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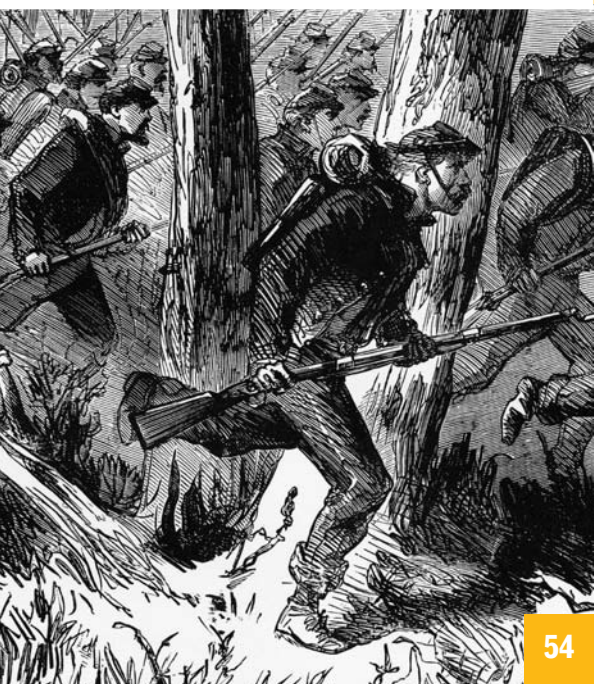

MILITARY HERITAGE

August 2011

features

columns

COVER: On May 22, 1863, men of the 8th Wisconsin advance to take Vicksburg, Mississippi by storm. Story on page 54. Painting by Don Troiani, Historical Art Prints.

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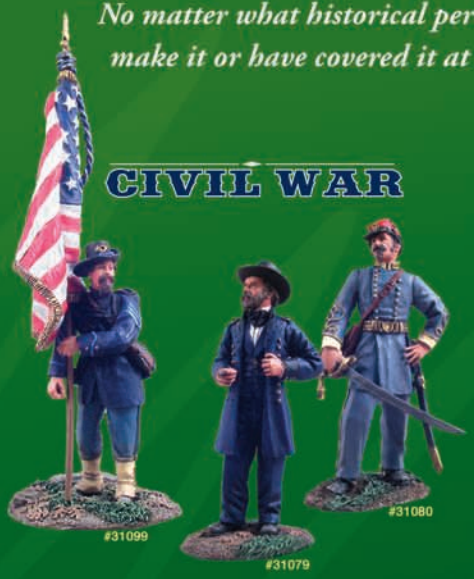

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Confederate John C. Pemberton was not a traitor, as some alleged. He was merely "a poor jerk" who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

ONE OF THE UNLIKELIEST—AND UNLUCKIEST—CONFEDERATE leaders was Pennsylvania-born general John C. Pemberton, who "married South," as the saying went, only to go down in infamy as the man who surrendered Vicksburg to Ulysses S. Grant on the Fourth of July, 1863.

The 48-year-old Pemberton at first seemed well qualified to lead a Confederate army, having graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1837. He served in the Seminole War, the Mexican War, and the frontier clashes with Indians and Mormons in the decade leading up to the Civil War.

Although born into a wealthy Philadelphia family, Pemberton had adopted pro-southern attitudes at West Point and then sealed his allegiance by marrying Martha Thompson of Norfolk, Virginia. When the war broke out in 1861, he resigned his commission in the U.S. Army and accepted a colonel's rank in the Confederacy.

Pemberton's rise through the leadership ranks was as swift as it was inexplicable. Despite seeing virtually no battlefield action during the first two years of the war, he was steadily promoted from lieutenant colonel to major general. He seemed to have a knack for inheriting the commands of superior officers such as Robert E. Lee when they were called away to other duties.

Succeeding Lee as commander of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, Pemberton first evinced flaws in his leadership style. Against the outraged cries of native Charlestonians, he voluntarily abandoned the defense of Fort Sumter, declaring that the fort was militarily insignificant.

In response to the growing complaints, Confederate president Jefferson Davis transferred Pemberton to Mississippi in October 1862. Davis may have thought he was moving the controversial Pemberton to a more out-of-the-way location, but unfortunately the Mississippi front was about to heat up considerably.

Faced with the unenviable task of trying to prevent the tenacious Ulysses S. Grant from capturing Vicksburg and seizing control of the entire Mississippi Valley, Pemberton was hampered by conflicting orders from Davis and General Joseph E. Johnston, commander of the newly created Department of the West. Davis ordered Pemberton to hold Vicksburg at all costs, while Johnston wanted the Pennsylvanian to make Grant's army his main target. Predictably, the confusion quickly spelled disaster for Pemberton and the Confederates.

The ensuing defeat at Champion's Hill, due in large part to Pemberton, ensured the capture of Vicksburg. Pemberton should have taken into account the Union commander's dogmatic personality. Any hopes that Grant would give him favorable surrender terms were quickly dashed. Hoping to sweeten Grant's mood, Pemberton made yet another public relations blunder, surrendering Vicksburg on July 4. Coupled with the Union victory at Gettysburg the previous day, the twin defeats foreshadowed the end, however delayed, for the Confederate cause.

It was not true, as one critic maintained, that Pemberton "had joined the South for the express purpose of betraying it." That gave him both too little and too much credit. Pemberton could not have made a worse shambles of things if he had premeditated them. The truth was, he was simply overmatched against a superb general such as Grant. As one of his few remaining supporters conceded following the fall of Vicksburg, Pemberton was not a traitor; he was merely "a poor jerk," in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Roy Morris Jr.

Editor's Note: We here at Military Heritage are saddened to report the recent death of long-time friend and contributor Bill McPeak of Aliso Viejo, CA, who passed away on April 23, 2011. By sheer coincidence, Bill's article on the single-handed battle-ax appears in this issue. We wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to Bill's wife, Sheree; their son, Logan; brother, Richard F. McPeak; sister, Susan McPeak Allen; and his countless other friends and relatives. Bill will be greatly missed, both personally and professionally.

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By Robert L. Swain

Thomas Howard, the Duke of Norfolk, was an unlikely choice to defend the throne of newly crowned Queen Mary Tudor. He was 80 at the time.

ON A SWELTERING EVENING IN EARLY JULY 1553, THE LATE KING Henry VIII's only legitimate son, the sickly 15-year-old Edward VI, died an agonizing death from tuberculosis, possibly complicated by measles. Edward's largely unmourned passing was followed by a self-serving scheme by his royal protector John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, to maneuver his 15-year-old daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, onto the throne instead of Mary Tudor, the only surviving offspring of Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon.

Arguably the most powerful man in England, the 51-year-old Northumberland had based Lady Jane's distant claim to the throne on the fact that she was Henry's great niece. That said, the claim contravened Henry's will, which had called for the crown to go first to Edward, then to Mary, then to Elizabeth, and last, to the heirs of his younger sister Mary (Lady Jane Grey being one of her granddaughters).

Still, Northumberland had manipulated the dying Edward into naming Lady Jane his successor by preying on Edward's fears that his Catholic half sister Mary would overturn his efforts to ensure that the country remained Protestant. Then the duke intimidated the Privy Council into proclaiming Jane queen several days later. Accordingly, she was installed by her father-in-law in the royal suite at the Tower of London to prepare for her coronation. But Northumberland had not taken into account the public's reaction, which turned out to be decidedly unenthusiastic about Jane.

The Privy Council grew uncertain about its hasty proclamation when pockets of active resistance to Jane began to emerge in various areas, first slowly and then more rapidly. The council's so-called firm support for her began to unravel. Alarmed, Northumberland moved aggressively to suppress the dissidents, but his forces lost heart at the prospect of armed skirmishes, and the suddenly revived council moved quickly to avoid being on the wrong side if Mary's contravening claim to the throne prevailed. Council members ordered Northumberland's arrest, and he was taken into custody a day after Lady Jane Grey's nine-day reign collapsed.

At the same time, Mary Tudor, 37, safe with her household staff at Framlingham Castle in Norfolk, was persuaded by her rapidly growing number of supporters to ride into London to claim the throne. An exhilarated Mary, loved and scorned with seemingly equal fervor by her father, arrived in London on August

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A fanciful drawing shows Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebels attacking the Tower of London in 1554. In reality, they never made it that far. RIGHT: Thomas Howard, third duke of Norfolk, as painted by Hans Holbein the Younger.

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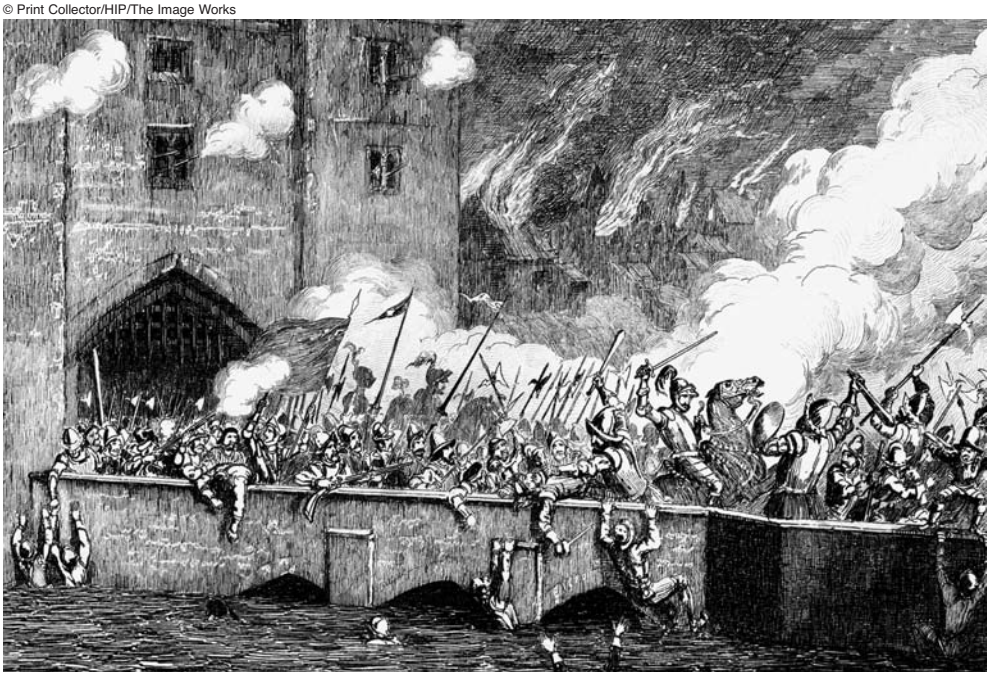


3 amid a jubilant crowd of supporters. A staunch Catholic despite her father's break with Rome years before, Mary decided to make an emotional early pilgrimage to the Tower of London to free the "martyrs" put there by her late father for persisting in their Catholic faith.

One of the first prisoners to greet Mary at the Tower was the former Duke of Norfolk, crusty 79-year-old Thomas Howard, a survivor of six years of confinement. Despite his reputation as a tough, resilient commander of Henry VIII's armies, Howard was physically small and had been suffering from rheumatism and a finicky stomach for years. Once a key member of Henry's inner circle and uncle to two of Henry's wives (Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard), Howard had been sent to the Tower in December 1546 for allegedly conspiring with his headstrong son, Surrey, to tamper with the succession during the waning days of the irascible Henry's reign.

While both Howards had been found guilty on flimsy evidence, Norfolk had confessed, hoping for mercy. The king would have nothing of it, and Surrey was beheaded on January 19, 1547, with his father scheduled soon to follow. However, Henry obligingly died nine days later, just six hours before the duke was scheduled to be executed. When the Privy Council got around to thinking about it, they reached the consensus that confinement in the Tower at such an advanced age would carry away the old duke without staining their hands with his blood. Later, some would rue their reluctance.

Among Mary Tudor's first official acts as queen was to see to it that Howard's dukedom and Order of the Garter were restored, and monies were granted him to buy back some of his personal property sold off during the reign of her half brother, Edward. Then Mary announced her intention to marry Prince Philip, son of Charles V, emperor of Spain and the Low Countries, who was 10 years her junior.

Blissful over her choice, Mary did not pick up on the instantaneous rumblings caused by word of her planned wedding. After listening impatiently to advice from the seldom-convened Great Council, a shaken Mary regained her composure in Tudor fashion by adjourning the group. Still, lobbying against her marital choice persisted for weeks, with intermittent acts of vandalism taking place in protest of the wedding.

Virtually unnoticed at first, conspirators had begun meeting in London as early as November to plot a rebellion. One of their leaders was Sir Thomas Wyatt, son of the famous poet of the same name who had been a one-time suitor of Anne Boleyn. Although the younger Wyatt had voiced support for Mary in July, he utterly

Both: Public Domain

ABOVE: Mary Tudor, daughter of King Henry VIII.
OPPOSITE: Sir Thomas Wyatt.

detested anything Spanish, and his enthusiasm for the new queen soon soured. Gathered around Wyatt were other equally disgruntled nobles. Barely more than a limited conspiracy at this point, the plotters intended to stage simultaneous uprisings on Palm Sunday in Herefordshire, Devon, Leicestershire, and Kent, where Wyatt lived in the 13th-century Allington Castle, on the banks of the Medway River.

Conspiracies were hard to conceal in Tudor England, with informers everywhere, and Mary and her council were soon put onto what was afoot. Informants told the council specifically about Wyatt recruiting adherents. Although initially shocked, Mary recovered quickly, calling on officials of the City Corporation for support and funds. But few seemed sure of Wyatt's declared purpose, and they underreacted to her anxiety. Whether it was their low opinion of the queen or their distaste for Mary's choice of a husband, corporation members scraped together only enough money to arm a paltry force of 500 men-at-arms.

Mary, undaunted, turned to the matter of selecting someone to rally and lead her forces against Wyatt. The only noble Catholic personage with military experience trusted by Mary was the newly restored Duke of Norfolk, now 80. Improbable as it may seem, Mary entrusted command of her assembled troops to someone who, years before, had browbeaten her to forsake her mother and accept her father's marriage to Anne Boleyn, even telling Mary that, if she were his daughter, he would "smash her head against a wall until it was soft."

While Norfolk was the logical choice to head Mary's forces, he had doubts about the adequacy of the small force being assembled. His first question was in the form of a complaint over how effective a mere 500 men-at-arms could be against several thousand rebels in Kent. Called upon over the years by Henry VIII to lead campaigns against rioters, rebels, and enemies at home and in France, Scotland, and Ireland, Norfolk had so irritated the king with his incessant complaining about inadequate support that Henry had turned to more compliant commanders to serve him.

In this instance, the best Mary could do in response to Norfolk's harangue was to offer her 200 personal guards, presently under the command of Sir Henry Jerningham, to serve under Norfolk as his captain of the guard. His sense of honor restored, Norfolk continued to grouse about the number and quality of the men in his command. At the same time, Norfolk made a mistake by choosing to ignore rumors that some of his troops planned to go over to Wyatt's side. This sort of thing had never happened under his command before, and he probably considered it a ploy to weaken his resolve.

Norfolk rose to the occasion. He ordered supplies, requisitioned artillery from the Tower, and prepared to move southeast against the rebels, known to be centered in the old city of Rochester, 24 miles away. Soon after departing London in late January 1554, the old duke received word that some of Wyatt's men had seized the bridge over the Medway River near Rochester. This prompted the duke to send a herald ahead to open negotiations with the rebels to implement the queen's recent promise to grant pardons to all who would give up their rebellious claims.

Unfortunately for Norfolk, the dissidents in Kent recognized the herald's offer to negotiate for what it was: a ploy to lull them into laying down their arms. The rebels were skeptical of anything emanating from Norfolk and ignored the offer, claiming they had done nothing for which they needed a pardon.

Too experienced to be surprised by the reaction of the rebels, Norfolk continued his march in near-freezing weather toward Rochester; his men were bundled in white coats with red crosses and divided into six companies. The force came into sight of Wyatt's position below Spitell Hill, where the road runs down to the bridge over the Medway. Norfolk instructed his company commanders to besiege the bridge and provoke Wyatt's contingent into yielding.

Norfolk's confidence in being able to take the bridge rested on an expectation of reinforcements from the command of his much younger half brother, Lord William Howard, now serving as Mary's lord admiral. The duke should

have known better than to rely on William, who had never forgiven him for not supporting family members after the scandal of Catherine Howard's unfaithfulness to Henry VIII. When evidence of her premarital sexual escapades surfaced, many of the Howards were held accountable for not revealing Catherine's wanton indiscretions to the king. Norfolk, who had helped engineer the marriage, had withdrawn to his ducal estate at Kenninghall to avoid the worst of Henry's wrath, while William Howard and others had to endure several months' imprisonment in the Tower.

When reinforcements failed to appear, Norfolk's optimism faded, but he continued his plan to subdue or placate the rebels, sending a message to the Privy Council in London pledging to do his best. For the moment, the message reassured Mary and the worried council members, some of whom could still recall stories of Norfolk's tenacity in face of unfavorable odds in France and Scotland, where he and his father, although gravely outnumbered, had achieved a brilliant victory 40 years before at the Battle of Flodden.

At the Medway Bridge, Norfolk was outnumbered at least 14 to 1, despite the late arrival of Lord Abergavenny with the several hundred troops he had raised for the queen. Shortly before Abergavenny's arrival, word had arrived that sailors from ships riding at anchor below Gravesend to escort the queen's groom to London had gone over to Wyatt. With only the faintest hope that more reinforcements might be found, Norfolk told his officers he was prepared to give battle if Wyatt decided to send his men across the bridge.

Ordering his men to stay behind, Norfolk rode forward with Jerningham to see where to place their guns for maximum effect, should artillery support become necessary. Satisfied that he knew what had to be done, Norfolk ordered forward his gunners and men-at-arms. When this was accomplished, the duke threw caution to the chilly winter winds and gave the order to fire. As the first gun belched forth, Alexander Brett, one of Norfolk's captains, drew his sword and startled the duke and Jerningham by shouting as loudly as he could: "We go about to fight against our native countrymen and friends in a quarrel unrightful and wicked! We are loyal Englishmen all, resisting the proud Spaniards who make the English slaves, spoil our goods, ravish our wives and deflower our daughters!"

With these words catching everyone's attention, Norfolk watched something he had never seen before: a royal force breaking ranks to join the other side, shouting: "We are all Englishmen! A Wyatt! A Wyatt!" Nothing like this had happened since the Wars of the Roses a hundred years earlier. Norfolk sat motionless on his horse, still disbelieving the flight of the men over the bridge to the rebels' side. When younger, he might have ordered his field pieces aimed at the deserters, but instead Norfolk simply pulled his horse's head around and galloped off. Norfolk's failure to hold his force mocked his earlier pledge to die for the queen, but as one historian remarked later, "Norfolk lived as long as he had because he never found anything worth dying for."

The defection of Norfolk's "Whitecoats" at Medway Bridge allowed Wyatt to turn his attention toward London. After conferring with his captains, he ordered his forces to follow him there. Along the way, Wyatt elected to ignore Sir Richard Southwell's force at Maidenstone, but he did pause to lay siege to nearby Cooling Castle, near the mouth of the Thames, which was being held without much determination by 58-year-old Lord Cobham, who was Wyatt's uncle.

Within days, a heartsick yet angry Queen Mary witnessed a bedraggled Norfolk and his handful of officers straggle back into London without supporting forces or artillery. When Mary turned to the Privy Council for advice and help, she found the mood ugly, something that didn't change when a mere scattering of Norfolk's soldiers appeared weaponless in London with their white coats torn and dirty.

Approaching London's outskirts, Wyatt's expanded force skirmished with small detachments of royal guards. Word of the fighting prompted Mary to publish a call for public support; within hours people assembled to hear the queen. When she arrived, the crowd grew silent as Mary spoke bravely and with more confidence than she might have felt. She promised her listeners that Lord Norfolk would defend the city "from spoil and sack, which is the only aim of the rebels."

Mary had little else to offer her subjects. Shortly after her speech, the lord admiral managed to stiffen the resolve of defenders at Ludgate, shouting, "They won't come in here!" He ordered his men to cut loose the drawbridge at London Bridge. To everyone's surprise and relief, Wyatt's resolve unraveled in the outermost streets of London. In fitting turnabout, Jerningham took the rebel leader prisoner.

Norfolk, alternately shocked and depressed by the experience at Medway Bridge, asked Mary for permission to withdraw to his beloved estate at Kenninghall. The queen granted the request all too readily, giving Jerningham the responsibility for rounding up the men-at-arms who had gone over to Wyatt and his rebels. Arrested quickly, 100 of them were tried within days, found guilty of treason, and hanged from the very doors of their homes in London. The rest were taken bound and wearing nooses around their necks to the tiltyard at Westminster to appear before Mary. It was reminiscent of the apprentices being paraded before her father in 1517 after the Evil May Day riots, which had been suppressed by Thomas Howard and his father. Like Henry VIII, Mary pardoned the deserters. The unfortunate Wyatt, however, was held in the Tower until April, when he was taken out to Tower Hill and beheaded. Shortly afterward, the now retired Norfolk's younger brother William was created Baron Howard of Effingham for his defense of London during the recent rebellion.

As preparations for Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain were renewed, Norfolk, not accepting full retirement, resurfaced to express his concern over how to ensure the marriage would be respected. Mary did not appreciate his anxieties. By the time of the wedding in late July, Norfolk was too frail to attend the long ceremony. He died quietly in his sleep on August 25, while the queen and her husband honeymooned briefly at Windsor. In deference to the deceased lord, they cancelled their social calendar for a day.

Age had accomplished finally what enemies, competitors, pestilence, a death sentence, and long isolation in the Tower had not been able to manage. Norfolk had outlived virtually all his contemporaries and all his children except for one daughter. Few could recall firsthand his one-time prominence as lord admiral, viceroy of Ireland, leading general, war hero, or principal adviser to Henry VIII.

The old duke was buried and mourned by a handful of family members, including his second wife, the haughty daughter of another prominent duke, who was long estranged from him because of his cohabitation with a longtime mistress who had disappeared from the scene when he was sent to the Tower. Years later, Norfolk's grandsons built a magnificent marble tomb for him in the small church next to Framlingham Castle. Nowhere in the small church is there any mention of Norfolk's last command. □

By William McPeak

The one-handed battle-ax was developed in about AD 500. The first version, the *francisca,* was named after the Frankish warriors who used them against the Romans.

THE SHAFTED AX HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE 6000 BC, IN BOTH PEACEful and warlike uses. The so-called battle-ax cultures (3200 to 1800 BC) extended over much of northern Europe from the late Stone Age through the early Bronze Age. The first ax heads were made of stone and used by hand; a wood handle known as the haft made ax wielding easier. Techniques of handle attachment included wedging, flanging, winging, and socketing. Socketing required the haft to be drilled with a hole to fit a shaped stone through the haft or on top of it. Many stony minerals were used for the head, and the edge was sharpened on both sides and double beveled.

With the discovery of metals came the various work of accommodating axes for warfare. From rather blunt faces in rectangular shapes, the ax head took on the familiar, slightly convex front edge and tapered back to the blunted butt. By the Iron Age (1000 BC), the wedge-shaped iron ax head was the standard form, drilled near the butt for hafting. For warfare, the battle-ax was most efficient in a light design. Axes with double front and rear edges cropped up in some ancient cultures but, realistically speaking, were too heavy for real efficiency.

The single-beveled edge head was soon developed. Unlike its farm implement predecessor, the battle-ax was meant to cut flesh, not wood. Roman legionaries carried a standard pickax with a short edge on a 19-inch head and a 30-inch haft. By the fifth century, a battle-ax with a narrow, wedge-shaped head, usually a flat arch or S-shaped top side with a rather flat, beveled convex edge of approximately three inches turned back at the heel in a concave sweep at the underside, appeared in northern Europe in the hands of the Franks. This ax was called the *francisca* (from the Latin word for Frank). The Franks made up the western German confederation that would evolve into a multipart kingdom under the Merovingian rulers and then an empire under the Carolingian rulers of the seventh and eighth centuries, particularly Charlemagne.

A chain mail-wearing Anglo-Saxon knight in the famous Bayeux Tapestry swings a battle-ax at a mounted Norman opponent during the Battle of Hastings, AD 1066.

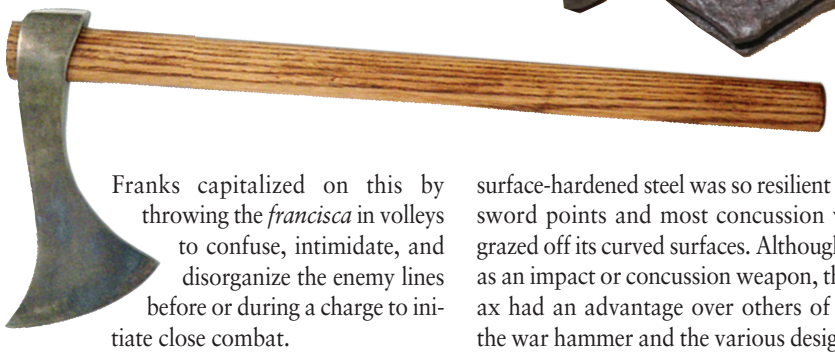
The Granger Collection, New York

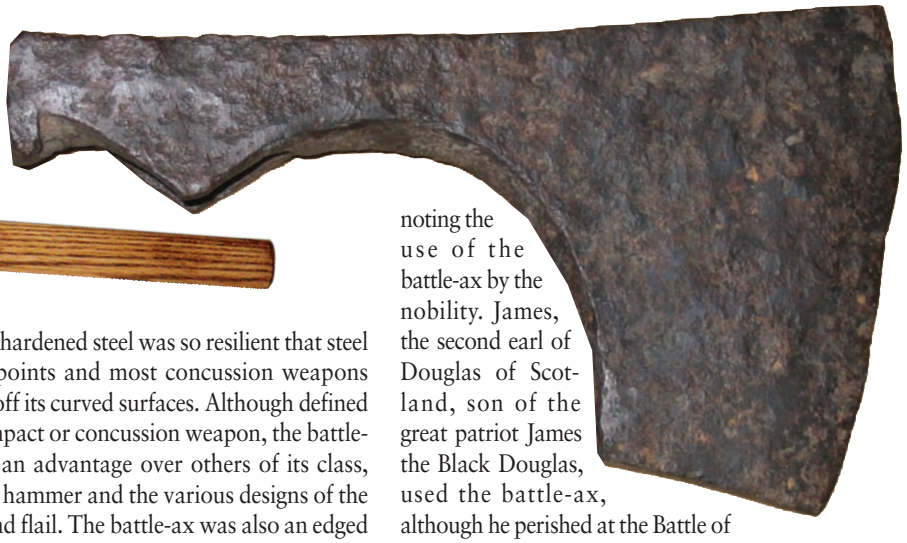
A horseman's ax, circa 1475. Note the hole in the haft to accommodate a leather wrist strap and belt hook for ease of carrying.

The *francisca* was used both as a throwing and close-combat weapon. The Roman historian Procopius described its use as a throwing weapon by the Franks: "Each man carried a sword and shield and an ax. Now the iron head of this weapon was thick and exceedingly sharp on both sides while the wooden handle was very short. And they are accustomed always to throw these axes at one signal in the first charge and thus shatter the shields of the enemy and kill the men." Procopius stressed that the Franks threw their axes immediately before hand-to-hand combat, for the purpose of breaking shields and disrupting the enemy line while wounding or killing enemy warriors. The weight of the head and short length of the haft allowed the ax to be thrown with considerable momentum to an effective range of about 40 feet. Even if the edge of the blade did not strike the target, the weight of the iron head could cause serious injury.

Another feature of the *francisca* was its tendency to bounce unpredictably upon hitting the ground due to its weight, unique shape of the head, lack of balance, and slight curvature of the haft, making it difficult for defenders to block. It could rebound at opponents' legs or against their shields and through the ranks. The

BELOW: A modern-day reproduction of the s-shaped *francisca* battle-ax. RIGHT: A Viking-made bearded ax, circa ad 1000.





Franks capitalized on this by throwing the *francisca* in volleys to confuse, intimidate, and disorganize the enemy lines before or during a charge to initiate close combat.

The *francisca,* after undergoing changes of the length of edge, became popular with other Germanic peoples such as the Anglo-Saxons, and made its way farther north to become a basic template for the expeditionary Vikings. The Vikings extended the *francisca* ax edge downward a further inch, with the underside at the heel cutting briefly back horizontally and then turning up into a deep concave arc. Called the bearded ax, the weapon would undergo changes such as sweeping into an arc at the heel of the edge. Scandinavian smiths had been working iron-edged weapons, and they usually made the ax head of iron and forged the edge into steel to make it a superior cutting face.

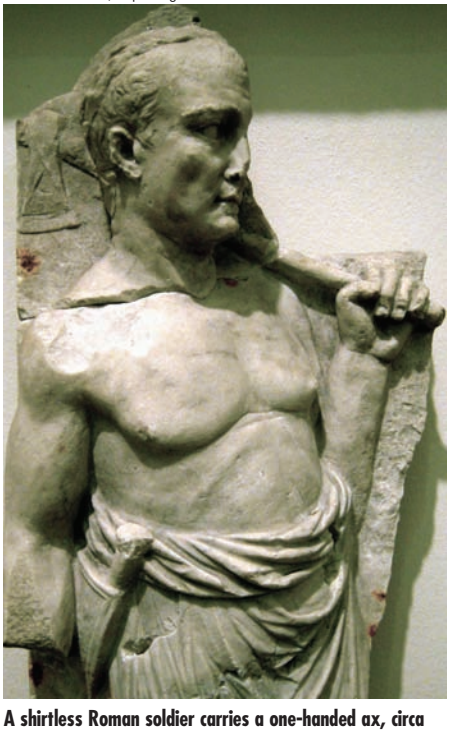
Another Norse style of the ninth century returned to the full arc of convex edge, tapering both the top and undersides of the head backward in a concave sweep to the haft, sometimes known as the shaved ax. This was probably the earliest broadax form and enabled a more effective sweeping cut rather than a simple chop. Although there were variations, the broadax continued to be developed from a basic one- or two-pound weapon with a haft of about 1½ feet of ash or oak. This was the common form of the European single-hand battle-ax thereafter. The Anglo-Saxon invasions of the fifth century and Viking raids from the late eighth and ninth centuries brought these early forms of the battle-ax to Britain.

By AD 1000, the Danes were popularizing a shaved ax design with as much as 12 inches of curved blade but again with the inside edges deeply concave. This was the Danish ax, with a weight of as much as four pounds and requiring a longer haft of three or four feet for both hands. In 1066, the English met the Norman invaders near Hastings with their primary professional infantry wielding a Danish battle-ax called the English long ax, which was essentially an early poleax for two-hand use.

The progression of improvements in edged weapons followed the improvement in armor in general. By the late 14th century, plate armor of surface-hardened steel was so resilient that steel sword points and most concussion weapons grazed off its curved surfaces. Although defined as an impact or concussion weapon, the battle-ax had an advantage over others of its class, the war hammer and the various designs of the mace and flail. The battle-ax was also an edged weapon—a powerful one. The various lengths and arcing edges of its head could inflict some massive damage when striking well. The popularity of the Danish long ax came from the force of its sweeping and cutting blows. A horseman had even better striking ability.

Although the sword still reigned as the knightly weapon, by the 12th century a variety of single-handed battle-axes were adopted by the noble class of Europe as a horseman's weapon. Manuscript miniature paintings of the medieval period show many a battle-ax cleaving into the helmeted head of a mounted knightly opponent. King Stephen of England took up the battle-ax after his sword was broken at the Battle of Lincoln in 1141. Richard the Lionheart was supposedly a famous wielder of the battle-ax. Thirteenth-century chroniclers made the point of noting the use of the battle-ax by the nobility. James, the second earl of Douglas of Scotland, son of the great patriot James the Black Douglas, used the battle-ax, although he perished at the Battle of Otterburn in 1388. Later, French marshal Breton Bertrand du Guesclin and his companion in arms Olivier de Clisson, future constable of France, both used the battle-ax.

National Museum, Copenhagen



A shirtless Roman soldier carries a one-handed ax, circa AD 50-150.

By the late 14th century, the noble knight put aside the battle-ax as a backup to the sword, which had undergone improvements with more tempering and narrowing of the pointed blade. Then came surface-hardened steel. With steel armor to contend with, many returned to the usefulness of the battle-ax. By this time, a basic horseman's ax evolved with the functional need of a longer haft to use while sitting astride a horse, where one could get the most out of it. The full convex edge and swept concave head of the broadax could be used to best advantage by performing the so-called draw cut on horseback. The draw cut was an arcing overhead stroke of the curved saber blade used by the light cavalries of Islam. The result was a deadly efficient follow-through. The forward momentum on horseback made the damage that much more efficient. The horseman's ax had a haft of up to three feet, usually requiring two hands, and a hole bored at the butt of the haft for inserting a leather thong for carrying at the saddle and winding at the wrist.

In the early 14th century, the battle-ax head was further modified—but at the opposite end. The butt of the battle-ax head was flared slightly out in a small hammer-like shape for more utility. Archers carried a short ax with a hammer-like butt to pound in and sharpen stakes for a trench palisade, and it was often preferred to carrying the usual short sword. Beginning in the late 14th century, the battle-ax began to appear adorned with butt-end alternatives similar to the war hammer to help puncture that impenetrable armor. The butt of the head was extended with a spike of up to about six inches, which was used as another puncturing option and counterbalance. A well-placed and powerful hit with the spike could puncture, but the ax's worked steel edge could

put a bigger slice in armor on its own. A further option was a vertical, four-sided spike of six inches extending above the center of the head. This rather awkward stabbing weapon was used mainly for delivering the coup de grace to a fallen opponent. Although the back spike became shorter, the vertical spike fell out of favor in comparison with battle-axes and the horseman's ax.

More practical additions were at hand. By the early 14th century, some battle-ax heads appeared with short, downward extensions from the head and along the haft to further secure it. This idea was furthered by reinforcing the haft by riveting metal bands called langets, extending partially or fully down both sides of the length of the haft. The langets were a means of protecting the battle-ax head from being sheared from the haft. A more effective solution to that outcome was to put the ax head on an all-iron or steel haft. This appeared in cylindrical and polygonal forms around the middle of the 15th century. Although heavier, the all-metal ax was also efficient. For protecting the hand against glancing and sliding blows, a small metal disk guard was added at the top of the ax grip. Something smiliar in larger form regularly appeared on the two-handed poleax.

At least one king favored the battle-ax to such extent as to gamble his kingdom on it. By the later 15th century, after 100 years of fighting between England and France, a civil war erupted in England between two houses of the Plantagenets and Lancastrians with a red rose symbol and the challenging Yorkists with a white rose. This was the War of the Roses. For more than 20 years, bloody battles pitting relatives against one another continued after the Yorkists effectively took power in 1461. In 1483 Richard III seized power, becoming perhaps the most reviled monarch in English history.

Revisionists, including William Shakespeare, made a concerted effort to discredit Richard. In his play *Henry VI,* Part 3, Shakespeare has Richard ready to do anything to grab the throne: "Or hew my way out with a bloody axe." The ax reference is relevant for Richard because evidence showed that from youth he practiced particularly with the battle-ax—so much so that his right arm was supposedly much more muscular than his left, as was his right shoulder and back. This probably gave the impression that he was deformed—thus the hunchback tradition.

In August 1485 it all came to a head at Bosworth Field, where Richard was defeated by Henry Tudor and a large force of Welsh archers and French mercenaries.

Richard had already successfully intercepted Henry's reserve and after the first shock had entered a swirling melee. He cleaved his way with surprising speed toward the frightened Henry, who was surrounded by bodyguards, before his horse became mired in the mud and the king threw down the ax and drew his sword for better reach. He was finally surrounded by a great mass of Welsh spearmen and cut down. Richard died bravely on the battlefield, crying out: "Treason! Treason!"—not, as Shakespeare had it: "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!"

Both all-metal and wooden haft battle-axes moved into the 16th century but were increasingly upstaged by more a versatile array of swords: infantry and cavalry sabers, curve-bladed short swords, and broad swords. But the all-steel battle-ax, usually without the vertical spike, did enjoy some splendor in the art of chiseled grips and engraved and etched blades for parade and ceremonial uses during the 16th and early 17th centuries. The battle-ax was still a popular secondary weapon in eastern Europe. Ornately chiseled all-steel battle-axes were popular cavalry weapons with the Ottoman Turks in the 16th century and into the 18th century in the Middle East and India. There they were called the *tabar* and had more curvature on the edge than Western designs. But for Europe as a whole, practicality centered on the battle-ax transformation into two-handed forms—the many pole arms and staff weapons with ax heads: poleax, Scottish *lochaber* ax, Russian *bardiche,* and various longer halberds.

Similar weapons were still a choice on 17th and 18th century battlefields, although firearms now ruled the day. In North America, trade axes with the Viking head became the new weapon of choice for Native Americans, replacing their wood and stone tomahawks. Hand-to-hand combat with the tomahawk would by necessity become a skill developed by frontiersmen during the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars. The U.S. Navy's boarding ax of the late 18th century looked similar to a short bearded ax, with three or more sharp teeth at the bottom back side of the edge to rake up and clear downed rigging and burned wreckage. By the 19th century, the typical broadax tool was used in camps and on battlefields by sappers and miners and at sea for onboard tasks. In modern times it has chiefly been used for engineering tasks.

Of all the impact and concussion weapons of military history, the ax remains an important tool, whether on the battlefield, in the forest, at throwing competitions, or simply in the backyard for the more peaceable pursuit of gardening. □

By John W. Osborn, Jr.

British officer John Glubb, "the other Lawrence of Arabia," had an adventurous career as commander of the Arab Legion during and after World War II.

WITH HIS SHORT, DUMPY APPEARANCE AND HIGH-PITCHED voice, John Glubb seemed more like a real-life Colonel Blimp than another Lawrence of Arabia. Yet for a quarter century, Glubb led a much-feared Bedouin force that tamed a desert, fought in two of World War II's least-known campaigns, and came close to strangling Israel at its birth. His failure to destroy Israel instead would destroy in a few hours the work of 25 years.

Glubb came to the desert by way of rural England. He was born in Lancashire in 1891, the son of a general, and graduated early from the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, joining the Royal Engineers in World War I. He was wounded three times in France; a piece of shrapnel sliced off his lower chin. The Bedouins would later give him the name Abu Hunaik, or "Father of the Little Chin."

After four years of war, Glubb found peacetime life monotonous. He saw a chance for new adventure when he learned that officers were wanted for service in Iraq, recently created out of conquered Mesopotamia as a consolation to Great Britain's old ally Prince Faisal after he was thrown out of Syria by the French. "Here was a prospect of more fighting," wrote Glubb, "and all the excitement and adventure of a strange country."

National Archives

Serving as a district officer, Glubb went far beyond his expected duties. He became enthralled with the Bedouins and their life, mastering their language, customs, and lore as perhaps no other Westerner had done before. He traveled hundreds of miles on camelback, subsisted on bread baked over an open fire with rancid sheep's butter, and used a rock for his pillow. "Only those who have experienced them can understand the joys of evening in the desert, seated in a circle round the campfire in the clean soft sand, beneath the sparkling Arab stars or in the still white light of the full moon," Glubb wrote.

In 1924, Ambassador Sir Kinahan

Imperial War Museum

Members of the Arab Legion wear bristling bandoliers over their native garb during their service in World War II. Sketched by British artist Anthony Gross. RIGHT: John Bagot Glubb.

Imperial War Museum

Cornwalis convinced Glubb to resign his commission in the British Army and devote his life to the Arabs. In November 1930, after a decade in Iraq, he contracted into the military service of Transjordan, with which he was to be famously identified for the next quarter century. A sandbox-size kingdom carved out of northern Arabia and territory east of the Jordan River adjacent to Palestine and ruled by Faisal's brother Abdullah, Transjordan was completely dependent on British support. By 1930, when Glubb entered Transjordan's service, it was clear that British troops could not cope with raiding by the tribes and by fanatical Ikhwan from Saudia Arabia in the 28,000 square miles of trackless desert making up 75 percent of the kingdom; even less equipped to do so was what passed for Trans- jordan's own security force.

Glubb spent his first three months traveling the desert by truck among the camps of the Howeitat tribe, "the wildest and most anarchic tribe I had yet met." Glubb recommended that the king withdraw British forces and enlist native Bedouins into the Arab Legion, with their own unit patrolling the desert. The Howeitat, although initially suspicious, quickly filled his mandated force of 90 men, with a long waiting list of sheiks' sons. Soon, Glubb and his followers had eradicated camel theft and cross-border raiding.

Well-armed members of the Arab Legion guard a fleet of British Gloster Gladiator biplanes during the Iraq campaign in World War II. Some 250 legionaries took part in the campaign.

When the Arab Legion's founder, Colonel Frederick Peake, retired in March 1939, Glubb was the obvious choice to succeed him. When he took command, the Arab Legion numbered 1,350; Glubb would build it up to 23,000, turning a police force into the best Arab army in the Middle East, attracting Bedouin from all over the region. This would prove crucial when World War II broke out a few months later.

Wondering if the Arab Legion would invade a neighboring Arab country to topple a pro-Nazi regime in Baghdad, the British commander in Palestine, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, asked Glubb, "Will the Arab Legion fight?" "The Arab Legion will fight anybody," was Glubb's confident reply. He led 250 legionnaires in a successful invasion of Iraq, then helped to drive the Vichy French from Syria.

To Glubb's disappointment, the Iraqi and Syrian campaigns, despite the praise his Bedouin received, would be the Arab Legion's only action in World War II. "I still believe that the Arab Legion might have played a role of considerable importance in Northern Africa in 1942," he wrote bitterly after the war.

The Legion's biggest conflict would come after World War II, as Palestine moved toward a United Nations-mandated partition and the first Arab-Jewish war. Glubb's first experience

of the Palestine problem was being stoned by an Arab mob in the streets of Jerusalem in 1932. He got a grim introduction of the conflict to come weeks before partition, in the hills outside Jerusalem. "When we rounded the bend in the road, we saw a large Jewish armored car halted in the middle of the village street," Glubb recalled. "The street was wide, and the houses on each side had small gardens in front of them. The houses and gardens were full of Arabs firing their rifles at the armored car. Every now and then, the muzzle of an automatic was thrust through a loophole in the side of the armored car and fired a few bursts at the Arabs, and was then withdrawn. There were obviously living Jews inside the armored car, but we could not tell how many. The noise of the firing was deafening."

Glubb helped arrange a truce for British forces to evacuate the Jews and let the Arabs have the armored car. The inside, he said, "was like a butcher's shop—so much torn flesh and pools of blood. Dragging, carrying, pushing, and covering them with our bodies, we thrust them into the British vehicles, which drove off. I called our soldiers over to one side. I waved to the villagers. 'It's all yours,' I shouted."

Glubb felt that the true villains of the Palestine tragedy were neither Jews, Arabs, nor the British, but other European nations and the United States, which refused to accept any displaced Jews. "When it came to the payment of compensation in expiation of their past shortcomings," wrote Glubb, "the Christian nations of Europe and America decided that the bill should be paid by a Muslim nation of Asia."

If he didn't blame the Jews, Glubb still was prepared to make war on them, building the Arab Legion, which had fallen from its wartime peak of 16,000 to 4,000, back up to 7,000 men. At same time, he secretly sent a subordinate, Colonel Desmond Goldie, to meet with Jewish officials to peacefully arrange partition when it came and keep both sides out of Jerusalem. But when the Jews declared statehood including Jerusalem, Glubb, remembering his pledge of loyalty to Transjordan King Abdullah, sent the Legion into action against the new state of Israel on May 15, 1948.

The Arab Legion, along with fellow Arab guerrillas, immediately overran the key Jewish kibbutz of Kfar Etzion in brutal hand-to-hand fighting. The Legion protected four surviving defenders, treating them as POWs. Two days later, a direct order came from the king to attack Jerusalem. Legionnaires cheered the news, but Australian Colonel William Newman was in tears. "They're sending my Bedouins into a fight they are not trained for," he told Glubb. Events would soon prove Newman right.

Library of Congress

Arab Legion soldiers move through the ruins of Jerusalem during the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949. Hand-to-hand fighting took place in the Old Jewish Quarter of the city.

It took the Arab Legion 10 days to conquer the few square blocks of the Old Jewish Quarter in East Jerusalem against 200 lightly armed defenders. "Hand-to-hand fighting took place from house to house and from room to room," wrote Israeli General Chaim Herzog. The quarter surrendered when there were only 36 defenders left standing and only 300 bullets among them. As at Kfar Etzion, the Legion's ranking Arab officer, Major Abdullah Tell, urged his men to let their professionalism prevail over their hatred, holding off screaming Arab mobs with rifle butts and warning shots to evacuate the quarter's 1,200 residents and carry the wounded on stretchers to the Israeli lines.

In the meantime, a convoy of armored cars led by Major Robert Slade was driving on the New City in West Jerusalem when a Molotov cocktail set the lead car on fire and blocked the way, forcing the other cars to reverse up the narrow streets. Some 200 legionnaires under Lieutenant Ghazi el-Harbi, a Saudi, fought their way onto the grounds of the Convent Notre Dame de France, less than a half mile from West Jerusalem, only to be pinned down under murderous fire. After the Legion force had suffered 100 casualties, Glubb ordered a retreat.

With Lieutenant Hamoud watching helplessly from his observation post, the Israelis reached Zion Gate, shutting off West Jerusalem. Colonel Newman urged renewed attacks, but Glubb refused, saying, "Our job is fighting in the open country, not slogging room to room." He later wrote: "Without a man in reserve and with ammunition which would scarcely be enough for another fortnight's fighting, we could not afford to embark on adventures, particularly in street fighting."

Glubb moved to shell and starve the Israelis into submission, cutting the Jerusalem Road at Latrun. The Legion threw back three desperate Israeli assaults up the ridge, once throwing in hastily armed clerks, signalmen, and cooks. Finally, the Israelis cut a new road through the hills out of Legion artillery range to open the supply line into Jerusalem on June 11, 1948.

Eleven days earlier, London, under pressure from Washington and the United Nations, had

withdrawn the 21 British officers then seconded to the Arab Legion and imposed an arms embargo. "The withdrawal of the British officers was a shattering blow," Glubb wrote bitterly. "They included all operational staff officers, both the brigade commanders and the commanding officers of three of the four regiments, and all of the trained artillery officers."

Glubb managed to keep the Legion operating with 16 retired British officers under contract, but the ammunition shortage soon brought him into conflict with the Transjordan government. "Don't shoot unless the Jews shoot first," was all Prime Minister Tawfiq could lamely advise. In more heated exchange, Tawfiq demanded: "Don't you know financial regulations? Where am I to get the money to pay for what you have overspent?" "I suggest you deduct it from my pay," Glubb retorted.

After months of static fighting interrupted by repeated U.N. truces, Transjordan and Israel signed an armistice on April 4, 1949. The Arab Legion had suffered 20 percent casualties and had made the only strong Arab showing in the war, capturing East Jerusalem and the West Bank of the Jordan River, which was annexed by Abdullah to form Jordan.

In the end, it would not be enough to save Glubb's career. The man who prided himself on understanding Arabs failed to see what an anachronism the sight of British officers commanding native troops had become in the new era of Arab nationalism. King Abdullah's assassination in 1951 robbed Glubb of his long-time patron, and the 30-year age gap with the king's grandson, Hussein, inevitably created tension. Glubb did himself no favors by objecting to the use of Jordanian territory for guerrilla attacks on Israel and repeatedly postponing when Jordanians could take full charge of their own military.

By 1955, the deputy commander of the Legion, Albert Cooke, was saying that Glubb "is having a very rough ride with the King and seems to be headed for a fall." After Hussein visited London, Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd said, "We suspected that he irritated the King. It was obvious that the time for his retirement could not be long delayed."

As he was being driven to work the morning of March 1, 1956, Glubb saw King Hussein's limousine in front of the prime minister's office and remarked that a cabinet meeting must be going on. An hour later, he got a call asking him to come over. "The King asked me to summon the cabinet this morning," Prime Minister Sameer told Glubb. "When the ministers arrived, he walked into the room and said you were to be dismissed." Sameer tried to soften the blow, suggesting that Glubb could be recalled, but then tactlessly asked, "Can you leave in two hours?"

Glubb protested, pointing out that he had a family and a lifetime's possessions to consider. He and Sameer settled on 7 o'clock the next morning. Glubb's wife took it in stride: "We'll have some tea now. Then I'll put the children to bed early, and we'll pack all night." Only the British ambassador, the minister of defense, and a few others were present to see Glubb off. The Royal Chamberlain gave Glubb an autographed picture of the king. "In a few hours, twenty-six years of work had been destroyed," Glubb wrote. The 64 British officers then serving with the Legion followed within a few days, and the break was completed with the Arab Legion being renamed the Jordan Arab Army.

Glubb never complained about his dismissal or criticized Hussein for it. Given a knighthood from the British government, he supported himself by writing and lecturing on his career in the Middle East. King Hussein quietly provided Glubb with some badly needed financial support in his last years and ignored widespread criticism among his fellow Arabs when he decided to attend Glubb's memorial service at Westminster Abbey in 1986. □

By Peter Suciu

Beginning with the Franco-Prussian War and lasting through World War I, European countries began printing military postcards. Today, they offer a window on the past.

MANY FAMOUS PHOTOS OF MILITARY UNIFORMS AND PERSONalities are actually taken from vintage postcards. And while today many vintage baseball or football cards can fetch thousands of dollars, military postcards essentially have been forgotten. Even at military shows, they tend to be buried in obscure piles. Yet military postcards can still serve as a window to the past—both the individual participants and the nations they served.

Postcard collecting today is very much a niche hobby, and the collecting of military cards is a niche within a niche, one that overlaps the greater category of collecting militaria. Postcards first became popular in the late 1860s, and saw a resurgence between the years 1894 and 1914. Cards of all sorts were popular, including those devoted to famous people, cards for holidays, advertising, and topical events. "Postcards have always been the means of communication since the late 1800s," says Alan Gottlieb, a dealer in postcards for Oldpostcards.com. He says that, all things considered, it was a more patient time. "Today, everything is instantaneous such as emails and text messaging."

The early age of postcards was also the age when military cards first gained popularity. The history of such cards precedes the widespread use of film cameras. "The first postcards were actually not photos, but lithographs, like the earlier trade cards," notes Eric Larson of CardCow.com, who adds, "U.S. picture postcards became popular after they were first made available at the World Columbian Exposition in 1893."

Postcards were first issued in the late 1860s, and military cards made their debut in a metaphorical baptism of fire. Both sides during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 printed cards depicting the soldiers of the era. These early cards were used as propaganda tools, and for the first time folks back home received a visual glimpse of the war at the front. These early cards also served as a way of setting the tone of the nation. While the German cards of the post-Franco-Prussian War showed a bright future, the French cards took a more somber tone that was more in keeping with the nation's crushing military defeat.

The first true military postcard was offered for sale on September 29, 1870, and was issued by the German Army Corps Society. It was uncolored (black and white), illustrated with the Red Cross symbol, signed by the commander of occu-

BELOW: This pre-World War II postcard was part of the series "Our Fighting Regiments" honoring the British Royal Artillery of 1717-1917. RIGHT: A Seaforth British Highlander is pictured in this pre-WWII postcard from Millar & Lang Ltd.

All photos: Author's Collection

A modern reprint of a World War I-era postcard depicts a recruiting poster for the Scots Guards.

pied France, and authorized by German occupation headquarters. The French also issued cards, part of a series of sketches drawn by Leon Besnardeau, a well-known stationer in Sille-le-Guillaume. These cards were reproduced on card stock and were used for homeward correspondence by soldiers in training.

Many nations began to print military postcards and illustrations, and for a time lithographs remained far more popular than actual photographs. The British, being master propagandists as much as master politicians, were keen to highlight their various exploits, and the cards were used to offer glimpses from the empire on which the sun never set, while also being used to recruit soldiers to join the ranks of the Queen's army. These included a variety of card sets.

Interestingly, many of Queen Victoria's enemies did not issue postcards until the Second Anglo-Boer War, when cards depicting the Boer struggle were printed. Other cards illustrating conflicts from a Eurocentric view were printed for a variety of wars, including the Boxer Rebellion in China, the Russo-Japanese War, and the Balkan wars. None of these survive in great numbers today, in part because of the limited appeal of the conflicts to earlier collectors and in part because many of the cards contained strongly nationalistic propaganda. The latter aspect made the cards less desirable, especially to the masses who didn't necessarily agree with the politics involved and thus likely never bothered to save the cards.

ABOVE: This period postcard showing German drivers with their wagons was printed for use by German soldiers during World War I. RIGHT: A post-World War I reprint of a French propaganda poster from the war urges French soldiers, "On les aura! (Let's get them!)"

For much of the late 19th century, military postcards were primarily a European affair, one that Americans didn't take part in until much later. "There were some foreign picture postcards before 1893 and some U.S. postal cards, but I don't think there were many military cards until the very late 1800s," says Larson. Even when the United States got into the act, the number of cards was somewhat limited. As a result, postcards chronicling the events of the Spanish-American War were actually far less common than one might expect, especially considering the widespread national exuberance over the war. It was far more common for American soldiers to have photographs made of themselves and mailed home. As a result, actual cards from the Spanish-American War are highly sought by collectors today. But so too are personal-photo military cards, often because these are truly one of a kind.

"Real photo military cards are typically the most desirable, since they were often made in very small numbers," says Larson. "Printed cards may have been made by the thousands or tens of thousands. I'm not sure if I'd say there are certain countries that are more desirable than others, but cards from smaller, more obscure places and smaller conflicts are rarer than cards from Europe or the U.S."

And while the larger conflicts may seem to be the more desirable, it is actually the lesser-known wars and sideshows that have piqued the interest of collectors. "Mexican Revolution cards with Pancho Villa are very sought after," says Larson. "Basically, cards that cross over into multiple topics may bring the highest prices."

It was another, greater war that marked the end of the highly detailed postcards, notes Larson. "World War I happened right after the golden age of postcards." Ironically, while postcards as a collectible, mini artwork practically died as a result of the World War I, postcards with simple art were actually sent in record numbers during the conflict. Some of these, such as the embroidered silk cards that were made in France during the conflict, remain the most desirable of all cards among collectors today.

While World War I ended the golden age of postcards in general, it was also a boom time for military cards. This duality of events isn't lost on modern collectors, who note that hundreds of thousands of cards may have been printed, many of which survive today. "The Germans have, for World War I, by far the most cards," says Chris Boonzaier, a collector of paper documents and postcards. He says that this is primarily because the Germans simply printed far more cards than anyone else. "Traditionally, they have had lots of cards, but cameras were also widely spread in Germany, and as a result there are zillions and zillions of photo postcards." Boonzaier notes that the cards were also quite well made, like most German products—military or otherwise. "As far quality and numbers, they lead the way."

Military postcards saw a resurgence after the war, but never to the levels of prewar cards. The closest came in Nazi Germany, as the master propagandists churned out cards in great numbers before the war and then following the Third Reich's many early successes. As the tide turned against Hitler and his minions, the cards dwindled in numbers until practically no new cards were being printed. Thus, original World War I cards remain far more numerous than World War II cards. Boonzaier adds that this relative plethora has been good for collectors. "With German World War I cards," he says, "you can choose one of hundreds of different themes to concentrate on. For collectors this is fantastic."

Boonzaier further notes that French postcards from the World War I era come in a distant second, and that, whereas the British had been early adopters of cards during the zenith of their empire, by World War I such postcards weren't nearly as popular in Great Britain. "The British seem to have favored letters," he says.

For this reason, those fewer British cards have become the ones most sought after by collectors. Among the holy grail of such postcards is one of Canadian Hospital No. 2 in Le Treport, France, showing an operation on a soldier about to begin. This card reportedly sold for nearly $1,000 on eBay a few years ago, but Larson says that most postcards sell for under $20, and many common cards retail for about a dollar. This makes it an easy hobby to get into and. except in the rarest occasions, one with relatively few fakes.

Nor is finding vintage military postcards all that difficult. While dealers such as Larson and Gottlieb have sites devoted to sales, many dealers have moved to online auction sites. "EBay all the way," says Boonzaier. "Most of the major postcard dealers are online and on eBay."

Where new sellers need to be concerned is

not so much with outright fakes, but rather with the millions of reprints of original cards. Museums around the world, notably those in Europe such as the Imperial War Museum in London, sell such reprints, and they should not be confused with the originals. However, it is worth noting that many of the reprints themselves are now out of print, and these "vintage" cards can be considered collectibles in their own right. Collectors should be wary of whether a particular card being sold was something produced by original printers in 1915, or whether it is a 1970s or 1980s reprint. The good thing about reprints is that they tend replicate the front artwork of the cards quite well, although purists will note that the paper on which they are printed is quite different.

Collectors tend to be very specific with regard to eras, rather than collecting a wide spectrum of postcards. Unlike baseball cards, there is little in the way of pricing guides, so collectors must pay whatever they feel is appropriate for the cards. Condition of cards is a big factor in determining the price.

Card sellers say that the grading of military postcards is not entirely dissimilar to that of stamps or coins although nowhere near as advanced. "Postcards are not graded like sports cards," says Gottlieb, noting that many factors

A German Absender (reservist artilleryman) is pictured in this studio photo that was printed as postcard and mailed by the soldier just before he was sent to the front.

come into play. "The professional graders for sports cards once tried grading postcards, but there was little demand for them [grades] in the postcard market."

More important, unlike baseball or other sports cards, military postcards come in the mailed variety, although many were never sent through the post. "Some collectors only care about the interest of the topic or postal marks, while other collectors for high-end expensive cards look for perfect corners and clean cards," says Gottlieb. "It is not very hard to tell the faults of a postcard on your own." And unlike sports cards, the rarity is only part of the issue, adds Gottlieb. "If I do not have a card that I collect, the grading is of little importance. In the future, I can always upgrade or I may never see that card again."

In addition to determining a card's rarity and condition, proper preservation is also an issue. Postcards, being paper, should be stored out of direct sunlight and under UV protection, if possible, when being displayed. Protective sleeves such as those from makers such as Ultra Pro, are also recommended. As cards can fade, the more valuable variety should be kept in albums or archive boxes whenever possible. "A good way to protect postcards is to use an acid-free protector," says Gottlieb. "For my personal collection of cards, I use the Ultra Pro Platinum Series Protectors for a three-ring binder."

Regardless of how military postcards are preserved, it remains a fact worth noting that the cards capture images that are often not to be found in history books and, thus, offer a unique perspective of the era. After all, it isn't every piece of militaria that allows you to literally look back in time. □

THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING

The "Prague Spring" of 1968 would prove to be tragically short-lived, as Soviet troops moved decisively to crush the pro-democracy movement in Czechoslovakia before it could spread to other Eastern Bloc nations.

BY TODD A. RAFFENSPERGER

AT 1:30 AM ON AUGUST 21, 1968, Czech authorities at Ruzyne Airport in the capital city of Prague waited to greet a special flight that was flying in directly from Moscow. The authorities were not alarmed. Perhaps it was a delegation coming to try to hammer out the growing differences between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

As soon as the plane taxied to the terminal, it became apparent immediately that it was no official delegation—diplomatic or otherwise. Instead, 100 plainclothes Russian soldiers armed with submachine guns clambered down the catwalk to the tarmac and stormed the airport terminal and control tower, overcoming the Czech security personnel without firing a shot. They were an advance unit of the Soviet 7th Guards Airborne Division. With the airport secured, the commandos signaled all clear for the rest of the Soviet airborne invasion force to proceed. It was the beginning of the end for Czechoslovakian democracy, which was being virtually strangled in its crib.

Around the world, 1968 had already been a year of turmoil. In the United States, the year was marked by the shocking assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. A growing number of Americans were taking to the streets, protesting the ever-escalating war in Vietnam, clashing with police and National Guard units, and taking over administration buildings at colleges and universities. The antiwar, antiestablishment furor was catching on in Europe as well, with similar demonstrations in West Germany by activists protesting the continuing American military presence in their country. Throughout France, mass demonstrations and strikes by students and workers were paralyzing the French economy and pushing the de Gaulle government to the point of collapse.

Communist leaders within the walls of the Kremlin were comforted by the thought that their own closed-off societies, isolated from the West by barbed wire, guns, and tanks, were immune to the sort of disorder and strife that was gripping the capitalist world. They hadn't counted on Czechoslovakia.

Pro-democracy demonstrators in Prague, one waving a Czech flag, battle Warsaw Pact tanks with rocks and Molotov cocktails following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

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212

Unlike in most of the other Eastern European countries that came under Soviet occupation after World War II, in Czechoslovakia the communists came to power in 1946 through electoral victories. But when in 1948 it became apparent that they were losing their popularity and thus were going to lose the next round of elections, the communist prime minister, Klement Gottwald, cracked down on all noncommunist factions in the government and used the militia and police to seize control of Prague. From then on, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic solidified its communist ties and joined the ranks of the other Eastern and Central European vassal states in the Soviet Empire.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLES ARMY (CSLA), NUMBERING 250,000 MEN, WAS structured along the lines of the Soviet Army. Its officer corps was composed almost entirely of men trained by the Soviets who had served in the First Czechoslovak Army Corps on the Eastern Front during World War II. Those officers from the prewar Czechoslovakian Army who had gone to London during the war and had come back after 1945 to help reconstitute the country's military were purged from the ranks. During the 1950s, when East Germany, Poland, and especially Hungary were wracked by uprisings, Czechoslovakia remained a stable, solid part of the Eastern Bloc. The Soviets were so confident of the stability and loyalty of the Czechs and Slovaks that they did not even keep a standing Red Army contingent in the country. In the event of a war with NATO across Germany, the Czechs were expected to hold up the Warsaw Pact's southern flank.

But by the 1960s, conditions within Czechoslovakia had started to change. Gottwald was dead, and in his place was a cautious reformer named Antonin Novotny. Unlike his predecessor, Novotny was willing to allow a certain limited degree of reform and loosening up of Czechoslovak society. He even went so far as to give businesses a little leeway in dictating their own production schedules and business plans.

In 1967, events in the Middle East altered Czechoslovakia's political course. In June of that year, Israel overwhelmingly defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in the Six Day War. The Syrian and Egyptian armies had been largely trained and equipped with advisers and weapons from the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, including Czechoslovakia. To many Czechs and Slovaks, Egypt's and Syria's humiliation was also their own.

The Six Day War provoked many among Czechoslovakia's intellectual elite to begin questioning the government's support for Egypt and its antipathy toward Israel. This criticism in turn opened up the floodgates to criticism of the government in general and of Premier Novotny in particular. Some of the first open critics of the regime were the members of the Writers Union, which numbered among its ranks a young playwright, Vaclav Havel, who was just beginning to make a name for himself. Novotny reacted to the criticism by reimposing censorship and clamping down on the press, moves that only engendered more criticism, both inside and outside the party. By the end of the year, there were calls within the Central Committee for Novotny's resignation.

Both: Library of Congress

ABOVE: Czech Prime Minister Antonin Novotny addresses the United Nations in 1960. BELOW: Much-feared KGB director Yuri Andropov, later premier of the Soviet Union.

When the committee met again in January 1968, the decision was made to strip Novotny of most of his power by separating the offices of first secretary of the party from the office of president of Czechoslovakia. Novotny previously had held both posts, and he was allowed to keep the office of president; but the first secretariat went to the head of the Slovakian wing of the party, Alexander Dubcek.

Dubcek was the son of Slovakian immigrants who had come to the United States and become American citizens. Active in the American socialist movement, they had both worked for Eugene Debs's Socialist Party at the turn of the century. In 1921, Dubcek's father, Stefen, moved the family to the Soviet Union to help build an industrial cooperative. The family moved back to their homeland of Czechoslovakia in 1938. As a teenager, Dubcek and his brother joined the Slovakian resistance against the Nazi occupation and took part in the Slovak national uprising in August 1944. Dubcek was wounded and his brother was killed in the fighting.

After the war, Dubcek climbed the ladder of the communist hierarchy and became a champion for the Slovak minority within the country. He made a name for himself as an advocate of government reform, including the separation of the party organization from the government. Dubcek was not known for being a maverick, but for being a hard worker, a fervent believer in Marxism-Leninism, and an admirer of the Soviet Union. Among his comrades in the Kremlin, Dubcek was affectionately referred to as "Our Sasha."

Dubcek's appointment was a welcome development for reformers in Czechoslovakia, but it did nothing to mollify the tens of thousands of people who had started taking to the streets and publicly demanding Novotny's resignation as president. On March 22, 1968, they got their wish; Novotny finally conceded the inevitable and stepped down. His successor was a former general and war hero named Ludvik Svoboda, who supported Dubcek's proposals.

What followed was an unprecedented period of freedom and reform behind the Iron Curtain that would be remembered in history as the "Prague Spring." For the first time in more than 20 years, the people of Czechoslovakia were not only allowed but encouraged to speak up and criticize the government and the party. Economically, Dubcek instituted an action program that loosened government controls on the private sector to an extent that Novotny had never dared. It wasn't long before the man whom the Soviets had regarded as a loyal, orthodox communist was declaring the desire to establish a "free, modern, and profoundly humane society."

Dubcek's neighbors and fellow Warsaw Pact leaders wanted no part of such an open society. They made their feelings known to Dubcek during the March 23 Warsaw Pact summit meeting in Dresden. Heading up the campaign of denunciation was Dubcek's neighbor to the north, East German leader Walter Ulbricht. The architect of the Berlin Wall and the most Stalinist of the Warsaw Pact leaders, Ulbricht was more than a little concerned about the possibility that the newfound freedoms of the Czech

and Slovak citizens would tempt his own citizens to demand the same. He denounced Dubcek for laying open Czechoslovakia to infiltration by Western influences and for giving his nation's artists and writers too much freedom. "The capitalist world press had already written that Czechoslovakia was the most advantageous point from which to penetrate the socialist camp," he exclaimed.

Poland's communist leader, Wladislaw Gomulka, shared Ulbricht's hysteria and went so far as to remind Dubcek of how Hungary was invaded and crushed in 1956 after its leadership had strayed too far from the Soviet fold. Ironically, Hungarian leader Janos Kadar, who had replaced the unfortunate Imre Nagy after Nagy was executed by the Soviets in 1958, took a more moderate tack, concluding that "Czechoslovakia's comrades know best, I believe, what is happening in Czechoslovakia today."

Whatever the leaders of the Eastern Bloc felt about what was happening in Czechoslovakia, it ultimately was not up to them as to what to do about it. No matter how much they exalted themselves within their own countries, the fact remained that they served at the pleasure of their Soviet masters. The question of what to do about Czechoslovakia rested within the halls of the Kremlin and on the shoulders of one man, General Secretary of the Soviet Union Leonid Brezhnev. Brezhnev had come to power in 1964 after Nikita Khrushchev was ousted over his supposed mishandling of the Cuban missile crisis. Unlike the temperamental, risk-taking Khrushchev, who always favored bold moves and ideas, Brezhnev was a cautious man who prized stability above all else.

Brezhnev at first was reluctant to get involved with events in Czechoslovakia. He had no problem with Novotny's ouster, and he had nothing against Dubcek himself. When asked by the desperate Novotny and other Czech hard-liners to intervene, Brezhnev replied: "I shall not deal with the problems that have arisen in your country. I know your party and the road it has traveled along, that is why I am confident that this time, too, it will adopt the kinds of decisions that are in the Leninist spirit." He was unwilling to sign off on a military operation against a fellow Warsaw Pact member unless it was absolutely necessary. Furthermore, Brezhnev had a personal connection with Czechoslovakia, having been a commissar in the Soviet armies that liberated the country from the Nazis in 1945. He was also friends with Czech President Ludvik Svoboda, whom he knew from the war.

It was the Soviet leader's hope that the situation could be resolved through negotiation. At

Rue des Archives/The Granger Collection, New York

Reform-minded Alexander Dubcek, first secretary of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia, greets supporters outside party headquarters in Prague a few days before the Soviet invasion.

the Dresden meeting, Brezhnev reiterated his opinion that every communist party had the right to make changes and reforms where it saw fit. But he also expressed concern that the changes that Dubcek and the reformers were making inside Czechoslovakia were going too far, especially in the area of allowing criticism of the party and of the socialist system. It especially irked him that even the party newspapers were using phrases like "decayed society" and "outdated order" to describe communism. Brezhnev reassured Dubcek that he would enjoy the full support of the Soviet leadership and the Warsaw Pact in taking whatever steps necessary to "stop these very dangerous developments." Through all the criticism, Brezhnev tried to maintain the air of fraternity among the parties.

Dubcek tried to maintain this sense of fraternity as well, constantly reassuring the Soviets and Warsaw Pact partners that there was no intention by his government to take Czechoslovakia out of the pact. Nor did he have any intention of abandoning socialism, a set of ideals he had believed in his entire life. He asserted that his reforms would serve to strengthen socialism, by ensuring the rights of the working class and encouraging workers' participation in socialism's further development. The action program of April 1968, drawn up by Dubcek and approved by the Central Committee, included a section entitled "Socialism Cannot Do Without Enterprises." Included were proposals to give private enterprises more freedom to act in foreign markets; to include consumer, labor, and other interests in the decision-making process; and to draft an economic plan that would be subject to the authority of a democratically elected National Assembly. But where Dubcek saw a brighter future for socialism in Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev and others saw only danger.

ANOTHER VOICE JOINED THE CHORUS THAT WAS WHISPERING ALARM AND threat into Brezhnev's ear. It was that of Yuri Andropov, chairman of the Soviet Union's notorious intelligence arm, the KGB. Andropov had made a name for himself in 1956 as ambassador to Hungary, where he was able to allay the worries of Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy about Soviet intentions right up until the moment that the Soviets invaded. His role in crushing the Hungarian uprising guaranteed his ascendancy to the Central Committee. Andropov made it his priority to crush any hint of dissident activity within the Soviet Union, creating an entire department within the KGB for the sole purpose of investigating, harassing, and persecuting dissidents including Andre Sakharov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He shared the anxiety that Ulbricht and Gomulka felt about what was going on in Czechoslovakia, and he was determined to make Brezhnev feel it as well.

Andropov had help from his counterpart in Czechoslovakia, the head of the Czech secret police agency known as the Statni Bezpecnost, or StB. His name was Josef Houska, and he was among

Well-armed Soviet troops atop tanks surround the radio station in central Prague on the first day of their unexpected invasion of a fellow communist nation.

many within the Czechoslovak security apparatus who opposed the Prague Spring. Together, the two security chiefs plotted to undermine Dubcek and to convince Brezhnev of the necessity to intervene in Czechoslovakia. While Houska fed information to Moscow identifying a so-called counterrevolutionary conspiracy in Prague, Andropov sent 30 KGB undercover agents to Czechoslovakia posing as tourists, in the hope that Czechs would reveal anti-Soviet and anti- communist sentiments to them. These agents were also tasked with putting up inflammatory posters and fliers calling for Czechoslovakia's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and the end of the communist system.

Andropov fed Brezhnev and the Politburo a steady diet of misinformation about counterrevolutionary activity going on in Prague, within the government itself. Reports of supposed arms caches being found throughout the country, no doubt planted by the StB or KGB, were used to claim that a massive armed uprising was in the offing. The KGB chairman also saw to it that stories appeared in *Pravda* revealing details of a supposed CIA plan to sabotage Czechoslovakia and penetrate the country's intelligence and security services. The KGB's head of counterintelligence in Washington, Oleg Kalugin, sent a report to his boss insisting that no such plan existed, that in fact the United States government had been caught off guard by the Prague Spring, but Andropov made sure the report never reached Brezhnev's desk.

DUBCEK WAS NOT UNMINDFUL OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING, AND HE KNEW THAT there were those in his own government who were plotting against him. Throughout the summer a steady escalation of rhetoric came from both sides. There was still no decision by Brezhnev about military action. Just the same, the Warsaw Pact started getting ready. A slow but steady assembly of armored and infantry units from East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, and the USSR started deploying closer to the Czech border. On July 21, Ulbricht ordered the mobilization in the Leipzig region of East German forces, including the 7th Armored and 11th Motorized Infantry Divisions. Meanwhile, the Warsaw Pact high command mobilized the entire Polish Second Army, consisting of four motorized infantry divisions. Three days later, the Hungarian 8th Mounted Infantry Division was also mobilized. The Bulgarians threw in with two regiments deployed to Soviet territory in the Ivanovo-Frankovsk area. These forces complemented the Soviet 1st Armored Army of the Guards, 20th Mounted Infantry Army of the Guards, 11th Armored Army of the Guards, the 38th Armored Army, and units from the Soviet Southern Military Group.

The assembled forces for what was code named Operation Danube numbered well over 250,000 troops. It was left to the supreme commander of the Warsaw Pact forces, Marshall Ivan Yakubovskii, to coordinate these forces when, and if, he got his orders to do so from Comrade Brezhnev and the Politburo. The officers and men of Operation Danube were told by their superiors that there would be little trouble. Indeed, it was their understanding that any intervention would meet with the full support of the Czech and Slovak peoples, who would see their arrival as a rescue from counterrevolutionary plotters. The Soviet defense minister, Marshal A.A. Grechko, underscored this point by stating emphatically to all his commanders that "Czechoslovakia is a friendly country. We are going to our brothers. On no account must we permit the spilling of blood of Czechs and Slovaks."

On August 17, the Politburo at Brezhnev's urging passed a resolution that declared that "the time has come to resort to active measures in defense of socialism in the CSSR and [we have] unanimously decided to provide help and support to the Communist Party and the People of Czechoslovakia with military force." Two days later, the Soviet ambassador in Prague, Stepan Chervonenko, delivered a letter of warning to the Czech leadership. It was nothing less than an ultimatum demanding that Dubcek and the party reassert complete control over the media, crack down on dissidents and critics, and repeal all economic and political reforms that threatened the communist hold on power. While not explicitly threatening an invasion, the letter stated that the demands must be met without delay or the matter "would be extremely dangerous." Dubcek got the message, and he readily accepted the demands laid out by Brezhnev. But by then the invasion was already under way.

A COUPLE OF HOURS AFTER MIDNIGHT on August 21, while Soviet paratroopers were securing Ruzyne Airport, the forces of five Warsaw Pact nations began crossing the border into Czechoslovakian territory. Seventeen tank and motorized infantry divisions swarmed into Czechoslovakia with more than 2,000 tanks, mostly T-55s and T-62s, and other armored vehicles. Soviet, Bulgarian, and Hungarian forces pushed from the southeastern border, linking up with Soviet airborne forces that landed and occupied the Slovakian provincial capital of Bratislava, and then moved on along the Czech-Austrian border. These forces linked up with the two Soviet and one Polish force that came in from the northeast, reaching Brno in the center of the country, which already had been occupied by Soviet paratroopers. On the right flank, coming in from the northwest, were Soviet and East German forces from the German Democratic Republic, units that originally had trained to fight a war against NATO forces deployed in West Germany. Now their guns were turned in a different direction.

The ground operations were supported by a concentration of 500 Soviet and Warsaw Pact combat aircraft, including MiG-19 and MiG-21 fighters. Meanwhile, a stream of Antonov AN-12 transports was landing at Ruzyne Airport on an hourly basis, offloading equipment and personnel of an entire Soviet airborne division. Similar airborne operations were also under way in the cities of Brno and Bratislava.

One of the first government leaders to get an inkling of what was happening was Dubcek's minister of defense, General Martin Dzur. When

Both: Public Domain

ABOVE: A victim of the Soviet invasion lies dead on the streets of Prague as civilians shout defiance at the Russian troops. Resistance was futile for the lightly armed Czechs. TOP: A helmeted Soviet soldier in an armored vehicle speaks to Czech protestors, many of them students, who are urging the Warsaw Pact soldiers to leave their country.

he first started receiving reports of movement along the borders, Dzur took it upon himself to issue an order that remains controversial to this day. Realizing that an invasion was imminent, he ordered his forces to remain in their barracks. No weapons were to be used under any circumstances, and the invaders were to be given "maximum all-round assistance" by the Czech military.

It didn't take long for the invaders to reach their assigned objectives. Units fanned out across the countryside, securing airports, telegraph offices, armories, barracks, radio stations, and party headquarters offices. Faithful to their orders, Czech Army units stayed in their barracks and offered no resistance anywhere.

As the long, rumbling columns of tanks, infantry, and artillery moved through the Czechoslo-

Both: Public Domain

ABOVE: Soviet troops swarm Wenceslas Square on August 21, 1968. The centrally located square was one of the focal points of invading forces. BELOW: Protesters use private vehicles and buses in a futile attempt to block the street near Radio Prague. Soviet tanks rammed through the improvised barricade.

vakian countryside, residents awakened by the sound of military vehicles first believed that it was merely an exercise, like others in the past carried out by their army and their Warsaw Pact allies. It was only when they turned on their radios that they started hearing the first reports of a major invasion of their country. Instead of the invaders waving the Nazi swastika, this time they were now waving the hammer and sickle of their old friend and protector Russia.

As word spread throughout the country, Czechoslovak citizens, mostly young people, started coming out in large and angry groups. "The whole world is watching! The whole world is watching!" they chanted, as television cameras recorded the confrontation. At first all they did was hurl insults and chants at the invaders, but before long they started throwing bricks, bottles, and stones. In some areas, citizens erected makeshift barricades to thwart the Soviet advance. The intensity of their anguish and hatred was something the Warsaw Pact soldiers had not been prepared for. They had been told that they were coming to save the people from a counterrevolutionary takeover that threatened their socialist paradise. As a result, the young soldiers, many of whom were from peasant or rural backgrounds, did not know how to react. It was a formula for violence.

BY 4:30 AM, SOVIET MILITARY VEHICLES arrived outside of the Central Committee building in Prague. Dubcek was on the telephone in his office trying to get more details about the invasion when a group of soldiers and plainclothesmen, led by a Soviet colonel, barged into the room. Without even the pretense of courtesy, the colonel walked up to Dubcek, yanked the receiver out of his hands, and pulled the telephone cord out of the wall. Announcing himself as a representative of a "revolutionary committee," the colonel ordered, "Comrade Dubcek, you are to come with us straight away." With that, Dubcek was led away under arrest.

In the streets of Prague, all hell was breaking loose. Soviet tanks from East Germany were met by crowds of angry Czech citizens who at first tried to talk to the soldiers and persuade them that there was no counterrevolutionary plot. But the bewildered soldiers continued on to their objectives. Soon enough, the peaceable appeals by the people were replaced by chants, threats, and violence. Some protesters climbed onto the tanks and vehicles in an attempt to open the hatches and get at the crews, or tried to set them on fire. The soldiers bearing the brunt of the anger and violence soon started to respond in the way they had been trained, by opening fire on the protesters.

The most intense fighting occurred outside the broadcast center of Radio Prague. The radio station had become the only fountainhead of defiance against the invasion. Protesters tried to protect the building by ringing it with city transit buses and setting them on fire. Soviet tanks and vehicles that tried to ram the makeshift fortifications sometimes caught fire themselves. People continued to surround the tanks, but the station's capture was inevitable, and by the end of the day Operation Danube had achieved all its key objectives.

While his people struggled to resist Soviet tanks with their bare hands, Dubcek and other reformers were being shuttled from base to base while the leaders in Moscow tried to find hardline replacements who could take the reins of power and restore order in a new government. But those few hard-liners on whom the Soviets could count did not have the clout and credi-

bility to win over the members of the Central Committee or the Presidium, who stood in passive but solid defiance to the Soviet actions.

Realizing that they were going to have to work with the leaders who were already in place, the Russians flew Dubcek and the others to Moscow on August 24. There Dubcek was reunited with Svoboda, who had been flown to Moscow earlier. They met with Brezhnev and other members of the Politburo, and two days later, with little choice in the matter, they signed the Moscow Protocols, a document that the Soviets had already drawn up before the meeting began. It was a revocation of almost everything that had been put in place during the Prague Spring. It repealed the economic reforms, it banned opposition groups, and it reasserted state control over the media. Dubcek, Svoboda, and other Czech reformers tried to haggle some concessions from the Soviets, but in the end Brezhnev got everything he wanted.

The Soviet leader subjected Dubeck to a final, humiliating lecture to drive home who were the true masters of in Eastern Europe. "The borders of your country are our borders as well," said Brezhnev. "Because you did not listen to us, we feel threatened." Brezhnev declared that in the name of those Soviets killed to liberate Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union was fully entitled to intervene militarily when it believed that the security of the socialist community was threatened. "It is immaterial," Brezhnev asserted, "if anyone was actually threatening us or not. It is a matter of principle. And that is the way it will be, for eternity." This prerogative that Brezhnev claimed for the Soviet Union in its East European satellites would become known as the Brezhnev Doctrine, holding that the USSR had the right to intervene in any communist country where it felt its interests were in jeopardy.

Dubcek returned to Prague on August 27 a broken man. With his eyes welling up with tears and his voice quivering at times, he addressed the Czech people on the radio for the first time since the invasion, telling his fellow citizens to refrain from any further confrontations with the invaders. He also told his saddened listeners that the situation would force them to "take some temporary measures that limit democracy and freedom of opinion." It was the best face that Dubcek could put on the situation, but everyone knew that it represented the end of the Prague Spring.

By military estimates, Operation Danube was a flawlessly executed success. It went off with a level of efficiency and coordination that made it a textbook exercise for Soviet military operations. In terms of casualties, the Soviet and

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Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev cynically raises Alexander Dubcek's hand after a forced meeting with the deposed Czech leader.

Warsaw Pact forces suffered fewer than a couple dozen fatalities or injuries. Some 100 Czechoslovakian men and women, mostly young protesters, were killed and hundreds of others were wounded. As far as Soviet military operations would go, the invasion of Czechoslovakia was relatively bloodless.

In short-range and longer political terms, the crushing of the Prague Spring would have disastrous consequences for the future of world communism. The communist and socialist parties in the Western democracies lined up in condemning the Soviet actions. For them, the invasion ran contrary to everything that they had been arguing for, a crushing of individual freedom that was taken for granted in the Western world.

CRITICISM CAME FROM WITHIN THE EASTERN BLOC AS WELL. THE COMMUNIST dictator of Albania, Enver Hoxha, condemned the invasion and withdrew his tiny fiefdom from the Warsaw Pact. Romania was the only major Warsaw Pact member that categorically refused to send troops to join the invasion force, with its dictator, Nicolai Ceaucescu, publicly condemning the invasion as flagrant violation of one socialist country's sovereignty by another. His high-profile opposition would endear him to Western leaders, who would treat him as a liberal maverick who was bucking Soviet orthodoxy, overlooking the fact that Ceaucescu was a tyrant to his own people. Seeing an opportunity to try to cast itself as the true leader of world revolution, the People's Republic of China also roundly condemned the Soviet invasion.

Perhaps the most profound impact that the crushing of the Prague Spring would have would be among the Soviets themselves, especially the younger generation of activists who saw their hopes for a more reformed, humane type of socialism crushed under their own country's tank treads. For millions of people who lived behind the Iron Curtain, the invasion of Czechoslovakia killed whatever hope they had that communism could ever change on its own.

Twenty-one years later, the long-discredited socialist system in Czechoslovakia was finally toppled by what would be called the "Velvet Revolution." It was a bloodless uprising similar to those that already had occurred in East Germany and almost all of the rest of Eastern Europe. As Czechoslovakia's citizens rejoiced in the downfall of the old regime, one of those for whom they cheered the loudest was Alexander Dubcek, who had long since resigned from the government, been stripped of his party membership, and been relegated to a meaningless job with the Slovakian forestry commission. But like the embattled country he had led so briefly in the Prague Spring of 1968, Dubcek survived to see a final triumph over communist oppression. In the end, perhaps, the good guys won. □

Led by a charismatic Thracian gladiator, rebellious slaves took to the mountains of southern Italy in a desperate bid for freedom from their Roman masters. The Spartacus Revolt had begun. BY ERIC NIDEROST

Freedom BY THE SWORD

IN THE SPRING OF 73 BC, THRACIAN GLADIATOR SPARTACUS DECIDED THAT THE time was right to attempt an escape. He was a virtual captive at the gladiatorial school of Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Batiatus, located at Capua in the Campania region of southern Italy. Like most gladiatorial schools, the House of Batiatus was a combination barracks, fortress, and prison. There, gladiators such as Spartacus perfected a savage craft of hand-to-hand combat designed to entertain their Roman masters. The gladiators took their names from the short sword, or gladius, favored by many of the combatants. Some, like Spartacus, wielded curved scimitars called sica; others used long swords or tridents. All fought in gladiatorial "games" where life and death were decided by the direction of the crowd's thumbs. Few expected mercy—most of the thumbs turned down, for death, at the end of a contest.

Spartacus wasn't afraid of dying—as a warrior he scorned death—but he had grown tired of fighting and probably dying for the amusement of his casually brutal Roman captors. Spartacus was a Thracian, a member of the wild tribes that inhabited the region that is now Bulgaria. His real name was Spardakos, which translated as "famous for his spear." He was about 30 years of age, and some have speculated he was of noble or aristocratic blood.

Spartacus was not born into slavery, but rather started his career as an auxiliary in the Roman Army. The legionary foot soldier was the backbone of Rome's military forces, but other roles were provided by the *auxilia* (literally, "helpers.") The Thracians, known as expert horsemen and superb cavalrymen, were particularly valued helpers. As a member of the Roman cavalry, Spartacus would have been close enough to observe and remember Roman strategy and tactics. He was a big man, bearded and physically imposing. The Thracians were feared as fierce warriors, with a reputation as hell-raisers not unlike that of the latter-day Vikings. They lived for battle and feasted with the severed heads of enemies decorating their dining halls.

Like many Thracian men, Spartacus sported tattoos that made him even more fearful. Yet beneath the barbarian surface was a man who could think, and think clearly. The Greek writer Plutarch declared that Spartacus "not only had great spirit and physical strength," but was "most intelligent and cultured, being more like a Greek than a Thracian." This was high praise indeed from a Greek.

For some reason, Spartacus deserted the Roman Army. Perhaps he wanted to join King Mithridates VI, as other Thracians had done. Mithridates was the ruler of Pontus, located on the southern shores of the Black Sea in modern-day Turkey. He had a powerful army, and his alliance with Cretan and Cilician pirates gave him command of the Black Sea, the Bosporus, and the eastern Mediterranean. Mithridates handily defeated Roman general Marcus Aurelius Cota, in part because the latter was a mediocre general. That was bad enough, but when Marcus Antonius, father of Mark Antony, took on the pirates, he was outmaneuvered and humiliated. Lucius Lucinius Lucullus, one of Rome's best generals, hurried east to rectify the situation, but it was clear that the campaign would tie up the legions for some time to come.

Whatever the reason for his desertion, Spartacus was captured and sentenced to be a gladiator. In a way, he was lucky. He could have

Thracian-born gladiator Spartacus falls in battle against the Romans at Apulia, Italy, in 71 BC. His body was so hacked to pieces that it was never recovered.

The Granger Collection, New York

ended up nailed to a cross, as other deserters-turned-bandits had been. Instead, Spartacus became a heavyweight, or *murmillo,* gladiator, burdened with a staggering 35 to 40 pounds of arms and armor, including the well-known crested helmet. He certainly did not have to learn to fight. As soon as Spartacus entered the gladiator school, he made sure he got hold of a *sica,* the traditional weapon of a Thracian warrior. Its curved blade was deadly, and Spartacus was expert in its use.

Discipline was harsh in the gladiatorial schools, and experienced soldiers such as Spartacus balked at the constant exercise, training, and dietary constraints. Punishment for even the slightest offense also chafed the gladiators. By the spring of 73 BC, Spartacus and others hatched an escape plan at Batiatus's facility. For the breakout to be successful, Batiatus and his armed guards would have to be taken by surprise. It had to be a mass uprising as well, because an individual had little chance of success.

Unfortunately for the gladiators, someone betrayed the plot, and Spartacus's hand was forced before the gladiators were ready. The guards moved in, but Spartacus and the others raced for

the kitchen in a last-ditch quest for freedom. Once inside, they grabbed meat spits, cleavers, and anything else they could find to serve as weapons. A melee ensued that was brutal and bloody. Somehow, Spartacus and 74 others managed to escape into the countryside. By sheer good luck they intercepted a wagonload of weapons going to another gladiator school. Now better armed, they had to decide what to do next.

FREEDOM WAS NOT AN END IN ITSELF; THE FUGITIVES WANTED REVENGE FOR the humiliations they had endured at the hands of their Roman masters. Spartacus's band included Thracians, Celts, and Germans, and it was natural that they wanted their own leaders. Spartacus led his countrymen, while Crixus headed the Celts, and Oenomaus became chief of the Germans. The unified rebels headed for Mount Vesuvius, some 20 miles away. The 4,000-foot-high volcanic peak had not exploded for centuries. The quiescent volcano afforded a good view of the surrounding countryside and was a natural fortress. Spartacus and his followers settled in to plan their next moves.

Slave revolts were nothing new in the Roman Empire. In 138 BC, several thousand ill-treated wretches rose up but were quickly crushed. In the aftermath of the rising, the survivors were crucified, 450 in Minturnae, 150 in Rome, and 4,000 in Sinuessa. Even more serious were the so-

A Roman mosaic from the "House of the Gladiators" shows the rigorous training the gladiators underwent before entering the arena to entertain Roman crowds.

called Servile Wars in Sicily. In 135 BC and again in 104 BC, Sicilian slaves made a desperate bid for liberty but were defeated by the combined might of the Roman Empire.

But there was something different about Spartacus. Bold and charismatic, he welded the disparate elements into an effective fighting force—at least for a time. He was also fortunate in that Italy's slave population was large and seemingly growing lager by the day. Rome was fast becoming the master of the Mediterranean, a juggernaut whose legions were the greatest military force in the world. In the first century BC, Rome's dominions included North Africa, Greece, and parts of Asia Minor and Spain. Extensive conquests brought great wealth to the city on the Tiber, profoundly altering Roman society and politics in the bargain. Rome was the richest, most powerful, and most corrupt city in the world.

Rome was master of all it surveyed, but success came at an enormous social cost. In centuries past, the Roman legionary was a peasant soldier, but as Rome's empire expanded, so did its armies. Legionaries found themselves fighting in the windswept mountains of Spain and the searing deserts of North Africa. When they did come home, they found their farms under threat from large landowners, many of them from the senatorial or business classes.

The process had begun as early as the Second Punic War (218-202 BC). The great Carthaginian general Hannibal had systematically laid waste to much of Etruria and southern Italy. Farmers were killed and records destroyed. As the decades passed and Rome's wars of conquest continued, returning legionaries preferred the *pilum* (spear) to the plow and sold out to large landowners. Those who tried to continue farming found themselves under pressure to sell. Usually the large landholders won, and the farmers either retreated to marginal land or flocked to cities like Rome, where they became part of the new urban poor. Kept alive and relatively happy by public games and the government dole, the era of *panem et circenis*—bread and circuses—had begun.

By the beginning of the first century BC, most of the small farms were gone, replaced by large plantation-like estates called *latifundia*. Free peasant workers were replaced by slaves, chattel who were exempt from military service and were expected to work the year round. Slaves grew grain, olives, and fruit trees or tended sheep on large estates owned by a wealthy few. The slaves were mainly prisoners of war, although some were domestic slaves born in Italy. Slavery was big business and could reap huge profits for both buyer and seller. Sometimes, Romans even bought captives from pirates who sailed the Mediterranean like predatory sharks. The businessmen and wealthy magnates grew rich from the cheap labor of their human chattel, giving little thought that these same slaves might harbor a secret desire for freedom.

Soon Italy was awash with slaves—some two million in a population of only six million. There were so many slaves that the Roman Senate quickly rejected an idea that slaves wear some kind of distinctive garb. If the slaves realized how truly numerous they were, the senators reasoned, they might take it into their heads to revolt en masse. Spartacus's breakout was perfectly timed even though the gladiators probably hadn't given the matter much thought at the time. Rome was simultaneously bogged down in two costly wars on either end of the Mediterranean. The battle-tested, veteran

legions were far away on campaign. With some exceptions, only second- or third-rate troops remained in Italy.

The runaway gladiators had a unique opportunity to take revenge on their former Roman masters. Now that they were safely ensconced in Vesuvius's crater, the fugitives could forage and plunder at will. The countryside was rich, garlanded with grapes that grew on thick vines nourished by the volcanic soil. Food was was plentiful, and nearby patrician estates were ripe for plunder. Spartacus gained more and more recruits. Most were runaway slaves, but others were simply disaffected farmers. Soon there were several thousand rebels camped out on Vesuvius, the beginnings of a small army. Roman authorities were slow to react. Spartacus and his band of rebels were so small in number at first that they seemed little better than the other roving bandits who infested the country roads of Italy. A group of Capuan policemen—armed men probably hired by Batiatus—began tracking the gladiators, but they soon got more than they bargained for. The Capuans were easily sent packing, but they left behind good weapons and armor. From their base on Vesuvius, the rebels raided the rich, lush countryside, terrorizing landowners. Back in Rome, news filtered in about Spartacus's escape and the plundering of the local countryside. The Senate decided to send one of its *praetors,* or magistrates, Gaius Claudius Glaber, to deal with the situation. There were eight praetors in all, and most of them were ambitious men. On the other hand, slave catching was not considered the most glorious of occupations.

Glaber accepted the assignment and rounded up some men. In its wisdom, the Senate had decided to characterize the gladiator breakout as a *tumultus*—an emergency. It was a serious matter, but not as serious as a war. There were few real soldiers available, so Glaber fell back on the time-honored expedience of recruiting from the countryside as he marched south. The retired veterans in the vicinity looked upon slave catching with such distaste that few would volunteer. Glaber somehow managed to gather some 3,000 men, raw recruits who were essentially militia, not soldiers. They were well armed and well equipped—much to Spartacus's later delight—but it was all a showy façade.

Glaber arrived at the foot of the volcano and considered his options. There was only one road up to the summit, and it was narrow and twisting. Glaber was no Hannibal, but even he recognized that the slaves held the high ground. The *praetor* decided to blockade the fugitives and starve them out. The Romans made camp at the base of the volcano and put a heavy guard on the road. Spartacus and his rebels were bottled up—or so it seemed.

Library of Congress

Well-preserved gladiator barracks and training facility near the Colosseum in Rome. Spartacus trained elsewhere, at Capua in southern Italy.

Not wanting to be held hostage on his own turf, Spartacus decided to take the offensive. His men made ropes of the wild grapevines that carpeted the area. Scouting his position, Spartacus saw that one side of Vesuvius had been left unguarded because the Romans saw it as fairly steep and the surrounding soil as unstable. The vine ropes could be lowered down, thus providing a kind of natural banister that the men could hold onto as they descended. Once all of Spartacus's men were safely down the mountainside, he led them in an attack on the Roman camp. Caught literally napping, the Roman soldiers had little chance, especially against expert warriors who reveled in hand-to-hand fighting. Most of the Romans simply fled in panic, abandoning their camp and leaving behind a great store of weapons, armor, food, and plunder to the triumphant rebels.

The Senate heard of Glaber's defeat with a mixture of irritation and concern. Praetor Publius Varinius was dispatched to take on the slaves, with his colleague Lucius Cossinius marching in support. Once again, raw troops were gathered along the way, with predicable results. Cossinius was defeated and killed near the baths at Herculaneum, and several detachments led by Varinius's subordinates also met with disaster near Vesuvius. Varinius still remained in the field, but it was beginning to look like he was in over his head.

YET REBEL SUCCESSES WERE CAUSING DISSENSION IN THEIR RANKS. SPARTACUS wanted to march north and leave Italy for good. Most of Gaul and parts of Thrace were still free. Passing through the Alps wouldn't be easy, but if Hannibal had done it 150 years earlier, so could they. In any case, staying in Italy was tantamount to suicide. Sooner or later, the Roman legions—real, battle-tested, veteran legions—would return, and the rebels would be destroyed. The Celtic leader Crixus disagreed. Overconfident, he wanted to attack Varinius. To him, heading north without battle was tantamount to turning tail. Crixus and many of the slaves wanted to keep raiding Roman farms and country estates. Riches were theirs for the taking. The gleam of gold blinded them to the real dangers that confronted them.

Finally a compromise was reached. The gladiators would stay in Italy, at least for the time being, and they would fight Varinius. But Spartacus insisted that their insurgent army was not yet ready to tackle the *praetor.* The Thracian would lead them south, to open pastureland, where they would gather and train more recruits. They would be heading away from the Alps and safety, but

Map © 2011 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

After escaping from gladiator school at Capua, Spartacus and his rebels spent the next two years marching and countermarching across Italy before finally being routed at Apulia. The victors crucified some 6,000 prisoners along the Appian Way to Rome.

there was method in Spartacus's madness. The vast pasturelands were where slave shepherds tended flocks. The shepherds were tough, hardy, and independent, and they were used to fighting wild animals and occasionally brigands. With proper weapons and training, they could be molded into the backbone of the insurgent force.

AS THE GLADIATORS MARCHED SOUTH, THOUSANDS FLOCKED TO SPARTACUS'S banner. When the time was right, they turned on Varinius at Lucania. The Romans were routed, and Varinius barely escaped with his life. Worse still, the rebels captured the bundles of rods and axes, called *fasces,* which were the symbols of a Roman magistrate's power and, by extension, of Rome itself. After this victory, thousands more slaves joined Spartacus's army, some of them still carrying their chains. The insurgent army now numbered 40,000 men and a vast number of women and children who were camp followers.

Spartacus took the winter of 73-72 BC to manufacture weapons and train men. Now that the Romans had been taken care of—at least for the moment—Spartacus once again turned his thoughts northward. He would cross the Apennines and march along the Adriatic Coast toward the Alps. As before, the ultimate goal for the insurgents was to leave Italy and return to their far-flung homes.

The Romans awoke at last to the gravity of the situation and put Consuls Lucius Gellius Publicola and Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus into the field. The rebels played into Roman hands by splitting up their forces. Crixus took around 10,000 men—perhaps more—and separated from Spartacus. Gellius caught up with Crixus near Mount Garganus and crushed him. Two-thirds of the insurgents, including Crixus, were killed in the debacle.

Spartacus, meanwhile, headed north, liberating slaves in the towns of Consentia and Metapontum and adding to his strength. Any freed slaves who wanted to join his army received weapons and rudimentary training on the march. In separate encounters with the pursuing Roman consuls, Spartacus managed to badly defeat both Gellius and Lentulus. The consuls retreated, but there was still a piece of unfinished business left to complete. Spartacus honored the slain Crixus by forcing 300 Roman prisoners to fight to the death near a symbolic funeral pyre. Even the most illiterate slave appreciated the irony: now the Romans were the gladiators and the slaves were the spectators.

Once the games were over, it was time to resume the march north. There was another brief encounter with the consuls, but they were brushed aside and the march resumed. There was one more hurdle for Spartacus to clear: Proconsul Gaius Cassius Longinus, governor of Cisalpine Gaul, and his garrison at Mutina. Cisalpine Gaul was the northernmost province of Italy, centered in the Po valley. Cassius, the father of Julius Caesar's future murderer, had two legions—some 10,000 men—at his disposal. It did him no good. In the end, Cassius was mauled by Spartacus's army, and the proconsul barely escaped with his life. The road though the Alps was open and beckoning. Spartacus urged his men to escape Italy at last, but most refused. Grandiose dreams still filled their minds and fevered their imaginations. Much of Italy lay defenseless and ripe for plunder. Some even talked wildly of taking Rome. Probably a few did escape over the mountains and returned home, but the others turned south once again.

In theory, the road to Rome was open, but Spartacus refused to rise to the bait. Rome was smaller than its later Imperial incarnation. Great monuments such as the Coliseum and the Pantheon were yet to be built. Nevertheless, Rome was still a sizable city, with seven miles of walls enclosing 1,000 acres. Some of the

walls reached heights of 13 feet. The walls had defied Hannibal, one of the greatest military geniuses of all time. Could Spartacus, untrained in the art of siege craft and lacking engineers, do better?

Spartacus probably never seriously considered trying to take the city, although he may have rendered lip service to his followers. The thing to do was to push south, into the lush and welcoming fields of southern Italy. In the autumn of 72, he and his insurgent army were still at large, and from the Roman point of view there was no end in sight. What was needed was a fresh approach, implemented by a new commander untainted by the stench of recent defeats. The Senate turned to Marcus Licinius Crassus. He was one of the richest men in Rome, with a fortune reckoned at 170,000,000 sesterces.

With money no object, Crassus easily raised six new legions. Thanks to his previous service under the great Roman general Sulla, he had a good reputation as a military man, and retired veterans responded eagerly to his call to arms. In addition to the newly raised legions, Crassus had the remnants of the consular forces recently defeated by Spartacus. In all, Crassus's army totaled about 45,000 effectives. By contrast, Spartacus was at the peak of his power and fame, with somewhere between 60,000 and 70,000 men at his disposal. Most Romans had contempt for slaves, even after the insurgent victories, but Crassus wasn't going to fall into that trap. The remains of the consul legions were posted around Ancona in the south. Crassus ordered his subordinate Mummius to shadow Spartacus, but not to engage in battle.

Mummius, seeking glory, disobeyed the orders and fought the wily Thracian with predicable results at Picenum, on the central Adriatic coast. The Romans were not only routed, but some literally threw away their weapons in panic as they ran. This was the ultimate disgrace in the ancient world. Crassus knew that he had to do something—and fast—to stop the contagion of fear from spreading through his new legions. He turned to an ancient method that had fallen out of favor in recent years—decimation. He chose 500 of the runaways who had disgraced themselves by flight and divided them into 50 groups of 10 men each. One man from each group was chosen by lot to be beaten to death by his comrades. This was harsh even by Roman standards, but soon the legionaries feared their commander more than they feared Spartacus.

In the winter of 72-71 BC, Spartacus's army arrived in Bruttium, in the toe of Italy, and took the city of Thurii. His intention was to cross over to Sicily, but what he intended beyond that is mere speculation. Spartacus may have wanted to establish a freed slave kingdom on the island. Sicily had a history of slave rebellion, and the thousands of still-discontented human chattels would welcome his arrival. Another line of thought involved the Cilician pirates. They might ferry him across the strait to Sicily or be persuaded to transport his men back to their homes, or at least to territory not held by the Romans. If Spartacus took Sicily, he could use the island as a naval base of sorts.

SOMETHING WENT WRONG, HOWEVER, AND THE PIRATES NEVER SHOWED UP. (Crassus may have bought them off, or else they simply betrayed Spartacus on their own.) With their disappearance, Spartacus was trapped when Crassus showed up and cut him off in the peninsula forming Italy's toe. Crassus ordered his men to build a wall across Bruttium, from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Ionia Sea, a distance of about 35 miles. The Roman fortifications were not continuous, but they were formidable. There was a stone wall at least 25 feet high, a wooden palisade, and a trench that was spiked by wooden stakes. Spartacus's first attempt at a breakout ended in defeat. Things looked grim for the formerly triumphant rebels.

It was now the winter of 71 BC, and supplies and tempers were growing shorter by the day. The Italian toe region was a cold, sparse land with little food and less comfort. Rebel morale began to plummet faster than the temperatures. Spartacus had his own antidote to such gloom. According to ancient writers, he crucified a Roman prisoner in no-man's-land between the two armies to demonstrate to his own troops the fate awaiting them if they were defeated. It was a salutary lesson. Crucifixion had no religious meaning in the first century—it was simply the most painful and degrading death the ancient world could conceive. Spartacus's men knew that crucifixion would be their fate if they were captured alive. They crucified a Roman in full view of his fellow legionaries.

akg-images

Roman soldiers led by Marcus Licinius Crassus defeat the rebels in this 17th-century German engraving. Spartacus died in vain while trying to reach Crassus on the battlefield.

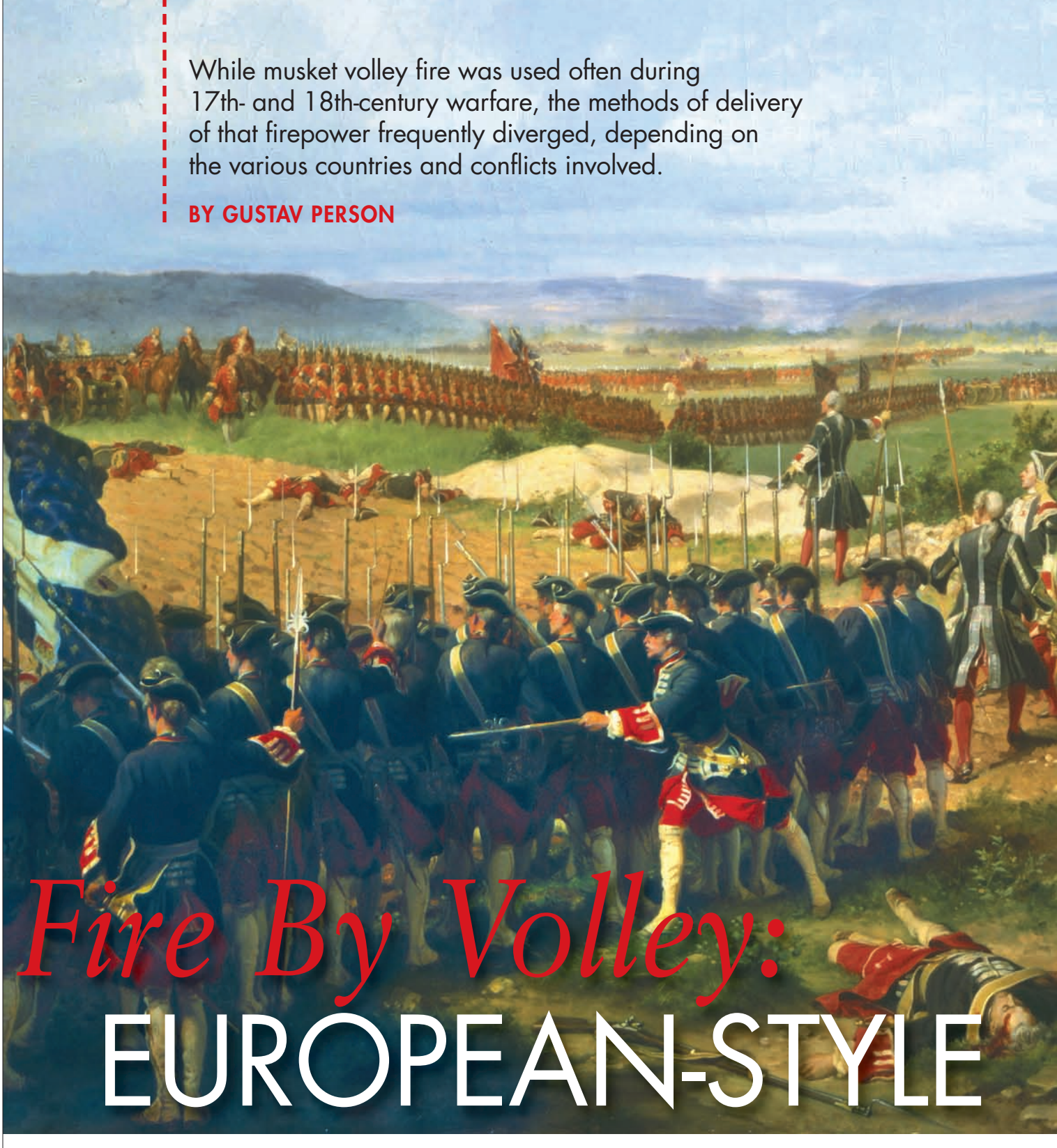
Spartacus was not going to end up on the cross if he could help it. He devised a bold plan to escape the trap, but he needed the proper weather conditions. Sometime in February, Spartacus made his move. He struck the Roman fortifications in the very teeth of a howling snowstorm, filling in the Roman defensive trench with earth, wood, branches, and the half-frozen corpses of slain prisoners. The bulk of the insurgent army escaped, but the rebels were still an undisciplined force, content to follow a leader only as long as he gave them victory and plunder. Spartacus had gotten them out of the trap, but his aborted Sicilian scheme had nearly led to disaster.

A large group of rebels, led by Castus and Gannicus, split off from Spartacus. Eventually, Crassus caught up with the splinter group and crushed it at Lake Lucania. Many chose death rather than surrender. Some 12,000 rebels, including the leaders, met their end. Spartacus and his remaining

Continued on page 66

While musket volley fire was used often during 17th- and 18th-century warfare, the methods of delivery of that firepower frequently diverged, depending on the various countries and conflicts involved.

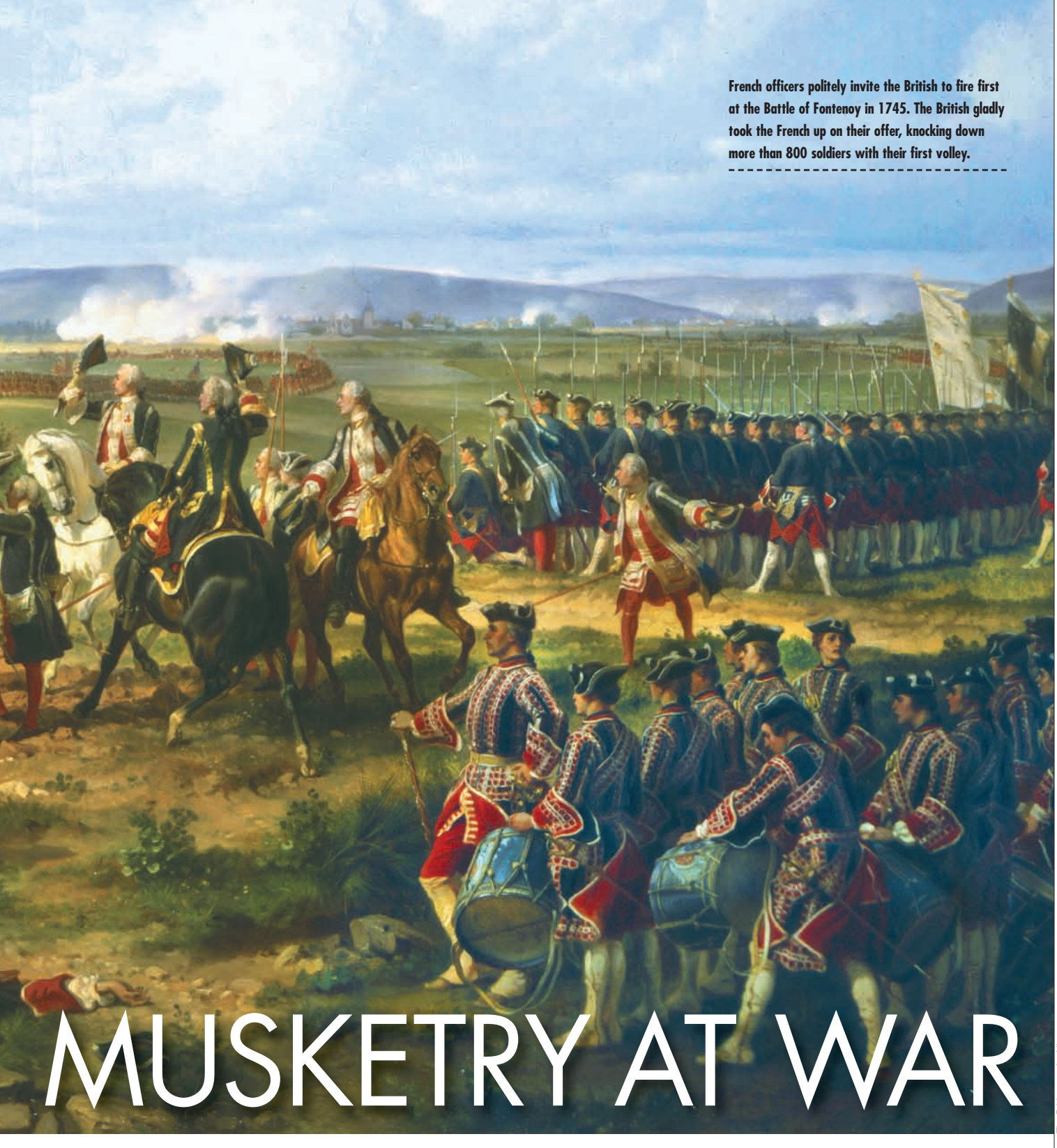
BY GUSTAV PERSON



Fire By Volley: EUROPEAN-STYLE

ON THE SNOWY FIELD of Mollwitz, Poland, on April 10, 1741, newly installed King Frederick II of Prussia faced a formidable army of Austro-Hungarians. After initiating the War of the Austrian Succession by invading Silesia, Frederick had only recently been installed on the throne. A born military genius, Frederick was still inexperienced this early in his career, and more campaigns and warfare would have to intervene before he earned his sobriquet, Frederick the Great. At Mollwitz, after his cavalry had been totally routed and most of his guns lost, Frederick was persuaded to leave the field as he was facing certain defeat. Prussian Field Marshal Kurt von Schwerin was asked to provide the rear guard for what remained of the army. "Over the bodies of the enemy," was his reply. The Prussian infantry was silent for a moment, but then advanced, their musket volleys rolling like continuous thunder. Faced by such a spectacle, the Austrian infantry refused to attack and conceded the battle to the Prussians.

While most students of military history are aware of the use of musket volley fire during



French officers politely invite the British to fire first at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745. The British gladly took the French up on their offer, knocking down more than 800 soldiers with their first volley.

The Bridgeman Art Library

MUSKETRY AT WAR

17th- and 18th-century warfare, the methods of delivery of that firepower often remain little known or appreciated. During most of the 17th century, the matchlock musket and the pike were the predominant infantry weapons. The prevailing ratio of musket to pike was 2 to 1. Battalions were formed six deep, with a pike block in the center and two flanking wings of musketeers. Starting about 1670, the flintlock gradually replaced the matchlock, and the plug bayonet also entered service, having been introduced first to British troops in garrison at Dunkirk in 1658. The socket bayonet became standard issue, effectively replacing the pike from the mid-1680s on. By 1703, all pikemen had vanished from British service.

In the matchlock period, there were essentially three methods by which troops delivered their fire. First, in the traditional Dutch manner, the troops formed in ranks six deep and fired by rank. The front two ranks would step forward; the first would give fire and then file away to the rear to reload while the next rank fired and likewise filed to the rear. The process continued with each

rank firing and wheeling away to the rear in rotation. Cavalrymen termed this method of advancing to fire, then falling back to reload, the caracole.

The second method was the Swedish *salvee,* originally developed by Gustavus Adolphus during the Thirty Years' War. In the *salvee* method, six ranks doubled up three deep, the first rank kneeling while the second and third ranks closed up tightly. Then all three ranks would fire together in a shattering volley. This usually was followed by the men clubbing their muskets and falling on the enemy with the pikemen. The *salvee* method was used extensively during the English Civil War (1642-1651). The obvious disadvantage was that all the muskets were discharged at the same time and left the troops vulnerable as they were reloading. For this reason, the method tended to be used only immediately prior to hand-to-hand combat.

A third method, known as the "Swede's way," divided a wing of musketeers into a checkerboard pattern, each subdivision being three deep. The subdivisions at the front would give fire and reload while the rear subdivisions marched forward through the intervals to fire. They then retired through the intervals to reload while the advanced subdivisions again gave fire. The Battle of Breitenfeld, on September 17, 1631, provided an excellent example of the use of the Swedish tactic. This method was included in 1675 in King Charles II's *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline*.

THE SWEDISH SYSTEM PROVIDED FORCES WITH THE ABILITY TO FIRE WHILE either advancing or retreating, but the system had a number of drawbacks. It invariably disordered the battalion and detracted from the soldiers' ability or inclination to aim. During this period, the French infantry occasionally used two other methods of delivering fire: firing by files and firing by divisions. Firing by files was executed by groups of two files at a time. The 10 men (if there were five ranks) would advance six paces to the front, spread out in a line, and fire. They would then return to their original places to reload while the next two files advanced and fired. Firing by division was similar in execution to firing by files, but it was conducted by four or six files.

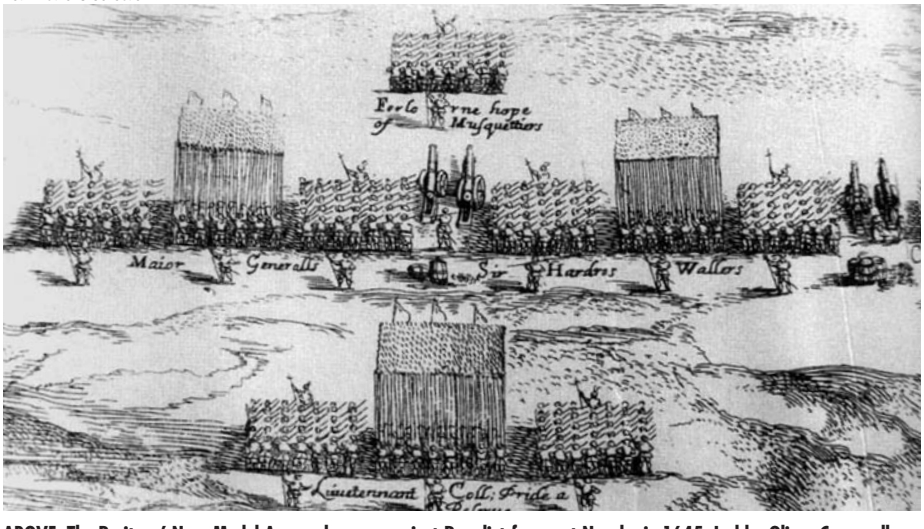
By the end of the 17th century, tactics changed again, caused primarily by the introduction of the flintlock musket, called the firelock. In 1694, British General Hugh McKay added an appendix, entitled the *Rules of War for the Infantry,* to a manual previously published as *Commands for the Exercisis* [sic] *of Foot, Arm'd with Firelock-Muskets and Pikes; with the Evolutions.* His later account of the Battle of Killiecrankie in Scotland, on July 27, 1689, proved that a new platoon firing system (known as "plattons fire") had arrived with the Glorious Revolution in Great Britain.

The Dutch method was once again introduced, influenced by the large number of English officers who were veterans of service in the Low Countries. Basically, the infantry battalion was formed in a traditional six-deep formation, with each wing of musketeers doubling its ranks to three deep and then dividing into six platoons. The grenadiers were also divided on the flanks of each battalion, while two firelock men of each company were used to fire as sharpshooters. At the pass of Killiecrankie, as the Jacobite Highlanders' charge began moving forward toward the British line, the platoons began firing at a range of 100 yards. Although all but two of the British battalions were eventually routed, they were able to inflict grievous losses on the charging Scots with the new platoon fire. The British defeat was largely caused by their use of the plug bayonet (affixed by jamming the wooden handle into the muzzle of the musket), which effectively stopped the volley fire at the most vulnerable moment.

During the next 10 years, the platoon firing system was developed into the sophisticated form described in the Duke of Marlborough's *New Exercise of Firelocks and Bayonets,* published in 1708 during the War of the Spanish Succession. In the new system, the British infantry battalion took the field and drew up in line in a predetermined order of 13 companies, with the grenadier company divided into two platoons, one on each flank. The whole battalion was formed into three ranks, closing to half-distance, or 18 inches, between each rank. The major or adjutant then divided the 12 line companies (omitting the grenadiers) into four grand divisions of three companies each, and each grand division in turn was formed into four equal-size platoons. Each platoon would number 30 to 50 men, depending on the effective strength of the battalion.

A battalion was thus reorganized into a total of 18 platoons, including the grenadiers. Next, the platoons were organized into at least three groups of six platoons apiece. The platoons were ordered to fire, not side by side but interspersed down the whole line in a carefully prearranged order to achieve continuity of fire from every part of the battalion line. The

Both: Author's Collection



ABOVE: The Puritans' New Model Army advances against Royalist forces at Naseby in 1645. Led by Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan pikemen were flanked by infantry armed with matchlock muskets. RIGHT: A 1608 drawing shows a musketeer shouldering his matchlock. The smoking match is held in his left hand while his right hand holds the forked "rest" used to steady the musket muzzle during firing.

Public Domain

Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus carries the staff of command as the battle rages behind him at Breitenfeld, Saxony, in 1631. His infantry used the *salvee* method of firing, six ranks massed three-deep for maximum impact.

colonel stationed himself with a drummer seven paces in front of the color party in the center; the lieutenant colonel positioned himself 10 paces behind the center of the line to take command immediately should the colonel be killed or otherwise incapacitated.

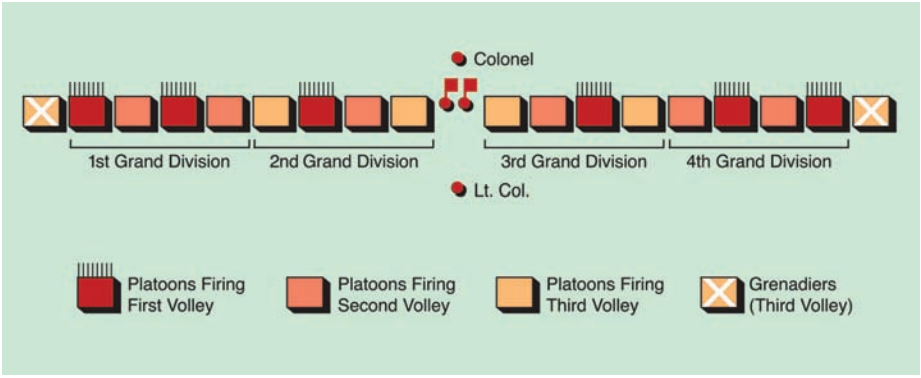
The battalion was now ready to advance, and all knapsacks and superfluous equipment were sent to the rear. At about 60 paces from the enemy, the six platoons of the first firing group made ready, by verbal order or beat of drum, and the platoons began to fire simultaneously. As the first firing group began to reload, the second and third groups fired in rotation. Formed in three ranks, the first rank of each platoon knelt while the second crouched and the third rank stepped slightly to the right; the process was known as "locking on."

The advantages of the platoon system were threefold. First, the new system facilitated the high degree of fire control by officers and noncommissioned officers; this in turn led to more accurate shooting and better discipline than was possible when firing by complete ranks. Platoon firing allowed the fire to be directed, if necessary, obliquely to the left or right and not just directly to the front of the battalion. Second, the three firings ensured that the enemy came under concentrated and continuous fire once the action opened; there was no let up. The psychological effects of such fire on recipients at ranges less than 100 yards cannot be overestimated. Third, one-third of a British battalion would always be loaded and thus ready to deal with any sudden emergency. At best, however, it was a complicated system.

This method of delivering a battalion's musketry proved so effective during the War of the Spanish Succession that it continued in use for the next 30 years. Under Marlborough the whole battalion halted before commencing its fire; however, by the time of the Battle of Fontenoy, on May 11, 1745, battalions were trained to continue their advance as they fired. To effect this maneuver, the platoons of the first firing group stepped out while the remainder half-stepped. The first group halted, volleyed, and reloaded, by which time the second group had caught up, fired, and reloaded while the third then delivered its own fire. The procedure was repeated time and again, creating the checkerboard effect that General James Wolfe was to describe a few years later.

AT FONTENOY, THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND, CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF THE BRITISH Army, formed a compact column of 15,000 English, Scottish, and Hanoverian infantry, about 500 yards wide by 600 yards deep. As the mass marched into a wide ravine with colors flying and drums beating, they were opposed by battalions of the Gardes Françaises, which had left their sheltering redoubts. What followed was a famous episode in which the opposing officers invited the others to fire first. The British took the opportunity and began platoon firing, striking down 50 officers and 760 men of the three leading French battalions within a very short time. The shattered French force fell back, and the allied column pressed on, firing disciplined volleys into the French second line, 300 yards behind where the first line had opened the struggle.

Meanwhile, the French Army continued to go its own way. Primarily for defensive fire, the French retained the rank system. The Ordonnance of March 2, 1703, mandated that the standard formation be five ranks deep as in the last great days of the pike and matchlock, although in practice many



ABOVE: In the British platoon firing system of 1728 (see diagram), nine battalion companies were divided into 18 platoons. This system provided for constant volley fire across the entire battalion front. BELOW: At the Battle of Malplaquet in 1709, the British platoon firing system proved superior to the French method of firing by rank. English marksmen easily beat back repeated French cavalry charges.

Public Domain

French battalions formed only four deep owing to the exigencies of manpower shortages as the War of the Spanish Succession continued. The men in the first four ranks knelt while the fifth stood. After the fifth rank fired, those in the fourth rank stood and fired while the fifth reloaded; then the third rank fired, and so on until all had fired when the fifth rank men could begin anew.

Sometimes, the commanding officer would order two ranks to fire at a time, making certain that the fire rolled from rank to rank. Provision was also made for firing while either advancing or retiring. This method recalled that of the caracole of the previous century and was used by the French until the late 1740s. The British often adopted various practices to evade the French fire. As soon as they saw the enemy infantry assuming a firing position, they fell flat on their stomachs and waited until the French had fired. Then, virtually unscathed, they got up and resumed their attack. This is what the Black Watch did as they attacked the French infantry in the entrenchments around Fontenoy. The fact that it was extremely difficult to direct oblique fire posed a severe disadvantage for the French defenders.

Both the British platoon firing and the French rank firing systems were well illustrated at the Battle of Malplaquet on September 11, 1709. In the morning hours, the British and allied infantry right wing, a total of 83 battalions, attacked the French infantry entrenched behind breastworks. The French fired by rank, causing fearsome casualties and beating back each British attack. Around 1:30 that afternoon, the French threw their massed cavalry squadrons in counterattacks against the British infantry, which used platoon firing. Despite repeated attacks, the British defeated the cavalry charges with heavy casualties.

The French continued to use the rank system during the wars of the Polish and Austrian Succession although they had begun to realize the advantages of the platoon firing system. A new regulation of May 3, 1750, permitted three different methods of delivering fire: fire by ranks, platoon fire, and independent fire, which the British termed "running fire." In the French platoon system, firing began from the center of the battalion, then spread to the wings, alternating between platoons on the left and right. The fifth platoon fired first, with the men in the first two ranks placing one of their knees on the ground and all ranks firing together. This practice followed new Prussian and British systems then coming into use. Like the British and Prussians, the French had begun to replace their wooden ramrods with heavier iron rammers, which helped to speed loading.

BY 1740, A NEW MAJOR MILITARY power was moving into the forefront of European history—Prussia. The Prussian infantry was groomed for greatness by two men: King Frederick William II, who nearly bankrupted his small country to build an imposing army, and his cousin, Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, who trained and equipped the army. Leopold's reforms covered almost every aspect of service. His overriding aim was to produce "good shooting, quick loading, intrepidity and vigorous attack." To accomplish this, he abolished the fourth rank, introduced the iron ramrod, and trained his men to fire three to five rounds per minute on the move.

The speed with which the Prussians proved capable of deploying and firing at the Battle of Mollwitz astounded their less-nimble Austrian opponents. The so-called walking muskets, with their unquestioning obedience, ferocious discipline, parade-like movements, and frequent blasts of fire, soon became the best infantry in mid-18th-century Europe. In action, the Prussians adopted two alternate firings by odd and even platoons; fire by individual platoons from right to left was still widely employed, but under certain circumstances (such as a full brigade attack) a whole battalion would fire at once. Infantrymen were trained to fire as they advanced at the rate of 75 paces to the minute, termed the "common step." It was claimed that 2,000 men were capable of letting off 10,000 shots in 60 seconds.

Frederick the Great inherited the Prussian system when he came to the throne in 1740. Despite its virtues, the method of alternate firings while advancing was difficult to perform and demanded the highest possible level of discipline and training among those attempting to

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Crack Prussian infantry under Field Marshal Kurt von Schwerin advance after delivering a devastating volley of musket fire at the Battle of Mollwitz in 1741. The well-disciplined fire turned defeat into victory against the Austrians.

employ it. Not only did the infantrymen have to be completely expert in loading under battle conditions, but the officers, especially those commanding platoons, had to be thoroughly familiar with a series of commands for the firing process. Prussian regulations were translated into English and appeared in 1759. They prescribed that during all firings, absolute silence must be maintained in the ranks; no moving about was permitted.

The Prussians used additional methods to increase the speed of their firings. Enlarging the vent hole at the breech allowed them to load their rifles without priming or ramming, enabling them to load and fire up to five rounds per minute. Nevertheless, it took a good deal of concentration and nerve to load a flintlock under enemy fire. In addition, after a few rounds the barrel became fouled with black powder residue, especially in humid weather. The soldier also had to avoid touching the scalding-hot barrel, see to the sharpness of his flint, and prevent the fouling of the vent and the lock, for which he was equipped with a wisk and a vent pick. With the fouling, fatigue, noise, casualties, confusion, and jostling in the ranks, rates of fire inevitably slowed down, giving way to uncontrolled "running fire" that, once begun, officers had great difficulty stopping.

In the British Army, platoon firings required complex arrangements, training, and timing. Frequently, soldiers on the noisy and confused battlefield had difficulty hearing orders by shouted command or drumbeat. The 1728 *Exercise for the Horse, Dragoons, and Foot Forces* had been copied word for word from Humphrey Bland's privately published *Treatise of Military Discipline* of the previous year. The author, a lieutenant colonel in the 2nd Regiment of Horse, extensively discussed platoon exercises, rank-and-file-intervals, the essentials of firing, and other details. The 1757 *Manual Exercise,* prepared by the Duke of Cumberland, his adjutant general, Robert Napier, and Lt. Col. Alexander Dury of the 1st Foot Guards, retained the platoon firing system. It was plain by the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763, however, that a new system was required. Having come under the influence of the Prussians in the 1740s and 1750s, the British now began to use the alternate system.

The different tactical formations within an infantry battalion were often confusing and contradictory. Within the platoon firing system, the platoon was the basic tactical unit; the company simply formed an administrative entity. In alternate firing, the means most favored to avoid confusing the soldiers was to turn each company into a fire unit. In the new British regulations of 1764, these companies, now designated sub-divisions, were numbered according to the sequence in which they should fire—either from right to left, from the center of the battalion outward to the flanks, or from the flanks in toward the center.

TWO OF THE EIGHT LINE COMPANIES (SUB-DIVISIONS) FORMED A GRAND DIVISION. The grenadier company remained in its accustomed position on the right flank, while the new light infantry company, beginning in 1770, formed the left flank. The new regulations provided for volley firing by platoons, sub-divisions, and grand-divisions. Not breaking up the companies improved the morale of the men since they went into action in their accustomed units with officers and men they already knew. The alternate system was much easier to perform, with the elaborate telling off and the separating of platoons to coordinate their fire now being avoided.

Although alternate fire was not officially adopted until the publication of the 1764 regulations, it had already been practiced in the best-trained battalions. One such unit was the 20th Foot, of which James Wolfe was lieutenant colonel. Wolfe thought alternate fire more practical than the regulation platoon fire—"the impracticable chequer," as he described it. In a regimental order of January 1755, Wolfe termed alternate fire "the most simple, plain and easy, and used by the best disciplined troops in Europe [i.e., the Prussians]." The 1764 regulation methods remained in effect through the publication of the new 1778 regulations, although only those troops serving in the British Isles were subject to them. There was no change in the alternate firing system, although the

firing now was prescribed as starting from the flanks and moving to the center of each battalion.

Other military commentators wrote extensively of the alternate system during this period. Thomas Simes's five volumes represented the most voluminous collection of basic material on regimental administration and daily routine in the army. In *The Military Medley* of 1768, Simes, a captain in the Queen's Royal Regiment of Foot (2nd Regiment), suggested an elaborate method for firings by a battalion of infantry. The first two volleys were fired by platoons from the right and left to the center, twice from the center to the right and left, once from the right and left to the center, and so on until a final battalion volley.

AMERICAN FORCES PREPARING FOR THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE STUDIED British manuals closely. In early 1775, Timothy Pickering, a militia officer in Massachusetts and the future quartermaster and adjutant general of the Continental Army, described the historical background of the platoon system used by both the Prussian and British armies. He explained the difficulty of performing it in battle as the reason for its replacement by the alternate system. Pickering went on to explain the alternate system and detailed firings by platoons, sub-divisions, and grand-divisions. He preferred to use the term "company" rather than "sub-division" since it was more familiar to the soldiers and would not be confused with grand-divisions. He also preferred alternate firing by platoons since they could fire in much quicker succession than by company or grand-division. Pickering reminded his readers that in the Prussian service, battalion commanders were strictly enjoined to ensure that half the platoons or grand-divisions of the battalion were always loaded and shouldered.

Both the British and American forces entered the Revolutionary War using a version of the alternate firing system. The British used the 1764 system, although they also reduced their ranks from three to two and opened their ranks to an extended interval. The Americans used a variety of manuals, including the 1764 version, until General von Steuben published his drill manual in early 1779, which regularized the alternate system for all American troops.

Baron Friedrich von Steuben was a former captain in the Prussian Army and, therefore, a product of that comprehensive school. When he arrived in America in late 1777, von Steuben brought with him a great deal of combat experience. Once he finished instructing the disorganized and untrained Continental Army at Valley Forge, he set out with his staff to write the drill and traiing manual, popularly known as the "Blue Book," that remained the American army standard until 1812. Von Steuben had witnessed the service of the Prussians during the Seven Years' War and unhesitatingly adopted the alternate system for the new American Army.

His firing directions encompassed those for platoons, divisions (companies), and battalions. Inexplicably, he did not include firings by grand-divisions, and in a major change with tradition, American infantry was formed in only two ranks rather than the customary three. He also stipulated that a platoon must include at least 20 men so that its volley would deliver enough musket rounds to be effective against the enemy. Understrength Continental Army units were combined to bring them up to effective combat strength.

British forces employed shock-oriented tactics that were distinctly at odds with contemporary European practices. The rationale behind this approach was that a battalion's best means of eroding its opponents' will was to stand its ground or to press the attack closely, fire one or two massed volleys, then charge with the bayonet. In fact, there is little evidence that the British infantry in America employed

MATCHLOCK AND FLINTLOCK

During most of the 17th century, there were two types of infantrymen: pikemen and musketeers. Originally, pikes were at least 15 feet long, but by the 1600s they had often been reduced to about 11 feet long. Pikes were usually made of ash or oak, and headed with a spear point and butt of steel. Musketeers carried a muzzle-loading matchlock that usually weighed between 14 and 20 pounds, and was so cumbersome that it had to be supported by a forked rest in order to fire. It featured a crude firing system that included a lengthy slow burning fuse or treated match cord. The musketeer carried his premeasured powder charges in small flasks hanging from a bandolier, colloquially known as the "Twelve Apostles," and bullets were carried in a separate pouch. Once the charge was primed and loaded, the pulled trigger sent the cock, holding the burning match, into the pan that contained a small priming charge of black powder. The ignited powder in the pan flashed through a touch hole in the barrel and ignited the main charge. Unfortunately, the misfire rate was very high, and the musket was almost unusable in inclement weather, except as a club. The matchlock was inaccurate at any target exceeding 50 yards, and the musketeer was lucky indeed to be able to fire two rounds a minute.

ABOVE: The reenactor in the foreground prepares to fire his reproduction matchlock. Note the rest held in his left hand. BELOW: Close-up of an original matchlock, complete with fuse cord.

By the middle of that century, the pike began to fall into disuse. Instead, musketeers carried a dagger or plug bayonet whose wooden handle fit into the muzzle of the matchlock. The plug bayonet was purely a defensive weapon, prohibiting the firing of the musket once inserted. A new form of the bayonet began to be introduced in the 1690s. It featured a triangular blade, attached to a metal sleeve, or socket, which locked into place around the muzzle of the musket. The chief advantage of the socket bayonet was that the musket could be loaded and fired while affixed.

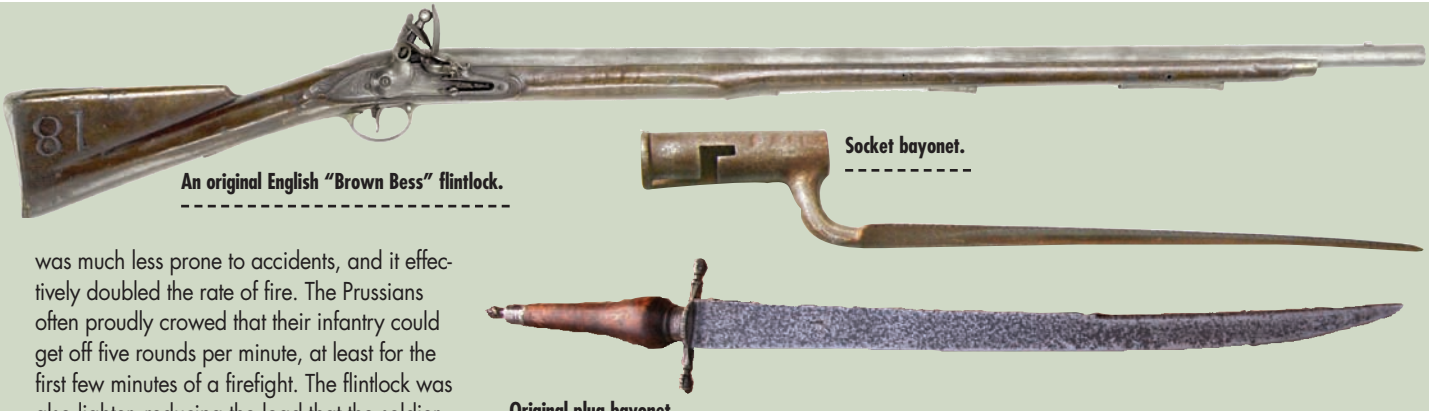
At the close of the 17th century, the matchlock began to be replaced in general use by the flintlock. The new ignition system featured a cock that held a sharpened piece of flint. When the trigger was pulled the flint struck a case-hardened piece of steel called a frizzen or hammer. The resulting sparks ignited the powder in the pan and then the main charge in the barrel. It resulted in a much more reliable firing mechanism, even though the misfire rate still approached 25 percent. It also required considerably fewer motions to load than the matchlock,

regulation firings, whereby volleys were delivered in strict succession by the battalion's four grand-divisions, eight sub-divisions, or16 platoons in prearranged sequences. This was done for three reasons: first, the preference for the bayonet against the shaky rebels; second, the need to fight over broken terrain and extended frontage; and, third, the lack of American cavalry, which did not require the British to reserve a portion of their fire at all times to deal with sudden emergencies—hence the preference for a single general volley immediately prior to the bayonet charge. The genuine number of sustained firefights during the Revolutionary War could be counted on the fingers of one hand: Brandywine, Saratoga, Monmouth, Cowpens, and Eutaw Springs.

At Monmouth, on June 28, 1778, a British attack was aimed at the American left wing. The British light infantry and the Black Watch pressed forward and were taken under fire by the American artillery. Volley after volley of musketry from the Americans, stationed behind a hedge, went on for nearly an hour. The precision of alternate volley fire, regularized by von Steuben, was the reward for his training. The pressure on the American wing was relieved when the 1st and 3rd New Hampshire Regiments and the 1st Virginia moved to the left through the thick woods and charged the extreme right of the British line, which gave way and fell back. The Americans had used British tactics to win the day, proving once again that when used as originally intended the alternate system of firing could produce successful results. □

U.S. Army Art

Thanks to training by Prussian Baron Friedrich von Steuben, American forces at the 1778 Battle of Monmouth were as skilled as their British foes in delivering effective volley fire. The Americans won the battle—and the war.



An original English "Brown Bess" flintlock.

Socket bayonet.

Original plug bayonet.

was much less prone to accidents, and it effectively doubled the rate of fire. The Prussians often proudly crowed that their infantry could get off five rounds per minute, at least for the first few minutes of a firefight. The flintlock was also lighter, reducing the load that the soldier had to carry along with his other accoutrements. The flintlock also arrived with the use of the paper cartridge, which permitted the soldier to more easily load and fire his musket. The new handy cylindrical cartridge combined the round lead bullet and a premeasured charge of powder in one package.

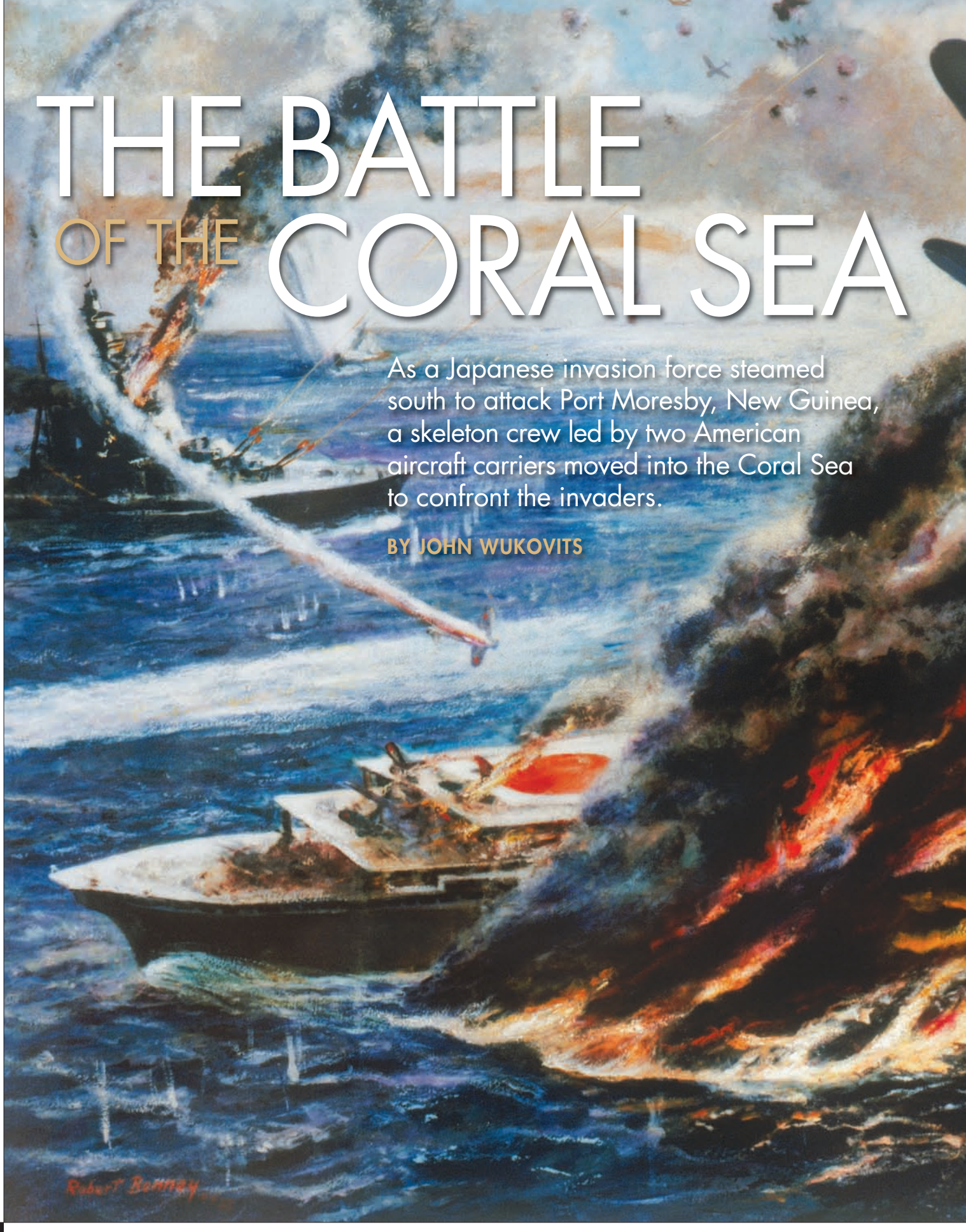
A soldier could usually carry between 25 and 60 rounds in his leather cartridge box, worn on a sling over his left shoulder. The cartridge box had to be rigid and waterproofed to protect the paper cartridges from rough handling and rainy weather.

The flintlock musket was not much more accurate than its predecessor; however, it allowed

Close-up view of flintlock, with the flint wrapped in a strip of leather in the jaws of the cock.

considerably more effective ways of delivering fire: notably the platoon and alternate systems. The flintlock remained the main ignition system for most of the world's armies for at least 150 years.

Doctrine and tactics are normally driven by the technology at hand. Matchlocks and flintlocks were muzzle-loaders and therefore necessitated loading while standing upright. Because of the inaccuracy of these smoothbore muskets, and the need for strict command and control, the resulting tactics called for volley fire. Commanders sought systems where rolling volleys, delivering constant streams of fire, were designed to break up enemy charges and inflict maximum casualties at close range. The shotgun-like blasts of volley fire could also be delivered by platoons in oblique directions, by ranks and, if necessary, by files. □



THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

As a Japanese invasion force steamed south to attack Port Moresby, New Guinea, a skeleton crew led by two American aircraft carriers moved into the Coral Sea to confront the invaders.

BY JOHN WUKOVITS

The Japanese carrier *Shoho* erupts in flames after an American dive-bomber scores a direct hit on her deck during the Battle of the Coral Sea. *Shoho* sank within minutes of the attack. Painting by Robert Benney.

U.S. Navy

WORLD WAR II was less than six months old when the American public, already stunned by the debacles at Pearl Harbor and Guam, faced one of its darkest moments. Thousands of miles across the Pacific, the American commander in the Philippines, Maj. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright, surrendered to the Japanese. "With broken heart and head bowed in sadness but not in shame," he radioed on May 6 to President Franklin D. Roosevelt from his bastion at Corregidor, "I report to your excellency that today I must arrange terms for the surrender of the fortified islands of Manila Bay."

But the tides of war often turn dramatically. Within 72 hours, American ships, planes, and sheer guts would turn gloom and despair into optimism and hope in a little-known portion of the South Pacific. The naval encounter in the Coral Sea, the lustrous waters bordering Australia's northeast coast, would knock the Japanese back on their heels and give both the American public and its military cause to celebrate.

The Japanese steamed into the Coral Sea with every reason to believe that another success lay before them. They had triumphed everywhere in the Pacific since December 7, 1941, when they had administered a crushing blow to ill-prepared American naval units at Pearl Harbor. What could possibly halt them now?

Three Japanese naval forces converged on the Coral Sea. A left arm under Rear Admiral Kujohide Shima, featuring one minelayer, two destroyers, a transport, and various smaller craft, would seize the small island of Tulagi off Guadalcanal's northern coast in the Solomon Islands for use as a seaplane base. At the same time, Rear Admiral Sadamichi Kajioka's right arm of 12 troop transports, escorted by the new light carrier *Shoho* and four heavy cruisers, would advance south from Rabaul, steam through Jomard Passage in the Louisiades, and seize Port Moresby on the southeast coast of New Guinea. This bold thrust would place Japanese forces within easy range of Australia itself and threaten vital American supply lines to the distant Allied nation.

To the east of the Coral Sea, Vice Admiral Takao Takagi led two carriers, *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, proud veterans of Pearl Harbor, escorted by two heavy cruisers and six destroyers, to intercept any American naval force trying to halt the Port Moresby invasion. Most Japanese commanders doubted that any American carriers remained in the region. They fully expected to achieve their objectives before the United States could mount an effective answer.

The United States, however, was more aware of the unfolding events than the Japanese realized. Due to the tireless efforts of American code breakers, analysts could read up to 15 percent of the Japanese JN-25 code, their most widely used code. Radio analysis plotted Japanese movements by studying the location, volume, and pattern of intercepted messages, giving Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander in

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ABOVE: Japanese aircraft aboard *Kuikaku* prepare for a morning sortie on May 5, 1942. BELOW: The U.S. Navy oiler *Neosho* is left burning and slowly sinking after an attack by Japanese dive-bombers on May 7.

Library of Congress

chief of the Pacific Fleet, vital information on enemy troop movements.

By early April, the Navy's intelligence team at Pearl Harbor under Lt. Cmdr. Joseph J. Rochefort was able to provide Nimitz with details of the Japanese plans for the Coral Sea offensive. Rochefort estimated that the Japanese had no intention of invadeing Australia itself, but that they would shortly launch an operation to seize the eastern end of New Guinea. This move would be quickly followed by a vast operation in the Pacific that would involve most of the Combined Fleet.

The news greatly concerned Nimitz, whose capabilities were hampered by the absence of Admiral William Halsey and two carriers, then taking part in the Doolittle air raid of mainland Japan. At a time when he most needed every resource at his disposal, a key component of Nimitz's air arm was busy on a bombing raid against Tokyo. He had two remaining carriers to deploy, but if he committed them to the Coral Sea, he left an unprotected Pearl Harbor open to further attack.

Nimitz's intelligence officer, Commander Edward T. Layton, reassured him that no enemy naval forces were steaming toward Hawaii. Nimitz decided to gamble. The enemy may have more powerful forces to commit to battle, but Nimitz knew their plans in advance and thus had the element of surprise on his side. He could place his ships at optimum positions to halt the Japanese advance.

On April 25, Nimitz met in San Francisco with Admiral Ernest King, commander of the U.S. Fleet and chief of naval operations. King and Nimitz both worried that Rear Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, who commanded the two available aircraft carriers, was too timid, but they doubted that the more aggressive Halsey would return from the Doolittle Raid in time to be involved in the coming action. Called "Whiskey Jack," Fletcher was aboard the carrier *Yorktown* when his orders arrived. He was to rendezvous with Rear Admiral Aubrey Fitch's TF-11, anchored by the carrier *Lexington,* 300 miles south of Tulagi at a position called Point Buttercup. There they were to join four cruisers coming from Australia under Australian Admiral Sir John Crace and halt the Japanese, even though Fletcher commanded a mere half of the firepower his opponent could bring to bear.

As Fletcher churned to the Coral Sea, Halsey returned from his raid. On April 25, he entered Pearl Harbor with *Hornet* and *Enterprise,* only to learn that he would soon be on his way to the South Pacific. He was to depart no later than April 30 and race 3,500 miles across the Pacific to the Coral Sea. If Halsey arrived in time to participate in the battle, he would be the senior commander and would take charge of all four carriers, including Fletcher's *Yorktown* and *Lexington.* Halsey was six days away from the Coral Sea.

ON MAY 3, THE JAPANESE OCCUPIED Tulagi, and Fletcher hurried north on his own rather than rendezvousing with Fitch or Crace. This bold move divided his forces, leaving him vulnerable to a strong Japanese attack, but luck was on his side as a massive cold front containing rain squalls and winds up to 35 knots hid him from enemy search planes.

Twelve Devastator torpedo planes and 28 Dauntless dive-bombers lifted off *Yorktown* shortly after 7 AM on May 4, flying without fighter protection, which Fletcher needed to hold back in case the carrier was attacked. An hour later, Lt. Cmdr. William O. Burch led the bombing raid against Tulagi. Most of the Dauntlesses' bombs fell wide of their marks, in part because their windows and gun sights had fogged over when the planes dropped from cooler temperatures in the upper altitudes to the warmer climes below. The Devastators proved ineffective as well, hitting only one minesweeper with 11 torpedoes. Two subsequent runs produced similarly disappointing results, with most bombs hitting far from their targets.

Fletcher, encouraged by accounts that his aviators had innocently exaggerated, reported to Nimitz that he had sunk two enemy destroyers, three gunboats, and a cargo ship and damaged several others. "Some fun!" he told Nimitz. His commander radioed back: "Congratulations and well done to you and your force. Hope you can exploit your success with augmented force." Fletcher, in truth, had inflicted only minor damage. The Japanese lost the destroyer *Kikuzuki,* two light minesweepers, and a merchant minesweeper.

The air attack on Tulagi spurred the Japanese to action as they now knew, much to their consternation, that at least one American carrier was operating in the area. In response, the

Japanese sent Admiral Takagi with *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* from Rabaul, escorted by two heavy cruisers, around the eastern end of the Solomons into the Coral Sea. They had one thought in mind—find and destroy the American carriers.

For two days the opposing forces scoured the Coral Sea without success, coming within 70 miles of each other on May 6 without realizing it. One Japanese land-based search plane sighted and correctly reported Fletcher's position that day, but that resulted in no response when the report was routed through Rabaul instead of directly to Takagi.

Fletcher and Takagi sent search planes out again on the morning of May 7. A Japanese pilot spotted the tanker *Neosho* and her escort, the destroyer *Sims,* at 7:36 AM, but in his excitement the pilot reported the pair as a carrier and a cruiser. Armed with this misleading information, Takagi launched all planes from both his carriers, and it was not until they arrived over the American vessels that the Japanese realized they had not found the aircraft carriers.

The two American ships below were helpless against the onslaught that followed. Four planes broke off from one wave of *Neosho* attackers to strafe and bomb the tanker, spitting bullets topside and against the hull. Other aircraft rocked *Sims* with three bombs. The first landed on the no. 2 torpedo mount and exploded in the forward engine room, the second hit the after upper deck house and exploded in the after engine room, and the third bomb smashed onto the no. 4 gun. Within a minute, *Sims* split in half and began to sink. As the destroyer disappeared, a sailor in the water saw the captain, Lt. Cmdr. Willford M. Hyman, on the bridge, "riding her down like one of the captains of old." A huge explosion lifted the ship 10 feet out of the water, leaving only 68 survivors.

At the same time, *Neosho* absorbed seven hits, including a suicide plane smacking into the no. 4 gun station. The ship's machine gunners remained at their jobs, firing at the enemy planes even though two men were killed instantly, one being decapitated by flying fragments. Captain John S. Phillips and the crew drifted powerless for four days in the damaged *Neosho* before a rescue ship, the destroyer *Henley,* located them on May 11. After removing 123 survivors, *Henley* sank the oiler with torpedoes. In all, 235 men were lost on *Sims* and another 179 on *Neosho.*

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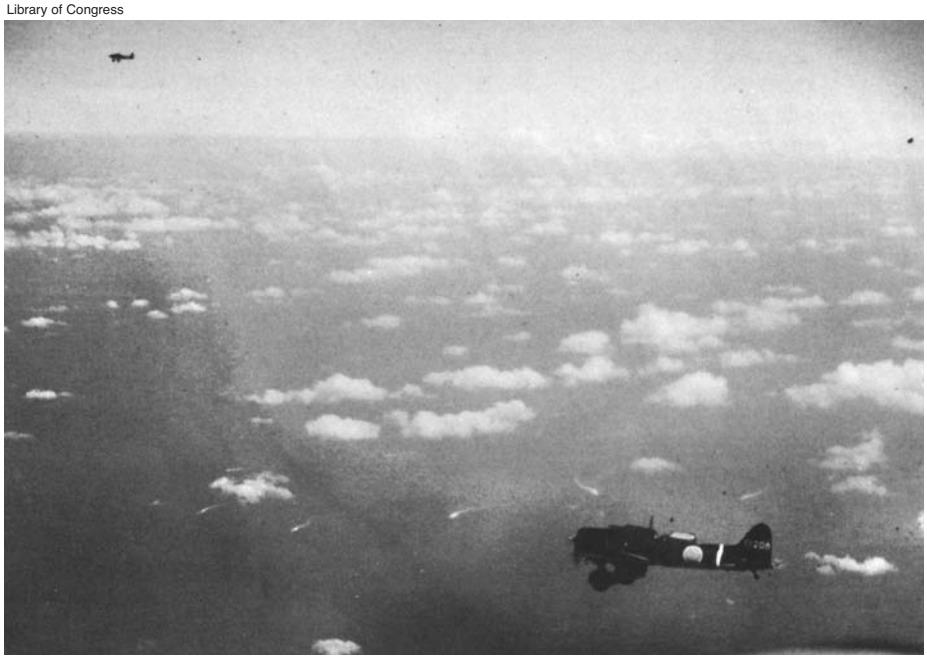


Japanese dive-bombers head toward U.S. Navy ships on May 7. These planes may have been part of the deadly morning attack on the USS *Neosho.*

This attack cost Takagi only six planes, but the disappointed commander was after larger targets. Instead of hunting down enemy carriers, his air units had been occupied all morning against secondary vessels. *Neosho* and *Sims* had unwittingly drawn the attack the Japanese intended for the carriers, leaving Fletcher untouched and free to strike. There was only one problem—he had not yet located the Japanese. It was not for a lack of trying. Fletcher split his force at dawn, sending Crace west to block a Japanese advance through the Louisiades while Fletcher headed north to guard the route.

Fletcher's hunt apparently ended at 8:15 when a search plane sent word of two carriers and four heavy cruisers 175 miles northwest of Fletcher. Convinced that he had discovered Takagi's main force, Fletcher ordered all planes to attack. The force was already on its way when the pilot returned and reported that instead of carriers, he had actually sighted two heavy cruisers and two destroyers. Fletcher erupted at the news, telling the unfortunate pilot that his error had just cost the United States two carriers. Fletcher's planes were now flying against comparatively minor targets and speeding away at a time when he needed them to defend against Takagi's carriers, which had to be somewhere close.

ABOVE: *Lexington* Captain Frederick Sherman. BELOW: Vice Admiral Takao Takagi.

Both: U.S. Navy

THE PLANES SENT TO HIT THE SUPPOSED TWO CARRIERS DID NOT return empty-handed, however. As they raced toward what they thought would be Takagi's main force, American pilots stumbled on *Shoho* and four heavy cruisers just north of the Jomard Passage in the Louisiades. At 10:50 AM, 93 planes attacked, but as it was not yet standard procedure to have a strike coordinator, all the aircraft went after the big game—the carrier—and left the cruisers untouched. An aerial melee ensued as Japanese fighters rose to meet the intruders, following the Americans as they dipped to deliver their attacks. Lt. Cmdr. Robert Dixon of *Lexington* said the fighters "came right on down with us in a terrible free-for-all mix-up, staying with us right to the water."

The surprised *Shoho* still had planes on her deck and elevator. When she turned into the wind to launch, she presented an easy target to American aviators. Bombs struck near the after elevator and exploded inside the rear hangar at 11:20, while five torpedoes crashed into the starboard stern, wrecking the carrier's steering and propulsion. In less than 30 minutes, *Shoho* was dead in the water.

The carrier sank after a tremendous explosion, flames leaping 400 feet into the air. More than 600 of the 900-man Japanese crew died, and all but three planes were lost. *Shoho* was the first Japanese ship larger than a destroyer sunk by Americans in the war. An excited Dixon uttered a memorable phrase that was widely printed by newspapers

U.S. Navy

U.S. Navy

ABOVE: Lt. Cmdrs. Joe Taylor, left, and William O. Burch, Jr., served aboard USS *Yorktown* during the Battle of the Coral Sea. LEFT: Japanese light carrier *Shoho* under attack by U.S. warplanes on May 7. An American plane is visible at the bottom center of the photo.

back home when he radioed back: "Scratch one flattop! Dixon to carrier. Scratch one flattop!"

The carrier's loss caused Takagi, who first wanted to destroy the American forces, to order the transports heading toward Port Moresby to remain north of the Louisiades rather than continue through Jomard Passage. The pullback marked the farthest south the Japanese would reach in the war. The steady advance begun on December 7 had been halted. From this point on, the Japanese would be heading in the opposite direction.

That night Takagi dispatched another group of aircraft to locate and hit Fletcher. The planes failed to find their quarry, and as they returned American fighters pounced on them, shooting down nine in the process. Eighteen surviving Japanese planes continued searching for their own carriers in the dark. When they spotted carrier lights, the pilots blinked a request in Morse code to land, but were greeted instead by hostile antiaircraft fire. In the darkness they had flown toward *Lexington,* which shot down more of the group as the rest fled.

Fletcher considered sending a surface force to engage the Japanese, but without clear knowledge of their location, he did not want to split his force. He needed every ship and aircraft for whatever lay ahead the next day. Fletcher possessed 122 aircraft and five heavy cruisers, one more of each than what Takagi brought to the battle. The Americans had the edge in destroyers and radar, but Takagi's force was battle tested and experienced, while Fletcher's was not. Whichever commander found the other first would have the upper hand.

May 8 was torridly hot. Expecting battle, medical teams aboard the American carriers and escort vessels prepared surgical dressings and morphine. *Yorktown*'s canteen issued 10,000 candy bars so that the sailors would have something to eat while at their battle stations. Miles distant, the Japanese handed out rice cakes to their crews. It looked to be a long day for both sides.

EIGHTEEN SCOUTING PLANES LIFTED OFF FROM *LEXINGTON* AT 5 AM. THE SHIP'S captain, Frederick C. Sherman, concluded that the skies would be filled with aircraft from both sides trying to locate the other. Chances were that the opponents would see each other at the same time, creating a situation in which the two foes might deliver their knockout blows at the same time. "There we were," wrote news correspondent Stanley Johnston, aboard *Lexington,* "two powerful air-striking forces within 30 miles of one another wrapped in the invisibility lent by a rainy night. All of us felt that morning would bring a momentous day. In our enemy we recognized a tough, fanatical foe whose courage and cunning could not be discounted. Our forces appeared about equal. It seemed to be a question of who would get the first blow home. All of us felt that history was in the making."

The situation called for risks, and at 7:15 the Japanese air commander gambled and launched 69 torpedo planes and dive-bombers before his scouts had found Fletcher. He believed the search planes would soon locate the American carriers and provide his attackers with the necessary information. He surmised correctly. At 8:02 AM, *Yorktown*'s radar picked up an aircraft 18 miles to the northwest and heard the pilot radio his report. Sherman predicted that the Japanese air group would appear at about 11 o'clock. He could only hope that his search planes could locate the enemy soon. His wishes materialized at 8:20, when an American scout plane piloted by Lt. J.G. Smith spotted *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* 175 miles northeast of the *Lexington* and heading south.

At 8:22, Sherman, aboard *Lexington,* received Smith's contact report. Two minutes later he intercepted a radio transmission from a Japanese aircraft indicating that the enemy had also spotted the Americans. The first carrier duel of the war was about to begin.

In the ready rooms of both *Yorktown* and *Lexington*, pilots leapt to their feet. Thirty Dauntlesses, nine Devastators, and 14 Wildcats lifted off *Yorktown,* followed 10 minutes later by *Lexington*'s 24 Dauntlesses, 12 Devastators, and 10 Wildcats. By 9:25 the air groups from both American carriers had departed. Ninety-five minutes later the *Yorktown* bombers sighted the two enemy carriers eight miles apart. Instead of attacking immediately, the bombers circled for 20 minutes, waiting for the slower torpedo planes to arrive. This unfortunate lapse gave the Japanese time to launch additional fighters, while *Zuikaku* raced toward a nearby rain squall for shelter.

Lieutenant Joseph Taylor of *Yorktown* started the fight by leading a group of torpedo planes toward *Shokaku*. As Zeros pounced on the inexperienced Americans, dive-bombers followed from 17,000 feet and dropped two 1,000-pound bombs on *Shokaku,* mangling the flight deck and destroying the aircraft repair shop.

Lieutenant John J. Powers held steady as his plane sped toward *Shokaku,* waiting until beyond the normal release point to ensure his bomb hit the target. Powers successfully landed a direct hit, but the explosion demolished him and his plane. Most of the other American air-

craft missed with their bombs or torpedoes. One Japanese sailor joked that the American torpedoes were so slow that "we could turn and run away from them." Not one of the Mark 13 torpedoes found its target.

The American pilots lost 43 aircraft while registering only a handful of hits. However, these successes ignited gasoline fires aboard *Shokaku*. Although the Japanese brought the fires under control, the carrier was no longer able to launch aircraft from her warped deck. Losing her main capability, the carrier limped back to Truk, where extensive repairs kept her out of action until July.

It now became Fletcher's turn as Japanese forces descended on both American carriers. As Lt. Cmdr. Kuichi Takahashi searched the Coral Sea with 69 aircraft, the pilot who had first discovered Fletcher, Warrant Officer Kanzo Kanno, flew directly across Takahashi's path and agreed to lead the planes to the carriers. Kanno did this knowing that he would not have enough fuel to make it back to his own carrier.

At 10:55, *Yorktown*'s radar detected the Japanese force 68 miles out. Each carrier launched eight Wildcat fighters, but the fighters flew at an altitude far below that of the oncoming Japanese formation, an error that allowed the enemy planes to safely fly above the American fighters. Stripped of his aerial defenses, Fletcher, who stood outside *Yorktown*'s flag bridge wearing an old-style World War I helmet and watching through binoculars, would have to rely on his antiaircraft guns to ward off the enemy. Yeoman Tom Newsome, standing just inside the door, heard Fletcher say, "They're going to bop us."

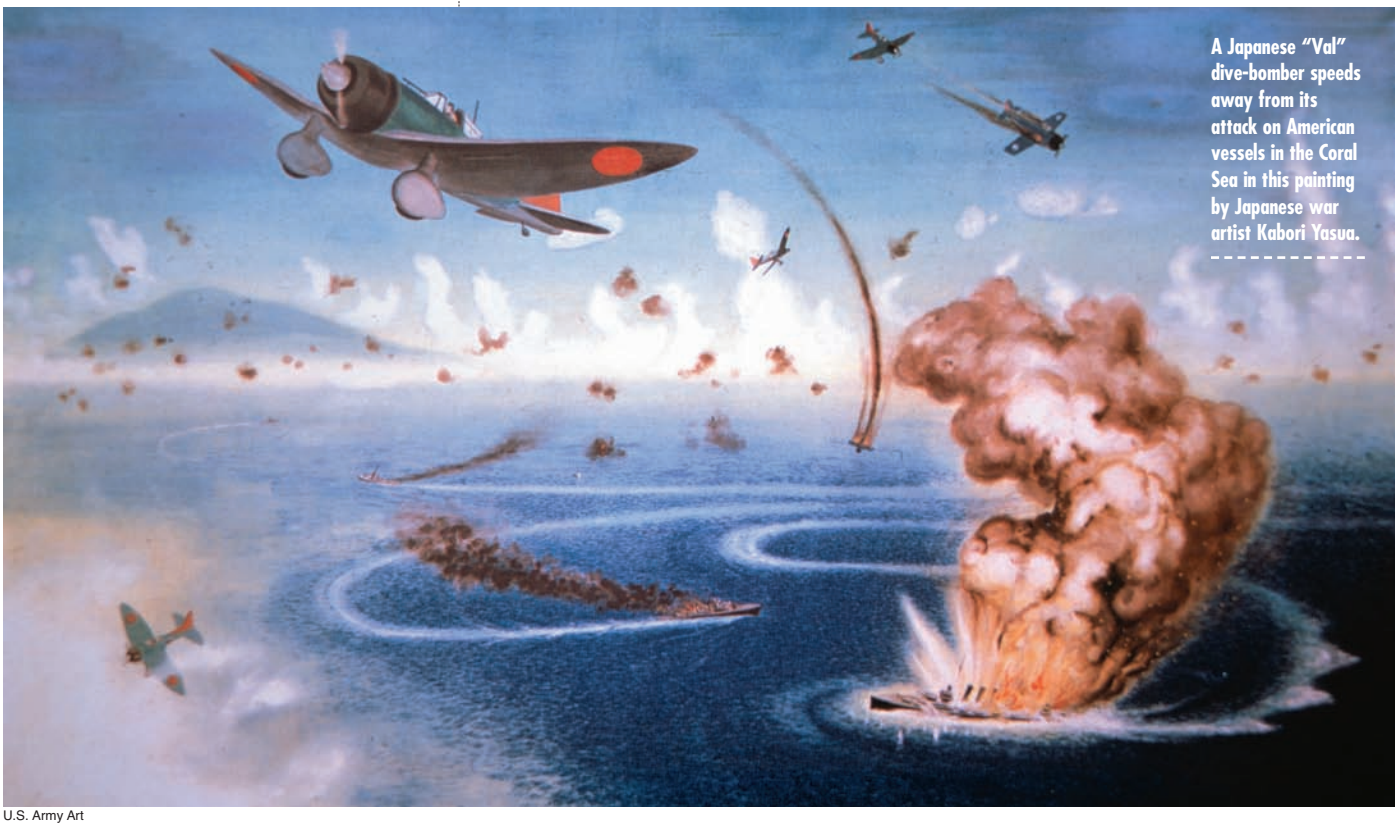
Takahashi led his planes in at 11:18, coming out of the sun at a 45-degree angle. A wall of American antiaircraft fire greeted the intruders, hitting one of the first invaders so accurately that the plane disintegrated, sending the crew spinning into the skies. *Yorktown* evaded the first string of torpedoes with a series of desperate maneuvers, but the ship could not escape every missile sent against her. At 11:25, 14 Japanese dive-bombers straddled the carrier with 11 near misses that loosened hull plating, rained shrapnel against gun mounts and bridge, and lifted the ship's screws completely out of the water.

CREWMEN ON *YORKTOWN* COULD EASILY SEE THE BOMBS DROP FROM AIRCRAFT that dipped to 1,500 feet above the water's surface before releasing their bombs. Captain Elliott Buckmaster engaged in evasive actions with each of the attacking aircraft, waiting until the pilot committed to his dive and then swinging the rudder sharply toward the plane to present smallest target. When one Japanese pilot pulled out low over the water, Buckmaster had already begun to engage the next bomber, issuing such a constant stream of course changes that the carrier made a series of giant "S" imprints on the surface.

Dozens of near misses straddled the carrier, and six bombs showered the ship with shrapnel. One bomb struck the carrier flight deck and exploded inside, killing or wounding 66 crewmen. Another bomb penetrated *Yorktown*'s flight and hangar decks before exploding four levels below, killing 37 men. Although mortally wounded from the blast, Lieutenant Milton E. Ricketts, commander of Repair Party 5, opened a fireplug valve, aimed the hose at the center of the fire, then crumpled to the deck and died. Crews managed to extinguish the flames before too much damage was done, enabling the carrier to continue at 24 knots.

Lexington faced her own ordeal. At 11:13 AM, the port side 5-inch guns on the carrier opened fire. According to pilot Ensign Ralph V. Wilhelm, the "sky was just a solid blanket of antiaircraft bursts all between 1,000 and 3,000 feet altitude." Thirteen torpedo planes attacked *Lexington* in an arc that extended from the port beam and across both bows in an anvil formation, approaching the carrier on both sides of her bow so that no matter which direction Captain Sherman directed the ponderous carrier, she would turn toward a bevy of torpedoes.

"The air fighting now became a melee," wrote Sherman. "Our own planes were mixed in with



A Japanese "Val" dive-bomber speeds away from its attack on American vessels in the Coral Sea in this painting by Japanese war artist Kabori Yasua.

U.S. Army Art

the enemy and the sky was black with flak bursts." Despite the intense antiaircraft fire, the Japanese charged straight at the carrier rather than drop out of formation, a courage that impressed Sherman. "It was beautifully coordinated. From my bridge I saw bombers roaring down in steep dives from many points in the sky, and torpedo planes coming in on both bows almost simultaneously. There was nothing I could do about the bombers, but I could do something to avoid the torpedoes."

One bomb appeared to be falling right at the admiral, who briefly wondered if he should duck behind the thin armored shield. He concluded that if he were meant to die from that bomb, there was nothing he could do about it, so he turned his attention to evading the torpedoes by turning the massive carrier slowly to one side or the other.

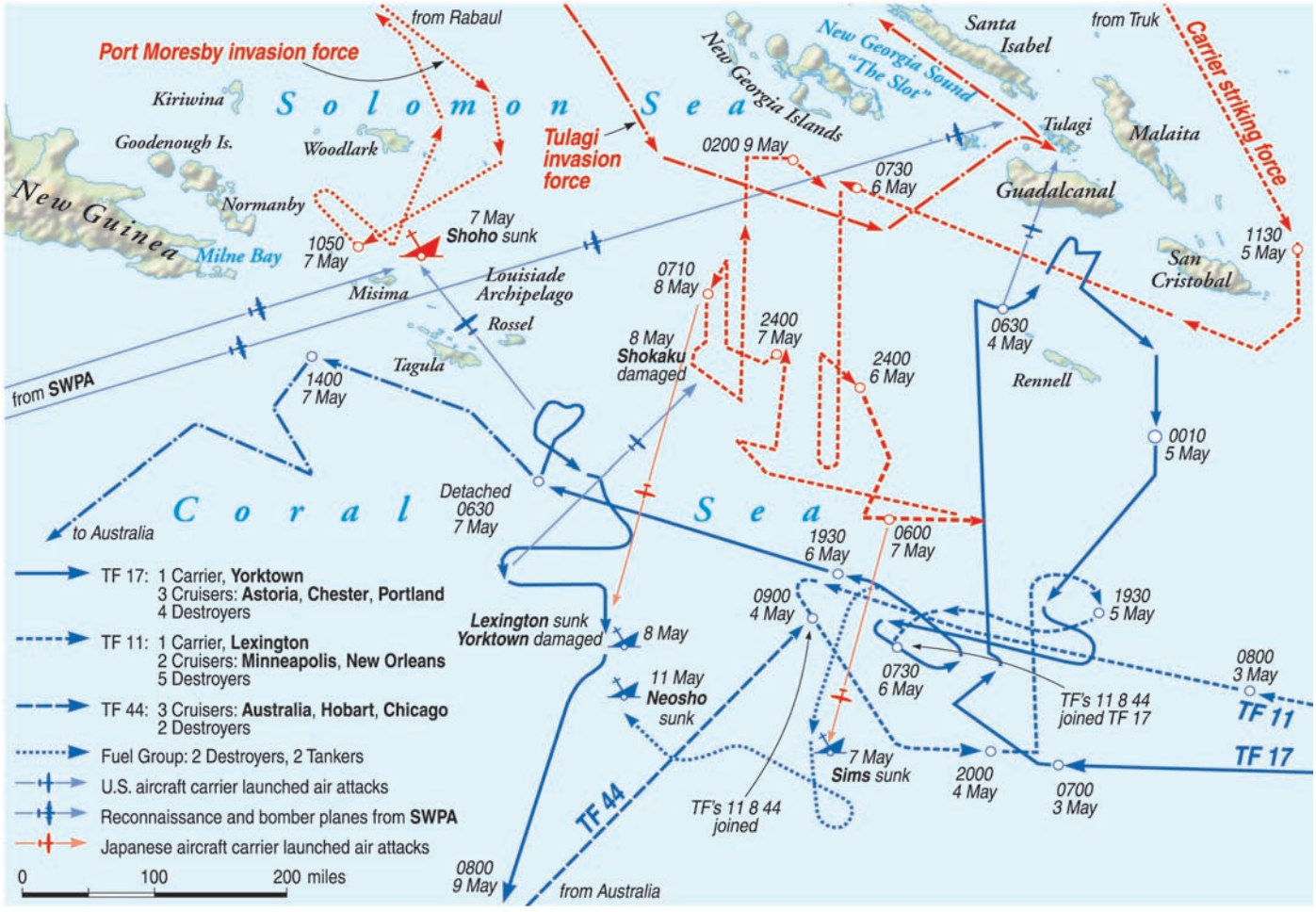
TORPEDO WAKES DISSECTED THE OCEAN, WHILE BOMBS SPLASHED ON BOTH sides. "Great geysers of water from near misses were going up higher than our masts," recalled Sherman, "and occasionally the ship shuddered from the explosions of the ones that hit." He evaded the first torpedoes and shifted rudder to outmaneuver the second group of planes, but when they split to attack both bows, "it became a matter of wriggling and twisting as best we could to avoid the deadly weapons heading our way."

Two wakes that Sherman knew he could not avoid churned directly toward the port beam, and he braced himself for the explosion. Nothing happened. The torpedoes were running too deep and had passed completely under the ship. Two more torpedoes ran parallel to the ship 50 yards out on either side and passed close by, but Sherman's luck had run out. At 11:18, a torpedo struck *Lexington*'s port side near the island, two minutes before two more slammed into the port side near the bow. In quick succession a 1,000-pound bomb smashed into the flight deck and a 500-pound bomb demolished the smokestack.

The brief battle packed incredible death and destruction in its few minutes. By 11:40, the fighting had ended, only 22 minutes after the first torpedo splashed into the ocean. "Suddenly all was quiet again," wrote Sherman. "It was as though some hidden director had signaled for silence. The Japanese planes were no longer in sight, the guns had stopped shooting for lack of targets." He glanced at his watch and noticed that the attack had lasted only nine minutes. "It seemed hours since we had first sighted the enemy planes."

While both American carriers sustained damage, they were able to maintain speeds of 25 knots and resume flight operations. Sherman, who had wondered if his ship would emerge from the fight, was delighted with the results. *Lexington* was far from secure, however. Aboard the ship, correspondent Stanley Johnston was writing about the day's action for newspaper readers back home when at 12:47 PM a huge internal explosion rattled the ship. "I was sitting in the navigating cabin, writing up the events of the morning from my notes when there came a jolt heavier than any of the explosions during the battle," recalled Johnston. "Then from deep down inside the ship resounded the dull rumble of an explosion." The eruptions rocked the carrier as smoke emerged from the edges of the flight deck elevator.

Caused by an accumulation of gasoline vapors leaking from damaged storage tanks, the fires quickly spread, turning the surface of the elevator in the flight deck to an ominous dull red. The bulkhead in the forward engine room was white-hot, and temperatures soared



to 160 degrees, causing dizziness and violent headaches among the fire tenders. Fires rapidly spread in the ship's lower levels, causing additional explosions that made damage control all but impossible. The carrier's executive officer, Commander Morton T. Seligman, realized that the ship was doomed. Sooner or later the flames would reach the torpedo warheads on the mezzanine of the hangar deck and cause more severe explosions. One officer put his hand to a torpedo warhead to test it and immediately

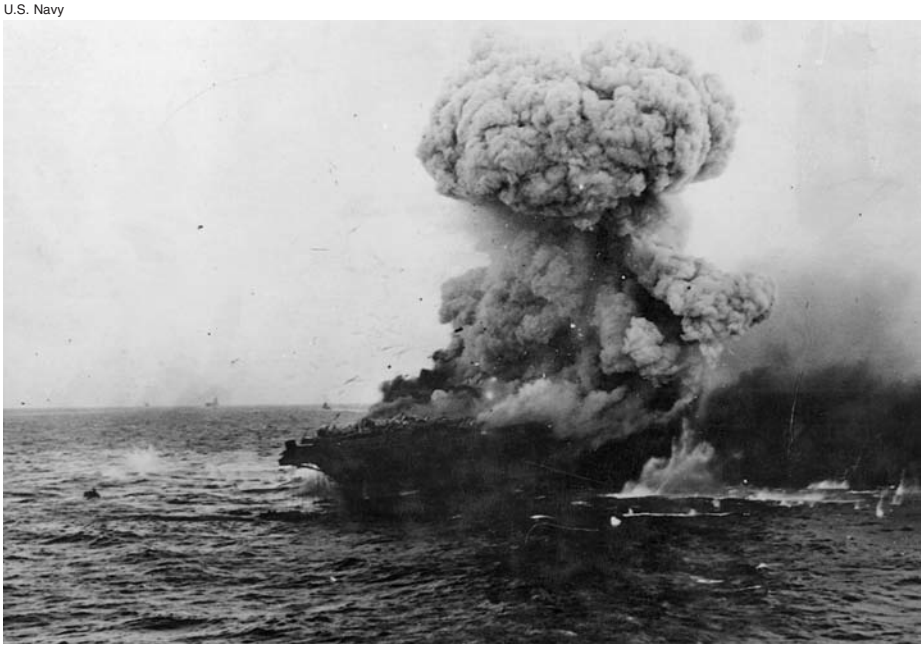
National Archives

jerked it away in pain. He looked down to see his hand covered with blisters.

At 5:07 PM, Admiral Fitch said to Sherman, "Well, Ted, let's get the men off." Although hesitant to give up his ship, Sherman saw no other course and agreed with Fitch. He reluctantly gave the order to abandon ship. While the wounded were lowered to waiting boats, the rest of the crew slid down ropes into the 80-degree water, where they were quickly retrieved by escorting destroyers. The crew abandoned the ship with such calm that not one life was lost. Some of the crew filled their helmets with ice cream from the service store and calmly ate it while they waited. Others neatly aligned their shoes on deck. "There was not the slightest panic or disorder. I was proud of them," wrote Sherman.

Sherman ordered Seligman to leave, then stood alone on the carrier for a final glimpse. While he struggled with his thoughts, an immense explosion rocked the carrier amidships by the elevator. Planes and debris flew everywhere, forcing Sherman to duck under the edge of the flight deck for cover. The commander decided that it was time to leave. He

U.S. Navy



ABOVE: *Lexington* is engulfed by smoke and flames after an internal explosion caused by gasoline vapors. The mortally stricken ship was later sunk by the American destroyer *Phelps*. LEFT: Bypassing an American destroyer, a Japanese dive-bomber heads straight for the carrier *Lexington*. OPPOSITE: The erratic zigzag patterns of the combatant ships in the Battle of the Coral Sea show how desperately the vessels attempted to avoid each other's dive-bombers. Between them, the two sides lost 76 aircraft.

walked to the side and slid down the rope into the water.

Fletcher ordered the destroyer *Phelps* to sink *Lexington* with torpedoes. At 10 PM, a brace of torpedoes sped toward *Lexington* while rescued crewmen aboard other ships cried openly. As they watched, the ship that had been their home at sea slowly settled beneath the waves. "The stricken vessel started getting deeper in the water, slowly going down, as if she too was reluctant to give up the battle," recalled Sherman. "With her colors proudly flying and the last signal flags, reading 'I am abandoning ship,' still waving at the yardarm, she went under on an even keel, like the lady she always was. As she disappeared from sight, there was a tremendous underwater explosion from her magazines. It was the end of the *Lexington*."

With *Lexington*'s loss, the Japanese had gained a tactical victory, but the United States had triumphed strategically. For the first time in the war, a Japanese invasion had been rebuffed; the troop-packed transports were ordered back to Rabaul. Repair parties patched *Yorktown* in time for her to play a key role in the crucial Battle of Midway the following month, while the Japanese sorely missed the presence of the two carriers that saw action in the Coral Sea, a factor that helped tip the scales in America's favor.

THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA CAUSED CELEBRATIONS BACK HOME. "JAPANESE Repulsed in Great Pacific Battle with 17 to 22 of Their Ships Sunk or Crippled," boasted the May 9 issue of the *New York Times*. Morale that had been shattered by the devastating attack against Pearl Harbor and the swift losses of Wake Island, Guam, and the Philippines now had been lifted. "It was, in truth, the greatest battle in the history of the U.S. Pacific Fleet," gushed *Time* magazine. "That day on the sun-bathed Coral Sea the Jap caught hell and absorbed a shattering defeat." The article added that the Japanese "had unquestionably taken a beating—the first serious defeat of his headlong career through the South Pacific."

Sherman agreed with *Time*'s assessment. "The Battle of the Coral Sea was the turning point in the war and a milestone in history," he wrote. "It proved the dominance of the aircraft carrier and ended the period of Japanese advance." He likened the battle to the Civil War confrontation between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack*.

Such confusion existed on both sides during the battle that naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison labeled Coral Sea the "Battle of Naval Errors." But the esteemed chronicler also recognized the positive impact the battle had made to the American cause. "Call Coral Sea what you will," wrote Morison, "it was an indispensable preliminary to the great victory of Midway." That in itself made the Battle of the Coral Sea a signal chapter in American military history. □

Sealing VICKSBURG'S

BY LAWRENCE WEBER

DURING THE CIVIL WAR, THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF Vicksburg, Mississippi, was readily apparent to both the Union and the Confederacy. Abraham Lincoln considered Vicksburg the key to the war in the West and a necessary target for the Union if they hoped to achieve overall victory. "Vicksburg is the key," wrote Lincoln. "The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket. I am acquainted with that region and know what I am talking about, and as valuable as New Orleans will be to us, Vicksburg will be more so."

Vicksburg, situated on a high bluff, was the last Confederate military stronghold on the Mississippi River. The location of the city allowed the Confederacy significant mobility along the strategic river, not only regarding troops, but also supply and communications. Southern President Jefferson Davis understood as well as Lincoln the importance of Vicksburg. In a letter dated May 8, 1863, Davis wrote: "If [Lt. Gen. John] Pemberton is able to repulse the enemy in his land attack and to maintain possession of both Vicksburg and Port Hudson, the enemy's fleet cannot long remain in the River between those points from their inability to get coal and other necessary supplies."

On the morning of May 14, Pemberton was en route to Edward's Depot just east of Vicksburg, where he was preparing to establish defensive positions, when he received a message from General Joseph Johnston, who had just evacuated Jackson. Johnston informed Pemberton that Union Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman had moved between them with four detached divisions at Clinton. If Pemberton could advance on Sherman from the rear while Johnston advanced from the front, together they could defeat Sherman's detached divisions. It was a bold idea, but it did not sit well with Pemberton. Advancing on four enemy divisions to the east meant moving the majority of Confederate forces farther away from Vicksburg, leaving the city even more vulnerable to an attack by the Union forces of Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant.

Pemberton convened a council of war with his generals. The opinions in the council were mixed, but a majority of the generals favored the advance that Johnston had proposed. Pemberton, however, felt that moving on Clinton would be suicidal, and instead sided with his two senior divisional commanders, Maj. Gens. William W. Loring and Carter L. Stevenson. They proposed that Pemberton move toward Grant's rear and cut off his communication and supply lines in the hope of forcing him to retreat. Pemberton agreed and ordered his army to move the next day toward Dillon's Plantation, located on the main road leading from Raymond to Port Gibson.

Pemberton was unaware that Johnston had evacuated Jackson without a fight. In a letter to his new commander, Pemberton wrote: "I shall move as early tomorrow morning as practicable with a column of 17,000 men to Dillon's, situated on the main road leading from Raymond to Port Gibson, 7½ miles below Raymond and 9½ miles from Edward's Depot. The object is to cut the enemy's communications and to force him to attack me, as I do not consider my force sufficient to justify an attack on the enemy in position or to attempt to cut my way to Jackson."

At 1 in the afternoon of May 15, Pemberton put his men into motion. Moving his army across Baker's Creek during the afternoon proved impossible as the creek had swelled tremendously due to a hard-driving rainstorm

Union Major General John A. Logan, waving his hat, rallies the men of the green 34th Indiana on the Union right at Champion's Hill. Logan's division cut the Jackson Road, leaving only the Raymond Road bridge open to the retreating Confederates.

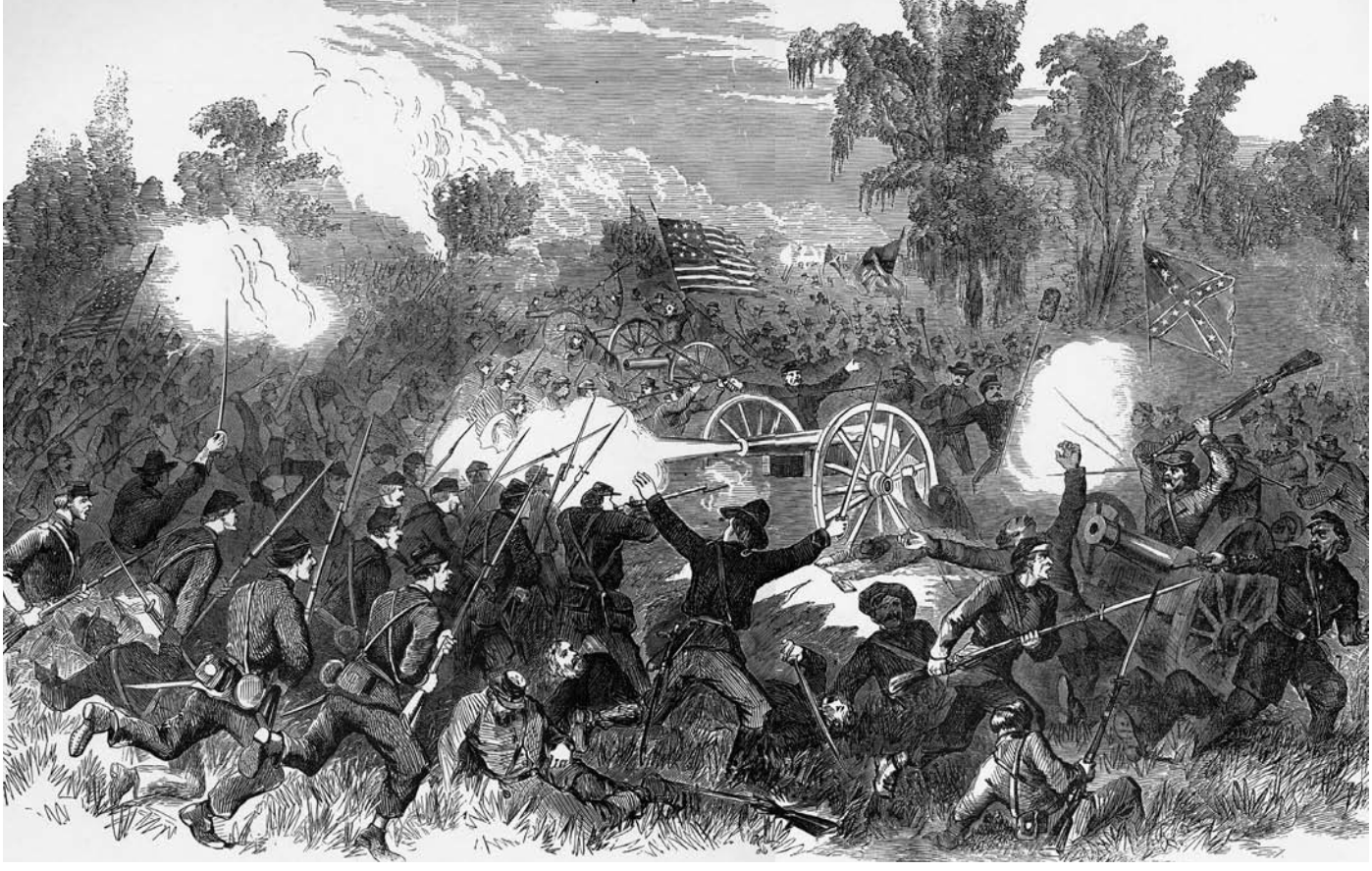
All photos: Library of Congress

FATE

With Union forces swarming toward Vicksburg, Confederate General John C. Pemberton reluctantly moved out of the city to intercept Ulysses S. Grant's hard-charging forces. They would collide at Champion's Hill.

that had washed away the bridge. Pemberton halted for several hours before eventually moving his army across the creek using the Clinton Road Bridge, 1½ miles to the north. He continued marching toward Raymond Road and eventually gave orders to bivouac for the night near the Elliston plantation, home of Mrs. Sara Elliston, where Pemberton established his headquarters. Upon settling in, Pemberton detailed Colonel Wirt Adams's 1st Mississippi Cavalry to patrol the vicinity during the night and scout for enemy positions. The night passed uneventfully.

The next morning, around 6:30, Adams encountered the lead Union forces of Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand's XIII Corps on the Raymond Road and began to skirmish with them. Around the same time that Adams sent word to Pemberton of his encounter, Pemberton received a troubling dispatch from Johnston. "Our being compelled to leave Jackson makes your plan imprac-



ticable," wrote Johnston. "The only mode by which we can unite is by your moving directly to Clinton, informing me, that we may move to that point with about 6,000 troops. I have no means of estimating enemy's force at Jackson. The principal officers here differ very widely, and I fear he will fortify if time is left him. Let me hear from you immediately."

Pemberton, thinking that Adams was simply skirmishing with a small band of Union forces on the Raymond Road and sensing the urgency in Johnston's dispatch, ordered his men to begin a retrograde march toward Clinton in the hope of reuniting with Johnston's forces. As Pemberton and his men began their countermarch, Union forces commenced to attack the head of his column with long-range artillery fire. Pemberton fell back to strategic Champion's Hill, a 75-foot-high prominence located on the grounds of the Champion plantation.

As the early-morning clash grew more intense, Pemberton quickly deployed all three of his divisions into battle lines stretching roughly three miles in length, with Loring on the right, Bowen in the center, and Stevenson on the left. The line of battle was quickly formed, without any interference on the part of the enemy. The position selected was a naturally strong one, and all approaches from the front well covered. Even Grant later commended Pemberton's position, writing in his memoirs: "Champion's Hill, where Pemberton had chosen his position to receive us, whether taken by accident or design, was well selected. It is one of the highest points in that section, and commanded all the ground in range."

There was one weakness in Pemberton's battle line, however. The left flank was vulnerable to an attack from the north via the Jackson Road, which crossed at the crest of the hill. This key intersection, known as the Crossroads, became one of the most hotly contested parts of the battlefield. During the early morning of May 16, Pemberton was unaware that a Union force commanded by Maj. Gen. John A. Logan (3rd Division, XVII Corps) was attempting to move from Bolton, down the Jackson Road to the Crossroads, in an attempt to cut the Confederates off from Vicksburg. If the Union forces could surprise Pemberton's men at the Crossroads and overlap their left flank, Pemberton's army would be trapped and all would be lost for the Confederates.

Good scouting on the part of the Confederacy foiled the Union trap before it could be implemented. Around 9 AM, a Confederate messenger brought word to Pemberton that Union forces were moving along the Jackson Road toward the Crossroads on their left flank. This information allowed Pemberton to adjust his lines in the defense of the Crossroads, and he ordered Stevenson and his men to establish lines at the crest of Champion's Hill. If the Confederates were to have any hope for success, the left flank had to hold their positions. One of the most critical and bloody parts of the battle was about to begin.

At about 10 o'clock, the battle began in earnest along Stevenson's entire front. Stevenson described the fighting in his official report: "At about 10:30 AM a division of the enemy, in column of brigades, attacked [Brig. Gen. Stephen D.] Lee and [Brig. Gen. Alfred] Cumming. They were handsomely met and forced back some distance, when they were reinforced, apparently by about three divisions, two of which moved forward to the attack and the third continued its march toward the left, with the view of forcing it. The enemy now made a vigorous attack in three lines upon the whole front. They were bravely met, and for a long time the unequal conflict was maintained with stubborn resolution. But this could not last. Six thousand five hundred men could not hold permanently in check four divisions, numbering, from their own statements, about 25,000 men; and finally, crushed by overwhelming numbers, my right gave way and was pressed back upon the two regiments covering the Clinton and Raymond roads, where they were in part rallied. Encouraged by this success, the enemy redoubled his efforts and pressed with the utmost vigor along my line, forcing it back."

While the Confederate left was surging back and forth against Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson's XVII Corps around the Crossroads, other Union forces began focusing their crosshairs on the Confederate center and right. Brig. Gen. Alvin P. Hovey's 12th Division, XIII Corps, battled along the center of the Confederate posi-

tion with great success. Hovey ordered Brig. Gen. George F. McGinnis and Colonel James R. Slack to press their skirmishers forward up the hill and follow with their respective brigades. In a few minutes the fire opened briskly along the entire line, continuing for an hour. The Union troops drove forward 600 yards up Champion's Hill, capturing 11 guns and more than 300 prisoners.

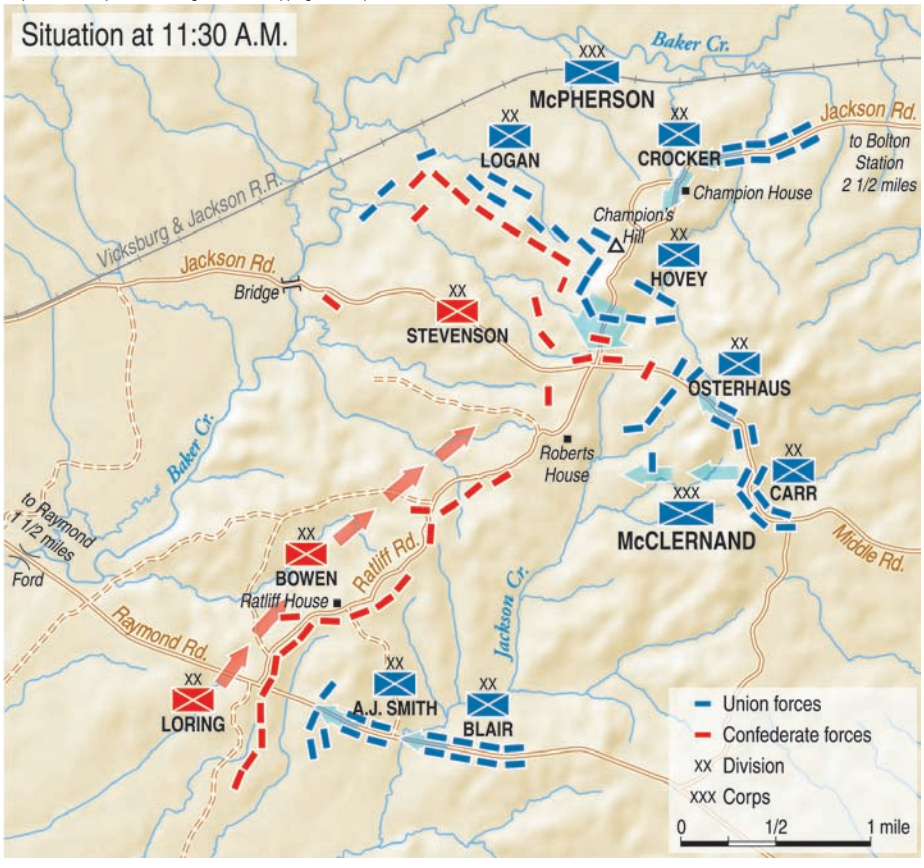
The Confederates would not surrender the ground easily, however, and soon countercharged Hovey's men in fierce and lethal waves. Leading the countercharge was Brig. Gen. John S. Bowen's crack 3rd Division, considered by many "undoubtedly the best combat troops in either army." Bowen's men received minimal, if any, support from Loring's division. According to Pemberton's official report, Bowen's men, who took the brunt of the assault, performed courageously: "Just at this time a column of the enemy were seen moving in front of our center toward the right. [John C.] Landis' battery, of Bowen's division, opened upon and soon broke this column, and compelled it to retire. I then directed Major General Loring to move forward and crush the enemy in his front, and directed General Bowen to cooperate with him in the movement. Immediately on the receipt of my message, General Bowen rode up and announced his readiness to execute his part of the movement as soon as Major General Loring should advance. No movement was made by Major General Loring, he informing me that the enemy was too strongly posted to be attacked, but that he would seize the first opportunity to assault, if one should offer."

Pemberton grew tired of waiting for Loring to move. Galloping up the plantation road, he found Colonel Francis Marion Cockrell's 1st Missouri Brigade double-quicking toward him and directed them to support Bowen at Champion's Hill. Cockrell's forces crashed into Slack's Federals with an ear-splitting Rebel yell. Cockrell, a Missouri lawyer who had enlisted in the army as a private and quickly rose through the ranks to brigade command, rode up and down the line, clutching a large magnolia blossom in one hand and a saber in the other. His men reached the hilltop and delivered what one participant termed "one unbroken deafening roar of musketry."

Eventually, Bowen's division pushed Hovey's men back to the crest of Champion's Hill, where the fight for the center of the line proved extremely hot. Hovey's division stubbornly fell back, contesting to the death every inch of the field they had won. Colonel George Boomer brought up his 3rd Brigade, which was almost bowled over by McGinnis's fleeing men. Stragglers shouted that they had left behind 1,200 bodies on the hilltop. Hovey massed 16 cannons from the 1st Missouri, 16th Ohio, and 6th Wisconsin batteries in an open field southeast of the Champion house and ordered them to open fire on the Confederates.

The sound of artillery thundered through Confederate center with lethal force. "Through the rebel ranks these batteries hurled an incessant shower of shot and shell, entirely enfilading the rebel columns," Hovey reported later. Meanwhile, Colonel Samuel Holmes's fresh 2nd Brigade arrived on the scene and began pouring shots through the heavy smoke that enveloped the battlefield. As the Confederates fell back again, shouts of joy could be heard from the men in Hovey's division. By 3 PM, Champion's Hill, which some of the men had renamed the "hill of death," was firmly in Union hands. Yet the battle was still not finished.

By mid-afternoon, the overwhelming numerical strength of the Union forces had broken the Confederate center. In what seemed like perfect timing for the Union, the Confederate left also found itself in disarray. Stevenson's division had been broken by Union forces around 4 PM and was falling back in unorganized masses. Pemberton did his best to rally the troops one last time on the left flank, but it was of no use. "Observing that large numbers of men were abandoningthe field on Stevenson's left, deserting their comrades, who in this moment of greatest trial stood



ABOVE: With Major General Ulysses S. Grant's forces fully in control of the high ground east of Vicksburg, luckless Confederate Lieutenant General John Pemberton had no choice but to fall back to the river fortress. Six weeks later, he would surrender the city to Grant. OPPOSITE: Union troops led by Brigadier Generals George F. McGinnis and Alvin P. Hovey attack the Confederate center at Champion's Hill, capturing 11 guns and 300 prisoners in an hour-long assault.

manfully at their posts," reported Pemberton, "I rode up to General Stevenson, and informing him that I had repeatedly ordered two brigades of General Loring's division to his assistance, and that I was momentarily expecting them, asked him whether he could hold his position; he replied that he could not; that he was fighting from 60,000 to 80,000 men."

Loring's division, which was finally on its way to reinforce Stevenson's men, had taken an ill-planned route and arrived just as Stevenson's divisions had been broken—too late to make any difference. The order was given to fall back to positions around the Big Black Bridge. As he had done with Cockrell, Pemberton grabbed Brig. Gen. Abraham Buford's brigade, of Loring's division, and sent it racing to the front, but not before the enemy had taken possession of the Ray-

mond Road. The 12th Louisiana and 35th Alabama Regiments rushed to Cockrell's support but were showered by fire from two captured batteries. Pemberton ordered a general retreat.

The Confederates, while retreating, did not know that earlier in the day Union forces had cut off their escape route on the Jackson and Ratliff Roads. In a last-ditch effort to escape from the Union forces, Pemberton ordered a final counterattack against the Crossroads to free up an escape route. Once again, the Crossroads became the center of a lethal storm. Some 4,500 Confederates commanded by Bowen threw themselves into the hazardous final counterattack. Charging with bayonets glistening, the Confederates pushed the Union back almost three-quarters of a mile, briefly regaining control of Champion's Hill. Sheer numbers were against them, however, and Grant, headquartered in the Champion plantation, ordered his own countercharge, which shattered the Confederates and sent them reeling back in the direction of Vicksburg, via the Raymond Road.

With the Raymond Road serving as the Confederates' only avenue of escape, it became imperative to protect it at all cost. Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman's brigade was selected as the rear guard for the Confederacy. While defending the Raymond Road against heavy artillery fire, Tilghman climbed down from his horse to give directions to one of his men. Just as his instructions were being relayed, an artillery blast thundered in his direction. Tilghman was struck in the chest by a fragment of a Union shell, fired from a position between the Raymond Road and the Coker House, and killed instantly. Rearguard command fell to Loring and his division. Eventually all of the Confederates retreated back to positions near the Big Black River Bridge and areas around Vicksburg. The Battle of Champion's Hill was over.

While Pemberton and his forces lumbered west toward the Big Black River, the victorious Union forces camped for the night on the bloodied slopes of Champion's Hill. Sleep did not come easily for the victors; hospital teams prowled the hillside for wounded and dying comrades. General Alvin Hovey, whose division had fought back and forth with the Confederates all day, was almost in shock as he surveyed the remains of the battlefield. "Champion Hill was, after the battle, literally the hill of death," he wrote. "Men, horses, cannon, and the debris of an army lay scattered in wild confusion. Hundreds of the gallant Twelfth Division were cold in death or writhing in pain, and lay dead, dying, or wounded, intermixed with our fallen foe."

Grant, too, was reflective. "While a battle is raging one can see his enemy mowed down by the thousand, or the ten thousand, with great composure," he wrote, "but after the battle these scenes are distressing, and one is naturally disposed to do as much to alleviate the suffering of an enemy as a friend." For Grant, the victory, while spectacular, was not perfect. Commands given to McClernand to move against the Confederate right flank could have been executed with more speed and order, Grant felt, and he found McClernand to have been deficient in executing his own orders. Had McClernand followed through on orders with reasonable speed, thought Grant, Pemberton's army could have been trapped and forced to surrender completely.

Grant explained his frustrations with McClernand in his personal memoirs: "McClernand, with two divisions, was within a few miles of the battle-field long before noon and in easy hearing. I sent him repeated orders by staff officers fully competent to explain to him the situation. These traversed the wood separating us, without escort, and directed him to push forward; but he did not come. It is true, in front of McClernand there was a small force of the enemy and posted in a good position behind a ravine obstructing his advance; but if he had moved to the right by the road my staff officers had followed the enemy must either have fallen back or been cut off. Instead of this he sent orders to Hovey, who belonged to his corps, to join on to his right flank. Hovey was bearing the brunt of the battle at the time. To obey the order he would have had to pull out from the front of the enemy and march back as far as McClernand had to advance to get into battle and substantially over the same ground.

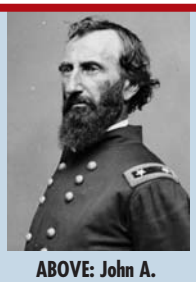
AFTER CHAMPION'S HILL

Some of the men involved in the Battle of Champion's Hill lived to see the end of the war; others did not.

After the battle, Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson, one of Ulysses S. Grant's favorite generals, was given command of the Army of the Tennessee when Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman was promoted to commander of all armies in the western theater. McPherson went on to fight with Sherman's Army of the Cumberland and Army of the Ohio during the Atlanta Campaign, where he was mortally wounded on July 22, 1864, at Peachtree Creek. His death was a heavy loss for the Union.

Major General John A. McClernand was involved in the Vicksburg siege operations for a time, but eventually was relieved of his command by Grant for insubordination and was replaced by Maj. Gen. Edward O.C. Ord. Abraham Lincoln eventually reinstated McClernand to field command in 1864, giving him command of the XIII Corps of the Department of the Gulf in a politically motivated maneuver. Poor health restricted McClernand's ability to do his job, however, and he resigned from the Army on November 30, 1864. McClernand went on to an undistinguished career in politics and law after the Civil War. He died on September 20, 1900, and was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois—the same cemetery as Lincoln.

Brigadier General Alvin P. Hovey went on to lead his division through the siege of Vicksburg, and was given command of the 1st Division, XXIII Corps, Army of the Ohio during the early parts of the Atlanta Campaign. In 1864, Hovey received a brevet promotion to major general. He resigned the Army in 1865. After the Civil War, he became U.S. Minister to Peru, a job he held for five years. In 1886, after years of practicing law, Hovey was elected to the United States House of Representatives, and was reelected in 1888. He later became governor of Indiana and died in office on November 23, 1891. He was buried in the Bellefontaine Cemetery, Indiana.



ABOVE: John A. McClernand. BELOW: John A. "Black Jack" Logan.

Major General John A. Logan's 3rd Division of McPherson's XVII Corps was the first to enter the city of Vicksburg after its capture. In November 1863, he was given command of the XV Corps after Sherman was promoted. When his friend and ally James B. McPherson was killed in 1864, Logan took command of the Army of the Tennessee during the Atlanta Campaign. He was relieved of command by Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard, but rejoined his old XV Corps during the Carolinas Campaign.

After the Civil War, Logan served in both houses of Congress, and was nominated for vice president of the United States on the Republican ticket with James Blaine in 1884, an election they lost. As commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, Logan issued General Order No. 11, which established "Decoration Day," now known as Memorial Day. Logan died December 26, 1886, and was buried in

Of course I did not permit Hovey to obey the order of his intermediate superior. Had McClernand come up with reasonable promptness, or had I known the ground as I did afterwards, I cannot see how Pemberton could have escaped with any organized force."

This was scathing criticism from the Union commander and strong allegations of serious misconduct against McClernand. In McClernand's official report, he did not seem to recognize the opportunity that had slipped through his fingers that day. "To say that the Thirteenth Army Corps has done its whole duty manfully and nobly throughout this arduous and eventful campaign is only to say what historical facts abundantly establish," McClernand wrote blandly.

McClernand had multiple divisions that seemed to have been engaged in a very limited, if any, way during the battle. While Hovey's division, which was with Grant for the majority of the battle, lost 619 soldiers killed, wounded, or missing, Brig. Gen. Andrew J. Smith's 10th Division, which was with McClernand, suffered only six wounded soldiers. Brig. Gen. Eugene A. Carr's 14th Division had only three casualties. Blair's 2nd Division, XV Corps, which was under the command of McClernand during the battle, reported zero casualties. These were units that could have been used to prevent Pemberton's forces from retreating. By comparison, McPherson's 3rd

Battle-hardened Union forces pursue the retreating Confederates through dense woods at Champion's Hill. Both sides considered the elevated battlefield a "literal hill of death."

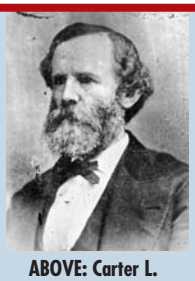
Division lost over 400 men, and the 7th Division lost over 650 men. According to McPherson's official report: "This, by far the hardest fought battle of all since crossing at Bruinsburg, and the most decided victory for us, was not won without the loss of many brave men, who heroically periled their lives for their country's honor. Their determined spirit still animates their living comrades, who feel that the blood poured out on Champion's Hill was not spilt in vain. Every man of Logan's and [Brig. Gen. Marcellus] Crocker's divisions was engaged in the battle."

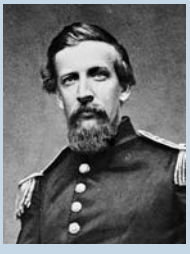
In spite of McClernand's poor performance, Grant seemed pleased, overall, with the results of

Continued on page 66

U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Major General Carter L. Stevenson's division bore the brunt of the Confederate fighting at the Battle of Champion's Hill. During the siege of Vicksburg, Stevenson commanded the right flank of the Confederate defensive line. After Vicksburg fell, he served ably at Lookout Mountain, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Kennesaw Mountain, Nashville, and Bentonville. When the Civil War ended, Stevenson moved to Virginia and became an engineer. He remained in this profession until his death on August 15, 1888. He was buried in the Confederate Cemetery in Fredericksburg, Virginia.



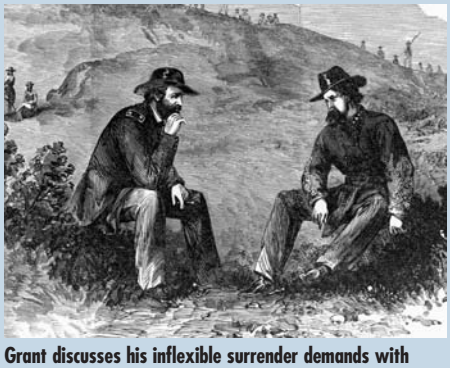


ABOVE: Carter L. Stevenson. BELOW: John S. Bowen.

Major General John S. Bowen did not live long after the Battle of Champion's Hill. Defeated at the Battle of the Big Black River Bridge, Bowen retreated into Vicksburg with the rest of Pemberton's men. When Vicksburg fell on July 4, 1863, Bowen was taken as a prisoner of war, but was quickly paroled. He became sick with dysentery soon after and died on July 13, 1863. He was buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery in Vicksburg.

Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton surrendered Vicksburg to Grant. He was taken prisoner of war, but was exchanged rather quickly and returned to the army. Voluntarily resigning his general's commission, Pemberton went on to serve as a lieutenant colonel of artillery for the remainder of the Civil War. Despite his loyal service to the Confederacy, Pemberton was always remembered in the South as the man who surrendered Vicksburg. After the war he lived as a farmer in Virginia before moving back to his home state of Pennsylvania. He died on July 13, 1881, and was buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia.

Major Samuel Hawkins Marshall Byers of the 5th Iowa Infantry perhaps put it best when he wrote: "The battle of Champion's Hill was won,



Grant discusses his inflexible surrender demands with Pemberton at Vicksburg.

and the victorious Union army was shortly in a position to compel the surrender of the key to the Mississippi River. Grant's crown of immortality was won, and the jewel that shone most bright in it was set there by the blood of the men of Champion's Hill. Had that important battle failed, Grant's army, not Pemberton's, would have become prisoners of war. Where then would have been Vicksburg, Spotsylvania, Richmond, Appomattox?" One hundred and forty-eight years later, the question still resonates. □

By Al Hemingway

The Boston Tea Party helped spark the American Revolution to end taxation without representation. But was that sentiment all for naught?

ON A WINTRY NIGHT IN DECEMBER 1773, ABOUT 70 MEN, MANY of whom were disguised as Indians, unceremoniously dumped an estimated 10,000 pounds, the modern equivalent of $1 million, of tea into Boston harbor. Their rebellious act against Great Britain would ignite a revolution that would eventually witness the birth of the United States. But were their actions entirely pure and noble? Would the tossing of hundreds of crates of tea into the cold waters of Massachusetts Bay ensure that the new nation be different than the government that now ruled the colonies?

In his new book, ***American Tempest: How the Boston Tea Party Sparked a Revolution*** (Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2011, 304 pp., illustrations, notes, index, bibliography, $26.00, hardcover), author Harlow Giles Unger reveals what transpired after the Boston Tea Party, the major characters involved and, incidentally, how thousands of innocent loyalists were harassed, subjected to physical violence, and uprooted from their homes.

Boston was a hotbed of rebel activity during the American Revolution. Individuals such as the fiery Samuel Adams; his composed lawyer cousin, future president John Adams; Paul Revere; James Otis, Jr.; John Hancock; and Thomas Cushing were members of the Tea Party. Ironically, with few exceptions, the majority of Tea Party members were not elected to the Continental Congress and did not assist in shaping the future of the fledgling country after England was defeated at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781.

Prior to the Boston Tea Party in 1773, Sam Adams was the instigator who kept Bostonians at a fever pitch. His dynamic oratories drew large crowds that met in local pubs and underneath the "Liberty Tree" near Boston's square. He organized mobs that terrorized customs commissioners, citizens, and merchants who supported Great Britain. Anyone who remained loyal to the Crown was tarred and feathered and had boiling tea forced down their throats.

Another fascinating character of the period was James Otis, Jr. The Harvard graduate could trace his roots back to the early English settlers

A 19th-century engraving of the Boston Tea Party shows colonists, some dressed as Indians, smashing open crates.

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

A Most Stalwart and Reliable Ally

Is Israel indeed America's unsinkable aircraft carrier?

In previous *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages, we made clear what a tremendous asset for our country Israel is. We gave many examples of its contribution to American safety in that important area of the world. But there is much more.

What are the facts?

Turmoil in the Middle East. There is upheaval in the Middle East. Governments shift, and the future of this vital area is up in the air. In those dire circumstances, it is a tremendous comfort to our country that Israel, a beacon of Western values, is its stalwart and unshakable ally.

Unreliable "allies." Egypt, a long-term "ally" of our country, is the beneficiary of billions of dollars of American aid. Its dictator, Hosni Mubarak has been dethroned. As of now, it is unclear who and what will be Egypt's new government. It is widely assumed, however, that it may be the Muslim Brotherhood. Far from being a religious organization, as its name would imply, it is dominated by fanatical radicals, ardent antagonists of the West, obsessed anti-Semites, and sworn enemies of the State of Israel. If the Muslim Brotherhood would indeed come to power, a bloody war, more violent than anything that has come before, is likely to ensue.

> "What a comfort for our country to have stalwart and completely reliable Israel in its corner..."

Saudi Arabia, a tyrannical kingdom, is another important "ally" of the U.S. It is the most important source of petroleum, the lifeblood of the industrial world. It is, however, totally unreliable and hostile to all the values for which the United States stands. The precedent of Iran cannot fail to be on the minds of our government. The Shah of Iran was a staunch ally of the U.S. We lavished billions of dollars and huge quantities of our most advanced weapons on him. But, virtually from one day to the next, the mullahs and the ayatollahs – fanatical enemies of our country, of Israel, and of anything Western – came to power. Instead of friends and allies, Iran's theocratic government became the most virulent enemy of the United States. Could something like that happen in Saudi Arabia? It is not at all unlikely!

Other U.S. allies in the region – Jordan, the "new" Iraq, and the Gulf emirates – are even weaker and less reliable reeds to lean on. Libya, which once, under King Idris, hosted the Wheeler Air Base, became an enemy of the U.S. under the loathsome Khaddafi. Turkey, once a strong ally, has cast its lot with Iran.

A stalwart partner. Israel, in contrast, presents a totally different picture. Israel's reliability, capability, credibility and stability, are enormous and irreplaceable assets for our country. Many prominent military people and elected representatives have recognized this. Gen. John Keegan, a former chief of U.S. Air Force Intelligence, determined that Israel's contribution to U.S. intelligence was "equal to five CIA's." Senator Daniel Inouye, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said that "The intelligence received from Israel exceeds the intelligence received from all NATO countries combined. The Soviet military hardware that was transferred by Israel to the USA tilted the global balance of power in favor of our country."

In 1981, Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear reactor. While at first condemned by virtually the whole world – sad to say, including the United States – it saved our country a nuclear confrontation with Iraq. At the present time, US soldiers in Iraq and in Afghanistan benefit from Israel's experience in combating Improvised Explosive Devices, car bombs and suicide bombers. Israel is the most advanced battle-tested laboratory for U.S. military systems. The F-16 jet fighter, for instance, includes over 600 Israeli-designed modifications, which saved billions of dollars and years of research and development.

But there is more: Israel effectively secures NATO's southeastern flank. Its superb harbors, its outstanding military installations, the air- and sea-lift capabilities, and the trained manpower to maintain sophisticated equipment are readily at hand in Israel.

Israel does receive substantial benefits from the United States – a yearly contribution of $3 billion – all of it in military assistance, no economic assistance at all. The majority of this contribution must be spent in the US, generating thousands of jobs in our defense industries.

Israel is indeed America's unsinkable aircraft carrier. If it were not for Israel, thousands of American troops would have to be stationed in the Middle East, at the cost of billions of dollars a year. In contrast to the unreliable friendship of Muslim countries, the friendship and support of Israel are unshakable because they are based on shared values, love of peace and democracy. What a comfort for our country to have stalwart and completely reliable Israel in its corner, especially at a time when in this strategic area turmoil, upheaval and revolution are the order of the day. Yes, Israel is indeed America's unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Middle East.

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159
Gerardo Joffe, President

FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501 (c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world. Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

125

who arrived in America, and it is he who historians say coined the phrase "taxation without representation."

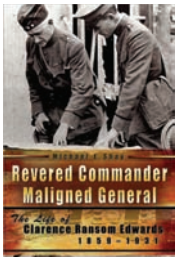
Although not a born revolutionary to the degree of the incendiary Sam Adams, Otis could also incite a crowd. His erratic and unstable behavior, which some attribute to being clubbed by a British tax commissioner, prevented his becoming an active member of the Continental Congress. Today, some historians claim that Otis was schizophrenic or manic-depressive. During his lucid moments, however, Otis could be a brilliant statesman and lawyer. Whatever the reason, he had to sit out most of the revolution because of his condition. He met an untimely death when he was struck by lightning while observing a thunderstorm.

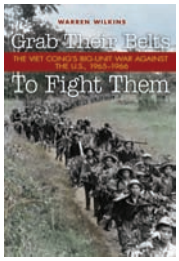
The passionate Sam Adams, whose forceful diatribes caused many colonists to take up arms to fight the British, did not fire a shot in anger during the war. As his popularity waned in Boston, he virtually faded from the public's view. After the war, Adams tried to run for Congress, but was defeated. He did serve as the lieutenant governor of Massachusetts for five years under John Hancock, and then inherited the position of governor. He won the next election and continued to serve in that post until 1797.

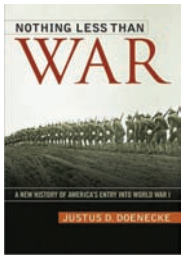
Ironically, while serving as governor, Adams made an extraordinary statement when residents of the state protested the raising of taxes. "The man who dares to rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death," he said. It was a strange statement coming from the man who was probably the main driving force behind the colonies' revolt against the British tax system.

Another sad chapter to the whole affair, according to Unger, was the displacement of thousands of Americans who remained loyal to the British. Many fled westward to escape the taunts and physical violence levied against them by their fellow countrymen. The author writes that "well over sixty thousand, or more than 10 percent of that region," were New Englanders.

Perhaps the most paradoxical part of the entire American Revolution was that the colonists had formed a government that was identical in numerous ways to its predecessors. Virginia statesman Patrick Henry said that the Constitution had created "a great and mighty president with the powers of a king." Congress, he said, had the ability to implement direct taxation, something that Americans had opposed and died for during the revolution. From that standpoint, Unger maintains, "The Revolution from Britain, it seemed, had been for naught."







Revered Commander, Maligned General: The Life of Clarence Ransom Edwards by Michael E. Shay, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 2011, 282 pp., photos, maps, notes, index, $45.00, hardcover.

Finishing dead last in his class at West Point certainly did not hinder Clarence Ransom Edwards from climbing the promotional rung. However, it would be his acid tongue and controversial behavior that would put him in a negative light with American Expeditionary Forces commander General John J. Pershing during World War I. Pershing would eventually dismiss Edwards as head of the 26th "Yankee Division."

Although a Spanish-American War veteran, Edwards would see his first actual combat in the Philippines. At the Battles of Santa Cruz and Zapote Bridge, he demonstrated great bravery and received three Silver Star citations. From that point, Edwards had a meteoric rise. Immediately before America's entry into the Great War in 1917, he was in charge of all U.S. forces in the Panama Canal Zone.

Edwards was given the arduous task of getting the Yankee Division into shape, a job he did so well that it was the second complete division to arrive in France ready for combat. Despite his administrative skills, Edwards made instant enemies of many senior officers, including Pershing. A man like Pershing demanded total loyalty from his staff, and Edwards was not that kind of soldier. When he found fault, he would voice his opinion and not mince words.

The final straw came in October 1918, when Edwards received a report from some soldiers who had talked with German troops. The Germans, they said, were eager for an armistice to end hostilities. Edwards, believing he had stumbled upon important information, notified his superiors, stressing that no vital information had been exchanged. Unfortunately for Edwards, First Army headquarters did not view his report in a favorable light. They replied by saying that fraternization between the troops must be stopped immediately. This action was the culmination of months of bickering, and Edwards was relieved of command.

Edwards may have been despised by many of his peers, but his men loved him and affectionately called him "Daddy." When he was lying on his deathbed and the call went out to veterans of the Yankee Division that their beloved leader needed blood transfusions, countless soldiers offered to be donors. Years after his death, his men would remember him with plaques and ceremonies. To the Doughboy in the field, unaware of the backstabbing and quarreling among the general staff, Edwards would always be their "Daddy."

Grab Their Belts to Fight Them: The Viet Cong's Big-Unit War Against the U.S., 1965-1966 by Warren Wilkins, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2011, 288 pp., photos, maps, notes, index, $35.95, hardcover.

Many Americans who never served in Vietnam are under the impression that American forces fought a ragtag, poorly trained group of soldiers. The image of an old Vietnamese peasant pulling up an antiquated, rusty rifle from his well at night to take a few potshots at passing American soldiers is still widely believed.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As the author points out in this book, the main Viet Cong units were highly trained and motivated. Their strategy of "grabbing their belts," or fighting Americans at close quarters to deny them use of their superior firepower, was their overriding strategy, and led to many bloody clashes with U.S. troops.

Wilkins focuses on the first year or so of the war, examining a few of the major battles where Americans and Viet Cong tangled. It was a risky venture asking for artillery or air support when your enemy was just yards away on the battlefield. For Americans who at times relied heavily on their supporting arms, it meant using discretion to avoid taking friendly casualties. Wilkins does an excellent job in describing the use of firepower in battle and what strategy the communists employed to negate the ace card the Americans held.order of the day, and opportunities for blacks were limited. However, Gravely was one of the first blacks accepted into the U.S. Navy and was commissioned an officer at war's end. Even while wearing the uniform, he was arrested by military police while in Miami for impersonating an officer, and was denied housing in Virginia during the Korean War.

Nothing Less Than War: A New History of America's Entry into World War I by Justus D. Doenecke, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 2011, 416 pp., notes, photos, $40.00, hardcover.

The author, a professor emeritus of history in South Florida, reexamines the reasons the United States finally entered World War I. He delves in great detail into the presidency of

Woodrow Wilson, his cabinet members, and public opinion. Wilson was in a quandary over the shipping issue. Great Britain had vowed to seize any neutral ship it deemed destined for Germany. Public debate on whether or not to side with Great Britain was fueled by the media. Publisher William Randolph Hearst had a decidedly pro-German slant as compared to other publications, and wanted to remain neutral in European affairs.

Many in Wilson's cabinet lacked diplomatic skills and gave him poor advice. The public outcry over the sinking of the British ocean liner *Lusitania,* on which nearly 1,200 died, including 100 children, was a major contributing factor to America declaring war on Germany in 1917.

As the author states, Germany forced Wilson to ask Congress for a declaration of war. Ironically, the political climate with Germany was improving at the time and worsening for England. Still, it was a close call for the president. "He could only hope that the conflict would justify the required sacrifice," Doenecke writes.

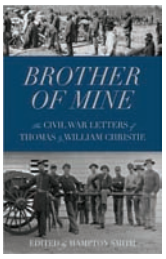
Brother of Mine: The Civil War Letters of Thomas & William Christie, edited by Hampton Smith, Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, 2011, 330 pp., notes, bibliography, $19.95, softcover.

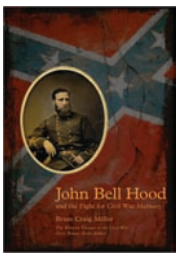
Letters are a gateway into the hearts and minds of soldiers who fight in wars, and the Civil War is rich with correspondence that has survived between family members on the front and at home.

The Christie brothers, 13 years apart in age, wrote a treasure trove of letters to their father, sister, and younger brother while serving together in the 1st Minnesota Light Artillery. The unit participated in the battles of Shiloh, Corinth, Kennesaw Mountain, Atlanta, and Bentonville. The battery also served during the 40-day siege of Vicksburg.

The letters penned by the brothers, atrocious spelling and grammar aside, give the reader a vivid, and at times graphic, picture of what transpired during the fighting. On April 15, 1862, a week after the Battle of Shiloh, William wrote to his father, saying: "The bullets were pouring upon us like a hail storm. Just as soon as we got our guns into position we began to give them our compliments with shell and canister."

Both brothers survived the conflict. William became a successful farmer, passing away in 1901. Thomas developed a deep religious fervor during the conflict that followed him into civilian life. He was ordained a minister, and with his wife traveled to Turkey as missionaries. He died in 1921.





The Christies' wartime letters are a microcosm of both northern and southern families during the Civil War, illustrating their hopes and fears and capturing a wrenching part of our nation's history.

Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress: Owner's Workshop Manual by Graeme Douglas, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2011, index, photos, illustrations, $28,00, hardcover.

Here is a book for any reader who has had a keen interest in actually owning a B-17 Flying Fortress. It has everything, including the plane's history, technical specifications, diagrams, inventory of parts, and even the preflight check list required before takeoff.

One of the most famous aircraft ever constructed, the B-17 first appeared in the U.S. Army Air Corps in July 1935. By war's end, nearly 13,000 of the planes would see combat in all theaters of operation.

The book has more than 250 photographs and drawings showing the reader how to restore the plane—that is, if you can find one. The author has more than three decades of experience with B-17s and is a part-time volunteer at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, England. He spent considerable time assisting in restoring the B-17G Model Mary Alice and as a member of the ground crew for the Sally B. The book is a must-read for all B-17 enthusiasts—even if you do not own one.

The Second Creek War: Interethnic Conflict and Collusion on a Collapsing Frontier by John T. Ellisor, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 2010, 499 pp., notes, index, maps, $50.00, hardcover.

As the author states in his book, precious little has been written about the Second Creek War. As he points out, however, the war had tremendous economical and social impact on not only the Creeks themselves, but also on blacks and poor whites who were close neighbors of the Creeks.

The conflict raged over three states, Alabama, Georgia and Florida. By the start of hostilities, the Creek Nation had lost large tracts of land to encroaching white settlers and fraudulent government agents. That was the impetus for the fighting. Much of the combat was particularly bloody, with the entire town of Roanoke, Ga., being burnt to the ground, prompting the American Army to intervene.

By 1837, the Creeks were being forcibly removed from their land. However, many hid and found refuge within the affected states. Others sought safe haven with the Seminole tribe in Florida and continued to fight the war. Ironically, with the great depression of 1837, many farmers who occupied Creek land lost it to the more prosperous plantation owners, while many Creeks fared quite well in their new western homes. The Civil War split many Creeks, much as it did whites, with individuals fighting for both North and South.

Ellisor's book sheds new light on a very misunderstood period of our nation's history, an era that has been unfairly forgotten in many American textbooks.

John Bell Hood and the Fight for Civil War Memory by Brian Craig Miller, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, TN, 2010, 318 pp., notes, index, $37.95, hardcover.

History has not been kind to John Bell Hood. The much-maligned Confederate general has been widely reviled for his military performance commanding the Army of Tennessee during the Civil War, when he suffered disastrous defeats at Atlanta, Franklin and Nashville.

Historian Brian Craig Miller takes a closer look at the life of Hood, and has a far different opinion of the man. His account, the first in more than two decades, claims that there is no concrete evidence that Hood was a gambler or drug user who recklessly endangered his troops on the battlefield. Many of these assertions, Miller writes, are myths that have been perpetuated through the years with no documentation to give them credence.

Hood tried for years after the war to defend his actions. He even wrote a memoir contradicting claims by Confederate general Joseph E. Johnston and Union general William T. Sherman of his incompetence on the battlefield. "By examining the historiography carefully, and uncovering how the Hood paradigm came to be constructed, we can begin to understand how some prominent historians have misrepresented John bell Hood," writes Miller.

Even on his deathbed, when he was succumbing to yellow fever in 1879, Hood remained feisty. He fought the disease much as he had fought on the battlefield, when he uttered to his doctor, "I will fight this fight as long as there is a shot left in the locker." Unfortunately for both Hood and the Confederacy, he lost most of his fights. □

By Joseph Luster

The Korean Occupation of America

Homefront's story is clear and compelling, thanks to screenwriter John Milius.

SOCOM 4: US Navy Seals

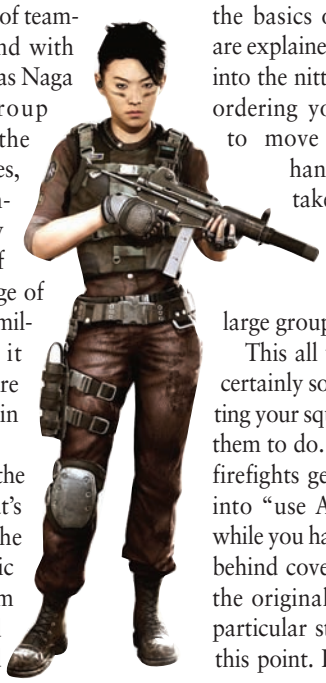
Could *SOCOM 4* have been released at a worse time? Probably not. The latest in Sony's exclusive line of tactical third-person shooters had the misfortune of coming out right around the time of Playstation Network's notorious shut-down at the hands of hacker community "Anonymous," rendering its chief feature, online play, utterly useless. At the time of this writing PSN is back up and running for the most part, and reviewers were able to get their hands on the game a bit before all the ruckus, but the damage a month or so of no online play takes on a brand new title like this is difficult to properly quantify.

PUBLISHER
Sony Computer Entertainment

SYSTEM(S)
Playstation 3

AVAILABLE
Now

Without PSN up and running, the first month of the game's release left players to soldier through the 14 missions available in the campaign by themselves. *SOCOM 4: US Navy Seals* starts off with some promise, putting us in the shoes of Ops Commander Cullen Gray. Along with a small squad of teammates, Gray must contend with both native rebels known as Naga and the mercenary group ClawHammer, taking the fight through cities, jungles, villages and … more jungles. The story is a fairly phoned-in aspect of *SOCOM 4* and, in this age of countless me-too modern military shooters, I found it increasingly difficult to care about what was going on in the first place.



I'm not even convinced the characters care about what's going on, regardless of the occasionally dramatic cutscene. That's fine, I'm here to shoot things and control squad mates, and that's precisely what *SOCOM 4* does, well, fairly competently. The game opens with a handful of back-to-back scenarios that offer increasingly complex tactical opportunities, and it's all explained pretty thoroughly, with ample hand-holding prior to letting the player loose. Once the basics of control are explained, they get into the nitty gritty of ordering your squad to move forward, hang back, take out enemies, etc. Things get more interesting when another squad is thrown into the mix; perfect for setting up ambushes and flanking large groups of enemies.

This all works great at first, but there are certainly some AI issues when it comes to getting your squads to do precisely what you want them to do. This is exacerbated further as the firefights get hairier, often turning strategies into "use AI teammates as human shields" while you hang back and pick off enemies from behind cover. It's been a while since I played the original *SOCOM* games, but their very particular style of realism has faded some at this point. Instead, developer Zipper Interactive—who has worked on every *SOCOM* since the first hit Playstation 2 in 2002—seem to have taken some steps back to accommodate the modern era of shooters. Maybe it's perceived that what *SOCOM* came onto the scene with originally is no longer quite as novel, but it would have been nice to see them go further in the direction of realism and more in-depth tactics rather than falling closer in line with the pack.

There are some nice diversions peppered throughout the campaign. The occasional stealth mission puts you in control of Forty-Five, a female team member who specializes in sneaking around all *Metal Gear Solid* style. There are still frustrations present, and you'll definitely be doing sections over before you realize the trick to getting through them, but they serve as nice breathers between all the pounding, cover-based firefighting.

But enough about the solo action. That's never been *SOCOM*'s specialty, and that remains the case in this installment. However, thanks to an equal number of changes made to the online experience, the same will be said by

some in regard to the multiplayer. The effect *Call of Duty* has had on the industry looms large here, with additions like kill streak rewards and moving spawn points making things feel just a little too close to Activision's juggernaut. I personally enjoy those features in other titles, but I'm also of the mind that *SOCOM* should do what it does best rather than spinning itself into yet another indistinguishable twitch-reaction shooter.

Gone are modes like Breach, Demolition, Control, and Convoy, as all new modes have been planted in their place. Last Defense has players capturing neutral sectors of the map; Uplink is like Capture the Flag except you're downloading data from enemies; Bomb Squad involves either disarming or protecting bomb sites; and Suppression is a classic deathmatch-style battle. These plus a high level of game mode customizability mean that no one is going to be hurting for something to do online here, but it's a shame that a lot of that *SOCOM* magic got lost along the way.

Though I didn't get to try it out for myself, great things have been said about the way that *SOCOM 4* utilizes Playstation Move motion controls. Outside of *Killzone 3*, that's a rarity for a shooter like this, so anyone with access to Move controllers might want to give that a shot. All in all, *SOCOM 4: US Navy Seals* is far from a terrible experience, but it's one that long-time fans of the series should be wary of before diving in headfirst. Let's close this as it opened, with a question. Would this title get any attention without the *SOCOM* name attached to it? Probably not.

Magicka: Vietnam

Here's something a little different that was difficult to pass on mentioning due to concept alone. *Magicka: Vietnam* imagines the war-torn jungles of Vietnam in a much different context … one that involves wizards. And goblins. Yes, this isn't your typical Vietnam-based action game, but who can resist the promise of unleashing Napalm magic on the "Goblin-Cong" forces?

Magicka: Vietnam was released as the first full expansion to Arrowhead Game Studios' *Magicka,* an isometric action-adventure title with a heavy focus on wantonly casting lots and lots of powerful spells. As such it's fast-paced and full of water, fire, lightning, and other destructive types of spells making your foes go pop across the map like blood-filled water balloons.

PUBLISHER
Paradox Interactive

SYSTEM(S)
PC

AVAILABLE
Now

The Vietnam expansion comes pretty cheap at $4.99, and all *Magicka* players in a session together will be able to play it as long as the host has purchased the DLC. *Magicka* isn't a very costly title as is, so it might be worth a shot for anyone interested in mixing war with wizards in a loose, humor-infused manner like this. □

spartacus revolt

Continued from page 37

men—perhaps 35,000 or so—were still at large, but it was the beginning of the end. The wily Thracian managed another victory against two of Crassus's subordinates, but the final outcome was never in doubt. In the last weeks, Spartacus's movements were more like those of a hunted animal than an independent commander.

The main rebel army was finally cornered between two Roman armies near Apulia in April 71. Crassus led one force; Lucius Lucullus landed at Brundisium with another. Spartacus knew that the odds against a victory were astronomical, but he was determined to see it through to the end. As a gesture of defiance, he killed his own horse before the battle. He would fight on foot like the majority of his men. If they won, they would get new horses; if they lost, it wouldn't matter anyway.

Spartacus tried to reach Crassus in an effort to personally kill his rival. Observers saw Spartacus personally kill two Roman centurions as he pushed through the melee toward Crassus. As he flailed away, his *sica* coated in crimson, the gladiator got close enough to catch sight of Crassus, wounded in several places, before he finally dropped to his knees. Drenched in sweat and blood—his own and the enemy's—Spartacus continued to fight from a prone position before being overwhelmed. His body was so hacked to pieces that it was never recovered or identified.

The rest of the slave army was similarly annihilated. After two years, the Spartacus Revolt was over. Triumphant at last, Crassus was determined to exact a terrible punishment on the thousands of rebel prisoners who had survived. All 6,000 were crucified along the Appian Way from Capua to Rome, a forest of crosses bearing bitter human fruit. Death was painful and lingering, and after death the bodies were allowed to decay in place. The horror and stench lingered for months.

Spartacus was dead, but he was not forgotten. Over time, his legend grew, a vivid tale that resonated through the centuries. The real Spartacus has been replaced by one motivated by a political agenda. There is no evidence that he was a social revolutionary who wanted freedom and justice for all. He certainly wanted liberty for himself and his followers, but he probably wasn't interested in completely overturning a social order that was still seen as natural in most ancient societies. But whatever his ultimate motives, Spartacus was an exceptional man, one whose courage and charisma shook the Roman Empire to its very foundations. □

vicksburg's fate

Continued from page 59

the day. He recognized immediately that the Battle of Champion's Hill had secured the Union's position between Confederates Johnston and Pemberton. Pemberton was now left with two unpalatable options: either fall back into Vicksburg without Johnston and prepare for a siege, or circle around the Union position at Champion's Hill and reunite with Johnston to the east, abandoning Vicksburg altogether. Pemberton eventually chose to withdraw into Vicksburg after another Union victory at the Battle of the Big Black River Bridge, which took place the day after Champion's Hill. Pemberton hoped that Johnston's army would eventually come to the defense of Vicksburg. It never did. In fact, Johnston ordered Pemberton to abandon Vicksburg and reunite with his forces, but, under strict orders from Davis to stay in Vicksburg, Pemberton chose to obey the president. He spent the next six weeks besieged inside the city before surrendering to Grant on July 4. The key to the West had been transferred from the pocket of the Confederacy to the pocket of the Union.

Although decisive, the Battle of Champion's Hill was costly for Grant and the Union. Some 410 soldiers were killed, 1,844 soldiers were wounded, and 187 men went missing. His total engaged forces at Champion's Hill numbered 32,000 men. Pemberton lost 381 killed, 1,018 wounded, 2,441 missing, and 27 artillery pieces. Included among the dead was General Tilghman. General Bowen, who had fought so hard to retake the hill, would die of dysentery a few weeks later at Vicksburg.

Abraham Lincoln, who recognized early the importance of the key city, wrote to Grant that summer: "My Dear General, I do not remember that you and I ever met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable service you have done for the country. I wish to say a word further. When you first reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did—march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and thus go below; and I never had any faith, except a general hope that you knew better than I, that the Yazoo Pass expedition and the like could succeed. When you got below and took Port Gibson, Grand Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks, and when you turned northward, east of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgement that you were right and I was wrong." □

John D. Hoptak | Instructor, American and Civil War History

John D. Hoptak is an American and Civil War historian and educator. Author of *The Battle of South Mountain*, *Our Boys Did Nobly*, *First in Defense of the Union*, and *Antietam: September 17, 1862*, Hoptak brings to life the riveting conflicts that divided a nation. Hoptak's laboratory is the Antietam National Battlefield, where as a Park Ranger he shares his vast knowledge about the bloodiest day of battle in U.S. history.

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