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Cover: The first wave of Americans wade ashore under intense fire from German defenders on Omaha Beach, June 6, 1944. See story page 34.

Photo: National Archives

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"How I BEAT My... Acid-Reflux Nightmare!"

"Now, I can eat even the spiciest foods without worry!"

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.

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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

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

of ***AloeCure***®. Then something remarkable happened… NOTHING! Not even the slightest hint of indigestion.

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!

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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

Malaysian searchers locate lost aircraft wreckage.

AN ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS THE MALAYSIA HISTORICAL GROUP IS MAKING a substantial contribution to the continuing effort to document the wreck sites of World War II aircraft in Malaysia, Thailand, and India. In doing so, this dedicated group of searchers also assists in the identification of remains and documents the crash sites through drawings and photographs, bringing closure to families and solving the mysteries that surround the fates of so many lost air crews who flew and died in the Pacific Theater during the war.

During the past 10 years, the organization, which consists of six dedicated individuals, has assisted in the location of at least 30 sites that are known or are believed to be World War II-era crash sites. In the process, more than 40 British and American families have received confirmation of the fate of their loved ones who were casualties of war. According to a recent story from Agence France-Presse, more than 100 British and American aircraft are believed to have crashed in the area frequently explored by the group, while several Japanese wrecks have also been discovered.

The group's spokesman, Shaharom Ahmad, recently told reporter Romen Bose, "What we do is find whichever wrecks are in Malaysia and help identify them so that relatives can get closure after waiting for more than six decades."

In addition to maintaining a website, mhg.mymalaya.org, which provides numerous photographs of wreck sites and other information, the group conducts extensive research that includes the available reports of incidents and interviews with elderly individuals or residents who may have witnessed an actual crash or stumbled across a wreck site. To date, more than a dozen additional British and American crash sites may remain to be explored.

Three years ago, the group reached the site of an American C-47 transport aircraft that had been lost during routine flight operations in the Perak region of Malaysia in November 1945. Although the site had been observed as far back as 1966, it was not until the these military historians showed the initiative to confirm its location that interest developed in an excavation and possible recovery of remains. Thus, the U.S. Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command is planning an expedition to excavate the site in 2013.

A particularly poignant find occurred at the crash site of a British plane. The searchers found pieces of a watch that had fused to the fuselage of the aircraft when it crashed in flames, along with a pair of rings and a dagger. In 2006, the crash site of a U.S.-built Consolidated B-24 Liberator in service with the Royal Air Force was discovered in the Malaysian state of Negeri Sembilan. The plane had been lost during a supply flight in August 1945, and the remains of its crew had been unburied more than 70 years.

The British government refused to acknowledge the discovery until the searchers produced fragments of the plane bearing identifying serial numbers. Subsequently, the government declined to get involved in the recovery of the remains, asserting that the crash site was a war grave and stating that it "does not actively search for remains and discourages unofficial excavations." However, honoring the wishes of family members, the remains are being recovered by the Malaysian searchers with private rather than government funds. Interment in a military cemetery in Malaysia is planned for sometime next year.

With more than 40 weekend expeditions into the jungle behind them, the group has also located a metal knob bearing a serial number and a logo of the Mitsubishi company. Additional research revealed that the part belonged to a Japanese bomber that was lost during a raid on December 8, 1941. The searchers are aware of another crash site, that of a Japanese fighter plane that was shot down in Kedah State and located in 2001. Locals cut up that plane for scrap, while the skeletal remains of the pilot were discarded.

The Japanese government has reportedly expressed little interest in identifying any crash sites or the remains of any of its lost airmen.

Michael E. Haskew

WWII HISTORY

Volume 11 ■ Number 4

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Sometimes I think the people who designed this phone and the rate plans had me in mind. The phone fits easily into my pocket, and flips open to reach from my mouth to my ear. The display is large and backlit, so I can actually see who is calling. With a push of a button I can amplify the volume, and if I don't know a number, I can simply push "0" for a friendly, helpful operator that will look it up and even dial it for me. The Jitterbug also reduces background noise, making the sound loud and clear. There's even a dial tone, so I know the phone is ready to use.

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Dispatches

The Look of Defeat

Dear Editor:

I thought I would take a few minutes to compliment your recent choices for magazine cover photos showing German troops pictured late in the war. Their faces seem haunted, pensive and it seems to me from their expressions that they have resigned themselves to fighting a war already lost and almost certain death. They didn't need Hitler or their generals to spell it out for them ... they had lost and you can see the fear in their eyes. Keep up the great work.

Douglas Elslager
Jupiter, Florida

Battle of Midway

Dear *WWII History*:

While Michael D. Hull's article on Admiral Marc Mitscher (Jan. 2012) was very informative, there was one glaring error that would be difficult for a real historian to make. Mr. Hull states on page 21 that the USS *Hornet* joined the carriers *Yorktown* and *Lexington* of Rear Admiral Raymond A. Spruance's Task Force 16. Unfortunately, the *Lexington* had been sunk at the Battle of the Coral Sea by the time the Battle of Midway was fought. It was the USS *Enterprise* along with *Yorktown*, that the *Hornet* joined.

Also, Mr. Hull insinuates that the *Hornet*'s air groups were party to the sinking of the four Japanese carriers during the battle off Midway Island. This is incorrect. Dauntless dive-bombers from *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* sank all four of the Japanese carriers lost during Midway. *Hornet*'s Wildcat fighters and Dauntless dive-bombers never found the Japanese fleet due to a mistake by the strike leader, Stanhope Ring. For some reason, he took the three squadrons of Air Group 8 some 30 degrees north of the last reported position of the enemy and missed the Japanese altogether.

But the CO of Torpedo Squadron 8, Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron, the bravest of the brave, knew where the Japanese were. He split off from the main strike group against orders from Ring and flew directly to the enemy fleet. Unfortunately, Waldron's navigation was better than Ring's, and he arrived in the vicinity of the Japanese fleet without the fighter protection of his air group. As Mr, Hull correctly stated, all 15 of *Hornet*'s Torpedo Squadron 8 were shot down.

Hornet's only contribution the Battle of Midway was that Waldron's Devastators drew the Japanese combat air patrol down to water level to attack the hapless TBD-1 Devastators of Torpedo 8. This left the air directly above three of the Japanese carriers unprotected. Dauntless dive-bombers from *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* fortuitously arrived at that moment and the rest is history. This is not to say that *Hornet* did not contribute. The sacrifice of Torpedo 8 was the catalyst for what is now referred to as "The Incredible Victory." As a side note, my father served on the USS *Enterprise* later in the war under Admiral Marc Mitscher as a TBM pilot in Night Torpedo Squadron 90.

Joel A. Turpin
Hampton, New Jersey

Third Reich Death Knell

Dear Editor:

In his article "Third Reich Death Knell" (January 2012 issue), David H. Lippman repeats the common myth that Stalin provoked a race between Zhukov's 1st Belurussian Front (1BF) and Koniev's 1st Ukranian Front (1UF), as to who would take Berlin first and raise his Front's flag over the Reichstag cupola. This myth probably originated from Koniev's badmouthing his former bosses in the late 1950s, and was popularized in the writings of Viktor Suvorov. However, available evidence suggests that neither Stalin nor Zhukov had anything to do with this, and the only racer to Berlin was Koniev himself.

First, the Soviet plan for the battle, never mentioned by Lippman, clearly gave both Fronts their goals. Stavka's Directive 11059 ordered 1BF "to take the city of Berlin and no later than by the 12-15th day to reach Elbe," and Directive 11060 ordered 1UF "to destroy the enemy in the area of Cottbus and to the south of Berlin, and no later than by the 10-12th day reach the line Beelitz-Wittenberg and further along the Elbe river to Dresden. Subsequently ... prepare an assault on Leipzig." Though the borderline between the two Fronts was originally only drawn to Lubben, taking Berlin was clearly the task of Zhukov's 1BF, and Koniev's 1UF was aimed into the Dresden-Leipzig area through Cottbus. However, when 1BF slugged through the Seelow Heights, Koniev saw a chance to get to Berlin ahead of Zhukov, and, with Stavka's permission, turned his efforts to the northwest. This was a reasonable move; however, Koniev executed it poorly since, in a rush to do so, he exposed 1UF's left flank to a German counterattack, skillfully executed by four Panzer divisions from Schorner's Army Group near Bautzen. This attack, likely the last German tactical victory of the war, had cost Koniev's troops dearly.

Second, when one of the 1UF armies, 3rd Guards Tank Army (3GTA), crossed into the 1BF line of advance, Zhukov asked Stavka to confirm the borderline between the two Fronts. The reply came back on the evening of 28th in the form of Stavka's Directive 11077, signed by Stalin and Antonov, ordering them "to establish the following borderline between 1BF and 1UF as of 2400 hrs on April 28th: up to Mariendorf as currently is, and further on through Tempelhof-Viktoria-Luise Platz-Savigny [Platz] line, and from there on along the railroad Charlottenburg-Westkreuz-Ruleben [sic].". Thus, Stavka adjusted the original plan to the realities and gave Koniev the south and southwest of Berlin. However, the borderline between the two Fronts was clearly set; the city center and the Reichstag remained the goals of 1BF, and, therefore, no race between the two Fronts was ever provoked from the top of the Soviet chain of command.

To comment on Soviet losses, I have no idea where Lippman picked up the number of about 30,000 KIA at the Seelow Heights. According to Krivosheev's *Rossiya i SSSR v Voinakh XX Veka*, which gives fairly accurate numbers for 1945 Red Army losses based on the unit reports, the "irreplaceable casualties" (that is, KIA+MIA) of 1BF through the whole Berlin offensive were 37,610 men. The numbers for the losses at Seelow are not available separately; however, based on the battle descriptions, we can reasonably assume that 1BF losses were divided roughly equally between the Seelow breakthrough and subsequent fighting in and around Berlin. Therefore, a good guess for the Red Army losses at Seelow would be around 18,000-20,000 KIA. Soviet tank losses were also moderate, by the Eastern Front standards. The tank armies of 1BF suffered the following losses during the whole Berlin offensive: 1GTA lost 232 of its 709 tanks and self-propelled guns (~33%) and 2GTA lost 209 of 667 (~31%). Interestingly, in the whole Berlin offensive Koniev's 1UF suffered somewhat heavier relative losses in men (0.90% daily) as compared to Zhukov's 1BF (0.86% daily), not to mention the third participating Front, Rokossovsky's 2BF, which suffered only 0.55% daily losses. These higher relative losses of 1UF were likely due at least to some extent to Koniev's debacle at Bautzen and to stubborn German resistance near Kummersdorf. Thus, there is no reason to present Koniev as a great alternative to Zhukov as a Front commander. In the end, however, Soviet losses at Seelow were well balanced by German losses when most of the encircled German 9th Army men were slaughtered in their breakthrough.

Lippman's numbers are not accurate; besides the abovementioned loss estimates, Lippman gives Soviet strength in the Berlin offensive as 2.5 million men, while the actual strength of the three participating Fronts, Flot (Navy) units, and the allied Poles, according to Krivosheev, was just about 2.06 million. Lippman's numbers of Berlin defenders are also somewhat inflated (though 10,400 tanks was probably a misprint); see Earl Ziemke's *Stalingrad to Berlin* for more accurate estimates. And instead of telling us again and again about the rape of German women by Red Army soldiers (the readers are probably smart enough to get the idea of what was going on from a single mentioning of such), Lippman could use the space to discuss more interesting topics; for example, the German counterattack at Bautzen, or how Hitler's order to withdraw the 56th Panzer Corps into Berlin helped the encirclement of the 9th Army.

Yuri Khripin
Gaithersburg, Maryland

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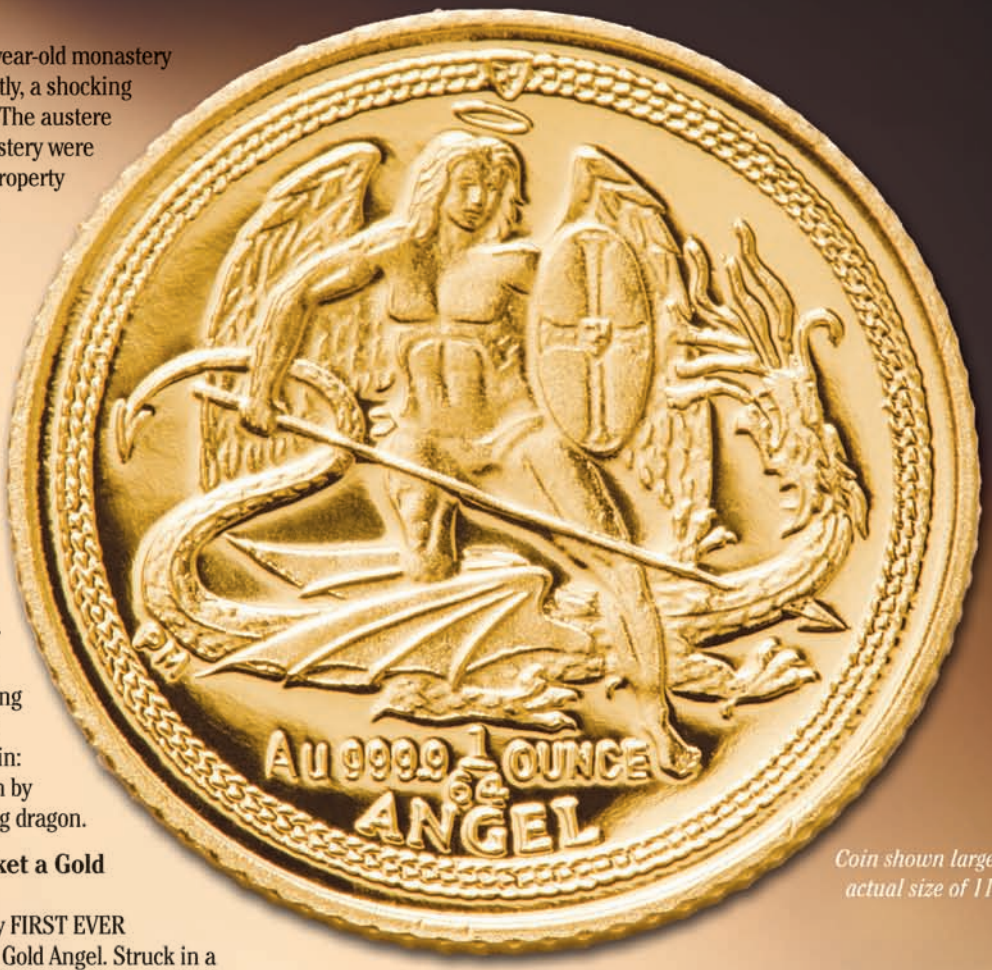
The Mystery of the Gold Angel Hides a Big Secret

During restoration of a 600-year-old monastery in Coventry, England recently, a shocking discovery made headlines. The austere monks who had lived in the monastery were forbidden from owning personal property of any kind. And yet, mysteriously hidden within one of the monk's cells, historians discovered a medieval gold coin.

Why would a poor monk have a gold coin secreted away in his room? The answer to this medieval mystery is revealed in the very name of the coin: The Gold Angel.



Coin shown larger than actual size of 11 mm.

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By Michael D. Hull

Pearl Harbor Heroism

Seaman Doris Miller was an unlikely hero during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

HIS NAME WAS DORIS, BUT HE WAS A POWERFULLY BUILT football fullback, a heavyweight boxer, and the first black American hero of World War II.

He distinguished himself during the Japanese sneak attack against Hawaii on Sunday, December 7, 1941, and gave his life for his country two years later. Poems and songs were written about him, a Navy ship was named in his honor, and he was memorialized at the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor.

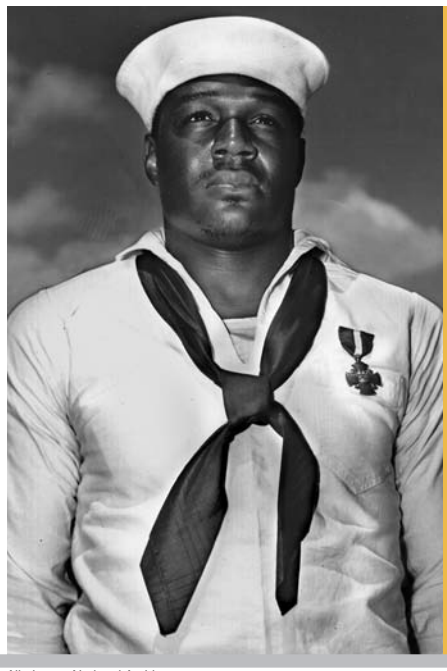
Doris Miller, known as "Dorie" to his shipmates in the U.S. Navy, was a humble seaman from humble origins who became a legend and an inspiration to America's black community during the war. His extraordinary courage on December 7 brought him the Navy Cross, a commendation by the secretary of the Navy, and praise from Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet.

Dorie Miller was born on October 12, 1919, to Conery and Henrietta Miller of Waco, Texas. He had three brothers, one of whom would serve in the Army during World War II. Dorie attended Waco's Moore High School, where he distinguished himself as a battering ram fullback on the football team. When not in school, the barrel-chested young athlete worked on his sharecropper father's farm.

At the age of 19, Dorie decided that he wanted to travel and also earn money to help support his family, so he went to Dallas and enlisted in the Navy as a mess attendant, third class, on September 16, 1939, two weeks after the outbreak of World War II. After undergoing basic training at the Norfolk, Virginia, Naval Station, he was assigned briefly to the USS *Pyro,* an ammunition ship.

On January 2, 1940, Miller was transferred to the Colorado-class battleship USS *West Virginia* (BB-48). Commissioned on December 1, 1923, the 32,000-ton battleship mounted eight 16-inch guns and was regarded as one of the best vessels in the U.S. Fleet. Miller found his athletic prowess in demand aboard the "Big Weevie," which had long emphasized sports activities for morale building among her crew, winning the Iron Man athletic trophy more than any other ship. The young Texan became the ship's heavyweight boxing champion. He was assigned in July 1940 to temporary duty aboard the battleship USS *Nevada* and at the Secondary Battery Gunnery School and returned to the *West Virginia* on August 3.

Early on the balmy morning of December 7, 1941, the battleships, cruisers, destroyers, minesweepers, submarines, and tenders of the U.S. Pacific Fleet lay at anchor, peaceful and unsuspecting, around Ford Island in Pearl Har-



LEFT: Seaman Doris Miller was serving as a mess attendant aboard the battleship on that fateful morning but helped carry his mortally wounded captain to temporary safety and manned a machine gun, firing at the low-flying attackers.

TOP: The battleship USS *West Virginia* settles on an even keel to the bottom of Pearl Harbor after sustaining multiple torpedo hits from Japanese planes on December 7, 1941. Rescuers in a motor launch pull a sailor from the water as smoke billows.

All photos: National Archives

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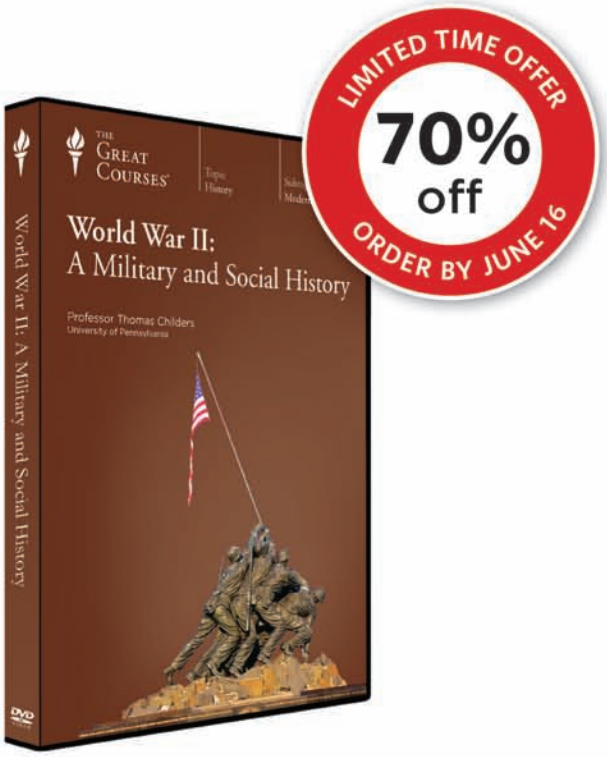

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bor, Hawaii. On Battleship Row, the *West Virginia* was anchored next to the USS *Tennessee* and astern of the USS *Maryland* and USS *Oklahoma*. Sailors stirred from their bunks that morning, headed to the messes for breakfast, and readied themselves for morning colors and Sunday church services.

Aboard the *West Virginia,* mess attendant Dorie Miller was below deck collecting laundry and starting another routine day of menial tasks that were the prescribed functions of black sailors in the segregated U.S. Navy. At 7:55 AM, his chores were abruptly interrupted

ABOVE: During the Pearl Harbor attack, the *West Virginia,* shown in a 1939 photograph, was moored outboard of the battleship USS *Tennessee* and took hits from several aerial torpedoes while the *Tennessee* was shielded from torpedo attack but struck by Japanese bombs. LEFT: Dorie Miller lost his life when the escort carrier *Liscome Bay* was torpedoed in the Gilbert Islands on November 23, 1943. This photo of the *Liscome Bay* was taken two months before and shows the carrier with its decks full of Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bombers and Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo planes.

by the sounds of explosions, guns firing, and seamen shouting, "The Japs are attacking us!"

Without warning and against almost no opposition, the first of two waves of 360 Japanese carrier-borne torpedo bombers, dive bombers, and fighters had burst through the overcast and swept in over the island of Oahu to attack the ships, airfields, and other U.S. military installations. Two years and three months after its outbreak, America had been suddenly and brutally thrust into the global war.

Led by Kate torpedo bombers, almost 200 planes in the first enemy attack wave flew in low and fast over Pearl Harbor, loosing their projectiles on Battleship Row. Three battleships—*California, Oklahoma,* and *West Virginia*—were struck. The second run hit a cruiser and capsized a minelayer, and the third struck another cruiser and the old battleship USS *Utah*. Under eight simultaneous dive bomber assaults, four more battleships—*Nevada, Maryland, Tennessee,* and *Pennsylvania*—caught fire, while the venerable battlewagon USS *Arizona* took hits in her forward magazine and boilers. She blew up with the loss of 1,103 officers and men. Within minutes, Pearl Harbor was an inferno of explosions, fires, and high columns of billowing black smoke.

Meanwhile, Japanese planes bombed and strafed the Ford Island and Kaneohe Naval Air Stations, the Marine Corps air base at Ewa, and the Army Air Forces' Hickam, Wheeler, and Bellows Fields, where bombers and fighters were parked wing-to-wing and almost completely wiped out.

Aboard the *West Virginia,* messman Miller and other sailors scrambled topside to assist on deck when they felt the ship convulse and heard the din of sudden war overhead. The Big Weevie was burning and severely damaged after taking hits from two 1,000-pound bombs and six or seven torpedoes. She listed rapidly, but this was corrected by prompt counterflooding, allowing the battlewagon to settle almost upright on the harbor bottom. Her blackened, battered superstructure remained above water.

On deck, Miller was knocked down by the force of another explosion, but he recovered and assisted fire and rescue parties that had been organized by the ship's well-trained crew. Because of his considerable physical strength, Miller was able to carry several wounded men to safety. Despite frequent enemy dive bombing and strafing, all hands fought the fires. "Their spirit was marvelous," reported the ship's surviving executive officer. "Words fail in attempting to describe the magnificent display of courage, discipline, and devotion to duty of all."

On the *West Virginia*'s exposed battle conning tower, her skipper, Captain Mervyn S. Bennion, doubled up. Steel fragments, probably from an armor-piercing bomb that had just struck the nearby USS *Tennessee,* had torn into his stomach. Lt. Cmdr. T.T. Beattie, the ship's navigator, loosened Bennion's collar and summoned a pharmacist's mate. Under continued strafing and as fires swept toward the bridge, Dorie Miller joined Lieutenant D.C. Johnson, the ship's communications officer, in dragging the almost disemboweled Captain Bennion to cover and attempting to move him from the bridge.

But the skipper, knowing that he was dying, maintained command and was concerned only for his ship and crew. Lying on the deck of his bridge, he ordered that he be left alone, and his life flickered out a few minutes later. Along with Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, killed aboard his flagship, the *Arizona*, Captain Bennion was later awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor.

Vice Admiral Walter S. Anderson, himself a prewar skipper of the *West Virginia,* said later, "He was a bona fide hero. I did not personally know enough to recommend him for the Medal of Honor, but I am glad he got it, because that captain of the *West Virginia* merited it if anybody ever did." Bennion was one of 105 men killed out of the battleship's complement of 1,500.

After the attempt to assist his dying skipper, mess attendant Miller joined Lieutenant F.H. White on the ship's forward guns. Without hesitation, he positioned himself behind a big .50-caliber antiaircraft machine gun. He had never been instructed how to fire a gun, but Miller quickly figured out how the weapon worked and began firing at strafing Japanese planes. "I just grabbed hold of the gun and fired," he reported later. "It wasn't hard. I just pulled the

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the U.S. Navy commander in chief in the Pacific, pins the Navy Cross on Seaman Dorie Miller during a ceremony at Pearl Harbor on May 27, 1942.

trigger, and she worked fine. I had watched the others with these guns…. Those Jap planes were diving pretty close to us."

During a visit to San Francisco in December 1942, the soft-spoken, courteous Miller explained, "I forgot all about the fact that I and other Negroes can be only messmen in the Navy, and are not taught how to man an anti-aircraft gun. Several of the men had lost their lives—including some of the high officers—when the order came for volunteers from below to come on the upper deck and help fight the Japanese. Without knowing how I did it, it must have been God's strength and mother's blessing, I ran up … and I started to fire the big guns. I actually downed four Japanese bombers." Some witnesses said that Miller may have actually shot down five aircraft, although the actual extent of any damage inflicted on the Japanese is unknown.

Dorie fired unflinchingly at the enemy raiders for about 15 minutes before running out of ammunition. Then he was ordered to leave the crippled ship. After helping to rescue more shipmates, he dived into the harbor and swam to safety ashore. Dorie had to swim part of the way underwater, beneath burning oil leaking

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from the *Arizona* and other nearby ships.

In the wake of the disaster at Pearl Harbor, the press and stunned Americans searched for heroes as compensation and morale builders. The Navy obliged, and newspapers carried stories about the heroism of men like Admirals Bennion and Kidd and Chief Watertender Peter Tomich, who sacrificed himself in the boiler room of the capsizing battleship *Utah* so that his crew could escape. But the acts of bravery at Pearl Harbor were all attributed to whites, except for one newspaper story about an unnamed "Negro mess attendant." The "Jim Crow" Navy of the time was not ready for a black poster boy.

When America found itself suddenly at war on December 7, most blacks were ready to lend support, despite their second-class citizenship. Less than 24 hours after the Pearl Harbor attack, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People declared, "Though 13 million American Negroes have more often than not been denied democracy, they are American citizens and will, as in every war, give unqualified support to the protection of their country. At the same time, we shall not abate one iota of our struggle for full citizenship rights here in the United States. We will fight, but we demand the right to fight as equals in every branch of military, naval, and aviation service."

Dorie Miller's heroism went unnoticed for more than three months, when his identity was announced by Lawrence Reddick, director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York. Suspecting an intentional oversight by the Navy, he wrote to the Navy Department and asked if Miller's name could be released so that it could be added to his center's "honor roll of race relations." The Navy relented, and Reddick was able to publicly announce on March 12, 1942, the acts of America's first black World War II hero.

Led by the radical *Militant,* the *Chicago Defender,* and other black newspapers, the press ran stories about the humble messman who had risked his life to save a white officer. Some newspapers referred to him as "Dorie Miller, the first Negro hero," and America's non-white community was quick to embrace him as a model, along with world heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis, track star Jesse Owens, and singer-actor Paul Robeson. The black newspapers focused unceasingly on Miller's exploits, and civil rights groups demanded that he be awarded the Medal of Honor. He would have been the first black to gain the nation's highest decoration in the two world wars. Meanwhile, the Navy now regarded Dorie Miller as acceptable for recruitment posters.

Paul V. McNutt, chairman of the War Manpower Commission, shakes hands with Mrs. Connery Miller, mother of Dorie Miller. Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., looks on during a rally of the Negro Labor Victory Committee held in Harlem.

Buttons bearing his image were sold in black communities, and folk songs were composed about him. One fanciful ballad told of how Dorie was "peeling sweet potatoes when the guns began to roar," and how he grabbed a gun when he saw his captain "lying wounded on the floor." Another rough-hewn ditty went thus:

In nineteen hundred and forty-one
Colored mess boy manned the gun
Although he had never been trained
Had the nerves ever seen
God willing and mother wit
Gon' be great Dorie Miller yet
Grabbed a gun and took dead aim
Japanese bombers into fiery flame
He was aiming the Japs to fight
Fought at the poles to make things right
Fight on Dorie Miller I know you tried
Did your best for the side ….
I love Dorie Miller cause he's my race.

At a "Unity for Victory" rally of 6,000 people in Harlem in June 1942, Dorie's mother, Henrietta Miller, said, "Some say we colored people have nothing to fight for. We all have something to fight for. We have freedom to fight for. But we can't fight this war by ourselves. We've got to put Jesus into it, for He has never lost a battle."

Her son, meanwhile, was assigned to the 9,950-ton heavy cruiser USS *Indianapolis* on December 13, 1941, and promoted to mess attendant, second class and first class, and then ship's cook, third class. He served aboard the *Indianapolis* for 17 months.

After being belatedly commended by Navy Secretary Frank Knox on April 1, 1942, the proudest moment in Dorie Miller's life came on Wednesday, May 27. In Pearl Harbor, not far from where salvage work was proceeding on the hulk of the *West Virginia,* he stood on the windswept flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* to be decorated along with several other heroes of the opening battles of the war.

As he pinned the Navy Cross on Miller's chest, Admiral Nimitz declared, "This marks the first time in this conflict that such high tribute has been made in the Pacific Fleet to a member of his race, and I'm sure that the future will see others similarly honored for brave acts." Miller would also be awarded the Purple Heart, the American Defense Service Medal with fleet clasp, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal. The War Department later sent the young hero on a national tour to promote enlistments.

Miller completed his 17 months of duty aboard the cruiser *Indianapolis* when she returned to the Puget Sound Navy Yard in Bremerton, Washington, on May 15, 1943. A few weeks later, he was assigned to his fifth ship, the brand new escort carrier USS *Liscome Bay* (CVE-56). One of the Casablanca-class "jeep carriers" being mass-produced in the Henry J. Kaiser shipyards, the 14,000-ton, thin-skinned flattop had been launched on April 19, 1943,

and commissioned on August 7.

Dorie Miller was aboard when the *Liscome Bay* headed for her first operation in the western Pacific war zone. Her skipper was Captain Irving D. Wiltsie, and she flew the flag of Rear Admiral Henry M. Mullinix, the commander of Task Group 52.3. Comprising the escort carriers *Liscome Bay, Corregidor,* and *Coral Sea,* with a total of 48 Grumman FM-1 Wildcat fighters and 36 Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo bombers, the group was a component of Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance's U.S. Fifth Fleet.

Admiral Mullinix's force was assigned an important role, along with other carrier groups, in a major American offensive, Operation Galvanic, in the Gilbert Islands, 2,300 miles from Pearl Harbor. The escort carriers' primary function was to protect attack transports when Tarawa and Makin Atolls were invaded on November 20, 1943, by Maj. Gen. Julian C. Smith's 2nd Marine Division and Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith's 27th Infantry Division, respectively. Planes from the *Liscome Bay* and her sister flattops shielded the transport ships during the landings and then flew many sorties in support of the troops ashore. The islands were taken after three days of bitter fighting and heavy losses for the Marines.

Admiral Mullinix's three jeep carriers fought gallantly in the Gilberts during their first action. They were three hectic days and nights for Dorie Miller, his shipmates, and the *Liscome Bay* squadron (VC-39), and they expected that November 24 would bring more of the same. But time was running out because the enemy was closer than anyone realized.

During the night of November 23, a Japanese Mitsubishi G4M Betty bomber dropped flares to illuminate the American flattops for an aerial torpedo attack. By coincidence, a newly arrived enemy submarine, the *I-175,* was stalking the CVEs, and the flares gave her a clear view of the *Liscome Bay,* then cruising near Butaritari Island. Aboard the flattop on November 24, flight quarters was sounded at 4:50 AM and general quarters at 5:05 AM. Her pilots and air crewmen began to climb into their planes.

Five minutes later, Lt. Cmdr. Sunao Tabata's submarine took advantage of a gap left by two escorting destroyers, USS *Hull* and USS *Franks,* which had been detached, and loosed a spread of torpedoes at the *Liscome Bay.* One of them struck the flattop's starboard side between the forward and after engine rooms. Two violent explosions rocked the carrier, and a column of bright orange flame rose 1,000 feet. Fragments of the ship and airplanes were hurled into the air, and debris rained on other ships as far as 5,000 yards away.

The flattop had been struck in the worst possible spot, the room where her bombs and torpedo warheads were stowed. The after portion of the ship was ablaze, and half of her had virtually disintegrated. More explosions shook the flattop, and she continued to burn furiously.

"The entire ship seemed to explode," reported Ensign D.D. Creech aboard the USS *Coral Sea,* "and the interior of the ship glowed with flame like a furnace."

Twenty-three minutes after the first hit, the *Liscome Bay* sank stern first. She was the first of six U.S. Navy escort carriers to be sunk in the war. Her loss stunned the Navy.

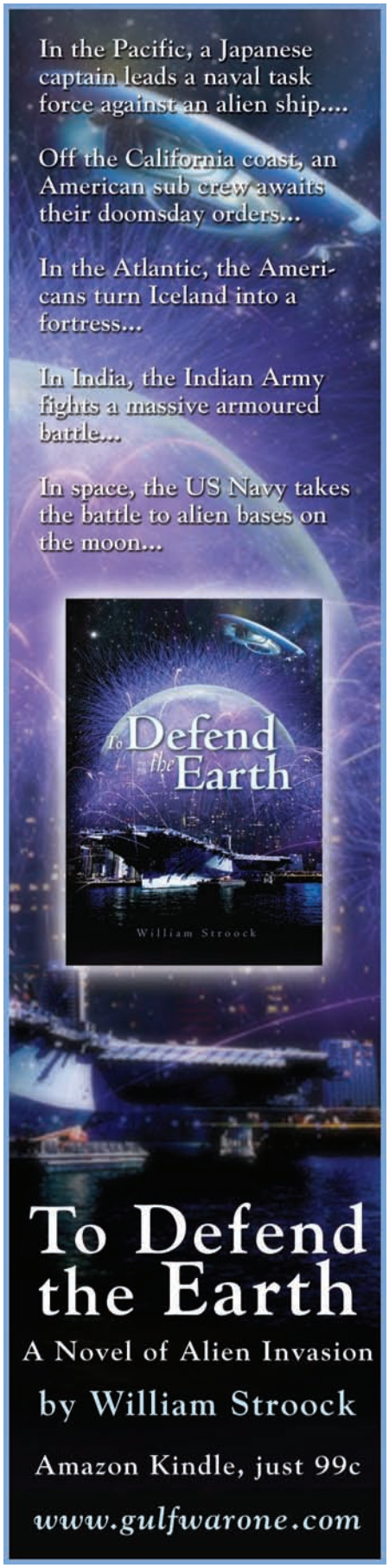
Only 55 officers and 217 sailors were rescued by destroyers. A Navy report of the loss quoted witnesses as saying, "It was a miracle that anyone managed to escape such a roaring inferno." Among the 644 men who went down with the *Liscome Bay* were Admiral Mullinix, Captain Wiltsie, and Dorie Miller. The quiet-spoken, humble Navy Cross winner was listed as missing after the sinking, and he was not officially presumed dead until November 25, 1944.

Miller's death was a big shock for the black community, which by then had become increasingly active in the war effort thanks largely to the efforts of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and black labor leader A. Philip Randolph. The messman's heroism on the USS *West Virginia* inspired blacks in their struggle for dignity and the right to serve on equal terms in the segregated armed forces. As Willie Wright, a disc jockey in New Haven, Connecticut, said later, "I used to see pictures of Miller in the church I attended as a youngster, and I wanted to learn more about him."

Remembering the sacrifice of Dorie Miller, increasing numbers of black men and women flocked to work in aircraft factories, munitions plants, and shipyards. One million blacks, including 600,000 women, toiled in defense plants during the war.

The burly, humble Navy Cross winner who had led the way for American blacks to take their place in the Allied struggle against tyranny was remembered. On June 30, 1973, the Navy commissioned a Knox-class frigate named the USS *Miller,* and a memorial plaque was dedicated by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in the Miller Family Park at Pearl Harbor on October 11, 1991. □

Frequent contributor Michael D. Hull has published articles on a variety of World War II topics. He resides in Enfield, Connecticut.



By Greg Wagman

Time & Life Pictures / Getty Images

The Turkish Truth

That Winston Churchill tried to entice Turkey into the war is common knowledge. His secret motivation for doing so is much less well known.

MAYBE THE TURKS WERE JUST BAD AT PICKING THE WINNING SIDE. IN WORLD War I the Central Powers were defeated by the Allies, so in October 1939 they switched to ally with Britain and France. Four days after the fall of Paris, Turkish President Ismet Inönü suspected his country might be on the wrong side yet again. To rectify the situation, he signed the German-Turkish Treaty of Friendship, setting the terms for Turkey's indefinite neutrality.

While the major world powers mauled each other for five years, Inönü tactfully resisted the invitations of both sides to enter the conflict. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill took a particularly aggressive interest in luring Turkey to the Allied camp. Why did Churchill exhaust so much diplomatic and economic effort on the Turks? After the war had ended, the prime minister conjured myriad reasons for wanting Turkey's help, but declassified War Cabinet documents tell a different story. The truth Churchill strove to bury was that he needed Turkey's support, either directly or indirectly, for a planned invasion of the Balkans.

At first glance, Ismet Inönü might not appear as the shrewdest, most clever leader to serve during World War II. Those who met him would describe the president of Turkey as a small, wiry man with a soft voice. For a man his size, he had large shoes to fill. The first president of the young Turkish Republic, the revered Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, died just 10 months before the outbreak of World War II. His death left Ismet Inönü, Atatürk's chief lieutenant, to lead the fledgling republic in a time of international uncertainty.

Although no one could have foreseen the scope of the looming war, Inönü was a sound choice for president. He spoke German, English, and French and had served in the Turkish military for 17 years, rising from lieutenant to general. As a successful commander, he was elevated to War Ministry adviser and then prime minister in 1923. It was June 11, 1940, when Ismet Inönü finally found himself president. His experience told him that the Turkish military was in no condition for serious combat, and this was most likely the primary motivation for Turkey's withdrawal into neutrality. As soon as Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, Inönü consistently maintained that Germany would never win the war. It was more for pragmatic purposes that he steadfastly kept Turkey a neutral party.

Not long after Turkey declared neutrality, both the Axis and Allied camps made overtures to lure the Turks to their respective sides. From the beginning, Winston Churchill spearheaded the Allied effort to buy Turkey's loyalty. As early as the fall of 1941, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull reassured British Ambassador Lord Halifax that the British would be allowed to take the lead in negotiating with Ankara. Allied shipments of war matériel to Turkey began immediately, but Churchill strictly controlled the flow of equipment to ensure it would only be enough for defensive purposes. If German military fortunes appeared to wane, Churchill foresaw increased aid to the Turks as the best way to encourage them into the Allied camp.

In January 1943, Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt met at Casablanca and outlined the future of Allied grand strategy. American and British staffs clashed throughout the week, but it was the British "Mediterranean

National Archives

ABOVE: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (left) and Turkish President Ismet Inönü confer during talks in the Turkish city of Adana. TOP: Turkish soldiers of the 172nd Infantry Regiment man a machine gun during training exercises in 1940. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill attempted to coax the Turks into World War II on the Allied side.

SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE

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by General Rudolf-Christoph Freiherr von Gersdorff; translation by Anthony Pearsall

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On 21 March 1943, Adolf Hitler is scheduled to attend the Heroes' Memorial Ceremony at the Berlin Arsenal and then tour the exhibition of captured Soviet weapons. Gersdorff is to be in the party accompanying Hitler—Gersdorff's time to act has come.

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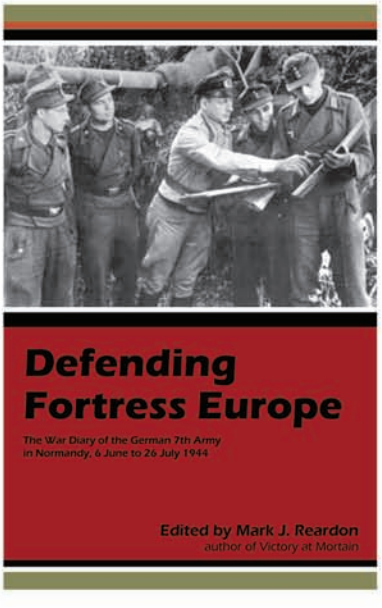

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ABOVE: U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (left), Turkish President Ismet Inönü (center), and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (right) pose for photographers during a 1943 conference during which they discussed matters of mutual importance.
RIGHT: When a controversial memorandum fell into U.S. hands, Lord Halifax (right) was left to explain to the Americans that the content did not represent official British policy with relation to Turkey.

strategy" that carried the day. The British vision called for an invasion of Italy supported by more aggressive attempts to draw Turkey into the war. Churchill suggested that this might best be accomplished by a personal meeting with the Turkish leadership on Turkish soil.

That meeting took place at Adana, Turkey, over the last two days of January 1943. On the first day of the meeting, Marshal Fevzi Cakmak, the Turkish chief of the General Staff, outlined the necessary equipment for his military to be combat-ready. The enormous quantities of equipment included 2,300 tanks, 2,600 guns, and 120,000 tons of aviation fuel. Cakmak also requested trucks, other motor transport, and locomotives complete with coal. As the stunned British delegation took notes, Marshal Cakmak chided the British for not filling his standing request for 500 fighter planes.

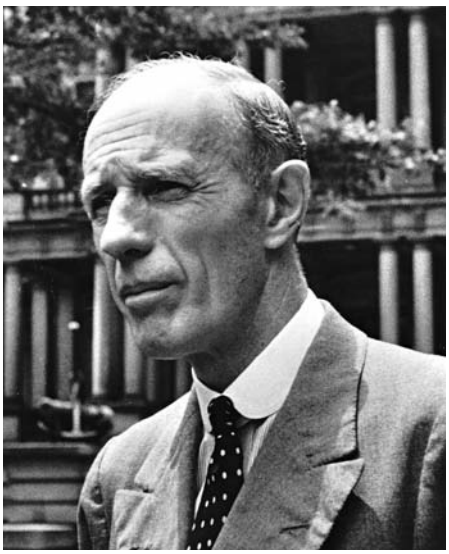
In his meeting with President Inönü, Churchill agreed to increase Allied supplies to Turkey. In return, Inönü promised nothing more than to reconsider Turkish neutrality. When Churchill inquired about the possibility of Allied air bases in Turkey, Inönü again made no assurances. As long as Axis forces were positioned in Bulgaria, they could threaten Istanbul, the economic center of Turkey. Until this threat was removed or more military assistance was received, the Turks would remain neutral. Remarkably, two days after the Adana Conference Churchill cabled President Roosevelt to report that his visit to Turkey was a "great success." Unbeknownst to his American allies, Churchill had a very good and very secretive reason to expend so much diplomatic and economic effort to draw Turkey into the war.

Even as Allied war planners were polishing final details for their invasion of Sicily, British planners were plotting the next move. At Casablanca the Western Allies had agreed to capture Sicily, but the strategic debate was so contentious that no further targets could be agreed upon. No doubt, American Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall was hoping that after the fall of Sicily Allied attention would turn back toward the liberation of France. But as early as Christmas 1942, a month before Casablanca, the British War Cabinet was drafting other plans.

In early December 1942, the War Cabinet printed a secret report titled "Offensive Strategy in the Mediterranean," which concluded that after successful operations in Italy, "our next thrust should be directed against the Balkans." Less than a week after issuing the report, the British Joint Planning Staff ordered its Future Planning Section to "examine and report" on the possibility of a Balkan invasion.

Churchill kept close tabs on the reports coming from his War Cabinet. From the beginning he was fully supportive of future operations in the Balkans. During his meeting with President Inönü at Adana, Churchill handed his Turkish counterpart a note called "Morning Thoughts." The notes hinted that Inönü should face "the possibility of Turkey becoming a full belligerent…." A copy of Churchill's "Morning Thoughts" filtered back to Washington, alarming Roosevelt and American military planners. The British ambassador, Lord Halifax, tactfully explained to Roosevelt that the memo only represented Churchill's private opinions and was not written with the consent of the War Cabinet.

With access to declassified War Cabinet documents, it is safe to say that Lord Halifax may not have been entirely forthcoming. By the time Churchill's "Morning Thoughts" were written, the prime minister would have already had access to War Cabinet directives calling for the preliminary planning for an invasion along the Adriatic coast of the Balkans. Further planning kicked into high gear after the successful con-



quest of Sicily and the follow-up invasion of the Italian mainland. The Americans were not made privy to this planning process.

With U.S. and British forces slugging through the mountains of Italy, Churchill's attention turned toward the Aegean islands. Some historians have suggested that this was just another case of the prime minister's fertile strategic imagination getting the best of him. But was this really the case, or did Churchill have something else on his mind when he envisioned the capture of the Aegean islands? What we know for certain is that Churchill and Roosevelt exchanged a series of cables discussing the capture of Rhodes and other German-garrisoned islands in the Aegean Sea.

Despite the prime minister's persistent and increasingly blunt messages, Roosevelt steadfastly refused to divert any forces from the campaign raging in Italy. Perhaps when Churchill

was pleading for operations in the Aegean he was recalling a War Cabinet report from December 5, 1942. The report recommended an attack into the Balkans but cautioned that it would not be possible "unless either Turkey comes into the war or Italy goes out of it."

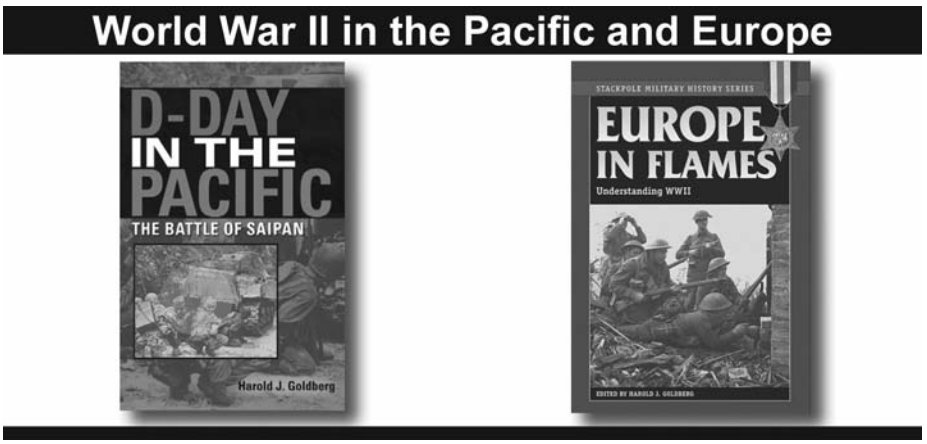
By October 1943, just when Churchill and Roosevelt were arguing over operations in the Aegean, American war planners were growing ever more suspicious that the British were scheming for a Balkan invasion. In fact, on October 8, 1943, Roosevelt hinted at this when he cabled Churchill. "As I see it, it is not merely the capture of Rhodes but it must mean the necessity and it must be apparent to the Germans, that we intend to go further.... Strategically, if we get the Aegean Islands, I ask myself where do we go from there...?"

Churchill frantically cabled back reassuring messages, promising Roosevelt that he was not asking for a full invasion but only for commando operations. It was too little, too late. The damage had already been done. Roosevelt and his military advisers felt they had sniffed out Churchill's intentions, but they would have been even more alarmed had they known just how evolved the British invasion plan had become.

Churchill may have been telling Roosevelt that he did not wish for a land invasion, but back in London the Joint Planning Committee had been refining an invasion plan since 1942. In May 1943, they completed a preliminary investigation of an invasion along the coast of Yugoslavia, but the only possible land bases from which the invasion could be launched were in Turkey. Launching an attack from across the Bosporus, British forces would sweep down to liberate Greece and then move north. Without the necessary Turkish support, this plan was temporarily set aside.

By the fall of 1943, however, the Allied advance in Italy opened up ports across the heel of the Italian boot. Invasion plans for Yugoslavia were dusted off and again revised. On November 8, 1943, the War Cabinet unveiled its most detailed set of plans to establish a bridgehead in Albania, titled "Adriatic Bridgehead." This time, the attack would not come from across the Bosporus, but from across the Adriatic Sea. The primary goal of the invasion was to topple the already unstable pro-German government in Bulgaria and then encourage a domino effect across the Balkans.

The most pressing concern was to locate a suitable site for the bridgehead. Beaches along the coast of Yugoslavia were not deemed suitable for a large enough force, but Durazzo Bay in Albania could handle roughly 2,000 tons of shipping per day. More importantly, the Durazzo



beachhead provided access to much needed airfields. There was a landing ground next to the bay, and larger airfields at Tirana and Valona would be within striking distance. Until these airfields were operational, fighter cover from Foggia in Italy was deemed sufficient.

There was another key advantage to picking Albania over Yugoslavia. The report concluded, "The nature of the country and communications [in Yugoslavia] would make the German task of sealing off the bridgehead easier than in Albania." Furthermore, a bridgehead in Albania would be better positioned to threaten the Bulgars or to move south to liberate the Greeks. In Yugoslavia, any landing force would have to rely on help from the partisans, who were of an unproven quality.

The tactical details of the operation called for two divisions to assault in the first wave. The northernmost division would land north of the Tirana road junction and secure the port and landing ground at Durazzo. The second division, landing south of the road, would immediately strike inland to capture Tirana. Once the beachhead was secure, a third division and the 1st Special Service Force were both earmarked for support. Naval and air support were to be made available from Italy.

The British Joint Planning Committee report acknowledged that the necessary landing craft for the operation would have to be drawn from Operation Overlord, possibly delaying the invasion of Normandy for up to three months. The Americans were bound to dislike any further delays.

Despite the concerns of the War Cabinet, a rich bounty of tempting prizes seemed ripe for the picking in the Balkans. First, the British knew that Bulgaria's government was teetering on the verge of switching sides. Axis satellites across the region could fall in a domino effect, knocking out Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, or Croatia. Capture of the Balkans would also stretch German manpower ever thinner and deprive the German war economy of critical resources such as chromite, oil, copper, and bauxite. Chromite ore was of particular concern to the German war effort, since it is essential to steel production. With domestic stocks of chromite ore depleted, Germany now relied solely on two main sources, the Balkans and Turkey.

The United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union all protested Turkey's double game in feeding the enemy war industry. Privately, Turkish diplomats assured the Allies that they were secretly delaying shipments of chromite to the Germans. Whether this was actually true is debatable. What was undoubtedly true was that Turkey profited handsomely from its trade

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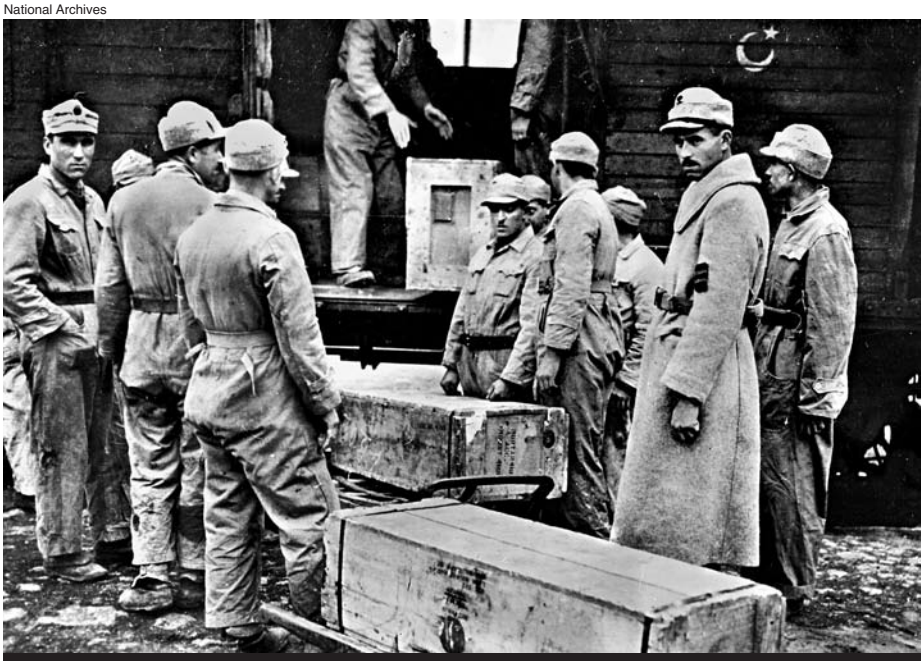

Although Turkey did not officially join the Allies until the spring of 1945, the nation did receive large amounts of war matériel and supplies through Lend Lease. In this photo, Turkish soldiers unload American-made bombs and other ordnance at Port Iskenderun, Turkey.

with Nazi Germany. In return for chromite, the Germans supplied Turkey with more military equipment.

Despite the lack of cooperation from Turkey, Churchill refused to give up on the invasion of the Balkans. Churchill decided to carry his case to Soviet Premier Josef Stalin at the Tehran Conference in November 1943. The week before the meeting he authored a memorandum calling for the British to "seize a port or ports and establish bridgeheads on the Dalmatian coast…." Before the memo could be cabled to Washington, Field Marshal Alan Brooke, chief of the Imperial Staff, advised the prime minister to strike any reference to the Balkans for fear of alarming the Americans before the meeting at Tehran. Churchill allowed the line to be struck but personally resolved to bring up the issue at the conference.

In November 1943, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met face to face for the first time. On the very first day of the Tehran Conference, November 28, Churchill summoned all of his charisma to present Stalin with the Balkan option to ease pressure on the Eastern Front. Roosevelt had not expected the British prime minister to break ranks with him and was at first surprised. Stalin had long since suspected that the British might try to cross the Adriatic, an area Stalin already considered in his sphere of influence.

Now it was Stalin's turn to surprise Churchill. The Soviet dictator adamantly insisted that the Allies stick to their preparations for Overlord along with a diversionary attack through southern France. In the Mediterranean, including in Italy, he wished no offensive action to be taken. Stalin then turned his attention to Turkey, Churchill's pet project, and expressed his opinion that Turkey was a lost cause. Now that the war was beginning to swing against the Axis, he saw no point in continuing to pamper Ankara with attention.

By December 1943, an invasion of the Balkans was no longer a serious option. Without landing craft from Overlord there would be no way to land the amphibious invasion force. And without Turkey's entry into the war, the invasion could not be launched from across the Bosporus. To make matters worse, not only did Churchill face opposition from Stalin and Roosevelt, he now faced internal opposition from Chief of Staff Alan Brooke. Brooke correctly analyzed the report from the War Cabinet and noted that any exploitation of the Adriatic bridgehead would take roughly eight divisions.

With his hopes of further Mediterranean action dashed, Churchill abruptly ended his courtship of Turkey. Military and economic aid was reduced to a trickle, and blunt language began to replace once kind words of encouragement to Ankara. When the Turkish General Staff asked why its requests for equipment had not been fulfilled completely, one British general quipped that it would have clogged Turkey's inadequate rail network for years. The British then demanded to know why Turkey had not yet joined the Allies, to which the Turks

shot back that 26 Axis divisions were in position to attack Istanbul from bases in Bulgaria.

Not long after the conference the British telegraphed a secret note to Washington reporting that the Turks "insist their original demands for equipment can be reduced neither in quantity nor in quality and must be accepted in total before our treaty rights can be discussed." This was the straw that broke the camel's back. In no uncertain terms, U.S. and British diplomats told Turkey to end its trade with Germany immediately. The British ambassador to Ankara was instructed to report that if Turkey did not cooperate with Allied demands aid would be cut off and the Western Allies would remain silent if Stalin made postwar demands on territory around the Dardanelles.

By early 1944, President Inönü must have realized that his double game would have to end. He never doubted that Germany would lose the war but was now faced with the rising power of his Soviet neighbor. On April 14, 1944, the Turkish National Assembly finally suspended commodity exports to Germany. Ankara severed all diplomatic relations with Berlin four months later. The Allies handed Turkey an ultimatum to declare war on Germany by March 1, 1945, if the Turks wanted a seat in the future United Nations. Just days before the ultimatum expired, Turkey finally entered the war on the Allied side. It was merely a token gesture of good faith.

After the success of Operation Overlord was apparent, Churchill did everything in his power to distance himself from the Balkan invasion plans. In his memoirs the former prime minister censored and altered key pieces of evidence to make it appear he had always been a strong proponent of the Normandy invasion. The truth was that Churchill had long expressed private reservations about the invasion of France. He gloomily noted to one adviser in April 1944, "This battle [in Normandy] has been forced upon us by the Russians and by the U.S. military authorities."

In his postwar writing Churchill bitterly maintained that if only Roosevelt had allowed him to capture the Dodecanese islands, Turkey could have been tipped into the war. This was quite unlikely since official British policy was for the islands to be returned to Greece, not Turkey. What Churchill could never admit in his memoirs was that he secretly needed Turkey's support to allow a British invasion of the Balkans. □

Greg Wagman is a real estate investor in the Philadelphia area. He holds a History degree from the University of Notre Dame.

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Destroy Fascist Tanks with Antitank Rifle!

The Soviet PTRD and PTRS antitank rifles were used by the Soviet Army throughout World War II.

EVER SINCE THE TANK APPEARED ON THE BATTLEFIELD DURING WORLD WAR I, armies the world over have sought to field man-portable infantry antitank weapons to give the infantryman a viable defense against the metal monsters. The first attempt was made by the Germans during World War I with the 13.2mm Tank-Gewehr Model 1918, a monster Mauser antitank rifle five and one-half feet long and weighing 40 pounds. While it could indeed penetrate the armor of World War I tanks, recoil was so brutal that few infantrymen wished to fire it more than once.

Between the world wars, for lack of anything better, several armies fielded antitank rifles. Some, such as the Germans and the Poles, opted for small-caliber weapons firing extremely high velocity hardened-core projectiles. At the other end of the scale were the "rifles" chambered for cannon ammunition, such as the Finnish Lahti, Swiss Solothurn, and Japanese Type 97, all of which used 20mm ammunition. Somewhere in the middle fell the British Boys .55-caliber antitank rifle.

A pair of Red Army soldiers fires a PTRD-41 antitank rifle at a German tank somewhere on the Eastern Front in 1943. The Soviets employed the antitank rifle long after other weapons had been developed.

These weapons were actually effective enough in penetrating the armor of tanks from the 1920s and 1930s. In 1939, the antitank rifle was state of the art. By 1941, advances in tank armor and technology had rendered it all but useless. Yet it was not until 1941 that the Soviets had developed and put into production their own antitank rifle.

Oddly, the Red Army had all but ignored this type of weapon until immediately prior to World War II. The first Soviet attempt was a rather feeble effort in "reverse engineering" so common to Soviet technology of the early Communist era. The Sowetskoe PTR Sholoklov 38 was an almost exact copy of the German Model 1918 Mauser. It was chambered for the Soviet 12.7mm heavy machine-gun cartridge, roughly equivalent to the American .50-caliber Browning machine-gun round. The only improvements to the World War I design were the addition of a somewhat effective one-chamber muzzle brake and a two-round magazine in lieu of being merely a single-shot weapon. The weapon was not produced in any real numbers, and it quickly disappeared.

Almost as soon as the sun set on the Shokolov, a new day was dawning for two weapons that were to prove a mainstay for the entirety of World War II.

Invented by Russian arms designer Vassily Degtyarev, who also created successful light 7.62mm machine guns and heavy 12.7mm DShK machine guns still in use today for the Red Army, the PTRD (protivotanko ruzhe systemy Degtyareva) Model 1941 (PTRD-41) antitank rifle appeared that same year.

The PTRD had an almost brutal simplicity that lent itself well to mass production and rugged dependability in the field. It was a single-shot weapon consisting of a four-foot barrel, bipod, pistol grip, and skeletal butt stock. Simple open sights were mounted on the left side of the weapon, as was a cheek pad for the shooter. This kept the shooter's face away from the recoiling parts.

Other than the cheek pads, butt pads, and wooden pistol grip, the entire weapon was constructed of steel. Over six and one-half feet long the weapon, despite its streamlined design, still weighed 38 pounds. A muzzle brake was fitted. While it did help reduce recoil, it also produced a violent muzzle blast that could sometimes reveal the location of the weapon and crew. The Soviet field manual titled *Destroy Fas–*

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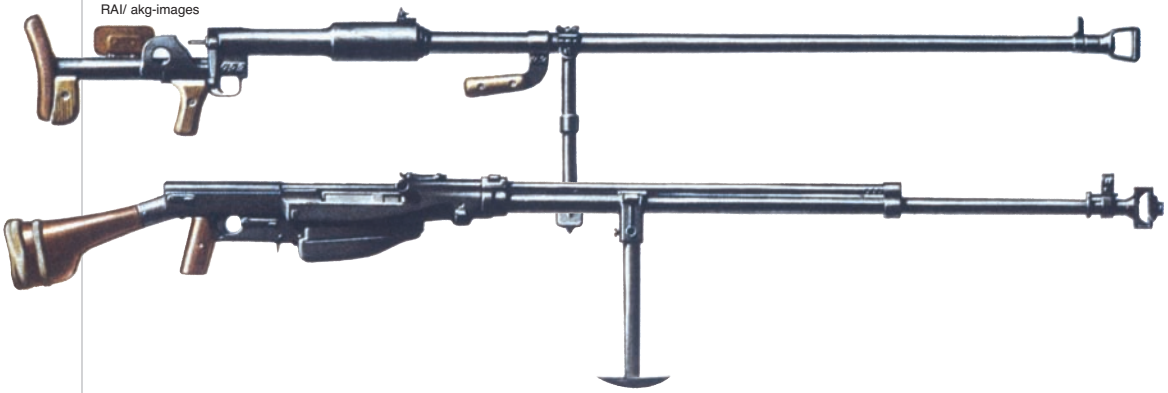

ABOVE: Two American soldiers inspect a PTRD-41 captured from communist troops during the Korean War. Antitank rifles fired large-caliber projectiles and were known for their substantial recoil. LEFT: The two primary Soviet antitank rifles of the World War II era were the PTRD-41 (top) and the PTRS-41 (bottom). The PTRD-41 was a single-shot weapon, while the PTRS-41 was capable of semiautomatic fire.

cist Tanks with the Anti-tank Rifle!, stated: "The modest dimensions, ease of carry and camouflage, and precision and accuracy of firing all impart high combat qualities to the rifle." An atrocious 11-pound trigger pull, however, made accuracy a bit harder to achieve.

The PTRD was served by a two-man crew. Extra ammunition was carried in a canvas pouch with shoulder strap that contained 15 rounds. When fired, the barrel recoiled in its "stock" in a long recoil manner of operation. At the end of the recoil travel, the bolt locked to the rear and the barrel returned to its forward position, ejecting the spent casing and leaving the chamber open for the assistant gunner to insert a fresh round. When he had done so, he usually tapped the firer to let him know the weapon was ready again. A good crew could deliver eight to 10 aimed shots per minute. Tactically, the two-man antitank rifle teams usually worked together in squads of three weapons teams.

The other main Soviet antitank rifle, this one designed by Sergei Simonov who also created the still popular SKS carbine, was the PTRS-41, or protivotanko ruzhe systemy Simonova. This weapon was more complicated than the simple and reliable PTRD. Gas piston-operated, the PTRS ejected the spent case and stripped another round from the magazine semiautomatically when fired. A multiple setting gas regulator, which could be likened to the one on the FN FAL rifle, offered adjustments to ensure sufficient gas power and was vented from the barrel to the piston even when the weapon was dirty or extremely cold. Fitted with a muzzle brake, the gas-operated system also helped to soak up some of the massive recoil, making the PTRS more pleasant to fire than the PTRD.

The PTRS was still a massive hunk of iron. Also having a four-foot barrel, the beast was a total of seven feet long and weighed around 46 pounds. However, the barrel could be removed to make the weapon easier to transport by two men. The weapon was fed by a five-round magazine that was remarkably similar to the stamped steel "enbloc" clip used by the American M1 Garand rifle. It loaded upward into the magazine well. Single rounds could also be loaded and fired manually from the top of the receiver.

The clip feed and semiautomatic action should have been a considerable bonus, as even the big 14.5mm round usually required multiple hits to disable an armored vehicle. However, the PTRS was not nearly as successful as the simpler PTRD. It was prone to jamming if the least bit dirty, and the powerful 14.5mm cartridges tended to rapidly foul the gas port needed to cycle the weapon. It was issued in smaller numbers and saw less use than the PTRD. The PTRS teams worked in the same way the PTRD teams did but could put out many more rounds per minute.

Two main factors kept the Soviet antitank rifles viable in an age when they were disappearing from the battlefield. The first was the unique caliber of the Soviet weapons, the 14.5mm, which made them probably the most effective of the antitank rifles. The second was the great number of the weapons produced.

The cartridge that was eventually settled upon was the flat-based BS-41 (API) Armor Piercing Incendiary, which fired a massive 1,011-grain projectile (the standard .30-caliber rifle bullet of the day was only around 150 grains) with a 597-grain hardened steel or tungsten penetrator and an internal charge of incendiary material. With a muzzle velocity of 3,300 feet per second, it could penetrate some 25mm of armor at 500 yards, 40mm at 100 yards, and the incendiary agent could set fire to flammable materials it contacted.

The 14.5mm proved much more effective than the rounds used in most of the other antitank rifles of the day and is still in use in heavy tank machine guns and light antiaircraft guns today.

Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin has been quoted as having said, "Quantity has a quality all its own." Some 17,000 PTRDs were produced. By the end of the summer of 1943, a million and a half antitank rifles had been cranked out by Soviet state factories. The *American Field Artillery Journal* noted that by the end of 1942, provision of rifle regiments with antitank rifles had increased 416 percent since their adoption in 1941. The weapons stayed in production right up to the end of the war.

Each infantry regiment included an antitank rifle company, with 27 antitank teams. Each infantry battalion also had an antitank rifle pla-

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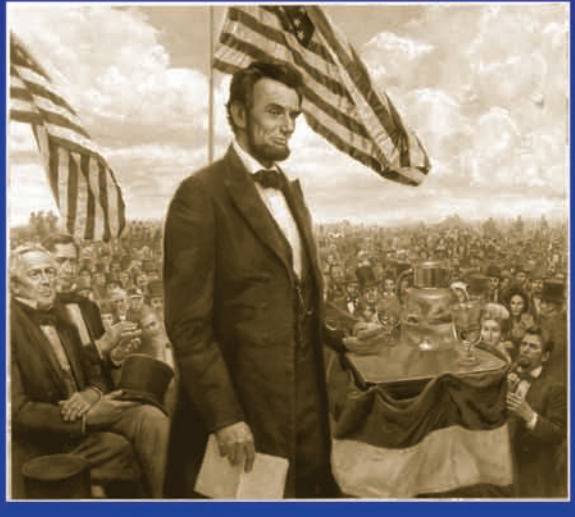

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toon with nine antitank rifles. To reinforce hot spots, such as Kursk, the Soviets threw in independent antitank rifle battalions. Each battalion had three companies of 70 men and 18 to 20 antitank rifles each. Attaching an additional 60 or so antitank rifles to a unit gave it some real extra teeth against enemy armor.

German armored commander Maj. Gen. F. von Mellenthin complained after the war, "The Russian and his antitank weapon are inseparable; sometimes it seemed as if every infantryman carried his own antitank rifle."

With such extensive numbers and so powerful a caliber, the PTR antitank rifles were feared by the Germans. It was primarily due to hits and penetrations from these powerful and numerous antitank rifles that the Wehrmacht increased the Mark IV's armor in the Ausf. B and Ausf. E models of the original Mark IV medium tank. The Ausf. G model added even more armor and Schurzen armor skirting over the sides and tracks.

Despite the reputation of German leviathans such as the Tiger, Panther, and Elefant armored vehicles, the predominant tank in German service throughout the war remained the venerable, dependable Mark IV. In fact, Col. Gen. Heinz Guderian, a legendary German armored commander, even recommended a "quantity over quality" approach, concentrating on mass-producing upgraded Mark IVs rather than expending valuable time, resources and manufacturing capabilities developing new tanks.

The PTR series of weapons with the BS-41 tungsten-cored armor-piercing round was able to penetrate 35 to 40mm of armor at 300 meters; the side armor of the German Mark III and Mark IV tanks was only 30mm at its thickest on the flanks. The addition of another 8mm of steel armor Schurzen, physically separate from the hull armor, in addition to providing extra thickness, caused the 14.5mm round to expend much of its energy and begin to tumble from a nose-first attitude while penetrating this first layer. It also helped to protect the more vulnerable wheels and suspension system.

Some Western historians have nicknamed these skirts "bazooka pants" and attribute their addition to the appearance of shaped-charge weapons such as the American bazooka and British PIAT. The use of Schurzen was undoubtedly quite effective against shaped-charge HEAT (high explosive antitank) rounds as well, but its adoption was due to Soviet antitank rifles. German accounts from both the field and manufacturers lay the adoption of Schurzen squarely at the feet of the endless supply of Soviet antitank rifles.

Guerdian stated, "The 'aprons' were sheets

of armor plating which were hung loose about the flanks and rear end of the Panzer III and Panzer IV and the assault guns; they were intended to deflect or nullify the effect of the Russian infantry's antitank weapons, which could otherwise penetrate the relatively thin, vertical body armor of those types of vehicle."

When the new generation of German armored fighting vehicles appeared, they were more formidable and heavily armored than the ubiquitous Mark IV. The Mark V Panther and Mark VI Tiger had up to 110mm of armor, the Jagdpanther tank destroyer 120mm, and the massive Elefant as much as 200mm. Realistically, the 14.5mm round could do no more than put gouges in such thick steel hides.

Even so, the antitank riflemen engaged the new behemoths like a swarm of flies tormenting a maddened bull. To increase the odds of success, under ideal conditions as many as 10 Soviet antitank rifle teams would engage one platoon of three or four German tanks. Antitank riflemen were also trained to use the accuracy of the weapon to target known weak points of enemy tanks. Particular attention was paid to the vision slots; a blinded tank becomes quite vulnerable.

Decorated Tiger tank commander Otto Carius had a close call with a Soviet antitank rifleman. He said a glancing blow from a Soviet antitank rifle on his cupola's Kinon vision block blinded it and knocked off a chunk that ricocheted inside the turret. Carius believed that a direct hit at a flat angle would have penetrated completely.

National Archives

In this close-up view of a well-worn PTRD-41 carried by communist forces during the Korean War, the pad covering the stock has deteriorated noticeably.

Another Tiger tanker noted that when engaged by multiple Soviet antitank riflemen at close range, most of the tanks' vision blocks had been shot out in a matter of minutes. The commander and gunner searched in vain to locate and engage the riflemen with their cannon and machine guns but, "[The antitank rifle teams] always went to other positions and then disappeared again as quick as lightning."

In the wartime Soviet field manual, the riflemen were advised to execute the very tactics that frustrated the German tankers, such as:

In all cases have secondary firing positions.

Take 5 to 10 shots from one position, then move to another.

If the enemy tank is moving in a direction not favorable to you, quickly and discreetly occupy another position in order to shoot it in the flank or rear.

Maneuvering on the battlefield, guide the tank into the fire of another tank crew.

In July 1942, a Soviet sergeant shrugged and told a Western reporter with rural Russian stoicism and simple eloquence, "What is a tank? I can see it, but it can't see me. My rifle is small and hard to hit, but a tank is big. All you have to do is aim at it."

It was seldom as easy as that. Bearing in mind wartime propaganda, a German report claimed that, in February 1943, one of the vaunted new German Tiger tanks sustained an incredible 227 hits from Soviet antitank rifles and, while the suspension and road wheels had been heavily damaged, the Tiger was able to keep moving and fighting for the duration of the battle.

The Soviets even had tank killer aces. Two

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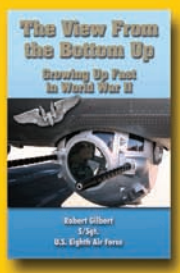

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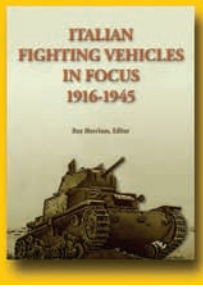

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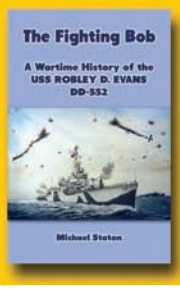

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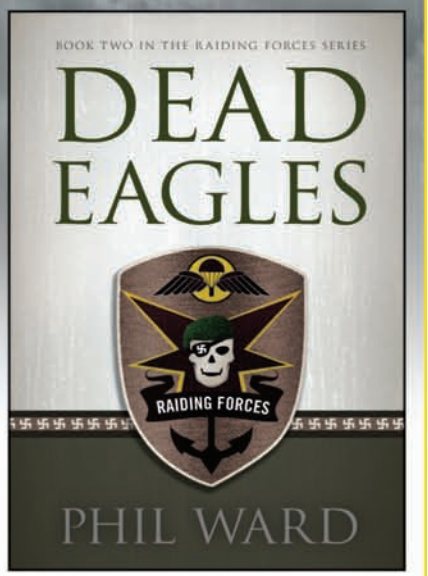

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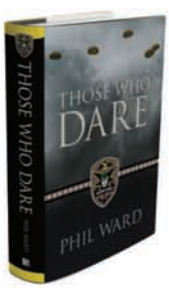

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Following two infantrymen armed with conventional rifles, a two-man PTRD-41 antitank team rushes into combat as smoke from exploding shells billows nearby. By the summer of 1943, more than 1.5 million antitank rifles had been produced in the Soviet Union.

antitank riflemen, Yablonko and Serdyukov, were credited with 22 tank kills between them, and Sergeant Ilya Derevjanko knocked out 10 by himself. Another antitank rifleman named Manenkov of the 95th Rifle Division was made a Hero of the Soviet Union for destroying six German tanks in the vicious street fighting in Stalingrad.

Just as they had female pilots, artillery crews, and snipers, the Soviets also had female antitank teams. These teams consisted of three members instead of the usual two-man teams to better haul the heavy weapons. It was no wonder the extra crew member was needed. With the rifle alone weighing 38 or 46 pounds, the standard 200 rounds of 14.5mm ammunition added over 60 more pounds. To this was added the weight of personal weapons and ammunition, field gear, equipment, bedrolls, rations, and more

As with most other nations' antitank rifles, the Soviet weapons also found use against light armored vehicles, trucks, and infantry positions. The *Soviet Infantry Manual* noted: "If no tanks and armored vehicles are present, on orders of the antitank rifle squad leader the antitank rifles can take under fire enemy machine guns, artillery and the firing slits of bunkers and forts at a range out to 800 meters and aircraft at a range of up to 500 meters."

Private Vassily Kovtun of the 902nd Rifle Regiment was given credit for destroying four tanks, two armored personnel carriers, and two armored cars. The big antitank rifles were also handy for reaching enemy soldiers behind cover in house-to-house street fighting. Antitank rifle ace Ivan Knjazev of the 310th Guards Rifle Regiment was credited in a Soviet report with "67 AFVs, MGs, guns and mortars." Kovtun was also credited with knocking out 20 German machine-gun nests.

When the U.S. Department of the Army, using interviews with German veterans of the Eastern Front, published *Russian Combat Methods in WWII* at the beginning of the Cold War, the report said of the antitank rifle: "It was to be found even where no German tank attacks might be expected…. If the small gun, always excellently camouflaged, was not needed for antitank defense, its flat trajectory and great accuracy were put to good use in infantry combat."

Antitank rifles were also extremely popular weapons to air-drop to Red partisans operating far behind enemy lines to give them a powerful yet portable weapon to use against German supply lines and support units. Rear-area German security forces usually had only light armored cars or tankettes, often captured enemy models, to utilize for patrols and reaction forces. These lightly armored vehicles and supply trucks could be easily defeated by the powerful 14.5mm weapons.

One partisan said of the PTR dropped to his troops, "It was the ideal weapon for partisans. Its accuracy was amazing, and a trained PTR crew could hit the boiler of a railway at 800 meters. This enabled us to ambush German trains in daylight, shooting them up from a safe distance."

Although it was not a dedicated antiaircraft weapon, the PTR was often fired at German planes. The weapon was certainly powerful enough to knock down an aircraft. The 14.5mm round is still used in light antiaircraft cannon to this day. On July 15, 1943, Soviet propagandists credited an antitank rifleman named Denisov with using his PTR to shoot down two "Fascist bombers," and Private Semen Antipkin with destroying eight tanks and one German aircraft.

It should be noted, however, that Soviet doctrine dictated firing every available weapon at

attacking German aircraft. It proved to be effective enough to make ground support missions by the Luftwaffe very unpleasant.

One German pilot reported on Luftwaffe aircraft losses in February 1942: "Every Soviet ground unit attacked by our aviation opens fire on our planes with rifles and other infantry weapons. The probability of hits on a small target by widely distributed ground fire is very great…. Mortar fire is also used. I do not point this out as an example to be followed but to explain that the Soviets fire on aircraft with all weapons used by ground troops."

After World War II, the Soviets exported PTRS-41 antitank rifles as part of their effort to modernize and equip the North Korean Peoples Army. At the beginning of the Korean War, due to the limits of Japan's road and bridge infrastructure, the U.S. Army had only M24 Chaffee light tanks available in theater. Thinner skinned than the German Mark IV, these light tanks proved quite vulnerable to PTRs. When heavier tanks such as the American M26 Pershing and British Centurion began to arrive, the PTR lost much of its utility as an antitank weapon.

Like the Soviets, the North Koreans continued to use PTRs in much the same way as modern antimaterial and special applications rifles. A 1951 U.S. Army intelligence summary ended, "Consequently, these rifles ostensibly find more employment at present against infantry concentrations, machine gun emplacements, and similar targets than as antitank weapons."

The PTR also remained in service with other Soviet Bloc countries for after World War II. Albania kept them in its inventory until the early 1980s. Despite its utility as an antimaterial rifle in Soviet and Korean hands and the development of scoped PTR and other antitank rifles as long-range sniper rifles by military officers in the field, the U.S. Army brass showed absolutely no interest in the concept.

Forty years later, however, a similar antimaterial rifle suddenly came back into vogue and is in great demand by armies around the globe, especially by military snipers and special forces. Today, more than a dozen countries manufacture such weapons, with four of those nations making antimaterial rifles chambered for the 14.5mm round. The current Hungarian-produced Gepard family of antimaterial rifles includes two different 14.5mm models, and the weapons bear a striking resemblance to the Soviet antitank rifles of 1941. □

Author Robert Cashner resides in Philipsburg, Montana. He has previously written for WWII History *on the Boys Anti-Tank Rifle and the Japanese knee mortar.*

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By John Perry

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Hitler addresses legions of SA stormtroopers on July 9, 1933. The Führer worked diligently to perfect his style of public speaking.

Rhetoric's Overlord of Darkness

Adolf Hitler was a master of oratory, mesmerizing crowds with words and gestures.

WHEN NAZI ARCHITECT ALBERT SPEER SURRENDERED IN 1945, HE MADE A strange remark: "So now the end has come. That's good. It was all only a kind of opera anyway."

Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda Josef Goebbels agreed that Hitler turned politics into a grand play. Even the Führer called himself "the greatest actor in Europe," enjoying contact with movie stars while plunging the world into a melodrama of madness. Through years of political propaganda, theatrical trappings, and charismatic speaking, this vagrant beer hall agitator became what biographer Alan Bullock called "the greatest demagogue in history." During his rise to power, Hiter warned that the German people "must not be allowed to find out who I am. They must not know where I came from and who my family is."

The blurred youth of Adolf Hitler set the stage for his meteoric rise to power after World War I. His harsh Austrian father Alois (Schicklgruber was the original family name) earned a middle-class income as chief customs official in Linz, the Austrian town Hitler later wanted to make the Reich's cultural capital. Clara, his indulgent mother who died of cancer, called her thin, pale-faced, irascible boy "moonstruck" because he lived in a dream world.

Childhood friend August Kubizek later wrote that Adolf showed "a gift for oratory from his earliest youth. And he knew it. He liked to talk, and talked without pause. Sometimes when he soared too high in his fantasies I could not help suspecting that all this was nothing but an exercise in oratory."

A teacher in Linz also remembered "Hitler holding duologues with trees stirring in the wind." And in his book *Mein Kampf* jailbird Hitler reminisced that his "oratorical talent was being developed in the form of more or less violent arguments with my schoolmates."

Hitler drifted to Vienna, selling watercolors and painted postcards on the street after twice failing the entrance exam to the Academy of Fine Arts—a slight that, coupled with his mother's death, left unhealed scar tissue. Interestlingy, evidence of anti-Semitic hatred in Hitler seems slim before the end of World War I. Even then the social misfit with "lightning in his eyes" would jump to his feet and rave about Socialists, "not avoiding vulgarisms, in a very impetuous way" while dabbing paint on canvas and waving a T-square in the air. The budding artist sometimes sketched soap advertising posters, one showing black boots with a red background and white letters, colors later part of the Nazi flag. Hitler called these difficult days his "granite foundation."

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He nicknamed the watch *Ritorno* for homecoming, and the rare heirloom is now valued at $42,000 according to *The Complete Guide to Watches*. But to our family, it is just a reminder that nothing is more beautiful than the smile of a healthy returning GI.

The hunter's back

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Hitler addresses an adoring throng during the Reich Party Rally of Victory held in Nuremberg from August 30 to September 3, 1933. Standing behind Hitler is his staunch supporter, Ernst Röhm, leader of the SA Stormtroopers who was murdered the following summer during the Night of the Long Knives.

Vienna planted the seeds for Hitler's perverse political platform through access to cheap printed material. He skimmed books, newspapers, pamphlets, the magazine *Ostara,* and the illustrated monthly *Der Scherer,* generally publications that supported his deluded ideas. Two arcane German writers, Guido von List and Jorg Lanz von Libenfels, helped feed fantasies of a glorious Germanic past full of pageantry and pagan rituals. It is also likely that he read *Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion* and Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *The Foundations of the Twentieth Century.* Hitler also liked the romantic Western cowboy and Indian novels of Karl May.

It is probable that Hitler stayed in Vienna to avoid the draft. He returned to Munich when conditions seemed safe, but the Army summoned him for an examination. Military doctors found the future Army commander "not strong enough for combatant and non-combatant duties," and rejected him as "unfit for military service." Nevertheless, he managed to join the Bavarian Army and served as a regimental dispatch runner. Before the end of World War I, Hitler was gassed and injured. He recovered in a hospital where the psychiatric department labeled him a psychopath with hysterical symptoms. He did receive the Iron Cross twice but never rose above corporal (actually a private) because superiors felt this oddball lacked leadership qualities.

Germany became an economic wasteland after World War I. Out of this rubble rose magicians and messiahs, but the National Workers Party hit the jackpot with Hitler, lashing at communists, capitalists, intellectuals, trusts and monopolies, the French, the Polish and Jews, anything to create mass frenzy through fear.

After the war, Hitler returned to Munich and became involved in the Bavarian Soviet Republic. Film footage shows him marching at a funeral, head high, with an armband the color of the Socialist revolution. He remained in the army and did guard duty at a POW camp and

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On February 1, 1933, Adolf Hitler addresses the German nation over the radio. Hitler had just been named chancellor, and soon he would assume absolute dictatorial power.

train station. The Information Department offered "speaker courses" as training tools for troops. An instructor recalled, "The men seemed spellbound by one of their number who was haranguing them with mounting passion in a strangely guttural voice. I had the peculiar feeling that their excitement derived from him and at the same time they, in turn, were inspiring him."

Officer Karl Mayr heard about Hitler's oratorical skills and enlisted him as an undercover agent. "He was like a tired stray dog looking for a master" and "ready to throw in his lot with anyone who should show him kindness."

Mayr later wrote: "He was totally unconcerned about the German people and their destinies." The beer hall stumper spoke on topics such as "Social and Economic-Political Slogans." Some soldiers found his talks "spirited," one calling him "a born popular speaker." Hitler exclaimed in *Mein Kampf*, "I could speak."

He soon realized this talent paved the road to profit. August Kubizek read about his oratory in the 20s and recalled, "I was very sorry that he had no more been able to follow through with his artistic career than I had.... Now he had to make a living as a speaker at assemblies. Tough job."

Mayr also used Hitler as a stooge to attend meetings of radical political parties in Munich. One group was called the DAP (German Workers Party, later changed to National Socialist German Workers Party, shortened to Nazi). Instead of observing, he shouted down a guest speaker and gained attention, leading the party's founder to remark, "He has a big mouth. We could use him."

Hitler joined the splinter group in 1919 and soon handled party propaganda, seeing himself as a drummer for the great revolution yet rapidly becoming the outspoken party voice. In 1920, for example, he roused crowds at over 30 mass meetings. The next year he spoke to over 6,000 members at Munich's largest hall, and in 1922 an audience of 50,000 at a Nazi rally in Munich. Hitler may have been obscure in most of Germany, but not among diehard Nazis whose number soon reached 55,000. As businessman Kurt G.W. Ludecke recalled, "His words were like a scourge. When he spoke of the disgrace of Germany, I felt ready to spring on any enemy."

During this incubating period, Hitler designed symbols for the Nazi party, most derived from earlier sources. A crooked cross called the swastika, black in a white circle with a blood-red field used as part of the esoteric Thule Society's emblem, appeared for the first time in 1920.

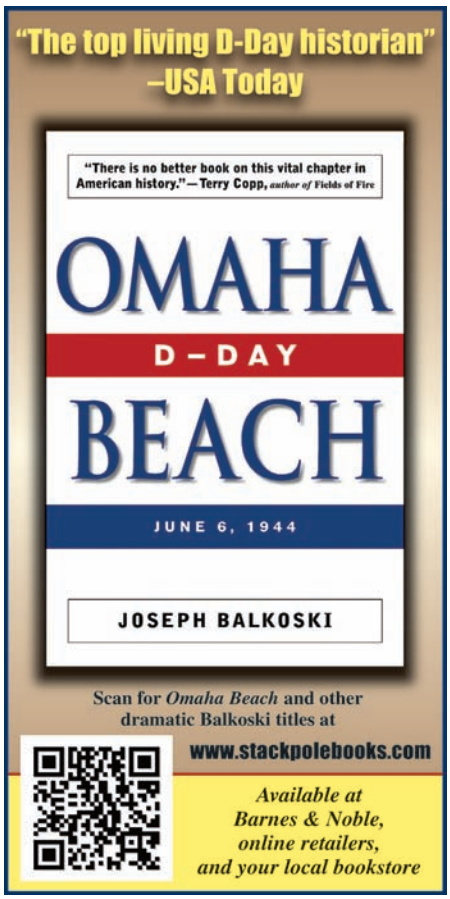
Hypnotist, clairvoyant, and stage magician Erik Jan Hanussen is often overlooked as an influence on Hitler's speaking style. Former Nazi ranking member Otto Strasser told a psychoanalyst in 1942, "Hitler took regular lessons in speaking and in mass psychology from a man named Hanussen, who was also a practicing astrologer and fortune-teller. He was an extremely clever individual who taught Hitler a great deal concerning the importance of staging meetings to obtain the greatest dramatic effect." The Führer learned crowd control through gestures and the use of garish poses from Hanussen, who was later murdered by Nazis.

Pretty soon the unemployed young orator rode around in a Mercedes convertible carrying a rhinoceros whip and wearing a hat and long raincoat. Admirers called this carnival sideshow barker Germany's young messiah and Germany's Mussolini. Yet he still insisted, "I am nothing but a drummer and a rallier." That soon changed.

Many saviors preached to Germans after World War I to gain political power. Papers often reported street fights, plots, and putsches to overthrow the government. On November 8, 1923, several thousand people packed a large Munich beer hall to hear the prime minister of Bavaria speak. Suddenly, the doors flew open and Hitler, flanked by storm troopers, entered with a holstered Browning revolver. He leaped on a beer table, fired a shot into the ceiling, and took politicians hostage. A heated oration ensued. The shaking, sweating Hitler screamed, causing beer drinkers to applaud. One spectator thought the hoarse, unshaven future Führer looked like "a poor little waiter."

Snow and rain began to fall outside. Traffic stopped. Thugs with guns and clubs patrolled side streets. Yet, Hitler failed to take over government buildings, the railway station, and phone exchanges. Former World War I general Erich Ludendorff made the mistake of letting hostages go free on their honor. The ill-conceived putsch petered out by morning when

Continued on page 76



Bedford's Valiant Boys

The small town of Bedford, Virginia, sacrificed many of its sons at Omaha Beach on D-Day. BY DON HAINES

WHEN TWIN BROTHERS ROY AND RAY STEVENS OF BEDFORD, VIRGINIA, joined Company A, First Battalion, 116th Infantry of the 29th Infantry Division in 1938, they could not know that their decision would completely destroy their dream of one day owning a farm together.

Joining the hometown National Guard unit simply meant they would be receiving $30 per month from the U.S. government for playing soldier one night a week and two weeks every summer. Times were hard in the small farming community of Bedford, population 3,000, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal had not yet lifted them out of the Great Depression. It was possible that they could be called to active duty, but they did not think much about it. Besides, if that happened at least they would go together, which is exactly what happened on February 18, 1941, as the Bedford Boys found themselves on a train headed for Fort Meade, Maryland.

The 29th was activated initially for 12 months, but Captain Taylor Fellers, commanding officer of Company A, knew the 12-month period was not set in stone. The world was an increasingly dangerous place, and he thought the Bedford Boys had best be ready for anything. He was determined that Company A would be the equal of any, and he was equally determined that his boys not be ridiculed by the Regular Army guys who generally looked down their noses at National Guardsmen, not seeing them as real soldiers.

Patriotism played a part in Ray Nance joining the guard in 1933, but the tobacco farmer admits that $30 a month was also an enticement. Today, he is quick to say, "That was cash money." Nance had been sent to Richmond for officer training and was a second lieutenant when Company A was activated. He knew all the Bedford Boys and felt keenly his responsibility to them. The 29th was known as the Blue and Gray Division, composed of men from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and soon after his arrival at Fort Meade, Nance would have men he did not know assigned to his platoon. He was determined that these new men would blend well, and he took a personal interest in them also. Nance knew that Taylor Fellers was very strict, and he was equally determined not to let him down.

Master Sergeant John Wilkes, a big bear of a man, had proven himself an able soldier and rose quickly to company first sergeant. Wilkes demanded instant obedience and tolerated no slackers. But underneath, his young wife Bettie knew, he was sensitive and passionate. During his time stateside Bettie vowed to be with John as much as possible, a vow she kept, even traveling to Florida with other wives when the 29th was on maneuvers.

Earl Newcomb had learned to cook in a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp, so when he joined Company A in 1934 it seemed a natural transition to mess sergeant. Earl had made a vow, too. Get hot food to the soldiers of Company A whenever possible.

Allen Huddleston had been a soda jerk at one of two Bedford drug stores before joining Company A, just before they left for Fort Meade. "I knew the draft was coming, so I thought if I was going to war, I'd rather go with people I knew."

National Archives

Life magazine photographer Robert Capa accompanied assault troops during the first wave on Omaha Beach. Capa snapped numerous photos; however, an overeager technician attempted to develop the film too fast and ruined all but of few of the frames. This surviving image of the D-Day landings depicts American soldiers rushing forward through heavy surf while under German fire.

Five of the Bedford Boys, left to right, Ray Nance, Ray Stevens, Roy Stevens, Captain Taylor Fellers, and Sergeant John Wilkes posed for photos during happy times before June 6, 1944. Wilkes was photographed with his wife Bettie. Ray Stevens, Fellers, and Wilkes were among the 19 Bedford Boys killed on D-Day. Nance, the last survivor of the Bedford Boys, died in 2009.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: The Bedford Boys arrived at Fort Meade, Maryland, in February 1940 and underwent arduous training. These soldiers are participating in close-order drill in preparation for deployment to Europe. RIGHT: A two-man bazooka team takes aim at a distant target during training exercises on a British beach in October 1943. The 29th Infantry Division underwent extensive training in preparation for D-Day.

At Fort Meade the Bedford Boys got a taste of what real soldiering was all about. They could soon strip their M1 Garand rifles blindfolded, and those who did not know soon learned about military etiquette or else they would be facing an Article 15, two hours of extra duty. They went on maneuvers twice, to North Carolina and Florida, where they used new radios and motorized vehicles while learning how to attack an enemy. Also at Fort Meade they learned about the advantages of central heating and running water, something most Bedford Boys had never had.

While the longest pass was two days, and Bedford was seven hours away, the boys would find a way to get there and spend some time with family, wives, and girlfriends. If they could not get home, the home folks, especially wives, would find a way to get to them.

By the summer of 1941, boredom began to settle in and grousing began. If there was no war, why did they have to be away from home? What was this Army stuff all about anyway? Come December 7, 1941, they would find out.

On that day, the 29th was in North Carolina, alternately cursing the ice and then the mud. Roy Stevens remembered how Pearl Harbor changed attitudes. "I didn't even know where Pearl Harbor was, but I was mad. We'd slug back a beer and vow to whip 'em good and still be home for Christmas."

On that day, the 12-month enlistments became for the duration.

For the next 10 months the Bedford Boys and their comrades in the 29th trained, and at day's end the conversation would always get around to what part they would play in this war. Not everyone was so eager. Sergeant Earl Parker had just found out his wife was pregnant with their first child. Parker was in no hurry to leave the United States.

An old axiom says that it takes the Army a while to move, but then it moves fast. In September 1942, the 29th found itself on the way to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. Now they knew they were on the way to Europe. While they wanted to slap the Japs, the Germans would have to do. Now the Bedford Boys wondered—how long?

Security was tight at Camp Kilmer, and try as they might the Bedford wives who wanted one last glimpse of their husbands found it very difficult. Somehow, Ray Stevens wrangled a pass to Washington, D.C., to visit his buddy's sister. It was here that Ray for the first time declared that if he went to war he would not come back.

Come September 26, 1942, the men of the 29th were bound for Europe either aboard the *Queen Mary* or the *Queen Elizabeth,* luxury liners in civilian life but now pressed into service as military transports. They were amazed at the Spartan-like existence on these once opulent vessels, but, of course, they were carrying 7,000 men each plus crew.

Company A did not even reach England before the men got a taste of what it was like to see death up close.

The *Queen Mary* was under orders to stop for nothing and could not pick up survivors when she collided with one of the escort ships, the light cruiser HMS *Curacoa,* splitting her completely in two. Allen Huddleston remembered the horror. "I was lying on my bunk when I felt a slight thud. I looked out a porthole, just in time to see half a ship sinking. We didn't even slow down."

The men of the 29th were shocked to see hundreds of sailors drowning with no effort to rescue them. The *Curacoa* incident was hushed up. Officers and men were told to say nothing, and they obeyed.

The 29th Division arrived in England on a cold, rainy day and reached quarters at Tidworth Barracks on October 4, 1942. It was a freezing place heated by two pot-bellied stoves that were extinguished at lights out. Their straw mattresses soon produced a scabies epidemic. After they finished scratching, Company A began 20 months of extensive training, a record unmatched by any other infantry unit.

At this time the 29th commander was Maj. Gen. Leonard Gerow, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute who knew the West Pointers back in Washington had many doubts about the mostly National Guard soldiers in his command. Gerow was adamant about his boys measuring up, and those who could not would be reassigned.

Taylor Fellers understood what Gerow was trying to do: weed out the guys who could not hack it. Lugging around a 100-pound barracks bag was too much for some, not to mention running 100 yards in combat boots in 12 seconds. Nor could they do 35 push-ups, 10 chin-

ups, sprint through an obstacle course, then follow that with deadly accurate fire from a .45-caliber automatic, an M1 rifle, or a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle). They were not less brave, just less physically able. But Roy Stevens points out, "Some were transferred because of exceptional stamina, to Ranger and Airborne units, and some were sent to Officer Candidate School."

The winter of 1942-1943 was the coldest on record in England, but the training never slackened. Twenty-five-mile marches in large overcoats were routine. "You'd have icicles on the outside and be sweating like crazy on the inside," remembered one veteran.

The following spring the Bedford Boys were camping out on the hated moors. "You couldn't stay dry," said Allen Huddleston. "One time we had to set up our pup tents in a driving rain. Captain Fellers kicked a bunch of them down because they were not in perfect alignment. Guys were still in them."

Roy Stevens knew Taylor Fellers better than anyone, especially the good time guy under the tough exterior. "Sometimes, on a long march I'd go up and walk beside him and start talking about the good days back home. I could really get him going. Of course this was always out of earshot."

Even men training for the greatest military venture of all time—and by now there was plenty of talk about what they were being trained for—had to have some play time, and nobody can play like an American GI. They would visit the pub, imbibe too much, be carried to their barracks, and wake up the next morning with a terrible hangover. They vowed never to be so foolish again; however, it was a vow that would last only until the next pub visit.

After a year and a half in England, the men of the 29th were anxious to get on with the job and go home. Once a traveling evangelist had a huge sign on his tent that read: Where will you spend eternity! A GI had scrawled underneath it: In England!

On occasion, too, a GI could wax poetic. About the hated moors they sang:

"I want to go again to the moors,
To follow their winding trails,
To stand again on their lonely slopes
In the cold and the wind and the gales.
Oh, I'll go out on the moors again,
But mind me and mark me well,
I'll carry enough explosives,
To blow the place to hell!"

Not all of the 29th's soldiers were anxious to leave England. There had been some transfers in from the 1st Division who had experienced combat in North Africa. They had had a taste of battle and were not eager to repeat the experience. Bedford Boy Earl Parker, who had just become the father of a beautiful baby girl named Danny, declared he would gladly stay in England if it kept him from assaulting a beach.

In July 1943, a spit-and-polish West Pointer named Charles H. Gerhardt replaced Gerow as commander of the 29th. Along with his fearsome reputation came the information that he had little regard for National Guardsmen. He then shocked everyone by granting three-day passes. It was the lull before the storm.

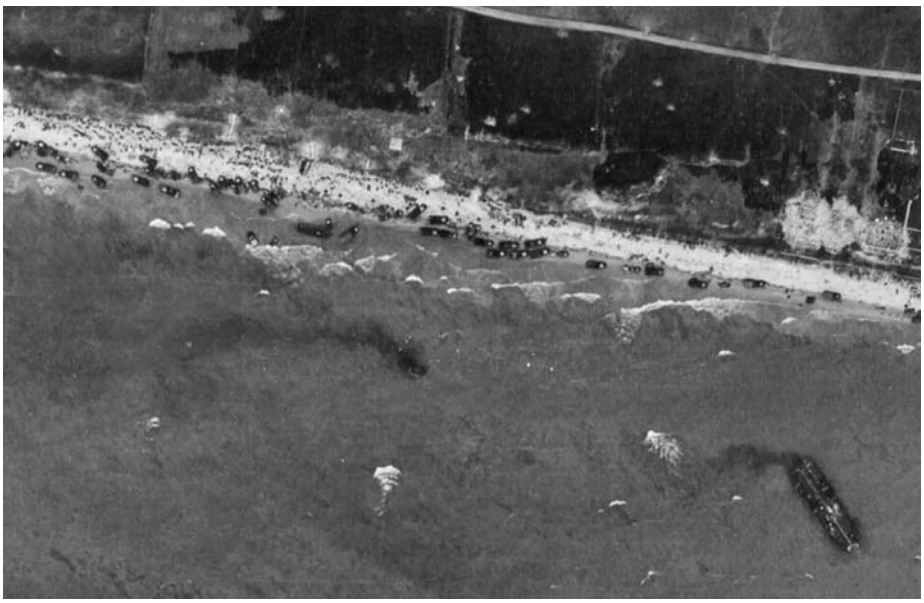
Gerhardt had waited 20 years for this opportunity, and he was not going to blow it. The honeymoon lasted a few weeks, and then Uncle Charley began to crack the whip. He announced that everyone, enlisted and officer alike, would henceforth shave clean every day, in cold water if necessary. All vehicles would be polished and as spotless as uniforms. And—Uncle Charley's biggest hang-up—chin straps would be fastened

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: During training exercises in Britain, American soldiers blast barbedwire entanglements with a Bangalore torpedo, an explosive that was supplied to the troops in tubular sections and assembled on the beach. One soldier is conspicuous with the fuel tanks of his flamethrower visible. BELOW: General Dwight D. Eisenhower (center) addresses soldiers of the 116th Regiment, 29th Division during training exercises on February 4, 1944. Eisenhower is flanked by Major General Charles Gerhardt (left), commander of the 29th Division, and Major General Leonard Gerow (right), commander of the U.S. Army's V Corps.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: Landing craft churn toward Omaha Beach during the opening minutes of D-Day, June 6, 1944, while some soldiers are seen wading through the chest-high surf. BELOW: This aerial image of Omaha Beach on D-Day shows troops of the U.S. 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions struggling to reach cover and eventually advance against German fortifications. The situation on Omaha Beach remained in doubt for some time, and General Omar Bradley, commander of American invasion forces, considered evacuating the troops.



at all times. He also had a problem with familiarity. If someone got too close, he would bark, "That's far enough."

Gerhardt was hated by many, but he did not care. He had already been informed that the 29th would spearhead the greatest land invasion in history, and he would not fail. It was this attitude that undoubtedly brought victory but would identify Uncle Charley as the general with three divisions, one in the field, one in the hospital, and one in the cemetery.

To give his men the feeling that they were special, he came up with an inspiring battle cry, "Twenty Nine, Let's Go!" Before World War II was over, other units who had tired of Gerhardt's battle cry would reply, "Twenty Nine Go Ahead!"

In September 1943, Taylor Fellers told Ray Nance that Company A would probably be chosen as part of a spearhead that would assault the coast of France. Everything was hush-hush, but most caught on as soon as they began training to land on heavily defended beaches. The troops got a little nervous when everyone from Uncle Charley on down had to take swimming lessons, but not everyone learned how to swim.

The closer Fellers got to D-Day, the less confident he became. He listened with doubting ears as the planners said the landing would be a snap. Heavy bombers would take out the enemy pillboxes and in so doing would create ready-made foxholes on the beach. Demolition experts would destroy all of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's carefully placed mines and other defenses. The battleship USS *Texas* would obliterate whatever the bombers missed, and Sherman tanks adorned with special flotation devices would hit the beach with the infantry and give covering fire.

Fellers listened and doubted even more. It would take a minor miracle for everything to go as planned. At one meeting, though only a captain, he spoke up. "Sir, I could take one BAR and hold that beach." He got no reply. As he and Ray Nance left the meeting, Fellers said, "We'll all be killed, Ray."

The 116th Infantry Regiment, of which Company A was a part, would be assaulting a beach code-named Omaha. The troops were already being referred to as the suicide wave.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, had originally scheduled Overlord for June 5, but bad weather postponed the landing until June 6, 1944. The weather was better, but there was considerable cloud cover and the English Channel was choppy.

Fellers's opinion was shared by a number of other soldiers. Some higher ranking officers believed the landing should be at night, which would provide an element of surprise. One officer who had served in the Pacific even questioned the landing craft to be used. The LCAs (landing craft assault) would come to a stop when they hit the beach. Landing craft with treads, which would continue as they hit land, would be better and give more protection. He was essentially told to mind his own business. The first wave would hit the beach at 6:30 AM.

As D-Day approached, the already anxious men of Company A had their anxiety increased when Fellers came down with a bad sinus infection and was hospitalized. However, when they lined up to board the transport SS *Empire Javelin,* Fellers was there. "I trained with you, and I've come to die with you if that's what it takes."

Roy Stevens remembered, "It lifted our spirits to have our leader back."

Charles Gerhardt was standing on the dock as the men of the 29th boarded. "Are you ready, men?"

A Bedford Boy named Bedford Hoback, who was on the same LCA as his brother Raymond, said: "Yes sir, we're sure ready."

The transport moved into the English Chan-

nel, and Roy and Ray Stevens stood at the rail with Earl Parker, who took a photo of his daughter out of his pocket and said, "If I could see her just once, I wouldn't mind dying."

Twelve miles from Omaha Beach, the troops stepped off the transport and into their LCAs. Roy was on a separate craft from Ray and still bothered by Ray's feeling of impending death. Roy had refused to shake his brother's hand on the ship because he knew Ray saw it as their final contact. "I'll shake your hand later, up at the crossroads above the beach sometime later this morning."

Ray offered his hand again, and again Roy refused. As he sat hunkered down in LCA 911, Roy looked over at 20-year-old VMI graduate, Lieutenant Edward Gearing, a born leader, so young, yet so competent.

In LCA 910, English Sub-Lieutenant Jimmy Green stood beside Taylor Fellers. Green could not help but feel that the 60 pounds each 29th Division soldier was carrying would be too much weight in deep water. Suddenly, Green winced as the stern of 910 collided with 911. There did not appear to be any damage, but a short time later his stoker said 910 was taking on water. Green decided to go ahead, depending on the pumps to keep them afloat. His orders were to get these men to Omaha by 6:30 AM.

As they headed inland they did not know the Allied bombers had missed most of their targets. Because of cloud cover, the pilots had dropped their bombs far inland, killing some French civilians and cows, but few Germans. There would be no ready-made foxholes.

To make matters worse, many of the DD (duplex drive) Sherman tanks, their flotation devices inadequate in the choppy water, would flounder and sink without reaching Omaha Beach. Captain Fellers knew what this meant, but when asked by Jimmy Green if the LCAs could go in without the tanks, he replied, "Yes, we must get there on time."

Years later Roy Stevens was asked if a kind of Murphy's Law could be applied to D-Day. He replied, "Yes, battles never go as planned."

At 6 AM, Ray Nance, who was scheduled to land at 7:30, peered through a slot in his LCA, remembering to keep his head down. His job would be to set up a command post, so when radioman and Bedford Boy John Clifton told him the antenna was broken on the radio, Nance told him to keep it and they would repair it on the beach.

In LCA 911, Roy Stevens said a prayer for himself and his comrades, most of whom were so seasick they did not care whether they lived or died. Then, suddenly, their craft began to sink beneath them. They tried bailing with helmets but it was too little, too late, and soon everybody was in the water. Stevens could barely swim and his 60 pounds began to drag him under. Luckily, Bedford Boy Clyde Powers was a good swimmer and kept Stevens from drowning.

While bobbing in the water, they heard their radio operator yell that he was drowning. They looked around, and he was gone. Lieutenant Gearing saved a couple of men by cutting their packs off. Their situation seemed hopeless until Jimmy Green, passing them in LCA 911, told them to hang on and he would pick them up on his way back. Hearing this, Gearing told Roy Stevens he was in charge and to keep talking and make sure the men stayed together.

With that, Gearing started swimming toward the beach. The men in the water said they knew Stevens would keep them alive because he was concerned about his brother. Jimmy Green kept his promise, and soon those who had survived the sinking were back aboard the *Empire Javelin*. They would return to England for rest and refitting and then be sent back to France.

LCA 910 touched down on time 30 yards from shore. Taylor Fellers thanked Jimmy Green for getting them in. Fellers had asked Green to give him some covering fire when they got in the water, saying, "My men are National Guard troops and have never been in combat."

As much as Green wanted to honor the request, he could not. The water was just too rough. Green watched as Fellers and his men, who included brothers Raymond and Bedford Hoback, walked through the water with their weapons held high. Upon reaching the beach, they lay prone 50 yards from their objective, the D-1 Vierville draw. As they stood to run to their objective, the Germans opened up. Within seconds, Taylor Fellers, husband, son, brother and leader of men, along with the 29 others in his LCA lay dead.

The LCA carrying Master Sergeant John Wilkes experienced the same withering fire, but he and some of his men miraculously made it to the beach. The last they saw of him, Wilkes was firing his M1 at a German emplacement. He would be found later, a bullet through his forehead. Bettie's sensitive, passionate man would not be coming home. Nor would Earl Parker, the Bedford Boy who said he would gladly die if he could see his daughter just one time. His body was never found.

Lieutenant Ray Nance remembered that when his LCA got to the beach the ramp would not go down. "Get it down!" he screamed, knowing the Germans would be keying on the craft. Finally, the ramp went down and Nance plowed straight ahead. When he looked back, no one was behind him. The Germans had annihilated most of his men in an instant. As he got closer to the beach he saw the body

National Archives

As their landing craft bobs and weaves its way toward Omaha Beach, American soldiers observe the chaotic maelstrom of combat into which they are about to plunge.

National Archives

A few of the wounded soldiers evacuated from the Normandy beaches head back to the safety of Britain aboard a U.S. Coast Guard vessel. Medics braved murderous German fire to render aid to the wounded on Omaha Beach and often presented easy targets for German gunners despite their helmets emblazoned with red crosses.

of Bedford Hoback. Then he saw the bodies of two more Bedford Boys. Nance was shocked by the carnage. He had trained these good men and seen them grow as soldiers.

"I felt responsible for them, every last one," he recalled. "They were the finest soldiers I ever saw."

Then Nance collected himself. He had a job to do. He started to crawl toward a cliff, the only available cover. Suddenly, a machine gun bullet tore away part of his heel and blood spurted. It was then that Nance had the first of two D-Day experiences he would never forget.

"Just as I was about to give up hope I looked up in the sky, which had a rosy appearance," he recalled. "A warm feeling came over me, and I knew I was going to live.

"An immaculately dressed Navy corpsman leaned over me and began dressing my wound," Nance said of his second experience. "He gave me a shot of morphine, said this is worse than Salerno, good luck to you."

Then he was gone.

When Ray Nance told this story, people told him he was hallucinating. No one could look that good after coming in on an LCA. But Nance had his bandaged foot to prove his story. Today he feels that the Navy corpsman was heaven sent.

Later, a Sergeant came by and carried Nance to an aid station. "He put me down and I noticed what looked like a pie plate," said Nance. "I started to put my hand on it. The Sergeant shouted, "Don't touch it!" Nance had nearly put his hand on a German mine.

There was another angel of mercy on Omaha that day. His name was Cecil Breeden, Company A's medic. He was credited with saving many lives and would continue to do so all the way to Germany. Breeden never got a scratch. Many thought the Iowan deserved the Medal of Honor.

Roy Stevens was intent on finding his brother. The first thing he and Clyde Powers, who also had a brother in another LCA, did was visit the cemetery. Stevens walked to the part of the cemetery with graves of soldiers whose names began with S. He scraped some mud from a dog tag hanging from a cross and saw that it belonged to his twin brother, Ray. At the same time Powers found his brother, Jack.

Finally, Stevens said, "Come on Clyde, let's get the men who did this." As Roy Stevens left the cemetery, one thought came to mind: Why didn't I shake his hand? As things turned, out the Powers and Stevens families would have one son return from war. The Hoback family had lost both sons.

In all, 19 Bedford Boys died on June 6, 1944. Three would be killed later. No other community in the United States suffered such a loss. Only 10 percent of Company A survived the landing without being killed or wounded. They truly were the suicide wave.

Roy Stevens vowed to kill one German for each of his buddies. On June 13, he volunteered to lead a patrol, then regretted his decision. "At that moment I looked in the bottom of my foxhole and saw the face of Jesus Christ. He said, "go ahead, you'll come back."

Stevens survived the patrol. "I'd come back just like he said I would. Right then and there I prayed and made a deal with God: 'If you let me get home, I'll be your servant.'"

Men react differently to tragedy. Clyde Powers mourned while Roy Stevens wanted revenge. He went on other dangerous patrols and even volunteered to take messages to artillery units. Word got around that he had a death wish, which led to a reprimand from his commanding officer. "You take it easy, it's going to take all of us to win this."

Roy Stevens's combat time came to an end on June 30, when an antipersonnel mine shredded him with ball bearings. While lying in sick bay, he noticed he was next to men deemed too far gone. He grabbed the smock of a passing nurse.

"I'm not here to die, I just need a little help," Roy begged.

The nurse replied, "If you let go of me I'll see what I can do." Surgery saved Stevens's life, and he was flown to a hospital in England on July 30. While in the hospital he wrote a poem about Ray and included it in a letter to his mother. He titled it "Twin Brother Farewell."

I'll never forget that morning,
It was the 6th of June
I said farwell to brother, didn't think it would be so soon.
I had prayed for out future, that wonderful place called home.
But a sinner's prayer wasn't answered, now I'll have to go there alone.
Oh brother, I think of you, all through the sleepless night,
Dear Lord, he took you from me, and I can't believe it was right,
This world is so unfriendly, to kill is now a sin, to walk that long narrow road, it can't be done without him.
Dear Mother, I know your worries, this is an awful fight,
To lose my only twin brother, and suffer the rest of my life.
Now fellows take my warning, believe it from start to end,
If you ever have a twin brother, don't go to battle with him.

This poem now rests on the kitchen wall of Roy Stevens's Bedford home.

Bedford Boy Allen Huddleston missed the D-Day landing due to a broken ankle suffered in training. He rejoined Company A on August 28 and recognized no one.

"My first day somebody asked me if I knew Joe Parker," said Huddleston. "I said yes. He said, 'Well he was killed yesterday.'"

Like the Hoback family, the Parker family lost two sons. It might be considered a stroke of luck that younger brother Billy, serving in another unit, became a POW. Perhaps it saved his life. Huddleston never saw the Company A mess sergeant, but Newcomb kept his promise to his buddies to serve hot food whenever possible.

Huddleston was wounded in the shoulder on September 30, 1944. He still remembers the cumbersome brace he wore for several months. "I asked if they could just put a cast on it, but they said they needed to know if the wound began bleeding."

When families back in Bedford got news of the D-Day landing, they huddled around their radios. They had no way of knowing whether their men had been involved in the landing because mail was heavily censored. However, they suspected this was the reason that Company A had been in England for such a long time.

News of the invasion filled them with renewed vigor. Wives and mothers who had rolled thousands of bandages rolled even more, filled with the hope that their sons and husbands would soon be home. They could not know that 19 of the Bedford Boys already lay in foreign graves or floated lifelessly off the coast of France.

On July 4, 1944, the *Bedford Bulletin* reported that Company A had been commended for its actions on D-Day, but still no news about individual Bedford boys had arrived. About this time, letters written to a number of the men came back as undeliverable.

Bettie Wilkes would be the first to get some news, a month after D-Day, and it was much less than official. She was standing on a street corner when called to by a woman across the street.

"Bettie, did you hear about John?" Then the woman crossed the street. "He was killed."

Bettie rushed home in a state of shock. Family members tried to convince her that surely the government would have told her if anything had happened. Bettie never revealed the name of the bearer of bad tidings.

Another letter followed to the Fellers family that Taylor had been killed, but still no word came from the Army. According to Bedford resident Helen Stevens, "It was like waiting for an earthquake."

National Archives

The bodies of American soldiers killed in action at Omaha Beach are lined up for eventual return to Britain. On Omaha Beach alone, approximately 2,500 American soldiers were killed or wounded. Most of the casualties occurred during the opening minutes of the landings.

Ray Nance, photographed with his wife Alpha, Roy Stevens, and Allen Huddleston (left to right) recalled vividly the roles they played in the compelling story of the Bedford Boys. Stevens and Nance survived the harrowing Omaha Beach experience on D-Day, while Huddleston rejoined Company A, 116th Regiment sometime after recovering from a foot injury.

On July 17, Elizabeth Teass, the 21-year-old Western Union operator at Green's drugstore, reported for work as usual. She switched on her teletype machine and sounded a bell heard in Roanoke 25 miles away. She typed the words, GOOD MORNING. GO AHEAD. BEDFORD. Words came chattering back. GOOD MORNING. GO AHEAD. ROANOKE. WE HAVE CASUALTIES.

Teass watched as one telegram, then two, then three came through. She waited for the teletype to stop, but it did not, not for a long time. Teass was in shock. Why so many? But she knew her job. The families must be the first to know.

Today, Elizabeth Teass is somewhat embittered because some have suggested she handed out the telegrams willy-nilly for delivery. "Mr. Frank Thomas, an employee of the drug store, usually delivered telegrams in town, so he took some," she remembered. "But some of the families lived outside town. Mr. Carder, the undertaker, delivered one of these. Sheriff Jim Marshall took one, and so did Doctor Rucker. Then Mr. Roy Israel, who operated the town taxi ser-

Continued on page 78

Hero to the

LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM EDWIN DYESS, A U.S. Army Air Corps pilot and squadron commander, was considered a hero by men who served under him in the Philippines and who felt they owed their own lives to Ed's sacrifice.

Born August 9, 1916, Ed Dyess was a Texan in the truest sense of the word. A member of a family with strong southern roots—his ancestors arrived in Georgia before the Revolution—he grew up in the small town of Albany, a plains town some 30 miles from the modern Air Force base that bears his name. His father was a local judge and tax assessor who had migrated to Shackleford County to take a position as a school teacher just before his son was born. Even though his father was an educator and politician, Ed's family had a strong military tradition dating back to when Georgia was a colony and Dyess men fought in the Indian Wars.

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Both of his grandfathers fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War, and one was captured and sent to a POW camp from which he escaped to fight again, thus setting a precedent his grandson would follow nearly a century later. His paternal grandfather was captured by Union troops while on a scouting mission in Pennsylvania and incarcerated in a notorious Union prisoner of war camp near Chicago. After refusing an offer of parole because it would prohibit him from rejoining his unit, Dyess's grandfather managed to overpower a guard and escape, then made his way south through Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee to rejoin the Confederacy and fight until the end of the war. It was a remarkable escape and journey through two northern states and across Union-held territory—not to mention an exercise in determination that Ed inherited.

Ed's interest in aviation was typical of many young men of his day. He and his father were inspired by Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic along with the rest of America as the country became air-minded. His dad took him up for his first airplane ride when a barnstormer stopped for a few days in their community. Yet, even though he came from an air-minded family, aviation was not his first choice. The boy wanted to join a carnival, but as a teenager he started taking some bootleg flying lessons from another passing barnstormer, although not with the intention of becoming a professional pilot. His father's position as a county judge and tax assessor led him toward a career in the legal profession, and after high school he attended Tarleton College in Stephenville, Texas, in preparation to study law at the University of Texas in Austin. He spent the summer before he was to begin studies at Texas working as a roustabout in the oil fields.

One of Ed's coworkers had recently washed out of the U.S. Army aviation program at Randolph Field, Texas, and their conversations prompted Dyess to remember the flying lessons he had taken a few years before. He began having doubts about the legal profession and decided to go in the Army and become a pilot. He told his father he wanted to get an appointment to the

Combat artist Keith Ferris painted this image titled "Too Little, Too Late" depicting American Curtiss P-40 fighter planes piloted by Joseph Moore and Sam Grashio in action against the Japanese above Clark Field in the Philippines on December 8, 1941. Ed Dyess was one of the first U.S. pilots in the Philippines to take to the air after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and his combat experience included aerial dogfights, bombing and strafing missions, and even ground operations. INSET: Major Ed Dyess of the U.S. Army Air Corps led American pilots in combat against the Japanese in the Philippines and endured captivity.

End

AIR CORPS OFFICER ED DYESS FOUGHT THE JAPANESE IN THE PHILIPPINES, ESCAPED FROM A POW CAMP, AND GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE THOSE OF OTHERS. BY SAM McGOWAN

Keith Ferris

Army's "West Point of the Air." Instead of expressing consternation, Judge Dyess was pleased with his son's decision and told him, "Son, if it can be got, we'll get it." He got the appointment as an aviation cadet and reported to Kelly Field at San Antonio for flight training.

Military flight training was a dangerous proposition in the 1930s, and Dyess soon came to know death firsthand as some of his classmates "bought the farm" in training accidents. The daily exposure to danger made him develop a stoic attitude toward death and his own mortality. Having been raised in the Presbyterian faith, he had been schooled in the tradition of Calvinism, which teaches that man's destiny is predetermined by the will of God. Upon graduation from pilot training and being commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserve, Dyess was assigned to the 20th Pursuit Group at Barksdale Field near Shreveport, Louisiana.

In November 1939, the 20th Pursuit was transferred to California and Lieutenant Dyess went with it. After his transfer to California, he met Marijean Stavik, a young woman from Champaign, Illinois, whose family published the Champaign newspaper. They were married in the fall of 1941, only a few days before Ed's departure for the Philippines. America was gearing up for imminent war with Japan, and his transfer was part of a major buildup of the U.S. Army's Philippines Department.

When the 35th Pursuit Group deployed two of its squadrons to a classified overseas destination, Dyess sailed for Manila in the fall of 1941 aboard the transport *Winfield S. Scott*. A first lieutenant, he had been elevated to commanding officer of the 21st Pursuit Squadron. They set sail from Hawaii on November 6, not knowing where they were bound until the ship was out of the harbor and at sea, at which time they were told that the code word "Plum" that had been stenciled on their baggage stood for the Philippine Islands, where they were to join the 24th Pursuit Group.

The news should not have been a surprise. War clouds had been gathering in the Pacific for several months, and the Army had begun a buildup of forces in the Philippines that included a number of pursuit squadrons. Although the 21st and its sister squadron, the 34th, had their full complement of ground personnel, each squadron was only at half strength in pilots. Additional pilots were expected to arrive on other ships, but as events unfolded over the next few weeks, the other ships never reached the islands and the latecomers ended up in Australia.

The two squadrons also sailed without airplanes. They were expecting to receive brand-new Curtiss P-40Es when they arrived in Manila, but when they reached their new assignment at Nichols Field they found that their airplanes, which had been shipped separately, had yet to arrive. Instead, they were given Seversky P-35s that had recently been replaced by P-40s in the 24th Pursuit Group. The 21st operated the obsolete P-35s for a couple of weeks, but on December 5—only three days before the outbreak of war—the squadron was equipped with brand-new P-40Es that had just been assembled at the air depot at Manila.

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Photographed in the Philippines on March 3, 1942, the day he shot up Japanese shipping and targets of opportunity at Subic Bay, then-Captain Ed Dyess exudes the confidence of a young, well-trained fighter pilot.

The P-35s went to the 34th Pursuit Squadron, which relocated to Del Carmen, a newly constructed airfield north of Manila, while the 21st remained at Nichols. Nichols was also home to the 17th Pursuit Squadron, commanded by 1st Lt. Boyd "Buzz" Wagner. Wagner had been in the Philippines for a year, and Dyess turned to him to learn the ropes. Wagner's squadron had been equipped with P-40Es in October, but the 21st's airplanes were right out of the shipping crates. The mechanics and pilots worked feverishly to prepare their new airplanes for operational use, but they were up against a timeline they were not aware of.

Since the new airplanes were being delivered straight from the factory, most of the engines needed slow-timing (operations at reduced power for a specified time to allow the piston rings to seat), and some of the guns had yet to be bore-sighted. There was a shortage of oxygen tanks on Luzon, which restricted high-altitude operations to 15,000 feet. America was preparing for war in the Philippines but was lacking an important commodity—time. Equipment that was necessary to bring the pursuit squadrons up to full combat readiness was still at sea when war broke out—if it had even left the depots in California—and would be diverted to Australia.

Although Dyess and his men had only been in the Philippines a few days, he was well aware of the severity of the situation. On Saturday, December 6, he made a bet with squadron mate Lieutenant Sam Grashio, who had commented that the United States would not go to war with Japan at all. Dyess asserted that the war would start within a week. Colonel Harold George, commander of V Interceptor Command, talked to the young pilots that day and advised them that when war came they would be fighting a holding action until reinforcements could come from Hawaii and the United States. He told them that they had about 70 first-line fighters available to defend against attack and that he thought they could put on a good performance.

The colonel made no bones about their situation as he advised his young pilots that while their mission was not exactly suicidal, it was not far from it. This was not comforting news, and the young men were sobered by the reality of their situation. None of them comprehended just how desperate their circumstances really were.

The 21st Pursuit Squadron received the last four of its 18 P-40Es that evening. All of the airplanes were brand new and had just been assembled out of the crates they had been shipped in from the factory. None of the engines had been slow-timed, and with less than four hours average flying time on them, none of the fighters had been properly broken in before they were thrown into combat. There was no oxygen available for high-altitude flight, and the radio sets were poor. No ground control network had been set up, and there was only one operational radar site in the islands. It would be destroyed by a Japanese air attack during the opening hours of the war.

Every man in the Philippines knew that war was on the horizon, but the United States had yet to adequately prepare for it. Although the attack on Pearl Harbor in faraway Hawaii came as a surprise, U.S. forces in the Philippines were feverishly preparing for war. A secret message had been sent from the White House to military commanders in the Pacific in mid-November advising them that war with Japan was imminent. The message also stressed that it was imperative that Japan be allowed to strike the first blow, an admonition that led to confusion at the higher command levels as to how to deal with Japanese aggression such as reconnaissance flights and whether or not to conduct reconnaissance of their own. The mes-

sage was clear in one regard. It instructed commanders to bring their forces to alert status and to prepare for war.

The Air Corps, in particular, had been on full alert for several days, and at 0230 hours on December 8 the pilots of the 17th and 21st Pursuit Squadrons at Nichols Field were scrambled to their airplanes. The same thing had happened on the preceding six mornings. After about 10 minutes they were told to stand down, and most of the men returned to their quarters.

Two hours later, Dyess received the first news of the attack on Pearl Harbor when the phone in the squadron orderly room rang at about 0430. Word of the attack had reached the islands through a commercial radio station an hour and a half before, and Navy commanders had been notified shortly thereafter, but official notification did not come until later.

The headquarters of General Douglas MacArthur, commander of U.S. forces in the Philippines, received word of the attack at about 0400, but it was not until 0530 that the news was officially verified with a message from the War Department. By that time the men of the 21st Pursuit Squadron had returned to their operations building. They were immediately ordered to report to their airplanes and start engines. After about 10 minutes with no takeoff order forthcoming, Dyess instructed his pilots to cut their engines and stand by. The pilots climbed out of their cockpits but remained close to their airplanes. Boyd Wagner's 17th Pursuit Squadron was ordered to take off, but the 21st waited—and continued waiting for the rest of the morning. Wagner's squadron had an unfruitful mission patrolling just north of Clark Field.

At about 11:30, Dyess was ordered to take his squadron airborne and head north to cover Clark Field while the fighters based there were refueled after having landed from a fruitless mission to northern Luzon. A formation of Japanese bombers had been detected, but the P-40s failed to make an interception and returned to Clark to refuel. They had completed refueling and were lined up at the end of the runway preparing to take off when bombs began falling on Clark Field. A few P-40s got off the ground, but most of the squadron was caught by the falling bombs and their fighters were destroyed or severely damaged.

Shortly after takeoff, Dyess received instructions to patrol between Corregidor and the naval base at Cavite, some distance to the south of Clark. The second flight was late taking off and failed to get the message to divert to the south, so they set off for Clark by themselves. Almost immediately, two of the new Allison engines began throwing oil, forcing the pilots to turn around and head back to Nichols. The four other P-40s continued north toward Clark. They arrived overhead but saw no indication of enemy activity, so they turned west after some fighters they could see in the distance, probably P-40s from the 3rd Pursuit, which was based at Iba on the other side of the Zambaleses Mountains from Clark.

A few minutes later, the call went out for "all pursuit to Clark" and they turned around. A third engine started throwing oil, and the pilot turned south to return to Nichols. The three remaining pilots arrived over Clark in the middle of the attack, and one, Lieutenant McGown, disappeared after possibly witnessing a fellow pilot under attack by Japanese fighters while descending in his parachute and going to assist. The other two, Lieutenants Grashio and Williams, managed to shoot down one Zero, then came under attack themselves. They managed to evade the Japanese fighters and make their way back to Nichols, where they found Dyess waiting for his men with cold Coca-Cola

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ABOVE: Shown with their engines roaring, Curtiss P-40 fighter aircraft are lined up at Hamilton Field, California, prior to their deployment to the Philippines. Pilots of the 20th Pursuit Group and their ground crewmen check the engine performance. Ed Dyess was assigned to the 20th Pursuit Group at Barksdale Field, Louisiana, and relocated to California with the unit in November 1939. BELOW: Following a Japanese air attack on December 10, 1941, obsolete American P-35 fighter planes lie destroyed on the ground at Nichols Field in the Philippines. When Ed Dyess and his squadron arrived in the Philippines, the P-35 constituted much of the U.S. fighter strength.

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ABOVE: While serving in the Philippines, Ed Dyess and the 21st Pursuit Group flew the Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk, a rugged and powerful fighter aircraft. Photographed in October 1941, this P-40 appears factory fresh. OPPOSITE: Japanese soldiers crouch forward as they advance through the Philippine jungle during operations in December 1941.

and sandwiches from the squadron mess.

The squadron spent the rest of the day on fruitless patrols. As evening approached, Dyess was told to move to Clark since Nichols Field was expected to be the next target for a Japanese attack. The main runway at Clark had been cratered by bombs, and the fighters were forced to use the dirt auxiliary strip. It was the dry season, and the runway was covered with dust, which rose in a cloud after each landing. Darkness was falling, and the combination of reduced visibility and dwindling light prolonged the time necessary to get all of the fighters on the ground.

Engine failure had reduced the squadron's strength from 18 to 11 fighters. Its strength was further reduced early the next morning when one pilot hit a B-17 bomber while attempting to take off and another crash-landed when the pilot became disoriented after taking off into the cloud of dust that had been stirred up by the propellers on the dirt runway. A third P-40 lost an engine at 7,000 feet and had to glide back into Clark, only to be fired on by friendly antiaircraft guns. Dyess now had only eight serviceable fighters left, but his mechanics at Nichols were working feverishly to repair the ones that had aborted the previous day.

December 10, the third day of war, was the worst day for the Interceptor Command, although the culprit was not the superior numbers and skill of the Japanese fighter pilots but rather another stroke of the bad luck due to poor timing that plagued the Air Corps in the Philippines. Late that morning, Dyess encountered enemy aircraft for the first time and saw his fire rake one from nose to tail. But he was concerned about two others that were in the area and did not see what happened to his quarry.

Later that afternoon, Dyess was eating lunch with Wagner when they were notified that enemy bombers were approaching Clark Field. They made their way to the strip and took off separately into a cloud of dust. They were both shocked when they emerged from the dust cloud and discovered that only inches separated their wing tips! The bombers had turned toward Manila, so Dyess and the other pilots were ordered to head in that direction. When he saw the bombers in the distance, he pressed his gun button to warm up his guns, but nothing happened. After several attempts he landed at a nearby auxiliary field, where he managed to charge his guns with a screwdriver and help from some soldiers. It was a common problem.

By the time Dyess took off, the enemy formation had vanished and he missed out on the one major air battle of the Philippines. On December 8, the Interceptor Command counted approximately 70 operational fighters. The action on December 10 severely depleted the 50 or so that were left after the engine failures and combat losses on the opening day of the war. Only a handful were shot down, and the fighters accounted for a large number of Japanese aircraft, but by the time the fighters engaged, many of them had been aloft for some time and were running low on fuel.

Three P-40 pilots were killed and at least eight bailed out; most of the rest were forced to crash land wherever they could as their engines coughed their last due to fuel exhaustion. By the end of the 10th, total American fighter strength was down to 30 airplanes, of which only 22 were P-40s. The other eight were P-35s, which were all nearly worn out. Four P-40s were being assembled at the air depot and were completed as Manila was being abandoned on Christmas Day.

With fighter strength severely depleted, MacArthur's headquarters decided it was foolhardy to continue risking the precious planes against overwhelming odds, but rather to conserve them for reconnaissance and attacks on ground targets. Dyess was ordered to take the remnants of his squadron back to Nichols Field, where the pilots were reunited with their ground crews for a short time. With their aircraft depleted, the need for pilots had decreased, so some of Dyess's men were transferred to the Signal Corps to serve as aircraft observers. The rest of the squadron was ordered to move to a new airfield that was still under construction at Lubao, a town on the edge of Manila Bay.

The Lubao strip had been cut out of a sugar cane field, and the Filipino and American troops used the cane as camouflage. Japanese bombers frequently flew over the field but never managed to spot the well-concealed P-40s. The remaining 26 P-40s and a single North American A-27 flew in late on Christmas Eve. The men were quartered some distance away, and the crew chiefs refused to leave their airplanes, staying on the airstrip to perform badly needed maintenance.

Dyess and his men had a sumptuous meal on Christmas Day as they feasted on turkey and trimmings that had been trucked from Manila, which was being evacuated. It was a meal they would look back on in their dreams and discussions as supplies on Bataan dwindled and after they became prisoners of the Japanese. As the last trucks rolled out, MacArthur declared Manila an open city, a political declaration designed to dissuade the Japanese from launching a military attack that could cause heavy casualties among the civilian population.

The day after Christmas, Dyess again engaged in aerial combat and shot down a Japanese dive-bomber, the first he was able to actually confirm, although none of his aerial victories were ever formerly credited to his record. Two days later, he was nearly shot down himself by an aggressive Japanese Zero pilot who caught him unawares. After his airplane was struck by a burst of fire, Dyess began a dive to build up speed, then pulled up into a zoom and came out of it ahead and above the enemy fighter. The Japanese pilot turned toward him, and they rushed head-on until the heavier .50-caliber fire from the P-40 blew the

top off the Zero's engine and set it on fire.

Dyess later reported that several of his pilots got their first Japanese aircraft during this period. On December 30, Dyess and his wingman had a field day when they spotted a convoy of Japanese trucks. The Japanese vehicles were American-made and difficult to distinguish from U.S. military vehicles, but one had the large red meatball on its hood that identified it as the enemy. The P-40s made two strafing passes on the seven trucks and left three burning and the other four shot to pieces. Pursuit pilots such as Dyess, Wagner, Lieutenant Russell Church, and Captain Grant Mahoney wreaked a heavy toll in Japanese lives and equipment, illustrating how effective the Interceptor Command could have been with reinforcement and resupply that never came.

On New Year's Day, Dyess and his ground party completed work on the new field at Lubao. They had no more than finished when they got word that advancing Japanese troops were threatening the field. MacArthur had ordered a general retreat onto the Bataan Peninsula, and the Air Corps was to move with the troops. The combination of combat losses, accidents, and dwindling spare parts had reduced fighter strength to only 18 P-40s, which were divided between the 17th and 34th Pursuit Squadrons and initially sent to two airfields on Bataan, one at Pilar and the other at Orani. Half the P-40s were later ordered to Mindanao, an island in the Southern Philippines that was still in American hands and serving as a delivery point for transports bringing in supplies from Australia.

Personnel and aircraft from other units were rolled into the two squadrons, and a contingent of pilots, including Wagner and Mahoney, were sent to Australia to pick up some P-40s that had been on a ship at sea when war broke out and had been diverted to Brisbane. They would not return. The 21st Pursuit Squadron gave up its airplanes and was reorganized as a ground battalion. The new battalion was initially assigned as the base defense force at Lubao, while the air units moved to Bataan.

During the next three months, Dyess gained a reputation as one of the most effective officers on Luzon. He and his men scrounged up an assortment of weapons including .30- and .50-caliber machine guns that they took from wrecked fighters to supplement their rifles and submachine guns. The airmen modified the salvaged machine guns with homemade mounts so they could be used as infantry weapons. They also had a few Browning Automatic Rifles and four Bren Gun carriers, along with an assortment of submachine guns, modified Lewis guns, and hand grenades. When the battalion/squadron first moved to Bataan, they had an abundance of rations and supplies, but about two weeks after the move the quartermaster ordered that all surplus supplies be turned in. After that the men subsisted on what they were issued, supplemented by what they could find or kill, including horses and mules that had served as cavalry mounts and beasts of burden.

On January 17, Dyess was notified that a Japanese landing party had come ashore at Agoloma Bay. He and his men were loaded into trucks and driven seven miles to engage the enemy force. Initial estimates were that the landing party was small, about 30 men, but it turned out to be at least 20 times that size and the resulting battle lasted for several weeks.

The airmen joined some Filipino constabulary forces and a few engineers from the 803rd Engineering Battalion to meet the attacking Japanese troops. The Japanese overestimated their opposition and retreated. As they were pushed back toward the cliffs overlooking the bay, they began digging in, turning the engagement into a siege. Dyess and his men remained in opposition to the Japanese for a week, then were temporarily withdrawn for a six-day rest and replaced by Philippines Scouts. During the week they had been there, the airmen-turned-infantry managed to push the Japanese back toward the cliffs some 150 yards. During their respite from combat, the airmen were engaged primarily in fighting forest fires. When they returned, they found that the Filipinos had gained about 50 yards, but at tremendous cost. The Scouts had suffered nearly 50 percent casualties.

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The Air Corps troops reinforced the Philippines Scouts and pushed the Japanese farther back until they were only about 400 yards from the cliffs by the bay. By the fifth day, the line was down to about 300 yards, and four American tanks arrived to provide support. Suddenly, the Japanese began ripping off their uniforms and leaping over the 50-foot cliffs onto the sandy beach. Some went over the side to descend to prepared positions, but large numbers simply jumped to the beach in an attempt to escape. As the Americans advanced, they could see their enemy on the sand below. They were running up and down wildly, some were into the surf in an attempt to swim away. The American airmen and Filipino soldiers raked them with automatic weapons fire, killing everything that moved. The Japanese that had taken shelter on the side of the cliff continued to hold out and were practically impervious to the dynamite, grenades, and mines that were lowered on ropes and exploded next to the cliff face.

On the eighth day after Dyess's men returned to the battle, they finally wiped out the Japanese force with assistance from the Navy, which supplied two armed Boston Whalers and two armed longboats. Some of the airmen went out in the whalers while Dyess, who had been promoted to captain and then to major, was in one of the longboats to direct fire. The sailors raked the cliffside with machine guns and captured 37mm cannon.

The attack continued even as a flight of Japanese dive-bombers knocked out all four boats, but not before they had destroyed the Japanese defenders. The Army personnel

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Filipino scouts photographed following the defeat of a Japanese landing force at Agoloma Bay in the Philippines. Dyess and other U.S. Army Air Corps personnel served as ground troops with the scouts.

stormed the beach and finished off the survivors. Only one Japanese soldier was taken prisoner. Dyess and his men counted over 600 bodies after resistance ceased; countless others had been swept out to sea. After the battle, Colonel George visited the men of the 21st Pursuit Squadron. He told them they were returning to aviation duty, and Dyess presented the colonel with a captured Japanese sword.

Dyess's new assignment was as field commander for the Bataan and Cabcaben airfields. A third airfield was under construction at Marivelles under the supervision of Captain Joe Moore, who had managed to get in the air during the attack on Clark Field. U.S. air strength on Bataan had risen to 10 airplanes, but only five were first-line P-40s, and those consisted of two different models. The other five included a Bellanca, a Beechcraft, an Army O-1, and a couple of other ramshackle light transports that made up what the men had begun to call The Bamboo Fleet. It was under the loose command of Major William "Jitter Bill" Bradford, a former civilian air taxi pilot who had joined the Army before the war as an engineering officer. Colonel George had limited the fighters to reconnaissance and resupply missions while holding them in reserve to be used to meet large-scale ground attacks.

The ground crews worked on the fighters to improve their combat capabilities, including developing a bomb release mechanism that allowed the P-40s to carry 300- and 500-pound bombs. The main problem for the airmen on Bataan was a lack of food. Although large supply dumps remained, there was practically no meat or other sources of vital protein. By the end of February, all the horses and mules had been slaughtered for food. Bradford volunteered to fly to Cebu and bring back supplies. After he made two successful round trips, other pilots went to pick up food. Dyess made at least one trip himself. But the cargo capacity of the small transports was limited, and it was hardly enough to supply the men on Bataan.

In early March, Dyess's P-40 had been modified to carry bombs, and almost immediately lookouts reported the presence of a large number of ships in Subic Bay. Dyess asked for permission to mount an attack, but Colonel George was reluctant to authorize the mission. However, the next day, March 3, Dyess got word to come to the airfield, where his airplane was being loaded with a 500-pound bomb. Colonel George advised that Japanese ships were unloading supplies at Olongapo, and he thought they should be discouraged. Another P-40 had already gone out with a load of fragmentation bombs and came back to report that he had dropped them but was unable to assess the damage. Dyess took a wingman and headed for Subic Bay, where he found the largest concentration of ships near Grand Island in the bay rather than at Olongapo. Dyess identified his wingman only as "Shorty" in his account after his return from the Philippines because he was still a prisoner of the Japanese.

Dyess made three attacks on the Japanese ships in Subic Bay and the supply dump on Grand Isle before the day was out. On each occasion, he went out with a 500-pound bomb which he delivered by diving from about 10,000 feet. The bomb he dropped on his first attack missed the ship he was aiming at, but after the drop he went low and strafed it three times. After his third pass, he saw the ship stop dead in the water. He expended his ammunition on four warehouses and one of two vessels he estimated at 100 tons.

Dyess was joined in the attack by other pilots from his squadron and from Joe Moore's squadron at Marivales. After refueling and rearming, he returned for a second attack, and even though his bomb again missed a transport, it exploded among several smaller vessels, which were tossed into the air by the geyser of water. He then went in for another strafing attack on the warehouses and vessels in the harbor. One of his targets was the second of the two 100-ton vessels he had spotted on his first strike. Dyess raked it from stem to stern with his guns and then watched it sink.

Colonel George did not want to let Dyess go back for a third sortie but finally relented. Lieutenant John Burns went along as his wingman. It was near dusk when they approached the target, but there was still plenty of light for the attack. Two large freighters had been tied up at the dock during the previous attack, but they had both shoved off and were maneuvering in the bay, so Dyess chose the supply complex on Grand Island as his target. He dropped his bomb at 1,800 feet and saw it score a direct hit that set off a series of secondary explosions, starting a fire that burned into the next day. Large, softball-sized tracers were coming up at him from the fleet of cruisers and destroyers that filled the bay.

Observers situated on Marivales Mountain reported that a large transport was slipping out of the bay, so Dyess elected to bypass the ships in the harbor and the tracer-filled sky and flew toward the transport until he could see it silhouetted against the sunset to the west. He made two passes and saw fires breaking out all over the ship. He was at 1,800 feet in a 45-degree dive for another pass when the ship blew up. It was getting dark, but the light of the fire and the remnants of the sunset allowed him to spot another

large ship that was throwing up a tremendous amount of antiaircraft fire. After his second pass, fires were burning all over the deck. He concentrated his fire on the bridge on the third pass and ran out of ammunition. The ship had been severely damaged and ran aground on the beach, where it burned for two days.

Dyess was not alone in the attacks on the ships and supply dump, but his attacks were the most successful. One pilot and airplane were lost early in the day. Darkness claimed three of the remaining four. Dyess's wingman, Lieutenant Burns, ground-looped during landing, and his guns went off and sprayed tracers around the airfield. Two pilots who had taken off from Marivales landed with a tailwind and cracked up both airplanes, leaving Dyess's single fighter as the operational P-40 force on Bataan.

During the next few weeks the ground crews managed to assemble another P-40 out of the three wrecks. Since it was made from parts from different models, the pursuit airmen referred to it as the "P-40 Something." The attacks had been costly for the Americans, but in terms of actual damage they were far more costly to the Japanese. Tokyo Radio reported that Subic had fallen under attack by three flights of four-engine bombers with fighter escorts. Dyess would later comment that the problem was that the Japanese could easily replace their losses, but the Americans could not.

Dyess was awarded two Distinguished Service Crosses for his actions in the Philippines. His performance was an example of the dedication of an amazing group of young men who continued to press the fight against the Japanese against overwhelming odds. Ed Dyess, who had come to the islands as a first lieutenant and had been promoted to major, was an individual identified as crucial for the war effort when it became apparent that Bataan was going to fall. He was ordered to fly his P-40, which he had named "Kibosh," off of the island to Mindanao, where he would be evacuated to Australia.

In mid-March, Colonel George met Dyess at Bataan Airfield and told him that he had been ordered out of the Philippines with MacArthur, who was going to Australia to become Supreme Commander of Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific. George, who was promoted to brigadier general but would die in an aircraft accident a few weeks later, told Dyess to tell his men that if he was not back shortly, it was not because he did not want to return. Dyess was essentially in command of the last of the interceptors left on Bataan: a pair of P-40s and a couple of P-35s.

By early April, the situation on Bataan had become desperate. There was a severe shortage of food and medical supplies. Dyess was advised that on April 10 some ships (actually submarines) were going to arrive from Cebu with supplies and that bombers would be attacking Japanese positions to provide cover for the deliveries. He was to take his remaining fighters and "rid the skies of Japanese fighters." Dyess and the other men on Bataan had no way of knowing that a mission was being mounted from Australia; they were only told that there would be air attacks. As it turned out, the air raids did not take place until April 13 and, with the exception of a single mission against Nichols Field, were directed against Cebu itself, which had fallen into Japanese hands the day before. By that time Dyess and his men were prisoners of war.

On April 9, Maj. Gen. Edward P. King, the senior American officer on Bataan, surrendered his command. As Japanese forces approached Bataan Airfield, Dyess was ordered to take his P-40 and fly out, but he felt he could not abandon his squadron and got permission to stay. He gave the airplane to Lieutenant Jack Donaldson, telling him to go out and bomb and strafe the approaching enemy, then to come back over the base and if the Japanese were as close as they had been told, to rock his wings and head south for Cebu. Donaldson was back in 15 minutes with his bomb racks empty. He rocked his wings, then turned south to Cebu, where he was forced to land wheels-up as the airplane's hydraulics had been shot out.

Dyess picked men whose names had been given to him by Interceptor Command headquarters and sent them out in the remaining planes. One of those evacuated was Captain Ben Brown, one of three men who flew out in a P-35. A few months later, Brown talked to *New York Times* reporter Byron Darnton, telling him of the heroism and dedication of his commanding officer, Major William E. Dyess, and how he had given his own airplane to one of his pilots to fly out of Bataan. The dispatch was printed in newspapers around the country, then buried in archives and forgotten until the following year.

After he got word that General King was going to surrender, Dyess considered his situation. He originally hoped to find transportation for his pilots to Corregidor, but when he learned that no boats were available he debated whether to surrender his men or take them into the mountains and join the guerrillas. He knew the locations of the guerrilla camps, but they were some distance away. The Navy gave his men food, but they had no quinine and he hesitated to take them into the mountains without it since the woods were infested with malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

Dyess and his men had decided to try and join the guerrillas, but after they had gone

National Archives

Starving, thirsty, and subjected to barbarous treatment by their Japanese captors, American personnel captured on the Bataan Peninsula rest briefly under the watchful eye of Japanese guards during the infamous Bataan Death March.

National Archives

Following the arduous Death March, Ed Dyess was held for two months at Camp O'Donnell on Luzon before being transferred to Cabanatuan. This photo shows Camp O'Donnell in 1945, after the facility was abandoned by the retreating Japanese.

about two miles they encountered three Japanese tanks. An officer stood in the open turret of one, pointing an automatic pistol in their direction. The enemy officer gestured for the Americans to move off the road into a depression. Dyess and his pilots decided to eat, then get some sleep and plan their next move after they had rested. They never got the chance to make a next move, as they were awakened by Japanese soldiers and taken prisoner.

Dyess and his men found themselves in the worst of the infamous trek from Bataan to San Fernando that will forever be known as the Death March. A few days before the surrender, Dyess had obtained extra food for his pilots so they would be able to continue flying, and they were in a little better shape than most of the other soldiers, but they entered an ordeal that was far beyond their ability to foresee—and which was nearly impossible to endure.

General King and his staff expected their men to be given humane treatment after the surrender, but the victors considered the prisoners to be no more than vermin. To the Japanese, surrender was a forfeiture of honor and respect, and they considered the Americans and Filipinos as objects of disdain. The deadly march had not even begun when Japanese soldiers demonstrated their brutality and low regard for human life. The victorious Japanese searched the prisoners time and time again, looking for anything of Japanese origin.

One Air Corps captain was being searched by a Japanese private, who reached into a pocket and pulled out some yen. The private immediately forced the burly captain to his knees as he pulled out his sword. He raised without ceremony and brought it down on the back of the man's neck, severing the head from the body. Dyess knew the captain but was too far away to actually see the beheading. The man had been in charge of an observation post well behind the lines, and Dyess doubted if he had ever seen a dead Japanese soldier. The unfortunate captain was the first of thousands of American and Filipino soldiers who would die at the hands of their captors or from illness and starvation over the next few weeks.

During the 85-mile trek to the railhead where they were finally loaded on crowded cars for the final leg of their journey to Camp O'Donnell, the men received little food or water and were subjected to the harshest treatment imaginable. Suffering from starvation and sickness, many of the prisoners were unable to maintain the pace the guards expected. Other prisoners tried to carry them as best they could, but men dropped by the hundreds. They were taken care of by clean-up squads of Japanese soldiers who shot or bayoneted the unfortunate men where they lay, then left the bodies for other prisoners to stumble over as they came up the terrible road of death.

Dyess and the remnants of his squadron were on the march for five hellish days. The sadistic Japanese soldiers tormented the men with captured rations and made them stand or sit in the hot sun for hours. Thirsty men who broke ranks and attempted to reach streams and wells were shot. The exact death toll from the march will never be known. Approximately 75,000 men surrendered on Bataan, of which 11,000 were Americans. As many as 21,000 died on the road between Marivelles, where the march began, and their arrival at Camp O'Donnell. Even more died in the disease-ridden camp.

Dyess remained at Camp O'Donnell for two months. At first only the men from Bataan were kept there, but after the surrender of Corregidor more troops joined the "battling bastards of Bataan" in the already overcrowded camp. Conditions were dismal. Dyess was part of a party that was sent to Clark Field to clean up wreckage. While on the Clark detail, he had an encounter with a Japanese soldier who spoke some English, and with Dyess's smattering of Japanese they were able to have a conversation. The Japanese, who claimed to have fought in China and Singapore and on Bataan, held the fighting ability of the Americans in low regard. When Dyess asked him what the Japanese intended to do with their prisoners, the enemy soldier laughed, then drew his sword and made a couple of decapitating motions with it.

The soldier asked about the value of various items the Japanese had taken from their prisoners. Dyess noticed that the man was wearing a watch that looked familiar. He looked closer and realized it was his own, a military watch with a 24-hour dial that he had bought while on a flight to Cebu. He was tempted to ask how the man had gotten it but knew that would be a mistake. The soldier bragged about all of the victories racked up by his countrymen, but when he claimed that Japanese submarines had shelled Chicago, Dyess knew he was exaggerating. Dyess would have a similar conversation with a Japanese fighter pilot a few months later after he was transferred to Cabanatuan. The Japanese airman was more respectful of a fellow airman and seemed to be most concerned about the death of his squadron commander, who had been shot down by a P-40 pilot. As he took his leave, the Japanese pilot told Dyess he would be seeing him again. An hour or so later two Japanese fighters flew low over the camp.

When he returned to Camp O'Donnell from Clark Field, Dyess heard rumors that they were being moved to a new camp at Cabanatuan. At first they were encouraged by the news, but then it occurred to them that a few weeks earlier all of the senior officers had been sent to Japan and Formosa, where they were working as laborers. They were fearful that their chances of escape or exchange would be nil. The men also feared it might be a rumor. They soon learned that it was not; the Japanese had decided to separate the American and Filipino POWs, and all Americans would be moved to Cabanatuan while the Filipinos would remain at Camp O'Donnell. They were also told that they would be moved by truck, an announcement that no one believed.

The Japanese were true to their word, although the prisoners at first thought they were being tricked again when no trucks showed up at the place where they were supposed to load. Dyess was expecting another death march with the loss of hundreds of men, but the trucks finally arrived. The Americans noticed that most of them were of Chevrolet, Ford, and GMC manufacture. Japanese soldiers packed them into the trucks like sardines—so tightly that there was no room to move.

Dyess spent several months at Cabanataun, where he found that while conditions were better than they had been at O'Donnell, they were still dismal. Prisoners were shot and some were tortured to death for various infractions. Three officers who decided to escape even if they died in the attempt were captured and brought back to the camp, where the Japanese made a spectacle of them. The three men were stripped naked and tied to posts with cross-pieces crucifixion-style and flogged repeatedly with pieces of timber. The torture continued through the day and into the night and then through the next day, until the Japanese officers realized that the men were beyond the point of feeling pain. They took the tortured bodies from their crosses and transported them from the camp. A few minutes later shots rang out.

Dyess was chosen to be part of a group of prisoners who were sent to Mindanao, where they would serve on work details in the vicinity of Davao. On October 24, 1942, they were loaded onto a railroad car and taken to Manila. The following day the prisoners were paraded through the city and marched to the docks, where they were loaded onto a decrepit British-made ship. It was a freighter, the holds filled with cargo, and it reeked with noxious odors. The men were not sure where they were headed until they saw the dark shape of Corregidor pass on their right and knew they were headed south, which meant they were going to Mindanao. Japan, Korea, and Formosa were all north of the Philippines.

Two companies of Philippine Constabularies were also on the ship. The Constabularies were government police, and the POWs were not sure what to make of them or where their loyalties lay. Dyess and some of the men worked up an escape plan but decided against trying to make a break for freedom. They learned too late that if they had gone ahead with their plan to take over the ship, the Filipinos would have sided with them against the Japanese sailors and guards.

The new camp at Davao was actually a civilian prison, and the other prisoners were Filipinos who had been convicted of crimes before the war rather than military prisoners. The Japanese had told the Filipinos that once they had taught the Americans to do their work, they would receive pardons, but when the Americans arrived, they were too emaciated to be very effective as laborers. Surprisingly, the Japanese increased their rations and included meat and vegetables to increase their strength.

National Archives

ABOVE: Pictured in an outrigger canoe, this group of American guerrillas resisted the Japanese in the Philippines and eluded capture for the duration of the war. Ed Dyess and other escaped prisoners of war made contact with a group of American guerrillas but declined to join them, opting instead to attempt to return to duty. BELOW: Promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel, Ed Dyess (left) and fellow escapee U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander M.H. McCoy (center) meet General Douglas MacArthur at his headquarters in Australia.

U.S. Air Force

At first the new prisoners thought their conditions had truly improved, but then the Japanese commander cut their rations to barely enough to keep them able to work. Very little medical care was provided, and the guards were not above the same brutality and murder that had been prevalent at the previous camps. Each day groups of prisoners were sent out to various destinations on work details in the rice and vegetable fields. Dyess was assigned to drive a cart to deliver materials to the various work details, a job that allowed him some degree of freedom and a means of possible escape.

The Filipino convicts helped the Americans learn how to look busy while doing very little work. The Americans also learned that their Japanese captors lived in fear of the Moro tribesmen who populated the southern islands. One of the prisoners was a Moro, and after he was tied up and flogged he was determined to get even. A few days later when the guard gave the prisoners a rest break, the Filipino picked up an ax in a motion so swift no one saw what happened and buried it in the guard's neck. He then grabbed a bolo knife and carved up the Japanese guard's body, then disappeared into the jungle with the man's shoes and rifle. Fortunately, the Japanese did not seek retribution from the Americans since the culprit was a Filipino civilian convict and not a prisoner of war.

In February 1943, Dyess and Marine Captain Austin C. Shofner began plotting an escape. They discussed who else to bring into their plans. Dyess decided on Captain Sam Grashio from his squadron and an enlisted man named Leo. Shofner suggested two other Marine officers, Majors Jack Hawkins and Michael Dobervitch. They also included Navy Lt. Cmdr. Melvyn H. McCoy, who was an experienced navigator and ran a coffee-picking detail that allowed him to venture outside the camp. U.S. Army Major Stephen M. Mellnick and two Army enlisted men working with McCoy on the coffee-picking detail would also have to be included.

The group spent almost three months planning and accumulating equipment for their escape. Dyess's job was to drive a cart pulled by bulls to deliver poles and other materials to the various work details outside the camp, so they concealed their supplies under the poles in his cart and he drove them to where they could be hidden on the edge of the jungle. On Sunday, April 4, almost a year since General King had surrendered his command on Bataan, they made their escape and plunged into the dense jungle. They made contact with local guerrillas, who at first were wary of them. Once they were convinced, the guerrillas became friendly and eager to help the men find their way across the island to a larger force.

Led by Filipinos, the escaped POWs spent two weeks walking through the dense jungle and swamps before they finally emerged on solid ground and made contact with American guerrillas. The guerrilla commander warned them against trying to make their way to Aus-

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The British midget submarine attack on the mighty German battleship *Tirpitz* left the giant warship crippled at her anchorage.

David and Goliath

BY RICHARD RULE

BY MID-1942, THE TOWERING German battleship *Tirpitz* stood alone as the largest, most powerful warship in the world. Despite rarely venturing from her lair deep within the Norwegian fjords, her mere presence in the region forced the British Royal Navy to keep a large number of capital ships in home waters to watch over Allied convoy routes to the Soviet Union.

The fact that the menacing shadow of one ship could hold so many others virtually captive in the North Atlantic at a time when they were desperately needed elsewhere was an intolerable situation in the eyes of Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. "The greatest single act to restore the balance of naval power would be the destruction or even crippling of the *Tirpitz*," he wrote. "No other target is comparable to it." His obsession with the massive dreadnought was the driving force behind numerous Royal Air Force and Royal Navy attempts to sink her, but all had met with failure.

The harsh reality was that inside Norwegian waters the *Tirpitz* enjoyed the protection of an ice-clad fortress bounded by sheer walls of solid rock and enhanced by German ingenuity. The natural defenses had been substantially bolstered by the deployment of countless artillery batteries and antiaircraft guns in the surrounding mountains while close-quarter protection for the 42,000-ton battleship was provided by layers of heavy antitorpedo nets that were closed around her like a second skin. Nothing had been left to chance, and within these all-encompassing defenses, the Germans confidently believed the "Lonely Queen of the North," as the *Tirpitz* was known, was untouchable. To the Royal Navy looking on from afar, it was not an idle boast.

Churchill wanted action, but the British Admiralty could see no way to strike at its nemesis. Naval bombardment was impossible due to the configuration of the intervening land, the fjords were mostly beyond the range of land-based bombers, and a raid by conventional submarines would be suicidal.

However, from within the deepening gloom that beset the Royal Navy, a ray of light emerged. For a number of years, Navy engineers had been working on the prototype for a 51-foot, 30-ton, four-man midget submarine specifically designed to attack naval targets in strongly defended anchorages. They had developed, in effect, a complete submarine in miniature, but in lieu of torpedoes, the midgets were fitted with two crescent-shaped detachable explosive charges fitted externally on either side of the pressure hull. These mines, each containing two tons of Amatex explosive, were to be planted on the seabed directly under the target ship then detonated with a variable time fuse.

It was deemed unlikely that the German command ever envisaged a raid by midget submarines or X-craft, as the British vessels were known, giving rise to optimism that at last an attack on the *Tirpitz* might stand a fighting chance of success. It was a tantalizing prospect.

Winston Churchill, a renowned enthusiast of covert operations, had been greatly impressed by an earlier raid launched by Italian divers against British ships in Alexandria harbor and was eager for the X-craft to replicate a similar feat against the *Tirpitz*. His impatience to strike, however, was tempered by a Royal Navy that would not be rushed. While operational considerations dictated that these vessels would require many unique features, Navy experts were determined to develop the X-craft prototype along principles firmly grounded in reality and based on sound submarine practice. Within the halls of the Admiralty there was little enthusiasm for the unconventional, outlandish approach typical of the Special Operations branch.

Even at this early stage of X-craft development, the sheer volume of pipes, dials, gauges,

National Archives

This X-craft submarine of the British Royal Navy plies the waters of the harbor at Sydney, Australia, in 1945. X-craft midget submersibles similar to this one struck the German super battleship *Tirpitz* in a Norwegian fjord.

levers, and other vital equipment crammed inside the tiny hull left very little space for crew comfort. Navy planners recognized only that men possessing extraordinary self-control could cope with the claustrophobic conditions, and they sought volunteers "for special and hazardous duty" from among newly commissioned Royal Navy officers. The candidates, including many from Australia and South Africa, were not told what the mission entailed, but over the next few months, they were filtered through rigorous selection criteria. The physically unsuitable, the timid, or men with a "death or glory" outlook were steadily weeded out. Those who made the grade quickly found themselves undergoing intense training and theoretical courses on the X-craft.

Training and weapon development proceeded simultaneously, as further modifications, tests, and sea trials were conducted until the final construction design was approved. With the aid of civilian firms, the first six vessels, designated X-5 through X-10, rolled off the line to form the fledgling 12th Submarine Flotilla.

As the momentum of the operation gathered speed, bold theory predictably collided head-on with practical application. Before any attack could be launched, a number of significant roadblocks would need to be cleared, not the least of

Imperial War Museum

Lieutenant Godfrey Place (second from right) and Lieutenant Duncan Cameron (far right) pose with other X-craft mariners of the British Royal Navy. Place and Cameron participated in the raid on *Tirpitz* that succeeded in damaging the battleship. Both were captured and received the Victoria Cross for heroism.

which involved getting the X-craft to Norway. Experts agreed that German patrols and air reconnaissance ruled out launching the vessels from a depot ship near the Norwegian coast, and a weeklong journey across the North Sea was considered beyond the endurance of the four-man crew. They would be completely exhausted before they ever reached the target. It was a vexing problem, but after much deliberation it was decided that the midgets would be towed to the operational area behind patrol submarines using 200-yard manila or nylon cables.

Even under tow, however, the 1,200-mile journey would still take eight days, so "passage crews" would be trained to ferry the craft to the target area. Then these men would be swapped with the "operational crews" who would make the voyage in the towing submarines.

These transit crews would play a vital, yet largely unsung role in the operation. Theirs would be an exacting, demanding duty in which they were to remain virtually submerged throughout the entire journey, only coming to the surface every six hours for 15 minutes to ventilate their hulls. It promised to be a voyage of incredible hardship, and few envied them.

Another critical factor in the planning was the timing of the raid. By early 1943, the Norwegian Battle Group of *Tirpitz,* the battlecruiser *Scharnhorst,* and the pocket battleship *Lutzow* had relocated to new berths within the small landlocked basin of Kaafjord, northern Norway. The German ships were now anchored five degrees north of the Artic Circle where there was no darkness in summer and no light in winter.

Summer was unsuitable for a British attack because the X-craft needed the cover of darkness to recharge their batteries; winter deprived them of daylight to make visual contact with the target. The most favorable times for an attack occurred during the two occasions each year when daylight and darkness were equal, the equinoxes in March and late September. March was too soon, so the Admiralty settled on late September with the attack to go in on September 22. Navy planners had been swayed by intelligence reports from Norwegian agents indicating that on this date the *Tirpitz*'s 15-inch guns would be stripped and cleaned, and her sound detection equipment would be down for routine servicing.

In June 1943, specialized training for what came to be called Operation Source started in earnest when men and machines moved to the secret wartime base known as Port HHZ in Loch Cairnbawn, northern Scotland. Amid tight security, the Navy had designed a course that replicated the fjord up which the men would travel to attack the *Tirpitz* and her escorts, *Scharnhorst* and *Lutzow.* Now putting their new X-craft through trials, the men vying for selection carried out simulated attacks, rehearsed towing procedures behind larger submarines, and perfected techniques for cutting through antisubmarine nets. The men grew accustomed to the squalid, cramped interior of the vessels, but they never learned to enjoy it.

Throughout their arduous training, the strengths and weaknesses of the volunteers were constantly evaluated; everything they did and said during these interminable months played a role in determining who would go and who would be left behind. If the mission were to stand any chance of succeeding, the personnel conducting it would need to be the very best, both mentally and physically. The Navy recognized that a midget submarine would get the men to within striking distance of the *Tirpitz,* but it would take cold-blooded courage and fierce determination to breach the defenses and sink her.

Finally, after nearly 18 months of training, planning, and construction, Operation Source was ready for the ultimate test. The crews had been finalized, and among those selected was a 26-year-old Scotsman, Lieutenant Duncan Cameron, Royal Naval Reserve, whose natural leadership qualities and stout character saw him awarded the command of X-6. Another successful candidate was a 22-year-old veteran of the submarine service, Lieutenant Godfrey Place RN DSC, who took command of X-7. These remarkable men were destined to play pivotal roles in what was to be one of the most daring exploits of the entire war.

The Admiralty's operational plan called for each pair of submarines to make their way independently to a position west of the Shetland Islands. From this point, they would sail on parallel courses approximately 20 miles apart to the jumping-off point at Soroy Sound, some 11 miles off the Norwegian coast and almost 100 miles from Kaafjord.

From this location, the X-craft would negotiate their way independently up Altafjord via Sternsund, cut their way through the nets at the entrance to Kaafjord, and then slip under the enclosures surrounding each of the ships to lay their charges. X-5, X-6, and X-7 would strike at the *Tirpitz*; X-8 at the *Lutzow*; and X-9 and X-10 at the *Scharnhorst*. It was an extraordinary undertaking, but these were extraordinary times and the stakes were high.

Shrouded in secrecy, the boats sailed from Loch Cairnbawn behind their parent submarines on the night of September 11-12, 1943. Ahead lay 1,200 long, gray sea miles to Norway. As a select few watched the motley fleet disappear into the gathering darkness they knew that nothing like this had ever been attempted before. They wondered how many, if any, would make it home.

Operation Source was, in so many ways, an experimental undertaking. There had been little practical experience to draw upon, and planning staff anticipated the likelihood of mishaps en route—they seemed inevitable.

One of the many unknowns involved the reliability of the manila towlines. Nylon was the superior material, but only three were available in time for the mission, and it was hoped that the manila lines would work—but nobody knew for sure. As events transpired, the doubts surrounding their suitability would soon be tragically borne out.

After four uneventful days of passage, the weather began to rapidly deteriorate on September 15. As the larger vessels pounded through the mounting seas, life for the passage crews soon became unbearable. Wretched with debilitating seasickness, the men could neither stand properly nor lie down comfortably as they wrestled around the clock with their charges, which, on the end of their towlines, where being tossed and pitched about like kites in a storm.

The stress loads on the cables increased dramatically as the vessels surged as much as 100 feet through the water, and eventually the manila lines to X-8 and X-7 succumbed to the strain and parted. The passage crews in both the X-craft realized almost immediately what had happened and surfaced. It was no easy task to bring them both back under tow with auxiliary lines, and many hours were lost before the journey could continue. The troubles for X-8, however, were far from over as a water leak in the starboard mine gave the vessel a pronounced list.

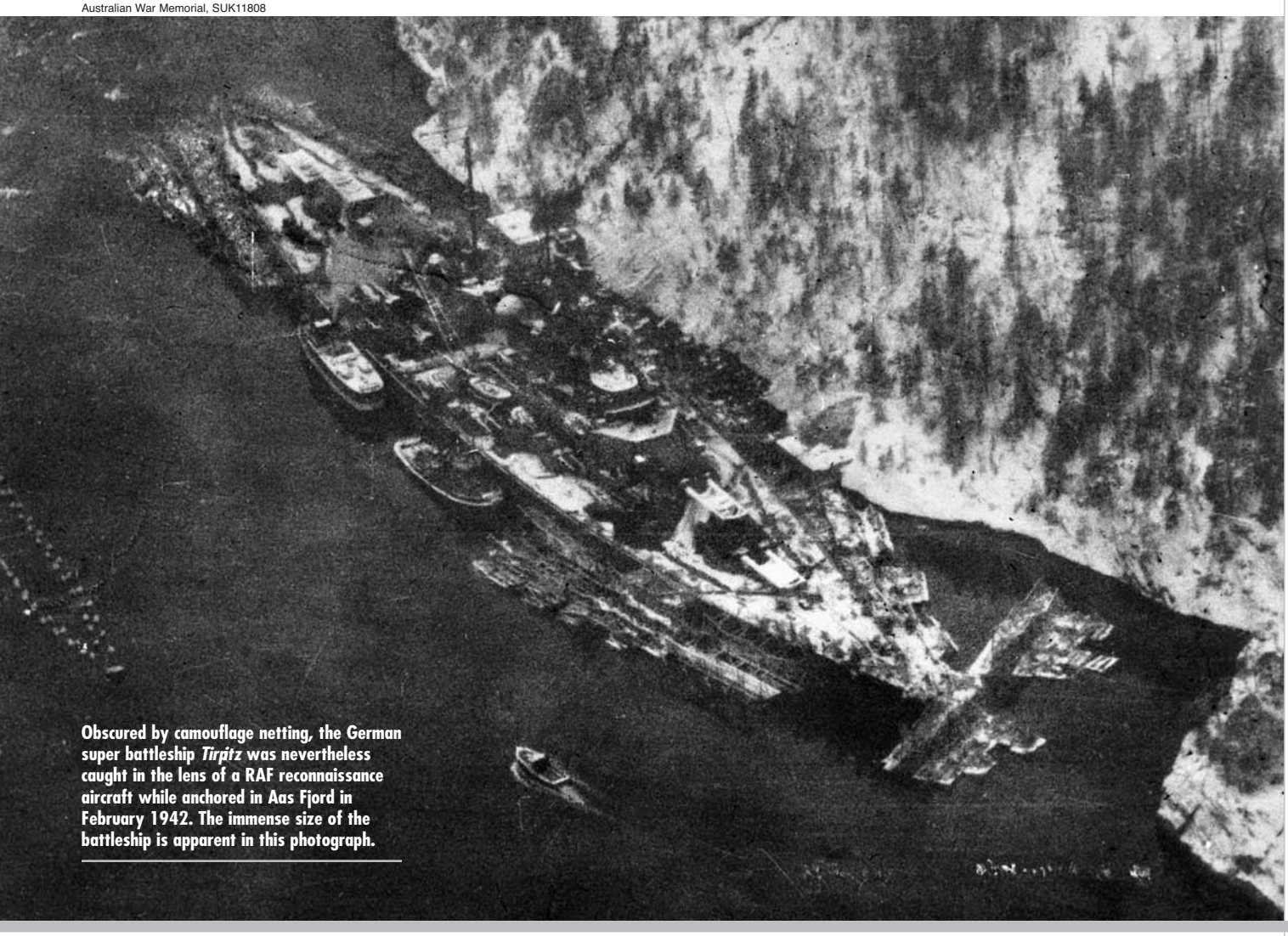
The crew struggled hard to maintain control, but it soon became clear that they would need to jettison the charge and continue with only one. The faulty explosive was put on "safe" and released to the depths, but a short time later the port mine also developed a leak. With little alternative, it too had to be jettisoned. It exploded prematurely, causing substantial shock damage to the submarine's internal systems.

With the battered X-8 now unable to dive and close to foundering, the decision was made to scuttle her. The manila tows soon claimed another casualty when the cable to X-9 suddenly snapped. Unlike the previous line failures, this break occurred near the mother ship leaving the full weight of the waterlogged towline hanging off X-9's nose. Already trimmed bow heavy to counteract the upward pull of the parent vessel, X-9 dived out of control to the bottom of the North Sea, taking her transit crew with her.

Not only defective equipment threatened to derail the mission. At 0105 on the morning of September 20, Lieutenant Place, who was now aboard X-7, brought the vessel up to ventilate. The towing submarine had also surfaced to find itself on a collision course with a drifting mine. Following evasive action, the crew watched the mine pass by only to see their wake drag the mine's mooring line onto the tow cable to X-7. In a few seconds, the lethal charge slid down the hawser and wedged itself in the bow of the X-craft where it bounced up and down with the pitching seas.

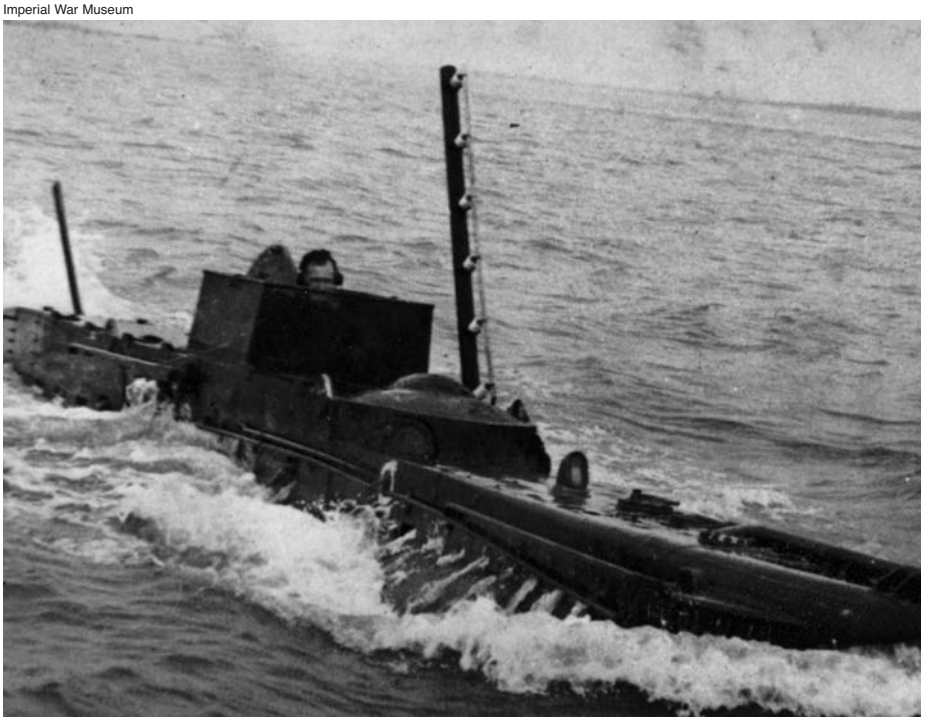
Lieutenant Place immediately scrambled along the deck casing and, as the wind and

Australian War Memorial, SUK11808



Obscured by camouflage netting, the German super battleship *Tirpitz* was nevertheless caught in the lens of a RAF reconnaissance aircraft while anchored in Aas Fjord in February 1942. The immense size of the battleship is apparent in this photograph.

Imperial War Museum



A prototype X-craft churns along during trials. Although it experienced some navigational and mechanical challenges, the midget submarine proved well suited for the attack on *Tirpitz*.

spray tore at his clothes, calmly untangled the mooring line from the bow, then deftly kicked the mine clear with his boot. The unwelcome stowaway soon disappeared from view and the voyage resumed.

By approximately 1800 on September 20, the four remaining X-craft had finally made their landfalls seaward of Soroy Sound as scheduled. Last minute reconnaissance over the target area, however, indicated that neither the *Scharnhorst* nor *Lutzow* were in their berths. With X-8 and X-9 already lost, the Admiralty decided that the four remaining submarines were to attack the *Tirpitz*. By 2000, the X-craft had successfully slipped their tows and set a course for the declared minefield at the entrance to Sternsund. There was no turning back now; they were on their own.

With X-6 running on the surface, Lieutenant Cameron took up lookout duty on deck as his craft steadily motored through the short arctic night toward the coast. Skirting the outer rim of the minefield, X-6 passed safely through the first of many obstacles, and soon Cameron could make out the rugged peaks towering on either side of the entrance to Stjernsund, a narrow passage of water leading to Altafjord. The mouth of Stjernsund was protected by shore batteries and torpedo tubes, and with the onset of dawn Cameron submerged to 60 feet and quickly slipped through with the incoming tide. He waited until he was about a mile inside the fjord then cautiously brought X-6 up to periscope depth and scanned the glassy water for any signs of trouble.

It was such a beautifully tranquil place that it was hard to believe that violent death could be only a matter of moments away; it was a sobering thought, and Cameron dived and continued his journey concealed in the gloom of the shaded northern shore. So far, everything had gone smoothly, but they all knew the real test was yet to come.

The other three X-craft had also passed through the entrance at Stjernsund without difficulty, but water seeping into X-10 caused an electrical short circuit that disabled both her periscope and gyrocompass. Despite valiant efforts to repair the defects, the bitterly disappointed crew realized that, with their craft hopelessly crippled, they were out of the running. To avoid compromising the mission, they would spend the daylight hours of September 22 on the bottom before eventually retracing their steps out of the fjord.

The original attacking force of six had now been whittled down to just three, and there were still many hard miles to travel. The crew of X-6 expected to reach the inner end of the waterway near Altaford by last light and planned to spend the night among the Bratholme group of islands to recharge the batteries and prepare for the attack the following morning, September 22.

They were making good progress, and despite the rigors of the 1,200-mile journey, X-6 had been handed over in near faultless condition. But, as the day progressed, things started to go awry. A water leak in one of the side charges had steadily worsened, giving the vessel a severe list to starboard, and her automatic helmsmen had broken down, but of most concern was her periscope lens, which had begun to continually flood. The leak was discovered to be outside the hull and unrepairable. The periscope would therefore have to be tediously stripped down and emptied of water after nearly every use.

In isolation, the mechanical failures did not present insurmountable problems, but a reliable periscope was essential for Cameron to safely conn the craft up the fjord. Its slender shape had been specially designed to minimize water disturbance, but such a feature counted for nothing if he could not see anything through it. When the action started the following day, he prayed that it would not let him down.

With the onset of darkness, X-6 maneuvered into a small, desolate brushwood cove, and while his crew was below preparing for the trials ahead, Cameron climbed out on the deck casing to look around. In the distance, he could see the lights of the large German destroyer base at Lieffsbotun and the town of Alta beyond, but secreted away in their small hideaway it was dark, bitterly cold, and silent—or so he thought. Suddenly, not more than 30 yards away, the door to a cabin burst open, bathing the area in bright light. Cameron froze, barely able to breathe, as male voices trailed out over the water.

Were they German?

Within a few seconds, the door was closed and Cameron was once again swallowed up in the darkness. Quickly recovering from the shock, he decided to find somewhere else to lay up for the night. However, upon leaving the small harbor, X-6 was nearly run down by a fishing boat only to then narrowly avoid another vessel coming from the opposite direction. It was a nerve-wracking experience, and Cameron ensured that their next stopping place was remote and uninhabited.

While keeping watch topside in the still arctic night, he reflected on what had been a very eventful 24 hours. It was both surreal and exhilarating to realize that in the midst of the most destructive war the world had ever known, four Royal Navy seamen could actually be sitting squirreled away deep inside an enemy fleet anchorage listening to the BBC and drinking cocoa. The wonder of the moment was shattered at 2100 when a volley of star shells and searchlights erupted from the destroyer base across the water.

Had the Germans detected one of their comrades? They waited anxiously for something to happen, but to their relief no alarms were sounded, no engines were heard to start, and soon all was quiet again. Cameron had no idea what the commotion had been about, but he did know that he would be happier once they were on their way.

At 0130 on the morning of September 22, Cameron went over his attack orders once more, then destroyed them. Prior to leaving Scotland, the X-craft commanders had taken precautionary measures to avoid blowing each other up by agreeing to drop their cargoes between 0500 and 0800 with charges set to explode between 0800 and 0900. Cameron planned to unload his bombs at 0630, then retreat out of the fjord, but when he tried to preset the timers he found the fuses on the port side explosive continually shorted out. There was no way of knowing when it would explode.

By now the mechanical attrition was sapping the crew's confidence, but the young officer was determined to press on. With little discussion, he gave his orders, and at 0145 they set a course for the *Tirpitz*. The final stage of the attack was underway.

The nets covering the mouth of Kaafjord were 158 feet deep and included a 437-yard-wide boom gate fitted near the shallow southern shore. By 0400, X-6 had maneuvered to within half a mile of these formidable defenses, and her diver was suiting up in readiness to cut a hole through the antisubmarine netting. As they closed to within 30 feet of the mesh, the sound of propellers became audible overhead as a Norwegian trawler headed for the boom gate.

Cameron realized it must have been open and without hesitation brought X-6 to the surface. The crew could scarcely believe what he was going to do as he maneuvered into the wake of the coaster and with incredible audacity proceeded through the gate in broad daylight. It was a torturous passage as they waited for an alarm to be sounded, but, incredibly, they made it through without detection and immediately dived.

They could hardly fathom their luck. Perhaps in the choppy water the Germans mistook the low silhouette of the X-craft for a towed barge or raft. In any case, Cameron's bold maneuver had paid off and by guess and by God the small submarine began groping its way up the fjord toward the *Tirpitz,* which was now only three miles away.

Through the faulty periscope, Cameron spied a waterway crammed with German warships of every size, and it was chilling to realize that to reach the *Tirpitz* he would have to slip right through the middle of them. A tanker sitting at anchor refueling two destroyers lay directly between X-6 and the *Tirpitz,* and by dead reckoning he set a course that would, in approximately two hours, take them past the tanker's stern. It was always going to be a harrowing journey, but the source of most anxiety for the crew arose from the noise generated by the submarine's trim pumps. They would have to remain in constant use to maintain the craft's buoyancy in the differing water density, but the sound they emitted was precisely what a hydrophone operator would be listening for.

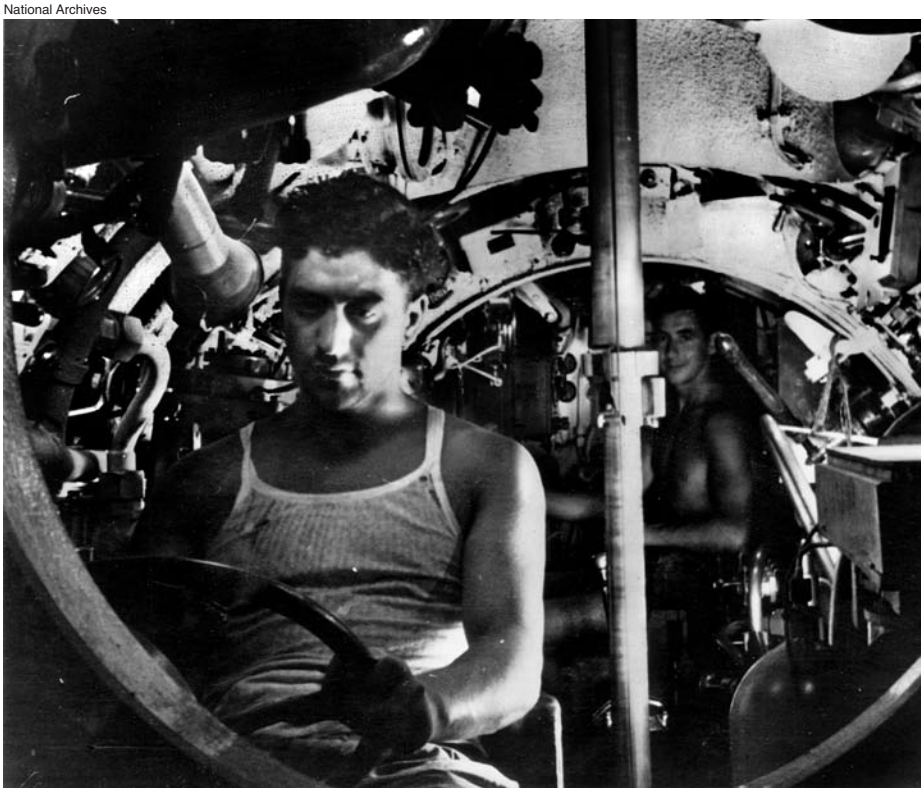
Progress up the fjord was agonizingly slow, but after two hours Cameron expected to be somewhere near the tanker's stern and returned to periscope depth to steal a quick look. The hazy image in the lens was enough to send him reeling back in horror; X-6 had surfaced midway between the bow of a destroyer and her mooring buoy. He immediately crash dived to 60 feet, the crew shut down the craft, and they waited. How could they not have been seen or detected by a listening post? These lengthy spells of inactivity punctuated by moments of sheer terror were as taxing on a man's strength as a grueling marathon, but as the minutes ticked by with no German response, Cameron cautiously pressed on again.

By 0700, X-6 had come within reach of the battleship's antitorpedo netting, but since passing into Kaafjord the submarine had begun to labor severely. She was in fact barely seaworthy. Cameron once again had to come up to periscope depth to gain his bearings. It was an incredible risk in such a small waterway, but at this vital stage it would have been impossible to navigate their way to the *Tirpitz* by guesswork alone. Through the faulty lens, he could make out the ship, but as he began scanning the water around her, the periscope motor burned out, filling the submarine with choking smoke

As X-6 submerged to contain the fire, Cameron sensed the despondencyof the men. They had given their all in unimaginable discomfort for 35 hours straight, but faulty workmanship and defective equipment were undermining their every move. However, the predetermined attack period was fast approaching. Time was now critical.

Inside the stifling hot control compartment, heavy with fumes and condensation, stony faces with bloodshot eyes stared at one another in the gloom. They were clearly showing the strain, but nobody could bring themselves to say what they all were thinking. They had no idea how the other X-craft had fared, but if the mechanical defects of X-6 were any indication, they had to assume they were the only ones who had made it this far.

National Archives



British seamen operate their X-craft in the cramped space available for the four-man crew. Mystery continues to surround the disappearance of X-5, one of the midget submarines that attacked the battleship *Tirpitz*.

U.S. Navy

German sailors stand on the deck of the massive battleship *Tirpitz* moored in a Norwegian fjord sometime between 1942 and 1944. One of the warship's 15-inch gun turrets is trained abeam, while camouflage floats are seen in the distance. *Tirpitz* was also well protected by antiaircraft guns on shore.

Little was said, but clearly no one wanted to admit defeat 46 yards from the ship they had come to destroy; an opportunity like this might never come again. The decision was made to press on, but the crew had no illusions about its chances. Even if they remained undetected, X-6 was in no condition to make good an escape. None of them expected to be leaving Kaafjord.

Hugging the north shore, X-6 dived to pass under the nets, which were believed to have been no deeper than 60 feet. But after several attempts at various depths, it was realized that the mesh went all the way to the bottom. The Admiralty intelligence was wrong, and now, at this critical moment, there was no way through. The latest setback came as a body blow, but Cameron, dizzy with fatigue, would not let the mission end like this. His blood was now boiling, and he was determined to find another way in. He brought the vessel to periscope depth once again to check the boat gate located close to the shore and spied a picket launch about to pass through.

With a reckless disregard for the danger, Cameron surfaced into the wash of the small boat. The ploy had succeeded at the entrance to Kaafjord, and maybe it would work again. Quickly juggling the pump controls, the crewmen motored through the gate in broad daylight right behind the picket boat, bumping and scraping the bottom as they did. Surely, this time their boldness would be their undoing, but, remarkably, they made it through unnoticed. As the boom gate closed behind them, Cameron took X-6 down into deeper water and set a course that would take them under the stern of the *Tirpitz*.

Like silent assassins sliding through the shadows, they inched their way through the frigid waters to within striking distance of their target. Suddenly the X-6 ran aground and momentarily broke the surface less than 200 yards from the battleship. The disturbance was seen by a lookout, but British luck continued to hold when the sighting was dismissed as being merely a porpoise and no alert was raised. The German sailors on *Tirpitz* had endured many false alarms over the years and now avoided instigating them for fear of ridicule.

Inevitably, though, Cameron's run of luck finally ended a few minutes later when X-6 careered into a submerged rock that wrecked the gyrocompass and thrust the vessel to the surface 80 yards abeam of the ship. There was no mistaking what she was this time, but the sighting of X-6 caused considerable confusion aboard the *Tirpitz*. An incorrect alarm sent men scurrying to secure watertight doors instead of their action stations, and vital minutes were lost before the correct submarine alert was sounded. Even then, few senior officers believed a submarine could have gotten through. The X-craft was too close for the ship's big guns to depress sufficiently to engage her, so crewmembers opened fire with small arms and threw grenades.

Now the crew of X-6 knew that the Germans were aware of their presence. They no longer had to worry about what might happen; it was now a matter of completing their mission before it did happen. Being in the line of fire threw off the fatigue that had enveloped Cameron's men and rekindled their determination to hit back. They too had powerful weapons, and they were now intent on using them.

As bullets churned up the water around the vessel, Cameron quickly dived, but with the periscope now almost completely inoperable and the gyrocompass out of action, he had no idea which way he was heading. Oblivious to the chaos unfolding above him, he blindly groped his way toward what looked like the shadow of the ship but fouled a wire hanging over the side and was stuck fast. After desperate maneuvering, the submarine broke free of the snag only to shoot to the surface again close to the port bow. Undaunted by the hail of bullets once again striking the hull, Cameron took the submarine down and backed her under the *Tirpitz* where he quickly released the charges beside B Turret.

With no hope of escape, the exhausted crew destroyed its secret documents and equipment. As the sailors brought X-6 to the surface to surrender, Cameron ordered her sea cocks opened and her motor left running full astern with the hydroplanes to dive. As they opened the hatch, the firing immediately stopped and the men scrambled onto the deck. A launch from the ship was soon alongside to pick them up, and a German officer tried to secure a tow to the X-craft but the line was hastily cut as the submarine began to sink, almost taking the launch down with her.

The four prisoners were taken to the ship, and to the surprise of the Germans, smartly saluted the colors as they stepped onto the deck. Under guard, they stood huddled together looking bedraggled and physically spent, wondering what the future held for them as the minutes ticked by. On the express orders of the *Tirpitz*'s commander, Captain Hans Meyer, the men were immediately given coffee and schnapps.

Meanwhile, at almost the same instant Cameron and his crew were scuttling their vessel, Lieutenant Place in X-7 was sitting astern of the *Tirpitz,* preparing to offload his deadly cargo. Earlier in the morning, he had literally climbed over the nets at Kaafjord but had soon become entangled in the netting around *Lutzow*'s empty birth. After struggling desperately for an hour, Place finally broke free only to become entangled in *Tirpitz*'s netting. The violent effort undertaken to break loose had damaged his gyrocompass, and the craft broke the surface at 0710.

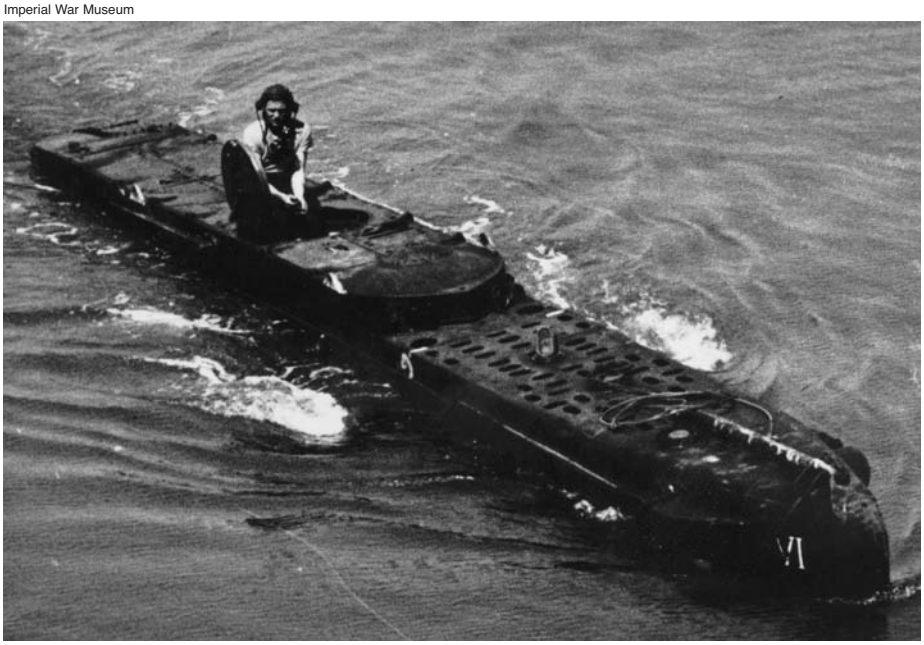
With the Germans at that moment occupied with X-6, Place was not seen. Diving once again, Place, like Cameron before him, found that the nets went all the way to the bottom, but without realizing it he had fortuitously slipped through an opening on the seabed. By this time he had completely lost his bearings and had come up to periscope depth to discover the *Tirpitz* only 98 feet away. He immediately submerged and made his run to the target at a depth of 40 feet.

Hitting the ship on the port side, the X-7 slipped under her keel. At this point, Place could hear the detonation of grenades around Cameron's X-6 but assumed they were meant for him. Sidling along the hull, he placed one charge beneath the bridge and the other near the stern under the aft turrets. Each was set to explode in approximately one hour's time.

It was now 0720, and Place attempted to escape, but without a compass he would have to guess his way back to the opening on the seabed. Sliding over the top of the first net, he was spotted by the Germans but disappeared from view. After an hour trying to find the opening, he only succeeded in getting himself entangled again. This time he was stuck fast, fully realizing he was about to be destroyed by his own charges.

Aboard the *Tirpitz,* the Germans had at first refused to accept that Cameron and his crew were British. They suspected them of being Russians and were unwilling to believe they could possibly have come all the way from England to Kaafjord in such a small submarine. Passing crewmembers mocked the prisoners for not having used their torpedoes when they had the chance, but Captain Meyer, who had been studying his captives from the bridge, had grown suspicious. Privately, he greatly admired their courage and daring, but in his mind, they lacked the demeanor of men who had failed.

Imperial War Museum



Prototype midget submarine X-3 or X-4 gets underway during trials in 1942. The explosive charges planted by heroic British sailors in X-craft midget submarines disabled the German battleship *Tirpitz*.

Meyer was soon convinced that they had not been armed with torpedoes but had instead used mines either on the ship or on the seabed. Divers were immediately ordered over the side to check the hull, and attempts were made to move the ship by heaving on the starboard cable and veering on her port to swing the bows away from the likely position of the charges. Meyer had earlier considered taking the ship into the deeper water beyond its enclosure, but the sighting of X-7 outside the nets changed his mind. In any case, it would have taken over an hour to get the ship underway.

The prospect of another submarine loose in Kaafjord had caused absolute pandemonium. Cameron and his men had also seen X-7 slide over the top of the nets earlier and had noticed that her mine clamps were empty. As guards herded them below, they could not let on that with eight tons of explosives beneath the ship, this was the last place they wanted to be!

A short time later, at 0812, a series of colossal explosions violently heaved *Tirpitz*'s stern six feet out of the water. A German sailor who had also served on the *Scharnhorst* recalled the moment. "We've had torpedo hits, we've had bomb hits. We hit two mines in the channel, but there's never been an explosion like that." Lights failed, equipment was strewn in every direction, and men were hurled through the air like rag dolls. The four prisoners were dragged back onto the deck to be confronted with utter chaos and panic.

"The German gun-crew(s)," one British sailor later recalled, "shot up a number of their own tankers and small boats and also wiped out a gun position inboard with uncontrolled fire." Orders were issued, then countermanded, as officers tried to regain control of the men who were running in all directions. With tensions running high, the mood of the Germans had turned very ugly, and the British seamen were lined up against a bulkhead where an outraged officer, brandishing his pistol, demanded to know how many more submarines there were.

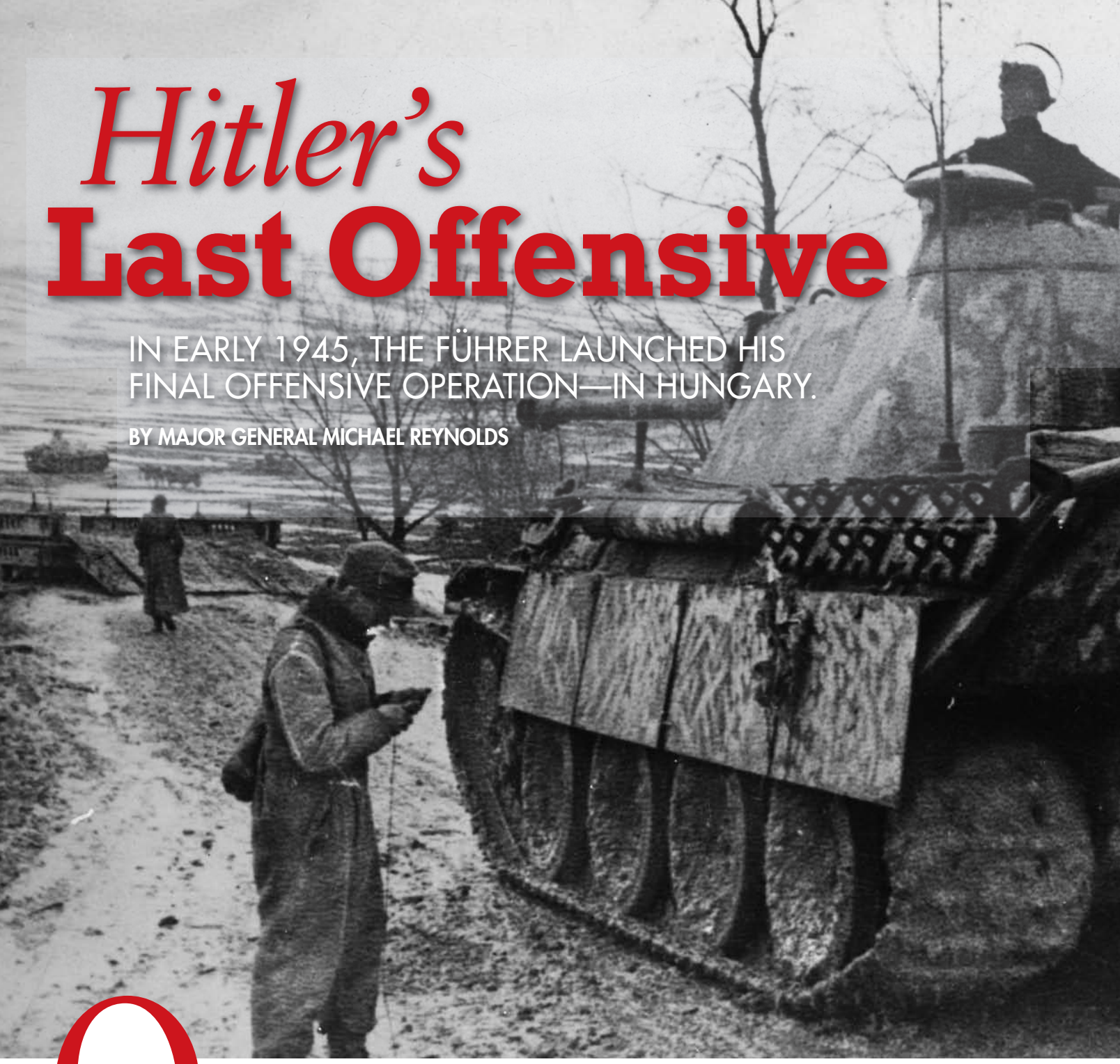
When they refused to answer, Cameron was convinced they were about to be shot. It was not until Admiral Oskar Kummetz, the senior naval officer in the region, came aboard to find out what had happened that the situation was defused. He stopped on his way to the bridge,

Continued on page 75

Hitler's Last Offensive

IN EARLY 1945, THE FÜHRER LAUNCHED HIS FINAL OFFENSIVE OPERATION—IN HUNGARY.

BY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL REYNOLDS



ON JANUARY 12, 1945, Hitler received the news he had been dreading—the Soviet Red Army had launched its winter offensive. He wasted no time. Within four days Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, commander in chief West, received the following order: "CinC West is to withdraw the following formations from operations [they were still involved in the Battle of the Bulge] immediately and refit them: I SS Panzer Corps with 1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte and 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend; II SS Panzer Corps with 2nd SS Panzer Division Das Reich and 9th SS Panzer Division Hohenstaufen. Last day of refitting is 30th January. Reinforcements will be provided under the authority of the SS Supreme Operations Office."

These elite formations were to be reinforced and reequipped to lead another great offensive—this time on the Eastern Front. Hitler viewed the threat from the East as far more serious than that posed by the Western Allies, and he was determined to protect his Greater German Reich from Stalin's "sub-humans." The fact that the Battle of the Bulge had frittered away many of the men and much of the equipment needed to throw back and destroy the Soviet armies now threatening Germany was of no consequence, and he sent his personal adjutant, SS Major Otto Günsche, to the commander of the Sixth Panzer Army, General Sepp Dietrich, to tell him that within four weeks his army, comprising I and II SS Panzer Corps, would be moved to the Eastern Front to launch a new offensive, code-named Spring Awakening.

The commander and a crewman of a German Mark V Panther medium tank peer toward the Soviet enemy and prepare to defend their ground somewhere in Hungary on February 26, 1945. This tank belongs to the battle-hardened SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler. Within weeks, Hitler's final offensive of World War II commenced in Hungary.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

Operation Spring Awakening was designed to secure the vital oil deposits in southern Hungary and perhaps even regain the oil fields of Romania. Both Dietrich and General Heinz Guderian, the Army chief of staff, had wanted the Sixth Panzer Army deployed behind the Oder River to protect Berlin and northern Germany, but Hitler would have none of it. The only natural oil deposits in German-controlled territory were those around Nagykanizsa in southern Hungary and, with Allied air attacks disrupting and often neutralizing the synthetic gasoline production sites for long periods, it was essential to protect them. Without this crude oil the war could not be continued. Dietrich and the trusted divisions of the Waffen SS were to be given responsibility for Spring Awakening.

It proved impossible to fully refit Dietrich's divisions by January 30; personnel and material replacements continued to arrive during the loading for the move to the east, during the move itself, and even after arrival in Hungary. Indeed, in view of the massive, and by now almost continuous, Allied air onslaught, the general state of the German war economy and not least, the appalling casualty rate sustained in five and a half years of war, it is astounding that Dietrich's formation was made ready for an offensive action at all in such a short time, actually less than a month. Men were drafted from the Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine, the slightly wounded and sick returned to their parent formations, and vehicles and tanks were delivered directly from factories.

Extraordinary measures were taken to conceal the fact that the Sixth Panzer Army was being moved to the Eastern Front. All ranks were ordered to remove their sleeve bands, and special code names were given to all components. Thus, II SS Panzer Corps became SS Training Staff South, the Das Reich Division was Training Group North, and the Hohenstaufen became Training Group South. Even regiments were redesignated as construction teams. For example, Der Führer became Otto North, after its commander, Otto Weidinger. Other deceptive measures included unloading part of the Sixth Panzer Army staff near Berlin and making it known that their final destination was in the Frankfurt-am-Oder area and, despite the air threat, actually sending the Tiger IIs of I SS Panzer Corps via the Berlin area before routing them through Vienna to Hungary.

In view of the time needed to refit and move the Sixth Panzer Army to the Eastern Front and to secure the ground west of the Danube for the new offensive, Hitler ordered a preliminary attack in Hungary on January 18. This attack was designed primarily to cut off and destroy all Soviet troops north of a line drawn from Lake Balaton through Székesfehérvar (known to the Germans as Stuhlweissenburg) to Budapest, and secondly to liberate that city—the Pest garrison had in fact withdrawn across the Danube to the hills of Buda the night before.

Since the Russians had depleted their defenses in this area to meet previous German attacks in the north, this new offensive was initially very successful. Within three days, a large section of the west bank of the Danube had been secured south of Budapest, and the Germans then turned north and northwest, threatening to link up with other forces attacking in the north and to cut off an entire Soviet Front. By the 26th, however, with their forces in the south only 20 kilometers from Buda and in the north only half that distance, the Germans were exhausted. This was the moment when Soviet Marshal Rodion Malinovsky went over to the attack. Although Székesfehérvar and the ground between it and Lake Balaton were held by February 3, the Germans were more or less back to their original positions.

Meanwhile, Marshal Georgi Zhukov's and Marshal Ivan Konev's offensives in the north had advanced over 150 kilometers. Warsaw, Lodz, and Cracow had fallen, and a Soviet Army had entered East Prussia. The Red Army was now a mere 200 kilometers from Prague and, worst of all for the German people, it had crossed the Oder River and was only 70 kilometers from Berlin. This then was the crisis situation into which the Sixth Panzer Army was about to be launched.

Another factor complicating Hitler's plan was that by mid-February 1945, the Red Army was holding a considerable bridgehead in Hungary across the Gran River north of Esztergom. This bridgehead was seen by the Germans as a potential assembly area for a major thrust toward Vienna and as such it had to be eliminated before the Germans could launch Spring Awakening. This preliminary operation was given the code name South Wind, and on February 13, Headquarters Army Group South ordered the commander of the German Eighth Army "to attack, concentrating all available infantry and armored forces, and accepting the consequent weakening of other front sectors, with the newly arrived I SS Panzer Corps.... After a short artillery preparation, to thrust from the north, to destroy the enemy in the Gran bridgehead."

Operation South Wind proved a brilliant success. In eight days Hermann Priess's I SS Panzer Corps, with valuable assistance from Panzer Corps Feldherrnhalle, recaptured over 400 square kilometers of territory, inflicted 8,800 casualties on the Red Army, and cleared seven infantry divisions and a Guards Mechanized Corps (equivalent to a German Panzer division) from west of the Gran—all for the loss of only 2,989 casualties. However, although it is remarkable that such an effective fighting machine could have been produced within a month of the Ardennes disaster, the more so when one takes into account that many of the men involved had received only minimal training, the question arises as to whether this elite

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ABOVE: During the early phase of the German offensive in Hungary in the spring of 1945, panzergrenadiers load into half-tracks before advancing toward the Soviet lines. These troops are dressed in heavy winter gear, and snow covers the landscape. RIGHT: Soviet Marshal Rodion Malinovsky (left) commanded the Second Ukrainian Front during the fighting against troops under German Waffen SS General Sepp Dietrich (right) in Hungary in the spring of 1945.

Both: National Archives

SS Panzer Corps should have been used in this operation at all.

Despite all the measures taken to disguise the arrival of the Sixth Panzer Army on the Hungarian front, units of I SS Panzer Corps were soon detected in the Gran bridgehead operation. Its commitment there, rather than in the northern part of the Eastern Front, and the knowledge that yet another SS Panzer Corps had arrived in Hungary immediately alerted the Soviets to the possibility of a German offensive. It is also obvious that the premature use of the Corps interrupted the proper refitting of its two SS Panzer Divisions and actually ensured that their effectiveness in Spring Awakening would be reduced. Taken together, these facts indicate that the use of I SS Panzer Corps in Operation South Wind was a serious mistake.

Hitler's precise aims for Operation Spring Awakening were as wildly ambitious as those in the Ardennes three months earlier. They were to destroy the Soviet forces in the region bounded by Lake Balaton and the Danube and Drava Rivers, secure the Hungarian oil deposits, and establish bridgeheads over the Danube with a view to further offensive operations.

The attack was to be carried out in the north by Sepp Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army and the III Panzer Corps of Hermann Balck's Sixth Army, and in the south, between the Drava River and the southwest corner of Lake Balaton, by the Second Panzer Army, part of Army Group Southeast and a panzer army in name only.

Serious concerns were expressed by Sepp Dietrich and his senior staff officers that as the Sixth Panzer Army and III Panzer Corps moved southeast and east they would become increasing vulnerable to any counteroffensive launched by the Soviet forces already located north of Székesfehérvar and west of the Danube. These comprised a Soviet army of three rifle corps backed by a guards mechanized corps. Since Balck's Sixth Army defenses in this area were woefully inadequate, these concerns were fully justified. Nevertheless, Hitler rejected a proposal that these Soviet forces should be dealt with first or at least engaged, and the date of Spring Awakening was confirmed as March 6.

For its premier role in this final German offensive, the Sixth Panzer Army was reinforced to a strength of six divisions: the Leibstandarte and Hitlerjugend, Das Reich and Hohenstaufen, and the I Cavalry Corps with the 3rd and 4th Cavalry Divisions. The latter were genuine mounted troops and were a considerable asset in the conditions of the Eastern Front where the horse sometimes had advantages over motorized transport.

While the Germans were preparing Spring Awakening, the Soviets were planning their own offensive that was due to start on March 15. It was designed to capture Vienna and be carried out by the Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts (Army Groups) with four armies. Although the Soviets learned of the impending German offensive during the Gran bridgehead fighting, the Supreme Soviet Headquarters in Moscow decreed that two of the Russian armies due to take part in the Vienna offensive were to continue their preparations and were not to be included in any defensive planning.

Since the main German threat was known to be in the Third Ukrainian Front sector, the Soviets concentrated the bulk of their forces between Lake Balaton and a point some 20 kilometers to the north of Székesfehérvar. Here Marshal Fyodor Tolbukhin massed three armies together with two tank corps and a guards mechanized corps. According to the Soviet official history, his forces totalled 407,000 men, 6,890 guns and mortars, 407 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 965 aircraft, but it is likely that many of his formations were much weaker than these figures suggest.

The Third Ukrainian Front commander reasoned that if and when the Germans attacked they would be sufficiently weakened by the depth of his defenses for him to launch his own offensive as originally planned, using the reserve armies and any forces unaffected by the fighting.

German intelligence of the Soviet defenses was good. Although it failed to identify the correct designation and exact positioning of every formation, it estimated the number of armies, corps, and divisions in the attack area with remarkable accuracy. Its only serious errors were in not detecting a guards mechanized corps and a guards cavalry corps in the path of the Sixth Panzer Army, and the positions of two of the three corps of Tolbukhin's second echelon army astride the Danube.

To the north of the Third Ukrainian Front, Marshal Malinovsky's Second Ukrainian Front numbered some 500,000 men and another 600 tanks, but over 400 of these were in reserve for the forthcoming offensive.

The primary component of the Spring Awakening offensive can be narrowed down to the area between Lakes Balaton and Valencei. There the attack involved Sepp Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army and the III Panzer Corps of the Sixth Army, with some 300 tanks and Sturmgeschutze self-propelled assault guns. These forces were opposed by more than 1,200 guns and mortars and, in theory but in the event not in practice, by some 300 Soviet tanks and assault guns.

The state of the ground caused great anxiety in the German command. At the end of February the weather had become unexpectedly warm, and as the ground thawed all movement became difficult and cross-country movement, even by tracked vehicles, virtually impossible. The onset of what is called *razputitza*, a three- to four-week period of almost complete immobility in spring and autumn due to muddy conditions, did not augur well for Hitler's last offensive.

Dietrich's chief operations officer reported, "In the constricted area between Lakes Balaton and Valencei the mud became alarming. The closer one came to the … assembly area, the more widespread the land that was under water—impassable for all kinds of vehicles. It looked the same … in the enemy area, as far as the terrain permitted observation.… A Panzer attack in open terrain under these conditions is out of the question."

As a result of this report, a request was made to Headquarters Army Group South that the attack should be postponed for at least two days, and Dietrich himself asked General Guderian in Berlin to support the proposal—to no avail.

The II SS Panzer Corps' final assembly area was just to the south of Székesfehérvar and its initial mission was to establish a bridgehead over the Danube between Dunaujvaros and Dunaföldvar, some 60 kilometers away. Das Reich and Hohenstaufen were to attack side by side on a 10-kilometer frontage, from a start line running due west from Seregélyes. The initial objectives were Sarkeresztur and Sarosd, both about 10 kilometers from the start line.

The III Panzer Corps was tasked with screening the corps' left flank, and its boundary with I SS Panzer Corps was the Sarviz canal, which together with the adjacent Sarviz River formed a major obstacle. On the right of I SS was I Cavalry Corps. The objective of these two corps was the Sio canal between Mezökomarom and

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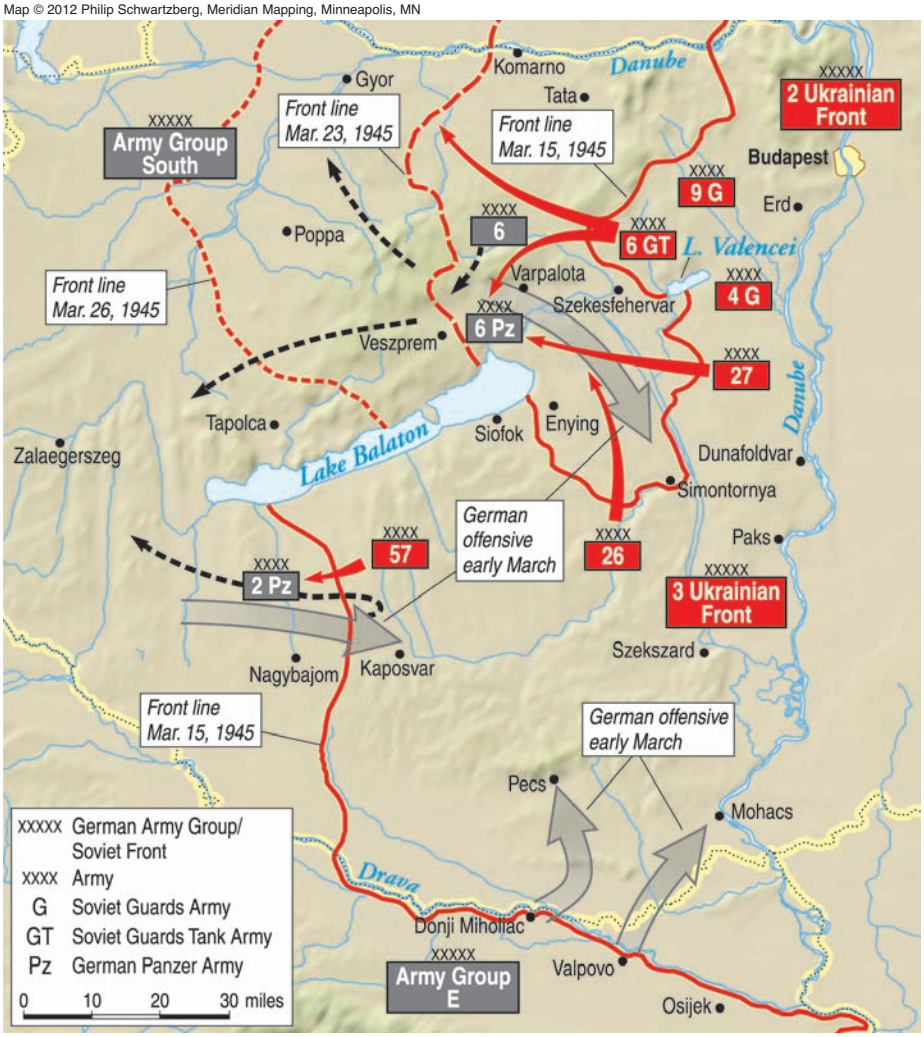

Operation Spring Awakening was launched in the East by elements of three German panzer armies in the spring of 1945. One of its primary objectives was to safeguard German access to the oil fields of Romania.

Simontornya, 15 and 25 kilometers away respectively.

Units of Balck's Sixth Army were manning the forward defenses in front of these assault forces and would come under command as the attack developed. A panzer division, the armored element of another, and a motorized brigade were held in Army Group South Reserve.

The area over which the Waffen SS divisions were to advance, although very open, is gently rolling country with a number of significant hill features and ridges. There were only two hard surface roads running southeast from Székesfehérvar, and even these had been turned into rivers of mud by the thaw. Had the ground been frozen at the time of the attack, the initial results might well have been very different.

The Soviet defenses between Lakes Balaton and Valencei were constructed in great depth—on average some 30 kilometers. Seven infantry divisions were holding the front line between the lakes and four more, one of which was in Army reserve, were sited in depth between Sarbogard, Mezökomarom, and the southeast edge of Lake Balaton. Two of the frontline divisions were to the east of Lake Balaton, immediately in front of I Cavalry Corps, two faced I SS Panzer Corps, two more were opposite II SS Panzer Corps, and a divisional equivalent was in front of III Panzer Corps. The XVIII Tank Corps, with about 75 tanks and armored assault guns, provided a mobile reserve in the area of Sarosd, directly in the path of II SS Panzer Corps, and four more rifle divisions and a guards mechanized corps were situated just to the west of the Danube directly covering II SS Panzer Corps' objectives of Dunaujvaros and Dunaföldvar.

As if all this was not enough to contend with, the Soviets had a further 12 rifle divisions within 30 kilometers of the east bank of the Danube and three more between the west bank and Lake Valencei. When one considers that the normal ratio expected for a successful attack is three to one in favor of the attacker, it becomes clear that the Sixth Panzer Army in general, and II SS Panzer Corps in particular, had been given formidable tasks.

A detailed Russian study of the Lake Balaton offensive gives full details of the strength and dispositions of one of the divisions forming the Soviet defense, the 233rd Rifle Division. This particular division was opposing the Hitlerjügend and part of the Leibstandarte, but the divisions facing the Das Reich and the Hohenstaufen divisions would have been similar in strength and deployment.

The study says that between February 18 and March 3 the 233rd Rifle Division had dug 27 kilometers of trenches, 130 gun and mortar positions, 113 dugouts, 70 command posts and observation points, and laid 4,249 antitank and 5,058 antipersonnel mines, all this on a frontage of 5 kilometers. It goes on to quote a figure of 114 guns and mortars, including six 122mm howitzers and 33 120mm mortars for the division, giving an average of 22 guns and mortars per kilometer of front, with up to 67 able to fire on the most important axes. Although there were no tanks in this defensive zone, there was an average of 17 antitank guns per kilometer forming 23 tank killing grounds.

The division was deployed with two regiments forward and a third on a flank in depth. This latter regiment was given counterattack tasks into what the divisional commander considered to be three areas of vital ground. The defenses were made up of three zones. The first, 1 to 1.5 kilometers deep, comprised two continuous trench lines and parts of a third. Some 1.5 to two kilometers farther back was another position made up of one continuous and one intermittent trench and then, three to five kilometers from the frontline lay a final trench line and strongpoint.

In terms of personnel strength, the study claims that on March 6 the division was 70 percent below its authorized strength and that its regiments, with an average strength of only 665 men, had therefore been reduced to two instead

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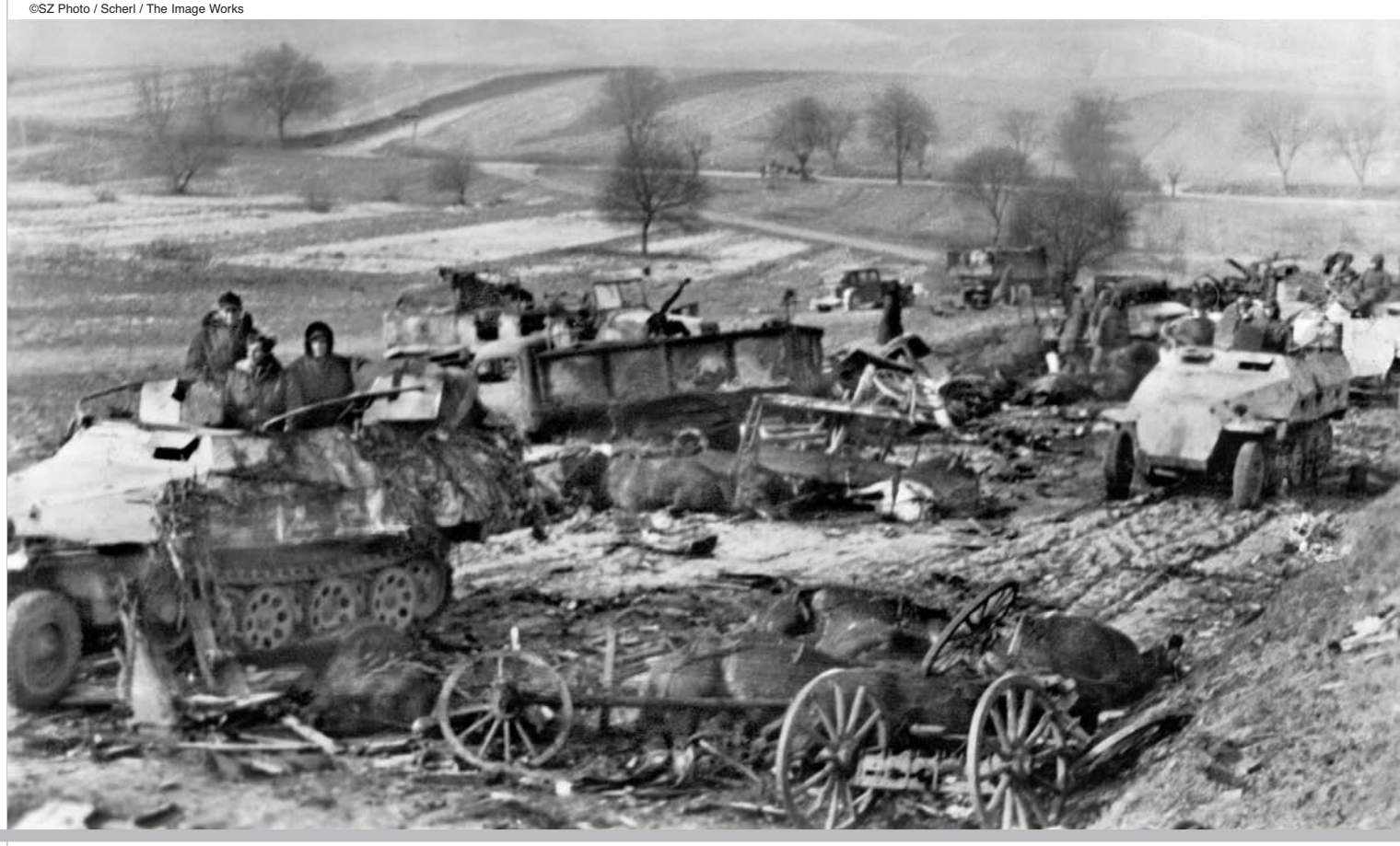

of three battalions. This may well be true, but just as the Germans sometimes exaggerated their losses in order that the actions of the survivors might appear more heroic, so it is more than likely that the real divisional strength was in fact higher, at least in the region of 40 percent of authorized establishment or, in other words, nearer 5,000 than the 3,500 quoted. The whole study is written in the heroic style.

On March 2, General Wilhelm Bittrich's II SS Panzer Corps was placed on an alert status and told to be prepared to move. All training was immediately suspended. The following day, its divisions, Das Reich and the Hohenstaufen, were ordered forward to their final assembly areas for the new offensive, south and southeast of Székesfehérvar. By first light on the 4th, Das Reich, after moving through Györ and Zirc, had reached the Varpalota area while the Hohenstaufen, following a route through Kisbér, was in the region of Mor.

It seems that detailed orders for the attack were not received until around midday on the 5th—only 16 hours before H-hour and when the leading grenadiers were still over 20 kilometers away from their final jumping-off points. A lack of cover and clogged routes meant that most of the transport vehicles had to be left well to the north and the men had to complete this march carrying their full equipment and combat loads of ammunition.

To compound this already desperate situation, the routes they had to take and share through Székesfehérvar with III Panzer Corps were a morass of mud. Then, to compound the whole problem, as darkness fell it began to snow. There was no possibility of either division's tanks or heavy equipment reaching the forward assembly areas in time for the attack. Complaints by both divisional commanders and the corps chief of staff that there was no possibility of II SS Panzer Corps being ready at H-hour were to no avail. Bittrich was not empowered to authorize a delay or postponement and Dietrich's appeal to Guderian had already been rejected. The attack order was a Führer Order, and that was that.

Priess's I SS Panzer Corps was more fortunate. Although it faced similar problems, it had its route through Polgardi to itself, and it reached its forward assembly area southeast of that town in time for H-hour.

As dawn broke on March 6, snow was still falling from low cloud and the temperature hovered around zero degrees Celsius. The ground was frozen near the surface, and men and vehicles sank into thick mud the moment they moved off the few roads available. Conditions were very similar to those experienced in the Ardennes only three months earlier.

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ABOVE: The bodies of dead Red Army soldiers lie strewn around the knocked-out hulk of a Soviet tank in the town of Székesfehérvár in central Hungary. The soldiers were killed during the fight to recapture the town from the Germans. The tank is an American-built M4 Sherman obtained by the Soviets through an aid program. OPPOSITE: During offensive operations in Hungary in March 1945, German half-tracks, several of them loaded with panzergrenadiers, pause among the wreckage of a Red Army supply column caught in the open and decimated earlier in Operation Spring Awakening.

While it is generally agreed that the 30-minute artillery barrage heralding the beginning of Spring Awakening began as planned at 4 AM on March 6, there is considerable disagreement as to exactly when the II SS Panzer Corps attack began. From all the available evidence it seems clear that the corps did not in fact launch any serious attacks on the 6th. However, I SS Panzer Corps launched its attack on time, but even then surprise was not achieved and the gains were small—the deepest penetration being a mere four kilometers. Farther to the west, the 3rd and 4th Cavalry Divisions were forced back to their start lines by Soviet counterattacks.

On the eastern flank there was some success. By midday, units of III Panzer Corps had advanced about four kilometers to the east, south of Lake Valencei, and penetrated into Seregélyes. This threatened the rear of the Soviet defense zone in the XXX Corps area, causing alarm within the Soviet command. The reaction was swift. Marshal Tolbukhin reinforced Lt. Gen.Gagyen, the Twenty-Sixth Army commander, with two tank brigades and three antitank regiments from his reserve XVIII Tank Corps, and Gagyen ordered these units to take up positions confronting III Panzer and II SS Panzer Corps. Gagyen also placed his reserve rifle division under the command of the XXX Corps. Finally on this day, Tolbukhin ordered a division from his reserve army into a second defensive line opposite II SS Panzer Corps; a complete rifle corps from east of the Danube to move to a new position to the south of Simontornya; and two tank regiments of I Guards Mechanized Corps to begin moving west toward Sarbogard.

The following day, March 7, II SS Panzer Corps attacked soon after first light. The Hohenstaufen advanced toward Sarosd in rain mixed with light snow. The entire landscape was a morass of mud, and it was soon clear that it would be impossible to launch the division's panzer regiment. Two tanks disappeared in mud up to their turrets, and the rest of the lead company had to stay on the only hard surface road in the attack zone. The SS Panzergrenadiers, struggling forward on their feet, were therefore without effective armored support. To complicate matters, long-range Soviet artillery was interdicting the bulk of the Hohenstaufen's armor still crossing the Sarviz canal at

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Rolling through the ruins of a Hungarian village, a Waffen SS Mark V Panther medium tank passes a knocked-out Soviet T-34 tank and the remains of a destroyed truck.

Szabadbattyan.

The attack reached a high point about five kilometers northwest of Sarosd but then bogged down. The Das Reich attack was no more successful. Again, the supporting tanks were mired and the grenadiers could make only limited progress on their own against the well-prepared Soviet field fortifications. Unfortunately for II SS Panzer Corps, the Russian XXX Corps commander had correctly identified the roads leading southeast out of Székesfehérvar as the most likely enemy axes and had deployed his strength accordingly.

On the right of II SS Panzer Corps' zone, the 44th Panzergrenadier Division "Hoch und Deutschmeister" managed to advance four kilometers to a hamlet northeast of Aba, but again Soviet countermoves were decisive. Another rifle division and a tank brigade were allotted to XXX Corps, and the division that had come under command the previous day took up positions facing west along the Sarviz canal north of Sarbogard.

The Army Group South War Diary for March 7 reads, "II SS Panzer Corps, which did not get going yesterday because of a delayed arrival, today, primarily with infantry forces, drove a 6km deep wedge into the main enemy defenses as far as the hills west of Sarosd."

The I SS Panzer Corps was more successful. The Soviet study of the Balaton offensive confirms that by 8 PM on the 7th the Leibstandarte had breached the second-line defenses of the 68th Guards Division on a five-kilometer front, and this caused the division to withdraw behind the Sarviz canal where the Army's reserve rifle division had already taken up defensive positions. This move began at 1 AM on the 8th and, according to the study, despite German efforts to disrupt the withdrawal, the division was dug in on the east bank by last light.

On March 8, I SS Panzer Corps' attack gained momentum, and by evening Nagy had been secured against minimal opposition, as had the Enying–Dég road about three kilometers west of Dég. The II SS Panzer Corps' Hohenstaufen, however, failed to get beyond the Aba–Sarosd road. A motorized rifle brigade had reinforced the hard-pressed infantry division in this sector, and the only real success came just after dark when some fortified farmsteads were captured to the northwest of Sarosd. The Soviets claim that the other division of the corps, Das Reich, made nine separate attacks on this day but again "antitank and artillery fire from concealed positions stopped the enemy attack."

The failure of II SS Panzer Corps to make progress on the east side of the Sarviz canal was inevitably causing deep concern at Headquarters Army Group South and Sixth Panzer Army and this led, on the night of the 8th, to the release of the 23rd Panzer Division from the Army Group South reserve to I SS Panzer Corps. With some 50 tanks, Jagdpanzers, and Sturmgeschützes, the division was ordered to follow behind the Leibstandarte and to be prepared to cross the Sarviz canal and attack the Soviet forces in the rear of the II SS Panzer Corps in the Sarkeresztur area.

The situation began to change dramatically on March 9. In I SS Panzer Corps' sector one Kampfgruppe (battlegroup) of the Leibstandarte overcame well-defended positions covering the Nagy–Saregres road to the north of Saregres before being brought to a halt by an antitank screen immediately north of the village. Another, in spite of the unfavorable ground conditions, reached the high ground 2.5 kilometers north of Simontornya before being halted by dug-in antitank guns and heavy artillery fire from positions south of the Sio canal. In the Hitlerjugend sector things also went reasonably well, particularly when one considers that there were no roads and few negotiable tracks in its area. Dég was soon captured, and by evening the division's leading elements were immediately to the north of Mezöszilas.

On the right flank of I SS Panzer Corps, one division of I Cavalry Corps exploited the gap created by the Hitlerjugend and reached the main road between Enying and Mezökomarom, while the other attacked Enying.

The Russians viewed the events of March 9 with some alarm. As the Frunze Military Academy Study describes it: "From the morning of 9 March, the operational situation on the XXX Rifle Corps front [opposite II SS Panzer Corps] sharply deteriorated. The success of the enemy in breaking through the tactical defence zone of CXXXV Corps [on the I SS Panzer Corps

front] created a serious threat to the rear of the Twenty-Sixth Army.… Because of this breach, control between the two left hand Corps of the Army and XXX Rifle Corps became too complicated, so CinC Front [Tolbukhin] ordered XXX Rifle Corps transferred to the Twenty-Seventh Army."

This transfer was part of an overall restructuring of the Third Ukrainian Front. From the night of the 9th Tolbukhin's reserve Twenty-Seventh Army became responsible for the sector between Lake Valencei and the Sarviz canal. Meanwhile, General Gagyen's Twenty-xixth Army remained responsible for halting what Tolbukhin considered the main threat: I SS Panzer Corps and I Cavalry Corps between the Sarviz canal and Lake Balaton. To this end Gagyen was reinforced with a tank regiment, a self-propelled artillery brigade and two antitank regiments, and the main weight of the Third Ukrainian Front's close air support effort was retargeted to his sector.

While the 9th had been a good day for the men of I SS Panzer Corps on the west side of the Sarviz canal, Dietrich and his senior commanders were acutely aware that the left flank of the corps was becoming dangerously exposed. The II SS Panzer Corps still had not reached Sarkeresztur and only the difficulties of crossing the Sarviz River and canal were preventing the Russians from attacking the flank of the German penetration. Marshal Tolbukhin, however, was not slow to recognize the operational opportunities offered by this situation, and on the same day he requested the release of one reserve army to his control and the use of another. Moscow refused, saying that these armies were earmarked for the forthcoming general offensive and that he would have to make do with what he had.

In fact, the Supreme Soviet Command went further and, on this same day gave both Tolbukhin and Malinovsky revised missions. The Third Ukrainian Front was to continue to defend south of Lake Balaton with two armies but was to be prepared to launch a major attack north of Lake Valencei with two reserve armies, one of which Tolbukhin had just requested. The aim of this attack was, as Dietrich had feared, to strike the rear of the Sixth Panzer Army. Malinovsky's Second Ukrainian Front was to join in the attack after one or two days, with two armies attacking westward along the south bank of the Danube. Later, the armies north of the Danube and south of Lake Balaton were to join in the offensive. The initial attack by Tolbukhin was to be made as soon as the Sixth Panzer Army's offensive had been halted. This was expected to be on the 15th or 16th.

The strength of the Soviet position derived from their early knowledge of the forthcoming German offensive and their ability to formulate and develop an overall strategy to deal with it both before and during the fighting. The fact that they were facing reverses in one area did not distract them from their long-term aim, and the albeit serious situation on the west side of the Sarviz was seen as an opportunity rather than as a setback. The similarities between the Balaton offensive, the Mortain counterattack in Normandy, and the Battle of the Bulge are obvious—the difference being that the Americans had no prior warning and had to react to events rather than preplan them.

On March 10, the terrible weather and ground conditions ensured that progress west of the Sarviz was slow. The Hitlerjugend continued its painful advance toward Ozora and, after capturing Mezöszilas by 9 PM, moved on during the night to capture Igar, four kilometers northwest of Simontornya. In the sector of I Cavalry Corps, the 3rd Cavalry Division managed to seize a bridgehead over the Sio, five kilometers west of Mezökomarom, and the 4th Division encircled Enying.

On the same day, the 23rd Panzer Division, despite heavy antitank and artillery fire from the east side of the Sarviz canal, closed up to Saregres. By nightfall it had taken over from the Leibstandarte on that flank and this allowed the SS division to concentrate for its attack on Simontornya and the subsequent crossing of the Sio canal. The I SS Panzer Corps was now some 25 kilometers ahead of II SS Panzer Corps, and the threat of a Soviet counterattack into its exposed flank appeared ever more likely.

The appalling ground and weather conditions and stiff Soviet resistance prevented any further progress in the II SS Panzer Corps sector on the 10th. The Soviet Study says: "Cruel fighting took place around Hill 159 where artillery played a significant role in the destruction of the enemy. Unable to achieve success with frontal attacks, the enemy tried to outflank the objective; however, this maneuver was frustrated by tanks and SP guns in enfiladed ambush positions. Fighting continued at night."

The lack of progress by Bittrich's corps is hardly surprising. Apart from the adverse ground and weather conditions, II SS Panzer Corps was now up against the major part of six infantry divisions (with two more sited in depth farther east), albeit most of them seriously understrength, and significant elements of two armored formations. Nevertheless, on the 11th Das Reich launched an attack described by General Otto Weidinger, the overall commander, as "right out of the textbook." It was successful and by mid-morning had reached an important hamlet lying six kilometers southeast of Sarkeresztur known as Heinrich Major. At the same time, on the right flank a vineyard immediately northeast of Sarkeresz-

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Bathed in the eerie, surreal light of muzzle flashes from nearby guns, a Soviet artillery crew services its weapon during a heavy barrage against suspected concentrations of German troops and armor in Hungary in March 1945.

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Camouflaged against the winter landscape, a trio of German soldiers takes up firing positions in the Hungarian forest. The soldier in the foreground is armed with an MP-40 submachine gun capable of firing up to 500 rounds of 9mm ammunition per minute. Another soldier lies prone, ready to fire an MG-34 machine gun stabilized with a bipod.

tur was captured, effectively cutting off Aba.

On the same day, I SS Panzer Corps had even more success. Panzergrenadiers of the Leibstandarte spent the day clearing the important ridge lying just to the north of Simontornya, and at the same time the Hitlerjugend captured the road junction 1,500 meters south of Igar. This secured the jumping-off positions for the final attack on Simontornya, which was to be carried out the following day. Meanwhile, on I SS Panzer Corps' left flank the 23rd Panzer Division penetrated into Saregres but was unable to clear it. Army Group South's hopes of launching an attack across the Sarviz in this area in support of II SS Panzer Corps were proving overly optimistic.

March 12 saw the status quo more or less continue on II SS Panzer Corps' front. The only real success seems to have occurred at Aba, which was cleared by the 44th Panzergrenadier Division. The attack in the Heinrich Major area was continued but cost several tanks and self-propelled guns. Later in the day, two Soviet counterattacks were repulsed, the second being supported by 10 tanks, four of which were claimed destroyed.

The Leibstandarte's attack on the town of Simontornya on March 12 was launched from the high ground north of the Sio canal. Fierce house-to-house fighting lasted all day, but by last light Simontornya north of the Sio was largely in German hands with only a few pockets of resistance remaining.

Another somewhat surprising success on the 12th came in the I Cavalry Corps' sector, where the 3rd Cavalry Division managed to cross the Sio canal and secure a bridgehead to the west of Mezökomarom while the 4th Cavalry Division closed up to Balatonszabadi. Nevertheless, despite these gains there was little doubt that the Sixth Panzer Army's offensive was losing its momentum. The II SS Panzer Corps had been decisively halted, and Priess's Corps was now up against five infantry divisions backed by a cavalry corps. The fact that these divisions were understrength was relatively unimportant, for the ground they were holding was ideal for defense and totally unsuitable for an attacking armored formation.

Undetected by German intelligence, the buildup for the forthcoming Soviet offensive was proceeding rapidly on the 12th. The movement of the Sixth Guards Tank Army with some 500 tanks to an assembly area just west of Budapest was completed, and a second attack army was moving in behind the army defending the sector immediately to the north of Lake Valencei. The scene was being set for the final destruction of the Sixth Panzer Army.

From March 13-15, II SS Panzer Corps remained in a defensive posture with the Hohenstaufen still in front of Sarosd and Das Reich in a half circle around Sarkeresztur. The Deutschland Regiment and elements of the 44th Panzergrenadier Division were just to the north of the small town, and the armored group continued to beat off repeated attacks on its positions at Heinrich Major. Numerous requests to withdraw from this exposed salient, less than three kilometers wide, were rejected.

The 14th was mainly sunny, and the temperature climbed, drying the ground. On the 15th, Das Reich continued to beat off repeated Soviet counterattacks. Strength returns on this day show the Hohenstaufen with 35 Panther tanks, 20 Mk IVs, 32 Jagdpanzers, 25 Sturmgeschützes and 220 other self-propelled weapons and armored cars. Forty-two percent of these vehicles were, however, under short- or long-term repair. Das Reich had 27 Panthers, 22 Mk IVs, 28 Jagdpanzers and 26 Sturmgeschützes on hand. Figures for self-propelled weapons, armored cars, and vehicles under repair are not available.

The most surprising thing about these figures is that the Hohenstaufen had six Panthers and eight MK IVs more than when it started the offensive and was only two Jagdpanzers and one Sturmgeschütze worse off, and Das Reich was down only seven Panthers, two Mk IVs, one Jagdpanzer, three Sturmgeschützes, and 38 armored cars and self-propelled weapons—the latter despite the fighting at Heinrich Major. Two things are clear from these figures. First, the repair and resupply system was working well, and second, the appalling ground conditions had prevented the deployment of the majority of the armored vehicles.

What of the more successful I SS Panzer Corps during this period? The Leibstandarte's small bridgehead across the Sio canal at Simontornya was successfully defended throughout the 13th. There were numerous Soviet counterattacks, all supported by tanks and aircraft. Meanwhile, the 23rd Panzer Division had managed to clear Saregres on the Sarviz River, but a subsequent attempt to force a crossing of the canal near Cece failed in the face of tenacious resistance. This ended Army Group South's hopes of supporting II SS Panzer Corps' advance with attacks from west of the Sarviz.

While the Sixth Panzer Army persisted in its efforts to implement the basic strategy of Operation Spring Awakening, the Soviet preparations for their own offensive were nearing completion. In addition to the Sixth Guards Tank Army already assembled just west of Budapest, another 24 rifle divisions, a tank corps, and a guards mechanized corps were being made ready for the strike across the rear of Sepp Dietrich's command.

Both: akg-images / RAI Novosti

ABOVE: Soviet self-propelled guns advance warily across an open field in Hungary. As the Germans launched Operation Spring Awakening in March 1945, the Soviets had prepared an offensive of their own. BELOW: A Red Army soldier mans his machine-gun position in Hungary while comrades, weapons at the ready, peer toward the horizon and the oncoming Germans. The machine gun, a Maxim Model 1910, appears anachronistic compared to modern German weapons.

On March 14, the bridge across the Sio in Simontornya laid by the Leibstandarte's SS Pioneers was badly damaged by Soviet artillery fire and the Corps' armor and heavy weapons were forced to remain on the north bank. Nevertheless, during the afternoon SS Panzergrenadiers managed to expand the Simontornya bridgehead to some five square kilometers.

Meanwhile, the Soviets were attempting to establish their own bridgehead across the Sarviz canal in the Saregres sector and at Ozora, and it was these Soviet counterattacks that were seen by all the senior German commanders as ominous signs of things to come. At army group and army level, German intelligence had detected part of the Soviet buildup on the 13th, but the moves had been misinterpreted as local reinforcements, and it was not until the evening of the 14th that the Army Group South War Dairy recorded: "Today's movements leave no doubt of the enemy's intentions. Based on the results from aerial observation, motorized columns of at least 3,000 vehicles are moving out of the rear area from Budapest … to the southwest, most of them in the direction of Zamoly. His objective will be to cut the rear connections of the German forces [Sixth Panzer Army and III Panzer Corps] which have advanced from the narrow passage of Székesfehérvar, by an attack in the direction of Lake Balaton."

During March 15, I SS Panzer Corps continued to hold its slender bridgehead across the Sio, but it was now clear to most German commanders that Spring Awakening had failed. Sepp Dietrich recommended an immediate withdrawal to a suitable defensive line in the north, but this was ruled out by his superior, General Otto Wöhler, the commander of Army Group South. At 3:10 PM, the latter gave his assessment of the situation to Berlin. He pointed out that any attempt to advance farther south in the I SS Panzer Corps area would be "inexpedient" owing to the hilly terrain and the corps' exposed left flank.

This was a major understatement. The ground to the south was not only hilly, it was broken, wooded, and bounded on both sides by waterways—something that should have been foreseen when the original plan was made. Wöhler proposed, therefore, to leave the 23rd Panzer Division where it was in the Saregres sector and, after relieving I SS Panzer Corps on the Sio with I Cavalry Corps and a Hungarian Division, to move it north to a position behind II SS Panzer Corps and III Panzer Corps. All three panzer corps would then attack east, between Sarkeresztur and Gardony, toward the Danube before turning south in accordance with the original plan. Wöhler estimated it would take four days to complete the necessary regrouping. Berlin approved this plan, which was hardly surprising since it was both strategically and tactically superior to the original concept, but demanded that it be put into effect in three days, not four.

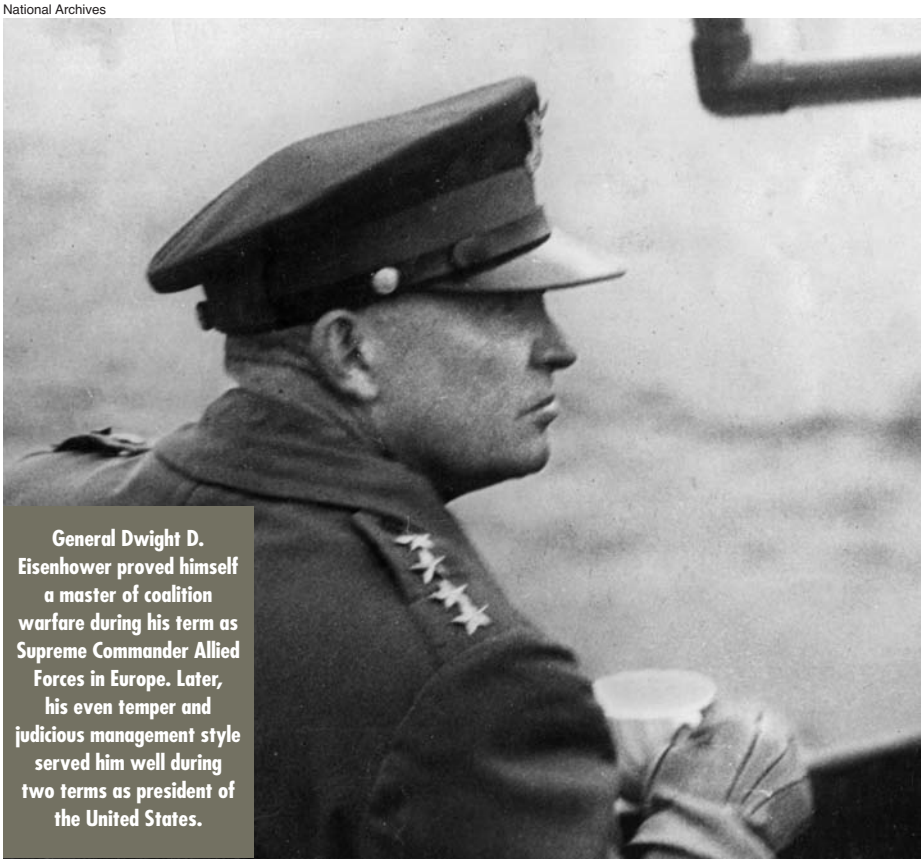
Although this revised concept was considered impracticable by most of the field commanders involved, the necessary orders were issued at 11 PM, and during the night the first units of I SS Panzer Corps were withdrawn from the battle area.

On March 16, as I SS Panzer Corps made its

Continued on page 77

By Al Hemingway

National Archives

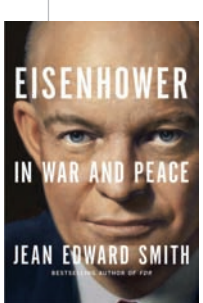


General Dwight D. Eisenhower proved himself a master of coalition warfare during his term as Supreme Commander Allied Forces in Europe. Later, his even temper and judicious management style served him well during two terms as president of the United States.

Ike commanded respect as a soldier and statesman

Eisenhower's "clear and concise" management style carried him to victory in World War II—and through a successful presidency.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT WHEN DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER WAS PRESIDENT OF the United States from 1952-1961, he was not a hands-on chief executive. Because of his inexperience in legislative and judicial matters—Eisenhower had come from a military background—it was his cabinet members who made all the hard decisions. Today, we know this is the farthest thing from the truth. As declassified documents show, Eisenhower was anything but a laid-back president. His energy and leadership, even with medical setbacks during his second term, were evident.



In his new biography, ***Eisenhower: In War and Peace*** (Random House, New York, 2012, 950 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $40.00, hardcover), historian Jean Edward Smith lays bare the life of the 34th president of the nation, including his greatest achievements and his failures.

Dwight was born in Texas in 1890. The Eisenhowers relocated to Abilene, Kansas, when he was two years old. "Ike," as he was called by his family and closest friends, was a good student with a "retentive memory" and a "natural gift for clear writing, effective prose." He took the test for West Point and passed, graduating in 1915 with the "Class the Stars Fell On." Out of the 164 newly commissioned second lieutenants in the class, 59 attained the rank of brigadier general or higher, with Eisenhower and Omar Bradley reaching the five-star plateau.

Life in the peacetime Army was difficult. Promotions were slow and plumb assignments were rare. Eisenhower, however, had an edge. Generals like John J. Pershing, Fox Conner, George Moseley, and Walter Krueger took a liking to the young officer and each in his own way guided his career with invaluable advice.

In 1915, Eisenhower met and fell in love with Mary Geneva Dowd, called Mamie, and the two married in 1916. The Dowds were a well-to-do family from Denver, Colorado, and Mamie's father assisted the newlyweds with a monthly stipend to ease the burden of a second lieutenant's pay.

In September 1917, Mamie gave birth to a son whom she called "Little Ickey." Tragically, in 1921, "Ickey" died from scarlet fever that had been passed on to him by a woman hired to do household chores. Unknown to them, she had just recovered from the disease but was still a carrier. Eisenhower was devastated. Each blamed the other and they grew increasingly distant. It would be a breach that would never heal in their nearly 53 years of marriage.

Meanwhile, Ike worked closely with Douglas MacArthur, spending several years with him in the Philippines. At first, they got along well together, but toward the end of his tenure in the Far East, MacArthur's super ego and ranting were too much for Eisenhower.

It was during his Washington, D.C., assignment working for General George C. Marshall that Eisenhower's talents as a staff officer and planner really began to shine. Working long hours, Ike devised the strategy of the crossChannel invasion from England to France that would ultimately come to fruition on June 6, 1944.

Although junior to many, Marshall chose Eisenhower to be the supreme commander of the Allied Forces. He matured as a tactical commander and was often the sounding board between the American and British leaders. It was here he got his first taste of politics dealing with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. It would serve him well during his eight years as president.

When he retired from the Army, Ike took the job as president of Columbia University, but it was the world of politics that he yearned for. When approached to run on the Republican ticket in 1948, he declined. It was a wise choice;

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Good News from the Middle East

Israel's Prospects Have Never Been Brighter

We are used to and almost inured to the daily bad news from the Middle East – bloodshed, riots, car bombings and more. But there is one spot of shining light in the area – a country forged in almost unending wars, a country that has absorbed millions of immigrants: Israel – its prospects have never been brighter.

What are the facts?

A robust and growing economy. The standard of living and the GDP (Gross Domestic Product per capita) of Israel are on the level of most European countries and ahead of quite a few. Israel is a fount of accomplishment and innovation. Almost all major U.S. high-tech companies, such as Microsoft, Intel, Apple, Cisco, Oracle, and many others, have established production and research facilities in Israel. None other than Warren Buffett (and he certainly knows where to put his money) has just recently placed a multi-billion dollar investment in Israel. Next only to Canada, Israel has the largest number of companies listed on American stock exchanges.

"The outlook for Israel is excellent… [its] future has never been brighter."

One of the important reasons for Israel's economic success is the high level of education of its population, of which Israel's world-class universities and its Technion (the fount of Nobel Prize winners) are the driving force.

A cohesive society. Israel, a country of immigrants, has a cohesive society cemented by its common faith and by the miraculously resuscitated Hebrew language. The bulk of its population are descendants of immigrants from Middle Eastern countries – all the way from Morocco to Iraq and Iran. Over a million Russian "olim" (those who have "ascended" to Israel), most of them highly educated, are now also an important segment of the populace.

The Israeli Arabs (about one-fifth of the population) are not yet fully integrated. But even they are becoming a full part of Israeli society, while maintaining their culture and their different beliefs. Another segment that is not yet fully absorbed are the immigrants from Ethiopia, because they come essentially from a medieval culture and have still some difficulty in integrating into a modern high-tech society. Finally, the "haredim" (the ultra-orthodox) are still not fully accepting the essentially secular nature of Israel's society.

In contrast to all other Middle Eastern countries, women play a full role in Israel. The Chief Justice of Israel's Supreme Court is a woman. Women pilots fly the fighter planes of the IAF. Women are prominently represented in the Knesset (Israel's parliament). A woman (Golda Meir) has been prime minister of her country. The fact that women occupy high-level leadership roles both in business and in government is a reflection of the egalitarian nature of Israeli society.

Militarily, Israel is in an excellent position. There is much speculation that Egypt, with its new military leadership, might abrogate its peace treaty with Israel. But the Egyptian military are realists, however much they may rattle their sabers. There is no way that they will doom themselves by attacking an overwhelmingly powerful Israel. Syria is in total disarray and no threat to Israel for the foreseeable future. The only real threat – and it is a serious one – is Iran in its quest for a nuclear weapon. One hopes that it can be stopped by sanctions or, if necessary, even by military means. But if it could indeed produce a nuclear weapon and would launch it against Israel, chances are excellent that Israel's advanced missile defense shield would abort it. But even the obsessed ayatollahs realize that Israel's response to such an attack, whether or not successful, would be overwhelming and would inevitably devastate their country and decimate its population.

Energy resources of Israel, the best news of all. Energy has always been the weak link in Israel's economy. Virtually all of its hydrocarbons have to be imported. Most of its natural gas comes from Egypt, a most unreliable supplier. But here is perhaps the best news of all: Gigantic gas fields, containing trillions of cubic feet, accompanied by a substantial amount of oil, have been discovered off Israel's coast. These fields will begin to be exploited in 2013 and will, in one swoop, make Israel not only energy independent, but a major exporter. It will bring billions of dollars in yearly revenue. Wags have said mockingly that Moses took the children of Israel 40 years through the desert to bring them to the only place without oil. Well, the wags were wrong and Moses was right.

The outlook for Israel is excellent. Its economy is in prime condition and growing from month to month. Its society, composed of many disparate elements, is thriving and cohesive. It is prosperous, strong and secure. It has now been blessed with an abundance of mineral wealth, soon to be exploited. Israelis have been outstandingly successful so far – what with all the wars and having absorbed millions of immigrants. Just think of its wonderful future, with all the wealth of natural gas and oil soon falling into its coffers. Yes, Israel's future has never been brighter.

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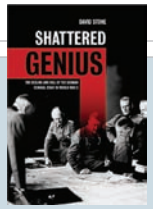
SHORT BURSTS



Shattered Genius: The Decline and Fall of the German General Staff in World War II by David Stone, Casemate Publishers, 2011, 424 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $34.95, hardcover.

How could a group of professional senior officers fall to the whims of the Nazi Party during their tenure as rulers of Germany? That is a question that author David Stone answers in this fascinating book about the creation and complacency of the German General Staff, a highly motivated group whose strong sense of duty and honor was compromised when they formed, as he refers to it, an "unholy alliance" with Adolf Hitler.

The wily Hitler realized that he could not undermine his regular army senior officers. Behind the scenes he, together with SS chielf Heinrich Himmler, Luftwaffe leader Hermann Göring, and Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels, orchestrated the 1934 Night of the Long Knives, eliminating the leadership of the rival SA and numerous members of Hitler's political opposition.

Many in Hitler's staff argued against war, but the sly former paper hanger maneuvered his options like chess pieces to gain the favor of the German people and the junior officers to forge ahead with his plan to conquer Europe. In fact, it was not until July 1944, after the botched plot to assassinate Hitler failed, that he assumed complete control of the general staff.

This is a fascinating account of the inner workings of the German Army during the 1933-1945 period and their continuous struggle to perform their duty in an honorable fashion, only to fall prey to the madness of one man's dream of world conquest that would ultimately destroy the country.

Hobart's 79th Armoured Division at War: Invention, Innovation & Inspiration by Richard Doherty, Pen & Sword Books, South Yorkshire, England, 2011, 240 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $39.95, hardcover.

Although he never led men in battle, Maj. Gen. Percy Cleghorn Stanley Hobart was a visionary when it came to the subject of armored vehicles. When he joined the tank corps in 1923, he soon realized that the tank was the wave of the future. His innovative thinking was ahead of its time. Because of his ideas, however, he was forced into retirement and became a member of the Home Guards as a lance corporal. When Prime Minister Winston Churchill learned of this, Hobart was immediately reinstated and given command of the 11th Armored Division. Because of health reasons, he was transferred to the 79th Armored Division, a specialized unit of modified tanks that could help Allied soldiers get ashore in the upcoming invasion of France.

Together with the Royal Engineers, Hobart's tankers were driving a wide variety of unusual vehicles such as the Crocodile, fitted with a flamethrower instead of a gun. Another carried a temporary bridge that could drop a 30-foot span in seconds. The Crab, a tank equipped with rotating chains, was used to clear the beaches of any land mines. Collectively, the innovative armored vehicles were called Hobart's Funnies.

After the war, Hobart continued his endeavors with the same high level of energy that he had during his time in the Army. He died of cancer in 1957 and, as the author writes, "He left a legacy that would benefit many."

Riders of the Apocalypse: German Cavalry and Modern Warfare, 1870-1945 by David R. Dorondo, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2012, 336 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $36.95, hardcover.

Despite the armored blitzkrieg into Poland in 1939 that started World War II, the German Army still possessed mounted cavalry in an age of mechanized warfare. In fact, seven million horses were in service in all the European armies at the outset of the conflict, with Germany possessing nearly three million of that number.

For the most part, the author states that the German cavalry units, excluding the dreaded horsemen of the Waffen SS, performed their duties honorably during the war. They were imbued with a strong character and professionalism because of their lineage dating back centuries. Sadly, this noble spirit was wasted upon an evil totalitarian dictatorship that sent their country into ruins.

With the exception of ceremonial units, the mounted horse units are not a part of today's military in most countries. The day of the glorious charges into the teeth of the enemy's defenses has long vanished.

"He risked his own life and paid in full," the author writes, "more frequently than his rider. The horse should be remembered."

Searching for Sergeant Bailey: Saluting an Ordinary Soldier of World War II by James Breig, Park Chase Press, Baltimore, MD, 2011, 303 pp., photographs, bibliography, $24.95, softcover.

Approximately 16 million men and women served during World War II. The vast majority performed their duties honorably and were discharged to the civilian world to continue in their careers and professions. Not all of these individuals were able to readjust to civilian life in a smooth, orderly fashion. Many were haunted by their combat experiences and were unable to move forward in a positive manner.

Such was the case of James Boisseau Bailey—a native of a small hamlet in Virginia—who had trouble after his return from the Pacific Theater in 1945. Oddly enough, the author, James Breig, discovered the letters that Bailey had written to his mother in an antique shop near Williamsburg, Virginia. The correspondence between the two sparked an interest in Breig, who immediately began an odyssey to find out what kind of person Bailey was and how he lived after the war. It was a sad story complete with alcoholism, drifting from job to job, and the loneliness that accompanies such a life.

Here is a tribute to one ordinary man's journey that took him halfway around the globe to participate in historical events that helped shape the future of the world—even in a small way. It is also an honor to all the Sergeant Baileys who served during that period of American history and earned the title of the "greatest generation."

Images of War: Armoured Warfare in the North African Campaign by Anthony Tucker-Jones, Pen & Sword Books, South Yorkshire, England, 2011, 144 pp., photographs, $24.95, softcover.

As the title implies, this book is crammed with numerous photographs, many of them rare, dealing with tank warfare in the North African campaign. As the author correctly points out, the desert terrain of North Africa was quite suitable for armored battles and catapulted General Erwin Rommel into the limelight because of his lightning-fast tactics, earning him the sobriquet "The Desert Fox" and making him a national hero back in Germany.

Tucker-Jones also has uncovered some fascinating pictures of the Italian Tank Corps when it invaded Egypt in 1940. When Benito Mussolini's tankers were roughly handled by British forces, Hitler dispatched armored units with Rommel in command to bolster the Italian dictator's forces.

The author covers the desert war from Italy's invasion to the German intervention and the autumn of 1942 when Rommel's game of cat and mouse with the Allies came to an end because of his lack of equipment and supplies.

A good book that is especially beneficial for those who are interested in this part of the conflict, its clear, concise format will enable readers to attain a better understanding of the desert campaign and also learn about its leaders and the various tanks employed during the fighting. □

he sensed that President Harry Truman would probably win reelection. As Smith points out, Eisenhower "knew the pulse of the American electorate better than anyone."

Smith does a superlative job of bringing to light Ike's achievements during his two terms as president, narrowly averting a world war in the Middle East during the Suez incident, ending the Korean War, and keeping the United States out of the Vietnam debacle in 1954. Despite these successes, it was the St. Lawrence Seaway project, opening traffic to the Great Lakes, and the interstate highway system that he was most proud of during his terms in office.

As president, Eisenhower kept the United States from being involved in war, built a highway system that remains in use today, and began the space program after the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957. That program would eventually land a man on the moon a little over a decade later.

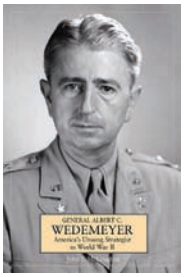
When he left office in 1961, Eisenhower wanted his five-star rank restored. This would require an act of Congress and left incoming President John F. Kennedy baffled. When he asked his military assistant, Brig. Gen. Ted Clifton, why the former president wanted to be known as general instead of Mr. President, Clifton replied that attaining that rank was "something Ike had worked for all his life."

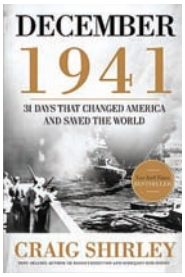
"Besides," Clifton said, "if he is a five-star general, he needs no favors from you or the White House." The bill was passed with no dissenting votes.

Despite rising to the highest office in the land, the man from middle America, who once said that he came from the "ordinary people," wanted to be remembered as an old soldier who had faithfully done his duty.

Japan's Last Bid for Victory: The Invasion of India, 1944 by Robert Lyman, The Praetorian Press, South Yorkshire, England, 2011, 297 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $50.00, hardcover.

Hailed as the "Stalingrad of the East," the Battles of Kohima and Imphal were the culmination of Japan's last-ditch attempt at invading India. Conceived as a spoiling attack to disrupt Allied offensive plans, they were also an effort by the Japanese to seize additional territory for its empire. The Japanese 15th Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Mutaguchi Renya, laid siege to Kohima in early April 1944. Although lightly defended by the Assam Regiment and Assam Rifles, the mixed British and Indian troops put up a spirited defense. There was hard fighting around the tennis courts and the field supply depot located on Kohima Ridge. Positions were mere yards from each other as the two sides engaged in bloody hand-to-hand combat during the fighting.





"Kohima was a battle that we could see plainly from the sky," said Flight Sergeant Jim Bell of Royal Air Force No. 31 Squadron. "It was pitiful—like World War One—slit trenches, no-man's land etc."

On April 18, soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 1st Punjab Regiment fought their way through to relieve their besieged comrades. Despite horrendous casualties, they had held. Japanese troops were also repulsed and driven back into Burma after an unsuccessful try at defeating British forces there.

Lyman, a retired British Army officer, has written a wonderful narrative describing in rich detail not only the bitter no-quarter combat between the adversaries, but also the terrible weather conditions that impeded both sides during the campaign. Lyman is well qualified to tell the story of the British victories at Kohima and Imphal. His biography of Lt. Gen. William Slim, the Allied 14th Army commander whose strategy paved the way for victory, was the groundwork for this book.

This is a well-written story dealing with a slice of World War II history that is sadly neglected but was nonetheless an important part of the Allied victory in the Southeast Asian Theater of Operations.

General Albert C. Wedemeyer: America's Unsung Strategist in World War II by John J. McLaughlin, Casemate Publishers, Havertown, PA, 2012, 336 pp., photographs, bibliography, notes, $32.95, hardcover.

In the late fall of 1944, a single transport plane circled the airfield at Kunming, China, and landed unceremoniously at the far end of the field. In another area, a large group of American and Chinese officials was anxiously awaiting the arrival of the new commanding general of U.S. forces in China and the China-Burma-India Theater. As the entourage stood there, one tall, slightly built officer stepped from the plane at the other end of the airstrip and commandeered a ride on a truck to introduce himself to the party. "My name's Wedemeyer," the man said, shaking hands with everyone. "Glad to be here."

The unflappable command style of Lt. Gen. Albert Coady Wedemeyer was a far cry from his predecessor, Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, who, although a dynamic combat leader, did not have the tact to deal with the Chinese, especially Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Nationalist forces.

Wedemeyer was relieving a man who was immensely popular in the American press but not among the Chinese. The Nebraska native, however, was used to dealing with temperamental political figures, as with the case of Prime Minister Winston Churchill when Wedemeyer, then a lieutenant colonel, had to brief him, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and General George C. Marshall on his paper outlining a cross-Channel invasion of mainland Europe in 1943, a full year before D-Day actually occurred. Churchill never forgave or forgot Wedemeyer's careful and accurate analysis that opposed his North Africa, Mediterranean, and Balkans approach to defeating Nazi Germany.

McLaughlin has given us a fresh, new account of the life of a man who embodied the West Point motto of "Duty, Honor, Country." He also disputes others, especially noted historian Barbara Tuchman and her negative assessment of Wedemeyer.

Here is a long overdue book about a true American hero, unpretentious but brutally efficient, clever, and a top-notch strategist who accurately predicted world events.

Albert Coady Wedemeyer deserves no less.

December 1941: 31 Days That Changed America and Saved the World by Craig Shirley, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN, 2011, 646 pp., bibliography, notes, $24.99, hardcover.

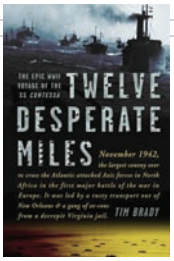
Here is a colorful and descriptive account of the days prior to December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and the days immediately following it until December 31. The author has taken the entire month and has literally painted a picture of what life was like for Americans during that period.

Until that time, the wars in Europe and Asia were not in the forefront of the American psyche. The country was beginning to emerge from the depths of the Great Depression that had gripped her for the past decade. Most of the population was steeped in isolationism. Americans remembered all too well the "war to end all wars" just a quarter century before and wanted no part in another land war in Europe, much less Asia.

Sadly, the United States was woefully unprepared for war. President Roosevelt had implemented the Lend Lease Act to assist Great Britain, which was standing alone against the might of Nazi Germany.

Shirley's book is an excellent snapshot of that one crucial month in 1941 that dramatically altered world events and swept America into the maelstrom of yet another world war—a war that would change the way we think and live forever.

Twelve Desperate Miles: The Epic World War II Voyage of the SS Contessa by Tim Brady, Crown Publishers, New York, 2012, 304 pp., photographs, notes, $26.00, hardcover.



This is a superb account of the Battle for Lyautey in French Morocco in November 1942 and the important role that the SS *Contessa* played during the fight. The *Contessa* was an old freighter owned by the Standard Fruit Company that had been used prior to the war for hauling bananas and coconuts from the Caribbean. It was selected because its design allowed it to navigate extremely shallow waters, a task that had to be performed to supply U.S. troops via the Sebou River to the airfield—a distance of 12 miles.

To accomplish this task, Welsh-born William Henry John would remain in command of the ship with a mishmash of a crew that included released inmates from prisons in the area.

Also, a Frenchman, Rene Malevergne, known as "The Shark," was smuggled out of Morocco to participate in the operation. Malevergne was a river pilot and was intimately familiar with the Sebou River. In the end, he would be the first Frenchman to be awarded the U.S. Navy Cross and the Silver Star Medal for heroism.

Twelve Desperate Miles is a topnotch thriller, full of suspense and intrigue, about the daring exploits of a small vessel's crew in achieving victory in Morocco during the early days of the North African Campaign. □

Simulation Gaming

Killing Adolf Hitler is the ultimate endgame.

With decades of entertainment based on World War II behind us, and decades more down the road, there's bound to be some (okay, quite a bit) that strays farther than "loosely" based on history and right into the realm of fantasy. Somewhere in that fiction-brewed historical vat bubbles the ultimate endgame to it all: killing Adolf Hitler.

Video games have been getting in on the Hitler-wasting action for almost as long as they've been around. Many of them don't stray too far from reality, and his inclusion is expected to a reasonable degree in actual World War II fare like older *Medal of Honor* or *Call of Duty* games. However, the handful of times we've had to tackle Hitler face to face have been memorably wild. Let's take two of the most notorious instances for example.

PUBLISHER
Rebellion Developments

DEVELOPER
505 Games

SYSTEM(S)
PC, Xbox 360, PS3

AVAILABLE
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After hitting arcades in 1987, *Bionic Commando* was released for Nintendo's Famicom console—known in America as the Nintendo Entertainment System—with a much more sensational title. What literally translates to *The Resurrection of Hitler: Top Secret* pretty much spells out what to expect in the mechanical arm-swingin' action-platformer's final showdown. When it was localized, all mentions of the game's Nazi party were removed. Neo-Nazi nation flags sporting a swastika with a lightning bolt behind it were replaced with the Eagle-emblazoned symbol of the Badds, a group lead by Generalissimo Killt.

The identity of Adolf Hitler may have been changed to Master-D outside of Japan, but those who played the game to completion would still recognize Master-D's face as that of Germany's former Führer. Players were even treated to a relatively graphic animation of Hitler's face contorting into a mushy mess and exploding; truly a cinematic treat for kiddies of the late 1980s.

It's one thing to take out Hitler as he's set to be resurrected, but id Software's classic first-person shooter *Wolfenstein 3D* gave players a more terrifying foe to face before they could claim victory over the Nazi forces. Imagine the horrors of throwing down with Hitler when his body is encased in a large robotic suit saddled with not one, not two, but four chainguns. In reality

an offense so bold might have actually turned the tides of battle, but those skilled enough at the seminal FPS were able to overthrow his cruel plans in up close and personal fashion. It's worth noting that Nintendo of America wiped this aspect of *Wolfenstein 3D* clear from the Super Nintendo version of the game, removing Hitler's moustache and dubbing the boss Staatmeister.

This brief tour through two classic titles brings us tumbling back to reality, where game creators are still finding ways to let players take "this time it's personal" action on one of history's most reviled leaders. The latest is a far cry from the fantastic, though, as *Sniper Elite V2* challenges everyone to "Kill Hitler" via a special pre-order bonus mission.

SNIPER ELITE V2

The original *Sniper Elite* was first released in 2005, making its way across various platforms, from PC to PlayStation 2, Xbox, and eventually Nintendo Wii in 2010. *Sniper Elite* placed an emphasis on stealth, featuring a camouflage index to assist players in staying out of the enemies' field of vision. While it was host to a variety of authentic World War II weapons, the realistic ballistics of those weapons was the hook, with everything from breathing to bullet drop and wind strength factoring into accuracy.

Sniper Elite V2 serves as a reboot of sorts, tasking OSS agent protagonist Karl Fairburne with the tall order of either killing or capturing key scientists involved in Germany's V-2 rocket program. Players looking to jump back into action on day one will get an extra special treat for pre-ordering the game, though, with the chance to assassinate the Führer themselves.

"Kill Hitler" is a bonus mission that offers two new rifles, the SVT-40 and the Kar 98, and an unprecedented tactical opportunity. Your mission: Intercept Hitler's train before it departs for Berlin and aim your sniper rifle at him and pull the trigger as he attempts to flee on foot. It's not going to be that easy, of course, and you'll only have one brief window of time to nail Adolf and alter the course of history as we know it.

Naturally, really doing so would create a time paradox the likes of which can only be matched by going back in time and duking it out with dinosaurs, so it's not recommended. But hey, it at least makes a little more sense than going mano-a-mano with a quad-gunnin' version of Hitler in a steel-girded spacesuit.

- Joseph Luster

Continued from page 59

looked over the four bedraggled Englishmen, then curtly told his subordinate to put the pistol away. Below the water's surface, meanwhile, X-7, instead of being destroyed by the explosion, had been wrenched clear of the netting. Place took her to the bottom to assess the damage but quickly realized that although the pressure hull was intact much of X-7's mechanical controls and internal systems were beyond repair.

Place tried to bring her up again but found X-7 was almost uncontrollable as she repeatedly broke the surface and was hit by gunfire from the *Tirpitz*. With little prospect of escape, Place decided to abandon ship, but he did not expect a warm reception.

Surfacing near a moored gunnery target, the small submarine was immediately raked by intense small-arms fire. Place gingerly opened the fore hatch and began waving a white sweater, signaling his intention to surrender, and the firing stopped. As he leaped into the water and swam to the gunnery target, X-7 dipped her bow, allowing water to pour through the open hatch. The vessel quickly sank beneath the surface with three crew members trapped inside. One managed to escape later, but tragically, the other two drowned. Their bodies were later recovered by the Germans and reportedly buried with full military honors.

The two survivors of X-7 joined their comrades aboard the *Tirpitz* but were bitterly disappointed see her still afloat. Following their transfer to the naval prisoner of war camp at Marlag-O, near Bremen, Germany, Cameron and Place, unaware of the damage they had caused, would spend a great deal of time discussing what they could have done to improve the outcome. On the other side of the Atlantic in London, Norwegian agents and Énigma decrypts provided detailed reports on the status of the wounded battleship, and Churchill was delighted.

Although *Tirpitz* had not been eliminated, it was clear that she would be out of action for at least six months. Her four main turrets had been thrown from their roller-bearing mountings, her hull gashed and distorted, all three engines were inoperable, and the port rudder and all three propeller shafts were out of action. Five hundred tons of water had poured into her hull and, although her water integrity held, a number of hull frames were damaged beyond repair. She would in fact remain laid up in Kaafjord until April 1944 and was never to regain complete operational efficiency.

So ended the first attack by British midget submarines and the first successful blow against the mighty *Tirpitz,* but it had come at a cost. All six craft were lost along with nine men killed and six taken prisoner. For their roles in this remarkable operation, described by Rear Admiral C. B. Barry, DSO, as "one of the most courageous acts of all time," both Lieutenant Cameron and Lieutenant Place were awarded the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest military decoration.

Both men remained in the Royal Navy after the war, and Duncan Cameron attained the rank of commander before suddenly dying on active duty in April 1961. He was 44 years old. Godfrey Place retired a rear admiral in 1971 and died peacefully in 1994 at the age of 73.

Mystery still surrounds the fate of X-5, commanded by Lieutenant H. Henty-Creer. His vessel was sighted near Kaafjord after the explosion, at 0843, but was raked with heavy fire from *Tirpitz* and claimed as sunk with all hands. Authorities believed that she had perhaps missed the first specified attack period and laid up in the fjord to plant her charges to follow the initial attack, then make her escape.

There are many, however, including the young officer's family, who believe that Henty-Creer and his crew had in fact planted their charges before being sunk. They speculate that the sheer force of the detonation beneath the stern of the *Tirpitz* indicated the presence of considerably more explosive than was deposited by X-6 and X-7 and that the 21-year-old Henty-Creer should have been awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously for his role. The controversy, which has continued since 1945, was reignited in 2003 when local Norwegian divers discovered what appears to be the wreck of X-5 in Kaafjord—minus her charges. Were they planted beneath the ship in 1943? Investigators are continuing the search for answers.

The fate of the *Tirpitz,* however, is not in dispute. Her ill-starred career came to an abrupt end in Tromso Fjord on November 12, 1944, when she was attacked by stripped-down British Avro Lancaster bombers using the new 13,000-pound "Tallboy" bombs. A direct hit triggered a massive explosion in one of her magazines, capsizing the ship and killing over 900 officers and men.

After the war, the wreck of what had once been the most powerful battleship in the world was declared the property of the Norwegian government and ingloriously cut up for scrap between 1948 and 1957. □

Richard Rule writes from his home in Heathmont, Victoria, Australia. A veteran of the Australian Army, he works in sales management, enjoys fly fishing, and has written several books.

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Continued from page 33

Ludendorff decided to organize a protest march downtown. Hitler bought the idea. Gunfire broke out with state police. When the smoke cleared, over a dozen Nazis had been killed or wounded. Hitler fled in a yellow Opel and hid in a rich supporter's attic, threatening to commit suicide.

The publicized Munich trial of conspirators turned into a travesty as Hitler dominated the courtroom, speaking for hours in a trance about the Versailles Treaty and the betrayal of the Fatherland. "You may pronounce us guilty a thousand times over, but the goddess of the eternal court of history will smile and tear to tatters the brief of the State Prosecutor and the sentence of this court. For she acquits us."

When Hitler received a short prison sentence instead of being deported, crowds cheered both inside and outside the courtroom. Newspaper reporters featured the dramatic beer hall putsch, introducing a new German political figure to the world.

In Landsberg fortress, Hitler preached to inmates while working on his seminal work *Mein Kampf,* dictating his thoughts to a dutiful Rudolf Hess. This historic book clearly states, "All great, world-shaking events have been brought about, not by written matter, but by the spoken word" designed for "mass effect and mass influence." The intelligentsia "lack the power and ability to influence the masses by the spoken word" because they renounce its "real agitational activity." They also miss a basic premise of propaganda. "The more modest its intellectual ballast, the more exclusively it takes into consideration the emotions of the masses the more effective it will be."

After Hitler left prison, his movement lost leverage, but he continued to make public speeches, appealing mainly to farmers and workers who sought simple answers to complex problems through the Nazi Party. Yet, only a minority of Germans supported the National Socialists. They received 6.5 percent of votes in the 1924 election, less than 2.9 percent in the 1928 election, and Hitler lost the 1932 presidential election. He never received more than 37 percent of the popular vote. Everyone thought the Nazi Party was doomed. But through backstage political intrigue, Hitler convinced President Paul von Hindenberg to appoint him chancellor in 1933.

The outraged General Ludendorff wrote the elderly president a prophetic letter: "By naming Hitler as Reich chancellor, you have delivered up our holy Fatherland to one of the greatest demagogues of all time. I solemnly prophesy to you that this accursed man will plunge our Reich into the abyss and bring our nation into inconceivable misery. Because of what you have done, coming generations will curse you in your grave."

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Hitler makes one of the exaggerated gestures he is known for during an address at the opening of the Winter Relief Organization at the Berlin Sports Palace in 1936. Such theatrics were captivating to some spectators and utterly ridiculous to others.

Ascetic Hitler understood the power of place and theatrics in influencing the masses. "My surroundings must look magnificent. Then my simplicity makes a striking effect." He dressed simply, ate simply, and lived simply—but made Nazi displays grandiose. Albert Speer thought that all the esoteric rituals were "almost like rites of the founding of a church."

Hitler and Goebbels supplied the German masses with endless parades, rallies, and festivals such as the staged 1936 Olympics, annual Octoberfest in Munich, and the extravagant Nuremberg Rally. Openings usually included thousands of solemn Nazi soldiers doing the macabre goosestep. Drums rolled and trumpets blasted. A male chorus chanted heroic anthems. The electric atmosphere included everything from floats and colorful costumes to banners, flags, and enormous eagles. Smoke and torchlight parades trailed on for hours, often after sundown for a quasi-mystical effect.

The operatic spectacles of Richard Wagner served as a blueprint for Hitler's rhetoric with their war, struggle, and mythological themes. Hitler attended productions of Wagner's operas whenever possible and patterned the hypnotic tones of speeches after them.

When Hitler unsuccessfully ran for president against Hindenberg in 1932, red posters with Gothic lettering and simple slogans surfaced everywhere. One exclaimed: "Our Last Hope: Hitler," while others read "Work, Freedom, and Bread!" and "We Are Creating the New Germany! Remember the Victims." Hitler became the first politician to use an airplane, stumping at 20 rallies to almost a million Germans. Goebbels pushed slogans like "the Führer over Germany" in which Hitler seemed to descend from the clouds like some god. Between April and November he spoke at 148 mass rallies to cheering crowds of up to 40,000.

Goebbels also enlisted radio and movies in the struggle. One poster praised: "All Germany listens to the Führer with the People's Radio." By 1934, over six million radios existed in Germany, and during the war over 70 percent of homes had one, more than any other country. Loudspeakers were placed in schools, factories, and public squares. In 1933 alone, Hitler delivered 50 radio speeches but felt uncomfortable in a studio without a visible mass audience and seldom used the medium after 1933. The Nazis also made hundreds of propaganda films such as *The Eternal Jew, Olympia,* and *Triumph of the Will* in which Hitler strutted past 100,000 soldiers.

Hitler wrote his own speeches, sometimes waiting until the last minute, and dictated to secretaries while planning melodramatic gestures. He once told a journalist, "When I compose a speech, I visualize the people. I can see them just as though they were standing before me. I sense how they will react to this or that statement, to this or that formulation."

Speeches were often staged at night in large auditoriums with controlled lighting effects. He was probably influenced by noted German playwright Hanns Johst, who said, "Lighting changed forms, heightened them, dissolved them and turned them into fairy tale magic." Entrances were carefully staged with delays, and Hitler usually left immediately after speaking, accompanied by stirring music.

Before speaking, Hitler became jittery, fingering cap and gloves, slouching down in a seat with head between hands. But then a miraculous transformation happened. He usually began very slowly in a tenor voice, sometimes for 10 or 15 minutes, searching for words and intuitively sizing up an audience. Then all hell broke loose. A secret wartime report said that his voice would rise, tempo increase, and get louder and louder, shrieking curses and foul names to frenzied audiences. Rhythms were liturgical, peppered with slogans, repetition of words and patriotic language such as "One people, one nation, one leader."

Content was designed to arouse basic instincts rather than the intellect as illustrated by the following seething snatches from speeches in the

1920s. "There will be no peace in the land until a body is hanging from every lamp post"; "On one point there should be no doubt: we will not let the Jews slit our gullets and not defend ourselves"; or "Let us be inhumane! But if we save Germany, then we will have accomplished the world's greatest deed. Let us do injustice! But if we save Germany, then we will have eliminated the world's greatest injustice. Let us be immoral! But if our folk is saved, then we will have opened the way for morality again!"

Hitler wore a military uniform while speaking to give him confidence, like any actor playing a role, exploiting time, space, and rhythmic speech patterns for maximum emotional effect. Few denied his power of persuasion over mass audiences. After ranting for hours, his breathing grew heavy. He became drenched with sweat. Sometimes he nearly collapsed and would be helped off the stage while frenzied audiences gasped in awe at their savior. His valet wrote that after these exhaustive orations he would "wrap Hitler in a thick blanket and escort him home. There he took tablets to prevent getting a chill, drank tea laced with a log of cognac and took hot baths."

Yet, the magic vanished backstage. The insecure Hitler, always surrounded by scores of SS guards, became just another face in the crowd, eating chocolates and cream cakes, watching Mickey Mouse cartoons, and retelling the same threadbare stories. His favorite American movie tune was "Donkey Serenade," and he liked to whistle "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf."

So who was the real Adolf Hitler, the cult figure who, in the end, failed as an artist, failed as a militarist, failed as a political leader? Nobody ever knew, even the Führer himself. Albert Speer recalled, "In retrospect, I am completely uncertain when and where he was ever really himself, his image not distorted by playacting."

General Alfred Jodl, who saw Hitler nearly every day, wrote to his wife during the Nuremberg Trials: "Who will boast of knowing another when that person has not opened to him the most hidden corners of his heart? Thus I do not even know today what he thought, knew, and wanted to do, but rather only what I thought and suspected about it."

Hitler's tragic flaw? He failed to heed Nietzsche's sage advice: "I am that which must overcome itself again and again." Such a stark awakening might have saved the lives of 50 million people. □

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last offensive

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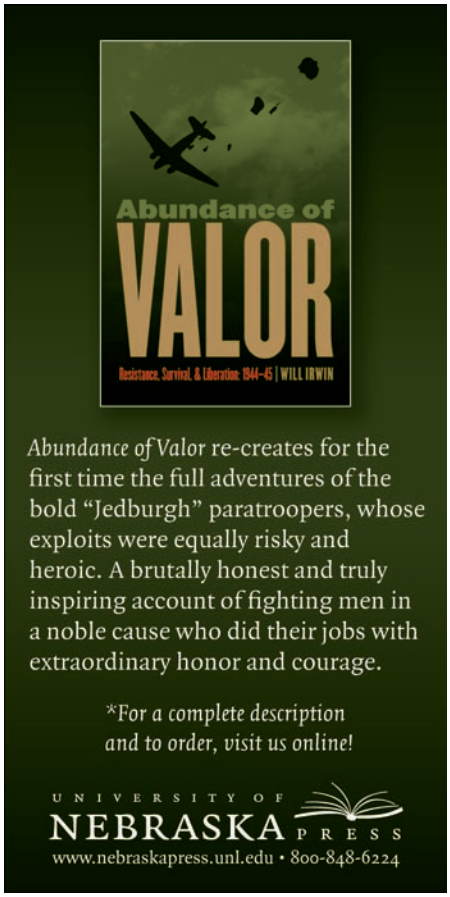
first withdrawals from the Simontornya bridgehead, two Soviet Armies launched a major attack on a 20-kilometer front in the IV SS Panzer Corps sector between Székesfehérvar and the Vertes hills. Behind them stood the Sixth Guards Tank Army, and on their northern flank another army waited to join in the offensive. The immediate Soviet objectives were Tata and Györ in the north and Varpalota and Veszprem in the south. The southern thrust was designed to cut off and destroy Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army.

Unbelievably, as late as 11 PM on the same day, General Wöhler still believed he could implement his plan to attack east with his three panzer corps, and that same night Headquarters Sixth Panzer Army issued orders for the relief of I SS Panzer Corps during the following two nights. At 1:20 AM on the 17th, however, General Guderian, Army chief of staff, recommended to Wöhler's chief of staff that preparations be put in hand for I SS Panzer Corps to attack north rather than east—into the flank of the Soviet advance. At 1:45 AM, in spite of Hitler's refusal to allow any changes to his master plan or any major redeployments without his personal permission, the Chief of Staff Army Group South, Lt. Gen. von Grolmann, instructed Dietrich to prepare I SS Panzer Corps for just such an attack. Later that morning, Wöhler finally requested permission from Berlin to use I SS Panzer Corps for the attack from the Varpalota area toward Zamoly. This was followed by another request for authority to withdraw II SS Panzer Corps behind I SS Panzer Corps as soon as it arrived in the vicinity of Székesfehérvar.

Bittrich's corps had continued to defend its Aba–Sarkeresztur sector during this period and was now dangerously exposed. Hitler eventually gave his permission for these deployments at 1:40 AM on March 18, and at 2 AM. Wöhler ordered Dietrich to move I SS Panzer Corps to the area north of Varpalota and subordinate it to Army Group Balck.

So ended Hitler's last offensive action of World War II. Just over seven weeks later the surviving men of these once elite corps would be prisoners of war—but not of the Soviets—of the Americans. □

Author Michael Reynolds is a retired major general in the British Army. He is a veteran of the Korean War and the former director of NATO's Military Plans and Policy Division. Since retiring from the Army, he has written numerous well-received books on the subject of World War II.



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bedford boys

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vice, told me not to hand out any more, that he would deliver the rest. Each telegram that was delivered had to have a verification of delivery slip come back. Bedford was one quiet little town. Everyone's heart was broken."

Roy Stevens may have said it best. "A veil of tears hung over Bedford."

There could not possibly be a more appropriate place for the National D-Day Memorial, which was dedicated on June 6, 2001. Of the 35 Bedford Boys who went away to war, 13 came home. Roy Stevens played an active role in the establishment of the D-Day Memorial. He returned to Omaha Beach for the 50th anniversary of the landing in 1994. He died in 2007.

Ray Nance was proud of the fact that he reestablished Company A in 1948. He thought it would be a good morale booster, and the young men of Bedford flocked to join. Company A went to war again in 2004 in Afghanistan. This time everyone came home. Ray Nance died in 2009.

Allen Huddleston is a widower and still subscribes to the magazine, *The Twenty Niner.* He operated a photo shop and is now a talented painter. Others give Huddleston credit for writing the inscription on a monument dedicated in the town in 1954. But he modestly says that it was a group effort.

One question that has been debated is why Company A was chosen for the first wave against Omaha Beach. General Gerhardt explained it this way when he came to Bedford to dedicate the 1954 memorial: "Why was the 116th Infantry picked for that particular job? Because they showed the characteristics necessary on that particular day. Who were these boys? The record of the 29th goes back to 1620, through the regimental history of Virginia troops, and their record has been unequaled. Those boys were the descendants of those who fought with Jackson, Lee, and Stuart."

But perhaps there is a simpler explanation: that the commanders knew the type of soldiers they were sending would carry out their orders, no matter what; that though they feared the dragon, they would not hesitate to march into its mouth if that was their mission. Nothing typifies this better than Taylor Fellers's reply to Jimmy Green:

"Yes, we must get there on time." □

Don Haines is a retired registered nurse and Cold War Army veteran whose work has appeared in WWII History *and many other publications.*

ed dyess

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tralia by boat and wanted them to join his command. The former POWs argued that they were all specialists and their skills would be better utilized if they returned to the American forces. Melnik and McCoy journeyed to the camp of Colonel Wendell Fertig, who they considered to be little more than a civilian in a uniform. Fertig was unfriendly and reportedly put the two officers under house arrest. Dyess, who had remained behind, grew impatient and set out to join his two fellow escapees.

By this time word of their escape had been sent to Australia, and in mid-June they learned that a submarine would pick them up at Sibuguey Bay, which was on the other side of the island. There was not enough time to get the rest of the group to the pickup point, and there was limited space on the submarine, so the three made their way to the bay and were picked up on July 15, 1943. As it turned out, a large Japanese naval force arrived in the same bay within days.

The newly freed men were taken to Australia where they reported to MacArthur, who presented the three with the Distinguished Service Cross, Dyess's second, and told them to take their story to the United States. Dyess and the other two officers were sent to Washington, D.C., where they briefed military and civilian leaders at the highest levels. Dyess was saddened to learn that his friend Boyd Wagner had died in an aircraft accident the previous November.

At first their story was classified top secret out of fear that it would cause civilian morale to suffer. Finally, permission was given for Dyess to tell his story to the media, but then it was withdrawn again. The media were initially somewhat lukewarm to the story—other prisoners and internees had returned from Japanese captivity, although none of them had been on the Death March. Then someone discovered that Dyess was the same Air Corps officer whose exploits on Bataan had been reported in the Darlton dispatch a year before, and the newspapermen realized they had a real story to report.

Dyess's wife, Marijean, was in the newspaper business and felt that since the *Chicago Tribune* had a large circulation it would be the ideal vehicle to get the widest distribution. Ed's goal was to tell the world about the inhumanity of the Japanese soldiers responsible for guarding the American and Filipino POWs. Marijean used her contacts in the newspaper business to convince the *Tribune,* and a contract was signed. A *Tribune* journalist conducted a series of interviews with the young officer at the Greenbrier Resort at White Sulpher Springs, West Virginia, where he had been sent to recuperate.

After Dyess told his story, the War Department again put a clamp on it and refused to allow it to be published. Meanwhile, Dyess returned to duty and was sent to the Lockheed aircraft factory at Burbank, California, to become familiar with the company's deadly P-38 Lightning fighter in preparation for a new assignment as a squadron commander in the Southwest Pacific.

Dyess's heroic life came to an end on December 23, 1943, when the P-38 he was flying caught fire over the crowded residential areas along the Southern California coast near Burbank. Rather than risking loss of life on the ground, Dyess elected to risk his own life and attempt a crash-landing in a vacant lot instead of taking to his parachute. He died in the ensuing crash.

A few days after his funeral, Dyess's family was told that he had been recommended for the Medal of Honor. There is some confusion as to whether the recommendation was for his exploits in the Philippines. Some believe it was for the attempted crash-landing, but since the Medal of Honor is a combat decoration, this is unlikely. None of the Air Corps airmen who fought in the Philippines were awarded the Medal of Honor, although several, including Dyess's friend, Joe Moore, were recommended. Dyess was posthumously awarded the Soldiers Medal for choosing to sacrifice his own life in the burning P-38.

A few weeks after Ed's death, the War Department gave permission for the *Chicago Tribune* to print "The Dyess Story," which ran in a series of articles starting on January 28, 1944. The series was published in book form in the spring and instantly became a bestseller. Americans were shocked, dismayed, and incensed as they read the account and learned of the brutality of the Japanese soldiers and their officers.

Dyess himself became one more war hero whose life was cut short and soon faded away as news from Europe, where Allied troops had invaded Normandy, drew the nation's attention. He was not forgotten by the men who had served under him in the Philippines or by his family and friends in Albany. In the 1950s, local citizens began a campaign to have Abilene Air Force Base renamed in his honor, and their request was accepted. Dyess Air Force Base is now the home to an Air Combat Command B-1 bomber wing and a wing of Air Mobility Command C-130 transports. □

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