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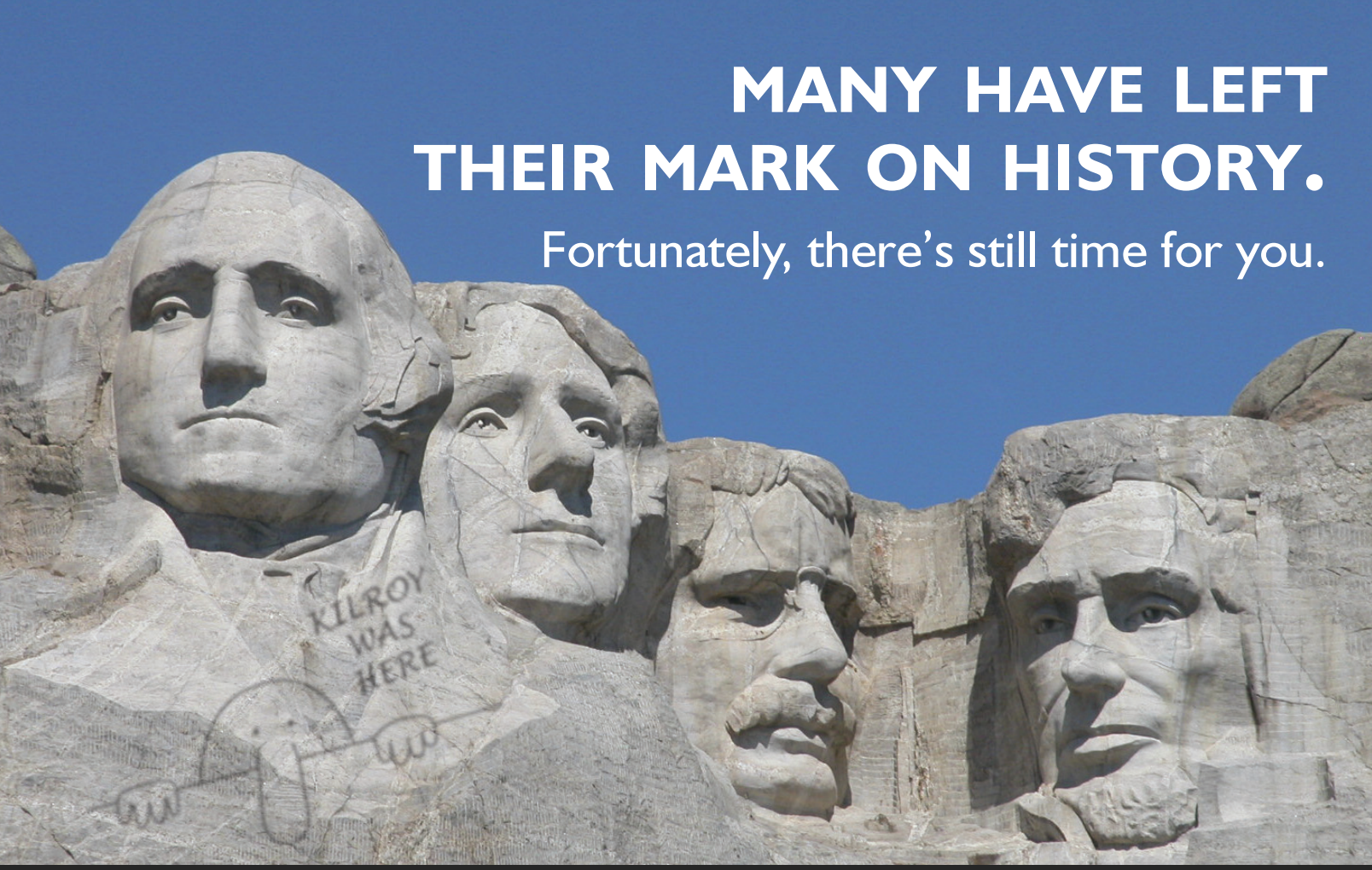

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COVER: U.S. Marines return fire from North Korean snipers in Seoul, September 1950. Photo courtesy of the National Archives.

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The war bearing his name was nothing to brag about, either for Winfield Scott Hancock or his troublesome subordinate George Armstrong Custer.

TALL, HANDSOME, AND RAMROD-STRAIGHT WINFIELD Scott Hancock perfectly embodied his flattering nickname, "Hancock the Superb." His performance on Civil War battlefields from Antietam to Gettysburg underscored that sobriquet. Few Union generals made a more striking impression within the army than the Pennsylvania-born West Pointer.

Even more striking than Hancock—and considerably more flamboyant—was his younger counterpart, "Boy General" George Armstrong Custer. Despite graduating dead last in his own West Point class (1861), Custer parlayed a slashing, hell-for-leather style of attack into a brevet major generalship by the end of the war. His often breathtaking disregard for friendly casualties was an often overlooked part of the package.

But both Hancock the Superb and Boy General Custer would find their personal and professional reputations badly tarnished in the military fiasco known—much to its namesake's eternal chagrin—as Hancock's War. On the windswept prairies of Kansas and Nebraska, their Plains Indian opponents would prove considerably less awed by the generals' preceding reputations. And unlike the Confederate Army, the Sioux and Cheyenne warriors did not go in for suicidal frontal attacks and sword-swinging melees. They typically fought on their own terms, when and where it was most advantageous for them. Glory meant something entirely different to Native Americans.

As commander of the Military Department of the Missouri, Hancock inadvertently annoyed Indian leaders at the outset of hostilities when he lectured them at great length on their responsibilities as chiefs during a stormy parlay at Fort Larned. "I don't find many chiefs here," he complained. "I have a great deal to say to the Indians. Tomorrow I am going to your camp."

The chiefs, with fresh memories of the horrifying massacre of Cheyenne men, women, and children at Sand Creek, Colorado, three years earlier, did wait around for Hancock's visit. They vamoosed. Furious at their departure, Hancock dispatched Custer and the 7th Cavalry to bring them back to camp. For the next three months, the Boy General futilely chased the tribesmen from Kansas to the Platte River in Colorado. Not once did they cooperate and offer a standing fight, although they left a trail of burned homesteads, wagon trains, and stagecoach stations for him to follow. The Indians gave Custer a new nickname—Hard Backsides—for spending so much time in the saddle chasing them.

Frustrated and embarrassed by his failure to corral the fugitives, Custer made an unauthorized trip to Fort Riley, Kansas, to visit his unhappy wife, Libbie, and quickly found himself brought up on charges of "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline." He was lucky not to have been charged with desertion.

A military court subsequently found Custer guilty on all counts—he was—and sentenced him to a year's suspension and loss of pay. The less than repentant Custer returned home to Michigan and bombarded friendly newspapers and politicians with letters blaming Hancock for his ridiculous showing on the Plains. Meanwhile, the two sides signed a mutually unsatisfactory treaty at Medicine Lodge Creek in October 1867, putting an end to the inglorious war.

The next year, Custer was back in the saddle, restored to command after Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan interceded in his behalf with President Ulysses S. Grant. On the banks of the Washita River, in November 1868, he finally located a hostile Cheyenne camp. To the ghostly strains of its battle song, "Garry Owen," the 7th Cavalry fell on Chief Black Kettle's camp, killing the chief, his wife and 101 other Cheyenne. It was Custer's first and only triumph over the Plainsmen.

As for Hancock, he survived Hancock's War, only to lose another battle, this one political, when he was defeated by his former Union Army comrade, General James A. Garfield, in the presidential election of 1880. By then, Custer and most of the 7th Cavalry were long since dead, slain on the banks of another river, the Little Bighorn, by some of the same Sioux and Cheyenne they had chased around the Plains nearly a decade earlier. Payback, as they say …

Roy Morris Jr.

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By Chuck Lyons

The use of newly devised "hand cannons" by the Hussites, a 15th-century religious sect, changed the face of European warfare forever.

Swiss soldiers armed with hand cannons attack the Burgundian artillery of Charles the Bold at the Battle of Grandson in 1476.

THE HUSSITES, ALL BUT FORGOTTEN TODAY, WERE A 15TH-CENTURY sect of religious reformers, forerunners of the Protestant Reformation that was to come a century later. Remnants of their ideas still exist in several Christian groups, including the 825,000-member Moravian Church, or Unity of Brethren. But when history remembers the Hussites at all, it is more for their "hand cannons" than for their religious zeal. Using these handheld gunpowder weapons, the Hussites fought and defeated formidable armies sent by the Holy Roman Empire, the Catholic Church, and the Kingdom of Bohemia. Theirs was the first use of such weapons in Europe, and it changed forever the face of European warfare by demonstrating that properly armed infantry could defeat armored knights on horseback.

Library of Congress

It is generally accepted that gunpowder had existed in China since at least the 8th century, although some modern researchers have speculated that it was developed in several places simultaneously. The knowledge of its composition and use spread from the Far East westward into the Moslem Middle East. One Arab commentator claimed it was used in primitive cannons against invading Mongols in AD 1260, cannons that were probably bamboo tubes reinforced with iron and used to fire an arrow. (Other Arab commentators dispute this claim, believing that it was the Mongols who first introduced gunpowder to India).

From the Middle East, gunpowder spread along the Silk Road into Europe, or was introduced by invading Mongols. Whatever route it traveled, it is established that gunpowder had arrived in Europe by the 13th century, when Roger Bacon, the English alchemist and philosopher, described its ingredients. "We can, with saltpeter and other substances,

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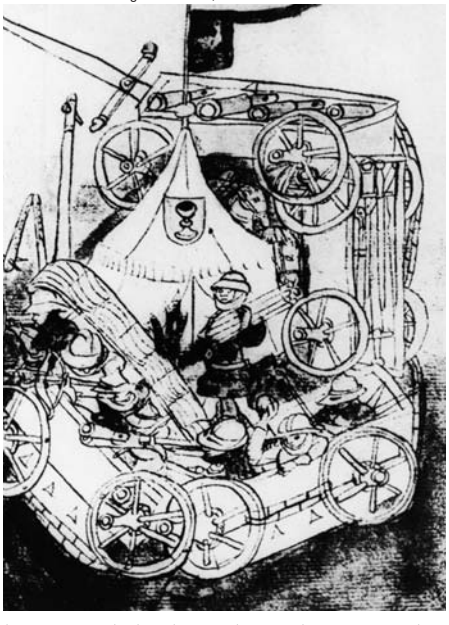


ABOVE: Hussite attackers bombard a fortified castle with cannons in this 14th-century illuminated manuscript. RIGHT: A virtually impregnable Hussite wagon square is pictured in this 15th-century illustration.

compose artificially a fire that can be launched over long distances," Bacon wrote in his *Opus Maior* in 1248. "By only using a very small quantity of this material much light can be created accompanied by a horrible fracas. It is possible with it to destroy a town or an army."

In 1250, a Norwegian manuscript also mentioned gunpowder's composition of coal and sulphur as an excellent weapon for sea battles. The first true cannon came along 100 years later and is usually credited to the German friar Berthold Schwartz, who has also been credited with independently inventing or discovering gunpowder. Crude siege artillery was used as early as 1326, and by the mid-15th century gunpowder weapons had been developed into massive cannons capable of hurling 750-pound stones.

The first use of cannon for military purposes in the western world was probably the Moorish cannon used in the defense of Seville in 1248 and of Niebla in 1262. In both cases, the city's Arab residents fired some sort of primitive gun at the Spanish who were besieging them. The first metal cannon was probably the pot-de-fer that was presented to Edward III upon his accession to the English throne in 1327. It was essentially an iron bottle (the name is French for "iron pot") with a narrow neck that was loaded with gunpowder and fired an iron bolt feathered with iron.

Such cannons may have been used in the 1337 siege of Stirling Castle during the Second War of Scottish Independence. There are sporadic mentions of gunpowder weapons throughout the 14th century, and in 1338 a French raiding party sacked and burned Southampton, England, using, besides the normal arms of the time, a *ribaudequin,* which is basically a large bow with 48 bolts, and three pounds of gunpowder. In 1346, cannons were used at the Battle of Crecy, and in 1350 Petrarch, the Italian poet and scholar, wrote that cannons on the battlefield were "as common and familiar as other kinds of arms."

Europeans contributed to the development of gunpowder technology by introducing "corning," a process that added liquid to the gunpowder mix and allowed the formation of larger and more regularly sized granules, which in turn settled the dust and contributed to gunpowder's reliability and consistency. Other developments in the making of gunpowder, especially the advent of saltpeter farming, resulted in the price of powder falling as much as 50 percent at the beginning of the 15th century, a development that allowed the manufacture and use of more and more gunpowder weapons. By 1411, John the Good Duke of Burgundy had some 4,000 handguns stored in his armory.

References to "guns with handles," hand-held weapons, had existed for some time in the Orient, but they were first made by European sources about 1350. Such guns may have been available before that time, however. Early handheld weapons were called culverins, a term derived from the Latin, *colubrinus,* or "of the nature of a snake." They were useful but not popular.

These weapons and the men who used them were looked down upon in a society still dominated by chivalry and controlled by armored and mounted knights trained for hand-to-hand combat. That condescending attitude continued into the 16th century, when church authorities railed against the use of gunpowder weapons, calling them blasphemous and linking them to the so-called black arts of witchcraft and devil worship. But by the mid-14th century, even the Pope's forces were using gunpowder weapons. The handheld guns of the day were limited in their use, however, due to their cumbersomeness and difficulty of loading, which could not be accomplished on horseback.

Early handguns were simply smaller versions of cannons. They were single-shot, smooth-bore, muzzle-loading tubes eight to 12 inches long and closed at the breech end with the exception of a small touch hole. A slow match was applied to the touch hole to fire the weapon. The slow match, which was itself another European innovation, was a piece of cloth that had been soaked in potassium nitrate and then dried, which enabled it to smolder without going out. Hand cannons generally were made of bronze or brass, although a few were made of iron. They rested on a rounded piece of wood that was held under the arm of the gunner or leaned against the ground to steady the gun. These handles also protected the gunner from the heat of the discharge and helped control the weapon's recoil.

A German document from 1390 indicates that the barrels of such weapons were filled with powder for about three-fifths of their length, followed by a wooden sabot and then an iron or stone ball. Others were less sophisticated, firing arrows or even pebbles picked up from the

ground. Handling the weapons required the gunner to use one hand to hold the gun and the other to apply the slow match. In some cases, however, the gunner held his hand cannon in both hands while the slow match was applied to the touch hole by an assistant. Around 1425 a method was developed for attaching the slow match to the gun with an S-shaped mechanism that lowered the match by means of a lever. This allowed the gunner to fix his full attention on where he was aiming rather than on the match being brought to the touch hole.

Early hand cannons had the ability to pierce some armor, were inexpensive, and could be mass produced. The flash and noise given off by the igniting gunpowder—Bacon's "horrible fracas"—had a psychological effect on an enemy. Their penetrating power and speed of operation were roughly equivalent to that of the then popular crossbow, but unlike the English longbowmen, gunners could be quickly and easily trained. The guns had a further advantage in that the forging methods required in their manufacture meant that centralized governments had a measure of control over their production and the manufacture of ammunition—an important consideration in a time when violent rebellion was commonplace.

It was not until the Hussite Wars of the early 15th century, however, that modern tactics were developed to enable gunpowder weapons to make a decisive contribution to European warfare. The Hussite Wars were a series of engagements in Bohemia begun in 1419 by the followers of Jan Hus, a Czech priest, philosopher, and reformer who had been accused of holding "heritical views," condemned by the Roman Catholic Church, and burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.

Originally an internal church conflict launched when followers of Hus rose up after his death demanding church reform (a movement that prefigured the Protestant Reformation a century later), the Hussite Wars turned into a wider Czech rebellion that spilled into significant areas of Silesia, Hungary, Lusatia, Meissen, and Saxony. The Pope himself eventually called several crusades against the rebels, and in 1430 Joan of Arc entered the conflict, sending a letter to the Hussites threatening to lead a crusading army against them if they did not return to "the Catholic Faith and the true Light. If I wasn't occupied in the English wars," she warned, "I would have come to see you a long time ago; but if I don't find out that you have reformed yourselves I might leave off [fighting] the English and go against you, so that by the sword, if I can't do it any other way, I will eliminate your mad and obscene superstition and remove your heresy or your life." Joan's capture by English and Burgundian troops two months later kept her from carrying out her threats.

Originally, the Hussites fought a defensive war, but by 1427 they had begun to take the offensive. It was during this latter period that they developed what became known as their "war-cart strategy," named for the cart column in which Hussite forces traveled and fought. The wagons in question were simple rectangular farm wagons with stout planking rising three to four feet high from the wagon bed. At the top of the sides, some of which were armor plated, additional planks were hinged. These could be raised and fixed in place, forming a wall through which hand-gunners and crossbowmen could fire from cover. Below the body of the wagon was another hinged plank, pierced with firing slits that could be lowered to close off the space beneath the wagon and create additional cover for hand-gunners and crossbowmen.

ullstein bild

Half-blind Jan Ziska, leader of the Bohemian Hussites, won major victories against Imperial armies in 1420 and 1422.

Bags of rocks were attached to the wagons to provide stability and, in case of emergency, be hurled at the enemy. The Hussite strategy consisted of forming the horse-drawn war carts, or *tabors,* into squares or circles, joining them wheel to wheel by chains, with their corners attached to each other and a ditch in front. Shields or thorny brushes were stacked in the openings between the carts. The crew of each cart consisted of 30 to 44 men, including four to eight crossbowmen and two hand-gunners, two drivers, foot soldiers, pikemen, and shield carriers. Hussite cavalry was massed inside the circled wagons. The ensuing gunfire created havoc among the enemy's armored knights.

The Hussite wagon squares had the added advantage of supporting one another in the close fighting that would follow an attack. The artillery consisted primarily of four types: a *tarasniuc,* a four- or five-foot-long gun with a two-inch bore; a *haufnitze* (from which the modern word "howitzer" may have originated), a short-bodied gun with an eight- to 12-inch bore; a bombard, a large-caliber cannon or mortar that fired large stones; and small cannon. The guns were mounted on specially built war wagons that allowed for their recoil. Some of the weapons were siege guns, and it is probable that the *haufnitzes* and *tarasniucs* were used to hurl canister at the enemy.

Battering the enemy's close-formed knights with such artillery would finally provoke a charge by the proud knights. Such a charge was met by the Hussite gunners and crossbowmen. Any enemy horsemen who survived the initial fire and were able to get between two wagon circles would find themselves caught in a deadly crossfire.

A major Hussite aim in the fighting was to disable the knights' horses so that they dismounted, making the cumbersome knights easier targets.With the enemy weakened, Hussite infantry armed with flails, swords, and pikes as well as the Hussite cavalry would attack from behind the carts, usually striking the dismounted and disoriented knights from the flanks. The knights, caught between the flanking attacks and the fire from the carts and unable to escape because they had been dismounted, would be annihilated. Over time, the Hussites developed a reputation for not taking prisoners, a bit of psychological warfare that further demoralized the enemy.

The wagon tactics, which were developed by the Hussite's half-blind military leader Jan Ziska, have been called "one of the most imaginative and offensive minded use of field fortifications." The Hussite wagon fort was not, however, a new idea. The term "wagon-fort" had been mentioned as early as the the 4th century by a Roman army officer, and the Chinese used such formations at the Battle of Mobei in 119 BC.

The Hussite wagon forts have been likened to the battle squares used by Wellington at Waterloo. What the Hussites had done was to combine the wagon-fort idea with the existing crossbow and the newfangled hand cannon. The result was devastating. Such weapons and tactics allowed Hussite forces to win major battles against armed knights throughout the 1420s and 1430s. It was not until 1436 that the Hussites, troubled by internal dissension, were brought to the peace table.

By then they had achieved nothing less than a revolution in tactics, one that prefigured the end of the age of chivalry and initiated the resurgence of infantry as the weapon of choice on the battlefield. Their introduction of gunpowder also presaged a social revolution. Now even an illiterate peasant could overcome a noble knight. It was a lesson that, once learned, was never forgotten. □

By John W. Osborn, Jr.

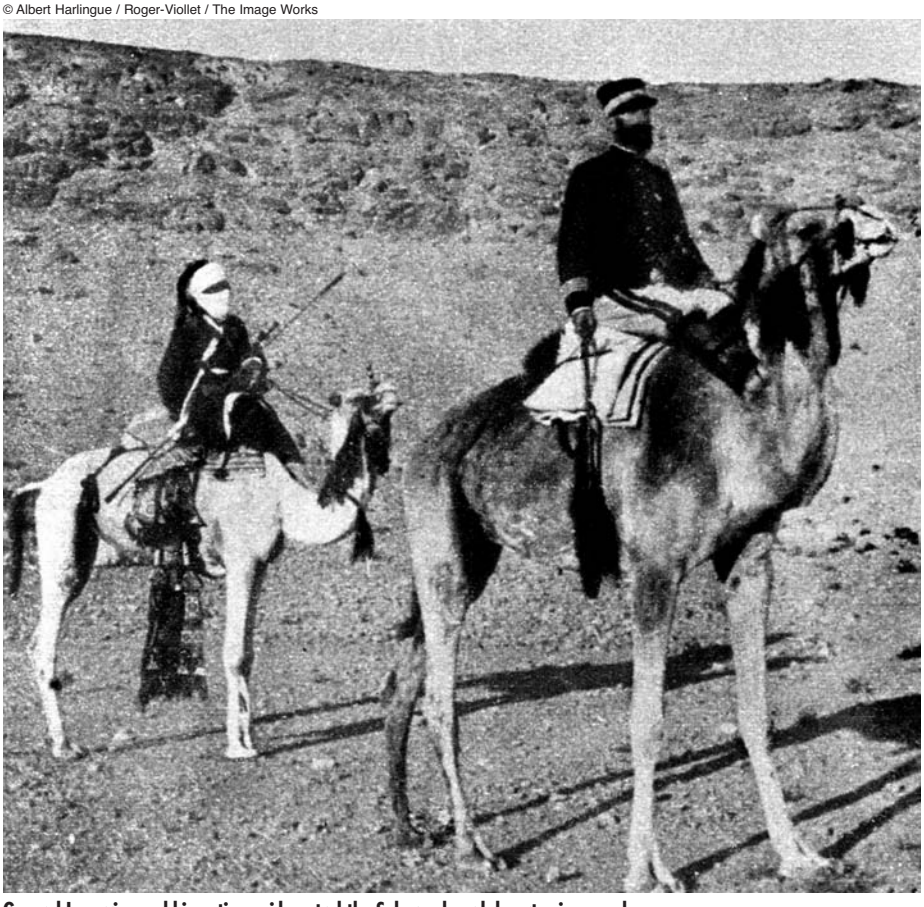
French officer Henri Laperrine organized warring desert tribes in North Africa to break the stranglehold on the Sahara by the fearsome Tuaregs.

Frederic Lix's dramatic illustration, *The Defeat of the Tuaregs, 1894,* appeared in a French newspaper of the time.

COMPARED TO ITS SPRAWLING BRITISH COUNTERPART, THE FRENCH colonial empire produced few notable heroes. One of these was Henri Laperrine, a talented but troubled officer who would help tame his part of the wilderness but, ultimately, would be destroyed by it. Laperrine, born in 1860, was burdened by a wastrel officer-father who bankrupted the family and became notorious throughout the army for his incompetence and dissoluteness. A marshal of France, inspecting Laperrine and other cadets at the St. Cyr military academy, asked him pointedly: "Didn't I know your father? Well, tell him I've never forgiven him."

After graduating from St. Cyr, Laperrine was initially posted to France's North African colonies of Algeria and Tunisia. Bored with garrison life and inherently unsociable (he would never marry or show any interest in women, unlike his friend and fellow St. Cyr cadet Charles de Foucauld), Laperrine volunteered in March 1889 for service considered so dismal that even the Foreign Legion avoided it. He moved south into the sprawling Sahara with Senegalese spahis.

France had laid claim to territory comprising modern-day Chad, Mali, and Mauritania, with visions (which would prove to be nothing more than sun-baked mirages) of vast mineral wealth and a modern railroad to carry that newfound wealth across the blazing sands. Blocking the way were the various indigenous tribes of the region, none of whom was exactly welcoming to foreigners. Most dangerous of all were the fierce Berbers of the Ahaggar and Tassili-n-Ajjer Mountains, who effectively controlled the oases and caravan routes. They called themselves the People of the Veil, but they were bet-



General Laperrine and his native guide patrol the Sahara aboard desert-wise camels.

ter known by the name their Arab enemies gave them, the Tuareg—or "abandoned by God." As an old Arab saying had it, "The scorpion and the Tuareg are the only enemies you meet in the desert."

The French would find that out the hard way, after several exploring and military expeditions had been wiped out by the Tuaregs. Laperrine and the future victor of the Marne and marshal of France, Joseph Joffre, came upon one such annihilated group in early 1894. "In a clearing, at the foot of a thick bush, was a mass of corpses, probably those of the *tirailleurs*, while in the middle and south, other bodies lay in various postures," Joffre wrote years later. "We left the place with a sense of quiet and powerless rage which is extremely trying."

Laperrine took out his anger by leading counter-raids with his spahis. In one punitive raid that attracted much attention back in France, he tirelessly tracked a Taureg raiding party and led a nighttime assault against their encampment on horseback, jumping the barricade, emptying his pistol, and thrusting his sword into a mass of scrambling tribesmen. Frenchmen safely at home in their comfortable bourgeois beds were enraptured by the romance of Laperrine's strike: the brave French captain riding through the cold desert night at the head of his tiny force, the brilliant African stars overhead, the measured, spongy thud of the camels' hooves contrasting with the rhythm of the spahis' horses as they raced forward on a mission of fire and retribution.

After two years in the desert, Laperrine was posted back to France by the Army. He returned to Africa in June 1901 as a major and first commander of the oases, whose mission it was to organize a new force to pacify the Sahara once and for all. Previous efforts had cost the nation more than 50 million francs.

The idea of recruiting the Tuaregs' traditional desert enemies—the Chaamba, Tuat, Tidilkeit, and Gourara tribes—did not originate with Laperrine, but he was undoubtedly the officer best suited to carry it out. It took a special kind of officer to command a mixed-native unit. Mastering the various languages and the art of camel riding were the easiest requirements. The men themselves had to be treated with as much tact as the truculent animals they rode. One had to be sensitive to the subtle tribal and racial hierar-

Laperrine accepts the formal submission of the Tuareg chiefs following his victory in battle.

chies, which determined social relationships in the desert. Arabs would not serve with Tuaregs, and no one would serve with blacks or slaves. One also had to be prepared to put up with a certain amount of insolence and lack of respect—every man who carried a rifle considered himself a lord. There were no salutes, parades, or military discipline. If a trooper was unhappy, he simply took his camels and departed. It was a system adapted to the special needs of the desert, and as Laperrine instinctively recognized, it was the only one that worked.

Laperrine drew recruits mainly from the Chaamba, organizing and supplying them into three 300-man camel companies led by French officers. He typically sent them out on long-range patrols of 20 men each. "Unless one has led one of these trips, or taken part in a similar policing operation, one cannot imagine the excellent character of our Saharians," wrote Laperrine. "Their resilience in the face of fatigue, hunger and thirst is a matter of amour-propre. There is never a complaint, even when circumstances are such as the chief is obliged to repeat the miracle of the loaves and fishes. When reading them their evening orders I have often had to include instructions of the following kind: for such-and-such reason we cannot get fresh supplies until this time instead of that time; I've given you provisions to last from April 15 to 30; you'll have to make them last to May 8. I've given you three days' water; but from the latest information, it seems that we will not reach another well until noon on the fifth day; you will have to be sparing with your water. I wonder how these orders would be received by any other company in the Sahara?"

Though he looked more like a mild-mannered postal clerk than a hard-riding cavalryman or a skilled diplomat, Laperrine quickly showed that he could match his desert recruits in endurance, spending 10 hours a day on camelback in 120-degree heat and letting scorpions crawl all over him at night in the dark. His strenuous training efforts were to bear fruit on May 7, 1903, in the decisive action in the French pacification of the Sahara, the battle at Tit oasis.

Lieutenant Gaston Cottenest had camped southwest of the Ahaggar Mountains with 100 men and sent another 30 out scouting the countryside. At 4 PM he suddenly came under attack by at least 300 Tuaregs. The Tuaregs charged on camelback, threw their lances, then dropped off their camels, sword in one hand, rifle in the other, to rush hacking into the Saharians. "Before this human wave which continued to advance without stopping and without firing, we withdrew little by little behind our convoy," Cottenest recalled. "We were outflanked and they were going to surround us completely, when I ordered my men to rally at the top of a small hill of boulders and sand."

Cottenest held the summit while the Tuaregs crawled around the boulders, some to within 25 yards of the Saharians, keeping up a steady fire. "We would see behind the rocks which protected them a head, a puff of smoke and then everything disappeared," wrote Cottenest. After an hour of fighting, Cottenest was running low on ammunition when some of the Tuaregs abruptly decided to abandon the fight to loot the Saharians' camels. At the same time, the patrols Cottenest had sent out earlier suddenly returned. Seeing the surprise they caused on the enemy, the Saharians suddenly charged down the hill into the Tuaregs. What followed was described by Cottenest as a "violent hand-to-hand fight, the butts of rifles broke over skulls." The Tuaregs fled in disorder.

Cottenest brought back from Tit three dead and 10 wounded, but he left behind some 94 enemy dead. Another French officer visited the scene months later and described the battle site as "a real charnel house. The ground is littered with the bodies of camels and horses, above all in the depression where the convoy was located. The Tuaregs have not buried their dead: they have left them where they fell, almost all on the rock itself, and have raised only small pyramids of stones. Through the chinks of these primitive tombs, one can clearly distinguish the Tuaregs stretched out fully clothed, just as they were on the day of the combat. Decomposition has done its work, and the corpses are literally spread out on the ground. It has been six months since the battle, but this cemetery still reeks of an insupportable stench."

The Battle of Tit effectively broke the back of tribal resistance to the French in the Sahara. After the battle, Laperrine's patrols seldom had to fire a shot; one patrol crossed the desert four times during the hottest period of the year without losing a man or a camel. Formerly shunned, Sahara service under Laperrine suddenly became one of the most sought-after postings for colonial officers. "I am free to follow my ambitions in a country where healthy adventure is still possible," wrote one officer. "I command and I organize. I do not have to make any reports until the end of the expedition. Post is rare—thank God! I don't want to hear anything about Europe, where I would be a tiny stick in the current. Here I am one of the first in an epoch where everyone is starting off under a new administration."

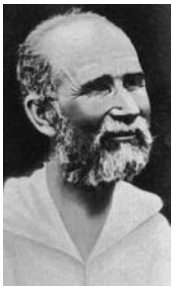
One by one, the desert tribes came in to make their formal submission to Laperrine. On August 25, 1905, the conquest of the Sahara was completed when Laperrine ceremonially draped the leader of the Ahaggar Tuaregs with a red burnoose to symbolize the honorary position given to him by France. Some Tuaregs even joined Laperrine's camel corps.

But Laperrine himself would soon have to submit to French authority. He had once written, "Initiative does not mean indiscipline." Paris did not see it that way when he sent patrols probing into Turkish-held Libya, provoking a diplomatic contretemps. One step ahead of being relieved, he requested a transfer back to France on November 8, 1909. The next five years passed quietly for the old desert warrior. Then came World War I.

Reentering active service, Laperrine was serving as a colonel on the Western Front when the Turks encouraged unrest among the Tuaregs. The situation became a crisis in December 1916, when a Tuareg raiding party murdered Laperrine's old St. Cyr classmate and friend, Charles

de Foucauld. The irrepressible Foucauld had given up his playboy-officer's lifestyle to become a monk, living an ascetic existence among the Tuaregs. To his admirers, Foucauld was a modern-day St. Francis of Assisi. To skeptics—and there were many—he was an impractical, if well-meaning, fanatic. Apparently, some of the Tuaregs inclined to the latter opinion.

Both: Public Domain



ABOVE: Charles de Foucauld, Laperrine's St. Cyr classmate and longtime friend, became a monk and lived among the Tuaregs. RIGHT: Henri Laperrine.

Laperrine returned to the Sahara to reassert French control and seek revenge, carrying with him a notebook containing 103 names of the raiding party that had attacked his friend, vowing to hunt them down and cross off the names as he did. He found his once-proud camel corps had become a shambles, its officers demoralized. He whipped the corps back into shape, got them back out on patrol, and by January 1918, he had the situation in the Sahara once more under control.

He largely failed in his other mission, however. Laperrine managed to locate and kill seven raiders in a surprise attack on their camp; some of Foucauld's few meager possessions were found with them. But it was not until 1922 that the Tuareg who had actually fired the fatal shot into Foucauld was hunted down and executed.

By then, the Sahara, twice conquered by Laperrine, had its final victory over him. In February 1920, recently promoted to brigadier general, Laperrine boarded a flight to pioneer an air route from Algiers to Dakar. The aircraft became lost, ran out of fuel, and crashed. A search party of Laperrine's camel corps found two survivors 21 days later.

Laperrine was not one of them. Badly injured in the crash, he had suffered terribly for two weeks in the more than 100-degree heat. Five days before the rescue party arrived, he had tried to crawl away to die—it was the desert tradition.

Brought back to camp by his companions, Laperrine's last words before sinking into a final coma were: "People think they know the desert. People think I know it. Nobody really knows it. I have crossed the Sahara ten times and this time I will stay here. I am sorry. I have failed you." He made his last journey on camelback, wrapped in airplane cloth, to the hermitage of Tamanrasset, where he was buried next to his old friend Charles de Foucauld. The two had come a long way from St. Cyr. □

By Guillermo Rivera

In 1954, the U.S. Army's 33rd Infantry Regiment retraced the journey of Spanish conquistador Vasco Balboa.

Vasco Nunez de Balboa takes possession of the Pacific Ocean for Spain on September 29, 1513, in this 19th-century illustration.

AS A COMBAT VETERAN OF SOME OF WORLD WAR II'S TOUGHEST fighting, Lieutenant Jim McDonald was not easily flustered, but he had a bad feeling about this. The war had ended nine years ago, and now, in mid-April 1954, he was crouched in a fetid Panamanian jungle, carrying a heavy pack and a radio on his back. Around him, 43 other soldiers crouched under trees or any other cover that they could find. Overhead, he could hear the low-pitched whine of the L-19 spotter plane as it flew over their position. McDonald yelled, "Take cover!" Projectiles fell from the plane and the ground shook with their impact. As soon as it was safe to do so, McDonald ran out and checked the first package he came to—frankfurters and beans were strewn across the ground. Someone was not going to eat tonight.

The Granger Collection, New York

McDonald's unit, consisting primarily of soldiers from the Army's 33rd Infantry Regiment and a squad of Marines, was five days into a 10-day crossing of the Isthmus of Darien, Panama. The only way for them to receive resupply in the jungle was via aerial drop. With typical gallows humor, the men had christened the operation "meat-and-bean-dodging time." The unit had embarked on an operation to retrace the journey of the Spanish conquistador who had "discovered" the Pacific Ocean in September 1513, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. Romantic poet John Keats, in the first great poem of his tragically short career, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," had eulogized Balboa's feat while getting his name wrong: "Or like Stout Cortez when with eagle eyes/ He stared at the Pacific—and all his men/Looked at each other with a wild surmise—/Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

Cortez subdued the Aztec empire

All photos: National Archives

ABOVE: Members of the Jungle Platoon launch a log raft during the platoon's retracing of Balboa's steps. LEFT: A private in the 33rd Infantry Regiment's Jungle Platoon cleans his M-1 rifle—a daily ritual in the tropics.

in Mexico, but he never set foot in Panama. Balboa, like Cortez and many of his fellow conquistadors, hailed from the Spanish region of Estremadura. Balboa first embarked for Panama as part of an exploratory expedition led by his countryman, Rodrigo de Bastidas. Balboa returned to Hispaniola, where he unsuccessfully tried his hand at farming. Deeply in debt, he stowed away on a resupply ship bound for Panama, where his fortunes took a turn for the better, and he rose to command all Spanish forces in Panama. His crowning achievement was the crossing of the isthmus with 190 Spaniards and 1,000 natives, culminating in his discovery of the Pacific Ocean (he christened it the South Sea) in 1513.

The significance of the discovery was threefold. It continued Columbus's uncompleted objective of discovering a water route to the Indies, led directly to Magellan's voyage of global circumnavigation, and advanced the discovery and conquest of the Inca empire by Balboa's chief lieutenant, Francisco Pizarro. In the end, however, the discovery did not save Balboa. Six years later he was summarily beheaded by his successor and father-in-law, Pedrarias Davila.

As the soldiers of the 33rd bent under their loads, they were seeking the trail of the original Balboa. The trip had been planned quickly after a strange report reached Army leaders concerning the former king of Belgium, Leopold III, and his ongoing travails. When Germany attacked France through Belgium in May 1940, the king led the defending Belgian Army. In his dual role as head of state and head of the armed forces, he surrendered unconditionally to the Germans. He spent the majority of the war as a German prisoner of war at his palace in Brussels. During the war he also met and married a commoner, Mary Liliane Baels, who assumed the title of Princess of Rethy. The nation was deeply divided in its support of the king, due to his actions during the war and his marriage to a commoner. In the face of deep unrest, he abdicated the throne in favor of his son Baudouin in July 1951. After his abdication, he embarked on a series of wanderings to undeveloped areas in South America, Africa, and Panama.

On March 29, 1954, Leopold entered Darien from the Pacific side in an attempt to recreate Balboa's route in reverse. His small group consisted of himself, noted Venezuelan anthropologist Jose Maria Cruxent, a photographer, a Panamanian National Guard officer, and several Kuna Indians to help guide and carry loads. Accounts varied as to the success and conduct of the king's 14-day operation, during which time Leopold was feared lost after being held captive by natives in the interior. Hearing of the operation by the former Belgian king, U.S. Army Caribbean Command issued a special directive on March 18, ordering the 33rd Infantry to dispatch a unit of its own to recreate Balboa's route. The mission was christened "Operation Balboa."

On March 20, Colonel George A. Elegar, commander of the 33rd Infantry, called his Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon leader, Jim McDonald, into his office for an overview of the mission. Elegar instructed McDonald to begin an intensive training program involving the Pioneer and Ammunition (P & A) Platoon from the regiment's 1st Battalion, led by 1st Lieutenant William Lueders. The composite platoon was rounded out with a squad of Marines, a Navy corpsman, two medics from the 33rd, two Signal Corps photographers, and two Panamanian nationals—2nd Lieutenant Carlos J. Martinez of the National Guard and Thomas Guardi, Jr., chief of the government's mapping division. (One of the noncommissioned officers from the P&A Platoon, Sergeant Guillermo Rivera-Perez, was the author's father.)

Highly respected within the regiment, McDonald had graduated from West Point, class of 1951. A rarity among his classmates, he had been an NCO in World War II and had arrived at the military academy as a new cadet in the summer of 1947 wearing a Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) earned with the 8th Armored Division in the Saar-Moselle triangle as part of the XX Corps. He had been wounded twice, once by enemy fire and once by an accidental discharge when a friend was cleaning a weapon. Only the enemy wound was reported.

Individual training for the soldiers and Marines began immediately, with a focus on map and compass reading, physical conditioning, route reconnaissance, machete use, first aid, field sanitation, jungle movement and survival, and swimming. The unit conducted numerous cross-country road marches through hilly jungle terrain, with each man carrying 20 pounds of sand in his backpack. Training continued until two days prior to departure. McDonald and the patrol leaders also embarked on a series of L-19 overflights of the intended route, as maps of the area were scarce and generally unreliable.

A Jungle Platoon squad hacks its way through thick foliage near Fort Kobbe in Panama.

Although the directive from headquarters at the U.S. Army Caribbean Command specified four checkpoints—a starting point, an Indian village, Balboa's hilltop, and the exfiltration point—McDonald had to navigate the remaining terrain and divine Balboa's original route on his own. During the initial planning phase, McDonald had consulted with Professor Angel Rubio of the University of Panama, the acknowledged expert on the topic. Rubio had also been intimately involved with the planning and routing of King Leopold's expedition. While McDonald's patrol was traversing the jungle, Rubio had been a passenger in numerous L-19 overflights of the area.

After an intensive preparatory period, the men were ready to embark on Operation Balboa. On Tuesday, April 20, the unit traveled down the Atlantic coast in a tugboat and motorized J-boats, disembarking near Sasardi Point, opposite Mulatupo Island. A group of San Blas Indians from Mulatupo helped them ferry supplies ashore in piraguas and was hired to help carry rations for the initial march inland. They were in the presumed vicinity of Acla, the long-abandoned settlement established by Balboa from which he embarked on his historic journey in 1513.

The patrol suffered its first and only casualty requiring evacuation when one of the members fell and severely cut his hand on a machete. Fires were kept burning and guarded every night of the march. The patrol also carried live ammunition for their M1 rifles, .45-caliber pistols, and shotguns. They intended the ammunition for hunting and for self-defense—Darien was correctly viewed as very wild country indeed.

The next day the unit departed at 6:20 AM on a southwesterly bearing, in the direction of the Morti village that lay on the far side of the coastal hills to their front. Twenty hired Indian porters joined the column to carry C rations and presents for the villagers. Eight porters were paid $24 and dismissed after their loads of C rations were consumed. For the first few days of the trek, the platoon could hear aircraft flying overhead, but the L-19 couldn't see their signal flares and reported the platoon to be lost.

On April 22, Sergeant Emory Abercrombie and Pfc. Jack Sutch were evacuated to the Acla base camp. Abercrombie had suffered a malarial relapse and Sutch's arm had swollen alarmingly; both walked back under their own power. At the headwaters of the Morti River, the guides said the expedition was three hours away from the village. A large group of natives met the platoon and ferried two-thirds of them to the village in hollowed-out log piraguas. The platoon had marched 16,000 paces (about eight miles) and traveled 1.5 miles in the piraguas. The village chief assigned them a bivouac site 250 yards from the village. This was the same chief who one month earlier had held Leopold captive for appearing in the village unannounced and without permission.

The next day, having negotiated with the chief, McDonald loaded all but six of the platoon members onto piraguas to travel down the Morti River to its junction with the Chucunaque. Lueders followed a few hours later with the remainder of the platoon. Water was in short supply, but the men found some water holes near a dry riverbed and purified the water with halazone tablets from the soldiers' canteens. The L-19 conducted a ration drop the next afternoon, with about a third of the rations damaged beyond use.

On Sunday, April 25, the unit made slow progress through thickly vegetated areas that required manual clearing by machete. The sustainable rate of movement was roughly 1,300 yards per hour. Water was running short, and a group was sent back to holes used the day before to fill canteens. Due to poor radio contact with the L-19, only a partial ration drop was conducted, and the men were put on short rations, supplemented by a wild turkey shot by one of the soldiers.

Water remained a problem, with many of the men down to a pint or less in their canteens. Morale remained high, however, and the men chewed the meat of the black palm nut for additional hydration. On the 26th they located an adequate water hole after covering another 12,940 paces.

The patrol continued moving to the southwest and covered some 5,500 paces the next morning. The L-19 pointed them to a logging road that paralleled their route of march, and the next afternoon, after marching another 11,000 paces, they reached a logging camp. The loggers were friends of the Panamanian observers with the patrol, and the soldiers were able to sleep in the camp sheds, wash their clothes and eat native-prepared dinners.

On April 28, the platoon got lost. Following native guides who insisted that they knew the trail, the platoon traveled 17,600 paces (8½ miles) up and down steep terrain but ended up only three miles closer to their hill objective. McDonald dismissed the guides and paid them $10 for their trouble. Aerial reconnaissance confirmed that they were still some 12 miles from the hill, at an azimuth of 250 degrees. Moving 5½ miles through moderately difficult terrain, the patrol crossed the Cupanati River, which put them within a day's march of their objective. The L-19 dropped rations that evening onto their hilltop bivouac site; half were recovered in edible condition.

Reveille was called at the standard hour of 4:30 AM on April 30. The unit traveled over rugged terrain, reaching a logging road that the aerial reconnaissance had pointed them toward. By 11:45 they had traveled some 6,000 paces up and down steep hills, following the logging trail. Near noon they believed that they were near the objective, but thick vegetation made it difficult to ascertain the specific location of the peak. After an advance reconnaissance element reached the peak at 2 PM, the remainder of the platoon finished its climb 45 minutes later. They had traveled 11,100 paces

that day, about 5.5 miles, mostly uphill. Of the 47 men who had started the march, 44 had completed it, a noteworthy achievement in such rugged conditions. For perhaps the first time since 1513, an organized armed force had reached the lofty peak and observed the brackish waters of the Gulf of San Miguel.

In standard military fashion, the 33rd named the objective hill after its elevation. Hill 2200's elevation was confirmed by altimeter as 2,073 feet by McDonald. The hill was actually part of a linear ridge, itself a spur off a larger hill mass to the north. The ridge was aligned north to south and was topped by two similar hill masses, of which 2200 was the southernmost. Natives knew the hills as El Pechito Parado, or "the Upright Breasts."

After clearing a helicopter landing strip on the hilltop, the men received a visit the next morning from Colonel Elegar and two aides. They brought with them a monument to be erected on the hilltop. The expedition had already found a stone mound on the hilltop, pointing toward the Pacific Ocean at an azimuth of 190 degrees. Balboa was reputed to have left a similar marker on the hill in 1513. The regimental commander had also brought a barber, hot food, and cold beer for the weary platoon.

Colonel George A. Elegar, Lt. Gen. H.L. McBride, and 1st Lt. James W. McDonald, left to right, confer at a Panamanian river crossing.

Additional visitors to Hill 2200 arrived the next day, most notably Professor Rubio, who regaled the men with tales of Balboa. The following day, the monument was officially dedicated in a ceremony attended by representatives from the 33rd Infantry, U.S. Marine Corps and the Panamanian National Guard. Over the next two days, the soldiers walked to an embarkation point on the Bay of San Miguel, where they boarded boats for a trip to Balboa on the Pacific side of the canal. From there they boarded trucks for the trip back to Fort Kobbe. McDonald and his men had marched a total distance of 162,536 paces, or 83 miles, over a period of 10 days.

Rubio later claimed in a 1962 book that the expedition had climbed the wrong hill, and that Leopold had climbed the right one. Interestingly, a plaque left on the monument by the unit in 1954 has disappeared. Noted Panamanian guide Hernan Arauz, who led several "route of Balboa" treks across the isthmus in the 1990s, told the author that he had never seen the marker. His father, Amado Arauz,, himself a well-known Panamanian anthropologist, recently published an article in a Panamanian periodical on the route of Balboa. He received an anonymous response that contained a picture of the 33rd Infantry's plaque. From the background of the picture, it appeared that it is now a conversation piece in someone's private library. □

By Dorraine Fisher

Scottish-American arms dealer Francis Bannerman stored 30 million rounds of ammunition and weapons in his castle in the middle of the Hudson River.

IN CENTRAL NEW YORK, 50 MILES NORTH OF NEW YORK CITY ON THE Hudson River, is a small spit of land known as Bannerman Island. Originally called Pollepel Island, the tiny island was noted for tales of ghosts, and the local Native Americans would dare to visit it only during daylight. Early Dutch settlers used the island as a signpost marking the end of a rough passage through the Hudson highlands, and it also served as a strategic defense point for the patriots during the Revolutionary War.

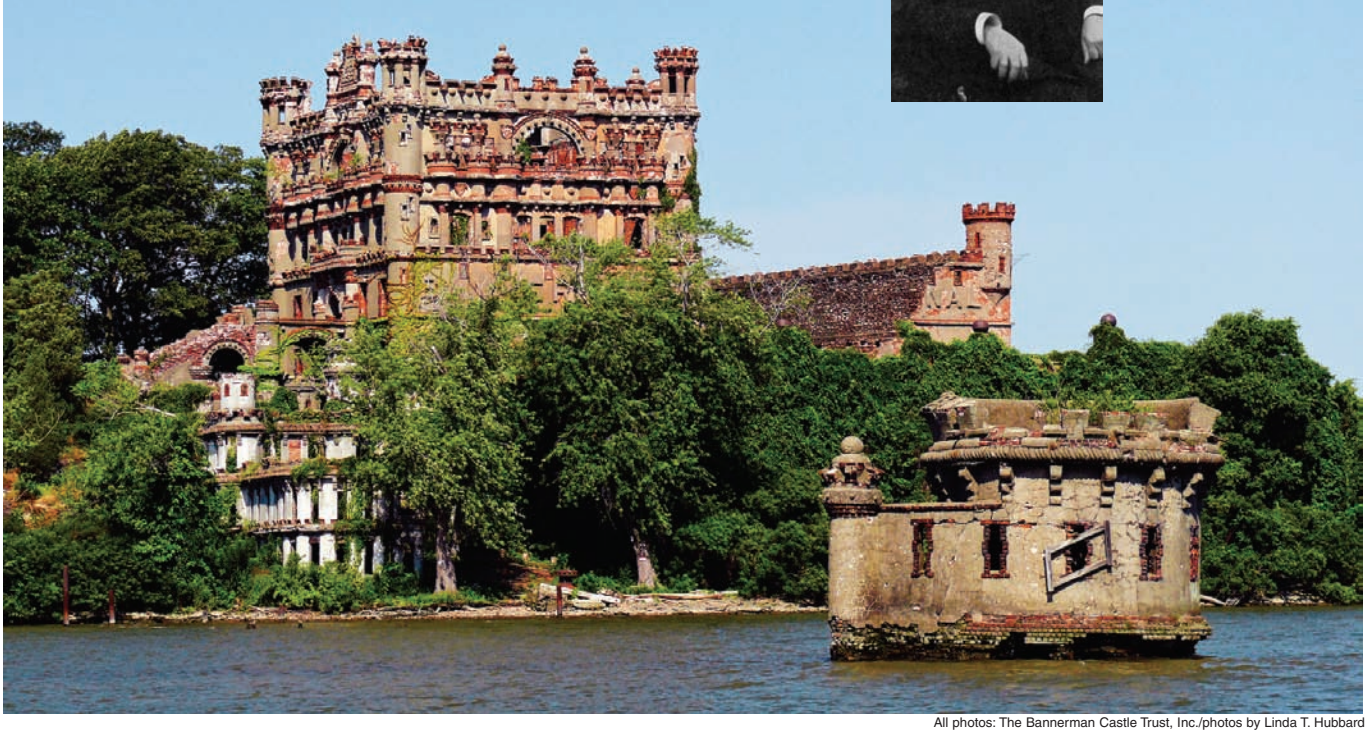
Today, Bannerman Island provides a resting place for the ruins of a genuine Scottish castle, although the castle was not built to serve as a home. A closer look at the structure's side reveals the raised-relief words "Bannerman's Island Arsenal," denoting the original purpose of castle and serving as a huge advertisement for the Bannerman family business. The sign could be seen clearly by passengers riding Hudson River steamboats and the New York Central Railroad.

The Bannerman family was descended from the legendary Scottish clan MacDonald, which had been largely wiped out by the rival Campbell clan in a massacre at Glencoe in 1692. The Campbells had sworn allegiance to the English throne, but the MacDonald clan refused to offer a similar pledge of loyalty, which prompted the slaughter by the Campbells of the MacDonald males between the ages of 12 and 70. The name of Bannerman is said to have originated during the battle of Bannockburn in 1314 when a family member heroically rescued a captured banner from the enemy and escaped into the hills. The Scottish king Robert Bruce bestowed upon him the honor of "banner man," which ultimately became the family name.

Francis (Frank) Bannerman VI immigrated to the United States with his parents from Dundee, Scotland, in 1854, when

Bannerman Castle, in the Hudson River, sits in ruins today, 50 miles north of New York City.

INSET: Francis Bannerman.



All photos: The Bannerman Castle Trust, Inc./photos by Linda T. Hubbard

he was three years old. The family settled in Brooklyn, where Frank's father, true to the family name, began the business of reselling flags and ropes that he had purchased at local Navy auctions. He was accompanied by young Frank, who soon began making money on the side by collecting scrap items from the harbor and reselling them.

At the onset of the Civil War, Frank's father taught him all he needed to know about how Navy auctions operated before he left to join the Union Navy, leaving the 12-year-old boy in charge of the family business. Frank promptly quit school to help support the family full time in the absence of his father. He dragged the river with a large grappling hook for scrap items to sell to local junk buyers, and he quickly learned to repair many of the items he found and sell them for a profit. By the time Frank was 14, his small, individual money-making projects had turned into a full-blown, thriving business. By the time his father returned from the war, young Frank had accumulated enough merchandise for the family to start one of the very first military surplus stores.

At the end of the Civil War, the United States government was left with huge stocks of military surplus, which it began auctioning off to buyers for scrap metal. Huge stocks of surplus arms also went onto the government auction block. Frank promptly bought up all the swords, cannonballs, guns, and bullets he could. He soon realized that he could resell the items at a nice profit if he sold them for their original purposes rather than for scrap metal. By age 20, the young junk dealer had become a successful secondhand arms dealer.

In 1871, with his father's blessing, Frank VI started his own competing store. His business dealings quickly became legendary. He bought up thousands of Civil War carbines at rock-bottom prices and sold the bulk to a store in New York that retailed them for 69 cents apiece—a remarkably low price that makes one wonder what Bannerman himself paid for them. Bannerman once avoided exorbitant rail-freight charges on a shipment of cartridge boxes from California by chartering a clipper ship to deliver the goods to New York via Cape Horn.

The U.S. government generally smashed surplus arms before auctioning them off, much to Bannerman's dismay since he considered it more important to preserve historic arms than to reduce them to scrap. In one government auction, some 11,000 guns were sold for scrap, including many surrendered by Confederate General Robert E. Lee and his legendary army

The castle, once home to "Bannerman's Island Arsenal," was a popular sight for river passengers.

at Appomattox. The government refused to accept Bannerman's bid, stating that he would likely repair the smashed guns and put them up for sale in competition with the obsolete guns the government was trying to sell. Instead, the heirloom weapons were destroyed and sold as scrap metal.

On a business trip to Ireland, Frank visited his grandmother in Ulster and met a young woman named Helen Boyce. The two were married on June 8, 1872, and eventually had three sons, Francis VII, David, and Walter. The two older sons continued the family business; Walter eventually became a doctor and moved to Massachusetts.

After the close of the Spanish-American War in 1898, Bannerman bought up 90 percent of its captured goods in a sealed bid. This became his most legendary and problematic purchase. The family had been storing its arsenal in a warehouse in Brooklyn, but due to the large quantities of black powder in the new purchase (an estimated 30 million rounds of ammunition), it became necessary to find a safer place to store the huge amount of hazardous goods away from populated areas. The city of New York would not allow them to be stored near occupied areas.

Frank's son David discovered Pollepel Island in the Hudson River while taking a canoe trip. Situated approximately 1,000 feet from the east shore, it proved to be the perfect distance from the city for the storage of a huge arsenal. The Bannermans purchased it from owners Thomas and Mary Taft in 1900 after the owners stipulaed that they not use it for the sale of alcohol. Bannerman fervently supported prohibition and had no problem with the restriction.

Frank and his wife spent the next 18 years designing an elaborate castle and another, smaller structure that served as summer living quarters for the family. The house was graced by a large picture window with a view of the United States Military Academy at West Point. The couple built their castle in the Scottish tradition of their ancestors, with little professional help from contractors or architects. Plans included battlements, towers, and a genuine drawbridge. Mrs. Bannerman landscaped the grounds. They added four additional warehouses to the grounds, including one that was placed in the tower of the castle. Huge metal baskets hung from the castle's corners, suspending gas-fed lanterns that burned through the night like torch lights. Armed guards and dogs paced the grounds day and night to keep out intruders.

The family lived virtually on top of hundreds of thousands of rounds of live ammunition, but there were only a few recorded mishaps. The danger of living on an arsenal was brought home forcefully to Mrs. Bannerman one day. She was lying in a hammock on the terrace when she decided to get a glass of iced tea. As she stepped into the house, she heard an explosion and turned just in time to watch a piece of the island's powder house land in the middle of her hammock. Nearly 200 pounds of black powder had exploded and hurled debris. The sound of the blast could be heard nearly 50 miles away. Both the castle and the residence suffered extensive structural damage. Doors were blown off their hinges, and windows were broken in homes in nearby towns from the enormous explosion.

Despite the alarming incident, the Bannerman family by 1900 had become one of the largest suppliers in the world of all manner of military goods, serving individual buyers, collectors, and foreign armies from an enormous store at 501 Broadway in New York City. The family conquered every possible market, even selling old uniforms to theater organizations as costumes (including costumes for Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West show).

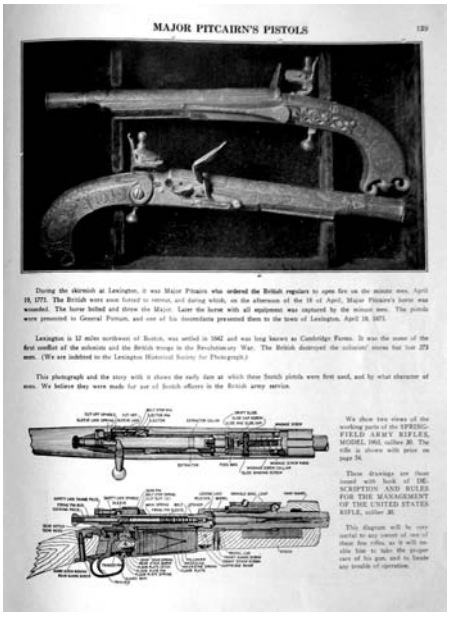
Many years after the Civil War, they were still able to supply original Union uniforms in pristine condition in their original packaging. Many of the commemorative cannons displayed in small towns across the country were supplied by the Bannermans, and they even supplied suits of armor displayed in museums and personal collections around the world.

Any type of war goods that an individual might want could be found at Bannerman's, from ancient crossbows to Civil War muskets, Filipino bolos and barongs, and tribal war shields. The wants of boys and young men were given special attention, and Bannerman's advertised its catalog in popular boys' and outdoor magazines of the day. Although Bannerman's never sold live weapons to minors, a boy could buy any war decorations he might want for his bedroom wall or military-style camping equipment from the 350-page catalogue. The fully detailed catalogue, published from 1880 to the 1960s, is still considered a valuable reference for military supplies. It can even be found in some library systems around the United States.

Bannerman never revealed his largest arms customers, and although he claimed to have never knowingly sold arms to buyers of questionable origin, some of his weapons were said to have inadvertently ended up in the hands of "revolutionists" around the world. Some


FIREARMS OF THE CONFEDERACY 227

PLATE V


MAJOR PITCAIRN'S PISTOLS 129

Pages from the 84th anniversary issue of the Francis Bannerman Sons arms catalogue of 1949.

observers claimed that they saw Bannerman's weapons being used by insurgents in Panama during their struggle to gain independence from Colombia.

At the onset of World War I, one of Bannerman's employees, an Austrian immigrant named Charles Kovac, was arrested on charges of spying, casting a large shadow of suspicion on Bannerman's business. Soldiers were stationed on Bannerman Island for precautionary purposes and made an extensive search of the grounds. Machine guns mounted in the tower of the castle aroused suspicion, but Bannerman claimed that they had only been used to salute passing steamboats. Bannerman sent an angry letter to Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, voicing his objections to the island's occupation and noting his reputation as a true American patriot. As for Kovac, he was subject to deportation, but eventually was paroled and had his work activities on the island severely restricted.

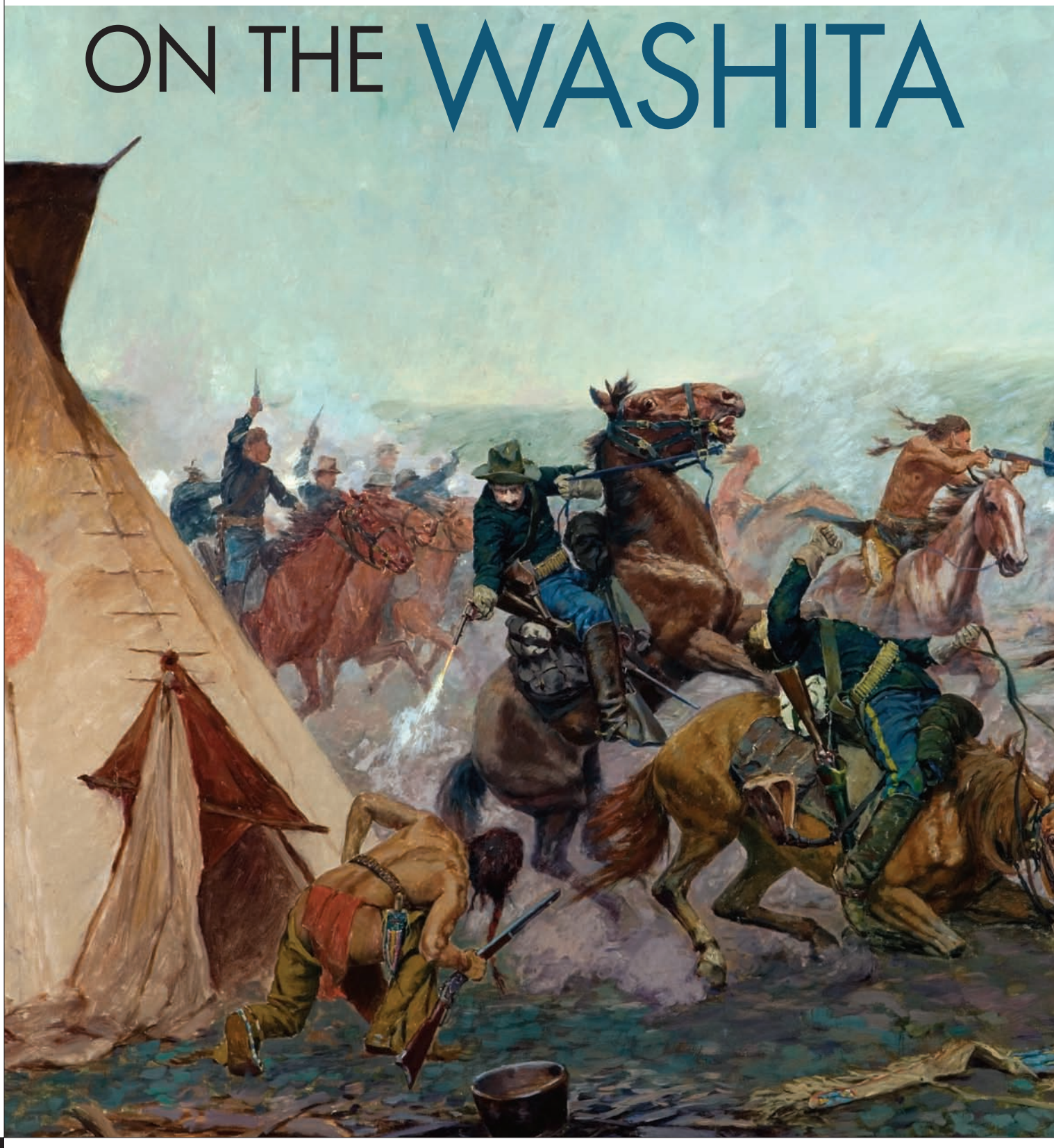
Frank Bannerman died in 1918 at the age of 68 from overwork, according to a *New York Times* obituary, but many believed that the occupation of the island and the suspicion surrounding his name and business had seriously compromised his health. He had also been involved in a large, ambitious war relief effort to Belgium at the time, which may have contributed to his downward turn. The island continued to be used for storage, but all further construction on the castle came to an end. Frank VII and David Bannerman continued to operate the business well into the 1970s out of a massive warehouse on Long Island.

The business eventually began to sell more to collectors than to arms buyers. After the two brothers died, it passed to the control of grandson Charles Bannerman, who ironically had married Jane Campbell and finally ended the clans' long feud. The family finally sold Bannerman Castle to the State of New York in 1967. A munitions expert was hired to remove any remaining dangerous ordnance, and the city took possession of all the remaining merchandise, some of which was donated to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The state made plans to conduct tours of the castle, but a mysterious fire on August 8, 1969, caused extensive damage. Firefighters quickly rowed to the island to look for anyone who might have been trapped by the blaze, but they could do little to save the castle itself. Stone, cement, and bricks were all that remained of the original structure. Police investigated the possibility of arson, but nothing could be proven. Since that time, the castle has been declared off limits to the public, although the island itself is open for tours from May through October. The fate of the castle is now in the hands of Bannerman Castle Trust, Inc., which is attempting to secure funds for a renovation.

Although he had an exceptional career dealing in weapons of war, Frank Bannerman's greatest wish was that there would come a day when his weapons were no longer considered necessary and his military surplus store and museum could become known instead as a "Museum of Lost Arts." He was a great preserver of military history, and experts agree that many of the surviving items dating from the Civil War survive today largely due to Bannerman's one-man efforts to save them. □

MASSACRE ON THE WASHITA



BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG

In the fall of 1868, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer commenced a controversial military operation against the Cheyenne. It would bring him the only significant victory of his Indian-fighting career.

Members of the 7th Cavalry ride into an unsuspecting Cheyenne village on the banks of the Washita River on November 27, 1868, in artist Charles Schreyvogel's painting *Attack at Dawn.*

Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK

THE CONCLUSION OF the Civil War saw the painfully reunited nation resume its westward surge. Complicating that surge was the Indian question: how best to remove the Native American peoples from the paths of white expansion. The United States Army, imbued with impatient confidence after defeating the redoubtable Confederates, felt that the resolution of the Indian problem would be a swift and simple matter. That assessment would prove to be disastrously wrong, for both sides.

The postwar opening of massive new areas for settlement and the building of the transcontinental rail system required a sufficient number of soldiers. The main theater of operations in the West immediately after the Civil War was the area of the Great Plains. Situated west of the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, this swath of land stretched 500 miles east to west and 2,000 miles north to south, covering parts of Canada as well as the United States. Included in this vast territory were the areas of Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North and South Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wyoming. It was the home to over 100,000 Native Americans (Blackfoot, Crow, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and others), proud, warlike people who would not be removed from their tribal lands without a struggle.

At the end of the Civil War, Congress authorized a Regular Army of 57,000 men, well under the numbers needed to secure the revitalized settlement of the West. A number of factors complicated the Army's task. First, a strong force had to be maintained on the border with Mexico to keep an eye on the French-sponsored regime of Emperor Maximilian. Second, one-third of the army had to be deployed in the southern states to ensure the Reconstruction program would be completed. This left fewer than 15,000 troops to combat and contain the Indians, a task made harder by the fact that many of the soldiers were tied down manning the 255 military posts scattered throughout the nation. The result was predictable. In the majority of large-scale operations against the Indians, the Army was able to bring to bear at most 1,500 to 3,500 fighters at a time.

Furthermore, the Army was hobbled with a poor appreciation of the tactics required to defeat the Native Americans. The high command was still rooted in the ways of conventional warfare practiced during the Civil War. Accustomed by that conflict to rely upon weight of numbers and armaments accompanying ponderous advances, the Army leadership after 1865 needed time to relearn the lessons of fighting a frontier war in which it had not been actively engaged for almost 10 years. Meanwhile, it had to cope with a skilled foe whose use of deception, mobility, and guerrilla-style fighting techniques to avoid battle and strike unexpected blows was exceptional.

In 1866 an explosion of violence occurred in the Wyoming and Montana territories of the northern plains. The violence escalated with a bloody and unimaginable defeat sustained by the Army. On December 12, Captain William J. Fetterman, in command of an 81-man mixed infantry and cavalry detachment, was ambushed by 1,000 Indian fighters outside Fort Phil Kearny, Wyoming. Fetterman and his entire command were wiped out. At the time, the Fetterman Massacre was the worst defeat ever sustained by the American military on the Great Plains. Public anger over the event brought demands for the government to come down hard on the Native Americans. The Army was more than willing to do so.

From his headquarters in St. Louis, Lt. Gen. William T. Sherman, commander of the Military Division of the Missouri, contacted Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock, who headed the Department of Missouri, a geographical command encompassing Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, and New

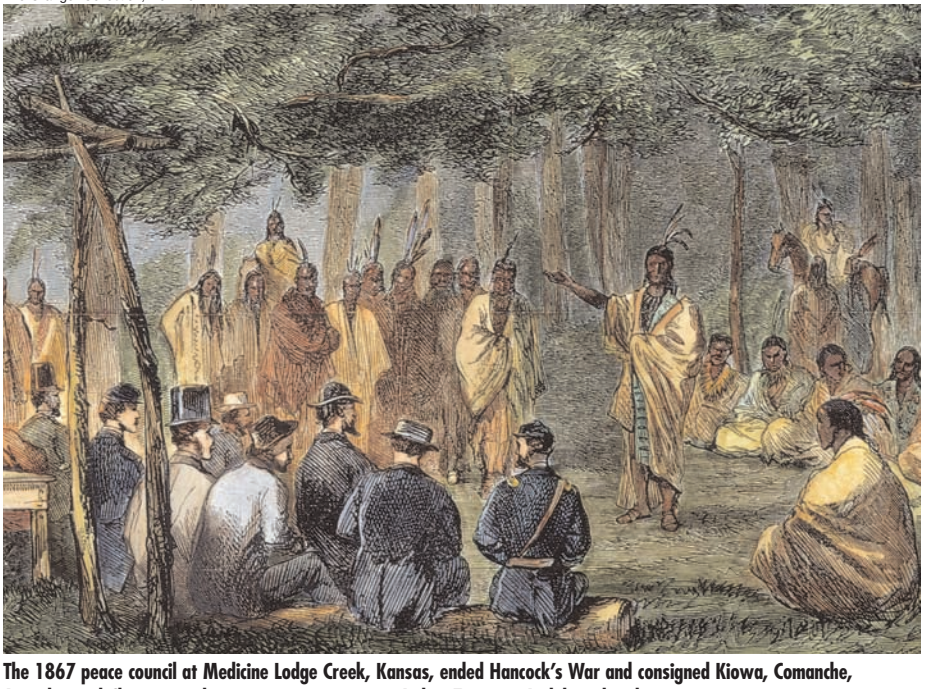
Mexico. Sherman ordered a military strike to teach the Indians a lasting lesson. In March 1867, Hancock gathered 1,400 infantry and cavalry, along with one artillery battery, and set out for Fort Larned, Kansas, to confront the Cheyenne and Sioux tribesmen camped at Pawnee Fork, 35 miles south of the fort.

During Hancock's approach to the Indian village between April 12 and 15, the Indians fled their camp. Cavalry was sent after the escapees, but the only things they found were burned stage stations, run-off livestock, and butchered white civilians. In retaliation, Hancock set fire to the Indian camp on Pawnee Fork. What became known as Hancock's War had begun.

For the next three months, the Army carried out fruitless searches for the Indian bands that repeatedly attacked and destroyed mail stations, stagecoaches, wagon trains and railroad workers along the Platte, Smokey Hill, and Arkansas Rivers. By the end of July, the Great Plains was embroiled in warfare. Except for a few abortive mounted expeditions, Hancock's forces spent the summer strictly on the defensive. His 5,000 soldiers (chiefly infantry) were tied down defending a 2,500-mile perimeter made up of isolated military posts designed to protect the major travel arteries. Within this cordon ranged the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne, who took every opportunity to strike selected targets.

In July, the U.S. Congress negotiated a peace with all the warring tribes on the Great Plains. Embedded in the resultant treaty was the requirement that all the Indians be cleared from the area between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers and resettled to the north and south. Army brass reluc-

The Granger Collection, New York



The 1867 peace council at Medicine Lodge Creek, Kansas, ended Hancock's War and consigned Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, and Cheyenne tribesmen to reservations in Indian Territory. It did not last long.

tantly went along with the congressional peace initiative, mainly as a way of diverting attention from the clumsy and embarrassing campaign that Hancock had conducted.

The Medicine Lodge Treaties (the talks took place at Medicine Lodge Creek in southern Kansas) were finalized in October 1867 between the United States and the Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes. The Native American signatories were consigned to a reservation in Indian Territory (modern-day Oklahoma). The peace created at Medicine Lodge Creek did not last long. Comprehending belatedly what they had bartered away and increasingly angered by the failure of the U.S. government to provide long-promised supplies, the Cheyenne and their traditional allies the Arapaho went on a rampage starting in July 1868. Aimed first at their longtime rivals, the Pawnee, the rebellious Indians also attacked whites along the Solomon and Saline Rivers.

In the Department of the Missouri alone, 110 white civilians were killed, 13 women raped, and more than 1,000 livestock stolen. In addition, uncounted farmhouses, wagon trains, and stagecoaches were destroyed. Numerous small-scale skirmishes occurred between soldiers and Indians, but the Army never succeeded in bringing the raiders to bay. Frustrated commanders vowed to pursue and kill any Indians who refused to move onto Medicine Creek Treaty lands.

In March 1868, Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan replaced Hancock as head of the Department of Missouri. The flinty-eyed Sheridan, diminutive and blasphemous, had successfully commanded a field army in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, as well as the Cavalry Corps of the Union Army of the Potomac, during the Civil War. Like Sherman, Sheridan believed in the concept of total war. To both men, total war meant subjecting the entire enemy population to the horrors of war, thereby undermining their will to resist. It had worked against the South—perhaps it would work against the Indians as well.

Although Sherman and Sheridan blamed Cheyenne and Arapaho leaders for instigating the recent disturbances, the facts were otherwise. Before the summer warfare erupted, the Cheyenne and Arapaho had moved south to Indian Territory to get away from the growing disorder north of the Kansas line. Most of the trouble was caused by young Indian men who resisted tribal authority and sought to plunder white settlers and their property. Others were members of the warrior society known as Dog Soldiers, who lived only to fight the white man and other hereditary enemies. The Army failed to separate the perpetrators of the summer violence from other tribal members who advocated peace with the whites.

One such peace proponent was Cheyenne chief Black Kettle. Born in 1801 near the Black Hills, Black Kettle was a longtime advocate of compromise with the United States. He sought to accommodate the Americans by signing several peace treaties with them in the hope of retaining some autonomy for his people. Despite his efforts, he and his tribe were attacked on November 29, 1864, at the Sand Creek Reservation in the Colorado Territory by territorial militia under Colonel John M. Chivington. The surprise assault on the Indian camp claimed 163 Cheyenne dead, mostly women and children. Black Kettle barely escaped with his life.

Even after the Sand Creek Massacre, Black Kettle continued to work for peace with the American government, but his standing with his own people never recovered from the debacle of Sand Creek. His acquiescence to later treaties caused many other Cheyenne to lose faith in his judgment and ability to lead them. This increased the influence of the Dog Soldiers, who insisted that war was the only answer to the growing white threat. To Sherman and Sheridan, Black Kettle's inability to control his people was seen as an encouragement to further violence. The generals determined to eradicate the problem by severely punishing Black Kettle and his compatriots.

Past experience showed that little success

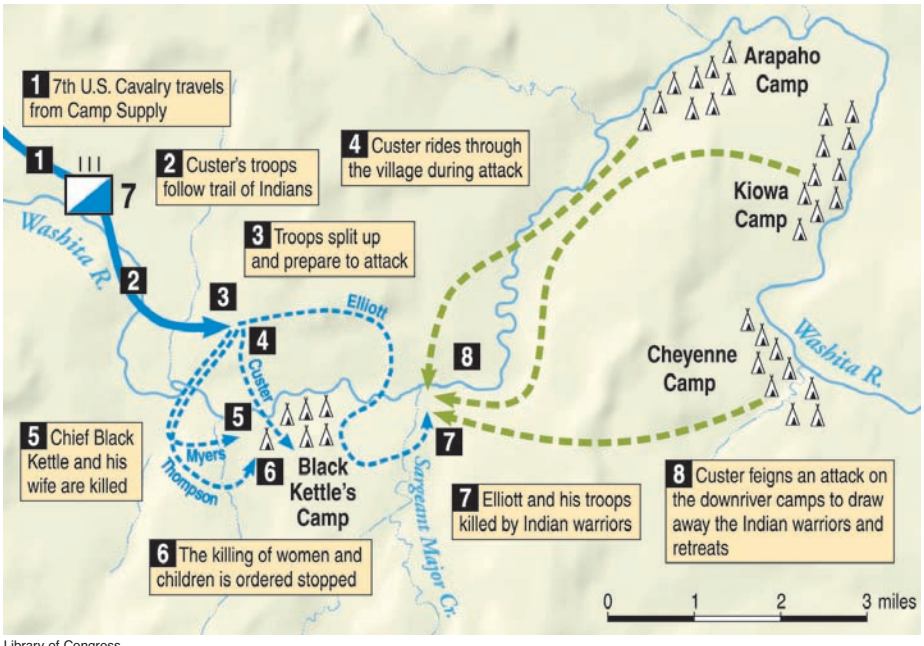
could be gained during the warm seasons when the Indians were free to move around the country. Sheridan reasoned that a radically different approach had to be tried—a winter campaign would be initiated. That was when the Indians were at their most vulnerable, unable to travel due to the heavy snowfall and forced to stay in one place for an extended period of time. Active operations during the winter by the Army, rarely seen before on the Great Plains, would yield the advantage of tactical surprise.

To shield white settlements and screen the concentration of his forces for the forthcoming campaign, Sheridan kept roving columns in the field throughout the month of October. The forces were to act as "beaters" to drive the Indians south of the Arkansas River and east toward the Antelope Hills. Sheridan's main component, the 7th U.S. and 19th Kansas Cavalry Regiments, was to proceed to a point near the junction of Beaver and the North Canadian Rivers in Indian Territory and hit the Indians' winter quarters along the headwaters of the Washita River. According to Sheridan, the objective of the mission was to "strike the Indians a hard blow and force them on to the reservations set a part for them, and if this could not be accomplished to show to the Indian that the winter season would not give him rest, and that he and his villages and stock could be destroyed."

The 7th Cavalry was buoyed by the return of its former leader, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer. Custer, a 29-year-old West Point graduate, class of 1861, had enjoyed a meteoric rise during the Civil War, going from a second lieutenant in 1861 to brevet major general of cavalry by war's end. He had headed the 7th Cavalry during Hancock's abortive campaign of 1866, but his performance then had been lackluster for so renowned a horse soldier. Unable to find—let alone bring to bay—the Indians during the campaign, Custer had been suspended from active duty and court-martialed for leaving his post to visit his wife. But Sheridan, who had commanded the young Buckeye during the Civil War, asked President Ulysses S. Grant to reinstate Custer to active command. The newly rehabilitated officer joined his regiment on October 11, 1868, two days after Sheridan received final authority to commence his winter campaign.

Sheridan hoped to begin operations by the end of October with a movement to the Washita Mountains in the southwestern part of Indian Territory. The initial moves were designed to keep harassing the enemy during the winter until the Army could concentrate its resources for a major blow in the early spring. But the transfer of troops south was halted as

Map © 2010 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



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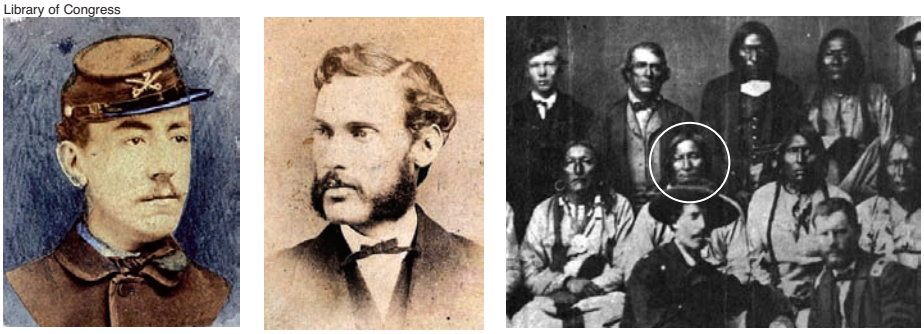


ABOVE: Major Joel Elliot (left), Captain Louis M. Hamilton (center), and Black Kettle (right), circled in the center of the photograph. TOP: Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer divided his command to fall on the Cheyenne camp from all sides. A similar plan of attack came to grief eight years later on the Little Bighorn.

a result of the inability to gather enough supplies at Fort Dodge, Kansas, to support the maneuver. As October wore on and the logistical base at Fort Dodge grew, other units of Sheridan's command frequently but inconclusively skirmished with Cheyenne and Arapaho forces.

On November 12, Colonel Alfred Sully led his command from their encampment just south of Fort Dodge. The column forded the Arkansas River and reached the Cimarron River on the 15th. By the 18th they had marched 110 miles south from the Arkansas, where they began constructing a supply base, rather unimaginatively dubbed Camp Supply, south of the North Canadian River.

As the men labored to build Camp Supply, Sully and Custer fought over who was entitled to command the expedition. Sully sought to exert command by reason of his Regular Army brevet rank of brigadier general. Custer countered by claiming his brevet rank of major general of volunteers trumped Sully's argument. The dispute went unresolved, with Sully retaining overall command, until Sheridan joined them on November 21. Sheridan immediately settled the "conflict of rank" issue by packing Sully off north to Fort Harker, leaving Custer in command of the expedition.

The 7th Cavalry moved out from Camp Supply on November 23. They had hoped to be joined by the 19th Kansas by that time. But Samuel J. Crawford's troopers would not reach Camp Supply until December 1, after a harrowing 20-day march through snow-covered ravines and gullies, beset by severe winter conditions and near starvation. As a result, the success of the operation would have to rely on the 7th Cavalry.

The 7th United States Cavalry had been created in 1866. Many of its officers were veterans of the Civil War, including company commanders Captains Frederick W. Benteen, Louis M. Hamilton, Robert M. West, and Thomas B. Weir. The unit also contained a goodly portion of combat veterans, as well as recent enlistees from all walks of life. Custer's second in command was Major Joel Elliott, an Indiana native who had risen through the ranks during the Civil War to gain an officer's commission. Elliott was a veteran of the Battles of Shiloh, Perryville, Corinth, and Stones River. He

had transferred to the cavalry and participated in Brig. Gen. Benjamin Grierson's famous Mississippi raid. By war's end, Elliott had received two wounds as well as two brevet promotions. After mustering out of the Army in 1866, he sat for an exam that gained him a major's commission in the 7th Cavalry. As the senior regimental major, Elliott had commanded the 7th in Kansas prior to Custer's return in 1868. Custer considered him "a young officer of great courage and enterprise."

Snow lay a foot deep on the ground when the 7th Cavalry moved out on November 23 in column of fours. Their mission was to track down a Cheyenne and Arapaho band that Custer had heard was moving north five days before. The soldiers' route would cover 250 miles, south to the South Canadian River, then down to Fort Cobb, next southwest toward the Washita (or Wichita) Mountains, then northwest back to Camp Supply. The men carried 30 days' rations with them. Custer led the way, compass in hand, as the troopers and 37 heavily laden supply wagons tramped their way south. On the 25th, after crossing numerous thinly frozen deep streams, the men spotted the Antelope Hills. By then the horses were greatly fatigued as a result of the hard going and difficulty of finding grass for them to eat on the snow-covered landscape.

Movement became even harder as the cold increased and a thick fog appeared. According to one participant, "it was necessary to dismount very often, and walk in order to prevent our feet from freezing." That same day, Elliott was sent out on reconnaissance below the South Canadian River. He reported back that he had discovered a trail used by as many as 150 Indian warriors. He continued his reconnaissance until he stopped near a tributary of the Washita River to await orders from Custer.

After hearing of Elliott's find, Custer determined to leave a small detachment with the wagons and take the rest of his men southeast across country to link up with Elliott and strike what he was sure were Indian villages on the Washita River, a tributary of the Red River that flowed just southeast of the South Canadian. The 7th crossed the South Canadian River into terrain characterized by rolling hills and undulating plains interspersed with wooded creeks and low-lying streams and valleys.

Custer had been right about the supposed location of the Indians. Since early November, about 6,000 of them occupied various villages along the Washita River, known to the Indians as Lodge Pole River. Abundant winter grass for their ponies as well as timber, drinking water, and firewood

Library of Congress

made the area a perfect resting place during the winter season. Across a bend at a point where the Washita ran roughly east to west, and south of the river between two gently rising ridges about two miles apart, stood the teepees of Chief Black Kettle. At this point the Washita was between nine and 12 feet wide and formed a crescent-shaped bend encompassing 30 acres, where most of the 51 lodges sheltering 250 people were situated. A mile to the west, large herds of Cheyenne ponies were turned out to graze. Black Kettle's village was four miles west of the principal concentration of Cheyenne lodges. Arapaho and Kiowa camps were nearby.

Returning Indian raiders (the ones whose trail had been spotted earlier by Elliott) advised Black Kettle that they had seen a path in the snow made by enemy horses heading for the Washita encampments. The old chief discounted their story; he did not believe that white soldiers would be operating that far south in such wintry conditions.While the Indians debated the idea of an enemy advance, Custer and his men were approaching the Washita valley from the northwest. They first saw the Indian pony herds, and finally through the predrawn light Army scouts discerned the Cheyenne lodges, even entering the village before reporting back to Custer, who was waiting on a hillside a mile north of the camp. The scouts estimated the warrior strength in the village at only 150 men. After countermarching away from the village so that his presence would not be discovered by the Indians, Custer and his officers formulated their attack plan.

Custer decided to strike at daybreak. During the remaining hours of darkness, Custer split his command to surround the village and assault it from all sides. Elliott's force (Companies G, H, and M) moved to the rear of the Indian position; Captain William Thompson with Companies B and F crossed to the south bank of the Washita and positioned themselves to the south. The west side of the village would be hit by E and I Companies under Captain Edward Myers after he crossed the stream. Companies A, C, D, and K as well as the regimental sharpshooter detachment under the command of Captain Louis M. Hamilton and accompanied by Custer were stationed on a ridge a mile northwest of the village. The attack was to be made simultaneously by all forces at dawn, but if any of the columns were discovered beforehand, they were to engage at once. The signal for the assault would be given by the regimental band.

By dawn, Elliott's force was within three-fourths of a mile of the village, straddling both sides of the Washita, with most of the men dismounted and in skirmish order. To their left, Thompson's command eased into place. On the ridge beyond, Hamilton's troopers waited in the cold darkness standing by their horses, prohibited for obvious reasons from lighting fires.

As daylight drew near, the soldiers with Custer on the ridge were ordered to mount up. The men formed a single line, while the sharpshooters arranged themselves on foot in skirmish order in front of the left wing. Custer's column crested a second ridge and saw what looked like a deserted village. Company K, on the right of the advancing line, was ordered to charge anyway and secure any Indian ponies encountered. As the troopers neared the Indian lodges scattered beyond the thick timber along the Washita, Custer turned to the regimental band leader and ordered him to strike up the regiment's famous marching song, "Garry Owen."

Before the first musical notes faded in the cold morning air, the soldiers rushed into the Indian camp. The dismounted sharpshooters veered away to allow their mounted compatriots a clear path over the river and up the steep banks. Indians came scrambling out of their tents, mostly unarmed and bewildered. Leading the attack aboard a black stallion, Custer fired his revolver at one Indian and rode over another before taking a position on a rise a quarter of a mile south of the stream. Hamil-

ton's men entered the encampment firing their pistols at any target that moved. Soon after, Hamilton was shot dead from his saddle.

From the west and south Myers's and Thompson's men stormed into the village, but the latter's force failed to close the circle around the Indians, allowing many to escape to the east. Meanwhile, hemmed in from all directions, other Indians ran for the river, jumped into the freezing waist-high water, and fired at the enemy over the steep bank. Others fled downriver or sought protection behind trees and in ravines. Seeing the chaos around them, Black Kettle and his wife mounted a horse and raced into the river, but both were struck by bullets and fell mortally wounded into the Washita.

Within minutes the soldiers controlled the village. In the ear-rattling confusion, troopers chased and, according to one army scout, "killed without mercy" any Indian man, woman, or child within their reach. That was not completely accurate. Dozens were rounded up and taken prisoner on the slopes below the village.

After the village was cleared and the prisoners rounded up, the real fighting commenced. Taking refuge in the timber near the Washita, isolated groups of Indians fought off the pursuing soldiers. Custer's men dismounted and fought on foot, aided by the sharpshooters who effectively silenced the stubborn pockets of resistance in the ravines and along the river bank. At the same time, Custer sent his men to gather the women and children still in their teepees and to assure them that they would not be harmed.

As the village fell, 1st Lieutenant Edward S. Godfrey and 20 troopers sought to capture the Indian ponies feeding nearby. After rounding up a herd of horses south and east of the village, he left to run down a group of Indians seen fleeing across the river to the east. After going three miles, the junior officer spied another large number of lodges along the Washita. Even worse, he also saw hundreds of Indian warriors coming after him. Placing his small detachment in skirmish order, Godfrey deftly leapfrogged his men over a number of ridges away from the rapidly approaching enemy. After a time, for some unexplained reason they faded from his front.

As Godfrey and his men withdrew, they heard heavy firing coming from the nearby south bank of the Washita, but the trees prevented them from discerning what was happening on the far shore. Reaching Custer, Godfrey reported his encounter with the new band of warriors and the presence of a large village downstream. Custer seemed surprised at their existence. Godfrey suggested that Elliott might be under attack. "I hardly think so," said Custer, "as Captain Myers has been fighting down there all morning and probably would have reported it."

The Granger Collection, New York

The Granger Collection, New York

ABOVE: Osage scouts mount a celebratory scalp dance after their allies in the U.S. Cavalry routed their ancestral enemy, the Cheyenne, at Washita. TOP: Indian women and children flee as the 7th Cavalry surges through their teepees at dawn, firing indiscriminately. OPPOSITE: In a surprise late-autumn campaign, Custer's command marches through the snow to strike the Cheyenne village on the Washita.

What Godfrey had heard but not seen was the destruction of a small force of horse soldiers under Elliott, which was the reason why the Indians had stopped chasing him. During the assault on Black Kettle's camp, Elliott had seen a group of hostiles slip through the gap between his and Thompson's line. Gathering 18 troopers, along with Sgt. Maj. Walter Kennedy, Elliot gave chase. "Here goes for a brevet or a coffin," Elliott shouted as he galloped off in pursuit of the Indians.

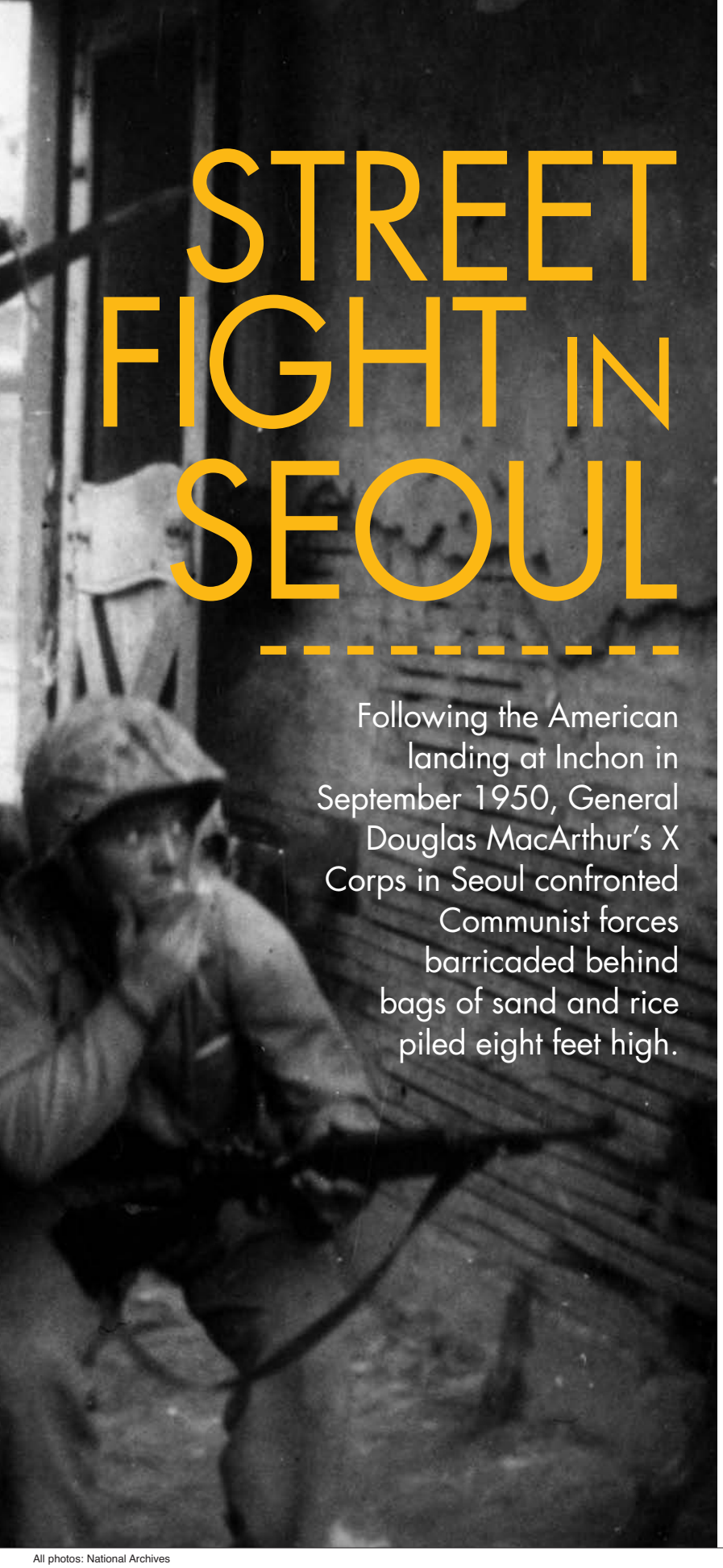
Upon reaching a point 2½ miles east of Black Kettle's village on the south bank of the Washita, Elliott was suddenly attacked by hundreds of Indians from several directions. Dismounting and taking cover in the tall grass, the regulars were showered with Indian bullets and arrows and killed to a man. Their bodies were gruesomely butchered and scalped. Soon after the massacre, newly arrived Indians from the east and north came within sight of Black Kettle's camp.

A short time later Custer's ammunition train arrived, having ridden through the loose cordon of Indians beginning to surround Custer's position. The colonel sent out a skirmish line to engage the rapidly congregating Indians. While the two sides exchanged shots with each other, Custer ordered the village burned to the ground. He also sent companies under Benteen, Weir, and Myers to engage the enemy. After a few spirited charges, the Indians fell back.

As the fighting died down to the north, Custer instructed Myers to locate Elliott and his detachment. After riding two miles eastward down the river, Myers returned and reported his failure to locate the missing officer and his men. Custer did not renew his efforts to discover Elliott's whereabouts. He was more concerned about the growing number of armed Indians in the area, and he

Continued on page 66

American Marines return fire from North Korean snipers as they fight street to street in the South Korean capital of Seoul in September 1950.



STREET FIGHT IN SEOUL

Following the American landing at Inchon in September 1950, General Douglas MacArthur's X Corps in Seoul confronted Communist forces barricaded behind bags of sand and rice piled eight feet high.

BY MARC D. BERNSTEIN

ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1950, the United Nations X Corps, spearheaded by two regiments of the U.S. 1st Marine Division, landed at Inchon, on South Korea's west coast, 25 miles from the capital of Seoul. The landing was a spectacular gamble by UN Supreme Commander Douglas MacArthur and proved to be an equally spectacular success. Despite rampant rumors of an imminent landing circulating for weeks before the actual event, MacArthur's Inchon assault completely surprised the North Koreans, whose army was largely engaged in attacking UN forces along the Pusan Perimeter, far to the south. Inchon proved to be only lightly defended by the North Korean People's Army (NKPA), and the U.S. Marines rapidly established a beachhead. The battle for Inchon was quickly over. The next objective was Seoul itself. The capital would prove a much tougher nut to crack.

War had begun on the Korean Peninsula on June 25, 1950, when North Korean Russian-made T-34 tanks crashed across the 38th parallel and rapidly routed the defending Republic of Korea (ROK) forces. Within days, Seoul had fallen to the North Koreans and the bridges across the Han River had been blown by the retreating ROK Army. American President Harry Truman reacted immediately and forcefully to counter the naked Communist aggression, rushing the U.S. 24th Infantry Division to Korea from occupation duty in Japan to help stem the onrushing Communist tide. At the same time, the United Nations, with the Soviet Union absent in protest of Nationalist China's presence on the Security Council, voted to enter the war on South Korea's side.

Undeterred by international sanctions, the North Korean forces continued their drive southward, hemming in the UN forces around Pusan, in the extreme southeast of the country. MacArthur struck back with his audacious amphibious assault at Inchon. American Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey spoke for many when he described MacArthur's counterattack as "characteristic and magnificent. The Inchon landing is the most masterly and audacious strategic stroke in all history." Other military leaders called it nothing less than "a 20th century Cannae." (In 216 BC, Carthaginian leader Hannibal inflicted Imperial Rome's greatest defeat at Cannae, on the Adriatic coast.)

The surprise landing immediately threatened the North Koreans' line of communication to the Pusan Perimeter, requiring a pullback of NKPA units from the south to avoid the risk of having them permanently cut off. The capital of Seoul was itself not initially occupied by many North Korean troops, but this would quickly change. As a result of the Inchon landing, the North Koreans sent reinforcements into the greater Seoul area, intending to make a determined stand in the capital. UN forces advancing from the seaport of Inchon would have to battle 20,000 NKPA

All photos: National Archives

Under fire on the outskirts of Seoul, American and South Korean forces take cover in the woods on September 20, 1950.

troops tasked with holding Seoul. They would prove stout adversaries.

MacArthur reasoned that the recapture of Seoul was a crucial follow-up to the Inchon landing. "By seizing Seoul, I would completely paralyze the enemy's supply system coming and going," the general noted. "This in turn would paralyze the fighting power of the troops that now faced [Lt. Gen. Walton H.] Walker. Without munitions and food they would soon be helpless and disorganized, and could be easily overpowered by our smaller but well supplied forces."

At the beginning of the war, Seoul had a population of nearly two million people. The city core was surrounded by hills, cottages, and rural villages, but the inner city contained modern office buildings that were solidly constructed and maintained. Wide thoroughfares crisscrossed the city. One major road, Ma Po Boulevard, was lined on both sides by two- and three-story stucco and masonry structures as well as churches, hospitals, and walled compounds. Seoul was a logistical hub for the North Korean invaders because the vast majority of their supplies were funneled through a fairly narrow corridor in and around the South Korean capital.

X Corps, commanded by MacArthur's erstwhile chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond, began its drive from Inchon to Seoul on September 18. The 5th Marines, under Lt. Col. Raymond L. Murray, advanced on Kimpo Airfield, Seoul's primary airport, and captured it with little difficulty. Kimpo lay some miles south of the Han River (Seoul is on the river's north bank). Troops and supplies were flown into Kimpo while the Marines continued to advance cautiously eastward.

The newly arrived 7th Marines covered the 5th Marines' northwestern flank between Seoul and Uijongbu, while the U.S. Army's 31st Infantry, on the X Corps southeastern flank, advanced to make contact with Walker's units moving up from the Pusan Perimeter. The 187th Airborne also landed at newly liberated Kimpo in late September to provide additional flank protection to the Marines south of the Han.

North Korean units called to defend Seoul included the green 18th Division, which initially had been heading to the Pusan Perimeter, and an experienced regiment of the 9th Division, which had been fighting along the perimeter's Naktong River line. In addition, roughly 2,000 troops of the 78th Independent Infantry Regiment and the 25th Brigade moved into the Seoul area as rapidly as possible after the Inchon landing on express orders from North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung. Other Communist units in the Seoul area were the 70th Regiment, the 42nd Tank Regiment, and the 107th Security Regiment.

The 7th Marines were still en route to Inchon when Maj. Gen. Oliver P. Smith's 1st and 5th Marines began their push from the seaport to the capital. Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller's 1st Marines pressed forward along the Seoul-Inchon highway, heading directly for Yongdungpo. The 5th Marines, on Puller's left, managed to fully secure Kimpo Airfield by September 19 in preparation for crossing the Han River to the west of Seoul. Opposition was light in the first days after the Inchon landing because the NKPA was still consolidating its units in the Seoul area. The Communist forces hoped to use natural obstacles such as the river and the hills ringing the city to retain control of the capital. The U.S. Army's 7th Division had begun disembarking at Inchon on September 18, and South Korean units joined the campaign. They would all be needed, as NKPA resistance rapidly stiffened around Seoul.

On September 18, Almond ordered Smith to send his units across the Han and capture a hill position north of the capital. Smith issued his own order to his regiments. On the 19th, they were to secure a Han crossing site near Haengju, followed by a river crossing on the 20th and the capture of the Communists' mountain fortress, Hill 125. At 8:40 on the evening of the 19th, a scouting party of 14 men from the 5th Marines' Reconnaissance Company swam the river to locate a suitable cross-

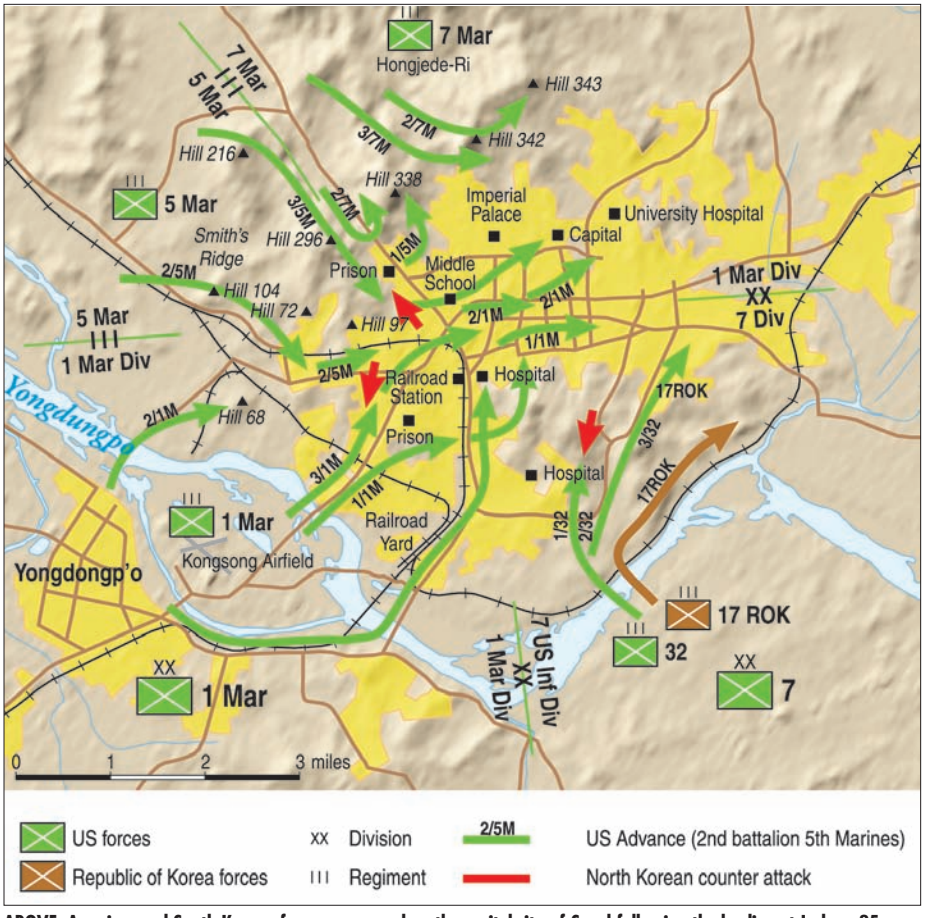
ing site for the regiment on the north bank. They landed safely at the Haengju ferry site and reconnoitered, finding no enemy in the immediate vicinity.

North Korean troops, in fact, were ensconced on Hill 125, and after amphibious tractors (LVTs) carrying the rest of the company were halfway across the river, heavy enemy fire crashed down on them, forcing them to retreat to the south bank. A daylight crossing of the river was now required. The Marines began a heavy predawn bombardment of Hill 125, followed by an assault crossing at 6:45 AM led by I Company of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. Within three hours, they secured Hill 125, and the rest of the 3rd Battalion crossed in LVTs without incident.

By nightfall, the 5th Marines, along with the 2nd Battalion of the ROK 1st Marine Regiment and an attached U.S. tank company,

were on the north bank of the Han. The tanks had been ferried across by a combat engineer battalion using pontoon bridging. Hill 125 was just eight miles from downtown Seoul. The 5th Marines' eastward advance continued, this time north of the river.

Also on the morning of September 20, Puller's 1st Marines closed on the Seoul suburb of Yongdungpo. The Marines repulsed a counterattack by five T-34s, and the NKPA 87th Regiment of the 18th Division lost 300 troops and several tanks. Puller's forces moved directly along the highway and through hill country south of the Han. The Communists withdrew into Yongdungpo itself. Puller requested unrestricted fire support from Marine artillery and



ABOVE: American and South Korean forces converged on the capital city of Seoul following the landing at Inchon, 25 miles west, in mid-September 1950. LEFT: Marine Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, left, confers with Brigadier General E.A. Craig on a hilltop overlooking Seoul.

airplanes. Almond granted Puller's request.

At 6:30 AM on September 21, Puller launched his attack into Yongdungpo. Staff Sergeant Lee Bergee of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, recalled the assault. "Yongdungpo was surrounded by a moat on one side, by a wide rice paddy on the west, and by high ridges on the southeast," said Bergee. "Staring at the sooty chimneys of the city, I wondered how many of us would be killed taking this dirty town. Yongdungpo was literally infested with North Korean troops. All afternoon we observed them fortifying their ridge. Artillery, heavy mortars, and our Corsairs pummeled Yongdungpo that afternoon. The 4.2s [mortars] fired white phosphorous, setting sections of the city ablaze. One of our planes dropped napalm on a block-long fuel dump. Flame and smoke rose a mile and a half into the air."

The fight for Yongdungpo lasted two days before the commander of the NKPA's 87th Regiment decided he'd had enough and quit the town. Puller's Marines advanced to the south bank of the Han, directly opposite Seoul, and began concerning themselves with the mechanics of crossing the river in LVTs. The 5th Marines advanced from the west to cover their left flank.

Murray's 5th Marines, whose own left flank would be covered by Lt. Col. Homer L. Litzenberg's newly arriving 7th Marines, commenced a week-long attack on Seoul from the west. NKPA defenders manned a main line of resistance anchored on Hill 296. The jumbled terrain around the hill was ideal defensive ground. During World War II, Japanese forces had used the same ridges for tactical training, and the North Koreans had the advantage of preexisting firing positions, command posts and observation sites. Colonel Chan Wil Ki of the 25th Brigade led a total force of nearly 10,000 troops in the hill sector west of Seoul, exceeding the combined U.S. and ROK Marine formations arrayed against him. For the Allies, going would be tough.

Murray began his assault of Hill 296 at 7 AM on September 22, with the 3rd Battalion on the left, the 1st ROK Marine Battalion in the center, and the 1st Battalion on the right. The 2nd Battalion was in reserve. By evening, H Company had reached the crest of Hill 296, but the Com-

munist forces continued to mount a defense in depth in the ravines south and east of the hill. The ROK Marines and Murray's 1st Battalion had to advance across open ground. Close-air support from the Corsairs of Marine Aircraft Group 33 proved invaluable in beating down the NKPA defenders. Some pilots in Major Arnold A. Lund's VMF-323 squadron, flying off the escort carrier *Badoeng Strait,* flew as many as four sorties a day per plane.

The battle for Hill 296 ultimately boiled down to fire superiority. Murray's infantry could count on not only significant air support, but also great assistance from the artillery of the 11th Marines, which fired round after round throughout the night while the infantry battled forward with great difficulty. Eventually, Chan's stout NKPA defenders crumbled under the strain.

By September 23, Smith's 1st Marine Division had all three of its infantry regiments on the line, and Smith came under pressure from Almond to keep advancing into Seoul. September 25 would mark the three-month anniversary of the North Korean invasion, and General MacArthur wanted Seoul liberated by that date for symbolic purposes. Almond chafed at the painstaking progress of Smith's division. Almond's operations officer noted later, "The Marines were exasperatingly deliberate at a time when rapid maneuver was imperative."

Smith disagreed with Almond's assessment of the situation, understanding that the nature of Communist resistance had changed since the relatively light defense of Inchon. Almond decided to bring additional units into the battle for Seoul. He ordered the U.S. Army's 7th Division's 32nd Infantry, under the command of Colonel Charles E. Beauchamp, to move across the Han River in LVTs and attack Seoul from the southeast. The movement was scheduled to take place on the morning of September 25.

Smith's own operational plan for taking the city called for Puller's 1st Marines to cross the Han just west of Yongdungpo, move east along the north bank of the river, and fight their way into the center of Seoul. Murray's 5th Marines would carry the enemy defenses in the hills west of Seoul and enter the northwestern part of the city, while Litzenberg's 7th Marines provided flank protection to the north and cut the Seoul-Uijongbu highway to prevent a successful NKPA withdrawal. Seven battalions of artillery were available to support the tanks and infantry going into Seoul.

Before the plans could be put into effect, it was necessary to clear the North Koreans' 25th Brigade, 78th Independent Regiment, and assorted units from the western ridges. The enemy brigade was an elite force with about 2,500 men and was composed of two infantry battalions, four heavy machine-gun battalions, an engineer battalion, a 76mm artillery battalion, a 120mm mortar battalion and miscellaneous service troops. Most of the officers and NCOs of the brigade had seen previous combat experience with Chinese Communist forces outside Korea. The 78th Regiment was also battle-tested.

September 24 marked the day of heaviest fighting for the western ridges. The key to the battle became the advance of 1st Lieutenant H.J. "Hog Jaw" Smith's D Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, which had to attack over open ground and seize a strongly defended knoll, then continue the advance into a heavily wooded ridge. The NKPA actively defended the sector with more than 1,000 troops. Smith called in repeated air strikes and artillery fire, and eventually succeeded in taking the position, at the cost of his own life and 35 other Marines' lives that day. Seizing the ridge cost the company 178 casualties of the 206 men who had

advanced across the valley the previous day. The reverse slopes of the complex looked like a charnel house. The surviving Marines began to count the rows of NKPA bodies, most blasted hideously by Marine 105mm howitzers, Corsairs, and mortars. They reached 1,500 before they stopped counting.

By dusk on September 25, Almond had his entire infantry force positioned north of the Han River for the recapture of Seoul. The 32nd Infantry had completed its crossing of the river by mid-afternoon on the 25th and quickly seized Nam-san, a 900-foot-high hill also known as South Mountain, which closely overlooked the southeastern districts of Seoul. Meanwhile, the ROK 17th Regiment covered the 32nd's right flank and attacked Hill 348, five miles east of the capital. The 1st and 5th Marines had begun their own advance toward the center of Seoul that same morning. Each of the Marine regiments operating within Seoul itself would advance on a frontage of 1 1/2 miles, with specific objectives such as Government House and the embassies already identified.

The fight for possession of the South Korean capital city would prove to be three days of hell. The NKPA was determined to make a stand behind barricades every 300 to 400 yards along the major streets. They threw up barricades of rice bags filled with sand or rubble, eight feet wide by five feet high. Each barricade was defended by antitank guns and heavy machine guns, and the approach to each was strewn with mines. The defenders reinforced their positions with overturned trolley cars, automobiles, barrels, streetcar rails, and other debris. Interlocking fire from 45mm antitank guns, T-34 tanks, and self-propelled antitank rifles made the approaches virtual killing zones.

Along the outer edges of the barricades, Chan placed teams of snipers to disrupt Allied assaults. The snipers were skilled, furtive killers. Photojournalist David Douglas Duncan, attached to Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, vividly remembered the ambushers. "Reds, armed with rapid fire burp guns and hiding behind the gutter walls along the way, squirted quick bursts at the steadily pushing Marines, then melted away," he wrote. Every building in Seoul seemed to house an enemy sniper. Marines dubbed one particularly dangerous intersection "Blood and Bones Corner." Army Signal Corps Lieutenant Robert Strickland, attached to the Marines, felt the brunt of the North Korean defense. "The air was whipping with everything from flying stones to big antitank shells," he recalled. "We got so much fire of all kinds that I lost count. I have seen a lot of men get hit in this war and in World War II, but I think I have never seen so many men get hit so fast in such a small area."

ABOVE: Gunners in I Battery, 11th Marine Regiment, load and fire their 105mm mortar in support of the 7th Marine's assault. OPPOSITE: Marines race past an abandoned Communist barricade. Defenders used rice bags filled with sand or rubble to block the Allied advance.

Faced with such suicidal resistance, Puller's 1st Marines could make only 2,000 yards of headway into Seoul on September 25, even while Almond was making a public statement declaring that the capital had been fully liberated at 2 PM. The Marines' technique for reducing the NKPA defenses involved the extensive use of concentrated firepower. The Marines slowly ground forward under a hail of protecting artillery, mortar fire, and close air support that leveled whole acres of enemy territory.

The defenders fought with great tenacity to the end, firing from rooftops, trees and side streets. Intense heat from the burning buildings added to the nightmare, and Communist suicide squads repeatedly attacked American tanks. Robert Tallent of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines described the deadly close-in fighting. "In actions of this type there can be no flanking of a position—only so many men can get into the fight. The width of the street, available cover and strength of the enemy fire dictate the number of troops that can be brought to bear on any one position. The barricade is a separate battle all to itself."

The Americans utilized M-26 Pershing and M4A3 Sherman tanks to hammer through the Communist barricades. The Pershing, supporting the Marines, used a 90mm main gun and two .30-caliber machine guns, while the Army-backed Sherman tanks featured 76mm main guns and three .30-caliber machine guns. Staff Sergeant Chester Bair of the Heavy Tank Company, 32nd Infantry Regiment, noted that "as soon as one [barricade] had been eliminated, there would be another. After a tank overran three or four of them, another one would replace it." And journalist Duncan noted, "The tanks traded round for round with the heavily armed, barricaded enemy and

chunks of armor and bits of barricade were blown high into the air."

Withering firepower was brought to bear. As always in wartime, civilians on the scene suffered along with combatants. Reginald W. Thompson, a correspondent for the *London Daily Telegraph,* wrote that "few people can have suffered so terrible a liberation." Thompson found the UN campaign "profoundly disturbing. The slightest resistance brought down a deluge of destruction blotting out the area." Ironically, a *New York Times* reporter quoted Puller as telling his subordinates, "We've got plenty of ammunition and air support, and I want you to use it only when necessary." Marine Captain A.B. Reynolds was not so sanguine. "This is a hell of a way to make a living, isn't it?" he growled.

Despite his disavowal, Puller was in the forefront of those utilizing heavy firepower against the NKPA. By the end of the month, the city was 65 percent destroyed and thousands of South Korean civilians lay dead. MacArthur seemed far more interested in retaking the capital as quickly as possible rather than in keeping collateral damage to a minimum—a clear distinction from his more cautious approach to the recapture of Manila five years earlier in World War II. Unlike Manila, MacArthur had never lived in Seoul.

Almond, in particular, was severely criticized for his operational handling of the recapture of Seoul. Historian Robert Leckie, a Marine veteran himself, surmised that "Almond either rejected or did not consider the possibility of surrounding Seoul, of cutting the roads to the northwest, north and northeast and forcing the capitulation of its garrison. This would have been a slower process, and would probably have reduced the psychological effect which bold and sudden victory, as MacArthur often said, could produce upon the Oriental mind. Whatever the reason, Almond's decision to attack vigorously produced the holocaust through which the 1st Marine Division had to pass."

Almond, in fact, ordered Smith to execute an attack into the center of Seoul on the night of September 25-26. Shortly after 8 PM on September 25, X Corps flashed a message to the 1st Marine Division ordering an immediate advance after aerial observers reported the "enemy fleeing city of Seoul on road north of Uijongbu." Almond told Smith, "You will push attack now to the limit of your objectives in order to insure maximum destruction of enemy forces."

The NKPA was indeed pulling out of Seoul, but not all of it. Enemy counterattacks were launched that night against the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, in the hills just west of the city, and down Ma Po Boulevard against the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. The 25th Brigade attacked fiercely down the boulevard in strength, with tanks and self-propelled guns, causing Smith to cancel his own night attack pursuant to Almond's order. By daylight, the 1st Marine Regiment had killed 250 enemy and captured four tanks and two self-propelled guns in the Ma Po Boulevard fighting alone.

Before dawn on the 26th, the NKPA also counterattacked the 32nd Infantry's positions on Nam-san, the 900-foot-high South Mountain on the edge of Seoul. One company of the 32nd was overrun on the mountain, but Colonel Beauchamp's men stood their ground and drove the enemy off with heavy casualties. The 32nd Infantry, assisted by the 17th ROK Regiment, then pressed into Seoul proper in an effort to link up with Puller's advancing Marines on the left flank.

Throughout the day, Puller's Marines pushed farther up Ma Po Boulevard, but could gain only about a mile of ground in heavy fighting against the barricades. Meanwhile, Murray's 5th Marines were struggling over a low hill mass before finally breaking into the city streets in the northwestern sector of Seoul on the morning of the 27th. By nightfall, X Corps troops controlled approximately half of the South Korean capital. Much fighting had ensued since Almond's premature declaration

of the city's capture on September 25.

Seoul itself was a city in ruins. The American liberators were as shocked as the civilian survivors at the level of destruction. Pfc. Morgan Brainard of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines recalled seeing "great gaping skeletons of blackened buildings with their windows blown out, telephone wires hanging down loosely from their drunken, leaning poles; glass and bricks everywhere; literally a town shot to hell." Private Win Scott of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, observed: "The city was dirty. There were animals running wild and junk everywhere. Some battles were fought around barricades formed by trolley cars. Pictures of Stalin hung on some of the buildings. Communist propaganda was all over."

Despite the withdrawal from Seoul of the NKPA 18th Division along the Uijongbu road, the Allied drive into the heart of the city remained a difficult chore. But now key objectives were falling to the UN forces. The 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines recaptured the French embassy at 11 AM on the 27th. That afternoon the Marines took back the U.S. embassy and elatedly if exhaustedly raised an American flag. The Seoul railroad station was also retaken in heavy fighting that the morning. The 5th Marines and the 7th Marines linked up, moving down toward the city from the north, and the 5th Marines took Government House in mid-afternoon.

In the meantime, another link-up had occurred. Just before midnight on September 26-27, tanks of the U.S. Army's 7th Cavalry

joined with the 7th Division's 31st Infantry at Suwon, 27 miles south of Seoul, marking the junction of the X Corps with UN Eighth Army forces pushing north in the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter. The Communists elsewhere within South Korea were fleeing northward and disintegrating as an effective fighting force.

Within Seoul organized resistance continued into the evening of September 27 before slacking off into small-size firefights involving isolated groups of NKPA troops. By the morning of the 28th, relative quiet had descended on the city. The next day, MacArthur arrived in triumph in Seoul, accompanied by South Korean President Syngman Rhee. At noon in the National Assembly chamber, MacArthur made a formal pronouncement: "Mr. President, by the grace of a merciful Providence our forces fighting under the standard of that greatest hope and inspiration of mankind, the United Nations, have liberated this ancient capital city of Korea. I am happy to restore to you, Mr. President, the seat of your government that from it you may better fulfill your constitutional responsibilities." President Rhee replied fulsomely to the general: "We love you as the savior of our race."

Ironically, with the entry of the Chinese Communist forces into the war in full measure just two months later, Seoul would suffer another brief occupation. In pushing their way southward against the Eighth Army in early January 1951, the Chinese captured the capital, only to see the UN forces regain it for good in March, following a brilliant counteroffensive conducted by Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway. Seoul remained within reasonably close proximity to the fighting on the

ABOVE: A defiant if wraith-thin North Korean surrenders to the Marines in the Naktong River sector. His comrade was not so lucky. LEFT: A smoldering North Korean tank is stark evidence of the Marines' accurate artillery fire. OPPOSITE: An American tank follows a long line of North Korean POWs captured during the battle for Seoul.

Korean Peninsula for the rest of the war, and its potential vulnerability to North Korean attack remains evident to this day.

Casualties in the September 1950 retaking of the capital were relatively low by World War II standards, or even by the standards of the fighting along the Pusan Perimeter. Between September 20 and September 30, the 1st Marine Division suffered 1,716 casualties, of which 340 were killed in action or died of wounds. The heaviest losses occurred on September 24-25. The U.S. Army's 7th Division suffered 106 killed, 409 wounded, and 57 missing in action after its arrival at Inchon on September 18. Total X Corps casualties for the entire Inchon-Seoul campaign beginning September 15 and extending into early October were about 3,500. The North Korean aggressors suffered an estimated 14,000 killed and another 7,000 taken prisoner.

In the final assessment, the battle for Seoul proved to be a relatively brief but exceedingly tough fight. The NKPA was willing to make a determined stand, although it had to know that ultimately it could not retain control of the South Korean capital. The North Koreans were outgunned and eventually defeated at Seoul, but thousands of civilians would not live to witness MacArthur's ceremonial return of the city to the South Korean government. For them, no less than for the American Marines and soldiers and ROK forces who delivered them from Communist control, the price of liberty was high indeed. □

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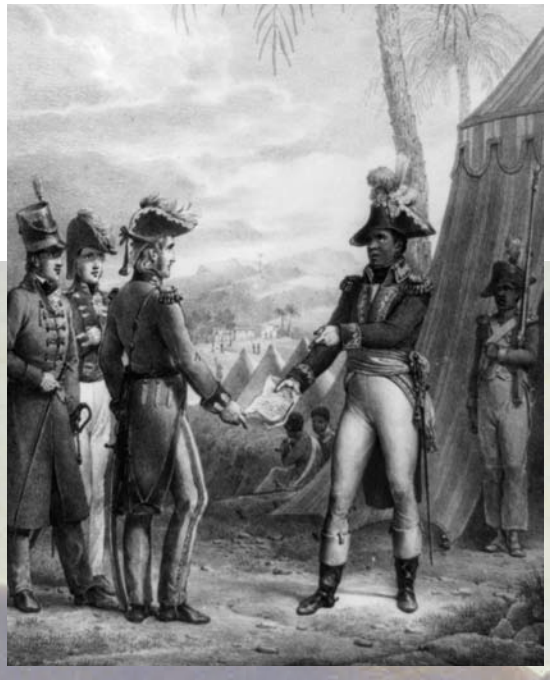

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In early 1802, a 20,000-man French invasion force led by Napoleon Bonaparte's brother-in-law landed in Haiti to wrest control of the island from the rebellious army of ex-slave Toussaint L'Ouverture.

BY GREGORY PEDUTO

Aided by Toussaint, French revolutionary forces defeated the British and Spanish at the Battle of Croix des Bouquets on June 23, 1794. Painting by Charles Renoux. INSET: British general Thomas Maitland meets rebel leader Toussaint L'Ouverture to discuss a secret treaty after Maitland had failed to suppress the Haitian revolt in 1798.

SPARTACUS

WIND BILLOWED and waves crashed onto the deck of the massive 120-gun French flagship *L'Ocean*. From a window in his quarters, Captain General Charles Victor Emmanuel Leclerc studied the vast flotilla as it plowed through the lapping foam of the Atlantic. Comprising 32 lumbering ships of the line and 22 fragile frigates, the armada was the largest naval expedition in French history.

Within the holds of the vessels, more than 20,000 soldiers of Napoleon Bonaparte's revolutionary Army of the Rhine obsessively oiled their weapons, scrubbing away all traces of saltwater corrosion. Hardened veterans of the emperor's campaigns in Italy and Egypt, the soldiers were as diverse as the languages they spoke. Some of the troopers hailed from France, while others came from Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, or Germany. Their primary mission was to secure Louisiana for an eventual invasion of the United States. On the way, Napoleon had tasked the army with the deceptively simple objective of ending a slave revolt on the island of Saint Domingue (modern-day Haiti).

Leclerc knew the armada was nearing the rebellious island when the frigid waters of the Atlantic gave way to the clear blue-turquoise of the Caribbean. On January 29, 1802, the squadron anchored at the rendezvous point of Samana Bay, on the eastern shore of Haiti, and launched a massive amphibious campaign to restore slavery on the trouble-ridden island.

From the shoreline, the islanders watched in awe as the tall masts of the fleet blotted out the horizon. Wonder soon gave way to panic when the ex-slaves spotted French battle flags fluttering in the wind. News of the invasion spread rapidly across the tropical atoll's villages. Everywhere the freed slaves cried ominously: "The French have returned!"

Hearing the cries, a mounted force galloped at breakneck speed over secret jungle roads and under hanging tropical vines. The barefoot horsemen wore a hodgepodge of bloodstained French shakos and British redcoats, grisly trophies of earlier failed European invasions. Some of the riders looked like a raiding party of black buccaneers, replete with jangling earrings and machetes thrust through their belts.

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ABOVE: Rebellious Haitians led by a voodoo mystic named Boukman Dutty massacre French colonials in a brutal August 1791 uprising. OPPOSITE: French troops made a successful assault on Le Cap Francois in February 1802, capturing Haiti's largest port after fierce fighting.

At the head of the ragtag detachment rode a gaunt African with three jagged scars running across his face. Wounded 17 times in battle, the leader bucked in his saddle, wincing in pain. The French called him the Black Spartacus—for good reason. In little more than 11 years, Toussaint L'Ouverture had risen from enslaved coachman to commander of the entire island. He could read and write both Latin and French. When it came to the nuances of guerrilla warfare, Toussaint rivaled anyone in military history.

In Haiti, insurrection served as the national pastime. Since the island's first colonization, the fires of revolution had burned like a volcano. The slaves fought because they had no other options. Faced with daily whippings, brandings, and torture, nearly 40,000 Africans perished in Haiti each year. The brutal French plantation system only fanned the flames of insurrection. On the island, it was more economical to work a slave to death and purchase a new one than to take care of the existing workers. Baron de Wimpffen, a German visitor, commented on the brutal situation: "The cracking of whips, the smothered cries, and the indistinct groans of the Negroes, who never see the day break but to curse it."

To make up for the murderous mortality rate, French farmers imported 30,000 to 100,000 slaves annually, but the massive introduction of Africans tipped the balance of power. The white population stood at a minuscule 24,000, in comparison to over 400,000 blacks. Impossible to control completely, thousands of escaped Africans took to the hills, setting up revolutionary bands known as maroons.

To make matters worse, the French faced another menace that danced to the reverberating beat of drums. The sounds announced the birth of voodoo, a bizarre new faith that mixed animistic West African religions with Catholicism and ritual possession. Thousands of nightly torch-lit vigils held in steamy swamps and deep ravines personified the resistance and unified the slaves in a common voice.

The first sophisticated revolt followed the growth of the religion in 1758 when a voodoo priest named François Mackandal hatched a failed plot to poison Frenchmen. Thirty-three years and three rebellions later, the slogans of the French Revolution reached the island's shores, but the brutalized slaves understandably wondered where their liberty, equality, and fraternity were. In 1791, the African captives answered the question with an uprising led by a voodoo mystic named Boukman Dutty.

Toussaint earned his epaulets in Boukman's army, and together the men burned the island to cinders. With bricks and iron cudgels, the rebels pushed the colonial forces of King Louis XVI into the sea. At the end of the revolt, Boukman was dead and Toussaint found himself in command of Haiti.

The French abolished slavery to appease the insurgents, but the attempt backfired. The island's plantation owners fumed at the decision and begged the British crown to intervene.

A 12,000-man British expeditionary force charged into the power vacuum, intent on pillaging Haiti's legendary riches. With the swamp-bred aid of yellow fever, the Black Spartacus slaughtered the invading redcoats. Next came the Spanish, marching across the jungles from their half of the island, but Toussaint obliterated the invaders and captured their colony for good measure. It was becoming a habit with the battle-scarred leader.

Needing money—and quickly—the first consul of France undertook the risk of reinvading Haiti. British forces had routed Napoleon's army on the sun-scorched Egyptian sands. Without the aid of colonies, Napoleon could not amass the funds necessary to finance a European conquest. For this reason, the French looked westward to the lost territory as a springboard for world domination.

Known as the Pearl of the Antilles, the island's economy once had contributed a third of France's foreign trade. Home to 655 sugar plantations, 1,962 coffee farms, and 398 cotton estates, the island previously sent 300,000,000 livres home to the mother country each year. In

addition to the wealth, Napoleon had another reason for wanting to reassert control over Haiti. His wife Josephine inherited a massive plantation on Saint Domingue. She desperately wanted to reclaim the parcel of land, and her constant lobbying for an invasion drove the French leader to act. Napoleon later observed, "I believe that Josephine had some influence on that expedition, not directly, but a woman who sleeps with her husband always exerts some influence over him."

Another factor was the destruction of the Corsican adventurer's army in Egypt. That defeat forced the emperor to abandon his plans for eastern provinces. As part of the preliminary Treaty of Amines in 1801, the British offered Napoleon a consolation prize. The English invited him to retake Haiti to quell the slave rebellion and prevent the spread of such uprisings throughout the Caribbean.

Napoleon launched into the task of reconquest with his typical vigor, but the plot made little sense. Toussaint still considered himself a French subject. The rebels had never even declared independence. They simply desired abolition of slavery. If Napoleon had enlisted Toussaint's aid, he might have conquered the entire Caribbean. Instead, he remained bent on war.

Napoleon appointed his brother-in-law, General Charles Leclerc, to head the campaign. Known derisively as the Blond Napoleon, Leclerc not only looked like the first consul, but also mimicked his mannerisms and style of dress. Even shorter in stature than Bonaparte, Leclerc proved one of the emperor's most sycophantic followers. For good measure, he married Napoleon's sister Pauline.

Napoleon needed a man well versed in the rigors of tropical warfare. For this position he chose Donatien Rochambeau, the son of the general who had fought alongside George Washington at Yorktown. An old hand in Caribbean insurrections, Rochambeau had battled rebellions on Martinique and Guadeloupe. To this leadership team, Napoleon assigned 20,000 men from the battle-hardened Army of the Rhine.

Drawn from Italian, German, and Swiss brigades, the men had fought for the ideals of the French Revolution with unflinching dedication. All told, the army contained five generals of division, nine generals of brigade, and 14 adjutants. The sheer size of the force presented a massive conundrum for the commander of the fleet, Admiral Villaret Joyeuse. There were not enough ships to transport the army. To make room, the admiral unloaded cannons in French ports and reduced his vessels to skeleton crews in order to cram more soldiers aboard. By then it was clear to everyone involved that Napoleon was displaying none of the tactical genius for which he was known.

His poor choices served to foreshadow his future defeat at the hands of the Russian winter. Sent in woolen metropolitan uniforms unsuited for the tropical heat, Leclerc's men battled not only the slaves but also heatstroke. The regent also ignored the importance of re-supply in a tropical war. Napoleon decreed that the army must forage European-style to eat, an impossible task in a jungle war.

To match the problems of supply, the French dictator provided extremely vague invasion plans. To conquer Haiti, Napoleon devised a three-stage strategy of occupation. In the first stage, Leclerc would offer the black leaders false promises in order to allow the army to land peacefully and occupy strategic locations. Next, the army would round up the three main African generals: Toussaint L'Ouverture, Henri Christophe, and Jean Jacques Dessalines. With the black officers eliminated, the third stage called for the French army to re-enslave the population.

By October 1801, the French fleet prepared to sail, but more indecision cost Leclerc's army. The general's wife insisted on traveling with her husband. It took her two months to assemble her wardrobe. If the Blond Napoleon had arrived earlier, he would have landed in the midst of a rebellion led by one of Toussaint's generals. Instead, 4,000 miles across the Atlantic, Toussaint worked to consolidate his position.

Toussaint's men stripped the ports of food and cached the supplies deep in the impenetrable Cahos Mountains. To defend these jungle stockpiles, the blacks constructed huge lumber and

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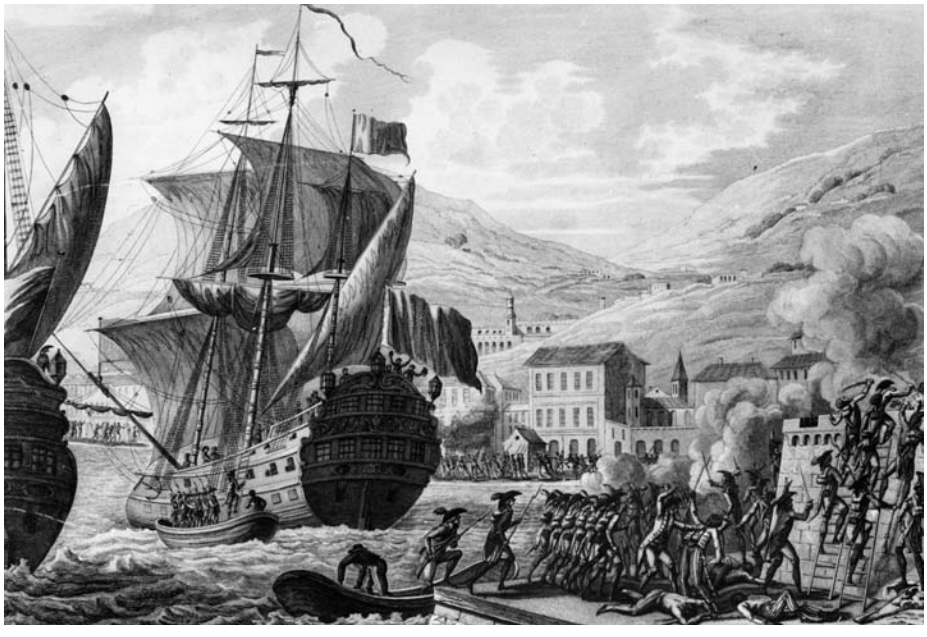

earthen fortresses throughout the bush. In addition to food, Toussaint's army needed arms and ammunition, goods that came from the United States.

In the 1700s, Americans downed 7.5 million gallons of rum each year. Molasses served as the lifeblood of Haiti's economy, and New England depended on the sugary by-product to produce rum. Toussaint knew that resupply was impossible without molasses, and under his reign the substance flowed like water.

Napoleon believed erroneously that his invaders were facing a mass of unarmed rabble, but in reality, they were bristling with weapons. Boston merchants sold the Haitian military 30,000 muskets. Another 30,000 M1779 and M1777 .69-caliber French flintlocks and 60,000 Brown Bess muskets, left behind by the British when they withdrew from Saint Domingue, rounded out the freedom fighters' armory.

What the slaves lacked in proper uniforms, they overcame with suicidal fanaticism. The long years of toiling in the cane fields had transformed Toussaint's men into an army of virtual super-humans. They could live for months on a piece of salted cod and a tablespoon of rum a day. On these meager rations, the rebels often marched 60 miles a day. The French General Pamphile da Lacroix wrote admiringly, "No European army was ever better disciplined than Toussaint's troops."

The diehard army consisted of 20,650 men divided into three geographically based divisions.

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In the north, General Henri Christophe defended the country's largest port, Le Cap François, with 4,800 men. A soldier since birth, Christophe had fought as a drummer boy in the American Revolution with the Chasseurs-Volontaires de Saint Dominique. In stark comparison to Christophe was the brutal and despotic General Jean Jacques Dessalines, commander of the island's southwest. Reared on a plantation, the tyrannical general faced a steady diet of whippings and torture throughout his life, which stoked the fires of racial hatred within his heart. With a division of 11,650 soldiers, Dessalines represented Toussaint's most able—and ruthless—lieutenant.

In the Spanish sector of Haiti, Santo Domingo, Toussaint's brother Paul headed a force of 4,200 men. Another 100,000 irregular soldiers stood in a constant state of readiness throughout the island. Armed with muskets, sabers, and machetes, these men formed a cadre of behind-the-lines fighters who disrupted enemy supply lines seemingly at will..

On January 29, 1802, the French fleet pulled into Samana Bay. Watching from the undefended shoreline, Toussaint knew that there was only one way to defeat such a force. The rebel leader dispatched his fastest horsemen to the camps of Christophe, Dessalines, and Paul L'Ouverture with plans for the resistance. The message read: "Do not forget, while waiting for the rainy season which will rid us of our foes, that we have no other resource than destruction and fire. Tear up the roads with shot; throw corpses and horses into all the fountains, and burn and annihilate everything." Only yellow fever could dismantle such an invasion, and Toussaint needed to delay the French until the coming of the rains brought the natural epidemic to bear on the enemy troops.

While Toussaint's messengers galloped across the island, Leclerc's armada split into three divisions

"THE FRENCH WILL MARCH HERE ONLY ACROSS PILES OF ASHES AND THAT THE GROUND WILL BURN UNDER THEIR FEET. EVEN ON THOSE CINDERS, I SHALL CONTINUE TO FIGHT."

to assail the island's ports. In the north, Leclerc, Admiral Joyeuse, and a division of 7,000 soldiers moved on Le Cap François. Leclerc hoped to take Christophe's 4,800-man division by surprise, but the wily African general sank every buoy in the harbor, preventing an amphibious attack.

Leclerc needed to envelop the rebels to stop them from disappearing into the jungles. If the insurgents escaped, the war might linger for years. To thwart Christophe's retreat, Leclerc feigned a diplomatic parlay while Rochambeau and a naval squadron blasted nearby Fort Dauphin to gravel. Under the thunderous roar of the slaves' cannons, Rochambeau and 4,000 men assaulted the narrow fortified peninsula of land in rowboats. Cannonballs flew through the air while the force rowed closer to the shore. Braving a storm of musket fire, Rochambeau's troopers scaled the walls and slaughtered the defenders. With Fort Dauphin in French control, Rochambeau sealed off Christophe's retreat to the southeast.

To provoke the general's surrender, Leclerc dispatched a message to Christophe. He warned: "Unless you surrender, 15,000 men will be disembarking tomorrow. I hold you responsible for whatever might take place." Christophe fired back an unflinching response. "The French will march here only across piles of ashes and that the ground will burn under their feet," he said. "Even on those cinders, I shall continue to fight." The reply horrified the French general. If the slaves destroyed Haiti's infrastructure, the island would be useless as a moneymaker. To stop the destruction, Leclerc moved on Le Cap François with a coordinated land and sea offensive.

On the morning of February 6, Admiral Joyeouse towed two massive ships of the line up to the harbor with cables. Black gunners defending Fort Picolet unleashed 23 shots, but two broadsides from the gigantic 100-gun vessels reduced the fort to a mound of smoldering rubble. Surrounded by the heavy fog of the ship's gun smoke, 300 French marines sailed for the city on small skiffs while Leclerc and 5,000 soldiers closed the noose around Christophe's neck.

The French forces landed at L'Acul, southwest of the city. Using a mountain as a screen,

the French marched behind Le Cap François to envelop the defenders. When Christophe discovered the trap, he distributed kegs of gunpowder and lamp fuel and put the city to the torch. Before retreating to the hills, the slaves lit a fuse that led to the city's powder magazine.

Into the fiery holocaust charged Leclerc's bayonet-wielding grenadiers. A wild fracas erupted as the slaves charged out of the city and the French charged in. The slaves were cornered and Leclerc moved in for the kill. Then the magazine blew. Splinters and shrapnel cut great swathes through the French forces. The well-timed explosion allowed Christophe enough room to flee into the mountains, but at day's end Leclerc controlled the ruins of Haiti's once-greatest city.

While Leclerc and Rochambeau pacified the north, General Jean Boudet, Rear Admiral Louis-Rene Latouche Treville, and a division of 3,500 men sailed into the island's western bay to conquer Port-au-Prince. To capture the city, Treville armed a flotilla of log rafts with small cannons. Boudet and his division then rowed the improvised dreadnoughts into the harbor.

From Fort Bizoton, General Jean Age, a white Frenchman fighting on behalf of the slaves, watched the force sailing toward the town. Spurred on by patriotism, Age refused to open fire. Emboldened by the lack of resistance Boudet ordered, "Let us kill without noise," and the rafts landed on the outskirts of town.

Some rebels threw down their arms, while others opened fire. Age's second-in-command, Louis Darue Lamartiniere, broke the stalemate by shooting an artillery officer who refused to open the powder magazine. Lamartiniere and a band of followers seized a quantity of artillery ammunition and sprinted to the city walls. His men loaded the guns and unloaded a storm of grapeshot at Boudet's soldiers. Hearing the resistance, Admiral Treville brought his frigates into play. His naval guns silenced the city's cannons, and allowed Boudet to force the gates. The French quickly captured the city intact and unburned, but once again the slaves escaped.

From the city of St. Marc, Jean Jacques Dessalines bitterly denounced Age's treachery. He formed a raiding party of 6,000 men and raced to the city of Leogane, burning everything on the way. After he occupied Leogane, Dessalines murdered its white inhabitants and burned the city. Boudet sent a detachment of 1,000 light infantry to check Dessalines's pillaging, but the seasoned guerrilla fighter avoided all open engagements. His rapid maneuvers soon had the French detachment chasing the guerrillas in futile circles.

While the fighting raged, Leclerc received letters detailing the slave's crumbling resistance. Toussaint's brother Paul surrendered the eastern half of the island without firing a shot. The Creole south under General Jean-François Laplume not only capitulated to the onslaught but also joined the French. Only the defense of the northern city of Port-de-Paix, led by the black General Jacques Maurepas and his 9th Regiment, continued to buoy Toussaint's hopes.

The last vestige of a French colonial demi-brigade, the 9th Regiment represented the rebels' most professional fighting force. On the morning of February 10, the regiment met General Jean Joseph Humbert's 1,500 soldiers of the line at the city gates. Both sides formed European-style ranks and exchanged musket volleys. The slaves pounded Humbert's men with shots while irregulars set fire to the city, burning it to ash. With the town destroyed, Maurepas withdrew, leaving behind 400 French corpses.

In little more than two weeks, Leclerc controlled every port on the island, but, in reality, the Blond Napoleon controlled nothing. It seemed like the jungle was swallowing regiments whole. Any time a French unit smaller than a division left the cities, it was met by an onslaught of hit-and-run attacks and poisoned wells. Leclerc voiced his fears in a letter to Napoleon: "This is a war of Arabs. We have barely passed before the blacks occupy the woods surrounding the roads and cut off our communications." To end the resistance, Leclerc reasoned that he needed to capture the slaves' supplies in the interior.

On February 18, Leclerc launched a massive offensive to converge simultaneously on Toussaint's headquarters in Gonaives. From the northeast, Rochambeau moved his division from Fort Dauphin and advanced westward. General Jean Hardy occupied the center and marched south. General Edme Etienne Desfourneaux advanced south from the northwest. From the south, Boudet attacked northward from Port-au-Prince. The Black Spartacus was trapped between an onslaught of 12,000 French muskets and the sea.

The bloodthirsty Rochambeau exceeded all expectations and camped seven miles away from

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ABOVE: Haitian forces in improvised uniforms mount a stiff defense during hand-to-hand combat with crack French veterans. OPPOSITE: French forces under General Charles Leclerc rout Haitian rebels at the Ravine-a-Couleuvres. Leclerc was Napoleon's brother-in-law.

Toussaint's headquarters. The Frenchman hoped to prevent the rebels' getaway into the Cahos Mountains. Toussaint needed to stop Rochambeau's advance to preserve his escape route. With a force of 1,500 grenadiers, 60 dragoons, and 1,500 plantation workers, the rebel leader prepared an ambush on February 23, at a deep ravine known as Ravine-a-Couleuvres.

For 12 hours, the slaves waited, muskets in hand, for the invaders to arrive. The tropical sun pounded down on the insurgents while insects chewed at their skin, but the fighters sat unperturbed. At dawn, Rochambeau's division of 5,000 soldiers blundered straight into their trap.

Black sharpshooters rained down volleys of musket balls from camouflaged hiding places atop

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the cliffs. When a trumpet sounded, a wave of ax-wielding plantation workers slammed into the division. Bitter hand-to-hand fighting broke out everywhere, and by noon the ravine grew slick with gore. By 1 PM, the slaves had driven the French into a small stream and prepared to annihilate the invaders, but Rochambeau rallied his men. The French general hurled his hat into the black ranks and screamed, "My comrades, you will not leave your general's hat behind!" The tactic transformed the 5th French Light Infantry Regiment into a pack of frothing berserkers. A howling charge pierced the rebel lines, and the 5th recovered their general's hat and saved the division, but Toussaint had already done the impossible, preserving the escape route to the Cahos.

Toussaint occupied his last fortified bastion in the mountains, the impressive citadel of Crete-a-Pierrot. Dessalines arrived at the castle days later, and the two prepared for a lengthy siege. The British-constructed, 300-foot-high stone citadel served as the slaves' most imposing stronghold. Bristling with English .24-caliber cannons and a dry moat surrounding the castle, Crete-a-Pierrot was the key to the rebel position. Taking it would destroy the slaves' supplies and end the war.

On March 11, 1802, a long line of European soldiers hacked a trail through the lush vegetation in search of the castle. From the north and south, Rochambeau, Boudet, General of Brigade Jean Debelle, and General of Brigade Pamphile da Lacroix converged on the outpost with 12,000 soldiers. Toussaint left Dessalines and Lamartiniere, the hero of Port-au-Prince, in command of the vital station and hastened northward to recruit more soldiers. With Toussaint gone, only 1,200 slaves remained to fight the entire French army. To open a hole for Toussaint's escape, Dessalines and a cadre of men charged the invaders. Toussaint got away, and Rochambeau's division broke off the engagement to give chase, leaving Boudet to confront the fortress alone.

Dessalines feigned retreat and enticed the cocky Europeans to charge straight into the fort's camouflaged artillery. When the pursuing Frenchmen wandered into range, Dessalines and his men dove into the dry moat. Flashes of fire and smoke erupted over the slaves' heads, mowing down 400 French soldiers. Boudet withdrew his troops to await his mortars, but the dense underbrush made the transportation of artillery a nightmare. To speed up the attack, the commander elected to take the fort the next day with an onslaught of flesh.

That night Dessalines rallied his men around the ramparts and delivered a rabble-rousing speech, promising: "We shall be attacked this morning. All those who wish to become slaves of the French may leave the fort." Not a single warrior left the castle, and the ferocious general grabbed a blazing torch and held it perilously close to a powder keg, crying, "I shall blow you all to glory if you let the Frenchmen into this fort!" No one could sleep for fear of being surprised by Boudet's blitz.

At dawn, the French general drew his saber and led a wild charge at the rebel redoubt, but the attack proved useless. A storm of gunfire cut down 800 French soldiers; a stray shot clipped Boudet's heel and took him out of action. After repulsing the attack, Dessalines left Lamartiniere in command of the bastion and slipped away through the jungle to recruit more men.

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While awaiting the heavy guns, the French attempted to mine the walls of the redoubt, but the intense tropical humidity made the work impossible. Rochambeau then led wave after wave of French soldiers to their doom. Finally, the mortars arrived and the siege guns bombarded the fort for eight days. The slaves fought on without a drop of water. By March 24, Lamartiniere and 500 remaining men decided to fight their way out of the stone coffin.

At 9 PM the fleeing slaves fell upon Rochambeau's sleeping division. The surprise assault enabled Lamartiniere and his fighters to break through the lines and disappear into the undergrowth beyond. In his memoirs, Lacroix called the move "a remarkable feat of arms." The next morning, Rochambeau occupied the empty fortress and counted his dead. The fruitless victory had cost the invaders 2,000 soldiers, but the French tragedy had just begun.

Great arcs of lightning cut across the humid night sky. Thunder roared and rain fell in sheets. The moisture collected in stagnant pools in every field, pothole, and crevice. From these pools came swarms of mosquitoes that dined upon the exhausted French troops. The rainy season had arrived, and with it the dreaded yellow fever.

The French soldiers keeled over in droves, stricken with a plague of biblical proportions. Fever cooked victims' brains until they heaved forth black vomit, their faces turned a ghoulish yellow, and they died. Leclerc wrote Napoleon to tell him of the disaster. "I have already more than 1,200 men in the hospital," he reported. "Calculate on a considerable waste of life in this country. Send reinforcements." At the current death rate, Leclerc reasoned that his army would be a pile of corpses by September. The emperor shuttled more thousands of his men into the Caribbean hell. He even dispatched 8,000 soldiers from the famed Polish Legion, but the reinforcements only fueled the spread of disease. The war in Haiti was unwinnable.

To forestall his inevitable defeat, Leclerc implemented a bold divide-and-conquer ploy, opening negotiations with Christophe and Dessalines in the hope of enticing the black generals to betray Toussaint. In return for that betrayal, Leclerc offered the men commissions as generals in the French Army.

By joining the French, Dessalines and Christophe planned to capture the island for themselves. It was clear that the French were finished—only Toussaint prevented the two from seizing total control. If the pair disposed of the Black Spartacus, they had only each other to vie with for hegemony.

Leclerc, Christophe, and Dessalines convinced Toussaint to surrender, promising not to reinstate slavery. Toussaint surrendered on May 1, and Christophe and Dessalines pushed for his immediate deportation. On June 7, French soldiers seized Touissant, locked him in irons, and threw him aboard a ship bound for Europe. Haiti's Black Spartacus died one year later in a frigid dungeon on the Swiss border.

The deception plunged the island into an uproar. Black forces led by voodoo mystics split into tribal affiliations and battled the French and other blacks. Meanwhile, Christophe and Dessalines jockeyed for a total takeover. The two leaders set up the remaining Frenchmen for ambushes while also supplying the rebels and killing any black leaders who challenged their authority.

On April 27, 1803, Napoleon officially reinstated slavery in Haiti, and every man, woman, and child arose in armed resistance. Leclerc responded by waging a war of extermination, gassing, drowning and slaughtering whole families to quell the revolt, but the resistance continued. On May 18, Great Britain declared war on France. The famed Jamaica Naval Squadron descended on the island and cut off all supplies. By now, Napoleon had forgotten all about the distant campaign and ignored Leclerc's pleas for help.

Without fresh food, the French ranks were ravaged by fever. By July, more than 10,000 French soldiers had succumbed to the black vomit at a rate of 160 men a day. General Hardy dropped dead, along with 65 percent of Leclerc's general staff. On November 2, Leclerc himself fell victim to the outbreak and died. Napoleon promoted Rochambeau to general in chief of the expedition, but he could do little to reverse the catastrophic losses.

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ABOVE: Betrayed by his own lieutenants, Toussaint died in a Swiss dungeon one year after surrendering. OPPOSITE: Toussaint L'Ouverture's forces exchange close-range rifle fire with French attackers during the battle for Haiti.

To make up for the casualties, Rochambeau imported 600 slave-hunting dogs from Cuba. As with everything in the utterly vicious war, the dogs proved bloodthirsty, savage, and unpredictable. In their first battle, the animals devoured a French drummer boy. The dogs did not stem the tide, and Dessalines and Christophe rebelled. Armed with English guns, uniforms, and ammunition, they pushed Rochambeau to the breaking point, forcing him to withdraw the remains of his shattered army to Le Cap François on June 26, 1803.

Rochambeau strengthened the city's defenses by constructing a chain of blockhouses defended by 72 cannons and 2,000 soldiers. In the middle of the chain was Fort Vertieres. Defended by the 11th demi-brigade, the fort contained only 300 men. This tiny force was about to battle 18,000 of Dessalines's troops arrayed in 12 brigades.

The slave army descended upon the blockhouses in human-wave assaults. The French poured fire into the blacks, mowing down some 1,200 rebels, but one by one the redoubts fell. The rebels turned the blockhouses' cannons on Fort Vertieres. The salvo ignited the castle's powder magazine and blew it to smithereens. With Vertieres destroyed, the rampaging horde headed for the city.

On October 8, Rochambeau loaded his surviving troops onto three frigates and pulled out of Le Cap François for the last time. Only 3,900 solders remained from the once-grand expedition. The losses amounted to one dead general in chief, five deceased generals of division, 14 slain generals of brigade, and 54,000 lost solders. The slaves paid an even higher price. Nearly 80,000 Haitians perished in the conflict, but their reward was freedom—they had defeated one of Europe's finest armies in the first successful slave revolt in history.

Napoleon considered the failed expedition one of his worst losses. He later admitted in exile: "My greatest mistake was to try and subdue Haiti by force of arms. I should have let Toussaint L'Ouverture rule it." Bonaparte's dreams of an American empire were dashed as well, and on April 30, 1803, the diminutive dictator sold Louisiana to the United States. In a way, Toussaint had helped save America, as well as Haiti, from the imperial ambitions of a ravenous Napoleon. □

THE ART OF KEITH ROCCO

ONE OF THE GREAT tenets of 19th-century historical painting was the idea of plein air art, which called for "truth, naïveté, simplicity, and the impression of the moment," and insisted that "the soul of the picture is the event, and that the various hats, buttons, bows, spurs, and straps of the costume are not the most important elements."

Adolf von Menzel, the great German historical painter of the era, was a keen disciple of this thesis, recognizing the artistic value of the inner relation of one figure to another. Menzel built his reputation on paintings depicting the victories of Prussian ruler Frederick the Great, even though he never personally experienced warfare himself. Menzel's soldiers were real, with a spirit in their action that was the result of countless hours spent working tirelessly on figure studies. In 1866, Menzel traveled to the battlefield of Königgratz (Sadowa) to reassure himself of the accuracy of his previous historical battle pieces. When he saw the dead and mutilated corpses of Austrian and Prussian soldiers lying on the field, he felt satisfied that he had captured the authenticity of battle in his paintings.

Contemporary artists of historical events are confronted with the similar challenge of creating impressions of events that occurred well beyond anyone's living memory. The modern battlefield offers few clues as to what combat was really like in say, 1805, so the painter has to delve into the available visual clues and written testimonies. This is painstaking work that requires endless hours examining historical artifacts such as weapons, uniforms, and accoutrements, along with reading personal narratives and reviewing paintings and prints from the period, before the first preliminary pencil outlines can be attempted. If the artist is fortunate, he may get to visit the actual scenes of combat, albeit much changed over time. Countless sketches follow, all frequently altered and revised as new information emerges. The next step is to create small oil studies that will provide a sense of scale and show the artist how the overall composition will fit into the larger canvas. The finished painting might not appear for months—sometimes years—after the original conception.

One such scrupulously authentic painter is Virginia-based artist Keith Rocco, best known for his fine renditions of the wars of Napoleon and the epic Civil War battles between Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant. Rocco's canvasses can be found in many major collections in the United States and abroad. The National Park Service, the United States Army, state and city museums, and historical societies have all acquired original Rocco paintings, some of which are on a grand scale. His pictures have been profiled in numerous books and magazines, and his prints hang in many private homes.

WITH A FOCUS ON THE RANK AND FILE AND SINGLE MOMENTS, KEITH ROCCO TAKES US INTO THE HUMAN DRAMA OF WAR. **BY PETER HARRINGTON**

White Misery

ABOVE: 71st Highland Infantry in the Peninsula. RIGHT: Mockern-1813. BELOW: The Rear Guard.

With his renditions of the Napoleonic period, Rocco is continuing a long tradition of artists who have been attracted to the savage wars of empire that raged across Europe from 1793 until 1815, a period which, according to Rocco, offers one of the widest spectrums of color for an artist to use. "First and foremost I am a painter, and composition and color are still the foundation of any successful painting," he says. "These particular periods offer me many opportunities to challenge myself artistically and a great diversity of color palettes to choose from."

French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte encouraged painters to record his victories, and the famous depiction of the 1807 Battle of Eylau by Antoine Jean Gros was the result of a national competition held in France for the best depiction of the event. Two decades after Waterloo, King Charles X commissioned paintings of Napoleon's battles to adorn a battle gallery at the Palace of Versailles. While the emperor and his marshals were being lauded on canvas, the experiences of the common French soldiers were being portrayed more humbly in countless lithographs from the pencils of Horace Vernet, Hippolyte Bellangé, Auguste Raffet, and Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet.

By the second half of the 19th century, paintings of the Napoleonic Wars were commonplace on the walls of salons in Paris, alongside scenes from contemporary wars. The artists of these masterpieces are familiar to scholars of military iconography. Edouard Detaille, Alphonse De Neuville, and Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier, for example, were the leading proponents in creating a visual record of Napoleon's armies and enemies. Rocco's name often appears alongside such stalwarts, and he is quick to point out that these artists were his inspiration as he labors to create modern impressions of the same era. That these painters and others were concerned with the plight of the common soldier strikes a sympathetic chord with Rocco, who often focuses on the individual in many of his smaller figure studies.

While Rocco pays close attention to detail in the uniforms, accoutrements, and equipment of the private soldier, such details are secondary to his ideals. On this point, he is explicit. "There is a painting movement today that puts the emphasis on details and to a lesser degree emphasis on the composition," he notes. "The painting becomes a two-dimensional museum of artifacts, where a real museum or a good reference book does a far superior presentation. It is exhausting for the viewer because the eye has no idea where to rest or what is the central focus."

For Rocco, composition and movement are the keys to lasting art. A glance at the artist's numerous renderings of the Napoleonic Wars reveals a rich assortment of scenes and subjects. Individual soldier studies figure prominently in Rocco's oeuvre. We see a French hussar of the 7th Regiment leaning against a wall in Egypt during the campaign of 1799. As he smokes a pipe, local people climb nearby steps. From the same campaign is an interesting vignette depicting French artillerymen seeking shade from the glaring sun beneath a sheet attached to one of their cannons, parked near the ruins of an ancient temple.

At the other extreme, weatherwise, was the calamitous campaign in Russia in 1812, and in a scene with the fitting title of *White Misery,* Rocco depicts Russian infantry trying to advance while shielding themselves from the bitter cold and snow. Soldiers have wrapped scarves around their mouths, while their officer advances with sword in hand, head lowered. To understand what it felt like to be one of the soldiers fighting in such conditions, Rocco turned to the memoirs of Captain Jean Coignet, who described the hopelessness and suffering of the French troops. Another contemporary observer, British General Richard Bourke, wrote of a "rabble of dying men [who] walked from Orsha to the Berezina like a funeral procession ... feeling the seeds of death in one's enfeebled body."

While French troops were struggling in Russia, other units of the Grande Armée were fighting on the Iberian Peninsula in a bitter conflict involving extensive guerrilla tactics. Once again, Rocco drew his inspiration from contemporary memoirs to conjure images of non-conventional fighting. In one affecting example, *The Last Cartridge,* vultures circle above a French wagon surrounded by five bodies, while the perpetrators of the deadly ambush, Spanish guerrillas, approach the scene warily.

In many of Rocco's battle tableaux, one is reminded of other great military artists who went before him. His painting of a house at Mockern in 1813, showing Prussian infantrymen firing through the door and window, immediately brings to mind De Neuville's well-known Franco-Prussian War piece, also entitled *The Last Cartridge,* while the wonderful animated scene of French troops breaking through the large wooden gates of Hougoumont at Waterloo on June 18, 1815, is reminiscent of the 1903 painting by Scottish artist Robert Gibb. The influences of other late 19th-century battle painters such as Carl Röchling, Ernest Crofts, William Barnes Wollen, and Americans Howard Pyle and N.C. Wyeth can also be detected in his works. But while readily acknowledging such inspiration, Rocco is less influenced by their subject matter than by their compositional and painting styles. *Tribute to Caesar, 1813,* which shows a squadron of Polish lancers riding past Napoleon seated on his white horse atop a rise, is the artist's personal homage to Meissonier and the latter's great canvas of the Battle of Friedland.

While Rocco has personally inspected the battle sites at Waterloo, Ligny, and Quatre Bras, his emphasis is not on the appearance of the physical landscape, but rather on the human drama that occurs when men are facing death. Consequently, many of his paintings focus on the moment, the incident. He has a special empathy for the rank and file, for the underdog soldiers who willingly follow others into battle—often despite the likely losing outcome. The artist involves his audience in the drama by drawing them into the action to feel the tension, anguish, and stress of battle. We can smell the gunpowder, the mud, the stench of death, the screams of pain, and the thud of galloping horses racing past.

War is never clean, and Rocco effectively creates an atmosphere of the dirty and chaotic horror of Napoleonic warfare. The armies that fought across Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries wore some of the most colorful and elaborate uniforms ever designed. Yet each soldier was issued only one uniform and had to wear it on campaign, in battle, on the march, and even to sleep. The improbably crisp uniforms seen in contemporary prints of the period did not stay that way for very long. They soon became ripped, soiled by dirt, sweat, smoke, mud, powder stains, and blood. Rocco is acutely aware of this and paints accordingly. In his piece showing combat outside a building during the Battle of Aspern in May 1809, the once lily-white uniforms of the attacking Austrians are stained and muddied.

When Detaille was creating his masterpieces, he worked in an enormous studio crammed full of uniforms, manikins, weapons, flags, and military artifacts, while outside he kept cannons and artillery wagons. When he died in 1909, his collection became the basis of the new Museé de l'Armeé in Paris. Old sepia photographs of other military artists in their studios reveal similar assemblages of artifacts and accoutrements. Rocco is no exception—he owns a fairly extensive collection of contemporary Napoleonic artifacts, augmented by a large collection of high-quality costumes based on artifacts and other collections.

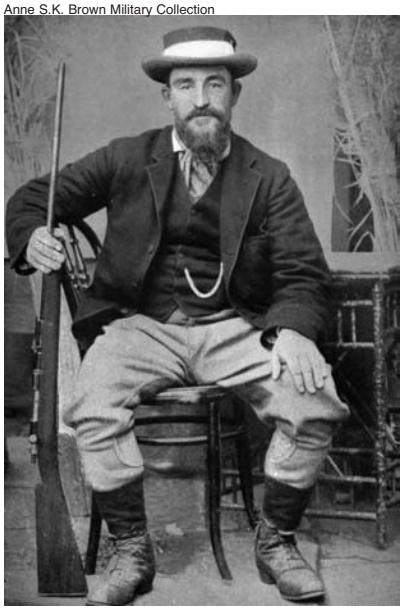
Never one to rest on his laurels, Rocco is always searching out new information from museums and archives in order to maintain a high level of accuracy in his pieces. Since the Napoleonic Wars lasted almost two decades, there is a virtually endless supply of subjects for the artist to tackle in the future, as he delves assiduously into the past. □

ABOVE: Coldstream Guardsman. BELOW: Polish Vistula Legion Infantryman. OPPOSITE TOP: The Melee. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: At the Outpost.

"First and foremost I am a painter, and composition and color are still the foundation of any successful painting. These particular periods offer me many opportunities to challenge myself artistically and a great diversity of color palettes to choose from."

CUNNING AMBUSH AT SANNAH'S POST

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection



Boer Commandant-General Christiaan de Wet laid a clever trap for an unsuspecting British garrison in the Orange Free State. Much to his surprise, substantial reinforcements arrived just hours before the attack.

BY WILLIAM WELSH

The Art Archive/MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg

DURING THE INFAMOUS Black Week of December 1899, the proud British Army suffered three consecutive bloody defeats in southern Africa. In each of the clashes, Boer citizen-soldiers, called burghers, held fast to their defensive positions and repelled poorly executed attacks by the supposedly better-trained British forces. The shocking victories at Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso lifted Boer morale while crushing British hopes for a quick, decisive victory against the outgunned and outnumbered enemy.

British General Sir John French and his mounted troops advance toward Boer-besieged Kimberley during the Second Anglo-Boer War. OPPOSITE: Boer guerrilla leader Christiaan de Wet, circa 1900.

Ironically, a key Boer leader did not participate in any of the Black Week battles. Instead, newly promoted General Christiaan de Wet journeyed by horse and railcar from the eastern front in Natal to the western front in the Orange Free State, where President Marthinus Steyn wanted him to lead two Boer commandos into battle. The Boer fighters at Magersfontein were unacquainted with De Wet and unimpressed by him. De Wet lacked the piercing gaze of Assistant Commandant-General Louis Botha or the paternalistic demeanor of Commandant-General Piet Joubert. Of middle height, with slumping shoulders and kind eyes, De Wet looked more like a station master or a bank clerk than someone capable of derailing the best-laid plans of Great Britain's most celebrated generals.

Despite his unprepossessing appearance, De Wet had a keen mind for strategy and a quick eye for tactics. When the Second Boer War erupted in 1899, he was working his farm in the Orange Free State. In keeping with the state's injunction to raise large families to populate the Boer republics, the 45-year-old farmer and his wife were busy raising 16 children of their own. De Wet, like most Boers, was no stranger to warfare. He had fought alongside the Boer forces from Transvaal that defeated the British in the Battle of Majuba Hill in 1881 during the First Boer War.

In late September 1899, the Boers mobilized and deployed substantial forces on the borders of Cape Colony and Natal. On October 9 they issued an ultimatum to Great Britain to cease interfering in the internal affairs of the Boer republics. Two days later they invaded British-held Cape Colony and Natal.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

De Wet did not participate in the initial action in Natal because the Free State forces mobilized more slowly than their northern neighbors in Transvaal. His 500-man commando arrived on the eastern front after the British forces had withdrawn from Dundee and retreated to Ladysmith. In an effort to keep the Boers from encircling Ladysmith, British Lt. Gen. Sir George White dispatched units under his command to drive the Boers from several key hills, or kopjes, north of the town. Lt. Col. Frank Carleton, given orders to occupy Nicholson's Nek, left Ladysmith at 10:30 AM on October 30 at the head of a column comprising the 1st Battalion of Gloucesters, 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, and the 10th Mountain Battery.

The broken ground and high country of northern Natal made for tough going. At one point, artillery mules stampeded, and the noise alerted the Boers in the vicinity that the enemy was on the move. Carleton failed to reach his objective before nightfall. Fearing that he would be ripe for attack if he camped on low ground at the base of the gap, Carleton ordered his men onto Tchrengula Mountain south of the pass, where they hastily constructed breastworks from loose stones.

The Boers in the vicinity planned to attack Carleton wherever he camped. At daybreak they struck from three sides. De Wet led the northern prong of the attack along the ridgeline. During their advance, the Boers killed or drove off most of Carleton's pickets before one company of British soldiers raised a white flag to surrender. Believing that the entire British force was preparing to surrender, the Boers emerged from cover. Carleton, realizing what had happened, refused to continue the fight, preferring to surrender his entire force rather than be accused by the enemy of violating a white flag. It was a heady triumph for De Wet and other Boer officers on the scene, who managed to lead away 954 British soldiers with very little bloodshed.

The day after the action at Nicholson's Nek, General Sir Redvers Buller, the commander in chief of British forces in South Africa, arrived in Cape Town along with the 47,000-strong British 1st Army Corps. While en route he wired orders to White instructing him to abandon Ladysmith and take up a new position behind the Tugela River. Upon his arrival, Buller learned that White had disregarded his orders and was trapped in Ladysmith. Immediately, the relief of Ladysmith became one of Buller's top priorities, along with the relief of other besieged British forces at Kimberley and Mafeking. Buller personally led a rescue force to relieve the 10,000 British troops bottled up inside Ladysmith and clear northern Natal of the Boers.

After several weeks of hard marching, three British columns closed with the enemy. In the center, Lt. Gen. Sir William Gatacre hoped to dislodge Boer forces and capture the railway junction at Stormberg. Following a bungled night march, his troops made a weak attack the morning of December 10 against a Boer army entrenched on high ground. After the initial attack failed, Gatacre ordered his troops to withdraw, but 600 did not get the order in time and subsequently surrendered.

The next day a much larger battle occurred to the west, where Lt. Gen. Lord Methuen attacked an entrenched Boer force at Magersfontein and was thrown back with heavy losses. The last, and perhaps most significant, defeat of Black Week occurred at Colenso, when Buller ordered a frontal assault against Boers on the north bank of the Tugela River. It, too, ended in failure. When news of the shocking string of defeats reached London, the British minister of war, Lord Lansdowne, ordered his friend and colleague Lord Frederick Sleigh Roberts, who was serving in India, to replace Buller as commander in chief of British forces in South Africa.

Roberts planned to march north to seize the Boer capitals at Bloemfontein and Pretoria. Of the nearly 100,000 British troops in Africa by that time, Roberts had half under his direct command. For his initial advance, Roberts would lead a 37,000-man corps north along the Western Railway to relieve Kimberley. Once he took Kimberley, Roberts would be in a good position to outflank Boer Commandant-General Piet Cronje at Magersfontein.

Roberts took command of his army in mid-February at Waterval Drift on the Riet River. The British found when they tried to move their supply train through the drift on February 15 that the soft mud on the riverbanks made for an extremely poor crossing. While the supply train of 200 wagons slowly made its way through the drift, Roberts marched off to the northwest with Maj. Gen. Sir Henry Colville's 9th Division and crossed at Wegdraai Drift. The teamsters responsible for the supply train allowed the oxen, which had struggled through the mud at Waterval, to graze and rest on the north bank before resuming their march. Five hundred men were assigned to guard the supply train until it rejoined the corps.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. John French led 5,000 cavalry on a wide sweep around Cronje's forces at Magersfontein. After a three-day ride, the British entered Kimberley on February 15. While his exhausted cavalry was given a hero's welcome in Kimberley, Roberts's infantry divisions crossed the Riet River and began fanning out across the veldt. In response, Cronje's force began a slow retreat toward Bloemfontein.

On that same day, De Wet swooped down on the lightly defended British supply train at Waterval Drift with a force of 1,000 mounted commandos. About mid-morning, the general ordered several long-range guns atop nearby kopjes to open fire on the British position. As the shells crashed into the dirt around them, the badly surprised teamsters attempted to drive as many oxen as possible into the drift, where they hoped the steep banks would protect the animals from shrapnel. Meanwhile, others rushed to the unhitched wagons and began hastily to unload crates to serve as makeshift breastworks for the impending attack.

Observing that the British seemed determined not to give up their supply train without

a fight, De Wet ordered his dismounted riflemen to attack. As the fight got under way, the oxen became more difficult to control and, to the consternation of their handlers, stampeded toward the Boer lines. Despite the loss of the oxen, the British infantry defending the supply wagons refused to surrender. The fighting continued well into the afternoon, while the defenders dispatched pleas to Roberts to send reinforcements. In response, Roberts eventually dispatched two battalions of infantry and an artillery battery. He ordered Maj. Gen. Charles Tucker, commanding the 7th Division, to assess the situation and report back to him.

The reinforcements were unable to rescue the besieged forces before De Wet made off with 170 wagons filled with supplies. He also captured or drove off 1,600 oxen that the British needed to haul supplies. "It was, indeed, a gigantic capture; the only question was what to do with it," De Wet wrote in his memoirs. The oxen proved as difficult for the Boers to control as they had been for the British, and De Wet's command lost considerable time rounding up scattered animals and dragging off their booty.

Roberts's primary objective was to capture Bloemfontein. He knew that to achieve his goal required defeating Cronje's 4,000-man army. The latter's withdrawal along the north bank of the Modder River was agonizingly slow. Cronje believed it necessary to protect his five-mile-long supply train, despite the urging of his subordinates to abandon the train. Cronje did not get far before he learned that British cavalry had gone before him and assumed a blocking position until Roberts' infantry could catch up. Rather than abandon his wagons and cut his way out, Cronje stubbornly entrenched at Paardeberg to await his fate.

On February 18, the British attacked in force. While Roberts's infantry suffered more than 1,200 casualties in a senseless frontal assault, British artillery and rifle fire decimated the horses that Cronje's men rode, making escape difficult if not impossible. In the days that followed, the British pounded Cronje's position with shells from more than 100 guns encircling the Boers. With Cronje's men no longer able to get away, it was left to De Wet to assist his superior. He promptly ordered his men to mount up.

By late afternoon, De Wet's force managed to reach a position six miles east of Paardeberg on the south bank of the Modder River. After surveying the enemy's position atop a ridgeline, De Wet ordered his men to dislodge the British from high ground and help Cronje break out from the trap. At dusk, De Wet led a force of about 500 Boers onto a prominent kopje known as Horse Hill, surprising and capturing 100 enemy cavalry. He sent word to Cronje of the possible escape route, but by then Cronje seemed incapable of reaching the life vest thrown out to him.

For three days De Wet held the position, but only a trickle of men from Cronje's army took advantage of the opportunity to avoid capture. On February 21, De Wet could no longer hold out against British efforts to recapture the ridgeline, and he withdrew his men. Six days later, Cronje surrendered his luckless force to the British. With Cronje in captivity, the difficult task of leading the Free State forces fell to De Wet.

After the debacle at Paardeberg, Boer politicians and generals held a council of war at Kroonstad, 100 miles north of Bloemfontein. General I.E. Ferreira initially was chosen to succeed Cronje as commandant-general, but after Ferreira was accidentally killed by one of his sentries, De Wet was given command of the state's forces.

Believing that Bloemfontein would fall in a matter of days, Boer leaders plotted a strategy to distract Roberts and slow his northward progress. Generals Koos De la Rey and Louis Botha would ride toward Bloemfontein in an attempt to lure Roberts into battle, while De Wet was to swing southeast to link up with a force of 5,000 commandos led by Jan Hendrik Olivier, who was rapidly retreating from a position behind enemy lines along the Orange River.

Roberts's army marched unopposed into Bloemfontein on March 10. The British commander paused to deal with a number of problems. The majority of his troops had been drinking contaminated water and, as a result, field hospitals were overcrowded with men suffering from dysentery. Another reason for the British delay was a lack of supplies. Having lost a considerable number of oxen at Waterval Drift, Roberts had to wait for the arrival of fresh animals to pull his supply wagons. While waiting, Roberts issued a proclamation to Free State burghers promising to leave them unmolested if they turned in their firearms and took an oath of neutrality.

The Art Archive

ABOVE: British troops manhandle 4.7-inch siege guns across the River Vaal in this frame from a vintage newsreel of the time. OPPOSITE: R. Caton Woodville's painting, *All That Was Left of Them,* depicts the thin rank of surviving British soldiers after the disastrous Battle of Magersfontein during "Black Week."

Knowing that the British were unlikely to resume their advance until they had replenished their supplies, De Wet granted his men a 12-day leave of absence to boost morale. The number that reassembled on March 25 at the designated meeting place on the Zand River exceeded De Wet's wildest expectations. The column rode to Brandfort, just north of the position held by Roberts's army.

Less than a day's march east of Bloemfontein lay the city's waterworks. They were located adjacent to a way station known as Sannah's Post on an unfinished rail line connecting Bloemfontein with Thabanchu. De Wet resolved to overrun the facility's meager guard of 200 men and destroy the pumping station to deny the enemy the clean water essential to the health of its troops. De Wet's plan called for dividing his forces into two separate groups. He would take 350 men and move west into position along the banks of Korn Spruit, a tributary of the Modder, while his

MAIN RIFLES OF THE SECOND BOER WAR

IN THE AFTERMATH of the failed attempt by Dr. Leander Starr Jameson and his 600 horseman to overthrow the Traansvaal Republic's government in January 1896, the Boers in both republics embarked on a spending spree to arm all able-bodied burghers with state-of-the-art rifles.

Commandant-General Piet Joubert placed orders for as many as 36,000 single-shot British Martini-Henry rifles, which the British infantry had used in the First Boer War of 1881. But far better rifles were available. Disgusted that Joubert had squandered money on obsolete rifles, Traansvaal President Paul Kruger instructed Joubert to place another order—this time for 37,000 German-made Mausers to arm all able-bodied burghers at the cost of more than $1 million.

By the 1890s, both the British and the Germans were manufacturing small-bore, high-velocity rifles that substantially increased a soldier's rate of fire by drawing new rounds from a magazine. The British Lee-Enfield and the German Mauser were state-of-the-art weapons embodying impressive technological advances made in the second half of the 19th century. One of these advances was the brass cartridge which, first introduced in the 1840s, paved the way for single-shot breech loaders, and eventually for magazine-fed repeater rifles. Another key development, that of smokeless powder, greatly increased the efficiency of the guns, resulting in a flatter trajectory and greater muzzle velocity.

The Mausers greatly evened the odds for a nation of citizen-soldiers pitted against well-trained British forces. Each Boer was a marksman who had honed his skills hunting game to put food on the dinner table. In the conventional portion of the war, well-protected Boer forces on the defensive either in trenches or atop kopjes using the Mauser were able to shred British infantry attacks across open ground. The result was that the British had to rewrite their infantry manual from scratch. They eventually adapted and began employing such tactics as open formations, movement by leaps and bounds, and artillery screens to protect advancing infantry.

The Martini-Henry, first manufactured by the British in 1871, was a single-shot rifle that discharged a heavy round of 0.45 caliber at a muzzle velocity of 1,350 feet per second. The rifle's single-shot action was developed by Friedrich von Martini of Switzerland and used the Henry Rifling System designed by Alexander Henry. The introduction of the magazine-fed Lee-Metford rifle in 1888 led to a gradual phasing out of the single-shot Martini-Henry.

The Boer Republics purchased improved Martini-Henrys in bulk quantities in the 1890s and sold them to burghers at prices as low as four pounds sterling. When Lord Frederick Sleigh Roberts issued an amnesty program in which he called on the burghers to turn in their rifles and go home, many craftily turned in variations of the Martini-Henry, as opposed to the coveted Mauser.

Paul and Wilhelm Mauser perfected the bolt-action rifle and, as a result, won the race among industrialized nations of Western Europe to develop the best rifle for the late 19th-century battlefield. They first introduced the magazine-fed Mauser in 1871. The reliability and precision of the M/71 established the Mauser brothers as the best rifle makers in the world. In the following years, they would issue new patterns which were sold around the globe.

The mainstay of the Boer forces during the Second Boer War was the Mauser model of 1896, which was almost identical to the Model 93 used by the Spanish army. The Boer Mausers had various dates inscribed on the receiver, indicating different patterns made in 1895, 1896, or 1897, but they all incorporated the same basic features embodied in the so-called Spanish Mauser.

The Model 96 fired a 7 mm (0.276-inch) bullet in a smokeless cartridge with a muzzle velocity of 2,296 feet per second. The weapon was sighted for 2,000 meters but was most effective at half that distance. It used a fixed vertical box magazine that held a five-round clip.

The Boers carried their ammunition in five-round clips, which they locked into the Mauser with a firm push of the thumb. The clips gave the Boers a clear advantage over their enemy, even when the British were armed with the Lee-Metford or Lee-Enfield, both of which had 10-round magazines. The Boers could quickly reload the Mauser magazine using the clips, whereas the magazine of the newer British rifles had to be reloaded one bullet at a time. For some inexplicable reason the British never developed a clip for the rifles during the conflict.

The British struggled throughout the war with finding a rifle comparable to the Mauser. At the outset of the conflict, the British infantry used the 1893 version of the Lee-Metford. The Lee-Metford used an obsolete black-powder cartridge containing a .303 (7.7 mm) round. When the war broke out in 1899, the Lee-Enfield Mark I was available but in an ironic twist the British quartermasters decided to let the regular soldiers wear out their older Lee-Metfords before supplying them with Lee-Enfields. The Lee-Enfield, distributed first to British reserves and eventually to the regulars, incorporated a number of improvements over the Lee-Metford relative to the number, depth and width of grooves in the barrel, as well as using a smokeless cartridge. The Lee-Enfield also fired a .303 caliber bullet with a muzzle velocity of 2,060 feet per second.

The Lee-Enfield attracted Boer attention as their forces began running short of the 7 mm ammunition for the Mausers. In his raid on the British base at Roodewal on June 7, 1900, Boer Commandant-General Christiaan De Wet and his men seized all of the .303 ammunition they could find for the captured Lee-Metfords and Lee-Enfields they were beginning to use as Mauser ammunition dried up.

ullstein bild

ABOVE: Boer soldiers armed with deadly Mausers defend the Tugela River on March 31, 1900. BELOW: The 1893 version of the Lee-Metford rifle.

brother Piet De Wet made a full-scale assault across the Modder from the east with the remaining 1,150 burghers. If all went according to plan, the outnumbered British garrison would be surprised and captured before it could be reinforced.

While De Wet was assembling his men for the raid to capture the Bloemfontein waterworks, British Brig. Gen. Robert Broadwood was leading a 1,700-man column back to Bloemfontein to spread word of Roberts's amnesty proclamation throughout the Free State. Broadwood's force comprised two cavalry regiments, a brigade of mounted infantry, and two batteries of horse artillery. On his return to Bloemfontein, he planned to escort 92 wagons consisting primarily of English refugees with a few Boer "hands-uppers" who desired protection. Broadwood spent several days distributing leaflets, but he decided to withdraw after he learned that a sizable Boer force was retreating in his direction. He wired Roberts on March 30 that he planned to camp at the waterworks on his return march to Bloemfontein.

Broadwood's force began arriving at Sannah's Post at midnight on March 30. A small mounted escort arrived first. The main force splashed through the Modder about 3:30 AM, and was followed 30 minutes later by U and Q Batteries. Exhausted from the bad roads and repeated skirmishes with the lead elements of Olivier's column, the British troopers bedded down beside the refugee wagons. The garrison commander wrongly assured Broadwood that the enemy was not in the immediate vicinity, and Broadwood decided not to post sentries. It was a serious mistake.

As his main force approached the Modder just before daybreak, De Wet's scouts informed him that a mounted British column had arrived at the waterworks during the night. Although the odds were now even, De Wet remained confident that he held the upper hand. Boer forces moved into position in the kopjes on the east bank while the commandant-general took his smaller force west to assume a blocking position at Korn Spruit. Once they reached Korn Spruit, the burghers spread out in ravines along both sides of the wagon road where it entered the drift.

Broadwood dispatched several patrols before daybreak with instructions to ford the Modder and search for signs of enemy activity. The majority of the patrols had nothing to report, but a lieutenant leading one patrol reported enemy gunfire. Believing this to be an isolated incident, Broadwood sent out no additional patrols. One significant incident might have forewarned him of the enemy presence.

ullstein bild

A mounted Boer column crosses the Klip River during de Wet's brilliant cavalry campaign.

Roberts's chief of scouts, American-born Frederic Russell Burnham, was patrolling the area at daybreak and spied Boer forces massing for an attack. He climbed a kopje and began frantically waving a red handkerchief in an attempt to signal Broadwood's men. Burnham managed instead to catch the attention of the Boers, who subsequently took him prisoner.

At first light, the burghers at Korn Spruit spotted a wagon on the east side of the stream just above the drift. Standing alongside the wagon was a small group of native tribesmen tending some sheep and cattle. The burghers interrogated the tribesmen and learned that the wagon belonged to a hands-upper from Thabbanchu. The tribesmen said the farmer intended to sell his livestock to the British Army once he arrived in Bloemfontein. The burghers promptly took custody of the wagon and livestock.

Shortly after the British patrols returned, shells crashed into the British camp at the waterworks. The barrage caught the British completely by surprise. Dodging shrapnel as best they could, the British soldiers dove for cover. While they knew the fire was coming from the far side of the Modder, they had no way of judging the size of the threat or of determining the exact location of enemy forces. The Boers had done an exemplary job of concealing themselves among the kopjes that lined the east bank.

After the initial shells rained down, the burghers opened up with their Mausers, making it impossible for the British to remain on the open grassland around the waterworks. Broadwood mistakenly assumed that he was under attack from Olivier's 5,000-strong force, and decided that his best course of action was to withdraw as swiftly as possible to Bushman's Kop, where he could dig in and await reinforcements. The wagons started toward Korn Spruit at dawn, and Broadwood ordered his troops to saddle up and follow the wagon train.

A large number of wagons driven by local refugees and escorted by about 200 British soldiers entered the drift at Korn Spruit. The refugees had heard gunfire erupt in the vicinity of the waterworks and, in response, drove their wagons as quickly as possible toward what they believed was safe ground. "The result was a scene of confusion," De Wet wrote. "Towards us, over the brow of the hill, came the wagons pell-mell, with a few carts moving rapidly in front."

As the wagons rumbled down into the drift, De Wet's burghers sprang from well-concealed positions and shouted, "Hands up!" The soldiers were rounded up and disarmed. At this point, De Wet ordered the refugees to form a single line, drive through the spruit, and wait on the opposite bank. The refugees were warned that they would be shot if they made any attempt to signal their predicament to the British soldiers on the other side.

In the meantime, large numbers of disorganized British troops on foot and horseback began streaming into the drift. Having returned to their concealed positions, De Wet's burghers once again sprang from cover and ordered the British soldiers to throw down their weapons. Confusion reigned. De Wet was enraged by his troops' inability to disarm the British in an efficient manner. Rather than simply throwing the captured rifles out of reach of the prisoners, the soldiers sought their commander's advice at every turn. "The burghers kept on asking, 'Where shall

I put this rifle, General? What have I to do with this horse?' This sort of thing sorely tried my hasty temper," De Wet wrote.

Shortly after the shelling began at daybreak, Major Edmund Phipps-Hornby, commander of Q Battery, was awakened by one of his gunners, who asked him in a shaky voice whether the battery should limber up and withdraw. Phipps-Hornby decided to bring some of the guns into action, but it quickly became apparent that the 12-pounders were substantially outranged by the Boer guns. Realizing that effective counterbattery fire was impossible, Broadwood ordered both batteries to withdraw west. Broadwood told Major P.B. Taylor, commanding U Battery, to proceed first, with Phipps-Hornby to follow. The officers immediately set off in the direction of Korn Spruit.

Taylor's battery arrived at the drift first. Broadwood had instructed Taylor to cross the spruit and unlimber his battery atop a ridge on the opposite bank to provide cover for the withdrawal. When Taylor reached the edge of the drift, De Wet stepped forward and announced calmly: "Dismount. You are prisoners. Go to the wagons." In no position to argue, Taylor's men allowed themselves to be led away. In the confusion that followed, Taylor managed to remount and ride to safety.

From his position in the rear of the column, Phipps-Hornby watched as Taylor's battery drew up alongside a row of wagons halted on the east rim of Korn Spruit. Phipps-Hornby surmised that U Battery was stopping to allow the wagons to cross first. Suddenly a gunner from U Battery came running toward Q Battery, shouting: "We are all prisoners! The Boers are there! They are in among the convoy and among the guns!" Taylor rode up next and verified the gunner's report.

Realizing at once that his battery was exposed to the enemy's deadly accurate rifle fire, Phipps-Hornby ordered the limber drivers to wheel to the left and make for the outbuildings at the railroad station. With the keen eye of an artillery commander, he had spotted a low ridge 70 yards in front of the station where he planned to unlimber his guns and make a stand.

Seeing the second British battery riding away from the drift, De Wet ordered his men to open fire. The roll of gunfire startled the horses of U Battery, and they immediately bolted in all directions, causing more confusion in the Boer ranks. To alleviate the situation, burghers began firing at the panicked horses in an effort to silence them. Boer rifle fire also ripped into the horses and men of Q Battery. One crew was completely decimated before it could withdraw; two wagons carrying badly needed ammunition overturned and were abandoned by the rest of the battery.

The commander and men of Q Battery managed to get five of their guns to the low ridge despite the unabated hail of bullets. Together with the one gun crew that escaped from U Battery, Phipps-Hornby had virtually a complete battery in hand. Although the Boers were within range, the flat trajectory of the British guns made it difficult to hit the burghers deployed at a higher elevation along the edge of the drift. In the subsequent duel between British artillery and Boer riflemen, the Boers quickly gained the upper hand. In a short period of time, Q Battery lost 38 of its 50 officers and gunners. Besides Phipps-Hornby, the only other officer left alive was Captain Gardiner Humphreys. At 10 AM, Phipps-Hornby ordered the guns withdrawn to the relative safety of the station.

Hoping to save as many guns as possible, Phipps-Hornby managed to corral some men who had been crouching behind a nearby stone wall to help remove the guns from the ridge. When the men ignored his initial pleas for assistance, Phipps-Hornby berated them as cowards. "I gave them the rough edge of my tongue, and said I would shoot any man who didn't get out," he wrote later. "Go out and fight—or come and help me."

Ten dismounted cavalrymen left the safety of the stone wall to assist. The motley group of gunners and dismounted troopers had to make several trips between the ridge and the station buildings to drag the guns to safety. While trudging up the slope, they leaned forward into the enemy fire as if facing a heavy wind. The calm courage exuded by Phipps-Hornby and Humphreys sustained the men. When Humphreys's stick was knocked from his hand by an enemy bullet, he nonchalantly bent down and picked it up before continuing at a casual pace back toward the guns.

Phipps-Hornby also showed his mettle. When one of Broadwood's aides suggested that he retire to the relative safety of the station buildings, he matter-of-factly replied, "Perhaps it would be as well, but I have been here some hours now." In the process of withdrawing the guns, a number of the volunteers and artillerymen were felled by the unrelenting Mauser fire.

The carnage was overwhelming. Nevertheless, Phipps-Hornby and his men managed to pull three guns and a substantial amount of equipment to safety before breaking off the task. They then hitched the three guns to limbers parked behind the station buildings and withdrew south, fording the spruit and driving hard for Bloemfontein.

Phipps-Hornby's escape was part of the hurried retreat by Broadwood's entire command from Sannah's Post. When the majority of Broadwood's mounted troops reached Korn Spruit, he ordered them to cross the spruit above and below the position held by De Wet and his men. The numbers streaming past the Boer position at Korn Spruit were substantially larger than the Boer contingent holding the drift, and De Wet ordered them to stand fast and make no attempt to pursue the British. "We fired at them as they passed and took several more prisoners," De Wet wrote. "Had I but commanded a larger force, I could have captured every one of them."

When Phipps-Hornby arrived t Bloemfontein later that day, he sought relief for his frayed nerves by tossing back three glasses of whiskey in quick succession. Physically and emotionally drained, he broke down and wept. Word quickly spread among the garrison of Q Battery's resistance and the harrowing withdrawal of its guns under enemy fire. Phipps-Hornby, another officer, and three gunners received the Victoria Cross for their service that morning. Broadwood, conversely, was severely reprimanded in private by his superiors for his actions at Sannah's Post, but officially he was exonerated of any responsibility for the debacle.

De Wet's haul from the ambush was substantial. He had captured 428 prisoners and 117 wagons, and he had recovered seven of the nine guns left on the battlefield. As the action drew to a close in the early afternoon, the burghers gathered the spoils in preparation for transporting them to safety in the Transvaal. De Wet decided to take 800 men and continue raiding south, leaving the remainder to escort the wagons, guns, and prisoners north. On April 3, De Wet's raiding party successfully attacked a British convoy under the protection of the Royal Irish Rifles near Reddersberg. After an intense fight that lasted the entire day, the Boers prevailed and accepted the surrender of 546 men.

Detaching part of his force to march the prisoners north, De Wet and his remaining men rode to Wepener, where they boldly laid siege to a much larger force numbering 1,900 men led by Maj. Gen. E. Brabant. The unit, known as Brabant's Horse, was made up of Afrikaners from Cape Colony, and the idea that they had enlisted to serve the Crown enraged De Wet. He undertook a siege of the town that lasted more than two weeks before breaking off the action and returning north.

Bold as it was, De Wet's raid was only a minor distraction to the enemy and could not stop the British juggernaut as it rolled into the Transvaal. Johannesburg fell on May 30, and Pretoria followed on June 5. By the end of the summer, the British had cleared the last of the Boer resistance from the railway line running from Pretoria to the border of Portuguese East Africa. In the months that followed, the British turned to extreme measures in an effort to break Boer resistance. They built blockhouses to protect railways along which they moved troops and supplies, constructed internment camps, and embarked on a scorched-earth policy in which they routinely put Boer farms to the torch. In the internment camps, Boer women and children died by the thousands of hunger and disease.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: A driverless team of British horses flees in panic after the Boer ambush at Sannah's Post.
OPPOSITE: Q Battery, led by Major Edmund Phipps-Hornby, gallops into action at Korn Spruit during the surprise Boer attack. The major would receive the Victoria Cross for bravery.

Desperate to thwart the systematic destruction of Boer life in the Orange Free State, De Wet invaded Cape Colony in November with 1,500 men, forcing Roberts to detach a substantial number of troops to chase him off. The wily guerrilla leader invaded Cape Colony for a second time in February 1901. To deal with the 3,000-strong Boer force, the British detached another 14,000 troops to pursue them. It was a high-stakes game of cat and mouse.

As the war drew to a close in 1902, De Wet initially refused to go along with the majority of Boers who favored peace. He finally relented, but like a wolf in captivity, he chafed under the imposed peace. When World War I broke out in 1914, De Wet led an uprising in the Free State when South African leaders proposed to enter the war on the side of Great Britain and invade German South West Africa. In an ironic twist, De Wet's former comrade, Louis Botha, led the forces that crushed the rebels and took De Wet into custody. De Wet was sentenced to six years in prison, but was released after a year with the promise that he would not have any further involvement in politics. It was an ironic end to an illustrious, if unorthodox, military career. □

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By Joseph Luster

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2

This ride's going to be tough to top.

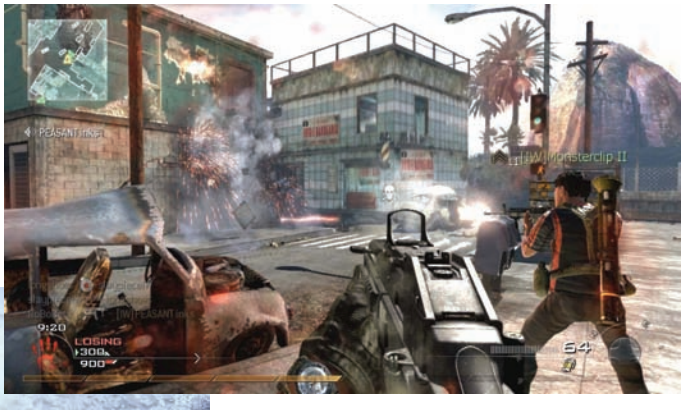
The latest in Activision's hit-making franchise puts developer Infinity Ward back up to bat for a direct followup to one of the biggest first-person shooters of all time. There has to be a lot of pressure on the creative end when you have fans rabid enough to keep playing your last effort right up to its sequel's launch, but the team has proven that they're more than up to the challenge. *Modern Warfare 2* [for the Xbox 360 (reviewed), Playstation 3, and PC] is exactly what we all expect from a monster sequel, and then some. For the sake of confusion, I won't be throwing *Call of Duty: World at War* into the referential mix. Trey- arch's last World War II entry used a lot of keen ideas established in *Modern Warfare,* but this is really Infinity Ward's beast, and it builds directly off their previous work in every way.

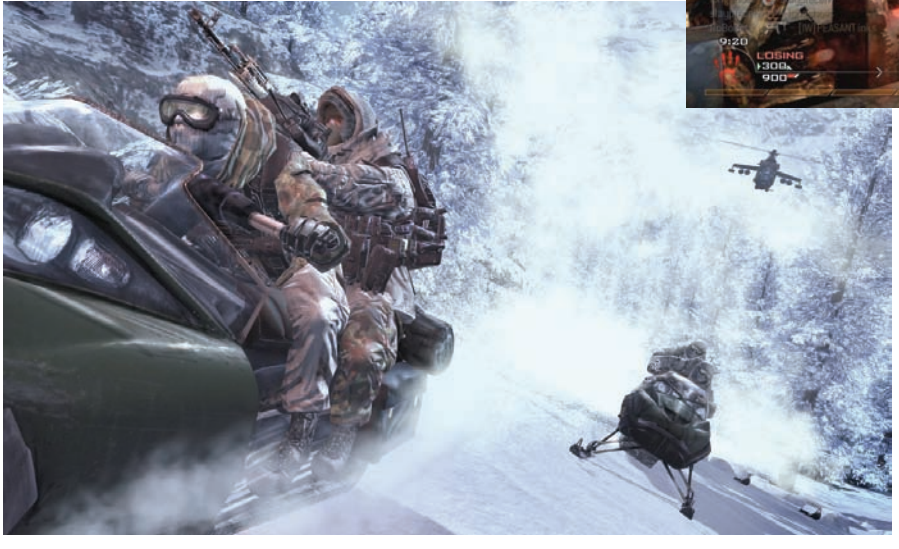
War-based first-person shooters are practically defined by their seat-rocking and face-melting scripted events at this point; the *Call of Duty* series certainly is. Infinity Ward continue to work toward proving themselves as masters of this particular craft, and as a result, *Modern Warfare 2* only really grinds to a halt when the end credits roll.

The pace is kept fairly frenetic thanks to fresh objectives and a wide variety of locales. Before a heated, violent excursion through Rio De Janeiro has a chance to wear thin, it's off to a completely divergent setting. The brisk heights of Siberia make way for the war-torn streets of Washington, D.C., and, more often than not, levels end in explosive chases and leaps to the safety of helicopters that are almost comical in the intensity of their last-second derring-do.

The series is still somewhat plagued by spawn points that seem to barf out an endless barrage of enemies until you progress forward enough to stop the flow, but this has been superficially masked more successfully than before.

In a very Hollywood Standard way, orders from the last outing are doubled like greasy-bagged extra value meals. But Infinity Ward works toward something most crafters of record-breaking media tend to shy away from as to avoid alienating the potential millions served: they take risks. Even *Modern Warfare* was notable for a few stand-out sequences designed to shake the player, like putting you in the shoes of a soldier as he witnesses a nuke go off, slowly dying from the irradiated blast. If that was a spoiler, it may be time to catch up on that backlog of gaming.





While I won't be revealing anything major in regard to *Modern Warfare 2,* it's important to note the impact of the "No Russian" level, and the controversy that resulted from its inclusion. It's an early stage, and has the player taking the role of a CIA operative undercover with the antagonist, Russian terrorist Vladimir Makarov. Together with a few of his men, you calmly enter a Russian airport and proceed to mow down civilians to convey a message soaked in the blood of the innocent.

It's a shocking scene, for sure, regardless of whether or not you decide to actually open fire on anyone yourself. It may make your heart pound, twist your gut, or just disgust you, but its inclusion was clearly a deeply thought-out creative move that couldn't have been an easy decision. Some will be (and have been) quick to dismiss it as a gratuitously sensational scenario, but the fact of the matter is there's no other platform that can so effectively rouse its audience. A film depicting a similar sequence just wouldn't have the immersive impact, and this is what separates games from everything else out there. It may be ugly, but it's not pointless.

Admittedly, I could praise the presentation, the action, and all the various cinematic qualities of *Modern Warfare 2* all day and the story would still come out looking a little bit like sludge. It's not that the writing is particularly awful—much of the dialogue is convincing, the acting spot on, and the scenarios around which this is all wrapped are truly exciting—but it's so muddled that it could just as well be about almost anything and garner the same results.

A lot of this hinges on its rigid connections

to the story of its predecessor. It essentially continues where *Modern Warfare* left off—well, five years after the fact—but the opening credits montage of those events does little to bring the player up to speed. If games are going to tie themselves to one another like televised serials or high-end film sequels, they would do well to follow in the footsteps of shows like *24* and include revealing, and completely optional, "previously on ..." intros. This goes doubly so for a series loaded with so many betrayals that it almost becomes a running gag.

Even if those twists and turns—all the times the player gets knocked down in a scripted event and rises in a daze while chaos erupts around them—are completely expected and at times predictable, they're effective. If the campaign is a six-hour popcorn game, then the rest of the package is the ultimate collection of special features. I'm likely in the minority on this, though, with a good deal of gamers considering it in reverse; the solo campaign a mere diversion to dip their feet in when not scorching competitors online.

One of the greatest aspects of multiplayer is the way it constantly dangles the carrot, doling out rewards consistently, often in the face of great defeat. This may have been established in *Call of Duty 4* and carried over to *World at War,* but it's at its peak here, and new features and rewards are woven in to complete the best multiplayer FPS on the market.

It's hard to be mad when you lose a round, unless someone's exploiting something like the nasty javelin glitch, which has since been patched. Of course, more glitches will be exploited down the line, breaking multiplayer in myriad ways, but there's always the option of buddying up with friends and just having a killer online party night in any of the modes. And there is a staggering amount to choose from, relatively speaking. Seriously, there are modes that I still haven't had the urge to try out, but someone out there is going to find the perfect personal setting.

Between the loaded multiplayer—including the addictive cooperative Spec Ops missions—and a single-player ride that's worth getting on more than once, *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* earns the admission charged. Considering the fact that it pushed over four million units in the United States and United Kingdom within 24 hours of its release, and has since sold over six million in the United States alone, rest assured there will be plenty of people to enjoy the mayhem with for quite some time. □

ON THE LOOKOUT: UPCOMING BATTLES

NAPOLEON: TOTAL WAR

The Creative Assembly's turn-based strategy title continues the *Total War* series, which first started in 2000 with *Shogun: Total War. Napoleon* takes place over three campaigns, the first two of which center on Napoleon's 1796 Italian campaign, and the Egyptian campaign of 1798. Previous *Total War* entries include *Medieval, Rome, Medieval II,* and *Empire.*

PUBLISHER
Sega

SYSTEM(S)
PC

AVAILABLE
Q1 2010

BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

Like the first game, *Bad Company 2* is all about blowing crap up. This time around, the destructible environments are even more so, with buildings crumbling to dust in both single-player and multiplayer modes. In contrast to *Modern Warfare 2, Bad Company 2* will offer dedicated server support for all the online carnage.

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts

SYSTEM(S)
Xbox 360, Playstation 3, PC

AVAILABLE
March 2, 2010

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By Al Hemingway

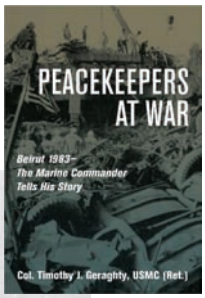
The vicious bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 was a tragic foretaste of the ongoing war between the U.S. and Islamic terrorists.

ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 23, 1983, A LARGE YELLOW Mercedes-Benz truck was seen approaching the Beirut International Airport. No one paid particular attention until the vehicle began to pick up speed and make its way toward the Battalion Landing Team (BLT) Headquarters building of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines.

The truck then passed through a wrought-iron gate, rammed into a sandbagged sentry position, and crashed through another barrier before ending up in the lobby of the four-story structure. What happened next was almost indescribable. The truck, loaded with explosives, detonated with a force later described as the equivalent of 12,000 pounds of TNT. The massive, seemingly indestructible concrete building was reduced to rubble within a matter of seconds.

And 241 American servicemen lay dead.

At the time, it was the worst act of terrorism ever recorded against Americans. How could this tragedy have occurred? In his new book, ***Peacekeepers at War: Beirut 1983: The Marine Commander Tells His Story*** (Potomac Books, Washington, D.C., 2009, 256 pp., maps, photos, notes, index, $29.95, hardcover), Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty, USMC (Ret.), the senior ground commander on the scene, gives an in-depth account of the tragic event, which stands as a forerunner of more than 25 years of Islamic violence against American and other western nations.



The Marines, together with French and Italian contingents, first arrived in Beirut, Lebanon, in the summer of 1982. They returned that fall after the horrific massacre of 700 Arab men, women, and children in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Phalangist Christian militiamen. This was the impetus of the peacekeeping mission that followed. Originally, the directive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff read: "To establish an environment which will permit the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out their responsibilities in the Beirut area." It was troublingly vague.

"The mission from the start was opaque, nebulous," writes Geraghty. "But when you look at this sort of mission in terms of what we all learn as Marines, it flies in the face of our doctrine. The decision to send us in was made with good intentions, but it was made from the heart rather than from the facts."

As the commander on the ground,

National Archives

Rescue workers search for survivors in the aftermath of the terrorist bomb attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983.

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Israel: A Light unto the Nations

Those who demonize Israel are either misinformed or malevolent

If that proverbial man from Mars came to visit and read the world's newspapers, especially those in the Arab and Muslim world, he would be convinced that Israel was the most evil nation in the world and the source of all of the world's strife.

What are the facts?

A nation to be emulated. The reality, of course, is that Israel is a nation, a society, that should be admired and emulated by many countries in the world. The very fact of how the State of Israel came into being is one of the most inspiring in history. Born out of the ashes of the Holocaust, it has emerged as one of the most advanced, productive and prosperous countries in the world.

The demonization of Israel, assiduously cultivated by the Muslim world, has reached a crescendo following Israel's recent defensive action in Gaza. Instead of being grateful to the hated Jews for having totally withdrawn, the Palestinian Gazans showed their gratitude by almost daily pounding Israeli towns with close to 10,000 rockets and bombs. After countless warnings, Israel ultimately decided to put an end to this travesty.

> "As the prophet Isaiah presaged: Israel is indeed a Light unto the Nations."

When Israel finally did invade Gaza it took the most elaborate precautions not to hurt civilians. As a first in the history of warfare, Israel dropped tens of thousands of leaflets, warning the population and urging it to abandon areas in which military action would take place. The Israeli military made thousands of phone calls urging people to leave areas that would come under attack. But fighting in a densely populated environment is difficult and loss of civilian life is hard to avoid. Hamas fighters wear no uniforms. It is impossible to tell them from civilians. Is a person who allows a rocket launcher in his backyard a civilian or a fighter? And how about using schools, hospitals and mosques as munitions depots and staff centers? The hue and cry of Israel's demonizers in accusing it of "disproportionate force" is totally absurd. The ultimate insult, comparing Israel to the Nazis, is freely bandied about by Israel's detractors.

Israel is not an "apartheid state." Another familiar tack of Israel's vilifiers is to call it an "apartheid state," on the model of former South Africa. But that is so ridiculous, so preposterous, it is hard to believe that serious people can countenance it. The exact opposite is the case. Israel is the only country in its benighted neighborhood in which people of all colors and religions prosper and have equal rights. Israel, expending substantial effort, rescued tens of thousands of black Jews from Ethiopia. And it has given assistance and absorbed countless Christian expatriates from Sudan, who escaped from being slaughtered by their Muslim countrymen. Israel's over one million Arab citizens enjoy the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows. They are represented in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, and are members of its bureaucracy, of its judiciary, and of its diplomatic service.

All over the world, Leftists, including in the United States and, sad to say, even in Israel itself, tirelessly condemn and vilify Israel. Why would they do that? First, of course, there is good old-fashioned anti-Semitism. Second, many of those who hate the United States vent their poison on Israel, which they consider being America's puppet in that area of the world. But Israel should certainly get top grades in all areas important to the Left. In contrast to all its enemies, Israel has the same democratic institutions as the United States. All religions thrive freely in Israel. Also, in contrast to all of its enemies, women have the same rights as men. The Chief Justice of Israel's Supreme Court is a woman. One-sixth of the Knesset are women. Compare that to Saudi Arabia, a medieval theocracy, where women are not allowed to drive cars, where they cannot leave the country without permission of a male relative, and where they can be and often are condemned to up to 60 lashes if the "modesty police" deems them not to be properly dressed in public. Gays and lesbians are totally unmolested in Israel; in the surrounding Muslim countries they would be subjected to the death penalty.

In spite of demonization and vilification by so much of the world, Israel is indeed a Light unto the Nations. The State of Israel is the foremost creation of the Jewish enterprise and Jewish intellect that has benefited every country in which Jews dwell, certainly our own country, the United States. Second only to the United States itself, Israel is the world's most important factor in science and technology, way out of proportion to the small size of its population. Israeli Jews are at the forefront of the arts, the sciences, law and medicine. They have brought all these sterling qualities to bear in building their own country: Israel. By necessity, they have also become outstanding in agriculture and, most surprisingly, in the military. What a shame that the Arabs opted not to participate in this progress and this prosperity and chose instead the path of revenge, of Jihad and of martyrdom. As the prophet Isaiah presaged: Israel is indeed a Light unto the Nations.

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East
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Gerardo Joffe, President

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Geraghty accepts full responsibility. He makes it clear, however, that outside events took place that dramatically altered his unit's primary objective as neutral peacekeepers. First, the Israeli Defense Force withdrew from its positions near the Shouf Mountains. Their early departure left a void that had to be filled by the Lebanese armed forces. Immediately following the Israeli departure, rocket, mortar, and small-arms fire increased between all the factions. The Marines began to sustain casualties, and their role as peacekeepers was transformed into becoming active combatants in the conflict.

"This regretful decision by Israeli leaders predictably accelerated the resumption of the Lebanese civil war," Geraghty writes, "culminating in the dual suicide truck attacks on the multinational peacekeeping force six weeks later."

Naval gunfire and air strikes were authorized by the United States in direct support of the LAF. Geraghty did his utmost to stop the requests. He and the other American commanders on the scene thought the White House was overreacting to the situation. Despite discussions with liaison officers from Ambassador Robert "Bud" McFarlane's staff, Geraghty's pleas fell on deaf ears and the fire support missions continued. Geraghty told McFarlane pointblank: "This will cost us our neutrality. Don't you realize that we'll get slaughtered down here? We're sitting ducks."

Geraghty points out lessons that should have been learned from the assault on the BLT barracks, especially the creation and ultimate buildup of Hezbollah, the extremist group responsible for the suicide truck attacks. This fanatical organization is still supplied and trained by the Iranian and Syrian governments. It also has close ties with Al-Qaeda and offers to train terrorists for operations against Israel and the United States.

Because of our "passive response," Geraghty believes, the "enemy smelled blood," and struck at the American homeland on September 11, 2001. There was no retaliation for the 1983 bombings, nor have any of the perpetrators been brought to justice for their heinous crime. Geraghty's book is an eye-opener for anyone who wants to learn more about what happened in 1983 before and after the awful destruction of the Marine barracks in Beirut.

Jerusalem's Traitor: Josephus, Masada, and the Fall of Judea by Desmond Seward, DaCapo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2009, 314 pp., photos, notes, index, $28.00, hardcover.

Acclaimed historian Desmond Seward has taken a rather complicated era in world history and has penned an extraordinary biography of Josephus, a Jewish general at the time of the revolt against Rome in AD 66.

Josephus was born into a wealthy and influential family. He was appointed a general during the rebellion in Galilee against the Romans who occupied Palestine at that time. During the seizure of Jotapata, he was taken prisoner. Always a resourceful man, he escaped certain death by prophesying to the Roman commander, Titus Vespasian, that he would become emperor of Rome, a prediction that did come true.

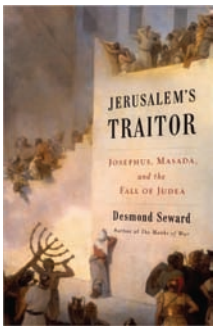
Josephus traveled with Vespasian's legions and was an eyewitness to the destruction of his homeland. When Vespasian's son Titus assumed command of the expeditionary force after his father's ascent to the throne, it was Titus who eventually laid siege to Jerusalem. Although Titus tried not to destroy the temple, the Jewish Zealots inside, whom Josephus loathed, left him no alternative.

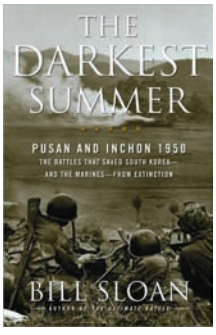
After the insurrection was crushed, Josephus returned to Rome and wrote about his experiences in the conflict. His works, which have created intense debate among scholars throughout the years as to their historical accuracy, included *The Jewish War, Vita,* and his voluminous *Antiquities of the Jews.* Although he took the name Flavius Josephus and became a Roman citizen, he never forgot his Jewish faith and upbringing. His last account, *Contra Apionem,* was published after he died around AD 95.

Seward does a masterful job at dissecting Josephus's works to separate his prejudices and exaggerations and give the reader an accurate account of what happened during a turbulent time in Jewish history when thousands perished, not only at the hands of the Romans but also by the own countrymen.

Despite his boastful writing and obvious disdain for the Zealots (with the exception of their heroic stand at Masada), Josephus's *The Jewish War* provides an excellent glimpse into an important part of Israel's past. Considered arrogant and deceitful by many because of his collaboration with the enemy, Josephus deserves praise, Seward writes, for his staunch belief in the continuation of the Jewish faith. "We have lost our land and our dearest possessions," Josephus wrote, "but our Law will live forever."

The Darkest Summer: Pusan and Inchon 1950: The Battles That Saved South Korea–and the Marines–From Extinction by Bill Sloan, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2009, 545 pp., photos, notes, index, $27.00, hardcover.





When the U.S. Marines triumphantly raised the Stars and Stripes on Mount Suribachi at Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal boasted to Lt. Gen. Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith: "Holland, the raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years."

Little did Forrestal know that by 1947 the illustrious Marine Corps would be fighting for its very existence—not on any remote battlefield, but within the hallowed halls of Congress, the Pentagon, and even the White House. And it would take another war to ensure their survival as America's premier fighting force.

Many within the Army and Navy wanted to integrate the Marines' mission within their branches. Some politicians, including President Harry S. Truman, agreed. He continually refused to appoint the commandant of the Marine Corps to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declaring: "The Marine Corps is the Navy's police force, and as long as I am president, that's what it will remain. They have a propaganda machine that's almost equal of [Soviet Premier Joseph] Stalin's."

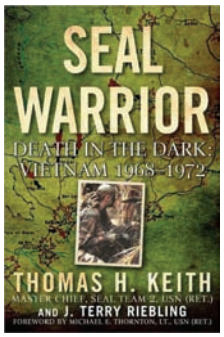
Despite this stinging slap, the Marine Corps was saved from being disbanded through the efforts of Michigan congressman Clare Hoffman, Commandant General Alexander A. Vandegrift, Brig. Gen. Gerald Thomas, Lt. Col. Victor "Brute" Krulak, and Brig. Gen. Merritt A. Edson. The Marine Corps was assured its mission when Hoffman added amendments to the National Security Act. On July 25, 1947, Truman signed the bill into law.

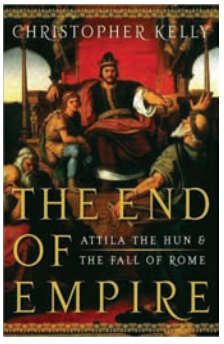
Then came June 25, 1950. The North Korean People's Army suddenly invaded South Korea and drove deep into the country, capturing Seoul and sending the South Korean and American armed forces reeling in retreat. Woefully undermanned and ill-equipped, the 24th and 1st Cavalry Divisions were rushed to the war zone to stem the tide of the enemy advance. The Marines hastily formed the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade under Brig. Gen. Edward A. "Eddie" Craig, a combat-savvy leatherneck who fought brilliantly in the southeastern pocket of the country known as the Pusan Perimeter.

General Douglas MacArthur's masterstroke at Inchon soon followed. Despite the terrible

tides in the harbor and the nervous pleas from his staff, MacArthur had the Marines land at Inchon and cut off the NKPA forces in the region. It would prove to be one of the greatest amphibious assaults in history. Even at the Chosin Reservoir, when thousands of Chinese troops entered the conflict, the Marines performed magnificently by withdrawing slowly, maintaining unit integrity and taking their dead and wounded with them.

Their outstanding performance during the Korean War assured the Marines' central role within the American military establishment. Never again would any politician suggest eliminating the Marine Corps after it had proved once more to be America's foremost amphibious force in readiness and lived up to the Corps' proud motto: "First to Fight."





Seal Warrior: Death in the Dark: Vietnam 1968-1972 by Master Chief Thomas H. Keith, USN (Ret.) and J. Terry Riebling, Thomas Dunne Books, New York, 2009, 292 pp., photos, index, $25.99, hardcover.

As their name implies, United States Navy SEALs have fought on sea, land, or air since their inception in 1962. Highly trained in guerrilla and unconventional warfare, SEAL teams strike deep inside enemy territory to gather valuable intelligence data and keep the enemy off balance.

Keith was a member of SEAL Team-2 on numerous tours in Southeast Asia. He comes from a long lineage of warriors in his own family dating back to the Revolutionary War. Military service and combat runs in Keith's blood, and his 29 years of experience in counterinsurgency operations makes him more than qualified to tell this story.

"The SEAL Teams will soon celebrate our first fifty years of service, and while we have grown, learned new skills, and taken on more dangerous and demanding duties, not much has changed," writes Keith. "Every warrior who served in the teams, and who serves in them today, carries on a tradition and a warrior ethic that remain unequaled. The only easy day was yesterday."

The End of Empire: Attila the Hun & the Fall of Rome by Christopher Kelly, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2009, 350 pp., illustrations, index, $26.95, hardcover.

The word Hun can still conjure up images of bloodthirsty and ruthless savages, bent on destroying everything in their path. In their savage heyday, the Huns sacked numerous cities and towns as they inched their way toward the greatest prize of all—the Eternal City, Rome.

Leading this band of nomads was their charismatic and often brutal leader, Attila. History has not been kind to the king of the Huns. He is portrayed as an uncivilized brute, murdering and pillaging anyone he encountered. Some claim he was the primary reason that the Roman Empire finally crumbled. Others believe that, although Attila certainly contributed to the downfall of the Roman Empire, it was doomed long before he arrived on the scene, dying from its own internal corruption.

Kelly believes that Attila the Hun must be placed in the proper historical context. There is no doubt that he ransacked, murdered, and burned villages to the ground. Kelly is quick to point out, however, that other nomadic tribes such as the Vandals and Goths did much the same. He portrays a somewhat kinder and gentler Attila as a shrewd negotiator and perceptive person in spite of his wrongdoings.

Attila's premature death left a void in the Hun leadership. Soon, the "wolves from the North" disappeared and left no trace. The once-mighty Roman Empire, now fragmented, would eventually become the countries of France, Italy, and Spain. In a way, the Hun invasion of northern Italy and France was the unintended springboard for the formation of modern-day Europe.

Manila and Santiago: The New Steel Navy in the Spanish-American War by Jim Leeke, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2009, 190 pp., photos, index, $26.96, hardcover.

The Spanish-American War, though brief, was a shining moment in American military annals. "It has been a splendid little war; begun with the highest motives, carried on with magnificent intelligence and spirit, favored by that fortune which loves the brave," said John Hay, U.S. ambassador to England, at the time.

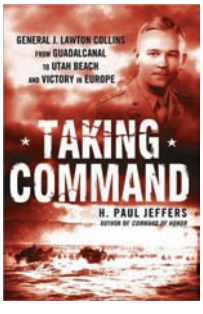
Despite the dubious reasons that catapulted the United States into hostilities with Spain in 1898, Hay was correct on one point—there was a magnificent spirit displayed by American troops, particularly those in the U.S. Navy. Time and time again, naval officers demonstrated indomitable courage and sheer audacity when confronting the much-larger enemy.

On May 1, 1898, Commodore George Dewey inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Spanish fleet commanded by Admiral Patricio Montojo in the Philippines. Directing his men aboard his flagship USS *Olympia,* Dewey smashed the enemy within seven hours without suffering a single fatality. In addition, he seized Manila Bay, establishing the United States as a world power for a century to come.

Several months later, in the waters off Cuba, the warships of Rear Admiral William T. Sampson and the flying squadron headed by Commodore Winfield Scott Schley met the enemy at the Battle of Santiago Bay. When the smoke cleared, the Spanish fleet had suffered numerous hits and 500 casualties. The catastrophic defeat signaled the end of a Spanish naval presence in the Western Hemisphere.

Leeke's book vividly describes the people and events surrounding both of these important victories during the short but bloody conflict. Many of those in government, including President Theodore Roosevelt, made a concerted effort to build up the American Navy after realizing what a strong fleet could accomplish, and it was because of men like Sampson, Dewey, and Schley that the Navy remains a formidable fighting force to this day.

Taking Command: General J. Lawton Collins from Guadalcanal to Utah Beach and Victory in Europe by H. Paul Jeffers, Caliber Books, New York, 2009, 325 pp., photos, index, $25.95, hardcover.



He was known as "Lightning Joe" Collins to his men. He led by example, trying to visit the front as much as possible. He came ashore with the 25th Division to relieve the Marines on Guadalcanal in early 1943 and did such an exemplary job that he was subsequently reassigned to the European Theater.

Collins was given the task of heading the Seventh Corps that landed on Utah Beach. Under his leadership, the corps took part in closing the Falaise pocket to cut off the retreating German Army. His units were involved in the bitter battles at Aachen and the Hürtgen Forest during the bloody Battle of the Bulge in the bone-chilling winter of 1944-1945. Collins's

troops eventually entered the all-important Ruhr Valley, the heart of German industry for the war effort, and participated in numerous battles and skirmishes until war's end in May 1945.

Called the "GI's general" by correspondents, Collins often appeared on the front lines. During the fighting on New Georgia in the Central Solomons, he occupied 15 different foxholes in one evening. Collins eventually became Army Chief of Staff, assisted in the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and was appointed ambassador to South Vietnam in 1954 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. He suffered a fatal heart attack at the age of 91 in 1987.

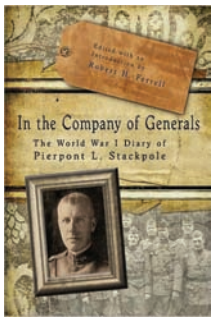
Jeffers's book is a fitting tribute to a true fighting man who inspired his troops and possessed excellent leadership skills. "Such self-assurance is tolerable only when right," wrote General Omar Bradley in his autobiography *A Soldier's Story,* "and Collins, happily, almost always was."

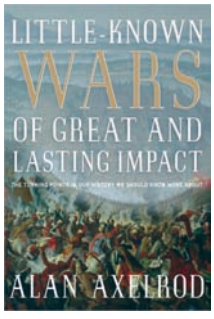
In the Company of Generals: The World War I Diary of Pierpont L. Stackpole edited by Robert H. Ferrell, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO, 2009, 208 pp., illustrations, maps, index, $34.95, hardcover.

A blueblood Boston lawyer by trade, Pierpont L. Stackpole was thrust into action at the outset of World War I. He was commissioned a major, and later became a lieutenant colonel and an aide to Maj. Gen. Hunter Liggett. In that latter role, Stackpole was in a position to observe firsthand Liggett's remarkable leadership qualities.

A Pennsylvanian by birth, Liggett graduated from West Point in 1879 and served in a variety of remote western outposts at the beginning of his career. Promotions during the era were slow in coming, but Liggett persevered and by the beginning of World War I he had attained the rank of major general. Despite his portly appearance, Liggett had a keen mind. Realizing his enormous military knowledge and common sense, American Expeditionary Force Commander General John J. Pershing appointed Liggett the leader of the Army Corps. By the time of the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, the bloodiest battle in the war, he had become commander of the First Army.

Liggett's no-nonsense leadership capabilities were much evident during his time in France. Described as a "shadowy figure" by the author





because he was never really in the limelight, Liggett's tremendous contribution to training the largest American Army to date was put into proper perspective by Stackpole. The young Harvard graduate traveled with Liggett almost everywhere and observed firsthand his methods. Liggett discussed his generals, the war and other subjects during their quiet moments together.

Stackpole's journal is an important document that sheds much-needed information about a crucial time in American mililtary history. Never before had American senior officers commanded such large amounts of men in battle, and it was Hunter Liggett who played a significant role in making sure that it was done right.

Little-Known Wars of Great and Lasting Impact by Alan Axelrod, Fair Winds Press, Beverly, MA, 2009, 288 pp., illustrations, notes, index, $19.99, softcover.

From the beginning of recorded history, there has been only 292 years of peace. Wars, great and small, have been all too often the rule. Axelrod's book looks at 18 different small wars that have had an everlasting impact on the world. Beginning with the revolt of the Iceni Queen Boudicca in AD 60 and stretching to the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya from 1952 to 1956, the author gives a brief synopsis of each war.

One good example is a war that took place in North America that clearly altered America's history. King Philip's War, waged from 1675-1676 in New England, was America's costliest conflict, according to Axelrod. Fifty percent of existing white villages were severely damaged, and 12 were razed to the ground. The economy suffered as well. The war cost an estimated 100,000 pounds and devastated the trade and fishing in the region.

More importantly, the war was terrible in the cost of human life. The population of New England at that time was a mere 30,000. Six hundred died in the fighting, with hundreds of additional deaths recorded among the civilian population due to disease, starvation, and other illnesses directly attributable to the war.

King Philip's War "set the fierce tone of white-Indian relations in the United States," writes Axelrod. From this came the French and Indian War and other violent encounters between whites and Indians that would culminate in the massacre at Wounded Knee more than two centuries later. □

washita

Continued from page 29

feared that they might discover and attack his wagon train, then advancing from the South Canadian River and guarded only by 81 infantrymen.

Late in the day, Custer determined to extract his command from a steadily worsening situation. After slaughtering more than 800 Indian ponies, Custer's column, with wounded soldiers and 53 captured Indian women and children in tow, headed east along the north bank of the Washita toward the remaining Indian camps. Custer explained later that the enemy would never expect a movement in that direction and that the surprise would aid his withdrawal. He was right. Some skirmishing occurred between the soldiers and the pursuing Indians; but most of the warriors dispersed and headed for their lodges in order to protect their own families and property. The retreating soldiers, unmolested, were able to join their wagon train, and by late evening of the 28th crossed to the north of the South Canadian River to safety. Four days later they reached Camp Supply.

That night, while the regiment's Osage scouts held a "hideous scalp dance" in honor of the victory, Custer described the battle to Sheridan. The general, always to the point, wanted to know what had happened to Major Elliott. Custer, somewhat lamely, suggested that Elliott had simply gotten lost and would turn up eventually. It was "a very unsatisfactory view of the matter," Sheridan replied, but conceded that it was "altogether too late to make any search for him." From that time on, Custer never again enjoyed his commanding general's full confidence.

Elliott's loss notwithstanding, the Battle of the Washita was a ringing affirmation of Sheridan's overall strategy of total war. At the loss of two officers and 19 enlisted men killed and another 11 wounded, Custer's regiment had killed 103 Indian warriors. More importantly, the destruction of the Indians' ponies, lodgings and food, combined with the brutal reality that the soldiers could strike them during any season of the year, was completely demoralizing. The war on the southern Great Plains would continue until June 1869, but it paved the way for the final triumph over the Indians in that theater. It also cast Custer in the public mind as the most important Indian fighter in the country, even though it proved to be his only major battlefield success against Native American forces. Seven and a half years later, at the Little Bighorn River in southern Montana, he would attempt another surprise assault on an Indian encampment—with vastly different results. □

MEET THE PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE

He survived two ghettos, Dachau and Auschwitz before being liberated by the Americans.

She was engaged to an American paratrooper and joined the Women's Land Army in England.

During Nazi occupation in the Netherlands he carried messages on his bicycle for the Dutch resistance.

She lived a stone's throw from Utah Beach and was among the first French citizens to be liberated.

He slept in the cold attic during the Battle of the Bulge while Germans occupied his home.

A Frenchman in the US in 1940, he joined US Army Intelligence and went behind enemy lines in Normandy.

D-Day, Operation Market Garden, Battle of the Bulge, Dachau, Eagle's Nest

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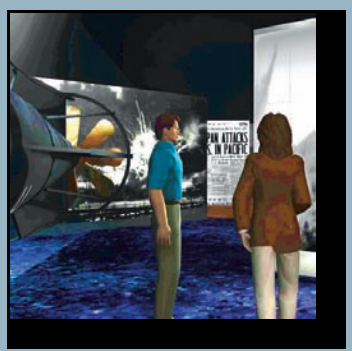

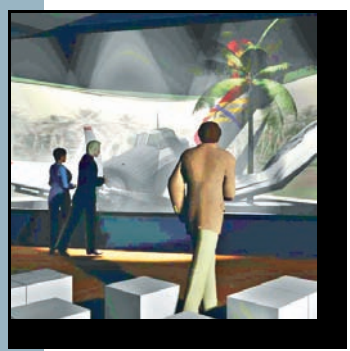

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