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Wellington's Preparations for Waterloo

FIELD MARSHAL ARTHUR WELLESLEY, DUKE OF Wellington, was in Vienna when the news arrived in early March 1815 that Napoleon had escaped from exile on Elba and returned to France. Wellington soon began making preparations to leave Vienna for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, where he would take command of an Anglo-Dutch army. He said his goodbyes to those he encountered,

one of whom was Czar Alexander I of Russia. In an informal yet important conversation, Alexander rested his hand in a paternal fashion on the duke's shoulder. "It is for you to save the world again," the czar said.

The duke had the utmost respect for his opponent as seen when someone mentioned in a conversation the previous year that he had never fought Napoleon. "No, and I am very glad I never was," said Wellington. "I would at any time rather have heard that reinforcement of forty thousand men had joined the French army than he had arrived to take command."

Wellington arrived in the Netherlands on April 5. The Duke relied in the 10 weeks leading up to the battle on his talents as an administrator and as a proven battlefield commander to prepare his troops to fight a French army with Napoleon at its head.

Although Wellington did not possess the strategic brilliance and audacity that Napoleon had shown over the course of his career, he did have his own unique strengths. His experience campaigning in India against the Mysoreans and the Marathas, as well as his campaigns in the Iberian Peninsula against the French, taught him how to navigate sensitive political situations similar to the one he found himself in when he arrived in the Netherlands.

Wellington was compelled to retain two young and incompetent princes in key commands despite the backlash this created among the vastly better qualified British generals. Thus, Prince William of Orange was nominally given command of the I Corps, and Prince Frederick of the Netherlands was given nominal command of a division that ultimately would be posted west of Waterloo at Braine to

protect the Anglo-Dutch army in case Napoleon planned to sweep around Wellington's right. He made sure competent British generals accompanied them.

Wellington quickly set about organizing and supplying his army for the coming campaign. As he had done in India and on the Iberian Peninsula, he integrated green and veteran troops to ensure all of his units could stand up to the French in battle, and he also combined foreign units with British units to boost morale and prevent desertion. Afterward, he made sure that all of his troops received pay and the food and clothing they would need for the campaign.

One day Wellington was walking in a Brussels park with Thomas Creevey, when his friend asked him if he thought he could defeat Napoleon. "By God, I think Blucher and myself can do the thing," said Wellington. One challenge Wellington faced was that the British crown was not inclined to call up more soldiers. As they continued talking, Wellington pointed to a nearby British soldier sightseeing in the park. Wellington pointed to the soldier and said, "There, it all depends on that article whether we do the business or not. Give me enough of it, and I am sure."

What Wellington had to do on Sunday, June 18, 1815, at Waterloo was use caution and prevent his subordinates from making mistakes that might cost him the battle. Only when he was absolutely sure that the tide of battle had shifted in his favor did he switch to the offensive. The duke regarded Waterloo as a close fought battle. In a letter to his brother, he wrote, "I never took so much trouble about any battle, and never was so near being beat."

William E. Welsh

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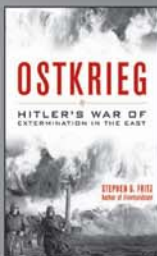
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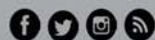
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By Ludwig Heinrich Dyck

German Ace Hans Ulrich Rudel, who destroyed more than 500 Russian tanks on the Eastern Front, was “worth an entire division.”

IN THE VILLAGE OF SEIFERDAU, SOUTHERN PRUSSIA, AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD boy with an umbrella jumped out of a second-story window. The umbrella turned inside out, the boy landed in a flowerbed and broke his leg. That little boy was Hans Ulrich Rudel, who dreamed of becoming an airman. Rudel’s journey to fulfill his dream would not be easy, ultimately earning him the highest decoration of any German serviceman in World War II. Adhering to his maxim, “He is only lost who gives himself up for lost,” Rudel faced death untold times.

Son of a Lutheran pastor, Rudel was born on July 2, 1916, in Konradswaldau in Lower Silesia. Not much of an academic achiever, Rudel focused instead on sports. He taught himself to ski at 10, the mountains holding a special place in his heart. With family finances allocated to his sister’s medical studies, Rudel gave up his dream of civil air pilot training. He had decided to become a sports instructor when fate intervened with the creation of the Luftwaffe.

Rudel gained admission into the Wildpark-Werder Military School in



Unknown

1936. Although wanting to become a fighter pilot, Rudel volunteered for the new Stuka diver bomber forma-

tions to avoid assignment to the slower bomber command. Rudel’s sober, milk-drinking habits ostracized him from the hard-partying pilot culture. Being only an average pilot did not help either. Relegated to aerial photography during Germany’s invasion of Poland, Leutnant Rudel nevertheless earned the Iron Cross Second Class. While Stukas blitzed across France, Rudel was training pilots. During the Balkan campaign, Rudel, by then an oberleutnant, was stuck at Reserve Flight in Graz when aerial brilliance came upon him. Rudel’s Stuka stayed attached to his wing leader like “an invisible tow rope,” hardly ever shot wide at bombing or missed at gunnery. Preconceptions nevertheless followed him to Greece. Forbidden to fly in combat, Rudel listened to the “music of the engines” roaring off to Crete.

Rudel’s talents were given a chance after Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. From 3 AM to as late as 10 PM, Rudel was in the air over Belorussia. With sirens screaming, the Ju-87 Bertha Stukas turned Soviet supply columns into “seas of wreckage.” Rudel found a kindred spirit in Hauptman Ernst Siegfried Steen of Group III Stuka Geschwader 2, the Immelmann Wing, named after the German World War I ace. Steen affectionately called Rudel that “crazy fellow” because Rudel, who received the Iron Cross First Class on July 18,

Stukas over Russia in 1943 and (inset) Rudel in a Stuka cockpit. During the titanic Battle of Kursk, Stuka “Gustavs” blasted tungsten-core shells through Soviet tanks, while Stuka “Doras” knocked out Soviet antiaircraft guns.



Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-646-5188-17; Photo: Richard Oniz

flew dangerously low for accuracy.

The Immelman Wing next joined the siege of Leningrad where on September 16 the Stukas caught the 23,500-ton Soviet battleship *Marat* in open water. Steen's bomb was a near miss but Rudel's 1,000-pound bomb was dead on. When it was confirmed that the *Marat* survived, Rudel saw red. Braving enemy fighters and the anti-aircraft fire of Kronstadt harbor bursting "like the clap of doomsday," Rudel returned to finish off the wounded *Marat* on the September 23. Absorbed with hitting his target, Rudel released his new 2,000-pound bomb at 900 feet, forgetting that its fragmentation effect ranged up to 3,000 feet. Rudel momentarily blacked out, skimming 10 feet above the water. Rear gunner Alfred Scharnovski woke him up: "She is blowing up, sir."

Rudel spent the winter of 1941 in the Rzhnev sector. Weakened by lack of winter supplies, frozen petrol, and frostbite, the German soldiers held out against an onslaught of fresh Siberian divisions. Not for the last time, the Stukas defended their airfield from ground attacks. Rudel's holiday present was the German Cross in Gold followed in January 1942 by the Knight's Cross. Temporarily sent to reserve flight at Graz as an instructor, Rudel stopped on the way to get married in his home village.

Rudel's new crews underwent rigorous aerial training, supplemented with morning runs and afternoon swims. Rudel volunteered his trainee Staffel (squadron) to support mountain troops in the Caucasus. Flying over the snow-capped Elbruz Mountains, Rudel was entranced by green meadows and mountain flowers. "For a time I forgot entirely the bombs I am carrying and the objective."

In September 1942 Rudel completed his 500th operational flight. Reaching his 600th in November, Rudel celebrated by consuming copious amounts of cake. Soon after Rudel contracted jaundice. Ignoring a furious doctor, Rudel staggered from the hospital to take command of 1st Staffel of the Immelman Wing at Stalingrad. By now the wing had been re-equipped with the more powerful Ju-87 Dora. The close-quarter fighting in the city demanded painstaking accuracy to avoid hitting friendly troops. Overexerted and sick, Rudel pushed himself to the limits to ward off the destruction of the 6th Army, feeling "more as if I were in Hades than on earth."

On February 10, 1943, Rudel completed his 1,001st operational flight. Promoted to flight lieutenant, Rudel was sent on holiday leave. After captaining the Luftwaffe team in a ski



Rudel demonstrates the preferred method for knocking out an enemy tank by firing through its thin back armor. Although he had many close brushes with death, the Stuka ace survived the war.

tournament in Austria, a recharged Rudel went on to test the new twin 3.7cm cannon-armed Ju-87 Gustav Stukas. Even slower and less maneuverable than the bomb-carrying Ju-87, the Gustav nevertheless became an excellent tank buster. Resuming command of 1st Staffel, Rudel integrated the cannon Stukas in the fighting for the Kuban bridgehead. Within a few days Rudel himself destroyed 70 of the small Soviet boats trying to cross the lagoons. His efforts earned Rudel the rank of Hauptmann on April 1 and the Oak Leaves on April 14.

In July 1943 the Stukas unleashed a storm of destruction at the Battle of Kursk. Swooping in at 15 to 30 feet above the ground, Rudel's cannons blasted tungsten-core shells through the thin back armor of enemy tanks. A successful hit entailed flying through an exploding curtain of fire, scorching Rudel's Stuka and riddling it with splinters. By the end of the first day's attack, Rudel's Gustav had destroyed 12 tanks. Other Doras bombarded the deadly Soviet anti-aircraft guns or circled to protect against fighters. Despite inflicting heavy casualties on the Soviets, the Germans gained little ground. Worried about Anglo-American landings in Sicily, German leader Adolf Hitler called off what turned out to be Germany's last great offensive in the East.

On July 17 Rudel took over command of Group III Stuka Geschwader 2, helping slow down the Soviet advance that pushed the Germans to the Dnieper River by August. After destroying his 100th tank, Rudel received the Swords to his Knight's Cross at Hitler's Wolf's

Lair on November 25.

Rudel's Stukas were transferred north from the southern front to aid the encircled Cherkassy pocket, then back south to north of Odessa. Promoted to major on March 20, 1944, Rudel led an attack against a Dniester bridge. A new pilot lagged behind and, riddled by Soviet Lag-5 fighters, veered off into Soviet territory. Rudel found the crew in a field waving from beside their downed plane. Landing to rescue them, Rudel's own plane got stuck in the mud. Pursued by Soviet infantry, Rudel and his companions ran four miles to the Dniester. Confronted by a steep cliff overlooking the river, the four of them slid downhill through thorny bushes. Their clothes and hands ripped, they caught their breath before diving into the icy, flooded river. Reaching the other side, the crew of the other Stuka collapsed beside Rudel. Hentschel was missing. Rudel, himself exhausted, dove back in. He was too late: "If I had succeeded in catching a hold of Hentschel I should have remained with him in the Dniester."

Rudel and his companions next stumbled upon another party of Russians. Tommy guns pointing at them, his companions surrendered. Dodging bullets, Rudel made a break for it. Hit in the shoulder, Rudel nearly blacked out. More Russians with horses and dogs came after him. Cresting a hill, he ran down the other side, collapsing in the mud. In the twilight, the pursuers lost of sight of Rudel. He plodded on through pouring rain, running mile after mile, losing all feeling in his feet. Aided by Romanian peasants who shared their meager food, Rudel crossed 30 miles of enemy territory in "the hardest race of [his] life." The elation of Rudel's return among the Immelman Wing was tempered by the news of Hentschel's death.

On March 29, Rudel initially refused the Diamonds to the Knight's Cross because Hitler also insisted that Rudel stop flying. To Rudel's relief, Hitler rescinded his order.

More special awards were to come, along with more attempts to ground Rudel and have him command increasingly fanciful operations. Clad at one meeting as a medieval archer, at another in a toga, the eccentric Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring awarded Rudel with the Golden Pilot's Medal with Diamonds and the Golden Front Service Medal. The latter featured the number of Rudel's 2,000 sorties in diamonds. Göring wanted Rudel to lead a new Messerschmitt 410 squadron to combat Anglo-American bombers. The Reichsmarschall also spoke of an unbelievable 300 panzers ready for an imminent Eastern offensive. Furthermore,

worried about Rudel's safety, Göring relayed Hitler's forbiddance of Rudel rescuing any more downed crews.

Even as the Soviets pressed closer to the German homeland, Rudel experienced the awesome might of the U.S. Air Force. Large numbers of American fighters hunted for prey after escorting bomber formations. Rudel remembered several hundred Mustangs pouncing on his 19 Stukas. For the first and only time, Rudel abandoned the mission but managed to bring his squadron home without loss.

The Soviets encroached upon East Prussia, where Rudel disobeyed orders and rescued another crew. In recognition of Rudel's defense of the Latvian Courland pocket, Field Marshall Ferdinand Schoerner sent cakes decorated with the number of Rudel's destroyed tanks. In heavy fog, Rudel's Stuka suddenly buzzed right over a massive Soviet penetration. Rudel twisted crazily to avoid the metal screaming past him from anti-aircraft and machine-gun fire. Rear gunner Ernst Gaderman yelled; "Engine on fire!" Oil and flames obscured the cockpit. Rudel crash-landed in a forest. Gaderman, a doctor, suffered three broken ribs but managed to remove a piece of metal skewering Rudel's thigh. Despite his injuries, including a concussion, Rudel returned with his squadron

to lay waste to the Soviet column.

Flying back to Romania, Rudel discovered that his allies had changed sides when Romanian anti-aircraft fire opened up on the Stukas. Rudel threatened to bomb the staff headquarters of Romanian Air Force Commodore Emanoil Ionescu, who promptly allowed the Stukas to continue using the airfield. Assuming command of the Immelmann Wing, Rudel defended the German Army's retreat out of Romania into Hungary. He alternated between flying the Ju-87s or the new, faster ground attack FW-190Fs. In September 1944, Rudel returned to inspect a new type of Soviet tank destroyed in an earlier battle. Survivors hidden in the wreckage opened up on the Stuka with their anti-aircraft gun, puncturing Rudel's leg. Passing out after landing at Budapest, Rudel woke up in the hospital with an extracted bullet and a plaster cast.

Cutting short his six-week recovery to eight days, Rudel joined the battle for Budapest. Summoned to Germany again, Rudel met not only a beaming Göring but Hitler alongside most of the high command. Awarded with the unique Golden Oak-leaves with Swords and Diamonds to Knights' Cross on January 1, 1945, Rudel was promoted to colonel but was again ordered to stay grounded. Again Rudel

refused to accept the decoration if it meant he could no longer flying. Hitler's faced darkened then changed to a smile, "All right, you may go on flying." Returning to Budapest, Rudel earned the Hungarian Medal for Bravery from the Hungarian leader Ferenc Szalasi.

Ignoring more orders to discontinue flying and disciplinary threats, Rudel helped Schoerner build up a new front in Silesia, and he also assisted Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler in defending Pomerania and Frankfurt on the Oder. Rudel destroyed 12 of 13 tanks a mere 50 miles from Berlin. With one cannon jammed and a single round remaining in the other, Rudel went for the remaining Stalin tank which "burst into a blaze" when "something seared through" Rudel's "leg like a strip of red hot steel." Rudel again passed out after landing his flaming Stuka.

Rudel awoke on an operating table at Seelow, one of his legs in plaster, his other leg amputated. Rudel consoled himself with memories of comrades who had paid the ultimate price. Deluged with flowers and presents from an adoring public, Rudel barely recovered in Berlin's Zoo bunker before returning to fly in April. His mechanics rigged up a projection to control the rudder bar with his stump but the rubbing re-opened the wound, splattering the

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

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engine in blood.

By now even Rudel questioned the sanity of his high command. Holding out for an armistice with the Western Allies, Rudel frankly told Hitler that “the war can no longer be ended victoriously on both fronts.” Rudel kept flying until May 8, 1945 when he received the news that the war was over. He was to surrender unconditionally to the Russians. Considering a suicide attack, Rudel was dissuaded by his men. Addressing his Immelmann Wing, Rudel praised the men’s bravery and loyalty.

Anticipating a chivalrous reception, Rudel crash-landed at an American aerodrome at Kitzingen during parade formation. Rudel was greeted by a soldier pointing his gun and demanding Rudel’s Oak Leaves. Rudel “shoved him back and shut down the hood again.” Rudel remained undaunted in captivity. He denied knowledge of death camps, retorted with accusations of women and children massacred by Allied bombers, and told the Americans to look for further atrocities among their Soviet allies. Deemed a “typical Nazi officer” by his interrogator, Rudel was interned at U.S. Army bases and prisoner of war camps in Germany and France. Transferred to a German hospital Rudel obtained his release in 1946.

Bundesarchiv Bild 1011-655-5976-04; Photo: Grosse



Rudel’s Stuka “Gustav” mounting twin 3.7cm cannon under the wings is prepared for a sortie in Russia. The tank-killer version was even slower and less maneuverable than the dive-bomber version, but Rudel nevertheless achieved impressive results with it.

Sick of a Germany that blamed the ills of World War II on its soldiers, Rudel moved to Argentina in 1948. He worked for Argentina’s airplane industry and helped build the air force of President Juan Peron. But his real passions continued to be sports and mountain climbing, and he did not let his prosthetic leg deter him. Rudel competed in skiing and tennis and nearly

climbed the summit of Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Americas in 1951. During 1953-1954, Rudel joined fellow veterans on the Argentina-Chile border in ascending the formidable 22,441-foot Llullaillaco. Rudel’s mountaineering adventures are recounted in his book, *From the Stukas to the Andes*.

Continued on page 70



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Rapp is perhaps best known from the famous painting by artist François Gerard presenting his captives to the emperor at Austerlitz where Russian Prince Repnin-Volkonsky surrendered on Decem-

ber 2, 1805. Rapp was born April 27, 1821, at Colmar in Alsace-Lorraine, a border territory long disputed by France and Germany. The son of the Colmar city hall janitor, he abandoned his theological studies to join the French cavalry as an



enlisted regular in the Chasseurs de Cevennes in 1788 under the regime of King Louis XVI, who was beheaded on January 21, 1793.

Working his way up the ranks during the bloody French wars against Austria and Prussia, Rapp showed substantial courage in battle, eventually rising to the rank of general of division. Over the course of his long career, Rapp would be wounded 25 times. He saw combat along the Moselle and Rhine Rivers and served as an aide-de-camp to General Louis Desaix during General Napoleon Bonaparte's Egyptian Campaign of 1794-1798. The impetuous former lieutenant achieved glory at the Battle of Sediman in Egypt fought on October 8, 1798, wherein he captured an enemy battery. Given a cavalry squadron and later a brigade to command, Rapp was again at Desaix's side on June 14, 1800, at the Battle of Marengo in Italy where his commanding officer was slain.



Delaying Napoleon Bonaparte's departure for an orchestral performance in Paris on December 24, 1800, General Count Jean Rapp (below) saved Napoleon's life when a bomb exploded near the wrong carriage.

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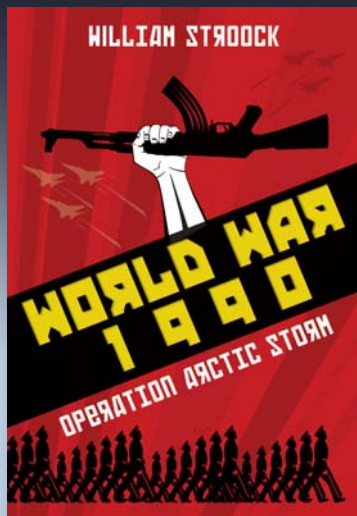
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Impressed by the young officer, Bonaparte afterward attached him to his own staff as aide-de-camp, a post that Rapp retained until the fall of the First Empire in 1814. The emperor also entrusted Rapp with secret missions in the Royalist French Vendee department in Switzerland and in Belgium.

Through these campaigns, Rapp forged a reputation as one of Napoleon's most valuable officers. However, his posting to the staff failed to keep the hothead out of direct combat with the enemy time after time.

The posthumously published *Memoirs of General Count Rapp, First Aide-de-Camp to Napoleon* recounts the heroic deeds Rapp performed for Bonaparte. His role in saving the First Consul's life the first time was, in reality, a matter of delaying his departure from the Tuileries Palace, albeit unwittingly, more than anything else.

There are two good accounts of this first assassination attempt. One is Rapp's own account. "It has been affirmed that Napoleon was not brave," wrote Rapp. "He was well aware how numerous were his enemies among the Jacobins and the Chouans; yet, every evening he walked out in the streets of Paris, and mingled with the different groups, never accompanied by more than two individuals. Lannes, Duroc, Bessieres, or some of his aides-de-camp usually attended him in these nocturnal excursions. This fact was well known throughout Paris.

"The affair of the Infernal Machine has never been properly understood by the public. The police had intimated to Napoleon that an attempt would be made against his life, and cautioned him not to go out. Haydn's *Oratorio* was to be performed that evening [December 24, 1800]; the ladies were anxious to hear the music and [the officers] also expressed a wish to that effect. The escort picket was ordered out."

What delayed the party from leaving immediately, as was Napoleon's personal practice upon deciding to go somewhere, was a playful discussion between Rapp and Madame Josephine Bonaparte over exactly which shawl she would wear that evening.

"While I was engaged in this operation, we heard Napoleon depart," Rapp wrote. "Come, sister,' said Madame [Caroline] Murat, who was impatient to get to the theater, 'Bonaparte is going.' We stepped into the carriage: the First Consul's equipage had already reached the middle of the Place Carrousel. We drove after it, but we had scarcely entered the place when the machine exploded.

"Napoleon escaped by a singular chance. Saint-Regent, or his French servant, had sta-

tioned himself in the middle of Rue Nicaise. A grenadier of the escort, supposing he was really what he appeared to be, a water carrier, gave him a few blows with the flat of his saber, and drove him off. The cart was turned around, and the machine exploded between the carriages of Napoleon and Josephine.

"The ladies shrieked on hearing the report, the carriage windows were broken, and Madame Beauharnais [Josephine's daughter by her first marriage] received a slight hurt on her hand. I alighted and crossed the Rue Nicaise, which was strewn with the bodies of those who had been thrown down, and the fragments of the walls that had been shattered by the explosion.

"Neither the Consul nor any individual of his suite sustained any serious injury. When I entered the theater, Napoleon was seated in his box, calm and composed. 'The rascals,' said he, very coolly, 'wanted to blow me up. Bring me a book of the *Oratorio*.'"

The second account, which was published in Paris during 1830-1831, basically confirmed Rapp's account, but it also adds some more interesting details. This was a ghostwritten book of memoirs by several authors, but listed under the sole name of Napoleon's first valet, Constant Wairy. First Valet Constant, as he was known, outlived both the emperor he served and his aide-de-camp.

"About seven o'clock, the First Consul entered his carriage with Lannes, Berthier, and Lauriston to go to the Opera," wrote First Valet Constant. "When they arrived in the middle of Rue Nicaise, the escort that preceded the carriage found the road obstructed by a cart that seemed to be abandoned, and on which a cask was found fastened with ropes.

"The chief of the escort had this cart removed to the side of the street; and the First Consul's coachman, whom this delay had made impatient, urged on his horses vigorously, and they shot off like lightning. Scarcely two seconds had passed when the barrel that was on the cart burst with a frightful explosion. No one was slain but several were wounded.

"By a fortunate chance, the carriages of the suite, which should have been immediately behind that of the First Consul, were some distance in the rear, which happened in this way: Madame Bonaparte, after dinner, had a shawl brought to wear to the opera; and when it came, Rapp jeeringly criticized the color, and begged her to choose another.

"Madame Bonaparte defended her shawl, and said to the general that he knew as much about criticizing such things as she did about attacking a fort. This friendly banter continued for some moments, and, in the interval, the First

Consul, who never waited, set out in advance, and the miserable assassins and authors of the conspiracy set fire to the Infernal Machine.

“Had the coachman of the First Consul driven less rapidly, and thereby been two seconds later, it would have been all over with his master; while, on the other hand, if Madame Bonaparte had followed her husband promptly, it would have been certain death for her and all her suite. It was, in fact, the delay of an instant that saved her life.”

First Valet Constant concluded his account with this interesting sidelight on the future emperor: “Such was the devotion of each and all to the person of the First Consul that not one of the persons attached to his service was for an instant suspected of having a hand in this infamous attempt. Neither at this time, nor in any other affair of this kind, were the members of his household ever compromised; and never was the name of the lowest of his servants ever found mixed up in criminal plots against a life so valued and so glorious.”

The second assassination attempt, in which Rapp played a much more direct role, was by German Friedrich Staps on October 23, 1809, in the wake of the defeat of the Austrians at Wagram and the subsequent occupation of

Vienna in which Napoleon took up temporary residence at Schonbrunn Palace.

Following a partial review of the French Army by Napoleon, the 18-year-old Staps approached the emperor as if to present a petition. When only a mere yard stood between him and Napoleon I, Staps attempted to draw his knife and was only prevented from doing so by Rapp, who was vigilantly standing by.

“His right hand was thrust into a side pocket under his greatcoat, and he held a paper, one end of which was visible,” wrote Rapp. “I was struck by the expression of his eyes when he looked at me: his decided manner roused my suspicions. I ordered him to be put under arrest.”

The emperor decided on a personal interrogation and asked Staps directly in the presence of his guards and aides, “What did you intend to do with the knife?”

“To kill you,” said Staps. After declaring that he was neither sick nor mad, Staps asserted further that his intended assassination of Napoleon was “because you have caused the misfortune of my country. You have done harm to me as well as to all Germans. I determined [alone] to take your life from the conviction that I should render the highest service to my country and to Europe.”

The emperor ordered him examined by his own physician, who affirmed that Staps was, indeed, neither sick nor mad. Napoleon, impressed by his conviction, ardor, and patriotism, offered him a pardon.

“I want no pardon!” said Staps. “I feel the deepest regret for not having executed my design. To kill you would not have been a crime, but a duty!”

Again, the emperor sought a way out of a situation that clearly distressed him: “Would you not be grateful were I to pardon you?”

“I would notwithstanding seize the first opportunity of taking your life,” said Staps.

Four days later, still refusing to recant, Staps was duly executed.

“His last words were, ‘Liberty forever! Germany forever!’” wrote Rapp in his memoirs. “‘Death to the tyrant!’ I delivered the report to Napoleon. He desired me to keep the knife that had been found on the criminal: it is still in my possession.”

The third assassination attempt took place in the final days of the disastrous Russian campaign of 1812, as the once-proud French Grande Armée made its way back from Moscow that fall across the steppes of European Russia to the comparative safety of West-

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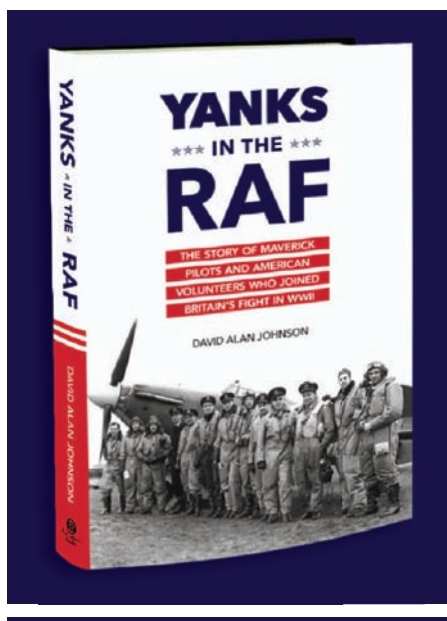


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Rapp is shown presenting captured Russian Prince Nikolai Repnin-Volkonsky to Napoleon at the Battle of Austerlitz on December 2, 1805. Although posted to Napoleon’s staff, Rapp occasionally participated in combat as he did when he led a cavalry charge at Austerlitz against a portion of the Russian Imperial Guard.

ern Europe. Rapp helped, in concert with other staff officers, fight off marauding Cossacks, who nearly captured Napoleon at Gorodnya on October 24.

There are at least three good accounts of this little known, but colorful, incident. The first is that of *The Memoirs of Sgt. Bourgogne, 1812-13*, the second is General Count Philippe de Segur’s *History of Napoleon’s Expedition to Russia*, and the third is Rapp’s own account.

“I was suffering greatly from my wound, but I would not leave Napoleon,” wrote Rapp. “We took horse at half past seven in the morning, to visit the ground on which the battle had been fought; the emperor was placed between the Duke of Vicenza, Prince de Neufchatel, and myself. We had scarcely quitted the huts where we had passed the night when he perceived a cloud of Cossacks; they proceeded from a wood in advance on our right. They were drawn up in pretty regular files: we took them for French cavalry.

“The Duke of Vincenza was the first who recognized them: ‘Sire, these are Cossacks!’ ‘That is impossible,’ replied Napoleon. They rushed upon us, shouting with all their might. I seized the emperor’s horse by the bridle; I turned it round myself. ‘But these are our troops?’ ‘They are the Cossacks! Make speed!’ ‘They are Cossacks, indeed,’ said Berthier. ‘Without doubt,’ said Mouton.

“Napoleon gave some orders and withdrew. I advanced at the head of the squadron on duty; we were overthrown; my horse received a wound six inches deep, from a lance, and fell, with me under him. We were trampled underfoot by these barbarians. Fortunately, they perceived at some distance a troop of artillery; they ran towards the spot.

“Marshal Bessieres had time to come up, with the horse grenadiers of the Guard. He charged them, and retook from them the wagons and the pieces of cannon, that they were carrying away. I raised myself again on my legs. I was replaced in my saddle and proceeded as far as the bivouac.

“When Napoleon saw my horse covered with blood, he feared that I had again been wounded; he asked me whether I was. I replied that I had got off with a few contusions. He then began to laugh at our adventure, that, nevertheless, I did not find very amusing.

“I was well repaid by the account that he published of this affair; he loaded me with eulogiums: I never before experienced pleasure compared to that which I felt on reading the flattering things he said of me.”

“General Rapp had one horse killed under him in this charge,” wrote Napoleon. “The intrepidity of which this general officer has given so many proofs is manifested on all occasions. I repeat with pride the praises of this great man: I shall never forget them.”



Back in Germany, Rapp in 1813 defended the port of Danzig as its governor, was subsequently captured, and passed a year as a Russian prisoner of war. When Napoleon returned to France from his exile on Elba in March 1815, Rapp immediately rallied to his side. Napoleon gave Rapp command of French V Corps of the Army of the Rhine, which was responsible for guarding the French frontier in Alsace. With his V Corps, Rapp won the Battle of La Suffel against the Austrians on June 28, 1815, which occurred 10 days after the emperor's loss at Waterloo.

When allowed to return from exile in 1817, Rapp became a peer from the Haut-Rhine Department and later was appointed a treasurer in 1819 by Bourbon King Louis XVIII.

The soldier-turned-politician then authored his famed memoirs. He died from cancer at age 50 at Rheinweiler in Baden in 1821, the same year that Napoleon died on St. Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean. Napoleon might have died earlier if Rapp had not been present to save his life on those three occasions. Rapp's proud hometown of Colmar still boasts a statue in the hero's honor on its own Champs de Mars. The statue bears the inscription, "My word of honor is sacred."

Had Rapp himself fought at Waterloo successfully, or extended his military career under the second Bourbon Restoration, he might well have received his own coveted marshal's baton, as did so many soldiers of the empire and kingdom. Nevertheless, his name is recorded for posterity on Napoleon's Arch of Triumph in Paris. □

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By Christopher Miskimon

The FN-FAL rifle was the most successful of the NATO military rifles and was used in all four corners of the globe.

B RITISH CORPORAL STEVEN NEWLAND CREPT THROUGH THE INKY darkness toward an Argentine sniper who had pinned his troop of Royal Marines on the slopes of Mount Harriet on East Falkland Island. He and a fellow marine had painstakingly made their way up the boulder-strewn hillside in the hope of killing the harassing sharpshooter. Along the way Newland became separated from his

companion, but he continued nonetheless. Finding his target, it was worse than the young Englishman feared. An entire squad of Argentine troops awaited the marines. They were taking only single shots at their enemy, seemingly in the hope of luring them into an attack. One Argentine had a machine gun ready, the rest were armed with Fabrique Nationale de Herstal-Fusil Automatique Leger (FN-FAL) rifles.

Newland readied his own weapon, a self-loading rifle (SLR), the British variant of the FAL. Quietly he inserted

a fresh magazine of 20 rounds. Taking two grenades, he pulled the pins and threw them, one landing on the machine gun and the other among a clustered group of soldiers. Ducking behind a boulder, he waited until the grenades exploded, then waded into the Argentines, shooting anyone who still moved three times. His rifle empty, he ducked behind a rock to reload. As he did so, some of his comrades below fired two rockets into the enemy position. Attacking again, he saw an Argentine he had hit earlier and realized the man was still alive as he fired

a burst at Newland. The Briton felt bullets hitting his legs and flew into a rage, shooting his opponent 15 times in the head.

The Falklands War from April 2, 1982, to June 14, 1982, pitted against each other two nations that used many of the same weapons. Both had FN-Mitrailleuse d'Appui General machine guns, Browning 9mm pistols, and Exocet missiles. The most common weapon of the two sides, though, was the FN-FAL rifle, one of the ubiquitous small arms of the Cold War era. While the Avtomat Kalashnikova 47, or AK-47, was by far the most produced rifle in the Eastern Bloc, in the West a number of designs were widely used, among them the American M-16, German G-3, and the Belgian FAL. It was this last weapon that would go on to serve more than 90 nations worldwide.

Like the rifles it competed against, the FAL had its origins in the post-World War II period, as the lessons of that war were digested and incorporated into weapon designs. Most of the combatants in that conflict were armed with bolt-action rifles that fired full-powered cartridges, which were effective at ranges of 1,000 meters or more. However, studies showed most infantry combat took place at ranges of 300 to 400 meters or less, and the average soldier could not reliably hit a target at the extreme distances their

A Canadian soldier fires his country's version of the FN-FAL rifle. In 1956, Canada became the first country to adopt the versatile light automatic rifle made by FN Herstal of Belgium.



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A West German soldier (left) carries the FN-FAL while on a joint exercise with U.S. forces in 1960. West Germany used the rifle, which it called the Gewehr G1, in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

weapons could range. Snipers and machine guns were more effective when long-range fighting occurred.

The idea arose to adopt smaller, less powerful ammunition that still would be effective at average combat distances but would be lighter and more compact. This would allow an infantryman to carry more of it. The lower recoil would be more manageable for conscripts unused to firearms. These new rounds were often referred to as intermediate-powered cartridges. The Soviets had the 7.62 x 39mm used in their AK47s and the British designed their own .280-caliber round which measurably outperformed the Soviet design. However, this revolutionary step forward was about to be stopped by a conservative American officer, Colonel Rene Studler.

The chief of American small arms development, Studler preferred a larger cartridge, the 7.62 x 51mm, essentially a slightly scaled-down version of the .30-caliber M1 round that GIs carried throughout World War II. This was really not an intermediate round but rather a shortened full-power rifle cartridge. Over time American dominance of the postwar West meant it could push through its own design and the 7.62 x 51mm was standardized as the 7.62 NATO cartridge, much to the chagrin of many in the United Kingdom and Europe.

As this was happening, the Belgian company FN Herstal was recovering from its nation's occupation by Nazi Germany. The company, which was established in 1889, quickly began

designing Cold War-era small arms with some success. Designer Dieudonne Saive, who had worked closely with American firearms designer John Browning, was the chief architect of the prototype of FN's new weapon, the FAL. Test samples were chambered in several calibers including the British .280 and competed in American rifle trials in 1950, where it emerged as the favorite of a board of infantry officers. Despite this, Studler kept pushing for his preferred cartridge, and this effectively killed the .280. The West would have new rifles, but with the American-backed ammunition.

With the cartridge issue settled, new rifles began to enter service in the mid-to-late 1950s. Despite American interest in the FAL, the U.S. Department of Defense ultimately chose its native design, the M-14, essentially an updated M-1. This occurred despite an understanding by some that the United States would accept a European design since it had gotten its way on the cartridge selection. In the United Kingdom and Europe, there was widespread anger that at the time received much attention, but soon the various parties pushed ahead with their own rifles, including the FAL, now redesigned to use the 7.62mm NATO cartridge. The first nation to adopt it was Canada, which ordered 2,000 FALs for testing in 1954. The Canadian armed forces soon adopted it as the C1 in 1956.

From there interest in the new rifle grew quickly. Some armies turned to the FAL perhaps to spite the United States after the way it pressured NATO to adopt the 7.62mm cartridge and then the M-14, which few nations purchased. The United Kingdom followed

quickly, adopting its own variant of the FAL called the L1A1 SLR. Commonwealth nations such as Australia, New Zealand, Rhodesia, and others followed suit. The United Kingdom rifles were modified for semi-automatic fire only and many other nations over time did the same. This was because the full-powered 7.62mm round caused the rifle to rise markedly when fired on a full-automatic setting, ruining accuracy and wasting ammunition at all but point-blank range.

With the Commonwealth using the FAL, the rifle quickly drew attention elsewhere. Venezuela bought 5,000 in an unusual caliber similar to the .280, but later adopted the 7.62mm. Argentina and Brazil followed suit, manufacturing hundreds of thousands of the rifles over the next several decades. India and Israel also produced their own weapons for both domestic and export use. Eventually, the FAL could be seen across South America, Africa, and Asia.

As with most successful designs, variants began to appear. A paratrooper, or Para, version with a folding stock was among the first. These frequently came with shorter barrels to keep airborne troops from snagging their rifles when exiting an aircraft's door. Several light machine-gun versions appeared with bipods, heavy barrels, and 30-round magazines. These were not universally popular, though. The United Kingdom, for example, converted Bren guns to 7.62mm instead.

A standard FAL rifle weighs 9.5 pounds, and Para versions usually weigh about a pound less. Standard barrel length is 21 inches, and overall



A Canadian soldier fires his country's version of the squad automatic weapon during a NATO exercise in 1983. Variants of the FN-FAL included a paratrooper version with a shorter barrel and folding stock, as well as several light machine-gun versions with bipods, heavy barrels, and 30-round magazines.



The standard, gas-operated FAL weighs 9.5 pounds, has a 21-inch barrel, and holds 20 rounds. It is made with both wood and plastic stocks, and can be fitted with scopes, bayonets, grenade launchers, and night vision devices.

the rifle is 43 to 45 inches long, depending on variant. The rifle is gas operated, meaning a small amount of the gas created by firing a round was used to cycle the bolt, ejecting the spent casing and loading a fresh round into the chamber. The standard magazine holds 20 rounds, though 30-round versions exist in small numbers. Both wood and plastic stocks can be found. The FAL can be fitted with scopes, bayonets, grenade launchers, and night vision devices.

Almost as soon as it entered service the FAL began to see combat. It went with British troops to Malaya and various flashpoints around the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Though the rifle was intended for the expected confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, it proved effective in the open desert terrain where the 7.62mm cartridge's long range was an advantage. During the Aden Emergency, a patrol of British Special Air Service (SAS) troops in April 1964 conducted a patrol into the Radfan Mountains to mark a landing zone for paratroopers operating against the Soviet-supplied rebels.

The nine troopers of the patrol, led by Captain Robin Edwards, equipped themselves with SLRs and a single Bren light machine gun. Each carried five magazines for his rifle with an extra bandolier of 50 rounds in his pack. The ammunition for the Bren, an older weapon still in .303-caliber, was distributed among all of the troops. The area was extremely arid so the SAS men determined the need for water to outweigh that of ammunition; after all, the mission was not to engage the enemy directly but to perform reconnaissance and find a landing zone for their fellow soldiers.

After setting out, the patrol began to go awry. The radioman became ill from food poisoning, slowing the group's progress. When dawn arrived they were still far from their objective and had to hide in an old set of fighting positions abandoned by the rebels. The patrol's luck turned even worse when a goatherd stumbled upon them. He raced off and warned the local



A Bolivian soldier carries FN-FAL with a folding stock. In the 21st century, the rifle continues to be used by many nations around the globe despite its replacement as a first-line rifle in most Western militaries.

tribesmen, who quickly surrounded the position and began shooting. The SAS men kept their cover behind the rocks and returned fire slow and steady from their SLRs. They knew their ammunition would not hold out unless they made each shot count. Before long every member of the patrol was wounded, many by flying shards of rock from near misses. The ill radioman was killed.

Royal Air Force fighter-bombers strafed and bombed the attacking rebels, holding them back. Each trooper fired single shots from his rifle, taking careful aim. This kept the situation at a stalemate until dusk, when the air support had to withdraw. Edwards realized the enemy would use the cover of darkness to move in for the kill, so he decided they would attempt a

breakout. They were able to get free of the tribesmen, but Edwards was killed. The remaining seven moved through the dark back to British-controlled territory. Before long they realized four rebels were tracking them. Two of the SAS troopers hung back, hiding in the night with their SLRs at the ready. When the tribesmen came close, they opened fire and cut down all four. Two more enemy fighters tried to follow them later that night and suffered the same fate. After dawn, the wounded men stumbled across a British armored car. The two most seriously wounded men were loaded on the vehicle and taken for treatment. The remaining five marched back to their base. None of them had run out of ammunition despite their ordeal, a testament to their fire discipline and their semi-automatic SLRs.

While the British were fighting in the Middle East, Australian troops were fighting in Vietnam, a relatively small contingent committed alongside U.S. forces. Being a small, professional army rather than a mass conscript force, the Australian infantrymen were trained to a higher level of marksmanship, and they put this to use with their FALs. Like the British, the Aussies also called their rifles SLRs. Initially, soldiers were issued five magazines with their rifles. In action they were trained to immediately fire off their first magazine quickly to establish fire superiority, critical in the first seconds of a firefight. After that the troops would reload and fire one or two well-aimed shots at a time, and then reload their empty magazines from bandoliers. While their firing method was sound, it quickly became obvious that five magazines were insufficient for close combat and more had to be issued.

The Australians' most famous battle in Vietnam was at a rubber plantation near the town of Long Tan in August 1966. A company of Aussies held off a reinforced regiment of enemy troops for a day; at one point a helicopter had to perform a low-level ammunition drop. The troops ran into the problem of not having enough magazines to last throughout the encounter. Thus, an after-action assessment recommended at least eight magazines per soldier with ammunition resupplies already loaded in magazines for quick use. On the plus side, the power of the 7.62mm NATO round was tremendous help to the Australians during their time in Vietnam.

Another variant of the FAL arose in Vietnam when the Australian SAS forces developed a cut-down version for close-range jungle fighting. Specially converted to fire on full automatic, these rifles also had the barrel cut down

Continued on page 69

With two hours of daylight left, French Emperor Napoleon I saw his chance to make the Battle of Waterloo his greatest victory. After a day with many charges repulsed with great carnage, a critical bastion protecting the Duke of Wellington's line had fallen to the French. On the French right, it looked like Prussian reinforcements had been pushed away from joining the enemy coalition forces. Wellington's soldiers must be stretched nearly to the breaking point. It was time, thought the emperor of France, to hazard his most precious resource. He had so far withheld one of the finest corps of soldiers in European history, soldiers who were so valuable that one never wanted to risk losing one in battle. Now was the time to send in the infallible and legendary Imperial Guard.

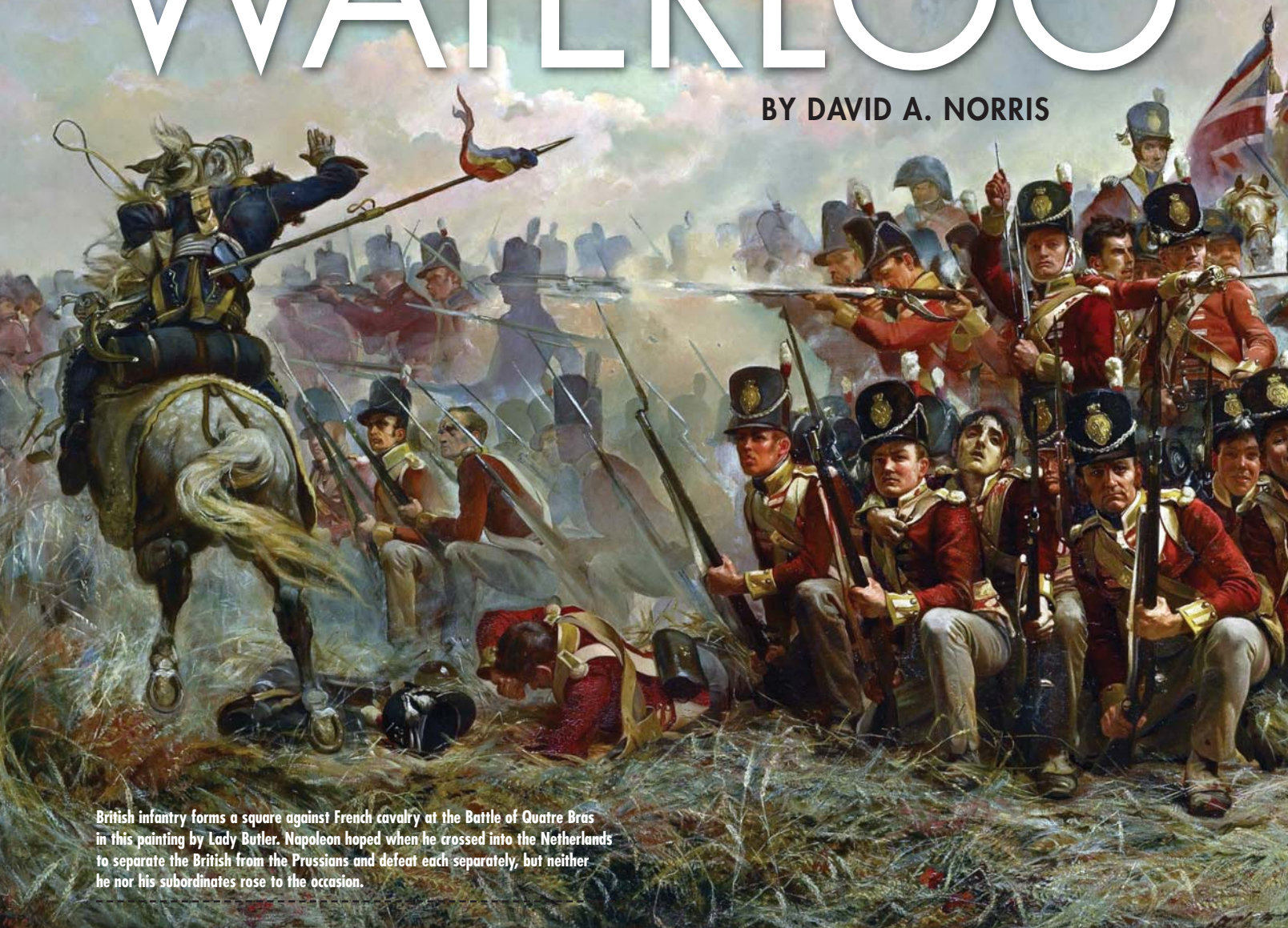
This was the Napoleon Bonaparte's second chance to bring Europe under the rule of one leader. His first regime had crumbled after disastrous defeats in Russia and the Iberian Peninsula. As

armies from all over Europe converged on Paris, the emperor abdicated on April 6, 1814.

Louis XVIII, heir of the old Bourbon dynasty, was made the king of France. The former emperor was exiled to the little Mediterranean island of Elba. But, there would be a final act to the Age of Napoleon. On March 1, 1815, Napoleon escaped from Elba and headed for France. With him were 1,000 men of his old Imperial Guard, his "Elba Battalion," who became the nucleus of a new army when he

TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER AT WATERLOO

BY DAVID A. NORRIS



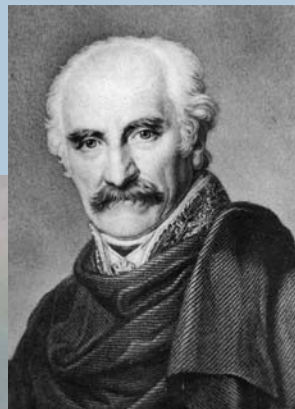
British infantry forms a square against French cavalry at the Battle of Quatre Bras in this painting by Lady Butler. Napoleon hoped when he crossed into the Netherlands to separate the British from the Prussians and defeat each separately, but neither he nor his subordinates rose to the occasion.

landed near Cannes to reclaim his throne.

As Napoleon headed toward Paris, royalist troops confronted him at Laffrey, a town near Grenoble in the French Alps. Louis XVIII's soldiers were being sent to arrest the man who had held their allegiance only months before. Bonaparte faced them alone. Throwing open his coat, he said, "If any one wishes to kill his emperor, let him fire!" Rather than firing, the soldiers cheered Napoleon's superbly timed dramatic gesture and joined his growing retinue.

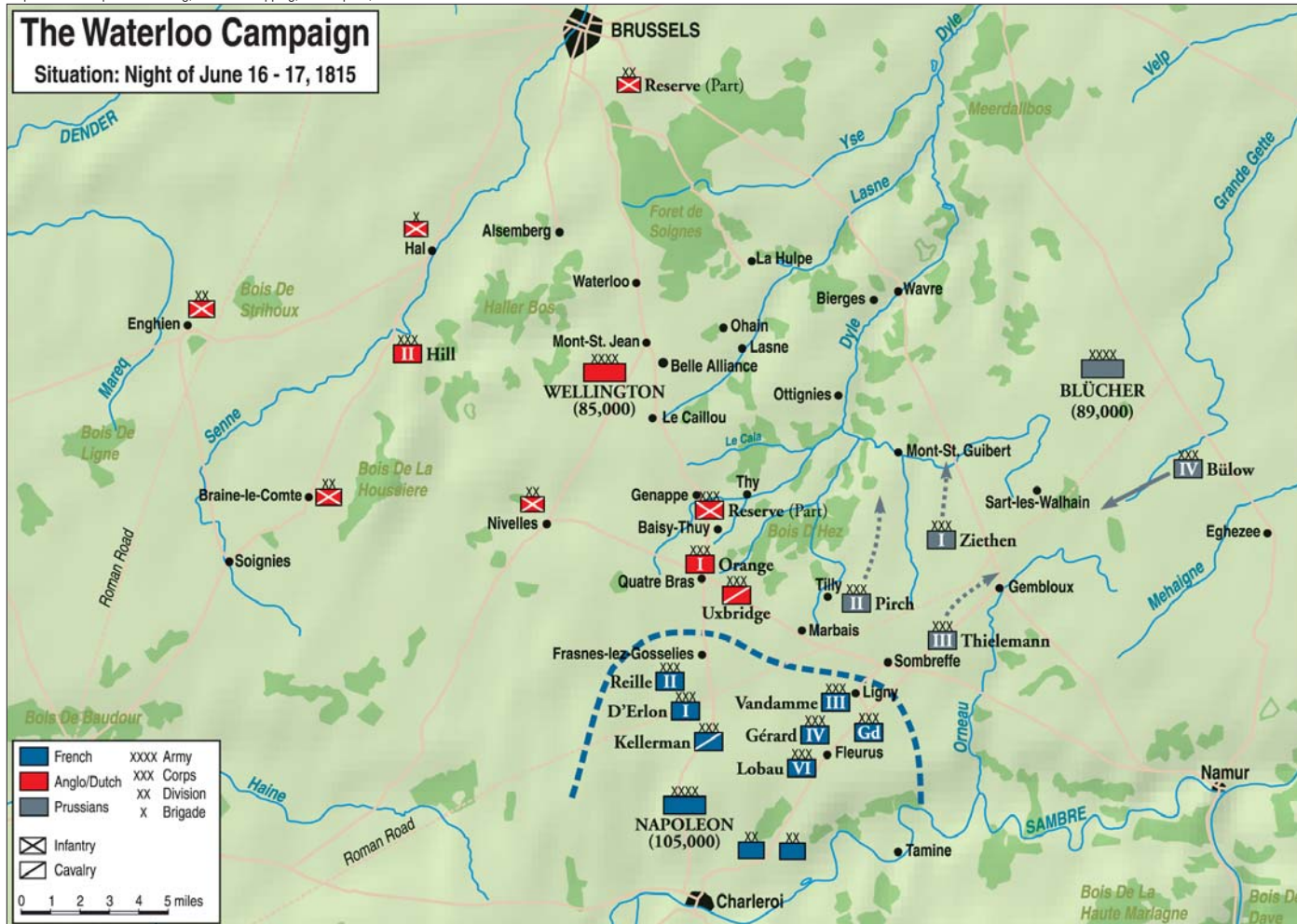
Only 19 days after he stepped back onto French soil, Napoleon was in Paris and was again Napoleon I, Emperor of France. Immediately he took command of the army of France and set about raising more troops. Napoleon knew that his recent enemies would not quietly consent to his return to power.

Marshal Michel Ney; Field Marshal Gebhard von Blucher; and Field Marshal Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington.



Desperate for a decisive victory over the Seventh Coalition, Napoleon failed to smash the Duke of Wellington's line at Waterloo on June 18, 1815.





ABOVE: Napoleon led the right column against the Prussians at Ligny, while Marshal Michel Ney led the left column to Quatre Bras to block the Duke of Wellington from reinforcing the Prussians. Napoleon had hoped to crush the Prussians at Ligny, but Blücher retreated north to maintain contact with the Anglo-Dutch Army. **OPPOSITE:** Napoleon directed the Battle of Waterloo on foot from a knoll where mounted couriers and staff officers received his orders.

Indeed, as news of the escape from Elba reached European capitals, the four largest European powers—Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia—each pledged 150,000 troops for the new war. For the first time the anti-Napoleonic coalition appointed a single general to command their combined forces: Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington. This Anglo-Irish soldier had won the grueling campaign that threw the French out of the Iberian Peninsula. In command of the Prussian contingent was Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher, the only general who had defeated Napoleon twice.

Austria and Russia needed time to mobilize their forces and bring them to the border of France. So in spring 1815, the French faced only two enemy armies. Both of them, under Wellington and Blücher, were in modern-day Belgium, then part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, not far from France's northeastern borders.

Blücher commanded 120,000 men, but this figure included many conscripts and semi-trained militia. Wellington's 68,000-man force, although often referred to as the "British" army, included only about 28,000 British soldiers. Much of Wellington's force came from the smaller German states, and the rest were Belgian and Dutch soldiers who only one year before had been part of Napoleon's army.

The Belgians and Dutch in Wellington's army were commanded by 23-year-old Maj. Gen. Prince William of Orange. Diplomatic considerations insured that the prince received command of the largest corps of the Allied army. The duke's other two corps were under Lt. Gens. Lord Rowland Hill and Sir Thomas Picton.

Napoleon was born in 1769, making him the same age as his adversary Wellington, but the passing years weighed more heavily on the emperor than they did on the duke. The emperor's state of

health in 1815 has been extensively debated in the two centuries' worth of history books published after Waterloo. Certainly, he was no longer as active and vigorous as he had been in his thirties. His officers marveled at his ability to work late into the night for long days and get by with short naps. Now, he grew tired more easily and needed longer hours of sleep. Even worse, health problems nagged at the emperor and crimped his mobility. Suffering from piles and a bladder infection, it was excruciatingly painful for him to spend long spells in the saddle.

Napoleon once kept tight control of his commanders. Unable to ride around a battlefield as freely as he once did, he would have to rely on his generals and his staff officers more than he was accustomed.

Compared to the conscript-heavy armies of his enemies, Napoleon's army of 1815 had a high proportion of seasoned veterans. Some allied commanders led multinational forces, divided by language and different political loyalties. Practically all of Napoleon's new army came from France. Highly motivated, the officers and soldiers were enthusiastic about

adding another triumph to the long list of Napoleon's brilliant victories.

The core of Napoleon's revived army was a new incarnation of the elite Imperial Guard. Since 1804, the Guard had built a legendary reputation. Too valuable to risk except in desperate situations, it was always held in reserve until the outcome of a battle was hanging in the balance. Time after time, the Imperial Guard was sent into battle and changed a wavering situation into a smashing French victory. For the new Imperial Guard of 1815, foot soldiers with 12 years of experience joined the Old Guard. Others, all of whom had at least four years of military experience, joined the Young Guard.

Staffing the high command of the new Napoleonic army was difficult. Many brilliant officers who had served the French Empire well were dead or abroad. Others were reluctant to go to war for Napoleon once again. Napoleon would later regret some of the appointments he made among the generals willing to join him this last time.

Marshal Michel Ney was among the most famed of Napoleon's commanders. The peak of his sterling service may have been his command of the rear guard during the grim wintertime retreat from Moscow in 1812. Bonaparte himself called Ney "the bravest of the brave." His courage would never be questioned; if anything, he would burnish this aspect of his renown at Waterloo. Unhappily serving Louis XVIII, Ney embraced Napoleon instead of capturing him as the king had ordered. Napoleon would depend more heavily on Ney than ever before, effectively putting him in charge of the battlefield at Waterloo.

Marshal Jean-de-Dieu Soult had built a reputation as a battlefield general that lost much of its luster when he commanded the ill-fated French forces in the Peninsular War. Like Ney, Soult willingly switched allegiance from Louis XVIII to Napoleon when the chance came in 1815. In the new army, the old combat general was given the administrative post of chief of staff.

Marshal Emmanuel Grouchy, Marquis of Grouchy, was a rarity: a born aristocrat who held one of the highest commands in the Napoleonic armies. Grouchy's previous service induced Napoleon to entrust him with the right wing of his army and to allow him more latitude than was wise.

With Ney, Soult, Grouchy, and 120,000 men designated as the *Armée du Nord*, the emperor crossed the border from France to Belgium on June 14. They marched into the French-speaking region of Wallonia, heading first to Charleroi.

If the coalition combined its forces, it could quickly crush the emperor's army. But Wellington's men were dispersed around Brussels and to the south and west of the city. Blucher's troops were sprawled from Charleroi to Liege, nearly 60 miles to the east. The emperor planned to slice between the two armies. Kept apart, the enemy forces could be defeated one at a time. Then, he could deal with the Austrians before the Russians could bring their numbers into the war.

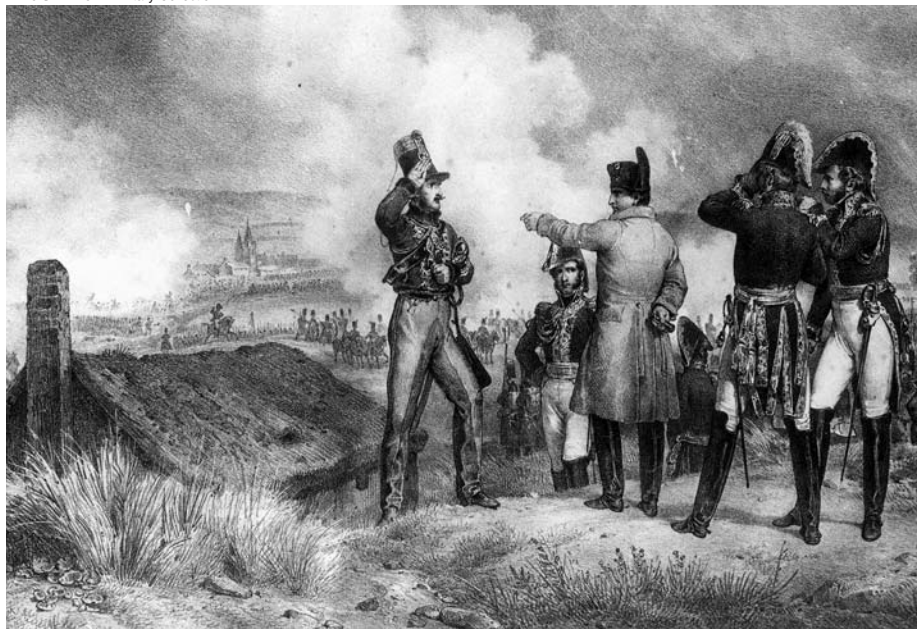
After crossing the border, Napoleon risked splitting his army. He would lead the right column to attack Prussian troops encamped at Ligny. Ney and the left column would take a small crossroads hamlet called Quatre Bras, west of Ligny. Here, on the dividing line between the two allied forces, Ney could block Wellington from aiding Blucher. A lancer unit from Ney's command rode to the crossroads. Finding no enemy troops, they rode on and left the place unoccupied. Ney otherwise did nothing to hold Quatre Bras.

So far, Napoleon's moves had taken his enemies by surprise. On the night of June 15, as the French prepared for attacks on the next day, droves of allied officers took a break from their duties to attend a ball thrown by Duchess Charlotte of Richmond in Brussels. Rumors spread around the ballroom when Wellington arrived late. He quietly confirmed that the French were crossing the border. Officers flew to their commands, some of them not bothering to change. The next day, they would conduct the battle against the French still in their evening clothes and dancing shoes.

Two battles were fought on June 16. Each had a different outcome, and each played its part in leading to the final confrontation at Waterloo.

At Ligny, the French drove the Prussians from the field and captured 21 guns. Although no one knew it at the time, Ligny would be Napoleon's last victory. West of Ligny, Dutch soldiers and

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection



Picton's British division held off Ney at Quatre Bras, although the French assaults prevented Wellington from reinforcing Blucher.

The battles of June 16 showed that the Napoleon of 1815 had lost some of his earlier edge. Napoleon's muddled orders to Ney did not explain that the main effort that day was to be against Ligny. With Ney's attention focused on Quatre Bras, the potential rout of the Prussians at Ligny turned into an orderly withdrawal. After the battle, Napoleon was unusually relaxed and casual regarding the fleeing enemy, and vetoed an aggressive pursuit. Ten years before, he might have harried the fleeing army to its virtual annihilation.

Not only was Blucher allowed to escape, but the French failed to find out where he was going. On the morning of June 17, the French believed that the Prussian army was fatally mauled by the defeat, and they were sure that the Prussians would retreat east to Namur. Napoleon detached Grouchy with 33,000 troops to pursue Blucher's army. But the Prussians were not heading for Namur. With good morale, they were marching north toward Wavre with every intention of carrying on the war. Aware of Blucher's movements, Wellington abandoned his plans to concentrate for battle at Quatre Bras. Instead, he fell back up the Charleroi-Brussels road (roughly parallel with Blucher's route) to Waterloo, a village about 12 miles south of



At Quatre Bras, Duke Frederick William of Brunswick was killed by a gunshot shortly after leading a charge. Marshal Ney's hesitation in pressing the French attack at Quatre Bras allowed the Duke of Wellington ample time to hurry forward reinforcements.

Brussels and nine miles west of Wavre.

Around Waterloo, broad farm fields and gently rolling countryside offered ample room for the armies to maneuver. Two miles south of the village of Waterloo, the Charleroi-Brussels road crossed a ridge called Mont St. Jean. Here, Wellington arranged his 68,000 men and 156 guns along the high ground, facing to the south. On the southern slopes of the ridge were three clusters of farm buildings, called Hougoumont, La Haye Sainte, and Papelotte. These three farmsteads, with their manor houses, masonry walls, and brick buildings, were wonderfully suited as fortified defenses.

Rain was falling late on the afternoon of June 17 as Napoleon's 72,000 men, who had 256 guns to support them, neared Waterloo from the south. They halted along the road, near a tavern called La Belle Alliance. The tavern was atop a low ridge roughly parallel to Mont St. Jean, and here the French set up camp in preparation for the battle that would come the next day.

The precipitation swelled into a downpour. Among the English, Sergeant William Lawrence of the 40th Regiment of Foot recalled, "That night we crept into any hole we could find, cowsheds, cart-houses, and all kinds of farmstead buildings, for shelter." Lawrence could "never remember a worse night in all the Peninsular war, for the rain descended in torrents, mixed with fearful thunder and lightning, and seeming to foretell the fate of the following morning."

Napoleon spent the evening at Caillou, a farmhouse south of the inn. He slept for a few hours, then rode out about 1 AM for perhaps two hours to inspect his lines. In the distance glowed campfires that allied soldiers managed to nurture in the rain.

The next day was Sunday, June 18, 1815. About 8 AM, the rain started tapering off. With some of his staff officers and commanders, the emperor reigned over a breakfast at Caillou. They ate

from silver plate emblazoned with the imperial arms. Bonaparte seemed serenely confident to his staff. "We have ninety chances in our favor, and not ten against us," he said. The night before, Soult broached the question of summoning all or part of Grouchy's forces to strengthen their lines. Napoleon snapped, "Because you have been beaten by Wellington, you consider him a great general. But, I tell you that he is a bad general. And now I tell you that Wellington is a bad general, that the English are bad troops, and that this affair is nothing more serious than eating one's breakfast."

After the rain stopped, Napoleon reviewed his lines from horseback as the armies arrayed for battle. Bands played as the French troops in their resplendent uniforms cheered, "Vive l'Empereur!" Ensign Rees Gronow, an officer of the 1st Foot Guard, who was on duty as an aide-de-camp, plainly saw the emperor as he rode with his staff during the spectacular French review from the allied line. British officers near Gronow, watching their famous adversary through a spyglass, saw him in the distance on his white horse reviewing his vast host.

Perhaps a little surprisingly for one of Europe's wildest tacticians, Napoleon's battle plan at Waterloo was straightforward and simple. He would open with a diversionary attack from his left, with elements of Lt. Gen. Count Honore Charles Reille's corps moving against Hougoumont. Then, a heavy bombardment would pummel the allied center and left. When the enemy was sufficiently weakened by the artillery, the French would launch an all-out frontal attack on Wellington's center.

Napoleon was aware that substantial numbers of Prussian troops might reach Wellington at Mont St. Jean that day. Not so many years ago, the combative campaigner would have launched his attacks immediately after first light, hoping to overrun the enemy before they could be reinforced. And this was likely what Napoleon had in mind. However, the night of soaking rain worried many officers among his staff and his top generals. Muddy ground would slow the infantry, and would also impede the cavalry, which Napoleon expected to help shatter the enemy lines. Field guns would be difficult to move in the soft ground. Furthermore, many of the troops were tired from marching well into the night to reach La Belle Alliance. Considering it prudent to allow the ground to dry out a bit, the emperor delayed the first infantry attacks for a few hours.

Wellington used the delay caused by the rain to arrange his lines. Assured by 3:30 AM that Blucher was sending troops to his aid, the commander was prepared to hold on to the ridge.

His heaviest concentration was along his right, fronted by Hougomont. Using one of his familiar tactics, the duke deployed many of his troops lying down behind the crest of the ridge. This would partially shield them from some of the enemy artillery's preliminary barrages, and would also limit French knowledge of the placement and numbers of his men. The allied left around Papelotte was more lightly manned, in the expectation that the Prussians would arrive on that side of the battle line.

There was one very unfortunate error in the duke's troop deployments. To prevent a surprise move against his right, and to cover a possible retreat if things went badly, he sent 17,000 troops roughly eight miles northwest to the villages of Halle and Tubize. With the potential of the Prussians coming in on Wellington's left, a long swing to the right by the French would have been highly unlikely. Added to his 68,000 troops, the men sent toward Tubize would have strongly bolstered Wellington's numbers.

Obtaining some relief by getting out of the saddle, Napoleon settled in to direct the battle on foot. His headquarters was a table dragged out of a farmhouse onto a little knoll. Aided by a spyglass, he had a view of part of the battlefield, and maps and papers were spread out on the table before him. Mounted couriers and staff officers awaited his orders.

Also on hand were local guides. One fellow, a local innkeeper named Jean Decoster, had been pulled out of bed at 5 AM to furnish the French with his local knowledge. Another guide, Joseph Bourgeois, was so frightened that he stuttered whenever called upon, and he kept his eyes fixed on the ground. Eventually, Napoleon dismissed him. Asked later what it was like being in the presence of Napoleon, Bourgeois said, "If his face had been the face of a clock, nobody would have dared look at it, for the hour."

By the late morning, the French knew that Blucher had moved to Wavre. About 10 AM, Napoleon ordered Grouchy to attack the Prussians.

As the sun came out to dry the landscape, a steady breeze blew, the kind that huntsman called "a drying wind." By 11 AM, the ground was dry enough for the French to open the battle. Napoleon's artillery opened fire to cover the start of the first infantry advance. On the French left, Prince Jerome Bonaparte's (the emperor's brother and the recent king of the Netherlands) division of Reille's corps drew the task of taking Hougomont.

Hougomont was held by troops from Britain and the German state of Nassau. Some defenders punched holes in the brick walls to

create loopholes for their muskets. Other defenders took advantage of hedges and orchards around the buildings. Although intended as a diversion, Reille's attack on Hougomont grew into a major effort. As the defenders held on, more and more French units were thrown in. Their absence would be felt when Ney launched his main attack later with a lighter force than intended.

Beyond the north gate of Hougomont, a party of French sappers gathered to try to force their way inside. Leading the assault was a sous-lieutenant named Legros, whose first name does not appear in accounts of the battle. Once attached to a unit of engineers, the powerful Legros was nicknamed L'Enforceur. With an axe as his chosen weapon, Legros broke open the gate and his 30 men poured into the courtyard. As the French rushed in, the defenders nearest the gate were pushed back. If Legros could hold on long enough for more French to reach him, the anchor of Wellington's right would fall.

Lieutenant Colonel James Macdonnell, commander of the Hougomont detachment, called for help in getting the gate closed. About 10 officers and men joined him, among them Lt. Col. Henry Wyndham and Corporal James Graham. They rushed to the gates, slammed them shut again, and then brought down the wooden bar to hold them fast.

While shutting the gate Wyndham saw a French grenadier, supported on the shoulders of another man, peer over the wall and aim at him with a musket. Graham and the Frenchman fired at the same instant. The grenadier missed, and Graham killed him, saving Wyndham's life.

Any French reinforcements were now locked out, and Legros and his 30 soldiers were trapped inside. Every one of the storming party was killed except for a young drummer boy. Wellington

Library of Congress



A wagon stacked with ammunition for British infantry pulls into the courtyard at Hougomont Farm just minutes before a desperate attack by the French.

later said that the fate of the battle turned on the gates of Hougomont.

Wyndham, it was said, was so affected by the fighting at the gate of Hougomont that he could not bear to close a door. Years later his niece remembered his suffering from sharp winter draughts roaring through an open door.

As the duke awaited Blucher, the emperor anticipated Grouchy's arrival. Grouchy heard the French artillery from late morning on. He was summoned to Waterloo in two rather ambiguously worded dispatches drafted by Soult at 10 AM and 1 PM. Wary of disobeying the emperor's previous orders in favor of new, contradictory dispatches, he decided against turning around to march toward the sound of the guns.

Blucher had maneuvered past Grouchy and dispatched the corps of Field Marshal Count Hans von Zieten and General of Infantry Count Bulow von Dennewitz to join Wellington. Ominous news struck the French at noon when a Prussian hussar was captured at Saint-Lambert, only three miles to Napoleon's right. General of Division Georges Mouton, Count de Lobau, was sent with his VI Corps to the village of Placenoit to protect the French right and block the first units



Victoria and Albert Museum

of the Prussian army that approached the battlefield.

By 1 PM, the French were ready to start their main offensive of the day. Gunners increased their rate of fire, aiming at Mont St. Jean. Wellington ordered his men to lie down beyond the crest of the ridge to shelter them from the heavy bombardment. Maj. Gen. Willem Frederik Bylandt's Dutch-Belgian brigade, in the open, was heavily pounded by the artillery. At 1:30 PM, the 17,000-man corps of General of Division Jean-Baptiste Drouet, Count d'Erlon, moved toward the allied line atop Mont St. Jean. Originally, d'Erlon was to be supported by Lobau before the latter's corps was sent to the right flank.

D'Erlon's four tightly packed divisions moved en echelon. They were crowded together to avoid La Haye Sainte on their left, which was held by Major Georg Baring of the King's German Infantry. As the French divisions marched up the hill, their own artillery had to cease their covering fire. Bylandt's brigade wavered and broke, but d'Erlon came under heavy flanking fire from La Haye Sainte, a nearby sandpit manned by the 95th Rifles and allied artillery.

Behind the crest of Mont St. Jean, the soldiers of Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Picton's division could not see the advancing French. They did see Bylandt's men fleeing past to the rear. Some allied gunners in front of Picton abandoned their pieces and ran as well. As the French reached the crest, Picton ordered, "Up! At them!" Three thousand British soldiers, until then hidden from the French, suddenly arose. In response to a wobbly French volley, they poured a devastating fire into the French column at a distance of perhaps 50 yards. Then, with fixed bayonets, they charged. As

French cuirassiers charge against a British square in a painting by 19th-century artist Felix Philippoteaux that exaggerates the steepness of the hills. Field Marshal Wellington's artillery pounded the advancing French cavalry, greatly weakening its strength.

the redcoats rushed forward, Picton was killed instantly by a shot in the head.

Adding to the surprise of the French on Mont St. Jean, more than 2,000 British cavalrymen galloped into focus amid the battle smoke. The Household Brigade and Maj. Gen. Sir William Ponsonby's Union Brigade (so called from its composition of English, Scots, and Irish horsemen) hurled themselves into the French infantry and some accompanying cuirassiers. The French were pushed off the ridge with the loss of 2,000 prisoners and two regimental eagles.

Buoyed by their success, and with no time for



a complete battle plan, the British cavalry roared down the slope and continued up the ridge near La Belle Alliance. With their commander, Lt. Gen. Henry Paget, Earl of Uxbridge, riding at their head, the horsemen hacked their way through and over some of the French batteries in front of the main line. Losing momentum, and with their horses blown, Uxbridge's cavalry was hit by a devastating counterattack by French cuirassiers and lancers. About half of the British were killed or taken prisoner; Ponsonby was killed by an enemy lance.

Action in the center slowed for a time. Toward Hougoumont, French howitzers fired carcass ammunition, incendiary shells that set the thatched roofs of the farm complex afire. Flames swept through the buildings, trapping wounded soldiers inside. But Macdonnell and his men kept up their fire and clung to their position.

were lifted completely off the ground and carried along with the rushing tide of cavalry.

At last, the thousands of French riders neared the allied guns. Wellington's gunners fired their last rounds. Under orders, they fled from their pieces to take refuge in the infantry squares. French lancers, cuirassiers, and other cavalry galloped through the silent guns and flung themselves at the infantry.

Formed in a square, infantry of the era were almost invulnerable. The hollow rectilinear formations might have as many as four ranks. The two rear ranks poured steady musket fire. The front rank kneeled, putting their musket butts on the ground and holding them out diagonally while the second rank held their own their muskets and bayonets out at waist level. In effect, the square presented a steel-tipped chevaux-de-frise with two ranks of soldiers firing behind it.

A square was vulnerable to heavy small-arms fire, of course, and well-placed artillery could plow through its closely aligned ranks. But, if the men held steady and did not panic, they were likely to shoot down enough of the attacking cavalymen to repel a mounted attack.

Added to the allied infantry squares, Wellington's remaining cavalry pitched into Ney's horsemen. Under the pressure, Ney withdrew. Unfortunately for the French, no one had thought of bringing tools to spike the allied cannons. The gun crews ran out from inside the infantry squares and fired at the retreating cavalry. Once withdrawn, Ney halted the horsemen and turned them around for another attack.

From La Belle Alliance, Napoleon could see the wave of French horsemen ebb and flow against

The previous night's rain, which had impeded the French, also slowed the Prussian advance. Their route from Wavre took them across swollen streams and muddy ground that each successive wave of troops churned into a deeper and stickier obstacle. About 4 PM the Prussian IV Corps approached the French right flank, where Lobau managed to blunt their advance.

As the pressure from the Prussians increased on the French right, Ney mistook some shuffling of Wellington's units for the beginning of a general retreat. Ney ordered the cavalry corps of General of Division Count Edouard Jean Baptiste Milhaud to charge up the slope of Mont St. Jean. Trying to break veteran infantry with cavalry unsupported by infantry was a risky gamble. But Ney was confident, and "the bravest of the brave" joined Milhaud to lead the charge himself.

Rather than preparing a retreat, Wellington was reinforcing his center by throwing in some of his reserves. As his artillery pounded the advancing French cavalry, his British and German foot soldiers formed into squares to repel Ney's charge.

Ney took the cavalry by a different route than the earlier attacks of d'Erlet. Now, the new French assault came west of the Charleroi road, aiming at Wellington's line between La Haye Sainte and Hougoumont.

The slopes of Mont St. Jean rise at a gentle angle. But, the farm fields were still damp, and their muddy soil made the long ride uphill even slower and more exhausting for the French horsemen. The cavalry was squeezed together to minimize fire on their flanks as they passed between La Haye Sainte on their right and Hougoumont on the left. So tightly packed were the French riders that some of their horses

the enemy line. The emperor gloomily told Soult, "This movement is premature and may yet have disastrous results." Yet, there seemed nothing to do but support Ney. Under Napoleon's orders, the cavalry corps of General of Division Count François Etienne Kellermann was committed.

As the battle grew more desperate, Napoleon returned to the saddle. When the very nervous innkeeper Jean Decoster accompanied the emperor, the guide was secured by having his saddle tied to that of a chasseur. As they got closer to the enemy, Decoster constantly ducked and swerved to avoid bullets. Napoleon paused in his direction of the battle to tell him, "Now, my friend, do not be so restless. A musket-shot may kill you just as well from behind as from the front, and will make a much worse wound."

Whenever the French cavalry charges receded, allied foot soldiers came under renewed tempests of French artillery. Gronow was inside an infantry square that by late afternoon resembled "a per-

of throwing them into Ney's attacks. About 6 PM Ney ordered another assault on the enemy center, while Bonaparte at last pulled the Imperial Guard out of reserve. But the guards were sent to bolster Lobau.

"Every moment was a crisis," wrote Brigade-Major Harry Smith, a participant in the battle. By 6:30 PM, Wellington faced an even greater crisis than he had seen that day, and the tide of battle seemed to be turning toward the French. Lobau pushed the Prussians back from Placenoit. Its defenders nearly out of ammunition, La Haye Sainte finally fell to the French. The French could now bring artillery up much closer to the enemy. At that point, Napoleon felt that his right flank was safe and that it was time for a final stroke to break Wellington's line. Napoleon released most of the Imperial Guard to reinforce Ney.

Just as the guardsmen prepared to move on Mont St. Jean, Wellington's battered and frayed center was at last getting a little relief. After the nerve-wracking tension of the day, the arrival of elements of the Prussian I Corps let Wellington tighten his thinning lines. Wellington personally brought up some Brunswick troops, his remaining reserves.

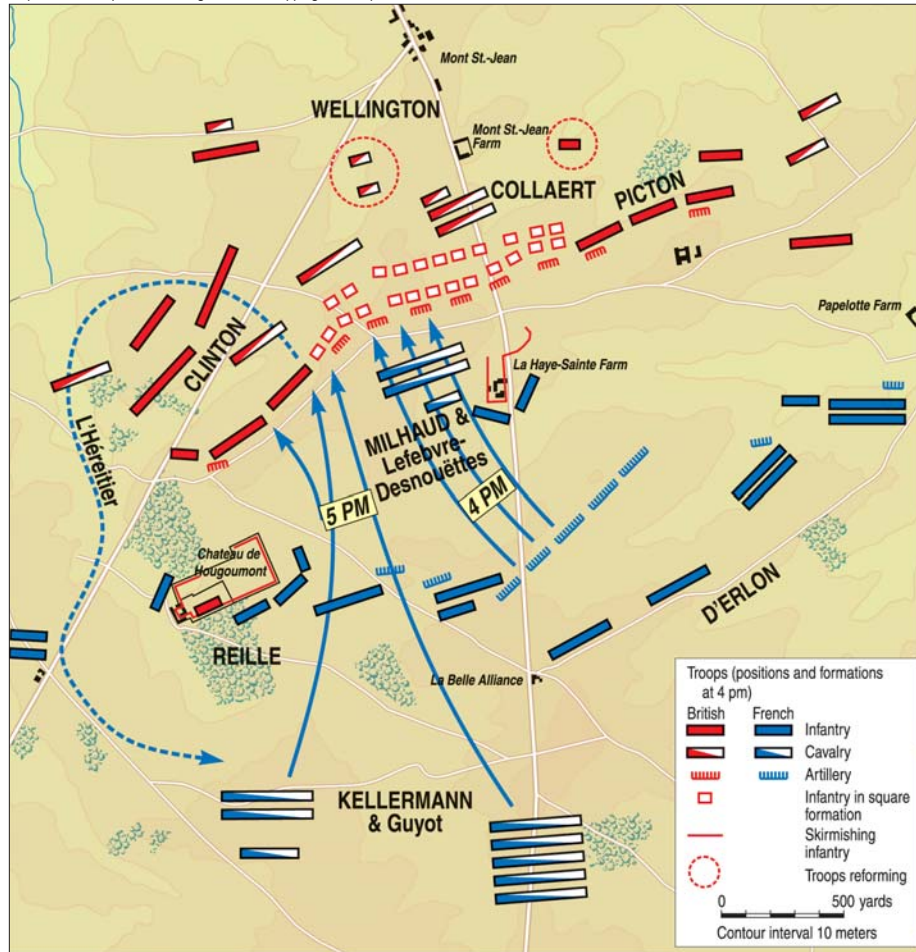
Fifteen minutes after the first Prussians joined Wellington, at 7 PM, the battalions of the Imperial Guard swept forward led by Ney. They marched up the slope, roughly following the route taken for the futile cavalry attacks, aiming at Wellington's line between the captured La Haye Sainte and the still defiant Hougomont. To the right, the Imperial Guard was supported by d'Erlot's corps, and elsewhere Reille and Lobau kept up their fire.

To steady his soldiers against the rumors sweeping through the ranks about Prussian reinforcements, Napoleon spread false reports that Grouchy had reached the field with his 33,000 men.

Battle smoke partly hid the massing of the Imperial Guard for their last-ditch attempt. A French captain deserted to the allies, bringing news of the impending charge of the Guards. Wellington ordered his guns to cease fire on the La Haye Sainte batteries and other French artillery to save their fire for the impending infantry attacks.

Pressing toward the enemy, the Imperial Guard advanced in squares. Between each square were two 8-inch guns of the horse artillery. Allied guns sliced into the Guards' squares, and the survivors adjusted to fill the gaps. Ney's horse was killed. It was the fifth horse shot from under him that day. At some point in the fighting that day, an enemy saber sliced off one of Ney's epaulets.

Map © 2015 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



Field Marshal Wellington's battered and frayed center received relief late in the day when the arrival of the Prussian I Corps enabled Wellington to shift his forces to prevent his line from breaking. Fifteen minutes after the Prussians arrived, the French Imperial Guard swept forward.

fect hospital, being full of dead, dying, and mutilated soldiers." Fearsome as the cavalry charges were, Gronow found the mounted attacks to be a relief because they made the enemy artillery cease fire.

As thousands of Kellerman's and Milhaud's cuirassiers drew nearer, Gronow later recalled "the very earth shook under the enormous mass of men and horses." Amid the tumult the ensign noticed an odd sensation. "I shall never forget," he wrote, "the strange noise our bullets made against the breastplates" of the armored cuirassiers, which sounded like "the noise of a violent hailstorm beating against panes of glass."

In the smoke, chaos, and death looming over the battle, it is uncertain how many times the French cavalry charged up Mont St. Jean. But it was not enough. Wellington's squares blasted and hurled back each mounted attack.

With the Prussians looming over his right, Napoleon held his infantry reserves in place instead

When Ney and the cream of Napoleon's army neared the ridge, its right echelon scattered the Brunswick troops and two English brigades. Then, allied artillery staggered the Imperial Guard, and Colonel H. Detmers' Dutch-Belgian brigade charged at them with bayonets. Detmers and the guns sent this section of the Imperial Guard reeling back down the hill.

In the center, Maj. Gen. Peregrine Maitland's brigade had been lying down awaiting orders. With them, Gronow heard Wellington shout, "Guards, get up and charge!" At the order, Maitland's men fired a crushing volley into the French "and rushed on with fixed bayonets and the hearty Hurrah! peculiar to British troops," wrote Gronow.

All along its front, the Imperial Guard stalled. The elite Guard wavered and then began retreating. As the flood of French troops ebbed, the cry went up throughout the French lines, "Le Garde recule! ("the Guard is retreating").

That morning, the French line had been roughly straight and parallel with Wellington. But at the climax of the battle, as more and more Prussians pressed against Napoleon's right, the French line was bent south at a right angle in front of Papelotte. Zeiten's Prussians hit the French right, which began to break about 7:30 PM. Seeing his forces advancing and the fearsome Imperial Guard in retreat, Wellington said, "In for a penny, in for a pound," and ordered a counterattack.

Panic engulfed the rest of Napoleon's troops, who knew the Imperial Guard had been shattered and saw the growing avalanche of allied soldiers nearing them. Most of the French regiments crumbled and fled from the field.

Lieutenant Colonel Henry Wyndham opened the door of a halted carriage and climbed in. At the same moment, Jerome Bonaparte spilled out of the other door and escaped. The emperor himself abandoned the field. Left behind on the battleground of Waterloo were 25,000 French dead and wounded. Another 9,000 were scooped up as prisoners. Allied losses all told ran to about 23,000.

Although Grouchy attacked and defeated part of the Prussian army at Wavre on June 19, Napoleon's Armee du Nord was smashed beyond repair. Napoleon went back to Paris. He tried to hold on to power, but only his most loyal (or delusional) adherents thought there was any chance to prolong the emperor's reign. With nothing left to stop the allied forces converging on him, Emperor Napoleon I abdicated again on June 22. Louis XVIII was reinstated as king of France, marking the close of the Napoleonic Era. The brief final flare of the

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection



Napoleon's Imperial Guard was shattered in its climactic assault on the Anglo-Dutch line. Faithful to the end, two battalions of the Old Guard covered the retreat of the rest of the French army.

Napoleonic Empire, which was crushed by the defeat at Waterloo, would become known as the Hundred Days.

Napoleon tried to escape to the United States, but he fell into the hands of the Royal Navy. A more secure place of exile was selected for the former emperor: the remote British colony of St. Helena, an island in the South Atlantic. There was no chance of escape from one of the British Empire's most isolated possessions.

Napoleon Bonaparte had six years to reflect on Waterloo before he died on St. Helena in 1821. He blamed his marshals and generals, especially Ney. He complained about the poor caliber of his staff officers and even the entire army. Once, Napoleon told his companion Gaspard Gourgaud, "The men of 1815 were not the men of 1792. My generals were faint-hearted." Perhaps, thought the exile, waiting one more month before beginning the offensive would have given the army more time to solidify itself. Another time, he complained, "Ah! Mon Dieu! Perhaps the rain on the 17th of June had more to do than people think of the loss of the Battle of Waterloo."

Repudiating talk of revolution and reform, the Congress of Vienna restored the old system of monarchical rule. For Europe, Waterloo marked the start of an unprecedented 99 years of relative peace. There would be some small wars; revolutions in 1848, the Crimean War, and wars leading to the unifications of Italy and Germany. But, no conflicts drew the entire continent into all-out war until the 1914 assassinations of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the Duchess Sophia of Austria-Hungary at Sarajevo led to World War I. Charleroi, so close to Waterloo, was the site of fighting early in this new world war in September 1914. But the fighting at Charleroi would lack the tone and character of the grand clash at Waterloo fought between Napoleon and Wellington on that long summer day in 1815. □

A Sherman tank of the Calgary Armored Regiment rolls through the rubble-strewn streets of Ortona, Italy, in a painting by an eyewitness Canadian war artist Major Charles Fraser Comfort.



ITALY'S STALING

“WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?” Major Bert Kennedy, acting commander of Canada’s Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment of the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade, asked Lieutenant Farley Mowat of the intelligence section. It was December 5, 1943, and Kennedy was in a foul mood. He had been ordered to launch a diversionary attack across the Moro River without artillery support and establish a stronghold on the north ridgeline. This would be the right flank of Maj. Gen. Christopher Vokes’ 1st Canadian Infantry Division’s attempt to cross the river in its drive for Ortona three miles to the north. “We’re to cross the Moro River right away,”

said Kennedy. “No preparation. No support. What’ve you found?”

Mowat, who had been scouting the terrain with an intelligence officer of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, told Kennedy that there was nothing to be seen from the vantage point of the Canadian position on the south bank of the Moro.

Determined Canadians fought street by street through Ortona in December 1943 against elite German paratroopers who sought to stall the Allied advance up Italy's Adriatic coast.

BY MIKE PHIFER



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This did not improve Kennedy's mood. Kennedy ordered Mowat to take a few scouts and search for a usable crossing. He also ordered Mowat to report back in an hour.

Slipping down to the river with three men under the cover of darkness, Mowat and his scouts waded along the flooded banks of the

Moro and eventually found a crossing. They quickly headed back to their lines where they discovered Company A of the Hasty Ps, as the regiment was known, preparing for action. While Mowat reported to Kennedy, scout leader Lieutenant George Langstaff guided the company down to the ford. Once Company A had established a foothold across the river, it would be reinforced with the rest of the battalion.

Shortly after 10 PM, Mowat, who was with Kennedy at the time, saw six or seven German machine-gun positions begin, in Mowat's words, "stitching the darkness with vicious needles of tracers." Green and white flares burst overhead and soon mortar rounds came crashing down on Company A. Both soldiers "were appalled by the ferocity of the German reaction," wrote Mowat. Kennedy requested a situation report by radio.

The men of Company A did not get the message. Caught in a wicked crossfire, the company and platoon commanders knew they had to withdraw from a potential death trap. When Kennedy received a report from the company commander the following day, he ordered artillery support to silence the German machine guns covering the ford. Meanwhile, at two points farther upriver more Canadians were attempting to cross the Moro in preparation for an attack on Ortona. They were having a better go of it at one of the points. A bloody December lay ahead for the Canucks.

The Allied advance up the Italian boot toward Rome had begun in early September 1943. The Germans had brought an abrupt halt to the Allied advance at the Gustav and Bernhard fortified lines roughly 90 miles south of the Allied objective. The advance of Lt. Gen. Mark Clark's Fifth Army up the western coast of Italy had stalled due to bad weather, fierce German resistance, and heavy casualties.

To get things moving, Lt. Gen. Bernard Montgomery was to attack with his Eighth Army in eastern Italy. The Eighth Army would cross the Sangro River and advance on the coastal town of Pescara. From there it would swing west to Avezzano. The Allied leadership believed this would threaten Rome and force the Germans to shift troops facing Clark to meet them. At that point, Clark would break through the Gustav Line and link up with Allied units landing at Anzio about 30 miles southwest of Rome. The Italian capital would then fall.

It was a bold plan with the Eighth Army planning to push west to Avezzano by December 25. "I must have fine weather," said Montgomery, but he would not get it. By mid-November, heavy rains began to fall. Nevertheless, the Eighth Army's V Corps under Lt. Gen. Charles Allfrey managed to cross the Sangro River in late November.

At that point, the Germans counterattacked, which blunted Montgomery's advance. A bloody engagement ensued in which the V Corps managed to force the Germans back across the Moro River. German engineers began fortifying the ridge on the north side of the river valley. On December 1, the 1st Canadian Division was ordered to take over for the battle-weary British 78th Division on the south side of the river.

Vokes quickly got his troops moving toward the Moro River. By December 3, the majority of the 1st Canadian Division was assembling south of the 78th Division's position. A day later the Canadians began taking over for the 78th Division. That same day the Sangro River rose more than six feet. The rising waters washed away the vital pontoon bridge across the waterway. The men of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade, which had not yet reached the 1st Division's position, found themselves stranded on the south side of the Sangro.

With heavy rains falling and a sea of mud expanding, it became clear to Montgomery that Rome would not be captured anytime soon. Instead, he focused on taking Pescara, which lay 25 miles to the north. At the same time, he had his eyes on Ortona, which was a key deepwater port with a rail line. The Germans had destroyed Ortona's harbor and railway tracks, but they could be repaired. With the Eighth Army's supply line stretched to the breaking point, the capture of Ortona became of strategic importance to Montgomery.

Vokes wanted to get all of his units across the flooded Moro as soon as possible, but this would not be easy with the constant rain. On the ridgeline behind the Moro River, General-leutnant Karl Hans Lungershausen's 90th Panzer Grenadier Division had dug in on the reverse slopes of gullies and ravines dotted with olive groves and vineyards. The Germans had sewed mines in the fields and set up machinegun positions to check the Canadian advance.

Canadian patrols found three potential spots across the river where bridges could be built. One was on a new coast road on the right flank, another was on the old highway that wound through the Moro valley toward the village of the San Leonardo on the German side of the river valley, and a third was a couple of miles upriver from San Leonardo at the small village of Villa Rogatti located on a ridge. Vokes decided he would cross the river at all three points. His troops would attack at night without artillery support, relying primarily on surprise.



Elements of General-leutnant Richard Heidrich's elite 1st Parachute Division stubbornly defended Ortona against determined attacks by Maj. Gen. Christopher Vokes' 1st Canadian Infantry Division in December 1943.

With Company A of the Hasty Ps being driven back across the river after its failed attempt at crossing, things were not going well farther upriver at San Leonardo either. At midnight, Company B of the 2nd Brigade's Seaforth Highlanders set off to cross the river for the village. It would be followed shortly afterward by Companies A and C in preparation for the main attack. The Royal Canadian Engineers stood nearby, waiting to construct a crossing of steel cribs to allow the 17-pounder antitank guns to get across the river to help repulse German counterattacks. Once the Seaforths had established a bridgehead, the engineers planned to construct a Bailey bridge to allow tanks to get across the river.

Companies A and C soon found themselves under heavy German machine-gun fire, which forced Company A back across the river while Company C held on to a small piece of real estate 100 yards from the edge of the Moro. Meanwhile, Company B managed to reach its objective and waited for dawn to arrive.

On the left flank, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Regiment (PPCLI), also of the 2nd Brigade, had better luck when three companies slipped across the Moro and captured Villa Rogatti. Although driven out of the town, the Germans still held fortified positions on the outskirts of Rogatti.

At 9 AM, the 200th Regiment of the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division counterattacked. Incoming mortar rounds and machine-gun fire hammered the Canadians. The Canucks hung on to Villa Rogatti in expectation of armored support from the British 44th Tank Regiment. German panzer grenadiers charged through olive groves backed by Panzer Mark IV tanks and attacked the village. The Canadians managed to hold on until British tanks arrived to help them repulse the German attack. A second German attack in the afternoon was halted after two hours of hard fighting.

On the Canadian right flank, the Hasty Ps attacked again across the Moro. This time a 20-minute barrage hammered the German positions before Company C crossed the river at 2 PM, followed by Company D. The two companies soon found themselves pinned down by heavy enemy fire. Kennedy ordered the withdrawal of the two companies at 3:40 PM, but Company D was unable to break off.

Unable to make radio contact with Company D, Kennedy figured they had been overrun. Smoke and fog, which had obscured the battlefield, eventually cleared enough for Kennedy to see that Company D had managed to penetrate the German position. He sent Companies A and B to their aid, as well as a platoon of infantry from the Bren gun carriers, who were ordered to dismount and attack on foot.

The Canadians managed to capture the ridge on the north side of the river and quickly dug in on the reverse slope. This gave them a toehold on the German side of the Moro. They braced themselves for the expected German counterattack. Meanwhile, near San Leonardo, the Seaforth High-

landers were unable to capture the village despite the aggressiveness of Company B holding out on the German side of the river. A plan to capture the village was cancelled when British tanks, unable to cross the river, found themselves in a duel with German tanks on the other side of the Moro.

At the division's headquarters, Vokes was informed by his engineers on the night of December 6 that a bridge could not be built at Villa Rogatti due to terrain factors. By default, San Leonardo was the only place one could be built. While Vokes prepared for a new assault, the Hasty Ps continued to strengthen their toehold. Despite heavy rains and German shelling, the troops managed to manhandle two antitank guns and ammunition across the river and up the muddy ridge. The German counterattack the night of December 7 fell on the Hasty Ps, who managed to repulse the enemy.

On December 8, Canadian, British, and Indian batteries hammered the German positions starting at 3:30 PM. Their direct fire was supplemented with aerial bombardment and naval gun fire. When the guns fell silent an hour later, the Canucks attacked. Vokes' plan called for the 48th Highlanders of the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade to attack the 361st Regiment of 90th Panzer Division west of San Leonardo on the escarpment. At the same time, the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR), also of the 1st Brigade, would pass through the Hasty Ps' bridgehead and attack the village from the right.

The men of the 48th Highlanders splashed across the Moro River and quickly secured their objectives. The rest of the Highlanders came up, dug in, and awaited the German counterattack. But the RCR, which went into action on the right of the 48th Highlanders, was having a tough time. The infantry managed to get about halfway to San Leonardo when heavy German shelling and an armored counterattack stopped them cold. Lt. Col. Daniel Spry, commander of the RCR, ordered his men to dig in and called down artillery fire around the perimeter of his position. The German tanks pulled back, and the Canadians shifted to a place they dubbed Slaughterhouse Hill.

At 10 PM the engineers began building a floating bridge across the river at San Leonardo so tanks could reach the far bank. Enduring enemy fire, the engineers had the bridge completed by 6 AM on December 9. Originally, Vokes had planned for the Seaforth Highlanders and the 14th Armoured Regiment, better known as the Calgary Tanks, to jump off from San Leonardo and attack toward the Orsogna-Ortona road. With the RCR unable to reach San Leonardo, the Seaforths and Cal-

gary Tanks would have to take it first.

Major Ned Amy, commander of Squadron A of the Calgary Tanks, set out with 12 tanks to take the village. The men of Company D of the Seaforths rode into battle atop the tanks. Two tanks were lost when they failed to make a sharp turn on the road down to the Moro and rolled over a 30-foot cliff. Once across the river, the infantry dismounted as they came under German machine-gun fire.

A platoon led by Lieutenant John McLean rushed into the village and began to root out the Germans in house-to-house fighting. McLean killed or captured 26 German infantrymen in the process of neutralizing 10 enemy machine guns. The Germans counterattacked with 12 tanks and infantry through the olive groves but were thrown back by Squadron A of the Calgary Tanks, which by then was down to four tanks. San Leonardo was finally in Canadian hands.

Besides attacking San Leonardo, the Germans attacked the Hasty Ps and the RCR. The latter held a two-story stone house, which its men had nicknamed “Sterlin Castle” after Lieu-



ABOVE: Soldiers of the Canadian Loyal Edmonton Regiment peer around a building to fire on the enemy. The Canadians had to fight house to house to secure the strategic Italian city. **LEFT:** A Canadian infantryman aims a Projector Infantry Anti-Tank weapon from a concealed position in Ortona. The PIATs were effective against the workhorse German Panzer IVs.



tenant Mitch Sterlin, who commanded Number 16 Platoon of Company D. In anticipation of the German counterattack, Spry ordered Company A and Sterlin’s platoon to fall back from Slaughterhouse Hill, but neither Lieutenant Jimmy Quayle’s Number 8 Platoon or Sterlin’s platoon received the message.

Quayle, who was positioned to the right of the stone house with his men, soon discovered that the rest of the company had fallen back. He tried to warn Sterlin. Believing that Sterlin’s platoon had been wiped out, Quayle withdrew. But Sterlin and his men were still alive, albeit cut off.

Panzer grenadiers assaulted Sterlin’s position. Through the rifle and machine-gun fire, a small number of German soldiers managed to reach the building and attempted to fire through its windows and doors. They were all killed. When the panzer grenadiers eventually retreated, they

left a large number of dead and wounded sprawled around Sterlin Castle.

After the German counterattacks failed to dislodge the Canadian bridgehead, elements of the badly battered German 90th Division realized their defenses at the Moro River had been breached. As a result, they withdrew during the night of December 9 to a strong position less than a mile south of Ortona in front of the Orsogna-Ortona road. There the Germans dug gun pits and shelters in the side of a 200-foot gully that ran for about three miles to the Adriatic Sea. The Canadians respectfully called the strong position “The Gully” during and after the battle. The same night, the 3rd Regiment of General-leutnant Richard Heidrich’s 1st Parachute Division headed south from the Adriatic Line to replace them. More elements of this tough division would follow. The Germans were determined to deny Ortona to the Canadians.

By that time in firm control of the north bank of the Moro River, the Canadians continued their advance toward the Orsogna-Ortona road. At 9 AM on December 10, the Loyal Edmonton Regiment of the 2nd Canadian Brigade, backed by the Calgary Tanks, set out to capture a crossroads where old Highway 16 intersected with the Orsogna-Ortona road. The Canadians had code-named the crossroads Cider. Once Cider was captured, the PPCLI could secure the vine-covered south side of The Gully known as Vino Ridge.

Things started off well enough. The Loyal Edmontons sent word at 1:30 PM that three companies had reached Cider. The problem was that the Loyal Edmontons were not near their objective, a fact recognized by Lt. Col. Cam Ware, the PPCLI’s commander. Despite his protests that his men would be shot to pieces by the enemy holding the high ground around Cider, he was ordered to attack Vino Ridge. As predicted, the PPCLI was hit hard by the Germans in a vicious heavy barrage and counterattack. Ware called off the attack but not before the Germans had wounded three of the regiment’s company commanders.

The tactical significance of The Gully in blocking his approach to Ortona was now clear to Vokes. He ordered his 2nd Brigade to continue their frontal attacks on December 11. The Edmontons kicked off the attack by first attempting to fight their way to Cider. Murderous machine-gun and mortar fire halted the attack. The PPCLI struggled through the vineyards and olive groves of Vino Ridge, which was laced with mines and booby traps. By mid-afternoon the troops had managed to fight their way to the edge of The Gully where the two sides flung grenades at one another.



German paratroopers look for enemy movement near Ortona. These elite soldiers were well equipped and had access to the best infantry weapons available in Nazi Germany.

The Seaforths were unable to reach their objective, which was a key ridge overlooking The Gully and Casa Berardi, a three-story house located about three quarters of a mile southwest of Cider.

Despite the efforts of the 2nd Brigade, The Gully was still firmly in German hands. Vokes ordered in his reserves, the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade, which had been stranded on the south of the Sangro River. With the river again bridged, the West Nova Scotia Regiment of the 3rd Brigade was ordered to pass through the Seaforths, cross The Gully, and take Casa Berardi.

At 6 PM the West Novas attacked. They took a severe pounding from German artillery and mortar fire as they pushed forward in the mud and darkness. When they approached the edge of The Gully, the Canadians came under heavy small arms fire and could do nothing but dig in and wait until morning. Lt. Col. Pat Bogert, commander of the West Novas, requested artillery support for his morning attack since tanks were unable to traverse the mud. At 7:30 AM a reference-coordination barrage mistakenly fell on the West Novas' position, causing many casualties. This was followed by German artillery fire and an attack by German panzer grenadiers. The Germans were repulsed, and two companies of the West Novas climbed out of their slit trenches and pursued them into The Gully where they were forced to halt by enemy machine-gun and tank fire. The survivors retreated back to their slit trenches. Bogert was among the wounded.

Vokes ordered another assault on The Gully. The Carleton and York Regiment of the 3rd Brigade was to conduct the attack with the support of the Calgary Tanks. At 6 AM on December 13, the Canadians attacked in the wake of an artillery barrage. The Canadians captured three machine-gun nests and more than 21 prisoners. Heavy German fire stalled the attack, forcing the Canadians back with heavy casualties.

Although the main assault failed, probing attacks by the West Novas, Seaforths, and Ontario Tanks fared better. The Canadians found the Germans vulnerable at Casa Berardi, which was at that point seen as the key to capturing The Gully. Vokes ordered the Royal 22nd Regiment of the 3rd Brigade to attack in the morning. Unbeknown to the Canadians, the tired and decimated 90th Panzer Division was being pulled out of the line and replaced with the 1st Parachute Division.

At 6:30 AM on December 14, a heavy Canadian artillery barrage began pounding the Germans. The Royal 22nd Regiment was ordered to launch an attack on a two-company front. Captain Paul Triquet's Company C of the regiment was to lead the attack on the left, and Captain Ovila Garceau's Company D of the regiment was to lead the attack on the right. Major Herschell Smith's

C Squadron of the Ontario Tanks, which had seven tanks, was to support Triquet, whose company was expected to experience greater resistance. At 7:10 AM, the two companies advanced into the teeth of German machine-gun, mortar, and tank fire.

A Panzer Mark IV, which had been concealed behind a house, rolled into the open and blasted the Canadians. With Smith's tanks mired in the mud, the Canadian infantry had to take immediate action to knock out the German tank. Sergeant J.P. Rousseau rushed forward and fired a PIAT antitank weapon at point-blank range. The round struck the Mark IV's turret, and the turret exploded.

Smith finally caught up with Triquet after losing a Sherman to a German tank that subsequently was silenced. As they advanced, the Canadian tanks knocked out three more German tanks that were shelling Triquet's company. The German tank crews also racked up their own kills, putting two more of Smith's tanks out of action. But the surviving Canadian tanks knocked out three more German tanks.

"There are enemy in front of us, behind us, and on our flanks," Triquet shouted to his men. "There is only one safe place—that is on the objective." Triquet was down to 14 men, but it was enough to drive out the German paratroopers and capture Casa Berardi. After knocking out another German tank, Smith brought up his four remaining tanks and the small band of Canadians held onto their objective. By nightfall on December 14 the rest of the Royal 22nd Regiment arrived, strengthening Triquet's hold on his objective. Triquet later received the Victoria Cross for his actions.

Other Canadian attacks that day made little headway. Vokes worked on another plan as it was crucial that help reach the Royal 22nd Regiment. On December 15, the Carleton and York Regiment was ordered to attempt another breakthrough of The Gully. The new attack failed.

Vokes decided on a more indirect attack on Cider. His three-stage plan was to have the 48th Highlanders attack north with the aim of cutting the Villa Grande road about 2,000 yards from Cider. The RCR was given the task of capturing Cider. After that objective was achieved, the 2nd Brigade would launch an attack designed to capture Ortona.

Operation Morning Glory, as the first phase of the attack was called, began at 8 AM on December 18. Canadian artillery batteries lay down a creeping barrage that advanced 100 yards every five minutes. Twenty minutes after the opening barrage, the 48th Highlanders advanced behind the shell curtain. They were supported by Squadron B of the 12th Canadian



ABOVE: A pair of tanks from the Canadian Three Rivers Regiment advances into the center of Ortona on December 22, 1943. Armor played a key role supporting infantry of both sides in the hard-fought urban battle. RIGHT: A soldier of the Saskatoon Light Infantry delivers harassing fire with his .303-caliber, water-cooled Vickers machine gun.

The Loyal Edmontons attacked on a two-company front the next morning. Company B advanced through cultivated fields to capture a handful of buildings on the edge of the town. The 100 soldiers of Company D advanced over open ground under machine-gun and sniper fire, which inflicted heavy casualties and forced them back. After a second attack failed, Company D was down to 17 men. Company commander Major Jim Stone divided the survivors into three groups. He wanted to follow Company B into Ortona but was ordered by his regimental commander, Lt. Col. Jim Jefferson, to continue attacking from his position because it was crucial to have troops on both sides of the Corso Vittorio Emanuele to protect the tanks.

Lieutenant John Dougan, in charge of six men in Stone's depleted company, had the tough task of leading the attack. Spotting a narrow ditch that led to an apartment building on the edge of the town, Dougan decided to use it as his route of attack. "We're all going to die anyway, so we might as well give it a go," he told his men. The squad crawled up the ditch using smoke grenades for cover. They hoped the Germans did not have a machine gun at the other end.

Fortunately, the Germans did not have a machine gun posted at the other end of the ditch. Dougan and his men were followed by Stone and the remains of Company D. The men seized a large house and fired down on enemy troops in slit trenches. Sherman tanks rumbled forward, penetrating 200 yards into Ortona. They found the streets clogged with rubble from destroyed buildings and sewn with mines. The Loyal Edmontons pushed into the town and made it as far as the Piazza Vittoria by nightfall. This put them a quarter of a mile from the Piazza Municipale.

While the Loyal Edmontons battled their way into town, the Seaforths captured the church and began to advance up a street called Via Costantinopoli, in the eastern part of Ortona. They and their tank support met stiff German resistance. Outflanking the Germans was problematic because of 15-foot-high rubble piles. Brig. Gen. Bert Hoffmeister, the commander of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, ordered the rest of the Loyal Edmontons and Seaforth companies into the town. The PPCLI was held in reserve. The bloody battle, which war correspondents dubbed "Little Stalingrad," was under way.

With reports that the Corso Vittorio Emanuele was clear of roadblocks for 300 yards, Stone devised a bold plan to catch the Germans by surprise on December 22. His plan called for the tanks of C Squadron to drive in low gear with sirens wailing and guns firing. The infantry would go along beside the tanks.

"We started off and the noise was absolutely deafening," Stone said afterward. "We got a hundred yards without a shot being fired at us." The lead tank stopped 25 yards from a large rubble pile.

Knowing every minute was crucial, Stone quickly climbed up on the tank. "What the hell's the

matter?" he asked the tank commander. The commander pointed at a piece of sheet metal lying on the road ahead of him and said he thought it might be covering a mine. Stone was angry. The tank advance had ground to a halt, and his plan was unraveling.

Suddenly, a German 57mm antitank gun opened up on the lead tank. Stone ordered a soldier to fire his antitank gun in response, but he missed. Throwing a smoke grenade at the antitank gun, Stone charged the gun and flung a grenade over the armor shield, killing the crew.

The Canadians then began fighting house to house toward the Piazza Municipale. In the bloody street fighting that followed, objectives were broken down to company, platoon, and section level. A strict system was set up in which commanders reported when each building had been cleared before starting on a new one. The buildings themselves were death traps with the Germans booby trapping empty ones or leav-



ing delayed demolition charges in them. The fronts of some buildings were blown off by the Germans, leaving the interior exposed to machine-gun fire. Machineguns also covered the heaps of rubble blocking the streets.

Upon reaching the entrance of Piazza Municipale, Stone's men found a killing zone with at least five German machine guns pouring death into the square from nearby buildings. One of these was the municipal hall. The paratroopers had removed the town clock from the tower atop the hall so that they could use it as a firing position.

Private C.G. Rattray and two other soldiers rushed into a building and cleared the ground floor. Then Rattray headed up the stairs and single-handedly took out three enemy machine

guns and captured five paratroopers. With night approaching, the fighting died down. Canadian tanks withdrew from the town under cover of darkness to avoid being attacked in the narrow streets.

The following morning the Canadian advance continued building by building. The Loyal Edmontons cleared Piazza Municipale and started toward the Aragonese castle and an adjacent cemetery. They met stiff resistance. The Seaforths were given the task of clearing the western half of the town.

With tanks finding it hard to move through heaps of rubble on the streets, the Canadians manhandled 6- and 17-pounder antitank guns into Ortona. The guns proved extremely useful. The Canadians used an armor-piercing round to punch a hole in the wall of a German-held building; after that, they fired multiple rounds of high-explosive shells into the building until its occupants were dead. The guns also proved useful not only in clearing the crest of rubble piles so tanks could get over them, but also in killing German snipers on the rooftops.

To avoid exposing themselves to fire on the streets, Canadians began “mouse-holing” from one building to the next. Battalion pioneers would place a demolition charge against the intervening wall on the top floor, and while the attacking troops waited on the ground floor, the pioneers would set the charge off. The troops would then race upstairs, toss a couple of grenades through the gap, and burst into the next building with Tommy guns blazing.

While the 2nd Brigade advanced house to house to the center of Ortona, Vokes ordered the 1st Brigade to advance northeast and cut the roads running north of the embattled town to Rollo and Pescara. This would cut the German paratroopers’ supply line and trap them in Ortona.

Following a creeping barrage, two companies of the Hasty Ps supported by Sherms from Squadron A of the Ontario Tanks, pushed off at 9:30 AM for their objective, a bulging ridgeline 1,000 yards north of the Tollo road. The tanks quickly bogged down in the mud, but the infantry continued on, almost reaching their objective an hour later. Then the artillery barrage lifted leaving the Canucks exposed to enemy fire. The two companies went to ground with heavy casualties. Another company was brought forward and the Hasty Ps captured the ridge. The remaining company was brought up and dug into the Hasty Ps’ tenuous position. The Hasty Ps would spend a tense night beating back paratroopers armed with automatic weapons from the 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Parachute Regiment, who tried to infiltrate

their position and attack them from the rear.

With the ridgeline captured, the second phase of Vokes’s plan was launched. The 48th Highlanders quietly slogged past the Hasty Ps position single file in the rain at 4 PM, headed for their objective of high ground overlooking the small villages of San Nicola and San Tommaso. The boldness of the night attack without artillery or tank support paid off as the Highlanders surprised and captured two houses filled with Germans. They then pushed on and seized their objective at 7:40 PM.

The final phase of Vokes’ plan kicked off on the morning of December 24 with the RCR intending to pass through both the Hasty Ps and the Highlanders to capture the main highway north of Ortona. There would be no creeping barrage to cover them for fear of hitting the Highlanders. Instead, four artillery forward observation officers went with them to call down artillery strikes where needed.

But the attack did not go well in the daylight as German paratroopers were still in the area and mortar and artillery fire broke up any chance of reaching the isolated Highlanders. Major Storme Galloway, commander of the RCR, called off further daylight attacks and waited for darkness before sending a company forward to reach the Highlanders. Fierce machinegun fire drove them back. A fresh attempt would have to wait for Christmas Day.

Christmas Eve in Ortona saw continued street fighting and casualties mounting on both sides. The Germans received much needed reinforcements when the 2nd Battalion of the 4th Parachute Regiment reinforced the embattled 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Parachute Regiment. The two Canadian battalions, meanwhile, were receiving replacements, but with the horrific

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Tanks of the Three Rivers Regiment, accompanied by soldiers of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, move into Ortona on December 22. The Germans launched a major counterattack on December 26, but withdrew from the city the following day.

casualty rate many rifle companies were down to 30 men. Despite all this, the Canadians slowly pushed back and rooted out the paratroopers. By that point, half of the town was in Canadian hands.

Fighting continued through Christmas. But for the Canadian troops in Ortona there was a break in the action as Seaforth Highlander companies were rotated back to enjoy a Christmas dinner served in the captured Church of Santa Maria di Constantinopoli. Many soldiers in the Loyal Edmontons were not as fortunate, although attempts were made to get the roast pork dinner up to them.

German paratroopers surrounded the 48th Highlanders and hammered the Canadians with mortar and artillery fire. The RCR was ordered to abandon its original plan of cutting the high-

Continued on page 67

Captain David Farragut's flagship, the *Hartford*, is attacked by a Confederate fire raft as the Union fleet makes its run past Forts Jackson and St. Philip on April 24, 1862. The *Hartford* caught fire, but prompt action by the ship's crew saved her from destruction.



Conquering THE QUEEN CITY

The victory at Manassas on July 21, 1861, had made the Rebels overconfident bordering on lethargic. As one observer noted, “It created a paralysis of enterprise that was more damaging than disaster was for the North.” Conversely, in the artificial quiet following the Union defeat, U.S. naval strategists, moving along unexplored paths toward a new and more effective blockade, undertook a series of major combined operations that swept nearly the entire Atlantic Seaboard from Virginia to the Carolinas, Georgia to Florida. Yet the applause over these successes quickly became muted when Rear Admiral Samuel DuPont failed to take the major ports of Savannah and Charleston. New Orleans, the “Queen City” of southern commerce, was the first important Confederate port to fall to combined operations.

The stage was set for the capture of this vibrant commercial artery when the Blockade Strategy Board selected Ship Island in the Gulf of Mexico as a site for a naval base. The U.S. Navy chose this narrow, sandy, and barren spit of land, barely a mile wide and eight miles long, because it

was an ideal location for maintaining the ships of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and provided a staging area to embark an advance on the “doorway to vitals of the Confederacy.” In September 1861, the small Confederate garrison evacuated Ship Island just as the USS *Massachusetts* was preparing to shell it. Shortly after the evacuation, Governor Thomas Moore of Louisiana wrote to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, urging him to send an officer to New Orleans who, “with youth, energy, and military ability, might infuse some activity in

A lack of resources and divided command hampered Mansfield Lovell in his defense of New Orleans. The stage was set for David Farragut to win a key victory that hurt the South's war effort.

BY PEDRO GARCIA



our preparations, and confidence in our people.” Davis sent Brig. Gen. Mansfield Lovell, a former New York City deputy streets commissioner, to take charge of the city’s defenses.

Although the U.S. Naval Office had developed and designed broad plans for the capture of New Orleans, nothing had gone beyond the discussion stage. This changed when Lieutenant David Dixon Porter of the USS *Powhatan* managed to get an audience with Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, along with two senators from the Naval Committee, and proposed a

bold plan to run past Forts Jackson and St. Philip with fast steamers accompanied by 20,000 troops to seize and hold the city.

But what piqued everyone’s interest was Porter’s innovative scheme to employ a flotilla of specially converted schooners, each mounting a 13-inch mortar to soften up the forts, unhinge their fire, and demoralize the garrisons. He believed a 48-hour bombardment would do the job before the main fleet’s dash up to the city. Welles was impressed, and with Porter in tow, went to see President Lincoln. After deeming the plan plausible, Lincoln said, “We can push on to Vicksburg and open the river all the way along.” The president, who believed that the Mississippi River—and New Orleans in particular—was the key to the rebellion, suggested they see Maj. Gen. George McClellan about the troops. McClellan, who was in the process of conceiving his Urbana plan, was concerned about diluting his own manpower and was reluctant to support the plan. Ultimately, he came around because it was determined that fewer troops would be needed. He found in the scheme the perfect



LEFT: Porter used a flotilla of specially converted schooners, each mounting a 13-inch mortar, to bombard the two forts guarding New Orleans before the main fleet's dash upstream to the city. **TOP RIGHT:** Union Captain David Glasgow Farragut (left) and Confederate Brig. Gen. Captain Mansfield Lovell. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Union Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter. **OPPOSITE:** The Union fleet enters Mississippi River in a *Harper's Weekly* illustration. To get past Plaquemine Bend, where the two forts were situated, the sailing ships had to tack against a four-knot current, thus exposing them to heavy fire from 115 heavy guns.

opportunity to bury a man he despised—the insufferable politician Maj. Gen. Ben Butler—in the most remote post possible.

The participation of the U.S. Army in the operation was essential since the city would not fall to an unsupported naval attack. Running the gauntlet of the forts was a calculated risk, for without their reduction the enemy would be left in the U.S. Navy's rear. The operation ultimately was done based on the certainty that Butler's 15,000 soldiers could and did isolate and cut off Forts Jackson and St. Philip from the city. Because of his confident boast that he could reduce the forts within 48 hours, Porter was given the mortar flotilla.

Command of the expedition went to Number 38 on the captains list, David Glasgow Farragut. He was on record as having plans to capture forts with ships and understood the limitations of land fortifications. Welles was impressed that Farragut had severed his Southern roots. Farragut was a Tennessee native, his wife was from Virginia, he had resided in Norfolk, had a brother in New Orleans, a sister in a nearby parish, and a cousin who was married to Captain John Mitchell, the Confederate naval commander at New Orleans. Needless to say, there was much opposition to his appointment, especially in congressional circles. But Farragut came highly recommended by those who had served alongside him in the U.S. Navy.

Realizing that no guarantees came with command, and referring to the opinion of other senior officers, Welles wrote, "Most of them, while speaking well of Farragut, doubted if he was equal to the occasion, but yet no one would name the man for a great and active campaign." In a navy that traditionally picked its flag officers by seniority, Farragut probably held low expectations, yet he was wholeheartedly Welles' man.

When Lovell arrived in New Orleans in mid-October, he was appalled at the status of the city's defense. His predecessor, 71-year-old Maj. Gen. David Twiggs, admitted that the city "was entirely defenseless, that he had been unable to get anything done, and that at many points, [they] could not make an hour's fight." Indeed, the best one can say about the septuagenarian is that he met his enlistment quotas. However, the troops raised were principally sent to Florida, Tennessee, and Virginia. On October 18, the day after he arrived in the city, Lovell fired off letters to Davis and Secretary of War Judah Benjamin. To Davis, he wrote, "The city has been almost entirely stripped of everything, should you see in the New Orleans papers that we are well supplied with everything, you may regard it as a ruse. You will always be advised of the true condition of affairs." To Benjamin, he appealed that the "heads of bureaus be requested to order nothing further from here until we have supplied ourselves with a fair supply for the force required for the defense of the city."



Lovell probably wondered who was running the war when Benjamin responded, "I cannot restrain the heads of bureaus from purchasing or forwarding supplies from New Orleans." Thus, the dilution of resources continued. Lovell assiduously applied himself to developing his own resources. He built mills to produce powder and a cartridge manufactory and contracted foundries to cast guns, shot, and shell. He blockaded bayous and inlets that offered avenues of approach and established a network of telegraph and rail links. By the end of December, Lovell had overseen the complete obstruction of the river and had replaced outdated smoothbores in the forts with newly cast Columbiads, seacoast mortars, and a few rifled pieces. Of equal importance, he could claim that 15,000 men, including 6,000 volunteers, were manning the fortified earthworks in and around the city.

But almost as fast as Lovell developed his own resources, trained and recruited men, the myopic Confederate War Department would siphon them off in preparation for the spring offensive in western Tennessee. Having suffered a string of disastrous defeats and reverses, such as the loss of Forts Henry and Donelson and the evacuation of Kentucky and western Tennessee,

Davis' preoccupation was with the defense of this line. Indeed, the Confederates were ruthless in their concentration, and Mansfield Lovell felt an ominous breeze from the Gulf of Mexico.

While Confederate generals frequently lacked good maps, this was not the case for Farragut as he planned his attack on the mouth of the Mississippi River. By April 1862, Farragut probably knew as much about Forts Jackson and St. Philip, located 70 miles below New Orleans, as if he had built them himself. He had precise information on these two forts from a lengthy narrative, laid out in elaborate detail, and prepared by Brig. Gen. John Barnard, Chief Engineer of the Army of the Potomac, and forwarded to him by Welles in early February. Barnard had worked with Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard, in the 1840s, rebuilding Fort St. Philip and strengthening Fort Jackson. Farragut learned that "Fort Jackson is a masonry bastioned pentagon with fronts of 110 yards, its walls are 22 feet high, and it is surrounded by wet ditches flanked by 24-pounder howitzers in casemate on each of the ten flanks." Barnard noted, "Two curtains bearing on the river are casemated for 8 guns each and parapets on the two water fronts are arranged to receive 22 channel-bearing guns with a flanking water battery."

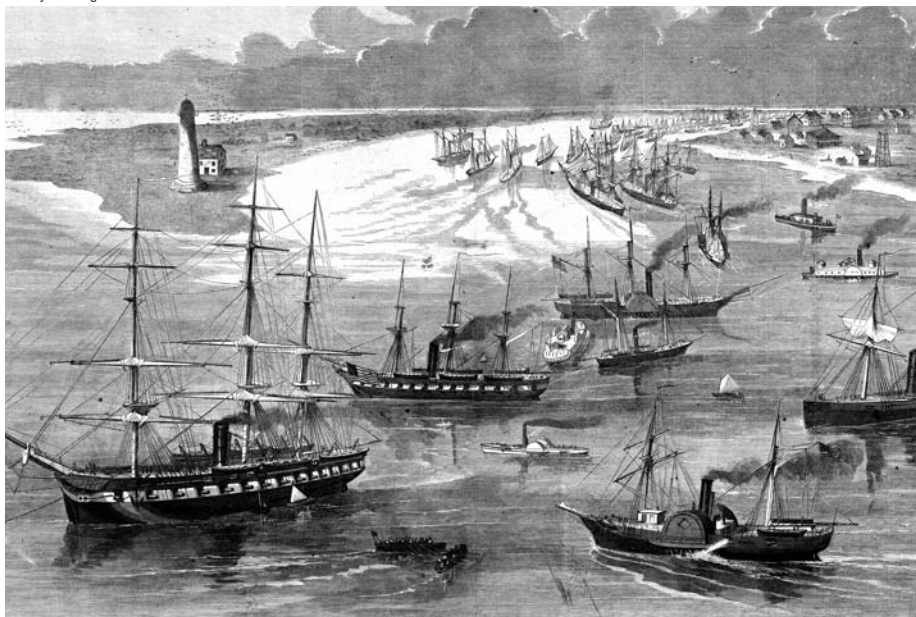
The fort, built in 1822 at the behest of General Andrew Jackson, hero of the Battle of New Orleans, had settled in the Mississippi Delta mud over the years and the parade ground sometimes held more than a foot of water. Magazines needed pumping day and night and, as a result, the bomb-proof casemated guns came just to the top of the levee and could not be depressed for critical hits at a ship's waterline, which proved to be absolutely key to the fleet's passage. Commander John Bartlett of the USS *Brooklyn* said of his ship's passage during the ensuing battle, "For 20 minutes we stood silent beside our guns, with shot and shell passing over us and bursting everywhere in the air." Lieutenant George Perkins of the gunboat USS *Cayuga* said, "I soon saw that the guns of the forts were all aimed for mid-stream, so I steered close to the walls, and although our masts and rigging were badly cut up, our hull was but little damaged."

What was important to Farragut, amid all the minutiae, was that the fort was arranged for 126 heavy guns, 115 which bore on the river, which at that point was 700 yards wide. Farragut learned that the smaller Fort St. Philip, located 750 yards diagonally upriver on the east bank, was an irregular quadrilateral work of 150 by 100 yards, arranged to receive "20 heavy guns bearing directly upon the channel

with two external batteries mounting 52 guns." Its parapets were 20 feet thick and rose 17 feet from the bottom of a moat and had the advantage of delivering enfilade fire to any fleet coming upriver. Indeed, this antiquated Spanish work had withstood a nine-day bombardment and repulsed a British fleet in 1815.

The forts were located on a section of the Mississippi known as Plaqueminds Bend, or Windless Bend, for sailing ships coming up the river had to tack against a four-knot current to negotiate the bend, thus making them sitting ducks for the forts, a situation rendered moot by Farragut's steam-powered fleet. Just below Fort Jackson was a river obstruction consisting of eight dismasted schooners, strongly moored and chained together, with their ground tackle and rigging dragging in the river. Behind this were 18 fire rafts that were to be released intermittently to light up the area and harass Farragut in his preparations. This job was tasked to the polyglot Confederate forces afloat, who would completely botch the operation. "Although certainly dangerous, they were so badly managed that in a little while they merely served to amuse us," recalled a Union tar. Indeed, although ordered to, they neglected to send any rafts down the river the cru-

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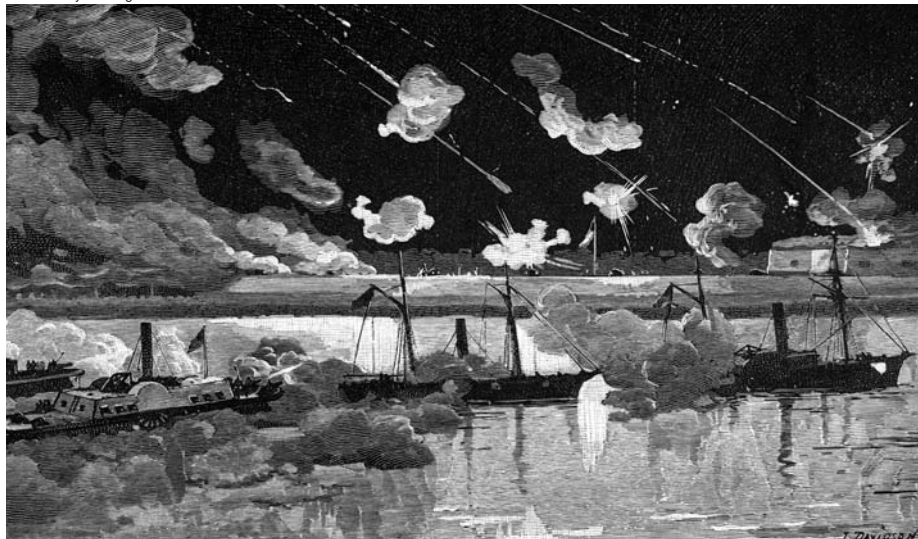


"THE FEDERAL VESSELS REPLIED WITH THEIR BROADSIDES, THE FLASHES OF THE GUNS FROM BOTH SIDES LIT UP THE RIVER WITH A LURID LIGHT THAT REVEALED THE FEDERAL STEAMERS. I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE WAS EVER A GRANDER SPECTACLE WITNESSED THAN THAT DISPLAYED DURING THE GREAT ARTILLERY DUEL THAT FOLLOWED."

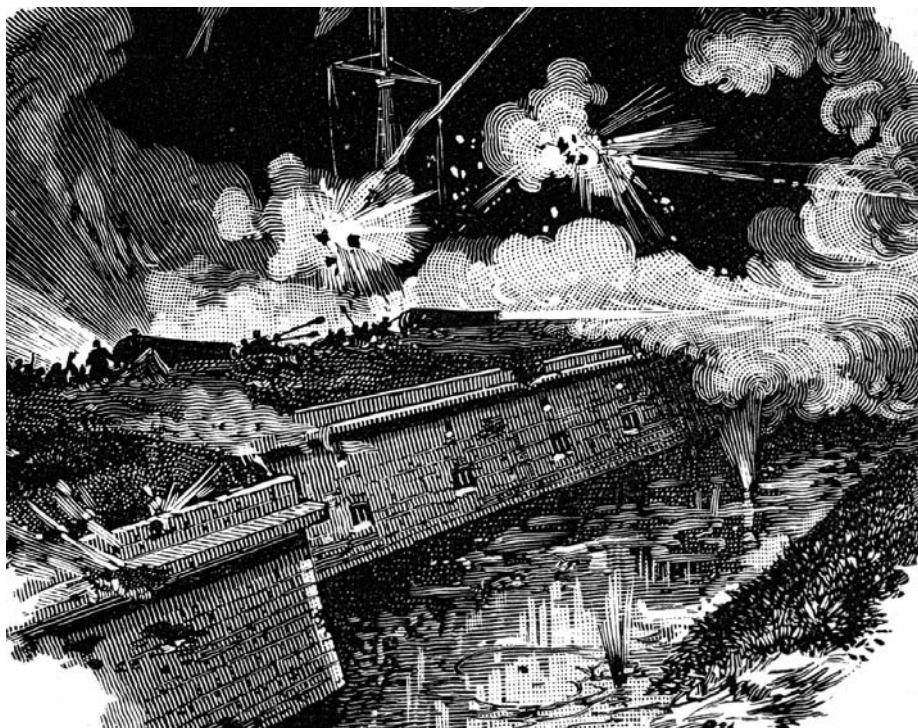
cial night before Farragut ran the gauntlet. Because of this criminal neglect, the river remained in total darkness while he made his final deployment. Mitchell "had failed to ignite and send down all the fire-rafts that were under his charge, at the proper time to meet our fleet," wrote Porter. "It can well be imagined what the effect of millions of burning pine-knots on 20 or 30 rafts would have been."

Farragut digested this information, as well as Barnard's opinions and suggestions, and gleaned information from fishermen concerning the river obstruction and the motley naval complement. From New Orleans newspapers he accurately gauged the despairing state of morale. But before launching his attack, he was to have more precise information. A U.S. Coast Survey team mapped and plotted with triangulated precision the range of Confederate guns and guided Porter's mortar schooners into position. Porter test-fired his mortars and dressed the tops of his masts with bushes, so they could blend in with the trees on the banks.

By April 18, Porter's 21 bomb boats grouped into three divisions were guided into position, the first and third divisions along the south bank of the river, the second on the north bank. They



TOP: Union gunboats fire on the water battery of Fort Jackson. From a concealed position downstream, Porter's mortar schooners did a good job of softening up the forts but were unable to completely silence the forts' guns. BOTTOM: Fort St. Philip is shown during the height of the battle on April 24.



were placed 2,850 to 3,600 yards from the forts. Firing commenced about 9 AM, and shortly thereafter Fort Jackson was replying vigorously, but inaccurately. Each schooner fired every 10 minutes for 10 straight hours. After placing the loads, sailors scurried aft as fast and far as possible, standing on tiptoe with their fingers in their ears and mouths open to counteract the concussion. The shells were punishingly accurate, setting fires, threatening magazines, disabling guns, opening the earth, and burying men alive. When firing ceased, the Union sailors discovered that 1,100 shells had found their target or had plopped into the mud before bursting, creating small earthquakes. The mortar flotilla had received relatively little damage because of its camouflage among trees. The deception was so effective that, even with glasses, observers in the forts never spotted the schooners on the south bank.

During the night Porter moved his exposed second division from the north to the south bank. When the Union sailors renewed their bombardment early the next morning, Porter decided to make the effort continuous. Yet ammunition was running low and he slowed each schooner's fire

to one bomb every half hour. Inside Fort Jackson, the bombardment kept men inside the casemates. The parapet and the interior of the fort were honeycombed with sandbags, reinforcing damaged areas and replacing blown-up masonry. Clearly, the forts had suffered, but it was equally clear that there was no sign of surrender. Porter, in a foul temper and painfully aware of his boast that he would reduce the forts within 48 hours, began to despair and lose confidence in taking the forts before Farragut made his run. Indeed, had Porter been present at the interview between Welles and Farragut, he would have been surprised to learn that his foster brother believed the mortar flotilla would be largely ineffective. Farragut said he placed more faith in the horizontal fire of modern guns than he did in the parabola fire of mortars.

Cognizant of dwindling ammunition and coal, Farragut determined on Easter Sunday, April 20, that unless vigorous action was taken, "he would be reduced to the status of a blockading fleet." That moonless and drizzly night, covered by particularly heavy mortar fire, two gunboats, the USS *Itasca* and *Pinola*, were detailed to break the river obstruction and open the channel. "In a moment a sharp fire was opened upon us from the water batteries and Fort Jackson, nearly all the shots passing over us," wrote Lieutenant George Bacon of the *Itasca*. It was a near thing, but dawn found a wide breach in the all-important river obstruction.

Once again, "the want of concert of action among the independent floating commands of the enemy caused him to neglect the protection of what should have been his main reliance for defense," wrote Bartlett. The only cause for delay removed, and over the objections of fleet's commanders, some of whom deemed it risky to advance upriver beyond the reach of their supplies, Farragut ordered the fleet to prepare to run past the forts.

The running of the forts "must and should be done, even if half the fleet is lost," wrote Farragut. His blue-water sloops-of-war prepared for brown-water action. They stowed superfluous spars below, rigged splinter nets on the starboard sides, barricaded the helms with sails and hammocks, heaved hempen fenders over the inboard sides, and spread chains and sandbags around the deck machinery. Day and night, mortar shells were lofted into Fort Jackson and to a lesser degree on Fort St. Philip, but by the afternoon of April 22, with Butler's troops anchored on transports below the fleet, Farragut was growing impatient. He told Porter, "We are wasting ammunition and time. We will fool around down here until we have



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nothing left to fight with. I'm ready to run those forts now, tonight."

"Wait one more day and I will cripple them so you can pass with little or no loss of life," replied Porter. "All right, go at 'em again and we'll see what happens by tomorrow," Farragut said. He also would hope for a change in the northerly wind that would counteract the tide and thus retard the high and powerful current running past the forts.

The man who shouldered the responsibility of creating and directing the South's naval forces was Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Russell Mallory, an outstanding maritime lawyer and former U.S. senator from Florida, who had chaired the U.S. Senate Naval Affairs Committee. Although a gifted and capable administrator, he was handicapped by not having the staff or organization that his counterpart possessed. He was the bearer of an inhuman responsibility, a one-man show who not only had to build a navy from scratch in time of war, but was the author and executor of naval strategy, and he paid dearly for his isolation with some major blunders, not the least of which was the loss of New Orleans.

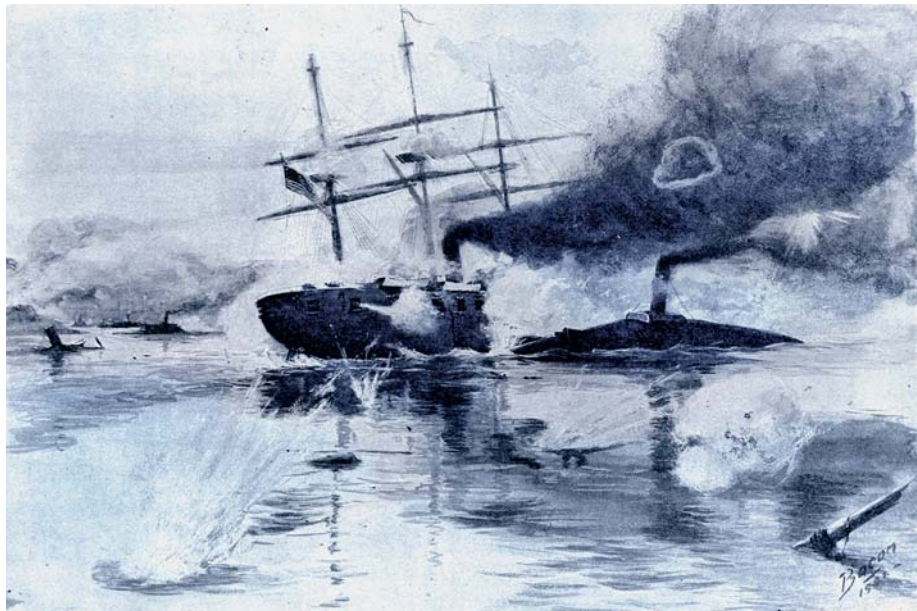
Mallory's efforts were characterized by divided naval commands, friction between the army and the navy, and the injudicious use of resources. In the short duration of the crisis, Mallory employed five different naval commanders, all of whom had nebulous paramete-

For the run upriver past the two forts, Farragut divided his fleet into three divisions. Two divisions took on Fort Jackson (left), and one division engaged Fort St. Philip.

ters of command and all of whom exhibited little cooperation or coordination among themselves, let alone with the army. Asserting that a unified command was the only proper way to defend New Orleans, Lovell had raised the issue of control of the naval units with the authorities in Richmond, but Davis reminded him in a terse message that they were not part of his command. Mallory and the Confederate authorities in Richmond believed that the real threat to New Orleans was not Farragut's fleet less than 80 miles downstream but Captain Andrew Foote's ironclad flotilla 500 miles north at Island No. 10. Mallory's reckless and impractical shipbuilding program was a major blunder that left New Orleans bereft of the resources that would have been better employed at constructing a conventional gunboat force to deal with Farragut.

A progressive visionary, Mallory, kept insisting that he would pin his faith on a few ironclads. In September 1861, he contracted for two powerful ironclad rams, the CSS *Louisiana* and the CSS *Mississippi*, that he expected to sweep the Union fleet from the river. They were gigantic for the time. The *Louisiana* was 264 feet long, 62 feet abeam, and was propelled by three screws driven by three engines and 11 boilers that could develop more than 1,500 horsepower, with an unheard speed of 14 knots. Her armor required more than 1,100 tons of railroad iron, and she carried 20 guns, including four rifled pieces. The *Mississippi* was 250 feet long, 58 feet abeam, and was also driven by three screws. She carried 16 guns, including two rifled pieces.

Work on the bulky behemoths, which did not begin until October, was characterized by shortages and delays in the delivery of timber and railroad iron, as well as a week-long carpenters' strike. They were the products of wishful thinking, experimental technology combined with house-building techniques. They would prove to be sloths in the water, poorly designed and underpowered. Considering the South's limited resources, they should not have been built and, in fact, neither vessel was completed. The *Louisiana* was launched without her engines and proved to be no better than a floating battery as she lay off Fort St. Philip. The *Mississippi* was two weeks from completion by the time Farragut entered the river and was scuttled on April 25 to prevent her capture. If the *Louisiana* had been capable of operating under her own power with a speed comparable to Farragut's ships, it is likely she could have done considerable damage to Farragut's fleet. As for the *Mississippi*, Farragut deemed her "a magnificent specimen" and said that if she had been seaworthy she would have operated against his wooden ships "like a bull in a china shop."



The CSS *Manassas* rams the USS *Brooklyn*. The crew of the Confederate ironclad ram fought heroically, damaging the *Brooklyn* and the USS *Mississippi*.

In addition to the *Louisiana*, the ragtag flotilla led by Mitchell included the 143-foot, ironclad ram CSS *Manassas*. She had been converted from a powerful tugboat and originally placed in privateer service in September 1861. She attacked and broke up a Union blockading force at the Battle of the Head of Passes on October 12, 1861. The ironclad ram subsequently was purchased by the Confederate government in December. Confederate naval forces were rounded out by two gunboats and two steam launches, each fitted with a small howitzer, and a half dozen tugs and unarmed vessels.

Mitchell also retained an anomalous control over a pair of gunboats that were commissioned by the State of Louisiana. To complete the three fleets, there were the five gunboat-rams of the notorious and independently commanded River Defense Fleet. Indeed, when Mitchell sent Captain John A. Stephenson orders from Lovell placing him at Mitchell's disposal, the captain, while pledging cooperation, replied he would take no orders from him, or any other naval officer. Distressed, discombobulated, and apoplectic, Mitchell then washed his hands of them; and, as could be foreseen, they were useless. "Not one of them made the feeblest offensive or defensive movement," he wrote.

Farragut's extreme confidence was rooted in his fleet's awesome firepower, 17 seagoing warships, 43 vessels in all, carrying 245 guns. This gave Farragut an eight-to-one advantage over the Confederates. Even with the guns in the forts, and with those of the water batteries, the Confederates would fight at a three-to-one disadvantage. "One fact only was in our favor, and that was the division of their forces under three heads prevented unanimity of action," Porter said.

The lone major Confederate success was achieved by the Louisiana State gunboat, *Governor Moore*, commanded by the gallant and dashing Beverly Kennon, late of the Confederate Navy and the U.S. Navy. In a dramatically fierce and pitched battle, she succeeded in ramming and sinking the seagoing gunboat USS *Varuna*. Soon afterward, almost shot to pieces, ablaze, and with more than two thirds her crew dead, she was scuttled. *Manassas* fought heroically and succeeded in delivering timber-shattering blows to two of Farragut's larger warships, the *Brooklyn* and USS *Mississippi*. But because of her sluggishness, the ram was selected as a target by any enemy within sight, and subjected to a withering fire, coming to grief two hours after entering the fight.

To crown the drama of the *Louisiana*, sailors were lacking. They were substituted by volunteer soldiers from the army who had no naval training and, for the most part, no artillery experience. This would prove quite damaging. "A 9-inch shell fired by the *Louisiana* struck the *Brooklyn* about a foot above the waterline, on the starboard side of the cutwater, forced its way for three feet through the timbers and remained there," wrote Bartlett. "At New Orleans, the shot was cut out, and it was found that in their hurry the gunners had neglected to remove the lead patch from the fuse, so that the shell did not explode. Had it done so it would've blown the whole bow off, and the *Brooklyn* would've been sent to the bottom."

Indeed, while the ram received many a fierce broadside from several Union ships that had no effect whatsoever, her shells pierced their sides as if they were paper maché. "For among all the ships that were sent to Farragut there was not one whose sides could resist a 12-pound shot," wrote Porter. Yet, enemy vessels were able to withdraw, sheer off, and move on, while the *Louisiana*, immovable as she was, could not press the issue.

About midnight on the April 24, the Federal fleet began to stir and make final preparations for battle. The running of the gauntlet would be conducted in three divisions that were expected to divide the enemy's fire. Leading the way would be eight gunboats and warships passing on the eastern side of the river, fixing their fire on Fort St. Philip. The Center Division of three warships, with Farragut's flagship, the USS *Hartford* in the lead, were to engage Fort Jackson on the left, followed by the Third Division of six gunboats, whose objective was also Fort Jackson.

At 1:55 AM two red lanterns displayed at the yardarm of the *Hartford* gave the signal for action, and by 3:30 AM the long single column of warships had advanced into the still, hazy night and into a suffocating cauldron of fury. Almost immediately, the water battery off Fort Jackson detected black shapeless masses moving upriver and barked in protest, joined shortly by the guns of the forts. It is difficult to conceive or aptly describe the grandeur and horror that followed. A Confederate observed, "The Federal vessels replied with their broadsides, the flashes of the guns from both sides lit up the river with a lurid light that revealed the Federal steamers. I do not believe there was ever a grander spectacle witnessed than that displayed during the great artillery duel that followed." A Union sailor added, "Combine all that you've heard about thunder with all that you've heard of lightning, and you have a fair idea of the Battle at Plaqueminds Bend."

Kennon of the *Governor Moore* noted that the naval action occurred in a tight space. "The bursting of every description of shells quickly following their discharge, increased a hundred-fold the terrific noise and fearfully grand and magnificent pyrotechnic display which centered in a space no more than 1200 yards in width," he wrote. By the flash of guns, for an instant seamen saw half-naked gunners at the forts rushing, shouting, and screaming. Boldly moving up to the hulk line, the mortar flotilla delivered its most furious bombardment. The First Division did not emerge from the action unscathed; as previously noted, the gunboat *Varuna* was sunk by Kennon's cottonclad. The

Center Division, carrying the fleet's heaviest broadsides, passed with various fortune. The *Hartford* was seriously damaged by artillery fire and barely survived an encounter with a fire raft. In trying to avoid contact with the fire raft, the flagship ran aground and was unable to escape as the fire raft was again pushed against her sides. She was set ablaze, and only the prompt and heroic efforts of her crew saved her from destruction. The flagship was at last extricated and continued her way up the river. Finally, three of the six gunboats of the Third Division, caught under the guns of the forts in the emerging daylight, failed to pass and fell back down the river.

"Day was getting broader and with the first ray of the sun we saw the fleet above us, and a splendid sight it was, or rather would have been under different circumstances, and the Uncle Sam of my earlier days had the key to the valley of the Mississippi in his breeches pocket, for which he had to thank his gallant navy and the stupidity, tardiness, ignorance and neglect of the authorities in Richmond," wrote a Union tar.

Dawn creased the horizon on 13 of 17 vessels at anchor, the fleet having taken 184 casualties, and by 11 AM the next day were headed for New Orleans. Butler's command moved to invest Fort St. Philip, while Porter continued his bombardment of Fort Jackson. The citizens of New Orleans were in total panic. Lovell, with the city council's endorsement, and being necessarily reduced to a force of 3,000 militia, evacuated the city and torched the levees.

After making short work of a valiant but benign resistance at Chalmette, four miles below the Queen City and the scene of Andrew Jackson's glory, Farragut's bruised fleet hove in sight, training its guns on the raging, amorphous mobs. What followed was much defiant posturing, and the city refused to submit to Union authority. A Union flag, flying over the former U.S. mint, was torn down and destroyed by the mob.

Farragut's patience was sorely tested, but he did not destroy the city in response. He wisely let the city exhaust its anger, and instead moved upriver to destroy fortifications at Carrollton. When he reopened negotiations on April 28, he reminded the mayor, "Fire from this fleet may be drawn upon the city at any moment ... and the levee would, in all probability, be cut by shells." The city surrendered the next day.

On May 1, Butler arrived in New Orleans to begin an uneasy military occupation that was characterized as much by angry controversy as it was iron-hand despotism, bringing much embarrassment to the Lincoln administration, and compelling his recall in December.

The forts had sustained only 48 casualties during the battle and twice refused Porter's demand for surrender, but when rumors of the surrender of the city reached Fort Jackson, a reaction began to permeate the garrison. Hoping to reassure the men who were "still obedient but not buoyant and cheerful," Brig. Gen. Johnson K. Duncan, commander of the two forts, issued an order on April 27 praising their "courage, gallantry, and heroism." The garrison was mostly made up of Germans, who were distrusted from the start. They were also told that Duncan intended to blow up the fort over their heads rather than surrender. The balance of the garrison was made up of impressed Northerners. In fact, one week earlier one of Porter's boats had picked up a red-capped deserter who claimed to be an impressed Pennsylvanian. "The Northern men had applied for duty in the forts to avoid suspicion, and in the hope that they would not be called upon to fight against the Federal Government," wrote Duncan.

Hence, at midnight they mutinied, spiking guns, dismounting others, loudly demanding surrender, even threatening the lives of their officers. The post chaplain tried in vain to quell the mutineers, and Duncan had no choice but to send a flag of truce to Porter the next morning. "The officers suggested that the mutiny of the troops was caused by many of them being foreigners or northerners," wrote a Union observer. After the surrender, the fort was inspected by Coast Survey officers, who found a scene of desolation and ruin. The infrastructure was completely shattered, gun carriages were destroyed or damaged, but most of the dismounted guns were remounted and, as Farragut's fleet could testify, the ability of the fort to fire had not been impaired. "We are just as capable today of repelling the enemy as we were before the bombardment," Duncan later wrote. Perhaps the effect of Porter's bombardment was best summed up by Maj. Gen. Godfrey

Library of Congress



The Union Fleet is shown anchored at New Orleans the day after the battle. If any battle in spring 1862 kept Europe neutral, it was Farragut's victory at New Orleans.

Wietzel of the U.S. Corps of Engineers: "To the uninitiated, it seems as if this work was badly cut up," he wrote. "It is as strong today as when the first shot was fired at it." Nevertheless, the bombardment prepared the forts for the fleet's passage and kept the enemy gunners under cover and away from their openly mounted guns.

The loss of New Orleans resonated profoundly throughout the South. Mallory was affected quite bitterly, calling the loss the most stunning blow of his lifetime. Two weeks after the fall he wrote to his wife, "I do not know how you discovered that the naval losses on the Mississippi affected me, but the fact is that they almost killed me, and I am ashamed to say that I have lain awake at night with my heart depressed and sore, my eyes filled with tears, in thinking over them. Our boys fought splendidly and merited by their gallantry the victory they had not the force to achieve. This has made me very weak and neutralized the effect of all the medicine I have taken,

Continued on page 69

DAWN BROKE CLEAR AND HOT OVER CONSTANTINOPLE ON JULY 17, 1203. All manner of war machines were clustered around the Latin crusaders' fortified camp on a hill where the Monastery of Saints Cosmas and Damian was located. Giant stones flung by mangonels inside the city flew through the air toward the crusader's camp. The crusaders made final preparations for an advance. Their objective was the Palace of Blachernae in the northeastern quadrant of the imperial city.

Using hide-covered tortoise shells to protect infantry and sappers, the crusaders advanced. Others marched toward the walls with scaling ladders under the protection of crossbowmen and archers who showered the tops of the walls with quarrels and arrows to keep the defenders pinned down.

When the crusaders reached the wall, ladders were raised and placed against the wall. From the tops of the walls, the defenders hurled stones and poured hot sand and oil on the attackers.

"By dint of strenuous efforts two knights and two sergeants managed to scale the ladders and

Sack of CONSTANTINOPLE

make themselves masters of the wall," wrote Geoffrey of Villehardouin, Marshal of Champagne, who witnessed the attack. "A good 15 of our men got up on top, and were quickly involved in a hand-to-hand contest of battle-axes against swords. The [Varangian Guard] inside the barbican plucked up courage and fought back so savagely that they drove our men out."

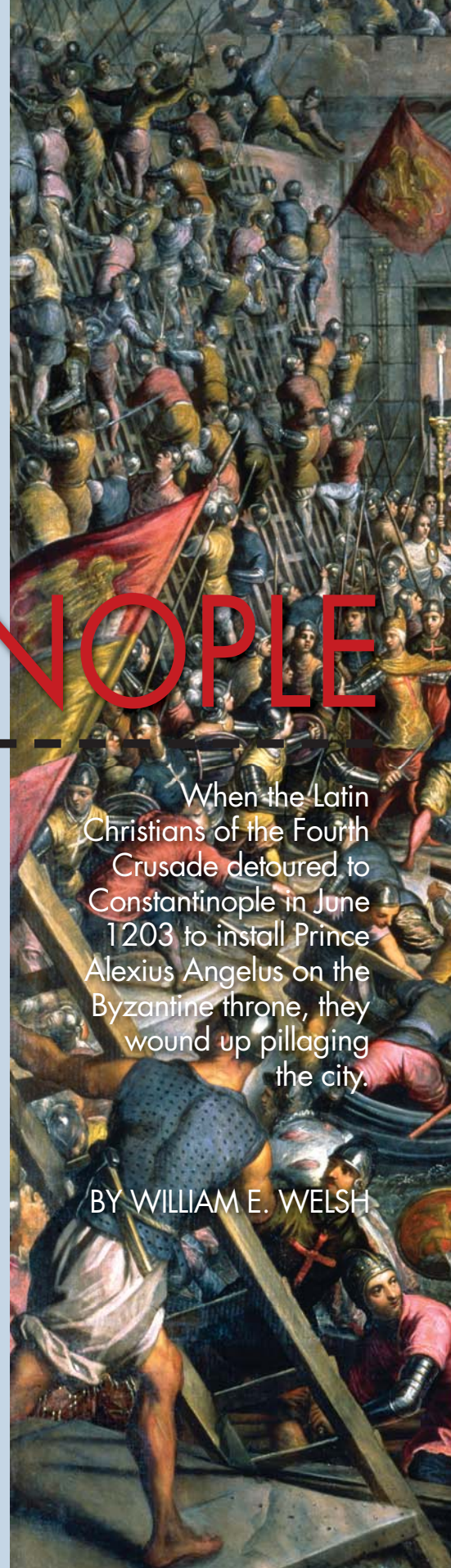
A short distance away, the Venetian navy began to assail the shorter seaward walls along the inlet known as the Golden Horn. The simultaneous attack was meant to stretch Emperor Alexius III's resources and gain access to the city, whether by a breach in the wall or a successful attack on one of the towers atop the seaward wall. "The din was so tremendous it seemed as if both land and sea were crumbling in pieces," wrote Villehardouin.

When his galley captains shied from beaching their vessels on the narrow strip of land beneath the seaward walls, Venetian Doge Enrico Dandolo shouted to the crew of his flagship to put him ashore, which they did with a company of marines. Following his lead, the captains of other war galleys also beached their craft. "As soon as the other Venetians saw this banner on land, and their lord's galley touching before them, every man of them felt deeply ashamed, and all made for the shore," wrote Villehardouin.

Watching the attack from one of the Venetian ships was 21-year-old Alexius Angelus, the son of deposed Byzantine Emperor Isaac II Angelus, who languished in a prison inside the city. The young prince had escaped the year before to enlist the help of the West in overthrowing usurper Alexius III. He had found a welcome ally in Boniface of Montferrat, the leader of the Fourth Crusade, who saw in the prince's plight a way that the crusaders might repay their massive debt to the Venetians for provisioning and transporting them to the Holy Land.

Dandolo had agreed with Boniface that a diversion to Constantinople was a sound idea. The Byzantine prince had promised in negotiations with the Latin crusaders that he would pay them 200,000 silver marks if they restored his family to the throne. The young prince signed an agreement known as the Treaty of Zara and took a solemn oath. Both the crusaders and the Venetians intended to hold him to that oath, come what may.

Eleven years had passed since Jerusalem fell to Saladin's army when Pope Innocent III announced on August 15, 1198, a new crusade to liberate the holy city from the Muslims. The initial reaction was not the rush to take the cross that characterized the First Crusade. But when Count Theobald III of Champagne and other nobles took the cross at a tournament hosted by Theobald on November 28, 1199, others quickly followed their example.



When the Latin Christians of the Fourth Crusade detoured to Constantinople in June 1203 to install Prince Alexius Angelus on the Byzantine throne, they wound up pillaging the city.

BY WILLIAM E. WELSH



Sailors and marines of the powerful Venetian Navy assault the seaward wall along the Golden Horn for a second time in April 1204. The Venetians suspended gangplanks from the masts and yard-arms of their galleys that served as flying bridges for marines to use in assaulting the tops of the city's walls.



ABOVE: When they came up short of funds for the Fourth Crusade, the western crusaders agreed as part of a bargain with the Venetians to help them capture Zara in Dalmatia in November 1202. Zara was critical to Venetian trade because much of the oak for their ships came from Dalmatian forests and their ships were resupplied at the port going to and from the Levant. **OPPOSITE:** An early depiction of Constantinople shows towers at regular intervals along the walls and also the great chain across the Golden Horn. In July 1203, the powerful Venetian navy sunk the much weaker Byzantine navy, and the crusaders captured the Tower of Galata, which housed the windlass that controlled the great chain.

The most notable of the other barons who took the cross were Count Baldwin IX of Flanders-Hainault, Count Louis of Blois, Count Hugh of St. Pol, and Count Simon IV of Montfort. The expansion of the Seljuk Turks in Anatolia made a journey by land highly problematic, so in April 1201 a delegation of six knights led by Villehardouin journeyed to Venice to arrange transport. The knights met with Doge Enrico Dandolo, who was in his 90s and had been blinded as a result of an accident while he was in his 60s. Despite his age and handicap, his mind was sharp and his body in decent condition.

The meeting with Dandolo resulted in a contract in which Venice would transport 33,500 crusaders to the Holy Land by sea and supply them for nine months at a cost of 84,000 silver marks to be paid before the fleet sailed. At their own expense, the Venetians offered to provide 50 war galleys to escort the vulnerable transport ships. Dandolo drove a hard bargain. In addition to prepayment, the Venetians were to have a say in the direction of the crusade and receive half of the territorial conquests.

Dandolo intended to lead the fleet when it sailed on June 24, 1202. Rather than sail to the Christian-held port of Acre, the crusaders planned to sail to Egypt, the weakest of the Muslim lands, where they would establish a base from which to march on Jerusalem. The contract did not mention that Egypt was the destination. This was a confidential matter as the leaders of the crusade felt that the common soldiers would not understand the strategy behind invading Muslim-held Egypt as opposed to sailing unopposed into Acre.

The matter of the destination of the Venetian fleet was hard to keep secret. When word slipped out and spread throughout the crusader forces, a number of barons arranged their own naval transport from Marseilles or the Apulian ports of Bari and Taranto. This would have a profound effect on the crusaders' pact with Venice.

Another setback for the crusaders was the untimely death on May 24 of Theobald, who had been the de facto leader of the crusade. The French barons offered the position of leader to Marquis Boniface of Montferrat. A natural-born leader, Boniface had strong ties to the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Byzantine Empire. His father had fought in the Second Crusade, and his three brothers had married into the Byzantine imperial family and fought in the Holy Land. "His family was a family of crusaders," wrote Villehardouin.

In the summer of 1202, the barons and their respective companies of crusaders arrived in

Venice. The Venetians required the crusaders to camp on the Lido, the narrow island that served as a barrier between the city and the Adriatic Sea, to prevent the possible spread of disease. Because large numbers of crusaders had opted for alternate transport, only 12,000 crusaders assembled in Venice. The 4,000 knights and 8,000 sergeants gave all the money they had to the venture, which amounted to 50,000 silver marks.

The doge refused to let the fleet sail until the Venetians received the remaining 34,000 silver marks. Dandolo's rationale was that the Venetians had not only invested heavily in new ships, but also that the effort would cut sharply into routine trade conducted by the republic. Nevertheless, the crusaders, who were uncomfortable camping in the summer heat on the barren Lido, resented the delay as they had given every last coin they had to the Venetians. The departure date passed with no end in sight to the crisis.

In September, Dandolo proposed to the leaders of the crusade that they assist the Venetians in retaking the heavily fortified city of Zara on the Dalmatian coast, which the Hungarians had taken from the Venetians. Zara was critical to Venetian trade because much of the oak for their ships came from Dalmatian forests and also because their ships were resupplied at the port on their way to and from the Levant. If the crusaders agreed to the diversion to Zara, then the Venetians would postpone payment of the remainder of the debt until it could be satisfied by spoils taken in the Holy Land. Having no other choice but to disband the crusade, the leaders of the Fourth Crusade agreed to the preliminary expedition. Everyone hoped that when the Zarans saw the mighty fleet they would capitulate without bloodshed.

The crusaders' morale was restored when the Venetians turned over 150 ships to serve as transports. Of the 150 ships, 100 were horse transports and 50 were passenger transports. The horse transports were a hybrid galley and sailing ship with doors in the sides near the water line for unloading the horses. The passenger transports were round-hulled sailing ships normally used for cargo transport. Several of the sailing ships were gigantic in comparison to the other vessels and capable of carrying hundreds of passengers. In addition to the 12,000 crusaders, 8,000 Venetian sailors and marines would participate in the crusade. The Venetians loaded 300 siege engines on the war galleys and the larger sailing ships.

The large fleet left Venice during the first week of October. It made many stops on the way to Zara to add provisions and crew. On November 10, the fleet dropped anchor outside the har-

bor. The Venetians negotiated with the Zarans in an effort to arrange a peaceful surrender, but at the last minute the Zarans changed their minds and decided to resist the Venetians. The crusaders and Venetians began a determined assault on the walled city on November 13 using mangonels, scaling ladders, and other equipment. The crusaders also planted a mine under one of the landward towers. After two weeks, the Zarans agreed to surrender on the condition that their lives be spared. Dandolo agreed to the terms, but once the Venetians gained control of the city, he ordered the execution of some Zarans who were known enemies of Venice.

The attack on Zara did not sit well with Innocent III. He promptly excommunicated both the crusaders and the Venetians. He would eventually rescind the excommunication of the crusaders, but not the Venetians. With winter almost upon them, the Venetians advised the crusaders that it was best to winter at Zara and resume the expedition in the spring.

The enormous fleet sailed to Corfu in early May 1203. Alexis Angelus arrived on the island bearing a letter of recommendation from his brother-in-law, Philip of Swabia, who urged the leaders of the crusade to support the Byzantine prince in his quest for the throne. Boniface and the other prominent nobles were tantalized by the prince's promises. Alexis Angelus pledged

in the subsequent Treaty of Zara that he would pay the crusaders and Venetians 200,000 silver marks and furnish substantial support for their expedition to the Holy Land. The treaty was signed, and the fleet set sail for Constantinople on May 24.

On June 23, the fleet anchored in sight of Constantinople. The crusaders had never seen anything like what they beheld that morning. "Those who had never seen Constantinople before gazed very intently at the city, having never imagined there could be so fine a place in the whole world," wrote Villehardouin. "They noted the high walls and lofty towers encircling it, and its rich palaces and tall churches, of which there were so many that no one would have believed it to be true if he had not seen it with his own eyes. There was indeed no man so brave and daring that his flesh did not shudder at the sight."

The fleet sailed past the city in a long line the following day. The war galleys sailed in the front followed by the sailing ships. The crusaders landed on the Asiatic shore opposite the imperial city to gather corn and livestock.

The same day, a delegation sent by Alexius III arrived by boat. The leader of the delegation told the crusaders that the emperor was willing to give them provisions if they left his land. The crusaders scoffed at the delegates. They told the emissaries to inform the emperor that he should abdicate immediately so that his nephew could take the throne that rightfully belonged to him. Alexius III ignored the demand.

The Latin Christians expected the supporters of Alexius Angelus to visit their camp to discuss plans for unseating Alexius III, but no one arrived. After a number of days had passed, Dandolo ordered a squadron of 10 galleys to cruise past the city walls on July 2 with the young prince aboard. The purpose of the trip was to gauge the reaction of the residents to the presence of the prince.

The galleys "rowed back and forth in front of the walls and showed the people the young man, asking them if they recognized him as their lord," wrote chronicler Robert of Clari, a knight from Picardy who participated in the Fourth Crusade. "The inhabitants said they did not know who he was." The people of the imperial city were openly hostile to the would-be emperor. They laughed, jeered, and shouted insults. It was a shock not only to the prince, but also to the Latin Christians who had brought him. If the Latin Christians were to be repaid, they would have to free Isaac II by force and install him and his son as co-emperors.



Wikimedia

The Byzantine Empire was under considerable pressure from its neighbors at the beginning of the 13th century. To the east, the Seljuks controlled a sizable portion of Anatolia. To the north, the Bulgarians and the Hungarians were steadily expanding. Although Alexius III recently had signed a peace treaty with the Bulgars, war could break out again any time. The emperor had no commercial ties with Venice; his ties were with its bitter rivals Genoa and Pisa.

Alexius had seized power from his brother Isaac in 1195, but he did not improve the lot of his people. He was weak, lazy, and incompetent. He showed no interest in the day-to-day administration of the empire. Instead, he left that to his closest advisers. Despite all of these factors, the Byzantines still took great pride in their reputation as the most civilized people in Europe.

If the Latin Christians intended to try to put the young prince on the throne by force, Alexius III could field 50,000 troops, mostly mercenaries, to resist them. The most loyal were the 5,000 men of the Varangian Guard. The rest were Slavs, Pechenegs, Turks, and Pisans. Only the Varangians were comparable to the French knights, who had been schooled in the art of war from a young age.

After the humiliating episode beneath Constantinople's seaward wall, it was clear that Isaac II and his son Alexius Angelus would have to be seated on the throne as co-emperors by force. Since the crusaders needed the money to pay off the Venetians, and Dandolo wanted the remainder of the debt paid off, the Latin Christians resolved to attack the city. It was a daunting undertaking. The Umayyad Caliphate had tried twice, once in the 7th century and again in the 8th century, and failed. Nevertheless, Dandolo and Boniface began directing preparations for an assault. It would begin with an attack on the Tower of Galata across the Golden Horn from the city.

The Venetian fleet set off on the morning of July 5 to assault the Tower of Galata, which housed the windlass that controlled the great chain blocking access to the Golden Horn. Galata, a suburb of Constantinople, was situated on the opposite side of the Golden Horn from the city. Barges carrying crossbowmen and archers landed in the first wave. They strode onto the beach and fanned out to cover the landing. The second wave consisted of Venetian war galleys that towed the horse and infantry transports to the beach. While the infantry formed up, the knights disembarked with their horses. "The knights issue from the transports, and leap into the sea up to their waists, fully armed, with helmets laced, and lances in hand," wrote Villehardouin.

Although Alexius III did not contest the landing, he and his army were drawn up nearby. A missile duel ensued between the two sides until the crusader vanguard, led by Baldwin, began to advance toward the Greeks. It is unclear why Alexius led an army out of the city when he did not intend to give battle. He might have thought the crusaders were not planning on committing all of their forces to the attack on the tower, but they did just that. Galata was unfortified save for the garrisoned round tower. When the Byzantine emperor saw the Latin knights advance with their lances, he ordered a general withdrawal. The contingent of the Varangian Guard that garrisoned the tower would have to fend for itself. After the crusaders pillaged the abandoned Greek camp, they decided to bivouac for the night. They had no intention of launching a hasty attack on the well-defended tower.

Before the crusaders had a chance to mount their assault on the following morning, the Varangians sallied forth hoping to catch the crusaders by surprise. Coming to their aid were several barges filled with Greek infantry that sailed across the Golden Horn. "Then a cry was raised in the host, and our people ran together from all sides, and drove back the foe with great fury, so that many were slain and taken," wrote Villehardouin. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting lasted throughout the morning until the crusaders eventually drove back the attackers. The Greeks from the city attempted to escape on their barges but most were either cut down or drowned. As for the garrison, it tried to conduct a fighting retreat, but the knights and sergeants followed closely, attacking them as they fell back. "The men of our host pressed them so hard that they could not shut the gate," wrote Villehardouin. The garrison, which had been greatly reduced in the fighting, decided to surrender rather than face certain slaughter if the crusaders took the tower.

Once inside the tower a group of crusaders lowered the chain blocking the Golden Horn and the Venetian war galleys raced into the inlet and sank all of the Greek ships. During the Umayyad sieges, the Golden Horn had remained under the control of the Byzantine navy, which greatly hampered the siege efforts. Although the crusaders were substantially outnumbered by the Greeks, control of the harbor would enable them to attack the seaward walls along the Golden Horn, which were not as high as those on the landward side.

The crusader infantry departed Galata on July 11 and marched north along the Golden Horn until they reached the stone bridge that carried foot traffic from Galata to the imperial city. The Greeks had destroyed the bridge over the Barbsis River to deny it to the attackers, so the crusaders repaired it in 24 hours. Once across, the crusaders established their camp atop the hill where the Monastery of Saints Cosman and Damian was located beyond the city's landward wall.

The landward wall that stretched across the peninsula from the Sea of Marmara to the Golden Horn was almost six kilometers long. In the 5th century, Emperor Theodosius ordered the construction of a double wall that averaged about 30 feet in height. The crusaders were camped opposite the Blachernae Palace that had a single 45-foot-high wall. Boniface and his subordinate commanders decided to launch their attack against the sector of the landward wall nearest the Golden Horn in order to stay in close contact with Dandolo and his naval commanders. The leaders of the crusade set their troops to work building a palisade with a trench around it.

For the next five days, the Latin and Greek armies exchanged fire with their siege artillery. To keep the crusaders off balance, Alexius III ordered regular cavalry forays throughout the day and night to harass them. Boniface divided the crusader army into seven battalions. To counter the Greek cavalry probes, one crusader battalion was on alert at all times. In some of the engagements, the crusaders chased the Greeks all the way back to the gates of the city. It was a dangerous game as the Greeks atop the walls threw large stones down at any of the knights and mounted sergeants who got too close to the walls.

While the crusader assault on the Blachernae Palace was in full swing, the Venetian war galleys and the largest of the sailing ships positioned themselves in the Golden Horn to attack the seaward wall near the Gate of Petron. To protect their ships from stones hurled from Greek mangonels, the Venetians draped hides and vines over their vessels to soften the impact of the projectiles. For offensive purposes, the Venetian crews constructed large siege towers atop the forecastles of the galleys and the largest of the sailing ships. The siege towers served as platforms for the mangonels. The Venetians also ingeniously devised a way to suspend gangplanks from the masts and yard-arms that were raised and lowered by rope tackles. These gangplanks served as a flying bridge for Venetian marines to assault the top of the city's walls.

After Dandolo and his marine escort landed on the Golden Horn beach on July 17 there followed "a grand and marvelous assault on the city," wrote Villehardouin. In furious fighting, the Venetian marines charged across the flying bridges onto the seaward wall and captured a number of towers. The Greeks defending that portion of the wall panicked and withdrew. At that point, the Venetian marines fought their way to the gates and opened them for their fellow soldiers. The Venetians ultimately gained control of 25 of the 110 towers along the Golden Horn.



When Emperor Alexius learned that his troops had abandoned part of the wall, he ordered a counterattack. As the Venetians fell back, they lit fires in the city. The wind blew the fire toward the Greeks, which bought the Venetians time to withdraw to the towers they had captured.

While the Greek infantry counterattacked the Venetians on the seaward wall, Alexius III led the Greek cavalry out of St. Romanus Gate in the landward wall toward the crusader camp. Alexius meant to turn Boniface's right flank, but three crusader battalions led by Baldwin rode to check their turning movement. The other four battalions remained near the fortified camp in case another force of Greeks advanced from another gate. Boniface, who led the reserve, ordered every cook and page to pick up a weapon and help protect the camp.

Alexius had nine battalions numbering about 30,000 troops. His battalions were about twice the size of the crusader battalions. When Baldwin's crusaders were within crossbow distance of the Greeks, he ordered them to withdraw. He feared that they had gone too far to receive reinforcements in a timely manner if attacked. The Count of St. Pol and Lord Peter of Amiens, leading the second of the three battalions accompanying Baldwin, refused to withdraw, believing that retreating was a shameful act. Baldwin, who had already begun withdrawing his battalion, rode back to their aid. By that time, the

Venetians attack the seaward wall along the Golden Horn while crusaders attack the land wall in a 15th-century illuminated manuscript. The successful initial siege of Constantinople in July 1203 enabled the Latin crusaders to install puppet emperor Alexius IV.

crossbowmen and archers on both sides were engaged in a fierce duel.

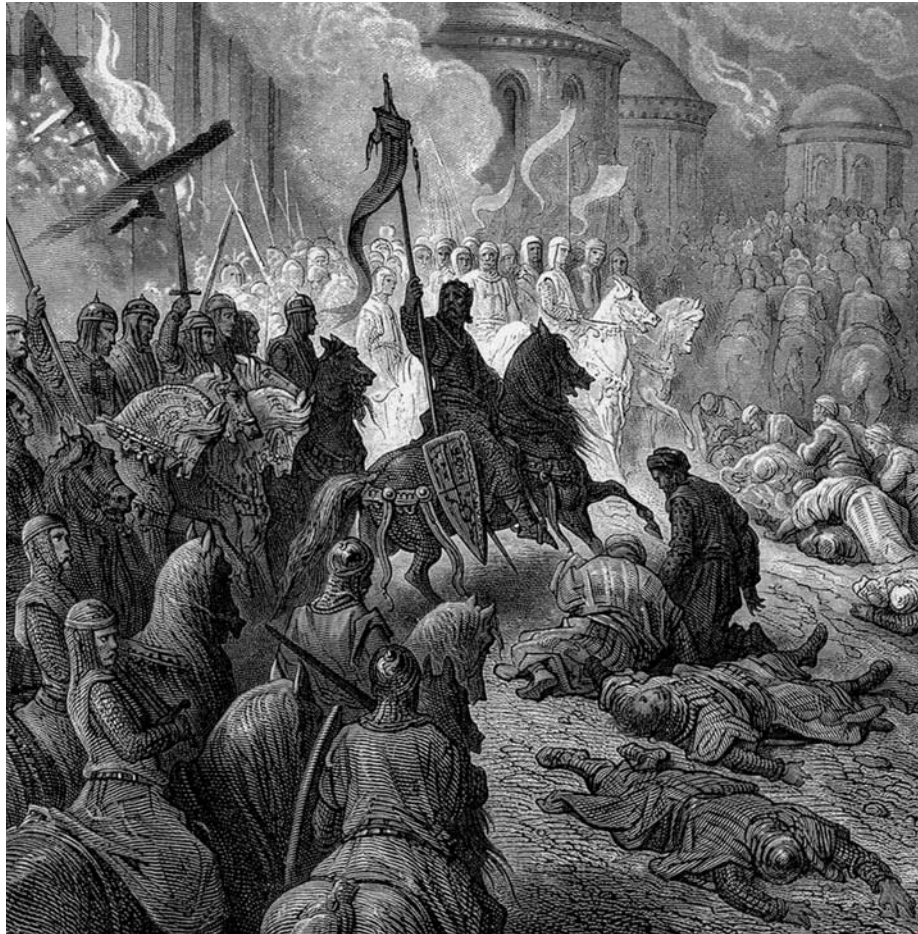
The fighting amounted to nothing more than a skirmish, though. Neither Alexius nor the majority of his subordinate commanders had the stomach for major bloodshed. Despite their larger numbers, the Greeks were intimidated by the Latin soldiers. "The nagging idea of flight and the faint-heartedness of those about him thwarted Alexius from what needed to be done," wrote Byzantine chronicler Nicetas.

Alexius' main intention had been to force the Venetians to come to the aid of the crusaders. The tactic worked perfectly because when Dandolo learned that the crusaders were facing a major attack by the Greeks, he ordered his men to withdraw from the city.

But the Venetians' ability to penetrate the city's defenses was enough to compel Alexius III to flee the city that night. He not only took enormous quantities of gold and precious jewels with him, but also his imperial regalia, as he intended to continue his rule from another part of the empire. After he departed, the people of the city opened the gates to the Latin army. In a critical move, the Varangian Guard agreed to accept Isaac II and his son as co-emperors. As the leaders of the Latin crusade had intended, Prince Alexius and his father were enthroned on August 1. The young prince became Alexius IV.

The Latin army waited four months for payment. During that time, Alexius IV paid them the equivalent of 110,000 silver marks, but was unable to pay them the remaining 90,000. He faced a couple of serious financial problems: Alexius III had fled with most of the funds in the imperial treasury and the Byzantine clergy and his subjects vehemently resisted his attempts to collect taxes.

A delegation of Latin Christians met with Alexius IV in his imperial court in early November. They informed him that they were willing to give him another four months to pay the remaining 90,000 silver marks called for in the Treaty of Zara. Alexius' advisers were outraged that the crusaders were placing demands on the emperor. Alexius was in a terrible bind. If he sided with the crusaders and appeared willing to meet their demands, he would lose the respect of his advisers and make himself vulnerable to a coup. Conversely, if he alienated the Latin army, the crusaders and Venetians would more than likely attack the city with the aim of exacting the remaining sum



through plunder. Alexius sided with his advisers, informing the delegation that he would make no further payments to them.

When the delegates debriefed Dandolo, he suggested to Boniface that they should overthrow Alexius IV and replace him with one of the leaders of the crusade. Dandolo reasoned that if a Latin prince was installed on the Byzantine throne then the Venetians would get exclusive trade rights with the empire.

As a result of the breakdown in relations, Boniface's men pillaged homes and villages outside city walls in December and January. In retaliation, the Greeks sent fire ships toward the Venetian fleet, but the experienced mariners easily intercepted them. During that time Alexius IV did not organize any major attacks against the Latin invaders. His failure to attack the Latin Christians infuriated his advisers, the Senate, and the citizenry.

On January 27, 1204, a mob coerced the Byzantine Senate into electing nobleman Nicholas Canabus to the throne. Nicetas says Canabus was "versed in generalship and war and its business." Because of this overt threat to his rule, Alexius IV requested protection from the crusaders. Boniface agreed to send a detachment to guard Alexius. This gave one of the emperor's high counselors, Alexis Doucas, who had secretly been plotting against Alexius IV, the opening he needed to seize the throne for himself. But he had to move quickly before the crusaders arrived the following day.

Doucas, who was known as Murzuphlus for his unusually bushy eyebrows, awoke Alexius IV on the night of January 27 and told him that he must leave his bed chambers because a mob was on its way to seize him. When Alexius entered another room, he was put in chains and led away to prison. Murzuphlus already had bribed the eunuch who guarded the royal treasury and persuaded the Varangian Guard to support him. In the following days, Isaac II died in prison from natural causes and Alexius IV was strangled while in captivity.

On February 5, Murzuphlus was crowned Alexius V in the Hagia Sophia. Two days later, he met with Dandolo. The elderly doge demanded the remaining 90,000 silver marks owed to the Latin Christians. When Murzuphlus tried to negotiate an alternate resolution, Dandolo reiterated his ultimatum and departed.

The Latin Christians were confident they could gain control of the city partly based on their pre-

vious success against the seaward wall along the Golden Horn. Once inside the city, they reasoned, they could recoup the money owed them by force. Therefore, they entered into an agreement among themselves that stipulated that the Venetians would receive 200,000 owed to them by the crusaders regardless of what they already had received from Alexius IV. Furthermore, they would elect one of the leaders of the crusade as the emperor of a new Latin empire. A Venetian patriarch would assist him in administering the empire.

In March the Latin Christians began preparing for a new assault on the city. The Venetians not only overhauled their siege engines but also "raised ladders from the yards and masts of the vessels, so high that they were a marvel to behold" in preparation for a fresh assault on the seaward wall, wrote Villehardouin. As for the Greeks, Alexius V ordered his engineers to raise the height of the towers by building two or three new stories made from wood. In addition, Murzuphlus had his troops dig two parallel ditches in front of the seaward wall along the shore of the Golden Horn. He also sent orders to outlying provinces to dispatch companies and battalions to help defend the imperial city.

The Venetians assailed the seaward wall along the Golden Horn on April 8. Unfortunately for the seafarers, Murzuphlus' plan to raise the height of the towers worked brilliantly. The Venetian masts could not reach the highest floors of the towers, and the Greek mangonels did considerable damage to the Venetian vessels. The Venetians withdrew to develop new tactics.

On April 12 the Venetians attacked the same stretch of wall. They had extended the height of their masts and ladders in the interim. But more importantly, they assigned a pair of ships to assault each tower instead of a single ship as they had done four days earlier. Despite a steady barrage from the Greek mangonels and furious missile fire from Pisan crossbowmen, the Venetians pressed their attack. Two of the giant roundships, the *Pilgrim* and the *Paradise*, served as excellent platforms for their assault. A heavily armored French knight, Andre d'Urboise, leaped from the mast of the *Paradise* onto the top floor of one of the towers. He fought like a demon, driving the defenders back with his sword. Although he eventually was slain, he bought enough time for his fellow Frenchmen to secure the tower. The crusaders eventually expanded their foothold to four towers.

At the base of the seaward wall, a contingent of 10 knights and 60 sergeants under Count Peter of Amiens managed to hack their way through one of the city's gates. "When they came to the postern, they began to hew and pick

at it very hardily; but the bolts flew at them so thick, and so many stones were hurled at them from the wall, that it seemed as if they would be buried beneath the stones, such was the mass of stones thrown from above,” wrote Robert of Clari. Nevertheless, they managed to cut a breach large enough for one man to crawl through. One of the knights, Aleumes of Clari, crawled through and single-handedly drove back the defenders so that other men could follow him through the passage. Together, the band of crusaders drove off the defenders and opened the gate for their fellow soldiers.

Murzuphlus rode his horse through the streets trying in vain to rally the fleeing soldiers. Neither the Greeks nor the Varangians could be compelled to mount a counterattack. That night the crusaders once again set fire to part of the city. Realizing that he faced almost certain execution, Murzuphlus fled by boat under cover of darkness. He was apprehended and brought back to the city where he was flung to his death from the top of the Column of Theodosius.

The citizens of Constantinople sent a delegation to Boniface the day after the battle to discuss the future of the city, but the crusaders had nothing to discuss with them. The crusaders dressed for battle that day and entered the city. They began the customary three-day sack of a conquered city that had resisted peaceful surrender. The first targets of the Latin soldiers were the Orthodox churches and the wealthy citizens who were stripped of all their belongings of value that could be carted away. Some of the religious and military leaders took precious relics back to their own churches and castles.

The Latin Christians “discovered in abundance, here, there, and everywhere ... that they were all suddenly transformed from aliens and paupers into very rich citizens,” wrote chronicler Gunther of Paris. The crusaders compiled gold and silver, magnificent gems, ornate clothing, valuable trade goods, and all manner of commodities, according to Gunther. So much loot was gathered “that no one could estimate its amount of value,” wrote Villehardouin. The plunder “included gold and silver, table services and precious stones, mantles of squirrel fur, ermine and miniver, and every choicest thing to be found on earth,” wrote Villehardouin.

Following the sack of the city, Boniface ordered his soldiers to turn over the loot so that it could be distributed according to the pact made before the siege. The leaders collected 300,000 silver marks from the common pool of booty. Of that amount, the Venetians received 200,000 silver marks, and the crusaders received 100,000. In his account of the crusade, Villehardouin estimated that individual cru-

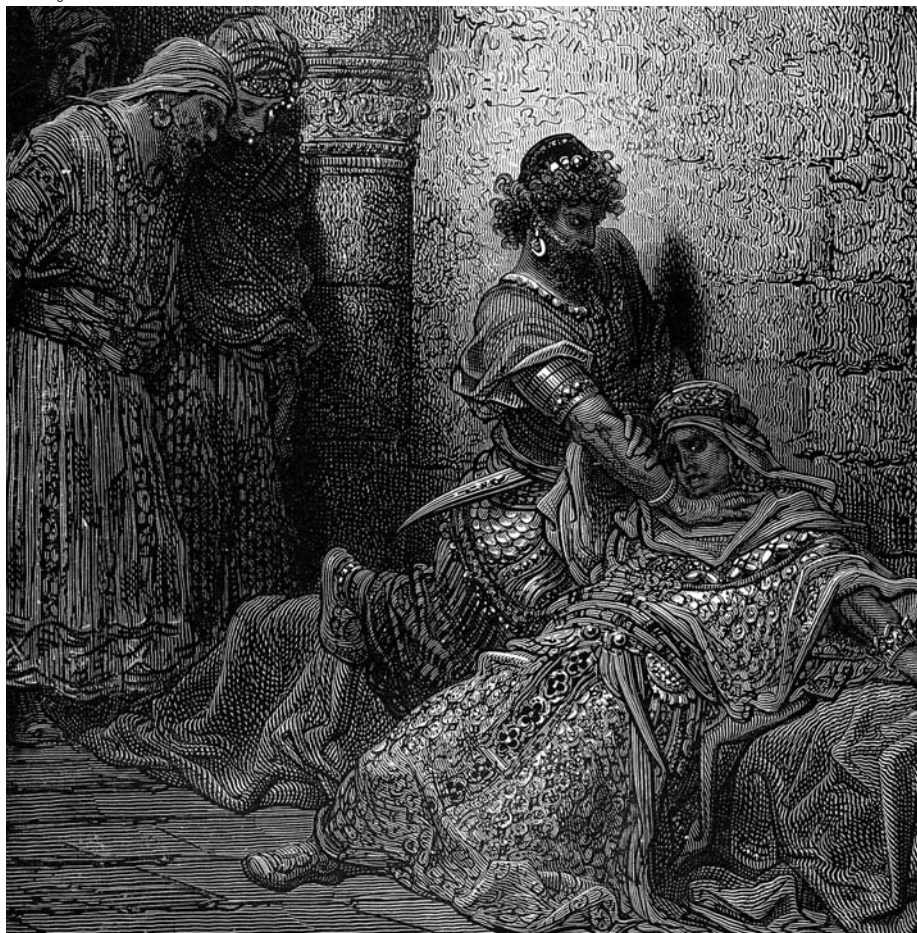
saders and Venetian mariners hid booty amounting to an additional 500,000 silver marks.

A council of six Frenchmen and six Venetians decided who would rule the empire and govern the imperial city. Of course, they adhered to Dandolo’s wishes. Boniface was passed over in favor of Baldwin on the grounds that the Marquis of Montferrat not only had been too close to Alexius III but also had strong ties to Genoa, which was Venice’s chief maritime rival. To assist Baldwin in ruling the city, the council appointed Venetian Tommaso Morosini to serve as the patriarch. As for Boniface, the council selected him to rule as King of Thessalonica.

The council granted Venice free trade rights throughout the empire and barred Genoa and Pisa from trading in its territories. Venice also received control of key ports on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, the coast of Greece, the western shore of Anatolia, and on islands in the Aegean Sea.

On May 16, the Count of Flanders-Hainault was crowned Baldwin I of the new Latin Empire of Constantinople. Only a few of the crusaders continued to the Holy Land; most chose to remain in the new empire or return home.

Eon Images



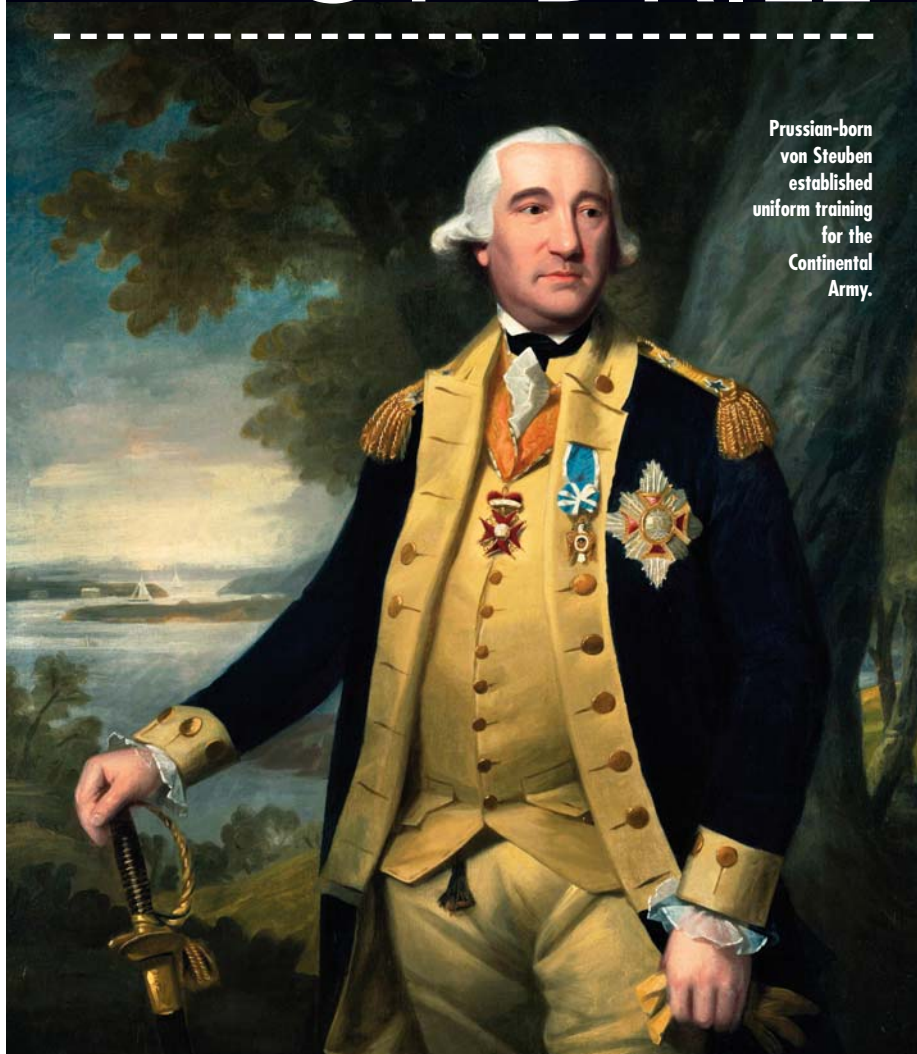
ABOVE: Alexius IV is murdered following a palace coup by Alexius V. When Alexius V also refused to pay the debt, the Latin crusaders sacked the city and crowned Baldwin of Flanders-Hainault as the first Latin emperor of Constantinople.

OPPOSITE: The Latin crusaders entered Constantinople not as liberators but as conquerors bent on exacting compensation from the city for Alexius IV’s failure to pay his outlandish debt to them. The first targets of the Latin soldiers during the sack of the city in April 1204 were the Orthodox churches and wealthy citizens.

Baldwin faced an immediate state of war because of internal unrest in the outlying provinces of the empire and attacks by the Bulgars led by Tsar Kaloyan. Baldwin died following his capture by the Bulgars at the Battle of Adrianople fought April 15, 1215. Boniface, died fighting the Bulgars at the Battle of Messinopolis on September 4, 1207. Assailed from all sides, the Latin Empire of Constantinople eventually fell to the Nicaeans in 1261.

The leaders of the Fourth Crusade had compromised themselves by bowing to Venetian desires and succumbing to their own greed. They contributed nothing substantial to the Kingdom of Jerusalem other than furnishing a small number of reinforcements. They waged war against fellow Christians at Zara and Constantinople. Theirs was a shameful legacy. □

THE NECESSITY OF DRILL



Prussian-born
von Steuben
established
uniform training
for the
Continental
Army.

TO STAND UP TO THE BRITISH REGULARS AND WIN AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON NEEDED MEN WHO COULD FIRE MASS VOLLEYS, FIGHT WITH LITTLE OR NO COVER, AND WIELD A BAYONET.

BY ERIC NIDEROST

IN NORMAL TIMES 18th-century Cambridge, Massachusetts, was a small farming community of about 800 souls clustered around a common. Some of its more prominent citizens owned stately Georgian homes, and Cambridge also was the site of Harvard College.

In the summer of 1775 Cambridge was an armed camp, home to thousands of men who called themselves “forces of the United Colonies.” Mostly New Englanders, these militiamen were mainly farmers and craftsmen, and at the time they were conducting a siege of nearby Boston, which was occupied by British Army regulars.

They were largely untrained, but some of these men had already shown their mettle at the Battle of Bunker Hill, fought earlier that summer.



General George Washington rallies his Continental Army during the Battle of Monmouth in June 1778 in a 19th-century painting by Emanuel Leutze. Maj. Gen. Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben's relentless drilling of Washington's soldiers at Valley Forge the previous winter enabled them to fight the British Army to a draw that day.

The British redcoats had marched confidently forward with parade ground precision, only to be swept away in a storm of lead unleashed by hundreds of American muskets, fired by men protected by ramparts on a high hill.

The British finally took the American position, but it was a pyrrhic victory with more than 1,000 redcoat casualties. "Another such [victory]," lamented British General Henry Clinton, "would have ruined us." The myth was soon born that Americans were a tough, resourceful breed that did not need any formal training or discipline to win a war.

The roots of the American Revolution can be traced back to 1765, when Great Britain, saddled with a huge war debt from the Seven Years War, attempted to impose its authority with a

series of direct taxes enacted by parliament. To the Americans this was tyranny and arbitrary rule, since it seemed to usurp the powers of their own colonial legislatures.

After the clashes at Lexington and Concord, the members of the Second Continental Congress decided to take measures for their mutual defense. The thousands of militiamen besieging Boston were adopted as the nucleus of a United Colonies Army, later refined to the Continental Army. As time went on, men from New York and other colonies joined the fledgling force.

As soon as the Continental Army was created, it was recognized that a commander in chief was needed to give the fledgling force strong leadership. George Washington was chosen in part because he was a Virginian, and so far the troubles had been largely confined to New England. He was also one of a handful of native-born Americans with any real, albeit limited, military experience.

Publicly it seemed nothing could shake Washington's calm, even placid, demeanor. But when he inspected his new command he was appalled. The general later wrote that the Continental Army was "a mixed multitude of people under very little discipline, order or government." Officers were mainly elected; if soldiers did not like their orders, the offending leader was quickly demoted and replaced.

During Washington's inspections, scattered popping noises rippled through the camp, the sounds of soldiers randomly discharging their muskets. This had nothing to do with Washington, nor was



this a form of salute. Soldiers would fire flintlocks to start fires, to empty weapons, or just to have some fun. The men were so careless that companions were sometimes killed or wounded.

On August 4, 1775, a general order was issued, noting that “it is with shame and indignation the general observes, that notwithstanding the repeated orders which have been given to prevent the firing of guns in and about camp, it is daily and hourly practiced.” Such carelessness produced casualties, created chaos, and used up powder. It was a closely guarded secret, but for a time in summer 1775 the army had only 36 barrels of powder.

The Massachusetts legislature warned Washington that this rag-tag collection of farm boys were “youth ... used to a laborious life” who had not learned “the absolute necessity of cleanliness in their dress and lodging, continual exercise, and a strict temperance, to preserve them from diseases.”

The reality made these pronouncements seem like understatements. Men felt that doing the laundry was woman’s work, so they wore their clothes until filthy and stinking with sweat and other revolting odors. Not everyone was so dirty, but regular bathing was not as common in the 18th century as it was later. Filthy soldiers often developed “the itch,” a skin disease that left the victims with scab-like eruptions on their bodies. The cure was an ointment made of hog lard or pine tar mixed with brimstone.

Cambridge was overflowing with men in the summer and fall of 1775. All classes at nearby Harvard College were cancelled, and its stately buildings were converted into makeshift barracks, a hospital, and officers’ quarters. But the army had nearly 20,000 soldiers, and those who were not housed in abandoned Tory houses or college buildings had to make do with the materials at hand.

Tents and other makeshift shelters sprang up in Cambridge common, each placed wherever the

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection



A volley by British regulars shatters the Lexington militia on April 19, 1775. In open terrain, the poorly trained American militia simply could not match British infantry.

soldiers wanted them. The resulting confusion looked more like a gypsy camp, with little of the military precision, cleanliness, or order of European armies. Open latrines were dug at Washington’s instance, but all too often men would “set down and ease themselves” whenever they felt like it.

Human waste and offal from slaughtered animals was everywhere, and within a very short time a noxious cloud of evil smells rose from the camp. The acrid stench of urine and feces combined with the smell of gunpowder, green wood burning, and the rotting remains of animal carcasses produced an almost suffocating stink.

Unsanitary conditions bred disease. Typhus and smallpox were probably the greatest killers in camp, but soldiers also contracted dysentery and other illnesses. Smallpox was a vicious scourge, and in those years the civilian population experienced a terrible epidemic of this disease.

Washington was immune since he had had smallpox as a teenager, but he recognized what its deadly threat. He eventually made inoculation mandatory for the entire army, which undoubtedly saved lives. Sanitation slowly got better, though like any 18th-century army, disease would not be

entirely eliminated.

Washington also recognized the desperate need for a trained and fully professional army, an army that could meet the British regulars on an equal footing and beat them. Washington wrote, “Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak, and esteem to all.”

The peculiarities of 18th-century European warfare made discipline all the more important. The smoothbore flintlock musket was the basic infantry weapon at the time. It was a fairly reliable weapon, at least in comparison to the matchlock that it replaced, but was still wildly inaccurate. A soldier firing a musket was lucky if he could hit a target beyond about 50 yards or so. To compensate for this, European armies fired massed volleys in three ranks, usually at close range.

Muskets were unwieldy weapons, and loading was an intricate process that required several distinct steps. A soldier had to be a mindless automaton, or possess nerves of steel, to go through the motions of loading and firing in the open with cannon balls and musket bullets peppering the air all around him. Since few humans have nerves of steel, European armies resorted to flogging and other draconian punishments to enforce discipline.

On the whole, most Americans thought this was nonsense. New Englander Timothy Pickering, who wrote one of the early drill manuals, believed that Americans were intelligent people who fought by choice and used their brains. They did not need compulsion, and they certainly did not need intricate drill. Washington thought otherwise.

Americans also favored Indian methods of warfare, including concealment and using cover whenever possible. This was especially true of the frontier borderlands. Frontiersmen favored the celebrated Pennsylvania rifle, which in the hands of a good marksman could be accurate up to 200 yards, maybe a little more. When riflemen from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland began to join Washington’s forces in Cambridge, they caused quite a stir.

Riflemen, especially under the command of Daniel “Old Waggoner” Morgan, would contribute to the American cause in the years to come. But rifles were slow to load, easy to foul, and did not take a bayonet. This meant the rifle was a specialist weapon, not one for the whole army. Victory would depend on the smoothbore musket and all that came with it, including mindless drill, massed volleys, and open air fighting with little protection from enemy return fire.

But training was as chaotic as the army camp itself. There were at least three manuals used at



The Continental Army marches into winter quarters at Valley Forge in December 1777. Of the 12,000 American soldiers who marched into the camp, 2,500 would perish during the harsh winter.

the time, and officers used whichever they fancied. Short-term enlistments did not help. In the summer of 1775 many soldiers were due to go home on December 31 of that year. Even if a man did get some training, it was wasted, because most had little inclination to reenlist.

Somehow the Continental Army managed to hang on until independence was declared. Brilliantly improvising, the Americans dragged artillery from Fort Ticonderoga across snowy fields by ox teams. They used these guns to fortify Dorchester Heights just outside Boston. The British soon evacuated the city, along with many Tories.

Soon after the Declaration of Independence, the American cause was hit by a string of near-fatal defeats, redeemed by two small but crucial victories at Trenton and Princeton. The next year British General John Burgoyne and his entire army surrendered at Saratoga, bringing France into the war as an American ally.

American soldiers fought well, especially in circumstances favored them as at Trenton and Saratoga. But they still sorely needed training in the European way of war if they had any hope of consistently beating British regulars. Continentals did not maneuver well, or change from one formation to another with the skill and discipline of the redcoats. They also were deficient in the use of the bayonet, still an important weapon of war in the 18th century.

Who would provide such training? Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane, the two American commissioners in France, were actively engaging foreign officers for American service. Unfortunately, the trickle of applicants became a flood, until Deane admitted, "I am well nigh harassed to death with applications of officers to go to America."

A few were excellent officers, or at least

showed great potential. There was, for example, Marquis de Lafayette, a young man with a passion for the American cause and important political connections to boot. But most were mediocre at best. But then, on June 25, 1777, a middle-aged Prussian showed up at Franklin's door at Passy, a village not far from Paris. He was Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin von Steuben. This was no ordinary old soldier, but a man who had fought in the army of Frederick the Great.

Friedrich von Steuben was born on September 24, 1730, into a family of the Junker social class. Junkers were Prussian aristocrats who were expected to serve the king with wholehearted devotion, usually as soldiers. Steuben's father, Wilhelm August, was a talented military engineer who was sent by King Frederick William I to Russia to help Czarina Anna rebuild her army. His family went along, and young Friedrich soon learned how to speak Russian.

Steuben senior returned to Prussia in 1739, and the next year a new king, Frederick II, ascended the throne. Frederick seized Silesia from Austria, setting off a new round of European wars. At 16 Friedrich joined the Infantry Regiment von Lestwitz (Regiment No. 31) at Breslau, Silesia. He was a Freikorporal or officer-cadet, a position that at least on paper was considered something like a noncommissioned officer.

The Prussian system required that young officers be directly responsible for the well-being of their men. Though never too familiar with their charges, young cadets and officers became well acquainted with the daily lives of the men who served under them. A Prussian officer was supposed to be strict but fair, and it was expected that he share in their hardships and dangers. Though discipline could be severe if a soldier broke the rules, real bonds of mutual respect could develop between an officer and his men.

As the 1750s progressed, young Steuben and his regiment remained with the Breslau garrison. Some officers used their free time to drink and carouse, flirt with local girls, or visit prostitutes. Steuben rarely joined in their activities. He loved the theater, read works like Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and studied mathematics. He also had an aptitude for languages and soon mastered French. This was important, because French was the lingua franca of Enlightenment Europe and a language that Frederick the Great himself favored.

Like most soldiers Steuben longed to prove himself in war. He got his chance when the Seven Years War broke out in 1756. Austria, still smarting from the loss of Silesia, formed a large anti-Prussian coalition that included France and Russia. Steuben fought in a number of major battles, including Frederick the Great's masterpiece, Rossbach. But Steuben was captured by the Russians and sent to St. Petersburg as a prisoner of war.

Steuben remembered the Russian he picked up as a child and could speak directly to his captors. Officers were well treated, and Steuben's winning personality made him a lot of friends. Perhaps the most notable was Peter Ulrich, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp and heir to the Russian throne. In 1762 the duke became Czar Peter III and immediately made it known he wanted to make peace with his idol, Frederick the Great.

Steuben immediately informed the Prussian foreign minister, who passed the glad tidings to the king. Frederick was delighted, and before long negotiations took Russia out of the war. France and Austria, their major ally gone, had no choice but to make peace with Prussia. The soldier king and his realm had survived.

Frederick the Great decided he needed fresh blood among the senior officers. To this end he created a rudimentary staff school, the *Spezialklasse der Kriegskunst*. There would be classes in strategic planning and the art of being a general. The schoolmaster was none other than Frederick the Great himself, considered one of the great commanders of the 18th century.

The school was small and exclusive; only 13 officers were enrolled. After training and perhaps a bit of seasoning, these men would in time become generals in the Prussian Army. Captain von Steuben was one of them. But in 1763, for reasons still not entirely known, he was dismissed from the service. The king was downsizing his army after the war, true, but there was a story that Steuben had fallen afoul of a powerful fellow officer. Perhaps it was General Von Anhalt, who was known to be jealous and vindictive.

In any case, Steuben was cut adrift, his future uncertain. In 1764 he landed a position as court chamberlain to Prince Josef Friedrich Wilhelm, ruler of Hohenzollern-Hechingen. Germany was not yet a nation, but rather a patchwork of some 300 large and small states. Hohenzollern-Hechingen was one of these, a tiny principality that was so quaint it seemed to be from a fairy tale.

Steuben's duties were light, but he did manage to procure the Order of Fidelity from the Margrave of Baden-Durlach. Something else came with the distinction: the title of *Freiheer*, or baron. But by 1775 he tired of this picturesque backwater and sought out a military position. Employment in France, Austria, or even Britain was not possible. But then he heard of the American colonists and their struggle for independence.

Encouraged, Steuben went to Paris and eventually sought out the two American commissioners, Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane. Deane was enthusiastic about this now middle-aged Prussian, but Franklin was cool, saying nothing but observing all. After a time Franklin was positively discouraging, refusing to even to pay Steuben's travel expenses.

Deeply disappointed, Steuben was about to leave Paris when news came that the Margrave of Baden wanted him at Karlsruhe. There was an opening in the Margrave's army, and the ruler wanted Steuben to fill it. No doubt elated, Steuben left France and was soon in Baden. Unfortunately, when he arrived at Karlsruhe he was shocked to discover the army vacancy, and his whole future in Baden, was in serious jeopardy.

Person or persons unknown had spread the rumor that, while chamberlain at Hechingen, Steuben had taken liberties with youths and young boys at court. In the Prussian Army, homosexuality was tolerated if discreet, but in the rest of Europe it was considered perverted and sinful. The idea that Steuben was taking advantage of youngsters made the charges particularly serious.

Was Steuben a homosexual? Quite possibly, but these charges had all the earmarks of a vicious smear campaign. Almost all of Steuben's friends abandoned him, and it was clear the stain of pederasty would follow him even if he was declared innocent. Here he was, an aging, unemployed officer with few prospects, a suspected pederast with whom few wanted to associate.

But then salvation arrived in the form of a correspondence. He got a letter asking him to return to Paris at once. It seems the Americans had changed their minds. They wanted him after all. The Continental Army desperately needed expertise in army organization, training, logistics, and planning. Steuben would be a godsend to the struggling Americans. The idea that he was a veteran of Frederick the Great's almost legendary Prussian Army was another point in his favor.

Though Steuben's expertise was real, his résumé was deliberately doctored with exaggerations, and in some cases, outright falsehoods. Franklin and Deane were the main authors of this decep-

tion, in large part to win the acceptance of Congress. Steuben claimed, for example, that he had been a Prussian lieutenant general, when his real rank had been captain. Since he had no evidence for the exaggerated claims, it was said that he came to Paris so hastily he had left the supporting documents at Karlsruhe.

Steuben left France on Friday, September 26, 1777, aboard the frigate *L'Heureux*, a warship disguised as a ship-rigged merchantman. The ship's hold was filled with contraband, including muskets, mortars, cannons, and several hundred barrels of gunpowder. Since all these goods were destined for the American rebels, France had to be circumspect in this operation. The ship's name was changed to *Flamand*, and its papers were falsified.

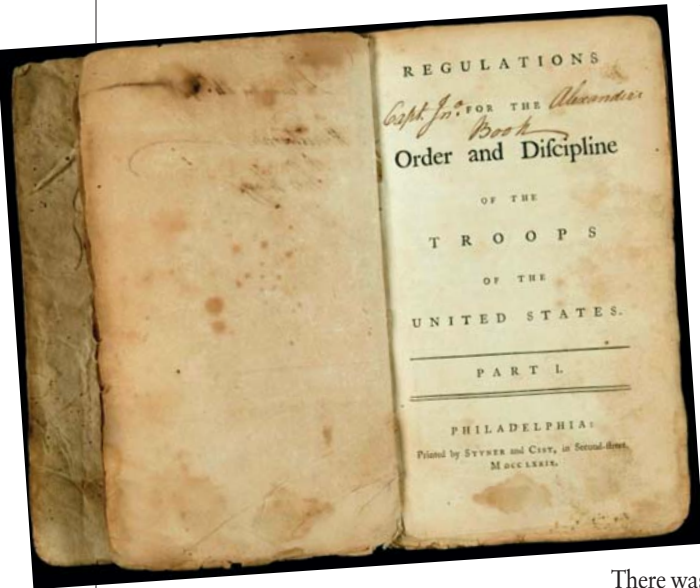
As a retired general about to reenter active service, Steuben was expected to have an entourage of some sort. He was bringing four young aides with him, the most important being Pierre-Etienne Duponceau. Seventeen-year-old Duponceau was a scholarly young man who spoke fluent English. This was important, since the baron did not speak English, except for a few words. One of his favorites was "goddamn."

Later, when he was in America, Steuben brought two other promising young officers into his military family. One was Alexander Hamilton, who was almost a foster son to George Washington and was later celebrated as the first secretary of the treasury. The other, Pierre Charles L'Enfant, was a brilliant engineer who after the war would play a major role in the planning and design of Washington D.C.

Steuben arrived in America after a somewhat rough passage of almost two months. After some interviews with the Congressional Board of War, Steuben was formally accepted and made captain, which was ironically his real rank under Frederick the Great. With the preliminaries at last behind him, Steuben was told to report to the main Continental Army under Washington. It was February 1778, and Washington's forces were in winter quarters at Valley Forge.

The baron arrived at Valley Forge on February 24, 1778, and was pleased that Washington personally rode out to meet him. The two exchanged pleasantries, but Steuben was a little disappointed that Washington seemed stiff, formal, and overly dignified. The Prussian had expected a much warmer reception. But General Washington, a reserved man by nature, was also consciously playing the role of leader of the only body, except the Continental Congress, that truly represented a fledgling United States.

Actually Washington liked Steuben, and as the weeks went by showed that he had complete





confidence in the middle-aged Prussian. Steuben was given complete freedom to make a thorough inspection of the camp, including its organization and logistics. The baron lost no time in fulfilling what was expected of him. For the next two weeks Steuben conducted extensive tours on horseback, and the tough old soldier must have been appalled at what he saw. "No European army," he freely admitted, "could have been kept together under such dreadful deprivations."

Washington was lodged in a simple but sturdy farmhouse, but most of the army lived in rough log huts occupying about 2,000 acres of land. Today the very name Valley Forge conjures images of ragged soldiers enduring cold, starvation, and sickness with scarcely a murmur. For once, the reality was actually worse than the national saga.

The men had to endure snow and freezing temperatures in uniforms that were nothing more than tattered rags. Some literally had no trousers and had to gird themselves with thin blankets. Many had no shoes, and Washington himself noted that when the barefoot men marched, they left bloody tracks in the snow.

Amazingly, most of these men were not the sturdy farmers of Lexington and Concord, though a core of 2,000 to 3,000, were holdovers from the earlier period. The ranks were filled by indentured servants, poor landless men, recent immigrants, and others lower down on the social scale.

Logistics were also a nightmare. Bad weather hampered the transportation of supplies, and both the quartermaster and commissary depart-

ABOVE: Maj. Gen. von Steuben began drilling and training Continental troops soon after his arrival on February 23, 1778. His ultimate objective was to ensure that the Continental soldiers were thoroughly competent in European methods of war. **OPPOSITE:** Maj. Gen. von Steuben's *Blue Book*, which replaced several existing drill manuals, was published and distributed to officers in 1779. It would remain the chief training manual for the U.S. Army until the War of 1812.

ments were marked by widespread mismanagement, incompetence, and outright corruption. Not everyone was corrupt; a small dedicated staff did what they could, but the odds were stacked against them. Starving soldiers subsisted for days on fire cakes made from flour and water.

Steuben poked around the camp for days, making copious notes that would later be transformed into memos to Washington. He would visit the common soldiers in their log hovels, asking them about their health, officers, and daily routine. He really seemed to want to improve their living conditions, which made them respect this foreigner from across the sea.

His appearance also impressed them. He might have been growing a middle-aged paunch, but otherwise he seemed the very embodiment of a professional soldier. Private Ashbel Green, then only 16 years-old, later recalled, "Never before, or since, have I had such an impression of the ancient fabled God of War as when I looked on the baron."

Washington decided to make Steuben inspector general, a position that included the rank of major general. An inspector general had to make sure an army was well drilled, trained, clothed, and fed. It was his job to discover shortages or other problems and make sure the proper authorities, such as the quartermaster, acted on his recommendations. He also kept a careful record of regimental strengths and held officers responsible for the whereabouts of their charges.

Steuben's first assigned task was to take over the Continental Army's training. The goal was for the American troops to be thoroughly competent in European methods of war. The Continental Army also desperately needed some sort of uniformity, that is, a standard to which all could aspire and ultimately master. There were at least three manuals being used at the time, which caused confusion when units were brigaded together.

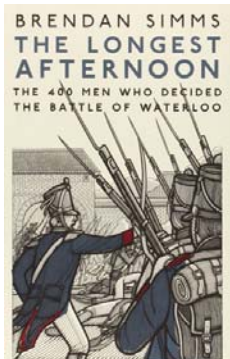
The baron believed that officers should take an active part in the drill instruction, not just leave it to sergeants as in the British Army. While never overfamiliar, Steuben showed he liked his men and their welfare was one of his primary goals. He also formed bonds with the junior officers, many of whom were just as ragged and half-starved as the rank and file.

To show they were appreciated, Steuben arranged a little party for the impoverished junior officers. He managed to scrape some rations together, together with a few small luxuries, for the feast. They dined on tough beefsteak and potatoes, with hickory nuts for dessert, which they washed down with a fiery liquor called salamander. One of the young officers was James Monroe, future president of the United States.

Continued on page 70

By Christopher Miskimon

The 2nd Light Battalion, King's German Legion, held the line at La Haye Sainte, buying precious time for Wellington at Waterloo.



THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO WAS A NIGHTMARE FROM HELL. MUSKET balls, shot, and shell flew back and forth, tearing apart men and horses and leaving their broken bodies to litter what had been a pristine field just days before. The din of cannons and musket volleys was joined by the pitiful wailing of wounded men, dying animals, and the roar created by the hooves of charging cavalry.

At about 5 PM much of the battle focused around the small farm of La Haye Sainte, located in the battlefield's center. The French had made several attempts to take the walled complex throughout the day. But the riflemen of the Second Light Battalion, King's German Legion, defending the farm and an adjacent orchard, had held against everything thrown at them. Their strong resistance delayed the prospects of a French victory. These men were Hanoverians, serving in a British-raised unit and wearing the green

uniforms often associated with rifle-armed sharpshooters.

A concentrated French attack crashed against the walls of La Haye Sainte. Masses of enemy infantry moved on it. The area was shrouded in smoke from the farm's barn, now steadily burning. Another battalion of the King's German Legion tried moving to relieve their battered brethren at the farm, but they were set upon several times by French cavalry. This forced them to form into defensive squares, saving themselves from destruction, but wasting

precious time.

At La Haye Sainte the fighting had been desperate for most of the day. The riflemen were almost entirely out of ammunition. A few companies worth of reinforcements arrived, but they were armed with muskets, not rifles; their ammunition would not fit the German troop's weapons. The clash at the walled farmhouse had reached a crisis point.

The French were just outside the walls, so close they could seize the German rifles when they were pushed through loopholes to fire.

A concentrated French attack crashes against the walls of the La Haye Sainte farmhouse. When the Hanoverians ran low on ammunition, they resorted to bayonets, clubbed rifles, and stones.



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Can the U.S.—Can the World— Afford a Palestinian State?

The Middle East is in chaos: Islamists are waging bloody jihad—and winning—and Palestinian society is collapsing. Is now the time for a Palestinian state?

While the Middle East is being overrun by Islamic terror groups, and Palestinian political factions are verging on civil war, some world leaders now propose forced peace talks with Israel, guaranteeing the Palestinians a state. Can we really afford a Palestinian state ripe for takeover by terrorists?

What are the facts?

Bloodthirsty violence wreaked by Islamic terror groups in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Tunisia has created epic instability in the Middle East. This regional jihad is being waged by the Islamic State, al Qaeda affiliates, al Nusra Front, Hizbollah, Hamas, Houthi rebels and, most prominently, Iran.

Indeed, the jihadis are capturing more Middle East territory daily. The Islamic State continues to seize ground in Syria and Iraq and threatens next to attack Israel's neighbor Jordan. The Houthis today control three major cities in Yemen, and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is making gains in other parts of the country. The greatest threat, however, comes from Iran, which through its terrorist proxies now exerts effective control over four Arab capitals: Baghdad, Iraq; Damascus, Syria; Beirut, Lebanon; and Sana'a, Yemen.

This leaves Israel, the Middle East's only democracy and bastion of Western freedoms, almost encircled by forces of radical Islam—Hizbollah and Iran on its doorstep to the north in Lebanon and Syria; the Islamic State in Syria and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula; and Hamas to the south in Gaza. Iran, of course, threatens weekly to annihilate the Jewish state—and it is steadily, secretly building the nuclear capability to back its bluster.

Adding to this regional volatility, the Palestinians' two main political parties, Fatah in the West Bank and the Islamic terror group Hamas in Gaza, are locked in internecine strife. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's government has no control over Gaza's 1.9 million Arabs. The internal Palestinian conflict has become so bitter that President Abbas recently called on Arab nations to launch military attacks against Hamas.

But Palestinians' problems run far deeper. Their economy is in shambles: Without nearly \$1 billion annually in

international aid, including \$400 million from the U.S., it would collapse. Palestinian civil society in the West Bank is notoriously rife with corruption. Political order is also crumbling: No Palestinian elections have been held since 2006. The 80-year-old Abbas is serving his tenth year of a five-year term, and his Fatah party has no provisions for a successor. What's more, security in the West Bank is critically dependent on support from Israeli Defense Forces. Without it, experts predict a takeover by Hamas, which did the same in Gaza in 2006. A Hamas coup would leave Israel a tiny island engulfed in a sea of Islamist terror.

A Palestinian state forced upon the world today
would most certainly turn into a nightmare.

Why don't the Palestinians already have a state? The Arabs were offered a state next to Israel by the United Nations in 1948, but

turned it down. After Israel's defeat of three invading Arab armies in 1967, the Jewish state offered to negotiate land for peace, but again the Arabs refused. As recently as 2001 and 2008, under the auspices of the United States, Israel offered the Palestinians up to 95 percent of the West Bank and Gaza, plus a capital in East Jerusalem, but again the Arabs walked away from statehood and have for more than 60 years stubbornly refused to recognize the Jewish state.

Today the situation in the Middle East has changed dramatically in two ways. First, Israel and moderate Arab nations are threatened as never before by radical Islamists obsessed with conquest. Second, Palestinian institutions have reached new lows of dependence and disorganization, nearing total collapse. Iran-supported Hamas is well armed and could seize control of the West Bank at any time.

While some world leaders have proposed a deadline for completion of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, leading to a Palestinian state within a few years, this idea does not account for today's horrific new reality in the Middle East. Indeed, a Palestinian state that is forced upon Israel and the rest of the world would most certainly turn into a nightmare.

While Israel, the United States and other nations have worked in good faith to create a Palestinian state, the Palestinians themselves have consistently rejected requirements that would ensure Israel's security and survival. Today, explosive threats from radical Islamist terror groups in the Middle East, especially Iran, as well as the disintegration of social, economic and political order among the Palestinians, make a Palestinian state unrealistic. Rather, world leaders need to focus on stabilizing the region—especially Palestinian society—and put Palestinian statehood temporarily on hold.

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Bayonets, rifle butts, and even stones were used to beat the French back. When the attack finally dwindled away around an hour later, the remaining riflemen were down to at most three to four rounds apiece. Desperate messages were sent requesting more ammunition, but none came; the wagons carrying it had been lost before the battle.

Another French attack quickly came. This time the French were emboldened by the slackening German fire and began swarming onto the walls and roofs of the farm. It was obvious now La Haye Sainte would be lost. The German commander, Major George Baring, sadly gave the order to retreat. A desperate rearguard action covered the retreat, but at a heavy cost. The unit had paid a heavy price for their stubborn defense. Their efforts had not been in vain, though.

Although the farmhouse was lost, the delay caused by the courageous defense upset the chances of French victory, allowing the Prussians to arrive and deal a decisive blow alongside the Allied army. *The Longest Afternoon: The 400 Men Who Decided the Battle of Waterloo* (Brendan Simms, Basic Books, New York, 2015, 208pp, maps, notes, bibliography, index, \$25.99, hardcover) relays these events as the critical turning point at Waterloo. Had these men given way earlier, Waterloo may very well have ended as a French victory. The entire day's events, both before and after the French capture, are covered in thorough detail.

Using new archival research including previously unknown first-person accounts, the author takes this one part of a large battle and breaks it down to the personal level. Most accounts of war from this period focus on the officers with only infrequent mention of the soldiers they commanded. This book tells the enlisted men's stories. It does this not through the usual sketchy anecdotal tales, but by identifying them by their names and specific actions. There is an extensive amount of detail about what was only one battalion in a very large army.

This year marks the 200th anniversary of this famous battle. Waterloo was a battle so large and important that thousands of books have been written about it. Despite this wealth of coverage, the actions of these 400 Hanoverians have never received such in-depth attention in an English-language text. The reader is given a vivid impression of what it was like to be at the focal point of La Haye Sainte, where a small number of stout men surrounded by death, smoke, heat, and flame did all that could be asked of them and more.

Continental Versus Redcoat: American Revolutionary War (David Bonk, Osprey Publishing,



Oxford, UK, 2014, 80 pp., maps, illustrations, bibliography, index, \$18.95, soft-cover)

Osprey's Combat Series compares famous soldiers from two armies that fought each other. This new title pits the American Continental Army, the fledgling professional force of the rebellion, with the well-trained, highly disciplined British soldier known colloquially as the Redcoat. Each force had its strengths and weaknesses, some of them not well known today.

The author describes the recruitment and organization processes for each type of soldier, along with their respective uniforms, weapons, and equipment. The author also covers how each force was trained and drilled. To show how these opponents conducted themselves in battle, chapters are devoted to three engagements—Brandywine, Monmouth Courthouse and Cowpens—that occurred over a four-year period to show how the combatants performed under different circumstances. Numerous first-hand accounts by participants are used along with contemporary artwork. As usual with Osprey books, there are a number of high-quality original illustrations.



The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East (Eugene Rogan, Basic Books, New York, 2015, 448 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, \$29.99, hard-cover)

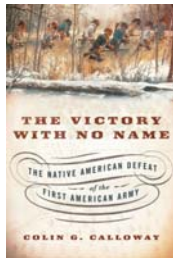
The Ottoman Empire was considered a weak and crumbling nation in the early 20th century. Despite this perception, the Ottomans controlled considerable territory in the Middle East during this time. Although they had little ability to project power beyond their borders, they were a force to be reckoned with when on the defensive. Their situation was improved by the considerable aid they received from their German allies. If called upon to defend themselves, they could do so with innovation and courage.

For these reasons, the initial British and French attacks against the Turks ended in stalemate or outright defeat. In Lower Mesopotamia and on the Gallipoli Peninsula, the Ottoman forces were able to cause untold hardships and loss to their foes. They essentially routed the British at Gallipoli, forcing their withdrawal and causing much consternation throughout the British government.

The persistent efforts of the British eventu-

ally turned the tide of war against Turkey. Using a combination of regular Commonwealth forces and irregular Arab forces raised against their Ottoman masters, the British eventually brought defeat to Turkey's doorstep. The armistice brought the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire as England and France redrew the Middle East's borders into a map of their liking.

The Middle Eastern Theater in World War I is getting more attention now, and this book is an excellent primer on the subject. The military details of this wide-ranging topic are covered in detail along with the related political actions. The conclusion includes the effects of the armistice on Turkey and its subsequent history, providing a complete look at the end of an empire that had endured for centuries.

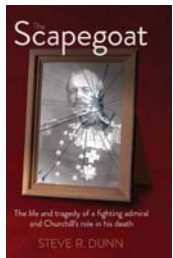


The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army (Colin G. Calloway, Oxford University Press, 2014, 224 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index,

\$24.95, hardcover)

A young United States in 1791 sent an army to defeat opposing Native Americans along the Miami River in northwest Ohio. That army was badly beaten, suffering almost 1,000 casualties from a force of 1,400 compared to only a few dozen lost to their opponents. It was the nation's worst defeat of the period, and also the largest victory Native Americans ever won.

The battle is obscure today, for in the long narrative of American expansion at the expense of the indigenous peoples, it was a small affair. The outcome was reversed with the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. This book places the event within the context of its time. Spain and England occupied North America, as well, and they watched to see how the American experiment would turn out. It also changed the way the young nation organized its military forces and launched the first congressional investigation. It is a detailed look at a major yet unknown event in U.S. history.

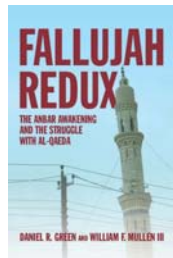


The Scapegoat: The Life and Tragedy of a Fighting Admiral and Churchill's Role in His Death (Steve R. Dunn, Book Guild Publishing, Hove UK, 2014, 252 pp., photographs, appendices, notes, index, \$28.95,

hardcover)

World War I was just a few months old when Rear Admiral Christopher Craddock led a squadron of the British Royal Navy into the Battle of Coronel. This engagement took place not far from the Falkland Islands and resulted in the worst defeat of British sea forces in a century. Two cruisers and more than 1,500 sailors were lost in return for only three Germans wounded in a very lopsided defeat. Craddock died during the battle and was subsequently blamed for the loss.

This biography of Craddock seeks to reveal the reasons for the defeat and the unfair treatment he posthumously received in the aftermath. Rather than demonize the involved parties, the author seeks to explain the complexities of dealing with a naval defeat during a difficult period in British history. The author places the various circumstances surrounding Craddock and the battle into context.

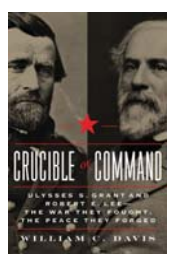


Fallujah Redux: The Anbar Awakening and the Struggle with Al-Qaeda (Daniel R. Green and William F. Mullen III, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2014, 192 pp., maps, photographs, index, \$37.95,

hardcover)

Fallujah is one of the most memorable names of the Iraq War. The city was the scene of hard fighting, atrocities, and a protracted struggle to restore a semblance of peace. Initially occupied by the Americans in 2003, it soon became a hot bed of insurgency. This led to a difficult battle for the city, one the Americans won in 2004. The victory was short lived, however, as the insurgency continued for four more years. The situation began to change with the Anbar Awakening when U.S. forces began working closely with the local tribes in the province. Together, Americans and Iraqis drove out the insurgency in a cooperative campaign.

The book is written from the perspective of the veterans who fought there. It is a comprehensive look at the events that transformed Fallujah from just another Iraqi city to a name catapulted to the world stage.



Crucible of Command: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee—The War They Fought and the Peace They Forged (William C. Davis, Da Capo Press, Boston, MA, 2015, 629 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, \$32.50, hardcover)

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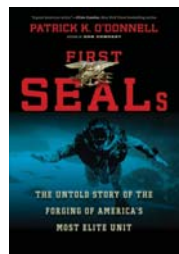
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Grant and Lee are two of the most famous opponents in military history. Their epic struggle during the American Civil War has filled countless pages, turning much of their story into near clichés. Grant is frequently portrayed as the hard-drinking, hard-minded general who failed at everything else he tried. In contrast, Lee is seen as a brilliant tactician and gentleman soldier tragically fated to serve a losing cause.

Both have rightfully earned their place in the pantheon of great American soldiers, but there is more to them than these stereotypes. In this volume, the well-known author approaches Grant and Lee in a new way. He holds that they were very much alike. Through reinterpretation of their personalities, experiences, and characters, both generals became very similar in their attitudes, talents, and abilities. Even if the reader disagrees with some of the premises, it is still worth reading and can serve as a touchstone for future studies on the two heroic generals.



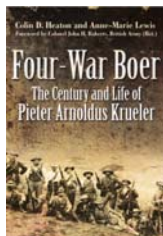
First Seals: The Untold Story of the Forging of America's Most Elite Unit (Patrick K. O'Donnell, Da Capo Press, Boston, MA, 2014, 290 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, \$25.99, hardcover)

The U.S. Navy Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) Teams are legendary today, almost to the point

of mythology. These elite warriors have their own mythos, and it is found in their predecessors of the Maritime Unit, a group of commando-swimmers who pioneered the techniques today's SEALs use to design their own practices.

In 1942 a disparate group of men, including a movie star, a dentist, and several surfers, set about forming the Maritime Unit. They developed new ways to infiltrate enemy territory, conduct reconnaissance, and perform numerous types of missions in enemy-held territory. Throughout the rest of the war, they transformed their theories into reality. In the Mediterranean region, mainland Europe, and the Pacific, the commando-swimmers went behind the lines. Some were captured, even winding up in the Mauthausen concentration camp.

Much of this story was lost in obscurity after the war. Extensive research and interviews have now brought this story back to light. The author is an established authority on special operations forces and his new book sheds light on the origin of the SEALs.



Four War Boer: The Century and Life of Pieter Arnoldus Krueler (Colin D. Heaton and Anne-Marie Lewis, Casemate Publishers, Havertown, PA, 2014, 274 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, \$32.95, hardcover)

Africa has seen its share of bloodshed over the last 120 years. Soldier Pieter Krueker witnessed much of it. Born in 1885, he served as a scout during the Second Boer War while only 14 years old. At the outset of World War I, he served the Germans in East Africa under the command of the famous Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, the officer who conducted a long campaign of resistance to British forces in the region. After the Great War, he was able to continue his life despite serving on the opposite side of many of his countrymen.

During the 1930s Pieter left Africa for Spain, becoming a mercenary in the civil war there on behalf of a Basque movement. When World War II began, he took a role training officers and acting as a coastwatcher, this time for the British Dominion and Commonwealth forces. Though aging, he was energetic enough to again become a mercenary in the Congo during the 1960s. Afterward, he trained South African Selous Scouts and Army commandos.

Pieter was a Special Forces soldier before the concept was invented. The author includes a chapter on the elite Selous Scouts, a force the Boers helped create.

The River Was Dyed with Blood: Nathan Bedford Forrest and Fort Pillow (Brian Steel Wills, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2014, 274 pp., maps, illustrations, appendices, notes,

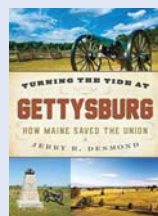
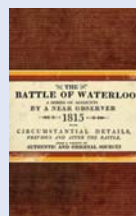
SHORT BURSTS

With the 200th anniversary of Waterloo in June there are many new books on the subject. This issue's Short Bursts includes many of these new titles.

The Battle of Waterloo: A Series of Accounts by a Near Observer 1815 (various authors, Osprey Publishing, 2015, \$14.95, hardcover) A reprint of a book compiling numerous articles written soon after the battle. Includes maps and period drawings by first-hand observers.

Waterloo: The Great Battles Series Book One (Alan Forrest, Oxford University Press, 2015, \$29.95, hardcover) This book focuses less on the battle and more on the cultural and legacy of Waterloo. Different nations took diverse views of its meaning and significance.

Waterloo 1815 (1): Quatre Bras (John Franklin, Osprey Publishing, 2015, \$21.95, softcover) This is the first in a trilogy of books on the campaign that led to the decisive battle. It focuses on the Bat-



tle of Quatre Bras, an engagement on the road to Waterloo.

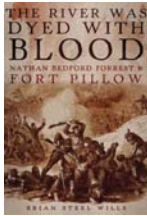
Waterloo 1815 (2): Ligny (John Franklin, Osprey Publishing, 2015, \$21.95, softcover) The second book looks at the Battle of Ligny. The action occurred the same day as Quatre Bras, also paving the way for the decisive encounter at Waterloo two days later.

Inside the President's Helicopter: Reflections of a White House Senior Pilot (Lt. Col. Gene T. Boyer with Jackie Boor, Cable Publishing, 2014, \$24.95, hardcover) The author saw combat in Vietnam and later flew presidential helicopters. This memoir recounts his experiences through war and peace.

Turning the Tide at Gettysburg: How Maine Saved the Union (Jerry Desmond, Down East Books, 2014, \$16.95 softcover, \$9.99 e-book) A specific look at the Maine regiments that served at Gettysburg. The author reveals how each played its part in the victory.

A Sniper's Conflict (Monty B, Skyhorse Publishing, 2014, \$24.95, hardcover) A British Army Sniper's memoir of his time in Iraq and Afghanistan. Full of detailed descriptions of daily operations.

The Hidden History of America at War: Untold Tales from Yorktown to Fallujah (Kenneth C. Davis, Hachette Books, 2015, \$30.00, hardcover) The author has chosen six battles from American history and used them to demonstrate important milestones in the nation's development.



bibliography, index, \$29.95, hardcover)

Nathan Bedford Forrest is a controversial figure in American military history. His skill as a cavalry commander is widely acknowledged, but many people question his moral standing.

Most of the criticism of Forrest is attributed to the fighting at Fort Pillow on the Mississippi River in Tennessee. During this battle, many Union soldiers, including African American troops, were slain by the victorious Confederates. Forrest himself wrote of the river being “dyed” with the blood of the slain Union defenders.

The dispute at Fort Pillow centers on whether Forrest’s cavalry massacred surrendering soldiers or whether the killings were justified because the battle was still in progress and those slain were combatants. Nevertheless, the Northern press accused Forrest of resorting to butchery. The accusation would follow him for the rest of his life and beyond.

This work makes a case for Forrest as neither a barbarian nor innocent, stating that while he did not specifically order the massacre of the garrison, he did lose control of his troops. Those troops saw African Americans in uniform as an anathema and acted savagely, making Forrest responsible for their conduct but not the instigator of it. □

Ortona

Continued from page 39

way and instead establish a corridor to the 48th Highlanders. Sixty men of the Saskatoon Light Infantry started out at dusk. They made contact with the beleaguered Highlanders, giving them much needed supplies and extracting their wounded.

It was none too soon as at 10 AM on December 26, the German paratroopers launched a major counterattack. The surrounded Canadians fought desperately, throwing back a total of three German assaults. Three Sherman tanks eventually broke through and came to their aid. The 48th Highlanders were not long in striking back at the paratroopers. Their attack forced the Germans to withdraw to San Nicola and San Tommaso.

Fighting continued in Ortona with the paratroopers’ control of the town dwindling to a small section of the old quarter in front of the castle. The elite paratroopers fought fiercely using flamethrowers, machine guns, mortars, and antitank guns. On December 27, an officer in the Loyal Edmontons and 23 men were in a two-story building distributing ammo when preset explosives left behind by the Germans blew it up. Only three men survived. The Canadians quickly retaliated when their engineers set explosives under a building held by the Germans and detonated the charges, killing about 50 Germans in the blast.

Believing that one more hard push would clear the town, Hoffmeister ordered the PPCLI into the fight. Patrols sent out the morning of December 28 found that the German paratroopers were gone. They had been ordered to withdraw the night before. Ortona was in Canadian hands.

Fighting still raged northwest of Ortona where the 48th Highlanders captured San Nicola and San Tommaso on December 29. Two battalions of the 3rd Infantry Brigade were then inserted back into the fight with orders to push the paratroopers across the Riccio by early January.

December had been a bloody month for the 1st Canadian Division, costing it 2,339 casualties, of which 502 were killed. German losses are harder to determine, although they were likely heavy, particularly for the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division.

The Allies would not capture Rome for another six months. But the 1st Canadian Division owned Ortona. This was reflected by a hand-painted sign that the Edmontons and Seaforths placed in front of the battered town that read, “This is Ortona, a West Canadian Town.” □

Queen City

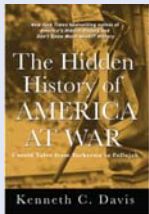
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but I am getting over it.”

But he never did, and the lamentations grew to revolve around an even more freighted proposition: If during the spring of 1862 any battle kept Europe neutral, it was Farragut’s victory. If Farragut had failed, followed a month later by Maj. Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s devastating Shenandoah Valley campaign, combined a month later with George McClellan’s embarrassing defeat on the Virginia Peninsula, European intervention looked a good deal more attractive, especially with a good portion of the Union Navy lying at the bottom of the Mississippi River.

The politics of local defense continued to hamstring strategy in the Confederacy. Louisianans, as had the states on the Eastern Seaboard before them, felt Richmond had betrayed them. Moore, joining the cacophony, decried the myopia of the Confederate government and pointedly asked, “How much longer is Louisiana to be considered beneath the considerations of the Government?” Frequently during the crisis, Moore sent requests to Davis for all manner of aid for the defense of the Crescent City. He was looked upon as an alarmist and given half-hearted cooperation. At one time, Davis replied, “Should your worst apprehensions be realized, which I cannot bring myself to believe, when I remember how much has been done for the defense of New Orleans since 1815, both in the construction of works and facilities for transportation, I hope a discriminating public will acquit the Government of having neglected the defenses of your coast and approaches to New Orleans.”

A Virginia newspaper called it “the most deplorable tale ever told.” Although vindicated in a court of inquiry, Davis blamed Lovell for the loss and crucified him ever after. In his memoirs, Davis missed a great opportunity to offer a well-deserved apology. He could have looked back on a country that had elected him to a position of power nearly equal to that of a dictator, where so many cities now lay in rubble, rich farmland and wealthy agrarian economy had been laid to waste, and the infrastructure was destroyed. All was gone. All but New Orleans. Lovell could not have fought for New Orleans without destroying it, and he knew it. New Orleans and the surrounding towns were spared, along with countless lives and millions of dollars in property, thanks to Lovell, a Northerner who fought for the South, and Farragut, a Southerner who fought for the North. □



Whitey: The Story of Rear Admiral E.L. Feightner, A Navy Fighter Ace (Peter B. Mersky, Naval Institute Press, 2014, \$39.95, hardcover) A biography of a pilot who went from the deck of a WWII carrier to the halls of the Pentagon. Along the way he helped develop a new generation of Cold War aircraft.

Hurricane from the Heavens: The Battle of Cold Harbor, May 26-June 5, 1864 (Daniel T. Davis and Phillip S. Greenwalt, Savas Beatie Publishing, 2014, \$12.95, softcover) A guidebook for those who want to tour the Cold Harbor battlefield. It also serves as a solid work on the battle for those who want to learn more about how it unfolded and what was at stake.

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H-Hour: World's Elite

Keeping with the theme of team-based tactical shooters is *H-Hour: World's Elite*, which is currently in the works at SOF Studios, which has former SOCOM talent—the project is spearheaded by David Sears, creative director of the original

SOCOM—among its ranks. Another similarity between this and *Squad* is Unreal Engine 4, to which *H-Hour* switched after starting development on Unreal Engine 3. At the time of this writing *H-Hour* is entering Early Access on PC, and a PlayStation 4 version is planned at some point in the future.

play. Or driving a truck through Manhattan on a rail while the city explodes due to unknown causes. They shouldn't be ranked by who has the biggest explosions and their greatest appeal shouldn't be 'everybody else is playing it.'" Shots fired!

So what should they be about? How about "connecting on a human level with other players, honoring the contributions of our military colleagues through respect for authenticity, and bringing like-minded people together online to strategize, execute, and win." Huh, no

their latest game, *Squad*.

Squad seems like the next logical step after *Project Reality*, giving the team a chance to branch out with their own stand-alone game that does more than build upon a pre-established IP. On paper *Squad* is very similar to *Battlefield*, in that it's billed as "an online, team-based military themed first-person shooter where high levels of teamwork and communication are crucial to success." *Squad* is taking this concept, applying the level of realism generated in *Project Reality*, and popping it in the solid framework of Unreal Engine 4.



H-Hour is but one sample in an increasingly large pool of games successfully crowdfunded on Kickstarter. When the dust settled in July 2013, nearly 3,000 backers managed to pledge \$252,662 to fund the development of *H-Hour*, pushing it safely beyond its initial \$200,000 goal.

Another aspect of *H-Hour* that puts it in the same wheelhouse as *Squad* is its focus on teamwork and multiplayer support, as well as its attempt at achieving a higher level of realism than some of the major releases out there. If anything sums up the studio's mind-set it's this little nugget from the original Kickstarter pitch: "Because shooters don't have to be about long cutscenes or pointless 'wow' moments. They don't need to involve sprinting around constrictive maps and magnetic bullets. They shouldn't involve overly scripted AI behaviors that are exactly the same every time you

wonder the campaign was a success. We'll definitely be keeping our eyes on *H-Hour*.

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SQUAD DEV TEAM

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AVAILABLE
2016

Squad

Many of the massive budget triple-A war games don't have the luxury of focusing too closely on realism. Would you really be able to pull in a wide enough audience for the latest *Call of Duty* or *Battlefield* game

if the spotlight were more on true-to-life ballistics and damage than pure arcade-style action? Probably not. And then there's the other end of the spectrum, occupied by straight-up military simulators like the *ARMA* series. This is the gap that the folks behind the *Project Reality: Battlefield 2* mod hope to bridge with

Players will be able to hop in squads consisting of up to nine people, with those squads then forming teams of up to 50 on 100-player servers. If the game's description didn't already tell you that *Squad* is very dependent on teamwork, that should do the trick.

Weapons

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Teams will do battle in large-scale environments—both directly based on and inspired by real world locations using Geographic Information Systems satellite data—and there will also be a base-building feature that further solidifies its focus on teamwork and leadership. This should help attract players who are less into the destructive elements of combat, as they'll be able to hang back, build fortifications and strongpoints for their team, and could end up being just as decisive a part of victory as anyone else.

It seems that level of customizability is key to the overall communal experience of *Squad*. Combined Arms Warfare means players can choose to take on different tasks, like joining a tank crew, or co-piloting a CAS helicopter, or hitting the ground screeching and kicking up dirt on a motorcycle. While the servers, max team size, and environments are indeed massive, *Squad* promises scalability that can also accommodate enjoyment on a smaller scale with more concentrated fighting areas. Positional voice communication allows for strategizing on the go with fellow squad leaders, or those right next to you, with no need for third-party programs.

Of course, the whole reason we're even talking about the *Project Reality* devs and *Squad* comes right back to realism, which is at the forefront here and a big part of the nuts and bolts that make the game. *Squad's* custom physics engine code produces simulated Newtonian physics that enhance the experience of firing everything from small arms to mounted machine guns, grenade launchers, and rockets. The receiving end is getting equally special attention, with simulated damage models greatly affecting movement and the ability to recover from fire. Needless to say, this is one of the reasons Medics will be playing an especially crucial role in *Squad*.

At this point we're not too far out from *Squad's* successful turn at Steam Greenlight, a community-bolstered process it went through with flying colors. It's currently expected to be released in 2016, so we all have time to prep ourselves for its more realistic take on war gaming. □



to just past the gas system, providing a short weapon easy to wield in jungle terrain. SAS contact drills included immediate bursts of suppressive fire to gain the initiative in close combat, so these weapons often had 30-round magazines. Nicknamed “The Beast,” some soldiers reported the muzzle blast and noise to be equivalent to a .50-caliber machine gun.

Elsewhere the FAL continued its spread throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Israeli soldiers carried them through several wars and kept some in second-line use well after newer weapons became available. They particularly liked to use rifle grenades, which the FAL is easily capable of using. Shortly after Fidel Castro's forces seized control of Cuba, thousands of FALs were purchased. Unfortunately for Castro, many were delivered with the coat of arms of the old regime stamped into the magazine well. These rifles were quickly replaced by Soviet-made weapons, but soon FALs started appearing around Central and South America. Some appeared in the hands of local governments, and others were used by various rebel and guerrilla groups. Either way, many of them had a hole in the side where the old Cuban coat of arms symbol had been removed. The rifles and other FALs from abroad can still be found throughout Central and South America to this day.

Because arms flow both legally and illicitly in Africa, it is not surprising that FALs turned up there shortly after they were introduced. Belgian paratroopers carried them in the Republic of the Congo, and soldiers in the former British territories in South Africa and Rhodesia quickly adopted the weapon. Most of these FALs were British L1s, but after the arms embargos began affecting the minority regime in Rhodesia, FALs made in South Africa and Germany were acquired.

Over time FALs appeared in the hands of rebels and antigovernment forces as well. The FALs gradually appeared on the surplus market. What is more, many FALs were either looted or liberated from government armories, depending on one's point of view. While the AK-47 series is by far the most common infantry rifle used in Africa today, FALs are still found. The African nations using the FAL appreciate it for its hitting power and reliability.

One of the last major conflicts for the FAL in the West was the Falklands War. Both sides used the weapon as their standard infantry arm, with the Argentines also using the heavy-barreled light machine gun version as a squad automatic weapon. Some Argentine troops also

had scopes mounted for sniping; a few were very effective in this role. Both sides used night-vision devices, but the British model had a shorter effective range, something their enemy exploited by giving the night-vision devices to their better marksmen. One British sniper had so much trouble with his antiquated Enfield sniper rifle he got rid of it and used a captured FAL with open sights.

The Argentine FALs retained their full automatic capability. In normal infantry fighting this proved no real advantage, but when engaging low-flying aircraft, such as helicopters, it proved its worth on at least one occasion. Argentine Lieutenant Carlos Esteban led his platoon away from the British landing site at San Carlos when it was clear he was outmatched by the large enemy force. Taking flight into the nearby hill country, they were surprised to see a British helicopter fly overhead. Moments later another helicopter, a Gazelle, appeared and now the Argentines were ready. All of them fired their FALs on full automatic, creating a storm of fire around the aircraft. Suffering numerous hits, the Gazelle made a forced landing in the waters of a nearby bay. As the aircrew swam to shore, a few of the Argentine soldiers began to fire at them until Esteban stopped them.

The officer then led his platoon farther into the hills away from the British. Suddenly, two more Gazelles flew overhead, one after the other. The Argentines again unleashed their torrent of rifle fire. One Gazelle crashed, killing both crewmen and landing only 10 meters from Esteban. The second was hit at least 14 times but the pilot managed to get away and make an emergency landing on a nearby ship. It was a sobering lesson for the British in what concentrated rifle fire could do to a low-flying helicopter.

In the 21st century, the FAL has remained in use despite its replacement as a first-line rifle in many militaries. They are occasionally still seen in use by British and Australian SAS units in Afghanistan, where many battles are fought at longer ranges due to the mountainous terrain. Often troops on the side of one mountain are fighting with insurgents on the side of another mountain. In such conditions, the long range of the 7.62mm cartridge is appreciated.

The FAL rifle is not a perfect infantry weapon, but it is by far the most successful of the Cold War-era 7.62mm NATO military rifles. Admittedly, it is heavy and long, making it cumbersome in close quarters. But it is a reliable rifle, and its powerful cartridge can penetrate tree trunks, brick walls, and most modern body armor at close ranges. Given its widespread use on every continent, the FAL will undoubtedly be seen in action for decades to come. □

On a visit to Germany in 1950, Rudel divorced his wife, who had refused to follow him to Argentina with their two children. She had sold Rudel's medals, including his Knight's Cross with Diamonds, to an American collector. Rudel continued to do well in his professional life as a representative for Siemens and other manufactures.

But controversy continued to follow him. With the help of Paraguayan President Alfredo Stroessner, Rudel protected notorious war criminal Josef Mengele for three decades. But Mengele was not fond of Rudel, comparing Rudel's opinions to the "stupid [anti-Nazi] material pouring down on young Germans since 1945." Rudel nevertheless advocated renewed aggression against the Soviet Union and derided members of the German Army who failed to fully support Hitler. Returning to live in West Germany, Rudel joined the right wing German Reich party. In 1976 Rudel's acceptance to an officer's evening of the Immelmann Wing caused a stir in the Bundeswehr because of Rudel's "activity in a neo-Nazi party."

Rudel was not destined to have a long life, succumbing at the age of 66 to a brain hemorrhage on December 21, 1982. Buried in Dornhausen, Rudel's funeral was attended by old comrades, some wearing the Knight's Cross, some giving a last Hitler salute.

Rudel's bravery, skill, self-sacrifice, and nearly boundless endurance cannot be denied. Rudel risked his own life six times to rescue downed comrades. He himself was shot down 30 times by flak, never by an enemy plane. During his 2,530 combat missions, unmatched by any pilot, Rudel single-handedly destroyed 547 tanks, 2,000 ground targets, the Soviet battleship *Marat*, two cruisers, and a destroyer. Stalin put a ransom of 100,000 rubles on Rudel's head. Schoerner did not exaggerate much when he praised Rudel as being "worth an entire division."

In his riveting war memoir, *Stuka Pilot*, Rudel comes across as a likable, heroic, and inspiring figure. Rudel's noble characteristics are difficult to reconcile with his close association to Hitler's clique and to far-right causes after the war, but Rudel was never accused of any war crime. Indoctrinated in Nazi ideology at an early age, he clung faithfully to what he deemed righteous and either disbelieved or ignored its horrific consequences. Perhaps British fighter ace Douglas Bader, who did not agree with a number of Rudel's beliefs, best summed up Rudel, concluding that he was "by any standard, a gallant chap." □

Steuben's primary concern was training, and he gave the matter his undivided attention. It was already March 1778, and in a few weeks the spring campaign season would open. Could he train an entire army in time? Steuben solved the problem by forming a model company. There were about 150 men in this company, too unwieldy for effective instruction, so the baron selected a 20-man squad to work with first. They serve as the template that the rest of the company, and eventually the whole army, would follow.

The squad was put through their paces while the rest of the company looked on. They were taught how to dress ranks, stand at attention, march at a rapid pace, and change direction suddenly without breaking formation. The baron was gruff, but humor always managed to seep through the stern façade. If a line was not arrow straight, Steuben would good naturedly lay hands on the offending soldiers and push them into proper position.

Soon the other members of the company would be put through their paces, broken up again into squads for easier handling. The baron's entourage, well versed in his methods, would each take a squad and drill it until the maneuvers were second nature. As the days passed the model company began to attract attention. Its intricate drills—and above all, the baron himself—became a source of entertainment in an otherwise bleak, cold, and hungry camp.

The baron often flew into a rage when mistakes were made, his face turning an apoplectic red as he peppered the air with a stream of obscenities in French and German. *Teufel*—devil—was one of the milder oaths. Sometimes the anger was real, but often it was done for effect and to entertain the watching crowds of soldiers. Steuben would also stomp the snowy ground in rage, waving his silver-headed swagger stick.

His audience on the sidelines thought this was hilarious, as when he asked a translator, probably in French, to "come and swear for me in English; these fellows won't do what I bid them." But while they were being entertained they were also getting a foretaste of what they too would soon have to master.

Steuben was a success because he grasped the fundamental differences between Americans and Europeans. Americans were much more individualistic. "The genius of the nation," he once wrote, "is not to be compared with the Prussians, Austrians, or French. You say to a soldier 'Do this,' and he does it; but [here] I am

obliged to say 'This is the reason why you ought to do it,' and then he does it."

Steuben took his job very seriously, and if he drove the men hard he drove himself harder. After sunset he would work feverishly by candlelight then snatch a few hours sleep before rising again at 3 AM. He reviewed the notes he had scribbled out the day before while his manservant Vogel powdered his hair and braided it into a long cue. The extra long queue was a distinctive emblem of the Prussian Army.

As time went on Steuben improved the sanitation of the army camps. Latrines and kitchens were placed on opposite sides of the camp, and the tents or huts were in orderly rows lining company and regimental streets. But Steuben's longest lasting achievement was his drill book, a work based on his Valley Forge experiences. It was formally entitled *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, but most people simply called it the *Blue Book*.

Steuben's training methods were vindicated on several occasions, but most especially at the Battle of Monmouth in June 1778. Though tactically a draw, the Continentals traded volleys with British redcoats toe to toe without flinching. Even in the earlier stages of the battle they showed their mettle. Earlier in the day, when some confusion reigned and they were told to withdraw, they did so without panic and in good order.

The rest of Steuben's Revolutionary War career had its share of ups and downs. When he was sent south to help in the defense of Virginia, he had serious differences with the state's governor, Thomas Jefferson. He also fell ill but recovered to participate in the Yorktown campaign that to all intents and purposes ended the war.

Washington wanted to reward Steuben, so he was given command of one of the American divisions during the siege of Yorktown. It was one of the proudest moments of his life. After the war he became an American citizen and settled on a property near Rome, New York. He was cash poor but did own land in various places. Congress, usually stingy, did finally give him a \$2,500 pension that eased some of his money woes.

Though Steuben's health was failing, his mind was active and he was still interested in military affairs. He urged that the United States create a national military academy, but the fear of military dictatorship was so strong West Point was not established until 1802. Steuben died on Friday, November 28, 1794. His *Blue Book* would remain the chief training manual for the U.S. Army until the War of 1812. □

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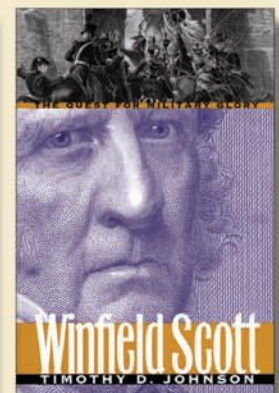
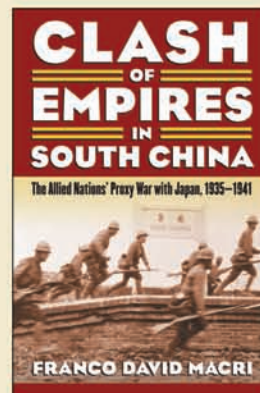
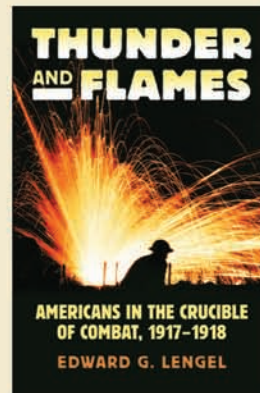
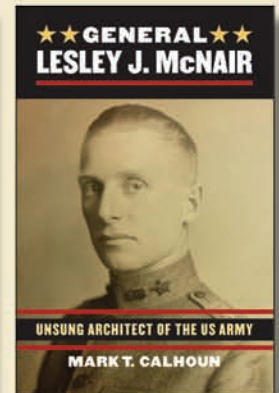
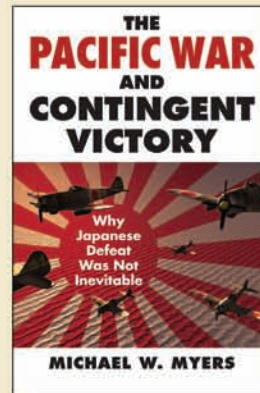
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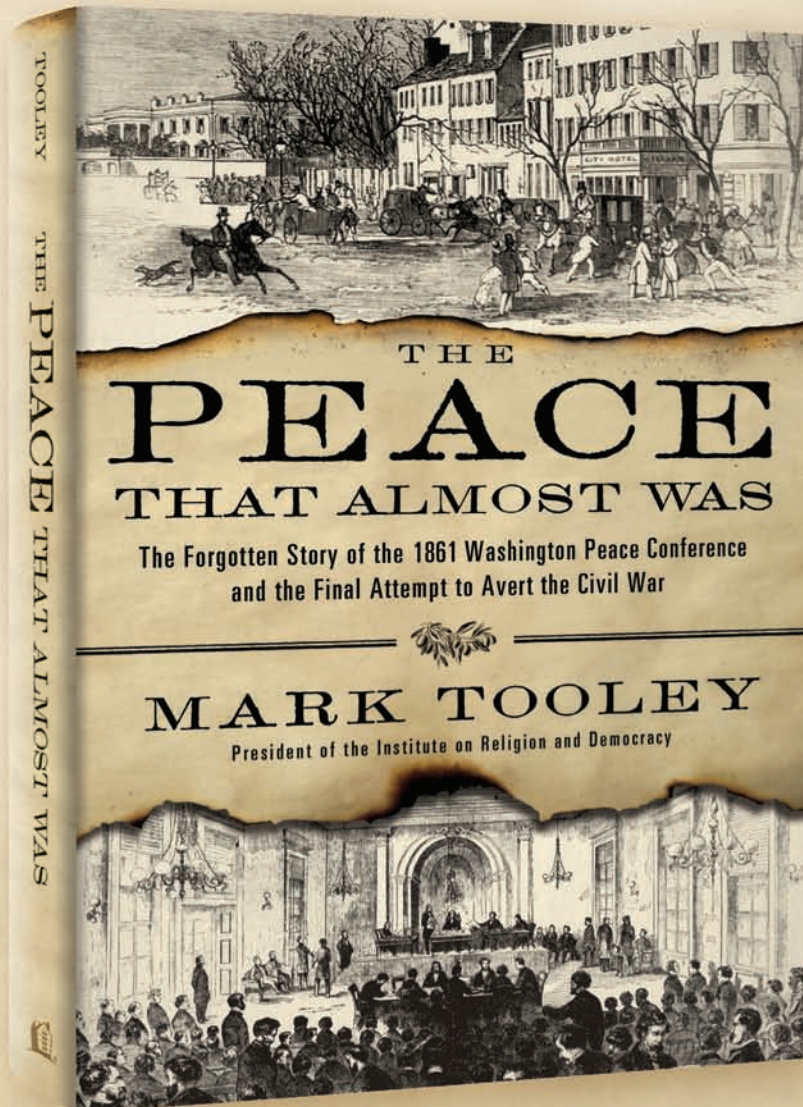
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