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COVER: Napoleon portrait, titled "1814," by Jean-Louis Ernest Meissonier. See story page 44. © Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD / The Bridgeman Art Library

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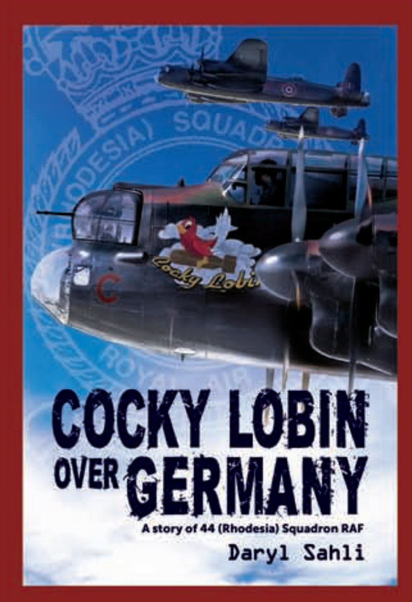

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Going Up Against J.E.B. Stuart

BRIGADIER GENERAL ALFRED PLEASONTON'S OUTWARD appearance was that of a well-groomed man. He kept his beard and moustache neatly trimmed, parted his wavy hair on the side, and wore a wide-brimmed hat like a dandy. Unlike many American Civil War generals whose fiery gaze in period portraits makes it seem that whatever object they looked at might suddenly burst into flames, the native Washingtonian has a look of contentment, as if he had just finished a good repast.

Major General Joe Hooker, commander of the Army of Potomac, selected Pleasonton on June 7, 1863, to succeed Brig. Gen. George Stoneman as commander of the three-division corps, which "Fighting Joe" had created. Hooker had sacked Stoneman in the wake of the Chancellorsville campaign the previous month for the poor results he had produced leading the newly established corps on a raid behind Confederate lines.

Alfred Pleasonton

George Stoneman

Stoneman's raid on Lee's communications network and supply lines had failed from several standpoints. First, Stoneman had allowed heavy rains to delay his start. Second, he failed to push the units under him to reach key targets, such as spans on the Virginia Central Railroad, or destroy the primary supply hub of the Army of Northern Virginia at Guiney's Station on the Richmond, Fredricksburg, and Potomac Railroad. Third, the damage the raiders did manage to inflict was so slight that Confederate engineers were able to repair it in just a few days.

Pleasonton's seniority and experience were the likely reasons Hooker picked him to succeed Stoneman. A graduate of West Point's Class of 1844—a group that included Generals Winfield Hancock, Simon Buckner, and Alexander Hays—Pleasonton had a good military pedigree. Pleasonton graduated higher than all three of those classmates; he ranked seventh in a class of 25. He served with distinction in the Mexican War and afterward in various posts on the frontier. By June 1863, he had commanded a cavalry division through three campaigns: Maryland, Fredricksburg, and Chancellorsville.

Unfortunately, the Chancellorsville campaign brought out his talent for self-aggrandizement. Like many other self-promoting generals in that war, including his predecessor, Pleasonton liked to inflate his performance on the battlefield. At Chancellorsville, Pleasonton had remained with the main body of Hooker's army to coordinate the use of the second brigade of his division. When Jackson's corps swept over the Union XI corps like a wall of flood water, Pleasonton was at Hazel Grove with Lieutenant Joseph Martin's horse artillery and several batteries belonging to Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles's III Corps. In his after-action report, Pleasonton took credit for commanding all of the artillery—about two dozen guns—at the clearing and in repulsing Jackson's entire corps. In reality, the Confederate numbers were dramatically smaller and Pleasonton only directed Martin's battery.

Nonetheless, Pleasonton showed at Hazel Grove that he had the stomach to fight—even if his reports were highly suspect. Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry had declined to engage Stoneman during his raid. But when Pleasonton launched what amounted to a frontal attack on the rebel cavalry at Brandy Station, Stuart had no choice but to give battle. That encounter, not Stoneman's uncontested raid, was the true test of Hooker's shiny new cavalry corps.

—William E. Welsh

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CARL A. GNAM, JR.
Editorial Director, Founder

WILLIAM E. WELSH
Editor
editor@militaryheritagemagazine.com

LAURA CLEVELAND
Managing Editor

SAMANTHA DeTULLEO
Art Director

Contributors:
William B. Allmon, Arnold Blumberg, Robert F. Dorr, Peter Kross, Joseph Luster, Christopher Miskimon, Eric Niderost, Mike Phifer, Steve Sommers, Alexander Zakrzewski

ADVERTISING OFFICE:

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

MARK HINTZ
Chief Executive Officer

JANINE MILLER
Subscription Customer Services
sovereign@publishersserviceassociates.com

KEN FORNWALT
Data Processing Director

CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY
Worldwide Distribution

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

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By William B. Allmon

The frigate USS *Confederacy* defied the odds for nearly two years of service in the Continental Navy before falling prey to the British.

THE BRITISH FRIGATES HMS *ORPHEUS* AND *ROEBUCK,* ON APRIL 20, 1781, escorted their prize—the Continental Navy frigate USS *Confederacy*—with the Union Jack flying above the Stars and Stripes, to New York harbor, thus ending *Confederacy*'s two-year service to the American rebels. In that short time, like other Continental Navy ships, *Confederacy* experienced delays in building, fitting out, arming, recruiting sailors, shortages, and just plain bad luck.

The Continental Navy frigate USS *Confederacy* was launched in 1778 to perform missions such as scouting the high seas and escorting merchant convoys during the American Revolution.

When the American Revolution began in 1775, the Royal Navy of Great Britain, with 270 ships—131 ships of the line and 129 frigates, sloops, cutters, and brigs—dominated the world's oceans. The 13 American colonies, dispersed along the Atlantic coast, divided by navigable rivers and estuaries, were vulnerable to attack by sea. Using the Royal Navy and a few marines, the British easily should have been able to crush the American Revolution. Only distance, long supply lines, and badly neglected and manned ships kept the British from decisively exploiting their superior naval force.

The American rebels, the British were certain, would be unable to raise a navy capable of winning a maritime war. Except for a few small state navies established to protect their home waters, the American colonies had no organized navy to take on the Royal Navy. In fall 1775, the Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, began looking for means to protect their shores from attack by the British.

On October 3, 1775, Congressman Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island introduced a resolution calling for the "building of a fleet of sufficient force for the protection of these colonies," to be employed "in such a manner and places as will efficiently annoy our enemies." After two weeks of raucous debate, Congress on October 30 authorized the conversion of four merchant ships into warships, appointing John Adams, a staunch advocate of naval power, and six other Congressmen to a naval committee to draft rules to govern the American navy.

Adams presented the draft to Congress on November 23, 1775, recommending $60,000 be set aside to build frigates. Congress passed the resolution establishing the Continental Navy and appointing a 13-member Marine Committee, one member from each colony to oversee the fleet. The Continental Navy, once established, would be able to pursue and attack any enemy men-of-war and transports. But before any prizes could be captured or men-of-war sunk, the new Continental Navy needed ships. On December 13, 1775, Congress authorized the construction of 13 frigates—five with 32 guns, five with 29 guns, and three with 24 guns—to be ready for service by the end of March 1776.

U.S. Navy

Lack of funds determined that only frigates, ships with one or two decks, used mainly for scouting and escort duties, could be built. By March 1776, despite having large

tracts of land with a variety of huge trees, including white oak for building warships, due to serious shortages of naval stores and equipment and lacking experienced shipwrights, none of the original 13 frigates was ready. The first Continental frigate, *Warren,* was launched at Providence, Rhode Island, on May 15, 1776; the last frigate, *Washington,* was completed in September 1776, but with few exceptions, the Continental Navy was stuck in port waiting for provisions, ordnance, rigging, and crews.

Despite this, on November 30, 1776, Congress ordered the construction of three 74-gun ships, five 36-gun frigates, three sloops of war, and an 18-gun brig. Two of the 74-gun ships, three frigates, and the brig were never completed due to shortages of money and materials. Work proceeded slowly on the remaining ships, including the frigate *Alliance,* in Salisbury, Massachusetts, and *Trumbull* in Norwich, Connecticut.

In January 1777, Congress authorized the building of a second Continental Navy frigate in Norwich. Construction of the new frigate began in the spring. In September, Congress and the Marine Committee decided to name the new frigate *Confederacy*.

The same day she was named, Congress selected Seth Harding of Norwich as *Confederacy*'s captain. Born in Eastham, Massachusetts, on April 17, 1734, Harding went to sea early in life and prospered in the West Indies trade. When the revolution began, Harding took command of the 14-gun brig *Defence* based in New London, Connecticut, and successfully attacked British ships between Connecticut and Long Island.

In September 1776, securing the aid of Connecticut Governor Jonathan Trumbull, Harding applied for a captain's commission in the Continental Navy. After voting to name the new ship, Congress elected Harding captain of the frigate *Confederacy*.

Confederacy was finally launched on November 8, 1778, after a year's construction. At 153 feet long with a beam of 135 feet, 6 inches, and displacing 950 tons, the new frigate was designed for speed and was larger than frigates used by other navies. After launching, she was towed down the Thames River from Norwich to New London, where her three masts were set up and her guns mounted.

While *Confederacy* was made ready, Harding, along with Lieutenant Gurdon Bill, and Joseph Hardy, captain of *Confederacy*'s Continental Marine detachment, concentrated on recruiting a crew. Competing with local privateers for the available sailors, Harding found recruiting difficult. Unlike the lax discipline, high wages, and a chance for prize money offered by privateers, the Continental Navy paid low wages, had strict discipline, and prize money was divided between the government and a ship's crew.

Continental Congress member John Adams chaired a naval committee that recommended the construction of 13 frigates. The USS *Confederacy* was one of two that were built in Norwich, Connecticut.

Along with raising a crew, arming *Confederacy* was another problem. She was designed to carry 36 guns—28 12-pounders and six 6-pound guns—supplied from the foundry at Salisbury Furnace, Connecticut. However, because of technical problems, they failed to deliver the armament. The order was transferred to a Massachusetts iron works, which also could not deliver *Confederacy*'s guns to New London in time. Eventually, as they did for other ships, the Navy Board's Eastern Department in Boston was forced to scrounge for cannons. By exchanging cannons with other Continental ships, using captured British guns, and adding cannons bought in France, *Confederacy* eventually mounted 28 guns on the main deck, six on the quarter deck, and two on the forecastle.

Recruiting a crew remained Harding's biggest difficulty. A recruitment announcement in a New London newspaper failed to produce the full complement of 260 sailors needed to go to sea, so Harding sent patrols into New London to round up deserters and press sailors into service. Although not unusual, the Continental Navy resorted to impressment far less than the Royal Navy. One patrol rounded up French prisoners released by the British; another patrol brought in 50 sailors. Some of the impressed men were later released, while the rest remained on board *Confederacy.*

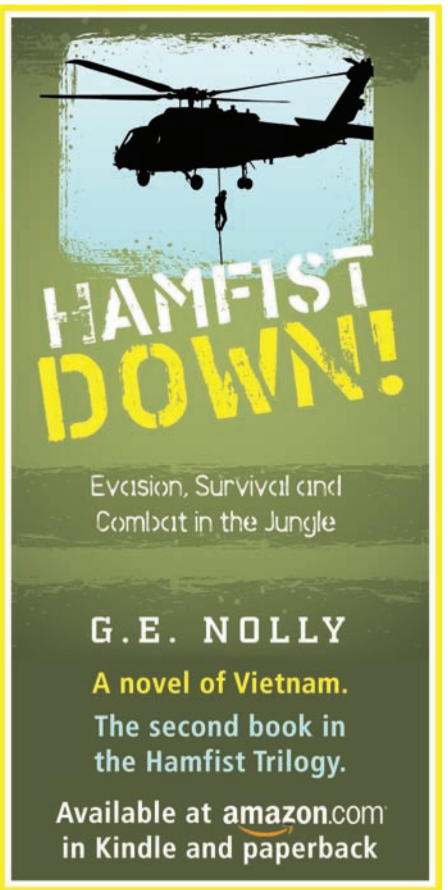
Unhappy with his lack of progress preparing *Confederacy,* on April 17, 1779, the Navy Board ordered Harding to put to sea. On May 1, 1779, undermanned and short of supplies, Harding took *Confederacy* to sea for the first time and turned south for Delaware Bay, training *Confederacy*'s green crew in seamanship, gunnery, and battle tactics.

Several weeks later, on June 2, 1779, *Confederacy* sailed up Delaware Bay to Lewisburg, Delaware, where Harding received orders to join Captain Samuel Tucker's frigate *Boston* on a three-week cruise off the coast, where they were to destroy as many enemy ships as possible. The frigates also were ordered to escort a fleet of merchant vessels carrying supplies from the West Indies for the Continental Army into Delaware or Chesapeake Bay ports. After receiving their orders, *Confederacy* and *Boston*, flying the new 13 stars and stripes American flag, plus the Continental Navy's Rattlesnake ensign, left Delaware Bay and sailed into the Atlantic.

Two days out, *Confederacy*'s lookouts sighted a merchant convoy pursued by two British frigates. Tucker signaled *Confederacy* to attack one frigate, while *Boston* took on the second. *Confederacy*'s crew quickly cleared the frigate's decks for action, while she and *Boston* sailed past the convoy toward the British ships. The British frigates, sighting the American frigates bearing down on them and determining that they would be overpowered, gave up the chase.

Boston and *Confederacy* escorted the convoy safely to Delaware Bay and resumed their cruise. Several days later, on June 6, 1779, they sighted a ship resembling one of their recent opponents. Hoisting British colors, *Confederacy* and *Boston* bore down on the 26-gun British privateer *Pole.* Once in range, *Boston* and *Confederacy* struck their British flags and hoisted American colors. Tucker demanded the privateer's surrender. Outnumbered and outgunned, *Pole* surrendered without firing a shot. "In company of the *Boston* captu'd a privateer of 24 guns and upward of 100 men on board," Harding wrote in his log.

Escorted by *Confederacy* and with a prize crew from *Boston* on board, *Pole* set sail for Philadelphia. Later that same day, *Confederacy* captured the English schooner *Patsy* and sloop



William bound for New York from the West Indies. *Confederacy* escorted the three prizes to Philadelphia then rejoined *Boston* at sea.

On July 2, 1779, *Confederacy* and *Boston* joined Captain Samuel Nicholson's frigate *Deane* in Chesapeake Bay to search for a rumored British naval force. Finding nothing, *Confederacy* returned to Delaware, while *Deane* and *Boston* patrolled off British-held New York. *Confederacy* returned to sea on August 24, 1779, searching for the Continental brig *Eagle* carrying supplies from St. Eustatius Island, West Indies. Finding *Eagle* off the Delaware Capes, Harding escorted her safely into port.

Harding sailed *Confederacy* to Chester, Pennsylvania, on September 8, 1779, and waited for instructions. His orders arrived on September 17. *Confederacy* was to carry Conrad Alexandre Gerard, French minister to the United States from the court of King Louis XVI, home to France. During the passage, Harding was to avoid engaging enemy vessels, comply with Gerard's wishes, and treat him with all the respect due his stature.

A month later, on October 17, 1779, Harding was informed that John Jay, former president of the Continental Congress, newly appointed American ambassador to Spain, with his secretary and family, would be traveling with Gerard on *Confederacy.* During the voyage, Harding was instructed to consult with Jay and Gerard and "be governed by their orders in respect to any occurrence which may happen and the port to which you are to proceed."

John Jay, his wife Sarah, and his entourage boarded *Confederacy* at Chester on October 20. Minister Gerard and his party arrived five days later. Once his distinguished passengers were settled in, Harding raised anchor on October 26 and took *Confederacy* to sea.

In the Atlantic from October 27 to November 6, *Confederacy* enjoyed 12 days of smooth seas and pleasant sailing. By November 7, 1779, *Confederacy* was making nine knots under a brisk wind and steadily growing seas. "It was blowing a fresh gale, the ship close to the wind under courses," *Confederacy*'s Sailing Master John Tanner recalled.

Tanner was on watch at 5 AM, November 7 with Seaman William McLaughlan when he saw the bowsprit starting to break. Tanner quickly ordered *Confederacy* turned into the wind to save the mast. Before the turn could be made, the foremast, Tanner remembered, "in less than half a minute fell over to leeward quite clear of the ship." Tanner then heard the mainmast crack; it fell over him, covering him in a mass of "mast yards, rigging and sails." Before he could get free, Tanner heard *Confederacy*'s mizzen mast break and topple over the quarterdeck.

Hearing what Sarah Jay called an unusual noise on deck, Harding and his crew hurried up from below. "It was unnecessary to call all hands to the deck," Howard observed. In three minutes, because of poor quality timber, *Confederacy* had lost her bowsprit, fore, main and mizzen masts, leaving the frigate dismasted at the mercy of gale force wind and waves.

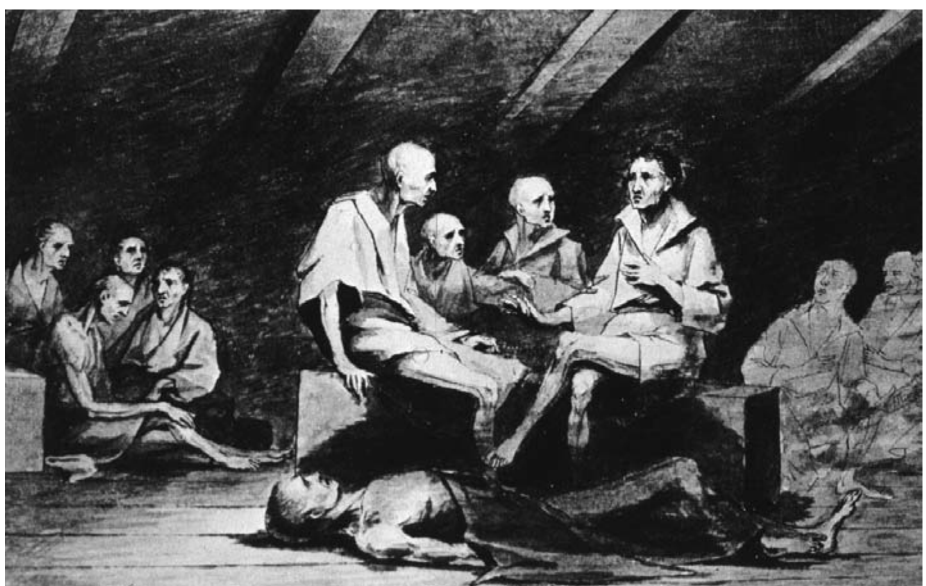
"We all turned to with a will," Tanner wrote. Over the next six hours, while *Confederacy*'s quartermasters William Kingston and Abel Spicer tried to control her rolling, her sailors cut away the snapped spars, sails, and cables, behaving "exceedingly well on this occasion," Harding reported. Once the wreckage was cleared, they attempted to jury rig a mast on *Confederacy*'s furiously tossing and rolling decks. Unless the crew could establish some degree of steerage and reduce the roll, the ship was in grave danger of foundering.

By evening the crew had rigged, Tanner recalled, "some sail on the stump of the mizzenmast" and a sea anchor to "keep the ship to the wind as it blew a gale." With her small masts, *Confederacy* rode out the storm all night. "The ship labored very much for want of the mast," Tanner remembered. "The decks [were] full of water all night."

At dawn on November 8, the crew found that *Confederacy* was not responding to her rudder, leaving the ship helplessly wallowing in the heavy seas. The shank of *Confederacy*'s rudder connecting it to the helm had split, leaving the rudder to bang freely against the stern, opening holes through which water flowed.

Harding set his crew to rigging a new rudder connection. With considerable trouble, *Confederacy*'s sailors managed to link chains through a ring and bolt below the split shank and steer the ship, but the bolt broke under the strain, leaving *Confederacy* again out of control. For two weeks, while *Confederacy* drifted east with wind and currents, her crew tried to jury rig her helm to her rudder. Working over the ship's side, *Confederacy*'s sailors threaded two lengths of chain through two eyebolts on the frigate's rudder, connecting them to lines passing through blocks on spars mounted on the stern, and in turn securing to blocks on the weather deck. Using these lines to move her rudder, they brought *Confederacy* under control, although the strain caused the lines to frequently snap.

On November 23, 1779, Harding called a council of his officers to decide if they should sail to Europe or to the nearest safe port. By



The USS *Confederacy* was captured on April 14, 1781, while escorting a large convoy of merchant ships. The American frigate's hapless crew was confined on the British prison ship *Jersey* where many of the men died from disease as a result of the notoriously unhealthy conditions.

now, *Confederacy* was 1,140 miles from Delaware Bay, well out into the Atlantic. Given the chronic steering problems, the council agreed *Confederacy* was in no shape to sail to Europe. In her present condition, they said, it was prudent to proceed to the French colony of Martinique in the West Indies.

Harding turned *Confederacy* south toward Martinique, limping under makeshift masts, her crew manning the pumps constantly to keep ahead of the water leaking through the stern. The weather remained calm during *Confederacy*'s passage to Martinique. *Confederacy* was also lucky not to encounter a British warship in her damaged condition.

Harding brought *Confederacy* into St. Pierre, Martinique, on Saturday, December 18, 1779, 53 days after leaving Delaware Bay. Harding had used all his skills as a captain to get his badly crippled ship across 1,400 miles of open sea. Both crew and passengers were relieved to have arrived in Martinique.

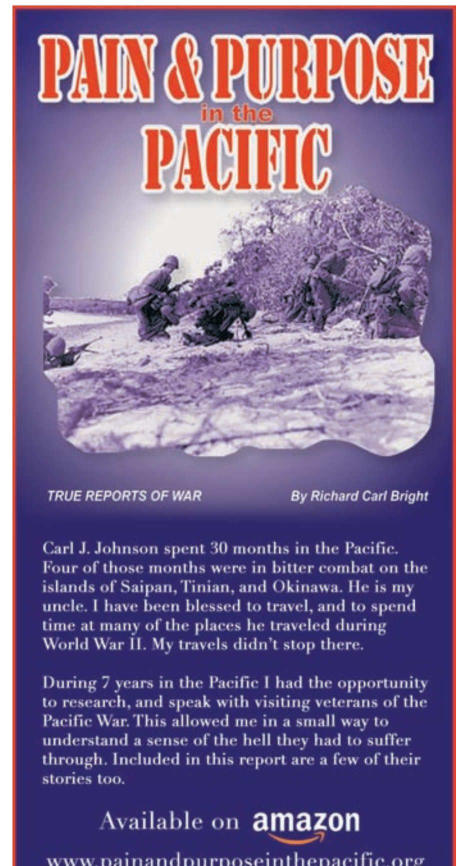
When *Confederacy* anchored, she was met by American naval agent William Bingham, who put Jay's family into his own house and arranged for *Confederacy*'s repairs. On December 22, five days after arriving in St. Pierre, Bingham, Jay, and Harding called on Martinique's Governor François Claude Amor, Marquis de Bouille, in the capital of Fort Royal. De Bouille promised them no effort would be spared to repair *Confederacy,* as if she were a French frigate. *Confederacy* sailed from St. Pierre to Fort Royal on December 26 and tied up at the French naval station.

Three days later, John Jay and his family joined Gerard aboard the French frigate *Aurore* and sailed to Cadiz, Spain, going from there to Madrid. *Confederacy* remained in Fort Royal through February 1780, as repairs were made on her splintered rudder, and attempts to set up temporary masts were made. None were stored at Fort Royal, and those that were available were used to repair damaged French warships. New masts, Harding reported, were "very difficult to obtain and some impossible to be had at this place."

Despite everything, Harding reported by February 18, "I have obtained such necessities for the ship's outfit as are to be had in this place." *Confederacy*'s makeshift masts were ready for sea by March 13, 1780, and Harding took her to sea, intending to sail to Boston, where he believed "spars of the best quality abound in great plenty." Before setting course for Boston, *Confederacy* returned to St. Pierre to pick up additional supplies.

After taking on a cargo of sugar and cocoa, with Bingham aboard as a passenger, *Confederacy* set sail for Philadelphia on March 30, escorting a convoy of five merchant ships. Five days after leaving Martinique, *Confederacy* sprung her foremast in a heavily rolling sea. Her small, jury rigged masts, Howard observed, could "hardly be called in first class trim." But, remembering her earlier dismasting, *Confederacy*'s crew, Hardy wrote, considered this a "trifling circumstance."

Confederacy's sprung mast forced Harding, one officer recalled, to "treat his makeshift rigging gingerly, lest he find himself once again dismasted." Several ships were sighted but were



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allowed to pass unchallenged; the frigate's inferior rigging made pursuit impossible. The rest of *Confederacy*'s voyage passed uneventfully.

Approaching the American coast, the ships of the convoy scattered to their various destinations, while *Confederacy* continued to Cape Henlopen, Delaware, arriving on April 25. Two days later, a river pilot guided her to Philadelphia.

As *Confederacy* began her refit, the Continental Navy's fortunes reached their lowest point. Both 1779 and 1780 were bad years for the navy; half a dozen ships were lost to the British, and there was little money for the navy to build new ships or repair older ones. Officers and men were paid in devalued paper currency. A greater blow fell on May 12, 1780, when 5,000 Continental troops under Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, along with the frigates *Providence, Boston, Queen of France,* and *Ranger,* surrendered to a British army led by General Henry Clinton at Charleston, South Carolina. The loss of these four ships, Miller said, "all but eliminated the Continental Navy as an effective fighting force." By summer 1780, only the frigates *Trumbull* and *Deane* in New England, *Confederacy* refitting in Philadelphia, the frigate *Alliance* in Europe, and the new sloop *Saratoga* in Delaware remained.

Confederacy spent summer and fall 1780 alternating between Philadelphia and Chester, trying to get back to sea. By the end of November 1780, with an unexpected influx of money from a cargo of rum captured by *Saratoga,* and after seven months in port, *Confederacy*'s rerigging was completed.

The *Saratoga,* commanded by Captain John C. Young, escorting a 13-ship convoy heading for the West Indies, joined *Confederacy* off Reedy Island, Delaware. On December 20, 1780, both vessels escorted the convoy into Delaware Bay, until *Confederacy*'s pilot, deciding the weather was too rough for her to venture out to sea, turned *Confederacy* back to Delaware Bay, leaving *Saratoga* to escort the convoy alone.

Confederacy got underway the following day, December 21, and headed into the open sea. Despite her refit, *Confederacy* did not sail well under her new rigging. Several days out at sea, she once again sprung her mainmast, forcing Harding to shorten sail when the wind freshened or risk its collapse.

At noon, January 8, 1781, *Confederacy*'s lookouts sighted a sail in the distance. Harding gave chase, and by 10 PM, *Confederacy* was alongside the brig *Elizabeth* and another vessel, *Nancy,* commanded by Captain Clifford Bryce, from Liverpool, Nova Scotia, bound for Turks Island in the British-held Bahamas. The ships were escorted to Cape François, Haiti, where a French Admiralty Court determined that the *Elizabeth* and *Nancy* had been legally captured. But neither Harding nor *Confederacy*'s crew received any prize money for the capture.

On February 1, 1781, under orders of the island's governor, *Confederacy* left Haiti with the French brig *Cat* to hunt for British ships. After a two-week cruise, encountering only American vessels, Harding returned to Cape François on February 16. There *Confederacy* joined *Saratoga,* the frigate *Deane,* and the privateer *Fair American,* which, along with *Cat*, formed what one sailor called "a formidable squadron."

The squadron left Cape François on February 20 and patrolled the Windward Islands, seeking British ships. They soon captured the British merchant ship *Diamond,* bound from St. Kitts to Jamaica with a cargo of dry goods and slaves. *Confederacy* and *Saratoga* also captured a 20-gun cargo ship sailing from St. Eustatius to Jamaica. After this action, *Confederacy, Saratoga* and *Deane* returned to Cape François, where they waited for several weeks while a convoy of American and French merchant ships assembled.

The 77-ship convoy—37 American and 40 French merchant ships—left Cape François on March 15, 1781, escorted by *Confederacy*, *Deane,* and *Saratoga.* Four days later, the French ships parted company with the Americans and headed for Europe. A short time later, *Saratoga* chased two British merchant vessels, capturing one and continuing after the second, leaving *Confederacy* and *Deane* escorting the convoy. *Saratoga* never returned; *Deane* lost the convoy in a storm and made her own way to Boston, leaving *Confederacy* escorting the merchantmen alone.

Confederacy was herding her charges along near the Delaware Capes on Saturday, April 14, 1781, when Harding sighted a large ship bearing down on the convoy. Harding cleared *Confederacy* for action, ordered the merchant ships to scatter, and steered toward the approaching ship. Unexpectedly, another vessel came over the horizon following the first. The second vessel was the 44-gun frigate HMS *Roebuck* under Captain Andrew Snape Douglas. When they were in range, *Roebuck* and Captain James Richard Dacres's 32-gun frigate HMS *Orpheus* broke out British colors and ran out a second deck of guns. Alone, faced by their overwhelming firepower, Harding struck *Confederacy*'s colors without resistance. Thus

ended the ship's brief and troubled career in the Continental Navy. Several merchant ships from the convoy were also captured. The rest escaped.

After putting a prize crew aboard, *Roebuck* and *Orpheus* escorted *Confederacy* to New York, arriving six days later, on Thursday, April 20, 1781. "The captain of the rebel frigate must escape every imputation derogatory to the conduct of an officer and a man of honor," a New York newspaper commented. "We must allow even an enemy merit, when he is not found justly to have forfeited it."

Most of *Confederacy*'s crew was confined aboard the prison ship *Jersey* in New York harbor, where many died of disease and malnutrition. Those of the *Confederacy*'s sailors who survived remained aboard *Jersey* until they were exchanged, joined the British service, or were released.

Marine Captain Hardy, Lieutenant Bill, and other junior officers were sent to England on a Royal Navy ship to be imprisoned. When the ship accidentally put into an Irish port, Hardy and Bill escaped, making their way to France and eventually back to America.

Captain Harding, along with 100 American prisoners, was paroled and sent to New London in a prisoner exchange on May 4, 1781, his navy career finished. In November 1781, Harding invested in the Connecticut privateer *Young Cromwell,* which was captured on her first voyage. He next commanded the six-gun corvette *Diana* in October 1782, only to be captured by a British man-of-war. After the revolution, Harding became a merchant sailor and retired to Schoharie, New York, where he died on November 20, 1814.

Of the original 13 frigates built for the Continental Navy, seven, including *Confederacy*, were captured; four were burned to prevent their falling into British hands. Only the frigate *Deane* remained at the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783. The Americans had expended vast amounts of money and manpower building, arming, and victualling warships that failed to hamper the operations of the superior Royal Navy.

Confederacy was placed into service with the Royal Navy under the name HMS *Confederate*. In June 1781, the newly commissioned *Confederate* sailed to England, where in mid-July she was declared unfit for service and placed in reserve. Seven years later, in March 1787, the former *Confederacy* was broken up. Her fate may not have been what the nation had hoped for, but it accurately reflected the general fortune of the Continental Navy's first frigates. □

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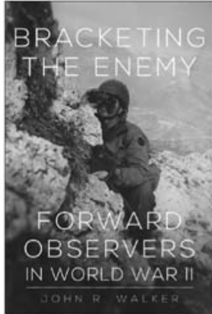

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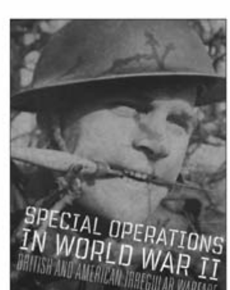

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By Robert F. Dorr

Future U.S. President Harry S. Truman led a National Guard field artillery battery on the Western Front during the Great War.

IN THE DARKNESS AND DRIVING RAIN ON AUGUST 29, 1918, GERMAN artillery shells smashed down on American artillerymen fighting on a fir-clad slope in the Vosges Mountains in Alsace. The rumor spread that this was a gas attack. The Americans, who should have been preparing to fire back, were confused and scared, donning gas masks and affixing equine gas respirators on the snouts of their horses. Some men panicked, turned, and ran amid the piercing roar of the barrage. Several horses, including those towing two artillery guns, ran off in the wrong direction.

The captain in command was up on his horse, trying to direct his soldiers in the chaos, darkness, and rain. A German shell ripped into the wet earth 15 feet from him. His horse collapsed and fell into a gaping shell hole, landing on top of the captain and pinning him down. After a soldier rushed over to help, the officer scrambled to his feet, gasping and shaking, just in time to see more of his men turning and running. In the black night, confusion everywhere, the officer stood tall, held his ground, and let loose with a stream of profanity. It was rough language his men had never before heard from the slim, bespectacled figure who was usually stiff and reserved.

Thus began World War I for Captain Harry S. Truman, a Missouri National Guardsman newly in charge of Battery D, 129th Field Artillery, 35th Division. Truman inherited an unruly, insubordinate band of men who had scared away a previous commander. They seemed incapable of working together.

Their first fight on that hilltop in the Vosges was not so much a failure as a fiasco, but it also was the last time Truman's battery performed poorly. At 34, Truman was more mature than the officers who had preceded him. He wielded a brand of leadership that combined stern guidance with a genuinely friendly nature. Creating a word play on the Civil War's First Battle of Bull Run, his men soon called the action in the Vosges the "Battle of Who Ran." Instead of sapping their morale, the event galvanized them. It filled them with a resolve never to turn and run again; it gave them an experience they would share for the rest of their lives. But their greatest test in combat was yet to come.

Just after the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on April 12, 1945, his successor, Truman, delivered a radio address to the U.S. Armed Forces. He referred to the commander in chief's having fallen —many Americans had never known any president but Roosevelt—and then drew upon his experience to add:

"As a veteran of the First World War, I have seen death on the battlefield. When I fought in France with the 35th Division, I saw good officers and men fall and be replaced.... I know the strain, the mud, the misery [and] the utter weariness of the soldier in the field. And I know too

Captain Harry S. Truman, second from right, directs his National Guard artillery unit during World War I. The unit supported the 35th Infantry Division and, for a time, the 1st Infantry Division.

National Guard

The Granger Collection, New York

his courage, his stamina, his faith in his comrades, his country and himself."

Truman was born in Missouri in 1884, had an unremarkable upbringing at a farm near Independence, and was prevented from attending a military service academy by his poor vision. Accounts differ on whether Truman applied and was rejected or simply never applied.

In the Army's *Field Artillery Journal,* Lt. Col. James B. Agnew described how George R. Collins of Kansas City, on his own volition early in the 20th century, organized a field artillery battalion as part of the local National Guard:

Collins "recruited, in addition to about 60 other 'fine fellows who worked in banks and stores around town [Agnew wrote],' the bespectacled Truman, then 21 years of age." The year was 1905. "Truman found himself in the lofty station of private soldier serving on a 3-inch gun, then the Army's standard field piece."

According to his memoir, Truman enjoyed Guard meetings and serving with men "who would pay a quarter for the privilege of drilling once a week." He learned the basics of artillery work as a member of Battery B, 2nd Missouri Field Artillery, a component of the Kansas City unit, during summer encampments at Camp Girardeau, Missouri. Among other skills, Truman learned to handle the spirited six-horse teams used to draw field guns and caissons. This was the kind of experience that would serve Truman well years later when the world's great powers went to war on July 28, 1914, and the United States joined in on April 6, 1917.

Truman left the National Guard in 1911. He worked at a succession of jobs. He donned the uniform again when the United States entered the Great War.

In keeping with custom in National Guard units, the men of Truman's mixed Kansas-Missouri outfit elected their leaders. Truman was always patting his pockets to confirm that he had extra pairs of eyeglasses with him, for he lived in fear of being unable to see. This prompted one of his fellow soldiers to dub him a worry wart. Still, Truman was both liked and respected. Not everyone believed his claim of surprise when the men elected him a lieutenant.

Already mature compared to his fellow artillerymen, Truman was toughened and made more mature when his unit—the 129th Field Artillery Regiment of the 60th Field Artillery Brigade, a component of the 35th Infantry Division—trained in 1917 at Camp Doniphan at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Fellow artilleryman Nathan Serenko called Truman "a quiet

Captain Harry S. Truman commanded a four-gun battery of French 75mm field guns, Model 1897. During the Meuse-Argonne offensive, Truman moved his artillery forward even as the infantry was sustaining heavy casualties.

dynamo." Fellow soldier and future political henchman Harry Vaughan called him "one tough son-of-a-bitch of a man.... And that," was part of the secret of understanding him."

After Fort Sill came France. According to a letter written to his future wife, Bess, First Lieutenant Harry Truman landed in Europe as a member of the Allied Expeditionary Force on April 14, 1918. Having debarked from the 36,000-ton Army transport ship *George Washington* after the journey from New York, Truman spent his first day overseas at the Hotel des Voyageurs in the French port city of Brest. He had gotten to France ahead of the bulk of the 35th Division and had time for artillery training in France, where he was introduced to the famous French 75mm artillery guns.

It was quite a contrast to the plain 3-inch gun Truman had used stateside—a relic of the era just after the American Civil War. Truman's regiment had six artillery batteries, each with four of the weapons officially dubbed the French 75mm Field Gun, Model 1897. The gun used an innovative recoil system consisting of two hydraulic cylinders, a floating piston, a connected piston, a head of gas, and a reservoir of oil. Troops said it never jammed and could be relied on for accuracy and smooth operation.

Once his men joined him and completed further training, Truman was designated commander of Battery D in his battalion of the 129th and promoted to captain without yet having received the paperwork or the pay. That meant the slight Missouri officer was in charge of 200 men, four French 75mm guns, 24 horses, and associated caissons and battery equipment.

Following their baptism of fire in the Vosges, which had been a sleepy backwater before the Americans arrived, Truman and his entire division were given a difficult order by the Allied Supreme Command. They were to move from one end of the battle line to the other in dreadful weather in what artillery historian Agnew called "one of the most prodigious and exhausting road marches ever devised in modern warfare."

Uprooted from the low level of hostilities in Alsace, the division and much of the Army's I Corps were pointed north in driving rain on primitive roads east of Verdun. The men, horses, and field pieces slogged north, often within three to five miles of the front and thus within range of far-reaching 105mm German artillery. They encamped by day and moved by night, hoping to foil German aerial observers.

The long march by Truman and so many others—long disparaged by regular Army soldiers as mere Guardsmen who could not hack it—provided a brutal taste of war under conditions where each soldier must have felt helpless to influence his fate. A typical artilleryman in Truman's battery lugged 60 to 70 pounds of gear while each horse was burdened with extra harness, forage, a grooming kit, and an equine gas mask.

Truman had plenty of time to think during this ordeal and was undoubtedly focused on what lay ahead. He had to know that his battery's tactical mobility and fighting prowess was being eroded as the march claimed the one thing the artillerymen needed most: the horses. Throughout the 35th Division artillery, including Truman's unit, artillery commander Brig. Gen. Lucien Berry later said that roughly 20 percent of the horses succumbed to the terrible conditions of their abrupt and lengthy movement.

Truman must have wondered if his soldiers realized, by that point, that he possessed the technical skills to lead them and the horsemanship needed in an army utterly dependent

on animal power for transportation. Did they feel themselves under good leadership each time they pulled the lanyard to send a round flying toward the foe?

They did. The evidence is overwhelming on that point. Despite whatever doubts he may have had, Truman was blessed with plenty of self-confidence. He also knew that his bookish appearance was a factor he had to overcome as a leader and that, despite being under fire in Alsace, his battery had not yet proven itself. But Truman also knew he and his men could meet the challenge.

The troops and their surviving animals reached the heights above the Aira River, and the 35th Division prepared to launch its first offensive of the war at daybreak on September 26, 1918. The dull thumping sound of German 105mm artillery guns increased in tempo as Truman's artillerymen stacked ammo, set up gun positions, and began firing in support of the attacking 35th Division infantrymen. It may have been the noisiest moment of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, but it was also a moment characterized by competence. The chaos exhibited by Truman's battery back in Alsace was replaced with busy, businesslike efficiency.

"Truman was not a large man and not imposing, but he could be very strict," wrote artilleryman Serenko, in a memoir prepared by a family member. "He did not hesitate to discipline soldiers who failed to measure up, even when they were senior noncommissioned officers. He was stern but you could see that he genuinely cared, so most of the men liked him."

"Captain Truman watched with satisfaction while his four guns, rolling and thundering, fired 3,000 rounds during the 4-hour preparation and rolling barrage," added Agnew. "The violent fire program was designed to afford the infantry a running start against the expectant Germans, who were dug in [and] determined, yet already disillusioned by the Allied victories at St. Mihiel and Belleau Wood."

Over the next four days, the 35th Division gained ground, lost ground, and regained lost ground. A busy and businesslike Truman moved his artillery forward even as the infantry was sustaining heavy casualties. Truman was constantly in motion between his command post and forward observation sites as the great offensive unfolded. One of his artillerymen claimed that the guns were in such constant use that men draped water-soaked blankets over smoldering tubes. Each time soldiers opened a breech to reload, it was like opening the door of a hot oven.

During the constant movement, still pummeled by the almost continuous rainfall, Truman's battery was at times in the right place to fire upon the foe but the wrong place relative to friendly infantry. Because of poor communication, driving rain that sometimes arrived horizontally like incoming bullets, and the difficulty of traversing a battlefield riddled with shell craters, Truman's battery at one point actually positioned itself some 200 yards in front of the infantry it was supposed to support.

To get into the fight, the artillerymen had to pull their horse-drawn guns through an area they had bombarded earlier. One of Truman's soldiers later wrote of riding "over the destruction that had been wrought by our guns. It looked like humans, dirt, rock, trees and steel had been turned up by one plow."

On September 30, 1918, the casualty-ridden 35th Division was pulled off the line but its artillery element stayed in place, providing support, then, for the 1st Infantry Division, the "Big Red One." The Allies were continuing the Meuse-Argonne offensive, in which 26,000 men would lose their lives. By the time they, too, were pulled back on October 3, Truman and the other artillerymen had won a letter of

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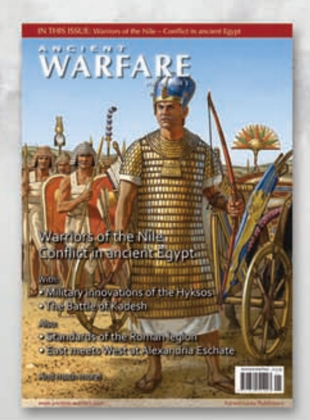

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praise from 1st Division commander Maj. Gen. Charles L. Summerall, the Boxer Rebellion veteran and future chief of staff who was considered the U.S. Army's foremost artilleryman. The stigma of coming from the National Guard was beginning to dissipate.

Ordered back into battle in mid-October, the 35th Division went to Verdun, the scene of one of the bloodiest among the earlier battles of the war. Truman's men set up their guns on heights overlooking the Woevre Plain with the Meuse Valley at their backs.

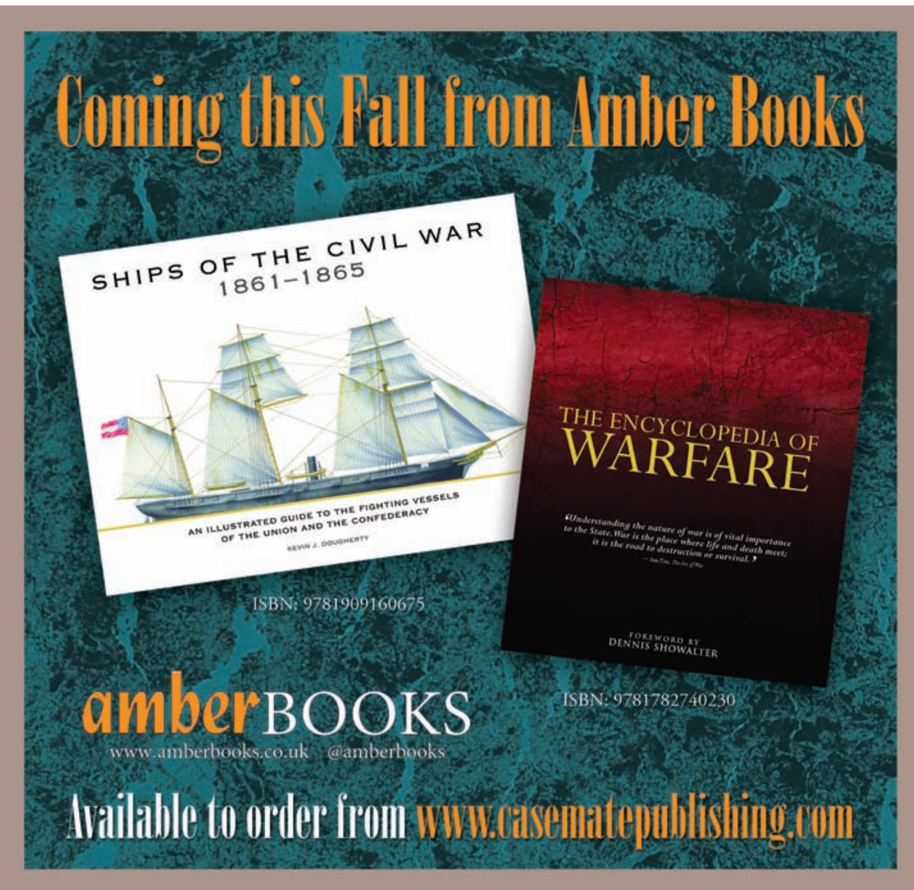
By then, the 129th and Truman's Battery D no longer had any need to prove anything. They exchanged fire and counterfire with Germany batteries. Truman's battery was credited with either wiping out or forcing the abandonment of two opposing artillery batteries and also clearing out a German observation post—but at the same time, their ranks bristled with rumor. The buzz was that the belligerent nations in the awful war were close to agreeing to an armistice.

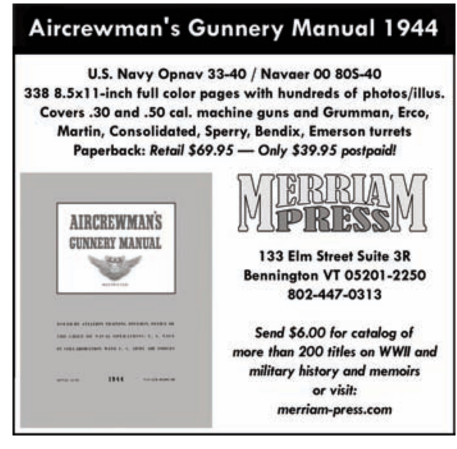
It was a war Truman had never needed to be in. In 1911, he had mothballed his uniforms. He was a farmer and grew food for the war effort. He was the sole supporter of his mother and sister. His vision was below military standards. He was 33, two years older than the age limit set by the Selective Service Act. Any of these factors were legitimate grounds to be exempted from service.

Before sunrise on Monday, November 11, 1918, Truman received a field phone call from Major Newell T. Paterson, his regiment's operations officer. Paterson had been instructed to tell Truman that a cease-fire would take effect that day. Truman's Battery D already had fired 68 rounds in the general direction of the German lines. Paterson urged Truman not to tell others about the instruction for fear it might turn out to be a mistake. But soon afterward Truman received the same order that went to everyone in his battalion. There was to be no artillery fire after 11 AM.

"I fired the Battery on orders until 10:45 when I fired my last shot on a little village—Hermaville—northeast of Verdun," Truman wrote in his memoir. Several batteries within the battalion claimed to fire the last round of the war before the 11th-hour armistice, one of them supposedly at 10:59 AM, but Truman's made no such claim. Truman also wrote: "We stopped firing all along the line at eleven o'clock. It was so quiet it made your head ache."

Twenty-seven years later, when he was elected president of the United States, Truman became the first combat veteran to take the office since the beginning of modern warfare. □





By Peter Kross

The CIA had second thoughts about assassinating Dominican Republic strongman Rafael Trujillo but was unable to stop the killing.

THE UNITED STATES FROM 1959 TO 1961 TURNED ITS FOCUS TO TWO of the most charismatic, ruthless, and despotic rulers in the Caribbean region, Fidel Castro of Cuba and Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic. Over the next two years, the United States government turned to the Central Intelligence Agency to devise a plan to kill both of these men, a task the agency relished. In the case of Fidel Castro, the CIA came up with hair-brained schemes to kill the Cuban leader, including using members of the American mafia to carry out the assassination. In the case of Trujillo, the CIA would ship arms and ammunition to certain anti-Trujillo elements in the Dominican Republic that were willing and able to assassinate their ruthless leader. In the end, the Castro assassination plots failed despite many attempts on his life. As far as the fate of Trujillo was concerned, the outcome was a lot different, with the conspirators having much better luck than their compatriots in Cuba.

In the years since the establishment of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 by U.S. President James Monroe, the United States considered the Caribbean an "American lake," an area of strategic importance to Washington. It was the policy of succeeding American presidents to prevent other powers, mostly from Europe, from gaining a foothold in Latin America. If it meant making marriages of convenience with less than stable leaders in the region to protect U.S. interests, so be it.

The United States had a longstanding political and economic relationship with the Dominican Republic going back to the early 1900s. In 1906, the Dominicans signed a 50-year treaty with the United States to give the larger country control over the republic's customs department. U.S. Marines occupied the Dominican Republic in 1916 and stayed for four years. At the time of the American withdrawal, Trujillo was in charge of the Dominican National Guard. Only a few years before, Trujillo had been a member of group of dissidents who opposed Horacio Vasquez, the leader of the National Party. The group fomented a revolt in the country.

Library of Congress

Rafael Trujillo's 1957 American Chevrolet on display following his assassination on May 30, 1961. During the ambush, Trujillo stumbled wounded out of his car, only to be shot dead in the street. RIGHT: Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Trujillo

© Bettmann/CORBIS

After the rebellion ended, the young Trujillo joined a rag-tag group of thieves and robbers called "The 44." When the Americans landed in the Dominican Republic, Trujillo was one of hundreds of young men of military age who were given training by the United States, and he was part of the National Guard that battled the rebels in the countryside. Trujillo was a brutal soldier who took every opportunity to torture his prisoners without any retribution from his superiors. When Vasquez became president, he appointed Trujillo as a colonel in the National Guard and later chief of police, a

post with unlimited power.

In 1930, a coup was initiated by the rebels whose leader, Estrella Urena, became the provisional president until elections were held. Trujillo pledged not to run for president but changed his mind. Backers of Trujillo killed opposition leaders, ransacked opponents' homes, and kidnapped anti-Trujillo newspaper reporters. Through a campaign of widespread terror and intimidation on the part of his backers, Trujillo was now president of the Dominican Republic, a post he would hold for almost 30 more years.

In the decades to come, Trujillo ruled the country with an iron fist, taking over for his personal gain such industries as oil refining, cement manufacturing, and food production, pocketing large amounts of cash for years to come.

In 1956, Castro was planning a revolt in Cuba whose goal was the removal of the dictator Fulgencio Batista. Secretly, Trujillo offered Batista military supplies to stop Castro but there was never any lasting relationship between the two dictators. Trujillo referred to Batista as "that shitty sergeant," and said, "I'm going to oust the bastard." But Trujillo had no love for Castro either. Trujillo sent arms and ammunition to anti-Castro dissidents then living the Miami area. On New Year's Eve 1959, Castro and his band of revolutionaries ousted the hated Batista, and Castro proclaimed himself the leader of Cuba.

On June 14, 1959, an abortive invasion to topple Trujillo began. On that day, a plane with Dominican markings left Cuba and landed at the Cordillera Central in the Dominican Republic. On board were 225 men led by a Dominican named Enrique Jimenez Moya and a Cuban named Delico Gomez Ochoa, both of whom were friends of Castro. The invasion force was composed of men from various Latin American countries and Spain. Some Americans also participated. As soon as the invaders landed, they were met by soldiers of the Dominican Army, and 30 to 40 men escaped.

A week later, another group of invaders boarded two yachts and was escorted by Cuban gunboats to Great Inagua, in the Bahamas, heading for the Dominican coast. Instead, the group was spotted by Dominican soldiers who blasted the yacht to pieces. Trujillo ordered his son, Ramfis, to lead the hunt for the invaders, and soon they were captured. The leaders of the invasion were taken aboard a Dominican Air Force plane and then pushed out in midair, falling to their deaths.

The plot was, in reality, tactically directed by many opposition leaders inside the country. Trujillo blamed Castro for the plot, and secretly Castro was behind the entire affair. In time, Trujillo set up a plan to invade Cuba (which never took place) and had his followers loot the Cuban embassy in the capital city of Ciudad Trujillo. Cuba subsequently severed all diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic.

Another Caribbean leader who hated Trujillo was Romulo Betancourt, the president of Venezuela. In 1951, an attempt to kill Betancourt took place in Havana when someone tried to stab him with a poisoned syringe. The behind-the-scenes culprit was none other than Trujillo. By 1960, Betancourt was publicly criticizing Trujillo, calling him a crook and a scoundrel. In retaliation for his slurs, Trujillo planned an elaborate assassination attempt against Betancourt.

Both: Library of Congress

ABOVE: Cuban dictator Fidel Castro and Trujillo both supported attemps to overthrow each other. BELOW: Visiting the United States, Rafael Trujillo reviews a Marine Corps honor guard. Trujillo's control of the Dominican Republic lasted for three decades. He alternated between serving as the country's president and its top military official, but he always controlled the country's politics.

That same year, while Betancourt was driving through the streets of Caracas, Venezuela, during the annual Army Day parade, a powerful bomb exploded in his motorcade. The bomb had been placed in a green Oldsmobile parked near the parade route and contained 65 kilos of TNT. The blast exploded right under the car carrying Betancourt and his party. The car was sent flying across the street. One person in the auto was killed, and Betancourt suffered severe burns to his hands.

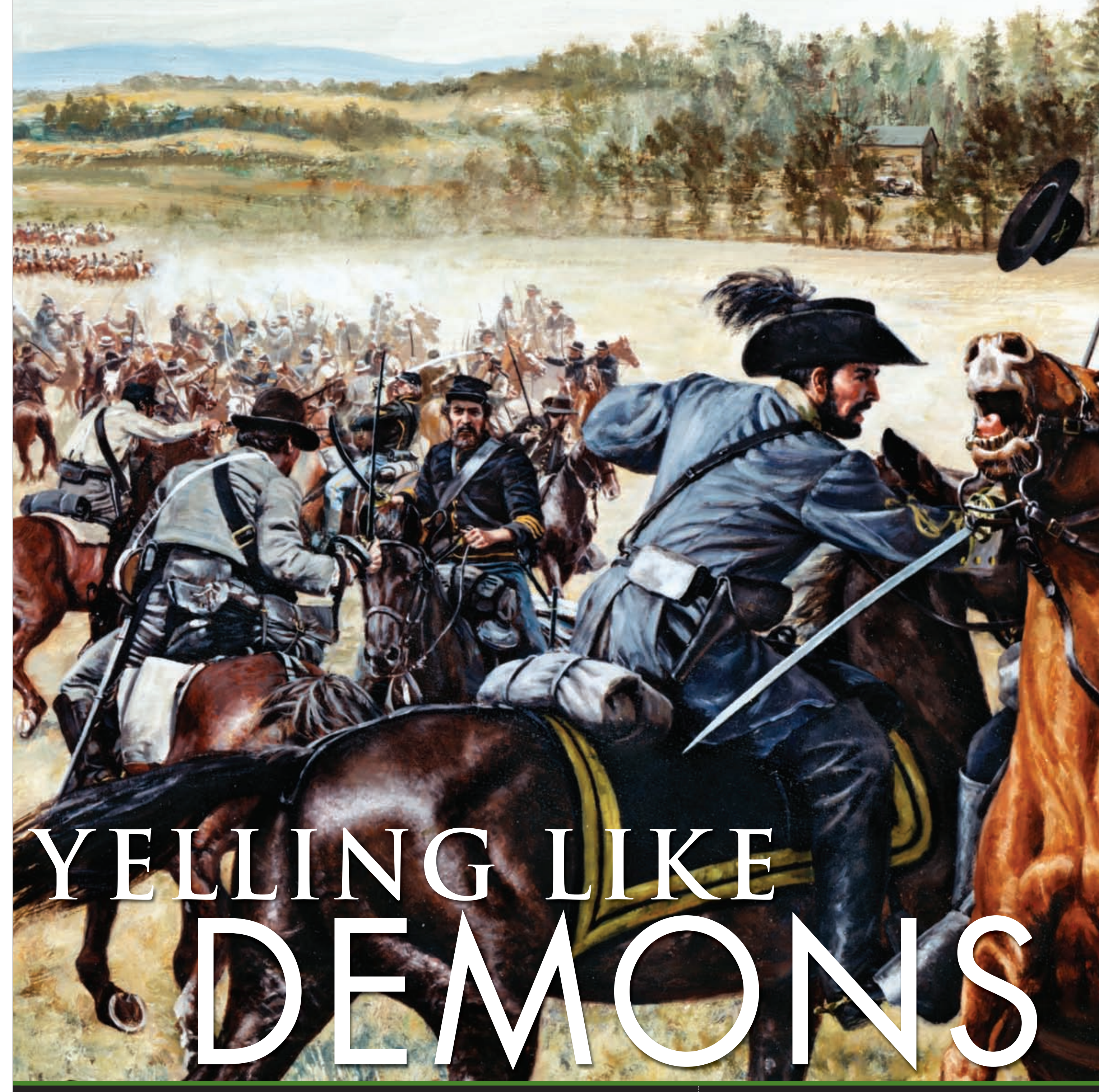
In Washington, the Eisenhower administration saw the assassination attempt by Trujillo against Betancourt as the last straw. President Dwight D. Eisenhower believed that Trujillo was just as bad as Castro, and if left alone he would turn the Dominican Republic into another bastion of communism in the Western Hemisphere. Eisenhower ordered the CIA to mount a covert operation to help the anti-Trujillo elements in the country to overthrow the bothersome dictator.

In February 1960, Eisenhower approved covert aid to the Dominican dissidents, which was intended to lead to the removal of Trujillo and his replacement by a regime that the United States could support. In the spring of 1960, U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic Joseph Farland made initial contact with dissident elements in the country. The dissidents asked for sniper rifles, but at that time they were not delivered. Right before he left for Washington, Farland introduced his successor, Henry Dearborn, to the dissident leaders and told them that in the future they were to work with Dearborn. The new ambassador told the leaders that the United States would covertly help the rebels in their efforts to oust Trujillo but would not take any overt action.

In June 1960, a meeting took place between Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Roy Rubottom and Colonel J.C. King, chief of the CIA's Western Hemisphere Division. They discussed a request by a principal leader of the opposition for a limited number of arms to aid in the overthrow of the Trujillo regime. In July, their subsequent proposal was accepted, and the CIA sent 12 sterile rifles with telescopic sights along with 500 rounds of ammunition to the Dominican Republic.

In August 1960, the United States cut off diplomatic relations with Trujillo, leaving Dear-

Continued on page 70



YELLING LIKE DEMONS

A SWEEP BY UNION CAVALRY SOUTH OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER IN JUNE 1863 CAUGHT J.E.B. STUART'S TROOPERS BY SURPRISE. THE ENSUING BATTLE OF BRANDY STATION WAS THE LARGEST CAVALRY CLASH OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR. **BY MIKE PHIFER**

MAJOR GENERAL JAMES EWELL BROWN Stuart was in all his glory. It was June 8, 1863, and the Confederate cavalry commander was putting on a grand review of his horse soldiers on a plain west of the Rappahannock River near Brandy Station, Virginia, for none other than General Robert E. Lee. In fact, this was Stuart's third grand review since May 22. The first two had more pomp and ceremony and concluded with a mock battle. The third review was more hastily put together for Lee, who had been invited to the second review but missed out.

Stuart's 22 regiments of horsemen were lined up in double ranks that stretched for three miles. It was an impressive sight, and Stuart had good reason to be proud. His cavalry was at its zenith, boasting five brigades of horse soldiers and two battalions of horse artillery numbering 9,536 troopers and 756 officers. With plans to take the war north, Lee had reinforced Stuart with a brigade of cavalry under the command of Brig. Gen. Beverly Robertson from

Don Stivers

North Carolina and Brig. Gen. William "Grumble" Jones's brigade from the Shenandoah Valley. Stuart was happy to have the reinforcements, but not with their commanders. He thought Robertson "the most troublesome man in the army" and had been glad to see him reassigned to North Carolina. Stuart also disliked Jones, a feeling that was returned by the rough-talking, hard-fighting cavalry officer.

Besides seeing his cavalry command increased in strength, Stuart had spent almost a month in Culpepper County, where he had been sent to protect the Army of Northern Virginia's rear from Federal cavalry and take advantage of the good grazing land there. While there he also resupplied his regiments, got fresh mounts when possible, and drilled his men.

After inspecting the troopers, Lee took up position on a low rise and watched as almost 10,000 sabers flashed in the sunlight, colors flying as the squadrons passed him in columns of four. When the review was finally over, the tired troopers rode back to their respective camps near Brandy Station.

Colonel Tom Munford, who was briefly in command of Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee's brigade, as Lee's nephew was laid up with rheumatoid arthritis, encamped for the night at Oak Shade Church near the Hazel River, a tributary of the Rappahannock. Brig. Gen. William Henry Fitzhugh "Rooney" Lee, Robert E. Lee's son, meanwhile, took up position at Welford's Farm, while Jones's brigade encamped near St. James Church along with Major Robert Beckham and the famous Stuart's Horse Artillery Battalion.

Brigadier General Wade Hampton, one of the richest men in the Confederacy, bivouacked his brigade between Fleetwood Hill and Stevensburg along with Robertson's brigade. Stuart, meanwhile, headed over to his headquarters on Fleetwood Hill. This scenic terrain was an elevated ridge that commanded the surrounding rolling country and the roads leading north and south from Brandy Station.

Stuart was happy with the day's pageantry and prepared to move his men out the next day as they were to screen Lee's army as it began to shift west and then head up the Shenandoah Valley for an invasion of the North. Jones, though, was not pleased with the day's events and commented: "No doubt the Yankees, who have two divisions of cavalry on the other side of the river, have witnessed from their signal stations, this show in which Stuart has exposed to view his strength and aroused their curiosity. They will want to know what is going on and, if I am not mistaken, will be over early in the morning to investigate." He was right.

For some time, Union General Joseph Hooker had been receiving reports about Stuart's presence in the Culpepper Court House vicinity. Colonel George Sharpe, Hooker's chief of intelligence, believed the Rebels intended to launch a large cavalry raid. Hooker decided to strike first.

On June 7, Hooker ordered Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton, his cavalry commander, to divide his force and cross the Rappahannock River at Beverly and Kelly's Fords and "disperse and destroy the Rebel force assembled in the vicinity of Culpepper." The Federal horsemen were also to destroy the enemy's "trains and supplies of all description" to the best of their ability. If they should be successful in routing the Rebels, they were to pursue them vigorously as long as it was to their advantage.

It was a tall order for the Army of the Potomac's cavalry. By the third summer of the war, Union cavalry was finally reaching parity with Confederate cavalry. When the war broke out, the North was at a disadvantage for qualified cavalry officers as the majority of those serving in the regular army resigned their com-

All: Library of Congress

ABOVE: Brig. Gen. Wade Hampton, Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton, Brig. Gen. W.H.F. "Rooney" Lee, and Colonel Alfred Duffie. BELOW: The Battle of Brandy Station was fought in the rolling hills south of the Rappahannock River astride the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry at Brandy Station screened the movement of General Robert E. Lee's infantry that passed by Culpeper Courthouse on their way to the Shenandoah Valley during Lee's second invasion of the North.

Map © 2013 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

missions to fight for the South. In the first half of the war, the bluecoated cavalry generally suffered from a lack of comfort and experience in the saddle. In contrast, their Confederate counterparts, who had relied heavily on horses for personal transportation before the war, had brought their own mounts when mustered into units. The result was that the Union cavalry mostly had been outfought and outridden by its Rebel adversaries.

The organizational structure of the Union cavalry during the first part of the war also put it at a distinct disadvantage. Rather than being organized in a separate cavalry corps, individual regiments were attached to infantry commands for use as scouts, couriers, and escorts. Such an approach completely nullified their use for raids and long-range reconnaissance.

In contrast, Stuart used his cavalry for large-scale actions that effectively merged reconnaissance activities with disrupting enemy operations during the Peninsula and Second Manassas campaigns. Having circumnavigated the Union Army in the East during the Peninsula campaign, Stuart repeated the feat after the Antietam campaign with his famous Chambersburg Raid in October 1862. Stuart's ability to ride around the Union Army was deeply humiliating to the Union cavalry units serving in the East.

Under Hooker's command things had greatly improved for the Federal horsemen as "Fighting Joe" made sure they received better training, equipment, and horses, weeded out poor officers, and most importantly grouped the horse soldiers into a corps. The newly created cavalry corps had done well in its first raid into Culpepper County at Kelly's Ford in March but did less well in a raid behind Rebel lines during the Chancellorsville campaign in May. Now the Federal horsemen were anxious again to prove their mettle and skill.

Before the bluecoats mounted up and rode out on June 8, they refilled their cartridge boxes, were issued three days worth of rations, and saw to their horses. Soon 9,000 horse soldiers, divided into three divisions, were in the saddle and on the move for their destinations. Marching along the dusty roads in support of the cavalry were 3,000 blue-coated infantrymen. These handpicked regiments made up two brigades and were among the best marching and fighting soldiers of the Army of the Potomac.

The Federals' plan to thrash Stuart's cavalry was to have Brig. Gen. John Buford take his 1st Cavalry Division and the Reserve Brigade across the Rappahannock at Beverly Ford and move on to Brandy Station. Accompanying him was a brigade of infantry under Brig. Gen. Adelbert Ames and some horse artillery.

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ABOVE: Troopers of the 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry, part of the Reserve brigade of Brig. Gen. John Buford's First Division, photographed shortly after the battle. The regiment was in the thick of the fighting on the Union right flank. LEFT: Private William B. Todd of Company E, 9th Virginia Cavalry, of Brig. Gen. W.H.F. "Rooney" Lee's brigade. The trooper, whose regiment saw action on the Confederate left, poses with a Colt Army Model 1860 revolver.

Buford's force made up the right wing of Pleasonton's plan, and the cavalry corps commander would travel with this wing himself.

At Brandy Station, Buford was to be joined by Brig. Gen. David Gregg's 3rd Cavalry Division, which was to cross the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, located about eight miles below Beverly Ford. Also crossing Kelly's Ford as part of Gregg's left wing was the 2nd Cavalry Division under Frenchman Colonel Alfred Duffie and an infantry brigade under Brig. Gen. David Russell. Once across the Rappahannock, Duffie was to take his division and ride to Stevensburg to protect Buford's and Gregg's left flank as they headed to Culpepper and attacked the Rebel cavalry. Only as the Union cavalrymen were to brutally learn, Stuart and his horse soldiers were not at Culpepper, but rather five miles closer at Brandy Station.

After a hot, dusty ride, Gregg's 3rd Cavalry Division reached Kelly's Ford and encamped about a mile from the ford after dark. With the Rebels nearby, extra precautions were taken, no fires were lit, and the men ate a cold meal. Gregg ordered that the horses were to remain saddled and bridled. The troopers, trying to catch some sleep, had to loop the reins around their arms.

Around midnight, Buford's men bivouacked about a mile or two above Beverly's Ford out of sight from Rebel pickets. With no campfires allowed, the men dined on cold ham and hardtack before grabbing a couple of hours of sleep. At 2 AM the horse soldiers were quietly awakened from their short slumber and ordered to mount their horses. Once mounted, they rode toward the ford.

A gray dawn began to appear, casting strange shadows on the landscape when the 1st Cavalry Division reached the ford, which was shrouded in a thick fog. Sitting on his gray horse smoking a pipe, Buford watched as his troopers splashed into the 3½-foot-deep ford and crossed over in columns of four around 4:30 AM. Alabama born Colonel Benjamin F. Davis led the 1st Brigade across the ford first with the 8th New York Cavalry spearheading the way.

Rebel vedettes spotted the bluecoats and thundered back to the picket reserve, their revolvers blazing to sound the alarm. The 30 sleepy-eyed men who made up the picket reserve from the 6th Virginia Cavalry of Jones's brigade quickly mounted up. Their commander, Captain Bruce Gibson, dispatched two men to gallop back to tell Jones of the Yankees coming. "Keep cool, men," Gibson told his pickets, adding, "and shoot to kill." He then led the small band of horsemen forward to slow down the Federal onslaught.

Gibson's pickets let loose a volley at close range into the advancing 8th New York Cavalry, emptying a number of saddles. The Federal advance was momentarily turned back, but the main body soon came up, forcing Gibson and his men to fall back. Davis's brigade pressed them hard toward the camp of Stuart's Horse Artillery about a mile and half from Beverly Ford. Pushing through the trees and to an open plateau, the bluecoats spotted the Rebel artillery in an open woods.

Yankee bullets zipped in over the blankets of the Confederate artillerymen. The men quickly scrambled to their feet and dashed for their 600 horses and mules that were pastured nearby. While most of the men harnessed their animals and limbered them up, quick-thinking Captain James Hart of the Washington Artillery of South Carolina rolled one of his guns out onto the road with the help of a handful of men. The Blakely gun then began hammering the Federal horsemen with canister. Another gun was soon rolled into action and added its firepower against the Yankees, buying the Confederate artillerymen precious time to get their guns to safety.

Major Cabell E. Flournoy, commander of the 6th Virginia, quickly thundered onto the scene with 150 horse soldiers, some of them without coats and saddles. They pushed past the retreating Confederate guns and crashed into the 8th New York. Sabers slashed and revolvers crashed in the bloody and fierce fight, which initially pushed back the 8th New York. Bluecoat help soon arrived, and outnumbered and suffering about 30 casualties, Flournoy was forced to fall back.

Lieutenant R.O. Allen of the 6th Virginia quickly turned his horse around when he spotted Colonel Davis about 75 yards ahead of his men. Davis was turned in the saddle waving his men

onward yelling, "Stand firm, 8th New York!" Sensing something wrong, he turned to see Allen coming toward him. Davis swung at Allen with his saber, but the Confederate swung to the side of his horse and missed the blow. Then Allen fired his revolver, putting a bullet into Davis's brain and killing him.

The 7th Virginia Cavalry had arrived along with Jones and entered the fray. While the blue and gray horsemen attacked and counterattacked along the Beverly Ford Road and surrounding woods, it was becoming clear to Buford and Pleasanton that the enemy cavalry stood between them and Culpepper Court House. The 8th Illinois Cavalry of Davis's 1st Brigade, now under the command of Major William McClure, hit the two Virginia cavalry regiments hard, managing to finally push them out of the woods.

With Hart's two guns helping to cover their retreat, Stuart's Horse Artillery took up position on a ridge near Emily Gee's brick house and east of the St. James Church. In front of the Rebel guns lay about 800 yards of open terrain to the southern edge of the woods, where the 8th Illinois soon made its appearance and came under Confederate artillery fire. Then the 12th Virginia Cavalry of Jones's brigade slammed into the Federals. The bluecoats managed to drive off the Rebels only to be hit by two more units from Jones's brigade, the 11th Virginia Cavalry Regiment and the 35th Virginia Cavalry Battalion. The Illinois boys were quickly reinforced by the 8th New York and 3rd Indiana Cavalry of their own brigade. The Rebels eventually got the worst of it and were forced to fall back near the artillery holding the ridge.

Back at Fleetwood Hill, Stuart became aware of the fighting at Beverly Ford when he heard the gunfire and had been informed of the Yankee's crossing the ford by a hard-riding courier dispatched by Jones. Stuart ordered his camp taken down and the headquarters and supply wagons

"HUNDREDS OF GLITTERING SABERS INSTANTLY LEAPED FROM THEIR SCABBARDS, GLEAMED AND FLASHED IN THE MORNING SUN, THEN CLASHED WITH METALLIC RING, SEARCHING FOR HUMAN BLOOD, WHILE HUNDREDS OF LITTLE PUFFS OF WHITE SMOKE GRACEFULLY ROSE THROUGH THE BALMY JUNE AIR FROM DISCHARGING FIREARMS."

sent to Culpepper Court House. Couriers were sent to Hampton, Rooney Lee, and Munford to ride toward the sound of the guns. Orders also were sent to Robertson to watch the other fords, especially Kelly's Ford.

With Rebel resistance stiffening, Buford brought up the two infantry regiments of Ames's brigade. He ordered the 124th New York Infantry to take up position at the edge of the woods on the west side of the Beverly Ford Road, while the 86th New York Infantry was put on the east side of the road. To the left of the 86th, most of the 1st Brigade, except the 8th Illinois, took up position. Held in reserve was the small 2nd Brigade. Buford's artillery was also brought up and had some difficulty deploying due to the trees.

Buford ordered Major Robert Morris Jr., commander of the 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry of the Reserve Brigade, to clear the woods of any remaining Rebel skirmishers. As Morris move forward with his men, any remaining Rebels soon scrambled back to their own lines. Emerging at the edge of the woods, Morris led his men in a charge across the open ground toward the Confederate guns and cavalry near the St. James Church.

"We dashed at them," recounted an officer in the 6th Pennsylvania, "squadrons front with drawn sabers, and we flew along—our men yelling like demons—grape and canister were poured into our left flank and a storm of rifle bullets on our front." As the cavalrymen galloped toward the Rebels' guns, they had to leap three ditches, which sent some riders and mounts crumbling into a heap. Morris's horse went down in one of the ditches, hit by canister, and the major was captured. Heavily outnumbered, the bluecoats fought desperately with their sabers and pistols, some managing to reach a Confederate battery before the 35th Virginia hammered into their front, while the 11th Virginia and 12th Virginia hit their right flank. Seeing the desperate situation the Pennsylvania boys were in, the 6th U.S. Cavalry of the Reserve Brigade sent four squadrons galloping to support them.

"Hundreds of glittering sabers instantly leaped from their scabbards, gleamed and flashed in the morning sun, then clashed with metallic ring, searching for human blood, while hundreds of little puffs of white smoke gracefully rose through the balmy June air from discharging firearms," said a Confederate artillerymen watching the cavalry fight near his gun. The Federals managed to fight their way out and rode hard for the safety of their own lines.

After driving off Rebel pressure on his right flank, Buford secured his line by anchoring his right on the Hazel River and his left along the Rappahannock. Meanwhile, the Confederates were strengthening their own line of defense with the arrival of the bulk of Hampton's brigade. Stuart, who had arrived on the scene after leaving his adjutant, Major Henry McClellan and a few couriers and signalmen maintaining contact by flags with Confederate headquarters, ordered Hampton's men to take up position to the right of Jones and the Gee House.

The Confederates went on the offensive. Hampton quickly sent out dismounted skirmishers against dismounted Yankee troopers under Colonel Thomas Devin and spread out infantrymen. A fierce firefight erupted on Buford's left. Rooney Lee's brigade, meanwhile, after driving off some Union resistance, had taken up position north of Jones along a stone wall between the Cunningham and Green farms.

With Lee's dismounted horse soldiers holding the wall and mounted troops in reserve, they had a good field of fire on the right flank of Buford's position. Buford ordered the understrength 5th U.S. Cavalry to retake the wall. Leaving one squadron to protect a section of Captain William Graham's battery, two squadrons of dismounted Union troopers managed to capture a portion of the wall and beat back Confederate counterattacks. Running low on ammunition, the Federal troops fell back to help protect Graham's battery.

Union artillery now opened up on Beckham's guns. In the artillery duel that erupted, the Yankees got the worse of it, but the firing did allow Buford to reorganize an attack against Lee's men holding the stone wall. It was thrown back. In the lull that followed, guns were heard booming near Fleetwood Hill. It was now about 11:30 AM, and Buford's men had been fighting for almost six hours waiting for Gregg to arrive. He finally had.

Gregg had a long early morning waiting impatiently for the Frenchman to arrive with his men. Duffie and his 2nd Division had a long, tiring ride for Kelly's Ford on June 8 and had stopped to rest briefly. Reveille was sounded at 1 AM, and the horse soldiers were soon in the saddle again. In the darkness and fog of the early morning, Duffie's guide got lost, forcing the column to do some backtracking. Finally, Duffie made his appearance sometime around 5:30 AM, and Gregg finally got his left wing moving.

Using two collapsible canvas pontoon boats

After crossing Beverly Ford before dawn on June 9, 1863, Brig. Gen. John Buford's reinforced First Division pushed back the Confederate left flank more than a mile.

that Hooker had sent with Gregg's left wing, a small detachment from Russell's ad hoc brigade of infantry slipped across Kelly's Ford. It quickly drove off Confederate pickets and secured the ford. A squadron of the 1st New Jersey Cavalry then splashed across the ford and captured vedettes belonging to Robertson's brigade. With the ford secure, Gregg's left wing began crossing the Rappahannock about 6 AM. It would take about three hours before all his men had crossed, putting them way behind schedule.

Once across the river, Brandy Station lay only seven miles away by road. The country that lay in front of Gregg was prime cavalry terrain, mostly flat and open. Although the sound of the guns could be heard at St. James Church, Gregg did not ride toward it. Instead, he stuck to the original plan and traveled by road toward Brandy Station. Meanwhile, Duffie's division was sent toward Stevensburg to protect Gregg's southern flank.

Besides skirmishing with the Federal infantry, Robertson did little to oppose Gregg's advance on Brandy Station. He sent word of the Yankee advance and then would do little during the rest of the battle.

Upon hearing of Gregg's advance, Jones sent a messenger to Stuart to warn him that the Yankees might reach Brandy Station from the south. Stuart replied, "Tell General Jones to attend the Yankees in his front, and I'll watch the flanks." Upon hearing this, Jones snapped back, "So he thinks they ain't coming, does he? Well, let him alone; he'll damn soon see for himself."

Leading Duffie's advance on Stevensburg was Major Benjamin Stanhope with two squadrons of his 6th Ohio Cavalry. Stanhope's advance pushed into the little town of Stevensburg and soon had its hands full when Confederate cavalry was spotted coming from the north. Stanhope sent word to Duffie of the Rebel advance, but the Frenchman did not speed up his division. Instead, he ordered Stanhope to hold Stevensburg and if forced out to retreat slowly.

Leading the Confederate column of horse soldiers, which consisted of the 2nd South Carolina Cavalry, was Colonel Matthew Butler. Butler had about 200 men and was part of Hampton's brigade, which had been posted along with the 4th Virginia Cavalry of Munford's brigade and a lone gun in reserve at Brandy Station. Butler sent Lt. Col. Frank Hampton, younger brother of Wade Hampton, with a small detachment into Stevensburg to establish an outpost and delay the Yankees. Upon reaching Stevensburg, Hampton helped hurry along some of Stanhope's men, who had evacuated the town.

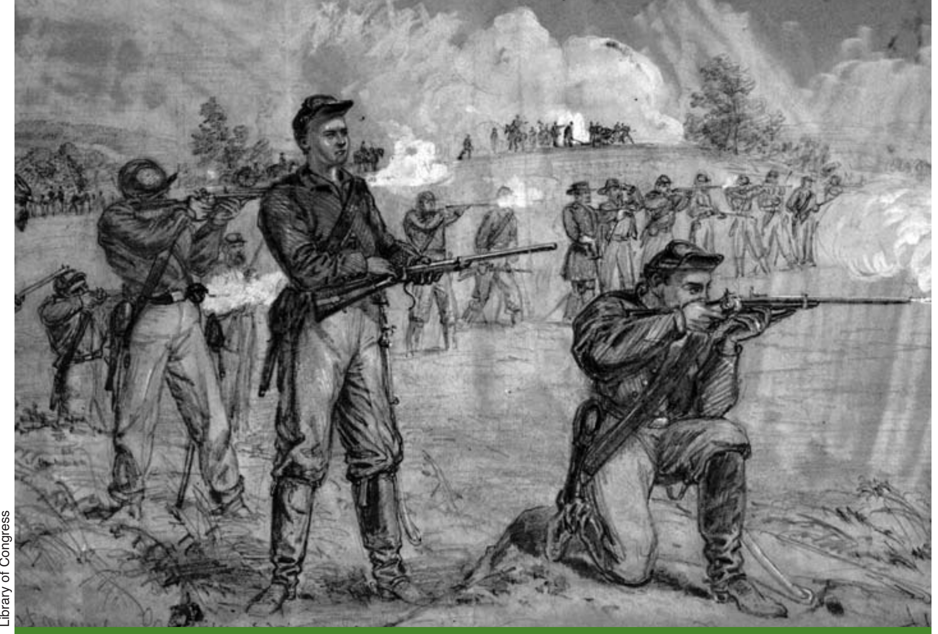
To block the Yankee advance toward Culpepper and screen Maj. Gen. James Longstreet's I Corps encamped about halfway to the town from Stevensburg, Butler deployed his force east of the Stevensburg-Brandy Station road, just outside of town. The wooded terrain of the area helped hide Butler's weak numbers as his men were spread out over a mile. Butler was soon informed that reinforcements were on the way in the form of the 4th Virginia Cavalry under Colonel William Wickham.

When Duffie arrived around 11 AM, he sent in mounted skirmishers to determine the strength of the Rebels. Without orders, Colonel Luigi di Cesnola quickly charged with his 1st Brigade, with the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry leading the way into Hampton's detachment holding Stevensburg. The Confederates here were overpowered and forced to flee. Lt. Col. Hampton was mortally wounded. The Union horse soldiers soon smashed into the 4th Virginia, which had just arrived and was forming for battle. "It was a regular steeplechase" recalled a Union cavalryman, "through ditches, over fences, through underbrush." The graybacks scrambled for safety, rallied temporarily, only to retreat again with some of them not stopping until they reached Longstreet's men.

With his right flank collapsed and fleeing, Butler had no choice but to retreat toward Mountain Run, a small stream with steep banks about three miles south of Brandy Station. Duffie and his men rode into Stevensburg and then headed north on the road that led to Brandy Station. The Frenchman could see Butler attempting to make a stand at Mountain Run. Duffie's artillery commander, Lieutenant Alexander Pennington, quickly brought his battery into action against the lone gun with Butler. One of Pennington's rounds smashed into Butler and another officer. Butler was badly wounded, losing his foot, while the other officer died later that night. Butler passed command to Major Thomas Lipscomb, telling him to fight and fall back slowly toward Culpepper.

As Duffie prepared to charge the Rebel position, a courier reached him from Gregg telling him to "return and join the 3rd Division, on the road to Brandy Station." Duffie was to head back the way he came on the Kelly's Ford Road and join Gregg at Brandy Station. Gregg was in wild fight at Fleetwood Hill and could use the Frenchman's help.

Watching the Yankees under Gregg advancing on Fleetwood Hill was Major McClellan, the staff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ABOVE: Dismounted troopers from the 1st Maine Cavalry of Colonel Judson Kilpatrick's First Brigade of Brig. Gen. David Gregg's Third Division form a skirmish line on the Union left flank. The 1st Maine hit the 6th Virginia Cavalry hard in the flank before Confederate reinforcements appeared forcing Gregg's Division to retire. OPPOSITE: The 2nd U.S. Cavalry of the Reserve brigade of Brig. Gen. John Buford's First Division, is shown in action near Beverly's Ford in a period sketch by Edwin Forbes. Buford conducted a fighting withdrawal as he took his command back across the ford at the end of the day-long battle.

officer Stuart left behind. He knew the Confederates were in serious trouble if the Yankees captured the hill, but as it was he had little at hand to defend the key terrain. After quickly sending a rider to warn Stuart, McClellan spotted a lone 12-pounder Napoleon gun near the foot of the hill. McClellan had the gun's commander, Lieutenant John Carter of Chew's battery, bring his artillery piece to the top of the hill beside the Miller House. He then ordered Carter to fire slowly on the column of advancing Yankees.

British soldier of fortune Colonel Sir Percy Wyndham was leading his 2nd Brigade as the advance guard of Gregg's 3rd Division when Carter's lone gun fired on his command. Wyndham halted his advance just below the Orange and Alexandria Railroad tracks and deployed his brigade. Possibly fearing the Rebels had set a trap, he sent a message to Gregg and then waited to hear from his commander before advancing. In the meantime, Wyndham ordered up a section of guns from Captain Joseph Martin's 6th New York Independent Battery, which unlimbered and fired on the Rebel gun.

Carter's lone gun bought precious time for the Confederates. When the courier from McClellan arrived at St. James Church and informed Stuart of the Yankees near Fleetwood Hill, the Confederate cavalry commander told artillery officer Captain Hart to investigate. Hart had not gone far when a second messenger from McClellan arrived and told Stuart, "General, the Yankees are at Brandy." Stuart quickly ordered the 12th Virginia, 35th Virginia, and a section of horse artillery toward Brandy Station. Stuart quickly followed and soon ordered Jones and Hampton to ride to face the new enemy threat. Rooney Lee's men and the dismounted skirmishers were left at St. James Church to deal with Buford.

The second section of Martin's battery was brought up to add firepower to the other section, which was down to one gun as its second was disabled due to a stuck round in the bore, and support Wyndham as he was finally ordered to advance on the key high ground. Wyndham, riding with the 1st New Jersey Cavalry, led his brigade forward. With drawn sabers and a wild shout, the bluecoats dashed across the railroad tracks and thundered over the field toward Fleetwood Hill.

McClellan, who was watching the Yankees, knew help was needed now. Turning to the east, he spotted the 12th Virginia Cavalry, under Colonel Asher Harman, riding to his aid. McClellan quickly swung into the saddle and galloped toward the horse soldiers, urging them to hurry. With his gun out of ammunition, Carter was withdrawing from the advancing bluecoats, who were 50 yards from the crest of the hill, when Harman and his men arrived.

The 12th Virginia slammed into the 1st New Jersey. In the swirling, choking dust, gray-, butternut-, and blue-clad horse soldiers blazed away with revolvers and slashed with sabers. The 12th Virginia was driven off, as was the 35th Virginia when it entered the fray.

"The heights of Brandy and the spot where our headquarters had been were perfectly swarming with Yankees, while the men of one of our brigades were scattered wide over the plateau, chased in all directions by their enemies," recalled Major Heros von Borcke, a Prussian serving as Stuart's aide.

As the Rebel cavalry rallied for another charge, elements of the 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry joined the New Jersey horse soldiers. Then the Confederates charged again, this time with the 6th Virginia, which had just arrived after being sent by Hampton (the 6th Virginia was part of Jones's brigade but was fighting with Hampton back at St. James Church). The New Jersey cavalrymen found themselves in a bad way as they were nearly surrounded in a sea of gray and butternut. To break free they desperately charged two Confederate batteries that had arrived on the scene. The Rebel gunners put up a determined stand as one artillerymen shouted, "Boys, let's die over the guns!"

Fighting grew in intensity as the 1st New Jersey attempted to break out of the Rebel cavalry and guns. Three times their guidon was captured, and three times it was recaptured, the last time by a small band from the 1st Pennsylvania, which was fighting to the left of the 1st New Jersey. When the 1st New Jersey finally limped away exhausted, its commander, Lt. Col. Vigil Brodrick, lay dead, while Wyndham had a bullet in his leg.

Martin's battery, meanwhile, moved its guns to the southwest side of the bottom of the hill and opened up on the Confederates. The Federals soon had unwelcomed visitors with the 6th Virginia charging toward them. The New Yorkers blasted away with canister, but the Rebels kept coming and overran them. The Federal gunners fought desperately with revolvers and rammers, but it was not until the arrival of some Union cavalry that the Virginians retreated back up the hill.

As the fighting raged on and around Fleetwood Hill, Martin and his surviving artillerymen again fired into the Southern horsemen. This time the 35th Virginia overran the guns and attempted to turn them on the Yankees, but the arrival of two companies of the 1st Maryland Cavalry changed their minds. The Virginians retreated. So did Martin, whose three guns were useless now as one had a burst barrel and the other two were spiked or wedged. With his artillery horses dead and only six men out of 36 unharmed, Martin abandoned his guns.

Two Rebel batteries arrived on Fleetwood Hill, quickly unlimbered, and hammered away at the Yankees. Gregg soon ordered Colonel Judson Kilpatrick to attack with his fresh 1st

Brigade. A lieutenant in the 10th New York Cavalry, which was charging on the right, recalled meeting a large body of Rebels: "The Rebel line that swept down upon us came in splendid order, and when the two lines were about to close in, they opened a rapid fire upon us. What then followed were indescribable clashing and slashing, banging and yelling."

Wade Hampton arrived, and it was Cobb's Legion of Georgia Cavalry from his brigade that hit the New Yorkers hard, causing them to retreat off the hill. The 1st South Carolina Cavalry of Hampton's brigade flanked the 2nd New York Cavalry, which fought briefly before fleeing as well. The South Carolinians were in hot pursuit, hacking down any stragglers.

Seeing two of his regiments falling back, Kilpatrick led the 1st Maine Cavalry into action. The 1st Maine ferociously slammed into the 6th Virginia with sabers hacking and slashing. In the brutal fighting, Kilpatrick killed a Rebel officer he knew from West Point and disliked. Despite the success of the 1st Maine's charge, it was only temporary. Hampton's Jeff Davis Legion attacking east of the railroad tracks and other Confederates attacking west of it forced Gregg's men to retreat. Hampton soon called off the attack when Stuart held back cavalrymen to secure the heights. The 11th Virginia briefly followed Gregg's retreating division, which had been joined by Duffie's much needed troops, who had arrived too late to help. The fight for Fleetwood Hill was over.

While Gregg had his hands full at Fleetwood Hill, Buford began to press Rooney Lee, although he had been ordered by Pleasonton to remain on the defensive. "Do you see those people down there? They've got to be driven out," Buford told some officers from the 2nd Massachusetts and 3rd Wisconsin Regiments in Ames's brigade. The infantry officers could see Lee's sharpshooters and some dismounted horse soldiers from the 10th Virginia Cavalry and 2nd North Carolina Cavalry well positioned behind a stone wall and thought they doubled their own numbers. An officer said as much to Buford, who replied "Well, I didn't order you, mind; but if you can flank them, go in, and drive them off."

Several companies of infantry supported by 10 sharpshooters eased their way toward the Rebels' northern flank, using whatever cover they could find, and managed to get close to the enemy and fired into them unexpectedly. Lee's brigade poured lead into the Federals, who scrambled back to safety.

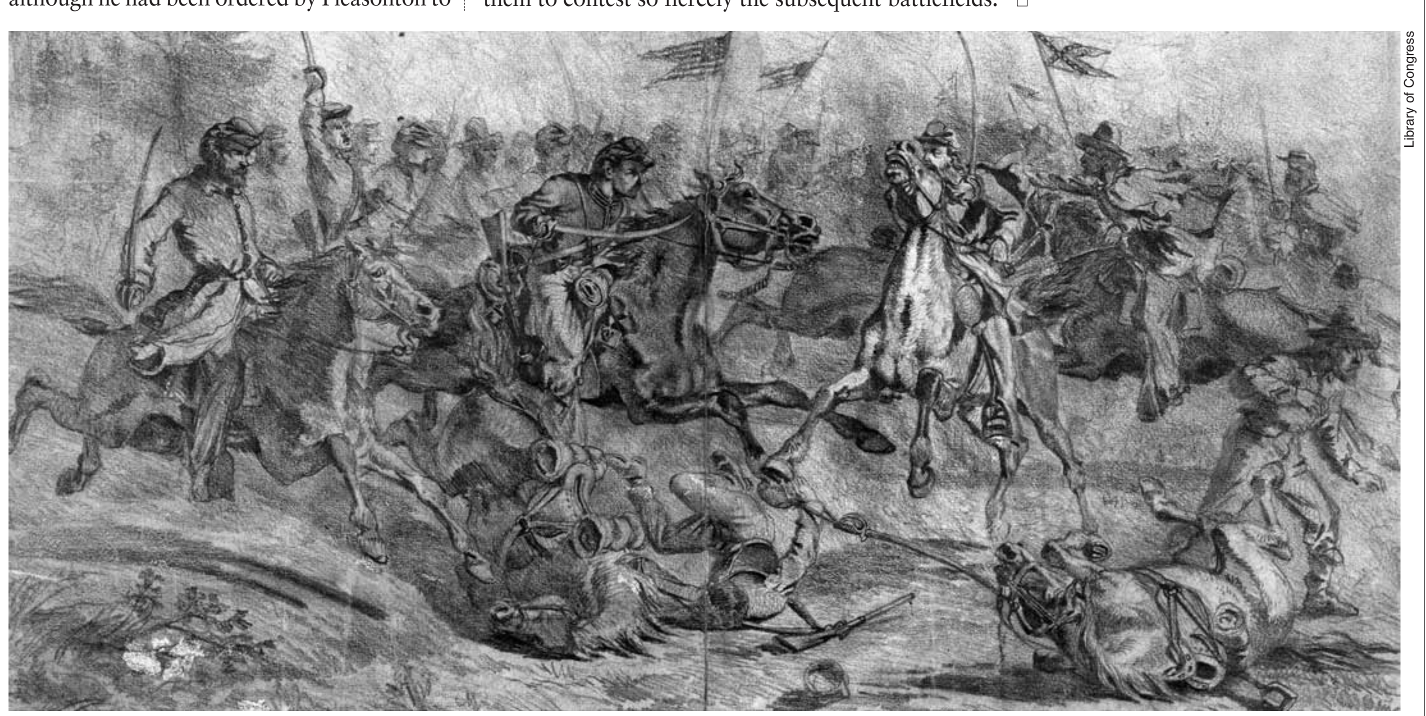
Buford now ordered in his battered 6th Pennsylvania and the 2nd U.S. Cavalry. Enduring Confederate rifle and artillery fire, the Pennsylvanians did well until slammed into by the 9th Virginia Cavalry. In the wild melee that unfolded, the 6th Pennsylvania was shoved back until the 2nd U.S., led by Captain Wesley Merritt, entered the fight, driving into the flank of the Virginians and chasing them back over Yew Ridge, west of the stone wall. Then Rooney Lee counterattacked with the 2nd North Carolina, 13th Virginia, and 10th Virginia, shoving the Yankees off the ridge and back to their own lines.

In the confusion, Merritt and an aide approached a knot of Confederate officers and told the leading officer he was his prisoner. The officer was Rooney Lee, who took a swing with his saber at young Merritt's head. Merritt managed to parry most of the blow, although he lost his hat and suffered a slight wound. Both Merritt and his aide managed to escape a volley of pistol shots as they galloped to safety. Rooney Lee would not be as lucky; he was wounded in the leg in the fighting around Yew Ridge.

In the end, the Federals were forced to fall back as Confederate reinforcements under Colonel Munford finally arrived. The biggest cavalry fight in North America had ended. With reports of Confederate infantry arriving to support Stuart, Pleasonton ordered Buford to withdraw around 5 PM. Conducting a fighting withdrawal, Buford took his command back across Beverly Ford with no trouble as the Confederates did not pursue.

It had been a bloody day for the cavalry of both sides as the Federals suffered almost 900 killed, wounded, and captured; the Confederates had roughly 600 casualties. Although the battle was a Confederate victory as the Federal cavalry had failed in its objective of dispersing Stuart's forces and retreated from the field, the bluecoats had done well.

McClellan, Stuart's staff officer on Fleetwood Hill, would later write that the battle had "made the Federal cavalry." He continued, "Up to that time confessedly inferior to the Southern horsemen, they gained on this day that confidence in themselves and in their commanders which enabled them to contest so fiercely the subsequent battlefields." □



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SWEDISH GAMBLE AT NARVA

Swedish King Charles XII set out to force the Russians to raise their siege of Narva. It became a defining moment for the young monarch.

BY ERIC NIDEROST

Just after dawn on the morning of November 20, 1700, two figures stood atop Hermansburg, a small rise that overlooked the fortress town of Narva in the Baltic province of Estonia. One of the men was plainly a high-ranking officer, an older man whose elaborate uniform and curly wig proclaimed his importance. Yet, curiously, he was deferential to his tall companion, a pink-faced teenager who swept the horizon with his telescope.

The youth was King Charles XII of Sweden, about to engage in the first major battle of his career. Charles was about five feet, nine inches tall, but his slender build made him seem even taller. He had an oval face, hawk nose, and thick lips, redeemed by piercing blue eyes that commanded respect. The young king was dressed in a simple blue uniform with brass buttons that marched down the front of his tunic; no sign of royalty, no gold braid or order of chivalry, was evident.

But perhaps the most unusual feature was his closely cropped blond hair, strands of which could be seen poking out from under a simple black tricorne. This was still the age of Louis XIV, where elaborately curled, full-bottomed wigs were not only standard but also almost mandatory. Charles left his wig

in Stockholm, vowing never to wear it again.

Indeed, Charles had more on his mind than court fashion. Sweden was being assailed by a coalition of powerful enemies determined to dismantle an empire built over the previous 75 years by piety and blood. The Swedish king already had won his first laurels by knocking Denmark out of the war, but in facing the Russians he confronted his most daunting challenge.

The king lowered his telescope and spoke to the older man beside him, Field Marshal Carl Gustav Rehnskjold. Charles always spoke with laconic brevity—clear, concise, and to the point. Narva was a major Swedish fortress, and it was being besieged by a Russian army of 35,000 to 40,000 men. Charles had no more than about 9,000 hungry and exhausted effectives.

There, spread out below the two men's feet, was a classic siege operation at the dawn of the 18th century. It was like an engineer's plan brought to three-dimensional life. The Russian trenches encircled Narva in a sweeping arc that was some four miles in length. But the besieger had also constructed a second line of fortifications, this time facing out, not in, designed to keep any possible relief force at bay.

A cold rain was falling, and darkening clouds and plunging temperatures brought the chilling promise of a snowstorm. How could such a relative handful of Swedes triumph against a well-entrenched enemy four times its size? Looking down at the Russian host, many Swedish officers must have felt a chill that was entirely unrelated to the weather. But to Charles, the dire situation was a tonic that brought excitement, not despair.

The weather was worsening, but Charles took little notice. "We will attack," the king said to Rehnskjold, leaving the older man to work out a suitable plan to carry out his royal wishes. Nothing less than Sweden's status as a major European power hung in the balance. If Charles was defeated or destroyed, Sweden faced ruin and even possible foreign invasion. The Battle of Narva was about to begin.

The coming contest had its roots in the growth of Swedish power in the 17th century. By 1700, Sweden was the "Mistress of the North," an imperial power whose greatness was both feared and admired. The Baltic was a "Swedish Lake," since most of the islands and territories that bordered that great sea were controlled by Stockholm.

The Swedish empire included Finland and the provinces of Karelia, Estonia, Ingria, and Livonia. It also had footholds in northern Germany, with the most prominent being western Pomerania and the seaports of Settin, Stralsund, and Wismar. Sweden had a population of about 1.5 million, but it did possess probably the finest army in Europe at the time.

The Battle of Narva was a resounding victory for Swedish King Charles XII over his Russian foe. The young monarch is shown at lower right in Alexander von Kotzebue's romantic painting.

© Age Fotostock

The Swedish infantry, magnificent in their blue uniforms with yellow facings, were armed with the latest flintlock muskets. They also had a relatively new innovation, the socket bayonet, which allowed a musket to be fired when attached, unlike the common plug bayonet that was jammed into the muzzle.

Swedish soldiers were tough and hearty peasants, accustomed to the icy blasts of Scandinavian winters. They shared the king's pious fatalism. Charles once said in effect that a man should not worry about being killed in battle; you would not die unless God decreed it was your time to die. This rough assurance gave the Swedish soldier unbounded strength and confidence.

Swedish power brought enemies as well as friends. Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, cast covetous eyes on some of Sweden's Baltic lands. Frederick IV of Denmark, another potential foe, wanted to reclaim some territory his country lost to Sweden earlier in the century.

But Russia was going to be Sweden's most dangerous enemy, though few believed this in 1700. After a long slumber lasting several centuries, the Russian bear was at last awakening from its self-imposed hibernation. Czar Peter admired the West and was determined to modernize a still largely medieval country. The Western calendar, Western dress, and above all Western technology were introduced to a backward nation, still drowsy from its long semi-isolation.

Peter, a colossus in body (he was six feet, seven inches tall), knew that Russia needed an ice-free port, a "window to the West," if the country was ever to be accepted as an equal among the great powers of Europe. Such a seaport would be an umbilical cord to a modernizing nation, bringing in nourishing fresh ideas, trade, and technology to a country that was still a developing infant in Western terms.

The Russians were blocked from going south—that is gaining access to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean—by the weakening but still powerful Ottoman Empire. That left the north, but the Baltic coast was controlled by Sweden. The Swedish army was probably the best in Europe at the time, but if the Swedes were simultaneously attacked on several fronts, their military power might well be diluted and ultimately neutralized.

The secret allies began clandestine preparations for war. They were encouraged by the fact that Sweden's new ruler, the 18-year-old King Charles XII, seemed a stripling youth. They misread their man. He was pious and moral, athletic and highly intelligent. Above

ASSASSINATION OR CASUALTY OF WAR?

Charles XII remains a controversial figure to this day. On one hand, he is praised for his brilliant skills on the battlefield and his courage and resolution in the face of overwhelming odds. On the other hand, he also was responsible for prolonging a war that in the end almost ruined his country. Even his death is clouded in controversy: Was he killed by the enemy, or was he assassinated?

After Charles's catastrophic defeat at Poltava, he managed to escape the debacle by seeking refuge in Turkey. After a few years with the Ottomans, the king dashed across Europe and returned to Sweden after an absence of 14 years. Sweden was almost bled white by the long war, but Charles was determined to recoup the nation's fortunes. Somehow he scraped together another army and marched to Norway, then occupied by his inveterate enemies, the Danes.

The Swedish army began to lay siege to Fredriksten, a fortress just across the Danish border. On November 27, 1718, Charles led 200 grenadiers to take Gyldenlove, an outwork of the fortress, personally climbing a scaling ladder in the face of Danish fire.

On the evening of November 30, the king went forward to inspect the progress of the siege trenches that were being dug under the cover of night. Charles decided to take a look over the parapet, exposing himself to possible enemy fire. After some time observing, the staff just below him heard a "special sound" as if a "stone had been thrown with great force into the mud."

To their horror, the Swedish officers realized the king had been shot—a ball had entered his left temple and exited the right part of his skull. He was killed instantly. It seemed clear cut—he had been hit by a projectile of some sort from the Danes. But as the years passed, questions arose. The king was determined to continue the fighting—he even once spoke of a "40-year war." Maybe he was assassinated so that Sweden could sue for peace.

In a quest to uncover the truth, the king's body has been exhumed in 1746, 1859, and 1917. Predictably, the 1917 exhumation was the most scientific and forensically detailed. An autopsy was performed and X-rays and photos taken. If the shot had been fired from the Danish fortress or an outwork, then Charles would have been hit from the left. If there had been a Swedish assassin, he would have been struck from the right.

Examination of the king's head clearly shows that the presumed entry wound on the left is significantly larger than the exit wound on the right. That would argue that the fatal bullet came from the right, that is, from an assassin. Yet, forensic studies have shown that, in certain cases, an entrance wound can be larger than an exit wound.

Studies have also shown that Danish shells from the period contained balls of the same dimension as Charles's fatal shot—but some records seem to indicate the guns capable of firing this type of ammunition were silent that night. Or were they? The mystery only deepens.

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Swedish troops bear home the body of fallen King Charles XII, who was killed by shrapnel during the Siege of Fredriksten in 1718.

The hat Charles wore that night shows a hole on the left "Danish" side—but assassination buffs have discounted this, saying it depended on how he was wearing the hat. Ballistics tests have ruled out assassination—at least according to some. Grape balls have low impact and velocity and can produce large entrance wounds and small exit wounds.

Many also believe the fatal shot came from Overberget, a Danish outwork, not the main fortress itself. It just so happens that Overberget was on Charles's left. It would have been hard, though not impossible, for an assassin to shoot the king because the night was so dark. Shellbursts did light the sky, and the Danes had hung out wreaths of burning pitch to further illuminate the siege. Even so, such light would have been flickering and shadowy, hardly good conditions for an accurate shot.

There have been calls for Charles to be exhumed once again with the hope that 21st-century science can finally solve the mystery. Until such permission is granted, the mystery will remain. Was he assassinated? Perhaps not. So far the jury is still out on this coldest of cold cases. □

all, he was a born soldier, reveling in military hardships and dangers.

Hostilities began when Augustus the Strong invaded Swedish Livonia without a declaration of war. The Danes also were on the march, invading Duke of Holstein-Gottorp Frederick IV's territory just south of their own country. The duke was a Swedish ally and also a cousin of Charles XII.

Charles took the news calmly, but inwardly he must have been seething with righteous indignation. He called for his council and announced his intentions: "I have resolved," Charles said, "never to start an unjust war, but also never ending a just war without overcoming my enemy. Augustus has broken his word. Our cause, then, is just and God will help us."

Denmark would be the first target of Charles's offensive. The basic plan was to land troops on Zeeland, a Baltic island where Copenhagen is located. The main Danish army was tied up in Holstein-Gottorp, far to the south. If Charles could successfully land in Zeeland, he could take the Danish capital behind Frederick IV's back. The Danish king would be forced to sue for peace.

On June 16, 1700, the young Swedish king boarded his flagship *King Charles* at Karlskrona, the main Swedish naval base. Charles was scheduled to rendezvous with an Anglo-Dutch fleet, which was key to any success against the Danes. King William III of England, who was also ruler of the Netherlands, wanted a quick victory to stabilize the region. Only then could he focus on his main foe, Louis XIV of France.

But before the rendezvous could be completed and the two allied fleets joined, the Swedes had to pass through the Kattegat Sound, a treacherous channel some three miles long. Determined to prevent the allies from uniting, the Danish fleet lay close to the sound's main Baltic entrance. There were also dangerous shoals in the area, and well-placed Danish cannon added to the list of hazards.

There was one possibility, but Swedish Admiral Wachtmeister hesitated to order it. There was a secondary channel that was relatively unguarded, but its treacherous shoals made it a dangerous proposition. One or more of the Swedish warships might run aground, and that would also block further passage like a cork in a bottle.

Charles overruled his admiral's objections and ordered the Swedish fleet to enter the secondary channel. Three of the largest vessels had to be left behind—they drew too much water—but after some nail-biting moments the rest of the fleet got through.

The combined allied fleet now numbered 60 ships against 40 Danish men-of-war. The Danish fleet withdrew. There was nothing else it could do. On July 23, a Swedish landing force of some 4,000 men established a beachhead on Zeeland. Charles, impetuous as ever, jumped out of his boat before it touched shore, wading waist deep with drawn sword in hand.

More Swedish troops arrived, and in short order Copenhagen was under siege. Trenches and parallels were dug and the city bombarded. Frederick, hurrying back from the south, quickly capitulated. The Treaty of Travendal, signed August 18, 1700, was a complete triumph for Charles and his allies. Denmark was out of the war.

In the meantime, Peter had declared war on Sweden with the aim of recovering the lost provinces of Ingria and Karelia. As a first step, the czar would try to take Narva, a fortress in Estonia just over the border from Ingria. The actual Russian frontier was only 20 miles away, an easy march for an army of semi-raw recruits.

The Russian army was indeed new, hastily conscripted and trained in only a few months. The Streltsky, the old pre-reform Russian soldiers, had revolted a few years earlier and were ruthlessly exterminated. Only a few demoralized remnants remained. There were only four well-trained, modern regiments in the Russian army, the Guards regiments. The Lefort, Butursky, Preobrazhensky, and Semyonovsky would have to be the foundation on which the rest of the Russian forces would be built.

Moving quickly, Peter ordered that landowners, including monasteries and elements of the Orthodox Church, be taxed by providing serf peasants as recruits. The ranks were soon filled, but it took time to whip—sometimes literally—these illiterate serfs into shape as soldiers. Mastering the drills was one problem, and learning to load and fire muskets like automatons was another.

All: Wikipedia

LEFT TO RIGHT: Prince Ivan Trubetskoy, governor of Novgorod; Swedish King Charles XII; and Russian Czar Peter the Great. The Swedish king and the Russian czar were the principal antagonists in the Great Northern War, in which Russia contested Swedish supremacy in northeastern Europe.

The Russian officer corps was also relatively new, filled with courtiers more eager than helpful. At this stage his best officers were, with a few exceptions, foreigners with previous military experience. Peter's cavalry arm was adequate but unseasoned, but his artillery was impressive. Ironically, 300 cannons had been a gift from Charles XII, originally intended to be used against the Turks.

In mid-September, Prince Trubetskoy, governor of Novgorod, was ordered to march to Narva with an 8,000-man advance guard and invest the city. Field Marshal Fedor Golovin was tapped to command the main army, though, of course, Peter himself would loom large in any military decisions.

Narva was heavily fortified, with stout walls punctuated by bastions that radiated out like a glowing star, each bristling with cannon. The center of the town was typically Baltic German in style and architecture, with tree-lined streets, quaint gabled houses, and Lutheran churches whose steeples spiked the sky. The town nestled securely on the west bank of the Narva River, a meandering stream that was dotted with small islands.

Just across the river and linked to Narva by a bridge was the former Russian fortress of Ivangorod—now a Swedish outwork—a relic of the time when the area was a border frontier. It was plain that Narva was going to be a tough nut to crack.

Luckily, Peter had the services of General Ludwig von Hallert, a Saxon engineer. Hundreds of Russians were put to work digging trenches and creating siege lines. To guard against attack from the rear—Charles might try to relieve the invested fortress—a line of contravallation was also built to protect the besieging Russian army.

The contravallation line stretched for four miles and featured earthworks nine feet high with a trench six feet deep in front. The earthwork mounds were topped by *chevaux de frise*, logs whose tops had been carved to a point. Around 140 cannons protruded from the earthen ramparts, making an attacker's task that much more difficult.

In the meantime, Charles was mulling over future plans. Augustus the Strong was besieging Riga, and to Charles the Polish king was the most deceitful and wicked of his enemies. Charles longed for the day when he could punish the double-dealing Saxon. But it was fall, and winter comes early to these northern climes. The Swedes would have to cross the Baltic in a season notorious for autumnal gales.

Headstrong as always, Charles gave orders for the army to be transported to Livonia. He hoped to give Augustus a drubbing, but if that were not possible, he was flexible enough to turn north and deal with Peter at Narva. The Swedish fleet set sail on October 1, 1700, the ships packed with troops and supplies of war.

The fleet was about halfway through its journey when it was hit by a raging storm. Warships and transports were scattered, buffeted by high winds and raging, foam-flecked seas. Some managed to anchor off Courland and ride out the storm; others foundered and were lost. The transports were tossed about like a child's bathtub toys, injuring many cavalry horses. Charles himself was so seasick he could barely function.

On October 6, the battered Swedish fleet reached Pernau on the Bay of Riga. Ships were repaired, and once the storm was over fresh transports brought additional troops and artillery from Sweden. While his army rested and recovered, Charles learned that the siege of Riga had been lifted and that Augustus was in winter quarters. Cheated of his primary prey, Charles now turned his attention to the Russian siege of Narva, some 150 miles away.

Charles set up his headquarters at Wesenburg, drilling his men while he waited for additional troops to join him. Most of his officers thought an attempt to relieve Narva so late in the season was sheer madness. It was a sevenday march to Narva, through desolate country made even worse by a Russian scorched-earth policy. The land itself was full of bogs, and heavy rains were turning it into a sea of mud.

The officers also pointed out that there was but one road to the beleaguered town and that ran through three passes that were easily defended. Rumor also had it that the Russians had 80,000 men at Narva (actually closer to

© Marc Grieves

40,000). That meant the Swedes would be outnumbered eight to one.

Charles listened patiently, as he always did when matters of importance were discussed. When the last officer had his say, the king announced that, in spite of it all, they would march to Narva and engage the Russians as soon as possible. If Narva was taken, the Russians might well sweep on, taking much of Sweden's Baltic provinces.

"Surely God will protect us," Charles said," since our cause is righteous. Besides, with my brave blue boys behind me [a reference to their uniforms], I fear nothing." All arguments ceased—they would march to Narva as soon as it was practical.

But even Charles realized winter was fast coming on—he would march with the troops he had and not wait for reinforcements. That meant that the king had somewhere between 9,000 to 10,000 men, horse and foot, at his immediate disposal. The officers were still doubtful, and the rank and file still didn't know what to make of their teenaged monarch.

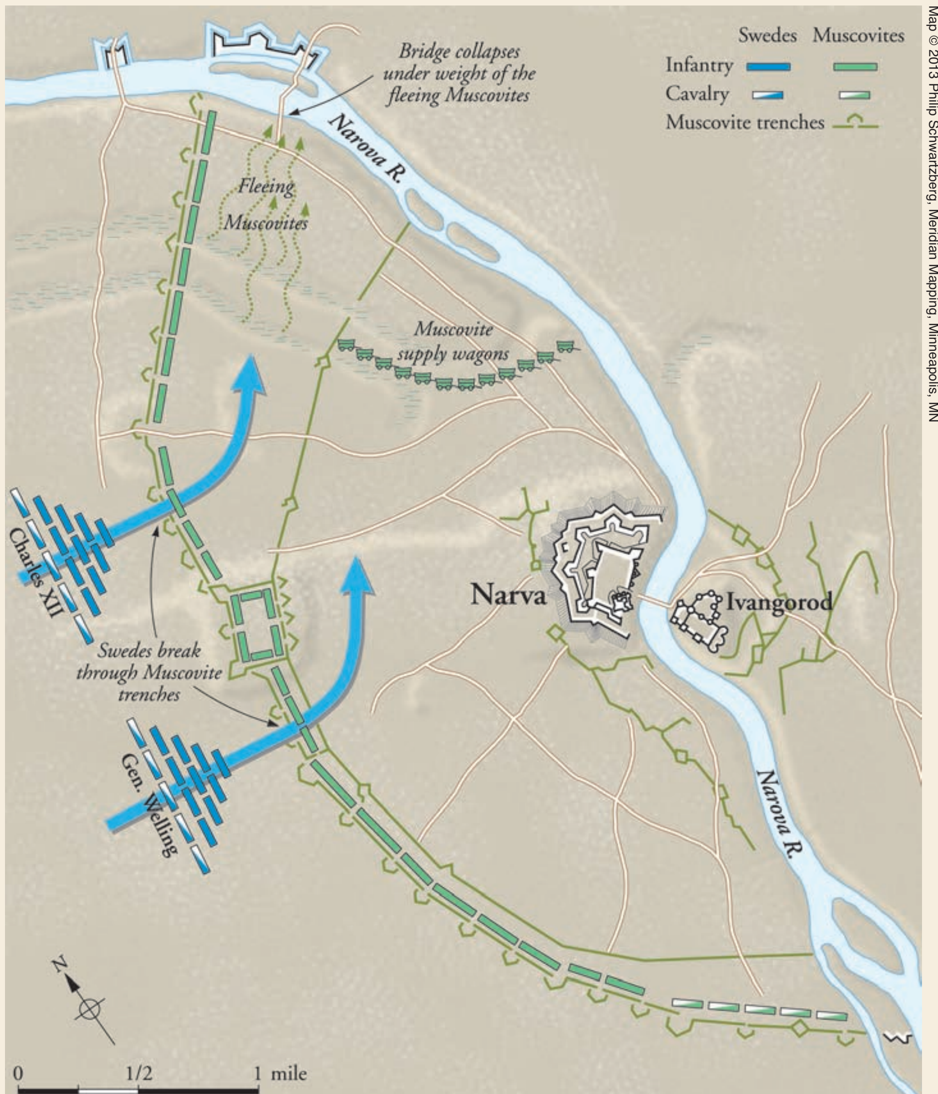
The Swedish army left Wesenburg on November 13. The march was a nightmare and even worse than predicted. The road was already muddy, but the tramp of thousands of feet churned it into a glutinous muck. Slate gray clouds unleashed a steady, driving rain, soaking the soldiers to the skin.

When the army halted for the night it faced new ordeals. The temperatures dropped to below freezing, turning the rain into wind-driven sleet and snow. Eschewing the comforts of royalty, Charles stoically camped on the bare ground, without tent or shelter. It was said that freezing snow speckled his face and body as he slept in the open air.

The darkened skies were lighted by the flaming remains of farm cottages put to the torch by the retreating Russians. There was no food to be had and no fodder for the horses. Some Swedes had a few crusts of bread in their knapsacks, but the constant dampness made the bread so heavy with mold it was all but inedible.

But to the Swedes' great joy and relief the first two passes on the Narva road were completely undefended. The third obstacle, Pyhajoggi Pass, was defended by Russian cavalry, but the czar's horsemen withdrew after a skirmish.

The news that Charles was coming created an uproar in the Russian siege camp at Narva. At about 3 AM on the morning of November 20, Peter summoned Charles Eugene, Duc Du Croy, and told him to assume command of the Russian army. Du Croy was technically an observer from Augustus of Poland. Although an experienced soldier, he didn't speak Russian, nor did he have confidence in the czar's officers or his common soldiers.



Map © 2013 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

ABOVE: King Charles XII's Swedish troops cracked the Russian line in two locations, causing the Russian troops into a panicked retreat. OPPOSITE: King Charles XII's Swedish infantry, with socket bayonets attached to their muskets, storm the Russian earthworks in a contemporary painting by Marc Grieves. A blizzard blew directly at the Russians, blinding them and providing cover for the attacking Swedish troops.

Du Croy tried to politely decline, but it was hard to say no to a czar. He reluctantly assumed command, and Peter and General Fedor Golovin, the nominal Russian commander, departed soon after. The czar was going to use his presence to speed up reinforcements to Narva and to confront Augustus, asking why he lifted the siege of Riga so precipitously. Golovin was the Russian foreign minister, so it made sense, at least on paper, to have the general go with Peter.

When the Swedish army reached the outskirts of Narva, Charles and Field Marshal Rehnskjold went up to Hermannsburg Hill to scout the enemy positions. Charles noted a weakness—the Russian fortifications were so extensive; the Russian army was spread thin. The Swedish army excelled in the offensive; the catchword " G a Pa" (roughly, "up and at 'em") was no mere exhortation, but an article of faith.

If the tough and disciplined Swedish infantry could effect a breach in the Russian works, they could pour in and wreak havoc from within. The bluecoated Swedish "foxes" would be in a very large Russian "henhouse." It was a bold gamble, but Charles knew it was the best chance of victory. His small army was starving, exhausted, and far from home. Attacking was the only hope of salvation.

The basic plan was devised by Rehnskjold. The Swedish infantry, split into two divisions, would hit the center of the Russian earthworks. Once achieving a breakthrough, the Swedish left under

The Granger Collection, New York

BELOW: The Battle of Narva rages in a period engraving. Swedish King Charles XII's keen eye for battlefield advantages enabled him to defeat an army four times the size of his at Narva. OPPOSITE: Swedish infantry from the Wermeland Regiment invade the Russian-held earthworks at Narva. The Swedish army excelled in the offensive; the catchword "Ga Pa" ("up and at 'em") was no mere exhortation, but an article of faith.

Rehnskjold would push north. The Swedish right under General Otto Vellinck would push south. It was crucial for the Swedes to keep the Russian army separated into two halves. If all went well, they would be able to literally divide and conquer.

The Swedish cavalry would protect the infantry's flanks and deal with Russian horsemen, if any. They would also be on the lookout for any Russians trying to mount a sortie, or even simply trying to escape. King Charles and his Drabants—Royal Life Guards—would be on the far left with cavalry under Colonel Magnus Stenbock.

General Du Croy observed the Swedes' arrival, and at first felt no cause for alarm. Presumably Charles would start to dig siege trenches—in essence the Russian besiegers would become the besieged. Du Croy, bewigged and dressed in a bright red uniform, was puzzled by what he was seeing. It looked like the Swedes were making fascines, rough bundles of wood bound together, which could be dumped into ditches to help troops cross such barriers.

That could only mean that Charles was about to attack. Du Croy decided to send out a substantial force, which numbered approximately 15,000 men, to confront the newcomers. Unfortunately, the Russians refused to budge from their fortifications. Bowing to the inevitable, Du Croy ordered the Russian troops to place their regimental standards on the earthworks, stand to arms, and await developments.

It was 2 PM when Charles gave the order for the Swedish army to advance. The rain had stopped, but darkening clouds ominously hovered over the combatants. As the Swedes advanced, a raging snowstorm suddenly descended on the battlefield like the wrath of God. Some Swedish officers hesitated. Should they postpone the attack until the weather cleared?

"No!" shouted Charles, his voice distinctly heard above the howling winds, "The snow is at our backs, but it is full in the enemies' eyes!" He was right. The snowstorm was a help, not a hindrance, since it blinded the Russians and disguised how few Swedes were advancing against them.

The storm became a full-fledged blizzard, the wind-lashed snow falling so rapidly the horizon was transformed into a blinding white void. The Russian troops, their eyes stung by the pelting flakes, could hear the sounds of the enemy but could see nothing. The blizzard was so perfectly timed it seemed that nature itself was allied with the Swedes.

Suddenly, a line of blue appeared out of the white swirl, apparitions that must have seemed almost like ghosts to the startled Russian soldiers. Most of Peter's troops were muzhiks, long-suffering peasant serfs, whose bravery and stoicism was matched by an understandable superstition.

It was the Swedish infantry that halted, raised their muskets, and fired a thunderous volley. Flames spouted from hundreds of muskets, and Russians on the earthwork parapet fell like grass. Led by officers waving swords, the bluecoats went forward at the run. The regiments that had fascines threw them into the Russian ditch, making a bridge to cross over. Other Swedes simply dove into the ditch, climbed up, and fought their way into the Russian siege works.

The Russian soldiers fought bravely but were no match for Swedish determination and cold steel. Vicious hand-to-hand fighting ensued. "We slew all who came at us," a Swedish officer grimly remembered, "and it was a terrible slaughter." Once a breach had been made in the Russian works the Swedish soldiers poured in like a blue and yellow torrent.

In spite of the pelting snow and growing chaos, Swedish discipline assured that everything went according to plan. The two Swedish divisions separated and went about their assigned tasks with coolness and professionalism. The Russians fought bravely at first, but their morale was weakened by fear, confusion, and sheer lack of experience.

Panic arose and infected the Russian regiments like a deadly contagion. Orderly ranks of soldiers dissolved into fear-stricken mobs, men whose only thought was to escape as quickly as possible. Whole regiments took to their heels, some soldiers leaping over the parapets in an attempt to reach the open fields. Many fugitives were cut down by sword-wielding Swedish cavalry.

Instinctively seeking a scapegoat for their own actions, Russian muzhiks shouted, "The Germans have betrayed us!" "German" was the Russian generic term for foreigner, and for many such officers the feeling was mutual. General Ludwig von Hallert, a Saxon serving the czar, was thoroughly disgusted. "They [the Russians] ran about like a herd of cattle" he recalled. "One regiment was mixed up with another so that hardly 20 men could be got into line."

General Boris Sheremetev's cavalry did little to help the situation. The Russian horsemen, many of them dvoriane (nobles), galloped off the field in a wild panic, proving blue bloods could run away just as fast as commoners. Plunging headlong into the river, the fleeing horsemen and their lathered mounts perished in its twisting cataracts.

The Swedes pressed north and south, driving all before them. The Russian retreat soon became a rout. Thousands of terrified Russian soldiers, artillerymen, and wagon drivers desperately tried to cross to the east bank of the Narva River via the Kemperholm Bridge. It was a wild stampede of men, all pushing, shoving, and stumbling over each other in a frantic effort to make good their escape.

The bridge weakened under the unaccustomed weight of horses, wagons, and hundreds of men, and finally its timbers gave way. The whole structure collapsed into the river, taking scores of Russians to their deaths in the cold waters below. Worse still, a major avenue of

escape was cut off from the rest of the panicking soldiery.

Charles was in the thick of the fight, but more like a common soldier than a commander in chief. Fearless to the point of recklessness, he exposed himself continuously to danger. At one point the king and his horse fell into a muddy ditch, and the viscous muck held both of them fast. He was freed after much effort but had to leave his horse and one boot behind.

That did not end his adventures. He mounted a second animal only to have the poor beast killed from under him. When a Swedish trooper gave him a third horse, Charles smilingly said, "I see the enemy want me to practice riding." The king was also hit by a spent musket ball, which was later found in his cravat.

There was one pocket of strong Russian resistance. At the northern end of the battlefield, near the collapsed Kamperholm Bridge, several battalions hastily barricaded themselves behind an improvised wall of supply wagons and cannons. The holdouts included the Preobrazensky and Semyonnovsky regiments under General Ivan Buturlin. These were Peter's pride, well trained and uniformed in the Western European fashion, and his confidence in them was justified.

A potential defeat loomed on the cusp of victory. Far to the south, General Weide's 6,000-man Russian division was comparatively unscathed and intact. If Weide decided to mount an offensive, the triumphant but exhausted and still outnumbered Swedes would be caught between him and the Russian holdouts near the Kamperholm Bridge.

Luckily, the Russians capitulated, their spirit finally broken. Charles might well have played the magnanimous victor, but in his heart he was relieved they had surrendered. The king granted generous terms: the officers would be prisoners of war, but the bulk of the beaten army would be released and allowed to return home. In reality, the prospect of guarding some 20,000 prisoners with 9,000 Swedes was too fantastic to even contemplate.

The common Russian soldiers were allowed to keep their muskets, but standards, cannons, and war matériel were to be turned over to the Swedes The booty included 145 cannons, 10,000 cannonballs, 397 barrels of powder, and 230 standards.

Swedish casualties were amazingly low, with some 667 dead and around 1,200 wounded. It was harder to assess Russian casualties because of the chaotic nature of the fighting. Most accounts agree that the Russians lost 10,000 to 15,000 dead and wounded, and 20,000 were taken prisoner. Few battles have been so one sided.

The Russians were released at dawn the following day. Charles mounted a splendid horse and positioned himself near the repaired Kamperholm Bridge. As the Muscovites trudged past, crossing the span to gain their freedom, they doffed their hats in reluctant homage to their conqueror. Each Russian regiment laid its standard at the feet of the king's mount, the pile of silken banners growing larger with each passing minute.

Narva established Charles XII as one of the greatest generals of his time. It was the first of many victories he would win in the course of the next decade. But Narva also contained the seeds of defeat and disaster. After a brief interlude of carousing when he was a youth, Charles swore off liquor for the rest of his life. But soon he was drunk with military glory, a far more dangerous intoxication.

The Swedish victory against the odds can be attributed to three factors: Charles's bold and unconventional leadership, Rehnskjold's careful planning, and the toughness and professionalism of their infantry. The Swedes were lucky, too, in that they were fighting a new, untested, embryonic Russian army that was still training. Properly led and trained, Russian soldiers were formidable foes, "citadels to be demolished by cannon," as Napoleon once put it.

After Narva, Charles was faced with two choices: either invade Russia while Peter was still vulnerable or turn around and deal with the duplicitous Augustus of Saxony-Poland. He chose the latter, giving the czar much needed breathing space. Ultimately, when Charles became bogged down in central Europe the pause stretched to eight years.

Over the years some of Charles's more admirable qualities had hardened. Stubborn courage had become a pig-headed obstinacy; he fought on when he could have had peace on Sweden's terms. He also had contempt for the fighting qualities of his czarist enemies, not understanding that the Russian army of 1708-1709 was not the Russian army of 1700. The result was a catastrophic defeat at Poltava.

Yet, Narva is rightly remembered as a brilliant victory against the odds, when a young, courageous, and unconventional king gambled and won. □

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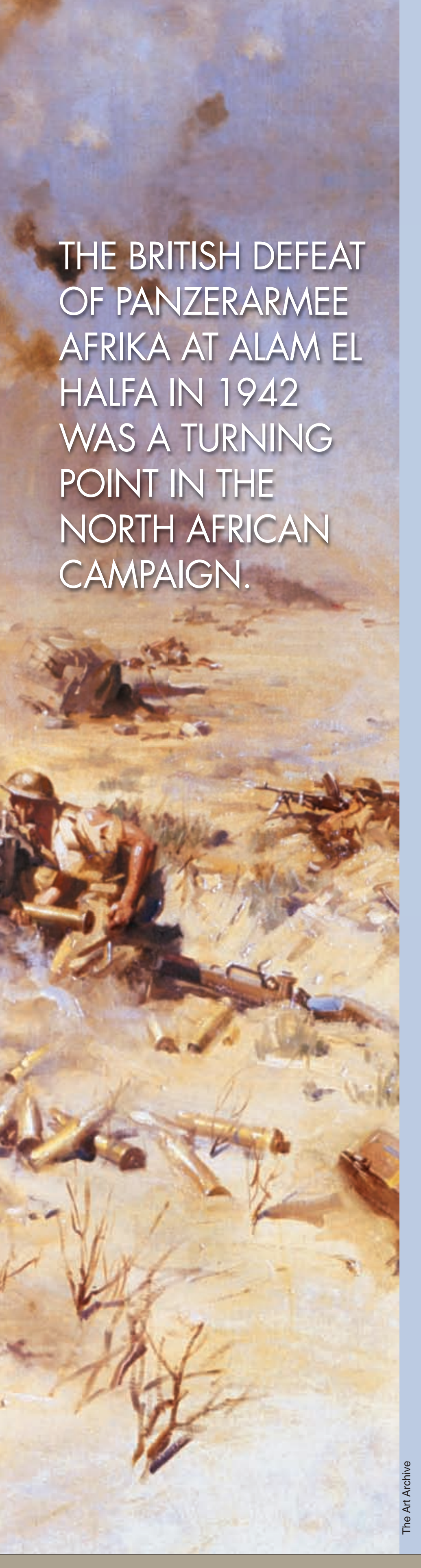
ROMMEL'S FAILED GAMBLE

BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG



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THE BRITISH DEFEAT OF PANZERARMEE AFRIKA AT ALAM EL HALFA IN 1942 WAS A TURNING POINT IN THE NORTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN.

AN OLD CLICHÉ ADMONISHES, "BAD THINGS ALWAYS COME IN THREES." Whether it was thought of as a law of nature or merely coincidence, a rapid succession of events in North Africa during the summer of 1942 seemed to confirm this widely held notion among the officers and men of the British Eighth Army.

The first event was the Battle of Gazala (May 26-June 15), which witnessed a resurgent German-Italian Panzerarmee Afrika under Erwin Rommel tear through the fortified British Commonwealth defensive lines. That success forced the British—almost in rout—to flee east over the Libyan-Egyptian border. The second event was the surprisingly quick collapse in just two days (June 20-21) of the British fortress of Tobruk, which had the year before withstood an Axis siege of eight months. And with Tobruk's fall came the capture of 32,000 Commonwealth troops and a promotion to field marshal bestowed on its conqueror, Rommel. The third event was Eighth Army's bungled defensive stand at Mersa Matruh, with the loss of a further 7,000 British prisoners of war, on June 26 and 27, which should have delayed if not stopped the enemy's advance, resulting instead in another precipitate British retreat deeper into Egypt.

National Archives

ABOVE: Newly appointed 8th Army Commander Lt. Gen. Bernard Montgomery (left) addresses officers. BELOW: German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, the Desert Fox, consults map with staff.

Signal

On June 25, just before the fiasco at Mesra Matruh, the commander of all British forces in the Middle East, General Sir Claude Auchinleck, took personal charge of Eighth Army's operations. From the fall of Tobruk to the moment the stampede of English units out of the Mersa Matruh defense locale toward the east began, Auchinleck's objective was to keep Eighth Army together. Although it had suffered severe losses in men and material and was much disorganized, it was more bewildered than demoralized; its basic framework was still intact and was certainly capable of further efforts. Auchinleck correctly identified that the continued existence of Eighth Army, no matter how much territory was given up, made the present critical situation retrievable. Indeed, Auchinleck knew that considerable reinforcements were on their way to Suez. These included 300 American M4 Sherman tanks, 100 self-propelled artillery pieces, and a large number of U.S. Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers originally destined for China but rerouted to Palestine. Further, the British 8th Armored Division and the 44th and 51st Infantry Divisions were en route to Suez.

If the fight against the Panzerarmee could be maintained until at least some of these reinforcements reached Egypt, then defeat might be averted and a victory over a dangerously overstretched Axis army might be achieved. But this did not alter the fact that Eighth Army was at the time heading back to a last-ditch position with a determined enemy constantly nipping at its heels and trying to strike a mortal blow.

The last-ditch position to which Auchinleck was shepherding his battered command was a point 300 miles east of the Libyan-Egyptian frontier—and less than 100 miles from the city of Alexandria and the vital Suez Canal—at a small railway station known as El Alamein. Already, several brushes had taken place in the desert inland of El Daba between small parties of British and Germans, all determined to make the "Alamein line" as quickly as possible. By June 30, the majority of the retreating Eighth Army had either reached or was close to entering the Alamein line. Among them were members of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, who after hearing a BBC radio

announcer report that Eighth Army had reached the El Alamein line, looked around at the empty desert, indistinguishable from the miles of sand to the east and west, and commented with curses and derision as only riflemen could. There was no line at Alamein on July 1, only a widely scattered series of defensive boxes in disrepair.

The name El Alamein came from the rail stop British engineers built there in the 1920s. While surveying the route of the pending track, the engineers planted two flags in the sand to mark the stop. Local Bedouin tribesmen then called the spot "el Alamein," meaning "two flags." In 1942, the place was an empty space except for the small group of railway buildings standing in the desert. North of the rail line near the coastal road rose a shoulder of rock, which formed a small line of hills sloping away to the salt marsh on the coast. To the south the ground was made up of desert covered with clumps of camel thorn. However, the desert surface alternated from a rocky limestone bed with a thin covering of sand to areas of deep soft sand. Roughly 10 miles south of the tracks was Miteiriya Ridge, which stretched in a wide arc across the desert landscape.

Ten miles farther to the south running west to east was a low hump of rock known as Ruweisat Ridge. About 15 miles southeast of the station and seven miles to the east of Ruweisat Ridge sat Alam el Halfa Ridge. All three ridges were made of hard rock barely covered with loose sand, which made the construction of field defenses on them very difficult. In addition to the ridges there were a number of mounds (tels) and various sized shallow depressions called deirs. A little more to the south the ground changed in to a much rougher, rockier terrain culminating in a series of high hills that overlooked the cliffs at the edge of the impassable Qattara Depression.

Before the war the Alamein line, which stretched for 38 miles, had been recognized as a possible site for a position from which to defend the Nile River Delta. As a result, in early 1941 the British had laid out a defense line consisting of three fortified boxes across the Alamein chokepoint. The most important box was constructed as a 15-mile semicircle around the rail center designed to hold an infantry division. Halfway down the desert another box was laid out at Bab el Qattara. Farther south the Naqb Abu Dweiss box commanded the approaches leading to the depression itself. The boxes were 15 miles apart and, therefore, were out of mutual supporting distance. As a result, they could never be held independently.

The assumption in 1941 was that a strong armored force would be employed to maneuver between the boxes to assure their successful defense. But in July of the following year the battered Eighth Army, with only 137 functioning tanks at El Alamein, did not possess enough armored fighting vehicles to protect the boxes. Further, after the November 1941 counteroffensive to relieve Tobruk (Operation Crusader) was initiated, the buildup of the El Alamein position was ignored. With little more than some barbed wire strung and a few mines laid to protect them, the boxes that constituted the Alamein line were really nothing more than a line on a map.

As the fragmented Eighth Army fell back to El Alamein in July 1942, Auchinleck scrambled to devise a way to defend it. His solution was based on the tactic that part of the army would hold positions to channel and disorganize any enemy advance; the rest would remain mobile to strike the foe from flank and rear. Auchinleck ordered his infantry divisions to form their maneuver elements into artillery battle groups (or brigade groups) whose activities were to be personally supervised by their division commanders. Corps leaders were to make sure that maximum forces were concentrated at the decisive points, even if those points were outside their assigned sectors.

Regardless of Auchinleck's resolve to stop the Italian-German army at El Alamein, he realized that he might not be able to do so. If he could not, Auchinleck intended to fight step by step through Egypt, making stands at defensive positions that had been set up covering the western approaches to Alexandria, the Nile Delta, and Cairo. As a last resort, Auchinleck might hold the Suez Canal with part of his mobile force while the remainder withdrew along the Nile River.

In the meantime, as the plans for the worse case scenarios took shape, the British desperately tried to build up the strength of the El Alamein position in the face of the onrushing Panzerarmee. The 1st South African Infantry Division, after retiring from the Gazala line, had been sent to the El Alamein position and spent two weeks improving the defenses of the Alamein box by drilling out new sites, roofing in existing ones, laying down thousands of yards of barbed wire, and burying thousands of mines. The South Africans were also ordered to send out two mobile columns, that is, battle groups (the Army chiefs favored a composite force made up of an infantry brigade supported by two batteries of artillery) to watch the desert to the west and south of the box.

Auchinleck was determined that no troops should be left to be encircled in the static positions being beefed up on the El Alamein line. As a result of this understandable mind-set, only one infantry brigade of the South African division would be available to hold the Alamein box, although it was backed up by four artillery regiments. This assemblage of artillery was a step in the right direction since it signaled that the guns of the Eighth Army, about 500 pieces of all calibers, were finally being concentrated to deliver effective massive support fire.

Meanwhile, the remnants of the 50th Infantry Division were formed into three columns and deployed to cover the gap between El Alamein and Deir el Shein, with the 18th Indian Infantry Brigade placed in the latter box. Ten miles farther south, the 6th New Zealand Infantry Brigade, 2nd New Zealand Infantry Division, was deployed in the Bab el Qattara box, while the 4th and 5th New Zealand Infantry Brigades underwent reorganization. In the far south, the 9th Indian Infantry Brigade held the box at Naqb Abu Dweiss, but was nearly isolated from the rest of the line due to a lack of transport.

British infantry man earthworks on the El Alamein line. From July to August 1942, the British army in Egypt received a vast influx of men and material.

As late as midday on June 30, although most of the Eighth Army's infantry formations (a combined strength of around 30,000 combat troops) had settled into the El Alamein front, all its armor forces had yet to arrive. The surviving elements of the 1st and 7th Armored Divisions, along with the 2nd, 4th, and 22nd Armored Brigades, were still 50 miles to the west near Fuka and motoring toward El Alamein with only the slightest notion of where they were to be placed. Until the tanks could reach their allotted positions to support their friendly infantry, the El Alamein line was simply too thin to resist Rommel's armored spear-

Both: Imperial War Museum

Panzerarmee Afrika artillery is towed into position during the early fighting at El Alamein. Rommel's supply line was stretched to the breaking point in Egypt and only a small fraction of the supplies needed arrived each day.

heads. Further complicating the situation was the fact that the army had lost thousands of vital tons of ammunition, fuel, food, engineer supplies, and transport, which would be needed to defend the El Alamein position. Almost all of the loss was from supply bases originally sited at or near Tobruk and captured by the Germans when that bastion fell.

As the Eighth Army was reeling from its defeats at Gazala, Tobruk, and Mersa Matruh and heading farther into Egypt, its comrades of the Desert Air Force, under Air Vice Marshal Arthur Coningham, provided an offensive punch, the only one the British possessed at the time in the Western Desert. According to Maj. Gen. Eric Dorman-Smith, Auchinleck's chief of staff, in the face of the Panzerarmee's superiority in armored maneuver warfare, the Eighth Army had to buy time to rebuild its tank force through a defense of the Red Sea ports. Dorman-Smith went on to say that as a result of the weakness of the army's armored formations, "Our only offensive weapon is our air striking force … it alone enables us to retain any semblance of initiative." In contrast to the noticeable lack of the presence of the Luftwaffe, the Desert Air Force dominated the skies over the Eighth Army as the ground forces moved back to El Alamein. The Australia-born Coningham committed every available plane he had to the defense of the army as it retreated, hoping to disrupt the enemy's advance as much as possible.

From June 23 to June 26, the fighters and bombers of the Desert Air Force made a maximum effort to slow down the oncoming Panzerarmee Afrika even as it leapfrogged to the rear itself. After June 25, a program of round-the-clock bombing was initiated, which continued for the rest of the Desert War. The result was that the Axis forces were compelled to move and bivouac dispersed even at night, thus slowing their movement and preventing a concentration of forces when attacking.

Although slowed by exhaustion and the rain of aerial attacks on it during the last days of June 1942, the Panzerarmee forged ahead after the action at Mersa Matruh. Rommel knew speed was critical if he was to throw the enemy out of his last defensive position. His divisions were drawing on their last reserves of morale and physical strength as they moved forward. A lack of transport to deliver replacements, ammunition, and fuel to the units, which had fought hard and suffered losses and traveled nonstop since May, resulted in seriously depleted combat formations. At the end of June total armored strength available to Rommel stood at 55 German and 70 Italian tanks. His artillery comprised 330 German and 200 Italian pieces. It was Rommel's force of will that kept Panzerarmee's weak spearheads driving forward.

Regarding air support, the Panzerarmee was at a distinct disadvantage. In pushing his command so far and fast Rommel had outrun the Luftwaffe's ability to provide air cover. The Luftwaffe simply did not have the means to keep up with Rommel's blistering pace. Also, its resources were stretched too thinly since it was not only tasked with aiding Rommel in his land campaign, but also committed to the reduction of Malta, which was deemed essential to alleviating the horrible supply shortages the Panzerarmee continued to endure. The Luftwaffe's efforts to support Rommel during the Battles of Gazala and Tobruk were massive but could not be sustained. As a result, when the Panzerarmee crossed into Egypt on June 23, friendly air support evaporated. If Eighth Army had been subjected to continuous enemy air attack during its retreat after the loss of Tobruk, the defeat would have turned into a catastrophe.

Even with all the problems facing the Panzerarmee, as it closed in on El Alamein at the end of June, Rommel felt optimistic about his prospects of breaking British resistance and capturing the Nile Delta. At the start of the month, Rommel initiated an assault that spawned a series of nearly continuous and heavy battles over the next 30 days on El Alamein line.

The contests began with a typical Rommel operation, which was a repeat of his successful stroke at Mersa Matruh. His intent was to penetrate between the Alamein box and Deir el Abyad with the object of cutting the coastal road, then make a sweep south with his armor to eliminate the Qattara box. But this thrust was blocked by British XXX Corps (composed of mostly infantry) in the north, while XIII Corps (mainly British armor) tried to attack the Axis southern flank. This encounter, which commenced on July 1, led to three days of battle during which the Panzerarmee assaulted the British-held Ruweisat Ridge twice but failed to gain all of it. Meanwhile, XXX Corps continued to bar the way to the coastal road while XIII Corps maneuvered to outflank the enemy by moving to the north and northwest, but without success. Stymied in his efforts and under pressure from a reinforced Eighth Army, Rommel suspended his attacks and dug in on July 4.

The British now went on the offensive. On July 10, they attacked near the coast at Tel el Eisa hoping to advance to Deir el Shein and the German-held airfields at Ed Daba. Their efforts were met by strong German counterattacks on July 12. Between July 14 and 16, Auchinleck struck the Italians holding the Axis center on Ruweisat Ridge and gained a foothold on that height. The fight for the slope continued on July 21-23. To relieve the pressure on their ally on Ruweisat Ridge, the Germans counterattacked but were repulsed. On July 22, the British captured Tel el Eisa. Initiating Operation Manhood on July 27, the armor of XIII Corps captured and consolidated its

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

hold on Tel el Eisa and occupied the Miteirya Ridge; however, the latter was lost to a German counterattack. On July 31, Auchinleck felt compelled to suspend further offensive moves and pause to reinforce, retrain, and reorganize his battered army.

The fighting in July, which is known as the First Battle of El Alamein, had been costly to both sides and was in many respects disappointing to each, but it brought the Axis advance to a standstill and ended the run of British battlefield disasters.

As for the Panzerarmee, it had fought the July battles against an enemy constantly absorbing replacements of men and material, while it barely received a trickle of those commodities. As exhausted as their opponents, Rommel's forces not only held their own but also delivered sharp counterpunches that stopped the British in their tracks. Most importantly, the German field marshal had preserved his army and prevented its destruction.

While the exact number of those killed and wounded in the Panzerarmee during the July fighting is unknown, at least 7,000 prisoners (5,000 Italian and 2,000 German) were captured by the British. During this period the Eighth Army suffered 13,000 casualties. Even as combat took place, the El Alamein line was being greatly strengthened in anticipation of the inevitable Axis offensive.

In preparation for the next blow Rommel was sure to deliver, Auchinleck acted on the premise that due to a paucity of seasoned German infantry an attack on the El Alamein line's northern sector could be discounted. Accepting the views of his veteran armor corps commander, Lt. Gen. William H.E. "Strafer" Gott , the commander in chief expected Rommel to hook around Eighth Army's southern flank and head for the Alam el Halfa Ridge. The possession of that height provided excellent observation and good terrain to the coastal road. Alam el Halfa, as Gott strenuously pointed out, was not only vital to any German advance down the coast to Alexandria, but also vital to the Eighth Army for holding its present positions on the El Alamein line.

Hoping to achieve better cooperation between his infantry and armor, Auchinleck proposed to defend his position by abolishing the distinction between armored and infantry divisions, creating in their place mobile divisions composed of one armored and two infantry brigades.

Auchinleck also planned a new Eighth Army offensive with the main blow coming from the north. In the meantime, he ordered that the El Alamein line be fortified in depth and in breadth. To that end, in the northern zone two defensive lines were built. These were held by the infantry of XXX Corps. To hold the important Alam el Halfa Ridge, Gott assigned its defense to the reliable 2nd New Zealand Infantry Division. He replaced the two brigade boxes, which could not mutually support one another, with the entire New Zealand Division backed up by massive artillery. Alam el Halfa thus became the main bulwark protecting the west and southern faces of the El Alamein line. Just to the south and west of that slope the bulk of the army's armor was posted to intercept the expected Axis armored turning movement as it rounded Eighth Army's southern flank. Auchinleck's scheme was a novel one, but he would not be around to see if his new ideas for attack and defense worked.

Even before the July fighting on the El Alamein line finished, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had urged Auchinleck to undertake a general offensive to clear the Germans and Italians from North Africa. Auchinleck responded that such an effort was not possible before September 1942, if even then. A perplexed Churchill decided to visit Egypt in early August to determine future strategy for the Middle East.

It was not long after his arrival in Cairo that the British leader determined to replace Auchinleck with someone he felt would be more offensive minded. His choice was Gott, a veteran of the Desert War since its beginning in 1940, and commander of Eighth Army's main armor component, the XIII Corps. Unfortunately, on August 7, 1942, Gott was killed when the bomber he was traveling in was shot down by two German fighter planes. Churchill then appointed his second choice, Lt. Gen. Bernard Montgomery, to take over the Eighth Army.

As soon as the 55-year-old veteran of World War I, an active participant in World War II since 1939, reached his new command, Montgomery started to remake the Eighth Army in his own image. His first address to his new staff made a tremendous impact. The defense of Egypt lay at El Alamein, Montgomery said, and if the Eighth Army would not stay there alive it would stay there dead. There would be no more backward looks, and if Rommel chose to attack so much the better.

Montgomery further declared that under him the army would fight differently. No more brigade groups; divisions would fight as entire divisions. No more isolated defensive boxes; all defensive positions would be integrated and mutually supporting. What he never admitted was that the basic outline for the British conduct of the Battle of Alam el Halfa followed the concept of his much underestimated predecessor, Claude Auchinleck.

The entire army was impressed by its new chief's can-do attitude. Churchill also was impressed. On August 21, Churchill wrote: "A complete change in atmosphere [in Eighth Army] has taken place … the highest alacrity and activity prevails." The prime minister might also have noticed the new Eighth Army commander's trademark: meticulous planning and preparation.

As Eighth Army recovered from the July 1942 battles, it not only greatly improved the defensive capabilities of the El Alamein line but also received a vast influx of men and material. From July to August the army received 730 tanks, 820 artillery pieces of all kinds, more than 15,000 vehicles, and thousands of tons of supplies. Eighth Army's manpower in August rose to around 150,000 men.

On August 30, 1942, Rommel wrote to his wife: "There are such big things at stake. If our blow succeeds, it might go some ways in decid-

ing the whole course of the war. If it fails, I hope at least to give the enemy a pretty thorough beating." The field marshal, after being stymied during the July battles, had decided to launch his army in one last attempt to reach the Nile Delta. He knew it would be a now or never proposition.

During August 1942 the Panzerarmee existed in a quartermaster's nightmare with the troops living from hand to mouth on captured food, fuel, and ammunition. Supplies for the army shipped from Italy were regularly sunk by the British Navy and Air Force, and whatever got through to Benghazi or Tobruk was eaten up by the long haul to the front. Of the 100,000 tons of supplies the Panzerarmee required each month, only a fraction ever got to the troops in Egypt. With this in mind, Rommel knew he had to attack before the British received more men and tanks and before the enemy could weave a shield of defensive minefields, which would be too dense to permit a rapid breakthrough of their lines.

Discounting any idea of assailing the heavily defended northern sector of the British line, Rommel opted to strike in the south, using his tanks and mobile forces to encircle and destroy Eighth Army in a repeat of the Gazala battle. His strike force would not be concentrated until the eve of the attack, and to maintain the element of surprise there would be no artillery or air preparation. Limited infantry attacks would be mounted along the entire front to pin down and confuse his opponent. Once his armored and motorized elements were assembled south of Deir el Qattara, they would push through the British minefields, which recent Axis reconnaissance assured would be easy to clear, drive east, then turn north for the coast road. The plan was to encircle the opposition and cut him off from his supplies.

The force Rommel had by late August consisted of 84,000 German and 44,000 Italian troops and 234 German and 281 Italian tanks. But his supply of transport, fuel, and ammunition was barely sufficient to sustain anything but a rapid victory.

On the night of August 30, 1942, Rommel began his offensive. The tanks of the Afrika Korps (15th and 21st Panzer Divisions), the 90th Light Motorized Infantry Division, and the Italian armored divisions Ariete and Littorio (containing barely half their full 16,000-man complement) assembled on the southern flank of the German line around the El Taqua plateau. The plan called for this entire force to pass through the British minefields north of Qaret el Himeimat and then drive east. Rommel's tanks were to be protected on the left flank by reconaissance battalions and on the right by Italian armor.

Near the Munassib Depression behind Eighth Army's front line, the 90th Light Division would act as a hinge between the static Axis forces to the north and the advancing Afrika Korps. The whole force was then to wheel north, bypassing Alam el Halfa and heading for the British rear at the eastern end of Ruweisat Ridge. Meanwhile, it was hoped that Eighth Army would be distracted by the German 164th Light Motorized Infantry Division and the Italian X and XXI Infantry Corps, which were to mount raids all along the enemy's front. Unfortunately for Rommel, air superiority was with the British. It was a bold plan requiring speed, surprise, and enough fuel to make it work.

As darkness descended over the desert, the Africa Korps approached the British minefields. It appeared that the attackers had achieved surprise, but then around midnight they clashed with the 7th Motor Brigade, British 7th Armored Division. Soon the Desert Air Force began dropping bombs on the Afrika Korps. Bunched up to pass through the British minefields, a number of German tanks, infantry carriers, and supply trucks were destroyed.

As the Germans were hung up in the minefield under air assault, they were met by fierce resistance from the three battalions of the 7th Motor Brigade defending 13 miles of the British front. After four hours of fending off the enemy, the Motor Brigade, covered by the British 4th Light Armored Brigade, was forced back by overwhelming German pressure. Rommel's hope to traverse the 42 miles to the east and then turn toward the coastal road during the moonlit night of August 31 was frustrated.

Seriously delayed by the stout defense by the 7th Motor Brigade, mines, and air raids, it was not until 5 AM that German engineers were able to clear gaps in the British minefields and allow the panzers to push forward. More misfortune struck the Afrika Korps when an air attack hit its headquarters, wounding the corps commander, General Walther Nehring. Colonel Fritz Bayerlein, Rommel's chief of staff, took charge of the corps. Twenty minutes later, Maj. Gen. Georg von Bismarck, commander of the 21st Panzer Division, was killed by mortar fire. The command and control of the Afrika Korps was badly disrupted at a critical moment.

National Archives

ABOVE: German panzer troops confer during a lull in the fighting. Rommel was forced to break off his attack on September 2 because of the severity of allied air attacks and lack of fuel. OPPOSITE: Italian tanks, carrying sandbags for better traction and protection, advance through a depression along the El Alamein line. The depressions—which featured escarpments and fine powdered sand—were difficult for armor to traverse.

Farther north, the actions conducted by the Italian engineers and German paratroopers designed to tie down the British forces in that sector were generally a failure. One exception was the advance of the Ramcke Paratrooper Brigade against a British position held by the 9th Indian Infantry Brigade, 5th Indian Infantry Division, on Ruweisat Ridge, although the Germans were eventually forced to retreat.

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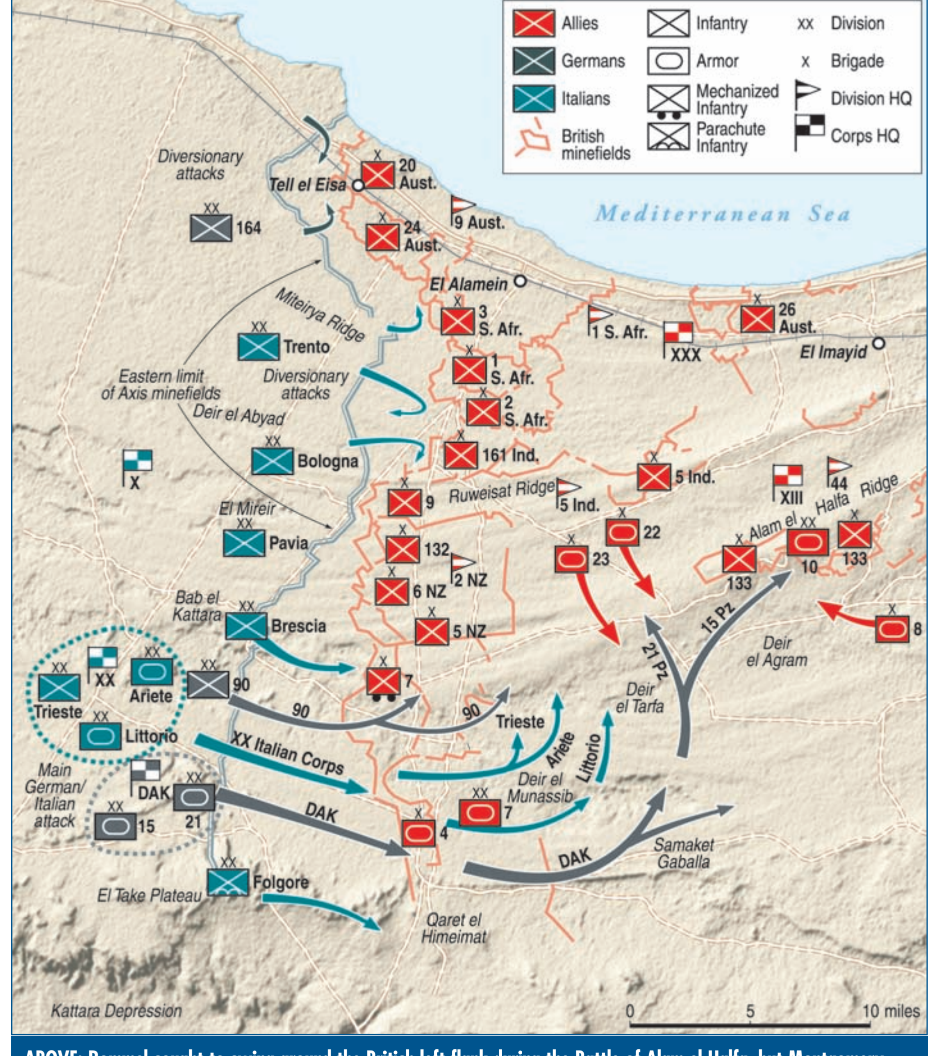

ABOVE: Rommel sought to swing around the British left flank during the Battle of Alam el Halfa, but Montgomery massed his field artillery and launched armored counterattacks to nullify Rommel's gains. OPPOSITE: Rommel lacked air cover at Alam el Halfa, which left his mechanized columns at the mercy of allied bombers such as the Martin Baltimore Mark II.

By 8 AM, the 21st and 15th Panzer Divisions found themselves about three miles east of the enemy minefields and preparing to drive eastward. After arriving at Africa Korps headquarters that morning, Rommel realized that the minefields had not only caused time delays and casualties, but also consumed large amounts of fuel he could not replace. Therefore, he modified his original battle plan. Due to insufficient fuel to make the planned wide sweep to the east, he directed his panzers to turn immediately to the north after Bayerlein persuaded him to continue the attack.

The objective now for the Afrika Korps was Point 102 situated on the Alam el Halfa Ridge, with the Italian XX Corps ordered to take Alam Bueid. Because the Ariete and Trieste Divisions were held up in the British minefields, they could not attack their objective until that evening thus depriving the German tanks of support when the latter attacked Alam el Halfa. More valuable time was lost when, in attempting to implement the new plan, the Littorio Division trespassed onto 21st Panzer's route of march. It took more than an hour to untangle the two divisions and proceed toward Alam el Halfa.

As it turned out, Rommel's decision was the worst he could have made. His new scheme was going to pit his tanks against the 22nd Armored Brigade and 44th Infantry Division, both entrenched on Alam Halfa and waiting for Rommel's armor.

As the afternoon of August 31 wore on, the Axis turning movement continued. Ahead of it the 7th Motor Brigade, supported by 22nd and 4th Light Armored Brigades (also part of 7th Armored Division), fell back to the Ragil Depression. The 7th Armored Division had done its job, seriously slowing Rommel's tanks. The 23rd Armored Brigade was attached to XIII Corps and moved south to cover the gap between the New Zealand defensive position and the 22nd Armored Brigade at Point 102 on Alam el Halfa.

In the air, the Desert Air Force was now restricted in its efforts due to a sandstorm. On the Axis side, sorties by 240 fighters and 70 dive bombers of the Luftwaffe and Italian Air Force had little effect on the ground battle.

About 1 PM, in a raging sandstorm that was blowing in the face of the British defenders and reduced visibility to 100 yards, the 21st Panzer Division, with 120 tanks in three waves, turned directly for Point 102. Ahead of the advancing panzers stood the antitank guns of the British 1st Rifle Brigade, supported by the Crusader tanks of the 22nd Armored Brigade's 4th County of London Yeomanry Tank Regiment. When the panzers were just 300 yards from them, the Rifle Brigade's 6-pounder antitank guns opened up. Along with accurate artillery fire, the antitank screen destroyed 19 German tanks. Unsupported (the 15th Panzer Division during the attack had to curtail its movements due to lack of fuel), the 21st Panzer Division's strike was more hesitant than usual, and it stopped its attack at 4 PM, drawing off toward the Ragil Depression at nightfall. The division claimed it had eliminated 12 enemy tanks and six antitank guns in this action. In the meantime, Montgomery ordered 23rd Armored Brigade with its Valentine tanks and the 2nd South African Infantry Brigade, 1st South African Infantry Division to take station just north of Alam el Halfa Ridge as a ready reserve.

That evening, Bayerlein suggested to Rommel that both panzer divisions break contact with the British and attack Point 102 from the flank. It was a good idea, but lack of fuel made it impractical. British airpower returned hitting, both German armor and supply transport congregating at the Ragil Depression.

To the north, a small force of Australian infantry supported by a squadron of tanks mounted an attack near Tel el Eisa as a diversion to disrupt the main Axis attack in the south. The assault was quickly counterattacked by elements of the German 164th Light Motorized Infantry Division, forcing the attackers to retreat.

With barely any fuel reaching them on September 1, the tanks of the Afrika Korps could do little that day. While 21st Panzer settled into a defensive posture due to dry fuel tanks, the 15th Panzer Division was ordered to renew the attack on Alam el Halfa. Its probing of the ridge was stopped cold by the efforts of the 22nd and 8th Armored Brigades. The 8th lost 13 M3 Grant tanks to a German antitank screen while destroying eight Panzer III tanks

and one Panzer IV. By that night, the Afrika Korps was out of fuel and confronted by all the tanks of the Eighth Army, which had gathered around Alam el Halfa Ridge.

Throughout the day, the British massed seven field artillery regiments near the New Zealand positions and pummeled the static German and Italian armored units leaguered to the south. The Desert Air Force flew 125 sorties against the same enemy targets.

Montgomery used that afternoon to leisurely "regroup so as to form reserves and make troops available for the closing of the gap between the New Zealanders and Qaret Himeimat and seizing the initiative." These moves were not completed until September 2, due to a lack of urgency on the part of Montgomery and a lack of transport vehicles to move the troops.

Throughout the morning of September 2, the Germans and Italians remained camped waiting for an enemy counterattack that never came. At 10 AM, new orders were received by the German mobile forces. Rommel had decided to break off the offensive due to the severity of enemy air attacks and the lack of fuel. His subordinates were shocked at the decision and felt they could still defeat the enemy if given the needed fuel in a timely manner. Battle groups from each panzer division were to be formed to cover the retreat.

The Littorio Division was ordered to hold its position while the German tanks pulled back. After that occurred, the Littorio, Trieste, and 90th Light Divisions also withdrew. The retreat started the next day, and by that evening the strike force of the Afrika Korps was ensconced just west of Deir el Munassib. That point, as well as Qaret el Himeimat, which afforded good observation of the surrounding area, were retained by the Axis and incorporated in their new defense line. It was, in effect, a consolation prize for the sacrifice they made to lever the enemy from the El Alamein line.

Realizing that the enemy was withdrawing, Montgomery, rather late that day, directed his XIII Corps to pursue and harry the beaten enemy and close the gap the Germans had opened in the British lines at the commencement of their attack on August 30. With only small units of the 7th Armored Division ordered to carry out Montgomery's belated instructions, the Axis withdrawal was virtually unhindered. The only real damage to the withdrawing enemy was caused by the Desert Air Force, which during 176 sorties dropped 112 tons of bombs.

Instead of a vigorous pursuit, Montgomery ordered Operation Beresford, an infantry attack designed to "reestablish the minefield to the south of the New Zealanders' position." It was to be carried out by the 132nd Infantry Brigade, 44th Infantry Division, supported by the 5th and 6th New Zealand Brigades covering the 132nd on each flank. The attack fell on the positions held by the Italian 27th Brescia Infantry Division, X Infantry Corps.

The operation was a dismal failure, costing the 132nd Infantry Brigade 697 men and the 5th New Zealand Brigade 275 soldiers. One battalion of the Brescia Division lost heavily during an engagement with the 5th New Zealand. Soon after the attack began, the 6th New Zealand Brigade joined the action against the 101st Trieste Motorized Infantry Division and the 90th Light Division. One bright spot in the whole sordid tale of Operation Beresford was that it showed how well the British artillery had learned to play its role in supporting infantry and armor. Its timely intervention prevented the destruction of the 5th New Zealand Brigade.

With the failure of Operation Beresford, the Eighth Army's attempts to interfere with the Panzerarmee's withdrawal ended. Patrols from the 7th Armored Division and the 8th and 22nd Armored Brigades harassed the Axis rear guards. By September 5, the fuel situation for Rommel's army had improved somewhat, allowing it to operate for the next seven days. On the 6th, the Battle of Alam el Halfa ended.

The "Six Days' Race," as the Axis troops dubbed the Battle of Alam el Halfa, was over. It was Rommel who had received a beating. The cost to the Eighth Army amounted to 1,750 men killed, wounded, or captured. The British lost 67 tanks, 10 pieces of artillery, and 15 antitank guns. The Panzerarmee sustained 1,859 German troops killed, wounded, and missing, as well as 49 German tanks, 55 pieces of artillery, and 300 trucks destroyed. The Italians lost 1,051 men, 22 guns, 11 tanks, and 97 other vehicles.

Imperial War Museum

Both Rommel and Montgomery made mistakes during the struggle. The latter was fortunate that his rigid static defense strategy was not compromised. His foe had run out of fuel and could not maneuver at will. The former was lucky that he faced an opponent who, due to his inherent caution, did not make an all-out attempt to destroy his immobile strike force as it sat in front of Alam el Halfa Ridge. Rommel's good fortune continued when Montgomery did not pursue him as his command was retreating and hampered by a lack of fuel.

In the final analysis, Rommel seems to have learned little from the battle as far as the interdependencies of his logistical situation and how those considerations hampered his operations.

As for the British, even if the Eighth Army had not exploited its advantages during the battle, it still gained a conclusive victory over a previously unbeaten antagonist. The British victory at Alam el Halfa caused the morale in the army to soar and gave the troops every confidence in Montgomery's leadership. The victory also assured the soldiers that the next time they met the Panzerarmee in combat, the British would be doing the attacking, with every chance of a successful outcome. And so it was. □

Count Wincenty Krasinski, who led the elite 600-man Polish Light Horse at the Battle of Somosierra, is shown with his troops in the battle. When an officer of the French Imperial Guard cavalry balked at attacking a Spanish artillery position, Napoleon called on the Polish Light Horse to do the job instead.

Warsaw National Museum

BY ALEXANDER ZAKRZEWSKI

flash OF

SABERS

FINDING THE SOMOSIERRA PASS BLOCKED BY SPANISH BATTERIES, NAPOLEON ORDERED HIS POLISH LIGHT HORSE TO PUNCH THROUGH THE RESISTANCE.

ON the foggy morning of November 30, 1808, Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France, watched impatiently as his Grande Armée lumbered up the rocky slopes of the Sierra de Guadarrama Mountains of central Spain. It was the last obstacle before Madrid and certain victory over the rebellious Spanish. In anticipation of his advance, a small but determined Spanish force had fortified the narrow pass that led through the sleepy mountain village of Somosierra. As the French advance stalled in the face of withering cannon and musket fire, Bonaparte turned to the 3rd Squadron of the Chevau-Légers Polonais of the Imperial Guard and impetuously ordered them to charge the enemy positions. Miles from their eastern homeland, the Polish horsemen dutifully responded. The result was an unlikely victory and one of the most spectacular cavalry charges of the Napoleonic Wars.

In 1807, war with Portugal furnished Bonaparte with the pretext for sending thousands of French troops into Spain. Despite being France's nominal ally since 1796, the Spanish government was corrupt and ineffectual and its people backward and impoverished. Consequently, the French emperor deemed the time right to extend his control over the whole of the Iberian Peninsula. As the French marched through the country, they made a point of subtly occupying the strategic routes, towns, and villages through which they passed. On March 23, 1808, General Joachim Murat, Bonaparte's brother-in-law, affirmed their true intent by marching into Madrid with 20,000 men, effectively placing the country under French military rule. At the same time, Bonaparte masterfully exploited a dynastic quarrel between the Spanish King Charles IV and his son Ferdinand VII to his own advantage. Posing as mediator, he invited both father and son to Bayonne, where he forced both their abdications and handed the Spanish crown to his brother Joseph, King of Naples.

While the Spanish people had no great love for the ruling Bourbons, resentment toward the occupiers had begun to boil over, and on May 2 the citizens of Madrid rose up in rebellion and attacked the city's French garrison. Murat's bloody suppression of the revolt only served to further enflame nationalist outrage. Provincial juntas quickly raised their own armies to combat the invaders, and an alliance with Britain was secured. French forces, disorganized and poorly led, soon found themselves assailed from all sides, and on July 20, 1808, Europe was astounded by the news that an 18,000-strong French corps commanded by General Pierre Dupont had been surrounded and forced to capitulate at Bailén. The myth of the Grand Armée's invincibility was irrevocably shattered.

Worsening French woes was the intensifying guerrilla war, which was making supply and communications across the peninsula increasingly difficult for the occupiers. In this "war to the knife," as Spanish General Jose Palafox described it, prisoners could expect little mercy, and both sides readily engaged in brutal terror tactics. Moreover, on August 1, a British Expeditionary Force under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley landed in Portugal and within three weeks forced the capitulation of French General Jean Junot and 26,000 of his men. So untenable had the situation become that after only 10 days on the throne, Joseph Bonaparte, dubbed "Joseph the Intruder" by his contemptuous subjects, was forced to abandon his empty capital and retreat to a tenuous defensive line along the Ebro River.

When news reached Paris of the disastrous developments on the peninsula, Napoleon was aghast. After castigating his generals for their incompetence, he declared, "I realize I must go there myself to get the machine working again." He sent Joseph a flurry of orders assuring him that help was on the way, and after making contingency plans for war with Austria he ordered 130,000 men, mostly veterans of previous campaigns, to leave cen-

Prado Museum, Madrid

tral Europe for Spain. Commanded by the cream of the French marshalate—Ney, Soult, Victor, Mortier, Bessières—this new invasion force was a massive instrument of war organized into seven army corps, a cavalry corps and a reserve that included the Imperial Guard. Among the guard cavalry were the Chevau-Légers Polonais.

When Napoleon entered Warsaw in December 1806 during the War of the Fourth Coalition, he was welcomed as a liberating hero. A decade earlier, Poland had been partitioned by Russia, Prussia, and Austria and erased from the map of Europe. Patriotic sentiment remained high, however, and as a show of gratitude for his defeat of the partitioning powers, the citizens of Warsaw raised a guard of honor to escort and protect the French emperor during his stay in Poland. Recruited from among the best noble families in the country, these men greatly impressed Bonaparte by their stature, manner, and horsemanship, and in March 1807 he ordered the creation of a 600-strong Chevau-Légers Polonais (Polish Light Horse) regiment to serve as part of his Imperial Guard.

Chosen to command the regiment was Count Wincenty Korwin Krasinski, a nobleman and patriot of considerable influence. Krasinski had served in the national cavalry before the partitions and was instrumental in organizing the Warsaw honor guard. However, Krasinski spent most of his time away from the regiment serving as a courtier to Bonaparte, and Colonel-Major Pierre Dautancourt was very much the regiment's true commanding officer. Affectionately nicknamed "Papa" by his men, Dautancourt had made his name as a cavalry officer in the Gendarmerie d'élite of the Imperial Guard, and it was he who saw to the organization and training of the regiment and accompanied it on campaign.

While most of the officers were Poles already in French service or who had served in the Warsaw honor guard, the regiment's colonel-majors as well as its staff officers and instructors, were all Frenchmen pulled from other units. All four squadron commanders were Polish, however, and after the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw in July 1807, further suitable volunteers were drawn from the newly created Polish Army. The creation of the regiment reflects Bonaparte's growing need for foreign contingents to make up for the high losses he incurred during the Prussian Campaign as much as it does his high impression of the Poles. It is also indicative of his desire to expand his cavalry arm, which had served him so effectively during the campaign, to unprecedented numbers.

ABOVE: The Battle of Bailén in July 1808, in which the Spanish forced the surrender of 20,000 French troops, marked the first major defeat of Napoleon's Grand Armée. In response, Napoleon personally oversaw the reconquest of Spain. OPPOSITE: Napoleon reviews the Polish Light Horse Regiment, which served as part of his Imperial Guard at the time of Somosierra. The regiment, whose members were drawn from Polish nobility, initially had been established to escort the French emperor during his stay in Poland in 1806.

Despite this need, enlistment criteria were set deliberately high in order to meet the standards of the Imperial Guard. Only gentlemen of means and education were accepted as officers, and even troopers had to be landowners capable of paying for their own horse, uniform, and equipment. Although height requirements were eventually relaxed, Bonaparte's proclivity for large cavalrymen was such that the Poles' enemies frequently noted their imposing size. Before a recruit was accepted, he had to present himself along with proof that he met all requirements to Prince Józef Poniatowski, nephew of the last king of Poland and war minister of the Duchy of Warsaw. Only then could he count himself among the French emperor's élite.

The regiment's uniforms were dark blue with red facings and offered a resplendent mix of Polish military tradition and Imperial France. The tight-fitting trousers had a double red

stripe running down each leg, while the *kurtkas* (jackets) were fronted by a large red plastron and high collars, both edged with silver lace. The most distinguishing feature was the traditional square-topped Polish cavalry cap or *czapka* that, following the Napoleonic wars, would become standard issue in cavalry regiments throughout Europe. Roughly eight inches in height, each czapka bore a tri-color cockade and a large bronze frontal plate containing a crowned "N" identifying the horsemen as soldiers of the emperor. In the field, each man carried a saber and two pistols, as well as a carbine with bayonet, a surprisingly heavy load yet typical of light cavalry units of the era.

The first detachments of the Chevau-Légers Polonais arrived in Spain in late June 1808, just as the French position on the peninsula began deteriorating rapidly. As yet untested, they were placed under the tutelage of General Antoine Lasalle, who commanded the cavalry in Marshal Bessières' corps. Lasalle was a brilliant and dashing cavalry officer who openly believed that no French hussar ought to live past the age of 30 (he was killed at the Battle of Wagram in 1809 at age 34). Despite his bravado, Lasalle cared deeply for the welfare of his horsemen, and the Poles came to greatly respect and admire him as they learned the duties of light cavalry in the field. At the Battle of Medina Del Rioseco on July 14, he led an ad hoc group of cavalry that included some Chevau-Légers in a last-minute charge that turned a desperate situation into an impressive victory. However, the disasters at Bailén and in Portugal negated any such successes, and by the autumn of 1808 the Poles had withdrawn with the remaining French forces to the Ebro. The real test was yet to come.

On November 4, Bonaparte crossed into Spain with his relief army and began a whirlwind campaign designed to smash Spanish resistance, push the British out of the peninsula, and reassert French control for good. He assured Joseph that by January, "There will not be a single village in revolt." After a crushing victory at Gamonel, in which the Spanish lost 3,000 men at the cost of a hundred French soldiers, Bonaparte entered Burgos on November 10. As the French forces moved north and south in a massive effort to encircle the bewildered Spanish, the emperor made plans to advance on Madrid. On November 23, after the Spanish Army of the Center was scattered at Tudela, he set out toward the capital with a 45,000-strong vanguard.

With the Spanish armies shattered and retreating, all that stood in Napoleon's path was the Sierra de Guadarrama Mountains. Running roughly 50 miles through the heart of central Spain, the mountains offered Madrid a natural northern defensive barrier. In the capital, General Benito San Juan quickly realized that once the French were over the mountains, he stood no chance of holding the city, which was already in a growing state of panic. San Juan was an experienced and capable officer who had commanded the personal bodyguard of Spanish Prime Minister Manuel de Godoy. He pulled together an ad hoc force of roughly 21,000 regulars and militia with 16 cannon and began making plans for an indirect defense in the mountains.

There were two main passes, both of which would have to be defended. The Guadarrama Pass lay northwest of Madrid, and San Juan prudently predicted that Bonaparte would instead follow the main road south from Burgos and up through the pass near the village of Somosierra. It was the quicker and more direct option, and the Spanish commander split his forces accordingly. While he sent 9,000 men to guard the Guadarrama Pass, 7,500 Spaniards and all 16 guns were prepared to meet the French at Somosierra. The remaining men were sent to an advanced position north of the mountains at Sepulvida.

For the outnumbered Spanish, the Somosierra Pass offered ideal ground for a strong defense. The road that ran through the pass wound four miles through the mountains, climbing 960 feet and crossing several streams as it went. After a gentle ascent for the first few miles, the road steepened sharply as it entered an increasingly narrow defile. A series of rocky spurs bulged out of the

BONAPARTE'S ANGER ERUPTED.
"IMPOSSIBLE? IMPOSSIBLE? I DO NOT KNOW THIS WORD," HE EXCLAIMED INCREDULOUSLY, HIS RIDING CROP WHISTLING THROUGH THE AIR. "WHAT? MY GUARD HALTED BY SPANISH, BY A BAND OF ARMED PEASANTS!"

Library of Congress

mountains on either side of the road as it approached the summit where, at an altitude of 4,700 feet, there stood the Ermitage de Nuestra Senora de la Soledad chapel. From that point, the ground leveled off before beginning a gradual descent past the village of Somosierra.

San Juan divided his cannon into four batteries. At the summit, where the defile widened and the ground leveled, he mounted 10 guns behind an improvised fortification manned by 2,000 men. Three smaller batteries of two guns each—all that could fit along the narrow road—were mounted at regular intervals of about 550 to 750 yards, the first of which stood at the entrance to the pass behind the stone bridge that crossed a small mountain stream call the Duraton. The rocky slopes alongside the road were steep and full of trees and vegetation but still traversable by infantry, and it was here, facing the entrance to the pass, that San Juan positioned the majority of his men.

As the French advanced southward toward Madrid, the Spanish advance guard at Sepulvida melted away without a fight, and by November 29 Bonaparte and his forces were at Boceguillas, only 15 miles north of the pass. The next day, in the early morning hours, the emperor rode out with his staff to reconnoiter the pass for himself and complete his plans for the coming battle. He was accompanied by a detachment of guard cavalry that included the Chasseurs à Cheval and the Chevau-Légers Polonais. His duty squadron that morning was the 3rd Squadron of the Chevau-Légers commanded by Jan Kozietulski.

A thick fog hung in the air that morning, effectively obscuring the Spanish defenders. Unable to gauge the enemy positions, Bonaparte and his staff decided to dismount, make camp, and await the arrival of the main French force. As the emperor sat with his staff poring over maps in preparation for the coming attack, legend has it that a curious scene took place. While Bonaparte and his entourage deliberated, a lone member of the Chevau-Légers approached the fire. Bonaparte's aides angrily waved him away, but the emperor allowed him to pass. The trooper calmly walked up to the fire, lit his pipe, and turned to leave without saying a word. As he was walking away, one of the officers scolded the trooper for his impertinence and insisted that he thank his emperor for the privilege. The Pole instead raised his arm, pointed to the summit, and said, "I will thank him up there," before walking off.

The fog had not cleared by the time the main French force began to arrive and, as a result, Bonaparte still could not make out the enemy positions. He ordered a member of his staff, Major Phillipe de Ségur, to ride into the entrance of the pass with a detachment of Chasseurs à Cheval and survey what he could. Despite the fog, the Spanish heard the cavalrymen approaching and quickly scattered them with a volley from the first battery. At 9 AM, still unsure of what awaited his men, Bonaparte ordered General Francois-Amable Ruffin's division, part of Marshal Claude Victor's corps, to engage the enemy in a three-pronged attack designed to overwhelm any opposition. The 24th Line Infantry Regiment was to advance up the slopes to the east of the main road while the 9th Light Infantry did the same on the western side. As these flanking attacks were dislodging the enemy troops on the slopes, the 96th Line was tasked with forcing the road itself and breaking through to the summit.

Ahead of the line infantry went the *voltigeurs*. Composed of the best shots in the regiment, these specially trained units covered the infantry's attack by advancing ahead of the main line in loose formation and disrupting the enemy positions. However, that day a combination of fog and difficult terrain coupled to slow the French advance on the slopes, and as soon the voltigeurs came into contact with the well-positioned Spanish they were met with a volley of concerted musket fire. The 96th made better progress along the road until it came to the bridge over the Duraton, where it was greeted with fire from the first Spanish battery.

Further hindering the French attack was the fact that the Spanish had damaged the road leading to the pass. Consequently, the French

Warsaw National Museum

ABOVE: Baron Jan Kozietulski became the most famous commander of the Polish Light Cavalry. OPPOSITE: Napoleon's relief army rushes toward Somosierra Pass. The key mountain pass in the 50-mile-long Sierra de Guadarrama Mountains was held by 21,000 Spanish troops with 16 guns.

artillery was slow in supporting the infantry. Moreover, the narrowness of the road was such that only three guns–two 8-pounders and a 24-inch howitzer from the 3rd Regiment D'Artillerie à Cheval–could be brought up in support. The first Spanish battery consisted of only two 4-pound cannon, but it had the advantage of the high ground as well as a protective earthwork. In the narrowness of the pass, the two guns proved deadly effective. The French guns were quickly under fire and could not effectively concentrate on the Spanish positions for any length of time before having to reposition.

Sometime between 11 AM and noon, the fog finally began to lift, and Bonaparte ordered Lieutenant Andrzej Niegolewski, the youngest officer in the regiment, to take a platoon of Chevau-Légers from the 3rd Squadron, reconnoiter the enemy positions as best he could, and seize Spanish prisoners for interrogation. The emperor then rode into the defile to observe the situation for himself accompanied by the rest of Chevau-Légers and two squadrons of the Chasseurs à Cheval.

Once within sight of the stone bridge, Bonaparte and his retinue came under fire from the first battery. As cannonballs hissed and crashed around him, the emperor, telescope in hand, began to grow more and more frustrated at the slow progress of the infantry. Ignoring the concerns of his staff for his own safety, he turned to Colonel Piré, aide-de-camp to Marshal Berthier, and ordered him to take the 3rd Squadron and see for himself whether the first battery could be taken. Piré did as instructed, but upon seeing for himself the strength of the Spanish position and the narrowness of the road quickly returned to report that it was impossible to take the cannon from the front.

Upon hearing these words, Bonaparte's anger erupted. "Impossible? Impossible? I do not know this word," he exclaimed incredulously, his riding crop whistling through the air. "What? My guard halted by Spanish, by a band of armed peasants!" He turned once again to Major de Ségur, who had earlier led the Chasseurs à Cheval up the pass, and told him to order the duty squadron to take the guns. While the exact meaning of Bonaparte's order remains vague to this day, it most likely called for the Poles to take only the first battery and open the road for Ruffin's stalled infantry. For Squadron Leader Kozietulski, however, an order from the emperor was beyond question no matter how ambiguous. "Forward you sons of dogs, the emperor is watching you!" he shouted to his troopers who rode forth to resounding chants of "Vive L'Empereur!"

The 3rd Squadron comprised two companies: the 3rd led by Captain Jan Dziewanowski and the 7th under Captain Piotr Krasinski. The strength of the squadron at the time of the charge is generally estimated to have been about 150 sabers. Its exact number, however, is difficult to determine as Niegolewski's platoon was still on its reconnaissance mission, and there were more men either in hospital or posted elsewhere. The narrowness of the road meant that the squadron was forced to ride four horses abreast in a column a few hundred yards long. This type of cumbersome formation made it difficult to pick up speed along the inclining path and was much more suited to marching than charging.

As the Poles made their way toward the stone bridge and the first Spanish battery, they became a clear target for the Spanish infantry on the slopes. Once within 300 to 400 yards of the first battery, the squadron was racked by a salvo from the Spanish guns that shattered the front of the column and brought the charge to a brief halt. The Poles quickly regrouped, though, and, still under fire from the slopes, continued on toward their objective.

As the squadron approached the battery, the gunners switched to canister with deadly effect, and the road was soon littered with dead and wounded men and horses. Yet, the Poles had come too far to turn around a second time, and they plunged through the first battery furiously sabering the bewildered gunners. Having overrun the guns, the 3rd Squadron horsemen had most likely fulfilled their objective and could have stopped to await the infantry. But with their mounts gaining speed and the fire from the slopes still targeting them, they continued to the second battery. The fog, though lighter than earlier in the day, still hung in the air and was heavy enough that the Poles could not see what awaited them farther up the pass. It was equally as blinding to the Spanish defenders who, unable to make out exactly how many horsemen were coming toward them, could only sit blindly and listen as the thunder of hooves drew nearer.

It was at this time that the squadron received much needed reinforcements in the way of Niegolewski's platoon, which had returned from its earlier reconnaissance mission. Having seized prisoners as ordered, the platoon had returned to the French lines where it dismounted and began cleaning its equipment. Upon spotting the wild charge, Niegolewski did not wait for orders. Instead he rallied his men with shouts of "Forward, Vive L'Empereur!" and immediately started up the road to join the rest of the squadron, picking up stragglers en route.

As the Poles approached the second battery, Squadron Leader Kozietulski was dismounted and left behind badly bruised but otherwise unhurt. Command passed to Captain Dziewanowski, who led the column crashing threw the Spanish cannon, silencing the battery and scattering the defenders. Spurring their frothing mounts forward, the Poles continued up the narrowing and sharply ascending pass toward the next battery. The farther up the pass they went, the more fearsome the fire became from both the slopes and the cannon in front of them. Just before reaching the third battery, Lieutenant Rowicki yelled to Niegolewski that he had lost control of his horse. Niegolewski, realizing that the terrified animals were by this point running on instinct more than anything else, yelled back that he should just let the reins hang loose. It would not matter for Rowicki, however, as he was almost immediately decapitated by a cannon ball.

Once within site of the third battery, Dziewanoski was thrown from his horse and left by the side of the road bleeding profusely with a shattered leg and broken arm. Command passed yet again, this time to Captain Krasinski, who now led as many maddened, riderless horses as he did cavalrymen crashing through the third battery. By this point, the Spanish defenders, shocked at the speed and force of the charge and still unable to discern exactly how many horsemen were coming at them, began to dwindle away. Regulars and militia, both on the road and on the slopes, began to retreat in growing panic toward the main battery at the summit, where the Poles' great-

est challenge yet awaited them. Having come farther than anyone would have expected, the exhausted and depleted horsemen now faced 10 fortified guns and the main Spanish reserve.

As they approached the summit, it was Krasinski's turn to be thrown from his horse, and command of the now chaotic charge passed for the final time to the late arriving Niegolewski. Unlike the badly injured Dziewanowski, Krasinski was miraculously unharmed and able to make his way back down the pass, which was by now a mess of mangled horses, dying men and abandoned Spanish equipment. Although the Poles were thoroughly outnumbered and completely disorganized, the effects of the charge's unlikely progress on the morale of the defenders cannot be understated. The farther the Chevau-Légers traveled up the pass, the faster the enemy's retreat became a rout. By the time the Poles reached the summit, the Spanish positions had been flooded by panicked regulars and militia fleeing in disorder and precluding any kind of effective defense. As a result, the main battery, by far San Juan's strongest position, offered no challenge to the horsemen who, having finally reached level ground, broke off in every direction, furiously hacking anyone in their path.

With the final battery overrun, Niegolewski, his saber broken and horse wounded, paused and turned to Sergeant Sokolowski. "Where are our boys?" he asked with dismay. "They are dead!," Sokolowski replied. But the Spanish were not yet done. Fully aware of just how few Cheveau-Légers were actually left, they furiously counterattacked the outnumbered horsemen. Before the squadron could rally, Sokolowski was mortally wounded, and Niegolewski's horse was shot out from under him, pinning him helplessly to the ground. A group Spaniards immediately fell upon him, robbing him of anything that looked to be of value and leaving him for dead with no fewer than nine bayonet and two bullet wounds.

Just as it looked like the tide of battle had turned and the Chevau-Légers were going to be repulsed from the hard-won summit, help arrived. Bonaparte, having seen the 3rd Squadron overrun the first few batteries, immediately ordered the rest of the regiment, as well as the Chasseurs à Cheval of the Guard, to support the attack. Commanded by Count Tomasz Lubienski, these reinforcements had difficulty traversing the narrow pass given the carnage and debris that now choked it. Once at the top, though, Lubienski quickly rallied the survivors of the 3rd Squadron, and once again the Spanish defenders found themselves under attack. Behind the cavalry reinforcements could also be heard the beating drums of the infantry regiments, who were now able to make their way up the slopes and road unopposed. The distant chants of "Vive L'Empereur" filled the Spanish defenders with terror, and their brave resolve once again gave way to a panicked rout. San Juan's calls for order went unheeded as his retreating men fled southward through the mountains and into the surrounding countryside, looting any towns and villages through which they passed.

WITH THE FINAL BATTERY OVERRUN, NIEGOLEWSKI, HIS SABER BROKEN AND HORSE WOUNDED, PAUSED AND TURNED TO SERGEANT SOKOLOWSKI. "WHERE ARE OUR BOYS?" HE ASKED WITH DISMAY. "THEY ARE DEAD!" SOKOLOWSKI REPLIED.

Warsaw National Museum

The first voltigeurs to reach the summit came across a barely conscious Niegolewski still trapped under his dead horse. Fully aware of the brutal fate that awaited French prisoners taken alive by the guerrillas, the clever officer had feigned death. Once free, he asked his rescuers to lean him against one of the captured Spanish cannons, where two surgeons hastily bandaged his numerous wounds. Lubienski had already sent word to Bonaparte that the pass had been cleared and as the emperor made his way to the summit, he too spotted Niegolewski, covered in blood and seemingly at the point of death. Moved by the young man's pitiful state, he dismounted and knelt down beside him. Grasping his hand, he thanked him for his bravery before removing the Legion d'Honneur from his own coat and pinning it on the wounded Pole. Niegolewski recovered from his grievous injuries and would write 47 years later how he wished all young men could one day be as honored as he was at that moment.

In the space of seven minutes, the Chevau-Légers Polonais had cleared the defile, capturing 10 standards and 16 guns in the process. More importantly, they had opened the road to Madrid. Estimates as to the exact number of casualties incurred by the 3rd Squadron during the charge vary wildly due to the numerous conflicting accounts of the engagement. Only 20 men survived the charge unscathed, according to Ségur. Dautancourt, who was not present during the charge, listed 57 total casualties. However, the evening roll call after the battle noted a further 26 NCOs and troopers wounded but present. Among those who succumbed to their injuries in the days after the battle was Captain Dziewanowski who, after having his leg amputated, died in Madrid on December 5. The spectacular success of the impetuous charge provided Bonaparte with a propaganda coup and exactly the type of brilliant victory the Grand Armée badly needed to erase the humiliation of Bailén. As a result, Bonaparte deliberately understated his losses, declaring in an official bulletin on December 2, that the Poles had lost just eight men killed and 15 wounded after clearing 13,000 entrenched defenders.

ABOVE: Napoleon sent badly needed reinforcements to the top of the mountain pass to ensure that his cavalry were successful in clearing the road to Madrid. The spectacular success of the charge of the Polish Light Cavalry guaranteed victory that day and helped erase the humiliation of Bailén. OPPOSITE: Polish light horsemen armed with sabers braved withering enemy fire to overrun multiple Spanish artillery positions blocking the road through the Somosierra mountain pass.

While Spanish casualty figures vary as well, they were most likely lighter than might be surmised given the short duration of the engagement and the fact that most defenders simply gave up the fight and fled as the charge progressed. However, the French cavalry aggressively pursued the fleeing survivors, and as many as 3,000 prisoners were taken in the hours after the battle. Among the Spanish casualties was General San Juan, who was forced to the bear the blame for the calamity. One week after the battle, with Madrid firmly in French hands, the unfortunate general was ingloriously lynched by his own riotous men.

The morning after the battle, Bonaparte ordered the regiment drawn up for review. After personally inspecting his gallant horsemen, many of whom bore visible wounds and bruises from the previous day, the emperor removed his hat and declared, "You are worthy of my Old Guard! Honor to the bravest of the brave!" A total of eight Legions d'Honneur were awarded to the officers of the regiment and another eight to the troopers and NCOs. On December 2, four years to the day since Bonaparte's crushing victory at Austerlitz, the regiment accompanied its emperor to the gates of Madrid, which duly surrendered two days later.

In Poland, news of the charge caused a wave of national fervor. The men of the regiment represented some of the foremost families in the country and the cream of its military youth. Kozietulski would be known for the rest of his life as the Hero of Somosierra and was eventually made a baron of the empire. In the years after the battle, controversy arose as to who actually led the charge. Lubienski tried to take most of the credit for himself despite all accounts stating that he arrived in support with reinforcements once the summit had already been breached. Bonaparte's bulletin claimed that General de Brigade Pierre Montbrun led the charge. However, no one present claimed to have seen him, and Montbrun reportedly laughed when informed of his participation. Adding further conjecture is the now famous painting of the battle by French artist Horace Vernet. Commissioned by the wealthy Krasinski family, the work inaccurately depicts both Colonel Wincenty Krasinski and Colonel-Major Dautancourt as present in a deliberate effort to include one of their own.

With Joseph reinstalled on the Spanish throne and the British presence on the peninsula reduced to a small force in Portugal, Bonaparte returned to France in early 1809, eager to turn his attention to a resurgent Austria and the coming War of the Fifth Coalition. In February, the Chevau-Légers were withdrawn to France, where that spring they were refitted as lancers. The regiment went on to serve with distinction across the Continent, including once again in Spain where Spanish General Palafox dubbed them "Los Infernales Picadores" (The Devil's Lancers). In Russia, General Colbert, commander of the guard cavalry, ordered all cavalry units to borrow Polish caps and capes when going on picket duty in order to keep Cossacks away. Two more Polish regiments of guard lancers were eventually raised, and when Bonaparte was exiled to Elba in 1815, he was accompanied by 109 of his Polish lancers.

The lancers served their emperor one last time during the Hundred Days Campaign, including at Waterloo, where they were unable to break the British squares. Following Napoleon's defeat and final banishment to St. Helena, the regiment returned to Warsaw, where it passed into the service of the czar. □

Death of a KINGMAKER

KING EDWARD IV RETURNED TO ENGLAND FROM EXILE IN 1471 RESOLVED TO SEE HIS TRAITOROUS MENTOR, THE EARL OF WARWICK, REMOVED FROM POWER. | BY WILLIAM E. WELSH

Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick, was troubled by reports he was receiving in March 1471 that an invasion by King Edward IV was imminent. Warwick had driven his former protégé, the 29-year-old Yorkist king, from the realm six months before, but the earl knew it was only a matter of time before the willful Edward returned to fight for the throne.

Forty-three-year-old Warwick, the most powerful magnate in the English realm, sent mounted messengers galloping to his allies in every corner of the kingdom. The riders delivered messages in which the earl exhorted his allies to redouble their patrols of the coast to ensure that Edward and his foreign army of "Flemings, Easterlings, and Danes," to use Warwick's words, should be driven into the sea and not allowed to gain a foothold on English soil. His reference to foreign mercenaries was a ploy to stir up resentment against Edward.

Warwick had deployed his forces carefully against the invasion. A strong Lancastrian fleet patrolled the English Channel, making a landing in the south unlikely, and Lancastrian armies in the North, East Anglia, and the West Country were prepared to contest a landing in those areas. He prayed his lieutenants and captains would be able to crush the invasion at the coast.

People in the towns and on farms throughout England felt that Edward might land at any moment. They imagined a great battle would take place that would determine once and for all whether the House of York or the House of Lancaster was to rule the land. Warwick and Edward, who had once fought side by side in the name of the House of York, were going to do everything in their power to kill each other and put an end to a 16-year civil war that had drenched the countryside in blood and cast a crimson veil over the throne.

The seeds of England's civil war, which later generations refer to as the Wars of the Roses, grew out of the discontent of the most powerful peers of the realm with the rule of Lancastrian King Henry VI, whom they blamed for the defeat of English forces in the Hundred Years War with France.

Chief among the critics of Henry VI and his advisers was Richard Plantagenet, Third Duke of York, who in 1450 began pressuring the king to rid himself of his closest councilor, Edmund Beaufort, Second Duke of Somerset, whom York accused of treason for his failings as the leader of English forces in France. York attempted unsuccessfully to seize control of the government on the king's behalf in 1452, but was unable to get sufficient support from other English peers to prevail. But when the king went mad the following year, York pressed his case to become the protector again, an office he obtained in March 1454. However, Henry VI recovered the following year, which put an end to the First Protectorate.

Initially, blood was shed at the First Battle of St. Albans when York and Warwick broke up a meeting of Henry VI's court and slew a number of powerful Lancastrian magnates, including Somerset. York took Henry VI prisoner and established the Second Protectorate.

In the fall of 1459, the Lancastrians forced York and his supporters, including Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, and his son, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, to flee the country. By that time, Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou, had become his chief adviser. The following spring, the Yorkists defeated the Lancastrians at the Battle of Northampton. This victory paved the way for York to not only reestablish himself as lord protector but also to arrange through the Act of Accord the disinheritance of Henry's son, Edward, Prince of Lancaster, and stipulated that York and his heirs were to succeed to the throne on Henry's death.

Although the act called for the Yorkists to support Henry VI as king until his death, it remained unsatisfactory to the Lancastrian faction. When York marched north the following year to suppress a large Lancastrian army, he and Salisbury were slain at the Battle of Wakefield.

The slain duke's eldest son, Edward, Fourth Duke of York, quickly took up where his father left off. Despite the Act of Accord's provision that Henry was to remain on the throne until his death, Warwick had Edward

Yorkist English King Edward IV rides into London on April 11, 1471, at the head of a powerful army to reclaim his throne. Edward had sought refuge in Flanders the previous fall when his former mentor and chief ally, the Earl of Warwick, raised a large rebel army to lead against him and restored Lancastrian King Henry VI to the throne.

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declared king on March 4, 1461, while Henry and Margaret were with the Lancastrian army in northern England. Edward subsequently secured his claim to the throne as the first king of the House of York in a decisive defeat of the Lancastrians at the Battle of Towton on March 29.

Edward ruled under the guidance of Warwick, who served as his chief adviser in both domestic and foreign matters. Henry was captured and imprisoned in the Tower of London, and Margaret took refuge first in Scotland and later in France.

Edward's mother, Cecily Neville, gave birth to him in 1442 in Rouen in English-held Normandy. The birth took place during his father's second term as lord lieutenant in charge of English forces in France. On his 12th birthday in 1454, young Edward received the title, Earl of March. He subsequently gained military experience in the company of his father and cousin, Warwick, during the first major period of warfare between 1459 and 1461.

Because of the confidence Edward had gained during the tumultuous period following his father's death, it wasn't long before he felt that as king he was better qualified than his cousin Warwick, who was 14 years older than him, to make decisions on behalf of the realm.

Three years after ascending to the throne, the headstrong young monarch secretly wed Elizabeth Woodville, a widow of the lesser nobility who had appealed to him for assistance after she

All: Wikipedia

ABOVE: King Edward IV; Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick; Edward's youngest brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester (later King Richard III); King Henry VI. OPPOSITE: The Earl of Warwick submits to Queen Margaret of Anjou in France at a meeting arranged by French King Louis XI. Through the Angers Agreement of July 1470, Warwick pledged to restore her husband, deposed Lancastrian King Henry VI, to the throne of England.

had been denied the inheritance of her late husband's estates following his death fighting with the Lancastrians at the Second Battle of St. Albans in 1461. Edward became quite fond of her, and he decided to marry her in 1464 even though it was a well-established tradition for the English king to marry a woman of noble birth from the Continent to gain a diplomatic advantage with another royal family.

The marriage, which Warwick and others learned about after the fact, also had another major repercussion; namely, it gave the large Woodville family access to titles and lands as part of the system of royal patronage that they would not otherwise have gained. The increased influence of the Woodville family in Edward's royal court meant diminished influence and wealth for Warwick.

The rift between Edward and Warwick became greater as the decade progressed. When Warwick sought to marry his two daughters to Edward's brothers, Clarence and Richard, to strengthen his ties to the royal family, he was rebuffed. Edward and Warwick also clashed over foreign affairs. Warwick favored an alliance with French King Louis XI, while Edward favored closer ties with the Duke of Burgundy. On this matter, Edward once again did as he felt was in the best interests of the realm by arranging for his younger sister, Margaret of York, to wed Charles, Duke of Burgundy, in 1468.

Not content with his diminished importance in Edward's court, Warwick plotted with Edward's brother, George, Duke of Clarence, to unseat Edward the following year. In the spring of 1469, a group of Yorkist rebels in northern England, led by an anonymous knight who called himself Robin of Redesdale, rose up against Edward and demanded in a manifesto that the king rid himself of all advisers other than Warwick and the Neville family. Warwick, who secretly guided the rebellion, was able to recruit Clarence to his cause. When Edward found himself isolated without sufficient military forces to resist Warwick and Clarence, he surrendered himself that summer to George Neville, Archbishop of York, who was one of Warwick's brothers. After his surrender, Edward became Warwick's prisoner.

The following months were difficult for Warwick. He had not foreseen that the majority of the English were satisfied with Edward's rule, which had lasted for nearly a decade, and many peers of the realm refused to cooperate with him. What's more, a small Lancastrian rebellion broke out in the North, which the earl found difficult to crush without Edward's support. For these reasons, in the fall of 1469 Warwick and Clarence struck a deal with Edward in which he was freed in exchange for pardoning them. The Lancastrian revolt was crushed, and Edward was restored to the throne.

Warwick had no interest in reconciling himself with Edward. Allying himself once more with Clarence, the two magnates lured Edward away from London in March 1470 to stamp out another manufactured rebellion in Lincolnshire led by Warwick crony Sir Robert Welles. This time Warwick intended to dethrone Edward in favor of Clarence, who was now his son-in-law following his marriage to Neville's eldest daughter, Isabella.

Warwick's strategy called for trapping Edward's army between Welles's force marching south and a force raised by Warwick and Clarence marching from the Midlands. The earl's strategy quickly unraveled. First, he and Clarence couldn't raise sufficient men to form an army. Second, Edward learned of Welles's perfidy and threatened to execute his father unless the son surrendered. Anxious to free his father, Welles prematurely attacked Edward's army. At the Battle of Losecote Field on March 12, 1470, the king's army routed Welles's force. Perhaps disgusted with Warwick's second betrayal, Edward acted in a more ruthless manner against his opponents. Lord Welles, the father, was executed before the battle, and his captured son, who had led the rebels, was executed after the battle.

Lacking sufficient forces to resist Edward, Warwick, Clarence, and their ally John de Vere, the 13th Earl of Oxford, rode south to Dartmouth and sailed to the Continent. When the English garrison at Calais refused to let them land, they instead went to France. Louis XI, who was anxious to have an ally on the English throne to reduce support for Burgundy, granted asylum to Warwick and Clarence. Still convinced that he was the most qualified to rule, Warwick entered negotiations with Margaret of Anjou for an invasion in which Yorkist King Edward would be removed and replaced with her son, Edward, Prince of Wales.

To bind his family to the Lancastrians, Warwick agreed in the Angers Agreement—an agreement he signed in July with Margaret—to restore Henry VI to the throne. In return, Margaret agreed to wed her 17-year-old son, Edward, Prince of Wales, to Warwick's younger daughter, Anne. Warwick's ultimate intention as a kingmaker, despite his vow to put the feeble-minded Henry back on the throne, was to install Prince Edward on the throne. If Prince

Edward and Warwick's daughter had children, then Warwick would be the maternal grandfather of future royal blood.

The terms of the agreement stipulated that Warwick was to invade England, remove Edward from the throne by force, and restore Henry to the throne. Once this was accomplished, Margaret and Edward would return to London, where they would be reunited with Henry VI, who was Edward's prisoner in the Tower of London.

While Warwick was plotting his return, yet another rebellion broke out in northern England, orchestrated by some of his Yorkist supporters. Edward arrived in Yorkshire on August 14 with a small army with the intent of putting down the rebellion.

Meanwhile, Louis furnished Warwick and Clarence with vessels to transport them to England. They departed France on September 9 and landed several days later at Dartmouth. They immediately marched north to rendezvous with the earl's retainers in the Midlands.

At that point, a crucial event occurred that altered the balance of power among the Yorkists. Warwick's younger brother, John Neville, Marquis of Montagu, defected to the Lancastrian side to join his older brother in attempting to dethrone Edward.

Montagu previously had been Earl of Northumberland. The earldom, which traditionally had resided with the rival Percy family, had been given by Edward to John Neville in 1464 in recognition for his service repelling Lancastrian forays from Scotland following Edward's ascension to the throne. Following Warwick's betrayal, in March 1470 Edward returned the earldom to Henry Percy, whose father had been slain fighting for the Lancastrians at Towton. To compensate John Neville for his loss of the earldom, Edward gave him the title Marquis of Montagu, which, unlike the earldom, did not come with any estates. Edward's move was done to reduce the power of the Neville family in the North.

Torn between his loyalty to both Edward and his older brother, Montagu took an army of 6,000 that Edward had raised and led it against his former benefactor. This left Edward to face him with only 2,000 men. Realizing that Warwick had substantially larger forces than he could raise, Edward fled south to King's Lynn in Norfolk, which was under the control of his ally, Anthony Woodville, the Earl of Rivers. With most of England under the control of either the Lancastrians or Yorkists loyal to Warwick, the king had no other option than to leave the country. Edward was able to arrange for three ships to transport his small force to Holland. On October 2, the ships set sail. Accompanying Edward on the voyage were Rivers, Lord William Hastings, and Edward's youngest brother, Richard Plantaganet, Duke of Gloucester.

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On October 5, Archbishop Neville entered London with a sizable force and secured control of the tower in preparation for the arrival of Warwick and Clarence. The following day the earl and duke arrived in the city to take control of the government. Keeping his promise to Margaret, Warwick promptly released Henry VI from the tower and restored him to the throne. The event became known as the Readeption of Henry VI.

Warwick made as few changes as possible in the lower echelons of Edward's government to maintain popular support for the new Neville-directed throne of England. For the most part, the individuals who had been serving in judicial and law enforcement functions were reappointed. As negotiated in the Angers Agreement, Warwick became the king's lieutenant of the realm. To increase his ability to control the military, Warwick took for himself key positions, such as chamberlain of England, captain of Calais, and lord high admiral.

To maintain a careful balance of power, Warwick did not redistribute Yorkist lands and titles to prominent Lancastrians. He did not give Lancastrian nobles, such as Montagu, Oxford, William Stanley (Lord Stanley), and George Talbot (Earl of Shrewsbury) either a role in the government or a seat on the royal council. To avoid alienating the Lancastrians, he also delayed as long as possible Clarence's reappointment as lieutenant of Ireland. Even though the Neville-directed throne was short of funds, Warwick paid for many expenses out of his own pocket rather than alienate Parliament by asking it for a large grant.

Edward spent his time in Holland writing to supporters in England and working with those who had accompanied him, such as Rivers, to arrange for the assembly of ships necessary to eventually transport him back to England. Whereas Duke Charles of Burgundy had tried to remain neutral in the dispute between the two English houses, the realization that a Lancastrian England allied with his enemy, Louis XI, compelled him to secretly finance Edward in the belief that Edward, now his brother-in-law, would remain a staunch ally if he was returned to the English throne. To help Edward procure ships and hire a small mercenary force to ensure he gained a foothold on English soil, Charles gave his brother-in-law 50,000 florins. In addition, Edward secured loans from English merchants keen on retaining strong commercial ties with the Burgundian Netherlands.

Edward perceived that his brother, Clarence, was feeling insecure about his position in the Neville-led Lancastrian government. He therefore wrote multiple letters to Clarence, which were delivered by Edward's sympathizers, imploring him to support a Yorkist invasion. While Edward continued the secret correspondence, his supporters began assembling an invasion fleet at Flushing in February.

On March 2, 1471, Edward boarded his flagship. Unfortunately, the fleet could not gain favorable winds for more than a week, which meant that three dozen ships of various sizes had to remain in protected waters ready to sail once the wind turned. Aboard the ships were 1,200 mercenaries, including a contingent of handgunners. On March 11, the fleet sailed into the North Sea bound for East Anglia.

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A fanciful period depiction of the Battle of Barnet fought just outside London shows Edward IV (left) piercing the Earl of Warwick with a lance. As with all battles during the Wars of the Roses, the bulk of the forces fought dismounted.

The following evening, Edward's fleet anchored off the coast of Norfolk. Unsure of the measure of local support he might receive, he sent a small party ashore to ascertain whether circumstances were favorable for landing his entire force. Upon learning that the area was tightly controlled by Warwick's ally, the Earl of Oxford, the party boarded again, and on March 13 the fleet sailed north in search of a more favorable place to land. That evening a great storm arose that scattered the ships. Rather than try to reassemble the fleet, the various groups landed wherever they were along the coast once the seas were calm enough to allow them to go ashore.

Edward's force landed the following day in three groups near Ravenspur in East Yorkshire. Initially inclined to immediately march south where he had the most supporters, Edward agreed to follow the advice of his lieutenants that he should establish his presence first in the Lancastrian-controlled North to show that he was confident of success no matter where he landed in England.

The small Yorkist army struck out for the nearest major town in East Yorkshire, which was Hull. The Yorkists had predicted correctly that they were generally unwelcome in the North even though Edward's father had held the title of Duke of York. When Edward's army reached Hull, it was denied entry. The countryside was full of Lancastrian levies, but they lacked a leader to organize them to resist Edward's invasion.

Edward continued east, and on March 18 his army arrived at York, which was located in North Yorkshire. In a meeting with Lancastrian officials of the town, Edward told them that he had returned only to reclaim his dukedom. Believing the falsehood, the officials allowed Edward and his brother to enter with a small escort. By denying entry to his army, they sought to prevent Edward from occupying the walled town and using it as a base.

The following day, Edward led his army on a southwest course to Sandal Castle, the site of his father's defeat by a large Lancastrian army in December 1460. There he was reinforced on March 20 by a small number of troops loyal to him in the North. He was aware that Montagu was at Pontefract Castle a short distance to the east. For reasons unknown to Edward, Montagu did not pursue or attempt to block Edward's attempt to reach Sandal Castle.

Still wary that Montagu might attack his column, Edward pushed it hard on its march to Nottingham in the Midlands. With scouts guarding its flanks, the Yorkist army tramped southeast to Doncaster and then south for Nottingham. Warwick was sorely disappointed to learn that his brother had not attacked the Yorkists before they left the North.

The most likely reason that Montagu failed to attack Edward was that he was reluctant to strike Edward by himself. He probably preferred that his brother be the one to lead an army in battle against Edward.

Montagu's northern army was not the only Lancastrian army that was mobilizing against Edward. Upon learning that Edward had landed, Oxford had sent letters to his supporters instructing them to assemble at King's Lynn in Norfolk for a march to intercept Edward's army. While Edward was on his way to Nottingham, Oxford arrived in King's Lynn and made a quick inspection of his army. On March 22, Oxford led his force west. His destination was Newark-on-Trent, which lay a day's march from Nottingham.

At Newark, Oxford was joined by large contingents led by two other Lancastrian nobles. One was Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, a staunch Lancastrian who had fled abroad following Towton and returned to England to support the readeption. The other was Lord William Beaumont, who had lost his estates when Edward transferred them to Hastings following the Yorkist victory at Towton. Despite the loss of their estates, these men still had hundreds of loyal followers. Altogether, the Lancastrian army at Newark numbered 4,000 men.

At Doncaster, Edward was joined by a pair of Yorkist knights who brought 600 men with them and news that more were on the way from Lancashire. Arriving in Nottingham on March 24, Edward learned from his scouts that a substantial Lancastrian force under Oxford was located at Newark. The following day, Edward's army tramped north to attack the Lancastrians. Even though he was outnumbered, Edward hoped that he could surprise and rout Oxford's army.

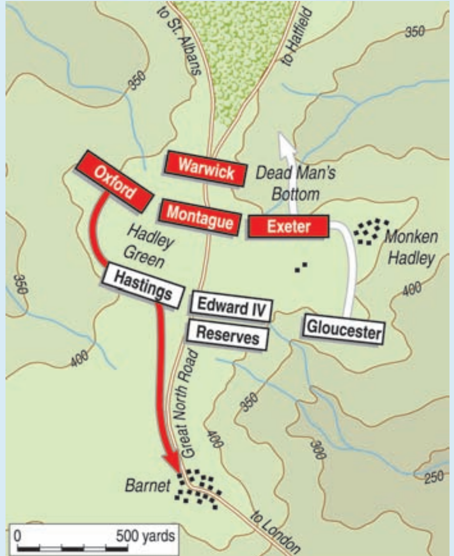
But the clash never occurred. Oxford ordered his entire force to withdraw under cover of night. Like Montagu, he most likely was reluctant to fight Edward until he had united with Warwick.

When the Yorkist king learned that Oxford's army had withdrawn, Edward countermarched south to Leicester, where he received 3,000 additional reinforcements from Lancashire. The Lancashire men were loyal to Hastings, who was the recipient of the Lancastrian estates during Edward's rule.

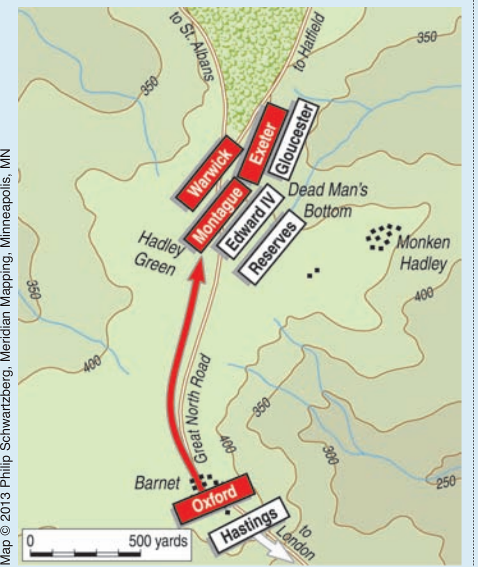
At the time, Warwick was at Warwick Castle where he was assembling forces from his vast estates in the Midlands. Once he had organized his personal army, he marched to Coventry, which was the second strongest walled town in England after London. While Edward was at Leicester, the other two Lancastrian armies, one led by Montagu and the other by Oxford, marched around Edward and joined

Warwick. The combined Lancastrian army in Coventry numbered 15,000.

On March 29, Edward arrived with his 6,000-strong army outside Coventry. He had his army deploy for battle on the outskirts of the city. This was a customary invitation to battle. But Warwick refused even though his army was more than twice the size of Edward's. The earl had received a letter from Clarence advising him to await his arrival with reinforcements before accepting Edward's invitation to battle. What's more, Warwick respected Edward's qualities as a military leader, and he knew that the opposing army had a block of professional soldiers from the Continent.



As a result of the defeat of Lord Hastings' division on the Yorkist left by the Earl of Oxford's division, the opposing lines wheeled counterclockwise. This movement set the stage for the debacle that occurred when archers from Montagu's division fired on Oxford's returning troops, mistaking them for Edward's division.



Map © 2013 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

Located in the heart of the Midlands, the important commercial center of Coventry was an intimidating stronghold. Work on the city's 3½-kilometer circuit of eight-foot-thick red sandstone walls had begun in 1350 and taken a half century to complete. The walls bristled with 32 guard towers. Edward's only hope was that Warwick would march out to meet him. The Yorkist king had neither the weapons nor the time to conduct a lengthy siege of a strongly held town.

Edward also sent word to Warwick that he would grant him a pardon. But Warwick spurned the offer as he had resolved not to serve as one of Edward's counselors, but rather as the de facto leader under the readeption.

Clarence had been in the West Country raising his own force when Edward landed. About the time Edward arrived before Coventry, Clarence led his 4,000-man army northwest toward the contested Midlands. On April 2, the duke's army arrived in Burford in Oxfordshire.

Edward had no intention of allowing Clarence to reinforce Warwick. On the same day Clarence reached Burford, Edward quit Coventry and shifted his forces south to Warwick Castle. By capturing Warwick's primary residence, he hoped to anger the earl into marching to its relief. But the earl was not so easily manipulated. His army remained securely behind Coventry's thick walls awaiting Clarence's arrival.

On April 3, Clarence and his personal army arrived in Banbury, which lay a day's march from Edward's position at Warwick. That afternoon Edward and Richard met with their brother on the Banbury Road to discuss a possible reconciliation. Clarence was bitter because Warwick had not given him a role in the new Lancastrian government. Furthermore, his mother, Cecily Neville, and his sister had urged him to resolve his differences with Edward upon his brother's return to England in 1471. Heeding the advice of his family, Clarence reconciled with Edward, and his large group of retainers and levies nearly doubled Edward's Yorkist army.

BOTH SIDES WOULD FIGHT DISMOUNTED BECAUSE THE ACCURACY OF THE ENGLISH LONGBOWS MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR MOUNTED KNIGHTS TO REACH AN ENEMY LINE BEFORE THEIR HORSES HAD BEEN STOPPED BY A STORM OF ARROWS.

On April 4, Clarence rode with his brothers to Coventry. Upon their arrival, Clarence beseeched Warwick to accept Edward's pardon, but the earl again declined the offer. Having tried their best to solve the dispute by words rather than force of arms, Edward on April 5 marched south toward London where he hoped to recruit more men, as well as capture Henry VI, thus removing him once more as a willing pawn in the game of dynastic chess.

Unwittingly, a well-led Lancastrian army that had been in the vicinity of London left the region the same day headed for the West Country. The army, led by Edmund Beaufort, Fourth Duke of Somerset, planned to rendezvous with Queen Margaret, her son, Prince Edward, and a small force of men at arms. Beaufort and his lieutenants, who had been dealt with harshly by Warwick under Edward's reign, had no desire to overtly assist him. In their minds it was his responsibility to vanquish Edward with his own forces. Their allegiance lay primarily with Henry VI and Margaret. Although Margaret and her troops boarded their vessels at Honfleur on March 24, repeated storms in the Channel kept them bottled up in port for three weeks.

When news reached Warwick of Edward's destination, he sent a messenger to his brother, Archbishop George, to muster the city's militia to prevent its capture by Edward. The archbishop called up the militia, but there were no military leaders of note to organize a stout defense against the Yorkist king.

Edward's march to London was a slow affair. Believing that Warwick might attack his column from behind, the king handpicked some of his best mounted men-at-arms and archers to create a strong rear guard to ensure that his army would not be vulnerable to attack. He also conducted a slow march to allow those who wanted to join his army from the counties through which he marched to have sufficient time to be incorporated into the ranks.

On April 8, Edward's army, having passed through Northampton the previous day, arrived in Dunstable in Bedfordshire. Edward occupied St. Albans on April 10 after a short march. There the king waited for his Yorkist supporters to do what they could to persuade the militia to allow Edward to enter unopposed. Municipal officials loyal to Edward were able to persuade the troops to go home to dinner that night and await a summons to return to their posts. The officials had

no intention of calling them out again. A dispatch was sent to Edward telling him to arrive the following morning.

With the troops still billeted in their homes the morning of April 11, Edward entered London at the head of his army through Bishopsgate. Marching behind Edward in the vanguard were 500 Flemish handgunners who scowled and cast looks about designed to make any dissenters think twice about disrupting the king's intentions.

A band of Edward's soldiers accepted the surrender of Archbishop Neville, who had sent a note to the Yorkist king the previous day indicating that he would cooperate with him once he entered London. The archbishop was removed to the Tower of London. Edward later pardoned him.

Meanwhile, Edward sought out Henry VI, who was ensconced at the Bishop's Palace where he had been under the watch and care of the archbishop. "My cousin of York, you are welcome," said Henry. "I know in your hands my life will not be in danger." Henry was correct. Edward ordered the pathetic, dethroned Lancastrian king taken to the tower for safekeeping.

On April 12, which was Good Friday, Edward learned from his scouts that Warwick was marching to London hoping to attack the Yorkist king on Easter Sunday, when it was assumed Edward would be resting his army. But Edward was not a naïve military commander, and he fully appreciated the possibility of Warwick's launching such an attack.

The following day, April 13, Edward's army marched north on the Great North Road. His scouts skirmished that afternoon with Warwick's scouts at the village of Barnet, 12 miles north of London. The Yorkist scouts got the better of their Lancastrian counterparts, and when they chased them through the village and beyond, they saw Warwick's 15,000-strong Lancastrian army assembled on a slight ridge a half mile north of the town. The scouts returned to Edward with news that the enemy host had been located.

Edward marched his army after darkness as quietly as possible to a position a quarter of a mile from Warwick's army. The decision to camp so close to the enemy, which was done to ensure that the Yorkists would be in position to attack at daylight, had an unexpected benefit.

Warwick, who learned that Edward was encamped just to the south, ordered his gunners to bombard the enemy throughout the night. The stone shells passed harmlessly over the camp. It was a novel use of artillery for the time, as medieval field artillery generally was used only at the beginning of a battle. Edward ordered his gunners not return fire so as not to reveal his exact position.

Warwick accompanied by Oxford, Montagu, and Exeter and their troops. As for Edward, he had his two brothers, Hastings and Rivers, fighting on his side. Other peers who contributed substantial troops to Edward's army were Henry Bourchier, Earl of Essex; John Bourchier, Lord Berners; Humphrey Bourchier, Lord Cromwell; and William Fiennes, Lord Say and Sele. The large number of peers in Edward's army substantially raised the morale of his troops and instilled them with the belief that they were fighting for a just cause.

Library of Congress

Both sides would fight dismounted because the accuracy of the English longbows made it impossible for mounted knights to reach an enemy line before their horses had been stopped by a storm of arrows. An added benefit of having the men-at-arms fight dismounted was that it stiffened the resolve of the green levies in the infantry ranks. Warwick liked to direct the battle from the saddle, but his brother John convinced him that it would hearten the Lancastrian levies to have the earl fight on foot among them.

Since both armies were made up of Englishmen who dressed in a similar manner for battle and carried similar weapons, the retainers and levies of each peer of the realm wore the livery or badge, or both, of their noble. In the case of men-at-arms encased in plate armor, they might wear the livery over their armor, and the levies would do the same over their jackets. At Barnet, Warwick's men wore red livery and had a badge showing a ragged staff. Edward's men had livery of blue and red with a badge showing a sun with streamers.

Both armies were divided into three "battles," of which the closest comparison in modern armies would be the division. Each battle comprised an unspecified number of companies, each of which was led by a captain. Companies ranged from several dozen men to several hundred.

Warwick's Lancastrian force had the advantage of the high ground, and nearly half of the army was protected by the lay of the land. The Lancastrian line, which was situated about a half mile north of Barnet, was astride the Great North Road. From right to left the battles were led by Oxford, Montagu, and Exeter. Oxford's men, who were deployed on the right, enjoyed the advantage of deploying behind a hedgerow, which served as a natural entrenchment. Warwick established a reserve behind Montagu's battle. The earl then joined his brother in the center of the battlefield.

The hedgerow was one of many in the area that divided the open ground north of Barnet known as Gladsmuir Heath into a large number of separate fields. Behind the Lancastrian line was a small manor house known as Old Fold Manor, which had a moat around it. Beyond the house to the north the Great North Road bent northeast, while another road branched off toward St. Albans to the northwest. Two copses were behind the Lancastrian line, one of them between the fork in the two roads to the north and the other to the east along a side road that led to Enfield.

The Yorkist line from right to left consisted of the battles of Gloucester, Edward, and Hast-

ings. Edward also established a dismounted reserve behind his division.

Barnet would be the first battle in which 19-year-old Gloucester would lead a battle of his own. Richard, who had been schooled in the art of warfare since childhood, would meet his first real test as a military leader. Edward ordered Clarence and his retainers to join his battle to keep a close eye on his brother and ensure he did not commit an act of treachery during the clash of arms. Hastings had the difficult task of attacking uphill against Oxford's troops behind the hedgerow.

Although Edward had done an admirable job the night before of shaking out his marching column into a line of battle, he was not able to get his force directly opposite the enemy. Edward's line was slightly east of Warwick's line, which meant that each army's right flank overlapped the other, giving Gloucester an advantage on the Yorkist side and Oxford an advantage on the Lancastrian side.

Edward had previously issued orders to his lieutenants to inform their troops that in the event of a victory they were only to only kill lords and spare the enemy levies. At some point before the battle began, though, he changed his mind and ordered no quarter given to any of the enemy in the event of a victory. His reason for the change of heart was probably to make sure that no survivors of Barnet joined the second Lancastrian army located in the West Country.

Both sides slept on the damp, cold ground unsure of whether the morning would bring exhilarating victory or dismal defeat for their side. Edward ordered his troops to fall in at 4 AM.

During the night a fog had settled over the battlefield. The fog would make it impossible for each side to judge the other's strength in the morning. When the sun rose at 5 AM on Sunday, April 14, Warwick ordered his artillery and archers to fire on the Yorkists, even though it was impossible to see their exact position through the fog. Edward ordered his archers and handgunners to return fire. The handgunners, as they had in previous battles, proved to be largely ineffective.

Edward ordered the trumpeters to sound a general advance. Shouts and cries mingled with the sound of trumpets and drums, and the din that the voices and instruments made as they mingled together could be heard in nearby villages.

Hastings' division encountered considerable difficulty closing with Oxford's division behind the hedge. His troops, the majority of whom were recruited from the Midlands where Hastings had large estates in Leicester and Northampton counties, had to hack their way through bramble to reach their foe. Unknown to them, farther west beyond their flank several hundred of Oxford's men, who were clad in the red livery with a star with streamers for their badge, plunged through the thicket and appeared unexpectedly on Hastings' flank. With loud shouting the Lancastrians began slashing their way into the side of Hastings' line.

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ABOVE: Nineteen-year-old Richard, Duke of Gloucester, ably led the Yorkist vanguard at Barnet. A thick mist the morning of the battle served to further complicate the difficult task of telling friend from foe on a battlefield where the combatants fought for opposing English lords. OPPOSITE: When the Lancastrian line was finally broken, a heavily armored Earl of Warwick tried to reach his horse to escape but was easily overtaken and killed by Yorkist infantry.

After 30 minutes of fighting, the left of Hastings' division crumbled. Before Hastings could redeploy his men to meet the flank attack, his entire line broke. Oxford's men charged into the broken line swinging their swords and axes in an orgy of gore and death. The survivors streamed south across the heath leaving a bloody tangle of their dead and dying comrades to be trampled by Oxford's exultant troops. The rout on the Yorkist left was not surprising considering that Hastings and his captains had not had sufficient time to drill the large number of green levies in their ranks before the battle.

Oxford's men chased the fleeing Yorkists through the fog. When they overtook individuals or groups, they struck them down from behind and hacked them to death as they lay on the ground. A significant number of the survivors fled through Barnet and continued south toward London.

The same advantage of overlapping the enemy flank that Oxford's men exploited on the west end of the battlefield was afforded to Gloucester's troops on the east end of the battlefield. Gloucester led his men forward along ground that gently sloped upward toward Exeter's men, who were deployed on open ground. They were clad in blue and red livery and wore a boar badge. Exeter's men, clad in the duke's red and white livery adorned with a fiery yellow beacon for a badge, braced themselves for the assault.

Ironically, Gloucester had been trained to be a knight under Warwick's instruction at

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By Steve Sommers

A devout collector of pre-World War II German-made Heyde toy soldiers explains why they are among the most highly prized in the world.

Heyde-made Alexander the Great set. RIGHT: Britains' 54mm Waterloo Highlander is typical of the well-painted, historically accurate, hollow-cast lead figures mass produced by the British manufacturer.

ABOUT 30 YEARS AGO, MY WIFE AND I WERE WALKING AROUND A big antique toy market on a county fair site. There were sheds and barns and tents and the backs of station wagons filled with every sort of doll and truck and train imaginable. Of course, I was looking for toy soldiers: Heyde if possible. And there in an open shed I found a dream; all the pieces were still tied down in a two-foot, square burgundy-colored Georg Heyde and Company box. It was a U.S. Navy zeppelin set.

In the box there were dozens of figures: holding ropes, carrying cans, and waving signal flags. There also were pilots sporting brown flying suits, an officer looking through a spyglass, and even a sailor messenger on a bicycle. In the middle of the two-tiered box was a great tin zeppelin with a flying American eagle painted on the side and "U.S. Navy" scrawled below. The asking price was more than I had in the bank; in fact, it was more than I thought any toy soldier collector would be willing to pay, but somehow the set disappeared. I have never seen another one exactly like it, and I have often looked.

I may have been destined to be a toy soldier collector. One day when I was about five or six, my dad appeared with a large, old, square cardboard box; it had a picture label showing an American Flyer train. Inside I discovered a tin railroad station, a big green tunnel, lights and signals, many sections of track, a transformer, a black electric engine, and brown tin passenger cars. Dad said his family had moved frequently; as a result, this box was the only toy left from his childhood. I picked up one of the cars and gave it a shake. It rattled. I slid back the car roof, peered inside, and saw two play-worn kneeling Scots, one with a broken rifle and the other with missing arms. Despite their condition, I was hooked. I liked that train, and I owned several 1950s Lionel sets, but it was toy soldiers that I loved the most.

Photo courtesy of Joe Wallis, Regiments of All Nations

All photos by author except where noted.

Like those kilted, white-helmeted highlanders, more than half of my boyhood soldier collection was hollow-cast lead, manufactured by Britains. Britains' figures dominated the market for enthusiasts in the past century. The rest of my army was made by Britains' competitors and by three-inch American Dimestore soldier makers. Britains were painted in bright uniforms of all nations and sold with several figures to the box. For a dime each, three-inch khaki troops by Manoil or Barclay could be individually plucked out of a sales tray at the corner store. I had both types. My mom made me play with my Britains inside on the rug, but the dimestore soldiers were made for backyard trenches and attacks with rocks or even BB guns.

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Israel: A 65-Year Miracle

One of the proudest accomplishments in world history.

There can be little doubt when, 500 or 1,000 years from now, the history of the world will be written, that the creation and the development of the State of Israel will be considered one of the proudest and most shining successes. Now, as Israel's 65th birthday has just been celebrated, it is a good time, in our own day, to review what has been accomplished.

What are the facts?

The Birth of a Nation: The State of Israel was born out of the ashes of the Nazi Holocaust, probably the most horrible crime in the blood-stained history of mankind. The *"yishuv,"* (the Jewish population of the country) consisted of barely 400,000 people. On the very day of its birth Israel was invaded by the armies of five neighboring Arab states. Almost miraculously, the vastly outnumbered and outgunned Jewish forces managed to overcome the combined Arab might. But they paid a horrendous price for their victory. More than 6,000 combatants and civilians perished in that War of Independence. It was as if the United States were to lose over 6 million people in combat. But the War of Independence was not the only one that Israel's implacable enemies foisted on it. There was, perhaps most importantly, the 1967 Six-Day War, in which Israel gained a spectacular victory, which will be studied and analyzed in military academies of the world until the end of time.

The Jewish People's Renaissance. There is no comparison in history to the Jewish people's renaissance after 2,000 years of persecution, discrimination and exile, and its transformation into a Jewish nation. Jews from all over the globe flooded into the newly established haven of the Jewish nation. All received a brotherly welcome and were seamlessly integrated into the new state. One of the proudest accomplishments of the Jewish State of Israel was the ingathering of the black Jews of Ethiopia. They, also, are now an integral part of their new country. As an aside, the current Miss Israel is a lovely woman of Ethiopian heritage.

Almost one-half of the world's Jews now live in Israel, having immigrated from all corners of the world. These millions are now fully part of their country, truly an unprecedented accomplishment.

One of Israel's major successes is the revival of the ancient Hebrew language. It had been used only as a religious language for the over 2,000 years of the Jewish diaspora. It has been fully "modernized" and is used as the daily vernacular of Israel for all purposes. There is nothing comparable to it in the history of the world.

To the amazement of all, including perhaps many Jews, Israel, forced by necessity, has emerged as one of the world's important military powers. It has proven more than able to hold its own though surrounded by enemies, who almost singlemindedly are fixated on its annihilation.

An Economic Powerhouse. Economically, Israel's position at its 65th birthday can only be described as miraculous. It is economically comparable to most European countries and superior to quite a few. It is a font of innovation, a high-tech powerhouse, fueled by the country's world-class universities and technical schools. Most United States high-tech companies have branches and laboratories in Israel. They consider them as a source of creativity and of new development. Next to the U.S. itself and Canada, Israel has more companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges than any other country.

One of the weak parts of Israel's economy is the production of oil and gas. Until now Israel has been almost totally dependent on imports of gas from Egypt, a most unreliable supplier. But discoveries of huge oil and gas fields in its territorial waters in the Mediterranean make it clear that Israel will be independent of oil and gas imports in just a few years and may emerge as a major exporter of such products.

On its 65th birthday Israel is in very good condition. Congratulations are in order. But all is not yet perfect, and improvements can be made. There are social problems. There still is too much disparity between rich and poor. There is also disparity between the largely secular majority and the ultra-orthodox *"haredim,"* and also between the Jewish majority and the over one million Arab citizens who are not yet entirely accepting of their country. The biggest and most intractable problem, however, is the stubborn enmity of the surrounding Muslim countries and those beyond its borders, such as Iran. One can only hope that wise leaders in those Muslim countries will eventually emerge, who will realize that Israel is here to stay and that the welfare of their countries and of their citizens will only be assured by accepting Israel and allowing it to lead the region into a new age of democratic advancement and prosperity.

"One can only hope that wise leaders in those Muslim countries will eventually emerge, who will realize that Israel is here to stay ..."

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Most of my dime store figures were killed in action, but I kept my Britains on the shelf and then stored them for 20 years. When I was a kid, though, it was my dad's stories of his childhood wishes that turned me into a dreamer of Heyde figures. Heyde figures were the two-inch, solid cast, animated toys of his childhood. My dad told me about the Heyde soldiers he wanted but could never afford. He recalled that the figures were sold with accessories that formed miniature dioramas, such a pontoon bridge under construction, a military encampment with tents and tables, a zoo with tiny buildings, and a frozen pond with children ice skating.

I pictured all of that and more in my imagination. Much to my frustration as a child, I was never able to find a single figure. I later learned that thanks to World War II and the U.S. Army Air Forces, the Heyde Company in Dresden did not survive the war.

As an adult, I studied history, moved back to Chicago, and met a group of people in the Military Miniature Society of Illinois. Most of them sculpted or painted miniature figures. They meticulously recreated uniforms and parade or battle postures to a high degree of accuracy. I tried my hand at connoisseur figure painting, but soon I realized that along with a few others in the club, my first love was still toy soldiers. At first I collected Britains' figures; their emphasis was clearly on parades of accurately detailed uniforms. Action was generally limited to running horses and soldiers shooting in dress uniforms. Soon, however, I discovered that with some digging and a little help, Heyde's more toy-like, animated figures, old and battered or mint in the box, could still be found.

Today, an adult might have a handful or a boxful of toy soldiers left over from childhood or collected as a reminder of the past. Most collections range from a few hundred to a thousand or more figures; and these collections probably have a focus beyond simple nostalgia. Soldier collecting in the 20th century perhaps can be traced back to two books by H.G. Wells: *Floor Games* (1911) and the better known *Little Wars* (1913). These books established the framework for one part of the toy soldier collecting hobby: wargaming. Although Wells was British, his first book was partially illustrated with photographs and drawings of German-made Heyde figures alongside Britains' figures, toy trains, and blocks for scenery. So, between imaginary battles an adult enthusiast might line his troops in mantelpiece parade or create a temporary diorama on a shelf. After all, they were too much fun to simply store in a box.

ABOVE: Heyde's World War I-era American encampment includes wagons, tents, soldiers sleeping on straw beds, and a vignette of officers seated around a table under a tree. BELOW: French soldiers surrender after a defeat incurred during the Franco-Prussian War.

Then as now, the military history enthusiast might collect figures to arrange in a cabinet or enhance a collection of books, or as a reminder of regimental or national history. Another common approach by figure collectors is to try to acquire everything in the company's catalog as stamp collectors do. Or maybe it is collectors who simply love one particular maker. I probably collect Heyde figures for all of these reasons.

When I was a kid, television and movies stimulated my collecting. My imagination gave me a redcoated British square repelling Zulus; Britains also supplied me with hollow-cast French legionnaires fending off charging Arabs. As a child and as an adult collector, the options seem endless. As with any other type of collecting, though, it is possible to simply run out of gas. Many advanced collectors manage to keep going by broadening the scope of their collecting or upgrading the quality of their troops. For example, they might request only mint condition soldiers in their original box.

How big can a soldier collection get? I knew a lifelong collector, with no limit to his interests, but with a modest income. Still, when he retired to the southwestern United States, he needed a moving van to transport it all.

What is the value of a collection? Again, type of figures, age, condition, and quality determine the financial worth of individual figures or sets. For example, a single Heyde figure in the most common 48mm scale might range enormously from a used soldier that has been played with going for a dollar or less to an in-the-box mint set selling for several hundred dollars. About 25 years ago, I heard of a fellow who traded a 1930s sports car for a collection of Napoleonic French soldiers made by Mignot. Within a year, the man with the soldiers had lost interest in the toys, but it turned out to be an even deal. Apparently, the fellow with the car blew up its

engine. I supposed that made it a good trade.

I like Heyde figures for many reasons. Ironically, one is that Heyde production is not well documented. For Britains, it is the opposite case. Britains are exceptionally well catalogued from their start in the 1890s to the present. There are good American books on Britains, such as those written by Joe Wallis. But when I began looking for Heyde, there was mystery about it; discovery is still part of the fun in searching for these German-made toys. In 2003, a Heyde enthusiast, Markus Grein, wrote the first book, *With Heyde Figures Around the World,* on the history of the company. Even more recently, T. Borges and F. Winckel wrote *Heyde-Hunters,* a picture book that shows some of the best of the company's sets.

Although Britains produced figures showing troops from many nations, its lead soldiers were most often marching on parade. One of Britains' largest and longest made sets was the formal changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. Heyde, in addition to producing some large sets of parade troops, made a great many sets of figures in action. They were intended for creative play or display. With Heyde, a boy or man might simply have fun recreating scenes from the siege of Troy to the trench warfare of World War I. Heyde supplied them both.

I continue to buy Heyde figures at auctions and from dealers at antique toy soldier shows. I swap with fellow collectors, and I hope for a good find at an antique shop. A few years ago on a trip to France, I found a great set of Heyde Egyptians in chariots fighting Nubian warriors. They were in the window of an art and militaria shop; when I asked the woman behind the counter for the whole group, she had to telephone the owner for the price. When the call was returned, I was amazed that they were asking less than I expected. That does not happen often, I am sorry to say.

The Egyptian set is still in my collection that I have been building for more than 30 years. I have concentrated on ancient warfare and the past 200 years of history. I have several sets depicting the early period. There is the Taking of Troy with its sloping walls, Greek temple, Trojan horse, and characters right out of Homer's *Iliad*. Heyde's Alexander the Great set centers on a mammoth war elephant. The Roman triumphal procession of Germanicus also includes an elephant along with chariots and dozens of figures in ceremonial dress. Medieval knights occupy a castle by Gottschalk, the well-known dollhouse maker. I am lucky enough to have buffalo hunt sets in two sizes, each complete with cowboys, Indians, and a stagecoach.

Although covering all of Western history, Heyde specialized in figures of European wars right up to World War I, as well as 19th-century empire building. Heyde offered Franco-Prussian War battles, such as Sedan or the siege of Paris. World War I was the theme for many sets: trench fighting, almost comical battling tanks, pontoon bridge building, and communication units with Morse code keys or an electric light.

Heyde also produced an Arab caravan and French legionnaires fighting in North Africa. The company even made little lead battleships that were much too small for their figures to sail. In nonmilitary figures, Heyde cast children playing in parks in summertime and wintertime, red-jacketed huntsmen chasing a fox, and fairy tales, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*.

Many nations and scenes were in Heyde's regular offerings; if not, specific sets could be special ordered. Heyde even made an airport and an arctic Little America set, which was incongruously complete with both penguins and polar bears. These and other Heyde super sets had tin buildings that anticipated by four decades the MARX plastic playsets of the 1950s and 1960s.

Why do I collect Heyde figures? They are historical, inventive, and simply fun. Other toy soldier makers covered some of the same themes, but with Heyde there was a special quality of animation and variety and a magical toy-like look and feel. □

French legionnaires defend an artillery position in Heyde's French Foreign Legion box set.

The Heyde Egyptians set replicates warfare between Egyptians and Nubians.

World War I soldiers and artillery behind embankments constructed of newspaper are displayed in a setting designed to evoke trench warfare.

By Christopher Miskimon

In a mismatched battle, the citizens of Stonington, Connecticut, successfully defended themselves against the British Royal Navy during the War of 1812.

MANY CONSIDER THE WAR OF 1812 TO HAVE BEEN A WAR THE United States should never have waged. America was in over its collective head, and it was lucky to have ended the conflict without suffering defeat. Others believe the war ultimately led to a greater sense of American identity. Both may be true, but it cannot be denied that the war gave us tales of valor which became part of the American lexicon: Fort McHenry, Battle of New Orleans, and the numerous ship-to-ship duels of the fledgling U.S. Navy. ***The Battle of Stonington: Torpedoes, Submarines and Rockets in the War of 1812*** (James Tertius de Kay, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2012, 216 pp., illustrations, maps, index, $26.95, softcover) is a story full of courage equal to those larger tales, although most have never heard of the town or the battle fought there.

Stonington, Connecticut, is a small coastal village less than a dozen miles east of the mouth of the Thames River and New London. A typically small seaport in the early 1800s, it would seem an unlikely place to become the focus of a Royal Navy attack in the summer of 1814. Exactly how that happened and why is the focus of this book. The author does an excellent job of explaining it.

In 1814, the war was largely stalemated along the Canadian border. Each side had variably won or lost, but the overall American goal of invading Canada had failed. Likewise, the British-Canadian forces arrayed against the Americans lacked the ability to carry the war back across the border and inflict a decisive defeat. However, the war in Europe against Napoleon was drawing down, freeing British resources for action against the upstart Americans. While the effect of this would culminate later in the attacks against Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and New Orleans, in the meantime the pressure on the Canadian border needed relief.

To accomplish this, a number of raids and bombardments along the New England coast were planned. Here the British played on American politics and weaknesses. Most of the American troops were militia, tied to their homes and livelihoods. Attacks along the coast would make the civilian populace cry for the return of their militias for local defense. Given the political nature of the militia leadership, this seemed a likely result. New England was also known as a hotbed of opposition to the war since the people there had many business ties to England and Canada during peacetime. A secondary motive for the raids was retaliation for American experiments with submarines and torpedoes against British ships, a threat they considered an unethical way to conduct warfare.

Men from Sonington, Connecticut fire their cannon on British ships raiding the American coast during the War of 1812. Painting by S. Francis Smitheman.

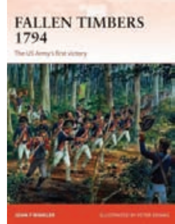
Tiny Stonington was singled out for such a raid. In command was Commodore Thomas Hardy, a close friend of the famed British Admiral Horatio Nelson. They had fought together at Trafalgar, and Hardy was with Nelson when he died. Under Hardy's command were five ships with a total of more than 160 cannon, along with Congreve rockets. Arriving off Stonington on August 9, 1814, the British sent a note ashore telling the townsfolk to evacuate because the town was about about to be destroyed. Shocked by this, the townspeople decided to fight back with all at their disposal: two 18-pounder cannon and a six pounder.

The battle itself lasted several days, interspersed with truces and negotiations. The Americans were able to inflict considerable damage on their opponents despite their lack of armament, while the British bombardment did only moderate damage to the town. The lack of British success may be more attributed to Hardy's essential decency; he seemed unwilling to inflict civilian casualties and went to lengths to avoid doing so.

At the time, the battle was national news in America, a stirring tale of victory against overwhelming odds. Largely forgotten today, it is still a good story. The author tells it in a flowing narrative, which entertains the reader as it details the complexities of the battle and the larger picture of the war.

General Douglas MacArthur is a controversial figure to many. Some revere him as a military genius, while others consider him an egotist, more politician than general. Although his accomplishments must be acknowledged, the end of his career was bathed in quarrel as he entered into a dispute with U.S. President Harry Truman. The subject of this clash was no less than a challenge to the Constitution of the United States, whether a military officer could dictate national policy in defiance of civil authority. ***MacArthur's War: The Flawed Genius Who Challenged the American Political System*** (Bevin Alexander, Berkley Caliber, New York, 2013, 248 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $25.95, hardcover) delves into the conduct of the Korean War under Douglas MacArthur leading to his dismissal by Truman on April 11, 1951.

The fact that MacArthur was a skilled and competent general was largely borne out by his handling of the response to the North Korean invasion of South Korea. The landing at Inchon along with the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter quickly reversed the tide of the war until Chinese intervention. However, his hardline stance toward China and apparent desire for war with that nation were in direct defiance of the president's policy of containment of communism and wider concern about not only China, but also the Soviet Union. It was a difficult process for Truman, as MacArthur was popular with the average American and had powerful backers in Congress. In the end, the threat his actions posed to the nation's democratic civil institutions was too great to allow him to continue wearing the uniform.



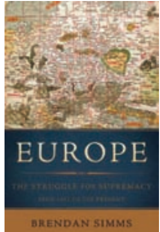
The conquest of the Native American tribes by the United States was a long, bitter struggle encompassing a series of wars over several centuries, if one includes the colonial period. Native American warriors were among the best light infantry in the world, and overcoming their resistance to the inexorable westward advance of the American settlers was not always assured. In the years after the Revolutionary War, various tribes fought against the settlement of their lands in the Northwest Territory. Eventually the problem became acute enough that the U.S. Army was sent to deal with it. ***Fallen Timbers 1794*** (John F. Winkler, Osprey Publishing, Botley, Oxford, UK, 2013, 96 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index, $21.95, softcover) describes the battle wherein that army won its first victory against an alliance of various tribes and secured the area for American expansion.

Raiding and sporadic warfare were features of the dangerous life on the frontier during this period. Since they excelled at this kind of fighting, the native warriors were often successful. The U.S. Army, at that time known as the Legion of the United States, was sent west to deal with them, commanded by General Anthony Wayne.

The situation was even more complex, though. British support for the tribes was widespread, the Spanish and French were agitating, and Wayne faced intrigue from within his own ranks as some of his officers schemed and plotted toward their own ends, at times even actively sabotaging the army's logistics. Wayne had to manage all these complexities during the campaign while preparing to fight an alliance of numerous tribes gathering against him. These tribes assumed another American war with Britain was imminent, and they would drive their enemy out with British soldiers alongside them. When Wayne's army met those warriors and defeated them in two hours of battle at Fallen Timbers, it was a blow that brought a temporary peace and set the stage for the next round in the early 1800s.

Only in the last two centuries has military medicine made the great leap forward to the cutting edge of medical experience. Only in the last 100 years have armies lost more soldiers to combat than to disease. ***Between Flesh and Steel: A History of Military Medicine from the Middle Ages to the War in Afghanistan*** (Richard A. Gabriel, Potomac Books, Washington, D.C., 2013, 300 pp., notes, bibliography, index, $34.95, hardcover) chronicles the long history of medical coverage on the battlefield.

The book begins with an overview of the emergence of modern warfare as it developed from feudal times to the War on Terror, focusing on the ever increasing lethality of weaponry. Afterward the chapters launch into the corresponding expansion of military medical services. Beginning with the barber surgeons of the Renaissance and continuing through to the doctors now serving in the Middle East and elsewhere, this book highlights the effort to save lives even as war makes it easier to take them.



Central Europe has long been a pivotal place in world history. Events there and the struggle for control of that region have had ripple effects not only in Europe itself, but also across the globe as the powers that rose and fell there extended their influence to other continents. It began with the Holy Roman Empire and has continued to the present day with the various states which have succeeded it. Even peripheral nations such as Britain and the United States across the Atlantic paid attention to the powers at the heart of the continent as part of their own policies because what happened in the core of Europe was of critical importance.

This is the premise of ***Europe: The Struggle***

for Supremacy from 1453 to the Present (Brendan Simms, Basic Books, New York, 2013, 690 pp., notes, index, $35.00, hardcover). Not strictly a military history, the book weaves together political, economic, religious, international, and military events, which shaped the region and made it so important in world history.

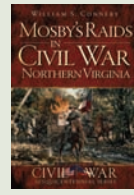
From its beginnings as a fragmented web of independent states which became the Holy Roman Empire, Europe went through a continuing process of political and military amalgamation as various nation-states vied for control. This included decisions on whether to assimilate religious minorities such as the Jews or to exclude and in some case eliminate them. Catholics versus Protestants, royalty against commoner, and Nazi against Communist were all continuations of this fight to unite Europe under essentially a single flag. The situation after the recent economic crisis is characterized as a resurgent Germany attempting to use its wealth to increase its control of the rest of the continent by providing financial aid to nations it has made into markets for its products.

The entire process was aided by an essentially democratic ideology, which permeated European society since the Middle Ages. Unlike nation-states elsewhere, which were ruled despotically, in Europe there was an understanding that the monarch did not have absolute power. While not true democracies, there was a sense of freedom for at least some, and when tyrannical rulers arose they were often deposed by a coalition of princes or nations which recognized the threat they posed.

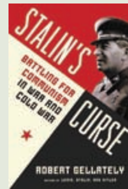
Memoirs of the Vietnam War are becoming more common than those of World War II veterans, who sadly are now mostly gone. The generation of Baby Boomers who fought in Vietnam is now reaching retirement age, so it is to be expected that more will begin sharing their experiences. ***Outside the Wire: Riding with the "Triple Deuce" in Vietnam, 1970*** (Jim Ross, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2013, 293 pp., maps, illustrations, glossaries, $24.95, hardcover) is among the newest of such memoirs. It relates the experiences of the author as

SHORT BURSTS

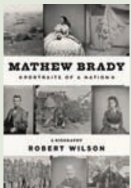
The New Zealand Wars 1820-72 (Ian Knight, Osprey Publishing, Botley, Oxford, UK, 2013, 48 pp., softcover) Part of the Men-at-Arms series, this book covers the various conflicts between the Maori tribes indigenous to New Zealand and the colonists, who arrived to settle there. Uniforms, weapons, and the organization of each side are explained in detail.



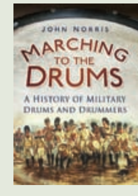
Mosby's Raids in Civil War Northern Virginia (William S. Connery, The History Press, Charleston, SC, 2013, 158 pp., softcover) Known as the "Gray Ghost," Colonel John Singleton Mosby conducted a partisan war in Northern Virginia, which gained him fame in the South and infamy in the North. This work is part of a series of books published for the 150-year anniversary of the Civil War.



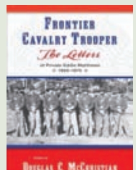
Stalin's Curse: Battling for Communism in War and Cold War (Robert Gellately, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2013, 477 pp., photographs, notes, index, $32.50, hardcover) Using newly released Russian documents, this work covers the efforts of Josef Stalin to expand the grip of Communism across the globe.



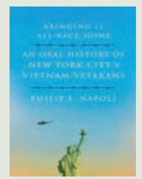
Mathew Brady: Portraits of a Nation, a Biography (Robert Wilson, Bloomsbury Press, New York, 2013, 261 pp., illustrations, notes, $28.00, hardcover) This biography of 19th-century America's most important photographer. His studio sent camera teams to Civil War battlefields and provided the iconic images of the conflict.



Marching to the Drums: A History of Military Drums and Drummers (John Norris, Spellmount, Gloucestershire, UK, 2012, 159 pp., illustrations, notes, $22.95, softcover) Before their ceremonial role today, drums were an important signaling tool to maneuver and control armies in the field. The history leading to today's tradition of military drums is covered in chronological fashion.

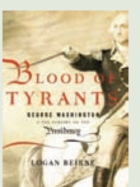


Frontier Cavalry Trooper: The Letters of Private Eddie Matthews 1869-1874 (Douglas C. McChristian, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2013, 414 pp., illustrations, index, $55.00, hardcover) Private Matthews wrote extensive and detailed letters detailing his service in Arizona and New Mexico. They provide a chronicle of the daily life of frontier soldiers during America's westward expansion.

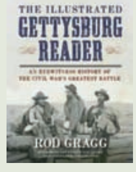


Bringing It All Back Home: An Oral History of New York City's Vietnam Veterans (Philip F. Napoli, Hill and Wang, New York, 2013, 254 pp., notes, $27.00, hardcover) The author spent years collecting the oral histories of New York veterans. This work collects the experiences of the Vietnam generation's veterans.

Soviet and Russian Military Aircraft in the Middle East: Air Arms, Equipment and Conflicts Since 1955 (Yefim Gordon and Dmitriy Komissarov, Crecy Publishing, Manchester, UK, 2013, 272 pp., $56.95, hardcover) This reference work highlights the service Soviet and Russian aircraft have seen in the Middle East's wars from the Suez Crisis to the recent civil war in Syria. From the mid-1950s the Soviet Union widely distributed combat aircraft across the region.



Blood of Tyrants: George Washington and the Forging of the Presidency (Logan Bierne, Encounter Books, New York, 2013, 420 pp., $27.99, hardcover) This is a treatise on how Washington and the Continental Congress dealt with policy decisions during the American Revolution. The use of torture, treatment of spies, and other issues are covered using records and personal letters.



The Illustrated Gettysburg Reader (Rod Gragg, Regnery History, Washington D.C., 2013, 485 pp., $29.95, hardcover) Blow-by-blow coverage of the famous battle using the words of its participants and witnesses is provided. Each chapter examines a part of the battle through the writings of the officers and men who were there.

a mechanized infantryman in the 25th Infantry Division as America's involvement in the war was slowly winding down with the advent of "Vietnamization."

While the book is overall similar to other veterans' writings, Ross does an excellent job of recounting the everyday experiences of the infantryman. Rather than fill the book with descriptions of combat, the narrative follows reality; engagements were few and far between, interspersed with at times mind-numbing routines. Guard duty, unproductive patrols, false alarms, and sandbag filling give the reader a feel for what an enlisted soldier did on a daily basis. Added to this is the feeling of near helplessness as the unit moves and acts under the orders of distant officers, orders which seemed incomprehensible to enlisted men.

Descriptions of the combat that did occur are vivid. The litter of shell casings, the noise, and the mixed emotions of fear and anger are all there. An officer's memoir will usually give background information, the how and why of an operation. As an enlisted man, Ross knew none of this and thankfully did not try to find it for inclusion. How he experienced the war is exactly how it is presented. This microcosm view of the war is how infantrymen before and since have known combat, and that view is well represented here.

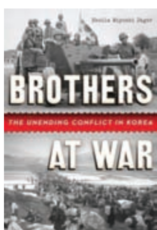
With his unit being withdrawn from Vietnam and going home en masse, Ross was dealt a hard blow. Everyone in the unit with 90 days or less remaining on their tour went home; those with more went to another unit. Ross had 93 days left. Sent to the 1st Cavalry Division, he ended his tour as a straight-leg infantryman and then did a short stint in a rear area before going home.

The origins of World War I are generally credited to the series of alliances, diplomacy, and militarism of the major European powers set in motion by the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Serbia on June 28, 1914. Typically, the bulk of blame is placed on the German and Austro-Hungarian regimes. ***July 1914: Countdown to War*** (Sean McMeekin, Basic Books, New York, 2013, 461 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, index, $29.99, hardcover) puts forward a different assessment of the events which precipitated World War I.

The author begins with a detailed account of the day Ferdinand died. There were a number of conspirators placed at different locations along the Archduke's route, which was publicly known. Only a single assassin had to succeed and one did. This was interpreted by the Austrians as an act of war by Serbia, though some Austro-Hungarian elements opposed this stance. Indeed, Austria-Hungary was then regarded as a weak empire by many, unworthy of much consideration.

Still, imperial action against Serbia might draw in the small nation's nominal champion, Russia. Although the Russian Army was itself not particularly feared abroad, it was more than a match for Austrian strength. This set the Austrians to seek alliance with Germany to counter Russia. From there began the series of events that led to war as one nation after another was drawn into the vast complicated network of European alliances.

Where this work differs from others is in the assertion that the wave of double-dealing, belligerency, and occasionally outright ignorance during July 1914, was spread among what would become the Allied powers as well. In particular France and Russia acted in ways which pushed Europe into conflict, seeking to gain from the political situation after the assassination and seemingly unaware of the wider risks their actions prompted. By the end of July, Europe and the world were set on a path, the consequences of which still reverberate today.



At least technically, the Korean War has never ended. This is brought home occasionally by North Korean saber rattling and the periodic exchanges of fire that still occur between the two Koreas. Yet, since the end of the actual Korean War in 1953, there has been little written in the intervening 60 years to bring the unhappy history of the two Koreas into a long-term perspective. ***Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea*** (Sheila Miyoshi Jager, W.W. Norton and Co., New York, 2013, 605 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, index, $35.00, hardcover) takes the long history of conflict on the Korean Peninsula and melds it into a coherent narrative.

This narrative not only explains the historical events of the war in detail, but also examines the effect the ongoing war has had on the Cold War and the international arena since then. The book begins where the division of Korea began, at the end of World War II. The peninsula was quickly split into two countries and within a few years became a battlefield for the greater conflict of communism versus democracy.

The first half of the book deals with the Korean War, including a summary of the massive international effort in the West to stem the North Korean tide, which seemed unstoppable in the early days on the fighting. The successful United Nations counterattack drove North Korea to brink of defeat only to get a reprieve in the form of massive Chinese assistance. This brought the war to an effective stalemate.

After the cease-fire was signed, China declared a great victory in containing the United Nations forces, but the war was essentially unresolved for the Koreans. Decades of conflict followed, at times limited to rhetoric but occasionally reverting to shooting. Along the demilitarized zone, incidents were common, and constant political maneuvering was required by the United States, China, and the Soviet Union to maintain a balance of power acceptable to each. Intermittent crises such as the seizure of the USS *Pueblo* were seen as distractions from other pressing issues such as the Vietnam War. Despite the great powers' ostensible support for North or South Korea, all of them valued maintaining a status quo that prevented war rather than allowing a final resolution of the Korean issue through renewed fighting.

The rise of the United States to its present position of world leadership is well documented but usually in separate works which concentrate on a specific era or conflict. ***Flight of the Eagle: The Grand Strategies that brought America from Colonial Dependence to World Leadership*** (Conrad Black, Encounter Books, New York, 2013, 699 pp., maps, $35.99, hardcover) brings together the actions and plans which propelled America to the position it today enjoys.

The story begins with the Colonial Era, where a sense of national identity was forged and independence was won. A second section deals with how America faced the internal demon of slavery and secured itself on the continent and in the Western Hemisphere. This accomplished, the United States took its first steps onto the world stage, eventually becoming the "indispensable country" during World War II. Emerging from that conflict preeminent, the work concludes with America's actions during the Cold War and beyond. The political, diplomatic, and social developments of each era are blended with the military activities that made the United States a world power, and eventually the world power.

By Joseph Luster

Would-be assassins are asked to try out all aspects of the *Blacklist* package to make the most of the experience.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: BLACKLIST

Back when we previewed *Splinter Cell: Blacklist*—the sixth installment in Ubisoft's long-running stealth-action franchise—it was only partially clear how it would differentiate itself from its predecessor, *Splinter Cell: Conviction*. While *Blacklist* may act as a direct sequel to the 2010 entry, it's definitely learned some lessons and built upon past mistakes and successes. The end result is an interesting blend of single and multiplayer that asks its would-be assassins to try out all aspects of the package to get the true *Blacklist* experience.

The changes work for the most part, and developer Ubisoft Toronto did a good job of making the different modes seem connected. From the airborne headquarters known as the Paladin, missions can be selected that are intended for solo play only, solo and co-op, or co-op only. The hub isn't just for selecting missions, either. Players will be hanging out here to upgrade their gear, and even the plane itself, so there's plenty of incentive to do well in missions and earn more cash to make things smoother moving forward.

All those gadgets and upgrades will definitely come in handy, because the stakes are pretty high in *Blacklist*. The name of the game refers to United States assets presented as the target of a series of escalating terror attacks. The terrorists behind those attacks call themselves "The Engineers," and it's up to the newly formed Fourth Echelon counterterrorism unit to trot the globe and put an end to this before thing get even uglier. It's a premise that we've seen countless times in *Tom Clancy* games and others like them—with shades of *24* thrown in for good measure—but it does hold some strong beats within that shake things up and raise the level of excitement significantly.

PUBLISHER
UBISOFT

DEVELOPER
UBISOFT TORONTO

SYSTEM(S)
PC, XBOX 360, PS3, Wii I

AVAILABLE
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Sam Fisher leads the operation and gets his hands dirty in the process, but this isn't the same Fisher we've come to know over the years. While he's most certainly the protagonist, he seems more of an equal player in things, with some of his personal investment gone along with the commanding voice of actor Michael Ironside. Taking his place is Eric Johnson, who also performed actions for motion capture. That was precisely the reason Ubisoft cited for the change, as they wanted to take advantage of new performance capture technology this time around. It takes a bit of adjustment to get used to not hearing Ironside's gravel-chewing lines, but Johnson is perfectly capable of taking on the role, and the transition eases as the action picks up.

That action is a much stronger focus in *Blacklist* than in previous entries, with attention placed on fluidly killing in motion. This eventually works and looks cool, but *Blacklist* definitely still has some awkward opening moments of stealth just like most other entries in the genre. Maybe it's just me, but it always takes a little loosening up to get into the groove of being slick and taking enemies down with style and grace. Most levels have been designed to accommodate differing styles of play, though, and *Blacklist* is at its best when it offers up a more open playground to work Sam's gadget-loaded magic.

A good way to gauge how successful a *Splinter Cell* game is at its stealth core is to see how stupid you can get away with being before you meet a gruesome end. In one of the previous entries, I recall lamely scaling outside windowsills like Spider-Man and picking off clueless enemies in rapid succession, or even rolling through offices dropping smoke grenades as I dashed past hired goons. *Blacklist* finds a nice balance and rarely kills the atmosphere through poor level design or enemy AI, though it's far from flawless. That's one reason the increased fluidity of combat makes things feel more natural, making way for a combination of pure stealth and knuckle-whitening action. Between on-the-fly executions and hand-to-hand takedowns, you don't always need to know exactly what's around that next corner if you're in a rush.

Some missions end up being at odds with the otherwise fluid new mechanics and pacing. It's nice to see the developers attempting to switch things up from time to time, but objectives like sniping from above to clear a path for Sam tend to bring things screeching to a halt. With such diverse locales and objectives, *Blacklist* didn't really need any superfluous additions to spice things up.

One of the best things *Blacklist* brings back is Spies vs. Mercs mode, which was one of the most intense additions to 2004's *Pandora Tomorrow.* The setup is simple: One group plays spies who attempt to hack terminals, while the other steps into the first-person perspective of the Mercs, who must protect said terminals from intruders. The swapping of perspective adds some great tension, as Mercs must rely on their handy flashlight as a motion detector beeps ominously, knowing a silent killer is lurking somewhere in the shadows. While there are other competitive modes, Spies vs. Mercs once again remains the king.

It's kind of odd to say a stealth game hits its highest notes when played with a partner, but it's true in the case of *Blacklist*. There's something special about cooperatively creeping through the shadows, quietly taking out enemies, and having each other's back when things get a little too hot. The only downside is it makes it a bit tougher to recommend to those who only plan on playing offline. With competitive and co-op multiplayer adding so much to the full package, it would be a shame to miss out on everything *Blacklist* has to offer. □

Continued from page 59

Middleham Castle. Having been informed before the fighting began that morning that there appeared to be no resistance opposite his extreme right flank, Gloucester had directed several companies to take advantage of the exposed nature of Exeter's left flank. The flankers were to get behind Exeter's line and assail it from three sides.

While Oxford's troops were pursuing Hastings's fleeing men, Gloucester's men were steadily pushing back Exeter's troops. As the fighting rose in fury, those that fell dead or wounded were trampled by others pushing forward to make the most of a local success. When he learned that Exeter's line was wavering, Warwick ordered the reserve to march to Exeter's assistance.

Edward's troops in the center benefitted from the king's presence. Their morale surged like high tide on a full moon. Swinging their swords, axes, and bills, they forced Montagu's troops backward in the opening minutes of the fight. Edward repeatedly led fresh charges into Montagu's line, swinging his sword with mighty strokes. He and his household troops made great inroads in Montagu's line. When Warwick observed Montagu's troops giving ground, he gathered up whatever fresh men he could find and led them forward to assist his brother. Then, he returned to the rear to try to get some feel for how the fighting was going on other parts of the battlefield. By the end of the first hour of fighting, Montagu's larger numbers enabled him to halt the backward movement of his battle.

The two sides had begun the battle facing each other on an east-west axis, but with the left flank of each army either retreating or in rout, the line gradually rotated 90 degrees counterclockwise so that it was aligned with the Great North Road. Edward, who was in the thick of confused fighting in the center, did not discern through the thick fog that his left flank had been routed.

Since Oxford had no way of knowing that his men would so easily overrun Hastings's command, he certainly had not given his men permission to pursue the fleeing Yorkists. While the rest of the Lancastrian line remained heavily engaged with the enemy, it was his responsibility to try to halt the pursuit to the extent possible. Thus, Oxford and his captains ran after their men. After a long delay, which must have seemed a lifetime to the earl, he and his captains regrouped 800 men in the fog-choked heath and led them back toward the hedge.

Oxford most likely thought he would be able to lead his reorganized command directly into the rear of the center of the Yorkist army. However, he was not aware that the line of battle had dramatically shifted and was now on a north-south axis. This meant he was actually leading his men toward the right flank of Montagu's battle.

By this time Montagu was acutely aware that his right flank was undefended. After nearly two hours of hard fighting, he and some of his men noticed a body of troops approaching from the south. Flying above them were banners with what appeared to be Edward's badge of the sun with streamers, but in actuality was Oxford's badge of a star with streamers. Believing he had been outflanked by Edward's men, Montagu ordered a group of archers nearby to fire on the advancing column.

Montagu's archers fired several volleys into the advancing troops. The arrows killed and wounded a number of Oxford's men.

Under fire by Montagu's archers, Oxford's men were quick to believe that Warwick had switched sides in the middle of the battle, and they shouted, "Treason! Treason!" Oxford's troops, which he had labored so hard to reform, immediately broke ranks and fled from the battlefield. The shouts of treason were heard by Montagu's men, and the Lancastrians began to fall back as they tried to comprehend what was happening around them.

Edward sensed a pivotal moment had arrived, and he ordered his reserve into the fight. Despite the commitment of Warwick's reserve to the Lancastrian left, Gloucester's troops also sensed that the tide had shifted and laid into Hastings's battle. Montagu's battle gave way under the added pressure of the Yorkist reserve. His line broke, and the men fled north. Exeter's troops also fled.

The fighting was over well before noon. Yorkist men-at-arms had closed on Montagu's position and cut him down. After briefly trying to rally the retreating Lancastrians, Warwick realized the day was lost and tried to make his way to where the horses were tethered. Encumbered by his armor while moving on foot, Warwick was easily overtaken. The Yorkists knocked him down. One of them pulled up his visor and stabbed him in the throat. The Kingmaker was dead.

Exeter, who lay seriously wounded on the battlefield, initially was stripped of his armor by Yorkist levies who were systematically plundering the dead and wounded. He was identified among the wounded later in the day and taken to a safe place so that his wounds could be dressed. Edward subsequently imprisoned Exeter in the Tower of London. Oxford, Beaumont, and Oxford's two brothers were able to escape and in time made their way to Scotland with a small body of men.

The surviving Lancastrians fled north. They hoped to reach various forests along either the Great North or St. Albans roads where they might hide until darkness. Many of them were slain before they could reach the copses.

As for the Yorkists, Lords Say and Cromwell were among the dead. In addition, Edward's household troops, who made many charges into the enemy line with the king, had suffered heavy casualties. Edward dispatched messengers to London to convey news of his victory. When they arrived they found that some of Oxford's men, who had ransacked homes in Barnet and failed to return to their unit, had continued to London and mistakenly reported that the Lancastrians had won the battle.

The casualties on both sides were about 1,500. That Warwick as Henry VI's lieutenant was able to bring so large a host against rival Edward was a feat in itself. Nevertheless, he lacked Edward's charisma and ability to spur his troops to great feats despite the odds.

Rather than order the bodies of Warwick and Montagu mutilated and displayed on the gates of London, Edward ordered them taken into the city. It was said that Edward afforded them the courtesy because he believed that Montagu, who had done him great service, had reluctantly taken up arms against him. The bodies were loaded in a farm cart and hauled into the city where they were displayed for three days at St. Paul's Cathedral. Afterward, Edward ordered the bodies taken to Bisham's Abbey in Berkshire, where they were buried alongside their parents.

The same day that Edward destroyed Warwick's army north of London, Princess Margaret and her son landed at Weymouth in Dorset. After a period of recruiting in the West Country, the Lancastrians marched toward Wales, where they hoped to raise additional troops. Edward moved to block them, and on May 4 the two armies met in battle at Tewkesbury. The death of Prince Edward of Wales during the battle and Somerset after the battle meant an end to Lancastrian claimants to the throne. The only remaining heir was 14-year-old Henry Tudor. Two years after Edward's death in 1483, King Richard III would face Henry Tudor in battle at Bosworth Field. □

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born as the sole U.S. representative in that nation. Dearborn was now the de facto head of the CIA in the Dominican Republic since all the regular CIA personnel had left the country. As Dearborn studied the political and military situation, he cabled Washington that the dissidents were "in no way ready to carry out any type of revolutionary activity in the foreseeable future, except the assassination of their principal enemy [Trujillo]."

In the meantime, the United States tried to aid in the peaceful removal of Trujillo by sending emissaries to persuade him to leave. The effort was to no avail.

Plans were now activated to effect the removal of Trujillo by any means necessary. A CIA memo concerning a limited invasion plan discusses "the delivery of approximately 300 rifles and pistols, together with ammunition and a supply of grenades, to a secure cache on the South shore of the island, about 14 miles East of Ciudad Trujillo."

The dispatch also says that the cache would include "an electronic detonating device with remote control features, which could be planted by the dissidents in such a manner as to eliminate certain key Trujillo henchmen. This might necessitate training and introducing into the country by illegal entry, a trained technician to set the bomb and detonator."

John F. Kennedy, who became president of the United States in January 1961, continued the CIA's covert effort to oust Trujillo. Before the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in April 1961, the Kennedy administration covertly sent machine guns, pistols, and carbines to the dissidents in the Dominican Republic.

Three .30-caliber MI carbines had been left in the U.S. embassy before the United States broke diplomatic relations with Trujillo, and on March 31, 1961, these guns were supplied to the dissidents. These particular carbines eventually found their way into the hands of one of Trujillo's assassins, Antonio de la Maza. On April 10, four M3 machine guns and 240 rounds of ammunition were sent via diplomatic pouch to the Dominican Republic. They were received on April 19.

On February 15, 1961, Secretary of State Dean Rusk sent a letter to President Kennedy informing him of the developments regarding the Trujillo plots. It read: "Our representatives in the Dominican Republic have, at considerable risk to those involved, established contacts with numerous leaders of the underground opposition … and the CIA has recently been authorized to arrange for delivery to them outside the Dominican Republic of small arms and sabotage equipment."

Ramfis Trujillo (left), the dictator's sadistic son, took over upon his father's death. Romulo Betancourt, Venezuela's president, publicly despised Trujillo, who sought to have him assassinated.

After the Bay of Pigs disaster, the Kennedy administration tried to convince the dissidents not to kill Trujillo as the political climate was not conducive at that moment. However, the machine guns were dispatched to the U.S. consulate and were taken into possession by Dearborn. Two days before Trujillo's murder, Kennedy sent a cable to Dearborn informing him that the United States did not condone political assassination in any form and that the United States must not be associated with the attempt on Trujillo's life.

Dearborn's pleas to the dissidents to call off the assassination proved, in the end, to be futile. On April 30, Dearborn told Washington via cable that the dissidents were going to kill Trujillo during the first week of May and had in their possession three carbines, four to six 12-gauge shotguns, and other small arms. The CIA, seeing the futility of further talks with de la Maza, ordered Dearborn to turn over the rest of the rifles.

On May 30, a spy who worked in the garage where Trujillo's 1957 Chevrolet was parked, told the four main conspirators—La Maza, Salvador Estrella, Antonio Imbert, and Garcia Guerrero—that Trujillo was planning to meet his girlfriend, Mona Sanchez, that night. The men had in their possession revolvers, pistols, a sawed-off shotgun, and two semiautomatic rifles, some of which had been supplied by the CIA. The route that Trujillo was to take passed the Agua Luz Theater, on the highway that led to San Cristobal. The assassins were in position by 8 PM, waiting for Trujillo's car to arrive.

At 10 PM, Trujillo and his chauffer got into the Chevrolet and proceeded to the girlfriend's house. The assassins picked a section of the road that was the least traveled and when Trujillo's car passed them, Imbert gunned his own car and took off after Trujillo. During the next few, hectic minutes, the assassins opened fire, riddling the car with almost 30 bullets. Trujillo's chauffeur attempted to return fire with a machine gun.

Badly wounded, Trujillo scrambled out of the car, looking for the assassins. Meanwhile, De la Maza and Imbert doubled back. Trujillo had no chance. He was shot down by the two men and died on the spot. The conspirators put Trujillo's body in the trunk of a car and parked it two blocks from the American consulate.

After killing Trujillo, the assassins fled to various parts of the country, hoping to evade the huge manhunt that was soon to descend upon them. Whatever hope the assassins had of a coup being initiated upon the death of Trujillo was for naught. His sadistic son and heir apparent, Ramfis, took over the presidency and rounded up all the conspirators. They were summarily executed, some of them being fed to sharks.

After the assassination, Dearborn sent a message to Washington saying, "We don't care if the Dominicans assassinated Trujillo, that is all right. But we don't want anything to pin this on us, because we aren't doing it, it is the Dominicans who are doing it." Shortly thereafter, Dearborn and the remaining Americans left Santo Domingo.

Ramfis Trujillo's time as the leader of the Dominican Republic was short lived. By September 1961, he was in a power struggle with Joaquin Balaguer, another Dominican politician. A possible coalition government was proposed, but soon rioting broke out in the streets and the country seemed on the verge of collapse. In the end, Ramfis Trujillo fled his homeland with millions of dollars of looted cash, never to return.

A series of riots took place in Santo Domingo in April 1965. American embassy officials cabled Washington saying that communist elements were trying to take power in the country. President Lyndon Johnson dispatched a force of 22,000 American troops to restore order. In reality, there was no communist revolt, and the American invasion was roundly criticized throughout Latin America.

In the final analysis, the United States did not want to participate in the events leading up to the assassination of Rafael Trujillo but did so partly due to the political climate of the Cold War. The United States feared that Trujillo would turn the Dominican Republic into another Cuba and reluctantly went along with the rebels' demands to provide them with guns and ammunition. In an ironic twist, the United States succeeded in removing one dictator, Rafael Trujillo, by basically doing very little, while desperately trying to assassinate Castro of Cuba, and failing miserably. □

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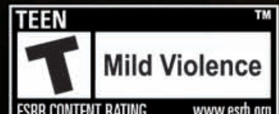

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