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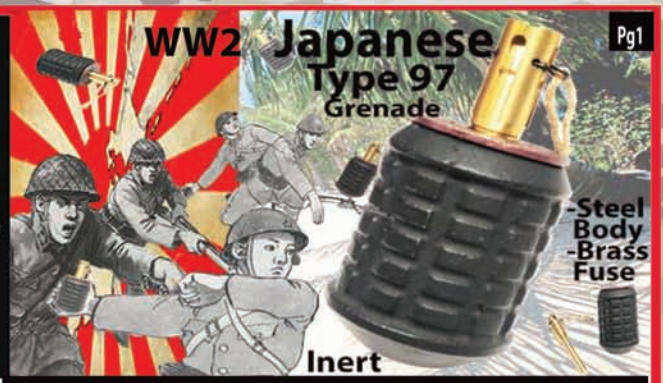

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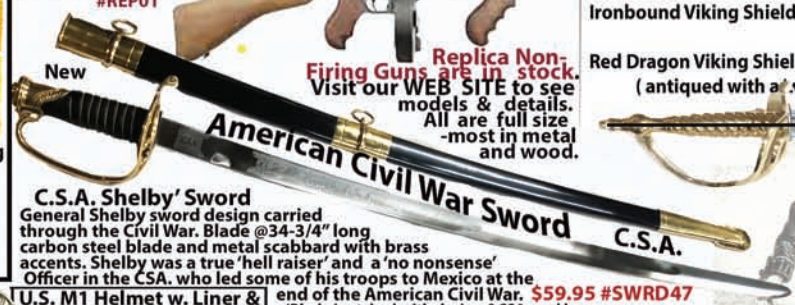

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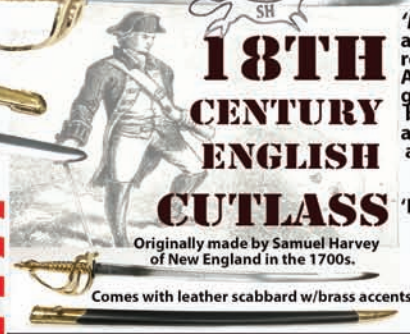

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MILITARY HERITAGE

Summer 2024

FEATURES

Cover: Captain Larry W. Bass, of the 4th Infantry Division, leads a patrol in search of Viet Cong and NVA soldiers in the Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam, in October 1967. See story page 26. Photo: National Archives.

COLUMNS

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EDITORIAL

The War Of Twists And Turns.

War is a terrible thing to study, but under the assumption that fresh ones are in the offing, such study is at least instructive and at best useful. Thus has been the worth, lo these 2,400 years, of the examination of the Peloponnesian War.

Homer began his Odyssey with these lines: "Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns" (Fagles translation, 1996). Homer knew much about the nature of men and the nature of war. Although he was writing about characters and warfare of very roughly 1000 BCE, he might well have been describing the mutually destructive conflict between Sparta and Athens 600 years later. This was a war of twists and turns, and of men of twists and turns.

The entire contest, beginning with its causes and suffusing its 27-year course, is a mare's nest of convolutions, outrageous treachery, dumbfounding idiocies, streaks of strategic and tactical brilliance, and crushing misfortune. But there is no need to scan the entire war; its final few years serve admirably.

Through 20 years of war, several principles had fairly well been accepted by all: that Sparta, fielding a practically invincible army, would retain control of much of the land, and that Athens, being a maritime power, would control the seas. Indeed, Sparta virtually roamed and plundered Attica at will while Athens imported its food through the Hellespont and Bosporus to its port at Piraeus and hence through its Long Walls to the city itself.

Then Sparta attempted its own strategic "twist." For one, it would attempt to defeat Athens on the sea, these landlubbers thus taking up sails to attempt outfighting the region's best naval power. That was not all of Sparta's "out of the box" thinking. It would get the money to build a navy by making an alliance with Persia, the empire it fought so notably 80 years before.

Even all this might have failed had not Athens, known for its intelligence, ushered up a string of stupidities. The one most notable in this stage proceeded from the 406 BCE sea battle of Arginusae Islands near the Ionian island of Lesbos. After a heroic effort of taxation, melting down its temple gold to build more ships, and then manning them with its citizens rich and poor, Athens smashed the Spartan fleet. But owing to a whipped-up sea, the eight squadron admirals were unable to rescue Athenians struggling in the water, doubling Athenian casualties. Demagogues and spineless politicians condemned the eight battle winners to death.

Although crippled in competent admiralship as well as in seamen, Athens continued patrolling the sea lanes to keep the food flowing. Sparta sued for peace. Predicting victory, Athens rejected the reasonable terms.

Sparta looked to a man named Lysander, who turned out to be an astonishingly good strategist and admiral. He led his fleet up and down the Ionian coast until he found the Hellespont unguarded, seized it, and choked off the Athenian food supply. Athenian admirals had to respond. They sailed to the region and anchored some miles from the Spartan ships.

The brilliant Alcibiades, hero of Athens, then gross traitor, then hero to Athens again, then persona non grata exiled in the area, risked his life to warn the Athenian admirals that their anchorage was vulnerable to a daring Spartan excursion. The Athenians responded to the effect that they would not countenance the words of such an amoral man as Alcibiades.

But the reprobate was telling the truth. Lysander sortied, catching the overconfident Athenians while they were ashore eating, and destroyed their fleet. The game was up. Athens lay penniless and prostrate. Lysander sailed to the noble city, terms in hand.

A final twist. Sparta's terms were not harsh enough in the opinion of the Thebans, Corinthians, and other Spartan allies, who wanted Athens destroyed and its population sold into slavery. Sparta refused, for the reason that Athens had saved Greek civilization during the wars against Persian invasion. ■

—Brook C. Stoddard

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VALOR

National Guard historic painting by H. Charles McBarron

Known as 'Black Death,' Henry Johnson finally earns U.S. recognition for valor.

By Kevin Seabrooke

In the early hours of May 15, 1917, U.S. Army Corporal Henry Johnson and Private Needham Roberts sat in an outpost along the French lines at the western edge of the Argonne Forest. German snipers had fired at them when they'd first come on sentry duty for the midnight-to-four a.m. shift, prompting the men to line up a box of grenades in case of an attack.

But all had remained quiet until about 2 a.m., when the stillness of the night was broken by the distinctive "snick" of wire cutters.

Johnson threw a grenade toward the perimeter fence and ordered Roberts to run back to camp to inform the French troops of the attack—the pair were part of the all-black 369th Infantry Regiment, now attached to the French Fourth Army. Having received little training, the unit had no combat experience and had previously been performing menial tasks since its arrival overseas.

Roberts started to run, but came back to help Johnson when the Germans opened fire and hurled grenades at the outpost. Shrapnel from one of those grenades hit Roberts, wounding him badly. Johnson helped him back to safety, where Roberts was able to lie in the trench handing grenades to Johnson.

But there were too many Germans, advancing from every direction. Eventually, Johnson ran out of grenades, then bullets, before they were on top of him.

Johnson swung his rifle like a club until the stock broke. Overwhelmed, he was sent sprawling by a blow to the head. He watched as the Germans started to drag Roberts away and reached for the only weapon he had left—his bolo knife.

Scrambling to his feet, he charged, hacking away at the Germans before they could get a clean shot

Wikimedia

ABOVE: U.S. Army Sergeant Henry Johnson, 369th Infantry Regiment, 93d Infantry Division, AEF, wearing France's highest honor for valor, the Croix de Guerre. Johnson would finally be awarded a Medal of Honor by President Obama in 2015. TOP: Soldiers of the 369th Infantry charge a German position during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive on September 29, 1918, in "Hell Fighters from Harlem," by H. Charles McBarron. The village of Séchault was taken, earning the Croix de Guerre for the entire regiment, which lost nearly a third of its men in the offensive.

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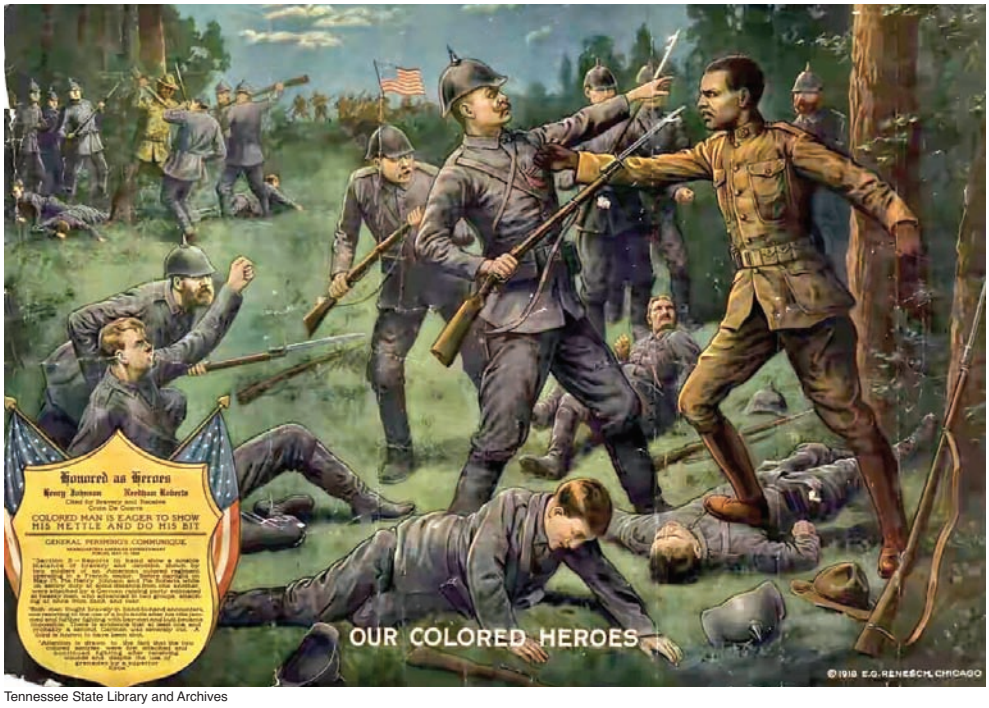
ABOVE: Men of the 15th Infantry Regiment, New York National Guard, photographed in France, with the French helmets issued to them when the unit was transferred to the French 16th Division. They were later issued the standard American Brodie helmets. BELOW: This illustration published in 1918 depicts Corporal Henry Johnson and Private Robert Needham, as they fought off a German raid, despite multiple wounds.



Tennessee State Library and Archives

at him. Johnson was shot in the arm as he stabbed several Germans, including one who had climbed on his back. As Johnson dragged Roberts back, the Germans retreated as the sounds of the Allied forces approaching grew louder.

The morning light revealed Johnson had saved Roberts and killed four Germans, wounding possibly 10-20 more. Despite suffering 21 wounds, he had single-handedly kept the Germans from breaking the French line.

"Each slash meant something, believe me. I wasn't doing exercises, let me tell you," Johnson would later recall.

Born on July 15, 1892, in Winston Salem, North Carolina, William Henry Johnson moved to New York as a teenager. He worked various jobs, including a chauffeur, soda mixer, laborer in a coal yard, and a redcap porter at Albany's Union Station. On June 5, 1917, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was assigned to Company C, 15th New York (Colored) Infantry Regiment, a National Guard unit made up of enlisted black soldiers with both black and white officers, that had been formed in 1916.

Federalized in 1917 and shipped to France in December, the unit was designated as 369th Infantry Regiment, part of the segregated 93rd Infantry Division.

The 93rd was largely assigned to non-combat roles as stevedores and laborers—unloading supplies and digging latrines. As was often the case back home in the U.S., the white soldiers had little regard for the African-American troops, and refused to serve in trenches with them.

Major General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), reportedly wanted to keep American units together, though segregated, but some units from the 93rd were detached to serve with the French, whose ranks included Black soldiers from its empire.

The 369th Infantry was attached to the French 161st Division on April 8, 1918. They were given French helmets, rifles, and taught just enough of the language to understand orders.

Johnson and the 369th deployed to the front near the Argonne Forest, alongside white French soldiers who mostly treated them better than their American counterparts.

While some black leaders had questioned why African Americans should sacrifice themselves for a nation that would not grant them full citizenship, others, such as W.E.B. DuBois said that "while the war lasts [we should] forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our white fellow citizens and allied nations that are fighting for democracy."

Some 380,000 African Americans would answer that call and serve in the Army during World War I. Of these men, 200,000 were sent overseas—mostly in support roles—but about 42,000 saw combat.

Among themselves, the soldiers of the 369th were the "Black Rattlers," complete with a coiled rattlesnake poised to strike on their unit crest. The French soldiers they fought with called them "Men of Bronze" (Hommes de Bronze). By the time they paraded through the streets of New York in 1919, they were famous by the name that appeared in *The New York Times* headline: "Harlem Hellfighters."

It was the Germans they fought against who gave the 369th the name "Hollenkampfer." A captured Prussian officer reportedly said that the Hellfighters were "devils" that "smile while they kill and won't be taken alive." The U.S. Army officially recognized the name for the unit in 2020.

The French 16th Division, which commanded the Hellfighters, quickly recognized the actions of Johnson and Roberts. The two soldiers received the Croix du Guerre, France's highest military honor.

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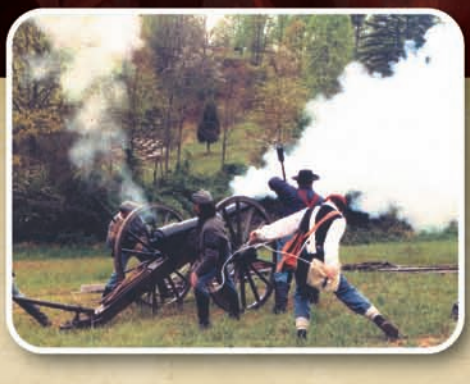

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ABOVE: Command Sergeant Major Louis Wilson of the New York National Guard receives the Medal of Honor from President Obama on behalf of Henry Johnson—98 years after the end of World War I. LEFT: Soldiers of the 369th receive medals awarded by France for their valor in battle fighting along side of the French Army. Henry Johnson and Robert Needham received the French Croix du Guerre. BELOW: Soldiers of the 369th appear happy to be arriving at Hoboken, New Jersey after their service in France. One soldier poses with a German helmet, apparently a war trophy.

The French orders, dated May 16, state Henry Johnson "gave a magnificent example of courage and energy." They were the first U.S. soldiers to earn this distinction, and Johnson's medal included the coveted Gold Palm for extraordinary valor.

"There wasn't anything so fine about it," he said later. "Just fought for my life. A rabbit would have done that."

From that point on, Johnson was known as "Black Death." The 369th would go on to prove itself in combat operations through the rest of the war—spending 191 days on the front lines— and was decorated with the French Croix de Guerre with Silver Star for service during the Meuse-Argonne campaign and cited for bravery 11 times for the unit's actions. Its members also received 171 individual decorations for heroism.

Johnson would be singled out for his heroism and actions under fire. Former President Theodore Roosevelt called Johnson one of the five bravest Americans to serve in World War I. Johnson's image was used by the Army to recruit new soldiers and to sell Victory War Stamps—"Henry Johnson licked a dozen Germans. How many stamps have you licked?"

After the war, Johnson and Roberts returned home as national heroes. Promoted to sergeant, Johnson led the New York City parade for the 369th in February 1919. The unit had been denied the honor of marching in a parade of "The Rainbow Division" before being shipped out to Europe. National Guard units from across the country had been combined into one unit to be deployed to France together so that no particular state or region felt slighted.

The commander of the unit that would become the 369th, Col. William Hayward, was told that "black is not a color in the rainbow."

Johnson's fame was fleeting. The 369th had spent more than six months in combat, possibly more than any U.S. unit in the war. They suffered some 1,500 casualties with only 900 replacements. The lack of replacements and constant stress of the front line left them exhausted by the end of the war in November. And the America they came back to was still the America they had left—Jim Crow, second-class citizenship and the systematic denial of equal rights to black Americans.

Johnson was taking part in a series of paid lectures until one evening in St. Louis he went off the "racial harmony in the trenches"script and said what was really on his mind—that white soldiers refused to share trenches with Blacks and other abuses.

Johnson was "shunted aside" after that, according to the National Guard, and offered no more speaking engagements. A warrant for Johnson's arrest was reportedly issued for wearing his uniform beyond the prescribed date of his commission.

Though he was praised publicly by the press

and the Army, Johnson's discharge papers didn't mention his debilitating injuries, so he received no disability allowance.

That he didn't receive a Purple Heart at the time was not out of the ordinary. The Badge of Military Merit, which became the Purple Heart, had been established by President George Washington in 1782. It was only given to three soldiers from the Revolutionary War, and though it was never discontinued, it was not proposed officially until after World War I.

In 1932, the War Department authorized the awarding of the Purple Heart to all soldiers, upon their request, who had been awarded the Meritorious Service Citation Certificate, Army Wound Ribbon, or were authorized to wear Wound Chevrons subsequent to April 5, 1917, the day before the U.S. entered World War I.

The first Purple Heart was awarded to General Douglas MacArthur in February, 1932.

With no other way to make money, Johnson returned to his job as a porter at the train station in Albany, New York. Hampered by his lack of education and unable to hold a steady job due to his injuries—his shattered left foot had been put back together with a metal plate—Johnson struggled. Unable to support himself and his family, his marriage broke up and he died alone and penniless at age 32 on July 1, 1929, in New Lenox, Illinois. The cause was myocarditis, following a tuberculosis diagnosis.

A re-examination of the World War I military records of African Americans in the 1990s uncovered Johnson's story. In 1996, President Bill Clinton posthumously awarded Johnson the Purple Heart.

For many years, it had been assumed that Johnson had been buried in a pauper's grave. But in 2001, historians from the New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs discovered that a "William Henry Johnson"—he had only given the name Henry Johnson when he enlisted—had been buried in Arlington National Cemetery (Section 25, Site 64).

After this discovery, the Army awarded Johnson the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second-highest military decoration.

To the dismay of many supporters, Johnson had not yet been awarded the Medal of Honor, for courageous military action, due to a lack of military documentation.

Efforts to recognize Johnson's valor continued until researchers found the needed documentation, including a memo written by Army Commander in Chief Gen. John J. Pershing. It confirmed that Johnson had been an American soldier in spite of the fact that he had worn a French uniform and served under French command.

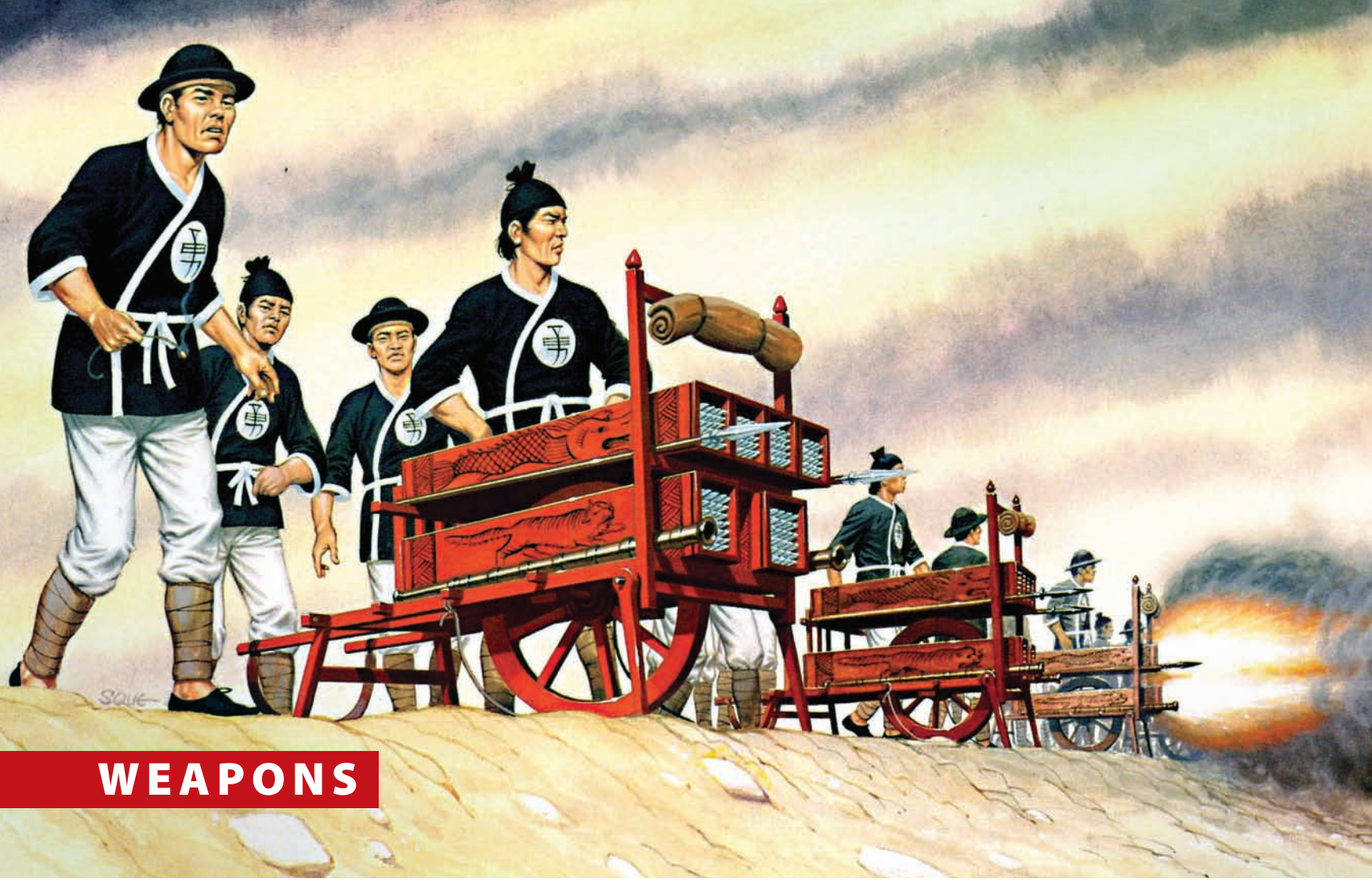
Pershing wrote that Johnson's unit "first attacked continued fighting after receiving wounds, and despite of use of grenades by superior force, and should be given credit for preventing by their bravery the taking prisoner of our men."

At a Whitehouse ceremony on June 2, 2015, Johnson was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama.

At the ceremony, Obama said, "The least we can do is to say, 'We know who you are, we know what you did for us. We are forever grateful.'"

His Medal of Honor citation reads, in part: "Private Johnson's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company C, 369th Infantry Regiment, 93d Infantry Division and the United States Army."

In June 2023, the U.S. Army renamed Fort Polk in Leesville, Louisiana, as Fort Johnson. The base, officially named Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson, replaced the name of Confederate commander Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk. ■



WEAPONS

Osprey Publishing/*Medieval Chinese Armies 1260-1520*-David Sque

The feudal Korean 'fire cart' was a precursor to modern barrage rocket systems.

By M.G. Haynes

Korean General Kwon Yul shouted the one-word order down the hill. Scarcely had it left his lips before it was lost in a deafening crash. Haengju Fortress seemed to erupt in flames as thousands of rocket-propelled arrows arced high over the ramparts and plunged into the densely packed Japanese samurai ranks below. The explosive and unexpected volley caused indescribable carnage and chaos amongst the attacking force.

After the eruption of arrows, the Japanese pulled back in confusion to a safe distance before launching further assaults against the ancient fort. But each successive wave was welcomed in turn by a storm of iron-tipped, exploding arrows.

Twelve hours later, with the Japanese burning their dead and commencing a sullen withdrawal back to the safety of Seoul's high city walls, Kwon Yul no doubt smiled for the first time all day. Commander of a rag-tag army of 2,300 soldiers, guerrillas, monks, and local townspeople of every background and description, his motley force had miraculously withstood nine separate assaults by a veteran enemy army that outnumbered them thirteen-to-one. The narrow victory had been made possible only by his corps of artillerymen manning Joseon Korea's secret weapon.

The defense of Haengju on March 14, 1593, during the Imjin War (1592-98) remains a significant event etched in Korean history. The so-called Imjin War was in reality two invasions, in 1592 and 1597, that were launched by the powerful feudal lord (daimyō)Toyotomi Hideyoshi with the intent of conquering the Korean Peninsula, ruled by the Joseon dynasty and China, ruled by the Ming dynasties. Initially, Japan was able to occupy much of the Korean Peninsula. But the position became untenable as reinforcements came from China and the Joseon Navy disrupted Japanese supply fleets along the southern and western coasts. Guerrilla resistance and supply problems brought the conflict to a stalemate. After the death of Hideyoshi in 1598, Japanese forces withdrew from the Korean Peninsula.

The Haengju Fortress, a wooden stockade perched on a cliff overlooking the Han River was a strategic location that posed a threat to Hanseong (modern-day Seoul), prompting the Japanese forces there to launch an attack.

On that fateful day, a formidable Japanese

An early version of the hwacha "fire cart" rocket launcher was developed by the Chinese about 1450 CE, and could be carried on a cart that could be easily moved on the battlefield. Tubes contain arrows with rockets attached that are lit by the gunner holding a match at left.

Author photo / Korean War Memorial

In this Korean painting of the Japanese attack at Haengju, two Korean *hwachas* ("fire carts") are shown to the right of center, as a wave of Japanese rush the fortress at left. The surrounding terrain, and the earthen fortress allowed the Koreans to make successful use of the hwacha.

army of 30,000 men, led by Konishi Yukinaga, commander of the Japanese First Contingent, marched upon Haengju. With such a large force, the Japanese apparently felt their usual dispatch of scouts wasn't necessary before attacking the outdated fort. It seems they hadn't realized, until arriving on the scene, just how narrow the approach really was. The limited space around the stockade forced them to take turns assaulting it. Undaunted, they arranged themselves in multiple lines, with battle-hardened veterans leading the way. The Korean defenders fought back fiercely, using a combination of arrows, cannons, and the hwacha to repel the invaders.

Despite three attacks, including one with a siege tower, the Japanese struggled to breach the outer defenses. During the intense fighting, Ishida Mitsunari was wounded, and Ukita Hideie (son-in-law of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the Retired Regent of Japan who had launched the invasion of Korea) managed to breach the outer wall but was also wounded and forced to retreat. In a final desperate attempt, Kobayakawa Takakage, commander of the Japanese Sixth Contingent, burned a hole through the fort's log pilings, but the Koreans held their ground until dusk. Just when they were nearly out of arrows, supply ships containing 10,000 more arrows arrived, allowing them to continue the fight. Ultimately, the Japanese were forced to retreat.

The limited space had meant that the Japanese assaults were distinct and came at intervals—during which the hwachas were probably reloaded, much to the dismay of the attacking samurai. Following a Japanese breakthrough of the lower barrier, and subsequent flood of invaders into the fortress, the tactical situation wouldn't have allowed for such clean engagement of successive assault waves. Yet the breach had been narrow and so the large attacking force would have stacked up outside for quite some distance, providing a tempting target for the garrison's hwacha crews. These men—knowing full well the value their weapons brought to that fight—undoubtedly worked as rapidly as they could, with officers nervously eyeing both the desperate melee below and the progress of reloading.

In addition to being one of Korea's most famous conflicts, the Battle of Haengju represented the best conditions imaginable for the employment of the simple but effective hwacha.

In 2024 the world stands in awe of the power of multiple rocket launchers and their use in combat. The provision of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) to the army of Ukraine has been a major contributing factor to the success that force has seen defending their country against Russian invasion. Yet the developmental ancestry of such a potent weapon system has a surprising lineage. One that includes an ancestor from the far-off, misty peaks of medieval Korea, at the time called the Kingdom of Joseon.

Gunpowder was invented in China in the 9th century CE, with its first documented military use in 1044 as a method of igniting containers filled with Greek Fire. Continued development produced fire lances—essentially a roman candle attached below a spearhead—and even "fire tubes" which dropped the lance altogether, leaving a spark-shooting bamboo tube. Historians have sometimes wondered if the first rocket was accidentally "invented" as the result of a dropped fire lance, the weapon rapidly accelerating rearward once free from a soldier's grip.

Regardless of its precise origin, by the 12th century, exploding projectiles hurled by catapults or fired from oversized crossbows had become commonplace throughout the region. By the 14th century, cannons and true rockets were growing in popularity across the Far East. Yet initial attempts at building rockets for military use were hampered by dangerous and unpredictable inaccuracy. A weapon that can't be aimed is virtually useless, after all.

Turning to an age-old solution, weapons developers attached small tubes of gunpowder to arrows loosed from the ubiquitous Korean recurve bow. The fletching of the arrows solved

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the accuracy problem and the gunpowder-filled tubes increased both range and penetrating power. It was only a matter of time, then, until Chinese and Korean craftsmen would realize the full potential of these projectiles and construct ever more effective weapon systems to employ them.

Created in 1409 during the Joseon Dynasty by several Korean scientists, including Yi Do and Choi Hae-san, the projectile that made more sophisticated weaponry possible, the *singijeon*, ("magical machine arrows') was perfected in 1448. The singijeon was an arrow with a tube of gunpowder attached in addition to a small explosive charge which detonated at the conclusion of flight. Singijeon were created in three variations, essentially small, medium, and large. The largest variety was reportedly capable of an amazing 1,000 meters in range, a phenomenal reach in the 15th century.

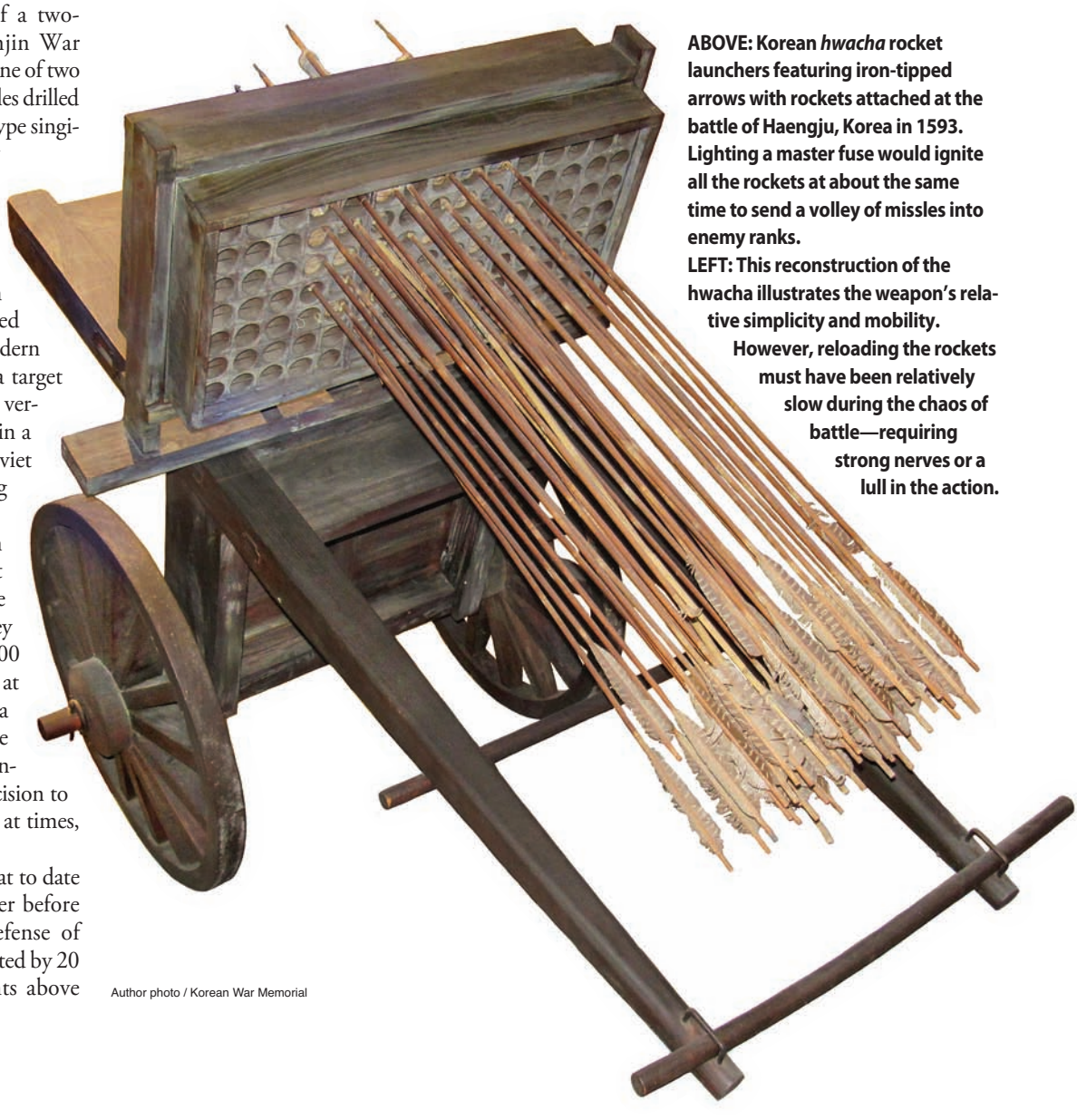
In 1451, the combination of accurate, rapid firing rocketry and the easy maneuverability provided by a simple hand cart, produced the first hwacha. The hwacha was, essentially, a rack of rocket arrows attached to the top of a two-wheeled cart. By the time of the Imjin War (1592-98) this weapon system came in one of two variants. The wooden rack either had holes drilled through it in order to launch the small type singijeon, or held 50 small, permanently mounted, bronze gun barrels, much like later European organ guns. In either case, the fuses were all linked together to provide a single fusillade.

The gun barrel version—with each barrel propelling four small, iron-tipped bolts, would have had the effect of a modern claymore mine, blasting 200 darts at a target with each discharge. With the singijeon version, 100 rocket arrows were delivered in a manner very similar to the firing of a Soviet Katyusha Rocket Launcher during WWII.

Fired as an artillery piece more than the direct-fire rocket wheelbarrows built and employed by Ming China, the hwacha delivered a single, massive volley out to about 450 meters, reduced to 100 in bad weather according to observers at the time. Devastating in its effect upon a closely packed body of enemy troops, the weapon system would have been time consuming to reload, meaning that any decision to fire required serious consideration and, at times, nerves of steel.

The fluid nature of Imjin War combat to date meant neither type of hwacha had ever before been used en masse prior to the defense of Haengju Fortress. The firepower generated by 20 such pieces, positioned on the heights above

Osprey Publishing/*Siege Weapons of the Far East (2)*-Wayne Reynolds



ABOVE: Korean *hwacha* rocket launchers featuring iron-tipped arrows with rockets attached at the battle of Haengju, Korea in 1593. Lighting a master fuse would ignite all the rockets at about the same time to send a volley of missles into enemy ranks.
LEFT: This reconstruction of the hwacha illustrates the weapon's relative simplicity and mobility. However, reloading the rockets must have been relatively slow during the chaos of battle—requiring strong nerves or a lull in the action.

Author photo / Korean War Memorial

them, must have been a shocking development to a Japanese army expecting to clear out a small, if troublesome, guerrilla force.

The hwacha would be specifically called out for its effectiveness that day, successfully defending Haengju against all odds. It was singled out for praise at other points during the Imjin War as well—following both sieges of Jinju City and then later, mounted on naval vessels, after the failed attack on Suncheon Castle and subsequent final battle of Noryang in 1598.

These noteworthy moments aside, the hwacha made its presence felt in most defensive sieges throughout the war, as well as a few assaults on Japanese strongholds, though the long reload time limited its utility in the attack.

Along with the Battle of Haengju, the first battle of Jinju, are regarded as two of the most important battles of the war.

At Jinju in November of 1592, a detachment of 15,750 soldiers from the Seventh Japanese division advanced on the city which was defended by 3,800 soldiers, with cannon, hwacha and a small number of arquebuses—early muzzle-loaded matchlock firearms.

The Koreans held out for six days before the arrival of the main leaders of the Righteous armies of Korea, Gwak Jae-u, with a small group of men. Gwak had the men blow horns, which attracted about 3,000 guerrillas and irregular forces to the scene, alarming the Japanese commanders, who thought they were surrounded by a relieving force.

In July of 1593, the Japanese returned and burned Jinju to the ground, slaying nearly all the inhabitants except for some concubines.

One of these women would become a legend. During the Japanese victory celebration after the battle, Nongae, concubine to an assassinated provincial official, is said to have danced for a Japanese officer near the cliff overlooking the river—she then embraced him and dove off the cliff, killing them both. A shrine still exists near the spot to honor her sacrifice and willingness to resist even after the city had been lost.

Uncomplicated in the extreme, the hwacha was, in reality, little more than a commonsense pairing of existing technologies to create something both new and decisive. Over the course of six long, bloody years of fighting, the hwacha contributed significantly to Korea's struggle to evict the Japanese invaders. Odd as it may seem, then, the employment in battle of a modified handcart might be said to have preserved an entire kingdom.

Nevertheless, the hwacha represented the ground component to an advantage in artillery already maintained by Joseon's navy over the Japanese invaders. This, at times, helped balance out the otherwise terrible disparity in hand-held firearms which remained a distinct Japanese advantage throughout the conflict. To further emphasize this fact, during the lull in ground combat from 1593 to 1597, Joseon's armories specifically prioritized increased production of two weapon systems: cannon for warships, and rocket-launching hwachas, subtle, if concrete, testimony to the regard with which the weapon was held.

The hwacha's deployment was one of the key factors that led to Japan's failure in their campaign to conquer the Korean peninsula. Simple in design, brutal in employment, ghastly in its effect upon the enemy, the hwacha proved to be a war-winning weapon for Joseon, greatly contributing to the ultimate—if hard-fought—Korean victory in 1598.

Today, hwachas can be seen in Korean museums, national parks, and popular culture, serving as a testament to Korea's innovative military technology during the Joseon Dynasty. The victory at Haengju was important psychologically, for it gave the populace a feeling of hope, a sense that Japanese aggression would recede after all. Four centuries later, "Haengju Skirts," a type of kitchen apron that women within the fortress used to carry rocks to the ramparts, are still produced and worn. ■

UNIFORM 11th Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment, 1916

Artwork: Peter Dennis

HEADGEAR: The steel Brodie helmet became standard by July 1916.

UNIFORM: Khaki woolen 1902 Pattern Service Dress Tunic and Trousers.

RIFLE: Standard, 10-round .303 Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE), with leather sling, and Pattern 07 sword bayonet with 17-inch blade.

1914 LEATHER BELTING: With slow production of the preferred canvas webbing, many units were issued leather belts to carry ammunition pouches, the bayonet frog, an entrenching tool handle, water bottle, haversack, large pack, mess tin, and more.

GAS MASK: His gas mask, called a gas helmet, is in a canvas bag slung under his left arm. By 1916, these masks covered the whole head and included celluloid eyepieces.

PUTTEES: These long strips of fabric wrapped spirally around the lower leg for support and protection were in general use from 1902 until 1938, when they were replaced by gaiters.

BOOTS: Unlined ankle boots, in service from the mid-19th century, called Ammunition Boots by the British, included hobnail soles.

The East Lancashire Regiment was a British Army line infantry regiment originally formed with two battalions in 1881. During World War I the regiment included 15 additional volunteer battalions, as part of Britain's volunteer "New Army." The 11th Battalion, known as the Accrington Pals, with recruits from the town of Accrington, included four companies of 250 men. Raised in September 1914, the unit left for Egypt in December 1915 as part of the 31st Division. Within a month of their arrival in Egypt, the battalion was ordered to France.

The unit's first action came on July 1, 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. With the 11th battalion leading, the 31st Division was to attack the hilltop fortress of Serre, then defend the advance of the rest of the British attacking force.

The 11th Battalion left the trenches at 7:20 a.m. and advanced on Serre. At 7:30, the Germans began firing machine guns and tossing grenades at the 11th Battalion troops. Some men from the first company are believed to have made it into the German trench lines, but were never seen again. The battalion took heavy casualties, and were stopped cold in No Man's Land. With no reinforcements, the surviving troops were forced to withdraw back to their trenches.

The East Lancashire Regiment suffered more casualties that day than on any other in its history. The 11th Battalion suffered 594 casualties out of the 720 in the attack. A mile to their south, the 1st Battalion lost 463 casualties out of 700 officers and men who went "over the top."

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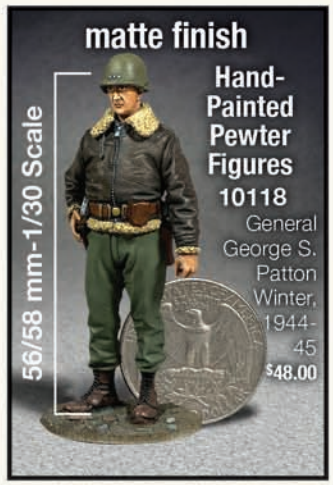

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The Tragic Story of Mordecai Booth and the Burning of the Washington Navy Yard.

By Robert P. Watson, Ph.D.

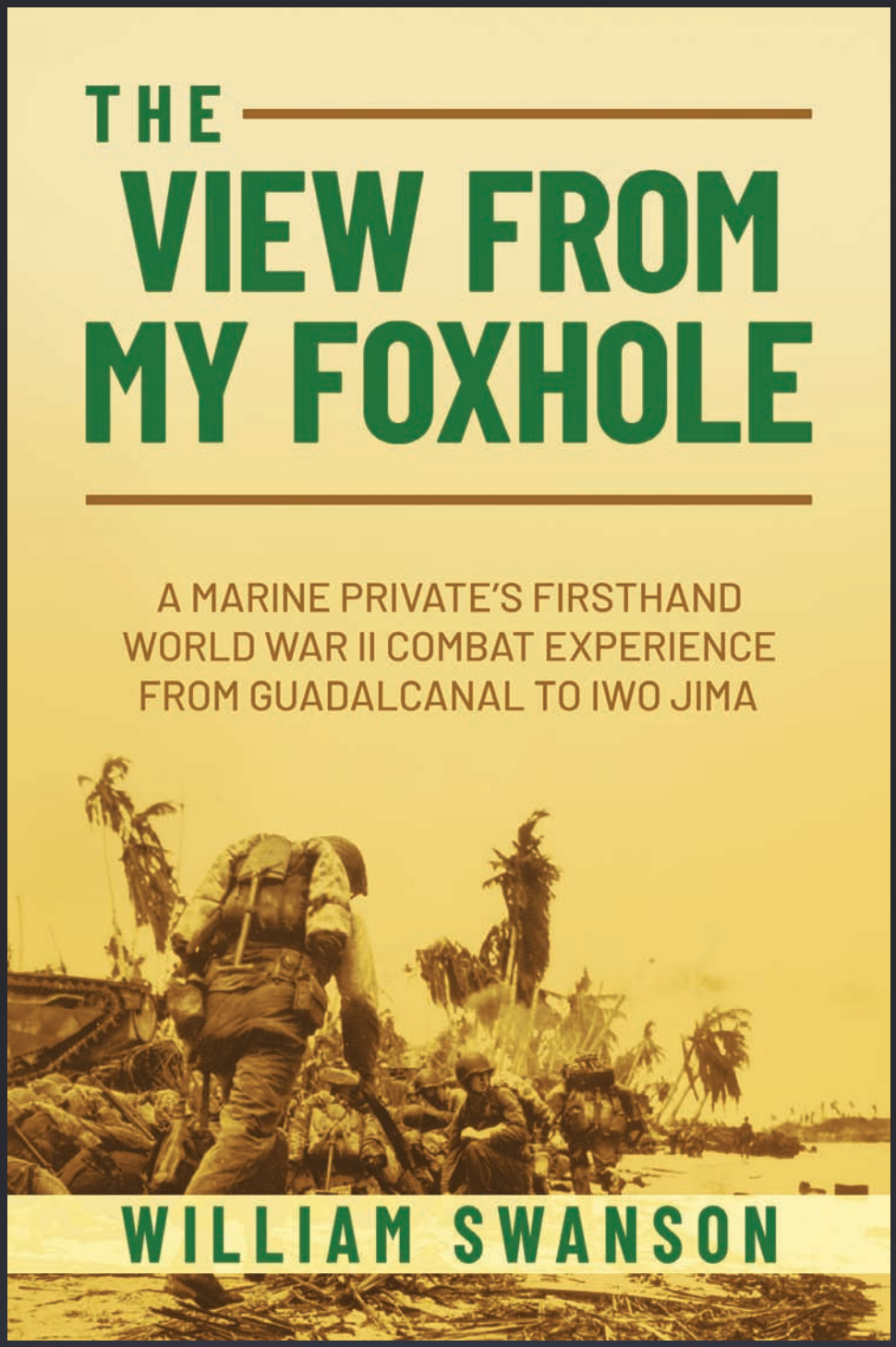
Naval History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: Born in London, U.S. Navy Commodore Thomas Tingey served in the British Navy as a youth, and later, is believed to have joined the Continental Navy during the American Revolution. He was commandant of the U.S. Navy Yard in 1814, and claimed to be the last American officer to leave the city during the British attack. TOP: After defeating American forces at the Battle of Bladensburg in nearby Maryland, British troops under Admiral George Cockburn marched on Washington, setting fire to multiple public buildings, including the White House, and the U.S. Capitol.

News arrived in the capital city that the British army had defeated a hastily-gathered and rag-tag collection of American soldiers, sailors, militiamen, and government clerks in Maryland at Bladensburg. Rumors ran wild about what Gen. Robert Ross and Adm. George Cockburn would do next. They were now just a short march from Washington. Nothing stood in their way. It was Wednesday, August 24, 1814, and inside the Washington Navy Yard, Capt. Thomas Tingey and his clerk, Mordecai Booth, were forced to face the unspeakable—would they have to burn the important naval facility to prevent it from falling into British hands?

Booth had spent the preceding two days either frantically preparing supplies to be transported out of the Navy Yard or on horseback riding around the region trying to gather intelligence about both British intentions and the haphazard American defenses. An unlikely hero, the unimposing 51-year-old clerk had no military training. He had just been appointed clerk at the Navy Yard in 1811, a year before war broke out. But during this critical moment, he was one of the few who chose to stay at his post.

Upon hearing of the defeat at Bladensburg, Booth again rode to nearby hills to surveil the countryside. There was good news and bad—on the one hand, there was no sign of the British army. As he noted, "I saw not the Appearance of an Englishman" on the road to Washington, which inspired hope that they were still in Maryland and maybe planning to march on Baltimore or another target. On the other hand, there were still no defenses in and around Washington. Everywhere Booth rode, he saw panic and chaos. American militia units were retreating in every direction and the remaining residents



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– Martha MacCallum, Fox News Anchor, *The Story* & Co-anchor, *Fox News Election Coverage*, Author: *Unknown Valor, A Story of Family, Courage and Sacrifice from Pearl Harbor to Iwo Jima*

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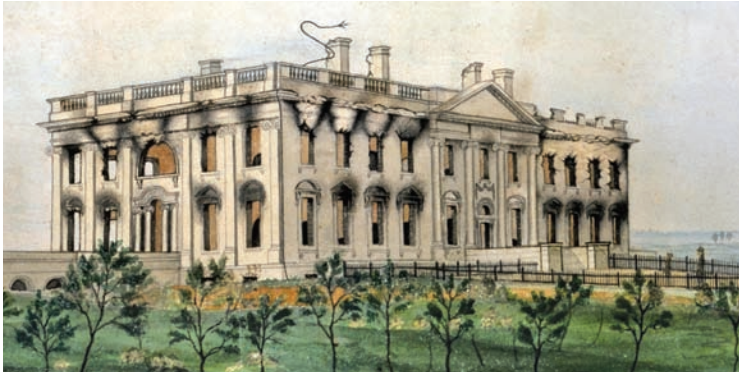


The White House Historical Association

ABOVE: At the battle of Bladensburg, Maryland, U.S. Marines helped stop the British attack as American militia fled the field. The "greatest disgrace ever dealt to American arms" allowed British forces to capture and burn Washington, D.C. RIGHT: The White House as it appeared after the attack, with soot and ash visible above the windows. Mordecai Booth tried to alert the President of the impending British attack, but found that the President, First Lady, staff, and his military guard had already evacuated.

of the capital city were fleeing from their homes. In a hurried but thorough note, he shared both assessment of the situation and his despondence with Capt. Thomas Tingey, commandant of the Navy Yard, writing "but Oh! My Country—And I blush Sir! To tell you—I saw the Commons Covered with the fugitive Soldiery of our Army—runing, hobling, Creaping, & appearently pannick struck."

Booth stopped and questioned some of the militiamen, but none had any plan except to flee. The clerk rushed back to the Navy Yard, hoping Tingey had better news. It was wishful thinking. Tingey had not received orders one way or the other—which was interpreted by the two men as the worst-case scenario.

Remounting his horse, Booth raced into the city to see if the army had regrouped and were digging in to defend it. What he saw was just as bad and ended any hope of saving the capital or the Navy Yard. There were only about 250 troops in the city—what was left of Commodore Joshua Barney's brave sailors, about the only unit that put up a stingy defense at Bladensburg. Unlike the U.S. army and militia units who fled in disarray, Barney's men had rushed to the capital hoping to find other units in order to organize a last-ditch stand. After watching the remaining residents and soldiers run, however, they seized the four ornamental cannons in front of the Capitol Building and a small 6-pounder sitting beside the Executive Mansion. Finding only two horses and two wagons, they loaded two of the guns and the small cannon then spiked the other two and abandoned the city. It was nearing sunset and they constituted the last vestige of the American military in the capital.

Booth rushed back to the Navy Yard to inform Tingey that the military had not regrouped to defend the capital. The Madison administration had proven inept and, shockingly, had made no contingency plans despite the fact that a flotilla of British warships had been prowling the Chesapeake for weeks and a large British force was spotted disembarking along Maryland's eastern shore.

As he rode, Booth heard an enormous explosion, but discovered it was a nearby bridge being destroyed and not the Navy Yard. Upon arrival however, the clerk learned from Tingey that an aide to the Secretary of the Navy had just delivered a similarly distressing report—the army was scattered and there was no defense of the region. They had no recourse. It was time to burn the Navy Yard.

Burning the shipyards, however, came with the risk that the massive fire might spread out of control to the surrounding homes, as the wind was beginning to pick up. The few remaining residents begged the commandant not to set the fire. Tingey was in an impossible situation. He was also still recovering emotionally from having recently lost his wife and the prospect of destroying the facility he had built and devoted the past 14 years to weighed heavily on his heart. With much sorrow, Tingey informed the residents to evacuate. It was nearing 5 p.m. and he was out of options.

Booth begged his superior for permission to yet again ride out—one last time—on another dangerous scouting mission to try to find the whereabouts of the British. He reasoned that they still had perhaps two or three hours and a fleeting chance that the enemy was headed to Baltimore. The two men agreed that if Booth did not return in time, Tingey would start burning the facility. Exhausted and full of anxiety, Booth raced back out to gather intelligence, hoping for a miracle. He encountered a butcher from Georgetown named Thomas Miller who had also been looking

for either army. Booth asked to join him and both men rode to where Miller had last seen the enemy. It was not good. A long red line was on the march on the main road into Washington.

Booth rode back into the capital, stopping at the President's House, wondering if Madison and his wife were still there or if they or any members of the Cabinet might have orders as to what should be done. As he arrived at the mansion, so did a colonel, who dismounted and hurried to the front door. Booth watched as the officer yanked on the heavy bell rope. Nothing. He yanked repeatedly and banged on the door. Still nothing. The officer hollered, "French John!" There was no answer from Jean Pierre Siousat, the steward. The home was empty; the president, first lady, their staff, and the 100 soldiers assigned to protect Mrs. Madison were gone. "All was as silent as a church," remembered Booth. The clerk, who had been riding and working for three days straight, finally paused, exhausted, and pondered the alarming reality of what was happening. It hit him "that the metropolis of our country was abandoned to its horrid fate."

The British army was about to arrive, plunder, burn, or perhaps occupy the city he loved. Booth remounted and rode back to the Navy Yard. He had one more dreadful job to do that day. The clerk was struggling with his own issues. His wife, a widow who brought six children into the marriage, had died just months before the start of the war and Booth was deeply in debt trying to care for a large family.

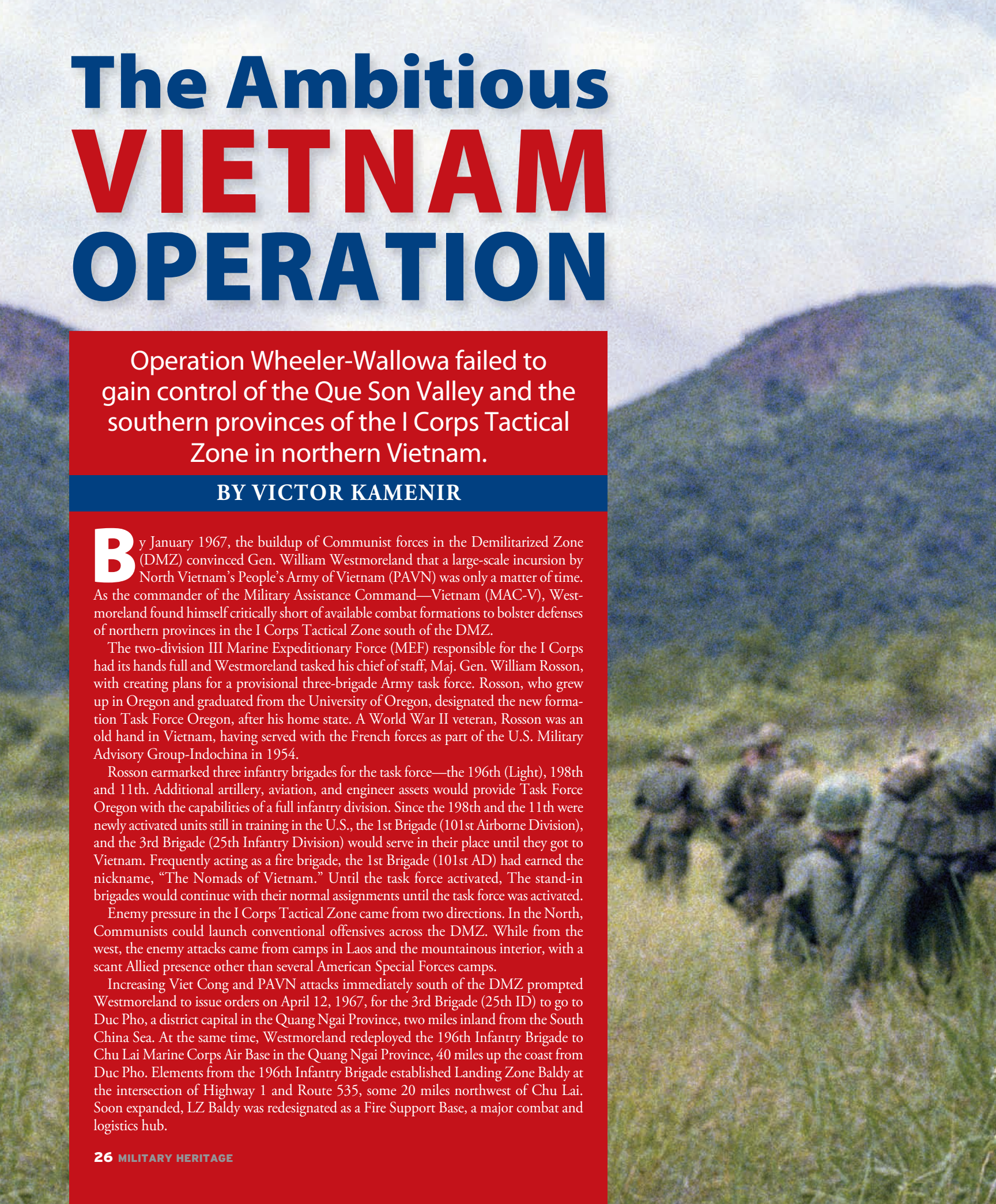
On the way back to the Navy Yard, Booth encountered a small party of American officers on horseback. They conferred and rode together. However, near Long's Hotel they were surprised by an advance unit of British soldiers who tried to capture them. Booth was nearly shot. The Americans managed to elude them, but Booth began to worry that he had been away too long, that Tingey and the Navy Yard may have been captured. He pushed his horse, now barely able to walk, on the precarious ride back toward the wharf.

Tingey was also worried. Had something happened to Booth? They were out of time. Tingey sent the few remaining naval staff away and saw to it that his clerk's children were evacuated. The commandant planned that, if he did not hear from Booth by 8:30 p.m., he would burn the Navy Yard. But his trustworthy clerk arrived 30 minutes before the deadline and delivered more crushing news.

They had no choice. Tingey did not wait until 8:30; he gave the order as soon as Booth arrived. The magnificent Navy Yard, designed by the famed architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, who had helped build the Capitol, was burned. The

Continued on page 95

The Ambitious VIETNAM OPERATION



Operation Wheeler-Wallowa failed to gain control of the Que Son Valley and the southern provinces of the I Corps Tactical Zone in northern Vietnam.

BY VICTOR KAMENIR

By January 1967, the buildup of Communist forces in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) convinced Gen. William Westmoreland that a large-scale incursion by North Vietnam's People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) was only a matter of time. As the commander of the Military Assistance Command—Vietnam (MAC-V), Westmoreland found himself critically short of available combat formations to bolster defenses of northern provinces in the I Corps Tactical Zone south of the DMZ.

The two-division III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) responsible for the I Corps had its hands full and Westmoreland tasked his chief of staff, Maj. Gen. William Rosson, with creating plans for a provisional three-brigade Army task force. Rosson, who grew up in Oregon and graduated from the University of Oregon, designated the new formation Task Force Oregon, after his home state. A World War II veteran, Rosson was an old hand in Vietnam, having served with the French forces as part of the U.S. Military Advisory Group-Indochina in 1954.

Rosson earmarked three infantry brigades for the task force—the 196th (Light), 198th and 11th. Additional artillery, aviation, and engineer assets would provide Task Force Oregon with the capabilities of a full infantry division. Since the 198th and the 11th were newly activated units still in training in the U.S., the 1st Brigade (101st Airborne Division), and the 3rd Brigade (25th Infantry Division) would serve in their place until they got to Vietnam. Frequently acting as a fire brigade, the 1st Brigade (101st AD) had earned the nickname, "The Nomads of Vietnam." Until the task force activated, The stand-in brigades would continue with their normal assignments until the task force was activated.

Enemy pressure in the I Corps Tactical Zone came from two directions. In the North, Communists could launch conventional offensives across the DMZ. While from the west, the enemy attacks came from camps in Laos and the mountainous interior, with a scant Allied presence other than several American Special Forces camps.

Increasing Viet Cong and PAVN attacks immediately south of the DMZ prompted Westmoreland to issue orders on April 12, 1967, for the 3rd Brigade (25th ID) to go to Duc Pho, a district capital in the Quang Ngai Province, two miles inland from the South China Sea. At the same time, Westmoreland redeployed the 196th Infantry Brigade to Chu Lai Marine Corps Air Base in the Quang Ngai Province, 40 miles up the coast from Duc Pho. Elements from the 196th Infantry Brigade established Landing Zone Baldy at the intersection of Highway 1 and Route 535, some 20 miles northwest of Chu Lai. Soon expanded, LZ Baldy was redesignated as a Fire Support Base, a major combat and logistics hub.

Members of a 1st Cavalry Division patrol watch a UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" Helicopter work the area during the Vietnam War in 1967.

Almay

On April 20, Westmoreland activated Task Force Oregon at Chu Lai under Rosson's command, under III MEF's operational control.

The arrival of the Army task force freed Marine ground units to shift north closer to DMZ, leaving Marine Aircraft Group 12, equipped with A-4 Skyhawks, and Marine Aircraft Group 13, with F-4 Phantom IIs, to operate from Chu Lai. Elements of the South Korean 2nd Marine Brigade and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's (ARVN) 2nd Division filled the gap between the two U.S. Army bases.

The base at Chu Lai rapidly expanded to a sprawling complex alongside sandy beaches framed by palm trees. The idyllic scene greeting soldiers newly arriving in Vietnam was interrupted by outgoing artillery and the roar of Marine jets taking off from the airfield. After a few days of training at the Combat Center, the replacements were assigned to their new units and thrust into the brutal reality of jungle warfare.

The coastal provinces in the I Corps Tactical Zone—the region nearest North Vietnam and adjacent to the DMZ—had been under almost total Communist control since the First Indochina War in the 1950s. Except for the American base at Chu Lai, the enemy controlled most of the coastline of the two provinces, bringing in supplies and weapons by boat from North Vietnam.

At the heart of the area, straddling the Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces and extending 25 miles inland, is the Que Son Valley. From its mountainous western end to the coastal lowlands, rice farmers eked out a living in villages and hamlets on low hillocks among rice fields crisscrossed by thick hedgerows. Two roads, Route 535 and Route 534, ran west from coastal Highway 1, joining at the district center of Hiep Duc at the valley's west end.

The local Viet Cong forces and the PAVN 2nd Division used the valley as a logistical area and base of operations. Senior Col. Le Huu Tru commanded the 6,000-strong veteran PAVN division, composed of the 3rd, 21st, and 31st Regiments, with anti-aircraft assets, 120mm rockets, and mortars. The constant clashes between allied and Communist forces were described by a journalist as, "beyond the coastal highways, the [Americans] are interlopers, fighting a frustrating, dirty war against an enemy they rarely see."

Rather than fight conventional battles, the PAVAN/VC tactic was to infiltrate an area, establish defensive positions, then ambush the Americans—inflicting as many casualties as possible before withdrawing.

Arriving Army battalions took over from the Marines the task of locating enemy bases and supply caches in an inhospitable terrain full of mines, booby-traps and snipers. Success was measured in body counts and captured enemy weapons and equipment. Rosson immediately launched a series of aggressive operations in conjunction with the South Vietnamese and South Koreans, named after eastern Oregon counties: Malheur, Hood River, Benton, and Cook.

In the field, U.S. infantry companies typically operated within a two-hour march apart for mutual support. Individual platoons had their own objectives within a company's area of operations, but stayed close to reassemble rapidly if needed. Troops carried rations and ammo for three to five days because they might be in the field for extended periods and supplies dropped by helicopter could give away their position.

At first, the Army brigades had success as the North Vietnamese, used to Marines with few helicopter assets, were accustomed to moving around even during the day without being observed. The

All: National Archives

ABOVE: A soldier on patrol from 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, conducting a search and destroy mission points to a suspected Vietcong outpost in September, 1967, during opening days of Operation Wheeler. LEFT: An Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) interpreter questions villagers during a search and destroy mission conducted 18 miles southwest of Da Nang during Operation Wallowa, which began in October, 1967. OPPOSITE: As part of Operation Wheeler, soldiers from Company "C," 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Brigade, search for enemy activity and targets from their observation post in the mountainous Tam Ky area of the Republic of Vietnam.

U.S. Army's ubiquitous UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" gunships exacted a heavy toll on the Communist troops before they adjusted their tactics and operations. The PAVN quickly developed effective countermeasures, utilizing heavy 12.7mm and 14.5mm machine guns in the anti-aircraft role.

The enemy was everywhere and nowhere in the hostile and alien terrain. A GI might come across a statue of Buddha sitting serenely in a clearing—never hearing the sniper's shot, or worse, hearing the sickening "click" of an activating booby trap. The Viet Cong were careful to mark mines and traps so their troops and local villagers would not walk into them. Allied patrols tried to get cooperation from villagers before sweeping an area, but it was rarely possible, as they might be Viet Cong sympathizers or too terrified to cooperate.

In a typical operation, U.S. infantry inserted by helicopter would surround a hamlet or a village and sweep it for Viet Cong cadres and sympathizers, weapons, and supplies while armored vehicles set up blocking positions to prevent escape. Villagers were then allowed to take what they could carry and moved to refugee camps. Then the village was burned, becoming a free-fire zone where U.S. firepower could be brought to bear without fear of killing civilians.

The 1st Brigade (101st AD), arrived at Duc Pho in May and immediately began patrolling west of the town. On May 15, a company of paratroopers was ambushed by an estimated battalion-size force of PAVN regulars fortified in a bunker complex. Maj. Charles Kettles, a flight commander in the 176th Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, volunteered to lead a flight of Hueys to bring in reinforcements and evacuate the wounded.

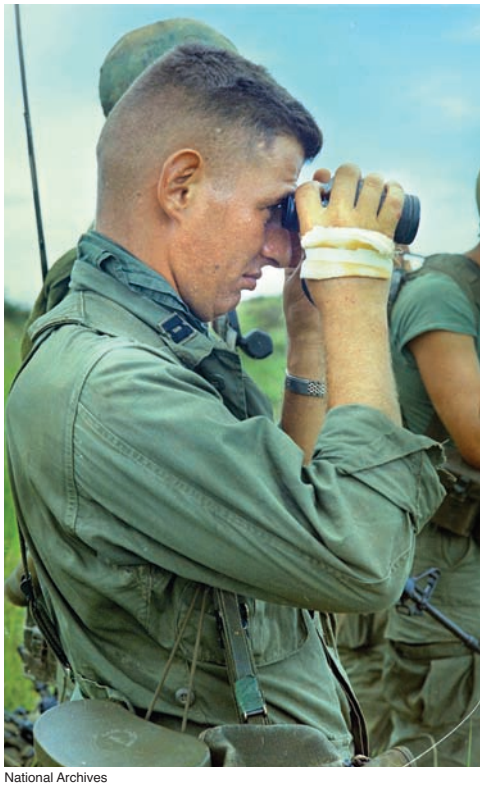
Kettles twice led flights to the landing zone, where heavy enemy fire hit soldiers before they had a chance to leap out of the helicopters. In the afternoon, a call came in to evacuate the remaining 40 infantrymen, as well as four crewmembers from a shot-down helicopter from Kettles' company. Kettles led the choppers back to the fight for the third time that day, the soldiers scrambling aboard as machine guns peppered the helicopters. On the return leg, Kettles was advised that eight men had been left behind, cut off by heavy fire. Without a thought, Kettles flew back and rescued the missing soldiers, his damaged helicopter barely making it back to base. For his actions, Major Kettles received a Distinguished Service Cross in 1968 and a Medal of Honor in 2016 after a special act of Congress. "We got the forty-four out. None of those names appear on the wall in Washington. There's nothing more important than that," Kettles said.

In July 1967, Rosson was promoted to lieutenant general and took command of the 1st Field Force, a corps-level formation. Task Force Oregon was turned over to Brig. Gen. Samuel Koster, a veteran of World War II and Korea.

By the end of August 1967, the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st-1st Cavalry, composed of three armored cavalry troops equipped with M113 Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicles, finished deploying to Vietnam and joined Task Force Oregon.

On September 11, Koster commenced "Operation Wheeler," named for another Oregon county, in the southern part of the Que Son Valley. Under the command of Brig. Gen. Salve Matheson, 1st Brigade (101st AD) established their headquarters near Tam Ky, the capital of Quang Tin Province, on Highway 1. The goal of Operation Wheeler was to conduct a series of

U.S. Marine Corps



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ABOVE: This F-4 Phantom II from Marine Aircraft Group 13, as well as A-4 Skyhawks (Marine Aircraft Group 12), operated from Chu Lai to support ground operations with 500 pound bombs and napalm. RIGHT: CPT Antonio Mavroudis, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Brigade looks for enemy targets from an observation post on a mountain top. The company was participating in Operation "Wheeler" in the Tam Ky area. CPT Mavroudis was killed in action 28 October 1967. OPPOSITE: 26 October 1967: Soldiers from Company "D," 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division move up a hill to check out a hut during a search and destroy mission in the Quang Ngai Province, 8 kilometers West of Duc Pho, Republic of Vietnam.

search-and-destroy missions against the 2nd PAVN Division, which has been operating in the area since 1966.

On September 25, 1967, Westmoreland issued orders converting Task Force Oregon, a division in all but name, to an actual numbered division, the 23rd, the seventh U.S. division fighting in Vietnam. At the same time, Koster received his second star, and the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, was redesignated as the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. In addition, Westmoreland temporarily shifted the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) under Col. Hubert Campbell in early October north from the II Corps to assist with Operation Wheeler.

First activated in May 1942 on the Pacific island of New Caledonia, the 23rd Infantry Division became known as "Americal" (American, New Caledonian Division), even in official correspondence.

Arriving in the I Corps Tactical Zone, the 3rd Brigade (1st Cav) established Landing Zones Leslie and Ross on the west end of the Que Son Valley by the village that gave the valley its name.

On October 3, Campbell's Brigade launched "Operation Wallowa" (another Oregon county) from Landing Zone Baldy to form the northern prong of Operation Wheeler. At the same time, Koster reinforced Matheson with a battalion from the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

On October 22, leading elements from the 198th Infantry Brigade under Col. Louis Gelling began arriving at Duc Pho from Ft. Hood, Texas.

On November 8, the 3rd Regiment (2nd PAVN) sprung an ambush with 75mm recoilless rifles on a column of tracked armored vehicles from the 1st Cavalry Division near LZ Ross. The ambush cost the lives of 10 American soldiers, with 46 wounded. In response, artillery and air strikes pulverized the area. The infantry companies inserted the following day found three 75mm recoilless rifles and forty-five enemy bodies. A captured soldier disclosed that the 68th PAVN Artillery Regiment, armed with 122mm rockets, was in the area.

Unable to employ conventional artillery in the mountainous wooded terrain, Communist forces extensively utilized Soviet and Chinese-made 105-pound portable rockets, frequently fired from improvised bamboo launchers up to seven miles away.

Koster ran extensive helicopter hunter-killer operations to find and destroy Vietnamese rockets. Aero-scout White Teams attempted to locate enemy positions and call them in for aero-weapons Red Teams to pounce upon. When the two teams

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operated in tandem, they were called Pink Teams. Afterwards, a flight of four troop helicopters, each carrying a Blue Team–a six-man infantry aero-rifle unit—was inserted to conduct mop-up operations and evaluate the effects of an attack.

These missions flew so low and close that the Americans aboard helicopters and the Communist soldiers on the ground could see each other's eyes. On multiple occasions, the choppers returned to base with enemy blood on the outside of their windshields.

On November 11, to facilitate command and control, Koster merged operations Wheeler and Wallowa into one, conducted primarily by the 1st Brigade (101st AD) and the 3rd Brigade (1st CD).

On November 13, automatic weapons fire shot down a Blue Team Huey. As additional U.S. helicopters arrived to rescue the downed aircrew, several concealed enemy 12.7mm machine guns unleashed a fury of fire. One chopper exploded in the air, and two more crash-landed. In response, American artillery and aircraft pounded the reported enemy positions. Then three rifle companies from Lt. Col. Robert Kimmel's 1st-35th Infantry established a defensive perimeter around the downed aircraft.

Kimmel was up the next day in bad weather directing the search-and-destroy operation from a command-and-control helicopter when it was hit by enemy machine gun fire and crash landed in a rice paddy. Another aircraft picked Kimmel up, and he was back in the air an hour later. Kimmel returned the next day when inclement weather forced the pilot to fly low to the ground. After enemy 12.7mm rounds peppered the chopper, it lost its tail rotor and exploded on impact, killing all aboard. Lt. Col. Marion Ross and his 2nd-12th Cavalry took over the mission. After failing to establish contact with the elusive enemy for two days, Ross terminated the operation. In the wake of the incident, the Americal Division command changed tactics by requiring ground units to secure the area before attempting rescue by helicopter.

After additional in-country training, the 198th Infantry Brigade moved from Duc Pho to Chu Lai to relieve the 196th, which shifted to the southern sector of the Wheeler/Wallowa operation. The 1st Brigade (101st AD) temporarily moved south to II Corps Tactical Zone.

On November 22, a U.S. signals intelligence detachment intercepted transmissions that appeared to come from the headquarters of the 3rd PAVN. Triangulation pinpointed the suspected headquarters to Hill 63, a small hill four miles east of LZ Ross.

At the time, Major Gilbert Dorland, the executive officer of the 4-31st Infantry Regiment, 196th Infantry Brigade, led a mixed infantry-armor patrol in the area. The 29-year-old West Point graduate, on his second Vietnam tour, led two companies from his battalion, two platoons of armored personnel carriers from Troop F, 17th Cavalry, and four tanks from Troop A, 1-1st Cav. It was too late in the day to act on this intelligence, and Dorland's small task force went into a nighttime laager.

The following day, under heavy rain, Dorland's two infantry companies approached Hill 63 from two directions, with the armored vehicles in reserve. As the U.S. soldiers began moving uphill around 7 a.m., a withering hail of small arms and machine-gun fire struck one of the companies. In minutes, four Americans were dead and eight wounded. The second company moved up and became heavily engaged as well. Judging by the fire intensity, Dorland estimated the enemy numbers to be roughly battalion-strength.

At Dorland's command, M48 tanks and M113 armored personnel carriers charged forward to support the infantrymen. The armored vehicles advanced so fast that Dorland remembered some PAVN scrambling out of their spider holes practically from under the vehicles' tracks.

Enemy recoilless rifles opened fire from short range, scoring hits on two tracked vehicles. Dorland, riding on top of his APC, was thrown off when a hit on his vehicle killed the track commander. Not seeing Dorland on the ground, the driver backed over the major as he maneuvered

All: National Archives

TOP: First Air Cavalry GIs observe artillery hit an enemy position during search and destroy, west of Duc Pho, Quang Ngai Province. ABOVE: Men of "A" Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry climb a slope outside of LZ Ross during Operation Wallowa. OPPOSITE: A CH-47 Chinook helicopter lowers a water trailer to soldiers of the 101st Airborne Brigade in September 1967. The 81mm Mortar Section was providing fire support for units on search and destroy missions in the Tam Ky area, as a part of Operation Wheeler.

to shield infantrymen behind the vehicle. Although seriously hurt, Dorland was still able to move. He refused medical care and evacuation and remained in the field to direct the fight.

With the weather clearing, Dorland called in artillery and air strikes on enemy positions. Marine F-4 Phantoms from Chu Lai pounded the area with napalm and 500-pound bombs. Despite Americans' overwhelming firepower, the PAVN soldiers refused to surrender or withdraw from their well-fortified positions. The M48 Patton tanks blasted enemy bunkers at point-blank range and crushed the spider holes with their tracks while infantrymen got in close to drop grenades and C-4 into tunnels.

Aware of the brutal fight on Dorland's hands, the 196th Brigade dispatched two more infantry companies, delivered by helicopters from the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion. Despite Dorland's reluctance to leave the fight, he was ordered to do so and was replaced by LTC Thomas, commander of the 4-31st Infantry.

When the enemy finally withdrew the following day, U.S. soldiers found 128 bodies identified by captured documents as belonging to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd PAVN Regiment. American casualties were 7 dead and 84 wounded in the fight for Hill 63. Major Dorland received the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions.

In the afternoon on December 5, U.S. observation helicopters spotted enemy soldiers between two mountaintops north of LZ Ross. Responding gunships attacked the group with devastating results. A rapidly inserted Blue Team killed several more, bringing the total to 17 enemy KIA. Among the North Vietnamese killed were the 2nd PAVN Division commander, Colonel Tru; the Division's political commissar Nguyen Minh Duc; deputy chief of staff; chief of rear services; chief of operations and intelligence, chief of combat operations and training; and commanders of the 31st and 21st Regiments, as well as several battalion commanders.

Documents found on officers' bodies showed plans for a division-sized attack against Ross. Based on captured documents, American intelligence believed the attack would occur around the end of December.

After the American troops withdrew from the scene of the attack, the 2nd PAVN Division's Deputy Political Commissar Bui Duc Tung led a small patrol to recover the bodies. "When Nguyen Chon [Commander of the 1st Regiment] and I went uphill from Son Phuc, the enemy has withdrawn," Tung remembered. "The scene was desolate, the trees were ruined, the bodies of comrades were no longer intact. I assigned soldiers to bury each person at the foot of the mountain, and local people volunteered to protect the graves."

After the war, Colonel Tru's body was recovered and identified by his silver tooth.

On December 9, White Team helicopters located a large body of PAVN troops three miles north of LZ Baldy. Gunships and artillery blanketed the area as companies from the 1st-35th Infantry hurried to engage on the ground. The day-long fight resulted in more than 120 enemy dead and 10 taken prisoner. Interrogated prisoners revealed efforts by the 2nd PAVN Division to accumulate food stores to sustain significant operations in the Que Son Valley.

In mid-December, in the south of the I Corps, the 198th Infantry Brigade launched "Operation Muscatine" to secure the immediate vicinity of Chu Lai within the larger scope of Operation Wheeler/Wallowa.

On December 20, the 11th Infantry Brigade under Brig. Gen. Andrew Lipscomb arrived in Duc Pho from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and immediately began in-country training. Once deemed ready, the 11th Infantry Brigade took over the mission of Operation Muscatine from the 198th.

As a prelude to the Tet Offensive, Senior Colonel Giap Van Cuong, a new commander of the 2nd PAVN Division, received orders to destroy the 3rd Brigade (1st CD). On December 26, three North Vietnamese defectors reported an imminent attack against LZs Ross and Baldy. On January 1, 1968, all radio traffic by the 2nd PAVN Division stopped, typical of previous enemy operational patterns.

On January 2, General Koster launched a preemptive sweep near LZ Ross. A company from the 2nd-12th Cavalry rapidly established contact with the enemy west of the landing zone. Reinforced by another company, the cavalry troopers accounted for over 20 enemy KIA. Two enemy prisoners revealed the arrival of additional reinforcements, anti-aircraft machine guns, and a battery of six 122mm rocket launchers.

Before dawn on January 3, battalion-size units from the 2nd PAVN Division attacked U.S. firebases in the Que Son Valley. Landing Zones Ross and Leslie bore the brunt of the assault, coming under 82mm and 120mm mortar fire, 122mm rockets, and 75mm recoilless rifles.

Two battalions from the 3rd Regiment attacked LZ Ross from the west, while one battalion from the 21st Regiment came from the south. A sheet of fire sliced into the enemy as U.S. artillerymen lowered the gun barrels to fire practically in the faces of the oncoming PAVN troops. At LZ Leslie, an enemy company-size sapper element armed with satchel charges and flamethrowers breached the perimeter before being wiped out. By 6 a.m., the enemy fell back at the cost of 18 American dead, 137 wounded, and more than 300 North Vietnamese killed.

Throughout January 4 and 5, infantry companies from the 196th Infantry Brigade became hotly engaged with elements of the 1st PAVN Regiment in the vicinity of LZ West, six miles south of LZ Ross. As Company C (2nd-1st Infantry) was preparing night laager positions, it came under a heavy attack that killed the company commander and one of the platoon leaders. By the time another company arrived four hours later to drive the enemy back, 16 Americans lay dead, with 56 wounded. During the week's fighting, enemy heavy machine guns in an antiaircraft

role damaged thirty-two American helicopters, destroying six.

The official newspaper of the North Vietnamese Army claimed victory over one of the battalions of the 196th Infantry Brigade. "When the enemy arrived at the battle area, our two 12.7mm weapons lowered their barrels and fired at the U.S. infantry forces. The Regiment's strong firepower subdued the enemy artillery," the newspaper described the actions of the 3rd Regiment, 2nd PAVN Division. "Along with cover fire, the regiment formed many prongs of attack of the enemy, cutting off the rear area, and attacked the enemy's flank, cutting the enemy forces into small clusters in order to destroy them," the Communist narrative went, "the battle quickly resulted in victory. The 3rd Battalion, 196th U.S. Brigade, was basically put out of action. Two Companies were destroyed, and one company suffered heavy losses."

In mid-January, the 2nd PAVN Division withdrew, having failed in its mission to destroy the 3rd Brigade (1st CD) and losing more than 1,100 men killed and about the same number wounded.

In the southern sector of the Americal Division's area of operations, in the heavily populated Quang Tin and Quang Ngai provinces, more troops were needed to defend all population centers. Rural mountain areas were largely ceded to the enemy. Strong local Viet Cong forces controlled most of the Quang Ngai Province and fortified every hamlet and village under its control with formidable multi-layered defenses. The enemy presence was particularly heavy in the Batangan Peninsula. Two battalions from the 198th Infantry Brigade began patrolling the peninsula, relieving the South Korean Marines who moved to the Quang Nam Province.

The PAVN's 3rd Division maintained a heavy presence in the Quang Ngai Province, where the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 3rd Brigade(4th ID) conducted sweeping operations along the Quang Tin-Quang Ngai boundary. With help from South Vietnamese forces, most population centers were relatively secured by the end of November, and the 3rd PAVN Division withdrew south to the II Corps Tactical Zone.

Without slowing down the operations tempo, General Koster shuffled the units under his command, sending the 196th Infantry Brigade to the North and replacing it with the 11th Infantry Brigade.

By the end of January, clashes with Communist forces steadily escalated, with both American brigades conducting constant battalion-sized operations. Heavy fighting and overwhelming American firepower reduced many villages to ashes, exacerbating the severe refugee problem.

When a major Communist offensive kicked off on January 31, at the start of Tet, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year, base camps of the Americal Division came under attack. An intense rocket and mortar attack hit Chu Lai Air Base. An unfortunate hit on a bomb storage facility caused a catastrophic explosion, destroying three aircraft and damaging twenty-three others. Once their bases were secured, Westmoreland moved the 3rd Brigade (1st CD) and the 1st Brigade (101st AB) to Hue to assist the Marines fighting to liberate the ancient Vietnamese Imperial Capital. In the fighting west of the city, the 2nd-12th Cavalry suffered heavy casualties.

After the Tet offensive was defeated, Westmoreland withdrew the 3rd Brigade (4th ID) from the Que Son Valley, shifting it south to Binh Dinh Province by the end of February. This left only the 196th Infantry Brigade to continue Operation Wheeler/Wallowa in the North of the I Corps. At the same time, a fourth rifle company was formed in each battalion of the 196th and 198th Brigades.

The fighting continued unabated. In the Que Son Valley, the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 1st-1st Cavalry continued searching for the 2nd PAVN Division. On February 26, the 1st-1st Cavalry, sweeping through the area two miles southwest of Tam Ky, made contact with a large

force of local and Main Force Viet Cong units. Over the next three days, cavalry troopers, reinforced by an infantry company, killed more than 200 Viet Cong guerillas.

In early March, intelligence reported that elements of the Communist Division came down from the mountains to gather provisions. On March 4, the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 1st-1st Cavalry encountered a large force from the 3rd PAVN regiment. Over the next week, in a series of running firefights, U.S. soldiers killed 400 North Vietnamese soldiers.

On March 16, Company C, 1st-20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade was on a sweep south of the Batangan Peninsula, an area under almost complete Viet Cong control for most of the war. Despite encountering no enemy presence or resistance in the hamlet of My Lai, American troops massacred between 350 and 500 unarmed Vietnamese civilians, ranging in age from infants to the elderly. Although aware of the event, General Koster made little effort to thoroughly investigate the tragedy, which remained unknown to the

All: National Archives

ABOVE: An M48A3 Patton tank from 1st Cav Division advances on a village. Tanks and M113 armored personnel carriers working alongside infantry provided needed firepower, with an occasional tank battle against the PAVAN (People's Army of Vietnam). LEFT: Lt. Col. Charles Kettles receives the Medal of Honor from President Barrack Obama on July 18, 2016, for actions during a battle near Duc Pho, on May 15, 1967. Kettles, was credited with evacuating dozens of Soldiers in a UH-1D Huey helicopter under intense enemy fire. OPPOSITE: A CH-47 Chinook helicopter deploys soldiers from Company "D," (2nd BA, 35th IN, 3rd BR, 4th ID) in Quang Ngai Province near Duc Pho.

American public for another year.

From April to November 1968, when Operation Wheeler/Wallowa ran its course, the Americal Division conducted several smaller scope operations under the Wheeler/Wallow aegis. From April 8-19, the 11th Infantry Brigade conducted Operation Norfolk Victory, a series of area sweeps in the Nghia Hanh District, Quang Ngai Province, resulting in forty-three enemy and five Americans killed.

The 198th Infantry Brigade carried out Operation Burlington Trail in the Quang Nam Province to keep Route 533 open in the Que Son Valley. By the time Burlington Trail ran its course in December, Communist losses came to over 1,900 killed at the cost of 129 American lives.

In June, having served a year in command, Koster returned to the United States and Maj. Gen. Charles Gettys became the second commander of the Americal Division on June 23.

During most of July, Gettys conducted Operation Pocahontas to secure the west end of the Que Son Valley with a provisional task force of five U.S. infantry battalions and supporting South Vietnamese units. Despite extensive patrolling and sweeps, the operation only killed 127 enemy troops while losing 18 U.S. soldiers.

Elements from the 3rd PAVN Division, from the Binh Dinh Province in the II Corps Tactical Zone, were active in the southern Quang Ngai Province. In September, the 11th Infantry Brigade conducted Operation Champaign Grove against the 3rd PAVN Division, inflicting 378 enemy KIA while losing 41 Americans. The Brigade then shifted into Operation Vernon Lake in November, the last action under the Wheeler/Wallowa umbrella, eliminating 435 enemy soldiers and losing 35 of their own.

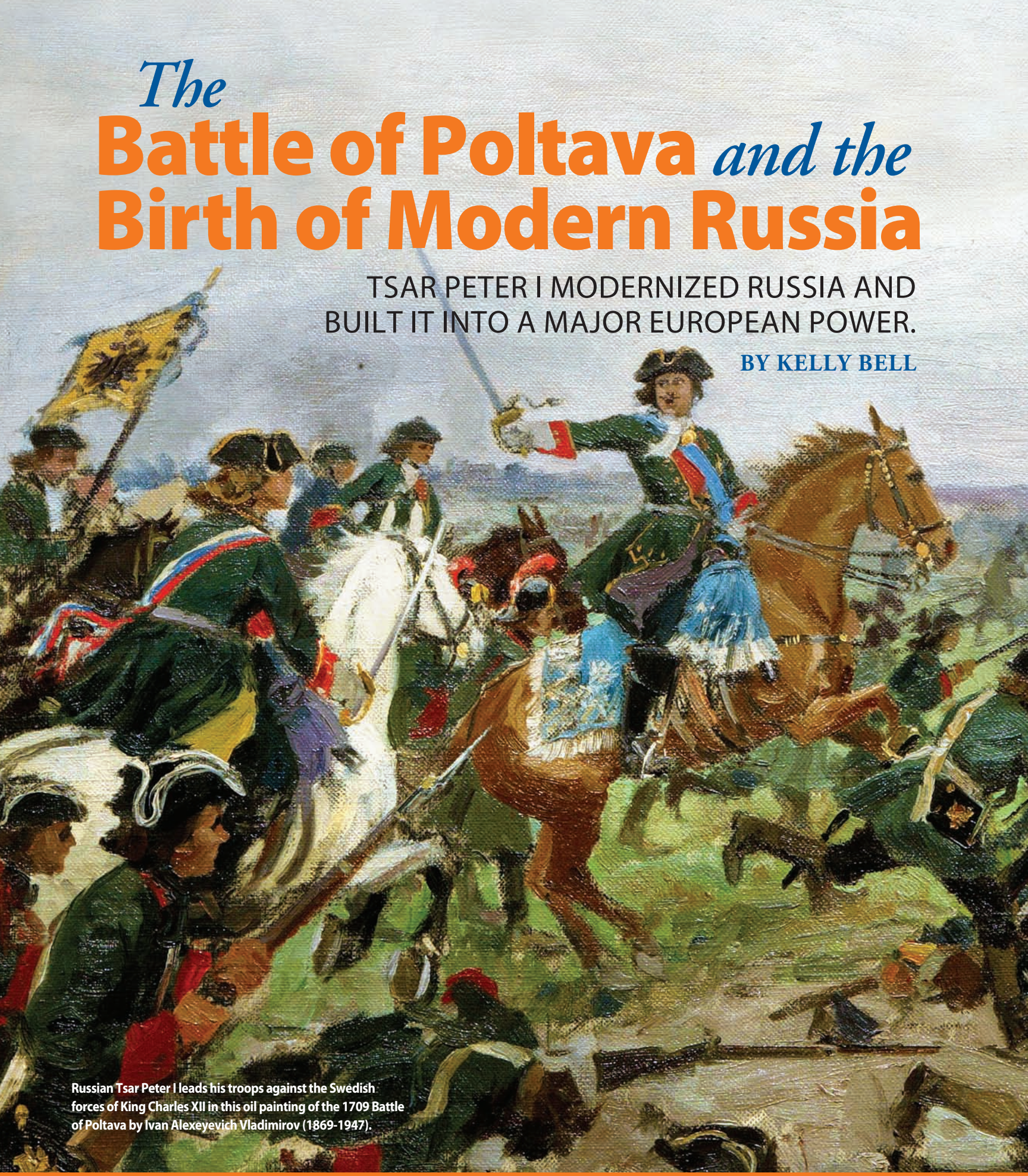
On November 16, just five days after terminating Operation Wheeler/Wallowa, Maj. Gen. Gettys flew to inspect a captured PAVN base camp. On board the general's UH-1 helicopter was the Division's Assistant Chief of Staff, Maj. Colin Powell, future Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff. During landing, the chopper's rotor blade struck a tree, causing the machine to drop from the height of three stories. Despite suffering a broken ankle, Powell pulled the injured Getty and two other officers from the wreckage while a door gunner rescued other occupants. Because the crash was not a result of enemy action, Power received a Soldier's Medal, an award for bravery not involved in actual combat contact with the enemy.

Despite the ultimate sacrifice made by more than 220 American servicemen and more than 10,000 claimed PAVN and Viet Cong killed, Operation Wheeler/Wallowa ultimately failed to gain control of the three southern provinces in the I Corps Tactical Zone. While the Communists scored a significant propaganda victory during the Tet Offensive, their forces suffered grievous losses in men and materiel. No longer able to engage the Americans in the "battle of big battalions," the PAVN and Viet Cong forces continued the guerilla warfare unabated. ■

The Battle of Poltava *and the* Birth of Modern Russia

TSAR PETER I MODERNIZED RUSSIA AND BUILT IT INTO A MAJOR EUROPEAN POWER.

BY KELLY BELL



Russian Tsar Peter I leads his troops against the Swedish forces of King Charles XII in this oil painting of the 1709 Battle of Poltava by Ivan Alexeyevich Vladimirov (1869-1947).

More than 300 years ago Russia was a supine giant convulsing internally from factionalism, making it difficult to resist hostile incursions, until 23-year-old Crown Prince Peter I ascended to the tsarist throne in 1696. A far-sighted young man, Peter the Great, as the world would soon know him, could diagnose issues at a glance and deduce needed crucial reforms. He was equally adept at executing those changes. After quickly establishing himself as absolute monarch he embarked on a crusade to open up his country to the progressive West and hence guide it into a rapidly developing, expanding world.

Peter perceived the domestic resources at his disposal and the benefits to be gained from their exploitation. By exporting flax, hemp, pitch, furs, hides and timber Mother Russia could reap bountiful largesse from international markets thirsting for these commodities. The fly in the ointment was that, despite its gargantuan size, his country was mostly landlocked. Apart from the White Sea port of Archangel, which was closed by ice most of the year, there was no access to international shipping lanes. Along with upgrading his military, Peter desperately needed a seaport on the busy Baltic Sea. First, though, came his armed forces. Russia's vast reservoirs of natural resources would not be enough, as he made clear in a conference with his top advisors:

"A ruler who has but an army has but one hand, but he who [also] has a navy has both."

Sweden was his main adversary, so the young Tsar hired army and naval experts from Holland, England, Scotland and Prussia to overhaul Russia's military. Considering the caliber of his opposite number this was not a situation he dared overlook.

Like Peter, Charles XII was a young man, crowned king of Sweden in 1697 age 15. And like most adolescents, especially those finding themselves in such a position of power, he was impetuous. But he was far beyond his few years in his quick, clear grasp of issues and circumstances and how to address them. And, like Peter, he had a ruthless determination to succeed—just one of their many similarities of personality and ambition.

Charles eagerly, meticulously absorbed a military education in pursuit of his aspiration to match the feats of his illustrious predecessor Gustav II Vasa (known in Europe as Gustavus Adolphus) who had established Sweden as a major power via his battlefield exploits during the Thirty Years' War. Crowned king at age 17 Gustaphus had imposed Swedish domination over Finland, Lapland, Karelia, Ingria, Estonia, Livonia, western Pomerania, the Baltic port of Wismar and the North Sea bishoprics of Bremen and Verden. By 1697, Charles' powerful navy controlled the Baltic—and access to

Alamy

Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

commerce for Poland, the northern German states and Russia.

Still, Peter was not intimidated. He aimed to supplant Sweden as the main power in the lucrative Baltic region, but realized he needed a realistic and credible reason to justify opening hostilities in the war this would require. He thought of two.

The first was Ingria, at the northwestern tip of modern-day Russia that had been a source of Russo-Swedish contention for hundreds of years. It was there that Peter intended to construct the future, vital port of St. Petersburg. Since 1617 it had been governed by Sweden, and was a tinderbox of smoldering discontent between its Lutheran rulers and Russian Orthodox citizens, who were eager to be freed from their denominational rivals.

Peter's second reason was more personal. In 1697, fearing assassination, he had arrived incognito on a visit to Riga on the Baltic coast. Hoping to tour and take copious notes on the harbor's defensive fortifications he was angered when the city's Swedish governor refused him access to the waterfront. Taking this affront personally he used it as further justification to commence a campaign of aggression, and in 1699 allied himself with Saxony and Denmark, who were also hostile to Sweden. After spending the rest of that year mobilizing and merging logistics with his new allies he declared war in 1700. The Great Northern War, as the conflict came to be known, would last into 1721 and it would teach Peter to respect his opposite number.

As the fighting began and spread, Charles quickly made a name for himself as a true paladin of the battlefield. His charismatic personality, coupled with his tactical acumen, soon endeared him to his soldiers. As did the fact that he lived, fought, ate and slept alongside them. An unnamed advisor described him as "married to his army." Charles savored the life of a campaigner, spending almost his entire reign in the field. His renown spread beyond his borders as Britain's Duke of Marlborough expressed a yearning to join Charles' command and "learn what I yet want to know in the art of war."

As the Great Northern War unfolded, Charles wasted no time in wounding his adversaries, crushing the Danes before turning his eager attention to Peter and his ally Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. In November 1700 Charles and not quite 9,000 of his soldiers stormed forward out of a blizzard, breaching the fortifications of Narva (just west of modern-day St. Petersburg) and crushing a Russian garrison of 40,000.

A sobered Peter may well have been willing to come to terms at this point, but Charles offered no peace feelers. As a devout Protestant he held his opposite number in the lowest esteem, regarding him a decadent, secular ruler whose domain needed liberating. For the time being, however, Charles felt the Russians were sufficiently cowed to allow him to turn his attention to other, still-unfinished matters. Launching major campaigns in 1702 and 1703 he crushed the Saxons, and then attacked Augustus, forcing him to flee Poland and abandon his throne to Charles' puppet king, Stanislaw I. But Peter was taking notes, making preparations for a protracted and decisive reaction, a fact he made clear at a summit for his top field commanders: "The Swedes will go on beating us for a long time, but eventually they will teach us how to beat them."

He commenced dispatching troops to assist Augustus while simultaneously working on his own logistics and recruiting. His determination to avenge the humiliation of Narva moved him to introduce widespread conscription and heavily tax Russia's Orthodox monasteries—even ordering church bells to be melted down and forged

into cannons. He hired western officers to create, train and lead elite corps. Charles would be the first enemy to learn the rueful lesson later thrust upon Napoleon and Hitler—Mother Russia, her resources and climate are formidable.

Peter could—and did—draw upon an essentially endless reservoir of serfs to flesh out his ranks, and was quite willing to absorb staggering losses in order to achieve his aims. The sheer size of the country, as well as its harsh weather, were formidable obstacles for invaders. An ambitious army might easily cross Russia's seemingly endless border, but it was nearly impossible to overrun. There is simply too much land to conquer, especially when it is blanketed by deep snow and cloaked in killing cold most of the year.

Doubtless cognizant of the military advantages being provided by the Motherland's size and climate, the young tsar threw himself into anti-Swedish endeavors. In the spring of 1703 he smashed a fly with a sledgehammer by sending a massive army to crush the little fortress of Nyenskans at the mouth of the Neva river. Although a clear case of overkill, his actions may have been justified in light of the offensive's results. By eliminating this minuscule enclave Peter totally routed the Swedes from the eastern extreme of the Gulf of Finland. He then commenced heavily militarizing this area. These fortifications would soon grow into his capital of St. Petersburg. Emboldened by this latest success, he followed it up by retaking the town of Narva in a grisly battle that ended August 9, 1704.

Charles refused to be discouraged by this setback, and made no effort to alter his strategy and aims. He stuck to his plan to first strike at Russia by neutralizing its ally prior to a decisive confrontation with Peter. In September he launched an attack of such abandon that it knocked the Poles off balance as Swedish invaders rampaged 1,000 miles across their country and into the heart of Saxony, shattering Augustus' forces and compelling him to sign a humiliating armistice that formally ended his partnership with the tsar. Suddenly stripped of allies, Peter considered abandoning his warrior ways and embracing mediation. This might have made for a fairly positive outcome for Charles because of an unrelated situation.

Since 1701, western Europe had been embroiled in the bloody War of Spanish Succession. Beset by a coalition of resolute enemies, French King Louis XIV was running low on resources of all kinds, especially competent soldiers. Casting about for a mercenary army he noted (along with the rest of Europe) the impressive recent performance of Swedish fighting men. The elderly monarch approached Charles, offering him a deal in which Louis would arrange a cease-fire between Sweden and Russia if Swedish troops would fight alongside the French.

Charles saw no reason to shift his focus from east to west and embroil his armies in a conflict whose outcome either way would offer little profit to Sweden. Besides the lack of a clear motive for accepting the French overture, the youthful Scandinavian monarch could readily perceive Russia's dire straits. His war against Peter was going well, so why make peace when victory appeared within his grasp? He decided to launch a major offensive and finish off Peter.

Swedish spies had informed him most of western Russia's population was disillusioned by Peter's seeming determination to sweep away traditional Russian values. His far-ranging reforms aimed at modernizing the country had not yet produced noticeable improvement, and such dictates as the banning of wearing beards and long coats struck the people as bizarre and invasive. When his Fifth Column operatives informed him these people would greet him as a liberator, Charles resolved to deliver a knockout blow. He would send his armies on a trek across Poland and Lithuania, stabbing into the Motherland's heart with Moscow as his final objective.

His first task was to gather a force sufficiently sizable for the coming operation, and to secure dependable supply routes. With both these aims in mind he contacted Ukrainian Cossack Chieftain Mazeppa, who was eager to free his land and people from tsarist rule. He led 30,000 cavalrymen, expert in fighting on horseback, into Charles' encampments. Mazeppa not only provided crucial manpower, but assured his new Swedish ally their combined forces would be adequately nourished from Ukraine's fertile croplands. Leaving nothing to chance, Charles sent for additional soldiers from Sweden, where governmental officials were bemoaning the war's drain on their economy and resources.

As the weather warmed in the spring of 1708, Charles bivouacked his command of 35,000 troops at Borisov, 180 miles west of Smolensk. At Riga, 500 miles to the northwest, Count Adam Lewenhaupt waited with another 12,500 soldiers. As he was settling in at Borisov, Charles sent word for Lewenhaupt to join him and bring his crucial supply wagon train. Without waiting for a

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The Hermitage, St. Petersburg

ABOVE, LEFT: Crowned at 15, King Charles XII of Sweden took to life as a soldier and spent most of his reign campaigning in the field. ABOVE, RIGHT: Ten-year-old Peter I was named co-Tsar of Russia with his 16-year-old half-brother, Ivan V, in 1682—the year Charles XII of Sweden was born. The half brothers ruled Russia jointly until 1696, though actual power during that time was wielded by Sophia Alekseyevna, Ivan's full sister and Peter's half-sister. OPPOSITE: Charles XII watches as Russians under Peter I surrender their colors and salute the victor after the Battle of Narva in November 1700.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

response Charles impatiently advanced on Peter's army, only to have it flee eastward. It was a ploy to extend the Swedes' supply conduit, making it longer and requiring more troops to guard its increased length. Charles saw through this tactic, and halted his army upon reaching the Dnieper, intending to wait for Lewenhaupt. After encamping in and around the city of Mogliev, Charles received a dispatch informing him his reinforcements and supplies were unable to embark because of a paucity of horses and wagons. Lewenhaupt estimated it would be July before he could move out.

This delay could have worked to the invaders' advantage. The troops were winded and hungry after their already-lengthy advance. Waiting for their reinforcements and supplies would give Charles' men time to rest and refresh and—considering the date of Lewenhaupt's arrival was uncertain—perhaps wait out the brutal Russian winter in relatively comfortable accommodations, or even withdraw to the opulent Ukraine, where they could be assured of more-than-sufficient food and yet more recruits. Mazeppa, however, was anxious to join forces with the Swedes and defeat the Russians before Peter learned of what he would regard as treason on the part of the Cossack leader. Despite his misgivings, Charles fatefully let himself be talked into heading south without waiting for Lewenhaupt.

From this point Peter's innate tactical/strategic skills came through as he dispatched troops to the Ukraine to re-establish Tsarist authority and find a general of auxiliaries who, unlike Mazeppa, was loyal to Moscow. Word of this maneuver spread, and most of Mazeppa's Cossacks deserted him and aligned themselves with Peter. Although the situation was looking increasingly grim for Charles, he had not yet lost hope because, in early August, Lewenhaupt finally sortied with reinforcements and the supply convoy. This lengthy, horse-drawn line of thousands of wagons, however, was slowed by torrential autumn rains as it

Both: Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

ABOVE, LEFT: An ally of Peter, Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, lost the throne when Charles invaded Saxony in 1706, but regained it after the Battle of Poltava. ABOVE, RIGHT: Stanislaw I, became King of Poland when Augustus was defeated by Charles and forced to abandon Poland. An ally of Charles, who placed Stansilaw on the throne, he was forced to abdicate after the Battle of Poltava. TOP: At the Battle of Lesnaya, Swedish General Lewenhaupt—mounted, in a red coat, pointing to the left of the scene with a baton—was outnumbered two to one, by the Army of Peter I. After some eight hours, Lewenhaupt had lost half his men and retreated under cover of darkness, abandoning the supply wagons meant for Charles XII.

passed through Lithuania. By the time it reached Mogilev in mid-September the Swedish army was long gone, the delay having led Charles to conclude the supply train was not coming.

In hopes of catching up with him, the teamsters and reinforcing troops made their best speed, arriving at the Dnieper on about the 20th. At this point, Russian reconnaissance patrols spied the pack train and galloped back with this news to their main force. Setting out to intercept this tempting target with a contingent of 14,500 cavalry, Peter found it encamped outside the riverine city of Lesnaya. Although taken unawares, Lewenhaupt and his sorely outnumbered soldiers fought gamely. After losing more than half his command, Lewenhaupt withdrew under cover of darkness, abandoning the priceless supply cache to the delighted Russians.

By this point Charles had been reinforced by more troops from the Ukraine and a large contingent from Livonia. Expecting Charles' army to be well supplied, the new arrivals had brought little with them except weapons and ammunition. The massive, multinational forces who had come to fight the Russians found themselves with virtually no food and a brutal winter bearing down on them. Bivouacking east of Kiev, in and around the cities of Romny, Priluki and Lochvika, Charles commandeered numerous billets, turning locals out into the cold. To the misery of the cold and starvation, disease was soon added.

The plague spread through the rat-infested confines of the army's encampments. Thousands died from illness, starvation and hypothermia. The entire, 10,000-man German contingent deserted and fled to the west in desperation. Respite was slow in coming as the Arctic-like winter dragged on interminably. The incredible cold reached as far south as Italy, freezing the canals of Venice. In May, the Baltic Sea was still covered in ice. The requisitioned area was too small to accommodate Charles' immense command, so his soldiers pitched lean-tos against the outer walls of the overcrowded buildings, used picks to hack trenches in the frozen ground and slaughtered their horses and mules for food. A Lutheran chaplain later described his parishioners' suffering:

"We experienced such cold as I shall never forget. The spittle from mouths turned to ice before it reached the ground. Sparrows fell frozen from the roofs to the ground. You could see some men without hands and feet, others deprived of fingers, toes, faces, ears and noses, others crawling like quadrupeds."

By winter's end the army of Swedes and their auxiliaries had been reduced to barely half its former strength. The winter had also hurt the Russians, but between their captured caches, intact supply lines and adequate accommodations they

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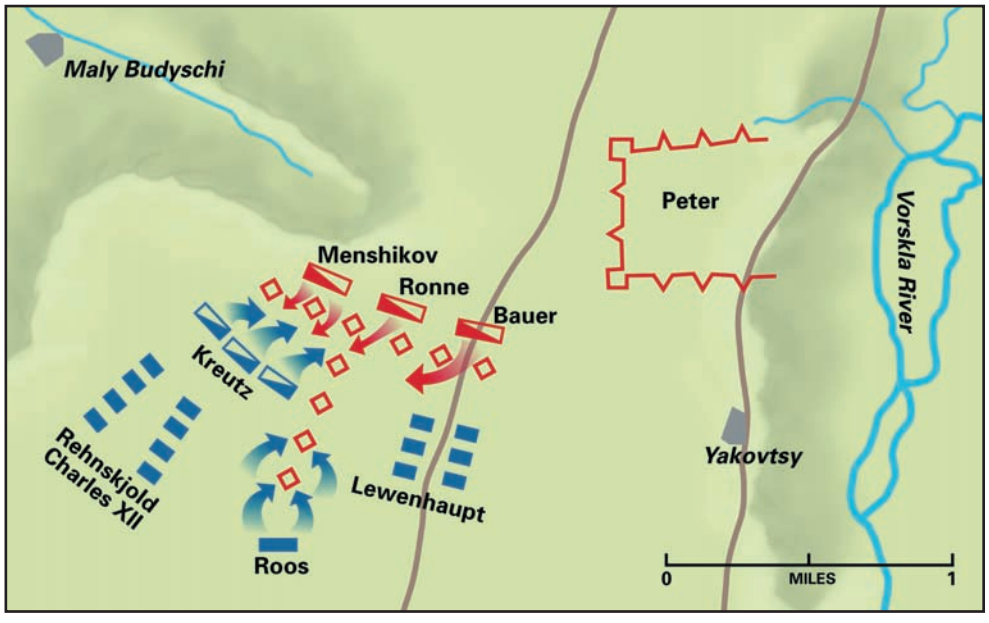


ABOVE: When the Swedes attacked at Poltava, the Russians were working on four new redoubts—small forts manned by several hundred men and one or two cannon—with the new line at right angles to the original six to form a "T" shape. These new redoubts were designed to divide the Swedish attack. The Russian earthworks are at right. The Russians outnumbered the forces of Charles XII by more than 3 to 1 in men and 70 to 4 in cannon. TOP: Leading a cavalry charge south of Poltova on June 27, 1709, Charles had his left foot shattered by a musket ball. This 1880 painting by Gustaf Cederström shows Charles, his shattered foot bandaged, watching with his Cossack ally Mazeppa as the battle unfolds under the command of Field Marshal Carl Gustav Rehnskjold. After fleeing the battle with Charles, Mazeppa died three months later.

Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

weathered the killing cold far better. And unlike Charles, who was hemmed in by hostile forces, Peter was able to send out recruiters to conscript able-bodied young men from the surrounding region to swell his ranks. By April 1709, the Tsarists were ready to re-commence fighting.

Following the ravages of the winter, neither side had enough resources for more than one major campaign. Charles sent repeated messages to his lapdog king in Poland, Stanislaw, to draft as many healthy young Polish men as possible into Sweden's army and send them to the thawing theater of operations. Some Swedish generals urged Charles to withdraw westward to hasten the link-up with these reinforcements, but while his officers saw this as a redeployment, the young monarch construed it as retreat—a word he could not abide.

Instead, Charles established control over the highway running eastward from Kiev to Kharkov, which was the major thoroughfare from Poland. While this was a sound move for future operations, it did little to replenish and reinforce his army in the short term. Realizing this, he moved east to the town of Poltava, located where the Khatkov road crossed the Vorskla River. This community was essentially a fortified military outpost garrisoned by 4,000 Russians with powerful artillery support. The invaders would have to hurry and neutralize it before Peter, who was certain to be tipped off by Russian couriers out of the town, arrived with his main army.

On May 1 the Swedes began shelling Poltava heavily, but the damage they inflicted was not as telling as they assumed. Despite the towering columns of smoke and leaping flames, the dug-in defenders suffered relatively few casualties. By mid-June Peter's main force still had not arrived, but the besiegers were running short on ammunition. Erroneously thinking he was seriously hurting his foes, Charles could not figure out how they were still firing back, especially since it was apparent they were themselves scraping the bottom of their own caissons. Using whatever it could as ammo, the town's garrison resorted to bizarre extremes. Charles was shocked one morning to be struck by a dead cat fired from a Russian cannon, but he soon had plenty to distract him from this draconian measure.

On June 15, mounted reconnaissance patrols informed him the main body of Russian troops, 40,000 strong, were assembling north of Poltava along the eastern bank of the Vorskla. However, Peter seemed reluctant to engage in open combat, only sending out small units to jab at the Swedes. His forbearance likely stemmed from his capture of a Swedish courier bearing news from Poland. This horseman was one of several messengers Stanislaw had dispatched to inform Charles he had not been able to raise any troops to send to the king. Knowing this, Peter likely hoped the invaders, decimated by the Russian winter, would decamp and withdraw. Such a move would have been prudent, but the firebrand young Charles was too proud and arrogant. When the forces occupying Poltava stayed put, Peter prepared for a major set-to.

On June 27, he sent a mounted detachment on a feint across the Vorskla south of Poltava. Charles fell for the ruse and personally led a cavalry unit to meet the enemy at the ford. As Charles arrived, a Russian soldier made one of

Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

ABOVE: A victorious Tsar Peter I after the Battle of Poltva, a watershed moment in Russian and European history. LEFT: At the Battle of Poltova the Swedish army was forced to retreat for the first time in the reign of King Charles XII, and Peter (mounted, right of center) was waiting. As the battered Swedes withdrew, 30,000 fresh Russian reserves, backed by artillery, fell upon them.

the luckiest shots in history—shattering the king's left foot with a musket ball. Charles tried to ignore the gushing wound, remaining in his saddle and shouting orders, but his injury soon overcame him. His soldiers loaded him into a wagon and rushed him to the surgical tent. It was his 27th birthday.

For three days he lay in feverish delirium while his feckless generals took no action, even as the Russians began to deploy and construct fortifications. These redoubts could not be outflanked because the river and its swampy banks were impassable, protecting the rear. In addition, Peter's just-reinforced command was now double that of Charles' winter-weakened army. The Tsar well knew that it is easier to defend than to attack, so he was constructing defensive positions, daring the enfeebled, famished invaders to choose between humiliating retreat or to assailing bristling defenses manned by a fresh, well-trained, well-armed, well-fed and huge garrison determined to protect its Motherland.

Too weak to stand, Charles realized he was in no fit state for active participation, so he turned over command to Field Marshal Carl Gustav Rehnskjold. The king was now as weakened as the forces he commanded. Still, he imprudently heeded the impatient Rehnskiold's adjuration, "In the name of God then, let us go forward!" He ordered an attack for dawn on the 13th. The cavalry would charge first, assault and neutralize the redoubts and clear a path for the infantry—who would then scale the palisades and close with the Russians in hand-to-hand fighting. Charles may have been too disoriented from blood loss to realize the impracticality of such tactics versus such overwhelming numbers and it soon went badly wrong.

Summer daybreak comes early at this high latitude, and by 4 a.m. the sun was clear of the horizon. The Swedish infantry was in position, but had to wait as generals Lewenhaupt and Rehnskjold were not finished deploying their cavalry.

While the attackers struggled to get ready, Peter was wrapping up his own preparations. He had spent the hours of darkness erecting yet more redoubts, and was able to complete them because of his enemy's delay in getting started. Peering through telescopes, the Russians noted how Charles was not yet in position to advance, but the bustling activity in their encampment told Peter the invaders were coming soon, depriving them of the element of surprise.

When the Swedish cavalry charged it pounded into a withering crossfire from 70 cannon entrenched in the middle of the defensive perimeter. Even so, the horsemen managed to rout the defenders, but other elements bogged down as their horses were killed, forcing the mounted troops into a grisly maelstrom of hand-to-hand combat. In the center, Charles was fought to a standstill in front of bristling fortifications, but on his left his horsemen were gaining ground through less-prickly defenses. Peter's officers urged him to commit his reserves, but he noted how Swedish soldiers were falling in bunches. He could afford to lose men at a greater rate than outnumbered Charles, and would wait and use his still-uncommitted troops to administer the coup de grâce.

Though their ranks were thinning rapidly, the invaders remained dedicated and valiant. Maintaining impeccable discipline they continued to press ahead, but were becoming too scattered to have any hope of success. Desperate to rally his troops, Charles sent Lewenhaupt to charge the Russians' left flank at 7 a.m. and ordered General Roos, in command of the center, to back off and reassemble what was left of his command. It took Lewenhaupt until 9 a.m. to detach his men and get them to their jumping-off point. Roos did his best, but could not break free from the hellfire pouring from the ramparts. Looking on from those ramparts, Peter saw and diagnosed Roos' attempt to relocate, and sent fresh reinforcements to counter the maneuver. Chewing a swath

Continued on page 85

Return to Leyte

General Douglas MacArthur landed in the Philippines, leading American troops in the campaign to liberate the islands from Japanese occupation.

BY DAVID H. LIPPMAN

Apprised of an approaching LCM full of VIPs, the beachmaster surveyed his busy dock full of ships loading and unloading troops and supplies at Red Beach on the Philippine island of Leyte. His authority over the beach absolute, he decided the ongoing work was more important than the "brass hats" and denied their request to land at the dock.

The biggest "brass hat" in the Pacific–General Douglas MacArthur—was not amused. Along with Filipino President Sergio Osmeña, trailed by his staff officers and the usual gaggle of reporters, MacArthur was forced to wade through surf nearly up to his knees, his steely gaze fixed angrily on the offending beachmaster.

On seeing his photo in the newspaper resolutely wading ashore, MacArthur realized its public relations value and would replicate the scene at all future amphibious landings.

More importantly, the arrival of MacArthur and the 24th Infantry Division honored his pledge to return and liberate the Filipino people from Japanese captivity. In a radio broadcast, U.S. rifle fire crackling behind him, he declared, "People of the Philippines, I have returned!"

The return was set in motion during a July 1944 meeting in Hawaii between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his top two Pacific commanders, MacArthur and Admiral Chester Nimitz, who wanted to invade Formosa, then Japan, bypassing the Philippines and all of Southeast Asia.

But MacArthur had personally promised to liberate the American commonwealth of the Philippines and was keenly aware that while Filipino guerrillas were battling

The first American flag is raised on Leyte two minutes after H-Hour—the moment when U.S. troops hit the beach—during the liberation of the Philippines in October, 1944. INSET: U.S. General Douglas MacArthur wades ashore at Leyte Island in October, 1944, fulfilling his promise to return to the Philippines.

Both Photos: National Archives

Japanese occupiers, American POWs who had survived Bataan were starving and enduring torture.

Roosevelt, who was seeking reelection during wartime, needed victories in the Pacific against America's hated Japanese enemy.

MacArthur proposed moving on Leyte, then Luzon, and Nimitz agreed on the necessity of taking and holding the critical air and ground bases in the Philippines and neutralizing Japanese forces there.

MacArthur tapped Prussian-born General Walter Krueger to lead the assault with his U.S. 6th Army. A former enlisted infantryman, he was a meticulous planner and administrator who recognized that in the miserable terrain of the Philippines in general, and Leyte in particular, supply was everything.

The easternmost island in the Philippines, Leyte is 115 square miles and had a population of 915,000 in 1944. Leyte Gulf in the east was the natural place to invade, near the rice and corn belts of Leyte Valley. MacArthur planned to land at Tacloban, build airfields, and then attack the mountainous regions beyond. With four Army divisions going in on L-Day and three more to follow, Krueger's 200,000 men constituted a powerful force. It was backed by the 2,500 combat aircraft of Gen. George F. Kenney's Far East Air Force and not one, but two massive American battle fleets: the 3rd Fleet under Adm. William F. Halsey and the 7th Fleet under Adm. William Kinkaid.

The U.S. assault on Leyte began in September 1944 with a series of dogfights greater in number and intensity than the Battle of Britain. The airmen of Halsey's 3rd Fleet pounded air bases in Formosa, Okinawa, and the Philippines. Japanese officers reported scores of downed U.S. planes and ships. Although untrue, celebratory lantern parades were held in Tokyo.

None of this propaganda impressed General Tomoyuki Yamashita, the "Tiger of Malaya," who conquered the British colony with 55,000 men against a British force twice his size. For expressing his views on war and politics too loudly to his superior, Field Marshal Hisaichi Terauchi, Yamashita had been sent to an obscure command post in Manchuria for two and a half years.

With the Americans menacing, the Philippines needed a better commander than Lt. Gen. Shigeru Kuroda, who had neglected defenses in favor of geisha girls, prostitutes, and golf.

Told he was going to the Philippines, the 59-year-old Yamashita remarked, "So it's come at last, has it? Well, my going won't change anything. It's my turn to die, isn't it?"

Yamashita arrived in Manila, the Filipino capital, to take over the 14th Area Army—Japan's term for an army group—and discovered that his old foe, Terauchi, was his new boss. Worse, Yamashita inherited a weak staff and weaker divisions, gone soft by years of occupation duty. Yamashita had no control of the air forces defending the islands, commanded by Lt. Gen. Kyoji Tominaga. The Imperial Japanese Navy had its own agenda, which it did not share with Yamashita.

The Japanese troops defending the Philippines were unprepared to face the Americans. They lacked ammunition, food, and equipment. In all, Yamashita had 300,000 troops scattered around the Philippines, 20,000 of them in Leyte, most in Lt. Gen. Shiro Makino's 16th Infantry Division, part of Lt. Gen. Sosaku Suzuki's 35th Army. While the division had conquered Bataan, its current troops—draftees from Kyoto and Osaka—were raw. Suzuki's headquarters was on the nearby island of Cebu, so he could not immediately oversee the defense.

On October 18, the American fleets bore down on Leyte. That same day, the Imperial Navy ordered nearly its entire fleet to sea under a complex plan to annihilate the Americans.

Early on the 20th, the American fleet arrived off Leyte and began shelling and bombing an 18-mile line from San Jose to Dulag and landing four divisions.

The four divisions divided into four corps headed for Leyte: X Corps in the north with the 24th and 1st Cavalry for Red Beach, and 96th and 7th in the south under XXIV Corps, aimed at Orange, Blue, Violet, and Yellow Beaches. The 6th Army went ashore at 10 a.m.

The XXIV began moving inland with the 1st Cavalry Division attacking on its right to seize Tacloban and its airfield. On the left at the southern end, Violet and Yellow Beaches fell to the 7th Infantry Division, veterans of Attu and Kwajalein, and the 96th Infantry Division had grabbed Dulag by noon.

Private Joe Hoffrichter, manning a flamethrower, landed at 10:30 on an M-8 self-propelled howitzer. If the howitzer's guns could not silence a bunker, Hoffrichter was to use his flamethrower.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: A Coast Guard-Manned LST unloads Sixth Army Division troops in an early wave of the amphibious landing at Leyte Island, Philippines, on October 20, 1944. OPPOSITE: American GIs pinned down on the beach at Leyte Island. Troops of the XXIV Corps, the Seventh Infantry Division and the 96th Infantry Division were landed in amphibious tractors designed for crossing coral reefs—the vehicles had been prepped for the cancelled invasion of Yap Island. Providing cover for the landing troops, these proved so successful that they were used on beaches again in January 1945, at the Invasion of Lingayen Gulf.

He came under Japanese artillery fire and found his fellow men of the 34th Regiment dug in on the beach. The M-8 was blocked by a tank trap and could not silence the fourth of four bunkers. Hoffrichter had to do the job.

He reached the dirt and log emplacement, shoved the flamethrower's nozzle into a hole and fired three bursts. "The screams I heard were of intense agony. The machine guns were silenced and the stench of burning flesh drifted through the openings where the guns were," he said later. "I vomited on the spot." His team took out 16 bunkers—four more by Hoffrichter, who vomited each time.

At the southern end of the beach, the 96th Infantry was making its combat debut. But the men had been well trained, enduring long jungle marches and mountain climbs in New Guinea. The battleship USS *Tennessee*, a Pearl Harbor survivor, and three cruisers battered Japanese defenses with 2,720 rounds of ordnance before the 96th Division went in.

Believing the Japanese propaganda of the great "victory" off Formosa, a stunned Makino signaled Yamashita from his division headquarters under heavy American fire: "Enemy fleet approaching. Not clear whether they are sheltering in Leyte Gulf from bad weather or are escaping from the Taiwan battle." The message was his last. American shells shut down his radio.

At Tacloban, MacArthur kicked at the corpses of Japanese troops and identified them from their badges. "The 16th Infantry," he said. "They did the dirty work on Bataan." After that, he resumed inspecting the battlefield, walking unconcerned across Tacloban airfield as American and Japanese troops were fighting for control of it, easily in range of enemy snipers.

As night fell, the Americans had secured their beachhead, but the remaining Japanese began annoying the GIs in the dark with mortar and machine-gun fire, pestering a position held by 3rd/34th and Private Harold Moon, a company screw-up who had spent time in the stockade.

Well supplied with a Thompson sub-machine gun and grenades, Moon stood off repeated Japanese attacks and called down coordinates of enemy positions for GI mortar fire. When a Japanese platoon charged his position, he emptied his magazine, killing 18 enemy soldiers to halt the attack. He hurled a grenade at a machine gun on his right, but the machine gun got him first.

The fighting went on until a 4 a.m. bayonet charge by Moon's platoon finally broke the Japanese. Among the GIs who took over the ground was Hoffrichter, who found more than 200 Japanese dead lying near Moon's corpse and his foxhole. Moon received a posthumous Medal of Honor.

The invasion of Leyte had been a great success for the Americans: on the first day, they had a secure lodgment at a cost of 55 dead and missing, 192 wounded. But supplies were a big problem. As had happened at Guadalcanal, insufficiently large shore parties unloaded supplies that had been poorly loaded, and the beaches became jammed with 1.5 million tons of equipment—all of it unable to be moved anywhere quickly on an island lacking metal and concrete roads.

Meanwhile, the Japanese—stunned to find the reports of victory were false—scrambled to cope with the invasion. Yamashita had reached Manila only 10 days before the blow on Leyte fell and barely had time to summon the staff officers he wanted. Among them was his new chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Akira Muto, who came from Sumatra.

Leyte quickly became the epicenter of the greatest naval battle in history. The Imperial Japanese Navy flung nearly every ship and plane it had at the Americans, and the three-day whirlwind of naval fighting that ensued had a little bit of everything: daring submarine attacks on advancing Japanese cruisers; massive air strikes that sent Japanese battleships and carriers to the bottom; the last "Fire-Away Flanagan" battleship duel; the first use of kamikazes; and a heroic stand by tiny American destroyers and escort carriers against the world's biggest battleship that turned the tide. When the Battle of Leyte Gulf was over on October 25, the Imperial Japanese Navy was a spent force, and the U.S. Pacific Fleet dominated its namesake ocean.

Meanwhile, Yamashita, Muto, and Terauchi convened around maps on October 20 at Fort McKinley to figure out how to respond. They presumed that their navy and airmen would wipe out the U.S. Navy, but the situation was grim on Leyte. Makino could not report on what was Jgoing on because so many of his units had been shattered.

All: National Archives

ABOVE: A Navy Helldiver from the carrier USS *Hornet* above a burning Japanese tanker. Navy fighters and other planes sank 80 percent of the troop transport and supply ships sent to reinforce Japanese forces on Leyte Island in the Philippines. BELOW: In November 1944, soldiers of the 126th Infantry (MI), 32nd Infantry Division, take fire from Japanese troops as they approach a native hut in the mountains of Leyte. OPPOSITE: Three GIs from the U.S. Army Sixth Division, having made their way from the surf to the edge of the beach, hunker under Japanese machine gun fire during the Battle of Leyte.

Now Imperial General Headquarters ordered Yamashita to make the major defense of the Philippines in Leyte and reinforce Suzuki's 35th Army with every man available. Yamashita pleaded with Terauchi to use his power to protest the order. Shipping troops to Leyte while American planes and submarines guarded the approaches would be a useless, suicidal measure that did not meet bushido standards. Yamashita wanted to fight the decisive battle on Luzon, where he had the bulk of his troops and supplies, his own headquarters, and the very same difficult terrain that had enabled MacArthur to hold out for months in 1942.

Terauchi vetoed Yamashita's protests. Muto found the theater commander "in extremely high spirits and optimistic" and ordered the 14th Area Army "to totally destroy the enemy on Leyte."

Yamashita passed that on to Suzuki, who was splitting his lone division into the pompously named Southern and Northern Leyte Defense Forces, more to sound aggressive and conceal weakness than anything else—the 16th Division was close to collapse.

True to his nature, Krueger had his men consolidate their positions and build up supplies, while engineers slapped steel matting on the Dulag and Tacloban airfields. This did not work so well: as soon as the matting went down, heavy rains came, turning the airfields into quagmires. The U.S. Army Air Forces had difficulty operating their Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter bombers from them. Kenney turned to the Navy for help, but it had problems of its own: the naval battles had put the 7th Fleet's escort carriers in the dockyard and had worn out the aircraft and crew of Halsey's 3rd Fleet carriers with attrition and fatigue. Halsey kept his ships on line, despite further kamikaze attacks and typhoons. Japanese planes, based in Cebu, Mindoro, and locations near Manila, were able to take to the skies and bomb U.S. forces without much interference.

Even so, the Americans advanced. The legendary 7th Cavalry Regiment of Little Bighorn fame cleared out Tacloban, accepted gifts from liberated Filipinos, and drove west, taking small losses. The 24th Division faced tougher fighting against Japanese troops who had mastered jungle camouflage, hiding in takotsubo, or "octopus holes," their word for a spider hole—letting U.S. patrols go by, then ambushing them from behind.

The Americans advanced into the mountains west of Dulag and Tacloban and found tougher going and tougher defenders. Japanese Special Naval Landing Forces (their version of Marines) built a tunnel on Hill 522 that took two days to clear. Once done, U.S. artillery and navy forward observers took over Hill 522 to call in six-inch guns on the enemy.

As the GIs moved forward into thickening mountain jungle, they also battled leeches, fungus, and mosquitoes. The miserable conditions made it difficult to bring up water and food, which made the 100-degree heat more miserable. Every night it rained, and troops had to bail out foxholes to avoid drowning after they fell asleep. The Japanese had the same problems, only theirs were far worse—lacking many basic supplies, some of their troops were starving

Unaware of their naval defeat, Suzuki flew to Ormoc on Leyte, where he told his staff, "We are about to step on the center of the stage. There is no greater honor or privilege. We don't even need all the reinforcements they are sending us." Actu-

ally, he did. The crippled 16th Division was barely able to hold the northern coastal town of Dagami.

But the two divisions coming in by sea, the 1st "Gem" Division for Ormoc and the 26th landing at Carigara, constituted some of Japan's best troops. Lt. Gen. Tadasku Kataoka's 1st Division's battle honors included the Russo-Japanese War, and it had spent years fighting tough opposition in China. Behind them came portions of the 30th and 102nd Divisions, a total of 45,000 men.

The U.S. 24th Division drove up Highway 2 through rain and resistance to capture Jaro on October 29 and continued north to Carigara along the 12-foot-wide rock-and-gravel road.

The Japanese 1st Division arrived at Ormoc on November 1, its men wearing filthy, lice-ridden uniforms, but intact. Lt. Minetoshi Yahiro told his platoon leaders, "We have long been preparing for this day. The hour has come when we must use all our training and skills." Corporal Kiyoshi Kamiko, a peacetime primary school teacher and wartime conscript, gulped in the fresh tropical air.

Suzuki gave orders to Kataoka to head north to Carigara, assemble there, and attack the Americans. A cavalryman and veteran of China, Kataoka knew plans fell apart and asked what to do if his division was attacked before Carigara.

"Proceed to Carigara," answered Suzuki's chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Yasiharu Tomichoka. "There's nothing to worry about."

Before the 1st Division could get moving, it had to endure an air raid by Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers on the recently arrived transports. Col.Yoshio Miyauchi, commander of the 57th Regiment, watched a bomb explode the transport *Noto Maru*, which his regiment had just left. His men had survived, but his trucks, horses, and ammunition were burning on the ship.

The 1st Division advanced toward Limon under American bombing and strafing, seeking to outflank the 24th Infantry. Krueger reacted cautiously, aware that the Japanese move from the south could be accompanied by an amphibious assault from neighboring Mindoro. He ordered the 1st Cavalry to move up on the Gem Division while the 24th dug in.

In the south, the 7th and 96th Divisions headed for Dagami, the stop before the ultimate prize on Leyte's main west coast: Ormoc.

To the north, the 24th Division faced an impending Japanese counterattack while trying to move forward. The 1st Cavalry took over positions from the battered 24th. Miyauchi's men advanced past wounded and bandaged men of the 16th who were hobbling back to the rear until they hit the highest point of Highway 2, a mass of cogon grass, jagged hills, and branching spurs—a perfect defense line. The Americans would call it "Breakneck Ridge."

On November 5, Miyauchi told his men to jettison unnecessary items and stuff their haversacks with grenades and hardtack and put Kamiko's company in the lead.

At the same time, the 1st Cavalry Division attacked, seeking the Mainit River bridge to Carigara beneath the ridge, Hoffrichter among them. The Japanese opened up on this advance with the usual machine guns and mortars, and Hoffrichter was ordered to fix his bayonet. He and his men moved slowly at first, then they began picking up speed. "I was never so frightened in my life. The nearest I had ever come to hand-to-hand combat was in the movies."

The Japanese counterattacked, with Kamiko leading the assault. The Americans pelted his squad with grenades, which tore open geysers of dirt—Kamiko feared this was his last moment on Earth. An American machine gun opened up, followed by rifles and mortars, and Kamiko's men answered to little avail. Kamiko's men moved laterally and started digging takotsubo. Yahiro came up to see what was going on and found the other two squads were trapped, and Kamiko's squad was the only unit holding the high ground. Despite the lack of water—the men found coconuts to drink from—the five men dug in and were ready for a dawn attack on the 6th.

During the night, the 4th Squad joined Kamiko's crew, with platoon leader Warrant Officer Hakoda. At 9 a.m., the Americans opened fire with machine guns. Kamiko ordered his men to fix bayonets and ready grenades. Hakoda yelled, "Charge!" and 4th Squad stormed into the mur-

National Archives

derous American fire. Hakoda was hit. "Take command," he called to Kamiko. With the GIs nearly on top of them, Kamiko yelled, "Fire everything you have!"

They did so, and amid the close-quarters battle, a shell screeched over and hit the Americans, followed by two more. It was a Japanese fieldpiece that had finally made it into position, and the shells silenced the American machine guns and stopped their advance for the moment.

The 1st Cavalry tried again with more machine-gun fire, their riflemen charging up the hill. Kamiko's men and artillery greeted them with a fusillade, which sent the GIs tumbling down the hill, dying or retreating.

The Japanese renamed that portion of Breakneck Ridge "Yahiro Hill," but that did not lessen the determination of the Americans to take it. Once again the 1st Cavalry attacked Yahiro Hill, and once again the 1st Cavalry wavered. Yahiro's men held the ground, although only 25 soldiers were left.

For Major General Franklin C. Sibert, his X Corps' inability to take Breakneck Ridge was becoming frustrating. So were casualties: one company was down to one officer and 85 men, even though the Japanese had lost nearly 2,000 men. Krueger addressed that problem by sending for planned reinforcements, in this case, the 32nd "Red Arrows" Infantry Division, veterans of New Guinea. The 77th "Metropolitan" Infantry Division, composed of New Yorkers, and paratroopers of the 11st Airborne Division, also joined them in the fight.

The 32nd slogged through the heavy rain and mud to the Carigara Valley. Meanwhile, the 24th and 1st Cavalry attacked on November 8, amid typhoon-whipped rain and winds. Heavy artillery competed with real thunder. Infantrymen struggled with inaccurate maps as well as the rain and the Japanese. Up top, Kamiko and his men were equally soaked and miserable, plus short on ammunition and food. Yahiro ordered his men to direct steady fire on the advancing Americans, which held them back until they heard the rumble of a Sherman tank behind them—they were surrounded.

Two of Kamiko's men scrambled down with a satchel charge and placed it under the tank. The charge went off, forcing the tank to retreat, but Kamiko still faced attacks to his front. An American grenade rolled down the hill and into Kamiko's takotsubo. He figured it was the end, but the grenade fizzled out.

Even so, the Japanese did not have much left, with so many of the men wounded. Sergeant Noshio Yoguchi, a veteran who had fought since 1938, sat bleeding profusely from a right thigh wound. Unable to move, he tried to commit harakiri by pointing a pistol at his temple, but it had jammed because of the mud.

By now, the Americans were practically on top of Noguchi's position, and he huddled in bloody water, amid dead comrades, hoping not to be captured. The GIs took over the area near him and dug their own foxhole. In the dark, he crawled down a steep incline, past the bodies of more dead comrades, looking for water, until he was exhausted and fell asleep.

The battle for Breakneck Ridge went on with both sides suffering misery. On November 10, the Americans tried again, sending two battalions of 1st Cavalry against the mass of shell holes. Yahiro's company was down to a handful of men. When they finally ran out of ammunition, Kamiko yelled in fury and futility, "Charge, charge!" in English.

Yahiro's assistant then shouted out the command to "turn around and advance," the Imperial Japanese Army's euphemism for "retreat." Kamiko had heard the order on the drill field, but never in battle. The Americans took advantage of the hesitation to pour fire at Yahiro's company, hitting Yahiro in the throat.

Now Kamiko was in charge, and it was clear he and his men were doomed. They could not retreat, so Kamiko ordered his men to scoop up all the grenades and attack, hurling them at the Americans. The men attacked, but it was hopeless. Kamiko realized the assault would lead to a meaningless death for his men. "Follow me!" he yelled, and he led the men down the hill toward Highway 2 and back down the road, pursued by American mortar and machine-gun fire.

The richness of American resources was starting to pay off. Mountainous terrain had interfered with radar, 34 inches of rain turned airfields into quagmires, but Halsey kept his carriers in position

despite attrition, fatigue, and kamikaze attacks to provide both ground support and attacks on Japanese convoys headed for Ormoc. U.S. Army engineers, many of them African American, performed heroic feats to create and maintain roads and airfields, while Filipino porters carried supplies to the front and wounded men back.

The Japanese found that effort harder going. Their bases were shielded from monsoons, but not from the occasional earthquakes that affected both sides. They also lacked trucks, bulldozers, and a supportive Filipino population.

The 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions, reinforced by the 11th Airborne, reached the west coast city of Baybay on November 1 via an unguarded trail that crossed Leyte's narrow waist, but the usually determined Japanese resistance, aided by the mountainous terrain, held it back. The XXIV Corps Commander, Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge, proposed sending a regiment of the 7th Infantry Division by sea to Ormoc.

Meanwhile, Yamashita became increasingly worried about the 35th Army's desperate situation and Terauchi's determination to fight the great battle on Leyte and not Luzon. Terauchi insisted that the American Air Force and Navy had been defeated—it was merely a matter of time before Krueger's force was cut off and forced to surrender. Yamashita did not believe that.

Bolstering Terauchi's argument was a landing of 12,000 men of the 26th Division, while another 10,000 men were also headed for Ormoc, and he believed those men would tip the balance. Yamashita tried three times to change his superior's mind. At one of them, Yamashita's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Akira Muto, lost his temper and exploded at the field marshal.

No matter. Terauchi had the rank and the pull and was unimpressed. "We have heard the opinions of the 14th Area Army," Terauchi declared, "but the Leyte operation will continue."

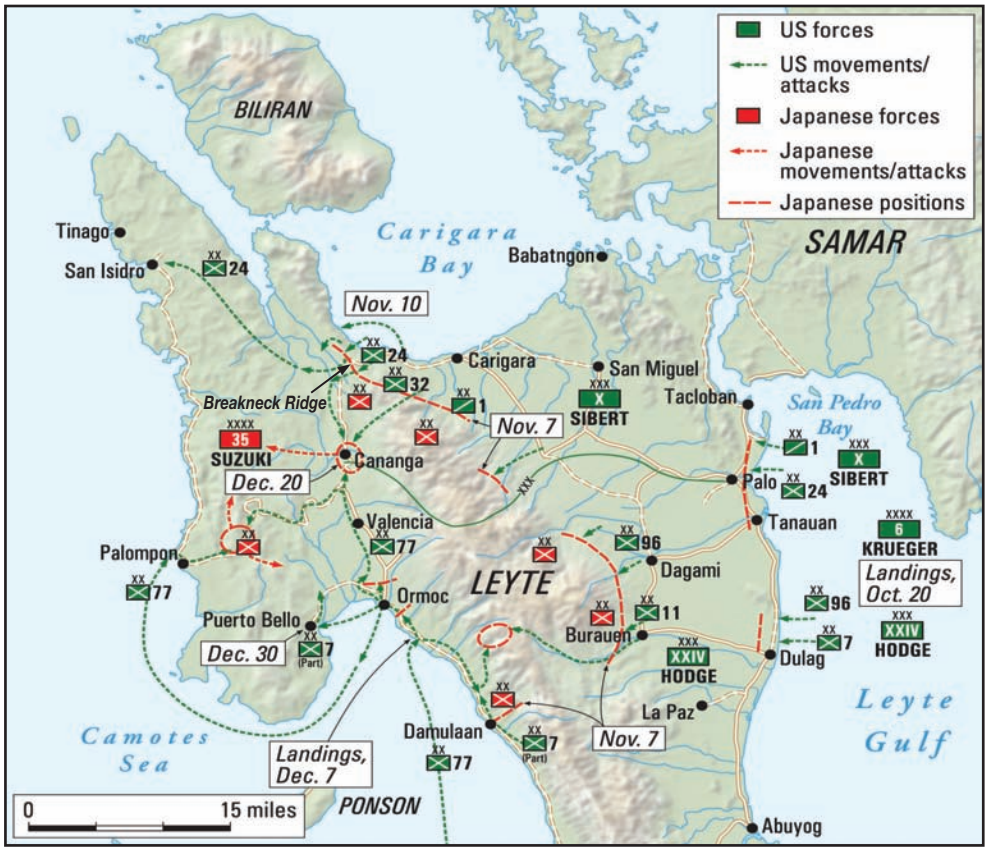
Yamashita had no choice. "I fully understand your intention," he said. "I will carry it out to a successful end."

On November 11, the 11,000-man convoy arrived at Ormoc Bay and faced 200 planes from Halsey's fleet. The six transports were sunk first, followed by four destroyers. The remains of the convoy headed back to Manila, losing two destroyers en route.

Terauchi shifted his headquarters to Saigon in Indochina. Yamashita was certain that Leyte could not be held. Terauchi, though, insisted that the 35th Army attack east across the mountains and retake the American airfields in eastern Leyte. Yamashita obeyed.

He messaged Suzuki on November 15 that the 35th Army would attempt to destroy the enemy on Leyte, but if more troops could not be sent

Map © Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



ABOVE: In October 1944, U.S. Army General Douglas MacArthur led the amphibious assault on Leyte Island to begin the recapture and liberation of the entire Philippine Archipelago and to end almost three years of Japanese occupation. BELOW: Japanese troops ford a river in the Philippines in this captured war photograph. The 20,000 Japanese troops defending Leyte—mostly raw draftees—lacked food, ammuntion and equipment. OPPOSITE: Having landed and fought their way up the beach, soldiers from the 7th Regiment (1st Cavalry Division) wade through a swamp as they head for their objective, the village of San Jose in October, 1944.

National Archives

All: National Archives

ABOVE: U.S. Army soldiers cover their ears and turn their backs as the155 mm "Long Tom" field artillery gun is fired at Japanese troops moving to the Carigara Front on Leyte Island, Philippines. BELOW: U.S. soldiers inspect a knocked-out Japanese Type 2 KA-MI amphibious tank—without its flotation sections. First deployed by the Japanese at Guadalcanal, most of the KA-MI tanks used in support the 101st SNLF (Special Naval Landing Force) at Ormoc Gulf in late 1944 were destroyed.

"Luzon will become the main theater of future operations in the Philippines."

The order confused Suzuki, who decided that the best defense was a good offense and ordered Kataoka to counterattack to hold Breakneck Ridge, while the 26th Division attacked over the mountains to take Tacloban. All available planes would be committed to a rare night Japanese parachute operation on the Burauen airfields.

Up on Breakneck Ridge, American tanks had broken through, and the 32nd Infantry Division began moving south toward Ormoc, relieving the battered 24th Infantry Division.

Now the Japanese launched Operation Wa. It began on the night of December 6 with four Japanese transport aircraft loaded with infantrymen equipped with demolition bundles trying to glide to an assault landing on the airfield around Burauen. The Americans knew the attack was coming, thanks to their code breaking efforts, and experts in airborne warfare, the 11th Airborne Division, the "Mud Rats of Leyte," were waiting.

One plane crashed offshore, and an amtrac full of GIs investigated it, killing two Japanese and forcing the rest to swim into a swamp. The other three could not find their target.

After this, 51 Japanese transports roared over at twilight, and 350 men of Lt. Col. Tsunehiro Shirai's 3rd Parachute Regiment jumped into battle over the San Pablo, Buri, and Bayong airfields. Their mission was to capture the airfields, destroy the planes and facilities, and then withdraw into the mountains to hook up with the advancing 26th Infantry Division and 500 men of the battered 16th Division plodding east over the hills.

The Japanese paratroopers jumped just as the 11th Airborne headquarters men were lining up for evening chow, and division commander Maj. Gen. Joe Swing was sitting in a folding chair. All thought it was a drop of reinforcements and supplies until someone yelled, "They're Japs!"

Swing wasted no time, yanking headquarters men, cooks, clerks, and bakers into defensive positions, and calling for the 187th Glider Infantry Regiment and the newly arrived 38th Infantry Division to reinforce him.

The paratroopers fought for four days in pouring rain. Some Japanese put on U.S. gear to confuse the GIs, but it was not enough. They were outnumbered and outfought by some of America's best-trained men.

With Operation Wa crushed, the 6th Army attacked Ormoc simultaneously from the north and south on December 5. The 1st Division put up a determined defense, but the rest of the Japanese forces were exhausted and short of supplies.

Private First Class Elmer Fryar, 32, defined the 11th Airborne's courage on December 7 in an attack toward Ormoc. A member of the

2nd/511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fryar dashed forward onto an exposed knoll and held off a banzai charge by Japanese troops. Helping a comrade to safety, he came upon his platoon leader aiding another wounded paratrooper. When a Japanese soldier leapt out, rifle at the ready, Fryar stepped in front of his CO to take the bullet. Fryar was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor.

On the same day, the 77th Infantry Division, veterans of Guam, pulled off the kind of stunt that MacArthur liked: loaded in landing craft, the division landed on the west coast of Leyte, just south of Ormoc, and headed north up the road, menacing the main Japanese base, to virtually no opposition. There was only a single battalion of the 26th to hold the city. The rest of the 26th and 16th Divisions were trapped in the mountains and the jungle in their futile attack on the American airfields.

Suzuki had not expected this attack and had not even built beach obstacles. All he could do was order his forward divisions to retreat and call for 500 paratroopers of the 4th Parachute Regiment to be airlifted to an airfield eight miles north of Ormoc, but they didn't arrive until dawn on December 8 and had to parachute into the jungle. The Japanese also sent in a battalion of the 30th Infantry Division to help out, plus they launched kamikaze attacks that sank the destroyer USS *Reid* and a destroyer-transport.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. Andrew Bruce's 77th Infantry Division drove up the west coast of Leyte against a collection of Japanese rear-area men under a transportation officer, Colonel Mitsui. It was not enough, though. On December 10, the 77th entered Ormoc, finding a mass of blazing buildings and rubble.

The Japanese still had not given up, though. Following his orders from Terauchi, Yamashita sent in 3,000 men of the 8th Division and 900 tons of ammunition and supplies in five transports, guarded by three destroyers, two sub chasers, and 30 fighters. Marine Vought F4U Corsair fighters leaped upon them, sinking three transports. The remaining ships stood by to pick up survivors, but 700 men were drowned. When the convoy sailed again, more American planes sank another transport before the survivors could land at Palompon.

The last convoy consisted of a 400-man Special Naval Landing Force detachment under a Lt. Cmdr. Ito, with nine amphibious tanks and 20 mortars. Its two destroyers and two transports slipped through the American dragnet, heading for Ormoc, where the USS *Coghlan* opened fire and sank the destroyer *Uzuki*. The transports steamed in unaware that Ormoc was in American hands, and their captains were stunned when shells started whistling at them from the shore. "Don't shoot!" the Japanese yelled, but one transport was swamped by shells. The other fled to the opposite side of the bay to unload the last supplies and men Suzuki would get, and the surviving destroyer sprinted for home

A U.S. Army M8 self-propelled gun fires on a Japanese pillbox in support of the 77th Infantry Division fighting in the Ormoc Valley on west Leyte Island in the Philippines. Equipped with snorkels during landings, the Howitzer Motor Carriage M8 could land in shallow water and proved effective in the Pacific War.

Eighty percent of the Japanese ships sent to Leyte had been sunk, but Suzuki had still received 45,000 reinforcements. Only 10,000 tons of supplies had made it, though, and it was now clear that the 35th Army's position was untenable.

Yamashita already knew that, and now Terauchi had to realize the same. On December 17, Yamashita told Suzuki he would receive no more assistance. All Suzuki had left of the 65,000 men who had fought on Leyte were 15,000, most sick and hungry in scattered units, all weary and dispirited.

On Christmas Day, Yamashita sent Suzuki a final message. He could evacuate his troops to any other island in the Philippines, bidding him farewell. Suzuki tried to do so, managing to ship 1,000 men to Cebu, but the rest were trapped on the island, including Kamiko.

Having suffered relatively lightly–5,000 dead and 14,000 wounded–Krueger's 6th Army was given the assignment of liberating the main island of Luzon. The Luzon defenses were substantially weakened by the hopeless defense of Leyte, and the Japanese struggle for Luzon would be even more hopeless–and horrific.

The mop-up campaign on Leyte was turned over to Lt. Gen. Robert Eichelberger's U.S. 8th Army, and his troops would wage a harsh, slow, and unrelenting war against scattered, starving, but determined Japanese troops across the island. Only 5,000 Japanese troops would see their homeland again. Among those who perished was Suzuki himself, victim of an American airstrike in March 1945.

Suzuki was extremely distraught over his comprehensive defeat, but even more upset was Japan's Prime Minister Marquis Kuniaki Koiso. He had publicly committed his government to victory on Leyte.

Koiso learned of the decision to abandon Leyte as he was headed for an audience with Emperor Hirohito and could only mumble to His Majesty that Japan had been defeated.

Kamiko and Nakamura fled the island in a Filipino outrigger, evaded an American PT boat, and reached Cebu and safety. ■

The Battle of

In the fall of 1862, Confederate armies were making their first and only coordinated effort to carry the war into the North. In the east, Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia had won the Second Battle of Bull Run on August 30, threatening Washington, D.C., as he began his Maryland campaign. By September 15, Gen. Stonewall Jackson had captured the Federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Then Lee ordered Jackson to join him in Maryland at Sharpsburg, where his force of 45,000 would make a stand behind Antietam Creek as Union Gen. George B. McClellan approached from the east with 87,000 men.

A day earlier in the western theater, General Braxton Bragg's Army of Mississippi marched into Glasgow, Kentucky, with an eye on crossing the Ohio River at Cincinnati. Bragg had brought 20,000 rifles with him hoping to find sympathetic Kentuckians eager to join him in fighting Union

The failure to hold—and later retake—the crucial rail crossroads of Corinth, Mississippi, spelled doom for the Confederate war effort.

BY ROBERT L. DURHAM

Gen. Don Carlos Buell and to help with the capture of Louisville. Bragg had never had plans to capture Cincinnati, but the threat had stirred up Ohio troops eager to defend it.

While the exploits of Bragg and Lee played out on the national stage, two armies in Northern Mississippi—the Army of the West under Maj. Gen. Sterling Price, and the Army of West Tennessee under Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn, were tasked with keeping Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and other Union forces in lower Tennessee by combining their armies and attacking the vital southern town of Corinth, Mississippi.

Overshadowed by the horrific scale and violence of the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862, the strategic significance of Corinth lay in its railroad junction, the crossing of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, and the Memphis and Charleston Railroads. Corinth had been Grant's target when Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, knowing he was outnumbered, had marched 19 miles north to surprise him at Shiloh.

Confederate Colonel William P. Rogers leads the attack on Battery Robinett in Keith Rocco's painting, "Key to Corinth." The Mississippi rail crossroads was itself the key to the Western Theater of the Civil War.

Corinth

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

"Camp of the Third Kentucky Confederate Infantry at Corinth, Mississippi," by Conrad Wise Chapman, who served with the unit. He was wounded at Shiloh and saw action in Mississippi and Louisiana before receiving a transfer to Virginia late in 1862.

After defeat at Shiloh, General P.G.T. Beauregard ordered his troops to fall back and fortify Corinth. Beauregard was now in command following Johnston's death at Shiloh on April 6.

Major General Henry Halleck, commander of the Union's Department of the Mississippi, was unimpressed with Grant being caught by surprise at Shiloh. He took over command of Union forces and followed Beauregard toward the town described as the "vertebrae of the Confederacy" by former Confederate Secretary of War LeRoy Pope Walker.

Halleck, himself, considered Richmond, Virginia, and Corinth to be the "great strategic points of the war, and our success at these points should be insured at all hazards."

Halleck was cautious by nature and the historic carnage at Shiloh—some 20,000 combined killed and wounded—caused him to move even more slowly. Fortifying after each advance, Halleck at one point had only moved five miles in three weeks. Finally, on May 27, 1862, the siege guns were in place and the Union began to bombard Corinth.

By this time, Confederate morale was extremely low. Outnumbered two to one, they had lost almost as many men as they had at Shiloh to typhoid and dysentery. On the night of May 29, they withdrew from Corinth to Tupelo, Mississippi, about 50 miles south.

Following the retreat from Corinth, Beauregard took a medical leave of absence without permission, leaving newly promoted Gen. Braxton Bragg in charge. The relationship between Confederate President Jefferson Davis and Beauregard had already been strained for some time, so Davis gave the command of the Army of the Mississippi (renamed Army of Tennessee in November) to Bragg and transferred Beauregard to Charleston, South Carolina.

Van Dorn was given command of the Department of Southern Mississippi and East Louisiana on June 28 and went to Vicksburg to improve the Confederate defenses there. Union gunboats were threatening the city from upstream and down. Van Dorn raised the morale of the 4,000 troops garrisoned there, setting up cavalry patrols and ordering the construction of new field works.

At the beginning of July, Bragg was still in Tupelo and making preparations to try to retake Corinth when he got word on July 10, that Buell's Army of the Ohio was moving toward Chattanooga with 30,000 troops. Another cautious commander who insisted on preparation, Buell's progress was delayed by repair work on railroads and bored troops looting the countryside. At times during that summer, his army was making barely a mile per day.

As Bragg saw it, Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Chattanooga, Tennessee, were the keys to holding onto and regaining control of the western theater. Knowing Buell was headed for Chattanooga, Bragg would finally answer the call for reinforcements from Maj. Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of the Confederate Department of East Tennessee. Union Brig. Gen. George Morgan's 7th Division of the Army of the Ohio had occupied Cumberland Gap since the middle of June, threatening Smith at Knoxville, Tennessee.

Price, who remained in Tupelo with his Army of the West, was left in command of the District of Tennessee.

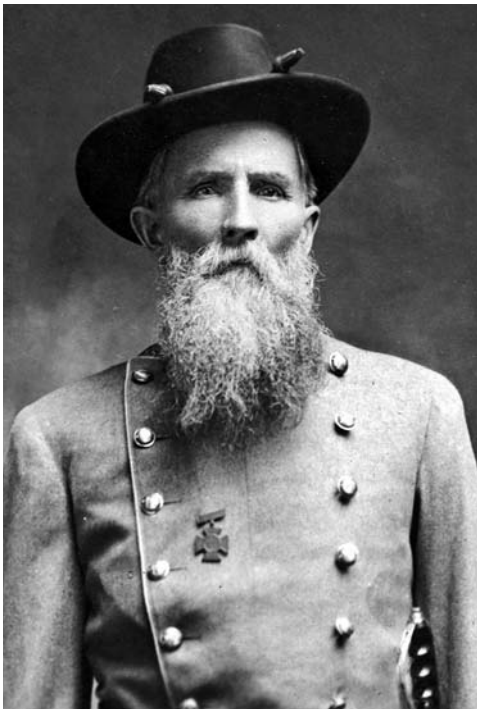
With the Union holding Memphis and much of western Tennessee, Bragg and his infantry had to travel 766 miles by train—from Tupelo to Mobile and Montgomery in Alabama, then to Atlanta and Dalton in Georgia—to get to Chattanooga. The cavalry and artillery went by road. Bragg arrived at Chattanooga by July 30, ahead of Buell, who went to Nashville instead.

Bragg, having been convinced by Smith to invade Kentucky before driving Union forces out of Tennessee, was in the Bluegrass State in early September when he urged Price and Van Dorn to attack Corinth to keep Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans's Army of the Mississippi there from reinforcing Buell. If successful, Bragg hoped they could then march north to join him.

On September 13, Price arrived at Iuka, Mississippi, a small Union supply depot on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. After some cavalry skirmishing, the Federal commander at the post, Col. Robert C. Murphy, set his supplies afire, and fled to Corinth. The Confederates put out the

All: Library of Congress

ABOVE: This photo from *Miller's Photographic History of the Civil War*—published in 1911 for the semi-centennial of the war's beginning—shows Union soldiers near Corinth, Mississippi, c. 1862. BELOW LEFT: Private Charles H. Ruff of Co. G, F, and S, 2nd Texas Infantry Regiment. BELOW RIGHT: Civil War veteran Daniel Patton Hill of Co. H, 3rd Missouri Infantry Regiment.



fires and saved most of the much-needed provisions. Murphy was later court-martialed for failing to destroy the supplies, but was acquitted. Price settled down in Iuka to wait for Van Dorn, whose 7,000 men would bring the combined strength of the two armies to 22,000.

As the district commander, Grant sent Rosecrans to retrieve the situation, and to recapture Iuka. After an intense, bloody battle, Price retreated to Baldwyn, Mississippi, on September 19, the same day Lee crossed the Potomac back into Virginia following Antietam.

Price learned from his Iuka experience that the Federals could concentrate enough forces rapidly anywhere between Iuka and Memphis, to crush either his or Van Dorn's commands individually. Price believed they had to join forces and he sent a notification to Van Dorn, saying "I will leave here in two days to form a junction with you." They met at Ripley, Mississippi, with Van Dorn, the senior in rank, taking command. This did not sit well with Price but, for the good of the cause, he readily conceded.

Van Dorn reasoned that an attack on Memphis would not yield a military advantage as Union gunboats would make holding the city impossible. The fortifications around Bolivar, Tennessee, made a quick assault there unfeasible—and Union reinforcements could be quickly sent there by railroad from Jackson, Tennessee. In addition, both flanks would be exposed to Federal attacks from Memphis or Corinth.

At an interview with Van Dorn on the 18th, Van Dorn told Price he would attack the Union army at Corinth before starting for Nashville. The capture of Corinth would force the Yankees to abandon West Tennessee, enabling Van Dorn and Price to move north to join Bragg with no interference from the Federal army.

Capturing Corinth would cut off Bolivar, Tennessee, and then Jackson, Tennessee, would easily fall. He was expecting paroled prisoners of war from Fort Donelson to reach him soon and, with those added soldiers, he would control West Tennessee. This would enable him to advance through Middle Tennessee to join Bragg's army. "The attack on Corinth was a military necessity requiring prompt and vigorous action," Van Dorn wrote.

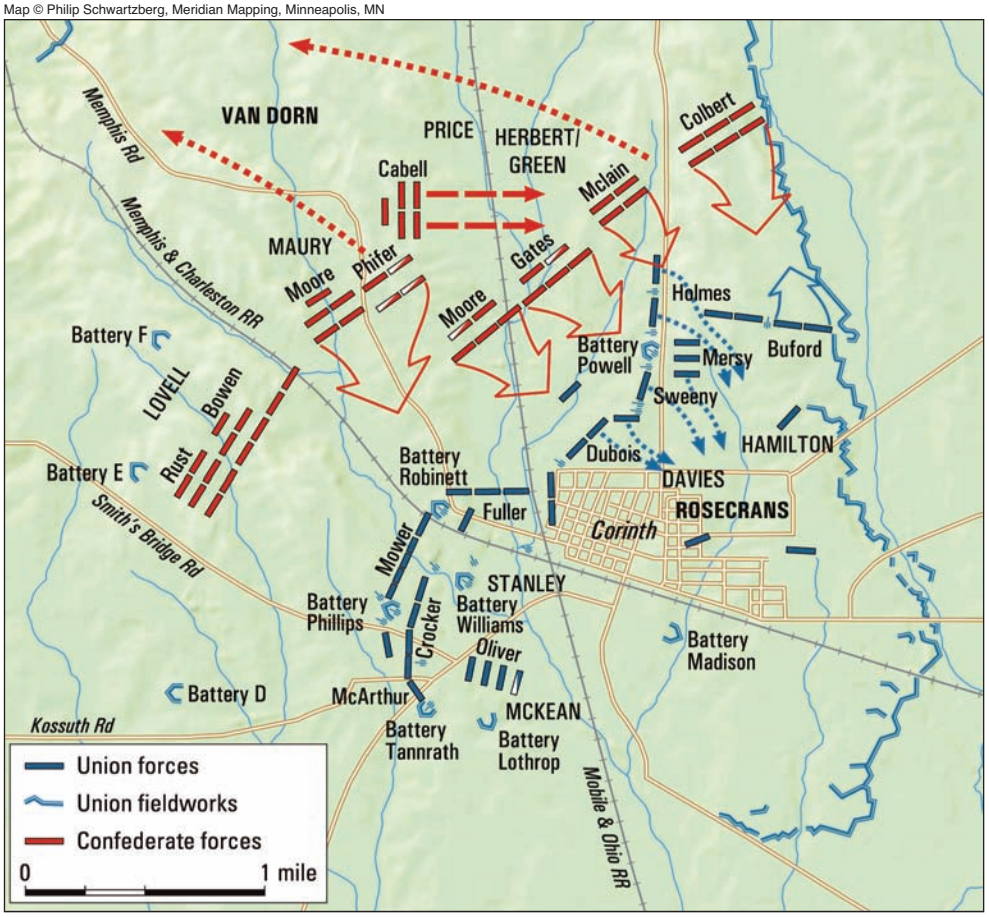
But not all of his generals agreed. Major General Mansfield Lovell, now commanding Van Dorn's Army of West Tennessee, favored an attack on Bolivar. However, he thought if the Confederates could take Corinth, the Federals must fall back to Jackson, Tennessee and, "finally (if we get our additional forces from the returned prisoners) we shall be able to drive him to the Ohio."

Price agreed on the necessity of taking Corinth but wanted to wait for the return of the prisoners, now being organized in Jackson, Mississippi. He expected that the 12,000 to 15,000 new soldiers would make them strong enough to take it easily.

Van Dorn dismissed the objections of Lovell and Price and ordered them to distribute three days' cooked rations and be ready to move the next morning. Lovell would lead on September 29, followed by Price the next day. They first headed north in a feint on West Tennessee.

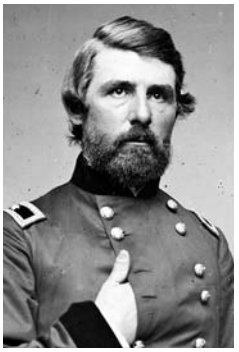
October 1 was unseasonably warm with temperatures above 90 degrees. Most of the streams had dried up, making water hard to find. Many of the Rebel soldiers fell out of ranks to straggle in later, and some suffered sunstroke. None of the

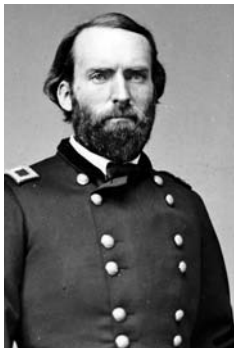
Map © Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



All: Library of Congress

TOP LEFT: Confederate Brigadier General Dabney H. Maury. TOP RIGHT: Confederate Brigadier General John C. Moore. BELOW LEFT: Union Brigadier General Charles S. Hamilton. BELOW RIGHT: Union Brigadier General David S. Stanley.





Battery Robinett , along the Memphis Road near the center of the map, was the scene of some of the most intense fighting during the Battle of Corinth. Confederate troops on the right flank had better success, actually entering Corinth before being driven out by heavy artillery fire from the other Union batteries. Battery Powell, along the Hamburg Road on the right side of the map, was briefly captured by the Confederates before being retaken by the Federals.

regimental officers and men knew the objective of their march. Price's men were delighted when they crossed the line into Tennessee. They "wanted to go north" and they found the possibility of returning to Mississippi repulsive.

As they then turned east along the Tennessee-Mississippi border, they found that Yankee cavalry had torn up and burned the planking on the Davis Bridge over the Hatchie River. After replanking the bridge, they continued to Chewalla, Tennessee, where they bivouacked on October 2, only 10 miles northwest of Corinth.

"The men remembered the fortifications around this intrenched position, strengthened under the energetic labors of the enemy, and protected by heavy abattis of felled timber," Sergeant William H. Tunnard, a soldier in the 3rd Louisiana later wrote. Many became despondent when they realized what their journey had in store.

Grant also now knew the Confederate's destination and sent word to Rosecrans to be prepared for an attack. Rosecrans had gone to Corinth on September 26 and initially had only 15,000 men in the town. He drew in 8,000 more from outposts in surrounding towns and immediately put his men to work strengthening the fortifications, which had been built by the Confederates under Beauregard the previous spring. Rosecrans commanded the battery lunettes to be connected by breastworks. Rosecrans ordered "the front to the west and north to be covered by such an abatis as the remaining timber on the ground could furnish." He "employed colored engineer troops organized into squads of twenty-five each" to work alongside the soldiers. His final contribution to the defenses consisted of having a new redoubt, Battery Powell, constructed a half mile north of town. This battery accommodated six guns.

The morning of October 1, Rosecrans ordered Col. John Oliver's brigade, of Brig. Gen.Thomas McKean's Division, to Chewalla, to slow any Confederate advance. They found the march terrible, "The heat and dust and swift pace were too much for the men," remembered a 47th Illinois soldier. "One by one the boys dropped out, unable to continue further." When they went into camp at midnight, most of the men threw "themselves down in the furrows of an old corn field, too weary to build fires or seek refreshments."

On October 2, at 10 a.m., the 7th Tennessee Cavalry charged a company of skirmishers from the 15th Michigan. They "drove in the enemy's pickets," recalled J. P. Young of the 7th. The 15th formed a line and attacked the Rebel cavalry, who dismounted to meet them but slowly gave way. Then the Michiganders retreated when they ran into Brig. Gen. Albert Rust's brigade of Lovell's division, in advance of the Southern army.

Oliver's skirmishers faced their Southern counterparts the rest of the day with few casualties on either side. In the evening Rosecrans ordered Oliver to make a fighting withdrawal to the outer defense fortifications northwest of Corinth.

Daybreak, October 3, found Van Dorn's entire Confederate army arranged in sight of the outer Corinth earthworks, with no reserve. This day would be another murderously hot one, with the temperature already above 90 degrees. At 9:30 a.m., Van Dorn called a final meeting with his generals and, at 10 a.m., he launched the attack, in an echelon from right to left.

General Lovell's division came in first; thick timber split his command. McKean's Federal division stood ready to face them. The Union

Library of Congress

Called the Battle of Corinth (also Second Battle of Corinth by some)—to differentiate it from the Siege of Corinth earlier that year, the clash on October 3-4, 1862, in northwest Mississippi was the last chance for the Confederacy to hold onto the vital rail crossroads. This hand-colored Currier & Ives lithograph depicts Federal troops under General Grant fighting the combined Confederate forces of Generals Van Dorn, Price and Lovell. The original caption reads, in part, "the Rebels were utterly defeated and driven from the field, throwing away their arms and accoutrements and every thing that could impede their flight."

21st Missouri held the extreme left of the Federal defenders, in an isolated position. Alabama, Arkansas, and Kentucky troops of Rust's Brigade temporarily drove them back. Col. David Moore tried to rally the 21st Missouri's Union soldiers. "About this time my horse was shot under me, bruising severely my amputated leg," Rust reported [Rust had lost his leg at the Battle of Shiloh]. As his men carried him from the field, he turned the command over to Maj. Edwin Moore, "who rallied the men and repeatedly drove the enemy from the hill." Finally, flanked on both sides, the blue-clad soldiers fell back.

Rust's men moved past the Missourians' right flank to the edge of the hill. A deadly fire came into Rust's left flank from the other side of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. The 4th Alabama, assigned as skirmishers in front of the brigade "fled in wild confusion." The left and center of Rust's Brigade charged against the Federal artillery and infantry, as close as 60 yards. The artillery switched from shell to solid shot. One shot "struck a large tree, just a few feet from my head and tore it to pieces," remembered Private W. G. Whitfield of the 35th Alabama.

Rust's Brigade had come up against the 57th Illinois and a section of Battery D, 1st Missouri Light Artillery. The Rebels came on a second time "with that cold-blooded yell which has to be heard to be appreciated," said one Illinoisan. For a third time, they charged, "Our men stood the shock nobly, delivering the most steady and effective fire I have seen during the war," stated Captain James Zearing of the 57th. Rust's men attacked resolutely against this intense barrage. The fire from the 57th Illinois increased "but it had no effect in checking their march. They advanced on the double-quick in the utmost disregard of human life."

The 9th Arkansas and 35th Alabama charged the Union battery section, which tried to get away. One made it, racing off to safety. The limber pole on the other gun broke and the cannons smashed into the ground.

From behind the old Confederate earthworks, the other Union artillery continued to rain fire on the Rebels. A Mississippi sharpshooter battalion came forward in a skirmish line against three Federal guns when they "turned loose solid shot whose unearthly screams through the air set up the most gigantic dodging I have ever seen," Capt. C.K. Caruthers, their commanding officer, related. "We swept away the enemy's skirmishers, despite the huge limbs of trees cut off by the solid shot." James Newton, one of the Yankee skirmishers being swept away, unashamedly described his flight, "I could not run so fast as I had ought on account of a sore foot."

On the left of Bowen's Mississippians and Missourians, Brig. Gen. John Villepigue, also of Lovell's Division, brought his brigade up against the Federals. Greatly outnumbered, the Union line began to unravel. To finalize their plight, Brig. Gen. John Creed Moore's Brigade, of Brig. Gen. Dabney H. Maury's Division hit them hard, racing out of the woods to strike their right flank and rear.

General Lovell, pleased with his division, told the men of the 35th Alabama, "Well, boys, you did that handsomely." He felt the work of his division to be finished. Rust had pushed forward 300 yards; Lovell had him return to their starting position. Bowen and Villepigue had lost control

of most of their regiments and Lovell told them to reassemble their men and return to their original line. "We had captured the outer line, and… we remained there; not a regiment of the brigade or the division engaged," said a disgruntled Lieutenant Holmes of Bowen's Brigade.

The 7th Illinois, on the right, experienced the attack of Gen. Moore's Brigade before any of the others. Col. Andrew Babcock, their commander, looked "to the rear; he looks down a ravine and beholds the Chewalla road swarming with rebels," in the words of Sergeant D. Leib Ambrose. The Federals broke, fleeing before being cut off.

Colonel Marcellus Crocker's Brigade of McKean's Division stood in reserve behind the routed Federal infantry. "The Union troops fled in confusion toward us, the pickets and skirmishers nearby joining in the stampede. The enemy followed a short distance, firing and yelling like demons," remembered Capt. Clinton H. Parkhurst of the 16th Iowa. "The fugitives poured into view like scattered sheep… scores of them being bloody from wounds."

Two Confederate brigades "marched at common time, in perfect silence, preserving faultless lines," wrote Parkhurst. "We took deliberate aim, and with a crash we fired… It was scarcely a moment before an answering volley hurled bullets among us… and the battle opened with fury… As we fought at remarkably short range, many of us rammed down two minie balls with each load of powder." A pause occurred in the fighting and the Federal commander ordered them to retreat to Corinth.

In the center of the Union line, the men of Brig. Gen. Richard Oglesby's Brigade of Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Davies' Division, waited apprehensively for the next Confederate shoe to fall. They watched as six Rebel brigades assembled in the timber facing their line. "Through an opening in the woods I could see the rebels forming their lines for the assault on our works. The woods seemed to be full of the men in gray. A great number passed this opening; tramp, tramp, tramp, they kept coming," remembered Corp. Charles Wright. Convinced the Union line should have been formed in the entrenchments closer to Corinth, "back a mile and more in our rear, under the guns of Robinett, was the place to make a fight," he later remembered thinking.

The Rebel skirmish line alone comprised more troops than did all of Oglesby's Brigade. The Confederates ran a battery onto a knoll in front of the 81st Ohio and opened fire. The Federal Battery H, 1st Missouri Light Artillery, opened a converging fire on the Reb battery, killing most of the battery's horses and driving the battery to the rear. The Yankee infantry waited while Confederate Brig. Gen. Charles W. Pfifer's Brigade bore down on them, and Col. John D. Martins' Brigade made for a gap in the Federal line.

The Yankees had no choice but to flee as the Rebels burst over their breastworks. The 9th

Both/Library of Congress

ABOVE: Under the command of General Van Dorn, the Confederates penetrated several forts along the perimeter of Corinth, Mississippi, including Battery Powell and Battery Robinett—even breaking through into downtown, where fighting raged around the railroad crossing and the nearby Tishomingo Hotel. Artillery and a charge by Union reserves, such as the one pictured above, recaptured the batteries and drove the Confederates out of the town. The number of dead and wounded was high for both sides. OPPOSITE: Part of in inner circle of defenses of Corinth, Mississippi, Battery Robinett—a crescent of earthworks known as a "lunette"—was the scene of intense hand-to-hand combat during the Battle of Corinth. In front of the battery was a 10-foot-wide ditch and an abatis—downed trees and other debris meant to slow attackers. Open at the rear, it was defended by three 20-pounder Parrott rifled cannon. Battery Robinett was directly in front of the Confederate attack on Corinth when it came unexpectedly from the northwest, instead of the south.

Texas Dismounted Cavalry captured a two-gun section of Union artillery. The other section escaped just in time, before being overrun. The Federal artillery and infantry fled to the safety of the breastworks near the town.

The way lay open for the Southerners to attack Corinth. However, Lovell, the commander of the only comparatively fresh Confederate division, thought his men had done enough. Not until 5 p.m., almost an hour after Brigadier General Moore had driven back Crocker's men, did Lowell comply with an order from Van Dorn to advance. Even then, rather than assault Corinth, he only brought his division up to contact Moore's right flank. Near sunset, Lovell halted a half-mile short of the Union fortifications around Corinth.

Both sides lay on their arms during the night; the temperatures quickly dropped from the daytime highs. The skirmishers from both sides kept the night lively with the sound of musketry. When the moon rose, it astonished the men with its brilliance, "The brightest moon I ever saw," remembered Samuel Byers of the 5th Iowa.

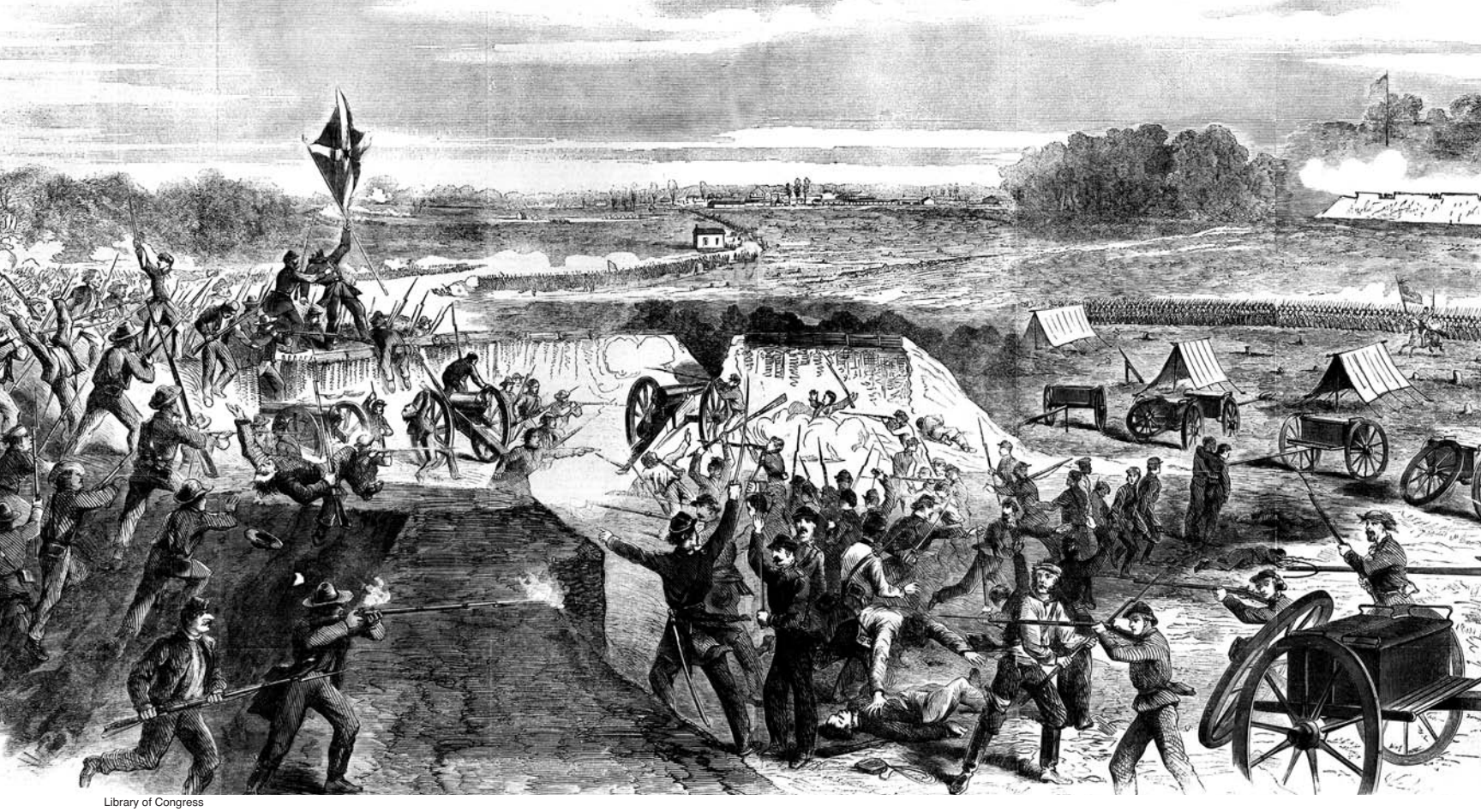
Rosecrans, sure the Confederates greatly outnumbered him, felt he must secure Corinth's inner fortifications. These fortifications consisted of five artillery redans forming an arc northwest of Corinth. He posted McKean's Division on the left, on College Hill. Brig. Gen. David Sloane Stanley's Division supported Battery Robinett. "Davies was to extend from Stanley's right northeasterly across the flat to the Purdy road." Brig. Gen. Charles Smith Hamilton's Division formed on Davies' right with one brigade, the rest of the division in reserve. Col. John Mizner's cavalry "was to watch and guard our flanks and rear from the enemy."

The Rebels under Van Dorn reorganized during the night and maintained the positions held at the close of the struggle. Lovell held the right, Maury the center and Brig. Gen. Louis Hébert the left. Van Dorn thought the Yankees might be evacuating Corinth but Green disagreed, "What made me doubt they were evacuating was the chopping of timber," this would mean adding to the abatis. Rosecrans had reinforcements coming; Brig. Gen. James McPherson had orders from Grant to march four regiments from Bethel "with all speed." but they would not arrive in time.

Van Dorn determined to attack at dawn, with an artillery barrage at 4 a.m. Hébert would begin the attack from the left, with Maury to charge Corinth as soon as he "should observe the fire of the Missourians, who were on my left, change from picket firing to rolling fire of musketry." Van Dorn commanded Lovell to form his division with two brigades in front and one in reserve. He should then wait until Hébert engaged, when he would "move rapidly to the assault and force his right toward the low ground southwest of town."

The temperatures on October 3 had been unseasonably hot and though the following morning saw frost, the heat would return with the sun. At 4 a.m., the night exploded with cannon fire. "What a magnificent display! Nothing we had ever seen looked like the flashes of those guns. No rockets ever scattered fire like the bursting of those shells!' related Col. John Fuller. He commanded a brigade in Stanley's Division.

The Rebel artillery got no response from the Federals for over an hour; the Federal artillery waiting for dawn to reveal the source of the barrage. The Union 30-pounder Parrotts in Batteries Robinett, Williams, and Phillips began to return fire at 5:15 a.m. It took less than 30 minutes to silence the Confederate guns and a calm fell. Van Dorn sent three staff officers to ascertain the cause of the delay, with none able to locate Hébert. At 7 a.m., Hébert reported at headquarters and asked



Library of Congress

On October 3-4, 1862, a Confederate force of 65,000 under General Earl Van Dorn attacked the rail hub of Corinth, Mississippi, defended by 120,000 Federal troops. Confederate Brig. Gen. Dabney H. Maury tried three times to take the fortification known as Battery Robinett—the site of heavy fightng as depicted in this *Harper's Weekly* illustration, based on a sketch by Alexander Simplot. As Gen. David S. Stanley's division came up to support the battery, some Confederates were able to find a gap in the line to enter the city of Corinth, but were driven out by a strong Federal counterattack.

to be excused from his command due to illness. Price put Brig. Gen. Martin Green in command of the left wing.

Hébert had not informed his brigade commanders of the plan of attack for October 4. When Price delivered word to Green, eating breakfast behind his brigade, that he commanded the division. "Green, upon whom the authority then fell, was hopelessly bewildered, as well as ignorant of what ought to be done," said Lt. Col. Robert S. Bevier. Green put Col. William H. Moore in charge of the brigade and began to inspect his division's lines. About 10 a.m., "somebody concluded we had better charge, and the order was given," stated Bevier.

"With a wild shout, our whole brigade jumped swiftly across the railroad and charged toward the enemy's line," recalled Major Finley L. Hubbell of the 3rd Missouri, Col. Elijah Gates' Brigade. They charged with their left in the air, Col. Robert McLain and Col. W. Bruce Colbert lagged. In addition, they had no reserve; without informing Green, Maury ordered Brig. Gen. William Cabell to fill a gap on Brig. Gen. Charles W. Phifer's left.

"Stopping but a moment in the edge of the woods, to reform our companies, slightly discouraged by the fallen timber, our brave brigades pushed right ahead," said Bevier. "The shot and shell from more than half a hundred guns crashed and whistled around us incessantly."

"The very earth shook; the plain was swept with every conceivable projectile—round-shot ploughed up the ground, raising volumes of dust; shells went shrieking above and around, exploding and filling the air with their deadly contents," Ephraim McD. Anderson of the Missouri Brigade recalled. "A perfect tornado of grape and canister came whizzing and pouring upon us, and, as we neared the works in the face of this storm, the rattle of musketry and the hissing of minie balls were added."

Half a mile of open ground separated the Confederates from Battery Powell, with clouds of Yankee skirmishers standing in the way. The Union artillery fire butchered many men of Gates' and Moore's Brigades before they could close. The carnage would have been worse, but the blue-clad skirmishers masked much of the fire from the artillery around Battery Powell.

Moore and Gates paused to reorganize their ranks, 200 yards short of their objective. Then they let loose a volley and charged on at a double quick. This broke the will of the Union defenders and entire regiments collapsed. The Iowa "Union Brigade" dissolved first, followed by the 7th Illinois on their left. Rosecrans rode into the fleeing men, trying unsuccessfully to rally them. Col. Thomas W. Sweeney's Brigade stood after the artillery batteries on either side broke and "galloped off in wild confusion." The artillery limbers and caissons ran through Sweeney's reserves, crushing some of the men, and routing the rest. The Union ammunition wagons behind the line stampeded "and they too started on the run to the rear," reported Davies. He started after the men, trying to rally them. When an officer refused to return to the front, Davies drew his revolver and killed him, then galloped on.

Battery Powell had five guns, with their crews and horses, crammed inside the redan. Many of the artillerymen ran away when they saw the cannoneers and infantry on each side streaming away. Lt. John Brunner, commander of Battery I, 1st Missouri Light Artillery, released their horses and ordered his remaining men to retreat, leaving the guns behind. The remaining artillerists in the battery followed suit.

Gates' Missouri and Arkansas Brigade smashed into Battery Powell. "One of the bloodiest places I ever saw," said William Boyle, one of the Mis-

sourians. They streamed over the breastworks and fired a volley into the 52nd Illinois, breaking them. Only one Union battery remained on the field and Col. Francis Cockrell, commanding the 2nd Missouri, yelled "Forward, my boys, we must capture that battery." The Federal cannoneers stayed with the cannon until the Missourians overran it, but finally had to retreat. They saved their limbers and caissons but lost all six cannon.

At 10:45 a.m., Colonel August Mersy's 9th Illinois faced the Confederate Missourians alone. Mersy got his men into line, and they held on long enough for the Yankee fugitives to safely escape. Gates' gray and butternut clad soldiers punched a hole in the Union line, but they had exhausted themselves in doing so. Almost as disorganized as the Federals; they needed aid, but none came. McLain and Colbert had not penetrated the Union line and Maury had not even begun his attack. The men of Gates' Brigade held the captured breastworks but did not move forward.

The 12th Wisconsin Artillery Battery, flanked by the 56th Illinois Infantry on its left and the 10th Missouri on the right, had not been engaged and stood ready to assist. As soon as the Union fugitives cleared their front, the infantry opened fire on Gates' men. The artillery joined in, firing double-shotted canister. The Confederates "fled, leaving their dead and wounded behind. When they started on the retreat they ran like frightened sheep," said a Wisconsin cannoneer. The 56th Illinois and 10th Missouri charged down the hill after them. "On we went, yelling at the top of our voices," remembered a 10th Missouri Yank.

At Battery Powell, Bevier saw the oncoming Federals, "While looking at them in dismay … my horse was shot through, and the ball flattened against my ankle … on arising, found it all safe and sound, though somewhat bruised … when the order came to fall back—and it was time." They did not withdraw in an orderly fashion though; "A panic seemed to seize all the men," said Hubbell. The Rebels retreated through the same fire they had charged through as the Yankees rushed forward to man the artillery once again. At 11:30 a.m., Gates's men returned to the safety of the Memphis & Charleston Railroad embankment.

During the hour Gates' men held the Union breastworks, McLain and Colbert fought a stand-up fight with Brig. Gen. Napoleon B. Buford's Brigade in the timber 400 yards east of Battery Powell. The Union artillery tore swaths in their ranks and, when the Confederates reached a range of 75 yards, Buford's infantry fired a volley. "I was in the rear rank. I raised my musket and blazed away at nobody in particular. A comrade in front of me afterward said 'I nearly shot his ear off,'" said Private Samuel H. M. Byers of the 5th Iowa.

Continued on page 98

Both: Library of Congress

ABOVE: Confederate dead in front of Battery Robinette the day after the Battle of Corinth. On the ground in the center of the photo is the body of Col. William P. Rogers of the 2nd Texas. To the right is the horse that was shot out from under him. BELOW: Confederate soldiers killed during the Battle of Corinth, Mississippi, October 3-4, 1862, by George Washington Armstead (1835-1912), a photographer from Columbus, Ohio, published in *Miller's The Photographic History of the Civil War* with a caption: "Before the Sod Hit Them."

ALFRED THE GREAT: Scholar, Strategist, Swordsman

Alfred the Great's Anglo-Saxons watch Viking ships approach the shores of England in the painting "How the Danes Came up the Channel a Thousand Years Ago: Off Peveril Ridge, Swanage, AD 877," by Herbert Arthur Bone (1853–1931). OPPOSITE: A 19th-century Byzantine-style ikon with the Greek inscription "The St. Alfred the Great-King and Confessor." Few period images exist of the King of Wessex, who is credited as the father of England as a single state.

Alamy / Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum

MILITARY SUCCESS—WITH SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS—MADE THE SAXON KING 'GREAT.'

BY DAVID A. NORRIS

Wikimedia Commons

In January 871 Alfred, prince of the Saxon kingdom of Wessex, waited for his brother in the tense moments before battle. The prince gazed at a formidable host of Viking warriors assembled on high ground at Ashdown, in Berkshire. For six years, "the Great Army" of Viking raiders had roamed nearly at will across the Saxon kingdoms of England. Towns, villages, monasteries and convents had all been captured and destroyed, their inhabitants slaughtered. Most of Saxon England had fallen and tottered on the edge of ruin. Alfred's brother, King Aethelred, ruled the last lands able to offer any resistance to the Vikings.

The young Prince had yet to make his mark on the battlefield and grew impatient waiting for his brother to arrive. Giving way to his impetuous nature, the Alfred ordered his men into battle, leading them against the vast army led by two infamous Viking kings—and, as it turned out, into the pages of British history.

Born at Wantage, Berkshire in 849, Alfred was fifth son of King Aethelwulf, ruler of the West Saxons. When Alfred was born, seaborne raids against the Saxon lands of England had been going on for some 60 years. Split into several separate and competing monarchies, the Saxons struggled to repel the raiders

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"Viking Ships Off the Rocky Coast," by German artist M. Zeno Diemer (1867–1939). Raiders from what is now Denmark, frequently raided the English Isles in Viking longships. Powered by sail and oars, the shallow-draft vessels could be portaged overland into seas, lakes and rivers to raid far inland.

sailing in from the North Sea. Usually called "Vikings" today, 9th century chroniclers called the invaders Danes, pagans, heathens, or pirates. Most of the men attacking the British Isles came from what is now Denmark and Norway.

Abandoned by the Romans in the early 5th century, Britain fell to invading Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. Soldiers from these Germanic tribes from northern Europe had been invited as mercenaries by the late Romans. More and more arrived, and pushed aside or absorbed the native Britons to take over most of what is now England. These Germanic Britons were later referred to as the Anglo-Saxons.

At one time a dozen or so Anglo-Saxon monarchies competed for power in early medieval England. Wessex, the kingdom of the West Saxons, was in southern England. At the time Alfred the Great was born in 849, Wessex included most of England south of the Thames, and some of the Cotswolds and other lands of western England out to the boundaries of Wales. It was the most powerful of the English kingdoms, the other three remaining then being Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria. The military forces of the English kingdoms were scattered and took time to assemble for war. The kingdoms also jostled each other for power, and sometimes faced internal political strife.

The Danes had great advantages over the lumbering armies of England and northern Europe. They plied the seas in longships, swift shallow-draft vessels propelled by oars as well as a large square sail. Under oars, the vessels could reach speeds of 12 knots or more, and could easily overtake or outrun any vessel they might encounter.

Longships drew three feet of water or less. Their crews could run the ships aground close to a beach and wade ashore. Likewise, when the crews returned laden with loot or prisoners, the ships could be pushed out to sea in a few minutes. It was possible for raiders to transport the longships overland and launch them in rivers or lakes, surprising Saxon towns and villages far from the coast.

While keeping a wary eye on the Danes, King Aethelwulf wanted to make a pilgrimage to Rome. Although they were on the northwest edges of Europe, the West Saxons were well acquainted with Rome. In the city, there was even a "Saxon School" for the education of their clergy. Unable to leave his realm in 853, the king sent his young son Alfred to meet the pope. Alfred was only about four at the time. When Aethelwulf deemed it safe to leave his kingdom for a time in 856, he journeyed to Rome and brought Alfred with him.

Many noblemen of 9th century England could not read, and saw little need for books. Alfred was different; although not taught to read in his early childhood, he developed a lifelong affection for books.

King Aethelwulf died in 858. His kingdom was divided between his son Aethelbald, who received his western lands in Wessex; and Aethelbert, who would rule Kent and the other eastern regions of his domain. After Aethelbald died in 860, the old kingdom was reunited under the rule of Aethelbert. Under an agreement among the royal family, his younger brothers Aethelred and Alfred were placed next in line of succession rather than any sons of Aethelbert.

In 865, Aethelred became king upon the death of his elder brother. The new king worked well with his younger brother, raising Alfred to the rank of secondarius—his second in command and heir apparent. He gained experience as well as respect as he took part in frequent clashes with the Danes.

Aethelred assumed the crown at a crucial moment in England's history. For decades, the Danes were content with extended raids that ended once they had gathered enough loot, or had been bribed with suitably large payments to withdraw. With royal authority divided among multiple kingdoms, it was difficult for the Saxons to assemble and maintain the military force needed to repel the invaders, or prevent more incursions.

But just as Aethelred became king, England's situation grew infinitely worse. A massive number

of Northmen, called "the Great Army" in English chronicles, landed in East Anglia in autumn 865. No longer satisfied with plunder and extortion, many of the Danes would settle permanently on land seized from the English. Wrote chronicler Simeon of Durham, "there was this countless host horsed, and rode and trampled hither and thither, taking very much spoil, and sparing neither man nor woman, widow nor maiden."

King Osbert, ruler of the neighboring kingdom of Northumbria, was overthrown and replaced by a new king, Aella. When the Danes poured out of East Anglia into Northumbria, the two rivals united to lead an army against the invaders. They attacked the Danes who had captured the city of York. In the battle, the Northumbrian force was defeated and Aella and Osbert were slain. The shattered kingdom came to peace terms with the Danes.

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The British Museum

ABOVE: A 19th century illustration of the legend that the King of Wessex, Alfred the Great, entered the Danish encampment disguised as minstrel to gather information on the strength of his enemy. LEFT: An Anglo-Saxon relic in the British Museum collection, the "Sutton Hoo Helmet" is one of only four examples surviving from the period. The iron mask, covered with copper panels bearing animal and warrior motifs, dates from about the 7th century and was likely worn by a chieftan or king.

With East Anglia and Northumbria unable to help allies or resist the invaders, the "Great Army" next wore down Mercia, the kingdom to the north of Wessex. In 869, the Danes moved back into East Anglia. The next year, the Danes defeated the East Anglians. Their ruler, King Edmund, was either slain in battle or was captured and killed by the enemy.

Fighting in 9th century Britain was done mainly on foot. Horses were of much less importance in battle at this time than they would be to knights several centuries later. The Danes could transport horses in their long ships, but usually found it more convenient to seize mounts and draft animals in lands they plundered.

The Saxons used spears, including lighter throwing spears as well thrusting spears, which could be wielded as pikes. Among the Saxons, swords were used mainly by higher-ranking classes, although nearly everyone carried a knife into battle. Axes, sometimes the same ones the men used on their farms, also served as weapons. The axe was a more important weapon among the Vikings.

Shields were generally of hardwood, sometimes protected with layers of ox hide or leather. A metal boss (usually iron) in the center of the shield protected the hand grip. Saxons and Vikings alike fought in formation behind a shield wall, with each man's shield adjoining or overlapping that of his neighbor. It made an effective defense, but such formations would be broken up if the soldiers had to rush in pursuit of an enemy.

Armor of chain mail was known, but rare and expensive enough to limit its use to the wealthiest warriors. Many men would have worn their ordinary clothing, perhaps adding a heavy padded leather jerkin to provide some protection.

Contemporary English accounts of these Viking-age battles have few details, but they describe massive and horrific casualties. Saxon armies lost capable leaders and great numbers of trained fighting men, weakening their responses to future raids. But the Danes by no means had everything their own way; some Viking forces suffered astounding losses in disastrous defeats. But, there were always enough Northmen to fill fleets of new ships to cross the North Sea and attack the Saxons.

By 870 Aethelred's Wessex was the only kingdom free of the Danes. In the closing days of that year, the army of Danes (Saxon chroniclers called them the "heathen host") reached the town of

BELOW: The British Isles circa the 886 Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum—a peace agreement between Alfred of Wessex and Guthrum, the Viking ruler of East Anglia. Alfred's guerilla war against the Danes and eventual victory at the Battle of Edington in 878 united much of Anglo-Saxon England. RIGHT: Modern European reenactors portraying Saxons and Vikings, demonstrate shield-wall combat using axes, swords, and pikes.

Map © Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN


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Reading in Berkshire. Sheltered in a fortified encampment, they sent out a foraging party under two jarls, or chieftains.

Ethelward, another Saxon chronicler whose writings of the "age of Alfred" survive, wrote of the Danes at Reading that "their two chieftains were proudly prancing about on horseback, though naturally unskilled in the art of riding, and, forgetful of their seamanship, went galloping over the fields and through the woods."

On or about the last day of 870, at a place called Englefield, the foragers ran into a Saxon force led by Aethelwulf. This man, bearing the same name as the late king of Wessex, was the ealdorman of Berkshire. At this time, an ealdorman was an official appointed by the Saxon king to administer one of his counties; the term is related to the Viking rank of jarl or chieftain, as well as the modern ranks of British earl as well as city alderman. Ealdorman Aethelwulf led his small force to a resounding victory. They slew one of the enemy earls, and the Danes fled from the field.

Englefield was only the first of a series of grueling clashes in what the chroniclers called "the Year of Nine Battles" (not all of the names of the battles survived in the records) that shook Wessex in the next year. About four days after Englefield, King Aethelred and his brother Alfred brought the kingdom's main army to recapture Reading. In a hard-fought but disastrous battle, the Saxons pushed their way to the town gates, but the Danes burst out of the town for a surprise counterattack. The Saxon ranks collapsed. The capable Ealdorman Aethelwulf was killed with many more of Aethelred's men.

Yet, only another four days passed until there was another pitched battle at Ashdown on or about January 8, 871. Ashdown's exact location is uncertain, but it's thought to have been in Berk-

shire. Bagsecg and Halfdan, remembered as leaders who landed with "the Great Army" of 865, led the Danes to a commanding stretch of high ground at Ashdown. They divided their army, with one part led by the two kings and the other under the command of several jarls.

King Aethelred and his brother were attending mass when the Danes approached and threatened battle. Alfred left to keep the enemy under observation. Aethelred, as Asser recorded, refused to cut short the service, declaring "that never while he lived would he leave his Mass before the Priest had ended it, nor, for any man on earth, to turn his back on Divine Service."

On what soon became the field of battle, the Danes divided into two forces, one under the two kings and the other commanded by several jarls. The Saxon planned a similar strategy, with Aethelred leading his half of the army against Bagsecg and Halfdan, and Alfred attacking the jarls.

The Danes advanced steadily toward the Saxons. Alfred was still in command on the field, and he watched the enemy draw so close that he either had to retreat or charge. Able to wait no longer, "so drew he together his shield-wall in good order, and advanced his banner straight against the enemy." As Prince Alfred wielded his sword and shield in the melee, "This way and that swayed the battle for a while, valiant it was and all too deadly." When the king's mass was done, Aethelred rushed to the front with his reserves. The Viking army broke. "Most part of their force were slain, and with all shame they betook them to flight." And so the Saxons held "the death-stead," as they called the battlefield. Among the dead were Bagsecg and a number of the Danish jarls.

Ashdown was something of a Pyrrhic victory for the Saxons. Enough men were lost or put out of action that shortly afterwards their weakened army suffered losses in the battles of Basing and Merton. Aethelred died shortly after the latter battle. It's uncertain whether he had been mortally wounded on the battlefield, or succumbed to some form of disease. At any rate, the throne was passed on to Alfred.

More Danes joined the Great Army. The new king endured more defeats by the combined enemy forces. And yet, King Alfred's resistance was so fierce that the Northmen negotiated a truce.

The invaders left Wessex, but only to fall upon the remnants of the other English kingdoms and

to take London. In 872 Burghred, king of Mercia (and Alfred's brother-in-law) was forced into exile and would die in Rome. A Mercian named Ceolwulf was installed on the throne as a puppet ruler; it was understood that he would abdicate whenever it suited the Danes to bring in a different king.

Alfred kept up resistance even as more Danes poured into eastern England and Scotland. Chronicler John of Wallingford wrote of the years of chaos, "In such storm of events, who can track the course of each wave?"

Firmly based in conquered lands in East Anglia, the Danish Jarl Guthrum led an army against Wessex in 876. The invaders eluded pitched battles. Although the Danes accepted bribes to move on, they simply plundered another area until they were paid off again.

John of Wallingford described the "piteous … slaughter that might be seen" in the wake of a Viking attack. "There they lay in each road and street, and crossway: old men with hoar and reverend locks, butchered at their own doors; young men headless, handless, footless; matrons foully dishonoured in the open street, and maidens with them; children stricken through with spears—all exposed to every eye and trodden under every foot. Some, too, there lay half burnt under their half-burnt houses, not having dared to leave them; for they who were driven from their hiding-places by the fire perished by the sword."

Late in the year, King Alfred and the royal household were at Chippenham in Wiltshire. Like other Saxons, the king's retinue looked forward to Christmas as a time of celebration. Normally, the Danes were quiet during the winters. The celebration lasted through the 12 days of Christmas. Early in January 878, stated the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, "after twelfth-night, the Danish army stole out to Chippenham." Led by Guthrum, the invaders surprised the Saxons guarding the household of King Alfred. With their stronghold fallen, Alfred and his family escaped with some of their retainers. The raiders killed or scattered the soldiers who had been with the Saxon king.

Guthrum hoped to conquer all of Wessex, and his triumph looked nearly complete. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle recorded that after the Danes overran Chippenham, "many of the people they drove beyond the sea, and of the rest the greater part they subdued and forced to obey them, except for King Alfred" and "a small band." Once, Alfred's kingdom stretched 300 miles from the western tip of Cornwall to Kent on the southeast coast of England. Now, he reigned in hiding over a fragment of Somerset forest and marshland, and remote scraps of neighboring counties that so far escaped the marauding Danes.

From the desperate situation of the king of Wessex at the low point of his fortunes arose some of the most famous legends of Alfred the Great, and indeed, in all of English history. Perhaps the most famous tale is the one of King Alfred and the cakes. In this story, the king was alone and in hiding. A peasant woman offered him shelter as she might a poor vagrant, having no idea of her guest's once-exalted station. Busy with her chores, the woman told Alfred to watch some wheat cakes she left baking at the hearth. Alfred was so deep

Alamy

ABOVE: Alfred the Great leads his brother King Ethelred's West Saxon army against the Danes at the Battle of Ashdown in 871. Illustration by Morris Meredith Williams (1881–1973) for *The Northmen in Britain* published in 1913. OPPOSITE: A 1778 engraving of Alfred, left, on the isle of Athelney, greeting messengers who bring word of a victory over the Danes. Alfred and a small number of men retreated to Athelney where he was able to conduct raids against the Danes.

Wikimedia Commons

in thought about rescuing his kingdom that he didn't notice the cakes burning. When her benefactor returned, she was astounded by his negligence and scolded him.

Some of Alfred's subjects fled across the English Channel to France. To those who remained alive Alfred seemed to have dropped out of sight. It would be some time before he would be in any position to go on the offensive. It hardly seemed possible for affairs in Wessex to be any worse, until the Danish chieftain Ubba sailed from his winter camp on the South Welsh coast. Thirty ships full of Danish warriors landed on the north coast of Devon.

Odda, the ealdorman of Devon, refused to throw in his lot with the invaders. Little help was available, but Odda cobbled together what forces he could, most of the men being peasants with little or no military experience. They assembled at a place remembered as Countisbury Hill, which offered some existing defenses in the form of an ancient fort that overlooked the beach that swarmed with Ubba's men.

Ubba postponed attacking Odda. He knew that the Saxon position had no water. There seemed to be ample time to wait for thirst and hunger to bring them an easy victory.

The symbol of Ubba's power was a flag, sewn by his sisters that depicted a raven. With the raven, a symbol of the Danes' chief god Odin, the banner was believed to have magical powers. Many believed that the flag could predict the outcome of a battle; if the cloth flapped and waved in the wind, it meant victory. Should the cloth folds droop on the staff, defeat was foretold.

Rather than wait for a slow defeat, Odda rolled the dice for a surprise dawn attack. His men rushed over their ramparts and charged into the Danish camp. Taken by surprise, Ubba's army was destroyed. Ubba himself was killed; some say that Odda slew him. The once-fearsome raven flag was now a trophy of war.

After Easter, Alfred found refuge at Athelney, an island with a hunting lodge or small royal hall surrounded by marshlands, in modern-day Somerset. This island of "firm land, which is only two acres in breadth," was described two and a half centuries later by the historian William of Malmesbury. "Athelney," said the historian, "is not an island of the sea, but is so inaccessible on account of bogs and the inundations of the lakes that it cannot be got to but in a boat. It had a very large wood of alders, which harbors stags, wild goats, and many beasts of that kind." Alfred probably knew the area well from hunting trips he took in happier times.

Athelney offered a secure and secretive base to conduct raids against the Danes. In this way they supported themselves with food and supplies taken from the invaders, as well as Saxons who had surrendered to them. William of Malmesbury wrote of Alfred that even when the enemy thought he was finished, "he would escape like a slippery serpent, from the hand which held him, glide from his lurking-place, and, with undiminished courage, spring on his insulting enemies."

In the beginning, Alfred's small band made swift raids to seize enough food to ensure their survival. Gradually, the foraging expeditions grew into sharp guerilla raids. Once completely dominant, the Danes were now forced to concentrate their forces to avoid being cut up in small detachments. Small bands of Northmen were no longer everywhere, and many of Alfred's subjects were able to come out of hiding and prepare for battle again.

After gradually building up his forces, early in May, Alfred left Athelney. He halted at a place known as "Egbert's Stone" and summoned his

subjects and allies to join him. Asser wrote that "And there met him at that place all the people of the districts of Somerset and Wiltshire, and all the people of the land of Hampshire, who had not gone beyond the sea for fear of the pagans. When they saw the king, as was right, they received him after so great tribulation as one risen from the dead, and they were filled with joy unspeakable."

One of the legends of Alfred the Great told of him going under cover around this time, disguised as a minstrel, into the Danish camp. Whatever the truth of the story, it shows something of the unique regard the people of Wessex had for their king. Not only did they believe he had the imagination to plan the infiltration of the enemy camp, and the courage to conduct the reconnaissance himself, but it was also believable that he could sing and play music well enough to fit the part.

Word spread of the reappearance of King Alfred. From areas of Somerset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire that were free enough of the Danes, men left their homes or hiding places and joined the growing Saxon army. Perhaps beacon fires were lit to summon the men to rally around Alfred.

After leaving the camp at Egbert's Stone, the Wessex army marched to a landmark known as the Iley Oak, and camped another night. Egbert's Stone and the Iley Oak were evidently well-known to the people of the region, making it easy for local men to find the king's army.

The next morning, on a date not exactly known but between May 6-12, 878, Alfred "set his standards in motion and came to the place called Edington," according to Asser. Guthrum's army was there in a fortified position. The king of Wessex "fought fiercely against the whole host of the pagans, forming his shield-wall closely, and striving long and boldly." The tide of battle turned toward Alfred, who "with great slaughter overthrew the pagans."

Unable to reach the seashore and escape on their ships, Guthrum fled deeper inland with some of his men into Chippenham. Alfred followed, "and smiting the fugitives, pursued them to the fort. And all things, men and horses and beasts, that he found without the fort he took, and the men he slew forthwith."

Now, the resurgent West Saxons held the advantage, as political and feudal ties would strengthen their forces. On the other hand, the Danes were formidable opponents but they were not united under a single ruler. They raided, fought, and withdrew as they saw fit, and factions formed alliances when convenient. Now, Ubba was dead and his army was destroyed, and no Danish groups were close enough or willing to help raise the siege of Chippenham.

The food for the remnant of Guthrum's army had been mainly the stolen livestock they herded toward Chippenham. Left to graze in pasture land outside the defenses, the livestock was recaptured by the Saxons. Penned up in the Saxon stronghold they had captured back in January, Guthrum and the Danes endured two weeks of siege before the threat of starvation, and the chance of obtaining mercy, pushed them to surrender to King Alfred.

Edington and the siege of Chippenham were landmark triumphs, all the more impressive following the period of chaos and uncertainty after the royal court was expelled from Chippenham. Neither victory meant an end to the troubles of Wessex. But Guthrum's defeat meant that the Danes were forced to leave Wessex and its other lands to Alfred, and they even abandoned the western portion of Mercia. The Saxons regained London and rebuilt the city after its ruination by the invaders.

Minted during the reign of Alfred the Great, this silver penny struck sometime between 875-880 CE features a bust believed to depict the king, with "ELFRE D REX" around.

And, there was a truly remarkable concession. Guthrum consented to convert to Christianity. He adopted a Saxon name, Aethelstan. And, his godfather for the christening was none other than King Alfred himself.

The Northmen remained a menace, but Guthrum held to his word. He ruled in East Anglia, but left Alfred's realm alone. The former Guthrum even minted Saxon-style coins with his new name of Aethelstan until his death in 890.

The agreements reached after the Battle of Edington were formalized some years later (the precise date is unknown) by the Treaty of Wedmore. Watling Street, an old Roman road running diagonally across England, became the boundary between Saxon and Dane. Watling Street ran from Dover and Kent across the Thames at London, and continued into Mercia. To the east would live the Danes, in a land called "the Danelaw," as their laws were in effect within this region. King Alfred held sway over the lands west of the line.

Wessex still resorted to paying "Danegeld" (Dane-money) to the Vikings as bribes to keep them from raiding the Saxons. Some of the invaders were beginning to settle down and preferred to tend to their new farms rather than go raiding. Yet, all too many Danes continued to accept the "protection payments,"only to break their pledges and go back to war. The rest of Alfred's reign would not be all peaceful.

That is not to say attackers would have an easy time. Under Alfred's planning, the Danes faced a much more efficient and deadly foe. The fyrd, or Saxon militia, was divided into two groups. One group was ready to take up arms while the other tended to their farms and harvests, so responding to raids with force was much faster than in previous decades.

A number of important *burhs* (market towns), were selected as military posts. Some towns had remnants of Roman fortifications that gave a head start in providing defensive walls. Others required new earthworks, ditches, and wooden palisades. Roads linked the burhs. In the event of a new invasion, fire beacons quickly signaled the alarm across the countryside. Lands were granted to settlers who would bear arms in the event of an emergency. When the system went into effect, all of Alfred's subjects lived within 20 miles of the defenses and soldiers of one of the new burhs.

It was obvious to Alfred that a revamped land militia would not be enough to protect his subjects. Wessex had a small navy in the time of his father King Aethelwulf, but Alfred expanded and strengthened his navy to a higher degree. At that time, the West Saxons and the English were not really seafarers. To man his ships with experienced mariners, he recruited sailors from Frisia and elsewhere along the north European coast.

Nonetheless, wars continued during the rest of Alfred's reign. Simeon of Durham wrote of an attack in 884. The Danes came to Rochester, and built an earthwork outside the gate of the town. The townsfolk held on, allowing Alfred time to confront the enemy "with no small force". When the Saxon army "drew near …so quickly did the Danes, fear-stricken, seek safety on Ship-board; leaving their earthwork, and all the horses brought with them from France, and all the French captives they had taken."

In 896, the "Host" held a stronghold on the

Danish Vikings attack Anglo-Saxon forces under Alfred, King of Wessex, who would unite much of England and establish a lasting peace with the Danes.

River Lea, about 20 miles north of London. A chronicler noted that "a great body of the townsmen, and other folk beside" attacked the Danes but "they were put to flight, and there was slain some four of the King's Thanes [noblemen]."

Alerted to the incursion, King Alfred encamped by London, watching the enemy and keeping them away from the farmers harvesting the year's crops. Inspecting the layout of the River Lea, he saw a way that the stream "might be shut in so that never might they bring out their ships."

John of Brompton left a little bit of detail into Alfred's plan to trap the enemy fleet. Joined by a force of Londoners, Alfred attacked the stronghold and "brake it down and slew four of their leaders, and divided the river Lea into three branches, so that their ships could not be brought out." The Danes abandoned their ships in the Lea and withdrew from the London region. After the enemy left, the Saxons burned some of the captured vessels, and took some back to London.

Although constantly occupied with the protection of the realm, Alfred's travels to Rome and his devotion to books made him well aware of potential alliances with countries on the continent. His daughter Aelfthryth was married to Baldwin II, the Count of Flanders, in 889. This tie would come back to haunt England. The four-times-great-granddaughter of Aelfthryth, Matilda, would become the wife of William the Conqueror—the Norman ruler who would conquer the Saxon kingdom of England in 1066.

Another of Alfred's daughters, Aethelflaed, married Aethelred, the Ealdorman of Mercia. Allied with her brother King Edward of Wessex, Aethelflaed was skilled at politics. She came to rule Mercia in her own right in an age when it was nearly inconceivable for a woman to reign. In 917, with Edward of Wessex, she campaigned against the Danes and recaptured Derby, although she died the next year.

King Alfred himself died in 899. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle eulogized him thusly, "King he was over all Angle-kin, save only that part which was under Danish sway; and for thirty years, lacking one and a half, held he the kingdom."

His son and successor, Edward the Elder, inherited a strong kingdom able to survive to become a foundation of England and the monarchy. One millennium later, Alfred was regarded as one of England's most famous kings, but he was also admired (not entirely accurately) as the founder of the Royal Navy. The rebellious 18th century American colonists also looked to the medieval king of Wessex; in 1775, one of the first warships of the Continental Navy was named the *Alfred*. To this day, Alfred the son of Aethelwulf is the only king of England whose name is joined with the honorific of "the Great." ■

From Raw Recruit *to* Seasoned Trooper

Robert Peck was just 17 when he joined the U.S. Cavalry and soon found himself on the 1857 Cheyenne Expedition and in the Battle of Solomon's Fork. **BY ERIC NIDEROST**

Robert Morris Peck was strolling the streets of Cincinnati one brisk November day when a yellow poster outside a boarding house caught his eye. After the bold headline "wanted," he read: *able-bodied, unmarried men between the ages of seventeen and forty-five to enlist as soldiers in the First Regiment, U.S. Cavalry*. It was 1856, and the 17-year-old printer's apprentice had a restless, peripatetic nature and an innate thirst for adventure.

Peck had always been interested in the West, eagerly devouring all the books he could find on the subject. His favorites were James Fenimore Cooper's "Leatherstocking Tales," and he thrilled to stories of wild Indians and courageous mountain men. But factual accounts, such as the exploits of "pathfinder" John Charles Fremont, were not to his taste.

The young apprentice also chafed at the mindless drudgery of the printer's trade, and was certain that such an indoor, confined existence was making inroads into his health. The West, with its wide open spaces under an azure sky, promised health as well as adventure. Peck considered his options. As he explained years later, "Newport Barracks was the permanent recruiting station, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, and separated from Covington, Kentucky, my home, by the Licking River."

But on reflection he realized that Newport Barracks was a place where you might be sent to any part of the service that needed men—infantry, artillery, or cavalry. He might linger at the Barracks for a long time awaiting assignment. But here was a recruiting center exclusively for the First Cavalry, and horse soldiers retained a strong element of glamor and romance.

Peck entered the building and met recruiting sergeant William Carroll, an old soldier with a martial air and a talent for spinning stories designed to make army life attractive. Carroll could have saved his breath, because Peck had already made up his mind to enlist. But there were still a few details to work out, mainly the fact that he was underage and would need permission from a parent or guardian.

Peck's family didn't know of his desire to join the army, and he hoped to keep it that way as long as possible. A plan was hatched in which Carroll would happily accept permission papers that were essentially forged by the youth. Following a brief interview by a Lieutenant Wheaton, Carroll took the young man to Newport Barracks for a physical examination.

The post doctor pronounced Peck fit, but remarked that he was "peaked," "delicate looking," and "only a boy." Peck agreed, but blamed most of his appearance and uncertain health on the monotonous printing job he had endured for three years. The doctor wryly commented that indeed the "soldier's life is a good thing for you physically—that is, it will either kill or cure you."

Once he was sworn in for a five year "hitch," it was a matter of waiting until the ice melted on the Mississippi the next spring. Once the river was navigable, a steamer would take Peck to Fort Leavenworth, the official headquarters of the First Cavalry Regiment and the hub of all military matters pertaining to the vast American west.

Since the Mississippi was generally ice-bound and closed from December to March, there was ample time to learn the basics of soldiering at Jefferson Barracks, a facility on the banks of the river about nine miles below St. Louis. It was nearing the end of February when Peck and about 300 other recruits boarded two steamboats for Fort Leavenworth. He always remembered that bitterly cold journey, where the trees that grew along the riverbank were festooned with long icicles

He was assigned to Company E, commanded by Capt. Samuel Sturgis. Though a firm believer in discipline, the captain was also a fair man and well liked by his company. Though he seems to have done well at Jefferson Barracks, Peck was still an apprentice soldier with much to learn. He was fortunate enough to have old soldiers willing to take him under their wings, and was smart enough to heed their advice on army life.

New recruits like Peck found life highly regimented, with a daily round of assigned tasks from early morning to the coming of night. Reveille sounded at 5:30 a.m., then the troopers marched to breakfast. After a simple repast—maybe coffee, a slice of salt pork, bread—it was off to the stables for 90 minutes of "stable call." It was an era when horses—especially draft animals—were treated

A cavalry regiment bugler sounds "Recall" during the U.S. Army's expedition into Cheyenne and Arapaho land in the summer of 1857. Detail from Don Troiani's painting "The Recall."

Kansas Historical Society

with callous indifference or outright cruelty. In cities like New York the poor beasts that pulled the various wheeled vehicles were worked to death, their emaciated corpses left in the street where they fell.

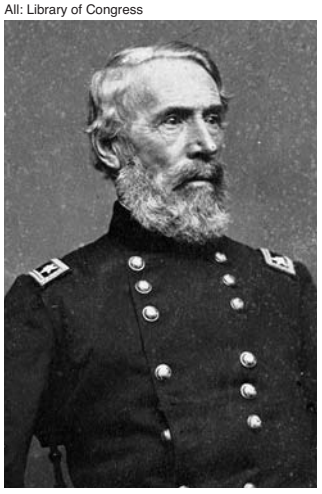
It was different in the cavalry. Peck recalled a sergeant who said "Horses must be nursed with great care, and everything must be done for the comfort of the horse." The young trooper was also told "our cavalry unit's efficiency depended entirely on the condition of our horses." Stable call meant the troopers watered, fed, and groomed their mounts. Peck's horse was a "solid colored" mare, with a three inch high "US" on its left shoulder that marked her as government property.

After stable call, it was time for mounted drill from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. In the afternoon there would be more equine care. "Twice a day," remembered Peck long after, "we'd lead our mounts to the picket line, where we'd use a curry comb, brush, and [hoof] pick." The tasks included sponging the horse's eyes and nostrils. Horse care was of such importance that troopers on campaign were issued small grooming kits for ministrations on the trail.

On an average day, five hours were devoted to horse care and mounted drill, and after that there were more duties to perform. Guard duty was particularly dreaded as a tedious exercise of excruciating boredom. Peck's motto seemed to be, as he once put it, "Grin and bear it." Yet he was still young enough to retain something of his boyish desire for high adventure on the plains. Sooner or later the cavalry would be called out to "chastise" the native Americans and Peck could hardly wait.

The First Cavalry was part of a modest expansion of the army in 1855. With the addition of

All: Library of Congress



From left, Colonel Edwin Sumner became the oldest Civil War field general; Capt. Samuel Sturgis, from Pennsylvania, served as a Major General during the Civil War; Capt. George Steuart, in the uniform of a Confederate Brigadier General, was raised in Baltimore, Maryland. TOP: Union Pacific railroad workers are being attacked by Cheyenne warriors in this *Harper's Weekly* engraving based on a drawing by Theodore R. Davis. OPPOSITE: The first two U.S. Army cavalry regiments were organized by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis in 1855. Troopers were issued new uniforms—dark blue short jackets, sky blue trousers, black felt Hardee hats, Sharps carbines, pistols, and cavalry sabers—that would remain in use into the Civil War.

two infantry regiments and two cavalry regiments the Army's numbers were now 17,867 officers and men. The public generally despised the military, save when the nation was at war. In times of peace soldiers were considered the dregs of American society, its ranks filled with the lazy, the ignorant, the drunkards, or the cast-off human refuse of foreign nations.

This description, like most stereotypes, has some elements of truth. Alcoholism was a problem for officers and men alike, but the public gave little thought to the isolation and hardship that might turn a soldier to drink. And the foreign element was a large one. In 1850 about 60 percent of the regular army rank and file were foreign born. About half were Irish, and about one fifth were German. Native-born Americans who joined were mostly unemployed or, like Peck, seeking excitement and adventure in a mythic West.

Army life was strict, and any miscreant guilty of "conduct prejudicial to the good order and military discipline" could expect a wide range of "corrections" placed upon them, including time in the guard house (jail) on a diet of bread and water, or hard labor with a heavy ball and chain around their leg. Flogging was falling into disuse for all

but the most serious offenses, such as desertion.

Private James Murphy, Company E, First Cavalry, was a happy-go-lucky Irishman with a fondness for alcohol and an independent spirit that set him at odds with his commander, Capt. Samuel Sturgis. One day the company assembled as usual, each man beside his horse, while they waited for Sturgis to command them. When the Captain ordered "Mount," each trooper swung into the saddle but Murphy, probably drunk, had some difficulty.

The Irishman put the wrong foot in the stirrup, and ended up backwards facing the horse's tail. The troopers around him began to snicker, but Murphy paid them no mind. Sturgis, hearing the commotion, walked over and was incredulous. "Murphy," said the Captain, " how the hell did you get yourself in this fix?" Sitting contentedly backwards staring at his mount's rear end, the private answered,"I think, sir, the ould beste [old beast] must have turned around as I was getting up here!"

By this time the mounted troopers had their own problems, manfully trying to suppress the urge to laugh out loud. Capt. Sturgis found little humor in the situation, and before long the Irish "comedian" was behind bars in the guardhouse. But such diversions of garrison life were soon replaced by preparations for a major campaign against the Cheyenne.

In 1851 a number of tribes—the Cheyenne included—signed the Treaty of Fort Laramie, a pact that was supposed to bring lasting peace between the Native Americans and the United States. But as the years went on the Cheyenne discovered their way of life was threatened by white encroachment. On the eastern flank of Cheyenne lands the territory of Kansas had been established and was quickly filling up with settlers. Gold prospectors roamed Cheyenne territory and emigrant wagon trains bound for Oregon or California scared off the buffalo, a major food source.

Tensions mounted, and violence erupted, with innocent victims on both sides. When two natives approached a wagon driver to ask for tobacco, the teamster took fright and shot at them. In response they fired arrows in his direction, wounding him in the arm. In retaliation for the incident a hotheaded Capt. George Steuart and his troopers charged a group of unsuspecting Cheyenne, killing ten and wounded eight.

Now convinced the whites wanted war, the Cheyenne responded accordingly. Emigrant wagon trains were attacked, including a small Mormon party that suffered several deaths, including a child. It was these wagon train assaults that prompted Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to order a full scale punitive campaign against the Cheyenne.

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ABOVE: U.S. Dragoons walk their horses through a cactus patch during an expedition in the west in the painting by Tom Lovell. Dragoons were considered mounted infantry, who rode into battle, but were expected to fight on foot. The U.S. Army included dragoon regiments until 1861. BELOW: In addition to cavalry, dragoons, and infantry, Colonel Edwin Vose Sumner's punative expedition against the Cheyenne in 1857 included a few M1841 mountain howitzers. Well suited for the rugged terrain, the lightweight howizter fired 12-pound explosive shells as well as spherical case and canister. OPPOSITE: Purported photograph of Cheyenne medicine man White Bull, also known by such names as "Ice," "Hail" and "Ice Bear," who was in his 20s at the time of the Battle of Solomon's Fork.

Both: Library of Congress

This was to be a major effort, with a southern wing commanded by Maj. John Sedgewick and a northern wing headed by Col. Edwin Vose "Bull" Sumner. The two columns would execute a pincer-movement, meeting on or about July 4th, at a point midway between what are now Denver, Colorado, and Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Sumner's command would be Company A and B, First Cavalry, but would be augmented by Companies E and H of the Second Dragoons when he reached Fort Kearny. Additional troops would join Sumner's column when they arrived at Fort Laramie, namely Companies C, D, and G of the foot-slogging U.S. Infantry. U.S .Dragoons would also augment the cavalry portion of the expedition.

Bringing up the rear would be 50 mule-drawn supply wagons, a remuda of spare horses and mules, a herd of cattle for meat rations "on the hoof," and two "Mountain" howitzer artillery pieces. The southern wing under Major Sedgewick would also include two artillery pieces, a substantial wagon train, and cattle for fresh meat. Nothing, it seemed, would be left to chance.

On May 18, 1857, the southern wing of the Cheyenne expedition left Fort Leavenworth, its departure marked by martial pomp and ceremony. The men were dressed in their standard blue shell jackets trimmed with yellow. Black felt headgear was turned up on one side in a manner reminiscent of what was styled a "Hardee" hat. Formed up in a column of fours, the troopers made their official departure at 9 a.m.

A mounted brass band was on hand to provide music suitable to the occasion, and Col. Sumner was on a small reviewing stand ready to take the salute of his men on parade. Ramrod straight, resplendent in a blue tunic that featured a double row of gleaming brass buttons and eagle shoulder boards, he had dark hair and a dark mustache quite unlike his later white-haired Civil War photos. His hat was off, and he was surrounded by a cluster of officers there to witness the occasion.

As each company went past the reviewing stand, its captain ordered "present sabers!" and the troopers saluted the silent figure in blue. The brass band played "The Girl I Left Behind Me," a stirring song of departure appropriate to the occasion. Sumner would be leading the northern wing of the Cheyenne expedition set to leave Fort Leavenworth the next day.

Private Peck was with Company E of the Sedgewick wing, and wrote about his experiences in vivid detail almost 45 years later. At Salt Creek, about three miles from Leavenworth, the column halted to allow the cumbersome but necessary supply wagons to catch up. After about eight months in the cavalry Peck was thoroughly acquainted with the routine of garrison life, but the daily life of a trooper on campaign was a whole new learning experience.

As the column headed in a southwesterly direction there were a few scattered hamlets to be seen, and a Mr. Lowe ran a solitary blacksmith shop in the middle of nowhere, but finally there was nothing but the vast Kansas plains stretched endlessly before them. The column crossed the Kaw River, a stream that could be forded on horseback, but the wagon train needed to be ferried across by flatboats.

The Sedgewick command entered the fabled Sante Fe Trail just after crossing the Kaw a few miles west of Topeka. This was the stuff of legend,

the artery of trade to the Hispanic southwest, a route familiar to Peck's boyhood heroes Jim Bridger, Kit Carson, and Jedediah Smith. Though Santa Fe was now U.S. territory, the column still met wagon caravans from the city traveling west to trade.

Private Peck, now 18, was keenly aware he was living out the western adventure he dreamed of since boyhood. The Santa Fe Trail took them to the Arkansas River, but en route there were more wonders to behold. Vast colonies of prairie dogs were to be seen, "and throughout the trip we were seldom out of sight of these interesting little animals." But sightings of buffalo—technically bison—grew more frequent, the herds ever larger, until while crossing a stretch about eight miles between Plum buttes and the Arkansas River the column was threatened by a herd so "vast in extent that we could see no end in flank or depth." The stampede was an undulating brown carpet of 15,000 to 20,000 beasts, a tsunami of hooves and horns and shaggy bodies that threatened the entire column with annihilation.

An adult male buffalo can weigh a ton, and for their bulk they are amazingly swift animals that have been clocked at 30-35 miles an hour. Something had spooked them, and they were now in full gallop. As the leading edge of the brown mass grew closer, a ground-shaking rumble audibly added to the visual terror.

"Sturgis," cried Major Sedgewick, "what'll we do?" Luckily Captain Sturgis had frontier experience, and with Sedgewick's grateful approval, took temporary command, The wagon train circled, forming a protective barrier for the cattle herd and other animals, while the troopers dismounted—every fourth man a horse holder—and ran double-quick time to get in line.

"Our flanks were turned back," remembered Peck, "forming us in the shape of a huge V, with the point towards the coming herd, and the open ends of the V enclosing our horses and (wagon) train." Peck was scared, really scared, for it seemed the "torrent of brown wool" could not be stopped, and what "would be left of us when the avalanche of horns and hooves sweeps over us?"

"Commence firing!" Sturgis shouted over the din of pounding hooves, and the troopers blazed away at will. Like a ship's prow, the wedge of gunfire parted the brown torrent. As ammunition ran low, more was brought up, but it was almost a half an hour before the herd fully passed and the danger was over. Scores of buffalo lay dead or wounded before them, and some of the less badly injured actually limped away to try and rejoin the herd.

The troopers made sure that some of those fallen animals would be added to the column's food larder. Pioneer travelers sometimes sang the praises of buffalo meat, and of course it was an indigenous mainstay, but Private Peck didn't like it. Younger animals might be tender enough, but overall Peck found buffalo meat to be lean, stringy and tough. He preferred meat from the cattle that accompanied the column.

The rendezvous with the Sumner column was accomplished without a hitch, on July 4, 1857. The command had native scouts, including Delaware, led by Chief Fall Leaf. They were good guides and also proficient hunters, and were highly regarded. The expedition now had six companies of the Sixth Infantry to boost their numbers—good firepower for defensive actions, useless when in pursuit of swift-moving Cheyenne on horseback.

It was now a question of tracking down the Cheyenne. The column was near the South Platte River, in what's now Colorado. and were going to strike east, probing the plains though some of the toughest ground they had yet encountered. Acknowledging the challenge, Sumner decided that the expedition would switch to a pack mule train, ordering the baggage and commissary fodder wagons back to Fort Laramie for resupply.

The troopers would have only the clothes they wore, with no bedding or tents. No wheeled vehicles would accompany the expedition, save a two-mule hospital ambulance. If all went well, Wagonmaster Percival Lowe would load up the wagons, and return to the South Platte at about the Salt Lake crossing, there to await further orders.

The march resumed, a torturous trek across a desiccated landscape, where the furnace-like blast of summer on the Kansas plains soared over 100 degrees, drenching man and beast with sweat at the slightest exertion. The horses suffered the most; the pack mules carried far less fodder than the wagons, so grain rations were drastically cut. They could graze on grass, but that was becoming more scarce by the day.

Sumner ordered that the men walk their horses every other hour to give their mounts additional rest. Some officers objected to this, but Sumner was adamant, and set the example by going on foot himself. Eventually water was found; there was grass in abundance and plenty of game. They made camp at Huckleberry Creek, whose waters flow under sands into the Republican River.

Though conditions improved, the damage to the horses was evident. Many were noticeably failing after days of little or no water, exhausting heat, and scant food. Their saddles no longer fit and saddle sores added to their woes. How would they perform now that they were deep in Cheyenne territory?

The Cheyenne were being guided by two shaman "medicine men" called Dark and White Bull—White Bull also went by a number of names like "Ice," "Hail" and "Ice Bear." He was

Montana Historical Society Research Center

only in his 20s, and during his long life he would witness, and even take part in, Cheyenne history for the next 50 years and more. But now he and Dark were considered great medicine men even though White Bull was such a young man

White Bull said that if the warriors washed their hands in a certain spring, the blue coat's guns would be ineffective. If they did as he directed, they would see that when a trooper fired his carbine, the bullet would drop uselessly to the ground. These revelations caused a great commotion within the tribe, and confidence in battle soared. They washed in the "holy" spring with something akin to exultation. This made them invulnerable in battle!

On the morning of July 9, about 10 a.m., a Delaware scout reported seeing six Cheyenne. Colonel Sumner took this sighting seriously—thinking the main body of warriors were just ahead—and ordered the column to halt and prepare for battle. Cinching the saddles on the now-scrawny horses was paramount.

When they were ready, Sumner addressed the men directly in his characteristic booming voice, "I don't know how many warriors the Cheyenne can bring against us, but I do know that if officers and men obey orders promptly, and all pull together, we can whip the whole tribe. I have the utmost confidence in my officers and soldiers. Bugler, sound the advance!"

The column went forward, quickening pace as the bugler sounded the "trot." But the four-gun battery of mountain howitzers soon became bogged down in a little creek. The Sixth Infantry foot soldiers were also left behind. This reduced Sumner's command to six companies, a total of about 300 men. Even this number made them under strength—many were on detached duty such as leading mule supply trains or manning the artillery battery.

Sumner's column "came down a hollow from the upland prairie, debouching into the Solomon River bottom, and Peck could see they were entering a "valley." The waterway in front of them was probably the South Fork of the Solomon River. The Cheyenne easily crossed the river, though some caution was needed in some boggy spots, because this time of year it was only about two feet deep. Once across they spread out in full battle array, loudly and lustily singing their war songs to keep up their courage.

Still a novice soldier, Peck gazed at the mass of yelling, gesticulating warriors with something akin to awe. Their hair adorned with feathers, their faces daubed with paint, they carried lances, buffalo hide shields, and bow and arrows. A few had guns, mostly an odd assortment of makes and models. Each warrior loudly chanted his unique war song and their collective voices produced a terrible din that was frightening to hear, even as their martial spectacle was unnerving to behold.

This was reality, not boyish fantasy. One particular Cheyenne warrior caught his eye, a man who stood apart from the crowd and seemed to exhort the others. He brandished a lance, and wore a feathered war bonnet that stretched almost to the ground. Each feather represented a coup, or act of bravery in war, so he must have been a respected leader.

Peck felt the cavalry soldiers were greatly outnumbered, and started to think maybe Sumner had "bit off more than he could chew." Sumner noticed the natives were trying to outflank him on the left, so he detailed Captain Beal and his company to deal with the threat. But now it was time for the main event; adrenaline pumping, the troopers awaited his command.

"Sling carbines!" Sumner roared, then "Draw sabers!" Sabers? It was an order that puzzled greenhorn and veteran alike. Though the men did have saber practice, soldiers felt the swords were vestigial remains of an ancient past. Most thought that there would be a volley or two from their carbines, then a full-blown charge with their revolvers.

But the troopers obeyed and 300 sabers rasped out of scabbards, the blades glistening in the sun. Sumner now called "Gallop-march!" followed by a hearty "Charge!" that came from his lips. Adrenaline pumping through their veins, the troopers charged, answering the Cheyenne calls with a loud shout of their own. The troopers held their weapons in tierce point—arm extended forward with the cutting edge of the saber facing up.

It's speculation, but Peck recounts that the command was almost within rifle range when Sumner ordered the charge. If he had ordered a volley at this point—as most troopers expected—

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ABOVE: Three Cheyenne warriors photographed in traditional garb by Edward S. Curtis around 1900. One wears an elaborate war bonnet made of eagle feathers, something only recognized tribal leaders are allowed to wear. Today, only Native Americans are legally allowed to collect eagle feathers. OPPOSITE: Colonel Sumner's unusual order for his men to charge with sabers unnerved the Cheyenne warriors, who believed they were protected only from the trooper's bullets by the powers of spiritual waters. The Cheyenne turned and galloped away. Sumner pursued them for more than five miles, but only mangaged to catch up with a few.

ClassicStock / akg-images / Nawrocki

many of the bullets would indeed have fallen short. White Bull's "prophecy" would have been fulfilled, and the Cheyenne might have met the charge with resolution.

Instead, the Cheyenne seemed thunderstruck by the saber charge, something the holy men had not prepared them for. The spiritual force unleashed by the special waters was supposed to bring protection against firearms, not long knives. Courage and skill in battle were cultural norms, but these warriors were suddenly confronted with something abnormal.

Did the white men have some new, great "medicine" with these sabers? Did Maheo, the Great Creator spirit, favor these bluecoats, at least for the moment? When confronted with superior "medicine," the Cheyenne did not feel it was dishonorable to run—which they did, scattering in every direction. Moments before their hasty departure some of the natives let loose with showers of arrows, but for the most part refused to stand and fight

The cavalrymen pursued their quarry for five to seven miles, but were not successful in bringing many to bay. The fatigued cavalry mounts could not keep up with the fresh Cheyenne horses. Some fighting took place between small groups, but there was no general engagement. Some Cheyenne had lost their mounts and a few others stayed behind as a kind of unofficial rear guard.

There were probably many of these smaller, sometimes hand-to-hand fights, but most were unrecorded. One exception is the fight between Private Rollin M Taylor and a dismounted Cheyenne warrior. Taylor had been closing in on the native when his horse stumbled on a prairie dog hole, throwing him. As he catapulted to the ground he lost his revolver, but somehow kept his saber.

Now that the tables were turned, the Cheyenne lost no time in launching several arrows at Taylor while he lay on the ground. One slightly wounded him in the shoulder, while a second arrow went through his hat, wounding his scalp, and almost comically parting his hair. Rushing forward, the warrior tried to stab Taylor with his knife, while parrying the trooper's defensive saber blows with his bow. Taylor's saber cut through the bow and delivered a deep cut in the man's right shoulder.

Bleeding profusely, the warrior staggered and fell down. Taylor ran him through with his saber. The dying Cheyenne made signs asking his adversary not to let anyone scalp him after death. Taylor readily agreed, and the warrior died. True to his word, when a Pawnee tried to scalp the Cheyenne, Taylor angrily threatened to saber him. The Pawnee left without a scalp.

Private Martin Lynch, Company A, was one of the few troopers killed by the Cheyennes. Ironically, he had been detailed to guard the mule pack train, but was determined to join his company in the charge. He left the pack train, his horse galloping furiously, but the mare got a little too close to a group of Cheyennes, who launched a rain of arrows in his direction. Lynch was hit by several of them, one piercing his heart. After he tumbled to the ground, they shot him with his own revolver, but were forced to retreat when a group of cavalry arrived on the scene, so he was not scalped.

Conventional wisdom said a Cheyenne warrior would rather fight to the death than surrender. Private Peck noted that one able-bodied warrior did surrender, much to the amazement of all. Later, the Pawnee scouts requested the prisoner so they could torture him to death in a scalp dance. Sumner rejected the notion with disgust., even when the Pawnee offered him a string of fine horses in payment. The Cheyenne prisoner reportedly escaped later.

The Battle of Solomon's Fork was over. Sumner's command sustained two dead and twelve

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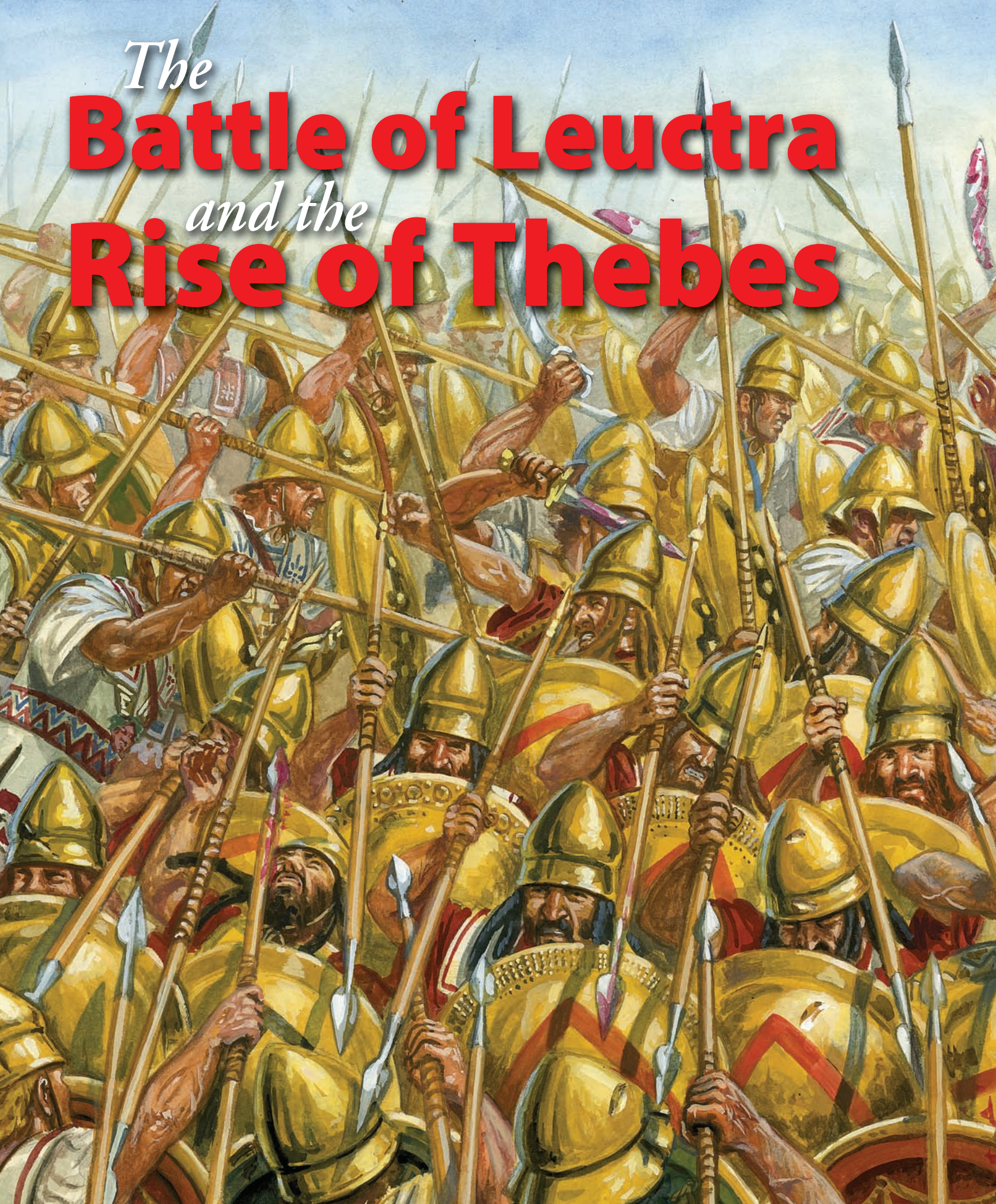

The Battle of Leuctra *and the* Rise of Thebes

Across a broad valley near the Greek village of Leuctra, the summer sun beat down on 16,000 anxious Greek warriors. While cavalry horses pranced nervously in front of the lines, officers made final adjustments and offered brief words of encouragement. The city states of Sparta and Thebes, at odds for decades, would finally decide their struggle for power by force of arms.

In the tight ranks of the Spartan phalanx, veteran warriors steeled their nerves for the inevitable terror that awaited. Inexperienced conscripts trembled. The stillness was broken as orders were barked on the Spartan side of the field, setting the army in motion. In unison, the Spartan battle line surged forward, in complete silence according to their training. In the rear of the Spartan phalanx, flute players kept cadence for the men trudging toward the enemy.

As they neared the Theban phalanx, the Spartans witnessed an enemy line bristling with spears and protected by a solid wall of large, round aspis shields emblazoned with the club of Heracles. The symbol of the great Greek demi-god was used as the insignia of the Sacred Band, an elite group of Theban warriors who had trained most of their adult lives to fight, and crush, the might of Sparta. Within moments, the fate of the Hellenistic world would be decided by the finest warriors of ancient Greece.

The Theban victory at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE ended Sparta's decades of dominance and myth of invincibility.

BY JOSHUA SHEPHERD

For over three centuries, Sparta had been a dominant force among the restless and antagonistic city states of ancient Greece. In early antiquity the city had been little more than a landlocked backwater situated in the narrow valley of the Eurotas River. But the Spartans, hemmed in by mountains and eager for expansion, aggressively sought elbow room at the expense of weaker neighbors.

Sparta sought influence and resources not by diplomacy, but through brute force. After seizing control of surrounding settlements in their home region of Laconia, the Spartans waged a war of outright conquest about 700 BCE. Pushing west across formidable mountains, the Spartans invaded the fertile homelands of Messene. Following a lengthy and bloody war of attrition, the Spartans succeeded in subjugating the whole of Messenia.

Rather than place their new conquest under tribute, the Spartans made an unthinkable decision. The entire Messenian population was enslaved, declared the hereditary property of the Spartan state. The unprovoked enslavement of fellow Greeks shocked the Hellenistic world but facilitated the radical transformation of Sparta.

By forcing the Messenian slaves, or helots, to work the land, Spartan citizens were freed from the constraints of pursuing a livelihood. To maintain the system and expand Sparta's power, virtually the entire male population was required to enter full-time military service, manning garrisons at home and abroad in a stark exhibition of brute force.

Subjected to a ruthless training regime, brutal discipline, and sparse rations, Spartan hoplites—heavily armed footsoldiers—were the most feared warriors of ancient Greece. While the armies of most Greek city-states comprised short-term volunteers, Sparta fielded veteran troops who were experts at the craft of war.

The comprehensive militarization of Spartan society unsurprisingly led to centuries of dominance across the Greek world. Spartan armies fanned out across the Peloponnesus, subduing the bulk of the peninsula. As a check on unrestrained power, the Spartans developed a novel dual monarchy of not one, but two hereditary kings from separate families, the Agiads and Eurypontids, who were regarded as descendants of the god Zeus. The dual kingship ensured a stable monarchy: only one king at a time could go to war, while his counterpart remained safely in Sparta.

Farther north, the cities of Attica and Boeotia, foremost among them the grand metropolis of Athens, scrambled to maintain their independence against the specter of an ascendant Sparta. Although the Greek states occasionally united to confront the repeated threat of Persian invasion, old rivalries died hard. And as Sparta increasingly flexed its muscles, full-scale conflict became all but inevitable.

Beginning in 431 BCE, an apocalyptic conflict rent the Greek world. In a wide arc from Sicily to

Breaking with traditional phalanx formation, Theban general Epaminondas lined up his best soldiers on the left side—50 ranks deep—against the best of the Spartan soldiers at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE.

George E. Koronaios / Wikimedia

LEFT: With the Acropolis of Athens as a backdrop, a modern reenactor portrays a Greek hoplite. OPPOSITE, TOP: Discovered in Italy, the "Chigi Vase" is an example of Greek oinochoe pottery dating from the first half of the 6th century BCE. This was the first discovered depiction on pottery of the hoplite phalanx, including the hoplon (shield) and other aspects of Greek military organization. The flute player at left is thought to have kept the hoplites in step while marching. OPPOSITE, INSET: A statue of the Theban General Epaminondas in the Temple of Ancient Virtue, at the Stowe Landscape Gardens in England. Built in the 1730s, the temple houses four statues—a general (Epaminondas), a legislator (Lycurgus), a poet (Homer) and a philosopher (Socrates)—representing ancient ideals. The inscription reads, "From whose Valour, Prudence, and Moderation, the Republick of Thebes received both Liberty and Empire, its military, civil, and domestick Discipline; and, with him, lost them."

Asia Minor, Athens and Sparta, along with their allies, unleashed a horrific total war that witnessed loss of life, famine, and destruction on an unprecedented scale. In 404, Sparta finally succeeded in forcing the surrender of Athens.

In the wake of the Peloponnesian War, Sparta became the dominant power of the Hellenistic world, wielding influence across a wide swath of the Mediterranean. Puppet governments friendly to Sparta were installed in a number of minor states.

Not surprisingly, however, the fiercely democratic city states of ancient Greece grew increasingly restless in the face of Spartan hegemony. Despite long-standing Spartan dominance in the Greek world, a new power was on the rise by the fourth century BCE. Thebes, situated northwest of Athens, was a restless city state intent on flexing its muscles and freeing itself from outside domination.

Thebes occupied a dichotomous role for much of its history. Situated in the center of Boeotia, the town sat at the very crossroads of empire. Boeotia was a comfortable region characterized by flat terrain and fertile farmland. The Boeotians consequently prospered, but were slow to develop militarized states compared with the superpowers of Athens and Sparta.

The city of Thebes, the largest and most powerful city of Boeotia, wielded great influence over her neighbors but was, in turn, repeatedly subjected to the control of both Sparta and Athens. In the perilous game of Greek diplomacy, Thebes' allegiance was constantly in a state of flux between the two larger warring cities.

Boeotia was also situated in ancient Greece's prime avenue of war. Armies headed toward the regions of Attica or the Peloponnesus necessarily

National Etruscan Museum, Villa Giulia, Rome

marched directly through the flat terrain of the Theban homeland. So many armies traversed Boeotia that the Roman historian Plutarch aptly referred to the region as "the dancing floor of war."

Thebe's increasing diplomatic weight was a natural outgrowth of a strengthening military. Like most rising powers, Thebes possessed a robust citizenry proud of their city's mounting strength and prosperity. This patriotism manifested itself in greater enthusiasm for military service and a serious approach to training and discipline.

But Thebes could field more than the traditional part-time citizen soldier. Throughout its history, the city had occasionally employed a force of 300 elite troops to bolster the hoplites. But in 378 BCE, Thebes constituted a brand-new crack unit, known as the Sacred Band, which could rival the vaunted Spartans man-for-man.

The Sacred Band was composed of 300 men who were devoted to full time soldiering. The men were unmarried and, freed from the responsibility of raising families, spent the bulk of their time training. In addition to constant drills that stressed the use of weapons and the deployment of the phalanx, the members of the Sacred Band were devotees of traditional Greek sports including running and wrestling. When not on campaign, the troops were housed in the Theban fortress of the Cadmea, and were maintained and supplied by the state so that their full energies could be devoted to the art of war.

Wikimedia Commons

Thebes, however, was a hotbed of rival political factions vying for power. Although the city possessed a minority of citizens with pro-Spartan sentiments, Theban patriots, nominally allied to Athens, were predominant. Among the latter were two of the city's most influential men: Pelopidas and Epaminondas. Pelopidas was the scion of an aristocratic family, immensely wealthy, and by nature and inclination a warrior.

Epaminondas, however, was the quintessential citizen of ancient Greece. Descended from an impoverished family, Epaminondas lived an ascetic lifestyle but was a thoroughgoing Theban nationalist. A skilled orator, he quickly established a name for himself in the Theban political scene and was eventually installed as a Boeotarch, one of seven chief officers who administered the Boeotian Confederacy.

During his lifetime Epaminondas was a dominant force in Thebes, but when duty called he served on the front lines with his fellow citizens. At the Battle of Mantinea, he is credited with having saved the life of Pelopidas. The two would forge a professional friendship that would prove crucial to the Theban city state.

Despite her own internal disorders, Thebes hoped to exploit an inherent weakness in the Spartan state and maintain constant military pressure on her rival. Although Sparta's militarized society had succeeded in dominating Greece for much of its history, it did so at the expense of its own population. Spartan men, who focused their energies on warfare, spent little time at home, and the family unit suffered accordingly. Over the

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ABOVE: This color lithograph of "Pelopidas leaving for Thebes," is an illustration from *Plutarch's Lives for Boys and Girls*, told by W.H. Weston, London 1910. OPPOSITE: A frieze depicting Greek hoplites in battle, from the Nereid Monument at Xanthos in Lycia, ca. 390-380 BCE, on display at London's British Museum.

decades, the population of Spartans citizens dwindled. In the earliest years of Sparta's history, the city boasted perhaps 9,000 male citizens. By the 4th century BCE, there were fewer than 700.

The ceaseless bloodletting that ravaged Greece was temporarily halted in 387 BCE. Peace talks, ironically called by the Persian King Artaxerxes II, saw envoys from across Greece agree to an armistice. The treaty, known as the King's Peace, stipulated that Asia Minor be left in Persian control and that all Greek cities "big and small, should be left to govern themselves." The treaty provision guaranteeing complete autonomy for Greek city states unintentionally laid the foundation for continued war.

When the treaty was officially ratified, Epaminondas suggested affirming the treaty not on behalf of Thebes, but all Boeotia. Seeing the move as a provocative insult from a Theban-dominated Boeotian League, the Spartan King Agesilaus II sternly refused. Hoping to weaken Theban influence in Boeotia, the Spartans refused to officially recognize the League, and maintained troops in the region of Phocis to the west of Boeotia. Unwilling to risk another all-out war, the Thebans backed down. It was a humiliating insult that Epaminondas would not soon forget.

The ugly game of internal Theban politics would ultimately end the brief respite from war. In 382 BCE, the pro-Spartan Theban agitator Leontiades plotted a coup with a local Spartan commander, Phoebidas. On his own initiative and in blatant violation of the King's Peace, Phoebidas unexpectedly led a Spartan force into Thebes and, with the help of Theban collaborators, seized control of the city. Ismenius, leader of the pro-Athenian faction, fled the city, along with Epaminondas and Pelopidas.

Apprehensive that the incident could reignite the war, the Spartans recalled Phoebidas, but Spartan troops continued to occupy Thebes. King Agesilaus defended his rogue general, and Phoebidas received little more than a reprimand and a fine. Despite having ratified the King's Peace in 387, the Spartans clearly hoped that they could once again bully their way into dominating the Greek world.

The Thebans were quick to carry out revenge. After three years of galling Spartan occupation, Ismenius' partisans slipped into Thebes. Among them was Pelopidas, who, true to his reputation as a man of action, was eager to strike a blow. For his part, Epaminondas remained aloof from the plot, and preferred to steer clear of shedding Theban blood. Pelopidas and the nationalists entertained no such scruples; with the help of locals who had grown outraged by the occupation, the Thebans assassinated the pro-Spartan collaborators who had been ruling the city. With the help of Athenian troops, the Thebans then succeeded in expelling the Spartan garrison from the city.

Not surprisingly, the King's Peace began to unravel across Greece. Hoping to forestall a resurgence of Spartan dominance, Athens and Thebes formed a confederacy of Greek states to present a united front to Spartan encroachment. The new league announced that it had been formed "so that the Spartans may allow the Greeks to live in peace, free and autonomous, with all their territory secure."

Eventually over 60 cities joined the confederacy in the hope of avoiding the shameful Spartan occupation that Thebes had endured. The new league, it was proclaimed, would admit no foreign "garrisons or magistrates."

The league was an unacceptable threat to the Spartans, who could see their influence in Greece on the wane. War ensued. Under Athenian leadership, the league poured its resources into an impressive fleet. Their investment paid off in 376 BCE, when the allies badly mauled a Spartan fleet at the Battle of Naxos.

The following year, the Spartans suffered a rare defeat in a pitched land battle. Hoping to drive a garrison of Spartan troops out of northwestern Boeotia, the Thebans dispatched a flying column under the command of Pelopidas, which consisted of 200 cavalry and the 300 crack hoplites of the Sacred Band. The Thebans unexpectedly

British Museum

encountered a superior Spartan force in a narrow mountain pass near Tegyra and had little choice but to stand and fight.

The Spartans, with about 1,200 men, were confident that they would handily brush aside the small Theban force. But Pelopidas drew up his entire force in a dense column that launched a fierce attack against the enemy right, the traditional place of honor where the Spartan commanders were sure to be located. The Sacred Band proved its worth, smashing through the enemy right, where the two Spartan commanders were killed. Although the Battle of Tegyra was considered a minor affair, the invincibility of the Spartan hoplite was demonstrated to be an antiquated legend. Pelopidas, as well as the members of the Sacred Band, enjoyed greater confidence in facing the Spartans again.

The Thebans, confident that their city was on the rise and capable of humbling Sparta, rejected overtures for a new treaty. Thebe's attempt to become a rival power was clearly a threat that Sparta felt obliged to confront once and for all. An invasion of Boeotia was planned for the campaign season of 371 BCE. While the elder King Agesilaus remained in Sparta, his younger counterpart, King Cleombrotus, would lead the assault against Thebes.

Cleombrotus, already occupying the city of Coronea to the west of Boeotia, commanded a sizable force more than capable of launching an invasion. The king eventually mustered a force that numbered about 10,000 men, which included hoplites, a mix of light troops, and a force of some 1,000 cavalry. The light troops and cavalry were vital for screening and foraging operations, but the real core of the army constituted the heavily armed hoplites. The bulk of the hoplites were conscripted from Sparta's vassal states and allies in the Peloponnesus. A dedicated core of just 700 Spartan citizens would form the backbone of the army.

Breaking through to Boeotia, however, could prove problematic. The easiest route to the Theban homeland, which passed south of Lake Copais, was nonetheless blocked by Theban forces in mountain passes east of Coronea. Forcing a direct passage could prove an immensely bloody affair. Cleombrotus formulated an intricate plan to steal a march into Boeotia by minor mountain passes which the Thebans would likely neglect to guard.

Rather than move directly east from Coronea, Cleombrotus ordered his army to march by a wide, circuitous route, first to the west, then in a wide arc to the south and east. His army skirted the Corinthian Gulf to the south, and their movement was masked by rugged mountain ranges to the north. The Spartan force slipped through narrow mountain passes west of Creusis completely unnoticed by the Thebans. After emerging onto the rich plains of Boeotia, Cleombrotus was in a position for a drive into the Theban heartland.

For their part, the Boeotians had hastily formed an army of 6,000 men for the defense of their homeland. The army included a solid core of Theban hoplites, bolstered by troops from various Boeotian city states. More importantly, the army also included the elite Sacred Band under the command of Pelopidas.

Curiously, the army was not led by a single commander, but by seven Boeotarchs. Six of the Boeotarchs remained with the army, while a seventh, Brachyllides, commanded a smaller detachment that guarded a vital mountain pass at Mount Cithaeron. Although Epaminondas was a charismatic commander that possessed a forceful personality, his leadership among the Boeotians was by no means without challenge.

If they had any hopes of forestalling an invasion on their homeland, the Boeotians had little choice but to head toward the Spartan army. Theban scouts located the Spartans near the town of Leuctra, camped along a ridgeline overlooking a broad plain. Epaminondas and his fellow Boeotarchs led their army to an opposing ridgeline, where they set up camp on the opposite side of the valley from the Spartans.

Although the Thebans had fielded an impressive army capable of confronting the Spartans, the Boeotian high command was divided over what course to take. With the Spartan army in plain view along the opposing hillsides, several of the Boeotarchs voiced reservations over giving battle.

A trio of the leaders—Damocleidas, Damophilus, and Simangelus—argued that fighting a pitched battle under the current conditions was too risky. Victory, they argued, was by no means assured, and a Theban defeat would leave all of Boeotia open to the ravages of the Spartan army. The hesitant Boeotarchs advocated for retreating with the army intact, evacuating the civilian population to the safety of Athens, and then seeking battle under more favorable conditions.

Epaminondas, joined by the Boeotarchs Xenocrates and Malgis, would have none of it. Epaminondas argued that all of Boeotia had contributed to assembling a large army, the enemy had been located, and there was no guarantee that a

more favorable battlefield would ever present itself in the future. Pelopidas had already proven that the Spartans were no longer invincible, and the Sacred Band was present and itching for a fight. Although victory wasn't guaranteed, Epaminondas asserted that a fight under the current circumstances was worth the risk.

The six Boeotarchs, evenly divided in sentiment, had reached an impasse. In an army governed by the consensus of multiple commanders, the disagreement proved crippling. In the face of the enemy, the Thebans were unable to make a binding decision one way or another.

When all seemed hopeless, Epaminondas experienced a fortuitously timed stroke of luck. Fresh troops arrived in camp. It was the detachment of men who had been guarding the Cithaeron Pass, led by the seventh Boeotarch, Brachyllides. After the discussion was renewed, the newly arrived Boeotarch weighed the options and then cast his vote with Epaminondas. With the deadlock broken, Epaminondas could finally put the entire Boeotian army into motion. The Thebans would give battle.

From the hills surrounding the plain of Leuctra, the finest warriors of Greece broke camp and formed long, sinuous lines as they marched for the valley floor. Although the surrounding hills were dotted with scrub growth, the plain was free of underbrush and an ideal locale for the deployment of the hoplite phalanx. Although relatively flat, the valley possessed a gentle slope that descended toward the Spartan side of the valley.

Pushkin Museum, Moscow

As he made dispositions for the coming fight, Epaminondas developed an unorthodox plan. Long standing Greek tactical doctrine called for an army's strongest contingent to occupy the place of honor on the right flank. Epaminondas chose an unexpected opposite course. While placing a thinner line of his Boeotian allies on his right, he placed his strongest contingent, the Theban phalanx, on his left. Foremost among them were the 300 men of the Sacred Band, commanded by Pelopidas and occupying the front ranks.

Epaminondas likewise ordered the troops on his left to form an exceptionally deep phalanx. Ancient sources differ, but the left wing of the Theban army was between twenty-five to fifty ranks deep. It was a massive phalanx never seen before on a Greek battlefield. The unprecedented formation was a powerful hammer with which Epaminondas hoped to smash the power of Sparta.

To ensure the success of the plan, Epaminondas arranged another tactical innovation that used his own weaknesses to his enemy's disadvantage. Realizing that the Boeotian allied troops would likely not perform very well when battle was joined, the Theban general decided to arrange his entire army in an oblique formation, leading with his powerful left wing.

Allied auxiliaries on his right wing were angled away from the enemy line and given free rein to give ground to the Spartan attack. By doing so, the Spartan left would be inevitably drawn farther from its own lines and away from the epicenter of the battle. When and if the Thebans cracked the Spartan right wing, the Spartan left wing would not be in a position to render aid.

From his vantage point, the Spartan King Cleombrotus formed up his army in a conventional phalanx. Although it was impossible to precisely discern enemy strength, it was obvious that the Thebans had formed an exceptionally dense phalanx. Although Spartan armies traditionally formed eight ranks deep, Cleombrotus responded to the Theban threat by forming his own phalanx twelve ranks deep. His lines presented a formidable sight of glinting steel and crimson cloaks, which were the traditional badge of Spartan citizenship.

The Spartan king personally commanded the right wing of the army, which was made up of some of his best troops, including his personal bodyguard. The 300-man royal guard, known as the hippeis, was considered an elite unit even among the Spartans.

The center of the line was manned by allied hoplites drawn from city states across the Peloponnesus. The allied troops added much needed extra manpower but were generally considered of questionable loyalty in a tough fight. The left wing of the line was occupied by another contingent of crack Spartan troops commanded by prince Archidamus, son of King Agesilaus. Although the allied auxiliaries in the center would likely not fight with great resolution, they could be expected to hold their own while the Spartan contingents smashed both enemy flanks.

Out in front of both armies trotted contingents of cavalry. The horsemen were generally lightly armed and wore little more than cloth tunics. Greek cavalry was used for screening and scouting duties but posed little threat to an enemy phalanx. Infantry dominated the tactical landscape of ancient warfare. As the sun soared over the valley, thousands of Greeks nervously peered at their enemy. For the men who would battle at Leuctra, the coming fight would be a horrifyingly personal affair. Hoplites waged war face to face with their enemy, and killing was a fierce contest of brute strength, iron discipline, and sharp steel.

While both armies made final adjustments to their infantry lines, the opposing cavalry forces began skirmishing in the no-man's-land between the Spartans and the Thebans. Fighting in irregular order, knots of horsemen dashed toward their counterparts, looking for opportunities to strike. Primarily resorting to their lances, Greek fought Greek in a wild melee of dashing and thrusting.

Although immense dust clouds were stirred up by the horse's hooves, the cavalry fight seems to have been little more than a minor tussle. With

This slab of the Amazonomachy frieze from the Mausoleum at Halikarnassos, now in the British Museum, depicts Greek warriors battling Amazons. OPPOSITE: A marble stele from the Taman Peninsula, 4th century BCE, depicting two Greek warriors—identified by some sources as members of the Sacred Band of Thebes.

little real fighting to be done by the lightly armed cavalry, the horsemen quickly disengaged and galloped for the rear of their respective armies. They would play little role in the coming battle, but waited patiently for the outcome of the contest in preparation to exploit any victory.

With the battlefield clear of horsemen, both sides set their phalanxes in a slow but steady march toward the enemy. Few commands were needed for the well-disciplined hoplites, and the field was quiet save for the low rumble of thousands of fighting men on the march. On the Spartan side of the field, flute players kept time for the advancing men. Flushed with adrenaline as they closed the distance to the enemy, men broiled under their bronze armor.

For the men in the very first rank, the psychological terror was most intense; with the enemy approaching from the front and their own men pushing from the rear, the front lines of a Greek phalanx could suffer horrific casualties in the brutal meat grinder of ancient warfare. As the two armies closed the distance, the Boeotian line was angled toward the left as planned by Epaminondas. The Spartan line unintentionally developed into a reverse crescent: while the two Spartan wings moved forward as planned, the center, occupied by Peloponnesian allies, lagged behind.

As the two sides collided, a terrifying cacophony of clashing iron and shouting men peeled across the valley floor. The initial fighting was a fierce test of wills as some of the finest warriors of ancient Greece clashed face to face. Combat in the phalanx was a horrific experience; for men in the front ranks, it was often a death sentence. At Leuctra, there was little room for elaborate tactics once the battle was joined. Men fought and died with little glory; the fortunate casualties were killed quickly; others were crushed in the massive press of men.

Initially, the Spartans held their own as both lines grappled for supremacy. The Spartan reputation of discipline, ingrained after centuries of tradition, was by no means a hollow legend. The Spartan right bristled with trained warriors, and men from both sides fell by the score.

But as pressure from the massive Theban phalanx began to tell, the Spartan lines began to crack. According to their training and tradition, Spartan hoplites were loath to break ranks or surrender. But the sheer weight of numbers caused the Spartan front ranks to give way. Spartans fought until overwhelmed or were simply pushed to the rear by the seemingly irresistible Theban steamroller.

The Roman historian Plutarch recorded one notable example of unbending Spartan tenacity. Fighting in the front ranks of the Spartan phalanx, the young nobleman Cleonymus fought with steely resolve, side-to-side with fellow citizens. As the crushing weight of the massive Theban phalanx began to break through, Cleonymus was wounded and knocked down three times, struggling to his feet each time in a desperate attempt to regain his position in a crumbling line. Weakened by successive wounds and exhausted by the sheer strain of battle, the young nobleman was finally overpowered and killed.

Fighting ferociously beside his bodyguard, King Cleombrotus refused to give ground. The hippeis warriors stood firm beside their king, thrusting violently with their spears in a desperate attempt to hold the Thebans at bay. Far from rallying his demoralized troops, Cleombrotus had inadvertently placed himself in a hopeless situation.

Swarms of Thebans continued to pour into the gaps in the Spartan lines and batter the remains of the Spartan phalanx further to the rear. Cleombrotus, trapped with a dwindling knot of his guards, remained true to the Spartan warrior ethos and fought stubbornly as masses of Thebans wrapped around his flanks. The Spartan royal guard was overpowered, and as exultant Thebans rushed in for the kill, Cleombrotus fell dead in the melee. His death constituted a staggering blow for a Spartan royal house whose lineage stretched back for centuries.

With the king dead on the field, Spartan cohesion quickly fell apart. Although disciplined Spartan soldiers were legendary for their stubborn refusal to retreat, the realities of the ancient battlefield belied that reputation. With the phalanx broken down, individual Spartan hoplites were easy prey to the Thebans, who ranged through the battlefield shouting, cursing, and killing with wild abandon.

The crucial Spartan right wing, the key to the entire army, had been effectively crushed. Panicky fugitives streamed for the rear in a desperate attempt to escape the Theban killing machine. But rather than pursue the retreating Spartans, Epaminondas and Pelopidas reined in their troops and wheeled their massive phalanx to the right. Theban training paid off. An organized Theban line began pushing along the length of the enemy army, unexpectedly tearing into the exposed flank of the Spartan allies who occupied the center of the battle line.

For troops who were less than eager to fight, the Theban flank attack was a crushing blow. The Peloponnesian center simply collapsed, with demoralized troops streaming for the rear in utter confusion. Those unfortunates unable to escape the field were simply cut down by the rapidly advancing Thebans.

On the Spartan left, Archidamus quickly appraised the peril of his advanced position. Realizing that the Spartan left was badly exposed and

Continued on page 95

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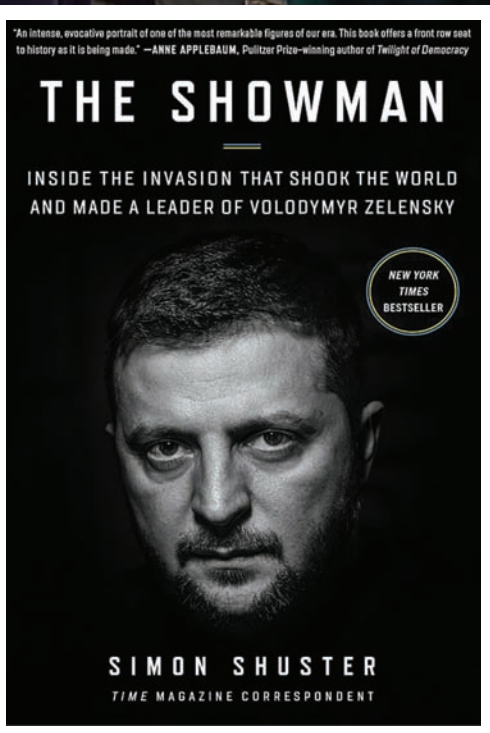

ABOVE: The evolution of Volodymyr Zelensky from entertainer into a symbol of resistance and resilience as president of the besieged nation of Ukraine is covered in this new book by *Time* correspondent Simon Shuster. TOP: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky speaking to rescuers in Dnipro after a massive night missile attack in April 2024. Two floors of a five-story apartment building were destroyed and eight people killed.

Zelensky's hard transformation to become his nation's wartime leader.

By Christopher Miskimon

The distant thundering of Russian missiles and bombs awoke Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine, at 4:30 a.m. on February 24, 2022. Reaching over, she felt the empty spot next to her in the bed. Her husband, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky, was in the next room, already dressed, preparing to go to work. "It's started," he told her.

Russian armored columns and a heliborne assault were about to converge on Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, following closely behind the Russian air and missile strikes. Zelensky had received dire predictions from Western intelligence services, predicting the Russian intent to invade from multiple directions, overrun the capital and topple the Ukrainian government. However, many Ukrainians thought the Russians would, at worst, attack in the east around the disputed areas of the Donbas.

Now, the Western predictions were proven true. Kyiv is an ancient city; it has been fought over by Vikings, Ottomans, Mongols, Lithuanians, and Poles. The Russians first struck the city in the 12th Century. Now they were coming again. Zelensky got into his motorcade, which quickly moved into the city. A call came from Denys Monastyrsky, Minister of the National Police and Border Guards. It was his job to report the Russian invasion. Zelensky asked him from what direction the Russians were coming. The minister told him, "All of them."

The Russian invasion came from the north, east and southeast, from north of Kyiv around the nation's border to Crimea. Air and artillery strikes hit along the front lines, while air and missile strikes hit Ukraine's air defenses and cities. Monastyrsky noted a silence on the line for a moment as Zelensky processed the information. Then Zelensky said came to a fateful decision. He said, "Beat them back."

He sent text messages to his senior aides and ministers: "Go to the office, I'll meet you there." Zelensky exuded confidence, although he knew his country was in a dire situation. The Russian military was much larger and better equipped. Zelensky knew he had failed when he chose not to call up the reserves and fortify the border weeks earlier. No time for such worries now, what he did next is what mattered.

Arriving at his office, Zelensky soon saw Oleksiy Danilov, Secretary of the National Security

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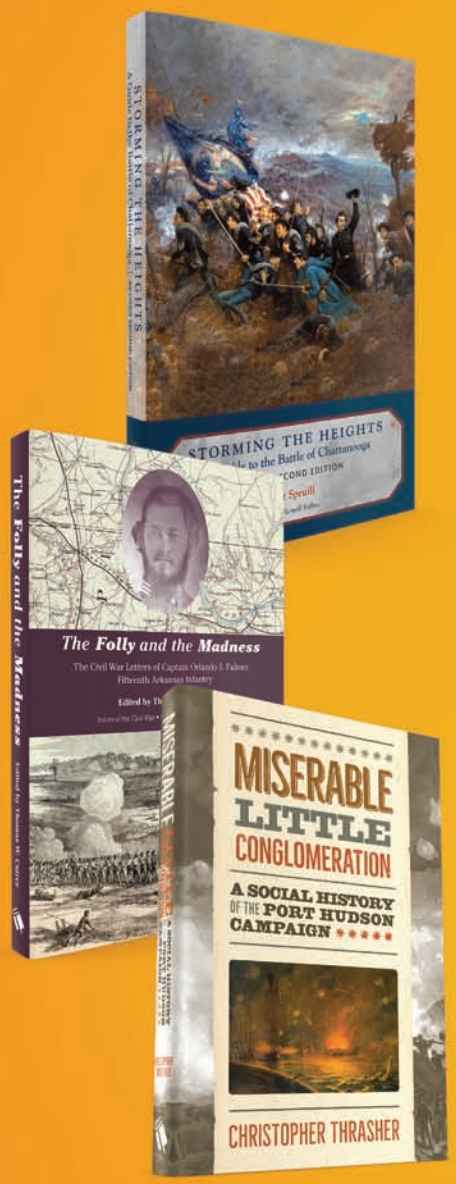

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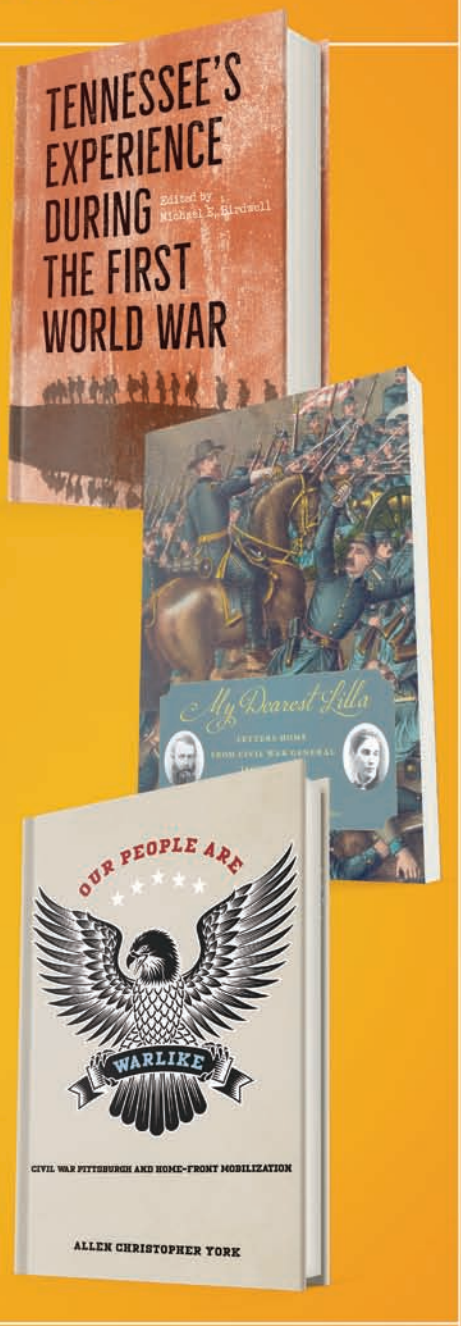

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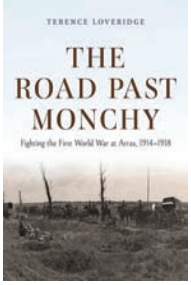
and Defense Council. He noticed Zelensky's calm demeanor. The president said a Russian phrase street brawlers often used, translated roughly as "Let's kick some ass?" Danilov did not believe the Russians could seize the entire country. Ukraine was too big to occupy. He feared a quick strike on the capital to kill or capture Zelensky. There were three known groups of Russian operatives assigned to do so.

Many of Zelensky's aides, military and intelligence personnel waited to see what their president would do. Some thought he would flee or simply panic. Danilov later said, "Before you find yourself in a situation, there is no way to tell how you will react." Zelensky reacted well under the circumstances. He recorded a message to his people, reassuring them "…. Don't panic. We're strong. We're ready for anything." Zelensky also spoke to Boris Johnson, the UK's Prime Minister. He shouted into the speakerphone, "We will fight, Boris! We are not going to give up!" Danilov recorded the scene on his phone, moved by Zelensky's display of resolve.

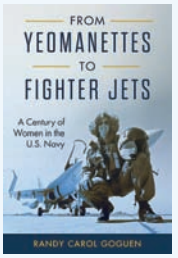
That resolve hardened in the days to come. Offers of evacuation from several allied nations insulted Zelensky—did they think so little of him? Though he had no real military leadership experience, he began directing those who did to fight the Russian invasion, to resist. Zelensky's maturation as a wartime leader is described in ***The Showman: Inside the Invasion that Shook the World and Made a Leader of Volodymyr Zelensky*** (Simon Schuster, William Morrow, New York NY, 2024, 363 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $32.99, HC)

Zelensky began his life as an entertainer and evolved into a symbol of resistance and resilience. This book traces that process. The author spent months with Zelensky in Ukraine, observing and interviewing him extensively. Through interviews with the Ukrainian President's close advisors and friends, combined with coverage of the events, the book has a strong narrative. It examines the complexities of Zelensky, the difficult choices of leadership and how he rose to a moment of need for his nation. The author's presence in Ukraine provides an eyewitness viewpoint of Europe's worst war since 1945 and the man who leads Ukraine through it.

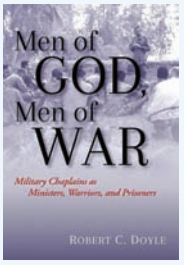


The Road Past Monchy: Fighting the First World War at Arras, 1914-1918 (Terrence Loveridge, Indiana University Press, Bloomington IN, 2024, 401 pp., maps, illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index, $35, HC)

SHORT BURSTS



From Yeomanettes to Fighter Jets: A Century of Women in the U.S. Navy (Randy Carol Goguen, Naval Institute Press, 2024, $34.95, HC) This new book covers the gradual integration of woman into the navy over the course of a century. The book highlights their contributions and challenges.

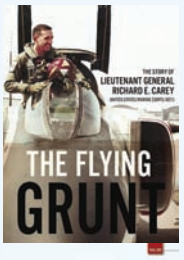


Men of God, Men of War: Military Chaplains as Ministers, Warriors, and Prisoners (Robert C. Doyle, Naval Institute Press, 2024, $34.95, HC) From the American Revolution onward, military chaplains have served their nation and fellow soldiers under the most adverse conditions.

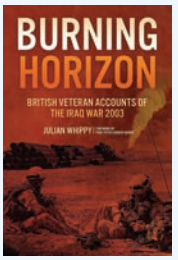
Hawk Recon: Headhunters in the A Shau Valley (William "Doc" Osgood, Pen and Sword Books, 2024, $32.95, HC) A medic in a reconnaissance platoon in the 101st Airborne in Vietnam, Osgood was his unit's unofficial combat artist.

The Soviet-Afghan War 1979-89 (Gregory Fremont-Barnes, Osprey Books, 2024, $20, SC) The USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 sparked a terrible nine-year war. This book covers its major events and effects.

The Cimbrian War 113 – 101 BC: The Rise of Caius Marius (Nic Fields, Osprey Books, 2024, $25, SC) Marius contained the Germanic Threat to Rome in 105 BCE before defeating them in 102-101 BCE. Has excellent battle illustrations and detailed text.



The Flying Grunt: The Story of Lieutenant General Richard E. Carey, USMC (Ret.) (Alan E. Mesches, Casemate Books, 2023, $37.95, HC) Enlisting in 1946, Carey gained a commission and became a combat pilot, flying 204 combat sorties in Vietnam.



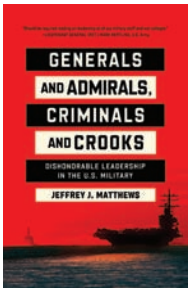
Burning Horizons: British Veteran Accounts of the Iraq War 2003 (Julian Whippy, Casemate Books, 2023, $34.95, HC) Recounts the experiences of ordinary soldiers during the Iraq invasion in March and April 2003.

Danger Zone: U.S. Clandestine Reconnaissance Operations Along the West Berlin Air Corridors, 1945 – 1990 (Kevin Wright, Helion & Company, 2023, $29.95, SC) The Cold War saw extensive efforts by both sides to monitor the other's military preparations. Detailed coverage and excellent illustrations.

The village of Monchy-le-Preux sits on a low hill east of Arras. During World War I, this otherwise minor local became a focal point for the hellish fighting of that conflict. Over four years of combat, this area saw extensive fighting on the ground and in the air. On the front line, soldiers manned trenches, hid from artillery fire and mowed down their enemies with machine guns when they dared to attack. Behind the front, planners, logisticians and commanders sought ways to break the stalemate and push the enemy back. It was an ever-evolving challenge to find the tactics and procedures which would allow the Allied armies to push the Germans out of their trenches and it took years to accomplish.

The typical view of World War I on the Western Front is one of loyal and long-suffering soldiers, callous, uncaring generals and fiendishly effective defensive weapons such as the machine gun and poison gas. In this new work, the author

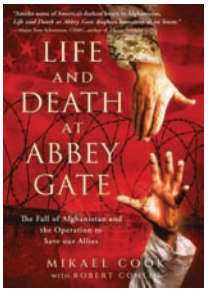
takes a relatively unstudied portion of the front line and argues the conduct of soldiers and leaders was much more dynamic than the accepted wisdom. They were much more willing to try new ideas rather than continue conducting useless advances and sit in the mud. The book benefits from a wide range of research and the author's fresh perspective.



Generals and Admirals, Criminals and Crooks: Dishonorable Leadership in the U.S. Military (Jeffrey J. Matthews, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame IN, 2024, notes, bibliography, index, $38 HC)

There are many American flag officers who stand as exemplars of duty, integrity and honor. Unfortunately, there are others whose legacies are examples of immoral and unethical conduct, lessons in what not to do. Some have committed war crimes, others were simply corrupt and greedy. A few disregarded the constitutionally appointed authority above them, the best example being Douglas MacArthur's insubordination toward President Truman during the Korean War, leading to his dismissal. One of MacArthur's subordinates once said of him, "The best and worst things you hear about him are both true." He was undoubtedly a competent and brave soldier, but his ethical failings showed up more than once during his career, to be tolerated by his superiors until they became unbearable.

The story of MacArthur and other failed American military leaders is well-recounted in this new work. The book is instructional; failure is generally a better teacher than success and the reader can learn much of human nature through its pages. The author investigates what factors influenced these failures and what might be done to prevent them in future leaders. The book provides many examples from the Philippines Insurrection through to the 'Fat Leonard' scandal of the 21st Century.

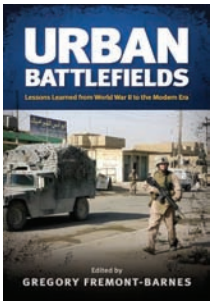


Life and Death at Abbey Gate: The Fall of Afghanistan and the Operation to Save our Allies (Mikael Cook with Robert Conlin, Casemate Publishers, Havertown PA, 2024, 192 pp., maps, photographs, $24.95, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2023, maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $35, HC)

As the United States withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, the situation quickly became

chaotic. A group of veterans, intelligence operatives and even legislative aides worked to evacuate Afghans who had worked with them for two decades and were now being left behind. They feverishly used satellite phones as their tools to get help for these Afghans, who faced almost certain death at the hands of the Taliban. Meanwhile, U.S. Marines manned the Abbey Gate at Hamid Karzai International Airport under extraordinarily difficult conditions during the evacuation. The U.S. military suffered thirteen fatalities from an ISIS suicide bomber. Though the effort was not a complete success, thousands of Afghans were evacuated during a two-week period.

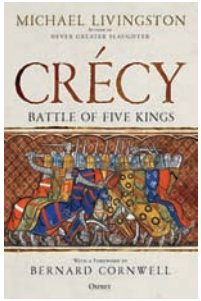
The author was heavily involved in this effort and brings the tragedy and courage of the events to life in this book. He blends the stories of his fellow veterans and the Marines who stood at the Abbey Gate into a fascinating and harrowing account of the evacuation period. It highlights how these ordinary people worked together under difficult conditions to fulfill promises which were not their specific duty to honor, but who felt the call of that obligation, nonetheless.



Urban Battlefields: Lessons learned from World War II to the Modern Era (Edited by Gregory Fremont-Barnes, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis MD, 2024, 389 pp., maps, notes, index, $44.95, HC)

The Russian Army attacked the city of Grozny in Chechnya on December 31, 1994. It sent several columns into the city from the north, east and west simultaneously, intent on quickly overawing the local population and seizing control of the city. The plan soon fell apart. The armored columns came under attack by teams of Chechen fighters armed with RPGs and small arms. They often fired from basements and the roofs of buildings, either too low or too high for the tank's main guns to engage. The poorly trained Russian infantry mostly stayed in their vehicles, making them vulnerable to attack. Chechen troops focused fire on the lead and trail vehicles in each column, trapping the vehicles in the middle so they could be destroyed in turn. Snipers killed leaders or wounded a man and laid an ambush for those who left cover to help him. The Russian took heavy casualties and many of the survivors became trapped for days. The Russian were learning hard lesson about fighting in cities.

Urban Warfare is one of the most difficult of military operations. This new work contains eleven chapters, each covering a different urban battle. Each is thoroughly covered and described with good maps and well-organized narratives. The book provides a good examination of urban combat in the modern era.



Crecy: Battle of Five Kings (Michael Livingston, Osprey Books, Oxford UK, 2024, 303 pp., maps, illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index, $22, SC)

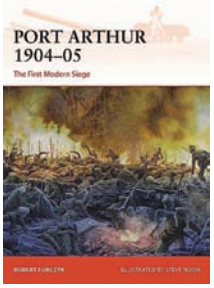
On August 26, 1346, the British army had ceased its northward retreat as its leaders decided to make a stand against the pursuing French forces. A brief rain deluged the battlefield as the two armies formed up, tamping down the dust armies raise as they move and allowing the various banners and heraldric devices to be clearly seen. The battle began with an archery duel between France's Genoese crossbowmen and English and Welsh longbowmen. The crossbowmen quickly lost the exchange and fled. Subsequent French cavalry charges fell prey to English arrows, French mud and terrible close combat. The fighting continued until midnight, finally ending as the defeated French gradually gave up the field. An outnumber English army decisively defeated its French enemy and changed the outcome of the Hundred Year's War.

The author is an authority on the ancient and medieval periods, with many books and scholarly articles to his credit. This new book adds to these accomplishments with fascinating new research which demonstrates how much of what was thought to be understood about the battle is mistaken. Archived manuscripts, satellite imagery, and traditional archaeological field work were all used to draw new conclusions about Crecy

The Battle of Bong Son: Operation Masher/ White Wing, 1966 (Kenneth P. White, Casemate Publishers, Havertown PA, 2024, 192 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, bibliography, index, $34.95, HC)

Two months after the hard fighting in the Ia Drang Valley, newly promoted Colonel Harold G. Moore led a new operation against the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). Beginning on January 24, 1966, Operation Masher/White Wing targeted the NVA's Sao Vang Division, which operated in the Bong Son area in Binh Dinh Province in the South Vietnam's Central Highlands. For six weeks, the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division fought the Sao Vang division's three subordinate regiments. Heavy fighting took place, costing 250 American lives and an estimated 3,000 NVA soldiers. Nonetheless, it proved an apparent success for the 1st Cavalry, showing it could use its combination of mobility, firepower and aggressive leadership to achieve victory. However, the NVA showed its determination by returning to the area in strength within a few months. Masher/White Wing was only the beginning of a years-long struggle in the region.

The author served as an infantryman in the 1st Cavalry Division's Long range reconnaissance patrol unit as part of a six-man team in the Bong Son area. They located NVA camps, monitored their movements and called in artillery and air strikes, giving the author in-depth, personal knowledge of the area and activities covered in this well-written book. He effectively demonstrates how the tactical successes of the troops on the ground were in vain without a strategic vision to stop the continued flow of troops and supplies into South Vietnam.



Port Arthur 1904-05: The First Modern Siege (Robert Forczyk, Osprey Books, Oxford UK, 2024, 96 pp., maps, illustrations, bibliography, index, $25, SC)

The Russo-Japanese War began with a surprise naval attack by the Japanese Navy on the Russian Pacific Fleet at Port Arthur. The Japanese followed this successful attack with a troop landing on the Liaodong Peninsula in May 1904. Their soldiers quickly laid siege to Port Arthur, which was heavily defended, and severed the rail ink to the rest of Russia. Naval fighting continued, including mine warfare which cost the Russian several ships. A Russian ground campaign to relive the port failed but fighting continued as the Japanese brought in heavy siege guns and slowly wrought destruction within the port and town. Eventually the Japanese captured important pieces of high ground and defensive forts from the Russians, finally capturing Port Arthur in January 1905.

This new addition to the publisher's Campaign series provides a detailed look at the Port Arthur action. It uses high-quality original artwork, excellent maps and diagrams, and period photographs to accompany the detailed narrative. The siege was a gradual progression from landing to victory and the book documents the events of this progression wells. ■

SOLDIERS

Continued from page 25

men watched the sickening scene as the new 44-gun frigate USS *Columbia*, scheduled to be launched in only a few days, the 22-gun sloop USS *Argus*, the new schooner USS *Lynx*, and other ships were engulfed in flames. Stockpiles of wood and supplies from the storehouses, the sawmill, ropewalk, and the enormous dry dock burned bright. The winds blew the flames throughout the massive complex, and the fire was soon a raging inferno.

Tingey and Booth said their goodbyes. The commandant departed in a small boat for Alexandria; his clerk waited a few moments longer, staring at the growing flames. At 8:20 p.m., he mounted his horse for the final time. The animal could no longer run, but the clerk could not abandon his reliable steed, noting that he was "too good a one to be lost." As Booth rode slowly out of town, he turned and saw the bright glow of the fires behind him. Crossing a bridge he heard a cascade of explosions from the docks, which he knew was the powder and munitions. Overcome with emotion, Booth described the moment as "So repugnant to my feelings, so dishonorable, so degrading… so awful."

Later that night, the British entered the city. They would burn the Capitol, President's House, and government buildings such as the War Department, State Department, and Treasury. It was observed by Booth, who had spent the night and next day watching the destruction. He was stunned. Never had he seen or imagined such an enormous fire. Booth was particularly struck by the sight of the largest building in the country burning, bemoaning that the Capitol will "be an Additional Monument of our Country's disgrace and dishonor." His closed his report with the words, "This all will agree in—that the Stain can never be blotted from the recollection of Americans."

A month later, Tingey wrote to his daughter, recording "I was the last officer who quitted the city after the enemy had possession of it… I was also the first who returned." The warship USS *Tingey* would later be named in his honor as would the gate at the Navy Yard.

One year after the conflagration, Booth's own home was damaged by fire. He and his family continued to struggle. Booth essentially oversaw the rebuilding and supervision of the new Navy Yard as Tingey's health deteriorated in the years to come. In 1819 and 1820, Tingey submitted requests that the hardworking clerk from Virginia be given an assistant and a pay raise. Both were declined. Booth died in 1831 and was buried in the congressional cemetery near Tingey. ■

POLTAVA

Continued from page 43

through the hapless Swedes, these reserves killed or wounded all but 400 of Roos' soldiers.

For the first time in his young life, Charles XII was forced to retreat, and Peter was waiting. As the battered Swedes commenced a grudging withdrawal, 30,000 fresh Russian reserves formed up in a phalanx with infantry in the center, flanked by cavalry. To their rear artillery emplacements uncorked a killing barrage over their heads. It was 10 a.m., and the invaders were decimated and exhausted, but still game. Resplendent in their blue jackets and white breeches they trudged resolutely forward into a hail of musketry and grapeshot. Somehow the right wing managed to close with the Russians, but the semi-success was fleeting and expensive. Elsewhere on the battlefield, the Swedes were mauled.

The dwindling left wing ground to a standstill in front of the cannon emplacements, and Peter seized the opportunity—throwing his entire force against the center, slicing the Swedish army in half. Incredibly, Charles' men kept fighting, launching a cavalry charge against the Russian left. Peter's field commanders did not wait for instructions, but on their own initiative had their infantry and artillery form up into a square that met the blond horsemen head-on and sent rueful survivors galloping for their lives. They quickly caught up with and passed through the remaining infantrymen, who had thrown down their empty guns and were running for their own lives. By noon the corpse-littered vista was silent.

Incapacitated by his mangled foot, Charles was being borne to the rear on a litter when a cannonball exploded yards away, killing his bearers and most of his personal bodyguard. Miraculously unhurt by the blast, the king was nevertheless almost captured by the pursuing Russians, but a passing cavalryman gave his horse to his liege, who rode it all the way to relative safety in Turkish territory. Behind him almost 10,000 of his men were dead, wounded and captured. Peter lost about 4,500 killed and wounded. His victory would dramatically change the world.

As word of Poltava spread throughout a sobered Europe, government leaders and their people realized the balance of power was permanently altered. A superpower had arisen in the East, and Tsar Peter was its undisputed master. Henceforth his intercourse with other nations would be comported from a position of power. The repercussions of this battle are ongoing. Mother Russia and her resolute people would survive repeated attacks and bloodlettings in coming centuries, maintaining their place as major international players to this day. ■

LEUCTRA

Continued from page 89

subject to being cut off in flank and rear, the prince immediately gave up pursuit of the enemy to his front and ordered a hasty retrograde. Spartan warriors raced west along the valley floor, skirting along the hillsides in an attempt to escape the rapidly closing Theban trap.

The disorganized remnants of the Spartan army streamed to the west, making way as best they could for the city of Leuctra. Epaminondas eventually opted not to press his advantage too far and decided not to seek further battle. Spartan leaders including the prince Archidamus attempted to bring order to the shaken fugitives, but it was obvious that the crushing defeat at Leuctra had ended Spartan ambitions in central Greece.

In the aftermath of the battle, the broad plain at Leuctra was a scene of horror. The brutal nature of close-quarters ancient warfare left the stricken with ghastly wounds. The field was strewn with the dead and dying; trampled grass was streaked red with the blood of the slain and littered with the scarlet cloaks of the Spartan dead. As the exultant shouts of victorious Theban warriors echoed across the valley, wounded men called out for water and mercy.

The Thebans, sensing that the battle would occasion a tremendous rebalance of power across the Hellenistic world, commemorated the great victory by erecting a grand monument on the center of the battlefield. Epaminondas' reputation soared in the aftermath of the fight, further cementing his grip on the levers of power in Thebes. The city, which had long been considered a second-rate city state in the shadow of Sparta and Athens, became the dominant force in central Greece.

For Sparta, the pitched battle at Leuctra had been nothing short of calamitous. Of the 700 citizen hoplites present at the battle, it is thought that 400 had been killed on the field. It was a staggering blow to the city's population from which it would never fully recover. After its last great play for power had ended in disaster, it was clear that the once-great Spartan state, as well as its dreams of empire, had entered an irreversible decline. Henceforth, Sparta was forced to defend its shrinking borders with Peloponnesian subjects and foreign mercenaries. It was a recipe for failure.

The collapse of Sparta had been set in motion by Epaminondas' innovative tactics on the battlefield of Leuctra, but carried out by the grim dedication of Theban hoplites who were determined to defend their homeland. The Theban citizen-soldiers, quipped the Greek historian Diodorus, had crushed the Spartan elites, once considered the "invincible leaders of Greece." ■

GAMES

TAKE TO THE CHOPPY SEAS IN AN EXPANSION TO BESIEGED AND GET ENHANCED WITH HELIBORNE

By Joseph Luster

Besiege: The Splintered Sea

Genre: Simulation • Platform: PC • Publisher: Spiderling Studios • Available: Now

Spiderling Studios first launched physics building war game *Besiege* on Steam in February 2020, bringing with it plenty of ways to challenge both the computer and likeminded players in simulation combat. The base game lets you build everything from catapults to tanks and helicopters with the help of its flexible building system and a collection of over 70 blocks, and now that general concept has expanded to the vast ocean.

Besiege may not be about historical—or even modern—military combat, but the new *Besiege: The Splintered Sea* expansion might just be what any hungry seafaring sim fans out there have been looking for. If you've been trying to fill a gap left in the wake of more traditional naval battle games, the 10-level campaign in *The Splintered Sea* is worth a look.

In *The Splintered Sea*, "The Offlanders" are a group occupying a series of islands throughout the world. It's up to you, either alone or with the help of friends, to take down Admiral Drasckar's fleet of cutters, paving the way for a grand battle against his signature galleon. With this new story comes new means of mechanical inspiration, including a handful of new oceanic blocks that expand the creative possibilities. Floats, rudders, screws that aid in propulsion, sails, paddles and harpoon launchers are among the new blocks this followup introduces, so it's up to you to decide what to do with them.

The team at Spiderling has done their best to essentially make *The Splintered Sea* operate like *Besieged*, only in water this time. With that goal in mind, there are hydrodynamics at play that produce drag unique to each shape, thus affecting the way your machines move through the water. An assortment of creatures, hazards and other aspects unique to the setting await on the surface of the ocean, as well, so expect your boat to be thoroughly rocked.

It's all a very nice way of saying that if you like *Besiege*, you'll likely dig the new sandbox being introduced in this expansion. You can also take that sandbox and put it to even more creative use in the level editor, and all of the unique movement and physics features can be seen in the multiplayer mode, as well. By the time this issue is in your hands, *Besiege: The Splintered Sea* should be out in full. If you enjoy building as much as campaigning, you'll want to try out something a little different and head out into these enjoyably choppy waters.

Heliborne Enhanced Edition

Genre: Air combat • Platform: PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, PC • Publisher: Klabater • Available: Now

Developer and publisher Klabater's *Heliborne* first took to the skies back in 2017, eventually paving the way for an enhanced edition. Much of the aerial combat action we get into over here skews toward planes and other similar aircraft, so *Heliborne* offered a unique take on the genre with a dynamic

battlefield and some welcome MMO elements. *Heliborne Enhanced Edition* takes those elements and further separates them from a crowded playing field, and I was more than happy to have an excuse to fly around and shoot away once more.

At its core, *Heliborne* offers players a wide variety of rotary-wing aviation options, with historical tiers spanning the 1950s to the 2000s. Beyond serving a welcome overview of helicopter history, there are maps inspired by many of the conflicts in which they took part over the years. There's Operation Nguyen Hue in Vietnam, Badakhshan Province in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and more, each with their own advantages and disadvantages for both air and ground units.

No matter what version of *Heliborne* you play, two modes stand at the forefront: Domination and Frontline. The former is your average capture-the-flag mode available to play on the Badakhshan and Gulf of Tonkin maps. Frontline has players capturing bases as ground vehicles spawn in convoys and traverse the map to solidify positioning and fortify bases along the Operation Nguyen Hue, Khost Region and Kosovo maps.

The assortment of Attack, Air-Assault and Recon helicopters get the job done with a mix of arcade and simulation, right down to the dynamics of inertia and momentum. The presentation doesn't always match the intricacies of combat, but when it works it tends to hit that sweet spot between realism and intuitive controls. If you really want to get hardcore with it, Heliborne supports flight sticks in addition to gamepads and keyboard/mouse configurations.

If you've yet to play *Heliborne* or are thinking about jumping into the cockpit for the first time, *Enhanced Edition* is the way to go. The visuals have been spruced up a bit along with the user interface, and the game engine has gotten a nice little upgrade overall. The updated version also introduced nighttime iterations of the maps and more prototype machines, so the changes are substantial enough to make it worth a return trip. ■

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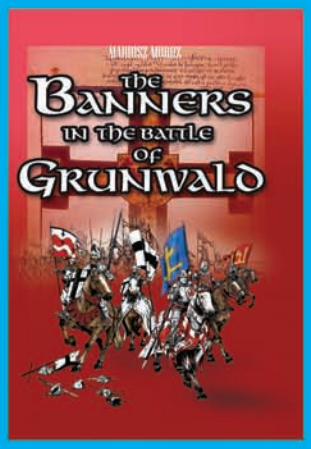

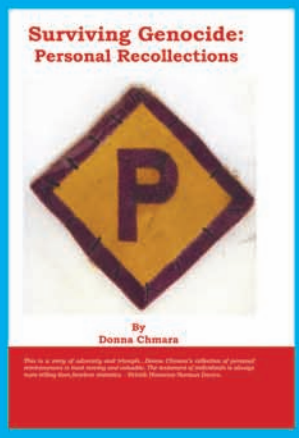

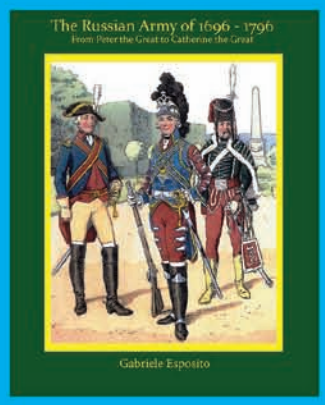

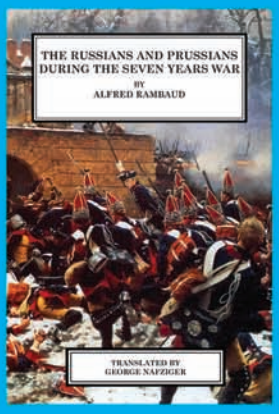

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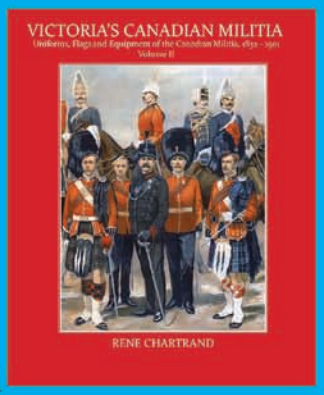

On Military Matters

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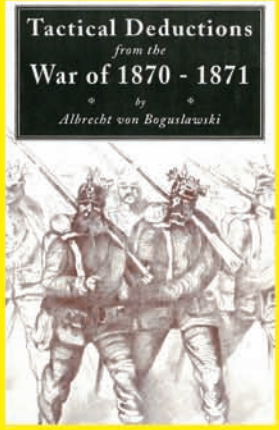

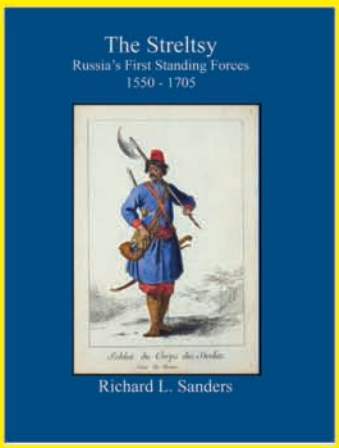

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CORINTH

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The fire from the Union line brought the Confederates to an abrupt halt. They endured the carnage for 45 minutes. McLain fell, his leg taken off by a solid shot. This took the fight out of his brigade; they fled, with Colbert's Brigade following. In the words of Willie Tunnard, 3rd Louisiana, Colbert's Brigade, "By this time so many had fallen, that no further progress could be made against the overwhelming forces of the enemy. It would have been madness to have made the attempt, and the brigade was compelled to retreat."

Colonel W. H. Moore, on Gates' right, still advanced after Gates withdrew. The Federals in his front had no reserves and he chased them into the streets of Corinth. But it was only a momentary Rebel victory, for a door-to-door conflict ensued and they were driven out.

Maury's Division moved against Battery Robinett, southeast of Battery Powell, along the Memphis & Charleston Railroad line. His boys had been under fire from the Union artillery of Batteries Williams and Robinett since dawn. Instead of moving out right after Gates, Maury did not begin his attack until 11 a.m. Capt. Oscar Jackson of the 63rd Ohio, to the right of Robinett, awestruck as he viewed Dabney Maury's advance, recorded, "As soon as they were ready, they started at us with a firm, slow, steady, step… Not a sound was heard but they looked as if they intended to walk over us."

The first Union shell from Battery Williams detonated in the middle of the 42nd Alabama, killing or wounding 40 men. "You could see the poor fellows throw up their arms and leap into the air, and fall down. Still they pressed on," said a soldier in the 39th Ohio. The Confederate advance slowed when they came to the abatis, but still they moved on, "clambering over logs & creeping under brush—firing & loading as fast as possible but still moving on," remembered Texan James C. Bates.

After they cleared the abatis, they reorganized and charged Battery Robinett from 50 yards away. They "were met by a perfect storm of grape, canister, cannon balls, and minie balls. Oh God! I have never seen the like! The men fell like grass. I saw men, running at full speed, stop suddenly and fall upon their faces, with their brains scattered all around; others, with legs and arms cut off, shrieking with agony," recalled Lt. Charles Labruzan of the 42nd Alabama. Five Rebel regiments faced Fuller's Brigade and the Battery Robinett artillery.

Colonel William P. Rogers led the 2nd Texas Infantry directly against Battery Robinett. The first and second assaults failed, and the Rebs reformed for their third try. Col. Rogers rode among all the regiments of Moore's Brigade, goading them to greater exertions on their next attack. Unsheathing his sword, he cried, "Forward, Texans." The Rebel infantry charged at a dead run. "One ball went through my pants, and they cut twigs right by me. It seemed by holding out my hand I could have caught a dozen," declared Lieutenant Labruzan.

With Battery Robinett just 40 yards away, the butternuts went to ground, lying flat and grasping the dirt. The Yankees started throwing grenades over the wall. A Rebel officer screamed, "Over the walls, and drive them out." Men from the 2nd Texas, 35th Mississippi, and 42nd Alabama charged at Battery Robinett. Col. Rogers, mounted on his black mare, halted his horse near the ditch, firing his pistol into the embrasure. The men with him fired a volley into the left flank of the 63rd Ohio.

Rogers led his men in an attack on the battery. "The next instant the Texans began yelling like savages and rushed at us without firing," Oscar Jackson said. "Don't load boys, they are too close on you, let them have the bayonet." In a fierce hand-to-hand struggle, the Ohioans pushed the Confederates out of the redan. One of the Rebels turned to fire a last shot. "I saw the fire was aimed at me and tried to avoid it, but fate willed otherwise and I fell right backwards. I was struck in the face," recalled Jackson.

The Yankee 11th Missouri, and a few men from the 63rd Ohio, attacked the Southerners in front of Battery Robinett. Surrender being the only option, Rogers grabbed a ramrod from Private T. B. Arnold of the 35th Mississippi and tied his handkerchief to it. The Union soldiers did not see it and fired a volley into the little Confederate group in front of the redan. Rogers and his mare fell beside a large stump in front of Battery Robinett. He wore body armor, but it proved to be of no use; at least seven balls hit him at close range. The Confederates had no choice but to retreat, under heavy fire from the Yankees in and around Battery Robinett.

Lowell never came into action and many Confederate officers and soldiers felt the battle would have been successful if he had. The Rebels retreated to the positions from which they had started their attack in the morning. Rosecrans did not push them, and they spent the night there before beginning their retreat. When they reached the bridge over the Hatchie, they found a Union division from Bolivar, under Maj. Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut disputing the crossing. They had to march downriver, to a mill dam, where Price built a bridge for the escape of Van Dorn's army. Justifiably, the Federals claimed victory over the Confederates to end the Battle of Corinth. ■

ROBERT PECK

Continued from page 81

wounded. Lieutenant J E B Stuart, later a Confederate general, was one of those injured. The exact number of indigenous casualties is unknown. Cheyenne sources say three dead, other sources say nine or more. The casualties of those small ground encounters remain unknown, and some mortally wounded Cheyenne probably died in the trail.

The Cheyenne remained elusive, and the next 20 days or so was an exercise in futility. About 15 miles from the battlefield the cavalry came upon the Cheyenne village, intact but devoid of people. Something like 171 lodges were filled with buffalo robes and all sorts of goods, but all signs showed the village had been abandoned in haste. The troopers looted the lodges with what they needed, and the remainder was put to the torch.

It took 23 days of unrelieved misery to march to the Arkansas River. The hard campaigning was taking its toll, even among the younger troopers like Peck. Food rations grew short, until both men and horses were in dire straits. The main source of food was the dwindling herd of Texas longhorns. Generally one a day was butchered to provide meat for the command—but as time went on even the ration was reduced.

There was little or no game in the area, so the starving men had to be satisfied with whatever they could find. "On another occasion," Peck admitted, "a polecat [skunk] was killed and we ate it." There was also a time when his company had a "grand feast of wolf meat." If a horse or mule gave out, the Colonel ordered it shot for consumption. Peck also recalled a bizarre meal of "stewed buzzard."

Eventually they got resupplied, and the campaign was officially over. The First Cavalry troopers by now were in a very ragged condition. Looking more like scarecrows than soldiers. Peck later wrote that some of the men were ironically attired in Indian clothing taken from the abandoned village. First Sergeant Arlington, the fashion plate "dude" of the regiment, now had "a pair of moccasins, Indian leggings over a pair of dirty drawers, no trousers, an old stable frock for shirt, no (blue) jacket, and a handkerchief bandana tied around his head in place of a hat."

The Battle of Solomon's Fork was the first major encounter with the Cheyenne, but it would not be the last. Private Peck came back from the campaign as a seasoned soldier. After his five-year hitch he became a wagon master for the U.S. Army, and though a Kentuckian he stayed with the Union in the Civil War and admitted his first vote was for Lincoln. But nothing he experienced later could match his first adventure during the 1857 campaign. ■


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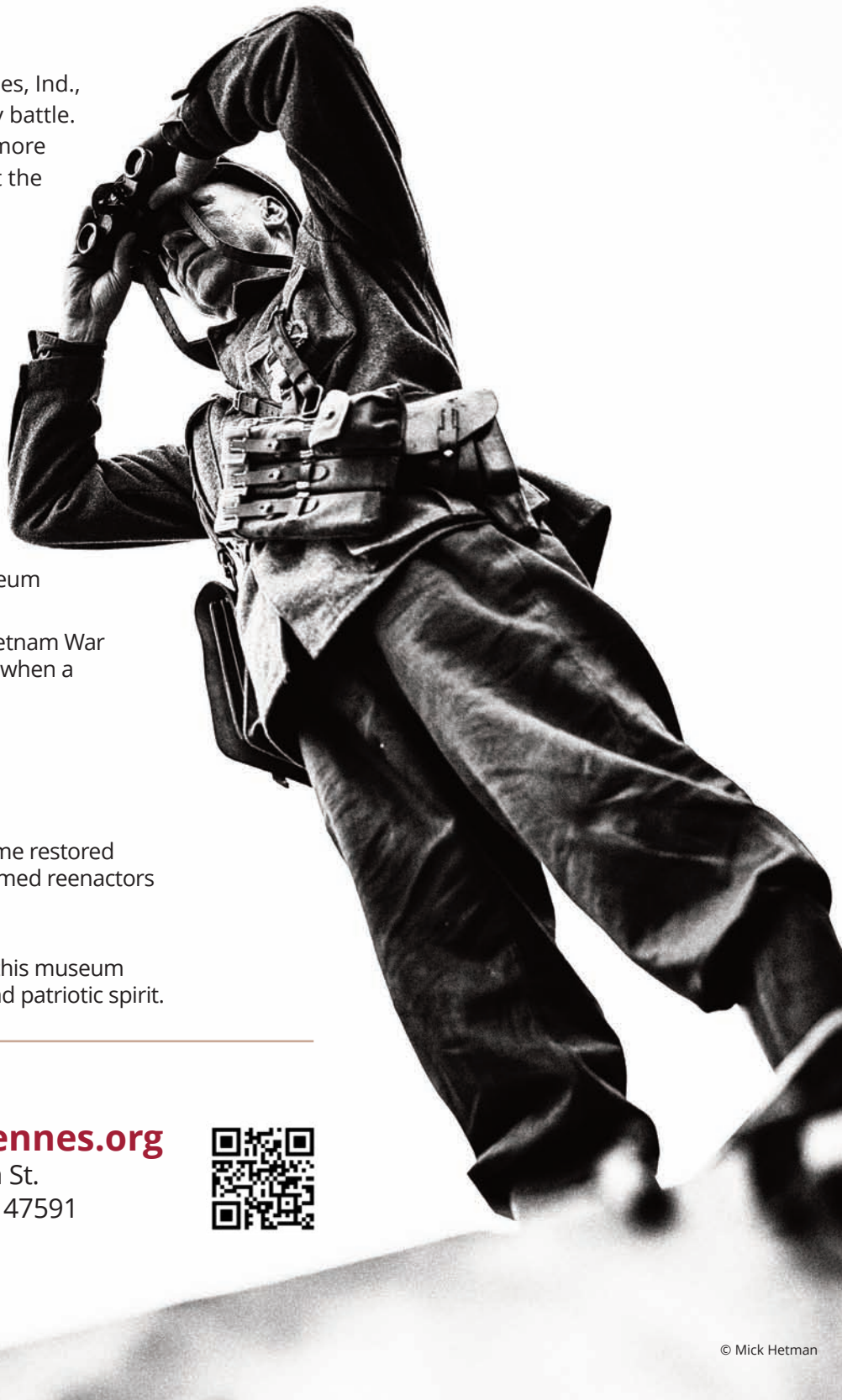
At the **Indiana Military Museum**, in Vincennes, Ind., relive the glory and the heartbreak of military battle. See aircraft, vehicles, artillery, uniforms and more spanning from the Civil War to present day at the museum recently featured on the History Channel hit show "American Pickers." In the museum's annex, tour immersive, life-sized scenes from the World War I trenches and home front, complete with sound effects and even trench rats. This museum is also completely handicapped accessible, all on one floor, for people of all abilities.



LIVING HISTORY EVENTS

August 31-September 1: Indiana Military Museum will host a WWII reenactment.

July 20-21: Indiana Military Museum plans a Vietnam War reenactment, but will set the date according to when a helicopter can land.

Dates subject to change.

ALSO SEE...

Pres. William Henry Harrison Mansion
Indiana's answer to Monticello, this historic home restored to Northwest Territory splendor features costumed reenactors presenting the history of the home.

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Revisit the glamorous age of old Hollywood at this museum that catalogues Red Skelton's characters, life and patriotic spirit.

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