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FEATURES


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COVER: Private David M. Thatcher, Company B, First Virginia Cavalry Regiment, photographed with his cavalry saber and an Adams revolver. Thatcher was mortally wounded at Buckland Mills, Virginia, October 1863. See story page 12. PHOTO: Library of Congress.

COLUMNS

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EDITORIAL

‘If I ever did anything right in my life, I made their names immortal.’

Anyone interested in reading military history sooner or later comes around to Cornelius Ryan, known to his friends as “Connie.” He wrote stunning books on World War II: *The Last Battle*, about the struggle for Berlin; *A Bridge Too Far*, about the ill-fated race to cross the Rhine bridge at Arnhem in 1944; and, of course, the book with which his fame will always be linked, *The Longest Day*.

Oddly, *The Longest Day* was published a bit later than it was hoped in 1959, the 15th anniversary of the invasion of France, and another book on the great battle was released a few months before. But being “scooped” made not the least difference. Critics and admirers of outstanding reporting saw the quality of the book and rallied to it. Military histories were forever altered, and improved.

Ryan was the son of a British soldier and an Irish-nationalist mother. His grandfather had been an irascible journalist in Ireland and young Connie soon determined journalism for his own career. Still in his early 20s, he was sent by a London newspaper to cover American G.I.s in Britain. At first he found it difficult, but later admitted that, “Among those brash, irreverent, confident [American] soldiers, I found my spiritual home.” He viewed D-Day from a ship in the invasion fleet.

Pursuing journalism in the United States after the war, he finally persuaded *Reader’s Digest* to underwrite his effort to write a book for the 15th anniversary of the Normandy invasion. He flung himself into the work, interviewing not only Americans, Canadians and British, but also French and Germans.

One of his best friends was Jerry Korn, who was a bomber copilot on D-Day and met Connie at *Collier*’s magazine after the war (and who later was managing editor at Time-Life Books when it produced its series on World War II in the 1980s as well as edited *A Bridge Too Far*). “The thing that made Connie’s book [*The Longest Day*] succeed was the scope of the research,” he told me once. “He talked to so many of the men that you really did get a sense of what it must have been like to have been there. Nobody had written anything like it. It’s a bit hard to appreciate now what a literary bombshell that was.”

Ryan was 39 when *The Longest Day* was published. He matured as a writer through his later books. But research was always a strong suit. Korn says he had file cabinets overflowing with material and millions of words of interviews and materials from which to shape his narratives. Supposedly Ryan once said, “I am a reporter. If I am some help to serious historians, I’ll be satisfied. I’m not a great writer, but I know how to combine a vast amount of material into a dramatic context. There is no reason for history to be dull.”

Ryan died of prostate cancer in 1974 at age 54, books he had wanted to write forever unrealized. Veterans of the 82nd Airborne acted as the honor guard at his funeral. General James Gavin presented his widow with the American flag that covered his coffin. Walter Cronkite read from *The Longest Day*.

Ryan often visited cemeteries in Normandy. There he once said to his wife, “Nobody knew their names until I began research for *The Longest Day*.… I guess I wrote *The Longest Day* because I never understood why nobody seemed to care about the names of the ordinary men and the civilians involved. If I ever did anything right in my life, I made their names immortal.”

—Brooke Stoddard

From the publisher

In our own way, I hope that our publications, *Military Heritage* and *WWII History*, bring some recognition to the many ordinary men and women who should have their own place in history. Most are not famous, and didn’t expect to be, but they made their own contribution to history—for the good and, unfortunately, “the bad.” In the “Soldiers” department of this issue you’ll read about the “Senegalese Tirailleurs” who fought for France in two world wars, whose service was often overlooked. In our “Valor” department, we recognize some of the soldiers, and one civilian, who found themselves surrounded on a mission in Vietnam’s Ia Drang Valley. What they experienced was no doubt terrifying, life-altering, and some rightly received medals in recognition of their brave actions, but all who were there deserve to be remembered.

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U.S. Army

Valor in the Valley of Death: Recognition of bravery at Ia Drang's Landing Zone X-ray in the Vietnam highlands.

By Kevin Seabrooke

For about half an hour artillery and rockets fired from UH-1B helicopters from the Aerial Rocket Artillery battalion had pounded an area in Vietnam's Central Highlands between Chu Pong, the 1,000-foot massif straddling the border with Cambodia, and the Ia Drang River.

The short bombardment was intended to soften up potential resistance without giving the enemy time to prepare. Out of seven potential landing zones (LZs), Lt. Col. Harold "Hal" Moore, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, had chosen the one closest to the enemy position designated by the innocuous NATO alphabet letter "X-ray."

Moore knew that he and the 90 men from the first drop would be alone in the small clearing for at least 30 minutes while the 16 Hueys made the 34-mile round trip to Plei Me Camp to pick up more troops.

Since the French had left Vietnam in 1954, the limited U.S. military involvement in the country had been primarily as advisors focused on training and support roles. President John F. Kennedy authorized

U.S. Army

(Mississippi Armed Services Museum)

Medal of Honor recipient Major Bruce Crandall climbs skyward in his UH-1D helicopter after dropping off air cavalrymen at Landing Zone X-ray in the Ia Drang Valley in 1965. RIGHT, TOP: Major Bruce Crandall voluntarily flew an unarmed helicopter into LZ X-ray 22 times on November 14, 1965, bringing in supplies and ammunition to the surrounded infantry, while also evacuating wounded. In 2007, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. RIGHT, BOTTOM: A veteran of World War II and Korea, Capt. Ed W. Freeman, made 14 voluntary relief and evaction flights to LZ X-ray. He received the Medal of Honor in 2001.

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U.S. Army

Air cavalry troopers wading through elephant grass engage the enemy in Vietnam. The combination of artillery and air power made life a veritable hell for the NVA troops attacking the landing zone.

Special Forces troops to train and assist the South Vietnamese military. By 1963, the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam had grown from 700 to 16,000 and they were now involved in counterinsurgency operations as well as training. In 1965, the first U.S. combat troops were deployed to Vietnam, marking a significant shift from an advisory role to active participation in the war.

In October, the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) 32nd Regt had attacked the U.S. Special Forces camp at Plei Me, 17 miles to the east. The Communists stopped short of completely destroying the camp, hoping to draw Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces into an ambush, a tactic they had used before. The ARVN asked for U.S. help and together they attacked and severely crippled the waiting 33rd PAVN Regt., sending both units retreating for the Cambodian border. Attacking, then retreating over the border into Cambodia or Laos where U.S. soldiers were forbidden to pursue, became a regular tactic for the Communists.

Chu Pong had become a major communist stronghold and a point of entry for PAVN troops coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to enter the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

To investigate the Ia Drang Valley, the U.S. Military decided to fully deploy its Air mobility tactics, newly developed for Vietnam—helicopters would deliver, supply and extract a battalion-sized force into hot zones. Since the mountainous terrain and heavy vegetation wouldn't allow the heavy weapons of a normal combined-arms force, that role would be filled by artillery, aerial rocket fire and close air support.

Finding signs of recent enemy activity, Moore began to doubt the viability of their mission. In that first hour, as troops were being ferried in, Moore's men captured a PAVN deserter, a young boy, who said there were two regiments on the mountain. It would turn out that, in addition to the 32nd, 33rd, the 66th Regt. was also there. The landing zone was a clearing about the size of a football field, surrounded by dense jungle, making it harder to assess potential threats and any intelligence they had was limited and likely outdated.

Some 90 minutes after the first troops landed, the shooting began. Over the three days and two nights, Moore's 1st Battalion, and later 2nd Battalion replacement, would find themselves not on a search and destroy mission, but in a fight for their lives against a numerically superior force.

One of the chopper pilots, Captain Ed W. Freeman, recalled that the operation was running smoothly over the first four drops. "I thought we had another cakewalk here," Freeman said in a Library of Congress interview. "On the fifth, they cut us in two. They had three regiments on the side of that hill and they were dug in."

They were outnumbered by the PAVN by about 10 to 1, Freeman said. "They were just eating helicopters live ... I took 50-something rounds in my helicopter." The attack was so intense that once Freeman's crew got back to the staging area, all helicopter operations into the landing zone were shut down.

That first bloody and chaotic day at LZ X-ray—November 14, 1965—would grow into the month-long Battle of Ia Drang, considered the beginning of full-scale U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. It was the first U.S. clash with trained North Vietnamese regulars and a turning point in the Vietnam War. It was also a showcase of the resilience and fighting spirit of American soldiers.

The situation at X-ray was soon desperate for Moore and the 1st Battalion who were pinned down and running out of ammunition, water and medical supplies. There were also a rapidly growing number of wounded to be evacuated. But enemy fire from the mountainside made resupply and evacuation missions extremely dangerous.

At the staging area, the commanding officer, then-Maj. Bruce Crandall, called for a volunteer to fly back in with him to help. The only one who joined him was his friend Freeman.

"I put'em in there," Freeman recalled, so not volunteering wasn't an option.

Military policy didn't allow medevac pilots to land at an LZ unless it was "green"—not under enemy fire—for at least five minutes, so Freeman and Crandall also began evacuating the wounded.

On that first day of the battle, Freeman flew 14 missions and Crandall 22 in unarmed helicopters—many of which had to be switched out due to damages—encountering intense enemy fire to bring the much-needed aid and fly more than 70 casualties to safety.

"I put in 14-and-a-half hours that day, in and out of that LZ, doing that. And at 10:30 [p.m.], I made the last landing with some guy holding a flashlight and hauling those people out," Freeman remembered. "And [Moore] came out and said, 'I can last till daylight. Shut it down.'"

Freeman said he was happy to hear that. "We had been hot-refueling, so we hadn't even shut the helicopter down—we'd eat maybe a can of C[-rations] on the way—it was a 13-minute flight each direction from where we picked up the supplies to drop them off into his landing area."

The Battle of Ia Drang (November 14-18) resulted in 237 U.S. soldiers killed and 258 wounded, with four missing. For the ARVN, the numbers were 132 killed, 248 wounded and 18 missing. The fighting at LZ Albany on November 18 would be the deadliest single-day battle in Vietnam with 151 American soldiers killed and 121 wounded. At LZ X-ray, 70 Americans were killed and 120 wounded.

The U.S. estimated Communist losses at 1,037–1,745 killed, though the PAVN claims the total was half of that.

The Battle of Ia Drang inspired the critically acclaimed book *We Were Soldiers Once … And Young*, which was the basis for the film, *We Were Soldiers*, released in 2002.

U.S. Army

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The Vietnam War summit

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LEFT TO RIGHT: Lieutenant Colonel Harold Moore, Distinguished Service Cross; Joseph L. Galloway, war correspondent for United Press International, Bronze Star; 2nd Lt. Walter Marm, Congressional Medal of Honor; 2nd Lt. John L. Geoghegan, posthumously awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Air Medal. TOP: A UH-1D helicopter discharges soldiers of the elite 7th Cavalry at LZ-X-Ray. The Americans initially thought they were fighting the Viet Cong, but soon realized they were facing North Vietnamese regulars.

In the book, co-written with journalist Joe Galloway (who was embedded with the 7th Cavalry), Moore noted that there were many more instances of valor at the Battle of Ia Drang

"Too many men had died bravely and heroically, while the men who had witnessed their deeds had also been killed... Acts of valor that, on other fields, on other days, would have been rewarded with the Medal of Honor or Distinguished Service Cross or a Silver Star," Moore recalled. Instead, the only recognition the families of those soldiers received was a telegram of condolence from the U.S. Army.

Those on the ground were officially recognized soon after the battle.

A second lieutenant during Ia Drang, Walter Marm of Company A, 1st Battalion, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in December 1966 for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty."

Leading his platoon to relieve 2nd Platoon, B Company, which was cut off and completely surrounded by PAVN, Marm and his men came upon an entrenched machine-gun position at a large termite hill. Marm "demonstrated indomitable courage during a combat operation" by deliberately exposing himself to fire to find the hidden weapon that had them pinned down. After trying unsuccessfully to take the gun out with a light anti-tank weapon, Marm charged the machine gun—killing some of the enemy with grenades and finishing off the rest with his rifle. Marm also received a Purple Heart.

"It was a very intense battle," Marm said, speaking to an American Legion audience. "We had tremendous support. It was a total team effort. The Air Force provided cover with about 100 airstrikes."

In June 1966, Moore, promoted to colonel, was awarded the U.S. Army's Distinguished Service Cross, the military's second-highest recognition for valor.

The award citation praised Moore's "great skill and foresight" in moving "from position to position, directing accurate fire and giving moral support to the defending forces" and his "successful predictions of insurgent attack plans" enabling him to direct attacks, from small arms to air strikes, against the enemy.

Moore's "ability to shift men and firepower at a moment's notice against the savage, last-ditch efforts of the insurgents" allowed his battalion to repulse yet another large attack by well-trained

Continued on page 97

National Guard Heritage Painting by Domenick d'Andrea, courtesy the National Guard Bureau

Revolvers in American Military Service

By Ian McCall

The Texas sun beat down in early June, 1844, as 75 Comanche lay hidden in the thick underbrush along the bank of a small creek. They had left obvious tracks, hoping the 15 Texas Rangers camped a mile up the creek would follow them into an ambush. But the tracks were too obvious and Captain Hayes ordered his men to withdraw. Deprived of the chance to ambush their foe, the Comanche retrieved their horses and took off after the Rangers. The Comanche warriors, who could loose many arrows in the time it took to reload a single-shot pistol, were stunned when the Rangers fired round after round from their new Colt Paterson five-shot revolvers.

The Battle of Walker's Creek was a running battle covering more than three miles that ended in close combat at a small hill where the overwhelming firepower of the Ranger's revolvers allowed them to carry the day, killing some 23 Comanche with the loss of one Ranger. The age of the revolver had arrived. While the U.S. did not create the revolver, it would earn its place in history as a distinctly American type of gun. With innovations from companies such as Remington, Colt, and Smith & Wesson, revolvers would be carried by troops in every conflict from the Mexican American War to Vietnam.

The first service use of revolvers in North America was not by any branch of the U.S. military—they were carried by the armed forces for the Republic of Texas. Though single-barrel guns with rotating chambers had been around since the 15th century, these weapons had been both costly and complicated to make as well as difficult to use. Invented in 1831 and patented in 1836, Samuel Colt's Paterson revolver would revolutionize handguns. Firing a .36 caliber ball propelled by a black powder charge, these guns first saw service in small numbers with the legendary Texas Rangers, who fought primarily on horseback and needed a small maneuverable weapon with the ability to deliver accurate fire rapidly. The Paterson filled this role well, but was still primitive, underpowered and awkward to reload. Despite its advantages over single-shot pistols, the technical issues made the Paterson revolver seem unattractive to many potential buyers. One problem, for instance, was that the trigger only protruded when the hammer was cocked and could occasionally become stuck in the retracted position.

These early five-shot revolvers would also be

LEFT: The "Battle of Glorieta Pass: Action at Apache Canyon," by Domenick d'Andrea, depicts Union troopers of the First Colorado (mounted) Infantry charging Confederates in 1862, firing their revolvers at a full gallop. Revolvers manufactured by Colt, Remington, and others proved to be effective military weapons. BELOW: Confederate Private William B. Todd of the 9th Virginia Cavalry, proudly displays his Colt Army Model 1860, likely taken from a battlefield.
INSET: The Colt's Manufacturing Company's Colt Army Model 1860, a cap and ball .44-caliber single-action revolver, was used during the Civil War.

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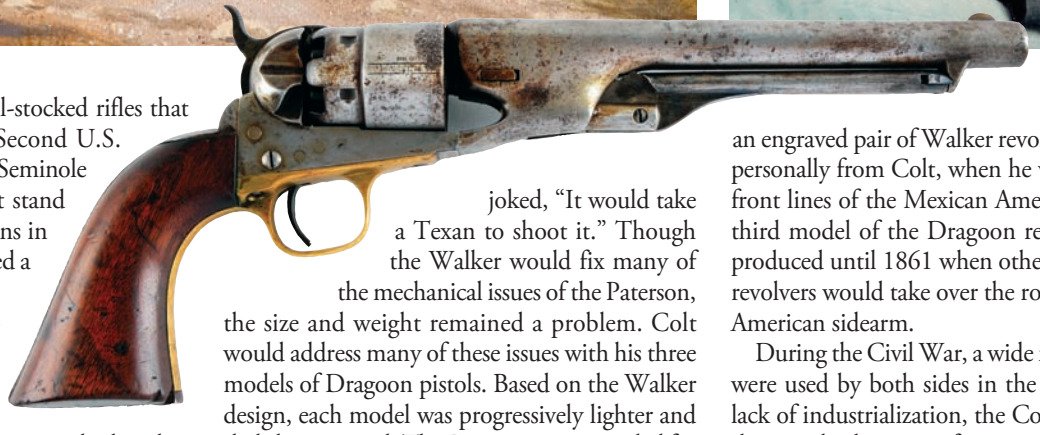


developed into a series of full-stocked rifles that would see service with the Second U.S. Dragoons during the Second Seminole War. But these rifles did not stand up well to the harsh conditions in the Florida swamps and earned a poor reputation with troops.

Despite the Paterson's negative reception by some units, the gun also became known as the "Texas Colt" for its association with the Rangers, who loved it. The Republic of Texas tasked legendary frontiersman and Ranger Captain Samuel Walker with helping Colt create a revolver that would better fulfill the needs of the Rangers. Thus, the legendary Colt Walker was created. Firing six .44 caliber balls, with nearly double the typical pistol black powder charge, the Walker was a force to be reckoned with. So massive was this revolver in comparison to the earlier Paterson, that Walker joked, "It would take a Texan to shoot it." Though the Walker would fix many of the mechanical issues of the Paterson, the size and weight remained a problem. Colt would address many of these issues with his three models of Dragoon pistols. Based on the Walker design, each model was progressively lighter and slightly improved. The Dragoon was intended for sale to the military and would see great success in this regard despite its still considerable size and awkward reload. Whatever their shortcomings, the ability of cavalry and dragoons to fire multiple high caliber rounds before having to reload proved to be a decisive advantage in many engagements. Many officers during the Mexican American war purchased Colt Walkers or Dragoons for themselves and their men. Captain Walker himself was carrying an engraved pair of Walker revolvers, sent to him personally from Colt, when he was killed on the front lines of the Mexican American war. Colt's third model of the Dragoon revolver would be produced until 1861 when other more advanced revolvers would take over the role of the primary American sidearm.

During the Civil War, a wide range of revolvers were used by both sides in the conflict. Due to lack of industrialization, the Confederacy lacked the standardization of arms present in Union units. Many times, older models such as the Dragoon or Walker were used to overcome production shortfalls. Many revolvers were smuggled through the Union blockades from Europe. A few models were even produced in small numbers in the South. But most Confederates used revolvers captured from Union troops or federal stockpiles. The Colt Model 1860 would see the most action during the war. Taking lessons from the earlier

series of revolvers, the Colt Model 1860 had a .44 caliber ball propelled by black powder. But these revolvers were even more reliable than previous iterations. More than 200,000 of these would be produced, making it easily the most popular model in the war. However, during this conflict Colt would not be the only company supplying sidearms to the U.S. military.

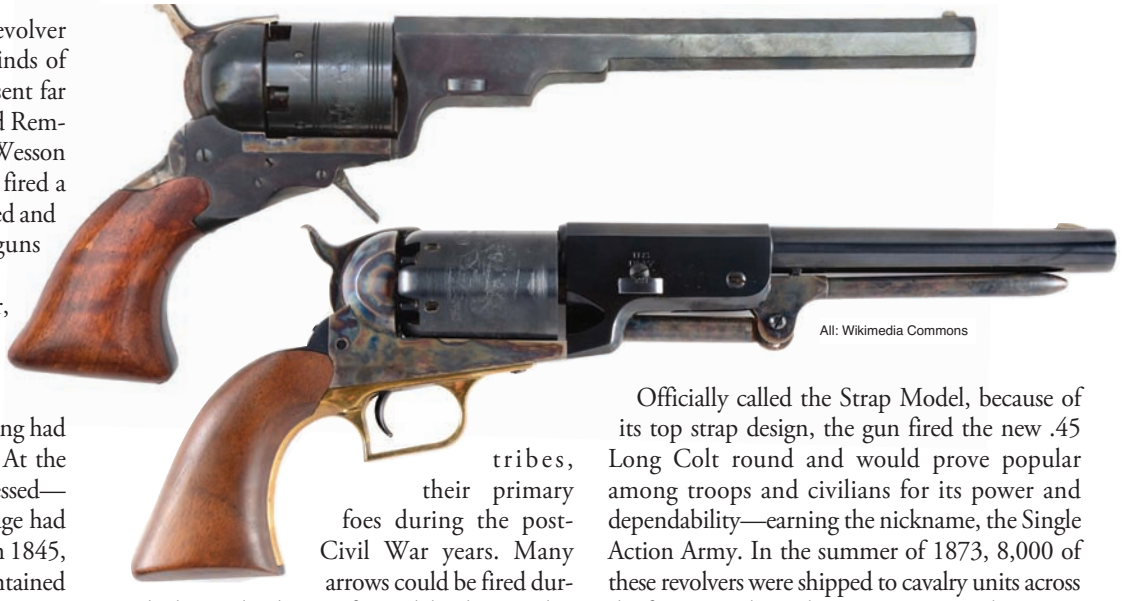
The Remington Company's Model 1858 also called the New Model Army was similar to the Colt Model 1860—both fired a .44 caliber black powder propelled ball and operated with a single action trigger. But Remington had the advantage that they were able to produce their revolvers for $2 less per gun. The Army predictably jumped at the chance to get a revolver of similar quality for a lower price. This meant by 1863 no more contracts were given to Colt, and Remington reigned supreme in the eyes of the ordinance department.

The New Model Army also had the advantage when it came to reloads. In the days before fixed metallic cartridges the fastest way to reload a revolver was to swap out a spent cylinder with a preloaded backup. Remington cylinders could be exchanged by removing a single pin, compared to Colt revolvers that needed the whole barrel removed to change the cylinder.

Despite the success of traditional revolver design throughout the Civil War, the winds of change were blowing. Though they had sent far fewer guns to the battlefield than Colt and Remington, Massachusetts-based Smith and Wesson had perfected a new kind of revolver that fired a metallic cartridge. And while underpowered and of limited military value at first, these guns would mark a new era in military arms.

During the years after the Civil War, America rapidly downsized its army. There was little appetite in Washington for increasing military spending and as many units were disbanded, those remaining had to make do with leftovers from the war. At the same time firearms technology had progressed—in France, the first rimfire metallic cartridge had been developed by Louis-Nicolas Flobert in 1845, followed by the first revolver to use self-contained metallic cartridges by Eugene Lefaucheux in 1854. It was clear that metallic cartridges, which included the bullet, powder, and primer all in one package, were the future of warfare. The ordinance department knew the military's arsenal needed an upgrade, but they lacked funds to do so. In a cost-saving measure, Colt Model 1860s were converted to fire metallic cartridges. But these conversions were haphazard, and many units did not get them, and had to make do with Civil War equipment. Even with these limitations, the U.S. cavalry forces were at a major firepower advantage over the western indigenous tribes, their primary foes during the post-Civil War years. Many arrows could be fired during the long reload time of muzzleloaders. Multi-shot revolvers had tipped the balance and, while many indigenous groups were able to secure these faster firing weapons via trading or raids, U.S. forces had the clear advantage in terms of the number of these weapons, to say nothing of spare parts and ammunition. However, the soldiers of the army still had to deal with increasingly outdated equipment.

Down, but not out, Colt would submit a new revolver for government trials in 1872. This new revolver beat out the Smith and Wesson easily and was adopted as the military's new sidearm.



All: Wikimedia Commons

ABOVE: An Army scout brandishes his revolver while clutching the reigns and his rifle. When the Colt Paterson revolvers first appeared on the battlefield in the West, native Americans were overwhelmed by the firepower. BELOW: Soon after the appearance of the Paterson, Colt worked with Texas Ranger Samuel Walker to refine the weapon, and created the legendary Colt Walker, bottom.

Officially called the Strap Model, because of its top strap design, the gun fired the new .45 Long Colt round and would prove popular among troops and civilians for its power and dependability—earning the nickname, the Single Action Army. In the summer of 1873, 8,000 of these revolvers were shipped to cavalry units across the frontier. Throughout its time in military service 37,000 Single-Action Armies were issued to troops. The .45 caliber round was considered powerful enough to knock down the enemy but not so powerful as to make recoil unmanageable, and the seven-and-a-half-inch barrel allowed for relatively precise shots. This iconic weapon would have a short service life however, only lasting from 1873 to 1892.

In 1892 the Single Action Army was replaced by the next generation of military sidearms. The Colt New Army, also known as the Model 1892, was the first double-action revolver to see service

in the U.S. military. The adoption of this revolver helped mark a change in military thinking. When the Single-Action Army had been adopted, cavalry were still expected to use the revolver as their primary weapon. Now mounted units were using carbines as their primary weapon and revolvers relegated to a backup role as a sidearm. For this new sidearm role, the government looked for a smaller gun that could be more easily carried by all kinds of troops. The Model 1892 was a double-action revolver firing the .38 Long Colt round, with about half the power of the Single Action Army's .45 Long Colt. But now that revolvers were only serving as backup weapons, the Model 1892's smaller frame and increased portability were seen as acceptable trade-offs for the less powerful round. The double-action trigger—cocking and firing the gun with one pull—was seen as a major advantage over the Single Action Army. The Colt New Army also had a swing-out cylinder, which meant all the rounds could be ejected at once for rapid reloading. Between 1892 and 1907, 291,000 of these revolvers would be produced. The Model 1892 would see service in the Boxer Rebellion in China, the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection. However, while the revolver performed well mechanically, the .38-long colt round was found to be underpowered, causing a limited number of Single-Action Armies to be brought back into limited service.

Seeing a major change in small arms technology, the Ordnance Department was less than impressed with the performance of the .38 round and knew the Model 1892 was not long for service. By 1909 the military knew it would soon be adopting a new .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol, but wanted a new revolver that would bridge the gap. Colt created a design based on their 1892 model called the New Service. This revolver fired the old .45-long Colt round with a new smokeless propellant. Roughly 14,000 were produced and would see action in the closing stages of the Philippines campaign. While revolvers would still have a place in arsenals for years to come, this would also be the last time the U.S. military used a revolver as their primary sidearm.

By the time of America's entry into World War I, the new .45 Colt M1911 was firmly in place as the sidearm of choice for American forces. However, demand for the new pistol greatly outstripped production, leading to the creation of the .45 Model 1917. Using the same design as the earlier 1892 and 1909 models, the M1917 differed in that it fired the new .45 ACP round. This allowed ammo to be interchangeable between the M1911 and the model M1917. To accomplish this the M1917 used 3-round half-moon shaped clips to hold the bullets in the cylinder, due to the

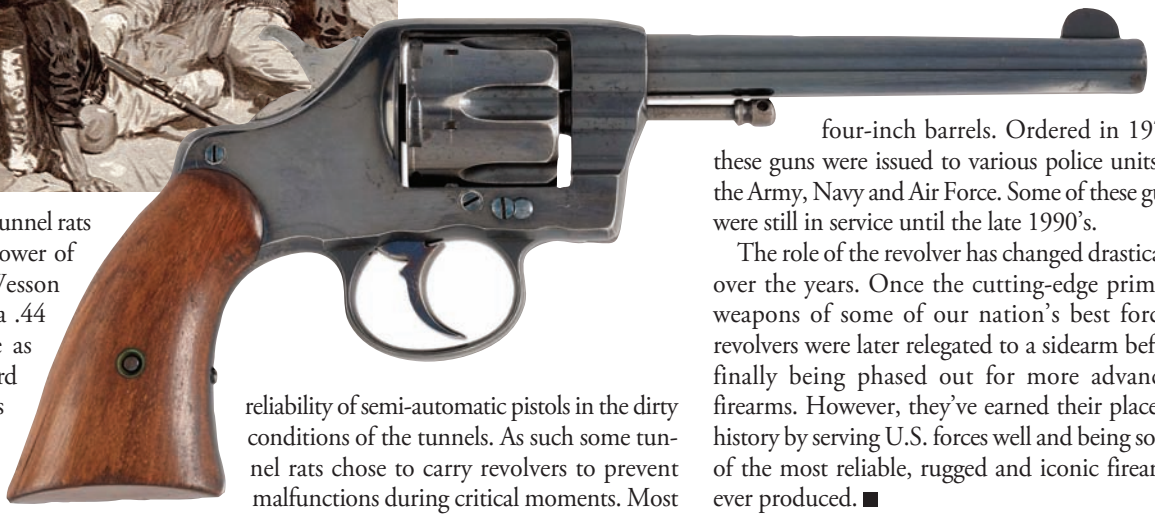
.45 ACP round not having a rim like traditional revolver rounds. Many of these revolvers, known as the "substation standard," would see action in the First World War with the American Expeditionary force. More than 318,432 would be produced by both Colt and Smith & Wesson from 1917 to 1920. And while the revolvers performed admirably, they were outclassed by the M1911. During the interwar years few sidearms of any kind were produced for the military and most of the existing revolvers were placed into storage. However, when the U.S joined World War II the military once again found itself extremely underprepared for a vastly increased demand for sidearms. While the M1911 would once again be the primary sidearm of U.S. forces across the globe, the M1917 would be called on once again to serve as a second line handgun. At the start of the war the military had 188,120 of the M1917 in storage. For the most part these revolvers would serve as the sidearm for non-combat personnel such as stateside security personnel and MP's. However, more 20,000 of these revolvers would be issued to personnel in combat zones in both Europe and the Pacific.

Semi-automatic handguns had proven their place as the primary sidearm for most militaries during World War II and would continue into the Cold War. But despite this, many revolvers remained in U.S. military service. Revolvers were now used to fill niche roles such as arming investigators and pilots. Most of these were varieties of the .38 Colt Official police. These were short barrel .38 special revolvers seen as the appropriate weapons for investigators in both the civilian and military worlds. In addition, the Air Force needed a lightweight and compact revolver for its pilots to use on the ground should they be shot down. The Colt Aircrewman had a two-inch barrel, was made almost completely out of aluminum and fired .38 special rounds. Because of the relative weakness of the aluminum cylinder these revolvers could only fire tailormade underpowered rounds, limiting their effectiveness. The Aircrewman model is notable for being the only revolvers ever ordered by the newly formed U.S Air Force.

Vietnam would be the last war where revolvers would see any significant use by U.S. forces. Revolvers in service varied greatly in terms of models used and many were carried by special forces and irregular troops. But the most prolific users of revolvers were the U.S. Army "Tunnel Rats." The Tunnel Rats were a group of U.S. and allied soldiers who would infiltrate Viet Cong tunnels, which the communist insurgents used to move around. The conditions in these tunnels were quite cramped and the tunnel rats faced the constant threat of ambush. Because they were unlikely to be in a sustained firefight, or come up against

Both: Wikimedia Commons

LEFT: By the time of the Philippine Insurrection the the Army was issuing the smaller, .38 caliber, Colt New Army Model1892 revolver. In service the gun proved to be underpowered, and was eventually replaced by the semiautomatic Colt M1911. BELOW: The first double-action revolver with a swing out cylinder to be generally issued by the U.S. military was the Colt M1892 Navy and Army.



multiple hostiles at once, some tunnel rats preferred the sheer stopping power of revolvers. The Smith and Wesson Model 29, for example, fired a .44 magnum round almost twice as powerful as the M1911's standard .45 ACP. Another option was the Smith and Wesson Model 10, which was similar to the M1917, but fired the .38 special round. While these .38 Special revolvers were less powerful than the standard .45 ACP firing M1911, there were still some concerns about the reliability of semi-automatic pistols in the dirty conditions of the tunnels. As such some tunnel rats chose to carry revolvers to prevent malfunctions during critical moments. Most of the revolvers used in Vietnam were procured by individual soldiers, as most U.S. Forces made use of the M1911.

The last revolvers ever ordered by any branch of the U.S military were 6,500 Ruger Security Sixes, firing .38 special rounds and outfitted with four-inch barrels. Ordered in 1977, these guns were issued to various police units of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Some of these guns were still in service until the late 1990's.

The role of the revolver has changed drastically over the years. Once the cutting-edge primary weapons of some of our nation's best forces, revolvers were later relegated to a sidearm before finally being phased out for more advanced firearms. However, they've earned their place in history by serving U.S. forces well and being some of the most reliable, rugged and iconic firearms ever produced. ■

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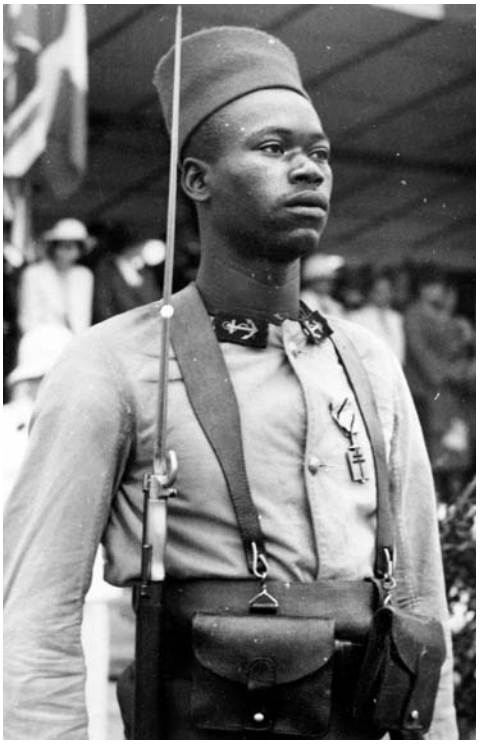
The Long Hard Road of the Tirailleurs Sénégalais, France's Forgotten West African Colonial Soldiers.

By Kevin Seabrooke

The German capture of Fort Douaumont overlooking Verdun was a major blow to French morale in February of 1916. Situated on the River Meuse in the northeast near the German border, it had been the last stronghold to fall in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War and was considered a sacred symbol of healing for the people of France.

It was a place carefully chosen by General Erich von Falkenhayn in an effort to keep the French army away from the coming conflict with the British in the west (the Battle of the Somme) while inflicting mass casualties from a mostly defensive position. In late 1915, Falkenhayn reportedly argued in a memo to Emperor William II that the French army could best be destroyed by capturing something that "for the retention of which the French would be compelled to throw in every man they have."

That would include the dark-skinned *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* "riflemen" or "skirmishers" from Senegal—though over time they were likely to come from many parts of West Africa (French colonial areas that would later become the countries of Benin, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mauritania). Some 140,000 of them would take part in the war at the Western Front (30,000 were killed) and though they would earn praise for their bravery, their presence on the field of a European battle was a source of international controversy.



Senegalese Tirailleur Dominique Kosseyo was awarded the Cross of Liberation by Gen. Charles de Gaulle on July 14, 1941, in Brazzaville, French Equatorial Africa. Kosseyo is the first African to receive the award, given to heroes of the Liberation of France during World War II.

LEFT: African Senegalese soldiers marching down a street in a town in France during World War I. BELOW: Members of the 43rd Senegalese Tirailleurs Battalion, who fought in the recapture of Fort Douaumont in October 1916, pose with their flag decorated with the fourragère–given to a military unit awarded a mention in despatches.

From February to December of 1916, the Tirailleurs were involved in countless assaults and counterattacks in the Great War's longest conflict, a brutal war of attrition in a hellish landscape of constant bombardment—some 40 million artillery shells were fired during the battle for Verdun. Over the 10 months, the two armies would suffer a combined 700,000 casualties and some 300,000 killed. Gen. Erich Ludendorff, the de facto leader of the German military from 1916 onward, wrote in his memoirs that Verdun was "a gaping wound which was gnawing away at our forces."

After several days of shelling, the Tirailleurs were part of the French infantry that eventually recaptured Fort Douaumont on October 24, taking 6,000 German prisoners. The French would retake the nearby Fort Vaux about a week later. Accounts from the time describe their ferocity in close-quarters combat, using their bayonets and even their *coupe-coupes* (traditional fighting knives) to push back the German defenders.

The recapture of Fort Douaumont boosted French morale and marked the beginning of a series of successful counter offensives that eventually pushed the Germans back to where they had started in February.

Masserigne Soumare, a Tirailleur who took part in the recapture of the fort, said he was proud to have done what the French had tried to do so many times before.

"We were told: 'Don't wash your uniforms. Cross the country as you are so that everyone who meets you will know that you made the attack on Fort Douaumont,'" Soumare told historian Joe Lunn, who published *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* in 1999. Lunn recorded interviews with more than 80 African veterans and witnesses to World War I in the early 1980s.

The Tirailleurs took a train to St. Raphael in southern France and "in every town we crossed, the French were clapping their hands and shouting: 'Vive les tirailleurs sénégalais!' ... And afterwards, whenever we were walking in the country-everywhere we used to go—if we told people that we made the attack on Fort Douaumont, the French were looking at us with much admiration," Soumare recalled.

Created by decree under Napoleon III in 1857, the Senegalese Tirailleurs Corps would fight in all of France's colonial actions as well as the Franco-Austrian (1859) and Franco-German (1870/71) wars. After fighting in both world wars, they would again be involved in colonial actions for France until 1960, when 17 African countries, including 14 former French colonies, gained their independence.

General Charles Mangin, a French colonial officer, had begun advocating in 1909 for the recruitment of a large army from North and West Africa to be trained to fight in European wars. Mangin argued that this colonial force could make up the difference in available manpower for future conflicts.

By 1913, the unified, industrial state of Germany was growing in population, reaching about 68 million to France's 40 million. Well aware of their demographic disadvantage, France lengthened its term of military service to three years in 1913 to try to grow its standing army.

France had known before it started that they could not win a war of attrition. But at the beginning France, who had greatly underestimated the number of German troops it would be facing, felt the conflict would not last long and so preferred to use "more reliable" troops. Still, the Tirailleurs were on all fronts in northern France in 1914,

though not yet in great numbers.

In their colonial experiments all European nations had used the indigenous peoples as soldiers or police. But France had become the first nation to employ black African troops on European soil, something the Germans considered an outrage. In reaction to Mangin's idea, the *Berliner Post* had declared in 1909 that "it would be an insult to fight with these barbarians on European soil."

In the summer of 1915, the German Foreign Office would publish "Employment, Contrary to International Law, of Colored Troops in the European Theatre of War by England and France," claiming African colonial soldiers were committing such atrocities as gouging out eyes and cutting off noses, ears and even the heads of captured or wounded Germans.

German propaganda characterized black soldiers as wild animals with uncontrolled sexual desires that were a threat to white women.

In his 2017 book on postcards of World War I, *With a Weapon and a Grin*, Stephan Likosky described how propaganda was used to target different audiences. To the French, "the African savage was now a disciplined soldier willing to serve his mother country" while, to make him less threatening, he was also depicted as "a naive and child-like figure—*a grand enfant*—amicable and ever ready to flash a broad smile." At the same time, the French press often depicted the Tirailleurs as bloodthirsty cannibals to play upon German fears.

The Germans, it is worth noting, committed one of the first genocides of the 20th century in their African colony of "German South West Africa," now Namibia. Rebelling against colonial rule, the Herero killed more than 100 German settlers in January 1904. The Nama also rebelled. In retaliation, German forces killed tens of thousands of the Herero and Nama by driving them into the desert to die of dehydration. Thousands more were placed in concentration camps, where the majority died of diseases, abuse, and exhaustion.

Critics in America and Britain also decried the use of Africans against Europeans as their service raised uncomfortable questions about citizenship, equality, and the very nature of empire. While fighting for France, Tirailleurs were denied the same rights and recognition afforded to their white counterparts.

Yet these men, often considered "inferior" by European standards, would prove their valor and humanity on the battlefield, shattering preconceived notions of African capabilities. But Mangin's insistence that the men from West Africa were "born soldiers" proved as untrue as any of the pseudo-scientific and prejudicial beliefs so prevalent at the time.

But 1914 did not start off well for the Tirailleurs and while there were many reports of their ineffectiveness in defensive situations—running forward to escape artillery fire or charging cannons with bayonets—the fault lay with their commanders.

In general, a Tirailleur had little training, poor equipment and did not speak French. They were patronized and thought of as child-like so that they always had white officers. Some did win medals and they were honored by many at the time. But their specific actions or exploits remain unknown and more than a century later, details of Tirailleurs are scarce.

Climate also proved an obstacle for the Tirailleurs, many of whom had inadequate clothing and fought barefoot—they issued boots far too big for them because they were believed to have enormous feet as a result of walking barefoot their whole lives. As late as in 1917, Mangin proposed that the Tirailleurs fight barefoot because by wearing boots, "those agile apes are losing one of their best infantry qualities, namely their elasticity in marching."

Frostbite and trench foot were common and in colder weather, they could hardly hold their rifles. After that first winter of the war, the Tirailleurs were sent to camps in the south of France from November to March, a practice known as "*hivernage*."

These soldiers, many of whom had never set foot in Europe before, found themselves in a world of unimaginable horror. They endured the squalor and carnage of trench warfare, the relentless artillery bombardments, and the constant threat of disease. The psychological impact of this new, industrialized form of warfare cannot be overstated. Imagine the sensory overload: the constant noise, the smell of gas and decaying bodies, the sight of unimaginable injuries. Yet, despite these hardships, the Tirailleurs fought with remarkable resilience. They were known for their bravery in combat, their ability to adapt to different terrains, and their unwavering loyalty to their French officers, a complex dynamic often born of necessity and survival.

The Germans and the British were more impressed than the French, for what the Africans did not lack was courage and about a third of them would be killed.

Back at the front in 1915, the tirailleurs saw heavy losses. In April a battalion of them panicked in the face of a mustard gas attack near Ypres and killed their white commanders. The French officers were given orders to shoot any tirailleurs who turned back from the front lines.

Edmund Genet, an American serving in the French Foreign Legion, recalled in his memoir a scene from the Second Battle of Champagne in September, 1915, that the "Tirailleurs made two strong charges and both times had to fall back. They were ordered to make a third and, refusing to face again the murderous fire of the German machine-guns, turned in flight."

Genet described the officers of his unit trying to turn the fleeing men around and his commandant, "wrath written all over his face," kicking one of the men to stop him.

Soon after, charging ahead toward those same machine guns, Genet saw "dead Tirailleurs were lying everywhere, killed in those two first charges, ghastly and bloody."

The years 1914-15 were bloodiest years for France and by September of 1915, losses had been so great that French leadership had doubts about continuing the war. Remembering Mangin's promise of 500,000 colonial soldiers, they turned back to Africa where French recruiting tactics turned coercive—provoking local riots in what is now Burkina Faso and Mali. After the losses at Verdun, France was desperate for more men and recruiters became duplicitous in 1917-18, promising citizenship and benefits that never materialised.

During the Great War, France would deploy more than half a million colonial troops. About 450,000 of those were indigenous Africans, including the Tirailleurs Sénégalais, as well as Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans, Malagasies, and Somalis. Some 110,000 settlers of European descent also served. The colonial troops helped, but it would ultimately take British, Italian and, finally, American troops to end the conflict.

The entry of American combat troops into the war offers another example of the many instances of tenacity displayed by the Tirailleurs. Fighting house to house in the village of Château-Thierry on the Marne River in May 1918, they slowed the Nazi offensive enough to allow the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division to intervene and keep the German 7th Army from establishing a bridgehead across the river.

Tirailleur Sergeant Mamadou Dia would receive the Croix de Guerre for exceptional bravery and leadership during the intense house-to-house combat at Château-Thierry.

By 1917, the Tirailleurs had become part of the French war machine and their commanders praised them as shock troops who didn't take prisoners, using bayonets and coupe-coupes as *Nettoyeurs de tranchées* or "trench cleaners"— a constant source of German complaint and propaganda.

And yet as late as 1918, an officer at a training camp for West African troops wrote that the Tirailleurs were "cannon fodder, who should, in order to save whites' lives, be made use of much more intensively."

Even the French Prime Minister and Minister of War Georges Clemenceau said, in a February speech to the French Senate that same year that, "We are

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ABOVE: German Wehrmacht troops talking with West African French Colonial POWs, Terailleurs Senegalese, sometime during the Battle of France in 1940. BELOW: Members of the 1st Free French Brigade celebrate reaching the British lines in 1942. Commanded by Gen. Marie-Pierre Koenig, they had faced the German Gen. Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps and its Italian allies on the Libyan front from May 26 to June 11. Completely surrounded, some 2,600 men out of the 3,600 who began the battle, managed to escape.

Musée de l'Ordre de la Libération

going to offer civilisation to the Blacks. They will have to pay for that […] I would prefer that ten Blacks are killed rather than one Frenchman!"

General Robert Nivelle was not alone in his belief that France should "spare not the black blood so that white blood be saved." Tirailleurs were the soldiers most often sent to the front for suicidal attacks and counter attacks. At Chemin Des Dames, April 16, 1917, they fought bravely, but French battle plans had fallen into German hands and 45 percent of the Africans were slaughtered.

In 1917, Lieutenant Galandou Diouf wrote in his newspaper, the *Indépendant Sénégalais*, that after duties were fulfilled, rights would also have to be granted: "We want the same equality in society as we had in the trenches when facing death."

After the November 1918 Armistice, the Tirailleurs were part of the occupation force stationed in the German Rhineland, but were not deployed until the spring of 1919 to avoid the worst of the winter weather.

Many Germans were vehemently opposed to the presence of these "inherently inferior" men on their national soil, taking it as an affront to national pride and a deliberate attempt by France at racial humiliation. From this arose the *Schwarze Schmach* or "Black Shame" campaign, lasting from 1920 until the end of the occupation in 1930, that falsely accused the Tirailleurs of a multitude of crimes, especially the rape of white women, all over Germany. The virulent campaign would create a negative image of the Tirailleurs and fuel racial tensions that would later be exploited by right wing nationalists and eventually become Nazi propaganda.

However, the contribution of the Tirailleurs goes beyond their military achievements. Their presence in Europe challenged racial stereotypes and exposed the contradictions of colonialism.

When the second World War broke out with Germany's 1940 invasion of France, the French army had about 2.9 million men, including an estimated 179,000 Tirailleurs who had been mobilised. Some 40,000 of them would fight in Europe or "metropolitan France."

During the Battle of France there were a number of instances of Germans murdering Tirailleurs as well as British soldiers. The massacre at Chassely is perhaps the most well known.

Posted just north of Lyon in the village of Chasselay, part of the 25e Régiment de Tirailleurs Sénégalais held out for a day and a night against the Germans. They surrendered on June 20 when they ran out of ammunition.

Accounts from the time describe the some 50 Tirailleurs being separated from their white officers and told to assemble in front of two tanks. The Senegalese were then told to run as the tanks' machine guns mowed them down. The tanks were then driven over the dead and wounded. There were reports of some French officers being shot for trying to intervene. The local people ignored the German order not to bury the bodies.

The remaining African soldiers who surrendered during the Battle of France were interned in Frontstalags prison camps in France to keep them from "defiling" German purity. They were guarded by Nazis and then Vichy French officers.

Tirailleurs would fight with the Free French Forces in North Africa and Italy before taking part in Operation Dragoon, the invasion of southern

ImagesDefense (https://imagesdefense.gouv.fr)

ABOVE: Tirailleurs from French colonial Africa enroute from Italy to France to take part in Operation Dragoon, the "forgotten landing," at Provence on August 15, 1944. RIGHT: Senegalese riflemen or "Tirailleurs" in the Vosges mountains in eastern France in the winter of 1944-45.

France in August 1944.

The Tirailleurs would have another moment of national and even international fame as part of the 3,700 men from the men from the 1st Free French Division under Gen. Marie-Pierre Koenig held out against a German-Italian force of 32,000 under General Rommel, "The Desert Fox," at Bir Hakeim in Libya during the Battle of Gazala (May 26-June 11, 1942).

The Free French didn't prevent Rommel from taking the port city of Tobruk, but they did disrupt his plans and allow the British to regroup in defense of Egypt. It was a moment of redemption for France after its swift defeat and capitulation to the Nazis in 1940.

Among praise from many Allied leaders, the Free French in exile, Charles de Gaulle, said in a telegram to Koenig, "Know and tell your troops that all of France is watching you and that you are its pride."

Before the liberation of Paris on August 25, 1944, General De Gaulle had been in talks with American and British military leaders to allow Free French forces to enter the city first.

Allied High Command granted the request, but only if the division that marched in had no black soldiers. In January 1944 Major General Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, wrote a memo stamped "confidential" that said "It is more desirable that the division mentioned above consist of white personnel." Smith went on to note that the Second Armoured Division, which had at the time only 25 percent "native personnel" was the only French division "operationally available that could be made one hundred percent white."

In the end, the French substituted all the available white soldiers from other units and eventually included some from parts of North Africa, the Middle East, and Spain. In France it became known as the *blanchiment* or "whitening."

The process of discharging and repatriating the Tirailleurs became complicated by the refusal of France to pay wage arrears due to the released prisoners of war. There were protests and reports of soldiers refusing to board ships bound for Africa being shot by French soldiers. When one ship finally arrived in Senegal on November 21, 1944, the 1,300 tirailleurs were transferred to French army barracks in the town of Thiaroye near Dakar.

A deadly clash between the French army and Tirailleurs on December 1, 1944, remains controversial. France claims 35 protesters were killed, while other sources put the number at 300.

Thirty-four of the so-called mutineers, who were accused of being instigators, were tried and given sentences ranging from one to ten years in prison. In 1947, when French President Vincent Auriol visited Senegal, the men were pardoned, but not exonerated. The promise that in recognition of their service they would become equal citizens of France was never honored.

A 1988 film about the massacre, *Camp de Thiaroye*, was banned in France and censored in Senegal. In 2000, France began opening up its military archives, shedding more light on the events. Until 2010, Tirailleurs received lower pensions than their French counterparts and their ambiguous citizenship status limited access to other benefits.

In 2017 French President Francois Hollande, saying they were owed "a debt of blood," granted citizenship to 28 Africans who fought for France in World War II and other conflicts.

The men, aged 78-90, received their certificates of citizenship at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

France passed a law in 2023 that meant that Senegalese veterans who fought for France no longer had to live in France for six months out of the year in order to receive their benefits.

The French film *Tirailleurs* (English title: *Father and Soldier)* premiered at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. Starring well-known actor Omar Sy, the film follows the story of a Senegalese man and his son fighting for France in World War I.

That the film was released to the public in France and Senegal in January 2023 is evidence of progress and perhaps a sign that the exceedingly slow wheels of justice may still be turning. ■

UNIFORM

Heavy Roman Cavalryman, First Century CE

Artwork: Johnny Shumate

HELMET: Similar in appearance to the infantry *galea*, the helmet was frequently made of iron, and covered in a sheet of copper or other decorative metal.

CAVALRY LANCE: Derived from the *contus,* cavalrymen might carry a half lance, or thrusting spear.

THROWING SPEARS: Roman auxilia cavalry typically carried javelins or short throwing spears.

SWORD: Longer than the infantry's *gladius*, the *Spatha* ranged in length from 20-40 inches.

SADDLE: Wood, covered with leather, with two horns in front, and two in back, without stirrups.

SHIELD: Period images suggest the cavalry carried oval *scutum* (shields) with a metal "boss" to protect the hand gripping the shield.

MAIL: By the first century Roman cavalry were wearing *lorica hamata* (chain mail) cuirasses, believed to have been developed by the Celts as early as 300 BCE.

TROUSERS: Short *bracae* riding breeches were practical for the cavalry.

SANDALS: Infantry style with spurs.

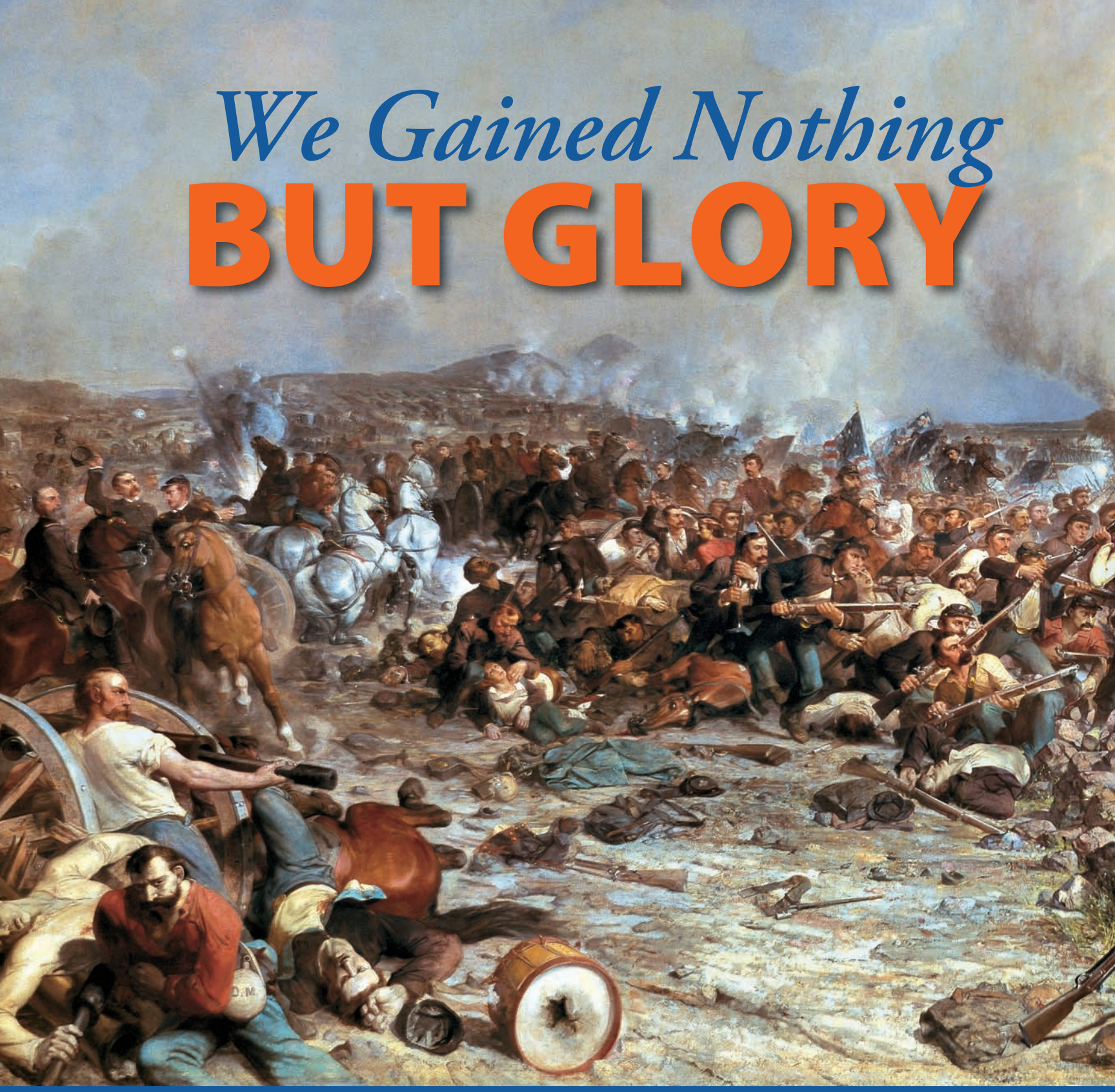
Roman cavalry before 400 BCE was recruited from the aristocracy in limited numbers. As the cavalry expanded, recruits came from beyond the aristocracy.

By the first century CE, much of the Imperial Cavalry was made up of non-citizen professional soldiers, many recruited from Roman provinces that could field skilled native cavalry. Under the rule of Augustus, the native cavalry troops were formed into *auxilia* (auxiliary) units, outfitted and trained by the Romans, and frequently formed into an auxiliary corps.

A primary responsibility of Roman cavalry was to scout ahead of the Army when on the march. When the Army assembled for battle, the cavalry was usually placed on the wings, with the infantry in the center. This formation was intended to prevent the Roman infantry from being flanked.

During the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE, Roman commander Scipio used his superior Legions against Hannibal's infantry and elephants. As the battle developed the Roman and auxilia cavalry defeated Hannibal's mounted troops, then returned to the battlefield to attack Hannibal's army from the rear. This caused Hannibal's line to collapse, with many of his men massacred.

We Gained Nothing BUT GLORY

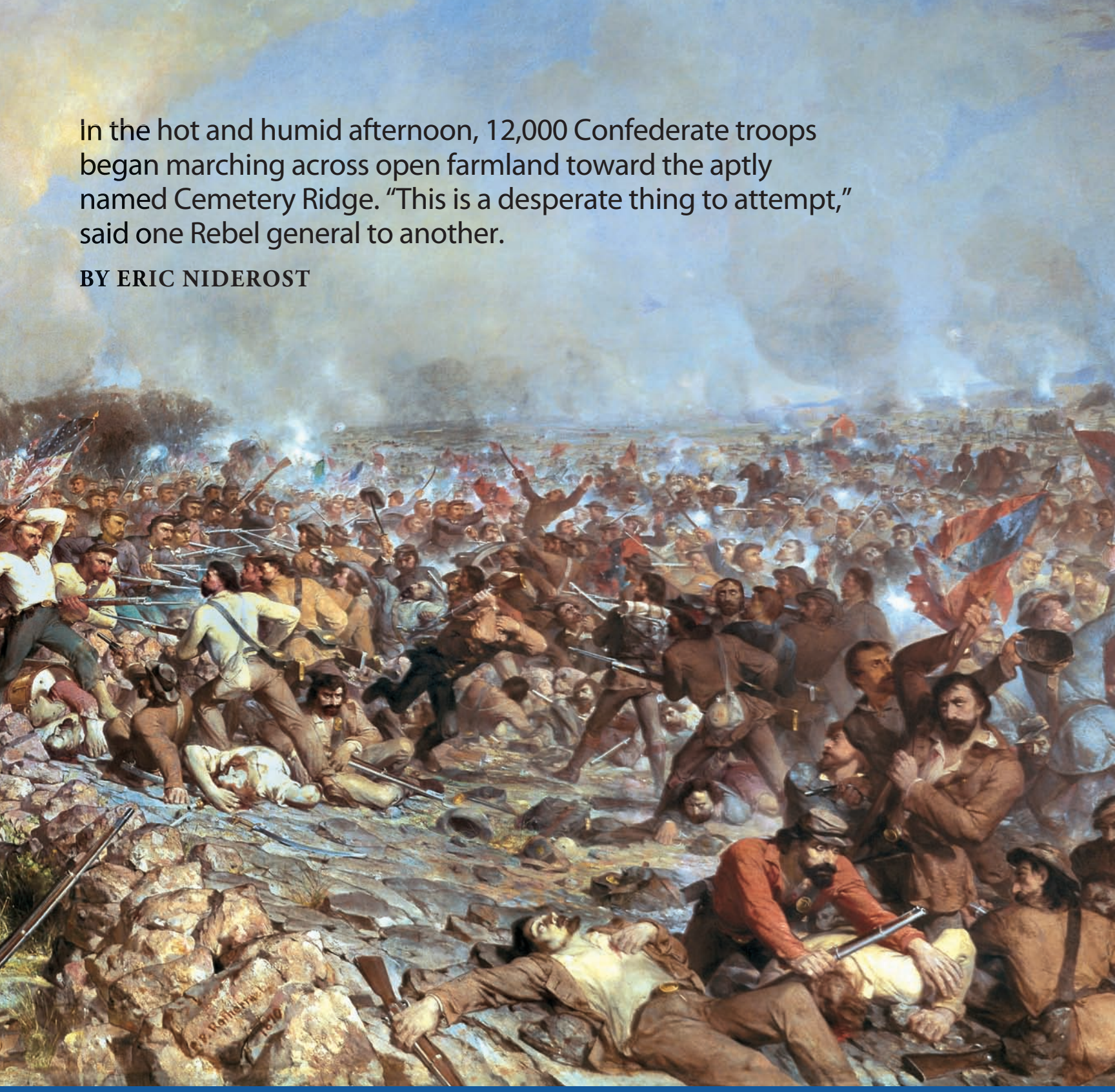


On the eve of its national birthday, a battle that could tear the United States asunder would begin amid the fields and farms of southern Pennsylvania. Meteorogically, July 3, 1863, was a typical summer day on the Eastern Seaboard–hot and humid with temperatures well into the 90s. The action on the ground would soon be even hotter, forever seared into American history. Five days earlier, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's formidable Army of Northern Virginia, some 75,000 strong, had invaded the North for the second time in a year, hoping to win a decisive victory over Union forces. The 90,000-man Army of the Potomac, commanded by recently appointed Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade, was holding on for dear life.

The two armies had been fighting around the small town of Gettysburg for two days and during much of that time the Confederates had seemed to be on the brink of success. Victory had so far proved elusive, but Southern morale remained high in spite

In the hot and humid afternoon, 12,000 Confederate troops began marching across open farmland toward the aptly named Cemetery Ridge. "This is a desperate thing to attempt," said one Rebel general to another.

BY ERIC NIDEROST



of horrific casualties. A combination of poorly coordinated attacks, missed opportunities, and a Union Army stubbornly defending its own soil had prevented Lee from achieving his goals. Nevertheless, the Virginia-born commander was firmly convinced that one more determined attack, this time on the Union center, would give his army the epochal victory that thus far had proved maddeningly elusive.

Lee had been suffering from diarrhea and it's possible his physical discomfort clouded his judgment. More significantly, the brilliant tactician was a victim of his own success. Past victories over inferior Union generals had bred overconfidence and fostered in Lee a certain intransigence when his ideas were chal-

The Confederate high tide at Gettysburg broke at the low stone wall known as "the Angle," where Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New York regiments beat back the heroic but doomed assault depicted in this epic painting by Peter F. Rothermel.

State Museum of Pennsylvania

Library of Congress

"Gen. Pickett taking the order to charge from Gen. Longstreet, Gettysburg, July 3, 1864 ,"by H.A. Ogden. Longstreet , who famously disagreed with General Lee's plan, reluctantly granted Pickett permission to launch his ill-fated assault.

lenged. Believing that Meade had weakened his center to reinforce his battered flanks, Lee was convinced that a massive attack at the center would cut the Union army in two. Lt.- Gen. James Longstreet, commander of the Army's I Corps, respectfully disagreed. "I have been a soldier all my life," he told his Lee. "I have been with soldiers engaged in fights by couples, by squads, companies, regiments, divisions, and armies, and should know as well as anyone what soldiers can do. It is my opinion that no 15,000 soldiers ever arrayed for battle can take that position." Longstreet's passionate and well-reasoned pleas fell on deaf ears. Lee would attack.

The Army of the Potomac was in a strong defensive position just south of Gettysburg. The Union line resembled a fishhook, with the barbed point embedded in a small rise known as Culp's Hill to the locals. From there, the fishhook curved south, running along a low backbone of land called Cemetery Ridge. The eye of the fishhook was anchored on two wooded hills, Round Top and Little Round Top. This naturally formidable position gave the Federals the advantage of interior lines, where reinforcements could easily be shifted to various points as needed. By contrast, the Confederates were strung out along a concave line that made communication and coordination of attacks exceedingly difficult.

A mile to the west of the Union position, Lee rode along Seminary Ridge on the morning of July 3, making inspections and issuing last-minute orders for the coming assault. He was a figure of great respect, even awe, to the men he led and an icon of the Confederacy. Lee had an indefinable quality, a charisma that set him apart from other commanders. Abstemious in his personal habits, courtly and dignified, the soft-spoken aristocrat seemed born to command. Riding his famed warhorse, Traveller, Lee was joined on his tour by Longstreet and Maj. Gen. George E. Pickett, a fellow Virginian. Pickett's 4,500-man division was still fresh; it would be a key element in the unfolding drama. The generals passed long lines of infantry, who were ordered not to cheer or make any kind of demonstration, lest the enemy get wind of what was about to happen. Soldiers scrambled to their feet as Lee passed, and many removed their hats as a token of mute but heartfelt respect. Lee acknowledged the tribute with a slight nod and a touch of his brim. The bond between the white-bearded general and his men needed no words to be fully expressed.

Lee halted Traveler, raising his field glasses eastward toward the Union lines that paralleled his own. He focused on a clump of oak trees plainly visible even at a distance—the focal point of the entire assault. The attacking units would converge on the soon-to-be-famous "copse of trees." Marching under heavy enemy fire would be difficult, but at least the Confederate officers leading the assault would have a central location on which to concentrate. Also watching from Seminary Ridge were generals Lewis Armistead and Richard Garnett, who were decidedly uneasy about their men's chances. "This is a desperate thing to attempt," Garnett said quietly. "Yes, it is," Armistead agreed. "But the issue is with the Almighty, and we must leave it in His hands."

Posted near that clump of trees, blissfully unaware of Lee's steely scrutiny, were the men of the 69th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Part of Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock's II Corps, they occupied part of the Union center, the upper end of the fishhook. Mostly from Philadelphia's working class, these rough-and-ready Irishmen were familiar with both hard work and ethnic prejudice. The 69th was posted on the forward slope of Cemetery Ridge, along a low stone wall that abruptly turned 90 degrees—a feature known forever after as "The Angle" or "Bloody Angle." It was not a particularly formidable wall, rising only about two feet above the rich Pennsylvania soil. A few fence rails had been piled on top, adding to the fence's height but not doing much to increase its value as a shield.

After some desultory fighting around Culp's Hill earlier in the day, an eerie, unnatural silence had descended on the battlefield—"almost as still as Sabbath day," remembered one Union private. In the

ominous silence Federal soldiers shifted uneasily in their blue wool coats, unaware they sat at what amounted to a Rebel bull's-eye.

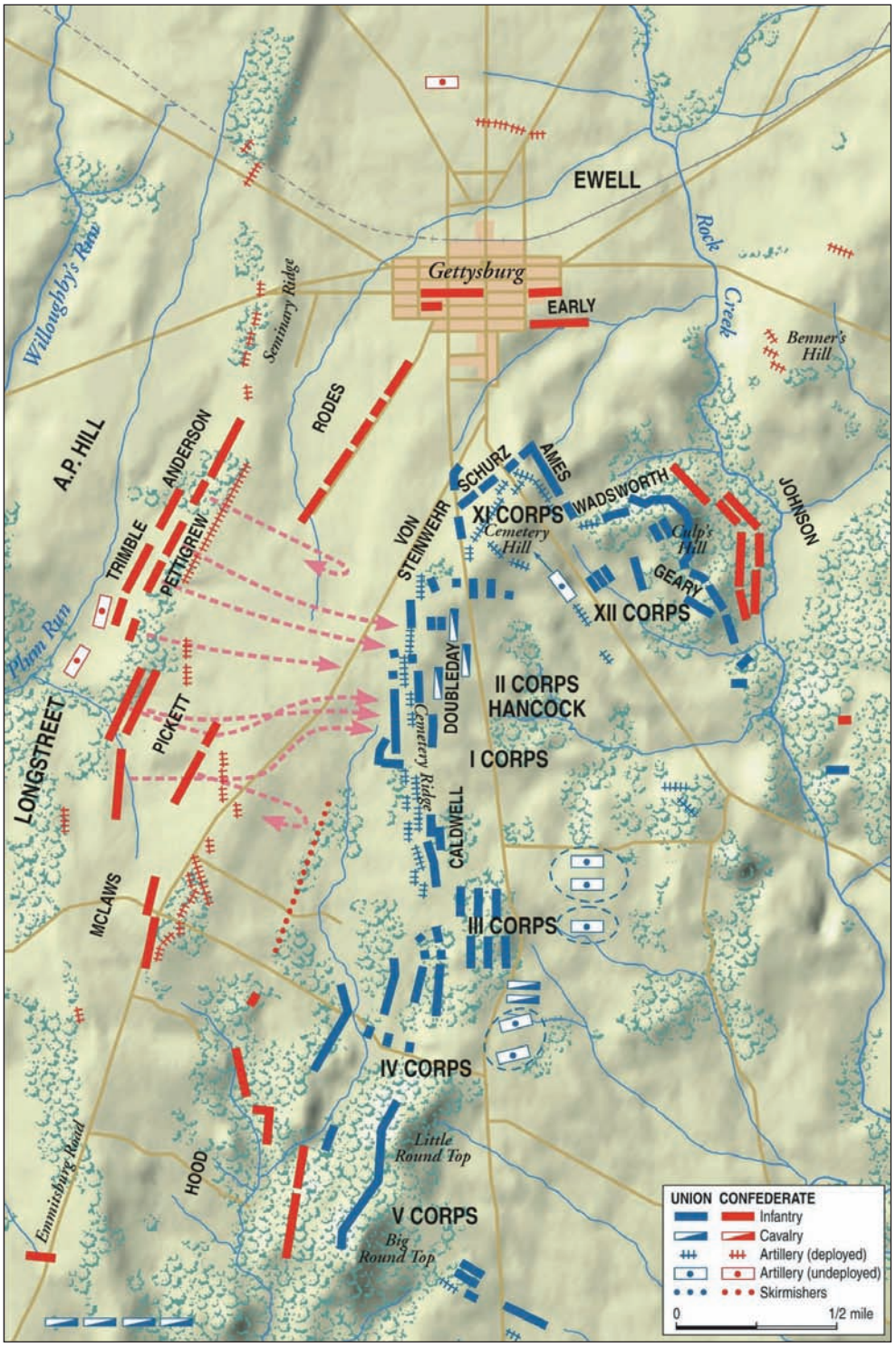
Brigadier General Alexander S. Webb, commanding the Philadelphia Brigade, had that morning posted two companies of the 71st Pennsylvania to the immediate right of the 69th, between them and the corner of the Angle. The rest of the 71st Infantry continued along the wall after the zigzag shift. The left flank was held by a somewhat understrength 59th New York. The 72nd Pennsylvania, Webb's strongest regiment, was posted in the rear as a mobile reserve. The Irishmen could take some comfort in the fact that they had ample artillery support, although sometimes the guns could prove a mixed blessing. If you weren't careful, you might fall victim to friendly fire, and the artillery units often attracted the unwanted attention of enemy batteries as well.

Lieutenant Alonzo Cushing's Battery A, 4th U.S. Artillery, was positioned about 150 feet behind the companies on the 69th's right. These Regular Army gunners were armed with six three-inch rifled cannon. Lt. William Arnold's Battery A, 1st Rhode Island, was posted to Cushing's right, and behind the eight companies of the 71st Pennsylvania. Another battery, Lieutenant Frederick Brown's Battery B, 1st Rhode Island, was placed to Cushing's left, on the other side of the clump of oaks.

Now just past midday, the heat was nearly unbearable as each man tried to find shelter from the broiling sun. Those wearing short-brimmed kepis or forage caps were particularly exposed to the merciless rays. Some were lucky enough to shelter in the welcome pool of leafy shade under the oak trees. Blanket corners tied to the trigger guards of bayonetted rifles stuck in the ground made makeshift tents for others. Their faces grimy with gunpowder, the men were tired, dirty, and sweaty. Water was scarce. But even above all this was the hunger, as the men of the 69th hadn't eaten in two days. Some veterans managed to scrounge a few tooth-breaking hardtack biscuits, but many felt stomach pangs so acute that one soldier called them "a wolf's hunger."

The sweltering heat also meant a miasma emanating from the unburied Georgians from Brig. Gen. A.R. Wright's brigade—scores of corpses with with blackened faces and swollen torsos lying just beyond the regiment's position. Among them lay dead artillery horses, their legs splayed in grotesque postures.

On the shady ridge across the way, Lee was finalizing his plan of attack. Writing with his customary brevity, Lee ordered that "General Longstreet will make a vigorous attack on his front, General [Richard S.] Ewell will threaten the enemy on the left, or make a vigorous attack, should circumstance justify it; General Hill will hold the center at all hazards." Lee also envisioned Stuart and his cavalry—the prodigal general having finally returned to the



On the morning of July 3, a predominance of Confederate striking power lay directly opposite Major General Winfield Scott Hancock's II Corps in the middle of Cemetery Ridge. Confederate commander Gen. Robert E. Lee felt that if the Rebels could break through, they would win the battle.

Army the day before—sweeping around the Union rear and exploiting the hoped-for breakthrough in the Federal center.

At dawn, Federal troops had attacked Ewell's men around Culp's Hill. This was not an all-out offensive; its main objective was to recover a series of trenches lost the day before. After six or seven hours of fighting, the bluecoats not only regained the trenches, but also drove most of the Confederates off Culp's Hill. Ewell was not going to be able to threaten the enemy right as Lee had planned. But it was a minor setback and Lee remained optimistic.

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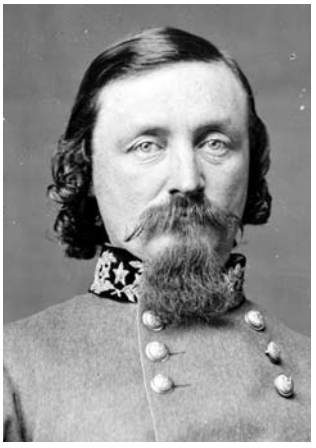
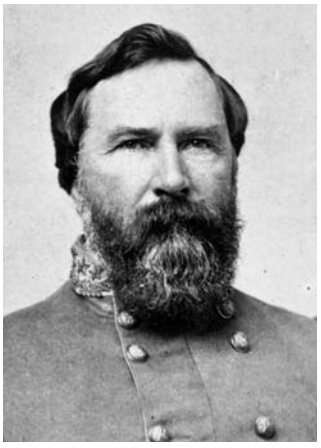
He had an ace in the hole. Before the main attack began, the Union line would be softened up by a massive Confederate artillery barrage.

Overall responsibility for coordinating the barrage fell squarely on the shoulders of Colonel E.P. Alexander, a 28-year-old Georgian who had served as an artillery instructor at his alma mater, the United States Military Academy at West Point. Alexander was lukewarm about the whole enterprise: "Even if this [attack] is entirely successful it can only be so at a very bloody cost," he wrote to Longstreet. The I Corps commander agreed wholeheartedly, but he knew that Lee would not change his mind. Longstreet wrote back: "Let the batteries open. Order great care and precision in firing."

No less than 143 Confederate guns would take part in the cannonade, which started at precisely 1:07 p.m. When the Federals replied, the nearly 300 guns was the largest artillery duel in the history of North American. The man-made thunder could be heard 140 miles away in Harrisburg. Cannon muzzles spouted great tongues of flame with each report, along with clouds of acid, dirty-white smoke. When a gun was fired, its carriage kicked back on its wheels and dug a groove with its tail in the unresisting soil. There were two types of artillery at Gettysburg: smoothbore cannon and rifled guns. The smoothbores were mostly bronze, Model 1857 Napoleons that fired a powder-filled explosive shell or 12-pounder solid shot. A typical rifled gun was the 2.9-inch Parrott Rifle, whose barrel featured twisted grooves that made for greater accuracy. It fired an elongated shell with an

All: Library of Congress





Above from left, Major General George E. Pickett commanded relatively fresh troops and was Lee's choice to lead the charge; Gen. James Longstreet was actually the commander of the Confederate forces that made the charge, and preferred a flanking attack; Col. E. Porter Alexander was in charge of the Confederate artillery barrage that preceeded Pickett's attack and recognized the likely toll it would take. OPPOSITE: Based on the painting "Hancock at Gettysburg," by Thure de Thulstrup, this print shows Maj. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock riding along the Union lines directing a gun forward to the battle line as his infantry and artillery fire on the mass of approaching Confederates. Gen. George Pickett's 12,000-man charge, including three brigades of Virginians, suffered 60-percent casualties in just about an hour.

effective range of more than 2,000 yards.

The cannonade grew in intensity, becoming an ear-splitting symphony of death and destruction that was merely an overture for the greater terror still to come. After an hour, thick skeins of gray-white cannon smoke turned the sun into an angry red disk suspended in the sky. In the unnatural fog the death-dealing solid shot and shells could not be seen coming, adding to the horror. At first the Confederate cannonade was very effective. Torrents of exploding shells rained down on the Union positions causing horrific casualties. One exploded near the 1st Rhode Island Artillery, killing two gunners and horribly wounding another. One of the dead men had the top of his head blown off, exposing a mass of blood, brains, and shattered skull tissue. The wounded man's arm had been nearly severed, the limb barely connected to his body by a few muscles and tendons. Blood pumped from the raw, gaping wound with each heartbeat.

The effect of these horrors, coupled with the noise, smoke, and flame, was designed to cripple an enemy's will to resist. There was nothing the Union infantry could do except to lay low, hug the ground, and pray that the ordeal would end soon. Recalling those terrible moments, a sergeant in the 1st Minnesota admitted, "We had been badly scared many times before this, but never quite so badly as then." Just when things seemed to be at their worst, a miracle occurred—at least it seemed like a miracle to the Union infantry huddled down and trying to stay out of harm's way. Confederate shells, previously so accurate, began overshooting their intended targets. The Rebel artillery played havoc with rear areas, but the Union infantry and, more importantly, the Union artillery was largely spared. When the Confederate infantry finally attacked, it would be facing the full fury of the uncrippled Federal guns.

A flurry of shells exploded around Meade's headquarters, one shot narrowly missing the general as he stood by an open door. Another shell tore up the outside steps, while still another carried away part of the portico. When Meade and his staff officers went to mount their horses, they found that a shell had killed them all. The eviscerated mounts were still hitched to a nearby fence rail.

Various explanations have been given as to why the Confederate artillery became so inaccurate. The heavy, fog-like smoke made distances and ranges hard to judge, and the constant recoils dug deep trails in the ground, with a resulting loss of accuracy. The shell fuses were also partly to blame. The Richmond armory had been temporarily shut down, and the fuses the Rebel gunners were using that day were from an armory in Charleston, South Carolina. Since they were not used to the slower-burning Charleston fuses, the artillerymen miscalculated lengths and trajectories.

Alexander knew that his guns could not sustain such a high rate of fire indefinitely. He dashed off a hasty note to Longstreet, urging him to begin the infantry attack. "If you are coming at all," Alexander wrote, "you must come immediately or I cannot give you proper support." Pickett and Longstreet were watching the artillery barrage when a rider delivered Alexander's message. "General, shall I advance?" Pickett asked, his eyes bright with anticipation. Longstreet could not bring himself to answer; he merely nodded his head in reluctant assent. "I shall lead my division forward, sir," Pickett responded, then galloped away to begin the attack.

Pickett was a Southern cavalier in every sense of the word, a man who almost seemed to have stepped from the pages of an Alexander Dumas novel with his dark moustache, goatee, and shoulder-length hair. Here was D'Artagnan in the flesh; his "long ringlets flowed loosely over his shoulders, trimmed and highly perfumed; his beard likewise curling and giving the scent of Araby." In theory, Pickett's men were fresh, but "fresh" was very much a relative term. While it was true that his own division had not yet

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been engaged, many of the other units had been terribly mauled on the first day of battle. Lee did not fully realize just how badly hurt some of these regiments were until it was too late. The 26th North Carolina, for example, had suffered greatly on the first day. At the beginning of the battle, the regiment had around 800 men present for duty. By sunset, 588 of them were dead or wounded.

Major General Henry Heth's division, of which the 26th North Carolina was a part, had suffered some 40 percent casualties, yet Lee selected them for the final make-or-break effort. Maj. Gen. Dorsey Pender's division, now commanded by 61-year-old Maj. Gen. Isaac Trimble, had suffered just as much. When Lee and Trimble were inspecting the troops that morning, Lee noticed that many of the men were wearing bloodied bandages. Appalled by the sight of hundreds of bandaged heads and hands, he exclaimed, "Many of these poor boys should go to the rear; they are not able for duty." Lee scanned the thinned ranks for familiar officers. "I miss the faces of many dear friends," he said. Then Lee rode off, casting a farewell glance toward the troops and muttering, almost to himself, "This attack must succeed."

Longstreet's advance finally got under way around 3 p.m. All formed into ranks, the Confederate line stretched a mile in length. Brig. Gen. James L. Kemper's men made up Pickett's right-front brigade, while Brig. Gen. Richard B. Garnett's troops formed the left. Brig. Gen. Lewis A. Armistead's brigade was just behind Garnett's in close support. The void on Pickett's left would be filled by Heth's division, commanded by Brig. Gen. James Johnston Pettigrewbut after Heth was wounded. Two brigades from Pender's division were assigned to support Pettigrew's effort. Brig. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox's brigade and Col. David Lang's brigade were placed on Pickett's right to block any Union flanking movement.

Although Longstreet and others later claimed that 15,000 infantry went forward that day, the actual numbers were much smaller. Death, wounds, disease, and desertion had made inroads in the ranks, although many of the walking wounded had rejoined their regiments. Something on the order of 12,000 men took part in Pickett's advance. Most of these men were veterans who knew full well the risks they were facing. Some officers tried to bolster the men's courage with speeches and exhortations, others simply led them in prayer. Armistead turned to the color-bearer of the 53rd Virginia and asked, "Sergeant, are you going to put those colors on the enemy's works yonder?" "Yes, General," the noncom replied, "if mortal man can do it, it shall be done."

The Confederates marched forward as if on parade, dressing their ranks and keeping the proper alignment. Long lines of men moved across the gently rising farmland at a steady pace, a measured 90 steps per minute. The men were dressed in gray or butternut-colored coats, and some sported kepis or high-crowned headgear called beehive hats. Most of the infantry were dirty and sweaty from ceaseless marching and the exertions of battle, but their guns were kept immaculate and in perfect working order. Some soldiers were ragged scarecrows, their clothes patched and worn, their feet

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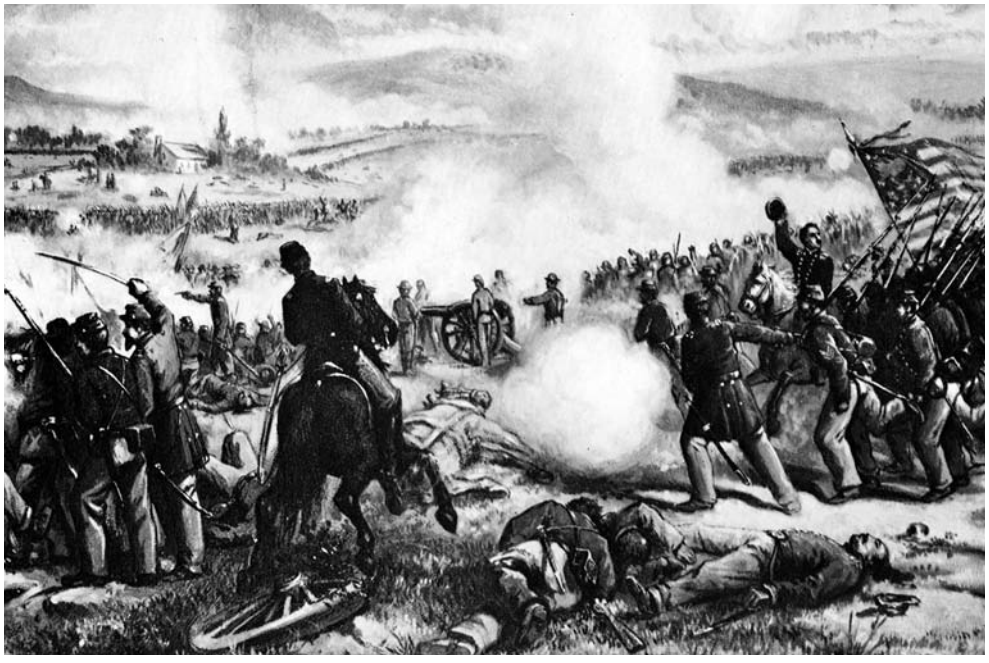
clad in roughshod "utility brogans;" some were even barefoot. One unit had just received new uniforms and was well dressed that day.

Whether the men looked like hoboes or parade-ground regulars, every one of them was a soldier, bravely determined to see things through. It was an awe-inspiring spectacle—the long, gray mass surmounted by red Confederate battle flags waving in the breeze. "Up, men, and to your posts!" cried Pickett. "Don't forget today that you are from old Virginia!" "Look at my line," called Armistead. "It never looked better on dress parade." At the other end of the line, Pettigrew called out to one of his regimental commanders, "Now, colonel, for the honor of the good old North State, forward!" Among the ranks, a different cry went up. "Goodbye, boys," the men called to one another as they set off across the field.

For a moment all was silent. Then the Union artillery opened up, pounding the Confederates with a firestorm of shot and shell. Round shot punched into the ranks, flinging men to the ground like rag dolls. Shells screamed into the earth with a dull thud, fusing, hissing, and sputtering before exploding into great mushrooms of smoke and flame, tearing bloody gaps in the gray lines. In Garnett's division, 10 men were killed or wounded in a single shell burst. Yet still they came. Some of the men lowered their heads as though they were walking into a natural storm, not a man-made one. "Come on, Johnny. Keep on coming!" the Union troops shouted across the line.

At a prearranged signal, Pickett's division executed a "left oblique," a complicated maneuver designed to maintain the link with Pettigrew's men and prevent a fatal drift to the right. The Southerners halted under fire and changed direction, the whole operation being accomplished in two or three minutes. The Union troops watching across the way marveled at the Rebels' coolness. They were, one Northern officer conceded later, "a damned brave set of fellows." The Confederates were approaching the Emmitsburg Road, a country thoroughfare about 250 yards from the Union line. Its road bed was a few feet below the surrounding ground, with two high rail fences running parallel to it. The 7th North Carolina's experience was a typical one. The first fence they encountered was largely pulled down, allowing the men to move into the road, but the second fence was largely intact. There was nothing to do but climb over it, a task easier said than done under Union artillery and rifle fire.

When the mass of Confederates reached the Emmitsburg Road, the men in the 69th Pennsylvania



ABOVE: In a view from behind the Federal lines during Pickett's Charge, troops from the 19th Massachusetts and 42nd New York rush to relieve Alexander Webb's embattled Philadelphia Brigade. TOP: A view of Pickett's Charge from behind the Union lines near the "copse of trees," the goal and highwater mark of the Confederate advance. Illustration by Edwin Forbes, a special correspondent for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* who was embedded with the Union Army from 1862-1864.

dropped to one knee and began pouring volley after volley into the surging gray ranks. The Rebels replied, but their irregular, hesitating fire was far less effective. On the left flank, Pettigrew's attack was being squeezed and shredded by enemy fire. Union batteries on Cemetery Hill opened up with a vengeance—29 guns spitting a hurricane of solid shot and shell. Colonel John Brockenbrough's brigade received the brunt of the punishment. About this same time, the men of the 8th Ohio began blasting the Rebel flank. It was all too much, and Col. Joseph Mayo's 3rd Virginia suddenly broke and ran to the rear. The majority of Pettigrew's men, however, held firm and continued to advance with heavy casualties. An audible groan, loud enough to be heard over the battle noise, arose from the Confederate ranks.

On the Union right, Brig. Gen. George J. Stannard's Vermont Brigade took a leaf from the 8th Ohio's book, marching out and firing into the vulnerable flank of Pickett's division. Kemper's brigade was taking more than its share of the punishment. The men did not break, but Kemper himself rode back to Armistead, pleading, "General, hurry up, my men can stand no more." Armistead turned to a nearby officer and said, "Colonel, double quick." At his command, the brigade started to rapidly walk, then run, toward the developing maelstrom.

The Union flank attacks had narrowed the Confederate front to perhaps 500 yards, and the Emmitsburg Road fences had completely disordered the once-precise ranks. The soldiers bunched up in a seething, wedge-shaped mass of humanity, 15 to 30 men deep. Command structure vanished with the ordered ranks. Pickett's and Pettigrew's men mixed together, the lines forming a perfect target for the ravenous Union artillery. As the gray infantry closed, Union gunners switched to double shots of canister—lethal containers filled with iron balls. When discharged, the containers broke apart and rained their loads shotgun-fashion into the dense mass. This was artillery horror at its most extreme, with victims torn apart and disemboweled by the deadly metal spray.

Armistead drew his sword and stuck his black slouch hat on the point, raising the blade high as a rallying point to his men. He was the last brigadier in Pickett's division left on his feet; Kemper was wounded, Garnett killed. The surviving Confederates were converging on the Angle. Cushing and his 4th Artillery gunners had manhandled two 12-pounder guns forward to the stone wall to greet the arriving Confederates with hot blasts of canister. The Southerners, screaming their Rebel yells, overran the guns and killed the 22-year-old Cushing, who was posthumously promoted to lieutenant colonel for his work that day. Armistead stepped over the stone wall with his men, waving his sword and crying, "Give them the cold steel!" A Confederate breakthrough seemed close at hand.

Several companies of the 69th Pennsylvania suddenly found themselves inundated, small blue islands in a surging gray sea. Company F was totally engulfed, and soon every man was dead, wounded, or a prisoner. Company D made a stand, shooting at Confederates at point-blank range and parrying enemy bayonets with clubbing gun barrels. Company D's forlorn stand saved the remainder of the regiment from being enveloped. The rest of the 69th managed to withdraw from the stone wall, at least for a few feet, and continued the momentarily unequal contest.

Most of the 71st Pennsylvania had fallen back in disorder, but the 72nd Pennsylvania remained poised on the crest of Cemetery Ridge. Fingers of flame laced from Union muskets as the regiment stubbornly traded volleys toe-to-toe with the Confederates at the Angle. Webb, who had just taken command of the Philadelphia Brigade a few days earlier, vainly tried to get the men to advance, but they steadfastly refused. (Many did not recognize their new commander.) Disgusted, Webb walked over to what remained of the 69th to encourage them in their fight. A Confederate bullet grazed his thigh, but Webb made it a point to walk, not run, to the struggling Irishmen. A general—particularly a new one—had to show firmness in the face of a danger.

About this same time, II Corps commander Hancock rode over to Col. Arthur Devereaux, who found his subordinate in a high state of agitation. They couldn't see the Angle from this position, since the oak grove blocked their view, but Devereaux could recognize all the telltale signs of trouble, including panicked fugitives streaming for the rear and a swelling chorus of rifle fire mingled with the shouts and curses of fighting men and the screams of the wounded. Devereux turned to Hancock and shouted over the din, "They have broken through; the [enemy] colors are coming over the stone wall! Let me go in there!" Hancock quickly nodded his assent, adding unnecessarily, "Go in there pretty damned quick."

Devereaux led his 19th Massachusetts forward; the New Englanders soon were joined by the 42nd New York. The combined fire of the various Union regiments now entering the fray proved too much for the Confederates at the Angle. Armistead was hit twice, falling near one of the Union cannons. Once he was out of action, the heart seemed to go from the heroic charge—it was as if Armistead's wounding had broken a magic spell. Suddenly the few score Confederates who somehow had passed over the stone wall unhurt realized the terrible predicament they were in. Those who could not escape back to the Southern lines simply reversed their weapons and surrendered. There was no shame in that; each man at the Angle had done his duty against impossible odds.

Pettigrew's part of the assault fared no better, and in fact never reached the Union line at all. The color-bearer of the 26th North Carolina seemed to have a charmed life; he still carried the regimental flag forward, even though such men were usually the first ones to go down. Soon the color-bearer was alone, except for one sergeant. By this time the Union soldiers behind the wall, admiring the man's courage,

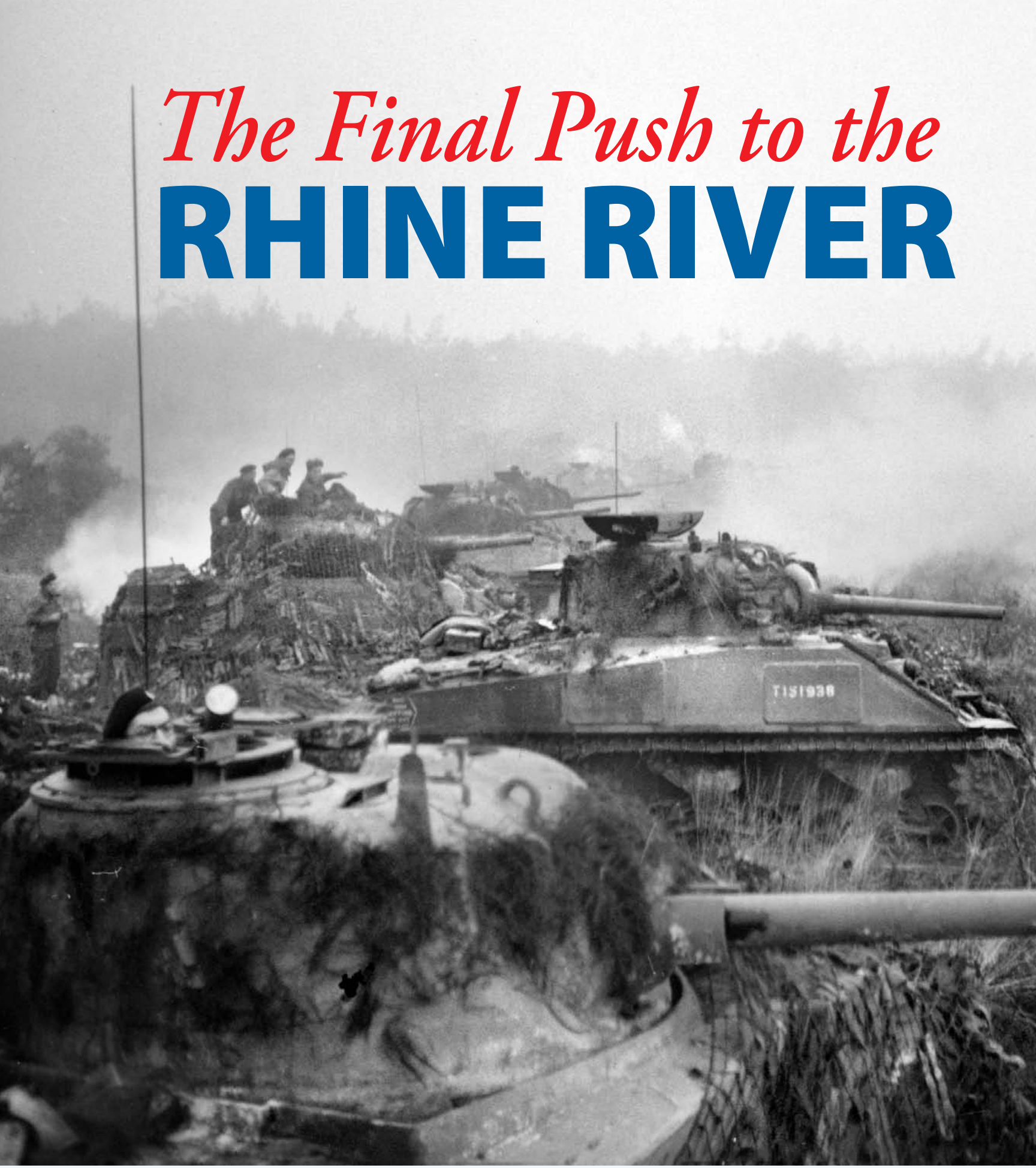
In this painting by Don Troiani, Confederate Brig. Gen. Lewis Armistead, his hat atop his sword, leads his tattered, but gallant men over the Union line. Armistead, a close friend of Union Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock before the war, was wounded at this moment, and died in a Union field hospital two days later.

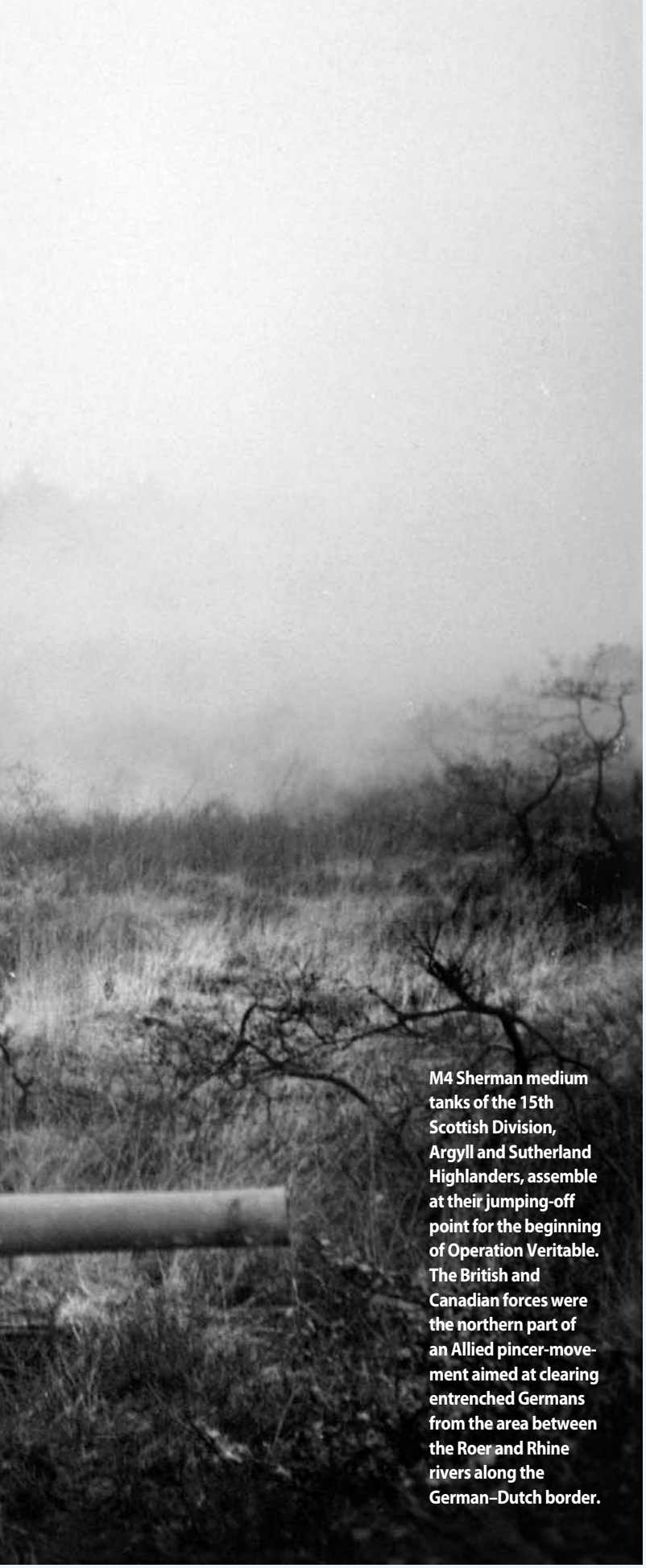
refused to shoot him. He marched right up to the stone wall with his regimental standard, then stopped as if waiting for the bluecoats to make the next move. For a few moments—it must have seemed like an eternity—the Union soldiers simply stared at the man. Then one Federal reached out a hand, saying, "Come over to this side of the Lord," and pulled the color-bearer across. The North Carolinians surrendered. In all, only 90 men who made the charge escaped death, wounds, or capture at Gettysburg—an attrition rate of 88 percent.

Pickett's charge had failed; Lee's grand design was now in ruins. The entire field in front of the Union center was carpeted with dead and wounded Confederates. Scattered clusters of survivors painfully limped back to their lines. Lee hastened to accept full responsibility for the debacle. "It is all my fault," he said—and it was—as the survivors finally gained the relative safety of Southern lines. Pickett rode up, his face a frozen mask of shock, sadness, and loss. The dashing, swashbuckling cavalier was no more; in his place was a man who realized, perhaps for the first time in his life, the true cost of war. "General Pickett," Lee remarked, "place your division in the rear of this hill and be ready to repel the advance of the enemy." "General Lee," Pickett responded, in a voice hard with grief and tinged with accusation, "I have no division."

It was no hyperbole. The Confederates as a whole lost 4,900 men in the charge; Pickett himself lost half of his division. Two of his three brigade commanders were killed outright—Armistead would die of wounds a few days later—and one was badly wounded. All 13 of his regimental commanders were killed or wounded. A Virginia captain spoke for many when he wrote, a few days after the battle, "We gained nothing but glory, and lost our bravest men." Lee, unable to fully grasp the extent of his defeat, simply muttered,"I thought my men were invincible." The failed attack known to history as Pickett's Charge showed Lee and the rest of the world just how wrong he was. ■

The Final Push to the RHINE RIVER





M4 Sherman medium tanks of the 15th Scottish Division, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, assemble at their jumping-off point for the beginning of Operation Veritable. The British and Canadian forces were the northern part of an Allied pincer-movement aimed at clearing entrenched Germans from the area between the Roer and Rhine rivers along the German–Dutch border.

Imperial War Museum

Montgomery's Anglo-Canadian 21st Army Group caught the brunt of German resistance in the Reichswald.

BY DAVID H. LIPPMAN

On February 19, 1945, nine British and Canadian divisions stood on the brink of victory after fighting their way through rain, mud, cold, and determined Germans to break through the Reichswald Forest between the Rhine and Maas Rivers—opening the way for the British assault into Germany's heartland.

"Operation Veritable" was one of British Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery's set-piece designs, which called for Gen. Sir Harry Crerar's 1st Canadian Army to attack through the Reichswald as the northern pincer of a two-pronged attack that would break through to the edge of the Rhine on the Ruhr, trapping 150,000 German soldiers in its course. The southern prong, "Operation Grenade," came under Lt. Gen. William Simpson's 9th Army. Both attacks were to go in together for maximum force. But the Germans struck first, releasing the sluice gates on the Schwammenauel Dam, flooding the Roer River, preventing the Americans from attacking across it.

Monty ordered "Veritable" forward, anyway, under Lt. Gen. Sir Brian Horrocks' 30 Corps, with three British and two Canadian infantry divisions leading the attack. Two more British infantry and two armored divisions would follow-up. To back "Veritable," Horrocks had the support of two powerful weapons: the "funnies" of the 79th Armored Division, a separate outfit equipped with specialized vehicles. These included "Flails," tanks equipped as minesweepers; "Petards," tanks equipped with massive mortars to blast open blockhouses; "Crocodiles," Churchill tanks armed with flamethrowers; "Wasps," Bren carriers similarly armed; "Fascines," tanks that could drop a bundle of wood into an anti-tank ditch to enable infantry to cross it safely; "Kangaroo" armored personnel carriers, and "Buffalo" amphibious vehicles, which could swim over flooded terrain.

The battle had begun on February 9, on a nine-mile wide front, with a gigantic artillery barrage of British and Canadian guns that destroyed most of the formidable German defenses facing 30 Corps. On the first day, the British and Canadians gained most of their objectives in drenching rain and increasing mud, taking hundreds of prisoners, destroying German divisions, while taking few casualties.

After that, the drive into the Reichswald turned into an ugly slog, with British troops fighting for yards, but advancing slowly and steadily, taking POWs as they went. The two major objectives were towns that were instrumental parts of the German Siegfried Line. By themselves, the towns were formidable defensive zones. German engineering and slave labor added barbed wire, strongpoints, pillboxes, anti-tank ditches, and machine-gun nests. Cleve fell first, and after that, the front expanded, which enabled Crerar to relieve the command strain on Horrocks, who was fighting the battle while suffering from a 105F fever brought on by combat wounds suffered in North Africa.

Now the 2nd Canadian Corps re-entered the battle, commanded by an emotional opposite to the cheery Horrocks: the dour, cold, and calculating Lt. Gen. Guy Simonds. His corps, consisting of the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions, moved into their positions south of Moyland on February 15. The Canadians had already participated in the earlier part of Reichswald, using their Buffaloes and Weasel amphibious vehicles to take flooded ground. The 2nd Division had fought at Dieppe, the 3rd Division had landed at D-Day.

The two Canadian divisions moved up along graveled roads called "Maple Leaf Up" that had turned to mud, the 3,347 vehicles in each division crawling along. Fourth Field Artillery Gunner George Blackland would visit the battlefield 28 years later, and find the indentations from his gun pits and dug-out pits still there, albeit overgrown with weeds and gorse. The main cause of the traffic jam was Royal Canadian Engineers trying to bulldoze a second track for "Maple Leaf Down" to withdraw casualties and empty supply trucks.

On the 19th, Simonds went into action with his fresh 2nd Canadian Division's 4th Infantry Brigade, which passed through 3rd Canadian Division to break the hinges of the German line.

But before the Canadians could attack, the Germans did–hurling paratroopers in gray greatcoats and distinctive helmets in the dawn rain and mist against the thin line of the Regina Rifle Regiment. Lt. Buzz Keating told his men to wait a few seconds until they came into range, and then yelled "Up!"

The Canadians did so, guns blazing, hurling grenades. The Germans fled back into the fog, leaving behind dead and wounded. One para overran a Regina position and tried to take POWs. Sgt. Hunt Taylor braced his rifle on Keating's shoulder and took the German down. Then Taylor thanked Keating for standing still.

The Reginas were "suffering from exhaustion" according to their war diarist from the shelling and the woods, but the Can Scots could still fight, moving on the Bedburg-Cleve road "in a magnificent show of steadiness." Maj. R.H, Tye, commanding the Can Scots, was wounded by machine-gun fire, and could only crawl, but did so into a shell crater, and did his best to command his troops. The Germans held the high ground with machine-guns and Pvt. Dan Elder, a stretcher-bearer, moved around the wounded men, tending them while ignoring bullets and shrapnel that whizzed about him. He carried a Red Cross flag on a stick and put it in the ground to show he was doing noncombatant work, but the Germans shot at him anyway.

Fifty Germans counterattacked, which forced the Can Scots to dig in, unable to advance or retreat. Men could only suffer and die in place. The Reginas official history noted: "By now Brigade HQ were screaming that the Wood 'should have been cleared by now and what were we going to do about it?' The huge casualties list was a mute answer."

The RHLI consolidated on their objectives 400 yards east of the Goch-Calcar road at 2 p.m. As usual, the Germans counterattacked, and Lt. John Williamson of C Platoon asked Whitaker for mortar support, using the term "Big Brothers,"

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: On the night of February 7-8, 1945, RAF Bomber Command sent 1,200 heavy and medium bombers over the Rhineland to kick off Operation Veritable. The heavy bombers concentrated on reducing the towns of Kleve and Goch to rubble, while the medium bombers pummeled smaller towns such as Kalcar, Udem, and Weeze. At 5:30 a.m. the next day, General Harry Crerar's First Canadian Army unleashed a devastating artillery barrage on the German positions. OPPOSITE: Canadian troops of the 1st Canadian Army massing for the Anglo-Canadian Operation Veritable (February 8-March 11,1945), the northern half of an Allied pincer movement into the industrial heart of Germany. U.S. troops in the southern half of the pincer movement, Operation Grenade, were delayed by the intentional flooding of the Roer River.

Wikimedia Commons

which actually meant heavy artillery. "We got the artillery on our position alright and it did the job, but it certainly surprised the hell out of me!" Williamson recalled.

Later that evening, the Germans fired a Panzerfaust through the pigpen next to Williamson's farmhouse, which created a hole through which more paras charged. Williamson had a Thompson submachine-gun he'd acquired from American airborne troops at Nijmegen and fired back, killing the first German who came through. The platoon took care of the rest.

But the 4th Brigade's relief effort would change all that: instead of attacking piecemeal, Brig. Fred Cabeldu committed 14 field regiments of artillery, seven regiments—a total of 470 guns—a rocket battery, and the Toronto Scottish Machine-Gun Regiment's medium Vickers machine-guns and mortars in fire support in a timed rolling barrage ahead of the Essex Scottish on the right and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (the "Rileys") on the left, under future military historian and general, Lt. Col. Denis Whitaker, a veteran of Dieppe. On the flanks were Bren carriers and Wasps, ahead of them 16 Sherman tanks of the Fort Garry Horse, the first Canadian tanks to enter the Reich.

It rained all night and it was still bitterly cold at noon on the 14th. The Rileys' war diarist wrote, "Such weather was not very promising for an attack…road conditions were bad making vehicle movement slow."

But the Rileys and the Essex Scots attacked on the 19th, their objective the road that connected Goch in the west with Calcar to its northeast.

Simonds' plan was to send the fresh 4th Infantry Brigade through the tired 3rd to take the objectives past the Goch-Calcar road, while the Canadian Scots would clear the eastern extension of Moyland Woods and gain more high ground overlooking Calcar.

The two Canadian battalions advanced, riding Kangaroos. The rolling barrage was timed to advance 100 yards every minute-and-a-half to match the standard pace of armored vehicles. Flame-throwing Wasps added to the destruction from the flanks. Ahead lay the objectives: fortified farmhouses on the far side of the objective road.

They were defended by panzer grenadiers of the 116th Panzer Division, paratroopers from Maj. Gen. Hermann Plocher's 6th Parachute Division, and deadly 88mm anti-tank guns. The 116th Panzer Division's Chief of Staff was Lt. Col. Heinz-Gunther Guderian, son of the famed German tank genius. Unfortunately, while the Canadians knew the paras and 88s were there, they did not know about the 116th "Windhund" Division and its vehicles.

Whitaker saw a "narrow country road, hard-surface, dead straight, with barely space for two tractors to pass, connecting the market towns of Goch and Calcar. I could plainly see the stubbled brown field sloping gently upwards to the road 2,000 yards away. Dotted here and there were farmhouses and sheds. To reach our objective my men had to cross that short open stretch. But 'upwards.' I recall a disquieting thought. What lay over the top?"

Whitaker believed that if he could keep the enemy heads down in the initial assault, "our task would not be too difficult. I had tremendous confidence in our artillery. I reckoned without the rain. It continued through the night, making the ground boggy and treacherous."

Whitaker worried about his exposed left flank—fighting was still going on in Moyland Wood, and German paras could pop out and attack him. He put Bren carriers and Wasps on the left as well as his anti-tank platoon to address that threat. Then he hopped onto Maj. Harvey Theobald's Sherman and climbed inside. Whitaker hated riding in tanks—they were obvious targets—but he needed to advance quickly. Perched in the co-driver's seat, he believed that if the tank was hit and started to burn, he would never escape.

Both: Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: Manufactured from the modified chassis of the M4 Sherman medium tank, this Kangaroo personnel carrier transports soldiers of the 53rd Welsh Division during the Battle of the Reichwald in February and March, 1945. TOP: On February 13, Private A. Rees of the 2nd Gordon Highlanders, 15th (Scottish) Division, cleans his Lee-Enfield Mark IV, No. 1 rifle in the ruins of building in Kleve, Germany, near the Dutch border.

Everything depended on the speed with which the tanks could advance, but as usual, several got caught in the mud. But the infantry and other tanks pressed on. When a Kangaroo towing a six-pounder (57mm) anti-tank gun got mired, Essex Scot Sgt. Don Elvy, commanding the gun's crew, flagged down a passing Bren carrier and hitched the 2,640-pound gun to the carrier. The whole party kept on to the objective.

On the German side, Guderian's men drew last-minute reinforcements: a panzergrenadier regiment from Panzer Lehr, under Maj. Helmut Hudel, their tank destroyer battalion, and their panzer regiment. They were a veteran team, but the tank battalion had only 14 Panther tanks. Hudel was impressed by the Canadian gunnery. "Since early morning very strong artillery fire could be heard at the front. The expenditure of ammunition was extraordinary; no one had heard anything like it before," he said.

The Canadian advance began at noon, and German guns and mines began ripping open Canadian troops and vehicles—Lt. Gordie Holder guided support company carriers to a position to engage the enemy—and was killed in "the first slashing burst of fire from the German 88s."

Watching the advance, Cabeldu grew concerned as he lost 11 vehicles quickly, mostly to mines. "While for the most part the Kangaroos were able to drop the troops near the objectives, these vehicles were unable to get right onto the objectives because of severe anti-tank fire."

Riley C Company CO Maj. Joe Pigott also saw many of his men fall. "We were taking one hell of a licking. The 88s made it so hot for the Kangaroos that some of the companies were dropped short of their objective. We finally got there, but we had about 50 percent casualties," Pigott said later.

Theobald's tanks reached a milk plant on the Goch-Calcar road, and headed onto open ground. Then two of the troop's tanks exploded in flame from 88mm guns. Two more were disabled. Theobald saw the German guns, but his radio net was jammed: "It seemed like 75 people were trying for the same airtime! I was screaming, trying to get on the air to the fellows and warn them. It was quite eerie to watch the enemy shells silently hitting the ground and exploding just a few yards away. You could hear nothing except the noise of the motor of the tank and the explosion of our own gun firing. I felt as though I were in a tin box that was going to be hit and brewed up at any moment. I had so much gear on me, I didn't think I could have ever gotten out if the tank were hit."

As Theobald stopped his tank alongside an abandoned 88mm gun, Whitaker shouted: "Let me out of this tin can." Whitaker ran into the creamery and was joined by his Tac HQ team. Theobald continued to struggle to make his voice

heard on the radio. Two German shells barely missed Theobald's tank before it reached the protection of the milk plant. But two of Theobald's tanks burst into flames.

On the Rileys' left, Maj. Duncan "Dunc" Kennedy's B Company was in Kangaroos under heavy German fire. Ordered to bail out, Williamson's No. 10 Platoon gave fire support while Kennedy led the rest of the company on the Schwanenhof farmstead. Williamson's 2-inch mortar banged away with all of its 13 smoke bombs to cover the assault. Kennedy's men disappeared into the smoke's protective cover. Williamson and his men ran after to catch up, and a machine-gun bullet hit Williamson in the leg, knocking him into a shell crater. A stretcher-bearer put sulfa powder on the wound and bandaged it, while the men gained cover of the farm buildings. Undeterred, Williamson hobbled through the fire to join them.

By now, B Company was dug in, battling German infiltrators who were coming up a ditch 150 yards to the front of the buildings. Williamson limped over to Kennedy to report. As Williamson came up beside the major, who was standing near some machinery, a bullet ricocheted off a piece of it, piercing Kennedy's stomach just below his belt. Kennedy was carried to the basement for shelter, but refused to be evacuated–he would lead his men from the basement.

Heavy machine-gun and anti-tank fire hit C Company from a hedgerow and small farm on its left flank. Pigott kept his young men moving, despite the heavy fire, warning them, "falter and you die." Pigott had served for five years in a British battalion in North Africa under a plan that gave Canadian officers combat experience, and was a veteran of D-Day. His eccentricity: he wore an experimental type of body armor issued in Normandy, made of manganese steel plate. It had saved his life on many occasions. In comparison, most of Pigott's men were in their first engagement, and some had been transferred from supply, ordnance, and artillery units to make up shortages in infantry units. They had little time to practice tactics. Pigott told his men to watch him, follow him, and do what he did. It didn't work—150 yards short of the objective, German machine-guns opened up, and Pigott's men hit the dirt.

At that moment, three Wasps burst out of the smoke, under Sgt. Pete Bolus. Pigott pointed at the German positions, and yelled, "There are Germans in the house! Go and burn the bastards out!" Boles turned his vehicles on the farm and attacked.

"The fuel was a black jelly that stayed in a mass like a tube of toothpaste," Bolus said later. "You'd fire it on the ground—that damned stuff, it would crawl along the ditch and over the top…It would stick and burn and keep on burning. If you ever got it on your clothes you were a goner. It was devastating." Bolus burned the house and barn to the ground, and incinerated the hedgerow. C Company advanced while the Wasps headed back, out of flame, to rearm.

Imperial War Museum

After the capture of Kleve in the lower Rhine region of northwestern Germany, soldiers from the 2nd Gordon Highlanders search a 16-year-old German prisoner on February 14, 1945.

Now C Company consolidated its gains, with the young men still suffering. Things were made worse when Company Sgt. Maj. Stewart Moffatt was knocked to the ground by a sniper bullet that tore through his jaw—his second serious wound. Pigott picked Moffatt up and took him to a farmhouse. When Pigott opened the door, "there was a German standing there with a stick-grenade in each hand. We stared at each other. He was pretty scared, I guess, and I think that if I had yelled at him he would have surrendered. Anyway, he flipped the grenade. It hit me on the chest and exploded," Pigott recalled.

The grenade blasted a dent in Pigott's armor and left him black and blue for six weeks, but it saved his life. A metal shard hit his windpipe and threw him into the farmyard. For both Pigott and Moffatt, the war was over. Lt. R.W. Wight of the pioneer platoon took over C Company. Incredibly, the frightened men held their new position against counter attacks with determination. Then Wight rallied the men and continued the advance, facing a manned German 88 mm gun. "Suddenly a single Canadian tank appeared," Wight said later. "I had no radio or other means of communication, but somehow by running in front of and alongside the tank, I was able to direct cannon and machine-gun fire directly at the farm and the 88 gun, and at the same time indicate that we would rush the farm.

"The tanker apparently understood. It was now my difficult task to rally the men for an all-out assault on the farmhouse and the 88 gun. It occurred to me that with fixed bayonets, everyone might gain the courage needed for this sort of head-on attack. The presence of some of my own (Pioneer) platoon, whom I had known and respected for months, helped me greatly. I started to sing the Demolition Platoon theme song, 'L'Amour, L'Amour, L'Amour.' The men took up the song. Getting close to the building, we charged and threw our grenades. Finally we took the farm and some prisoners." C Company reached its objective, and then started digging in under German fire.

At nightfall, the Fort Garry tanks waddled off to replenish fuel and ammunition. They were most vulnerable to enemy attack at night. Whitaker and his Rileys awaited a German counterattack.

They were right. At 4:30 p.m., Luttwitz visited

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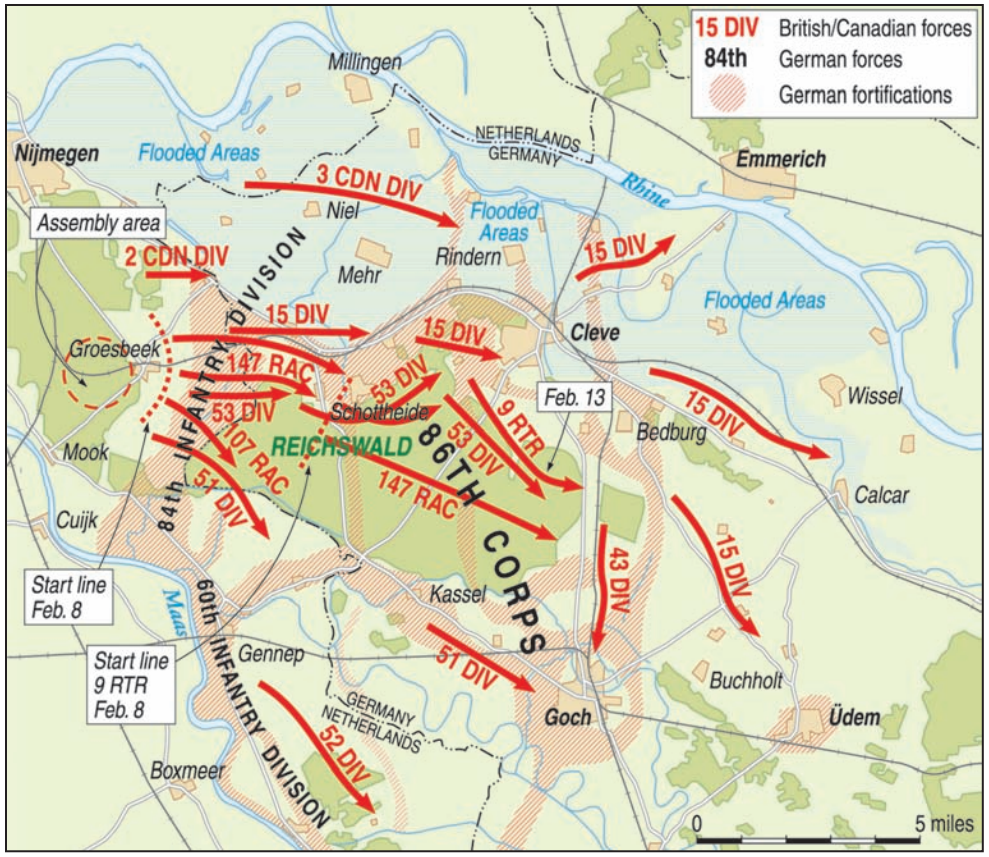


ABOVE: The British and Canadian15th Division met stiffer resistance from German defenders in the Reichwald, despite heavy Allied bombardment before the assault. Operation Grenade, the southern arm of the Allied pincer movement that featured U.S. units was delayed by the German sabotage of dams, flooding low-lying areas in the Rhineland. OPPOSITE: During earlier action in France, members of the 116th Panzer Division add branches to camouflage their Jagdpanzer IV tank destroyer. During Operation Veritable, the division could only muster 22 tanks against the British and Canadian advance.

the CP of 116th Panzer Division, whose commander, Maj. Gen. Waldenburg was Luttwitz's cousin. Over dinner, they discussed that very subject by using 6th Parachute Division and more reinforcements: Kampfgruppe (Battle Group) Hausser, of the Panzer Lehr Division. Drawn from German Army demonstration units across the Reich, Lehr had fought fiercely in Normandy and the Bulge, under Maj. Gen. Fritz Bayerlein. However, its well-trained veterans all lay dead in both battlefields and the division as a whole was down to 22 tanks.

The Essex Scottish attacked promptly on February 19 against the various German defenses, and took their objectives by 3 p.m. The Germans counterattacked with infantry and tanks, taking advantage of the Essex's open right flank. Canadian troops fought back, using up ammunition at a high rate of speed. Maj. Bruce MacDonald's headquarters tank troop ripped the Germans with machine-gun fire. The Germans called in artillery and mortar fire. McDonald's loader, tracking the ammo, yelled that his Sherman had only four rounds of AP shot and 150 machine-gun bullets left. A second later, a German shell hit MacDonald's tank and damaged its radio aerial.

MacDonald saw that the Germans were using a depression on his left to close in on the farm buildings. MacDonald ordered the Sherman of No. 3 Troop, a "Firefly," into action. It mounted a 17-pounder gun, more powerful than MacDonald's 75 mm gun, and was designed as a tank killer. The Firefly rumbled past MacDonald…and its track was shot off. But its gun was not. The tank opened fire, and made "many 'good Germans' out of the counter attacking force," MacDonald said later.

Then the Essex Scottish was pinned down and started taking casualties. German fire blasted the Firefly and its crew bailed out. A shell smashed into MacDonald's Sherman, and "with more alacrity than dignity," MacDonald ordered his men to bail out, under sniper fire.

Now MacDonald used another wireless set to contact the artillery Forward Observation Officer (FOO) supporting the Essex. All B Company officers were dead or wounded, the FOO said, so he was commanding that company, despite also being wounded.

The Essex's signals officer, Lt. Kenneth Jennerette, joined MacDonald in a slit trench, where they watched MacDonald's now useless tank crew head for the rear. The two officers stayed, trying to dig towards a nearby trench to reach fellow Canadians there. But a bullet hit Jennerette's wrist. "He tried to jump from one slit into another so that he could get bandaged, and with the second shot, the sniper hit him in the abdomen. He was…in considerable pain and I passed him my morphine Syrette…there was then little we could do but watch and keep our ears cocked, hoping momentarily to hear the rumble of missing tanks, plus C and D Companies. They didn't come, but the Boche did, throwing hand grenades into our slits from one foot away and after most (of the nearby Essex) were wounded, one stood up with his hands in the air and the rest of us followed suit."

MacDonald alertly tore off his rank badges and any documents that indicated he was an officer. The Germans marched him back into their lines to start a 10-mile trek. MacDonald faked shell shock, staggering listlessly along and fell behind the main column. With only three German guards present, MacDonald was able to slip into a slit trench. When the Germans did notice he had escaped, they could not find him in the dark. MacDonald found Canadian lines, where he brought back intelligence on the location of German artillery positions. For these various feats, he received the Distinguished Service Order.

Joining the Essex Scottish in a Bren carrier was Capt. George Blackburn of the 4th Canadian Field Artillery Regiment, serving as a Field Observation Officer. The future newsman saw the Scots pinned down by German fire from a nearby house, complete with sniper. The infantry summoned a Wasp to deal with it.

"With a terrible roar, a huge ball of flame rolls across the road, instantly setting the house on fire. In a matter of seconds, a white sheet appears at a side door, and a German soldier comes out with his hands on top of his head—and another and another—until there are 26 strapping paratroopers, including an officer lined up in the barnyard, grinning as though it's funny that a monstrous flamethrower should have been used to burn them out," Blackburn later wrote.

"But the sight of those sneering faces is good for you: it arouses hate and anger—those foul twins that can sustain a man in battle when all else fails, and which, you now realize, have been missing all day. You feel the thickness disappear from your head and the jerky wobble leave your knees."

One of the Canadians taking these men POW had just lost his pal by a shot from the farmhouse minutes before the Wasp trundled up, and asked his company commander, Maj. Bob Suckling, "Aren't we going to shoot them?"

Suckling turned away, but a veteran sergeant put

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-3464-09; Photo: Burchhaus

his arm around the Canadian and said, "We don't do that sort of thing, kid." Blackburn and his crew drove off to assist the Essex Scottish and the Rileys.

While the Essex Scottish gained a tenuous grip on the farmsteads of Göttern and Brunshof, the RHLI on their left faced an attack by a Panzer Lehr battle group at 8 p.m. In the dark, the German panzergrenadiers and reconnaissance vehicles stormed into action. The Rileys lacked the support of the Fort Garry Horse tanks, which had clanked back to base to replenish ammunition and fuel and carry out maintenance. On their own, the Rileys and Essex Scottish took heavy casualties from German fire.

At 11 p.m., Lt. Col. John Pangman, commanding the Essex Scottish, reported "that the situation about him was becoming critical; his forward area had been overrun, and enemy tanks were firing on his headquarters." The Rileys reported "fighting fiercely to beat off two counterattacks against (their) left flank, which had penetrated the forward defenses and were slowly overrunning C Company."

Pangman rode forward in a Kangaroo to see what was going on and the vehicle was disabled just behind the forward companies. Pangman set up his HQ in a farmhouse. By 3 a.m. on the 20th, Pangman and his men were surrounded in the building's cellar, which had a strongly-built ceiling. Lt. Horace Tucker, the intelligence officer, and some of his men, stayed above to engage the Germans. Tucker cut down enemy troops until he was seriously wounded. The defenders were forced into a basement, where they used a Bren gun to kill Germans descending the stairs. The Germans got the point, pulled back, and unleashed Panzerfausts on the Canadians, setting the farmhouse on fire. A German tank thundered through the building's wall to collapse the cellar ceiling. Cpl. Armand Kain ran up the stairs and fired two rounds into the tank with no effect.

Pangman ordered his men to destroy the papers and maps, and told his two Bren gunners to get ready to surrender. They told Pangman they didn't believe in surrendering and refused.

The desperate situation was relieved by Maj. Joe Brown of 4th Canadian Field Regiment (artillery), who was Pangman's FOO. He reached his regimental HQ and asked Lt. Col. MacGregor Young for artillery fire directly on the building. When Young asked if Brown was certain, the FOO replied: "It's our last resort…position overrun by tanks and infantry."

Seconds later, all 24 of 4th Field's guns opened fire, drenching the area with HE fire, catching many Germans in the open, halting the attack.

The rest of the Essex Scottish weren't doing too well, either. A Company was down to 35 men capable of fighting. "The early hours of the morning were grim ones," the Essex Scottish war diarist wrote. "Isolated company groups fought on, short of ammunition, burdened with casualties which could not be easily evacuated and lacking support of the anti-tank weapons with which to deal with the (Mark IV) tanks the enemy had marshaled for his counterattack."

To the left of the Essex Scottish, Lt. Col. Whitaker was swamped by reports from his Rileys of relentless counterattacks, starting at 8 p.m. German tanks and infantry rolled forward and into a fierce Canadian artillery barrage, separating the infantry from their tanks.

B Company was getting hit head on by tanks. Lt. D.W. Ashbury knocked one out with his PIAT, but at 1:35 a.m., the situation was "desperate."

Whitaker's answer was a counterattack of his own. He ordered the battalion's scout platoon, 25 men under Lt. Johnny Lawless, to do so. The

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-680-8254-30; Photo: Höss

ABOVE: As part of the second phase of Operation Veritable, XXX Corps moved on the town of Goch, defended by German Fallschirmjägers, such as the ones pictured here. Some 2,000 experienced paratroopers were moved into the Reichswald to stiffen the resolve of the questionable troops of the 84th Infantry, but they were not able to stop the Canadians from taking Goch on February 19, 1945. OPPOSITE: Battle-hardened German soldiers, such as these panzergrenadiers photographed earlier in the war, were brought in to help mount a more effective defense in the Reichswald, delaying the British drive into the industrialized Ruhr.

scouts crept silently through the German troops and surrounded the Schwanenhof house, where Maj. Duncan Kennedy's B Company was trapped. On signal, the scouts started "making a terrific noise, throwing many grenades through the windows before rushing in. The operation was a complete success. 25 Germans were killed or wounded and another 50 taken prisoner; our only casualty was Lawless, who was slightly wounded by shrapnel from one of his own grenades. B Company position was finally stabilized," Whitaker wrote later.

"Jack Drewry and his gunner crew of two—the latter operating the 19-set from a halftrack right behind my HQ—swung into non-stop action that was to continue through the night," Whitaker wrote. Drewry called down artillery fire that dispersed the enemy from in front of C Company's HQ. In 12 hours, 4th Field Regiment hurled 5,400 shells into the small area to help halt eight German counterattacks. The Germans couldn't see where the Canadian guns were firing from because they used flashless powder.

The impact of this Canadian bloodletting was not lost at higher levels. As the clock ticked down on February 19, Cabeldu let the division's boss, Maj. Gen. Bruce Matthews, know of the situation. Matthews reacted with alacrity, assigning the 6th Brigade's Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders to Cabeldu, to act as reinforcements or relief.

Cabeldu decided to put them in a defensive line to replace the Royal Regiment of Canada, so that one of his own battalions could be the relief force, opting for brigade cohesion as the vital factor.

Relief was urgently needed. On the 20th, with only 13 combat-effective men remaining, the Essex Scottish D Company withdrew at 3:15 a.m. CSM Les Dixon and Lance Sgt. Bill Moriarty prevented the company from being annihilated by greeting a German attack on their building with heavy Bren gun fire and driving tanks off with their PIAT. The tanks withdrew and shelled the building instead. The Germans could not break through, so they withdrew. But D Company lacked enough men to hold the building, so they had to pull back. Dixon, a decorated veteran of Dieppe, received a second bar to his Military Medal, making him the only man to win the decoration three times. Moriarty also received the same medal.

Cabeldu went to the Royal Regiment's headquarters and told Lt. Col. Richard Lendrum that if the Royals could "get in quickly they might recover a good many Essex Scottish who would be pinned down in slit trenches." Lendrum worked out an attack with Young for 9 a.m. The latter was exhausted, but promised the necessary barrage.

Meanwhile, Whitaker's RHLI held their ground on a damp and cold morning with 400-yard visibility. At 8 a.m., the Germans counterattacked yet again. The Rileys could hear the Germans warming up their tanks in the bitter cold 800 yards away, giving D Company commander Maj. Louis Froggett a good idea where they would attack. He had a 17-pounder anti-tank gun sited against them, and told his men not to fire until the AT gun had done so. Froggett's plan worked. The gun blasted

Bundasarchiv Bild 183-J28577; Photo: Pospesch

open four panzers in quick succession, sending German tankers flying out of their blazing wrecks. The Rileys chopped up the infantry.

At 9:30 a.m., still battling mud, Royal Regiment's A and C Companies attacked, joined by Fort Garry Horse's C Squadron. "The advancing Royals found that shell and mortar fire constituted the principal hazard in this attack," wrote the Royals' official historian. Incredibly, none of the tanks bogged down, and they provided such close support that initial casualties were light and no tanks were knocked out. As A Company reached Goch-Calcar road, the tanks wrecked a 75-mm anti-tank gun and a halftrack mounting a smaller weapon.

By 10:30 a.m., Maj. Jack Stother, commanding C Company, was in radio contact with Pangman, and learned of their plight. Stother told Pangman that "relief was on the way…and to keep his head down." Soon C Company reached the battered house, finding 18 men holed up in the cellar, some, including Tucker, badly wounded.

Before Stother could arrange to evacuate the wounded, the Germans counterattacked. Stother told Pangman he had to withdraw to reorganize his men to face the Germans. Pangman and his pals refused to leave. When a German officer appeared at the top of Pangman's cellar, brandishing a grenade, an Essex corporal shot him dead. After that, the Germans left Pangman alone—they were too busy coping with Stother's men, who arrived en masse at 2 p.m., with Bren carriers to haul off the wounded.

Stother studied the situation in daylight, and declared it "a poor one tactically as enemy tanks could come up very close to it unobserved and fire on it from hull-down positions." It was clear that one Canadian battalion could not defeat the Germans in the area. The Rileys and Royals went on the defensive against Panzer Lehr, gripping the Goch-Calcar road with determination. The 4th Brigade's war diary called them the "proud holders of the ground won, ground strewn with the enemy's dead and equipment."

On the 21st, the RHLI could report they had knocked out nine Panthers, three SP guns, and two halftracks, but needed 150 other ranks and six officers in replacements. No Riley had been captured. Whitaker "found the men tired but still determined to hold. They were proud of their achievements, despite the cost."

During the epic stand, Crerar messaged Whitaker: "My congratulations on and admiration of the gallant and most successful fighting carried out by all ranks of the regiment he commands during the last 48 hours."

Panzer Lehr's tanks and men made their last counterattack at 6 p.m. Cabeldu responded by sending C Squadron of Fort Garry Horse to bolster the Riley defense, joined by the Queen's Own Camerons. The measure worked. After two hours of intense fighting, the German attack collapsed. Lt. Lawless and his scout platoon headed off to raid a position that the Germans had used to form up attacks and took them by surprise. Lawless' men killed 25 Germans and captured 50. The whole bag was all that was left of No 5 Company of the 902nd Panzer Grenadier Regiment.

The situation was hopeless for Panzer Lehr as night fell on February 21. Its survivors pulled out, leaving behind 200 dead men, 11 wrecked tanks and six 88 mm guns, and headed south where it would run into the U.S. 1st Army, which was also driving on the Rhine.

At dawn on the 22nd, the Essex Scottish emerged from its foxholes to find the Germans gone. The Essex Scottish had gone into action with 25 officers and 540 other ranks: it was now down to 17 officers and 395 other ranks. The Rileys took 125 casualties and earned six awards, including Whitaker himself, who added a bar to his Distinguished Service Order from Dieppe. The Rileys were singled out in the brigade war diary for their "outstanding example of a well-planned and executed operation and of the ability of our

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: A Valentine Mk XI Royal Artillery Observation Post (OP) tank, left, and a Churchill tank move cautiously through the rubble of Goch, Germany, in late February, 1945. The British Bomber Command had sent heavy bombers to reduce the towns of Kleve and Goch to rubble on February 7. OPPOSITE: Sergeant J. Welch of the 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division holds a position in the ruins of a house in the German town of Goch near the Dutch border, on February 21, 1945, the day the Allies secured the town.

troops under good leadership and by sheer guts and determination to take and hold difficult ground against the enemy's best." The 4th Canadian Brigade's casualty total for February 19-20 was exactly 400 men.

In Moyland Wood, 7th Canadian Brigade's Regina Rifles faced heavy German artillery, mortar and Nebelwerfer—on top of regular counterattacks. Rifleman Dwight Small said later, "It was a miracle we held off the Germans! We were firing on the Germans almost constantly and throwing more grenades than I ever had in my life."

By February 21, Small saw no end to his ordeal. Neither did the Can Scots, who fended off a strong counterattack on the 20th. The battle even wore out the brigade commander, Brig. Jock Spragge, who planned an assault to send the Royal Winnipeg Rifles into the woods to relieve the other two battalions, backed by tanks and Wasps. But after Spragge held his O Croup, Simonds relieved the exhausted Spragge, putting Lt. Col. Al Gregory in as temporary commander. Simonds blamed Spragge for 7th Brigade's failures, and wanted new blood.

The Canadians approached this battle with the usual methodical nature—five sectors, each 300 yards wide, saturated by artillery 30 minutes before the attack. The heavy guns would be joined by mortars, anti-tank guns, and the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa with their heavy machine-guns. As the Winnipegs attacked the sectors from A to E in turn, the artillery barrage would move down to concentrate on "known, and likely, enemy positions, north and east of the wood."

The Winnipegs, known as the "Little Black Devils," drew support from the Sherbrooke Fusiliers' tanks and Wasps, which would operate in relays. That would ensure the infantry had continuous support. Incredibly, the day was clear and sunny, after weeks of rain. The 84 Royal Canadian Air Force Group could intervene with fighter-bombers.

By 8 a.m., the Little Black Devils formed up behind the Regina Rifles. Kick-off was set for 10 a.m., but German machine-guns had been pestering the Regina Rifles for days, so the Reginas went in early to silence them before the attack. They did so with great efficiency, returned to their trenches, and found the Winnipegs occupying them for the attack. It was postponed 12 minutes, and then both battalions rushed forwards. The tanks took positions on high ground, blazing away with main and machine-guns. RCAF Typhoon pilots saw Germans fleeing into a building and hammered it with rockets.

When the Black Devils attacked, the Germans shot back with the usual rain of artillery and mortars. B Company's Maj. Harry Badger and his command team were all hit and wounded. Lt. Bob Gammon in D Company was killed. But the advance did not falter. In 40 minutes, the two lead companies had taken all their objectives. A and C Companies of the Winnipegs move in Sector B with Wasps hurling flame at any possible German hiding place. They didn't kill many—the Germans had fled. When the Wasps used up their fuel, they headed back and were replaced by new ones from the relays. A Canadian report said, "It proved of double value to bolster the morale of our troops while undermining that of the enemy. The fire plan was still carrying on, and the attack was running to schedule."

But here the Germans had more artillery, and entrenched defenders, as well as snipers. They struck down all of A Company's officers, putting Sgt. Alf Richardson in charge of the company. "The advance was painful and step-by-step, with close-quarter fighting controlled by the remaining NCOs," a Winnipeg report noted. "The enemy positions were revealed only when they opened fire at close range. The German paratroopers were well dug-in and camouflaged, and the advancing troops had to crawl forward determinedly to reach cover and fire back."

When they finally achieved their objectives, C Company had just two officers and 40 men; A Company had no officers and only 25 men.

The survivors of C Company found a well-prepared position ahead of them held by 200 German paras. "The Germans were dug in and supported by mortar fire and airburst artillery, its position ringed with mines and trip wire. But with flame, heavy machine-gun fire and assaulting infantry, the position was stormed and overrun. Some were killed, a number escaped, and only five were taken out alive," the official report said.

Major Charlie Platt led his men forward with Wasps rolling alongside, using flame power to overwhelm German tenacity. The Germans made three successive counterattacks "but were caught in the open by artillery fire directed by a forward observation officer in the A Company position. A heavy toll was inflicted," according to the Black

Devil report.

By the time the Canadians reached Sector E, the German defenses were down to two machine-guns on the eastern edge of the woods and riflemen in pits. Despite the tough terrain, the tanks advanced. One hit a mine, killing Trooper James Elliott and wounding the other three. The minefield caused many casualties.

Even so, Maj. Hugh Denison's D Company finally reached the end of Moyland Wood and a narrow row of houses, bristling with paratroopers and freshly-laid anti-tank mines. The Sherbrookes had to withdraw. The Germans counterattacked, hurling grenades and firing submachine-guns from the hip, yelling in English, "Get your hands up!" The forward section's Bren gun jammed at that moment, and the Germans overran and killed them. The rest of the Canadians shot down many Germans before they withdrew. Lt. George Adams, leading the forward platoon, was briefly blinded by grenade fragments. He was taken to a field dressing station, had his eyes cleaned, regained his vision, went back to the fight, and gained a Military Cross.

The Germans counterattacked twice more, losing six men each time. "Thus," concluded the Canadian official history, "the obstacle of Moyland Wood had been overcome at last." The price has been immense: The Little Black Devils had entered the battle with just 207 men, and suffered 105 casualties, 26 killed: a 40 percent rate. The last two were truly tragic: D Company's executive officer, Capt. Bill Ormiston and his driver, Cpl. George Quovadis, driving to the front with fresh rations in a Bren carrier. It hit a mine and exploded, killing both.

It had been a rough time for the 7th Brigade: the Canadian Scottish lost 168 casualties and the Reginas suffered 134. One-third of the brigade was lost. The Germans had suffered vast numbers of casualties, too, virtually all of them dead…fewer than 200 paras had surrendered, befitting their ferocity. A wounded Canadian soldier, awaiting medical attention, muttered, "Moyland, bloody Moyland."

But the Reichswald battle wasn't done yet. British troops were still battling to take Goch. Realizing that defeat loomed there, the Germans began firing off their ammunition dumps before they lost them, and continued to shell the British as they withdrew. To make matters worse, the RAF bombed the 7th Argylls in a navigational blunder, killing four and wounding 19.

The 227th Brigade's objective was the village of Bucholt and Schloss Calbeck on the east side of the River Niers. They attacked on the 20th with Wasps to add punch, established a bridgehead over the river, and attacked again on the 21st, into violent shelling. The 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers consolidated their positions and faced a night assault by German paratroopers. It was a touch-and-go

Imperial War Museum

situation in the dense woods, darkness, heavy German fire, and minefields. The 2nd Gordons struggled to clear the woods down to the Goch-Wesel railway line, amid furious counterattacks. The situation was so serious, that two battalions of 46th Brigade, 9th Cameronians and 7th Seaforths, came in to relieve the pressure, finally clearing Schloss Calbeck. Despite heavy opposition, 46th Brigade took 150 POWs and eight self-propelled guns from Battlegroup Graefing and 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment.

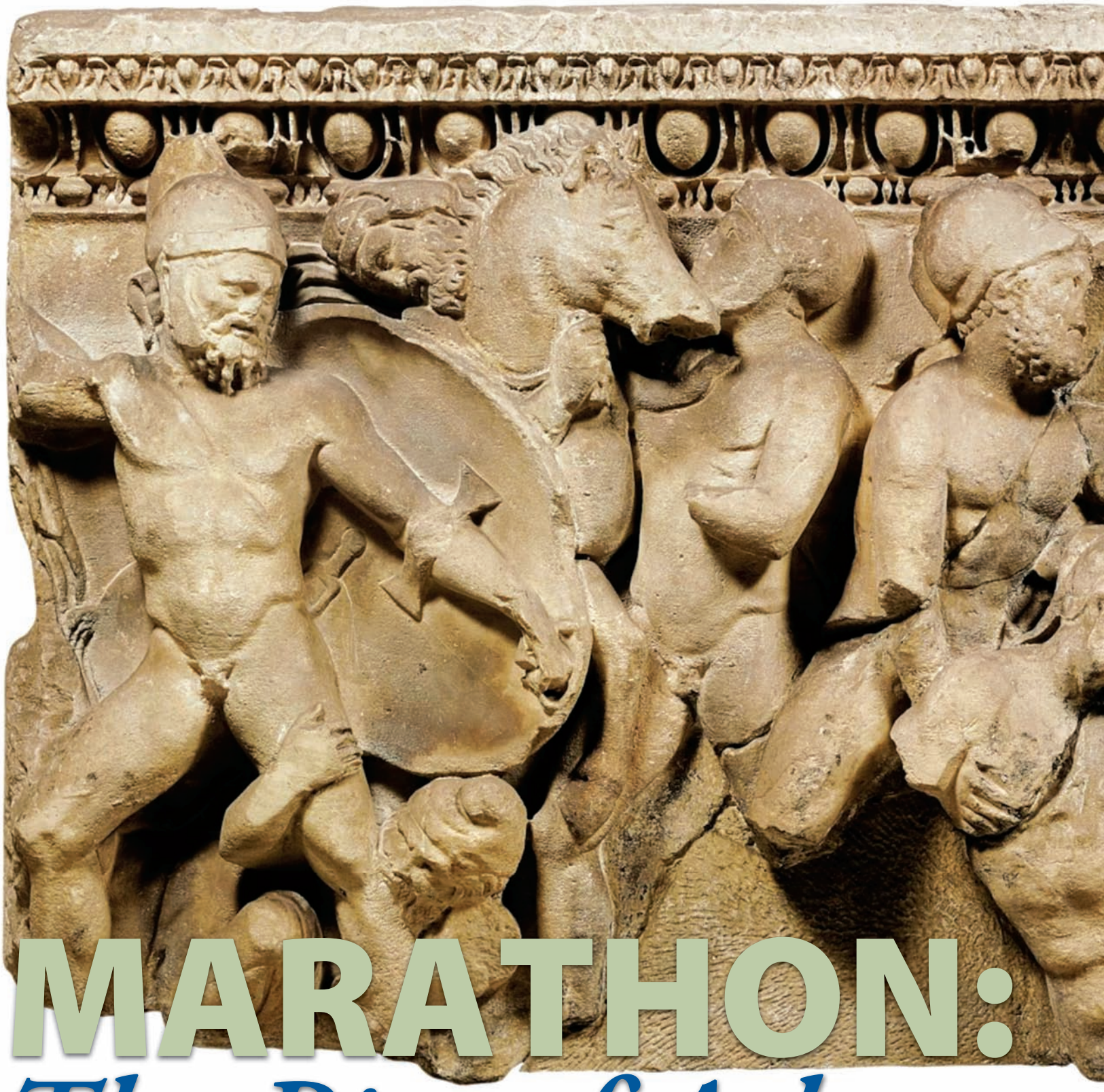
There was nothing left for the Germans to do but concede what should have been obvious from the start: 1st Parachute Army could not hold against the British offensive. General Schlemm gave the order to withdraw from Goch on the morning of the 22nd, and both the 15th Scottish and 51st Highland Divisions claimed to be first British troops into the wrecked town.

In the ruined town, Scottish troops consolidated amid the mud and rubble while the Royal Army Service Corps brought forward three vital morale-builders: hot food, dry socks, and letters from home. Capt. Robert Woollcombe, a platoon commander in 6th KOSBs, wrote, "At last it was Germany; the thought never left you. Germany; it did not matter what we did." The advancing troops thought about Dunkirk, and one wrote home: "Here in the enemy homeland, a grim satisfaction was the main emotion expressed. Serves the bastards right."

On the 23rd, the U.S. 9th Army finally began the southern pincer of Monty's plan, launching Operation Grenade, hurling two corps across the Roer River, despite continued flooding. Backed by airpower and artillery, the Americans crossed the river with only 92 casualties, and were poised to both drive on the Rhine and join with 1st Canadian Army in cutting off 150,000 German troops from retreating to safety.

Montgomery took time to report to Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, on the 19th: "We captured Goch today, and the 15 and 51 Divs are engaged in mopping up the town in which we have so far taken 400 prisoners. We have also now got the use of the road Goch-Calcar except at the Calcar end. Having captured Goch we have now got to fight for that ground which will enable us to use the road. I spent all day up in the Reichswald Forest area and visited most of the British divs and found the troops all in tremendous form and very well pleased with themselves. The total prisoners captured in the Veritable Operation are now nearly 10,000 and we estimate that a total of

Continued on page 97



MARATHON: *The Rise of Athens*

The source of Athens' glory stems from this remarkable victory over a formidable Persian host, an event which altered the course of world history. BY MARTIN LEAVITT

The relief decoration on this Roman sarcophagus depicts the battle between the Greeks and Persians at Marathon.

Brescia, Museo di Santa Giulia

In the late summer of 490 BCE, a large Persian army landed at the plain of Marathon just 26 miles from Athens. Once ashore, they set up a large tent encampment on the southern edge of a marsh. It was a multinational force, a chilling reminder of the Persian empire's great scope. Each contingent had its own distinctive dress and weaponry. The Persians were among the most colorful, their garb consisting of multihued tunics and distinctive trousers. A soft cloth covering called a tiara enveloped their heads, completing the costume. There were also Ionian Greeks—that is, Greeks living on the western coast of present day Turkey—reluctant warriors who had been compelled to join the Persian effort.

Perhaps the most unusual of all were the Ethiopians. Certainly they were the farthest from home. These Africans daubed their faces with white and vermilion, and some wore leopard skins as emblems of personal bravery and hunting prowess. Soon, they were going to hunt two-legged game.

Numbering 25,000, the Persian army was commanded by Datis and Artaphernes, the former a

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ABOVE, LEFT: An image of Darius the Great as part of a large rock-relief inscription written in Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonianon a cliff at Mount Behistun in Iran. ABOVE, RIGHT: Marble Roman copy of a bust of Miltiades the Younger, (c. 554-489 BCE) the Athenian general who lead the Athenians to victory at the Battle of Marathon. TOP: Painted c. 460 BCE, this image decorating the bottoom of a ceramic *kylix* (shallow, footed, two-handled cup) used in ancient Greece for drinking wine, shows a Greek hoplite slaying a fallen Persian soldier. OPPOSITE: Persian commander Datis had orders to subdue the island states of the Cyclades and then punish Eretria and Athens for their part in the Ionian Revolt.

Mede general and the latter the son of a Persian governor. They were acting under the direct orders of King Darius I, a monarch who had brought the empire of the Medes and Persians to the height of its power. The expedition had a twofold mission: to punish Athens and subjugate central Greece. Athens was to be made a salutary lesson, a stern warning to all who tried to resist the will of the Great King. Once Athens was subdued, even the militant Spartans further west might yield to Persian sovereignty.

The Marathon landing place had been chosen with care, selected on the advice of an exiled Athenian. Hippias, son of Pisistratus, had once been tyrannos of Athens.Tyrannos meant "chief," or even "dictator," but without the negative connotation of our word "tyrant." Hippias had begun well, but as time went on his regime became increasingly high-handed and arbitrary. He was overthrown in 510 BCE, and fled to Persia. Once there, he plotted for his return. Hippias traveled to Sardis in Asia Minor, where he canvassed the Persian *satrap* (governor) for action against his native city.

It was Hippias who suggested Marathon, in part because the flatness of the terrain—rare in mountainous Greece—favored cavalry. Since most Greek states were deficient in cavalry, the use of mounted soldiers at Marathon might well tip the scales in favor of Persia. In any event, Marathon's coast road led directly to Athens, another point in its favor.

The Athenians prepared to resist. Miltiades, a leading light in the Athenian war council, felt that no time should be wasted. Instead of hiding behind its walls, the men of Athens should go out and actively engage the enemy—or, at least, impede his progress. Spartan aid would be welcome—after all, they were the finest soldiers in Greece—but Miltiades knew that Athens could not passively wait for the invader. "Take food and march!" Miltiades ordered, and with this laconic command some 10,000 Athenian troops began a trek to Marathon. The outcome of this contest would determine the fate of Athens, and the course of Western civilization.

How did the Athenians incur the wrath of the Persian King Darius? How did this first in a cycle of Persian wars start? The origins of the war can be traced to Ionia, on the western fringes of Asia Minor, where transplanted Greek colonists had founded flourishing cities several centuries earlier. The ancient Greek homeland was blessed with a stark, rugged beauty, with snow-capped mountains rising above shallow plains. But the soil of Greece, called *Hellas* by its natives, is thin and not very fertile. With patient husbandry crops could be coaxed from the land, but there was always the threat of overpopulation and subsequent starvation. Colonization was the answer, and by the mid-6th century BCE the Greeks of Ionia were well established.

Although the Ionian Greek civilization flourished, its very location made it vulnerable to subjugation. By 500 BCE Ionia was part of the Persian empire, ruled by King Darius I of the Achaemenid dynasty. Later ages, infected with a pro-Western bias, characterized the clash between Greece and Persia as a battle between civilization and barbarism. Persian civilization was not barbaric, however, and Darius was an able, even enlightened, ruler by the standards of the day.

But Darius also came from a cultural tradition where political freedom was an alien concept. Once a people was subjugated, their only duty was to obey. Conquered peoples might be allowed some degree of local autonomy, but ultimate control rested with the Great King. By 500 BCE the Persian Empire was at its apogee, stretching from Egypt to the borders of India. It was a huge landmass that might have been too unwieldy for any

one man to control, however gifted. The Empire was also excessively heterogeneous, lacking the binding "glue" of common religion, language, or culture. Instead, Darius supplied an administrative unity by dividing his realm into 20 satrapies, each ruled by a governor or satrap under the Great King.

Empires are founded on conquest and rooted in expansion. Once a cycle of conquest is begun, it is hard to stop, and impossible to reverse. In 513 BCE Darius led an expedition across the Hellespont into Europe. The mighty Danube was bridged—a marvel of engineering for its time and troops sent into the vast unknown of Scythia (now roughly Romania, Ukraine, and southern Russia). The Scythians were hard-riding nomads, impossible to pin down, and the very vastness of the country—a constant theme in Russian history—tended to baffle and frustrate the invaders. Some historians feel Darius wanted merely to stage a demonstration in force to cow the Scythians, not add these nomads to his already far-flung empire.

In any case, the Scythian expedition was a failure. The elusive tribesmen adopted a scorched-earth policy that eerily presaged Russian tactics against Napoleon and later still the Germans in World War II. Although the Persian army failed to cow or conquer the Scythians, some of the effort's secondary goals were more successful. Thrace was added to the Persian Empire, an area well-known for its gold and silver mines. Perhaps equally important, Thrace was in Europe, the Asian empire's first tentative foothold on a new continent.

Macedonia, a kingdom on the southern edge of Thrace, soon pledged allegiance to the Persian king. Nothing, it seemed, would stop Persia's inexorable spread along the western flank of the Aegean.

The semifailure of Darius's European foray encouraged the Ionian Greeks to think of freedom. By the standards of the day Persian rule was usually tolerant and just. Tribute taxes were not too burdensome, and local satraps were as circumspect as possible in dealing with the touchy Greeks. But even the lightest chain is still a shackle; even the most benevolent dictator still a despot. Fiercely independent, chafing at alien rule, the Ionian Greeks were ripe for revolt.

The rebellion started in 499 BCE. One of the chief instigators of the uprising, Aristagoras of Miletus, went on an embassy to European Greece to solicit aid. For the most part, his eloquence fell on deaf ears. In spite of Darius's presence in Thrace, few Greeks felt the Persians were a threat. The Ionians were their ethnic brethren, but the city-states of mainland Greece were too parochial in outlook to worry about what was going on across the sea.

Athens decided to give aid, however, dispatching a decidedly token 20 ships for the cause of Ionian Greek independence. Eretria, a small city on the island of Euboea followed suit, contributing five ships. Athens was not as altruistic as it seems; the city well knew Hippias was plotting with the Persians to return, and Ionian freedom might weaken Persia's prestige and power in the eastern Aegean.

At first, the Ionian revolution seemed within an ace of succeeding. In 498 BCE the rebels staged an attack on Sardis, managing to burn most of the lower town. This apparent victory strengthened the rebel cause, until virtually all of Ionia was in open revolt. The Athenians and Eretrians withdrew at this point, supposedly because of political dissension back home.

Perhaps Athens felt the Ionians were so near to success that no further assistance was necessary.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. The full weight of Persian resources was now brought to bear, and with devastating impact on the Greek cause. In 494 BCE the Ionian Greek fleet was sunk at Lade, and Miletus put under siege by superior Persian forces.

The Persians took the city, massacred many of its citizens, and then deported the survivors as captive slaves. Miletus itself was razed.

Once Miletus was destroyed, Darius acted with moderation. After all, Ionia was a valuable part of

Wikimedia

the empire. Laying it waste would have been counterproductive. But Darius realized these Ionian Greeks might remain restive especially when, just to the west, mainland Greece still enjoyed independence. Conquering mainland Greece seemed a logical thing to do. It would bring a sense of closure; once European Greece was subdued, the Aegean would be a "Persian lake."

The Greeks as a people were bold, inquisitive, and fiercely independent. The best of them had inquiring minds, ever ready to challenge the status quo, to investigate, to explore new things. It was these very qualities that helped make Greek civilization so brilliant. Yet the Greeks were politically fragmented, and sometimes quarrelsome and fratricidal. To a middle eastern "Oriental" despot like Darius, used to a strict hierarchy of obedience, Greek life must have seemed chaotic and vulnerable.

Ensconced in his palaces in Susa and Persepolis, Darius made plans for a punitive expedition against Eretria and Athens. But perhaps conquest, not punishment, was the Great King's ultimate goal. The Athenian and Eretrian aid to the Ionian rebels had been small, even puny—only 25 ships in all. Such opposition was mere pinpricks to such a mighty empire as Darius possessed. Certainly, it was not enough to warrant such an all-out vendetta on the Great King's part.

An armada of ships was collected to sail against Greece, commanded by Maridonius, Darius's son-in-law. In 492 the Persian fleet set sail, hugging the shore as much as possible as it proceeded south. Such caution proved useless when a storm slammed into the ships as they rounded the promontory of Mt. Athos. The fleet was badly damaged, with many ships sunk, but the Persians still remained a threat. Thrace was reorganized as a satrapy, and the Greek settlement there liquidated.

One of the Greek exiles from Thrace was Miltiades, who had been a leader of an Athenian colony established there years before. Miltiades was ambitious, and sometimes unscrupulous, but he was also a good soldier with a kind of sixth sense for divining the enemy's intentions. He was a dangerous enemy for the Persians to have. Miltiades' enmity was a factor in the coming clash at Marathon.

War is costly, and the Great King didn't want to spend any more than he had to. If intimidation could achieve the same results, so much the better. Envoy-heralds were dispatched to each Greek island and city-state with a demand for submission. If a city "medized," that is, agreed to Persian hegemony, earth and water would be given to Darius's heralds in token of surrender. The key island of Aegina, just south of Attica on the Saronic Gulf, medized. This meant that naval resistance to the Persian onslaught would be difficult if not impossible.

In the early 5th century, Athens was in the midst of a great political experiment, unique in world history. Democracy, or rule by the people, was less than 20 years old. This democracy

was limited; women, foreign residents, and slaves had no say in political affairs. But Athenian democracy was still ahead of other nations, and its institutions were new and without the sanction of tradition and the balm of time. Athens has been called the "cradle of democracy," and in the early 490s the concept was indeed in its infancy,

The growing trend in democracy was reflected in military affairs—ironically, the one area where it was needed the least. Indeed, it could be argued, military matters need to be authoritarian to function effectively, but the democratic experiment seems to have permeated all facets of Athenian life.

The nominal head of the Athens war effort was the polemarch or war leader. The polemarch has been variously called "commander-in-chief" and even "war minister" by authorities on ancient Athens. Even ancient authorities like Herodotus seem confused, sometimes suggesting the polemarch retained supreme authority and at other times implying he was first among equals. In truth, the office of polemarch was in the state of transition, which perhaps accounts for much of the ambiguity and confusion.

By 490 BCE the polemarch had lost much of his former authority. Now, thanks to the democratic experiment, military affairs were largely handled by a war council of 10 generals. Supreme authority was exercised on a rotation basis, with each general (strategoi) taking command for a single day. Apparently the polemarch was a kind of "chairman of the board," but he also had a deciding vote if he chose to use it, a last vestige of former prestige.

Athens was fortunate in having Callimachus as polemarch in 490 BCE. An aristocrat by birth, he was seemingly without the overweening pride and ambition that all too often marred Athenian pol-

itics. Military decisions were apparently decided by majority vote, and if there was a tie, there was danger of fatal delay. The system gave the expression "divided councils" a whole new meaning.

The rotating command system was also potentially dangerous, because the army needed firm and consistent control. Strategy, even tactics, might change day by day with each new *strategoi.*

In the summer of 490 BCE a new Persian punitive expedition was ready to depart from its concentration point at Samos. The Persian fleet first stopped at the island of Naxos, which was

brutally torched. The next target was the island of Delos, famed throughout the Eastern Mediterranean as the birthplace of Apollo. Perhaps because of its sacred nature the Persians were more circumspect; it wasn't wise to offend a god, even a Greek one. The Apollo shrine was left untouched. In fact, the Persians left a necklace of twisted gold in dedication to the god.

The Persian fleet proceeded to the island of Euboea, anchoring off Eritrea. The city was surrounded and placed under siege, and for six days its citizens managed to repulse Persian attacks. On the seventh day, two prominent Eritreans by the names of Euphorus and Alemachus betrayed their neighbors and opened the gates to the enemy.

The Persians were harsh with Eritria, meting out punishments out of proportion to its "offense." The hapless city was put to the torch; even its sacred temples were not spared the conflagration. Those citizens who managed to escape the sword were transported to Persia as captives. All this for contributing five ships to the Ionian revolt? Perhaps Persian harshness was meant to provide Athens with a foretaste of its own fate if it did not submit. If so, the harshness only stiffened, not weakened, Athenian resolve.

When the Athenians learned the Persians had landed they sent messengers to enlist active support from neighboring city-states. Some had submitted to the Persians, some were apathetic, and some were fearful. Athens sent its swiftest runner, Pheidippedes, to Sparta with an urgent request for help. He covered the 140 miles between the cities in a remarkable two days, but though the Spartans seemed ready to fight they were right in the midst of a religious festival for Apollo. They promised, however, that when the full moon waxed bright in the sky, the festival would be over. Then, and only then, would the Spartans march. That meant in practice that no aid could be expected for a full week.

As we have seen, the Athenians chose to meet the enemy head-on instead of hiding behind city walls. The Athenian army headed for Marathon, marching east for the beckoning hills between Mount Hymettus and Pentelicon. Yet these were citizen-soldiers, not professionals in the strict sense,

Louvre Museum

Pergamon Museum, Berlin, Germany

Archaeological Museum of Athens

ABOVE, LEFT: Wall relief from the Palace of Darius I believed to depict Thrace infantry with spears and shields. OPPOSITE: Modern photograph of the battlefield of Marathon, with the sea at far left. ABOVE, RIGHT: Fragment of a Greek Corinthian helmet believed to have belonged to Militiades. TOP: Persians in ceremonial dress, armed with spears, bows and arrows, from the palace of Darius. These are believed to represent Darius' elite "Immortals."

though it would be a mistake to dismiss them as raw militia. They probably marched in disconnected groups, and at least some were attended by servants who carried their panoply or armor. The presence of servant-slaves, however, did not necessarily imply great wealth, though undoubtedly some were well off. Most of these citizen-soldiers were roughly middle-class, men of relatively humble station. One of them, Aeschylus, was a poet who would later achieve fame as the father of Greek drama.

Marathon is a low plain hemmed in by mountains on three sides, and on the fourth, the deep blue waters of Marathon bay indents the shore in a graceful crescent. Mount Pentelikon anchored the southern approaches to Marathon, a rough peak noted for its fine marble. Within 50 years, stone quarried from its slopes would give shape to the Parthenon. Once they arrived, the Athenians erected a rough fortification (a stockade by some accounts) along the coast road to Athens. The fort not only blocked Persian advances southward, it

ABOVE: This painting by Georges Rochegrossehe depicts the Greek downhill charge that gave them the advantage of speed and momentum, shocking the Persians. OPPOSITE: This drawing of a scene from the Battle of Marathon published in Rome in 1804 depicts the Greeks attacking the Persian ships as they land. Several leading Athenians were killed or wounded in capturing at least seven ships.

held the high ground.

For the next several days there was little movement on either side. The Athenians were partly stalling for time, because each day brought Spartan aid that much nearer. But the Athenians were also paralyzed with endless debate and internecine wrangling. To function effectively a military command needs a single brain, will, and authority. Collective generalship and war by committee was proving disastrous. When the 10 generals voted, they found they were evenly split between those who favored immediate action and those who preferred to wait for the Spartans.

The Athenians were heartened by the arrival of men from the Boeorian town of Plataea. There were only six hundred Plataean hoplites— some sources say 1,000–so the numbers were insufficient to tip the scales in the Greeks favor. Even with these arrivals the Athenians were outnumbered two to one. Still, the Plataeans were welcome, and must have given the Athenians a psychological boost.

In spite of a paralyzed command structure—at least for the moment—the Athenians had several advantages that might yet lead to victory. To begin with, the Athenians, like other Greeks, had superior discipline, training, and equipment.

The basic Athenian soldier was the *hoplite*, or heavy infantryman. The name is taken from the distinctive soldier's shield or hoplon, which could weigh as much as 18 pounds. The hoplite's body was protected by a *cuirass*, his legs by bronze greaves that were molded in imitation of a man's lower limbs. A heavy bronze helmet, graceful in spite of its weight, perched on the infantryman's head. Cuirasses were often made of linen or canvas glued together, and reinforced with metal plates or scales. Wealthier hoplites could afford a muscled cuirass, an "anatomically correct" style most people associate with the Romans.

Tactics went hand-in-hand with the heavy armor. Greek hoplites fought in a hedgehog formation called a phalanx. Eight or more ranks of hoplites would be armed with long thrusting spears that averaged about eight or nine feet. Enemies were confronted with a wall of spears, a "porcupine" that was hard to penetrate.

The Athenian war council continued its deliberations. Luckily, it contained some of the keenest political minds in the city, men whose exploits would be celebrated in later ages. There was Themistocles, who would become a major leader in the coming decade, and Aristides, known for such honesty he was given the epithet "the Just." Perhaps more importantly for the current crisis, these men were good soldiers, too.

Growing frustrated by the delay, Polemarch Callimachus broke the tie and ended the impasse by voting for immediate action. The Athenians would attack—but who was to lead them? As previously noted, each day a new general took command on a rotation basis. But perhaps inspired by Callimachus's actions, four generals gave up their command days to Miltiades. In a typical gesture, even Aristides gracefully yielded to Miltiades. Miltiades accepted, but tactfully said he would wait until his turn came. Nevertheless, in principle if not in actual fact, the Athenians at last had one strategoi to unite them.

This consensus came in the very nick of time, because the Persians were on the move. Some of the Ionian- Greeks unwillingly drafted into the Persian army, eager to turn the tables against their oppressors, deserted to the Athenians with a vital piece of information. Persian commander Datis decided to put a new twist on the old axion "divide and conquer." The Ionian deserters informed the Athenians that there was no Persian cavalry anywhere.

After some thought, Miltiades grasped the brilliance of the Persian plan. Datis had split his force into a land and a sea component. The Persian cavalry, accompanied by some infantry, had reembarked onto the ships. It was entirely possible that a Persian sea expedition was about to be dispatched to Athens. True, the sea route to the city was longer than the land route, some 70 miles around the tip of Cape Sounion, but Athens was virtually defenseless; what would happen if the Persians managed to land while the Athenian army was still at Marathon?

Before the Athenians were able to absorb these facts, there was some stirring within the Persian camp. Datis was moving his forces southward in the direction of the Greek position. It looked as if the Persians were in a win-win situation; if the Athenians were overwhelmed, then all of Greece might be subjugated. If, on the other hand, the Athenian army held its own, the Persian land forces might buy time for a seaborne force content to circle around and take Athens from the rear: Worse still, the volatile nature of Athenian politics might actually favor the invaders. Pro-Persian or pro-Hippias elements within the city might aid the Persians. Time was of the essence; if strategoi Miltiades defeated the Persian host, he just might be able to move the army back in time to counter a sea attack.

Rijksmuseum

Ailtiades saw that the enemy center was the strongest, composed largely of Persian troops. The center also had massed bodies of archers, whose "gadfly" shafts were meant to thin Athenian ranks and weaken Athenian resolve. The strategoi deliberately weakened his center, and strengthened his two flanks. The Persians in the center would be facing a hollow façade, but a façade that would hopefully dazzle them enough to overlook the strong Athenian flanks. Once the weak Persian flanks were brushed aside the Greeks could hit the Persian center on three, perhaps even four, sides.

The Platacan contingent was placed on the Greek left, while Callimacus the polemarch commanded the right. The Athenians adjusted bronze helmets, adjusted shields, and formed phalanx ranks. They held the high ground, so as they marched down the slope, they would have the advantage of a growing momentum. The Greek phalanx formations moved forward, the bristling spears of the front ranks pointing toward the enemy, the ground reverberating to the heavy tramp of bronze-clad warriors. As they marched, the hoplites raised their voices in a battle paean.

But something happened that completely altered the course of the battle: The Athenians started slowly at first, then suddenly charged forward in a run. The Persian were incredulous, scarcely believing their eyes. Persian archers unleashed clouds of arrows, but the Greeks were moving too fast, and many of the missiles missed their intended targets. Even those arrows that did find their mark were largely ineffective. A few Greeks fell, but most arrows bounced off heavy shields and sturdy helmets.

Herodotus, Greek historian of the battle, later commented that this was the first time Greeks charged an enemy at the run. It was an incredible feat: Each man was running in armor and shield that collectively weighed about 70 pounds, and that did not include the onerous task of handling a nine-foot spear. The Athenians had to run about a mile, but not one man faltered or slackened the pace. This "quickstep" run was being used for the first time in battle, but the technique was not entirely unprecedented. At the Olympic games there was the hoplitodromos, a foot race in armor that must have been familiar to most Athenians.

The Athenians smashed into the Persian flanks like bronze tidal waves, sweeping all before them. The Persian flanks wavered, then collapsed like a house of cards, exposing the Persian center. The Athenians kept their heads; once an enemy broke and ran it was the custom to pursue and slaughter as many fugitives as possible. But instead of chasing the refugees from the broken flanks, the Athenians concentrated their attention on the Persian center.

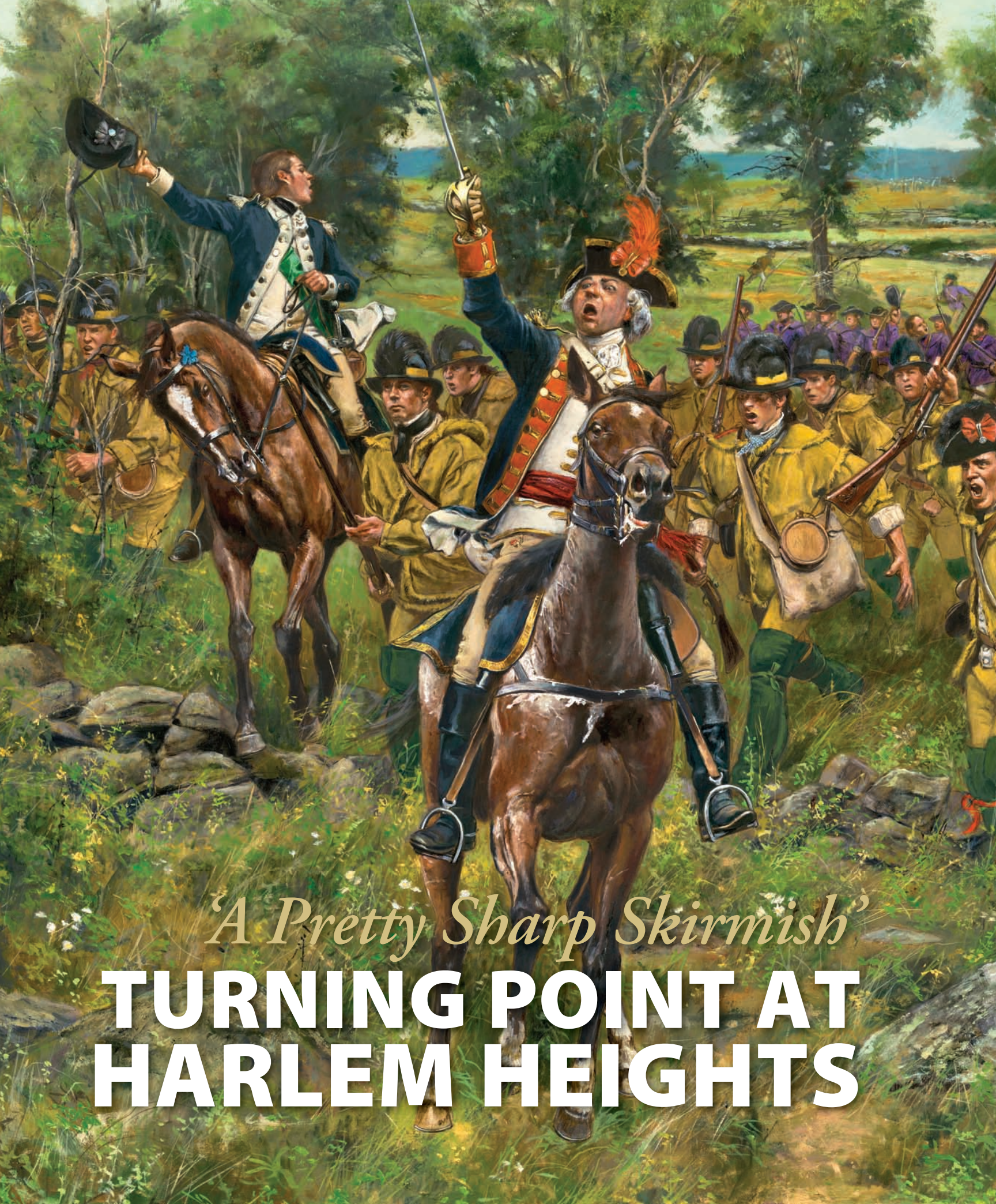
Ironically the Persian center had been locally victorious, breaking through the weakened Greek center, when suddenly it found itself surrounded on two sides. Iron-tipped hoplite spears impaled scores of Persians, easily puncturing or brushing aside wicker shields. Once a spear was broken, or circumstances favored close-in fighting, hoplites turned to their swords. Some had normal hoplite swords of iron; others were armed with the kopis, a heavy slashing weapon capable of great execution if wielded by a trained arm.

The Persian center fought well, but its relative lack of protective armor proved literally and figuratively crippling. Kopis swords hacked bloody paths through Persian ranks, each stroke cutting, lacerating, inflicting wounds and death with horrifying ease. Caught in a classic pincer movement, the Persian center soon met the fate of the flanks.

Bloodied and terror-stricken survivors sought any means of escape; some fled blindly into the marsh, while others streamed toward the Persian ships anchored not far from shore. These who waded into the marsh were cut down, the viscous ground proving a grave, not a refuge. A story was later told that the Greek god Pan, who could induce fear and stampede cattle, now came to the aid of the Athenians. The god instilled panikos in Persian hearts, literally panicking them.

Heady with victory, the Athenians attempted

Continued on page 98



'A Pretty Sharp Skirmish'

TURNING POINT AT HARLEM HEIGHTS

A detachment of 230 rangers and riflemen scrambled up a rocky escarpment on New York's Manhattan Island on the morning of September 16, 1776. The lone figure out in front, leading the way up through a tangle of boulders was their commander, Lt. Col. Thomas Knowlton. A hero at Bunker Hill and founder of an elite company of scouts, the 35-year-old was already a legend in the young Continental Army.

But on this morning, Knowlton was carrying out the most important mission of his life, heading up a surprise flank attack on British troops at the direct order of Gen. George Washington. As his rangers negotiated the last few yards of the hillside, Knowlton glanced over his shoulder and surveyed his men. He was known to be an officer who led by personal example. Orderly Sergeant David Thorp recalled that Knowlton never ordered "Go on boys" but rather exhorted his men to "Come on, boys!" Urging them forward, Knowlton plunged over the top.

For Washington, the fight that would unfold in the rolling countryside of Manhattan Island was a determined effort to strike back against a seem-

The fate of a new nation hung in the balance as General George Washington and his nascent Continental Army took on the seemingly invincible troops of the British Crown at Manhattan, New York, in September 1776.

BY JOSHUA SHEPHERD

ingly invincible British army and breathe new life in a faltering Patriot war effort. In fact, the campaign season of 1776 had been nearly disastrous for the Continental Army.

The year had begun promisingly enough, as the American siege of British forces in Boston ended in success. In March, resourceful Continentals succeeded in erecting a commanding artillery battery on Dorchester Heights, immediately rendering British positions in the city untenable. Without the cost of a major battle, Washington had succeeded in prying the British out of Boston. On March 17, Major General William Howe, overall commander of Crown forces, evacuated the city and sailed his army for the safety of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Washington was convinced, however, that Howe would eventually target New York City for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, the Royal Navy would need a deep water port to continue operations on the eastern

American General Israel Putnum leads Maryland riflemen toward the fighting near Harlem Heights, north of present day Central Park. His aide, 20-year-old Capt. Aaron Burr, follows behind, relaying the command to advance.

Spencer Collection, The New York Public Library

seaboard after being driven out of Boston. A center of Loyalist sentiment and one of the most vital trade centers in North America, the city also commanded the mouth of the Hudson River, a crucial navigable waterway that could potentially be used to sever the rebellious colonies in two.

In the weeks following the evacuation of Boston, Washington made plans to transfer the Continental Army to New York, arriving there personally by the middle of April. As soon as he surveyed the ground, however, Washington believed that effectively defending New York would be virtually impossible.

The city itself, situated at the southern tip of Manhattan Island, was a crowded, bustling market town, awash with Loyalist spies. Worse yet, the city was dangerously flanked by the Hudson and East Rivers. Although Washington expanded construction of fortifications and artillery positions to help defend the city and control river traffic, it was obvious that the Continental Army would be outmatched and outgunned if the Royal Navy decided to make a concerted effort.

But the political considerations of making a tangible defense of the city ultimately outweighed operational realities. Rather than concentrate his forces, Washington was forced to carve up his army in an attempt to forestall any potential British move. Washington divided his army into five divisions, placing three in New York City, one in northern Manhattan, and one on Long Island.

Despite such preparations, the appearance in the middle of June of the immense British armada carrying Lord Howe's overwhelming force of 32,000 men was a mortifying sight. Washington had little choice but to assume a static defensive posture.

Known as a methodical planner, Howe was nonetheless ready to make a move by the end of the summer. On August 22, 15,000 Crown troops landed on Long Island, clearly aiming to drive American troops off of the Brooklyn Heights, overlooking New York City just across the East River. Opposing him were a mere 5,000 Americans under the command of Maj.-Gen. Israel Putnam, dug in across a ridge known as the Heights of Guan.

On the evening of August 26, British forces executed a daring flanking movement, entirely unhinging the Continental line on the heights. The American high command had been caught flat footed and paid a high price. As their line collapsed, American troops fled for a new defensive position in a wild stampede that resulted in more than 2,000 men killed, wounded, or captured.

The embarrassing debacle called for Washington's direct intervention. Arriving on Long Island later on the morning of August 27, Washington assumed direct command but had few good options. Badly outnumbered and confined to a dangerously shrinking perimeter on Brooklyn Heights, he made the decision to evacuate his men from Long Island and regroup on Manhattan. On the night of August 29, Washington executed a daring night withdrawal in the face of the enemy, and succeeded in getting his men safely across the East River.

With the fall of Brooklyn Heights and the British now in possession of both Long Island and the smaller Governor's Island, New York City was increasingly ringed with enemy strongholds. Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene privately counseled Washington to abandon Manhattan entirely and regroup farther north on ground of their own choosing. One of Washington's aides-de-camp,

BELOW: By September 12, General Washington had deemed his hold on New York City untenable and decided to retreat northward. This 1777 drawing by Robert Cleveley depicts Lord Howe landing 4,000 troops at Kip's Bay, Manhattan, on September 15, before the Continental Army could complete its withdrawal. After initially routing the Continentals, Howe waited for an additional 9,000 troops to land before pursuing them. By then, the Americans had fortified the high ground at Harlem Heights, where they fought the British to a standstill. LEFT: "View of the Narrows between Long Island & Staten Island with Our Fleet at Anchor & Lord Howe Coming In," July 12, 1776, by Lieutenant Archibald Robertson of the Royal Engineers. Lord Howe's HMS *Eagle* is shown at the top right. After arriving off New York City on June 29, British troops landed on Staten Island on July 2. In this sketch a column of troops appears to be moving inland from the camp along the shore. With 20,000 troops, Howe was eventually able to drive Washington's army from Long Island on August 22.

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

Joseph Reed, recorded in his diary that, "We cannot stay and yet we do not know how to go."

By the first week of September, Washington finally admitted what he had known all along—without any realistic means of resisting the Royal Navy, the labyrinth of navigable rivers which surrounded the island rendered it indefensible. With an uncontested superiority on the water, Howe could strike the Rebels at a time and place of his own choosing.

In a September 8 report to Congress, Washington detailed his pending decision to abandon Manhattan. He knew the effect it would have on Patriot morale, but the unenviable choice couldn't be postponed any longer. Surrendering the city would be demoralizing, but the loss of the army itself would be nothing short of calamitous.

To preserve the army to fight another day, Washington planned to pull out of the city during the next week. As a field commander, he felt that he had few good options, and bemoaned that no matter where he turned he was confronted with "a Choice of difficulties." Worse yet, it was obvious to Washington that the inexperienced troops of the Continental Army were in desperate need of real training and discipline. No matter what decision he made, Washington wrote, he would do so "with some Apprehension that all our troops will not do their duty."

As events would prove, Washington's fears were by no means misplaced. On the evening of September 14, he moved his headquarters out of the city and took up lodgings at the Morris Mansion on the northern reaches of Manhattan. The job of moving the army out of the city, however, was a painfully slow process. As the sun set that evening, there were still about 3,500 American troops in the city limits.

As Washington labored over his decision, Howe had not been idle. Keen to trap the upstart army once and for all and deliver the coup-de-grace to the rebellion, he made preparations to sever Manhattan Island in half. During the evening of the fourteenth, five British men-of-war anchored in the East River just off of Kip's Bay, training their guns on American entrenchments above the bay.

The following morning, American troops under the command of Col. William Douglas were aghast at the sight. Matters only grew worse when a veritable fleet of flatboats pushed into the East River from the opposite bank. They were loaded with a landing force of British troops and German auxiliaries. Joseph Plumb Martin, a Connecticut soldier watching the scene unfold from a perch atop Kip's Bay, was mesmerized by the grand sight. The scarlet coats of the British troops, he thought, resembled a "large clover field in bloom."

The spell was broken when the British ships opened fire at 11 a.m. with a thunderous crash that rocked Manhattan. The hour-long naval bombardment shattered the American entrenchments commanding the bay, leaving no artillery in a position to effectively respond. Most of the American troops were green, and a number of them were armed with little more than pikes. For the infantry, there was little more to do than seek cover and pray for an end to the cannonade.

British officers were delighted by the sight of the inferno. Ambrose Serle, then serving as Howe's secretary, described the view as "awful & grand—I might say beautiful. The hills, the woods, the river [engulfed in] pillars of smoke."

The American troops on the receiving end did not share this view and, when the barrage lifted

about noon, a veritable stampede ensued. Despite their officer's pleadings, the troops broke in confusion and raced pell-mell for the rear. British flatboats landed with little opposition. Crown troops then pushed swiftly inland; German troops on the left, British grenadiers in the center, and light infantry on the right.

The day developed into a disaster for the Continental Army. The German troops fixed bayonets and charged forward on the American right, skewering terrified soldiers caught in the advance. On the left, the Continentals were more fleet of foot as any semblance of unit cohesion fell apart and Douglas' panicked troops ran from the field. "The demons of fear and disorder seemed to take full possession of all and everything on that day," a sheepish Joseph Plumb Martin confessed later.

Washington had been foiled once again by the combination of a wily enemy and his own inexperienced troops. Galloping onto the field, Washington shouted for order and, after vainly pleading for his men to rally, the frustrated general took to whipping them, wildly swinging at recalcitrant troops. Amid this scene, the British infantry suddenly appeared about 100 yards away.

According to one account, an infuriated Washington threw his hat to the ground, shouting "Good God, are these the troops with which I am to defend America?" It was with some difficulty that his staff convinced the enraged general to head for the rear.

In fact, all over the island American troops were on the run. With his route of escape from New York City gravely threatened, Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam got his 3,500 men on the move, marching them north along the Hudson River in a desperate attempt to escape the British trap. A rawbitten old veteran of the French and Indian War, Putnam pushed his men hard. While the methodical Howe secured his beachhead, Putnam slipped the noose, reuniting his command with the main body of the army.

But in his haste to extricate his men from looming capture, Putnam had been forced to abandon a vast stockpile of ordnance and munitions, including 12,000 round shot and a priceless 64 heavy guns. For the cash-strapped Continentals it was a nearly irreplaceable loss, and constituted nearly half of Washington's artillery train.

Equally discouraging was the loss of life in the one-sided fighting at Kip's Bay. Overrun by superior Crown forces, the narrowly avoided catastrophe had been costly for the Patriots—some 50 killed and 370 captured.

Despite the setback, Washington was already in the process of digging in on more defensible ground at the north end of the island. As scattered detachments straggled in from New York City and the East River, Washington consolidated his troops along Harlem Heights, a low ridge that traversed the island from east to west.

From here, Washington planned a defense-in-depth and set his men to constructing fieldworks in three parallel lines along the heights. The crucial southernmost line fronting the enemy was occupied by Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene, a cerebral Rhode Islander and self-taught military man, who was Washington's most trusted division commander. The Harlem Heights line would be a substantial obstacle if Howe pushed north up the island.

Washington's fears were borne out when enemy light infantry pickets had pushed to within a few hundred yards of the American front line, possibly probing for a weak spot in preparation for a larger offensive. Early on the morning of September 16, Washington ordered out a scouting party to ascertain British dispositions. The troops were to head south from Harlem Heights, cross a narrow valley known as the Hollow Way, and probe British positions on heights near the Hudson River.

In selecting the officer to head up the mission, Washington turned to Knowlton, one of his best men. In an army largely composed of inexperienced volunteers, Knowlton was a veteran who possessed a depth of experience. At 15, he had joined a provincial unit in his native Connecticut during the French and Indian War. By 20, he had been promoted to lieutenant. Subsequent to the French and Indian War, Knowlton continued his service during the siege of Havana in 1762.

Early in the Revolution Knowlton had served with distinction at Bunker Hill, and was eventually promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. But by the middle of August, 1776, Washington gave Knowlton his most important assignment yet. The colonel was given command of a new unit of rangers, a crack outfit of light troops who would carry out scouting duties. Knowlton, who had served as a scout and ranger in his younger days, selected promising men from Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusttes to fill out the ranks of his company.

As Knowlton readied his men for the patrol, he was aware that he would be up against the light infantry, some of the best of the British troops. Only recently reintroduced throughout the British army these units were made up of younger, more agile men that had quickly become a vital tactical tool for field commanders, primarily for screening and skirmishing.

To aid in mobility and impart esprit-de-corps, they were specially uniformed with short jackets and small leather caps. They also received incessant specialized training. Unlike their regular counterparts, the light infantry received training in loading and firing their weapons from a prone position. On the battlefield, the light infantry were not opponents to be trifled with.

New York Public Library Digital Collections

The "Battle of Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776," by notable Civil War artist Alfred R. Waud, shows the Continental Army holding the high ground against the British, who were forced to withdraw.

Knowlton, in command of about 150 rangers, headed out before dawn. Cautiously moving south for about a mile, they ran into enemy pickets that opened fire and alerted an advance post of light infantry. Knowlton kept his men moving, but quickly met heavy resistance. Light infantry was rapidly forming in his front, and it was obvious that he was opposed by superior numbers.

True to their reputation, the light infantry began lapping around Knowlton's flanks, and he immediately ordered his men to fall back. The rangers succeeded in executing a fighting withdrawal, and Knowlton drew his men off until they reached a more defensive position. Halting behind a stone wall, the rangers rallied and a sharp firefight ensued.

Meanwhile at headquarters, Washington and his staff worked by candlelight on correspondence. As the general's staff toiled away at routine paperwork, an agitated courier arrived from the front. The man reported that the British were advancing in force, moving north in three heavy columns. Washington and Reed doubted the report's accuracy. Jittery American pickets regularly sent in false alarms about British movements. Reed suggested that he ride out for a closer look, and Washington agreed. Reed was a key member of Washington's small but tight-knit staff, and a close confidant of the general.

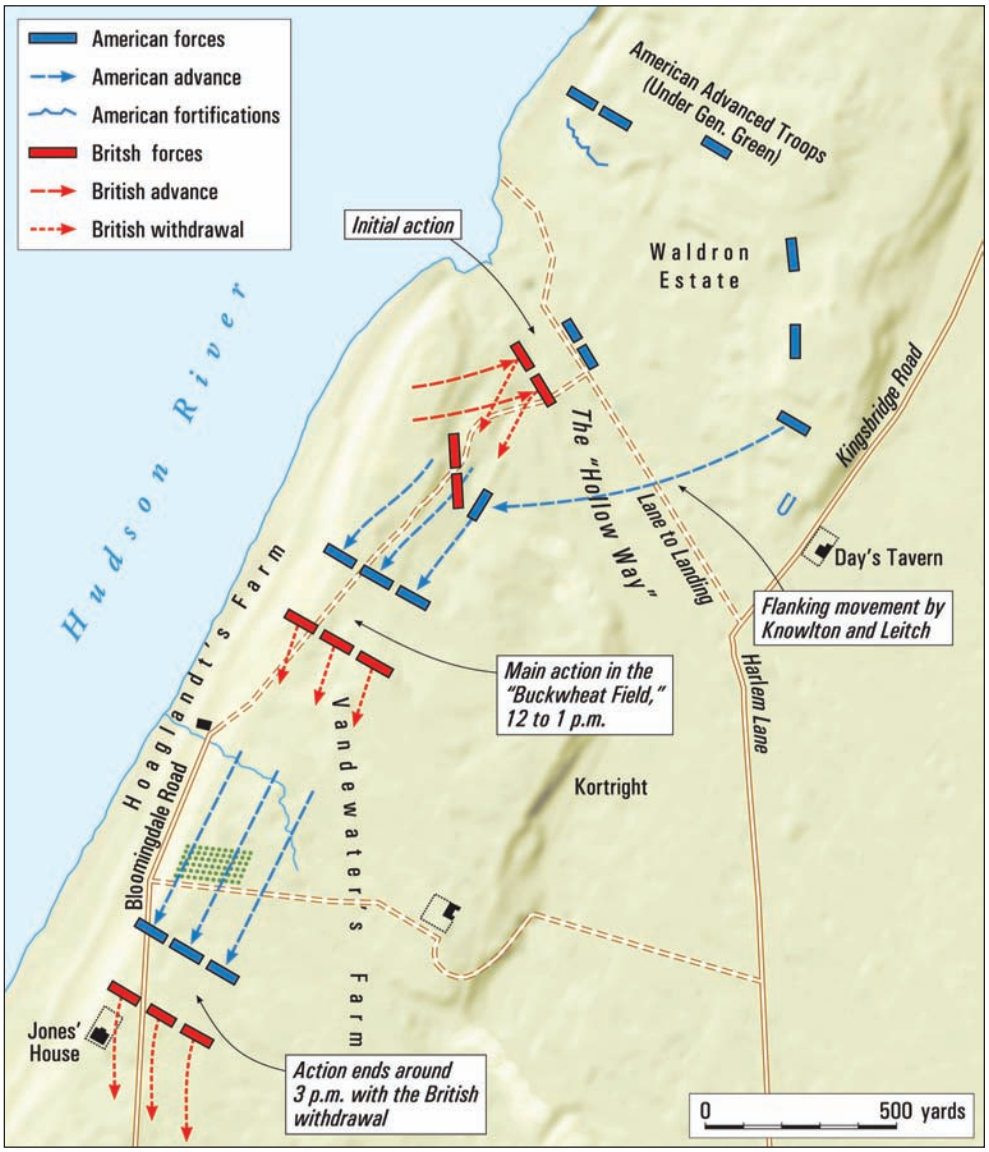
At the front Reed found the sharp fighting continuing, and though the American rangers were being pushed back, they were contesting every inch of ground. As Reed and Knowlton conferred, a party of British troops sprinted into the open and fired at the exposed American officers.

As the fighting retreat continued, Reed took shelter in a farmhouse and watched as Knowlton's men gave a good accounting of themselves. He was accustomed to seeing American troops in full flight from Crown forces. But this morning, the rangers coolly traded volleys with the British, slowly and deliberately falling back.

As the retreat continued, Washington arrived on the field to personally assess the fighting. As Reed joined him to give him the latest news, the pair was greeted by a familiar sight. As Knowlton's men fell back across the Hollow Way, enemy light infantry followed close on their heels. Rather than issue battlefield orders by fife and drum, the light infantry customarily signaled by the use of horns. As the redcoats swarmed over the hillside, a trumpeter could be heard above the gunfire.

Reed took the horn for an affront. He later wrote that the British sounded a horn "in the most insulting manner…as is usual after a fox chase. I never felt such a sensation before—it

Part of the New York/New Jersey campaign of the American Revolutionary War, the Battle of Harlem Heights was fought on September 16, 1776. Described by Gen. George Washington as a "pretty sharp skirmish," the battle marked the first success of the war for the army directly under his command and greatly boosted its morale. The action also led to the deaths of ranger Col. Thomas Knowlton and Maj. Andrew Leitch, commander of the Virginia riflemen.



seemed to crown our disgrace."

As Knowlton's harried men ran into the safety of the American lines, Washington was able to get a better grasp of the situation. Most of the enemy remained hidden from view, but Knowlton reported that from what he could gather, there were about 300 of them. Washington listened closely, thought for a moment, and then made a snap decision. Rather than simply swat back at the small enemy detachment, he immediately decided to hit hard and bag the whole lot.

By nature and inclination Washington was an inherently aggressive field commander, a trait which became apparent as he looked over the Hollow Way. From his vantage point, Washington felt that the enemy troops had driven far beyond their own lines and were dangerously exposed. Washington made plans to not only drive the Redcoats back, but to destroy them in detail. As he put it, he "formed a design of cutting off such of them as had or might advance to the extremity of the wood."

After skirmishing all morning, Knowlton's men were itching to strike back at the British and Washington would give them the chance. The plan called for 150 men to advance into the Hollow Way as a feint, and volunteers were quickly drawn from Brig.-Gen. John Nixon's brigade of Massachusetts and Rhode Island troops. Nixon's men would occupy and tie down the exposed British troops. Knowlton would lead another column wide around the enemy's right flank before falling on its rear.

Knowlton's outfit would be bolstered by the addition of three rifle companies drawn from Col. George Weedon's recently arrived 3rd Virginia Regiment. The honor of commanding the three rifle companies, however, fell to Major Andrew Leitch, of the 1st Virginia. Leitch had served as a company captain in the 3rd before his promotion to Major in the 1st. While Knowlton readied his men for the attack, Reed, who volunteered to accompany the flanking party as a guide, rode out for the rear with orders to bring up Leitch and his Virginians.

While he did so, the 150 man decoy party, under the command of Rhode Islander Lt.-Col. Archibald Crary, formed up and marched into the Hollow Way. As the New Englanders moved into the open, it seems that the British on the opposite heights got ready to receive an attack. Capt. John Chilton, a company commander in the 3rd Virginia, recalled looking up the hillsides and seeing Redcoats "peeping from their heights over the fencings and rocks and running backwards and forwards."

But as the Americans halted, British troops took the bait and moved into the open, working their way downhill. With the enemy light infantry lured into the open as hoped, more Continental troops were thrown forward in support, including the bulk of Nixon's Brigade as well as Weedon's 3rd Virginia.

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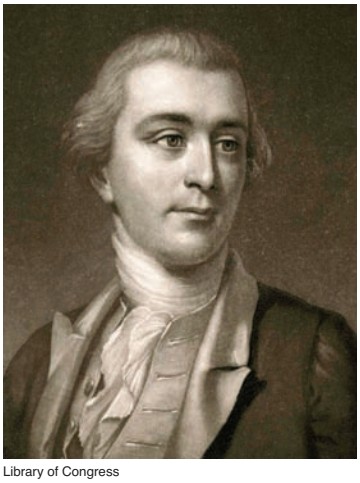
ABOVE: This news photo of the Harlem Heights battlefield was taken in 1897 looking north from 117th Street, between Claremont Avenue and Riverside Drive—now occupied by Columbia University. Early in the battle, as the British pressed Colonel Knowlton's men, they fell back behind a stone wall where they rallied and traded volleys with the enemy. BELOW: From left, General George Washington's Adj. Gen. Joseph Reed; Col. Thomas Knowlton, commander of Knowlton's Rangers; General Israel Putnam; and British Maj. Gen. Alexander Leslie.




Library of Congress

Washington's plan hinged on avoiding a general engagement in the Hollow Way and simply tying down the British there. Accordingly, the troops were under strict orders not to open fire. But when the enemy worked their way about 250 yards from the American line, an inexperienced and jittery junior officer, much to Weedon's consternation, ordered his men to fire.

The unexpected and ineffective musketry caused a ripple effect in the American ranks. Spontaneously, the green troops opened fire from the right to the left, unleashing a ragged volley uphill toward the British. An infuriated Weedon desperately tried to restore order, shouting for his men to cease fire. But his orders were ignored amid the confusion and gunfire. Even Captain Chilton, who heard Weedon shouting, thought that the colonel was calling for the men to "keep up our fire."

While Weedon shouted himself hoarse, the firing continued from both sides. But with the bulk of Nixon's Brigade thrown in the fight, the British backed off a bit and took up positions behind an overgrown rail fence.

The Continentals fired an estimated four volleys before the officers finally regained control. Remarkably, the Americans then wiped down their guns, and rather than fall back to a better position, they sat down in ranks. Although they remained targets for the British light infantry, they succeeded in buying more time for Knowlton's flanking party.

Remaining in that unenviable position was no small accomplishment for green troops. But while the enemy light infantry continued to send balls whistling downhill, the Americans sat still. It was a severe test of nerves for men unaccustomed to combat. Captain Chilton was ebullient in his praise for the men. The grim test went on for nearly an hour, and Chilton recalled that "our men observed the best order, not quitting their ranks, though exposed to a constant and warm fire." In the warmest of praise, Chilton observed that his men "behaved like soldiers."

With enemy attention occupied in the Hollow Way, Knowlton and Leitch succeeded in forming up their flanking party and working around the British right flank, though all was not going

according to plan. As the Americans tried to feel their way around the British flank, Reed was with Leitch's Virginians, who seem to have become disoriented by the unfamiliar terrain. Reed later indicated that the excited troops were moving too fast for him to direct, and in the confusion arrived out of position.

As they climbed up the rocky slopes that held the British, the Americans discovered too late that they had come in right off the enemy's right flank, rather than the rear. Without hesitation, Knowlton and Leitch urged their men forward, hoping to tear into the enemy's exposed flank. But as American troops stormed up the heights and opened fire, the British were able to pull back their right flank in order to meet the threat. Before Knowlton could launch the full weight of his force onto the enemy, they had been afforded a few priceless moments to prepare.

A fierce firefight developed on the top of the plateau, as elite troops from each side battled fiercely for control of the high ground. As Knowlton's men surged forward, the British light infantry was forced to give ground, but, true to their training, maintained a constant fire and contested every inch as they fell back.

The Americans paid for their gains. The hillside was alive with musketry, and men began to tumble. Leitch was in the thick of the fighting, urging his riflemen forward. In just three minutes, the indomitable Virginian was struck twice. Through sheer force of will, Leitch refused treatment and stayed on his feet. A third wound finally staggered Leitch and knocked him to the ground. Still conscious, he was carried off the field with two balls in the stomach and one in the hip.

As the Americans pushed across the top of the summit, Knowlton turned to urge his men on and a musket ball tore into the small of his back and he crumpled, but remained fully conscious. Capt. Stephen Brown witnessed him fall, and immediately ran to his side. As Brown knelt over him, he asked Knowlton if he was badly wounded. "Yes," he replied, "but I do not value my Life if we do but get the Day."

Despite the pain, Knowlton retained his composure, and, like any good field commander, did his best not to demoralize his troops. Remarkably, Brown thought that Knowlton seemed unconcerned and "calm as tho' nothing had happened to him." Brown shouted for two men to carry the colonel off the field. All the while, Knowlton ordered Brown to maintain pressure on the British and carry through with the attack.

As Knowlton was carried to the rear, the spectacle caused by his wounding attracted the attention of Reed, who had stayed with the flanking party during the attack. Reed ordered the wounded colonel thrown across his own horse and he personally escorted Knowlton to the rear.

Although Knowlton's attack had failed to strike the British rear as planned, the ferocity of the assault was slowly pushing the light infantry back. Seeking cover and a better defensive position, the Redcoats retreated to the high ground to their rear, which was covered with a hardwood forest. Washington, sensing a potential victory within reach, committed fresh troops to the fight, and ordered up a mixed bag of reinforcements.

Among the troops that entered the Hollow Way was Joseph Plumb Martin, who had joined the wild retreat from Kip's Bay just the day before. As his regiment marched into the valley, they saw British troops scampering into "a thick wood" on the opposite hillside.

While the British troops attempted to rally in the woods, more American troops poured into the fight. Senior officers watched in admiration as two Maryland regiments, commanded by colonels Charles Griffith and William Richardson, went into action. The Marylanders were green troops but executed their attack with a good bit of spirit, maintaining their ranks as they crossed the valley and moved uphill towards the enemy.

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ABOVE: This photo is believed to show the area where Colonel Thomas Knowlton was supposed to lead his rangers in a flank attack as decoy troops fired on the British front. However, Virginia troops fired on the enemy before the flanking move was completed. OPPOSITE: The famed 42 Regiment of Foot is driven back by the Continentals, shown at right in this 19th century engraving. Expecting their enemy to be easily driven from the battlefield, the British were shocked by the ferocity of the Continentals.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Washington and his staff witnessed the assault. Lt.-Col. Tench Tilghman, a native Marylander serving on Washington's staff, was delighted with the troops' performance. As they crashed into the British line, Tilghman reported that the men "charged with as much bravery as I can conceive." The hillside roiled in smoke, and the weight of American numbers began to tell. With their front hard pressed and their flanks dangerously threatened, British troops in the woods finally cracked and bolted for the rear.

But for the veteran Redcoats, the fight was far from over. As they raced south across the plateau, officers succeeded in rallying their men, forming up a new defensive line across high ground that straddled a buckwheat field. As the battle developed, both sides fed troops into the fight hastily and with little foresight. Washington would rush about 1,800 men toward the buckwheat field. Generals Putnam and Greene rode onto the field and assumed direct command of the fighting.

On the British side, command of the fighting was assumed by Brig.-Gen. Alexander Leslie, a determined career officer who had been fighting Americans since the outbreak of the war. Leslie likewise called up reinforcements, swelling his ranks with some of the best troops in Howe's army. His lines included two full battalions of elite light infantry, grenadiers, Hessian jaegers, and elements of the 42nd Regiment of Foot, the famed Black Watch.

What had started as a running skirmish developed into a conventional fight. Both sides volleyed steadily, but there was little effort to develop a cohesive plan. Crown forces, accustomed to seeing little fight out of the Rebels, were shocked by the ferocity of the engagement. For their part, the Americans were exhilarated. The British had been running all morning, and the Continentals were now holding their own in a toe-to-toe fight. Heavy musketry roared across the buckwheat, shrouding the field in dense clouds of smoke.

The outright slugfest continued for nearly two hours. Leslie, however, had no interest in bringing on a general engagement, and was content to simply hold off the American onslaught. The fighting also quickly depleted the mens' cartridge boxes; the Hessians and Highlanders both reportedly exhausted their ammunition. Hard pressed and unwilling to maintain a needless fight, Leslie ordered his men to fall back.

With Crown troops in flight, exultant American troops rushed forward instinctively. The pursuit continued across the buckwheat field and into an orchard. Although the Continentals were eager to keep fighting, Washington wisely reckoned that he had pressed his luck as far as he dare. The overextended enemy light infantry had been chewed up and repulsed, but a full scale pitched battle with Howe's entire army was out of the question.

Washington therefore dispatched Tilghman with orders for the troops to disengage. Greene and Putnam pulled their men back, and remained in front of the Harlem Heights lines until sunset. Howe was nonetheless disinclined to launch a counterattack. For the British, the battle at Harlem Heights had been a rather pointless and costly distraction. Sir Henry Clinton, who generally offered unvarnished opinions, held that the arrogance of the elite troops had caused the entire affair. "The ungovernable impetuosity of the light troops," he wrote, "drew us into this scrape."

As the American army settled into their lines that night, officers noticed a palpable shift in morale. The fighting at Harlem Heights had been a heady victory for the Continental Army, and a desperately needed tonic for Americans accustomed to defeat. Washington regarded Harlem Heights as a skirmish, but saw that the fighting had "a surprising and almost incredible effect upon our whole army…every visage was seen to brighten, and to assume, instead of the gloom of despair, the glow of animation."

The victory at Harlem Heights, however, had been no mere skirmish for the men who gave their lives. On the day following the battle, Lt. Samuel

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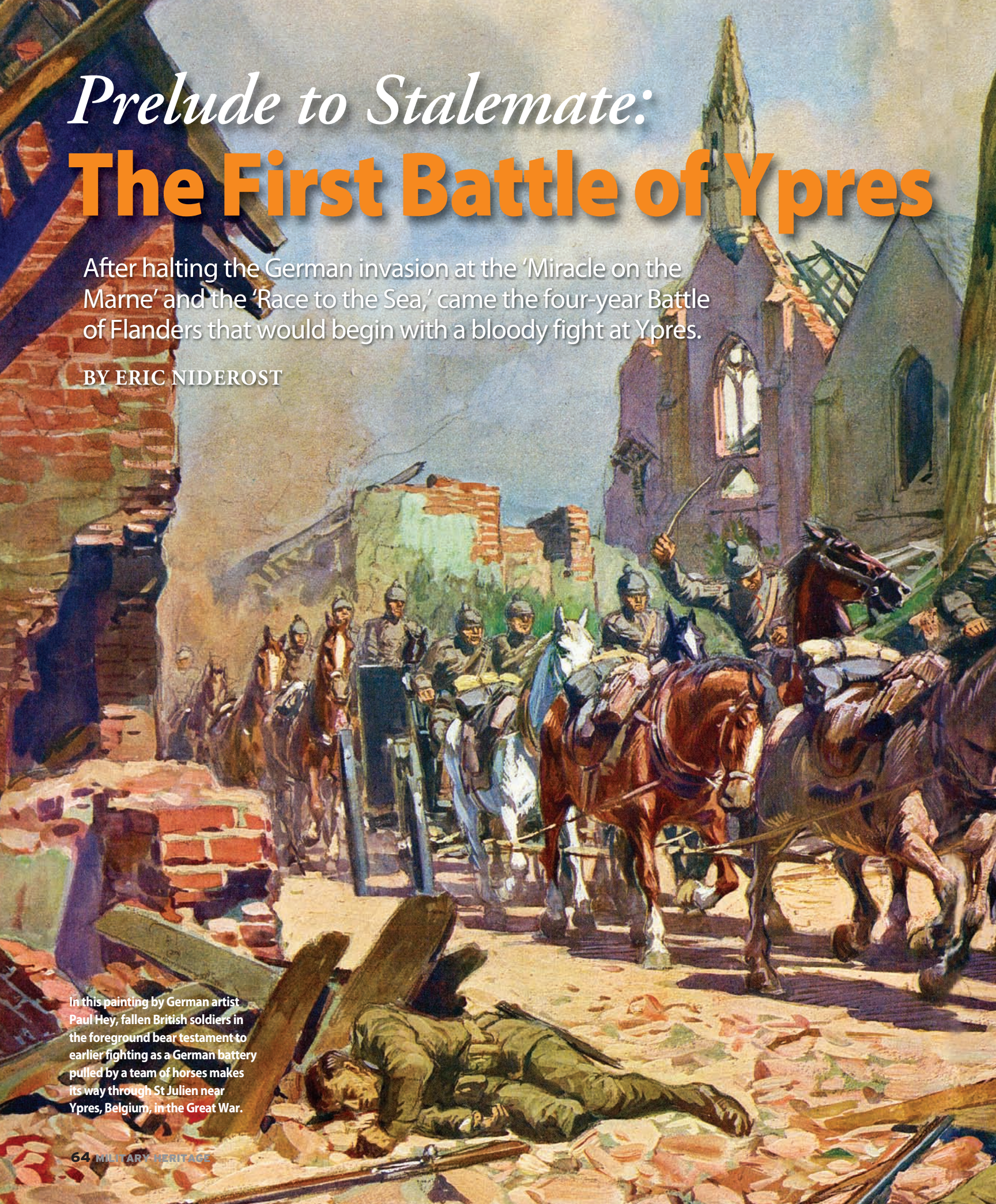
Prelude to Stalemate:
The First Battle of Ypres

After halting the German invasion at the 'Miracle on the Marne' and the 'Race to the Sea,' came the four-year Battle of Flanders that would begin with a bloody fight at Ypres.

BY ERIC NIDEROST



In this painting by German artist Paul Hey, fallen British soldiers in the foreground bear testament to earlier fighting as a German battery pulled by a team of horses makes its way through St Julien near Ypres, Belgium, in the Great War.

News that the Germans had been halted at the Marne River, a scant 30 miles from Paris, filled France and Britain with a sense of joy and relief. Since August 1914, a tidal wave of gray-clad soldiers had swept through Belgium and northern France like a juggernaut. Coming as it did on the brink of total defeat, the Allied victory was dubbed the "miracle of the Marne."

Bundesarchiv Bild 183-R34772; Photo: Unknown

ABOVE: German troops man a defensive position in Belgium in 1914. Stalemated after the Battle of Marne, the British moved north toward the coast in an effort to shorten supply and communication lines with England. The series of flanking maneuvers by British and German troops along the way during September and October became known as the "Race to the Sea" and left the two sides deadlocked again around Ypres, Belgium. OPPOSITE: Belgian Carabiniers attack a raiding party of German *Uhlans*, light cavalry traditionally armed with lances, sabres, and pistols, near Ypres, Belgium. Holdovers from another age, these units served in the German, Polish, and Austrian armies during World War I.

But the euphoria soon faded as grim reality set in—the Germans had been checked, not decisively defeated, and they still occupied nearly 90 per cent of Belgium and a large portion of northern France. The one bright spot was that the Germans had been pushed back 45 miles, proving they were not invincible. But it would take more than one victory, however significant, to expel them from Gallic soil.

Stung by their unexpected defeat, the invaders pulled back and dug in on the eastern bank of the Aisne River. Though the belligerents did not know it, this stalemate was a foreshadowing of the brutal war of attrition that was to characterize the next four years.

Near the end of September Field Marshal Sir John French, commander of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), notified his French counterpart, Gen. Joseph Joffre, that he wanted to move the British army northward, from the Aisne to the Flanders coast. Though the maneuver was complex, French argued that it was a vital necessity for the overall war effort.

Concentrated on the coast, the BEF would have a shorter communications link with England and fresh troops could be processed into their units upon arrival across the channel. A skeptical Joffre was concerned that, if things went badly, the BEF would simply scurry home across the channel.

But Joffre agreed and the British army moved north without a hitch. Under the cover of night, French soldiers seamlessly replaced British units on the front, leaving the Germans completely unaware of the switch. The BEF arrived at its Flanders positions between October 16 and 18.

This movement north was part of what has become misleadlingly known as "The race to the sea." Entrenched at the Aisne, both sides sought to outflank the other, and the only direction in which it was possible to move was north. Soldiers had forced marches, and to speed things along both sides utilized trucks and the railroad system when feasible. Between September 18 and October 6 there were no less than 10 violent attempts to maneuver around Allied or German armies—all failed with heavy casualties.

The situation was particularly galling for the Allies as each attempt to outflank the Kaiser's forces seemed to be a day or a battalion short. But these movements began to gain their own momentum, drawing the combatants ever northward as they tried again and again to flank each other. The "race to the sea" ended in Flanders, on the North Sea coase because there was no more room to maneuver. From then on, the only route to victory would be a breakthrough of some kind.

The rapid movements and shifting positions bred confusion on an unprecedented scale. BEF Capt. Ian Hay later recalled that "Belgium and the north of France were one huge jumbled battlefield.

Friend and foe were inextricably mingled and the direction of the goal was uncertain. There was no front, no rear, so direction counted for nothing."

Some of this confusion seems to have percolated upwards, clouding the minds of the Allied high commands. Sir John French, certain that the Germans had only a single Corps in the area, was convinced that a mid-October push in Flanders would end the war with an Allied triumph.

Joffre was also offensively minded, though perhaps less sanguine than his British colleague. Fortress Antwerp had fallen to the Germans on October 10, but King Albert and 80,000 men of the Royal Belgian army had escaped the city to fight another day. They were now entrenched along the Yser River, with the waterway forming a kind of moat to help protect the last corner of precious Belgian territory

Joffre envisioned a grand swinging envelopment on the French left that would encircle the German right. To put his plan into effect, Joffre wanted to extend his left, and asked King Albert to abandon the coast and move inland to support the French moves.

Many monarchs are figureheads, but in Belgium the King was commander in chief with real power and responsibility. Albert was no Napoleon, but he was a competent soldier blessed with a prescient strategic sense. The king refused Joffre's request, recognizing that any move inland would make the channel ports vulnerable to German seizure. The Belgian army would stay where it was, holding on to national soil and blocking any Teutonic incursion.

The defeat on the Marne caused changes in the German high command. Chief of Staff Gen. Helmut von Molke had been picked to carry out the invasion of Belgium and France, his guide a revised version of the Schlieffen Plan of 1905. The hapless Molke, completely over his head, actually had a nervous breakdown on the job.

He was replaced by General Erich von Falkenhayn on September 14, 1914, hard on the heels of the Marne debacle. Introverted, taciturn, and something of an enigma, Falkenhayn plainly saw that the Schlieffen Plan had ignored the importance of the channel ports.

The French coastal ports of Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk, together with the Belgian cities of Nieuport, Zeebrugge, and Ostend were Britain's gateways to the continent, places where troops, equipment and supplies could be funneled to the BEF. The coastal towns also were important links for the British to maintain an all-important line of communication with home.

If the Germans controlled the seacoast British logistical problems would increase tenfold as they struggled to maintain the BEF in the field. And if the campaign turned against the Allies, the BEF would be deprived of any avenue of escape. Submarine warfare was in its infancy in 1914, but there was also a possibility that the cities along the English Channel and North Sea could be developed into U-boat bases to harass British commerce and bring the island nation to its knees.

Falkenhayn selected the Flemish town of Ypres as the place where the Germans would mount a major offensive. It was a major communications hub, with roads and rail lines radiating in all directions. Its capture would facilitate the taking of the coastal ports, as well as driving a steel wedge between allied armies. The city had flourished in the Middle Ages, and its many imposing buildings, especially the 13th century Cloth Hall, bore testimony to its past greatness.

An eight-mile series of ridges formed a natural "bowl" with Ypres in the center. None of the ridges were higher than 160 feet, but Flanders was so flat these modest peaks afforded a spectacular sight of Ypres and the surrounding countryside. On a clear day even the vast blue-gray expanse of the North Sea could be glimpsed in the distance. There was a scattering of prosperous farms and villages nestled between the ridges, names that outsiders often found hard to pronounce. These villages, along with the names of some geographical features in the surrounding area, would become infamous as the places of unparalleled slaughter in the coming four years. For villages there was Messines, Zandvoordt, and St Eloi; for

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"Friend and foe were inextricably mingled and the direction of the goal was uncertain. There was no front, no rear, so direction counted for nothing." —Captain Ian Hay, British Expeditionary Forces

terrain there was Pilckem Ridge, Polygon Wood, Nun's Wood, and perhaps the most notorious of all, Passchendaele.

Falkenhayn began to make arrangements for the Ypres offensive. It was decided a new formation, dubbed the Fourth Army, would be organized to take part in the attack. Grand Duke Albert of Wurttemberg was chosen as its commander. Fourth Army would be composed of four corps of reservists, many of them raw recruits with little more than six weeks of basic training for military experience. The 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment was part of the Fourth Army, but it would be remembered more for the one soldier in its ranks than any battlefield honors—25-year-old Private Adolf Hitler.

The Fourth and Sixth German armies, some 500,00 men, would take part in the Ypres operation. The BEF had about 250,000 men on the continent, with about 100,000 of them in Flanders. The Belgian army was now down to about 70,000-80,000 effectives, and the French Army had about 100,000, with two divisions from colonial French North Africa. The Moroccans were a colorful lot, wearing their native dress of baggy pantaloons and fezzes.

Hard numbers are not easy to come by, because of all the confusion, daily casualties, and rapid movements of the armies involved. But in Flanders the Allies could muster about 270,000 and the Germans roughly double that number. A gray-clad tsunami of infantry, cavalry, and powerful artillery was about to descend on Ypres.

Unaware of what was going on with the Germans, French was preparing his own offensive. He met with First Corps commander Lt.-Gen. Douglas Haig at the BEF headquarters at St Omer, France on October 19, mainly to tell his subordinate the part they would play in the coming Allied "push."

An ebullient and optimistic French told Haig that the enemy was on the run, and that he'd face one depleted German corps at best. Haig, who became commander in chief of the BEF later in the war, was skeptical of French's assessment, knowing that intelligence might well get garbled or even exaggerated in transit 50 miles from the front. He was operating closer to the action and was disturbed by reports that there might be three German Corps in the vicinity. In fact, the Germans were assembling more than five corps for the offensive.

In an interesting historical footnote, the Germans had been in physical possession of Ypres less than two weeks earlier. Looking formidable in their grey tunics and pickelhaube helmets, some 8,000 troops had marched into the city on Octo-

ber 7. Soldiers were billeted for the night in the Cloth Hall, in schools, or whatever building that might serve as a temporary shelter.

But the Teutons quickly wore out their welcome as soldiers looted everything in sight and the officers demanded 8,000 loaves of bread be made for their ravenous troops. Civilian horses and wagons were "requisitioned," their owners paid in worthless coupons. Much to the relief of a stressed and ransacked city, the Germans left after one night, ironically abandoning a strategic goal they would later spend so much time, treasure and blood to unsuccessfully retake.

A week later, on October 14, the French and British marched through the streets of Ypres to take positions outside the town. The British were the 7th Division and the 3rd Cavalry Division of General Rawlinson's Fourth Corps. They made contact with French troops of the 87th Territorial Division who had arrived earlier. In British history, the city would forever be known as "Wipers" due to the Tommies' inability to master the Belgian French pronunciation,"eee-pruh."

ABOVE: With their French and Belgian allies, the British Expeditionary Force held on to the last major town in Flanders, Ypres, to protect French ports on the English Channel. The town would lend its name to five battles from October 1914 to October 1918. OPPOSITE: The Scottish infantry regiment Cameron Highlanders capture German troops during the fighting near Langemarck at the start of the First Battle of Ypres, October 23, 1914. A lithograph of the event by Italian Italian artist Fortunino Matania was published in *The Sphere* in 1914.

The British entered Ypres in a torrential downpour as its citizens went about their normal lives, their city still intact. The Gordon Highlanders, a Scottish regiment that prided itself on their wearing of the kilt, made a most colorful spectacle with their scissoring legs in step to the sound of skirling bagpipes.

One of their number was Lieutenant William "Willy" Fraser, 27, a graduate of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. He had upper class roots, and had served in India. He noted in his diary that as yet undamaged, Ypres was a "pretty little city surrounded by a wall and moat." His brother, Lt. Simon Fraser, also served in the regiment.

On October 19 Rawlinson's Fourth Corps pushed forward towards Menen and Roeselare, seeking to consolidate the cavalry's seizure of the ridges around Ypres. Once on the high ground, the British soldiers could see thick black columns of smoke rising from Belgian villages torched by the Germans. They also saw streams of refugees, pitiful columns of misery, many with horse or dog carts filled with what possessions they could save.

Also visible, even further back, were the swarms of German soldiers, advancing like an undulating gray carpet. They numbered in the tens of thousands, plainly more than "one weak corps."

On October 20 the town of Langemarck was held by French troops, supported by the British Fourth Corps to the south. They were joined by Haig's First Corps, which were scheduled to attack the Germans the next day. Haig moved his second division and a division of cavalry 2.5 miles east of Ypres, near the Passchendaele ridge. The rain continued, alternating with mist and bitter cold, and it must have been a very long night for troops of both sides shivering in the darkness.

The formal battle opened the morning of October 21, with heavy German attacks from Armentières to Messines and Langemarck. Historians generally label the first few days of Ypres the "battle of Langemarck" for convenience, but in truth Ypres was actually a series of "soldier's battles," where combatants brutally slug it out with little real direction or control from their superiors. It was a confusing, protracted, and very bloody fight conducted with grim determination over an almost 20-mile front.

The Germans did have an enormous advantage in artillery, outnumbering the British by five guns

to one. In addition, they brought up monster Krupp guns, the same artillery pieces that had battered Antwerp into surrender some weeks earlier.

The Gordon Highlanders were posted near the village of Zandvoorde a couple of miles from Ypres. At first the Highlanders didn't see much direct fighting. But the shelling, which William Fraser described in his diary as a "most unpleasant experience" grew more intense as time wore on. He described the Krupp siege artillery as "Big guns they are, and the shell has a most inspiring scream… the shells sound like an express train going through the air." The regiment started taking casualties—a man killed here—a man wounded there—but the worst was yet to come.

At one point German Fourth Army reservists attacked the British line and were cut down by the thousands. This aspect of the fight has since been turned into the stuff of legend, and though parts of the tales are certainly true, other aspects are almost certainly myth. The reservists had in their ranks a substantial portion of youthful and very raw recruits, many no more than 17-19 years old. Some were university students, the best and the brightest of the German nation, and they approached the war with a youthful patriotic fervor.

They were going against some of the most famous and elite regiments of the British army, with battle honors stretching in some cases 200 years and more. The Black Watch, Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, Green Howards, Gordon Highlanders—the list includes scores of regiments and is too long to mention them all. Their battle honors were a roll call of British history and a source of pride to both officers and men.

The men filling the ranks were tough and seasoned professionals, well trained and ever ready for—as one put it—"a fight or a frolic" in equal measure. When they heard the German Kaiser had called them a "contemptible little army," they cheerfully adopted "Old Contemptibles" as a nickname. Earlier in the war, freely using the name of one of Germany's generals, they marched along singing "we don't give a f—k for old von Kluck, or his f—king German army."

The professional British soldier took well-justified pride in his superior marksmanship, which had a deadly effect on the long lines of Fourth army Germans advancing in rapid order over the battlefields of Flanders. According to some stories, these young men, many still in their teens, linked arms and had their pickelhaube helmets festooned with flowers. As they advanced, another story claims they lustily sang "Deutschland uber Alles" with a patriotic zeal that even British bullets could not subdue. In recent years scholarship has debunked some of these tales as embellishments added after the war, especially the singing stories.

But the fact remains that these young soldiers, as well as their older comrades, were cut down by the hundreds by well-served British rifles. The standard British infantryman's weapon was the British Short Magazine Lee-Enfield MkIII, with a magazine that held 10 rounds and a rapid action bolt. This enabled a trained infantryman to perform the "mad minute," 15 aimed and accurate shots in 60 seconds—sometimes even more. European armies had rifles made for unaimed shots; that is, to be fired in mass on the hip as soldiers advanced together in great numbers.

There was a relative lull in the fighting after October 24, but the battle was not over; it was just entering a new phase. The Germans geared up for an all-out victory, spearheaded by five divisions commanded by General Max von Fabeck. Dubbed "Armeegruppe Fabeck," it consisted of the Fifteenth Corps, the Second Bavarian Corps, the 26th Division, and the Sixth Bavarian Reserve Division.

The Germans had high hopes for this Fabeck offensive, and indeed they almost succeeded. Beginning on October 29, and continuing for several days thereafter, the British were very hard

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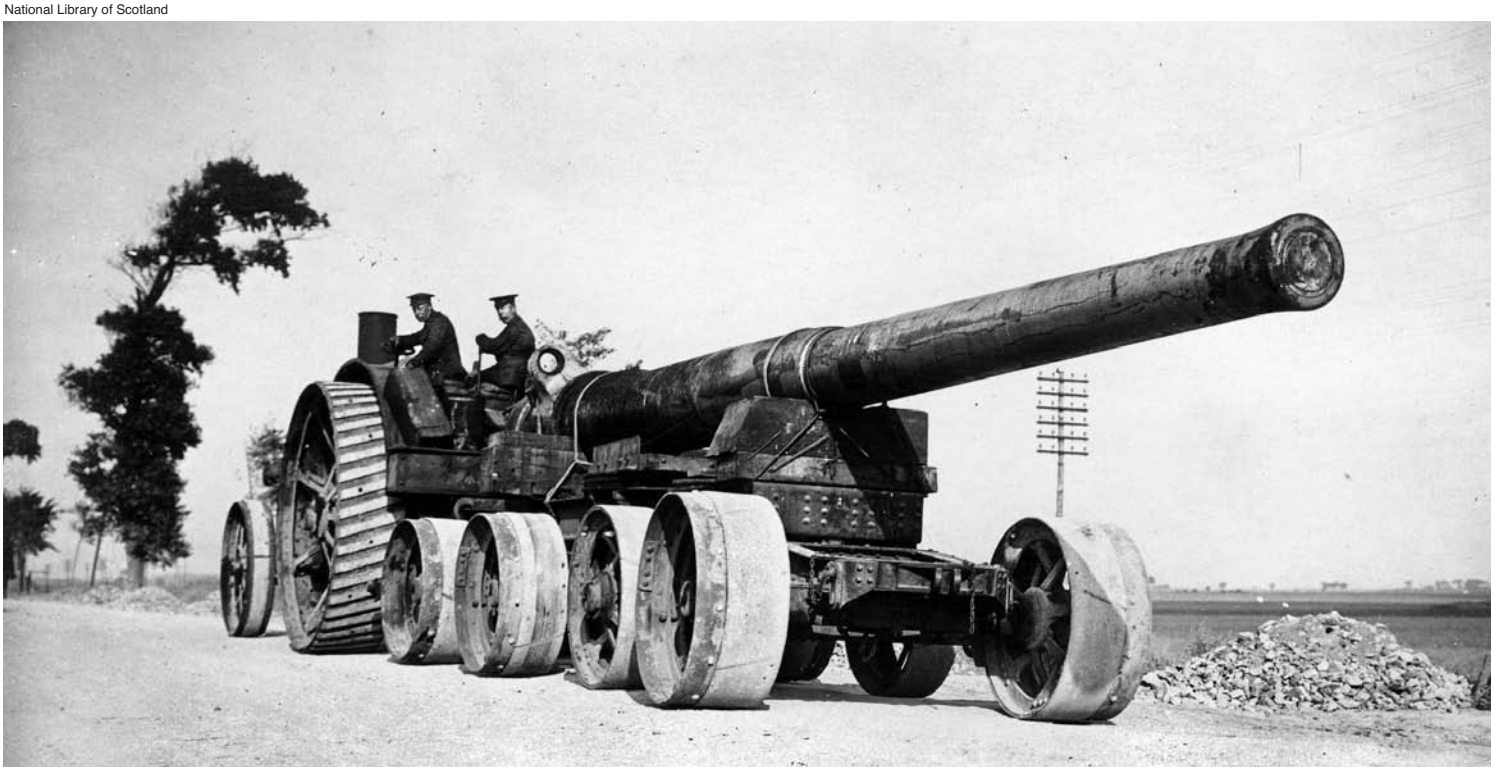

ABOVE: The British Army Service Corps uses a Daimler-Foster Heavy Tractor with rear wheels eight feet in diameter to haul this adapted naval gun into position neary Ypres, Belgium. The 15-inch Breech Loading Siege Howitzer, which had a maximum range of 10,795 yards and fired a 1,400 pound shell, was initially manned by the Royal Marine Artillery. Later, they were turned over to the Royal Artillery. OPPOSITE: Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards, man a hastily constructed trench near Zandvoorde, Belgium, south of Ypres, in October 1914. The conflict would soon be stalemated as both sides dug deeper and more elaborate trench systems.

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pressed. "Willie" Fraser and his Gordon Highlanders were posted near the village of Zandvoorde, and they were among the members of the Seventh Division that bore the full brunt of the German push.

Fraser had already experienced a personal loss when his brother Simon was killed, but he had little time to mourn. The Gordons had hastily dug trenches, but lack of time made them slapdash affairs that might protect a soldier from a bullet, but little else. It was foggy, and the highlanders could hear the Germans coming through the damp and clammy air, but not see them. Then, as the sun burned through the fog and the dense mass lifted like a curtain, the Gordons could see the enemy as they came into full view, "line after line saying 'Houra Houra' (hurrah) all the time and soon fire opened all down the line."

The Gordons were in dire straits; the battalion had had no food or water all day and heavy German shells rained down on them, the blasts eviscerating soldiers with horrible ease. The highlanders had mustered 26 officers and 812 men; they were now down to just one officer and 205 men. The fighting was a seesaw one, with positions gained only to be lost in the next round of fighting minutes or hours later.

Fraser was wounded in the shoulder by shrapnel, and in the confused and bitter fighting at one point he found himself a prisoner of the Germans. Luckily he spoke German, because he heard a German sergeant order that he be shot. Fraser quickly spotted an officer, chatted a bit, and the officer ordered he be spared. Once again confusion reigned, and in the fighting Fraser managed to slip away and escaped captivity.

A crisis developed at the town of Gheluvelt where the Germans were attempting to seize one of the high ridges running from Passchendaele to beyond Menen. Gheluvelt was a village that sat astride the Ypres-Menen road at almost the highest point of that particular ridge line. It afforded a good view of the terrain for miles, and the road—if controlled—would be a literal pathway to Ypres and the easiest way to take the city. The renewed offensive thrust up the Menen Road near Gheluvelt to Ploegsteert Wood in the south. The heaviest blows fell on the British Seventh Division and General Sir Edmund Allenby's dismounted cavalry.

General von Fabeck issued an order of the day. "We must and will conquer," he declared, "and end forever the centuries-long struggle, end the war, and strike the decisive blow against our most detested enemy (Britain). We will finish with the British, Indians, Canadians, Moroccans and other trash, feeble adversaries who surrender in great numbers if they are attacked with vigor."

The fighting at Gheluvelt was brutal and often hand to hand. One German historian said the action "almost had the savagery of the Middle Ages" in it. The fight was an endless succession of advances and retreats, advances and retreats, and positions often changed hands many times in the course of the day.

It was Sunday, October 31, when the Germans seemed on the cusp of victory. By sheer weight of numbers the British began to give way, and the Tommies were either slaughtered where they stood or reluctantly fell back in a kind of fighting retreat. Gheluvelt fell to the Germans, the imposing 18th century Gheluvelt Chateau, a prize that was a symbol of their triumph.

With the fall of Gheluvelt the road to Ypres was literally open, and a huge gap had been torn in the Allied line. Some 600 British prisoners had been taken, and the advance German elements on the Menen road were only about 1.9 miles from Ypres.

In the rear area Kaiser Wilhelm himself personally watched the progress of the advance through powerful binoculars. It was said that he planned

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

British Third Cavalry Troopers of the Seventh Division move past Red Cross wagons as they retreat from the German assault on Gheluvelt, Belgium, on the outskirts of Ypres. A British officer recognized that the traditions of horse mounted warfare would never be the same.

to ride into Ypres in triumph once the great prize was taken Yet the German Emperor's dreams of a victory parade was to prove premature.

Elements of the Scots Guards and the South Wales Borderers were still holding on against the odds in the Gheluvelt Chateau stables, perhaps 1,000 men against 10,000 Germans. Tpres was a battle where units were decimated regularly; earlier the Royal Welsh Fusiliers had been whittled down from 1,100 men to just eighty survivors. Yet the South Wales Borderers had a tradition of holding out against fearful odds. The South Wales Borderers (24th Foot) gained a kind of immortality when a detachment successfully withstood an attack of thousands of Zulu warriors at Rorke's Drift in 1879.

Brigadier General Charles FitzClarence, a descendant of Britain's King William IV and commander of the Guards Brigade, rode over to Gheluveldt and saw that it was now in German hands. Wheeling his horse around, he galloped to Major General Samuel Lomax to hurriedly explain the deteriorating situation and requested use of any reserves that might be on hand. The only soldiers that were available belonged to a half-strength formation, the Second Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment. FitzClarence didn't hesitate, but ordered battalion commander Edward B Hankey to rush over to Gheluvelt, expel the Germans, and repair the Allied line.

Hankey had only 27 officers and less than 500 men, but he accepted the order without any qualms and began preparations at once. He ordered a meal of strew and rum for his men, told them to take only rifles, bayonets, and ammunition with, and marched off in the direction of Gheluvelt.

Once they arrived on the outskirts of the village, Hankey could see that woods and a streambed partly protected them from German fire—but after that, there was 1,000 yards of open ground to be covered. The bad news was that open ground was covered by German artillery. There was no getting around it—that open space had to be crossed. "Forward, at the double!" Hankey ordered in a loud voice, then led them across the stubble field as fast as they could run. The

charge recalled battles of the historic past, with soldiers running with fixed bayonets and officers leading with drawn swords.

Artillery shells tore bloody gaps into the Worcestershires, killing and wounding about 100, but the rest made it past the gauntlet of fire. The Scots Guards and South Wales Borderers still clung to the stables, and some Germans were amusing themselves by taking pot shots at the surrounded Tommies.

Most of the rest of the Germans at Gheluvelt were casually walking around the chateau, eating rations, gawking like tourists at the imposing buildings, looting whatever they could lay their hands on, or simply taking their ease after days of strenuous fighting/ The Worchestershires burst into the chateau grounds like avenging furies, taking the Germans by complete surprise. Many just stopped whatever they were doing at that moment and fled.

Others were made of sterner stuff, and some hand to hand fighting developed, but the shock was too great, the Germans too unprepared to mount an adequate defense It wasn't long before they were forced to rapidly fall back. Company C, 2nd Worcestershires swept the field near the chateau, while Company A cleared the village of remaining gray-clad soldiers. A good portion of the Germans at Gheluvelt were men from the Bavarian 16th Reserve Regiment, Adolf Hitler's outfit. It is not known if he took part in the village and chateau fight and subsequent withdrawal.

The survivors of the Scots Guards and South Wales Borderers greeted their rescuers with a mixture of gratitude and relief. With the action over, Hankey sheathed his sword and went over to the South Wales Borderers commander, a man with the imposing name of Henry Edmund Burleigh Leach. Hankey said with a smile, "My God, fancy meeting you here." They were old friends. Leach, exhausted and overcome with emotion, could only reply "Thank God you've come."

The last major action of First Ypres occurred on November 11, 1914. Though the combatants didn't know it, exactly four years later the fighting would end with an armistice in 1918. The German Fourth Division and the Prussian Guards. It was an offensive that played out along a nine mile front stretching from Messines to Reuel. The attack was preceded by a German artillery bombardment that was the heaviest of the war to that date.

The Germans achieved some initial successes, but their momentum soon wore down. The First Prussian Guards made some headway, but as always British rifle fire was deadly, and British artillery well served. Eventually even the Prussian Guards—elite soldiers said to be six feet tall and above—were decimated, and they took refuge in a thick patch of woods named Nonne Bosschen, usually translated as "Nun's Wood."

Somewhere between 700 and 900 Prussian guardsmen were in the woods, seemingly cut off from support by heavy British artillery fire. They dug in, still intending to be the spearhead of a renewed assault. In spite of the difficulties, progress had been made, and the fortunes of war can change in an instant. The Prussian guards still hoped that a breakthrough could be achieved, and ultimately the English Channel and North Sea coastal ports be taken.

Those hopes were rudely shattered by the Second Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. When their commander, H. R Davies, learned that the Prussian Foot Guards were at Nonne Bosschen, he wasted no time in forming up his men to lead a bayonet attack. The regiment could trace its roots to the 52nd Foot, who had helped defeat Napoleon's Imperial Guard at Waterloo almost 100 years earlier. Now, they had a chance to best yet another enemy elite force, this time German.

The Oxs and Bucks attacked with vigor, and the vaunted Prussian Foot Guards withered under this determined assault. The woods were cleared of Germans, with virtually all of them killed or captured. Once again the Allied line held; Kaiser Wilhelm was cheated of his victory parade through Ypres.

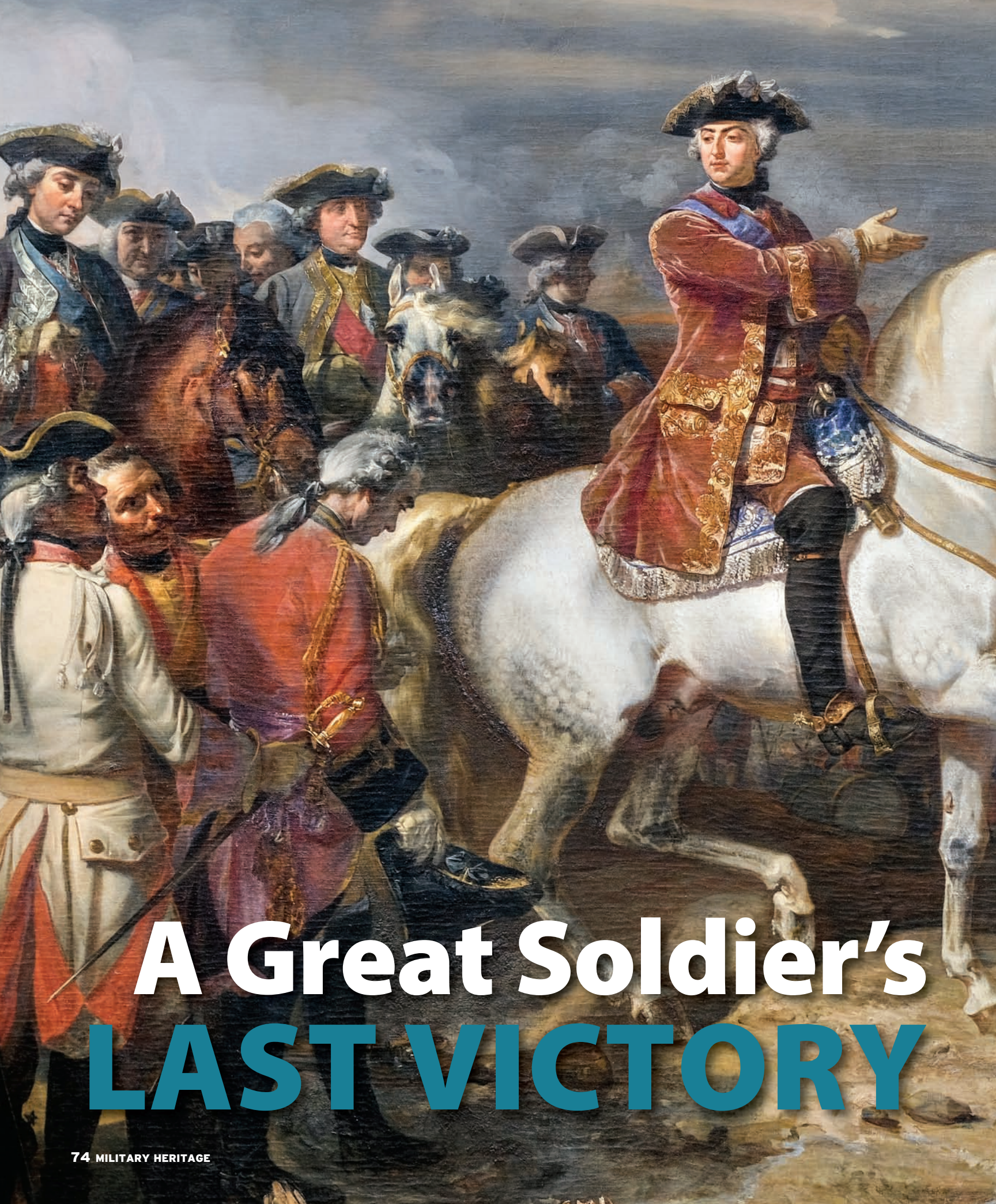
After November 11 there still was some halfhearted fighting, but both sides were exhausted, and colder weather heralded the coming of winter. Both Allies and Germans dug in, this time with trench systems designed by engineers, and the Western Front was formed. It was a demarcation line between opposing forces that stretched some 300 miles from the border of Switzerland to the North Sea The Ypres area formed a bulge in that line, a salient in military terms. As fighting continued in the salient over the next four years, the bulge would vary in size. But to the Germans' great frustration, Ypres was never taken.

The Battle of First Ypres marked both an end and a beginning. The war of maneuver ended, and in its place a static war of trenches, barbed wire, and stalemate would characterize the next four years. It also was the end of the prewar professional British army, which to all intents and purposes was destroyed in the first five months of the war. Some estimates place BEF losses at dead, wounded, missing or captured at about 90 per cent.

Ypres also marked the end of traditional horse-mounted cavalry. Modern artillery, rifles, and above all the machine gun made cavalry charges obsolete and almost suicidal. In early September there was a celebrated clash between the British 9th Lancers (Queen's Own) and the German First Guards Dragoons, a horse to horse, lance to lance melee in which the British emerged the victors. But the skirmish was more a salute to the past rather than an indication of the future.

By mid-October the cavalry was operating for the most part as dismounted cavalry—Dragoons—or just plain infantry. One British cavalry officer, Captain Francis Grenfell of the 9th Lancers, recognized they were seeing the end of an era. "We have had five of the hardest days of the war in trenches repelling German attacks" he wrote. "I am afraid all the cavalry traditions are forever ended …"

Another sobering British statistic estimates that of the thousand men per battalion that landed in August there remained, on average, one officer and 30 men in December. The empty ranks would be filled by a whole mass of "for the duration" volunteers, which history labels "Kitchener's Army." ■



A Great Soldier's LAST VICTORY

"The Battle of Lauffeld" by Louis Charles Auguste Couder (1836) depicts Marshal Maurice de Saxe's third great victory—the defeat of the Pragmatic army (British, Dutch, Austrian and German) at Lauffeld in 1747, under the eyes of King Louis XV, mounted on white horse. De Saxe went on to capture Bergen Op Zoom and Maastricht, concluding the French conquest of the Austrian Netherlands.

During the War of the Austrian Succession, Maurice de Saxe Led France to Victory at Fontenoy, Rocoux and the Battle of Lauffeld. | BY ERIC NIDEROST

Maurice Hermann, Count of Saxony and Marshal of France, swept the horizon with his telescope, his gaze occasionally pausing on the villages of Vlijtingen and Lauffeld in the distance. Better known to history as Maurice de Saxe, he was standing on the Heerderen Heights, a kind of natural amphitheater that should have given him an excellent view of the terrain just ahead. But, July 2, 1747, had begun with a clammy mist that shrouded the ground before giving way to a heavy rain.

Saxe was facing the "Pragmatic army," a multinational force that included British, Hanoverian, Austrian, and Dutch troops. The polyglot army was commanded by William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland and son of Britain's King George II. Two years earlier Saxe had defeated Cumberland in the celebrated Battle of Fontenoy. The corpulent 27-year-old Cumberland was an able administrator but a poor strategist and an even worse tactician.

In contrast, Saxe was a great soldier acknowledged by his contempo-

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Musée de la Vie rRmantique

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ABOVE, LEFT: Maurice Hermann, Count of Saxony and Marshal of France, also known as "Maurice de Saxe." ABOVE, RIGHT: King Louis XV of France. TOP: William Hogarth's 1750 painting "The March to Finchley" depicts fictional troops preparing to march against Bonnie Prince Charlie at Culloden during the second Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Though satirical, the painting is likely an accurate portrayal of the British Army.

raries as a general of courage, resourcefulness, and real brilliance. But even he, weather notwithstanding, was having difficulties making sense of Cumberland's convoluted marching and counter marching. The drenching rain obscured details, but when the rain slackened and occasionally stopped, puzzling glimpses of Allied soldiers came into view.

Saxe could see thin threads of red in the gloom, marking where British soldiers were leaving Lauffeld. A while later they returned to the village, only to leave a second time. As if he didn't have enough on his hands, the Marshal was responsible for the safety of King Louis XV of France—who was standing right next to him. Though the monarch had a reputation of being a dissolute womanizer, he was courteous and even deferential in Saxe's presence.

Maurice noted that Lauffeld was being torched and wondered if that meant the allied army was going to refuse battle and retreat to the fortress town of Maastricht, only three miles away. The king certainly felt this was the case, but respectfully let Saxe make the judgment call. After taking a few more sweeps of the ground with his telescope, Saxe said they would attack the Pragmatic army. If Cumberland accepted the battle, well and good; if he was trying to escape to Maastricht, Saxe was determined to cut him off. The coming battle might decide the whole campaign.

The mid-eighteenth century was a time of absolute monarchy, where rulers employed relatively small professional armies to engage each other in political games of sanguinary "chess." Wars could be fought for a province, a throne, or even to maintain a precarious balance of power in Europe. Alliances were formed or discarded according to expediency. Lauffeld was part of the War of the Austrian Succession, which began when Emperor Charles VI of Austria died in 1740 without a male heir.

In the last years of his reign, Charles had expended much time and effort in what was called the "Pragmatic Sanction." There were two major components to the agreement: that Habsburg lands would never be divided, and that the succession would automatically go to the Emperor's

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Depicting life in a French military camp during the War of Austrian Succession, this hand-colored engraving from 1740 shows mounted officers in the foreground with soldiers cooking and marching against the backdrop of a walled city being bombarded.

first born child, even if that child was a female. Charles's heir was the Archduchess Maria Theresa, so all of Europe knew the reason why the Sanction was so vitally important.

Most of the major powers did agree to the pact, but upon the Emperor's death their predatory instincts were aroused. Frederick the Great of Prussia boldly seized Silesia, and the other powers quickly coalesced into two rival factions. Great Britain nominally sided with Maria Theresa, but was mainly concerned with the vulnerable Austrian Netherlands (roughly comprising modern Belgium and Luxembourg). France, always the traditional enemy, was sure to cast covetous eyes on the vulnerable province, and it was in Britain's best interest, both political and economic, to see that Flanders remained out of the Gallic orbit.

The French army had fallen on hard times in the early 18th century, decimated and demoralized by the terrible defeats it had sustained during the last years of King Louis XIV. But in the 1740s it found new hope and inspiration from Marshal de Saxe, a man who embodied both the vices and virtues of the aristocratic Age of Reason. An inveterate womanizer, his bedroom exploits rivaled those of Cassanova, his contemporary . Yet he was also a general of real genius, a superb tactician and a man who genuinely tried to take care of his troops, rare martial qualities in Bourbon France,

In 1745 Maurice defeated Cumberland's "Pragmatic Army" at Fontenoy, one of the justly celebrated battles of the eighteenth century. King Louis XV was on hand to witness the triumph, and the royal presence gave the victory added luster. Fontenoy became so famous, it was said to have extended the life of the French monarchy for another 45 years. Forgivable hyperbole, but Saxe's talents were real and deserving of acclaim.

The Duke of Cumberland and the British army were recalled home when the Jacobite rebellion broke out in 1745. "Bonnie" Prince Charles, son of the Stuart pretender, was decisively defeated at Culloden, but Cumberland's ruthless measures against the highlander rebels earned him the infamous sobriquet "butcher."

Never one to rest on his laurels, Saxe took advantage of the absence of the British by capturing Brussels in February 1746 and continuing to advance in Flanders. By summer, the fortresses at Mons and Namur were in French hands and it looked as if the entire Austrian Netherlands would be controlled by the Bourbon monarchy by the end of the year. Yet another French victory at Rocoux in October completed the cycle of allied "Pragmatic" woes.

The Dutch grew alarmed at the seemingly inexorable French advances, and were more than willing to cooperate with Cumberland when he returned. To make sure he had enough men for a spring offensive, Saxe took troops from other fronts to bolster his own forces. By early 1747 the French army in Flanders numbered around 120,000 and was supported by 300 guns. One of Saxe's major objectives was to take the fortress town of Maastricht, a major Pragmatic strongpoint and supply center, which was simultaneously the key to the Netherlands.

If Saxe advanced on Maastricht, Cumberland might be forced into battle to protect the city. If the French could administer a decisive defeat on Cumberland and take Maastricht, total victory might well be in Saxe's grasp. Cumberland and the British army did return to the Austrian Netherlands, the duke still basking in the afterglow of his triumph over the Jacobite Scots rebels.

Brimming with confidence, Cumberland's arrogance matched his expanding girth. He decided to threaten Antwerp, and moved his army accordingly, but the plan soon ran up against a major obstacle—lack of transport. It was February, 1747, and the county was still in the grip of winter. For two long, freezing months the Allies suffered in miserable makeshift cantonments while Saxe's French troops were snug and comfortable in winter quarters.

Saxe was too old a campaigner to fall for Cumberland's half-hearted feints and clumsy maneu-

vers. He wrote "When the Duke of Cumberland has sufficiently weakened his army I shall teach him that a great general's first duty is to provide for its welfare." Saxe also refused to follow the Britisher's lead, preferring instead to seize the initiative himself.

The French were ready to move in April and Saxe sent out two flying columns while Cumberland still dithered about what course of action to take. Marshal Louis de Conrades headed one column that quickly took Liefkenshoek and a fortress near Antwerp locally known as "the Pearl." The second column, commanded by German born Gen. Ulrich Woldemar de Lowendahl, captured Sas-van Gent and two other towns. Since the real prize was Masstricht, Saxe purposely stationed a small army under Marshal Clermont on the Meuse River not far from that fortress.

Cumberland was thus presented with both a puzzle and a dilemma: whether Clermont's force was a mere decoy to bring the Allies to battle or was the advance guard of Saxe's main force which, once united, would move forward for a concerted attack on Maastricht. Cumberland decided to march south and crush Clermont's relatively small force, foiling Saxe's possible plans.

When Clermont became fully aware the main Pragmatic army under Cumberland was headed his way, he understandably started to panic, frantically sending message after message to Saxe pleading for rescue. He needn't have worried, for the wily Saxon-turned French Marshal had everything in hand. To calm Clermont's fears Saxe took to the road well ahead of the main French army, an act of real courage and fortitude given the state of the roads and his own poor health.

Disheveled and mud spattered, Saxe arrived in Clermont's camp looking more like a camp follower than a Marshal, but the sacrifice was necessary. Clermont was reassured that the entire French army was on its way, and that he should hold his position until further orders.

General John Ligonier was a French Huguenot whose family had immigrated to Britain because of the religious persecution of Protestants prevalent in France at that time. Ligonier proved an asset to his adopted country, distinguishing himself as a soldier under the Duke of Marlborough in the War of the Spanish Succession. He was 66, old by eighteenth century standards, and certainly old for the rigors of active service in the field.

But Ligonier was still active and vigorous, and could draw on 50 years of campaigning when assessing any military situation. He had had an early morning conference with Cumberland and the Austrian commander, Marshal Carl Joseph Batthyany. When the business was concluded he mounted his horse and started to ride over to his assigned post. He was General of Horse and Master of the Ordinance in this campaign, and tried to stick to his role in those positions.

Rijksmuseum

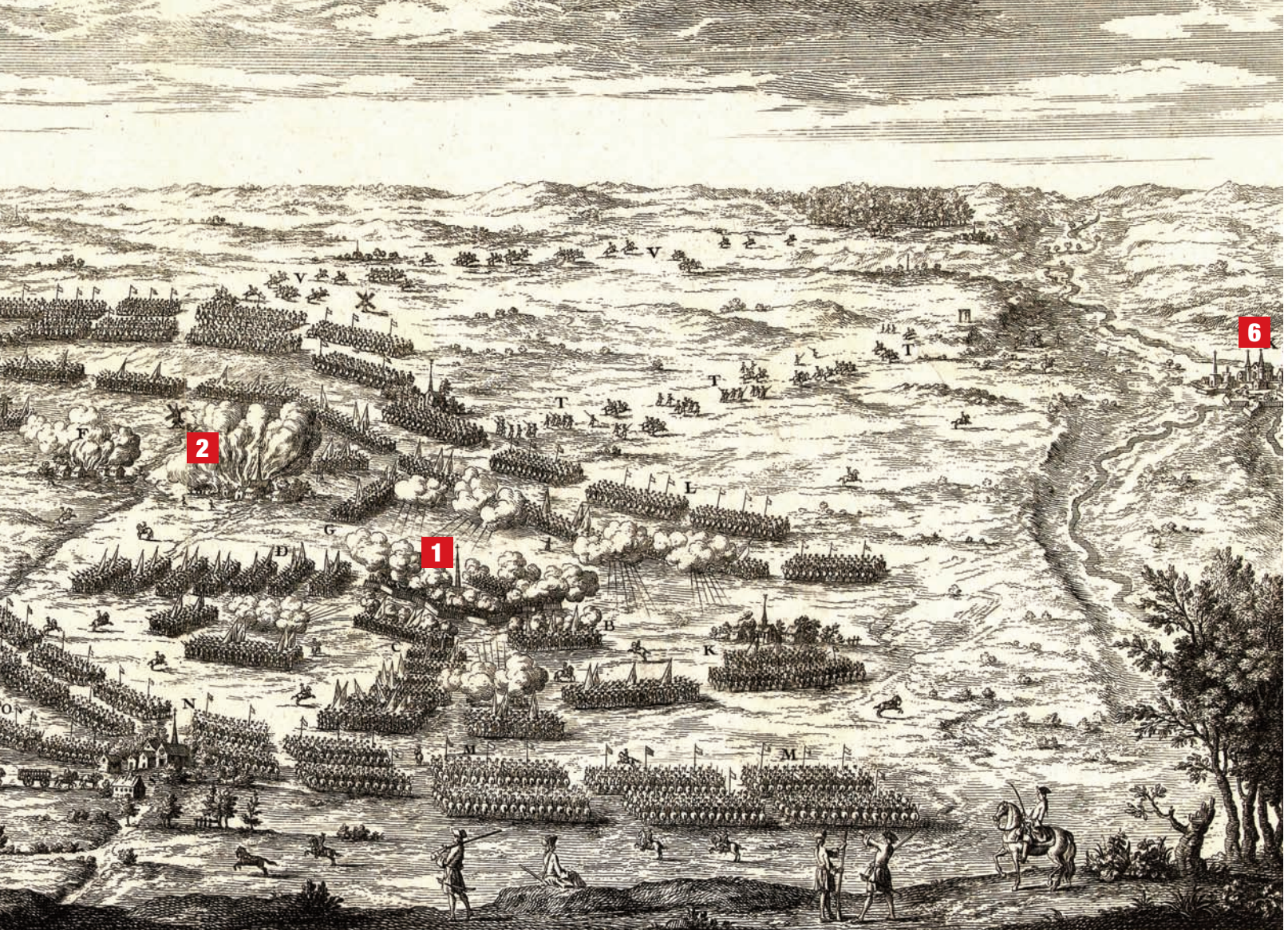
The rain still lingered, dampening spirits as well as clothes and equipment. Though the opposing sides had yet to engage in any serious way, an artillery duel opened up at 6 a.m. that was to continue for another hour and more. But then Ligonier noticed something that made him draw rein and look on in amazement: the red-coated British troops of the First Foot Guards (today's Grenadier Guards) were filing out of Vlytingen village. The nearby Lauffeld village was also being evacuated.

Hardly believing his eyes, Ligonier went back to Cumberland, who apparently had returned to his headquarters to have a leisurely breakfast with Batthyany. Ligonier tried to reason with Cumberland, stressing the value of the villages as strong points. Once converted into mini-fortresses, they would be hard nuts to crack, and would further form a kind of breakwater that would disrupt, if not entirely stop, the wave of French infantry.

Cumberland disagreed. He had ordered the villages occupied the night before only as temporary shelters. When morning came, British and Hanoverian units, especially, were to withdraw after putting the villages to the torch. To the incredulous Ligonier, the need for the village strongpoints was obvious. Either Cumberland had a short memory, or he chose not remember that at Fontenoy the French had, ironically, used similar strongpoints to great advantage.

Ligonier must have argued to the point of exhaustion, because Cumberland finally relented. Lauffeld was reoccupied by British and Hanoverian troops under Landgrave Frederick II of Hesse Cassel, a tough and resourceful soldier who also happened to be the son in law of King George II of Great Britain. Viltingen would be held by the British Foot Guards.

The Pragmatic left was occupied by a number of disparate units. Batthyany and his Austrians held the villages of Grosse and Kleine-Spauwen, a position that was almost impossible to take by frontal attack because of the high ravine just ahead. Kark August, Prince of Waldeck and his Dutch troops were also on the left, and the position was rounded out by an assortment of British, Hessian, and Bavarian regiments.



View of the Battle of Lauffeld from Heerderen Heights, in what is now Belgium, a part of the War of Austrian Succession, on July 2, 1747. King Louis XV accompanied the French army and was present at the battle, as he had been at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745. According to French text accompanying this period map, the King lived in the village of Heerden (5) during the battle.

Satisfied, and probably relieved, Ligonier went back to his assigned position. But once Ligonier's influence was removed, Cumberland became vacillating and uncertain, once again ordered the villages to be abandoned. According to some sources the villages were occupied and abandoned two or even three times. Finally, with a French attack only about an hour away, the villages were occupied, and this time permanently.

All this marching and countermarching had an effect on the troops, both on their morale and on their physical condition. The ground was soggy, and shoes were inevitably caked with mud and the detritus of the cultivated fields. Once they arrived at the all-too familiar villages, their eyes were stung and their throats choked by the acrid stench of burning wood. There was no time to adequately prepare for a defense in the seared ruins, other than poking a few loopholes into walls that were still standing.

Cumberland vacillated because he originally wanted a line-facing-line face off with the French foe. In his conception, the Allied army would form solid ranks that would stretch a mile or more. The British had perfected the art of platoon firing, a system of rolling volleys that was capable of keeping the enemy off balance. The British infantry, three ranks deep, would be a red-coated "wall" that Cumberland felt was much more effective than fixed strongpoints. He was wrong, but Cumberland was a hard man to persuade when his mind was made up.

Ironically Cumberland's ham-fisted handling of his troops—moving his troops to and from the villages—so confused Saxe that he drew the wrong conclusions.The Marquis de Valfrons, a French officer who was present, recalled later that "for more than two hours the Marshal believed the enemy was maneuvering to recross the (River) Meuse; he was confirmed in his opinion when he saw that Lauffeld was on fire." Though his brain and reasoning were just as sharp as ever, the Marshal was also fighting a bad case of edema, so severe he had to be tied in the saddle.

Saxe's original plan called for reconnaissance battalions to lead the way, quickly followed by a major attack on the Allied left-center at Lauffeld with the bulk of the French infantry. Battalion after battalion of white-coated infantry would punch a hole in the Pragmatic center and, while that was happening, French cavalry would simultaneously launch an outflanking move around the village of Wijlre. If successful, this flanking movement would cut the Allies off from seeking shelter at Maastricht.

It was about 10 a.m. when Saxe sent his troops forward to seize the villages, with Lauffeld being the main target. Gen. Gaspard de Clermont's grenadiers led the way, regimental flags flying and drummers beating out martial airs. They expected the ruined village to be empty, but as they approached the British and Hanoverian muskets flamed, spouting gouts of smoke and a hail of lead

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that cut down scores of grenadiers.

After the initial surprise, the grenadiers recovered their senses, rallied, and pressed the attack home. Stubborn courage propelled the French into Lauffeld, but they were soon driven back with heavy losses. Though not in traditional three rank lines, the British still had enough cohesion to fire by platoons in rolling volleys.

Ligonier also made sure that a battery of artillery was moved forward to aid in the village defense. The position was all that could be desired; in fact the battery was so well sited it played a major role in the defense. Every time the French tried to advance, they were lacerated by musket fire supplemented by lethal sprays of grapeshot.

James Wood, an officer in that battery, later recalled how his guns did fearful execution: "Though we cut them down with grapeshot from our batterys (sic) of 12 pounders, (they) did not seem to mind it but filled up their intervals (gaps) that we made with grape shot as they advanced."

Saxe watched the repulse of the grenadiers with consternation, realizing that Cumberland was not retreating. The Saxon could not afford to quit now; those villages had to be taken. There was nothing left to do but continue to send fresh battalions into the "meat grinder." The regiments brought forward were some of the most ancient and distinguished formations in the French Bourbon army: La Fere, Segur, Bourbon, Bettens, Monin, Royal Marine, Vaissaux, and d'Aubeterre, to name a few.

No less than 40 battalions were thrown into the struggle, but the stubborn Pragmatic troops still clung to the ruins with a tenacity that must have sparked a grudging admiration from the French, including Saxe. It was now too late to significantly change plans, and Saxe knew it. Usually he had more finesse, and was sparing with the lives of his men when possible, but to withdraw now would be unthinkable, and might well lead to a French rout.

Saxe was also concerned about the masked Allied battery, some 36 guns in all, that were tearing great bloody gaps in the Regiment du Roi, a cavalry formation that was attempting to support the attacking infantry. The French had to break through—if they did, victory would be assured. In fact, Saxe was sure that he could seriously damage, and possibly destroy, Cumberland's Pragmatic army by blocking its retreat to Maastricht

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ABOVE: At the 1747 Battle of Lauffeld William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, was the commander-in-chief of the Pragmatic army (a mixture of British, Hanoverian, Dutch and Austrian troops). Marshal Károly József Batthyány commaned the Austrian and Bavarian contingent, while Karl August, Prince of Waldeck and Pyrmont, commanding the Dutch. OPPOSITE: Marshal Maurice de Saxe defers to King Louis XV of France with a panoramic view of the battle of Lauffeld.

once the French breakthrough was achieved.

By this time Saxe must have been feeling seriously unwell. He had been in the saddle for hours, and the edema must have made riding an agony. Exhaustion was also taking a toll, but his preoccupation with the ever-changing circumstances of the battle made physical ills a secondary consideration.The ailing Marshal drew his sword, then ordered the Marquis de Salieres to lead 12 additional battalions into the fray.

The Irish Brigade in French service, the fabled "wild Geese," also played a crucial role in the struggle for the villages. They had played a distinguished—some say decisive—part in the Battle of Fontenoy two years earlier. It was a triumph, tempered by an enormous loss of life. The brigade was in voluntary exile due to the harshness of British rule in the Emerald Isle. This exile made recruitment problematic, since anyone caught recruiting Irishmen for foreign service would be severely punished. Recruiters were routinely hanged, though a magistrate might be "lenient" and order more than 1,000 lashes.

Nevertheless Irishmen were recruited, though gaps in the ranks were filled by Scots, Germans, Belgians, and, ironically, British. These outside elements seem to have blended well with the real Irish, so much so that the other nationalities are rarely mentioned. The capture of Lauffeld was another success, but the cost was high, with some 1,600 men dead and wounded. The colonel of the Dillon Regiment, Edward Dillon, was mortally wounded and died in British captivity.

Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, was one of the French officers who participated in this bloody fight for Lauffeld. He had already distinguished himself as a young man of resourcefulness and courage, so much so that he was marked for promotion. It was a time when King Louis's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, handled much of the inner workings of the government. For some unknown reasons a letter of recommendation to her was returned without comment, but luckily Rochambeau's father managed to scrape enough money to buy his son a regiment.

And so Rochambeau became colonel of the Regiment de la Marche at the age of 21. Régiment de la Marche is not listed as a participant at Lauffeld, but Rochambeau, who turned twenty-two the day before the battle, seems to have been lead-

ing, and encouraging, the Royal Auvergne Regiment instead. Sword in hand, young Rochambeau led his men though the village's shattered buildings, some of them still aflame. Smoke from the smoldering fires mingled with the grey clouds of black power, the later from the frequent discharges of muskets at close range

Bodies lay sprawled in the rubble, some clad in British and Hanoverian red, but many more in French white. As Rochambeau led his men through this hell on earth, he was struck in the head with a piece of grapeshot. It was dangerously close to his eye, and the impact knocked him out. As he was returning to consciousness, blood streaming down his face, he was hit by a second piece of grapeshot, this time in the thigh. This piece was as large as a pigeon's egg, and it exited without breaking a bone.

Tate / National Gallery

Rochambeau insisted that his soldiers help him stand, and with their continued support he watched the progress of the village fight. He could no longer lead them, bloodied and crippled as he was, but he cheered the Royal Auvergne Regiment as they advanced into the fray. The grapeshot that wounded Rochambeau was almost certainly from the battery Ligonier had set up.

Once they secured a toehold in the villages, the French managed to enlarge it at the cost of heavy house-to-house fighting. Encouraged by what he was finally seeing in the center, Saxe sent a mass of cavalry into Vytingen. It was an example of what the Italians called the "furia francese," or French fury, an attack conducted with such spirit and elan that all opposition crumbles before it.

Cumberland saw the Gallic horsemen, but initially felt he had the situation well in hand. The British duke sent Dutch cavalry forward to meet the threat, but for reasons unknown they panicked at the sight of the approaching foe. Turning tail, they spurred their mounts and galloped from the field as fast as they could. That was bad enough, but many of them crossed and all but collided with Allied infantry. The result was total confusion, and as the Dutch troopers frantically rode about, they were cut down by Frenchmen galloping in their midst.

While these events were unfolding Cumberland got more bad news: the village of Wijlre on his right flank had also just been taken by the French. The duke had been contemplating going over to the offensive; now, his options rapidly diminishing, it looked like he would be forced to order a retreat.

In the meantime General Ligonier was watching the French cavalry advances. He didn't know that Lauffeld had been taken by the enemy; all he saw was French horsemen nearing his position. It was a temptation too great to pass up; Ligonier knew that if he struck hard now, the French surge would ebb and eventually be stopped in its tracks. Drawing his sword, Ligonier marshaled some 60 British squadrons and put himself at their head. By this time no less than 140 French squadrons were approaching his position.

The British regiments he was leading must have been eager for a fight. During the winter of 1746-47 the British cavalry had been downgraded to dragoon status. Technically that meant they were now mounted infantry, where troopers ride to a battle, then dismount to fight. This was done as a cost-saving measure, because dragoons were paid less, and had generally inferior mounts.

The ensuing action, remembered as "Ligonier's charge," is one of the most famous cavalry actions in British military history. The timing was so perfect that the French were caught by surprise and thrown off balance. French troops were sent reeling, and no less than five French standards were captured in the encounter. In the process Wijlre was retaken, and the French cavalry put to full flight.

Ligonier was about to order a second charge when a note from Cumberland told him the bad news: Lauffeld had been taken, and the French had in effect won the battle. The missive further ordered Ligonier to abandon any idea of a second charge. The French émigré was baffled and frustrated—even if it was true that the battle was lost, a second charge would buy time for the Pragmatic Army to retreat. Ligonier sent back a tactful reply urging Cumberland to reverse his order. Eventually Cumberland did give permission, but by that time the French cavalry had recovered.

The émigré general once again drew his sword, and put himself at the head of the Royal North British Dragoons (Scots Greys), the Inniskilling Dragoons, and the Duke of Cumberland's Hussars, and had the trumpets sound the charge. For whatever reason Hessian cavalry refused to join the advance, so Ligonier had to make do with what he had. At first they swept all before them, a thundering mass of red-coated horsemen whose flashing sabers rose and fell as they cut through the opposing French foes.

Surviving French horsemen turned tail and scattered the British troopers in hot pursuit. But suddenly Ligonier and his men were confronted by a mass of unbroken French Infantry. The white-coated lines of soldiers caused the British troopers to pause and draw reins. Ligonier had penetrated the French lines, but Saxe had actually prepared for such an eventuality. His timing exquisite, Saxe ordered his cavalry reserves forward. Responding to his command, the Regiments d'Anjou, Carabiniers, Royal and de Broglie galloped forward with a special elan.

As the French cavalry appeared on Ligonier's flanks, French infantry also came up to block any possible escape. By now the British horses were blown, too exhausted for any serious attempt at withdrawal, but there was still a chance. Ligonier might have successfully escaped if he abandoned his command and rode hell for leather towards the French lines. He refused to countenance such a move, instead lingering in an attempt to rescue his troopers from death or captivity.

As he was seeking a possible exit for his men, a large body of French horsemen approached his position. Thinking quickly, Ligonier gave them orders in French to halt and proceed to another part of the field. The ruse worked momentarily, until a French officer noticed Ligonier's star badge on his coat and the blue ribbon across his chest, marking him as a member of the British Order of the Garter and a high ranking enemy officer. Ligonier was taken prisoner by two carbineers, who took his sword but graciously refused to collect his watch.

Now a prisoner, Ligonier had no idea what was to become of him—he was a Protestant, an émigré, and fighting in the army of one of France's traditional enemies. The general admitted that he honestly felt he was going to be killed after the French had just won a very hard fought, and

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: At the Battle of Lauffeld, British General John Ligonier ordered his cavalry to charge against a larger French cavalry charge. The move caught the French by surprise and they turned. Ligonier's men cut through enemy lines as they pursued the retreating French, but were soon trapped, their horses exhausted, as more French cavalry appeared on both flanks. OPPOSITE: General Ligonier's horse was killed in the action and he was taken prisoner, but exchanged within a few days.

bloody victory, with many casualties.

Ligonier's captors crowded around, and it seemed this was going to be his end. Within a few moments it became clear he was being taken to Louis XV, and not to his immediate execution, but there was still cause for worry. What would be the king's response? Louis had his faults, but he was genuinely gracious, free of bigotry, and humane.

The prisoner was about to be presented to the king, when Saxe rode up and interceded. The Marshal was exhausted, still racked by edema swellings, and still tied to the saddle so he would not fall off his mount. "Sire," Saxe said to the king, "I have the honor to present to your majesty a man who defeated all my plans by a single glorious action." This was a reference to Ligonier's cavalry charges, which bought time for Cumberland to withdraw his shattered army and escape to the safety of Maastricht.

King Louis smiled, immediately breaking the tension, and said to Ligonier "I will have the pleasure of your company at supper tonight." A much relieved prisoner bowed and kissed the king's hand. Ligonier did indeed have supper with the king, and to his surprise his carriage and other personal items that had been taken by the French were restored to him.

Louis soon released Ligonier, and tried to use him to relay peace feelers to the allies. France had been victorious for the most part, and had conquered most of what is now Belgium thanks to Saxe's genius. That said, France was nearly bankrupt and thoroughly sick of war, however glorious it seemed on the surface. During Ligonier's short captivity he and Saxe became friends, and later exchanged gifts.

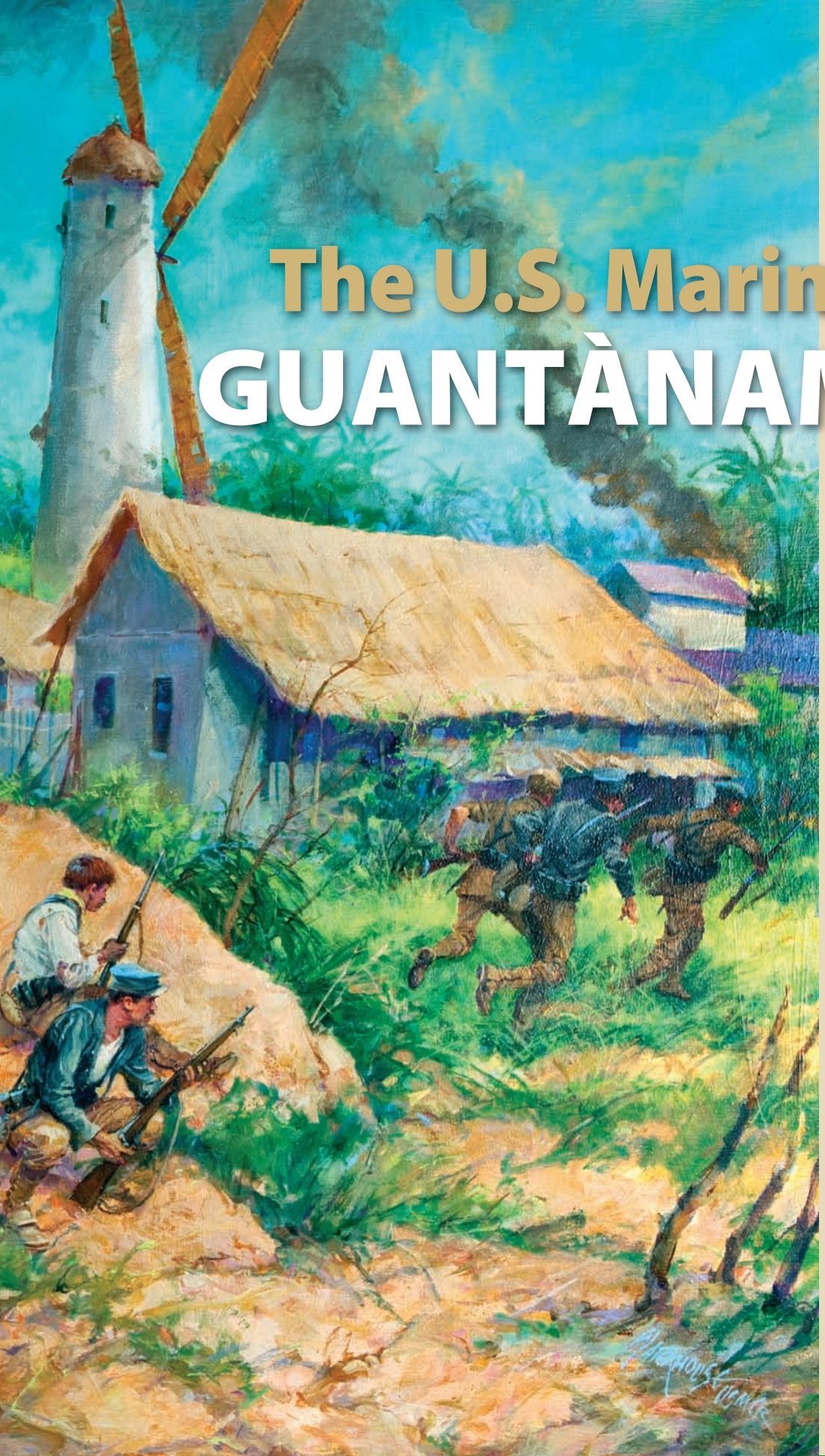
Battlefields are never a pretty sight after hostilities end, but Lauffeld was particularly horrific. In the morning the countryside had been a vision of bucolic charm—quaint "storybook" villages surrounded by fields of ripening crops. Now, the crops had been trampled or blown to bits, the villages burnt shells reeking of smoke and littered with eviscerated corpses. Indeed, Saxe and the French had paid a high price for their victory.

Cumberland's casualty counts included some 2,000 British, 2,500 Hanoverian, and 2,000 from the other allied contingents. The French lost far more, which is not surprising given the grim and tenacious fight for the villages. More commentators estimate French dead and wounded at around 14,000.

The War of the Austrian Succession ended in 1748 and though Saxe's victories left France in control of most of what is today Belgium, the peace treaty gave it back to Austria. Loaded with wealth and honors, but with an ailing body, Saxe died in 1750

For the Comte de Rochambeau, Lauffeld was one episode in what was to become a long and distinguished career. He was commander of the French Expeditionary force that was sent across the Atlantic to aid America during the American Revolution. Rochambeau and George Washington worked well together, and it was this partnership that produced the surrender of the British at Yorktown and the birth of the United States. Yet Lauffeld left its mark, as he would walk with a slight limp the remainder of his life. ■

This painting by Marine Corps artist Col. Charles H. Waterhouse depicts Marines and Cuban insurgent allies fighting Spanish troops during the Battle of Cuzco Well on June 14, 1898.



The landing was easy; holding on was the tough part.

The U.S. Marine Fight at GUANTÀNAMO BAY

BY A.B. FEUER

The capture of Guantànamo Bay, Cuba, by U.S. Marines in 1898 was a brief but violent phase of the Spanish-American War. Overshadowed by the more publicized land and sea battles—and largely ignored by historians—the ramifications of this victory would have far-reaching consequences in future relationships between Cuba and the United States.

Guantànamo Bay was commercially important to the Cuban economy because of the sugar port of Caimanera on the western shore of the inner bay—about five miles from the open sea. At the entrance to the outer bay—Fisherman's Point—a busy fishing village sprawled on a sandy beach beneath 30-foot cliffs. The Spaniards used the villagers to pilot ships entering the bay and bound for Caimanera.

The Cubans had been in revolt against their Spanish masters since 1895. But after three years of bloody fighting, the conflict was still unresolved. The Cuban insurgents controlled only two provinces on the island—while the rest of the country was under the heavy fist of the Spaniards.

Spanish troops held Guantànamo City, Caimanera, and the railroad connecting the two cities. A line of blockhouses defended the rail line, and a blockhouse and rifle pits had been constructed on the cliffs overlooking Fisherman's Point. A fort on South Toro Cay commanded the narrow channel leading from the outer to inner bay. Caimanera was also protected by a fort, and the Spanish gunboat *Sandoval* patrolled the inner bay.

After the sinking of the battleship *Maine* in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898—and the subsequent declaration of war by the United States against Spain—a naval blockade of Cuba, under the direction of Adm. William T. Sampson, was put into effect. However, recoaling a hundred blockading

National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, Va.

Naval History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: In preparation for the Marine landing at Guantànamo, members of a small detail take fire as they cut the Spanish telegraph cables connecting Guantànamo, Caimanera and Haiti. OPPOSITE: Spanish troops fire on Camp McCalla at daybreak on June 11. Pursuing the Spanish after eventually driving them off, the Marines discovered two of their picketts on outpost duty had been shot dead.

ships became an immediate major problem. Only 13 coaling vessels were available to the blockade fleet, and the nearest coaling station was at Key West, Florida, a distance of 90 miles.

A few weeks before war was officially declared, U.S. Navy Secretary John D. Long had visualized Guantànamo Bay as an ideal advance coaling station, and directed the U.S. Marine Corps to organize a battalion for service in Cuba.

On April 6, 1898, Colonel Charles Heywood, commandant of the Marine Corps, ordered selected Marines from bases on the East Coast to assemble at the Brooklyn Barracks at the New York Navy Yard.

A detachment of 60 Marines of D Company, under the command of Capt. William F. Spicer, departed Portsmouth, New Hampshire, by train. Private John H. Clifford was one of the group. In his article, "My Memories of Cuba," which appeared in the June 1929 issue of *Leatherneck* magazine, Clifford described the flurry of excitement upon reaching the Navy Yard: "Brooklyn Barracks bustled with wartime activity. Detachments were arriving from everywhere. The barracks were overcrowded and finding a place to sleep was a problem. Eventually a battalion, consisting of five rifle companies and one artillery company was formed. The battalion strength consisted of 636 enlisted personnel—along with 24 officers—and was placed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Huntington."

The Marine rifle companies were issued Lee straight-pull rifles—a high-velocity, 6mm weapon that used smokeless powder. The artillery company, under Capt. F.H. Harrington—and battery commanders First Lts. C.G. Long and William N. McKelvy—was provided with three-inch rapid-fire guns and the Colt 1895 machine gun.

John Clifford continued: "On April 22, with the Navy Yard Band leading the way, we marched down three Brooklyn streets. Thousands of patriotic, cheering Americans lined the parade route as we headed back to the yard and went aboard the *Kanapaha*."

On April 26, the Marine troopship *Panther*, escorted by the *Montgomery*, sailed for Key West. During the voyage, the rifle companies were exercised in volley firing, and the three-inch guns fired one round each. In the late afternoon of the 29th, the *Panther* anchored at Key West. The Marines disembarked, and for the next month drilled and engaged in gunnery practice.

About three o'clock on the morning of June 6, the Marines struck their tents, loaded their baggage, and once again marched aboard the *Panther*. The next day the battalion sailed for Cuba and an amphibious landing at Guantànamo Bay. Before any attack could be launched, however, the telegraph cables connecting Guantànamo with Caimanera and Haiti would have to be cut.

The *Marblehead*, *St. Louis*, *Yankee*, and the cable-steamer *Panther* were assigned the dangerous task. The flotilla was placed under the command of Cmdr. Bowman McCalla aboard the *Marblehead*. McCalla had orders to reconnoiter the bay while the *St. Louis* and *Adria* cut the cable at its source—Fisherman's Point.

The cable-cutting went off without a hitch as the *Marblehead* and *Yankee* steamed into the bay. McCalla observed Spanish soldiers entrenched on the cliffs and in front of the blockhouse. He immediately ordered his ship and the *Yankee* to open fire on the enemy position. The blockhouse was swiftly pounded to rubble and most of the trenches destroyed.

During the bombardment, the *Marblehead* and *Yankee* were in plain view of the Spanish artillery batteries on South Toro Cay and the Caimanera fort. The Spaniards fired several nuisance salvos, without effect, and at dusk, the *Sandoval* raced down the channel, fired a few quick shots, then dashed back to Caimanera.

Commander McCalla conferred with Admiral Sampson. They decided to land the Marine battalion at Fisherman's Point and establish a campsite at the clifftop blockhouse.

Preparatory to the invasion, the *Marblehead*, along with the *Dolphin* and *Vixen*, bombarded the landing beach and enemy trenches. They were soon joined by the *St. Louis*, *Yankee*, and the *Adria*. The exact number of Spanish troops in the vicinity was not known; however, about five thousand soldiers, commanded by Gen. Felix Pareja, were reported to be

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encamped a short distance inland.

Aboard the *Marblehead*, a war correspondent for the *Boston Herald* described the amphibious operation: "The first landing of American forces on Cuban soil took place about eight o'clock on the morning of June 10. A detachment of 40 marines from the *Oregon* and 20 from the *Marblehead* went ashore at Guantànamo Bay and occupied the east entrance of the harbor below Fisherman's Point.

"At one o'clock the *Panther*, escorted by the *Yosemite*, arrived with more than 600 marines. The men climbed into cutters and were towed by steam-launches to the beach.

"The landing, carried out under a blazing-hot afternoon sun, was unopposed. B Company, under Lieutenant N.H. Hall, was the first contingent ashore. C Company, led by Captain George F. Elliott, was the next to land, and both companies deployed up the steep cliff to the ruins of the blockhouse.

"The entire assault proceeded as efficiently as a Sunday-school picnic. Within an hour, the marines had burned the village and taken possession of the hill. Color Sergeant Richard Silvey hoisted the Stars and Stripes above the blockhouse—the first American flag to fly over Cuba. The site was enthusiastically given the name of Camp McCalla, after the popular commanding-officer of the *Marblehead*."

The Spaniards had evidently made a hurried departure from the hill. Scattered about the trenches and blockhouse were many personal possessions—along with hammocks, machetes, ammunition, and two field pieces. Also discovered in the rubble were a batch of official telegrams giving the strength of Spanish fortifications in the area. It was suspected that the messages had been deliberately discarded to deceive the Americans, but they were turned over to Admiral Sampson so he could investigate their authenticity.

In his report to Marine Headquarters, Lt. Col. Huntington commented on the Marine campsite: "The hill occupied by our troops is not a good location—but the best to be had at this time. The ridge slopes downward and to the rear from the bay. The plateau at the top is very small, and the surrounding countryside is covered with thick, almost impenetrable, brush. Our position is commanded by a range of hills about 1200 yards distant."

With the bay at their backs—and the jungle and hills to the front and sides—the Marines were in an endangered position, but tents were pitched and outposts established. Shortly after sundown the Marines ate their first meal in Cuba—hardtack and coffee.

About 10 p.m. a sentry sounded an alarm. The Marines were rousted from their sleep, and a skirmish line was quickly formed. Spanish voices were heard in the distance and lights were seen in the brush, but no attack materialized.

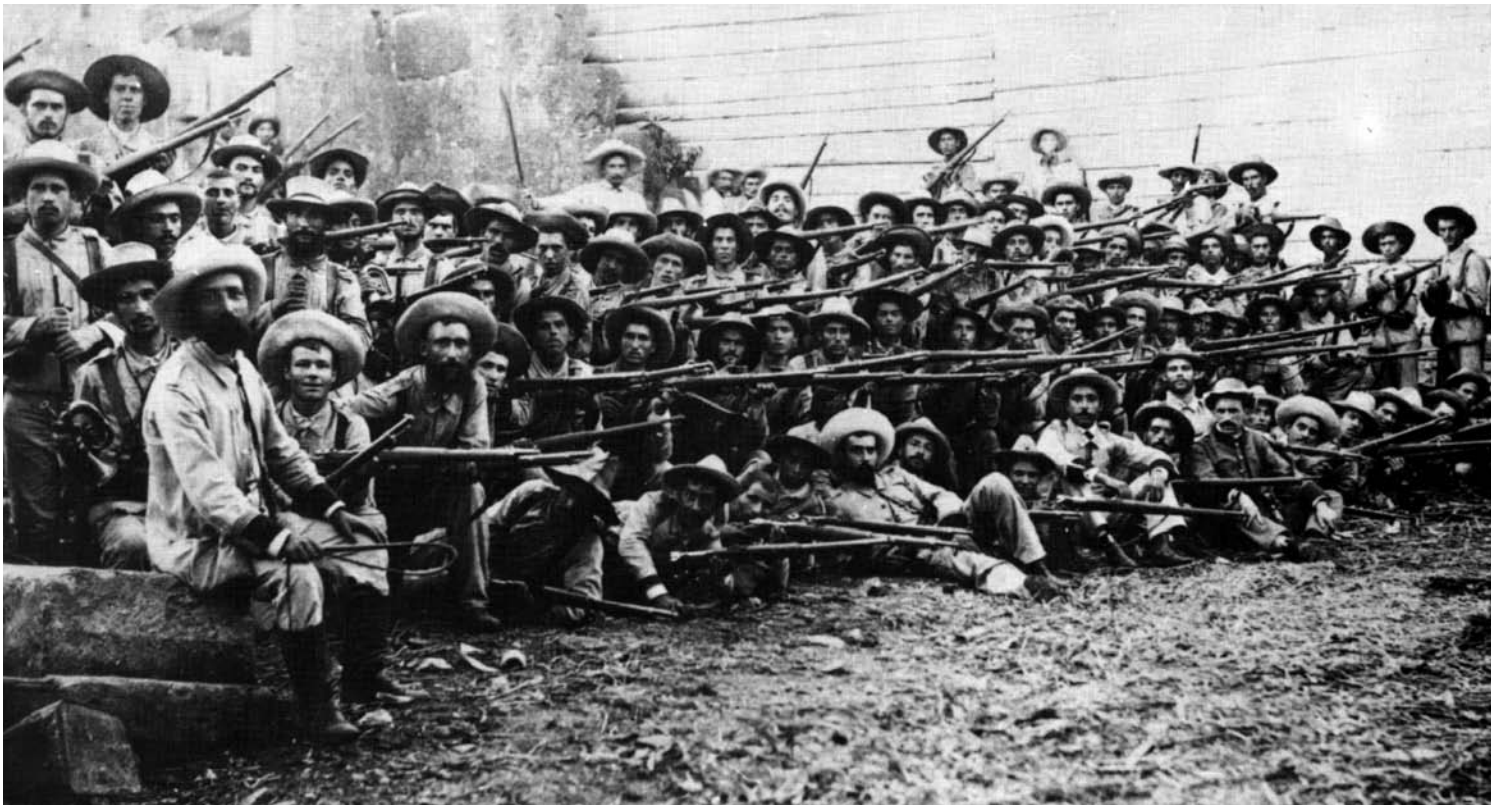
The Marines had a restless night and awoke to another scorching hot day. The only sounds emanating from the jungle were the cooing of mourning doves—which in reality were the Spaniards signaling to each other.

In the early afternoon, Colonel Laborde, commander of the Cuban insurgents in the area, told Huntington that the main Spanish force in the vicinity was headquartered at a freshwater well at Cuzco—some six miles southeast of Fisherman's Point. The well provided the only drinking water for the enemy troops—which comprised about 500 soldiers.

Late in the day, Privates William Dumphy and James McColgan of D Company were on outpost duty about 300 yards from camp. They were relaxing under a tree, but were soon lulled into carelessness by the constant heat and hypnotic sounds of the tropical forest. Without warning, Dumphy and McColgan were attacked and killed by a Spanish patrol that had sneaked through the thick brush. Both men were shot through the head at close range. The bodies of the Marines were stripped of shoes, hats, and cartridge belts—and then mutilated with machetes.

In his handwritten diary, Private Henry D. Schrieder of C Company recalled the events that followed: "About five-thirty we heard shots. Moments later, a Cuban scout rushed into camp shouting that

National Archives



a Spanish force was heading our way. The outposts were immediately alerted and hurried measures were taken for defense of the camp. Enemy Mauser bullets quickly began zipping over our heads. The Spaniards were hiding in the brush on all sides of us. Many had leaves and branches tied around their bodies so that they could scarcely be distinguished from the undergrowth. With our entrenchments still not completed, we made easy targets.

"Colonel Huntington tried to lead the battalion in a counterattack, but the underbrush was so thick and thorny that he continued the advance with only one company. Upon reaching the outpost defended by Dumphy and McColgan, the butchered bodies of our fellow marines were discovered. They never had a chance to defend themselves."

The search for the elusive enemy was abandoned at dark and Huntington and his frustrated detachment returned to the camp. Throughout the night, the Marines never slept. Deadly, high-velocity bullets riddled their defenses. Furious volleys—interspersed with sporadic fire—kept the battalion on adrenalin-flowing alert.

While standing in front of a hospital tent at about 1 a.m., Assistant Surgeon John B. Gibbs had just remarked to another doctor, "Let's get out of this. I don't want to be killed here!" when a Spanish bullet struck him in the head—passing through one temple and out the other.

Sergeant Charles H. Smith and his squad from D Company were dug in on the east slope of the hill on picket duty where the enemy attacked throughout the night. Smith was killed, and Corporal Glass and Privates McGowan and Dalton were wounded. First Lieutenant W.C. Neville and several men ventured out to recover Smith's body, but they came under heavy fire and were forced to fall back.

Henry Schrieder continued his account: "The Spaniards launched a dozen attacks before daybreak. The assaults were most threatening after midnight, when it seemed that the camp was completely surrounded. We held our ground defiantly, and our volleys seemed to have been delivered with good judgment, for they sufficed to hold the enemy in check.

"The night was uncommonly dark but the *Marblehead*, anchored out in the bay, kept her searchlight trained on the thickets. The lightbeams—along with the muzzle flash of Mauser rifles—served to guide our aim.

"At daylight on the 12th, the artillery field pieces, under the command of Lieutenants Long and McKelvy, commenced pounding the Spanish positions with rapid fire barrages. About this time, the *Texas* arrived and landed 40 marine reinforcements and two Colt machine guns. The weapons were hauled up the hill and mounted on the earthworks. The additional fire power promised more security for our men defending the camp, and gave Colonel Huntington the opportunity to deploy one company as skirmishers and move forward to dislodge the Spaniards. The efforts of the skirmishing party—supported by gunfire from the camp and numerous salvos from the *Marblehead*—seemed almost continuous, but the Spaniards kept shifting their attacks from place to place.

"Snipers became a major problem. Accordingly, all tents and supplies were moved to the side of the hill facing the bay, and a trench 40 yards long was dug on the south front. A barricade was also constructed as enemy forces were reported to be assembling for an all-out assault on Camp McCalla.

"At ten o'clock on the morning of the 12th, Privates Dumphy and McColgan and Surgeon Gibbs were buried on the south slope of the hill. The solemn ceremony was continually interrupted by the enemy—to whom the sacred purpose of those sharing in this observance must have been apparent. The prayers were concluded under the zing of Mauser bullets. The salutes we fired over the graves were aimed at the Spaniards."

Following the burial service, a flagpole and a large American flag were sent ashore from the *Marblehead*. The permanent flag was raised over Camp McCalla by the Marine battalion adjutant, First Lt. Herbert L. Draper. As the Stars and Stripes whipped in the breeze, the Marines cheered and ships in the harbor fired salutes and blew their whistles.

At the conclusion of the flag-raising ceremony, a defense perimeter was established, and C and D Companies took over the outpost positions. Ten Cuban scouts were attached to each picket company.

As soon as darkness settled over the jungle, a large Spanish force attacked the outposts. Hearing the gunfire, the *Marblehead* and *Panther* closed the shore and sent salvo after salvo into the woods. Several shells exploded in the vicinity of D Company. Word was

Both: USMC Archives

ABOVE: Lieutenant Herbert L. Draper raises the American flag in Camp McCalla, Guantànamo, as ships below fire salutes. TOP: Captain Francis Harrington stands beside a Hotchkiss 3-inch naval landing gun manned by Marine infantry at Camp McCalla. OPPOSITE: Spanish soldiers such as these were typical of those fighting first the insurgent Cubans, and then the Americans, in 1898.

quickly passed back to camp, and the ships were ordered to cease firing. Commander McCalla assumed responsibility for the error. He stated that upon noticing the muzzle flash from the Marine rifles, he had mistakenly believed that they were Mausers.

For most of the night, the men of D Company were kept busy defending their outpost. Under the circumstances, casualties were light. Sergeant Major Henry Good and Private Goode Taurman were killed, and Privates Burke, Wallace, Martin, and Roxbury were wounded. Just before daybreak, a large Spanish force sneaked through the high brush on the hill and charged Camp McCalla, but was beaten back by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire.

Later in the morning, reinforcements of 50 Cuban insurgents commanded by Lt. Col. Enrique E. Tomas arrived. The Cubans, familiar with guerrilla tactics, deployed in front of the camp—burning the thicket as they advanced—and cleared an area so as to deny the Spaniards the cover they had been using to their advantage.

Sporadic enemy sniper fire continued to plague the Marines. They stayed by their guns, ready for immediate action. By nightfall, the battalion was on the verge of exhaustion. In addition to the unbearable heat, the Marines had not slept or rested for more than 72 hours.

At daybreak on June 14—while half the Marine battalion was at breakfast—the Spaniards launched a heavy attack on Camp McCalla from the direction of the Cuzco hills. But once again they were beaten back. The *Marblehead*'s steam-launch, heading for Fisherman's Point, opened fire on the retreating Spanish troops, chasing them along the beach with her rapid-fire one-pounder.

Colonel Huntington realized that his overly-tired Marines could not keep fighting off enemy raids, both day and night, while waiting for promised reinforcements to arrive. A large-scale Spanish assault could possibly drive the battalion off the narrow beachhead. Huntington discussed the situation with Colonel Laborde. The Cuban commander suggested a surprise attack on the Spanish headquarters at Cuzco. Defeat of the enemy troops—and destruction of their water supply—would force the Spaniards to withdraw from the area. A strategy conference was held with Commander McCalla, and the plan was given the go-ahead. It was 9 a.m. when the Marines received their orders—and the sun was already hot and bright.

In his official report of the expedition, Captain George Elliott stated: "In accordance with verbal instructions, I left camp with 160 men of C and D companies—commanded respectively by First Lieutenant L.C. Lucas and Captain William F. Spicer. We were accompanied by 50 Cubans under Lieutenant Colonel Enrique Tomas. My orders were to destroy the well at Cuzco. This was the enemy's only drinking water supply within 12 miles, and made possible the continuance of annoying attacks upon Camp McCalla.

"When we were about three miles from Cuzco, I sent the first platoon of C Company, and 25 Cubans under Lieutenant Lucas, to traverse a high hill on the left. I had hoped to cut off any enemy pickets in the vicinity, however, our detachment was seen by a Spanish outpost. The Spaniards immediately ran to warn their main body of soldiers at Cuzco.

"Lucas and his platoon were successful in gaining the crest of the hill, but came under heavy enemy fire from the valley below—a distance of 800 yards.

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Meanwhile, Second Lieutenant P.M. Bannon led the second platoon of C Company along a path below the crest and hidden from view by the Spaniards. In order to keep from being seen, it soon became necessary for Bannon's column to leave the narrow trail and proceed through the heavy brush. Captain Spicer and D Company followed in single file.

"The crest of the hill was in the shape of a horseshoe—two-thirds encircling the Cuzco valley and the well. By late morning, C and D Companies, along with the Cubans, had occupied one-half of the horseshoe ridge.

"Meanwhile, Second Lieutenant L.J. Magill—on outpost duty with a platoon of A Company—heard the firing and came to our assistance. His detachment was directed to cover the left-center of the ridge.

"We were under attack by an unseen enemy. Individual Spaniards were sighted here and there and fired upon. They would dash from cover to cover, enabling us to find targets, which otherwise was impossible because of the thick chaparral in which the Spanish soldiers successfully concealed themselves.

"The enemy, rushing from one position to another, gave Magill's platoon the opportunity to catch the Spaniards in a crossfire. The Spanish defense was quickly reduced to straggling shots.

"The *Dolphin*, which had been ordered to cruise along the shore and support us if necessary, was signaled to destroy the house used as the enemy's headquarters, and also to bombard the valley."

By this time, however, the ship had steamed too far up the coast and her shells began falling on Magill's position, forcing the platoon to dig in on the reverse side of the ridge. Sergeant John H. Quick jumped to his feet and—amid a barrage of Mauser bullets—signaled the *Dolphin* to cease firing.

Lieutenant Magill was ordered to form a skirmish line and move down into the valley toward the sea. Lieutenant Lucas, with 40 men, fought his way into Cuzco, destroyed the well, and burned the building being used by the Spaniards as their headquarters.

Magill's platoon ransacked the enemy's shore signal station and confiscated a heliograph signal outfit that had been in constant use since the Marine landing.

The mission was a resounding success. Eighteen Spanish soldiers, including one officer, were captured—along with 30 Mauser rifles and a large quantity of ammunition. For the Americans, casualties were remarkably low—a single Marine was wounded and 12 were overcome by the heat. Spanish losses were approximately 30 killed and 150 wounded. The fight at Cuzco was the first pitched battle between American and Spanish troops during the war. With their fresh-water supply cut off, the Spaniards retreated to Caimanera and the town of Guantànamo.

On June 15, Captain John Philip, commanding the *Texas*, received orders to bombard the fort at Caimanera and drive out the Spaniards. The *Texas*, followed by the *Marblehead*, carefully steamed past the Toro Cays and entered the inner harbor. Captain Philip maneuvered the battleship as close to the shore as possible without running aground, and opened fire with his 12-inch battery. The *Marblehead* joined in the action—the blasts from its five-inchers drowned out by the thunder from the big guns of the *Texas*. The *Suwanee* took position off the starboard side of the *Marblehead* and participated in the attack.

Carlton T. Chapman, a war correspondent aboard the press boat *Kanapaha*, described the bombardment in vivid detail: "The *St. Paul* and other vessels remained in the lower bay. Sailors crowded the rigging and swarmed every lofty perch. They had grandstand seats and could see it all—the ships, the red-tile roofs of Caimanera, and the fort where exploding shells hurled thick clouds of yellow dust skyward.

"The marines on McCalla Hill had even a better

view. A dark blue thundercloud in the background made a magnificent setting for the ships and the spiraling smoke which floated across the bay and melted into the distance.

"The sailors and marines cheered, shouted and waved their hats whenever a shell from the *Texas* struck the fort. The flash of the discharge and the resulting explosion seem to be instantaneous. Then comes the smoke from the guns—rolling and swelling out in a vast cloud—followed by shock waves from the explosions reverberating across the water and ringing in your ears.

"The battleship was silhouetted most of the time—standing out in bold relief against the flame and smoke one moment, and enveloped in a thick cloud of haze the next. Except for a few shots from the fort at the opening of the action, there was no reply from the Spaniards, The bombardment was halted after an hour and a quarter and the fighting men-of-war withdrew down the bay."

The *Marblehead*'s launch remained in the channel and began grappling for mines. The boat's crew had no sooner hooked one of the deadly devices when enemy soldiers along the shore opened fire on the sailors. The launch was struck several times, but the bow gunner turned his one-pounder on the Spaniards and the other members of the crew replied with their rifles. The battle was running hot and heavy when the boat's gun mounting loosened and the one-pounder fell overboard.

The *Suwanee*, hearing the shooting, dashed up the channel and shelled the enemy positions, driving the Spanish troops into the jungle. Henry Schrieder remarked: "Two mines were picked up by the *Marblehead*'s launch. Both were French-made and packed with about a hundred pounds of guncotton each. The mines were manufactured in 1896 and placed in position when war was declared.

"Two Spanish soldiers came into camp and surrendered. They reported that their forces near Camp McCalla had been without food for three days, and one body of 500 men would give themselves up if not prevented by the officers.

"Spanish snipers in the bushes and trees along the north shore of the bay continued to be a nuisance. At dark, searchlight beams from the ships shined up and down the channel and into the thickets looking for any movement. About ten o'clock, the *Marblehead*, *Suwanee*, *Dolphin* and *St. Paul* steamed up the bay and bombarded the enemy shoreline for a half-hour."

The following morning, June 16, the *Oregon* arrived escorting two large coal colliers. Captain Charles Clark, commanding officer of the *Oregon*, requested permission for his men to get in some target practice. The request was granted and, in the early afternoon, the *Oregon* fired a few salvos into Caimanera—hitting the telegraph office and railroad station. As soon as the first shell exploded, a train standing alongside the station immediately put on a full head of steam and took off up the tracks with its whistle shrieking.

A few days after the bombardment of Caimanera, Commander McCalla began to concentrate his efforts on clearing the enemy minefield, which still posed a danger to ships. A minesweeping operation was carried out using two steam-launches and two whaleboats from the *Marblehead* and *Dolphin*—but they were quickly fired upon by a detachment of Spanish infantry across from the Toro Cays. McCalla was determined to eliminate the danger, and an expedition was planned.

On June 25 at 3 a.m., Colonel Huntington left camp with C and E Companies, along with 60 Cubans under Lt. Col. Tomas. Their mission was to clean out Spanish resistance on the west side of the bay.

The Marines crossed the channel in 15 boats. Henry Schrieder narrated: "The *Marblehead* took position close to the beach to cover the landing. The boats advanced in three columns and the marines were landed quietly and rapidly. A thorough reconnaissance was made, but the enemy was gone. Evidence indicated that they had left in a great hurry—probably the night before. We reembarked at nine o'clock. A column of Spaniards was seen from the *Marblehead*—one or two men at a time crossing a dry lagoon a few miles to the northwest. They were not fired upon."

Meanwhile, around June 22 to June 25, an American expeditionary force of about 16,000 men had landed east of Santiago without opposition. A week later, the historic battles of El Caney and San Juan Heights ended in victory for U.S. forces, and opened up the approaches to Santiago itself.

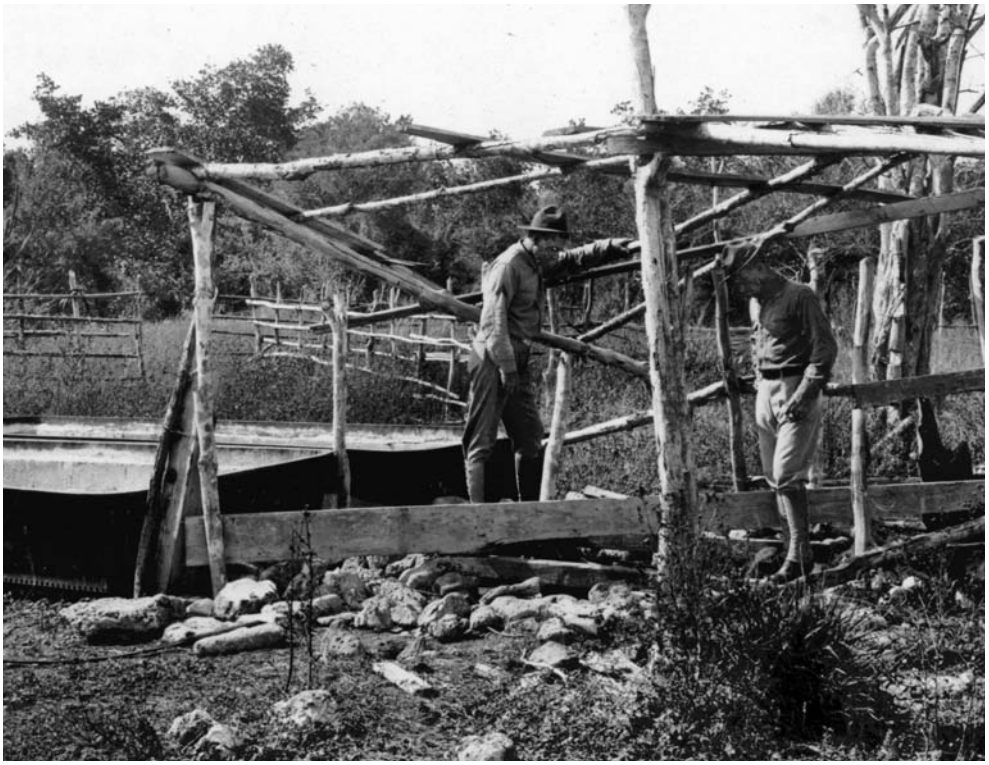
On the morning of July 3, a demand was sent to the city's commander, Arsenio Linares, to surrender the town or suffer bombardment. After several days of negotiations, Linares surrendered the city on July 15.

Less than a week after the surrender of Santiago, Guantànamo Bay was used as a staging area for the invasion of Puerto Rico. This was the last important episode for Guantànamo Bay in the Spanish-American War. The conflict ended on August 12, 1898, with the signing of the peace protocol and an armistice.

The American base at Guantànamo Bay was not formalized by lease agreement between the United States and Cuba until five years later, when in 1903 it was acquired as a coaling and naval station.

In 1903, George F. Elliott was appointed Brigadier General Commandant of the Marine Corps, relieving Maj. Gen. Charles Heywood. Elliott was the only commandant to receive his early training at West Point, and retired with the rank of major general in 1910. ■

Marine Corps Archive



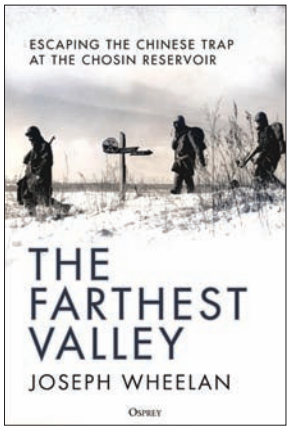
ABOVE: Marines inspect the captured well on June 14, 1898. The Battle of Cuzco Well was a portion of the larger fight for Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, during the Spanish–American War. OPPOSITE: Lt. Col. Huntington sent Marines, accompanied by insurgents, to capture the Spanard's water source at Cuzco Well. Destroying the only source of fresh water forced the Spanish to leave the area.

Marine Photo 127-N-A5434, taken by Sgt. F. C. Kerr, via NARA

The U.S. Marines waged a terrible fighting withdrawal from a Chinese trap at the Chosin Reservoir in December 1950.

By Christopher Miskimon

The Chinese assault troops lay down in the snow to hide from the U.S. Marines guarding the American perimeter at Yudam-Ni, November 27, 1950. Small groups of them probed that perimeter, searching for weak spots. The Marine sentries could hear them talking. More pungently, the Marines could smell them. The Chinese troops reeked of garlic, issued to them as a cold preventative. Whether there were weak points or not, the Chinese had to attack; their men were starving and freezing to death. They had to move or die.



They attacked in columns, sounding bugles, whistles and duck calls. Many of the Chinese troops threw grenades, other fired submachine guns or rifles. Lt. Col. Ray Murray, commanding the 5th Marine Regiment, ducked as a burst of machine gun fire ripped through the top of his headquarters tent. It was eerie, scary," he said. "I heard all these bugles and all the hell raising. They were screaming and shouting and then I heard the firing start." Over 30,000 Chinese soldiers surrounded 8,200 Marines at Yudam-Ni.

The Marines fought back, pouring fire into their advancing enemy. John Cole, A Marine in I Company, 5th Marines, recalled the attack. "You never saw so much movement. They were loading up to attack, that whole field stood up and started running at us, screaming "Marine you die tonight, you die tonight. We just kinda leveled in and let them have it."

The Americans concentrated their firepower. The commander of the Chinese 2nd Battalion, 235th Regiment, knowing his men were succumbing to the frigid temperatures, sent all 800 of his men into the attack. The Marines waited until the Chinese infantry were only 15 yards from their position and opened a deadly fire. The attack crumbled under the weight of steel and lead the Marines threw at it. The Chinese repeated their attacked several more time to the same end. By morning the Chinese battalion lost 650 men.

Red and Green tracers flashed across the battlefield; Some ricocheted into the air while others stopped in the bodies of men. One Marine machine gunner changed the barrel in his Brown-

Armed with an M1919 Browning Light Machine Gun and M1903 Springfields, First Division Marines trade fire with well-entrenched Chinese Communist forces on December 7, 1950, during the division's heroic breakout from the Chosin Resevoir in Korea. Note that some are clad in World War II-era tropical "frogskin" camouflage.

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- **How the BIGGER problem of "global cooling" has been overlooked** and why it could cause far greater hazards to humans than global warming (p. 174)
- **How a FAKE consensus of scientists and CORRUPTION of the peer-review process** have been purposely misused by politicians to further their agendas since 1990 (p. 56)
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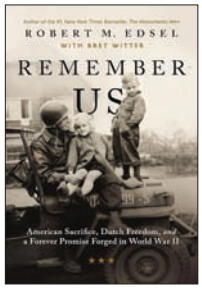
ing .30-caliber three times that night, using an asbestos glove to remove the overheated ones. Platoon leader Lt. Jack Nolan said, "I didn't comprehend the magnitude or scope of the attack until I saw the bodies in the morning." He counted 201 enemy dead sprawled on the ground in front of his company's positions. Some were only five yards from the Marine's defensive positions.

This attack was only the beginning of a long ordeal for the Marines, US Army troops and Chinese soldiers at and around the Chosin Reservoir. Ten thousand Chinese troops were lost on the first night, but they continued their encircling attack, hoping to cut off the US forces from escape. The cold proved as deadly an enemy as shellfire or enemy bullets. For two weeks the US forces fought their way through the Chinese until they reached the Sea of Japan. Their story of bravery and determination, and of Chinese perseverance, is told in ***The Farthest Valley: Escaping the Chinese Trap at the Chosin Reservoir*** (Joseph Wheelan, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2024, 384pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $35, HC).

This latest work by an established author of military history stands out for its detailed and graphic depictions of the combat and suffering of both sides. The extent of research is apparent in the narrative, which intertwines the American and Chinese perspectives of the battle. Most accounts of the Korean War tend to leave out North Korean and Chinese viewpoints; this book is all the better for its inclusion of the Chinese experience. The Chosin Reservoir is one of the most famous battles of the Korean War, but this new book adds a new depth of understanding for the reader, who can follow the action from both points of view in this well-written and readable volume.

Remember Us: American Sacrifice, Dutch Freedom, and a Forever Promise Forged in World War II (Robert M. Edsel, Harper Horizon, New York NY, 2025, 512 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $31.99, HC)



When Nazi Germany invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, it began four and a half years of brutal occupation. That occupation only ended through the sacrifice of thousands of Allied soldiers and airmen. Today, 8,200 of the American servicemen killed in that cause lie buried at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten. The names of 1,700 more are carved in the Walls of the Missing. Their stories are intertwined with other soldiers and civilians. This includes Frieda van Schäik, a Dutch teenager who fell in love with an American soldier; Lieutenant Colonel Robert Cole, the first member of the 101st Airborne to receive the Medal of Honor; and Sergeant Jeff Wiggins of the 960th Quartermaster Company, who left behind the poverty and prejudice of Alabama to be assigned to dig graves.

This new book tells the stories of 12 people who fought or lived through the carnage of the war. The author's research pulled together various historical records, diaries, and unpublished letters to weave together a fascinating narrative of the sacrifices made to free Europe and the gratitude the Dutch have for those who sacrificed on their behalf.

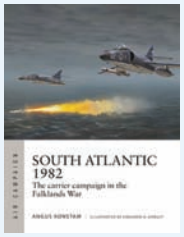
The Brown Water War at 50: A Retrospective on the Coastal and Riverine Conflict in Viet-

SHORT BURSTS

China's Stealth Fighter: The J-20 'Mighty Dragon' and the Growing Challenge to Western Air Dominance (Abraham Abrams, Pen and Sword, 2024, $39.95, hardcover). China's stealth fighter program is one of the most heralded weapons systems of the 21st Century. This book delves into the known details of this new fighter.

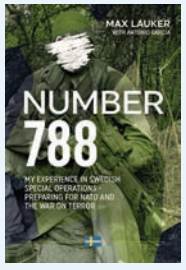
Aircraft of the Royal Navy Since 1908 (David Hobbs, Seaforth Publishing, 2024, $71.00, Hardcover) . This encyclopedic volume provides details on all the aircraft types used by the Fleet Air Arm. It is well illustrated and full of technical detail.

Son Tay 1970: The Operation Ivory Coast POW Rescue Mission (Justin Williamson, Osprey Publishing, 2024, $23.00, softcover). This meticulously planned raid to recover American POWs was executed flawlessly, but the tragically the prisoners were gone. This book explains how it was planned and carried out.



South Atlantic 1982: The Carrier Campaign in the Falklands War (Angus Konstam, Osprey Publishing, 2024, $25.00, softcover). Britain sent two carriers south to help retake the Falklands. This book explains the conduct and outcome of the campaign.

AH-1 Cobra Gunship Versus NVA Armor Vietnam 1967-73 (Peter E. Davies, Osprey Publishing, 2024, $23.00, softcover). A purpose-built helicopter gunship, the Cobra inflicted heavy losses on North Vietnamese armored units.

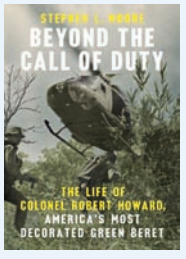


Number 788 – My Experiences in Swedish Special Operations (Max Lauker, Helion Press, 2024, $45.00, softcover). The author spent much of his military career in Swedish Special Forces. He served in operations in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa.

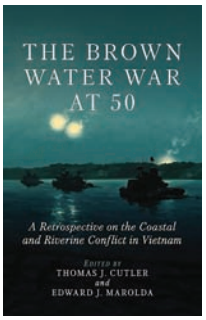
The Intoku Code (Wade Ishimoto, Casemate Books, 2024, $34.95, hardcover). The author served as an intelligence officer in Delta Force from its beginnings. His Intoku code means "doing good in secret."

Secret Servants of the Crown: The Forgotten Women of British Intelligence (Claire Hubbard-Hall, Citadel Press, 2024, $29.00, hardcover). The British intelligence services employed many women in covert roles. This work reveals their stories.

First-Hand Accounts from the Ukrainian Frontline (Oksana Melnyk, Pen and Sword Books, 2024, $34.95, hardcover). This book contains twenty-five vignettes from Ukrainian war veterans. Each provides insights into the experiences of Ukrainians during the present war.



Beyond the Call of Duty: The Life Colonel Robert Howard, America's Most Decorated Green Beret (Stephen L. Moore, Caliber Press, 2024, $14.99, softcover). Robert Howard spent 40 months in Vietnam and received over fifty decorations for valor. Two years of his service were with MACV-SOG. ■



nam (Edited by Thomas J. Cutler and Edward J. Marolda, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis MD, 2024, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $34.95, HC)

The United States Navy, Marine Corps and Army fought a long campaign along the coast and on the rivers of South Vietnam. Waterways are a vital means of transport in Vietnam, so they naturally became a conduit for the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong to move personnel, weapons and supplies. This made the country's coastline and rivers part of the battlefield. The Navy assembled a large force of patrol boats, landing craft and amphibious transports able to operate in shallow water areas. They conducted searches of fishing boats and patrolled the riverways. The Army assigned troops from the 9th Infantry Division to the Mekong Delta, and they worked closely with the Navy in operations throughout the delta.

This anthology contains twelve essays from veterans of the coastal and riverine war in Vietnam. Most are from US veterans, though one essay interestingly assesses the Chinese support to North Vietnam. This part of the war is often portrayed, but usually not in detail. This book provides a firsthand look at the Brown Water War and those who fought it, in their own words.

Iran-Iraq Naval War Volume 2: Convy Battles 1981-84 (Tom Cooper, Sirous Ebrahamini and E.R. Hooten, Helion Press, South Yorkshire UK, 2024, mas, photographs, bibliography, $29.95, SC)

The Iraqi and Iranian militaries fought a hard naval campaign during the Iran-Iraq War. Each side used the best weapons technologies available to them. Iraq was the first to use the Exocet missile in combat, before the Argentines used them in the Falklands. They also used French electronic warfare systems and Soviet-made anti-radiation missiles against Iranian radar sites. The Iranians flew F-14 Tomcats into battle with the AIM-54 Phoenix missile. At sea, they launched the Harpoon missile in combat as well.

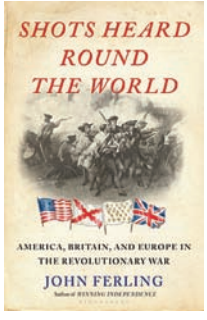
The naval operations of the Iran-Iraq War are little known today; this book is part of a series revealing the actions of both combatants. It shows how both sides used weapons that were cutting-edge technology at the time. The book is well-illustrated and contains extensive detailed information on the conduct of the naval campaigns.

Chrome Dome 1960-68: The B-52's high-stakes Cold War nuclear operation (Peter E. Davies, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2024, 96 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $25.00, softcover)

The Cold War never became hot in part due to the efforts of the US Strategic Air Command (SAC). While some of its leaders were decidedly hawkish in their views, their preparation for war and ability to demonstrate SAC's capabilities to the Soviets were a constant reminder that peace was preferable. Operation Chrome Dome kept nuclear-armed B-52 bombers in the air on a constant basis for eight years, showing the Soviet Union how America could swiftly retaliate against any aggression using overwhelming force. The program ended after a serious accident near Palomares, Spain and the rising capability of the ICBM missile force showed its time had passed. Thousands of airmen flew these missions at great risk.

This book highlights the risks taken by those aircrew, balanced against what was known or suspected at the time. The author does a creditable job balancing what was known about Soviet capabilities versus reality. The book is also full of technical information and summaries of how SAC leaders planned and prepared for a dangerous mission they nevertheless felt was critically necessary.

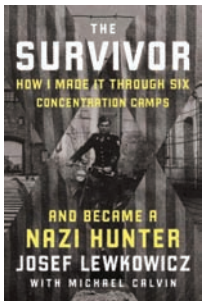
Shots Heard Round the World: America, Britain, and Europe in the Revolutionary War (John Ferling, Bloomsbury Publishing, New York, 2024, 560pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $36.00, hardcover)



When the British Army marched on Lexington and Concord, the American Revolution began. However, the war was not just between England and its rebellious colonies. This war became global in nature, involving France, Spain and the Dutch Republic, once Britain proved unable to quickly quell the uprising. France had agents assessing the possibility of a successful American Revolution even before it began. By 1777, French material support began arriving in America, followed by Spanish ships soon after. Othe supplies came through a Dutch port in the Caribbean. Still the war dragged on for eight years, with little sign of ending in America's favor. When the situation suddenly turned America's way shortly before the Battle of Yorktown, it was a surprise to many on both sides, but it was largely due to the international aid the colonists received.

This new book assesses the military and civilian leaders on both sides. It also considers their decisions and the effects of those decisions as the war raged not only in North America, but also in the Caribbean, Europe, Asia and Central America. The work provides a fascinating look at the global legacy of the American Revolution.

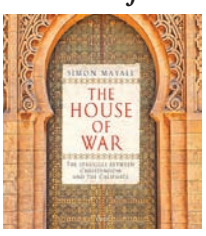
The Survivor: How I Made it Through Six Concentration Camps and Became a Nazi Hunter (Josef Lewkowicz with Michael Calvin, Harper Horizon, New York NY, 2025, 272 pp., photographs, $29.99, HC)



The author was a starving teenage boy, enslaved by the Nazis and imprisoned in a concentration camp. Over the years of his captivity, he spent time in six different camps. At Plaszow, a camp in Poland, he met Amon Goeth, the tall SS officer who killed randomly and inspired fear in the inmates whenever he appeared. After the war, the author joined US Army intelligence to help hunt down Goeth and other Nazis, because he had seen their faces and could identify them. He did in time help find Goeth and others. With 150 members of his family dead, he did what he could to avenge them, spending his life after the war to help bring Nazi criminals to justice. He also helped Jewish orphans rebuild their lives.

This is a firsthand account of a man who not only survived the Holocaust but dedicated his life to avenging the dead but also to aiding the survivors. The author's experiences are sometimes difficult to read, as it chronicles not just the horror of the Holocaust but also the history of anti-Semitism in Europe. The book is thoroughly readable, however, and even when difficult, should be read, particularly as time makes more doubt the events.

The House of War: The Struggle Between Christendom and the Caliphate (Simon Mayall, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2024, 352pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $35, HC)



The struggle between

A PAIR OF CURRENT WARGAMES GET SOME ANTICIPATED UPDATES AND WE'RE READY TO DIVE BACK IN!

By Joseph Luster

SIX DAYS IN FALLUJAH

Genre: Shooter • **Platform:** PS5, PS4, Xbox One, Xbox Series X|S, PC • **Publisher:** Victura • **Available:** Now

Developer Highwire Games and publisher Victura have prided the shooter *Six Days in Fallujah* as the world's first "documentary game" since it first hit Early Access back in June 2023. The game takes real accounts of one of the most pivotal conflicts of the past two decades—including those from over 100 U.S. Marines and soldiers, as well as dozens of Iraqi soldiers and civilians—and casts them in a stark, fully interactive light. Now players can enjoy more of this uniquely realistic shooter thanks to the Command and Control update that introduces a number of new features and improvements.

Chief among those new additions are the game's first official documentary story missions. These narrative-focused slices of campaign take players into the early days during which the Al Qaeda forces were forming ISIS as they experience more of the harrowing encounters at the heart of the attempt to retake Fallujah.

There's also a new solo mode that lets players command AI fireteams that employ authentic military tactics. This mode summons inspiration from other classic squad-based shooters, including the likes of *Ghost Recon*, *Rainbow Six*, *SOCOM* and more. Under your control, the squad will come face-to-face with more real-world events from the battle that have been simulated as accurately as possible. Members of the AI fireteam can deploy tactics like Fire, Maneuver, Ambush, Breach, and can even implement 360-degree security. Suppressing enemies, keeping an eye on specific targets and other actions are available at the tap of a button.

The aforementioned story missions also serve up a nice opportunity for the developers to provide general tutorials for solo squad control as players tackle the opening day of the Second Battle of Fallujah. As an added bonus, AI teammates can now be swapped in place of real people in online play when you can't quite fill out a full team of players. You can do the same in the new "HLZ Wolf" procedural mission, which joins the lineup of missions that can be played cooperatively with others or solo with Fireteam AI partners.

All in all, over 300 technical enhancements were put in place as part of the latest *Six Days in Fallujah* update, from control smoothness to overall game performance. The visuals have also been enhanced thanks to new ray-traced lighting and other effects that NVIDIA's RTX Global Illumination (RTXGI) made possible. It's enough to make lapsed players want to jump back in, and it's also a great starting point for anyone who has been looking for an excuse to see what Highwire's challenging trip through recent history has to offer.

CONFLICT OF NATIONS: WORLD WAR III

Genre: Strategy • **Platform:** PC, iOS, Android
Publisher: Dorado Games • **Available:** Now

Conflict of Nations: World War III is a grand long term strategy game that pits your military skills against up to 140 other players in expansive online multiplayer matches. Everything within it has potential repercussions, from the alliances you forge and the negotiations you conduct to the way you choose to use your powerful munitions. Now a much-loved feature is finally making its way back with the return of Elite Challenges.

For the uninitiated, these challenges presented team-based battles that forced alliances to square off against one another. The twist? The use of gold—which is the game's premium currency—is prohibited, and participating players must be rank 25 or above. If you're wondering why they went away in the first place if they were in such hot demand, it simply came down to logistics. At the time, an ever-expanding community meant that setting up Elite Challenges was particularly unmanageable for the team.

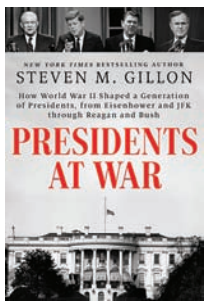
Thankfully, that appears to no longer be an issue. To get into the action, players who meet the criteria just need to initiate a challenge by selecting an Elite Challenge map, invite another alliance to compete, and wait for the opposing alliance leader to accept. Once they do so, both players will need to use their Elite Challenge tickets to join the match, after which their strategy skills will really be put to the test.

The return of Elite Challenges was paired with two challenge maps in the form of the Mediterranean and Antarctica. To further differentiate from other matches, these also include double the starting resources, with the tech tree kicking off on day 10, all in the name of giving commanders access to higher army counts and more versatile tech options. Dorado Games Monetization Manager Mark Abdilla called it "only a first step in breathing life back into our alliances and providing them with the necessary support to engage with the very best that *Conflict of Nations: World War 3* has to offer." Hopefully that means we'll be seeing further retooling and expansion in the future. ■

the Christian world and the Muslim Caliphate, eventually known as the Ottoman Empire, spanned over a millennia. Geography made this conflict inevitable. From 637, when Jerusalem was taken by Caliph Omar, to when Jerusalem fell again in 1917, the centuries were marked by constant tensions which occasionally broke out int open conflict. The period of the Crusades during the 11th to 13th Centuries marked major fighting. When the Ottomans took Constantinople, it marked the beginning of centuries of Ottoman expansion and threat to Eastern Europe. Once that threat was finally abated, the Ottomans went into a gradual decline as European Christian states grew in power. World War I finally put paid to the Ottoman Empire, leaving the Middle East open to the Christians they had kept at bay for so long.

This new book looks at the Christian-Muslim struggle through a focus on the major battles of the period. The author does an effective job weaving together conflicts widely separated by time and explaining their relationship to each other in the sweep of history. He is a retired British General with extensive experience in the Middle East and he effectively brings this depth of understanding to his subject.

Presidents at War: How World War II Shaped a Generation of Presidents, From Eisenhower and JFK Through Reagan and Bush (Steven M. Gillon, Dutton Publishing, New York NY, 2024, 528pp., notes, bibliography, index, $35, HC)



While Dwight Eisenhower was the architect or American victory in Europe, John. F. Kennedy commanded a tiny PT Boat in the Pacific. Lyndon Johnson was a naval reservist when the war began, while Richard Noxon and Gerald Ford joined the Navy shortly after the war began. George HW Bush served as a naval aviator, flying combat missions in the Pacific and surviving being shot down. Ronald Reagan was the only one who never served overseas, though he had been part of the Army reserve from 1937. He stayed in the United States and did public relations and made training films.

The author examines what each of these future United States Presidents took from their wartime and military experiences and applied to their time in office and in their lives. The book also looks at how their experiences affected the way they approached the Cold War. The narrative is well-researched and provides a deep look at each man, their effect on the world and their legacies. ■

VALOR

Continued from page 11

and numerically superior PAVN on the third day.

Moore would also receive the Silver Star and Bronze Star medals as well as a Purple Heart.

Clyde E. Savage was a sergeant serving as squad leader for 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, the so-called "lost platoon" that was surrounded by the PAVN. Savage had taken over command after the platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and weapon's squad leader had all been killed. Completely surrounded, they held off the enemy for 26 hours, with Savage calling for artillery strikes during the night within 50 meters of their position. In the morning, he shot more than 30 insurgents. For his "leadership during the battle [that] influenced his men to hold out until reinforcements relieved them," Savage received the Distinguished Service Cross in February 1966.

Second Lieutenant John L. Geoghegan was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Air Medal. Geoghegan left his foxhole command post when he heard Specialist 4 Willie F. Godboldt yell for help after being hit. His citation notes that he "selflessly exposed himself to the sheets of enemy fire as he ran out to assist his wounded trooper, receiving fatal wounds in the process." Their names are next to each other on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Specialist 4 Bill Beck and Specialist 4 Russell E. Adams, both of Platoon 3, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, held the flank of LZ X-ray for hours against a steady stream of NVA. After years of bureaucratic delay, they were awarded the Bronze Star with Valor in 1996.

In January, 1998 journalist Joseph Galloway became the only civilian from the Vietnam War to receive the Bronze Star Medal for heroism. Embedded with the troops, Galloway was at the Battle of Ia Drang and "disregarded his own safety to help rescue two wounded soldiers while under fire" on the second day at LZ X-ray.

Though they all took part in the same watershed moment in America's involvement in Vietnam, recognition for the valorous efforts of the two pilots would take more than 40 years to be officially recognized.

Captain Ed Freeman received the Congressional Medal of Honor in July 2001, for making 14 volunteer flights in his unarmed helicopter into LZ X-ray. Major Bruce Crandall would receive the Medal of Honor for his 22 flights into enemy fire in February 2007. For delivering much needed water and ammunition and evacuating wounded soldiers, the two men are credited with saving countless lives. ■

OP VERITABLE

Continued from page 45

20,000 Germans have been put out of action. A very great many Germans have been buried by our troops. The recent dry weather has helped us in the road problem and the rivers are now going down. Our total casualties in Veritable Operation are now 3,800 and all these are British except for 400 Canadians."

The Canadian Official History of the battle, written by C.P. Stacey, had the definitive assessment of the horrific tale: "Let no one misconceive the severity of the fighting during these final months. In this, the twilight of the gods, the defenders of the Reich displayed the recklessness of fanaticism and the courage of despair. In the contests west of the Rhine, in particular, they fought with special ferocity and resolution, rendering the battles in the Reichswald and Hochwald forests grimly memorable in the annals of this war."

Veritable was over. Thirty Corps now readied the advance south to link up with Simpson, while Simonds prepared the next stage of the campaign, Operation Blockbuster, the drive to Xanten.

Despite this intense activity, the British and Canadians took time to properly mourn their losses. The Royal Regiment of Canada relieved the shattered Canadian Scots on the evening of February 21, and the Scots were met by the skirl of the Essex pipes.

"The shrill, triumphant sound of the pipes gave something to the men that nothing else could," wrote the Can Scots official history. "Almost automatically, the bone-weary soldiers began to march in step."

The Can Scots came out with only two officers and 165 men in the four rifle companies. The Essex piper called, "What will you have, boys?" The Can Scots replied, "Cock of the North!"

The Can Scots entered the lines of the 15th Scottish Division, under their second-in-command, Maj. William Matthews, who found himself next to the 15th Scottish pipe major. Both were struck by the tragedy of the situation—the horrific battle…the dreadful weather conditions…the loss of so many young lives.

Amateur soldier Matthews said later of the pipe major's reaction: "He was a big, tough ex-Scottish guardsman; I'll never forget him. He was standing there in the moonlight watching our companies come in, some of them with only 10 or 20 men left. There were tears rolling down his cheek, and he turned to me, 'Makes you think, don't it, kid.'"■

Author David Lippman resides in New Jersey and writes frequently on a variety of topics for WWII History.

MARATHON

Continued from page 53

to capture the Persian ships lying at anchor close by. In spite of heavy armor, hoplites splashed into the water and boarded ships, now preoccupied with rescuing survivors and getting underway. Some of the Persians still fought boldly, and during the contest for the ships the Greeks lost some prominent men. It was here that the polemarch Callimacus lost his life, and strategoi Stesilaus. Cynaegirus, an Athenian noted for his muscular build and brute strength, managed to reach the stem of a ship, only to have his hand chopped off by a Persian axe as he attempted to board. Moments later, he too perished.

In all, the Athenians managed to capture seven Persian ships. They had won a great victory at Marathon. According to Greek sources, biased but possibly accurate, the Persians lost around 6,400 men, the Greeks 192. In the course of a single day, the men of Athens, aided by a small and courageous band from Plataea, crushed the Persian invasion and secured liberty, not only for themselves, but for all Greece.

But had they? Exhausted but triumphant, the Athenian army began to collect the dead and give aid to the wounded. But scarcely had they caught their breath when a light flashed from the peak of Mount Pentelikon. This was a signal, made by reflected sun rays off a burnished shield. It looked as if the signal were intended for the fast-retreating Persian ships. Who was signaling? Was it a traitorous Athenian, a supporter of Hippias? Was it a reassurance to the departing and bloodied Persians that some Athenians were still ready and able to collaborate with the invaders?

Strategoi Miltiades divined the danger: lulled by victory at Marathon, the Athenian hoplites might return to the city only to find it in Persian hands. It was possible—now, with the shield signal, even probable—that the Persians were not going home, but heading for Athens instead. It was crucial for the Athenian army to march back to the city with the greatest haste, not only to defend against a Persian landing, but also to forestall a possible pro-Hippias coup. Although the Persian ships had a head start, it will be recalled they faced a relatively long voyage around Cape Sounion to reach their objective. There was not a moment to lose. The hoplite units set out at once, a growing fatigue matched and eventually overcome by an even greater anxiety.

Miltiades and the Athenian army reached Phaleron, the old port of Athens near the city, just as Persian ships were coming into view. When Daris saw he had lost the race, he ordered a return to Asia.

According to legend, when the battle of Marathon was won, the runner Pheidippides was dispatched to Athens to announce the great victory. Superb athlete though he was, this 26-mile first "Marathon" came on top of hard fighting and a previous trek to Sparta to plead for aid. Pheidippides reached Athens, managing to gasp out *Nenikükamen*! (We have won!) before collapsing and dying of exhaustion. Another version claims he gasped "*Nike!*" (Victory!) before expiring.

The story of Pheidippides may or may not be true, but it stands as a fitting symbol for the Athenian achievement. Spartans were celebrated throughout the Greek world as tough, indefatigable warriors, but even they could not surpass the Athenians for sheer stamina and endurance during the Marathon campaign. The facts speak for themselves: A running attack across an open plain a mile wide, heavy fighting, then a forced march to forestall a Persian landing—all accomplished in heavy armor and shield.

All Greece rejoiced at Marathon, and Athens' prestige was boosted throughout the classical world. Spartan troops arrived too late for the battle, but were impressed by the Athenian achievement. The Spartans even made a point to march to Marathon to view the Persian dead. The Greek dead were buried in a large mound not far from where they fell. The mound exists to this day, and was actually excavated by archaeologists in the 1890s. A layer of charcoal was found, along with human bones and Ethiopian obsidian arrowheads. One skeleton seems to have been accorded special treatment, with burial in a special pottery container. It's only an educated guess, but some have ventured to suggest these are the remains of the polemarch Callimacus. Marathon stands as one of the great battles of world history. It is true that the Persians' wars were not over with Marathon; 10 years later, the Persians returned with an even greater host. The Battles of Salamis and Plataea in 480-479 BCE were crucial events—but if the Persians had won at Marathon, there would not have been a Salamis and Plataca.

The Battle of Marathon was the beginning of the rise of Athens and the dawn of the classical world's Golden Age. Led by Athens, 5th century Greece laid the foundations of Western civilization. Art, architecture, philosophy, literature, and drama all flourished. In Athens, the "school of Hellas," the new and untried system of democracy was allowed to further develop and in time become yet another legacy to the Western world.

Yet this cultural flowering needed the water of freedom to stimulate its growth. The very brilliance of the Greek mind needed an unfettered atmosphere to reach its full potential. If the Persians had won at Marathon, the deadening hand of Oriental despotism would have altered and stifled Western civilization for decades, if not forever. ■

HARLEM HEIGHTS

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Richards led an American work party out into the bloodstained meadows of the Hollow Way. As Richards and his men fanned out across the valley to locate the dead, they eventually found 33 slain Americans.

The bodies were brought to a central location and interred together in a single mass grave. A number of the bodies were reported to have sustained ghastly head wounds; rumors quickly spread that they had been bludgeoned by Hessian troops. Fittingly, Richards described the assignment as a "mournful duty."

Among the dead were both Knowlton and Leitch. Although it was initially thought that Leitch would survive his wounds, regimental surgeon David Griffiths reported that the major died on October 2, violently "seized by the lock'd jaw." Knowlton died later on the day of the battle. Reed recorded that the colonel remained a quintessential soldier to the end. "When gasping in the agonies of death," recalled Reed, "all his inquiry was if we had drove the enemy."

All told, American losses amounted to 33 killed and about 100 wounded. Precise numbers of British casualties were difficult to fix but Howe likely lost a similar number of men. The Americans buried 16 Redcoats that had been left on the field; a British deserter later reported that 89 British soldiers had been wounded in action

The results of the battle, however, were electrifying for the common soldier. After months of being repeatedly bested by superior British troops, American soldiers had finally turned the tables on their opponents. The British aura of invincibility, which was so devastating to American morale, had finally been proven an illusion. For the first time, the Continentals had bested Crown forces in an open field engagement. If the conditions were right, it was apparent that American volunteers could stand toe-to-toe with some of the finest troops in the world.

The American high command was more than pleased with the outcome of the fighting. Greene, whose division had spearheaded the assault across the heights south of the Hollow Way, came to the conclusion that the American soldier could indeed master the battlefield, but that he needed proper training and better leadership from the officer corps.

For his part, the army's artillery chief Maj.-Gen. Henry Knox recognized that the Battle of Harlem Heights, despite the limited number of troops involved, had been a priceless boost to American morale. The average Continental, wrote Knox, discovered that "if they stick to these mighty men," as he dismissively referred to the British, "they will run as fast as other people." ■

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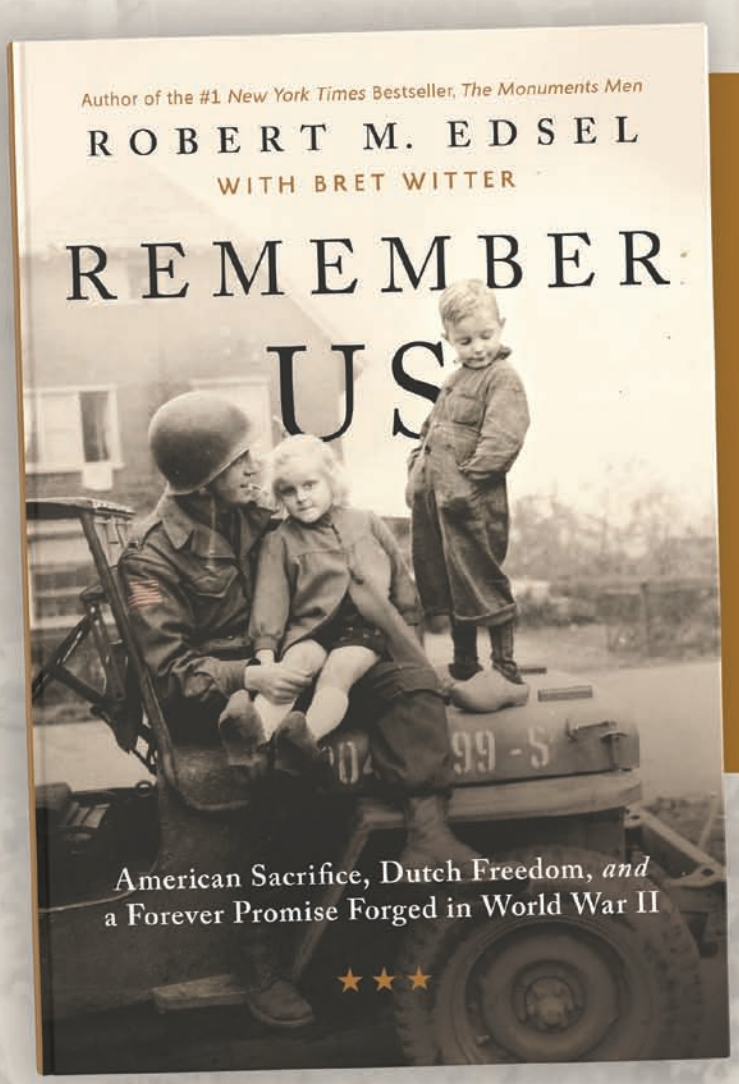

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