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Cover: German infantrymen move cautiously along a trench during the bitter fighting on the Russian Front. Story page 44. Photo: Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-708-0256-15A; Photo: Scheerer

*WWII History* (ISSN 1539-5456) is published seven times yearly by Sovereign Media, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite A-100, McLean, VA 22101. (703) 964-0361. Periodical postage paid at McLean, VA, and additional mailing offices. *WWII History*, Volume 12, Number 4 © 2013 by Sovereign Media Company, Inc., all rights reserved. Copyrights to stories and illustrations are the property of their creators. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without consent of the copyright owner. ***Subscription services, back issues, and information:*** **(800) 219-1187** *or* write to ***WWII History*** **Circulation, WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.** Single copies: $5.99, plus $3 for postage. Yearly subscription in U.S.A.: $24.99; Canada and Overseas: $40.99 (U.S.). Editorial Office: Send editorial mail to *WWII History*, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite A-100, McLean, VA 22101. *WWII History* welcomes editorial submissions but assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. Material to be returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We suggest that you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a copy of our author's guidelines. **POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.**

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# Discovery in the depths of Lake Garda.

**SIXTY-SEVEN YEARS AFTER IT SANK IN THE DEPTHS OF LAKE GARDA IN** northeastern Italy on the stormy night of April 30, 1945, an American amphibious vehicle, a 2.5-ton DUKW, has likely been located sitting upright in 905 feet of water.

The finding, intriguing to those following the stories of World War II relics discovered, recovered, and possibly restored decades after they were lost, may also finally bring some closure to the families of 24 soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division who drowned in the lake and went down with the DUKW that night. These men died just a week before the end of the war in Europe on May 8, 1945, and only about 48 hours before all German forces in Italy surrendered to the Allies on May 2. Tragically, there were casualties right up to the hour that the guns fell silent.

During the closing offensive of the war in Italy, the 10th Mountain Division had been among the Allied units chasing the remnants of the beaten German Army northward toward the Alps, the Brenner Pass, and the Austrian frontier. Lake Garda, 60 miles east of Milan, was near the villa occupied by deposed dictator Benito Mussolini, who had recently proclaimed the Fascist Italian Socialist Republic, a mostly fictitious state, more form than substance.

An American DUKW

On that fateful night, the DUKW, which routinely had room for 12 men, was loaded with 25 soldiers. One report claims these were troops of the 85th Infantry Regiment, members of Company K, and a machine-gun platoon of Company M. Another says that the troops were from the 605th Field Artillery Battalion with a driver from the Quartermaster Corps. An Italian account relates that a small artillery piece was also aboard. Soon after the craft set out across the lake, it foundered, dumping its human cargo into the water.

Although the fog of war and the passage of time have given rise to confusion in identifying the unit to which the casualties belonged, a single soldier, reportedly identified as Corporal John Hough, survived by clinging to a floating vehicle part. The other 24 men, ages 18 to 25, were officially listed as missing in action. The reason for overloading the amphibious vehicle is also apparently lost to history.

Mario Fusato, leader of the archaeological team that discovered the DUKW resting at the bottom of Lake Garda, told the *Christian Science Monitor,* "It was the biggest disaster to happen in modern times on Lake Garda." In a subsequent interview with Ansa, an Italian news agency, Fusato said, "On Sunday, the sonar gave us an initial image, but it wasn't clear enough to be able to say for sure that it was the DUKW. On Monday, though, we used a remote-controlled camera and we saw it. It is intact and sitting upright. There are lots of objects around it, which could be the skeletons or remains of the soldiers who drowned."

The wreck site lies too deep for divers. Fishing nets have become entangled around the vehicle, and tethered search equipment could easily snag at great depth. Any attempts to recover artifacts or determine the presence or absence of human remains will be challenging. Further, a decision will have to be made as to whether the site is designated as a war grave and treated as a sunken ship would be or if a salvage operation should be conducted with any remains recovered and identified subsequently returned to family members for burial.

The searchers who located the sunken DUKW have notified American authorities, and ultimately it will be the U.S. government that decides what, if anything, will be done in the future.

*Michael E. Haskew*

WWII HISTORY

Volume 12 ■ Number 4

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WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

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By Duane Schultz

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# The Breaking Point

## Combat fatigue took its toll on the fighting men during World War II.

**THE JAPANESE OPENED UP WITH HEAVY MORTAR FIRE JUST AS THE MARINES** moved off the beach and started inland. The men hit the deck and took any cover they could find as the barrage of shells exploded around them. They were completely pinned down. The shells fell faster and faster until they sounded like one continuous raging roar. For long agonizing minutes, no one could move. It was September 15, 1944, on a tiny spit of land called Peleliu.

Eugene Sledge, a 21-year-old private, never forgot his first day in combat. He described it 35 years later in his classic book *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*. "I thought it would never stop," he wrote about the barrage that day. "I was terrified by the big shells arching down all around us. One was bound to fall directly into my hole. I thought it was as though I was out there on the battlefield all by myself, utterly forlorn and helpless.... My teeth ground against each other, my heart pounded, my mouth dried, my eyes narrowed, sweat poured over me, my breath came in short irregular gasps, and I was afraid to swallow lest I choke."

**Artist Tom Lea's iconic painting *The 2,000 Yard Stare* illustrates the toll that combat may take on the psyche of an individual. Although its manifestations varied from one individual to another, shell shock, or combat fatigue, was bound to affect any soldier to some extent.**

He survived that day and the days that followed, but as the battle for Peleliu wore on, Sledge found that during every prolonged shelling "I often had to restrain myself and fight back a wild, inexorable urge to scream, to sob, and to cry. As Peleliu dragged on, I feared that if I ever lost control of myself under shell fire, my mind would be shattered."

Yet, despite the horrors and the fearsome memories that haunted him for decades, Sledge was among the fortunate ones. He came perilously close to the breaking point in combat but never quite reached it. He never completely lost control; he did not drop his weapon or try to claw his way deep into the earth with his fingernails, or run screaming and panic stricken to the rear. He never reached the point that he could not take any more, as thousands of men do in every war, for as long as there have been wars.

The number of combat fatigue cases in American fighting units in World War II was staggering. More than 504,000 troops were lost due to "psychiatric collapse," an early term for reaching the breaking point. That was the equivalent of nearly 50 infantry divisions lost to the war effort. Far more men were rendered unfit for combat in World War II than in any previous war, primarily because the battles were longer and more sustained.

Some 40 percent of all the medical discharges in World War II were for psychiatric reasons, the so-called "Section 8s." In one survey of combat veterans in the European Theater of Operations, fully 65 percent admitted to having at least one episode during combat in which they felt incapacitated and unable to perform because of extreme fear. One out of every four casualties in World War II was attributed to combat fatigue, with more cases reported in the Pacific than in Europe. On Okinawa alone, 26,000 psychiatric casualties were documented. Overall, 1,393,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen were treated for combat fatigue in World War II.

Historian John C. McManus described what combat fatigue is like. A soldier "starts trembling so bad he can't hold his rifle. He doesn't want to shake but he does, and that solves his problem. Involuntarily, he becomes physically incapable. He just plain 'gives up.'" It was reported that an infantryman in North Africa "went crazy and beat his head against our foxhole till his skin on his forehead was

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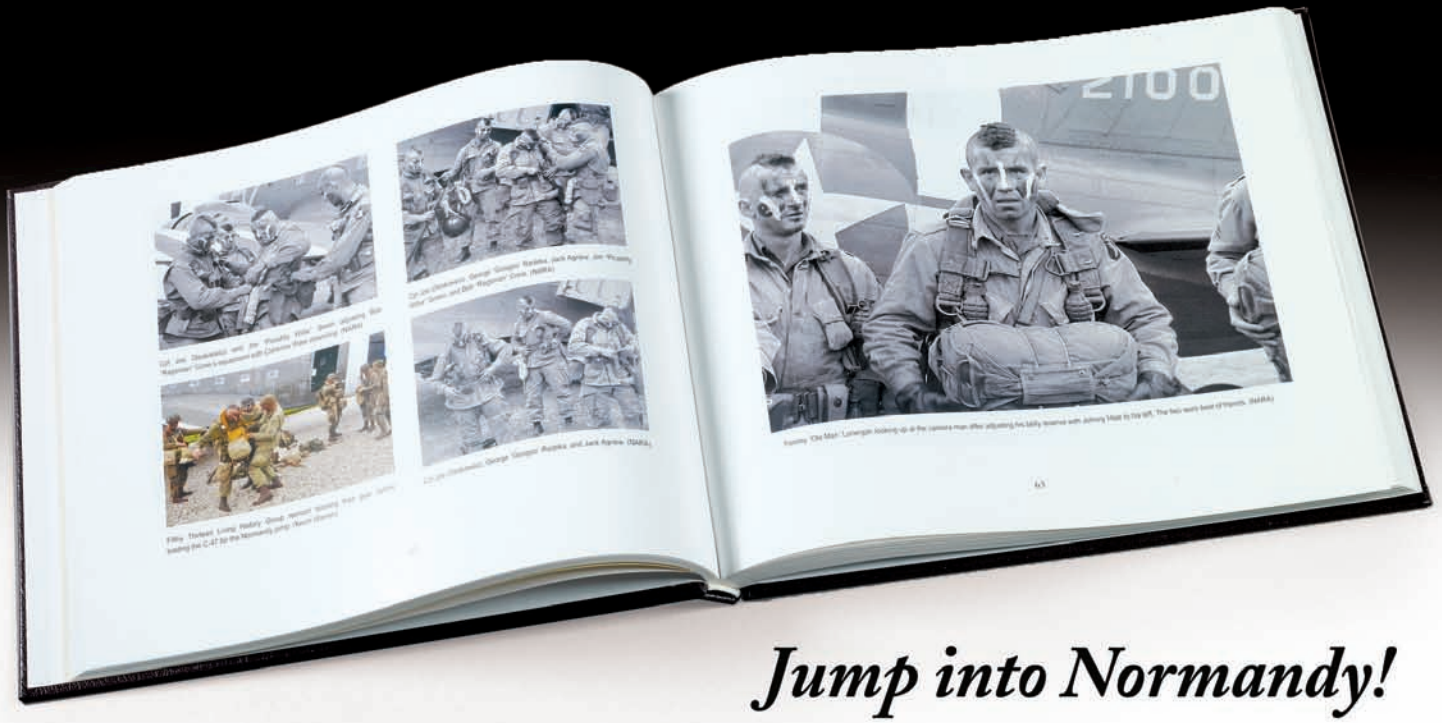

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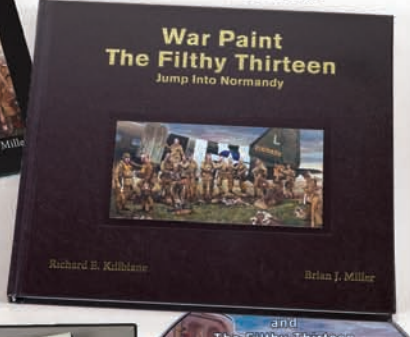



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just hanging in strands. He was foaming at the mouth just like a madman." At Anzio, a sergeant who had been in combat for almost a year started running so fast he had to be tackled and physically restrained. A friend said, "He was the last person in the world you would have thought that would happen to." Soldiers soon learned that it could happen to any of them.

One truism about the stress of continuous combat is that every soldier, no matter how well trained or how experienced, has a breaking point. "There is no such thing as 'getting used to combat,'" wrote a group of psychiatrists in a 1946 report titled *Combat Exhaustion.* "Each moment of combat imposes a strain so great that men will break down in direct relation to the intensity and duration of their exposure."

In some situations, such as the fierce and sustained fighting on the beaches and in the hedgerows of Normandy, fully 98 percent of those who were still alive after 60 days of fighting became psychiatric casualties. In less sustained fighting, the breaking point is typically reached between 200 and 240 days on the line. In the British Army in Europe, it was found that a rifleman could last for about 400 days, but that was attributed to the fact that the British relieved their troops for four days of rest every 12 to 14 days. American troops remained in battle continuously with no relief for as long as 80 days at a time.

The 1946 *Combat Exhaustion* report concluded, "Psychiatric casualties are as inevitable as gunshot and shrapnel wounds…. The general consensus was that a man reached his peak of effectiveness in the first 90 days of combat, and that after that his efficiency began to fall off, and that he became steadily less valuable thereafter, until he was completely useless."

The experience of reaching the breaking point was given different names in different wars. During the Civil War it was sometimes referred to as "nostalgia" because people thought it was caused by homesickness rather than the experiences of battle. Another name applied at that time was "irritable heart," also known as "Da Costa's Syndrome," after the U.S. Army surgeon, Dr. Jacob Mendes Da Costa. He described the symptoms as shortness of breath, discomfort in the chest, and palpitations, all of which he believed were caused by the stress of combat. By World War I, the condition had become known as "shell shock."

As long as there have been wars, regardless of the style of combat or the killing power of the weapons, extreme fear to the point of panic and loss of control, exhaustion, numbness, and sheer terror have caused men to collapse, tremble, and run screaming from the field of battle.

National Archives

**As he climbs aboard a transport off the island of Eniwetok, a U.S. Marine wears the expression of a fighting man who has endured continued hardship.**

World War II, with its far more powerful weapons of destruction, was no exception.

In 1943, the American Psychiatric Association described what it called the "Guadalcanal Disorder" that appeared during the deadly, prolonged, close-quarters combat in capturing the island of Guadalcanal in the Solomons. This was America's first large-scale offensive operation of the war.

More than 500 Marines were treated for an array of symptoms including "sensitivity to sharp noises, periods of amnesia, tendency to get panicky, tense muscles, tremors, hands that shook when they tried to do anything. They were frequently close to tears or very short-tempered." When it was thus demonstrated that even an elite force of Marines was susceptible to such breakdowns, the situation became of major concern to the War Department. If it could affect the Marines in that manner, then no troops could be considered exempt.

For the majority of troops, fear is ever-present in combat, but it does not always lead to incapacitation. Sometimes fear can result in an array of symptoms that can temporarily disable a soldier without necessarily leading to a diagnosis of combat fatigue and a forced period of relief from the front line. These symptoms include a frantic heart rate, uncontrollable trembling, sweating, and periods of weakness, vomiting, and involuntary urination and defecation. The last two symptoms are the most dreaded because they are so hard to conceal and cause such feelings as shame, embarrassment, and humiliation. Some soldiers consider them to be the most overt signs of cowardice to their comrades.

Sometimes the stress of combat is so overwhelming that it leads to a collective panic in which whole units show signs of combat exhaustion and simply leave the battlefield together. Charles MacDonald, a company commander in France, watched his entire company collapse under a German attack. "They walked slowly on toward the rear," he wrote, "half-dazed expressions on their faces."

Some react to the stress of combat by committing suicide. One American soldier was so exhausted physically and emotionally during the Battle of the Bulge that he thought of killing himself because he was convinced that he would never make it out alive anyway. "I had been living in such miserable, bitter cold, and scared at Bastogne, I didn't really care what happened. A click of the safety and tug of the trigger and my suffering would be over." He had to force himself to put on the safety catch on his rifle. "You see, I didn't want to kill myself [but] I was afraid that I was going to do it on impulse. Suffering does things to you."

A second extreme reaction to combat stress is a self-inflicted wound. Some men at the breaking point shoot themselves in the hand or foot. Lieutenant Paul Fussell, an infantry officer, found that hundreds of soldiers in the Hürtgen Forest fighting shot themselves to get out of the line. They usually chose the left hand or foot. Fussell said, "For most boys being right-handed, the shooting had to be done with the right hand, working with a pistol, carbine, or rifle. The brighter soldiers used some cloth—an empty sandbag would do—to avoid telltale powder burns near the bullet hole."

So many men wounded themselves that Army hospitals had to set up special wards to house those soldiers designated as SIWs (self-inflicted wounds). When they recovered, most were tried and convicted of "carelessness with weapons" and given six-month sentences in the stockade.

Another way out for those who could not stand up to the stress of combat or who simply did not like Army life anymore was to desert. This was a lot easier to do in Europe than on some remote Pacific island. The U.S. Army in Europe acknowledged that at least 40,000 men deserted; the British Army lost more than 100,000. Many of those who deserted fashioned new lives for themselves in other countries and were never found. Even the German Army, which had a policy of shooting deserters on sight, lost more than 300,000 soldiers through desertion.

Developing a method of treating the victims of combat stress took some time. In the early days of World War II, the U.S. Army tried several ways of dealing with the problem. At first,

psychiatric personnel attempted to screen for it during the induction and selection process, looking for signs of psychological instability, trying to pinpoint those men who might be prone to reaching the breaking point faster than others. It was soon recognized that it was virtually impossible to predict which soldiers would fold under the stress of combat and which ones would not.

In 1943, a committee of 39 psychiatrists, psychologists, and social scientists produced a 456-page manual for soldiers called *Psychology for the Fighting Man: What You Should Know About Yourself and Others*. The book offered advice on every aspect of a soldier's life, from morale and training to food and sex. But it devoted only nine pages to the topic of fear in combat.

The book took an optimistic and comforting view about feeling fear in battle, noting, "Every man going into battle is scared, but … as soon as the fighting man is able to go into action—to do something effective against the enemy, especially if it involves violent, physical action—his fright is apt to be dispelled or forgotten because he is too busy to remember it." In other words, a man could expect to be afraid before a battle, particularly if it was his first, but as soon as the fighting started his fear would vanish and he would be fine.

That advice did not work out well. The fear remained with many soldiers every time they faced the enemy, particularly if the actions involved an especially violent clash. Nor did evacuating combat-stressed soldiers far from the battlefield provide positive results. In addition to losing a trained soldier from future combat, the distance from the field seemed to worsen the condition of combat neurosis.

Then in 1943, along came Captain Frederick Hanson, an Army neurologist and neurosurgeon, whose assignment was to deal with hundreds of combat-stressed soldiers after the disastrous defeat of American troops at Kasserine Pass in North Africa. Hanson made two major decisions that radically transformed the way victims of combat stress were treated.

As historian Stephen Budiansky wrote, "Hanson's first step was to emphasize the normality of such reactions. He ordered psychiatric cases to be termed 'exhaustion.' The term was not just a euphemism. Hanson found that a significant number of cases were no more than the result of men being driven past their limits of endurance through lack of sleep during days of frontline fighting."

Hanson arranged for the soldiers to be given a bed and food close behind the lines and then injected them with sodium amytal and other calming drugs, often referred to as "Blue 88," named after the highly effective German artillery piece, the 88, which was also highly effective in knocking people out. The drugs induced a long, deep sleep lasting up to 48 hours. When the men awoke and the numbing effects of the drugs wore off, they were given hot showers, fresh uniforms, and a pep talk and then sent off to the front. Hanson's data showed that 50 to 70 percent were able to return successfully to combat within three days.

A key aspect of Hanson's program of rapid rehabilitation was to keep those suffering from combat exhaustion close enough to the front line that they could still hear the sounds of combat when they awoke from their drug-induced sleep. He also insisted that patients adhere to a regular military routine during the recovery period. Hanson's approach was made official Army doctrine toward the end of 1943 and remained in place for the rest of the war.

Still, there were many men who could not be helped even by this program and who never returned to active duty. For others, the fear of reaching the breaking point would stay with them long after the last battles were over; their war did not end in 1945. What we now call post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but which had no name or formal treatment programs during World War II, did indeed affect millions of returning World War II veterans. Most of them struggled on their own to deal with the terrors of their private war, not even confiding in their families or telling anyone else what they had experienced.

"The increasing dread of going back into action obsessed me," Eugene Sledge wrote in 1981, more than three decades after the war was over. "It became the subject of the most tortuous and persistent of all the ghastly war nightmares that have haunted me for many, many years. The dream is always the same, going back up to the lines during the bloody, muddy month of May on Okinawa. It remained blurred and vague, but occasionally still comes, even after the nightmares about the shock and violence of Peleliu have faded and been lifted from me like a curse…. All who survived will long remember the horror they would rather forget." □

---

*Duane Schultz is a psychologist who has written a dozen military history books including* Into the Fire: The Most Fateful Mission of World War II *and* Crossing the Rapido: A Tragedy of World War II. *His most recent book is* The Fate of War: Fredericksburg, 1862. *He is currently working on a book on the Marine Raiders of World War II.*

By Hervie Haufler

U.S. Air Force

# The Miracle of Bletchley Park

**Allied intelligence personnel, including Americans, at secret locations in Britian helped win the war against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan.**

**GREAT BRITAIN'S MILITARY INTELLIGENCE LEADERS LEARNED FROM THEIR** experience in World War I that the kinds of minds capable of breaking codes are a rare commodity and are often not likely to blossom in a military atmosphere. As World War II approached, the Government Code and Cipher School (GC&CS), a name deliberately underplaying the unit's importance, was moved out of bomb-vulnerable London.

For its new home, the chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, an eccentric millionaire named Hugh Sinclair, purchased the Bletchley Park estate in the town of Bletchley, Buckinghamshire. It was a nondescript manufacturing community some 50 miles northwest of London. But for Sinclair the important fact was that it was also a railway center, located on a main line out of London and another line that connected it to Oxford and Cambridge. In August 1939, as World War II loomed inevitably, Bletchley Park became Britain's codebreaking center, making use of the strange old eyesore of a mansion on the property while new structures were built when needed.

To head up GC&CS, Sinclair chose Alastair Denniston, who had shown brilliance as a codebreaker in Britain's Great War intelligence center, Room 40, in London. Settling down quickly to his assignment, Denniston realized that cracking new codes such as the Germans' machine-based Enigma system demanded special mind-sets, individuals with advanced mathematical skills, puzzle solvers, chess players, bridge addicts. He recruited such individuals, mainly from Cambridge and Oxford and launched a cryptography course to begin their training.

To have British codebreakers set apart in their own small world was in contrast to the intelligence decisions of other countries. They, including the United States, left their intelligence forces embedded in their military systems.

For the Germans in particular, this was a disastrous decision. The Nazi forces included many very bright individuals, but there were so many chiefs contending for Hitler's favor, with each of them zealously guarding his own turf, that the capable minds among the Wehrmacht's forces were too fragmented to be effective.

**German soldiers operate an Enigma machine, sending classified information encoded through a system of rotor settings that were believed to be virtually impossible to crack. However, Allied cryptanalysts at Bletchley Park were reading top secret German communications for some time during World War II.**

The result of all this was that Bletchley Park became a melting pot of special talent. When the war began, three of Britain's master chess players were attending the international Chess Olympics in Buenos Aires, Argentina. They promptly caught the blacked-out, unconvoyed steamer *Alcantara*

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By January 11th, 1964, the Mint was forced to halt orders for the 1964 Silver Proof Set, and eventually had to reduce the original maximum order of 100 Proof Sets down to just 2 sets per buyer in the face of such staggering demand. Finally, on March 12, even the limit of 2 sets was halted because the Mint received orders for 200,000 Proof Sets in just two days!

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As we approach the 50th Anniversary of JFK's 1963 assassination this year, the 1964 U.S. Silver Proof Set is back into the spotlight again. Each set contains the 1964 Lincoln Cent and Jefferson Nickel, along with three 90% Silver coins: the Silver Roosevelt Dime, Silver Washington Quarter, and the 1964 Silver Kennedy Half Dollar—the only 90% Kennedy Half Dollar ever struck for regular production.

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for home and joined Denniston's team at Bletchley.

GC&CS was, in short, a society ruled by intellectual merit. Measures such as military rank did not count. Saluting was abandoned. No one was ruled out for being over age. Individuals were known by first names or nicknames. Gaining respect was a matter of doing a superlative piece of intelligence work. Bright women were signed on, whether in uniform or civilian dress.

I know personally of all this because, when my bad eyesight ruled me out of enlisting in anything other than the U.S. Army Signal Corps, I was trained as a cryptographer and chosen as one of the Americans to participate in the British codebreaking program.

The task of my small contingent of cryptanalysts was to help operate a radio intercept station at Hall Place, a derelict manor in Bexley, Kent, that provided both our work space and our living quarters. Our station, codenamed Santa Fe, operated around the clock, so we were divided into three shifts. We knew we were part of a British system because we had phone links with the lovely British female voices at Bletchley Park, which we knew of only as Station X. On their advice, we broke up our large contingent of highly trained radio operators and assigned each of them to a specific German military network. Collecting their transcripts, we teletyped those labeled "KR" for "urgent" via a secret line to X while holding less timely ones for Jeep transport to be picked up in London.

**The elegant, stately façade of Bletchley Park today belies the nature of the top secret intelligence work that was conducted on the grounds of the estate during World War II.**

We cryptographers had been promoted to the rank of private first class as soon as our training in the United States had ended. At Hall Place, as we watched the arrival of our ranks of radio operators, we knew we were doomed to remain pfcs. The operators had for years been assigned to a listening post in Newfoundland, and as they entered we saw nearly every sleeve bristling with noncommissioned officer insignia. We were right. After four years I was demobbed as a pfc.

Because secret military information is ruled by the "need to know," we pfcs at Santa Fe never learned whether these messages we were handling so carefully were ever broken. In December 1944, there came a morning when my group, just off duty, agreed mournfully over

the dregs of our coffee that we had been involved in a thankless British game, a game in which message forms were merely being stacked up in some Limey warehouse awaiting the possible day when Station X would begin breaking the code. The reason for this despair was the terrible surprise of Allied soldiers being massacred in the Battle of the Bulge. The only way that this slaughter could be explained, we told ourselves, was that the codebeakers at Station X were not solving the Nazi messages.

Still, for us there was nothing for it except to continue to do all we could to supply our intercepts fully and correctly to X.

The result of all these limitations on learning about our role in World War II was that on being demobilized postwar, we still had little real knowledge of what part we had played. When the time came for me to sign my demob papers and I had to pledge not to reveal or discuss my wartume duty, I sniffed in disdain. "Who cares?" I asked myself. And I had to hold that negative opinion for some 30 years because the British placed a security clamp on us while the Cold War raged.

When the British themselves began to let down the walls of secrecy, what a joy it was, then, to discover the real stories of World War II codebreaking. Also I learned the truth about the Battle of the Bulge. In his last-ditch effort to save his regime and himself, Adolf Hitler had planned that his attack in the Ardennes would be directed without the use of radio. Communications were handled primarily by motorcycle couriers.

Allied commanders were so accustomed to receiving advance word of German decisions that they were caught completely off guard by the Ardennes offensive. Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower was attending his valet's wedding in Paris, while Britain's Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, commander of the 21st Army Group, was playing golf in Belgium and had received Ike's permission to go back to England to celebrate Christmas with his family.

For me the most important of these long-delayed revelations concerned my wartime service, the assurance that my fellow cryptanalists and I in Bexley had been, we really had been, participants in a critically important phase of the war. Oh, how my eyes devoured those first books about the triumphs, not at Station X but at what was really Bletchley Park. Along with my excitement at learning about Bletchley, I appreciated the wisdom of the British in setting up a nonmilitary structure there, in seeking out those rare individuals who could excel in codebreaking, in giving them the opportunity to con-

tribute to Allied victory no matter what their gender, their age, or their sexual orientation.

If I needed a prime example, there was Alan Turing. Turing was an eccentric young man who would never have been accepted by the military. For one thing, he was a closet homosexual at a time when Britain imposed harsh treatment on those who were exposed. Well after the war's end, when his true sexual nature was revealed while his great World War II contributions remained secret, he was subjected to such repulsive "healing" methods that he committed suicide rather than further endure his treatment.

When war descended on Britain in 1939, though, Turing's strange combination of talents came to the fore. He was a theoretical and mathematical genius, yet he could descend from his visionary cloud to become the most practical mechanic. This duo of virtues enabled him to lead Bletchley's attack on the German code machine, the Enigma.

Earlier, in the 1920s, Polish cryptographers had broken the Enigma and had been using a machine they called the "bombe" to read the German messages. Turing, though, saw that the Polish analysts were doing this in the wrong way. Their bombes attacked the German machine through the message key indicators, which could be changed overnight, forcing the analysts to start over again.

With astonishing speed, Turing created a British bombe that passed over the indicators to extract the key from the message itself—a solution that permitted all Enigma messages to be broken until, usually a day later, a new key was employed. His bombe possessed the power of 12 Polish bombes.

Turing's powerful and independent mind made him, even as a schoolboy, intolerant of conventional classroom teaching. Frequently he neglected his studies because his real attention was given to probing advanced mathematical theorems on his own.

Nevertheless, as his chief biographer Andrew Hodges reported, Turing won a scholarship to Cambridge and did so well there that he followed by winning a fellowship at the university's King College when he was only 22. At that time, the world of advanced mathematics was centered in the United States at Princeton University. In 1936, Turing went there to study under such mathematical leaders as Albert Einstein. Princeton Ph.D. in hand, Turing returned to Britain in 1939, just in time to create his bombe and lead the attack on the Enigma.

Still, he needed the help of another unmartial Englishman to make his system work effectively. This was the overage Gordon Welchman, a lecturer in mathematics at Cambridge. Turing's approach to cracking the Enigma was to look for "cribs," or "probable words," in a message. And it was true that German operators punctiliously paid respectable attention to proper officerial titles and the like. To have his machines looking for small strings of letters, however, did not produce enough rejections and led to too many "stops" that were found to be false only by hand testing. It was when Turing showed his plans to Welchman that, in a flash of inspiration, Welchman invented a technique which, in his own words, "greatly reduced the number of runs that would be needed to insure success in breaking an Enigma key by means of a crib." His idea was incorporated into the production of a new series of bombes being produced by the British Tabulating Machine Company.

**ABOVE: In Hut 3 at Bletchley Park, civilian and military personnel work together to decipher intercepted German communications. BELOW: Alan Turing, a theoretical and mathematical genius, led the Allied effort at Bletchley Park to decode and distribute intercepted German communications transmitted via the Enigma encoding machine.**

We Yanks at Hall Place didn't learn about all of this inspired work by these incredibly gifted Englishmen until long after the war. More immediately, we had to deal with problems occasioned by our location just south of London. We were on the flight path that German bomber crews most often followed on their way to bomb the city. If a German crew met with heavy antiaircraft fire, it was likely to unload its bombs short of the real target and head for home. These times were, for us GIs, scary enough when there were German planes up there, but they became even scarier when the Nazis began firing their V-weapons. These rockets could be fired high over us before crashing down without warning.

Our outfit won two Purple Hearts. One was granted to a GI who, on his night off, was shacked up with his British girlfriend when a buzz bomb hit the house. The other was more deserving. This GI, a private first class, was a radio operator whose set was located near the back wall of the operations room. When a V-2 crashed down just short of the hall there, it blew out several windows. The glass above this GI shattered and fell on him, severely cutting his scalp. Even though blood was running down his face, he never stopped copying his network.

Judging the situation, the sergeant quickly ordered a reserve radio operator to tune in on the pfc.'s net. When the operator signaled he was tuned in, the sergeant bent over the injured operator and told him he could stop copying. The GI just waved him away. The sergeant then seized the guy's pad and yanked it away from him. The GI leaped up, trying to reach his pad, and screamed, "You dumb bastard, can't you see I'm copying?"

On being demobilized at war's end, my mates and I had to sign pledges not to reveal what our duties had been. For me and some 10,000 others involved in the codebreaking, these pledges were honored all through the Cold War, a period of some 30 years. Then the British themselves began allowing officers at Bletchley Park to write about their experiences. I bought their books, eager to read official accounts of what we had achieved.

There was one thing lacking in these Briish memoirs. None of them ever mentioned that there were Americans involved. My reaction was to write a book of my own, *Codebreakers' Victory,* telling of the contributions made by three different groups of us GIs. □

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*A intelligence veteran of World War II, Hervie Haufler is the author of numerous works on the war's intelligence history, including* Codebreakers' Victory and The Spies Who Never Were, *available from E-Reads books.*

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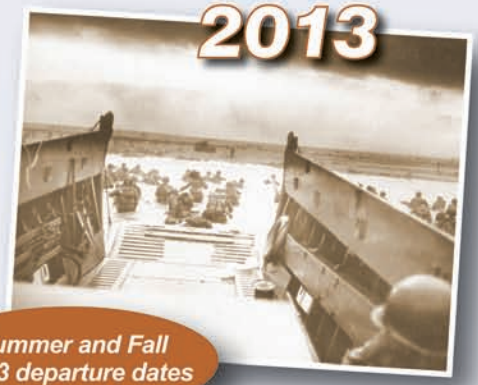

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| By Richard A. Beranty |

National Archives

# The World's Best Fed Army

## The K Ration fed millions of American troops and refugees during World War II.

**IT REMAINS ONE OF THE GREAT ICONS OF WORLD WAR II. SOLDIERS EITHER** loved it or hated it. Often overused because of convenience but regarded in high esteem by those who needed it, it left a lasting impression on the men who consumed it.

During its six years of production, millions upon millions were churned out by an array of American companies under U.S. government contract. Designed as a lightweight ration that airborne troops could carry in their pockets, it provided a nutritionally balanced meal with enough calories to keep a soldier functioning for several days in the field when all other food sources were cut off. It also gave GIs a taste of home in the form of candy, chewing gum, and cigarettes.

This is the K Ration.

Some five years before America entered World War II, the War Department tasked the Army's Quartermaster Corps and its newly formed Subsistence Research and Development Laboratory (SR&DL) located in Chicago to categorize field rations and develop new ones to replace the obsolete Reserve Ration in use since the end of World War I. An alphabetic system was designed to identify rations based on use.

Field Ration A, typically served in dining halls or aboard ships, provided at least 70 percent of the freshest meat and produce available. Field Ration B, mostly served in field kitchens, substituted canned foods when fresh goods or refrigeration were not available.

Field Ration C, or combat rations, was developed in the late 1930s and consisted of small cans of ready-to-eat meat and bread products. Its first major procurement of 1.5 million rations was made in August 1941, and over the next 40 years the "C Rat" evolved many times in variety, quality, and packaging, becoming the longest lived compact field ration in U.S. military history. It gave fighting men a well-balanced meal and did not spoil. Drawbacks were its bulkiness and weight. It was discontinued in 1981 with the advent of the Meal, Ready to Eat (MRE).

Field Ration D or emergency ration was an ersatz chocolate bar designed to give soldiers enough energy "to last a day." Proposed in 1932 for the cavalry, developed in 1935, and first produced in large numbers in 1941, the D Ration was not your everyday Hershey bar. Comprising bitter chocolate, sugar, oat flour, cacao fat, skim milk powder, and artificial flavoring, the D Ration could withstand temperatures of 120 degrees without melting. GIs found it untasty and difficult to eat. In fact, package directions advise that it be eaten slowly "in about a half hour" or dissolved by crumbling into a cup of boiling water. Quartermaster records show 600,000 D Rations were procured in 1941 and nearly 1.2 million in 1942. With so many on hand, none were procured in 1943, but the following year some 52 million were ordered. By 1945, the Quartermaster General was wondering how to get rid of the vast stockpile of D Rations.

With two distinctly different field rations being readied for mass production—Rations C and D—and war seemingly imminent, the War Department recognized the need for a nutritious, nonperishable, and, most importantly, easy to carry ration that could be used in assault operations by Army airborne troops. Again it turned to the SR&DL, which enlisted the help of a relatively unknown physiologist named Ancel Keys of the University of Minnesota. Dr. Keys's most notable study up to that time had taken place a few years earlier in the Andes Mountains of South America where he examined the body's ability to function at high altitudes.

"I suppose someone in the War Department had the crazy idea that because I had done research at high altitude I was therefore qualified to design a food ration to be eaten by soldiers who had been briefly a few meters above the ground," Keys wrote later.

**A pair of hungry American tankers of the VII Corps pause to eat K Rations during a break in the fighting in Belgium in December 1944.**


# We found our most important watch in a soldier's pocket

It's the summer of 1944 and a weathered U.S. sergeant is walking in Rome only days after the Allied Liberation. There is a joyous mood in the streets and this tough soldier wants to remember this day. He's only weeks away from returning home. He finds an interesting timepiece in a store just off the Via Veneto and he decides to splurge a little on this memento. He loved the way it felt in his hand, and the complex movement inside the case intrigued him. He really liked the hunter's back that opened to a secret compartment. He thought that he could squeeze a picture of his wife and new daughter in the case back. He wrote home that now he could count the hours until he returned to the States. This watch went on to survive some harrowing flights in a B-24 bomber and somehow made it back to the U.S. Besides the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star, my father cherished this watch because it was a reminder of the best part of the war for any soldier—the homecoming.

He nicknamed the watch *Ritorno* for homecoming, and the rare heirloom is now valued at $42,000 according to *The Complete Guide to Watches*. But to our family, it is just a reminder that nothing is more beautiful than the smile of a healthy returning GI.

***The hunter's back***

*The Ritorno watch back opens to reveal a special compartment for a keepsake picture or can be engraved.*

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**ABOVE: U.S. Army K Rations supplied soldiers in the field with a high-calorie, lightweight meal when more substantial field kitchen or food preparation facilities were unavailable. The K Ration weighed 32.86 ounces with three meals packed into separate boxes. It contained 3,726 calories. RIGHT: Photographed before the outbreak of World War II, K Ration designer Ancel Keys lived to the age of 100 and became famous for his research and conclusions on the linkage of smoking, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure to heart disease.**

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Colonel Rohland Isker, commander of the Subsistence Lab, was the man who approached Keys for help. In 1941, the two visited a Minneapolis grocery store and purchased 30 servings of hard biscuits, dried sausage, chocolate bars, and hard candy. Picked to test the new ration was a platoon of soldiers at nearby Fort Snelling. Though the soldiers consumed the food "without relish," according to Keys, it was given a second trial run at Fort Benning, Georgia, then home to the Army's paratrooper school. With comfort items such as gum, cigarettes, matches, and toilet paper added, the airborne troops gave it a thumbs up and the War Department followed suit.

In May 1942, the Army placed an order with the Wrigley Chewing Gum Co. to package one million rations. Officially named U.S. Army Field Ration K in honor of Keys, the Army had found its answer for a ration that provided "the greatest variety of nutritionally balanced components within the smallest space."

The concept was simple: a daily ration of three meals—breakfast, dinner, and supper—that gives each soldier approximately 9,000 calories with 100 grams of protein. Within months, scores of food, cereal, candy, coffee, tobacco, and other companies were producing components for and packaging K Rations.

If the concept was simple, so were the components. The breakfast unit contained a four-ounce can of chopped ham and egg with opening key, four K-1 biscuits, or energy crackers, four K-2 compressed graham crackers, a two-ounce fruit bar, one packet of water-soluble coffee, three sugar tablets, four cigarettes, and one piece of gum.

The dinner unit contained the same, except pasteurized process American cheese replaced the meat component, dextrose tablets replaced

the fruit bar, and lemon juice powder replaced the coffee.

The supper unit differed with a can of beef and pork loaf, a two-ounce D Ration instead of dextrose tablets, and a packet of bouillon powder in place of lemon juice powder.

All items fit snugly into an inner box just under seven inches long surrounded by an outer box. The meat component and cigarettes were packed separately with the remaining items sealed in a laminated cellophane bag. A day's ration of three units weighed just over two pounds.

The ration was much ballyhooed by the War Department at the time in posters and magazine advertisements through its Office of War Information. Army Signal Corps publicity photos show each item and describe its purpose: meat and cheese canned products for protein; K-1 biscuits for starches, carbohydrates, and minerals; K-2 graham crackers for roughage, vitamins, and starches; fruit bar for energy and vitamins; D Ration, sugar, and dextrose for energy; lemon juice powder for vitamins and minerals; bouillon powder for protein; cigarettes for a satisfying smoke; and chewing gum for thirst and tension.

The reverse side of these photos, which are dated December 30, 1942, reads as follows: "Now going into large scale production after rigid, scientific tests in the field, the U.S. Army's Field Ration 'K' is playing a vital part in helping to keep the 'world's best-fed army' well fed the world over even under combat conditions. The ration unit consists of three packaged meals—breakfast, dinner, and supper—each one containing a well balanced variety of appetizing, nourishing foods. Chewing gum is included to conserve water and relieve nervous tension. Specially concentrated foods furnish the necessary vitamins, proteins, minerals and carbohydrates."

Research to improve the ration continued over the next months and years. Chocolates and hard candy replaced the dextrose tablets, D Rations, and fruit bars. A compressed cereal bar and orange juice powder were added to the breakfast unit, matches to the dinner unit, and toilet paper to the supper unit. The meat component evolved too. Late-war supper units featured corned pork loaf with carrots and apple flakes. To protect the cigarettes from being bent during shipment and storage, a thin cardboard sleeve was added to surround the meat component.

The companies that produced these products and their brands reads like a Who's Who of corporate America. Some examples include H.J. Heinz and Republic Foods—meat component; Peter Paul's and Charms—candy; Nescafe—coffee; Miles Laboratories—lemon juice pow-

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**Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the Mediterranean, General Dwight D. Eisenhower sits on the ground to eat a C Ration during an inspection of Allied troops in Tunisia in 1943. The C Ration fed hungry American soldiers into the 1980s.**

der; Jack Frost—sugar tablets; Beeman's, Wrigley's, and Dentyne—gum; Camel, Chesterfield, Philip Morris, Fleetwoods, and Marvels—cigarettes.

K Ration packaging evolved as well during the war. Early-war outer cartons contained only the meal title and packager's name, such as Wrigley, Heinz, The Cracker Jack Co., American Chicle, Hills Bros., General Foods, Kellogg's, even whisky maker Hiram Walker and Sons. Mid-war cartons added the menu and some directions concerning food preparation. Late-war rations differed the most in that the brown or at times olive drab cardboard gave way to a distinctive color code, called in some circles either camouflaged or "morale" style. Breakfast units were printed in red, dinner units in blue, and supper rations in green. They also contained a malaria warning, instructions on how the inner cellophane bag could be used as a waterproof container, and for security purposes, printed directions that the empty can and used wrappers should be hidden.

For the most part, the inner carton did not change during the war. It was dipped in a solution of paraffin and bee's wax to seal its contents from the elements. Very early units included a wax paper wrapping, but this was quickly abandoned due to cost. An added bonus to GIs was the fast-burning properties of the wax. Soldiers found it ideal to heat the ration's meat component when set on fire. Both inner and outer boxes were perfect complements to each other, as the outer carton protected the wax coating on the inner box from rubbing off and sticking to other boxes. Typically 36 meals or 12 rations were packed into wooden crates weighing 40 pounds for shipment overseas.

The exact number of K Rations produced in World War II is hard to determine. After the government's initial order in 1942 of one million, at least another million were procured in 1943, and 105 million in 1944, its peak year of production.

There is no question that the unpopularity of the K Ration with American soldiers can be traced to its misuse. Familiarity breeds contempt, and it was not uncommon for GIs to discard everything except the candy and cigarettes. Testimonials abound from soldiers nowhere near the battlefield being issued the ration. Others report it was given to them for weeks on end. While there were times when that practice was necessary, there were also times when it was used because the K Ration was the easiest to issue.

There is also no question that Keys's vision of a small, lightweight, nutritious ration was a success. Paul McNelis, a decorated veteran of the Italian campaign with the 85th Infantry Division, has high praise for the ration.

"On the line we survived on K Rations," he said. "Mules brought them up the mountains at night along with ammunition and water. We were happy to get them. C Rations were better of course. They had more of a variety like ham and beans. But we didn't get any since they were bulkier, and we were being supplied by mules.

"If you were on the line, K Rations weren't that bad. One good thing about them was that the box was impregnated with wax. There was just enough that when you set them on fire, it would warm a cup of coffee. A buddy of mine showed me how to make toasted cheese. You open the can, stick your bayonet in it and hold it over that fire to melt the cheese, and then put it on the crackers."

With the end of World War II and peace at hand, there obviously was no longer a need for assault rations. The days of the K Ration were numbered. In 1946, an Army food conference recommended that its production be discontinued. In 1948, the Quartermaster Corps followed suit and declared the K Ration obsolete.

While the usefulness of the K Ration on the battlefield faded into history, its inventor would go on to worldwide fame. Ancel Benjamin Keys was born January 26, 1904. A gifted intellectual, researcher, and scientist, he read in the obituary notices of the Twin Cities newspapers shortly after the war that a high number of Minneapolis business executives, wealthy men who presumably had some of the most lavish diets in the world, were dying from cardiovascular disease while people in postwar Europe, those with more modest diets, were not.

Following a 10-year study, Keys concluded

National Archives

During combat operations in Italy in October 1944, soldiers of the 91st Infantry Division rest against a rocky outcropping and eat K Rations. The K Ration was relatively easy to transport, and it was alternately loved and hated by GIs the world over.

that smoking, high blood pressure, and elevated cholesterol levels were common factors in heart attack patients. That led to his landmark Seven Countries Study in which he proposed that dietary fat is directly related to heart disease, and saturated fat in food is a determining factor in blood cholesterol levels. His revolutionary and bestselling book *Eat Well and Stay Well* popularized the so-called Mediterranean diet with its emphasis on regular exercise and a diet rich in plant foods, fresh fruit, and fish, landing him on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1961.

Keys retired from the University of Minnesota in 1972 and remained physically active for the rest of his life. He died on November 20, 2004. When asked at his 100th birthday party whether his diet had contributed to his long life, he reportedly answered, "Very likely, but no proof."

Today, Keys's legacy lives on for collectors of World War II memorabilia. Complete K Rations that show up on Internet auctions routinely sell for more than $200. Single components, even empty boxes, also sell well. But a note of caution to potential buyers of K Rations: while an unopened box might appear to be in pristine condition, collectors have found there is a very good chance that the contents have been sampled—by worms. □

*Richard Beranty is a retired teacher of high school English and journalism who resides in Western Pennsylvania.*

By Jon Diamond

# Auchinleck of the Indian Army

**Prior to his arrival in North Africa, the British commander primarily led Indian troops and performed well in difficult circumstances during the campaign in Norway.**

**MANY STUDENTS OF WORLD WAR II HISTORY KNOW GENERAL SIR CLAUDE** Auchinleck as the Commander-in-Chief Middle East, who, after taking over for General Sir Archibald Wavell in late June 1941, oversaw the fluctuating fate of Britain's Eighth Army while combating German General Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps during Operations Crusader and Gazala.

It was after General Neil Ritchie's humiliating defeat along the Gazala Line that Auchinleck took over direct control of the Eighth Army and fought Rommel to a standstill in July 1942 at the First Battle of El Alamein. However, this Indian Army general had an eventful career leading British and Allied troops in Norway in the spring of 1940 as well as in the British Isles from July through November 1940 before his return to India to become commander of the Indian Army in January 1941. Those early Auchinleck commands were quite uncharacteristic for an Indian Army general given the rivalry of that organization with the regular British Army.

Field Marshal Sir Claude John Eyre Auchinleck, nicknamed "the Auk," was born on June 21, 1884, in Aldershot, England. He was the eldest child of Lt. Col. John Claud Alexander Auchinleck of the Royal Horse Artillery, stationed at Aldershot. The younger Auchinleck was of Anglo-Irish-Scottish descent, which was to characterize the origins of many a noteworthy British Army officer.

When Auchinleck was a year old, his father returned to Bangalore, India, to command the Royal Horse Artillery there. In 1888, while his father was serving in the Third Burma War, Auchinleck returned to England with his mother and siblings. His father, having retired from the Army in 1890, died two years later from a form of anemia putatively contracted during his Burmese service. As a result of his father's death, his childhood and early adulthood bordered on poverty.

All images, Imperial War Museum

British General Claude Auchinleck and Royal Air Force Group Captain M. Moore confer during operations in Norway.

In the fall of 1896, Auchinleck attended Wellington, located near Sandhurst, at a drastically reduced fee since he was an officer's son. In 1901, he sat for the entrance examination for the Royal Military College at Sandhurst since his lackluster mathematics performance at Wellington precluded the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, the training ground for gunners and engineers. He placed 45th on the Sandhurst examination, taking the last place allocated to the Indian Army, and entered the academy in 1902. He was among 30 cadets receiving their commissions in the Indian Army the following year.

With five other officers from Sandhurst, 2nd Lt. Auchinleck was temporarily sent to the 2nd King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI), a British battalion having recently seen action in South Africa. After a winter attached to the British regiment, he joined the 62nd Punjabis, an Indian Army regiment, in April 1904, to which he was permanently posted. Auchinleck rose to the rank of

A British artillery battery fires at German positions during the Battle of Narvik, along the bleak Norwegian coastline, in June 1940. British General Claude Auchinleck commanded troops during the disappointing campaign.

# New Prostate Pill Helps Relieve Symptoms Without Drugs or Surgery

## Combats all-night bathroom urges and embarrassment... *Yet most doctors don't even know about it!*

By Peter Metler, Health Writer

Thanks to a brand new discovery made from a rare prostate relief plant; thousands of men across America are taking their lives back from "prostate hell." This remarkable new natural supplement helps you:

- **MINIMIZE** constant urges to urinate
- **END** embarrassing sexual let-downs
- **SUPPORT** a strong, healthy urine flow
- **GET** restful nights of uninterrupted sleep
- **STOP** false alarms, dribbles and underwear drips
- **ENJOY** a truly empty bladder & unblocked flow

More men than ever before are dealing with prostate problems that range from annoying to downright EMBARRASSING!

But now, urological research has discovered a new solution so remarkable that helps alleviate symptoms associated with an enlarged prostate (sexual failure, lost sleep, bladder discomfort and urgent runs to the bathroom). Like nothing before!

*Yet 9 out of 10 doctors don't know about it!* Here's why: Due to strict managed health care constrictions, many MD's are struggling to keep their practices afloat. "Unfortunately, there's no money in prescribing natural products. They aren't nearly as profitable," says a confidential source. Instead, doctors rely on toxic drugs that help but could leave you sexually "powerless" (or a lot worse)!

On a CNN Special, Medical Correspondent Dr. Steve Salvatore shocked America by quoting a statistic from the prestigious Journal of American Medical Association that stated, "...about 60% of men who go under the knife for a prostatectomy are left UNABLE to perform sexually!"

### HERE ARE 6 WARNING SIGNS YOU BETTER NOT IGNORE!

- ✓ Waking up 2 to 6 times a night to urinate
- ✓ A constant feeling that you have to "go"... but can't
- ✓ A burning sensation when you do go
- ✓ A weak urine stream
- ✓ *A feeling that your bladder is never completely empty*
- ✓ Embarrassing sputtering, dripping & staining

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But thanks to this astonishing new natural discovery, you can now beat the odds. The secret? You need to load your diet with essential Phyto-Nutrients, (traditionally found in certain fruits, vegetables and grains).

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Thankfully, a small company (Wellness Logix™) out of Maine, is on a mission to change that. They've created a product that gives men who suffer with prostate inflammation new hope. They call it ***Prostate IQ***™. And it's fast becoming the #1 Prostate formula in America.

***Prostate IQ***™ gives men the super-concentrated dose of Phyto-Nutrients they need to beat prostate symptoms. It's taken Wellness Logix, 2 long years of R&D to understand how to capture the prostate relieving power of this amazing botanical. But their hard work paid off. Experts say ***Prostate IQ***™ is the most effective prostate supplement ever developed.

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A lot of prostate supplements fall embarrassingly short with their dosages. The formulas may be okay, but they won't do a darn thing for you unless you take 10 or more tablets a day. ***Prostate IQ***™ is different. It contains a whopping 300mg of this special "Smart Prostate Plant". So it's loaded with Phyto-Nutrients.

Plus, it's 100% bioavailable (which means it gets inside your bloodstream faster and stays inside for maximum results).

### MEN RAVE ABOUT PROSTATE IQ™!

"***Prostate IQ***™ works! It really works! Thank You!"
***- Christopher R.***

"A buddy at work told me about this product and it DOES work great!
***- Augustus L***

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captain during 11 years of peace in India, which were shattered by World War I. Up to that point, he had never fired a shot in anger. However, he did learn a number of local languages and bonded with his troops by being able to converse fluently with them.

Auchinleck, initially bound for France, was detoured along with his 62nd Punjabis (as part of the 22nd Indian Infantry Brigade) to Suez and the defense of the area around the canal from Britain's new enemy, Ottoman Turkey. It was in early February that Auchinleck received his baptism of fire as the Turks attempted to cross the Suez Canal at Ismailia. After defeating this Turkish attempt to take the Suez Canal, Auchinleck's regiment embarked for Aden in July 1915 to successfully eject the invading Turks in that Protectorate.

In December 1915, the 62nd Punjabi Regiment was ordered to the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia, and thus Auchinleck avoided the carnage of Gallipoli, the brainchild of his fellow Sandhurst cadet, First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill. Disembarking at Basra on January 7, 1916, for the offensive up the Tigris River to Baghdad, Iraq, Auchinleck, now an acting major and second in command of his regiment, witnessed nearly a 50 percent casualty rate during a month of campaigning against the well-entrenched Turks. A second major attack, this time along the right bank of the Tigris to relieve Kut in early March 1916, also failed largely due to a background of hasty and unimaginative planning and administrative incompetence.

Auchinleck summed up his regiment's condition in April 1916 as "exhausted, decimated and with our morale badly shaken." The chaos in logistics he experienced was to foreshadow the command role Auchinleck inherited during the Allied attack on Norway in 1940.

By the autumn of 1917, Auchinleck was regarded as an officer of promise and meritorious achievement, and he became the brigade major of the 52nd Brigade as part of the new 17th Indian Division. Auchinleck was mentioned in dispatches and received the Distinguished Service Order in 1917 for his service in Mesopotamia. He was promoted to major in January 1918.

Soon after the armistice, Auchinleck became a general staff officer (GSO) 2 with the division garrisoning Mosul, Iraq. In August 1919, as GSO 1 of a division, he was ordered to pacify Kurdistan. For his excellent staff work he was again mentioned in dispatches and made a brevet lieutenant colonel. At the end of 1919, he was offered a vacancy at the Staff College at Quetta, which was recognized as a "gateway to advancement" in the Indian Army. There, he was outstanding among the younger Indian Army officers who had survived the Great War.

**ABOVE: French troops man a position somewhere in Norway. General Auchinleck was complimentary of the conduct of the French soldiers under fire but bitterly disappointed with the performance of his own men during the 1940 Norwegian campaign. BELOW: A group of British World War I veterans muster as Local Defense Volunteers during the dark days as Britain stands alone against the Nazis. General Claude Auchinleck led Southern Command as the British prepared for a German cross-Channel invasion that never materialized.**

In 1923, Auchinleck was stationed at Simla, India, as a British staff officer, and after four years he returned to his regiment, now renamed the 1st Battalion, 1st Punjab Regiment. In 1927, Auchinleck, having been recognized as "one of the outstanding Indian Army officers of his generation," was posted to the Imperial Defence College (IDC). While at the IDC, Auchinleck made a valuable friendship with General Sir John Dill, the chief instructor there. After his stay at the IDC, Auchinleck returned to his regiment in India. At the end of 1928, Auchinleck was appointed to command his own battalion. In February 1930, he returned to Quetta as GSO 1 at the Staff College with the rank of full colonel. It was a two-year course, and he was in charge of 30 officers in the junior division in their first year.

Later, in command of the Peshawar Brigade, Auchinleck led a short punitive expedition against the Mohmands in 1933. For this expedition, he was awarded the title of Commander of the Bath (CB). In 1935, during another expedition against the Mohmands as a junior brigadier, he made a close professional association and friendship with the forces's senior brigadier, Harold Alexander. After this expedition's successful conclusion, he received the Companion of the Order of the Star of India (CSI) and another mention in dispatches. Upon being promoted to major general, Auchinleck handed over command of the Peshawar Brigade to Brigadier Richard O'Connor, another Wellington graduate.

From 1936 to 1939, Auchinleck was the Deputy Chief of the General Staff (DCGS), India and Director of Staff Duties in Delhi. In early 1938, Colonel Eric Dorman-Smith, another young staff officer of high intellect and professional achievement, was appointed Director of Military Training at Army Headquarters in Simla. There, both his work with Auchinleck and their mutual habit of long morning walks forged a strong bond of friendship and professionalism. This relationship would later flourish in the Western Desert in 1942, as the duo oversaw the successful defense of Egypt during the First Battle of El Alamein, after the defeat along the Gazala Line, when the victorious Afrika Korps was threatening to capture the Suez Canal and the Middle East.

In July 1939, Auchinleck and his family visited the United States as war clouds were looming over Europe. While he was sailing back to India, war broke out. Soon thereafter he took up a new position as commander of the 3rd Indian Division. During the Phony War, he continued to train his troops. In January 1940, he was ordered to return to England to take command of the IV Corps before its deployment to northern France around Lille as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in June of that year. The IV Corps was composed of British Regular and Territorial Army units, with most of the formation being untrained. A "Sepoy General" was now in charge of a large British Army force.

Auchinleck was isolated and lonely in his new IV Corps command, largely because the British Regular Army in the higher officer ranks was a tightly knit and closed community. Auchinleck also felt somewhat inferior to the Regular Army officers of the conventional English upper class because of the relative poverty of his youth and adulthood. To Auchinleck's endearing credit, he lacked the snobbishness of the British Regular Army. Instead, he exuded professionalism, which was an anathema to English upper class society. With his focus on professionalism, he

BY ROSS CLARK

Breaking News

# Human Body Inspires New Cane

## First Cane to Mimic Body's Natural Movement

Despite a rapidly aging population and giant leaps in medical technology, today's walking canes are eerily similar to canes from 2,000 years ago. Until now.

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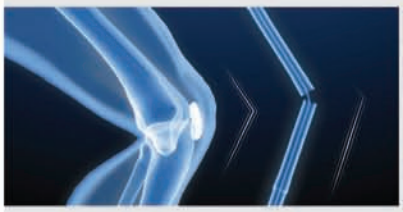

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**Wearing distinctive pith helmets, British soldiers assume prone positions as their commander scans the horizon for enemy activity. These troops were photographed near Ramadi, Iraq, as the British attempted to secure Middle Eastern oil reserves.**

shared a common trait with a junior competitor, future Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery.

On April 9, 1940, the Nazis, who had a nonaggression pact with Denmark, nevertheless invaded and forced a surrender of that country within hours. Also on that date, the Germans seized Oslo, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, and Narvik in Norway despite that country's neutral status. The Allies decided to counterattack with the most suitable objective being Narvik, even though it lies within the Arctic Circle. This strategic decision was based upon the recommendation of the British Military Coordination Committee under the chairmanship of none other than Winston Churchill, again serving as First Lord of the Admiralty.

The objective was to establish a naval base for the Allies in the far north of Norway, which could be a staging area to seize the Galliväre iron ore fields in Sweden. To achieve this, Narvik had to be retaken. Although other operations were proceeding badly against the Germans in central Norway, the Narvik attack was to deliver the major thrust against the Nazis. As events unfolded, it did no better than the more southern operations despite a British naval victory over a German destroyer force in the Ofot Fiord leading into Narvik.

On April 28, Auchinleck was ordered to report to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), General Sir Edmund Ironside. The CIGS, who was soon to be replaced by General Sir John Dill, informed Auchinleck that he and part of the IV Corps staff were going to Narvik. To emphasize the divide between the British Regular Army and the Indian Army, Ironside gave Auchinleck a backhanded compliment by describing him as "the best officer India had, who was not contaminated by too much Indian theory."

Auchinleck replaced the local ground forces commander in northern Norway, Maj. Gen. Pierse J. Macksey, who was faulted for being too deliberate in his approach to secure the port of Narvik. However, Auchinleck could see no way to speed up the British advance.

There were reasons for the faulty performance of the BEF under Auchinleck's command. There were few reliable maps of the area, and RAF air cover was spotty at best early in the campaign. While Auchinleck was at sea headed for Norway, there was a two-day debate in the House of Commons on the conduct of the Norway campaign that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's government.

The day before Auchinleck's arrival in Norway, the Nazi blitzkrieg through the Low Countries had commenced, and Churchill had been appointed prime minister. With attention diverted now to northern France and Belgium, it is easy to draw the conclusion that Narvik had turned into almost a backwater. Near the end of May, it was determined that Allied forces in northern Norway were to be evacuated. However, Narvik should be captured to facilitate the operation.

With Narvik in his hands, Auchinleck had to throw all of his energy and leadership to the task of evacuation with the minimum possible casualties. In his correspondence to Dill on May 30, Auchinleck commented, "The news from France is grim and every one is depressed by it, naturally. However, there is no sign of defeatism so far as I can see. This is a queer show into which you have put me!... One feels a most despicable creature in pretending that we are going on fighting, when we are going to quit at once."

The evacuation began on the night of June 3. Cloud cover, Auchinleck's determination to keep British antiaircraft guns in action to the last, and the RAF's ceaseless sorties from its base at Bardfoss all contributed to a smooth military withdrawal, which was completed by June 7. Auchinleck had been on Norwegian soil for just under four weeks. The Auk realistically drew his own historical analogy about the Napoleonic Wars in his correspondence with Dill. "We are in the same position as were Napoleon's adversaries when he started in on them with his new organization and tactics! I feel we are much too slow and ponderous in every way."

Auchinleck had learned some pragmatic lessons from his experiences in northern Norway. First, "To commit troops to a campaign in which they cannot be provided with adequate air support is to court disaster." Second, "No useful purpose can be served by sending troops to operate in an undeveloped and wild country such as Norway unless they have been thoroughly trained for their task and their fighting equipment well thought out and methodically prepared in advance. Improvisation in either of these respects can lead only to failure."

Two paragraphs of Auchinleck's report that was completed on June 19, 1940, and subsequently printed for the War Cabinet in March 1941, had been suppressed during the war and were only to reappear in July 1947. "The comparison between the efficiency of the French contingent and that of British troops operating under similar conditions had driven this lesson home to all in this theatre, though this was not altogether a matter of equipment. By comparison with the French, or the Germans for that matter, our men for the most part seemed distressingly young, not so much in years as in self-reliance and manliness generally. They give an impression of being callow and undeveloped, which is not reassuring for the future, unless our methods of man-mastership and training for war can be made more realistic."

Auchinleck would have his chance to train British troops in southern England, North Africa, and India where they would all prove their mettle and receive the Auk's accolades.

After the Norwegian debacle, Auchinleck was instructed to form V Corps for the defense of southern England. This would be an understrength corps of two divisions, virtually without heavy equipment, along a stretch of about 100 miles. Auchinleck observed firsthand that the British troops in Norway were inexperienced and the new V Corps would be no better off. Hard training lay ahead if a Nazi invasion

were to be either repelled or contained.

On July 19, 1940, Auchinleck received another promotion barely a month after his orders to the V Corps assignment. He was now to take over Southern Command. The V Corps would become the domain of Lt. Gen. Montgomery, back from divisional command in the failed BEF operation in Flanders. The two were at odds continuously, with the critical nature of the times preventing Auchinleck from sacking Montgomery. Auchinleck, like Rommel four years later in Normandy, wanted to meet the German invasion on the beaches; however, Montgomery argued vociferously for maintaining strength in reserve behind the beaches to destroy the Germans after they had secured a weak lodgment.

Auchinleck was also praised for the manner with which he constructed the Home Guard, which eventually became a reasonable military asset rather that a militia's mob. Unfortunately, many postwar accounts give Montgomery credit for the development of Southern Command and the Home Guard, even though it was Auchinleck who had laid the foundations for the hard training in Southern Command. Lt. Gen. Alexander took over Southern Command when Auchinleck was appointed commander of the Indian Army in November 1940.

One of Auchinleck's first moves as Indian Army commander in early April 1941 was to send several Gurkha and Sikh elements of the 10th Indian Division to secure the oil pipeline terminus to the Persian Gulf at Basra, Iraq, and to set a staging point to mount operations from there to Baghdad and crush the Rashid Ali rebellion. Other troops from this division, which were originally earmarked for transport from India to Malaya, were maneuvered by Auchinleck to Basra with the 21st Indian Infantry Brigade, arriving on May 6, 1941, followed by 25th Indian Infantry Brigade's landing there at the end of May.

Auchinleck's move was in conjunction with Churchill's ordering Field Marshal Archibald Wavell to provide a relief force (Habforce) from Palestine to lift the siege of RAF bases in Iraq in order to reclaim Britain's treaty rights from the insurrectionist Iraqi regime. Auchinleck's actions in Iraq pleased the prime minister. Churchill wrote to Auchinleck on May 14, 1941: "We are most grateful to you for the energetic efforts you have made about Basra. The stronger the forces India can assemble there the better…. We are, therefore, confined at the moment to trying to get a friendly Government installed in Baghdad and building up the largest possible bridgehead at Basra."

The prime minister further wrote of Auchinleck: "When after Narvik he had taken over Southern Command I received from many quarters, official and private, testimony to the vigour and structure he had given to that important region. His appointment as Commander-in-Chief in India had been generally acclaimed. We had seen how forthcoming he had been in sending troops to Basra and the ardour with which he had addressed himself to the suppression of the revolt in Iraq."

For an Indian Army officer, Auchinleck had performed admirably in Scandinavia during the assault on Narvik and its subsequent successful withdrawal, as well as in England where he built up Southern Command to become a realistic force to contest a Nazi invasion on the beaches. Furthermore, prior to his assignment as Commander-in-Chief Middle East, for which he is most famous, he had shown initiative when directing his Indian Army troops to seize Basra from Iraqi insurgents.

However, the sternest test for the Auk was to come against Rommel in North African desert. □

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*Jon Diamond practices medicine and lives in Hershey, Pennsylvania. He authored an Osprey Command Series volume on Field Marshal Archibald Wavell, published in 2012.*

National Archives

Mired in combat in the Hürtgen Forest of Germany, an American soldier wrote in December 5, 1944: "The road to the front led straight and muddy brown between the billowing greenery of the broken topless firs, and in the jeeps that were coming back they were bringing the still living. The still living were sitting in the back seats and some were perched on the back seats and others were sitting facing forward on the radiators because the jeeps were that crowded. You could see the white of their hasty bandages from far off and there were others of the still living who were on stretchers strung from the front seats to the back and on the radiators too, and the brown blankets came up to their chins. Overhead the sky was grey."

The Hürtgen Forest encompassed about 50 square miles of rugged, densely wooded terrain along the German-Belgian border south of Aachen, the first major German city to fall to the Allies. The area was thickly laced with mines, barbed wire, and concealed pillboxes with interlocking fields of fire. The American First Army was tasked with capturing the forest to secure the right flank of the advancing VII Corps, to prevent the Germans from mounting counterattacks from its concealment, and to attack a large portion of the Germans' fixed fortifications of the Siegfried Line from the rear.

The dominant geographic feature in the Hürtgen was near Bergstein, the Burgeberg-Castle Hill, or as the Americans called it, Hill 400 because of its height in meters, equivalent to 1,312 feet. Its steepest slope was at a 45-degree angle, and the hill was thickly wooded with evergreens. From this promontory the Germans enjoyed a commanding view of American movements and directed both nasty artillery fire and counterattacks. No American vehicle or foot movement went undetected from this vantage point. It was the cornerstone of the German line. If the Americans seized Hill 400, it would provide excellent observation of the Roer River, the next Allied objective after Hürtgen was cleared of Germans.

**The U.S. 2nd Ranger Battalion held Hill 400 in the embattled Hürtgen Forest against five fierce German counter-attacks in December 1944.**

The U.S. 9th Infantry Division made the first offensive move into the Hürtgen in September 1944 and was still there by the middle of October, having gained three kilometers at the cost of 4,500 casualties. A new attack was launched in November by the 28th Infantry Division. No appreciable ground was gained, and 6,184 Americans were casualties. The 4th Infantry Division was committed at the end of the month. After sustaining 6,053 casualties, it was relieved by the 8th Infantry Division early in December. In his book *The Mighty Endeavor,* Charles MacDonald described the fighting in the Hürtgen Forest as "the battle of the hedgerows all over again only this time with freezing rain, sleet, snow, flood, mud, pillboxes, and dense woods straight out of frightening German folk tales. It was the Argonne of World War II."

War correspondent and famed author Ernest Hemingway was more succinct: "Passchendaele with tree bursts."

The men of the 2nd Ranger Battalion, veterans of D-Day who had landed on Omaha Beach and some of whom had scaled Pointe-du-Hoc, were attached to the VII Corps and became caught up in the attrition of forest combat. Prior to this, the battalion had remained in Normandy to perform a series of odd jobs. When VII Corps began its drive into Brittany, the Rangers were ordered in as well. The battalion helped capture the great port city of Brest, and after a two-month respite, the battle-hardened soldiers joined the offensive against the Siegfried Line. On November 14, the 2nd Rangers, attached to the 28th Infantry Division, moved into the front line with a complement of 485 enlisted men and 27 officers.

General Norman Cota, commander of the 28th Division, who had personally seen the Rangers in combat on Omaha Beach, used the 2nd Ranger Battalion to replace units of the 112th Infantry Regiment on the front line. Lieutenant Bob Edlin of A Company walked his platoon through the snow and ankle-deep mud to the village of Geremeter. There the Rangers met the infantry of the 112th.

Edlin recalled, "The infantry outfit that had been up there was actually almost running in retreat just to get away. I ran into a friend in that unit, Captain Preston Jackson, who said, 'Bob this is the meanest son of a bitch that you've ever seen in your life up there. I wish you wouldn't go.'"

The Rangers did go and were immediately greeted with their first but not their last German artillery barrage. "Suddenly the artillery came. It's the purest hell I've ever been through. It was

BY JAMES I. MARINO

**Soldiers of the 28th Infantry Division hurry through a wooded area of the Hürtgen Forest near the town of Voosenack, Germany. The 2nd Ranger Battalion was attached to the 28th Division during the fighting in the Hürtgen Forest.**

# “Passchendaele WITH TREE BURSTS”

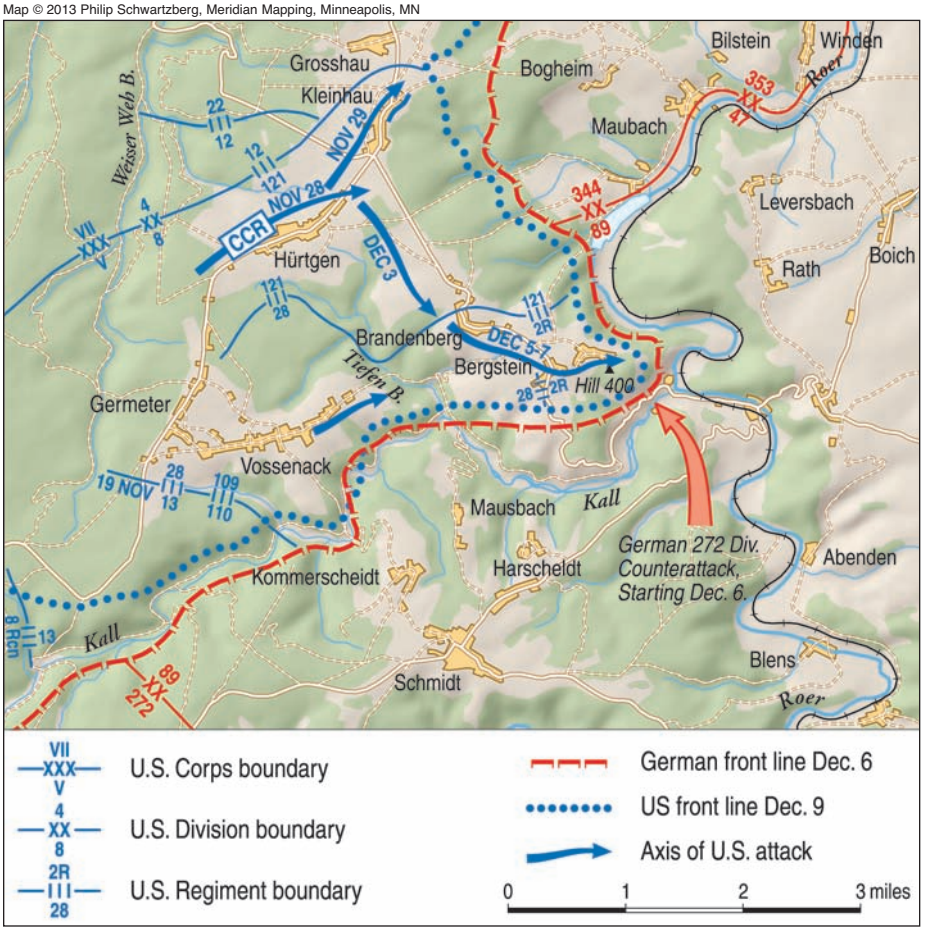
just round after round of crashing and smashing, beating on your head till you think there is no way you can stand it," recalled Edlin.

The most shocking surprise to the Rangers was not the enemy but the Americans. Captain Sid Solomon noted his men's observations. "The Rangers of Baker Company were amazed to see the GI equipment, clothing, and even weapons that had been discarded by the division troops who had previously held this area. Cold weather and a driving rain did not help the morale of those inexperienced American troops."

Even more disturbing was the fact that the regiment left wounded behind. Frank South, a medic with the 2nd Ranger Battalion, recounted the discovery. "We moved to what had been a German troop shelter at the crossroads near Vossenack. When we entered the troop shelter, we medics were shocked to find several wounded Americans there. In addition to abandoning equipment and supplies along the road, the 112th Infantry Regiment deserted some of their own wounded in their haste to retreat. Of course, we took care of their injuries and immediately evacuated them."

The Rangers ran patrols, dug in deeper, reinforced their foxholes with logs, and battled the cold weather. Fortunately, direct intervention by the Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, helped the 2nd Rangers to be better prepared for the cold weather than most of the regular infantry in the Hürtgen. Bob Edlin explained, "While at the bivouac, we were visited by General Eisenhower. The whole battalion gathered around and he just flat-out asked if anybody could tell him why we didn't have the new boot packs. One of the men yelled out, 'Hell, General, everybody back at headquarters has got them,' which was true. Everybody at Army, corps, and divisional headquarters was wearing boot packs, parkas, and warm clothes. That gear never leaked down to the front lines. We were still wearing summer clothes and it was in the low thirties. General Eisenhower said that will be taken care of, and God rest his soul, it was. A few days later we

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

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**ABOVE: American armored vehicles make their way up a slippery incline in the Hürtgen Forest. The men of the 2nd Ranger Battalion relieved elements of the 5th Armored Division when they arrived at Hill 400. TOP LEFT: Hill 400 in the Hürtgen Forest is located at center right in this map of the area. The hill was identified based on its height in meters. The men of the 2nd Ranger Battalion remembered it as a killing ground. LEFT: American soldiers inspect a hastily abandoned German machine-gun nest in the Hürtgen Forest. The fighting in the Hürtgen, which began in the autumn of 1944, proved to be some of the toughest in the European Theater. OPPOSITE: Soldiers of the 2nd Ranger Battalion slog their way along a muddy road in the Hürtgen Forest. These Rangers are on their way to Hill 400, the scene of a fierce stand against repeated German attacks.**

National Archives

**"With whooping and hollering as loud as possible, firing clips of ammo at random from their weapons in the direction of the hill, the Rangers ran as fast as they could across the approximately 100 yards of open, cleared field into the machine-gun and small-arms fire of the German defenders."**

received boot packs, and even wristwatches. He must have raided the whole damn headquarters to get enough for one Ranger battalion."

Near the end of November, the 28th Division relinquished its frontline sector to the 8th Infantry Division, V Corps. The Rangers remained and supported the 8th, but were now under V Corps command. After the 8th Division moved into the line, the Rangers moved Companies C, D, E, and F a short distance behind the front. A and B Companies remained deployed on the extreme right flank of the division's 121st Infantry Regiment.

Lieutenant James Eikner, in charge of headquarters communication, explained how the men felt. "We were a specialized unit, all volunteers. Putting us in a defensive position wasn't utilizing our skills and capabilities. Just sitting in those foxholes. We were very disappointed about this."

All three infantry divisions, 9th, 28th, and 8th, had tried to seize Hill 400 but failed. A combat command of the 5th Armored Division tried in the first week of December. Despite armored support, its infantry was also repulsed. The 47th Armored Infantry Battalion barely held Bergstein against German counterattacks and was in no shape to participate in another attack on Hill 400.

General Walter Weaver, commander of the 8th Division, personally asked the V Corps commander, General Leonard Gerow, for Rangers to bolster the armored combat command in Bergstein and to assist his division's next assault on Hill 400. Gerow, with approval from General Courtney Hodges, commander of the First Army, released the 2nd Rangers from V Corps control and trucked them from their bivouac to Hill 400. Weaver then decided to let the Rangers assault the hill by themselves, so as to keep his division fresh and to allow the Rangers to work in their own manner.

That same day, Lt. Col. James Rudder, the battalion commander, was transferred to the 28th Division's 109th Regiment. Captain George S. Williams, the executive officer, and Captain Harvey Cook, the intelligence officer, were called to 8th Division headquarters and given the mission. They were to relieve elements of Combat Command Reserve (CCR), 5th Armored Division, outside the town and take Hill 400. Captain George S. Williams, promoted to major, assumed command of the tactical effort.

Major Williams returned to the Ranger assembly area at 2130 hours. Trucks carried the Rangers toward the town of Kleinhau. The trucks were dispersed and "we had a heck of a time getting them together," recalled Williams. From Kleinhau the companies began their march to Bergstein. Shortly before the move, Lt. Col. Rudder hustled back from First Army headquarters to help Williams as much as possible, and Williams proceeded to Brandenberg.

The Rangers marched through darkness, mud, and bone-chilling cold to reach Bergstein before dawn. At Brandenberg, Major Williams contacted Colonel Glen Anderson, the CCR commander. Anderson outlined the difficulties his unit had faced at Bergstein and gave the group a guide to the armored infantry company command post in the town.

Captain Harold K. Slater went to the western edge of town to contact elements of the 5th Armored Division. By this time Companies A, B, and C had arrived. They went on through without stopping to take up defensive positions to the west and south of Bergstein. There were no troops in these positions until their arrival. The men of the 5th Armored were all in cellars, and they provided no guides. Fortunately, the 2nd Rangers had three lieutenants working as advanced liaison officers. These men were briefed at the armored command post on the locations of enemy positions. The lieutenants helped the battalion move into its positions by 0300 hours. Three companies, A, B, and C, dug in on the edge of a wood near the base of the

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ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, NY

**LEFT: Fully loaded with gear, a soldier of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division helps a buddy negotiate the difficult terrain in the Hürtgen Forest. The densely wooded area compounded the difficulty of the action there, and tree bursts rained shrapnel and wood splinters on the troops. RIGHT: German soldiers advance rapidly toward American positions in the Hürtgen Forest. The soldier in the foreground is carrying a Sturmgewehr 44, considered by many to be the world's first assault rifle.**

hill. Between 0300 and 0500, Companies D, E, and F settled into Bergstein.

Rudder devised the assault plan before the Rangers left the bivouac. The men were confident in it because it was Rudder's concept. Companies D and F would assault Hill 400, while Companies A, B, and C secured nearby ridges, established roadblocks, and provided supplemental mortar fire. Company E and the tanks of CCR remained in Bergstein as the reserve to support the assault or to respond to the expected German counterattack. A small scout party from Companies D and F reconnoitered the hill before the assault. Lieutenant Len Lomell took out the patrol from Company D.

Lomell recalled, "The patrol was to discover evidence of pillboxes, bunkers, and enemy positions. I set out with my patrol at 0330 and returned with the information to the battalion forward CP at 0600."

Headquarters reviewed the information and passed it to the assault companies. The plan still called for E Company to be the reserve while D and F Companies, the assault force, assembled near the church and cemetery in a partially sunken road that paralleled the base of Hill 400. The assault was at 0730 sharp. Williams called for the opening salvo just before sunrise.

The quick, crisp barrage caught the Germans by surprise. At dawn, Williams launched two companies across an open field and up the heights, using one company's covering fire to support the attack. Companies D and F, a total of 65 Rangers, moved out from their positions in Bergstein and crossed the line of departure at 0730.

German troops of the 272nd Volksgrenadier Division reacted like veterans, scrambling to their positions despite being under the American artillery barrage. Sid Salomon, commanding B Company, observed the German response. "The enemy defenders immediately became alert. A red flare shot in the air from an enemy outpost. Shortly thereafter, a heavy mortar and artillery barrage came down on the assaulting Rangers. Heavy small arms and machine gun fire was directed on the rushing Rangers. Casualties on both sides began to mount. A creeping German artillery barrage behind the assaulting Rangers produced more Ranger casualties. The enemy offered stiff resistance."

Four machine guns fired point blank at the Rangers moving up the hill. A German observation post swung into action, directing accurate mortar and artillery fire. Williams wrote in his after action report, "The Germans poured in mortar, 88, 120, and self-propelled gun fire."

Company C fired in support of the charge as its companions crossed the field. Salomon described the opening moments of the Ranger advance: "The CO at the appropriate time gave the word 'Go!' With whooping and hollering as loud as possible, firing clips of ammo at random from their weapons in the direction of the hill, the Rangers ran as fast as they could across the approximately 100 yards of open, cleared field into the machine-gun and small-arms fire of the German defenders. Crossing the field, and before reaching the base of the hill, the company commander and his runner became casualties, but undaunted, the remaining D Company Rangers charged up the hill."

Lieutenant Lomell described the opening moments of his first platoon's action. "The platoon crossed the 100 yards of half frozen mud, shooting randomly, we were at a dead run, facing small arms fire."

Salomon and Lomell did not know what really triggered the assault. Staff Sergeant Bill "L Rod" Petty of F Company did.

"During the wait for the jump-off enemy mortars burst about 75 yards behind us and moved toward us," Petty recalled. "You could feel the tension building as voices grumbled about why we didn't charge. We were stuck waiting for our own artillery to lift. We knew the enemy mortars would reach us before our barrage lifted. We were caught in a 200 yard area between the barrages. A new officer ordered a scout forward. McHugh and I screamed at the GI not to listen to the order. Private Bouchard stood. Four steps later he was cut down. This shot was the fuse that ignited the explosion of the Ranger charge. I was pulling Bouchard back when I heard McHugh yell, 'Let's go get the bastards!' Waving his

Tommy gun over his head, he broke across the field. As one man, F Company with bayonets shining, hip firing, and yelling a battle cry that probably goes back into the eons of time charged into the jaws of death. I never saw a more brave and glorious sight. It was a moment of being proud to be a Ranger."

Not all Rangers felt enthralled by what was happening. Herman Stein, also of F Company, had more basic thoughts. "I wasn't thinking about a ... thing. My one thought was, 'Let me get the hell across this field into some woods over there.'"

In his book *Citizen Soldiers,* author Stephen Ambrose related the Rangers' comparison of Point-du-Hoc and Hill 400, "Those who were at Pointe-du-Hoc on D-Day recall Hill 400 as worse. It was not as precipitous, but it was rocky shale, with frost and snow on it, and they had no grappling hooks or ropes. It was hand-over-hand, using the third hand to keep up a stream of fire."

Bud Potratz, D Company, was part of the whirlwind of combat edging up the hill. He remembered, "Fox Company led the way followed by the 1st and 2nd sections of the 1st Platoon of Dog Company. We fell to the ground at the sunken road and began firing our rifles toward the two burned-out buildings in front of the D Company attack. Mortar shells fell all around us, and our guys were getting hit. Captain Otto Masney, commander of F Company, gave the order to fix bayonets, and suddenly Mike Sharik stood up and yelled, 'C'mon, you unholy bastards!' and off we went. I remember firing at the hip and hollering 'Hi-Ho Silver!' as we trotted across the open field toward the base of the hill."

Salomon could also see F Company moving up the hill into enemy strongpoints. "An enemy machine gun located at the left lower corner of the hill wounded and killed several of the F Company Rangers as they crossed the open field," he recalled. "The remainder of the company continued forward, some running faster than others, all firing their weapons running up the hill.... Some of the Germans at the lower base of the hill either turned and ran up the hill to avoid the charging Rangers or stood up and surrendered."

Herman Stein figured the Germans saw it this way. "Half the Krauts ran and half gave up. I guess if you see 120 men acting like a bunch of Indians coming at you, you think these guys are nuts! We were yelling like crazy—rebel yells."

Private William Anderson, a seasoned Ranger broken from sergeant to the lowest rank for garrison infractions; Sergeant Petty, and Pfc. Cloise Manning were the first F Company men to reach the summit of Hill 400. They saw an enemy bunker with steel doors on the crest. Petty thrust his Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) into an aperture and emptied a 20-round magazine. Anderson shoved in a couple of grenades. Just then, an enemy shell exploded, killing Anderson.

Captain Masney arrived with more soldiers and captured the bunker. According to Lomell, Sergeant Harvey Koenig's squad chased the remaining Germans down the hill, almost to the Roer River, before returning to deploy along the forward crest. By 0835 the 2nd Rangers held the hill and had captured 28 prisoners.

The Rangers knew the Germans would follow with an immediate counterattack. Quick preparation and placement of the men had to be achieved. The men of D and F Companies found it difficult to dig foxholes in the rocky ground.

Both sides recognized the tactical importance of Hill 400. The Germans threw in the crack 6th Parachute Regiment to counterattack. According to captured German records, Field Marshal Walter Model had offered Iron Crosses and a two-week furlough to any Germans who recaptured the hill.

German artillery peppered Hill 400. The bursts showered the Rangers with deadly shrapnel. The shale prevented them from digging in, but the bunkers provided some cover. Potratz remembered, "Shells hit the hill from three sides. We could hear our comrades trying to dig in. There were screams of dying men. The smoke burned our eyes and nostrils. It was horrific, and the voices of the wounded tore our hearts."

The barrage cost casualties in more than one way. In his book *Closing with the Enemy,* historian Michael Doubler reported the psychological impact. "One new replacement in the 2nd Rangers saw the head of a fellow ranger less than three feet away blown completely off. The new soldier became speechless, did not know his name, and could not recognize anyone around him. The Rangers evacuated the replacement off the hill between counter-attacks. He ended up in a stateside psychiatric ward."

The Rangers were too weak to hold all points along the line simultaneously. Lomell had to

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**ABOVE: Men of the 18th Field Artillery Battalion, V Corps reload their rocket launchers in the Hürtgen Forest. Accurate and deadly American artillery fire was instrumental in holding the positions of the 2nd Ranger Battalion on Hill 400. LEFT: German mortars fire on American positions in the Hürtgen Forest. Blasts and shrapnel from German light and field artillery took a heavy toll on the Rangers battling to hold Hill 400.**

learn where the Germans were building strength to attack. He boldly sent out two-man recon patrols to check likely enemy assembly areas down the hill. With the intelligence the patrols gathered, Lomell was able to meet each thrust with the little strength he had. As a result, Hill 400 was saved by brains and bravery at the junior level.

Staff Sergeant Petty, in charge of what was left of F Company, organized his defense on top of the hill. Herman Stein took the 1st and 2nd Platoons and set up near the bottom of the hill toward the river. "I am convinced that these six to eight men were the vital factor that kept 'F' from being overrun," claimed Petty afterward. He was right; the Germans focused their efforts on that day entirely on F Company in an attempt to recover the bunker.

The first of five German counterattacks during the next two days hit the Rangers at 0930. In each assault the German force numbered between 100 and 150 men. Most of the attacks developed from the south and east where wooded areas close to the hill's base allowed a company of German paratroopers to launch the assault.

Major Williams described one of the counterattacks. "Germans were in and around the bunker on the hill before the Rangers were aware of their presence. Once on the hill they attempted to rush the positions. They used machine guns, burp guns, rifles, and threw potato masher grenades. Hand-to-hand fights developed on top of the hill in which some use was made of bayonets."

Petty was wounded in the fight and was evacuated that night. The Rangers held, forcing the Germans to regroup. The enemy artillery did not let up.

By noon, two of the Ranger companies mustered only 32 men. The survivors of D Company lost their commanding officer just before the German counterattacks began. Captain Masney was captured attempting to move down the hill to bring up more reinforcements. Lomell was the sole officer of D Company still standing. Lomell was also wounded, his left index finger almost severed and bleeding from the ears from the concussions of the artillery barrage.

General Weaver was unable to disengage any troops to relieve the Ranger Battalion. Stuck on the hill, the Rangers threw back every German counterattack over the next 40 hours.

The German paratroopers launched the second counterattack at mid-afternoon as about 150 men struck F Company. Ranger casualties increased. Lomell recalled, "We were outnumbered 10 to one. We had no protection, continuous tons of shrapnel falling upon us, hundred of rounds coming in."

German efforts were about to pay off when a single Ranger turned the tide. Lomell recalled the moment. "My platoon sergeant, Ed Secor, a very quiet man, out of ammo and unarmed, seized two machine pistols from wounded Germans and in desperation charged a large German patrol, firing and screaming at them. His few remaining men rallied to the cause, and together they drove the Germans back down the hill."

By 1600 hours, the Rangers had only 25 men left on top of Hill 400. "We had stopped another counterattack, but if the Germans had known how many men or really how few we had up there, they would have kept coming," reflected Lomell.

The desperate situation seemed to be sensed back at Ranger headquarters in Bergstein. Major Williams dispatched urgent messages to General Weaver for reinforcements, but none were available. Williams scraped together a platoon of 10 men from E Company in Bergstein and sent them scampering up the hill. The unit arrived in the nick of time just as the third counterattack erupted. The Germans struck with both of their regrouped companies.

American artillery was the key to the repulse

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**TOP: Jeeps, workhorses of the Allied armies around the world, were used to evacuate the wounded in the Hürtgen Forest. MIDDLE: A wounded American soldier is tended by medics in the Hürtgen Forest. BELOW: Young German soldiers, casualties of the heavy fighting in the Hürtgen Forest, lie unburied. Teenagers and old men previously considered unfit for duty often filled the ranks of Volksgrenadier units. These were usually led by a handful of combat veterans. OPPOSITE: An American soldier surveys the landscape of the Hürtgen Forest near the Roer River through a pair of binoculars. The height of Hill 400 gave its American defenders a panoramic view of the river and the surrounding countryside.**

of the third German counterattack. More precisely, it was one American forward observer, 1st Lt. Howard K. Kettlehut, from CCR's 56th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. He had a clear 360-degree field of vision atop the hill. As the German wave crested the hill from three directions, Kettlehut brought down the American firepower.

"At one point Kettlehut brought down fire from all artillery available in the Corps—18 battalions in all: 155s, 75s, self-propelled, 8-inch and 240mm guns placed a ring of explosive shells around the hill," remembered an observer. Kettlehut directed the barrage to keep the German paratroopers out of the hilltop positions and to prevent further reinforcements from the woods. This counterattack, together with another at 1500 hours, was beaten back.

The evacuation of the wounded was difficult during the fight. The first aid station in the bunker held as many as 20 wounded at a time. When night fell, ammunition bearers clambered over the snow, ice, and rocks up to the top and returned carrying the wounded on litters. Around 2100 hours, several men from E and C Companies performed the duty. Medic John Worthman recalled the arduous process of moving the wounded. "Most wounded had to be carried back to the aid station on litters. Carrying litters is cruel work in good terrain and inhuman punishment on wet hillsides under tree bursts."

Litter jeeps were waiting at the bottom of the hill. Nearly every jeep in the battalion was used for the evacuation. The battalion physician, Captain Walter E. Block, taught his medics never to hesitate to go in harm's way to care for a Ranger. Block was killed while tending the wounded and coordinating the evacuation when a shell burst on the roof of the aid station.

Throughout the night the Germans shelled the Rangers. "We stayed out all night," Stein said later. "There was a sort of drizzle. At that point we had about six guys from F Company left. One of these men included a replacement, Julian Hanahan, who fought like a veteran. We had a few guys down below, at the base of the hill."

Lomell summed up the entire first day on Hill 400. "It was a death factory. One way or another, they got you. You froze to death or you got sick or you got blown to bits. June 6, 1944, was not my longest day. December 7, 1944, was my longest and most miserable day on earth during my past 75 years."

Just after dawn on December 8, E Company reported being counterattacked from the north by troops coming from Obermaubach. The German 6th Parachute Regiment probed the hill under the cover of artillery fire. At 0808 friendly artillery fire, which was already on the way, was requested on the road to the north. It proved effective, and the Germans withdrew. Kettlehut and the artillery easily handled the morning attack.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, NY

"It was a death factory. One way or another, they got you. You froze to death or you got sick or you got blown to bits. June 6, 1944, was not my longest day. December 7, 1944, was my longest and most miserable day on earth during my past 75 years."

—Len Lomell

Captain Arnold recalled the most difficult attack of the 8th. "The heaviest counterattack of the fight was launched at 1500 on December 8. Between 100 and 150 men supported by direct fire of the 88s, self-propelled guns, mortars, and artillery attacked from all sides. Five of them [German soldiers] got within 100 yards of the church which was being used as a first aid station. Artillery fell all around the aid station, one round entering one window and leaving through another, taking away part of the second window. This attack lasted two to three hours and was beaten back by artillery."

During the night, the Germans tried to slip through the Rangers' foxholes toward the bunker. The Rangers hit the small German groups with short bursts of BAR and rifle fire or grenades. A 20-minute final barrage from the American artillery drove the Germans off the hill for the fifth and final time. The German attacks had all been directed at D, E, and F Companies and had inflicted severe casualties on the Rangers. However, the Rangers held with sheer guts and accurate artillery support.

By nightfall on December 8, General Weaver had juggled the lines of the 13th Infantry Regiment and was able to free up a battalion. Trucked to Hill 400, the infantrymen shuffled up the slope to the crest during the night. The Rangers were finally relieved. During 40 hours of intense fighting, the 2nd Ranger Battalion had lost 107 men wounded, 19 killed, and four missing, a quarter of their original strength. But the Rangers had seized Hill 400, the first American unit to do so in the four-month battle.

Unfortunately, nine days later the Germans retook the hill from the 13th Regiment. The U.S. Army would not seize Hill 400 again until February 1945.

The December engagement on Hill 400 concluded the Hürtgen campaign. The 2nd Rangers had demonstrated their mettle. Sid Salomon summed it up best: "The people in command did not know what the Rangers were. A Combat Command of 5th Armored Division, 3,000 men with tanks, failed to take the Burgeberg. Three companies of Rangers, just 200 soldiers, captured and held it." □

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# Getting the Gliders OFF THE


Author's Collection

**This Waco advertisement appeared in the July 1943 issue of *Flying* magazine. Waco was a major producer of gliders for the Allied war effort.**

TO BRING SOLDIERS swiftly and silently onto a battlefield, the U.S. Army decided to follow the German and British examples and build tactical gliders. But troubles galore plagued America's glider manufacturing program from the very beginning.

Sixteen companies were eventually contracted to produce the CG-4A glider—an American record for an aircraft having the most individual manufacturers. But, with almost the entire American manufacturing industry being awarded contracts to build an incredibly wide variety of military goods, finding enough companies with aircraft manufacturing experience was next to impossible.

Aircraft companies such as Boeing, Northrop, Grumman, Douglas, North American, Curtiss-Wright, Republic, Ryan, Taylorcraft, Aeronca, Piper, Beech, Consolidated, Vultee (Consolidated and Vultee would merge in March 1943 under the name Convair), and even Ford and General Motors were already up to their eyeballs in war-related work. The government, therefore, was forced to look elsewhere to find companies it hoped were capable of turning out large quantities of gliders.

The winning design for the CG-4A (the CG stands for Cargo Glider) was submitted to the Army by the Waco (pronounced "wocko") Aircraft Company of Troy, Ohio. The beauty of the Waco design was the fact that the entire nose section, including the cockpit, was hinged and could be swung upward, thus allowing troops or large cargo, such as a jeep or artillery piece, to be

This painting by artist Jim Dietz shows 82nd Airborne Division glider infantrymen unloading a 75mm pack howitzer from a Waco CG-4A glider during Operation Market Garden, September 17, 1944. The glider proved to be an effective tool for delivering men, weapons, and equipment directly to the front lines, but it was also very dangerous.

# GROUND

THE AMERICAN GLIDER-BUILDING PROGRAM MORE OFTEN RESEMBLED A COMEDY OF ERRORS THAN A SERIOUS WARTIME MANUFACTURING EFFORT.

**BY FLINT WHITLOCK**



loaded and unloaded quickly and easily.

Waco touted itself as the leading manufacturer of civilian aircraft in the United States from 1928 to 1935. Beginning in 1921 as the Weaver Aircraft Company, the firm moved from Lorain, Ohio, to Troy in 1924. In 1929, the name was changed simply to the Waco Aircraft Company.

Early on, only four companies were found with aeronautical-related experience and enough available industrial capacity to produce the unpowered aircraft: Waco, Ford Motor Company, Cessna, and Timm. Of these four, only Ford and Cessna had the facilities and organizational framework expected of a prime contractor. Ford was already building jeeps, tanks, and bombers in addition to other military vehicles.

Ford manufactured the gliders at its Kingsford, Michigan, plant where, before the war, "woody" station wagons were produced. During the course of the war, the 4,500 workers at Kingsford turned out 4,190 CG-4As—an average of eight per day—at an average price of $15,400. And Cessna would deliver a total of 750 gliders from its Wichita, Kansas, facility.

The government went shopping for other companies to produce the additional thousands of necessary gliders. The Pratt Read Soaring Company of Deep River, Connecticut, which already had glider-building experience, would deliver a total of 956 CG-4As during the war, while G&A Aircraft of Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, would build 627 of them.

In Minneapolis, the Northwestern Aeronautical Corporation was awarded a string of contracts and eventually manufactured 1,509 CG-4As; 1,470 more were built by Rearwin Aircraft and Engines, Inc. (the company later changed its name to Commonwealth) of Kansas City, Missouri. Another 433 were turned out by the Timm Aircraft Company of Los Angeles. Jenter Corporation (formerly Ridgefield) of New Jersey manufactured 162 of the craft.

Even well-known companies that apparently had no connection to the aircraft industry got involved. For example, the Gibson Refrigerator Company of Greenville, Michigan, built 1,078 of the engineless craft. Plenty of specialty subcontractors also produced component parts for the glider makers; the CG-4A consisted of

approximately 70,000 individual parts.

For example, Steinway and Sons, the famous New York piano makers, provided wings and tail surfaces. The H.J. Heinz Pickle Company of Pittsburgh made wings and spar tips. The Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company of St. Louis created inboard wing panels and wooden fuselage frames. Gardner Metal Products, a St. Louis-based coffin maker, made steel fittings. American Lady Corset Company was one of the companies that manufactured the silk drogue parachutes.

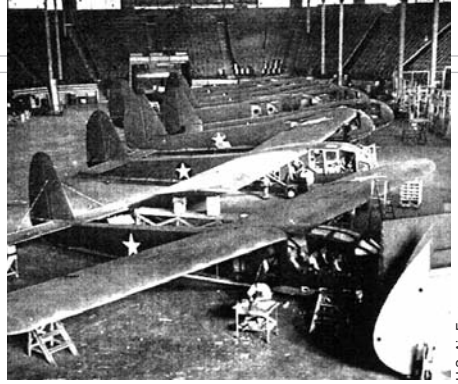
A total of 13,903 CG-4As were ultimately delivered during the war, more than all the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers or Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter bombers manufactured. Even the British received 1,095 American-made CG-4As, which they dubbed Hadrians.

Many of the chosen manufacturers, however, struggled to build an acceptable product at an acceptable price and deliver it on time. Babcock Aircraft Corporation of Deland, Florida, for example, built 60 gliders inside a circus tent for an average price of $51,000. In contrast, a high-performance fighter such as North American Aviation's P-51 Mustang cost approximately $58,000 per aircraft.

Four of the 16 companies that eventually received contracts, National, Rearwin/Ridgefield, Robertson, and Ward, had no experience in the field of aviation manufacture whatsoever. The Army's Materiel Command hoped that if all companies were working from the same set of blueprints and specifications all should be capable of producing high-quality gliders in sufficient numbers and at a reasonable cost. The hope would soon prove to be unfounded.

Because Waco had submitted the winning design, it was awarded the first contract. The order, approved on March 21, 1942, was for 200 nine-place CG-3A gliders. Shortly thereafter, the Army decided that the CG-3A was too small for general combat use, and besides, the only way for troops to exit the craft was to jump out the cockpit windows, so a contract was given to Waco to build 500 of the 15-place CG-4As. During the course of the war, Waco would be given contracts to build 1,074 gliders of various types.

During 1942, however, Waco had production problems and did not deliver its first glider until October of that year. One of the major problems that led to Waco's inability to meet its goals was that the other prime contractors, who had little or no knowledge of how to build a CG-4A, were constantly sending representatives to camp out at the Waco factory. They badgered the Waco staff for engineering data and production information so they could learn



U.S. Air Force

**ABOVE: Waco CG-4A and CG-3A (pictured) glidersare assembled by Rearwin/Commonwealth workers in the arena at the American Royal complex in Kansas City, Missouri. BELOW: At the Pratt, Read Soaring Company in September 1943, workers at the company's Deep River, Connecticut, facility fashion the lamination jig for a glider's nose during construction.**

National Archives

how to build their own gliders. There were some 2,500 pages of blueprints for the CG-4A.

As many as 60 representatives from the other manufacturers had been at the Troy facility at one time or another, a burden that greatly affected Waco's ability to meet its production quotas. Additionally, Waco, a relatively small company before the war, was continually being bombarded with calls from Materiel Command to design and build additional experimental gliders. All of these extra tasks put a strain on the already understaffed company and prevented it from working at peak efficiency.

Gradually, Waco's production improved, and in 1943 the company began turning out an average of 43 units per month; in 1944 the average reached 54. The average cost, less than $20,000 each, was also within the government's budget parameters; only Ford produced gliders for less.

Not all of the other glider makers were able to follow Waco's lead. Companies with little or no aircraft-manufacturing experience were given the opportunity to succeed or fail, and the Army, hard pressed to deliver gliders, was at fault for not more carefully checking out the bona fides of companies that applied for government contracts.

A perfect example was General Aircraft Corporation of Astoria, Long Island, New York. The first contract for 75 gliders was let on March 26, 1942. In July, the order was increased by 154 units, and by another 284 in December, bringing the total to 513 CG-4As; it took a full year for General to fulfill the contract.

To demonstrate how desperate the government was for contractors, General was awarded yet another contract in September 1943 for an additional 500 CG-4As; again, it took a full year to fill the order. The price was high, though. The gliders in the first contract cost an average of $33,770 apiece, while those in the second ran about $28,000 each.

Adding to General's woes was the fact that the company was held in low esteem by the government. The District Inspector General, after visiting the plant in early 1943, issued a scathing report that noted, among other problems, that the company was poorly managed, had unsatisfactory property accountability procedures, had incomprehensible general contract record keeping, and was doing a less than adequate job of inspecting the wooden and metal parts.

The report concluded that the company president, "having failed to discover and correct these shortcomings, displayed inadequate executive and administrative ability." It took several months for the company to shape up; even then, it was hard for General to produce gliders for the agreed upon unit price of $20,000.

Another of those firms that illustrates the rather haphazard way contracts were awarded was Porterfield Aircraft Company of Kansas City, Missouri. In actuality, there was no company; the contract was made with E.E. Porterfield, Jr. as an individual. After promising that he could build gliders, he then formed a company, hired a few employees who claimed to have aircraft manufacturing experience, and went into the glider business.

But little progress was made, and in May 1942 Porterfield sold his company to the Ward Furniture Manufacturing Company of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Trying to build gliders and furniture at the same time proved to be an impossible task, and the company abandoned the table and chair business to fully concentrate on turning out gliders.

Production problems plagued Ward, however, and the quality of the workmanship was below standard. Of the 50 CG-4As ordered, only seven were eventually delivered, and in April 1943 the Army canceled Ward's contract; the company went back to building furniture.

Given the payments made in advance to Ward and the amount it still owed the company for "future" work, the seven gliders cost the government approximately $380,000 each.

National Aircraft of Elwood, Indiana, was another small, inexperienced manufacturer that had problems gearing up to be a reliable supplier of gliders for the Army. In fact, the Army's experience with National was one that more resembled a Marx Brothers comedy than a serious effort to produce military aircraft. Although National received an initial order for 30 CG-4As in March 1942 and another 60 in May, the company seemed incapable of ramping up to fill the orders.

So inefficient was National that Major E.W. Dichman, the chief of the Glider Unit in the Production Division at Wright Field, Ohio, notified the Army's Materiel Command that the company was "a small concern apparently building in a barn," and in August 1942 Major Dichman recommended that the Army cancel National's contracts. He observed that the company was organized by a group of local businessmen, none of whom had any background in aircraft manufacturing.

"Managerial problems of the company were severe," said Dichman, "and to date the contractor had not demonstrated that he had either the facilities or the funds to manufacture gliders." Only when the company completely reorganized was the contract cancellation rescinded.

Even then, the situation at National failed to improve; an Inspector General's report revealed that as late as October 1942 the company had only "87 productive and 105 nonproductive workers" in its small, 82,000-square-foot facility. Cancellation was again threatened, and the owners sold out to a St. Louis company, Christopher Engineering.

A report noted: "The change in ownership was not especially salutary, and by February [1943] the situation at National had degenerated to the level of backyard theatricals." The new owners arrived at the Indiana plant, gave the general manager 30 seconds to write his resignation, and when he refused "had the Auxiliary Military Police eject him from the premises."

Even the new ownership and management were incapable of correcting the mountain of problems that grew ever higher. The factory was not large enough to complete more than one craft at a time. Nor was the one assembly room wide enough to accommodate the CG-4A's 84-foot wingspan. The building's walls had to be knocked out and lean-tos built. Record keeping was still chaotic. The plant, working with highly flammable materials, had serious fire hazards. And a revolt by workers unhappy with all the changes and turmoil resulted in a work stoppage and the holding hostage of the first completed glider.

Major Dichman, completely frustrated by his experience with National, terminated the contract on March 1, 1943. The company's total output—one glider—was delivered the following month. A report on the situation noted, "Including an unpaid obligation of some $272,000 as of 31 October 1944, this glider, and the lessons learned during the administration of the contract, cost the government $1,741,808.88."

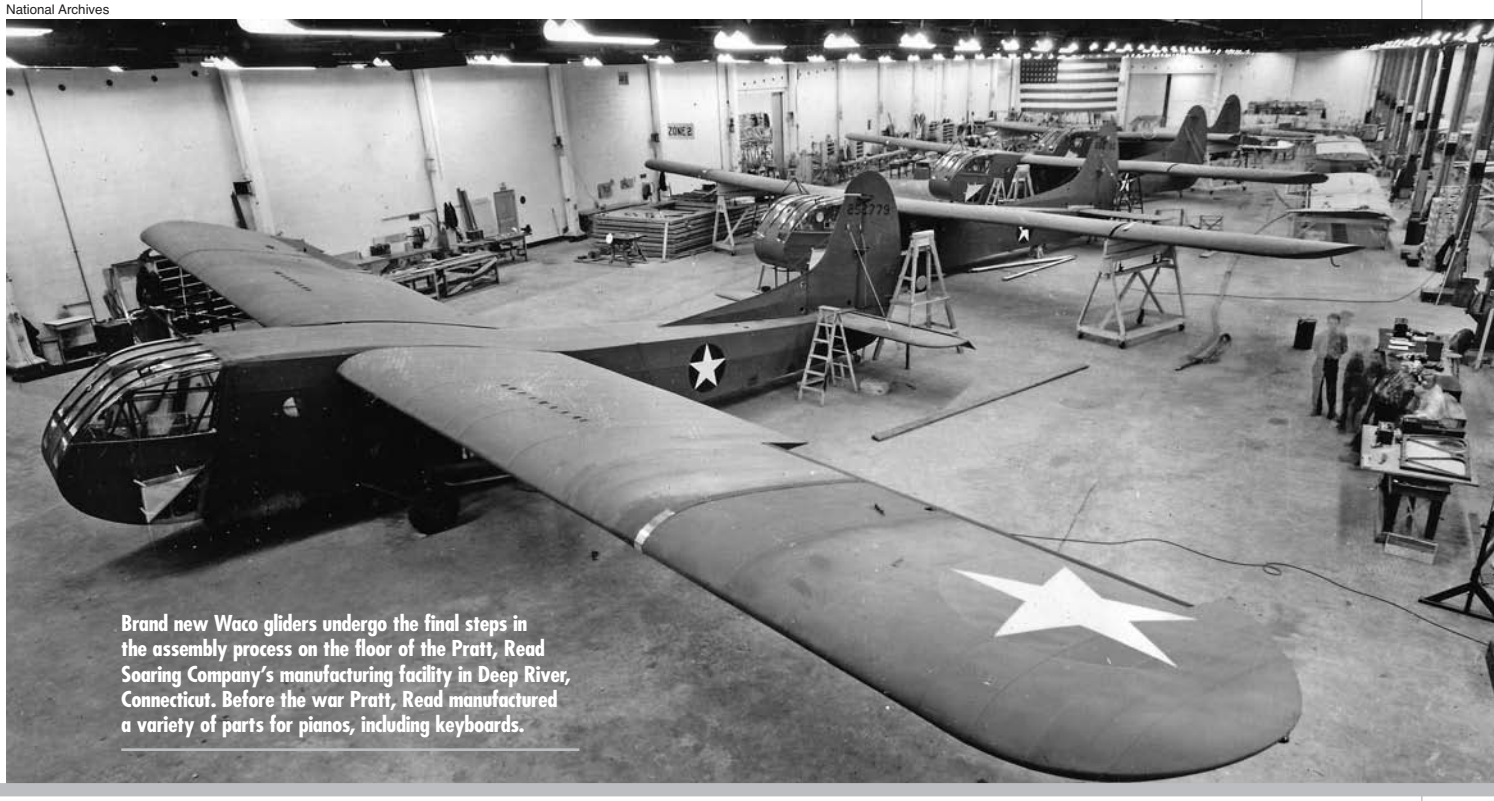
Laister-Kauffmann Aircraft Corporation of St. Louis won several CG-4A contracts in early 1942 but like Ward, General, and National, had problems fulfilling them. Of the 210 total CG-4As ordered, the first Laister-Kauffmann was not delivered until January 1943, followed by two more in April.

Because of the slow turnaround time, Laister-Kauffmann's contract was in jeopardy of being canceled, but production picked up and the company thereafter began building a dozen craft per month at an average cost of $29,000 each. Financial problems beset the company, however, and it appeared that Laister-Kauffmann's contract might actually be terminated. But in May 1943, Robert P. Patterson, the Under Secretary of War, decided to prop up the firm and subsequently disapproved the recommendations to kill the orders.

In the long run, Laister-Kauffmann turned out to be a steady, if slow, producer of gliders; in addition to the CG-4A, the company was also awarded contracts to develop the XTG-4 and XCG-10A models and produce the TG-4A, a cargo glider.

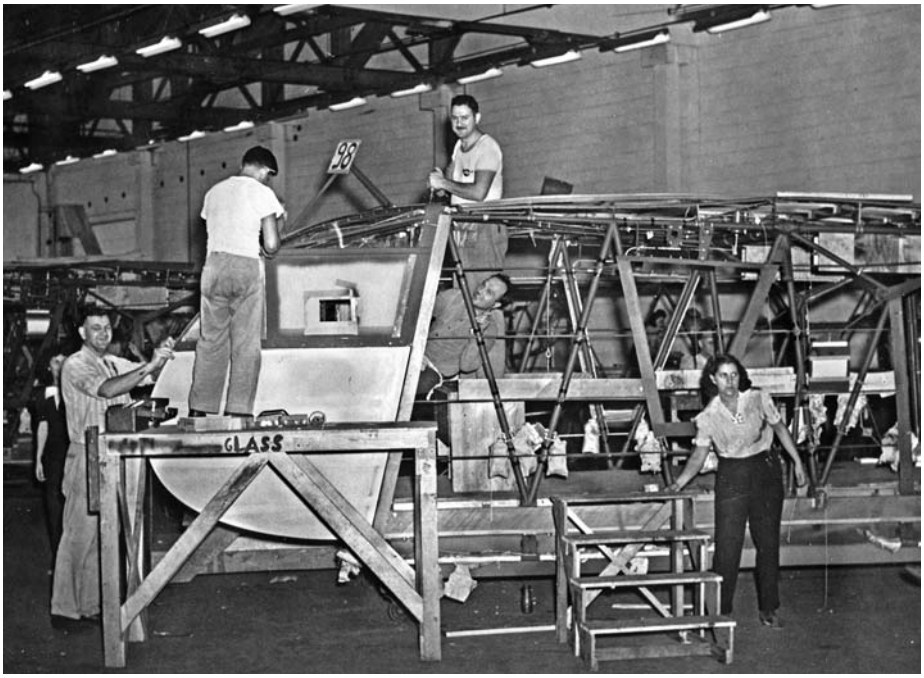
Another St. Louis firm, Robertson Aircraft Corporation, submitted a bid to build gliders and was given contracts totaling 170 CG-4As. But, despite having engaged in aircraft service and training activities before the war, Robertson proved to be little better than General and National in building the craft. There were endless errors and delays, and a report said that the company was internally "torn by jealousies"

National Archives



**Brand new Waco gliders undergo the final steps in the assembly process on the floor of the Pratt, Read Soaring Company's manufacturing facility in Deep River, Connecticut. Before the war Pratt, Read manufactured a variety of parts for pianos, including keyboards.**

National Archives




**Pratt, Read employees perform primary assembly work on a Waco CG-4A glider. With over 70,000 parts, the CG-4A proved almost impossible for manufacturers with little or no aircraft-making experience to build.**

and was so hampered by mismanagement and incompetence by persons in positions of authority "that it is disgraceful." By December 1942, not a single glider had been delivered.

As with National, Major Dichman recommended that Robertson's contracts be canceled, and on December 31, 1942 the company was notified that its orders were being pulled. An appeal resulted in the termination notice being rescinded and Robertson was given a second chance. However, by March 17, 1943 only six of a scheduled requirement of 23 gliders had been completed and accepted by the government. The contract was again on the chopping block, and the company's involvement in the glider program was on the verge of being terminated.

Only an intercession on May 1, 1943, by Under Secretary Patterson, who declared he thought it would be cheaper to continue all CG-4A contracts than to cancel those of the poor producers, saved Robertson's contract. The company redoubled its efforts to satisfy its obligations.

But then something went horribly wrong.

August 1, 1943, was a typical hot, humid day in St. Louis, but the city's flamboyant mayor, William Dee Becker, was not worrying about the sweat that was soaking his starched white shirt. While being driven to Lambert Field, the St. Louis municipal airport, his mind was on his upcoming ride in a Waco CG-4A glider made by the Robertson Aircraft Corporation. His wife Louise sat sulking next to him in the back seat, miffed that she had been excluded from taking part in the flight.

There was considerable civic pride owing to the fact that two local firms, Robertson and Laister-Kauffmann, had been awarded contracts by the War Department to build some of the nation's military glider fleet. It seemed that half of the city's population had turned out to see the public show at the airport and celebrate the economic boom that wartime production had brought to St. Louis.

The streets leading to Lambert Field were jammed with the cars of the curious, and Mayor Becker arrived just a few minutes before the scheduled demonstration was set to begin. One of his missions that day was to encourage the crowd to increase their purchases of war bonds.

A group of dignitaries was waiting for Billy Becker when his limousine pulled onto the tarmac where the glider and its tow plane, an olive-drab, twin-engine Douglas C-47, sat baking in the hot sun. A great cheer went up from the crowd when the mayor and his wife alighted from the car and waved to them.

Then Becker shook the hands of those who were going aloft with him: Charles L. Cunningham, St. Louis' deputy controller; Max H. Doyne, St. Louis Director of Public Utilities; Lt. Col. Paul Hazelton, supervisor of the U.S. Army Air Force Materiel Command; Thomas N. Dysart, president of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce; Henry L. Mueller, presiding judge of the St. Louis County Court; Harold A. Krueger, vice president and production manager of Robertson Aircraft; and William B. Robertson, president of the company that had made the glider. At the glider's controls was Captain Milton C. Klugh from I Troop Carrier Command. His co-pilot was Pfc. J.M. Davis.

Robertson, a retired Army major, was a nationally famous aviator who, back in the 1920s, had established the first air mail and passenger routes between Chicago and St. Louis. He had also been a driving force behind the creation of St. Louis' airport, named for then-Mayor Albert B. Lambert. The glider in which the group would be flying that day was the 65th completed by his company.

It is unknown if any of those who were about to go aloft and entrust their lives to the CG-4A (besides Robertson) knew of the company's problems and the Army's general distrust of the company's workmanship.

On that hot August day, a few speeches were made, Mayor Becker urged the crowd to buy more bonds, and the crowd pressed for-

Silent Wings Museum

**Passengers aboard the ill-fated St. Louis glider flight on August 1, 1943, included from left: St. Louis Deputy Controller Charles Cunningham, Director of Public Utilities Max Doyne, Army Air Forces Lt. Col. Paul Hazelton, Mayor William Becker, St. Louis Chamber of Commerce President Thomas Dysart, Robertson Aircraft President William Robertson, Robertson Aircraft Production Manager Harold Krueger, and St. Louis County Court Judge Henry Mueller.**

ward to get a better look as a silver tow rope was unspooled and connected to the tail of the C-47 and the nose of the glider. The pilots and dignitaries waved again to the throng, entered the canvas and wood contraption, strapped themselves in, allowed a newspaper photographer to take their picture, and then received the well wishes of still disgruntled Louise Becker.

The engines of the C-47 sputtered, coughed blue exhaust smoke, then roared to life. As the thrilled crowd ringing the airport watched, the tow plane pulled the glider to the end of the runway, spent a couple of minutes running up the engines to make sure all was in perfect operating order, then slowly began taxiing toward the takeoff point.

The takeoff was flawless, and both aircraft

smoothly took to the air, then banked and flew over the cheering, waving crowd. The plan was for the C-47 to tow the glider some distance from the airfield, release it, and then have it glide back and land at the airport. No one was expecting what actually happened.

Once at the proper altitude, and a second or two after the tow rope was released by Captain Klugh, the passengers inside heard a loud snapping noise, and then the right wing broke off and began fluttering to earth. At the same moment, the glider lurched and it, too, began its plummet.

At first, people on the ground could not believe what they were witnessing; surely this must be some sort of planned stunt, many must have thought. But then the horrible reality of what was taking place before their eyes sank in. Men shouted and women screamed. Some stood transfixed, mouths agape, while others turned away, covering their children's eyes with parental hands.

The stricken glider seemed to take forever to fall, but when it hit the ground, a great cloud of dust mixed with glider parts being propelled upward and outward from the crash scene rose into the air followed by the sickening crunch of wood and metal slamming into the ground. Immediately, ambulances, police, soldiers, and spectators began rushing toward the heap of debris, but it was too late; all 10 men on board had been killed instantly.

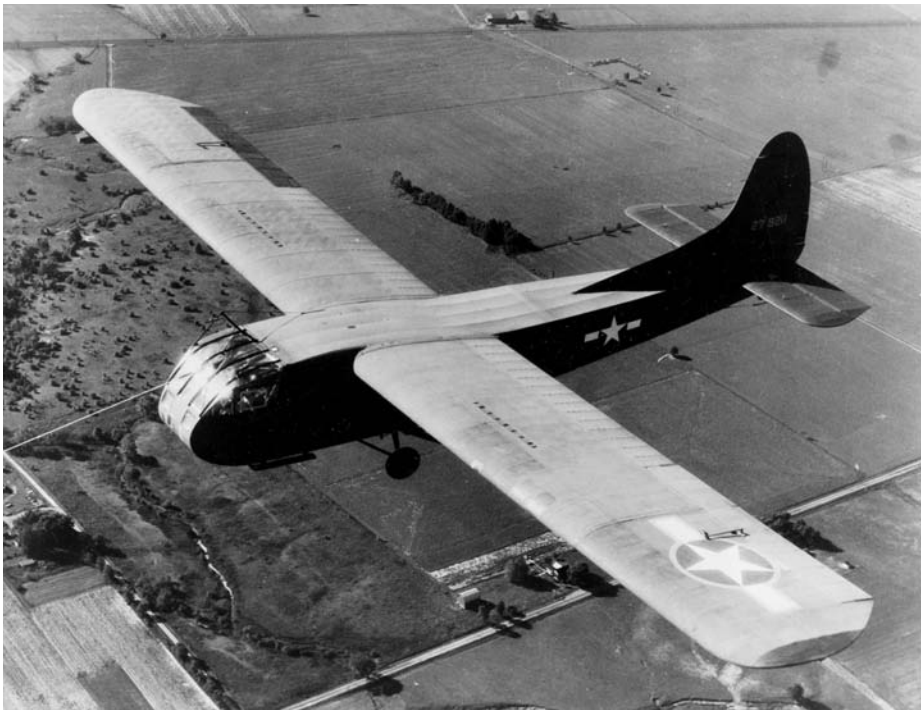
It was one of the blackest days in St. Louis and glider history.

In the inquiry that followed the tragedy, conducted by the Army Army Forces, the FBI, and both branches of Congress because sabotage was strongly suspected, a laboratory examination uncovered evidence of structural failure; the metal fitting that connected the wing strut to the fuselage had snapped. When the broken part was more closely examined, it was revealed that the metal had been bored to too great a depth, leaving the metal considerably and dangerously thinner than the specifications had called for.

A subsequent investigation of the Robertson Aircraft warehouse parts bins turned up the fact that 25 percent of the same fittings, made by a subcontractor, Gardner Metal Products Company, a St. Louis coffin manufacturer, had the same manufacturing flaw. Only a small percentage of them had been inspected when they were delivered to Robertson.

At a grand jury convened to look into the accident, a woman who had been transferred from the stenographer pool to the inspection department testified that she had received no training prior to her new assignment. Shaken, she said that had she known how crucial the part was, she would have been more careful.

National Archives



**ABOVE: A Waco CG-4A glider is shown in flight. With its 48-foot-long fuselage, the CG-4A could carry up to 13 soldiers, a Jeep, or a small artillery piece. BELOW: This restored World War II-era Waco glider is on display at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio.**

U.S. Air Force

In its report, the grand jury noted, "It was considered odd that the defective part should have been the one and only item on the blueprint specifications that was never able to be properly inspected because there were no instruments or methods suitable for the purpose."

The grand jury censured Robertson, Gardner, and Robertson's chief inspector, Herbert E. Couch, for negligence, but indicted no one for criminal wrongdoing. Until her dying day, however, Louise Becker, the mayor's widow, firmly believed that sabotage was at the root of the crash.

The Army, too, conducted its own investigation. Colonel L.M. Johnson of the Inspector General's office noted that the crash left him "firmly convinced that the conditions which were in existence at St. Louis prior to this accident are prevalent throughout the country. There is little that the Materiel Command can do to correct conditions."

A postwar report on the glider program spelled out the many problems: "Poor workmanship, improper methods of manufacture, and general inefficiency at the plants of contractors were all unfortunate aspects of the glider program."

The Robertson Corporation, as well as the entire American glider program, came under

*Continued on page 74*

In this painting by war artist Helmut Georg, German soldiers carry a wounded comrade to a medical aid station during combat in Russia. The German garrison at Ternopil experienced the wrath of the Red Army and was decimated in the autumn of 1943.

THE CITY OF TERNOPIL, LOCATED ON THE EASTERN BANK OF THE SERET RIVER, WAS founded in 1540 as a Polish military stronghold. Like many of the cities and towns in the Ukraine, Ternopil was no stranger to conquest and destruction. It was plundered by the Tatars in 1575 and was almost totally destroyed by the Turks and Tatars 100 years later. A final sacking by the Tatars came in 1694.

In the following century the Russians plundered the city during the Great Northern War (1710) and again in the War of Polish Succession (1733). It was looted three times between 1768 and 1972 by Polish nobles of the Confederation of Bar and by Russian troops and was then given to Austria after the First Partition of Poland.

Bouncing back and forth between Austria and Russia, Ternopil was destroyed by fleeing Russian troops in 1917. It became the capital of the Ukrainian People's Republic in late 1918 but was captured by Polish forces in 1919 and by Red Army troops in 1920 during the Polish-Soviet War. The city was then given back to Poland under the terms of the Riga Treaty that ended that war.

In 1939 the population numbered about 40,000 with 50 percent being Polish, 40 percent Jewish, and 10 percent Ukrainian. When the Soviets invaded Poland in September of that year, they carried out

# Death of A GARRISON

## THE GERMAN FORCES DEFENDING THE CITY OF TERNOPIL WERE VIRTUALLY ANNIHILATED BY THE RED ARMY IN THE AUTUMN OF 1943.

BY PAT McTAGGART

deportations of the Polish population and started a terror campaign against Ukrainians who supported the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

Ternopil received a new conqueror in 1941 in the form of the German Army. Even before the Germans attacked early in the morning of June 22, the commander of the Kiev Military District, General Mikhail Petrovich Kirponis, was one of the few Soviet commanders to take matters in his own hands and move his units to forward positions on the border. On June 21 he opened what would soon become the South West Front headquarters in Ternopil.

Kirponis's actions caused the Germans some problems when they attacked, but it was too late with too little. By the end of the month, Ternopil had fallen to the forces of General Heinrich von Stulpnagel's 17th Army. When the Germans entered the town they found numerous corpses of political prisoners that were killed by the Soviet Secret Police in the jail on Mickiewicz Street. They had been murdered hours before in an effort to get rid of any anti-Soviet elements in the town that might help the enemy.

Behind the victorious Army troops came the killing squads of the Einsatzkommando. In the case of Ternopil, a unit of Brigadier General of Police Dr. Otto Pohl's Einsatzgruppe C entered the town on July 2. The unit, Einsatzkommando 4b, commanded by SS 1st Lt. Günther Hermann, immediately began its grisly assignment.

With the help of Ukrainian police and the local non-Jewish population, more than 100 Jews were massacred between July 4 and 11. In August 1942 more than 4,000 Jews were sent to the Belzec extermination camp, and the final elimination of the town's Jews took place on June 20, 1943, leaving only a couple hundred hiding with friends or sympathetic town residents.

Ternopil remained an important communications and

U.S. Army Art Collection

rail hub, with trains bringing supplies to the forces of Army Group South. There were other trains too—trains that brought Jews from the Crimea and southern Ukraine north to the death camps in Poland. The German forces garrisoned in the town basically had a good posting, but there were still several skirmishes with local partisans in the countryside. In late 1943, that was all about to change.

Partisan activity stepped up dramatically in the waning months of 1943. The Ukrainians were getting edgy, and many that had once welcomed German forces as liberators had now turned vehemently anti-German due to the insane racial politics of the Nazi Party and its Gauleiters that ruled in the East.

Those who had thrown their lot with the Germans still served their masters, and a Ukrainian SS division was being formed to fight the Soviets. Around Ternopil, forced labor camps such as Zagrobale, Chistilov, and Chorostov held both Ukrainians and Jews who were worked to death under the eyes of the SS and Ukrainian police.

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-708-0298-23; Photo: Scherer

**ABOVE: Two German PzKpfw. IV tanks advance along a bleak, muddy landscape in December 1943, as panzergrenadiers trudge down a Ukrainian road that has turned into a quagmire or hitch rides on the tanks. Note the side armor on the vehicles, intended to detonate antitank shells prior to impact with the tank's hull. OPPOSITE: T-34 medium tanks and Red Army infantrymen attack across an open plain in the Ukraine. The T-34 proved to be one of the most outstanding armored vehicles of World War II and spearheaded the Soviet advance into the Third Reich.**

Partisans had always been a nuisance to the Ternopil garrison, but a new force was starting to make things a lot more dangerous in the countryside. Formed in the spring and summer of 1942, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) fought for independence from both the Soviets and the Germans. From its original operations area in the Volkynia Region north of Ternopil, the UPA had gradually moved south, forcing German garrisons to be on heightened alert and causing increasing casualties in the German rear areas.

October 1943 was very different for the German Army than the heady days of victory in 1941 and 1942. The disaster at Stalingrad, the stalemate at Kursk, and the hammer blows that followed in the wake of the first Soviet summer offensive of the war had pushed the once mighty Wehrmacht back hundreds of miles.

Field Marshal Erich von Manstein's Army Group South was now on the Dnepr River. Occupying the river's western bank, von Manstein's forces would have had a perfect defensive position in ordinary times. The western bank, considerably higher that the eastern side, overlooked a flat and treeless steppe, which would have to be crossed by the Red Army. If the Germans had time to fortify and adequately man the Dnepr position, it would be an extremely hard nut to crack—but these were not ordinary times.

Von Manstein had 37 divisions under his control, but they only averaged a frontline infantry strength of about 1,000 men. That meant each kilometer of the line was manned by 65-70 combat troops—a somewhat laughable ratio for any concentrated defense. To make matters worse, the river flowed toward the southwest until it hit the city of Zaporizhzhya, where it changed its flow to the southeast until it ran into the Black Sea below Kherson. Since there were not enough troops to man the lower western bank, von Manstein's line south of Zaporizhzhya ran straight south to Melitopol, leaving about one-third of his forces on the eastern side of the river.

The smell of winter was beginning to permeate the air as the troops of the Red Army prepared for battle. There was also another smell in the air—the sweet smell of revenge.

During the second week of October, a massive artillery barrage hit General Hans Valentine Hube's 1st Panzer Army's bridgehead east of Zaporizhzhya. This was followed by an attack of the 8th Guards and 3rd Guards Armies of General Rodion Iakovlevich Malinovskii's 3rd Ukrainian Front. Within days, the Germans were forced back to the outskirts of the city. General Fedor Ivanovich Tolbukhin's 4th Ukrainian Front joined the assault, hitting the Sixth Army whose southern flank was anchored on the Sea of Azov at Melitopol. By the end of the month, the Sixth Army had been split in two, and the 17th Army, occupying the Crimean Peninsula, was effectively cut off from German forces on the mainland.

North of Malinovskii and Tolbukhin, General Ivan Stepanovich Konev's 2nd Ukrainian Front ripped open the 1st Panzer Army's left flank and took the town of Pyalykhatky, about 56 kilometers south of the Dnepr. The move cut the main railroads to Dnepropetrovsk and Kryvvy Rih (Krivoi Rog), threatening the entire supply line of the German forces hoping to defend what was left of the southern flank.

Meanwhile, General Nikolai Fedorovich Vatutin's 1st Ukrainian Front struck the 4th Panzer Army and headed toward Kiev. On November 5, General Kirill Semenovich Moskalenko's 38th Army entered the city, where it became embroiled in savage street to street fighting with Maj. Gen. Georg von Rittberg's 88th Infantry Division. By the end of the day, Soviet forces controlled most of the city and von Rittberg's division was reduced to nothing more than a combat group.

Von Manstein hit back, maneuvering his panzer corps and striking the Soviets at their most vulnerable points, but the Russian generals had learned much from their opponents and made several important countermoves. Their losses could also be replaced much faster than their German counterparts, and while von Manstein could still bite, he did not have the resources to inflict a fatal wound.

The Soviets continued to batter the Germans in the southern Ukraine as winter set in. They were content to fight a war of attrition, which they knew the Germans could not afford. After

Sovfoto/Eastfoto

wearing down their opponent during the first three weeks of December, the four Ukrainian fronts made ready to strike again.

The Soviet plan called for a two-pronged attack that included 2,365,000 men, more than 2,000 tanks and self-propelled guns, 29,000 artillery pieces, and 2,360 aircraft. The 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Fronts (924,000 and 594,000 men) were to strike General Erhard Raus's 4th Panzer Army and General Otto Wöhler's Eighth Army and drive to Pervomaisk and Mohyliv-Podilskyi while 3rd and 4th Ukrainian Fronts (337,000 and 550,000 men) attacked the lower Dnepr between Nikopol and Kryvvy Rih.

To counter the Russians, the combined forces of von Manstein's Army Group South and Field Marshal Ewald von Kleist's Army Group A (Sixth and 17th Armies) had a total of 1,760,000 men and 2,200 panzers. There were also 16,000 artillery pieces and 1,400 aircraft to support those forces, but more than half the panzers and hundreds of aircraft were not fit for action. Added to this was the fact that the 17th Army was cut off in the Crimea in what the Soviets jokingly referred to their "largest self-sustaining POW camp."

On December 24, the Germans were preparing for their third Christmas in Russia. Field Marshal von Manstein was visiting Maj. Gen. Georg Jauer's 20th Panzergrenadier Division to attend Christmas celebrations when he received reports of an enemy attack on both sides of the Kiev-Zhytomyr road. "At first the news was not too serious," he noted in his memoirs. Upon returning to his headquarters at Vinnystya, however, he realized the Russians were attempting a large-scale breakthrough.

The assault of the 1st Ukrainian Front began with a massive artillery bombardment on December 24 that obliterated forward positions of the 4th Panzer Army east of Zhytomyr. Under an aerial umbrella Vatutin's 1st Guards and 18th Armies hit General Arthur Hauffe's XIII Army Corps, while the 13th and 60th Armies struck General Kurt von der Chevallerie's LIX Army Corps, which was located south of Hauffe. Meanwhile, the 40th and 27th Armies slammed into General Walter Nehring's XXIV Panzer Corps and General Ernst Eberhard Hell's VII Army Corps.

With the German front stretched so thin, the Soviets were able to achieve an overwhelming superiority at their attack points. Hammered by Red Army artillery and the Red Air Force that supported the assault, the 4th Panzer Army's front line buckled and then broke. Vatutin then sent his 1st Tank and 3rd Guards Tank Armies through a hole in the XIII Army Corps' sector, threatening the German rear area.

Von Manstein was painfully aware of his predicament. If the Soviets continued unabated, his two supply lifelines, the Lublin-Kovel-Berdychiv-Koziatyn rail line in the north and the L'vov-Ternopil-Proskhurov-Zhmerynka rail line in the south, would be compromised. If that happened, Army Groups A and South would have to rely on the Romanian rail system, which was in a sorry state of disrepair.

Asking for permission to maneuver freely, von Manstein was forced to wait while Hitler made a decision. Meanwhile, Vatutin expanded his operations, with the 1st Guards Army and 3rd Guards Tank Army and the 13th and 16th Armies pushing toward Zhytomyr and Korosten, while Lt. Gen. Fillip Fedosevich Zhmachenko's 40th Army moved forward south of Fastov. On the 28th, infantry-laden Soviet tanks reached Koziatyn. The following day, General Hermann Balck's XLVIII Panzer Corps pulled back from the Berdychiv sector.

Korosten fell to Lt. Gen. Ivan Danilovich Cherniakovskii's 60th Army on the 29th and the 40th Army took Skvyra, a town northwest of Hitler's old headquarters at Vinnytsya. At Zhytomyr, Hauffe's XIII Army Corps was surrounded by Lt. Gen. Pavel Semeiotic Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army. Von Manstein asked for freedom of movement once again, which brought an outburst from Hitler, who suggested that the field marshal was losing his nerve. He then ordered von Manstein, who was trying to direct his troops from Vinnytsya, to move his headquarters back to Ternopil. Zhytomyr fell on December 31, bringing the year to an end with one more Soviet victory.

The Soviet juggernaut kept rolling in Janu-

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-711-0427-26; Photo: Scheerer

**Photographed somewhere in the Ukraine, a captured Soviet T-34 medium tank has been pressed into service with the German Army and painted with swastikas and a white cross for recognition purposes.**

ary. Berdychiv fell to Rybalko on the 3rd and Kirovograd was taken by units of the 2nd Ukrainian Front on the 8th. By the end of the month, the line of the 1st Panzer Army had been shattered and two German corps were surrounded in the Korsun-Cherkassy pocket. A relief attempt broke through the outer ring of the encircling Soviet forces, but it was up to the men inside the pocket to break through to the relief force. Approximately 35,000 men from the six encircled divisions eventually made it out of the pocket in mid-February, but the divisions' heavy equipment, including tanks and artillery, was lost.

By now it was becoming evident that Ternopil could be in real danger. On January 21, Brig. Gen. Egon von Neindorff arrived in the city to take the position of Kommandant. Born in 1892 in Koblenz, von Neindorff had served in the west and in Russia, most recently as commander of the 36th Motorized Infantry Division.

Von Neindorff was appalled by the city's defenses, which consisted of a thin ring of dilapidated field positions in a 2-3 kilometer radius from the center square. With things going so badly at the front, von Neindorff knew he could expect little in the way of supplies and materials to make any improvements.

While some elements of the 1st Ukrainian Front were participating in the Cherkassy operation, Vatutin kept his other armies rolling westward. North of Ternopil, the 13th and 60th Armies were engaged in heavy fighting at Lutsk, Rivne (Rovno), and Shepetivka. The Germans put up a spirited defense, but both Lutsk and Rivne were lost to the Red Army on February 5.

Although the Soviets continued to move westward in February, heavy losses forced them to slow operations until replacements could be sent to make up for the dead and wounded. Vatutin continued to push his troops to the limit, however, and he made several trips to the front to encourage his generals to press forward.

On February 29, Vatutin visited the headquarters of the 13th Army to discuss plans for the March offensive, which would begin in a few days now that replacements were flowing to the front. Leaving the headquarters at 1640 hours, the general, his chief of staff, and an eight-man security detachment continued on for another conference at the 60th Army headquarters, which was located several kilometers to the southeast in Slavuta. While traveling through the village of Milyatin, the group was ambushed by members of the UPA. Although the attackers were driven off, Vatutin sustained a severe wound in the thigh. He was evacuated to a field hospital and later to Kiev, but despite every effort to save him he died on April 15.

Vatutin's replacement was none other than Marshal of the Soviet Union Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov—the savior of Leningrad and Moscow and the architect of many of the Red Army's most famous victories. Taking over on March 1, Zhukov lost little time in moving his forces toward their next objectives.

Following a devastating artillery barrage, Zhukov launched a new offensive against the 1st and 4th Panzer Armies. His 1st Guards and 60th Armies hit the XIII and LIX Army Corps, sending them reeling westward. The 3rd Guards Tank and 4th Tank Armies pushed through the two assaulting armies and broke into the German rear, taking Yampil and Ostropol.

The Russians kept going and soon opened a 50-kilometer-wide gap between the 1st and 4th Panzer Armies. By the end of the first week of March, the Soviets had pushed past Ternopil on both sides, threatening to cut off its important railhead. To the east, Col. Gen. Konstantin Nikolaevich Leselidze's 18th Army stood at Zbarazh, about 20 kilometers from the city.

**Brigadier General Egon von Neindorff commanded the German defenses at Ternopil.**

Ternopil had now become even more important as it was the primary supply conduit to Army Group South. Von Manstein was fighting for time—time to regroup and time for reinforcements to arrive. Southeast of Ternopil, the 1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler and the 7th Panzer Division were putting up a spirited defense. Additional forces were on the way, including the 9th SS Panzer Division Hohenstauffen and the 10th SS Panzer Division Frundsberg, which were en route from France.

Noting the serious supply situation that would occur if Ternopil fell, Hitler ordered that the city be held at all costs. On March 8 he issued Führerbefehl (Führer Order) No. 11, which declared that towns or cities could be designated as *Feste Plätze* (fortified places). The object of these fortified places was to keep the enemy from occupying strategically important towns and slow any enemy offensive by tying down forces that could otherwise be used to continue that offensive. In reality, this "inspired" decision would lead to encirclement and, ultimately, to the destruction of most of the defenders of those designated areas.

The Führerbefehl also listed several guidelines for the Fortress Kommandant. Defensive positions were to be put in place. Roads critical to the enemy would be blocked and bridges would be prepared for demolition. The Soviet armored superiority would be met with antitank units supported by heavy weapons and a reserve of combat-ready troops, and adequate supplies would be stockpiled. The harsh truth

was that by the time a city would be declared a *Festung* (fortress), the guidelines would be impossible to follow in most cases.

On March 9, Soviet troops entered Ternopil for the first time. The advance into the city was badly coordinated, and the tanks and accompanying infantry soon found themselves in a fierce fight with the garrison. An assault gun unit and some antitank guns were quickly sent to reinforce the garrison, which consisted of a mixture of Ukrainian volunteers and regular troops of the Army and Waffen SS that had been caught in the city. While the fighting was still going on, Hitler declared Ternopol a *Festung* on March 10.

If the situation had not been so serious, the declaration would have been laughable. Ternopil was surrounded by flat land, and von Neindorff had only been able to build rudimentary defenses since he arrived because of supply and manpower shortages. There were no antitank ditches, minefields, concrete bunkers, or fortified buildings within the city, and ammunition was also in short supply.

The garrison had a total of 15 antitank guns at its disposal, some of which were the practically useless 37mm versions, which had earned the contemptible nickname of "door knockers" among the troops for their failure to penetrate Soviet armor. There was no airstrip in the city, and antiaircraft defenses consisted of three 20mm and four 88mm guns. Artillery ammunition for the garrison's three 105mm and eight 155mm guns was in short supply, and the garrison's medical unit had hurriedly left the city just before the Russians arrived on the 9th, taking with it most of the city's medical supplies.

If the Soviets had been able to launch an attack in force, the battle for Ternopil would probably have been over on the 10th. Russian troops had already captured the supply dump located on the northeast edge of the city and were moving toward the suburb of Bila. Another Soviet thrust had forced garrison troops back in the southern part of the city.

The arrival of the assault guns and some supporting infantry broke the Russian advance, forcing them out of Ternopil after a few days of fighting. As the garrison troops advanced to their former perimeter, they left several burning enemy armored personnel carriers and six destroyed tanks in their wake. An estimated 400 enemy dead also littered the battlefield. Ternopil was free for the time being, but von Neindorff knew the Soviets would be back with a vengeance.

German forces had finally been able to establish a line on the western bank of the Seret River. Just north of Ternopil was Maj. Gen. Karl Arndt's 359th Infantry Division, which had been formed in November 1943. Arndt's northern flank was protected by another newly formed infantry division—the 357th under Maj. Gen. Wolfgang von Kluge. To the south of Ternopil, the remnants of Brig. Gen. Paul Scheuerpflug's 68th Infantry Division had taken up position. Stretching out across the Seret to the east was the 7th Panzer Division under Colonel Karl Mauss and the 1st SS Panzer Division under SS Brig. Gen. Theodore Wisch. General Hermann Balck's XLVIII Panzer Corps had the overall command for the Ternopil sector.

Von Neindorff and his deputy, Colonel Carl-August von Schönfeld, now had about 4,500 men to defend the city. They included troops from the Demba Fusilier Battalion, the 543rd Regional Defense Battalion, the 500th Proving Battalion, and the III Mitcherling Battalion, 4th SS Volunteer Regiment, of the 14th SS Galizien Volunteer Infantry Division. Also included were an Alert Company of the 8th Panzer Division and Alert Company Vogel. The 359th Infantry Division provided two battalions from its 949th Grenadier Regiment (commanded by von Schönfeld), the IV/359th Artillery Regiment (three batteries), and the 2nd Company of Engineer Battalion 359.

A six-gun self-propelled artillery battery from the 1st SS gave the garrison an added punch, and antiaircraft fire would be provided by the seven guns that remained from the 4th Battery, 384th Flak Battalion. Rounding out the hodgepodge of garrison units was the 1st Company, Panzerjäger Battalion 357 with six antitank guns and a battery of nine assault guns.

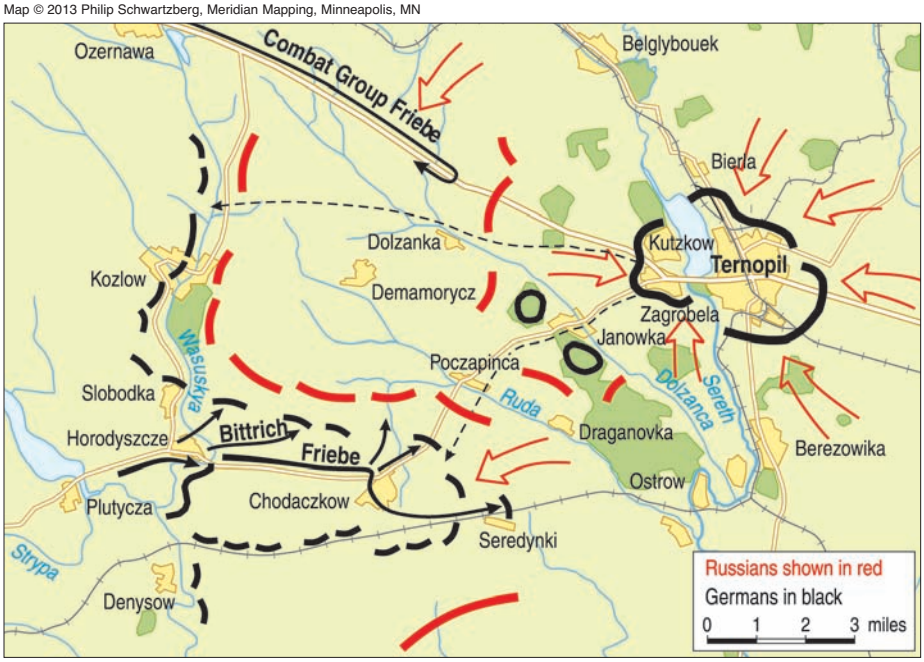
While fighting raged all along the front, the Soviets set about reinforcing a bridgehead on the western bank of the Seret River about 45 kilometers northeast of Ternopil where the sectors of the XLVII Panzer Corps and the XIII Army Corps met. Contact between the two corps was broken on March 18 when the sector of the 226th Security Battalion was torn apart. Heavy fighting nearly restored the German line, but a gap still remained, held by the Soviets.

On March 21, Zhukov hit the German line between Ternopil and Khmelnytskyy, about 105 kilometers southeast of the city. The 1st Army, 3rd Guards Army, and 4th Tank Armies, along with the 1st Guards Army, split the front asunder as more than 200 tanks pushed the 7th Panzer, 68th Infantry, and 1st SS Panzer Divisions back.

North of Ternopil, the Soviet 10th Tank Corps, supported by the 148th and 336th Rifle Divisions, smashed into the 359th Infantry Division, which was also forced back. The Soviets then swung around Ternopil, and on the night of March 23 the city was encircled. The new German front line was now about 20 kilometers to the west.

Von Neindorff had no illusions about his predicament. The city was short on rations and was surrounded by four Soviet divisions that were supported by armor. The Soviets were also bringing up extra artillery batteries and rocket






**Red Army forces virtually surrounded the Germans at Ternopil and applied relentless pressure, eventually inflicting heavy casualties and nearly destroying the defenders to a man.**

launchers to assist in an imminent assault.

On March 24, the Russians hit the suburbs of Kutkowce and Zagrobela on the western side of the Seret. Fierce fighting ensued, and the Soviets were able to take and hold Kutkowce. Zagrobela was initially lost to the Red Army, but garrison forces were able to retake it, only to lose it once again. The seesaw battle for the suburb saw the town change hands several times, but at the end of the day it remained in German hands.

Late in the day a Soviet representative approached the German defenses under a white flag. He offered terms to von Neindorff for the surrender of Ternopil. The offer went unanswered, and soon after the emissary returned to the Russian line artillery fire rocked the area and shells began falling on the German positions.

Meanwhile, 4th Panzer Army was preparing to launch a bizarre operation to deliver supplies to von Neindorff. A convoy carrying 40 tons of ammunition, food, and medical supplies set out from Lvov early on the 25th. It was to travel 120 kilometers in the middle of the night and meet up with a combat group of the 8th Panzer Division under the command of Colonel Werner Friebe, which would clear the way to Ternopil. However, Friebe's orders stated that once Ternopil was reached and the supplies were delivered he was to turn his unit around and head back to the main German line. Von Neindorff would receive no reinforcements.

Friebe was told to attack at 0530 hours, but the convoy was not yet at the assembly point. He conveyed that fact to 4th Panzer Army headquarters and was informed that he should begin the attack anyway. The convoy could catch up once daylight arrived. At the designated time, Friebe ordered his lead elements to advance.

Combat Group Friebe had two panzer regiments in its ranks, the 2nd and the 10th. It also had motorized infantry from the I/74th Panzergrenadier and I/18th Panzergrenadier Regiments. The colonel used a battalion of PzKpfw. V Panther tanks for his spearhead, which rolled over the defenses of the 107th Rifle Division, which was caught by surprise. Following in their wake, the other panzer elements fanned out, providing flank cover for the motorized units.

As Friebe continued, his units crossed the Dolzanca River. After crossing the river Friebe found the Russians dug in in depth. The only road in the area had been mined, so the combat group was forced onto the marshy and muddy ground on either side, causing delays as they struggled through the mire.

The Russians had prepared well to prevent an expected relief attempt. A series of "PAK Fronts," lines filled with antitank guns, stood in the way of any would-be rescuer. With some of his panzers already stuck in the muddy ground, Friebe hit the first antitank line, which occupied a hill standing directly in front of the Germans. The Soviet guns fired, and the lead panzers were put out of action.

Friebe was on the radio immediately. "Gudelius," he said, speaking to the commander of the 8th Panzergrenadier Regiment, "get your men forward quickly and take those gun positions."

The infantry jumped from their armored vehicles and moved toward the PAK Front. Supported by fire from the panzers, the panzergrenadiers took the Soviet line only to find another positioned on the next hill. That position also fell, as did a third that was even closer to Ternopil. Friebe estimated that his troops had destroyed 25 antitank guns before the panzers were free to move forward again.

It was late in the morning, and even with the delays caused by the Russian antitank lines, the supply convoy was still nowhere in sight. Friebe again pushed his men forward, even though the Soviet artillery was pounding his flanks. The Red Air Force also made an appearance with squadrons brought in from other sectors.

Noon found most of Combat Group Friebe about four kilometers west of the Zagrobela suburb. Here, the Russians had set up yet another line of antitank and infantry positions. While he planned the assault on the new line, the command post of Lt. Col. Alfred Gudelius came under attack by Red Air Force fighter

SD Photo/The Image Works

**During a welcome lull in the fighting on the Eastern Front, two German soldiers take time to eat a quick meal and smoke cigarettes. Such moments were few for the beleaguered German defenders at Ternopil.**

bombers. Gudelius was killed along with the commander of the I/74th Panzergrenadier Regiment, Major Cech, and the commander of the I/18th Panzergrenadier Regiment, Captain Jendreschik.

The attack put the final nail in the coffin of the relief attempt. At 1300 hours, Friebe called off the attack and ordered a withdrawal. "It was clear that a breakthrough to Ternopil would be impossible without more troops and material," he later wrote. "Numerous tanks were stuck firmly in the marshy areas and had to be retrieved. Mindful of our position and mindful of what we had already spent, I resolved to break off the operation and return to our own front line with all the vehicles that were still functional."

While Combat Group Friebe was groping its way toward Ternopil, the garrison was involved with a renewed Soviet assault on its eastern sector. A considerable number of Red Army troops were able to break through, and von Neindorff ordered an immediate counterattack with his meager reserves. It took hours of heavy fighting to finally restore the line.

During the evening of the 25th, with the sounds of fighting already faded away after Friebe's decision to disengage, the Soviets launched attacks on the city's northern sector and at Zagrobela. In the north, the Russians had massed 17 tanks with escorting infantry. The attack was finally repulsed with the help of Ternopil's assault gun unit.

At Zagrobela the Soviets fared better. Emboldened by stopping Friebe's relief effort, the Russians assaulted the suburb after a heavy artillery barrage. The defenders could do little to stop the onslaught, and the survivors pulled back deeper into the town. With the noose tightening, Zhukov immediately sent reinforcements across the Seret to thwart any further relief attempt while pushing other troops intro the newly captured area in Zagrobela for a continuation of the assault there.

The next two days saw several probes on Ternopil's defenses. Looking for soft spots in the perimeter, a number of Soviet attacks were repulsed, but these successes also drained the ammunition supply of the garrison. Von Neindorff relayed the critical situation to higher headquarters, and the Luftwaffe responded by dropping 44 containers of ammunition over the city. However, the presence of heavy Soviet antiaircraft units around Ternopil meant that the supply aircraft had to jettison their cargoes at an altitude of 600 meters or more. As a result, only about a third of the ammunition was recovered by garrison forces. Due to the heavy fine encountered, the Luftwaffe command decided that future supply attempts would be made by gliders or by night drops.

Soviet artillery had now been brought up in force, and the garrison was under constant fire from the big guns augmented by heavy mortars and rockets. The men, or more often than not teens, of the 949th Grenadier Regiment were fresh from the training ground. During this stage of the war, basic training had been largely reduced to fundamentals, and the 18-year-olds were now getting their first taste of combat in the worst possible conditions.

On the 28th the Russians chose a sector on the southeast defensive line that was manned by the II/949th for a particularly heavy barrage that lasted two hours. Following the barrage, low-level Russian fighters and bombers hit the area, adding to the carnage and confusion. This was followed by a combined armored and infantry assault that scattered the survivors, who were pulling back in a panic.

The surviving officers tried to rally the men for a counterattack, which was carried out halfheartedly and resulted in more German casualties. Fighting raged throughout the night and into the following day, with von Neindorff constantly shifting his troops, trying to scrape up enough men to seal off the Soviet penetration with the same futile results.

In the end, the defensive line in that sector had to be pulled back, with adjustments having to be made to neighboring sectors. The Russians, sensing the weakness and inexperience of the 949th, hit the regiment again, this time gaining ground around a major access road into Ternopil. Once again, the 949th retreated, abandoning frontline trenches to take up new positions on the very edge of the city, and once again von Neindorff was forced to make further adjustments to his shrinking perimeter.

With this further success, the Russians took a day to regroup while continuing to pound the German line with artillery fire. The bombardment increased in fury on March 31 as the predetermined points in the German defenses were subjected to a barrage that lasted several hours. Following the bombardment, the Soviets launched concentric attacks on the northern, western, and southern sectors of the line with the Red Air Force giving air cover.

In the eastern sector, the 336th Rifle Division was able to make a wide penetration. The Germans were pushed back to the Ternopil railroad station, which they could not hold. With the capture of the station, the Soviets controlled much of the eastern portion of the city. This opened the garrison's northern and southern flanks to attacks, causing von Neindorff to pull in those sectors, once again constricting his perimeter and making it next to impossible to receive supplies from the air.

The situation facing von Neindorff on that last day of March was all but hopeless. The area held by garrison forces on the eastern bank

Bundesarchiv Bild 146-1982-049-11A; Photo: Hoffmann

**On the move in March 1944, a column of soldiers of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS advances somewhere in the Ukraine. The division was originally populated with Ukrainian men and later augmented with other non-German troops.**

of the Seret amounted to about one by one and one-half kilometers, and since the Soviets controlled the heights around the city, they could fire at targets with impunity. Counterfire was impossible for the garrison guns because the dwindling ammunition supply had to be reserved to ward off Soviet infantry attacks. Heavy weapons that had been lost in earlier combat could not be replaced, and the wounded were practically without medical supplies. Food was running short for the garrison and the civilians that still inhabited the German-held areas, but most of the population had managed to move out of Ternopil to the countryside or the questionable safety of the suburbs that had already fallen to the Soviets.

Von Neindorff therefore sent the following message to army group headquarters: "Despite bitter resistance, unable to hold on any longer. Request Führer's permission for a breakout attempt." It took only a couple of hours for an answer that said Ternopil was not to be abandoned, regardless of the conditions. The fortress garrison was to continue to resist Soviet assaults until relieved.

April 1 brought renewed fighting in the northern sector, which was being manned by the remnants of the Ukrainian SS battalion. The Soviets struck hard, and the Ukrainians began to crumble. The demoralized troops were pushed back several blocks, but the Russian advance was slowed and then halted as Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers from General Otto Dessloch's Air Fleet 4 arrived on the scene. With fighters providing overhead protection, the dive bombers delivered their deadly cargo with precision while trying to dodge the heavy antiaircraft fire. The respite allowed von Neindorff to shore up his position in the north, but he soon had another problem.

The bridge across the Seret between Ternopil and Zagrobela was an important Soviet objective. Once it was in Red Army hands, the Ternopil garrison would have no way to attempt a breakout to the west except through a narrow roadway built on top of a dam in the city, which was also in danger of being captured. Zagrobela was now held by the Demba Fusilier Battalion, and the area it occupied represented the last vestige of land under German control on the western bank of the Seret in the Ternopil sector.

While the fighting was raging in the northern sector, the Soviets hit the Demba Battalion with an infantry attack. Unlike the Ukrainians from the Galizien Division, the soldiers of the battalion were veteran troops from the Demba training grounds in southern Poland. Although the Russians were able to gain ground at first, a well-coordinated counterattack pushed them back. The Soviets fought like tigers to keep their hard won gains, and both sides suffered heavily before the previous German line had been restored.

The next day, the Russians resumed their attempt to wrest Zagrobela from the Demba Fusiliers. This time they were supported by tanks. The rubble in the streets made slow going for the T-34s, which soon fell behind the infantry. Tank killer units used grenade bundles and sticky mines to disable a few, but the fusiliers' salvation came from Dessloch's Stukas, some of which were armed with 37mm cannon under each wing. Using tactics refined by ace tank-buster Major Hans-Ulrich Rudel, the Stukas swooped down on the Russian armor, hitting the lightly armored engine compartments with deadly 37mm fire that stopped the tanks and forced the survivors to retreat.

**"THE HONORABLE TASK OF FREEING THE BRAVE DEFENDERS OF TERNOPIL FALLS TO YOU. FOR THE PAST WEEK, THESE MEN OF THE FORTIFIED TOWN, CUT OFF FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD, HAVE HALTED A VASTLY SUPERIOR ENEMY IN HEROIC FIGHTING. PROVE YOUR COMRADES' WORTH. ONLY IF EVERYONE GIVES THEIR ALL FOR THIS TASK WILL THIS UNDERTAKING SUCCEED."**

Stymied in Zagrobela, the Soviets hit Ternopil from all sides. The Stukas were gone, and the combined armored-infantry assault succeeded in making several penetrations, which forced von Neindorff to further reduce his perimeter. The defenders fought tenaciously, and the dishonored survivors of the 949th made good their earlier failures in the face of superior numbers. With casualties mounting, von Neindorff was forced to throw in the last of his meager reserves to repulse an assault aimed at the center of the area he still controlled.

On the night of April 2, he again warned higher headquarters that his position was all but hopeless. "Continued resistance in confined area in the face of enemy pressure is only a question of time," his message said.

The message was passed from corps to Army headquarters. His commanding officers knew that von Neindorff was no coward, and they also knew that time for another relief attempt was growing short. They told von Neindorff to hold on for a few more days and that something would be done to relieve his men.

While Army command worked out a plan for a new attempt, the Russians kept up the pressure on the fortress. With the 302nd Rifle Division facing the western sector, the 322nd Rifle Division in the north, the 336th in the east, and the 117th Guards Rifle Division in the south, the Soviets were able to stagger their attacks, keeping the garrison off balance. The ammunition shortage was reaching a critical point, and von Neindorff was forced to rely more and more on Dessloch's Stukas to keep the Russians from breaking through. Luckily, the weather held, and as Red Air Force and Luftwaffe fighters dueled overhead, the "flying artillery" was able to break up Russian troop concentrations, allowing the garrison to hang on.

The 4th Panzer Army also had its hands full. While trying to hold the Red Army at bay to the north and east of Ternopil, other units had been engaged in trying to make contact with the encircled 1st Panzer Army, which had been in a fighting retreat from the Kamianets-Podilskyi Pocket, some 100 kilometers southeast of Ternopil, since the first part of March. On April 6, the 10th SS Panzer Division established contact with the encircled army as spearheads from both German forces met near Buchach (Buczacz), about 60 kilometers south of Ternopil.

This action freed the 9th SS Panzer Division, which was scheduled to support the 10th in its effort to reach the 1st Panzer Army. As the Soviets had already fortified the western approaches to Ternopil to counter any relief attempts from that direction, the Hohenstauffen was ordered to move to the Horodenka (Horodyszcze) area and meet up with Friebe's Combat Group from the 8th Panzer Division for an attempt from the southwest.

While these forces were gathering, the Russians continued to pummel the ever shrinking area held by the Ternopil garrison. Propaganda units were also with the encircling divisions, and during lulls in the artillery bombardments turncoat Germans or German-speaking Russians promised good treatment, food, and medical aid to any man who came over to the Soviet lines. The loudspeakers also played melancholy German songs, which, it was

Sovfoto/Eastfoto

**Soviet artillerymen follow the deployment of their weapon as it is towed along a muddy road by a prime mover. Massed Red Army artillery played a key role in numerous victories on the Eastern Front. This photo was taken in April 1944, as spring rains soaked the ground and made the movement of men and machines difficult.**

hoped, would prod the enemy to lose heart. The propaganda and songs were often cut short by renewed artillery fire.

In addition to destroying German positions, blanket artillery fire also helped cover Soviet infiltration units that ranged from squad to company size. Instead of mass attacks, the Russians managed to chip away at the German perimeter by seizing houses and buildings while garrison units were under cover. For three days, small groups of Soviet and garrison troops fought in conditions similar to Stalingrad, where both sides held various rooms or floors in the same structure. Grenades, flamethrowers, and satchel charges were the weapons of choice in this vicious fighting, and no quarter was given by either side.

On April 9, all four Soviet divisions assaulted the German perimeter after another massive bombardment. The 336th Rifle Division made significant inroads in the eastern sector, wresting several more blocks from the garrison. In the north, the 322nd was also successful in gaining valuable ground. The 117th Guards in the south and the 302nd in the west were not successful, and although von Neindorff was forced to pull half his line back once more, the Russians were not able to make the dramatic breakthrough they had hoped for.

From March 23 to April 8, the garrison had suffered 1,487 casualties, including 16 officers. That figure, von Neindorff stated, included those killed and those who were wounded so badly that they were no longer able to fight. In a message to the 4th Panzer Army headquarters, he also said that the condition of his remaining forces was such that they could no longer hold out with any certainty for even another day or two.

He received a reply later on April 10. It stated that Balck's XLVIII Panzer Corps would begin a relief attempt on April 11. The garrison was to prepare for a breakout and should be ready to destroy all weapons that could not be taken with the breakout forces. "Prepare wounded for evacuation…," the message continued. "Form a strong battle group to act as a rear-guard during the breakout. Breakout to begin only on radioed orders from the Panzer Corps. Password: No soldiers better than we."

Word of the orders spread throughout the garrison. It was a shot in the arm for the men, who had all but resigned themselves to their fate, and morale rose along the perimeter. If there was a chance of freedom, the men decided that they would fight even harder, holding on until orders for the breakout were given.

Since receiving orders to prepare for the relief attempt at 1700 hours on April 9, the 9th SS began moving to its staging area near Horodenka. There, it waited for Friebe's unit, now known as Panzer Formation Friebe, which was moving south from Brody. Friebe's forces arrived on the 10th and settled into an area north of the 9th SS. The vehicles in Friebe's command consisted of 24 Panthers, 9 PzKpfw. VI Tigers tanks, and about 100 SPWs (armored personnel carriers capable of carrying 13 men).

At 1730 hours on April 10, the relief forces received the following message from the XLVIII Panzer Corps headquarters: "The honorable task of freeing the brave defenders of Ternopil falls to you. For the past week, these men of the fortified town, cut off from the outside world, have halted a vastly superior enemy in heroic fighting. Prove your comrades' worth. Only if everyone gives their all for this task will this undertaking succeed."

Plans for the assault called for the units of the 9th SS that were to take part in the attempt and Panzer Formation Friebe to take bridgeheads across the Strypa River and make a straight drive to Ternopil. It sounded easy, but the Russians had fortified the avenue of attack with several PAK Fronts. Reinforcements had also been brought into the area, so instead of just facing the infantry of the 135th Rifle Division, the relief group would now also encounter the 1st Guards Artillery Division, which had a heavy gun brigade, two howitzer brigades, and three light artillery brigades, and the 68th

Guards Rifle Division. On the right flank of the proposed attack corridor stood the 148th Rifle Division and the 52nd Guards Tank Brigade.

The weather also affected the effort. It had started to rain even as the final preparations for the relief attempt were under way. The rain soon became a downpour that turned the earth into a sticky ooze that even the best tracked vehicles could not handle without extreme difficulty. Nevertheless, the relief forces set out in the early hours of April 11.

Friebe's spearhead, many of its vehicles already bogged down in the mud, soon ran into a hornet's nest of antitank guns supported by infantry. Several vehicles were hit as the Germans tried to force a crossing of the Strypa. A withdrawal was ordered, and German artillery was called in to blast the Soviet positions, but when the Germans moved forward again they were still hit with antitank fire backed up by Soviet artillery.

Friebe ordered a third attack, but that one also faltered and then stopped in the face of deadly enemy fire. It was evident that the planned crossing of the Strypa at the designated area would not be possible, so his unit was ordered to turn south and support the 9th SS in the Horodenka area.

The 9th SS was also plagued by the mud. In Horodenka proper, the Soviets had established a strong defensive position that would threaten the German flank. A force of 30 assault guns and 30 PzKpfw. IV tanks supported by infantry and engineers was able to penetrate the Russian defenses. Forging ahead, two platoons of engineers under the command of SS 2nd Lt. Kunigk fought their way toward a bridge spanning the Wasuskya River, a tributary of the Strypa. Fighting in the village raged as Kugnik's men inched their way forward.

As dawn broke, the engineers, supported by some assault guns, rushed the bridge under heavy fire. Their objective almost within their grasp, the engineers were rocked by explosions as the bridge disintegrated when Soviet engineers set off charges that had been placed earlier. With the bridge gone, Kunigk ordered his men to cross the river in rubber boats that had been brought up. Russian shells rained down upon them, but the crossing was made and a small bridgehead was established.

Meanwhile, SS Major Hagenlocher's I/SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 19 fought its way through the bristling Russian defenses that were still holding in the village. Supported by Stukas and assault guns, Hagenlocher's men gradually pushed the Russians back but were still not able to oust them completely. On the other side of the river, Kunigk was severely wounded as his men fought off Russian attempts to obliterate the bridgehead. With no hope for reinforcements, the engineers were finally ordered to abandon their positions and return to the opposite bank.

Sovfoto/Eastfoto

**A long line of German prisoners marches into captivity in the Ukraine in February 1944. The future for these captives of the Soviets was at best uncertain. Many prisoners never returned to Germany.**

About two kilometers to the south at the village of Mylniec SS Captain Lederer's I/SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 20 and the I/Grenadier Regiment 947 of the 359th Infantry Division attempted to gain a foothold across the Wasuskya, but they were met with heavy fire from Soviet positions on Hill 367, which had a commanding view of the area. As darkness fell, the II/SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 20 under SS Major Frank arrived. Frank ordered his men to cross the river on foot. With the water sometimes reaching their necks and weapons held above their heads, the men crossed the river, hoping to surprise the Soviets at first light.

While Frank's men crossed the river, the Ternopil garrison came under a massive nighttime attack, complete with heavy artillery fire. Soviet assault troops equipped with satchel charges and flamethrowers were able to penetrate German defenses in several areas, opening the way for regular infantry units to follow. Von Neindorff's forces were no longer strong enough to seal these breaches, and the Russians were able to keep chipping away at the ever shrinking German perimeter.

For the relief forces, it was vital to have a bridge built across the Wasuskya. Bridging equipment was on its way, but a violent thunderstorm made movement next to impossible. Mired in the mud, the equipment would have to be towed to the Mlyniec bridgehead—a time consuming process.

April 12 found Hagenlocher's battalion still locked in bloody combat at Horodenka. His men had already suffered 50 percent casualties, and the Soviets still held their positions almost to the last man before retreating a few meters to new positions. The fight for the village also meant that the much needed bridging equipment would have to circumvent the battle area, causing more delay.

Meanwhile, Hitler himself became personally interested in the fate of the Ternopil garrison. In a personal message to von Neindorff, the Führer urged him to be steadfast and to "hold on at any price. The order for your liberation has been given." However, words of encouragement, even from the top, could not change the situation at Ternopil.

At 2125 hours on the 12th, von Neindorff sent the following message: "Situation extremely desperate, penetrations can no longer be sealed off. Serious consequences to be expected from further enemy pressure. Relief imperative before it is too late."

The bridging equipment finally arrived on the 13th, but it was evident to the engineers that

because of the muddy banks on both sides of the river a bridge and accesses to and from it that could accommodate armor could not be finished until the following day. As the engineers began their work, Soviet and German aircraft dueled in the sky above the fording point. The Luftwaffe and Red Air Force committed considerable resources in the area, and several aircraft from both sides were lost.

Across the Wasuskya, the I and II Battalions of SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 20 were still stymied by the fierce Soviet resistance on Hill 367. Until armor could cross the river, the panzergrenadiers' only support came from sporadic artillery fire and Stuka strikes. The men inside the bridgehead also had to fight off several attacks launched from the Russian positions. To add to the dismal situation, the Soviets had also dug in some T-34s, which fired on the bridgehead from 800 to 1,000 meters away.

For the Ternopil garrison, the night of April 12 had been a nightmare. Red Army units continued to infiltrate the ragged defensive perimeter, and the Soviet artillery continued to pound the Germans relentlessly.

Von Neindorff's messages to the outside became increasingly desperate on the 13th, as is shown by a sampling received by XLVIII Panzer Headquarters.

O650 hours—"All sectors under heavy pressure through the entire night. New penetration northern wing. Hemmed in further in the west, pressure from north toward the bridge."

0950 hours—"Garrison under pounding in ruins since 0700. Enemy tanks and antitank guns in the streets as well a preparatory artillery and mortar fire."

1255 hours—"Heavy barrage on entire defensive perimeter since 1000. Infantry attacks in the south. Critical situation—urgently require relief."

1520 hours—"House to house fighting in the south and east. Ammunition running low. Where is relief?"

The SS engineers worked through the night of April 13 to construct their bridge, employing two companies under SS 1st Lieutenants Scheffler and Möller. Scheffler's men set prefabricated trestles in the ground and river bottom to hold the trunks and planks that Möller's men laid to form a corduroy road over which armor could pass.

At 0610 hours on the 14th, the panzers of SS Lt. Col. Otto Meyer's Panzer Regiment 9 got the word to begin the attack. The first units to cross the bridge were assault guns of the 7th and 8th Companies, followed by the 5th and 6th Companies, which were equipped with the Panzer IV. In the river below, the men of SS Captain Karl-Heinz Recke's II/ Panzergrenadier Regiment 19 were finishing crossing the river in rubber boats.

Once across the Wasuskaya, the assault units began to advance on the hills north and south of the heavily defended Hill 367. The assault guns, supported by Lederer's battalion, fell upon the Soviet units holding Hill 329, about two kilometers northeast of Horodenka. After heavy fighting the hill was taken, eliminating Russian observation points north of the bridgehead.

About five kilometers south of Horodenka, Recke's battalion and the 5th and 6th Panzer Companies hit Hill 349, which also fell after a sharp engagement. The attack was supported by Major Rudel's III Group of Lt. Col Karl-Heinz Stepp's Stuka Squadron 2. Hill 367 was now flanked on both the north and the south, but the Soviet defenders, supported by heavy artillery battalions, refused to budge from their position.

The Germans had made some gains, but ahead of them lay more Soviet defenses manned by the 135th and 148th Rifle Divisions and the 68th Guards Rifle Division. They could rely on the 1st Guards Artillery Division, whose batteries were dug in behind the Ruda River.

Panzer Formation Friebe was being brought into the bridgehead along with SS Captain Rudolf Gruber's III/SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 20. The reinforcements were sent south and ordered to then swing east once they passed Hill 349. There, they would join with other units of the 9th SS for an attack on the village of Velykyi Khodachkiv, about 13 kilometers southwest of Ternopil. The attack was slated to start in the early morning of the 15th, but it was already too late.

At Ternopil, the final act of the tragedy was coming to an end. Soviet forces, attacking from the north, east, and south, moved to crush the defenders. Several German units simply melted away under the onslaught, while others were

*Continued on page 78*

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-708-0256-15A; Photo: Scheerer

**The strain of combat evident on his face, a German infantryman and his comrades move cautiously along a ditch on the Eastern Front. A total of 55 soldiers managed to escape Ternopil and make their way to the main German line.**

THE HEROICS OF BRITISH ROYAL NAVY ARMED MERCHANT CRUISERS *RAWALPINDI* AND *JERVIS BAY* WERE INDICATIVE OF THE COURAGE DISPLAYED BY THE LITTLE VESSELS DEFENDING THE CONVOYS.

# Gallantry on the

Throughout World War II, the British Admiralty's deepest concern was the all-important shipping lanes that supplied their island fortress. If they failed to protect them, the British Isles would starve, and Hitler would reign triumphant. The Atlantic lifeline was very long and very fragile. There were plenty of merchant ships to keep Britain in the war; the critical need was escorts—warships—to protect the vital convoys and screen the heavy units of the Royal Navy. Early in the war there were never enough of these. A number of Royal Navy destroyers—already too few—had been sunk or damaged during the evacuation from Dunkirk in the summer of 1940, during the German invasion of Norway, and from other causes.

In September 1940, the United States would transfer 50 old four-stack destroyers to Britain in return for base rights on British possessions in the Caribbean. They would be a great help, but many more ships were needed. Shipyards in Britain, the United States and Canada hummed with activity. Over time, they would produce scores of destroyers, sloops, and corvettes for the hard-pressed Royal Navy. But until those ships arrived in numbers, the Admiralty would any tools that were available.

And so the Royal Navy commissioned auxiliary cruisers, civilian ships equipped with old weaponry and minimal amounts of other gear. They were manned by Navy crews, most of them reservists, and sent to sea. They would provide at least some semblance of armed escort to the armada of merchantmen that was the lifeblood of the British Isles. And they would serve other purposes as well: watchful eyes in the wild, frigid waters north of Great Britain, the remote, foggy avenues through which German surface raiders would have to pass to reach the North Atlantic.

Generally, these auxiliary cruisers had been liners by trade in their civilian days, traveling on their lawful errands to the United States, the Far East, and India. They were reasonably fast and long ranged, but high sided, virtually unarmored, and lacking the complex compartmentalization that gave warships their ability to absorb damage and still keep fighting. With all kinds of weaponry in short supply, they could be equipped with no more than old guns and minimal ranging equipment.

Still, they were better than nothing, especially since the Germans were expected to use surface raiders to prey on British shipping, and that included civilian ships converted into commerce raiders. The Kriegsmarine did indeed field a number of raiders in this war as well. Among the more famous were *Kormoran, Pinguin, Thor, Atlantis,* and *Komet.* They packed substantial armament. In her last fight, *Kormoran* was able to sink the Australian light cruiser *Sydney,* although *Sydney* took the German with her.

Still, an auxiliary cruiser might expect to fight such a raider on approximately even terms, at least to put up enough of a fight to hold the raider away from a convoy. In mid-September 1914, for example, Cunard liner *Carmania,* converted to an armed merchant cruiser, fell in with German raider *Cap Trafalgar* off the coast of Brazil. *Carmania* was outgunned by her enemy, but her own shooting was superb. Though she took repeated hits in her superstructure, *Carmania*'s guns hit the German again and again at the waterline. *Cap Trafalgar* broke off the action and ran for shelter, sinking two hours later.

And so, early in World War II, a number of British liners were converted to merchant cruisers. Some of them were lost, several to submarines, against which they had little defense. That was the fate of *Laurentic* and *Patroclus* west of Ireland in November 1940, and *Salopian* off Cape Farewell near Greenland the following May. Two of the ex-liners, *Rawalpindi* and *Jervis Bay,* met the ultimate test, a head-to-head fight against cruisers or pocket battleships of the German Navy. Vastly outgunned, with antique rangefinding gear, lacking any armor worthy of the name against the big German guns, the merchant cruisers' ends were preordained. But they did their duty to the end in the bitter waters of the North Atlantic, and a lot of cargo ships and merchant seamen survived because of their heroism. This is how it happened.

*Rawalpindi* could not have met more trouble unless she had run into super battleships *Tirpitz* and *Bismarck,* a pair that never went to sea together. What this vulnerable liner had encountered were sister ships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau,* fast 26,000-ton battlecruisers protected by heavy armor, 12 inches covering their turrets and the amidships portion of their hulls. They carried 11-inch main armament, nine tubes in three turrets, plus a dozen 5.9-inch guns and a formidable collection of antiaircraft weaponry.

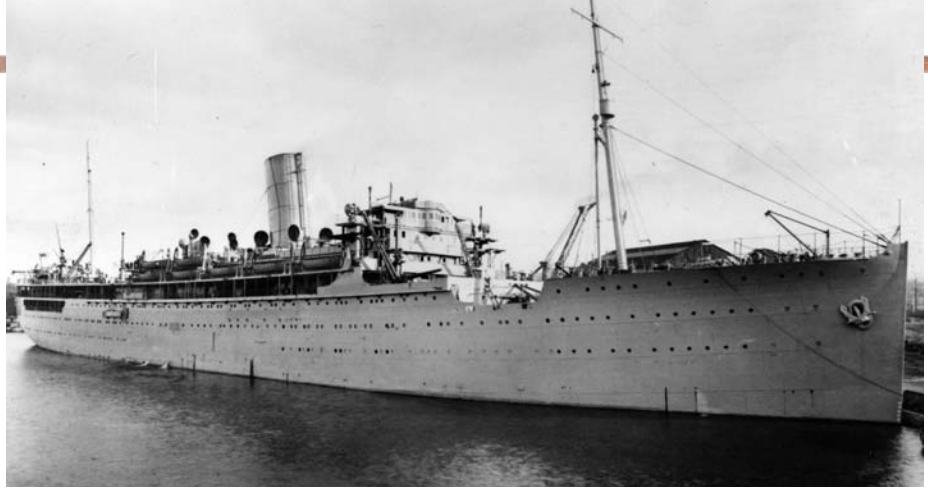
Under the command of Vice Admiral Wilhelm Marschall, these two monsters sortied from Wilhelmshaven on November 21, 1939, sailing northward through a brutal sea and winds of gale force and higher. The foul weather at least blinded British air reconnaissance, especially as the two big ships ran the dangerous 130-mile-wide passage between the Shetland Islands and the Norwegian coast.

**In this painting by artist Norman Wilkinson, the British armed merchant cruiser *Jervis Bay* is shown in flames as geysers from near-misses rise skyward. *Jervis Bay*'s opponent in this one-sided battle was the German pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer.* Although hopelessly outgunned, *Jervis Bay* took on *Admiral Scheer* in keeping with the finest traditions of the Royal Navy.**

# High Seas

BY ROBERT BARR SMITH

National Maritime Museum, London / The Image Works



Imperial War Museum

**ABOVE: After her conversion to an armed merchant cruiser for convoy escort duty in the Atlantic, HMS *Rawalpindi* encountered the 26,000-ton German battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and fell victim to the enemy warships in a gallant stand against overwhelming odds. This photo shows *Rawalpindi* shortly after her conversion was completed. OPPOSITE: Crewmen of the stricken HMS *Rawalpindi* occupy one of only three serviceable lifeboats and attempt to rescue fellow sailors as their ship is pounded relentlessly by the German battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.**

For a day and a half the two battlecruisers crashed through wild seas, heading into the storms and darkness of the north, their goal the passage between Iceland and the Faroe Islands and the picket line of smaller British ships that watched that strategic gap. The big ships' mission was to "roll up enemy control of the sea passage ... and by a feint at penetration of the North Atlantic appear to threaten his sea-borne traffic."

Late on the 23rd, only an hour or so before the stygian gloom of the arctic night came rushing down, *Scharnhorst* spotted a large ship through the murk and notified *Gneisenau*. Both ships turned toward the stranger, which seemed to be making maximum speed away from them. Although Kurt Hoffman, captain of *Scharnhorst,* was reasonably sure he had sighted an armed merchant cruiser, he still took the precaution of signaling with his big searchlight to the stranger. "Stop," he flashed. "What ship? Do not use your wireless. Where from and where bound?"

"FAM," came the reply, sent repeatedly. The response meant nothing to the Germans, who thought that it had to be some sort of recognition signal, or perhaps a code for the vessel's name. At last the battlecruisers got near enough to make out guns on the deck of the big ship, a liner, and to see that she was dropping smoke floats overboard. At just after 5 PM, *Scharnhorst*'s big guns belched fire, sending nine shells howling toward the strange ship. Almost instantly the target replied, and six-inch shells burst close alongside *Scharnhorst*.

The stranger was British, HMS *Rawalpindi,* a 16,697-ton liner, one of four sister ships built in the mid-1920s for the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. In happier times, she and her P & O sisters sailed the long route from Britain to India via the Mediterranean, Suez, and the Red Sea. Now armed with eight old 5.9-inch guns, she was part of the Northern Patrol, manning the picket line of ships stretched across the malignant waters of the 200-mile gap between the Faroes and Iceland.

Her captain was Edward Kennedy, a 60-year-old Royal Navy officer who had come out of retirement to command *Rawalpindi*. Her ship's company of 306 was the usual mix of Royal Navy regulars and reservists, plus 126 members of her peacetime crew who volunteered to stay with her when she was pressed into wartime service. On November 23, she was about 95 miles east of Iceland, bucking a rising sea and a howling northwest wind that was getting stronger by the moment. The temperature was already below freezing, and it was falling. Hail banged intermittently against the windows of the bridge. The Iceland-Faroes gap was as ugly as usual.

Kennedy was concerned that his improvised warship might meet the pocket battleship *Deutschland*; Admiralty intelligence believed that she was probably still in the North Atlantic and might try to reach home through the screen of the Northern Patrol. In fact, *Deutschland* was already back in Germany, and Kennedy was about to meet something much worse. At first, Kennedy thought a strange ship crossing his bow was a blockade runner and ordered that a boarding party be mustered and stand by. It was just before 4 PM on this miserable evening and already very dark. A cold, brilliant moon shimmered above the heaving white wave crests of a black and greedy sea.

It did not take the British commander long to identify the stranger as a German warship, and a big one. At first he could see only one warship, and he concluded that his opponent was probably *Deutschland,* a smaller ship than either *Scharnhorst* or *Gneisenau*. Even at that, Kennedy knew he was hopelessly outgunned, facing a powerful warship he could not hope to damage with his own puny armament. The situation was even worse than he knew, for in fact he was faced with not one but two even bigger enemy ships, both more powerful than the pocket battleship.

Captain Kennedy knew that his ancient 5.9s were no match for an armored ship bearing 11-inch, radar-directed guns. To buy time, Kennedy signaled to *Scharnhorst* that he would heave to, and at the same time he went to full ahead, pushing *Rawalpindi* past her maximum speed. At the same time, he radioed that he had encountered *Deutschland,* alerting the Admiralty and the other ships of the picket line that at least one big German surface unit was at sea.

For a little while, he could shelter inside intermittent rain squalls, but they could not hide his ship for long. And now he spotted another warship looming up out of the night and radioed that he had also sighted either heavy cruiser *Admiral Hipper* or light cruiser *Emden*. He was wrong, of course. The newcomer was *Gneisenau,* but the identity of her killers did not matter much to *Rawalpindi*. She was finished in either case, and now all that remained to Captain Kennedy was to decide how this encounter would end. He had no good alternatives.

Now *Scharnhorst* signaled again, "Stop or we sink you," and at last fired a round across *Rawalpindi*'s bow. Kennedy knew he could bluff no longer, but he kept on steaming away in an effort to save his ship, driving hard to the east, trying to lay a smoke screen with chemical floats dropped overboard. These did not function, and his ship was deprived of even this minimal protection.

Kennedy knew that *Deutschland* could easily run down *Rawalpindi* and crush the thin-flanked liner with her big guns. The same was of course true of *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau,* both of which could make 29 knots. The auxiliary cruiser had even less hope of hurting her huge opponents with her own obsolescent weapons, popguns in comparison to the battlecruisers' heavy artillery.

And so Captain Kennedy was faced with a dismal choice: keep running and delay the inevitable, or turn and go down fighting. Being Royal Navy, that was no choice at all. And so he turned *Rawalpindi* back into the teeth of the big German guns, charging down on his huge opponents. A salvo from *Scharnhorst*'s guns roared in, close but falling short. *Rawalpindi* answered, and her gunnery was good. Shells

ripped the water close to *Scharnhorst,* and one of *Rawalpindi*'s old guns got a shell into the battlecruiser, hitting her quarterdeck and causing some casualties.

*Rawalpindi* sheltered briefly in a rain squall, but as she steamed into the open again, she was hammered by salvo after salvo. When a big shell destroyed her generators she lost all electric power, including power to her shell hoists, so that her gun crews were reduced to manhandling shells up from the magazines to feed the old guns. On decks littered with dead and wounded shipmates they keep shooting. And now, within 10 minutes of the start of the engagement, *Gneisenau* entered the fray, swinging around to *Rawalpindi*'s unengaged flank and pounding the suffering vessel from her other side. Now Kennedy's gunners had to divide their fire between the two big ships, and gun after gun fell silent on *Rawalpindi* as the crews died at their posts.

Early in the engagement a salvo from *Scharnhorst* tore into the superstructure of the British ship, causing massive damage and starting an enormous fire that lit up the night like some sort of maleficent torch. A German shell smashed into *Rawalpindi*'s bridge, and her radio, still sending a warning of the German raiders, fell silent for good. The same shell probably killed Captain Kennedy, his quartermaster, and everybody else on the bridge. At last, in the blazing chaos a single British gun kept on firing, only two men of her crew still standing, and the story goes that other sailors vainly fired on the German ships with machine guns and even rifles. By 12 minutes past four the liner lay dead in the water, a huge blazing pyre, her last gun out of action, only a hulk but still afloat. The German ships kept on shelling her for another 10 minutes and then ceased fire.

*Rawalpindi*'s crewmen, those who were still alive, began to abandon ship, but only three boats remained intact after the pounding the ship had taken. The crew loaded wounded men into the surviving boats as *Rawalpindi* shook and trembled from internal explosions. Even one of the three boats was holed, and some men dove into the icy sea. At these latitudes, a man in the water did not last long.

From *Rawalpindi*'s blazing superstructure somebody—a hero never identified—sent a message in Morse Code to the Germans, repeating over and over: "please send boats." And in the best tradition of the sea, Admiral Marschall gave the order to rescue survivors from the wild seas. Just launching boats in this chaos of squalls and gale and crashing seas was desperate work, but *Scharnhorst* managed to pluck a few British survivors from the sea. To their enormous credit, the German ships stayed for an hour or more, doing everything in their power to save a few more seamen. Marschall knew *Rawalpindi* almost surely got a radio message out, bringing other British warships charging to the rescue, but still he stayed.

And then, a little after 7 PM, a German lookout spotted a warship in the gloom—she had to be British—and Marschall reluctantly broke off rescue operations just as a boatload of survivors was about to be lifted from the sea. Nobody, then or after, would blame Marschall. His first responsibility was to safeguard his own ships and crews, and he could not wait motionless in the presence of an enemy vessel. It was the luck of the sea, and it affected both sides. When the Royal Navy sank the battleship *Bismarck* in May 1941, British rescue operations had to be broken off with survivors still in the water because a U-boat was reported in the area.

As the German battlecruisers moved away, they were shadowed by the newcomer, the British light cruiser *Newcastle*. She had been *Rawalpindi*'s nearest neighbor in the Northern Patrol's screen and had sailed for the scene of the fight as soon as she had gotten *Rawalpindi*'s report that she had sighted a German warship. She had spotted the blazing furnace that was *Rawalpindi* and homed in on the flames. Although she packed 12 six-inch guns, *Newcastle* could not hope to fight either of the big German ships, let alone both.

She could shadow the Germans, however, for she was nimble and she could do 32 knots, fast enough to run from *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* if either of them turned on her. She was not equipped with radar, however, and she lost the two battlecruisers in the gloom as the rain turned into a swirling white wall of snow that cut visibility to about 1,200 feet. Once the snow cleared a little, *Newcastle* tried in vain to regain contact, then turned back to the site of the battle in time to see the flaming hulk of *Rawalpindi* turn turtle and go down. The cruiser found the boatload of men that Marschall had to abandon and miraculously fished from the sea two half-frozen crewmen still clinging grimly to an overturned boat. There were no more.

Captain Kennedy, 41 officers, and 226 men had died with their ship.

**A GERMAN SHELL SMASHED INTO *RAWALPINDI*'S BRIDGE, AND HER RADIO, STILL SENDING A WARNING OF THE GERMAN RAIDERS, FELL SILENT FOR GOOD.**

Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Bridgeman Art Library

HMS *Jervis Bay* was also a liner by trade, constructed by Vickers at Barrow in Furness in 1922. She was one of five such ships originally built for the Australian Commonwealth Line, and she and her sisters plied a monthly schedule between London and Brisbane. In the mid-30s, she became part of the new Aberdeen & Commonwealth Line, serving the same route. She and her sisters, all named for bays, could do 15 knots.

And so it went through the last years of peace until, when the specter of war loomed over Europe in August 1939, she was requisitioned by the Admiralty and converted into an armed merchant cruiser. Since everything, including weapons, was in short supply, all the yards could give her were seven 6-inch guns manufactured prior to World War I. She had no ranging equipment worthy of the name, and no armor at all. But she did get a coat of gray paint, a white ensign, a 255-man crew, and a captain with a heart of oak, Captain S.E. Fogarty Fegen, Royal Navy.

On November 5, 1940, about halfway between Ireland and Newfoundland, *Jervis Bay* was shepherding convoy HGX84, 37 merchantmen bound eastward for Britain. *Jervis Bay* was the only escort. In mid-afternoon, as the long North Atlantic night was already coming down, the liner sighted a huge shape on the skyline, a capital ship obviously, but at that range the lookouts could not make out the newcomer's nationality. Fegen signaled the stranger, asking "what ship?" over and over, but he got no answer. At last the captain had to conclude that the big stranger was an enemy. And he knew where his duty lay.

The strange, silent warship was the pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer,* which had slipped into the Atlantic through the Denmark Strait in the last days of October. The German Navy's B-Dienst (Funkbeobachdungsdienst or radio observation service) had intercepted British signals and advised the Kriegsmarine command that a large British convoy had left Halifax, Nova Scotia, on October 27. *Admiral Scheer* put to sea to attack the convoy, and on November 5, her Arado floatplane located HGX84 and reported that there was no sign of an escort. The British ships should be cold meat.

*Scheer* was a powerful ship, the ideal commerce raider, one of the Deutschland-class warships launched in the 1930s; she was sister to *Admiral Graf Spee* and *Deutschland* (renamed *Lützow* to avoid national embarrassment if she were lost in battle). After an undistinguished career, *Lützow* would go down under British bombs at Scheinemuende in 1945. And it would not be long, mid-December 1939, before *Graf Spee* would be gone forever, scuttled in the estuary of the River Plate after she was engaged in the South Atlantic by Royal Navy cruisers and driven to sanctuary in Uruguay.

But all of that was in the future, and now *Scheer* was loose, sailing toward the convoy lanes looking for prey. She was a mighty hunter with an enormous range, something around 20,000 nautical miles depending on her speed. She was fast, too, designed with the speed to run away from any ship she did not outgun. She was new, launched in 1934, and she and her sisters were the first ships of this size to have welded hulls and diesel engines. Her diesels could give her 28 knots at need, some 10 knots faster than *Jervis Bay.*

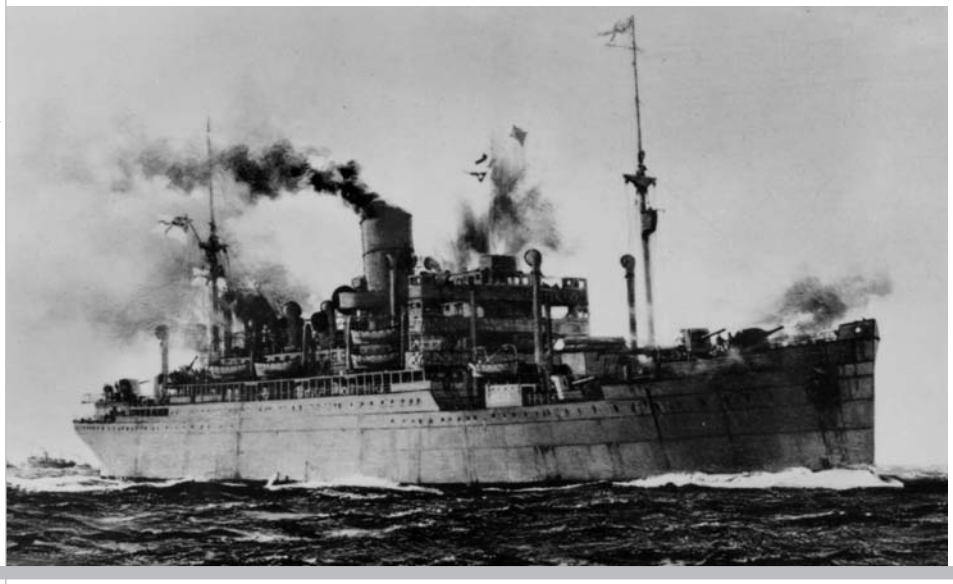
*Admiral Scheer*'s ship's company numbered more than 900, and her formidable main armament was six 11-inch Krupp guns in two turrets. These tubes were a new model, which could hurl a 670-pound shell some 30,000 yards. She also packed 14 5.9-inch guns, torpedo tubes, and a gaggle of antiaircraft weaponry as well. Her armor was heavy over her vital parts—some five inches over the front of her turrets and on her conning tower.

As *Scheer* bore down on convoy HGX84, *Jervis Bay* turned to meet her, swinging in to close with the raider at her best speed. Standing on his bridge watching the big German, Captain Fegen again signaled "what ship?" There was still no answer, as *Scheer*'s commander, Kapitaen-zur-See Theodor Kranke drove his big ship ever closer, intent on bringing *Jervis Bay* well within the range of his heavy guns before confirming that *Scheer* was hostile.

Captain Fegen had no notice that a German raider was loose in the Atlantic, and at first he naturally assumed that the newcomer was friendly. His suspicions grew as *Scheer* bore down on the convoy without answering his signals. And then, about 5:30 on this dreary night, *Scheer* turned broadside to *Jervis Bay,* opening the arc of fire for both her turrets, and the muzzle flashes of her main guns flickered in the gathering darkness. Now captain Fegen must have known that time was running out for him, his crew and his ship. His ship could not match speed with the attacker, which could stay outside the range of his antique guns and pound *Jervis Bay* to junk without risk to itself. Even if he could close with *Scheer,* he could not hurt her much with his venerable six-inch weapons.

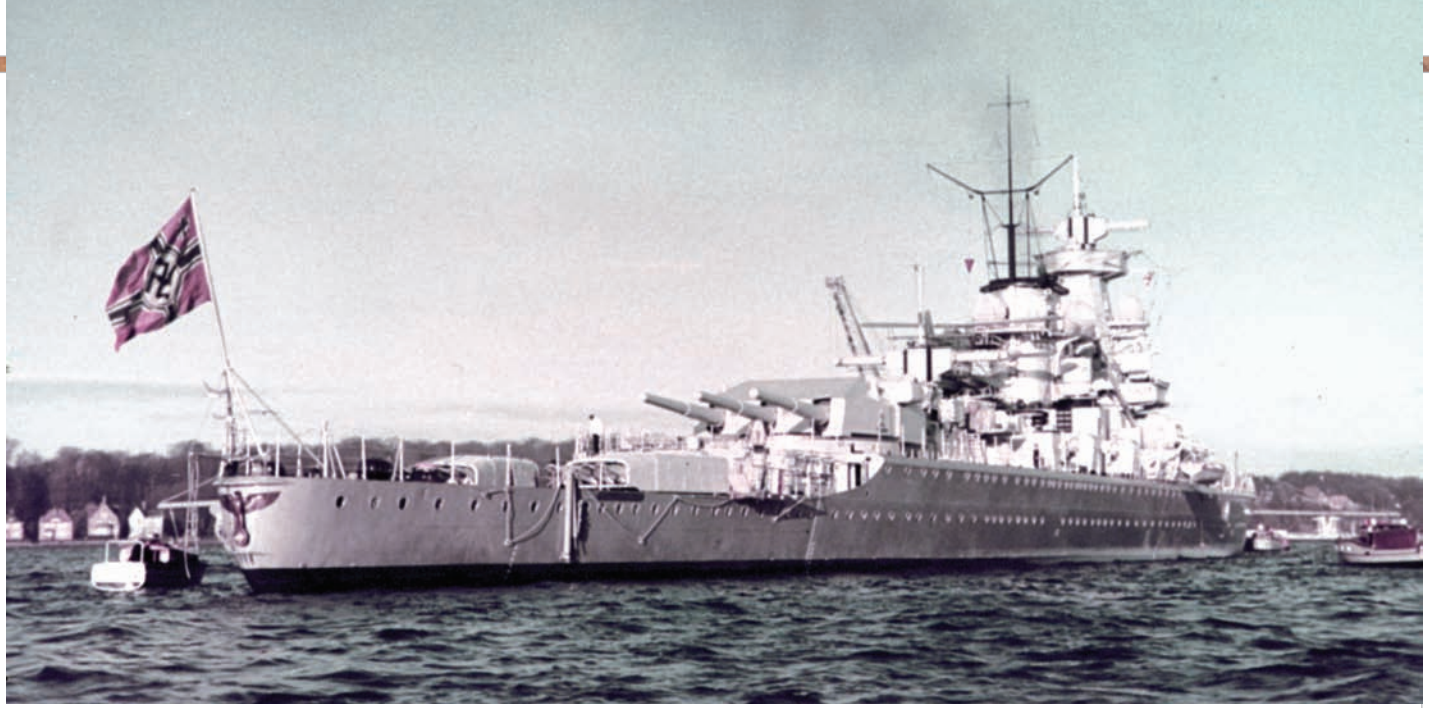
Captain Fegen ordered the firing of red flares, warning the ships of the convoy to scatter. As the merchantmen fled in all directions, Fegen sent *Jervis Bay* straight at the battleship, her four little forward guns banging away, dropping smoke floats as she tried to close with her enemy. The raider was then about eight miles

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, NY



Imperial War Museum

**RIGHT: Captain Theodor Krancke, commanding the German pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer,* was taken aback by the tenacious attack of the convoy escorts HMS *Jervis Bay* and HMS *Beaverford.* BELOW: After conversion to an armed merchant cruiser, HMS *Jervis Bay* was escorting Convoy HGX84 on November 5, 1940, when the German pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* came into view. The captain of *Jervis Bay* did his duty and defended the convoy to the last. OPPOSITE: The pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* is photographed at anchor in 1938. The warship was built for speed and with heavy armament, its main battery including 11-inch guns. *Admiral Scheer*'s attack on Convoy HGX84 was disappointing as most of the merchant ships escaped due to the vigorous defense of its escorts.**



## THANKS TO FEGEN'S GRITTY CHARGE, BY THE TIME *SCHEER* COULD TURN HER ATTENTION TO HER PRIMARY TARGETS, SHE COULD ONLY CATCH AND SINK FIVE.

away, well out of range of Fegen's old guns, but *Jervis Bay* kept shooting, trying to keep the German as far as possible from the helpless convoy.

*Speer*'s big 11-inch main guns quickly began to hit *Jervis Bay,* knocking out her fire direction center and finally sending a shell howling into the bridge. The explosion killed nearly everyone on the bridge; it tore off one of Fegen's arms, but he stayed grimly in command, keeping his ship headed for *Scheer.* With his bridge destroyed and everybody on it killed or wounded, in spite of his hideous injury Fegen made his way aft through the flaming wreckage of his dying ship. There he remained in command in the secondary steering position until a second shell killed him.

With her central fire direction destroyed, *Jervis Bay*'s surviving guns kept on shooting independently, their shells still falling short as the battered liner vainly tried to close the range and damage her huge enemy. Shell after enormous shell tore at *Jervis Bay* until at last she lay dead in the water, her decks and bulkheads splashed with the blood of her crew. Finally, her last gun fell silent and she began to founder, but she had bought the ships of the convoy a chance to get away; she had held up the German raider long enough for the convoy's plodding merchantmen to scatter into the night.

Her life finished, she turned on her side and then began her slide to the bottom bow first, taking with her 190 of her crew of more than 250. With enormous daring, Swedish Captain Sven Olander waited until *Scheer* had passed by in the darkness in pursuit of the other ships, then turned his freighter, *Stureholm,* back to recover such survivors of *Jervis Bay* as he could find. There were only 65. A few more were picked up over the next few days.

By now the merchantmen had scattered to the four winds, hurrying at top speed toward every point of the compass, and the gloom of arctic night was coming swiftly down to cover their escape. Thanks to Fegen's gritty charge, by the time *Scheer* could turn her attention to her primary targets, the merchantmen of the convoy, she could only catch and sink five ships. Thirty-two got away in the darkness to reach Britain with their vital cargoes. *Jervis Bay* was gone, but she had died well, and the courage of her crew was reflected in the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to Captain Fegen. The citation told it all: "Captain Fegen immediately engaged the enemy head-on, thus giving the ships of the convoy time to scatter. Out-gunned and on fire *Jervis Bay* maintained the unequal fight for three hours, although the captain's right arm was shattered and his bridge was shot from under him. He went down with his ship but it was due to him that 31 ships of the convoy escaped."

There is a little-known postscript to the gallantry of Fegen and his crew, played out in the cold and fog and darkness not far from *Jervis Bay*'s grave. *Beaverford,* a merchantman owned by the Canadian Pacific Railways, was part of Convoy HGX84 and scattered with the rest. She was a 10,000-ton, Glasgow-built freighter capable of 15 knots, requisitioned for war service early in 1940 and fitted with a couple of little 4-inch guns. In the falling darkness Captain E. Pettigrew watched the big German warship bearing down on *Beaverford* and decided he would not go softly into that dark night. Pettigrew swung his ship through 180 degrees and went straight for the raider, a little like a mouse charging a mastiff, banging away with his forward 4-incher.

In the gathering gloom Captain Kranke of *Scheer* could not be certain what sort of ship was shooting at him. Understandably cautious, he stood off and hammered *Beaverford* with his big guns. In the arctic darkness the stubborn freighter occupied her huge opponent until about an hour before midnight. Then she blew up, a monstrous fireball in the gloom of the northern night. Only wreckage remained in the icy water, and of her 77-man crew, there were no survivors.

All in all, *Scheer*'s attack on HGX84 was a great disappointment to the Kriegsmarine. Thanks to the fierce resistance of *Jervis Bay* and *Beaverford,* most of the convoy's ships won their way clear to sail to safety in Great Britain. Besides *Jervis Bay* and *Beaverford,* the pocket battleship had managed to sink merchantmen *Fresno City, Maidan, Trewellard, Kenbane Head,* and *Mopan,* a lonely little banana boat *Scheer* had sunk on her way to attack the convoy. Tanker *San Demetrio,* set ablaze by the battleship's guns and abandoned by her crew,

*Continued on page 74*

GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, SUPREME ALLIED Commander Southwest Pacific Area, kept his promise to return to the Philippine Islands when his Sixth Army under the command of Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger landed at Leyte in October 1944.

The Imperial Japanese response was swift. In the largest naval actions of the Pacific War the Imperial Japanese Navy fought and lost a series of bruising naval battles to Admiral William F. Halsey's Third Fleet and Admiral Thomas Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet in the Battle of Leyte Gulf during the same month. Even though the Imperial Japanese Navy had been thoroughly defeated, the Imperial General Headquarters still had over 410,000 soldiers in the Philippines under the command of General Tomoyuki Yamashita in the Japanese 14th Area Army and General Shigeyaku Suzuki's 35th Area Army.

IN JANUARY 1945, PLANES OF THE U.S. FIFTH AIR FORCE SMASHED JAPANESE KAMIKAZES AT CLARK FIELD IN THE PHILIPPINES BEFORE THEY COULD ATTACK U.S. NAVY SHIPS.

BY ROBERT F. McENIRY, LT. COL. USAF (RET.)

# KAMIKAZES
## Caught on the Ground


© Jack Fellows

The Japanese also had considerable airpower in the Philippines with the 4th Air Army under Lt. Gen. Kyoji Tominga, the Imperial Japanese Navy 2nd Air Fleet under the command of Vice Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, and the 1st Air Fleet under Vice Admiral Takajiro Onishi. These Japanese air forces were primarily stationed on Luzon at the Clark Air Field complex and launched relentless conventional and kamikaze attacks on the U.S. Third and Seventh Fleets.

From October to the end of 1944, a total of 79 U.S. Navy warships, merchantmen, and amphibious vessels were sunk or damaged by land-based conventional and kamikaze attacks. Among the damaged warships were the aircraft carriers *Intrepid, Franklin, Belleau Wood, Cabot,*


In this vivid painting by artist Jack Fellows, Douglas A-20 Havoc bombers of the 312th Bombardment Group, U.S. Army Air Forces, attack Clark Field in the Philippines on January 14, 1945. The planes use parafrag bombs against Japanese kamikaze aircraft on the ground at the air base near Manila. This was a follow-up raid to one that had taken place a week earlier, and both were intended to destroy suicide aircraft before they had the chance to damage American ships.

and *Essex*. The light carrier *Princeton* was sunk by a conventional land-based Japanese bomber attack.

General MacArthur ordered Fifth Air Force commander Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney to launch major land-based air raids against Luzon as soon as his planes were established on Leyte. The stage was being set for one of the largest medium- and light-bomber attacks of the Pacific War.

The target for the attack was Clark Field, operated by the Japanese since their conquest of the Philippines in 1941. The Japanese Navy units known to have been at Clark consisted of the 261st, 761st, 762nd, 752nd, and 901st Kokutai equipped with Mitsubishi G4M Betty bombers, and the 201st Kokutai equipped with Mitsubishi A6M5 Zero fighters.

Known Japanese 4th Air Army units at Clark included the 60th Sentai equipped with Kawasaki Ki-21 Sally bombers, the 208th Sentai equipped with Kawasaki Ki-48 Lilly bombers, the 26th Sentai equipped with Kawasaki Ki-43 Oscar fighters, the 13th Sentai equipped with Kawasaki Ki-45 Nick fighters, the 19th Sentai Equipped with Kawasaki Ki-61 Tony fighters, the 22nd Sentai equipped with Kawasaki Ki-44 Tojo fighter, the 62nd Sentai equipped with Kawasaki Ki-49 Helen bombers, and the 15th Sentai equipped with Kawasaki Ki-46 Dinah reconnaissance aircraft.

Clark airbase facilities consisted of six airstrips, Clark runways 1-6, and the five runways at Angeles City adjacent to Clark airbase. The antiaircraft defenses surrounding Clark were some of the most formidable in the Pacific Theater and as potentially hazardous as any heavily defended target in the European Theater. The Japanese defenses included 74 heavy antiaircraft guns of the 75mm Model 88, 237 medium guns of mixed types including Model 96 dual and triple 25mm, Type 40 40mm, Model 98 20mm, and Model 93 13mm twin-barreled AA weapons. The 174 light guns were dominated by Model 92 7.7mm machine guns.

These 485 guns were dispersed around the complex and manned by over 1,200 Japanese Army and Navy gunners. The Japanese also used combat air patrols of fighters to defend the airfields. In addition, 16 Japanese Army and Navy ground radars were present and still active with the potential of providing advanced warning to the Japanese defenders.

The Japanese also used ground-based visual observers to provide information on Allied aircraft passing nearby. They dispersed and heavily camouflaged their aircraft and constructed decoy aircraft and gun positions to protect their vital resources from air attack.

The Fifth Air Force moved bomber and fighter units to Leyte and Mindoro as soon as their bases were ready for operations. Aircraft from Tanauan and Tacloban airfields on Leyte and San Jose airfield on Mindoro were slated to launch airstrikes against Clark, beginning on January 7, 1945.

The actual planning for the first mission was accomplished by the staff of the 310th Bomb Wing. From Tanauan airfield 48 Douglas A-20G Havoc aircraft of the 312th Bomb Group,

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**ABOVE: Colonel Robert Strauss (left) of the 312th Bombardment Group and Lieutenant Colonel Milton W. Johnson of the 417th Bombardment Group each led their commands in raids on Clark Field in the Philippines during January 1945. BELOW: Flying low, the American planes were vulnerable to antiaircraft fire from these Japanese Vickers 40mm weapons.**

commanded by Colonel Robert Strauss, would take off. The 312th was represented by 12 aircraft each from the 386th, 387th, 388th, and 389th Squadrons. The 312th had unique unit markings, each bomber emblazoned with a skull and crossbones on the nose, through which the machine guns fired.

From Tacloban, 40 North American B-25J-11 aircraft of the 345th Bomb Group, commanded by Colonel Chester Coltharp, would join the 312th. The 345th squadrons represented in the raid included the 498th, 499th, 500th, and 501st with 10 aircraft each. Coltharp was the strike leader for the mission. The 345th also had colorful aircraft markings. Known as the Air Apaches, their planes had an American Indian chief logo on the rudders. In addition, various aircraft had bat's head images or hawk's head images painted on the noses with additional personal markings.

The combined formation would fly northwest over the Visayan Sea until they were off the southwest coast of Mindoro, where 48 A-20G aircraft of the 417th Bomb Group, commanded by Lt. Col. Milton W. Johnson and consisting of 12 aircraft each from the 672nd, 673rd, 674th, and 675th Squadrons, would join the effort. The formation would be escorted by 24 Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighters of the 8th Fighter Group, which would depart from San Jose and join up with the formation.

The formation would split into two waves on the run into the target. The first wave would consist of 24 A-20Gs of the 312th Bomb Group's 388th and 389th Squadrons and all 40 B-25J aircraft of the 345th Bomb Group. The 312th aircraft were on the right side of the first wave formation with the 345th to their left. The second wave would consist of 24 A-20G aircraft of the 312th, 386th, and 387th Squadrons and the 48 A-20Gs of the 417th Bomb Group. The 312th was also on the right side of this formation with the 417th on the left.

The first wave would attack Clark flying northwest to southeast. The second attack wave would fly from northeast to southwest. The two waves would create a large X pattern over the target. The mission planners' hope was that this would help the attackers locate and destroy all the dispersed and camouflaged aircraft hidden close to the airstrips.

The primary weapons for the mission would be thousands of 23-pound AM 40 parachute fragmentation bombs, otherwise known as parafrags. The mission planners also hoped that by flying up the west coast of Luzon the attackers would reduce the potential for detection from Japanese radar sites and confuse Japanese ground observers as to the mission's true target. With three bomb groups attacking Clark from the north, it was hoped that an element of surprise could be achieved, catching the Japanese antiaircraft gunners flat-footed, reducing losses. Radio silence was to be maintained to prevent detection by Japanese listening posts.

Each of the three bomb groups came to the raid with different motivations. The 345th Bomb Group had lost over 200 dead,

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**In this photo, a Japanese kamikaze pilot, his canopy open, taxis on Clark Field toward a rendezvous with death during an early suicide raid in October 1944. Ground crewmen shout encouragement to the doomed pilot. In the beginning, kamikaze raids were conducted by volunteers. Later, pilots were ordered to carry out the suicide missions.**

wounded, and missing ground personnel in a kamikaze attack on the Liberty Ship SS *Thomas Nelson* and lost an additional 22 dead and 40 wounded in a second kamikaze attack on the Liberty Ship SS *Morrison R. Waite* on November 12, 1944. The 417th Bomb Group had endured frequent air attack and had lost a number of aircraft on the ground. The unit also had lost its popular commander, Colonel Howard S. Ellmore, killed when his A-20G struck the superstructure of a Japanese merchant ship and crashed during a low-level attack on January 2, 1945. The January 7 raid would be the first group-size raid led by Ellmore's replacement, Lt. Col. Johnson.

The 312th Bomb Group was the most recent of the three to arrive in the Philippines. An experienced group, the 312th's flying element had just arrived days before this planned raid, eager to get in the fight.

The Japanese were not idle during this period. They were desperately trying to find ways to get aerial reinforcements to the Luzon bases and were to trying figure out ways to strike back at the growing American airpower in the region. Despite heroic efforts and ghastly sacrifices, nothing seemed to be slowing down the American airpower buildup despite the losses the Japanese inflicted. The Japanese knew that if land-based American airpower built up enough, Japanese air operations would be finished in the Philippines.

All the American aircrews were briefed on the mission on the night of January 6. The ground crews spent most of the night ensuring that the bombers were ready for the morning's important mission. The aircrews were awakened at 4 AM for breakfast and preflight checks. The 312th Bomb Group's A-20Gs took off at 6:50 AM into a bright, clear sky over Leyte. During the takeoff a 388th Squadron A-20G piloted by 2nd Lt. Eugene M. Bussard with gunner Sergeant Harvey Walker made one turn from Tanauan and crashed into the bay. Both airmen were killed. The cause of the crash was never determined but was presumed to be some type of mechanical failure.

Meanwhile, the 345th Bomb Group's 40 B-25Js took off from Tacloban at the same time. Both groups joined up and set course northwest at 1,500 feet, cruising speed 200 miles per hour. This would be a long mission, over 1,000 miles round trip with an estimated $6^1/_2$ hours of flight time for these two groups.

The 48 A-20Gs of the 417th Bomb Group and the 24 P-38 escorts of the 8th Fighter Group joined the formation above Mindoro. The formation followed the west coast of Luzon, staying over the ocean and taking care to stay well clear of the U.S. Navy Lingayen Gulf invasion fleet to avoid friendly fire.

Suddenly, two Japanese single-engine fighters came out of the haze with a P-38 in hot pursuit and made a beeline for the invasion fleet. An enormous antiaircraft barrage erupted at the two Japanese planes. The fire was of no direct threat to the formation, but the aircrews did feel the concussions of some of the larger detonations. The fate of the Japanese planes was not known.

The formation flew north of Manila and Subic Bay. Forty miles north of Subic Bay, it turned east and broke into the two attack groups. Unfortunately, the weather started to deteriorate. A layer of low clouds had descended over the hilltops. This forced some of the flights to jockey for position. Some chose to follow the formation below the low clouds into the pass. Other flights, due to the narrowness of the pass below the cloud cover, decided to climb through the clouds, clear the hills, and drop back down to rejoin the formation. Thus, the cloud cover broke up the formation.

Another problem with the planned in-line formation was that the A-20G and B-25J aircraft had different attack speeds and flight characteristics. The A-20Gs had a difficult time making the turn and staying in formation without stalling out. This caused some of the 312th A-20Gs to break formation to maintain flight speed.

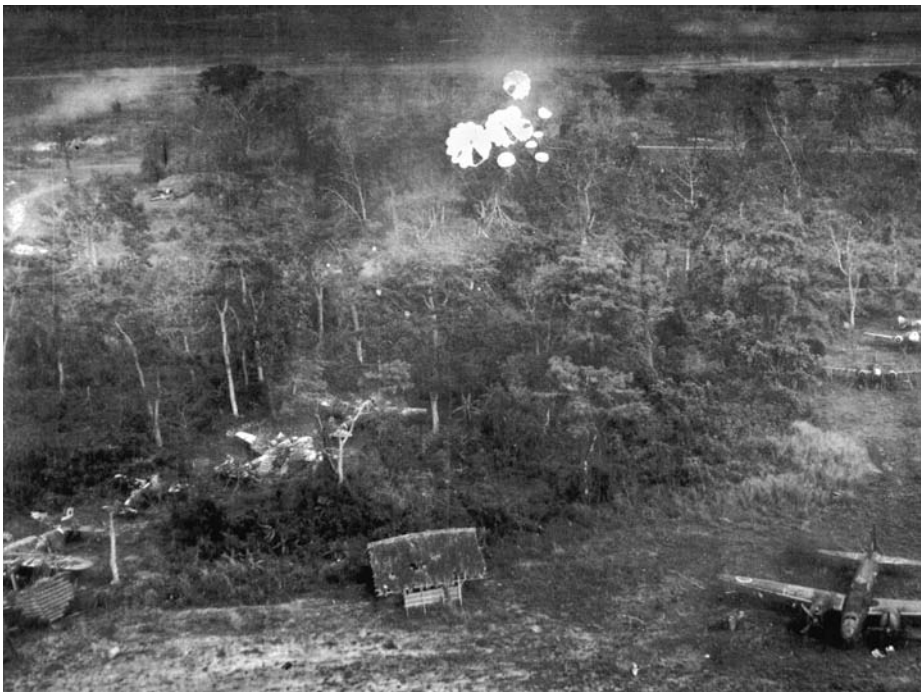
The mandatory radio silence also meant that pilots from the different groups could not communicate what they were doing. All of these changes in formation almost had tragic results during the attack. As this jockeying for position was going on, one of the A-20Gs from the 389th Bomb Squadron started to lag behind the formation, streaming smoke from the right engine. Because of the radio silence, no one in the formation new what the status of the aircraft was. The aircraft, *Sleepy Time Gal* being flown by 2nd Lt. Harry Lillard with his gunner Corporal Henry F. Lutage, crashed in the target area, and both men were killed.

Once through the clouds and into the valley, the first wave made its turn to the southeast

and accelerated to the attack speed of 250-275 miles per hour. The first wave was a loose gaggle of 64 aircraft jockeying for position. The worst aspect of this was some aircraft of the 389th Bomb Squadron found themselves out of formation on the left side, in front of aircraft from the 345th Bomb Group.

The B-25Js were forced to fly through some of the parafrag bombs released by the A-20s, and the B-25s had to be careful not to shoot down the A-20s that had inadvertently flown in front of them. The A-20s soon realized their mistake as B-25 machine-gun fire erupted all around them. Amazingly, no B-25s were hit by parafrags from the A-20s and no A-20s were hit by B-25 machine-gun fire, but it had been a close call.

U.S. Air Force



**Camouflage has proven to be little protection as parafrag bombs from American aircraft of the 498th Bomb Squadron, 345th Bombardment Group descend upon these Japanese planes on the ground at Clark Field in the Philippines.**

Bomber pilots saw camouflaged Japanese aircraft and made straight for them, dropping parafrags and machine gunning any target that looked worthwhile. First Lieutenant Joseph Rutter of the 389th Squadron noted, "As we ran toward the trees and the ruined hangars beyond I worked the rudder pedals and strafed every likely target. There was no shortage of planes, trucks, or buildings. I could see planes everywhere I looked—fat Bettys, hump-backed Tonys, delicate Oscars, twin-engine and single-engine, some in the open and others in revetments, most with camouflage netting over them. It was beautiful! What a field day!"

The Japanese gunners were at first caught off guard, with some of their guns even under cover. First Lieutenant Tom Jones of the 389th Squadron flying in an aircraft named *Little Joe* in the first wave noted, "Enemy aircraft circling above us were dropping phosphorous bombs in the midst of the formation. We raced across the target, made our right turn and headed down the Bataan peninsula for Manila Bay."

The Japanese soon recovered as the first wave passed over the target, and the volume of antiaircraft fire quickly reached a crescendo. A 345th B-25, the *Sag Harbor Express* piloted by 2nd Lt. Arthur Browngardt, Jr., was hit by antiaircraft fire in the right engine. The crippled aircraft flew over the airfield, over the town of Angeles, clipped a church steeple, crashed, and exploded in flames. All six crewman aboard were killed on impact.

Another 345th B-25 from the 500th Squadron, piloted by 1st Lt. Howard D. Thompson, had its right side raked by antiaircraft fire. The tail gunner, Staff Sergeant John Regin, was wounded by shell fragments. The crippled B-25 was able to make a wheels up crash landing at Mindoro with the entire crew surviving.

As the first wave of 345th and 312th bombers strafed and bombed, they were attacked by six or seven Japanese Zero fighters dropping parachute phosphorous bombs while orbiting at 1,500 feet over the formation. No American bombers were struck. As the 501st Squadron departed the target area and just a few miles north of Subic Bay, a lone Ki-43 Oscar fighter made a tentative pass at the squadron. Alert B-25 gunners fired a few bursts, which deterred that pilot from further attacks.

Seconds after the Oscar, another fighter flew over the formation and dropped a phosphorous bomb that caused no damage. The first wave had damaged or destroyed several dozen bombers and fighters. Two aircraft were lost. Over half the first wave planes, 35 aircraft, received flak or small arms damage. Several aircraft made emergency landings on Mindoro rather than trying to fly all the way back to Leyte.

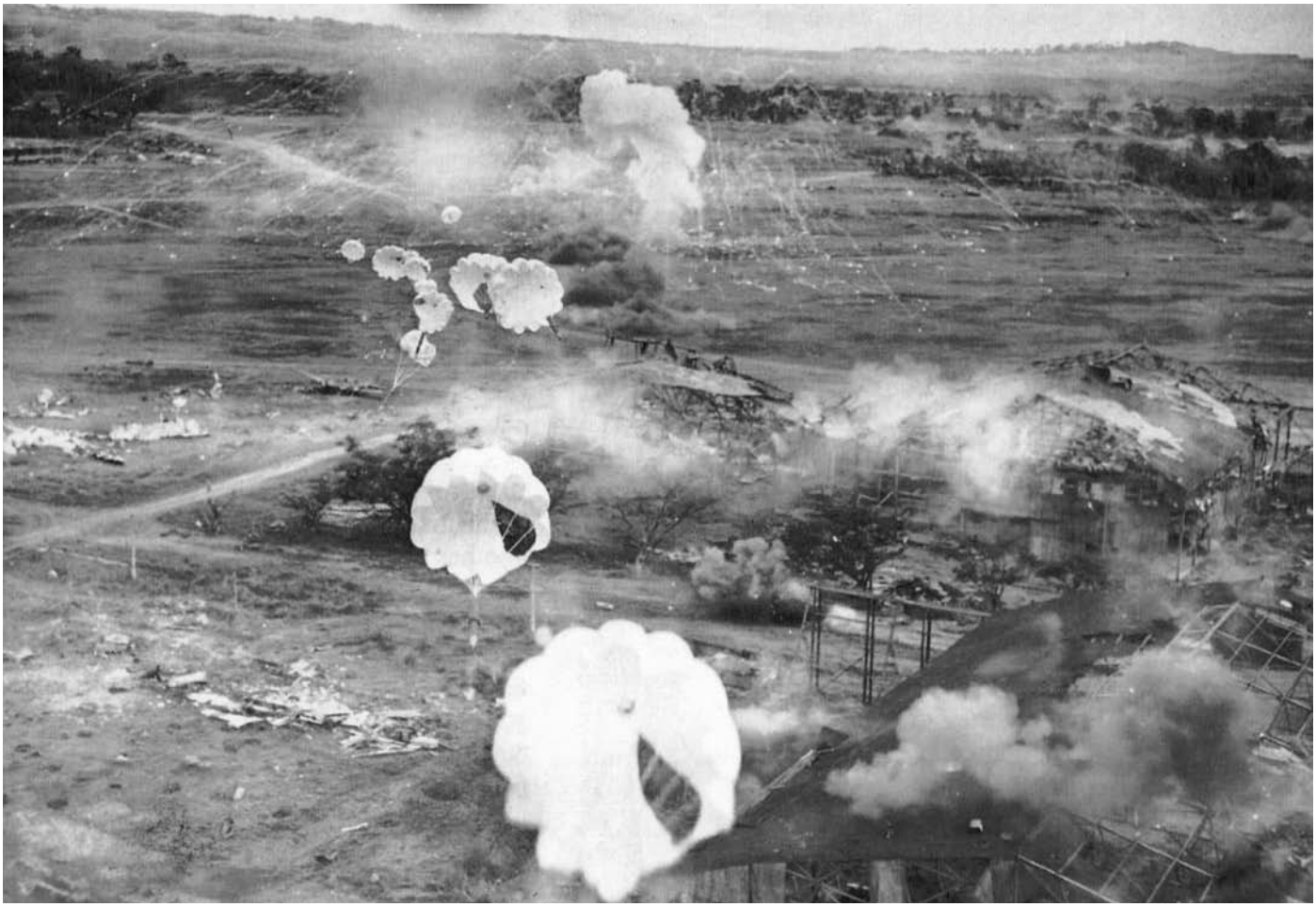
The enemy defenses were thoroughly alerted and gave the second wave a hot reception.

The second wave took the full brunt of the Japanese fire. A plane from the 386th Bomb Squadron piloted by Captain Frank C. Hogan was struck by antiaircraft fire over the Macalabat East airfield and set ablaze. Hogan made a successful crash landing outside Clark Field in a rice paddy near the town of Magalong. Friendly Filipino guerrillas rescued Hogan and his gunner, Staff Sergeant Joseph Joyce. Joyce had suffered severe head injuries and had one of his legs severed in the crash. He died 15 minutes after being recovered by the guerrillas. The Filipino guerrillas eventually got Hogan back to U.S. forces after several weeks.

Another passenger aboard the A-20, 1st Lt. Isaac Lobell, the 312th Group photographer, died when he was forced to parachute at insufficient altitude. He died when he struck the ground. Another 386th Squadron bomber was also struck by fire. This plane, piloted by 2nd Lt. Rupert Perry, flew all the way back to Leyte but crashed into Leyte Gulf while trying to make the airfield. The gunner was rescued, but the pilot did not survive. A third 386th bomber had an engine shot out. This plane, piloted by 2nd Lt. Ormande Frison, made a successful crash landing at Tanauan airfield, saving himself and his gunner, Sergeant Alex Wasserman.

The 417th Bomb Group did not have an easy time in the second wave. While flying down the middle of one of the Japanese runways, a thunderous explosion rent the ground and the air. In a second, three aircraft from the 673rd Squadron crashed and were destroyed. One of the three A-20Gs to crash was piloted by 1st Lt. Rodney D. Beckel. His gunner was Staff Sergeant Francis L. Malone. After U.S. forces captured Clark, it was determined that the Japanese defenders had buried 110-pound aerial bombs under the runway and electronically detonated them from a gun position when

U.S. Air Force



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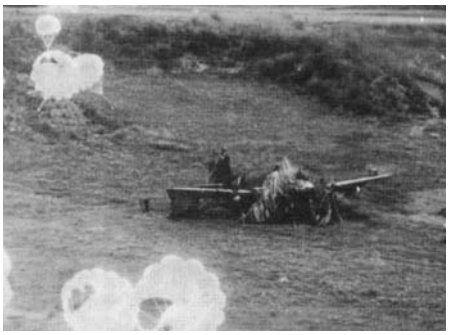

**ABOVE: Lieutenant John T. Cooper flies his bomber low over the wreckage of the main hangar complex at Clark Field. The facility has sustained heavy damage, and smoke rises from a phosphorous bomb dropped among Japanese aircraft earlier in the raid. LEFT: The parachutes attached to American fragmentation bombs are clearly visible in this photo of Japanese aircraft parked on the ground and under attack at Clark Field in the Philippines. Note the camouflage around the engine cowling of the plane at center.**

the aircraft flew over. This was the first time in the Pacific Theater that this tactic had been encountered.

Finally, a fourth A-20 was shot down by ground fire over the target. There were no survivors from any of the 417th bombers that were lost. As the second wave departed, seven of its aircraft had crashed over the target before returning to base.

The results of the raid were considered successful. A total of 7,836 parafrag bombs and over 100,000 rounds of .50-caliber machine gun ammunition were expended on targets at the six airstrips and surrounding dispersed aircraft. Intelligence verified that dozens of fighters and bombers were destroyed and that scores more were probably destroyed or damaged.

Japanese suicide missions dropped off appreciably after January 7, and the U.S. Navy Lingayen Gulf invasion force received only sporadic attacks. The raid unquestionably saved hundreds, possibly thousands, of American lives.

On January 8, 1945, the day after the raid, Lt. Gen. Tominga took his remaining ground and support personnel and formed them into the Kenbu Composite Infantry Division. These former airmen would now fight as infantry since their aircraft and airfields now lay in ruins.

Vice Admiral Fukudome fled to Singapore by flying boat on January 15. Vice Admiral Onishi took his remaining 30 flyable aircraft, retreated to the town of Aparri in extreme northern Luzon, and ordered all the planes back to Formosa in mid-January.

The total cost to achieve this major success had been one aircraft destroyed and one seriously damaged in the 345th Bomb Group with six killed and three wounded. The 312th Bomb Group lost a total of five aircraft destroyed with seven killed and two wounded. The 417th Bomb Group lost four aircraft, eight killed, and three wounded. More than 65 aircraft from all the groups received some type of battle damage.

Considering the extent of the defenses and the results achieved, the losses were considered acceptable. General Kenney ordered a single mission Air Medal awarded to all participants. It was the January 7, 1945, raid that finally broke the back of Japanese airpower in the Philippines. □

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*Robert F. McEniry served in the U.S. Air Force for more than 22 years, retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He is a private pilot and the son of a World War II pilot of the 312th Bomb Group. Currently, he serves as the Civil Service Program Manager with the Department of Defense at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.*

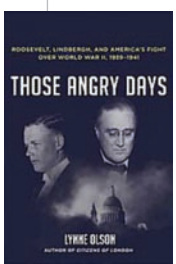
By Al Hemingway

# American Isolation Advocates

Prior to Pearl Harbor, a concerted effort was mounted to keep the United States out of World War II.

**AS WAR CLOUDS LOOMED OVER EUROPE PRIOR TO GERMANY'S INVASION OF** Poland on September 1, 1939, many Americans were divided into two camps—isolationists or interventionists. Each side fought the other vehemently to get its views across. With the Nazis steamrolling over Europe, and France barely hanging on, some adamantly believed that America should remain neutral and not send troops overseas again, as it had done in World War I.

Others feared the growing Nazi threat to the free world and also fought vigorously to get America involved militarily. And somewhere in the middle of this chaos was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who walked a fine line between both groups. The stage was now set for one of the most important debates in America's history—and at stake was the freedom of the entire world.




Famous aviator Charles Lindbergh and his wife Anne meet with Nazi Luftwaffe commander Herman Göring in 1936. Lindbergh was strongly in favor of American neutrality when war broke out in Europe.

In her new book, ***Those Angry Days: Roosevelt, Lindbergh, and America's Fight Over World War II, 1939-1941*** (Random House, New York, 2013, 544 pp., photographs, notes, index, $30.00, hardcover), historian Lynne Olson has a written an engrossing account of those turbulent two years prior to the U.S. entry into the conflict. Much of her focus is on the rivalry between the different parties who argued for and against involvement. Many isolationists strongly felt that America was again being drawn into a war to save Britain and France that would cost thousands of American lives as in World War I. But this time, the dangers far exceeded those of 1917. The Allies were now facing maniacal leaders bent on world domination.

Perhaps the most famous person in the isolationist camp was Charles Lindbergh. The famed pilot had gained notoriety after his historic solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927 and the kidnapping and tragic death of his son in the early 1930s. Lindbergh shunned the spotlight whenever he could. He despised most newspapers and reporters, with the exception of the *New York Times*, but as the war threatened to draw America into the fray, he came out in full support of neutrality.

Despite his fame and boyish good looks, Lindbergh's remarks often got him in hot water with the public. His close relationship with Germany before the war did not sit well with the American public, and his popularity plummeted. His relationship with his wife Anne also suffered. Always wanting to be her own woman, she was kept under his thumb and echoed his beliefs, although at times they were not her own. She read his speeches and gave him advice before they were delivered, but he never listened. In Des Moines, Iowa, in September 1941, he was labeled anti-Semitic after the remarks he made.

Roosevelt realized that America desperately needed to send aid to Great Britain, standing alone against Hitler after most of Western Europe had fallen. The president gathered those around him who could beg, cajole, and even politically threaten members of Congress to pass important pieces of legislation to enable him to do so. Roosevelt, however, was paranoid when it came to promoting laws that would assist Great Britain, such as the Lend-Lease Act. Even though most of his policies were accepted by the people by an

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# The "Root Cause" of the Middle East Turmoil

## Would peace descend if the Arab-Israeli conflict were resolved?

Many are convinced that the conflict between Israel and its neighbors in the predominantly Muslim Middle East is the "root cause" of the ongoing violence in the region and of worldwide acts of terror. Some leading politicians and many pundits have attempted to establish linkage between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the turmoil prevalent throughout the Middle East. But does this linkage really exist?

### What are the facts?

**Israel is a tiny country,** with fewer than eight million inhabitants (1.6 million of whom are Arabs). It is surrounded by 22 Arab countries with 400 million people. Nonetheless, Arab propaganda has convinced the world that Israel is an aggressive invader in the Middle East—a mighty Goliath compared to helpless Arab states. It is a supreme irony that tiny Israel, the size of New Jersey, outnumbered 50 to 1 and encircled by implacable enemies obsessed with its destruction, is considered a mortal danger to Muslims and to peace on earth. The linkage theory is that if Israel would make peace with the Palestinians, peace would descend upon the world and Islamist terror would cease.

> "This lust for war and terror will cease when Arab-Muslims come to terms with the West's leadership role in the fight for human rights."

But Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict are clearly not the root cause of the strife and turmoil in the Middle East. Israel was not involved in the deaths of the millions who perished in the Iraq-Iran war, nor in the current Sunni-Shiite civil war in Iraq. Peace between Israel and the Palestinians would do nothing to stop Iran's headlong development of nuclear weapons and its goal to achieve Middle East hegemony. Israel has no part in the Syrian civil war, which has so far killed more than 60,000 people, nor has it played any role in the chaotic "Arab Spring" that is still roiling Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Tunisia. Neither does Israel have any influence over the intractable conflict between warring Palestinian factions—Fatah in the West Bank and the terrorist group Hamas in Gaza.

**Is Israel an intruder in the Middle East?** The state of Israel resulted from the same process that created a dozen or more nations in Europe and the Middle East from the remnants of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires by Western democracies and the United Nations. For three thousand years Jews have continually inhabited what is today Israel and Judea and Samaria, the so-called "West Bank." In short, few countries born in the 20th century have a stronger claim to national self-determination than does Israel—and certainly not the Arabs, who have never had a state in Palestine nor a capital in Jerusalem. Yet it has been Arab nations, unable to countenance a Jewish state, that have waged numerous unprovoked wars against Israel.

**And how about terror?** Many believe that Israel is the root cause of the terror that Islamists have visited—and visit to this day—upon the world. But consider the attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, murderous attacks on the London subway system and in Mumbai, India, as well as the assassination of a U.S. diplomat in Sudan and most recently the U.S. Ambassador and three other consular officials in Benghazi, Libya. These and dozens of other acts of cowardly terror would have taken place even if there were no Israel. Rather, they are a reflection of the hatred that radical Islamists harbor against the West and its institutions. That hatred has nothing to do with Israel. Yet many believe that if only the United States would withhold its support of Israel—or "force" Israel to make peace with the Palestinians—Middle East terror would cease and we would no longer have to fear the scourge of suicide bombings, a uniquely Arab invention. Israel's role and responsibility in Arab discontent is an illusion. Arab and Islamist hatred toward the West and their deadly internal struggles would continue even if Israel ceased to exist.

Many claim that Arab and Islamist terror is the result of despair, hopelessness and poverty. But the facts prove otherwise. While Middle East Arabs are some of the richest people in the world, instead of using their enormous wealth to benefit their people, they squander it in luxurious excesses for a privileged few. The nineteen 9/11 hijackers were not poor or desperate. They were, without exception, well-educated people, members of upper-middle class families. The leaders of such Arab-Muslim terror organizations as Hamas, Hezbollah, al Qaeda and Islamic Jihad are educated people, from the upper reaches of their societies. No, terror is not a response of Arab-Muslims to alleged injustice by Israel, but is rather a customary strategy used by Arabs and Islamists to express their grievances against any enemy, even their own brethren. This pattern would not be any different if Israel had never existed or would cease to exist.

The cause of violent revolution and attacks on the U.S., Israel and other Western states is dysfunctional Arab-Muslim governments and the exploding influence of radical Islamism. This lust for war and terror will not end with an Israeli-Palestinian peace, but rather will cease when Arab-Muslims come to terms with the Jewish state's right to exist and the West's leadership role in the fight for human and democratic rights.

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overwhelming majority, he stopped short of declaring an all-out war even after an incident off the coast of Iceland when the aging destroyer *Reuben James* was sunk by a Nazi U-boat.

Roosevelt's indecisiveness and procrastination exasperated Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who said: "Nothing is more dangerous in wartime than to live in the temperamental atmosphere of Gallup polls or of feeling one's pulse or taking one's temperature."

During those days before the war, Roosevelt was filled with doubt and inaction, a far cry from the man who led the nation through the worst economic depression in its history. Americans wanted Roosevelt to lead them, and he gave them strong words in stirring speeches, but then he did nothing. Not until December 7, 1941, when the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor, did Roosevelt finally ask Congress for a declaration of war against Japan—and even then he was uncertain if he should include Germany and Italy. Fortunately, the two countries solved that dilemma when they declared war against the United States several days later.

This is a must read to fully understand the intense atmosphere that circulated throughout the country during that tumultuous period prior to Pearl Harbor. Olson weaves an incredible story of individuals on both sides of the argument—Americans, Britons, and Germans—who attempted to shape policy that would lead the United States into war or keep her from it. Ultimately, the interventionists would triumph and America would participate in a conflict on a scale never before seen—and the world would be altered forever.

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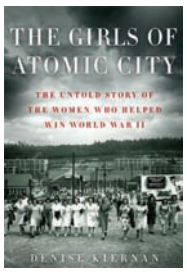
***The Girls of Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II*** by Denise Kiernan, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2013, 400 pp., photographs, notes, index, $26.00, hardcover.




This is a remarkable story of the thousands of women who were employed at the Oak Ridge Clinton Engineer Works, located in eastern Tennessee, about 25 miles from Knoxville, where uranium-235 was produced for use in the country's first atomic bombs, which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. The sprawling 60,000-acre facility housed 75,000 residents at its peak. Because of the highly secretive work, both men and women were given no details of what was actually going on there. Everyone from janitors to stenographers to chemists worked around the clock for several years not realizing that they were contributing to the Manhattan Project—the development of the world's first nuclear weapon.

The author focuses on women who held a variety of jobs at Oak Ridge, also called Site X. Although they were surrounded by miles of fencing and armed security guards and were being continually observed by undercover informants to ensure that they did not talk about their work, the employees managed to carve out an existence within their walled enclave.

Interspersed with the stories of the women is the history of the development of the atomic bomb. Scientists such as Enrico Fermi, Ernest Lawrence, and Niels Bohr came to the United States and assisted Robert Oppenheimer, laboratory director of the Manhattan Project, to create a workable atomic device to end the war.

The crux of the book is the fascinating personal accounts of the women who lived at Oak Ridge during that period. The cramped living quarters, acres of mud that made life miserable, and being kept under constant surveillance, added to the mental strain. Social and recreational activities such as dances, movies, and bowling were added as time went on to alleviate the boredom. Personal relationships sprung from this closed-in city that resulted in marriages as well.

Also examined are the substandard living conditions of the numerous African American laborers at Oak Ridge who performed most of the menial jobs. One interesting case is that of Ebb Cade, who was injured in an automobile accident and used in medical experiments without his consent. Cade was one of 18 people who were injected with plutonium to view the effects of the radioactive chemical element on the human body.

This is a good read on yet another little-known facet of World War II that ushered in the dawn of the nuclear age and the thousands of women who made that possible.

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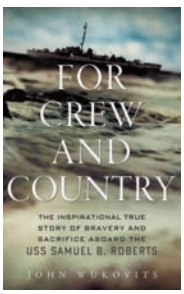
***For Crew and Country: The Inspirational True Story of Bravery and Sacrifice Aboard the USS Samuel B. Roberts*** by John Wukovits, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2013, 352 pp., photographs, notes, index, $26.99, hardcover.




This book is a moving tribute to the men who served aboard the USS *Samuel B. Roberts*, a destroyer that was involved in the Battle of Samar, Philippines, in October 1944. As part

of a small escort carrier group known as Taffy 3, the *Roberts,* along with a handful of other ships, fought off a superior Japanese naval armada sent on a last-ditch effort to destroy the U.S. invasion fleet that participated in the Leyte Gulf landing. The enemy force was commanded by Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita and consisted of 23 vessels, one of which was the *Yamato,* a massive battleship with 18-inch main guns.

Despite her diminutive size, the *Roberts*' skipper, Lt. Cmdr. Robert W. Copeland, ordered his ship to attack. After several successful hits against the enemy fleet, Japanese shells tore through the engine room, killing and wounding many of the *Roberts*' water tenders and firemen. Eventually, Copeland had no choice but to abandon ship. After a harrowing three days of no food, no water, scorching sun, and fending off shark attacks, the survivors were rescued. Copeland and numerous members of his crew were decorated for their gallantry. Admiral William "Bull" Halsey would later be severely criticized for moving the Third Fleet away from Leyte Gulf as the Japanese task force bore down on the unsuspecting vessels left to defend the invasion fleet—one of which was the *Roberts*.

Noted military historian John Wukovits has written a factual account of a modern-day Alamo where a handful of brave sailors stood their ground and helped defend the vulnerable carriers off the coast of the Philippines.

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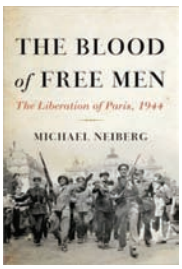
***The Blood of Free Men: The Liberation of Paris, 1944*** by Michael Neiberg, Basic Books, New York, 2012, 309 pp., photographs, notes, index, $28.99, hardcover.




Paris had been waiting to be liberated since its teary-eyed citizens watched in stunned silence as Nazi troops goosed-stepped into their beloved city in the spring of 1940. A puppet government, called the Vichy regime, had been established and was headed by the elderly 84-year-old World War I hero Marshal Philippe Petain. No one, however, believed that France's rulers were an independent body; the Nazis had a firm grip on the country and did as they pleased.

During their four-year reign, the Germans and the Vichy French had a collaborative, if uneasy, existence. Life went on in Paris. All that, however, changed after the Allies landed at Normandy in June 1944 and drove toward the interior of France. With the insistence of Charles de Gaulle, who would be installed as

the interim head of the new French Republic, elements of General George S. Patton's Third Army spearheaded the drive into the city, and Paris was finally released from the yoke of occupation on August 25, 1944, with the surrender of the Nazi forces.

Neiberg has penned an intriguing story of the various factions that teamed together to rid Paris of the German Army. As General Omar Bradley later wrote, "Paris beckoned with a greater allure than any other objective in Europe." The City of Light had worked its magical spell once again and was saved from the ravages of a conquering army.

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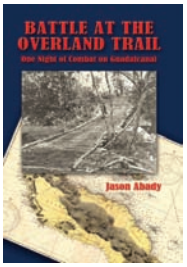
***Battle of the Overland Trail: One Night of Combat on Guadalcanal*** by Jason Abady, Warwick House Publishers, Lynchburg, VA, 2012, 251 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover.




This book was written to shed light on an important battle that took place during the Guadalcanal campaign and has rarely been discussed since that time. The Overland Trail, a road that meandered for miles and led directly to Henderson Field, was a prime objective of the Japanese during the six-month struggle for control of the island. In the early days of the fighting on Guadalcanal, the enemy made several aggressive thrusts to secure the trail and push on to seize the airstrip, a move that would have almost certainly been devastating for the leathernecks who had a tenuous hold on it.

On September 12, 1942, the Japanese struck hard. A polyglot force under Lt. Col. Merritt A. Edson that consisted of his Raiders and paratroopers successfully defended an area known as Lunga Ridge, later referred to as Bloody Ridge. At the same time, however, the Marines of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines were also involved in bitter and bloody combat in defending a section of the perimeter that overlooked the Overland Trail. Platoons led by 2nd Lieutenants William Sager and Herman Abady fought desperately, often hand-to-hand, to repel a Japanese attack by elements of the Kuma Battalion, which had landed on the island days earlier to capture Henderson Field.

Upon inspecting the perimeter right after the battle, future Marine Corps Commandant Colonel Clifton Cates remarked, "It was incredible that anyone could survive that," and compared it to the fight at Belleau Wood in World War I.

Abady's book is a good read for those wanting to learn more about a key battle during the Guadalcanal campaign that has been largely overlooked but was nonetheless important in the successful capture of the island by American forces.

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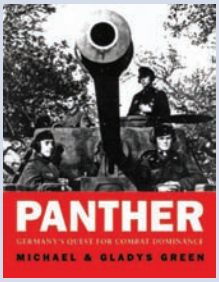
***Spies in the Sky: The Secret Battle for Aerial Intelligence During World War II*** by Taylor Downing, Little, Brown and Co., London, 2012, 407 pp., photographs, notes, index, $19.95, hardcover.

This is an interesting story that closely follows the history of aerial intelligence and photography in Great Britain, particularly during World War II. Ironically enough, the Royal Air Force did not pursue aerial intelligence until the beginning of the conflict because its leaders were not convinced of its importance. Once they were convinced of its immense significance, they were committed to using it to their full advantage.


Establishing a headquarters called Medmenham at the Danesfield House just outside London in 1941, an odd assortment of geologists, archaeologists, physicists, and mathematicians was formed to deliver up to date intelligence for RAF air crews by studying aerial photographs of enemy cities, military

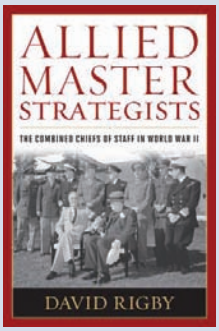
# Short Bursts

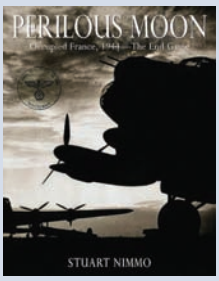
***Panther: Germany's Quest for Combat Dominance*** by Michael and Gladys Green, Osprey Publishing, Long Island City, NY, 2012, 288 pp., illustrations, photographs, index, $24.95, hardcover.




A new German tank appeared for the first time During the Battle for Kursk in the summer of 1943. It possessed sloping frontal armor, improved gun penetrating power, and better maneuverability. It was known as the Panther, and it was supposed to replace the Panzer III and IV tanks. Although its sleek design and heavier armament made it superior to other tanks, the Panther never lived up to its vaunted reputation. Hitler's insistence that the tanks be provided to his armor units without the proper engineering and trials greatly reduced its performance in the field. Panther production never exceeded 6,000, and despite its enhanced design it never played the pivotal role that Hitler anticipated in the outcome of the war.

The authors have written a clear, concise account accompanied by more than 100 excellent photographs and drawings describing the various components of the Panther.




***Allied Master Strategists: The Combined Chiefs of Staff in World War II*** by David Rigby, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2012, 288 pp., photographs, notes, index, $29.95, hardcover.

This is an in-depth examination of the most powerful military group during World War II—the Combined Chiefs of Staff—made up of U.S. and British Navy and Army officers. Established in January 1942, it was the "supreme uniformed command of the Western Allies." Some of the members included in this prestigious group were U.S. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, Admiral William D. Leahy, and Admiral Ernest J. King. On the British side were Admiral of the Fleet Andrew B. Cunningham, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, and Field Marshal Sir John Dill.

Although their top priority was the defeat of the Axis powers, suspicion and mistrust were apparent among them. Dill, a fervent supporter of the American strategy, was not one of Prime Minister Winston Churchill's favorite generals. This delighted the Americans, with the exception of General Albert C. Wedemeyer, an ardent isolationist prior to Pearl Harbor who held a deep-seated distrust of anything British.

The author does a superlative job of explaining the behind-the-scenes workings of this influential organization that, despite its faults, paved the way for final victory in World War II.

***Perilous Moon: Occupied France, 1944—The End Game*** by Stuart Nimmo, Casemate Publishing, Havertown, PA, 2012, 224 pp., maps, photographs,

installations, seaports, and other areas vital to the war effort. This herculean task spanned the entire continent of Europe. Among its members was a young captain named Derek van den Bogarde, who would later become noted film actor Dirk Bogarde. Another member of the group to achieve movie stardom was Sarah Churchill, featured in numerous American films.

Filmmaker and historian Taylor Downing has given the reader a glimpse inside one of Britain's more obscure top secret organizations during the war. This is a revealing book about a dedicated group of people who delivered valuable intelligence that helped defeat Nazi Germany in World War II.

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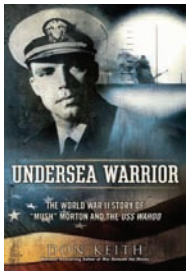
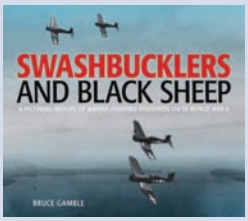
*Undersea Warrior: The World War II Story of "Mush" Morton and the USS Wahoo* by Don Keith, NAL Caliber, New York, 2012, 321 pp., photographs, notes, index, $16.00, softcover.




Author Don Keith provides a fascinating look, warts and all, at one of the most controversial naval heroes of all time—Dudley "Mush" Morton—who commanded the submarine USS *Wahoo*, credited with sinking 19 Japanese vessels. Morton earned an incredible four Navy Crosses in just 10 short months as a submarine commander. His tactics came under scrutiny when the *Wahoo* fired on the survivors of a Japanese troop transport that had sunk.

Unfortunately, most of those struggling in the notes, $34.95, hardcover.

Here is a compelling book concentrating on the author's father, a Royal Air Force Avro Lancaster bomber pilot, who was shot down in April 1944, a mere 80 miles from Paris, and the German pilot who shot him down. Nimmo parallels his father's story with that of Helmut Bergmann, a Luftwaffe ace and Nazi zealot. On the night Bergmann shot down Nimmo's dad, he ended up with a total of seven bombers damaged or destroyed and 38 RAF crewmen killed. Bergmann would later visit the crash sites and, in a macabre ritual, he would dance atop the wreckage celebrating his victories.





Included in the book are numerous photographs and illustrations, many of which depict life in Paris at the time of the occupation. Despite the Nazi presence, decadence prevailed in the City of Light, and many Parisians seemed oblivious to their surroundings. Nimmo's father had a front row seat, so to speak, as he hid from the Nazis and waited for the Allied advance into the city.

***Swashbucklers and Black Sheep: A Pictorial History of Marine Fighting Squadron 214 in World War II*** by Bruce Gamble, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2012, 216 pp., photographs, index, $40.00, hardcover.

Arguably the most famous squadron in Marine Corps history, VMF-214, known as the Black Sheep Squadron, amassed an impressive combat record during World War II. Nine of its pilots went on to become aces, downing more than five planes each, including Major Gregory "Pappy" Boyington. Boyington, the squadron's controversial commander, was shot down over Rabaul, held as a POW, and later awarded the Medal of Honor upon his release. The allure of the unit took on mythical proportions and even culminated in a television series some years later with Robert Conrad starring as Boyington.

This is a nice coffee table book, chock full of dazzling photographs and paintings, that is a must-read for aircraft buffs.

***American Aces Against the Kamikaze*** by Edward M. Young, Osprey Publishing, Long Island City, NY, 2012, 96 pp., photographs, index, $22.95, softcover.

There was nothing more dreaded by Allied sailors during World War II than the kamikazes. Known as the "Divine Wind" to the Japanese, Americans could not fathom a person's willingness to commit suicide to further a losing cause. But they did not understand the Japanese. The kamikaze pilot's beliefs were deeply rooted in his religion and the Bushido Code, or the way of the Samurai warrior. Allied pilots were determined to strike first before their adversaries' bomb-laden aircraft could strike a ship causing devastating damage and death. The author showcases some of the pilots who confronted the kamikazes, almost 100 of whom became aces between March and June 1945.

This is another winner from Osprey Publishing, recounting the story of Japan's most shocking weapon of the conflict—human suicide bombers. □

water were not Japanese sailors but Indian soldiers who had been captured and were being taken to prison camps. After an investigation, Morton was absolved of any wrongdoing but some believe that the incident prevented him from being awarded the Medal of Honor. The *Wahoo* went down in the Sea of Japan while on patrol in October 1943. Listed as missing in action, Morton was officially declared dead in 1946 after the war ended.

This is a wonderful book on the life of one of the most dynamic naval officers of his day—a hero to some and a scourge to others.

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***Fifth Army in Italy, 1943-1945: A Coalition at War*** by Ian Blackwell, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire, England, 2012, 268 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $29.99, hardcover.


Coalitions during times of war can be a positive move when countries are attempting to defeat a common enemy. However, these same alliances can also prove to be a nuisance. Issues such as strategies, commanders, and objectives can hinder them from moving ahead in a timely manner to put an end to the hostilities as quickly and efficiently as possible. World War II was certainly no different. Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower had his moments with the French and British when preparing for the North African and Normandy invasions. Very little has been written about these same differences between the Allied forces that comprised the Fifth Army. Following their landing at Salerno, Italy, in September 1943, they sometimes fought among themselves as much as they fought the Germans.

Despite this complexity of command, the Allied forces performed exceedingly well in defeating the enemy in some of the worst fighting encountered during World War II. For all of its ferocity, the Fifth Army took a backseat to the combat that was transpiring after the Allies had invaded France and were closing in on Germany. No matter how hard he tried, it seemed that the ambitious General Mark Clark could not get front-page news about his command's exploits in Italy. Controversy also surrounded Clark's motives on being the first to enter Rome after it was captured so he could attain further recognition.

Blackwell has given readers an excellent account of the successful Allied drive to capture Italy in spite of the jealous rivalries that existed at the time. □

## gliders

*Continued from page 43*

intense scrutiny and criticism after the crash. The muckraking columnist Drew Pearson shone a harsh light on the situation and declared, "The entire U.S. glider program has been woefully neglected."

Surprisingly, given the accident and the criticism leveled at the Robertson Corporation, the firm received another supplement to its glider contract shortly after the tragedy. Eventually, the company would produce 170 CG-4A gliders.

Still, quality control issues across the country stubbornly remained, and in March 1944, 95 gliders manufactured by Robertson, Waco, and Commonwealth were grounded pending an investigation of improper quality control and the use of unauthorized materials at Robertson and a subcontractor, Anheuser-Busch.

The tragedy led to a major shakeup in how the Army dealt with contractors and subcontractors. Training schools for inspectors were established, proper tools for measuring and testing glider fittings were created, and inspection procedures were carefully spelled out.

A postwar Army Air Forces report on the glider program, in the wake of the St. Louis tragedy, noted, "It is readily apparent that the utilization of small, inexperienced prime contractors in the glider program created a very real problem relating to quality control. The smaller CG-4A contractors needed the assistance of numerous subcontractors to achieve production goals, but they often lacked the skilled inspection personnel and system to insure quality workmanship by the subcontractors.

"At the same time, the Materiel Command was not able to control the quality of the work performed by these subcontractors. In effect, this meant that many of the parts incorporated in CG-4A gliders were not subject to adequate inspection, and the Materiel Command had no assurance that all of the gliders were structurally sound."

The soldiers who would soon be carried into combat in the gliders, however, never knew to what extent the gliders were flawed. Like most soldiers, they put their faith, justified or not, in their equipment. □

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*Besides being the author of a dozen books, mostly about World War II, Flint Whitlock is also the editor of* WWII Quarterly, *a Sovereign Media publication. This article is excerpted from his book,* If Chaos Reigns: The Near Disaster and Ultimate Triumph of Allied Airborne Forces on D-Day, June 6, 1944 *(Casemate, 2011). He lives in Denver, Colorado.*

## high seas

*Continued from page 61*

stubbornly refused to sink, and at last her men rowed back to her, reboarded her, attacked and beat down the flames, and brought her limping to port in England.

In the end, the killers of *Rawalpindi* and *Jervis Bay* became victims themselves. On the day after Christmas 1943, shells from the battleship HMS *Duke of York* and British cruisers mortally wounded *Scharnhorst* in the arctic darkness above North Cape. She was finally sent to the bottom by the torpedoes of cruisers *Belfast* and *Jamaica* and accompanying Royal Navy destroyers. Of her crew, 1,800 died with her.

Her sister ship, *Gneisenau,* was out of action for most of a year from a British submarine's torpedo during the 1940 Norwegian invasion. And then, while she was docked for repairs at Brest, in the gray dawn of April 6, 1941, a single Bristol Beaufort torpedo bomber bore in through a hail of flak to put a torpedo into her stern. Antiaircraft fire tore the *Beaufort* and her gutsy crew to pieces, but it was the beginning of the end for big *Gneisenau.* Five nights later British bombers hit her four times, doing more damage. Repaired, she was damaged by a British mine in early 1942, and she was never again operational. In March 1945, she was scuttled by the Germans after a British bomb had touched off an enormous fire in her vitals.

*Scheer,* transferred to the Baltic, had no more substantial successes, save for a remarkable foray deep into Russian waters. In the latter days of the war she fired missions in support of German ground forces falling back along the rim of the Baltic. And then, in April 1945, she took five British bombs and capsized while docked at Kiel, probably pitched over by the sheer force of the big bombs landing beside her. There she remained, lying on her side, literally part of the harbor. She was later covered with earth and rubble, and an industrial area was constructed over her grave.

The armed merchant cruisers were never considered anything but a stopgap, a temporary expedient to remedy the crucial lack of escort vessels for the all-important convoys. All the merchant cruisers were withdrawn from service well before the end of the war. But while they were needed they did their job in the best traditions of the Royal Navy, even to the final sacrifice. They should not be forgotten. □

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*Author Robert Barr Smith is a retired U.S. Army colonel and professor of law at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. He is a frequent contributor to* WWII History.

## Israeli Submarine Commander Brings Military Strength Memory Pill to the USA

# A NEW HOPE FOR MEMORY-LOSS

## *Helps restore recall, focus, concentration and clears up to 4-years of memory fog.*

By Steven Wuzubia, Health Correspondent

***Clearwater, Florida:*** Nothing's more frustrating than when you forget names... misplace your keys... or just feel "a little confused". And even though your foggy memory gets laughed off as just another "senior moment", it's not very funny when it keeps happening to you.

Well now, a retired Israeli submarine commander thinks he can fix that. "When you're responsible for protecting millions from harm; you must take your job seriously. You have to be focused, have intense concentration and a memory that won't tolerate failure." That's why ex-military man, David Rutenberg developed ***Lipogen PS Plus***... A new military grade memory formulation that's helped thousands of people get their memory back. Even if you're in your 70's, 80's and beyond. You can now stay mentally fit, focused and "fog-free" *Here's why...*

Ex-submarine commander, David Rutenberg unveils his discovery at news conference

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Dr. Shinitzky explains; "Science has shown, when your brain nutrient levels drop, you can start to experience memory problems. Your ability to concentrate and stay focused becomes compromised. And gradually, a "mental fog" sets in. It can damage every aspect of your life".

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But you must act fast. Your order can only be guaranteed if it comes in within the next 7-days. After that, supplies could run out. And your order may not be fulfilled until they are replenished.

So don't wait. Now you can join the thousands of people who think better, remember more— and enjoy clear, "fog-free" memory. Think of it as making a "wake-up call" to your brain.

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By Joseph Luster

# It might be time to step back from the zombie craze and go in a new direction.

## SNIPER ELITE: NAZI ZOMBIE ARMY

*Sniper Elite V2*—which remade Rebellion Developments' 2005 original—enjoyed a decent reception when it launched across a variety of platforms, including PC, PlayStation 3, and Xbox 360, throughout 2012, with a Wii U release that should be hitting shelves shortly. As the title implies, *Sniper Elite V2* is all about sniping, and it does so with as much respect to realism as it can muster. Attention to ballistics makes hitting targets a legitimate challenge, stealth aspects have players putting their surroundings into consideration, and a brutal X-Ray Kill Cam places a cherry atop every successful kill. Now, imagine taking a healthy chunk of that out—pretty much all except the last bit—and tossing zombies into the mix. If that sounds like a good idea, then you've probably already played *Sniper Elite: Nazi Zombie Army*.


**PUBLISHER** Rebellion

**DEVELOPER** Rebellion

**SYSTEM(S)** PC

**AVAILABLE** Now

As one would expect, developer Rebellion keeps the sniping intact, but also removes some of *Sniper*'s other key features, including stealth. That omission will be a blessing to some, but it's just another indication that what we're getting here is a somewhat half-baked attempt at latching on to the near ubiquitous zombie genre. *Nazi Zombie Army* also pretty much abandons rigid attention to ballistics in favor of popping zombie skulls wide open with less fuss, so the core of what made *Sniper Elite* attractive in the first place is, appropriately, more or less gutted.

For what it is, and for what it's priced at, maybe that's not so bad. There is some fun to be had in *Nazi Zombie Army,* even when taking into account how intensely overdone the entire concept is. Hitler and his Nazi forces are no stranger to meddling with the occult, and it's something that's been featured in games for about as long as anyone can care to recall. From classics like *Wolfenstein 3-D* to more modern spins like the zombie mode in *Call of Duty: World at War,* we get it. Hitler's scientists messed with the dark magicks and WHAM! Zombie hordes. It's a final, desperate gambit and, in this case, it'll only succeed insofar as your prowess behind a rifle scope will allow it.

The thing is, without those aforementioned major facets of *Sniper Elite,* playing *Nazi Zombie Army* by yourself just isn't that interesting. It's fun to watch a bullet shred the inside of a zombie's rotting body the first few times it happens via x-ray footage, but the novelty wears off quickly. The already short expiry date on excitement is extended some when friends are thrown in the mix, and you should consider yourself lucky if you happen to find three other like-minded folks that revel in spending their evenings wrecking the undead masses together. Co-op can be fun just to watch your partners go to work around you. Some may take it up close and personal—firing away face-to-face using their sidearms—while others hang back and line up some sharp shots. It's entertaining for a little while, but frankly, it's not going to be long before everyone finds a better way to whittle away the hours.

*Sniper Elite: Nazi Zombie Army* works for a brief period as a series experiment, but leaves little to no lasting impression of note. If we can't do anything more with the concept of zombies than what we're applying now, maybe we should take a break and reevaluate the concept. While it's a no-brainer (sorry) that zombies make for the perfect point-and-pop piñatas, it only takes so many trips around the bend for that haunting, shambling groan to become a derisive yawn.

## COMPANY OF HEROES 2

Relic Entertainment originally knocked real-time strategy out of the park in 2006 with the original *Company of Heroes*. The first entry in the series took players from the Battle of Normandy to the Falaise Pocket, and a couple stand-alone expansions—*Opposing Fronts* and

*Tales of Valor*—built on that foundation. Now the series is nearly ready to return to the front lines of war with *Company of Heroes 2*, which is scheduled to arrive on PC in June.

This time around the focus is on the Eastern Front campaign, which will task players with taking on missions ranging from Operation Barbarossa to the Battle of Berlin. The Soviet Army joins *Company of Heroes 2* as a new faction, and Relic implemented a handful of improvements to make things more grounded in reality and open up new unique situations that can be shaped by things like weather and troop visibility.


**PUBLISHER**
Sega

**DEVELOPER**
Relic Entertainment

**SYSTEM(S)**
PC

**AVAILABLE**
June 25, 2013

Relic's TrueSight line-of-sight technology aims to more accurately represent the latter, while the Essence 3.0 game engine advances *Company of Heroes*' ability to simulate harsh conditions with ColdTech. In fact, weather plays a dramatic role in this one, which is appropriate given the setting. Troops can become frostbitten and must rely on things like bonfires—which leave them open to enemy detection—to keep warm. Deep snow hinders movement and crossing frozen bodies of water comes with the risk of cracking the ice and plunging into the freezing depths below at any moment.

Even with all the new additions and the change in setting, everything else about this sequel sounds like *Company of Heroes* through and through. We'll see if it lives up to its predecessor when it arrives in North America and Europe soon. □

## WWII HISTORY
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## ternopil

*Continued from page 55*

pushed back block by block.

The Russians threatened to totally cut off the city as they advanced along the Seret toward the bridge and the dam. During the evening, von Neindorff ordered most of what was left of the Ternopil garrison, about 1,300 men, to cross the river to Zagrobela. A small rear guard was ordered to remain in the city to try and protect the approximately 700 wounded that could not be evacuated. The fate of those men was never known, but it is assumed that most of them perished during the final fight for the fortress.

Zagrobela now became the focus of Soviet wrath. After taking Ternopil, the surrounding Russian divisions were able to press the forces in the suburb into an area about 1,000 meters in diameter. The front line was everywhere and nowhere, and there was little protection from Russian artillery and air strikes.

The planned attack on Velykyi Khodachkiv was delayed until 1000 hours because fuel had to be brought up for the panzers. For the attack, the Germans would use the 5th and 6th Companies of Meyer's Panzer Regiment 9, the I and II/Panzergrenadier Regiment 20, the III/ Panzergrenadier Regiment 19, part of SS Engineer Battalion 9 and the I/ Panzergrenadier Regiment 8 of Panzer Formation Friebe. They were to be supported by SS Major von Saucken's I/SS Panzer Artillery Regiment 9.

As the attack forces moved out, they were met by heavy antitank and machine-gun fire punctuated by artillery fire directed by Soviet observers on the surrounding hills. The enemy artillery was met with von Saucken's counterfire. His motorized batteries (one 150mm battery and two 105mm batteries) were able to change positions several times, making them difficult to hit. Overhead, Stukas dived on the Soviet positions, hitting several dug-in T-34s.

The Germans slowly pushed the Russians into the center of the village, where a close-range tank duel erupted. Fighting raged throughout the day, but by early evening it had been taken and the assault forces moved farther east only to be met by a counterattack from the 52nd Guards Tank Brigade. As darkness fell, the two forces disengaged to regroup for the next day's battle.

While the fight for Velykyi Khodachkiv was in full swing, XLVIII Panzer Corps headquarters was still in contact with the Germans in Zagrobela. At 1200 hours, a radio message from the suburb reported that von Neindorff had fallen to enemy fire and that Colonel Von Schönfeld was taking command of the remnants of the garrison. It was also reported that the situation was extremely critical. At 1240 hours radio contact was severed, and nothing more was heard from Zagrobela.

Von Schönfeld was a practical man. He had commanded Grenadier Regiment 949 since the fall of 1943, and he had distinguished himself both in the west and the east. Now, with about 1,500 men under his command who were running out of ammunition, food, and water, he was on his own. The relief forces were only 10 kilometers from his position, but they might as well have been on the moon. He had no doubt that he would be overrun before outside forces arrived, if they ever did.

Deciding to take matters into his own hands, von Schönfeld gathered his remaining officers for a meeting at 2200 hours. He ordered them to gather their men and divide into two groups. The breakout was to start at 0200 hours.

Surprising Russian posts on the western edge of Zagrobela, the two groups were able to penetrate the Soviet defenses before they separated. Von Schönfeld and his group headed southwest, while the other group moved directly to the west. The good luck at the start of the breakout soon turned as both groups ran into heavier Soviet defenses.

Near the village of Jankova, about three and one-half kilometers southwest of Zagrobela, von Schönfeld's group hit the prepared positions of the 1st Guards Artillery Division. The Soviets reacted quickly after the initial contact, and those Germans who were not immediately killed fled westward singly or in small groups. With all the officers dead, including von Schönfeld, the leaderless men were picked off as they tried to reach the German line. Of the approximately 700 men in von Schönfeld's group, a total of 45 made it to the German line east of Velykyi Khodachkiv. Another 10 men from the other group staggered into other parts of the line—55 out of the original 4,600 man garrison.

The tragedy of the Ternopil garrison would be repeated many times during the final year of the war. Hitler's declarations of "fortress cities" such as Vitebsk, Mogilev, Königsberg, and Breslau sealed the fate of tens of thousands of soldiers who could have been used to shore up the crumbling Eastern Front. Hitler's obsession with holding these fortress cities, many of them for prestige reasons, would only hasten the inevitable end of the Third Reich. □

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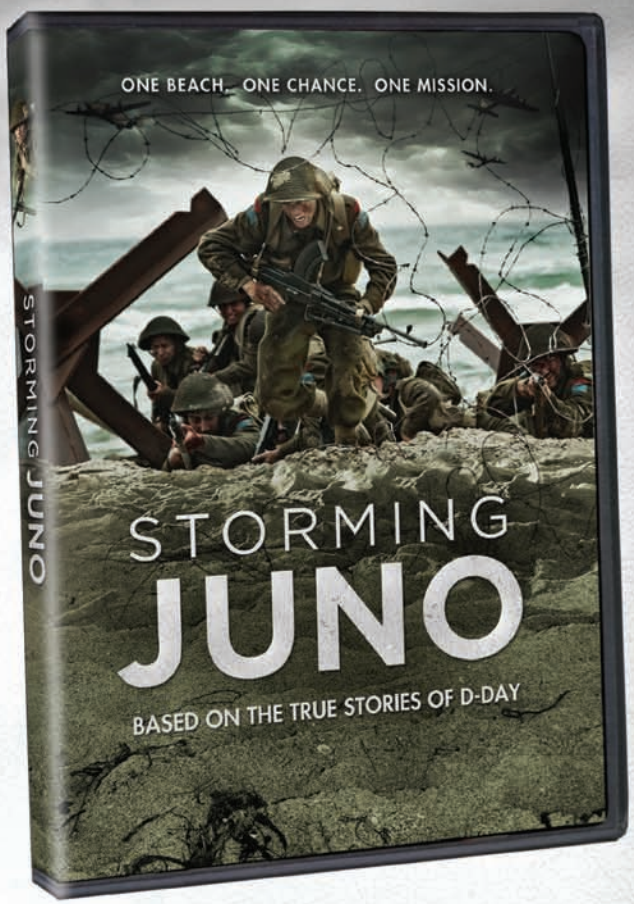


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