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Photo: National Archives

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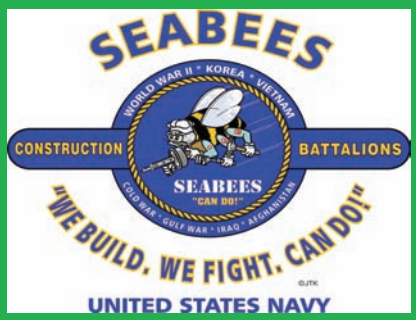

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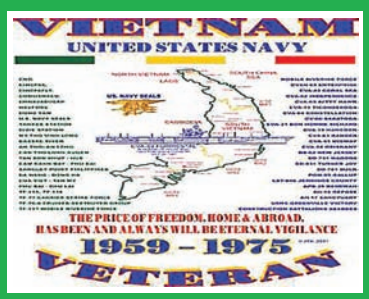

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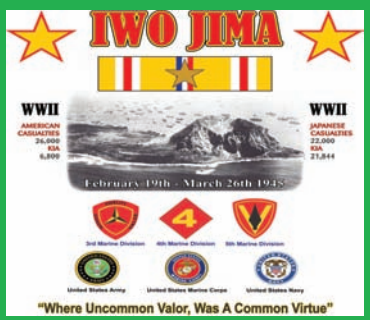

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Editorial

Recently released documents remind the world of Adolf Eichman's denial of wrongdoing.

WHEN AN ISRAELI TRIBUNAL FOUND ADOLF EICHMANN, THE RIGHT HAND OF Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich, guilty of crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes against Poles, Gypsies, and Slovenes, and membership in the Nazi Gestapo, SS, and SD—all three deemed criminal organizations by the Free World—he remained obstinate.

Despite the fact that Eichmann implemented and carried out the directive for the systematic extermination of European Jewry as outlined at the infamous Wannsee Conference in 1942, he denied responsibility and stunned those present in the courtroom as he maintained that he was only following orders. "I cannot recognize the verdict of guilty," he said.

Eichmann was, in essence, the executioner of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. Although he never directly killed anyone, he was responsible for issuing orders that led to the deaths, orders issued under the authority of his superiors. Eichmann packed the rail cars with human cargoes. His directives led to the deplorable conditions of the concentration and death camps that were wracked with starvation and disease.

Still, he asserted, "I was not a responsible leader, and as such do not feel guilty myself."

On January 27, 2016, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Israel released Eichmann's handwritten appeal of his death sentence that was handed down on December 15, 1961, and ultimately carried out a few minutes after midnight on June 1, 1962.

According to the distorted worldview that Eichmann held, he concluded that the trial judges had "made a fundamental mistake in that they are not able to empathize with the time and situation in which I found myself during the war years."

Eichmann had also written to Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, president of Israel at the time, "It is not true ... that I myself was a persecutor in the pursuit of the Jews ... but only ever acted by order of [others]."

Amazingly, in his written appeal the war criminal who never rose above the SS equivalent rank of an army lieutenant colonel alludes to the "unspeakable horrors which I witnessed," and goes on to relate, "I detest as the greatest of crimes the horrors which were perpetrated against the Jews and think it right that the initiators of these terrible deeds will stand trial before the law now and in the future."

After hiding in Argentina and living under an assumed name until Mossad agents captured him on a street in Buenos Aires on May 11, 1960, and spirited him back to Israel for a trial in which the prosecution spent 56 days and called 112 witnesses in presenting its case, the bespectacled former SS officer appeared frail, merely a shadow of the Nazi strongman who wielded the proxies of the highest ranking officers in the SS.

In a statement issued with the release of the Eichmann appeal documents, current Israeli President Reuven Rivlin commented, "Not a moment of kindness was given to those who suffered Eichmann's evil—for them this evil was never banal; it was painful; it was palpable. He murdered whole families and desecrated a nation. Evil had a face, a voice. And the judgment against this evil was just."

More than simply an interesting footnote to the violent history of the Nazi era and the human tragedy of the Holocaust, Eichmann's appeal reveals how totally and completely an individual may rationalize any action, no matter how heinous. Such a possibility is, in this case, chilling.

In the end, it is true that no human being can ultimately hide behind the weak defense of only "following orders" when those orders involve activities that civilized people must acknowledge are criminal in their very nature.

A lesson? Let it be so. Certainly a reminder.

Michael E. Haskew

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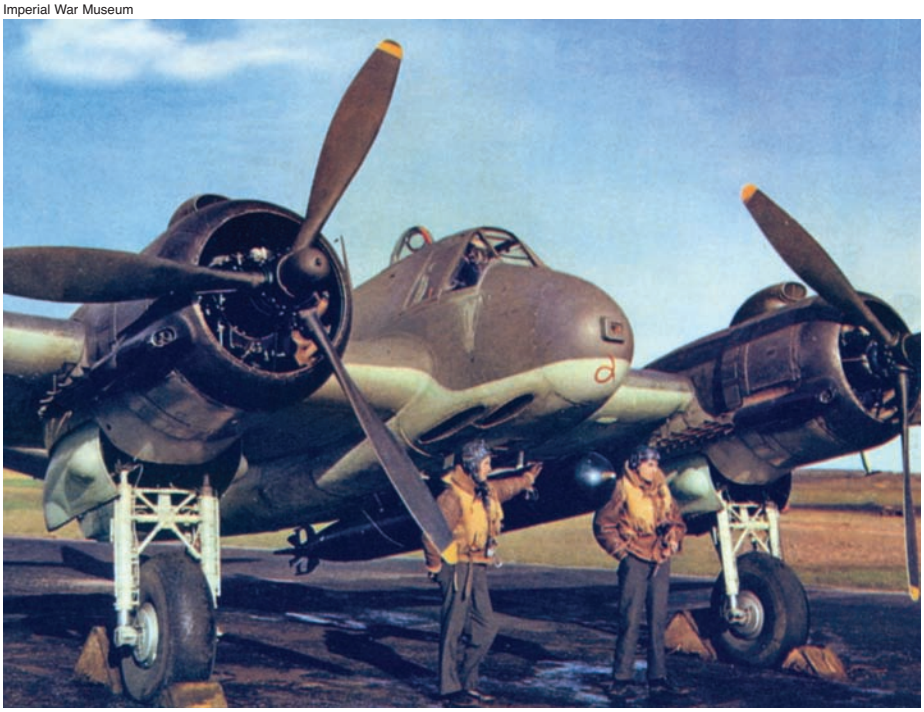

The Mighty Beau

One of the earliest multi-role aircraft of World War II, the Bristol Beaufighter was always dependable.

THE DAY'S FLIGHT WAS TO BE A FAIRLY TYPICAL "RHUBARB," OR A FAST freelance strike, for the two pilots in their Bristol Beaufighters.

It was to be a quick running attack on the Japanese airfield at Toungoo in Burma followed by impromptu strikes at anything they saw on the long trip back home over enemy-held territory to safety at Agartala. However, that February 13, 1943, mission was to be anything but routine for pilots Brian Hartness and Snowy Smith and their navigators.

They crossed the Irrawaddy River and then turned toward Toungoo. Spotting a Japanese supply train, they swooped down and attacked, leaving the crumpled locomotive in a cloud of escaping steam. When they got to the airfield, Hartness dived on an enemy bomber as it was taxiing into its dispersal, destroying it with a fierce burst of cannon fire. A second swing over the field enabled him to damage an enemy Nakajima Ki-43 Oscar fighter with his remaining .303-caliber bullets while dodging accurate Japanese flak and machine-gun fire.

Hartness was flying very low and momentarily took his eyes off the direct line of flight. To avoid the ground fire, he jinked the aircraft, but it was too late. His "Mighty Beau" struck a teak tree stump left standing after being stripped of its bark to season before being harvested.

"I hit the tree fair and square," Hartness remembered. "It smashed in the leading edge of my starboard wing between the fuselage and the engine nacelle and severely dented the exhaust collector ring which formed the front cowling of the engine. By some miracle the propeller was undamaged."

Hartness checked all the instruments and decided to make for safety at Ramu, located more than 300 miles to the northwest. There he gingerly landed his Beaufighter (No. EL286) to take on fuel and give the plane a good once over before flying on to his home base at Agartala, landing well after Snowy Smith's plane had touched down.

Hartness got a good chewing out from his superiors over the damage to his aircraft and managed an offhand, low-key apology to the Scot corporal in charge of EL286's ground crew. "Forget it," came the reply, and turning to the other Scots the crew chief said: "There I told ye, our pilot will always come back!"

And many crews did come back, thanks in good part to the proven toughness of the Mighty Beau, which was the Royal Air Force's first effective twin-engine strike fighter of World War II. The Bristol Beaufighter was a robust, pugnacious beauty of an airplane. It looked the role it played, that of a muscular, blunt-nosed pugilist that could take quite a beating while pounding the opposition to the ground. Although it lacked the svelte lines of the British de Havilland Mosquito, the tough Beau proved it could handle nearly anything thrown against it in all types of conditions, whether in the freezing fjords of Norway, the sun-baked expanses of North Africia, or the humid and unforgiving jungles of Burma.

The Beau traced its lineage back to the Bristol Beaufort, first envisioned in the mid-1930s as a torpedo bomber and a general reconnaissance bomber. The need for a stop-gap fighter was apparent, and the Bristol engineers looked for ways to adapt the Beaufort airframe for that role as well, saving crucial time and costs compared to developing an entirely new plane from scratch.

National Archives

ABOVE: The dependable Beaufighter was one of the earliest aircraft to perform in multiple roles during World War II. LEFT: This Bristol 156 Beaufighter TF Mk X, operated by Royal Air Force Coastal Command, is outfitted with torpedoes and rockets for use against enemy shipping.

Designers Leslie Frise and Roy Faddon nar-

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ABOVE: When this Bristol Beaufighter of RAF Coastal Command caught the German mine-detecting ship *Sauerland* in the open in the North Sea, it hammered the enemy vessel with accurate fire. BELOW: The Bristol Beaufighter was used extensively in the Pacific Theater and on the Asian mainland. In this photo a formation of Royal Australian Air Force Beaufighters flies over the Finschhafen, New Guinea, area.

rowed the fuselage, shortened the nose incorporating a single seat cockpit, added a dorsel position for a navigator/observer at midpoint on the fuselage, and added powerful but relatively quiet Hercules engines to the airframe. By utilizing the Beaufort's existing wing, tail unit, and landing gear, they were able to produce the first prototype Beaufighter in just six months.

The Beaufighter made its maiden flight on July 17, 1939, just a few short weeks before Germany invaded Poland and ignited World War II. The plane was to go on to become the most effective land-based antishipping aircraft the RAF had for the first three years of the war.

Four 20mm cannons mounted in the lower forward fuselage were fitted to the first 50 production Beaufighters, although subsequent planes were standarized with six .303-caliber Browning machines guns added in the wings, two on the port side and four on the starboard. The later addition of rocket projectiles (RP) made the Beau's punch even deadlier. The versatile plane was also modified to carry torpedoes and bombs.

The fact that the pilot was protected by armor plating and a bulletproof windscreen made the plane even more popular with most pilots. The pilot sat high and clear of the engines, providing an unobstructed view for low-level attack. The engines were set forward of the pilot, helping to protect the crew although the engine placement and power did give the plane a tendency to swing on take off and that caught a number of raw pilots by surprise. The swing could become uncontrollable if not immediately corrected, and sometimes resulted in crashes.

But it was the forward-placed engines, the plane's overall ruggedness and versatility, and its four cannons acting occasionally as protective skids that helped win the pilots over.

"I have seen a Beau go through a copse of trees [scything them down], through the earthworks surrounding an ammunition hut, through the brick-built hut, and finished up literally just an armored box, with the pilot sustaining only a broken leg and his observer uninjured," reported one veteran pilot.

Modifications were made as the plane evolved. Its tail was restructured, and instructions were provided in the attempt to overcome the plane's swing on takeoff. Some later models were adapted to use the readily available inline Rolls Royce Merlin engine.

Some pilots remained skeptical. One noted that an American who had joined the RAF early in the war felt completely at home in a Beau "as he'd previously been a truck driver!"

Pilot Maurice Ball liked the ground-attack aircraft, which took the fight to the enemy and gave the craft high marks for its "front office," or cockpit layout. Flying a Beau made him feel like a "knight of old," really "achieving something" rather than waiting passively for the enemy to come to you.

The navigator/observer was perhaps the most underrated component of the Beaufighter. He had limited vision is his cupola located some 18 feet behind the pilot. He could see only two-thirds of the ground because of the craft's nearly 58-foot wingspan, and often cloud cover, especially over Burma, would settle for weeks at a time. Perhaps the most challenging was the fact that the four 20mm cannons were placed in the body of the plane and they were not belt fed. That meant the navigator occasionally had to leave his position, either to unjam the cannon or arm wrestle fresh, heavy drums of 20mm shells into position, often while the plane was weaving to avoid enemy fire.

Not all the navigators were content to sit out an attack. Some toted along Thompson submachine guns on North Sea sweeps as something of an additional defense, although this meant smashing the navigator's canopy before the gun could be used. Some later models incorporated Vickers or Browning machine guns and armor for the crucial second man.

The Beau was among the first of the multitasking planes of World War II. Its strong airframe proved readily adaptable to a wide range of weapons, and it was capable of carrying out a variety of missions against difficult targets and in deplorable weather conditions. It became one of the first land-based torpedo aircraft of the war and was instrumental in proving the operational capability of airborne interceptor radar, which was then in its infancy.

When the Luftwaffe increasingly turned from day to night bombing over Britain in the fall of 1940, the RAF turned to the Beaufighter as a night fighter. With Mark IV radar fitted to its nose and a radar scope in the observer's position, the pilot was guided to the target by intercom directions. The craft proved capable in that role, and within six months the Beaufighters had used the temperamental radar to bring down more than a dozen Nazi planes. The number of enemy aircraft downed increased significantly as British radar and night fighting techniques improved.

The crews of the Beaus proved themselves to be masters of the night. Air Marshal W. Sholto Douglas noted in early April 1941 that although Beaufighters fitted with radar "carried out only 21 percent of the sorties at night, they have been responsible for 65 percent of the enemy aircraft destroyed." He went on to strongly urge that steps be taken to substantially increase the supply of Beaufighters.

The RAF and Bristol also looked to the Beaufighter as a way to take the fight to the Germans, using it as a long-range fighter and attack aircraft to hit enemy bases and shipping as distant as Norway. The Beaus could cut a small craft in half and sink 800-ton vessels. Some observers said the Beaufighters were able to provide so much firepower in an attack "that the aircraft seemed to be halted in midair by the recoil."

The firepower that a flight of Beaufighters could bring to bear was difficult to comprehend and even more difficult to overcome. On June 15, 1944, just a few days after D-Day, some 44 Beaus, including nine outfitted with torpedoes, took off from Langham, England, and linked up with nine North American P-51Mustangs serving as fighter cover.

They had received word that two large enemy ships and 17 escort vessels were at Dan Helder, north of Amsterdam, preparing to sail. The first wave of Beaus went in with their rockets firing and then opened with the cannons to make the ships' gunners run for cover while the nine "Torbleaus" (or torpedo-equipped Beaus) came in to finish things off.

By the time they were done, the British had

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This drawing of a Bristol Beaufighter TF Mk X of No. 455 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, presents the aircraft's distinctive profile with its large hump and dorsal machine-gun position.

sunk two merchant vessels and one escort, seriously damaged six others, damaged four more, and left one escort calling for assistance. All the Beaus returned safely.

The Beaufighters also proved themselves in North Africa and the Middle East, handling a variety of roles from antishipping and bomber escort to low-level attacks on enemy transport and installations. They protected convoys from Tobruk and Malta and flew antisubmarine patrols over Royal Navy ships in the Mediterranean. The Beaus excelled in ground strafing missions against enemy road convoys. They would fly straight down the road at low altitude, letting loose with nearly everything they had. Then, the number two plane would fly down and repeat the process as the surviving enemy drivers looked on in awe from the ditches.

"Only on two occasions," reports Wing Commander C.V. Ogden of No. 272 Squadron, "did aircraft actually scrape the road with their airscrew tips, but in each case the Beau returned safely."

Although that comment might have been tongue in cheek, the strafing runs did test the fortitude of the pilots as well as the strength of the planes. A photo in the Imperial War Museum shows a Beau with 25-30 percent of its right wing clipped off after striking a telegraph pole at full speed while strafing a convoy on the Libyan coast. It flew another 400 miles and landed safely at its home base. Another photo shows the three-foot top of an armed trawler's mast firmly imbedded in the nose of a low-flying Beau that made it back safely from a September 12, 1944, strafing run at Den Helder.

But it was in Burma and the Dutch East Indies that the plane really won over any remaining doubters and cemented its reputation as a tough, long-range plane capable of 1,500-mile missions that could take the fight to the enemy's lair, consistently deliver damaging blows, and then bring the crew safely back. The planes and crews more than held their own in fighting over jungles and open ocean in fierce climatic conditions that made maintenance and supply exceptionally difficult.

It was in the Far East that the Beau picked up its British-given moniker of "Whispering Death" because the quiet, fast, and low-flying plane could often be on top of the enemy before he had time to react.

According to one wartime account, the Beaufighters brought "a new kind of war against the Japanese. It was aggressive war, war of attack, war of accurate destruction. Hirtherto he had been bombed by aircraft which flew at remote heights in the sky. Sometimes they were strafed by low-diving bombers. That kind of attack had given them time to take cover.... Now it was different. Aircraft which skimmed the trees hurtled through the steep valleys of Timor's mountains, the hills screening the noise of their approach. They gave no signs of their coming and their guns' fury destroyed everything it their path."

Such an attack was perhaps best demonstrated by a Beaufighter pilot on a solo freelance sweep when he noted a full-dress ceremonial parade of Japanese at Myitkyina in northern Burma. The troops were celebrating Emperor Hirohito's birthday and were drawn up in a square around the flagpole. The Beau made two passes, scattering mayhem and death among the gathered men and horses. The attack severed the flagpole, symbolically bringing the rising sun flag down over the bodies of the fallen color guard.

The Japanese resorted to a number of tactics to counter the Beaus and related Allied aircraft disrupting their supply lines in the effort to push them back from India and retake Burma. One simple expedient was the stringing of steel cables between two trees in the hope of snaring a fast, low-flying Allied plane. Such tactics had little impact, however, as the Allies continued their attacks and further weakened the already overstretched and overtaxed Japanese supply lines. RAF No. 27 Squadron alone managed to damage or destroy 66 locomotives between January and September 1943, along with more than 400 items of rolling stock.

As the last year of the war opened, the Japanese in Burma were pulling back in an attempt to avoid the oncoming British Fourteenth Army. The Japanese relied on riverboats, which opened them to additional attacks from long-range Beaus and Mosquitoes.

Author Jerry Scutts noted, "Although it was far from unique in the Far East, the Beaufighter's tough, conventional construction took it past its logical phase-out in preference to that of the superior Mosquito, which had an Achilles heel not previously revealed in more temperate climates." The high levels of humidity and heat affected the bonding agents on the Mosquitoes' wooden airframe, occasionally causing the craft to be grounded because of structural failure.

"In certain instances, therefore, the Beaufighter replaced its replacement," added Scutts with a touch of irony.

In Burma, especially, he observed that the Beaufighter maintained its position as an exceptionally effective twin-engine strike fighter. Its unrivaled cannons and gun power—coupled with its rocket and torpedo capabilities—presented a challenge that the enemy simply could not match or counter.

The Mighty Beau lived on after the war, seeing continued years of service in the armed forces of countries ranging from Israel and Turkey to Portugal and the Dominican Republic. The Beau also lived on in the minds and hearts of the men it returned home safely in World War II.

Phil Zimmer is a U.S. Army veteran and a former newspaper reporter. He has written on a number of World War II topics.

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By James I. Marino

Both: National Archives

Stalwart Free French General

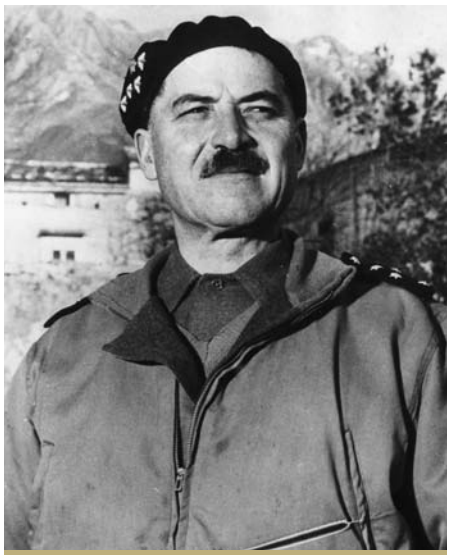
Alfonse Juin is considered by many to be France's best World War II field commander.

GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER IN Europe during World War II, considered General Alfonse Juin to be the best French combat general of the conflict. Juin led the largest French command engaged against the Germans during the middle years of the war.

"He was one of the finest soldiers," wrote General Mark Clark, commander of the Allied Fifth Army in Italy and Juin's immediate superior officer. Although Juin outranked Clark, Juin accepted the lesser position because of his patriotism to France and the honor of leading the French forces against the Germans.

Born December 16, 1888, at Bone, French Algeria, Juin's father was a policeman at Mostaganem. He enlisted in the French Army and entered Saint-Cyr, the French Military Academy, in 1909. He graduated 13th in his class in 1912, the same year as Charles de Gaulle, engendering a long friendship. Juin, posted to Morocco, joined the 1st Regiment of Algerian Tirailleurs and took part in pacification operations.

By 1914, Juin still commanded native Moroccan troops, but upon the outbreak of World War I he moved to the Western Front, as a lieutenant with the Moroccan Division. He took part in the Senlis, Ourcq, and Aisne offensives in 1914 and fought at the Battle of the Marne in September. He earned the Legion d'Honneur for "courage and power of decision." Cited in dispatches five times and decorated on the field of battle, Juin was wounded twice, most seriously in 1915 at the Battle of Soissons on the Champagne Front. His right arm became almost useless, forcing him to salute with his left hand for the remainder of his career, officially permitted to do so by the French Army.



ABOVE: General Alphonse Juin, commander of the French Expeditionary Corps during World War II, compiled an impressive combat record fighting the Germans in North Africa and Europe. LEFT: General Alfonse Juin commanded French troops against the invading Germans at the Battle of Gembloux, Belgium, in 1940.

He remained in the hospital for eight months. In December 1915, promoted to captain, he took command of a company of Tirailleurs of the 5th Moroccan Infantry Battalion. He fought in the ill-fated Chemin des Dames Offensive in 1917. In February 1918, Juin was nominated for staff courses and assigned to headquarters. In October, he joined the French military mission as liaison officer with the American Expeditionary Force. His first contact with American command would provide beneficial experience during the next world war.

After the war, Juin taught at the Ecole de

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Attempting to ford a deep stream somewhere in Belgium, a French tank throws up a shower of muddy water. Juin stopped the Germans at Gembloux but was forced to retreat when the Germans managed to break through at Sedan and elsewhere.

Guerre and graduated from the war college in 1921. He chose to return to North Africa, serving in Tunisia and Morocco. He took part in the Rif Campaign in 1923. He married Cécile Bonnefoy, had two sons, Pierre, a future St. Cyr graduate, and Michel, his youngest. Alphonse served in a Moroccan rifle regiment and later in a Foreign Legion Regiment. Juin relished cigars, bridge, music hall ditties, and dancing—but not the jitterbug. He relaxed by writing poetry and novels.

In the fall of 1925, Juin returned to France and became General Hubert Lyautey's aide de camp on the Supreme War Council. Promoted to major in 1926, he transferred back to Africa the next year, joining the 7th Rifle Regiment in Constantine, Algeria. In 1929, he headed the Resident General, Lucien Saint, Military Council. He took charge of planning the 1929-1933 pacification campaign against the tribes in the Atlas Mountains. By 1931, he was appointed principal private secretary to now Maj. Gen. Lyautey at Rabat.

Promoted to lieutenant colonel in March 1932, Juin became a professor of general tactics in the Graduate School of War in 1933. He took command of the 3rd Regiment of Zouaves in Constantine on March 6, 1935. He was promoted to colonel in June. He returned to France, under Generals Philippe Pétain and Henri Giraud, where he became a member of the Higher War Council in Paris. In 1937, Juin was appointed chief of staff to General Charles Nogues in Morocco. After completion of courses at the Center for Advanced Military Studies, he was promoted to brigadier general on December 26, 1938.

Although in command of a brigade, Juin was assigned the key position of mobilization on the staff of the North African Theater of Operations. At the outbreak of war with Germany, Juin was promoted to general and took command of the 15th Motorized Infantry Division. When the Germans began their offensive against France and the Low Countries in May 1940, Juin moved the division into Belgium. Advancing 30 miles, the 15th Motorized Division engaged the German Sixth Army. Juin won the Battle of Gembloux in Belgium on May 15, but with the German breakthrough at Sedan, Juin retreated to Lille. He defended Valenciennes and covered the retreat of the French First Army. The division was encircled at Lille. After running out of ammunition Juin surrendered his command on May 30 and was imprisoned at Koenigstein Castle until June 1941. He was promoted to major general while in captivity.

Released at the behest of Marshal Pétain, the leader of the Vichy government, Juin was given command of French forces in North Africa. Appointed deputy commanding general of troops in Morocco, he replaced General Maxime Weygand as commander in chief of all North African troops on November 20, 1941. Juin was placed under the direct authority of Admiral Jean-François Darlan. In December 1941, Juin refused permission for the German Army to use ports, railroads, and roads in Tunisia but was overruled by Darlan.

Prior to and during Operation Torch, the Allied landings in North Africa, Juin served as an officer of the Vichy army; however, he demonstrated his sympathies for the Allied cause and ordered all French troops under his command in Algiers to lay down their weapons. Juin also worked to convince Darlan to order a cease-fire, eventually leading to an end to hostilities between the Allies and French forces in North Africa.

Juin and Giraud desired to form a united French army to help liberate France from the Axis, but they knew it would take time. First they had to form and train units into a cohesive force. The only reliable forces available were the five French divisions in Tunisia. The French XIX Corps, mostly Algerian Tirailleurs and Moroccan Spahis, occupied 35 miles of the front line along the Eastern Dorsal Mountains and eventually fought as part of the American army. Juin assisted American II Corps commander General Lloyd Fredendall in recovering his fortitude during the disastrous Battle of Kasserine Pass.

At the end of February 1943, Juin was promoted and removed from direct command of the XIX Corps. The general focused on the task of raising and training the French Army to be used on mainland Europe. On July 31, 1943, Juin received command of the French Expeditionary Corps (FEC). In November 1943, he was assigned as Resident-General of Tunisia.

Despite the demonstrated commitment of French forces in North Africa and the loss in Tunisia of 19,400 French casualties, more than half dead or missing, some Allied leaders, especially the British, viewed the French Army as suspect. Doubtful of the French Army's quality and training, the plan for Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily, did not include the French.

Juin planned and led the successful French operation to occupy Corsica in September 1943.

Physically, Juin was sturdy at five feet, seven inches and 165 pounds. He was jovial, hard driving, and outspoken. In the field, he ate and slept very little. Though sociable, Juin liked to spend his first hour after waking in the morning in solitary thought and with a good smoke. Like most French generals, he had a flair for smart uniforms, preferred a Basque beret, and usually wore a cape, gloves, and boots. He spoke a heavily accented English.

General de Gaulle, who had known him since school, described Juin's leadership style as "reserved and self-confident, isolating himself deep within his duties, deriving his authority less from apparent brilliance than from a profound and secret ability. Master of his craft, he drew up plans of maneuvers beforehand with a firm line. Basing his strategy on the material he

received from intelligence, or from his own intuition, in every case the facts confirmed his procedure. He chose as a strategic axis a single idea, but clear enough to enlighten his men, complex enough to survive the pressures of action, strong enough to be imposed on the enemy."

In December 1943, General Dwight Eisenhower, senior Allied commander in the Mediterranean Theater, officially requested that Juin and the FEC be sent to fight in Italy. First, Juin had to fend off an attempt by British General Harold Alexander to use the French units piecemeal and not as one command. Juin persuaded Alexander to allow his original two-division force to fight as a unified formation.

Juin agreed to subordinate the FEC to the command of General Mark Clark and the Allied Fifth Army for several reasons. The two generals had met during Operation Torch and become good friends. Juin understood the need to commit French forces sooner rather than later, and a corps that included three divisions was all France had available at the time. Waiting until a larger French army was formed might diminish the overall French contribution to Allied victory and fail to fully restore French honor. Most of all, Juin realized that politics dictated the highest level of cooperation with other Allied commanders.

French combat experience in the mountains of North Africa was priceless. Juin stressed his military doctrine of mobility on foot, infiltration, and small-unit autonomy, all invaluable attributes in the rugged terrain in Italy. French forces contributed substantially to the eventual breach of the Gustav Line near Monte Cassino and the drive into northern Italy in the spring of 1944.

Juin's ability to analyze a tactical situation and make appropriate adjustments earned him great respect among his American and British contemporaries. De Gaulle wrote, "Juin restored the French military command to honor in the eyes of the nation, the Allies, and the enemy."

By May 1944, Juin commanded 112,000 soldiers. The Expeditionary Corps consisted of the 1st Free French Motorized Division, 2nd Moroccan Infantry Division, 3rd Algerian Infantry Division, 4th Moroccan Mountain Division, 2nd and 6th Moroccan Infantry Regiments, 7th and 8th African Light Cavalry Regiments, the Colonial Artillery Levant Regiment, the Marine Artillery Group, and three Moroccan Tabor Groups.

Juin directed the French advance beyond Rome. Ordered by Clark to move east of the city and pursue the Germans, Juin formed a corps of the 1st French Motorized Infantry Division and the 3rd Algerian Division, which

darted around Lake Bolsena. Within four days it covered 25 miles north of the lake. The French took Sienna on the July 3, 1944. Juin's forces stabilized the front 10 miles short of the Arno River. North of Rome the FEC fought for 43 consecutive days, inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, and took 2,080 prisoners.

At the end of July, the FEC was pulled out of the Italian front lines. Clark noted in his diary that Juin had "performed magnificently." The FEC fought in the Rhone campaign in southern France, but Juin was reassigned to the French high command.

In August 1944, de Gaulle selected Juin as General Chief of Staff of National Defense, a position that Juin held until May 1947. De Gaulle called Juin in that capacity "one of the surest military advisors any French leader ever had."

Juin was in charge of the expansion of the French Army, tasked with the execution of any of de Gaulle's decisions, and was de Gaulle's personal contact with Eisenhower at SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) and General Bernard de Lattre de Tassigny, commander of the French First Army. As chief of staff, Juin represented France at the San Francisco Conference where the United Nations Charter was signed. After the war, he

National Archives

General Alphonse Juin (left) chats with General Sir Harold Alexander, commander of Allied troops in the Mediterranean Theater, during the exhaustive attempts to crack the stubborn defenses of the Gustav Line in the spring of 1944.

directed the slow rebuilding and modernization of his country's army.

In August 1944, Juin became embroiled in the decision of whether Allied forces should liberate Paris from German occupation. When Eisenhower initially decided to bypass the city, Juin came face to face with Eisenhower and threatened to order General Philippe Leclerc's 2nd Armored Division to Paris over Ike's authority. Juin beseeched Eisenhower to negotiate with the German commander in Paris as well. Eisenhower subsequently ordered the French 2nd Armored and American 4th Infantry Divisions to liberate Paris.

When de Gaulle walked down the Champs-Elysees in triumph, Juin accompanied him. Juin organized the Paris French Forces of the Interior (FFI) into the 10th Division, which moved into combat by September. Juin accompanied de Gaulle during a nine-day conference with Soviet Premier Josef Stalin in early December 1944.

In March 1946, General Juin traveled to the Far East to negotiate with the Nationalist Chinese regarding the withdrawal of Chinese troops from northern Indochina in the Tonkin region of Hanoi-Haiphong. Juin achieved his task and returned to France to continue his responsibilities with the postwar French Army.

In 1947, he returned to Africa as the Resi-

dent General of France in Rabat, Morocco, holding the post until 1951, even though he remained in the post of chief of staff of the French Army. He continued to oppose Moroccan attempts to gain independence. In 1947, a nationalist movement threatened French rule. "Morocco," Juin said, "has a right to be independent. But independence must wait until Morocco is ready." He applied a policy of military firmness to assure French control.

As chief of staff Juin faced the quagmire of Indochina and the resulting conflict of national policies and concerns. He tried to balance the manpower commitment to the French Expeditionary Force in Indochina and the manpower commitment of the French Occupation Army in Germany and later the French Army's integration into the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) command in 1949.

Juin, like Leclerc earlier, eventually became one of the few generals questioning the drain on manpower and other resources associated with the continuing colonial war in Indochina. Asked by the French government to personally inspect the Expeditionary Corps in Indochina, Juin conducted a two-month inspection tour to assess the situation there. By November 1950, he summed it up succinctly: "Is France ready to pay the cost in human lives and money, while compromising our security in Europe to maintain Indochina in the French Union? If the nation does not think so, there are two solutions: first, negotiate with Ho Chi Minh, or second, bring the issue before the United Nations."

The French government ignored the sage advice and fought four more years, ending its involvement in Indochina in tragic defeat after the debacle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Juin's oldest son, Pierre, fought as a Foreign Legion officer of the 3rd Infantry Regiment in Indochina and survived the war.

With the creation of NATO, Eisenhower, the organization's supreme commander, tabbed Juin as the Commander-in-Chief Land Forces Central Europe for NATO. On Bastille Day, July 14, 1952, Alphonse Pierre Juin, still holding his NATO post, was promoted to the exalted rank of Marshal of France. In November, he was elected to the elite literary Académie Française. Next came another senior NATO position as he assumed command of CENTAG (the NATO Central Army Group comprised of four army corps) until 1956. He believed that NATO's forces, when motorized and brought up to planned strength, could quickly seize the initiative in case of an attack by Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces and punch their way eastward.

Following his NATO command, Juin fiercely opposed de Gaulle's decision to grant independence to Algeria, and he retired in 1962 as a result of the political discord that ensued. De Gaulle may have demanded Juin's resignation but publicly announced that he was placing Juin "in the reserve of the Republic." Juin then wrote his memoirs of the Expeditionary Corps in his book *La Campagne d'Italie,* published in 1962.

Juin was recognized by both American and British military leaders as the top French strategist to emerge from World War II. This was confirmed in a March 11, 1951, Associated Press article when he was selected by Eisenhower as NATO's ground forces commander. Ike said to reporters, "Juin rivals General de Lattre de Tassigny as one of France's best military minds."

Juin was his nation's last living Marshal of France until his death in Paris in 1967. He was entombed along with other great French military and political leaders, including Napoleon, at Les Invalides in the capital city.

James Marino, military writer, history teacher, and World War II reenactor lives in Hackettstown, New Jersey, and has written extensively on World War II since 1999.

By Bob Bergin

Both: RADM Milton E. Miles Collection, Naval History and Heritage Command

Chinese guerrillas of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization drill on horseback. SACO was a clandestine organization that originated in a cooperative effort between Chinese and American operatives to mount guerrilla raids against the Japanese enemy.

The Claws and Teeth of the Generalissimo

> To get the intelligence America needed in China, OSS had to conceal its operations from Chiang Kai-shek's spy master and the U.S. Navy.

IT WAS AT THE GRAND BANQUET GIVEN IN HIS HONOR THAT GENERAL WILLIAM "Wild Bill" Donovan told his host, General Dai Li, that the OSS intended to work on its own in China and that he wanted no interference from the Chinese. Dai Li exploded. He would execute any OSS agents found operating independently on Chinese soil.

Donovan struck the table, shouted: "For every one of our agents you kill, we will kill one of your generals!"

"You can't talk to me like that." Dai Li shouted back.

"I *am* talking to you like that," Donovan said. The two men "were suddenly all smiles." The confrontation was over, but in the morning Donovan was scheduled to meet Dai Li's boss, the Generalissimo himself, Chiang Kai-shek. It was not a pleasant prospect.

Dai Li was Chiang Kai-shek's spymaster, Chiang's "claws and teeth." As chief of the benignly named Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the Military Affairs Commission, Dai Li controlled thousands of spies in China and in every country that had a Chinese community. Some sources claim that Dai Li had 100,000 agents in the field by 1945. There were at least 50,000 regular agents and up to 500,000 total spies and informers, making Dai Li's the world's largest espionage operation at the time.

Chinese General Dai Li and U.S. Navy Commander Milton Miles worked together to build SACO.

Although the Japanese were occupying large areas of China, Dai Li's vast resources were focused not on them, but on Chiang's political enemies and the Chinese Communists. Against those targets, Dai Li carried on espionage and intelligence work. His biographer, noted historian Frederick Wakeman, Jr., called Dai Li "an extraordinary secret policeman." After his meeting with Dai Li in December 1943, OSS Chief Donovan called him a "mediocre policeman with medieval ideas of intelligence." Both evaluations were correct.

William J. Donovan was the chief of the Office of Strategic Services, the OSS. During World War I he led a battalion of the famed Fighting 69th New York Volunteers. He was wounded three times; for his coolness under fire he was named "Wild Bill" by his men. His valor won him the Medal of Honor. After the war, as a Wall Street lawyer involved in politics and extensive foreign travel, Donovan came to the attention of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. They were from opposing political parties but shared a world view.

Roosevelt valued Donovan's insights and used him as an informal emissary to evaluate events in Europe. In 1941, Roosevelt named Donovan the Coordinator of Information (COI), and the following year made him the chief of the new OSS, America's first strategic intelligence organization.

Donovan arrived in Chongqing, China, on December 6, 1943. In October he had been ordered to collect intelligence in China's Communist-controlled areas. He had briefed President Roosevelt on the intelligence situation in China, where the OSS had found itself in an awkward relationship with Dai Li's organization. Donovan told Roosevelt, "We cannot do our job as an American intelligence service unless we operate as an entirely independent one, independent of the Chinese and our other allies."

Roosevelt agreed and authorized Donovan to tell the Generalissimo "that we must be permitted independence of operations."

Donovan met with Chiang Kai-shek the morning after Dai Li's banquet and found Chiang ready for him. He told Donovan that he expected the Americans to recognize that China was a sovereign nation and that—like America—China would object to a secret service from another country coming into China and working there without the knowledge of the

Chinese. He asked Donovan to conduct himself "accordingly."

Donovan had little choice. For the OSS to conduct its operations, Donovan would have to work around Chiang and Dai Li. Dai Li's response to what Donovan did next was telling. Dai Li did nothing when Donovan circumvented him by creating a separate clandestine OSS intelligence collection mechanism and hid it inside the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force.

Donovan found an ally in Fourteenth Air Force commander General Claire Lee Chennault, Chiang Kai-shek's aviation adviser since 1937. The effectiveness of the Fourteenth Air Force that Chennault now commanded depended on the accuracy of the intelligence it received to target its bombers. The information Chennault was receiving from the Chinese War Ministry was not sufficient.

The U.S. commander in China, Lt. Gen. Joseph Stilwell, "exhibited a striking lack of interest in the intelligence problems of the China sector of his command," Chennault wrote in his memoir, *Way of a Fighter.* The intelligence the Chinese provided was outdated, inaccurate, and useless for targeting the bombers. Chennault turned down "a proffered alliance with Dai Li's notorious KMT secret police." It might have been useful, he thought, "but since Dai's men were engaged in a ruthless man-hunt for Communists, it would have meant the end of our intelligence and rescue relations with Communist armies in the field."

"Stilwell specifically prohibited the Fourteenth from any attempts to gather intelligence," Chennnault wrote. "I was again faced with the choice of obeying Stilwell's orders literally, or finding some other method of getting the information so essential to our operations."

Chennault solved his problem "by organizing the Fourteenth's radio-intelligence teams within the framework of our air-raid-warning control network and continued to depend officially on Stilwell's stale, third-hand Chinese intelligence."

Chennault's intelligence teams required men who could pass through the lines and operate in Japanese-occupied territory for extended periods of time. "Most of our field intelligence officers were old China hands," Chennault wrote, "men who had lived in China before the war, spoke the language, knew the customs, and could live in the field on Chinese food."

The pioneer and example for all who followed was John Birch, "led into our fold by Jimmy Dolittle after Birch had guided Jimmy and his Tokyo raiders out of East China," according to Chennault. The young Georgia Baptist was serving as a missionary in China and wanted to serve both God and his country. He stayed in the field for three years and refused any leave while the war went on.

National Archives

General William "Wild Bill" Donovan meets with his officers in the city of X'ian, China. Donovan created a separate OSS intelligence collection apparatus in Chinato conduct his own OSS operations.

Chennault agreed to let the OSS use the Fourteenth Air Force as cover for its unilateral operations behind Japanese lines. The result was the 5329th Air and Ground Forces Resources and Technical Staff, AGFRTS, or "Ag-farts," as it was popularly called. The organization combined OSS and the Fourteenth's field intelligence staff, added OSS Research and Analysis Branch personnel, and assumed all intelligence duties of the Fourteenth Air Force. It was a happy marriage and a very effective one.

OSS agents behind the lines gathered intelligence on Japanese shipping, rail traffic, and other targets, interrogated prisoners, trained guerrillas, sometimes engaged in guerrilla warfare, and did a host of other things important to the war effort. Chennault was pleased with the results. Given his myriad responsibilities, management of the entire AGFRTS organization was eventually turned over to the OSS.

The creation of AGFRTS was done secretly but with the recognition that OSS operations run through AGFRTS could not be hidden long from Dai Li—and eventually Dai Li was officially informed. The fact that Dai Li never challenged the OSS again and kept his hands off OSS operations can be read as Dai Li's understanding that Donovan and the Americans had drawn a line that they would not allow him to cross.

Many problems in the overall Chinese-American relationship during World War II grew out of the divergence in Chinese and American goals in the war and the strategic vision the two countries had for the future. For the Nationalist Chinese, the ongoing war with the Japanese was not always the top priority. In the Chinese view, once America got in the war the Japanese could not win. What would come after the war was far more important for the Nationalists. The Communists would have to be dealt with, as would China's imperialist ambitions. China had to free itself of outside interference and extend its own influence in Asia. The influence of the French, British, and Americans would have to be curtailed.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Americans started streaming into China, some with big ideas for winning the war and access to the funds to do it. Among them was Commander Milton E. Miles, known to history as Mary Miles, the nearest thing the U.S. Navy had to a China expert. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, he had spent five years with the Asiatic Fleet. In early 1942, U.S. Navy Chief Admiral Ernest King sent him to China to establish weather stations and "to heckle the Japanese."

One of the Chinese Miles was told to contact was Dai Li. Before leaving Washington, Miles read Dai Li's file and was shocked. Dai Li was called an assassin and the head of a Gestapo-like organization. It was said that he ran his own concentration camps for political enemies, that he did not like foreigners, and few had ever met him. He was said to be guilty of crimes that ranged from torture to mayhem and beyond. Reportedly, he had executed his own mother.

What can be confirmed of Dai Li's history shows a classic rise from obscurity to great power through cunning, intelligence, and deviousness. He was born in 1897 in the hills of Zheziang Province, where even as a teenager he was seen as natural leader but also as "a trouble maker addicted to sex and gambling." Caught cheating at cards, he ran off to join the army and then deserted—but not before he connected with the Green Gang, the notorious gangsters who controlled the Shanghai underworld. It was a link that would serve him well in times to come.

In 1921, Dai Li met Chiang Kai-shek and ran errands for him. In 1926, possibly with Green Gang help, he managed to get admitted to the Whampoa Military Academy, where Chiang was the chancellor. To ingratiate himself with Chiang, who wanted to use him as a batman, he reported on the ideological purity of his fellow cadets. Those he identified as Communists were eliminated in a purge at Whampoa in 1927.

Whampoa and its alumni were the base on which Chiang's power was built. His loyalists moved in a swirl of associations, secret societies, and front organizations. Permeating the mix was Chiang's personal espionage apparatus of secret intelligence organizations that he let fight among themselves for funds and authority.

In 1928, Chiang established a 10-man intelligence unit called the Liaison Group and put

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Dai Li at its head. Later called the "embryo of all subsequent party and state military organizations," the Liaison Group had to compete with many others. To strengthen his hand, Dai Li formed the League of Ten, Whampoa graduates he put on his private payroll who became the core of his personal secret service.

In 1932, when Chiang needed intelligence that others were unable to provide, he directed Dai Li to turn his League of Ten into the formal Special Services Department. The "Ten" became more than a hundred, and Dai Li's rise began. Dai Li became Chiang's primary source for political intelligence, and in 1938, Chiang established a new independent security agency, the Bureau of Investigations and Statistics. Dai Li was made its chief.

Before the outbreak of war with Japan, Dai Li's activities centered on Shanghai, where he suborned the police and drew on the skills of his old associates in the Green Gang. Kidnapping and torture became tools to gather intelligence and root out Chiang's enemies and the Communists. Trafficking in narcotics and other contraband was the means to supplement budgets as Dai Li's activities and power grew. Dai Li was the only armed man allowed in Chiang's presence. He became the most feared man in China.

Within days of his arrival in China, Miles met the man few foreigners ever met. At their first meeting Dai Li arranged an imposing mansion for Miles in Chongqing, formerly the residence of Chongqing's mayor. The current occupant, the city's garrison commander, would be pleased to leave, Dai Li said. With the house came a staff, including two Chinese liaison officers who would be Miles' interpreters and go everywhere with him. At their next meeting Dai Li organized a trip for Miles into occupied China, a tour he personally conducted all the way from Chongqing to the distant Chinese coast.

Dai Li outdid himself. The Japanese controlled the main roads but could do little about the smugglers, resisters, and refugees who fed information to Dai Li and assured the safety of the tour route. It left Miles greatly impressed with how easily Dai Li's organization could operate behind Japanese lines. The group endured several air raids, and while sitting one out in a rice paddy Dai Li proposed to Miles the creation of a 50,000-man Chinese guerrilla army under Sino-American control.

Without consulting Washington, Miles agreed and the two started working on the creation of what became the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, or SACO, to carry out espionage, special operations, and signals intelligence. The Chinese would provide the manpower, the United States the rest. Dai Li would be the SACO director, Miles his deputy.

Stilwell later commented, "The Chinese had a great nose for money and to them Miles probably looked like he had lots of it."

Targeting Miles was likely much more deliberately done. Even before he arrived in China, he was already well known to Dai Li. In Washington, Major Xiao Bo, China's military attaché, was a friend of Miles. They met often to discuss ways the United States could help China resist the Japanese. Miles was oblivious to the fact that Xiao was an agent for Dai Li.

Later, Miles would be surprised by how much Dai Li knew about him. Miles remembered, "He asked, by name, about each of my sons. And my car? He knew that a Chinese name was painted on it—'lan-ti,' meaning 'the blue one.'"

Alghan Lusey, a communication engineer working for Donovan, was invited to join the early part of the trip and had heard Dal Li's proposal. He was skeptical. When Lusey returned to the United States soon afterward, Miles asked that he take a copy of the proposal to Admiral King. Lusey passed a copy to Donovan.

Donovan resisted the SACO idea. But the OSS needed a Chinese base for its Asia operations, and Donovan agreed to wary cooperation with Miles and Dai Li. Washington's approval of SACO required that Miles be appointed chief of OSS activities in China. The OSS was admitted to China as the junior partner in Dai Li's intelligence network. The agreement specifically precluded the OSS from working independently.

The formal SACO agreement was signed in Washington on April 15, 1943. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox signed on behalf of the U.S. Personnel from the OSS, and the U.S. Navy started arriving at Dai Li's base outside Chunking to instruct Dai Li's people in everything from guerrilla warfare to criminal investigation, even an FBI school to train Dai Li's secret police.

There were problems from the start. Miles said he would not tolerate interference from the OSS or "dictation" from Stilwell; he would personally select personnel and only accept OSS directives that he deemed wise. An observer described him as "100 percent Navy and 00 percent OSS."

There was the focus of Dai Li's organization, which was directed against Chiang's internal enemies rather than the Japanese. There was the matter of torture. Happy Valley, which had a sanitized mess hall and Western toilets for the Americans, also had a prison where torture supposedly took place. There was the U.S. mistrust of Dai Li and concern about his methods, which reportedly included kidnapping, assassinations, and drug smuggling.

Dai Li's hand was seen in thwarted OSS operations. Free Thai agents being infiltrated into Thailand from China by the OSS were delayed and several killed. In Dai Li's view, Thailand was properly under the Chinese sphere of influence, and he had his own plans for the country. He would invade Thailand with a force of 10,000 Chinese guerrillas disguised as Thai and riding 10,000 Tibetan ponies. The situation was further complicated by Allied suspicions that Dai Li was trading secrets with Japanese intelligence.

These problems were exacerbated by Miles' insistence that nothing should be kept secret from the Chinese; they would work directly with the Americans and everything would be shared. It was an exceptionally naïve position for an intelligence officer. Stilwell saw that immediately. Stilwell had long experience in China and had engaged in intelligence collection as a military attaché. Information acquired with Chinese help, he said, would be unreliable, even fabricated. Stilwell had discovered that his house servants were provided by Dai Li. Coming home unexpectedly one day, he found them going through his papers.

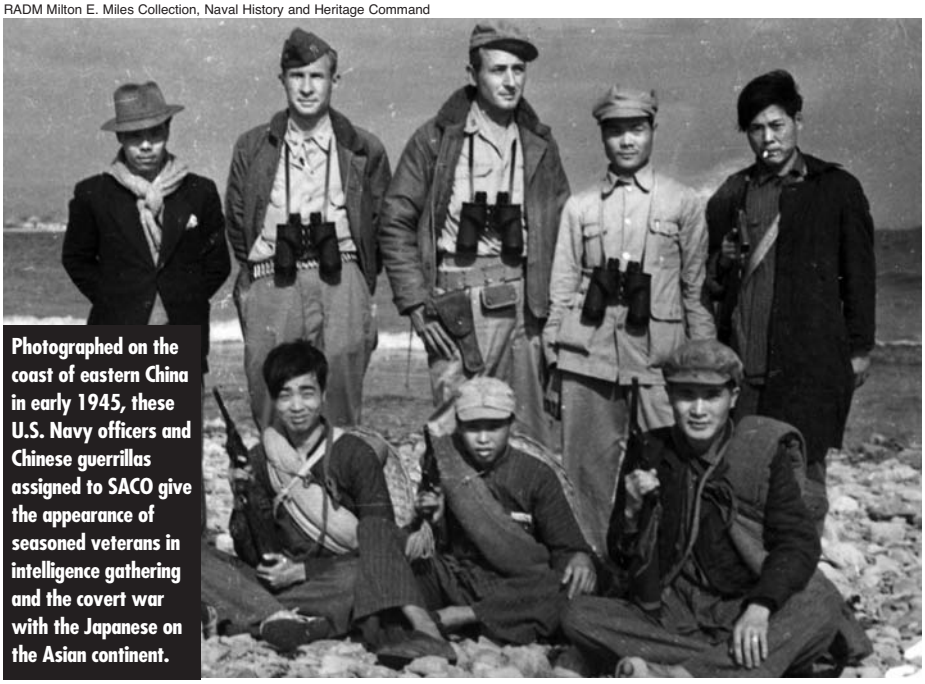
After his confrontation with Dai Li, Donovan fired Miles, who was officially removed from his OSS post on December 5, 1943, but remained as deputy director of SACO. He was replaced by Colonel John Coughlin, an experienced OSS officer who had served in Burma. OSS was done with Miles, but Miles was not quite finished with OSS.

It was time to direct attention to the Chinese Communists. Donovan had recognized the value of establishing contact with them early on. In 1941, his proposal to send an American undercover mission to work with the Chinese Communist guerrillas—the best guerrilla troops in the world by some estimates—was met with objections from the State and War Departments and set aside. By early 1944, serious American disillusionment with Chiang Kai-shek had set in, as had a growing concern that the war with the Japanese would be followed by a civil war that Chiang could not win.

There was a great need for information on the Communists. The one million guerrillas they controlled in Japanese areas became of considerable interest to Stilwell's headquarters. In the spring of 1944, the Japanese Army launched Operation Ichi-go—the biggest Japanese land offensive of World War II. Contact with the Communists became imperative.

On July 22, 1944, eight American diplomats, soldiers and spies flew from Chungking to Yenan, the remote Communist headquarters in northern China. It was "the most exciting event ever since the war against Japan started," wrote

RADM Milton E. Miles Collection, Naval History and Heritage Command



Photographed on the coast of eastern China in early 1945, these U.S. Navy officers and Chinese guerrillas assigned to SACO give the appearance of seasoned veterans in intelligence gathering and the covert war with the Japanese on the Asian continent.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung in *Liberation Daily.* Chiang Kai-shek had blocked direct American contact with the Communists until he could no longer avoid it and maintain his credibility with his foreign allies. A few months later Chiang agreed to let a U.S. military observer mission be set up in Yenan. As Yenan was in "rebel territory" it became known as the Dixie mission.

Among the Americans on that first visit were several from the OSS. This was the opportunity the OSS was looking for. The Communists had agents everywhere in Japanese-occupied China with access to a tremendous amount of information, and they showed great willingness to share what they knew.

In September 1944, the OSS agreed to provide badly needed radios for 14 Communist-held areas, and 14,000 pounds of American equipment, including lightweight radios and spare parts, were flown to Yenan. The OSS was allowed access to Japanese Communists who had fled to Yenan and started operational planning to send Japanese agents to Manchuria, Korea, and Japan itself.

In November 1944, a plan was drawn up to send OSS special operations personnel to northern China to mount sabotage strikes against the Japanese and train 25,000 Communist guerillas at Yenan. The plan was not discussed with Chiang's government when it was presented to the Communists in mid-December 1944, but Dai Li learned of it within days. The new American ambassador, Patrick Hurley, was invited to visit SACO headquarters at Happy Valley, where he was feted by Dai Li with "flags, ruffles, and flourishes."

Over dinner, Miles revealed to him that "a massive conspiracy was afoot to send American troops and arms to the Communists," and offered Hurley use of U.S. Navy radio facilities by which he could send messages to Washington and bypass his own embassy. Hurley, a self-made Oklahoma millionaire and former Secretary of War under Herbert Hoover, had arrived in September. He was uncritically supportive of Chiang and by all accounts unprepared to cope with the intricacies of Chinese political intrigue.

Hurley reported the plan to Roosevelt and went on to denounce the State Department officers in China whose assessments of the Chiang Kai-shek government and its prospects in the evolving China situation had become too realistic.

Stilwell had recently been recalled from China at Chiang's demand. To his successor, recently arrived Maj. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, fell the task of sorting out what had become a chaotic affair that had started while he was away visiting Burma. One outcome was that the SACO agreement was altered to bring Milton Miles and the SACO Americans directly under Wedemeyer's command. SACO-trained Chinese guerrillas already in the field were replaced with OSS-trained commandos. The OSS was given approval to expand operations, but not before Hurley was congratulated by the Generalissimo for having "purged the United States headquarters of the conspirators."

There was a purge, in fact, as senior State Department officers whose views of the China situation did not agree with the ambassador's were "Hurleyed" out of China.

A group of OSS Jedburgh officers arrived early in 1945 to work with the Communists and conduct commando operations. The Jedburghs had been successful working with local resistance forces in German-occupied Europe, but they never reached northern China because of Chiang's objections. This also hurt OSS intelligence collection capabilities aimed at the Communists as well as the Japanese, and prospects for continuing cooperation with the Communists were diminished.

The war was drawing toward its close, and on August 9, 1945, a total of 11 Soviet armies with more than one million men and 5,000 tanks pushed into the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo in northeastern China. Into the chaos went OSS officers to report on conditions. Among them was John Birch, who was killed by a Chinese Communist soldier at a roadblock.

As the war was ending, OSS special operations teams were dispatched on mercy missions to rescue Allied prisoners of war held by the Japanese in east China, Korea, and Vietnam. Radio intercepts showed that Japanese commanders had been instructed to kill Allied POWs. In Mukden, General Jonathan Wainright, commander of Allied forces at the fall of the Philippines, was found among Soviet troops.

Another OSS officer, Captain Roger Hilsman, was reunited with his Army general father at another POW camp in Mukden. A young General John Singlaub parachuted onto Hainan Island with his commando team and was met by Japanese with fixed bayonets. They were not convinced the war was over. Hundreds of Allied POWs and 5,000 Chinese slave laborers were released on Hainan along with thousands more at POW camps around the country.

As the war went on, Milton Miles became more isolated from the main American effort. In the end, Miles found himself under U.S. Army command, with all support of SACO under a G-5 administrative team that monitored SACO activities. Much of this grew from the concern that SACO would be drawn into China's imminent civil war. SACO was declared to have fulfilled its mission on September 4, 1945. Miles departed China on December 29.

On March 17, 1946, an aircraft carrying Dai Li crashed in the hills outside Nanking. Dai Li was dead, but many refused to believe it. Some blamed the crash on Communist sabotage, others on a bomb planted by the OSS. A Chinese investigation determined it was bad weather that killed Dai Li.

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

By Brent Douglas Dyck

National Archives

Why Wasn't Auschwitz Bombed?

> Evidence suggests that the Allies were aware of the infamous Nazi death camp and might have curbed the systematic killing with a precision bombing strike.

FORMER GERMAN PRESIDENT HORST KOEHLER ONCE SAID THAT AUSCHWITZ, the largest Nazi extermination camp, was home to the "worst crime in human history."

Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz, confessed during his trial after World War II that approximately 1.1 million prisoners, mostly Jews, had been killed at Auschwitz by Hitler's SS over a 4 1/2-year period. Some historians believe that the death toll may have been much higher. Most of these victims were killed in gas chambers, their bodies burned in crematoria, and their ashes dumped in a nearby marsh.

Many historians have wondered ever since, "Why wasn't Auschwitz bombed by the Allies?" This is one of the most controversial and hotly debated topics among historians who study World War II. Did the Allies know about Auschwitz? If so, could it have been bombed or was it too far away? Would bombing Auschwitz have taken away from the war effort? Lastly, if it was possible, would it have been effective or would it have done more harm than good?

In considering the feasibility of bombing Auschwitz, one needs to know if the Western governments knew about the world's largest killing center. The answer is a definitive yes. As historian Tami Davis Biddle has discovered, the first report about Auschwitz was made as early as January 1941—only six months after it had opened and before the gas chambers were installed. A report from the Polish underground was sent to the Polish government in exile in London, where it was forwarded on to Sir Charles Portal, the chief of the British Royal Air Force. The report said Auschwitz was one of the Nazis' "worst orgainized (sic) and most inhuman concentration camps."

In November 1942, the Polish underground reported to the Polish government in London that tens of thousands of Jews and Soviet POWs were shipped to Auschwitz "for the sole purpose of their immediate extermination in gas chambers."

The American public was first introduced to the horrors of Auschwitz on November 25, 1942, when the *New York Times* published an article on page 10 that stated, "Trainloads of adults and children [are] taken to great crematoriums at Oswiencim [Auschwitz], near Cracow." In March 1943, the Directorate of Civilian Resistance in Poland reported that 3,000 people a day were being burned in a new crematorium at Auschwitz.

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ABOVE: In this recent photo taken inside a crematorium at Auschwitz, the now cold ovens bear mute testimony to the genocide that was prosecuted by the Nazis at the most vilified of all concentration camps. LEFT: Polish women and children are herded aboard a train bound for the infamous Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz. Questions persist as to why the Allies did not bomb the death camp to disrupt the systematic extermination of its inmates.

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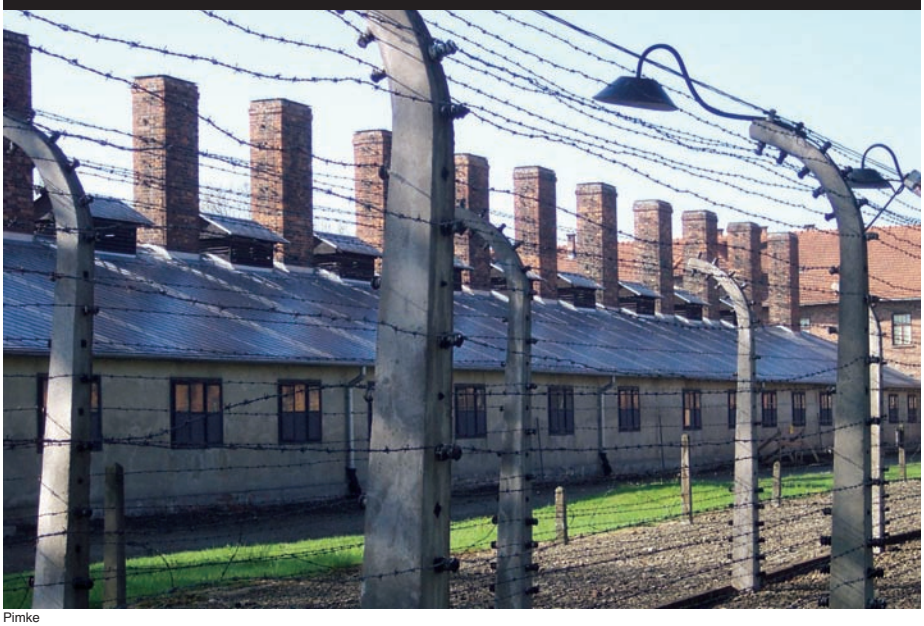
ABOVE: This wartime image captures the stark chemical plant where the lethal gas Zyklon-B was manufactured for use in the gas chambers of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz.
BELOW: Barbed wire fencing remains in place around the perimeter of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Located in Poland, Auschwitz was the scene of mass extermination on a colossal scale.



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Another report, from a Polish agent code-named Wanda, was given to the American military attaché in London in January 1944. She claimed, "Children and women are put into cars and lorries and taken to the gas chamber.... There they are suffocated with the most horrible suffering lasting ten to fifteen minutes.... At present, three large crematoria have been erected in Birkenau-Brzezinka for 10,000 people daily which are ceaselessly cremating bodies."

On March 21, 1944, the Polish Ministry of Information released a report to the Associated Press that "more than 500,000 persons, mostly Jews, had been put to death at a concentration camp" at Auschwitz. The report stated that most had been killed in gas chambers "but since the supply of gas was limited some persons are not dead when they are thrown into the crematorium." The story was printed in both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post*.

In April 1944, two men, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, managed to escape from Auschwitz. They in turn gave a detailed report of the camp, including maps and locations of the gas chambers and crematoria, to the Slovakian government. The report was forwarded to British intelligence, and its contents were broadcast over BBC radio in June 1944.

It was also discovered after the war that by the time Auschwitz had been liberated the Allies had photographed the camp at least 30 times during the course of the war. The photos, taken by the U.S. Army Air Forces, were stored at the Mediterranean Allied Photo Reconnaissance Wing in Italy, which was commanded by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's son, Colonel Elliott Roosevelt. Some photos even showed inmates being marched to the gas chambers.

Were the Allies capable of bombing Auschwitz?

Once again, the answer is yes. In November 1943, the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) created the Fifteenth Air Force based in Foggia, Italy. Auschwitz, which was 625 miles away in southwestern Poland, was finally within range of American Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and Consolidated B-24 Liberator heavy bombers.

By May 1944, the USAAF had begun attacking the Third Reich's synthetic oil plants located in Germany, Poland, and Romania. The goal was to bring Hitler's war machine to a halt. On August 8, 1944, a raid numbering 55 bombers from the U.S. Eighth Air Force flew from airfields in the Soviet Union and dropped more than 100 tons of bombs on an oil refinery at Trzebinia, which was approximately 20 miles northeast of Auschwitz.

Two weeks later, on August 20, the Fifteenth Air Force attacked the I.G. Farben synthetic fuel refinery at Auschwitz, which was less than seven miles from the gas chambers. On September 13, a raid numbering 94 B-24 bombers dropped 236 tons of bombs again on the oil refinery at Auschwitz. A photo taken during this raid by an American bomber crew actually shows the gas chambers and crematoria underneath the falling 500-pound bombs. This compelling image was created because bomber crews were required to release their bombloads while accounting for airspeed, windage, and distance to the intended target to achieve maximum accuracy.

As historian Rondall Rice has written, "The evidence clearly shows the Fifteenth Air Force's ability to bomb Auschwitz, in aircraft and in command discretion within the target priorities. By the summer of 1944, the command controlled ample aircraft; those aircraft had sufficient range and payloads necessary for such a mission; and bombing directives allowed commanders flexibility to direct attacks against special targets."

Would bombing Auschwitz have detracted from the war effort?

In June 1944, John W. Pehle, the executive

director of the War Refugee Board, appealed to the U.S. government to bomb the railways leading into Auschwitz. In July, Johan J. Smertenko, the executive vice chairman of the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, sent a letter to President Roosevelt asking him to bomb the extermination camps, especially the "poison gas chambers of [the] Auschwitz and Birkenau camps."

That August, A. Leon Kubowitzki, the head of the rescue department of the World Jewish Congress, asked the U.S. government to destroy the gas chambers "by bombing."

The U.S government rejected all of these requests to bomb Auschwitz. Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy replied in letters dated July 4 and August 14, "Such an operation could be executed only by the diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of our forces now engaged in decisive operations elsewhere."

In other words, with the D-Day invasion having occurred at the beginning of June 1944, the United States could not spare any aircraft to bomb Auschwitz as their main goal was to defeat the German Army in France. The U.S government believed that the best way to save the Jewish people being murdered at Auschwitz was to defeat the German Army and force Hitler to surrender.

However, American historian Stuart Erdheim has questioned the validity of McCloy's assertion. Erdheim believes that the gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz could have been destroyed in one strategic strike using 100 planes. Erdheim writes, "Viewed against the backdrop of the Fifteenth AF operations, just how 'considerable' would one raid of 80 fighters (half for escort) or 100 bombers (with escort) have been?... With the average number of sorties per day between 500 and 650, one mission of 80 fighter sorties represents one-seventh to one-eighth of one day's total missions." As Erdheim concludes, "The scale of such an air attack would not have affected the war effort in any appreciable way."

Historian Richard G. Davis agrees with Erdheim. He states that the destruction of the extermination facilities at Auschwitz, however, would probably have required "a minimum of four missions of approximately seventy-five effective heavy bomber sorties each." He states that in both July and August 1944, the American Fifteenth Air Force flew approximately 10,700 heavy bomber sorties per month. Davis writes, "Even if one assumes that the three hundred sorties ... would all have come at the direct expense of the Fifteenth's highest-priority target, the German oil supply, the effort expended on Birkenau would have amounted to about seven percent of that effort."

Davis concludes that "three hundred sorties and 900 tons of bombs, or even twice that number, would not have been a substantial diversion of this total effort."

The question then is whether bombing Auschwitz would have taken away from the war effort and thereby prolonged the war. The answer, according to Erdheim and Davis, is an emphatic no.

One of the arguments against bombing Auschwitz is that it would have probably killed many inmates in the process. In essence, the Allies would be just as guilty as the Nazis for killing innocent prisoners. However, many historians feel that an attack on the crematoria at Auschwitz would have been successful and should have been attempted. Using precision bombing to attack a concentration camp would have been difficult, but not impossible. In fact a precedent had been set when the U.S. Eighth Air Force attacked the Gustloff ammunition works located beside the German concentration camp at Buchenwald on August 24, 1944.

According to the Buchenwald report, the attack "completely destroyed" the armaments factory "in one single, well aimed blow." Even though prisoners were killed in the attack, this was not because of errant bombs but because the prisoners were working in the factory areas and were not allowed to retreat to the safety of the concentration camp. In fact, one prisoner said, "The Allied pilots in particular did all they could in order not to hit prisoners. The high number of prisoners killed is to be charged exclusively against the debit accounts of the Nazi murderers."

At Auschwitz the Nazis employed four gas chambers underneath four crematoria buildings. Two were located in the northwest corner of the camp, and the other two were in the southwest corner. According to Erdheim, very few inmates, if any at all, would have been killed if the U.S. Fifteenth Air Force had decided to bomb the gas chambers. The prisoners did not live anywhere near the crematoria, but instead their barracks were located east of the gas chambers. Therefore, Erdheim states that any misdropped bombs "would not result in bombs falling in the barracks area, but rather in: (1) open fields north or south of the crematoria; (2) the second crematoria of each group; and (3) the 'Canada' loot storehouse area between the two pairs of crematoria."

Erdheim also believes that since many of the prisoners were used as forced labor outside of the camp and far away from the crematoria, the chance of killing innocent prisoners was

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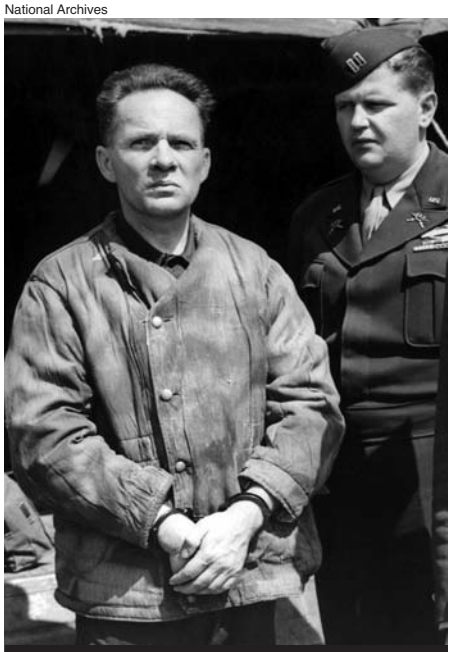

Rudolph Hoess, the longest serving commandant of the death camp at Auschwitz, arrives to testify during the post-World War II war crimes trials in Nuremberg. After his testimony, Hoess was turned over to Polish authorities, convicted of war crimes during a separate trial, and hanged in Warsaw.

lessened even more.

Rondall Rice writes that if the Fifteenth Air Force had used "a three-bomber front under clear weather, with each bombardier acquiring the target ... and in view of the Fifteenth Air Force's bombing accuracy for August and September 1944, the Allies stood a very good chance of destroying or damaging the Birkenau facilities while limiting the possibility of harm to those their efforts were designed to spare."

Some historians have argued that bombing the gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz would not have mattered. The Nazis would have simply killed the prisoners anyway. However, this is mere conjecture. It took the Nazis eight months to build the crematoria and gas chambers in the first place at the height of Nazi power.

Erdheim writes that to rebuild the crematoria "would have been difficult, if not impossible" in the summer of 1944 with the demands of the war and a lack of skilled labor. Therefore, without crematoria, the Nazis would have had to revert to shooting the inmates and burning the dead bodies in the open air. However, Erdheim believes that "cremation ditches … were hardly a practical alternative due to the problems posed by the humidity as well as the threat of disease. It was for these very reasons, in fact, that Himmler had ordered the crematoria built in the first place."

Transferring the prisoners to other camps such as Mauthausen and Buchenwald was not feasible as neither of these were extermination camps and they were not "capable of accepting a few hundred thousand inmates on short notice."

Historian Richard Davis writes, "Given the six to eight weeks needed to accomplish the physical destruction of the gas chambers and crematoria ... Auschwitz might have ceased to function by 1 September 1944.... Birkenau ceased its mass killing operations in mid-November 1944. For each and every day prior to this cessation, the complete destruction of its crematoria/gas chamber complexes might have saved more than a thousand lives.... The Allies could have bombed and destroyed Auschwitz. The Allies should have bombed and destroyed Auschwitz."

If the Allies knew about Auschwitz and were capable of destroying it, then why didn't it happen? It seems that when Auschwitz finally was within reach of U.S. air power by the late spring of 1944, the Allies were concentrating all their efforts elsewhere. As Tami Davis Biddle has written, "Military planners were consumed by a plethora of immediate war-fighting demands and problems.... The decision for nonaction [against Auschwitz] in the summer and fall of 1944 was made in the swirling vortex of competing wartime priorities.... Auschwitz was a distant and still poorly understood place that did not seem to have the same overriding claim on Allied resources as the Normandy invasion, the battle of France, the Nazis' V-weapon launch sites, or the ongoing, costly ground battles in Italy."

In a memo written in late June 1944 after the D-Day invasion, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander, listed the targets that the Allied air forces should bomb in order of importance. First were the V-1 and V-2 rocket launch sites and factories. The next priorities were "a. Aircraft industry; b. Oil; c. Ball bearings; d. Vehicular production." Bombing Auschwitz was not even a consideration.

However, the argument that the American air forces were too busy and overtaxed to bomb Auschwitz is not a wholly convincing one. After the Soviet Red Army had driven to within 10 miles of Warsaw in August 1944, the Polish Home Army rose up in the city and tried to overthrow the Nazi oppressors. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill urged Roosevelt to help the Polish rebels. The next month, as the U.S. Army was struggling to take the port city of Brest, V-2 rockets were slamming into London, and Operation Market-Garden was failing in Holland, the U.S. Eighth Air Force received

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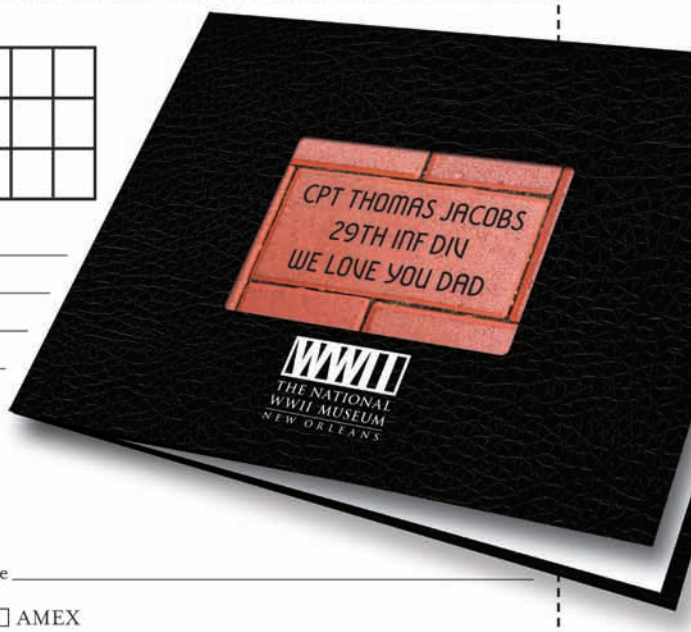

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A soldier of the 103rd Infantry Division crouches on the run as he accompanies a tank and jeep from an armored unit during combat operations. Sergeant Ray Miller spent numerous days on the front lines in the waning months of the war before he was taken prisoner. OPPOSITE: Recently promoted to sergeant, Ray Miller smiles broadly for the photographer in this image taken shortly after his return to the United States in June 1945.

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BY RAY ALLEN MILLER

Combat Soldier and POW

CORPORAL RAY ALLEN MILLER REMEMBERED HIS EXPERIENCES DURING WORLD WAR II AND WROTE AN EARNEST FIRSTHAND ACCOUNT OF COMBAT AND SURVIVAL.

I was raised on a farm between Hickory and Conover, North Carolina, the oldest of nine children, and this is a brief accounting of my military, combat, and prisoner of war experience in World War II.

I was one of the fortunate few who received more than the average amount of training time before being sent into combat. For this, I am very grateful. I feel that the extra preparedness made the difference in surviving or not surviving the horrors of war and the German prisons.

I am not writing because I think that my experience is unique or extraordinary in any way. I know that many combat soldiers and military service personnel suffered far worse experiences and for much longer duration than I did. However, this is my story, and if I don't write about it, no one else will.

My grandfather, John Monroe Miller, fought for the Southern Confederacy during the Civil War. He was captured by the Yankees near Richmond, Virginia, and held prisoner for 16 months at Point Lookout, Maryland. I wish he had written an account of his combat and prisoner of war experiences. I am sure it would have given his descendents a better appreciation of the hardships that he and his comrades and their families at home suffered during that terrible and devastating war.

My military career began May 21, 1943, when I reported for induction at the courthouse in Newton, North Carolina. They took us by bus to Camp Croft, South Carolina, to be examined and assigned. We came back home for seven days, then reported to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. There we received our GI uniforms and equipment, and I was assigned to Battery C, 794th Antiaircraft Artillery, Automatic Weapons Battalion at Camp Stewart, Georgia. The camp was about 30 miles west of Savannah. My platoon sergeant was Sergeant Weakland, who was housed in our barracks, which was a simple wooden building. I have been told that he died in combat in France or Germany.

I had requested to be placed in the Army Air Corps since I had just left a job working in an aircraft factory. They assured me at the induction center that they would assign me to airplane-related work. Apparently, someone reasoned that shooting them down was somehow related. This was not exactly what I had in mind, so I started asking, "How do I get out of this outfit?" I was told the only options were to join the paratroopers or become an Air Corps cadet. I chose the latter and made application. Of course, I continued my training in the antiaircraft artillery and advanced in rank to private first class and then corporal.

Finally, on October 23, 1943, Hugh Horn and I received orders of transfer to the Army Air Corps for appointment as aviation cadets. We were transferred out of our C Battery and into post headquarters of Camp Stewart to await further orders. On November 20, 1943, we were ordered to Gulfport Field, Mississippi, for further tests, both mental and physical. After approximately 2 1/2 months we received assignments to Texas A&M College.

On January 1, 1944, we went to Texas A&M at Bryan, Texas. We were both assigned to the 308th College Training Detachment (Aircrew), Squadron 2, Flight B for a five-month college training course. I was training to be a fighter pilot.

After three months, however, the U.S. government saw fit to transfer air force cadets from schools all over the country back to ground forces. Our school was closed, and we were sent to the infantry. The need for men in the ground forces was greater. I don't have to tell you, this was a sad day for hundreds of thousands of cadets all over the country.

On April 3, 1944, Hugh Horn and I, along with hundreds of students from A&M and other schools, were sent to Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi. There we became a part of the 63rd Infantry Division with the Blood and Fire patch. Most of the outfit was made up of non-commissioned officers, and we were given infantry basic training by a cadre of mostly pfcs. and privates. Our ranks meant nothing to them.

After one month of hard training in the hot sun, we were all split up and sent to different outfits. That is where Hugh and I parted company, and I was never to see him again. He did call me once at home in the late 1950s or early 1960s. He said he was a geologist, living in McComb, Mississippi. He didn't seem very happy, and I never heard from him again.

I was assigned to Company M, 410th Infantry Regiment, 103rd Infantry Division at Camp Howze, in Gainesville, Texas. I started training all over again, beginning with basic training, and continued on through advanced training. This was the fourth time I had been through basic training. I was assigned the job of communications corporal since I already held the rank of corporal. My job was to estab-

lish telephone communication (by sound-powered phones with wires laid on the ground) from squads to company, to battalion headquarters, and whenever possible, to our backup artillery.

The exact date I joined the 410th Infantry is unknown, but it was approximately the middle of May 1944. We continued our training until the end of September and then left for Camp Shanks, New York, and the port of embarkation. This included the entire 103rd Division.

On October 6, 1944, our entire division set sail in a convoy of 14 ships to a destination unknown to us. Our 410th Regiment was aboard the transport USS *Gen. J.R. Brooke,* the flagship of the convoy. We were escorted by destroyer escorts to help protect us from attack by German submarines. Many troop ships and merchant ships had been lost to submarines. Our ship was a Kaiser-built Liberty Ship. After several days at sea, we encountered a terrible storm that lasted for days, and almost everyone was seasick. The first land we sighted was Southampton, England, where we stopped briefly but did not go ashore. We continued on to the Mediterranean Sea through the Straits of Gibraltar to southern France, and arrived at Marseilles on October 20.

The Allied invasion of Marseilles had been made in August, and the Germans left the city on August 25, 1944. The harbor was still in bad shape. They unloaded us with full field packs, weapons, and full duffle bags and marched us toward the staging area north of the city.

The staging area was only about 10 miles from the harbor, mostly uphill. We marched and we rested; we marched and we rested some more. We must have gone 20 miles, it seemed. Those duffle bags were heavy. It started getting dark, and finally our leaders admitted we were lost. They decided to wait until daylight, so we bedded down where we were. That night it rained a cold rain. Everything we had was wet. The next morning we found the way to the staging area, and we lived in pup tents in the cold rain and mud for two weeks. During this time the ships were being unloaded, the machinery and equipment reassembled, and plans made to engage the enemy. Some of us were sent to help unload the ships.

On November 1, 1944, we left Marseilles to go into combat. Some went by train; we went by truck to Dijon, France. We were led into the combat zone at night to relieve elements of the 3rd and 36th Divisions. We became a part of the VI Corps of the Seventh Army. At that time, and through most of our time in combat, we didn't know where we were. We just went where they told us to and did what we were told to do.

The night we were led into combat, slipping and sliding, it snowed a couple of inches. When daylight came we saw dead bodies lying around —some German and some American soldiers. We were in the woods and were told the Germans were just across the draw from us. Everything was quiet, and the snow was so beautiful I suppose it was hard for the men to realize any danger.

Everyone got busy digging in and chopping wood to reinforce foxholes as though we would be spending the rest of the war in this spot. I ran telephones to most of the leaders' positions. A couple of hours later the Germans zeroed in on us with their 88s [88mm artillery], and we sustained a number of casualties. One sergeant, who was a "gung-ho" squad leader back in the States, went berserk and had to be carried out kicking and screaming. He never returned to combat.

After we were able to get the Germans on the run, we attempted to keep them running, so as not to allow them time to set up their artillery or dig in. We were told to put all of our gear except the absolute essentials on trucks that they brought in, and we could pick it all up later, farther on up the line. We kept only shelter halves, raincoats, spare socks, felt insoles for our shoe packs, and our weapons. We were never to see the other stuff again.

We had been issued two-man pup tents when we first went into combat. Each man had a shelter half, a tent rope, a collapsible tent pole, and some pegs. Two men had to put their shelter halves together to make a pup tent. We learned early on the pup tents were not safe in combat after several of the soldiers awoke to find bullet holes in theirs. We did use the canvas shelter half to lie on the wet ground to sleep on, or to cover foxholes to keep the rain from spattering in our faces.

We had a lot of cold rain as we fought through the Vosges Mountains. Water would seep into our foxholes, so we would cut hemlock branches and put them in the bottom to hold us up out of the water. I often covered my foxhole with my raincoat, and the next morning there would be frost all over the underside

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of the raincoat. Later on in the winter the rain turned to snow and the ground was frozen, but it wasn't so wet and sloppy.

We were kept on the run, week after week, chasing the Germans through the Vosges Mountains, taking one town after another. The artillery would usually shell the town, and the Air Force would do some bombing, then we would go in and finish cleaning it out.

The civilian residents of the towns would come out of hiding from the hills, or wherever, and welcome us with open arms—and open wine bottles—after the fighting was over. Many of the homes were still abandoned when we arrived at a newly liberated town. The first thing all the GIs wanted to do was to find a bed or someplace to lie down and sleep. Usually, however, we would no sooner get bedded down than an order would come for us to move on to the next town. We were so tired some would actually doze off while walking. I remember one time a German machine gun opened up on a column of men in front of us. We all hit the ground, and while a squad was dispatched to knock out the machine gun I went to sleep lying there in the mud and cold rain.

Once while in the combat zone, we got to exchange our clothes for some that had been laundered but not pressed. At least they smelled better.

Often, we would be in combat positions where the cooks could not come near us with their vehicles to deliver our rations. Sometimes I would go back to battalion headquarters after food for our platoon. Our food while in combat was mostly K rations. The K rations were in flat cardboard boxes with heavily waxed wrapping to make them waterproof. The boxes were small enough that you could carry enough in your field pack for two or three days.

The K ration was condensed and highly concentrated in nutrition. It contained a daily chocolate bar (called a D bar), a daily cigarette ration, and a small can of food. They had hardtack crackers to eat with the canned meats. There were three different menus: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast was chopped ham and egg. One meal was corned beef hash, and I don't remember what the other was. The cigarette ration was responsible for a lot of men starting to smoke for the first time.

About Christmastime 1944, our battalion took a short rest (about a week) at some French town. We found an old radio and hooked it up to a Jeep battery. I ran an antenna wire out, and we got some American music on it. It really sounded good to us, even though we had to strain our ears to hear it.

Our platoon sergeant, Joe Rivers, came out of hiding during this rest period and started his old "spit and polish" routine. While in combat he was to be found the farthest back in the deepest foxhole and was not worth a pinch of pudding. He was an old career man and was scared to death in combat. I voluntarily took over his duties during combat, and our lieutenant was attempting to get me promoted to his master sergeant rank.

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ABOVE: On January 20, 1945, the 103rd Infantry Division pulled back across the Moder River into France. After retaking a French town from SS troops, American soldiers of the 103rd Infantry Division start out on patrol. OPPOSITE: On December 14, 1944, two days before the opening of the Battle of the Bulge, infantrymen of the 103rd Division ride atop jeeps and trailers as they move into the town of Birlenbach, France. The 103rd crossed into Germany the following day and began its assault on the Siegfried Line.

After our short rest the 410th returned to the front, and we pushed on across the German border and into the famed Siegfried Line in some of the most rugged mountains I have ever seen. The Siegfried Line ran along the German border next to France. It was a wide band of heavily reinforced and interconnecting fortresses, or pillboxes, tunnels, etc. I can remember going inside some of the pillboxes.

We were still fighting within the Siegfried Line, making painfully slow progress, when the Germans launched their last, desperate but massive counteroffensive. Our outfit was ordered to withdraw to the VI Corps middle line of defense along the Moder River on January 19, 1945. We withdrew under the cover of darkness and in severe winter weather. We arrived at Mulhouse, France, on January 24 and occupied the town. The Germans followed close behind us and began shelling the town. The 410th moved out to positions on a hillside overlooking the town on the west side. We were greatly outnumbered and spread much too thinly.

As we moved out of Mulhouse, the Germans moved in, and we were sitting ducks for them in our position. We were on a bald hillside with no trees or cover of any kind. We dug in as best we could to escape the scorching small arms fire. Eight of us were holed up in a potato cellar. Several men down below us were hit. We did not know how badly they were wounded. We were pinned down so completely that we couldn't stick a finger up without getting it shot off.

When darkness came, I found my way back to our battalion headquarters and brought medics with stretchers to check on the wounded and try to get them out. The medics slipped down to the wounded men and found one was dead. The others they took back to the battalion aid station. I stayed with the other seven men in the potato cellar that night.

When daylight came we saw Germans dressed in white riding up and down the road in American Jeeps in back of our lines. They had infiltrated our lines and had overrun battalion headquarters behind us. We were cut off from the rest of our outfit, but the Germans had not bothered to capture us. We didn't know where any of the rest of the company was, except the eight of us who were together. We decided to split up into two groups and try to make it back to our outfit.

Our second lieutenant, Walton Lamkin, and three others, whose names I don't remember, went first. Of course, we didn't know then, but they made it back okay. Shortly after they left, Richard Scally, Todd Klabaca, Ernest McIntyre, and I took off in the bitter cold and knee-deep snow. We headed in the direction we thought our outfit might be. Several German soldiers came along the road and passed right by us but paid us no attention. We had a long way to go across open fields without cover of woods or anything. In the snow we were perfect targets. We could hear slower firing American machine guns in the distance, so we decided to head in that direction.

As we crossed the tree-lined road that headed west out of Mulhouse, we suddenly came upon a lone German soldier driving a donkey cart with a load of mortar ammunition. He quickly threw up his hands and begged, "Don't shoot!" so we took him with us as our prisoner. We just left the donkey there on the road and headed out across a large, open field of snow. There was no other choice. German soldiers were traveling freely up and down the road. We just hoped we wouldn't be noticed.

We had only gotten about 100 yards from the road when we were suddenly fired upon by German soldiers from behind the trees at the road.

We instinctively hit the ground, and when we did our prisoner grabbed the rifle of one of the men who was hit and covered us. The German soldiers from the road joined him, and they took us prisoner.

McIntyre and Klabaca were both hit. Mac's lower leg was broken, and Todd had a bad wound in the thigh. Two or three shots later Mac was hit in the shoulder, as well. Neither of them was able to walk on their own. The German soldiers were going to kill them and leave them there because they were in a hurry to get out of that area. We begged the Germans not to shoot them and told them we would help them. Richard Scally and I, and our ex-prisoner, practically carried Mac and Todd the one kilometer back to the German aid station at Mulhouse, near both the German and Swiss borders.

We had been captured by the dreaded SS troops we had heard so many bad things about. But really they treated us pretty well, except for threatening to shoot our wounded buddies and prodding us along in the deep snow to hurry us.

The medics at the aid station gave us hot wine to drink and did a good job of first aid on the wounded. They put Todd and Mac each on a small sled and had us pull them back to the next town behind their lines. They put us in a large barn-like building with lots of other prisoners, probably a hundred or more. That night, a German ambulance came and took the wounded away. We never saw them again.

The next morning, January 26, 1945, they started marching us away in a column of fours. As we got a couple of hundred yards from the building our air force came over, and dive bombers bombed the building we had just vacated. It went up in splinters. Then they came back around for a strafing run on the column of men. Just about the time they got us in their sights, they apparently recognized us as American prisoners. They didn't fire, pulled out of their dives and waggled their wings at us as they left. Man, you talk about sweating blood! Even the German guards broke and ran behind the trees that lined the road. Of course, they didn't allow us to run.

They walked us for about seven days as far as we could walk each day. When night came they would find a barn or some similar shelter for us, and they would feed us. The food wasn't great, but compared to what we had in store for us later it was a banquet. We had no idea where we were or where we were going.

It was about February 2, 1945, when they got us far enough behind the lines of battle where they could operate trains. We were loaded into boxcars like animals and taken to Stalag XII-A at Limburg, Germany. I'm not sure how long we traveled by train, as my memory of that trip has diminished considerably over more than 50 years. I do remember the civilians giving us water, bread, and some turnips through the cracks in the boxcars when the guards weren't looking. Some of the Germans spoke English and seemed eager to talk when the guards were looking the other way. They would say, "We are the good Germans. The Nazis are the bad ones."

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A young SS prisoner, captured by troops of the 103rd Infantry Division, stands with his hands on his head. During the German attack on Mulhouse, France, Ray Miller and his companions took a German soldier prisoner before they were fired upon by enemy troops and the tables were turned.

We arrived at Stalag XII-A on February 4. This I know for sure because I have it marked on my 1945 pocket calendar. On this calendar I have marked and noted all of the important events in my life for that year, beginning with January 25, when I was captured. I still have this calendar and have written an interpretation of all of the markings on it. A lot happened in my life that year.

The Germans marched us from the railroad into Stalag XII-A. We had a brief interrogation but nothing like we were expecting. I guess they figured they already knew more about us and our Army outfits than we did, so why waste their time. We still had all the clothes we were wearing at the time of capture and everything else except our weapons. They even let me keep a large pocketknife, a folding compact safety razor that fit into my watch pocket, a fountain pen, and my high school class ring. I also had some money hidden inside my socks that they never found. Really, they never searched us except for guns and large weapons. We were really fortunate to be able to keep our Army overcoats, else we would probably have frozen to death.

I was wearing thermal underwear, my ODs (olive drab wool pants and shirt), a wool sweater, an Eisenhower jacket (a short wool jacket designed for combat), snowpack boots, and wool socks. Snow packs were short boots with rubber feet and leather tops. They had half-inch thick changeable felt insoles. I also had lace-up leggings, a wool cap under my helmet liner, a steel helmet, and my long GI overcoat and wool gloves. We did not get to keep our helmets and helmet liners. Each GI was issued a spare set of insoles and a spare pair of socks. I carried my spare socks and insoles under my wool sweater, where they would dry from my body heat. The snow pack boots made your feet sweat, so I changed insoles and socks daily. You had to keep your feet dry to keep from getting frostbite. Many GIs lost toes and parts of their feet due to frostbite.

The Germans at XII-A assigned each of us a prisoner identification number. Mine was 96142. We were then assigned to our barracks. The barracks were unheated and had brick floors laid on the ground. For each two men there was a little bunch of well-worn straw on the floor for a bed. The straw was heavily infested with body lice. Each prisoner was issued a gray German blanket. The two men pooled their blankets together and slept in all their clothes and overcoats to keep from freezing to death. It was bitter cold outside with lots of snow, and I guess it was just about as cold inside. We lay down at night shivering and woke up shivering the next morning. Today, when we are having cold, snowy, and icy weather, I thank my God that I have a warm bed to sleep in and plenty to eat.

I can't remember how many men occupied each barracks, but quite a few—maybe 50 or so. The latrine was in a building nearby. It consisted of several holes in the floor that you would squat over and a large tank underneath the floor to catch the waste. There was no toilet paper or anything else. A lot of the men used money for wiping paper. I was quite fortunate, I thought, because I found a piece of cardboard which I would separate into thin sheets and keep in my pockets until needed.

Each prisoner was issued a tin can to eat from. It was up to him to keep it clean if he could. The water was only turned on a couple of hours a day, and it was ice cold. During this time we had to wash ourselves and our soup

cans. After a few days, most of us were having stomach cramps and diarrhea.

Our food ration consisted of a can of imitation coffee in the morning, a can of "grass soup" in the afternoon, and a slice of hard bread about one inch thick daily. That was all. The grass soup, as we called it, was watery with something that resembled hedge clippings, and if you were lucky you might find a tiny bit of potato in it. The bread was brought to us in whole loaves, and it was our job to divide each loaf equally between five men. I'm not sure about the number of men each loaf served, but I'm thinking it was five.

We were divided into squads of five men, or whatever number, and the bread was delivered to the squad leader. I was appointed leader of my squad, and so it was my responsibility to slice the bread in equal portions. If there happened to be a piece that looked smaller than the others, that was always my piece. The reason I got the job of dividing the bread was that I was the only one who had a large pocketknife. The bread was hard and dry, and it looked like it was coated with sawdust. The knife made squeaking noises when you sliced it. Not a crumb was wasted. These men were hungry and irritable and would fight you over a crumb of bread.

Stalag XII-A was a large camp that was to be only a temporary home for us. It was a segregation center for prisoners of all nationalities and ranks. Prisoners were segregated according to rank and the language they spoke. Commissioned officers were sent to officer's camps, most soldiers with rank less than corporal were sent to labor camps. Noncommissioned officers, for the most part, were sent to camps where they were not required to work. Of course, there were exceptions.

None of us were required to work while at XII-A except for one day when we were taken to help unload Red Cross food parcels. We had to carry them from the railroad to a warehouse. I don't know who benefited from the parcels, but we never got any of them while we were there. Some of the guys tried to break open parcels while the guards were not looking, but most were unsuccessful. The guards would yell at you, hit you with their rifles, and threaten to shoot you if you were caught.

The prison camp had been hit by a British bomber several weeks before we arrived, and some of the prisoners were killed.

The diarrhea or dysentery took hold of us quickly and fiercely. Most of us also developed urinary and kidney infections. Most had little control of bowel movements or urination. Many were passing blood through both. It is unbelievable how fast a healthy man can deteriorate under these conditions. I was only there for one month, and I lost an estimated 60 pounds. Many of those who came in the same time I did never made it out alive. The dysentery and starvation would weaken them so much that pneumonia would come along and finish them off. Those who were wounded when they came in stood little chance of survival.

The camp had two doctors who were prisoners, one American and one British, but they had no medical supplies. The worst cases were taken to them at the hospital. The hospital also had bed of straw, which crawled with body lice. Nobody ever came back from the hospital that I knew of. We were told that an average of seven prisoners died each day in this camp. The bodies were probably buried in mass graves.

The body lice were about the size of small ants. They were in our clothing, our bedding, on us, and everywhere. The Germans offered nothing to exterminate them. They made no visible bites on us, but they must have been sucking body fluids somehow. You could feel them crawling on you and scrambling and clawing to get through spots where your clothing fit tight. They laid thousands of eggs in the seams of your clothing. We would take off our clothes a piece at a time, scratch off the eggs, and then put that piece back on and take off another. This gave us something to do to pass the time.

We also talked a lot about food. I think half the guys in prison had plans to go into the restaurant business or open a hamburger stand. You could hear all kinds scrumptious recipes discussed. Some tried to list all the different candy bars they had ever known. Everything the men thought about was food oriented, as opposed to back in the States when it was women oriented. These were some of the things we did to pass the time and to take our minds at least temporarily off our difficult situation.

On the first day we came to XII-A, we were allowed to address a card to our next of kin stating that we were prisoners of the Germans and that we were okay. My parents received my card sometime after I was liberated. That was the only time I was allowed to send any mail, and I never received any while I was a prisoner. My parents were notified that I was missing in action, and they didn't know if I was dead or alive until April 25, 1945, when they received a telegram telling them I was a prisoner of the Germans. Three days later, on April 28, 1945, I was liberated, and I wrote to them as quickly as I could. In those days you couldn't just get on the phone and call home. My parents didn't have a telephone, nor did any of our neighbors.

We had some men in our barracks who just gave up. They didn't believe they would survive, so they just sat down to die. They wouldn't eat; they wouldn't talk; they wouldn't wash themselves or exercise or anything. We just had to get them up, make them walk and wash up, and tried to encourage them as best we could. We were able to get a few of them to snap out of it. I remember at least one man who suddenly went berserk and was screaming and kicking. They had to restrain him, and he was taken to the hospital. That was the last we saw of him.

Most of the guards at the prison camps were older men who were too old for combat duty, and a lot of them were rather crabby. They would have us fall out and line up twice a day so they could count us. The prisoners were

Getty Images

American soldiers stand around the gate of Stalag XII-A, near Limburg, Germany, the prison camp where Ray Miller was held captive in February 1945.

always doing things to irritate the guards, just to hear them scream at us. Some of the guards seemed a little dense. As they were trying to count the men, some would keep switching places in line so they would be counted twice. When the count didn't come out right they would do it all over again.

I can still see the globs of yellow mucous all over the white snow where the men stood while being counted. Most of us had bad colds and bronchial congestion, or worse, and were coughing up a lot of stuff.

Stalag XII-A at Limburg was, without a doubt, the worst of my experiences as a prisoner of war.

On March 7, 1945, we were packed into boxcars again for a three-day trip to an unknown destination. We were given rations that were supposed to last us for the three days. Thanks to the U.S. Army Air Forces, the trip took seven days. We had more stopping time than we did traveling time. Once, because of the threat of heavy bombers, they unloaded us and took us into an underground bomb shelter. I do not know the location. Another time, American dive bombers started to strafe our train just as we were entering a long tunnel. The Germans pulled the train into the tunnel and stopped, and that is where we spent the next 24 hours in total darkness.

The Granger Collection, New York

This photo of the sleeping area in Stalag XII-A sheds some light on the extent of the crude quarters that many Allied prisoners of war shared. Miller estimates he lost 60 pounds in the month he was held there.

We wondered why our own air force would bomb a POW train. We wondered if our cars were marked. We later learned that our train was also pulling some flatcars with long-range artillery guns.

Several times, when the Germans knew the heavy bombers were coming, they would stop the train and run for safety away from the railroad. We prisoners, however, were locked inside the boxcars, sweating it out. We could hear the high-altitude bombers overhead, then the bombs screaming down. We knew their target was the railroad, and we prayed that, this time, they missed. We heard the explosions as the bombs touched down, and our boxcar rocked back and forth on the tracks. There were close ones, but we were still there, so I guess our prayers were answered.

We were packed tightly in the cars with not enough room for all to lie down on the floor without lying partly on top of each other. You would lie down and hope to get some sleep, and the next thing you knew there was a pair of legs across your body. The men were irritable and sick and cold, and there was lots of fussing and fighting because of the crowded conditions. Most of us still had dysentery and urinary problems, which added to the discomfort of the trip. Also, with all the weight loss my bony hips got rubbed sore from lying on the hard floor of the boxcar. There was a large can, about the size of a GI garbage can, in the middle of the car. That was our toilet, and they opened the car once a day to empty it. I'm just glad I wasn't sleeping close to it.

On March 14, we arrived at Stalag 10-C, at Nienberg, Germany. One prisoner had died on the train during the trip. We were all starved because we had only brought food for a three-day trip, and we had been on the railroad seven days. When we got off the train, they took us first to what they said were gas chambers. They took us inside, a few men at a time, had us take off all our clothes, clipped off any hair we had anywhere on our bodies, and examined us closely for any signs of lice or eggs. Our clothes were run through a gas chamber or something that killed all the lice and eggs. I can't remember whether we got to take a shower or not. Anyway, when we got our clothes back we were free of lice for good. That was the best thing the Germans ever did for me while I was a prisoner.

The food at this camp was much better and more adequate. We also received supplemental Red Cross parcels of food, candy, and cigarettes. The barracks were wood-frame buildings with weather boarding and wooden floors up off the ground. I don't remember if they were heated in any way or not. I can't remember any bunks either. I think we slept directly on the wood floors. That was an improvement over the damp, cold brick floors at Limburg. Sanitary conditions were much better here, and with the improved nutrition our dysentery soon subsided.

We learned how to make tin can stoves, with one can suspended inside another and holes punched at the right places to make them burn efficiently. We burned small sticks of wood in them, and they worked very well for cooking or heating food. We bought our wood from the Russian prisoners who lived on the other side of the fence from us. The Russians brought some of the wood in from outside the camp, but much of it came from boards they were ripping off their barracks when the guards were not looking.

Cigarettes were the medium of exchange in the prison camps. Money was no good. Everything was priced in cigarettes.

The Germans were taking the Russian prisoners out to the bombed-out cities to do cleanup work. While they were out, they would load their pockets with whatever food items they could find or steal and bring them back to sell to the Americans for cigarettes. Sometimes the Russians had food items, such as eggs or potatoes for sale.

The Germans did not allow trading between the Russian and American prisoners, so they had to slip and do it when the guards were not looking. The Russians wore long overcoats and would hide their wares inside the coats while they stood at the dividing fence. Then they would open their coat, showing what they had for sale and hold up their fingers to indicate how many cigarettes they wanted for it. If the American customer thought the price was too high, he would say "no" and hold up fingers to indicate how many cigarettes he was willing to pay. Sometimes they would haggle a while before a price was agreed upon.

They always stood far apart until the price was agreed on; then they would go quickly to the fence and make the trade while the guard

National Archives

In this May 1945 photograph, recently liberated American prisoners of war await transportation during their journey home. Ray Miller was flown to Belgium and then transferred to Camp Lucky Strike near the port city of Le Havre, France, shortly after the German surrender and prior to his repatriation to the United States.

was headed the other way. Once, a guard was trying to discourage trading and fired his rifle to scare away the traders. The bullet hit an American prisoner inside one of the barracks and killed him.

The Germans gave us a small ration of cigarettes, and we were getting cigarettes in our Red Cross parcels. I had quit smoking when I became a prisoner, so I was saving all my cigarettes to buy food and some wood. American cigarettes were much preferred by the Russians and the Germans because they were of so much better quality than any of the European brands.

The temptation was too great, even for the German guards. Some of them also got in on trading with the American prisoners. They too wore long overcoats with many pockets and could easily carry in eggs, potatoes. and even loaves of bread.

One particular German guard noticed my high school class ring with its ruby stone, and he wanted it. He offered me a loaf of bread for it, and I said, "No way; I don't want to sell it." A few days later he approached me again and offered more, and I turned him down. He kept offering more until he finally offered three loaves of bread, and I let him have it. Bread was still a scarce item in our diet, so I sold much of it to some of my fellow prisoners for money—French, German, or Russian.

I kept the money hidden inside my boots until we were liberated. When we got back to Belgium, just before boarding ship to go home, I exchanged all my foreign money for American dollars. I was carrying over $300 in my wallet when we boarded ship for the States. After several days at sea, someone lifted my wallet from under my pillow while I was sleeping. My wallet was found later, somewhere on the ship—without the money, of course.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt died while we were at Stalag 10-C, and the Germans celebrated. They said, "The war is over; the war is over!" It was practically over, all right, but not the way they had hoped.

We spent one month at Stalag 10-C. On April 14, 1945, we watched as the Germans brought in large numbers of political prisoners to this camp. There were hundreds and possibly thousands of them, and they were a pitiful sight. They were marched in columns of four. They all looked like walking skeletons with skin stretched over their bones. Many were trying to help others who were unable to walk alone. Some would fall down, and the guards hit them with rifles or kicked them to make them get back up.

As they passed near us, some American prisoners flipped cigarettes near them, and about four of them would make a dive for the same cigarette. Then the guards would swear at them and kick them. We didn't know what the Germans did with these people. They were both men and women.

The next day, April 15, they marched us out of this camp, and we walked, all in the same day, to Oflag 10-B. My recollection of this camp is vague, but it was a prison camp for officers. I do recall that it was somewhat better then 10-C, and the food was better. For the first time since I was captured we started getting chunks of meat in our soup.

We got a report from stragglers who had been sick when we left 10-C and could not walk with us but joined us in the next couple of days. They told us the Germans turned machine guns on all those political prisoners and killed them.

We had known for some time that the Allied armies were getting closer and closer and were really putting a squeeze on the Germans. After about a week at this last camp (Oflag 10-B), many of our prison officials and guards fled. The rest stayed and became our prisoners.

The Americans were now in charge of the camp. I don't know where they got it, but a huge United States flag was hoisted over the camp. Some of our people went into the fields, killed cattle for beef, and dug up potatoes from storage mounds. We were eating quite well when the British Army came along and "liberated" us on April 28, 1945.

The British took us away in trucks and set up an elaborate tent city somewhere nearby. They fed us six times daily with mini-meals. We weren't allowed to eat a lot at a time because they said our stomachs would explode if we did, since they were shrunken from prolonged starvation and malnutrition. They also served us "tea and crumpets" every couple of hours.

While we were there shower facilities were set up so we could take baths. We were issued complete Government Issue of British Army uniforms, including shoes, socks, underwear, towels, shaving gear, shoe shine kits, mess kits, caps, jackets, everything except weapons. I suppose for a short while we were British soldiers. I still have and use my shoeshine brush.

Our hitch in the British Army lasted only five

Continued on page 78

There was tight security and feverish activity on the dock at the Hunters Point Navy Shipyard in San Francisco Bay around 3 AM on Monday, July 16, 1945.

Two U.S. Army trucks unloaded a precious cargo—a large crate and a two-foot-long metal cylinder containing a uranium projectile and components for the "Little Boy" bomb, destined to be dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima and usher in the atomic age.

Moored at the dock and making ready to get underway was the fast, heavy cruiser USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35), commanded by 46-year-old Captain Charles B. McVay. As soon as a big gantry crane quickly lowered the cargo aboard the ship, the crate was secured to the deck and surrounded by a U.S. Marine guard, and the cylinder was placed in the flag lieutenant's cabin.

The heavy cruiser USS *Indianapolis* met a tragic fate during the last days of World War II.

BY MICHAEL D. HULL

Gallant Ship, TRAGIC END

Rear Admiral William R. Purnell, the naval member of the Manhattan Project's Military Policy Committee, told McVay that if the ship ran into trouble the cylinder was to be saved at all costs. The ship would be carefully tracked during its voyage, and if anything happened to her, it would be known within hours.

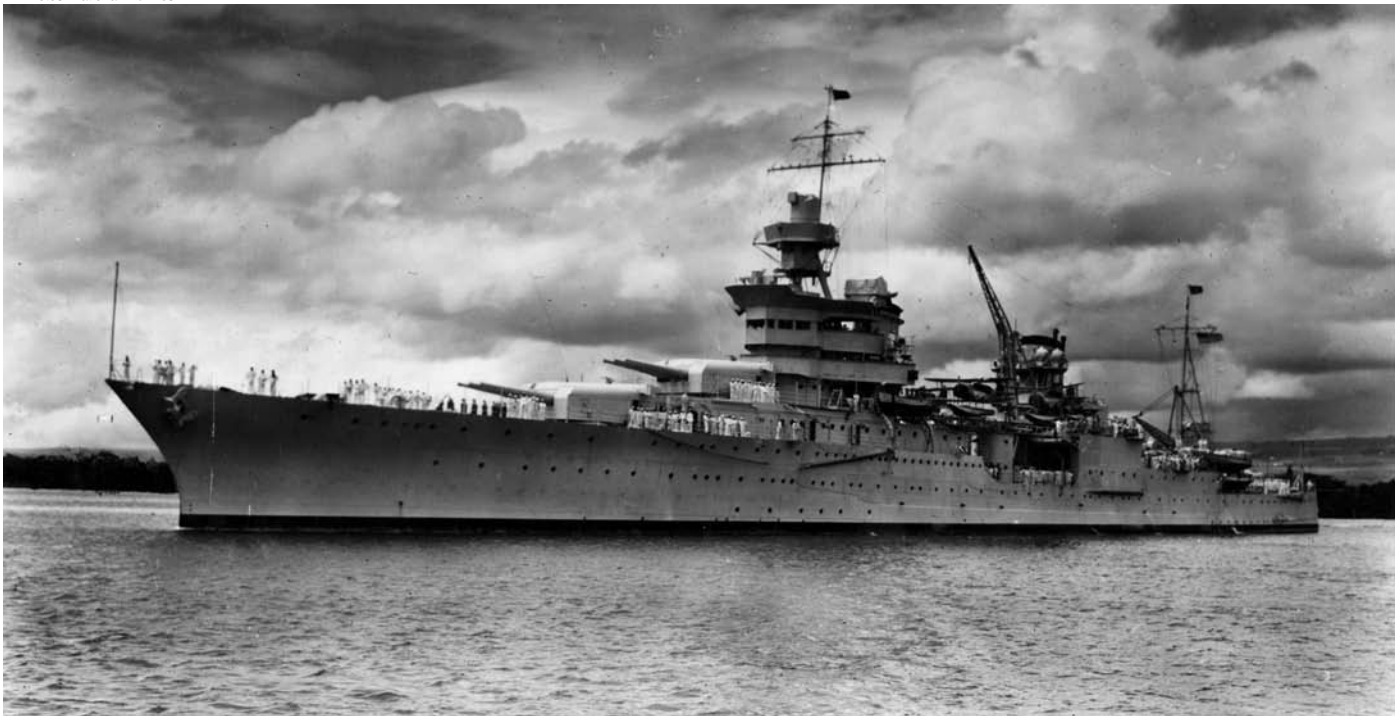
It was a unique, top-secret assignment for the 13-year-old *Indianapolis*. Rushed to completion and commissioned on November 15, 1932, she and her sister ship, the USS *Portland,* were modifications of the Northampton-class cruisers. They were critically top heavy with new electronics, light antiaircraft weaponry, and fire control gear.

With a complement of 1,196 officers and sailors, the *Indianapolis* displaced 9,800 tons, was 610 feet long, and had a top speed of 32.5 knots. Her armament included nine 8-inch guns, eight 5-inch dual-purpose guns, and two 3-pounder guns. Though a "treaty cruiser" with some design deficiencies like others of the Northampton class, the *Indianapolis* was a proud member of the U.S. Fleet. She boasted a handsome teak quarterdeck before being stripped for war and had an enviable reputation for sharp ceremonies and honors performed by her Marine Corps detachment.

As a lifelong private sailor, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and fervent advocate of sea power, President Franklin D. Roosevelt held a special affinity for the *Indianapolis*. He watched seagoing maneu-

In this sketch by artist Mark Churms, the high-speed transport USS *Bassett* launches LCVPs (landing craft vehicle personnel) in an attempt to rescue 150 sailors from the sunken heavy cruiser USS *Indianapolis* who have been adrift in the Pacific for five days. The *Indianapolis* was sunk by a Japanese submarine after delivering critical components of the atomic bomb to the island of Titian in the Marianas.

All Photos: National Archives



vers from her deck in May 1934 and sailed aboard her when he undertook his unprecedented "Good Neighbor Policy" cruise to Latin America in late November 1936.

At 8 on the morning of July 16, 1945, the *Indianapolis* cast off, bound for the island of Tinian in the distant Marianas group. She steamed under the Golden Gate Bridge half an hour later and headed westward across the Pacific Ocean. Recently patched up at Mare Island, California, after being severely damaged by a Japanese kamikaze plane on March 31, 1945, during the Okinawa invasion, the cruiser was a veteran of more than three years of fleet duty. She had been with the Pacific Fleet from the time of the Pearl Harbor raid on December 7, 1941.

After taking part in early 1942 raids, she saw action in almost every major amphibious invasion in the Central Pacific and lent fire support in the Aleutians, Gilberts, Marshalls, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, Guam, Palau, and Iwo Jima operations. The *Indianapolis* also served as the principal flagship of Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance when he commanded the Fifth Fleet.

Captain McVay, who ran a tight ship and was generally regarded as heading for higher flag rank, pushed his engine room crew to maintain top speed during the long voyage to the destination—the Twentieth Air Force's Boeing B-29 Superfortress heavy bomber base on Tinian, three miles south of Saipan.

The cruiser reached the volcanic, 50-square-mile island shortly after daybreak on Thursday, July 26. Because Tinian did not have an adequate harbor, the *Indianapolis* dropped anchor 1,000 yards offshore. As small craft swarmed around the cruiser, high-ranking officers of all services climbed aboard to watch the unloading of the top secret cargo, the heart of the world's first practical atomic bomb. A crane lifted the crate and cylinder into a waiting LCT (landing craft, tank), which promptly headed for shore. The cruiser had completed her unique mission, and McVay's grave responsibility was over.

The cruiser then weighed anchor and steamed to Guam, the southernmost island in the Marianas, where McVay was briefed and given new orders. The *Indianapolis* was to head for Leyte Gulf in the Philippines for two weeks of training exercises before rejoining the fleet and preparing for the Allied invasion of the Japanese home islands. Unescorted, the cruiser departed from Guam on July 28 and proceeded westward.

McVay and his crew were unaware of the dire perils that lay ahead. "There was no mention made of any untoward incident in the area through which I was to pass," he reported later. "I definitely got the idea ... that it was a routine voyage." A lieutenant and an ensign aboard the cruiser charted a direct, straight-line route at 15.7 knots estimated to get the ship into Leyte on July 31.

Surface and air units of the Imperial Japanese Navy had been rendered virtually impotent by late that month. In strikes against airfields, the naval base at Kure, and shipping in the Inland Sea, the powerful Task Force 38 of Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey's U.S. Third Fleet sank or badly damaged numerous enemy vessels, including the battleships *Haruna, Ise,* and *Hyuga*; the carriers *Amagi, Katsuragi,* and *Ryuho*; the heavy cruiser *Tone;* and the cruisers *Aoba* and *Oyoda*.

The Americans had written off the Japanese fleet as a threat in rear areas, but it was not quite finished because a few of its submarines were still at large. A final offensive by six diesel-powered I-boats, each carrying six kaiten one-man midget submarines (human torpedoes) as well as conventional Long Lance torpedoes, was underway in the Western Pacific.

Early that month, U.S. intelligence experts had decoded Japanese messages and confirmed the presence of four enemy submarines in the main shipping lane to Leyte. On July 24, while shepherding a convoy from Okinawa to Leyte, the destroyer escort USS *Underhill* was crippled off Luzon by a kaiten from *I-53* and then scuttled by submarine chasers. The death toll was 112 officers and men. But an Ultra intelligence intercept of a message from Lt. Cmdr. Mochitsura Hashimoto claiming that his *I-58* had sunk an American battleship was dismissed as the usual Japanese exaggeration.

The *Indianapolis* sailed on across the Philippine Sea, but a series of errors and oversights was sealing her fate. She had no underwater detection equipment and was dependent on radar and eyesight to detect a submarine. Routing officers, meanwhile, had told McVay that he would not need an escort. The cruiser was

on her own, and her whereabouts would be unknown for several critical days.

A headquarters radio message to the battleship USS *Idaho* in the Gulf of Leyte, reporting that the *Indianapolis* was on her way there, was incorrectly decoded and discarded. Next, a Navy radio relay station on Okinawa somehow lost a routing message to Leyte saying that the cruiser had left Guam. Leyte was unaware that the ship was coming.

Seven hours after the cruiser left Guam, the merchant ship SS *Wild Hunter* dispatched an urgent message from farther along the cruiser's planned course, reporting that an enemy periscope had been sighted. The destroyer escort USS *Albert Harris* and reconnaissance planes investigated but reported losing contact with the submarine.

Steaming to an area northeast of Leyte, the *Indianapolis* zigzagged to make tracking by enemy forces more difficult, although the maneuver was not required in presumably safe waters. Standard fleet instructions required ships to zigzag only when the visibility was good. Captain McVay's routing orders directed him to zigzag "at discretion," which he did by day. The cruiser had no lifeboats and only a few life rafts, but the end of the Pacific War was in sight. The Japanese Navy was no longer seen as a threat, and there was no reason to believe that the voyage to Leyte was anything but a routine assignment.

At twilight on Sunday, July 29, the visibility worsened under cloudy skies and the sea became choppy, so Captain McVay ordered a halt to the zigzagging. The ship resumed a straight, steady course. At 11 PM, after going to the bridge to check on the night watch, he went down to his cabin to sleep.

The *Indianapolis* was not "buttoned up" above the second deck. Like the Navy's other aging heavy cruisers, she had no air conditioning to make sleep possible for the crew in tropical waters, so the skipper allowed all ventilation ducts and most bulkheads to remain open. The entire main deck, the doors on the second deck, and the hatches to living spaces below were all open.

At the same time that Captain McVay turned in that night, Commander Hashimoto awoke from a nap aboard his *I-58*. Believed to be the fastest and best equipped submarine in the world, she carried six big oxygen-powered kaiten torpedoes, each with a 3,200-pound warhead. These were lashed on deck and designed to be piloted by one-man crews on suicide missions. *I-58* also carried conventional Long Lance torpedoes below decks.

The submarine's radar operator suddenly spotted a blip on his screen, and the crew sprang into action. Hashimoto submerged to periscope depth, and *I-58* closed in on the target, which proved to be the USS *Indianapolis*. Because she lacked sonar gear, the cruiser had no inkling of the enemy submarine's presence.

Although he had been running kaiten missions for several months, Hashimoto decided to attack with conventional torpedoes this time. I-58 closed to a distance of 1,648 yards from the target at 12:05 AM on Monday, July 30, 1945, and fired six Long Lances at the unsuspecting American ship.

Two and possibly three of the torpedoes slammed into the underwater starboard side of the *Indianapolis*. The first smashed into the bow, starting a huge fire below decks, and three seconds later the second torpedo found its mark directly below the bridge and detonated. The cruiser was soon burning fiercely.

Although the after half of the ship was untouched, the torpedoes set off a series of violent ammunition and fuel explosions, which blew off her bow. Tons of water gushed into the forward part of the cruiser, and her engines drove her under as she listed at an angle of 45 degrees. Spruance's gallant flagship was doomed.

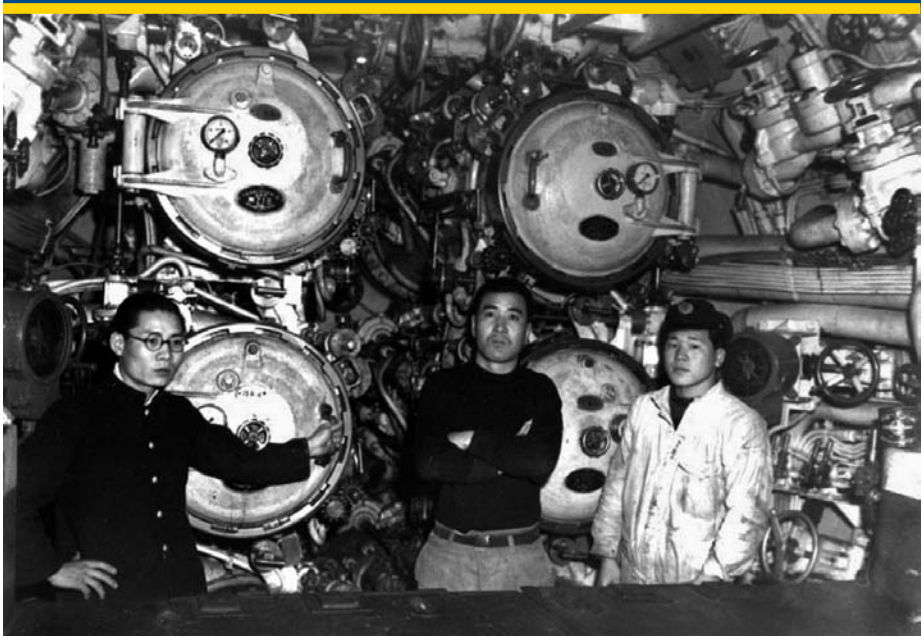
From amidships forward, there was no power, light, or pressure. Because the communications and most electrical lines had been severed, the bridge was unable to order the engines stopped, and the engineers could not stop them on their own. Captain McVay was unable to broadcast or sound orders. There was auxiliary power in the radio room, according to survivors' reports, and SOS and position messages were sent out by the stricken cruiser. But none were apparently received, possibly because of antenna damage.

Eight minutes after the first torpedo struck, McVay gave verbal orders to abandon ship. But below decks hundreds of crewmen who had

ABOVE: Landing craft churn past the heavy cruiser USS *Indianapolis* as the ship fires its big 8-inch guns in support of the landings on Saipan in the Marianas on June 15, 1944. TOP: President Franklin D. Roosevelt renders respect to the colors aboard the deck of the cruiser USS *Indianapolis* during his cruise to South America in November 1936. One of the cruiser's 8-inch gun turrets is visible in the background. OPPOSITE: When the cruiser USS *Indianapolis* was sunk in 1945, the warship was one of the best known in the U.S. Navy and a favorite of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who visited on several occasions and used the cruiser for some diplomatic travel.

All Photos: National Archives

ABOVE: This photo of the Japanese submarine *I-58* was taken in January 1946, several months after the surrender of Japan and the end of World War II. The commander of the submarine stalked the *Indianapolis* and fired six Long Lance torpedoes, sinking the ship with great loss of life just after midnight on July 30, 1945. BELOW: Three former crew members of *I-58* pose next to the submarine's torpedo tubes, which loosed lethal Long Lance torpedoes and sank the *Indianapolis* during the last days of World War II.



been sleeping were trapped, mortally wounded, burned, or drowned. Between 350 and 400 men went down with the ship. Of the estimated 800 sailors who were able to jump into the oil-coated sea, many were also wounded or badly burned and drowned.

The *Indianapolis* went down in 12 minutes. She was the last American warship to be sunk in World War II, the last submarine kill, and the last victim of the Imperial Japanese Navy. It was the most controversial disaster in U.S. naval history. Her skipper was one of the few survivors, but the tragedy was to prove his downfall.

A harrowing ordeal awaited the men able to clamber into the life rafts. They suffered four days of agony while the Navy had no knowledge of the cruiser's fate. Huddling in the life rafts or floating in lifejackets, the survivors drifted under a blistering sun while salt water caked and aggravated wounds. The fresh water aboard the rafts was found to be contaminated, and there was little food.

Some of the men became violently sick after drinking seawater, and others went mad and attacked their comrades in the water. Many of the men in lifejackets were devoured by prowling sharks. Almost 500 sailors died while awaiting rescue.

While no one ashore in the Philippines noticed that the *Indianapolis* was overdue, the desperate men in the water prayed and waited—helpless and forgotten. An Army plane called in a report of flares being fired from the water, but it was ignored.

It was not until 84 hours after the ship had gone down that anyone learned of her fate. On August 2, the crew of a Navy patrol bomber on a routine mission from the Palau Islands accidentally spotted bodies in lifejackets strewn over a mile-long area. A rescue effort was swiftly mounted, and when ships and planes arrived on the scene in force the following day only 316 survivors were found out of the cruiser's complement. Many of them were in shock from hours of exposure and having seen their comrades fall victim to sharks.

Suffering from exposure and dehydration, the survivors were rushed in rescue vessels to Peleliu. They were then transferred to the hospital ship USS *Tranquility,* which landed them in Guam on August 8. Admiral Spruance went to the hospital to visit his former shipmates and award Purple Hearts. "You'll never know how happy I am to see you made it," said the quiet, unassuming Battle of Midway victor, "and I'm only sorry we had to lose so many men I had come to think of as my family."

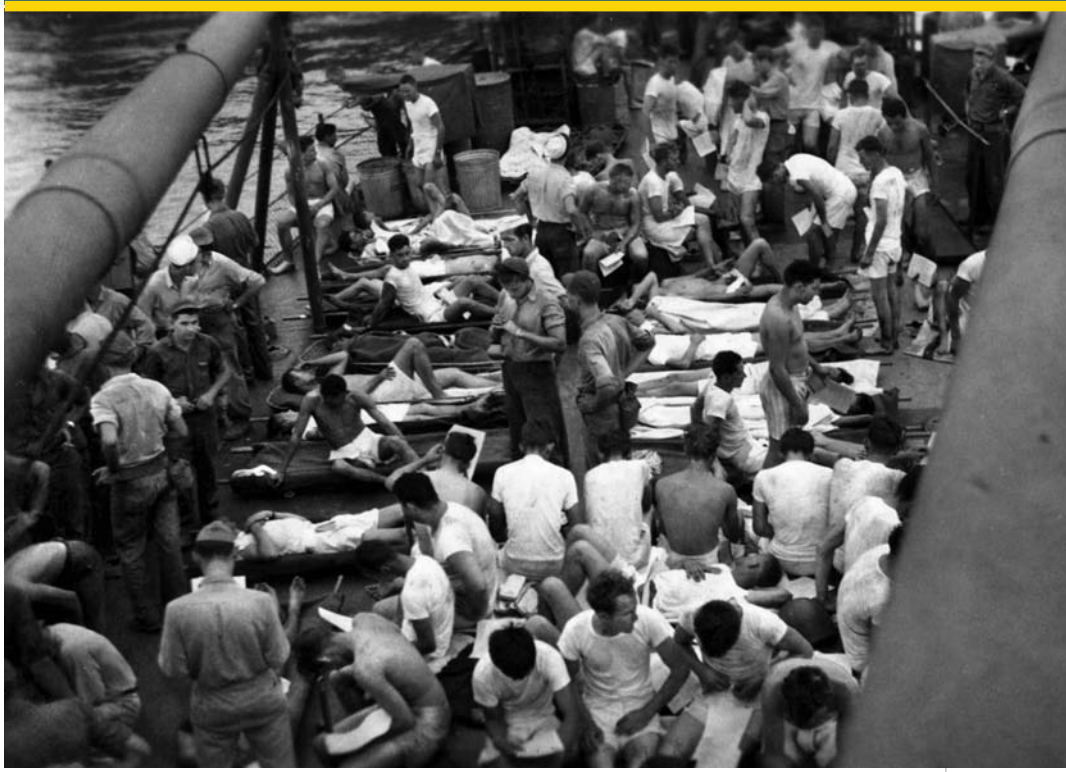
News of the loss of the *Indianapolis*, a final blow struck by Japan, was withheld from the American public for 16 days. Then it went largely unnoticed as headlines blared the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the subsequent Japanese surrender. Distinguished naval historian Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison later called the *Indianapolis* tragedy a "tale of routine stupidity and unnecessary suffering."

Major General Leslie R. Groves, the hard-bitten military commander of the Manhattan Project, said, "The *Indianapolis* was a very poor choice to carry the bomb. She had no underwater sound equipment, and was so designed that a single torpedo (sic) was able to sink her quickly."

A Navy court of inquiry was convened in August and recommended that Captain McVay be court-martialed on charges of "culpable inefficiency in the performance of his duty" and "negligently endangering the lives of others." He was to be the first U.S. Navy officer in more than a century to be tried for losing his ship to enemy action.

When the court-martial began on December 3, 1945, McVay was charged with "hazarding the safety of his ship by neglecting to zigzag in

LEFT: Captain Charles Butler McVay, commander of the ill-fated cruiser USS *Indianapolis,* points to his location aboard the ship at the time it was torpedoed. McVay was court-martialed after the tragic incident but exonerated during the proceedings and subsequently promoted to the rank of admiral. He retired from the U.S. Navy in 1949 and died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in 1968. BELOW: Survivors of the *Indianapolis* lie on the deck of the high-speed transport USS *Bassett* after their rescue from the desolation of the Pacific Ocean. Rescue efforts got underway some time after the actual sinking, and many crewmen were lost to wounds, exposure, delirium, and marauding tiger sharks.



good visibility through an area in which enemy submarines might be encountered," and the "failure to abandon ship in time, causing the death of many persons."

McVay was acquitted on the latter count but found guilty of the former. The court-martial took the unprecedented step of summoning Hashimoto to testify that McVay was not zigzagging at the time of the torpedo attack. But the Japanese submarine commander said that he could have hit the cruiser, whether she was zigzagging or not.

Appeals for leniency for McVay were registered by several high-ranking naval officers, including Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the revered commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet. As an ensign, he had served briefly aboard the *Indianapolis* after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy.

When Nimitz replaced Admiral Ernest J. King as Chief of Naval Operations on December 15, 1945, the court-martial was underway. He and the other officers advised strongly against it, but Navy Secretary James V. Forrestal had felt obliged to sanction it to quiet the press and satisfy the families of the men who were lost. Four other officers, meanwhile, received letters of reprimand in connection with the *Indianapolis* tragedy. They were the acting commander of the Philippine Sea Frontier, his operations officer, the acting port director at Leyte, and his operations officer.

At a press conference in his Navy Building office in Washington, D.C., on the morning of February 23, 1946, Admiral Nimitz briefed reporters on the court-martial findings. He stated, "We have no desire or intention to deny any of our mistakes." He said that the court-martial members and the judge advocate had recommended clemency for McVay and that this was supported by senior officers familiar with his service record.

Nimitz added that Secretary Forrestal "has approved these recommendations and has remitted the sentence of Captain McVay in its entirety, releasing him from arrest and restoring him to duty." A newsman asked the admiral, "Has there ever been a court-martialed officer in the history of the U.S. Navy who was later promoted to flag rank?"

Grinning and with a twinkle in his blue eyes, Nimitz pointed to himself and replied, "Here's one." Much to the amusement of the reporters, he recounted how on the dark night of July 7, 1908, he had grounded the four-stack destroyer USS *Decatur* on a mud bank while entering Batangas Harbor in the Philippines. He was court-martialed, but because of his flawless record received only a reprimand.

With the exoneration of Captain McVay, press attention turned to the four reprimanded port officers as likely scapegoats in the *Indianapolis* case. But this was not justified when it was established that they were merely following orders. For security reasons, port directors had been instructed not to report the arrivals of warships. It was further shown that when the ill-fated cruiser failed to arrive at Leyte the port director assumed that she had been delayed at Guam or diverted to another command. After a close study, Forrestal withdrew the four letters of reprimand.

McVay had been exonerated, but the tragedy sidelined his career. He was assigned to a minor post in New Orleans and marked time for three years until retiring from the Navy on June 30, 1949, at the age of 51. He left with the rank of rear admiral.

Despondent, he retired to Litchfield, Connecticut. On November 6, 1968, he went for a stroll on the lawn of his home with his pet Labrador retriever. He was later found shot through the head, with a .38-caliber pistol in his right hand and a blue toy sailor grasped in his left.

Author Michael D. Hull is a frequent contributor to WWII History. *He writes on a variety of subjects and resides in Enfield, Connecticut.*

A pivotal engagement during the bitter Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland had far-reaching consequences.

BY DAVID H. LIPPMAN

Battle for TOLVAJÄRVI

From Leningrad to Murmansk, columns of Soviet Red Army troops stormed down roads and trails into Finland's dense forests, lakes, and swamps, seeking to cut Finland in half.

Soviet Union Communist Party General Secretary Josef Stalin—known simply as the "Vozhd" or "Boss" to his inner circle—had ordered his massive armies to invade Finland, a blatant act of aggression, in 1939, a year of aggression. His massive armies, lavishly equipped with tanks, guns, and aircraft, easily outnumbered the Finns, and Stalin expected that he would carve out a land barrier between Leningrad, Russia's "Window on the West," and his supposed ally, Nazi Germany.

At first the bloodthirsty dictator sought to gain millions of acres of Finnish soil through diplomacy, but despite their country's small size and weaker economy the Finns were tougher than the nations that had given in to Hitler in 1938 over Czechoslovakia. They would not yield an inch of their forested soil. Their three million people would stand against the Soviet Union's 105 million.

On paper, the Finns had no chance. But this war, like all wars, was not fought in a ledger book. Unlike other wars, the war between Russia and Finland was fought in a winter landscape of endless forests, swamps, frozen lakes, subfreezing temperatures, and wilderness. Unlike their enemies, the Finns were at home in this dreadful environment and prepared to fight in it.

Stalin had gutted his army during bloody 1930s purges, turning the once formidable machine that had defeated the White Russian Army and Western invaders in the 1920s into a corps of obedient and incompetent lackeys. Despite the harshness of Soviet winters, Russian troops were not trained or equipped for winter fighting. Soviet field kitchens, for example, spewed out easily seen black smoke through chimneys that went straight up. Finnish kitchens used screens to hold back dark ash and vented horizontally.

Skiing was Finland's national pastime, and the Soviets ignored it. As a result, Soviet ski troops were trained to stand upright and fire their rifles from their skis. Finnish troops were trained to

Red Army soldiers, their dark uniforms standing out against the snowy landscape, advance warily through hostile Finnish territory in late 1939. Although the Soviet army was roughly handled at the outset, the Winter War ended after several weeks of fighting as overwhelming Soviet manpower, armor, and air superiority weighed heavily on the defending Finns.

fire their rifles prone, using the skis as braces for their rifles to ensure accuracy. Invading Soviet forces did not bother to wear snowsuits and were slowed by heavy vehicles that could not operate offroad in the heavy snowfalls.

The Finns had another edge, their supreme commander, Baron Carl Gustav Mannerheim, age 72, a former czarist Russian Guards officer, hero of the Finnish Civil War, big-game hunter, humanitarian, and national icon. He insisted that Finland refuse to negotiate. When Finnish politicians sent a delegation to Moscow to talk peace, he resigned his position as commander in chief. Just before the war broke out, the Finnish government begged him to resume his position and he did so. A Spartan, cold man, he dominated any gathering by the sheer force of his imperial personality. Perhaps most importantly, the Finnish Army and its men were trained to use their own initiative in difficult situations, counterattack swiftly, and were above all free men fighting for their homes against a foreign invader. The Soviets were that invader, and their initiative and flexibility had been sapped by the purges and political officers that peered over every commander's shoulder and reviewed his plans.

The Soviet attack came on a wide front. On November 29, 1939, the Soviet 155th Infantry Division attacked the Finnish 4th Corps in the Suojärvi sector, headed for a key road junction at Ilomantsi in Finland's midsection. Some 40 miles to the south, the 139th Infantry Division

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attacked through lakes along the axis of the Tolvajärvi Road, headed for a major road, which would in turn enable the Soviets to cut the rail line that supplied the entire IV Corps, imperil that force, and prevent its own counterattack. If the Soviet attack succeeded, it could cut Finland in two.

To add punch to this offensive, the Soviet 55th Infantry Division was moving parallel to the rail line between Suojärvi and Loimola. Lastly, the 168th Infantry Division, moving on the shore road, was headed northwest to Kitelä. The Soviets advanced slowly, bogged down by the tractors they were using to haul supplies and artillery.

Studying his maps and the panicked reports from IV Corps officers, Mannerheim turned to an ad hoc force named Task Force R after its commanding officer, Lt. Col. Veikko Räsänen, which consisted of four independent infantry battalions and PPP-7, the designation for the 7th Bicycle Battalion. PPP-7 had left its bikes in the barracks and was operating on skis, like everybody else in the Finnish Army. The task force was weak in artillery with only five or six modern guns in the rear and two 50-year-old field pieces on the border.

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The troops were tough enough, but Räsänen did not rise to the occasion—he seemed shocked and quickly lost his grip on the situation. At a time when frontline leadership was desperately needed, Räsänen stayed in his bunker at Ägläjärvi, six miles behind the front—too far for the Finns with their erratic communications.

When the Soviets hit the Finns on November 30, they streamed across the border but showed considerable caution—every time a Finnish rifle opened fire, they hit the ground. One Finnish automatic rifle team held up a full Soviet regiment for more than an hour near Jehkila at the northeast tip of Lake Suojärvi.

But on December 1, the weight of Soviet numbers began forcing the Finns back. They set up delaying positions at Varpakyla. The Soviets attacked with frontal assaults over open terrain and fell in heaps. But the sacrifice diverted the Finns from efforts to flank the defenders' roadblocks, forcing them to retreat to further delaying positions.

To buy time, Finnish engineers blew a dam on Lake Suojärvi's western shore, which flooded icy water over both sides. The Finns took advantage of the flood to flee, but the water soon froze up and the Soviets resumed the attack, driving the Finns off a north-south road from Suojärvi and Salonjärvi and its roadblock.

Task Force R dug in on the western bank of the Aittojoki River, with PPP-7 as the reserve at Ägläjärvi. Among the Finnish troops digging in was Special Battalion No. 112, made up of rear-echelon paperchasers with very little training and outdated equipment.

The Soviet advance was worrying Mannerheim, and he personally ordered Task Force R to counterattack on December 3 to reopen the road. The Finns jumped off on time and surprised the Soviet invaders. But when Soviet tanks showed up, the Finnish attack was stalled in its tracks.

Soviet troops and tanks began moving across Lake Salonjärvi's ice to encircle Task Force R. The only unit left to save the day was Special Battalion No. 112, and they charged into a counterattack, hurtling the Soviets into the forest. The assault gave the Finns time to withdraw to the prepared defenses on the Aittojoki.

The next morning, December 4, the Soviets attacked the Finns in the misty predawn darkness. The Finns held the line for three hours against heavy frontal attacks.

Finally, the Soviets broke through and slammed into PPP-7's headquarters. The battalion's commander, a major, rallied his miscellaneous collection of clerks, medics, cooks, quartermaster troops, and walking wounded, who fought the Soviets with personal sidearms, knives, and weapons grabbed from the dead. The Finns put up a determined fight, but halfway through the battle the major was wounded and rumors spread that he had been killed. The defenders collapsed in fear and panic. The men at the front, learning that their rear was being torn apart, also caved in. Räsänen and his headquarters team had to flee to Tolvajärvi while the rest of Task Force R fled to Ägläjärvi.

By morning on December 5, Task Force R had regrouped and dug in. Mannerheim ordered Räsänen to counterattack, and the colonel formulated a risky and ambitious plan—PPP-7 would go forward, braced on the flanks and rear by Special Battalion 112. These two outfits would absorb the next Soviet attack and hold it in place while the rest of Task Force

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ABOVE LEFT: Lieutenant Colonel Aaro Pajari commanded the Finnish Army Regiment JR-16 during the bitter fighting around Tolvajärvi. ABOVE RIGHT: Baron Carl Gustav Mannerheim (left), supreme commander of Finnish Army forces, consults with General Axel Heinrichs, commander of the III Corps, during efforts to stem the tide of Red Army forces invading Finland. LEFT: Alerted to the advance of Soviet forces nearby, Finnish troops rush to defensive positions early in the Winter War. Note the German coal scuttle-style helmets worn by the Finnish soldiers.

R, in the dense forests north of the road, hit the Soviet flank.

The plan would have been a good one if the Finns had good communications and more men, but they did not. PPP-7 broke under Soviet pressure in the first quarter hour on December 5. The rest of Task Force R never got the word to make the flanking attack, which would have easily cut off the Soviet advance.

Räsänen ordered another retirement, but this was conducted in good order thanks to the energetic Special Battalion 112. The Finns were now a group of hungry, scared, exhausted, frozen, depressed, whipped men falling back on Tolvajärvi and its hills and frozen lakes. Räsänen gloomily reported to Mannerheim that his men were nearing the point of ineffectiveness.

Finnish troops had retreated more than 40 miles and showed the strain. Some men had shot at each other by mistake, and others had fled at the mere rumor of tanks. Now the Soviets were poised to take the rail junction at Värtsilä. If the Soviets did so, they would collapse the Ladoga-Karelia front, and the Mannerheim Line would be open to attack from the rear.

The situation was desperate for Mannerheim. Studying his maps, he ordered JR-25 of the 9th Division to entrain for Kuhmo to serve as the nucleus of a newly formed brigade, despite its shortages of clothing and equipment. JR-27 was sent to Suomussalmi on December 7. The third and last regiment of the 9th Division, JR-26, was left on the Karelian Isthmus, facing the biggest Soviet offensive.

On December 5, JR-16 of the 6th Division was assigned to Mannerheim's personal command and sent to Tolvajärvi to stiffen the defenses.

The Finns continued to crumble on December 5. Ägläjärvi fell, putting them halfway between the border and the rail junction. The Soviet 155th Division was storming toward Ilomantsi, which would mean that all the Finnish troops at Tolvajärvi would be cut off.

The only good news for Mannerheim was that the Soviet attacks north of Lake Ladoga were not coordinated; they were separate columns attacking up roads and trails, tied by their heavy vehicles to those narrow arteries, unable to properly deploy beyond them or move and fight well in the adjoining woods, swamps, and frozen lakes.

Mannerheim realized that if these isolated columns could be cut off and destroyed quickly the Finnish troops fighting there could be transferred to the Karelian Isthmus to hold the main front on the Mannerheim Line. All that was needed was some determined leadership.

Fortunately, Finland abounded in such men.

On the last day of November 1939, the Soviet Red Army invaded neighboring Finland on several fronts. The ensuing war lasted only until March 13, 1940; however, the Soviets suffered heavy casualties in achieving the military victory and the territorial concessions that followed.

Mannerheim appointed one of his best officers, Maj. Gen. Woldemar Hägglund, as commander of the IV Corps and assigned him to defeat 10 Soviet divisions.

Next, Mannerheim turned to a close personal friend, Colonel Paavo Talvela, a hero of the 1918 civil war, vice president of the national film company, and president of the state liquor board, to serve as field commander. Talvela was an appropriate choice. He had completed extensive map wargames over that area while studying at the Finnish War College, where he had graduated at the top of his class. Bold, resolute, tough, Talvela was an imaginative tactician and

familiar with the terrain. Mannerheim described him as "a fearless and strong-willed commander, who possesses that degree of ruthlessness required in an offensive against a greatly superior adversary."

Mannerheim sent JR-16 from Oulu to Värtsilä late on December 5, and Talvela arrived at Mannerheim's headquarters at 4 AM on December 6, Finland's Independence Day, wearing full dress uniform.

Mannerheim briefed Talvela on the situation. The Soviet attack was two campaigns, one on IV Corps' northern flank, along the road from Suvilahti to Kollaa, and another on the roads to Tolvajärvi and Ilomantsi. Mannerheim would therefore detach all the troops on the latter front from IV Corps to report directly to him. This force would be under Talvela and called Group Talvela.

Talvela's job was to halt the enemy drives, throw them back, and recapture Suojärvi's road network, cutting off all supplies to the southern Russian column on the Kollaa Road. Talvela would have less than half the manpower of his opponents, no armor whatsoever, no air support, and precious few mortars and artillery.

Still, Talvela was eager to take the offensive. JR-16 would be his trump card. It was commanded by an old friend and Finnish Civil War comrade, Lt. Col. Aaro Pajari, a highly competent officer who concealed his heart condition beneath great determination. Talvela phoned Pajari and told him to find out what was going on at the front and then drive back to Värtsilä with a full report. Pajari did so, talking to commanders and frontline soldiers, urging them to speak freely. He spent some time studying terrain and fresh intelligence reports and then headed back, meeting with Talvela at 3 AM.

Pajari's report was grim. The defenders of Tolvajärvi had been retreating for a week, pounded by artillery and tanks, only able to respond with machine guns and hand grenades. The men were physically exhausted, edgy, and discipline was being maintained only by a thread. One more Soviet push would break them. The opposing Soviet 139th Infantry Division had a high level of training and tactical cohesion and was making solid flanking attacks. The Finns were on the wrong end of five-to-one numbers.

To make matters worse, the weather was aiding the invaders. Snowfall had been light and spotty, meaning that the offroad snowdrifts were not enough to hamper Soviet troops and not enough to provide Finnish ski troops with their advantages. Pajari concluded that the Finns needed something close to a miracle to halt the Soviets. Taking the initiative was simply impossible.

Talvela absorbed this report and had another worry, the secondary threat at Ilomantsi. There the Soviet 155th Infantry Division was heading southwest and nearly 10 miles from the town. Against this the Finns could put up only two battalions, but the Soviet drive was really being stopped by the 155th Division's commander, General Gusevski, who was moving cautiously.

Talvela decided to gamble. Assuming that the 155th would continue to move slowly, he would focus his strength on Tolvajärvi. First, he would put steel in the Finnish defenses. The Finns would hold the west shore of Lake Tolvajärvi. Talvela sent Pajari back to the front, no longer as an observer, but as commander. He would relieve the hapless Räsänen. Talvela said later, "In situations like this, as in all confused and hopeless situations, an energetic attack against the nearest enemy was and is the only way to improve the spirits of the men and to get control of the situation."

But while the two officers planned their strategy, the fighting went on. PPP-7 retreated five miles from its position at Ristisalmi on the eastern shore of Lake Ala Tolvajärvi to Lake Hirvasjärvi, north of Lake Tolvajärvi.

However, Talvela got some help from IV Corps—a battery of artillery on December 6, two more en route, and an independent battalion, ErP-9 ("Er" standing for "independent" or "detached"). Pajari's own regiment, JR-16, reached the front on December 7.

The 1st/JR-16 arrived first, early on December 7, and began digging in west and north of a bridge that spanned the narrows between Lakes Tolvajärvi and Hirvasjärvi. But as soon as the battalion began digging in, it came under enemy artillery fire, and some of the Finns fled as far west as Korpiselka. That opened a gap in the Finnish lines that enabled the Soviets to gain control of Kottisaari and a long narrow peninsula called Hirvasharju, which extended to the

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northwest and split Lake Hirvasjärvi from Lake Tolvajärvi. On that peninsula stood a new two-story tourist hotel, built chalet-style with the second floor overhanging the first. It had a superb view of the lakes and hills. The commander of the Soviet 609th Infantry Regiment saw it as a command post and bunker and turned it into his headquarters.

Talvela arrived on the scene late in the day to find 1st/JR-16 retreating and reorganizing and tried to rally some of the men. They were too dispersed for him to do so, but the panic had run its course. The weary men regrouped, and 3rd/JR-16, under Pajari, arrived. Pajari ordered his men to dig in, walking up and down the line, calmly and firmly telling his men to do their duty. Despite his calm voice, Pajari had misgivings.

Pajari's force was badly equipped by Finnish standards, lacking uniforms and snow boots and as unprepared to face the sub-zero temperatures as it was Soviet artillery fire. Fortunately, 3rd/JR-16 was not hard pressed. The Soviets were consolidating positions around the hotel that Pajari could see through his binoculars.

Early that evening Talvela conferred with Pajari, and they agreed that the situation had stabilized but the virus of defeat was spreading. Dramatic action was needed to curb the panic, regain the initiative, and show the Finns that the Soviets could be beaten.

Talvela sketched out a broad scheme for a strong raid against enemy troops, going across the frozen Lake Tolvajärvi and hitting the Soviet troops bivouacked on the road to Ägläjärvi. Talvela wanted to lead the raid himself, but his staff talked him out of it. Pajari, despite having had a tough, long day, volunteered to lead the raid.

The raiders were drawn from 2nd/JR-16, which had not been engaged yet. Just before midnight, two companies—the 9th and 4th—moved across the ice south of Kottisaari Island. An hour later, PPP-7, under its new commander, Major Ericsson, launched a feint against Kottisaari itself. The diversion did not fare too well. Ericsson was killed early—the second PPP-7 battalion commander lost in five days—and the battalion withdrew.

But 2nd/JR-16 moved across the ice beneath a moonless and empty sky, the only sound the scrape of its skis and the occasional whisper and crackle of ice responding to pressure. For all the Finnish troops, the move was terrifying —the utter darkness, the cold, the fear that a Soviet patrol might spot them at any minute. Logically, under these conditions the two companies got lost. The 9th Company hit a patch of open water, headed south to avoid it, and lost touch with 4th Company. Eventually, the 9th crossed the lake but met some Russian pockets, which led to a firefight in the dark.

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ABOVE: During an attack along the River Kollaanjoki on December 17, 1939, a Red Army tank advances slowly across a snow-covered hillside. Finnish troops often lay in ambush, taking advancing Soviet columns by surprise, inflicting casualties, and then melting into the deep forest. OPPOSITE: Firing their rifles from the prone position, Finnish ski troops in camouflage uniforms that blend in with the surrounding snow exerted a tactical advantage over their Soviet Red Army counterparts. The Finns were trained to fire with increased accuracy from the relative protection of the prone position, while Soviet ski troops fired standing upright on their skis.

But 4th Company held to its route, headed by Lieutenant Urho Isotalo and Pajari. An hour after crossing the lake, Finnish scouts saw large bonfires in a gully near the Kivisalmi Bridge. The Finns had met up with a small Russian security patrol and killed the lot soundlessly.

Beyond that stood a long, low, heavily timbered ridge, and farther beyond was more firelight. The raiders fanned out at the base of the ridge and advanced up it simultaneously so that the entire force would reach the crest at the same time. When Pajari crawled the last few meters to the top, he whipped out his binoculars to peer through the evergreens. He saw a vast encampment 100 meters away, holding a full Soviet battalion, all asleep or keeping warm at their campfires, and no sentries posted. In the distance, Pajari saw two more encampments for two more battalions. Pajari's one company was about to ambush an entire Soviet regiment.

While the Soviets continued to doze, Pajari moved his men into position. They heard PPP-7 making its diversion in the distance, but the Soviets before them were uninterested as a few men looked up at the sound, shrugged, and returned to their fires.

By 2 AM, 140 riflemen and 16 automatic weapons were posted in a semicircle along the ridge crest concealed in bushes, snow, and brush. All the men had targets acquired. Talvela fired the first shot himself, and the Finns opened up with everything they had into the gully beneath them.

The Soviets were so shocked by the force and violence of the Finnish ambush that they did not fire back. In three to four minutes, there were no standing targets—only heaps of dead Soviet soldiers lying in rings around their still blazing fires.

The Soviet battalions in the distance reacted to the noise and destruction by opening fire in all directions. Pajari led his men out through a gully near one of the encampments to confuse pursuers. The Finns slithered away while the Soviets waged a fierce firefight with each other that went on for two hours.

Pajari and his men found the return march more tiring than the approach. Pajari himself, suffering from a heart condition, needed to be transported in an improvised litter. But everyone made it back, some with badly needed Soviet felt boots, and the victory was complete.

Finnish morale was boosted by the feat. It was the first large-scale victory on the IV Corps front. More importantly, the raid knocked the Soviets off balance. They made no further major attacks in the area for two days, limiting themselves to patrols, artillery duels, and sniping.

With Tolvajärvi in hand, Talvela went up to Ilomantsi, where the Soviet 155th Infantry Division was still plodding along slowly, only 12 miles from the Ilomantsi-Korpiselka road junction. The Finnish ErP-11, under Major Nikoskelainen, was trying to stop the Soviets at the Möhkö Hill. Talvela ordered the heights held at

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During one of several pitched battles in the brief Winter War, a Soviet tank fires on a distant Finnish target in this still from the newsreel documentary film *Mannerheim Line.*

all costs, and his troops did so until being forced to pull back to Oinaansalmi on December 9.

Talvela put all Finnish troops in the Ilomantsi sector under Colonel Per Ekholm and named the command Task Force E. This consisted of four infantry battalions, but two of them were poorly trained ex-quartermaster troops. On December 8, the Ilomantsi defenders were reinforced by a battery of mortars, and a day and a half later by two old French 75mm field pieces, one of which proved inoperable. Task Force E already had five antique light field guns. This force would face the fully equipped Soviet 155th Infantry Division.

However, Ekholm proved ferocious. One of his patrols found an understrength Soviet battalion of 350 men wandering behind the Finnish left flank about five miles northeast of Ilomantsi, in a bog named Tetrilampi. Ekholm ordered the Soviets attacked by a strike force equipped with automatic weapons, and the Finnish group quickly surrounded the Soviets. During the night, Ekholm set up an ambush. At dawn the Finns opened a murderous crossfire on the Soviets. Not one Russian survived.

The 155th's commander, baffled at the disappearance of an entire infantry battalion, became even more cautious.

Talvela was impressed. His men were not just holding ground; they were taking action, throwing the Soviets off balance, and building up their own morale. It was time to attack on both fronts. He finished his plans on December 10 and ordered the attack to go in the next day.

Before Talvela could attack, the Soviets hit him on his left flank, using the ski battalion of the Finnish National Army, a collection of renegade Finns who were willing to fight for Stalin. The entire battalion marched through the forests on his left flank at Lake Tolvajärvi. The Soviets aimed at Talvela's supply line, the road to Korpiselka. There were no defensive works there, just field kitchens, artillerymen, quartermasters, and the headquarters company. At 11 that night, the Soviets attacked the position, where Finnish cooks were simmering large vats of sausage soup. The Soviets scattered the panic-stricken cooks and then sat down to eat the Finnish soup.

While they did, the Finns had a little time to recover. It was a stroke of luck for the Finns. Another was that Pajari himself was nearby. On his own initiative, he assembled 100 cooks, clerks, medics, supply sergeants, and artillerymen, and led them in a counterattack. It was a rare example of bayonet fighting in the Russo-Finnish War, and the Finnish troops, furious to see their own countrymen fighting for the hated Soviet invader, took no prisoners.

Meanwhile, Pajari summoned two companies of frontline troops to back up his ragtag band, and they hit the renegades from the east. By 4 AM, the Finnish National Army was in full retreat, and by dawn the fighting was over. Only a few of the renegade Finns made it back to their lines. The road and forests were strewn with frozen corpses, at least 100 of them near the bullet-riddled soup pots, some with hunks of sausage still clinging to their gray lips.

The battle became legendary in Finnish history as the Sausage War and was a major boost to Finnish morale.

But the Tolvajärvi struggle continued. The same night, a Russian battalion moved out from Kottisaaari Island across the ice, heading for Tolvajärvi village from the south.

The Finns were alert, and Lieutenant Eero Kivela's JR-16 company was first to get hit. He left two platoons and his heavy machine guns to hold the village and outflanked the outflankers with three rifle platoons. At dawn, the Soviets were just across the lake, still in the open. Kivela's men wasted no time. They opened fire and killed scores of men with their first volley. The Soviets panicked and fled across the open ice, making superb targets. Kivela's men kept firing until the Soviets were gone and then strode onto the ice to seize 16 machine guns from the dead men before retiring.

The Soviets kept trying on December 11, but the other attacks were less threatening. One Soviet objective had been achieved, perhaps unintentionally. Talvela would have to postpone his own counterattack until December 12.

Talvela assigned the task to the freshest men he had, Battalion ErP-9 and two companies of 1st/JR-16. If they could open the Russian defenses, his other forces could go through the hole in the lock. One pincer would cross the northern end of Lake Hirvasjärvi, pivot southeast, and hit the Hirvasharju Peninsula from the high ground in the rear, striking the tourist hotel, which was the lynchpin of the Soviet defenses.

When the northern pincer had made progress, Pajari would lead a frontal assault on the peninsula. Pajari would have his own troops along with a company from JR-37 and the 10th Independent Battalion (ErP-10). A third southern pincer, consisting of two companies of ErP-112, would assault Kottisaari Island, taking its high ground and enabling Finnish guns to interdict the Soviet supply line —the road over the Kivisalmi bridge. With luck, good timing, and determination, the Finns could win.

Talvela also made plans to counterattack at Ilomantsi. On December 11, the Soviets attacked at Oinaansalmi and the ferry crossing at Kallioniemi. In both places, the Soviets were thrown back with moderate casualties—two tanks wrecked by satchel charges and Molotov cocktails at the former and 134 dead at the latter. Now Talvela wanted three of Ekholm's battalions to hit the Russians at Möhkö from the flanks and frontally.

On the other side, Commander Belaev, who headed the Soviet 139th Division, was under pressure to advance. Corps Commander Panin arrived at the 139th's tactical headquarters on the morning of December 12 and personally took command of the division, ordering Belaev to attack.

The Finnish attack went wrong from the start. The 2nd and 3rd Companies of JR-16 moved off on the northern pincer at Lake Hirvasjärvi in foot-deep snowdrifts, unable to reach their

start lines until well after daylight, costing them tactical surprise. While these Finns tried to sneak up on the Soviets, the Soviets were trying to do the same in accordance with Panin's orders.

Instead, both sides surprised each other. The 3rd Company, on the far Finnish left, took the heat of the attack and Soviet machine-gun fire, and the Finns withdrew all the way to the Tolvajärvi Road. The 2nd Company slipped past the Soviets across the lake and readied for the southward turn when it was stopped cold by heavy Soviet fire at 11 AM. Pinned down, it lost contact with ErP-9.

That battalion was not doing much better. One company got mangled in the battle and retreated to the Tolvajärvi Road by 10:30. The battalion regrouped and joined the 2nd Company to prevent them from being overwhelmed, but this Finnish group could make no progress and withdrew, except a group of 100 men from the 2nd Company, which stayed in the battle, drawing down large numbers of Soviet troops.

The southern pincer did not do too well, either. ErP-112 attacked at 8 AM backed by heavy machine guns and four or five artillery pieces. The men crossed the frozen lake, clambered up the island, and reached some rocky islets near the Kivisalmi Bridge, but their support, the 9th Company of JR-16, never showed up. Their regimental headquarters never gave the company commander a jump-off time, so by the time he was told to advance it was long past the designated hour. He had to wait for further instructions.

The third thrust, in the center, was assigned to 2nd/JR-16. Pajari did not want to send his men against fortified positions over open ground without artillery support, and the guns did not get into position until two hours after they were supposed to. When the Finnish shells came crashing down, there were so few that Pajari cursed himself for waiting in the first place.

Pajari gave the word, and Lieutenant Isotalo led his 2nd Company of JR-16 across the straits on the lake's southern side with machine guns providing cover fire. Suffering only light casualties, 2nd Company moved across. However, 6th Company came under Soviet artillery and light automatic weapons fire, which tied them down. Soon the 4th, 5th, and 6th Companies, all intermingled, were pinned down as well.

Yet the Finns continued to attack. Backed by their machine guns, the ski-suited Finns silenced Soviet troops in their foxholes and gun pits and began engaging the Soviet heavy machine guns.

Incredibly, the Finns fought their way forward to the tourist hotel. Soviet troops in the fortified hotel opened up with gunfire from windows and loopholes cut into its thick log walls. Finnish officers showed considerable initiative, grouping and regrouping miscellaneous troops into combat teams to fight for the village and hotel. Officers and NCOs took casualties. Lieutenant Isotalo was shot in the hand, paused to get it bandaged, and then went forward to lead his men again.

The hardest fighting took place in a line of gravel pits about 200 yards west of the hotel and its hill. The road was narrow, the terrain jagged, and the Finns had to advance in single file. Pajari had his 37mm Bofors guns sited just in case—and soon enough three Soviet tanks trundled up the road to counterattack. The Bofors guns opened fire, and the three tanks were destroyed.

Pajari decided that there was still just enough of a fight on his northern flank to divert the enemy and enable him to reinforce the men in the gravel pits across the frozen lake. He ordered 3rd Company of ErP-10 to do so, and the 2nd Company of ErP-10 to attack straight across Lake Myllyjärvi into the base of the Hirvasharju Peninsula's wishbone shape to put pressure on the hotel from the northwest.

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Finnish troops man a machine-gun position against oncoming Soviet troops. The Finns were outgunned by superior Soviet armor and air power; however, Finnish tactics made the most the assets available.

The attack resumed at 1:30 PM. Finnish troops, refreshed by food and cigarettes, charged up a 60-foot hill against the chalet-style hotel and its log and granite walls. Soviet troops in the building and rifle pits in front of it blazed away with machine guns, rifles, and grenades. If the Finns had been supported by artillery, they could have easily taken the hotel, but instead the struggle came down to a battle of infantrymen.

The battle raged back and forth for an hour, hand to hand at some places. Finnish troops hurled grenades through hotel windows and shoved bayonets into Soviet bodies. Soviet troops counterattacked. One Finnish company commander was killed, another gravely wounded.

The scale was tipped when the 2nd Company of ErP-10 arrived, bringing the hotel under fire from the north, weakening the Soviets. Some Finns were able to sneak around to the building's southern side and snipe at its windows, which made the Soviets realize they were close to being surrounded.

Some of the defenders began to withdraw to the Kivisalmi Bridge, and the Finns, sensing victory, launched a charge into the hotel, hurling dozens of grenades through the ground floor windows, silencing all resistance on that floor.

However, there were still Soviets on the upper floor, and they maintained a heavy fire. As long as they held the hotel, the Finns could not advance. Lieutenant Siukosaari, commanding 6th Company, figured that the best way to eliminate the problem was to pour gasoline into the building, set it ablaze, and shoot any Soviets who tried to flee. A major standing nearby overruled that thought and ordered a more conventional assault. The decision may have been due to squeamishness or because the hotel was a prominent source of local pride.

Either way, Siukosaari led the attack by example, brandishing his Lahti pistol. He ran smack into a Russian officer armed with his own pistol at the doorway leading to the hotel kitchen. Both men opened fire three feet apart, but Siukosaari's shot hit first, killing the Soviet.

Siukosaari's men charged over the dead Russian into the hotel.

The Finns then had an easier time, hurling grenades into the upper level and then rushing up the stairway. They found 28 Soviet soldiers still alive, most of them wounded and ready to surrender, along with the corpse of the commander of the 609th Soviet Infantry Regiment and the usual regimental papers, all valuable for intelligence. Of greater value to Siukosaari and his crew were the 18 usable automatic weapons and ammunition—they doubled his platoon's firepower.

Buoyed by the victory, Pajari threw in the last card in his deck, Bicycle Battalion PPP-7, which mopped up as far as Kivisalmi Bridge. Pajari had won the southern part of his battle.

At Ilomantsi, the uneven struggle went on all day. The double pincers at Möhkö did not accomplish much, but near Kallioniemi the Finns knocked out four more tanks.

The next day, the Soviets made more infantry probes at Kallioniemi and the Finns tried again at Möhkö. By day's end, the Ilomantsi front was a stalemate. The Finns lacked the power to throw the Soviets back, and the Soviet 155th Infantry Division lacked the skis—and therefore the mobility—to flank the Finns. The temperature dropped to 25 degrees below zero, and the endlessly falling snow was more than a foot deep. The Soviets could not budge the Finns.

However, the Finns had skis and the training to use them, and Ekholm waged an active defense, staging raids and probing attacks against the 155th Infantry. As December dragged on, the Soviets tried to defeat Ekholm with little success. At one point, they slipped a battalion through Finnish lines and menaced his headquarters. Ekholm rallied his rear-echelon troops, counterattacked vigorously, and drove the Soviets off. The area remained quiet for most of the war.

Not so at Tolvajärvi, where PPP-7 began moving forward to Ristisalmi on December 13, while the rest of Pajari's troops took a day off to reorganize. Pajari was not happy with that. He recognized that the best way to deal with the opposing Soviet 139th Infantry Division, as any other Soviet unit, was to attack relentlessly. After the 13th, Pajari drove his men to do just that.

Meanwhile, the Soviets were determined not to give up at Tolvajärvi. They reinforced the battered 139th Division with the 75th Infantry Division. Pajari learned of this development on December 16 as Finnish air reconnaissance saw exhausted and wounded men of the 139th heading back to Russia while vehicles and men of the 75th headed forward.

Pajari moved swiftly. He continued his attack on December 14, with ErP-9 leading the assault. The Finns were stopped when two Russian tanks appeared, driving back and forth, hurling shells and machine-gun fire at the Finns, who could fire back nothing but colorful invective. They did not even have Molotov cocktails. When word of this holdup reached ErP-9's headquarters and its sole antitank gun crew, one of its gunners, Corporal Mutka, hitched up the 37mm gun to a farm horse, mounted it, and rode the horse bareback to the front. Once there, Mutka unlimbered the gun, aimed at the tanks, and blasted them open with three or four shots.

When the Soviet tanks exploded into the usual balls of fire and smoke, the infantry they were operating with were demoralized and began to flee. The Finnish troops charged forward a mile before being stopped at Metsanvaara Ridge.

Talvela sent Pajari 350 replacements on December 15, all overage reservists. They were ready to fight but poorly trained, poorly armed, and not as physically resilient as the young men who had died or were wounded.

Pajari ordered his men forward, and on December 16 they pushed past Metsanvaara and made good progress until hitting a determined group of Soviet troops at a roadblock just west of Lake Hietajärvi. The defenders were 200 men from a Russian officer candidate school, well trained, physically fit, highly motivated, and properly dug in. The Finns who fought in this battle later said they were the toughest troops they faced. The officer candidates inflicted heavy casualties on the attacking Finns. The 6th Company of ErP-9 lost six of 20, including its commanding officer, in the first hour of fighting. The officer candidates fought to the death. Only two are known to have survived.

Pajari could not afford such engagements and their attendant losses. He tried to outflank the main road, relying on skis and surprise. He sent an ErP-10 company on a wide end run to the south through Vieksinki and launched guerrilla strikes on the Ägläjärvi Road. Two companies of ErP-10 did the same from the north.

Seeing that Pajari was making great gains, Talvela gave him control of all Finnish reserves in the Tolvajärvi sector on December 17, with an order of the day that read: "The last energies of the troops must be used." Talvela also promoted Pajari to full colonel in recognition of his achievements.

On December 18, the Soviet Air Force finally intervened with attack planes swooping down on the forests. The bombs were more annoying than destructive, but Pajari's attacks on Ägläjärvi made no headway against Soviet roadblocks.

On December 19, Mannerheim promoted Talvela to major general but was on the edge of calling off the whole Tolvajärvi counteroffensive due to the lengthening casualty lists and the men's exhaustion. The newly promoted Talvela persuaded Mannerheim that his men had enough drive to break through the Soviet defenses and stabilize the situation. Mannerheim agreed to give Talvela more time.

In the predawn darkness, the Soviet 75th Division hurled a battalion of infantry and nine tanks against the Finns from Ägläjärvi, going straight for the Finnish antitank platoon and ramming the first gun. Corporal Mutka, still in the battle, closed with the tank as it crunched over the Bofors gun and blew it up with a satchel charge, blocking the road for the rest of the Soviet armor.

At daylight, Mutka bore-sighted his remaining Bofors gun and hit the rear Soviet tank in the column, trapping the whole force. He worked forward with his gun and hit two more vehicles. The crews of the surviving tanks got the point. They bailed out of their vehicles, and the Finns captured them intact with their engines running. The Soviet attack was done. The Finns tried to counterattack themselves, but the Soviets held them off.

The same day, Pajari hit his own personal limit. Physically exhausted from the ordeal and personally leading attacks, he was sent to the rear by Talvela and replaced by Lt. Col. Kaarlo Viljanen, another 27th Jaeger veteran, who proved to have plenty of determination himself.

Finns and Soviets clashed on December 21, 22, and 23 with little impact. The Soviets brought up more aircraft, and the Finns brought up more antiaircraft guns, shooting down three Soviet planes on December 21.

Late on the 21st, 2nd/JR-16 and two companies of ErP-9 attacked Ägläjärvi from the north, and two companies of ErP-10 and all of ErP-112 attacked from the south. In the dark, the Finns crossed the ice and closed on the village without losses against heavy but wild Soviet fire.

However, the Soviets had turned the small village into a fortress. The Soviets set up their automatic weapons for converging fire, and Finnish NCO and platoon leader casualties were again heavy—one battalion lost all three of its company commanders.

Each building was a separate strongpoint. One Finnish soldier said, "The houses were shot full of holes like sieves." The Finns hurled grenades into the buildings, but defending wounded Soviet troops went on fighting. The Finns fought house to house and room to room with grenades and bayonets. The fighting was so close that neither side could use its mortars.

Finnish mobility eventually told the story, as

SA-Kuva

Dead Red Army soldiers and abandoned tanks mark the scene of a brief but violent ambush during the Winter War. Finnish troops proved masterful in the art of winter warfare. Taking advantage of mobility and concealment, they routinely claimed a heavy toll in Soviet men and equipment.

one Finnish detachment cut off the village with a roadblock to the east, trapping the defenders. By noon, the 2nd Company of PPP-7 broke through into the center of the village to knock out a set of interlocking machine-gun nests. By 2 PM, the Soviets, short of ammunition and men, were in retreat. By dusk, Mannerheim called off further attacks, aware of his limited supplies of men and munitions.

After the victory, fighting did not stop in the Tolvajärvi sector. On Christmas Day, the Soviets bombed Pajari's headquarters at Aittojoki, killing the regimental chaplain while he held Christmas services. The Finnish Air Force retaliated, shooting down four Soviet bombers.

After that, fighting quieted down in the sector to company-sized actions and ski patrols, and in late December the first Finnish-American volunteers to reach the front were deployed to that sector, making up for the heavy losses. It was a token force of about a platoon, but it was in action for the rest of the war, providing at least moral if not material support to the Finnish cause.

Panin and Belaev faced defeat on their side. The 139th Division had lost a regimental headquarters, most of its artillery, and had been thoroughly mauled. Many men, including officers, were close to mutiny. Panin and Belaev ordered the division to withdraw, something the Red Army had not done since the Russian Civil War in 1919. Doing so was a shock to the Soviets and a boost to Finnish morale.

Another casualty of the campaign was the 8th Army's boss, Corps Commander Khabarov, who was replaced by Army Commander (Second Rank) Grigory Mikhailovich Shtern, a Stalin favorite. Ironically, he would be shot in a last-minute purge in June 1941, just before the German invasion of Russia.

The Tolvajärvi campaign was Finland's bloodiest of the war. Talvela lost a third of his officers and NCOs and a quarter of his other ranks, a total of 630 men killed and 1,320 wounded.

Soviet losses were more difficult to count. At least 1,000 died in the snow without being seen or counted. The Finns pulled 4,000 Soviet bodies out of the snow between Tolvajärvi and Aittojoki. Some 5,000 Soviets were wounded and almost 600 taken prisoner, many suffering frostbite due to poor winter clothing. The Soviets also lost 59 tanks and armored cars. The Finns took possession of 220 usable machine guns and light automatic weapons.

Talvela had eliminated the Soviet threat to the entire Ladoga-Karelia Front, burned up the Soviet 8th Army's reserves, and provided his own nation with a huge morale booster after the failure on the Karelian Isthmus. The campaign showed the toughness of the individual Finnish soldier and the weakness of the average Soviet soldier. The Soviet prisoners said they did not know why they were fighting. Perhaps most significantly, the victory displayed the courage and battlefield prowess of numerous Finnish officers.

But nobody thought about this at nightfall on December 23, when the Finns reached the Aittojoki River. The riverbank was a good defensive line, the Soviet threat was decisively checked, and the Finns were exhausted. They had done enough for two weeks, and the weary Finns began digging in, breaking into ration packs. They would enjoy a special treat for Christmas, gifts from the 80,000-strong Lotta Svärd women's organization, including civilian gifts of knitted clothing, delicacies, coffee, brandy, tobacco, and aquavit.

It was a welcome respite from the fighting against the Soviet juggernaut, and it proved all too brief. Soon enough the Red Army would return, and the war would continue until March 1940, as their overwhelming superiority in men and materiel resulted in a costly victory for the invaders.

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ON September 4, 1944, tanks of the British 11th Armored Division lumbered into the outskirts of Antwerp, Belgium. This was the crowning moment of the division's spectacular six-day drive ordered by British XXX Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Sir Brian Horrocks, on August 30. Horrocks' directive was intended to capitalize on that day's crossing of the Seine River in hot pursuit of a thoroughly disorganized German army, decimated and on the run as a result of its defeat in the Normandy campaign of the past eight weeks.

At noon on the 4th, the "Black Bulls" of the 11th pushed into the city proper under orders from Horrocks to "go straight for the docks and prevent the Germans from destroying the port installations." The need to capture Antwerp and the Dutch port city of Rotterdam had been recognized early in the Allied planning of the invasion of Western Europe. Now the first seemed likely to fall.

With a capacity to receive 40,000 tons of matérial a day, Antwerp was the largest port in Western Europe and was far closer to the armies advancing into Germany than Cherbourg, Le Havre, or the English Channel ports. But there was one major problem—it was 60 miles from the sea. No ship could enter it until its approaches were cleared. Capture of the harbor alone would not guarantee its use by the Allies. The Germans had to be prevented from destroying the port facilities and mining and blocking the estuary of the River Scheldt that flowed from the Channel past Antwerp. Nazi coastal batteries lining that waterway had to be eliminated before safe approaches to the river routes could be established.

By nightfall of the 4th, the British tankers had secured most of Antwerp's vital dockyard but then stopped their advance, forfeiting the real opportunity of clearing the entire Antwerp area—including the Scheldt Estuary—and capturing the German Fifteenth Army defending the region while their adversary was disorganized and on the run.

After a dash of 230 miles from the Seine to Antwerp the men of the 11th Armored were exhausted and at the end of their supply line. On the 6th the Black Bulls made a halfhearted attempt to create a crossing over the Albert Canal north of Antwerp but were thwarted by determined German resistance under Lt. Gen. Kurt Chill, who had cobbled together a defense force from the remnants of the German 84th, 85th, and 89th Infantry Divisions and several understrength parachute battalions, a total of 3,000 men to defend the canal's crossing points. Two days later the 11th Armored was ordered 40 miles to the east.

During the battle for Walcheren Island and the effort to open the Scheldt Estuary to Allied supply vessels, Canadian soldiers man their M4 Sherman tanks prior to an advance in September 1944. The Germans fortified both islands and shoreline in the estuary to deny the Allies the use of the port of Antwerp, Belgium.

National Archives

The Hardest Fight

For 55 days, from September to November, the Canadian First Army fought its most bitter battle of the war against a determined foe to capture the vital Scheldt Estuary. BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: In the Breskens Pocket across the West Scheldt from Walcheren Island, German soldiers man a machine-gun position that is partially camouflaged with tree branches. The Germans put up a determined defense against Canadian troops tasked with clearing the Scheldt Estuary to open the river and the port of Antwerp to Allied supply ships. OPPOSITE: Canadian soldiers of the Calgary Highlanders march past a German Sturmgeschutz assault gun that has been knocked out during earlier fighting. This photo was taken in South Beveland during the advance against stubborn German resistance on Walcheren Island in October 1944.

Fixed on reaching the German frontier by the fastest possible means, the Allied army commanders and Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force chief General Dwight G. Eisenhower entirely overlooked the strategic and tactical opportunity that had developed in western Belgium. Eisenhower believed that the "best opportunity for defeating the enemy in the West is to strike at the Ruhr and Saar" the industrial heart of Germany, and that their capture would cripple the country's ability to continue the war. Further, Eisenhower felt that the forces currently opposing the Western powers were weak and disorganized and that the Wehrmacht was on the verge of collapse in the West, hence his broad front strategy of pressing the enemy along the entire line from the English Channel to Switzerland and racing for the Rhine River. With this mind-set, Eisenhower gave no attention to securing the Scheldt Estuary or closing the trap on the Fifteenth Army, which was fleeing the area. This shortsighted strategic focus set the stage for the brutal and prolonged battle the Canadian First Army would have to wage around Antwerp in the coming weeks.

If the Anglo-American high command failed initially to see the strategic importance of the Scheldt Estuary, the same could not be said of its opponents. The sudden appearance of the 11th Armored Division in Antwerp on September 4 sent a shudder of panic throughout the German chain of command. Field Marshal Walter Model, leader of the German forces in the West, ordered the southern elements of the Fifteenth Army to make a fighting withdrawal to the coastal fortresses of Boulogne, Calais, Dunkirk, and Ostend, while the rest of Fifteenth Army made a last ditch effort to secure an escape path eastward to Breda. The herculean efforts of General Chill and his men and the indifference of the Allied high command toward taking the area around Antwerp allowed the German Fifteenth and newly formed First Parachute Armies to organize a shaky defensive line from Antwerp to the Maas River by mid-September.

On September 8, the 4th Canadian Infantry and 1st Polish Armored Divisions of the First Canadian Army came up against stiff German resistance along the Ghent Canal west of Antwerp. Up to that date British Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, commander of the 21st Army Group, had given priority to opening the Channel ports, placing only secondary importance on the destruction of the enemy forces northeast of the Ghent Canal. At the same time the First Canadian Army's zone of responsibility was enlarged to include Ghent and the south shore of the Scheldt to within a few miles of Antwerp.

On the 10th, Eisenhower, who had obliquely been pushing for the capture of Antwerp and the opening the Scheldt, agreed to hold off on that objective until Operation Market-Garden, the Allied land and parachute strike to the Rhine through Arnhem, was completed. Two days later the pressure to clear the Scheldt and thus alleviate Allied supply problems was increased when the Combined Chiefs of Staff stressed the need to do so "before bad weather sets in." That same day Montgomery asked General Harry Crerar, the commander of the First Canadian Army, if he could tackle the problem.

While the Allied military hierarchy slowly came to terms with the issue of opening the Scheldt Estuary to friendly shipping, the Germans had been considering the issue since the tanks of the 11th Armored Division had entered Antwerp early in September. Adolf Hitler ordered Walcheren Island on the north bank of the Scheldt, along with the land communication to it, and the south bank of the estuary along the Albert Canal to the city of Maastricht to be defended to the last bullet. To create a proper defense, Fifteenth Army continued its retreat to the east and connected with the newly created First Parachute Army, establishing a blocking position along the Albert Canal east of Antwerp. Hitler's directive put in motion 100,000 German troops whose task was to secure western Belgium including the Scheldt River region.

The German response to the threat posed by the Allied capture of Antwerp made the task of the First Canadian Army resemble, on a large scale, the reduction of a medieval fortress, a comparison that could be extended to the defensive problems facing the Germans. Fortress Walcheren, as designated by Hitler, was sited to defend a waterway at a vital crossing. South of the river its outer defenses were protected by a moat, the Leopold Canal. Its central "keep" was Walcheren Island itself. The land approach was a long-defended route: the south Beveland Peninsula with a series of gates, Woensdrecht at the base of the peninsula, the Beveland Canal, and finally the 1,000-yard causeway that joined the island to the mainland.

On the "other side of the hill," Colonel General Gustav Adolf von Zangen, chief of Fifteenth Army who was responsible for the Scheldt-Antwerp area, faced two major problems: extricating his forces from south of the Scheldt River and shoring up the defenses east of Antwerp. By September 23, he had accomplished the first task before the Canadians could stop him. He then went about solving his second problem by placing a veteran infantry division to hold the south bank of the Scheldt and another positioned on the Beveland Peninsula and Walcheren Island. Supporting his foot soldiers as well as well as covering the sea approaches, Zangen sited a number of medium 75mm and a score of powerful long-range 105mm and 155mm artillery pieces in strong concrete

emplacements. Topping off the German preparations was the accumulation of enough ammunition and food to sustain the defenders during a long siege.

Since the Normandy breakout in the summer of 1944, the First Canadian Army had protected the long Anglo-American left flank as it raced through France toward Germany's western frontier. First Canadian Army was the most international of the Allied formations. Its Canadian Army troops included a mix of tank and infantry outfits ranging in size from battalions to divisions, and its II Corps was made up of one armored and two infantry divisions. The place of its I Corps, which was fighting in Italy, had been taken by British I Corps. The 1st Polish Armored Division had become almost a permanent fixture in the army. Also included in the army's order of battle were Belgian, Dutch, and Czechoslovakian units.

Crerar was the first Canadian general to lead a field army in battle. Lt. Gen. Guy G. Simonds headed up II Corps, and Lt. Gen. John Crocker led I British Corps. While Crerar and Crocker were both competent officers, Simonds was a gifted combat soldier. When the battle for the Scheldt opened, First Canadian Army numbered about 150,000 men, 600 tanks, and more than 800 artillery pieces.

On September 13, Montgomery finally ordered Crerar to clear the land and sea approaches to Antwerp. Simonds had begun the effort the day before but feared the ground was unsuited for armored operations. He was correct; the number of water-filled canals and wet ground south of the Scheldt made the going slow, and resistance from the German defenders of the 245th Infantry Division was so fierce that it took units of the 4th Canadian and 1st Polish Armored Divisions until the 21st to clear the region south of the Scheldt of the enemy. With the Canadians butting up against the German defenses along the Leopold Canal, the next phase, cutting of the land routes to Walcheren Island to the east of Antwerp, began.

On September 19, II Corps, with the 4th and 1st Polish Armored Divisions leading, initiated a move 20 miles northeast of Antwerp to take the city of Bergen Op Zoom to isolate and attack South Beveland Island from the east. At the same time, British I Corps marched up on II Corps' right and established contact with the British Second Army.

Meanwhile, the Canadian 4th Infantry Division, occupying Antwerp, fought to drive the Germans from their positions just east of the town across the Albert Canal, from where they continually shelled the city's port. On the 22nd, elements of the division established a bridgehead over the canal at the village of Wyneghem east of Antwerp, forcing German defenders of the 67th Corps to abandon their posts. The next German defensive stand at the Antwerp-Turnhout Canal was overcome on the 23rd when the 2nd Canadian and British 49th Infantry Divisions established a bridgehead over that obstacle.

On September 27, new orders came down from Montgomery's 21st Army Group headquarters to free up British Second Army's left flank for a move toward the Ruhr. The Canadians had to maneuver 40 miles east of Bergen Op Zoom to cover the British left. Simonds had no alternative but to send the Poles and 4th Armored northeast since these new orders showed Montgomery was still giving the opening of Antwerp low priority.

Montgomery's continued lack of concern for clearing the Antwerp-Scheldt area stemmed from the debacle of Operation Market-Garden (September 17-26). The failure of Market-Garden forced him to shift formations from the First Canadian and Second British Armies away from the task of seizing the Scheldt and instead send them east to guard the Nijmegen salient. As a result, the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, recently attached to British I Corps, was given the job of sealing off the South Beveland Peinsula.

By now no one in the First Canadian Army was under any illusion about the enemy's ability and determination to fight. Though short on equipment and understrength in manpower, most German units showed steadfastness in defense and a willingness to deliver sharp counterattacks. Referring to the fighting at the Albert Canal, the war diary of the 5th Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division noted: "This was the first time our troops had met the enemy using bayonets."

On the 28th, the 2nd Division took the town of St. Leonard about 15 miles east of Antwerp. Three days later it took nearby Brecht and held it despite constant mortar bombardment and several counterattacks. Polish armor and foot soldiers of the 49th Division were then ordered to break out of the bridgehead on the Antwerp-Turnhout Canal to the northeast with the 49th aiming for Merxplas and the Poles driving for Tilburg along the rail line out of Turnhout. The Germans reacted by canceling their proposed strike at the Nijmegen salient, sending Kampfgruppe Chill (General Chill's ad hoc battlegroup) to Baarle Nassau east of Antwerp to defend the Tilburg area against the Poles. Although a determined assault by Chill's men in conjunction with the 719th Infantry Division,

67th Corps did not succeed in driving the Poles back. Polish losses were severe.

On October 4, Antwerp was finally cleared of Germans. Five days later the British I Corps halted to refit and reorganize. The Canadian 2nd Division returned to the control of Canadian II Corps, while General Crocker was given the British 7th Armored and 51st Infantry Divisions. Two days prior, the 4th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division moved within three miles of Woensdrecht at the eastern base of the South Beveland Peninsula.

Early on a warm October 7, the 5th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Division passed through its sister 4th Brigade on the way to Woensdrencht with the object of sealing off the South Beveland Peninsula. The division's 4th Brigade was sent to the rear, while its 6th Brigade screened the division's right flank back to Brecht. The area was studded with flooded polders rising inland to sand dunes and heathland, with groves of pine and spruce trees all around. As opposing machine-gun fired opened up, companies fought their way into the village of Hoogerheide just east of Woensdrencht, engaging in bitter house-to-house fighting. By dark the town had been taken along with 61 German prisoners. Farther north, other Canadian units had been stopped at the hamlet of Korteven.

The next morning, the 5th Brigade commander was informed by two civilians that a group of 2,000 German infantry supported by eight tanks was preparing to assail the Canadians. These turned out to be the 6th Parachute Regiment of Chill's Kampfgruppe, which had been diverted to the threat developing near Woensdrencht. The German airborne troops were fighting as infantry and had orders to reoccupy Hoogerheide and then move south to Ossendrencht.

During an early afternoon probing attack, the Germans lost a PzKpfw. V Panther medium tank. The first heavy German attacks took place in the evening but were beaten back. On the 6th, the entire 6th Parachute Regiment struck the Canadian left. The effort was thrown back with the loss of two Nazi tanks and a number of infantry casualties. The Canadians counterattacked with a mixed infantry-tank force capturing a wood that overlooked their position. This action netted 31 prisoners.

Later that afternoon, the Germans drove a Canadian infantry company from the outskirts of Woensdrecht. Parts of Hoogerheide were captured by the Germans but retaken. On October 9, Canadian tanks, after pushing onto the Woensdrecht rail line, were repulsed by German tanks and self-propelled guns. The German moves succeeded in keeping open the gate to the Scheldt fortress and its link with the German 70th Infantry Division in South Beveland and Walcheren. On October 2, the Canadian 4th Division had loaned an armored regiment and an infantry battalion to the 2nd Division to protect its open right flank. Although these reinforcements allowed the 2nd Division commander, Maj. Gen. A.B. Matthews, to augment the force attacking the neck of the peninsula, the odds were still not in his favor.

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: At the height of the battle for the Scheldt Estuary, bombs detonate on and around the Weskapelle Dike during a British Royal Air Force bombing raid on October 3, 1944. BELOW: As they continue to battle German troops for control of the Scheldt Estuary, Canadian soldiers traverse a flooded area in an amphibious vehicle.

National Archives

On October 10, the Royal Regiment of Canada, 4th Canadian Brigade picked its way across the sodden polder terrain southwest of Woensdrecht and reached the railway that ran along the isthmus but were not able to cut the highway beyond and parallel to it. As a result, in an operation code-named Angus, the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment), 5th Brigade, 2nd Division was directed to block the rail and road lines near Woensdrecht.

Three days later, during daylight and under cover of friendly artillery, two companies of the Black Watch charged over 1,000 yards of open ground flanked by dikes filled with enemy soldiers. Hit by a hail of machine-gun and artillery fire, their attached tanks unable to keep up due to the flooded ground, and the infantrymen unable to see to fire due to foggy conditions, the Black Watch attack was stopped after two hours. A second effort was made late that day with the same devastating results. German counterattacks with tanks and infantry continued, some resulting in hand-to-hand fighting and firing at point-blank range. The futile attacks cost the Black Watch 183 men killed, wounded, and missing, and the day came to be known as Black Friday to the infantry of the 2nd Division.

After the October 13 attacks it became obvious that the only way the 2nd Canadian Division would be able to break the road link to the Scheldt was to take the high ground around the village of Woensdrecht. From those low hills the Germans could see everything that moved on the bare fields below, which formed the neck of the peninsula. On October 16, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, supported by 168 artillery pieces and tanks, made a night attack capturing Woensdrecht.

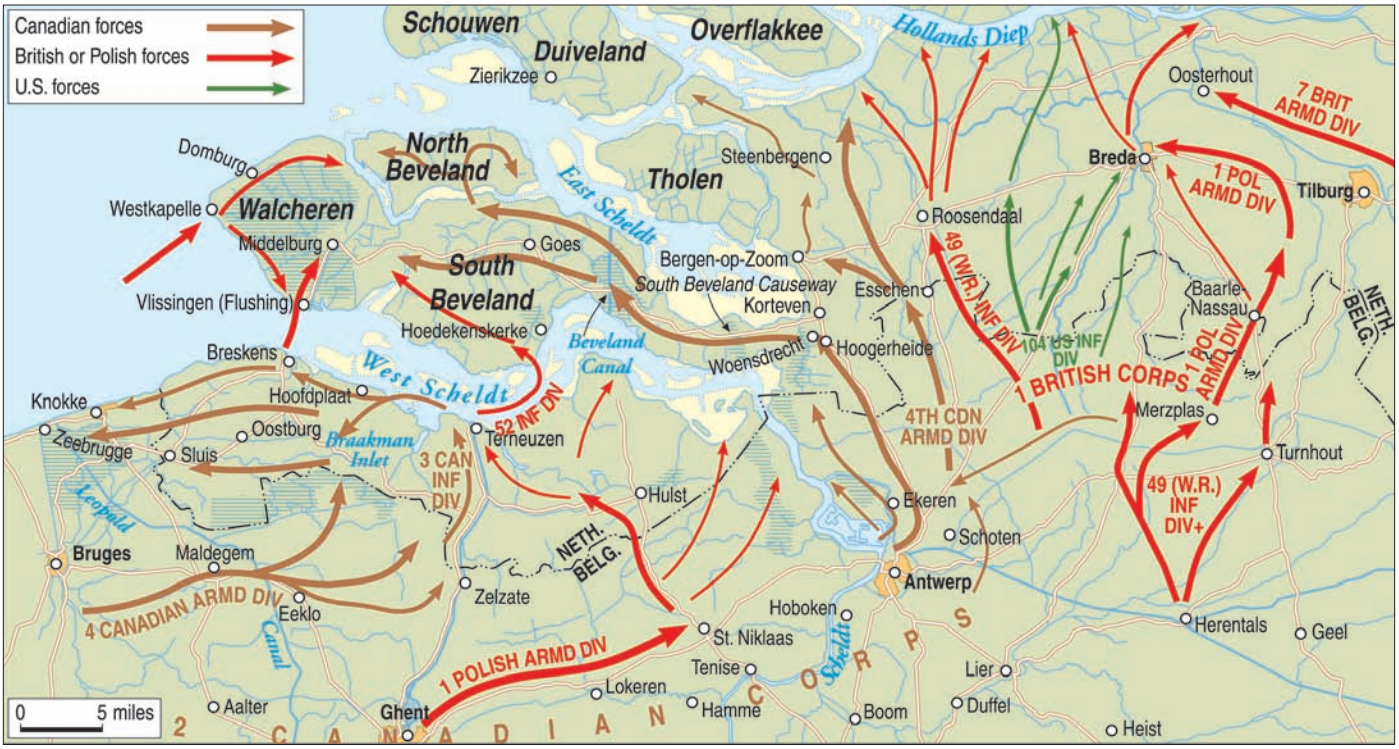
During mid-morning the German 6th Parachute Regiment counterattacked and overran the right flank forward company of the Hamiltons. With the Canadian position in grave danger, a hurricane of friendly artillery fire was ordered down on the threatened sector. Caught in the open, the Germans were annihilated within five minutes.

For the next five days the Hamiltons continued their battle for Woensdrecht, beating off German attacks and ferreting out enemy snipers who lurked in the ruins of the village. The eventual Canadian victory cost them 167 dead.

For the moment the 2nd Division lacked the strength to do more than hold its hard-won gains and wait for help. The Germans realized by October 16th that they could no longer keep the land corridor with Walcheren Island open. They then flooded South Beveland.

Placing more emphasis on opening the approaches to Antwerp, on October 11, 21st Army Group gave that mission its top priority. First Canadian Army was relieved of the responsibility of securing Second British Army's flank. Moreover, the latter was now to drive westward toward Breda to take the pressure off the Canadian right and attempt to trap the enemy south of the Maas River.

With more freedom of action, Simonds, tem-



In the autumn of 1944, Canadian troops mounted an offensive against German positions at the mouth of the River Scheldt. The Canadians struck at multiple points along the East and West Scheldt to secure the area and allow safe passage for Allied supply ships. Without access to the port of Antwerp, miles from the coastline on the banks of the Scheldt, Allied frontline units did not receive a steady supply of matériel.

porarily in charge of the army while Crerar was on sick leave, directed British I Corps to the northwest while the 4th Canadian Armored Division moved to cut off the enemy facing the 2nd Division by taking Bergen Op Zoom. Meanwhile, the 49th, 1st Polish Armored, and newly assigned 104th U.S. Infantry Divisions would head northward for the Maas.

Nearing Breda on the 21st, the 49th Division was attacked by the German 245th Infantry Division. Although the attack was repulsed, it was apparent that the Germans would oppose what they saw as a threat to cross the Maas into Holland.

On the 23rd, the 6th Brigade, 2nd Division drove north to the high ground just south of Korteven, while the 5th Brigade closed the South Beveland isthmus. The following day, the division's 4th Brigade marched west into Beveland and toward Walcheren. From the 27th to the 29th, the Canadians wrestled Bergen Op Zoom from the 6th Parachute Regiment. After more than three weeks of bitter combat, Fortress Scheldt had finally been fully invested.

By the end of September, the Germans south of the Scheldt had been confined to the "island" formed by the deepwater barrier of the Braakman inlet, the Leopold Canal, and the sea. The only land entry to the place was between the eastern end of the Leopold Canal and the Braakman on the Dutch-Belgian border. Known as Isabella, this fortress area held a garrison of the German 64th Infantry Division, 11,000 men strong, mostly veterans from the Eastern Front and Norway. Formed too late to take part in the Normandy battles, it was equipped with 500 machine guns, 200 antitank guns, and 70 pieces of artillery and supported by the five coastal batteries in the area as well as those on Walcheren Island. Well supplied with food and ammunition, it proved a formidable defensive force.

The Canadian 3rd Division was tasked with overcoming what came to be called the Breskens Pocket. The operation was dubbed Switchback. Simonds, blessed with a sufficient number of amphibious vehicles to cross the Scheldt, planned to attack with one infantry brigade where the Germans most expected an enemy assault across the Leopold Canal. A second brigade would soon follow the first. Two days later, after his opponent's attention and reserves had been committed to fend off the first Canadian maneuver, a third brigade would cross the Braakman and land in the German rear.

Two battalions of the 7th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division made the initial assault over the 90-foot-wide canal, which bordered dikes on both its banks. The German defenders were ensconced on the reverse bank of the canal dike, a difficult target for artillery. Flamethrowing Wasp armored fighting vehicles would attempt to clear enemy positions with blazing fuel.

Daylight on October 6 saw a sheet of flame delivered on the German side of the canal followed by the first boats carrying 3rd Division troops over the waterway. Many of the landing parties reached the opposite bank of the canal near Oosthoek unopposed. The defenders mounted several counterattacks. The 7th Brigade's two small bridgeheads were unable to connect, so movement across the canal took place to the right at the village of Moershoofde.

Many of the attackers were confined to the waterlogged canal bank. German counterattacks were so numerous that the Canadians lost count. These assaults, made through narrow passages, were met by Canadian artillery fire on the far bank and many Allied fighter-bomber sorties, which exacted a high price from the Germans.

For five days the contest at the canal continued with the combatants separated by only yards. A Canadian attempt to send over an infantry company was defeated and the unit almost destroyed. For three more days the 7th Brigade struggled to enlarge its bridgehead until engineers bridged the canal on the night of the 13th, allowing tanks to cross. In the meantime, the 9th Brigade had landed to the northeast.

On October 9, the 9th Brigade, 3rd Canadian Infantry Division rushed from the city of Ghent to help the 7th Brigade. The reinforcements

crossed the West Scheldt to the right of the German defenders, landing near the towns of Hoofdplaat and Braakman. Caught by surprise, the German division commander quickly sent in his reserves, followed by elements of the 70th Infantry Division from Walcheren. Aided by artillery fire from Flushing and Berskens, the Germans slowed the 9th Brigade advance. The 3rd Division's last unit, 8th Brigade, was then slated to follow in the wake of the 9th, arriving on October 12. The main thrust of 3rd Division was now east to west instead of south to north.

Fighting along the area's many dikes restricted the Canadian advance to single soldier fronts as the Germans fought with determination. The sky cleared several days after the battle began, allowing Allied airpower to drop 1,150 tons of bombs on the defenders.

On the 14th, south of the Braakman the 4th Canadian Armored Division attacked the Isabella area, meeting the 8th Brigade advancing from the north. By October 18, the 8th Brigade was eight miles from Oostburg at the center of Fortress Scheldt, while the 9th Brigade was two miles from Breskens on the coast. That same day the bloodied 7th Brigade was relieved from its bridgehead on the Leopold Canal by the British 157th Infantry Brigade. By the next day, the Germans had retreated to a shorter line from Breskens to Schoondijke, southwest through Oostburg and Sluis, and along the Sluis Canal to the Leopold Canal.

On October 21, the 9th Brigade stormed Berskens and the 20-foot-wide, 12-foot-deep antitank ditch surrounding it. Passing through the minefields protecting it, the attackers managed to capture the place by midnight, cutting off the Germans' last link to Walcheren. Between the 22nd and 25th the fight for Schoondijke was fierce, but the town fell on the 25th. Oostburg was taken by the 8th Brigade, while 7th Brigade mopped up the west coast. On November 1, the last German resistance, centered on the village of Knocke, was eliminated, thus ending the operation to wipe out the Berskens Pocket.

As October 24 dawned, the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division, across the West Scheldt, advanced up the South Beveland Peninsula toward Walcheren Island 30 miles to the west. To bypass the obstacle created by the Beveland Canal on the path to Walcheren Island, Simonds decided to turn this area with a water-borne landing by the 156th Brigade, 52nd British Infantry Division on the southern shore of the peninsula west of the Beveland Canal. This mission was named Operation Vitality.

On the 26th, as the 2nd Division's 4th Brigade overran the narrowest part of the South Beveland Peninsula, the 156th command landed on two beaches near Hoedekenskerke. During the day it had expanded its bridgehead in spite of a strong enemy counterattack from the north. The invaders then went on to occupy the town of Oudelande. By that afternoon, the Beveland Canal had been outflanked. The Canadians then split their forces, some heading to attack the Beveland Canal from the rear and the balance heading west.

On the 29th, it was certain that South Beveland would soon be in Allied hands. To the west lay the causeway, which carried a road, a rail line, and a bicycle path to Walcheren Island. Over the past few days the German had used these routes to escape the South Beveland Peninsula and find safety in Walcheren. The 2nd Division's 5th Brigade was tasked with securing the causeway, and the division commander did not like the prospects. The 30-foot-wide objective rose a few feet above sodden mud flats and ran straight for 1,000 yards of barren ground across the gap from the mainland.

At midday on October 31, a company of the Black Watch stepped onto the causeway to determine if a crossing was feasible. The brigade's Calgary Highlander Regiment prepared to cross to the island by boat at midnight. If the Black Watch was successful, the rest of the brigade would follow over the causeway.

As the Black Watch soldiers raced over the causeway they were met by a hail of enemy small arms and artillery fire. They soon discovered that a large crater in the road would prevent any tank support from following them.

While the Black Watch discovered the hole in the causeway, engineer officers discovered that even at high tide there would not be enough water to float boats across to Walcheren Island, and the mud flats would not support the weight of amphibious vehicles. In short, there appeared no other route to Walcheren except over the causeway.

Imperial War Museum

National Archives

ABOVE: As the hard-fought campaign to clear the Scheldt Estuary of German resistance draws to a close, British commandos round up surrendering enemy soldiers in Westkapelle. LEFT: British soldiers of the 4th Special Service Brigade join in the assault on the Scheldt Estuary as they wade ashore to attack the town of Flushing on Walcheren Island, which commanded the approaches to the River Scheldt.

Imperial War Museum

As the sound of sniper fire rings out, Scottish soldiers of the 52nd Lowland Division crouch behind a piece of heavy equipment in Flushing on Walcheren Island.

On November 1, regiments of 5th Brigade braved heavy German fire to create a toehold on the western end of the causeway. But severe enemy shelling forced them back to the cratered middle part of the highway. At midnight the 5th Brigade's Le Regiment de Maisonneuve pushed through the Black Watch and established a bridgehead on Walcheren. The 157th Infantry Brigade, 52nd British Infantry Division was then to exploit de Maisonneuve's success.

Dawn broke on November 2 without any signs of 157th Brigade, but there were plenty of Germans, including a few tanks moving east and west of the regiment. Only the intervention of friendly fighter-bombers prevented the de Maisonneuves from being overrun.

Finally at 6 AM, three companies from the Glasgow Highland Regiment, 157th Brigade ran across the causeway to join the Canadians on Walcheren. However, less than two hours later, under heavy enemy fire, the Canadian/British force had to pull back to the road. It was only after a footpath over the mud flats south of the causeway at the Slooe Channel was discovered that enough troops were able to reach Walcheren by November 2 to secure a viable bridgehead on the island and link up with the friendly forces on the causeway.

The Canadians were now poised to capture Walcheren Island, held by the 70th German Infantry Division. Simonds put his scheme for its capture, code-named Infatuate, in motion. His plan called for the air bombardment of the island to breach its dikes to prevent the Germans from flooding the area to impede Allied movement. Using amphibious vehicles, the First Canadian Army could attack the enemy at any time and place of its choosing.

On November 1, the attack on Walcheren commenced. Landing craft were assembled at Breskens to join the 52nd British Infantry Division for an attack on Flushing. More than 300 artillery pieces were sited near Breskens to support the landings. Two seaborne assaults were to be carried out by the 4th Special Service Brigade, one at the town of Flushing on the southern tip of the island, the second at the town of Westkapelle on Walcheren's west coast. Attacks from the South Beveland Peninsula were to coincide with the seaborne landings.

At 4:45 AM, the four-mile crossing of the Scheldt from Breskens to Flushing began, followed shortly by artillery fire and air attacks, which smothered the city's harbor in flames and smoke. By 6 AM, the commandos landed, assaulting the German strongpoints on the beach. The German defenders came to life, pouring heavy fire into the attackers. The 155th Brigade, 52nd Division landed soon afterward.

Four hours after the first landings at Flushing, Royal Marines came ashore near Westkapelle. The Marines, along with 24 flails tanks and bulldozers from of the British 79th Armored Division, headed south for Flushing. Twenty-five Royal Navy warships provided close support. The landings succeeded because the German heavy artillery fire was directed at the ships instead of the landing craft carrying the assault troops and because the four German 150mm guns sited ran out of ammunition just as the infantry came ashore.

Around 3 PM the commandos, advancing through the sand hills, captured the battery near Domburg, but after fierce resistance halted short of the town. Another commando contingent took the artillery battery positioned three miles from Flushing the next day and reached the dike near Flushing on the 3rd.

Meanwhile, on the eastern side of the island the 156th and 157th Brigades fought a bitter battle against the Germans. The two units linked up at the causeway and started to clear the unflooded are east of Middleburg.

Back at Flushing, the 155th Brigade had a hard fight eliminating German forces from buildings and pillboxes. With the town finally in its hands, the 155th started for Middleburg. That town was now the concentration point for the main German defense of Walcheren. Surrounded by the city wall and flooded country, the Germans felt confident they could hold out indefinitely. However, that confidence proved to be misplaced. On October 6, a company of the Royal Scots Regiment floated aboard eight landing craft over flooded fields into the town behind the German defenses. Mistaking the amphibious vehicles for tanks, the town's garrison surrendered.

Early on November 10, the last Germans on Walcheren Island gave up, and the approaches to Antwerp were clear of the enemy. After the war the Germans claimed that the flooding had made their situation impossible since the water prevented their gun positions from being resupplied, disrupted communications, and made troop movement difficult. Canadians and British amphibious capabilities set the course and tempo of the battle.

Throughout November more than 100 minesweepers labored to clear the 267 German mines in the West Scheldt. On the 28th, the first supply convoy to reach Antwerp, made up of 18 ships carrying 10,000 tons of stores, arrived. The cost to the First Canadian Army between October 1 and November 8 to allow the Allies unfettered control of the Scheldt was 703 officers and 12,170 enlisted men killed, wounded, or missing. During the same period the Germans lost 4,100 killed, 16,000 wounded, and 41,000 captured.

On the day the first Allied ships entered Antwerp harbor a ceremony was held to welcome the vessels. Representatives from Eisenhower's headquarters, British 21st Army Group, the Royal Navy, and the Belgian government were present. Ironically, no one from First Canadian Army was invited to attend.

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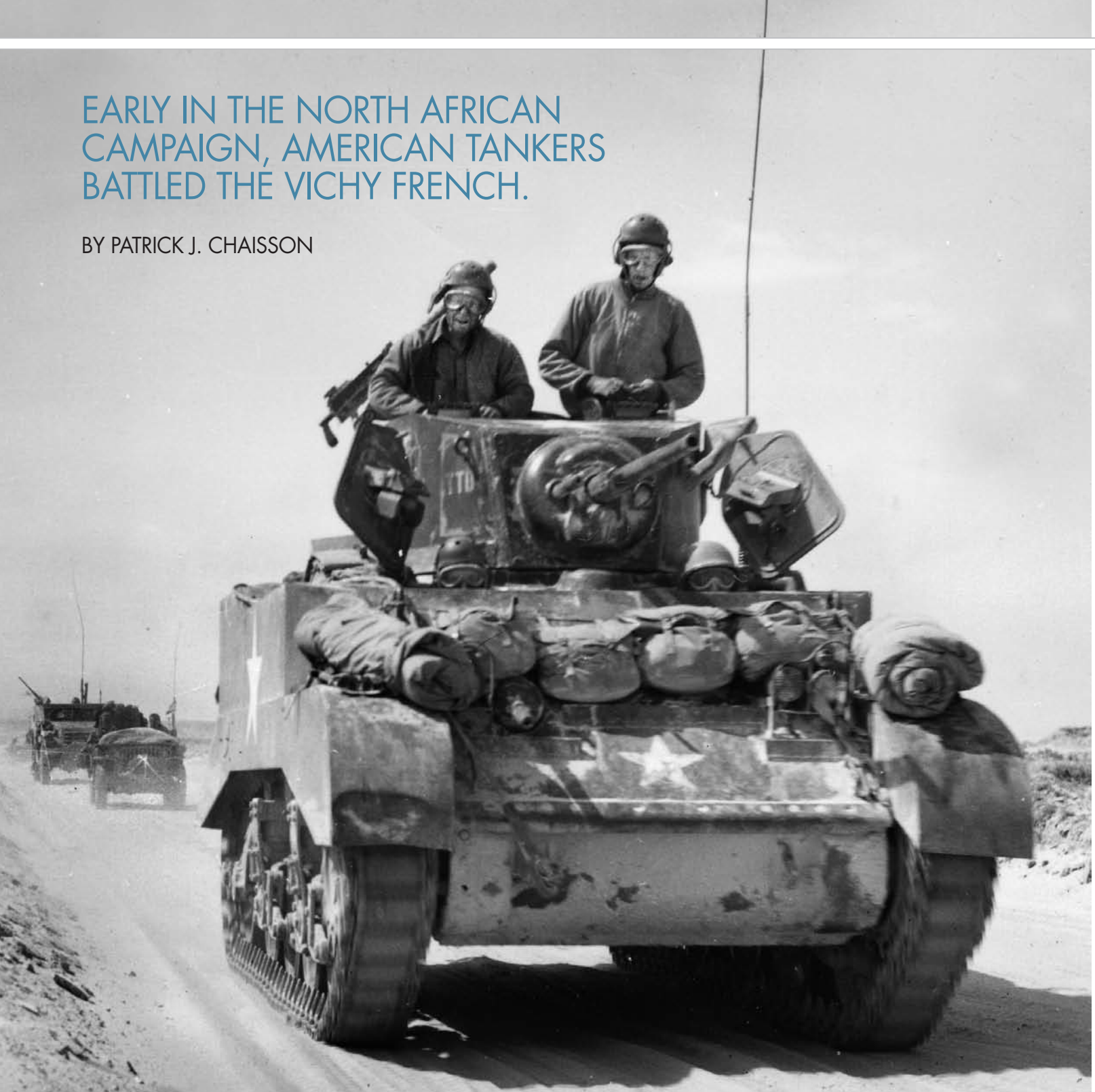
EARLY IN THE NORTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN, AMERICAN TANKERS BATTLED THE VICHY FRENCH.

BY PATRICK J. CHAISSON



A Hit or

LUCIAN TRUSCOTT NEEDED A CIGARETTE.

The 47-year-old brigadier general was having the worst night of his life. Earlier that day, American troops under his command charged ashore on the Atlantic coast of French Morocco as part of Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa. From the start, though, almost nothing went right.

"As far as I could see along the beach there was chaos," Truscott recalled. "Landing craft were beaching in the pounding surf, broaching to the waves, and spilling men and equipment into the water. Men wandered about aimlessly, hopelessly lost, calling to each other and for their units, swearing at each other and at nothing."

Alone in the darkness, General Truscott "sought the comfort of tobacco" and lit a smoke. He was heartened to see the pinpoint glow of other cigarettes appearing along the beach, although Truscott later remarked how surprised his troops would be to learn their commanding general was the first man to disobey his own blackout order.

The flicker of cigarettes at night was but one of many problems facing Truscott and the 9,100 soldiers he commanded. Put ashore by the U.S. Navy after dawn on Sunday, November 8, 1942, these assault troops had as their objective a military airport at Port Lyautey, French Morocco. Allied airmen needed this field, situated nine miles up the twisting Sebou River from the landing beaches on Morocco's Atlantic coast, to cover the invasion. Truscott expected his men to seize it by noon on D-day.

Yet the Port Lyautey aerodrome would not fall to American troops for two days. A variety of factors contributed to this, most of which had to do with the near total inexperience of U.S. Army and Navy forces in the realities of amphibious combat. Landing barges came in late and far off course. Soldiers straggled during exhausting approach marches. Heavy surf and soft sand hampered beach operations, leaving the infantrymen ashore largely without tank, artillery, or medical support.

Worst was the French response to Truscott's invasion. Instead of welcoming his men with brass bands, as one sergeant predicted, Vichy France's colonial forces fought back with everything they had. French fighter planes attacked U.S. troops on the beachhead, while coast artillery guns dueled with American warships offshore. Allied soldiers could only watch helplessly as well-led French reinforcements rushed in from all directions.

Truscott was most concerned with his southern flank. There, U.S. infantry outposts had crumbled under an armored counterattack that threatened to annihilate the entire invasion force. Only the coming of night brought a halt to the enemy's advance, which was sure to resume come morning.

Finishing his cigarette, Truscott considered what to do next. Then from out of the gloom came a man whom Truscott had been seeking all day. Lt. Col. Harry H. Semmes, one of the few combat-tested Americans ashore, dismounted from his M5 Stuart light tank and reported for duty. Truscott's orders were simple: assemble your men, get into position by dawn, and stop the French counterattack.

Semmes saluted and set off on his mission. Only then did the World War I tank veteran ask himself how he was going to defeat 1,000 infantrymen and dozens of armored fighting vehicles with the seven M5s that had managed to land that night. Of this Semmes was sure—the approaching dawn would bring with it a momentous tank battle, one he would fight outnumbered against soldiers once regarded among America's closest allies.

The struggle for Port Lyautey was part of a peculiar conflict fought between colonial French troops and Anglo-American forces from November 8-11, 1942. Allied planners labeled this campaign Operation Torch, while the

Crewmen aboard their Stuart light tank ride unbuttoned along a dirt road in North Africa in early 1943. M5 Stuarts of the U.S. 1st Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment played a pivotal role in securing the Allied foothold in North Africa during the opening hours of Operation Torch in early November 1942.

Miss Affair

National Archives

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: Landing craft unload their cargoes of U.S. Army troops on the beach in North Africa during the opening hours of Operation Torch on November 8, 1942. These troops are coming ashore south of Port Lyautey, where heavy surf played havoc with the initial landings, damaging numerous landing craft and disrupting the timetable for the movement inland toward the earliest Torch objectives. BELOW: Blue Beach was the scene of the U.S. 1st Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment's landfall in North Africa. The unit's commander, Lt. Col. Harry H. Semmes, played a key role in subduing Vichy French resistance in the area with only a handful of M5 tanks that were able to land on the first day.

French called it *la guerre des trois jours*—the three-day war. Whatever its name, this massive expedition was easily the most ambitious, complicated endeavor of its kind yet attempted during World War II.

Torch originated in the strong desire of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt to "open a second front" against the Axis powers. Reacting to pressure from the Soviet Union, then reeling from Nazi Germany's seemingly unstoppable onslaught, Churchill and Roosevelt vowed to begin offensive operations against Hitler's legions before the end of 1942. By doing so, they hoped to draw German troops away from the Eastern Front while demonstrating to Soviet Russia the Western Allies' commitment to victory—a sentiment viewed with great suspicion by Soviet Premier Josef Stalin, whose Red Army had thus far done most of the war's fighting and dying.

Although top political leaders were in agreement on the need for a second front, military officers within the British and American high commands clashed bitterly with one another over this campaign's strategic scope and objectives. British planners envisioned an amphibious assault on North Africa to serve as a stepping-stone for follow-on invasions in southern Europe while simultaneously gaining control of the Mediterranean Sea. Their American counterparts were anxious to retake France and lobbied strenuously for a bold cross-Channel invasion, possibly as early as 1943.

President Roosevelt, mindful of his promise to Stalin, twice directed his Joint Chiefs of Staff to cooperate with British officers as they planned an Anglo-American invasion to occur somewhere in North Africa or the Middle East during 1942. Thus, rather reluctantly, the U.S. military began preparing for what would become Operation Torch.

Torch's final plan called for simultaneous attacks on French Morocco and Algeria in northwestern Africa. Key objectives were the Algerian ports of Oran and Algiers on the Mediterranean Sea, as well as Casablanca along Morocco's Atlantic coastline. Once established on land, Allied forces would head for Tunisia, 500 miles to the east, where they were to eventually link up with General Bernard Law Montgomery's Eighth Army, then advancing through Libya.

A worldwide shipping shortage troubled Allied officers, as did the U-boat threat. The region's geography also presented operational challenges. Any convoy passing the Straits of Gibraltar bound for landing beaches in Algeria would be threatened by Axis-leaning Spain. Worse, Nazi Germany might use an Allied offensive as a pretext to occupy the Spanish mainland or its colony in Spanish Morocco, closing the Straits and marooning Allied forces in their Mediterranean lodgments.

But the chief cause of Allied anxiety was France. With 109,000 servicemen in North Africa, bolstered by tanks, aircraft, and a modern surface fleet, the Vichy, or collaborationist, French military could greatly disrupt any Anglo-American landing attempt if it chose to fight. The Allies, then, had to prepare themselves for this contingency while holding out hope that these colonial forces would not resist an invasion.

Following France's surrender in June 1940, Axis officials installed a puppet government located in the small resort town of Vichy. With World War I hero Field Marshal Henri Petain as its president, the Vichy regime ostensibly administered France's overseas possessions as well as an unoccupied region on the French mainland known as the Free Zone. While tightly controlled by the Nazi regime, Vichy France was permitted the means to defend its African colonies against foreign invasion. Whether this meant invasion from Germany or the Allies, no one was yet sure.

Allied commanders especially feared well-armed and belligerent French naval forces based at the crucial port cities of Casablanca and Oran. Vichy warships there could decimate a landing attempt even while docked, so direct assaults against those harbors were ruled out. Instead, invading armies would have to land some distance away and maneuver cross-country to converge on their objectives.

For example, Maj. Gen. George S. Patton Jr.'s Western Task Force needed to storm three widely

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American soldiers drag an antitank gun through the surf on a Moroccan beach on November 8, during the initial landings. The soft sand made beach operations difficult during the first several days of operations.

separated beaches in order to surround Casablanca. Safi, 140 miles south of the city, possessed a harbor suitable for unloading medium tanks directly off their transport ships. Fédala, 12 miles north of Casablanca, was Patton's main effort. His assault columns would then march on Casablanca and, with luck, seize its docks before French reinforcements could arrive. Seventy miles north of Fédala stood the all-weather runway at Port Lyautey, desperately needed by Allied air commanders to cover the invasion force. Patton knew all three operations had to succeed; the eyes of the world were upon him.

To take Safi Patton entrusted the 2nd Armored Division, an outfit he had recently commanded. Elements of the well-trained 3rd Infantry Division, fighting under Patton's personal supervision, got Fédala. A reinforced regimental combat team (RCT) from the 9th Infantry Division, designated Sub-Task Force Goalpost, was identified for the Port Lyautey landings.

Goalpost required a general officer to command the 9,079 combat and service support personnel assigned to it. Accordingly, Truscott reported to Patton's headquarters for this position in September 1942. A gravel-voiced Texan, Truscott's last posting was as U.S. liaison to the British Combined Staff. He had witnessed the raid on Dieppe that August and also headed up a team that drafted the initial concept for Torch. Truscott, a career cavalryman, appeared perfectly suited to lead the Port Lyautey invasion.

Most of the soldiers earmarked for Sub-Task Force Goalpost were stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Truscott traveled there at the end of September to meet Colonel Frederick J. de Rohan of the 60th RCT, whose riflemen would form Goalpost's backbone. Also present was Lt. Col. Harry Semmes, commanding the 1st Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment. Semmes had served with Patton's tank corps during World War I, and when he learned no officer over the age of 50 would be allowed to deploy for Torch, went directly to his old boss pleading to be taken along.

"You can come," Patton exclaimed after listening to Semmes' appeal. "In fact, I'll make you an armored landing team commander." Semmes happily returned to his battalion and immediately began preparing it for the landings.

In camps across the United States and Great Britain, invasion forces gathered to ready themselves for this historic expedition. Troop lists were drawn up, training programs accelerated, and the myriad logistical details necessary for such an unprecedented transoceanic assault completed. It did not proceed smoothly. As historian Samuel Eliot Morison observed, "Preparations came to a close in the latter part of October in an atmosphere of unrelieved improvisation and haste." These measures would have to suffice, as D-day was set for Sunday, November 8, 1942.

Issues of terrain bothered Goalpost's planners. The Sebou River emptied into the Atlantic at a small resort village named Mehdia. Adjacent beaches permitted amphibious landings when surf conditions were right, although in November the ocean off Mehdia was notorious for its high tides. South of town, a lagoon stretching for almost four miles paralleled the shoreline. Attacking soldiers exiting north around the lagoon were channeled into a marshy gap; those heading south had to surmount an easily defended gorge before reaching the coast road to Rabat. North of the Sebou, trackless, scrub-covered ridgelines limited vehicular movement. The river itself could support ship traffic of up to 15-foot draft for the nine-mile journey to Port Lyautey and its airport.

All of these considerations plus the vital factors of weather, time, and tide, were evaluated by Truscott's staff as it developed the invasion plan. It was a complex one. H-hour was set for 0400, two hours before sun up. The 60th RCT would land on five widely separated beaches along both sides of the Sebou, advancing rapidly inland to seize the airfield. The 54 tanks of Semmes' armored battalion were to act as a reserve and exploitation force. To preserve surprise there would be no preparatory naval bombardment—all objectives were to be taken "with cold steel."

Perhaps reflecting Truscott's Dieppe experience, an old "four-stack" destroyer, the USS *Dallas,* would enter the Sebou at high tide and beach itself opposite the airfield. Then, 75 raider-trained infantrymen were to disembark and assault their objective under covering gunfire from *Dallas*. If all worked to plan, the field would be in American hands no later than 1100 hours and open to Army Air Forces Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk fighter planes (carried aboard the escort carrier USS *Chenango*) later that afternoon.

Opposing the men of Sub-Task Force Goalpost in Port Lyautey were 3,080 colonial troops of the 1st Regiment of Tirraleurs Morocco, a light infantry formation largely equipped with Great War-vintage weapons. They were solid fighters, however, and ably led by a 48-year-old veteran named Colonel Jean Petit.

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Petit's riflemen were augmented by a group of nine modern antitank guns, three light tanks, an engineer company, and several batteries of artillery. Within six hours they could be reinforced by a regiment of 1,200 Spahis, horse and mechanized cavalry, stationed 90 miles inland at Meknès. More substantial support would come from the colonial capital of Rabat, 29 miles to the south. There, the 1st Regiment of Chasseurs d'Afrique stood ready with two battalions of truck-borne infantry, a squadron of armored cars, and 47 Renault tanks.

Other French forces were determined to hold Port Lyautey. From a bluff overlooking the mouth of the Sebou River loomed the Kasbah, a 16th-century Portuguese stone fort. Nearby were emplaced six modern 138.6mm coastal defense guns, each with a range of 12 miles. The entire plateau bristled with earthworks; 75mm howitzers crewed by the Légion Etrangère (French Foreign Legion) covered both the Kasbah and neighboring beach exits.

American commanders hoped their landings would go uncontested, but General Charles Noguès, commander of all military forces in French Morocco, had to resist for reasons of national survival. Noguès could not know whether Allied operations meant an all-out invasion or were merely a raid like Dieppe. If he surrendered to a raiding party not intent on holding Morocco, German retribution would be swift and violent. From Noguès' headquarters in Rabat, through the regional command post of Maj. Gen. Maurice Mathenet in Meknès, down to Colonel Petit in Port Lyautey the message was clear: you will fight.

A silent procession of warships steamed toward the Moroccan coast during the night of November 7-8, 1942. This was the Northern Assault Group, commanded by Rear Admiral Monroe Kelly. The battleship USS *Texas* and light cruiser USS *Savannah* stood by to deliver naval gunfire support, while six destroyers and a pair of minesweepers helped shepherd the landing waves. Naval aircraft from the escort carrier USS *Sangamon* provided air cover and antisubmarine protection.

The invasion started poorly when several transports fell out of position off the landing areas. Due to a shortage of barges, it took time—too much time—for the assault waves to assemble and begin loading troops. General Truscott even shuttled from ship to ship, trying to speed the debarkation process. Returning at 0430 hours to his command post aboard the SS *Henry T. Allen,* Truscott was stunned to learn his communications officer had intercepted a radio broadcast from President Roosevelt asking the French not to oppose American landings in North Africa.

Sub-Task Force Goalpost had lost the element of surprise, upon which much of its plan depended. Faced with a number of unpleasant alternatives, Truscott decided to press on with a dawn assault. As the sky lightened over Morocco at 0540 hours, American troops stormed ashore.

It did not take long for the French to react. Naval observers first saw searchlights flash on, illuminating the landing craft. A red flare then shot up into the murk, followed by heavy small arms fire. Soon, coastal guns bracketed the destroyer *Eberle*; she returned fire and began evasive maneuvers. By 0630 hours, *Savannah* and the destroyer *Roe* were trading salvoes with Vichy coast artillery near the Kasbah.

At dawn a number of Dewoitine 520 fighter planes appeared over the invasion area, strafing several beaches and attacking one of *Savannah*'s spotter planes before Grumman F4F Wildcat fighters from the *Sangamon* chased them away. Navy bombers also worked over the Port Lyautey airfield, catching several Vichy planes on the ground. But the heaviest action was taking place on shore.

Following an unopposed assault on beaches south of the Sebou, Major John H. Dilley's 2nd Battalion Landing Team (BLT) advanced to capture the Kasbah and its attendant coast artillery. The sound of shells passing overhead from *Roe* and *Savannah* disordered Dilley's inexperienced battalion, however, and it sat paralyzed until those guns checked fire. French forces took this opportunity to rush reinforcements in from Port Lyautey; later that morning a Vichy counterattack led by three ancient

Renault FT tanks almost drove the 2nd BLT into the ocean before it was blunted by Colonel de Rohan's last infantry reserves.

There would be no help from the 3rd BLT, commanded by Lt. Col. John J. Toffey, landing to the north. This battalion was badly delivered five miles away from its designated beach and spent the entire day laboriously slogging over sand dunes while trying to gain proper positions. The raiding party aboard *Dallas* remained offshore as Vichy machine guns earlier drove off a scout boat whose mission was to cut an antishipping boom across the Sebou.

The men of Major P. DeWitt McCarley's 1st BLT also landed far from their intended beaches. They made an exhausting foot march around the lagoon's southern end, dropping off several platoons of Company A (accompanied by 37mm cannons of the battalion antitank platoon) to picket the coastal road. The remainder of McCarley's outfit then maneuvered overland toward the airfield against stiffening opposition. Automatic weapons fire halted the 1st BLT at dusk, several miles from its objective.

The guns and matériel needed to overcome this unexpectedly fierce resistance were not getting ashore. As the day wore on the seas grew rougher. Dozens of landing craft foundered in the surf, too badly damaged for harried shore parties to repair. After enemy shells straddled his transport ships, Admiral Kelly had no choice but to move them out to a safer area 15 miles offshore—"halfway to Norfolk," Truscott grumbled. The surviving barges now faced a 30-mile round-trip journey, further slowing the delivery of equipment and supplies.

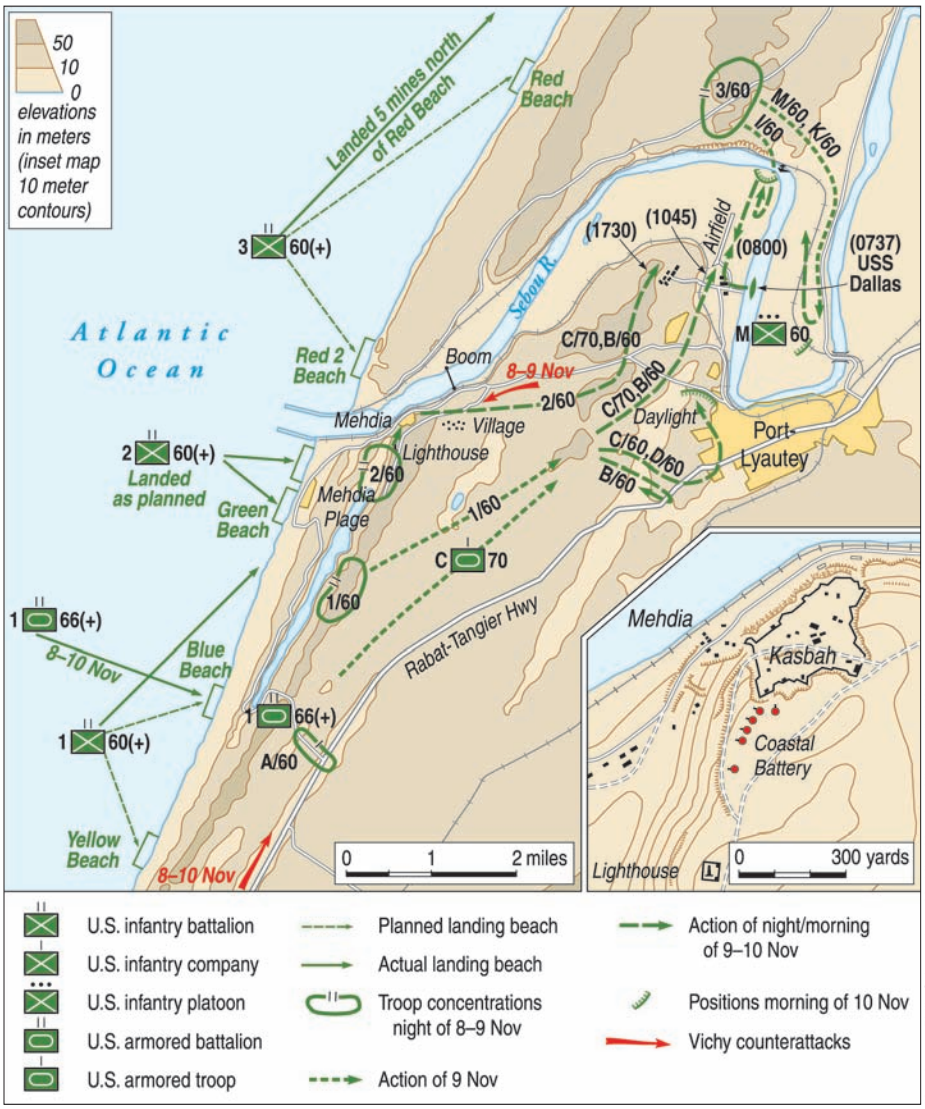
Worse, the transports were now out of radio range. General Truscott had to find out what was going on, so at 1500 hours he went ashore. His jeep, like so many other vehicles on the beach, immediately became mired in heavy sand; Truscott was forced to borrow a half-track for his first tour around the battlefield. What he saw greatly discouraged him: infantry pinned down by a few machine guns, stragglers everywhere, supplies piled up on the beach with no apparent organization, and few leaders pushing their men forward.

Toward nightfall, dazed riflemen from McCarley's Company A began filtering back with tales of strong enemy attacks along Goalpost's southern flank. Earlier in the day, two U.S. infantry platoons had marched out to establish blocking positions along the coast road. Nothing had been heard from them since midafternoon, and now Company A's commander was reported missing as well.

The advance guard of French chasseurs driving north from Rabat had swallowed these American outposts whole. Truck-borne infantry and armor overwhelmed a U.S. platoon at Sidi Bou Knadle, eight miles south of Mehdia, and then turned their weapons on 2nd Lt. Jesse Scott's roadblock set up one mile away. Well-trained Moroccan riflemen supported by tanks made short work of Scott and his soldiers. Vichy forces then pushed against Company A's main battle position, knocking out a 37mm antitank gun and capturing 2nd Lt. John Allers, the company commander. The French counterattack halted almost within sight of the beach, called off due to darkness and a line of American guns—dragged to the crest of a hill—that disabled two Renault tanks.

In the meantime, determined boat crews had managed to deliver seven M5 light tanks of Harry Semmes' 3rd Armored Landing Team before rising surf closed the beaches. Semmes collected his tanks and before dawn moved out to a ridgeline marking Goalpost's southern flank. Here he learned the radios and telescopic sights on all his Stuarts had come out of alignment during the journey overseas. Semmes' tankers would have to fight much like their fathers did in World War I, using hand and arm signals while firing only at point-blank range.

On foot, Semmes guided his tanks into position along the ridge. A pair of M5s, commanded by Lieutenant John Mauney, covered the Rabat road from the west while the remaining five Stuarts, under Semmes' control, sited

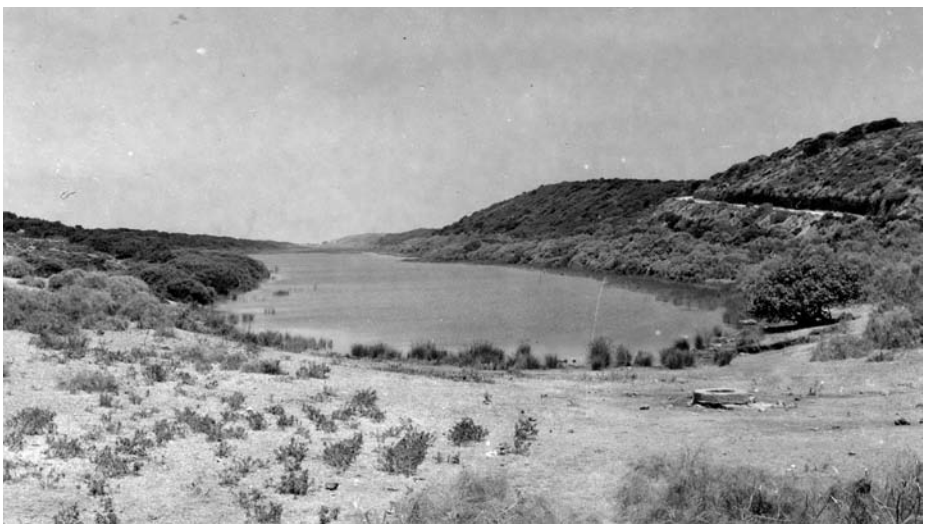


Map © 2016 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

ABOVE: The American landings at Port Lyautey were a difficult undertaking, particularly in light of the inexperience of the troops in amphibious operations. When Vichy French resistance proved substantial, General Lucian Truscott turned to American tanks to carry the operation to its successful climax. OPPOSITE: The U.S. Army had virtually no experience in amphibious operations by the time Operation Torch commenced in November 1942, and the extent of that inexperience was painfully evident during the opening hours of the offensive in North Africa. In this photo, American soldiers walk and stumble through the surf on a North African beach. When General Lucian Truscott came ashore, he found chaos.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: This Stuart light tank is equipped with a 37mm main weapon and a .30-caliber machine gun in the turret glacis for defense against enemy infantry. This photograph was taken in the city of Casablanca a few days after the Operation Torch landings. BELOW: In this area south of Mehdia Plage, a pivotal tank battle took place between American and Vichy French armored forces. In the distance beyond the lake lies the Kasbah, where a garrison of 250 Vichy French troops had to be neutralized.



themselves on the east side of the coast road. The American tankmen waited anxiously for daylight, certain a French attack was imminent.

The first streaks of dawn on November 9 revealed two battalions of Vichy infantry advancing from a white farmhouse a half mile away. Mauney's tank section rode out to engage them. Deadly antipersonnel rounds and machine-gun fire from his two M5s nearly annihilated the lead company and so demoralized the rest that they never again offered serious resistance that day. But a bigger threat soon emerged from the edge of a cork forest to the east.

There, 14 two-man Renault R-35 tanks could be seen crawling forward against Semmes' tiny force, firing armor-piercing rounds from their 37mm Puteaux cannons. Shell after shell struck Semmes' Stuart. "I noticed there would be a shower of sparks when the front armor plate was hit," he recalled. But, according to Semmes, instead of exploding "the white-hot hard steel core of the French shells ricocheted off ... high into the air."

Because their own guns were not bore-sighted, American tank crews had to hold fire until the Vichy armor grew dangerously close, 100 yards, to ensure hits. The M5's 37mm was more powerful than its French counterpart, though, and U.S. shells easily punched through the Renaults' plating. That was hardly the end of Harry Semmes' troubles, however. He later wrote, "Because the weather was chilly, the mechanisms of the breeches of our American tank guns did not properly eject the empty shells when the guns were fired. All the loaders, who were also the tank commanders, lost their fingernails clawing out the shells after the guns had been fired."

By backing into protected hull defilade positions while reloading, the Stuarts managed to keep their thicker frontal armor to the enemy and stay alive. But Semmes feared the advancing French tanks would soon flank his attenuated line. He soon received help from an unexpected source.

At daylight, the *Savannah* catapulted a pair of Curtiss SOC-3 Seagull spotter aircraft off its aft turret. These bi-wing floatplanes carried a crew of two and were armed with depth charges, a fixed forward-firing .30-caliber machine gun, and another .30-caliber on a flexible mount for rear defense. The SOC-3's chief weapon, however, was its radio.

Flying low over the battlefield, one of *Savannah*'s Seagulls observed the desperate tank fight taking place between Semmes' M5s and the Vichy Renaults. Radioing target data back to its mother ship, the vulnerable spotter plane then banked away to adjust fire. At 0750 hours, the first of 121 6-inch shells from *Savannah*'s main batteries began crashing in.

This shower of high explosives proved too much for the chasseurs. Pummeled by *Savannah*'s guns, all surviving R-35s began withdrawing into a nearby eucalyptus grove only to be savaged by a flight of low-flying Grumman TBF Avenger bombers from the *Sangamon*. Down on the battlefield, Semmes counted four destroyed Renaults—two of which his crew could claim. Semmes' tank had been struck by eight Vichy shells, all of which failed to penetrate its steel hide.

General Truscott arrived in time to witness the battle's aftermath. In the valley below, "a number of bodies were sprawled about in the various postures of sudden death," he remembered. Harry Semmes described the fight his team had just won and requested reinforcements. An orbiting Seagull had just reported that the French were regrouping for another, larger attack.

It was not long before assistance arrived. Two half-track-mounted 75mm assault guns took up position toward the ocean, while 10 additional Stuarts extended Semmes' line eastward into an adjacent cactus patch. These tanks belonged to Company C, 70th Tank Battalion, Captain William A. Edwards commanding, and were attached to Goalpost to provide infantry support. Instead, Edwards' M5s would fight their first battle against enemy armor.

At 0900 hours the second Vichy assault began. One column of R-35 tanks moved up the valley while another infantry-armor formation attempted a flanking maneuver. They ran right into Company C, hidden among the cactus. Stuarts and Renaults played a deadly game of hide-and-seek. The tank commanded by 2nd Lt. Raymond Herbert had just killed an

R-35 at point-blank range when it was hit in the side by French gunners. Herbert's M5 burst into flames, badly wounding all four crewmen. Another Stuart was also destroyed in the fight.

Yet the Americans, aided by *Savannah*'s accurate gunnery, managed to hold. Tearing tank-sized craters in the ground, the cruiser's 6-inch shells terrified the chasseurs and kept them from reorganizing. Her SOC-3 spotter planes got into the action too, even dropping 325-pound depth charges on Vichy targets. One of these projectiles exploded right next to a Renault, the concussion crushing everyone inside while leaving the tank's hull intact.

When it was all over, Lt. Col. Semmes counted 27 burning R-35s and more than 100 dead French colonial soldiers sprawled in the fields below. American casualties totaled eight wounded. By 1430 hours the situation had stabilized, allowing Truscott to transfer Company C's Stuarts for duty elsewhere. The rest of Semmes' battalion, now with operational radios and gunsights, soon began arriving to help guard the invasion's southern rim. While Vichy forces would make another halfhearted assault on November 10, U.S. tankers and the *Savannah*'s big guns quickly sent them scurrying back to Rabat.

The infantrymen of Sub-Task Force Goalpost could now focus on seizing their primary objective, the Port Lyautey aerodrome. Major McCarley's 1st BLT, with Company C's Stuarts in support, conducted an afternoon attack that wiped out 28 machine guns and four antitank guns. By sunrise on the 10th, they were ready to make one final push to the airfield. The 3rd BLT, converging from the north, stood ready to cross the Sebou River on rubber rafts once the signal was given.

But the Kasbah, now garrisoned by 250 diehard Vichy troops, refused to yield. Repeated American assaults on November 9 were easily repulsed. Feeling intense pressure to complete his mission, Truscott ordered Colonel de Rohan to personally lead a dawn attack the next day. The Americans were learning. Their early morning action started with two 105mm self-propelled howitzers blasting apart the Kasbah's heavy wooden doors, followed by eight Navy Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bombers swooping down to plaster their targets with 500-pound bombs. Bayonet wielding infantrymen then rushed in, securing the Kasbah by 1050 hours.

While this assault was taking place, the USS *Dallas* proceeded up the Sebou River to run itself aground near the Port Lyautey airport. *Dallas*' raiding party then went ashore via rubber boats to assist in capturing the airfield. By midmorning it was firmly in American hands—2 1/2 hours later, the first P-40s from *Chenango* began landing.

National Archives

This aerial view of the Kasbah offers some indication of the difficulty assaulting ground troops experienced in capturing the fortress during the early phase of Operation Torch. American ground forces needed support from artillery and U.S. Navy dive bombers that plastered the Kasbah with 500-pound bombs.

As darkness fell, U.S. troops could feel French resistance begin to fade. Telephone lines had already been humming for hours, carrying conversations between General Noguès in Rabat and Admiral François Darlan, the Vichy commander in North Africa, speaking from his Algiers headquarters. Sometime after 1930 hours Darlan issued a formal order declaring a suspension of hostilities. In Port Lyautey, Maj. Gen. Mathenet had taken command of Vichy forces. At 2330 he sent messengers to arrange a parley with Truscott the next morning.

At 0800 hours on November 11, the immaculately dressed French general passed through American lines under a flag of truce. Truscott, flanked by an honor guard of Harry Semmes' tanks, met Mathenet at the Kasbah to direct terms for the cease-fire. After a final exchange of salutes, the two men took their leave of one another—no longer enemies but not yet allies. The battle for Port Lyautey was over.

The remains of 84 U.S. soldiers who lost their lives during this operation were laid to rest in a newly established military cemetery near the Kasbah. Another 11 sailors perished during the three-day fight, while 275 Americans were listed as wounded or missing. French casualties amounted to some 350 men killed, injured, or missing in action. In return for these losses, the Allies gained an air base sorely needed to keep critical sealanes open along the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Northwest Africa.

American commanders also acquired valuable experience in the intricate art of amphibious operations, skills they later put to good use at Sicily, Salerno, Anzio, and Normandy. Torch had been an initiation into the universe of combat for many U.S. fighting men, although their first taste of battle against the French left many officers and men with mixed feelings.

Truscott best expressed their doubts in his official report. "The combination of inexperienced landing crews, poor navigation, and desperate hurry resulting from lateness of hour," he wrote, "finally turned the debarkation into a hit-or-miss affair that would have spelled disaster against a well-armed enemy intent upon resistance."

The troops of Sub-Task Force Goalpost would experience that well-armed enemy soon enough. Even as Truscott's soldiers were congratulating themselves on a successful invasion, battle-hardened German forces began pouring into neighboring Tunisia. Defeating those veterans would take months of tough combat, as well as the lives of many more Allied fighting men.

Patrick J. Chaisson is a retired U.S. Army officer, who during his military career held commands in armor, cavalry, and airborne units. He resides in Scotia, New York.

By Christopher Miskimon

National Archives

The Last Days of World War II

The end of the Third Reich was filled with fear, tension, and political intrigue for both the victors and the vanquished.

GRIEFSWALD, A SMALL GERMAN CITY ON THE BALTIC COAST, LAY DIRECTLY IN the path of Soviet tanks on April 30, 1945. Fear ran throughout the town as Germans worried what the approaching Russians might do to them in return for what the Third Reich inflicted on the Soviet Union in years past. A resident German commander, Colonel Rudolf Hagen, took matters into his own hands. He gathered a group of local officials and began negotiating for Greifswald's surrender.

The meeting took place at 3 AM. Eight hours later, the first Russian tanks entered the city. Soviet officers accepted the German capitulation and occupied the town. It was all completed very quickly, and order was maintained. The next day the rector of the local university noted in his diary that there were isolated reports of looting and rape. The Germans again met with the Soviet commander, and they agreed to post police throughout the town to maintain peace and order. Griefswald's people had avoided not only the destruction of their home but also the rampant violation of their very persons.

A Soviet Red Army tank pauses during the final drive on the Nazi capital of Berlin. A dead German soldiers lies unburied and virtually unnoticed in the scene of both triumph and destruction.

The town of Demmin, a few miles southwest, suffered a far worse fate. A Soviet armored formation approached it on April 30. Town leaders hoisted a white flag on the church tower. The Russian commander, eager to avoid a pitched battle for the town, exhorted his men to maintain their discipline and refrain from abusing the local civilians. A trio of soldiers was sent to negotiate the town's surrender, armed with a promise to spare the townspeople from looting and theft if they gave up peacefully. Hopes on both sides were tragically dashed by a detachment of SS troops, who ambushed the negotiators, killing all three. They then proceeded to retreat through the town, destroying bridges as they went. This may have slowed the avenging Soviet columns, but it also trapped the German civilians. The citizens raised more white flags as the Russians entered Demmin, but fanatic Hitler Youth opened fire on them. Enraged, the Russian troops set the town ablaze.

Panic gripped the people within the town. Many began committing suicide, terrified beyond reason of what the Russians would now do to them. Entire families perished this way. For their part, some Soviet soldiers inflicted a spree of rape on the female inhabitants. Others, horrified at what their comrades were doing, tried to stop the waves of suicides and brutality occurring amid the flames. By the next day more than 900 Germans were dead and the dreaded Soviet NKVD field police had to be brought in to quell the chaos.

April 30 also marked Adolf Hitler's death by suicide. Simultaneously, his Third Reich was also in its death throes. Germany was besieged from east and west by the triumphant Allied armies; another nation would have long since relented. The Nazis had such a hold over their populace as to make them continue fighting long after any hope of ending the struggle short of full defeat was over. It was a period of swirling bedlam as Allied troops tried to end the war, racing toward agreed upon lines that delineated future sectors of control.

Axis troops tried desperately to hold off the advancing Soviets to allow more of their soldiers and civilians to reach the Americans and British, where it was assumed they would be safe from revenge. This confused period is laid out in *After Hitler: The Last Ten Days of World War II in Europe* (Michael Jones, NAL Caliber, New York, 2015, 374 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliogra-

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phy, index, $27.95, hardcover).

At the battlefield level individual soldiers and civilians struggled to stay alive in the churning turmoil of the final destruction of Nazi Germany. There was truly no point in further bloodshed, but the troops still received orders and were still moved across the map with little choice but to continue. Civilians had to deal with starvation, the depredations of the enemy, and even the callousness of their own soldiers. At the higher levels, generals, heads of state, and politicians strived to end the war on terms favorable to their respective peoples and in a way that negated the already growing cracks in the alliance, cracks the surviving Axis leadership tried to exploit. In the end these efforts were successful due to the work of myriad players from Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower down to junior officers given missions in the field on short notice.

The author does an excellent job relating the numerous facets of the war's final days. The reader gains a solid understanding of how people great and small wove together the events that ended history's greatest conflict in Europe. The writing is clear and compelling, full of vignettes highlighting the experiences of the participants. His analysis of decision making and actions is thoughtful and possessed of insight. The book sheds light on a dark time, putting the reader amid the battlefield smoke and closed-door meetings that culminated in the war's end.

Hump Pilot: Defying Death Flying the Himalayas During World War II (Nedda R. Thomas, History Publishing Company, Palisades, NY, 2015, 192pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $18.95, softcover)

Flying the Hump was among the most dangerous air transport missions a pilot could perform during World War II. This was all the more poignant because the danger posed by the enemy was relatively low. No antiaircraft guns waited among the peaks and valleys of the Himalaya Mountains. Encounters with Japanese fighters were rare. The true dangers were posed by the environment. Weather could change quickly, and the harsh terrain virtually precluded a survivable crash landing. An engine failure was likewise an almost certain death sentence. Even when a crew survived a crash landing, the freezing cold and winds would soon finish them. The route over these mountains was known as the "Aluminum Trail," so named due to the 700 crashed aircraft that littered the ground, often serving as grave markers for the crews.

Ned Thomas was one of the American pilots who flew the Hump. His experiences are ably recorded here, providing an in-depth, fascinating look at a job that was supremely dangerous even without the specter of combat. The book includes enough practical detail about flying to inform the reader without becoming a technical manual. The descriptions of missions over the Hump are vivid and engaging, adding a human face to the drama created by perilous missions over a vast mountainous wasteland. The story of Ned Thomas and his fellow pilots exemplified courage in a perhaps unique way that deserves attention and is well worth reading.

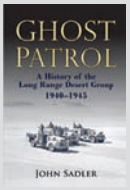
New and Noteworthy

Rising Sun, Falling Skies: The Disastrous Java Sea Campaign of World War II (Jeffrey R. Cox, Osprey Publishing, 2015, $14.95, softcover) A new paperback edition covering the often overlooked naval battles of the Pacific War's first sea campaign.

Torch: North Africa and the Allied Path to Victory (Vincent P. O'Hara, Naval Institute Press, 2015, $49.95, hardcover) A new look at the first Anglo-American counteroffensive of the war. It opened a new front against the Nazis and gave American troops much needed experience.

How to Become a Spy: The World War II SOE Training Manual (The British SOE, Skyhorse Publishing, 2015, $16.99, softcover) A reprinted edition of the British manual of "ungentlemanly warfare" and covert operations. Includes original cipher diagrams and tips on disarming sentries.

Hit the Target: Eight Men Who led the Eighth Air Force to Victory over the Luftwaffe (Bill Yenne, NAL Caliber, 2015, $26.95, hardcover) Tells the story of the unit through eight of its members, both officers and enlisted men. They fought a years-long struggle aimed at bringing the German homeland to its knees.

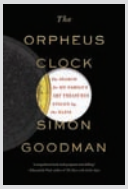


Ghost Patrol: A History of the Long-Range Desert Group 1940-1945 (John Sadler, Casemate Publishing, 2015, $32.95, hardcover) The story of one of Great Britain's most famous special forces units. It undertook extended reconnaissance missions and raids under the most extreme conditions.

Burma Road: Stilwell's Assault on Myitkina (Jon Diamond, Osprey Publishing, 2015, $21.95, softcover) This offensive was aimed at retaking northern Burma from the Japanese. Doing so would reopen the land route to China and help keep Allied troops supplied and in the war.

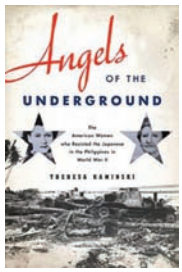
The Oxford Illustrated History of World War II (Edited by Richard Overy, Oxford University Press, 2015, $45.00, hardcover) A thorough summary of the war covering wide-ranging topics such as production, economics, innovations, and events on the battlefields. Well illustrated with many rarely seen images.

Bombing Europe: The Illustrated Exploits of the Fifteenth Air Force (Kevin A. Mahoney, Zenith Press, 2015, $35.00, hardcover) This unit was assigned to take the fight to the Nazis in southern Germany, Austria, the Balkans, and Eastern Europe. It braved both enemy fighters and antiaircraft guns to bomb its targets.



German U-Boat Ace Rolf Mutzelburg: The Patrols of U-203 in World War II (Luc Braeuer, Schiffer Publishing, 2015, $29.99, hardcover) One of the top U-boat aces of the war, Mutzelburg prowled the shores of Canada. The author used the photos of former crew members and the submarine's original logbooks.

The Orpheus Clock: The Search for My Family's Art Treasures Stolen by the Nazis (Simon Goodman, Scribner, 2015, $28.00, hardcover) The author's parents died in the concentration camps after losing everything else to Nazi predations. They owned a world-class art collection that Goodman spent two decades trying to recover from collectors, thieves, and even governments.



Angels of the Underground: The American Women Who Resisted the Japanese in the Philippines in World War II (Theresa Kaminski, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2015, 512pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $27.95, hardcover)

When the Philippines fell to Imperial Japan in 1942, the surviving American soldiers mostly went into captivity. A few managed to hide in the jungle and either make their escape or join the resistance. For the American civilians still on the islands, there was little choice but to live under the Japanese. A few joined the resistance, some serving secretly under the noses of the occupiers. Four American women—Claire Phillips, Peggy Utinsky, Gladys Savary, and Yay Panlilio—and a Filipino-American did just that, living in Manila. From there they gathered information and passed it to the guerrillas hiding in the hills around the city. They obtained supplies for the resistance fighters and even joined them. Several of them were the wives of American servicemen lost in the fighting. Their husbands' comrades were now prisoners in Cabanatuan and Camp O'Donnell. At even greater risk they smuggled food and medicine into the camps, helping the men endure the extreme privations inflicted upon them.

This book weaves the story of these four heroic women into the greater narrative of the Philippine occupation. Their personal ordeals are told in clear, dramatic prose, highlighting both their suffering and bravery under harsh circumstances. The experiences of these four heroines shed light on the ways women contributed to eventual victory and the price they often paid for it when they were caught up in the actual war zones.

Operation Long Jump: Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Greatest Assassination Plot in History (Bill Yenne, Regnery History, Washington, D.C., 2015, 244pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $29.99, hardcover)

When Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill went to Tehran, Iran, for a meeting on the conduct of the war, little did they know the Third Reich had set into motion a scheme to kill them. Both the American and British leaders wanted to meet elsewhere, but Stalin, paranoid over going too far away from the Soviet Union and afraid to fly, insisted. Hitler approved a plan to kill the three men; even the famous German commando Otto Skorzeny became involved. In the end the plot failed, but only after a twisting trail of strange events combined with what the author describes as "amateurish bungling straight out of the Keystone Cops."

The author did extensive research to uncover what facts remain of this far-fetched and improbable assassination attempt. Much of the story was buried under wartime secrecy needs and lost thereafter. As is often the case with espionage incidents, the details were scattered among numerous sources and persons, just a piece of the puzzle here and there. The writer does a good job pulling together these disparate bits of evidence and combining them into an enjoyable, well-crafted account.

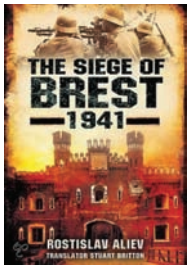
Cushing's Coup: The True Story of How Lt. Col. James Cushing and his Filipino Guerrillas Captured Japan's Plan Z and Changed the Course of the Pacific War (Dirk Jan Barreveld, Casemate Publishing, Havertown, PA, 2015, 304pp., maps, photographs, notes bibliography, $32.95, hardcover)

When the Japanese landed in the Philippines, Lt. Col. James Cushing was working as a mining engineer on the island of Cebu. Rather than surrender to an uncertain fate, he took command of the local guerrilla group that prosecuted its own war against the invaders. In 1944, luck placed opportunity in Cushing's hands. A typhoon downed a Japanese plane carrying an admiral and war plans; both washed up on the shores of Cebu. Cushing and his soldiers captured them, and thus began a deadly chase as the Japanese searched the island for their lost officer. Meanwhile, Cushing tried desperately to get word of his prize to the Allies.

This book is full of detail not only about the capture of the admiral and the war plans, but also of the hard service of Filipino resistance fighters and the war they fought. It captures the difficulties faced by Cushing and his troops as they seized the opportunity given them, revealing the compelling story of how a few unknown fighters had a major impact on the war's outcome.

The Siege of Brest 1941: The Red Army's Stand Against the German During Operation Barbarossa (Rostislav Aliev, translated by Stuart Britton, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA,

2015, 215pp., maps, photographs, $19.95, softcover)



When the Nazi juggernaut rolled over the Soviet border in June 1941, it advanced rapidly, leaving thousands of Soviet troops and civilians behind the lines. The city of Brest, near the Polish border, was quickly overwhelmed by the Germans. Then, in 1942, the Soviets captured a German document, an account of the taking of the city by the German 45th Infantry Division. To their surprise, the Russian leaders discovered the Red Army had held out in Brest for over a week, fighting from bunkers and tunnels within the city. The heroic story was altered for propaganda purposes and published as an example of Soviet courage and tenacity.

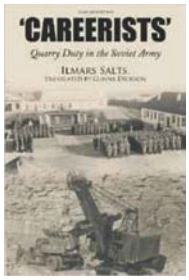
The stories of the soldiers who served there is combined with the surviving battle reports to tell the story of this little known fight. The author weaves together both German and Russian interpretations to give a detailed account of what occurred in Brest in a vivid blow-by-blow style.

Forgotten Sacrifice: The Arctic Convoys of World War II (Michael G. Walling, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2015, 284pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $$14.95, softcover)

The Murmansk Run was the route Allied convoys took from the West to the far northern city of Murmansk to deliver supplies the Soviet Union needed to stay in the war. As the convoys carried their cargoes north, the Germans threw ships, submarines, and aircraft at them. The crews of sunken or stricken ships might survive only to battle another enemy—the cold waters of the North Atlantic. Despite the risks, the sailors of both warships and merchantmen kept going, braving both bombs and ice to do their duty.

Full of oral histories from veterans as well as original research in the Russian Naval Archives, the author effectively tells the story of the sailors who dared fight both man and nature. There is a useful "briefing" chapter, which is essentially a primer on how the convoy war was fought, giving the reader excellent detail on the many facets of the fighting.

"Careerists": Quarry Duty in the Soviet Army (Ilmars Salt, translated by Gunna Dickson, Author House, Bloomington, IN, 2015, photographs, $18.49, softcover)



While most books on the history of the war focus on the fighting, this one looks at some of the civilians who suffered dreadfully in Siberia toiling for the war effort. The author was just a boy when the Soviet Union took over Latvia in early 1941. His landowning family lost its home and was deported to Siberia to work in a quarry. There, the family members grimly joked they were "careerists," a play on the similarity between the Latvian words for "career" and "quarry." Both of Ilmars' parents and his grandmother died during the war; only the orphaned children returned home in 1946. To add insult to injury, the author later found himself conscripted into the Soviet Army. Happily, after the fall of the Soviet Union Ilmars was able to reclaim his family's lost land. Overall, the book is a serious look at the Soviet camp system during World War II and those who suffered through it.

P-51 Mustang: Seventy-Five Years of America's Most Famous Warbird (Cory Graff, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, 2015, 256pp., photographs, index, $48.00, hardcover)

The Mustang is arguably the most famous of all American fighter aircraft. It was the plane that took control of the skies away from the Luftwaffe and escorted thousands of bombers to their targets in Germany. In the Far East, they flew over the Pacific Ocean, India, and China. Along the way they gained a reputation as a war-winning aircraft second to none. They could perform ground attacks or air-to-air combat equally well; Mustang pilots often had kill symbols affixed to their fuselages symbolizing enemy planes, locomotives, and vehicles.

Zenith Books specializes in these sorts of large, coffee table-style books and they do not disappoint here. The work is lavishly illustrated with period photographs, advertisements from contemporary publications, and images of the P-51 from model kits to vintage comic book covers. Mustangs are shown everywhere from the factory to the maintenance shop to the battlefield. Detailed text accompanies the illustrations, focusing not only on the plane's service but its legacy, including surviving Mustangs today. □

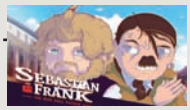
Simulation Gaming

BY JOSEPH LUSTER

THIS YEAR LOOKS TO DELIVER BOTH A MIX OF TRIED-AND-TRUE ACTION AND ONE OF THE MOST UNCONVENTIONAL SPINS ON WORLD WAR II TO DATE.

SEBASTIAN FRANK: THE BEER HALL PUTSCH

GENRE: ADVENTURE • **PLATFORM:** PC, MAC, LINUX • **PUBLISHER:** INDEPENDENT • **AVAILABLE:** NOW (DEMO)



While we do our best to mix it up, most of what we cover in these pages falls along similar folds. Such is the nature of the World War II gaming experience, but thankfully that's not the case 100% of the time. Independent developers aren't too shy about trying new things, even if said things don't always end up commercially successful. The fate of *Sebastian Frank: The Beer Hall Putsch* remains to be seen, but this point-and-click adventure with a twist is looking to shake things up one way or another.

Sebastian Frank: The Beer Hall Putsch takes place in Germany during the aftermath of World War I. While it's centered on a cute aesthetic that makes it look more like a happy-go-lucky adventure game of yore, the subject matter puts it in a league of its own. As Sebastian Frank, players will attempt to navigate the movement against Adolf Hitler's rise to power to ensure his threatening and deadly ideals don't take root on a larger scale.

There's one key advantage Sebastian Frank has over everyone else: He first met Hitler in Vienna in 1908 at Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts and later served with Hitler in World War I. Thus, he knows Hitler better than most, and he'll use that and his influence in the counter movement to put an end to this troubling figure before he gets too powerful.

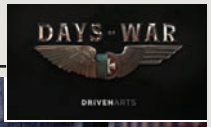
Of course, we all know how that ended up in reality, but that's what makes *Sebastian Frank: The Beer Hall Putsch* so intriguing. Players will take control of Sebastian and guide him as he explores, tackles puzzles, and meets other characters throughout his crucial journey. The team behind *Sebastian Frank* took direct inspiration from the classics of the point-and-click adventure genre, so anyone who grew up with the games of Lucasarts and similar outings will find an air of restrained nostalgia lingering throughout the Vienna Prologue demo that's available to try now.

Though the game didn't end up succeeding in its initial Indiegogo crowd-funding effort, which was closed after securing about 11 percent of a €30,000 (around $34k) goal, the team is passionate about their project. The studio consists of co-founders Cláudio Fernandes and José Nunes, as well as art director Joaquim Borges, who also serves as animator. Ricardo Grácio provides the soundtrack, and award-winning animated film producer Cláudio Sá produced the game's animated video sequences.

Between the style, the overarching themes, and the potential on display in the demo, *Sebastian Frank: The Beer Hall Putsch* is definitely something we'd like to see more of in World War II games. Here's hoping things go smoothly from here on out and we get to play the full version in the not too distant future.

DAYS OF WAR

GENRE: SHOOTER • **PLATFORM:** PC, PS4, XBOX ONE • **PUBLISHER:** DRIVEN ARTS • **AVAILABLE:** 2016



While we're on the subject of crowd-funded video game efforts, which are more and more abundant these days, developer Driven Arts has a big one on their plate. *Days of War* aims to deliver a "fiercely competitive shooter in a visually stunning WWII environment," and is planned for release on PC, PlayStation 4, and Xbox One sometime in 2016. While it remains to be seen if it will make that projected launch (more on that shortly), it would mark a welcome return to an area of WWII gaming that was previously so overabundant pretty much everyone burned themselves out on it.

Yep, we're talking about WWII shooters, which were a dime a dozen a decade or so ago. They're certainly on the opposite end of the spectrum to the previously mentioned *Sebastian Frank* adventure, but we've also come back around to a point where the concept seems novel once again. In a time when *Call of Duty* games are getting increasingly more futuristic in design and concept, a World War II shooter seems, well, downright quaint.

Driven Arts' *Days of War* is taking a ton of inspiration from *Day of Defeat: Source,* a team-based first-person WWII shooter from Valve (*Half-Life, Team Fortress, Portal, Left 4 Dead*) that originally hit PC back in 2005. Both keeping with tradition and adding something fresh, *Days of War* features an up-to-date look thanks to Unreal Engine 4 and mod tools that will be easy to pick up and use. Developing solid competitive play with plenty of strategy is the team's main goal, and it's being backed up with motion-captured animation, realistic physics, and immersive, faithful environments. The class-based combat should offer something for all types of play, and different game modes and terrain types will help keep everyone from getting too comfortable.

After cancelling its first campaign—aiming for a $100,000 funding goal of which it was projected to fall well short—Driven Arts launched a retooled Kickstarter campaign in March. That turned out to be a smart move, because at the time of this writing the *Days of War* campaign is sitting at a little over $33k of its $20k goal. That gets them to Early Access smoothly and on schedule, but there are still a bunch of stretch goals waiting to be fulfilled. $40k adds in British Forces, $60k adds in Russian Forces, and the Italian and French Forces will be added at $120k and $140k, respectively. If the campaign gets to $80k an Xbox One version will launch this year, and the same goes for PlayStation 4 if they hit $100k.

While the campaign will be way in the rearview by the time you have this magazine in your hands, we're looking forward to seeing how Driven Arts attempts to evolve the fast-paced action of competitive World War II shooters later this year. □

insight

Continued from page 30

a new order to fly to Warsaw and drop badly needed supplies to the Home Army, including guns, food, and medicine.

Against the wishes of General Carl "Tooey" Spaatz, the commander-in-chief of the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe, 107 B-17 Flying Fortress bombers escorted by 137 North American P-51 Mustang fighters left England on September 18, 1944, and flew over Warsaw. After dropping their supplies the planes landed in Poltava in the Ukraine. This mission shows that, contrary to what Assistant Secretary of War McCloy wrote, considerable air support could be diverted from decisive operations elsewhere and still not hinder the success of Allied forces.

Historian Donald L. Miller has asked, "Why were the Warsaw Poles supported, and not the Jews at Auschwitz?" The answer is that the Poles had more influence than the Jews did. As Miller writes, "At the time the Poles had what the Jews did not, a government in London, one with influence with Churchill."

Historian Henry L. Feingold perhaps comes closest to the truth writing, "The destruction of the Jews of Europe was largely ignored ... [because] the Jews of Europe were not fully part of the 'universe of obligation' that informs the Western world." In other words, the Allies felt obligated to help Poles in Warsaw; there was no similar obligation to save Jewish women and children dying in gas chambers in Auschwitz.

The Allied governments knew about Auschwitz and what was happening there, Auschwitz was within striking distance of the U.S. Fifteenth Air Force in Italy, bombing Auschwitz would not have diverted substantial resources from the war effort, and the gas chambers more than likely could have been destroyed with minimal casualties. Erdheim concludes, "With the kind of political will and moral courage the Allies exhibited in other missions throughout the war, it is plain that the failure to bomb [Auschwitz] Birkenau, the site of mankind's greatest abomination, was a missed opportunity of monumental proportions."

Hugo Gryn was 13 years old when he was sent to Auschwitz. He lost both his mother and his younger brother in the gas chambers. After the war he said, "It was not that the Jews didn't matter; [it was just that] they didn't matter enough."

Brent Douglas Dyck is a Canadian teacher and historian. His article, "Hitler's Stolen Children," appeared in the December 2013 issue of WWII History.

Miller

Continued from page 39

or six days. On May 4, the U.S. Army Air Forces brought in C-47 airplanes and flew us out of Germany to Brussels, Belgium, and we became good old Americans again. I can't remember if we traded in our "Lymie" uniforms there, or if it was at Namur, where they took us the next day. It must have been at Namur, Belgium, where they processed us back in with the living, gave us a quickie physical, and put us back into American uniforms.

We all got to write letters home. I don't remember if we got to write while we were with the British or not.

If we had only known then what we know now about POW-related disabilities and disability claims…. Many liberated POWs had problems and even injuries that were attributable to their experiences but hid them from the examining doctors if it was possible. All we were interested in was going home. We were afraid if we complained there would be further testing and possibly hospitalization before we could go home. None of us wanted that. But if it had gotten on our records at that time, the chances are there wouldn't have been so many of us denied benefits later.

After our processing at Namur, we were taken to Camp Lucky Strike outside of Le Havre, France, to await passage on a ship to the United States There were several of these camps named after American cigarettes, Camp Camel, Camp Chesterfield, etc. We were there from May 7 through May 10, 1945. During our stay at Camp Lucky Strike the war in Europe ended, and we celebrated.

On May 11, we boarded ship for the United States. We had some good sailing much of the way and enjoyed the trip, even though we were crowded aboard. We were eating well, and they served us a lot of eggnog between meals. They were trying to fatten us up before we got home. Twenty-three days after we left France, we arrived in New York.

We docked on June 2 and went back to Camp Shanks. This was the same camp we had left on October 6, 1944. That was only eight months ago! It seemed like a lifetime. It sure was a good feeling to be back in the good old U.S. of A!

A couple of days later, I was given a 60-day furlough with orders to report to a redistribution station at Miami Beach, Florida, following my 60 days. I went home to Conover, North Carolina, to see my family and let them know I was okay.

On August 8, I reported to Miami Beach Army Ground and Service Forces Redistribution Center. While I was there the war with Japan ended.

On August 20, I was sent to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. While there and on pass to Baltimore, I met Vickie Gutherie, the girl who was to be my first wife. After two weeks, on September 4, I was transferred to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and worked as a records clerk at post headquarters, processing service records of people to be discharged. While at Fort Bragg, I was at liberty to travel locally.

I was discharged on November 28, 1945. I went to work for a small furniture frame shop in nearby Oyama, North Carolina, owned by Owen Miller and Alvin Herman, through the rest of the year 1945.

For years after I got out of military service, I made no attempt to locate any of my Army or POW buddies. It wasn't until I became involved with the American Ex-Prisoners of War organization that I found the address of Richard Scally in Detroit, Michigan, and contacted him. He had visited Todd Klabaca and Ernest McIntyre, and they were okay. Dick Scally had worked for the City of Detroit until retirement. We continued corresponding with each other until his death a few years ago. His niece wrote, telling me of his death. I cannot recall the names of any of the men I was in prison with except Scally, who was captured with me.

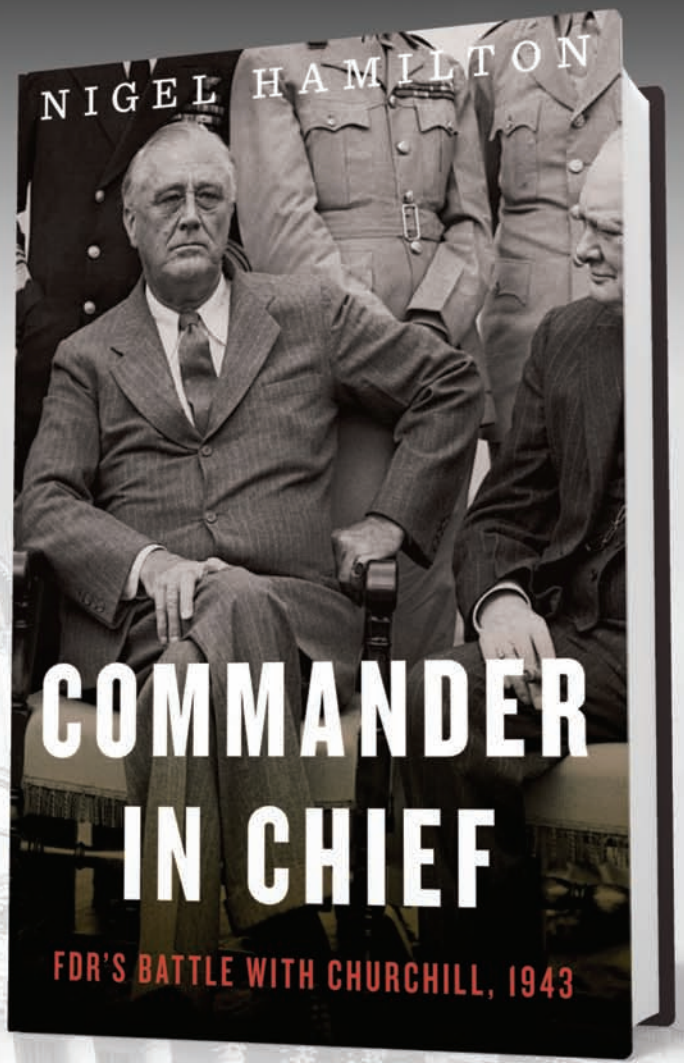
When I see someone throwing away or otherwise wasting food, I can't help thinking how many prisoners that food would have fed. When it is cold and rainy, or snow and ice outside, I always remember those times in combat and prison camp, and I say a little prayer, "God, thank you for a warm place to sleep and plenty to eat."

Ray Miller lived most of his life near where he grew up, in a home he built near Hickory, North Carolina, on land he had helped to farm as a boy. After early experience as a construction electrician he worked as an installation and maintenance electrician for 32 years at the General Electric-Hickory transformer factory that he helped start in the early 1950s.

After his retirement at age 62, Ray pursued an avid interest in genealogy—his own and that of his wife, Kathryn Echerd Miller. Together they were active in the local genealogical society. He helped initiate the Catawba County, North Carolina, chapter of the American Ex-POWs, and he was the founding chapter commander. He died in 1999, at age 75.

This article was submitted by Ray's son and daughter-in-law, Allen and Sandra Miller of Hixson, Tennessee.

In the sequel to the National Book Award–longlisted Mantle of Command, Nigel Hamilton continues **"the memoir that Roosevelt didn't get to write"** (*New York Times Book Review*) with the story of FDR's battles with Churchill throughout 1943.



Nigel Hamilton's *The Mantle of Command* drew on years of archival research and interviews to portray FDR in a tight close-up as he determined Allied strategy in the crucial initial phases of World War II.

Commander in Chief reveals the astonishing sequel—suppressed by Winston Churchill in his memoirs—of Roosevelt's battles with Churchill to maintain that strategy. Roosevelt knew that the Allies should take Sicily but avoid a wider battle in southern Europe, building experience but saving strength to invade France in early 1944. Churchill seemed to agree at Casablanca—only to undermine his own generals and the Allied command, testing Roosevelt's patience to the limit. Churchill was afraid of the invasion planned for Normandy, and pushed instead for disastrous fighting in Italy, thereby almost losing the war for the Allies.

In a dramatic showdown, FDR finally set the ultimate course for victory by making the ultimate threat. *Commander in Chief* shows FDR in top form at a crucial time in the modern history of the West.

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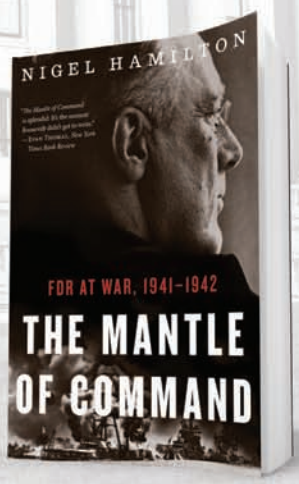

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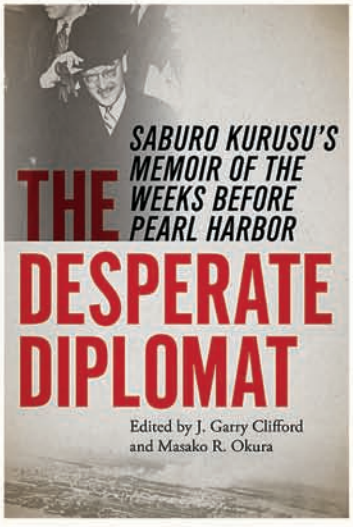

THE DESPERATE DIPLOMAT

Saburo Kurusu's Memoir of the Weeks before Pearl Harbor

Edited by J. Garry Clifford and Masako R. Okura

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Prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese Special Envoy Saburo Kurusu visited Washington in an attempt to further peace talks, but reported, "Working for peace is not as simple as starting a war." For more than seventy years, many have unfairly viewed Kurusu's visit as part of the Pearl Harbor plot.

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