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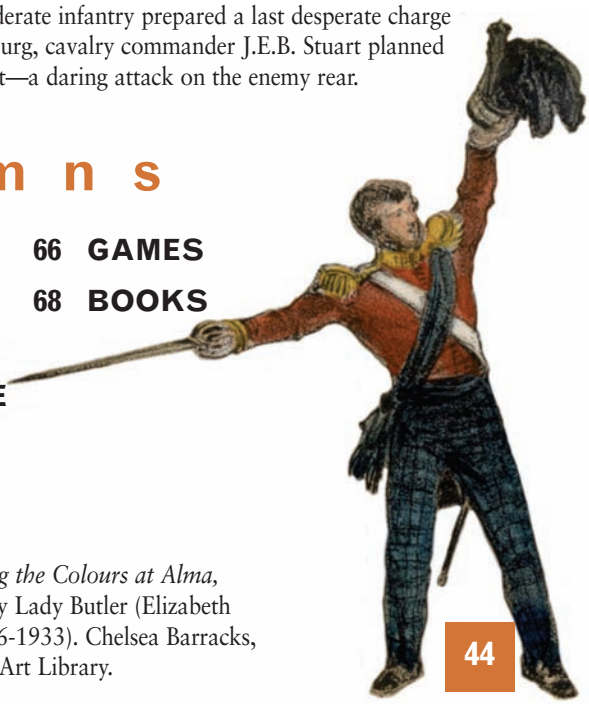

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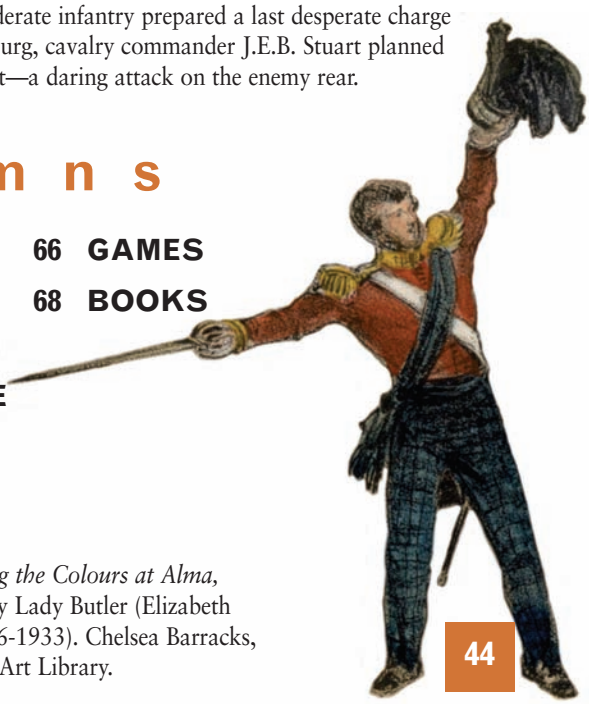

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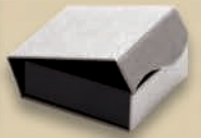

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Union General Elon Farnsworth did not have long to enjoy his promotion. He was cut down leading a suicidal and unnecessary charge at Gettysburg.

WHILE NEWLY MINTED BRIG. GEN. GEORGE Armstrong Custer was leading his Michigan cavalry brigade to glory at Gettysburg, fellow brigadier Elon Farnsworth, himself a native Wolverine, confronted a very different fate. Of the three "boy generals" promoted scant days before the battle, Farnsworth would have by far the shortest career as a brigade commander—a scant four days.

Together with Custer and Wesley Merritt, Farnsworth was jumped from captain to brigadier general in one quick step by corps commander Alfred Pleasonton, who had successfully sought the aid of Farnsworth's uncle, former Republican congressman John F. Farnsworth, in obtaining his own promotion. Twenty-five at the time of his promotion, Farnsworth, unlike Custer and Merritt, was not a West Point graduate. Instead, having been expelled from the University of Michigan for his role in the death of a fellow classmate, he had joined the Army and served as forage master during Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston's 1857 expedition against rebellious Mormons in Utah.

When the Civil War broke out, Farnsworth rushed back east to join the 8th Illinois Cavalry, which had been organized and led by his uncle. Rising quickly through the ranks, he took part in some 41 battles and skirmishes before joining Custer and Merritt on Pleasonton's personal staff in the spring of 1863. With them he shared in the Union cavalry's first true taste of glory at the Battle of Brandy Station, Virginia, that June before heading north to Gettysburg.

On the afternoon of the third day of the battle, Farnsworth and Merritt found themselves guarding the Union left flank following the Confederate disaster at Pickett's Charge. Their divisional commander, Brig. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick, had won the unflattering nickname "Kill Cavalry" for his reckless and impetuous style. Merritt, who had engaged in a fistfight with Kilpatrick while they were undergraduates at West Point, despised his vainglorious superior. Farnsworth would never get to know him that well.

Attempting to maneuver around the retreating Confederates at Big Round Top and throw the withdrawal into total disarray, Kilpatrick turned to Merritt and Farnsworth. Merritt, sensibly dismounting his men among the large boulders and broken timber on the battlefield, made little headway. Kilpatrick turned to his other brigade commander, directing Farnsworth to break the enemy skirmish line between Big Round Top and the Emmitsburg Road.

After the 1st West Virginia Regiment failed to break the line, Kilpatrick demanded that Farnsworth commit a second regiment, the already bloodied 1st Vermont. Farnsworth could scarcely believe his ears. "General, do you mean it?" he asked. "Shall I throw my handful of men over rough ground, through timber, against a brigade of infantry. The 1st Vermont has already been fought half to pieces. These are too good men to kill."

"Do you refuse my order?" snapped an angry Kilpatrick." If you are afraid to lead this charge, I will lead it." Demanding a retraction, the equally furious Farnsworth turned in the saddle. "General, if you order the charge, I will lead it," he said, "but you must take the responsibility."

The subsequent attack was every bit the fiasco Farnsworth had expected it to be. Confederate riflemen sheltered behind rocks, trees and fences unhorsed dozens of Union riders, including Farnsworth, who fell with no less than five mortal wounds. Called upon to surrender, the defiant Farnsworth took his own life.

Kilpatrick, having lived up to his nickname all too well, was unapologetic. The Union infantry, he said, had failed to take advantage of the mounted diversion he had obligingly provided them. As for Farnsworth, he gushed sentimentally: "We can say of him, in the language of another, 'Good soldier, faithful friend, great heart, hail and farewell.'" Somewhere, the doomed boy general must have smirked.

Roy Morris Jr.

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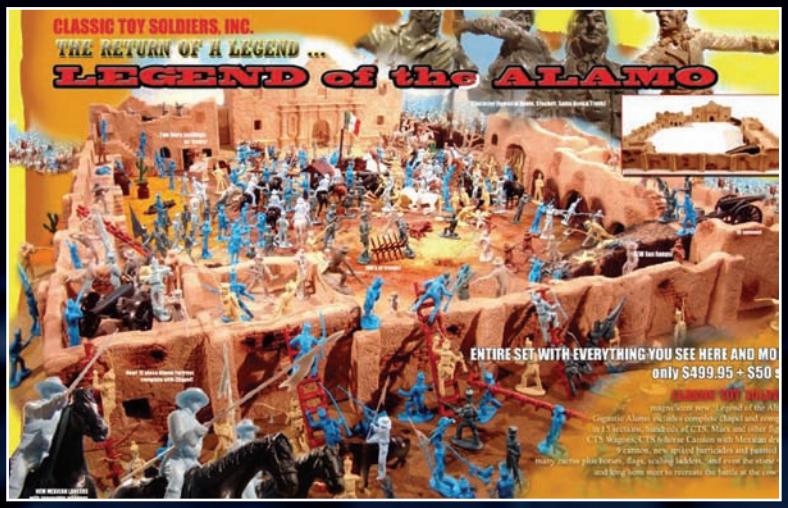

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By O'Brien Browne

Samurai warrior Miyamoto Mushashi is revered in Japan as a "Sword Saint" for his great skill and ferocity.

THE SAMURAI WARRIOR SAT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DUELING grounds in the village of Hirafuku, Japan, glaring at the spectators who had gathered around him. The day before, the samurai had posted a challenge to anyone wishing to fight him, but some brazen boy had blackened out the challenge and scrawled his own name across it. To erase this dishonor, the samurai insisted on a public airing. The year was 1596.

Public Domain

Opponents wisely cower before the fearsome samurai warrior Miyamoto Musashi, Japan's "Sword Saint." RIGHT: Miyamoto Musashi at the peak of his power.

As a monk tried to explain away the prank, the boy suddenly rushed in, shouting, "Come on, let's fight!" and attacked the startled warrior with a sword. Jumping to his feet, the samurai slashed at the youth with his short sword as the boy lunged forward, throwing the man over his shoulder. Quick as lightning, the youth struck the warrior between the eyes, stunning him. The samurai struggled to get to his feet, but the boy smashed him repeatedly on the head until the man dropped dead in the dirt. The crowd hooted and applauded in admiration. The boy, Miyamoto Musashi, was just 12 years old. And he had defeated the battle-tested samurai using nothing more than a wooden *bokuto* sword.

Musashi's first duel displayed the qualities that would light his name for future generations as one of the greatest swordfighters in Japanese history: surprise, boldness, strategy, fury, and skill. Musashi would go on to emerge victorious in more than 60 duels, most to the death. Much more than a fearsome swordsman, however, Musashi was also an exquisite painter, sculptor, calligrapher, teacher, writer, and philosopher. His book *Gorin no sho,* variously translated as *The Book of Five Rings,* the *Book of Five Elements* or *Essays on the Five Circles,* is considered a classic. Universally revered, Musashi is known as a *kensei,* or Sword Saint, in Japan.

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Perhaps no other fighting man has been so completely transmogrified by the film industry as the samurai, grotesquely distorting modern perceptions of medieval Japanese warfare. On the screen, handsome silk-robed actors elegantly glide through the air to bloodlessly bring down

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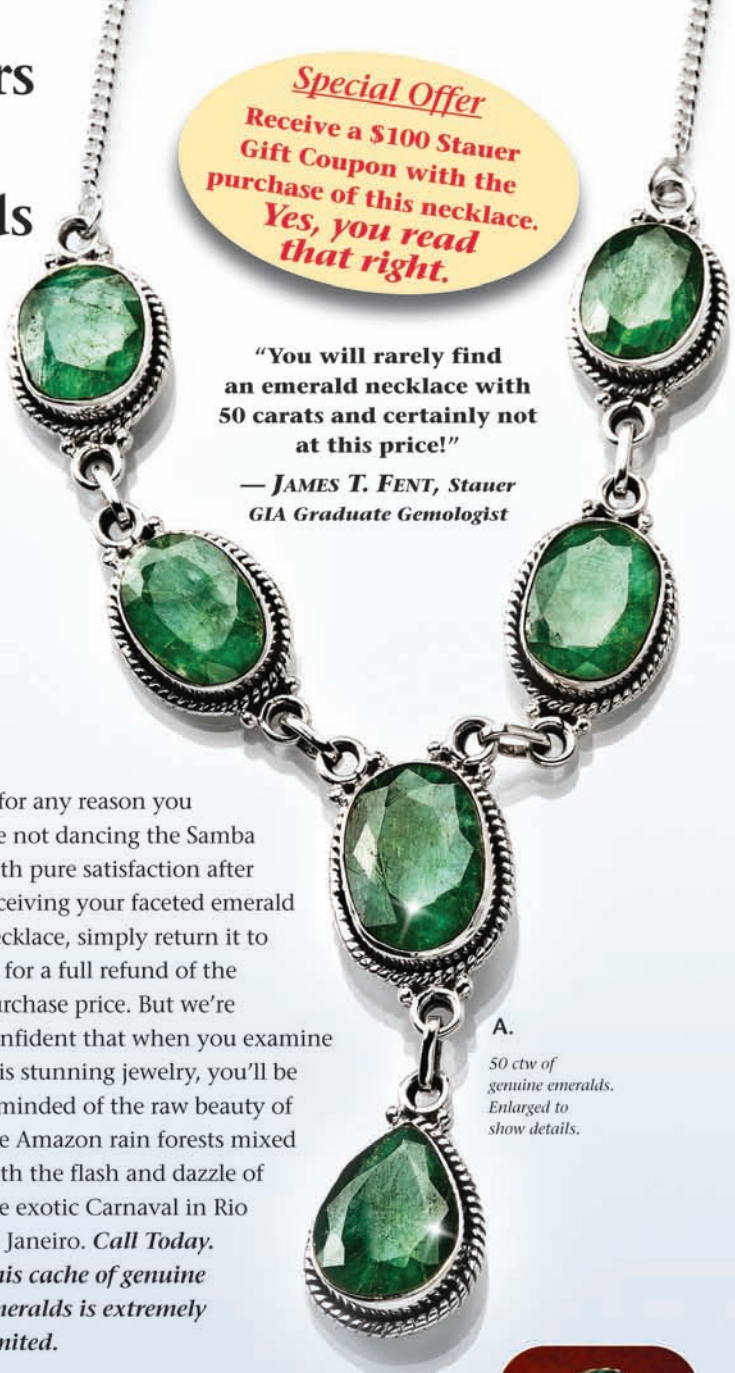

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their foes with a subtle flash of steel. The reality was quite different—hand-to-hand combat featuring spears, swords, arrows, and flintlocks is rarely pretty.

As Japan's warrior elite, the samurai were recognizable by their right to wear two swords: the long *katana* and the short *wakizashi*. A samurai's life was devoted to Bushido, the way of the samurai, summed up by warrior Tsunetomo Yamamoto: "I have found the essence of Bushido: to die!" If they served a lord, it was with utmost loyalty. A warrior was expected to commit *seppuku,* or ritual suicide, should his master die. His life was one of ritual, duty, honor, and warcraft.

With the ascent of Ieyasu Tokugawa as shogun in 1600, Japan enjoyed more than 250 years of relative peace, broken by sporadic rebellions. For the samurai, this meant abandoning warfare while maintaining their identity as warriors. This was the world into which Musashi was born. Much of his early life is unknown or contradictory. He was born in 1580 or 1584, in either the village of Sakushu or Banshu in Harima Province, near Kyoto. His father is thought to have been Hirata (or Miyamoto) Munisai, an expert swordsman who served a local lord.

Young Musashi was called Bennosuke; he would earn his adult name upon entering manhood around the age of 12. His mother died when he was a toddler, and Bennosuke was raised by his uncle and his father's new wife. When the marriage ended, Bennosuke grew up in another household after his stepmother remarried. The boy was seething with wild energy and was strong-willed and difficult to handle.

Bennosuke was harshly trained in the fighting arts by his father. One day, relates a period text, Musashi's father lost his temper and threw a knife at him. Bennosuke dodged it with a slight movement of his head. It was a rough upbringing for brutal times. Four years later, the boy fought the duel described above. Afterward, the triumphant Bennosuke changed his hairstyle, dress, bearing, and name, choosing Miyamoto Musashi—Miyamoto being his father's village.

In 1599, the teenaged Musashi hit the road, leaving all his belongings behind. At this time, talented young men often desired to work for a lord. They lived in barracks or their own homes, paying for most of their equipment. Musashi, however, chose to become a *rônin*, a lordless sword-for-hire paid in *koku,* or portions of rice. He wandered throughout Japan on journeys called *musha shugyo,* "traveling for improvement." Musashi slept out in the open, hunted for food, and earned money by providing services to townsfolk, a lifestyle that toughened both body and mind.

Always seeking perfection, Musashi trained in swordsmanship from sunrise to sunset. "A thousands days of training to develop," he wrote, "ten thousand days of training to polish." Like other *rônin,* Musashi sought duels against other warriors to hone his skills and make a name for himself. Warriors would post a notice in a town challenging someone to fight and a time and place would be arranged. Sometimes they would write a letter outlining the conditions of the match. If a warrior met another wandering samurai, he could ask him to fight. If the man

Both: Public Domain

ABOVE: Once again in the heroic mode, Musashi plunges his sword into a giant whale he is riding bareback. RIGHT: Having passed into myth, Musashi kills a giant sea creature to save Japan.

was a martial arts master, the challenger would often have to fight the master's disciples first. These duels, usually watched by referees and conducted in front of an audience, were deadly combat, resulting in serious maiming, crushed skulls, severed limbs, sliced torsos, and beheadings. The fighters used neither shield nor armor; they dueled in their robes.

In 1600, Musashi fought Akiyama, an expert of great power, killing him as quickly as one can turn over his hand. That same year, he apparently participated in the Battle of Sekigahara. After this, he took up his travels again, fighting 60 duels in 10 years, averaging a fight every two months. "I did not lose even once," he wrote. To survive for long, however, professionals like Musashi normally avoided warriors of their own or a superior skill level.

Musashi developed a unique style from these deadly struggles, described in brutal detail in *Gorin no sho*. He would ram his opponents, sometimes killing them on impact, throw dirt in their faces, maneuver so that the sun was in their eyes, and stab at their faces. Rhythm, self-awareness, and perceiving an adversary's intentions were vital. Musashi sought to psychologically destroy his opponents first; physically destroying them was an additional detail. "Your attitude," Musashi said, should "be superior to that of others ... you can conquer by virtue of your own mind."

Musashi studied, mastered, and then broke the rules of different fighting styles. His aggressive, fluid techniques were bewildering to his opponents, who expected a certain tradition-based behavior. Most died without comprehending what had hit them. Often Musashi's weapon was a *bokuto*. He strove to kill with his first blow; if this missed he would use its energy to follow through and strike anything—a hand, a foot—to weaken his opponent's ability to continue. It mattered little to him if he was up against one or 30 opponents. Few could withstand the single-minded ferocity of his attack. Musashi was creative, intelligent, brave, and self-reliant. "Respect the gods and Buddha," he counseled. "But do not depend on them."

An eccentric iconoclast, Musashi was an imposing man. Texts describe him as standing nearly six feet tall, with a powerful frame and well above the average strength. During his entire life he did not comb his hair or take a bath. During his prime, his hair hung down to his belt. As a *rônin,* Musashi lived a hard and barren life; he never married and had no children except three adopted sons. "Do not let yourself be guided by the feeling of love," he wrote in a philosophical text, *The Way of Walking Alone*. "Do not harbor hopes for your own personal home." He dedicated his life to the attainment of perfection.

During his travels, Musashi created a technique called *Enmei Ryu,* or "School of the Shinning Circle." In this technique, he wielded a

large and short sword to dazzle and baffle his opponents. By crossing the swords, he formed a scissors to immobilize or disarm his foes, then he would cut them down. Additionally, Musashi was skilled in *shuriken,* the art of throwing a knife or short sword. If Musashi's adversaries ran or fled, none succeeded in escaping him. His throws had the power of a strong bow, and he never missed his mark.

One text describes a duel in which Musashi fought Shishido, an expert in the *kusari gama,* a sickle attached to a chain with a steel weight at one end: "Before Shishido could strike with his sickle, Musashi threw his short sword, which pierced Shishido's chest. Immediately closing in, Musashi cut him down with his long sword. Shishido's disciples seized weapons and attacked Musashi. Under the brunt of Musashi's counterattack, they dispersed in all directions."

In 1604, Musashi fought famous duels against three Yoshioka brothers—Seijuro, Denshichiro, and Matashichiro—samurai from the respected Yoshioka School of swordsmanship near Kyoto. After an exchange of letters, a match was arranged pitting Musashi against Seijuro. True to form, Musashi arrived late; Seijuro became unnerved. The fight began and the two men circled each other, both armed with wooden swords. Musashi bashed Seijuro on the shoulder, knocking him out and crippling his arm; he never fought again. To avenge his older brother, Denshichiro challenged Musashi, who accepted. On the day of the match, Musashi again arrived late, greatly irritating Denshichiro, who was armed with a long staff that had a steel ball swinging from its end. During the fight, Musashi disarmed Denshichiro with his wooden sword, then killed him with his own weapon.

The Yoshioka family was outraged, and 12-year-old Matashichiro was made to challenge Musashi, who again accepted. This time, however, Musashi arrived at the grounds early and hid among the bushes. He watched as dozens of heavily armed Yoshioka men arrived, intent on killing him. Thinking quickly, Musashi calculated that, if he could take out Matashichiro, his followers would panic. Musashi sprang forward, killed the boy with a single blow, and made a fighting escape. It was a masterful display of strategy and boldness.

In 1612, when he was about 30 years old, Musashi sought a match with Ganryu Sasaki Kojiro, a sword stylist. The bout took place on a small island off Kokura. Kojiro wielded a *nodachi,* a long two-handed sword. Musashi came to the duel late and unkempt. After a short fight, he smashed Kojiro on the head with a *bokuto,* killing him. Musashi's detractors were outraged by his "disrespectful" conduct;

Library of Congress

A curious scholar holds a magnifying glass to study the impressive, if impassive, Musashi.

his supporters delighted in his intelligent strategy. "Seeing," Musashi wrote, "is more important than looking." In other words, sense and perceive your opponent's moves before the fight begins instead of concentrating on his weapons or actions once in combat.

In addition to dueling, Musashi also participated in several battles, including the siege of Osaka Castle in 1614-1615. In 1637, he apparently fought at Hara Castle during a rebellion, where he was wounded several times. In a letter from 1640, Musashi proudly wrote: "I have participated in battles six times. Four times out of six, I was in the van, leading the army into battle."

From the age of about 30, Musashi changed. On his present path, he realized, sooner or later he would be cut down by someone younger, stronger, and quicker. And despite the subtleties of Zen philosophy and endless training, he knew that any enraged prepubescent teen with a warrior complex could take him unawares and dash out his brains with a piece of wood.

"When I passed the age of thirty," Musashi wrote, "and thought back over my life, I understood that I had not been a victor because of extraordinary skill in the martial arts. Perhaps I had some natural talent or had not departed from natural principles. Or again, was it that the martial arts of other styles were lacking something?"

Now came a time of contemplation. Musashi composed poetry and created 25 paintings. He also made sculptures of wood and metal, and practiced the tea ceremony and calligraphy. He became excellent at *kizeme*—mentally dominating an opponent without killing him; he stopped participating in duels to the death.

In 1640, Musashi sent a letter to Lord Hosokawa, who wished to meet the famous swordsman. "I have never been officially in the service of a lord," Musashi wrote, "but I can be useful teaching the way weapons are used and what is suitable conduct on the field of battle." Musashi stayed with Hosokawa at Chiba Castle in Kumamoto, as Hosokawa's guest, teacher, and counselor. In 1641, Musashi wrote a work called the *Hyoho sanju go,* or "Thirty-five Instructions on Strategy." When Hosokawa died that same year, Musashi devoted his life to writing and meditation, retreating to Reigando cave on Mount Iwato, southwest of Kumamoto. He felt his own end approaching.

In 1645, he wrote *Gorin no sho,* whose chapters are based on the five elements of Buddhism: earth, water, fire, wind, and emptiness. Taking up his brush once more, Musashi composed *The Way of Walking Alone,* 21 points to guide future disciples. One week later, "at the moment of his death," relates a text, "he had himself raised up. He had his belt tightened and his *wakizashi* put in it. He seated himself with one knee vertically raised, holding the sword with his left hand and a cane in his right hand. He died in this posture, at the age of 62." According to his wishes, Musashi's hair was buried on Mount Iwato. His body, dressed in armor, was interred outside of Kumamoto so that, as he wrote, "I will protect the peace of the Hosokawa family."

Musashi's exploits have become shrouded by the mists of legend. Even during his lifetime, there were tales of him walking on water or killing mythological creatures. In the modern age, a best-selling novel, manga comic books, a television series, and more than 30 films have been made about his adventures. Musashi's teachings are still pertinent. *Gorin no sho* is widely read by those seeking wisdom in all walks of life. *Enmei Ryu* boasts many active branches. He is probably Japan's best-loved historical figure.

Musashi was an artist of the sword, the brush, the chisel, and the mind. He was a nonconformist in a highly conformist society, respecting the gods but putting faith in himself, working for lords but not under them, understanding the importance of tradition but being creative and original in his work and lifestyle. His greatness lay not in how many men he vanquished, but how he transcended killing and strove for the greater aspects of the heart, mind, and soul. At the end of his full life, the sublimity of creation trumped the lust for destruction. □

By Kevin Allen

The successful use of proximity fuses in the Battle of the Bulge was a milestone for Allied scientists seeking to develop more efficient artillery shell fuses.

EARLY ON THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 16, 1944, THE COMMANDER of the U.S. 406th Artillery Group, Colonel George Axelson, had a difficult decision to make. The Germans had just launched the offensive that would become known as the Battle of the Bulge, and one of their first targets was the 38th Cavalry Squadron, dug in around Monschau, Germany. The lightly armed cavalry troopers needed help, and the commander quickly called for artillery support from the 406th.

Axelson had just the thing: a new, secret artillery shell that had just been issued. The problem was that Allied commander Dwight Eisenhower had not yet given permission to use the weapon. Axelson decided that the emergency trumped the restrictions and ordered his gunners to use the new shell. Minutes later, rounds equipped with a new radio proximity fuse started exploding right over the heads of the attacking Germans. The attack collapsed.

Use of the proximity fuse in the Battle of the Bulge marked a final milestone in one of the most extraordinary scientific efforts of the war, rivaling that of the atomic bomb. Like the Manhattan Project, it involved teams of scientists struggling to overcome technical and physical obstacles in absolute secrecy. An estimated 3 percent of all the physicists in the United States were working on the project at one point.

The proximity fuse—a fuse that would explode just before reaching its target—had long been a dream of gunners. The two existing types of fuses, contact and timed, left much to be desired. A contact fuse literally had to hit its target to work, and a timed fuse depended on the judgment of whoever set the timer. In the Napoleonic and American civil wars, soldiers sometimes disabled timed shells by putting out the fuses after the shell landed

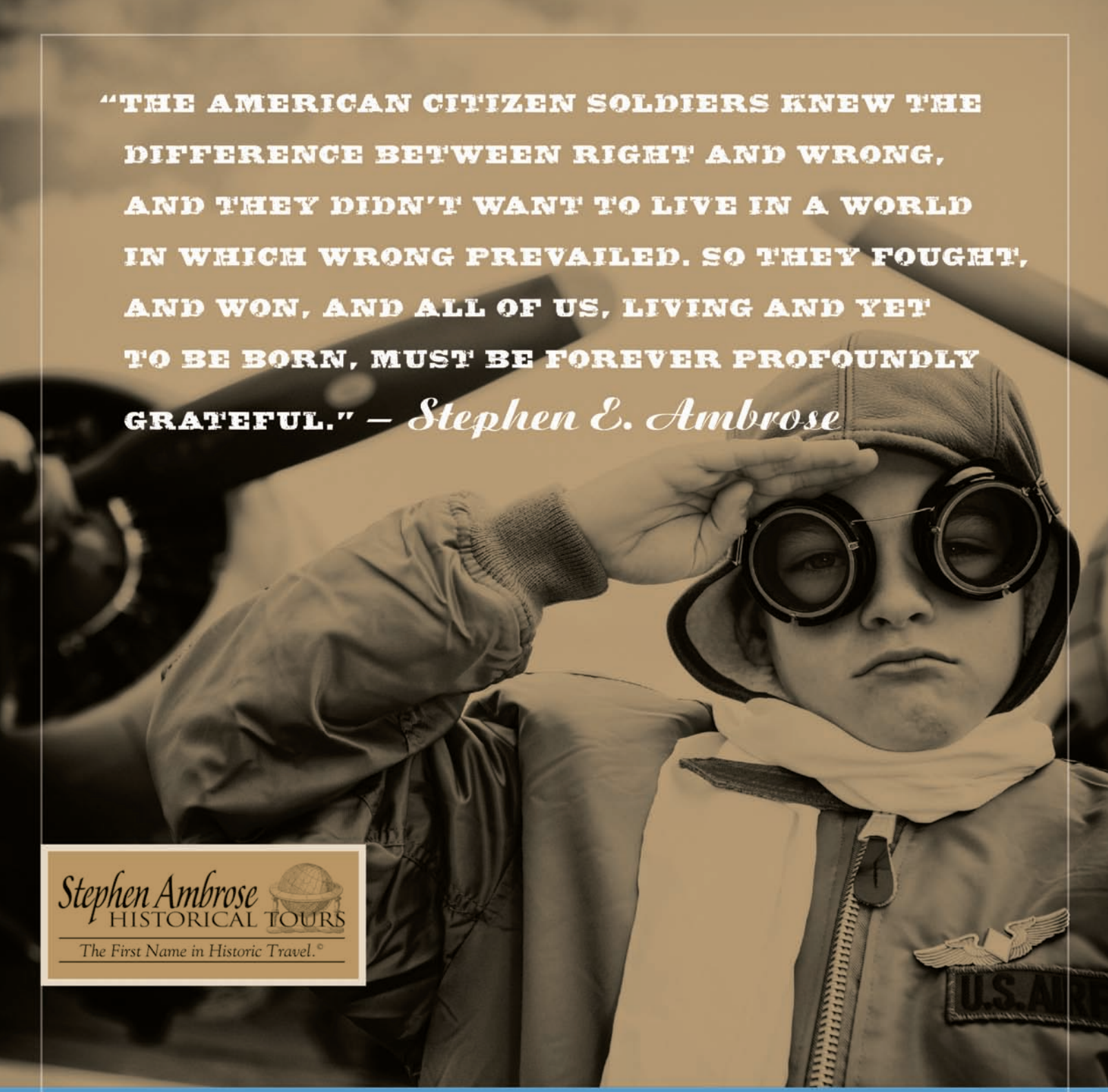
Neither fuse was well suited to dealing with airplanes. An antiaircraft shell had to go off within 100 feet of a plane to be sure of damaging it. Antiaircraft shells with contact fuses had to actually hit a moving aircraft, while timed fuses that were even a fraction of a second off could explode too far away to do any damage. The only practical solution was to fire hundreds of rounds at a target to increase the chance that one of them might hit it.

Getting a more sensitive and technically advanced fuse into antiaircraft ammunition was far from easy. For one thing, the shells were not very big, and the components of the time were not very small. The acceleration generated when the guns fired could shatter things like glass tubes. When World War II began, the technical challenge quickly became a high priority. German efforts never went very far, and the Japanese did not develop and deploy a workable fuse until the end of the war.

British efforts to come up with a

An American artilleryman scrapes snow off 8-inch shells while the rest of the crew prepares its gun for action somewhere in Belgium, January 9, 1945.

All photos: National Archives



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Sailors practice loading proximity-fused shells aboard the USS *Wilkes-Barre*. By the end of 1942, 5,000 rounds of new ammunition had been shipped to crews in the Southwest Pacific.

proximity detonator were part of what Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the "Wizard War." The British initially concentrated on photoelectric fuses, which used light-sensitive receptors to determine when a target was close enough to hit. Photoelectric fuses could fit into the larger warheads of antiaircraft rockets and were better known (several inventors had already filed patents on various designs).

Churchill, stressing the enormous importance of getting a proximity detonator in production as soon as possible, was among those pushing the photoelectric fuses. While British scientists also worked on a radio transmitter, the general feeling was that it would take too long to develop. Photoelectric triggers had their own problems, among them a tendency to go off because of light reflection from other sources, and the fact the fuses were of little use at night. By the time the British worked out a production-ready model, their U.S. allies had come up with their own, more effective radio fuse.

American efforts began in 1940 with the creation of the National Defense Research Council. The group, chaired by Carnegie Institute president Vannevar Bush, was to coordinate and direct research efforts on military-related projects. Immediately upon creation, NDRC asked the various services for their wish lists. At the top of the Navy's list was development of a proximity fuse for its antiaircraft guns.

NDRC turned the problem over to the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism at the Carnegie Institute, and its director, Dr. Merle Tuve. Tuve's group later became Section T of NDRC's successor, the Office of Scientific Research and Development. Researchers explored a number of different approaches, including photoelectric, radio wave reflection, acoustic, and ground-controlled fuses.

NDRC pulled in researchers from the National Bureau of Standards to work on proximity fuses for Army ordnance, primarily bombs and rockets. An informal division was set up, with the Navy and Section T working on fuses for rotating projectiles such as shells, and the Army group (later separated into its own division, Section E) developing nonrotating projectiles such as bombs, mortars, and rockets.

Section E's Army ties meant those researchers had to cope more with internal opposition, specifically from the Army Air Forces. AAF brass, including General Henry "Hap" Arnold, were concerned that development of the fuses would inevitably lead to the enemy getting its hands on them and turning them against Allied planes and pilots. In addition to tight security, this led to an unusual edict from the Combined Chiefs of Staff: there would be no use of a proximity fused weapon anywhere that it could be recovered and reverse-engineered.

Research started to take off after British scientists visited the United States in September 1940 as part of an information exchange program. The British group, led by Sir Henry Tizard, brought a number of developments, among them a circuit design for a fuse utilizing a radio oscillator. Tuve's group realized that if the components could be made strong enough to withstand the shock of firing, they could be fitted into a shell for a 5-inch antiaircraft gun. That would allow sending a radio signal from the shell and using the signal's reflection from the target to trigger the fuse—in essence, a sort of mini radar.

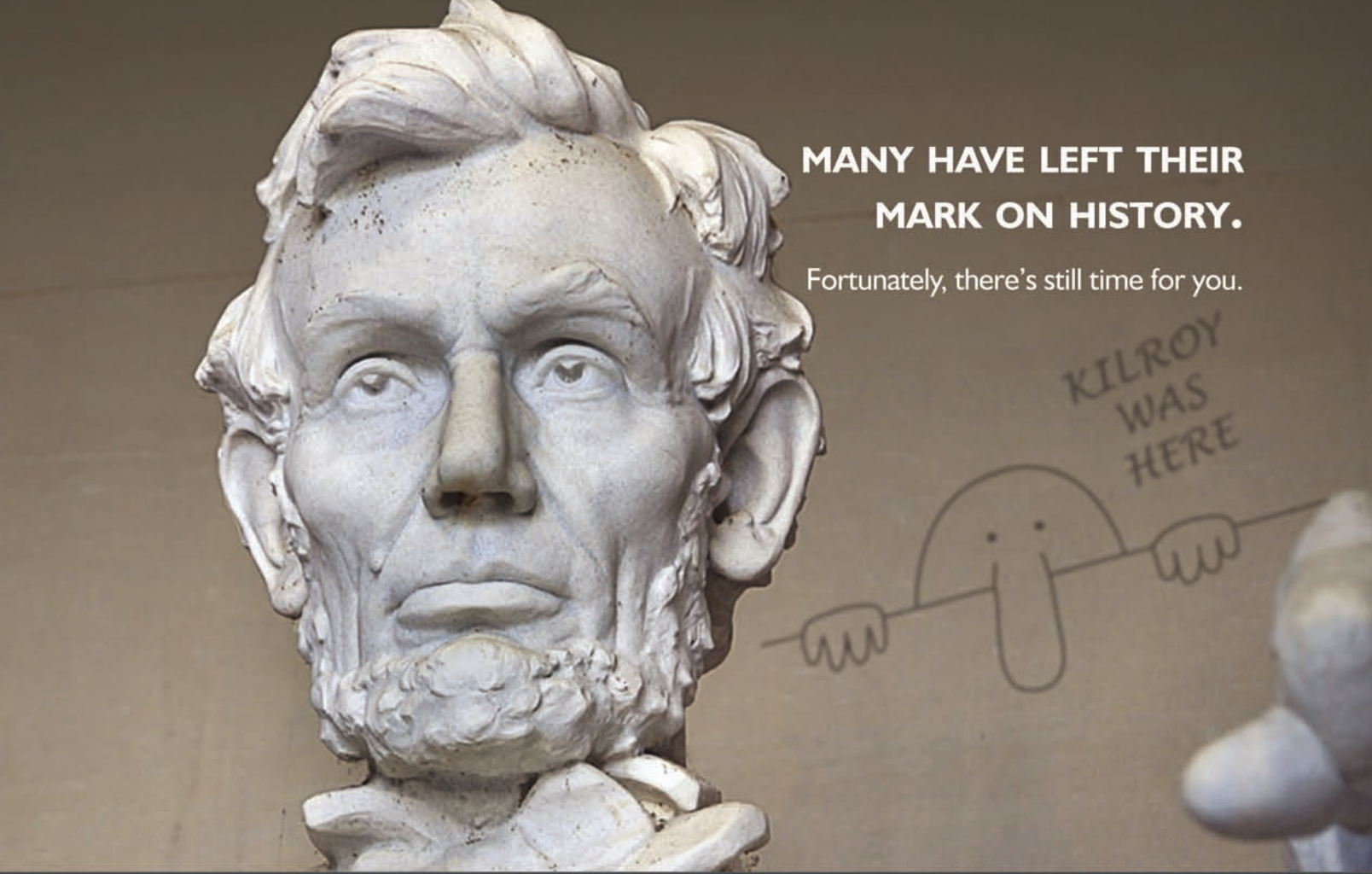
Developing rugged components was a critical obstacle to making a radio fuse. Section T researchers started testing various means to make sure the glass tubes and circuits could survive the shocks. They mounted tubes in metal blocks and fired .22-caliber bullets at them, put them in lead tubes and dropped them off buildings, and fired them from homemade cannons. At one point, Section T even explored the idea of metal vacuum tubes. However, researchers found that mounting the tubes (which were about the size of a pencil eraser) in blocks of plastic and coating them with wax enabled them to withstand acceleration forces of up to 22,000 *g*s.

Researchers also had to tackle finding a battery small enough to generate the power for the radio. While cutting down dry-cell batteries (like those in hearing aids) worked, they proved to have a very short shelf life. Realizing that a battery was basically zinc plates immersed in acid, the developers came up with a battery made of a glass ampule filled with acid surrounded by small metal plates. When the shell was fired, the glass broke and the acid covered the plates. While it did not generate power for long (less than two minutes), it was more than enough for the shell's flight.

Scientists still had to make sure the shell would not go off too soon. If the radio transmitter started too quickly, the gun could reflect the radio wave and the round would go off in the gun barrel, with obviously unfortunate results for the crew. Developers designed fittings that would short-circuit the power to the transmitter for a half second.

Work on the shells moved more quickly than the nonrotating projectiles, in part because of the Navy's intense interest—a senior officer on the project said every month's delay in developing a proximity fuse was equivalent to losing a cruiser. Section T had a successful test of a 5-inch shell with a transmitting fuse by June 1941. By the first half of 1942, they had progressed to test-firing over water and at model versions of Japanese airplanes to determine damage patterns.

The first practical test came on August 13, 1942. The cruiser USS *Cleveland,* equipped with proximity-fused 5-inch antiaircraft shells, destroyed two drones in rapid succession. The results stunned Navy officers, particularly those



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in charge of the drones. They had never seen any of them totally annihilated before and had no more to send against the *Cleveland*. They did find a third drone the next day, but the shells brought it down almost immediately.

That was enough for the Navy. By the end of the year, 5,000 rounds of the new ammunition were shipped to the Southwest Pacific, where they were distributed to the carriers *Enterprise* and *Saratoga*, and the light cruiser *Helena*. The proximity fuse entered the war on January 5, 1943. A cruiser and destroyer task force was returning to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands after a raid against enemy airfields when Japanese dive-bombers struck. On board *Helena*, Lieutenant "Red" Cochrane, in charge of the 5-inch antiaircraft guns, opened up on one of the bombers and brought it down with his second salvo.

It would be the first of many. By the end of the year, about half of the hits on Japanese planes had been credited to the new ammunition. With the Navy's needs met for the moment, Section T turned its attention to creating versions of the fuse for other weapons, particularly the British Navy's antiaircraft guns. It would not be as simple as just taking the same fuse and putting it in a different shell. British shells were smaller, which meant smaller components. Scientists also had to take into account the different characteristics in each gun, from the force of the acceleration to the rate of spin. Eventually, the Allies developed fuses for 28 different gun types. By September 1943, proximity fuses had been issued to British cruisers in the Mediterranean.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Army had developed enough interest in the fuses to start looking for its own versions. In May 1942, it called on Section E to develop a fuse that could be used in a 4.5-inch rocket. The idea was to use the rocket against German bomber formations. Section E head Harry Diamond managed to come up with a fuse design in two days. By the time the fuse got into mass production, however, the German bomber threat had all but disappeared.

In some ways, development of proximity fuses for bombs was an easier task since there was more room for the fuses and no concern about the stresses caused by shooting them out of a gun. But Section E had its own challenges. One of the biggest was temperature. The fuse had to work in the freezing temperatures caused by high altitudes. That was a particular obstacle for a battery, and finding a suitable one proved especially difficult. Researchers solved the problem by attaching a fan to the fuse. When it was dropped, the revolving fan drove a turbine, which in turn powered the radio transmitter in the fuse.

Cutaway view of the radio proximal fuse designed by the National Bureau of Standards for the U.S. Army. The fuse screwed into the nose of the bomb and exploded when radio contact was made with the target.

By mid-1943, progress on the shells had advanced to the point where a proximity fuse for an artillery shell was practical. Again, the gun characteristics proved a challenge, in particular the lower acceleration that howitzers generated. An additional complication was changing characteristics in each amount of powder, or charge, used for a particular shot. Researchers had to cope with 29 different velocities and rates of spin in their calculations.

No one had much idea what the best height

was for an air-bursting shell. By exploding shells above boards placed on the ground and then examining the shrapnel patterns, researchers found that the optimum damage height varied based on the gun caliber. The more common guns (105mm and 155mm) averaged around 30 feet, while the 240mm howitzer effective burst height was more than 70 feet up.

By 1944, the Army had effective shells for most of its guns but still could not use most of them. The secrecy edict was still in place at the insistence of the AAF, which effectively limited use of the proximity fuse to over water. When a ship fired a dud shell that landed on Sicily in 1943, headquarters quickly dispatched a special patrol to find and retrieve the fuse.

A female researcher holds a conventional 5-inch cathode ray oscilloscope in her left hand and a sub-miniature radio tube in her right.

That started to change in June, as the Germans' V-1 rocket began to make itself felt. British and American generals quickly realized the proximity fuse would prove, in Churchill's words, "potent" against the buzz bombs. At first, they restricted the ammunition to the Army's 90mm antiaircraft guns and British 3.7-inch guns located along the English coast. Even so, the fuse helped increase the proportion of destroyed V-1s from 24 percent to almost 80 percent in about a month.

The effectiveness of the Americans' 90mm guns in particular amazed British air raid officials who were not privy to the secret. One member of a British Home Guard antiaircraft battery, which was used to firing thousands of rounds at the V-1s with minimal effect, told how they watched an American 90mm gun and crew set up and shoot down four buzz bombs with eight shells. When they asked the U.S. battery commander how they had managed it, he replied facetiously that his crew was made up of Tennessee natives who were crack shots.

After the Allies captured Antwerp, V-1 attacks shifted to that port, forcing the Combined Chiefs of Staff to realize the time for total secrecy was over. On October 25, 1944, the CCS approved the use of the proximity fuse over land. The most immediate use of the special shells on the European continent was by antiaircraft guns set up along the V-1 approaches to Antwerp. By the end of the war, they had accounted for more than 2,000 V-1 kills.

The release of the artillery shells took a little longer. The Ardennes offensive provided the final incentive, and on December 19, three days after the 406th Artillery Group broke the embargo, Eisenhower formally asked for clearance. Two days later, all restrictions were removed. Unfortunately for the troops commanded by SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny, it was just in time for their attack on the town of Malmedy. American artillery battalions supporting the town fired the proximity fuse to great effect, so unnerving the attackers that some charged directly into the artillery fire, yelling, "Kamerad!" As early as December 23, estimates had as many as 2,000 German soldiers being killed by proximity-fused rounds.

The German Army quickly learned respect for the fuses. An American intelligence report noted German commanders offered a reward for soldiers who found a surviving fuse. Prisoners of war repeatedly spoke of the demoralizing effect of artillery airbursts, particularly at night. The airbursts had the added effect of cutting enemy communication wires more easily.

While the proximity fuse left an impression on both friend and foe (General George Patton later claimed that "the funny fuse won the Battle of the Bulge"), the effect was limited in Europe because it was not introduced until late 1944 (a mortar-round version under development just missed completion before the war ended). Its impact in the Pacific was more noticeable. One of the developers in Section T later estimated that 278 planes were destroyed by the fuse, and the older timed fuses would have accounted for only 46. A Navy study found that for every plane destroyed, 5-inch guns had to fire 1,000 time-fused shells, while the proximity-fused rounds required only about one-fourth as many shots. One naval historian even suggested that the fuse forced the Japanese to change their tactics, eventually resulting in kamikaze attacks.

The creation of the proximity fuse has never drawn as much attention as the development of the atomic bomb or radar, in part because of the secrecy surrounding its development. But its effect on combat was as great as any other invention on the technological front of World War II. □

By Thomas B. Blevins

South African paratroopers descended on an Angolan guerrilla base in 1978, sparking decades of debate over the ultimate aims of the raid.

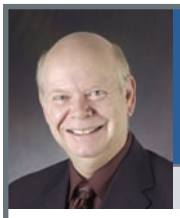
SOUTH AFRICA IN THE SPRING OF 1978 WAS A COUNTRY BESIEGED. THE apartheid state was increasingly unpopular with its neighbors and unable to control its own restive black population. In the view of the white minority in power, the nation was not only beset domestically but under attack internationally by the Kremlin-aligned governments of neighboring countries. Anticolonialist movements were sweeping the Belgians from the Congo, the Portuguese from Angola and Mozambique, white Rhodesians from Zimbabwe, and the South Africans from newly renamed Namibia.

The South African government's most pressing problem was the province of South-West Africa. The region, called Namibia since 1968, had been entrusted to South Africa after World War I under the terms of a League of Nations mandate. South Africa had been tasked with preparing the inhabitants of the former German colony for eventual independence. Decades passed and South-West Africa for all practical purposes had been transformed into a de facto province of South Africa, its great natural wealth flowing into Pretoria's coffers.

After 1945, South Africa's mandate was converted into a United Nations trusteeship, with an accelerated timetable for independence. In 1966, the region was given up by the South African government, allowing South-West Africa to gain full and complete sovereignty. Power passed to the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which began to espouse a Marxist ideology to attract support from Third World allies. For white South Africans, the thought of losing a steady source of wealth to the Marxist SWAPO government was impossible to accept, especially with disorder and conflict currently raging in Angola, directly to the north.

Events in Portugal added to the instability of the region. Participants in the April 25, 1974, Carnation Revolution, a military coup by leftist officers, swiftly gained control in Lisbon. The new leftist government granted independence to all Portuguese colonies in Africa. The result in Angola was a political vacuum

South African paratroopers advance through waist-high underbrush toward guerrilla positions in Angola in May 1978. RIGHT TOP: Raid leader Jan Breytenbach, a veteran of the bush. RIGHT BOTTOM: Paratroopers descend for the second phase of the operation.



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that energized the three armed forces already seeking Angolan independence. The Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) under Augustino Neto, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) under Holden Roberto, and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) under Jonas Savimbi all fought for an independent Angola—and ultimate control of the nation's government.

MPLA, in control of the capital, Luanda, received substantial Soviet aid, along with the support of Fidel Castro's Cuba. The Cuban troops sent to Angola functioned not only as a training cadre for MPLA, but also as independent battalions whose purpose was to stiffen MPLA in its fight against FNLA and UNITA. South African leaders viewed the increasing influx of Cuban troops as an armored revolutionary spearhead that ultimately would spread into Namibia.

Pretoria saw an opportunity to gain influence with a new Angolan government by backing FNLA and UNITA forces and destabilizing the country's Marxist regime. Several South African Army officers joined FNLA in Angola for Operation Savannah. On October 2, 1975, two battalion-sized FNLA units, designated Task Force Foxbat and Task Force Zulu, moved north from the Angola-Namibia border and came within miles of the capital of Luanda before being stopped by stiff Cuban and MPLA resistance. This cemented MPLA control of the country.

With the ascent of MPLA, UNITA tentatively joined FNLA to continue the guerrilla war in eastern Angola. Determined to crush the two groups, Neto negotiated an agreement between MPLA and SWAPO in March 1976. Marxist guerrillas would be given Angolan and Cuban training and protection in return for increased SWAPO influence across the border in Namibia. Neto hoped to divert South African aid from UNITA and FNLA and force the South Africans to defend the Namibia-Angola border. On October 27, 1977, a patrol encountered 80 SWAPO insurgents. A running battle resulted in 61 SWAPO dead. This raid, the largest SWAPO operation to date, pointed to a new wave of violence intended to influence negotiations among Western nations, South Africa, and SWAPO over the future of Namibia.

Interrogation of prisoners and deserters drew a picture of a new, even more radical SWAPO. The guerrillas were planning a large-scale infiltration of Namibia, supported by the larger Angolan bases. The numbers of SWAPO insurgents moving into Namibia were scheduled to increase until the organization became strong enough to overwhelm the South African troops and the local police force and prevent them from consolidating control in Namibia.

To provide a logistical base large enough to support the operation, the Angolans gave SWAPO control of several towns in southern Angola. These bases were fortified with trenches and antiaircraft guns. The largest base was located at Cassinga, code-named "Moscow" or "the Farm." It was home to approximately 2,000 insurgents, along with stores of munitions and equipment for SWAPO guerrillas infiltrating into Namibia. The village was also the forward tactical command headquarters of SWAPO Chief of Staff Dimo Amaambo. Nearby Techamutete was home to a rapid-reaction force—a battalion of Cuban mechanized troops riding BTR-152s, half-tracks, and T-34 tanks.

The base was discovered by accident by South African Air Force photoreconnaissance flights, which were looking for watering holes that SWAPO had used previously as bases of operation. The discovery of new SWAPO bases in Angolan towns sent shock waves up the South African chain of command—SWAPO was handing the South Africans a golden opportunity. With the foreknowledge that a new, large-scale SWAPO operation was due to begin in June or July, the South Africans elected to strike

first. To lead the paratrooper battalions in the attack, the South Africans selected a veteran of the Angolan bush, Jan Breytenbach.

To hide the operation, code-named Operation Reindeer, the South African Army organized a field exercise, called Operation Quicksilver, of its combined mechanized and paratrooper forces. The plan was unlike any previous operation in Africa. Some 377 paratroopers were split among four companies (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta) and two independent rifle platoons. The paratroopers were to be dropped from six C-160s, supported by four Canberra bombers, five Buccaneer fighter-bombers, two Mirage fighters for air cover, and a Douglas DC-4 airplane to jam enemy radio communications. Five Super Frelon and 13 Puma helicopters were to be used as the extraction force.

The plan, divided into four phases, was set to begin at 0800 hours on May 1. The first phase, the airdrop itself, would begin five minutes after an aerial bombardment of Cassinga by Canberra and Buccaneer bombers. The second phase would begin with paratroopers forming into two groups, an assault force and a stopper force. Alpha and Bravo Companies would land on the western side of Cassinga, attacking west-to-east into the compound. Charlie and Delta Companies would drop on the eastern and

The guerrilla base at Cassinga burns in the aftermath of the raid. A slain guerrilla lies in the foreground.

southern sides, respectively, as the stopper force. The two rifle platoons would parachute in north of Cassinga to clear out and hold the northern edge of the village. The second phase would end at 0945. The third phase was the clearing phase, with prisoners rounded up and intelligence gathered. The final phase, extraction, would be undertaken in two shifts. The operation would end at 1200 hours.

In overall command was Maj. Gen. Ian Gleeson, who would remain behind in Namibia during the attack. Breytenbach would drop with his troops, as would the raid's executive officer, Commandant Lewis Brand. Leading Alpha Company was Captain Gerrit Swart, who had under his command two rifle platoons and two 60mm mortars. Bravo Company, under Captain Hugo McQueen, was composed of two rifle platoons and was equipped with mortars. Charlie Company was under Commandant Monty Forbes and consisted of two rifle platoons. Delta was commanded by Captain Tommy Smit. Alongside the two rifle platoons would be a group of engineers and antitank specialists. The two platoons of riflemen were split between Lieutenants Johan Witt and Piet Botha.

The first flights of Buccaneer bombers lifted off from Waterkloof Air Force Base near Pretoria at 0519 on May 4. They were followed by the faster Canberra bombers, both of which would arrive over Cassinga at approximately 0750. The transports lifted off from Grootfontein Air Force Base in Namibia at 0600. The helicopters dusted off at 0600 as well, flying at treetop level to the designated helicopter assembly area, 14 miles east of Cassinga, arriving at 0630 and setting up with fuel bladders for helicopters, a security force, and radio beacons for directional navigation by overhead aircraft.

Two minutes after the supposed beginning of the operation, the Bucs and Canberra bombers began the bombing run. The bombers crossed the village from north to south at

1,000 feet, deluging it with hundreds of antipersonnel bombs. The bombers did significant damage to the parade ground, leaving behind a settlement that was wracked by explosions and burning from the aerial assault. Despite the destruction, antiaircraft guns from the base opened up on the South African paratroopers.

Many paratroopers realized immediately that critical mistakes had been made. Photoreconnaissance flights that followed the discovery of Cassinga had been made at a less than optimum altitude. Intelligence officers who helped plan the operation thought the pictures had been taken at a higher altitude. When planning the crucial drop between Cassinga and the nearby river, they believed the paratroopers would have more room. Compounding the mistake, the drop began three seconds late. The pilots of the transports couldn't see the drop zones because the roiling smoke from Cassinga was obscuring the landing zones. A gusting northeastern wind shifted the paratroopers to the southwest. Two-thirds landed east of the river. Much of Bravo Company ended up on the west side of the river with the battalion staff.

Heavily armed and equipped paratroopers celebrate the raid's success. Worldwide reaction was far less positive.

Breytenbach, arriving on the eastern bank, was immediately aware of the dire situation. The timeline of Phase 1 called for the paratroopers to regroup in 15 minutes for an assault on Cassinga. The impossibility of that plan resulted in a change in the advance. Rather than moving west to east, the two assault companies would strike northeast and move south to north when clearing the town. Alpha Company and Swart, already across the river, moved northeast, clearing SWAPO pockets as quickly as possible. Following close behind were Breytenbach and a mix of Alpha and Bravo paratroopers and mortars.

SWAPO leaders, many of whom were exiting Cassinga following the brutal aerial strike, failed to organize a significant defense of the base. Demoralized by the sudden strike and without any clear direction, SWAPO guerrillas only served as temporary speed bumps for the advancing, better-armed paratroopers.

The company under Forbes dropped east of Cassinga. The wind resulted in a drop two miles farther south than planned. Disoriented, Forbes wasted crucial time moving south and rendezvousing with Delta Company under Smit. Returning north, Charlie Company deployed 45 minutes late on the east side of Cassinga, becoming increasingly frustrated while waiting for orders from Breytenbach.

Delta Company landed to the west, regrouped, and proceeded to clear out the engineering complex. Using antitank rockets, grenades, and rifles, Delta Company proceeded to clear out the buildings, driving most of the SWAPO guerrillas into the bush to the south. The closest that Delta Company came to danger was when a nearby ammunition dump exploded and Bravo Company troops began to fire mistakenly on Delta Company paratroopers. After organizing their fire zones, Smit's men were able to clear out several hidden bunkers and set out land mines and kill zones for their antitank rockets.

The two independent platoons, dropping to the north, actually landed on top of their objectives. Botha's platoon was able to easily clear out the veterans' camp and proceeded to move southeast to the trenches at Cassinga. Witt dropped onto a housing complex to the north that was also cleared out quickly. Establishing a roadblock on the northern road, Witt moved south, linked up with Botha, and continued to move south, reaching the trench complexes defending Cassinga. Witt's platoon clambered into the trenches and used rifles and grenades to clear them out.

The raid on Cassinga was to be completed at 0945. At that time, however, Alpha and Bravo Companies were still mounting an assault after moving north and linking up with Delta Company. Witt's platoon was involved in the trench battle, and Charlie Company was growing increasingly restive as it waited for further orders. All around, SWAPO troops were putting up last-ditch stands across the battlefield.

Bravo Company met limited resistance as the paratroopers methodically cleared out Cassinga's southern houses, capturing the hospital and SWAPO guerrillas. Charlie Company moved into the attack, assaulting the trenches on the east side of Cassinga and discovering escape trenches used by SWAPO to evade the ring of paratroopers. Methodically sweeping the trenches, Forbes's men cleared out eastern Cassinga.

The two displaced companies, having moved northeast to reach Cassinga, split into two formations. Alpha Company and Breytenbach began an attack across the open bush to the west of Cassinga, clearing out the vehicle park but becoming pinned down by 14.5mm antiaircraft guns. The air cover—Mirage III fighters, Canberra bombers, and Buc fighter-bombers—was unable to strike so close to their own troops.

Brand, following Bravo Company, established field headquarters in the captured hospital. McQueen had Bravo Company move to outflank the antiaircraft gun, but the sweeping fire kept them from getting close to the emplacement. Brand had Delta Company move north to support Alpha and Bravo. As they approached the antiaircraft gun, the firing began to slacken after its operators were killed by mortar fire.

With the destruction of the antiaircraft gun and the elimination of the last serious threat to the paratroopers, the troops began to reorganize for extraction and intelligence gathering. Upon completion of the roundup of intelligence and prisoners, the primary complexes were to be blown by demolition teams. Brand called in helicopters for extraction. The extraction was supposed to begin with Bravo Company, but Brand ordered the wounded taken out first. Twelve Puma helicopters arrived and began the extraction process. The windy morning had given way to a dusty and hot afternoon.

As the helicopters withdrew, the airborne Bucs and Canberra bombers sighted an approaching column of Cuban tanks and trucks. The Cuban advance threw the South Africans into a flurry of activity. A second helicopter lift was called in and the paratroopers recalled to the eastern landing zone. Between them and the advancing Cuban column was a line of antitank gunners and the South African Air Force. The Cuban column was led by five T-34 tanks and a large number of BTR-152armored personnel carriers.

Overhead, Buccaneer bombers and Mirage fighters bombed and strafed the approaching

Continued on page 74

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Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices

By Peter Suciu

First used in combat during the Franco-Prussian War, military bicycles are hot items for collectors today.

ANYONE WHO HAS EVER VISITED EUROPE—PARTICULARLY FRANCE, Italy, and the Netherlands—knows that the people in those countries love their bicycles. Bicycle racing is one of the most popular sports in Europe, trailing only football (soccer) in overall popularity. And for many Europeans, cycling is how people commute to work, get to the store, and, whenever possible, get away from it all. But cycling also has a long and colorful military history that includes combat service in various armies in Europe and the rest of the world.

As with the automobile, no one person can claim to have definitively invented the bicycle. The first person generally credited with creating a two-wheel device that would be the forerunner of the modern bicycle was German Baron Karl von Drais, who in 1817 devised an in-line contraption that was propelled by the rider's feet. This horse substitute, called the Laufmaschine, or running machine, was aimed at the well-to-do, but did not catch on with its target audience.

Other inventors and tinkerers attempted to create a human-propelled machine, but it wasn't until the 1860s that Frenchmen Pierre Michaux and Pierre Lallement introduced a pedal-driven system that would greatly advance bicycle technology. New innovations in pedal-driven systems are now known to collectors as the "ordinary bicycle," or the "penny-farthing." These featured a tall front wheel and a lower back wheel, which gave the vehicle its nickname for the comparative size of British coins. The bikes were difficult and even dangerous to ride, as they had a high seat and poor weight distribution. These first bikes were novelties for wealthy men—no proper lady would ever consider riding one—but they did introduce the French to their long-standing love affair with the bicycle, one that continues to this day. While awkward to ride, the bikes were tested by the military for dispatch carriers and scouts.

Ironically, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 destroyed the fledging French bicycle industry, but it was far from the end for bicycle innovation. Instead, development progressed in Great Britain and the United States, where advances included a chain-driven system that allowed for a more stable riding platform. English inventor John Kemp Starley followed up on this development and produced the world's first successful "safety bicycle," which was called the Rover and released in 1885. It featured a design that would be recognizable today, with a steerable front wheel, equally sized front and back wheels, and a drive chain connecting to the rear wheel. The safety bike concept caught on during the 1890s, and military thinkers saw its combat potential.

The late 1880s and 1890s saw many nations experiment with bicycles. The Austrians and Germans

Inexorably advancing Japanese troops ride bicycles in Malaysia in 1941. Thousands poured into Singapore on such bicycles.

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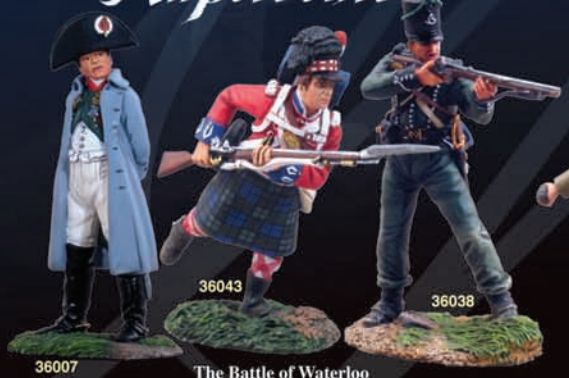

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ABOVE: The Swiss Army Bike's classic European appearance remained consistent through the 1980s. BELOW: An extremely rare example of a Japanese military bike from World War II. Even those in only fair condition are prized by contemporary collectors.

Collection of Karl Kithier

each looked into the possibilities of using the two-wheeled contraptions, but it was the French Army that formally introduced the bikes into service in July 1887. However, the British beat their continental rivals to the finish line, using cyclists as scouts during field maneuvers in 1885.

Americans soon followed suit, with various National Guard regiments experimenting with bicycles. In 1891, the First Signal Corps of the Connecticut National Guard was the first American force to have a formal military bicycle unit. The bicycle was used by messengers and relay riders, and the U.S. military took on various challenges. One Connecticut National Guard cyclist proved that he could personally deliver a message faster than an entire flag signaler team, while a relay team carried a single dispatch from Chicago to New York City in just four days and 13 hours, much of the time in rainy weather. A follow-up challenge brought a message from Washington, D.C., to Denver in just 6¼ days. Clearly, the bicycle could deliver the mail, but it still had to prove its place in wartime conditions.

While the bicycle proved that it could deliver messages via a dispatch rider, there were also experiments to have the bicycles do other duties. The bicycle was adapted for use by portable topographers and telegraphers. In the former case, a rider used his bike to study the grade of hills and other terrain to help commanders in the field determine if the land was traversable by cannons and wagons, while in the latter use, the bikes were used to lay cable from a command post to the front. Both uses seemed practical at first to designers, but in the field they proved otherwise.

Various nations conducted tests to see if a bicycle could be used as an actual gun platform, and the 1890s saw a series of strange designs, including sidecar-mounted machine guns and side-mounted rifles that could be fired from the handlebars. These prototypes not surprisingly failed to go very far, and few of these early gun-bearing bicycles survive, even in museums.

When the bicycle proved unable to be transformed into a new type of weapon, some nations instead looked to see if they could devise tactics to use the bike in combat. This occasioned the first practical study of tactics for bicycle riders—just in time for the bike to head off to a real war. It was during the Second Anglo-Boer War in South Africa, which began in 1899, that the bicycle was first used in an actual conflict. Cycles were used by messengers, adapted into portable stretchers, and even used as a part of a specially devised two-man cycle to patrol railroads. In the latter case, about 20 were built for patrol work, but none survive today.

Use of bicycles was not limited to the British, as their Boer opponents also adopted bikes, with Boer commandos using them in place of horses on a limited scale. Neither side attempted any frontal charges with the bikes, but they were used to get troops into the fighting and as an alternative for patrolling in hostile territory. The bike had been tested in battle, and it looked as though it would find a place in future wars.

However, it was still not to be as a frontline weapon. World War I, which had begun as a mobile and fluid conflict, at first seemed to be ideal for bicycles. Both sides used a large number of bikes to help troops get to the front lines quickly. But as the war bogged down into the hellish nightmare of trench warfare, the two-wheel machines were relegated to rear echelon duty. Cycles were used to some degree by sharpshooters in less static areas, as well as by scouts and dispatch riders.

Following the war, the European interest in bikes expanded into leisure and sports. In the United States, too, cycling began to catch on, with venues such as New York City's Madison Square Garden hosting daylong cycling races. With the advent of the radio, cycling faded as America's premier sport, giving way to baseball, which was easier for announcers to call. Yet across the ocean cycling remained popular, and bicycles remained machines of war as much as machines of sport and peace.

A generation after the trench warfare of World War I, the renewed outbreak of war in Europe and Asia put bicycles back in the field. The German Army, even during its rapid-moving blitzkrieg campaign, still relied on horse-

Both: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: A tongue-in-cheek British cartoon from 1819 lampoons the idea of adapting the newly invented bicycle for military use. LEFT: A French Army bike messenger in 1910. French military bicycle use dated back to the Franco-Prussian War.

drawn carriages to transport men and equipment, and bicycles too played a part. There is a misconception that the Germans were fully mechanized and motorized during the war. In fact, Adolf Hitler invaded Russia with more horses than even Napoleon. For this reason, the bicycle was used in great numbers by the Germans for reconnaissance.

Wartime shortages throughout World War II also resulted in many nations utilizing the bicycle to save on fuel. This was especially true in isolated Great Britain during the Blitz, and followed even after the Yanks arrived in great numbers. The United States, which was also on wartime rationing, used bikes in great numbers, but unfortunately for collectors, few of American bikes survived the war.

"Given the rarity of these bikes today I would say it's safe to assume that compared to other mass-produced military vehicles, bicycles were actually made in fairly small numbers," says militaria collector Johan Willaert, who specializes in American Army items from World War II, including bicycles. "A lot of them must have been shipped over to the European and Pacific Theaters, but it seems a lot more were kept and used stateside."

Willaert believes that there are actually more World War II-vintage bikes in European collections than in the United States, because most of these were bought in the States and shipped to Europe by collectors in recent years. "I know of only a handful of real 'left-behind' bikes in Europe while it seems they were not that uncommon in postwar surplus sales in the U.S.," Willaert says. "I think they were used much more at U.S. camps and airfields than in Europe. The U.S. Army was much more mechanized and had no bicycle troops as such."

Unlike other American gear from World War II, little information survives about the total numbers of bicycles produced. "It is not clear just exactly how many bikes were made for the U.S. Army on official wartime contracts," says Willaert. "There seem to be no lists left or they haven't surfaced to this day."

While bikes were never utilized in great numbers by Americans, and in only a limited frontline role by the British military, a wartime enemy of the Allies used cycles in much larger numbers. "It was probably the Japanese who used the bicycle most during WWII," says Robert van der Plas, coauthor of *Bicycle Technology.* "The invasion of Malaysia, with thousands of soldiers rolling into Singapore on bicycles, is one of the best-known instances. They used both folding bikes specifically designed for warfare, later rehashed for civilian use, and requisitioned bicycles from other occupied territories."

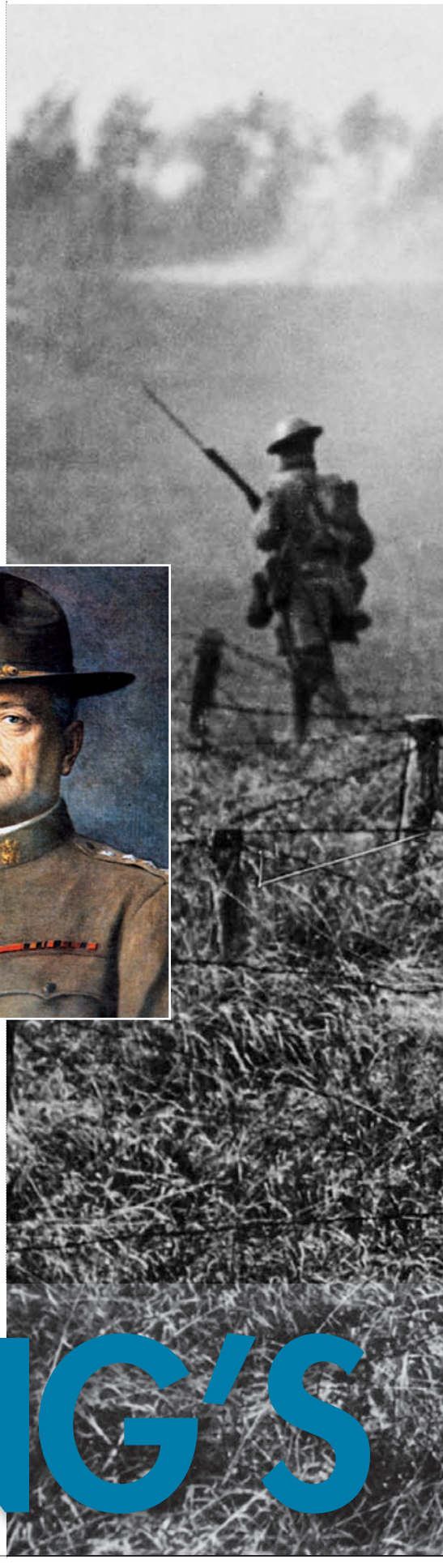
The Japanese proved able to adapt and overcome obstacles with their bicycles. Since rubber

Continued on page 74

PERSHING'S

Following the success of the lightning American assault on the St. Mihiel salient, AEF commander John J. Pershing launched an even larger attack through the heavily forested Meuse-Argonne section of northeastern France.

BY WILLIAM STROOCK



AT 0100 HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 12, 1918, German positions in the St. Mihiel salient on the Western Front were lit up by a massive artillery barrage. In all, more than 3,000 Allied guns of all sizes and calibers bombarded the previously quiet position. To the Germans' surprise, the barrage ceased after only four hours, and American troops on the north and south sides of the salient emerged from their positions and started the perilous trek across no-man's-land. The Germans were stunned by the speed and ferocity of the assault. Their lines were lightly manned, while many of the defenses had been neglected. German units were caught hunkering down in their bunkers in preparation for an expected renewal of the artillery barrage.

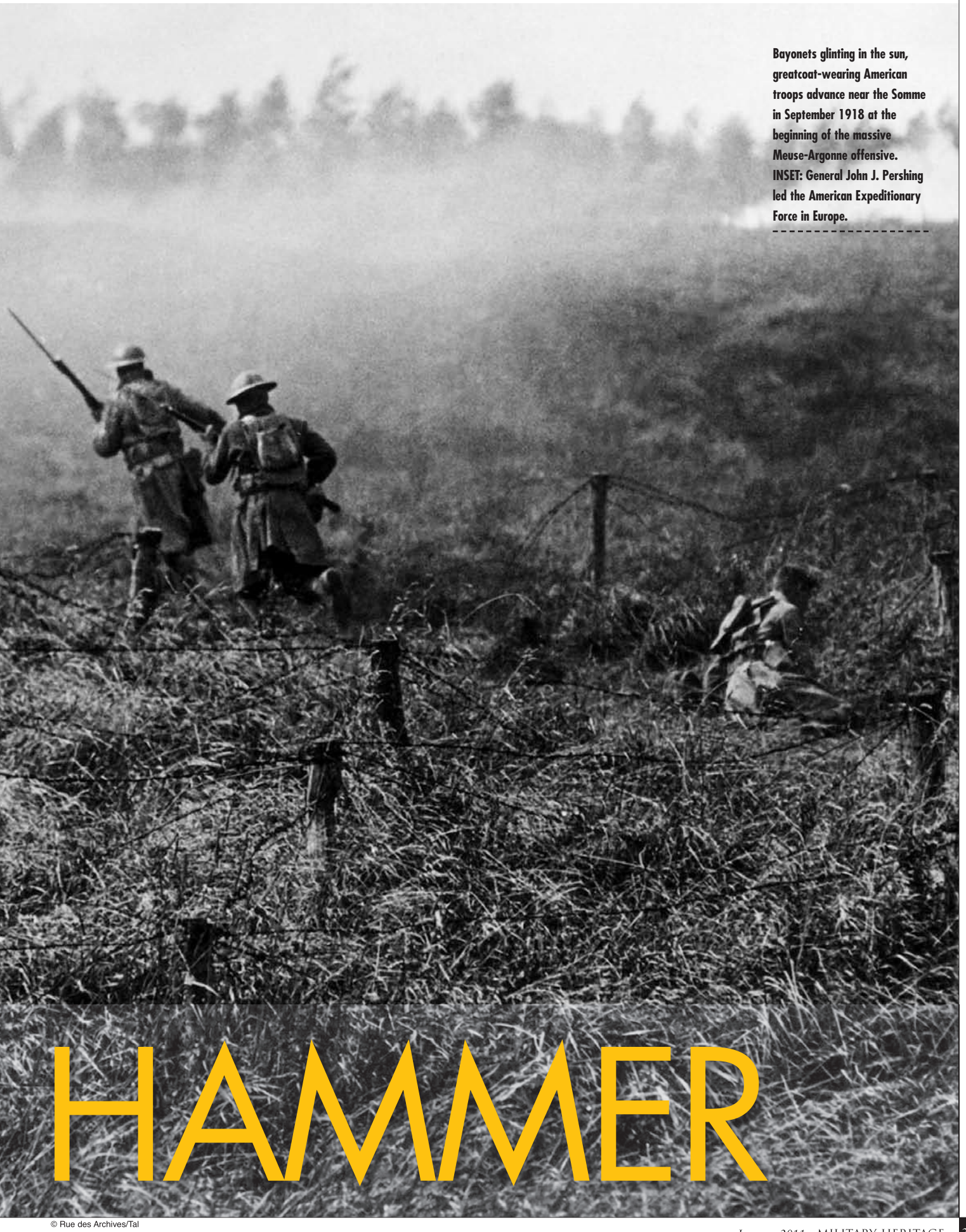
Not since the Civil War had the U.S. Army assembled a mightier force. On the south side of the salient were two U.S. corps comprising seven divisions. On the north were an additional three divisions, one of them French. Seven American divisions remained in reserve. In all, more than half a million men supported by 267 tanks and 600 aircraft were gathered for the first grand American offensive of World War I. The American First Army was commanded by General John J. Pershing, a career soldier with much combat experience in Mexico and the Philippines.

Library of Congress

German and Austrian resistance crumbled before the onslaught. Within two days, American forces had cleared the salient, establishing a line less than 10 miles from Metz, the German-held city and crucial crossroads. The attackers seized more than 400 artillery pieces and 700 machine guns, along with 16,000 prisoners. The Americans suffered 7,000 casualties. In truth, the Yanks were lucky. Although well planned and executed, the assault was carried out against a phantom enemy. Knowing that the St. Mihiel salient was an easy target and sensing that American forces were massing in the south for some sort of offensive, General Erich Ludendorff, the German commander on the Western Front, had begun quietly withdrawing troops from the sector two days earlier.

French Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the supreme Allied commander, had tried unsuccessfully to prevent the St. Mihiel attack from happening in the first place. The day he turned over command of the sector to Pershing, Foch visited his headquarters and proposed that the attack be drastically scaled back and that American reserves be dispatched to the Aisne sector. This was the revival of an old scheme, advocated by the British as well as the French, in which American troops would be dispersed piecemeal among Allied forces. The Allies initially demanded that the Americans simply be used as replacements for battered British and French units.

Pershing strongly disagreed. "The further we proceeded in the discussion," he recalled later, "the more apparent it became to me that the result of any of these proposals would be to prevent, or



Bayonets glinting in the sun, greatcoat-wearing American troops advance near the Somme in September 1918 at the beginning of the massive Meuse-Argonne offensive. INSET: General John J. Pershing led the American Expeditionary Force in Europe.

HAMMER

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: Wounded American doughboys dispassionately watch German POWs march into captivity during the Argonne campaign, October 1918. BELOW: German soldiers move quickly out of their defensive positions in June 1918 during the ill-fated Ludendorff offensive. The German knockout blow never succeeded.

at least seriously delay the formation of an American army." The two generals argued for some time. Foch pressed his demand to divide the American army. Finally, Pershing said, "Marshal Foch, you have no authority as Allied commander in chief to call upon me to yield up my command of the American army and have it scattered among Allied forces where it will not be an American army at all." "I must insist," Foch said. Pershing replied, "Marshal Foch, you may insist all you please, but I decline absolutely to agree to your plan."

As the price for Foch's reluctant acquiescence, Pershing had to give up his old idea of pushing toward Metz; instead, he shifted his forces for a grand attack in the Meuse-Argonne in conjunction with French and British forces. Pershing's task was to advance 10 miles and link up with the French Army on his left at the town of Grandpre, at the northern tip of the Argonne. This would be followed by a second drive another 10 miles north to a line between the towns of Stenay and Le Chesne on the River Meuse. He was instructed to push German forces off the heights on the east bank of the Meuse. For that task he had three corps: I, II, and V. Guarding Pershing's right was the French XVII Corps, positioned on the east bank of the Meuse.

Several factors would make this attack much rougher going than St. Mihiel. First, the Germans were waiting for a fight. The battle area was occupied by Army Group Von Gallwitz, part of the German Fifth Army. Overall, there were five divisions in line, with another 12 in reserve. Most of these formations were understrength, some by as much as a third. General Max Von Gallwitz was an experienced general who had seen action in Russia and at Verdun and the Somme. Second, the American First Army would be pushing north through the Aire Valley with the Argonne Forest on its left and the Meuse on its right. The terrain was dotted by woods not yet leveled by artillery and by several hills, all of which the Germans fortified. There were also three lines of defense, including the Kriemhilde Stellung, part of the Hindenburg Line of fortifications, running across the Romagne and Cunel Heights, just north of the main line, and the Freya Stellung, three miles farther north.

The heights on the east bank of the Meuse were also well defended. German positions there could deliver artillery and machine-gun fire into the American flank and would have to be neutralized. Third, the logistical situation was much more difficult, with the American sector being fed by three narrow and badly neglected roads. Lastly, because Pershing's best divisions had been deployed at St. Mihiel, where they now rested and regrouped, the attack would have to be made by tens of thousands of only partially trained troops. Five divisions, the 35th, 37th, 79th, 80th, and 91st, were hurriedly pulled out of training areas and thrust into line.

In early September, Pershing set about the task of extracting the bulk of the First Army from St. Mihiel and marching north, a movement of hundreds of thousands of men, 15 divisions in all, over roads already clogged with French forces moving into the battle area. Each division was allotted time on the road and assigned specific spots to halt during the day. New rail lines were laid out as well. Massive supply depots would have to be established, filled, and secured near the front. Following these were replacement camps and hospitals. Three corps and one army headquarters would also have to be picked up, moved north, and reestablished. Worse still, Pershing insisted that the movements be conducted at night.

Owing to the success at St. Mihiel, Pershing, like the rest of the American Army, was overconfident. He hoped to achieve tactical surprise in the Meuse-Argonne and stressed the need to move rapidly before German reinforcements could be brought to the area. He believed that Montfaucon, a strongpoint in the center of the German line, and the Cote de Marie, a piece of

high ground to the rear, must both be taken by the end of the second day. From there, he wanted a breakthrough where his open-warfare tactics of marksmanship and maneuver could be used more effectively. Pershing counted on breaking through the German front with simple blunt force and structured American divisions for the task. While Allied divisions were composed of three brigades, Pershing's divisions were composed of four. Pershing believed that earlier British and French offensives had failed to break through because of a lack of resources. He felt that by packing his divisions with an extra brigade, they could better replace the losses suffered early in an attack.

The attack began at 0530 hours on September 26. By and large, the first day went well. Covered by an early-morning fog and accompanied by a rolling artillery barrage, most American units advanced to the German first line of defense against only minor enemy activity. The deepest penetration was made on the right flank by III Corps, led by the 33rd and 80th Divisions, which advanced almost five miles. Late in the day, as the Americans advanced past the first line of defense, German resistance perked up. Here, the Yanks encountered strongpoints, machine-gun nests, and sniper perches. Once the fog lifted, German artillery began to make itself felt on the battlefield. Exacerbating the Americans' exposure was the lack of artillery support; many forward commanders were simply unable to keep up with their own rolling barrage. By the end of the first day's fighting, the Germans had managed to stop the AEF's advance well short of Pershing's objectives. Casualties were heavy.

By far the unit that had suffered the most was the green 79th Division, part of V Corps, which launched a frontal assault on Malancourt. The village occupied a central spot in the German line and needed to be taken before an assault could begin on the German strongpoint at Montfaucon. German defenders in the village and on the American right in the Bois de Malancourt exacted a heavy toll as the 79th advanced. Once the fog lifted, artillery added to the carnage. The 79th fought its way into Malancourt and then pushed on to the main target, Montfaucon, where it encountered heavy resistance on the left from Germans atop Hill 282. Caught in a vicious crossfire, the 79th got bogged down. The Germans left Hill 282 only when the American 4th Division lapped around their flank and swung north of the hill.

Despite the roads being completely jammed, holding up supplies and artillery batteries that could not be hauled through the mud, Pershing pressed the attack. The Germans were now thoroughly alerted, with supplies and reinforcements streaming in. Hard fighting followed. Although V Corps was able to take Montfaucon on the second day, it suffered heavy casualties when it attacked German positions in the woods to the north, the Bois de Fey and Bois de Ogons.

All across the line, American progress was undone by ferocious German counterattacks. The 91st Division, operating on V Corps' right, had the worst of it. The 91st fought a seesaw battle for the village of Epionville, a German strongpoint atop a small ridge in front of the division's second line of defense. The Americans took Epionville on September 27 but were quickly forced out by a German counterattack on the division's left flank. Having bloodied the Americans, the Germans pulled back from Epionville to their main defenses on the heights to the north.

By October 1, the end of the first phase of the attack, the AEF had advanced about eight miles. Casualties were staggering, overwhelming medical detachments in the rear. The 37th Division suffered 3,600 casualties, and the 91st suffered 4,700. All told, the AEF lost 26,000 dead and wounded in the first phase of the offensive. German artillery was the main culprit, accounting for nearly 75 percent of American losses.

Not satisfied with the pace of the attack, Pershing halted the operation, took stock, and reorganized. The performance of the five green divisions was sorely lacking. Inexperienced officers relied on foolish frontal assaults against entrenched, battle-tested Germans. Tanks were unable

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Troops of the 64th Infantry Brigade, 32nd Division, advance in support of the first line near Romagne-Sous-Montfaucon, France, in November 1918. The end of the war is near.

to keep up with the advance, and the artillery often failed to respond to fire-support requests. Many officers were sacked after the disaster at Montfaucon, including the V Corps commander, General George Cameron. Pershing assigned a pair of his veteran staff officers to help straighten things out in the 28th Division, whose commander complained of a lack of trained officers. Pershing withdrew the 37th and 79th Divisions and replaced them with the veteran 3rd and 32nd Divisions. The 35th Division was replaced by the mighty 1st Division. The 91st Division was pulled out of the line into reserve and not replaced.

Pershing resumed the attack on October 4. His objective was the Romagne Heights and the Cunel Heights, including the town of Cunel and the Bois de Cunel to its north. The highest point on the Romagne Heights was the Cote de Marie—taking it would make the remaining German positions on the heights untenable. III Corps advanced along a two-division front. The ensuing fight was a testament to the professionalism and tenacity of the German forces. The defenders stopped two assaults by the 4th Division, but a third broke through into the woods and the far side. The 4th continued north and hit the Bois de Peut de Faux, but was stopped cold. On the right, the 80th Division attacked the Bois de Ogons across a cratered field. The attack on the first day failed, but the 80th pushed on and eventually advanced to a point just southeast of Cunel before Pershing pulled the battered division out of line.

To the west, V Corps attacked along a two-division front as well. On the right, the 3rd Division made good progress until it reached the Bois de Cunel. Withering machine-gun and artillery fire stopped the advance. Undaunted, the division renewed the attack on the Bois de Cunel and fought its way into the wood; it was in American hands by the evening of October 10. On the left, the 32nd Division captured the village of Gesnes and then pushed on to the outskirts of the village of Romagne. The division ran into stiff resistance as it advanced farther north to the outskirts of Cote de Marie. A German counterattack drove the division out of town and off the hill, forcing the 32nd to dig in to the south. On the 32nd Division's left, the 91st Division attacked the adjacent Hill 255 and took the position after severe fighting. The 91st advanced the next day against Hill 288 but was stopped by massed machine guns and accurate artillery fire.

On the First Army's left, I Corps pushed into the Argonne. The 1st Division advanced east of the forest with the goal of breaking through the German line to the north and reaching the village of Sommerance behind the Germans' line of communication. The Big Red One drove three miles in just one day, taking the German strongpoint atop Hill 272 on October 9 and the village of Cote de Maldah the next day. This move opened up space for an attack into the Argonne from the east, which was undertaken by the 82nd Division. Rain and German artillery caused the 82nd to get off to a slow start, but it managed to fight its way inside the forest to Hill 180, which it took against light German resistance.

A heavy German counterattack fell upon the 82nd the next day, preventing the division from exploiting its success. The 82nd attacked toward Hill 233, on the eastern edge of the forest, where it was repelled with heavy losses. The division made good progress the next two days, pivoting north and taking the village of Cornay, which then was lost to a German counterattack. The 82nd Division's hard slogging put heavy pressure on the Germans still in the Argonne and forced them to pull back. The 77th Division pursued them to the forest's northern edge.

Pershing paused once again. He toured his divisions and spoke with their commanders, explaining the need for American troops, once a position had been taken, to dig in and prepare to repel the inevitable German counterattack. By emphasizing such action, Pershing hoped to minimize the seesaw nature of the campaign, which had seen numerous positions taken and then lost because commanders were not prepared to meet German counterattacks.

The AEF had suffered heavily, losing nearly

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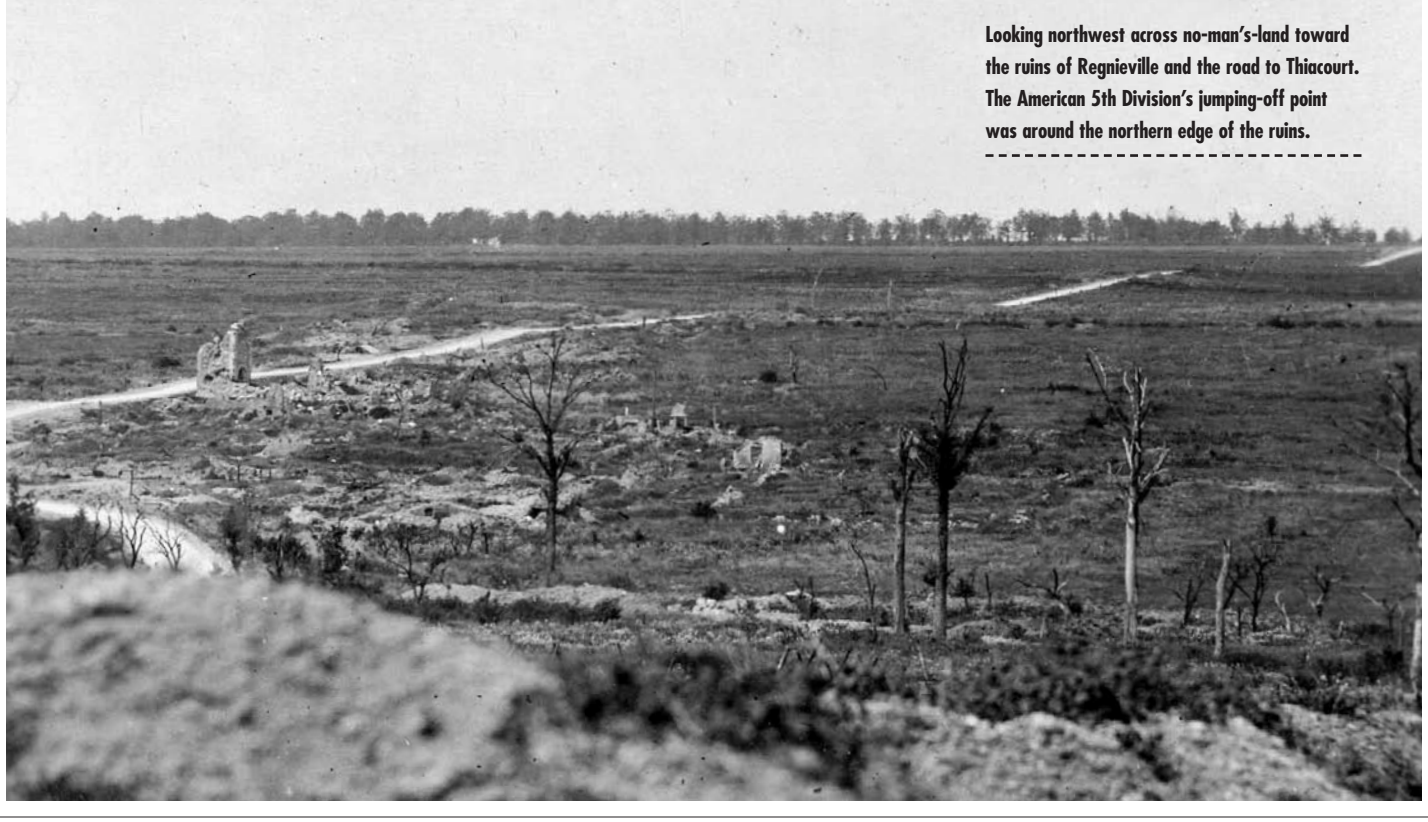


Looking northwest across no-man's-land toward the ruins of Regnieville and the road to Thiacourt. The American 5th Division's jumping-off point was around the northern edge of the ruins.

75,000 men since September 26. A further drain was the worldwide influenza epidemic, which had already made 70,000 men sick. With manpower growing scarce, Pershing altered the basic rifle company structure, trimming it down from 250 to 175 men. Two divisions, the 84th and 86th, which had just disembarked, were cannibalized for replacements. During this time, Pershing split the AEF in two, forming the Second Army and placing General Robert Lee Bullard, then heading III Corps, in command. First Army went to General Hunter Liggett, commander of V Corps. Pershing now commanded a de facto army group.

On the west bank of the Meuse, Pershing resumed the attack on October 14, with the goal of finally taking Romagne and Cunel and clearing the entire heights. In the east, III Corps, led by the 3rd Division and the fresh 5th Division, attacked the Bois de Bantheville and Bois de Rappes. The 3rd Division took the former, but the 5th Division was unable to make any headway against the latter. To the east, V Corps, with the 32nd Division in the lead, attacked and finally took Romagne, then dashed north and took the Cote de Marie, perhaps the most important strongpoint on the Hindenburg Line.

On the left, the fresh 42nd Division descended the Romagne Heights and attacked the Cote de Chatillion, breaking German defenses there and continuing north. To the west, V Corps attacked in the area of Grandpre. After advancing more than a mile to the outskirts of the village of St. Juvan, east of Granpre, V Corps encountered stiff German resistance and was unable to go farther. On the left, the 77th Division moved up and attacked St. Juvin, taking it on October 14. The 77th continued north and fought into the southern section of Grandpre but was unable to take the town.

While the American First Army was slugging it out with the Germans, the French XVII Corps crossed the Meuse and attacked German positions atop the high ground on the east bank. The ground in question was a series of hills overlooking the river and the Argonne. On the east bank, from south to north, were the villages of Brabant, Consenvoye, Sivry, and Dun-sur-Meuse. In the center of the German line was Richene Hill. Taking it was the key to holding the east bank of the Meuse. On the extreme right of the XVII Corps area of operations was the village of Beaumont. Pershing hoped to drain German divisions from the fight and to expand his frontage, which would allow for greater maneuver and further dilute German defenses.

The French XVII Corps actually contained

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: Battle-tested doughboys gather around a French tank overturned by an enemy shell near Cierges. BELOW: Members of a trench mortar battery in Company C, 1st Gas Regiment, 80th Division, load and fire phosphorous and Thermite shells near Le Neufour, France, on October 27, 1918.

two American divisions, the 29th and 33rd, both still on the west bank of the Meuse, and it was these formations that spearheaded the drive. On the night of October 8, engineers of the 33rd Division erected several bridges across the Meuse with the goal of taking the Borne de Cornoulilier, a height overlooking the river north of the German main line. The doughboys crossed the bridges under heavy German fire and struck Broen and German positions around the village of Consenvoye, taking it and driving up the slopes to the north at the base of Richene Hill.

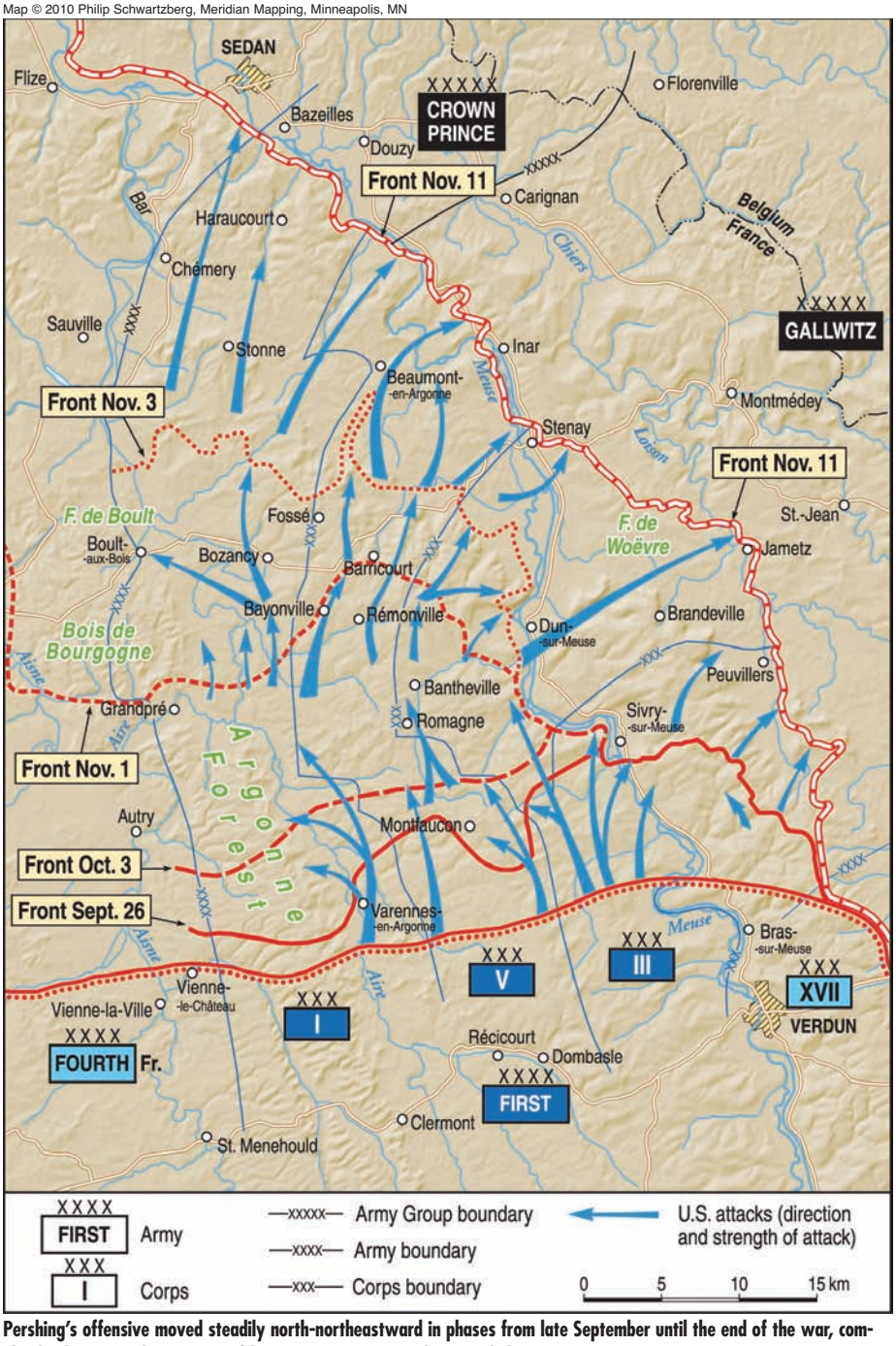
The Germans repulsed several assaults up the hill. To the south, the 29th Division crossed the Meuse and spent the next three days clearing Germans out of the woods around Richene Hill. XVII Corps was reinforced by the 10th Colonial Division and the American 26th Division. After pausing, XVII Corps renewed its offensive, attacking German positions at Molleville Farm, east of Richene Hill, which fell after a day's fighting.

Now Pershing directed Bullard's Second Army to continue the push up the east bank of the Meuse and attack the towns of Damvilliers and Dun-sur-Meuse. At the same time, Liggett was to hold the Germans in place, advance north, and pivot east to the Meuse. The Germans occupied a line beginning in the west at the Bois de Bourgonne and running east along Barricourt Ridge

from Buzancy to the Meuse. I Corps was to clear the Bois de Bourgonne and effect a junction with the French Fourth Army, while III and V Corps would take Barricourt Ridge.

First Army's attack was to begin on October 28, but after consulting with the French Fourth Army commander, who asked for a few more days to prepare, Liggett agreed to postpone the attack until November 1. The American attack got under way at 0530 hours and swept the Germans before them. On the center and right, III and V Corps stormed Barricourt Ridge, attaining all of their stated objectives by nightfall and advancing more than six miles. The doughboys encountered German fortifications smashed by now-accurate American artillery fire. Tellingly, Germans started giving up en masse.

Opposite what remained of the Kriemhilde Stellung, I Corps had more mixed results. Advancing on the right, the 80th Division made good progress and pushed through abandoned German positions. But on the left, the 78th Division was stopped without advancing even a mile. Concealed by the wood, the Germans contested every inch of ground. The 80th Division was forced to peel off and link up with the French Fourth Army near the town of Boult aux Bois. While Pershing was concerned about the movement, Liggett was not, stating simply that with V and III Corps driving north, the Germans in the Bois de Bourgonne would be compelled to withdraw.



Pershing's offensive moved steadily north-northeastward in phases from late September until the end of the war, completely shattering the German Fifth Army. American casualties totaled 117,000.

The next day saw even better results. V Corps drove several miles up the bank of the Meuse, taking Villiers-devant-Dun and Stenay. The 5th Division tried to cross the Meuse in the vicinity of Sivry-dun-Meuse, but came under heavy machine-gun and artillery fire from the far bank. That night, under cover of rain and fog, engineers erected a small bridge to the south at Brieulles. In the morning, elements of the 5th Division crossed under heavy fire and drove north along the east bank, securing a damaged iron bridge. The bridge was repaired that night, and reinforcements crossed the river to join their comrades.

By the night of November 5, the division was firmly established on the east bank. III Corps pushed on and by evening had reached the outskirts of Beaumont, more than five miles north of its previous day's position. The French XVII Corps linked up with III Corps and expanded the front of the attack to the east, taking Montmedy, which gave them a bridgehead across the Chiers River and the option of darting east against Metz. Because of their collapsing position to the east, German forces in the Bois de Bourgonne withdrew, just as Liggett said they would, ceding the ground to I Corps, which advanced another six miles. Liggett exulted, "The blow delivered by the 3rd and 5th Army Corps was so heavy and so completely successful that the enemy was unable to make any offensive return at all."

From Barricourt, V Corps continued north and, over the next few days, advanced another six miles, taking Beaufort on November 4 and Villemontry, on the banks of the Meuse, on November 6. On the left, I Corps duplicated the feat. Advancing on a two-division front, with the 80th and 77th divisions in the lead, I Corps marched down the ridge and dashed across the ground below, rolling more than 10 miles over the next three days and occupying several points along the Meuse. The 77th Division effected a crossing of the Meuse at Villers on November 7.

With his long-sought-after breakthrough now achieved, Pershing was thinking of making a strategic breakthrough into the Rhine and Saar valleys. "I felt full advantage should be

taken of the possibility of destroying the armies on our front and seizing the region upon which Germany largely depended for her supply of iron and coal," he noted. Accordingly, Pershing issued orders emphasizing the need to advance "without regard for fixed objectives and without fear for their flanks." He again emphasized boldness and open-warfare methods.

Pershing continued looking north and hoped to launch an attack on the city of Sedan, which was located just a few miles from the I Corps forward defenses. Pershing wanted the honor of entering Sedan to fall to the First American Army. Chaos ensued. The I Corps commander, General Charles Summerall, felt the order was open to interpretation and determined to make a dash for Sedan. A race developed between V and I Corps. While the 42nd Division was advancing on Sedan, the 1st Division (on Summerall's orders) jumped the gun and advanced across the 42nd Division's front and nearly got fired upon. An angry Liggett drove to V Corps headquarters and ordered the 1st Division to fall back.

Pershing was equally livid. "Under normal conditions the action of the officer or officers responsible for this movement of the 1st Division could not have been overlooked," he wrote, "but the splendid record of that unit and the approach of the end of hostilities suggested leniency." By November 11, both the 42nd and 1st Divisions were on the heights overlooking Sedan. But before the ultimate attack could be properly developed, the Germans agreed to a cease-fire.

During the last few days of the war, with the bulk of the First Army on the east bank of the Meuse and pressing east-northeast, the Second Army attacked as well. These were small-scale operations, meant to gain local advantage for possible exploitation later. The Second Army attacked along a four-division front and encountered heavy resistance, advancing less than a mile. On November 7, Marshal Foch requested that half a dozen American divisions be detached for a joint Franco-American offensive toward Chateau Saline, south of Metz. As Pershing had initially wanted to attack in this direction anyway, he was willing to provide the necessary troops. The attack would begin on November 14. Of course, it never happened. The war had ended three days earlier.

Pershing's First and Second Armies had cleared the Meuse-Argonne sector and positioned themselves to take Sedan and Metz, moves that would have threatened Germany's very ability to wage the war. In the course of operations, they shattered the German Fifth Army; inflicted 100,000 casualties; and captured 26,000 men, 974 guns, and 3,000 machine guns. The AEF, in turn, suffered 117,000 dead and wounded. In many ways, the greatest accomplishment was logistical. Pershing and his staff pulled the AEF out of one area, moved the army dozens of miles to north, and commenced an entirely new offensive within weeks.

Pershing's own summation of the Meuse-Argonne campaign, and indeed the entire AEF, takes up only a few pages at the end of his two-volume, Pulitzer Prize-winning memoirs. Like Ulysses S. Grant's post-Civil War memoirs, they are a literary achievement as well as a historical record. The immense pride Pershing felt in his officers and men shines through the last paragraphs. Humble to the end, Pershing points out that the AEF was not perfect: "The divisions with little training, while aggressive and courageous they were capable of powerful blows, but their blows were apt to be awkward and teamwork was often not well understood." Despite his quibbles, the battles in the Meuse-Argonne should be better remembered than they are by Americans, taking a place alongside such other forest battles as the Wilderness and the Bulge in the nation's other two great wars. □

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: Wary members of the 315th Machine Gun Battalion advance through the woods between La Chalade and Ciaon during the American offensive in the Meuse-Argonne sector. BELOW: Now quiet, one of the guns of Battery D, 105th Field Artillery, flies a large American flag at Etraye, France, after the armistice took effect on November 11, 1918.

IN OCTOBER 1949, the government of the Republic of China faced the greatest crisis in its history. After four years of bloody civil war, Nationalist forces headed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek were in full retreat, as the Communist forces under Mao Zedong swept inexorably south. By the time Mao declared the Peoples Republic of China in Beijing on October 1, the Communists had conquered most of China, including all the major cities. It was only a matter of time before they overran the last remaining Nationalist-held enclaves in the northwestern and southeastern corners of the mainland.

To ensure the survival of his regime, Chiang Kai-shek withdrew his forces to the island of Taiwan, preparing it as a last-ditch bastion. The Nationalists also fortified several strategic island groups just off China's southeastern coast, including Hainan, Zhoushan, Matsu and Kinmen, better known in the West as Quemoy. The Kinmen Islands, a group including two small islands and 13 islets, are located about six miles off the coast of mainland China, immediately opposite the port city of Xiamen (also known as Amoy), astride the entrance to Xiamen Bay. The larger of the two islands, called Greater Kinmen or simply Kinmen, a dumbbell-shaped land mass about 100 squares miles in size, was home to about 30,000 people in 1949. The eastern half of the island is mountainous, while the western half is generally flat and surrounded by miles of beaches suitable for amphibious landings.

With their backs to the wall, Chinese Nationalists prepared a last-ditch defense of the strategic island of Kinmen. If it fell to Commmunist forces, Taiwan would be next. BY EDWARD F. CHEN

FEROCIOUS BEARS OF KINMEN

In Chinese, "Kinmen" means "Golden Gate," an appropriate name for the islands. Xiamen was the closest major mainland port to Taiwan, about 100 miles away, but Kinmen was the key to the region, the gateway to Xiamen Bay and ultimately to Taiwan itself. As long as the Nationalists held Kinmen, they could bottle up the port and deny its use by the Communists in any attempted invasion of Taiwan. If the Nationalists lost Kinmen, not only would Taiwan be immediately threatened, but the political stability of the demoralized regime as a whole would be jeopardized.

In early October 1949, the Nationalist defense of the Xiamen region fell under the Fuzhou Pacification Command. Its two armies were headed by General T'ang En-po, a veteran of the wars against the Japanese and the Communists. The 8th Army, under the loyal but mediocre Lt. Gen. Liu Ju-ming, defended Zhangzhou and Xiamen Island with six divisions numbering some 30,000 men. The 22nd Army, led by the more capable Lt. Gen. Li Liang-jung, garrisoned the Kinmen islands, with 17,000 men in three understrength infantry divisions, plus supporting units and a light tank battalion stationed on Greater Kinmen. Another 3,000 men were posted on Lesser Kinmen.

As the Communists advanced relentlessly through Fujian and closed in on Xiamen, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the coastal islands to be reinforced at the expense of the remaining mainland territory. The rebuilt Nationalist 12th Army, under Lt. Gen. Hu Lien, was directed to transfer its headquarters and two of its three corps, totaling 40,000 men, from the Chaozhou-Shantou region of Guangdong province to the Kinmen Islands. XVIII Corps, under Maj. Gen. Kao K'uei-yuan, reached Kinmen with three divisions on October 9. Days later, the 19th Corps under Maj. Gen. Liu Yun-han followed suit, arriving off Kinmen on the 23rd to begin unloading its

Nationalist infantry troops supported by armor drive westward into the Communist beachhead near Guningtou in the mural painting *Beach Counterattack* by Chinese artist Shih Ping-hsi.

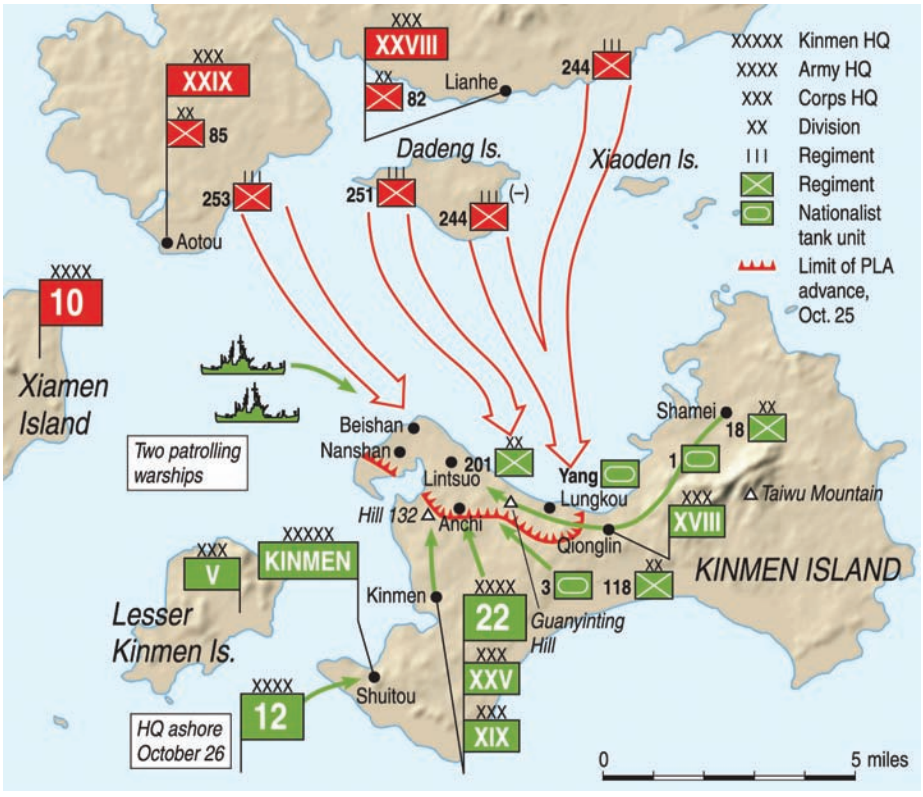
Guningtou War Museum Collection

troops on the southernmost beaches. The Chinese Air Force patrolled the southeastern coastline of the mainland, ready to sink any ships or civilian vessels that could be put to use for amphibious operations.

During the summer and autumn of 1949, the 3rd Field Army of the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) swept south from the Yangzi River through the coastal provinces. Leading the advance into Fujian was the PLA 10th Army, comprised of the XXIX and XXXI Corps, with nine divisions totaling 158,000 battle-hardened troops under Army Commander Ye Fei. By mid-October, the 10th Army had seized most of the major cities in Fujian and was poised to seize Xiamen and the islands in the bay as the first step toward "washing Taiwan in blood," as the Communist rhetoric of the time all to accurately warned.

Due to the terrain in which it operated, the 10th Army became the PLA's specialist in amphibious warfare. With no experience in that field, Ye Fei's subordinates had to adapt their well-practiced techniques for crossing rivers and other water obstacles and apply them to the seizure of offshore islands. Since the PLA was still predominantly a light-infantry force with few naval or air assets, the Communists were forced to improvise. Their operations were constrained by the number of local civilian vessels and fishing boats they could impress into service.

Ye Fei's 10th Army began its coastal campaign in mid-September with the seizure of Pingtan Island off the coast near Fuzhou. Five regiments crossed the bay in hundreds of commandeered fishing vessels and assaulted the island in the face of an oncoming typhoon, managing to overwhelm the Nationalist garrison of 7,000 men with little effort. Despite the precarious vulnerability of their primitive mode of transport to local weather and sea conditions, the Communists continued to prevail because of consistently ineffectual Nationalist resistance. On October 15,



ABOVE: Before dawn on October 25, 1949, Chinese Communist forces launched a bold, multipronged amphibious assault on Kinmen Island from the Chinese mainland. RIGHT: Nationalist forces under Chiang Kai-shek withdrew to the heavily fortified island of Taiwan in the fall of 1949.

Ye Fei's XXIX and XXXI Corps took Zhangzhou and assaulted the heavily defended island of Xiamen. Two days later the island and its vital port fell after brief but heavy fighting. Of the defending Nationalist 8th Army, only its commander and 4,000 troops managed to escape. When the nearby small islands of Dadeng and Xiaodeng were also taken, Ye Fei and his subordinates were confident that the Kinmen Islands would fall just as easily.

The man assigned the mission of taking Kinmen, XXVIII Corps Deputy Commander Xiao Feng, was not so optimistic. His corps had encountered great difficulties in finding enough fishing vessels and local crews to form a makeshift transport fleet, which finally amounted to 320 mostly sail-powered wooden vessels and boats of all sizes. In the final plan, three regiments with nearly 9,000 crack troops would cross Xiamen Bay at night and land on the beaches between Guningtou and Lungkou. The first wave force would seize the coastal high ground and establish a defensible beachhead before advancing south. Meanwhile, it was hoped that enough of the transport vessels would survive to return and pick up additional troops from the XXVIII and XXIX Corps in follow-on waves. The 10th Army's 85 available artillery pieces, including both 75mm and 105mm howitzers, would provide fire support. It was an extremely risky plan. After much delay and several postponements, the amphibious assault was finally scheduled for the night of October 24.

In previous campaigns of the Chinese Civil War, the Communists had prevailed in large part due to the widespread information they obtained through an elaborate network of spies and sympathizers in the Nationalist ranks. In this case, however, the network did not extend to Kinmen, forcing PLA commanders to rely on intercepted enemy radio transmissions. Although they were aware that Hu Lien's Nationalist 12th Army might be sent to Kinmen, the Communists had only an inkling of its current whereabouts, ignoring signs that some 12th Army units were already on the island. Determined to win the race against time and contemptuous of the enemy, Ye Fei urged his subordinates to rush preparations and invade as soon as possible. His army had consistently vanquished nominally superior Nationalist forces, and he had little reason to believe that this time would be any different. But in this case the Communists completely underestimated their enemy.

On Kinmen, the most likely invasion sites were situated along the 10 miles of beaches on the northwest coast from Guningtou in the west to Lungkou near the center. These villages were defended by the two infantry regiments of Maj. Gen. Cheng Kuo's elite but understrength 201st Ch'ing-nian-chün, or Youth Army, Division. In reserve nearby were Colonel Li Shu-lan's 118th Division of the 12th Army's XVIII Corps and the 1st Tank Battalion (1st Battalion, 3rd Tank Regiment) commanded by Lt. Col. Ch'en Chen-wei, with 22 American-built M5A1 "Stuart" light tanks organized into two tank companies.

The Chinese Nationalist Army's 1st Tank Battalion drew its lineage to the First Provisional Tank Group (Chinese-American), formed in Ramgarh, India, in 1943. During 1944-1945, they had provided armored support for joint Chinese-American forces advancing through northern Burma to clear the Ledo Road land supply route to China. After the war, the Chinese personnel of the Tank Group formed the core of the Nationalist Army's armored force, which was eventually expanded to three tank regiments and equipped with a mix of American, Japanese, and older foreign-built vehicles for use in the civil war against the Chinese Communists.

Unlike most of the defending Nationalist troops, the tank crews were veterans, survivors of many campaigns and well-trained in providing infantry support. However, throughout the

civil war the great combat potential of the armored force was squandered by bad generalship and supply problems. Nationalist tankers were rarely able to deliver significant blows against the Communists, even though the PLA lacked tanks or antitank weapons in significant numbers. In December 1948, during the decisive Huai-Hai Campaign in which the Nationalists lost five armies and over half a million troops, the tankers had been partly surrounded near the village of Shuangduiji in Anhui Province. They had barely managed to escape in a desperate breakout led by then-deputy Army commander Hu Lien, but had lost all their vehicles during the retreat. The men of the 1st Tank Battalion were withdrawn to Taiwan for refitting and retraining. They spent the next spring and summer getting replacement tanks operational before they were redeployed to Kinmen in September 1949 as one of the Nationalist Army's few remaining combat-ready tank units.

The afternoon of October 24 found the Nationalist garrison on Kinmen engaged in anti-invasion exercises. Among the participants were the three tanks of 1st Platoon, 3rd Tank Company, led by 1st Lieutenant Yang Chan. Just before dusk, the platoon was about to return to the company bivouac at Tingpao when Yang's own tank, No. 66, became stuck in a soft patch of sand on the beach north of Lungkou. Repeated attempts to free the tank were to no avail. Yang ordered one of the other Stuarts to hitch a towing cable and drag his tank out of the sand, but the second tank threw a track. The tank crews repaired the track and repeated the process several times, but No. 66 still remained stuck. Finally, Yang headed to Tingpao to get help. He returned to the repair site at 3 AM, bringing along an unditching ramp and some leftover rations. While the men ate, they discussed how to go about freeing the stranded tank.

Suddenly the coast was lit up by three signal flares that pierced the moonless night. Communist artillery batteries on the opposite shore opened fire on Kinmen, and a barrage of shells came down near the tank platoon, scattering shrapnel through the air. After 10 minutes of shelling the fire lifted, and the tankers could hear the ominous splashing of men wading ashore. At the shoreline to their front, some 3,000 enemy troops of the PLA 244th Regiment, 82nd Division, led by Regiment Commander Xing Yongsheng, began jumping out of dozens of wooden vessels and struggling through the surf toward the beach.

"All vehicles on alert!" Yang bellowed over the radio set. "Assemble around Tank Number 66 and face the shoreline, in platoon line-abreast

ABOVE: (left to right) General T'ang En-po, head of the Xiamen Pacification Command. 10th Army Commander Ye Fei. Lt. Gen. Hu Lien of the Nationalist 12th Army. TOP: Units of the 3rd Field Army of the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) rehearse amphibious landings along the southeastern China coast prior to the invasion of Kinmen. BELOW: Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek reviews the victorious tank crews of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Tank Regiment, following the Battle of Kinmen.

Guningtou War Museum Collection

Nationalist light armor and infantry troops charge northward into the village of Guningtou in the mural *Street Fighting in Guningtou* by Liu Wen-wei.

formation." After the other two Stuart tanks lined up around him, he ordered the entire platoon to open fire. Wooden boats burst into flames as the tanks and Youth Army troops in nearby bunkers unleashed the first shots of the battle. For the next hour they kept up a storm of fire, mowing down dozens of Communist troops charging up the beach and fighting off repeated assaults with grenades or demolition charges. In a curious twist of fate, a vehicle breakdown had placed the tank platoon in exactly the right spot to bar PLA assault troops from their objective: the town of Qionglin at the center of the island, the key high ground of Taiwu Mountain. If the Communists seized the area, they could cut the island defenses in two.

As the Kinmen defenders went on alert, General T'ang En-po ordered counterinvasion plans put into effect. In turn, the 22nd Army commander, Lt. Gen. Li Liang-jung, ordered Ch'en to send the rest of Captain Chou Ming-ch'in's 3rd Tank Company into the attack, even if they had to grope their way through the darkness. The four available tanks of Chou's 3rd Company and troops of the Nationalist 118th Division set off into the night, clashing with PLA troops that had reached Guanyinting Hill. One Stuart was struck by a glancing blow from a PLA bazooka round, knocking out one of its two engines. The crippled tank was able to hobble back to base.

In the face of stiff enemy resistance, Chou summoned Yang Chan's 1st Platoon into the fray. Yang complied and led the two mobile Stuarts of his platoon into the attack. Meanwhile, the crew of immobilized tank No. 66 and some 200 Youth Army troops held firm, engaging the Communists in close-quarters combat. Since tank No. 66 faced inland, driver Tseng Shao-lin and other crew members set up the tank's bow machine gun on a sand berm and engaged the PLA troops in an intense firefight. During the battle, a hail of bullets killed Tseng—the first casualty sustained by the tank unit.

Farther to the west, the PLA 251st Regiment, led by Liu Tianxiang, and the 253rd Regiment, led by Xu Bo, had landed in the sector between Huwei and Guningtou. The transport groups, scattered by the winds and waves, had suffered heavy losses during their journey across the bay. Nevertheless, they were able to overwhelm the forward defensive positions of the 201st Youth Army Division and push inland, taking the town of Guningtou. In the west, PLA troops reached as far south as Hill 132 before they were forced back by Nationalist reinforcements. The three PLA regimental assault groups were forced to operate independently. No division-level or senior command staff was present to coordinate their movements. Confusion reigned in the beachhead and units became completely disorganized.

Crucially, the Communists had failed to accurately determine local tidal conditions around Kinmen. To achieve surprise and minimize exposure to enemy fire during the assault, Xiao Feng had scheduled the landings at high tide. A few hours later the tides quickly receded before the PLA could organize their improvised transports to cast off. All of their surviving vessels were now stranded on the beach and battered by intense Nationalist fire. Not only would there be no reinforcements, but the firstwave troops were trapped on the island without even the prospect of escape.

At the same time the 3rd Tank Company was fighting for its life on the beaches north of Lungkou, its sister unit, the 1st Tank Company, was bivouacked at Shamei to the northeast. Deputy platoon commander 2nd Lieutenant Mu Chü-liang was the on-duty watch officer when the first enemy artillery shells began falling. Mu alerted his company commander, Captain Hu K'e-hua, and the crews of seven available tanks were soon ready to roll. They remained on standby until dawn, when Hu finally received orders to drive to Qionglin, where they were to join up with infantry from the 118th Division. When they reached the village, one tank dropped out from engine trouble, and no friendly infantry showed up to accompany them, so Hu decided to march to the sounds of the battle. Advancing along the coastal road, the tankers reached the enemy beachhead at 6:30 AM, where they spotted over 100 stranded wooden vessels. Hu reported to his superiors, "With that many boats over there, I think the enemy must number over ten thousand!"

After receiving orders to destroy the enemy wherever they were encountered, Hu led the 1st Tank Company down the enemy-held beaches. Meeting little resistance, the six Stuart tanks blasted away at any enemy troops they encountered. Since they lacked infantry escort, the tankers advanced cautiously at first, keeping their distance and plowing forward only after they had thoroughly shot up enemy positions.

Mu and the crew of tank No. 22 fired away without pause at enemy troops that seemed to be all around them. In the process, the tank's worn-out batteries gave out, and at 6:50 the vehicle lurched to a halt, losing all electrical power—even for the radio. With a Thompson submachine gun and signal flags in hand, Mu opened the hatch to contact the other tanks for assistance. He saw dozens of exhausted enemy

troops huddled in a nearby trench, offering no resistance. Brandishing his weapon, Mu yelled at the nearby enemy troops to lay down their weapons and head toward the rear. Nearly 80 Communists surrendered and were herded off to Qionglin. While another tank helped recharge No. 22's batteries, Mu found out why there had been surprisingly little enemy fire. Upon inspecting the discarded enemy weapons, he discovered that they were inoperable due to exposure to seawater, sand, and grit.

At around 7 AM, Hu led four tanks to the shoreline and blasted away at the grounded transport fleet. High-explosive shells set the wooden vessels ablaze, incinerating enemy wounded who had taken refuge inside them. The tankers continued north to Guanyinting, where they encountered hundreds of PLA troops hiding in shallow foxholes or abandoned Nationalist trenches. The Nationalist tanks bounded forward, maneuvering to enfilade the enemy positions, and unleashed a torrent of cannon and machine-gun fire, scattering hundreds of steel fragments of canister through the ranks of the enemy. Unable to bring to bear any of their few surviving bazooka teams, PLA troopers from the 244th and 251st Regiments could only respond with small-arms fire or ineffectual grenade attacks. Soon, they were overwhelmed by fire and forced to retreat. In the process, the headquarters of the 244th Regiment was overrun and regimental commander Xing Yongsheng was severely wounded and captured.

An hour later Nationalist infantry of the 118th Division finally caught up with the tanks, taking hundreds of prisoners. The four Stuart tanks continued their westward advance, blasting away at enemy positions and stranded wooden vessels. By 11:30, the 1st Tank Company had expended most of its fuel and ammunition and was forced to return to Shamei to replenish supplies. Other troops from the Nationalist 18th Division arrived in strength to consolidate the tankers' gains. Meanwhile, to the south, the 3rd Tank Company drove westward past Guanyinting Hill and engaged Communist forces at Anchi along with troops of the 118th Division.

In the space of a few hours, the Nationalists captured some 2,400 prisoners and liberated several hundred Nationalist Youth Army troops who had themselves been taken prisoner by the Communists during the initial rush. More than 2,000 enemy dead lay scattered among wrecked and burning transports on the beaches between Lungkou and Guningtou. Decades later, Mu Chü-liang would write, "In the dozens of battles that I have fought I had never witnessed a spectacle as terrible as this."

Now the Nationalists attacked the Communist beachhead at Guningtou. Units from four divisions of the 12th Army, some of which had just arrived on the island, advanced against the key village of Lintsuo. There, the veteran PLA troops had consolidated their defenses, digging in among the brick houses of the village. Well-sited machine guns and mortars exacted a frightful toll among the Nationalist infantry, killing a regimental colonel and a battalion commander. The inexperienced infantry had never fought alongside tanks, and coordination was poor. Yet the Nationalists stubbornly repeated their attacks. The tankers again proved their worth, acting as mobile pillboxes and eliminating enemy strongpoints.

By the end of October 25, the Nationalist forces had sealed off Guningtou and wrecked the makeshift Communist transport fleet stranded on the beaches. The PLA invasion force had lost more than half its strength, and was running low on ammunition and supplies. The Communists still held the high ground and were determined to hold out, in the hope that reinforcements would arrive. They were encouraged when XXVIII Corps managed to slip another 300 men ashore that night, led by 246th Regiment commander Sun Yunxiu.

The following day, the Nationalist tankers resumed their infantry support role, spearheading repeated infantry attacks against the Communist defensive perimeter around Guningtou. It was no easy task. The PLA troops had become proficient at hiding in their positions, letting the tanks roll past before emerging to unleash devastating fire on the infantry following behind. Attack after attack was broken up. Bloody street fighting ensued in Lintsuo, and its shattered houses and buildings exchanged hands several times. Eventually, the sheer weight of numbers prevailed; by nightfall the Nationalists had recaptured the village. With no prospect of additional Communist reinforcements, the outcome of the battle was now inevitable.

Chinese Communist prisoners are searched by Nationalist troops after the bitter fighting on Kinmen Island. Some 5,175 prisoners were captured.

Because of Kinmen's critical importance to the survival of the Nationalist regime, a number of senior government leaders descended on the small island to see for themselves that the situation had stabilized. Chiang Ching-kuo, the Nationalist leader's eldest son and leading troubleshooter, flew to Kinmen to pay a special visit to the 1st Tank Battalion command post at Qionglin to congratulate the tankers and offer rewards. The popular 12th Army commander, Lt. Gen. Hu Lien, also arrived at Qionglin that afternoon to visit the tankers.

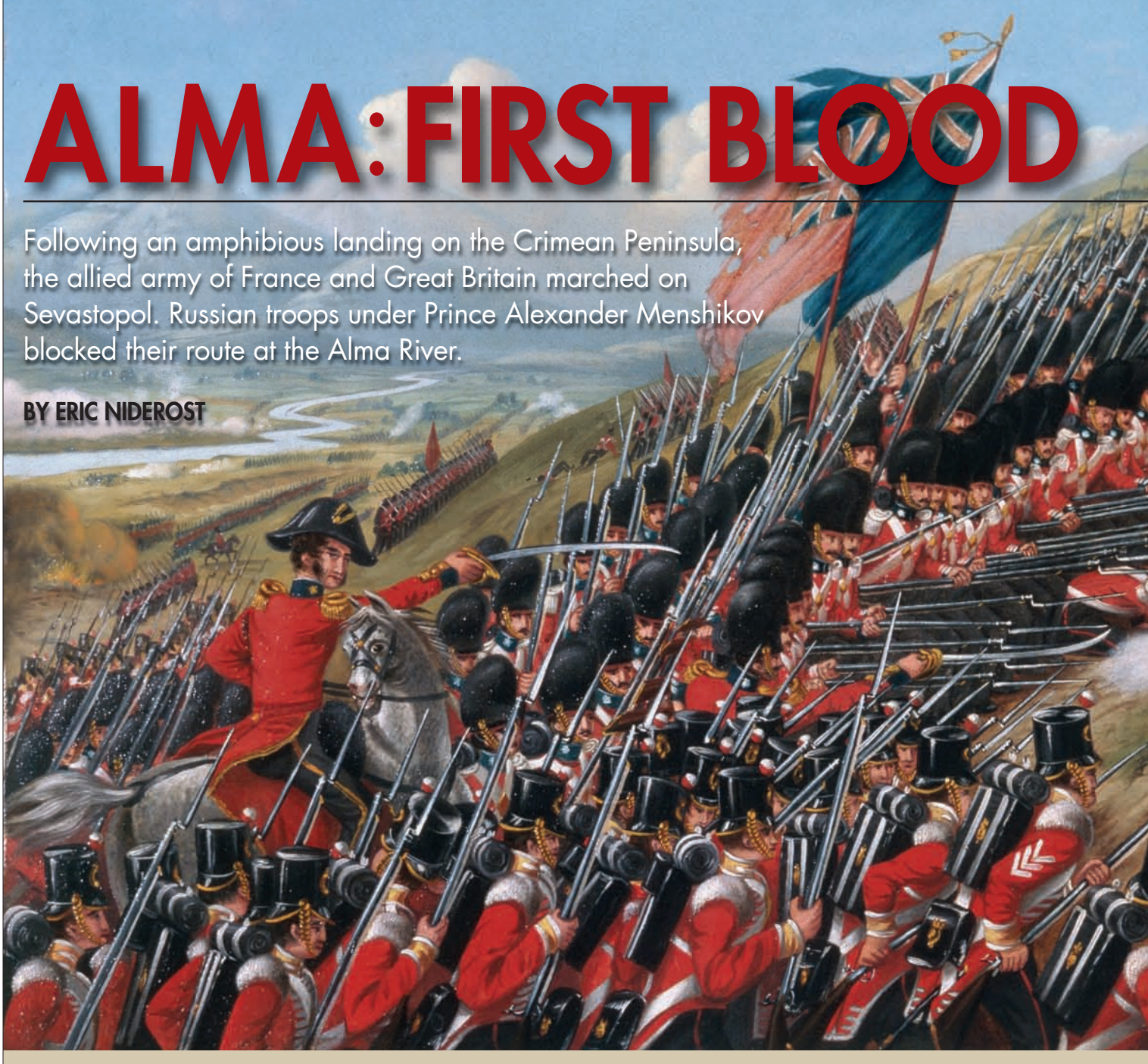
On the morning of the 27th, the Nationalists began their final effort to clear out the remaining Communist positions at Guningtou, with simultaneous thrusts from the south and east. By the afternoon, the Nationalists reoccupied Guningtou. Organized resistance ended with the capture of 900 remaining PLA troops who had fled to the beaches and bluffs to the north. Over the next few weeks, dozens of PLA stragglers were rounded up around the island. PLA regimental commanders Xing, Liu, and Xu were captured, imprisoned in Taiwan, and later executed; 246th Regiment

Continued on page 73

ALMA: FIRST BLOOD

Following an amphibious landing on the Crimean Peninsula, the allied army of France and Great Britain marched on Sevastopol. Russian troops under Prince Alexander Menshikov blocked their route at the Alma River.

BY ERIC NIDEROST

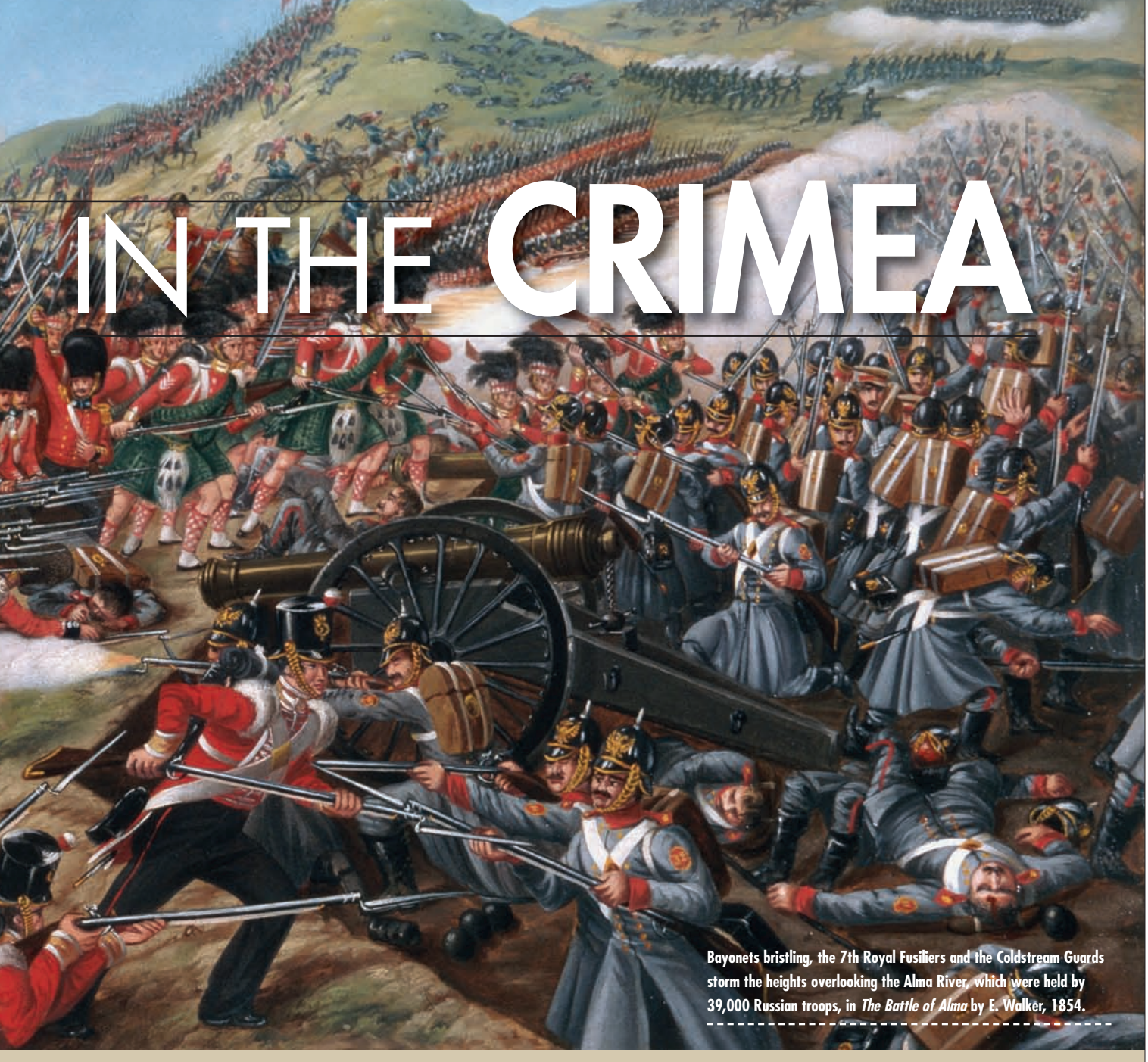


ON THE MORNING OF September 14, 1854, an Anglo-French fleet arrived off the coast of the Crimean Peninsula in the Black Sea. There were hundreds of vessels, including towering, three-decked warships, sleek frigates, and lumbering transports ready to disgorge their cargoes of men, horses, and equipment. The objective of the campaign was to take the Russian naval base at Sevastopol, some 25 miles to the south. Once Russian naval power had been neutralized, Czar Nicholas I's ambition to nibble away at the crumbling Ottoman Empire and establish a Russian presence in the Mediterranean would be checkmated. Defeated and humiliated, the czar would have to sue for peace.

The Anglo-French expeditionary force landed at Calamita Bay—soldiers inevitably nicknamed it "Calamity Bay"—and it took five days to fully disembark. The French Army was much better prepared than the British, but the stoical redcoats did not complain. The first evening ashore there was torrential rain, a deluge that lasted all night. The British had to make do with their sodden greatcoats and a few dripping blankets. By contrast, the French had tents set up for even the lowest soldier, and the Turks had unique little "pavilions" that looked like something out of the *Arabian Nights*.

It was the first of a series of misfortunes that dogged the British Army throughout the Crimean campaign. The sad truth was that the British were woefully unprepared to wage a major campaign so far from home. They had no transport or baggage train of any kind, and the Quartermaster General's Department had to create transportation on the spot—a daunting task under the best of circumstances. Foraging parties fanned out and bought carts and draft animals from the Tatars, local natives who had little love for the Russian czar. After much hard work, some 350 carts were assembled, but the British needed a minimum of 700 such wagons. That meant that the individual British soldier had no more rations or equipment than what he could carry on his back. An officer of the 42nd Highlanders listed a surprising number

IN THE CRIMEA



Bayonets bristling, the 7th Royal Fusiliers and the Coldstream Guards storm the heights overlooking the Alma River, which were held by 39,000 Russian troops, in *The Battle of Alma* by E. Walker, 1854.

The Art Archive/National Army Museum London/National Army Museum

of items he carried, including "three days rations of salt pork and biscuit [9 pounds], cocoa and sugar in his haversack; shirt, hose, boots, brushes, shell jacket and sponges in his knapsack, greatcoat, claymore [sword], dirk and revolver."

The men in the ranks carried even more supplies with them, including 50 rounds of ammunition for their Enfield rifle-muskets. These were relatively new weapons, with grooved barrels that put a spin on the new minié ball that gave it more power and accuracy. The British also favored two-rank formations, the legendary thin red line. *London Times* correspondent William Russell claimed to have coined the phrase (he originally called it a "thin red streak"). By contrast, the Russians, Turks, and French still used bulky column formations, large conglomerates of literal cannon fodder that relied on sheer mass, not firepower, to overawe enemies. The thin red line and superior firepower were the lone bright spots in an otherwise gloomy picture of hidebound allied tradition and incompetence.

Czar Nicholas was a political reactionary who used the Russian Army as an instrument of repression both at home and abroad. Turkey, called the "sick man of Europe," was plagued by weak and incompetent sultans and a corrupt, antiquated government. The scent of decay was in the air, making the Russian bear rapacious and eager to tear into Turkey's weakened body politic. The Crimean War began in late 1853, after a dispute between Catholic monks and Orthodox priests over the guardianship of Christianity's sacred sites in Jerusalem. Both sides appealed to Sultan Abdul Mecid I. France had long been the protector of Roman Catholics in the Middle East, and Napoleon III saw the dispute as a chance to flex his political muscle. The Turkish government bowed to the emperor's demands and gave protection rights to the French.

The czar was offended and sent an embassy to Constantinople to bully the Turks into changing their minds. The Russians also demanded a Russo-Turkish defensive alliance and the right for Nicholas to be the protector of all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. This would make

Turkey, in effect, a Russian client state, a puppet with the czar pulling the strings. The British government took a sudden interest in the developing crisis. It was a cornerstone of British foreign policy not to let any great power control Constantinople and the straits that connected the Black Sea with the Mediterranean. If Russian warships were allowed to enter the Mediterranean, it would no longer be a British "lake," and the overseas route to India and British possessions in the Far East would be threatened.

Backed by British support, Turkey rejected Russia's bullying demands, prompting the czar to invade the Turkish provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia. In response, British and French warships hurried to the straits to checkmate any Russian moves there. Turkey declared war on Russia in October 1853, but for the moment Great Britain and France stayed out the fray. The czar and his ministers realized that they were diplomatically isolated. Prussia was indifferent, Austria was hostile, and Great Britain and France were firmly if unofficially on the side of Turkey. A flurry of diplomacy went nowhere. Nicholas refused to compromise, in part because he feared that Russia would lose face. In November 1853, the Russians destroyed the Turkish fleet at Sinope.

Library of Congress

Now Nicholas had gone too far. When he refused to withdraw from Moldavia and Wallachia, France and Great Britain declared war on Russia in March 1854. Allied troops were sent to Turkey, and eventually ended up in Varna, in modern-day Bulgaria, to block any Russian moves on Constantinople. At the time, the Russians had nearby Silistria under siege. If that town fell, the Russians might pour south. The Russians eventually lifted the siege, and the 120,000-man army began to evacuate the Danube provinces. The allies had done no fighting, but Varna's dirty streets and polluted water spread disease. Cholera was soon raging through the ranks. The French Army was weakened, and many British regiments were decimated. It was decided that the allied effort should focus on Sevastopol, Russia's major naval base on the Black Sea. The czar's power had to be broken in one way or another—and the capture of Sevastopol would lessen his prestige and humble him enough to come to the peace table.

Now the Anglo-French expeditionary force found itself on the Crimean Peninsula in September 1854, some 25 miles from its objective. Cholera was still present, and throughout the voyage from Varna soldiers had continued to die of the disease. It was fortunate for the allies that the Russians did not contest the landings because at first it was organized chaos. A solitary Russian officer on horseback observed the landings, made notes, and then galloped away.

After a soggy night, the allied army marched out on the morning of September 19.The French were nearer to the shore, which gave them the advantage of having their right flank protected by allied warships. Eight battalions of Turks (about 7,000 men) under Suleiman Pasha marched with the French. The French 2nd Division, commanded by General Pierre Bousquet, marched next to the Turks, with the men of the French 1st Division under General François Canrobert forming the Gallic center. The French left was assigned to Prince Jerome Napoleon's 3rd Division, while the 4th Division under General Elie Forey brought up the rear.

The French Army had little of the discipline that was so common in British regiments. They were heroes on the battlefield, filled with courage and élan, but plundering thieves on most other

LEFT: Field Marshal Lord Raglan, Suleiman Pasha, and Marshal Aimable Pélissier were photographed by Roger Fenton in Lord Raglan's headquarters. BELOW: Prince Alexander Menshikov, the Russian commander in chief in the Crimea. OPPOSITE: British Zouaves and their Turkish allies cross the Alma River during the advance up the Crimean Peninsula toward Sevastopol.

Library of Congress

THE RUSSIAN ARMY IN THE CRIMEA

BY ANY STATISTICAL measure, Czar Nicholas I's army in the Crimea was a juggernaut. When fully mobilized, the Russians could muster somewhere between 770,000 and one million men. By contrast, the initial Anglo-French expeditionary force that landed on the peninsula in 1854 had a mere 60,000 men, 132 guns, and 1,000 cavalry. It seemed absurd to expect that such a comparatively puny army could successfully invade the Crimea and win the war. Yet that is exactly what happened.

Russia was a vast empire stretching from Europe to the Pacific, and these far-flung territories had to be defended. Czar Nicholas also had to keep a wary eye on Austria, technically neutral but decidedly hostile to Russian ambitions. That meant a large part of the army had to remain in western Russia. Other troops had to guard the Baltic regions and other areas. The Russian war effort in the Crimea was hampered by vast distances and lack of modern transportation. The roads were abominations, and there were no railroad links to the Crimean Peninsula. Russian troops often had to march for weeks to get to the front. The Crimea might as well have been on the moon.

The backbone of the czar's forces was the infantry. The rank and file was composed of muzhiks, or peasants, conscripted from the farms and villages of the empire. The twin virtues of the Russian soldier were courage and bulldog tenacity. The peasants were illiterate serfs, owned either by the state or by private individuals. They were a tough breed, accustomed to hardship and tolerant of the many abuses they had to endure.

This stoicism was evident once they joined the army. Service was usually for 25 years, which to the average peasant was virtually a life sentence. The officer corps was mainly aristocratic and largely incompetent, although there were exceptions. On the whole there was a good rapport between officers and men, even though a wide social gulf divided them.

Rue des Archives/Tal

occasions. A frustrated Prince Jerome Napoleon, cousin of Napoleon III, futilely attempted to stop his men from sacking local villages. They ignored his angry remonstrations. The common French soldiers were rogues, their mood lightened by the beguiling presence of the *cantinieres*, female camp followers dressed in tight-fitting uniforms that mirrored their male counterparts, who sold brandy and extra rations to the troops. The French Zouaves—dressed in baggy red trousers, vests, and tasseled fezzes of Algerian origin—were favorites of their British comrades in arms.

General Sir George de Lacy Evans's 2nd Division occupied the British front line of march on the right, with General Sir George Brown's Light Division beside it on the left. The Duke of Cambridge's 1st Division and General Sir Richard England's 3rd Division followed in support, and elements of the 4th Division brought up the rear. Cavalry screening was provided by the 11th Hussars, 13th Light Dragoons, 8th Hussars, and 17th Lancers—men who would later achieve immortality when they participated in the Charge of the Light Brigade.

The ground was treeless and undulating, perfect for the movement of men, horses, wagons, and artillery. The allied forces covered an area five miles wide and four miles deep. After the rainy, miserable night, spirits soared with the rising sun, and a gentle sea breeze made the air fresh and clean. Long columns of redcoats marched as if in review, and regimental bands played stirring airs. The Highland regiments were particularly striking, large muscular men with swaying kilts, bobbing feathered bonnets, and skirling bagpipes. Russell of the *Times* noted: "The effect of these grand masses of soldiers descending the ridges of the hills, rank after rank, with the sun playing over forests of glittering steel bayonets, can never be forgotten." This romantic vision of war was all too fleeting.

Soon the sea breeze diminished, replaced by sweltering temperatures. As the mercury rose, the

Colonels would assemble their regiments and give them pep talks, and the soldiers would respond with a dutiful, "Yes, Your Honor" and a hearty Russian cheer.

Russian weapons and tactics were largely derived from the Napoleonic Wars some four decades earlier. The main infantry weapon was still the smoothbore musket, with a range of only around 100 yards. Too much hope was placed in the Russian climate—"Generals January and February"—but the winter of 1854-1855 was relatively mild by Russian standards. The allies suffered but were not decimated like Napoleon's army was in 1812.

Czar Nicholas was a military martinet, and the army bore his indelible stamp. The czar delighted in drill, having the men master exaggerated goose-step maneuvers that looked spectacular on the parade grounds of St. Petersburg but had no use in actual battle. Practical battlefield training was minimal, replaced by mindless drills that turned each soldier into an automaton. Complicated maneuvers were literally drummed into a recruit's head by liberal use of fists and drumsticks.

Russia was an ossified society, stifled by autocracy and repression. Russian stoicism produced a fatal inertia, and, as defeats mounted, depression deepened into sheer hopelessness. The Russian Army in the Crimea was just as inept as the British, but British society was freer and public opinion unchained by government censorship. The public outcry eventually produced military reforms. By contrast, the Russian Army continued to suffer with little respite.

Famed Russian novelist Count Leo Tolstoy, then a young artillery officer serving at Sevastopol, noticed the difference when he interviewed British and French prisoners. "Every soldier among them," he recalled, "is proud of his position and has a sense of his value, he feels he is a positive asset to his army. He has ideas about politics and art and this gives him a feeling of dignity." Tolstoy ruefully added that "on our side, senseless training, useless weapons, ill treatment, delay everywhere, ignorance and shocking hygiene and food stifle the last sparks of pride in a man." □

sweat-drenched men were tortured by raging thirst. Parched and exausted soldiers began to fall out by the score. They were joined by cholera victims, soldiers whose burning fever and dysentery made them unable to travel another step. The trudging columns pressed on, leaving a detritus of sick and half-dead men in their wake. Lord George Paget, commanding the 4th Light Dragoons, did his best to get the victims up and moving again, with limited success. So many bodies lay sprawled on the ground that it looked as though a major battle had been fought.

At last the Bulganak River was spotted ahead. Disipline momentarily evaporated as men broke ranks and ran to quench their thirst. The kilted warriors of the Highland Brigade did the same, but were quickly checked by their commander, Colonel Sir Colin Campbell, and ordered back into formation. Campbell, one of the most respected officers in the British Army, knew what he was doing. The colonel sent forward a detachment that filled water barrels to the brim, which were then distributed to the thirsty troops. The regiments who had rushed down to the river in a great stampede got the worst of it, because thousands of feet had churned up the sluggish stream and literally muddied the waters. Thanks to Campbell's foresight, the Highlanders could fill their bottles with clean water.

A large Russian force showed up near the river, perhaps 6,000 infantry, a brigade of cavalry, and some horse-drawn artillery. Brig. Gen. James Brudendell, the seventh Earl of Cardigan, was sent out to reconnoiter with the 13th Light Dragoons and 11th Hussars, while the 2nd and Light (Infantry) Divisions were called up and placed in readiness. The Russian infantry left the field, but the czarist 12th Saxe-Weimar Hussars and Don Cossacks stood their ground. A hot skirmish developed, with troopers from both sides firing on each other from horseback. After 20 minutes of blazing away, not one man or horse had been hit. But the artillery was more deadly; Russian cannonballs were "bounding like cricket balls" according to one observer. One Russian roundshot managed to take the leg off of a British soldier. British artillery, 6- and 9-pounders, were brought up and flamed in counterbattery. The Russians seemed to tire of the artillery duel; they limbered up and withdrew south. The British had suffered four men wounded (two amputations) and five horses killed.

This was just an appetizer of war—the main course was yet to come. Seven miles away lay the Alma River and beyond the river a series of hills called the Heights of Alma. The Russians were not about to let themselves be bottled up in Sevastopol without a fight—if they were going to make a stand, the Heights would be the place to do it. Prince Alexander Menshikov, the Russian commander in chief in the Crimea, was sure that the Alma Heights would stop the Allies dead in their tracks. He assured Czar Nicholas that he could hold the Alma Heights for three weeks. Menshikov's overconfidence was founded on a complete misreading of the British soldiers' fighting abilities. The prince considered the British Army in the Crimea mere "sailors conscripted into military uniform." He was not alone in his contempt of the British, although most Russians admitted that the French could fight. The memories of the first Napoleon were too fresh to think otherwise.

The Alma Heights began at the sea with a bluff called the West Cliff. Overlooking the sandy mouth of the Alma as it emptied into the Black Sea, the West Cliff rose precipitously about 400 feet. Two miles upriver was Telegraph Hill, so called because of a tower that originally was intended to be a telegraph station. Telegraph Hill and West Cliff joined to form a plateau. The main road to Sevastopol ran between Telegraph Hill and another elevation to the east named Kourgane Hill, some 450 feet high. Kourgane Hill was in many respects the key to the Heights. The Russians had built a Great Redoubt on Kourgane Hill, a breastwork that held 12 guns. Slightly higher on the hill was the Lesser Redoubt, whose artillery protected the eastern flank.

There were also Russian cannons on the approaches to the Sevastopol road and guns covering the wooden bridge that spanned the Alma. Most of the 39,000-man Russian Army under Menshikov was positioned around Telegraph and Kourgane Hills.

Only one battalion of the Minsk Regiment guarded the West Cliff because the Russians considered it too steep to climb. The officer commanding there, General V.I. Kiriakov, boastfully told the prince that his battalion alone could tackle any two allied divisions. There were a few scattered stone walls on the north riverbank, and terraces held vineyards that were heavy with unharvested grapes. The stone walls were a double-edged sword since they might provide cover as well as impede an enemy advance. The village of Bourlick was on the north bank, a cluster of 50 houses that was ideal cover for Russian skirmishers.

After the skirmish, the allies made camp for the day, quickly gathering fuel to make their evening dinners. As night fell, hundreds of watch fires twinkled and danced like a carpet of stars. The overall British commander, General Fitzroy Somerset, Lord Raglan, took the opportunity to consult

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

with his French counterpart, Marshal Jacques St. Arnaud. Raglan was an excellent staff officer but incompetent to lead an army. He had served as military secretary and aide-de-camp to Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington, during the Napoleonic Wars, and he had been chosen to command the British troops in the Crimea because of his association with the Iron Duke. Wellington was one of the finest soldiers Britain ever produced, and with his passing in 1852 Raglan seemed a natural successor.

Unfortunately, little of Wellington's genius rubbed off on his protégé. For all his faults, Raglan did occasionally have some flashes of common sense, if not brilliance. He was not in

The proud Highland Brigade led the decisive charge at the Battle of Alma. "We'll hae nane but Hieland bonnets here!" Colonel Sir Colin Campbell exulted in his Scottish brogue.

favor of the Crimean campaign since he felt that the British Army was woefully unprepared for such a campaign. The British government ignored his protests. Nevertheless, Raglan was the soul of tact when he met with St. Arnaud on the evening of September 19. The French commander was ill, the feverish ravages of cholera marking his face and giving his eyes an odd cast. The marshal laid out a battle plan for the next day, and Raglan politely concurred with little comment. Speaking in a mixture of English and French, St. Arnaud explained that the French would cross the Alma River and attack where the Russians least expected—the precipitous West Cliff. Warming to the subject, St. Arnaud said the cliff was lightly defended and since it was at the mouth of the Alma, near the sea, the French would have the additional support of naval covering fire.

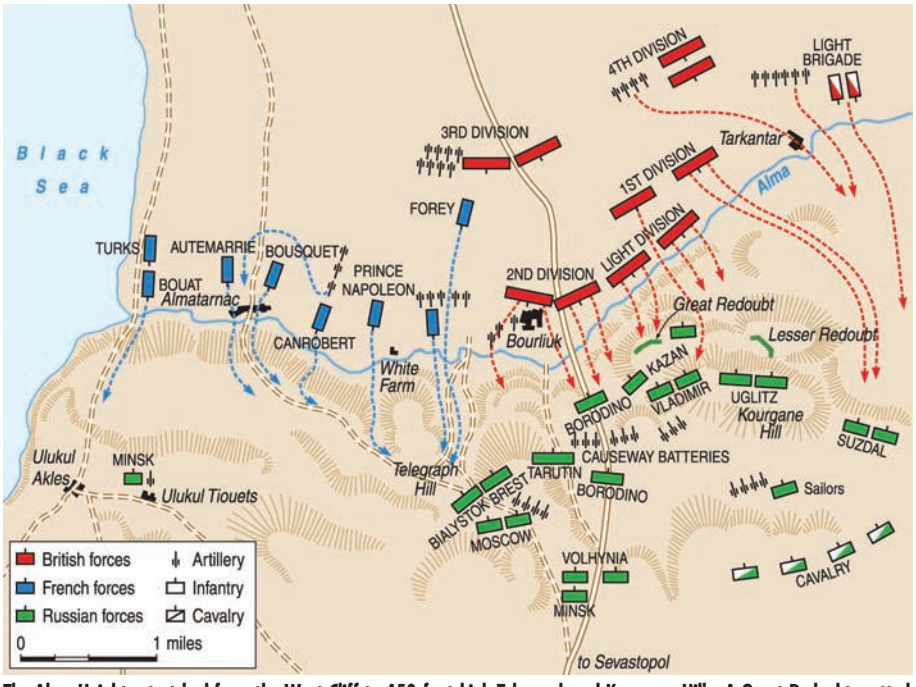
In St. Arnaud's scheme, the British would divert Russian attention by attacking Telegraph and Kourgane Hills. With any luck, Raglan's army might swing east and roll up the Russian right as the French—once they climbed the heights—rolled up the Russian left. Raglan assured St. Arnaud of British support but said little else. The attack began the next afternoon, with a French assault in echelon. Bosquet's division led the way, crossing the river mouth by means of a sandbar and scrambling up the steep cliffs. Canrobert's and Prince Napoleon's troops joined the fray, but the attack stalled because the treacherous tracks up the cliffs were too steep for artillery, and the French preferred to attack with artillery support.

The British advanced slowly, waiting for the French attack to prosper before going in themselves. The British first line consisted of Evans's 2nd Division and the Light Division. Behind them the

1st Division (Highland Brigade and the Guards) stood in support. All other British troops were held in reserve. The British marched in column, but when they got within range of the Russian guns across the river, they deployed into line. They were told to lie down, which lessened the chance of being hit by a rampaging cannonball. Nevertheless, the artillery fire was so heavy that casualties began to mount. The redcoats endured the hail of shot and shell for at least 20 minutes, keeping their courage up by giving names to the Russian guns. A French courier galloped up to Raglan, bringing St. Arnaud's request for help and adding with typical Gallic overstatement, "We are being massacred!" It was time to advance—anything was better than the nerve-wracking bombardment.

The Light and 2nd Divisions moved out. As they did so, the Russians put Bourlick village to the torch. Crackling flames leapt high into the sky, and dense clouds of smoke cast a pall around the immediate area. The acrid smoke and flames threw the 2nd Division into temporary confusion, with one battalion going to the right of the village and the other going left. The once orderly lines bunched up, and the situation was made worse by the Light Division inadvertedly coming in at a slight angle, so that some elements bumped into their colleagues from the 2nd Division.

Some grenadiers crossed the Alma via the still intact wooden bridge, but the river was only around four feet deep on average, and most were able to wade across. The 95th Foot and Royal Welsh Fusiliers became mixed up on the opposite bank, where the steepness of the slope on the Kourgane Hill ironically afforded some protection from Russian cannonballs. But victory would not be gained by sheltering under a lip of ground, and before long the redcoats set off again through a storm of canister and grapeshot. Their advance seemed irresistible, and as they surged



The Alma Heights stretched from the West Cliff to 450-foot-high Telegraph and Kourgane Hills. A Great Redoubt, potted with 12 guns, anchored the Russian positions.

up the hill the Russian gunners in the Great Redoubt ceased fire and began to limber up their guns in a frantic effort to escape.

As the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (23rd Foot) poured over the lip of the Great Battery entrenchment, color bearer Lieutenant Harry Anstruther was felled by a Russian bullet. Sergeant Luke O'Connor grabbed the Queen's colors from the lieutenant's dead hands and planted the banner in the redoubt, an act for which O'Connor was awarded the Victoria Cross. The redoubt was now in British hands, and two Russian guns had been taken in the bargain. But a counterattack was sure to come, and the nearest British help was the Duke of Cambridge's 1st Division, which had not yet crossed the Alma. Cambridge was 35 years old, the only divisional commander not to have served in the Napoleonic Wars 40 years earlier. If some of the other British generals were too old in some respects, Cambridge was too inexperienced. The duke was indecisive, uncertain of what he should do. He asked a befuddled subordinate, Brig. Gen. "Gentlemanly George" Buller, for advice. "Why, your Royal Highness," Buller replied, "I am in a little confusion here—you had better advance, I think."

In the meantime, the British soldiers holding the Great Redoubt were threatened by a huge Russian column composed of the Vladimir Regiment. Some of the British officers gave the command to shoot, but at least one other officer yelled, "Do not fire—they are French!" Confusion reigned, and a bugler sounded the call to retire. Outnumbered and with conflicting orders, the British abandoned the hard-won redoubt.

The Vladimir Regiment lurched forward to the redoubt, then halted to wait for the Kazan Regiment to come up in support. While they waited, a Russian officer glanced in the direction of Telegraph Hill and saw a small cluster of what looked like British staff officers. They seemed like a mirage because they were well behind Russian lines. It seemed impossible—yet the waving white plumes of their cocked hats confirmed that they were indeed British.

When the fighting started, Raglan had decided to go forward and seek a good vantage point from which to watch the coming action. When he first started out he was accompanied by a horde of hangers-on, men from the Commissariat or Medical Corps who wanted to see some of the action as spectators. They grew to perhaps 60 riders, until they were blocking the view of Raglan and his staff. He let them stay, explaining with a twinkle in his eye: "You know, directly we get under fire, those obliged not to remain will depart. You may rely on it." Sure enough, a Russian round shot fell short, then bounced up and flew over the heads of the assembled spectators. True to Raglan's prediction, the hangers-on scattered like a bunch of scared rabbits.

The British commander in chief and his staff crossed the Alma, surprising some French troops from Prince Napoleon's command who had gained the high ground. In fact, the French had largely scaled the cliffs and were making good progress in pushing back the Russians. Raglan and his party stopped on a spur that jutted out from Telegraph Hill just below the summit. It was a great vantage point, although it was risky to be behind Russian lines and cut off from most of the British Army. From Telegraph Hill, Raglan could observe events but do little to control or influence them. Raglan was literally out on a limb—yet some good did come out of it. "If they can enfilade us, we can enfilade them," he reasoned, and he ordered up

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

French Field Marshal Jacques St. Arnaud, flanked by two dragoons, gives orders at the Battle of Alma. Wounded soldiers lie at his horse's feet.

a battery of horse artillery to the site. It was difficult to get guns up the slopes, but once two cannons were in place, they fired on the Russian causeway batteries that guarded the Sevastopol road and were shredding the advancing British infantry.

When the Russian artillerymen found they were being bombarded in flank, they limbered up and withdrew to a new position to the rear. Unfortunately for the Russians, the new sites were too far back, neutralizing any advantage they had in firepower. Meanwhile, the Guards had waded across the Alma, the Highlanders just behind them and to their left. The Grenadier Guards were on the right, the Scots Fusilier Guards in the center, and the Coldstream Guards on the left. They were the flower of the British Army, protectors of Queen Victoria herself, formidable in their towering bearskin caps.

The Vladimir Regiment poured a heavy fire into the survivors of the 23rd Foot, who were holding a position just below the Great Redoubt, causing them to retreat down Kourgane Hill. Gaining momentum as they went down the slopes, they crashed into the advancing Scots Fusilier Guards, disordering their lines and sweeping them away. Queen Victoria had a love of Scotland and was partial to the Scots Fusilier Guards. The Coldstream and Grenadier Guards, knowing this, couldn't resist chiding their departing comrades: "Shame! Shame! What about the Queen's favorites now?"

Now there was a gap in the Guards line, and a captain of the Grenadiers ordered his company into a right angle. The Guards reformed in a kind of L formation, a gaping ring of fire that the Russians unwittingly ran into. Volley after disciplined volley cut into the Russian ranks with terrible effect. Once again, British rifle muskets spat minié balls with deadly accuracy. The czarist troops still carried smoothbore muskets, which could not effectively reply except at close range. Decimated by the hail of British gunfire, the Russians withdrew up the slopes.

Some 10,000 unbloodied Russian troops moved forward to try to regain the initiative, but they ran headlong into the Highland Brigade, Celtic warriors renowned for their fierce courage on the battlefield. The men in the 42nd (Black Watch), 79th, and 93rd Highlanders were led by Campbell himself. An officer of the 42nd later provided some details of the Highlander odyssey. Before they crossed the river, the Black Watch passed some vineyards, and as they marched the sturdy Celts helped themselves to bunches of grapes. The Alma was shallow—about knee high—although some Highlanders encountered deep pockets where the river rose to chest level.

Once across the river, the Highlanders were subjected to an accurate artillery and rifle fire. The Russian artillery was helped by range markers that had been pounded into the ground at intervals. Shaking off the water from their kilts as best they could, the Highlanders reformed and ascended the hill, firing as they went. This could be done only by the best troops, and the Celts proved their worth. The Highland Brigade advanced in two ranks, literally a thin red line nearly 2,000 yards wide. The Russians were incredulous, scarcely believing their eyes. There were two large columns of Russian infantry in the vicinity—the Sousdal Regiment, wearing spiked helmets, and the Kazan Regiment, in forage caps. The Sousdal Regiment tried to take the 42nd in flank but was met by the 93rd and 79th in echelon. The steady, relentless Highland volleys began to

Continued on page 73

SEIZING THE ALTMARK

ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1939, the day that Great Britain and France formally declared war on Germany after the Nazis' invasion of Poland, the German supply ship *Altmark* concluded her stay at the refinery center of Port Arthur, Texas, where she had taken on a full cargo of diesel oil, and returned to sea. Her officers and crew, unaware of secret orders placing her on military duty, assumed that her next destination was the Dutch city of Rotterdam, where she would call during her return to Germany.

Altmark was an 11,000-ton oiler with a length of 540 feet and a beam of 70 feet. She boasted four nine-cylinder diesel engines that could push her through the water at a top speed of 21 knots, and she had a cargo capacity of 14,000 tons. *Altmark* had been commissioned in Kiel in November 1938. In her brief time in service, she had participated in practice maneuvers off the Spanish coast along with the pocket battleship *Graf Spee* during the Spanish Civil War. Her captain, Heinrich Dau, was a devoted party member who had spent his life at sea in the merchant marine and exhibited a stiff, authoritative manner that made it difficult for his junior officers to feel at ease.

Dau assembled the crew upon receiving a wireless signal of the declaration of war, informing his 134 men that *Altmark* was now on active duty and would serve as a supply ship for the 12,000-ton *Graf Spee*. They would not be returning to Germany for at least four months. Unknown to most of the crew, some of her cargo space already had been stuffed with excess food, spare parts, and ammunition for just such an eventuality. Most of the crew stood by glumly, but the captain and First Officer Friedrich Paulsen did their best to whip the crew into a suitable state of patriotic fervor.

Dau's first decision was to begin conducting emergency boat drills that had so far been neglected on the voyage, in the event they should run into an enemy combatant. He then instructed the crew to repaint *Altmark*'s standard black-and-white trim a light yellow, adding a new name, *Sogne,* and new port of origin, Oslo, in an attempt to pass herself off as a neutral merchant ship.

Later that same day, *Altmark* rendezvoused for the first time with *Graf Spee* in the mid-Atlantic, halfway between Dakar and Trinidad. *Altmark*'s crew crowded the rails and took dozens of photos of the impressive warship. Six-inch-diameter pipelines were strung between the two ships to begin topping off *Graf Spee*'s oil bunkers, and Dau went across to confer with Captain Hans Langsdorff. They agreed that *Graf Spee* would meet up again with *Altmark* at a prearranged location on the 25th. Langsdorff assigned two wireless operators to *Altmark* to assist in the decryption of messages. After a full day of steaming together, the two ships parted. On the 4th, they crossed the equator for the first time.

The German government in Berlin vainly hoped that with the fall of Poland the Allied powers would come to their senses and arrive at a negotiated accord, but this did not happen. As *Graf Spee* gracefully rode the swells near *Altmark* during their second rendezvous on September 25, a coded message from Berlin arrived ordering *Graf Spee* into action. On the 26th, the ships parted company again, Langsdorff indicating that he would take his ship as far as possible from Africa, where British naval forces were close at hand, and test the waters off South America instead. Four days later, on September 30, he encountered and sank his first victim, the British steamer *Clement*.

On October 5 and 7, *Graf Spee* sank the British vessel *Newton Beech* and the freighter *Ashlea*. Langsdorff ordered the British crewmen transferred to *Graf Spee* as prisoners. On October 10, *Graf Spee* surprised and captured the British freighter *Huntsman,* a large vessel carrying raw rubber, wool, jute, ore, tea, and leather. Langsdorff barely had sufficient accommodation on board his own ship for *Huntsman*'s 84-man crew. He therefore appointed a prize crew to take her in charge, and together the two ships steamed for *Graf Spee*'s next rendezvous with *Altmark*.

Two days later, on the 14th, the three ships met in the mid-Atlantic. Langsdorff informed Dau that he would have to house the prisoners on board *Altmark*. Dau protested, wondering if it had been necessary to take prisoners at all rather than leaving them to the mercy of the Atlantic and pointing out that the large number

The British destroyer HMS *Cossack* heaves to alongside the elusive German supply ship *Altmark* off the Norwegian coast on February 16, 1940. It was the end of a long search.

Jammed with prisoners from the many conquests of her sister ship, the *Graf Spee,* the German supply ship *Altmark* was en route back to the Fatherland when she was intercepted and boarded by the British Navy off the coast of Norway. **BY JOSEPH M. HORODYSKI**

of British seamen would pose a grave risk to his own vessel. Langsdorff ordered that the British prisoners be well cared for. Dau returned dejectedly to his own ship to prepare accommodations for the POWs. Late in the afternoon, the prisoners were transferred in relays to *Altmark,* where they would be housed in the bottom two decks, above the keep, with no natural light, little ventilation, and a table and makeshift shower as their only luxuries. Of the 141 prisoners, 67 were natives of India.

The prisoners had not been aboard *Altmark* long before it became painfully obvious to them that this was no neutral ship about to take them to freedom. *Huntsman* Captain A.H. Brown became senior officer among the motley crew of captives. Dau let the prisoners make themselves comfortable, instructing *Altmark*'s carpenters to help construct rudimentary tables and chairs for them and even allowing the Hindus among the prisoners to prepare their own meals from *Huntsman*'s captured provisions. Intercepted radio transmissions on October 22 indicated that *Graf Spee* had sunk another freighter, *Trevanion*.

On October 28, *Graf Spee* showed up unannounced, and Dau was invited over for a conference with Langsdorff. Dau became angry when he was instructed to take aboard yet another group of prisoners—his ship was already overcrowded, he protested. Langsdorff informed him that he intended to take *Graf Spee* off on an extended tour of the Indian Ocean. *Altmark*, in effect, was on her own. Dau returned to his ship in a foul mood. *Graf Spee* departed the next day for parts unknown.

On November 19, *Altmark* picked up a news report from Capetown that the freighter *Africa*

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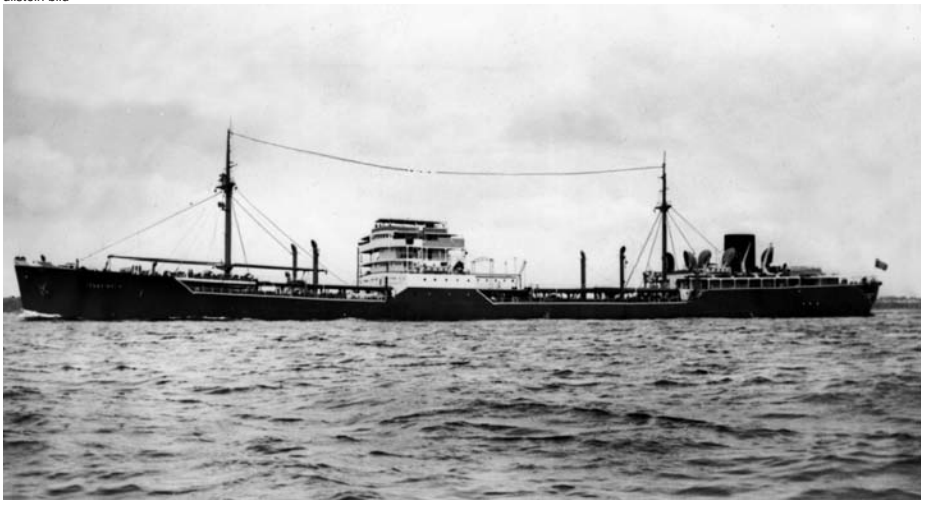


ABOVE: *Altmark,* whose name and trim colors were changed repeatedly, prowls the Atlantic in early 1940. BELOW: The much-feared German pocket battleship *Graf Spee* is scuttled by her crew after suffering heavy damage in Montevideo harbor, Uruguay, in December 1939. OPPOSITE: *Altmark,* moored in Jossingfjord, was photographed by a Lockheed Hudson just before the destroyer *Cossack* led a raid to rescue British priosners.

National Archives

Shell had been sunk four days earlier by an unknown German raider off Madagascar. Dau felt an immense wave of relief; *Graf Spee* was no doubt doubling back to the southern Atlantic. *Altmark* continued steaming in a designated square until the next scheduled rendezvous date with the battleship fell due.

One week later, *Graf Spee* came into view and took up station beside *Altmark* as refueling hoses were passed across to the raider. Dau expected another load of prisoners to be transferred into his custody, but only one man, Captain Patrick Dove of *Africa Shell,* had been taken prisoner. Langsdorff, aware of the overcrowding on *Altmark,* had allowed the rest of the ship's crew to shove off in a lifeboat and make their way to the African coast.

Langsdorff issued a list of 27 prisoners currently aboard *Altmark* to be transferred back to *Graf Spee,* a list composed chiefly of captains, first officers, engineers, wireless operators and seamen in need of medical attention. It was his intention to make one last sweep off of the South American coast and then return home to Germany. The transfer was effected on the 27th, and the next day *Graf Spee* departed on what would prove to be her final voyage.

Everything was in short supply on board *Altmark*—especially cigarettes. The British prisoners soon set up a barter system with the German crew. Five cigarettes from the German supply fetched a brand-new shirt, and eight bought a new pair of shoes, of which the British sailors seemed to have an inexhaustible supply. Conditions eased somewhat, but when the prisoners were advised to set their watches back an hour, it became clear that rather than returning to Europe or a neutral part of the ocean where they might be released, *Altmark* was in fact carrying them farther west.

Altmark had been sailing in circles for the last two days, awaiting Langsdorff's return. On December 6, the two ships met up once again. While *Graf Spee* refueled, 144 more British prisoners were transferred over to *Altmark*. By now, Dau was increasingly nervous. The 300 British prisoners now on board outnumbered his crew by more than two-to-one. Any attempt to take over and seize *Altmark* might well succeed. At 8 AM on the morning of the 7th, he addressed the captives. He reminded them that they were prisoners of war. He would try to make their conditions as comfortable as possible, but their treatment would depend on their good behavior. An *Altmark* sailor who had become too friendly with the British was court-martialed and sentenced to 21 days' confinement.

Shortly afterward, *Graf Spee* sped off; her scout plane had sighted another quarry over the horizon. With *Graf Spee*'s signal flags spelling out "Auf Wiedersehen," she soon disappeared from view. Neither Langsdorff nor Dau knew that they would never see each other again.

Langsdorff headed west to make one final sweep of the busy shipping lanes off South America before heading home in time for Christmas. But on the 13th, *Graf Spee* was sighted by a squadron of three British cruisers, and in a running battle lasting more than three hours, the German vessel was badly damaged and fled into the neutral Uruguayan port of Montevideo. The Uruguayan government ordered the ship to either leave within 72 hours or risk being interned for the duration of the war. Trapped in a harbor by superior British forces waiting for him outside, Langsdorff ordered *Graf Spee* scuttled to prevent her from falling into enemy hands. Then he shot himself.

Dau immediately altered course and attempted to sneak back to Germany. It would take daring, expert seamanship, nerve, and not a little luck. British naval forces, released from their hunt for the pocket battleship, were intent on preventing *Altmark*'s return to Germany. Over the wireless, Dau heard his ship's description broadcast again and again: black hull, white deckhouses, yellow funnel. He set his crew to work changing *Altmark*'s appearance as much as possible, repainting the ship gray and adding wooden and canvas structures to alter the ship's profile.

The British seamen did their best to get the word out to their comrades. Fifty prisoners at a time were allowed topside for an hour of fresh air and exercise whenever weather permitted. On one occasion a group of enterprising sailors prepared a note, giving the number of British sailors being held captive, the name of *Altmark,* and their current position as best as they could

estimate it. They managed to slip the note into a discarded tin can and drop it overboard without being spotted. An alert lookout spotted the object floating in the ship's wake and alerted the captain, who ordered *Altmark* stopped and the object retrieved. When he saw what it was, Dau became outraged. He ordered an investigation to determine who was responsible and threatened to have them shot. The German sailors made a half-hearted investigation. Frustrated, Dau ordered the number of British prisoners allowed topside to be cut in half.

Christmas Eve 1939 brought a little relaxation. Decorations were posted throughout the ship, and a special meal of roast mutton prepared for prisoners and German crew. In the spirit of the season, each prisoner was given a parcel containing half a bar of chocolate, three cigarettes, peppermint candy, soap, and toothbrushes (the last two were especially appreciated). Each German crew member was given a glass of beer, each British prisoner a cup of punch. Music and Christmas carols rang out far into the night.

But all was not well aboard *Altmark*. After thousands of miles of continuous sailing, her engines were in a sorry state. It was all her engineers could do to keep them running; spare parts were in short supply. There was some question as to whether they would hold out long enough to get them home. The British prisoners were allowed a bath only once a week, and the air below deck soon became fetid. In one compartment, 55 men were living, eating, and sleeping. Condensation caused it to be constantly wet. Second Officer Bob Goss of *Ashlea* requested a meeting with Dau and demanded the means to scrub down their compartments. Dau placed him solitary confinement for five days.

On January 28, *Altmark* recrossed the equator. Wary of an uprising, Dau permitted only three British sailors at a time to bring meals back to the rest of the men from the galley. German radio operators scanned the airwaves constantly for any sign that they had been spotted. In the next 10 days, *Altmark*'s lookouts reported other ships on at least six occasions, but due to the high seas, worsening weather, and foggy conditions in the North Atlantic, they escaped detection. On February 7, they passed close to Iceland, slipping successfully past the Faroe Islands. A small group of prisoners, who had been allowed on deck for a rare period of exercise, reported that the name A*ltmark* had ominously reappeared on the bow. They must be getting close to German waters.

On February 13, *Altmark* suddenly came to rest. Rumors spread through the prisoners. Were they in Hamburg? Had they arrived in Germany? Dau came on the intercom system to address his crew; the British captives strained to hear. "Our voyage is nearly over," he began. "We are now safely protected in neutral Norwegian waters. The Fatherland is so close that we can almost reach out and touch it. Two or three days at most, crossing the Skagerrak, and we shall be home to a hero's welcome."

At the Royal Navy's base near Rosyth in the Firth of Forth, a group of British destroyers had just set out on an ice reconnaissance patrol off the Norwegian coast. Led by the cruiser *Arethusa,* the destroyers steamed out in line abreast: HMS *Cossack, Sikh, Nubian, Ivanhoe,* and *Intrepid.* The flotilla made for Norway on what was expected to be a routine patrol.

***Altmark* spent the morning of the 14th waiting for a coastal pilot to navigate her through the** dangerous Norwegian waters, but none was forthcoming. After wasting the entire morning, Dau decided that they would have to make their own way. They got under way again, only to be intercepted by the Norwegian torpedo patrol boat *Trygg.* The Norwegian officer insisted on inspecting the ship. Dau led him up to *Altmark*'s bridge and showed him around, claiming that they were an unarmed tanker. The Norwegian seemed satisfied and issued a certificate that *Altmark* had been inspected and was free to continue. He told Dau that they might pick up a pilot at Alesund.

Upon arriving at Alesund, port officials again insisted on inspecting the ship. They refused to acknowledge *Trygg*'s letter and demanded to know if they were carrying prisoners or weapons. Dau protested his innocence, saying that they had already been searched once. By now the short Artic day was ending and darkness was approaching. The Norwegian official told Dau that *Altmark* would not be permitted to pass the vital fortress at Bergen in the dark.

The British prisoners began shouting, beating on the sides of the ship, banging utensils—anything to attract attention. Dau ordered his officers to put down the revolt using fire hoses; gunfire was to be avoided. Hoses were inserted in the hatch openings and cold water poured forth, drenching the prisoners and flooding the lavatory. The stench was overpowering. Filmy oil rose to the top of the three-inch-deep water. Electricity was cut off to that part of the ship, and the prisoners huddled together shivering in total darkness. Because of their behavior, Dau decreed that the prisoners would receive only bread and water the next day instead of regular rations.

By 6 PM, *Altmark* was again under way. "Permission or no permission, I am going on," Dau insisted. The Norwegian pilots were told that they would be put ashore in the morning. *Altmark*

Imperial War Museum

passed Sogne Fjord, north of Bergen, soon after midnight. Dau estimated that they would be home within 24 hours, provided they could maintain full speed without further interruption. He then noticed with annoyance that *Trygg* was slowly trailing them. Soon a light began signaling them out of the darkness. It was the Norwegian destroyer *Garm,* whose captain demanded to board *Altmark*. Dau protested that it was the third time he had been intercepted and forced to stop by the Norwegians, an act of aggression on the part of a neutral country.

The Norwegian captain insisted that no ship of any nationality would be allowed to pass the fortified area of Bergen without being searched. Dau refused, insisting that his ship had been searched twice already. He demanded that *Garm* transmit a formal complaint to the German embassy in Oslo. He was advised he would have to bring it over in person. Dau felt the noose tightening. After a brief consultation with his senior officers, some of whom felt he was walking into a trap, Dau decided that his only course of action was to go. He motored over to *Garm* in a launch.

Popperfoto/Getty Images

ABOVE: HMS *Cossack* arrives to a hero's welcome at Leith, Scotland, after liberating 300 British prisoners held aboard *Altmark*. BELOW: *Altmark* at bay in Jossingfjord, February 1940. Her officers claimed she was an unarmed tanker.

Imperial War Museum

Norwegian officials refused to accept Dau's assurances regarding the status of *Altmark*. Dau insisted that he needed to pass into the Skagerrak during the hours of darkness to avoid running into British naval patrols. "Today, tomorrow, what difference does it make" was the reply. Dau began to suspect that the Norwegians, despite their proclamation of neutrality, were in the pay of the British. He returned to his ship, barely containing his temper. Soon after Dau's departure, the Bergen district commander sent an urgent signal to the British embassy in Olso, which quickly alerted the Admiralty that *Altmark* was steaming two miles off the Norwegian coast. The First Lord himself set the hunt in motion. He ordered all available aircraft in the area to be on the lookout for the German supply ship.

By 8 AM on the 16th, *Altmark* was just north of Stavanger. The Skagerrak was only 100 miles ahead. Dau, who had managed only two hours of fitful sleep during the night, decided to stop for the day and resume the voyage under cover of darkness. By dawn the next day they would be in Germany.

But *Altmark*'s time had run out. All the delays during the previous 24 hours had eaten up precious hours of darkness. At 12:55 PM, an RAF Hudson spotted *Altmark* making eight knots in the fjord below and dove down for a closer look. All aircraft were under strict orders not to attack for fear of injuring the British sailors onboard. The Hudson quickly radioed the sighting and began shadowing the German ship. Night at these latitudes was only four hours away.

At 2:45 PM, *Altmark*'s lookouts spotted three ships ahead: the cruiser *Arethusa,* followed by the destroyers *Intrepid* and *Ivanhoe*. *Altmark* ran up to half speed. A new Norwegian gunboat, *Skarv,* was also shadowing them. Dau radioed that the ships ahead were armed warships sailing in Norwegian territorial waters, and that it was the Norwegians' duty to stop them. The Norwegians ignored the signal.

By 3:15 the British had approached close enough that *Intrepid* began to swing out a motorboat for boarding and put a shot across *Altmark*'s bows, ordering her to stop. *Intrepid*'s captain attempted to interpose his ship between *Altmark* and the coast. *Altmark* was now passing the entrance to ice-choked Jossingfjord. Dau ordered *Altmark* to enter at full speed. The ice groaned and creaked as *Altmark* forced her way through the packed ice. The ship shuddered, then made it through into the open water of the fjord before coming to a full stop. There was nowhere left to go.

Where *Altmark* had ground to a halt the fjord was only 400 yards wide. *Skarv* followed in *Altmark*'s wake and came to a halt 300 yards behind. Off to one side lay another Norwegian gunboat, *Kjell*. Outside the fjord's entrance lay the two British destroyers who had attempted to intercept *Altmark,* joined by *Cossack,* whose captain, Philip Vian, was eager to board the tanker. The fjord was narrow, and it greatly restricted ship movement. He decided to go in alone.

Disregarding orders from the Norwegian vessels to leave their territorial waters, Vian ordered *Cossack* to resume moving toward *Altmark*. At around 11 PM, *Cossack* came to a grinding halt alongside *Altmark*. Her railings had been removed to allow the boarding party unimpeded access to *Altmark,* whose crew was standing by. Dau ordered the prisoners kept below to prevent them from overrunning the ship. *Altmark* slowly began moving astern in an attempt to use her superior weight to push the British destroyer into the steep banks of the fjord.

Vian anticipated Dau's plan. He ordered *Cossack* swung around to meet *Altmark*'s weight full on, countering the German's ship action with his own, and preventing *Cossack* from being pushed onto the ice. The two ships crunched together briefly as they came into contact, then started to separate. At that moment a 24-man boarding party led by Lt. Cmdr. Bradwell Turner started to jump across to *Altmark,* but only a few made it before the distance grew too great. Vian brought the British destroyer alongside the German supply ship again. Shouting and fixing bayonets, the British sailors quickly joined their comrades already on *Altmark,* whose crewmen were desperately trying to launch a lifeboat in

an attempt to escape. One opened fire on the boarding party with a rifle. They were answered with a hail of small-arms fire. Two stewards and a stoker were hit. The lifeboat crashed onto the ice below.

Outnumbered six-to-one, the British boarders used the butts of their rifles to deal with any *Altmark* crewmen who resisted. A group quickly made its way to *Altmark*'s bridge, where Dau tried to pass himself off as a Norwegian pilot but then admitted to being *Altmark*'s captain. On the opposite side of *Altmark,* German sailors were trying to lower another lifeboat to escape from the British. Four or five had already begun making their way down the lines into the lifeboat. A British sailor raised his rifle and put several shots through the bottom of the lifeboat. Water immediately began filling the bottom of the boat, putting an end to the latest escape attempt.

Turner demanded to know where the British prisoners were being held. Dau offered to lead the way himself. The Germans began acting nervously, asking if they were going to be taken off the ship. Turner became suspicious. He asked the German officers whether *Altmark* had been fitted with scuttling charges. The officers on the bridge refused to answer directly, saying that it was a matter for the captain to address.

After the British boarded *Altmark, Cossack* withdrew to a distance of about four ship's lengths, ready to deal with any Norwegian gunboats that might try to interfere. They could hear the shots being fired and shouts in German and English coming from *Altmark*. *Cossack*'s radio officer picked up signals from the German ship to Berlin, saying that they were being boarded and murdered by British sailors. They asked that ships and aircraft be sent to their assistance. The ship was set to blow at midnight.

Vian ordered the rescue operation to be speeded up. He brought *Cossack* back alongside *Altmark*. At that moment a cry of "Man overboard!" rang out. Two British sailors immediately jumped into the freezing water, took hold of the man, and swam to safety. To their surprise, the man turned out to be a German sailor who had jumped overboard in a desperate bid to escape. He was already dead.

Turner and four or five British sailors, led by Dau, made their way down to one of the cargo hatches. The cover was opened and flung back. Turner called down into the blackness, "Any Englishmen down there?" Almost 300 voices responded at once, "Yes, we're all English down here." "Then come on up. The Navy's here!" It was a moment no one, prisoners or rescuers, would ever forget.

Popperfoto/Getty Images

Exultant British seamen and rescued prisoners celebrate aboard HMS *Cossack* following the successful rescue mission.

One by one the prisoners began to make their way up a ladder. Dau meekly apologized as they began to gather on deck, but the freed men ignored him. One British prisoner walked over to where some Germans were being held at gunpoint and, fulfilling a promise he had made to himself, punched the first German he could. "What the bloody hell kept you?" some of the prisoners said.

Vian watched from *Cossack*'s bridge as the prisoners crossed to his ship in a steady stream. It was 15 minutes to midnight. Some of the British boarders began leading a group of German prisoners over to *Cossack* at gunpoint. "Leave them, you fool!" Vian called out. "Leave all Germans behind! I don't want them!" The British sailors were happy to comply. The last of the boarding party rifled through Dau's personal safe for confidential papers and helped themselves to a swastika-decorated paperweight and a few other choice items as souvenirs. Dau cursed them as thieves and criminals.

The last of the British captives had now left their prison ship. Some were already down in *Cossack*'s mess eating their first decent meal in weeks. Vian took one last look around from *Cossack*'s bridge. *Altmark,* only moments before alive with noise and activity, was now silent. Searchlights swept the length of the tanker one last time, then Vian ordered his ship to cast off. *Cossack* slowly moved out of Jossingfjord, carrying the liberated prisoners toward the open sea and their voyage home.

The *London Times* headline the next day rang out in bold letters: "DASHING RESCUE." Newsreel cameras were dockside to record the prisoners' homecoming. Winston Churchill made the most of the success, praising the Royal Navy for liberating the British seamen from their floating prison and gallantly rescuing a drowning German seaman (without reporting that he died moments later). For the British public, the *Altmark* affair was the one bright spot in a long winter of bad news, the final end to the saga of *Graf Spee*.

As it turned out, *Altmark* did not blow up after all. No scuttling charges had been set. *Altmark* was soon repaired and sailed under Dau's command to Kiel harbor. Renamed *Uckermark* and given a new captain, she returned to sea. On November 30, 1942, she was in Yokohama harbor, Japan, alongside the German auxiliary cruiser *Thor,* which she was in the midst of resupplying, when she suddenly exploded and sank to the bottom of the harbor. Sabotage was suspected but never proved. Some 53 of her crew, the majority of them veterans of the *Graf Spee* cruise of 1939, were killed and an equal number wounded. Their former captain, Heinrich Dau, was not among them. In forced retirement, he remained in Germany and took his own life on the day that the Nazis surrendered in May 1945. □

KEEP TO YOUR SABERS, MEN

BY COWAN BREW

Confederate Brigadier General Wade Hampton, momentarily alone, desperately fends off enemy saber blows in a swirling melee in the farmland south of the York Turnpike at Gettysburg in Don Troiani's painting, *Hampton's Duel.*

AN ANGRY GLOOM hung like dust over the 6,000 Confederate cavalrymen trooping up the York Turnpike in the early dawn of July 3, 1863. After eight long and largely unproductive days in the saddle, the horsemen were setting out on a last-ditch effort to disrupt and disarrange the rear of the Union Army confronting General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the tiny crossroads town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. A blood-red sun—always an evil portent to experienced campaigners—shone directly into the men's eyes, and the damp summer heat was already soaking through their short, gray uniform jackets. It was clear to everyone that the day would only get hotter, literally and figuratively, before it was over.

No one was angrier or gloomier than the troopers' famous commander, James Ewell Brown Stuart. The day before, the flame-bearded young general had sauntered into Lee's headquarters tent on Seminary Ridge at Gettysburg, expecting the usual courtly greeting from his old friend and mentor. Instead, an obviously angry Lee, worn and distracted by two days of unparalleled savagery with nothing to show for it but a bloody stalemate, glanced sharply at Stuart with cold, dark eyes. "General Stuart, where have you been?" he asked brusquely. When Stuart attempted to describe his recent whereabouts, Lee cut him off with a withering look. "I have not heard a word from you for days," he seethed, "and you are the eyes and ears of my army." Embarrassed observers said later that Stuart looked as though he had been slapped in the face. He accepted the rebuke with a lowered head.

While Robert E. Lee's Confederate infantry prepared a last desperate charge on the Union lines at Gettysburg, cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart planned his own eleventh-hour gambit—a daring attack on the enemy rear.

Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalartprints.com

The fact that both men shared the blame for Stuart's untoward absence made the meeting no less uncomfortable. Lee, as was his increasing habit, had given Stuart a vague, all-encompassing order to "pass around" the Union Army massed below the Potomac River in northeastern Virginia and "collect all the supplies you can for the use of the army." At the same time, he had directed his 30-year-old cavalry commander to screen Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell's II Corps as it advanced into Maryland and to break off his expedition if he ran into any "hindrance" from the Federals. Having made a household name for himself a year earlier by riding completely around a similar Union Army under Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan in Virginia, Stuart intended to duplicate that noteworthy raid. He and his men never considered Union soldiers, whether cavalry or infantry, a particular hindrance to their plans. The still-painful memory of the drawn cavalry battle at Brandy Station, Virginia, three weeks earlier gave added motivation to the southern riders.

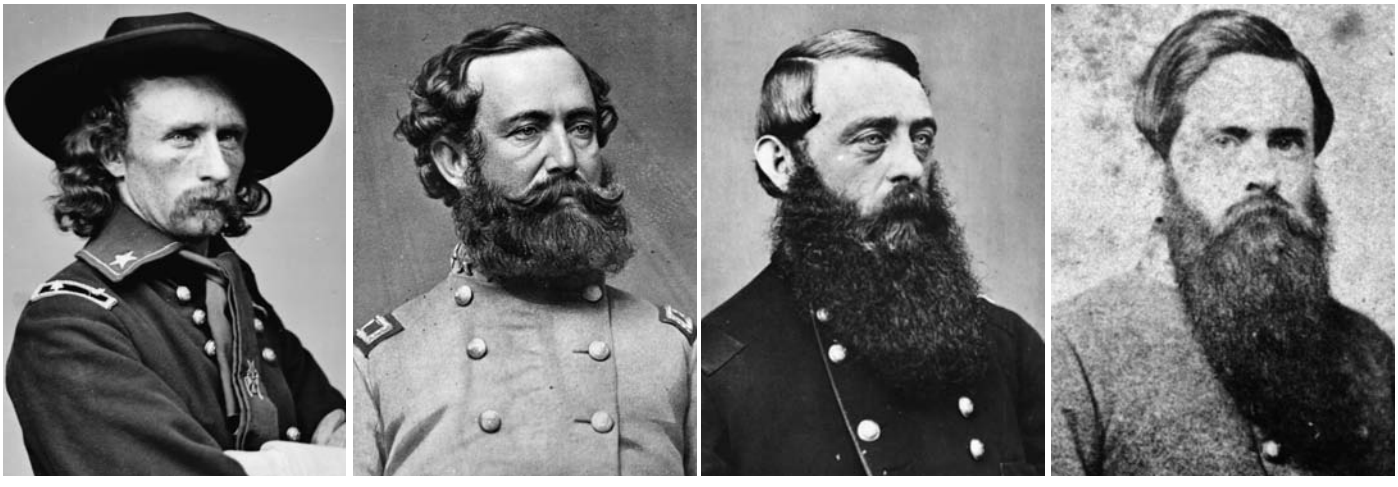
Beginning on June 25, Stuart's horsemen rode east from Salem, Virginia, intending to turn north and link up with Ewell around York, Pennsylvania. In the meantime, Lee's massive army began moving northward as well, mounting its second invasion of enemy soil in nine months. The first invasion had ended badly at the Battle of Antietam; Lee intended the second one to go much better. For that to happen, he needed accurate information from his cavalry arm, but for once he was let down in his expectations. The brigadier generals Stuart left behind to guard Lee's flanks, Beverly Robertson and William "Grumble" Jones, were not up to the task. Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, commanding Lee's I Corps, complained later with some justice that Stuart had left them his least favorite officers. Stuart could scarcely argue with that assessment. He considered Robertson "by far the most troublesome man I had to deal with," in no small part because Robertson had been a former suitor of Stuart's wife, Flora, and a protégé of his much-despised father-in-law, Union Brig. Gen. Phillip S. George Cooke, in the Old Army. The irascible Jones had more than lived up to his nickname of "Grumble" on numerous occasions, and, although he was a better general than Robertson, he was outranked by the other officer. In the confused command situation, each failed to notify Lee that the Union forces had broken camp and set out after him. As long as Stuart was out of touch, Lee was effectively flying blind—hardly the best way to begin the most crucial campaign of the war.

Meanwhile, free of his unlikable subordinates, Stuart galloped east with his battle-tested troopers. Stuart sent his most reliable scout, John Singleton Mosby, ahead to map out the best route across Maryland into Pennsylvania. Mosby, who would later win fame as the "Gray Ghost," leading the 43rd Battalion of Virginia cavalry on numerous independent raids in northern Virginia, reported back that Stuart could pass easily around the widely dispersed Union Army in western Maryland. It was a dangerously upbeat assessment, and it cost Stuart several hours when he discovered that the Federals had already moved out and occupied the road at Haymarket, Virginia, on which Stuart had expected to move. Had Stuart returned to Lee then, or at any rate reported the enemy movement, it might have changed the entire course of the campaign. Instead, Stuart was content to graze his horses in a field nearby while the unsuspecting Federals passed unimpeded.

Crossing the Potomac at Rowser's Ford, Stuart tore up a portion of the C&O Canal and swooped down on 125 enemy supply wagons at Rockville, Maryland, driving the fleeing teamsters all the way to the outskirts of the nation's capital at Washington. Instead of burning the wagons and continuing with all haste to join Ewell's vanguard, Stuart wrongly decided to hold onto the bulky wagons and their treasure trove of hams, sugar, and whiskey. This was the very definition of a hindrance, but Stuart blithely ignored Lee's injunction and continued northeastward—farther and farther away from Lee's army. Two days later, Lee was still telling Brig. Gen. Isaac Trimble, "I have not yet heard that the enemy have crossed the Potomac, and am waiting to hear from General Stuart." He would continue waiting for several days.

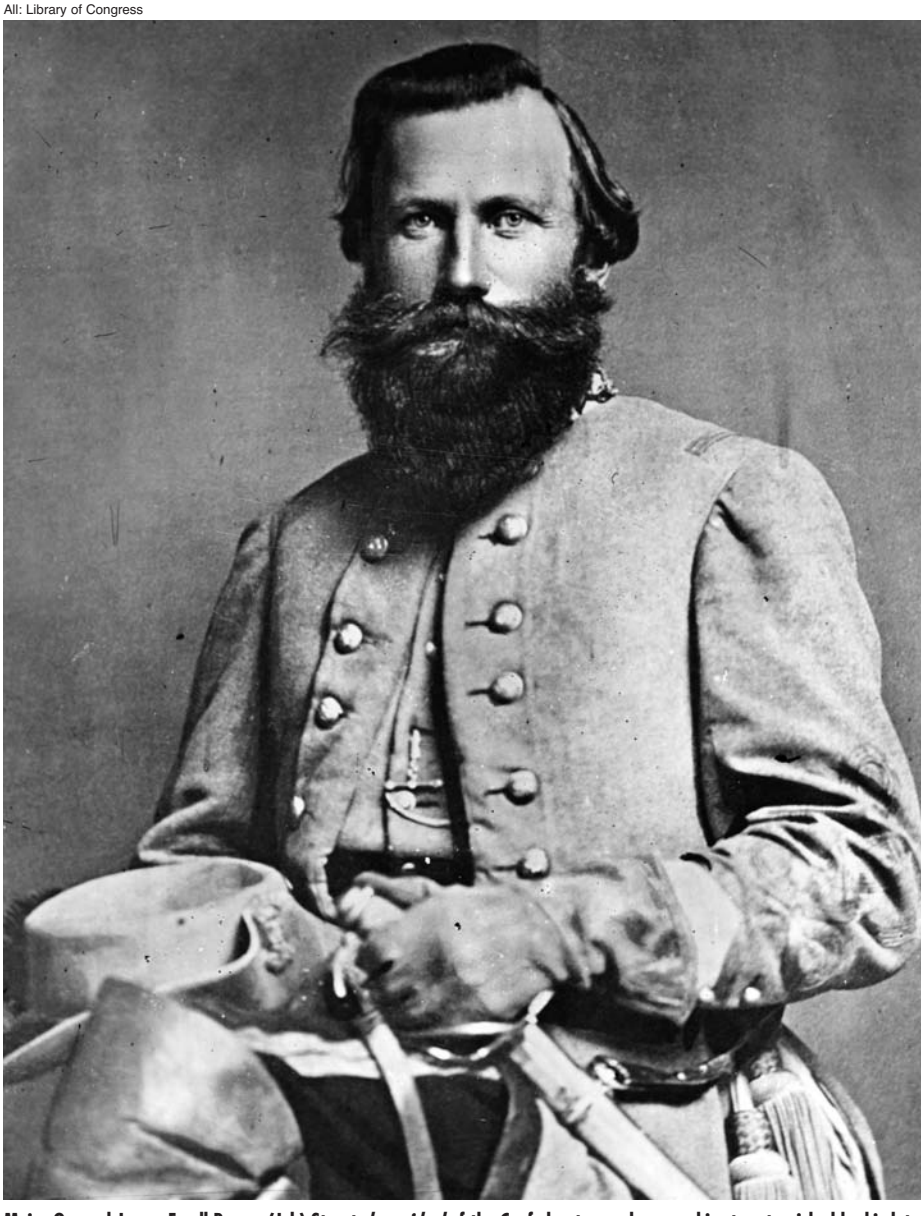
While their infantry comrades stumbled blindly into a major confrontation with the Union Army of Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade south of Gettysburg, Stuart's horsemen wasted precious hours tearing up a six-mile stretch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and paroling the 400 prisoners taken at Rockville. The hungry and thirsty mules pulling the captured wagons became increasingly unmanageable, a "source of unmitigated annoyance," according to Stuart aide Lieutenant William Blackford. Repeated clashes with screening Union cavalry further impeded Stuart's progress. In one close-run encounter near Hanover, Pennsylvania, Stuart had to leap his horse, Virginia, across a 15-foot-deep gully to avoid capture or death. Meanwhile, an anxious Lee paced about his tent, asking new arrivals: "Have you heard anything about my cavalry? Any news to give me about General Stuart?" For several days, the answer to both those questions was a dispiriting "no."

At last, on the afternoon of July 2, Stuart's column finally reached the outskirts of Gettys-



LEFT TO RIGHT: Brigadier General George A. Custer. Brigadier General Wade Hampton. Brigadier General David M. Gregg. Brigadier General Fitzhugh Lee.

All: Library of Congress



Major General James Ewell Brown (Jeb) Stuart, *beau ideal* of the Confederate cavalry, saw his stars tarnished by his late arrival at Gettysburg.

burg. Locating Lee's headquarters on Seminary Ridge, the weary cavalryman entered and saluted his commander. "Well, General Stuart, you are here at last," said Lee, before delivering his terse, devastating rebuke. With Lee's clipped words ringing in his ears, Stuart headed out again the next morning, marching northeast, then south, across the open countryside between the Hanover Road and the Baltimore Pike. Colonel Milton Ferguson's brigade led the advance. At Cress's Ridge, a long, low hill overlooking the farmland south of the York Turnpike, Stuart stopped to take stock of the situation. After scanning the surrounding countryside, he sent Lt. Col. Andrew Witcher's 34th Battalion forward to seize a nearby farm and fence line owned by local farmer John Rummel, half a mile to the east.

While Stuart's skirmishers were creeping forward, his blue-clad counterparts in the Federal cavalry had not been inactive. Brig. Gen. David McMurtrie Gregg, a native Pennsylvanian commanding the 2nd Division, moved swiftly to block the dangerously open terrain north of the Baltimore Pike, asking cavalry commander Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton for an additional brigade to help safeguard the position. Pleasonton agreed, sending Gregg a grass-green young brigadier named George Armstrong Custer from the 3rd Division to assist in the defense.

Custer, the goat of the 1861 graduating class at West Point, had worn his general's stars only for a few days, but already he had made a name for himself among Union horsemen. One of three "boy generals" promoted by Pleasonton in early June (Elon Farnsworth and Wesley Merritt were the other two) to give more youthful élan to the cavalry, the 24-year-old Custer was a natural-born self-dramatist. Wearing a gaudy nonregulation uniform that he had designed himself of black velvet trimmed with interlocking gold lace on the sleeves, a wide-collared navy blue shirt, and a bright red necktie, Custer ensured that he would always be the most colorful officer on any battlefield. Long blond hair falling nearly to his shoulders completed the corsair look. His new command greeted his arrival with veteran humor. "Who is the child?" they joked. "Where is his nurse?" After helping beat back Stuart's advance at Hanover, Custer won their grudging respect. Now they called him "the Boy General of the Golden Locks."

Gregg placed Custer's division, composed of all Michigan troops from the 1st, 5th, 6th, and 7th Regiments, at the intersection of the Hanover and Low Dutch roads. Custer positioned the 5th and 7th Regiments, facing north, in an open field where the two roads crossed; the 6th was farther west along Little's Run, a shallow stream flowing south from the farm. Dismounted scouts reached the base of Cress's Ridge and dashed back to report that two brigades of Rebel cavalry, supported by artillery, were moving through the trees on the high ground, little more than a mile away. Custer immediately wheeled about six mounted artillery pieces served by his old West Point friend, Lieutenant Alexander Pennington. Four quick rounds from a Confederate Parrott rifle ripped through the air. Union Colonel John McIntosh, commanding Gregg's 1st Brigade, rode up to Custer and asked for a summary report of the enemy's location. "I think you will find the woods out there full of them," Custer replied with a smirk, pointing toward Cress's Ridge. McIntosh dismounted skirmishers of his own from the 3rd Pennsylvania, 1st New Jersey, and Purnell (Maryland) Legion.

Custer and McIntosh were in the process of organizing a defensive line when a literally earth-shaking blast began two miles away. Seeking to soften up the Union center preparatory to the desperate frontal assault that would become known as Pickett's Charge, massed Confederate cannons had just unleashed the largest display of concentrated artillery fire ever heard on the North American continent. The ground shook beneath the Union cavalrymen and smoke rolled across the valley beyond. It appeared as though the very woods around them had been set on fire. The world seemed to be coming to an end.

Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalartprints.com

Whether by coincidence, design, or sheer inspiration, Stuart launched his own attack shortly after the ear-splitting cannonade began. His plan, he explained later in an after-battle report, was to keep the enemy pinned down in the front by sharpshooting skirmishers while sending his mounted forces around to attack the enemy left. The strategy began unraveling almost as soon as it began. By an oversight on the part of their acting brigade commander (Brig. Gen. Albert Gallatin Jenkins, the regular commander, had been wounded by a sniper the day before), Witcher's men had advanced with only 10 rounds of ammunition apiece. They quickly expended all their rounds in a nasty firefight with members of the 5th Michigan and 1st New Jersey, and pulled back to the Rummel farm to await reinforcements.

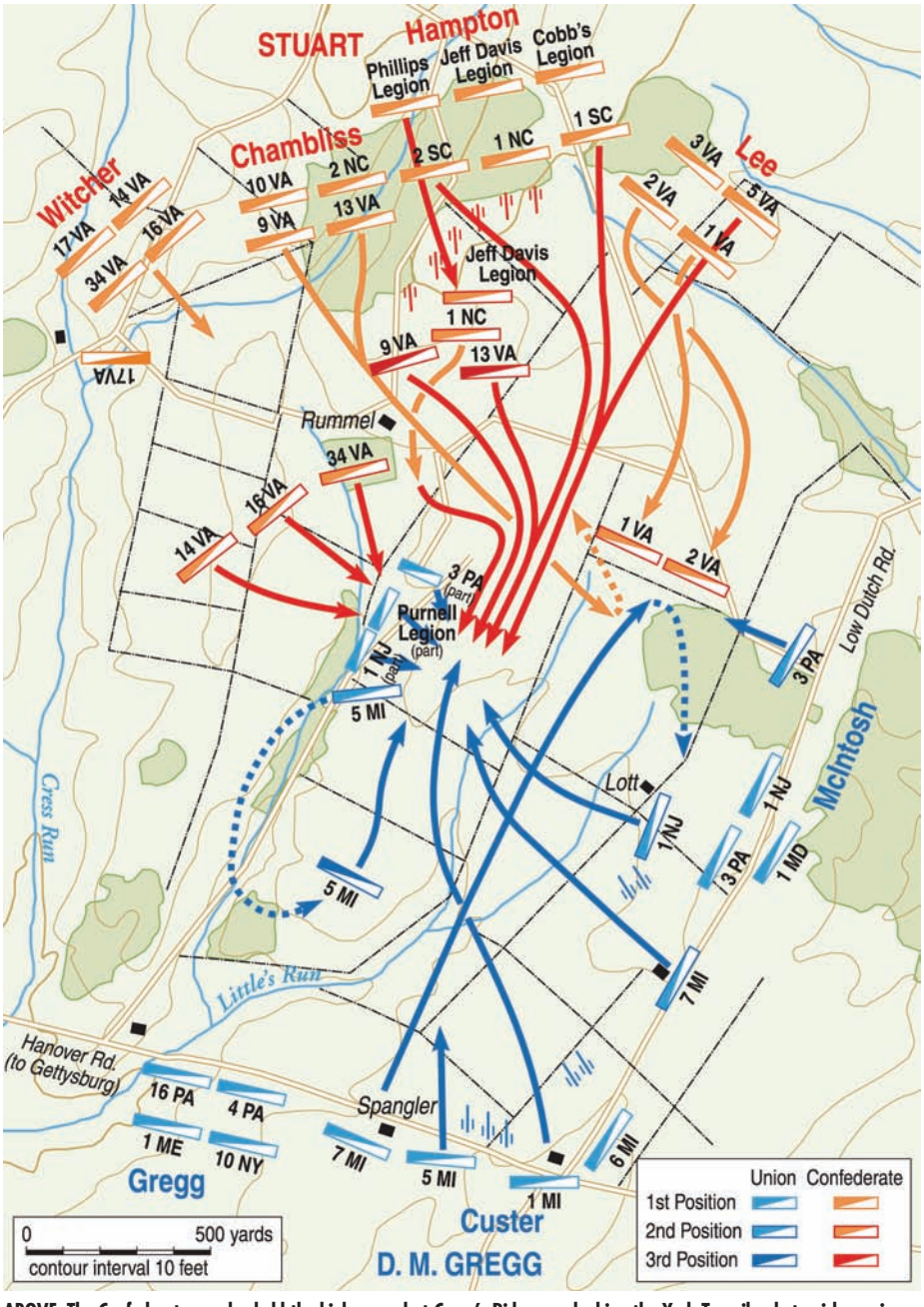
Stuart had been hoping to keep his mounted brigades hidden while they formed ranks and drove into the Union flank, but the battle seemed to be quickly getting away from him. Shoring up Witcher's skirmish line, he sent Brig. Gens. Wade Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee into the fray. The southern horsemen, in columns of four, galloped across the open field below Rummel's farm and crashed into Custer's right flank. Peppered by fire from Witcher's newly replenished battalion, the 5th Michigan fell back in disarray toward their artillery. Gregg, watching the battle unfold, ordered the 7th Michigan, which had been standing in reserve, to mount a counterattack. Custer, reacting swiftly for a neophyte brigade commander, drew his sword, reared up in his saddle, and cried, "Come on, you Wolverines!"

Spearheaded by 21-year-old regimental commander Colonel William D. Mann, the 7th Michigan troops directed a relentless pistol fire at the Confederates, who had taken cover behind a low post-and-rail fence. The retreating members of the 5th Michigan stopped dead in their tracks to watch the attack. The two sides came together with a sound like falling timber. "So violent was the collision," reported Captain William E. Miller of the 3rd Pennsylvania, "that many horses were turned end over end and crushed their riders beneath them." Miller himself reported receiving "a slight scratch"—actually a bullet through his arm. The fence broke up the charging Union column "into jelly, mixing us up like a mass of pulp." The two sides flailed at each other with sabers and blasted away with pistols and carbines. It was literally hand-to-hand combat. When

farmer Rummel returned to his home after the battle, he found two dead men lying in the lane amid 30 dead horses, their stiffened fingers still embedded in each other's lifeless throats.

Thinking quickly, some of the Michiganders leaped off their horses and leveled a piece of the fence, allowing the rest of their mounted comrades to pour through. "Kill all you can and do your best for each other," Mann urged. Custer led the 7th Michigan forward, aiming at a Rebel battery posted just below the Rummel farm. "At them we went, every man for himself," boasted coincidentally named Captain George Armstrong. The 7th Michigan, from the Grand Rapids area, was the least experienced regiment in Custer's brigade; most of the men had seen only patrol duty since arriving at the front two months earlier. They soon got the worst of it with the more battle-savvy Confederates, who clung to the necks of their horses like Apache Indians and fired at them from below with their pistols. Everyone was screaming like banshees. Sabers thudded into skulls with the sickening sound of a stick bursting a ripe watermelon. The fight, "desperate but unequal," according to Mann, lasted for 10 minutes—it seemed longer to those in the midst of it—with the 7th Michigan losing more than 100 men in the fray. Private Allan Price of the 6th Michigan, observing the contest, recalled later: "The 7th Michigan made a charge and got all cut to pieces. It was the first charge they ever made and it was awful work."

Custer disagreed. "I challenge the annals of warfare to produce a more brilliant or successful charge of cavalry," he wrote later. Those who had been in the charge agreed wholeheartedly with that assessment. "This is the most furious dragoon fight I ever saw or engaged in," Dexter M. Macomber of the 6th Michigan noted in his diary. A comrade in the same unit, Andrew Newton Buck, called it "the hardest battle of the war. Cavalry never did such fighting before in America."



ABOVE: The Confederate cavalry held the high ground at Cress's Ridge overlooking the York Turnpike, but quick-moving Union cavalry blocked the roads back to Gettysburg. LEFT: George Armstrong Custer, sporting his trademark red necktie, exhorts, "Come on, you Wolverines!" in Don Troiani's painting of the same name. He and his Michigan brigade made their reputation at Gettysburg.

Edward Corselius of the 5th Michigan combined the sentiments. "Such fighting I never saw before," he wrote to his mother. "It is an honor to belong to Mich[igan] Cavalry."

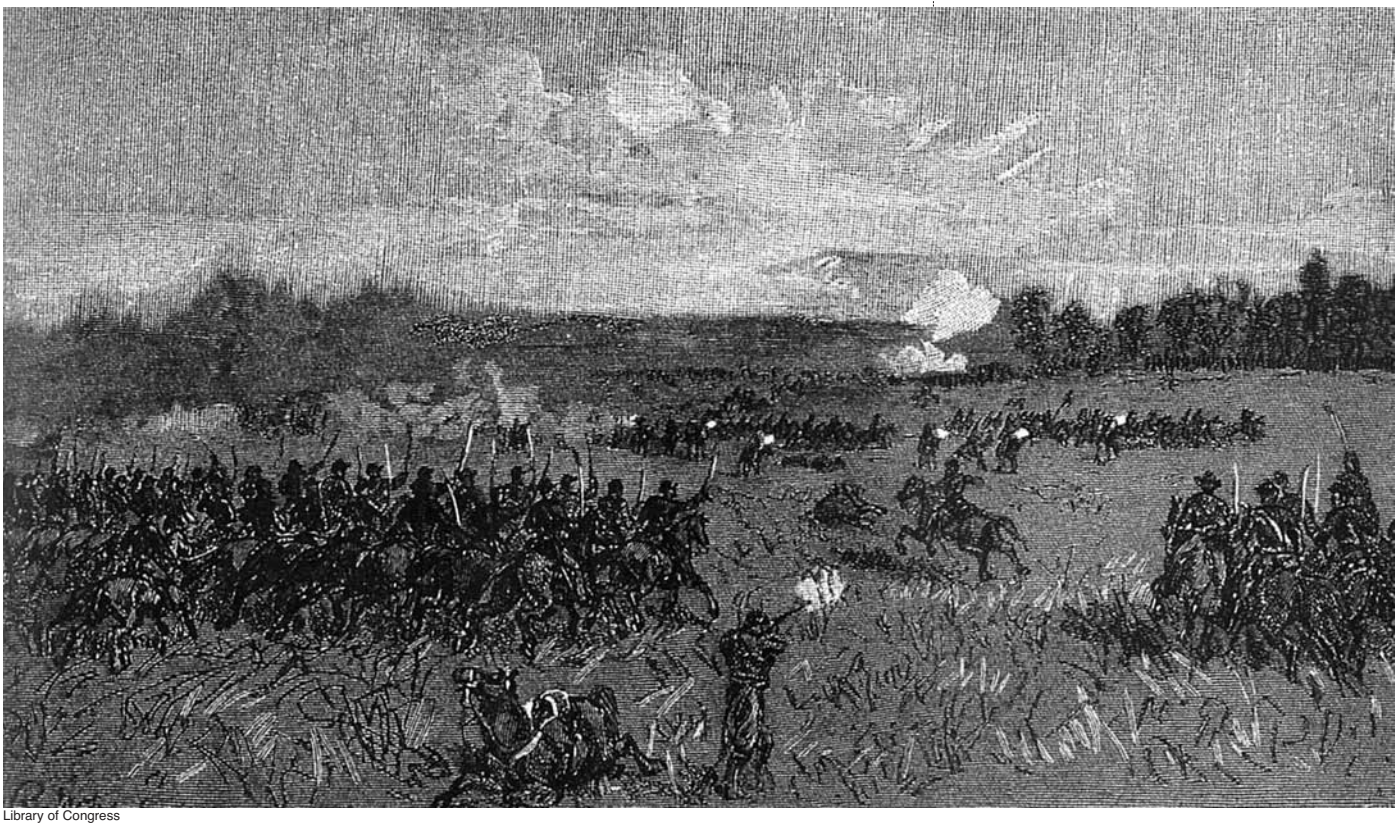
At the time, carried away by excitement, Custer dashed forward into the open field beyond the fence, only to look back in horror and see the rest of the regiment still bogged down behind him. Hastily ordering the bugler to sound retreat, Custer had his men wheel about just as two fresh Confederate regiments, the 1st North Carolina and the Jeff Davis Legion, rode down to meet them. Fitzhugh Lee's vaunted 1st Virginia joined the charge. Custer was suddenly in danger of being cut off. "We must get back behind the guns," he rather needlessly advised Captain Armstrong. The two rode for their lives. Colonel McIntosh arrived on the scene, exhorting the retreating soldiers to hold their positions. "For God's sake, men, if you are ever going to stand, stand now, for you are on your own free soil!" he shouted. Colonel Russell A. Alger, 5th Michigan commander and later secretary of war under President William McKinley, organized a volley into the enemy's onrushing flank. The southerners recoiled and withdrew to the comparative safety of Cress's Ridge.

Watching from the crest, Stuart worried that his men's inherent aggressiveness had carried them too far. "The charge being very much prolonged, their horses, already jaded by hard marching, failed under it," he reported later. "Their movement was too rapid to be stopped by couriers, and the enemy perceiving it, were turning upon them with fresh horses." Brigade commander Wade Hampton of South Carolina shared Stuart's concern. Grabbing his personal colors, Hampton spurred his enormous war horse, Butler, down the ridge toward his imperiled troopers, shouting for them to fall back. Major T.J. Barker, Hampton's adjutant, saw the colors waving through the smoke and mistakenly believed that he had signaled an all-out advance. Barker gathered up the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiments, along with Phillips Legion, and followed Hampton into the maelstrom. Looking back over his shoulder, Hampton was shocked to see the entire brigade dashing after him. Nevertheless, his own blood was up. "Charge them, my brave boys, charge them!" he cried.

The Union troopers watched the advance in open-mouthed wonder. Captain Miller of the 3rd Pennsylvania recorded the scene for posterity in awestruck terms: "A grander spectacle than their advances has rarely been beheld," he wrote. "They marched with well-aligned fronts and steady reins. Their polished saber-blades dazzled in the sun. All eyes turned upon them. Shell and shrapnel met the dancing Confederates and tore through their ranks. Closing the gaps as though nothing had happened, on they came. As they drew nearer, canister was substituted by our artillerymen for shell, and horse after horse staggered and fell. Still they came on." Southern officers sought to maintain order amid the chaos. "Keep to your sabers, men, keep to your sabers," they urged.

The Union gunners opened on the approaching horsemen, trying to slow them down. Horses and men fell, head over heels, but the mass of Confederate riders kept advancing. There were simply too many of them to stop. The artillerymen rammed double shots of canister—one-inch steel balls packed tightly in cylinders—into their guns and fired point-blank at their attackers. Custer's old West Point comrade Alexander Pennington directed a "dreadful havoc" of shells into the Confederate ranks. "On came the Rebel cavalry, yelling like demons, right toward the battery we were supporting, sweeping everything before them," Union cavalryman George Kidd remembered.

Gregg, taking personal charge of the battle, ordered a countercharge. Custer was quick to oblige. Riding up to his only uncommitted regiment, the 1st Michigan, he approached its commander, Colonel Charles H. Town. Speaking with elaborate formality, perhaps as a way of keeping his own nerves steady, Custer said, "Colonel Town, I shall have to ask you to charge, and I want to go in with you." Town, who was dying of tuberculosis, had to be strapped into his saddle before the battle. Some said he was courting a soldier's death on the



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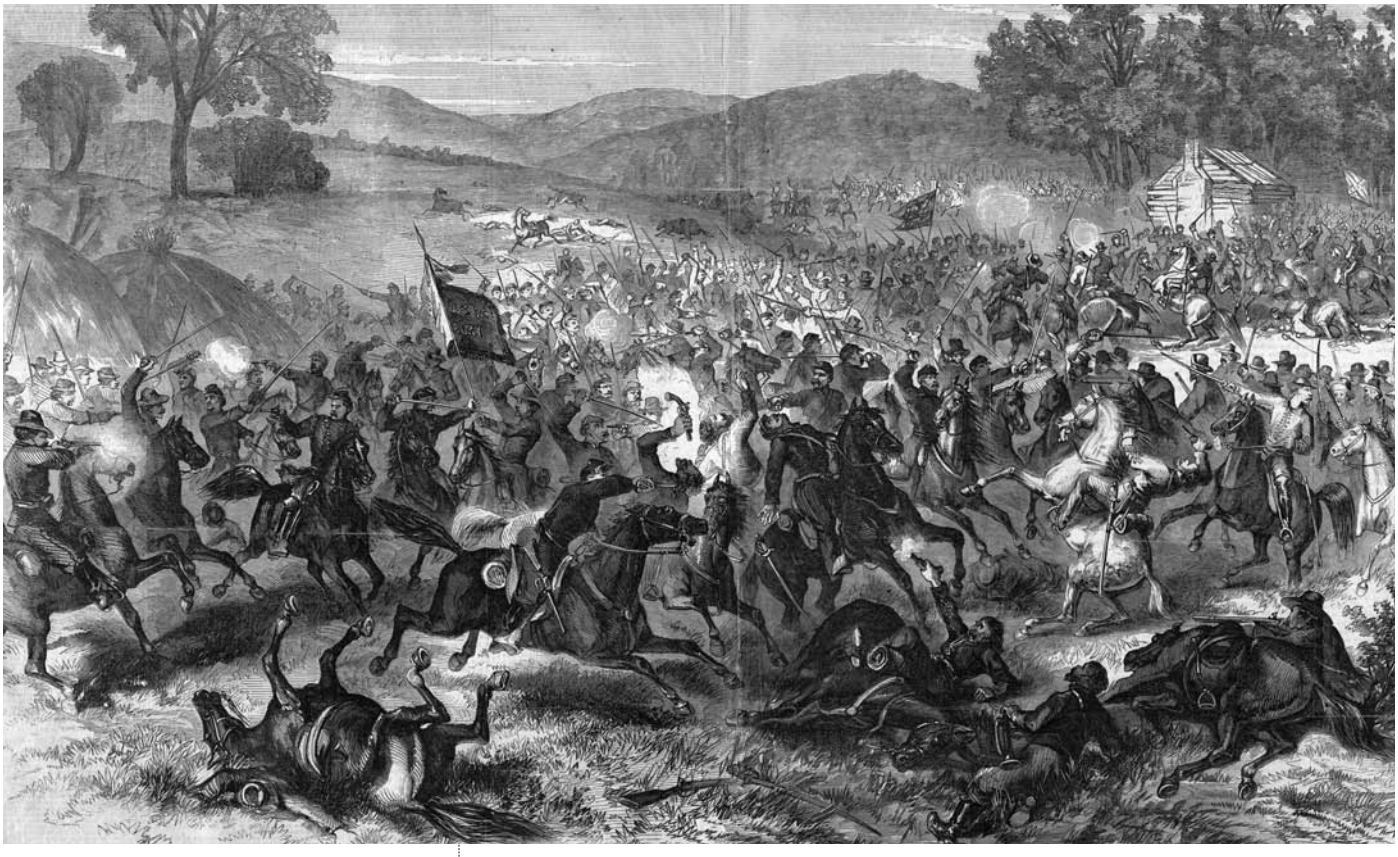


ABOVE: Union Brigadier General John Buford fought a follow-up battle with Stuart's cavalry at Boonsboro, five days after Gettysburg. From *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.* OPPOSITE: Battlefield artist Alfred Waud sketched the charge of the 1st Virginia Cavalry and the countercharge by the 1st Michigan in the rolling Pennsylvania farmland.

battlefield to avoid wasting away in a consumptive's bed. Whatever his motivation, he obeyed immediately and got the regiment moving. It was now 3 PM.

Private Cassius Norton of Company M described the ensuing charge. "We went out with a trot in columns of squadrons," he recalled. "At the time the command 'charge' was given we bounded from a trot into a gallop, the hill and its sides towards us crowded with screaming advancing rebels headed for us, 3 or 4 columns of them, while beyond our right was the shattered 7th rallying as best they could here and there." "Come on, you Wolverines!" Custer shouted again, vaulting from his stumbling charger, Roanoke, onto a nearby riderless horse and swiping at an oncoming Rebel with his saber.

Where a narrow lane crossed the farmland, the fighting peaked in intensity. Hampton, a strapping 6 feet, 2 inches tall, towered over the battlefield. Several Union troopers, attracted by Hampton's massive figure and the glinting gold stars on his collar, raced to surround him. Hampton unhorsed one attacker with his sword, unloading his revolver at the others. Hemmed in against a fence, the general faced sure capture or death. Two Mississippians from the Jeff Davis Legion rode to his rescue but were sabered off their horses by the milling Federals. Other swords sliced open Hampton's forehead and ripped through his uniform. With all his fast-ebbing strength, Hampton raised his heavy sword and brought it down on an attacker's head, splitting him open from crown to chin. Literally soaked in blood, the general reeled in the saddle while wary Federal troopers circled him, looking for an opening to finish him off.

At the critical moment, Sergeant Nat Price of the 1st North Carolina galloped into the melee, shooting down one Yank who was aiming a killing blow at Hampton's head. Other Confederates dashed to the general's aid as well. "General, they are too many for us!" Price cried. "For God's sake, leap your horse over the fence; I'll die before they have you!" Although stunned by the near-fatal blows, Hampton leaped the fence to safety. In midair, a piece of shrapnel smashed into his side, almost unhorsing him, but the lifelong horseman kept to the saddle and dashed up Cress's Ridge to safety, relinquishing command to Colonel Laurence Baker of the 1st North Carolina as he was helped from the saddle. It would be several months before Hampton could return to active service.

Intense personal combat was taking place all over the battlefield. Captain Walter Newhall of the 3rd Pennsylvania spurred his mount toward a flag-bearer from Hampton's brigade. Reaching out to seize the standard, Newhall was smashed in the face by the flagstaff, opening a hideous wound in his jaw. (He would survive the war and become a longtime aide to General Phil Sheridan in the Indian wars out West.) Of the 22 men Newhall led onto the field that day, 18 were killed or wounded.

Small groups of Federals continued pecking away at the Rebel flanks. One battalion, led by Captain Miller of the 3rd Pennsylvania, managed to penetrate the gray ranks and get into their rear, sowing more confusion in an already out-of-control situation. With the main thrust of the attack now blunted and more and more Union riders appearing on their flanks and in their rear, the Confederates broke off the fight and galloped back toward Cress's Ridge. Miller's men pursued them as far as Rummel's farm, where one Union trooper had the top of his scalp sliced off as quickly

Continued on page 73

By Joseph Luster

Ace Combat: Joint Assault

Recruit some pals for co-op play and blaze the skies while knocking out bogeys.

Ace Combat games aren't exactly known for being precision flight sims, or sims of any kind, for that matter. The series is practically defined by its looser, more action-oriented nature, and we wouldn't have it any other way. The aerial combat genre as produced in Japan tends to be as much about flying as it is looking cool while doing so, and Namco Bandai continues the tradition about as well as can be expected on Playstation Portable.

PUBLISHER
Namco Bandai Games

SYSTEM(S)
PSP

AVAILABLE
Now

Those who have only played the *Ace Combat* series via the big brother console versions can't really expect those gorgeous visuals to migrate in full to the confines of the PSP, but what's here is certainly more than the face of an ugly, neglected sibling. With little exception, *Ace Combat* translates nicely, with detailed plane models making the most of the system's resources. Things get a little muddy when it comes to landscapes, and none of the real-world locales' landmarks are exactly worthy of a fly-by gander, but it's tough to be bothered by that when in the heat of an intense dogfight.

As far as those are concerned, the only true crime is one inherent to all PSP games: the lack of the second analog stick. It may not be as crucial to *Ace Combat* as it is to, say, a third-person action title, but its absence is felt nonetheless. The sacrifice is most clear in the maneuverability of the broad line of aircraft. They fly just fine, but there's a bit of stiffness involved thanks to tightened control restrictions—something that hurts most when surrounded by closely circling enemies just outside of your reticle.

Thankfully, there's plenty implemented in the heads-up display, and in the general flow of action, to help offset the limitations of the system. Missions, which find the player as nothing more than fresh fish in a private military company known as Martinez Security, run the gamut from the simple clearing of enemy aircraft to protecting major cities from the threat of massive enemy battlestations. This being the first entry to be set in the real world doesn't add or detract anything specific from the dramatic plights, but it's an interesting turn for a series that still features some borderline sci-fi-level enemy aircraft.

When it comes to the friendly hangar, there's no shortage of options for those with the drive to unlock them all. It boils down to a total of about 40 to choose from when all is said and done, from the F-4 Phantom to the A-10 Thunderbolt II and beyond. Anyone who's a fan of planes and not a stickler for history or realism in their dogfightin' games will no doubt be pleased with the lineup.

If much of this is sounding familiar to those who played the series' last portable outing—2005's *Ace Combat X: Skies of Deception*—

UPCOMING BATTLES

BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2 VIETNAM

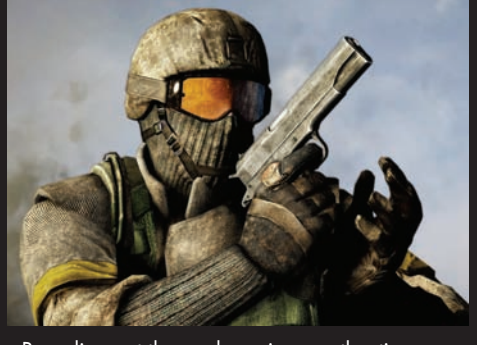
Bad Company 2 was hands down one of the best action-centric war games of the past year, with its emphasis on destruction and demolition and some truly sprawling multiplayer. Those still clinging to their copy will be glad they did so, too, because the upcoming *Vietnam* expansion is going to be available exclusively as downloadable content. So what does that mean for those without access to a copy of *Bad Company 2*? You gotta buy one! Hey, at least it won't be a purchase you regret later, so get on it.

PUBLISHER
EA

SYSTEM
Xbox 360,
Playstation 3, PC

AVAILABLE
Q4

Vietnam might seem like a simple map pack at first glance, but it's much more elaborate than your average downloadable addition. The expansion adds four new multiplayer maps, along with 15 new weapons and six fresh vehicles, a stable that includes the American Huey helicopter and others that fit in properly with the 1960s setting.



Rounding out the package is an authentic soundtrack peppered throughout in-game radio channels, "true war dialogue," and a new assortment of achievements and trophies to keep your finger on the trigger well past reasonable night-time hours.

well, it's because it is. Where *Joint Assault* becomes more of its own experience, however, is in the addition of co-op throughout the campaign. It's one thing to blaze through the skies and knock bogeys down from all directions, but it gets much more exciting and satisfying when doing so with at least one friend. Why stop there, though? The best thing about *Joint Assault* is that it offers options for up to four players, who can either take on missions as one large unit, or by splitting into two separate units in Relay Missions. Sure, there's also competitive multiplayer, but co-op is where it's really at.

Playing with others becomes exponentially important as the game progresses. This isn't necessarily because of the rise in difficulty—though that is, indeed, there—but because of mission length and the repetition of tasks. While the enemy forces grow both in threat and physical size, most of what you'll be doing to thwart them stays the course. This is hardly noticeable in a squad of friends having a good time, but the long, checkpoint-lacking later missions become arduous tasks for the solo gamer.

That's pretty much where the line is drawn here as far as a recommendation is concerned. If you plan on going it alone, it might be best to reconsider joining in on the *Joint Assault* campaign. Maybe look into one of the more visually dynamic console entries instead if you're new to the series and the concept still piques your interest. However, if you plan to recruit some pals and relish the title's namesake through some cloud-bursting co-op play, then this will likely end up a worthwhile addition to your portable library. □

PUBLISHER
Ubisoft

SYSTEM
PSP

AVAILABLE
November

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON PREDATOR

Consider this portable take on the acclaimed future war *Ghost Recon* franchise a nice little appetite-whetter for the upcoming *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier,* which will mark the series' fifth proper installment overall. *Predator* may not be the first outing to grace the PSP—High Voltage Software crafted a port of *Advanced Warfighter 2* in 2007—but the addition of three-player co-op should spice things up nicely. The only disadvantage is that, as of this writing at least, it appears co-op is local only. If this ends up being a solid entry, hopefully we won't have as much trouble finding local friends with their own copies of the game on hand.

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By Al Hemingway

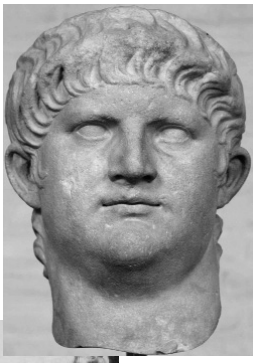
Did Nero really fiddle while Rome burned—or was he merely the victim of a clever political conspiracy?

THE IMAGE MOST PEOPLE HAVE OF THE ROMAN EMPEROR NERO IS of him perched at the summit of the Palatine hills, strumming his lyre while Rome is engulfed in flames. This impression has been accepted by many historians as fact, and Nero has even been accused of purposely starting the fire and then conspiring to place the blame on the Christians.

In his new book, ***The Great Fire of Rome: The Fall of the Emperor Nero and His City*** (Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2010, 248 pp., maps, notes, bibliography, $25.00, hardcover), Australian author Stephen Dando-Collins gives us an entirely different view of the events that led to the cataclysmic inferno that engulfed Rome on the evening of July 19, AD 64.

Whether intentionally set or merely an unforeseen mishap, the blaze ignited that evening. The day had been extremely hot, and people were streaming into the city for the Ludi Victoriae Caesaris tournament, set to begin the following morning. The fire, fueled by the summer winds, quickly spread. For the next week, flames consumed thousands of rickety wooden structures that were crammed together in the city.

Despite persistent rumors that Nero himself was arsonist, the emperor was not even in Rome when the fire started, but at his palace in Antium. He quickly returned and personally organized efforts to extinguish the fire. He also opened the Field of Mars and his personal gardens to the thousands of homeless citizens who had to flee the fire, and ordered that food and other supplies be brought into Rome. Yet despite these humanitarian efforts, reports still buzzed throughout the city that Nero had wanted Rome destroyed so that he could construct a newer, more modern capital, named after himself, to be called Neropolis.

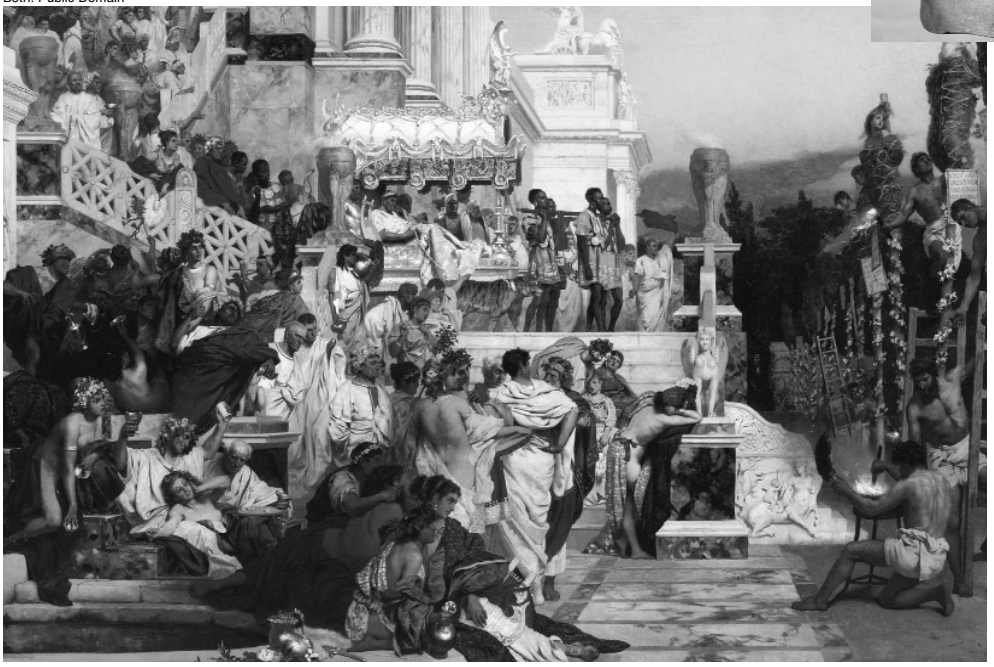


There has never been any concrete evidence that Nero started the fire. Dando-Collins closely examines the intricate conspiracy that, he believes, would prove to be the ultimate downfall of the young emperor. Many people behind the scenes were jealous of Nero's artistic accomplishments and his visionary plans for a newer, more modern Rome. He had already instituted a strict building code, and in spite of the severe criticism levied against him for his engineering ideas, the Corinth Canal, built after his death, followed his original design.

Did Nero, in an attempt to shed guilt for the fire, place the blame on the convenient scapegoats, the Christians? Dando-Collins suggests otherwise. The Christian population in Rome at the time of the great fire was not very large, he notes, and Egyptian followers of Isis were sum-

A romantic painting by Henryck Siemiradski shows Nero watching as Christians are burned in retaliation for their supposed torching of Rome. INSET: A marble bust of Emperor Nero.

Both: Public Domain



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A romantic painting by Henryck Siemiradski shows Nero watching as Christians are burned in retaliation for their supposed torching of Rome. INSET: A marble bust of Emperor Nero.

Both: Public Domain

You deserve a factual look at . . .

The Myth of "Settlements"

Are they indeed the "root cause" of violence in the Middle East?

One of the enduring myths about the Arab-Israeli conflict is that the "settlements" in Judea/Samaria (often called the "West Bank") are the source of the conflict between the Jews and the so-called "Palestinians." If that problem were solved—in other words, if Israel would turn Judea/Samaria over to the "Palestinians"—peace would prevail and the century-old conflict would be ended.

What are the facts?

Erroneous Assumptions: Various fallacies and erroneous assumptions underlie that belief, so often repeated that even those who are friendly to Israel, even many Jews in Israel and in the United States, have come to accept it. Our government, generally friendly to and supportive of Israel, has bought into the myth of the "settlements;" it has regularly and insistently requested that the "settlements" be abandoned and, one supposes, be turned over lock, stock, and barrel to those who are sworn to destroy Israel.

The very designation of the Jewish inhabitants of Judea/Samaria as "settlers" is inappropriate, because it connotes something foreign, intrusive and temporary, something that is purposefully and maliciously imposed. But that is nonsense of course. Why would the quarter-million Jews who live in Judea/Samaria be any more "intrusive" or any more "illegal" than the more than one million Arabs who live in peace in what is called "Israel proper" or west of the so-called "green line"? Nobody considers their presence as intrusive; nobody talks of them as an obstacle to peace.

> "Here is a thought: How about a deal by which the 'settlements' were indeed abandoned, all the Jews were to move to 'Israel proper' and all the Arabs living in Israel would be transferred to Judea/Samaria or to wherever else they wanted to go."

Most of us, regrettably perhaps, are too worldly and too "sophisticated" to put much stock in the argument that the territories in question, Judea and Samaria, are indeed the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people, that they were promised by God to Abraham and his seed in perpetuity. Jews have lived in that country without interruption since Biblical times. There is no reason why they shouldn't live there now. Why should Judea/Samaria be the only place in the world (except for such countries as Saudi Arabia) where Jews cannot live?

Legal Aspects: But how about the legal aspect of this matter? Isn't the "West Bank" "occupied territory" and therefore the Jews have no right to be there? But the historic reality is quite different. Very briefly: The Ottoman Empire was the sovereign in the entire area. In 1917, while World War I was still raging, Britain issued the Balfour Declaration. It designated "Palestine"—extending throughout what is now Israel (including the "West Bank") and what is now the Kingdom of Jordan—as the homeland for the Jewish people. In 1922, the League of Nations ratified the Balfour Declaration and designated Britain as the mandatory power. Regrettably, Britain, for its own imperial reasons and purposes, separated 76 percent of the land—that lying beyond the Jordan River—to create the kingdom of Trans-Jordan (now Jordan) and made it inaccessible to Jews. In 1947, tired of the constant bloodletting between Arabs and Jews, the British threw in the towel and abandoned the Mandate. The UN took over. It devised a plan by which the land west of the Jordan River would be split between the Jews and the Arabs. The Jews, though with heavy heart, accepted the plan. The Arabs virulently rejected it and invaded the nascent Jewish state with the armies of five countries, so as to destroy it at its birth. Miraculously, the Jews prevailed and the State of Israel was born. When the smoke of battle cleared, Jordan was in possession of the West Bank and Egypt in possession of Gaza. They were the "occupiers" and they proceeded to kill many Jews and to drive out the rest. They systematically destroyed all Jewish holy places and all vestiges of Jewish presence. The area was "judenrein."

In the Six-Day War of 1967, the Jews reconquered the territories. The concept that Jewish presence in Judea/Samaria is illegal and that the Jews are occupiers is bizarre. It just has been repeated so often and with such vigor that many people have come to accept it.

How about the "Palestinians," whose patrimony this territory supposedly is and about whose olive trees and orange groves we hear endlessly? There is no such people. They are Arabs—the same people as in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and beyond. Most of them migrated into the territories and to "Israel proper," attracted by Jewish prosperity and industry. The concept of "Palestinians" as applied to Arabs and as a distinct nationality urgently in need of their own twenty-third Arab state, is a fairly new one; it was not invented until after 1948, when the State of Israel was founded.

But here's a thought: How about a deal by which the "settlements" were indeed abandoned and all the Jews were to move to "Israel proper." At the same time, all the Arabs living in Israel would be transferred to Judea/Samaria or to wherever else they wanted to go. That would indeed make Judea/Samaria "*judenrein*," and what are now Arab lands in Israel would be "*arabrein*." The Arabs could then live in a fully autonomous area in eastern Israel and peace, one would hope, would descend on the holy land.

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Gerardo Joffe, President

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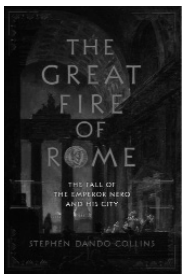
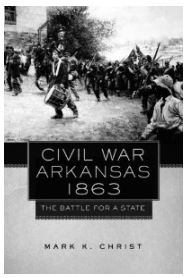
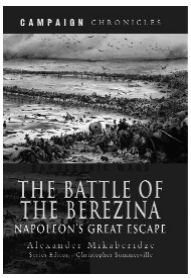
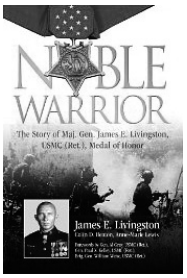
marily executed as well. Dando-Collins maintains that Nero was not the insane, sadistic leader that many historians have portrayed him to be. Instead, says the author, he was "incredibly tolerant of those who lampooned him," and often stayed the executions of many prisoners that he could have had put to death.









Dando-Collin's account of Nero's brief life, the conspiracy that was concocted against him, and the great fire that consumed 70 percent of the Eternal City is intriguing. Whatever the truth of the matter, Rome would never be the same after the disastrous inferno. It would not only change the landscape of Rome, but alter its history as well. Nero, faced with arrest and assassination, committed suicide four years later. "While many future emperors would include 'Caesar' in their name," writes Dando-Collins, "Nero was the last of the Caesar dynasty, a situation that many Romans lamented."

Civil War Arkansas 1863: The Battle for a State by Mark K. Christ, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2010, 321 pp., notes, index, maps, photos, $34.95, hardcover.

The State of Arkansas was a much-sought-after prize as the year 1863 dawned. Although Union forces were threatening Vicksburg, The Army of Northern Virginia was racking up impressive victories against the Union forces in the eastern theater. Confederate troops occupied the majority of Arkansas and the adjacent Indian Territory at the beginning of the year.

The stage was set for a decisive struggle to determine which side would control the fertile Arkansas River Valley. The rich agricultural land yielded a wide variety of crops and, as one Texan wrote, the "valleys of the Arkansas and White Rivers are the great granaries of the state and the seat of its greater wealth."

In September 1863, the drive to seize the strategically important region began in earnest. Union Brig. Gen. John W. Davidson's cavalry moved on Little Rock in early September. As the horsemen crossed the Arkansas River and raced toward the city, they encountered Confederate soldiers at Bayou Fourche. Davidson employed his artillery well, and soon the retreating Rebels were streaming toward Little Rock with the news that the Yankee cavalry was coming.

Instead of defending the city, Confederate commander Maj. Gen. Sterling Price ordered his men to withdraw, declaring that "the Yankees were not going to entrap him like they did Pemberton at Vicksburg." By late that afternoon, Price's army had made good its retreat. "The men grumbled and protested at giving up the town," wrote Silas Turnbo, a soldier in the 27th Arkansas Infantry. "It was our last hope for Arkansas and it would soon be in the hands of the Federals."

Turnbo's prophetic words would ultimately prove to be correct. As the 3rd Minnesota Infantry triumphantly marched into Little Rock later that day, their music drove the final nail into any Confederate hopes of remaining in the state. The Federals now had firm control of the lush, crop-producing valley.

What had started as a bleak year for the Union had been transformed into an extremely productive one. Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant finally took Vicksburg in July, and another Union army repelled Robert E. Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania at Gettysburg. The Mississippi River was under the control of Union gunboats, and now Arkansas had fallen. Although there were still 18 more months of bloody civil war, the year 1863 signaled the beginning of the end of the Confederacy.

The Battle of the Berezina: Napoleon's Great Escape by Alexander Mikaberidze, Pen & Sword, South Yorkshire, England, 2010, 284 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, $31.00, hardcover.

When his ill-fated invasion of Russia turned sour, French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte escaped through the frozen Russian countryside. However, when his Grande Armee reached the raging Berezina River on November 26, 1812, a feeling of impending doom swirled through the ranks. The waterway, normally frozen solid by that time, was not. An unseasonable warming trend had kept the river from freezing and, to make matters even worse, the Russian Army had converged on the French and was determined to destroy them.

With the Russians having destroyed the ridges, French engineers went to work erecting a makeshift one. Napoleon tricked the Russians into thinking that his army was moving to the south, and when they took the bait, he quickly began his crossing.

Many of the camp followers did not cross when told to do so. However, when General Jean Elbe ordered the bridge burned, they panicked and attempted to cross. Thousands died in the ensuing melee, either being burned, crushed to death, or murdered by the rampaging Cossacks. Nevertheless, the bulk of Napoleon's forces somehow made it across.

The author gives much of the credit for the operation to the Little Corporal's subordinates: Elbe and Marshals Michel Ney and Claude Victor-Perrin. Still, the fiasco cost the French dearly. Some 25,000 soldiers were lost, and what remained of the Grande Armee was a mere skeleton. Like the English at Dunkirk, the name Berezina is synonymous among Frenchmen with catastrophic defeat.

Noble Warrior: The Story of Maj. Gen. James E. Livingston, USMC (Ret.), Medal of Honor by James E. Livingston, Colin D. Heaton, and Anne-Marie Lewis, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2010, 247 pp., notes, maps, photos, $28.00, hardcover.

For 30 years, Maj. Gen. James Livingston enjoyed a stellar career as a Marine officer. As a company commander with the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines in Vietnam, he received the Medal of Honor. The horrific three-day struggle at Dai Do in northern Vietnam in 1968, sometimes referred to as the Battle of Dong Ha, was a bloody encounter that pitted hundreds of North Vietnamese Army soldiers against the understrength Marine forces scattered across the region in small firebases that defended the area. From April 30 to May 3, the "Magnificent Bastards" of the battalion held off a large enemy contingent that was attempting to attack the huge Marine supply base at Dong Ha.

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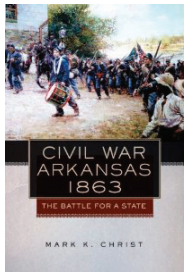
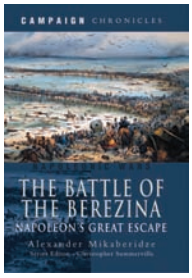
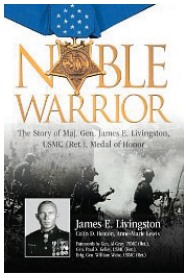
marily executed as well. Dando-Collins maintains that Nero was not the insane, sadistic leader that many historians have portrayed him to be. Instead, says the author, he was "incredibly tolerant of those who lampooned him," and often stayed the executions of many prisoners that he could have had put to death.







Dando-Collin's account of Nero's brief life, the conspiracy that was concocted against him, and the great fire that consumed 70 percent of the Eternal City is intriguing. Whatever the truth of the matter, Rome would never be the same after the disastrous inferno. It would not only change the landscape of Rome, but alter its history as well. Nero, faced with arrest and assassination, committed suicide four years later. "While many future emperors would include 'Caesar' in their name," writes Dando-Collins, "Nero was the last of the Caesar dynasty, a situation that many Romans lamented."

Civil War Arkansas 1863: The Battle for a State by Mark K. Christ, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2010, 321 pp., notes, index, maps, photos, $34.95, hardcover.

The State of Arkansas was a much-sought-after prize as the year 1863 dawned. Although Union forces were threatening Vicksburg, The Army of Northern Virginia was racking up impressive victories against the Union forces in the eastern theater. Confederate troops occupied the majority of Arkansas and the adjacent Indian Territory at the beginning of the year.

The stage was set for a decisive struggle to determine which side would control the fertile Arkansas River Valley. The rich agricultural land yielded a wide variety of crops and, as one Texan wrote, the "valleys of the Arkansas and White Rivers are the great granaries of the state and the seat of its greater wealth."

In September 1863, the drive to seize the strategically important region began in earnest. Union Brig. Gen. John W. Davidson's cavalry moved on Little Rock in early September. As the horsemen crossed the Arkansas River and raced toward the city, they encountered Confederate soldiers at Bayou Fourche. Davidson employed his artillery well, and soon the retreating Rebels were streaming toward Little Rock with the news that the Yankee cavalry was coming.

Instead of defending the city, Confederate commander Maj. Gen. Sterling Price ordered his men to withdraw, declaring that "the Yankees were not going to entrap him like they did Pemberton at Vicksburg." By late that afternoon, Price's army had made good its retreat. "The men grumbled and protested at giving up the town," wrote Silas Turnbo, a soldier in the 27th Arkansas Infantry. "It was our last hope for Arkansas and it would soon be in the hands of the Federals."

Turnbo's prophetic words would ultimately prove to be correct. As the 3rd Minnesota Infantry triumphantly marched into Little Rock later that day, their music drove the final nail into any Confederate hopes of remaining in the state. The Federals now had firm control of the lush, crop-producing valley.

What had started as a bleak year for the Union had been transformed into an extremely productive one. Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant finally took Vicksburg in July, and another Union army repelled Robert E. Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania at Gettysburg. The Mississippi River was under the control of Union gunboats, and now Arkansas had fallen. Although there were still 18 more months of bloody civil war, the year 1863 signaled the beginning of the end of the Confederacy.

The Battle of the Berezina: Napoleon's Great Escape by Alexander Mikaberidze, Pen & Sword, South Yorkshire, England, 2010, 284 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, $31.00, hardcover.

When his ill-fated invasion of Russia turned sour, French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte escaped through the frozen Russian countryside. However, when his Grande Armee reached the raging Berezina River on November 26, 1812, a feeling of impending doom swirled through the ranks. The waterway, normally frozen solid by that time, was not. An unseasonable warming trend had kept the river from freezing and, to make matters even worse, the Russian Army had converged on the French and was determined to destroy them.

With the Russians having destroyed the ridges, French engineers went to work erecting a makeshift one. Napoleon tricked the Russians into thinking that his army was moving to the south, and when they took the bait, he quickly began his crossing.

Many of the camp followers did not cross when told to do so. However, when General Jean Elbe ordered the bridge burned, they panicked and attempted to cross. Thousands died in the ensuing melee, either being burned, crushed to death, or murdered by the rampaging Cossacks. Nevertheless, the bulk of Napoleon's forces somehow made it across.

The author gives much of the credit for the operation to the Little Corporal's subordinates: Elbe and Marshals Michel Ney and Claude Victor-Perrin. Still, the fiasco cost the French dearly. Some 25,000 soldiers were lost, and what remained of the Grande Armee was a mere skeleton. Like the English at Dunkirk, the name Berezina is synonymous among Frenchmen with catastrophic defeat.

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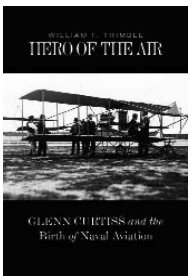

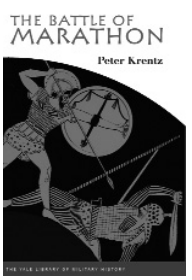

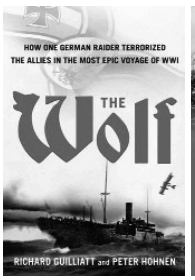

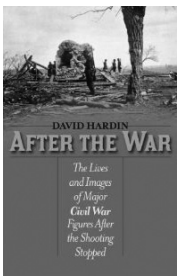

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Always fearful of an American invasion after the aborted attempt at Montreal and Quebec, Maj. Gen. Frederick Haldimand, the governor-general of Canada, ordered that Fort Ontario be rebuilt in 1782. Upon learning of this, General George Washington dispatched Colonel Marinus Willett to attack the fort, fearing the British were attempting to use the fortification as a stepping-off point for another series of attacks in the Mohawk Valley.

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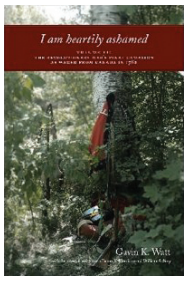

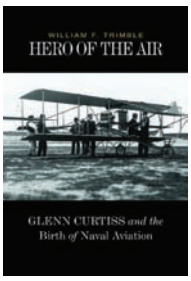

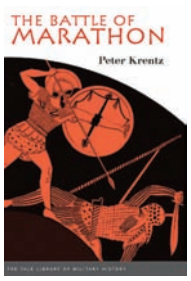

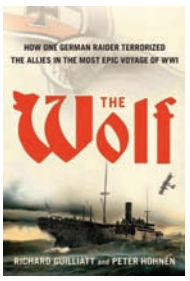

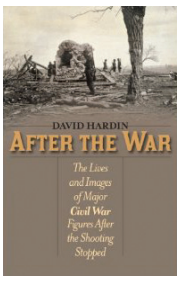

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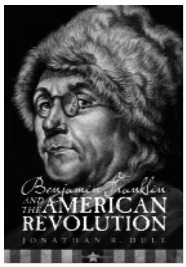
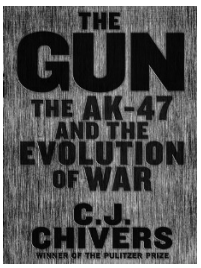
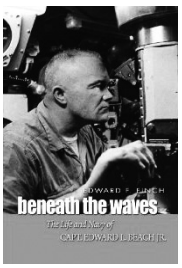
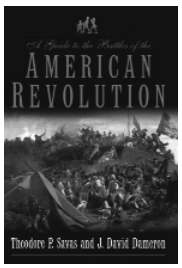
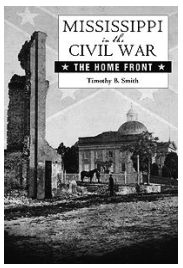
ous Ku Klux Klan, and the arrogant and egotistical George Armstrong Custer, who met his fate, along with 225 of his troopers, at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in June 1876.











One person in the book whose story is particularly enlightening is Mary Boykin Chesnut. The South Carolina native kept a journal during the war and made many observations that historians continue to use as a window into the past, to obtain a better understanding of what occurred during that tragic period of American history. As Hardin points out, Chesnut's "poignant book is the closest to an audio of the Civil War as can be found."

Benjamin Franklin and the American Revolution by Jonathan R. Dull, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2010, 184 pp., notes, $14.95, hardcover.

Historian Jonathan Dull's new book provides insight into one of our most enthralling founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, who, with the possible exception of George Washington, was the important cog in the framework of the American Revolution.

For more than 30 years, Dull read Franklin's letters and edited 20 volumes of the Pennsylvania native's personal papers. The majority of Americans envision Franklin as a genial man, a great inventor and all-around wise man with a keen eye for the opposite sex. However, the author's research uncovers a more complex individual, one who harbored an intense hatred of King George III and the Tories who supported him, including Franklin's own son.

Franklin spent nine years in France cultivating a special relationship between the two countries that would immeasurably aid the Colonies in gaining their independence from Great Britain. Upon his return to the United States, he spent months as a member of the Continental Congress working to adopt a constitution. He was an advocate of the abolishment of slavery and, until his dying day, remained an ardent revolutionary.

The Gun: The AK-47 and the Evolution of War by C.J. Chivers, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2010, 496 pp., notes, photos, $28.00, hardcover.

Its official name is the Avtomat Kalashnikova, meaning "the automatic by Kalashnikov," a senior sergeant in the Russian tank corps who had designed it. The number 47 is taken from the year 1947, when the weapon was first designed. And there you have it, the AK-47—arguably the most prolific rifle in the world.

The stubby-looking firearm, with its distinctive sound, remains a favorite among armies and terrorist groups. Although cheaply manufactured, it rarely jams, a feature that most soldiers prefer on the battlefield—ask anyone who had to use the early model of the M-16 in Vietnam, when such dangerous malfunctions were prevalent.

The author, a former U.S. Marine combat infantry officer, does a good job in tracing the beginnings of the AK-47 and its meteoric spread to become the rifle of choice for many armies throughout the world. Although the author notes that the AK-47 will at some point be replaced by another inexpensive but reliable firearm, its deadly history will remain with us forever.

Beneath the Waves: The Life and Navy of Capt. Edward L. Beach, Jr. by Edward F. Finch, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2010, 262 pp., notes, index, photos, #34.95, hardcover.

Here is a wonderful addition to any reader's personal library about one of the great pioneers of the U.S. Navy's submarine service: Edward L. Beach, Jr. Beach graduated second in his class at the United States Naval Academy in 1939 and went on to have a distinguished career during World War II. He took part in the Battle of Midway and participated in a dozen combat patrols, being awarded the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, and the Bronze Star with "V" device.

Beach also enjoyed remarkable success as an author. He drew upon his submarine experience to write his celebrated novel *Run Silent, Run Deep,* which was later made into a successful Hollywood movie. He received numerous literary awards and accolades before his death in December 2002 at the age of 84.

Finch's account is a glowing tribute to a man who contributed much to America's naval service—and to the literary world—helping people gain a better insight into how the U.S. Navy really operates.

A Guide to the Battles of the American Revolution by Theodore P. Savas and J. David Dameron, Savas Beatie, New York, 2010, 360 pp., index, maps, $19.95, softcover.

As the authors note in the beginning of the book, the American Revolution is enjoying a resurgence of popularity. Reflecting that resurgence, the authors here have gone into great detail about the battles, both major and little-known skirmishes, the units, and the leaders on both sides of the conflict.

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Mississippi in the Civil War: The Home Front by Timothy B. Smith, University of Mississippi Press, Jackson, 2010, 260 pp., index, notes, photos, $40.00, hardcover.

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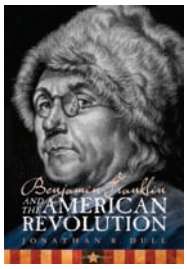
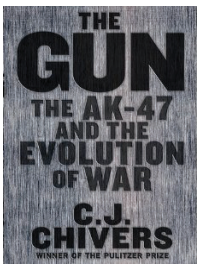
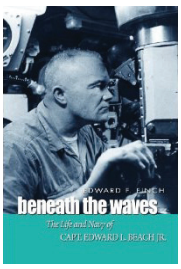
Mississippi was one southern state that suffered greatly during the war. The invading Union forces seized the capital of Jackson, dismantled the political infrastructure, burned and looted throughout the state, and laid siege to Vicksburg, which devastated the civilian population there.

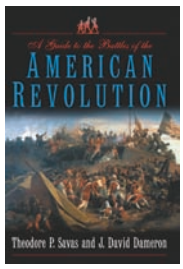
"Mississippi was crushed in its bid for independence and suffered the consequences of the attempt," the author writes. "But the affliction did not end there; the state's problems did not cease when the surrender documents were signed. Mississippi faced an unknown future in which the state would suffer the consequences of war far into the future, in some cases even to the present day." □

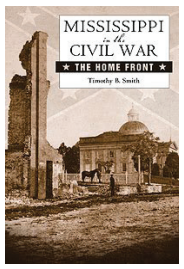
ous Ku Klux Klan, and the arrogant and egotistical George Armstrong Custer, who met his fate, along with 225 of his troopers, at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in June 1876.











One person in the book whose story is particularly enlightening is Mary Boykin Chesnut. The South Carolina native kept a journal during the war and made many observations that historians continue to use as a window into the past, to obtain a better understanding of what occurred during that tragic period of American history. As Hardin points out, Chesnut's "poignant book is the closest to an audio of the Civil War as can be found."

Benjamin Franklin and the American Revolution by Jonathan R. Dull, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2010, 184 pp., notes, $14.95, hardcover.

Historian Jonathan Dull's new book provides insight into one of our most enthralling founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, who, with the possible exception of George Washington, was the important cog in the framework of the American Revolution.

For more than 30 years, Dull read Franklin's letters and edited 20 volumes of the Pennsylvania native's personal papers. The majority of Americans envision Franklin as a genial man, a great inventor and all-around wise man with a keen eye for the opposite sex. However, the author's research uncovers a more complex individual, one who harbored an intense hatred of King George III and the Tories who supported him, including Franklin's own son.

Franklin spent nine years in France cultivating a special relationship between the two countries that would immeasurably aid the Colonies in gaining their independence from Great Britain. Upon his return to the United States, he spent months as a member of the Continental Congress working to adopt a constitution. He was an advocate of the abolishment of slavery and, until his dying day, remained an ardent revolutionary.

The Gun: The AK-47 and the Evolution of War by C.J. Chivers, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2010, 496 pp., notes, photos, $28.00, hardcover.

Its official name is the Avtomat Kalashnikova, meaning "the automatic by Kalashnikov," a senior sergeant in the Russian tank corps who had designed it. The number 47 is taken from the year 1947, when the weapon was first designed. And there you have it, the AK-47—arguably the most prolific rifle in the world.

The stubby-looking firearm, with its distinctive sound, remains a favorite among armies and terrorist groups. Although cheaply manufactured, it rarely jams, a feature that most soldiers prefer on the battlefield—ask anyone who had to use the early model of the M-16 in Vietnam, when such dangerous malfunctions were prevalent.

The author, a former U.S. Marine combat infantry officer, does a good job in tracing the beginnings of the AK-47 and its meteoric spread to become the rifle of choice for many armies throughout the world. Although the author notes that the AK-47 will at some point be replaced by another inexpensive but reliable firearm, its deadly history will remain with us forever.

Beneath the Waves: The Life and Navy of Capt. Edward L. Beach, Jr. by Edward F. Finch, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2010, 262 pp., notes, index, photos, #34.95, hardcover.

Here is a wonderful addition to any reader's personal library about one of the great pioneers of the U.S. Navy's submarine service: Edward L. Beach, Jr. Beach graduated second in his class at the United States Naval Academy in 1939 and went on to have a distinguished career during World War II. He took part in the Battle of Midway and participated in a dozen combat patrols, being awarded the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, and the Bronze Star with "V" device.

Beach also enjoyed remarkable success as an author. He drew upon his submarine experience to write his celebrated novel *Run Silent, Run Deep,* which was later made into a successful Hollywood movie. He received numerous literary awards and accolades before his death in December 2002 at the age of 84.

Finch's account is a glowing tribute to a man who contributed much to America's naval service—and to the literary world—helping people gain a better insight into how the U.S. Navy really operates.

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kinmen bears

Continued from page 43

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The battle for Kinmen proved to be a watershed event in the Chinese Civil War. For Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists, the victory secured their last-ditch bastion on Taiwan from Communist invasion and invigorated their cause after a succession of defeats during the previous year. Despite the fact that their enemy had rashly miscalculated by launching an amphibious assault against a numerically superior enemy enjoying armor, air, and naval support, victory came at a heavy price. During the 56 hours of what the Nationalists would later call "the Great Victory at Guningtou," they lost 1,267 men dead and 1,982 wounded in the vicious close-quarters combat. The tankers, who were instrumental in achieving the victory, lost two dead and seven wounded. Their efforts were recognized on November 5, when the new Kinmen garrison commander, Hu Lien, bestowed upon the men of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Tank Regiment, the honorific nickname, "the Bears of Kinmen."

The defeat at Kinmen was a profound shock to Mao Zedong and his military commanders. Recognizing how overconfidence had led to the disaster, the Communists took a more systematic approach toward the conduct of future amphibious operations. Over the next few years, the PLA refined its techniques and succeeded in driving the Nationalists from their remaining coastal island outposts. However, the inability to take Kinmen and Matsu ruled out any invasion attempt against Taiwan proper.

Transformed into impregnable island fortresses, Kinmen and Matsu played prominent roles on the front lines of the Cold War, with Kinmen subjected to punishing artillery bombardments during the 1950s as the Communists tried but failed to drive out the Nationalist garrisons. In 1958, the bombardment of Kinmen nearly sparked a nuclear conflict between the Chinese Communists and the United States, and the issue was hotly discussed during the famous Kennedy-Nixon presidential election debates of 1960. Although tensions across the Taiwan Straits have lessened to such an extent that both islands have become popular tourist attractions, the reduced garrisons of Kinmen and Matsu still remain symbolically on guard against possible threats from the Communist mainland. □

crimea

Continued from page 51

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The Russian withdrawal became a rout. There was nothing to do but seek the safety of Sevastopol. Menshikov seemed in a daze, unable to comprehend the extent of the debacle. He had promised to hold the Alma Heights for three weeks; he hadn't even held for three hours. As his soldiers steamed to the rear, Menshikov called out that it was a disgrace for a Russian soldier to retreat. The prince did not seem to realize he was to blame for the galling defeat.

The allied victory was won, and by the time French Zouaves had planted their tricolors on the top of Telegraph Hill, St. Arnaud was convinced that the French had won the Battle of the Alma almost unaided. He said as much in a dispatch to Paris, and only his death from cholera a few days later prevented bad feelings from festering between the allies, who had lost 3,342 dead and wounded. The Russians lost almost 6,000 men, the higher casualties stemming in part from British tactics and the deadly accuracy of the allied rifle-muskets.

A great opportunity was lost in the aftermath of the battle. St. Arnaud had wanted to push on immediately in hopes of taking Sevastopol while the Russians were off balance and reeling from defeat. Raglan refused, stating that there were 3,000 or so wounded British and Russians to take care of, and that they were three miles from the sea and their transport ships. The British commander was also anxious to do a flank march and take Balaklava, the best possible harbor in the area.

Hindsight evidence suggests that St. Arnaud was right. Sevastopol bristled with guns, but its defenses were still incomplete. There was indeed a chance that the allies could have taken the naval base by an all-out attack. On the other hand, Raglan was right in wanting a safe harbor to funnel in men and supplies for an extended siege. He could not have known how vulnerable Sevastopol was at that time. As it was, the Battle of the Alma was only the curtain-raiser to a protracted, bloody, and criminally mismanaged campaign. Alma, like the later fight at Inkerman, was a soldiers' battle, where the courage and fortitude of the rank and file redeemed at least partially the blunders and sheer incompetence of their leaders. □

gettysburg

Continued from page 65

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Stuart withdrew his forces from the ridge at sunset and reformed along the York Turnpike. Although inflicting 254 casualties—some 219 in Custer's brigade alone—to 181 of their own, Stuart's riders had failed to reach the Union rear. It would not have made any difference if they had; Pickett's Charge had failed and the entire Confederate Army was in retreat. The Battle of Gettysburg was lost. Almost immediately, a second battle began—this time in the court of public opinion. Stuart was pilloried unmercifully for his absence prior to the start of the battle, and many southerners (including, by implication, Robert E. Lee) blamed Stuart for the disastrous defeat. Said a well-connected journalist in the *Mobile Daily Advertiser*: "His [Stuart's] vanity seems to have controlled his actions, and the cavalry was used frequently to gratify his personal pride and to the detriment of the service. At the Battle of Gettysburg, he was not to be found, and Gen. Lee could not get enough cavalry together to carry out his plans."

Stuart's supporters leaped to his defense. "It was not the want of cavalry that General Lee bewailed, for he had enough of it had it been properly used," wrote Stuart's adjutant, Major Henry McClellan. "It was the absence of Stuart himself that he felt so keenly." John S. Mosby, the scout whose initially misleading report had contributed much to Stuart's decision to continue his raid, blamed Brig. Gen. Beverly Robertson for not moving quickly enough to support Lee's infantry. "The only thing I blame Stuart for was not having him [Robertson] shot," wrote Mosby. The debate raged on for years after the war, and most historians have apportioned some of the blame to Stuart for the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, while conceding that he had been given just enough autonomy by Lee to absolve him from any official misconduct. Stuart aide William Blackford probably best summed up the cavalry battle at Rummel's farm. "It was about as bloody and hot an affair as any we had yet encountered," Blackford wrote. "The cavalry of the enemy were steadily improving, and it was all we could do sometimes to manage them." In the rolling farmland east of Gettysburg, on the third day of the largest battle of the Civil War, they had scarcely managed them at all. □

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column. The fighters and bombers successfully destroyed or disabled a number of BTR-152s, forcing them to take cover in the woods and brush. A T-34 was blown apart by antitank rockets from the Delta Company stopping force. As another T-34 struck a mine and exploded, the remaining T-34s moved north off the road, heading in the direction of the last helicopters. The stopping force fell back and joined with the remaining mixed companies of paratroopers, waiting for their deliverance. The Super Frelon and Puma helicopters poured in to pick up the paratroopers. Bursting through the brush and bush behind the paratroopers were a pair of T-34 tanks. Once within range of the cannons, the T-34s stopped and opened fire.

Despite the imminent danger of being annihilated at point-blank range, the helicopters landed, loaded up, and began to lift off, burdened with paratroopers. Two other helicopters circled Cassinga in the afternoon sun to look for survivors, as the remaining Super Frelons and Pumas flew low over the Angolan bush to Namibia. Cassinga was finally abandoned by the South African paratroopers. The town was a burning wreck, occupied by a decimated Cuban mechanized battalion. Later that night, MPLA forces showed up to reclaim the town.

The Cassinga raid achieved many of its military aims. The destruction of the SWAPO base set back the guerrilla organization for several months and prevented an impending infiltration of the border area. The raid's political implications were a different matter. SWAPO press releases portrayed the camp as a refugee post that was struck by the South Africans out of brutal apartheid rage. The SWAPO accounts included images of dead women and children and vivid descriptions of the brutal slaughter, which claimed the lives of some 150 Cuban soldiers and a disputed number of other soldiers and civilians. A Red Cross report later found that the camp was a mixture of refugees and guerrilla fighters—it was impossible to say how many of each.

Whatever the ultimate truth of the matter, the raid was a public relations disaster for the South African government. The international world began to impose sanctions on South Africa, initiating the eventual death of the apartheid state. In Namibia, an annual Cassinga Day on May 4 commemorates the raid and its victims. Conflicting celebrations in South Africa stressing the paratroopers' brutally effective raid were discontinued after Nelson Mandela became president in 1994. □

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was in short supply, Japanese soldiers learned to ride on the rims when the tires went flat and couldn't be repaired.

After World War II, many of the wartime bikes passed to civilian hands as the world recovered from the horrors of war. This was especially true in Europe, where fuel was still hard to come by and where there had been an existing bike culture. "Bicycles have been a part of European history and culture for many, many years," says Willaert. "For ages the bicycle has been a means of everyday transport for thousands of people, especially in Belgium and the Netherlands. The bicycle was a cheap and easy means of transport for people who couldn't afford a car for decades."

While the bicycle was transformed into a means of civilian transport, it still remained a tool of war. In the Vietnam War, Vietcong and North Vietnam forces utilized bicycles in great numbers. Bikes were also used in other rural conflicts in Central America and Africa and are still used today by American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Ironically, two nations that used bikes in the greatest numbers have never actually used them in anger. These are the neutral nations of Sweden and Switzerland, each of which has rugged terrain and an independent spirit. Sweden was among the forerunners of bicycle technology for military use, and the 27th Gotlandic Infantry Regiment replaced its cavalry complement with bicycle-mounted troops in 1901. By 1942, the nation had six bicycle infantry regiments.

From 1948 to 1952, however, the Scandinavian nation began to decommission its bicycle infantry regiments, and by the 1980s only special bicycle rifle battalions remained. Most of the military bikes were sold off, and these are encountered in limited numbers on the private market. For collectors there are a number of models on the market, and those from the wartime era tend to be more desired by collectors, even though Sweden didn't take an active part in World War II. Commercial versions based on past military designs are also available today, but these were never technically used as military bikes.

Europe's other major neutral power, Switzerland, also has a long history of military bicycles. The Swiss followed the Swedes in adopting the bicycle for use by the infantry, with a special bicycle regiment introduced in 1905 and phased out only in 2001. The bikes that the mountainous nation used are known for their high quality and durability.

"Switzerland had a major shift in 1988 or thereabouts, and disbanded the original bicycle corporation," says Patrick Robb of Cold War Remarketing. The country's military transformed the bicycle units, in part to introduce a new and more modern bicycle. "This new bike was about $3,500 so it was significant," adds Robb. "What they did was to introduce a training program where you had to buy the bike, and at the end of the training you were refunded for the cost for the bike."

This updating resulted in Switzerland selling off nearly all of its military bikes, and Robb's company is among the largest dealers of the famous Swiss Army bikes. From the late 1990s to 2004, the company was able to obtain several hundred bikes at a time. "We're not seeing those numbers anymore," says Robb. "Now the majority of the liquidation of the old bikes has happened, and the deals are no longer available."

The glut of Swiss and Swedish Army Bikes may have passed, but collectors can still find many bikes on the market today. As with any military collectible, caution needs to be taken. While outright fakes are uncommon, in part because the market for collectors of military bicycles isn't that great, many bikes are not exactly what they appear to be. "I wouldn't say these bikes are faked when you consider a fake as being something that is newly made especially to resemble something else or similar to something that was made in the past," says Willaert. "But it also gets confusing, as many straight-off-the-shelf civilian bikes were put to use by the armed forces in their constant effort to conserve rubber and gas consumption. Some were repainted olive-drab and some even kept in their original color and chrome finish."

Willaert warns that it is easy for someone to repaint an old bike, even one from the 1950s, and claim that it is of wartime vintage. Likewise, many Swiss and Swedish bikes are often passed off as German, since all things German tend to carry a premium when it comes to World War II collectibles. Folding bicycles, which often are classified as "paratrooper bikes," are also highly desirable, even if most probably never actually made a jump.

For the collector who wants to get started, Montague Bicycles currently offers a paratooper model, which was developed for the United States military and is currently used around the world by the Marine Corps and Army Special Forces. Following landing, the full-sized aluminum mountain bike can be deployed in less than 30 seconds. Even in the age of Predator drones and high-tech warfare, the bicycle is still rolling on the battlefield. □

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