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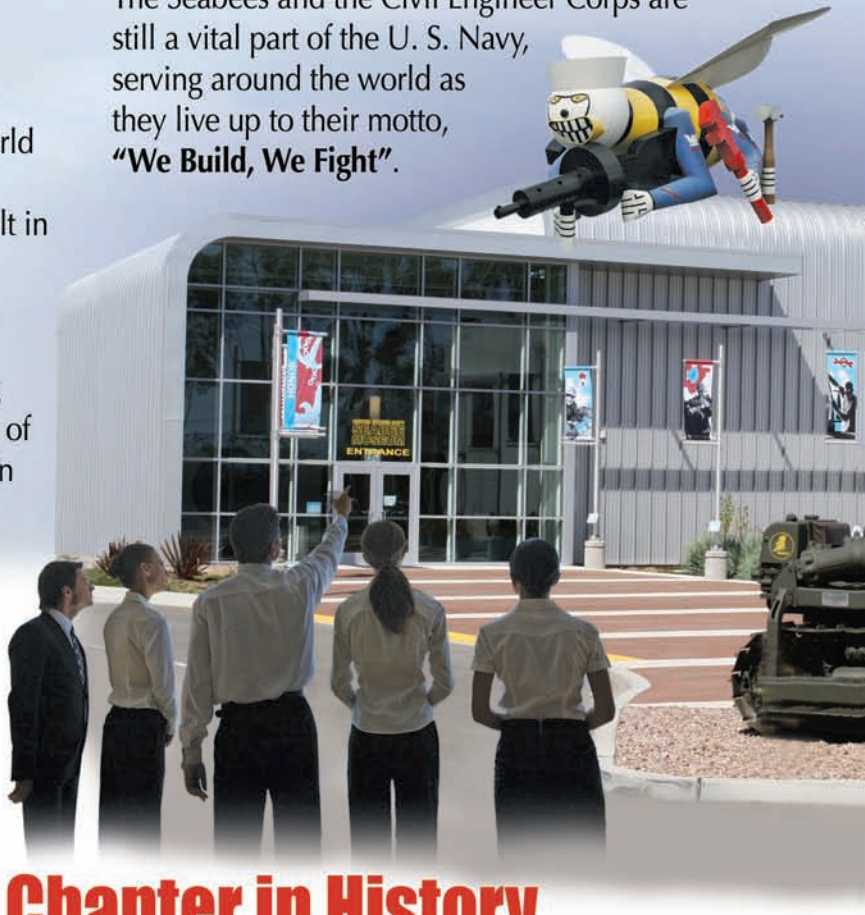

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Cover: Field Marshal Erwin Rommel scans the North African horizon in June 1942.
Photo: Bundesarchiv

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"For 40-Years, I was tortured with unbearable indigestion"

Confessions of an acid reflux victim

"And How I BEAT the indigestion Nightmare that Almost Killed Me!"

By Ralph Burns;
Former acid reflux sufferer

Here's My Story:

I've Suffered With Acid Reflux for Almost 40 Years Now. Unless you experience it you can't imagine how horrible it is. Every time I ate spicy foods I would get what I called "ROT GUT". Like something was rotting in my stomach. But now I can eat anything... No matter how spicy. Even if I never could before.

Let me explain… **For the better part of my life I purposely avoided a lot of foods.** Especially ones with even a tiny bit of seasoning. Because if I didn't, I'd experience a burning sensation through my esophagus—like somebody poured hot lead or battery acid down my throat. Add to that those disgusting "mini-throw ups" and I was in "indigestion hell".

"I was beside myself. What was I gonna do? Keep taking the pills, or suffer with problems that could ultimately be my demise."

Doctors put me on all sorts of antacid remedies. But nothing worked. Or if they did, it would only be for a brief period. And then boom! My nightmare would return.

Sometimes, I felt like I was dying. The pain was unbearable and nothing could make it stop.

But then my wife, who occasionally suffered with the same problem gave me one of her prescription acid blockers. It was a miracle. I felt like I could live again. Because before that, I was just miserable. I wanted to kill myself. But thankfully, it worked, and worked well.

I felt great, until about one year ago, when I read an FDA warning that scared the heck out of me. It went something like this…

FDA WARNING! Using proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) on a long term basis, increases your risk of hip, bone and spinal fractures.

That's a particular concern to me, since many acid blockers are PPIs. I've gone through two back surgeries and bilateral hip replacements. I had to ask myself, could PPIs have been responsible for my medical woes? After all...

"THE RECOMMENDED TREATMENT FOR PRILOSEC®, PREVACID® AND ALL OTHER PPIS IS ONLY 14 DAYS— I TOOK THEM FOR 14 YEARS!"

I was "between a rock and a hard place". Stop using the PPIs and I'm a "dead man in the water". It would be unbearable. I wouldn't be able to eat anything. I'd have to go on a water diet.

But that FDA warning was scary. I knew I had to stop or else risk developing spinal stenosis. My mother had that. And I watched her die a horrible death. Her spine just fractured. It was the worst death. She didn't deserve that. And neither do I.

I had to quit. So I stopped taking PPIs for a day or so. But my indigestion was worse than ever. I would rather take the chance of a spinal fracture than to live like that again. I tried everything. Even started using home remedies like Apple cider vinegar. But it just felt like I was pouring even more acid down my throat.

Then one day at dinner, a friend of mine said, "Why don't you try an aloe drink?" I said, "Aloe drink? Jeez. That doesn't sound good at all!" The next day he brought me a case of something called ***AloeCure***®. I was skeptical, but I was desperate! So instead of being an ingrate I decided to try it.

I was shocked! ***AloeCure***® tasted pretty good too. It has a pleasant grape flavor that I actually enjoy drinking. I decided to experiment. I stopped taking the PPIs altogether and replaced it with a daily diet of ***AloeCure***®. Then something remarkable happened… NOTHING! Not even the slightest hint of indigestion.

63-year old Ralph Burns enjoying a spicy hot portion of Lobster Fra Diavolo. Just 15 minutes after taking AloeCure®

And here's the best part. The next day we had Italian food — my worst enemy. But for the first time in 40 years I didn't get indigestion without relying on prescription or OTC pills and tablets. Finally, I just didn't need them anymore!

I was so thrilled; I wrote the *AloeCure*® company to tell them how amazing their product is. They thanked me, and asked me to tell my story... The story that changed my life. I said, "Sure, but only if you send me a hefty supply of ***AloeCure***®. I just can't live without it."

But don't believe me. You have to try this stuff for yourself. I recommend ***AloeCure***® to anyone who suffers with the same problem I did. It gives you immediate relief. You'll be grateful you did. I sure am. It's the best thing that's happened to me in a long, long time.

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Editorial

The victory at Guadalcanal turned the tide of war.

SEVENTY YEARS AGO THIS MONTH, IN JULY 1942, THE UNITED STATES MILITARY stood at a crossroads in the Pacific. Scarcely a month after the great naval victory at Midway, during which four Japanese aircraft carriers were sunk and Japanese expansionist aims in the Central Pacific thwarted, the American land offensive was set to begin. U.S. Marines were training for the invasion of a small island in the Solomons chain known as Guadalcanal.

Although senior American military commanders realized the magnitude of the Midway victory, they remained cautious and well aware that the course of the war remained fraught with peril. Should the land campaign on Guadalcanal that was set for August fail, the Japanese might once again seize the initiative and renew their threat to Australia. The Japanese juggernaut had previously been victorious everywhere in the Pacific Rim, occupying French Indochina, forcing the capitulation of the British bastion at Singapore, seizing Hong Kong and the Dutch East Indies.

The stinging surprise attack on Pearl Harbor that occurred December 7, 1941, had occurred only seven months earlier, and much of the crippled U.S. Pacific Fleet was undergoing repairs or still mired in the muck of the harbor's shallow waters while salvage operations were in progress. Japanese aircraft had sunk the British battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* and the battlecruiser HMS *Repulse* off Malaya on December 10, Wake Island had fallen later in the month, and another debacle befell the Royal Navy at the hands of marauding Japanese carriers in the Indian Ocean.

Then there was the devastating defeat of U.S. forces in the Philippines and the horror of the Death March as more than 75,000 American and Filipino prisoners were forced to march up to 80 miles from the Bataan Peninsula across the island of Luzon. Although the American public was not informed until three years later of the Japanese cruelty that resulted in prisoners dying at a rate of 30 or more per day, there was growing concern among American military and political leaders that these unfortunate captives were being treated brutally.

When the U.S. 1st Marine Division landed at Guadalcanal on August 7, the initial calm was deceptive. Months of savage fighting around Henderson Field, along the banks of the Ilu River, and at high ground that aptly came to be known as Bloody Ridge, tested the men of the 1st Marine Division, the 1st Raider, and 1st Parachute Battalion along with the U.S. Army reinforcements landed later. A series of nocturnal naval knife fights took place at close quarters in the waters surrounding Guadalcanal, and the Japanese inflicted serious losses, particularly during the Battle of Savo Island during which four cruisers, USS *Vincennes,* USS *Astoria,* USS *Quincy,* and the Australian HMAS *Canberra,* were sunk.

On land and sea, the victory at Guadalcanal was a near-run thing. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had agreed previously on a "Europe First" strategy, meaning that the Guadalcanal operation had been conducted on a shoestring. Had the Japanese prevailed, the Allies would still quite likely have won the war. However, the island road to Tokyo would have been a much more arduous trek, consuming even greater quantities of resources and costing innumerable additional lives. When the island was declared secure in February 1943, after seven months of fighting, some Japanese officers themselves acknowledged that the tide had turned inexorably in favor of the United States.

Major General Kiyotake Kawaguchi, commander of the Japanese 35th Infantry Brigade during the struggle for the island, later commented, "Guadalcanal is no longer merely a name of an island in Japanese military history. It is the name of the graveyard of the Japanese army."

Shortly after the war ended, General Torashiro Kawabe, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Imperial Japanese Army related, "The turning point of the war, I believe, following our series of victories, was at Guadalcanal.

Michael E. Haskew

WWII HISTORY

Volume 11 ■ Number 5

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Battle of the Battleships

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed Richard Rule's "David and Goliath" story of the midget submarine attack on the German battleship *Tirpitz* (May 2012 issue). But I must disagree with his opening statement that by mid-1942 she stood alone as the largest, most powerful warship in the world.

By mid-1942 the two Japanese giants *Musashi* and *Yamato* (45,000 tons displacement, nine 16-inch guns) had become operational. At 42,000 tons *Tirpitz* exceeded all other capital ships then in service, but fell short of many in terms of armament.

Her eight 15-inch guns ranked her below eight battleships with nine 16-inch guns (*Nelson, Rodney, Washington, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Indiana, South Dakota,* and *Alabama*), five battleships with eight 16-inch guns (*Mutsu, Nagato, Maryland, Colorado,* and *West Virginia,* although *West Virginia* was still being repaired from Pearl Harbor damage in mid-1942), and four battleships with nine 15-inch guns (*Vittorio Veneto, Littorio, Roma,* and *Impero*).

Like *Tirpitz,* nine other battleships had eight 15-inch guns (*Jean Bart, Richilieu, Queen Elizabeth, Warspite, Valiant, Malaya, Revenge, Resolution,* and *Ramillies*). Eight older battleships had 12 14-inch guns (*Fuso, Yamashiro,* and six U.S. battleships), arguably superior to *Tirpitz*'s eight 15-inch guns.

Tirpitz was newer, bigger, and faster than many of these vessels, but she hardly stood alone as the author states. She would have been badly overmatched by the two Japanese giants and was probably inferior to the U.S. North Carolina- and South Dakota-class ships. Her sister ship *Bismarck* did in fact lose out in a gun duel with HMS *Rodney* earlier in the war.

Dave Laster
Bellingham, Washington

The Battle of El Guettar

Dear Editor:

I want to send a few lines of thanks to you for your story published in the March 2012 issue of *WWII History* concerning tank destroyers at El Guettar. When I received my issue I could hardly believe my eyes. I was so joyous.

I have been reading books and magazines and looking at movies, etc., all for a little mention of news about that battle fought in North Africa.

In May 1943, 69 years ago, my parents and family received the notice that my brother had been killed in action in the battle at El Guettar. That was the only information given until the end of the war. Since then there was a fire in Missouri that destroyed information. In 1943, serving in the WACs, I was fortunate to find a book written by Ralph Ingersoll, *This Battle Is the Payoff,* that described the Battle of El Guettar from the viewpoint of an engineer.

Since then I read in General Patton's book, *War as I Knew It*: "Looking over the country where we fought during the battle of El Guettar gives one a definite idea of the greatness of the American soldier." He also admitted that if he had known how difficult it was, he might have been less bold.

The information you gave about the battle was very interesting to me. The tanks got most of the glory. I was very interested to see the maps.

Florence Miles
Hagerstown, Maryland

Operation Grand Slam

Dear Editor:

I was recently given a copy of the January 2012 issue of your very fine publication. I was immediately attracted to Allyn Vannoy's story of Operation Grand Slam as I had a direct part in that operation.

I Company, 15th Infantry Regiment was my unit. I had been with them since Anzio. I took part in Operation Dragoon on August 15, 1944. I was wounded, a second time, on October 26, 1944, near Epinal in the Vosges. I returned to the action early in January 1945. Upon my return to I Company, I was given a job as wireman in the mortar section.

We crossed the Ill River near Maison Rouge; it was very cold. The ground was frozen and thus impossible to dig in. We did find a shell hole and set up the mortar. All was very quiet!

Suddenly, the silence was broken by a loud cry of what sounded like, "Willie, Willie, Willie." One of our team fired a few rounds in the direction of the voice and quiet returned.

Suddenly, one of our guys came running back, yelling that German tanks were coming. As we had no antitank protection of any kind we decided to get out. I ran back to the river, followed it until I found a foot bridge, and crossed over.

There was much confusion as troops tried to find their units. Eventually order was restored. I located my company, we reorganized and pushed toward Riedihr and eventually to the Rhine.

Patrick D. Heagerty
Manilius, New York

Red Ball Express Test Runs

Dear Editor:

During World War II my father, mother, and sister lived in Virginia Beach, Virginia. My father was with a group of truck drivers who drove nonstop from the East Coast to the West Coast. Along the way MPs were at all the intersections. If a truck driver so much as threw a cigarette butt out the window it was picked up so there was no trace of their being there. This was a test of how to move supplies quickly and it was all top secret.

My mother and sister did not know where my father was or what he was doing for six weeks.

After the test runs were complete, the truck program was taken to Europe and known as the Red Ball Express.

I don't know how to use a computer and my husband could only find pictures from Europe, but nothing about the test runs in the United States.

My father's name was Russell Milton Younkin.

Do any of your readers have any information about the U.S. test runs?

Debra Correll
Fostoria, Ohio

Normandy Breakout Weapons

Dear Editor:

As always, congratulations on a really great magazine with insightful and informative articles on a war that impacted generations of Americans, let alone most of the world's populace throughout the mid-20th century. Personally, my connection to World War II was only vicariously through my father, who served as a combat engineer officer in the Imperial Japanese Army and I wasn't born until 15 years after the war's end. I myself am a former artillery NCO and expert on the weapons of World War II (primarily infantry and armor) as well as a modeler of the aforementioned equipment.

The well-written article, "Key to the Normandy Breakout," (March 2012 issue) has in it a photo of what appears to be "a German Fallschirmjager (paratrooper) prepares ammunition for several shoulder-fired antitank Panzerschreck weapons shown to his left...." Those are in fact all, presumably captured, US M1 and M1A1 2.36-inch "Bazookas." Next to the bazookas are both water-cooled M1917 and air-cooled M1919A4 .30 caliber light machine guns. The rounds in the fallschirmjager's hands appear to be either bazooka rounds or possibly U.S. 60mm mortar rounds still in their packing tubes. Finally, there appears to be a pile of USGI entrenching tools just to his right. My guess is he's taking stock of captured weapons and material picked up after the battle from either captured or killed U.S. troops. And though it was true that firepower on the German side may have been greater than that of their allied adversaries, this picture would, to the trained eye, infer that the advantage was due to captured weaponry.

That aside, all-in-all a great article in an even greater publication! Keep up the good work!

Brian Izumi
Las Vegas, Nevada

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By Michael D. Hull

National Archives

The Magnificent Jeep

The American vehicle was a true workhorse of World War II.

GENERAL OF THE ARMY GEORGE C. MARSHALL CALLED IT AMERICA'S GREATEST contribution to modern warfare. General Dwight D. Eisenhower said it was one of the four tools—along with the bulldozer, two-and-a-half-ton truck, and C-47 transport plane—that won World War II, and famed correspondent Ernie Pyle termed it a "divine instrument of wartime locomotion."

The U.S. Army's quarter-ton, four-wheel-drive Willys-Overland and Ford jeep was rugged, reliable, and highly maneuverable and gave sterling service in all theaters of operation during the 1939-1945 war. Praised by everyone from generals to privates, it was used for myriad tasks in all conditions of weather, from deserts to mountains, from jungles to beachheads. The jeep could be pulled out of the mud by its riders, was flown in gliders, and was easily adapted for an amphibious role.

From Bizerte to Saipan, from Rangoon to Anzio, and from St.-Lo to Bastogne and beyond, jeeps were utilized fully by American troops and their British Commonwealth, Free French, and Polish allies. The jeep was the most recognizable and widely used military vehicle in history, and the one the Germans most liked to capture in World War II for day-to-day use. Interviewing Wehrmacht generals after their surrender, U.S. Army historian Hugh Cole said that they admired the jeep more than anything else in the formidable American arsenal.

Although the U.S. and British Armies had used Ford Model T cars in World War I, the U.S. Army was still primarily horse-drawn in the 1920s and early 1930s. But there was a growing realization in the Quartermaster Corps and the Ordnance Department of the need for motorization as soon as possible, and the Army had a standing requirement for a small motor vehicle.

In 1932, the Infantry Board recommended acquiring some British-made, two-seater Austin Seven roadsters with oversize tires for use in reconnaissance and messenger duties (the Austin Seven would be used extensively by four armies as a radio and liaison vehicle). The U.S. Army was already experimenting in the early 1930s with motorcycles for such roles, but they had limitations in cross-country service. Motorcycles were too noisy for reconnaissance work and were more accident prone in rough terrain than four-wheel vehicles.

The Army sought a practical way to move machine guns and light weapons around a battlefield, so in 1936, the commandant of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, ordered the construction of a motorized machine-gun carrier with a one- or two-man crew. The Howie machine-gun carrier was developed under the direction of Major Robert G. Howie of the school's tank section and was completed in April 1937. But the crew had to lie prone to reduce the

General Joseph Stilwell rides in the front passenger seat of the lead jeep as a group of soldiers crosses a swollen river during the Burma campaign. The jeep was a workhorse of Allied armies the world over.

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Washington crossing the Delaware. Eisenhower launching D-Day. Kennedy rescuing the crew of PT 109.

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This first-ever Bicentennial Silver Proof Set sold out at the mint three decades ago. When you consider how much prices have risen since then, you might expect to pay $100 *or more* to buy this set today.

But for this special offer, we are releasing our entire stock of Bicentennial Silver Proof Sets for only $49 each. *Or better yet, buy five and pay only $39 each!*

Order now risk free

We expect our small quantity of Bicentennial Silver Proof Sets to disappear quickly at this special price. We urge you to call now to get yours. You must be satisfied with your set or return it within 30 days of receipt for a prompt refund (less s&h).

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ABOVE: During a rally at the Willy's Overland Motor Company manufacturing facility in Toledo, Ohio, employees listen to a speech by General B.O. Lewis while one of their jeeps sits precariously parked on a long line of stone steps. BELOW: At the Willy's plant in Toledo, Ohio, assembly line workers complete the manufacture of jeeps in 1941.

silhouette of the low-slung vehicle, nicknamed the "Belly Flopper." It proved generally impractical but came to be regarded as the grandfather of the famous World War II jeep.

The Army began to consider in the late 1930s whether one-and-a-half-ton cargo and pickup trucks would be suitable for light battlefield roles, but the Infantry Board wanted a small four-by-four, 1,000-pound vehicle to improve the mobility of a battalion's heavy weapons company and to provide transportation for company and platoon leaders. When American Bantam Co. of Butler, Pennsylvania, loaned three Austin Sevens to the Pennsylvania National Guard for evaluation during its 1938 summer maneuvers, Charles Payne, who oversaw Bantam sales to the Army, suggested that there was a considerable potential for a special reconnaissance vehicle based on the British roadster.

Payne's idea interested technical experts in the Quartermaster Corps, and they laid down requirements for the project in June 1940. The Army General Staff then handed the responsibility over to the Ordnance Technical Committee, and a subcommittee began work on the project on June 19, starting with a meeting at the Bantam factory. The subcommittee included Major Howie and three Ordnance Department engineers, Bob Brown, Bill Burgan, and William Beasley, who advised the Technical Committee and potential manufacturers on basic requirements for the vehicle. They said it should have four-wheel drive and a crew of three, and mount a .30-caliber Browning machine gun.

The focus of the development of the new reconnaissance car was the Bantam plant, where engineer Karl K. Probst headed the project, and the Quartermaster Corps depot at Camp Holabird in Baltimore, Maryland. The talented Probst was eventually regarded as the father of the jeep, but the vehicle was actually a joint effort.

Bantam shopped around for suitable components while engineers at Holabird drew up the basic configuration of the vehicle. Bids were invited in July 1940. Out of 135 manufacturers contacted, only two submitted bids. They were American Bantam Co. and Willys-Overland Co. of Toledo, Ohio. The latter had been trying to interest the Army in considering some of its light vehicles.

The first contract went out on July 25, 1940, to Bantam for the construction of 70 quarter-ton reconnaissance cars, with the first model to be delivered to Camp Holabird in 49 days. The vehicle was tested rigorously in the fall of 1940. It performed well, though numerous improvements were needed. The Quartermaster Corps now considered standardization and full-scale production, and competitive bids were issued. Three companies showing an interest were Bantam, Willys, and Ford Motor Co.

The QMC was concerned whether Bantam could handle a big Army contract because it had only a small plant with fewer than 500 workers. Ford, meanwhile, boasted 100,000 employees and several plants. Furthermore, Bantam and Willys were in shaky financial condition in the aftermath of the Great Depression.

While war now raged in Europe, squabbles and controversy delayed production of the Army's reconnaissance car. Bantam officials complained to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson that they should be given credit for the development of the vehicle and protested the involvement of other firms. Army officials disagreed and pointed to Camp Holabird's role in the vehicle's origins. Army agencies met in mid-October 1940 to iron out problems, and a consensus was reached that 1,500 more vehicles

Roger Viollet / Getty Images

The seep, an amphibious variant of the jeep, is shown in the field in 1944. These troops have taken the seep in swampy conditions that require a vehicle capable of gaining traction in difficult terrain.

should be purchased for further trials.

The Infantry Board and the Army combat arms were satisfied with Bantam's work on the reconnaissance car and did not favor bringing in other manufacturers, but the QMC sought to split the order for 1,500 vehicles two or three ways because it saw a requirement for 11,800 further cars through mid-1941. It doubted that Bantam could tool up quickly enough for such a major contract. The fight over future production raged in Washington for several months.

The Army General Staff supported the infantry viewpoint and recommended a sole-source contract to Bantam. The Defense Commission (later known as the Office of Production Management) backed the QMC position that multiple manufacturing sources were necessary. A compromise was finally reached in November 1941, with three contracts awarded to the three competitors for 1,500 vehicles each. The controversy intensified that same month when several magazines began charging that the Army was favoring the giant, Ford, over the underdog, Bantam. This sparked calls for a Congressional inquiry.

Pilot models of the reconnaissance car were delivered to Camp Holabird for trials, and a production run followed. The Ford design was nicknamed the Pygmy, while the Willys model was originally called the Quad. Extensive cross-country testing continued at Camp Holabird and Fort Benning. The Willys vehicle was overweight compared to the Bantam and Ford entries because of its four-cylinder, 55-horsepower "Go-Devil" engine and heavier transmission. This distinguished the Willys design from its competitors, but, in order to avoid losing its contract, the Ohio company redesigned the Quad and reduced its weight. The definitive Ford model was called the Ford GP.

The Army's overriding concern was to have a single quarter-ton truck design rather than three separate types, and the wrangling continued. The Quartermaster Corps continued to favor Ford, which made a critical concession in the late summer of 1941 by offering to manufacture its quarter-ton truck on the basis of the Willys design. The QMC expanded production to Ford.

Early production models of the quarter-ton truck rolled off the assembly lines, and the demand grew after the signing of the Lend-Lease Act whereby neutral America assisted its warring, hard-pressed allies. A number of the vehicles were shipped to Great Britain and the Soviet Union, and there was interest in much larger supplies. Eventually, about 2,675 Bantam, 3,650 Ford, and 1,500 Willys jeeps were passed to Britain and Russia as part of the Lend-Lease program.

The smallest of the U.S. Army's trucks, the standard jeep had remarkable power, stamina, and maneuverability. It was 11 feet long and 4 feet high and had a maximum highway speed of 50 miles per hour. It could carry five soldiers or 800 pounds of cargo, and, when fully loaded, covered 20 miles on a gallon of gasoline. Besides troops, the jeep would be called upon to haul ammunition, medical supplies, rations, and communications gear and was

National Archives

A corpsman holds a plasma bottle and rides beside a wounded man aboard an ambulance jeep on Okinawa in the spring of 1945. Although the ambulance jeep was used on all fronts, it gained a reputation for being somewhat unstable on narrow, mountainous roads.

capable of towing small artillery pieces or even some types of small aircraft.

Special fittings enabled the jeep to serve as a machine-gun platform, ambulance, firefighting vehicle, or radio patrol car. The little vehicle towed supply trailers and 37mm antitank guns and could mount all types of machine guns, recoil-less rifles, Wasp flamethrowers, and both bazookas and multitube rocket launchers. It also carried forward artillery observers and was used to lay telephone cables.

The jeep could cross bridges too weak to support heavier vehicles, was easily transported by air in American Waco and British Horsa gliders, and could be dropped by parachute. The vehicle was sometimes modified to provide motive power on railways and could traverse all types of terrain. Armor was added to some jeeps for "shoot-and-scoot" operations, and amphibian jeeps (seeps) were to see service in the 1942-1943 North African campaign and with Soviet Army reconnaissance units on the Eastern Front.

Many variants of the jeep were developed during the war. The Canadian Army Proving Establishment in Ontario built a tracked jeep in the autumn of 1942; a six-wheel "Super Jeep" was developed for the U.S. Army as a personnel carrier or field ambulance, but it never entered production; and a lengthened armored-car "Super Jeep," also with six wheels, was tested in 1942 for the Army's Tank Destroyer Command. The program was terminated. The most bizarre variant, however, was the ungainly, rotor-powered British "Rotabuggy" flying jeep. Towed by an Armstrong Whitworth twin-engine bomber, the Rotabuggy was developed for the British airborne forces, but the increased use of Horsa and Waco gliders made the program unnecessary.

An estimated total of 653,568 jeeps—standard and modified—were produced by the time the war ended in 1945. The majority were built by Willys-Overland.

A number of theories surfaced about the origin of the vehicle's name. Before its universal acceptance, manufacturers and the press came up with such names as Peep, Bug, Midget, and Quad, while the British dubbed it the Blitz Buggy. Amphibious and winterized versions were known as the Quack and Penguin. Many people believed the name was derived from the official designation of "GP" (general purpose).

The term "jeep" had been around for many years—an Army slang word for anything that was insignificant, awkward, or silly. "Jeepy" meant foolish. Army mechanics in World War I called any new vehicle a jeep, while in the Army of the 1930s the term referred to a recruit. The name became more popular in September 1937 with the arrival of the cartoon character Eugene the Jeep in Elzie C. Segar's syndicated *Popeye* comic strip. Eugene resembled a dog, came from Africa, and enjoyed a diet of orchids.

The name was used by Irving "Red" Hausmann, a Willys-Overland test driver, during trials at Camp Holabird to distinguish his company's vehicle from its Bantam and Ford competitors. When the *Washington Daily News* ran a story in February 1941 about the Army's new quarter-ton truck, the name jeep caught the public eye and stuck.

The jeep served in every theater of war and became a byword for mobility and reliability. It was employed for every conceivable military purpose compatible with its size. In rear areas, it was used widely for messenger and light cargo duties, as a staff car, and as transport for military police and Navy shore patrol units.

The use of jeeps increased dramatically through 1942 as America and its allies went on the offensive against the German, Italian, and Japanese foes. Jeeps struggled through swamps and jungle as U.S. 1st Marine Division and Army soldiers fought a six-month battle to secure Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, and Australian troops used the vehicles to negotiate the forbidding terrain of New Guinea.

In the Mediterranean theater, jeeps rolled through the dust of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia after the Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942. In the Western Desert, meanwhile, jeeps laden with jerry cans, ammunition, rations, and Vickers K and .50-caliber Browning machine guns carried men of the legendary British Long-Range Desert Group and the Special Air Service as they made hit-and-run raids on airfields, supply dumps, and communications lines behind the lines of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's vaunted Afrika Korps.

After the launching of Operation Husky in July 1943, jeeps toiled up and down the scrubby ridges of mountainous Sicily with the British Eighth and U.S. Seventh Armies. Then, the stalwart little trucks traversed the muddy trails and crags of mainland Italy as the Eighth and Fifth armies fought a bitter, two-year struggle against Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's German armies. Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark, the rangy, flamboyant commander of the Allied Fifth Army, rode in a jeep when British, American, and Free French forces rolled into Rome on June 4, 1944.

After the British, U.S., Canadian, Free French, and Polish assault divisions landed on five Normandy beaches early on June 6, 1944, jeeps were widely used under several national colors. The Americans rode them during the July breakout from the beachheads while the British and Canadian Armies, battling the bulk of German panzer strength in the Caen area, used them as ambulances. SAS and French Resistance units raced in them behind enemy lines in Normandy. Lt. Gen. Jacques Philippe Leclerc rode in a jeep when he led his proud French 2nd Armored Division into Paris on August 25, 1944.

The little Ford and Willys-Overland stalwarts were indispensable to the Allied forces in every theater of operation. Correspondent Pyle, who followed the GIs through North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, and the Pacific, wrote, "Good Lord, I don't think we could continue the war without the jeep. It does everything."

General Bernard L. Montgomery, commander of the powerful British 21st Army Group, sometimes chose the vehicle over a Humber staff car or his office trailer. Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr. occasionally rode in a customized Willys-Overland jeep in North Africa, Sicily,

Library of Congress

Mountain troops test the relative merits of the jeep and the mule during training in 1942.

and as his freewheeling U.S. Third Army pushed toward the River Rhine. In Normandy, before his untimely death, Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., feisty assistant commander of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division, used a battered jeep bearing the name *Rough Rider,* in honor of his famous father's Spanish-American War cavalry regiment.

Jeeps were air-dropped with the Allied airborne divisions in Operation Market-Garden on September 17, 1944, and the robust little vehicles hauled 6-pounder antitank guns when men of the British 1st Airborne Division marched into Arnhem, Holland, for their valiant, doomed stand at the "bridge too far." In 1944, infantry glider regiments were equipped with 24 jeeps, while parachute regiments had 17. On many U.S. and British airfields in England, meanwhile, radio-mounting jeeps were used extensively for runway control, towing, and guard duties.

Armored and lengthened jeeps and others improvised as snowplows served in besieged Bastogne and elsewhere in the Ardennes after the German breakthrough on December 16, 1944. Jeeps were in the thick of the fighting as Patton's Third Army and British units stabilized the critical situation in the Bulge, and they rolled across the Rhine with British, American, and Canadian armored, infantry, and artillery formations in the early spring of 1945.

Thousands of miles to the east, jeeps were in the forefront and performing a multitude of tasks as British Commonwealth and American forces cleared the Japanese from Burma, China, and numerous island groups across the Pacific. From fetid Guadalcanal to the black sands of Iwo Jima and arid Okinawa, jeeps were relied on and highly valued by thousands of U.S. Marine Corps, Army, Navy, Army Air Forces, and Coast Guard personnel, from privates and seamen to generals and admirals.

Jeeps were still in wide use after the Germans and Japanese were vanquished in May and September 1945, respectively. They carried military police units in Berlin, Tokyo, and Paris; U.S. Constabulary personnel in occupied Germany; and combined British-U.S.-French-Soviet MP patrols in Vienna.

Late in the war, jeeps were used by the British, American, and International Red Cross when the Nazi concentration camps were being liberated in Germany, Poland, Austria, and Russia.

World War II jeeps were featured in Bill Mauldin's popular, widely syndicated Willie and Joe cartoons, and the vehicle was revered by all who served in World War II. It was one of the most widely used and dependable pieces of ground warfare equipment in the Allied arsenal, along with the American Garand M-1 infantry rifle, Sherman medium tank, and bazooka rocket launcher; the British universal carrier, 25-pounder field gun, and 6-pounder antitank gun; and the Russian T-34 medium tank.

Standard and modified jeeps were widely used later by Allied forces in the 1950-1953 Korean War; by the French in Algeria and Vietnam; by British and French troops in the abortive 1956 Suez Canal action; by United Nations truce patrols in Cyprus; by Israeli forces in Egypt and Sinai in the 1960s and 1970s, and by U.S. Army and Marine Corps units in Lebanon and Grenada. □

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By Raymond E. Bell

National Archives

A Civilian in MacArthur's Air Force

Stephen P. Duggan, Jr., evaluated the performance of Allied air forces in the Southwest Pacific.

STEPHEN PIERCE DUGGAN, JR., WANTED TO BE A UNITED STATES MARINE. WHEN the United States entered World War II, Steve was all set to do his part. He had been in the New York National Guard, but his work in the law firm of Simpson, Thatcher and Bartlett prevented much participation in his unit's prewar activities. When it came time to stand up and be counted, however, Steve was ready—but his back was not. He was turned down for any active military service because of lumbar problems, which precluded any strenuous exercise.

Duggan, nevertheless, was not to be denied. If he could not put on a uniform as a member of the armed forces, he still figured there was some way that he could serve. As it so happened there was. What became his wartime service turned into an intriguing assignment—that of being the only civilian in a unique endeavor with the potential of significant impact on the future U.S. Air Force. His assignment was to the Southwest Pacific (SWPAC) Air Evaluation Board as its sole civilian.

World War II provided the rapidly expanded Army Air Corps the opportunity to confirm with deeds what had previously been touted with words, that air power was to be a, if not the, decisive factor in modern warfare. In 1944, General Henry "Hap" Arnold, the air arm's top general, seized the opportunity to document the achievements, efficiency, and potential of the maturing air force, and he directed that the air effort be evaluated in the different theaters of operation. An implication underlying these studies was that they could strengthen the positions of airpower advocates in their rivalries with the ground forces and the U.S. Navy. Unfortunately, the study results appear to have been overshadowed by the results contained in the controversial United States Strategic Bombing Survey.

Author Collection

ABOVE: Stephen Duggan, a civilian serving in the South Pacific during assessment of Allied bombing efforts, is shown in a 1945 photo taken while he underwent an Army Air Forces course for operations analysts. TOP: A B-25 medium bomber of the U.S. Fifth Air Force bombs a Japanese freighter in the harbor of Rabaul on the island of New Britain. Civilian Stephen Duggan worked to assess the effectiveness of Allied bombing efforts in the theater.

A potential challenge to conducting such a study in the SWPAC was that the area of operations was the exclusive domain of General Douglas MacArthur. He guarded his prerogatives closely, one of which was to keep tight control on air operations in his theater. Along

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with the strategic bombing campaign by Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers against the Japanese homeland, especially those flown from bases in the Mariana Islands, the only other major sustained Army Air Force (AAF) campaign in the Pacific was conducted under the auspices of MacArthur and his innovative airman, Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney. Neither in terms of variety, territory covered, nor length of time expended did the aerial operations on the Pacific Rim by the big bombers flying from Pacific bases or the Chinese mainland against the Japanese homeland challenge those of the U.S. Army Air Forces in the Southwest Pacific. Clearly lessons were to be learned there.

Whereas the strategic bombing against the principal Japanese islands led directly to winning the war, practically demolishing the country's economic capacity to conduct warfare, MacArthur's air forces stood to prove that tactical, strategic, and airlift operations well integrated with ground and sea maneuvers were an important, if not the most important, key to ultimate victory.

Under the capable Kenney, the Far East Air Forces became a model for the exploitation of short-, medium-, and long-range aircraft defeating a tenacious enemy spread over a vast area. Eventually placed under Kenney's command were the Fifth U.S. Air Force, the Royal Australian Air Force, the Thirteenth U.S. Air Force, the Royal New Zealand Air Force, the 1st Marine Air Wing, and the Seventh U.S. Air Force. It was this group of air forces that Arnold directed one of the five Air Evaluation Boards that he had organized to scrutinize.

The specific task of the Air Evaluation Board to which Duggan was assigned was to evaluate objectively all aspects of air operations in the Southwest Pacific, from destroying enemy aircraft to the adequacy of living facilities for black airmen. The evaluations were published in a series of reports beginning in the late spring of 1945. Their basic aim was to evaluate the training of pilots, bombardiers, gunners, and other airmen and to report on the combat efficiency of aircraft and related weapons.

But what of the role of the only civilian on the board's primary staff, a unique position for a man who had no previous connection with any air arm of the United States military establishment?

Duggan's principal task was that of chief analyst. One could rightfully question the value of having a civilian with no experience in air operations analyze their effectiveness in a critical war zone. A closer look, however, provides some plausible answers. First, as a highly trained lawyer, Duggan brought a wealth of

Author Collection

Civilian Stephen Duggan traveled with Major General William E. Lynd, director of the Southwest Pacific Air Evaluation Board, aboard the general's personal aircraft, a modified B-25 Mitchell bomber. Duggan is shown standing at far right in this group photo.

experience to analyzing situations that came before the board. Second, his reputation as a fine lawyer brought a large measure of credibility to his work. And third, with no ax to grind he could apply a high degree of objectivity to the evaluations, which were expected to be severely challenged, not only by the U.S. Army ground forces but by the U.S. Navy and its air arm as well.

In a March 30, 1945, speech, Duggan tried to give a specially selected group of civilians that he helped recruit for a proposed augmentation to the SWPAC Air Evaluation Board a feeling of why they, uninitiated like himself, were chosen for the tasks ahead. He told them it was not necessary to know anything about air operations, but as a keen group of professional men their analytical training made them logical candidates for the job.

Unlike the scores of other civilian experts in the Southwest Pacific, as a member of the evaluation board Duggan was not expected to have specific knowledge about the operations and air units as employed by Kenney, at least at the beginning of his tour. In fact, he bluntly stated that a lot of what he might contribute would be naïve and his suggestions unproductive because he lacked the necessary experience. However, because he looked at a situation in a different light from the military participants, he was making the required contribution.

The board for the Southwest Pacific was established in July 1944 along with four others, one each for the European, the Mediterranean, the Central Pacific, and the China-Burma-India Theaters. The genesis of the boards apparently came from Arnold's learning of the British Royal Air Force establishment of such boards in 1942. Upon his return from the Normandy battlefield, having observed how the British boards operated, Arnold decided to establish the five boards. The British board, according to Duggan was "to get removed from day to day operations, get back a ways, and try to take a more long-range overall picture of RAF operations." Arnold was evidently impressed with this objective approach.

Colonel W.B. Leach, AAF chief of the Operations Analysis Division, hired Duggan for the SWPAC board in August 1944. Duggan was to work directly for Maj. Gen. William E. Lynd, the board's director. In September Duggan traveled to Brisbane, Australia, the site of MacArthur's and Kenney's headquarters. He reported to Lynd for duty, arriving at a time when MacArthur's air forces were preparing to support his return to the Philippines. This effort was considered the fourth and next to last phase of air operations in the Southwest Pacific. The offensive in western New Guinea, the third phase, was winding up.

As MacArthur's unified forces advanced westward in New Guinea, Kenney took full control of the U.S. Thirteenth Air Force. This placed him in command of two air forces, the Fifth and the Thirteenth plus that of the Australians. His overall command then became designated the Far East Air Forces. On August

5, 1944, Kenney further took command of the 1st Marine Corps Air Wing and the Royal New Zealand Air Force. Thus, Duggan arrived in the SWPAC at an important time in the restructuring and enlarging of Kenney's responsibility.

Duggan's and the board's arrival in the battle area also came at an auspicious time considering MacArthur's modus operandi. Since MacArthur demanded total control over operations, he was suspicious of any threat of interference. Prior to Kenney's arrival in 1942, MacArthur had caused his two predecessors to be reassigned. When Kenney arrived at headquarters in Brisbane, MacArthur made no bones about his dissatisfaction with the American air effort. Kenney took quick action and soon won a secure place among MacArthur's subordinates.

At the same time, Kenney, who was very combative in pushing the theater's air operations, also took on the AAF high command in Washington, making friends with members of Arnold's staff and frequently irritating Arnold with his persistence. By August 1944, MacArthur and Kenney had become a smoothly coordinated and effective team. The evaluation board was arriving when the air effort was in top form.

It is not hard to imagine what Kenney would have thought when Lynd, a potential spy for authorities in Washington, turned up at MacArthur's headquarters as the director of some evaluation board. It is significant, therefore, that the board's implementing directive clearly laid out its purpose and the parameters within which it was to work. The purpose was to make an impartial judgment of the conduct and effectiveness of air attack in MacArthur's theater of operations. In no way was the board to resemble that of an inspector general while at the same time having broad access to combat units and free movement throughout the area.

How much the statement of purpose allayed the suspicions of an individual such as MacArthur as he greeted a host of potential Washington "spies" is a matter of conjecture. Nowhere in Kenney's memoirs or in MacArthur's *Airman,* a comprehensive look at Kenney's air efforts, is there mention of the presence of the evaluation board in the SWPAC theater. When Lynd submitted the Plan of Air Evaluation, SWPAC to Kenney on December 1, 1944, Kenney wholeheartedly endorsed it, at least on paper. In his endorsement Kenney supported a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the FEAF operations, citing the plan as excellent. At the same time he supported a large increase in the number of personnel on the board, the selection of whom would become a major task for Duggan.

Reflecting his confidence in Kenney and sure that Kenney's innovative combat techniques had much to offer in conducting such operations in the future, MacArthur also wholeheartedly endorsed the plan. If he had any reservations about adverse publicity emanating from the results of the evaluation, he certainly did not reveal them when he added his endorsement to Kenney's. He stated that an evaluation is a major function of the military establishment from which the armed forces had not reaped the full benefits in past wars.

MacArthur, with his eye on his place in military history, could see an opportunity for the findings of this board to solidify his name in the conduct of successful air operations as well as those on the ground. That he could count on Kenney to see that his interests were protected made it possible for him to allow wide latitude in the inquisitiveness of any evaluation board, no matter how innocuous its mission statement might seem.

Indeed, Lynd does not appear to have become a MacArthur antagonist. Major disagreements do not seem to have arisen during the course of the board's proceedings. Duggan, of all those on the board, had the least to lose if any conflict should arise. He was on leave of absence from his law firm from September 1, 1944, until July 1, 1945, and subsequently extended to September 1, 1945. He could have easily returned to the law firm had he been subjected to any official pressure to cover up disagreements. In Duggan's August 25, 1945, draft report at the end of his mandated service, his allusion to any problems encountered was simply "reluctance of Far Eastern Air Forces to provide the necessary facilities for the work of the Board."

Other factors, however, greatly delayed accomplishment of the board's purpose. Considering the competition for resources which were initially constrained by a "Europe first" strategy in Washington, it is not surprising that reporting accomplishments became problematic during the first phase of the board's operation. By May 1, 1945, Duggan recorded that in the previous nine months the board had produced precious little for its work, and those few reports submitted had no particular significance. Inhibiting factors included the time analyzing problems in the area, the preparation of an agenda of studies, and then an acceptable plan of evaluation that also took time for the approval process to take place. In addition, the turbulence created by an influx of board personnel unfamiliar with the board's work, the development of an administrative organization, the constant shifting of AAF personnel, and finally Lynd's two months of illness impeded progress.

National Archives

Shown in the cockpit of a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber, General George C. Kenney commanded the air forces that supported the ground offensive of General Douglas MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific and won praise for combat efficiency and innovation.

Duggan, therefore, did little report analysis during the first three quarters of the year. He did travel extensively. In the first four months of his tour, he flew around the theater to get to know the Army Air Forces personnel while taking part in conferences designed to familiarize board members with air operations, both those of the past and those contemplated for the future. The experience and knowledge gained on these trips were used to make a preliminary appraisal of the course of action the board should take in fulfilling its mission. The tours also helped to establish the board's credibility for objectivity and allowed board members to win the confidence of those being evaluated.

Then in November 1944, while MacArthur was slugging it out with the Japanese on Leyte Island in the Philippines, Duggan and the few board members present for duty prepared what became known as the "Plan of Evaluation" dated December 1, 1944. The War Department approved the plan in two months. The plan requested that an additional 100 officers, 150 enlisted personnel, and 65 civilians be authorized and allotted to the board and that they be made available January 1, 1945—arguably a very short lead time.

With evidently no reports to evaluate in the late winter of 1944, Duggan received the task of acting as Lynd's personal representative in selecting the additional civilian personnel. This necessitated his returning to the United States, which he did in the first two weeks of January 1945.

In his August 25, 1945, draft memorandum Duggan recounted his effort in detail. Through a screening of some 15,000 names of potential civilian candidates provided by the Officer Procurement Section of the Army Service Forces, Duggan selected 1,200 to be interviewed. He personally interviewed approximately 500. From that number he selected 46 with various occupations and from different geographic locations. Among those selected were lawyers, bankers, journalists, academicians, men in public life, and statisticians. There were also technical experts in fields such as aeronautical engineering, radar and radio engineering, armament engineering, and even a psychologist.

The group assembled at the Army Air Force School of Applied Tactics in Orlando, Florida, in March 1945 for an indoctrination course. On March 30, Duggan took part in a conference at which he addressed the role of operations analysts on the Air Force Evaluation Boards. He started off in a rather jocular vein by saying, "No doubt, gentlemen, when this horde of civilians descended on this school within the last week or ten days, there was considerable confusion engendered as to just what they were doing, why they were here, what the purpose of our work is."

After trying to distinguish between the other civilians working for the Army Air Forces and those on the evaluation boards and telling of his own experiences in the Southwest Pacific, there was little doubt that confusion as to their future still remained in the minds of Duggan's audience. Considering that his own board was still feeling its way in trying to evaluate air oper-

ations, it was understandable that Duggan could not completely ignore all his group's apprehensions about their own tasks.

Unfortunately, Duggan's extensive interviewing and selection of personnel all went for naught. Just as his group got ready to entrain for San Francisco on April 6 to fly on to Manila, the War Department cancelled the large-scale civilian board participation. Dejected, Duggan returned with the group from Orlando to Washington, where he tried for three weeks to place those still interested in contributing to the war effort in other positions in the government.

Duggan believed that the project to bring more civilians on to the board was canceled by General George C. Marshall, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, for a number of reasons. The war in Europe was obviously coming to an end, with Allied forces running rampant throughout the German heartland. There would soon be a surplus of Army Air Forces officers available to take the place of the discharged civilians. At the same time Arnold had come to feel that he could not justify having positions filled by civilians when there was soon to be a plethora of military personnel available.

The war in the Pacific, however, could well go on into 1946 and beyond with the invasion of the home islands of Japan and the bitter fighting anticipated there. The emphasis was now being shifted to that theater, but with no immediate end in sight, and the need for continued war production and a developing shortage of manpower in the United States, the need for civilian labor in the work force was increasing sharply. For the evaluation board in the Southwest Pacific, the implications of the forgoing were clear and the result was aborting of part of the plan to have more civilians other than Duggan work on the board.

A disappointed Duggan returned to Manila in May to take on the task of evaluating the reports that were beginning to trickle into the directorate. Delays kept hampering the organization of the effort so that May and June slipped away before the board's composition was finally firmed up and serious evaluation work undertaken. By July 1, Duggan allowed, "It may be said that the Board was at last organized, its personnel familiar with its functions, its various teams actively engaged in making the studies, and its headquarters located and adequately established in Manila."

Duggan's remaining time on the board, however, was short. His law firm had already extended his tour until the end of August. By September 1 both he and Lynd were back in the United States. The war ended shortly afterward, and the Army Air Forces released Duggan rejoin his law firm.

What then had been accomplished, and what would be the final outcome of the Southwest Pacific Air Evaluation Board's efforts?

It should be noted first, however, just how vigorous and successful MacArthur's air force was because Kenney's efforts framed the context of the documents the board produced. MacArthur in his *Reminiscences* often cited the effectiveness of the multinational air forces under Kenney's command. MacArthur had high praise for Kenney.

MacArthur wrote that none of the brilliant air commanders in the war surpassed Kenney in aggressive vision, mastery of air tactics and strategy, and the ability to exact the maximum from both men and equipment. He cited Kenney's extraordinary capacity at improvisation and taking a poor performing force and improving it to the point where it took command of the air every time it engaged the enemy.

There can be little doubt that MacArthur would have liked to see the achievements of Kenney and his airmen recorded for posterity as models for the future integrated operations of the Army Air Forces. By giving great credence to the way Kenney was able to effectively combine tactical, strategic, and airlift operations under the most trying circumstances, MacArthur was also in a position to enhance his own reputation when it came to the effective use of air power.

It was, therefore, in MacArthur's interest that the Air Evaluation Board be as thorough in its proceeding as possible, for he, as well as the Army Air Forces, had much to gain and nothing to lose in having all aspects of air operations recorded as objectively as possible. With air power's future firmly in mind, the fact that there were many valuable lessons to be learned from Kenney's air operations could not help but make the evaluation board's work all the more productive.

In terms of output, the board's accomplishments were impressive. A review of one register of U.S. Air Force documents, for example, shows that 11 of 25 titles with the words "air evaluation board" in them were specifically entitled *Air Evaluation Board/Southwest Pacific Area*. Other document titles which direct attention to that theater of operations are, *Allied Air Forces Southwest Pacific Area, Air Evaluation Board: Notes Southwest Pacific Area, Luzon Campaign—Exhibits, Far East Air Forces, and Far East Air Service Command*. Seven titles provide no specific clues as to whether their content includes anything of

Continued on page 71

By Blaine Taylor

Both: Library of Congress

Britain's Deadliest Enemy?

Prime Minister Winston Churchill labeled Haj Amin Al-Hussaini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, as such.

LIKE ALL PALESTINIANS AND MOST ARABS, HAJ AMIN AL-HUSSAINI NOT ONLY looked forward to an Axis Pact victory in World War II but also saw it as a means of defeating what he believed was a joint British-Jewish conspiracy to foist an Israelite homeland on the Middle East that would be to the detriment of his own people.

An Arab officer in the Turkish Ottoman Army in World War I, the young, familial, dynastic figure rose to political fame and power at an early age by helping to restore two Arab holy places in Jerusalem, hit his stride during the late 1930s, and reached the zenith of his fame by 1946, its nadir after 1948, and its twilight between 1950 and 1974.

The first true nationalist Palestinian politician, Haj Amin succeeded his late brother as the British-appointed Grand Mufti of Jerusalem (a title his family had held since 1789) in 1921 at age 26 as a law-and-order candidate, then used his two primarily religious titles to create, cement, and expand a political base from which he became the godfather of the later feared Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which Yasser Arafat inherited from him upon Haj Amin's death in 1974. He served as Grand Mufti for life, 1921-1974.

Originally a supporter of the British Empire Mandate in the Holy Land during the first nine years of his tenure of office, the Grand Mufti's moment of truth and parting of the ways with the United Kingdom came in 1936 when the British allowed into Arab Palestine a vast expansion of global Jewish immigration, more than 400,000 people.

From this, the Arabs feared that within a very few years they would be engulfed by a growing Jewish population that would ultimately dwarf their own numbers. Simultaneously, the Jews were also buying up vast tracts of Arab land in Palestine as well.

For his part, Haj Amin believed sincerely that the British meant to install a Jewish national state with or without Arab Palestinian consent, and one moreover that would dominate the entire region. Thus, the Grand Mufti came to personify the first and most vocal opponent of the future State of Israel, as well as the first to openly challenge the British Mandate politically.

The subsequent Second Arab revolt of 1936-1939 (the first being that of Prince Faisal and Lawrence of Arabia in 1916-1918) was crushed by the British Army in the spring of 1939, leading the Mufti to flee for his life, having been both an ally and then a foe of the Mandatory British.

As Haj Amin escaped first to Lebanon, from which to direct an ongoing guerrilla war in his homeland, the British Mandate High Commissioner junked all plans for an effective partition of Palestine between Jew and Arab, a partition that would in fact be accomplished after the war, in 1948.

In the fall of 1939, Haj Amin left Lebanon for Iraq where, for the next year, he plotted with native right-wing Iraqi Prime Minister

ABOVE: Haj Amin Al-Hussaini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, confers with Hitler in Berlin in December 1941. The Mufti courted German support for the Arab cause but never received the tangible military support he sought. LEFT: In a show of force, the British Scots Guards parade in Palestine during the Arab Revolt of 1936.

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Rashid Ali to forestall the British there, then align that state and, indeed, all of the Arab world, with the Axis Pact in Europe against what was perceived as their common enemy: the British-French-Jewish alliance that would later include both Russia and the United States.

It was their joint conviction that only through an Axis victory in the Middle East would the British Army and the Mandate be driven out and Palestine granted its independence by none other than German Führer and Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler.

Both men billed themselves wrongly as the sole leader of the Arab world, while their domestic opponents disputed these claims, fought the Mandate and its Zionist allies, and feared that Hitler would be a far greater tyrant than King George VI in far-off London.

In this belief, they were not entirely wrong, either, as the Führer mused confidently aloud of "the period after the conquest of the Mideast" as being appropriate for the Nazis to anoint an Arab leader there.

Meanwhile, the revolt was stamped out in Iraq in May 1941, the Red Army marched into Iran, Palestine was still occupied by the Mandate, and a civil war continued to rage there. In Libya and then Egypt, the German Afrika Korps piled up victories against the hated British as thrilled Arab mothers named their newborn sons Adolf and Erwin, the latter for German Field Marshal Rommel, the Desert Fox. The Grand Mufti, meanwhile, approved both the civil war and murder in Palestine from abroad.

On May 9, 1941, the day before the peace flight to Scotland by Nazi Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess, Haj Amin declared a Muslim jihad (holy war) against Great Britain as "the greatest foe of Islam" and incited anti-Jewish riots in Baghdad. Rashid Ali's revolt there failed, mainly because German and fascist Italian military aid did not arrive in time, but Haj Amin blamed instead a Jewish fifth column.

The Grand Mufti fled for the next 20 months to Iran and on June 13, 1941, was invited by the German Foreign Office to formally visit the Third Reich. Haj Amin hid in the Japanese embassy in Tehran until sneaking into Turkey in disguise in October, using a false passport.

According to his biographer Zvi Elpeleg, in *The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin Al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement,* "Germany was considered friendly since it was not an imperialistic country." The Third Reich had no overseas colonies then.

On his way to Berlin, Haj Amin resided in Rome from October 11 to November 5, 1941, as a formally recognized representative of the new Arab National Party, and pressed for Axis

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In 1937, while the Arab Revolt still smoldered, Haj Amin leaves the offices of the Palestine Royal Commission along with attendants and bodyguards.

recognition of a fascist Arab state that would include Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan. During a summit conference with the Fascist Duce, Mussolini told Haj Amin, "If the Jews want a state, they should establish Tel Aviv in America.... They are our enemies ... and there will be no place for them in Europe."

Haj Amin also met with Italian Foreign Minister Count Galeazzo Ciano. He then spent November 6-28, 1941, in Berlin, holding a series of meetings with German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and his able deputy, State Secretary Baron Ernst von Weizsacker, and then Hitler himself. The latter told the Grand Mufti that there would be no Axis Pact commitment to the Arab world until after the German armies conquered the Soviet Caucasus, which never happened entirely.

Nevertheless, Haj Amin began pro-Axis radio propaganda broadcasts in May 1942 to the Arab world. Despite this, the Nazis then backed Rashid Ali instead, while Fascist Italy tilted toward Haj Amin to spite the Germans. Thus, under the Axis flag in the summer of 1942 at the very apex of Rommel's desert victories against the Allies, Arab forces were raised to fight for both the Axis Pact and Islam.

On February 17, 1945, holed up 50 feet below ground in his Berlin Reich Chancellery bunker, Hitler analyzed his mistakes as he saw them in his political testament. He wrote, "Our Italian ally has been a source of embarrassment to us everywhere. It was this alliance, for instance, which prevented us from pursuing a revolutionary policy in North Africa.... This territory was becoming an Italian preserve, and it was as such that the Duce laid claim to it.

"Had we been on our own, we could have emancipated the Muslim countries dominated by France, and that would have had enormous repercussions in the Near East, dominated by Britain, and in Egypt, but with our fortunes linked to those of the Italians, the pursuit of such a policy was not possible.

"All Islam vibrated at the news of our victories! The Egyptians, the Iraqis, and the whole of the Near East were all ready to rise in revolt. Just think what we could have done to help them, even to incite them, as would have been both our duty and in our own interest!

"But the presence of the Italians at our side paralyzed us; it created a feeling of malaise among our Islamic friends, who inevitably saw in us accomplices, willing or unwilling, of their oppressors.... We had a great chance of pursuing a splendid policy with regard to Islam, but we missed the bus, as we missed it on several other occasions, thanks to our loyalty to the Italian alliance!

"In this theater of operations, then, the Italians prevented us from playing our best card, the emancipation of the French subjects and the raising of the standard of revolt in the countries oppressed by the British.

"Such a policy would have aroused the enthusiasm of the whole of Islam. It is a characteristic of the Muslim world, from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific, that what affects one, for good or for evil, affects all...."

Thus, a total victory by Rommel in North Africa in 1942 instead of the defeats that he suffered at El Alamein and in Tunisia might well have preceded a massive Arab rising in favor of the Nazis despite Mussolini, who, in 1937 with Italian Colonial Governor Marshal Italo Balbo of Libya at his side, raised the symbolic "Sword of Islam" in vain hopes of securing the Arabs to his cause.

As it was, after the military demise of the Axis forces in Africa in May 1943, these Arab soldiers found themselves fighting as part of the German Waffen SS in the Muslim parts of the Balkans during 1943-1945.

When the British formed the Jewish Brigade, Haj Amin countered with a like Arab unit. During 1944, Palestinian paratroopers trained by the Germans in Holland were air-dropped into the Holy Land to spread revolt and chaos; a postwar second anti-Jewish Holocaust was planned for the Middle East in the interim.

According to author Elpeleg, Hitler blamed the Jews for the gas warfare in World War I that almost claimed his sight for good, the U.S. entry into the war in 1917, the 1918 overthrow of the

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Haj Amin inspects soldiers of a Muslim division of SS troops raised in the Balkans. This photograph was taken in 1943, and the Germans saw the Grand Mufti as an advocate for Muslim soldiers in the SS.

Imperial German Second Reich, and the harsh 1919 Versailles peace treaty and its terms. Haj Amin concurred in these views.

In his postwar memoirs and other writings, the Grand Mufti insisted that he had not been involved in the first Holocaust, but he had opposed Jewish immigration from Nazi-occupied Europe to Palestine in his meetings with Hitler, SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, and von Ribbentrop, thus indirectly helping to provide more victims for the destructive maw of the gas chambers.

A primary aim of the Greater German Reich was the negation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, and Haj Amin was quoted as asserting that he was both delighted and pleased by the Nazi Final Solution of the Jewish Question during the four years that he spent within Nazi Germany during 1941-1945.

With the end of the Axis war effort in North Africa, Haj Amin turned his attention to the scattered Muslim populations throughout the Balkans. Two Waffen SS divisions were created for them, Handschar and Kama.

With the loss of the war in May 1945, Haj Amin slipped illegally into neutral Switzerland. Returning to prostrate Germany, he was arrested by the French and imprisoned at Varenne, rightly fearing indictment by the Allies as a war criminal at Nuremberg. He was saved miraculously from this fate, however, when General Charles de Gaulle personally intervened on his behalf, possibly to spite his British ally, Winston Churchill.

Thus, the Grand Mufti escaped yet again and was received at anti-British Cairo by Egyptian King Farouk and later welcomed back to Palestine as the unchallenged leader

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By John Mancini

National Archives

Covert Action in Albania

The American OSS conducted operations in the Balkan nation of Albania during World War II.

ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 7, 1939, ALBANIA, THE SMALLEST OF THE BALKAN countries, was invaded by Benito Mussolini's Italian Fascist Army. This conquered land would become a staging area for military operations against Greece and Yugoslavia.

The Fascist invasion ignited active resistance movements, as in other occupied countries. German and Italian troops clustered in towns and villages along the Adriatic Sea and the Straits of Otranto. They avoided the rugged mountains that were controlled by Albanian guerrillas. But civil war broke out, and conflicts erupted between partisan forces holding different political philosophies that generally were polarized along either communist or royalist-nationalist positions. By 1943, Enver Hoxha's Communist National Liberation Front was in control of the Albanian resistance movement. The communists represented the only viable guerrillas that were fighting the fascists. The British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the OSS had no choice but to support Hoxha's forces. The United States decided not to deploy OSS Special Operations teams to Albania in order to avoid being pulled into the fighting between guerrilla rivals and communist elements. However, five OSS Secret Intelligence units were inserted into Albania.

The first OSS team, designated the Tank Mission, was inserted by boat on the night of December 31, 1943. Gunnery Sergeant Nick "Cooky" Kukich of the U.S. Marine Corps was a member of the three-man unit that landed on an isolated section of the Albanian coast from a fishing boat that had been launched from Bari, Italy. Sergeant Kukich served as the team's radio operator.

The Tank Mission was tasked with contacting Albanian guerrillas and establishing an intelligence network. The OSS and the British SOE members who were already present in Albania had been charged with conducting operations that would keep German and Italian forces busy to prevent their deployment to the fighting in Italy.

The British, however, wanted the Americans to submit to their command. The proposal was flatly rejected. One of the SOE operatives was British actor Anthony Quayle. Ironically, 18 years later, Quayle would play the part of a British commando officer in the movie *The Guns of Navarone*, a screenplay very similar to his real-life special operations adventures during World War II.

Facing the same political conflicts between communists and nationalists in Albania that OSS agents experienced in China, Yugoslavia, France, and Greece, the Tank Mission made contact with the Communist National Liberation Front (FNC). Gunnery Sergeant Kukich and his two comrades established an outpost in a large cave on the Adriatic coast. The OSS Marine immediately began radio transmissions to Cairo, Egypt, and Bari, Italy. By January 1944, Kukich and his OSS team had created an active spy network in Albania and were transmitting a steady flow of messages to OSS communications centers on enemy military activity and the profile of guerrilla forces. Kukich and the Tank Mission's secret intelligence operation were so effective that the Germans launched a major offensive to find and destroy both the OSS and SOE teams. Enemy pressure and

Italian troops and motorized units parade through the streets of Durazzon, Albania, following the swift conquest of the tiny Balkan nation by Mussolini's fascist armed forces.

National Archives

Leaders of Albanian partisan forces point to German positions on a map while a member of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) looks on. Cooperative efforts between the SOE, the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and the resistance posed tremendous problems for the Germans in Albania.

the illness of several Tank team members forced their evacuation by sea in February 1944. Kukich, however, remained behind.

After the withdrawal of the Americans, Kukich operated with the British SOE from their primitive coastal camp. During this time he was the sole communication link for both American and British radio transmissions to OSS Headquarters in Bari. He and other Allied special operations warriors were constantly on the run from aggressive German patrols. Many critical insertions and evacuations were conducted because of his daring and persistence in maintaining radio communication with Allied command centers in Italy. Several sea evacuations for British battle casualities were successfully coordinated by the lone OSS agent. His transmissions were frequently interrupted by the threat of discovery from nearby enemy patrols, but the OSS listening post personnel were confident that he would soon be back on the air. As an OSS secret intelligence agent, he was able to continue the development and maintenance of an active Albanian espionage system that provided highgrade intelligence to Allied war planners.

Kukich reported one hairraising incident in which the Albanian underground transmitted an urgent report to the Allied special operations camp that the Germans had located their position and were on their way to eliminate them. Kukich and the British agents swiftly withdrew into the surrounding mountains and peered down from caves and hideouts as the enemy swarmed into their abandoned encampment.

Bundesarchiv

ABOVE: Accompanied by an Italian military vehicle, German mountain troops advance along a dirt road in Albania in 1943. BELOW: Gunnery Sergeant Nick "Cooky" Kukich, fifth from left, stands with a group of Albanian resistance fighters that includes communist leader Enver Hoxha, third from left, who became dictator of the small country for 40 years after the end of World War II.

National Archives

The Nazi troops were in the gunsights of the Allied agents, who reluctantly chose not to open fire, fearing that the brutal enemy would retaliate against the civilian population of a nearby town.

In February 1944, U.S. Army Major Lloyd Smith was inserted into Albania to conduct a rescue mission of Army nurses. In November 1943, a group of 26 nurses was on a plane that was forced down behind enemy lines in Albania. Fortunately, the nurses were found by Albanian guerrillas in a remote mountainous area and were evacuated by sea in January 1944 to Italy after an arduous monthlong hike to the coast.

Tragically, three of the nurses had been separated from the main party and were left behind. Smith returned to Albania in February 1944 to rescue the remaining nurses. This time he recruited Sergeant Kukich to help in the mission. Albanian guerrillas promised to bring the nurses to an Allied special operations camp in about 10 days.

As the date of the rendezvous approached, Smith and Kukich feared that the Germans had located their position and would attack at any time. Smith states, "The situation was critical at this time because we were expecting the Germans any day and I did not care to risk leaving the base, pick up the nurses and return to find it in German hands."

On February 25, Smith enlisted Kukich's help. He reported, "We agreed that when we received word that the Germans were coming, we would leave together with a radio. In this way we would still have communication to arrange for bringing a ship to some safe place along the southern coast for evacuation." On that same morning the two men fled the camp to a hiding place in the mountains.

Major Smith continued, "On the 26th,

Sergeant Cooky [Kukich] and I traveled up a mountain to the snowline. He carried his radio and I carried both of our packs. We waited in a gully at the snowline until dusk and then started toward the top. After traveling for four hours in the deep snow and walking against a wind that was knocking us off our feet every few yards, we decided to come back down the mountain a few hundred yards and find shelter. At this time we came into a hard rain. That night we bundled together under a rock ledge with our blankets. The next morning I felt that I had not slept at all; however, Sergeant Kukich insisted that I was both snoring and shivering, not just shivering. The next morning, 27 February, we spotted six Germans, at almost the same time we were spotted by them. We tricked them into believing that we were going down the mountain and then continued on our way over the top. Sergeant Kukich and I between us had two K-Rations, which we made last for three days."

National Archives

General Mehmet Shehu, top resistance commander in Albania, was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and led his forces in the capture of the capital city, Tirana, in the autumn of 1944.

Several weeks passed without hearing from the guerrillas as to the location of the Allied nurses. On March 14, 1944, Major Smith received a message from Cairo telling him, "If the nurses can be successfully evacuated in the next thirty days, continue; if not, return to Bari, Italy."

The tension level rose among the rescue team members now that a timetable had been set. Fortunately, on March 19 contact was made with the guerrillas, and the nurses were turned over to Major Smith. After an arduous two-day hike to the coast, the party was picked up by a swift motor torpedo boat for a two-hour run to the safety of Otranto, Italy.

Intense enemy pressure forced Sergeant Kukich to break off his intelligence-gathering and special operations activities and reluctantly accept a sea extraction back to Italy in March 1944. Kukich was promoted to second lieutenant and returned to the Albanian mountains in July.

On this mission he was attached to the headquarters of Enver Hoxha, the leader of the communist partisans. This group was viewed by the OSS as the most effective guerrilla force operating in Albania and deserving of American support regardless of its politics. Kukich was able to establish a tenuous relationship with the ruthless, narcissistic communist leader. He was given command of a guerrilla unit and moved into northern Albania to conduct operations with the 1st Division of the Albanian National Liberation Army against the Germans.

In September 1944, Lieutenant Kukich's troops were ordered to join General Mehmet Shehus's main partisan force for an all-out attack on the Albanian capital city of Tirana. The general was a seasoned soldier and veteran of combat against the fascists in Spain during the bloody civil war of the 1930s.

The Germans dug in for a fight inside the medieval walled city filled with Islamic architecture in the form of mosques and minarets. After a fierce battle, the city fell to the Albanian communist guerrillas in November 1944. The German troops either withdrew or surrendered but left behind devastation. The savage house-to-house fighting left the city filled with the decaying bodies of both partisans and Germans. Kukich and his OSS team began immediate radio transmissions to the OSS station in Bari.

Kukich continued to relay strategic intelligence on conditions in Albania and served as the liaison for the U.S. military and the State Department. His reports contained crucial information on the political and economic situation and on the outbreak of a deadly typhus epidemic. Valuable intelligence reports were also filed on the establishment of the communist regime under Hoxha, the new dictator who would rule Albania for the next 40 years.

State Department Foreign Service officers arrived in Albania during the summer of 1945 and worked to confront the emergence of militant Cold War communism that had replaced ruthless fascism. Lieutenant Kukich was one of the last U.S. military personnel to leave Albania in September 1945. Before his departure, he was awarded the Partisan Star decoration from the communist government for his courage in fighting for their liberation from the Nazis. He also received the Bronze Star for valor from the United States Marine Corps for his gallant service as an OSS agent. □

Author John Mancini is a retired colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. He frequently writes about covert operations during World War II and is a resident of Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Ordeal at Outpost Snipe

A BELEAGUERED GROUP OF BRITISH SOLDIERS TOOK A FEARFUL TOLL OF AXIS ARMOR AT EL ALAMEIN.

In this painting by Terence Cuneo, British troops of the 2nd Battalion the Rifle Brigade are depicted in a heated battle with Axis armor on October 27, 1942. Equipped with 16 of the new 6-pounder antitank guns, the British took a heavy toll in German and Italian tanks during the opening stages of the Battle of El Alamein.

BY CHRISTOPHER MISKIMON

THE WAR IN NORTH AFRICA flung vast armies across the arid deserts of Libya and Egypt for two long years, beginning with the Italian invasion of Egypt in September 1940. A lightning British counterattack threw the Italians back halfway through Libya before the arrival of General Erwin Rommel and the German Afrika Korps. Together the Germans and Italians likewise forced the British back into Egypt in April 1941, with only a small force left in Libya holding the fortified town of Tobruk.

Since then massive battles covering enormous swaths of desert had brought each side alternately back and forth as fortunes, supplies, and fuel waxed and waned. Now, in October 1942, British General Bernard Montgomery put into action his plan to roll the Axis army backward into Libya permanently. This confrontation would become known as the Second Battle of El Alamein.

For months Montgomery and his hardworking staff had been building up their army, hoarding supplies, bringing up new tanks and artillery pieces, and training their soldiers to penetrate the vast Axis minefields and defenses. Once all was in readiness, the engagement began on the night of October 23 with a massive barrage laid down by almost 600 cannon. A small but significant part of this battle would occur a few days later when a battalion of British infantry and antitank guns would wreak havoc on Rommel's panzer force at a tiny defensive position named Outpost Snipe.

That battalion, the 2nd Battalion the Rifle Brigade (shortened to 2nd Rifle Brigade in British parlance), was part of Brigadier T.J.B. Bosville's 7th Motor Brigade, the infantry element of the British 1st Armored Division. As such, the unit was very different from a standard British infantry battalion. It was heavily motorized, including scout platoons with 33 of the tracked vehicles known as Bren carriers. Along with these were machine gun platoons equipped with water-cooled Vickers guns and a platoon with 3-inch (81mm) mortars for additional firepower. Significantly for the job ahead, the battalion had an antitank company (S Company) equipped with 16 of the new 6-pounder guns, a vast improvement over the obsolete 2-pounder weapon. The heavy firepower of the battalion was balanced by the fact that there were only 90 actual riflemen in the entire unit.

The 2nd Battalion spent the first few days of the battle supporting engineer units engaged in clearing the large and numerous minefields the enemy had laid to slow any attack. Some casualties had been sustained during this time, so only 76 riflemen and 22 carriers were available for duty. Fortunately, 2nd Rifle Brigade had been reinforced with 16 sappers of the 7th Field Squadron, Royal Engineers, and 239 Battery of the 76th Anti-Tank Regiment, adding another 11 of the 6-pounders to their armament. At 4 PM on October 26, the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Victor Buller Turner, was assigned a new mission.

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The 1st Armoured Division was going to attack in the area of Kidney Ridge, so described because of the terrain feature's shape on a map. Near this spot were two areas code-named Woodcock and Snipe. Another battalion of the 7th Motor Brigade, the 2nd Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps (2nd KRRC), would occupy the Woodcock position while 2nd Rifle Brigade would take up position at Snipe; both would act as anchor points for the attacking forces. There, they would facilitate the advance of the tanks.

When Lt. Col. Turner arrived at Brigadier Bosville's headquarters, he had his part of the plan personally explained to him by the 1st Armoured Division's commander, Maj. Gen. Raymond Briggs. The general simply told Turner to lead his battalion west from Kidney Ridge to Snipe that night at 11 PM and dig in. At first light, around 5 AM, the division's 24th Armored Brigade would use Snipe as a pivot point during its attack. An artillery barrage would start five minutes before H-hour on a bearing of 233 degrees so the battalion could follow under its cover to the objective. If the barrage came in on a different bearing, Turner was to follow it anyway.

National Archives

A British Bren carrier comes under enemy fire in the desert near the Alamein front several weeks before Montgomery's attack began on the night of October 23, 1942.

After receiving his orders, Turner informed his second in command, Major Tom Pearson, of the situation and left him to prepare the battalion for its mission that night while he went forward to perform a reconnaissance of the ground they would have to cover in a few short hours. Peering through his binoculars, Turner could see little but open desert dotted here and there by camelthorn bushes. His troops would be badly exposed as they moved. It would also be exceedingly difficult to determine one's exact position in an area so devoid of terrain features. In fact, the actual positions of both the 1st Armoured and the neighboring 51st Highland Divisions were off by around 1,000 yards. This would only add to the confusion the British soldiers were soon to experience at all levels.

Returning to his battalion, Turner explained the situation to his gathered officers. He was uneasy but determined to carry out his mission. As his junior officers stood around him, Turner told them he thought this would be a "last man, last round" affair. Indeed, Lieutenant Alan Baer, commanding the attached 239 Battery, had been told earlier by one of his own superiors, "I should think it highly probable that you are in for a death or glory affair."

As H-hour approached, the battalion prepared to move out. Major Pearson had done his job preparing the column; the scouts' carriers were ready to spring forward, the riflemen right behind. Next in line were the antitank guns loaded on Chevrolet trucks referred to as portees. These, along with the trucks carrying supplies and spare ammunition, would wait on Kidney Ridge until called forward to dig in at Snipe. All was ready when the barrage began to fall at 10:55 PM. In the first of many such mishaps 2nd Rifle Brigade would experience, the artillery was falling on a bearing of 270 degrees, not 233 as planned. Turner realigned his men to follow on the new direction, and they moved out at 11:10.

Scattered enemy fire greeted them but did not affect the advance. The only delay occurred when the column bumped into a line of barbed wire. The engineers went forward and determined it only enclosed a dummy minefield. The cold night air swirled with the dust from the vehicles and exploding shells, shrouding the British in a thick haze. Turner donned a leather jacket to fight the chill and kept a close eye on his jeep's odometer, using it to keep track of his troops' progress. Behind him his adjutant, Captain Tim Martin, rode in a 15-cwt truck, watching his own odometer and sending frequent radio updates to headquarters about their position. To confuse any eavesdropping Germans, he used an improvised code, making reports such as, "We have just done the Cambridgeshire distance."

After advancing about 3,000 yards, Turner asked his artillery forward observation officer (FOO), Captain Ralph Noyes, to call for a smoke shell to be dropped directly on Objective Snipe. The round landed only 300 yards away, leading Turner to believe he was close to his assigned goal, so he moved his men into an oval-shaped depression about 800 by 400 yards at 12:15 AM on October 27. Actually, Turner's battalion was some 800 to 900 yards south of where it was supposed to be. As events would prove, however, digging in at the depression would be a stroke of good luck. An Axis supply depot had occupied the low area in the recent past; a few enemy bodies dotted the landscape, and a small German dugout was still usable. It became Turner's new battalion headquarters.

With his infantry digging fighting positions in the powdery sand, Turner called forward his antitank guns. Major Pearson had been awaiting the signal to advance; his column had been the target of enemy artillery for the past hour, and at 11:30 an enemy plane had appeared overhead and bombed them. A number of vehicles suffered damage and several casualties were taken. As the column moved out, the battalion medical officer, Captain Arthur Picton, stayed behind with the ambulances to treat the wounded.

The trip to Snipe turned out to be rough going. The swirling dust obscured the route, and many vehicles quickly became mired in the soft sand. Each time one became stuck, soldiers would go to work with shovels and tow ropes, placing mats under the tires to gain purchase. Some could not be freed, so the column had to go on without them. By 3:45 AM, only 13 of the battalion's 6-pounders along with six more from 239 Battery had arrived at Outpost Snipe. The supply lorries offloaded all the spare

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ABOVE: In the summer of 1942, German tanks and infantry advance eastward toward a showdown with the British Eighth Army at El Alamein in Egypt. BELOW: These Italian light tanks took part in the El Alamein campaign in the autumn of 1942. Since their armored vehicles proved highly vulnerable to British antitank weapons, the Italians piled sandbags on their vehicles for an added measure of protection.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

ammunition, food, and water they carried while the guns were distributed around the perimeter. The 239 Battery was situated along the northeast section, while S Company spread its cannon along the rest of the position. The 2nd Rifle Brigade was now ready to face the dawn and whatever it brought.

Turner was not content to rest, however. While his soldiers were fortifying Snipe he sent C Company's scout platoon, led by Lieutenant Dick Flower, to reconnoiter to the west. There were campfires on two sides of the depression, some distant to the southwest, others only 1,000 yards to the north. This led Turner to realize his position lay within enemy lines, an ominous portent of things to come.

As the battalion commander took stock of his situation, Lieutenant Flower's platoon ran into the enemy. Their first encounter was with a small position with 14 Italian infantry who quickly surrendered. Almost immediately another group of 150 were discovered; they seemed willing to surrender as well. Unfortunately, Flower's platoon was too small to handle such a large number of prisoners. Some riflemen would have to be brought forward.

Before they could arrive, the British scouts made a more alarming discovery. They came upon the laager of a large German/Italian battle group with some 35 tanks and self-propelled guns parked in the darkness. Known as Gruppe Stiffelmayer, their guard was seemingly down as the British scouts were able to close and attack the laager with the Bren guns on their carriers. Tracers and muzzle flashes lit the night, and confusion reigned for a few moments. Three German supply trucks were quickly set afire by the shooting, but this forced the British to retreat as the light from the flames exposed them to the angry response of the panzer crews. One carrier was lost, and most of the prisoners ran off, many being cut down by fire from both sides. Flower took his platoon back to Outpost Snipe without further loss.

Lieutenant Colonel Turner now knew there was an armored unit to his west; in addition, tanks could be seen in the moonlight around the laager to the north. The formation to the north was actually part of the 15th Panzer Division. Around 3:45 AM, the sounds of engines starting to the west signaled that Gruppe Stiffelmayer was beginning to move. It is probable that they decided to move because, having been found by the British, they feared an impending bombardment or attack. Whatever the case, the German force split into two groups. One headed northeast toward the 15th Panzer's laager while the other formed a single column and moved directly toward Outpost Snipe.

Leading the column was one of the precious Panzer Mark IV F2 tanks, known to the British as the Mark IV Special. This was an upgraded Panzer IV with a long-barreled 75mm high-velocity cannon, making it the most powerfully armed tank in North Africa. There were only 30 of them in the entire Afrika Korps, and now one of them was bearing down on Outpost Snipe at the head of a host of German armor. Fortunately for the British, the column came on unaware that a large enemy force lay dug in straight ahead. The Germans were in for a surprise.

Crouched behind the gun shields of their 6-pounders, the British crews let the Axis column close to point-blank range. Then, with the Mark IV Special a mere 30 yards away, one of the antitank guns opened fire. The 6-pound armor-piercing round tore through the armor of the panzer, and the tank burst into flames. At the same moment, another gun crew opened fire on a self-propelled gun, identified as a Panzerjäger 38t, an obsolete Czech tank chassis converted to carry a captured Soviet 76.2mm gun. Thinly armored, this vehicle too was knocked out. Confused as to the origin of this deadly accurate fire, the German tankers retreated, still unaware there was a British battalion in their midst. The British gunners rejoiced; finally they had a weapon that could knock out the feared panzers. They were subdued a little by one of

Imperial War Museum

During the early fighting at El Alamein, wounded British soldiers await medical attention at a field aid station.

the survivors of the Mark IV. He had managed to get out of the tank and take cover, from which he began sniping at the British. The lone soldier would continue this for several hours until, a little after sunrise, an English grenade silenced him forever.

Minutes later, at 4 AM, the artillery FOO, Captain Noyes, decided to do some scouting of his own. Outpost Snipe was sure to come under attack at some point, and a reconnaissance of the surrounding area would help him plan the use of the supporting artillery. He set out from Snipe but did not return. Explanations for his disappearance conflict. One account says he was captured by a German patrol, while another states he accidentally strayed into another British position and could not get back once the fighting started. Whatever the case, his skills at directing artillery would be sorely missed in the hours to come.

For the immediate time, however, there was little call for artillery as the area became quiet for the next two hours. The Germans were still not aware of the British occupation of the Snipe depression even though they had been fired on from it. In the confusion of battle they had apparently been unable to determine where the incoming fire had come from, so for now the outpost remained safe and hidden. At 5:45 AM, Major Pearson left, taking the transport vehicles with him as they were too vulnerable and exposed even in the depression. The column soon made its way to safety back on Kidney Ridge.

It was well they did, for at 6:15 the two Axis armored columns began to move, surprisingly enough, to the west. Some of the German tanks appeared out of dead space, suddenly visible to the British gunners from their hidden positions. Best of all, both groups were facing away from Snipe, their thinner side and rear armor an easy target for the powerful new 6-pounders. The British could have stayed silent and waited, but the Axis columns were simply too tempting a target.

The order to fire was given, and the brightening dawn sky was lit even further by the muzzle flashes of British guns and the flames of burning German and Italian tanks. Some of the tanks were as far as 800 yards from Snipe's guns, but it did not help them. One after another Axis fighting vehicle fell victim to the murderous fire. Sergeant Charles Callistan, a gunner of 2nd Rifle Brigade, relayed his experiences: "I let go at 150 yards. You couldn't miss. All our guns seemed to be firing at once. My target burst into flames but came on for another 50 yards before it halted. Suddenly the night was bright with burning tanks."

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On the other side of the battle an Italian officer, Capitano Preve, gave details of his own men's fight against the British: "Suddenly there is the most violent fire from another eight or ten antitank guns hidden on our left and in depth." As Preve watched, one of his junior officers led a brave but futile attack. "Second Lieutenant Camplani from outside his turret urges his own tanks to the attack at the head of them, drives his own tank at full speed on the most forward antitank gun."

Despite such bravery, the galling British fire was more than either Axis force could endure and both retreated, leaving a total of 16 knocked-out vehicles strewn across the desert. As the surviving crews abandoned their tanks to flee, the Vickers guns of the infantry went into action, cutting down many of the tankers as they ran desperately for safety.

So far things had all gone 2nd Rifle Brigade's way. Eighteen armored vehicles had fallen to its guns along with several supply trucks and many killed and captured Axis infantry from earlier. Now that would change because the Germans and Italians knew exactly where they were. Both artillery and direct fire began to fall in the area. At the same time, with the sun now up it was obvious some of the 6-pounders, laid in the darkness, were too exposed and had to be repositioned. Carriers were used to move them, and each time this drew fire. The situation was becoming hot, prompting Captain Marten to ask Lt. Col. Turner if they were in fact in the right place. Turner replied, "God knows, but here we are and here we'll stay."

Despite the confidence he radiated, Turner was actually quite worried. His battalion was there to act as a pivot point for the advance of 24 Armoured Brigade, but it was now late and nowhere to be seen. He could not know that the attempt to seize the Woodcock position had failed and this had upset the rest of the offensive. Nevertheless, there was nothing to do but hold on.

Shortly afterward, dust clouds were spotted off to the east, a telltale sign of tanks on the move. Within minutes Sherman tanks of the 47th Royal Tank Regiment (47 RTR) appeared

on the crest of the ridge, from which they could see Outpost Snipe. Tragically, seeing the 2nd Rifle Brigade's tight perimeter surrounded by Axis armor (at a distance, they could not tell that those tanks were knocked-out hulks), the British tankers mistook the position for a German strongpoint and opened fire on it. British shells screamed in on the outpost, much to the consternation of the British soldiers occupying it. Much of it was landing on 239 Battery, situated as it was on the east side of Snipe. The battalion's intelligence officer, Lieutenant Jack Wintour, wasted no time in getting to his Bren carrier and rushed off to the ridge to personally stop the firing, but it took until 8 AM before all the tankers were made aware of the error.

By then the men in Snipe spotted another concentration of 25 German tanks 1,000 yards to the west. As the tanks began to assume hull-down firing positions, the British gunners opened fire, hitting three that burst into flame. At 8:30, the tanks of 47 RTR arrived, taking cover in the depression with the gunners and infantry. This mass of British combat power drew Axis fire like moths to a flame. Artillery, tanks, and antitank guns deluged Outpost Snipe, throwing great clouds of dust and smoke into the air with each explosion.

Both sides laid smoke screens to protect themselves from enemy fire, only adding to the thick haze that prevented the British gunners from picking out targets. The Axis tankers and gunners even used a new tactic against the newly arrived Shermans. When a panzer gunner spotted an enemy tank, he would fire a smoke shell at it, marking it for his comrades. They in turn would hit the area around the target with 88mm and heavy gunfire; within 15 minutes seven Shermans were burning.

In his foxhole nearby, a British rifleman named Crimp huddled as low as he could next to his mates and tried to endure the shelling. "The shells scream down in inexorable succession, and all around us is the driving rending crash of high explosive. Several times my tin hat is crushed onto my head by the impact of near detonations, and once my lungs are filled by a rush of sand. Everyone lies still. You can't do a thing—it just has to happen. If one lands in the trench—well, we shan't know much about it."

It proved more than the tankers could take, and at 9 AM 47 RTR withdrew back to the ridge, reduced to a mere five Sherman and six Crusader tanks. To their left, 41 RTR, both part of 24 Armoured Brigade, had lost 12 tanks itself and also pulled back, ending the attack for which 2nd Rifle Brigade was to be the pivot point. This left the men at Snipe isolated and alone, though most of the infantry were glad to see them go—the tanks drew too much fire.

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ABOVE: Manhandling their 6-pounder antitank gun into position in the desert, British soldiers prepare for a German assault in this photo taken about the time of the action at Outpost Snipe. BELOW: Crewmen of the British 8th Armoured Division pause with their Sherman tanks just behind the front lines on October 27, 1942. At the time, the Sherman was the most advanced tank in the Allied arsenal.

Imperial War Museum

The gunners likewise suffered during the bombardment. In 239 Battery, Sergeant Bob Smith's 6-pounder took a direct hit and was knocked out and the entire crew killed or wounded. Smith himself was temporarily blinded but still managed to get to Sergeant Ronald Wood, one of his friends, to help his gun crew. Another gun was also put out of action. Meanwhile, Sergeant R.W. Binks spotted a Panzer IV at a range of more than a mile, a long shot even for the 6-pounder. Taking careful aim, he fired and hit the tank on his third shot, destroying it. Another panzer appeared to tow away the hulk, but Binks's luck did not hold and it got away.

Turner, lacking an artillery observer, could not direct any fire at his antagonists, and at 9:05 he sent a message to his brigade headquarters saying, "Our crying need is for a gunner." The 7th Motor Brigade promised to send one, but the gap between Snipe and friendly lines was now more than a mile, with all of it under Axis observation. The observer never got through. Turner's need for such a man became even more urgent when it was realized that much of the incoming artillery was British. It was a maddening situation, but eventually Major Pearson, who had returned with the light

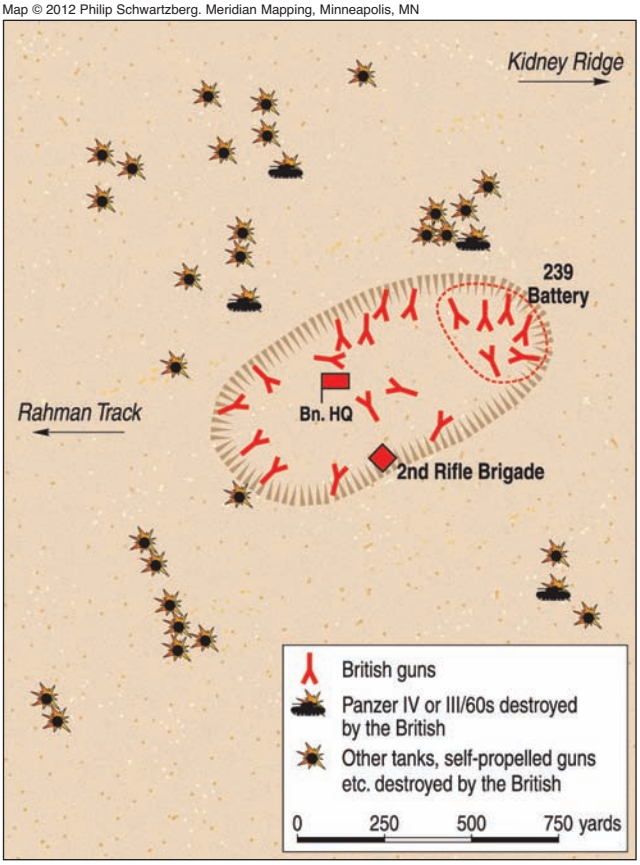
vehicles, personally went to the British artillerymen and persuaded them to cease fire.

Even while the "friendly" artillery was falling around Snipe, Italian infantry were spotted to the south preparing for an attack. Turner decided to use his scouts to conduct a spoiling attack and sent Lieutenant Flower's platoon to deal with them. The British soldiers climbed aboard their carriers and sped off. Within minutes they closed with the Italians and put them to flight, even destroying a pair of Italian trucks, each towing a captured 6-pounder. The scattered infantry tried to make their way back to Axis lines while the scouts returned to Snipe.

"During the next half hour many excellent sniping targets were offered by small groups of Italians as they tried to run away," Flower recalled. Since machine-gun ammunition was now running short, the soldiers were ordered to use only their Lee-Enfield rifles.

Acutely aware of the dwindling ammunition supply, Captain Peter Sheperd-Cross volunteered to take three carriers back to friendly lines to get more. Each of the carriers was loaded with the worst of the wounded. Sheperd-Cross and his men took off across the desert floor for the ridge, enemy fire snapping and bursting all around them. The captain's carrier even took a direct hit from a 75mm gun, but all three made it back to the main British line. Sending off the injured and gathering all the ammo they could carry, the group tried numerous times to get back to Snipe. Each attempt was met with such intense fire they had to run back. Major Pearson had likewise put together a relief convoy, but it met the same difficulty.

Outpost Snipe met its next threat from the southwest. Thirteen Italian tanks from the 133rd Armored Regiment of the Littorio Division, led by Capitano Preve, charged, firing as they came. The attack was designed to keep Outpost Snipe busy while Gruppe Stiffelmayer counterattacked the now-repulsed 24 Armoured Brigade. Turner became concerned since that part of his perimeter was not as strongly held as the rest. He ordered two guns moved to bolster that section. The soft, powdery sand was a great hindrance to the crews as they struggled to get the 6-pounders re-sited. Enemy fire killed four men as they toiled. Despite their casualties, the gunners laid into the Italian force and quickly destroyed four tanks, causing the rest to retreat and eliminating the threat for the moment.



Although hard pressed by repeated German and Italian attacks, the British destroyed or disabled numerous Axis armored vehicles and held their ground.

With the diversion neutralized, Gruppe Stiffelmayer was forced to divert some of its strength (25 to 30 tanks) to attack Snipe. At 10 AM, the German force advanced in two groups, one heading toward 24 Armoured Brigade and the other aimed straight at 2nd Rifle Brigade. The move inadvertently doomed the German attack, catching it in a crossfire. The tanks advancing toward Snipe had exposed their sides to 24 Armoured Brigade, which pounded them mercilessly. The group attacking the British tanks likewise exposed its sides to the gunners at Snipe at a range of 1,000 yards, still close enough for 6-pounder shot to punch through the thinner side armor. In less than an hour, eight more German tanks were burning. The rest quickly retreated.

It was now 11 AM with the sun burning high overhead. It was time to take stock. So far 23 Axis tanks lay blazing or knocked out across the hot desert sands. It was an impressive feat, but 2nd Rifle Brigade was suffering for its achievement. Axis artillery continued to rain on the outpost. Six of the precious carriers had been hit, and while 13 of the 6-pounders were still operational, ammunition was dwindling. Many of the gunners had been wounded, leaving most of the guns manned by mixed crews. The commander of S Company, Major Michael Bird, gathered some of the spare cannon ammunition and loaded it into one of the remaining jeeps driven by a Corporal Francis. Despite making themselves a juicy target, they drove the perimeter to distribute the green boxes of 6-pounder rounds to the guns. Bullets and shells nipped their heels the entire trip.

Turner decided to send out three more carriers with more wounded. Again one of them was hit before it reached the relative safety of the ridge. Major Pearson kept trying to send out his resupply convoy, but the Axis forces threw such heavy fire at it each time that Pearson decided it would have been suicide to keep going. Meanwhile the 1st Armoured Division commander, Maj. Gen. Briggs, monitored the battle, listening to Snipe's pleas for help over the radio, asking for tanks to come to their support. He also was listening to intercepts of German radio traffic. He knew both the 15th and 21st Panzer Divisions were being marshaled to counterattack against 1st Armoured. His choice was to either save his tanks for the coming strike or deploy them to Snipe's assistance, risking their loss before the main Axis attack came in.

"My reluctant decision was that I must leave the infantrymen to fight it out for themselves," Briggs would later write.

Left to their own devices, the men at Outpost Snipe prepared for another enemy assault, and at 1 PM another Italian attack began against the southwest section of the perimeter. This time eight tanks attacked, supported by infantry and a single Semovente assault gun. The attack also showed greater determination than the earlier Italian assault, this group continuing on even after taking fire.

The heavy shelling had reduced the British in this section to a single 6-pounder under the command of Sergeant Callistan. Most of his crew was now wounded, and he had sent the rest to fetch ammunition, leaving him to operate the cannon alone. Turner saw this and rushed over to help along with the platoon commander, Lieutenant Jack Toms. The battalion commander took over as loader, while Callistan aimed and fired the gun. Turner told

the sergeant to hold his fire until the enemy was only 600 yards away. Callistan then opened fire with devastating effect, hitting five tanks and the self-propelled gun with six shots, leaving all of them burning.

Now they had a problem. The three remaining vehicles continued attacking, and there were only two rounds of ammunition left. Adding to the dilemma, Lt. Col. Turner was badly wounded in the head by a chunk of shrapnel but refused treatment and stayed at the gun. Two of Callistan's gun crew crawled out on their stomachs to try to get more rounds for the cannon, but this exposed them to heavy fire and they barely made any progress.

While the wounded colonel continued directing Callistan's fire, Lieutenant Toms dashed off toward his jeep. It was 100 yards away but contained four boxes of precious 6-pounder ammunition. Machine-gun fire chased him the entire distance, bullets snapping past and kicking up puffs of sand and dust. Somehow he reached the jeep unscathed and drove right over to the waiting gun. Along the way the jeep was hit and caught fire, but Toms kept going. The crew pulled the ammo boxes off and once again manned their gun, the now-weakening Turner set beneath a scrub bush to rest. Callistan took aim at one of the three remaining tanks and fired, hitting it. Two more shots resulted in two more wrecked tanks—three in a row. As Callistan and his crew fired, Lieutenant Toms shouted back to Turner to keep him apprised. With the third hit the colonel cried out, "Good work! A hat trick—a hat trick!" The last tank had been destroyed only 200 yards from the perimeter.

The immediate threat over, Callistan filled a can with some water and set it on the burning jeep. Soon they had three cups of tea. Turner tried to resume checking his lines, but the wound was causing him to hallucinate, so he was taken to the headquarters dugout. There he began to imagine he was defending a harbor against attacking ships—not a bad analogy considering his tiny island outpost was at that moment awash in a sea of Axis tanks. At one point he cried out, "Open fire on that destroyer!" and shortly afterward had to be physically restrained for a time. NCOs were commanding some parts of the perimeter since most of the officers were dead or wounded. The desert heat was oppressive, and flies gathered in great swarms, especially around the wounded. The only respite was that the Axis forces seemed equally tasked and made no further attempt to attack for the next few hours.

Overhead a force of 60 Axis fighters and dive bombers appeared, but these were intercepted by 12 British Hawker Hurricane and 16 American Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighters and driven off with the loss of at least eight planes (the two Allied Squadrons claimed 15 aircraft between them) while the British lost three Hurricanes. The Axis sortie had been part of Rommel's planned counterattack, but the stiff Allied air resistance had disrupted it.

The British 2nd Armored Brigade appeared on Kidney Ridge at 4 PM. What must have been a sense of relief for 2nd Rifle Brigade turned to anger when the British tank force made the same mistake its brothers had earlier and opened fire on Snipe. The incoming fire included 105mm howitzers from the 11th Royal Horse Artillery, which was supporting 2nd Armoured. Turner later commented, "During an unpleasant day, this was the most unpleasant thing that happened." The error was quickly corrected and just in time. Two groups of Axis tanks could be seen gathering for an assault some 1,200 yards to the west. The first group had a mix of some 40 German and Italian tanks, while the other had 30 German armored vehicles.

At 5 PM, the larger group advanced directly toward 2nd Armored Brigade. In what must have been a communications breakdown, this armored force came straight past Outpost Snipe and the waiting guns of 239 Battery as though it had no idea the British were there. Only four guns remained, and the gunners waited until their foe was only 200 yards away with its flanks exposed. They opened a vicious fire upon the panzers, a few S Company guns joining in. The air around Snipe once again swirled with dust and smoke as round after round sought out the vulnerable armor of their quarry. Sergeant D. Newman of S Company was on the left end of the British line; his gun could be heard firing over and over. The sergeant later said he had hit four tanks, including a Panzer II from which a crewman wearing a long white coat jumped.

Newman's guns put out such effective fire that a panzer turned to attack it directly. Seeing this, Sergeant F. Hillyer traversed his gun and fired, scoring a hit. Lieutenant Baer, the 239 Battery commander, helped man a gun himself. Eventually it became jammed by sand and grit, forcing him to close the breech by banging on it with an empty shell casing. In this furious exchange of fire a dozen panzers were knocked out in only two minutes, half of them catching fire. A Panzer IV was hit simultaneously by two 6-pounders. Only a minute later, one of those British guns was hit in turn, killing or wounding all but one of the crew. Even so, the attack was stalled, and the Germans withdrew to some nearby low ground to hide.

The second Axis group now detached 15 of its own tanks to try to overrun Snipe. This group, having seen what the British gunners could do, moved carefully, using every low spot and small sand mound for cover. The Germans used their machine guns liberally to try to suppress their opponents. Against this force

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British National Archives

This artist's interpretation of the fighting at Outpost Snipe depicts wounded Lieutenant Colonel Victor Turner continuing to direct the fire of an antitank gun crew during the heat of battle. Turner was later awarded the Victoria Cross for his leadership and heroism under fire at Outpost Snipe.

From Private to Colonel

Legendary actor Jimmy Stewart piloted a bomber over Germany and retired after a lengthy military career. BY SAM MCGOWAN

Jimmy Stewart is arguably the only prewar American actor of superstar magnitude to have served in a sustained combat role during World War II, and the only one to have served in a position of command. He was also one of only a handful of men to progress from private to full colonel in less than five years.

James Maitland Stewart was a native of Indiana, Pennsylvania, where his father ran a hardware store, which makes him a true product of Main Street America. Indiana is far different from Philadelphia or even nearby Pittsburgh. Located in western Pennsylvania, it lies in a region with close ties to the American frontier of the early 1800s. Like many other Americans of his age, Stewart came from a family with military service in its background. Both of his grandfathers were Civil War veterans, and his father had fought in the Spanish-American War. As a boy, Stewart actually wanted to pursue a career in the military but was dissuaded by his father. A shy and reclusive youth, he spent much of his time building model airplanes, a hobby he continued into adulthood.

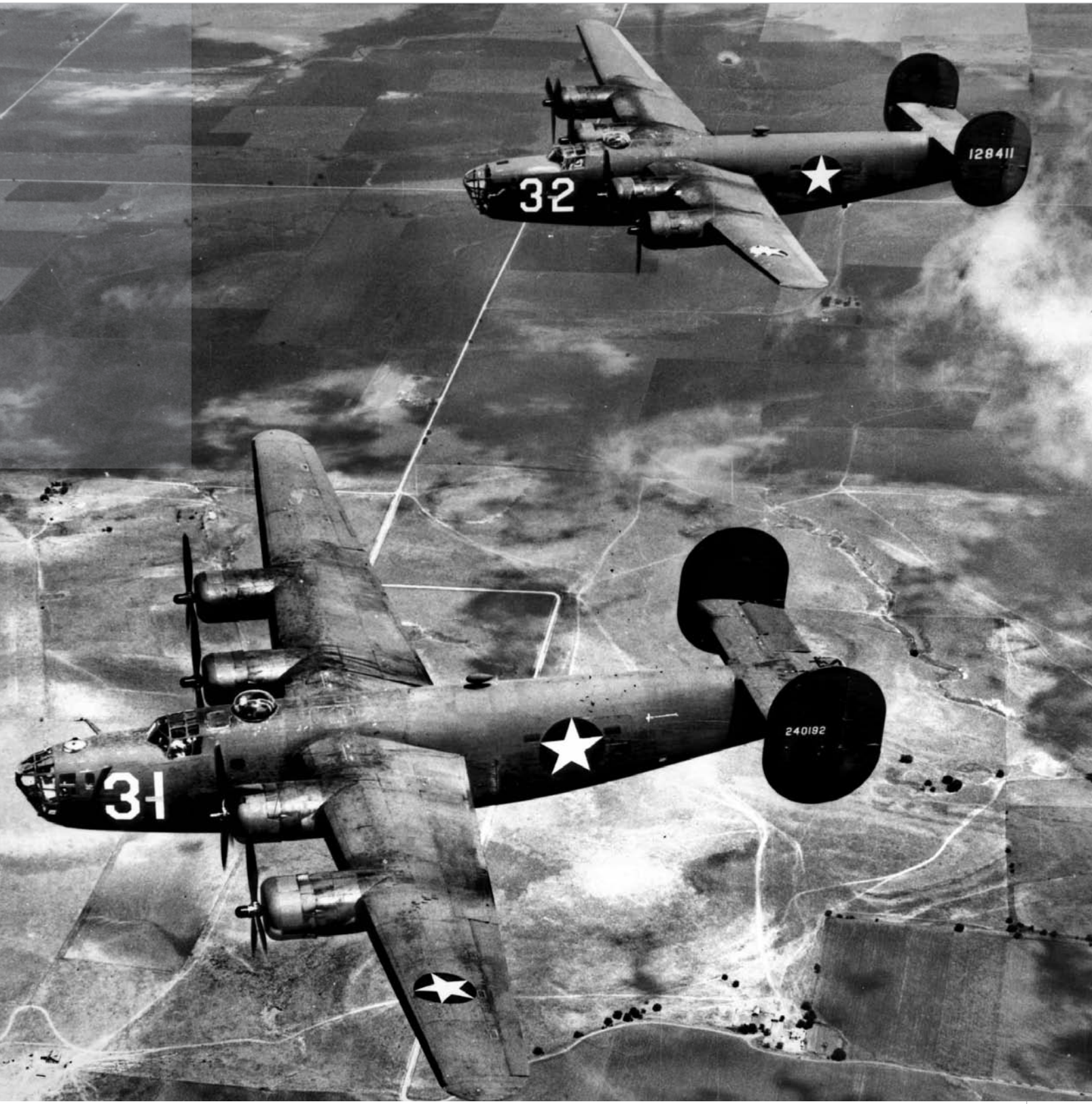
Stewart took his first airplane ride right after World War I when a barnstorming pilot stopped outside the town for a few days. Jimmy was around 10 or 12 years old at the time. His father's successful business provided the family with wealth and political connections. Jimmy's father enrolled him in Mercersburg Academy, a prestigious college preparatory school in southern Pennsylvania, at age 16. He was home with an illness when Charles Lindbergh made his historic transatlantic flight in an airplane that had been designed by Mercersburg alumnus Benjamin Franklin Mahoney.

ABOVE: Lieutenant General Henri Valin of the French Air Force awards the Croix de Guerre with Palm to actor Jimmy Stewart in 1944. Stewart was already a Hollywood star at the time and flew a number of combat missions over occupied Europe. OPPOSITE: A flight of Consolidated B-24 Liberator heavy bombers drones in formation. The Liberator was a workhorse of the Allied bombing effort in Europe along with the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress.

Stewart's personal ambition was to attend the U.S. Naval Academy and become a Navy pilot. His father, however, thought otherwise, and the young man enrolled at Princeton University in 1928. It was at Princeton that he developed an interest in acting and became friends with fellow actor Henry Fonda, who also shared Stewart's interest in model airplanes. Stewart and Fonda, who was not a Princeton student, were members of an intercollegiate dramatic team. After Stewart's graduation, the two young men went to New York to try their luck on Broadway. They took screen tests, then went to Hollywood, with Fonda preceding. He was at the station to meet Stewart, who stepped off the train carrying a model of a Martin bomber they had been working on while sharing an apartment in New York.

Immediately after he arrived in Hollywood, Stewart began taking flying lessons at Mines Field Airport—now Los Angeles International—where he encountered members of the Hollywood community such as Robert Taylor, Tyrone Power, and Frances Langford, who were flying out of the field. Taylor would later serve as an instructor pilot with the Navy.

By the spring of 1941, Stewart was a successful movie star and an accomplished pilot with a commercial license and more than 300 hours in his logbook. He owned his own airplane, a Stinson 105, and was an investor in Thunderbird Field, a new venture in Phoenix that had a contract to train Army pilots. Had he waited until after Pearl Harbor to enlist, Stewart would have been a good candidate for



All photos: National Archives

the Army's service pilot program, a program offering commissions and ratings as noncombat pilots to men with significant civilian flying experience.

Stewart, however, decided to enlist after he received his draft notice in October 1940 in the very first draft and had been in the Army for several months before Pearl Harbor. When he reported for his physical, the lanky actor was found to be underweight, a finding that would have caused most men to breathe a deep sigh of relief. But the notice had stirred a patriotic chord in the young man from America's heartland, and he was determined to answer his country's call. He appealed the decision. He passed the weigh-in the second time around. He said later that he had a friend manning the scales, while others have reported that he filled

up on bananas. On March 22, 1941, the actor became a U.S. Army Air Corps private.

Just how Stewart received his aeronautical rating as a military pilot is a mystery. At age 32 when he was drafted, he was beyond the cutoff age of 27 for aviation cadet training. He was a college graduate, however, from one of the country's most prestigious schools, and was thus eligible for an officer's commission. He also was a rated commercial pilot. At some point he applied for a commission and a rating as a pilot based on his civilian flying experience. Since his commission was dated January 19, 1942, he may have been commissioned in conjunction with the newly initiated service pilot program, although he was apparently given a military pilot rating since service pilots were restricted to noncombat duty. By that time he had been in the Army for almost 10 months and wore the chevrons of a corporal. He was stationed at Moffett Field outside San Francisco, where he remained for a time as an officer.

Stewart's experience in becoming a U.S. Army pilot is very unique. Prior to World War II, there was only one way to become a rated pilot, and that was through completion of an undergraduate pilot training course as either an aviation cadet or an already commissioned officer. In late 1941, the Army began hiring civilian pilots to serve under contract to ferry airplanes and perform other nonmilitary duties. When war broke out, many of these men were considered for military service in limited-duty status.

Stewart, however, was already in the Army when he was considered for commissioning and rating as a pilot and may have been rated and commissioned through a different route. Instead of being assigned to ferry airplanes or fly transports, he became an instructor pilot in the Training Command. He underwent an evaluation and was considered competent as a military pilot without attending a formal pilot training course. Stewart's status as a graduate of an Ivy League university and his leadership potential may have been factors in his ultimate military career. Even so, his progress is unique.

Although Stewart had his heart set on becoming a combat pilot, the Army was less enthusiastic about using a man of his notoriety in a combat role. He was more valuable as a recruiting tool. Shortly after he was commissioned, he was called to Washington, D.C., to attend President Franklin Roosevelt's March of Dimes rally and make the rounds of a number of parties and galas. Now that the United States had entered the war, the image of a Hollywood star in uniform wearing silver pilot wings was a surefire recruiting tool for the Air Corps. The patriotic Stewart, however, wished to serve as

ABOVE: After winning an Oscar in March 1941, for his role in the feature film The Philadelphia Story, actor Jimmy Stewart takes his oath to join the U.S. Army. BELOW: Shortly after enlisting in the U.S. Army, actor Jimmy Stewart poses with the tail of an aircraft as a backdrop.

a soldier; he did not want to play a role as a show pony and was determined to do everything in his power to get an operational assignment with a combat unit. When he returned to Moffett, he signed up for instrument and multi-engine training along with night and formation flying.

After receiving a rating as a multi-engine pilot, Stewart was sent to Mather Field near Sacramento for instructor training and qualification as a multi-engine instructor pilot. The former actor's next assignment was at Kirtland Field at Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he flew twin-engine Beechcraft AT-11s carrying bombardier training cadets on flights over the bombing range. It was an ideal assignment for a future bomber pilot—his role was to carry young bombardier trainees and their instructor over the practice ranges to drop dummy bombs on targets outlined in the desert. His responsibility was to fly a straight and level course over the bombing range until the student bombardier took control of the airplane with his sophisticated computerized bombsight to make the drop. It was routine duty, but while his passengers were learning to drop bombs, Stewart was learning to be a bomber pilot.

Whenever he had time off, Stewart headed for Los Angeles to see his Hollywood friends. Many had also joined the service. His good friend Henry Fonda enlisted in the Navy. Burgess Meredith, who had been Stewart's housemate before the war, had also joined the Army Air Forces and was in training to become an intelligence officer. During one visit toward the end of 1942, he met up with his old buddy Clark Gable, who had just completed an officer training course in Miami and had orders sending him to gunnery school. Gable was expecting to go overseas upon completion of the course to gather material for a movie he was making for the Air Corps.

In early 1943, Stewart transferred to Gowen Field at Boise, Idaho, in a new role as a four-engine instructor pilot. Prior to the assignment he went through a four-engine course at Hobbs, New Mexico, to check out as a first pilot, or aircraft commander. Upon completion of the course, which used Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses, he went to the Combat Crew Processing Center at Salt Lake City, Utah, where he expected to be assigned to a combat unit and begin training for overseas duty.

The other pilots in his class were recent graduates of advanced pilot training, and they received assignments to combat groups that were forming up for duty overseas. Stewart, however, was not a graduate of an Army pilot training program, and his status was somewhat murky. It is probable that since he was one of the first pilots to be rated on the basis of civilian flying experience, he had not been rated as a service pilot but had been given regular pilot wings instead. He went to Boise and the 29th Bombardment Group as an instructor pilot. The 29th had served on antisubmarine patrol missions in the Caribbean at the beginning of the war, then had moved to Boise to serve as a training group for combat units preparing for duty overseas. Shortly after his arrival, Stewart was promoted to captain and given a new assignment as a squadron commander.

After he had been at Boise for several months, a rumor reached Stewart's ears that he was going to be taken off flying status and reassigned to the audiovisual service. Another rumor was that he was going to be sent on a

perpetual War Bond tour. The rumors were more than Stewart could take. Up to this point he had not tried to pull rank, position, or status, but he had had enough. He paid a visit to the group commander, Colonel Walter Arnold, and stressed his desire for an assignment to a combat group. Arnold was sympathetic, and instead of giving him a pep talk about the needs of the service and sending him on his way, Arnold decided to do something on his behalf. He recommended Stewart to fill a vacancy in the 445th Bombardment Group, which had passed through Boise a few weeks earlier and was in the third phase of training at Sioux City, Iowa. The 703rd Bombardment Squadron needed an operations officer, someone with considerable heavy bomber and command experience, and Stewart had both. The group had activated at Gowen Field several months earlier, and Stewart was well known to its senior officers.

Stewart's transfer came at a time when the Army Air Forces was in the process of phasing out the B-17. Nearly all of the new groups still in the pipeline for overseas duty were equipping with B-24s. Larger and considerably faster than the famous B-17, the B-24 had much greater range, and the Army Air Forces senior leadership preferred it as the long-range heavy bomber until the Boeing B-29 Superfortress became available in significant numbers. With only a couple of exceptions, by late 1943 all of the new heavy bomber groups departing for Europe were equipped with B-24s, while all of the B-17s in the Pacific were being replaced.

Some of the overseas commanders, particularly Maj. Gen. James H. Doolittle, did not agree with the decision. Doolittle was particularly adamant about continued B-17 production after he took command of the Eighth Air Force, to which Stewart would soon be assigned, but that was still well into the future in the summer of 1943. Although he had reportedly been training new pilots in B-17s, Stewart's future would be in B-24s. According to author Starr Smith, who served with him in England, Stewart had not been checked out in the B-24 prior to his arrival at Sioux City, but the transition presented no difficulty to a pilot with his experience.

As a squadron operations officer, Stewart was responsible for his new unit's aircrews. His role was to supervise the assignment and training of the squadron's aircrew personnel and to ensure that they were all proficient. If a crew had problems, it was up to the operations officer to solve them or reassign crewmembers to make up effective crews. Stewart was an operations officer for only three weeks before he was moved up to take command of the squadron, a job that gave him new responsibilities. As a squadron commander, he became responsible for all squadron personnel, including the enlisted ground crews who took care of the big B-24s and the administrative personnel who were responsible for keeping squadron records and preparing written orders. His primary role was to maintain discipline and morale while carrying out orders he received from group headquarters.

By November, the 445th Bombardment Group had completed all its training requirements for operational service and was deemed ready for transfer overseas. Preparations for the invasion of Western Europe were under way, and the focus was on defeating the Luftwaffe and gaining control of the skies over the planned invasion beaches in France.

As the squadron commander, Stewart had no crew of his own. So he departed for Europe with the crew commanded by Lieutenant Lloyd Sherrard. Sherrard was an experienced pilot and had checked Stewart out in the B-24 when he joined the squadron at Sioux City. Stewart and the Sherrard crew left from the Ferrying Command departure point at Morrison Field at West Palm Beach, Florida, on November 15, 1943.

After their arrival at Tibenham, the men of the 445th did not go right into combat. It was November 1943, and the Army Air Forces had been in combat for almost two years, during which it had learned many lessons. One of the lessons was that newly arrived groups needed a shakedown period of theater indoctrination before beginning operational missions. The 445th was assigned to the 2nd Combat Bombardment Wing, commanded by Brig. Gen. Edward J. "Ted" Timberlake. The youngest

LEFT: Captain Jimmy Stewart paused for this photo upon his arrival in Great Britain. RIGHT: Standing fourth from left, Jimmy Stewart is photographed with officers of the U.S. Army Air Forces 703rd Bombardment Squadron. Stewart joined the unit as operations officer and rose to command the squadron before his subsequent transfer.

ABOVE: While serving as a squadron operations officer, Major Jimmy Stewart discusses a mission with pilots in the spring of 1944. RIGHT: Brigadier General Edward Timberlake, Jr., commanded the 2nd Combat Bombardment Wing and led the attack on the oil refineries at Ploesti, Romania, in 1943. Stewart served under Timberlake in the 703rd Bombardment Squadron.

general officer in the Army, Timberlake was the most experienced B-24 commander in VIII Bomber Command and arguably the most respected, if not the most capable, of the command's wing commanders. He took his 93rd Bomb Group to England in the summer of 1942 and led it until he was promoted to command a provisional bombardment wing.

While other young generals were sent back to the United States to new assignments, Timberlake remained in Europe with the Eighth Air Force as a combat wing commander for the duration of the war. A few days before Stewart transferred to the 445th, Timberlake's B-24s flew the famous low-level attack on the Ploesti oil fields in Romania. He was a no-nonsense commander who expected the best from the men who served under him, which meant he wanted his officers and their crews to be the best in the business. For more than two weeks the 445th flew practice missions to make sure that all crews were ready for combat. Stewart and his operations officer flew with each of the crews in the squadron and talked to each member to make sure they knew their jobs and were ready for combat.

On December 13, 1943, the 445th flew its first combat mission, a strike on the U-boat pens at Kiel. Stewart led the group's high squadron, taking them in over the target at 27,000 feet. His next mission was to Bremen on December 16, when he flew as lead pilot for the 445th Group. On Christmas Eve Stewart again led the group, this time on a mission against German rocket-launching sites in the Pas de Calais. With more than 2,000 bombers and fighters participating, it was the largest Eighth Air Force mission of the war to date.

It was on the January 7, 1944, mission to Ludwigshafen that Stewart came to the attention of superior officers above his group. Stewart was again leading the group. As they were departing the target area, he realized that the group he was following, the 389th Bomb Group, was 30 degrees off course. He called the other group lead and informed him of the error, but the other officer insisted they were on course. Stewart knew that the course was wrong and that it was taking both groups away from the protection of the main formation. Nevertheless, he advised the other group leader that he was sticking with him, knowing that the decision was akin to signing his own death warrant.

As Stewart feared, the German radar operators saw that the two groups had become separated from the bomber stream and vectored several squadrons of fighters to the attack. They were about 30 miles south of Paris when approximately 60 Luftwaffe fighters came in for the attack. The lead pilot, whose navigator had made the mistake, paid for his error as his B-24 went down. Stewart ordered his group to close up their formation for protection. His formation did not lose any planes, but 17 B-24s went down that day. Stewart's decision to stick with his sister group rather than abandoning them to their fate in spite of the navigational error saved the other group from complete annihilation. Colonel Milton W. Arnold, the 389th commander, sent a letter to 445th commander Colonel Robert H. Terrill commending Stewart for his actions. Shortly after the mission, Stewart was promoted to major.

The day after the Ludwigshafen mission, the Eighth Air Force command structure underwent some changes. For reasons that have never been fully explained, General Carl Spaatz, who had taken command of the new U.S. Strategic Air Forces, Europe, decided to send Eighth Air Force commander Ira Eaker to the Mediterranean and bring Maj. Gen. James H. Doolittle to England to take command of the Eighth. It was not a popular decision, and it became even less popular when Doolittle announced that the mission requirement for Eighth Air Force bomber crews had been increased from 25 to 30.

Many Eighth Air Force crewmen came to believe that Doolittle was using them to get his name in the papers. The intensity of combat was increasing, and casualties among the bomber crews were mounting. During their first 21 days in combat the 445th lost six crews, an average of two a week. Group personnel saw 61 of their comrades listed as missing in action in less than a month. Such casualty rates had become common throughout VIII Bomber Command and would quickly rise as the workload increased in early 1944 in preparation for the invasion.

Painted in an olive drab color scheme, a pair of Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers wings its way toward a target. Colonel Jimmy Stewart flew numerous missions in the B-24 following training and service with the Boeing B-17.

JIMMY STEWART WAS NO DOUBT THE MOST FAMOUS OFFICER TO SERVE IN A COMBAT UNIT IN WORLD WAR II; HE WAS ALSO THE MOST PUBLICITY SHY. HE WAS SERVING IN THE MILITARY PURELY FOR PATRIOTIC REASONS AND DID NOT WISH TO CAPITALIZE ON HIS MILITARY SERVICE IN ANY WAY.

In early 1944, Spaatz and his deputy commander for operations, Maj. Gen. Fred Andrews, approved a plan for Operation Argument, a massive week of heavy bomber attacks on targets in Germany that has since come to be known as "Big Week." On the opening day of the operation, Stewart flew as deputy lead of the 2nd Bombardment Wing. The mission was planned for blind bombing using radar, but the weather over the target was suitable for visual bombing conditions, so Stewart moved into the lead. He was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross for the mission. Stewart flew two other missions during the intense week, a mission to Gotha and a third to Nuremberg, during which he led the 445th formation.

During three months in combat, Stewart had achieved a reputation not only in his squadron but also in the group and wing. To many of the combat crews he had become a lucky charm. Missions on which he led either the squadron, the group, or the wing seemed to be successful, in that bombing results were usually good and casualties were generally light. He was popular with the officers and enlisted men under his command. But rumors began circulating that he had become too important to the higher-ups to risk on missions and that he was going to be transferred and perhaps grounded. In early March, the Eighth Air Force began a series of missions against Berlin, which had not previously seen American aircraft in its skies. The missions were hazardous and costly—the first two alone cost the Eighth Air Force more than 1,000 men. Stewart, however, was conspicuously absent from all of the Berlin missions until March 22, when he led the 2nd Bombardment Wing to the most heavily defended target in Germany. It was his 12th combat mission.

It turned out that the rumors of Stewart's transfer were true, although his days of combat flying were not completely over. He was relieved of command of the 703rd Bombardment Squadron and transferred to the 453rd Bombardment Group at Attleborough to assume the role of group operations officer. On March 30, 1944, he assumed his new position as assistant to the group commander, Colonel Ramsey Potts. Stewart's new assignment put him in a close relationship with another of the Liberator superstars. Ramsey Potts had been a squadron commander in the 93rd Bombard-

ment Group under Timberlake, who had previously introduced Stewart to him. After leading his squadron on the infamous low-level mission against Ploesti, Potts had risen to the rank of colonel and was given command of the 453rd Bombardment Group two weeks before Stewart's transfer when the group's original commander was shot down. As the group operations officer, Stewart was responsible for all of the details of planning the group's participation in the missions to which it was assigned and for briefing the crews for each mission.

Stewart's new assignment was based on merit rather than fame. Potts did not ask for him. The group's previous commander and operations officer had both been lost only a few weeks before, and morale in the group was correspondingly low. Stewart had a good reputation as a combat leader and as a commander who was popular with his men, officers and enlisted alike. Timberlake personally picked Stewart for the assignment to complement Potts.

Over the next few weeks the two new arrivals worked to bring the group back up to par. As operations officer, Stewart was not expected to fly every mission, but he often went up in the group assembly ship to look over the formations as the group was assembling and occasionally flew missions as a member of a combat crew. Unlike the combat crewmembers, he had no quota of missions to fly before he could be rotated home. As a staff officer, he was to remain overseas as long as he was needed. The Allies were getting ready for the Normandy invasion, and the mission tempo had picked up. Stewart flew a total of 20 (some sources say 21) missions with the 445th and 453rd Groups. Those are the missions for which he received credit.

Jimmy Stewart was no doubt the most famous officer to serve in a combat unit in World War II; he was also the most publicity shy. He was serving in the military purely for patriotic reasons and did not wish to capitalize on his military service in any manner, an attitude he maintained for his entire life. Members of the media were well aware that he was in England serving as a squadron commander with a Liberator group and were anxious to interview him. Stewart, however, refused all interviews and generally avoided contact with the press. The Army, however, took advantage of his notoriety by issuing press releases announcing his promotions and assumptions of new positions. A news release was sent out after his mission to Berlin in which he was quoted commenting on the intensity of the flak and fighters. When asked if the mission was unusual, he responded with "Unusual? We hit Berlin, didn't we?"

Sometime in June, Stewart received another promotion, this time to lieutenant colonel. Shortly afterward, on July 2, he transferred to 2nd Combat Bombardment Wing headquarters to become Timberlake's executive officer. In his new capacity he shared an office with Lieutenant Cal Stewart, no relation, who had come to England in 1942 with the 93rd Bombardment Group as a radio operator but had been reassigned to the squadron orderly room because of his civilian experience as a newspaperman in his native Nebraska. Timberlake authorized him to begin publishing a group newspaper, the first military newspaper in the European Theater. When he was promoted to brigadier general, Timberlake took Stewart with him as his orderly, then had him commissioned and made him his aide. The two Stewarts became good friends and equally loyal to their boss.

With his move to headquarters, Jimmy Stew-

LEFT: Major Jimmy Stewart distributes flight forms to American pilots preparing for bombing missions in support of the D-Day landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944. The flight forms were intended to assist the pilots in locating assigned targets. RIGHT: Major Jimmy Stewart discusses flight operations after a mission with a B-24 bomber crewman sometime in 1943.

art was off combat flying, but as a staff officer he was not due to return to the United States. Even though he was no longer assigned to combat duty, Stewart would sometimes manage to get on a mission. He frequently flew with the 389th Group, which had become the 2nd Bombardment Wing's pathfinder group. Equipped with specially modified airplanes featuring radar and electronic navigational equipment for blind bombing, pathfinder squadrons provided crews to lead formations and allowed bombing through the clouds. Although the Army Air Forces still maintained a pretense of "daylight precision bombing," the Eighth Air Force adopted British-developed electronic bombing methods beginning in the fall of 1943.

Stewart also occasionally went along on missions with his two previous groups, then later flew missions with the groups in the 20th Bombardment Wing. None of those missions were credited to him.

When Stewart transferred to Timberlake's staff, rumors started that he was being groomed for command of his own group. Although Eighth Air Force commander Doolittle would say later that if the war in Europe had continued Stewart would have become a group commander, it never happened. In September 1944, Timberlake transferred to command of the 20th Bombardment Wing, which included his old group, the 93rd, and Stewart went with him. After serving for a few months as Timberlake's executive officer, Stewart returned to the 2nd Bombardment Wing as operations officer.

In February 1945, Stewart was promoted again, this time to full colonel, and became 2nd Bombardment Wing chief of staff under Colonel Milton Arnold, whose attention Stewart had attracted with his actions in response to the straying 389th Group almost a year before. Stewart had risen from buck private to full colonel in only four years. It was a record achieved by few men. Only one other Hollywood type served in a combat role with similar rank; producer Merian Cooper had flown combat in World War I and returned to active duty as a colonel at the beginning of the war. Cooper served in China with Claire Chennault and in the Southwest Pacific in a staff position. Cowboy actor Tim McCoy, also a World War I veteran, held the rank of brigadier general in the Army reserve but did not serve overseas in World War II.

Stewart, now a full colonel, was still with the 2nd Bombardment Wing when the war in Europe came to an end. Timberlake had been replaced by Colonel Milton Arnold in August 1944, and Stewart had assumed a position as Arnold's operations officer in December. In February 1945, Stewart became Arnold's chief of staff. Three days after VE Day, Stewart replaced Arnold as commander of the 2nd Bombardment Wing.

ABOVE: Colonel Ramsey Potts presents Major James Stewart with the Distinguished Flying Cross for his meritorious conduct as deputy commander of a bomber wing during a bombing mission conducted on February 20, 1944, against the city of Brunswick, Germany. BELOW: James Stewart, among the elite of Hollywood screen stars, was promoted to brigadier general in the U.S. Air Force Reserve in 1959. Prior to his retirement in 1968, Stewart flew aboard a B-52 Stratofortress bomber during a mission over Vietnam.

The war had ended, and Stewart's new role was to preside over the demobilization of the wing and movement of its personnel back to the United States for separation or reassignment to the Pacific. He was in his new position for only some four weeks. Although Starr Smith relates that Stewart remained in command until the wing transferred back to the United States in September, official records indicate that he was replaced in June. His position until he returned to the United States aboard the liner *Queen Elizabeth* is unclear.

After the war, Stewart remained in the U.S. Army Reserve, then went into the Air Force Reserve when the Air Force became a separate service in 1947. His postwar reserve assignment was with the Strategic Air Command as deputy director of operations. He was nominated for promotion to brigadier general by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1957, but the promotion was opposed by Maine Congresswoman Margaret Chase Smith.

Two years later, after he was reassigned from Strategic Air Command to the Air Force Office of Information in the Pentagon, Stewart's promotion was approved. In 1968, just before his retirement, Stewart flew one last combat mission as an observer on a B-52 mission over Vietnam. The following year his stepson, Marine Lieutenant Ronald McLean, was killed in Vietnam. President Ronald Reagan promoted Stewart to the retired rank of major general. His military decorations included two Distinguished Flying Crosses and four Air Medals.

Jimmy Stewart not only shunned wartime publicity, but after the war he refused to discuss his military experiences publicly or with the media and forbade any mention of it by his publicists. He also refused to make any war movies, expressing his view that it was "not the same." The closest he ever came to a war movie was the 1955 film *Strategic Air Command,* in which his character, Lt. Col. "Dutch" Holland, had been a World War II B-24 pilot although the movie itself was set in the 1950s Air Force. He was interested in aviation, however, and made several movies with aviation themes, including *Spirit of St. Louis,* about Charles Lindbergh's historic flight across the Atlantic.

Although he kept his wartime service out of the public eye, Jimmy Stewart maintained contact with many of his wartime friends and participated in reunions. A representative of the Eighth Air Force spoke at his funeral in 1997. □

Author Sam McGowan is a licensed pilot and a resident of Missouri City, Texas. He has written numerous articles for WWII History.

In this painting by artist Keith Rocco, members of the U.S. 3rd Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Infantry Division man an antitank gun and fire on advancing German armor during the gallant defense of Mortain. Holding the high ground of Hill 314, troops of the Old Hickory Division blunted a thrust by the Germans to cut off the advancing U.S. Third Army in the summer of 1944.

Strong Stand Atop Mortain

SEVEN HUNDRED GIS HELD THE HIGH GROUND AGAINST GERMANY'S ATTEMPT TO CUT OFF PATTON'S THIRD ARMY.

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

A GERMAN SS OFFICER, holding a white flag of truce, walked through the American lines and up to a tall lieutenant from Texas. Surrounded for three days, the Americans were outnumbered four to one with little hope of relief. "Your situation is hopeless," explained the German, adding that if the Americans did not surrender, they would be "blown to bits." Around them lay wounded Americans, many suffering with gangrene. Other soldiers—dirty, hungry, and thirsty—hunkered down in foxholes or behind boulders. Smoking hulks of tanks littered the battlefield; blackened craters and bare tree trunks covered the ground. The American lieutenant weighed the offer for a second before delivering a curt response: "Go **** yourself."

In the first week of August 1944, the Germans were on the attack in Normandy. After being pushed off the D-Day beaches by Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley's First Army and suffering a rupture in their lines by Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr.'s Third Army, the Germans launched a counteroffensive of four Panzer divisions to smash the American lines and capture the vital French coastal town of Avranches, where Patton's tanks poured into the Continent.

An hour after midnight on August 7, 1944, more than 50,000 German troops and 300 tanks advanced westward. The 2nd SS Panzer Division targeted Mortain, a small town 20 miles directly east of Avranches. In the way of this armored assault stood the 30th Infantry Division, an American National Guard unit that landed a month earlier in Normandy. Called the Old Hickory Division in honor of President Andrew Jackson, the 30th had just replaced the 1st Infantry Division at Mortain a day earlier and barely had time to dig in before the Germans struck.

Monday, August 7 (Day 1)

A predawn German attack splintered the Old Hickory, overrunning roadblocks and capturing and killing scores of Americans. But islands of resistance denied the Germans key locations. The most important was Hill 314, overlooking Mortain from the east, which towered over the terrain for miles. The hill was ideal for defense, with huge boulders and dense undergrowth. The north and east sides of the hill sloped gently and were road accessible, but the south and west sides formed sheer cliffs above the town. On a clear day, Hill 314 provided a panorama of the French countryside for more than 30 miles.

Lieutenant Colonel Eads Hardaway, the commander of the division's 2nd Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, set up his headquarters in Mortain and sent his E, G, and K Companies to the crest of the Hill 314, placing them in a triangular perimeter. Lieutenant Joseph Reaser's K Company covered the north; Lieutenant Ronald Woody's G Company covered the southwest; and Lieutenant Ralph Kerley's E Company covered the southeast. The 2nd Battalion's GIs had only bazookas and mortars, but they possessed two artillery forward observer teams, both from the 230th Field Artillery Battalion. Lieutenant Robert Weiss commanded one team (Battery B), Lieutenant Charles Bartz the other (Battery C).

Both teams spent the previous day plotting artillery support. "I would plot out emergency barrage numbers and normal barrage numbers," explained Sergeant Frank Denius, from Bartz's team. Emergency barrage numbers were pinpointed on expected counterattack areas. During an attack, an observer only had to request "Emergency Barrage Number 1" and the gunners would know where to fire. Normal barrage numbers disrupted suspected supplies and support areas farther back. "If you got attacked at night, [artillery] had to come immediately," explained Denius. "My battalion had 12 105s, but in an emergency we could have all division artillery, then we had artillery from other divisions and corps artillery."

U.S. Army Art Collection

ABOVE: The village of Mortain and the strategically critical Hill 314 are shown in this sketch. The defense of Mortain was central to preventing a German counterattack from seriously endangering the flank of the advancing U.S. Third Army. BELOW: Three key figures in the defense of Hill 314 at Mortain were (left to right) Lieutenant Ralph Kerley, Sergeant Frank Denius, and Lieutenant Robert Weiss.

All: National Archives

The clanking tank treads warned the men atop Hill 314 of the impending attack. The Germans struck around 1 AM and quickly overran a roadblock on the southeastern edge of the hill. Survivors straggled into the perimeter. The Germans pressed their attack, cutting off communications between the hill and Lieutenant Colonel Hardaway's battalion headquarters in Mortain. Enemy tanks and infantry rushed up the eastern and southeastern slopes, the soldiers shouting, "Heil Hitler!" and charged G Company's foxholes near a small church called La Petite Chapelle.

As German tanks and infantry slammed into G Company, Lieutenant Kerley ordered Lieutenant Weiss to call in artillery fire. Blinded by darkness and fog, Weiss could hear the approaching tanks and radioed coordinates to the artillery based on his best guess. Shells rained down on the Germans. In a short, sharp skirmish, the American brushed them off the heights.

Lieutenant Bartz's observation team was stuck in the front lines, unable to call in rounds lest they reveal their position to the Germans. The attack took Bartz out of the fight, but the rest of his team, Sergeant Frank Denius and Technical Sergeant Sherman Goldstein, made it back to Kerley's headquarters. By the time they set up their radio and began adding to Weiss's artillery requests, two hours had passed. Denius and Goldstein would work well together for the duration of the battle. "I was an instrument operator," recalled Denius. "Sherman Goldstein was the radio sergeant. When I called out directions for fire, he relayed them to battalion."

Once the GIs halted the attack, Lieutenant Kerley did something odd. He removed his helmet, lay down on the ground. and fell asleep. The panicked men around him suddenly calmed. Dense fog held the battlefield in check. He finally awoke an hour later, refreshed. He led the rest of the battle energetically and with a clear head. It would be his last bit of sleep for the next week.

Kerley was amazed at what he saw once the sun burned off the fog: "Columns of enemy armor and foot troops streaming [toward us] from the east and northeast." The Germans were packed together, an easy target. Weiss and Denius called fire missions, and shells began exploding among the attackers, killing and maiming scores of Germans, destroying tanks and vehicles, and sending survivors scurrying down the hill.

While Weiss called in artillery on the east and northeast, Denius called for fire on the south and southwest. "I saw German infantry and tanks attacking," said Denius. "It was the first time that we had seen that many tanks and that large a concentration attacking us." Denius eyed a large intersection on the southeast corner below Hill 314, where the Germans were trying to either bypass the hill or attack it from behind. He and Goldstein ordered fire on the intersection and continued to do so during the

course of the battle.

The Germans retaliated with 88mm artillery fire. Several rounds exploded near Weiss, but the angle of fire and the huge boulders offered refuge. The shrapnel merely nipped the top of his radio antenna. Others were not as lucky. An 88 explosion knocked down a Native American soldier running up the hill. He lay there, shaking with fright before gathering the courage to stand, put his helmet on, and continued up the slope. While Weiss remained with Kerley, Denius and Goldstein moved between the three companies, offering fire support where they could.

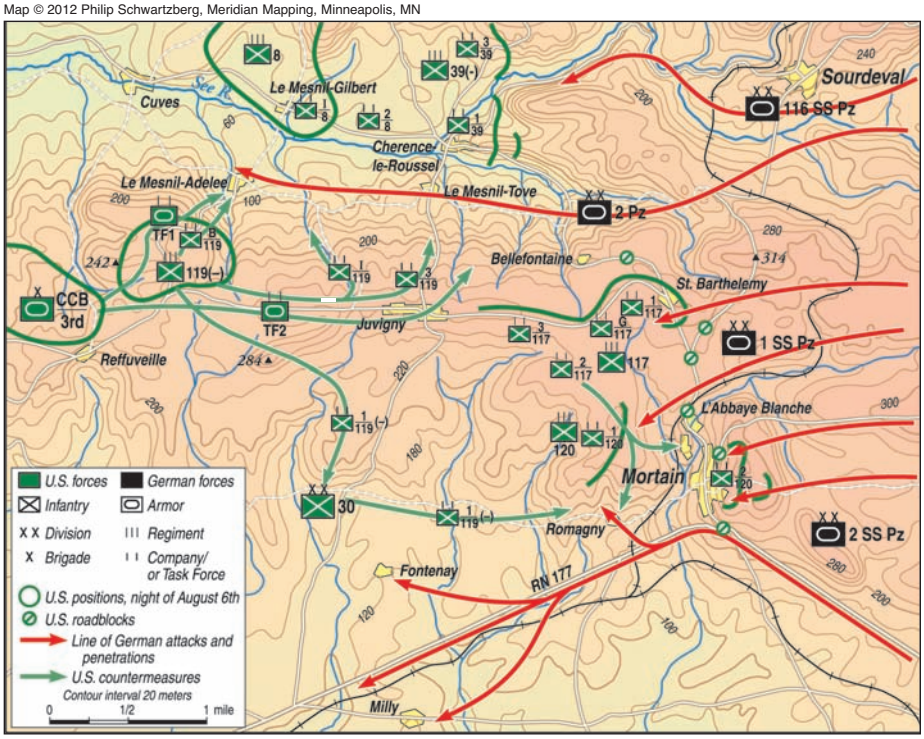
The Germans continued to probe the hill, but Companies E and K pushed them back. It was no easy task. When an enemy sniper began shooting at E Company, Lieutenant Kerley asked one of his men for his rifle and then disappeared for about 20 minutes. His men worried about him until they heard two shots ring out. Kerley emerged from the scrub and quietly offered the man his rifle back. "Thanks son," was all he said.

One German assault managed to capture several K Company rifle squads. Elsewhere, an E Company soldier, Private Paul Nethery, exchanged fire with a group of Germans. He was hit in the head and leg, but Nethery wounded an SS officer, who was then captured. The German turned out to be an artillery spotter, an important catch for the Americans.

As the morning wore on, men from the town below began drifting into Hill 314's perimeter. One unit arrived intact. Captain Reynold Erichson from F Company led a 40-man platoon from C Company onto the hilltop. Erichson had left the hilltop for battalion headquarters when communications died. Once there, Lt. Col. Hardaway gave Erichson the platoon and ordered him back up the hill.

Erichson spent most of the day trying to find a way back into the perimeter. He and his men constantly stumbled into groups of SS soldiers who forced Erichson to change directions. In the final dash, a German half-track with a mounted machine gun opened up on Erichson's men. Fortunately, the G Company soldiers atop Hill 314 dropped mortars on the Germans, enabling the trapped men to disengage and wriggle up the hill on their bellies. One of the last to make it into the perimeter was Captain Delmont Byrn of H Company, who was taken aback at what he found. "I was kind of shocked to see injured men lying there in the open, being hit again by shrapnel."

Above, American Ninth Air Force fighter planes flew 429 sorties to keep the Luftwaffe out of the skies that first day. Ten squadrons of Hawker Typhoons of the British Second



ABOVE: The success of the German counterstroke against the advancing Third Army was contingent upon the capture of Hill 314 and the nearby village of Mortain, lower right. BELOW: During the second day of the siege of Hill 314, American infantrymen of the 30th Division race along the edge of a field beside an imposing French hedgerow.

National Archives

Tactical Air Force flew 290 sorties and fired 2,088 rockets at German tanks and vehicles below, keeping the enemy at bay. "I'll never forget the sound of those rockets fired from the British Typhoons," explained Denius. "We had never heard anything like that before."

With most of Mortain in German hands, Lt. Col. Hardaway radioed Captain Erichson that he was now the temporary commander of the three companies. As the sun went down, Erichson ordered a survey of the remaining ammunition supplies. Each company reported severe shortages or depots inaccessible because of German snipers. At least 78 GIs were killed, wounded, or captured. There was no relief in sight.

Tuesday, August 8 (Day 2)

During the night, Lieutenant Woody shifted G Company's position closer to Lieutenant

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: German troops pose for a photographer during a respite from their efforts to disrupt the Allied advance toward the frontier of their Fatherland in the summer of 1944. These soldiers have festooned their helmets and uniforms with natural camouflage. BELOW: A PzKpfw. VI Tiger tank of the Waffen SS is shown in Normandy following the Allied invasion. A Tiger attempted to intimidate the soldiers of the U.S. 2nd Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment at Mortain but turned and withdrew from Hill 314 when a call for American surrender was ignored.

Reaser's K Company and away from Le Petit Chapelle, consolidating the perimeter but isolating Lieutenant Kerley's E Company. Throughout the night and into the next morning the artillery observers called in heavy fire every time the Germans massed for an attack. Whenever the Germans fired an artillery shell or a tank round, the observers quickly pinpointed the location and rained fire.

Finally, a lone Panther tank plowed through a hail of fire and roared onto the hilltop. The men held silent as the tank drove through the perimeter. An American bazooka team tried to get into a firing position while Denius raced to the area to call artillery rounds on the tank. Finally, the Panther's commander, probably realizing he was alone, turned around without firing a shot and retreated down the hill.

Although the lone tank was the only real attack of the day, the Americans had other worries. With no resupply, men were running low on food. They had pooled their K-rations, reserving some for the wounded, but soon ran out. Some dug potatoes and cabbages from an abandoned farm or plucked apples from an orchard. "That first bite of cabbage was about the most delicious taste I ever experienced," said Private Thomas Street. One soldier donated his bottle of cognac to fuel a fire used to cook potato soup.

Private First Class Allen Newhouse later recalled, "It was the first time I ever ate green apples without getting a stomach ache." Sergeant Denius relied on his chocolate D-Bar, shaving portions for himself with his bayonet. "I was neither hungry nor thirsty," recalled Denius, who was too busy calling in fire to think about food.

Some of the men found a cistern filled with "fairly greenish" water. They filled their canteens and dropped in purifying pills, "but it didn't help the taste," said Private Street. German snipers kept a freshwater well on the edge of the American perimeter under fire. A few thirsty soldiers said, "To hell with enemy snipers!" and crawled to it. One man provided covering fire while the other filled canteens.

With no medical equipment, casualties mounted. Even though the healthy men donated their first aid packs to the medics, medical supplies were being used up. "We were watching men die because we had no disinfectant, no bandages, except what was in the tiny first-aid kits we carried," said Captain Byrn.

And then there were the radio batteries, the crucial weapons that kept the artillery observers in business and the enemy at bay. The artillery observers used their radios sparingly. They found that turning off their radios for a couple of hours recharged the batteries a little, adding about five to 10 minutes of life. They also placed spare batteries on rocks in the sun, hoping the heat would recharge them. "I didn't know if putting them in the sun worked," said Denius, "but we tried it."

In an effort to resupply the men, two light artillery spotter planes packed with food swooped down on the hill. But the planes came under withering German fire and were forced to turn back before dropping their loads. The men on Hill 314 would have to wait.

Up on the hill, Captain Byrne worked to consolidate the American perimeter. He braved mortar and small arms fire to link up with Companies G and K. "As I had not learned to

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: Using his company command post radio to maintain contact with battalion headquarters, a U.S. Army lieutenant of the 30th Infantry Division maintains cover from potential German sniper fire. RIGHT: In a scene reminiscent of World War I trench warfare, a soldier of the U.S. 30th Division goes up and over the rim of his foxhole during the fighting at Mortain.

be scared yet, I made a fairly good example," he remembered.

By 2 PM, the Germans attacked G Company, this time from the west, from the town of Mortain. White phosphorous shells dropped on the hill, burning some of the Americans. Lieutenant Weiss quickly found cover and escaped the burning particles. He then called a fire mission on a group of enemy howitzers. Company G repulsed the attack, breaking up German concentrations with mortars. "Every time we saw the Germans forming up for an attack, we'd drop a few shells on top of them," recalled one soldier. But the Americans absorbed more casualties in the process.

Denius also called in artillery. "You could see the attack coming," he explained. "I would just put as much artillery into the area as I could. German tanks were very quiet and could slip up on you."

As the sun set, men gathered the dead and placed them out of sight, lest their presence reduce morale. The Germans tried another night attack, but American artillery kept them at bay. Weiss called in fire on the supply routes he had already zeroed in. He then directed artillery against three attacks by the Germans. Denius ordered fire on the southern intersection intermittently, staggering the rounds with two-minute breaks, then eight minutes, then another pause before firing again. "We asked them to keep firing, to do interdiction fire on 24/7."

Wednesday, August 9 (Day 3)

Early on Wednesday, the Germans launched an armored attack from the east against E Company's roadblock, trying to split the American perimeter. Artillery repulsed the first line of tanks, and the same steel curtain greeted the infantry. Then three light tanks attacked, followed by bicycle troops. The Germans attacked four times in one hour with more attacks to come. More and more tanks and infantry kept assaulting the same area, trying to break through, only to be halted by a rain of shells.

Having no success, the Germans gathered at the southwest corner of the hill and charged near the La Petite Chapelle. Tossing phosphorous grenades, they pushed forward. Some shouted, "Kamerad!" and waved white flags, then pulled out guns and started shooting. Lieutenant Weiss withheld fire, worried that he might call it on his own men. A German grenade exploded beneath an American .30-caliber machine gun. One of the men was wounded, but Sergeant Luther Myers survived the blast and field stripped the weapon in the dark to get it working again. One of the riflemen in front of Myers was hit in the arm and began crawling back toward him. Myers repaired the machine gun just in time to cover the man. Then he opened fire on the Germans, stopping their attack cold.

When firing ceased, men called for medics, who showed up with empty medical satchels. Unable to help their comrades, they went back to their foxholes. Shortly thereafter, a German officer began collecting rifles from the battlefield. Myers used his rifle to draw a bead on the German and fired. "I didn't even have to use the machine gun," recalled Myers about the easy kill.

Around 5:30 PM, a specially fitted American PB-38J, a fighter plane equipped with a glass nose in order to take photographs, flew over the battlefield and surveyed the terrain for the next day's arrival of transport planes. Unfortunately, the Germans shot at the plane as it circled, and it crashed in a nearby forest.

The artillery duel intensified, with the Germans getting the worst of it. "The Germans are building up strong reserves on all sides," Lieutenant Weiss reported to Division. "We are laying a ring of fire." The Americans fired 30 observed counterbattery missions in an hour, a record for the European Theater. "I can't tell you how many German trucks and tanks we knocked out," recalled Denius. "We had great vision when we could see clear enough."

Everything was running out. Ammunition stocks were low, medical supplies were threadbare, and the food had been consumed. To make matters worse, the dead began decomposing in the August heat. "The future looked anything but bright," said Lieutenant Kerley, "and morale was on the decline." Men buried their dog tags, rings, and anything of value, preparing to be overrun.

Then the German SS officer with the white flag walked up the hill and requested the Americans' surrender. He was brought before Lieutenant Kerley, who gave his curt reply and added: "When the last round of our ammuni-

tion is fired and the last bayonet has been broken in one of your bastard bellies, then we might talk surrender. But I doubt it. Now get the hell off this hill before I shoot you off."

The surrender request and the attack had an odd effect on the 2nd Battalion men. Their despondency disappeared, replaced by anger and resolve. "It was like nobody expected to live anymore," explained Captain Byrn. The men now concentrated on fighting to the last, taking as many Germans with them as possible. When an officer back at headquarters learned of Kerley's statement, he declared: "That's telling the son-of-a-bitch."

The Germans were good to their word. At 8:15 PM with the sun low in the western sky, a single Tiger tank blasted through the E Company roadblock and entered the perimeter. After firing a few rounds, the tank's hatch opened and a German rose out of it. "Surrender or die!" he shouted. After a few moments of silence, an American broke cover, climbed onto the tank, and clung to the turret as the tank sped back to enemy lines.

Even though the Germans eased their pressure on August 10, the radio battery shortage was becoming acute. Radios were no longer used to communicate between companies. Instead, the platoon and company leaders used runners. "Our batteries were so weak we could hardly hear," said Sergeant Harry Walker with K Company. "Corporal Brown [some three miles back with the artillery pieces] kept telling me to speak up; he could hardly hear me."

That afternoon a flight of Republic P-47 Thunderbolt fighter-bombers flew over the hill, bombing German positions. The Americans took cover in their foxholes, but the pilots above knew who held the top of the hill. Four hours later the fighter planes returned, escorting C-47 transport aircraft. Their aircrews kicked out supplies, which floated down under different colored parachutes. To protect themselves from ground fire, the C-47s flew at a high altitude, resulting in most of the supplies landing behind German lines. Desperate for ammunition, food, and batteries, American raiding parties raced into No-Man's-Land and retrieved some of the canisters. Most of the supplies consisted of ammunition and food. No batteries or medical supplies were retrieved.

Some of the supplies were ridiculous. Packed in boxes were .30-caliber rounds designed for World War I-style rifles. The men could use them in their M1 Garands, but they had to load them individually. Knowing that the Germans were listening, the radio operators bragged that they now had plenty of food, water, and ammunition.

As the sun went down, the American artillerymen shelled the hill, but with a different purpose. The artillerymen used propaganda shells, replacing leaflets with plasma, bandages, tape, and morphine. The word went out to expect artillery shells with red stripes around their bases. The artillerymen, 10 miles away, fired at the large white rocks on the northwest face of the hill. Some shells hit, bounced into the air, and imbedded themselves in the ground.

The men on Hill 314 had trouble finding these shells in the dark. They beat one shell, trying to crack it open, until someone realized it had no markings. The medical shells were only a partial success. Many were lost in the darkness. Also, the impact against the rocks destroyed the plasma. The men were able to extract bandages and penicillin, but it was not enough. "Every guy who was wounded got some penicillin," explained Denius. "I can still see the smile on those guys' faces when they got that medicine."

The men learned that there would be another resupply attempt either by air or artillery the following day. More good news arrived in the form of approaching heavy firing. "They told us another unit was fighting to rescue us," said Sergeant Charles Herndon. He was right. Task Force Gillis, an armor and infantry unit, was cutting its way toward Hill 314. Lieutenant Weiss saw friendly forces south of his position and reported, "They have the German army on the run."

Friday, August 11 (Day 6)

Throughout the darkness of August 11, division artillery kept a ring of fire around Hill 314, concentrating on the road nets. Dawn brought a big surprise: German vehicles heading east, away from Mortain. The Germans were retreating. Artillery opened up on the vehicles, depleting their numbers. The Germans around the base of the hill, however, showed no signs of retreating and kept up deadly sniper fire and assaults, trying to break into the American perimeter. As the morning wore on, a rumor circulated that the relief force would reach them around noon. "As the Germans fell back," explained Denius, "we were encouraged that friendly forces were getting closer and closer." When the hour passed with no relief in sight, the men were bitterly disappointed.

A second airdrop proved even worse than its predecessor. More artillery shells were recovered, but, once again, most of the plasma and morphine did not survive the firing. The velocity of a shell leaving the barrel simply smashed almost everything inside. A few bandages and some

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ABOVE: Shortly after their ordeal on Hill 314, soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment posed for this image. Their haggard faces bear the obvious signs of prolonged combat. OPPOSITE: Decimated by Allied air power and artillery during Operation Luttich, the German effort to cut off advance elements of the U.S. Third Army in Normandy, this German armored column lies immobile along a French roadside. Heavy casualties were inflicted on German troops exposed to highly accurate artillery fire and daylight air raids.

sulfa powder survived, and wide rolls of adhesive tape were flattened into inch-long disks.

Unable to rush the line, the Germans dropped a series of mortar shells on the American positions and then paused, waiting for the Americans to expose themselves before firing another series. The effects were horrible. The ground shook, bodies rose and fell with the impacts, and men choked on dust. Some ran to the southern edge of the perimeter, but there was no safe place to hide. To the Americans, it seemed that any movement, however slight, brought on mortars.

When the Americans spied a German team setting up a mortar, a sergeant with only a single mortar round set up his own. Once he completed his computations and adjustments, he kissed his final round, dropped it in the tube, and ducked. The round exploded about 10 yards from the enemy mortar, and the surviving Germans fled.

The 2nd Battalion had held out for six days without substantial resupply or definite signs of relief. The men had fought above and beyond the call of duty. But the strain of battle, little food, and dwindling ammunition spelled disaster. Even the bravest soldiers could not fight indefinitely without help or rest. As the sun went down that Friday night, Lieutenant Weiss signed off on his radio with a dire warning: "Without reinforcements, can hold until tomorrow." He never received the division commander's reply: "Reinforcements on the way. Hold out."

Saturday, August 12 (Day 7)

The Germans withdrew from around Hill 314 in the predawn hours. A departing tank shot a random shell into the perimeter, almost severing Staff Sergeant John Corn's right leg. He held on for a few hours while Lieutenant Weiss loosened and tightened a belt around his leg, but when Corn knew the end was near he offered his nickel-plated pistol and his watch to some nearby infantrymen. He died a few hours later.

Before noon, a column of American vehicles from the 35th Infantry Division raced up the southern side of the hill. In the van were two Sherman tanks, followed by a truck packed with food, water, and medical supplies. A single Sherman came next, followed closely by ambulances. An hour later, another regiment of Old Hickory, the 119th, pushed through Mortain and relieved the northern end of the hill.

The wounded were treated and loaded into the ambulances. The men of 2nd Battalion were then given food. "I didn't know anything could taste so good," said Sergeant Myers about a bouillon cube dissolved in cold water. Pfc. Leo Temkin admitted to loving his K-rations. "Funny thing," he confessed, "They tasted good. And I didn't like K rations." Sergeant Denius enjoyed fresh water and was treated to pancakes when he returned to his artillery battery. For syrup, Denius's cook boiled some sugar in water until it thickened.

The defenders of Hill 314, known as the "Lost Battalion," looked like ghosts to the men who relieved them. They were gaunt after six days of hunger. Of the approximately 700 defenders, only 376 survived. Casualties totaled 277 killed, wounded, and missing. Two out of every five American soldiers were casualties.

The Battle of Mortain proved the resilience of the American soldier in a crisis. The men had not panicked when surrounded and fought on despite low stocks of ammunition and food. The enemy had them so outnumbered and outgunned that Maj. Gen. Hobbs later claimed: "With heavy onion breath that [first] day, the Germans would have achieved their objective."

The brutal battle also brought together the men of the battalion like never before. "Guys who used to bitch at and fight each other became brothers," explained Pfc. Joseph Perry after the battle.

The battle at Mortain also proved the importance of artillery. During the standoff, the battalion's supporting artillery fired an average of 2,000 shells in a 24-hour period. Those rounds landed on German tanks, trucks, and soldiers.

The GI newspaper *Stars & Stripes* reported Lieutenant Kerley's blunt surrender refusal two weeks after the battle, but it never really stuck. General Anthony McAuliffe's "Nuts" response, delivered some five months later at the besieged Belgian town of Bastogne, became the rebuke heard round the world. The men of the Old Hickory who heard Kerley's response shared it with everyone on Hill 314 but kept it to themselves. The two best-known books about Mortain, *Victory at Mortain* by Mark Reardon and *Saving the Breakout* by Alwyn Featherston, both claim that Kerley's response was "short, to the point, and very unprintable." Neither author reveals what Kerley actually said.

The battle for Mortain was more important than just a hilltop stand. While the men of the 2nd Battalion held on by their fingernails, Patton's XV Corps raced 75 miles behind German lines. American commanders did not panic when the Germans attacked. Instead, they dealt with the situation while sticking to their plan of surrounding the entire German Seventh Army in Normandy. The fruits of Mortain would be harvested in the victory in the Falaise Pocket. □

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Martyr Village

The 2nd SS Division Das Reich destroyed the quiet French village of Oradour-sur-Glane en route to the fields of Normandy.

BY ROBERT MUELLER

Bundesarchiv Dennis Nilsson

Bundesarchiv

UPON VISITING Oradour-sur-Glane, one finds a quiet, rural French village where the populace carries on about its business much like in any commune in France. However, there are two Oradour-sur-Glanes, and one of them, while quiet, is not peaceful. The original Oradour retains all of the scars of the atrocity committed there on June 10, 1944.

The French region of Limousin had been a hotbed of communist resistance to German occupation since the organization of the first guerrilla bands, or maquis, in the spring of 1942. Young men attempting to avoid deportation to Germany as forced labor swelled the ranks of militant resistors. The communist strategy was to use every opportunity to inflict damage on the Germans or the French that supported them. As the anticipated Allied invasion of the European continent grew near, attacks and reprisals increased in frequency and ferocity.

Although only 38 years old, Brigadeführer (brigadier general) Heinz Lammerding was appointed commander of the 2nd SS Panzer Division "Das Reich," somewhat because of his friendship with SS chieftain Heinrich Himmler. Trained as an engineer, he was an early convert to Nazism and became an SS member in 1935. During Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union begun in June 1941, he had participated in the destruction of entire villages that had been accused of harboring partisans.

Stationed in the south of France, Das Reich had been rebuilding after losses suffered in Russia. Although most of the unit's troops were 17- or 18-year-old boys, the core officers and

In July 1944, German soldiers terrorize a French village, rounding up suspected members of the resistance and marching them off to an unknown fate. The residents of Oradour-sur-Glane experienced horrific treatment at the hands of the 2nd SS Division Das Reich. OPPOSITE: Photographed in 2004, more than half a century after its destruction by elements of the German 2nd SS Division Das Reich, the village of Oradour-sur-Glane remains a desolate memorial to the victims of murder.

NCOs were experienced fighters from the Eastern Front. After the Allies had landed their armies on the coast of Normandy, the German high command (OKW) struggled with the question of how best to respond while maintaining control of the interior. There was little argument that additional forces would be required to repel the invasion, but Army Group G headquarters in Toulouse was receiving reports of uprisings throughout central and southern France. An OKW signal stated: "It is necessary to use intimidating measures against the inhabitants. It is necessary to break the spirit of the population by making examples." The division received orders to prepare to move north.

Emboldened by the invasion and having received arms and instructions from Allied planners, the French Resistance erupted in armed revolt, determined to delay the movement of German forces. Roadside trees were dropped across highways, telephone cables cut, bridges blown, and small German detachments ambushed. Uncoordinated bands of fighters skirmished with 2nd SS Panzer units as they moved toward Limoges, inflicting some German casualties while suffering losses due to lack of discipline and heavy weapons.

On June 7, in an all-out maquis assault on the German garrison town of Tulle, the Germans suffered 97 casualties including 37 dead in two days of street fighting. The resistance went as far as to declare the city of 21,000 liberated from German forces. The Tulle uprising was put down by men of Das Reich Reconnaissance Battalion No 2. On June 9, a group of 99 suspected members of the resistance were

hanged from the town's balconies and lamp posts; 149 were deported to Dachau, and of those only 38 survived the war.

On that same evening, Sturmbannführer (major) Helmut Kämpfe, commander of the division's Battalion No. 3, was returning to his main force in Limoges accompanied only by his chauffeur after putting down a similar uprising in the town of Guéret. Their car was stopped by maquis near La Bussière, 24 kilometers northeast of the city; the chauffeur was shot and Kämpfe taken prisoner. Later that night, the resistance sabotaged a section of railroad track and viaduct in St.-Junien. While the passengers and 10 German soldiers were walking around the damaged section, two of the soldiers were shot.

The Germans applied the antiterrorist technique they had learned fighting the partisans in Russia—instant and indiscriminant reprisal.

National Archives

French maquis inspect the wreckage of a German supply train they have derailed. The resistance kept thousands of German troops away from the front lines to track the fighters who ambushed soldiers, severed communication lines, and radioed intelligence to the Allies.

Sturmbannführer Adolf Diekmann (sometimes incorrectly referred to as Otto Dickmann), a close personal friend of Kämpfe, led men of the SS Der Führer Regiment's Battalion No. 1 against the town of Oradour-sur-Glane to exact punishment. What happened next raised Oradour to the level of Lidice, Czechoslovakia, a town that had been wiped out in reprisal for the assassination of high-ranking SS officer Reinhard Heydrich in May 1942, in the annals of World War II crimes against civilians.

In 1944, Oradour-sur-Glane was a thriving market town, thriving as much as it could in occupied France, but its inhabitants seldom suffered from want, as Oradour had a reputation for abundant food provided by the lush countryside's numerous farms. Consequently, the town was overflowing with civilian evacuees, including Spaniards who had fled fascism and found the town after defeat in the Spanish Civil War. A few Alsatians who had been evacuated from the French province at the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 chose to stay rather than reenter territory claimed as part of the Third Reich. French citizens from Lorraine who had fled their homes before the Germans closed the border found shelter among their countrymen. A few Jews living under assumed names hid among the locals. They all had sought safety in the heart of rural France.

Although the town's normal population was about 330, on this peaceful Saturday, June 10, 1944, its population had risen to 650. An antiquated, one-track tram line operated between Limoges and St.-Junien, passing through the length of the town from its station near the Mairie and down the hill to the stop on the opposite side of the town by the river. Saturday shoppers crowded the few operational cars to complete their weekly search for produce. Even though it was Saturday, schoolchildren from the countryside were in town for a planned health inspection. Adults joined them as they awaited the distribution of the tobacco ration. There was little concern in Oradour, as it garrisoned no troops, hid no guns, had no history of resistance, and generally played no part in the war.

At approximately 1:30 PM, a 180-man detachment from the 3rd Company, commanded by Hauptsturmführer (captain) Otto Kahn, appeared from the direction of Limoges and searched the isolated farm buildings lying to the south of the town. They gathered up the civilians as they moved north after setting fire to their homes and barns. One such patrol came upon the tenant farm of Jean Rouffanche and his 47-year-old wife, Marguerite. Along with their extended family of two children, a grandchild, and a grandmother, they were herded along with others into Oradour.

Some minutes later, a convoy of trucks, halftracks, and cars crossed the Glane bridge and rode up Rue Emile Desourteaux, the town's main street. The Germans debouched and rapidly sealed the town. At first, most local people were only interested in enjoying their noon meal, as the town had a history of being left alone by the German authorities and few incidents had occurred in the area. However, several refugee Jewish families did take alarm; the Pinéde family, lodging in the Hotel Avril, hid their three children in a closet under the hotel stairway. Several young men wishing to avoid forced labor in Germany also hid in various buildings or escaped through the fields.

Dr. Jean Desourteaux was the town's mayor as well as its doctor, as was his father before him. His son was also a doctor, and the Desourteaux family was the most prominent in the town. Sturmbannführer Diekmann ordered the mayor to the Champ de Foire, or marketplace, where he demanded that all the town residents present themselves for an identity check. Random reviews of identification papers were a standard activity of occupation. No threats had been received and none given. However, the first sense of alarm ran through the assembling townspeople as the SS set up machine guns in the market.

Military trucks carrying people from the outlying communities arrived in the market square. Troops spread through the town, pounding on doors, searching buildings, and hurrying the dawdlers along. As the crowd in the market grew, people were talking and milling about, but the actual check of identity papers was slow to start.

Dr. Jacques Desourteaux returned from visiting a patient and parked his automobile near the marketplace. Escorted by an SS man, he joined the conversation between his father and Hauptsturmführer Kahn, who was using a French-speaking SS soldier as interpreter. Kahn

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ABOVE: Sturmbannführer Adolf Diekmann commanded the SS troops of the Das Reich's Battalion No. 1 while they committed atrocities against the citizens of the small village of Oradour-sur-Glane. BELOW: Some of the children of Oradour-sur-Glane pose for a school picture in 1943. A year later many of these children were slain by marauding troops of the 2nd SS Division Das Reich, Battalion No. 1. RIGHT: The interior of the town church bears mute testimony to the horror of June 1944 in Oradour-sur-Glane. Women and children were herded into the church, locked inside, fired upon, and then burned to death when the building was set ablaze.

National Archives

demanded 30 hostages; Dr. Desourteaux refused but offered himself and his four sons.

Then a few isolated gunshots were heard. Some of those attempting to escape the town had been sighted and killed. The mayor and some citizens tried to keep the crowd calm. Soldiers started to separate the men from the women and children. Other soldiers began to demand the locations of arms or ammunition illegally stored in the town. To simplify the search process, the women and children, totaling approximately 400, were led to the church, where they could supposedly wait in comfort. The men were ordered to sit in three rows facing the north wall of the fairground, where they were asked to give up any unauthorized weapons. One old and properly registered hunting gun was declared but ignored.

It was now midafternoon. The men were divided into six groups of unequal numbers and marched under guard to various barns or garages around the village. Some of the displaced refugees from the German-speaking regions of France strained to overhear the soldiers' conversations. A few started to fear for their lives because of what they heard.

Near 4 PM, a few young soldiers brought a strange, large box into the church nave while soldiers with submachine guns stood at the main door and near the right transept. Several survivors of the massacre reported that a shot from the direction of the marketplace rang over Oradour as if a signal to start the slaughter. The soldiers in the church ignited strings hanging from the box, and black acrid smoke quickly filled the church. Hand grenades were thrown into the fearful crowd. Those not killed by the explosions pushed their way into the vestry to find breathable air. The guards fired indiscriminately into the survivors. Firewood, church chairs, and straw were thrown upon the bodies sprawled across the flagstone floor of the nave and set alight.

The blaze at the church was intensifying as an Alsatian woman came to the door, identified herself as a German refugee, and begged to be let out. Hauptsturmführer Kahn shoved her back into the flames, declaring that he was not going to have any witnesses turning up later. The roof arching collapsed, and the melted church bell fell to the floor.

Only 47-year-old Madame Marguerite Rouffanche survived the slaughter in the church, first by feigning death and then by hiding amid the thick smoke behind the altar. She was able to force open the middle of the three altar windows, boost herself up to the ledge, and throw herself out, falling three meters to the ground. Wounded by soldiers firing at others attempting to escape, Madame Rouffanche hid in an early spring pea crop until help arrived 25 hours later. She had received four bullet wounds to the legs and one to her shoulder. She lived to give testimony at the war crimes trial of the perpetrators nine years later.

Germans with machine guns stood guard at the doors over the groups of men crowded into the barns and sheds. At the signal, they began shooting, indiscriminately killing anyone in the building. The Laudy family barn held approximately 60 men when the firing started. Most died quickly, and those who still moved after the few minutes of firing were coldly dispatched. Even so, a few survived, protected by the bodies of others who had fallen on top of them. The soldiers spread straw and firewood over the bodies and set it afire. As the flames quickly spread, the barn filled with smoke. Five men escaped into a rear courtyard and hid in a pile of hay and, when the hay was also set on fire, escaped again through a hole in the courtyard's surrounding wall. In a second yard, they hid among rabbit hutches until dark before escaping from the town. A sixth man, making his way separate

from the others, was seen and shot. No one from the other barns or garages survived.

Within an hour, the mass killing was complete, but the search for escapees continued. An invalid old man was burned to death when his home was torched. Two children who were hiding in the church's confessional stall were shot in the head. The engineer's assistant from a maintenance tram was shot and his body dumped into the river. The engineer inexplicably was allowed to return with the tram car to Limoges. A group of cyclists on a day excursion from Limoges were apprehended as they entered the town and shot in front of the Beaulieu forge. Days later, an unexplained group of bodies was found in the well on the road to St.-Junien. People from the countryside heard the explosion and gunshots. If they approached the town to investigate or to look for a child in one of the schools, they were shot.

By 6 PM, German soldiers roamed through the streets of Oradour, looting and setting alight every building in the town. Only the house of M. Dupic, the town draper, was spared as an overnight accommodation for the soldiers. It was ignited the following morning. At about this time, the Pinéde children, still beneath the hotel staircase, were driven from their hiding place by the heat and smoke of the burning hotel. They made their escape into the rear yard. As they did so, the eldest, 22-year-old Jacqueline, collided with an SS trooper and, in her confusion, asked, "What should we do?" The soldier waved his arm toward an open field and the children ran. They survived.

Word of the massacre spread; indeed, citizens with friends or relatives living in Oradour went to the town's outskirts, and a few even quizzed the guards blocking access. They received various explanations, but only one managed to pass the guards. He spoke to an officer about his missing children but was ordered to leave. Surprisingly, he was allowed to do so. The killing had ended.

That evening Sturmbannführer Diekmann returned to Limoges to meet with his commanding officer, Standartenführer (colonel) Sylvester Stadler, at the Der Führer regimental headquarters. He reported what he had done, claiming that the village was filled with explosives and maquis. Stadler expressed shock and promised a court of inquiry.

Diekmann returned to Oradour just before the regularly scheduled tram from Limoges. The tram's riders had their papers checked, and those from Oradour were ordered off the tram. The others were sent back to Limoges. At first it appeared that there would be 20 additional victims. They were taken to a field command post outside the town. Encircled by soldiers, they feared execution as a heated debate among the Germans ensued. They were released with instructions not to go to Oradour.

About 9:30 PM, still daylight during the wartime double Daylight Saving Time, the majority of the soldiers departed for the nearby village of Nieul, leaving only 20 or 30 rearguard troops in Oradour. During the night, parents, anxious about the nonreturn of their children from the day's classes, gathered outside the town. Gradually word spread: "Don't go into Oradour. They're shooting in there."

ABOVE: Heinz Barth, participated in the murders of civilians at Oradour-sur-Glane, and hid from law enforcement officials for years in East Germany. Photographed during his trial in 1983, he was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to life in prison.

It was not until the final soldiers left the town at 6 AM Sunday morning that the citizens discovered the full extent of the tragedy. The town was completely destroyed—not one of its 328 buildings remained undamaged. Partially or completely burned bodies lay everywhere.

On Monday morning a small detachment of Wehrmacht troops arrived and started to bury the dead in common pits. The work continued into Tuesday, but as the news of the atrocity spread, the efforts dwindled. As it was, the men had been summoned to Normandy and had orders to enter the battle being waged there.

French aid workers followed and exhumed the bodies buried by the Germans, attempted identification, and collected personal effects. Only 52 bodies could be formally identified. The other 590 were too badly burned. Only 10 victims of the roundup survived: the five men who escaped from the Landy barn; Madame Rouffanche; Roger Godfrin, an eight-year-old who ran out the back door of the school when the Germans ordered the children to the marketplace; and the three Pinedé children, whose parents both died. Twenty-eight successfully hid from the initial roundup, and 36 citizens of the town were away that day.

Stunned by the brutality shown at Oradour, the resistance essentially ceased its attacks, but Allied air supremacy made transport a difficult and risky proposition. The Das Reich Division eventually reached the battlefront. On June 30, Diekmann was killed by a shell splinter to the head when he left his command bunker without his helmet. Comrades claimed that he just did not care anymore. He is buried in La Cambe German Cemetery in Normandy. Kämpfe's body was recovered and is now buried in the German Military Cemetery at Berneuil. Kahn was twice wounded, lost an arm, and disappeared. It is believed that he died in 1977 in Germany. The court of inquiry was held when the unit arrived in Normandy, but a verdict was never reached.

In 1953, seven German and 14 French (Alsatian) members of Company No. 3, Battalion No. 1, Der Führer Regiment, 2nd SS Panzer Division Das Reich were brought before a military tribunal in Bordeaux, France, and charged for their participation in the Oradour atrocity. The tribunal was led by jurist M. Nussy-Saint-Saëns and consisted of six officers who had been in the French Resistance. Several of the key participants could not be located or refused to attend. The commanding officer of Das Reich, Brigadeführer Heinz Lammerding, had already been condemned to death for the hangings in Tulle. Although living openly in Düsseldorf, he was not forced to attend, as the British, in whose zone of occupation he lived, claimed to have never received an official request for his extradition. Lammerding died of natural causes in 1971. Diekmann and Kahn were dead; Stadler claimed no knowledge of the event and was not charged.

The seven German defendants—none of them officers—had already been in jail for eight years awaiting disposition of their cases. The Frenchmen, who had been interrogated as witnesses after the war and then released, returned voluntarily, expecting only to give testimony. The trial became divisive, pitting local Frenchmen against Germans and residents of the newly recovered province of Alsace. The trial was greatly complicated over the status of the 14 Alsatian defendants. Two of the French defendants had since been awarded medals for

their later service in the French Army in the Indochina fighting. One had received the Croix de Guerre. Most had been forced into the German Army. Some had deserted when the unit arrived in Normandy. By French law, others were below the age of adulthood when the events occurred.

German soldiers had been forced to sign statements written in English that they did not understand. Previously obtained confessions were recanted as having been extracted under torture. New retroactive laws shifted the burden of proof from the prosecution to the defense. Essentially, those accused would have to prove that they did not commit any crime. They would also have to prove that they were not members of a criminal organization, the German SS. The French press reported the story with zeal. Only one of the defendants could be identified by a survivor as having participated in the massacre. The defendant denied it. The French Law of Collective Responsibility was changed, and the trials of the German and Alsatians were continued separately.

Alsatian Antoine Lohner testified that he was the interpreter for Hauptsturmführer Kahn when talking to Dr. Desourteaux. His squad forced men to remove wagons from Denis's carriage house and forced the prisoners, including the old village priest, into the structure. He further testified that he saw fellow defendant Georges-Réne Boos throw hand grenades into the church. The other defendants were mostly silent except to proclaim their innocence.

After 32 hours of deliberation on the 800 separate charges, the verdicts were read on Friday, February 13, 1953. German Sergeant Karl Lenz was sentenced to death; four German defendants were sentenced to 10-12 years of hard labor. One had proven that he was absent from Oradour and was freed. Of the French Alsatian defendants, only Georges Boos, who had voluntarily joined the SS, was sentenced to death, not for war crimes but for treason. Lohner was sentenced to seven years hard labor. The other Alsatian defendants received sentences of 5 to 12 years of hard labor. One defendant was never tried as he had been found legally insane. The people of Limoges protested against perceived leniency for the perpetrators of the massacre. It was a judicial compromise.

The French National Assembly had passed a law granting complete amnesty to all those forced into the German Army. Still, the residents of Limousin thought the punishments too light and objected to the amnesty. Alsatians thought the sentences and amnesty disproportional. Eventually, both Lenz and Boos were pardoned.

In 1983, platoon commander Untersturmführer (lieutenant) Heinz Barth, who had been hiding in East Germany under an assumed name, was tried there for leading men during the massacre. He admitted to shooting into a crowd of men but claimed that he was only following orders. Found guilty of war crimes, he received a life sentence but was released in 1997 because of age and poor health. He died in 2007.

Madame Rouffanche, who had spent a year in the hospital and had electrified the trial with her recounting of the church fire, died in

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ABOVE: A few weeks after the atrocities were committed by SS troops at Oradour-sur-Glane, French workers exhumed the bodies of a number of the victims. BELOW: Shown at lower right in this 1953 photo, defendants sit impassively during their war crimes trial for the atrocities committed at Oradour-sur-Glane in 1944. Two death sentences and four prison terms ranging from 10 to 12 years were handed down with guilty verdicts among the 800 charges that were leveled.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

Pacific MERCHANT MARINE

THE U.S. PACIFIC MERCHANT MARINE BRAVED HEAVY ATTACKS BY THE JAPANESE TO DELIVER VITAL CARGO.

BY DR. CARL H. MARCOUX

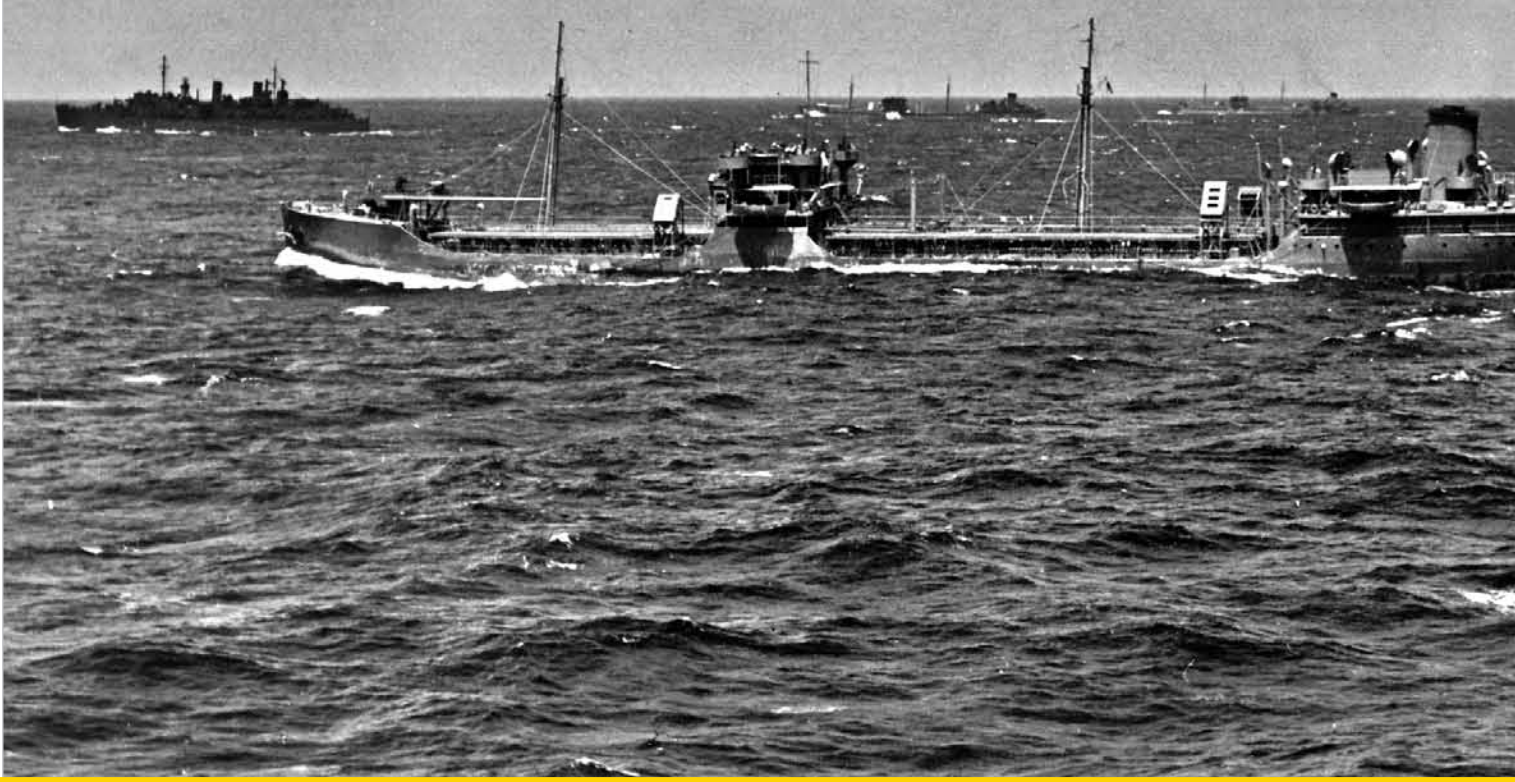
THE AMERICAN WAR in the Pacific proved to be largely a maritime endeavor. Fighting consisted of widespread naval battles between the two major opponents followed by American invasions of Japanese-held island bases. The strategy decided on by the U.S. high command consisted of taking and securing these bases one by one and moving toward a possible invasion of the Japanese home islands.

To accomplish this mission, large numbers of fighting men and vast amounts of equipment and supplies had to be moved from the U.S. mainland to the staging and combat areas. Estimates called for the movement of seven to 15 tons of supplies and equipment to support each soldier for each year of overseas service. The U.S. Merchant Marine played a major role in this critical transportation task. Merchant ships and their crews accompanied every major invasion of Japanese-held islands throughout the Pacific Theater.

Japanese naval action against American shipping occurred in three distinct phases. The first, immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, consisted of the capture or sinking of American ships at sea or berthed in ports of countries seized by the Japanese in the first few weeks of the war. The second phase, from mid-1942 until October 1944, involved the attack by Japanese submarines on single merchant vessels, generally sailing alone rather than in convoys. The third and final phase featured suicide attacks by planes, manned bombs, or torpedoes on ships berthed or lying at anchor at invasion sites.

Immediately after Pearl Harbor, the United States Merchant Marine was ill equipped for its crucial role that was to follow. The Japanese seized every ship flying the American flag in the Asian ports that they captured. Moreover, the bombing of Pearl Harbor served as a signal to the Japanese submarines at sea to begin action against American ships then currently sailing across the vast stretches of the Pacific. The German government joined its Japanese allies and began a campaign of destruction on Atlantic seas as well. In the three weeks following December 7, German U-boats sank 25 ships off the U.S. Atlantic coast, causing the loss of over 500 seamen.

The Japanese submarine fleet in the Pacific



did not present the same formidable threat to the U.S. merchant fleet as the Germans did in the Atlantic. Nevertheless, during the first few months of the war the threat of attacks by the Japanese created a great deal of apprehension on the U.S. West Coast. Merchant ships spotted a number of enemy submarines along that coast in the first couple of months after the war began. Japanese subs sank eight ships during December 1941 and attacked a number of others without sinking them. The tankers *Agriworld* and *H.M. Storey,* sailing along the West Coast, managed to escape without major damage. A unique incident occurred when a lone Japanese sub surfaced and shelled oil fields near Santa Barbara, California, causing little damage.

Not all ships at sea in the Pacific in December 1941 were as fortunate. The Japanese sank the Matson freighter *Lahaina* on December 10 and its sister ship *Manina* five days later. The Lykes Lines *Prusa* suffered the same fate on the 19th. The following day, the tanker *Emidio* sustained a direct hit to its engine room while sailing north of San Francisco, resulting in its sinking and the death of a number of its crewmen.

Tankers ride low in the water with their holds full of fuel. By the time this photograph was taken in April 1945, the U.S. Merchant Marine had been delivering precious wartime cargo to island outposts across the Pacific Ocean for more than three years. INSET: Survivors of the sunken Liberty ship *John E. Johnson* float near a rescue craft. Their cargo ship had been sunk by a Japanese submarine that attempted to ram a raft and lifeboat before surfacing to rake survivors with small-arms fire.

Initially, the United States was ill equipped to fight a two-ocean war. The loss of warships at Pearl Harbor seriously crippled the U.S. Navy's ability to respond to the Axis threat. The merchant fleet itself also was handicapped by the serious losses inflicted upon it. The remainder of the merchant fleet consisted mostly of old vessels well beyond their prime. Hog Islanders, a type of cargo ship constructed at the end of World War I, represented a disproportionate number of ships available for the tasks ahead. Further complicating the task was the fact that when the war commenced merchant shipping had to sail unarmed and proved to be an easy target for the enemy.

All photos: National Archives

Skilled personnel to serve the planned expansion of the fleet were in short supply. Many merchant marine officers had joined the Navy as that organization rebuilt following the December 7 attack, thus robbing the merchant service of many of its experienced sailors. It became necessary for the U.S. government to launch a high-priority program to build ships and to train seamen. The government established a new organization, the War Shipping Administration, to oversee this critical problem.

The WSA also ordered the building of some 3,700 ships in the course of the war. Most of these were the so-called Liberty ships—10,000-ton cargo vessels powered by reciprocating steam engines and capable of a top speed of about 11 knots. American industry began to turn out these ships at a phenomenal rate although faulty construction of the all welded hulls of the new design caused a number of them to break up in bad weather. Corrections in welding techniques ultimately solved the problem as the war progressed.

Toward the end of the war, American shipyards began turning out the Victory ship to replace the Liberty. The Victory had a top speed of 17 knots and used turbine propulsion engines to replace the less powerful steam plant used to drive the Liberty. The WSA also ordered the construction of a large number of tankers as well as some ships designed strictly for the transportation of personnel.

The staffing necessary to man the new vessels presented a critical problem for the WSA. The government established maritime schools on both coasts to train novice seamen for work in the deck, engine, and stewards' departments. The average cargo ship required a crew of approximately 45 seamen. In addition, the Navy put two dozen or so gunners, signalmen, and radio operators aboard each merchant ship to provide protection from enemy aircraft and submarines. The average merchant ship carried 10 20mm cannon, a 3-inch antiaircraft gun forward, and a 5-inch antiaircraft gun aft. Merchant seamen acted as loaders for the Navy crews.

Five state maritime academies established in California, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania prior to the war furnished officers for the expanded Merchant Marine program. The federal government also instituted a cadet program to train officers through courses set up both on land and at sea. This program ultimately resulted in the establishment of the United States Merchant Marine Academy, an institution similar to the Army's West Point, the Navy's Annapolis, and the Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut.

In 1942, the United States military undertook its island-hopping campaign across the Pacific, reversing the tide of Japanese naval victories and initiating the long trek toward the Japanese home islands with the invasion of Guadalcanal in the Solomons chain.

The Navy's Central Pacific Command, under Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, began amphibious assaults on Japanese strongholds in the

BELOW: The Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard in Baltimore, Maryland, is ablaze with lights as workers toil around the clock to produce a new generation of cargo vessels to deliver critical supplies to U.S. troops at war on Pacific islands and the Asian continent. RIGHT: Navy personnel instruct Merchant Mariners on the proper operation of a 20mm cannon fixed to the deck of a merchant vessel.

Gilbert, Marshall, and Mariana Island groups, while the South Pacific Command, under General Douglas MacArthur, began to move through the Solomons and New Guinea toward the Philippines. Both of these commands demanded heavy logistical support from the distant United States.

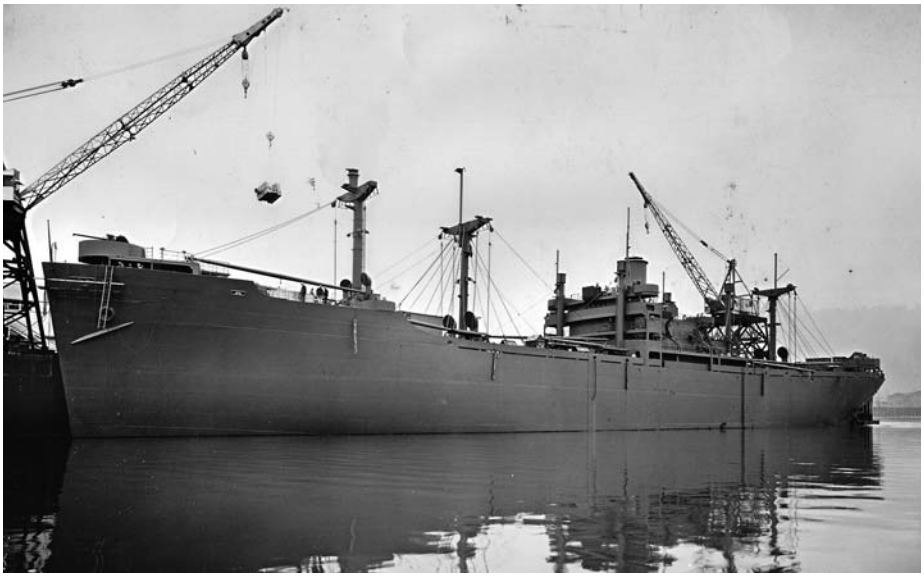
A steady run of merchant ships began lengthy voyages from the continental United States to these far-flung Pacific outposts. A supply trip from San Francisco or Los Angeles to Australia or New Guinea involved a run of more than 12,000 miles. Virtually all of the war material required by General MacArthur's forces had to be shipped over that distance. For the slow Liberty ships this meant a month or more at sea, often traveling through enemy-infested waters.

The Japanese did not pursue the same degree of aggressive submarine warfare practiced by the German Navy. The Japanese often used submarines to supply their far-flung island garrisons. However, when the Japanese did sink an Allied vessel the attacking sub would often surface and attempt to kill all of the survivors. After sinking the supply vessel *John A. Johnson* in October 1944, a Japanese submarine attempted to ram the ship's surviving lifeboat and raft. It then surfaced and opened up with small arms fire on the survivors in the water. Some 35 merchant seamen and their Navy shipmates survived the onslaught and were rescued the following morning by the patrol yacht USS *Argus,* which had been alerted by a Pan American Airways plane flying overhead.

During most of the war in the Pacific the majority of the merchant ships managed to complete their runs successfully. These vessels often spent weeks, even months, on lengthy runs to myriad island bases that depended on them for everything from food, arms, and ammunition to mail from home. Most ships sailed in convoys as they neared the active fighting areas, although some of the newer vessels, the Victory and the C ships, sailed alone counting on their speed to outrun the enemy.

Prior to the invasion of the Philippines in the autumn of 1944, Japanese submarine attacks against U.S. merchant ships were sporadic. With the American invasion fleet moving toward the Philippine island of Leyte in October, the Japanese naval high command made a fateful decision. Admiral Takijiro Ohnishi, commander of the First Air Fleet, instituted a plan for the crashing of Japanese aircraft into American ships accompanying the invasion of the island.

Ohnishi named this new fighting unit the Special Attack Corps, but it soon came to be known as the kamikaze, or Divine Wind. Overall Japanese strategy involved the use of three



ABOVE: The first Victory ship, SS *United Victory,* nears completion at the Oregon Shipbuilding Yard. The construction of Victory ships followed the initial success of the Liberty ships, merchant vessels constructed rapidly in sections and delivered to the U.S. cargo fleet, replacing losses sustained early in the war. BELOW: A casualty of war, the tanker USS *Mississinewa* blazes following an attack by the Japanese.

methods of suicide attack: the crashing of bomb-laden planes directly into enemy ships; the delivery of a manned rocket-propelled suicide missile, the Ohka, released from a bomber above the target; and the *kaiten,* a one-man midget suicide submarine carried by a mother sub and directed like a torpedo against an enemy vessel. In practice, however, only the kamikaze proved effective.

The original targets of the kamikaze were American aircraft carriers in order to reduce their overwhelming numbers in combat areas. However, in the ensuing raids Japanese suicide pilots often aimed their planes at any targets that presented themselves.

Despite the Japanese defensive preparations, the American forces landed at Leyte on October 20, 1944. A total of 108 merchant ships participated in the action, a number of them moving into San Pedro Bay to begin unloading men and supplies. On October 24, the Japanese began their waves of kamikaze attacks on American shipping. Some 20 merchant vessels were already in the process of unloading approximately 500,000 tons of food and supplies as well as 30,000 soldiers.

Although the Japanese conducted a series of desperate raids on the anchored ships, the merchant vessels successfully resisted the attempts by the kamikazes to destroy them. Many suffered substantial damage but still managed to inflict heavy losses on the attackers. The merchant ships were credited with shooting down 100 enemy aircraft during the 10 weeks following the Leyte landings. Unfortunately, a

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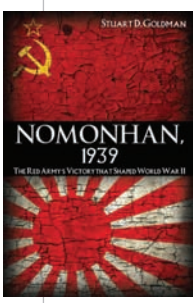
By Al Hemingway

Savagery at Nomonhan

In 1939, the Soviet Red Army and the Imperial Japanese Army fought for control of Manchuria in the bloodiest war the world has ever seen.

ON A MARCH DAY IN 1939, A 40-MAN COMBAT PATROL FROM THE JAPANESE Kwantung Army, led by Major Tsuji Masanobu of the operations staff, made its way to the base of Changkufeng Hill, a 450-foot-high mountain located on a ridge line near the Tyumen River in Manchuria. For several years, the Soviet Union and Japan had argued over the border that separated Mongolia from Manchuria. The Japanese had established a puppet government in Manchuria known as Manchukuo after they invaded that country in 1931. Since that time, border incidents had arisen between the two nations vying for eminence in the region.



In the summer of 1938, the Soviet Union and Japan fought a bitter two-week battle that resulted in a Soviet victory and their occupation of Changkufeng Hill. The defeat was a humiliating one for the Japanese Sixth Army—and they were determined to avenge it.

On Tsuji's order, his entire patrol stood and urinated in front of the Soviet positions on that March day, much to the amusement of the Russian soldiers. Then, Tsuji's men sat and ate a lunch complete with saké, traditional Japanese rice wine. What appeared to be a day in the park was actually a serious effort on Tsuji's part to gather intelligence on the terrain and take photographs of the area for an upcoming Japanese assault to drive the Red Army from the region. The bloody struggle that would follow near the tiny hamlet of Nomonhan would result in the opening shots of World War II.

In his new book, ***Nomonhan, 1939: The Red Army's Victory That Shaped World War II*** (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2012, 288 pp., maps, notes, index, $31.95, hardcover), author Stuart D. Goldman has not only written a powerful account of the Red Army's lopsided victory over Imperial Japan but also included the impact the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact had on the war, paving the way for Hitler to invade Poland a few days after hostilities at Nomonhan had ended.

Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, always the shrewd politician, waited patiently as Japan invaded China before making a major move in the area. As the mushrooming Chinese fighting sapped Japan of its manpower, weapons, and aircraft, including units from their Manchurian occupation force, Stalin reinforced the garrison in Manchuria, placing General Georgi Zhukov in command of the forces there.

In July, the Japanese assaulted the Red Army's positions. Soviet artillery pounded the Japanese as Red Army infantrymen from two battalions reinforced by armored vehicles finally pushed the attackers back to their starting point. That August, Zhukov ordered a major counteroffensive that decimated the Japanese 23rd Division. Once again Soviet artillery hammered Japanese positions and the newly arrived T-34 tanks annihilated the Japanese armor. In the end, an estimated 18,000-23,000 men were killed and wounded, not counting the troops in Manchukuo engaged between May and September 1939. Most of the Kwantung Army's guns and tanks had been destroyed along with about 150 aircraft. Soviet and Mongolian losses were heavy as well, with more than 30,000 dead and wounded.

The Japanese severely underestimated the fighting capabilities of the Soviet troops and their state-of-the-art equipment, mistakes they would continue to make throughout the war. They erroneously believed that the superiority of the individual Japanese soldier would be the deciding factor in any battle they fought. Meanwhile, the Soviet military walked away from Nomonhan having learned many important lessons that they

Russian troops take cover during fighting for Rezimov Hill in the Khalkin-Gol region of Mongolia in, August 1939.

You deserve a factual look at . . .

The Two-State Illusion

Would it solve the Middle East problem?

There seems to be almost universal consensus that in order to bring peace to the Middle East the creation of a Palestinian state is unavoidable. What is more, such a "solution" is the policy of the United States.

What are the facts?

The lesson of Gaza. In previous *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages we made clear that a Palestinian state would be impossible for Israel to accept. It would lead inevitably to Israel's destruction. The reason is primarily the lesson learned from the Gaza experiment. Under pressure from most of the world, Israel evacuated Gaza, displacing hundreds of families who had lived there for generations and who had built substantial communities and extensive agricultural installations. Instead of making even the least gesture of acknowledgment and gratitude, the Palestinians, almost from the very first day of their "liberation" from the hated Jews, began to lob rockets into Israel. Ultimately, Israel was forced to defend itself against those attacks and invaded Gaza in force. There was much damage and many casualties. As could be expected, "world opinion" condemned Israel's defensive action and called it "disproportionate."

> "...the ultimate goal is not... a Palestinian state... but the destruction of Israel."

If Israel were foolish enough to yield to the unrelenting pressure and were to turn Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") over to the Palestinians, it would find itself surrounded by enemies, whose ultimate goal is not the creation of a Palestinian state but the destruction of Israel – to use the common rhetoric, to wipe Israel off the map and push the Jews into the sea.

Statehood opportunities rejected. The reality is that the Palestinians are not really interested in their own independent state. Such a state never existed and the concept of a "Palestinian" people is a fairly new one. If the Palestinians were really interested in their own state, if that were their aspiration, they could have had such a state side-by-side with Israel, for a very long time. The first partition of Palestine – all of which, by the Balfour Declaration and by the mandate of the League of Nations was to be the Jewish home – occurred in 1921. Winston Churchill, who was then the Colonial Secretary, split the mandated territory, allocating the great bulk to the Arabs for the creation of what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. But, of course, that did not satisfy the Arabs. After much bloody fighting over the decades, other efforts were made to create an additional state for the Arabs (who by then called themselves "Palestinians"). There was the Peel Partition Plan of 1937, and, most importantly perhaps, the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947. Under the UN plan, the territory west of the Jordan River was to be split, with the major portion to be allocated to the Arabs and the smaller, disconnected, portion going to the Jews. Jerusalem, a bone of contention, was to be "internationalized" – it would not belong to either. The Jews, anxious to form their state, accepted this plan under which they were granted only a small fraction of the "Palestine" that they had been promised to be their homeland by the Balfour Declaration and by the mandate of the League of Nations. But the Arabs rejected the partition out of hand. Almost the same day that Israel declared its statehood and its independence, six Arab armies invaded Israel from north, east and south. In what could be called a Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might.

Following the Six-Day War of 1967, in which Israeli forces defeated the combined invasion forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, Israel offered generous terms for the formation of a Palestinian state. But it was not accepted. Instead, the Arabs convened in Khartoum (Sudan) and pronounced their famous Three No's: No peace with Israel, No negotiations with Israel, No recognition of Israel. Other offers of statehood were made over the course of the years. Ehud Barak, then prime minister of Israel, and U.S. President Bill Clinton offered the Palestinians almost total withdrawal to the 1967 armistice lines. The Palestinians rejected the offer, presumably because it did not include Israel's willingness to accept hundreds of thousands of Palestinian "refugees," who would with one stroke accomplish what the Arabs had not accomplished in their wars: the destruction of Israel. The creation of a Palestinian state could have been accomplished many times. But it is the unalterable goal of the Palestinians, indeed of most Arabs and most Muslims, to destroy the Jewish state and never to recognize and legitimize Israel in whatever shape and size as a Jewish state.

It is important to understand that the creation of a Palestinian state is not the true ultimate goal of the Arabs. It is, at best, meant to be a stepping stone toward the ultimate goal: the destruction, the disappearance of Israel and of the hated Jews from any portion of what they consider "holy Muslim soil." The Arabs are not interested in putting an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. That could have been accomplished long ago. On the contrary, to be martyrs is a source of pride and assurance of victory to the Arabs. They compare their willingness to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of their own with the Zionist enemy, who is concerned about combat losses or even the fate of one single abducted soldier.

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East
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Gerardo Joffe, President

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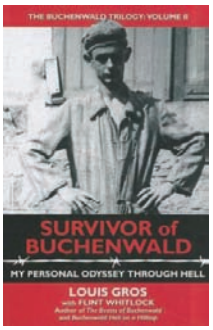
would put to their advantage when battling the German Army in the years ahead, mainly in the area of tank-infantry warfare.

As the author points out, even though the border clashes occurred nearly 75 years ago, their repercussions are still felt today. When Japan signed the peace treaty ending World War II on September 2, 1945, the Soviet Union was not included in the pact. Now, in the 21st century, both countries continue to view each other with a wary eye as the ghost of Nomonhan lingers.



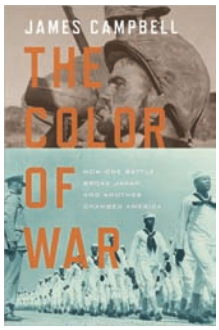
Survivor of Buchenwald: My Personal Odyssey Through Hell by Louis Gros and Flint Whitlock, Cable Publishing, Brule, WI, 2012, 229 pp., photographs, index, $24.95, hardcover.

It is hard to fathom that the word Buchenwald, name of the infamous Nazi concentration camp outside Weimar, Germany, means "beech forest" in German. It was here 100 years earlier that the noted German poet Johann Wolfgang Goethe sat under the shade of a massive oak tree to think. A little more than a century later, Goethe would have been sickened to see how his idyllic spot had been transformed into a living hell on earth by the Nazis.

Louis Gros was a French Catholic who was with the Maquis, or French Underground, when he was arrested in 1942. After months in prisons, he was transported to Buchenwald and miraculously survived to tell his story of the horrors that were perpetrated against its inmates.

Because he was not Jewish, Gros soon found himself working in the armament factory situated near the camp, which he describes as a "lucky assignment for any inmate." His father, who was also incarcerated at Buchenwald, was assigned to work at a nearby factory as well. Gros and other inmates worked on an assembly line for the V-2 rocket. Many of these workers would sabotage the rocket components in hopes that they would fail. Getting caught meant certain death.

Gros vividly describes the stench of burning flesh that permeated the air within the prison. The one unmistakable feature that dominated the landscape was the smokestack for the crematorium where inmates, especially the Jews, were sent every day. Gros escaped death on many occasions, including once when an air raid by American bombers killed many of his fellow prisoners. He was liberated by elements of General George S. Patton's U.S. Third Army as they raced after the Germans. He spent years fighting tuberculosis, which he contracted while a prisoner. He has gone on to live a productive life since his incarceration but, as he writes, "The memories are always there…."



The Color of War: How One Battle Broke Japan and Another Changed America by James Campbell, Crown Publishers, New York, 2012, 481 pp., notes, bibliography, $28.00, hardcover.

This book follows the paths of several Marines and black seaman, culminating with the victory at Saipan in the Pacific Theater and the disaster at the Port Chicago Naval Ammunition Depot near San Francisco that killed and

Simulation Gaming

Trickstar Games aims for the skies with *Damage Inc.*

PUBLISHER
Mad Catz

DEVELOPER
Trickstar Games

SYSTEM(S)
PC, Xbox 360, PS3

AVAILABLE
August 28, 2012

When *Damage Inc.* was first announced, it went under the title *War Wings: Hell Catz,* the tail end of which seems very appropriate since the dogfighter is being published by Mad Catz. Mad Catz is primarily known for the production of peripherals, like fighting game arcade sticks, steering wheels, and other similar (and sometimes expensive) game-enhancing equipment, but their involvement makes a lot more sense when you get a load of *Damage Inc.*'s humdinger of a collector's edition.

Throwing down extra on *Damage Inc.* nets you the fancy Saitek Pacific AV8R Flightstick, as well as a custom decal kit, and an exclusive downloadable content plane, the Reaper Corsair. *Damage Inc.* will need all the bonus assets it can muster when it comes out in August, because the only genre of World War II games more saturated at the moment than strategy is flight. This used to be the case with first-person shooters, but with modern and future eras overtaking historical spins on war, we're at a bizarre, perhaps temporary juncture where it almost seems novel to set FPS action in World War II again. Competition is high, and those who have kept up with this column have likely noticed more and more dogfighting games that at least range from decent to great.

Damage Inc. hopes to tackle some of the war's most famous battles in an accurate manner, with over 100 objectives based on challenges that actual pilots faced. It all starts with the attack on Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941. From there, the campaigns expand—defend Wake Island from the Japanese forces, and continue on throughout a variety of real Pacific Theater battlefields. Some of the available planes include the F6F3 Hellcat, B-25 Mitchell, SBD2 Dauntless, P40N Warhawk, J7WI Shinden, F4U Corsair, and A6M2 Zero.

All of the 23 missions can be played cooperatively, as well, with up to four players teaming up to blast through the sorties. Competitive multiplayer covers most of the bases expected, with players able to go head to head in both free-for-

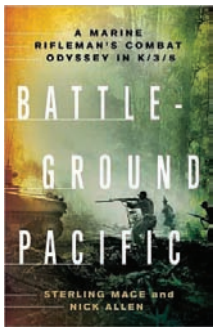
injured hundreds of sailors—most of them black. Both occurred in July 1944.

As the author states, black seaman who enlisted in the U.S. Navy prior to World War II were confined to mess duty. In 1942, at the urging of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, blacks were finally allowed to join the armed services and to be given the same assignments as white servicemen. Unfortunately, most officers did not agree with the order, and the military remained segregated until 1948.

Promised education and better choices of jobs in the military, most blacks found themselves relegated to menial and, at times, dangerous tasks, such as handling ammunition at Port Chicago. The horrific detonation of shells resulted in a huge work stoppage by blacks, who insisted that the assignment was too hazardous to perform. Fifty men were charged with mutiny and, if found guilty during time of war, could have received the death penalty. All the defendants were found guilty but given prison terms. Almost all were released by early 1946.

The Battle of Saipan and the concurrent Battle of the Philippine Sea, according to U.S. Naval historian Samuel Eliot Morrison, expended a tremendous amount of ammunition. Because of this, the Port Chicago facility was forced to handle large amounts of shells to replenish the supply and, as the author writes, "It was ill-equipped to handle such an onrush of ordnance."

This is a well-written account of two vastly different events that, incredibly, were linked together by the war. The Port Chicago incident and the subsequent mutiny and trial created a furor in black America. Civil rights advocates called for equality and justice in the military—something that would not become a reality for another two decades.



Battle Ground Pacific: A Marine Rifleman's Odyssey in K/3/5 by Sterling Mace and Nick Allen, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2012, 352 pp., maps, photographs, $25.95, hardcover.

Here is one of the best memoirs written about one man's experiences in two of the worst battles fought by U.S. forces in World War II. Sterling Mace, a wisecracking kid from New York City, enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps after Pearl Harbor and was assigned as a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) man with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division shortly after its return from the Cape Gloucester campaign. The unit's next assault was on the island of Peleliu, a claw-shaped Japanese fortress in the Palau chain. The purpose of the operation was to seize the island and construct an airstrip to guard General Douglas MacArthur's right flank as he advanced toward the Philippines. Despite the optimistic predictions of taking the island in four days, the Marines and the U.S. Army's 81st Division required more than two months. Sadly, the operation could have been cancelled because MacArthur's path to the Philippines was never in jeopardy from the Japanese.

From the moment the ramp lowered on Mace's landing craft at Orange Beach 2 on September 15, 1944, until the completion of the three-month battle for the island of Okinawa in the spring of 1945, the New York native escaped death on numerous occasions and survived the horrendous ordeal. Mace and co-author Nick Allen do a marvelous job of relating the everyday life of an infantryman in combat and his growing up on the streets of the Big Apple.

all dogfights and team-based battles. The classic deathmatch mode puts up to eight players against one another, allowing for game customization suitable to a variety of skill levels, while Team Dogfight splits fighters into separate squads. Survivor also comes in both normal and team flavors, with the goal centered on being the last plane in the skies.

This is all pretty standard stuff, with the exception of one mode that could prove to separate *Damage Inc.* from the rest of the pack. Scratch One Flattop mode takes two teams and gives them aircraft carriers to attack and defend. Cover your own side while using dive bombers and torpedo bombers to swoop in and sink the opposition's carrier. While it still holds to the same basic team-based conventions the rest of the multiplayer modes offer, it's certainly the least straightforward dogfightin' of the bunch. As is always the case, it will end up coming down to the kind of community the game builds and sustains after its release.

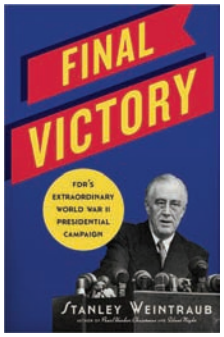
As for that stick, it looks like Mad Catz is also trying to keep the peripheral in line with Trickstar's dedication to historical accuracy, at least as far as controllers can do so. The AV8R (sound it out…) is styled after WWII combat aircraft, from the grip to the themed decals. It sports three buttons, a realistic trigger, and a POV analog stick, as well as integrated throttle and aircraft-inspired toggle switches. The Xbox 360 version includes a headset port for use with Xbox Live, but the real clincher is the fact that the stick is compatible with a number of other notable flight games. *Damage Inc.*'s site lists other titles it works with, including *Birds of Steel, Birds of Prey, Hawx 1* and *2, Ace Combat 6, Apache Air Assault, Heroes Over Europe,* and both *Blazing Angels* games. PlayStation 3 compatibility is roughly the same, but PC gamers can also crack at *IL-2 Sturmovik, Combat Wings, A-10 Warthog, Flight Simulator,* and *X-Plane.*

Trickstar Games is a relatively new developer, founded in Melbourne, Australia in 2009, but *Damage Inc.* doesn't represent their first foray into aerial combat. *J.A.S.F.: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters,* a modern flight action sim, was released across multiple platforms in 2011. Despite its facade of simulation, *J.A.S.F.* is closer to an arcade-style flight game, which also appears to be the aim of *Damage Inc.,* so keep that in mind when looking to scratch that aerial itch. We'll find out later this year if Trickstar truly upped their skill level in the genre.

- Joseph Luster

Mace's unit was featured in the HBO miniseries *The Pacific*. It chronicled Eugene Sledge, a mortar man with K/3/5, fighting on Peleliu and Okinawa. Sledge later wrote about his experiences in the classic book *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*, one of the best personal accounts dealing with men in combat.

Mace, who was a consultant on Sledge's book, has also delivered a hard-hitting story that equals Sledge's memoir.



Final Victory: FDR's Extraordinary World War II Presidential Campaign by Stanley Weintraub, Da Capo Press, Philadelphia, 2012, 256 pp., photographs, notes, index, $26.00, hardcover.

Historian Stanley Weintraub has penned another engrossing work dealing with the only American president to serve more than two terms—Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This book focuses on FDR's campaign for his fourth term in office, winning hard-fought election only to die less than three months later. Roosevelt had not been in good health. His heart was failing, and the polio he had contracted (a carefully hidden secret from most of the American public) years earlier was taking its toll. Still, most Americans wanted FDR to have another term. With the war still raging in Europe and the Pacific, they believed he was the man to finish the job.

The Republicans had their hands full to find a candidate to beat the popular FDR. They chose Thomas E. Dewey, the dapper governor of New York who, as Weintraub writes, had a "mechanical smile." Despite that physical drawback, the savvy New Yorker was a consummate politician and came out swinging, criticizing FDR.

In the end, although he mounted an aggressive campaign, Dewey was defeated by FDR, who took most of the electoral votes and 36 of the 48 states. Sadly, the rigors of the campaign trail took their toll, and FDR passed away in April 1945. Vice President Harry S. Truman was sworn in as the new commander-in-chief.

"There will never be another fourth-term election," Weintraub writes. "The Rooseveltian legacy may be that we will never have further crises of such magnitude as to require one."

A Different Time, A Different Man: The Story of John L. Sullivan, Assistant Secretary of the

Short Bursts

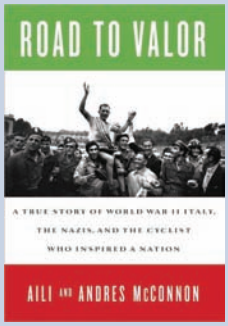
Road to Valor: A True Story of World War II Italy, the Nazis, and the Cyclist who Inspired a Nation by Aili and Andres McConnon, Crown Publishers, New York, 2012, 336 pp., photographs, notes, index, $25.00, hardcover.

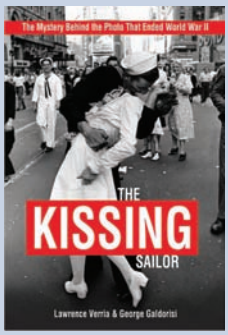
All that Gino Bartali ever wanted to do was ride his bicycle. In fact, the native of Tuscany in northern Italy became a renowned cycling legend when he won the Tour de France, a grueling 2,200-mile excursion that winds its way through the Alps, in 1938. With his victory, the Fascist government of Benito Mussolini attempted to use Bartali's win for propaganda purposes, something that thoroughly sickened the champion.

Although apolitical, Bartali had no choice but to take sides when Italy capitulated and the country was occupied by the Nazis during the war. He became involved with the Italian resistance movement and would routinely ride through the countryside carrying forged documents, photographs, and other papers, in the frame of his bicycle. Through his efforts, he saved the lives of an estimated 800 Italian Jews.

After the war Bartali was poor and practiced vigorously for another attempt at winning the Tour de France, which he did in 1948. Often outspoken and irascible with reporters because of his views, they soon dubbed him Ginettaccio or "Gino the Terrible."

A quiet and unassuming man, Bartali rarely discussed his wartime experiences. On May 5, 2000, surrounded by his family, Bartali quietly passed away. Called Ginettaccio by some because of his hard demeanor, he was called a hero by many for risking his life to save the lives of others—and that is what true heroes do.





The Kissing Sailor: The Mystery Behind the Photo That Ended World War II by Lawrence Verria & George Galdorisi, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2012, 224 pp., photographs, notes, index, $23.95, hardcover.

Times Square. New York. August 1945. Japan had just surrendered to the Allies, ending nearly four long years of war. Pandemonium erupted as people flocked to read the *Times* "zipper" announcing the end of hostilities. Greta Zimmer, a dental assistant dressed in her white uniform, stared intently at the marquee as she read the exciting news. Suddenly, George Mendonsa, a sailor serving aboard the destroyer USS *The Sullivans*, grabbed the startled dental assistant and, holding her tightly, gave her a big kiss.

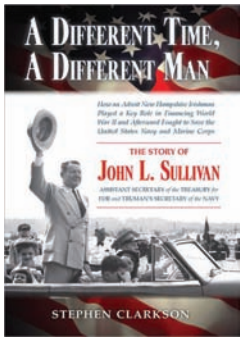
Unknown to the embracing pair, *LIFE* magazine photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt saw the opportunity for a good shot and quickly raised his camera, snapping four pictures in succession. The second picture would grace the cover of the publication and go on to become one of the most celebrated photographs of the World War II era.

However, Eisenstaedt did not get the couple's names. It took years of detective work and investigating numerous claims by others saying that they were the kissing couple on that August day to finally uncover their identity.

The authors not only do a great job in following the clues that led to the undisputable claim that Mendonsa and Zimmer are, in fact, the kissing couple, but they also convey the euphoria that swept the country when the war ended. It has been immortalized for eternity in one simple photograph.

A Man and His Ship: America's Greatest Naval Architect and His Quest to Build the SS United States by Steven Ujifusa, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2012, 464 pp., photographs, notes, index, $29.99, hardcover.

William Francis Gibbs was a dreamer. Although painfully shy, he went on to become one of the greatest engineers and created,



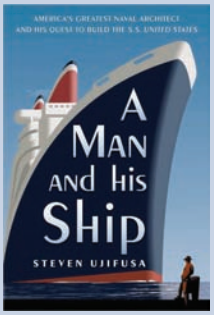
Treasury for FDR and Truman's Secretary of the Navy by Stephen Clarkson, Peter E. Randall Publisher, Portsmouth, NH, 2011, 233 pp., photographs, index, notes, $24.95, hardcover.

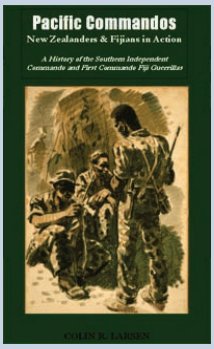
Once described as a "dynamo," the feisty John L. Sullivan played a key role as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration and, arguably, his most important part as Harry Truman's Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the postwar years when the U.S. defense budget was slashed and there was talk of combining the armed services.

A skillful politician, Sullivan, a New Hampshire native, was a staunch advocate of war bonds during World War II to help pay for the escalating cost of the war effort. An extremely intelligent man who "kept his finger on the financial pulse of the country," Sullivan commented in October 1943, "Nearly every activity of the Government cuts across my desk sooner or later."

During the years following the war, Sullivan became Secretary of the Navy when the National Security Act was enacted in 1947. It was during these lean years that Sullivan not only fought for the construction of new ships but also battled to maintain the Navy in its present state and prevent the abolishing of the Marine Corps.

Clarkson, who was Sullivan's law partner for 13 years, has done a superlative job on his biography. The book highlights the numerous accomplishments of a dedicated American who was an advocate for fiscal responsibility and a strong defense for the country while never once sacrificing his integrity. □





Pacific Commandos: New Zealanders & Fijians in Action: A History of the Southern Independent Commando and First Commando Fiji Guerrillas by Colin R. Larsen, Hailer Publishing, St. Petersburg, FL, 2012, 161 pp., maps, photographs, $29.99, softcover.

Written in 1946, this book had been out of print for more than 60 years prior to being re-released. Although small in number, these behind-the-lines raiders, who also included within their ranks Solomon Islanders and Tongans, provided valuable intelligence to Allied units during the war. Led by New Zealanders, the unit was created in 1941 and served in numerous campaigns in the Solomon Islands, including Guadalcanal. When the unit was disbanded in 1944, more than 40 percent of its officers and 30 percent of its noncommissioned officers had lost their lives. Every man in the unit had contracted malaria and had been pushed to his physical limits. For their courageous actions, many of the men were decorated.

Kudos to the publisher for shedding some well-deserved light on the Fiji Commandos of World War II. □

with his brother, a gigantic shipbuilding empire that produced some of the finest ships constructed during World War II.

At times irascible and demanding, Gibbs required excellence from his employees, especially his engineering staff and draftsmen. From his austere offices in New York City, Gibbs's staff designed a new cargo ship that FDR dubbed an "ugly duckling." The new vessel, however, would soon be known to the American public as the "Liberty Ship," one of the most significant vessels of the conflict. On June 6, 1944, Gibbs requested that his staff "make a short prayer," for the thousands of GIs storming the beaches at Normandy in the landing craft his company had designed. But it was not until after the conflict that Gibbs finally realized his dream of constructing the SS *United States*, the fastest and most elegant ocean liner to date, launched in 1952.

This book commemorates the 60th anniversary of the maiden voyage of Gibbs's oceanic masterpiece, the SS *United States*, often called "the greatest ocean liner ever built." It is also a tribute to the tenacity and determination of one man to see his dream through to reality.

profiles

Continued from page 23

significance about the Southwest Pacific area. Quantitatively then, 18 documents dealing with the SWPAC Air Evaluation Board in some form represent the results of an extensive effort.

To be sure, Duggan was optimistic that the eventual results, both qualitative and quantitative, would justify the Air Evaluation Board's efforts and his participation on the board. He felt that by January 1946 the reports specified in the plan of evaluation would be finished. Although the results looked paltry in September 1945, the foundation laid down by Lynd in the spring and summer of 1945 would produce significant evaluations, the most important covering the campaigns on the Philippine Islands of Leyte and Luzon as well as operations in the other islands in the archipelago.

Duggan did not, however, presume to make any prognostications about the impact the studies would have on the future of the Army Air Forces and its successor organization, the United States Air Force. He did not live to experience the Kosovo, Iraq, and most recent Afghanistan campaigns. Had he lived he would have noticed with interest how it appeared Kenney's seamless blending of the strategic, tactical, and aerial lift components of the Air Force was working in today's combat environment. He would also have wondered if those concepts developed by present Air Force planners and operators did not, in some way, emanate from the various Air Evaluation Board studies.

Apparently, however, there is no substantial evidence of any direct correlation between what Lynd, Duggan, and many others recorded and how today's Air Force conducts its operations. Nevertheless, the Air Expeditionary Wing concept looks remarkably similar to the integrated operations MacArthur's Air Force conducted in the Southwest Pacific during World War II.

Stephen Pierce Duggan, Jr.'s, civilian wartime service in MacArthur's Air Force was brief. Yet, the frustrated candidate for the U.S. Marine Corps was given the unique opportunity of serving his country as a civilian in an importation theater of operations, the Southwest Pacific. And he did it working under the aegis of one of America's most successful World War II airmen, General George C. Kenney, who commanded General Douglas MacArthur's Far East Air Forces. □

Author Raymond E. Bell is a retired U.S. Army brigadier general and the former editor of National Guard *magazine. He resides in Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York.*

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oradour

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1988 at age 92.

Why Oradour-sur-Glane? It had been described at the trial by resistance fighters as a peaceful town, and the explanation offered was that the Gestapo confused it with another village 30 kilometers away that had been a hotbed of French Resistance activity. The other town was Oradour-sur-Vayres.

In 1946, the French government expropriated the land of Oradour-sur-Glane to preserve the entire ruins as a martyr village. A new village was constructed a few hundred yards to the west, but it was not until years later that the laughter of little children was to be heard on its streets. The government built a crypt near the town cemetery to hold the remains of the townspeople, but political disagreements over the prosecution and amnesty of the Alsatian SS men resulted in the refusal of the survivors' families to turn over the remains. Instead, they built their own ossuary in the cemetery, which holds those ashes to this day. The crypt still stands, holding a few relics of the town.

To dramatize the massacre, the ruins and their meager contents have been frozen in time at the moment of the village's destruction. Barren streets are lined with the stone and concrete shells of burned-out buildings. Façades hold black plaques identifying the owner or business. Visitors silently wander along the rails of the tram line from the station down the hill toward the church. Tram wires and telephone cables stretch overhead. Doorways without doors and windows without frames or glass permit inspection of what little remains inside each dwelling. A metal sink resides in the corner of a burned kitchen. A Singer sewing machine sits along the wall of a parlor. There are few surviving upper stories, the support beams having burned and collapsed; the sky is visible through glassless windows. Rusting hulks of automobiles sit in destroyed garages, their tires and other flammables burned away, only the metal frames remaining. In the church, the only building that visitors are allowed to enter, a crushed infant's carriage rests near the altar. Bullet holes pockmark the lower levels of the walls as black smoke stains creep up toward the open sky. □

Robert Mueller is the author of Fields of War: Fifty Key Battlefields in France and Belgium *and winner of four national book awards including a Bronze Medal from the Military Writers Society of America. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army Signal Corps and resides in Buffalo Grove, Illinois.*

Continued from page 65

substantial number of Navy and Merchant Marine personnel were killed or wounded in the attacks along with a large number of the Army troops that had not yet disembarked for the shore.

As the liberation of the Philippines continued, merchant vessels came under even more intense attacks. In late December 1944, during the invasion of the island of Mindoro, a kamikaze dove into the Liberty ship *John Burke*. Loaded to the gunwales with ammunition, the vessel exploded, killing all the Merchant Marine and Navy sailors aboard. When the convoy reached Magrin Bay, Mindoro, the Liberty ship *Lewis L. Dyche,* also loaded with ammunition, suffered the same fate with the loss of its entire complement of personnel. In the same convoy, the *Francisco Morazan* managed to fight off numerous kamikazes, shooting down six attackers in the process. At twilight, the *Hobart Baker* became the day's final victim. Loaded with steel airstrip landing mats, it sank to the bottom of the anchorage after being hit amidships by a kamikaze.

During the conquest of Okinawa, an island in the Ryukyu group some 350 miles southwest of the home islands, more than 1,600 Allied ships operated off the island in the spring of 1945. Included in the strike force were 170 merchant vessels carrying ammunition, food, fuel, and other general supplies. Over 450,000 men participated in this campaign, 184,000 of whom went ashore for ground fighting. The balance of the force lay at anchor at Hagushi Bay on the west coast of the island and at Buckner Bay on its eastern shore.

In the course of the 87-day campaign, the Japanese launched 10 separate air offensives consisting of 1,465 planes against American shipping off Okinawa's coast. The Japanese succeeded in sinking 36 ships and damaging an additional 371. The Japanese lost more than 1,900 planes during the campaign.

The merchant ships *Hobbs Victory* and *Logan Victory* were among the vessels lost in the anchorage off Hagushi Bay. Loaded with critical ammunition, their destruction resulted in a temporary shortage of phosphorous and 81mm mortar rounds. Replacement for this critical ammunition had to be flown in from the Marianas. Another merchant vessel, *Canada Victory,* caught by surprise after sundown on April 27, was also sunk in the kamikaze attacks. A Japanese pilot approached unseen and crashed his plane into the mast behind the midships housing, which exploded and ignited a fire that could not be controlled. In addition to these three vessels, an additional dozen or so merchant ships sustained substantial damage.

When the Japanese on Okinawa finally surrendered on June 21, the island became the staging area for the impending invasion of the Japanese homeland. Hundreds of ships arrived with troops and supplies in preparation for the attack. Senior U.S. commanders anticipated heavy losses during an invasion of Japan. Merchant ships would be especially vulnerable to attack once they were clustered in the waters surrounding the islands and attempted to offload their cargoes. However, the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought an end to the war in the Pacific without an invasion of the home islands.

The United States had about 55,000 merchant seamen in 1941. Many were old timers who could not continue to sail, faced with the rigors of war and its accompanying strains. The government found itself hard pressed to keep up with the demand for seamen in the rapidly expanding wartime merchant fleet. The government training schools accepted men and boys over and under draft age as well as those rejected by the Selective Service System, providing they had the physical capacity to handle the work. The need was so great that some 15-year-old boys were accepted.

By war's end, the Merchant Marine manpower pool had reached 215,000.

In the course of the war 6,830 merchant seamen were killed, more than 11,000 were wounded, and more than 600 became prisoners of the Japanese. The casualty rate of the United States Merchant Marine was among the highest of any service.

A total of 731 American merchant ships were lost to enemy action during the war. Forty-three of these were lost in the Pacific campaigns. Many more merchant vessels were seriously damaged. Without question, the U.S. Merchant Marine had met its goals in delivering the men, equipment, and supplies needed to defeat the Japanese Empire.

Said General MacArthur at the conclusion of the Pacific campaign: "They have brought us our lifeblood and paid for it with some of their own. I saw them bombed off the Philippines and in New Guinea. When it was humanly possible, when their ships were not blown out from under them by bombs and torpedoes, they delivered their cargoes to us. In war it is performance that counts." □

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insight

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of the newly formed Arab League. Meanwhile, the failure of the 1946 London talks over what to do about the Jews and Palestinians in the Holy Land brought the thorny question before the new United Nations in New York City for a vote.

The Arab League established its Liberation Army to resist the subsequent partition decision of November 29, 1947, and thus the stage was set for the creation of the new State of Israel, the first since the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, almost 1,000 years earlier.

The key factors were the 1917 British Balfour Declaration that the Jews should have a national home in Palestine, the global sympathy for the victims of the Nazi Holocaust of 1941-1945, the withdrawal of the British Army, and the Transjordanian Arab Legion invasion of May 15, 1948. The rout of this formation and the Egyptian Army by the Jewish Defense Forces (JDF) and internal Arab political disunity spelled victory for the Jews on October 15 in the first of a trio of wars that occurred during 1948-1973.

King Abdullah of Transjordan called his political foe Haj Amin "a devil straight from hell," while an armistice was signed on February 24, 1949, on the Isle of Rhodes. The catastrophic defeat of Arab arms meant doom for the Grand Mufti's political career then and there, and he spent the last two decades of his life writing autobiographical articles and memoirs.

Shunted aside after almost three decades as a leading political and martial figure in the Arab world, Haj Amin was forced to watch from the sidelines during the creation of the PLO in 1964 and the rise of his spiritual godson, PLO leader Yasser Arafat, in 1968. On July 4, 1974, Haj Amin died of a heart attack in the American hospital at Beirut, Lebanon. He was buried in the Cemetery of the Fallen of the Palestinian Revolution there, with Arafat as a chief mourner. Israel refused him burial in Jerusalem, and thus his mortal remains are still in Lebanon.

Today, Haj Amin is viewed in the Arab world as a symbol of the 1948 defeat and also in the bloody saga of the Holocaust as the man whose Nazi broadcasts shrieked, "Kill the Jews wherever you find them! This pleases God, history and religion." □

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outpost snipe

Continued from page 39

coming in from the west, only three 6-pounders could fire. Each had only 10 rounds left. Initially, the gunners held their fire. Riflemen hidden nearby in their foxholes wondered why the guns remained silent. A few of the infantrymen even considered crawling to a nearby gun and using it themselves, but the heavy machine-gun fire kept them pinned in their hole. Turner, who had recovered a bit, even ordered the maps and codes burned, fearing this might be the end.

Two of the British riflemen, Privates Crimp and Suckling, huddled with their fellow soldiers as a panzer fired its cannon and machine gun at them. Then Crimp saw a gunner crawl from a trench and run over to a gun whose crew was pinned down. The gunner withdrew the round from the weapon's breech, hurried back to his own 6-pounder with machine-gun fire rattling around him, and then loaded and fired his own gun, knocking out the panzer. It was very rough going; the panzers were close enough for their machine-gun ammunition to pierce the gun shields of the 6-pounders.

Another gun commanded by a Sergeant Miles was likewise pinned and Miles himself wounded. Color Sergeant J.E. Swann crawled 30 yards to Miles's gun and took over, operating it singlehandedly until the rest of the crew got forward to help. He knocked out the closest panzer, and the rest of the guns opened fire at 200 yards. Within minutes six more panzers were destroyed. A sergeant named Hine saw two Panzer III tanks lined up one behind the other in his sights. He fired, and the shell blasted completely through the nearest tank and hit the other, 10 yards behind the first. The closer tank was only 100 yards away from Hine's gun. This was enough for the Germans, and this force likewise retreated 800 yards to a depression where it kept firing on the outpost until dusk, when it was seen heading west. The 6-pounders that had beaten off the attack were down to three rounds each.

While the sporadic fire continued, Captain Marten, the senior unwounded officer, received a radio transmission informing him that the battalion would be relieved. Since the codebooks had been burned, they again improvised a code. The brigade commander, Brigadier Bosville, told Marten 2nd Rifle Brigade would be relieved at "dinner time." Marten asked if the meal would be "an early dinner or a late one?" to which Bosville replied "The fashionable time." This meant 9 PM. Unfortunately, the 5th Sussex Regiment, the relief force, went to the wrong location and dug in there, leaving the men at Snipe wondering if they would ever get relief. Finally, at 11 PM Bosville granted Marten permission to withdraw.

The British did their best to collect their casualties, but there was not enough working transport to carry the dead, so they had to be left behind. The wounded were crowded aboard six carriers and three jeeps and sent east. Only a single 6-pounder was taken along, its portee riddled with bullet holes. The rest of the guns had their sights and breech blocks removed and were abandoned. The walking wounded and uninjured had to walk back under fire in a small column. The weary Sergeant Callistan recalled the horrid journey: "We had men with tommy guns leading and we carried the wounded in the center. Before we moved off I did something you may think rather stupid—I went back and kissed my gun. I carried one of our wounded on my back. Freddie—that was his name. He had volunteered to come out here. Been out only a few weeks. He had a wife and four children. He had been wounded trying to help someone else. They got him on the way back—shot him through the head."

The amazing ordeal of Outpost Snipe was retold throughout the British Army. A month later, the battle over, an official inquiry was convened that revisited the battle site to recount the action. It was determined that the men of Outpost Snipe had been responsible for knocking out 52-57 Axis tanks, 15 to 20 of which had been recovered by the Germans. The hulks of 37 armored vehicles still littered the field. Nineteen of these were claimed by 239 Battery. This constituted roughly 10 percent of Rommel's total armored strength at El Alamein, a considerable score for one British battalion.

For their efforts and bravery that day, Lt. Col. Turner was awarded the Victoria Cross, while Sergeant Callistan was recommended for one but received the Distinguished Conduct Medal instead. Callistan would later be commissioned but sadly was killed during the Italian Campaign. Color Sergeant Swann also was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and various additional decorations went to other soldiers.

Rommel himself wrote, "A murderous British fire struck into our ranks and our attack was soon brought to a halt by an immensely powerful antitank defense, mainly from dug-in anti-tank guns." It was a fitting tribute to the dogged perseverance of the soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, Rifle Brigade. □

Christopher Miskimon is a regular contributor to WWII History. *He is an officer in the Colorado National Guard's 157th Regiment.*

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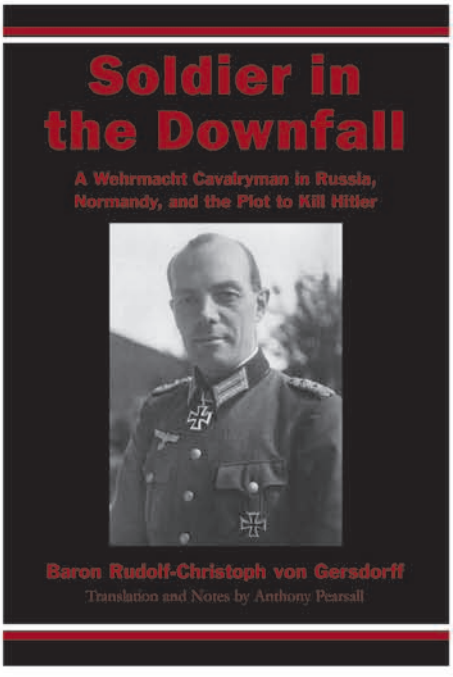

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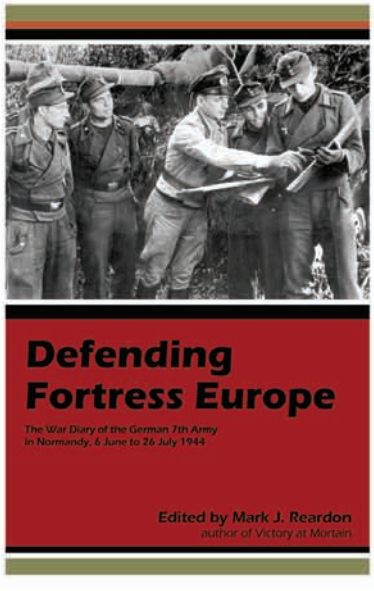

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