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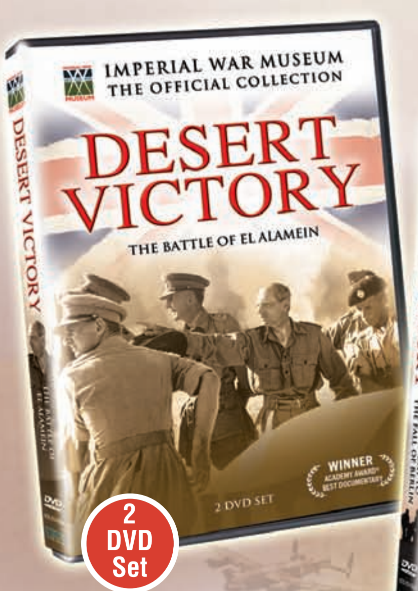

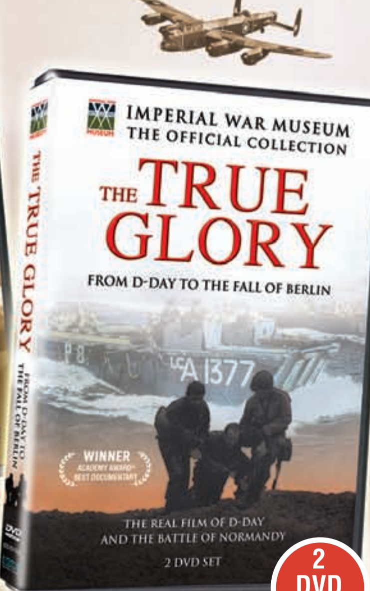

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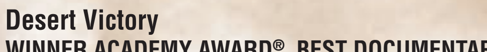

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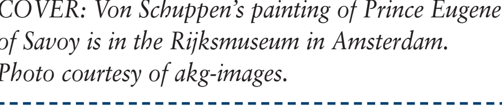
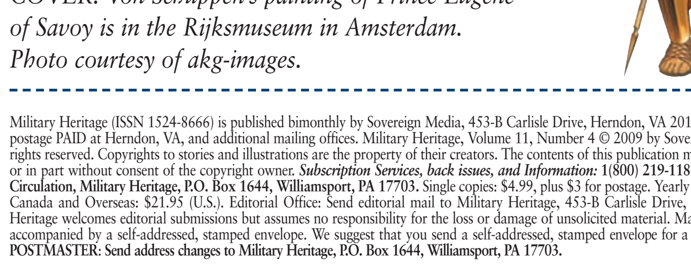


COVER: Von Schuppen's painting of Prince Eugene of Savoy is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Photo courtesy of akg-images.



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Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices

The great American poet Walt Whitman was a sort of one-man Sanitary Commission—not that he would have put it that way.

WHEN THE CIVIL WAR BROKE OUT IN 1861, THE great American poet Walt Whitman was a man on the skids, personally and professionally. His revolutionary book of poems, *Leaves of Grass,* had been largely overlooked, and Whitman was spending most of his time drinking with his fellow bohemians at Pfaff's beer cellar in New York City.

Things changed dramatically in December 1862, after Whitman's younger brother George was wounded while fighting in the Union Army at Fredericksburg, Virginia. Rushing to Washington, Walt spent days searching frantically for George in the overcrowded army hospitals in the nation's capital. As it turned out, George was not badly wounded—he had merely been cut on the cheek by a Rebel shell fragment and was already back with his regiment, the 51st New York, by the time Walt discovered what had happened.

The experience changed Whitman overnight. The sights and sounds of the hospitals stayed with him, and the poet returned to New York City only long enough to gather his possessions and return to Washington. He was now a man with a mission.

For the next two years, Whitman functioned as a sort of one-man Sanitary Commission, visiting the various hospitals and doing whatever he could to spread a little cheer to the patients confined there. His meager earnings as a government clerk went toward buying the soldiers' humble but much appreciated gifts: fruit, ice cream, candy, cookies, pickles, brandy, wine, tobacco, books, stamps—anything that might make their stay in the hospital a little easier.

Mostly, Whitman gave of himself. "In my visits to the hospitals," he recalled, "I found it was in the simple matter of personal presence, and emanating ordinary cheer and magnetism, that I succeeded and helped more than by medical nursing or delicacies, or gifts of money, or anything else." Over the course of the next three years, he personally visited tens of thousands of soldiers. His long white beard, plum-colored suit, and bulging bag of presents gave him a decided resemblance to Santa Claus, and the patients called after him at the end of each visit: "Walt, Walt, come again!"

Not everyone approved of Whitman's assistance, particularly the members of the more formally run U.S. Sanitary Commission. One commission member, Harriet Hawley, the wife of a Union colonel, was outspoken in her disapproval. "There comes that odious Walt Whitman," she wrote to her husband, "to talk evil and unbelief to my boys. I think I would rather see the Evil One himself—at least if he had horns and hooves. I shall get him out as soon as possible."

Whitman, for his part, returned Mrs. Hawley's dislike. He complained to his mother that Sanitary Commission members were mere "hirelings" who "get well paid & are always incompetent and disagreeable." That was uncharacteristically harsh for the ordinarily sunny and good-natured poet. But the unending stream of human devastation eventually wore him down, and Whitman began suffering from headaches, insomnia, dizziness, and depression. "I have seen all the horrors of soldier's life," he wrote. "It is awful to see so much, & not be able to relieve it."

The soldiers themselves begged to disagree that he had not done nothing to relieve their suffering, if only for a little while. One of them, 20-year-old Lewy Brown of Elkton, Maryland, who lost a leg at Rappahannock Station, spoke for many when he wrote to Whitman after the war: "There is many a soldier now that never thinks of you but with emotions of the greatest gratitude. I never think of you but it makes my heart glad to think I have been permitted to know one so good."

Whitman remained humble about his hospital service. "I only gave myself," he said simply. "I got the boys." But in more ways than one, as Lewy Brown said, Whitman had truly lived up to his nickname: "the Good Gray Poet."

Roy Morris Jr.

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CARL A. GNAM, JR.
Editorial Director, Founder

ROY MORRIS JR.
Editor
editor@militaryheritagemagazine.com

LAURA CLEVELAND
Managing Editor

SAMANTHA DeTULLEO
Art Director

Contributors:
Jerome Baldwin, Louis Ciotola, Al Hemingway, Joseph Luster, Chuck Lyons, William McPeak, Eric Niderost, Todd Avery Raffensperger, Fred Eugene Ray, William Stroock, Lawrence Weber

ADVERTISING OFFICE:

BEN BOYLES
Advertising Executive
benjaminb@sovhomestead.com
(570) 322-7848, ext. 130

MARK HINTZ
Chief Executive Officer

TINA POUST
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CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY
Worldwide Distribution

SOVEREIGN MEDIA COMPANY, INC.
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By Lawrence Weber

The U.S. Sanitary Commission assisted the hard-pressed Medical Department in providing aid and comfort to sick and wounded soldiers.

IN THE SPRING OF 1861, A GROUP OF INFLUENTIAL NORTHERN MEN AND women, led by Unitarian minister Henry Whitney Bellows and social reformer Dorothea Dix, met in New York City to discuss the formation of a sanitary commission, modeled after the British Sanitary Commission established during the Crimean War, to provide relief to sick and wounded soldiers in the Union Army. At the meeting, which took place on April 25, various topics were discussed, including how best to carry out much-needed sanitation and relief work on a grand scale for the benefit of Union soldiers spread throughout the country. By the conclusion of the meeting, the group had laid the foundation for a provisional sanitary commission to be called the Women's Central Association of Relief for Sick and Wounded in the Army, or WCAR for short.

The goal of the WCAR was to organize and implement a wide-reaching group of women who would provide humanitarian aid to wounded and sick Union soldiers. One of the most important members of the WCAR was Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman in the United States to earn a medical degree. Blackwell's knowledge of medicine was critically important for training new nurses who would eventually travel to army camps to tend the sick and wounded. The goals were noble and humane, but implementing them successfully would prove to be daunting. To be effective, the provisional sanitary commission would need to be assisted by the national government. Bellows felt that it was imperative to go to Washington, D.C., to examine the existing system of medical relief already established by the government. He set off with a small group of doctors, dubbed the Sanitary Del-

Union soldiers perform an ambulance drill at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac near Brandy Station, Virginia, in March 1864.

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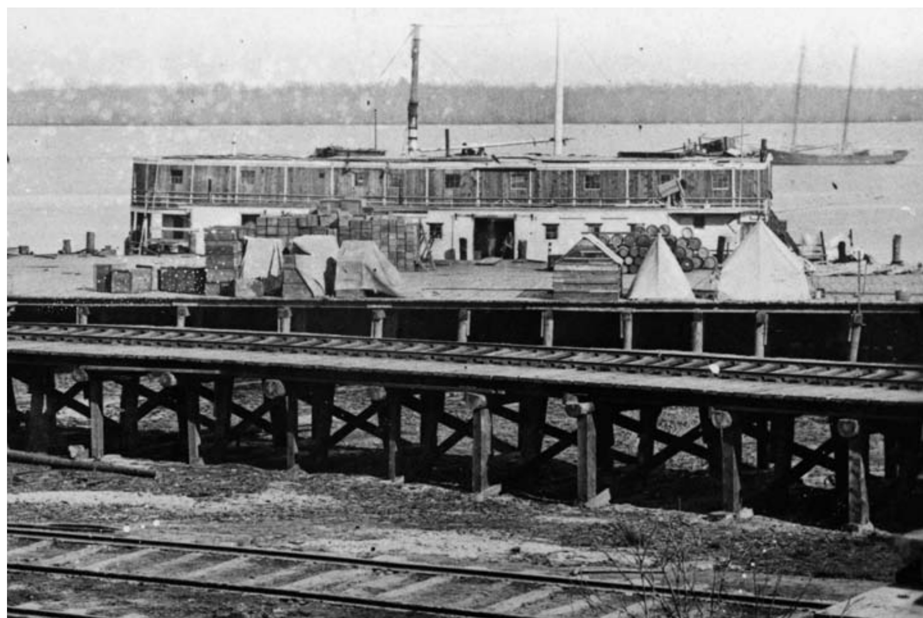
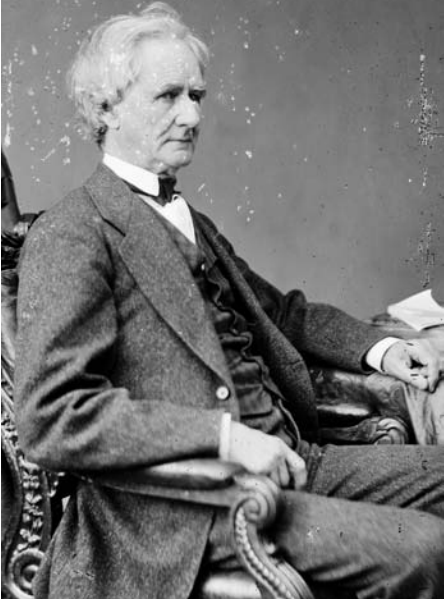


ABOVE: A Sanitary Commission barge docks at City Point, one of 19 hospital ships assigned to the Virginia peninsula. RIGHT: Union Secretary of War Simon Cameron. FAR RIGHT: Unitarian minister Henry Whitney Bellows.



egation, to investigate the government's ability to respond to the Army's mushrooming health and relief needs.

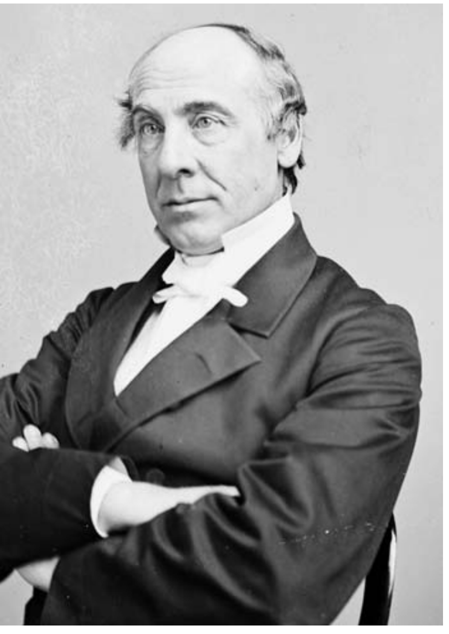
Bellows discovered that the government was woefully unprepared for the great national crisis that was already occurring; an extensive sanitary and relief system overhaul was needed immediately. Bellows's delegation consulted with military and hospital departments for ways to supplement the all-too-apparent governmental deficiencies. They sent letters to the surgeon general of the United States Army, Colonel Thomas Lawson, and to Secretary of War Simon Cameron, requesting that a permanent sanitary commission be established.

Cameron did not reply immediately, and the letter sent to Lawson failed to reach him before the surgeon general died suddenly on May 15 of apoplexy. The letter made its way to the desk of interim Surgeon General Robert C. Wood instead. Wood, the son-in-law to former president Zachary Taylor and the brother-in-law of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, found the letter persuasive and wrote to Cameron endorsing the group's request. "The Medical Bureau would, in my judgment, derive important and useful aid from the counsels and well-directed efforts of an intelligent and scientific Commission," Wood advised.

Cameron waited until a new permanent surgeon general was appointed before making a decision. After President Abraham Lincoln chose Dr. Clement Finley to replace the deceased Lawson, Cameron presented Finley with Bellows's suggestion for a sanitary commission. Meanwhile, Bellows fired off another letter to Cameron outlining the creation of a formally recognized United States sanitary commission. The letter highlighted the goals of the Sanitary Commission, with specific attention paid to the prevention of infection and disease among the sick and wounded.

After careful consideration of the letters and with the new surgeon general's blessings, Cameron drafted a resolution on June 9 endorsing the creation of the United States Sanitary Commission. He sent the resolution to President Lincoln for approval, and on June 18, Lincoln signed the necessary paperwork establishing the United States Sanitary Commission. As a reward for his hard work, Bellows was named president of the commission. Other members included Robert C. Wood; George Templeton Strong, the famous Civil War diarist who became the commission's treasurer; renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who had designed New York City's Central Park; and Dorothea Dix, who was appointed superintendent of women nurses.

The Sanitary Commission went to work immediately, attempting to increase its membership across the Union. In its first year, the commission's membership grew almost exponentially. By 1863, there were more than 500 branches working under the umbrella of the



U.S. Sanitary Commission, which was divided into three departments: the Department of Preventive Service, sometimes called the Department of Inspection; the Department of General Relief; and the Department of Special Relief. The Preventive Service Department was responsible for the inspection of volunteer forces, with specific attention paid to the area of disease, field conditions, and proper medical care. Special focus was placed on the soldiers' diet, which was often high in calories but low on nutrition. Hardtack, salted pork, coffee, crackers, and preserved beef were staples of the soldiers' daily fare. Conspicuously missing were fresh fruits and vegetables, which were hard to acquire. Food was often fried or undercooked, causing many soldiers to become ill from the poorly prepared, non-nutritious foods.

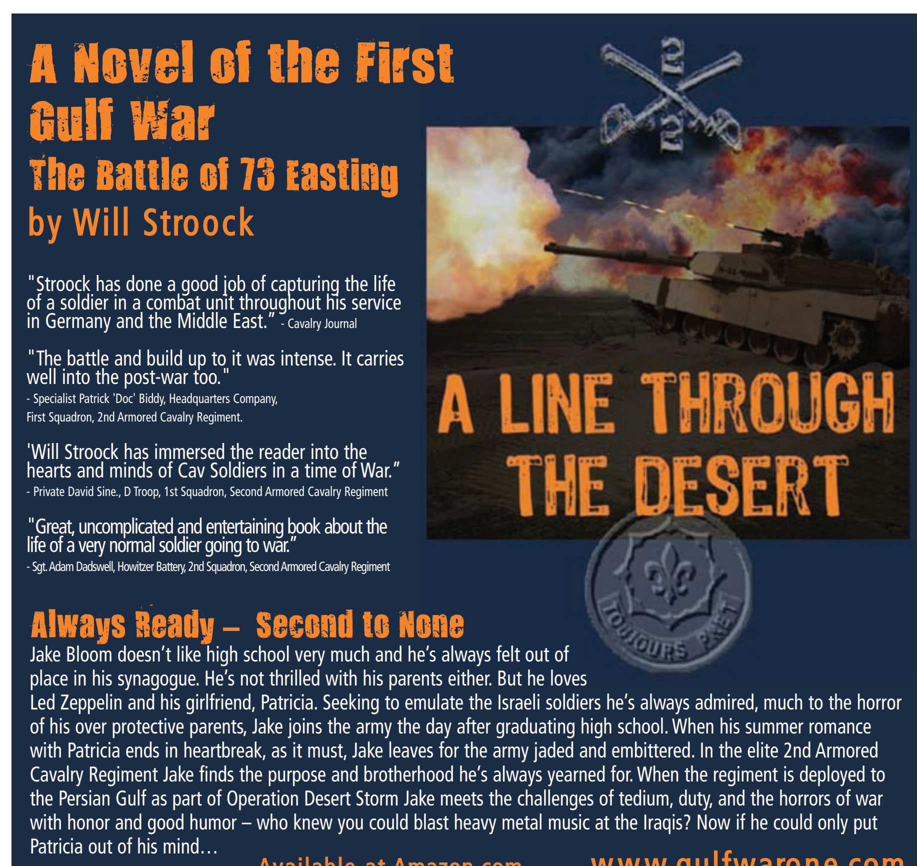
Once the Sanitary Commission was sufficiently organized and staffed, volunteers set out at once to take heir message to the soldiers. One of the best ways the Sanitary Commission was able to get out its message was through the printed media. The commission distributed 18 short treatises written by eminent medical men

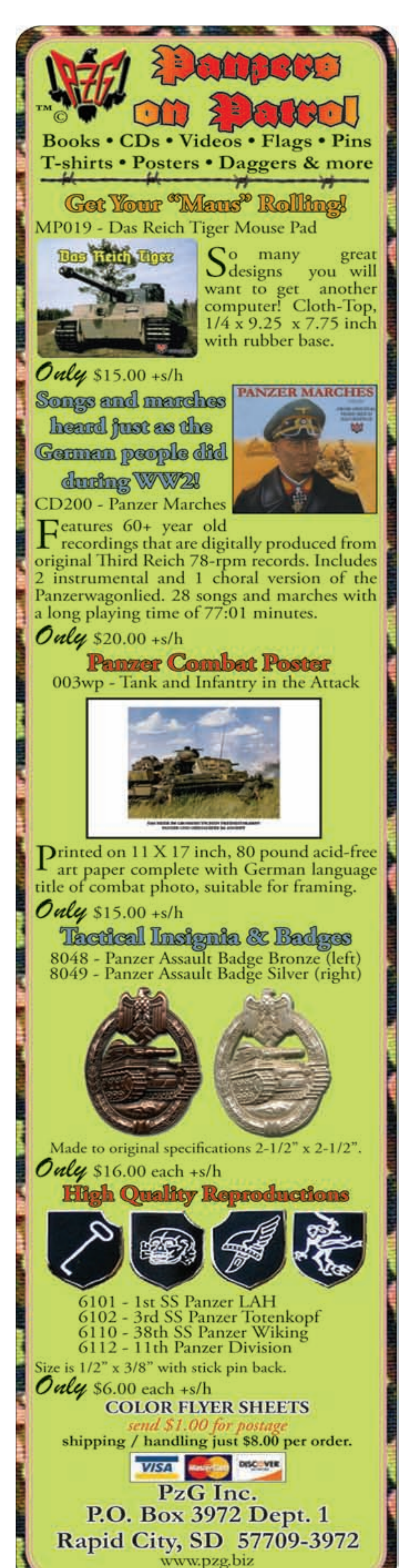
to regimental surgeons and commanding officers. Since the Medical Department had not issued any such treatises to them, the little books were of inestimable value. Sanitary Commission circulars, pamphlets and broadsides were also critically important in keeping the public informed and supportive. To raise money, publications such as the *Sanitary Commission Bulletin* and *Drum Beats* were sold for profit, and agents traveled across the country lecturing and fund-raising.

The ideas contained in the treatises were put to the test in July 1861, after the First Battle of Bull Run. There was no systematic method of gathering sick and wounded men from the battlefield to the field hospitals. The soldiers who could do so simply straggled in disarray, away from the battle, in search of help. When the Sanitary Commission investigated some of the reasons for the Union Army's failure at First Bull Run, they discovered that many of the soldiers were too fatigued and hungry to fight properly.

To prevent the mistakes of First Bull Run from happening again, the Sanitary Commission submitted an article, written by Dr. William H. Van Buren, to *Harper's Weekly*, which had a circulation of over 200,000 readers. The piece, published on August 24, roughly a month after the battle, was entitled "Rules for Preserving the Health of the Soldier." The article, like the earlier treatises, included a great deal of useful information for the soldiers to consider. Included in the article were tips on food preparation (frying meat in camp was unsafe and wasteful), the use of spirits (men who used alcohol regularly were the first to fail when strength and endurance were required), campsite selection, and proper grooming habits (hair and beard should be closely cropped). There was also advice on the proper marching pace (90 to 100 steps to the minute), tent spacing (tents should be placed as far from each other as possible, and never less than two paces), and tips on the treatment of wounded men (it was not always necessary to extract a bullet; in fact, more harm might be done in attempts to remove them). The article succeeded in spreading the Sanitary Commission's message to a wider audience.

As the war continued, the Sanitary Commission became more efficient. Dressing stations were established on the outskirts of a battlefield and staffed with assistant surgeons, stretcher bearers, and nurses. The staff of a typical dressing station came equipped with bandages, whiskey, brandy, opium pills, and morphine for injured soldiers. Soldiers who were treated at dressing stations but still in need of





Sanitary Commission nurses and officers pose at Fredericksburg, Virginia, during the 1864 Wilderness campaign.

advanced care walked to field hospitals if their injuries allowed. Soldiers who could not transport themselves to field hospitals were taken by ambulance—provided there were ambulances.

If a soldier survived surgery or treatment in a field hospital, he still faced mortal danger from surgical fevers triggered by infection. Blood poisoning, pneumonia, or erysipelas (a subcutaneous skin infection) could rapidly lead to death. Perhaps the most famous example of this scenario came following the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863, when Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson died from complications brought on by infection after his left arm was amputated.

Upon reaching a permanent hospital, the wounded soldier would be placed under the care of nurses. One of the most famous Sanitary Commission nurses was Louisa May Alcott, famed author of *Little Women.* In 1863, Alcott published a book entitled *Hospital Sketches* containing reflections on her life as a Sanitary Commission nurse. Alcott described a common scene: "To me, the saddest sight I saw in that sad place, was the spectacle of a grey-haired father, sitting hour after hour by his son, dying from the poison of his wound," she wrote. "The old father, hale and hearty; the young son, past all help, though one could scarcely believe it; for the subtle fever, burning his strength away, flushed his cheeks with color, filled his eyes with luster, and lent a mournful mockery of health to face and figure. When the son slept, the father watched him, and though no feature of his grave countenance changed, the rough hand, smoothing the lock of hair upon the pillow, the bowed attitude of the grey head, were more pathetic than the loudest lamentations." After his son died, the grieving father told Alcott and the other nurses: "My boy couldn't have been better cared for if he'd been at home; and God will reward you for it, though I can't."

By 1862, the Sanitary Commission's role had grown as the scope and nature of the war had grown. The Peninsula campaign of 1862 witnessed the launch of one of the first Union hospital ships during the Civil War, *Daniel Webster No. 1,* which was able to support some 1,000 sick and wounded soldiers. Most hospital ships were outfitted and staffed by the Sanitary Commission. The objective of the hospital ships was to transport injured soldiers from the war zone as quickly as possible to safe locations where they had access to better medical treatment. During the campaign, some 19 hospital ships were assigned to the Virginia peninsula. It was hard work, but every patient on the ships had a good place to sleep and something hot to eat, and the sickest were given every medical essential.

As 1862 moved along, the Sanitary Commission was severely tested at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Second Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburg. The commission responded admirably and even seemed to outperform the government's Army Medical Department, which was slow to respond to battlefield needs and often less efficient. That year saw another important addition to the Sanitary Commission's already critical work: the creation of the Hospital Directory, an agency that provided information to the general public about the location of sick and wounded soldiers in the army's general hospitals.

Established because of the tremendous influx of letters from families inquiring about the status of their loved ones, the Hospital Directory was headed by John Bowen. Under Bowen's leadership, the directory recorded information on more than one million soldiers. The information was sent to the directory's four main offices in Washington, Louisville, Philadelphia, and New York, where it was used to answer questions about missing soldiers and offer comfort and closure to families in despair.

The Hospital Directory also served as a data-gathering center, recording hospital and patient information that was used, in turn, by the Statistical Bureau for the evaluation of medical performance. The Statistical Bureau compiled data on the sanitary conditions of Army life through questionnaires that contained some 190 questions on such topics as camp soil, drainage, quality of available food, water supply, and the background of medical personnel. Through the careful evaluation of the questionnaires, the Sanitary Commission could understand more fully the dangers and complexities of camp life and, consequently, tweak and improve its own relief work.

The year 1863 was especially tumultuous. The battles that took place that year were some of the largest and most consequential of the entire war—Chancellorsville, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga. The Sanitary Commission was there for all of them. At Gettysburg, where the carnage was perhaps the most gruesome (approximately 22,000 soldiers from both sides needed medical attention after the battle), Sanitary Commission volunteers worked without rest. When the work of tending to sick and wounded was done, the surgeons in charge of the general hospitals near Gettysburg took the time to write the Sanitary Commission inspector at Gettysburg a letter expressing gratitude "at the manner in which the affairs of the United States Sanitary Commission have been managed since the late battle. The supplementary articles for the sick and wounded have been abundant, comprising every requisite which the exigency demanded, and which nothing but a well-regulated system, with much experience and forethought, could have secured."

In 1864 came some of the worst carnage of the war. In such places like the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Atlanta, and Nashville, the Sanitary Commission went to offer relief. The commission extended its Department of Special Relief to include the Army and Navy Claim Agency, based in Washington, which was designed to assist soldiers and their families in filling out the proper government forms to obtain back pay, pensions, bounties, and prize money. Many soldiers in the hospital, with families sorely in need of help, were unable to obtain the money that was due them or that was so tied up in red tape that it was beyond their power to collect. Agents of the commission, authorized by the Paymaster's Department, helped remove such difficulties. In Stanton Hospital alone, the back pay of 56 men, amounting to $3,008.96, was procured in a single week.

When the Civil War ended in April 1865, the work of the Sanitary Commission continued. The commission worked to negotiate the return of prisoners of war, helped to smooth the process of discharging Union soldiers, and continued to care for hospitalized soldiers. The commission also continued the good work of the Hospital Directory by reuniting soldiers with their families whenever they could and by offering comfort and closure to families who had lost loved ones. Not until October 1, 1865, did the commission's active relief work officially end. And though it is true that more soldiers died during the Civil War from infection and disease than from bullet wounds, the numbers surely would have been higher without the tireless contributions of the United States Sanitary Commission. □

By Chuck Lyons

Four-legged, hoofed, and winged animals did their part in World War II, serving as living weapons on the battlefield.

NOT ALL WORLD WAR II HEROES WERE MEN OR WOMEN. SOME were four-legged, hoofed, or winged. They included horses and mules, elephants, and dogs as well as more exotic animals such as bats, camels, reindeer, and pigeons. Even a brown bear took part in the war.

Using animals for their keener senses, faster feet, and stronger backs has been an accepted part of warfare since its beginning—especially the use of dogs, horses, camels, and elephants. Assyrian temple carvings show dogs being used in battle as early as 1235 BC. But odder animals have also played a part. The Romans used horses to pull their chariots and dogs to fight alongside them, but they also threw beehives at their enemies and sent burning pigs into the fray to panic enemy horses and elephants.

The most widely used animals in World War II—as throughout history—were horses and their more humble kin, donkeys, and mules. They were used mainly for transport in mountainous areas and rough ter-

Three British soldiers in the Cheshire Yeomanry lead a train of pack horses down a rocky mountain pass in Syria.

All Photos: Imperial War Museum

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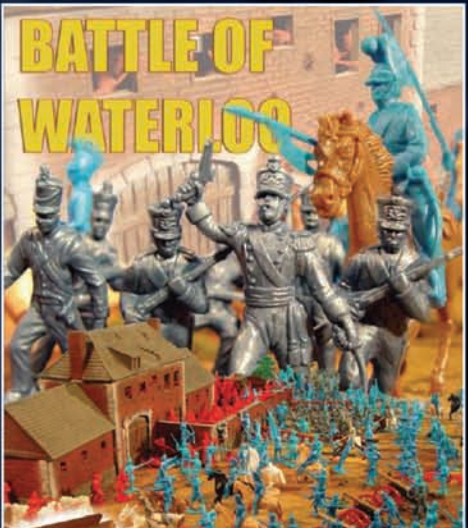

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rain in Italy, North Africa and Burma. Mules, sometimes with imaginative modifications, proved especially useful. In one instance, gray mules shipped to Italy from Iran and Persia were dyed brown to better camouflage them during the summer months, then returned to their natural gray for the winter.

The Germans, possibly learning a lesson from the Spanish Civil War when mechanized transport constantly broke down, mobilized approximately one million horses in World War II, along with 37,000 furriers and 236 companies of veterinarians to care for them. An estimated 80 percent of the German Army's transport was performed by horses. During the invasion of Poland in 1939, the Polish Army also used horses in its 11 cavalry brigades, and

ABOVE: An elephant pulls a Supermarine Walrus into position at a Fleet Air Arm station in India in June 1944.
LEFT: Syrian brown bear Wojtek, the famous mascot of the Polish 22nd Artillery Support Company, gets a snack.

the Russians activated 1.2 million horses, which they believed could better handle the notorious Russian winters than armored tanks and trucks.

In November 1941, in one the last full-scale cavalry charges in military history, Russia's 44th Mongolian Cavalry launched a gallant, sword-waving charge against the German 106th Infantry near the Russian village of Musino. The startled Germans, backed by the 107th Artillery, opened fire and decimated the cavalry. Only 30 horsemen reached the German position, and no Germans were killed or injured. The French and British also used cavalry units early in the war, with the British sending 8,000 horses to Palestine alone. The Japanese, Germans, and Russians continued to use cavalry throughout the war for mopping-up and patrol duties.

The United States experimented with the idea of mounted troops, and American generals George Patton and Lucien Truscott, both old cavalrymen themselves, believed that cavalry units could have prevented the escape of German forces across the Strait of Messina during the Sicily campaign. Near the end of the war Patton urged the formation of a new cavalry force. A number of men and horses were trained as cavalry in Texas but were never sent to Europe.

More exotic animals were also used in the war effort. Elephants were utilized by both the Japanese and the Allies in Burma for transport and in building bridges and roads. The Japanese used a column of 350 elephants during their Imphal offensive in March 1944. During the rainy season in Burma, the British used elephants to pull out trucks that had become mired in jungle mud. And over 100,000 reindeer were used for similar transport purposes in Finland, as well as uncounted numbers of oxen—and even cows. The Allies used camels as transport animals and as mounts in North Africa, Burma, India, China and southern Russia; and France had its own camel corps, said to be among the most feared troops in North Africa.

Like horses, dogs had been used by soldiers for centuries, and they also played a large part in World War II, working and fighting with both the Allies and the Axis powers. They were used as guard dogs and messengers, to sniff out enemy mines, and as companions and morale boosters. At the time of America's entry into the war, it was estimated that the Germans had already trained 200,000 police and military dogs, mainly Doberman pinschers and German shepherds, some of which had been provided to German allies such as Japan.

The Russians also trained dogs, especially white Samoyeds that were used to pull camouflaged marksmen on sleds close to enemy lines. In one sector of the front, a team of Samoyeds carried 1,239 wounded men from the field and hauled in 327 tons of ammunition in a five-week period. A Russian program also attempted to train bomb-laden dogs to run under enemy tanks, where the bombs would be detonated by a switch on the dogs' backs. The program never worked as planned, however, because many of the dogs automatically ran under Russian tanks—the tanks with which they had been trained, and others were spooked by the tanks' engine noise. Nonetheless, Russian tank dogs were credited with disabling some 300 German tanks.

The British used dogs to guard ammunition dumps, airports, and prisoner-of-war camps, and one guard dog, a boxer called Simmi, is credited with 86 arrests while on duty in Palestine. At the beginning of the war, the United States had no war dogs and no program for training them, but both the Marines and U.S. Army soon began such programs. In all, seven Marine dog platoons were trained, with the canines first seeing combat in 1943 when they landed with the 2nd Ranger Battalion on Bougainville. The dogs saw additional action on Guam, Okinawa, Guadalcanal, Kwajalein and Eniwetok, serving as sentries and on patrols and exploring Japanese pillboxes, caves, and dugouts.

The Army program began in 1942 under the

Quartermaster Corps. Like the Marines, the Army trained its dogs, donated by private owners, for use on sentry duty, as scouts and messengers, and additionally as mine dogs. In all, some 10,425 dogs were trained, with the majority—more than 9,000—trained for sentry duty and used to patrol domestic beaches and coastal fortifications, domestic military facilities, and factories. The emphasis later shifted to supplying dogs for combat, with seven dog patrols seeing action in Europe and eight in the Pacific, a total of 436 scout dogs.

Unlike the Marines, the Army accepted over 30 breeds of dog for training, including German shepherds, Dobermans, and farm collies. One Army dog, a German shepherd named Chips, became a hero and a national celebrity. Donated by his owner, Edward Wren of Pleasantville, New Jersey, Chips was trained in Virginia in 1942 and was one of the first American dogs shipped overseas. He performed sentry duty at the Casablanca conference and served in Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany as part of the 3rd Infantry Division. In Sicily he broke away from his handler and attacked a German machine-gun nest, seizing one man and creating such havoc that all the nest's occupants surrendered. Chips eventually received a Silver Star and a Purple Heart for his exploits, and in 1993 Disney Studios produced a TV movie about his life. After the war, Chips was returned to his owner and spent the rest of his life playing contentedly with Wren's grandchildren on the lawn of his New Jersey home.

Another war dog was Smokey, a four-pound Yorkshire terrier found in the New Guinea jungle by an American soldier in 1944 and carried throughout the campaign. He lived on C rations and Spam. Smokey flew with the 26th Photo Recon on 12 combats missions, was awarded eight battle stars, survived 150 air raids and one typhoon, helped build an airfield by threading telephone wire through a 70-foot long pipe, parachuted from a 30-foot tower, and served as a therapy dog for wounded men at station hospitals in New Guinea.

After the war, Smokey retired with her master, William Wynne, to Cleveland, Ohio, and often appeared on local television shows and entertained at veterans' hospitals. There are two memorials to Smokey in the Cleveland area, and the annual Yorkshire terrier award for rescues is named the Smokey Award.

The British were the first to begin the practice of parachuting dogs, dropping them into North Africa and France during the Normandy invasion. One British dog, an Alsatian named Bing, was dropped on D-Day, landed in a tree, and spent the night there under artillery fire

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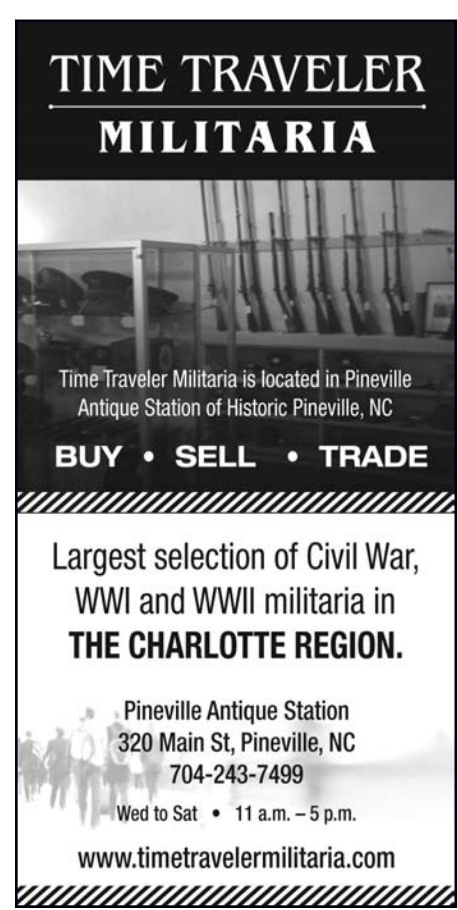
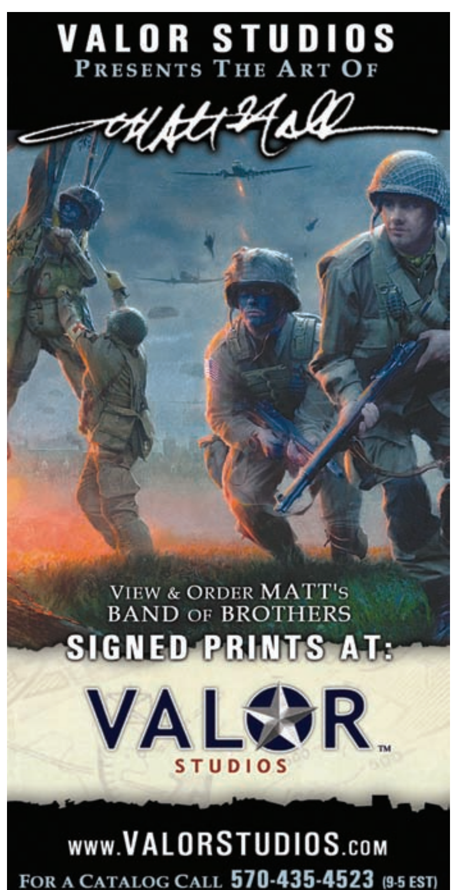




ABOVE: Mark, a German shepherd, delivers ammo to an English Bren gun team of the Eastern Command on August 20, 1941. RIGHT: Bobs, a Labrador serving with the No. 1 Dog Platoon of the British Royal Engineers, locates a buried mine in France in July 1944.

before being rescued the next morning and immediately going back on duty. The United States in 1942 began dropping sled dogs, sleds, and flight surgeons at crash scenes in the frozen north. The dogs were later used extensively in Europe.

Aside from transport animals and dogs, the Allies, like the Romans before them, used a number of more bizarre animals for war purposes, including Wojtek, a Syrian brown bear. Wojtek was born in 1943 in what was then known as Persia, and he was adopted as a cub by members of the Polish 22nd Artillery Supply Company. He then traveled west with the II Corps and served in the Middle East, where he was credited with capturing an Arab spy who had sneaked into a shower room in North Africa. Wojtek later served in Italy, where he ended his military career unloading and transporting ammunition during the battle for Monte Cassino.

Wojtek grew to weigh 500 pounds and was fed fruit, honey, and syrup. He was frequently rewarded with beers, enjoyed eating cigarettes, and even learned to work the showers to be able to cool off on hot days. At the end of the war, Wojtek marched in the British victory parade in Glasgow.

Smaller animals also played their part. In 1943, in hopes of attacking mainland Japan, the United States began working on a plan to develop small incendiary devices to be carried by bats, of which the United States had an unlimited supply. The plan was to release the bats in protective cases from B-24s deployed out of Alaska. Each flight would release about 100,000 bats. The bats were silent, nocturnal, and roosted during the day in secluded—and highly flammable—places such as wooden buildings and trees. The incendiary devices they carried under their wings were to be detonated by built-in timers.

The National Defense Research Committee concluded that the bats were an effective weapon after a mock-up Japanese city was built at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah and destroyed by bomb-laden bats in 1944. In all, the United States spent more than $2 million on the project before it was scrubbed in 1944 after it was decided that the project was developing too slowly and would probably not be ready before the war ended.

Pigeons were also used in the war. They carried messages, of course, with the United States alone utilizing some 54,000 military pigeons, overseen by 3,000 soldiers and 150 officers, in the Military Pigeon Service. They were used in every combat theater. The most famous American pigeon, named G.I. Joe, was credited with saving an entire British regiment that had been cut off. Flying 25 miles in 25 minutes, G.I. Joe brought news of the regiment's position just as Allied bombers were preparing to take off on a saturation bombing mission of that very position. G.I. Joe was subsequently awarded the Dickin Medal, a British citation given to war animals displaying gallantry and devotion to duty.

The Dickin was considered the animal Victoria Cross. Among those also receiving the medal were Winkie, a pigeon that flew 120 miles from a crashed bomber to deliver an SOS, and Judy, an English pointer, the only Allied animal to be officially registered as a prisoner of war. (Decades later, a New York City police dog named Apollo was awarded a Dickin Medal on behalf of all search-and-rescue dogs for their service following the 9/11 attack on

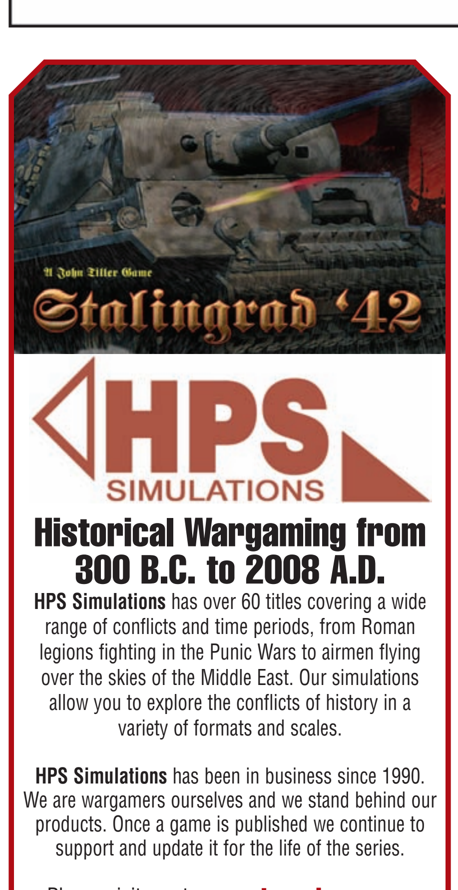
the World Trade Center).

Pigeons were also used in a scheme by famed behaviorist psychologist B.F. Skinner, who worked to develop a missile with a screen that showed an image of the target. Trained pigeons inside the missile would theoretically peck at the screen, which was connected to the missile's guidance system, guiding the missile to the target. The Defense Research Committee initially allocated $25,000 to the far-fetched project, but it was finally scrubbed in October 1944. Some pigeons, however, were used as spies. With cameras attached to their wings, they flew over enemy positions.

Cats were not left out of the war effort. Countless cats were used, as they have been throughout history, to catch rats and mice aboard Navy ships. One such ship's cat, Whiskey, which served on HMS *Duke of York*, gained fame for supposedly sleeping soundly while her ship sank the German cruiser Scharnhorst. Cats also served other—and odder—uses. At one point, someone at the Office of Strategic Services got the bright idea that a cat could be used to guide a bomb onto the deck of an enemy ship. Because of the cat's strong aversion to getting wet and its ability to always land on its feet, the reasoning went, a cat could be attached to a bomb and would guide that bomb away from the water and onto the solid surface of a ship's deck. How the cat was supposed to guide the bomb was never made clear. The plan was scrapped after cats were found to pass out during descent.

Even insects figured in the war. Several optical companies in the United States used spiders to spin silk that was used as the crosshairs on bomb sights, and the French and Germans pursued research with Colorado potato beetles to destroy enemy food supplies. As an elemental form of germ warfare, the Japanese dispersed disease-carrying fleas in China, reportedly killing more people than the atomic bombs used later in the war at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

After the war, many of the animals, especially the dogs, were retrained for civilian life and returned to their owners. Other animals remained in the military, were auctioned off to private buyers, or were donated to various zoos. Wojtek went to the Edinburgh Zoo, where he lived until his death in 1963 at the age of 22. He has since been the subject of a children's book, *The Soldier Bear;* had monuments in his honor unveiled in Canada, Scotland and London; and currently has several websites dedicated to his memory. An image of Wojtek carrying an artillery shell is the official emblem of the Army's 22nd Transport Regiment, Company C. □



By Todd Avery Raffensperger

Sent to assassinate a White Russian dissident, Soviet agent Nicholai Khokhlov faced a moment of truth at the height of the Cold War.

I'VE COME TO YOU FROM MOSCOW. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE Communist Party has ordered your liquidation." The blunt statement did not come as a surprise to the recipient of the information. Georgi Okolovich knew that his work as a Russian émigré and political dissident had incurred the wrath of Communist leaders in the Soviet Union. What was surprising was the messenger himself. The would-be assassin was Nicholai Yevgeniyevich Khokhlov, a hero of the Great Patriotic War with Germany and a captain in the Soviet intelligence service. Khokhlov's presence almost suggested overkill.

Khokhlov was a man destined for greater things. He came from a prominent and well-to-do family in Moscow, where his stepfather was a member of the prestigious Moscow College of Barristers. His birth father was an original Bolshevik who had served the Russian Revolution from its creation and talked of sharing a room with Lenin himself. That background ensured an ideological upbringing for Nicholai, who joined the Communist youth organization, Komsomol, in 1938.

Soviet spy Nicholai Khokhlov, right, converses with his would-be victim, Georgi Okolovich, in 1954.

Carl Mydans/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images

But Khokhlov did not aspire to a career in either politics or the law. He was more interested in the creative arts. He was accepted into the Studio of Music Hall Art, his talent being—of all things—whistling. But his real goal was to go into filmmaking, and he applied to enter the Motion Picture Institute. He was still waiting for word from the institute on June 22, 1941, when Germany launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia.

As Hitler's armies rolled across the Russian steppes, Khokhlov joined a special demolition battalion in Moscow. In September, as the Germans drew ever closer to the Russian capital, he was summoned to the office of the battalion's commissar, who gave him a phone number and ordered him to dial it. Puzzled, Khokhlov did as he was told, and after a moment he heard a voice that said, "Kamarov is listening." He was directed to go to Kamarov's flat, where he was whisked away in a big, black sedan to Kamarov's place of work, Dzerzhinsky Square, the headquarters of the NKVD.

The NKVD was the internal security organ of the Soviet government. It had functioned as absolute dictator Joseph Stalin's principal weapon during the purges of the 1930s. With the advent of World War II, the

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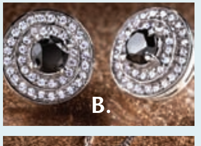

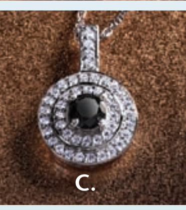

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NKVD was given a new set of priorities—setting up intelligence networks behind enemy lines and establishing and coordinating resistance in areas overrun by Axis forces. It was for this purpose that Khokhlov was recruited.

For several months, he and three other people, one male and two females, lived in a flat in Moscow, posing as a musical group in the local theaters. In reality, the four were trained in the use of weapons, explosives and hand-to-hand combat and how to function if left behind in a city full of Nazis. Fortunately for them, they never had to use their training. Hitler's army came within 17 miles of the Soviet capital before the Nazis were halted by the combination of fierce Russian resistance and even fiercer Russian weather—known sardonically as "General Winter."

Khokhlov's first real mission occurred in August 1943, when he and a fellow agent codenamed "Karl" parachuted into Byelorussia behind enemy lines, posing as German soldiers. They were to make contact with local partisan forces that would help them infiltrate the city of Minsk and arrange the assassination of the highest-ranking Nazi official in Byelorussia, General Wilhelm Kube. Before he had been sent in, Khokhlov was issued a special device to help him complete his mission, a magnetic bomb manufactured by the British. To get it to where it needed to be, Khokhlov had to enlist the services of Kube's maid, a young woman named Yelena Mazanik. Yelena had been contacted by Soviet agents before, but she had been reluctant to assist in any plot that could jeopardize her or her family. To give her a push, Khokhlov resorted to blackmail. He reminded her that her husband worked for the NKVD and that this information could easily be relayed to the Gestapo if she did not cooperate. "There will be no one to pity you and there will be no place for you to flee," Khokhlov told her.

The not-so-friendly persuasion worked. On the night of September 23, an explosion destroyed Kube's bedroom, killing the general as he was sleeping. Yelena, who had planted the bomb under his bed, escaped to the Soviet lines and was decorated as a hero of the Soviet Union. Khokhlov, for his part, was awarded the Medal of the Motherland, First Class.

The last two years of the war, Khokhlov fought with the partisans in Byelorussia, joining the Russian juggernaut that slowly and bloodily pushed the Nazis out of Soviet territory. Ironically, as his side was winning the war, Khokhlov experienced his first doubts. When the Red Army stormed into eastern Prussia and Poland in the summer of 1944, he marveled at the well-made homes, luxury items, and high standard of living the enemy had enjoyed. For a man who had been raised to believe that the quality of life in the Soviet Union was unsurpassed, the experience was a revelation. There was a wide gulf between Soviet rhetoric and the truth.

National Archives

Nazi General Wilhelm Kube was a wartime assassination target of Nicholai Khokhlov.

If Khokhlov thought that the end of the war would allow him to return to his original career goal of filmmaking, he was quickly disabused of the notion. General Pavel Sudoplatov, head of the NKVD department, Administrations for Special Tasks, had other plans for him. Sudoplatov's department had been responsible for various acts of sabotage and assassination, including the 1940 murder of Stalin's archenemy, Leon Trotsky, in Mexico. The general placed Khokhlov in Romania under a false identity, ready at a moment's notice for any possible assignment.

Khokhlov saw firsthand the squalor and deprivation of Romanian life. Until that time, he had never seen the ugly side of Communist life. By September 1949, he had seen enough. He submitted an official request to Moscow to be relieved of his duties and released from any further intelligence work. In Stalinist Russia, such an act could have cost him his life, but Sudoplatov was not the kind of man to use such blunt and overt tactics. Instead, he had Khokhlov recalled to Moscow and gave him several months' leave to visit his mother and sister (his father and stepfather had been killed in the war) and to think over his options. During that time, Khokhlov ran into an old school acquaintance, Yana Timashkevich, and started a relationship that led to their marriage.

In 1952, Khokhlov was posted to East Germany and assigned to an office in the Karlhorst, a suburb of East Berlin. From sunrise to sundown he was stuck at a desk, shuffling and sorting the reports of agents in both East and West Germany. It was a long, tedious assignment, made worse by the fact that his wife and newborn son were not allowed to emigrate with him.

During this time, Khokhlov came across a dossier on a dissident organization called the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists, or NTS. Originally organized by White Russian émigrés who had fled in the aftermath of the Russian Civil War, the NTS advocated replacing the Soviet system with a system based on a philosophy of Christian collective social responsibility, or "Solidarism." The more he read about the NTS, the more Khokhlov became enamored of the group's resolve to liberate the Russian people from the yoke of Soviet oppression.

The next year Stalin died in his sleep and his chief henchman, Lavrenty Beria, who had been chief of the NKVD, was arrested and executed. In the wake of Beria's downfall, a purge of Stalinist loyalists cut across the intelligence hierarchy. Among those felled by the axe was Khokhlov's superior, Sudaplotov, whose replacement was Colonel Lev Alexandrovich Studnikov, head of the newly formed Ninth Department. From Studnikov, Khokhlov received a new mission: kill the chairman of the NTS, Georgi Okolovich, then living in Frankfurt.

Khokhlov accepted the assignment, codenamed Operation Rhine, and handpicked the members of his team, two German operatives who went by the cover names "Felix" and "Franz." Both men had fled Germany in the wake of Hitler's ascendancy, and neither was a stranger to killing. It was Khokhlov's responsibility to choose their weapons. Instead of relying upon a commercially made firearm or an edged weapon, he recommended several concealable, noiseless guns to be used at short range, with steel bullets injected with poison to make certain the death of their target. Common cigarette cases were used to conceal the weapons.

Khokhlov's plan for killing Okolovich was simple and straightforward. Outside his apartment, Okolovich would be approached from behind by Franz and shot with one of the silenced weapons. Franz would then slip the weapon to Felix as he walked in the opposite direction, and Franz would get into a car with Khokhlov at the wheel. Felix would make sure that Okolovich was dead, then leave in his own car. With good planning and a bit of luck, the men would be back behind the Iron Curtain before German authorities knew what had happened.

On January 13, 1954, Khokhlov caught a plane for West Germany. When he arrived in Frankfurt, he rented an apartment and bided his time. By mid-February, he was ready to act. But he was about to act in a way that his superiors in Moscow did not foresee.

Khokhlov took the tram to the eastern outskirts of the city and proceeded to Okolovich's flat on the second floor of his building. He rang the doorbell, and the door opened halfway to reveal the oval-shaped, bespectacled face of his would-be target. "Georgi Okolovich?" Khokhlov asked, already knowing the answer. "Yes, I am he," replied Okolovich, who opened the door to let him in.

Once inside, Khokhlov told Okolovich that he had been ordered by Moscow to kill him. But, Khokhlov reassured him, "I can't let this murder happen." Khokhlov warned Okolovich that Moscow would certainly send others after him who would have no qualms about completing the mission.

Okolovich was skeptical at first, but he soon realized that Khokhlov could easily have killed him then and there. This fact, along with the earnestness the Soviet agent was obviously expressing, was enough to convince Okolovich of the other man's sincerity. He agreed to help Khokhlov but advised him to contact American authorities. The two men agreed to meet again the next week, by which time Okolovich had informed his CIA contacts about the meeting.

Ultimately, Khokhlov was driven to a safe house in the city, where he was subjected to a series of long and intense interrogations by men who had a hard time believing the story he was telling. At one point, one of the agents, identified only as "Leonard," made a point of looking up Nicholai Khokhlov's name in the Moscow telephone directory. When the operator told him that the line had been disconnected, Leonard accused the Russian agent of lying and of being a plant sent by the Soviets to spread false information to Western intelligence agencies. The mystery was cleared up when it was discovered that the Moscow directory Leonard was using was outdated and that Khokhlov's phone number had since been changed.

Still skeptical, the Americans sent Khokhlov to Camp King, a refugee camp that fronted as a base for American counterintelligence operations. For several days he was kept under guard while American and British authorities tried to decide what to make of him. Finally, he was able to convince the Americans that he was telling the truth.

Khokhlov's ordeal was far from over. The Americans transferred him to a small country house in the town of Oberukzel, where he waited for word of his family. As far as anyone knew, Moscow was unaware of what was happening. Khokhlov hoped that with the help from the NTS he would be able to return to Russia and maintain his cover as a loyal member of Soviet intelligence, thus keeping his family safe.

These hopes were shattered when members of the CIA and Britain's MI6 visited Khokhlov and informed him that they were going to announce publicly his defection to the West in retaliation for the kidnapping of an NTS agent in West Berlin by Soviet operatives the night before. One American in the room, a lieutenant colonel, told him bluntly, "We can't keep silent anymore. We've got to answer a blow with a blow." The colonel ordered him to appear at a press conference and tell his story to the world.

Khokhlov could not believe what he was hearing. "Do you understand what you're saying?" he shouted. "My family will perish!" The British agent in the room responded matter-of-factly: "They very probably will die. There's nothing that can be done. We cannot save them." The Americans reasoned that if he were to make a public show of his defection and his sabotage of Operation Rhine, it could conceivably put enough pressure on Moscow to ensure his family's safety and possibly even allow them to join him in the West. It was better than nothing. Khokhlov agreed.

On April 22, 1954, the Soviet war hero, assassin, and captain of the MGB went before an assembly of reporters in Bonn. In a prepared statement, he announced his intention to defect to the West and spelled out the reasons why. He outlined Operation Rhine and his orders to assassinate Okolovich. After making his announcement, Khokhlov held up pictures of his wife and son, pleading with reporters to help save his family.

In spite of their assurances, the Americans were unable to protect his family. On the day after Khokhlov's announcement, Soviet authorities arrested Yana. For the next two years, Khokhlov made the rounds on television talk shows, magazines, and congressional hearings in Washington, trying to apply pressure on Moscow to release his family. He tirelessly toured the United States, speaking at gatherings about conditions behind the Iron Curtain and impressing upon his audiences the need to continue the struggle for freedom in Europe and Russia.

In the autumn of 1956, as Soviet tanks rumbled into Budapest to crush the Hungarian uprising, Khokhlov returned to Europe to work with Okolovich and the NTS. The next year he personally felt the wrath of his former masters. On September 15, 1957, after speaking at a Russian revolutionary movement conference in Palmengarten, Khokhlov took a few sips from a cup of coffee. He thought then that it tasted peculiar. Not long afterward, he recalled, "A strange weight oppressed my stomach and heart." He became weak and nauseated. Before long, he was in a hospital bed in Frankfurt.

At first, doctors concluded that Khokhlov was suffering from acute gastritis, and reasoned that all that was needed was a couple days of rest. But gastritis could not explain the change in his skin coloring or what happened when he woke up with a strange sensation, feeling as though his mind was "disintegrating." He got out of bed to glimpse in the mirror; he couldn't believe what he saw. There were black and blue swellings all over his face, and his hair came out in clumps when he ran his hand through it. He seemed to be melting before his very eyes.

The culprit was thallium, a radioactive element used in the manufacture of high-density glass, gamma radiation detection equipment, and nuclear medicine. It was also used in the creation of insecticides and rat poison. When ingested by humans, thallium causes the hair to fall out, damages peripheral nerves, and destroys the victim's white corpuscles and bone marrow. The doctors believed his case to be hopeless. Nevertheless, they proceeded with the only known treatment to combat thallium poisoning—blood transfusions. To the surprise of his doctors and friends, Khokhlov began to slowly fight off the effects of the poison, but the struggle left him a wreck of his former self, bald, thin, scarred, and disfigured.

But Khokhlov remained. Not only did he make a full recovery, but he went back on the speaking circuit and continued his activity with the NTS. Eventually, he was persuaded by friends to divorce Yana in order to make life easier in Russia for her and their son. He moved permanently to the United States and became a professor of psychology at California State University in San Bernardino.

Khokhlov would live to have the satisfaction of seeing the USSR finally dissolve in 1991. Until his death in September 2007, he continued to speak out on events related to Russia and the post-Cold War era, including the murder of former Soviet agent Vladimir Litvenenko, who was killed with a lethal dose of polonium-210 that he also ingested through a cup of coffee. In spite of all he had gone through, Khokhlov held fast to the sentiment expressed in his memoirs: "I do not regret the decision, for there could be only one." □

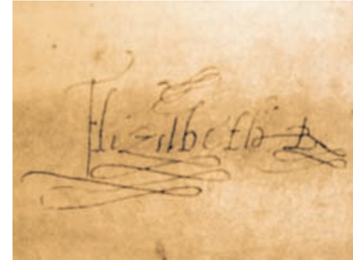
By William McPeak

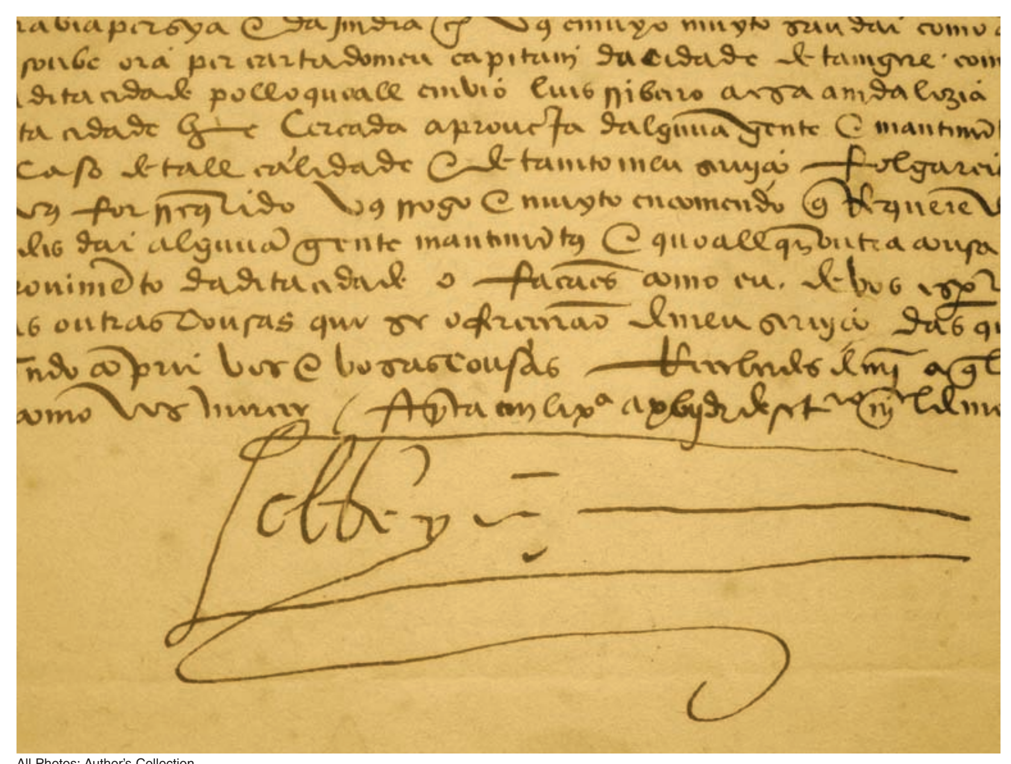
Collecting historical autographs is a challenging pastime, particularly since few medieval kings or queens could read or write.

COLLECTING HANDWRITTEN DOCUMENTS AND LETTERS ON military subjects is as long-standing as military history itself. By general definition, when a letter is written and signed by a person, it is considered a holograph (or autograph letter), but a document is something written by an official or servant and then signed by an important person. Foremost on the list of important people would be a king, queen, or a noble or commander at a significant military event. But collecting also includes any significant letter or document, regardless of who might have written it, such as orders, lists, personal accounts, commissions, commendations, even drawings and sketches from the field.

Collecting any written artifacts dating before the 12th century means collecting dried and treated skin. Everything then was written on parchment (sheepskin) or the more durable goat and vellum (calfskin), which replaced the papyrus exported from Egypt before 600 BC. Paper appeared in Europe sometime during the 12th century, coming from China via the Middle East. But paper was not prevalent until the 14th century. It was fragile compared to vellum or parchment, but it proved to be much cheaper to make.

There are some European documents with commanding signatures from the 7th century, but usually the signers were popes, not kings. In general, early European royal documents were intentionally kept simple. A scribe or secretary did the writing and other preparations. Most medieval kings and military leaders did little writing—because they could not. Instead, an official stamp or seal (attached with a leather thong, a cloth or silk) began to be used on royal documents and correspondence to lend them further authentication.





BELOW: "El Rey" signature of Portuguese King John III on a letter to the Duke of Arcos on September 17, 1529, requesting military assistance in Morocco. RIGHT: The magnificent and unmistakable signature of Queen Elizabeth I, circa 1599-1600.

All Photos: Author's Collection

A document authenticated as signed by William the Conqueror and auctioned in 1932 contained a large, ornate X at the bottom. The conqueror of England could not write, so he made his mark and his name was added by his scribe. Other kingly signatures were illegible scrawls—just variations on the X. These were illiterate kings—ruling, not writing, was what was important to them. In England, all kings prior to Richard II (1367-1400) are assumed to have been unable to write.

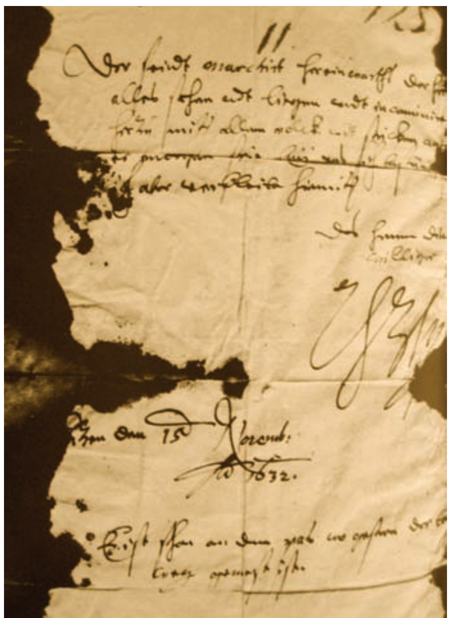
It should be noted that many royal

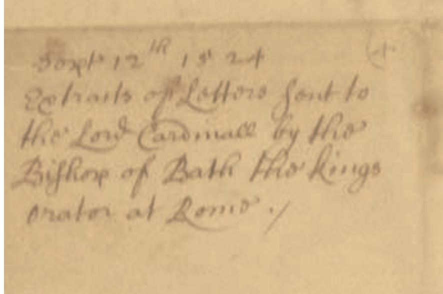
signatures are simply “the King” or “I the King.” An example of the latter is a military call for assistance by King John III of Portugal, the brother-in-law of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1519-1556). John III was married to Charles’s sister Catherine, and the short letter on paper, written in Portuguese and dated September 17, 1529, came from Lisbon and concerned a matter of military urgency. It was addressed to the Duke of Arcos in Andalusia. Islamic North Africa was a constant flash point for Iberian royalty. The king was asking the duke to send troops for the relief of Tangier, Morocco, which was then being besieged by the Islamic king of Fez. The body of the letter was in the hand of the king’s secretary, but John boldly signed it “El Rey.”

Even in more literate times, most European kings were infrequent writers, yet documents signed by monarchs represent the greatest source of preserved documents, simply because of the sheer amount of government business. Henry VIII of England was lazy enough—he called writing “painful”—to have a wooden stamp of his signature made up. Ironically, the monarch who most relished writing and signing official documents was his daughter, Queen Elizabeth I. Her penmanship was excellent, and she indeed had a huge signature—“Elizabeth R”—that is considered a calligraphic work of art. And although it appeared on important historical documents dealing with such epochal matters as the defense of the realm against the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth’s signature on more commonplace documents is also highly prized.

Kings and queens who ruled the longest are logically the sources for the most signed documents dealing with royal business. Conversely, those whose reigns were cut short by death or deposing represent more intriguing and valuable subjects for collectors. One monarch whose signature is quite rare and consequently quite valuable is England’s much-maligned King Richard III, the last of the Plantagenet line, who reigned for only 2½ years before being killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485.

How government-related documents were handled opens another window for collectors. Much of the day-to-day interplay of government business within a kingdom involved an army of scribes and secretaries who moved mountains of vellum and paper from point A to point B. Keeping track of documents and making copies was essential—the original could be destroyed so easily—and in the days without photocopiers, that was where the scribes came in. Their job was to make several copies of all





Sept. 12th 1524
Extracts of Letters sent to
the Lord Cardinall by the
Bishop of Bath the Kings
orator at Rome ./

ABOVE: Detail of the indexing title on the Wolsey letter, made by a scribe. TOP: Albrecht von Wallenstein’s hurried 1632 note to General Gottfried Pappenheim at the Battle of Lutzen is speckled with Pappenheim’s blood.

documents received or sent. They wrote quickly and used various forms of abbreviation to improve efficiency.

Among the potentially most historical court documents were diplomatic dispatches and reports. Sent by the king’s various representatives in foreign countries, they were the backbone of politics and diplomacy. A monarch’s official diplomat at a foreign court, his ambassador (in England he was called an orator), usually wrote a report once a week to summarize all significant events. These reports could take two or three weeks to arrive, but they were still the quickest means of relaying events.

A case in point was the secretary’s copy, in English, of a dispatch to Henry VIII’s powerful chancellor, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, from his diplomat at Rome, Bishop Hadrian of Bath. Probably copied in late September or early October 1524, the original dispatch was dated September 12 of that year. The scribe has written on both sides of the page and put a reference title on a folded side so that it could be filed and found easily. Dealing with events relating to the first Hapsburg-Valois War between Charles V and King Francis I in Italy, the dispatch mentions the emperor’s siege of Marseilles by Charles, the Duke of Bourbon, who had fled France and joined the emperor as commander of his forces. Also mentioned is a secret mission by a French envoy to the Swiss cantons to contract troops for the war. Additionally referenced are spying missions in Avignon by Bourbon’s cousin Philibert de Chalon, Prince of Orange, his second in command.

From the 17th century onward, the growing importance of the written word was amply reflected by the increased number of royal letters and documents passed down to the present. The amount of military correspondence from the field grew with the higher level of literacy among officers and the necessity of quickly adjusting plans of battle. With the arrival of the small field telescopes to help with reconnoitering and scouting, hurried reports on tactical updates became increasingly essential.

One of the most momentous battles of the Thirty Years’ War occurred at Lützen, Germany, on November 16, 1632, where Swedish King Gustavus lost his life and his imperial rival, Albrecht von Wallenstein, lost his best cavalry general, Gottfried Pappenheim. The latter had taken the cavalry to intercept Protestant reinforcements, but Wallenstein had messengers standing by to recall his commander of horse. Wallenstein penned a now-immortal note to Pappenheim with a summons in the universal Latin used for communications at the time. The note was delivered folded and headed: “Cito Cito Citissime Cito” [Quickly! Quickly! With greatest speed! Quickly!].

Pappenheim received the note and returned with phenomenal speed, arriving by 3 PM and joining the battle with a fury. But as he charged for the Swedish right, a cannonade from Swedish guns sent a large, molten shard of shrapnel that cut into his armor like a can opener and opened the whole left side of his body. Pappenheim was mortally wounded. Beneath his armor and his blood-soaked doublet was the blood-stained note that is preserved to this day.

The great store of available documents written on vellum and paper did not become a passion of collectors until the 19th century, when dealers began combing through European stately homes and their library archives. Historically minded collectors came on with a

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CANADIAN CAPTURE *of Vimy Ridge*

In April 1917, the flint-hard Canadian Corps captured the toughest German bastion on the Western Front at Vimy Ridge. It was the greatest Allied victory to that point in World War I.

BY JEROME BALDWIN

BY THE FALL OF 1916, Canadian soldiers fighting in the trenches on the Western Front had already distinguished themselves in battle. In 1915, they had staved off disaster at the Second Battle of Ypres when they plugged a gap in the Allied line after panicky French troops fled in the face of the war's first poison gas attacks. Amid the noxious clouds of chlorine, the Cana-

Canadian gunners shell supposedly impregnable Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917, in this 1919 painting by Richard Jack.

© Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, Canada / Bridgeman Art Library

dians had improvised gas masks—urine-soaked handkerchiefs held over their faces—and saved the day. Now, in October 1916, the months-long disaster of the Somme was finally drawing to a close. The Canadian Corps alone had suffered 24,000 casualties. Their morale badly shaken, they were relieved to receive orders transferring them out of the battle area, but that relief was cut short when they saw that they were going into line opposite the notoriously dangerous Vimy Ridge.

The Germans had taken the ridge in the first months of the war in 1914 and had managed to hold it ever since, despite repeated Allied attempts to capture it. Both the British and the French had tried to take it and failed, suffering heavy losses, and many on both sides considered it to be all but impregnable. Rising gently northwest from the Scarpe River valley, the ridge resembles a humpbacked whale, cresting at a height of 470 feet at Hill 145. About a mile north of Hill 145 was Hill 120, known as the Pimple. South of it was another hill, and the fortified positions of La

Folie Farm, La Tuille, and Thelus, with Farbus on the reverse slope. While they held it, the Germans threatened the strategically important city of Arras and prevented the Allies from recapturing the Douai Plain and the coal-mining areas of Lens.

The ridge was defended by three divisions of the German Sixth Army, under Col. Gen. Ludwig von Falkenhausen. The Germans had constructed a defense in depth, with three belts of trenches and fortified dugouts, some complete with electricity and running water. Gun emplacements had been dug into the forward slope of the ridge, and there was artillery on the reverse slopes as well. Bristling with machine-gun nests housed in concrete and steel pillboxes, protected by massive rolls of razor-sharp barbed wire, and pitted with huge craters and countless shell holes for attacking infantry to move through, Vimy Ridge was an extremely tough nut to crack.

Map © 2009 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

Three German divisions in Col. Gen. Ludwig von Falkenhausen's Sixth Army defended Vimy Ridge above the Scarpe Valley in northern France.

From the heights of the ridge, the Germans had a clear view for miles around, enabling their snipers to turn the entire area into a virtual killing ground. It was lethal to be out from under cover or concealment in the Canadian lines—even at night; the wily Germans simply sent up flares that turned night into day. The Germans were supremely confident that no one, certainly not the colonial troops from Canada, could take Vimy Ridge. One Bavarian soldier defiantly told his captors, "You might get to the top of Vimy Ridge, but I'll tell you this: you'll be able to take all the Canadians back in a rowboat that get there."

When the Canadians arrived, the Germans hoisted up an ironic sign that read: "WELCOME CANADIANS." The carnage of the war and the grisly evidence of the savage fighting that already had occurred there were all around, with nearly every surrounding farm and town reduced to piles of rubble. No-man's-land was an eerie moonscape of massive craters, littered with debris and the remains of thousands of men. Bones, grinning skulls, and entire skeletons in rotting uniforms of French blue or German gray lay everywhere, and the air was filled with the sour stench of death. Riven with destroyed trenches, the terrain was honeycombed with tunnels through the subterranean chalk surrounding the ridge, which was devoid of vegetation along its shell-blasted length. As the winter settled in and the temperature dropped to record-breaking lows, the Canadians endured all the miseries of trench life while the underground war continued. The troops were often hungry and always cold, but the war was going to heat up for them very soon.

CHAMPIONED BY THE NEW Allied commander, French General Robert Nivelle, the wildly ambitious plan for 1917 called for nothing less than to break the German lines, end the stalemate, liberate northern France, and win the war. While the French attacked at Chemins des Dames, farther south, the British were to begin an offensive between Givenchy in the north and Croisilles in the south. It would be the Canadians' job to protect the northern flank of the British attack, and that meant taking the bastion at Vimy Ridge. Canadian Corps commander Lt. Gen. Sir Julian Byng was given the daunting task in mid-January; the high command wanted it done by April 1.

Byng was an aristocrat, a career British Army officer, and a personal friend of King George V. An experienced officer, he had fought in South Africa and at Ypres, Gallipoli, and, most recently, the Somme before taking command of the Canadian Corps in September 1916. In many ways, Byng was a man ahead of his time. While many officers went nowhere near the front line, he often went right up to the forward trenches, inspecting defenses and talking to the men. In an era when it was unheard of to brief every man on an upcoming attack, Byng insisted that everyone, down to the private soldier, know the battle plan inside and out. He told his officers: "Explain it to them again and again. Encourage him to ask questions. Remember also, that no matter what sort of a fix you get into, you mustn't just sit down and hope that things will work themselves out. You must do something in a crisis." It was an unprecedented approach to command and training, and it would prove crucial in the upcoming battle.

Byng was determined that the bloodbath of the Somme not be repeated. During the agonizing winter months, glaring problems had come to the surface: not everyone had been briefed on the entire plan and not enough training had been conducted. The enemy's barbed- wire installations had not been destroyed, and intelligence about enemy positions and strength had been lacking.

To get around the problems, Byng arranged for German defenses to be simulated in the rear using flags and colored tape to represent enemy strongpoints, roads, and trenches; their accuracy was based on trench raids and aerial photographs. Attacks were practiced repeatedly and the men learned the "Vimy glide," how to advance safely behind a creeping barrage. The attacking infantry was synchronized with the artillery to move forward at a pace of 100 yards every three minutes, which would put the Canadians right on top of a German position so soon after the artillery barrage that the defenders would have no time to recover. Mounted officers carrying flags represented the creeping barrage as the men moved over the mock battlefield and learned the new attack strategy. Timing was everything. Byng told the men bluntly, "Chaps, you shall go over exactly like a railroad train, on the exact time, or you shall be annihilated."

During the fighting of the previous summer, thousands of British soldiers had been cut to pieces by German machine gunners while they got snarled on rolls of barbed wire whose five-inch barbs could ensnare a flailing soldier like a fly in a spider's web. The wire was supposed to have been destroyed by Allied artillery at the Somme, but it had not—the shells exploded above the wire instead of on contact, and no one had gone out to verify if the wire had been destroyed prior to the attack. It was a case of criminal neglect that led to thousands of dead soldiers—the cream of British society and vir-

tually the entire junior-officer class from the various elite universities. At Vimy Ridge, Byng intended to make sure that destructive No. 106 shell fuses were used; they did explode on contact and could blow pathways in the wire for attacking troops.

The fact that the shelling had been successful in destroying the wire was verified by trench raids that began at Vimy Ridge in December 1916. Armed with Lewis guns and Mills bombs, trench raiders provided invaluable intelligence from captured German documents and prisoners. When the raids began in December, they consisted of just a handful of men. Later, they would grow in size until well over 1,000 troops went over the top at any one time.

Besides gathering intelligence, the raids were used to familiarize the men with the territory they would be crossing on Zero Day. Each raid, in effect, was a dress rehearsal in working together. The raids had the added advantage of keeping the Germans in a constant state of tension, denying them rest and fraying their nerves. By the time of the actual attack on April 9, the Germans would be so exhausted that many of them were in no condition to fight.

ullstein bild/ Granger Collection, NY

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: Royal Engineers fix scaffolding ladders in frontline trenches on the day before the start of the Arras offensive in April 1917. TOP: Alert German soldiers man an advance position on the Aisne front in the spring of 1917.

Despite their advantages in intelligence gathering and experience, the raids were nevertheless costly—1,653 Canadians died at Vimy Ridge before the main attack even began, most of them in trench raids. But none was considered a real catastrophe until the largest raid was mounted on March 1, 1917, when 1,700 men of the 4th Division went over the top. Days prior to the raid, French civilians were inquiring about the upcoming attack. That should have raised a red flag in itself—if local civilians knew about the raid, the Germans too must have known. And they did. Some of those who had been taken prisoner had escaped the Canadians and made it back to their own lines with news of the buildup. Gas cylinders the Canadians were to use made a metal clanking sound as they were carried up to the line, alerting the Germans even more. Conversations in Canadian dugouts and tunnels had been overheard by Germans who had tunneled through the chalk close enough to eavesdrop. Some Canadian officers, realizing that another Allied disaster was brewing, tried to get the attack called off, but it was to no avail.

ON THE DAY OF THE RAID, the Canadians unleashed deadly phosgene gas toward the German lines—delayed payback for the Huns' poison-gas attack at Ypres—but some of the gas blew back into their own faces when the wind changed. Heavier than air, the gas also hung undispersed in the various shell holes and craters in which the attacking troops took cover, with predictably horrific results. The Germans had sited their machine guns to cover the gaps in the Canadian wire, conveniently marked with signs, turning them into kill zones. When it was over, there were over 600 Canadian casualties, many of them experienced officers and men whose absence on April 9 would be sorely felt.

Despite the fiasco, the battle itself was fast approaching. Preparations continued with rising intensity; everyone knew the plan but not the date. In another unprecedented move, newly developed sound-ranging and flash-spotting techniques were used to determine the locations, with pinpoint accuracy, of German artillery on the ridge. British and Canadian guns targeted them and would soon blast them out of action. In the underground city the Canadians had created, work crews continued to chip away at the chalk, stringing communication cables back to the rear areas. Tools and ammunition were stockpiled in some dugouts, while others were prepared for everything from dressing stations to command posts. A light-railway system had even been built to bring the massive amounts of shells up to the hun-

National Archives

German barb wire is shelled before the attack on Vimy Ridge.

gry guns. Thirty miles of approach roads were constructed, two miles of tunnels were dug, and more than 40 miles of water pipes were buried to supply a subterranean city that was so large that the men frequently got lost in it, even with guideposts and street names.

During the final week before the attack, Canadian artillery and trench raiders turned the screws ever tighter on the Germans. Raids were conducted every night; the barrages became constant and much larger, with 2,500 tons of ammunition per day hurled at the Germans, who called the period "the Week of Suffering." Heavy fire greatly impeded the enemy's ration parties; creeping barrages and sudden intensification of fire on a particular section of trench line caused the Germans to raise an attack alarm, forcing them to stand to for an attack that never came and depriving them of much-needed sleep and food as they anxiously awaited the coming fury.

FINALLY, IN THE EARLY HOURS of April 9, the assault troops moved into position. Some were in the forward trenches, others lying on their bellies in no-man's-land, waiting. Thousands more were crammed into the dozen subways, dug into the chalk, which extended rearward. With just minutes to go, the muffled order to fix bayonets ran up and down the line. The metallic sound of thousands of bayonets being locked into place filled the pre-dawn darkness as a late-season snowstorm blew in. At precisely 5:30 AM, a single big gun fired, followed by 900 more, creating a noise so loud that Prime Minister David Lloyd George could hear it all the way back in London.

Because it did not exactly parallel the Canadian lines, Vimy Ridge was 4,000 yards away at the southern end, narrowing gradually until only 700 yards separated the two armies at the northern end. As a result, the 1st Division, on the right flank under the command of Maj. Gen. Arthur Currie, had the farthest to go. The division was expected to secure the Farbus Wood on the eastern slope by early afternoon. The first objective was just beyond the German forward trenches, known as the Black Line on the maps the Canadians carried. Following behind the creeping barrage as they had been trained to do, the 2nd and 3rd Brigades reached the jumping-off point on schedule, signaling with flags to low-flying aircraft that they had arrived.

After 38 minutes the barrage, which had shifted ahead 200 yards, began to creep forward again as the men set out for the Red Line, a German trench called the Zwischen Stellung by its defenders. It was now 6:55 AM. Resistance was stiffening; men fell to German machine-gun fire, but others stepped in to take their places and the attack momentum never slackened. Pockets of enemy resistance were bypassed for the "moppers up" to handle later. Some machine-gun nests were put out of action by extraordinary acts of courage. Private William J. Milne of the 16th Battalion (Canadian Scottish) single-handedly took two out during the attack and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

The attackers reached the Red Line at 7:13—right on schedule. Once there, the 2nd and 3rd Brigades halted, dug in, and prepared to allow the 1st Brigade to pass through them and carry on the attack. By early afternoon the Canadians were safely in the Farbus Wood, with the shell-blasted village of Farbus securely in their hands.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Division, under Maj. Gen. Henry Burstall, also made good progress. Unlike the 1st Division, the 2nd Division encountered the heaviest fighting at the outset of the attack. German resistance lessened as they advanced farther east and fanned out as the front widened. With a wider front to cover, the Canadians required more troops, and the British 13th Brigade went with them. In all, some 30,000 British artillerymen took part in the Vimy attack, as well as infantry and pilots of the Royal Flight Command. One of the 2nd Division's objectives was the hamlet of Thelus, a veritable haven for German snipers who used its cellars as cover. Now the Allied artillery zeroed in and blasted the village to ruins, ending the sniping. When the Canadians finally overran Thelus at 10:30, they found a German officers' dugout complete with a fully stocked bar and a staff of five waiters.

Despite the various warning signs, the Germans were surprised by the speed of the Canadian advance—some of the Vimy defenders were captured in their underwear. On the 1st Division front, attackers discovered a German dugout with meals still hot on the table, hastily abandoned by enemy officers. After subsisting for so long on bully beef and plum jam, the rich fare left behind by the Germans must have been the finest meal the fortunate Canadian soldiers ever tasted in their lives.

Exhausted and hungry, some of the Germans eagerly surrendered, and the trickle of prisoners quickly became a river. But there were many other veteran defenders who simply hid in their

dugouts until the Canadians had passed, then emerged to shoot them from behind. Machine guns took a heavy toll on the attackers, their positions becoming easy to spot from the khaki-clad corpses that lay in front of them. To take them out, the Canadians used newly developed platoon tactics, attacking from three sides with Mills bombs and machine guns. They could not have known that they were using tactics their more mobile sons would use in the next war with the Germans.

THE 3RD DIVISION, under Maj. Gen. Louis Lipsett, moved quickly to take its objectives. The division had a shorter distance to cover and had only two enemy lines to reach, Red and Brown, before they would be on the eastern slope. After they had advanced nearly to the Brown Line, they began to take sniper and machine-gun fire from Hill 145 on their left. Some of the units there, such as the Black Watch from Montreal on the far left, were particularly hard hit. Something was definitely wrong on the neighboring 4th Division front.

Hill 145 was in the 4th Division sector, and it was vital that it be captured as quickly as possible. Under the command of Maj. Gen. David Watson, the 4th Division did not have the experienced officers and men it once had, owing to the raiding debacle of March 1. During the artillery barrage, the German trenches at the base of the hill were purposely not destroyed because one of the Canadian infantry commanders made the astonishing request that they be left intact for his men to use as cover from the fire expected from Hill 145. Subsequently, when the Canadians attacked, they ran into a wall of German fire that decimated some units, such as the 5th Battalion, which lost 346 men out of 400. While the 4th Division attack stalled, the advance on the far left moved ahead, passing between Hill 145 and the Pimple, both still in German hands. Right away, the Canadians started taking fire on both sides.

One of the officers in the thick of the fighting was Captain Thain MacDowell of the 38th Battalion, who would win one of four Victoria Crosses in the battle. Chasing after some fleeing Germans, MacDowell followed them through a dugout entrance and down a long stairway, where he found himself instantly enveloped in darkness. Continuing to advance, he turned a corner and came face to face with 77 Prussian Guards—a seemingly hopeless situation. Thinking quickly, MacDowell called over his shoulder to a nonexistent group of men, as though he was leading a large force (there were only two of his comrades behind him on the surface). The ruse worked; the Germans raised their hands in surrender. By taking them up in small groups, Mac-

Imperial War Museum

HILL 145 HAD TO BE TAKEN QUICKLY, BUT WHERE WERE THE MEN GOING TO COME FROM? ONCE AGAIN THE LOSSES OF MARCH 1 CAME INTO PLAY—THERE WERE NO MEN LEFT TO SPARE.

Members of the Canadian Army advance across no-man's-land alongside a Mark II tank during the Vimy Ridge assault. TOP: Canadian troops tend to a badly wounded German casualty on Vimy Ridge.

Imperial War Museum

Dowell managed to conceal the fact that he was virtually alone. MacDowell was luckier than Milne: he lived to receive his decoration and eventually became the only VC recipient at Vimy to survive the war. The other two with MacDowell were Lance Sgt. Ellis Sifton of the 18th (Western Ontario) Battalion and Private John Pattison, 50th (Calgary) Battalion.

THE SUCCESS OF THE ATTACK remained up in the air. If Hill 145 held out until dark, the entire operation would be in serious jeopardy. Under cover of darkness, the Germans would have all night to bring up reinforcements. Hill 145 had to be taken quickly, but where were the men going to come from? Once again the losses of March 1 came into play—there were no men left to spare. The 10th Brigade was slated to attack the Pimple the next day and so could not be tapped. In desperation, the 85th Battalion was found.

The 85th (Nova Scotia Highlanders) was an orphan battalion, not attached to any division. It had arrived in France only a month before and to date had been tasked merely with menial labor such as building roads and digging trenches. The battalion was referred to derisively as "Highlanders without kilts," but now history had plucked them from obscurity to be the last hope of the Canadian assault on Vimy Ridge. Attacking directly up the hill into the teeth of the German defenses, the green troops of the 85th Battalion so shocked the enemy by the sheer audacity of their attack that the Germans panicked and ran until the entire section was in full retreat down the reverse slope. Behind them, the 85th dug in. It was truly a miraculous victory.

Throughout April 10 and 11, the Canadians consolidated their positions. There were still some fierce small-group clashes, and snipers picked off men unfamiliar with their new positions, but the fierce counterattacks for which the Germans were renowned never materialized. All along the ridge, the Canadians gazed in awe at the peaceful French countryside to the east, which the war had barely touched. There, life went on as it always had. Green fields, green trees, and intact buildings seemed like another world compared to the shell-blasted hell of devastation and misery just over the Canadians' shoulders.

On Thursday, April 12, as another snowstorm kicked up, helping to blind the German defenders, the 10th Brigade of the 4th Division attacked straight up the Pimple and captured it in 90 minutes. With that charge, the Canadian victory was complete. Vimy Ridge would remain in Allied hands for the rest of the war. The price, as expected, was high. The Canadians suffered 10,602 casualties, including 3,600 dead. But the capture of Vimy Ridge cemented the fighting reputation of the Canadian Corps. German Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg called them without hesitation "the best of the English troops," and British Prime Minister David Lloyd George wrote admiringly, "Whenever the Germans found the Canadian Corps coming into the line, they prepared for the worst."

The Canadian success at Vimy Ridge was followed by similar success to the south, where the British Third Army, led by General Sir Edmund Allenby, punched through German lines for 3½ miles—a near-miraculous distance after years of snail-like advances

BELOW: ***The Crest of Vimy Ridge,*** **by Gyrth Russell, was commissioned by the Canadian War Memorials Fund.**

Canadian War Museum

on the Western Front. The exultant British prepared to exploit their new openings, but they were quickly disappointed in their hopes. Thanks to a voluntary withdrawal by other German troops just prior to the assaults, the German Sixth Army commander, Baron Ludwig von Falkenhausen, had ample reserves to staunch the bleeding. Despite inflicting some 75,000 casualties on the Germans—and suffering some 84,000 of their own—the British were unable to exploit the stunning successes of early April. The war settled back into a stalemated slugfest.

The disgraced architect of the Allied spring offensive, General Nivelle, was replaced by General Henri Pétain, the hero of Verdun, who returned to a defensive war strategy he summed up succinctly: "We must wait for the Americans and the tanks." In the meantime, 54 French divisions mutinied and refused to obey orders; thousands more deserted. By the time the spontaneous revolt was quelled, more than 100,000 war-weary French soldiers were court-martialed, of whom 23,000 were found guilty. Officially, only 55 soldiers were executed by firing squads, although French officers in the field shot down untold numbers of their own men or sent them forward unsupported to die beneath German artillery barrages. Pétain assuaged the army by promising that there would be no more French offensives in the war.

MORE CANADIAN VICTORIES were to follow Vimy Ridge, at places such as Arleaux, Hill 70, and Passchendaele. All were costly. As the war drew to a close in 1918, the Canadians spearheaded the Allied advance known as the Hundred Days. After the victorious conclusion of the war, Canada was given a seat at the peace negotiations because of the performance of its troops in the Great War. A total of 60,000 Canadians died in World War I, one in 10 who served at the front, about the same number of men as the United States lost in Vietnam—all suffered by a country of only 12 million people.

For Canadians, Vimy Ridge represented more than just the capture of an enemy stronghold on a snowy April morning in 1917; it was the place where Canada literally grew to manhood. Having been a self-governing nation for only 50 years, Canada suddenly emerged from the colonial shadows onto the world stage by gaining the greatest Allied victory to that point in the war.

Nearly 20 years later, in 1936, thousands of Vimy Ridge veterans and their families traveled back to the ridge to witness English King Edward VIII and French President Albert Lebrun dedicate a monument constructed atop Hill 145 after 11 years of work and $1.5 million in costs. The French, for their part, had not forgotten the Canadian triumph that day—thousands more of their own airmen and soldiers were also present at the dedication. In a token of deepest appreciation, 250 acres on the ridge and the surrounding acres were given to Canada by France. Still honeycombed with the ruins of trenches, tunnels, craters, and unexploded munitions, much of the site is closed to the public for safety reasons. It remains, however, a sliver of Canada to this day, a proud but costly reminder of the organized hell that was the Western Front nearly a century ago in World War I. □

National Archives

Australian War Memorial

TOP: Canadian machine gunners dig themselves into convenient shell holes on Vimy Ridge in support of the infantry attack. BOTTOM: Captured German officers somehow maintain their swagger after the Canadian taking of Vimy Ridge.

SPARTA *Versus*

In the fifth century BC*, the two great dominance. At stake were contrasting*

The Granger Collection, New York

THE WARS FOUGHT by Sparta and Athens in the fifth century BC pitted one city-state with ancient Greece's greatest army against one boasting her most powerful fleet. Yet the Spartan and Athenian ways of war differed in far more than a simple preference for fighting on land rather than sea. In fact, the distinctive approaches that Sparta and Athens took to combat embraced a wide range of tactics, only a few of which were tied to their traditional divide at the shoreline.

Military historians have tended to focus on the severe boyhood training regimen in Sparta (the *agoge*) and the potent combination of hardy physique and iron-willed martial philosophy it promoted. But the Spartan way of war was not simply a matter of outstanding individual toughness, strength, or even weaponry skills. Superior tactics played key roles as well—discretion was often the better part of valor for Spartans. They were adept at assessing battle odds and, should these not be to their liking, heading home without a fight.

Despite its fierce image, Sparta had a more extensive record of dodging armed confrontations than any other Greek city-state. It was not unusual for Spartan commanders to turn back before crossing a hostile border if the omens were bad. And even on the brink of combat, they might still choose to avoid action. Spartan King Agis II (427-400 BC) once claimed that "Spartans do not ask how many the

ABOVE A fully armored Spartan hoplite wears a Corinthian helmet and sports greaves, spear, sword, and shield in this watercolor by Peter Connolly. RIGHT: The destruction of the Athenian army by the Syracusans in 413 BC resulted in the deaths of Athenian generals Nicias and Demosthenes.

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ATHENS

BY FRED EUGENE RAY

city-states of Greece waged a decades-long war for approaches to both war and peace.

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Two Greek warriors clash shields while an archer on the left unleashes an arrow. Shields were always carried on the left arm.

enemy are, only where they are," but on at least four occasions he personally refused engagement with the enemy.

Classical Greeks fought in a dense linear formation or phalanx as armored spearmen known as hoplites. These hoplites were protected from their ankles up by greaves, cuirass, shield, and helmet as they stood close alongside each other in ranks that could be many hundreds of men wide. This allowed them to present a broad front that was hard to overlap or outflank. But there was a limit to how thin a formation could be without falling into disorder. Thus, most Greeks tried to form a file at least eight men deep to accept battle. Spartans, however, could advance and maneuver effectively in files as slim as four men. Those in the first three ranks struck overhand with their spears at the enemy front, and the fourth rank joined rows two and three in pressing shields into the backs of their fellows in a concerted effort to shove through the opposition, a tactic called *othismos*. This ability to maneuver when short-handed yielded success several times, most famously against a much larger Arcadian army at Dipaea in 464 BC.

MOST GREEK ARMIES advanced with men shouting encouragement and issuing distinctive battle cries. They would then rush the last few yards into close action. In contrast, Spartans moved forward slowly in measured steps to the sound of pipes and the rhythmic chanting of battle poetry. This allowed them to keep excellent order all the way into engagement. Moreover, the Spartans saw their opponents' noisy rush as amateurish, signaling false bravado to suppress fear. Their own deliberate and disciplined pace was meant to set a tone of both overwhelming confidence and deadly menace. So unnerving was this approach that many foes broke and ran before first contact.

Hoplites followed a natural urge when marching into battle to edge closer to the man on their right. They did this to gain better cover from the shield held on his left arm. This tendency caused phalanxes to fade toward the right as they advanced and often resulted in a mutual overlap of formation flanks on opposite ends of the field. The Spartans exploited this by deliberately exaggerating their own rightward movements. They would combine the movement with well-practiced wheeling by elite troops on their far right to curl around a foe's left flank. Once enveloped, the encircled wing would break and run, causing the enemy phalanx to collapse.

Besides exploiting the common phenomenon of rightward drift, Spartans also used more unique schemes on the battlefield. King Agis once shifted units in his formation during an advance. To attempt this in the very face of the enemy suggests that Spartans considered such risky moves to be well within their capabilities. Athenian general Cleandridas defeated Italian tribesmen in 433 BC by hiding a contingent of hoplites behind his phalanx. This disguised his true strength and, once engaged, let him wheel his men against the enemy flank to trigger a rout.

The most daring Spartan battle maneuver was to break off in the midst of combat and withdraw. All other Greek armies shunned this for fear of inviting disaster. The Spartans, however, could not only pull out of hopeless spots at minimal loss, but could also fake the maneuver and trick foes into breaking formation to give chase. Herodotus cited such false retreats

at Thermopylae in 480 BC. The Spartans then wheeled about each time and obliterated the overly eager Persians, who had fallen into premature and disordered pursuits. Plato claimed the Persians also suffered this same Spartan ploy at Plataea one year later.

While Spartans heavily punished those breaking ranks to follow their feigned retreats, they themselves refrained from any sort of pursuit. First, they saw no profit in risking precious lives to chase an already defeated enemy. Furthermore, staying on the battleground allowed them to possess the field at day's end. This was the universally accepted definition of formal victory in Greek warfare. Finally, by maintaining formation, the Spartans could rapidly reform on a different front, giving them the opportunity of mounting a second attack against any opponents that were still intact.

THE SPARTANS were well aware that success on the battlefield could carry a special danger in the form of friendly fire. Helmets limited vision and the din of battle was deafening, causing hoplites to easily mistake friend for foe in the mixed-up ranks. Thucydides cited just such a tragic incident within the encircling Athenian right wing at Delium in 424 BC. One way the Spartans reduced this hazard was by adopting uniform gear so as to more easily identify each other in the heat of a confused melee. To this purpose, they wore highly visible tunics that were dyed crimson. Their cloaks might have been red as well; however, they rarely, if ever, took these cumbersome garments into combat. The Spartans also painted large devices on their shields for identification, the most famous being the Greek letter lambda. Looking like an inverted "V," this was the first letter in "Lacedaemon," which was the ancient Greeks' name for Sparta.

Sneak attacks were not a staple of the Spartan army, but one did yield a victory at Sepeia in 494 BC. There, Sparta's famously wily King Cleomenes was facing a slightly larger host from Argos. Arranging a temporary truce and camping opposite the Argives, Cleomenes set up a routine that included signaling meals with a horn. When the enemy stood down at the same time for their own food, he had his men charge and put the unprepared Argives to a horrific rout. Another Spartan commander who used a sneak attack to good effect was Brasidas at Amphipolis in 422 BC, where he was under siege from Cleon of Athens. Cleon had lined up for a return to his base after a scouting expedition when the Spartans surprised him by rushing out of the city in two detachments, cutting the Athenian column in half and defeating each segment in detail. Brasidas brought the opening phase of the Peloponnesian War to an end with the victory, although he himself died in battle.

Even the best armies sometimes find retreat unavoidable. The Spartans, having lost 300 picked men and a king in a rearguard action in 480 BC at Thermopylae, came up with a less costly way to withdraw—the marching box. First used successfully under Brasidas in 423 BC, this formation consisted of forming most of the hoplite infantry into a hollow rectangle, placing the lightly armed soldiers and noncombatants inside the formation, and then deploying the remaining hoplites fore and aft to meet any enemy threats. The marching box could retreat and defend itself from all forms of attack. Xenophon of Athens claimed credit for creating the arrangement during the famed "Retreat of the Ten Thousand" after the Battle of Cunaxa in 401 BC. However, it is more likely that Xenophon simply modestly modified existing Spartan protocol.

Regard for classical Athenians as fighters in general has lagged behind their fame as creators of democracy and masters of aesthetic culture. From antiquity to the present, the Spartans have had far greater martial repute. Yet Athens in its fifth century BC heyday not only fought more than three times as many battles as Sparta, but actually enjoyed a slightly higher overall rate of combat success. In fact, Athenians developed the largest and most sophisticated war machine in all of Greece and applied tactics as creatively as they pursued the fine arts.

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A savage hoplite flourishes a shield decorated improbably with the drawing of a dog.

Athens followed adoption of democracy in 510 BC with a period of rapid expansion. The Athenians kept pace with rising territorial commitments by greatly increasing the size of their military. Athens' army went from a late sixth-century BC count of 3,600 armored spearmen to 13,000 citizen regulars on the rolls by 431 BC. Likewise, the Athenian fleet grew from 60 to 300 ships over the same period. Sparta could answer with only about half as many hoplites of its own and had no navy at all.

Short on cash and having severely limited citizenship, the Spartans relied upon a system of alliances. The Peloponnesian League gave them access to tremendous manpower, but had serious handicaps. Sparta often had to coerce or cajole reluctant allies into action. There was also dan-

ger that a balking ally might spark an unwanted and costly conflict. Indeed, Thucydides suggested that Corinth set off the great Peloponnesian War in just such a way. In contrast, Athens had full control over its own larger military, as well as those of other states that were much closer to being subjects than true partners.

As the Athenians expanded hoplite strength, they also greatly boosted their number of horsemen. Their cavalry force grew from fewer than 100 riders to some 2,200 during the fifth century BC. This was the only contingent of its kind among southern Greeks and was quite large even by the standards of horse-rich central and northern Greece. Moreover, Athenians held an edge over other cavalry in mounted archers. Originally imported from Scythia, these deadly riders rose to 200-strong. Horses made easy targets for the javelins of opposing skirmishers. By using an alternative screen of swift horse-archers with longer ranging composite bows, Athens transformed its cavalry into one of the most dangerous and versatile in all of Greece.

THE CAVALRY EXPERIENCE inspired Athenians to develop further skills to guard their flanks. These could be either natural or man-made barriers, the latter of which saw use at Marathon in 490 BC. Frontinus described the Athenians building a crude wooden barricade, or *abatis,* to stretch their front against a hillside and discourage a mounted enemy attack. Likewise, they exploited existing structures outside Syracuse in 414 BC to repel horsemen, and they did so again inside Athens at the Battle of Munychia in 403 BC. All the same, reliance on natural barriers was the more common tack. At Plataea and Mycale (479 BC), Eurymedon (466 BC), and Anapus (415 BC), the Athenians won victories with their flanks resting on seashore, streambed, or uplands.

Use of the bow was even more particular to Athens than expertise at either cavalry warfare or flank barriers. Along with their singular deployment of mounted archers, the Athenians were alone among Greeks in sending out large numbers of bowmen on foot. Their army included 800 foot archers who fought in tandem with 300 specially trained hoplites. The latter arrayed three-deep at the front, kneeling while shafts flew overhead and standing to repel any attempt to get at the bowmen behind them. Such specialized troops played a major role at Plataea, where they turned back Persian cavalry.

In addition, 400 to 500 archers also served aboard the Athenian fleet. Unlike other Greeks, who piled up to 40 hoplites onto each ship for hand-to-hand combat with other vessels, the Athenians used just 14 marines (10 hoplites and four bowmen) and pioneered the art of combat seamanship. This called for maneuvering their ships into position to strike opposing vessels with an armored prow while pelting them with arrows. Whether on land or sea, Athens made better use of the bow than any other city-state.

Athens' superior fleet came into play for surprise operations. By taking advantage of its great amphibious capacity, Athens launched more unexpected offenses than any other Greek city-state. Seaborne landings had been common as far back as the Persian Wars. But combining them with

ONE GREAT TRUTH OF WAR IS THAT VICTORY OFTEN COMES LESS FROM DESTROYING A FOE THAN FROM BREAKING HIS WILL TO FIGHT. THIS WAS GLARINGLY APPARENT ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OF ANCIENT GREECE, WHERE COMPARATIVELY FEW SOLDIERS FELL FACE-TO-FACE, BUT MANY DIED AFTER ONE SIDE WAVERED AND TRIED TO RUN AWAY.

a strong element of surprise arose in mid-fifth century BC as a tactic of the Athenian commander Tolmides, who sailed around the Peloponnese to descend for unexpected strikes against outmatched opponents. The Athenians refined the scheme over time with the use of troop transports, replacing the upper banks of oarsmen on war galleys with a mix of hoplites, light infantry, and horsemen. A commander could then land to enormous advantage with a large and diverse armament at a time and place of his choosing. Moreover, in the unlikely event that effective resistance did arise, he could simply put back to sea at very little risk to himself or his men.

When it came to stealthy operations, the Athenians did not always depend on their naval strength. In 458 BC, a year before Tolmides made his first surprise attack from the sea, Myronides of Athens won two battles as a result of unanticipated overland marches. These came at Cimolia, east of Corinth, where he twice bested the latter's regulars with forces thrown together from reserves, resident aliens, and local allies. This would not be the last time Tolmides won an engagement with an unexpected march. One year later, he led an army north to catch forces of the Boeotian League unprepared. In the wake of the subsequent victory at Oenophyta, Athens was able to dominate all Boeotia except Thebes for the next decade.

Masters of surprise operations, Athenians also excelled at stealth and deception on the tactical level. Their gambits included ambushes, sneak attacks, diversions, and disinformation. As early as Salamis in 480 BC, Themistocles tricked the Persians into a foolish naval offensive by leaking false plans. Such tactics saw their greatest use during the Peloponnesian War, when Demosthenes sprang an ambush that routed a larger phalanx at Olpae in 426 BC and carried out three separate nighttime assaults, winning the first two before suffering a ruinous defeat in the last.

Demosthenes was a daring leader, but more cautious men also used tricky tactics on Athens' behalf. Although notoriously conservative, Nicias used trickery twice to safely land armies

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on hostile soil, the first time with a diversionary attack and the second by feeding false information to the enemy. And a team of Athenian generals employed several deceptions at Byzantium in 408 BC. Xenophon and Diodorus detailed how they withdrew at night from a siege, only to sneak back and assault the docks with lightly armed troops. They then took the city by means of a surprise entry by their hoplites through an inland gate. Athenian commanders were not above deceiving their own men. Myronides at Oenophyta fooled the hoplites on his right wing into thinking that their stalled left was already victorious. This inspired them to renewed effort that carried their side of the field and turned Myronides's phantom success into the real thing.

PERHAPS THE LEAST known aspect of Athens' military prowess was its record of successful combat experience. One great truth of war is that victory often comes less from destroying a foe than from breaking his will to fight. This was glaringly apparent on the battlefields of ancient Greece, where comparatively few soldiers fell face-to-face, but many died after one side wavered and tried to run away. Being confident in their leadership, comrades, and personal ability gave hoplites the morale needed to impose their will on an enemy. Over a third of all the significant land engagements waged by Greek hoplites during the fifth century BC were Athenian victories. In fact, Athens' victory total over this period more than tripled that of any other city-state and exceeded Sparta's by a factor of better than four. Thus, when Athenians went into action, they fully expected to win—and more often than not they did.

Hoplite spearmen confront cavalry forces in this fragment of an Attic scroll, circa 510 BC.

All of the unique aspects of Athenian warfare came together in service of a fresh strategic concept developed by Pericles at the start of the Peloponnesian War to deal with the huge armies that Sparta and its allies could field. Athens hoped to avoid apocalyptic phalanx battle in favor of small actions and inflicting long-term economic pain. Exploiting its signature tactical skills and setting up fortified outposts (*epiteichismoi*) on enemy soil, Athens nearly brought down Sparta. It was only after the Spartans adopted key elements of the Athenian approach that they finally claimed victory after nearly three decades of war. Still, they could not suppress Athens for long and gave up a hotly contested occupation of the city after a single year. The Athenians soon had a fully restored democracy and went on to rebuild their overseas empire, rising up early in the next century to again challenge Sparta for supremacy.

It was rare for Spartans and Athenians to actually contest the same ground. This happened fewer than a dozen times during the entire fifth century BC. When these meetings took the form of grand, set-piece battles, Sparta always came away with the victory. Smaller engagements were more frequent and resulted in an unbroken string of Athenian successes. These seemingly contradictory trends were direct reflections of the states' differing tactical approaches.

Only three large battles in the fifth century BC saw Spartans and Athenians on opposing sides. The first occurred in 457 BC, when Sparta's Nicomedes led an army of his countrymen and allies

The Granger Collection, New York

Theban general Epaminondas saves the life of fellow general Pelopidas during the victory over the Spartans at Leuctra in 371 BC.

into Boeotia in a powerful demonstration meant to discourage Athenian aggression against Thebes, a Spartan ally. Athens responded in kind, and an engagement (Tanagra I) took place that involved over 25,000 hoplites. As the battle unfolded, Spartan spearmen carried the day on their right with the help of traitorous Thessalian horsemen who deserted the Athenians just as the fighting began. Athenian hoplites, standing on their right, were equally successful; however, they abandoned the field to go after their beaten foes. As a result, the Athenians ultimately lost to a more disciplined Spartan phalanx that held on to the battleground.

IT WOULD BE NEARLY two generations before Sparta and Athens would again meet in a grand clash. This came about in 418 BC at Mantinea I, where Argos sought to contest local Spartan dominance with help from the Athenians and other allies. After several false starts, the two sides finally came to blows with over 17,000 hoplites. Spartan King Agis opened the action with a bungled maneuver that allowed Argos's men to pierce and rout his left wing. However, when the Argives made the mistake of chasing the defeated men, Agis enveloped the Athenian hoplites on the opposite flank. As he did, Argive troops at center and next to Athens' contingent lost their nerve and ran away at first contact with the Spartans. Their flight left the Athenians with enemy spearmen closing from both sides, compelling them to retreat at heavy cost. The battle ended with the Spartans reforming in place to rout the Argive right wing as it came back from its ill-advised pursuit.

The last large engagement between the two dominant city-states came when the Spartans ousted the democratic regime at Athens after the Peloponnesian War and set up an oligarchy to run the city, supporting it with mercenaries and a few of their own hoplites. In 403 BC, Spartan King Pausanius reacted to growing Athenian opposition by leading a surge of fresh troops into the city. He then inadvertently stumbled into battle on a narrow stretch above Halae Marsh, a small coastal swamp south of

the main harbor at Athens. Some 7,500 Spartan hoplites engaged 3,000 Athenian spearmen across the restricted space. Many of the Athenians had only makeshift gear, but with their flanks anchored next to the wetlands and a rising slope, they made a spirited fight of it.

In the end, Pausanius's deeper files finally pushed their way to victory. As usual, the Spartans did not give chase. This time, their restraint not only limited casualties but also garnered good will that allowed Pausanius to negotiate a peaceful withdrawal. This left his old enemies at Athens free to regroup yet also secured his main goal of ending the physical and fiscal drains that the occupation had been inflicting on Sparta.

Making good use of well-drilled tactics, Sparta's superb hoplites had intimidated their foes, maneuvered around formation flanks, and held onto conquered ground to whip the Athenians in every grand-scale meeting over the course of better than half a century. However, they were not able to duplicate this feat in lesser engagements, whereas Athens could better employ its own signature martial skills.

Still, even smaller successes could have significant impact, such as the first three that Athens gained over Sparta earlier in the Peloponnesian War. These began in 425 BC on Spaectaria, a narrow island off southwestern Greece, where the Athenians bested a stranded Spartan garrison. They accomplished this with a landing near dawn that put perhaps 1,000 heavy spearmen and over 1,500 light-armed troops ashore against only 420 hoplites. Holding back from hand-to-hand fighting, this huge landing party drove the Spartans to the northern tip of the island under a rain of javelins and arrows and finally forced their surrender.

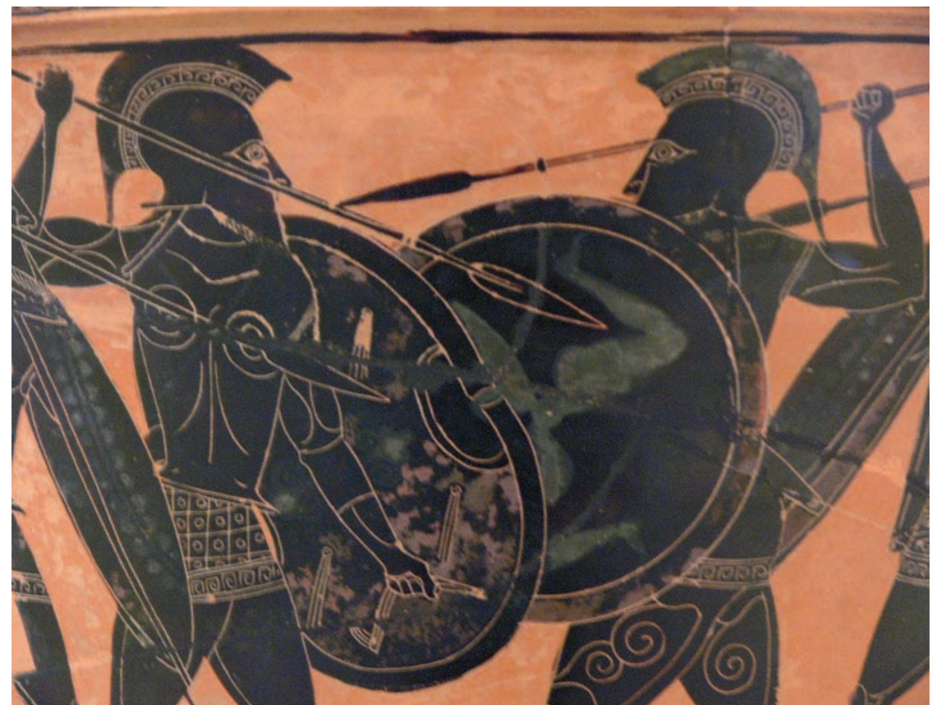
Within a year, hoplites from Athens were decisive in two more modest victories over Sparta. The first was on Cythera, just off the Spartan mainland. Nicias of Athens launched a sudden assault from the sea against this island's port to divert attention from a landing with perhaps 2,000 hoplites. Heading inland, he then met a Spartan phalanx half his strength near Cythera's capital. As had occurred so often, the Spartans advanced to put up a good fight despite being thinly filed. But the Athenians, veterans of many past victories, were not awed. Keeping their poise, they pushed back with files twice as deep until they drove their foes into retreat.

Nicias sent the surviving Spartans home under truce and turned Cythera into a base for amphibious raids all along Sparta's coast. His foes had little chance to intercept the swift and unannounced attacks, and when they did, they met overwhelming opposition. Thucydides reported that a small Spartan garrison near a couple of coastal villages came to blows in contesting one such landing. Having perhaps no more than 300 hoplites, the defenders met quick defeat against what was very likely three times as many Athenian spearmen. The stinging reverse, added to those on Spaectaria and Cythera, dampened the Spartans' ardor for war and induced them to offer peace, only to meet rejection from an increasingly confident Athens.

THE ATHENIANS WRESTED three more small victories from Sparta later in the Peloponnesian War. The first occurred in 411 BC, when the Spartan monarch Agis led a large column toward Athens in hope of exploiting political turmoil there. Some 600 hoplites of Sparta's Sciritae regiment composed the king's vanguard and, when this unit got too far out in front, came under attack. The Athenians pounced on the Sciritae with a mixed force of hoplites, light infantry, and cavalry. Unable to fend off an assault on every front, the Spartan spearmen made a fighting retreat, taking heavy losses in the process. By the time help reached the scene, the Athenians had already swept the field and returned home with the bodies of the fallen.

Thoroughly discouraged, Agis called off his offensive and arranged a truce to recover the remains of his lost men. He tried again, this time managing to reach Athens. There, however, he came up against a phalanx that kept close beneath the city wall, where it had excellent support from archers lining the ramparts above. Judging that he would take unacceptable casualties before even coming to grips with the opposing hoplites, the king simply turned about. As he marched off, his rear ranks fell behind and drew an attack from Athenian skirmishers and horsemen.

Trained from boyhood for battle, Greek hoplites face off at spear point.



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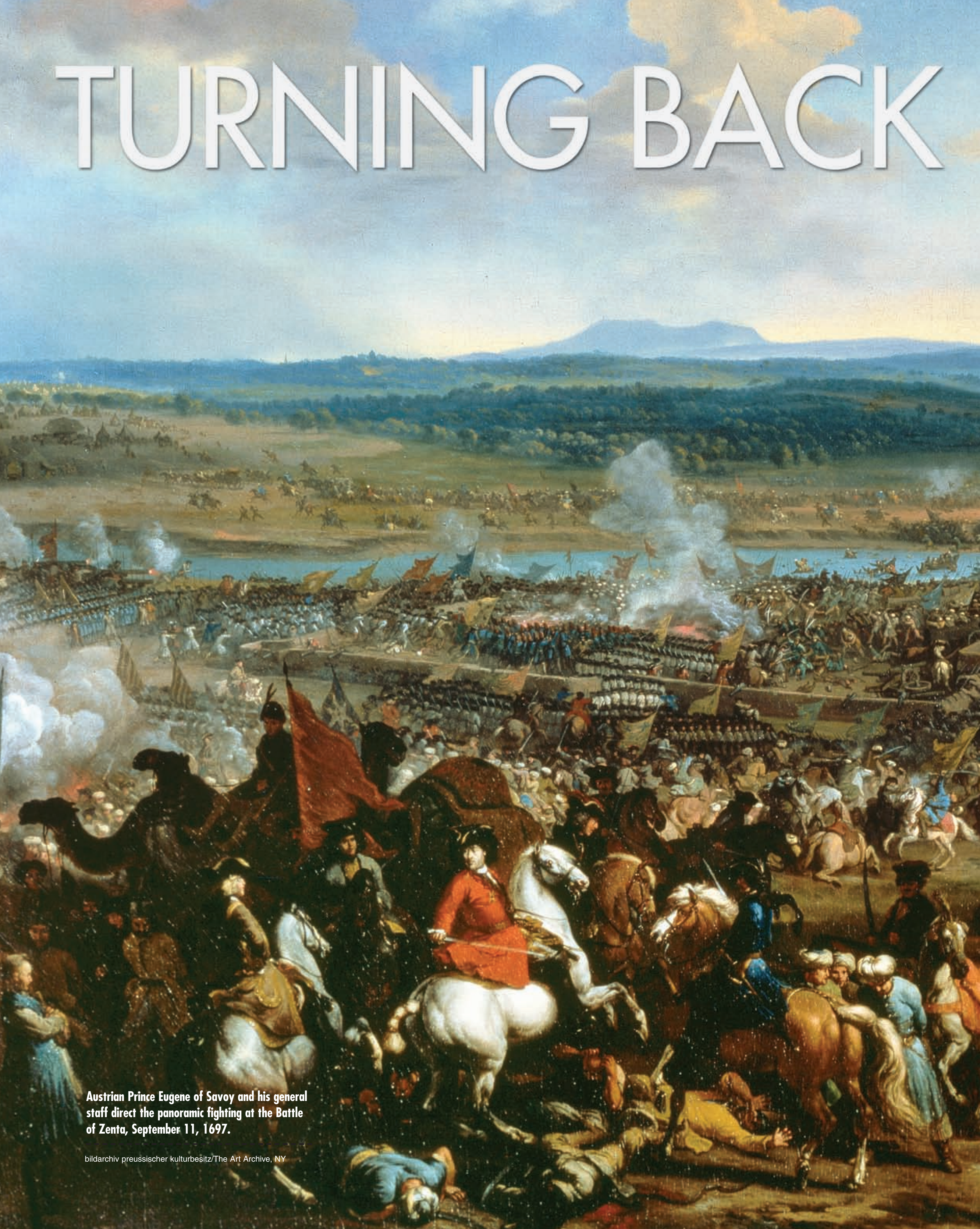
The Spartans' last setback of the war against Athenian troops came in 407 BC on the Aegean island of Andros. There, a landing force under Alcibiades of Athens surprised and beat a garrison half its size. The Spartans, who stood center and right in a thinly filed array, lost when local allies gave way on the left.

Accounts of actual combat between Sparta and Athens at their height make it clear that each had a fair share of success against the other. The Athenians used their expertise at surprise mobilization, amphibious operations, and light-armed warfare (both mounted and afoot) to achieve a greater number of victories. But Sparta's hoplites plied their own deadly skills to win every large action. Any advantage in tactics that either could claim was fleeting, the temporary product of unique circumstances holding sway on a given battlefield. The century closed after long decades of bloody fighting very much as it had begun, with both Sparta and Athens still fiercely independent and equally powerful in their different approaches to war. □

TURNING BACK



Austrian Prince Eugene of Savoy and his general staff direct the panoramic fighting at the Battle of Zenta, September 11, 1697.

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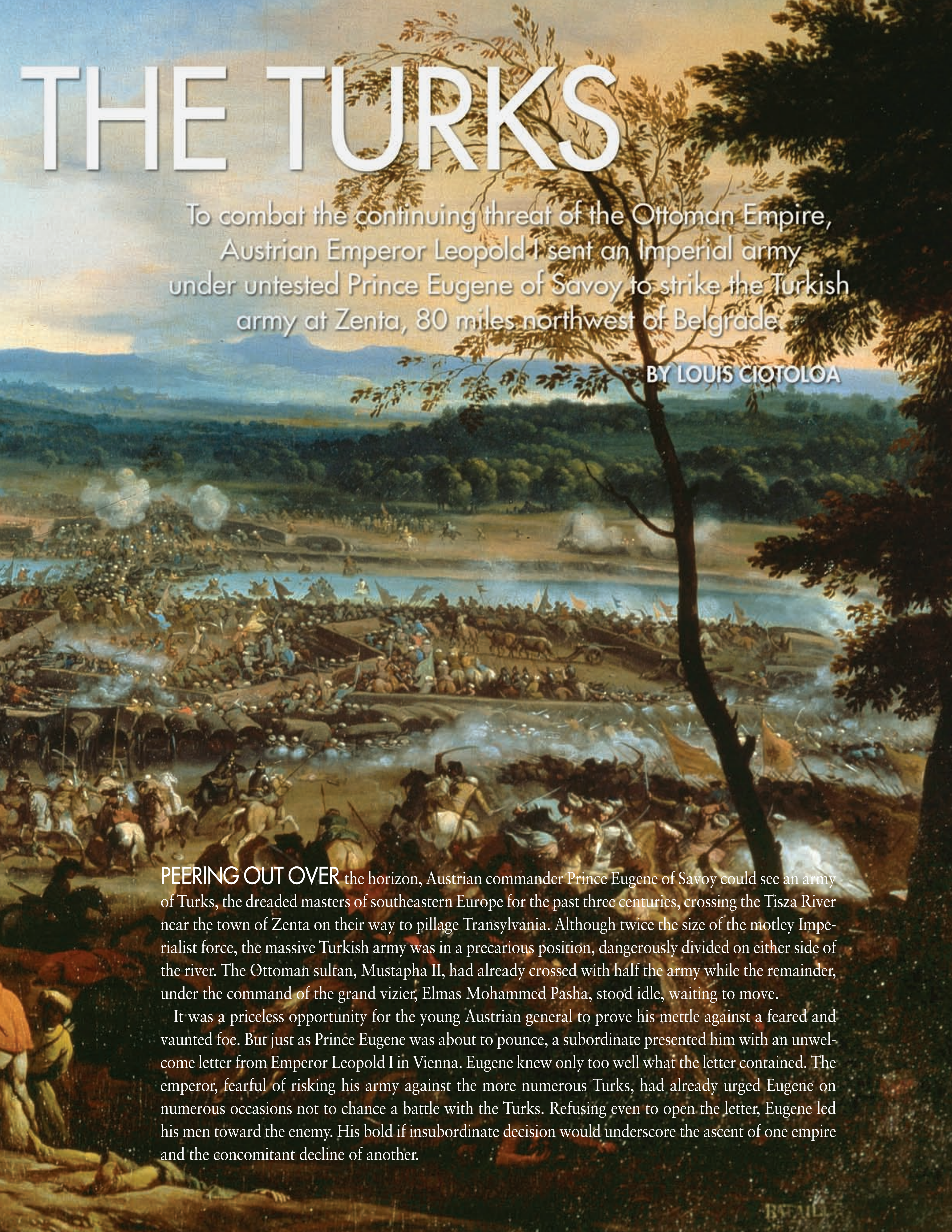

THE TURKS

To combat the continuing threat of the Ottoman Empire, Austrian Emperor Leopold I sent an Imperial army under untested Prince Eugene of Savoy to strike the Turkish army at Zenta, 80 miles northwest of Belgrade.

BY LOUIS CIOTOLOA

PEERING OUT OVER the horizon, Austrian commander Prince Eugene of Savoy could see an army of Turks, the dreaded masters of southeastern Europe for the past three centuries, crossing the Tisza River near the town of Zenta on their way to pillage Transylvania. Although twice the size of the motley Imperialist force, the massive Turkish army was in a precarious position, dangerously divided on either side of the river. The Ottoman sultan, Mustapha II, had already crossed with half the army while the remainder, under the command of the grand vizier, Elmas Mohammed Pasha, stood idle, waiting to move.

It was a priceless opportunity for the young Austrian general to prove his mettle against a feared and vaunted foe. But just as Prince Eugene was about to pounce, a subordinate presented him with an unwelcome letter from Emperor Leopold I in Vienna. Eugene knew only too well what the letter contained. The emperor, fearful of risking his army against the more numerous Turks, had already urged Eugene on numerous occasions not to chance a battle with the Turks. Refusing even to open the letter, Eugene led his men toward the enemy. His bold if insubordinate decision would underscore the ascent of one empire and the concomitant decline of another.

The war between the Austrian Habsburgs and the Ottoman Turks was still in its infancy when the Turks besieged the Austrian capital of Vienna in July 1683. The city's collapse would almost certainly have spelled the end of any Habsburg influence in the Balkans, if not the very dynasty itself. Fortunately for the Austrians, the commander in Vienna, Count Rudiger von Starhemberg, was as competent an officer as any in Europe. Starhemberg led a vigorous defense of the capital, aided in no small part by the arrival of a polyglot Christian army of Austrians, Bavarians, Saxons, various other Germans, and Poles. On September 12, 1683, the Austrians counterattacked the besiegers, routed the Turks, and saved Vienna. Present among the diverse heroes that day was a little-known 19-year-old Italian—Prince Eugene of Savoy.

FOLLOWING THE VICTORY AT VIENNA, Leopold cast his eyes covetously over the Turks' remaining European possessions and envisioned a new Hungarian empire under Austrian control. For the remainder of the decade, Leopold's dream drew ever closer to realization. In September 1686, after a century and a half of Ottoman domination, the city of Buda fell to an Imperialist army under another hero of Vienna, Karl von Lothringen. Satisfied with their gains, the Habsburgs prepared to dictate peace to their enemies, but the stubborn Sultan Mehmed IV rejected such a distasteful idea. His obstinacy served to fuel the Imperialist war machine, and on August 12 of that same year the Austrians crushed the Turks on the battlefield of Mohacs, where centuries earlier the Ottomans had annihilated a Christian army and established their own dominance in the Balkans. This time, the shoe was on the other foot.

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While the Battle of Mohacs fell short of crippling the sultan's military might, it did lead to the Austrian capture of Transylvania. Two years later, on September 6, 1688, an Imperialist army under Bavarian commander Max Emanuel took a prized jewel in the Ottoman crown—Belgrade. Wounded in the effort was a still youthful Prince Eugene.

Then Austrian progress ground to a halt. Following the fall of Belgrade, King Louis XIV of France announced a new war against the Habsburgs, in no small part due to his archenemy's astounding success in the east. Leopold refused to back down from either challenge, throwing his kingdom into a war on two fronts. The strength of his forces in the Balkans suffered accordingly as troops were transferred to the Rhineland and Italy. The reduction of troops did not go unnoticed in the Turkish camp, and the sultan worked diligently to take full advantage of the weakened Imperialist army.

ABOVE: Emperor Leopold I in his golden wedding cuirass. RIGHT: Count Ernst Rudiger von Starhemberg.

The capable Mustafa Koprulu was appointed grand vizier, and in 1690 a reconstructed army of 80,000 Turks under his command launched an offensive toward Belgrade. The depleted Imperialists had little choice but to fall back and abandon their hard-earned conquest, and by October the banner of the Ottoman Empire once again flew over the city. It was obvious that the Habsburgs had critically underestimated the strength of the Turks, but Leopold nevertheless remained undeterred. Still determined to establish a Hungarian empire, he reduced his battalions in the west and sent soldiers back to the eastern front. His moves resulted the following year in a victory at the Battle of Szlankamen, in which Koprulu was killed.

The momentum following Szlankamen could not be maintained, owing to growing financial stress and the war with France. By 1692, the Imperialist army again had ceased making progress in the field. A year later it failed miserably in an attempt to retake Belgrade. Increasingly desperate, Leopold looked for someone—anyone—to resurrect his fortunes. When the 25-year-old Elector of Saxony, Friederich Augustus I von Sachsen, offered reinforcements in exchange for overall command of the army, the emperor quickly accepted. It did not take long, however, for Augustus's ineptness and lethargy to become apparent in the face of determined Turkish offensives on every front. Soon Leopold was looking for another savior. The solution to his problem was a young yet experienced foreign officer serving in Italy, Prince Eugene of Savoy.

Eugene was born in Paris on October 18, 1663. Both his father, Prince Eugene Maurice of Savoy-Carignan, and his mother, Olympia, were of Italian origin. Following the death of his father and the exile of his mother, Eugene was left to the care of his grandmother. Desiring to distinguish himself, the young man sought a position in the French army, but Louis XIV rejected Eugene's continued entreaties. Angry and disheartened, the prince looked to Austria, which had just begun its war against the Ottoman Turks. Spurred by news of the death of his brother, who had already been serving Emperor Leopold in Hungary, Eugene turned to his cousin, the Margrave Louis of Baden, for assistance. With Louis of Baden's assistance, Eugene entered the Austrian ranks and went to war.

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Events moved quickly for Eugene. Under his cousin's command, he fought valiantly in the battle to relieve Vienna. News of his bravery spread all the way to the emperor, who was so impressed that he promised Eugene a regimental command. Rising in the Austrian ranks, Eugene again served admirably at the capture of Buda and led a cavalry brigade at the Battle

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Christian forces commanded by Charles V, Duke of Lorraine, and Polish King John III Sobieski, break the Turkish siege of Vienna on September 12, 1683.

of Mohacs. His efforts on the field earned him a promotion to lieutenant field marshal. Although he owed much to the emperor, Eugene's growing knowledge, combined with his youth, caused him to question his master's judgment. In 1688, when Leopold decided to continue hostilities with both France and the Ottoman Empire, the prince reacted sharply, writing: "Most people believe that we want to continue the two wars, although anyone with any senses who has the public good at heart is furious about it and knows that it is only monks who uphold this point of view." Fortunately for Eugene, Leopold was unconcerned by such criticisms and continued to employ his youthful general. As it happened, he required Eugene's talents elsewhere than the two primary war fronts. In 1689, along with many of his compatriots, Eugene was dispatched to the west, first serving briefly along the Rhine before heading to northern Italy. There he was to assist the Duke of Savoy and maintain a standing army of Spaniards. Before long, however, Eugene found the assignment distasteful. His deficient Spanish troops were unlikely to aid him in his martial ambitions, and Savoy was an uncommitted ally who was soon to defect from the Austrian cause. It would take a number of years and sustained setbacks in the east before Eugene would get the opportunity for independent command.

Despite Augustus's bungling, Leopold had little choice but to keep him on as the Imperialist commander in Hungary. With everything that was going wrong, he could not risk losing the Saxon reinforcements. The emperor was, however, willing to bring in an Austrian general to serve directly under Augustus as a means of obtaining at least some control over the situation. By late 1696, Eugene was practically begging to be transferred to the Hungarian front. Many in Vienna felt the same way. Foremost among them was the savior of the city, Rudiger von Starhemberg. Now serving as president of the War Council, the highest military rank in Austria, Starhemberg advised the

Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY

emperor: "No one with more understanding, experience, application, and zeal for Your Imperial Majesty's service, or with a more generous and disinterested temper, and possessing the esteem of his soldiers to a greater extent than the Prince" existed in the army. Starhemberg's opinion was impossible to ignore. Before long, his insistence proved decisive. On April 5, 1697, Leopold dispatched Eugene to Hungary to serve under Augustus. He was 33 years old.

AN AMAZING STROKE of good luck came to Eugene soon after his arrival on the front. The recent death of the Polish monarch had left that kingdom's crown vacant, and Augustus immediately began contemplating a bid to become the new king. He needed only to be urged slightly in that direction in order to be rid of him in Hungary for good. Leopold, Starhemberg, and Eugene were only too willing to oblige. Late that spring, Augustus made the decision to travel to Poland, where he would eventually be elected king. Eugene now had his first independent command.

Although overjoyed at seeing Augustus depart, the emperor nevertheless retained doubts concerning Eugene's youth and inexperience. He ordered Eugene to avoid all unnecessary risks, telling him "to act cautiously and avoid getting involved in any action without a good chance of success." When Eugene joined the Imperialist camp outside of Kolluth in the middle of July, he found a fighting force all too willing to obey the emperor's wishes. Augustus's lethargy had caused the army to degenerate into an ill-led mob. Utterly lacking discipline and money, Eugene wrote to Leopold that he saw nothing more than "indescribable misery" among the men.

THE AUSTRIAN ATTACKERS EASILY PENETRATED THE ABANDONED DEFENSES INTO THE HEART OF THE FRANTIC MOB THAT WAS ONCE THE PROUD TURKISH ARMY.

Eugene refused to allow such misery to dismay him. Upon reaching his destination, an officer informed him that the army was 31,142 strong. Eugene snapped back: "Thank you for the information. I am the 31,143rd, and we will soon be more. Let the enemy but allow me a few days in which to assemble Your Majesty's soldiers and then, with God's help, I will confound his purpose." But the task ahead was a daunting one. Leopold had few resources with which to supply the army. Eugene would have to procure them himself. In doing so, the young general put on a display of logistical genius that few others could match. Using the rivers of the region to his full advantage, Eugene masterfully shipped in supplies from the surrounding countryside. Within a few weeks, the downtrodden Imperialist army was back on its feet.

Fueled by French money, Eugene's opponent, the 100,000-man Turkish army under the command of Sultan Mustapha II and his grand vizier, Elmas Mohammed Pasha, was determined to test its new opponent. On August 19, the lumbering Ottoman juggernaut crossed the Tisza River, intending to invest the Imperialist fortifications at Peterwardein. Initially, there was nothing Eugene could do to halt the enemy

advance. His own army, although now better supplied, was still far inferior in size to the sultan's force. But help was on the way. The timely arrival of reinforcements, troops who had just finished suppressing a revolt in Hungary, boosted his strength to 50,000 men. Still, with an army only half the size of the Turks', an offensive was impossible. The alternative, a strategy long ago endorsed by both Leopold and Augustus, was to march to Peterwardein and prepare for a defensive struggle. If the Turks were to offer battle there, at least it would be on the Imperialists' home ground.

Eugene's arrival at Peterwardein changed everything. One look at the town's defenses was enough to dissuade Mustapha from his original intent. Instead, he decided to march along the Tisza, choose a crossing point, and invade Transylvania to pillage for supplies. This complete alteration of tactics seemed to suggest that despite a tremendous advantage in men, the sultan for some reason was afraid to give battle. The updated situation encouraged Eugene to pursue a more aggressive strategy. Intelligence further revealed a sharp Turkish deficiency in cavalry and an over-abundance of raw recruits. Obviously, this was the reason the sultan shied away from a confrontation. With a newfound confidence, Eugene marched his army from the safety of Peterwardein in pursuit of the enemy.

The prince was not overconfident. After all, the sultan still possessed a formidable 2-to-1 advantage over him. Consequently, Eugene maintained a safe distance from the Ottomans, waiting for an opportunity to attack. Early on the morning of September 11, he received amazing news. A captured Turkish pasha named Cafer, at the threat of being "hacked to pieces," informed Eugene that Mustapha's army was in the process of crossing the Tisza near the small town of Zenta. Apparently only half the Turks had crossed the river; the others were still waiting on the near bank. The situation was perfect. Eugene would attack the divided enemy and drive it into the river. The prince quickly assembled his cavalry and raced toward Zenta, with the bulk of the Imperialist army following close behind.

The marshland that made up the terrain over which Eugene had to cross to reach Zenta failed to slow the determined commander. Within a couple of hours, the Imperialist cavalry was within striking distance of the Turkish army. The sight that greeted it was enticing indeed. The captured pasha's information proved correct. The sultan, along with the bulk of his cavalry, artillery, and baggage, was already on the far side of the Tisza, having crossed over a hastily constructed pontoon bridge composed of 60 boats, while the grand vizier and most of the Turkish infantry, the janissaries, remained on the near side awaiting their turn.

EUGENE WAS SO OVERJOYED by what he saw that for a moment he considered striking the janissaries at once with only his cavalry, but he wisely chose the safer course and waited for the arrival of his infantry. He did not, however, sit idle while he waited; he sent back orders to the approaching army to arrange itself for battle en route. Within hours the rest of the army arrived, and although it had force-marched for 10 hours and the day was growing late, the Imperialist soldiers were fully prepared to attack.

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ABOVE: Prince Eugene of Savoy. TOP LEFT: Recapture of Buda castle from the Turks, 1686. Prince Eugene is mounted, right-center.

The weather was clear that afternoon, and the assembled Imperialists could easily discern the Turkish infantry massed on the flat ground waiting to cross the makeshift bridge over the Tisza. Although they had been eyeing the Imperialist cavalry for hours, the Turks were unconcerned. The sultan and his grand vizier never expected the Imperialists to be so bold as to attack their entire army. As a result, the Turkish soldiers prepared only slight earthworks and a ring of wagons to cover them as they forded the river. Only when the Imperialist infantry appeared did the Ottomans begin to brace for a possible assault. By then, it was already too late.

The Imperialist infantry arrived in a semicircle formation predesigned by Eugene to surround the Turkish bridgehead and crush it completely. There was no question in Eugene's mind that he would launch an attack despite the growing lateness of the day. Such an opportunity could hardly be passed up. But just as he was about to give the order to advance, the prince received a letter from the emperor. Eugene knew the meaning of the correspondence. Leopold had been begging him to refrain from aggressive action ever since he sent the prince to Hungary. Eugene simply chose to ignore the letter, leaving it unopened. Nothing was going to stop his date with destiny.

Eugene ordered the army forward directly into the face of the enemy. The right wing was commanded by Siegbert Heister, the left was under Guido Starhemberg (no relation to the famous

Rudiger), and Eugene himself was leading the center. In the late-afternoon sunlight, the Imperialist army moved forth.

The Turkish sultan unleashed his artillery against the advancing Imperialists from the opposite bank of the river, but his 100 guns were entirely ineffective, while the Austrian guns by comparison began mauling the enemy ranks. Within a short time, the Turks were becoming increasingly disorganized. In an attempt to slow Eugene's progress, the grand vizier ordered what little cavalry he had available on his side of the river to charge. The assault failed miserably, driven off by the Austrian dragoons. Meanwhile, a mass of Turkish s*pahis* was moving back across the bridge on orders from Mustapha to assist the grand vizier. The bridge being narrow, the pace of the horsemen was excruciatingly slow, and their presence clogged the only possible escape route for the surrounded janissaries. Should their line break, the Ottoman army would suffer an unimaginable catastrophe.

EUGENE QUICKLY RECOGNIZED that the Turkish right was the key to winning the battle. To its rear, the waters of the Tisza were shallow due to a large sandbar. Eugene instructed Starhemberg and his left wing to wade through the waters, bypass the Turkish defenses, and hit the enemy from behind. The maneuver was an instant success, catching the defenders completely by surprise. Their attempts to turn and face the threat to their rear created utter confusion in the Turkish ranks. For Eugene, the time was ripe to launch an all-out assault. He gave the order for the right and center to advance simultaneously, personally leading the charge over the marshy ground. Only infantry could advance in such wet terrain, but that proved to be all the force the Imperialists needed.

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Routed Turkish soldiers flee from Christian forces at Zenta, located in present-day Serbia.

The turmoil behind the Turkish lines created panic and caused the soldiers to leave their earthworks and wagon barrier almost entirely defenseless. The Austrian attackers easily penetrated the abandoned defenses into the heart of the frantic mob that was once the proud Turkish army. The janissaries never even bothered to discharge their firearms, but rather reached immediately for their swords in a vain display of medieval bravery. With the *spahis* still bunched together on the bridge, there was little hope to escape. When Starhemberg's men reached the bridge themselves, even that little glimmer of hope disappeared.

From Sultan Mustapha's vantage point, the scene across the river was heartbreaking. The cream of his army was being cut to pieces in brutal hand-to-hand combat, and there was absolutely nothing he could do about it. Bottled up against the river, the Turks fought like madmen until Starhemberg ordered his troops to fire point-blank into their backs. The volley was punishing and its effect disastrous. Many of the Turkish soldiers now chose to risk the deeper flowing waters of the Tisza rather than face the cold steel and fury of the Imperialists. A mass flight ensued as thousands of Turks rushed into the river. The result was horrifying. The vast majority of the Turks, attempting desperately to swim over one another, thrashed and sank to a watery grave. Of the drowned a shocked Eugene would later comment, "Men could stand on the dead Turkish bodies as if on an island." Barely 1,000 Turks reached the far shore alive.

Some, however, fought on, and the annihilation of the remaining janissaries was not complete until 10 PM. Only their pride kept these last valiant Turks fighting—by now, even their sultan was in the process of abandoning them, choosing to flee to Temesvar instead of making a stand with the remaining half of his army. The Imperialist troops, for their part, showed no mercy, prompting Eugene to comment, "The soldiers got worked up to such a pitch that they spared no one and butchered all who fell into their hands despite the large sums of money which the Pashas and Turkish leaders offered them to spare their lives." When all was said and done, the riverbank was littered with the dead and dying in a volume as yet atypical in western warfare. Some 20,000 Turkish corpses littered the field of battle, with as many as 10,000 more drifting in the Tisza. Among them were the governors of Anatolia and Bosnia, four viziers, and the luckless grand vizier Elmas Mohammed Pasha. Rumor had it that many more Ottoman officers were murdered by their own furious men. The affair was brutally lopsided. Joining the dead were a mere 500 Imperialists, while another 2,000 were wounded.

The next day the Imperialist army crossed the bridge into what had been Mustapha's camp. There it discovered nothing short of a treasure. In his panic, the sultan had left behind all of his artillery, a huge sum in money, roughly 9,000 baggage carts, and an astounding 60,000 camels. The booty excited an already exultant Eugene even more. "Amongst the Turks there is a terrible confusion," he reported. "With a little more preparation it would be possible to capture the entire kingdom and keep it."

But Eugene was a naturally wise commander, and he soon came to his senses and adopted a more realistic approach. It was late in the year and a growing number of his men were becom-

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Waving his hat, Prince Eugene of Savoy celebrates with his triumphant soldiers at Zenta.

ing sick, a common problem during campaigns in the Balkans. Upon careful observation of the situation, Eugene complained of "six weeks in these wastes, where woods in particular cannot be found, where there is no forage and almost all the water has to be taken from stagnant pools." There would be no pursuit of Mustapha.

EUGENE'S SPIRITS, however, were still high, and on September 15 he wrote an enthusiastic letter to the emperor, announcing his remarkable achievement at Zenta. "The great and signal victory and this considerable battle drew to a close with the day itself," he wrote. "It was as though the sun decided not to set until it could see and cast its rays on the triumph of Your Majesty's arms." Only then, after the sun had set on that fateful day at Zenta, did Eugene finally open the letter from Leopold. The letter contained precisely what he had anticipated—an order to avoid battle with the Turkish army.

Because of existing circumstances, Eugene decided to exploit Zenta with only a limited campaign into a now wide-open Bosnia. The offensive caught the Turks by surprise, and the Imperialists marched almost completely unmolested to Sarajevo. Upon reaching the city, Eugene dispatched two messengers to the Turkish garrison bearing his terms of surrender. The obstinate defenders fired upon them, killing one. Incensed, Eugene ordered Sarajevo set ablaze. This uncharacteristically brutal measure brought an end to the year's fighting and put an emphatic stamp on what had been an utter disaster for the Ottoman Empire.

The Austrian commander returned to Vienna on November 17 to great applause. The city erupted in spontaneous celebration while the rest of Europe, with the notable exception of Louis XIV, cheered him as a Christian hero. To Emperor Leopold, Eugene personally presented an Ottoman seal found on the field of battle around the neck of the dead grand vizier. Contrary to rumors propagated by jealous rivals that claimed Leopold was angered by Eugene's disobedience, the emperor was in fact overjoyed by his young protégé's triumph. Instead of temporarily imprisoning the general, as the story went, the emperor showered him with praise and gifts. And why not? Eugene's triumph had all but ensured Leopold's longstanding dream of a Habsburg-dominated Hungary.

That dream became a reality two years later when an exhausted Ottoman Empire finally came to the peace table with Austria and its allies. On January 26, 1699, the Treaty of Karlowitz awarded the Habsburgs possession of both Hungary and Transylvania. Austria now ruled central Europe unchallenged and possessed a formal empire. The boundaries established at Karlowitz between Austria and the Ottoman Empire would last until the end of the World War I in 1918. In stark and unforgiving contrast, the Ottoman Empire began its unrelenting decline, a fall in fortunes that would one day cause it to be shamefully branded "the sick man of Europe." From Vienna to Karlowitz, a span of just 17 years, the Turkish Empire went from its zenith to its lowest point. The Battle of Zenta was the final nail in the coffin.

As for the hero of that battle, Prince Eugene of Savoy, his career had yet to blossom into its full glory. A year after the end of the Turkish war the calamitous War of the Spanish Succession began. The prince would have the opportunity to do battle as an independent commander against the very kingdom that had disowned him so many years before. Alongside the equally brilliant English general, John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, Eugene would win famous victory after famous victory against the French to become one of the premier military commanders in European history. And it had all started at Zenta, with an unopened letter from the emperor. □

MEXICAN-AMERICAN CLASH AT SAN

Early in the Mexican War, American General Stephen Watts Kearny led his 1,700-man army across New Mexico and into California. On December 6, 1846, at San Pasqual, the two sides collided in battle.

Badly wounded Marine Captain Archibald Gillespie manages to fire an artillery round into on-charging Mexican lancers in artist Charles Waterhouse's painting. INSET: General Stephen Watts Kearny.

PASQUAL

BY ERIC NIDEROST

Painting by Col. Charles Waterhouse

AROUND NOON on September 25, 1846, Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny mounted his bay horse and raised a hand in salute. He was an impressive figure, ramrod straight in the saddle, impeccably dressed with a double row of brass buttons marching down his chest and gold epaulettes perched on each shoulder. At Kearny's signal, his grandly named Army of the West moved out of Fort Marcy, a military post just outside Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Kearny, a professional soldier, had been given a vitally important assignment. The newly minted general was ordered to take over New Mexico, then proceed to California and establish a functioning American government there. The odyssey actually began weeks earlier at Fort Leavenworth, on the Kansas plains, where the 1,700-man army assembled for duty. Many of the troops were hastily raised civilians, such as Colonel Alexander Doniphan's Missouri Mounted Volunteers, but the Army of the West's professional core was provided by Companies B,C, G, I, and K of the U.S. 1st Dragoons.

San Fernando Valley Historical Society

The journey from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe had been no picnic, but the men were inured to hardships on campaign. Kearny was a strict disciplinarian who forced a grueling pace—22 miles a day was average, and sometimes the column exceeded 30. The troopers longed for action, but the Mexicans seemingly refused to cooperate. Most Americans of the time viewed Mexicans with contempt, considering them culturally and biologically inferior to whites. The Army of the West's first encounters with Mexican people only fed these stereotypes. The column met a few Hispanics along the trail, seedy-looking individuals mounted on diminutive jackasses. Lieutenant William Hensley Emory later recalled that the Mexicans presented "a ludicrous contrast by the side of the big men and horses of the first dragoon[s]." Even mountain man guide Tom Fitzpatrick, who had a notable sense of humor, convulsed with laughter at the poorly mounted Mexicans.

The army's overconfidence was soon replaced by mounting frustration. The men entered Las Vegas, New Mexico, without opposition, but rumors arose of a large Mexican force waiting just outside town. Here was a chance for glory, a chance to forget the short rations and endless hours in the saddle. The national and regimental colors were unfurled, and each company's fork-tailed guidons waved in the breeze as buglers sounded commands, the brassy notes galvanizing the men and exciting their horses.

The Mexicans were supposed to be hiding in a gorge two miles from Las Vegas, and as the troopers neared the gorge, the squadrons broke into a full-blown charge. The troopers were quickly disappointed—they found the gorge discouragingly empty of the enemy. The Mexicans had fled if, indeed, there had ever been any Mexican soldiers in the vicinity in the first place. Emory, a topographical engineer with a keen eye for terrain, noted that there were several potential defensive positions along the Americans' line of march. They had been left unmanned. The Mexicans seemed unwilling or unable to mount any kind of defense.

DON MANUEL ARMIJO, the governor of the New Mexico province, was a self-styled general with no actual military experience. In fact, he preferred bombast to bullets, regularly unleashing a steady stream of paper proclamations and bellicose speeches on his unfortunate subjects. A comic-opera stereotype, the portly Armijo stuffed himself into a gaudy uniform dripping with gold lace, but there was no substance beneath the grandiose façade. He realized his bluff was about to be called.

Apache Canyon, a narrow defile 15 miles southeast of Santa Fe, was the last best place to stop the *norteamericano* invaders. Armijo hastily assembled some 3,000 local inhabitants, urging them to "crush the gringo invaders." It was a ragtag army scarcely worthy of the name, a hodgepodge of peon farmers, ranch hands, sheepherders, and old men armed with weapons so antique they belonged in a museum, not on a battlefield.

Luckily for all concerned, Armijo fled the scene and his army melted away like snow in the desert sun. American forces occupied Santa Fe without firing a shot—except for the 13-gun artillery salute that accompanied the raising of the Stars and Stripes on the roof of the governor's palace. Kearny, for his part, was conciliatory but firm. He made a speech that declared New Mexico part of the United States. Its citizens—at least the prominent ones—would have to declare allegiance to the American government. Mexican institutions such as the Catholic Church would be respected, and the American army would protect the people of New Mexico from marauding Indians.

Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny accepts the surrender of Santa Fe on August 18, 1846.

The Granger Collection, New York

Kearny stayed in Santa Fe for a month, laying the foundations of American control, before pushing on to California, the main goal of his peripatetic mission. California, three years' shy of its epochal gold rush, was still a much-sought-after prize. Its mineral riches were as yet untapped, but all recognized its natural bounty in the form of a mild climate, rich topsoil, and long coastline indented by good natural harbors. Mexican California was largely confined to the coast, a thin veneer of Hispanic civilization anchored by a chain of 21 Catholic missions. The missions had originally been meant as temporary institutions, lasting no more than a decade, but they had ossified into a kind of permanent status. They had been secularized in the 1830s, shut down, and acquired by a rising class of local cattle barons called rancheros. In 1846, Mexican California had around 7,000 Hispanics and one-tenth as many Americans. This figure did not include 6,000 former Mission Indians and well over 100,000 Native Americans living in the interior.

California, for all its promise, was still some 2,000 miles away from the leading politicians and generals in Mexico City. The native Hispanics—called Californios—had grown bitter over time at Mexico City's neglect. The bitterness festered until some prominent Californios began to think openly that the sore could be cured only by the balm of semi-independence. A few even dared to think of foreign intervention—perhaps an American protectorate or even annexation.

The last outside governor of California—that is, one from Mexico—was General Manuel Micheltorena. He was not without talent, but the 300 soldiers he brought with him proved to be his undoing. They were an ill-disciplined lot, ragged and semi-mutinous; many were ex-convicts. When regular pay was not forthcoming—a common complaint in early California—many *soldados* simply went back to their old light-fingered trades. Their numerous thefts and outrages alienated the Californios, who rose in revolt, and before long Micheltorena and his band of robbers were expelled from the province.

The Californios had triumphed temporarily, but they were divided into northern and southern factions. Governor Pio Pico, a native Californian, became governor of the rebellious but essentially autonomous province. He was the head of the southern faction, with his capital in the tiny pueblo of Los Angeles. The north was controlled by Jose Castro, military commandant of the region. Don Jose's base was Monterey, the principal port of California, and he financed his power with revenue from the all-important customs house.

The Californios still gave lip service to Mexico, but by 1846 they were effectively independent of Mexican control. At the same time, California was dependent on foreign trade, which had kept the region prosperous during its long periods of official neglect. The rancheros thrived on a growing tallow and cattle-hide industry. Americans and British dominated the hide and tallow trade through strong ties with the burgeoning factories of New England.

Californio leaders such as General Guadalupe Vallejo of Sonoma liked the Americans and favored annexation. These sentiments were

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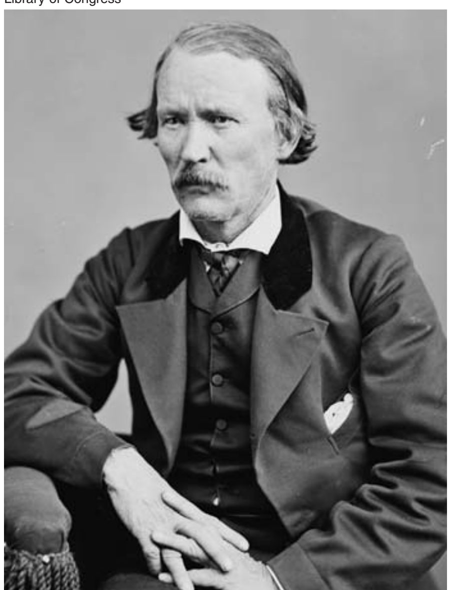

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THE CALIFORNIOS WERE ARMED WITH LANCES, AND THEY KNEW HOW TO USE THEM. BY CONTRAST, THE ARMY OF THE WEST WAS A MERE SHADOW OF ITS FORMER SELF, THE TROOPERS NO MORE THAN EMACIATED SCARECROWS MOUNTED ON MULES OR HALF-BROKEN HORSES.

encouraged by U.S. Consul Thomas Larkin, a Monterey businessman who doubled as a diplomat. Larkin himself was well respected by the Californios and had a great deal of personal and political influence. The consul worked feverishly for American annexation, at one point exulting in a private letter that "the pear is near ripe for falling."

Kearny had been ordered to complete the California harvest by occupying the territory and establishing a functioning American government there. With New Mexico apparently pacified, he looked forward to continuing on to the Pacific Coast. To date, the Army of the West had traveled some 850 miles from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe. Now it was about to embark on the most difficult and physically demanding leg of the journey.

In leaving Santa Fe, the Americans in effect were leaving the last vestige of civilization. Captain Philip St. George Cooke noted that "tomorrow, three hundred wilderness-worn dragoons, in shabby and patched clothing set forth to conquer or annex a Pacific empire, to take a leap in the dark of a thousand miles of wild plains and mountains." Cooke, not one for hyperbole, worried that they would be crossing several deserts where "a camel might starve, if not perish from thirst." Events would soon prove Cooke too sanguine in his worries.

The expedition was meant to gather information as well as to conquer. Emory headed a 14-man topographical party attached to the Army of the West. He was a consummate professional, eager to gather data that could be used to create the first accurate map of the lower Rio Grande-Gila River region. To do so, he was equipped with a special instrument wagon filled with chronometers and barometers. The first few days, as the column marched down the Rio Grande valley, were deceptively pleasant, warmed by the late fall sun. Vast groves of cottonwoods and willows lined the river. On October 6, the Army of the West camped at Valverde, where ruins bore mute testimony to Spain's ultimate failure to halt Navajo and Apache Indian raids.

ABOVE LEFT: Mexican Major Andres Pico. CENTER: Renowned scout Christopher "Kit" Carson. RIGHT: Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan.

ABOUT NOON, a small party of horsemen was spotted heading toward the camp. There was a moment of anxiety—were they hostile Indians? Tensions eased when it was discovered that most were white men, headed by Christopher "Kit" Carson, one of the most famous mountain men of his era. Carson was bound for the East Coast, carrying dispatches from Commodore Robert Stockton to President James K. Polk announcing the peaceful occupation of California.

Kearny was thunderstuck—had his mission been preempted? He pored over the dispatches, and Carson provided additional information. Elements of the U.S. Pacific squadron had landed three months earlier, boldly proclaiming that California was now part of the United States. On July 7, a party of American marines had marched to the Monterey customs house and raised the Stars and Stripes. Two days later, Captain John B. Montgomery of the USS *Portsmouth* landed at the village of Yerba Buena (later San Francisco) and raised the flag there as well. The Californios seemed indifferent to the American takeover. Some, like Vallejo, actually welcomed the change of regimes.

Kearny was not one to hesitate, and after short reflection he decided to press on to California. Orders were orders, even if the Navy had stolen his thunder. Knowing that they would soon be leaving the relatively benign Rio Grande valley and heading west toward the forbidding Gila River region, Kearny ordered Carson to abandon his original mission and guide the army to California. On Carson's advice, Kearny sent 200 dragoons—two-thirds of his force—back to Santa Fe. He would soon regret his hasty decision.

The column struck westward into the sandy upper reaches of the Sonoran Desert. The wagons quickly got stuck in the sand, as Carson had warned, driving the mule teams to exhaustion. Progress was so laborious that Kearny finally ordered the wagons to be abandoned. Supplies were switched to pack mule, something that filled Emory with dismay since his delicate instruments

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ABOVE: San Francisco was merely a sleepy Mexican port in March 1847. RIGHT: Marine Captain Archibald Gillespie left San Diego with a small force and joined Kearney.

were not designed to be carried in such rough fashion.

The line of march followed the meandering Gila River. The days were blisteringly hot; the nights freezing cold. Cactus sprouted everywhere, the sharp thorns ripping sweat-stained blue uniforms to shreds and lacerating the sides of the long-suffering horses and mules. Soon, all the animals were scarred with cactus wounds and saddle sores, and the cavalry horses that were the source of so much pride to the troopers began dying in droves, leaving many of the men to stumble on foot. Kearny's own mount, a magnificent bay, died and was left for the coyotes and vultures. Kearny had to switch to a mule, which might have looked ridiculous but at least was better than going on foot.

In spite of the hardships, Kearny managed to meet with some Indians along the way, including the Apache leader Mangas Coloradas, father-in-law of the great future chief, Cochise. The Apaches recognized at once that these white men were different from the Mexicans and quickly swore eternal friendship with the newcomers. (Carson wryly observed that he would not trust any of them.) The column also passed through the lands of the Pima and Maricopa tribes, gifted agriculturalists who made the desert bloom with wheat, corn, and other crops. Emory, a keen observer, noted that the Indians were peace loving yet obviously able to defend themselves against Apache depredations.

It was now November, and the Americans captured a Mexican courier in possession of important dispatches. The papers, dated October 15, told of major Californio uprisings against the Americans in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. This altered the strategic picture and galvanized Kearny's entire command. They could expect hard fighting—and soon.

THE ARMY OF the West crossed the Colorado River into California on November 25. The next few days were ones of incredible hardship for the Americans as they crossed a 90-mile stretch of barren landscape. The brackish water available did little to quench the raging thirst of men and beasts. Food was so scarce that the troopers had to slaughter their mules. Their immediate goal was Warner's Ranch, near the base of the southern Sierra Nevada. As they neared the ranch the land became richer, blessed with rich soil, waving grass, and stands of mighty oaks. Warner's Ranch seemed like the Garden of Eden to the travel-worn command, and they spent two days resting and feasting on mutton. Although somewhat refreshed, the dragoons were still a sorry sight: emaciated, ragged, sunburned, and half naked. Some were even barefoot.

The troopers managed to round up 75 fresh horses and mules, although only 30 were saddle broken enough to be of service. They belonged to Jose Maria Flores, a leading insurgent against the Americans. One of his drovers reported the theft and told Flores that there was a group of gringo soldiers in the area. Thus alerted, Flores contacted Major Andres Pico, brother of the governor, and advised the officer to reconnoiter the area. In the meantime, Kearny dispatched a message to the American forces at San Diego, urgently requesting an escort to the coast. When Commodore Stockton received the missive he immediately ordered Marine Captain Archibald Gillespie, Lieutenant Edward Beale, and friendly Californio leader Rafael Machado to take a small force and link up with the Army of the West. Gillespie's mixed command took along a four-pounder cannon as artillery.

Altogether, Gillespie brought another 37 men to Kearny's command, boosting the totals to roughly 140. Kearny also had two artillery pieces of his own, dragged laboriously though the sandy wastes and mountain defiles. The general was happy to see Gillespie, but he keenly missed the 200 extra men he had sent back to Santa Fe. Ironically, Gillespie was one of the reasons the Californios were in revolt in the first place. His high-handed occupation of Los Angeles, including arbitrary arrests, had caused much bitterness among the local population.

Col. Charles Waterhouse

On December 5, Don Andres Pico arrived at San Pasqual, a small Indian village 30 miles east of San Diego. Don Andres, supposedly a competent soldier, was apparently unaware the Americans were camped only six miles away. He had around 80 men, mostly local vaqueros, under his command, and at first glance the Mexicans seemed outmatched. For the most part, his men were not professional soldiers, and they possessed few firearms. But the disparity was more apparent than real. The Californios were armed with lances, and they knew how to use them. By contrast, the Army of the West was a mere shadow of its former self, the troopers no more than emaciated scarecrows mounted on mules or half-broken horses.

The night of December 5-6 was cold and rainy, dampening American spirits as well as drenching the troopers' ragged uniforms. Gillespie warned Kearny that there were Californio soldiers in the vicinity and offered to send some of his own mountain men to scout the area. Kearny approved the idea but preferred to send his own dragoons to reconnoiter. Events would prove that this was a crucial tactical blunder.

Lieutenant Thomas Hammond was ordered to lead the scouting party, accompanied by Californio turncoat Rafael Machado and six dragoons. The lieutenant and his party rode within a half mile of San Pasqual, then quietly dismounted. Machado crawled toward the village while Hammond and the dragoons stayed behind. It was a slow and painstaking process, but Machado managed to sneak into San Pasqual without detection and talk to an Indian villager, who was more than happy to give him information on Pico's forces. The natives feared and hated Don Andres and his lancers. Meanwhile, Hammond grew tired of waiting in the cold, clammy darkness. He mounted his horse, the other six dragons following suit.

Incredibly, Hammond and his party rode directly toward San Pasqual, sabers and scabbards rattling noisily as they approached. Village dogs let out howls of alarm, the canine chorus blending with human shouts of alarm. The Californios emerged from the Indian huts and raced to their horses, crying: "Viva California! Abajo los Americanos!" Hammond and his men managed to locate Machado in the confusion, and the whole scouting party beat a hasty and undignified retreat. One Californio found a blue army jacket that had been lost by one of Hammond's troopers. Pico examined the garment and noted the initials "U.S." on it. Here was proof, if any were needed, that Americans were indeed in the vicinity.

The scouting party returned to camp just past midnight. After listening to Hammond's report, Kearny issued orders for an immediate attack. There was no alternative. The coming daylight might reveal to the Californios just how exhausted and vulnerable the Americans really were.

Kearny's 1,912-mile trek from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to San Diego was one of the greatest overland marches in U.S. military annals.

The Army of the West was in the saddle by around 2 AM. It was bitterly cold, and a bugler tried and failed to nurse a few frozen notes from his instrument. The troopers moved out in a column of twos, every man eager to finally come to grips with the enemy. Kearny led his men to the brow of a ridge just outside San Pasqual valley. The general said that he wanted merely to capture fresh mounts, and that he wanted to keep casualties—including Mexican casualties—to a minimum. This was not to be a wholesale slaughter. How much this advice registered with the men is unknown. Most of the soldiers simply wanted some action after a grueling yet uneventful trek.

HIS SPEECH CONCLUDED, Kearny led the descent to the valley floor. He ordered Captain Benjamin Moore to spearhead the attack and encircle San Pasqual. Captain Abraham Johnston would follow in close support, his men mounted on the best horses or mules the Army of the West could muster, to provide the muscle in the operation, completing the encirclement and making sure no one escaped.

Kearny was in the vanguard, accompanied by Lieutenant Emory and the redoubtable Carson. Gillespie's men and the artillery brought up the rear. Kearny shouted the command, "Trot!" But in the excitement Johnston thought he heard the word "Charge!" instead. He acted accordingly. Johnston drew his saber, dug into his mount's flanks, and repeated the order "Charge!" to his men. They were off in an instant, and since Johnston's group had the best horses, they soon outdistanced the rest of the command.

"Oh, heavens!" Kearny exclaimed when he saw what was happening. "I did not mean that!" By now Johnston's men were well beyond earshot and hell-bent for leather. Pico had ordered his men to fire their muskets before engaging the Americanos, and Johnston's galloping troopers were met with a ragged volley. One lucky shot crashed into Johnston's forehead, killing him instantly. Another trooper went down, and the remainder found themselves hard-pressed by lance-wielding Californios.

Just when all seemed lost, the Californios abruptly broke off the attack and turned tail. The reason soon became apparent—Moore and his 50 troopers had arrived on the scene. Moore and his men gave chase for about a mile, but in doing so the dragoons became dangerously strung out. Weary mules and jaded, half-broken horses could not keep the pace. Even Kearny's mule was giving out, and he was falling farther and farther behind.

The Californios suddenly drew rein and wheeled about, facing their enemies. The tables were turned—the pursued were about to become the pursuers. The American dragoons were suddenly confronted by a line of horsemen coming at them at full speed, their eight-foot lances resting menacingly under their arms. As soon as the two groups collided it was clear that the Californios had the advantage. Their horses were fresh, and they maneuvered their mounts so well that animals and riders seemed as one. Kearny marveled at the enemy's superb horsemanship

Moore dueled with Major Pico himself, and the two furiously traded sword blows. Pico parried Moore's thrusts and slashed him with his own blade. Two lancers rushed to the aid of their commander, spearing the hapless American officer again and again until he finally tumbled from

Continued on page 74

Map © 2009 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

VINEGAR JOE AND THE BURMA ROAD

Following the Japanese conquest of Burma in 1942, American General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell trained two divisions of Chinese Nationalist forces to reopen the Burma Road from India to China. He had a score to settle with the occupiers

BY WILLIAM STROOCK

Both Photos: National Archives

WHEN THE UNITED STATES entered World War II in December 1941, Joseph Stilwell was already a highly regarded officer. Having impressed U.S. Chief of Staff General George Marshall with his grasp of maneuver warfare during Louisiana exercises in 1940, Stilwell expected to become a corps or even army commander in the coming war with Germany. Instead, mainly because he had traveled widely in China during the 1920s and 1930s, Stilwell was tapped by Washington to lead American efforts in China.

Nicknamed "Vinegar Joe," Stilwell did not make friends easily. He detested the British officer class, which he thought was snobbishly addicted to pomp and privilege, and he was no fonder of intractable Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, whom he nicknamed "Peanut" for his chronic timidity and foot dragging in the face of the enemy. Chiang, he said, was nothing more than "a grasping, bigoted, ungrateful little rattlesnake" who was more than happy to receive American supplies and equipment, while letting someone else—the British or the Americans—do his fighting for him.

Despite Chiang's continuing intransigence, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was determined to keep supplying his forces with Lend-Lease materials. By doing so, he hoped to keep China in the war, a goal that was seen by Washington as a worthwhile end unto itself. American planners considered China a potential staging area for air raids against Japan and a jumping-off point for an eventual invasion of the Home Islands. More importantly, if China was defeated, or if Chiang got fed up with the war and made a separate peace with Japan, dozens of Japanese divisions would be free to operate elsewhere against the Allies. Roosevelt also felt a great personal connection with China; his grandfather, Warren Delano, had enjoyed many lucrative business dealings with the giant Asian country.

By 1941, a third of China, including all of its seaports, was in Japanese hands. Still, the Chinese Nationalists were not entirely alone. During the opening years of the Sino-Japanese War, Chinese forces had been supplied via the Burma Road, a narrow route that began at Bhamo and entered China near Lashio. There was also a railway that ran from Mandalay north to the border town of Myitkyina (pronounced MITCH-i-na), 200 miles to the north.

The Japanese invasion of Burma in 1941 posed a dire threat to the Burma Road. As the British reeled before the Japanese onslaught, American authorities led by Stilwell finally convinced Chiang to commit his forces to the battle. Chiang agreed to send the understrength Fifth and Sixth Armies to Burma and place them under Stilwell's direct command. Stilwell and his Chinese troops entered Burma in mid-March 1942 and raced south to the important rail hub of Toungoo on the Sittang River. The first to arrive on the scene was the relatively well-armed Chinese 200th Mechanized Division. The 200th dug in along the Sittang and awaited an attack by the Japanese 56th Division.

Outnumbered and without air support, the 200th repelled several Japanese attempts to cross the Sittang and get around its flank. Over the next several days, however, the Japanese slowly ground down the 200th Division and by March 22 had turned both its right and left flanks. Meanwhile, the Chinese 22nd Division, commanded by General Liao Yao-hsiang, had taken position north of Toungoo, with the 96th Division following close behind. A strong counterattack could have stopped the Japanese advance in its tracks, and Stilwell worked desperately to organize one. However, most Chinese commanders were experts at doing nothing and had ready-made excuses for why they could not obey Stilwell's orders. By March 30, faced with anni-

ABOVE Vinegar Joe Stilwell. RIGHT: Wearing his trademark glasses and World War I-era campaign hat, Vinegar Joe Stilwell goes over a plan of attack with Chinese generals on the Toungoo front.

hilation, an enraged and dismayed Stilwell allowed the 200th Division to pull out of Toungoo, leaving behind more than 1,000 dead.

The resulting retreat was a rout, with British forces pulling back for India and Chinese troops retreating north in disarray. British General William Slim, who had been sent to Burma to try to rescue the situation, called the loss "a major disaster" and blamed the 22nd Division for not entering the fight. As for Stilwell, he burned with resentment and embarrassment over the forced retreat from Burma. "We got a hell of a beating," he said when he arrived safely in New Delhi. "We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back and retake it."

The fall of Burma in 1942 was viewed by the British as the tragic loss of a royal colony, while the Americans were inclined to lament the closing of the only route through which Chiang's forces could be resupplied and encouraged to fight. The British saw the liberation of Burma as an "end unto itself," in the words of Slim, and His Majesty's government, concerned with liberating Rangoon and Mandalay, had few resources to spare for an operation to reopen the Burma Road. Any such effort, said the British, should fall to Chinese forces. Chiang disagreed, hoping instead that the Allies would increase their supply shipments via the treacherous air route, the "Hump," over the Himalayas. But as troops and equipment originally meant for China were appropriated by Allied officials for use elsewhere (in one case, several British squadrons in India were transferred to North Africa after the fall of Tobruk), Chiang eventually accepted Stilwell's offer to train Chinese troops in India. The new force was christened the Northern Combat Area Command, or NCAC.

Both: National Archives

In 1943 a training camp for Chinese troops was established at Ramgarh, 200 miles east of New Delhi, and placed under Stilwell's direct command. There, American liaison teams worked hard to prepare Chinese troops for battle. Some 9,000 survivors from shattered Chinese Nationalist divisions in Burma were joined by another 22,000 men flown into camp over the Hump. Chinese foot soldiers were subjected to rigorous physical training and taught the use of rifles, machine guns, and radios. Chinese officers were taught basic tactics and unit coordination. Six weeks of basic training was followed by an eight-day course in jungle warfare. Since the divisions were to be equipped with American howitzers, special emphasis was placed on artillery training. While the Chinese troops were still subject to the hair-trigger brutality of Nationalist discipline, they were surprisingly well treated by the Americans. Troops were regularly fed, paid, outfitted and housed.

The Chinese troops would play an integral role in the upcoming Allied offensive. General Slim planned a three-pronged thrust against Japanese forces in northern Burma, with the objective of driving the Japanese out of their enclaves and opening up a road to China. The British IV Corps would lead the southern prong, attacking Japanese forces in Arakan. The central prong would consist of the British Special Force, a body of six light brigades commanded by the eccentric Brig. Gen. Orde Wingate. Special Force was ordered to open several airstrips through which follow-up brigades would be landed to attack Japanese garrisons along the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway.

MYITKYINA WAS THE PRIZE, a doorway through which overland supplies could be routed to China. As such, it fell to Stilwell and his retrained Chinese divisions. From Ledo, they would fight their way east through the Hukawng and Mogaung Valleys to Myitkyina in the Irrawaddy Valley. Stilwell, all too familiar with the perils of warfare in Burma, was under no illusions about the difficulties facing him and his men. "We have to go in through a rat hole and dig the hole as we go," he told subordinates. The steep, jungle-covered mountains, fast-flowing rivers, and fever-ridden bamboo forests were a physical and logistical nightmare. No less an experienced soldier than British Prime Minister Winston Churchill judged Burma "the most forbidding fighting country imaginable," and he added ominously: "One could not choose a worse place for fighting the Japanese."

Stilwell had no choice in the matter. Over the summer and early autumn of 1943, NCAC gathered for the planned assault. The Chinese 22nd and 38th Divisions gradually moved to Ledo. At the same time, regiments from the 30th and 50th Divisions flew into Ramgarh, where they retrained. These forces were supported by the 1st Provisional Tank Group, a mixed Sino-American battalion of 60 M3A3 tanks (later augmented by two platoons of Shermans) commanded by American Colonel Rothwell Brown. Also falling under NCAC's command was the American 5307th Provisional Regiment, better known as Merrill's Marauders, which was code-named Galahad and commanded by namesake Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill.

Often portrayed by the press as an elite band of commandos, the 5307th was in fact a unit composed of misfits, malcontents, and malingerers gathered from various U.S. Army back-

National Archives

waters. Lieutenant Charlton Ogburn Jr., later a distinguished Shakespeare scholar, took one look at the men he was expected to lead and thought: "The word 'pirates' crossed my mind. An assemblage of less tractable-looking soldiers I had never seen. I felt much like a Sunday school teacher in a reformatory." The 5307th joined NCAC in February 1944.

Leading NCAC into the jungle were hundreds of Kachin scouts, who had spent the last year in Burma waging a relentless guerrilla war against the Japanese. Engineers led by American Brig. Gen. L.A. Pick would follow the Chinese divisions, hurriedly carving a road out of the jungle. In China, more than a dozen Chinese divisions, called Y Force, gathered for an attack across the Salween River. Chiang, typically, would spend the bulk of the campaign manufacturing excuses for why his powerful force remained idle.

Facing NCAC in the Hukawng Valley was the elite Japanese 18th Division, commanded by tough and experienced General Shinichi Tanaka. The 18th was one of the best formations in the Imperial Army. The division had fought in China, participated in the conquest of Singapore, and helped kick the British out of Burma in 1942. Although one regiment, the 114th, had been sent north to aid the Japanese defense of Yunan, the 18th, especially on the defensive, was still a formidable unit.

Stilwell did not intend to impale his newly trained Chinese divisions on the stout Japanese defenses. Instead, he planned to overcome the enemy's geographical advantages by holding their forces in place with feint attacks while working around the Japanese flank. Even so, the initial offensive into the Hukawng Valley, begun in late October 1943, got off to a slow start, with Japanese patrols impeding the advance of 38th Division. When he encountered stiff Japanese resistance at Yupbang Ga (about 50 miles southeast of Ledo on the Tanai River), General Sun formed a hedgehog and hunkered down for a long battle. Although cut off, the Chinese troops were resupplied by air and held their ground.

Expecting the Chinese to easily give way, Tanaka launched several attacks, all of which failed to dislodge them. On December 21, Stilwell arrived at the scene and immediately ordered the 38th Division to counterattack. The attack began on December 24 with a large, well-placed artillery barrage followed by a steady Chinese advance against determined Japanese resistance. After a week of fighting, the combined assault broke the deadlock and the Allied forces took Yupbang Ga. It was a costly victory. The 38th Division alone lost 315 killed and 429 wounded. Still, it was a momentous triumph for the Chinese Nationalist forces. Not only had they held their ground against the Japanese—they had ultimately pushed them out of their positions. It was a harbinger of things to come.

ABOVE: Japanese troops advance in artist Mukai Junkichi's painting, ***Fierce Fighting of General Mizukami's Unit at Myitkyina in North Burma.*** Mizukami later committed hara-kiri. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Stilwell, center, maps out strategy with his two top Chinese commanders, General Sun Li-jen of the 38th Division and Liao Yao-hsiang of the 22nd. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** The rapid Japanese advance through the Burmese jungle, aided by bicycles, surprised British commanders.

BEFORE ADVANCING FURTHER, Stilwell struck Japanese forces in the town of Taro, on a plain south of Yupbang Ga. He delegated the task to the 65th Regiment, part of the 22nd Division and the 1st Provisional Tank Group. Stilwell began to have trouble with Sun and Liao, who had been told by Chiang to minimize their risks and be as cautious as possible. The only way for either commander to do so was to avoid offensive action. An exasperated Stilwell was forced to go to the front himself and cajole the 65th Regiment's commander into attacking. Under Stilwell's critical eye, the advance proceeded slowly but steadily, with the 1st PTG fighting several small battles, one at the village of Kutkai against Japanese light tanks. After clearing out an enemy position in which more than 250 Japanese were killed, the 1st PTG entered Taro.

The Granger Collection, New York

Japanese soldiers fight jointly with members of the anti-British Indian Liberation Army in Burma in the fall of 1944.

With his right flank secured, Stilwell resumed the slow slog toward Myitkyina. His next target was Maingkwan, about 25 miles up the Hukawng Valley. While the 65th Regiment of the 22nd Division, the 1st Battalion of the 5307th, and the 1st PTG advanced against Japanese forces, Stilwell ordered the Chinese 66th Regiment to march from Taro to the town of Walawbum, behind Maingkwan, where they were to establish a roadblock across the route leading to Kamaing, the Japanese main line of supply. Advancing on a two-regiment front, Stilwell steadily pushed back the Japanese.

The 1st PTG saw heavy fighting. On the night of March 3, the battalion was ambushed just east of Maingkwan, losing two tanks and an armored bulldozer to Japanese guns. Brown, in direct command of the battalion, ordered his tanks into laager formation and poured fire into the jungle while the better part of a Japanese battalion surrounded him. While the members of the 1st PTG were fighting for their lives, the Chinese 66th Regiment lost its way in the jungle and was unable to take Walawbum. An enraged Stilwell went looking for the regiment himself and, upon finding it, relieved the commander. The advance to Walawbum was temporarily halted.

THE TASK OF TAKING Walawbum now fell to the 5307th. Working with the 113th Regiment of the 38th Division, the 5307th got astride the road south of town, where it received aerial resupply. Knowing that he faced being trapped between Stilwell's hammer and Merrill's anvil, General Tanaka launched a fierce counterattack against the Sino-American force. Merrill had deployed the 2nd Battalion astride the road east of Walawbum and the 3rd Battalion on the town's eastern outskirts. The 1st PTG was held in reserve, and it carved from the nearby jungle an airstrip through which light aircraft flew in supplies. On March 4, Japanese forces probed the 2nd Battalion's defenses, a series of machine-gun nests, strongpoints, and listening posts. Japanese patrols trying to get around the battalion's right flank were ambushed in turn by a pair of platoons on loan from the 1st Battalion.

The next day, Tanaka launched several large-scale attacks against the 2nd Battalion, but his forces were unable to make any headway and suffered heavy losses. During the night, the 2nd Battalion, worn out by the day's fighting, abandoned the roadblock and withdrew to the east bank of a small river. Two Japanese companies followed and tried to cross. They were met by concentrated machine-gun fire and gunned down on the west bank, losing 400 men in a virtual massacre. Refusing to lose any more men in futile assaults on Merrill's defenses, Tanaka withdrew farther south, toward Kamaing, leaving behind more than 1,500 dead.

On March 7, the 113th Regiment took Walawbum against token opposition. While there was disappointment that the bulk of the Japanese 18th Division had escaped, no one was unhappy with the overall balance sheet, which heavily favored Stilwell. Wrote General Slim, who had been visiting Stilwell's headquarters at the time of the battle: "Walawbum was an undoubted victory. Although it escaped nearly intact, the Japanese 18th Division was roughly handled and had hurriedly to retreat."

The Hukawng Valley ended at a ridge southeast of Walawbum called Jambu Bum. This was Stilwell's next target. The disgraced Chinese 66th Regiment was charged with taking the ridge. At the same time, the 1st Battalion of the 5307th, in conjunction with the Chinese 113th Regiment, marched around the Japanese right flank for the town of Shadazup. The Sino-American force slogged through dense, hilly jungle, fighting several skirmishes against Japanese forces. The Chinese and Americans were greatly helped by a body of several hundred Kachin scouts, who raised havoc behind Japanese lines. Ten days later, the Allied forces found a large concentration of Japanese troops resting and at play along the Mogaung River.

On the night of March 28, the 1st Battalion launched a surprise bayonet attack and wiped

out the camp. Afterward, the 1st Battalion established a roadblock across the Kamaing road. Tanaka launched two attacks on the roadblock, both of which were stopped with the loss of over 300 men. During the night, the 1st Battalion was pounded by Japanese artillery, but after the drubbing they had received that day, no infantry attack was forthcoming. The next day, they were relieved by the Chinese 113th Regiment. Realizing that a strong enemy force lay astride his line of communications, and with the Chinese 22nd Division making steady progress against Jambu Bum, Tanaka pulled his forces back toward Laban, to the southeast. One battalion of the Chinese 113th Regiment pursued and inflicted further casualties on the Japanese, eventually capturing the village.

Stilwell built on the momentum gained by his victories at Walawbum and Jambu Bum by moving against the town of Inkangahtawng. While the 22nd and 38th Divisions pushed southeast into the Mogaung Valley, the hard-charging general sent the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 5307th on an end-around run behind Japanese forces. On March 24, the 2nd Battalion surrounded and attacked Inkangahtawng, but was thrown back by heavy enemy fire. The Japanese counterattacked from the direction of the Kamaing road, but the 2nd Battalion repaid the favor and turned back the enemy with heavy losses.

Tanaka reinforced his efforts, sending two battalions south and forcing Merrill to pull his own troops off the Kamaing road and onto a ridge named Nphum Ga. There, Merrill deployed his 2nd Battalion across the hill. One platoon was sent south to the village of Kauri, while Merrill sent the 3rd Battalion five miles north to guard his flank and defend a patch of open ground that was being converted into another airstrip. The first Japanese attack on Nphum Ga, launched near sunset on March 28, was thrown back with ease by the 2nd Battalion.

DURING THE NIGHT MERRILL, who had fallen ill, was evacuated, leaving the regiment in the hands of Colonel Charles Hunter. Another Japanese attack commenced at dawn on the 29th, but this too failed to make any headway against the dug-in troops. Follow-up efforts from the southwest and the south were also stopped. Under cover of darkness, Japanese forces slowly worked their way around the 2nd Battalion's eastern flank, but attacks launched on March 30 again were stopped cold. However, the Japanese did manage to get around 2nd Battalion's western flank and cut the trail linking them with 3rd Battalion. The next day, they hit Nphum Ga from three different directions.

The enemy thrusts pushed the 2nd Battalion back up the hill but failed to breach its perimeter. While the 2nd Battalion was holding on, a combat team from the 3rd Battalion made its way south and tried to reopen the trail. They made it to within a few miles of Nphum Ga

National Archives

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Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: Stilwell shares a laugh with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his wife. Stilwell secretly called Chiang "Peanut." LEFT: American-led Burmese guerrillas cross a shallow river in central Burma, ever alert for enemy snipers. TOP: American infantrymen rest less than 75 yards from the enemy at Myitkyina, August 2, 1944.

Map © 2009 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

The joint American-Chinese drive through Burma's forbidding Hukawng Valley got under way in October 1943. "One could not choose a worse place for fighting the Japanese," said Winston Churchill.

before being halted by stiff Japanese resistance. The next day, the 2nd Battalion attacked north but was unable to break through.

Fearing that the American forces would link up, the Japanese launched several assaults on the 2nd Battalion's western flank and managed to push through to the hill. A fierce American counterattack drove the Japanese back into the jungle. The 3rd Battalion pressed on, getting to within a mile of 2nd Battalion's positions by April 7. That same day the 1st Battalion, which had been force-marched from Shadazup to join the fight, arrived on the scene. On April 9, they finally broke through. After the link up, Japanese forces pulled back, leaving Nphum Ga to the Allies.

Having bought time for Japanese forces fighting the Chinese elsewhere in Burma, Tanaka pulled back toward Kamaing, a reprieve for the 5307th, whose men were exhausted and short of supplies. Stilwell pushed on, and the Chinese 112th Regiment outflanked the Japanese and took up a blocking position east of Kamaing at the village of Setan. The Japanese launched several fierce counterattacks against the 112th, all of which were turned back by the increasingly confident Chinese.

With their line of supply cut, Japanese forces inside Kamaing were unable to hold out against Stilwell's constant pounding, and the town fell to the 112th Regiment. The disgraced Japanese commander, Maj. Gen. Genzu Mizukami, committed ritual hara-kiri. Fighting continued for several days as Tanaka tried to retake the town, but the Chinese troops, reinforced by the 113th Regiment, threw back the general's desperate efforts. During the course of the battle, the 112th Regiment linked up with elements of Wingate's 111th Chindit Brigade, which had taken the town of Mogaung to the south. The entire Mogaung Valley was in Allied hands.

MYITKYINA ITSELF WAS now in sight. While the Japanese were being pushed out of Kaming, Stilwell dispatched the exhausted 5307th, now under half of its paper strength, on yet another long trek through the jungle, along with the 88th Regiment of the Chinese 30th Division and the 150th Regiment of the Chinese 50th Division, both of which had just been flown into Burma. They marched over the steep Kumon Mountains and through dense jungle in monsoon-like rain to arrive north of Myitkyina in mid-May. Rather than the town proper, the Sino-American force attacked the airfield to the east. The 1st Battalion of the 5307th attacked and took a ferry on the Irrawaddy River, while the 150th Regiment overran the airfield.

Stilwell now had troops just outside his prize objective and a means of easily resupplying and reinforcing them. Although surprised by the initial attack, the Japanese were well prepared to meet the challenge before them. The town was garrisoned by the Japanese 114th Regiment, which had returned from Yunan, and the railway between Myitkyina and Mandalay was still open. Japanese reinforcements were rushed to the scene.

Upon receiving word that the airfield was in Sino-American hands, Stilwell flew in reinforcements, including the Chinese 89th Regiment (part of the 50th Division) and a raw American engineering battalion. The first attack was launched on May 18 by the 150th Regiment. It made good progress at first, taking the railhead north of Myitkyina, but was driven out by a Japanese counterattack. To the east, the 3rd Battalion, in conjunction with the Chinese 89th Regiment, attacked the Japanese-held village of Charpate, which fell after a short fight. The 3rd Battalion garrisoned the village

Imperial War Museum

while the 89th Regiment took up a position to the southwest. Farther south, the 2nd Battalion occupied the village of Namkwi, astride the railway back to Mogaung. Four allied battalions were arrayed in an arc running north-northeast of Myitkyina, controlling the road, railroad, and airstrip. Japanese forces in Myitkyina were on their own.

Merrill, who had returned from sick leave, gathered his forces at the village of Pamati to the southwest for a final attack on Myitkyina. The Japanese struck first during the last week of May, attacking Sino-American forces at the airstrip. The 3rd Battalion attempted to relieve the airstrip but was repulsed by a stout Japanese defense. Other enemy forces attacked Charpate on the night of May 23 and again the next morning, driving the exhausted Americans out of the village.

The rest of Chinese 50th and 30th Divisions (one regiment each) arrived on the scene, but they were unable to break the deadlock. The 5307th, exhausted beyond all measure, disintegrated in the field, and the survivors had to be flown out and replaced by a pair of battalions of raw troops who were completely ill-equipped and -trained to fight the Japanese. A furious Stilwell berated his commanders and accused the British 111th Brigade of malingering in the vicinity of Mogaung. Slim had to intervene to keep the two commands working together. Luckily for Stilwell, the Japanese offensive into India had been stopped cold, and the enemy forces were in even worse shape. The Japanese garrison in Myitkyina ultimately withdrew in late June. Myitkyina was in Sino-American hands, and the road to China via Burma was open once again.

Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images

ABOVE: Colonel Charles Hunter, center, field commander of Merrill's Marauders, makes a point to Stilwell. TOP: Well-armed Chinese troops advance through the heavy jungle ground cover toward Myitkyina.

While Stilwell and his battle-hardened Sino-American forces were achieving a brilliant victory in the jungles of Burma, the Chinese homeland was going to pieces. Official Nationalist corruption, seeping into every layer of public life, hamstrung the economy and embittered a people already battered by heavy taxation, impressments, and incompetence. Unable to halt the Japanese advance, the 34 Chinese Nationalist divisions in the province were easily steamrolled by the oncoming enemy.

Analyzing the situation from Myitkyina, Stilwell suggested to Washington that the Chinese Nationalist division holding the line against communist force in the north be marshaled for a counterattack against the Japanese flank. President Roosevelt followed Stilwell's advice and sent a message to Chiang suggesting that Stilwell be made supreme commander of Chinese Nationalist forces. Chiang, for his part, did nothing to aid Stilwell or his forces at Myitkyina.

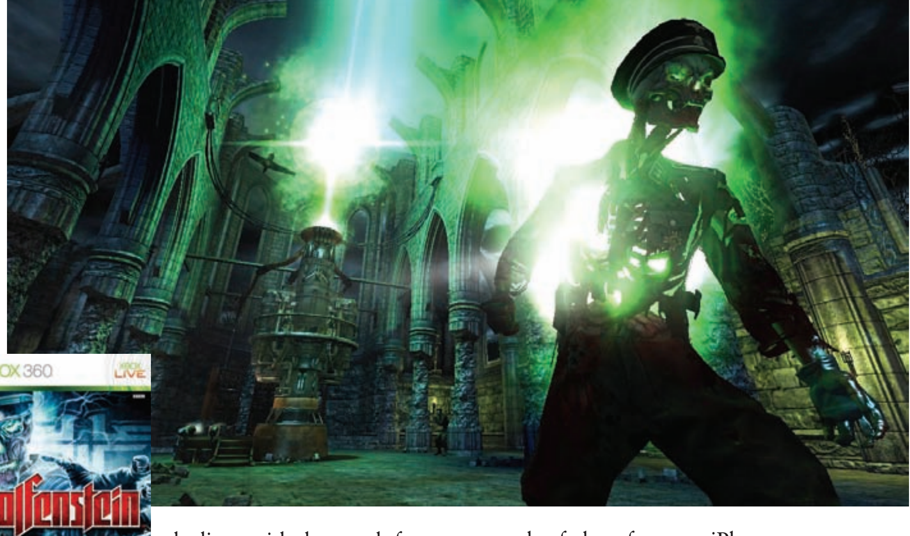
When Stilwell reported Chiang's continued foot-dragging to Washington, Roosevelt sent the generalissimo an extraordinary message saying bluntly that Chiang's inaction threatened to close the Burma Road and the Hump. "For this," said Roosevelt, "you yourself must be prepared to accept the consequences and assume the personal responsibility." An unapologetic Chiang responded by demanding that Stilwell be relieved. Obsessed with keeping Chiang happy, despite what was amounting to a massive waste of time and resources on an ally determined to do nothing at all, Washington acquiesced. Stilwell was duly relieved on October 18. By then he had pronounced his own verdict on the difficult and underappreciated campaign he had seen through to victory against nearly unimaginable odds. "Myitkyina—over at last," Stilwell wrote in his diary. "Thank God." It was an opinion doubtless shared by all the soldiers—American, Chinese, English, and Japanese—who had ever fought in the Burma Theater. □

By Joseph Luster

Rewriting History the *Wolfenstein* Way

Creative minds have been coming up with ways to mess with the events of World War II for some time, well before Quentin Tarantino took us through a reality warp and rearranged Hitler's face with *Inglourious Basterds*. No one named Captain America ever socked The Führer right in the kisser, and I'm pretty sure Adolf's signature in *Dr. Jones's Grail Diary* is part of what we know as "Movie Magic."

No matter how many times we've seen alternate timelines like these, there aren't many cases as extreme as the tale of one B.J. Blazkowicz, hero of the *Wolfenstein* series. He's been taking on the Nazis and their blasted dealings with the occult for a while now, and he may just be the only man, even in fictional history, to face off against a quad-chaingunned Hitler stomping around in a robotic suit. Now that's a showdown that makes even the exploding head of "Master D" in *Bionic Commando* look like a fizzling firecracker.



The run-and-gun stylings of *Wolfenstein 3D* were a far cry from the stealthy and methodical pacing of the 1981 Apple II game that inspired it, *Castle Wolfenstein*. Completely eschewing the concept of tip-toeing quietly around SS troops, *Wolfenstein 3D* brought the first-person shooter genre to everyone's attention in 1992 thanks to the brisk speed of its action, allowing players to blow away Nazis before even the first syllable of "Achtung" could escape their tinny built-in speakers.

Wolfenstein has gone through a number of changes over the years, and that's not even taking various and sometimes bizarre forms of censorship into account. (Turning attack dogs into rats in the Super Nintendo version is a personal favorite of mine.) That's bound to happen at some point, though, especially when the game has seen more ports than the surliest of sailors. One of the more interesting updates to the formula, for example, came in the form of *Wolfenstein RPG*, available for mobiles and in slightly more beefed-up form on iPhone.

If role-playing elements and the untimely destruction of Nazis seem like strange bedfellows to some out there, then comfort comes in the war-worn trappings of B.J. Blazkowicz's latest proper outing. Following up id's 2001 effort, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein,* Activision's simply-titled ***Wolfenstein*** (developed by Raven Software for the Xbox 360, Playstation 3, and PC) puts our hero on the front lines once more to go nothing short of ballistic on the paranormally twisted enemies of World War II.

Wolfenstein is at once a familiar and somewhat fresh take on the series that went far to make a name for id Software in the nineties. Agent B.J. Blazkowicz makes a triumphant return, fierce five o'clock shadow and all, to put a stop to the Nazi forces, but ends up with much more power at his disposal than a simple assortment of artillery could ever hope to provide.

During what should have been a fairly routine sabotage mission aboard a Nazi warship with its guns itching to rain down on London, B.J. witnesses the power of a curious medallion, hinting at more pesky occult tinkering on the side of evil that has to be squashed for good. Luckily, he finds a similar item to call his very own, granting him some much needed special abilities to even the ever-teetering playing field of war.

Enemy threats in *Wolfenstein* vary, and quickly become more interesting once B.J. unlocks the power of the Thule Medallion. By using the device to enter a realm known as the "Veil"—a world between our own and the Black Sun dimension that immediately

ON THE LOOKOUT: UPCOMING BATTLES

SABOTEUR

Get ready for a heaping helping of open-world action set in Nazi-occupied France, making this likely the first time such a sentence has ever been typed. Protagonist Sean Devlin takes a cue from war hero William Grover-Williams, and goes up against the Germans with an emphasis on stealth and sabotage. Developed by Pandemic Studios (*Destroy All Humans!, Mercenaries 2: World in Flames*), *Saboteur* coats the fighting-the-good-fight proceedings with a highly stylized and unique set of paints that separate it from the pack on sight.

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts

SYSTEM(S)
Xbox 360, Playstation 3, PC

AVAILABLE
December

reminded me of the climactic visions in Stuart Gordon's *From Beyond*—run of the mill soldiers become fodder for heightened senses and speed. To combat this, some enemies have their own supernatural powers, and can blaze across the screen in quick bursts, throw out energy shields, or disappear from sight altogether.

Most notable is Raven's attempt to make *Wolfenstein* an open world experience of sorts through the hub of Isenstadt, a fictional town oppressed by Nazi control, its citizens constantly holed up in fear. It's not like the developers throw you into a vast expanse and leave you to roam onward indefinitely, but it's a nice, controlled touch that lets the player take on missions from multiple groups, while keeping it from being overwhelming to those unfamiliar or just plain uninterested in the open world genre itself.

In the face of its structure, *Wolfenstein* successfully retains the fast-paced action everyone expects the series to deliver; they can throw in all the hub areas they want as long as they don't mess with the ability to run and gun with reckless abandon. The proceedings look pretty handsome, too, running on the id Tech 4 engine (*Doom 3*, *Quake 4*), which drives home the otherworldly effects of the medallion with only a handful of hiccups.

The story tends to plod at times, especially when you just want to get on with a mission and do what you're there to do (read: shoot things a lot), but the occasional throwbacks to the series' roots liven up some of the encounters. I'd personally rather spend my time digging around for more of the game's hidden items (like gold and intel), but I'd probably also be complaining if they hadn't included any form of narrative whatsoever.

Some aspects of *Wolfenstein* bring to mind the 2006 FPS *Prey,* possibly because that title was developed on a modified id Tech 4 engine and was home to a similarly toned spirit world. Multiplayer has its ups and downs, and features class-based combat that lets each player choose between a Soldier, Medic, or Engineer in three different modes, but doesn't really put forth much effort to surpass what was already established in *Return to Castle Wolfenstein.*

Despite the pedigree of its title, *Wolfenstein* still has a lot of stiff competition out there, especially when stacked against the millions-served likes of the *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* series. *Wolfenstein* offers something a little different, though, and succeeds as a single-player action/adventure that makes for a killer five-day rental, and a decent purchase for those who've taken an especially deep bite from the Nazi Occult bug.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: CONVICTION

The *Splinter Cell* series has always represented a different side of conflict, with Sam Fisher frequently out-sneaking Solid Snake, though he's always lacked the distinct Rambo edge of *Metal Gear*'s lead. The latest entry in the series has seen numerous delays, most notably from its originally scheduled release date of November 2007, but perhaps that's for the best, because *Conviction* looks like it could be 2010's first highly polished neck-snapper.

PUBLISHER
UBISOFT

SYSTEM(S)
Xbox 360, Playstation 3, PC

AVAILABLE
February 23, 2010

MAKING HISTORY II: THE WAR OF THE WORLD

This one's for fans of grand strategy gaming, where you're not just taking control of individual units, or even a full squad, instead acting as armchair general and making decisions that hold great weight on the future of the entire world. In pressing times, even the most seemingly insignificant of motions could change everything, and players will keep that in mind while developing their nation and strategizing a path to victory. Micromanagers, rejoice!

PUBLISHER
Muzzy Lane

SYSTEM(S)
PC

AVAILABLE
February 2, 2010

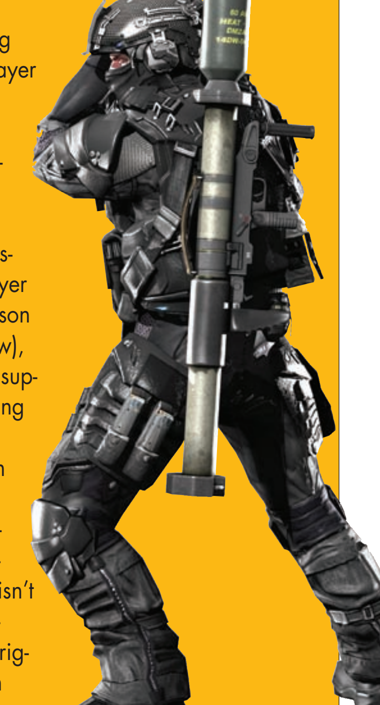
MAG: MASSIVE ACTION GAME

MAG could serve as an interesting experiment for large-scale multiplayer experiences on Sony's system. Developed by Zipper Interactive, MAG is billed as an MMOFPS (massively multiplayer online first-person shooter... phew), and is built to support a whopping 256 players, which are then divided into 8-player squads. The war in question is one based in the not-so-distant future of 2025, but the story isn't exactly a prime focus in this multiplayer-only outing, so prime that trigger finger for console firefights on an unprecedented scale.

PUBLISHER
Sony Computer Entertainment

SYSTEM(S)
Playstation 3

AVAILABLE
January 26, 2010



By Al Hemingway

Although now considered our greatest president, Abraham Lincoln was not particularly popular during his two tempestuous terms in office.

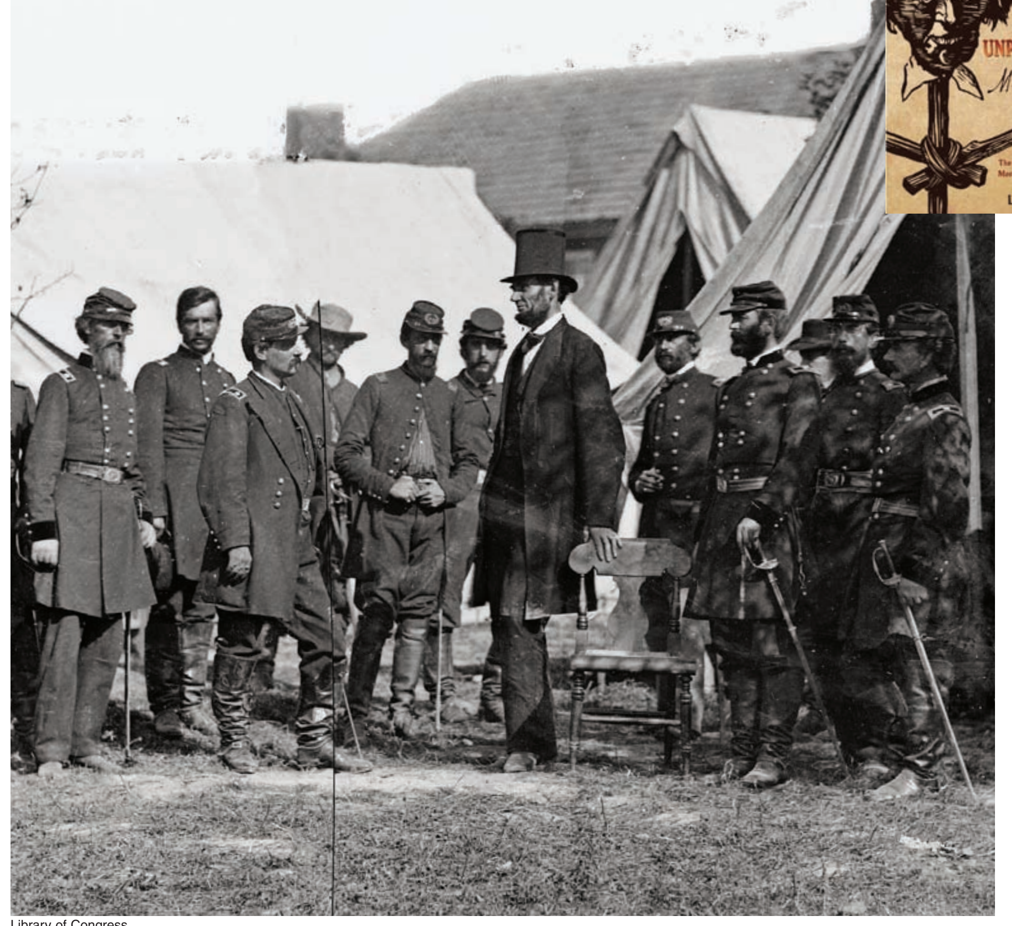
WHEN VISITORS GAZE UPON THE IMMENSE MARBLE STATUTE of a seated Abraham Lincoln looking out upon the reflecting pool at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., they are naturally overcome with a feeling of awe. When they stroll inside the building itself and read Lincoln's words, they come away with a sense of enormous admiration for the man who saved the Union and was later gunned down by a Confederate-sympathizing assassin.

However, was Lincoln as popular as we think? Many people today probably believe that he was elected twice to our nation's highest office by an overwhelming majority. However, as historian Larry Tagg points out in his new book, ***The Unpopular Mr. Lincoln: The Story of America's Most Reviled President*** (Savas Beatie, New York, 2009, 576 pp., photos, index, notes, $32.95, hardcover), such was not the case.

With the exception of one uneventful term in the House of Representatives, Lincoln had been an obscure frontier lawyer. He did receive notoriety when he openly debated Stephen Douglas for a U.S. Senate seat in Illinois in 1858 and when he delivered his now-famous Cooper Union speech in 1860 warning against "a house divided." Despite those two noteworthy performances, he still remained relatively unknown nationally.

Lincoln managed to win the 1860 presidential election by a narrow margin when the Democrats split along sectional lines, with Douglas running as a northern candidate and John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky being the southern standard-bearer. Although he managed to squeak out a victory, Lincoln drew slightly less than 40 percent of the popular vote. Only three other major-party candidates have fared worse in two-party elections: Herbert Hoover, Barry Goldwater, and George McGovern. All lost, it should be noted. When it was announced in the newspapers that Lincoln had won, many readers wondered aloud: "Abraham who?"

Lincoln's election was the final impetus for the Civil War, as southern states dropped out of the Union after he was elected. Ironically, Lincoln was also skewered in many



President Abraham Lincoln meets with General George B. McClellan and a group of officers at Antietam, Maryland, October 3, 1863.

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Mr. Netanyahu's Offer (II)

Are the objections of the Palestinians justified?

In our previous *hasbarah message* (#117, **"Mr. Netanyahu's Offer [I]"**), we told of the Netanyahu's government's willingness to allow a Palestinian state to arise alongside Israel in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and in Gaza. Not surprisingly, he attached certain conditions to this offer, all of which the Palestinians totally rejected. The objections that we discussed previously referred to the "settlements," the demilitarization of the new state, and the "return of the refugees."

What are the facts?

In addition to those conditions mentioned above, Mr. Netanyahu's offer of a state for the Palestinians in the "West Bank" and in Gaza included two further requirements: One, that Jerusalem remain the undivided capital of Israel and two, that the Arabs recognize Israel to be the Jewish state.

An Undivided Jerusalem. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israel defense forces reconquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Muslim city were rarely if ever asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side-by-side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Muslim Arabs declared their desire to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city into Arab possession.

> "Here is another chance for the Palestinians to have their own country... Chances are overwhelming that, once again, they will reject the outstretched hand...."

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city to Israel in the Six-Day War. It has now gained currency by dint of constant repetition. Basis of the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, the Temple Mount, sacred to both Muslims and Jews. But Jerusalem has for centuries been the capital of the Jewish people and has been the capital of Israel since its founding. It is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible. There is not a single mention of it in the Koran.

Israel is the State of the Jews. Mr. Netanyahu insists that Israel be recognized as the Jewish state. But such recognition is obviously only a formality. Israel was established as the Jewish state by the Balfour Declaration, by the League of Nations, by the United Nations, by the consensus of the world, and by the facts on the ground. The reason that the Muslims do not wish to recognize Israel as a Jewish state is that it would supposedly prejudice the rights of the Muslims and perhaps members of other religions who live in Israel. But that is nonsense. Regardless of what it is called, everybody understands that Israel is indeed the State of the Jews, and so do the over 1 million (approximately 20% of Israel's population) Muslims that live in Israel as full citizens, with all the rights and privileges of their Jewish fellow citizens. Nobody seems to object that, for instance, Iran designates itself as an "Islamic Republic." For the Muslim world to recognize Israel as the State of the Jews would simply be recognizing reality.

It has to be clear to every student of modern history that the Palestinians, if that were their real goal, could have had their own state since at least 1937, following the Peel Report. There have been many opportunities since. The most important of those was the 1948 decision of the United Nations to partition the country west of the Jordan River into a Muslim and a Jewish state. The Jews eagerly accepted the proposal, which the Arabs utterly rejected and instead invaded the nascent state of Israel with the armies of five of their countries. There have been many other opportunities since, all of which the Muslims have rejected. One must come to the unhappy conclusion that to create a state is not the ultimate goal of the Palestinians. The ultimate goal always has been and continues to be the destruction of the state of Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu's offer of allowing a Palestinian state to be created and to exist along Israel is a most generous offer. No parallel can be found in the annals of world history. It is abundantly clear that the "conditions" accompanying Mr. Netanyahu's offer are more than reasonable. Surely, after decades of open hostilities and the recent bitter example of Gaza, it should go without saying that the newly formed state should be totally and reliably demilitarized. It should be clear that the "settlements" – about 300,000 Jews in a sea of over 3 million Arabs – cannot be an obstacle to peace, since the over 1 million Arabs living in Israel are not considered a problem. It should be clear that the "refugees," which have swelled from the original 650,000 to allegedly more than 5 million, should be settled in the newly to be formed state of Palestine.

Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life and Jewish yearning for over 3,000 years. There is no reason why it should not remain the undivided capital of Israel. And, of course, Israel is a Jewish state. Everybody understands that, whether the Muslims do or do not wish to accept it. Here is another chance for the Palestinians to have their own country and to live in peace and in prosperity alongside Israel. But chances are overwhelming that, once again, they will reject the outstretched hand that is being offered.

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northern newspapers. He was particularly ridiculed for his surreptitious entrance into the capital via Baltimore by night train after rumors arose that he was to be shot along the way. This particular incident so embarrassed Lincoln that he vowed never again to appear to cower to threats.

Many in Washington who considered themselves the upper crust of society were appalled at the new president's sloppy appearance, uncombed hair, ill-fitting clothes and Midwestern drawl. His penchant for telling corny jokes particularly disgusted the Washingtonian elite.

As the bloody conflict continued, Lincoln was vilified in the North as well as the South. Even his one-time supporter Horace Greeley of the influential *New York Tribune* had a field day whenever Union forces were whipped on the battlefield. With the exception of some success in the western theater and a few victories in the east, the Union war effort sputtered. Lincoln's re-election campaign seemed doomed.

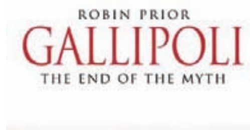
That would change when Union generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman racked up impressive victories in 1864, with Sherman capturing Atlanta mere weeks before the election. Lincoln was re-elected president over Democratic nominee George B. McClellan, a former Union general whom Lincoln had removed from command for insufficient aggressiveness.

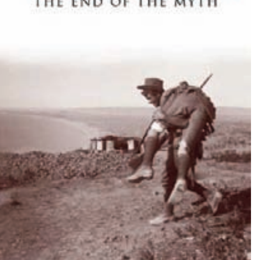
Throughout his two terms in office, Lincoln battled not only the Confederacy, but also the Congress, his cabinet and even friends who previously had supported him. One thing cannot be denied—Lincoln was the consummate politician, defusing many crises with an affable demeanor that concealed a steely temperament and an unshakable determination to preserve the Union, no matter what the cost.

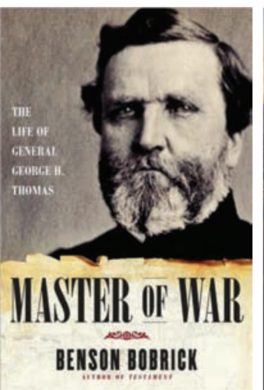
When the war finally ended in April 1865, Lincoln girded himself for the next impending struggle—the political reconstruction of the South. Many wanted the Rebels to pay dearly for seceding from the Union, but Lincoln had other ideas. "Let 'em up easy," he advised. His forgiving attitude toward the southern states infuriated hard-liners, but he was determined to heal the country.

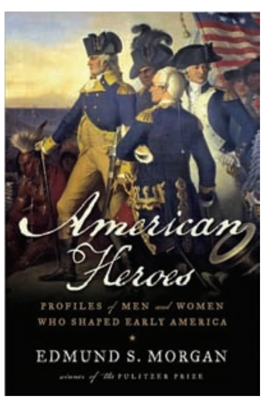
Ultimately, his plans would not be carried out. On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Lincoln was fatally shot by actor John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theater while watching a production of the ridiculous comedy, Our American Cousin. He died the next morning. Thousands lined the 1,600-mile route as his body was brought back by train to his adopted home of Springfield, Illinois, where he was laid to rest.

Abraham Lincoln, the hard-knuckles politician who had ascended to the presidency by a slender margin and was loathed and mocked by many throughout his career, would immediately be transformed a spotless martyr in the eyes of his countrymen. An assassin's bullet had seen to that.









Gallipoli: The End of the Myth by Robin Prior, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2009, 288 pp., photos, maps, index, notes, $35, hardcover.

With Europe in the throes of World War I, fighting on the Western Front in France and Belgium had ground to a standstill by late 1914. Casualties were mounting at an alarming rate, with no obvious military gains of any significance to show for it.

Enter Winston Churchill, Great Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty, with a multitude of ideas to break the bloody stalemate. After a series of meetings, he successfully pushed a scheme to bombard forts and destroy large artillery emplacements along the strategically located Gallipoli Peninsula of Turkey, Germany's partner in the war. To the west of the peninsula lay the Aegean Sea, to the east the Dardanelles Straits.

It was decided the attack would be a strictly seaborne attack conducted by the British Royal Navy, with some assistance from the French. British Secretary of State for War Lord Herbert Kitchener would not release any reserve army troops for fear of needing them in France.

From its inception, the naval campaign was a disaster. In the planning stage, the amount of ammunition needed to obliterate the fortifications and the number of ships involved were badly miscalculated. The mines laid by the Turks were another factor not seriously considered by Churchill and his planners.

In the end, Kitchener was forced to send troops when a land campaign began. Included in this number was a large contingent of Australian and New Zealand (ANZAC) forces. During the subsequent eight months of fighting, from April 1915 to January 1916, thousands of Allied soldiers were killed or wounded in senseless frontal assaults. As with the Western Front, the Gallipoli Peninsula was soaked with the blood of gallant soldiers with no noteworthy advances to show for their loss.

Where does the fault lie for the campaign's disaster? Certainly, many of the admirals and cabinet members of the British government were to blame, but military historian Robin Prior lays the bulk of the responsibility on Winston Churchill. It was Churchill who "had wanted to attack Turkey ever since it sided with the Axis Powers," says Prior. He then "bulldozed" the plan "past his naval advisors" and later convinced the Cabinet to adopt it. "These circumstances led to the naval attack and its failure led inexorably to the military campaign," Prior charges. "Churchill is therefore to blame for the whole sorry fiasco."

Churchill would resign as First Lord of the Admiralty after the Dardanelles campaign and volunteer to command an army battalion in France before returning to government service later in the war. Even though the Gallipoli debacle was a stain upon his career, the British public would once again call upon the elder statesman to lead the country in yet another world war a quarter century later. Churchill would redeem himself for Gallipoli.

Master of War: The Life of General George H. Thomas by Benson Bobrick, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2009, 416 pp., photos, maps, index, notes, $28.00, hardcover.

In his latest offering, popular historian Benson Bobrick attempts to dispel the central myth about Union General George Henry Thomas, who was given the sobriquet "the Rock of Chickamauga" after he defiantly stood his ground against Confederate General Braxton Bragg's onrushing forces during the height of the battle.

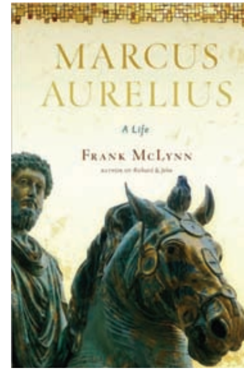
Despite his stand at Chickamauga and his noteworthy successes on other battlefields, Thomas was considered "slow" by many of his fellow officers, including Ulysses S. Grant, who later led Union forces to victory at Chattanooga. Thomas, however, was anything but

slow in his tactics. He enjoyed an enviable record of success during the Mexican War as well as the Civil War.

Although a Virginia native, Thomas opted to remain with the Union after the firing on Fort Sumter in 1861. (He had married a New York heiress several years earlier.) This infuriated his family, who turned his picture against the wall, burned his letters and vowed to never speak to him again. Even after the war, when Thomas attempted to reconcile the differences between him and his family, they still refused to acknowledge him.

Grant and Thomas had a similarly rocky relationship. It was Grant who permanently tagged Thomas as being slow in his movements. In his influential memoirs, Grant gave scant praise to his able subordinate. A modest and humble individual himself, Thomas destroyed all his wartime correspondence and, unlike Grant and William T. Sherman, never penned his own side of the story. All he would say was: "I made my army and my army made me."

Today, historians are looking at Thomas's contributions in a new light. As Bobrick states in his admittedly partisan book: "The deliberate suppression of his fame by the two best-known soldiers of the Union, Sherman and Grant, is a continuing national tragedy that must be set right. Justice never dies." Sometimes, it's just slow.



Marcus Aurelius: A Life by Frank McLynn, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2009, 684 pp., photos, index, notes, $30, hardcover.

In the nearly 2,000 years since his death, Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius is still considered by many historians to have been one of the wisest and noblest leaders of all time. His book Meditations, which he wrote during one of his military campaigns, is still widely read today. Such leaders as Frederick the Great, English captain John Smith and African dynasty-builder Cecil Rhodes, carried a copy of Aurelius's book with them wherever they traveled.

Aurelius preached a stoic philosophy and was a staunch advocate of a spiritual lifestyle. His writings were to be the prime resource for his own self-improvement and rational thinking. The personal observations he penned would later enable him to aspire to be a more enlightened emperor.

Although he had a philosophical approach to ruling the Roman Empire, his tenure was racked with war. His military expeditions took him to Asia to do battle against the Parthians and across the Danube to suppress the rebellious Germanic tribes. Despite these distractions, Aurelius continued his philosophical studies.

Aurelius would succumb to the plague in Vienna in AD 180. His passing was marked with much sorrow and now is considered by many the end of the Pax Romana, the period in which the Empire enjoyed its longest stretch of relative tranquility. Little did Aurelius realize that his writings would transcend time and make him one of the greatest philosophers—as well as rulers—of the ancient world.

A Hundred Feet Over Hell: Flying with the Men of the 220th Recon Airplane Company Over I Corps and the DMZ, Vietnam 1968-69 by Jim Hooper, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2009, 258 pp., photo, index, $25, hardcover.

Ask any grunt in Vietnam, whether he be Army or Marine, and he will tell you that air support was vital in keeping the enemy at bay. Many battles were won when American aircraft, referred to as "fast movers," would swing in low and drop their ordnance or napalm, often inciting cheers from the "ground-pounders" observing the action.

To achieve maximum accuracy, pilots known as FOs, or forward observers, would fly at extremely low altitudes in small Cessna O-1 planes called "Bird Dogs" to observe enemy movements and relay their findings back to the Direct Air Support Center. These brave individuals did a remarkable job under extremely trying circumstances to deliver much-needed air support to those on the ground.

Former FO Jim Hooper has written a gutsy account of his time in Vietnam. His area of operations was in the northernmost section of the country called I Corps. There, he dodged Communist antiaircraft and rifle fire, but also rifle fire. His unit, given the nickname "The Catkillers," did an extraordinary job at controlling air strikes for both Marine and Army outfits combating North Vietnamese Army forces crossing into South Vietnam via the Demilitarized Zone.

An interesting addition to the book is the epi-

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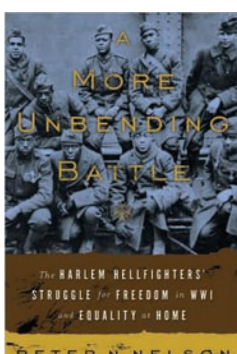
logue explaining what became of each pilot after his return stateside. Each individual has enjoyed great success in his respective endeavors, and many have commented how rewarding their tour of duty was with the Catkillers. The positive remarks by these Vietnam veterans help combat the perpetual myth that all who served there came home either a drug addict or a crazed killer. Hooper deserves a big thank you from Vietnam vets for writing this book and relating how he and his fellow pilots served honorably during that unpopular conflict.

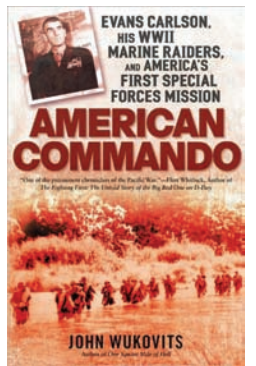
American Heroes: Profiles of Men and Women Who Shaped Early America by Edmund S. Morgan, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2009, 278 pp., index, $27.95, hardcover.

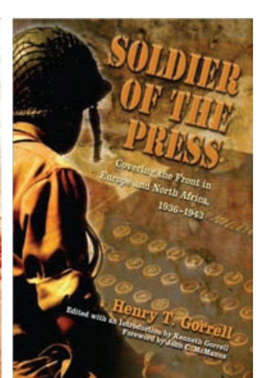
Celebrated historian Edmund S. Morgan has written a lively and authoritative book on individuals who helped transform colonial America into the nation we have today. He discusses the usual figures that contributed greatly to this effort, men such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and William Penn. He quotes from *Poor Richard's Almanac,* Franklin's annual newspaper published, concerning the evils of a hero. "There are three great destroyers of mankind," Franklin wrote, "Plague, Famine and Hero. Plague and Famine destroy your persons only, and leave your goods to your Heirs; but Hero, when he comes, takes life and goods together; his business and glory it is, to destroy man and the works of man. Hero, therefore, is the worst of the three."

Despite Franklin's denunciation of heroes, Morgan still uses the term when discussing those he believes live up to the name. Two such individuals, Giles Cory and Mary Easty, were accused of witchcraft and executed in Salem, Mass., in 1692. Instead of being intimidated by the magistrates, they steadfastly refused at their trial to condemn any others for the same "crime." Their courage was the impetus for the reversal of the sentences by the General Court of Massachusetts in 1697. Although this could not bring back those innocent people who already had been put to death, it served as a valuable lesson not to succumb to mass hysteria in such matters.

Morgan's very readable account of those early pioneers who shaped this land is enlightening. By examining those who came to these shores to escape persecution they endured in the native lands, Morgan has shed new light on early American history and its heroes.







A More Unbending Battle: The Harlem Hellfighters' Struggle for Freedom in WWI and Equality at Home by Peter N. Nelson, Basic Civitas Books, New York, 2009, 291 pp., index, $27.50, hardcover.

Originally organized as the 15th Infantry Regiment out of New York, the all-black unit was reformed in the spring of 1918 as the 369th Infantry Regiment. Because of segregation the new outfit, nicknamed "The Harlem Hellfighters," was assigned to the French Army. On the battlefield the soldiers performed admirably, participating in the Champagne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, Champagne and Alsace campaigns. Many of its members were highly decorated by both the American and French governments.

It was their bitter struggle for racial equality once they returned home from the war that the author concentrates on. After witnessing horrific combat on the French killing fields, many Hellfighters adamantly refused to be treated as second-class citizens by a country that had sent them off to fight.

Nelson refers to this as the emergence of the "New Negro," who would not endure disrespect or have to live in a "Jim Crow" society where African-Americans were considered equal, but separate. This sparked deadly riots throughout the country, resulting in numerous injuries and deaths among whites and blacks. One all-black town, Rosewood, Florida, was burned to the ground after a white woman falsely accused a black stranger of assaulting her.

It took years before the Civil Rights Act became the law of the United States. Those who had fought in the "war to end all wars" deserve praise for their important role in bringing to light the unfair treatment of blacks in the country at that time. "What the pessimists underestimated was the fight in the men who went away and returned," Nelson writes, "as well as the pride they would inspire, without which neither battle could be won, the one in France or the one back home."

American Commando: Evans Carlson, His WWII Marine Raiders, and America's First Special Forces Mission by John Wukovits, NAL Caliber Books, 2009, 337 pp., photos, index, notes, $25.95, hardcover.

Evans Carlson certainly did not fit the poster image of a United States Marine. The tall, lanky, fragile-looking New Yorker nonetheless thirsted for action and adventure. He enlisted in the U.S. Army prior to World War I and was commissioned a second lieutenant, seeing service in the Philippines and Hawaii but missing the war in France.

Carlson left the Army but enlisted in the Marines a few years later after becoming bored with civilian life. His subsequent service in Nicaragua in the 1930s, where he led native National Guard soldiers against Communist forces led by Augusto Cesar Sandino, honed his small-unit tactical skills, which he would use in World War II against the Japanese. His Marine Raider unit would embark on America's first special forces-type action, when they surprised the Japanese on Makin Island in August 1942. The leathernecks destroyed Japanese installations, gathered intelligence on the Gilbert Islands and help divert enemy attention from the amphibious landings on Guadalcanal and Tulagi.

In the fall of 1942, Carlson's 2nd Marine Raider Battalion conducted a long-range reconnaissance behind enemy lines, called "The Long Patrol" by historians, on the island of Guadalcanal. It was very successful, and proved that guerrilla-style tactics could be used successfully by American troops.

Many of his contemporaries, however, distrusted Carlson. He had spent considerable time with the Chinese Communists during his tenure in that country and became friends with Mao Zedong. He resigned his commission in the late 1930s but was reinstated after the attack on Pearl Harbor, much to the dismay of his peers.

Today, many of Carlson's ideas, deemed unorthodox during World War II, are used by Special Forces units. He took the Chinese phrase "Gung Ho," which means "to work together," as the motto for his unit. Considered by many a maverick, Carlson's courage under fire cannot be questioned. He passed down his leadership traits to his junior officers, who became fine leaders in their own right. Carlson and his elite Marine Raiders remain legendary

in the annals of Marine Corps history.

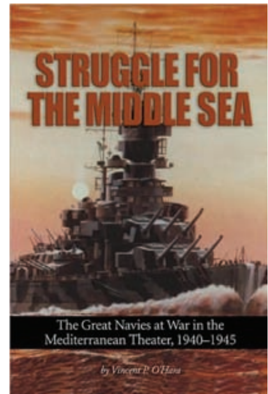
Soldier of the Press: Covering the Front in Europe and North Africa, 1936-1943 by Henry T. Gorrell, edited with an Introduction by Kenneth Gorrell, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO, 2009, 320 pp., photos, maps, index, $34.95, hardcover.

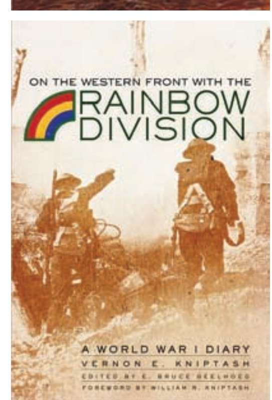
When Kenneth Gorrell discovered a long-lost typed manuscript vividly describing his relative Henry "Hank" Gorrell's experiences as a war correspondent in Europe, he unearthed a real treasure. Gorrell was in Italy and Spain prior to the United States entering the conflict. His dispatches, written with honesty and clarity, often got him into serious trouble with the governments he was reporting about.

After Gorrell was ousted from Italy by the Mussolini regime, he traveled to Spain to cover the Spanish Civil War. It was Gorrell who first reported the Nazi and Fascist intervention during that conflict. Spain became a killing ground in which new tactics such as the German blitzkrieg were being tested.

Gorrell later made headlines with his eyewitness accounts of the fighting in the Balkans, Romania and Albania, which often received scant attention in the American press. After the United States declared war on the Axis Powers after Pearl Harbor, the reporter was on the frontlines with American forces in Africa, the Middle East and Europe. Landing on Utah Beach on D-Day, Gorrell delivered the first reports of the fighting there by utilizing a radio transmitter with its antenna hanging from a tree.

Kenneth Gorrell deserves kudos for finding this gem in an old trunk in an attic in New Hampshire and thus ensuring that his relative's work was finally published. After more than six decades, Hank Gorrell's story can finally be told.





Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940-1945 by Vincent P. O'Hara, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2009, 324 pp., photos, maps, index, notes, $34.95, hardcover.

The Mediterranean Sea saw more naval action during World War II than both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans combined. The author sets out to put to rest once and for all the notion that the Italian Navy did not perform well. Nothing could be further from the truth, in O'Hara's opinion.

O'Hara rejects the claims by Great Britain and Germany that they took part in all the major naval actions in the Mediterranean. "In fact, however, a dispassionate survey of the Mediterranean campaign supports the opposite conclusions: the Italian navy fought hard; it often fought very well; and it accomplished its major objectives," writes O'Hara. "It kept Italy's African and Balkan armies supplied for three years and largely controlled the central Mediterranean."

O'Hara's book allows the reader to form a complete understanding of the extreme importance of the Mediterranean Sea. By war's end, the American fleet had emerged as the dominant force on that body of water—a role it has not relinquished to this day.

On the Western Front with the Rainbow Division: A World War I Diary by Vernon E. Kniptash, edited by E. Bruce Gelhoed, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 2009, 236 pp., photos, maps, index, $29.95, hardcover.

Vernon E. Kniptash was an eager enlistee when the U.S. was dragged into World War I in April 1917. Europe had already been bludgeoned by fighting since August 1914 and the arrival of fresh troops on the battlefield was a welcome sight for the Allies.

After enlisting in the U.S. Army, Kniptash joined his unit, the 150th Field Artillery of the famed 42nd Infantry Division, commonly referred to as the "Rainbow Division." As a radio operator, Kniptash had access to information occurring as it happened. He kept a journal for two years describing his experiences in France. Most of what he wrote was spontaneous, giving his prose a concise and sincere effect as he described the great historical events unfolding around him.

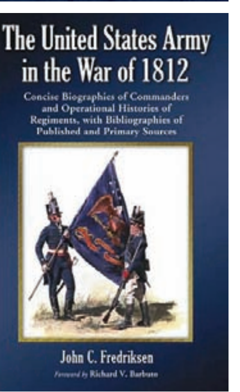
War diaries such as the one Kniptash wrote, enable historians and readers to gain significant insights into history. Young and innocent at the beginning of the war, Kniptash describes soldier's transformation from raw recruit to hardened combat veteran. He was lucky enough to have survived the conflict. He returned home to Indianapolis to begin anew and try to forget the carnage and horror he had witnessed. It is appropriate that the last word he wrote in his diary was "finis." The war was indeed finished and Vernon Kniptash was embarking on a new phase of his life.

No Peace for the Wicked: Northern Protestant Soldiers and the American Civil War by David Rolfs, The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 2009, 283 pp., notes, index, $38.95, hardcover.

It is difficult when serving during time of war to rationalize taking another human being's life. Most Americans on both sides during the Civil War had a religious upbringing that was in direct conflict with this belief. Nevertheless, the majority of soldiers on both sides performed their duty believing that their cause was righteous and that God was on their side.

The author examines the Northern Protestant soldier during the conflict to explain how the young men justified their actions and remained dedicated to fighting and preserving the Union. He points out that Northern churches were quick to maintain that Union soldiers were being used by God as "the instruments of His judgment."

Destined to be "soldiers of Christ," says Rolfs, the Union soldiers donned their uniforms to do battle with the godless men of the Confederacy. Likewise, their counterparts took up arms to repel the satanic hordes invading Dixie from the north. Although simplistic, such views enabled soldiers on each side to function in that cruel and unforgiving crucible known as war.



The United States Army in the War of 1812: Concise Biographies of Commanders and Operational Histories of Regiments, with Bibliographies of Published and Primary Sources by John C. Fredriksen, McFarland & Company, Inc., Jeffer-

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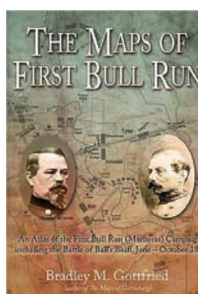
son, NC, 2009, 311 pp., photos, index, $45, softcover.

They were known as "Mr. Madison's Warriors," referring to our nation's fourth president, these soldiers who once again had to battle the world's best army at that time in the War of 1812. As the author states, very little has been written about our armed forces during this turbulent era in America's history.

Although the U.S. Army suffered serious setbacks during the conflict, they still emerged as a viable fighting force. The senior officer corps, described by the author as "ossified," did produce some shining stars on the field of battle—Jacob J. Brown, Winfield Scott and the legendary Andrew Jackson, to name three. It was during the period between the War of 1812 and the Mexican War of 1846-48 that the military establishment had a chance to grow and mature.

Fredriksen devoted more than 30 years of research to his book. In doing so, he has compiled an extensive amount of information on the war, its leaders (both military and civilian) and the units involved. His account is a tribute to the memories of those who fought in that truly forgotten war.

The Maps of First Bull Run: An Atlas of the First Bull Run (Manassas) campaign, excluding the Battle of Ball's Bluff, June–October 1861 by Bradley M. Gottfried, Savas Beatie, New York, 2009, 134 pp., maps, appendix, $34,95, Hardcover.



Here is another fine offering in the publisher's Military Atlas Series, one that concentrates on the action during the First Battle of Bull Run, or Manassas, in June 1861. Fifty-one maps are included in the book that detail both Union and Confederate troop movements. A legend has been added to each map illustrating terrain features such as woods, orchards and ridges, so that readers can easily follow the tactics employed during the battle.

Each map is preceded by a brief overview of the events leading up to the fighting and the actual campaign itself. The author has included an appendix in the back of the book listing all the units involved and the casualties sustained by each of them. "I am optimistic that readers who approach the subject with a higher level of expertise will find the maps and text not only interesting to study and read, but helpful," Gottfried writes. □

Continued from page 25

vengeance. Among the most avid was Sir Thomas Phillips, who collected a staggering one million vellum documents of all sorts. Most of the collectors were moneyed Americans with a special relish for their own history, and large collections came together quickly built around such specialties as George Washington and other Revolutionary War leaders, Abraham Lincoln, Civil War generals, and presidents.

Early-19th-century collectors, unfortunately, were joined by that element always on watch for criminal profit—the forgers. Letters, documents, and autographs are among artifacts most easily faked, and quality forgeries began to appear in relatively little time. Many of the 19th-century forgers' techniques are still used today. Duplicating pre-19th-century iron-based inks is a simple process—as is obtaining goose quills. One easy and therefore frequent forgery was to fake a famous signature among unknown signatures on an authentic but relatively obscure document. In other cases, letters were faked using genuine paper of the time and an able modern penman, or by writing on modern rag paper that had been stained with tea or coffee to give the document in question the appearance of aging.

It is safe to say that many if not all noteworthy autographs have been forged: all European monarchs, all prominent Civil War generals—especially in the 1880s with a resurgence of interest in that conflict—and many European military leaders. Some forgers were very sophisticated, others ridiculously simple, such as a Bowery tramp dubbed "Autograph Smith" who could fake any famous signature—especially those of Washington and Lincoln. In some cases, the forgery was unwitting. Many French nobles had their secretaries forge their signatures, and many of Napoleon's orders after 1800 were signed by his secretaries since he was so busy with war itself. Then there are the stamped signatures, instances of a reproduced signature but not the real thing.

The would-be collector of the written word has many things to consider: historical period, subject, type of manuscript form (letters or documents), and price. But first and foremost is locating reputable dealers. They have a professional standing to uphold and guarantee as authentic what they sell. The physical state of a document is also paramount. Nothing brings down the price of a paper letter or vellum document faster than water staining. Also, royal or government documents are worth more with the attached royal seal. High-profile collecting means spending big money: a significant letter by George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, for example, goes for an average of $20,000.

Napoleon presents an interesting dilemma for collectors. Although he signed many documents, his signature changed so often (at least 26 different ones, from "Bonaparte" to "Np") that examples are worth less than Washington's or Lincoln's: $2,500 for a good signature on a letter of average military interest. Prices for famous American commanders can vary widely. In general, addressed envelopes (without a letter) by someone of importance but with no autograph are far less expensive than letters or historical documents themselves.

In the 20th century, many documents were typewritten, with added notes and signatures in famous hands. Another medium, the postcard, can be collected for far less cost. World War I has traditionally been less popular than World War II in the United States, since American involvement in the first lasted for only a year. Small military notes and typed documents from lesser-known American generals sell for less than $100—while the Red Baron's signed photo goes for about $300. For World War II documents, the signatures of famous generals such as Dwight D. Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur go for about $100.

The German Third Reich is a popular area of collecting—and forging—right down to faking the green pencil that Field Marshal Erwin Rommel used in his letters while in North Africa because the desert air dried ink too quickly. American GIs unwittingly helped the forging process by bringing home reams of Nazi stationery as souvenirs. Signed photos of German war heroes—real or forged—are quite abundant.

One area overlooked for years involves the personal diaries or journals of common soldiers in the Civil War. The longest and most descriptive accounts of battles often came from them—not from busy officers who had less time to write. Cheap diary books were sold in camp to soldiers. These diaries, ruled tablets in slate-colored leather, still turn up frequently in flea markets. In the mid-1960s, such diaries were sold by the basketful for a couple of dollars each. They are worth many times that now. Unfortunately, most Civil War diaries were written in pencil and have faded significantly with time.

As collectors have demonstrated, the written word is as much a part of history as the great events defined by them. Besides going online for dealer sites, would-be collectors of autographs and manuscripts might want to consult *The Pen and Quill,* the journal of the Universal Autograph Collectors Club, and *Autograph* magazine. □

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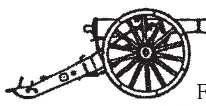

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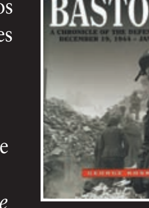

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the saddle, mortally wounded. Moore lay near an oak tree, his uniform drenched in blood, still clutching the hilt of his broken sword. A Californio came over and finished off the captain with a well-aimed pistol shot. Moore's brother-in-law, Lieutenant Hammond, attempted to ride to his aid and was fatally stabbed by Californio lancers for his trouble.

Kit Carson was unhorsed when his mount lost its footing. Winded but otherwise unhurt, the famous scout had only seconds to react to a new danger. He was directly in the path of some on-charging dragoons, and as he later admitted, "I came very near being trodden to death." Carson managed to scuttle away, but his gun was broken. He could see that the Americans—including himself—were no match for the Californios on horseback. He quickly found a discarded rifle and hurried over to a cluster of boulders. Once ensconced in his natural fort, Carson began to pick off any lancers that came within range.

Kearny himself was badly wounded when an enemy lance thrust drove deep into his back and entered his buttock. Unhorsed and bleeding, Kearny could do little to rally his rapidly disintegrating command. Within minutes, the Californios made short work of the American dragoons. The troopers fought with clubbed carbines and sabers, but the contest was unequal from the start. Particularly unnerving to the Americans was the way the Californios worked efficiently in teams. One vaquero would rope a dragoon from the saddle with an effortless yank. Once on the ground, the helpless trooper, hog-tied by a reata, would be impaled on a second vaquero's lance.

Gillespie was singled out as a special target of Californio ire. His heavy-handed rule of Los Angeles had started the revolt in the first place. Gillespie was lanced several times but managed to avoid a fatal thrust. Bloodied but defiant, Gillespie managed to find his way to one of the artillery pieces. Aided by a midshipman named James Duncan, he fired off a round or two of grapeshot that effectively broke up the Californio attack. The lancers left the field, enabling the Americans to technically claim a victory, albeit a mostly Pyrrhic one. Three officers and 21 men were dead, and another 17 were wounded.

The decimated Army of the West limped forward cautiously; it was clear the Californios were still in the vicinity. Kearny felt his men could do no more. It was better to dig in and send for relief. The general chose to make a stand on a small boulder-choked rise that was studded with cactus. It was less than ideal, but at least it was high ground. The dragoons threw together some rough fortifications, then settled in to wait for reinforcements. The nearest help was the U.S. Navy force in San Diego, 30 miles away. With the quick-riding Californios infesting the area, it might as well have been 100.

Carson, Lieutenant Edward Beale, and a Dieguenо Indian named Chemuctah were chosen to sneak through enemy lines and bring aid. The trio set out on the night of December 8. The ground was rough and gravelly, so Carson and Beale removed their boots to make less noise during their descent. Chemuctah's soft moccasins were not a problem. The night was still, and Carson worried that their canteens would make too much noise, so reluctantly they left them behind.

The first obstacle was a line of Californio pickets mounted on horseback and armed with lances. Carson, Beale, and Chemuctah crawled under the very noses of the pickets, close enough to the enemy horses to smell them. Somehow, Carson and his companions managed to evade detection, but Carson and Beale lost their boots in the darkness. There was no time to search for their lost footwear. They continued through rugged canyons and cactus-dotted arroyos until they cleared Pico's pickets. By mid-morning, Carson and Beale were in bad shape, their feet lacerated by rough rocks and cactus spines. Californios still swarmed through the area, so the three messengers split up. That way, there was a chance one of them would get through.

Carson literally stumbled into Stockton's camp in San Diego at 3 AM, some 12 hours after he had said good-bye to his companions. To his surprise and relief, he found that both Beale and Chemuctah had gotten there ahead of him, having traveled in a straighter line. A relief column of some 200 men had already been dispatched to Kearny's aid.

The rescue force reached Kearny and the battered Army of the West two days later and drove off the besieging Californios. The painfully wounded general finally made it to San Diego, claiming a technical victory at San Pasqual but admitting that "we paid most dearly for it." Emory the scientist noted precisely in his records that the army had traveled 1,912 miles from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to San Diego. It was one of the greatest forced marches in American military history. Unfortunately, the trek brought Kearny's men crashing headlong into Don Andres Pico and his determined Californios, who made good their boast: "*Aqui vamos hacer matanza* [Here we are going to have a slaughter]." It was all that and more. □

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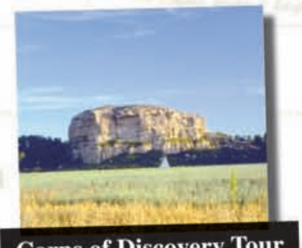

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