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Cover: A Canadian soldier prepares to lob a hand grenade into a building, December 31, 1943. Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

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# Editorial

## Under construction with America at war, the Pentagon remains an engineering wonder.

**ON SEPTEMBER 11, 1941, EXACTLY 60 YEARS BEFORE A TERRORIST ATTACK** damaged the building and changed forever the American way of life, ground was broken for the Pentagon, a five-sided office building which today houses the U.S. Department of Defense and has been an integral component of the nation's defense establishment since World War II.

Six months before the United States entered the war following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the country was in the midst of a great mobilization. L. VanLoan Naisawald and his comrades who worked in the building's classified message center were only a few of those military and civilian personnel who occupied it. Prior to its construction, more than 24,000 War Department employees and military men and women were housed in 17 buildings in the Washington, D.C., area. As preparations for war continued, that number was estimated to grow another 25 percent.

Although preliminary plans to erect temporary office buildings for these workers had been considered, Brig. Gen. Brehon B. Somervell, chief of the construction division of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, had another idea. The story goes that he summoned Lt. Col. Hugh J. Casey, another engineering officer, and civilian architect George E. Bergstrom to his office on July 17, 1941. That was a Thursday, and Somervell required of the pair that they come up with plans for a building of four million square feet, capable of housing office space for 40,000 workers. The building was to be no more than four stories tall, and there were to be no elevators. A weekend of intense labor resulted in a proposal for a five-sided building, which was presented to General Somervell the following Monday.

With the idea for the Pentagon in hand, the military moved quickly to win approval for the project. Perhaps there are few better examples of government working at its most efficient. On Monday, the War Department approved the project. The following day, Secretary of War also approved, and on the same day Somervell advised Congress of the plan while Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson informed President Franklin D. Roosevelt. A bill was quickly drafted, and the president and Congress approved \$35 million for the construction of the new building. Naturally, the eventual cost topped \$80 million!

Following several changes to the original plan and the relocation of the Pentagon from its proposed site between Arlington National Cemetery and Memorial Bridge, construction began in earnest. Progress was so rapid that construction sometimes outstripped the availability of architectural plans. By the end of 1941, more than 4,000 construction workers were laboring in three shifts to complete the building. The shell and roof were finished within a year, and the Pentagon was declared complete on January 15, 1943. Estimates of construction time had ranged up to as long as four years; however, the actual completion time was a near-miraculous 16 months.

With the wartime economy in mind, project managers avoided the use of critical materials in the construction of the building wherever possible. The Spartan appearance of the structure, without ornamentation, is evidence of this. Concrete pipes were utilized instead of metal, while ramps replaced elevators and copper and bronze were eliminated entirely from the materials list. At the height of World War II, it provided office space for more than 33,000 workers.

At the time of its completion, the Pentagon was the largest office building in the United States. Its nearly 18 miles of hallways and corridors cover almost 30 acres. The building has more than three times the floor space of the Empire State Building in New York City. Constructed in five concentric rings, the walking time from one point to another anywhere in the building is a remarkable maximum of only seven minutes.

Today, the Pentagon remains the nerve center of the U.S. military. Approximately 23,000 workers report to the massive building on the Virginia side of the Potomac River near Arlington each day. More than 3.7 million square feet of the building actually house offices, and 100,000 miles of telephone cable route more than 200,000 daily telephone calls.

Perhaps as tangible as the work that takes place there every day, the Pentagon itself has become a symbol of American military might and resolve that is recognized throughout the world.

*Michael E. Haskew*

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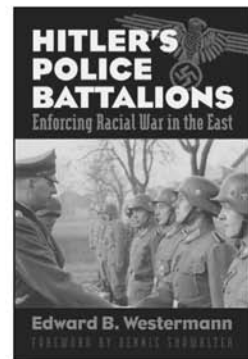
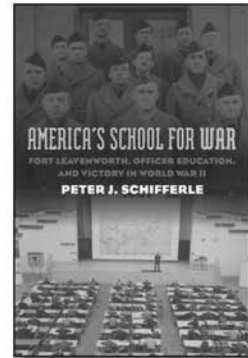
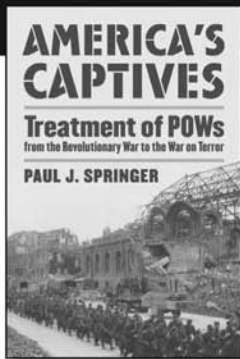
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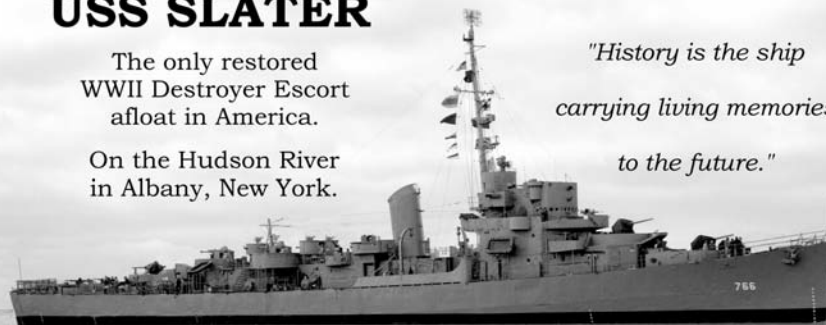
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## Joy Ride on a C-47!

Dear Editor:

I want offer a few words of thanks to Sam McGowan for his story and contribution to *WWII History*. I have been a subscriber to *WWII History* and I enjoy the stories very much. I especially enjoyed Mr. McGowan's story and history of the C-47 entitled "Tale of the Biscuit Bomber" (Ordnance, July 2010 issue). I was very interested in the story and adventures of the bomber.

Perhaps my memory originated in the year 1944 when a few of us WACs stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, at the time, heard another WAC come into out barracks and ask if any of us wanted a trip to Florida in a plane. It was a Sunday afternoon and none of us was on duty, so we thought, "Why not?"

A pilot stationed at Lawson Field (in Benning) had to fly and put in air time. Was it legal? At the time, who cared? This would be my very first flight in an airplace—a C-47.

When we got to Lawson Field we were equipped with helmets and parachutes that we were told to sit on. The trip was to Carrabelle, Florida. I think it was a place where the paratroopers practiced. We all sat on our parachutes in the bucket seats. We were a group of about six or seven. Some were very nervous and I

think I actually saw one face turn green as she threw up into a helmet. Then one WAC requested to use the bathroom. Well, the fellow on board kept a straight face as he pointed to a section to go to and we all laughed as she came out holding a bottle! We landed and spent a nice day on the beach.

Ever since that event I became interested in the C-47, so it was very enjoyable to read how many events the C-47 participated in.

Keep up with the stories of World War II. After I read the many stories I pass my copies on to other vets.

Florence D. Miles  
Hagerstown, Maryland

## Panzerfaust Practice

Dear Editor:

I was reading through your January 2010 magazine and come across the writeup and pictures of captured weapons. This brought back some memories of when I was with Company G, 18th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Division. At some point we were pulled out of the line for R&R. Upon returning my squad leader asked me to report to regiment and then division. It turned out to be quite a few of us. When we got back to division, they took us out to a large open area. In the center was a bunch of cars

and a few buses. We were given *panzerfausts* and took turns firing this weapon at the vehicles. After it was over they gave us one to carry back to company. So from then on I slept and ate with this thing along with my M-1. Some time after that, with the war winding down and not any action to use it, I was able to turn it back in. I don't know about the others that received one, if they used it. I sure did not. The weapon was not all that heavy. I had to make a rope sling to carry mine.

William L. Sasman  
LaGrange, Georgia

## German Deaths at Dachau

Dear Editor,

I always enjoy reading *WWII History* magazine. I would like to bring to the readers' attention that there are some mistakes in the article "A Fighting Foot Soldier of the 45th" (Profiles) in the June/July 2010 issue. The photograph at the beginning of the article is incorrectly captioned. It was taken by T/4 Arland B. Musser of the 163rd Signal Photographic Company, U.S. 7th Army on April 29, 1945. All the Americans in the photo are identified. Colonel Howard A. Buechner, a medical officer in the 45th, wrote in his 1986 book *The Hour of the*

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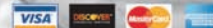
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*Avenger* that there was another machine gun located to the right but out of camera range. He was a witness to the execution of the German POWs in the photo as was the author of *Surrender of the Dachau Concentration Camp 29 April 1945*, Colonel John H. Linden. There are approximately 60 Waffen SS soldiers in the photo taken in the Dachau coal yard. Seventeen had just been killed, numerous others were wounded, and some played dead when the shooting started.

The number of 17 dead came from Lt. Col. Sparks. Colonel Buechner wrote it was 12.

There is a photo of the dead after the wounded and remaining survivors were removed but it's hard to count exactly. Just as the true number of German POWs killed in the Dachau coal yard incident will never be known, the total number of Germans killed by American soldiers at Dachau is unknown. The estimate is from 122 to over 520.

Most of the Germans who surrendered at Dachau were Waffen SS soldiers, wounded Germans convalescing at the camp hospital and their families. Most of the regular guards, the camp administrators, their families, and the Camp Commandant, Martin G. Weiss, fled Dachau on April 28, the day before the Americans arrived. On April 27 Victor Maurer of the International Red Cross came to camp with his team, bringing food and supplies for the camp prisoners. I am not aware if Mr. Maurer witnessed any of the killings of the Waffen SS soldiers or their officers.

The article mistakenly states that Lt. Col.

Sparks was sent back Stateside because of his threat to kill Brig. Gen. Henning Linden. Colonel Buechner writes in his book that Lt. Col. Sparks, 1st Lt. Jack Bushyhead, and himself were investigated and brought up on court martial charges for the execution of the German soldiers at Dachau. The article is correct that General George S. Patton, now the appointed military governor of Bavaria (which includes Dachau), destroyed the papers and evidence he had. He dismissed the court martial.

I, and I believe, many readers would like to read an article that details the true story of the executions of the German POWs at Dachau. It's a part of the war seldom discussed.

Edwin J. Sims  
Sacramento, California

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Japanese Type 94 tankettes speed through a village in China. The Japanese military operated in China for nearly 15 years beginning in 1931.

## Tanks of the Rising Sun

Handicapped by technologically inferior vehicles and outdated tactics, Japanese armored forces nevertheless played a conspicuous part in some of the initial campaigns of the Pacific War.

**IMPERIAL JAPAN'S FIRST HESITANT STEPS TOWARD ADOPTION OF ARMORED** fighting vehicles occurred in 1925 with the creation of two company-strength tank units. One of these formations was designated experimental and attached to the Chiba Infantry School. At the time, Chiba was the Imperial Army's center for the development and study of armored warfare doctrine and tactics.

Later that year the government launched the nation's first domestic program for the design and manufacture of armored vehicles. These activities were overseen by a commission of officers based at the Army's Osaka Military Arsenal. This body, a section of the Army Technical Headquarters, was made up of young junior officers interested in the design and employment of tanks and their use in combat. Grounded in the tank theories and usage they studied from the experiences of the European powers during World War I, the members of the commission were the prime movers in all future Japanese armored fighting vehicle design and armored combat doctrine and tactics from the mid-1920s to the end of World War II.

Without any previous work in the field of tank design, the Japanese initially looked to Europe for their inspiration. As a result, the first concepts adopted by Japan were multi-turret affairs exemplified by Western patterns such as the French Char 2C, the British Independent, and the German Nbfz, all in vogue in the period 1920 to 1933. The Russian T-35 (produced in 1933) also caught Japanese attention and was copied by them but only in small numbers.

The attraction of these foreign models was based on the Japanese original desire to field "heavy"

tanks, each weighing at least 20 tons. The result was the creation of vehicles like the Type 91 (22 tons) and the Type 95 (24 tons). But in 1935 the Japanese came to regret their involvement in the construction of heavy tanks because of the costs in time and scarce materials such as steel that were required to make these weapons. Consequently, Japan turned its focus in a new direction: the design and production of cheap and simple-to-build light and medium machines. The quest to bring into service such a force would govern Japanese tank design and production programs and the tactics these weapons employed through 1945.

The revised thinking by the military regarding tank development had taken root in the late 1920s and early 1930s even while heavy tank production was being pursued. The new direction appeared in the form of the Type 89 medium tank, which first saw production in 1931. Based on a mid-1920s Japanese tank design known as Number 1 Tank, it was built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. The Type 89 was a 12.7-ton, 18.8-foot-long, 9.17-foot-tall machine covered by a mere 10mm to 17mm of armor plate. Crewed by four men, its main armament consisted of a 57mm cannon and two 6.5mm machine guns, one in the rear of the turret and the other in the left hull front.

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**ABOVE: A Japanese Type 92 combat car traverses difficult terrain near the southern Chinese city of Shanghai during the fighting that raged in the area in 1937. BELOW: Japanese Type 97 tankettes, their crewmen flush with victory and streaming the banner of the rising sun, race past the Philippine legislature building in Manila in the opening months of World War II.**



Powered by a Daimler 105-horsepower, six-cylinder gasoline engine, it had a top speed of 15 miles per hour. The Type 89 was the first domestically produced tank manufactured in quantity. Originally conceived as a light tank of 10 tons, the increased weight caused by its larger symmetrical turret caused the Army to reclassify it as CHI-RO from the Japanese word *chugata*, meaning medium.

In 1934 the Type 89 was renamed the Type 89-KO, unofficially referred to as Type 89-A. In 1936, this model was replaced for frontline service by the Type 89-OTSU, or Type 89-B, essentially the same machine as the Type 89-KO but with one major difference. The Type 89-B was

given a diesel engine, whereas the older Type 89-A used a gasoline engine. They were built primarily by Mitsubishi, in factories established for the construction of the Type 89-B in both the Japanese home islands and Manchuria.

Hand in hand with its interest in tank employment, the country's War Ministry also toyed with the idea of increased mechanization of the Army on a limited scale. This led to the development in the early 1930s of armored cars that were designated as combat cars or light tanks. The Type 92 Combat Car was the result of this new focus, which was pushed especially hard by the cavalry branch. With a boxed hull contraption that formed a bulge, the Type 92

Combat Car weighed in at 3.5 tons and was operated by a crew of three. It was armed with two 6.5mm machine guns or one 13.2mm cannon mounted in the hull, and another 6.5mm automatic weapon could be placed in the turret. Powered by a six-cylinder, 45-horsepower gasoline engine, this vehicle traveled on three sets of rubber bogie wheels mounted in pairs. Only 6mm of armor protected this alleged armored fighting vehicle.

Another facet of the Army's tepid adoption of mechanization was the large production, starting in 1934, of a small armored tractor designed to move supplies and keep lines of communication open between the widely scattered Japanese garrisons stationed in Mongolia, Manchuria, and northern China. Designated the Type 94 Tankette, it was a 2.5-ton vehicle that carried a single 6.5mm machine gun in the turret. Later models like the Type 97 TE-KE, first built in 1936, put the diesel engine in the back and replaced the machine gun with a 37mm cannon. This upgraded model weighed 4.5 tons but still was encased in only 12mm of armor plate. Regardless, it proved highly effective against the Chinese, who had few armored vehicles and had to rely mainly on infantry small arms in battle.

Even as the Type 89-B medium tank was being refined after 1936, the Japanese Army realized that the machine was too slow to keep pace in the field with the wheeled transport and newly created mechanized infantry brigades it had formed in 1933 and deployed to Manchuria. The solution to this dilemma was deemed to be the creation of a new lighter and faster tank that would aid the Type 89-B in its role as an armored support tool.

The impetus to enhance the effectiveness of the Type 89-B by teaming it up with another tank model came from the cavalry branch of the Army, which took the opportunity in its quest to replace the Combat Car to push for a updated, speedier armored fighting vehicle. The new tank they got was christened the Type 95 (Kyugo) Light Tank, whose prototype was unveiled in 1934.

The Type 95 was a design of 7.4 tons employing the same six-cylinder, 110-horsepower diesel engine that powered the Type 89-B. Named the HA-GO (for light tank), it required three crew members: a driver, a machine gunner working two 7.7mm automatic weapons in the hull, and a commander-gunner firing the turret-mounted 37mm ordnance piece. Protected by 6mm to 12mm of armor, it could travel at a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour.

By early 1936 the machine was in full pro-

duction with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, the main manufacturer. It was not until mid-1942 that other companies were called upon to build the Type 95. By war's end, 2,400 units had been made. The Type 95 would be replaced after 1943 by a limited number (about 200) of the Type 98KE-NI, or Type 98-A. With a more efficient 37mm main gun and a speed of 31 miles per hour, the Type 98 was marginally better than its predecessor even though it had identical armor protection.

As early as 1936, the members of the Army Technical Headquarters understood that the Type 89-B tank was inferior to its European counterparts in all the major categories. It was underpowered, underprotected, and under-gunned. Overriding the Army General Staff's Operational Section, the Technical Headquarters secured its own proposal for a better medium tank in 1937. This new model was known as the CHI-HA. Construction was by



**ABOVE:** On January 5, 1939, a Japanese Type 92 combat car supports attacking infantry near the town of Nanchang, a key location in central China. **LEFT:** A destroyed Type 95 HA GO light tank sits in the jungle at Biak, New Guinea, in 1944. Japanese armored development lagged behind that of Western nations, and inferior Japanese tanks were no match for their American counterparts.



machine, former CHI-HA models were fitted with Type 1 CHI-HE turrets. This combination became the Type 97 Shinhoto-CHI-HA ("new" or "modified" turret) medium tank.

The Type 97, which came into service in 1942, was in most

welding and riveting, and the armor was slightly curved. A small two-man turret was mounted to the right of the hull and housed a low-velocity 57mm gun. The three 7.7mm machine guns—one installed in the hull front, one in the rear of the turret, and sometimes one fitted as an anti-aircraft weapon—provided reasonable antipersonnel firepower. Armor protection was 25mm steel plate encasing most of the tank's body. Driven by a strong V-12 air-cooled diesel 170-horsepower engine, the CHI-HA had a speed of 24 miles per hour and an average range of 130 miles.

Produced by Mitsubishi, this model saw rapid modification and improvement after the Russo-Japanese conflict in Manchuria in 1939. A new version, the Type 1 CHI-HE with 50mm of armor, was slated to go into full production by the end of 1941. To speed the deployment of this tank and to overcome the technical difficulties that were retarding output of the new

regards close to what the CHI-HA had been except for a centrally located turret that mounted an improved 47mm cannon. Operated by five men, the Type 97 weighed 16 tons and was 18 feet long; seven feet, eight inches wide, and almost eight feet high. The same powerful Type 100 V-12 diesel engine was used. The Type 97 was the best tank the Japanese had during the war, being comparable to the early German Mark III. It also made up the majority of the Imperial Japanese Army's armored fighting vehicles from 1942 onward.

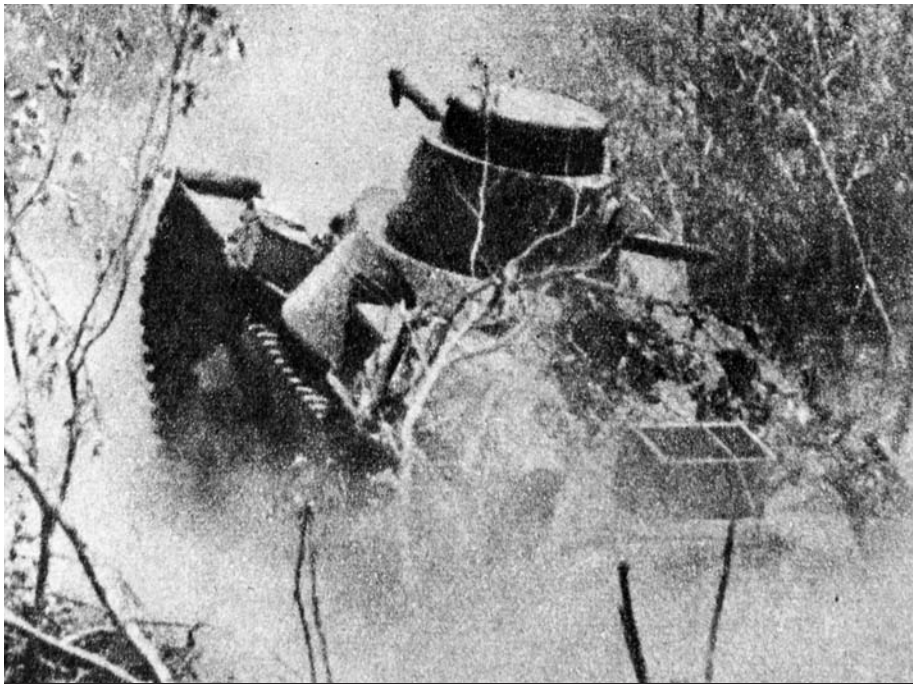
A number of very real constraints on Japanese tank design and construction dictated what type of and in what numbers such vehicles could be manufactured during the period between 1930 and 1945. First, size and weight restrictions were significant because of the infrastructure of the country. Prewar Japan lacked the numerous wide roads found in Europe and North America. Consequently, the

nation's railways, with a track gauge of only 3.5 feet, had to carry all the armored traffic. As a result of the rail network's narrow gauge, tank design could not exceed a width of 8 feet for any vehicle.

Second, Japan's island geography meant that only through sea transport would its military equipment reach any war zone. This reality meant that in order to ease ship storage and handling, the sizes and weights of armored fighting vehicles would have to be minimized. This translated into the requirement for lighter tanks with thinner armor protection and smaller caliber main armament.

Economic factors also played a key role in Japanese tank construction. Prior to World War II, the government was extremely cost-conscious and preferred to build smaller, therefore cheaper, armored fighting vehicles. The cost of manufacturing was dictated by the powerful politically connected private business sector, which not only built the product but put forth designs and specifications as well. There was little governmental control over what the giant manufacturers demanded in cost per unit or in quality control.

Also, the nation's industrial base was not large enough to carry on large-scale tank production along with other wartime arms manufacturing necessities. Only 12 factories in 1941 had the capacity to produce tanks, and these were situated in Manchuria as well as in the



Advancing rapidly through hilly country on the Bataan Peninsula, a Japanese tankette churns up a cloud of dust. Several Japanese armored vehicle types were obsolete by the time World War II began.

BELOW: The thinly armored and lightly armed Type 95 Kyugo tank was one of the oldest Japanese tanks in service during the war. It was also available in larger numbers than other types.

Home Islands, thus making the transfer of raw materials, parts, and labor very time consuming and expensive. By 1944, the number of facilities making tanks had been reduced to just four because of the urgent need to build more ship and plane engines to sustain the war effort. Japan's capacity to produce steel and iron for armored fighting vehicles had always been scarce and was the prime reason that the creation of those weapons had fallen from manufacturing Priority A in 1941 (the highest production level) to Priority D (the lowest level) by late 1943.

The will to field a strong armored force was also lacking in the ranks of the Army high command, and this explains the tepid support that armor was accorded during the war. The nation's military leaders felt that the war zones their armed forces would be engaged in—the Pacific islands, Southeast Asia, China, and Manchuria—offered little scope for large-scale armored warfare operations. This was the consensus since the Japanese opponents in those areas possessed little or no tank strength that could interfere with Japan's intended aggressive moves.

As a result, the Japanese government allowed for the manufacture of a mere 1,024 tanks of all varieties in 1941 and only 1,290 in 1942. And these years proved to be the peak period for Japanese tank production during the entire war!

In contrast to the 6,300 tanks the Japanese constructed from the 1930s to the end of the Pacific War, the United States built 4,000 tanks in 1941, then 24,000 the next year.

As the war progressed, Japanese tank organization evolved from regimental *Sensha Rentai* (regiments first formed in 1938) to group to division level in order to better control multiple regiments. Tank Groups (*Senshadan*) comprising three regiments were raised in Manchuria between 1938 and 1940, with another regiment, the 2nd, formed in Japan to be used in the Malaya campaign.

A failure as a combined arms team because it did not contain infantry, engineer, or artillery formations, the tank group was supplanted by the division (*Sensha Shidan*) concept starting in mid-1942, with the cre-

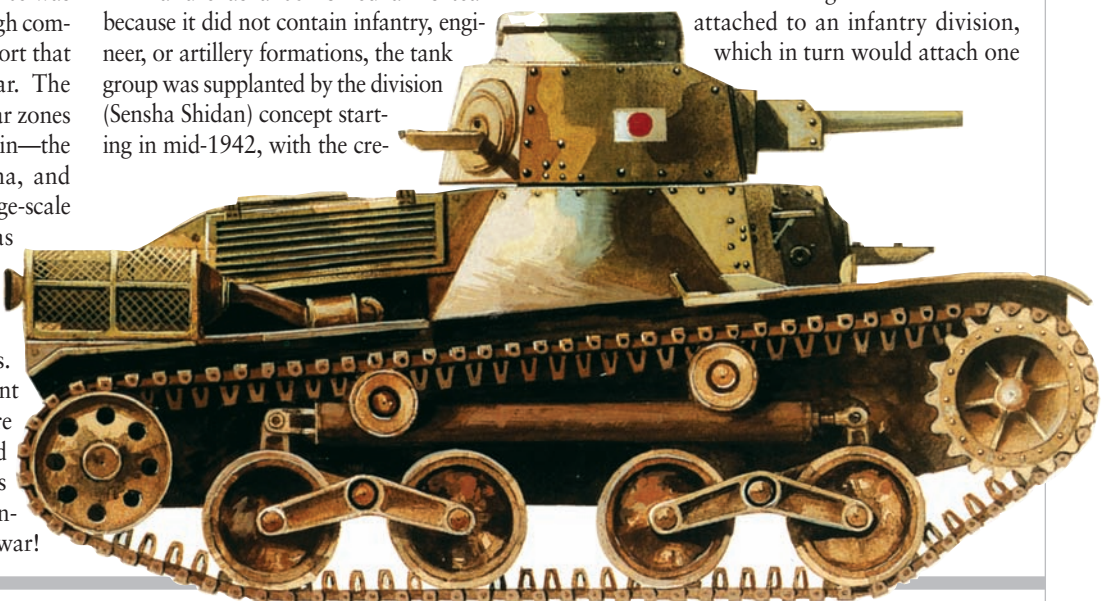
ation of four tank divisions by 1944. Each division held two tank brigades (*Sensha Ryodan*) of two regiments each. It was touted as an all-arms force, and its supporting artillery regiment was towed, not self-propelled, and the ratio of three infantry battalions to four tank battalions was too high. A division's order of battle called for each tank regiment to have 1,071 men and 78 tanks, an infantry regiment of 3,029 men, as well as artillery, antitank, reconnaissance, engineer, and maintenance units.

In addition to divisions, the Japanese Army had a plethora of independent tank companies (*Dokuritsu Sensha Chutai*), 12 of which served on Saipan and the Philippines, mostly occupying static defensive positions.

Japanese tank regiments held 750 to 850 officers and men (tank troops were collectively called *Senshahei*), manning 30 to 50 tanks. A full colonel usually commanded the regiment, while majors and captains ran the companies, and sub-lieutenants officered platoons. Maintenance, supply, and medical units were integral parts of the regiment. Usually three or four tank companies (three medium and one light) made up the unit. Three or four tank platoons of three to five tanks each formed a company.

But tank strength in a regiment was always a problematic issue due to losses from combat and poor maintenance. Also, as the war dragged on, Japanese tank crew shortages grew acute in both numbers and efficiency. Since the Army did not send dismounted tankers back from the front, using them instead as regular infantry, experienced crews rarely got the chance to impart their expertise to replacements in the tank corps.

Japanese tank doctrine as devised in the 1930s stated that the tank's primary mission was to support friendly infantry. Typically, one tank regiment would be attached to an infantry division, which in turn would attach one



tank company (Shidan Sensha Tai) to each infantry regiment. The tank division's light tank company would be retained for reconnaissance and flank protection tasks. This practice of using tanks in "petty-packet" fashion prevented the best use of the weapon, which required mass and shock action.

At the start of the Pacific War, tanks were treated as mobile guns, firing as they moved to suppress enemy machine-gun and artillery positions in order that the favored arm of decision, the infantry, could capture contested ground. By late 1942, reacting to the successes of the Germans during the first years of the war, the Japanese had revised their tank doctrine and decreed that the tank was now the main strike force and that all other arms were there to support it. This new theory of tank combat was based on the possibility of conflict with the Soviet Union on the vast Asian plains.

A small amount of armor was deployed to the Pacific area. Tanks of the 1st Independent Tank Company, about 12 Type 97 mediums under Captain Yoshito Maeda, were used on Guadalcanal. The protracted battles in New Guinea saw their use but to little effect due to the lack of roads; muddy, mountainous terrain; and thick jungle. A few score were sent to the central Pacific atolls, where it was envisioned that they would charge at the Americans as they landed on the beaches. This hope was soon dispelled by American firepower, and the tanks were relegated to being not more than static firing positions.

Tank units were also sent to the larger, western Pacific islands, but the roadless, hilly, and densely forested terrain reduced mobility. This, combined with piecemeal commitment against superior American Sherman and Stuart tanks—with their thicker armor protection and sporting 75mm and 37mm guns respectively—caused most Japanese commanders to use their vehicles in dug-in positions to avoid the lethal enemy tank fire.

Tactically, Japanese tankers were urged to be aggressive; it was not unusual for tanks to continue an advance even after their accompanying infantry was left behind or had fallen back. If unsupported, tank crews would dismount to clear obstacles themselves and even attack the enemy troops covering them. When attacking, companies would assume the T formation (Choji) with three platoons and the headquarters section deployed in line and a fourth platoon to the right center. When the assault went in, the front units established the firing line while the rear platoon attempted to hit the enemy flank or guarded its own company flank.

*Continued on page 80*


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## Hitler's Second Bismarck

Joachim von Ribbentrop was Nazi Germany's second foreign minister during 1938-1945.

**DESPITE BEING RIDICULED AS A VAIN, POMPOUS, AND GLORY-SEEKING IMBECILE** in a spate of biographies, diaries, letters, trial transcripts, and memoirs by leaders, field marshals, generals, and diplomats from both the Allies and his own Axis partners during and after the war, Joachim von Ribbentrop nevertheless was one of the premier foreign affairs practitioners of the Nazi epoch.

In his life full of ironies, he was one of the first of the top Nazi German leaders to have a full-scale biography done on him, in 1943, *This Man Ribbentrop—His Life and Times*, by Dr. Paul Schwarz, a disgruntled former foreign office official who had served with him in Berlin. His autobiography, *The Ribbentrop Memoirs*, written between August 25 and September 23, 1946, in his Nuremberg jail cell as he awaited hanging as a convicted war criminal, appeared with added material from his widow in 1954 and is the only account of his remarkable life in his own words.

From that date until 1992, as virtually every other top Nazi leader was profiled in a seemingly unending series of biographies, von Ribbentrop, whom Adolf Hitler called his “second Bismarck” because of his many foreign affairs successes, remained virgin territory to book authors. That changed, however, with the appearance that

year of two excellent biographies, *Hitler's Diplommat: The Life and Times of Joachim von Ribbentrop*, by the late John Weitz, and *Ribbentrop* by Michael Bloch, reissued in 2003 in a paperback edition, thus making it more generally available to would-be readers.

Many writers have wondered why Hitler ever picked von Ribbentrop as the Third Reich's second foreign minister on February 4, 1938, in a move that stunned even Ribbentrop. His contemporaries, particularly his rivals for power and influence within the Nazi Party and German Reich government, who were legion in number, also wondered. Part of the answer was that he was well traveled, far more than almost anyone else in the top leadership cadre, especially the Führer himself, having journeyed to London, Rome, Paris, and New York before his appointment, and to Moscow afterward. He had not visited Tokyo, although during the war he wanted to get there either by long-range Luftwaffe aircraft or by U-boat, but such travel was forbidden by Hitler as too dangerous.

His rivals both within and without the Third Reich had ample reason to be jealous of von Ribbentrop, moreover, because of the number of positions he held in succession and the signal diplomatic success he achieved while in them.

These included being head of the Nazi Party's Ribbentrop Bureau outside the regular foreign ministry during 1934-1938, Special Commissioner for Disarmament Questions during 1934-1935, during which post he managed to have signed the landmark Anglo-German naval treaty on June 18, 1935, something no one thought he could accomplish; ambassador to Great Britain from 1936 to 1938, and Reich foreign minister from 1938 to 1945.

In this final posting, von Ribbentrop negotiated and signed the most important treaty of the entire prewar period, the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939, which gave the green light to the joint German-Russian invasion of Poland and helped launch World War II. In 1946, he insisted it was his “very own idea,” not Hitler's. Taken together or viewed singly, these were no mean feats, indeed, for any diplomat of any regime in any era.

In addition to those, he also negotiated the Anti-Comintern (Communist International) Pact of 1936 that brought Imperial Japan into the German orbit for the first time; the Axis Pact with Fascist Italy on May 22, 1939; and the final coup de grace, the Tripartite Pact of September 27, 1940, which

**Pictured with several aides, Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop was often maligned by other top Nazis. However, history reveals that he did not often receive the credit he was due.**



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tied into one alliance Germany, Italy, and Japan and was designed to keep the United States out of World War II. Due to the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, however (which surprised not only Hitler and von Ribbentrop but also Japan's ambassador to Berlin), the last goal failed.

At least in part for all of these treaties, von Ribbentrop was convicted and hanged by the international military tribunal at Nuremberg on October 16, 1946, at age 54. He was then the number one offender following the suicide that same night of former Reichsmarshal Hermann Göring, his major rival.

Joachim von Ribbentrop was born at Wesel on the Rhine River on April 30, 1893. The offspring of several generations of soldiers, he became interested in foreign

affairs when he chanced to see Kaiser Wilhelm II and King Edward VII of England during the latter's state visit to imperial Germany in 1909.

Before spending the years 1910-1914 in Canada, young Ribbentrop (the title of von was purchased later from a relative) made his first trip to London. He always felt an affinity for the might, main, majesty, and power of the British Empire, he asserted, even in prison. He considered it an extreme irony of his life that he was viewed by both Allies and Axis as having hated Britain. This sentiment, he believed, was assumed by others to be so strong that he advised Hitler wrongly that Britain would not fight in 1939 to prevent further German territorial aggrandizement. This he denied vehemently in his memoirs.

While in Canada, he worked for 18 months as a bank clerk at Montreal, was a bridge construction worker in Quebec despite having had surgery to remove a kidney, spent several months in New York City, and was even a reporter there. This experience reflected the fact that he spoke English and French fluently, another reason Hitler picked him in 1938 as Reich foreign minister. Indeed, he even translated briefly for the Führer before a full-time translator was hired.

"I seriously considered being a violinist," he later recalled wistfully; and he also rode horses, hunted, played tennis, skied, and bobsledded during the 18 months he lived in Switzerland

Previously unpublished photo by Helmut Laux, JRA



**Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and Count Galeazzo Ciano, Foreign Minister of Fascist Italy, confer during a hunting excursion in 1940. Both men supported their nations' aggressive moves toward war.**

during his youth.

When World War I broke out in August 1914, von Ribbentrop thought it his patriotic duty to return home from Canada for military service but lamented in his jail-cell memoirs later, "What if I had stayed?" Certainly he would not have been facing the hangman's rope. When his ship was stopped at sea, the ever resourceful future diplomat hid in a coal bunker and then talked his way out of wartime internment as an enemy alien.

Back home, he avoided a medical examination and thus joined the Blue Hussars at Torgau, where in 1945 the Red Army would effect its famous juncture with the Americans. Unlike all the other top Nazis, von Ribbentrop saw combat action on fronts both east and west and

was duly awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class for valor under fire. He proudly noted in his memoirs that four generations of his family had received the coveted medal, including his son Rudolf, a Waffen SS panzer officer on the Eastern Front in World War II.

During service in Turkey, Germany's World War I ally, he met Franz von Papen, who later served as a Weimar Republican chancellor and worked with Göring and von Ribbentrop to make Hitler Reich chancellor on January 30, 1933. Indeed, some of these all-important secret negotiations took place in the von Ribbentrop family home at Dahlem, a posh Berlin suburb. The end of World War I and the unexpected defeat of Germany had come as a complete shock to von Ribbentrop. "We officers considered it especially humiliating that our epaulettes should be replaced by blue stripes," he later noted.

Working at the War Ministry in the immediate postwar period, 1st Lieutenant von Ribbentrop helped the Army prepare for the upcoming Versailles Peace Conference that both he and Hitler later did so much to dismantle during 1933-1938. In 1919, he resigned his Army commission after five years and joined the Berlin branch of an old Bremen firm of cotton importers, in which he could put his considerable foreign contacts to good use.

"The owners soon granted me power of attorney," he remembered proudly, and his suc-

cess was crowned on July 5, 1920, by the fortuitous marriage to Annelies Henkell, the wealthy heiress of a still well known, prosperous German wine and champagne firm. She was destined to survive both World War II and her marriage to von Ribbentrop. Disputing the allegation by Nazi Propaganda Minister Dr. Josef Goebbels that von Ribbentrop "married his money," his widow wrote in 1954: "In 1924 my husband gave up the Henkell agency and devoted all his time to the importing firm, which he alone had developed, and of which he was the sole owner."

Like Göring and Rudolf Hess, von Ribbentrop was a devoted husband and family man, writing to his wife in his farewell note the day before he was hanged, "I again touch your dear head and look deep into your eyes with all the unending love which one human being can have for another." Despite this, in January 1945, he offered to fly to Moscow with his entire family as hostages, to meet again with Josef Stalin in an attempt to end the war, but his Führer refused.

He met Hitler at Berchtesgaden on August 13, 1932, and immediately joined the Nazi Party as a result, taking his place within the inner ranks of those working with von Papen to have Hitler named German chancellor, his first such great service that the Führer never forgot.

Far from being the yes man that his enemies called him, Hitler himself termed von Ribbentrop "his most difficult subordinate." This was mainly because he asserted that he constantly tried to moderate the Nazis' stand against the Jews, both for humanity's sake, he wrote, and because it made Germany look bad in the eyes of world public opinion. He also tried to end the war with Soviet Russia, especially after the twin defeats of Stalingrad and Kursk in 1943, when it became clear that the Third Reich would lose.

During what he called the "critical years of 1935-36," von Ribbentrop sought in vain, he claimed, for personal meetings between the new Reich chancellor and the top leaders of France and England. These duly occurred in September 1938 at Munich, but by then the chances for alliances with both had gone for good. The Führer, like Göring later, even wanted to fly to London himself in 1936. In the end, Hitler sent von Ribbentrop as the new German ambassador to the Court of St. James's upon the death of the previous representative.

"Ribbentrop, bring me the English alliance!" Hitler commanded as he saw him off, but his mission failed because, he testified, the British would not allow Germany to become too powerful on the continent of Europe, and thus upset

what they called “the balance of power.” This echoed the United Kingdom’s stance since the days of French King Louis XIV.

Von Ribbentrop wrote in a 1938 secret memo from London, “England is our greatest enemy,” after talking with both Winston Churchill and the man he considered the Third Reich’s greatest foe, Sir Robert Vansittart, permanent under-secretary in the British Foreign Office.

“He [Hitler] did nothing but offer England friendship,” complained von Ribbentrop, adding that the Führer even into 1940 offered to “guarantee” the British Empire with a force of 12 German divisions if asked in return for a free hand for German expansion in the East and the return of one or two former imperial colonies for raw materials. The offer was continuously rejected, however.

In 1936, von Ribbentrop asserted that he vigorously opposed sending Luftwaffe planes and pilots to aid Generalissimo Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War, but Hitler and Göring prevailed. In 1943, he also tried to arrange a personal Hitler-Stalin summit conference to end the war in the East, but the Führer demurred because he believed that a military victory must be won first. It never was.

Hitler sometimes seemed to act as his own foreign minister and appeared not to trust his Foreign Office. In addition, von Ribbentrop faced the rivals who wanted his job at home: Göring, Goebbels, Nazi theologian Alfred Rosenberg, and Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler among them. The latter even tried to involve him in a scheme to replace Hitler, to which he claimed he replied, “Himmler, I will not play this game. I remain loyal to the Führer.”

As for the Army and assassination plots against Hitler, von Ribbentrop stated in 1946, “I never entered into a conspiracy and remained loyal to the end.” In fact, he was loyal beyond the end of the Third Reich, as his defense before the tribunal at Nuremberg proved. He refused to assert disloyalty to the dead Führer even when fighting for his own life during testimony on the witness stand.

His basic defense stance was that neither he nor Hitler wanted war in 1939, only the settlement of the Polish question, in which they felt Britain really had no interest. Ribbentrop also stated that neither he nor Hitler believed the British would go to war over Poland.

“I was never informed about military questions,” he avowed, and swore he did not know of the plan to attack the Soviet Union until April 1941, two months before it occurred. Still, he asserted that he argued against it right up to the day of the invasion.

National Archives



**Accused as a war criminal, von Ribbentrop listens to testimony while seated in the dock at Nuremberg. Von Ribbentrop was convicted and executed in 1946. Four of his top aides testified against him during the proceedings, and Ribbentrop did take the witness stand in his own defense.**

Von Ribbentrop was in favor of a Japanese attack on British-held Singapore but wanted at all costs to keep the United States out of the war, he insisted. Like all the other 21 defendants in the dock at Nuremberg, he felt that it was an “enemy court” that was illegal and biased against all of them, only interested in seeking convictions and death sentences, not justice. In short, he believed it was “victor’s justice,” as Göring had also claimed.

“Not even half of my evidence was admitted.... Only the prosecution, not the defense, had access to German and foreign archives,” he wrote, maintaining to the last that neither he nor Hitler sought “world domination.” Instead, he said, the Führer wanted Stalin’s westward expansionism into Central Europe contained. Ribbentrop wrote his memoirs, and his defense was largely conducted from von Ribbentrop’s memory alone.

On October 15, 1946, Joachim wrote to Annelies, “I am perfectly composed and will hold my head high whatever happens ... proud and unbroken, and in the firm belief in an eternal life, I shall go on my way.” Even his harshest critics have admitted that he mounted the steps of the gallows with courage, there to meet his fate. □

*Towson, Maryland, freelancer Blaine Taylor is the author of six books on the World War II era, the most recent being Hitler’s Headquarters from Beer Hall to Bunker, 1920-1945.*

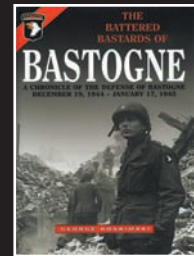
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A German submarine rolls on a heavy sea during a mission in the Atlantic. Painting by Olaf Rahardt, 2000. INSET: German spy Werner Alfred Waldemar Janowski was apprehended by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

## Cloak and Dagger Mounties

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police served as counterspies against both Nazi agents and Soviet operatives.



Sensitive to the Nazi threat to North America, the hotel clerk became even more observant of his puzzling customer. Janowski became increasingly nervous in response to casual but pointed conversational questions and

asked about the departure time of the next train to Montreal. The clerk replied that it would leave in about one hour. The stranger asked for directions to the depot, declined the offer of a ride, and abruptly left the hotel.

The desk clerk's suspicions of a possible enemy agent were quickly confirmed by a yellow matchbox that the man had left behind in his rush to the train station. The matchbox was marked made in Belgium and lacked the required import tax stamp.

Constable Alphonse Duchesneau of the Quebec Provincial Police was immediately contacted by the hotel clerk. The policeman was skeptical of the allegations but dashed to the railroad station along with the astute clerk and boarded the train.

Janowski was spotted instantly. Constable Duchesneau confronted him and demanded to see his papers. The German nervously handed him two documents. The first was a Canadian National Registration Certificate identifying him as a resident of Toronto, Ontario, but the form was printed in both French and English.

**IN THE EARLY MORNING OF MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1942, THE GERMAN U-boat U-518 surfaced off the bleak Quebec coast. Seamen scrambled onto the wet, slippery deck and quickly launched a wooden dinghy into the cold, black water. The German sailors rowed silently through the darkness to the rocky shore.**

A lone passenger grabbed several suitcases and leaped off the swaying craft onto the beach. German agent Werner Alfred Waldemar Janowski, code-named Bobbi to the Abwehr, had been inserted into Canada.

The 38-year-old Nazi swiftly changed from a naval uniform into civilian clothes and by daylight was in the small town of New Carlisle, four miles from the landing site. He presented himself as a traveling salesman when he registered at the New Carlisle Hotel. Janowski stated that he would not be spending the night and asked to register for just a bath and breakfast.

The stranger immediately aroused suspicion in the front desk clerk when he paid for the room and food with currency that was out of date and circulation. The clerk also noticed that the stranger's clothes were odd and very much out of style. Janowski reported that he had arrived by bus from a neighboring town, obviously unaware that bus service had been discontinued from that community.

The clerk's suspicions continued to grow. The people of the isolated coastal town were very aware that Nazi submarines operated near their shore. Merchant vessels were frequently sunk by U-boats within sight of land. Peculiar nighttime sounds that came from the ocean were known to be surfaced enemy submarines recharging batteries. It was also well publicized that eight German agents had landed by submarine in the United States six months earlier.



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**ABOVE:** Masked to protect his identity, Igor Gouzenko, a member of the Soviet embassy staff in Ottawa, speaks to American journalist Saul Patt following his defection. Gouzenko later became a Canadian citizen. **RIGHT:** William S. Stephenson, known during World War II as the spy master Intrepid, supervised the Corby espionage case.



National Archives

This type of bilingual printing of official documents occurred only in the province of Quebec. The other document was a Quebec driver's license, but with a Toronto, Ontario, address.

These inconsistencies raised too many questions. Duchesneau demanded to search Janowski's luggage. The search was unnecessary to expose the German as a spy: he blurted out, "I am caught! I am a German officer!"

Duchesneau proceeded to examine the German's suitcase, which contained spiked brass knuckles, approximately \$6,000 in currency, pills, a loaded .25-caliber automatic pistol, and a 40-watt transmitter-receiver radio. The spy from the sea had been arrested 12 hours after he had come ashore in Canada.

The case of the spy from the sea was transferred to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The elite law enforcement organization was established in May 1873 to suppress heavily armed gangs of whiskey traders who controlled the western Canadian prairies. Throughout its colorful history, the Mounted Police had performed both law enforcement and military missions for the Canadian government. During the Riel Northwest Rebellion of 1884, Mounties served as scouts for the Canadian Army; and during the 1899 Boer War, Mounted Police performed as cavalry with the British forces in South Africa.

Mounties were with the Canadian Army in France and Belgium during World War I and

with the Allied Expeditionary Force to Siberia in 1918. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are best known for their Arctic dogsled patrols, but battling urban crime and international threats became new missions during the early 20th century.

A special branch of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was established and became actively involved with counterintelligence operations after the 1917 Russian Revolution and the rise of the Canadian Communist Party. A bloody general strike in Winnipeg, Manitoba, during the summer of 1919 enflamed fears of a Bolshevik threat to the western provinces, and there was an increase of communism within the Canadian labor movement after World War I. Mountie John Leopold infiltrated the Canadian Communist Party in 1920 and worked under cover for eight years. His skillful counterspy activities led to the arrest and conviction of many top party leaders on various conspiracy charges.

After Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933, Mountie counterspies shifted their attention from communist conspiracies to the Nazi threat. RCMP agents swiftly penetrated Nazi and fascist organizations. When Great Britain and Canada declared war on Germany in September 1939, Mountie counterespionage agents had compiled a list of "dangerous persons" who were immediately arrested and placed into wartime detention and internment. Nazi Ger-

many would have to reestablish its Canadian spy network by inserting new agents.

Mountie Clifford Harvison was assigned to lead the Janowski espionage investigation, which was codenamed Watchdog. The seasoned Mountie criminal investigator had spent years in Montreal during the 1920s arresting counterfeiters, drug dealers, and gangsters involved with smuggling liquor into the United States. Harvison described his experiences as simply dealing with booze, brothels, and drugs.

Harvison and the urban Mounties were called the "Horsemen" by the Montreal criminals who viewed their aggressive law enforcement tactics as similar to the Western frontier

style of their predecessors. In 1938, Inspector Harvison was given command of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Investigation Unit, which included counterintelligence duties.

When Harvison began his questioning of the spy from the sea, Janowski claimed to be a U-boat naval officer who came ashore on a simple reconnaissance mission and then decided to desert. The German adamantly denied that he was a spy or a saboteur. However, Janowski could not answer basic questions about a submarine.

Under aggressive interrogation by Harvison, Janowski quickly dropped his cover story and revealed that he was in fact a German Army officer who had lived in Canada from 1930 to 1933 and was on an espionage mission for the Abwehr. Janowski appeared to become cooperative and further stated that his mission was a prelude for other Nazi espionage and saboteur U-boat landings.

The main objective of the German agents was to sabotage war industry plants in both Canada and the United States. Harvison suggested to Janowski that he had been set up to fail by German intelligence by giving him money and documents that would arouse immediate suspicion. The astute Mountie investigator perceived an exploitable weakness

in the otherwise overconfident German. The Nazi agent feared that he would be hanged as a spy if he did not cooperate.

Harvison exploited Janowski's fear of execution and suggested that he work for the RCMP. Janowski accepted the possibility that he had been betrayed and agreed to work as a double agent. And Harvison was convinced of the German's sincerity to cooperate and participate in this counterintelligence operation against the Abwehr. The Mountie counterspy hoped to lure other Nazi agents into a Royal Canadian Mounted Police counterespionage trap.

An agent from British Intelligence joined the Mountie team that included a code expert and a specialist on radio messages. Transmissions to Abwehr headquarters in the German seaport city of Hamburg began from a house in the residential area of Montreal. The transmissions were made twice a day for the next nine months. However, it slowly became apparent that the communication was very one-sided. German intelligence requested information on military units in Montreal and Quebec City, antisubmarine defenses on the Saint Lawrence River, and National Registration Certification documents.

All of the Abwehr inquiries suggested plans for future espionage and sabotage missions. The Mountie counterspies replied with sanitized military intelligence, but the Germans provided no information. The Mounties pressed harder through Janowski's transmissions for intelligence regarding other Nazi agents in Canada. Janowski was directed to use the ploy that he had been alone in enemy territory for almost one year and was in need of finances. Who could he contact in Canada for help?

However, his German handlers did not deviate from their pattern. They simply ignored these transmissions and replied with their own questions. Finally, it became painfully apparent that the captured spy could not be used to lure any more Nazi agents into a Mountie trap.

Questions arose to try and explain the Abwehr's response. Had Janowski's arrest been too publicized and therefore known in Germany? Had he remained loyal to the Abwehr and cleverly alerted Hamburg through predetermined codes in his transmissions that he had been captured and was under the control of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police? The counterespionage operation was discontinued, and Janowski was turned over to the British and transported back to England.

As the Nazi espionage threat subsided in Canada, new dangers from the Soviets emerged. In September 1945, Igor Gouzenko, a member of the Red Army Military Intelligence and a code

*Continued on page 80*



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## A War Department Staff Officer Remembers

The author witnessed numerous interactions during the critical years of 1942 and 1943.

**IN THE FALL OF 1943, I FOUND MYSELF A “LIMITED SERVICE” DUTY OFFICER** assigned to the Operations Division, War Department General Staff in Washington, D.C. This agency had been established by Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall due to his lack of confidence in the response times of the old General Staff agencies.

OPD, as it was called, was a relatively small agency headed by a two-star general, Tom Handy. He was supported by a small staff of senior officers, mostly young colonels and clerical support consisting mainly of limited-duty enlisted men. Through this agency came and went all the critical radio correspondence to and from General Marshall’s office to Army commanders worldwide. In effect, it was Marshall’s command post.

**General Joseph W. Stilwell, commanding the U.S. Tenth Army, broadcasts from a radio station on Okinawa. As a staff officer at the Pentagon, L. VanLoan Naisawald often read Stilwell’s colorful dispatches.**

OPD was physically located on the third floor of the Pentagon, with its classified message center, of which I was a part, located directly beneath the War Department code room. All classified messages passed through this message center to and from the code room by pneumatic tubes. Handling these messages for OPD was a small staff of one senior lieutenant colonel, some six junior duty officers, of which I was one, and about an equal number of limited-duty enlisted sergeants.

We alternated duty tours from 8 AM to 4 PM, from 4 PM to 12, and from 12 to 8 AM, but the length of the tours invariably ran some 12 hours. The shifts were rotated periodically. The officers handled all Top Secret and Eyes Only messages, with the enlisted sergeants handling the others. Each message was read, and the reader determined which staff section in OPD would have responsibility. The message was then immediately delivered.

The highly classified ones were taken initially to the “front office,” where distribution was determined. In many such cases the number of copies sent down from the code center was limited—instead of the normal dozen or so, these came in but three to four copies. In extremely sensitive cases, we received only three copies from the code room, one for General Marshall, one for the White House, and one for General Handy. White House copies were hand delivered to Admiral William Leahy, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s chief of staff—and no one else.

During my almost two years of duty there, I was privileged to encounter, either directly or indirectly, some of the key figures of World War II. But of all the messages received during my tour of duty there, those from General Joseph “Vinegar Joe” Stilwell elicited the most enthusiasm and interest from all who saw them. All incoming messages were filed by month in a loose binder by point of origin, with the most recent being on the top. The last message from Stilwell during his retreat out of the jungles of Burma in 1942 read, “This radio’s getting too dammed heavy.” It was the last message from “Vinegar Joe” for some weeks, but those that followed later were gems.

Messages from Stilwell were always eagerly awaited, so at variance were they from the more routine prosaic ones from other theaters. One message in early March 1943 caused us to feel a bit sorry for the general in his—what was then obvious to us—

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**ABOVE:** Major General Thomas T. Handy offers the general orders to one of five colonels who were promoted to the rank of brigadier general in 1943. General Handy commanded the Operations Division of the U.S. War Department at the Pentagon. **BELOW:** At the Pentagon Signal Center's message perforating section, communications were received via a belt carrier, perforated, and then passed along through a tube system before transmission. Those who handled messages received varying levels of security clearance.



very difficult assignment. Writing to Marshall, he commented that in working on his “own small manure pile I am inclined to forget how much larger yours is....” He went on to say that if Marshall felt it best to sack him, to go ahead—it was always his ambition “to be a sergeant in a machine gun company.”

So interesting and so pithy were his personal messages that all of us eagerly awaited his frequent Eyes Only missives to General Marshall. These usually arrived at our desk about 2 AM, making the night shift far more interesting. It was a known fact in the War Department that Stilwell had two intense dislikes—Chinese

leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and anyone British! Chiang was usually referred to as “Shanker Jack, the Peanut, or the Gisimo.” I recall well one message in which he was so bitterly upset with the British position on some matter that I was directed to deliver it immediately, at about 6:30 AM, to Marshall's quarters at Fort Myer, Virginia.

A staff car took me there in a few minutes, and I was escorted into the breakfast room where the general was eating. I handed him the message as he was lifting a cup of coffee to his lips. As he read, he paused. Slowly he lowered the cup and turned to me. “Have you read this?” he asked. I replied that I had.

Marshall laid the message down and then paused for a minute before saying something to the effect that “This is a message to end all messages!” That evening a message went back to Stilwell telling him to cool down and play ball in a very difficult situation. We anxiously awaited Stilwell's reply, which came back the next night. It read something to the effect that he would even stand up for some upcoming ceremony and wear a monocle. Stilwell added that he had only one good eye anyway!

Another testy message to Marshall and his people in OPD was a bitter complaint about the lack of support being given Stilwell in his effort to build up the Chinese Army. Materials promised were in India, he wrote, engineer construction equipment had consisted of a wheelbarrow and a bulldozer—with bull attached!

“I will be [expletive deleted] if I like playing the goat ... if nothing can be done, OK, but ... don't go on telling me how great they are going to back me to the limit—This is the limit already!” Stilwell wrote.

A litany of pithy messages flowed from Stilwell over the years, castigating Chiang and his duplicity. Chiang's wife also suffered at his hands. Madame Chiang was an immensely charming and influential lady, particularly with President Roosevelt. Stilwell, and to an extent those in OPD in the China-Burma section, felt her influence was less than helpful overall. It was the perception in OPD that Madame Chiang wangled promises out of the president that the Army was incapable of fulfilling except at the expense of other theaters. One case arose in March 1943, when a Chinese plea for more aircraft was being put forth as the way to end the war in China. The “Madame” was then heading for Washington, and Stilwell wired Marshall that he hated to think of the results “now that the Madame is let loose on a credulous public!”

So intense was the anti-Madame feeling at the China desk of OPD that this writer wit-

nessed an exchange between the desk head, a full colonel, and his deputy, another full colonel, about who would go to the airport to greet Madame Chiang on her arrival. The junior colonel, a crusty, old, tobacco-chewing ex-cavalryman and former West Point football coach, flatly refused to go! Only by considerable persuasion from his friend and boss did he finally agree.

None of us in OPD had any doubts as to Stilwell's belief in the effectiveness of the Chinese Army under Chiang. Blunt evidence of this came in a message to Marshall stating that if the Chinese Army was so full of fight and so well led, "What am I here for?" He went on to say that the Chinese leader just sat in his palace writing books and refusing to believe anything a "foreign devil" told him in reference to his own people. All the man felt he needed to win, said Stilwell, was more airplanes.

One suspects that the influence of General Claire Chennault, who had headed the original Flying Tigers and was now an Army Air Forces commander in China, played a major role in this situation. To Stilwell, the constant praise Chiang and his army were receiving in the American press confirmed Chiang's warped ideas.

One last story about Stilwell concerns one of his official visits to the Pentagon. The OPD message center was located on the ninth corridor, just off the E-Ring of the Pentagon, where all the really senior officials were located. One morning I followed a warrant officer named Bond, who ran the OPD record file room, as we headed for General Handy's office. Bond was leading and took the inside as she made the left turn onto the E-Ring, only to run full force into Stilwell, knocking him to the ground. Stilwell, from a sitting position on the hall floor, looked up at Bond and snorted, "First time I ever came 6,000 miles to be knocked on my ass by a warrant officer!" With that he arose, brushed himself off, and continued down the hall.

Regardless of our high security clearance, we were never allowed to enter the code room, for it contained the new SIGABA code machines. These highly classified devices were somewhat akin to the German Enigma machines and were stringently guarded—except in one unfortunate instance that I witnessed from a distance.

The U.S. Army had some sort of large Signal Corps operation in a South American country, possibly Brazil, and for some unknown reason a senior U.S. officer stationed in that facility started to take a party of foreign officers into the code room there. An alert sergeant immediately ordered all the covers to the machines to be lowered, closing them to view. But news of



**Brigadier General Charles K. Gailey, Jr.,**  
proved an unpopular figure as a colonel in the  
Operations Division of the War Department.

the event soon made its way back to Washington and Marshall's desk.

A scathing message went out, reducing the officer from his elevated wartime rank to his Regular Army prewar rank and directing him to report to Washington immediately. I never heard the final consequences, but I am sure they were very severe. Interestingly enough, later in the war a truck containing a full SIGABA unit being readied for movement disappeared. Apparently taken by some GIs going AWOL, the truck was ditched in a river and recovered several days later after a frantic search.

Two other messages stand out in my memory. One of these came from General Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters in North Africa about the time of the Sicily invasion. It was directed as Eyes Only to General Henry "Hap" Arnold, chief of staff of the Army Air Forces. It concerned the all-black fighter group from Tuskegee and was obviously in reply to an inquiry as to the unit's efficiency. The bottom line, the report said, was that the unit was well trained but the pilots lacked the initiative to close with German fighters. For that reason the unit had been assigned to ground support. But, according to postwar accounts, this decision was apparently changed and the unit restored to full combat duty with fine results.

The second memorable message came from General Douglas MacArthur. We underlings always also enjoyed his personal messages with their flowery prose. In this instance, there was the usual distinctive MacArthur description of how a group of Japanese fighters had attacked a U.S. bombing force protected by a normal

*Continued on page 82*

# B E Y O N D B A N D O F B R O T H E R S



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# *Delaying* **Action at Enchenberg**

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AMERICAN TROOPS BATTLED STUBBORN GERMAN RESISTANCE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF EASTERN FRANCE. **BY ALLYN VANNOY**

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THE 44TH INFANTRY DIVISION, PART OF THE U.S. SEVENTH ARMY'S XV Corps, was pushing elements of the battered German 25th Panzergrenadier Division back toward the German frontier in the Vosges Mountains during early December 1944. In a desperate effort to slow the Americans, the Germans were employing defensive tactics that included minefields, roadblocks, and blown bridges. At one French village the Germans tried another means to delay the Americans.

After securing the town of Montbronn on December 6, the 44th Division's 114th Infantry Regiment found itself attempting to maneuver along the only road in its sector leading north. Its objective was the village of Enchenberg. In an effort to add leverage to the operation, while the 114th Regiment's 1st Battalion approached the village along the road from Montbronn the 2nd Battalion was directed to move cross-country and flank the village from the northwest.

The 114th Infantry Regiment was a New Jersey National Guard unit with its roots extending from the American Revolution through the Civil War, Spanish-American

War, and World War I. The unit had been activated on September 16, 1940, under Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf Sr. (the father of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., commander of Desert Storm forces during the Gulf War of 1991). On September 15, the regiment disembarked at Cherbourg, France. On October 18, it was involved in its first combat operation, and in mid-November, as part of the U.S. Seventh Army, it helped capture the Saverne Gap in the Vosges Mountains.

A village of 80 or 90 buildings, Enchenberg

was situated on a high ridge in a gap between two hills, just west of the town of Lemberg. Forests screened the village to the northwest and southwest.

On December 7, just 90 minutes before the assault was to begin, Major Edward M. Minion, who had taken command of the 1st Battalion only two days before, called his company commanders together to explain the orders he had received from regiment. The 1st Battalion was to proceed into the town until it contacted the 2nd Battalion approaching from the north.



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The strength of the German forces in the area was not known, and no reconnaissance had been made.

Company B, commanded by Captain T. Owens, was to make a reconnaissance in force to feel out defenses along the southern edge of the village. Company C, under Captain Melvin G. Biggs, and Company A, led by Captain Harold B. Williams, were to follow at 100-yard intervals to the rear of Company B. Company D, the heavy weapons company under Captain Eugene Bryant, was to be the last in column.



At 7:30 AM, the companies pushed off from Montbronn. Company B moved along the dirt road in two columns, 15 yards between men, the 3rd Platoon on the right, 2nd Platoon on the left, and the 1st Platoon on point. The point squad of the 1st Platoon, under Sergeant Frank McMichael, was sent 200 yards ahead of the platoon.

At about 8:30, when the squad was roughly 300 yards from the southern edge of the town, mortar shells began to fall 50 yards ahead. In spite of the fire, Company B continued its

advance until it was 100 yards short of the first house, where machine-gun and sniper fire, coming from their immediate front, forced the men into ditches along the road. Word was passed back requesting supporting fire from Company D's mortar. After two 81mm rounds had been dropped in the area, the machine-gun fire ceased.

When German mortar fire began to fall near Company B at 8:40, Major Minion ordered the mortars to provide smoke. Under the cover of this smoke, the 1st Platoon proceeded to the

**A pair of soldiers of the U.S. 44th Division advance warily through a wooded area in search of a German sniper.**

first two houses on the east side of the road into the town and the first house on the west side of the road.

A terrific explosion was also heard at about this time. It was learned afterward that the road bridge over the railway, referred to by some as the railroad crossing bridge or simply "the bridge," farther ahead on the road had been



**Festooned with tree branches for camouflage, an M4 Sherman tank stands guard in the center of the town of Enchenberg on the day after Christmas.**

blown up by the Germans. Using the first building on the left side of the road for cover, Staff Sergeant Henry Bayer ordered his 2nd Platoon to follow the 1st Platoon into the houses. At this point, a German Panther medium tank, which had maneuvered to a position on the east side of the blown bridge, began to bring 75mm and machine-gun fire on the troops attempting to occupy the houses. At the moment, the loss of the railway overpass bridge was a blessing since it prevented the Panther from moving closer to the GIs.

Lieutenant Bruce A. Tankel, commander of the regiment's Company C, accompanied by 2nd Lieutenant Dan Uribe and his radio operator, Pfc. James Swinny, approached Company B's position. Tankel and the others managed to dodge the fire from the Panther and then crawl to the safety of the houses at the edge of the village.

Tankel went to the attic of the second house from the south, on the east side of the road, and established an observation post. Adjusting the fire of the company's six 105mm howitzers, he brought it to bear in the vicinity of the Panther. Since Tankel could not actually see the tank from his position, he was assisted in directing fire by Technical Sergeant George C. Price, 1st Platoon, who was across the street and could observe the vehicle and call back its position to Tankel, who relayed the information by radio. After a barrage came close to the Panther, it pulled back into the town and out of sight.

At about noon, Tankel spotted German

infantry digging in along a forward slope above the railroad tracks to his southeast. Artillery fire was immediately brought down, killing or wounding several of the Germans and forcing the rest to seek cover.

On the battalion's orders, Company B held in place. Because of the company's isolated position, and fearing that the Germans might move to encircle it, Minion directed that patrols be sent out from Companies A and C to reconnoiter the area on both sides of Company B's position. Although they returned with negative reports, to obtain a personal estimate of the situation Minion decided to visit Company B's position. A wire team followed the major forward. As he reached the company the Panther reappeared.

Company B used several buildings to shield itself from the Panther. To overcome these obstacles, the tank began firing armor-piercing shells into the houses between it and Company B. Not waiting for disaster, Tankel directed artillery fire on the tank once more. After 28 rounds had landed in its vicinity, it again withdrew.

While Company B had been moving into the town, Company C, which had been following 100 yards to the rear, ran into heavy artillery and mortar fire and so was diverted from its intended line of march. It moved into the dense woods to the southwest of Enchenberg. There the GIs dug in and remained for the rest of the day. The same shellfire drove Company A back to buildings just north of Montbronn, where they stayed until 1 PM the next day.

Major Minion decided that Company B, with its 110 men, could hold its position for the moment. He and Tankel then returned to the rear amid heavy rainfall and machine-gun fire. On the way back, Minion hit the ground to avoid some close rounds, and he aggravated an old knee injury. The two men made it to the battalion command post about 5 PM, but the major continued on to the aid station to have his knee checked.

Just after dark, mine detector teams cleared the road up to Company B's position. Under sniper fire a quarter-ton truck brought forward water, ammunition, and a daisy chain—a series of land mines tied together with a rope—to the company.

A perimeter defense had been set up with the 3rd Platoon protecting to the east and the 2nd Platoon on the west side of the road. The 1st Platoon was set up in houses to the rear of the 3rd and 2nd Platoons. Half the men remained on alert while the other half rested.

About 10 PM, the Panther returned to the same point it had occupied on the previous occasions and opened up with 75mm fire. The GIs being fired on were not able to vacate their house because of continuous small-arms fire that was also sweeping down the main road through the town. Two men were wounded as a result. The Panther kept up with sporadic cannon and machine-gun fire through the night but withdrew before dawn.

The next morning at 7, Pfc. Michael Kness, Company B, decided to relieve himself and started to step out of the building where he had spent the night. Private Donald I. Dyer, who was seeing his first action, was on guard at the time and warned Kness against leaving the building. Kness went outside anyway. Dyer then turned his attention toward the window that faced the road. Although it was still dark, he noticed three soldiers approaching along the road. Two of the men proceeded to go around the side of Dyer's house while the third remained beside a tree in front of the house.

Dyer called out a challenge to the individual by the tree, giving the password. The individual answered, "Was?" But Dyer wasn't exactly sure of his words. It was dark, and he had never seen a German uniform before. The man nonchalantly turned and started back toward the center of town along the roadway. Dyer then heard a shot and someone yelled, "They got Kness!" At the same moment five Germans appeared and broke into a run down the road from the rear of the house. Dyer fired two shots at the fleeing group. Dropping the trailing figure, he then fired another four rounds. One of the group turned and fired a short burst at Dyer

with a machine pistol. Kness was later found dead at the bottom of the cellar stairs.

As it was getting light, Sergeant Leslie O. Curtwright, leader of 2nd Squad, 3rd Platoon, was on the second floor of one of the buildings. He noticed a German on the railway embankment about 175 yards away, apparently trying to observe for artillery fire direction. Curtwright drew a bead on the German with his rifle while asking his platoon leader, Lieutenant Borgerding, "Can I pull it?"

Borgerding replied, "Go ahead." Curtwright flipped off the safety and squeezed the trigger. The German fell. Even at that range Curtwright could tell that he was dead—the first of six enemy soldiers to be killed by Curtwright that day.

At 7:30, 2nd Lieutenant Larsen, a forward observer from Company C, sighted a "bunch of careless Germans" digging in on ground to the east of the town on Hill 407. "We banged the hell out of Jerry on that hill," recalled Pfc. Leonard J. Hare. Word was also received that the 2nd Battalion, approaching from the northwest, had run into heavy mortar fire as it attempted to close the circle around Enchenberg.

At 8:15, Sergeant Harry D. Loeb sighted the ever-present Panther moving into its usual firing position across the railroad bridge gap. This information was reported to the battalion, but before fire could be directed against the tank it again withdrew.

The regiment now ordered 1st Battalion to continue its attack and secure the southeast end of the village until they could link up with the

**Sergeant Bayer was the first man down the embankment of the rail cut as his men gave covering fire. He surprised two Germans, who quickly vacated their foxhole with their hands held high. Bayer yelled to his men, "Don't fire on them!" But they continued to fire. "Stop for Christ's sake!" he screamed. His men stopped shooting and then came up at a run.**

2nd Battalion. Major Ralph C. McCrum, acting 1st Battalion commander while Minion was recovering from his knee injury, called a meeting of company commanders and decided on a new plan of action.

Company C was to proceed at 11 AM to the edge of the woods west of the houses occupied by Company B, then move northeast, cross the railroad tracks, and clear out the houses on the left side of the main street. Company B was to cross over the railway and clear out the houses to the right of the main street. Company A was to move into the houses vacated by Company B and act as battalion reserve. The planned

jump-off was changed to 1 PM because of the problems 2nd Battalion was having north of the town. The situation was deteriorating to a series of shoot-and-scoot actions by the Panther, punctuated by fire and wait on the part of the Americans.

At 11, the tireless Panther reappeared. Loeb spotted it from an upstairs window. As he started downstairs to report this information to the command post across the street, the Panther let loose an armor-piercing round at Loeb's building, followed quickly by two high-explosive shells. One blast tore Loeb's right leg off at the hip as shell fragments also wounded Private Mortimer Cohen. After firing the three rounds, the tank again withdrew.

Lieutenant Elwin D. Sterling and Sergeant George C. Price, who were in the command post across the street, dashed through small-arms fire to the aid of Loeb and Cohen. A jeep ambulance was called, and the two men were evacuated. Fifteen minutes later, Loeb died from his wounds.

Sergeant Curtwright now spotted a German soldier who seemed to be watching the activity around the jeep-ambulance and took aim at a distance of about 100 yards from his attic position. A moment later, another German fell dead. Captain Owens of Company B returned and set about orienting his platoon leaders on the impending attack.

After a heavy concentration of American artillery fire was laid on the far side of the railroad tracks, the companies jumped off as planned at 1 PM. The GIs of Company B raced

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**A safe distance away, two soldiers of the U.S. 44th Division observe the shelling and aerial bombardment of German positions near the village of Enchenberg. German tanks harassed American infantry throughout their fight for the town.**

across the railway one man at a time. Sergeant Bayer was the first man down the embankment of the rail cut as his men gave covering fire. He surprised two Germans, who quickly vacated their foxhole with their hands held high. Bayer yelled to his men, "Don't fire on them!" But they continued to fire. "Stop for Christ's sake!" he screamed. His men stopped shooting and then came up at a run.

As the 2nd and 3rd Platoons of Company B continued to race across the railway cut, Sergeant Henry E. Welsh, assistant squad leader of 2nd Squad, 1st Platoon, saw two Germans attempting to set up a mortar about 400 yards southeast of the blown bridge. Welsh opened

ullstein bild



fire with his M1, causing the two Germans to leave their mortar and run. As they fled, Welsh cut them down.

After getting across the rail cut, Company B reorganized and proceeded to clean out the houses on the east side of the main road. The infantrymen took small arms fire from buildings further up the road.

Before Company C jumped off from its position in the woods west of the village, Captain Biggs sent a patrol of four men to reconnoiter. The patrol returned at noon and reported that no Germans had been contacted up to the

embankment of the railroad cut.

At 12:50 the company started forward through the trees toward the line of departure near the southwest edge of the town. The 1st Platoon was on the right, 2nd Platoon on the left, and 3rd Platoon following 150 yards to the rear of the 2nd. The dense woods limited visibility to just 15 feet, which caused the 3rd Platoon to lose contact with the leading platoons.

At 1 PM, a German mortar barrage began to fall on the 3rd Platoon. In the confusion, some men headed to the rear rather than in the direction of the village. Others remained in the area under fire to aid the wounded.

The leading platoons continued their

advance parallel to the houses on the west side of the main road to just west of the rail cut, where they soon began to receive small-arms and mortar fire. The 1st Platoon leader, 2nd Lieutenant Thomas L. Buchman, led his men in groups of four or five to the houses along the west side of the road in an effort to find protection from the mortars.

The 2nd Platoon, which was advancing to the west of the 1st, was slowed by this fire. As they found little cover on the ground they were crossing, men moved by rushes through the open fields and an orchard. Technical Sergeant

Harold Smith, along with Staff Sergeant Nicholas Olah from 3rd Platoon and part of his squad, managed to run and crawl to the first house on the west side of the road.

The 2nd Platoon was still pinned down in the orchard when Captain Biggs sent his runner to an M36 tank destroyer, which had come up and parked along the road with instructions to fire at the steeple of the town church. Captain Biggs had a hunch that a German observer was using the steeple as an observation post. The tank destroyer fired three 90mm rounds at the steeple approximately 1,000 yards to its front. After the third hit, the German mortar fire ceased.

At 2 PM, the two platoons, along with Olah's 3rd Squad, moved across the railroad cut, one man at a time running down the west embankment, across the tracks, and up the east bank to the cover of several buildings. These men were covered by a light machine gun under Sergeant Robert Turner, who had the weapon set up on the top of the railroad cut behind a hedge that ran parallel with the tracks. Captain Biggs tried to keep his platoons abreast of each other and advancing up the main street by ordering them to occupy the three houses on either side of the road beyond the railway cut.

Due to the German mortar fire and sniper activity, the 1st and 2nd Platoons had become disorganized as some of 1st Platoon was mixed in with members of 2nd Platoon. Both were scrambled with platoons of Company B.

Private First Class James A. Davenport saw Germans in the third house on the east side of the road and said to the group of men he was with, "Hey, there's Germans over there."

Sergeant John R. Huyge answered with the obvious, "Well, let's go get them!" and then proceeded toward the house. He kicked down a thin concrete slab fence that was in his path and ran to the side of the house where Davenport had seen the Germans. Once there, he turned and discovered that he was alone. He ran back to where he had left his squad. Meanwhile, Technical Sergeant John Elek, 2nd Platoon, had come up. Huyge told him, "Davenport says there's Germans in that house. If someone will help me, we can get 'em." About eight men, including Elek and Pfc. Raymond Swanson, followed Huyge back to the house. Swanson approached the doorway and yelled, "*Kommen sie aus*," as he aimed his M1 at the door. Two Germans then came running out with their hands in the air.

Sergeant Huyge and Pfc. Swanson now ran across the street to join their squad on the west side of the road. While they were crossing, a large-caliber shell whizzed passed them. Sergeant Elek, looking out an attic window

from the house on the east side of the road, observed that the fire was coming from a Panther at the first street intersection to the east along the main road. Elek radioed the tank's position to Captain Biggs, who was in a building to Elek's rear.

Biggs told Elek to give the information to 1st Lieutenant Michael Szoc, who was in the same building as Biggs. Szoc in turn relayed it to supporting guns. The resulting artillery fire did not hit the Panther but did kill a number of German infantrymen who were behind the vehicle as the shell fragments bounced off the walls of the buildings in the narrow street. The Panther moved up and down the street to avoid being hit by the artillery shells. At the same time, it fired its 75mm gun systematically in the direction of the buildings to its front and both sides of the street where the American troops were located.

Sergeant Elek's house was hit, forcing him to leave his attic observation post. Once downstairs, Elek called across the street to Buchman, asking to relay the position of the German tank to Szoc by radio. From a hayloft, Buchman was able to observe the Panther, and relayed the information to Szoc. But the tank now opened fire on his position, forcing Buchman to the ground floor where it was not possible to see the threatening Panther any longer.

When Buchman told Captain Biggs over his radio that he could no longer see the Panther, Private Leland A. Goeke, who had borrowed Elek's radio, began relaying information on the tank's position to Biggs. Goeke was looking through a three-inch hole that had been broken through a frosted-glass window.

After attempting to knock down a house and barn filled with hay that had blocked its line of fire, the Panther proceeded to a position that was only 25 yards from Goeke, who radioed this information to Szoc. Artillery shells then began to land in the road near the tank, wounding several accompanying German infantrymen.

Another German tank now appeared and came up the road, stopping alongside the first. The GIs of the two companies let loose with bazooka fire at the armored pair. This seemed too much for the Panthers, and so they began to withdraw, firing their machine guns and cannons as they went. German medics, adorned in white aprons with large red crosses, came up to collect the wounded, the Americans holding their fire as they went about their work.

As Company A prepared to come forward, four .30-caliber machine guns, three 60mm mortars, and a squad of riflemen were placed on the company's left flank on high ground east of the road with good observation on the railroad cut. Scouting patrols, sent out earlier,

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**ABOVE: The 81 mm mortar proved essential in blasting entrenched German positions during the arduous advance of the U.S. Seventh Army across France. Here, a mortar team prepares to fire its weapon at German troop concentrations. OPPOSITE: On the alert for advancing Allied troops, a German soldier appears ready to contest every inch of ground in the Vosges Mountains of France. Note the *panzerfaust* antitank weapon, the Mauser rifle, and the automatic weapon adjacent to his position.**

returned with reports that they had not contacted any Germans up to the banks of the cut.

Company A jumped off at 1 PM. While Company C was moving into position on Company B's left flank, Company A moved out with the 2nd Platoon leading and 3rd and 1st Platoons following behind it at 100 yards. At 1:15, advancing in platoon column, the company was about 100 yards from the railroad cut when German mortars opened up. At the same time a flat trajectory weapon fired at them from somewhere east of the cut. Private Robert Shofner was wounded in the neck and shoulders by shell fragments; Private Ralph Husky received leg and stomach wounds; Staff Sergeant Raymond Mautai lost both legs. All three men died while six other wounded survived.

In the meantime, Captain Williams had moved into the second house on the right of the road with the remainder of the 2nd Platoon and yelled to the men bringing up the rear to "move to the cover of the building." But the men were panicky. First Lieutenant Sol Samazin, executive officer, who had been moving up with the 3rd Platoon, heard the message and relayed it to the troops. Despite these orders several of the GIs remained in the ditches rather than moving up to the houses. Although under fire, Samazin made two trips from the buildings back to the ditches to bring up the stragglers.

By 1:45, Company A was in two buildings on

the right of the road as squad and platoon leaders made a hasty reorganization of the units and prepared to continue the advance. At 2:30, Williams crossed the railroad cut and found Company B in buildings on the right side of the street. He then ran across the street to Company C's positions and spoke to Lieutenant Lawrence P. Meltesen, company executive officer. Meltesen told him, "There's a tank just around the corner of the road ahead firing 88mm and machine gun." Then, while under sniper fire, Williams brought Company A across the cut. This took about 10 minutes to accomplish.

Williams ordered the 2nd and 1st Platoons to clear the houses on a side street that jutted out on the south side of the main road east of the cut, the 2nd Platoon to take the first three houses and the 1st Platoon to take the last three. The 3rd Platoon was to remain in the buildings just occupied by the company along the main road.

The 2nd Platoon's 16 men moved out first. The 2nd Squad, under Sergeant Russell Karch, dropped off at the first of the three buildings assigned to the platoon. As they approached the house, four civilians came running out of the cellar door waving a white sheet. Behind them followed three Germans with their hands over their heads.

Technical Sergeant Earl Dunnuck moved the 3rd Squad to the rear of the second building,

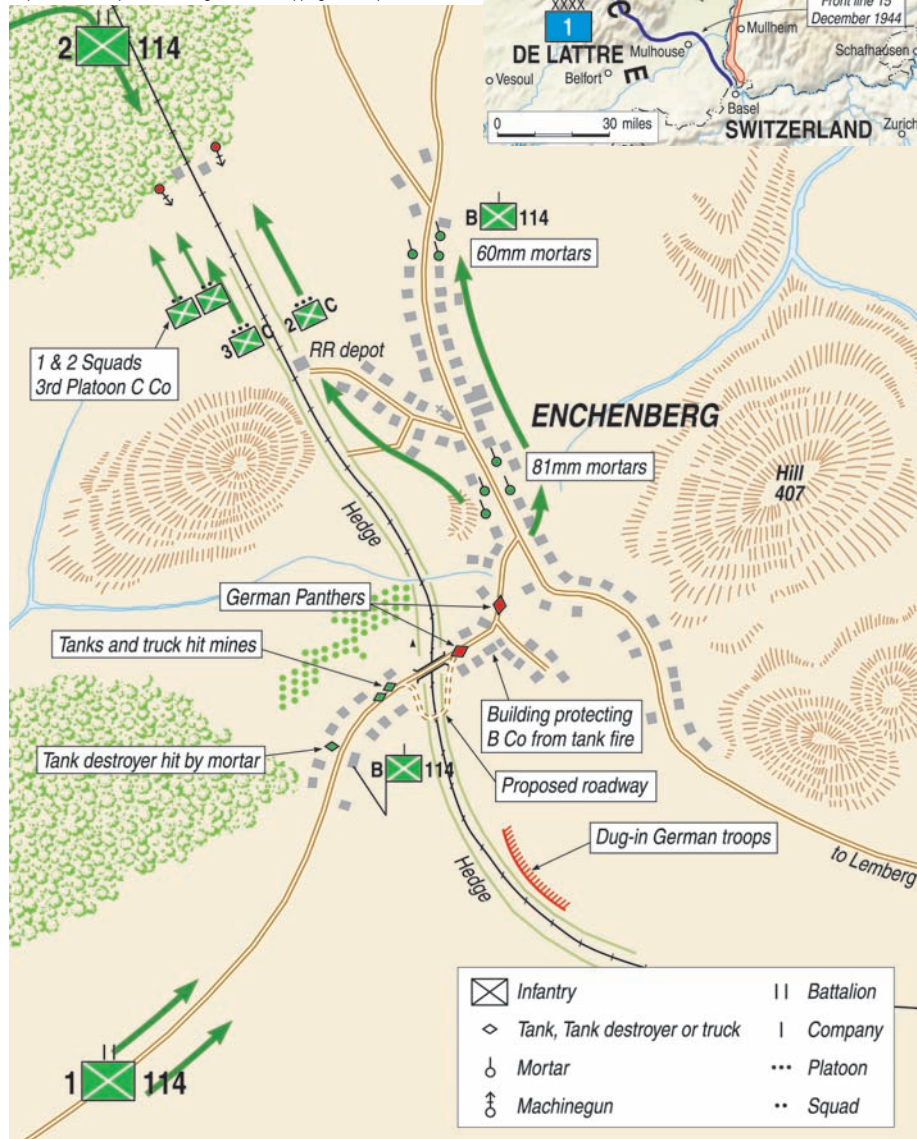
rolling over a mesh fence, while Pfc. Charles Lewis (acting squad leader), Private Stanley Duda, Pfc. Paul J. Stark, Private Paul J. Swank, and Private Ray K. Washam followed in the same manner. They moved cautiously toward the second house. Dunnuck opened the back door, and three civilians came out slowly. Eight Germans followed them and were taken prisoner. Pfc. Stark escorted them to the rear.

Dunnuck entered the house with the rest of the squad and then went to the front of the house with Washam. They found a dead German in the hallway, his head practically shot off. Lying on the front step was a young German with a leg wound, but he seemed to be paying no attention to the events around him because of the intense pain he was suffering. Ignoring him, Dunnuck looked out the open

door and saw four or five Germans dug in to his right. Another German was walking toward the third house that the platoon was assigned to take. These men were about 200 yards away.



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German troops rallied to block the American advance through Enchenberg and the surrounding area for several days. Fighting was fierce and casualties were heavy on both sides.

Dunnuck took careful aim and, so as not to expose himself more than he had to, fired left-handed, squeezing off three rounds from his M1. The Germans took cover. Dunnuck then left Stark and Washam, who continued to fire at these Germans from the doorway and front window, as he called to Lewis, who had just started upstairs. Lewis and Dunnuck went out the back door. Dunnuck intended to outflank the Germans while Stark and Washam engaged them from the front of the house; however, the backyard was framed in by a wire fence, part of the same one Dunnuck had gone over as they approached the house. To get to the other side of the house, they needed a few moments to cut a hole in the fence.

As Lewis was cutting an opening in the wire mesh, Dunnuck saw a German peeking through a nearby barn door, which the German closed abruptly a moment after Dunnuck spotted him. With a way cleared through the fence, Lewis covered Dunnuck as he ran to the corner of the house. As Dunnuck peered around the corner, he found himself face to face with one of the Germans he had taken the left-handed shots at earlier. The German reacted by tossing a grenade at Dunnuck, but Dunnuck ducked back around the corner of the building and the grenade went off harmlessly. He moved again to the corner of the house and saw the German running around to the front. The German turned the corner at the front of the house and dropped his rifle as he came face-to-face with Washam.

Lewis and Dunnuck now headed for the barn where Dunnuck had seen the German only moments earlier. A grenade was tossed down at them from an upstairs window of the house they had just left. Lewis picked it up and threw it away. It was a dud. Dunnuck then fired a rifle grenade through the open barn door. After it exploded and apparently neutralized any threat from that direction, he tossed a hand grenade into the upstairs window of the house, but his grenade turned out to be a dud also. Stark, who had moved out of the house, then fired a rifle grenade through the window. This one went off.

Captain Williams had come up by now, accompanied by a few men from the 2nd Platoon. As they did, a potato masher hand grenade was tossed out of the upstairs window, causing them to scatter. It went off harmlessly. Williams then sent Staff Sergeant William Ravenscraft, 2nd Platoon squad leader, to get some men from the 1st Platoon so that fire could be directed on all sides of the building. Under cover of this fire Dunnuck tossed his last grenade into the building. After it exploded, the cellar door opened. The GIs held their fire while three civilians ran out and nine German enlisted

men and two officers followed them.

While the 2nd Platoon had been engaged, the 19 men of the 1st Platoon had also been busy. Under Staff Sergeant Robert Norton they had moved behind the last three buildings on the right side of the road. The platoon split into two squads. One squad covered the outside of the buildings, while the other searched inside. The 1st Squad found nothing in the first building. The 2nd Squad, under Norton, found some civilians along with four Germans sitting around a fire in the cellar of the second building.

Approaching the last building on the block, Pfc. Phil Yarosites, leading four men of the 1st Squad, saw a German antitank gun set up around the corner of the building with its barrel pointing due west toward the blown bridge. This may have been the flat-trajectory weapon that had fired on Company A as they approached the rail cut earlier.

By 4 PM, Company B had taken all the houses on the south side of the main street up to the first side street. Radio communications had been established with Captain Biggs, who was abreast of Company B on the north side of the street. Captain Williams had worked Company A past the railroad tracks and occupied the group of houses on the side street to Company B's right. Biggs received orders from battalion to consolidate his position and set up defenses for the night. At dusk an all-around defense was established.

Nearly two hours since its last appearance, the Panther now returned. Supported by five or six infantrymen, it made its way from the center of the village. In its progress it systematically fired at houses on both sides of the street with its machine guns and cannons. Upon reaching the intersection, where the side street split off to the south, it was confronted by a building that blocked its direct line of fire on the buildings where Company B had taken shelter. In an effort to remove this obstacle, the tank fired point-blank at the building with armor-piercing shells. Fortunately for the men of Company B, the building included a barn on the side facing the tank. Hay stored in the barn acted to cushion the cannon fire. Realizing that its efforts were proving futile, the Panther became more daring and closed on the houses where Companies B and C were holed up.

The Panther got within 25 yards of Company B's position when Pfc. Reynold A. Blubaugh fired a bazooka from a second-story window in one of the buildings on the south side of the street. The rocket exploded without causing any apparent damage to the Panther.

Sergeant Hucke of Company C fired a bazooka round at a distance of 25 yards and at

Both: National Archives



**ABOVE:** Two German prisoners stand under the watchful eye of an American soldier. These soldiers appear haggard and disconcerted after days of fighting and were captured while trying to infiltrate Allied lines. **BELOW:** This PzKpfw V medium tank, knocked out by American fire, is inspected by a GI during a break in the advance past Enchenberg. Popularly known as the Panther, this tank mounted a 75mm gun and accounted for numerous U.S. casualties during the fighting in the Enchenberg area.



an angle of 85 degrees off the front of the Panther, striking the tank's bogie wheels and causing one of these small wheels to fly into the air. At the same time, Pfc. Ormand Beltz opened up with a Browning automatic rifle while other GIs fired small arms at the accompanying German infantry.

Sergeant Elek cautiously peered out the window of the building where members of Com-

pany C had taken up a position, and he spotted three Germans coming up his side of the street and hugging the buildings for protection. As he reached back to one of the other men who were with him, he whispered, "Give me a grenade." Someone plopped a grenade into Elek's outstretched palm. He pulled the pin and threw it in the direction of the three Germans. He repeated, "Give me another."



**Halting along a snowy road in the Vosges Mountains of France, a column of Panther medium tanks awaits orders. The Panther was developed in response to the successful Soviet T-34 medium tank and proved to be one of the finest armored fighting vehicles of World War II.**

Another grenade was dropped into Elek's hand; he pulled the pin and threw the second grenade in the direction of the Germans before the first had exploded. One of the Germans apparently saw the spark from the burning fuse of the second grenade because there was a yell just before the first grenade went off. In the next instant, the Germans attempted to scatter but were plastered by the second grenade, which had apparently landed closer to them than the first.

To add to the complications facing the GIs, a second German tank now appeared. It came up the street and parked alongside the first. This was probably the same one that had been involved in the earlier action. The tanks were brought under bazooka fire by members of Company C but received no damage. Both then opened fire on Companies B and C before again withdrawing toward the center of town and out of sight. Once again the Americans held their fire as German medics came forward to collect their wounded.

As the tank action was developing along the main street, Private William I. Ross spotted 15 or 20 Germans advancing through the orchard to the north of Company C's positions. Some of the group were setting up a machine gun only about 20 yards away from Ross. He reported this information to Captain Biggs, who was in the same house with him. The Captain moved to one of the rear windows to observe for himself. He heard someone twice say, "Hands up!" in broken English, and he noticed 10 or 12 men lined up in a column like prisoners.

Biggs, thinking that someone was leading away a group of prisoners taken earlier, yelled out, "Who the hell is chasing those German prisoners?" When no one answered, he cut loose with his Thompson submachine gun as grenades were thrown by Staff Sergeant Leon Pretti, Staff Sergeant Chapler, and Private Gilbert I. Marez. Some of the Germans ran while others were hit, but none of the Company C men ventured out to see the results of their work.

A short distance away, Pfc. Jack F. Williams of Company C, who was manning one of the company's light machine guns at the rear of one of the houses, peered through the evening dusk to see up to 10 Germans approaching. He fired 125 rounds before his gun jammed. Leaving the useless weapon, which he had been manning by himself, he ran to the front of the house. There he found other members of Company C. Williams yelled to them, "Come and help me somebody. I can't hold 'em much longer!"

Five men followed him through the narrow hallway to the rear of the house and opened fire just in time. The six Americans blazed away with a light machine gun, a captured German Schmeisser machine pistol, a Thompson, and M1 rifles. One of the Germans attempted to throw a potato masher in the window, but it hit the side of the building and exploded harmlessly. Before the attack was repelled, the GIs lobbed 60mm rounds into the orchard, preventing other Germans from coming up to reinforce the assault. The Americans heard moaning all night long but believed that it would be unhealthy to go outside to offer aid.

Half the men of Company C took the opportunity to get some rest while the others remained on alert for the rest of the night. During the night the artillery pounded the northern part of the village.

On orders from the battalion, all companies remained in their positions for the night as bazooka and small-arms ammunition was brought up by carrying parties. Casualties were evacuated; but while they were attempting to cross the railway cut, the carrying parties were fired on by 20mm guns from the north in the rail bed, making it rough going for the GIs.

In an effort to get armored support into the town, plans had been formulated to construct a roadway starting just west of the tracks, south, paralleling the railway on the slope from near the blown bridge down to the tracks, across the track bed, and then back north to the main road east of the bridge.

Mine detectors were brought up to check the proposed roadway, but no mines were discovered. Engineers and a bulldozer from the 63rd Engineer Battalion were brought forward to build the road. At about 10 PM, after working its way about 75 yards along the west bank of the cut, the bulldozer hit an undiscovered mine and was put out of action. At midnight, a tank-dozer was brought up in a further attempt to lay a roadway. It also struck a mine and was disabled. Then German mortar fire landed in the vicinity of the laboring engineers and hit a nearby tank destroyer. The mortar round scored a direct hit in the open-topped crew compartment, setting the tank destroyer on fire and putting it out of action.

A bit earlier, a German soldier carrying a wounded comrade approached Company A's position. He was stopped by Staff Sergeant Walter Motyka a few yards from the last building along the side street where the antitank gun had been found. The prisoner told Motyka that he had come from Lemberg by half-track as part of a crew of three. The half-track had stopped about 1,000 yards from the bridge, and his NCO had sent him to investigate the town. While doing so he had decided to surrender. He had also found a wounded German soldier in the field and brought him along. The prisoner said that he was Polish and that he had been forced to fight for the Germans. The prisoner also reported that the Germans had 250 to 300 troops in Lemberg, along with three tanks.

The 2nd Battalion, as it attempted to approach the town from the north, had run into well-defended German positions along its route of advance. When the attack on Enchenberg had jumped off, the battalion had moved out of Montbronn using a trail running north

**The 2nd Battalion, as it attempted to approach the town from the north, had run into well-defended German positions along its route of advance. When the attack on Enchenberg had jumped off, the battalion had moved out of Montbronn using a trail running north through a ravine west of the town. The battalion had been held up in the ravine by artillery and heavy small-arms fire.**

through a ravine west of the town. The battalion had been held up in the ravine by artillery and heavy small-arms fire.

In an effort to bring in tank support on the morning of December 9, a column of eight Shermans of the 749th Tank Battalion headed up the road from Montbronn. As they moved to avoid a damaged truck, the tanks turned off the roadway and moved along the shoulder until the third and fourth tanks in the column both struck mines and were knocked out. Fearing that there might be more mines, the other tanks stopped in place.

There were also reports that the two German Panthers that had been causing so many problems had pulled out of the town during the night. Regiment now issued orders for the 1st Battalion to push through the town, with or without tank support, and “shake hands with

the 2nd Battalion coming in from the north.”

The plan was to have the 1st Battalion launch an assault at 8:30 following an artillery barrage. Companies B and C would move to clear the north end of the town. A half hour prior, Company A was to move out and secure the southeast portion of the town.

Beginning at 7:30 and continuing until 8:15, a terrific artillery barrage of 96 guns, including 105s, 155s, and 4.2-inch mortars, was to hit the area north of the middle of Enchenberg to the high ground to the east and west of the town. A no-fire line was drawn through the center of the town.

At 8:30, Company B proceeded north through the town, searching and clearing all the houses on the east side of the main street. The only resistance encountered was some occasional sniper fire. By 10:30, Company B was at

the north end of town. Here a defense was set up facing north.

At the same time Company B moved out, Company C also pushed north through the town, cleaning out the houses on the west side of the main street. No opposition was encountered. At the north end of the village, Company C drew up alongside Company B and set up defenses. That evening Captain Biggs’s Company C made contact with 2nd Battalion north of the town along the railway.

By the morning of December 10, the 63rd Engineers had installed a bridge over the railway cut. The 114th Infantry would continue to push toward the German frontier until December 31, when it would come under assault by SS troops during a German offensive called Operation Nordwind.

In their fight for Enchenberg, the GIs of the 1st Battalion showed that they were capable of taking on German Panthers without the support of tanks or tank destroyers. The Germans, however, managed to delay the 114th for three days while using little in the way of resources, buying time to prepare defenses closer to the German frontier. □

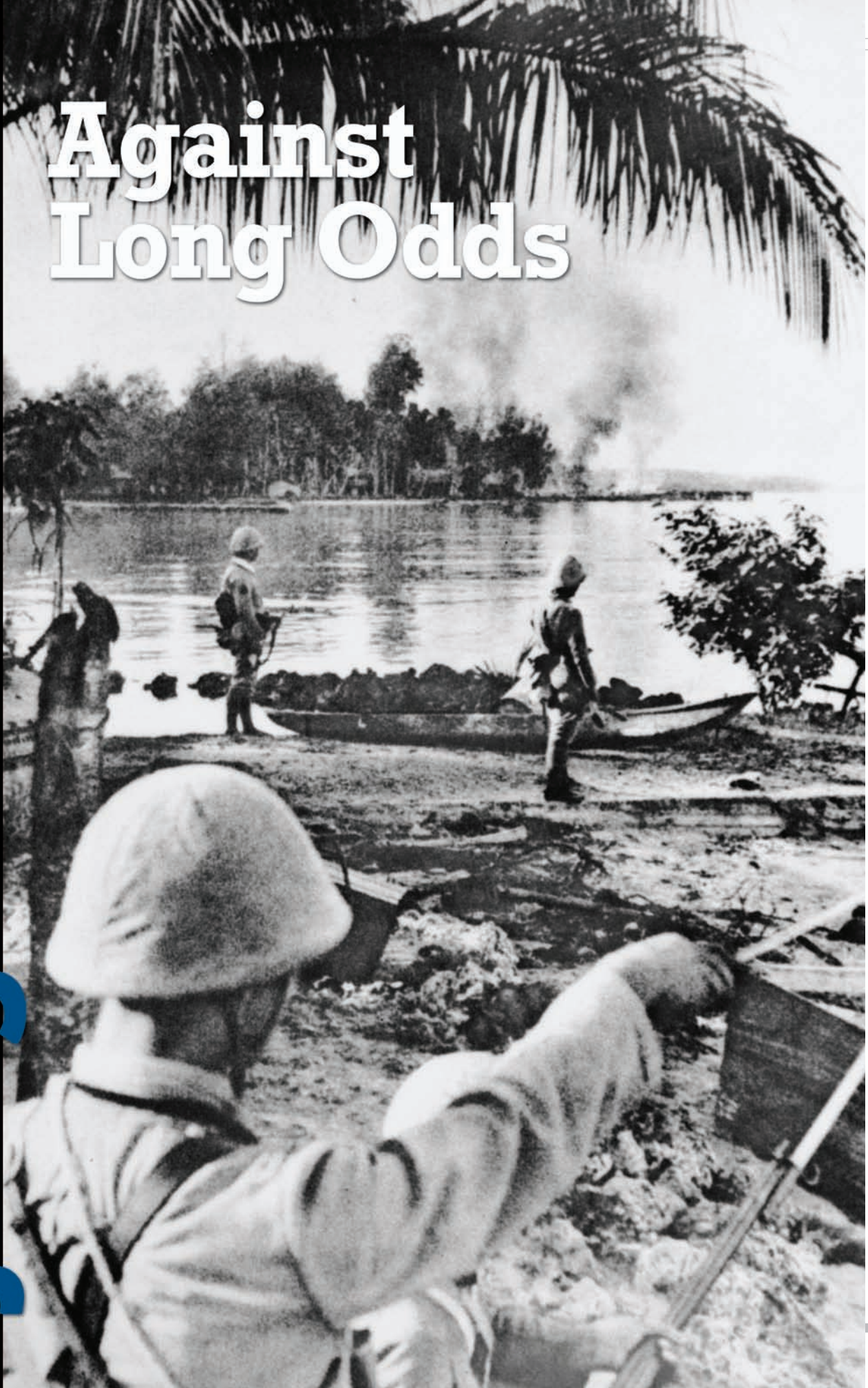
*Author Allyn Vannoy has written extensively on a variety of topics related to World War II. He resides in Hillsboro, Oregon.*

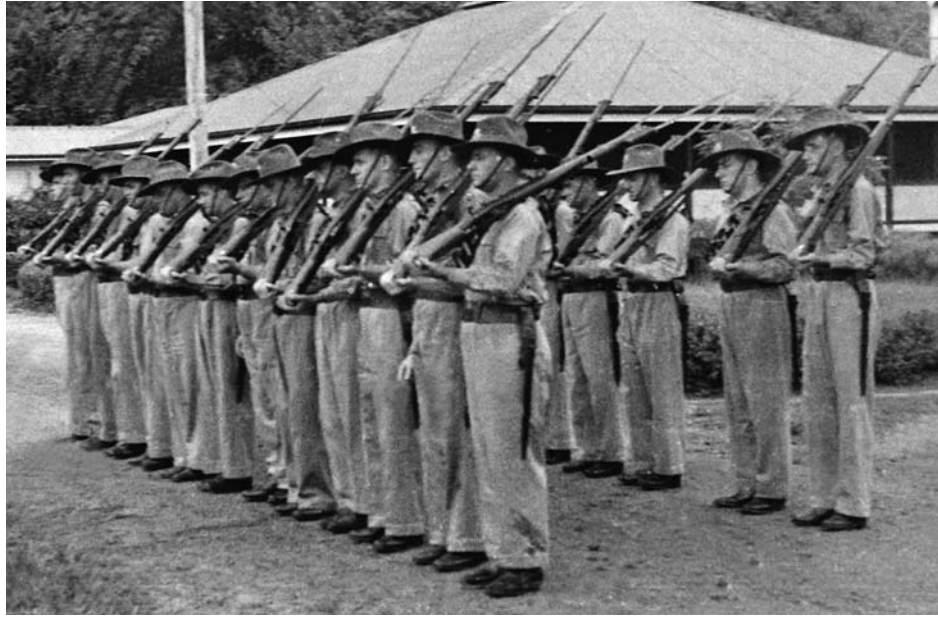
**The wreckage of an American truck that had been laden with ammunition and suffered a direct hit from German artillery is inspected by two U.S. soldiers in Enchenberg.**



# Jungle Warriors

## Against Long Odds





All photos: Australian War Memorial unless credited otherwise

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## THE NEW GUINEA VOLUNTEER RIFLES FOUGHT THE JAPANESE AND THE PRIVATION OF THE JUNGLE. **BY GLENN BARNETT**

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THE FIRST ALLIED VICTORY OF WORLD WAR I OCCURRED WHEN AUSTRALIAN volunteers occupied the German colony of northeastern New Guinea and the adjoining Admiralty Islands. After the war, the League of Nations confirmed Australia's possession of these lands as a mandated territory.

Ominously, the German Micronesian islands to the north of New Guinea were occupied by Japan. Like Australia, Japan was given a League of Nations mandate over its wartime conquests. During the interwar period the Japanese illegally built up naval and air bases on these islands.

When war began in Europe in September 1939, great demands were placed upon Australia, which at the time had no army to speak of. The Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) was formed to support Great Britain in Europe and North Africa. Other rapidly conscripted forces went to the British in Malaya, the Dutch in Indonesia, and the French in New Caledonia. Australian resources were stretched thin. Yet the direct threat from Japan had to be taken seriously.

Late in 1939, the New Guinea territories were authorized to raise their own civilian militia to consist initially of 21 officers and 450 men. This force was to become known as the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (NGVR). Their charter was limited to providing "beach defense against raiders."

For the next two years the NGVR attempted to organize its civilian volunteers into effective military units but faced the difficulty of individual job relocations and recruitment efforts by the AIF, which took many able-bodied men into the regular army. Another logistical difficulty was that the NGVR was divided into five or six different locations based on towns in New Guinea, New Britain, and New Ireland, each separated by hundreds of miles of jungle or ocean.

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**LEFT: A Japanese officer with a drawn sword directs soldiers on the beach as troops occupy Kavieng, the capital of New Ireland province on the island of New Guinea. The area was captured by the Japanese on January 23, 1942, and months of hard fighting followed. ABOVE: On April 25, 1940, the assembled Salamaua Platoon of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles is drilled by its sergeant, a noncommissioned officer named Rogers.**



The largest contingent was based at the mandate's capital of Rabaul on New Britain. In 1940 Rabaul had a mixed Australian and expatriate European population of about 1,200 people, the largest in the New Guinea mandate.

The rest of Rabaul's population consisted of 1,300 Asians, mostly Chinese, who were also worried about the Japanese threat. Some of these were organized into an ambulance corps. The 70,000 indigenous people on the island were excluded from military service. The German experience with native soldiers had not been good, and, besides, it was Australia's job to protect them, not to expose them to danger.

Rabaul was a strategic prize. The crescent city wrapped around a volcanically created deepwater port sheltered on three sides. It was one of the best natural harbors in the Pacific. The 200 or so original NGVR recruits at Rabaul were provided with a few World War I-era weapons: rifles, bayonets, .303-inch (7.7mm) machine guns, and a few light mortars. One supply shipment brought a consignment of wool greatcoats, a useless item in the humid tropics. Some of the tinned meat they received as rations dated from 1918 and were spoiled. Peacetime budgets kept them undermanned and underarmed. If a civilian volunteer wanted a uniform, he had it made by local Chinese tailors at his own expense.

This was the state of things at Rabaul in March 1941, when the Australian Army ordered the 2/22 battalion, called Lark Force, to defend the town and the island of New Britain. By the time the war in the Pacific started in December, there were 1,400 regular Australian troops in Rabaul under the command of Colonel J.J. "Joe" Scanlon. The men

of the 2/22 paid little attention to the civilian-based NGVR who worked at their jobs during the day and drilled at night. Nor did they take advantage of the militia's experience and knowledge of the terrain and the local population.

Scanlon had his orders. He was to defend beach landing sites, the airport, and the port facilities of Rabaul. Those orders were never altered to meet changing conditions.

Among the equipment the 2/22 brought with them were two six-inch coastal defense guns, which were placed at the mouth of the harbor. Several World War I-era 3-inch antiaircraft guns were also situated. Early in December, the 24th Air Recognizance Squadron showed up with four Lockheed Hudson bombers, two or three Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boats, and 10 new Commonwealth Air Corporation Wirraway trainer-fighters.

The Wirraway was the first warplane built in Australia. It was produced under license from North American Aircraft and was based on the same design as that of the American T-6 Texan trainer. The Australians outfitted their version with two machine guns (7.7mm) and bomb racks. The Wirraway was slow and awkward. It was totally outclassed by Japanese planes. Circumstances, however, required it to be a frontline fighter.

When war broke out, the government in Sydney authorized the evacuation of women and children from New Guinea and New Britain. Government employees and administrators were not allowed to evacuate. For them, it was business as usual until it was too late.

On Christmas Day, a single Japanese four-engine bomber flew over Rabaul on reconnais-

sance. The first air raid occurred on January 4, 1942. Eighteen twin-engine bombers dropped their bombs on the city's two airfields while antiaircraft fire exploded impotently 5,000 feet below them. Two Wirraways were scrambled, but to no avail. Bombing became a near daily event.

Colonel Scanlon of Lark Force soon realized that he would not be reinforced. Australia was stretched to the limit of its manpower capacity, and no more help would be forthcoming. It began to dawn on everyone in Rabaul, so far from Sydney, that they were expendable.

On January 19, a coast watcher reported two aircraft carriers, four cruisers, and several destroyers escorting a troop convoy. They were headed for Rabaul. Only now did the military authorities call up the 80 or so NGVR who remained in the city and assign them to defend portions of the beach.

The next day an air armada of 80 Japanese bombers and 40 escorting Zero fighters roared over Rabaul. Six Wirraways bravely went up to meet them, and all were shot down. The bombers hit the wharves, shipping, and the town itself. Following the raid, the remaining men of the 24th Squadron decided to leave Rabaul. They boarded their remaining planes and departed. For the 2/22 and the NGVR there was no way out.

The departing aviators blew up the remaining ordnance at the airport. When the bombs were detonated, the explosion damaged some nearby houses and knocked out the wireless radio tower, the only communication link with mainland Australia.

Just after dawn on January 23, the Japanese invasion began. An estimated 5,300 Japanese troops were involved in the landings. The men of the NGVR were assigned to defend their position on the beach.

There was some initial success at the landing sites. Japanese soldiers were mowed down in the surf by the machine guns and mortars of the defenders. Soon, however, Japanese firepower overwhelmed the defenders who were running low on ammunition. Japanese losses came to only 16 killed and 49 wounded with the loss of one bomber and crew.

The Australians fled inland, but they had made no provision for a second line of defense. There was no rendezvous point; no supplies had been moved to the area, and there was no apparent leadership. Individually and in groups, the defenders either gave themselves up or fled into the interior hoping for rescue. The 2/22 ceased to exist as a fighting force.

In January 1942, it was not yet understood how brutal the Japanese would be in victory.

Those who sought to surrender could not guess the fate that awaited them. After the war, the bodies of 158 soldiers, civilians, and missionaries were found at the Tol Plantation where prisoners had their hands tied behind their backs with fishing line and were taken into the bush where they were bayoneted or shot.

On nearby New Ireland, a small company of about 160 officers and men of the 1st Australian Independent Company and a few former NGVRs could not hold off some 4,000 Japanese troops who landed there at the same time as the Rabaul attack. Rather than defend the beaches, the Australians retreated inland. In their haste they forgot to destroy important stores. Five hundred drums of aviation fuel, oil lubricants, and quantities of food fell into Japanese hands. Sixty civilians and surrendering soldiers were executed there.

This was not the fate of most of the two garrisons. The majority of the soldiers taken were interned until June when the 7,267-ton Japanese passenger ship *Montevideo Maru* put into Rabaul. The Japanese rounded up 1,035 men, mostly of the 2/22, and 36 members of the NGVR (others may have been listed as civilians) and forced them into the hold of the ship, which sailed westward toward the Philippines. Its likely destination was the prison camps of Burma.

Fate intervened, however. Off the coast of Luzon on July 1, the *Montevideo Maru* was spotted by the submarine USS *Sturgeon*. The sub's captain had no way of knowing the nature of his victim's cargo. The *Sturgeon* attacked. All of the Australians, locked below decks, went down with the ship. It was the worst maritime disaster in Australian history.

Back on New Britain, some of the NGVR and 2/22 men did not surrender. Forced from the beaches, they blundered into the jungle where many of them came down with tropical diseases such as malaria and typhoid. Sick, hungry, and lost, the frightened men dared not give themselves up. It was then that the NGVR on the mainland of New Guinea came into its own.

Between them, Lt. Cmdr. Eric Feldt of the Royal Australian Navy and Lt. Col. Keith McCarthy cooked up an impromptu plan to rescue as many men as possible from the disaster on New Britain. McCarthy, operating from a secret location a little south of Rabaul, had a still-working wireless transmitter. He coordinated operations with Feldt, who was in New Guinea. Feldt was the director of the coast watchers and at the hub of their communications.

To effect the rescue, the NGVR needed the help of Christian missionaries. The mission stations on New Guinea had powerful radio transmitters, sheltered ports, and, most important,

boats. Several mission workers took up arms with the NGVR and manned the boats, even while their missions were being bombed. Several small boats made off for New Britain under the cover of darkness to conduct an evacuation. Sick, wounded, and exhausted men made their way to small landing sites as yet unnoticed by the Japanese to embark for New Guinea or Australia. Some 214 men were saved.

When some of the NGVR men reached Australia they were treated with suspicion by the military authorities because they wore odd uniforms with unrecognizable patches. Few in Australia knew of the existence of the NGVR.

With Rabaul lost to the enemy, the military authorities in Sydney finally realized the impor-

At noon on January 21, waves of Japanese bombers and fighters roared over the twin towns of Lae and Salamaua on the Huon Gulf coast. That afternoon the civilian population of Lae was moved to an emergency camp inland. The NGVR assisted the civilians, both European and Chinese, to evacuate and for the next several days combed the town for supplies and equipment ahead of the inevitable invasion. They destroyed anything that could be of use to the enemy.

The NGVR base of operations moved inland to a prewar center for gold mining in the Bulolo Valley behind the coast of Salamaua and the Markham Valley behind Lae. The rough and tumble gold miners flocked to the NGVR,

National Archives



**ABOVE:** Using a telescope to view Japanese troop movements, men of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles maintain a lookout position high in the mountains of the large island. **OPPOSITE:** Retreating from the strong Japanese forces that landed near Rabaul on January 23, 1942, these soldiers rest briefly along a primitive trail in New Britain's Bainings Mountains.

tance of the NGVR. Urgent telegrams reached the scattered and desperately few men in New Guinea, ordering them to prevent the Japanese from landing on the coast. Without proper arms or equipment it was an impossible task.

Resistance to the Japanese in New Guinea centered around the Huon Gulf on the northeast coast. Major W.M. Edwards was now in command of the NGVR. It was a greatly reduced force. So many able-bodied men had joined the AIF that his own militia was more like a home guard of determined if aging men.

which needed all the manpower it could find. In addition to military duties, the NGVR was the de facto civilian authority as well. The civil office had broken down, and the Volunteer Rifle officers were the last vestige of Australian authority on the northeast coast of New Guinea.

The Japanese did not come right away, and the small detachments remaining in Lae and Salamaua continued the job of gathering supplies and sabotaging material that might be of use to the enemy. About 20 NGVR men stayed in Salamaua where they performed useful work

at the little airstrip. They refueled short-range Hudson bombers flying from Port Moresby on reconnaissance or bombing raids against Japanese positions at Rabaul. Using 44-gallon drums of aviation fuel and pumping by hand, they extended the range of the Hudsons and helped them make it back home.

In the predawn darkness of March 8, Private Jim Keenan was on watch at Salamaua. Looking out to sea, Keenan was not sure what to make of the dim forms he was seeing at the periphery of his vision. He woke his mates in their tents just in time to see Japanese landing barges making their way through the surf. The little garrison sprang into action. They coaxed an old truck into starting and rushed to the airstrip to set fire to the fuel dump, destroy the wireless tower, and make their way to a wire footbridge and safety across the Francisco River.

The bridge wires were cut just as an advance troop of Japanese scouts reached the opposite bank of the river. Each side took pot shots at the other, but there were no casualties. That same morning the Japanese landed at Lae. About 3,000 Japanese troops took part in the dual assaults.

One soldier of the Salamaua squad buried four cases of rum for the day when the Australians would return. When that day came on September 13, 1943, the soldier and his mates made a beeline for the spot only to find a Japanese antiaircraft gun mounted on 47 inches of cement on top of their buried treasure.

Approximately 1,800 Japanese soldiers were garrisoning Lae, with another 300 at Salamaua. To face them, the NGVR could field just over 100 trained and fit men. There were perhaps 200 more who could not travel over the mountainous jungle paths to fight owing to wounds or disease. Still, the military authorities in Australia expected them to engage the Japanese. In the anxious days before the Battle of the Coral Sea, there was nothing to spare for the remote outposts in northern New Guinea.

The desperate authorities in Port Moresby continued to send messages to Major Edwards, ordering him to prevent the Japanese from moving south overland. Edwards knew these expectations were impossible for men who had only a few rifles and Vickers machine guns. Many of the men were barefoot, their uniforms well worn. There was no proper medical attention available and no resupply.

Edwards put on a display of bravado to make the enemy think that he had larger numbers than he did. Raids of two or three men, frequently repeated, gave the Japanese the impression that they faced a much larger force. In any event the enemy did not venture inland



until it was too late. From January until June, the NGVR soldiers were the gatekeepers who prevented the Japanese from moving overland through the gold fields and south to Port Moresby.

One of the most important tasks undertaken by the NGVR was to report on Japanese activity at Lae and Salamaua. They knew the lay of the land and could establish vantage points on hills and even in trees to spy on the enemy below. Useful intelligence about Japanese movement on land, at sea, and in the air was transmitted to Port Moresby. The Japanese knew they were there and sometimes made them the object of patrols. There were casualties on both sides.

In June, following the important victory in the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Australian government finally felt it could spare some troops to reinforce the ragged remnants of the NGVR. The 2/5 Independent Company began arriving by air. Detachments of the 300 men of the 2/5 were dispatched throughout the Bulolo and Markham Valleys.

NGVR member Bob Emery remembered, "Early June, I think it was. The 2/5th Independent Company started moving down our way, and this cheered us up quite a bit because it looked like we might get a bit of help. We see these young blokes with all this new equipment ... new boots, new rifles, Tommy guns and everything you could think of."

The NGVR and the 2/5 were gradually combined into Kanga Force. Lt. Col. N.L. Fleay, the commander of Kanga Force, was eager for

action. The NGVR had long scouted the enemy at Salamaua and knew the Japanese positions, routines, and daily activities. Now with the modern weapons and the fresh manpower of the 2/5, they could strike.

It would be June 29 before men and equipment could be moved into position for a raid on Salamaua. Twenty-one NGVR joined 50 of the 2/5th. They were divided into seven teams to attack five Japanese strongpoints.

Acting independently, the teams made their way in the darkness to their assigned targets. Barking dogs and alert sentries awakened the Japanese and caused the attack to go off prematurely. The Japanese poured out of their shelters and returned fire in the dark. Still, the raiders estimated that they inflicted over 100 casualties on the enemy for a loss of four wounded. The little raid at Salamaua inflicted the first defeat upon the Japanese Army since the beginning of the war in the Pacific. In Australia the press had a field day.

The next night a raid was made on a forward Japanese position in a plantation outside Lae. The object was to destroy a field gun, blow up a bridge to prevent reinforcements, capture documents, and kill as many of the enemy as possible.

The attack on Salamaua the night before alerted the Japanese, and they were ready. It was a moonlit night, and the attack was delayed until 2 AM, when a mist settled over the area. Once again barking dogs alerted the Japanese to danger. The attack on the bridge and gun were abandoned, and the raid became a shooting match. Major T.P. Kneen was one of the first Australian casualties. With the loss of their leader, the Australians gradually withdrew. For the cost of one dead and two wounded they claimed over 40 enemy casualties.

The Japanese increased their patrols, and casualties mounted on both sides. Increased enemy air activity frightened native carriers away, and portage became a real problem.

On July 21, the Japanese began putting troops ashore at Buna and Gona for a march over the Owen Stanley Mountains toward Port Moresby. Once again, messages urging action against the enemy reached the men of the NGVR and the newly arrived 2/5th. Once more supplies would not be forthcoming.

While Port Moresby was feeling the pressure of the Japanese push over the Kokoda Trail, some resourceful NGVR men made a 100-mile hike to unoccupied Madang, where they rounded up a herd of 40-50 inbred Zebu cattle left over from the German era and herded them over the mountains to feed the men. But other supplies, especially medical equipment and

malaria pills, were not getting through. By the end of August, 2/5 Company was down to 182 men fit for duty. Sickness, chiefly malaria, had taken a heavy toll.

Lieutenant Colonel Fleay was feeling the exhaustion as well. On August 30, as the result of faulty intelligence, he ordered the campsites and towns of the Bulolo Valley to be burned. Kanga Force was to retreat farther inland. He thought a Japanese advance or parachute assault was in the making. The hasty decision caused panic. As explosives were set off, the native carriers deserted their loads and fled.

As it turned out, the enemy was only patrolling, but the homes and businesses of the NGVR men as well as ammunition and stores were burned to the ground. Important bridges were destroyed. This caused some real bitterness between Fleay and his allies. Some NGVR men refused to follow his orders, and he had them arrested. The native people of the area saw some of their settlements burned as well, and much goodwill was lost.

Fortunately, not all of the Australians fled. Two patrols of 29 and 20 men, respectively, remained in contact with the enemy, who had managed to reach inland from Salamaua as far as Mubo. These patrols concluded that the Japanese were settling in and not planning to advance farther inland. The threat was over, but the damage was done.

Other towns on the north coast of New Guinea faced peril. At Madang, fewer than 20 NGVR men had been given rudimentary military training. In August 1941, three NGVR men were sent to garrison the airstrip. The three men were armed with an old Lewis gun, which could swivel skyward. It was all the NGVR could muster for an anti-aircraft gun. War work at Madang included setting temporary obstacles on the airstrip that could be removed if a friendly plane approached.

Command of the tiny NGVR force fell to store manager Gordon Russell. Unlike Colonel Scanlon at Rabaul, Russell planned meticulously for a withdrawal. Using local prison inmates, he had food and supply dumps set up a day's journey apart in the interior. He also took it upon himself to get civilians out of harm's way. A sea voyage was too dangerous in Japanese-controlled waters. The Australian Air Force refused to fly transports to the north coast because of Japanese air superiority.

Evacuees had to walk overland as far as the 5,500-foot Mount Hagen and continue on foot over the trackless mountains to Port Moresby. Though Madang was bombed on January 21 along with Lae and Salamaua, it was not invaded until November 1942.



**ABOVE:** Troops of B Company of the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles stand proudly with a Japanese flag they have captured in battle at Mubo on July 21, 1942. **OPPOSITE:** Perched in a camouflaged treetop position above Nuk Nuk in August 1942, two men of the NGVR scan the horizon for Japanese forces on the move.

Farther up the coast was the town of Wewak. Evacuation from there was complicated by a deranged civil servant named George Ellis. Considered by his peers to be mentally unstable, Ellis ruled his part of the nearby Sepek River like a feudal lord. When civil authorities tried to remove him, he sent his native policemen on a rampage to kill white settlers. Several died in the native police uprising. Eventually deserted by everyone, Ellis took his own life.

European evacuees had to make their way upriver past the carnage on the shore to a safe landing and hike inland to Mount Hagen. There the aged and sick were met by an angel of mercy. A Catholic mission priest named Father John Glover was a former member of the NGVR. His contribution was to fly the mission biplane to lift evacuees off Mount Hagen and to safety at Port Moresby. When his plane crashed, he and a mechanic repaired a second plane and continued the work. When the second plane crashed, Father Glover made his way to Australia and convinced Qantas Airlines to continue the evacuation. Seventy-eight evacuees were rescued, including 18 survivors from the 2/22 at Rabaul.

By October, the main Japanese thrust against Port Moresby over the Kokoda Trail had stalled, and the Allies had assumed the offensive. Men could now be spared to support the NGVR and 2/5 still fighting at Wau. The 300 men of the 2/7 Independent Company were flown into the Bulolo Valley. They were shocked at what they found.

Captain E.W. Stout, the medical officer of the 2/7, wrote about the survivors of 2/5 and NGVR: "The general health of the troops in this area is rapidly deteriorating due to an inadequate diet ... not only inadequate but unbalanced, and the constant tinned meat is resulting in a high percentage of gastritis and diarrhea.... Troops are becoming desperately short (of clothing). Clothes are saturated with sweat and dirt each day ... Inability to change into dry clothes is causing an epidemic of contagious skin troubles."

The few remaining NGVR men continued to scout and guide the raids on Japanese positions. Their ongoing observations had located the site of every Japanese machine-gun nest and supply dump and determined the daily routines of the enemy. The main thrust of the war in New Guinea was now out of their hands, but the few NGVR men who remained would serve as coast watchers or guides for American and Australian landings to retake the villages and islands that they knew so well.

During a reconnaissance in force of Los Negros Island in the spring of 1944, American troops were so impressed with the assistance of two NGVR personnel that the NGVR were awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for their contribution, the only Australian militia unit so honored. □

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# The Twilight

The imposing muzzle of the 75mm cannon mounted by this Waffen SS Panther medium tank dominates this image. The Panther complemented other medium tanks in the German armed forces, particularly the PzKpfw IV, and proved superior in armored action with most Allied tanks.



BY THE END OF APRIL 1945, two of the most feared divisions of the Waffen-SS, the 1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler and the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend, had both been reduced in strength to little more than reinforced regiments. As a result, they were being forced to operate as a single, coordinated entity rather than as two separate divisions.

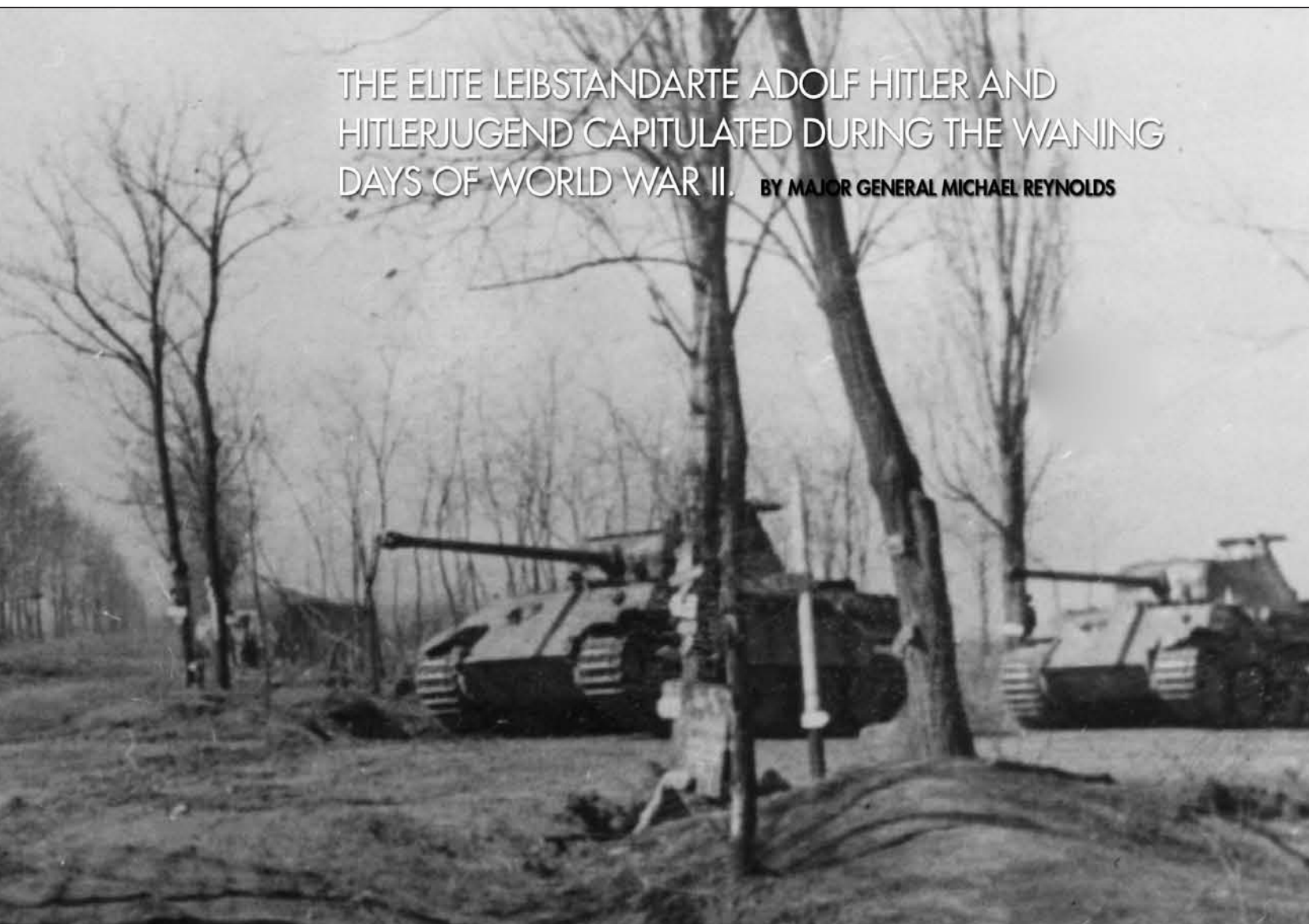
The Leibstandarte had been in action almost constantly since September 1939. The Hitlerjugend, formed on Hitler's order in June 1943, had joined the Leibstandarte in Normandy to form I SS Panzer Corps under the command of one of the führer's favorites, Sepp Dietrich, and as such these powerful divisions fought throughout that campaign and then went on to lead Hitler's last offensive in the West—the 1944 Ardennes offensive, better known as the Battle of the Bulge.

In March 1945, I SS Panzer Corps, then under the command of SS General Hermann Priess, led the last German offensive in the East, only to find itself engulfed in the final Soviet offensive on that front, an offensive that would take the Red Army to Berlin and the Austrian Alps. Not surprisingly the bitter fighting in the last year of World War II had exacted an appalling toll on the strength of the Leibstandarte and Hitlerjugend, and after the withdrawal from Hungary into lower Austria and the fighting in the Vienna Woods neither division was capable of taking serious offensive action.

The last period in the history of the only divisions to bear Hitler's name is particularly fascinating because it demonstrates how, even in the most chaotic and demoralizing circumstances such as those in lower Austria at that time, highly motivated, well-trained soldiers, led by com-

# of the Gods

THE ELITE LEIBSTANDARTE ADOLF HITLER AND  
HITLERJUGEND CAPITULATED DURING THE WANING  
DAYS OF WORLD WAR II. **BY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL REYNOLDS**



manders whom they respected, were able to reach levels of military performance to which modern armies can only hope to aspire. The actions of first one division and then the other made it possible for both to withdraw through incredibly difficult terrain, so that both survived to reach safety—even if that safety meant surrender and captivity. It also has to be said that fear of falling into the hands of the Red Army was a highly motivating factor in the performance of I SS Panzer Corps.

The final withdrawal into the Alps from positions south of the road running from Berndorf in the east to Rotheau in the west in lower Austria began on April 22 with two Kampfgruppen (KGs) of Otto Kumm's Leibstandarte pulling back to temporary positions in the mountain valleys on the south side of the Traisen–Hainfeld road. One withdrew through Lilienfeld toward Türrnitz and the other toward Kleinzell and Ramsau.

Meanwhile, the men of Hugo Kraas's Hitlerjugend Division struggled to hold on in the Triesting valley between Hainfeld and Weissenbach to allow the other KGs of the Leibstandarte to move back toward Furth and Pernitz. SS Second Lieutenant Borchers described the withdrawal of parts of KG Peiper and Siebken's 2nd SS Panzergrenadier Regiment from Hainfeld: "We defended the town with three panzers.... Mortars, anti-tank guns and rifle fire would allow us no rest. After the town exchanged hands several times, scarcely a house remained standing...We took up positions 1,000 meters south of the town. The Russians attacked them immediately. The enemy left his dead behind but threw us out of these positions."

SS Dr. Knoll, a captain, talked later of the withdrawal of his aid station: "Redeployment to Kleinzell ... Regimental Aid Station: Kalte Kuchl:



one dead, cause of death—hunger! ... [Colonel Joachim] Peiper's command post attacked. We still have three Mk IVs and two 20mm flak guns. Revolting diarrhea.”

SS Lieutenant Stiller also told how his company reached safety during the night of the 23rd: The Company was completely exhausted.... Pernitz was reached at 0600 hours in a forced march through the [mountains]....The Russians fired on Pernitz from the ... hills. The company continued the march and reached Gutenstein at 0900 hours. Assembled trucks transported the exhausted men through Rohr and Kalte Kuchl to Hölle. The Company's night camp was a barn with tree branches as straw. It was bitterly cold.”

Otto Kumm's Divisional Headquarters in Weissenbach found itself unable to pull out through Hainfeld as originally planned and was forced to withdraw through the mountains. By the 24th the Leibstandarte had established some semblance of a defensive line running from Lilienfeld in the west through Kleinzell and Ramsau, and then across the mountains to the Pernitz area. This allowed the battered Hitlerjugend KGs to withdraw into the mountains on the south side of the hated Triesting Valley. Late on the 23rd, the Soviets occupied the Weissenbach–Pottenstein sector.

On April 25, while the Hitlerjugend defended the line from Ramsau toward Furth and then south toward Pernitz, the Leibstandarte began the construction of a new alpine defensive position running from Rohr northwest to Lilienfeld. Most of this ground is well above 1,000



meters and lay under packed snow. The chronicle of the Leibstandarte flak battalion recorded, “The withdrawal became more dramatic from day to day. Through Pernitz–Gutenstein–Rohr–Kalte Kuchl into the Halbach valley [running toward Kleinzell]. The last 37mm guns took up the outer defense while the infantry battle groups occupied the mountain positions. The enemy tried to penetrate ... into the Halbach valley but he was forced back by a counterattack.... Attacks by enemy infantry were stopped by banging cooking pots together and making cracking noises that echoed in the mountains. This saved ammunition.... One 88mm gun that was manhandled into position ... in the Halbach valley was able to effectively engage the Soviets on the opposing mountain ridges. The remaining three 88mm guns ... engaged Soviet assembly areas east of Kalte Kuchl with direct fire.”

Werner Sternebeck, commanding a Mk IV tank group, described what it was like for the few remaining tanks. “We were being compressed in the [Halbach] valley. Only one tank

had a field of fire, so we were more and more vulnerable to enemy infantry. It was a desperate, nerve-wracking and ultimately hopeless battle without chance of success.”

By last light on the following day, the new defensive line was considered sufficiently organized, and orders were issued for the Hitlerjugend to begin its withdrawal to the Tradigist area where it was to reorganize and then take over in that sector from the 10th Parachute Division. This would place the Hitlerjugend on the Leibstandarte's left flank and create a continuous ISS Panzer Corps front running from Rohr northwest through Lilienfeld to Rabenstein.

The Hitlerjugend withdrawal started at 9:30 PM and, after appallingly difficult foot marches, the weary soldiers finally reached the road leading to Rohr and Hohenberg where trucks waited to take them back to the new assembly area.

On the 27th and 28th, the Hitlerjugend reorganized while the Leibstandarte continued to ward off Soviet patrols and probing attacks. The fighting was limited but ferocious when it did flare up. One senior sergeant reported, “Our platoon strength was four NCOs and 23 [soldiers]. There was fierce fighting against two Russian companies in the early morning. Losses: three killed, two missing and 17 wounded. After the battle, which was sometimes conducted hand to hand ... our platoon had a strength of one and four... I was wounded.”

Sternebeck said later that his tanks were withdrawn since there was no longer any ammunition. He went on to comment, “Everyone was fighting for bare survival in order to escape falling into Soviet captivity.... Comradeship, trust, obedience and even loyalty existed only where people knew each other.”

The “little war in the mountains,” as Ralf Tiemann, chief of staff of the Leibstandarte, described the last days of the war in his *History of the Leibstandarte*, could not have been more unpleasant. The Russians used loud speakers to encourage the Germans to desert, the weather was bitterly cold, and there was a desperate shortage of food.

To counter the Russian propaganda, Dietrich issued a special Order of the Day which included, “Our Fatherland is in great danger.... Is there one among you who does not have a personal reckoning to settle with the unbridled hordes coming from the Kremlin? You are the guardians of the Reich, the avengers of all the horrors inflicted on our people, the shield bearers and defenders of a thousand-year military tradition.... Long live Germany! Hail our Führer!”

There was no answer to the cold and hunger. SS Second Lieutenant Stiller recalled, “The

weather and the hunger were allies of the Russians. The men lacked any protection from the cold. Their bodies heated the earth bunkers.... Our sector had to be carefully controlled. Ivan was not as tired as us and at night we had no contact with our neighbors. In addition the snow muffled all sound.”

Meanwhile, during the 27th and 28th the Hitlerjugend completed its move to the Tradigist valley, a naturally protected and dramatically beautiful area, and began to reorganize into its formal regiments and battalions.

The divisional chief of staff wrote, “Replacements which had arrived were incorporated. Wounded men returned to their units from the hospitals. Some, who had not fully recovered, ‘discharged’ themselves since they preferred to be with their units. After a period of rest, the weapons were cleaned and uniforms repaired. Since renewed action was in the future, the replacements were trained in the field and prepared through lectures. The commanders and unit leaders recced the 10th Parachute Division sectors assigned to them.”

The relief of the paratroopers took place during the 29th, and by last light the new corps front of some 25 kilometers was complete. In the end the new sector saw little activity, and to all intents and purposes the war was over for what was left of the twin divisions.

The news of the Führer’s death reached the men of I SS Panzer Corps on May Day in various ways. One SS lieutenant told his men, “Comrades, the Führer is dead. We will continue to fight here on the front. We have received orders from our Standartenführer [Colonel] Max Hansen, to defend our positions tenaciously until all rear area elements—the aid stations, hospitals, the last elements of the fleeing population—reach security from the attacking Russians. This is an honorable mission!”

Lieutenant Stiller remembered, “We had a new commander-in-chief [Admiral Dönitz]. The Company learned of the führer’s death from battalion. The reaction? Rumors of a cease-fire with the Amis [Americans]. The men endure everything.”

Most of the soldiers had no illusions. As a survivor of the Leibstandarte’s Reconnaissance Battalion said later, “We heard on the radio about the catastrophe in Berlin and the death of the führer. Dönitz spoke words of encouragement, but we knew that our hour of defeat had arrived. Everyone had only one desire—to reach the American lines as quickly as possible.”

Hitler’s death was certainly seen as a catastrophe by the older and more senior members of the corps, the ones who, before the war, had stood close to their leader in the Chancellery

Author’s Collection



**ABOVE:** SS soldiers wearing their distinctive camouflage field jackets and helmets lie in ambush for enemy armor. Their 75mm antitank gun was an effective weapon against Allied tanks. **OPPOSITE TOP:** A Panther medium tank of the 12th SS Hitler Youth Panzer Division rolls forward in Hungary. The sloped armor of the Panther helped ward off enemy shells. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Pictured while holding the SS rank equivalent to a colonel, General Wilhelm Mohnke (left) commanded the 1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler late in World War II. General Hermann Priess (right) commanded the 1st SS Panzer Corps during its fighting in the Ardennes Offensive and in Hungary during its last offensive of the war.

and at the Berghof. Their relationship had always been special. As Hubert Meyer, chief of staff of the Hitlerjugend, put it, the news “moved them deeply.”

The following day the Hitlerjugend was ordered into Sixth Panzer Army reserve in the Kilb area. While the battalion of Rudolf von Ribbentrop, son of Nazi foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, remained in position to cover the withdrawal, the rest of the division pulled out during the night of May 2. The last battle had been fought. The campaign on the Eastern Front in 1945 had cost the Hitlerjugend 4,376 casualties, of which 1,498 were dead, including one regimental and seven company commanders. Thirty-two Mk IV and 35 Panther tanks had been lost, as well as 20 guns, howitzers, and heavy mortars. What was left? Nearly 10,000 men and, according to Meyer, six Mk IVs and nine Panthers combat-ready, as well as 37 guns, howitzers, and heavy mortars.

At the same time as he ordered the Hitlerjugend into reserve, the corps commander ordered all nonoperational elements of the Leibstandarte to be withdrawn from the forward positions and assembled in the Türnitz and other adjacent valleys. This included all transport, repair, supply, and medical units and heavy weapons without ammunition. For those who remained in the forward strongpoints it was an agonizing time.

On May 7, the commander of the Sixth SS

Panzer Army, Sepp Dietrich, who had lost touch with his superior at Army Group South, on his own initiative ordered the Hitlerjugend to move into a new assembly area to the south-east of Amstetten. At the same time, Hubert Meyer was told to report to his opposite number, Fritz Kraemer, at Headquarters Sixth Panzer Army, located 10 kilometers west of Scheibbs. Dietrich was not present. Meyer was told that General Alfred Jodl, chief of staff of the German high command, on behalf of Admiral Dönitz, had offered the surrender of all German armed forces at Eisenhower’s headquarters in Reims and that the necessary document had been signed at 2:41 that morning. Hostilities were to cease at midnight on May 8, and by that time all troops had to be across the demarcation line between the Americans and the Soviets. That line was the Enns River.

Kraemer went on to thank Meyer, on behalf of Dietrich, for the outstanding actions of the Hitlerjugend and told him to offer the surrender of the division to the Americans at Steyr that afternoon.

Meyer described the afternoon’s events in his *History of the Hitlerjugend*. “A narrow lane had been opened up through a minefield, marked with white tape. An American jeep guided the car to a sentry at the entrance to a factory.... Pistols were handed over. [He and an orderly officer] were driven into the city in an American jeep with an escort. It stopped in



Following its surrender, the troops and vehicles of the Leibstandarte Division are directed into captivity.

front of a hotel in the market square.... The American guard at the entrance said in German: 'Don't worry, everything will work out!' The negotiators were led into a room on the first floor. In its center stood a large table covered with maps. There was no other furniture in the room. Three or four American officers were sitting on the floor. A staff officer stood up and [Meyer] was requested to indicate on the map where the division was located. Then came the question: How many men did the division have? The answer: 'Ten thousand' was taken in with great delight by the officers sitting on the floor. Bottles and glasses standing around gave an indication that the victory had already been celebrated. That was understandable but it was deeply painful to the negotiators."

The American staff officer announced the conditions for surrender: "The Division will cross the demarcation line in the Upper Austrian city of Enns on the Enns river on 8 May 1945, from 0800 hours to 2400 hours. Anyone arriving later will go into Russian captivity. All weapons will be unloaded 2km from the river, small arms are to be removed. The ammunition for tanks and guns will follow behind them on trucks. The

tanks will point their guns in the air. All vehicles will have to fly white flags."

After Meyer had reported, his divisional commander summoned his commanders to give them the news and conditions. After ordering that white flags would not be flown, Kraas made a speech in which he thanked every member of the division for their valor and loyalty and asked that in memory of their fallen comrades they should maintain their spirit of camaraderie during captivity and during the rebuilding of the destroyed Fatherland.

He closed with these words: "We set out on the bitterest journey of our life as soldiers with our heads held high. In quiet composure, we will march toward our destiny. We have fought bravely and with integrity in all theaters of war—but still the war is lost. Long live Germany."

Meyer continues his description of the final hours. "On the morning of 8 May 1945 at 0430 hours, SS Major General Hugo Kraas and SS Lieutenant Colonel Hubert Meyer drove with the operations staff and the divisional escort company via Amstetten to Enns.... They stopped approximately one kilometer from the river where the road leads down from the ridge. Along

both sides of the road were deep gravel pits. At the left edge of the road [there was a high embankment on the right] stood the divisional commander, his adjutant and his chief of staff, awaiting the approach of the divisional columns. The escort company buried its weapons in the gravel pits.... The commanders reported their units and the troops marched past, mounted, as if on parade, with perfect bearing."

Suddenly, a few Wehrmacht vehicles came out of Enns. Sitting on them were former prisoners from the nearby Mauthausen concentration camp with weapons at the ready. They drove along the column and started looting the vehicles. To prevent further abuse a Panther was parked in the left lane so that no more vehicles could drive down the column.

It is perhaps ironic that the Hitlerjugend Division was required to surrender at the bridge closest to Mauthausen (eight kilometers away) and was forced to ask for protection from the former inmates. Could one be forgiven for suspecting that this was a carefully thought-out scenario on the part of the Americans? Only nine days previously their troops had overrun the infamous camp at Dachau and, in an outburst of anger at what they found, they had summarily executed 21 guards, including 17 SS men.

Mauthausen was one of the first concentration camps, and some 195,000 men and women were imprisoned there and its sub-camps between August 8, 1938, and May 5, 1945. More than 105,000 of them died. According to today's Austrian authorities, when the SS guards fled on May 3, there were 68,268 inmates including 1,734 women, four British and two American citizens. Another 81,000 prisoners were liberated by American troops from the sub-camps and other concentration camps in upper Austria.

By last light on the 8th, most of the Hitlerjugend had crossed the Enns and made camp in the fields close to Enns. Vehicles, guns, and tanks were parked separately, and lines of American sentries guarded the men. Von Ribbentrop's battalion was the last to cross the river, just before the midnight deadline, and individual stragglers who were late were turned back. Those who were able swam across the river farther south or found other crossing places.

Altogether, 9,870 men, including 328 officers and 1,698 NCOs, surrendered to the U.S. 65th Infantry Division. They were only just in time—at 6:45 PM three Soviet officers from the 7th Guards Airborne Division arrived at the American headquarters. The leading elements of their division were only 20 kilometers east of Enns.

And what of the Leibstandarte, which had been given the unenviable task of covering the

withdrawal of much of the Sixth Panzer Army? Unbelievable as it may seem, it was still receiving new equipment. On May 2, some 40 members of the 501st Heavy SS Panzer Battalion were sent to a depot near Enns with the task of making six Jagdtigers operational; and on the afternoon of the 7th, men of the 7th SS Panzer Company received orders to pick up four brand-new Mk IVs from Kirchberg. Two of the Jagdtigers reached the Leibstandarte command post at Scheibbs, but one was immobilized and the other used as a roadblock near Waidhofen; the Mk IVs were eventually “scuttled” in the Enns.

During the night of May 7, the men in the forward positions received their orders. They were to assemble southeast of Scheibbs and then move via Waidhofen to the Enns River, 18 kilometers southwest of that town. From a schoolhouse near Scheibbs, Joachim Peiper sent his last message as a free man: “The dream of Empire is over! Tonight, with Guhl [commander 2nd SS Panzer Battalion] we face the last enemy.”

A senior sergeant in Siebken’s regiment remembered, “I experienced a spontaneous feeling: there were still Russians to the right, to the left and in front of us—maybe even behind us? Could we expect fairness from the Ameri-

cans? We suddenly had to think about our fallen comrades, relatives, the columns of refugees and the victims of the bombs. Unconditional surrender made everyone wordless. If yesterday, with gallows humor, we had sung ‘Everyone forward’, today we are all quiet.”

Fear of Russian captivity was now being supplemented by uncertainty about American intentions, but few if any members of I SS Panzer Corps anticipated the hatred felt by all Allied troops for the Waffen SS. The Germans would complain repeatedly and endlessly that they had never been anything other than combat soldiers and had no knowledge of extermination squads and concentration camps. They had yet to come to terms with the fact that anyone who wore SS runes was seen by Allied troops as part of a diabolical machine that had caused endless misery and countless deaths—as a barbarian who deserved to be treated as such. The members of the Waffen SS would soon discover, to their intense shock, that the Americans had no intention of extending to them the honors and courtesies applicable to normal prisoners of war.

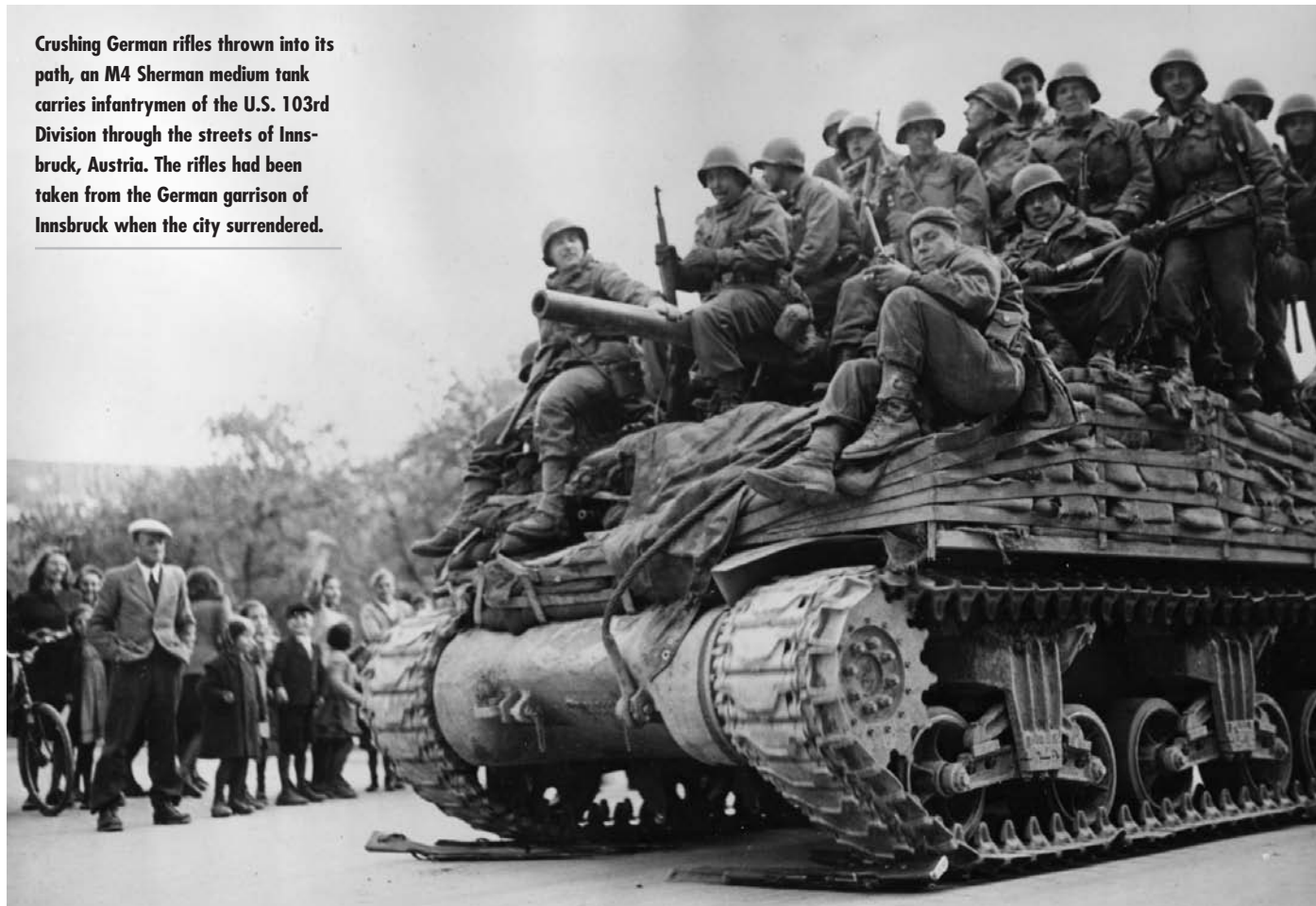
Disengagement from the forward area was accomplished without difficulty and, after five

years and eight months of war, the 1st SS Panzer Division began its march into captivity. Among the many dead left behind in Hungary and lower Austria were at least four battalion and 11 company commanders. Heavy weapons and equipment were destroyed en route, and some armored vehicles were driven into the Enns River. But unlike the Hitlerjugend, which had moved toward captivity as an organized military force, the Leibstandarte found itself split into units of varying size and competing with countless refugees and Wehrmacht personnel to make the midnight deadline.

SS Lieutenant Pulvermüller described what happened to his 4th SS Artillery Battery. “We drove off by ourselves and blew up the six guns—these were the only ones—at a quarry... A Panther was standing on the road. It used its last drops of fuel to roll into the quarry. We filled it with grenades and ammunition and blew it up with the guns as best we could. Then we moved out to the west in small groups.”

The congestion in the Enns valley between Waidhofen and Steyr caused by the refugees and other fleeing troops soon brought the Leibstandarte columns to a complete stop, and it became obvious that few of the units would be able to

**Crushing German rifles thrown into its path, an M4 Sherman medium tank carries infantrymen of the U.S. 103rd Division through the streets of Innsbruck, Austria. The rifles had been taken from the German garrison of Innsbruck when the city surrendered.**



National Archives

cross the demarcation line at Steyr by midnight.

The commander of the 1st SS Panzerjäger Battalion, Karl Rettlinger, told of what happened to his unit. “The roads were hopelessly jammed, so the men left the vehicles and reached the Enns on foot. I came upon a foot-bridge. Peiper and his staff were also there. We crossed the Enns and entered captivity.”

May 9 was a sunny, warm day, but the weather did little to cheer the many members of the division who had still to cross the river. “Will the Americans try to stop us?” was the question in everyone’s mind. As soon as Otto Kumm arrived in Steyr, he was driven to the local American headquarters, where the commander of the U.S. 71st Infantry Division took him to meet General Lothar Rendulic of Army Group South.

The 71st Divisional cavalry troop had captured Rendulic in Waidhofen the day before. Rendulic told Kumm that the Leibstandarte was to take up a position on the east bank of the Enns. This was tantamount to ordering him to surrender his men to the Russians. Kumm refused the order and told his units to cross “the Green border” anywhere they could, preferably to the south of Steyr. Some had to force their way across.

One participant in the crossing remembered, “At about 1200 hours we were in Losenstein where we discovered an intact stone bridge.... The Americans there refused to let us cross. With the help of several combat-ready tanks in the column, we [SS Colonel Max Hansen and the survivors of the 1st SS Panzergrenadier Regiment] crossed the Enns bridge, therefore the demarcation line, at 1400 hours without a fight.... During the evening, after the vehicles could go no further, we set them on fire. We continued marching to the west.”

Others, like Rolf Reiser with what was left of the tank group, took a long detour. He remem-

bered, “Further movement in the direction of Steyr was impossible because of congestion, and the bridge there was supposedly blocked by the Americans. Also, the Soviets were advancing from Amstetten to Steyr to block the bridge on their side. We decided to take another route. The last four tanks were driven into the Enns and sunk. The 7th Company, approximately 60 men, drove in the opposite direction, to the south, into the mountains in the direction of Altenmarkt. Driving against all the traffic heading to Steyr, our progress was slow, especially since the road was narrow.... From Altenmarkt we took the road to the west and ... reached the 1,050-meter high village of Winischgarten. There we made contact with the U.S. Army. A young American lieutenant behaved correctly—we were disarmed and all weapons turned over, but officers were allowed to keep their pistols.”

Not everyone was so fortunate. SS Lieutenant Vögler of Hansen’s 2nd Battalion, recalled, “In the smaller villages there were no sturdy bridges, only suspension bridges. These were overtaxed in the desire to escape Ivan. They broke and collapsed with all the men into the icy depths and the rushing waters of the Enns. What senseless and desperate actions! However, any exhortations and attempts to stop them were in vain.”

Unlike the majority of the troops of the Hitlerjugend who were placed under guard immediately after their surrender, many of those in the Leibstandarte were simply waved on to the west. In fact, from midnight May 8 to midnight May 11, the U.S. 71st Infantry Division recorded only 3,777 members of the Leibstandarte taken prisoner.

SS Lieutenant Pulvermüller described the hours after surrender. “The first POW Camp was in a meadow near Steyr. We were able to drive in the three available trucks about 30km outside the camp—the excuse being that we wanted to pick up our Waffen SS comrades and bring them to the camp. The residents in the towns we passed through could not believe their eyes—so many Waffen SS soldiers free, and after the capitulation! [After meeting the same U.S. patrol twice] our excuse no longer worked.... under escort they brought us back to Steyr.”

Joachim Peiper took advantage of this lax

**“I had seen the massacred German company near Rovno in 1941. I knew of other stories like that. Therefore I had no trouble making my decision—captivity? Never with the Russians!”**

security to head for his home and family in Bavaria, but he was caught and arrested by an American patrol. His captors had no idea that he was soon to be branded “GI Enemy Number One.”

The same lack of control resulted in some actions by the surrendered men that were later regretted. SS Lieutenant Leidreiter of the reconnaissance battalion later recounted his experi-

ences. “I had seen the massacred German company near Rovno [in the Soviet Union] in 1941. I knew of other stories like that. Therefore I had no trouble making my decision—captivity? Never with the Russians!... We reached the first bridge across the Enns south of Steyr [Losenstein] ... On the other side there were two choices—to the north was the road to Steyr—that wasn’t even considered.... There were many burning vehicles, almost all carrying the sign with the Key [Leibstandarte]. Then came the bad time. We took off our uniforms.... The uniforms were burned with the VW. It was a wretched moment! There was a forested rocky slope in front of us.... The entire slope was swarming with German soldiers and civilians.... The higher we climbed the more we discarded from our heavy packs.



National Archives

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Leidreiter remembered meeting Max Hansen as much as two days later. “An officer with a Knight’s Cross, in full uniform.... The rest of us



**Elements of the German Nineteenth Army wait for final instructions on their surrender to the American 44th Division in the Austrian Alps.**

were going—whether into captivity or to another life—with some baggage, with a blanket, an overcoat or sack with shaving implements—not so Max Hansen. He climbed down the long slope, as always, proud, erect, as if he was going to report with his entire Regiment! ... What a marvelous and honorable commander!”

And so, by one means or another, the officers and men of the Leibstandarte joined their comrades of the Hitlerjugend on the west side of the demarcation line during the 9th and 10th. Soon the vast majority of them would be behind wire, but some managed to escape custody. They, in order to avoid U.S. patrols and armed gangs of former concentration camp inmates intent on revenge, moved in small groups—mainly at night and through difficult terrain. By day they hid in woods, trusting nobody. Not all of them managed to get home, and most of those who did were soon picked up by the Allied military authorities.

And what of the first commander of the Leibstandarte and I SS Panzer Corps, Sepp Dietrich? On May 8, he went to a new headquarters at Zell am See 60 kilometers south of Berchtesgaden, known as OKW South. There he expected to meet its commander, General August Winter, but on arrival he learned of the capitulation and that Winter had gone on to Berchtesgaden.

Dietrich told his U.S. interrogators that he tried to follow Winter but that he and his wife were arrested by the Americans before he could do so. Since the place of arrest was Kufstein, some 70 kilometers west of the Berchtesgaden, the suspicion has arisen that he may have been trying to smuggle his wife into Switzerland. It is also strange that he made no effort to contact his direct superior, General Rendulic; however, in view of Rendulic’s directions to Kumm to stay east of the Enns, it may be that Dietrich suspected that he might be ordered to surren-

der his men to the Russians and decided to stay out of touch.

Although it would seem out of character for Dietrich to have deserted his men, the question has to be asked, why was he not in the Enns-Steyr sector to greet his “boys” in their most distressing hour? The U.S. sergeant from the 36th Infantry Division to whom Dietrich surrendered described his prisoner as “not anything like an army commander—he is more like a village grocer.” □

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FILMS ABOUT THE WAR WITH JAPAN REVEAL THE SPIRIT OF A NATION RALLYING TO VICTORY. **BY JOHN WUKOVITS**



# Hollywood Goes

"THEY'RE MACHINE GUNNING! They're strafing the hospital! The beasts! The slimy beasts!"

"Pearl Harbor! Most of us didn't know what it was, let alone where it was."

"We're still here—we'll always be here—come and get it."

Those words about and to the Japanese foe, emotional and stirring as they are, came not from any World War II American politician, political commentator, or soldier. They originated instead from Hollywood, the dream factory, the sunshine center of film that entertained audiences with the dancing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, the comedy of Charlie Chaplin and the Three Stooges, and the beauty and grace of Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh.

While they may have, in some cases, overstated the concerns or served as examples of blatant stereotyping and bigotry, they accurately summed up the public's mood in 1942 and 1943 and reflected the varying responses to events as they unfolded in the Pacific. Where the public saw sinister spies as orchestrating Japan's initial onslaught, Hollywood made movies in which Humphrey Bogart bested secret agents. When the Japanese military juggernaut backed outnumbered American soldiers in the Philippines into near hopeless predicaments, Hollywood sent film heartthrob Robert Taylor into the fray, confounding the enemy with words and bullets as they charged his machine gun.

In the course of researching the Pacific War over a lifetime, I have amassed a collection of movies about the war that were released during the war years. Examples would be 1942's *Wake Island*, a film produced about the gallant Marine defense of a tiny Pacific island, or 1944's *Since You Went Away*, a film about life on the home front during the war. A collection that began with *Guadalcanal Diary* has grown in numbers to more than 40.

The movies I select to watch change from year to year, but a small number inevitably make it to my DVD player, appearing year after year without interruption. Most, I find, are films made during 1942-1943 or about events from those years, the desperate months when ill-prepared

Richard Jaeckel, Preston Foster, and Lloyd Nolan play Marines battling the Japanese in *Guadalcanal Diary*, released in November 1943.

20th Century Fox/The Kobal Collection



# Pacific

American forces tried to halt the Japanese military and regain momentum for the long struggle that in 1942 was still in doubt.

The immediacy of these films never fails to impress me. Through watching their actions and listening to their words, a viewer more than 60 years later learns how the nation felt during those desperate days. One senses the anger and the disillusionment directed at the government for being caught by surprise, the hatred and bigotry then common toward the Japanese, the defiance of a nation hurt by the death and desolation of Pearl Harbor, and the shattering of innocence as a nation comes of age in the world.

These films may be divided into five major categories—espionage and treachery, last

stands, a glimpse of the enemy, hitting back, and the home front. Though by no means a scientific or complete survey of all World War II films produced during the war, these offer a snapshot of a country at war in 1942-1943, an image frozen in time.

It was no surprise that President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the master of politics and persuasion, quickly turned to Hollywood in Pearl Harbor's aftermath. He understood that few vehicles in American life reached so wide an audience or so profoundly affected those it touched. What better way to convey to the public the government's messages about war, the enemy, and home front restrictions than to utilize the local theater, where each week men,



women, and children gathered to cheer their personal heroes or ogle luscious starlets?

“The American motion picture is one of our most effective mediums in informing and entertaining our citizens,” Roosevelt stated in December 1941. Few could disagree. In 1940, 80 million people, representing two-thirds of the population, headed to the shows. More than 400 reporters, including one from the Vatican, operated from offices in the California film community, where they covered the fads and foibles of Tyrone Power and James Cagney, Paulette Goddard and Greta Garbo. Only Washington, D.C., and New York City boasted a larger press presence.

Film producers made the new war a part of 72 films that appeared between December

Warner Bros. The Kobal Collection



**Disgraced Army officer Humphrey Bogart (left) takes on enemy agents, led by Sydney Greenstreet (in white hat), intent on destroying the Panama Canal in *Across the Pacific*. The 1942 film, directed by John Huston, also stars Mary Astor.**

1941 and the following fall, from the sublime *Mrs. Miniver* and *Wake Island* to those bordering on the ridiculous, such as Tarzan battling Nazi agents who parachuted into his jungle domain. The Office of War Information (OWI), charged with overseeing propaganda issues, hoped Hollywood would simultaneously entertain and inform its audiences, inserting valuable messages almost surreptitiously between the laughter and joviality. As OWI director Elmer Davis stated, “The easiest way to inject a propaganda idea into most people’s minds is to let it go in through the medium of an entertainment picture when they do not realize that they are being propagandized.”

The OWI issued a manual informing Hollywood studios how to aid the war effort, sent

officials to confer with studio bigwigs, and reviewed screenplays for positive messages. The sacrifices asked of the home front, for instance, might be included in a film, but the OWI wanted the movie to portray men and women as willingly accepting rationing and shortages, smiles adorning their faces rather than frowns. The OWI suggested that screen writers and producers ask themselves seven questions about the film, including whether the picture would help win the war and if it would truthfully inform their audiences. Most studios gave at least lip service to the seven questions, knowing that blatantly ignoring a government request could sever the assistance the United

could span the chasm. Hollywood had no trouble individualizing the German foe, but all Japanese were the same, automatons cut from similar cloth.

“In Europe we felt that our enemies, horrible and deadly as they were, were still people,” wrote that most venerable and beloved war correspondent, Ernie Pyle. “But out here [the Pacific] I soon gathered that the Japanese were looked upon as something subhuman or repulsive, the way some people feel about cockroaches or mice.”

During the war’s first year, more than 20 films dealt with espionage and sabotage. While similar treatments existed concerning the German threat, films targeting the Japanese menace rarely included humor as part of their portrayal. Two 1942 films involving Hollywood superstar Humphrey Bogart illustrated the diverse ways Hollywood painted the Germans and Japanese. Humor buoyed every scene in *All Through the Night*, a light-hearted thriller involving Bogart and his Runyonesque gang (including among its number a very young Jackie Gleason) pursuing Nazi agents (including Peter Lorre) because, in part, they murdered the baker who made Bogart’s favorite cheesecake. Bumbling thugs smacked each other around like the Three Stooges, while Bogart mimicked the Nazi salute during a meeting of infiltrators by repeatedly thrusting his arm forward, each time forcing a cessation in the proceedings as every German present stopped to follow suit. In the end, Bogart snared his man and foiled the Nazi plot to blow up a cruiser in New York harbor.

Bogart turned deadly serious in his second vehicle that year, a film involving Japanese agents attempting to dynamite the Panama Canal. Unlike *All Through the Night*, the September 1942 movie *Across the Pacific* offered neither jokes nor clumsy spies. Directed by John Huston and starring Mary Astor and Sydney Greenstreet, the movie pits a supposedly disgraced Army officer played by Bogart against nefarious enemy agents led by Greenstreet, intent on destroying the Panama Canal locks. Bogart steams for the canal, foils the plot, and returns a hero.

The February 1943 film *Air Force*, starring John Garfield, reinforced the stab-in-the-back theory. Filmed with the cooperation of the Army Air Corps and supposedly based on actual incidents described in official military files, the movie follows the journey of a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress as it wings its way from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor on December 6. Not surprisingly, the crew finds itself in the midst of the December attack over Oahu. After

States military handed filmmakers, but a perusal of films shows flagrant disregard for some, especially the notion of truthfully portraying issues.

Rather than mold public opinion, right out of the gate Hollywood reinforced existing home front fears and bigotry by producing films that focused on Japanese treachery, trickery, and espionage. According to these films, Japanese agents moled into American society in an attempt to stab in the back the United States, a charitable nation that had willingly sent steel and other products across the ocean. Rather than being grateful recipients, the Japanese instead proved to be that “yellow peril” that had long been feared, a people so inherently different from American citizens that no bridge

a hasty refueling, they proceed to Wake Island and the Philippines. *Time* magazine labeled the film “a superbly thrilling show,” while the *New York Times* claimed the movie would leave audiences “limp and triumphant at the end of its two-hour ordeal.”

The *New York Times* was also correct in adding that the movie exaggerated certain features, but every product released at that time could be accused of stretching the truth. That is, after all, the basis of propaganda, and *Air Force* leaned heavily on half-truths and stereotypes. One of the characters claimed that every defeat absorbed in the Pacific was caused by sinister fifth columnists working from within the system, and the film even shows the bomber being shot at by Japanese residents of Oahu as it approached Pearl Harbor. Later, subversive elements in the Philippines ignite brush fires to guide Japanese bombers to their targets, and a Japanese pilot machine guns a helpless American flier as he parachutes from his damaged aircraft.

The movie encapsulates the nation’s response to real and supposed treachery when a character admonishes the Japanese while attempting to boost audience morale. “Listen, any buck-toothed little runt can walk up behind Joe Louis and knock him cold with a baseball bat—but a clean man don’t do it. Your Uncle Sammy is civilized: He says, ‘Look out, you sneaks, we’re gonna hit above the belt and knock the day-lights out of you!’”

That message was continued by a collection of films that Richard Lingeman calls the “last-stand” pictures, films that conveyed to the enemy that while they may have momentarily knocked the nation’s military on its heels, they had in actuality only poked a hornet’s nest with a stick. These movies shifted the focus from defeat to the gallant military endeavor to delay the Japanese so the United States military and industrial machine would have sufficient time to field a response that would inevitably end in Japan’s defeat. They highlighted men and women from every part of the land, boys from Kansas and girls from Brooklyn, who defiantly battled a vicious foe. Never letting a good opportunity pass by, the principals delivered rousing messages to the nation and the enemy.

No one less than Clark Gable starts the ball rolling in 1942’s *Somewhere I’ll Find You*, a delightful montage of intrigue, suspense, and romance featuring powerful performances from Gable and the object of his lust, Lana Turner, equally impressive as a female reporter. After watching second-rate but fun movies like *Secret Agent of Japan*, a viewer learns why Gable and Turner amassed such reputations. Their talents

MGM/The Kobal Collection



Lana Turner and Clark Gable play intrepid newspaper reporters in *Somewhere I’ll Find You*.

soar beyond those of their contemporaries as they steal every scene.

The film opens with newspaper reporter Gable returning from assignment in Europe, where he observed firsthand Hitler’s march to power against enfeebled democracies more bent on appeasement than action. Gable immediately heads to his newspaper’s building, where he bursts into the publisher’s office and delivers a stern lecture illustrating how the isolationist sentiment that gripped much of the nation in the late 1930s opened the door for Hitler’s Nazi tyranny.

Gable eventually winds up in the Philippines, where he concludes the movie with a stirring account of the sacrifices made by both American and Filipino forces battling on Bataan. Firing words in staccato fashion as he dictates a story for his publisher in New York, he talks of “brown men and white men fighting together and when they bled their blood was the same color.”

The epitome of the “last-stand” films arrived with one of Hollywood’s first endeavors after Pearl Harbor, the September 1942 movie *Wake Island*. Supposedly based on actual Marine accounts and starring Hollywood heavyweights Brian Donlevy, Robert Preston, William Bendix, and Macdonald Carey, the movie portrayed the stout Marine defense of Wake Island, a tiny outpost in the central Pacific. While the rest of the Pacific quickly succumbed to the Japanese military, and with the pride of the U.S. Navy lying on Pearl Harbor’s bottom, one beacon lit the gloom—the glorious two-week defense of Wake Island, an action that momentarily halted the Japanese juggernaut while boosting a tattered home front morale.

Today we laugh at how quickly television cranks out a movie-of-the-week based on current events, but few could match the speed with which Hollywood approached the fighting at

Wake Island. A script begun before the Wake garrison surrendered in late December 1941 included the usual wartime stereotypes and exaggerated comments.

A Japanese diplomat, representative of envoy Saburo Kuru, who stopped at Wake Island in November on his way from Tokyo to Washington, D.C., sports buck teeth and thick spectacles, while Japanese soldiers during the December battle enter a hospital to bayonet helpless wounded. Donlevy, in the role of the Marine commander, comforts a compatriot whose wife had been killed in the Pearl Harbor attack by asserting in the less than stirring words, “We’ve got to destroy destruction. That’s our job,” and later borrows from a glorious page in American history when he admonishes his battery commander, “Don’t fire until you see the whites of their eyes.”

The movie’s producers pulled out all the stops to depict a once-torn nation now united by the dastardly December 7 attack. Before war erupted the two groups laboring on the island, the Marine garrison and the large contingent of civilian construction workers sent to build Wake’s defenses, treated each other with disdain. The construction boss argued with the Marine commander over areas of authority, and fights erupted between Marine privates and construction workers. The Japanese assault instantly united both groups, however, with civilians manning guns alongside Marines.

As the film’s end nears, the Marine commander played by Brian Donlevy stands toe-to-toe with the construction boss, played by Albert Dekker, blasting away with their machine gun while Japanese soldiers surround their position. Adhering to the then common dictate to avoid showing the death of an American while fighting to the last, the movie ends with an explosion that kicks up a large cloud of dust, and a narrator’s voice proclaiming as the Marine Corps Hymn plays in the background, “This is not the end. There are other Leathernecks, other fighting Americans, 140 million of them, whose blood and sweat and fury will exact a just and terrible vengeance.”

The film became an instant sensation in the United States, earning a spot alongside *Mrs. Miniver* as audience favorites for 1942. *Newsweek* stated that it “is Hollywood’s first intelligent, honest, and completely successful attempt to dramatize the deeds of an American force on a fighting front.”

Bosley Crowther, the film critic for the *New York Times*, attended a screening of the movie with 2,000 Marines at Quantico, Virginia, and watched as the Marines wildly cheered the film’s heroics. He wrote, “Here is a film which

should surely bring a surge of pride to every patriot's breast" and stated the movie was "about heroes who do not pose as such."

*Newsweek* was only partly correct in calling the film honest, as much had to be based upon supposition. In researching my book about the battle, I interviewed many of the Wake Island Marines. To a man they agreed that while the film proved to be good entertainment the only accurate aspect was that there was an island and men fought on it.

On the other hand, Crowther aptly concluded that the Wake Island battlers were heroes without seeking recognition. Again, in the course of my interviewing, each aged Marine in recounting his actions scoffed at the notion that he was a hero. "I was just doing what I was supposed to do," they affirmed in a powerfully understated manner.

Despite any shortcomings, the film is good fun and received four Academy Award nominations.

The early 1942 combat in the Philippines, which featured desperate fighting from hopelessly outnumbered forces against a well-oiled Japanese military, provided a fertile backdrop for Hollywood's last-stand films. A smaller offering comes with *The Eve of St. Mark*, a film starring Vincent Price and Harry Morgan of *M\*A\*S\*H* fame. Based on a 1942 screenplay by Maxwell Anderson about a group of American soldiers trapped in a near hopeless position in the Philippines, the film focuses on whether the soldiers should attempt to evacuate their position or remain and fight to the death.

Never a threat to vie for Oscar nominations, the film delivers a steady diet of astounding dialogue. "I'm drafted for a year," one young soldier tells his girlfriend before leaving the country, then displays a shocking mathematical deficiency by adding, "but I'm afraid it's going to be a year of several summers and half a dozen winters and heaven only knows how many lonely nights." Vincent Price quotes Shelley and Shakespeare, and compares himself to a "young Alexander [the Great] dying" before succumbing to malaria.

When one soldier wonders why they should sacrifice themselves for a country that failed to heed the signs of imminent hostilities and prepare for war, he hears the answer that powers the movie. "We're not fighting Japs," responds his buddy. "We're fighting so that 1950 kids won't have to steal potatoes from boxcars" like he and other youths had to do during the Depression. He convinces the group to hold their positions and delay the enemy as long as possible.

*Bataan*, released in June 1943, is a far supe-

rior movie dealing with American soldiers mounting a last stand in the Philippines, and one of the best war films to emerge from World War II. The film gathered a luminous collection of actors to rival *Across the Pacific*, including Robert Taylor, George Murphy, Thomas Mitchell (not long after completing *Gone with the Wind*), Lloyd Nolan, Robert Walker, and a young Desi Arnaz. They comprise the 13 men of a platoon detailed to delay the Japanese long enough for other American units to retreat.

The director, Tay Garnett, deftly used the 13 characters to portray both a nation united as well as the grit that would carry the nation through to ultimate victory. He opens the film

MGM/The Kobal Collection



***Bataan* tells the story of 13 members of a doomed platoon in the Philippines, including a young soldier played by Robert Walker.**

with a sequence popular among movies of the day, Japanese planes strafing Filipino children and bombing a hospital packed with wounded American soldiers. When one bandaged soldier tries to hobble from the hospital, a Japanese bomb dislodges a wooden frame that falls on the soldier and crushes him to death.

After that heavily propagandized sequence, *Bataan* provided one of the most beautifully depicted stories to emerge from the film industry. Unlike most other offerings, *Bataan* gives screen time to each of the 13 members of the doomed platoon, in that fashion providing

background for each man, building empathy for the character, and making each soldier's death more meaningful to audiences. In a clever move, practically every ethnic group in the nation is represented, including men from Spanish, Polish, and Italian backgrounds, a Jew and a Catholic, a grandfather-type played by Mitchell, a fresh-faced youth played by Walker who alternately thinks of mom and killing his first Japanese soldier, and in an impossibility for the segregated Army of the day, an African-American. In an intentional move to illustrate that the nation was being defended by the common citizen, not one of the 13 came from the professional ranks back home. They were the average Joes fighting for mom and dad, soda jerks and farmers dying for all that is good.

As the movie unfolds, the Japanese slowly approach the platoon's position. One by one, the 13 die, always by an enemy purposely kept concealed until the film's final sequence, when they camouflage themselves with tree branches for the last assault against the lone survivor, Robert Taylor, the platoon sergeant who dispensed wisdom and tough love to his men. "It don't matter much where a man dies," he tells Robert Walker as the crying youth struggles with his predicament, "as long as he dies for freedom." In a message directed at theater audiences, as the enemy closes in on Taylor, who heroically fires his machine gun from a grave he had dug for himself, Taylor shouts at the Japanese, "We're still here—we'll always be here—come and get it."

As in all last-stand movies, Taylor goes down fighting, but his death is not actually shown. He continues to fire his weapon, grinning madly as the Japanese draw near. The film, which touched audiences in 1943, still packs an emotional wallop more than 60 years later.

Surprisingly, the war years delivered some of the strongest leading roles for female actors, with Claudette Colbert starring in two major wartime vehicles and Greer Garson in the Oscar-winning *Mrs. Miniver*. The Philippine campaign offered two World War II films portraying the role of nurses with 1943's *So Proudly We Hail* and *Cry Havoc*. The first, featuring Paulette Goddard, the stunning Veronica Lake, George Reeves (who later enjoyed television fame as Superman), and Sonny Tufts joining lead actress Claudette Colbert, entered theaters in September. Mirroring *Bataan*, the film immediately resorts to a stereotype with the Japanese bombing a hospital and a character raging, "They're strafing the hospital! The beasts! The slimy beasts!"

Colbert's character, nurse Lieutenant Janet Davidson, then takes center stage to blame pre-

war isolationism for the military's ill fortune in the war's early going. She explains that one thing led to the U.S. retreat in the Philippines. "Because we have no quinine, and the things that go with quinine: big guns, and troops, and food, and a responsibility to the world we live in. Why? Because old men said we were impregnable between two oceans." Colbert added, "Who should we have listened to—our President? Or those who smugly told us the smug things we wanted to believe in?"

The movie later graphically illustrates that a united population, willing to sacrifice, would lead to victory. Veronica Lake, mourning the death of her fiancé at Pearl Harbor, courageously sacrifices her life and kills a group of enemy soldiers by igniting a hand grenade as she supposedly surrenders to the Japanese. Colbert lends added heroism to the deed by telling the other nurses, and at the same time admonishing audiences, "It's the people's war because they have taken it over and are going to win it and end it with a purpose—to live like men with dignity, in freedom."

Nurse Colbert validates Lake's sacrifice, and the tragic loss of every American fighting man in the Philippines, with another strong message targeted at home audiences—the fighting forces in the Pacific sacrificed themselves to give the nation time to rebound from Pearl Harbor. Whereas Robert Taylor and his hardy platoon handed time to the country with their deaths in the Philippines, this time the women contribute. "We've become what they call a delaying action. We are saving time and I hope to God the people back home aren't losing it for us." She adds, "It's our present. We're giving them time."

The powerful film ends with the voice of Colbert's husband, whom she married during the siege of Corregidor shortly before he was killed in the fighting. In tender, loving words the future Superman, George Reeves, tells his bride to keep her chin up, do her duty, and that the war would result in precisely what they all sought, a bright future as symbolized by the farm he had purchased for her.

Though Colbert and most of the nurses eventually escape death when they are evacuated from the islands, the same is not true for 1943's other film about nurses in the Philippines, *Cry Havoc*. The movie, a weaker imitation of Colbert's stellar film, ends with the surrender of the nurses to a group of Japanese soldiers whose intent is all too clear, even if Hollywood in 1943 would never depict it: rape and death.

Though the *New York Herald Tribune* praised the nurses' heroism, which "has made our enemies change their opinion about this being a 'soft' nation," most critics condemned

MGM/The Kobal Collection



Like the doomed soldiers in *Bataan*, the heroic nurses of *Cry Havoc* know what awaits them when they surrender to the Japanese. Pictured here are actresses Ella Raines, Frances Gifford, Ann Southern, and Joan Blondell.

the vehicle for relying too much on sensationalism. Captain Florence MacDonald, who commanded the Army nurses in the Philippines the film supposedly honors, wrote a letter to the playwright objecting to what she viewed as horrendous exaggerations. "You have managed to include horror, war, birth, death, destruction, horror, Lesbianism, insanity, hysteria, horror, smut, murder, spies, sex, horror, and even a little nobility." She then added, "It should bring wonderful box office."

In the early years of the war Hollywood delivered a handful of films examining the Japanese foe, but most succumbed to the temptation offered by other wartime products. Stereotype and simplicity of message overruled any serious study of the Japanese. In 1942, *Little Tokyo, U.S.A.* centered around the West Coast evacuation of Japanese Americans, not surprisingly crafting a pro-evacuation stance. The movie opens with another direct slap at prewar isolationism, blaming it for all the woes that then beset the country.

"For more than a decade," the narrator states, "Japanese mass espionage was carried on in the United States and her territorial outposts while a complacent America literally slept at the switch. In the Philippines, in Hawaii, and on our own Pacific coast, there toiled a vast army of volunteer spies, steeped in the traditions of their homeland." The narrator adds that the film "is presented as a reminder to a nation which until December 7, 1941, was lulled into a false sense of security by the

mouthings of self-styled patriots whose beguiling theme was: it can't happen here."

The film depicts Preston Foster, fresh after foiling the Japanese in *Secret Agent of Japan*, as detective Mike Steele. Could a more American name have been selected? Steele investigates a series of crimes in Los Angeles. As the ever vigilant Steele digs deeper, he learns that the crimes are related. They were all committed by Japanese agents living in California who struck in coordination with the December 7 attack against Pearl Harbor. The clear message was that the nation could not trust any Japanese, even if they had long resided in the United States.

In one astounding scene, as Foster delivers a thorough thrashing to a dastardly Japanese American, he blurts, "That's for Pearl Harbor, you slant-eyed...." The movie, hardly one of Hollywood's most glorious efforts, concludes by justifying the removal of Japanese from the West Coast. "Unfortunately, in time of war, the loyal must suffer inconvenience with the disloyal."

Although Edward Dmytryk's 1943 *Behind the Rising Sun* featured horrendously made-up white actors portraying Japanese characters, Dmytryk was the first director to see a difference between the Japanese military and the Japanese people. He presented the Japanese government, then dominated by the military, as the evil, not the Japanese people themselves.

Co-star Tom Neal, as the Americanized son of a Japanese diplomat, returns to Japan in the 1930s, where the military gradually transforms him into a monster able to turn away as Japan-

ese soldiers bayonet Chinese children. His father, played by J. Carrol Naish, witnesses his son's shocking transformation and warns his friend, an American businessman named O'Hara, that he must leave Japan before it is too late.

In a symbolic scene, Robert Ryan squares off in a combination boxing-martial arts bout against a Japanese soldier, a jujitsu expert. When he and O'Hara learn that the expert has permission to kill Ryan, the American survives a savage beating to best the Japanese, thereby announcing that no matter how good the Japanese military thinks it is or what tools it applies, America will never be defeated.

As O'Hara leaves the country, Naish commits ritual suicide, explaining his reasoning for audiences around the world. "I do not die for the Emperor, a little man on a white horse. I die for the hope that the people of Japan can redeem themselves before the civilized world. But if that is not to be, then the Japan I know must die with me for one can't build honor or dishonor. To whatever gods that are left in the world, destroy us as we have destroyed others. Destroy us before it is too late."

After the initial flurry of movies dealing with the notions of betrayal from the Orient and epic last stands, Hollywood continued to reflect current events by turning to the "hitting back" genre.

After losing the Philippines, Guam, and Wake Island, United States forces began striking back, first with the dramatic April 1942 Doolittle Raid on Tokyo, then by commencing the long drive toward Japan with the August 1942 landings on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

As always, the film industry followed in the wake of these events, producing major motion pictures on each action. The tone of this batch differed from its predecessors in that optimism seeped into the messages. No longer was a stunned country frantically holding on for dear life; it now inflicted blows on a surprised enemy, strikes that presaged eventual doom for the Japanese.

Unlike other movies mentioned in this article, films depicting the Doolittle Raid did not start production for a year after the event occurred. The War Department clamped a tight lid on information about the mission, other than stating that Doolittle had bombed Tokyo, both hoping to keep secret the news that the bombers launched from aircraft carriers and fearing that home front adulation over the event might provoke reprisals on eight captured Doolittle

raiders. The War Department lifted the ban in 1943 after realizing that the enemy had quickly ascertained the origin of the bombers.

Doolittle's bombing of Japan yielded two fine films. *Newsweek* called *Thirty Seconds Over*

captured raiders to stand up in the docket for a true American hero.

The film ends with Andrews, who knows he and the others are doomed to die, delivering a defiant warning to his captors similar to the one Clark Gable issued in *Somewhere I'll Find You*. "You can kill us—all of us, or part of us," Andrews vows. "But if you think that's going to put the fear of God into the United States of America and stop them from sending other fliers to bomb you, you're wrong—dead wrong. They'll blacken your skies and burn your cities to the ground and make you get down on your knees and beg for mercy. This is your war. You wanted it. You asked for it. And now you're going to get it, and it won't be finished until your dirty little empire is wiped off the face of the earth!"

From the perspective of 60 plus years, one has to love the defiance of the 1940s. After receiving the expected guilty verdict, the American fliers proudly march from the courtroom, heads held high as they walk to their deaths.

*Guadalcanal Diary*, released in November 1943, remains one of the most gripping war movies of its day. Based on Richard Tregaskis's best-selling book of the same name, written by a correspondent who accompanied Marine forces to the island, the film stars William Bendix and Lloyd Nolan, both resurrected after dying in *Wake Island* and *Bataan*, accompanying

fellow Marines as they land on the Japanese-held jungle island. While the U.S. forces eventually triumph, the documentary-style movie does not shy from depicting the rigors these and, by implication, future American units face in wresting control of Pacific possessions from a gallant, but devious, enemy.

Bendix and others land on Guadalcanal, spouting wisecracks toward each other and challenges at the enemy. In one early scene Bendix shoots at what he assumes is a Japanese soldier perched in a tree, then explains, "I swore I could see his buck teeth." Lloyd Nolan's character shrugs off the island's carnage with a simplistic notion that prevailed at the time. "It's kill or be killed. Besides, they ain't people."

The film contains the usual collection of Marines. Bendix plays a character from Brooklyn who loves his baseball, a young Anthony Quinn adds the appropriate ethnic touch showing a united nation, Lloyd Nolan shines as the rough old Marine, and Richard Jaeckel symbolizes the innocence of a reluctant nation, fighting a war that was forced on it, by portraying a 17-year-old Marine who looks not a



*Tokyo*, released in November 1944 and starring Spencer Tracy as Colonel Doolittle, Robert Walker, Robert Mitchum, and Van Johnson "one of Hollywood's finest war films to date." The sentimental film, which used the American family to play on audience emotions, became one of the most popular films of its day.

More wrenching was *The Purple Heart*, released in March 1944 and starring Dana Andrews and Richard Conte. While *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* focused on the raid itself, *The Purple Heart* concentrates on what happened to the eight captured Doolittle raiders. It begins in a Japanese courtroom, where the downed fliers are supposedly receiving a fair trial for their role in the mission. The director cleverly uses silhouettes on the wall to hint at the sadistic Japanese guards hovering about the American captives, willing to resort to torture at the slightest provocation, and employs a buck-toothed, maniacal character as the judge. Symbolizing the gallant contribution made by the Chinese, a son kills his father in court after his parent betrays the American fliers. As guards lead the son away to certain torture and death, Dana Andrews tells his

day older than 14.

The film moved audiences with its portrayal of the Goettge patrol, a small group of Marines hacked to death by the Japanese on the beaches while a terrified survivor watches 100 yards away. Viewers warmed to the cheerful frolicking of American youth, pulled from their peacetime pursuits to face a devilish foe, then sat silently while camouflaged enemy soldiers bayoneted them from behind or gunned them down from concealed positions. Bosley Crowther wrote that the audience with whom he watched the film “was visibly stirred” by the movie.

One other film falls into this category. *The Fighting Sullivans*, released in February 1944, presents the story of the five Sullivan brothers from Iowa who enlist in the Navy as a group, are posted to the cruiser USS *Juneau*, and meet their deaths in the naval Battle of Guadalcanal in November 1942. Most of the film unfolds in the United States, showing the five brothers as they grow to manhood, symbolizing the country as they battle each other at every step along the way but pulling together should an outsider intimidate any of them.

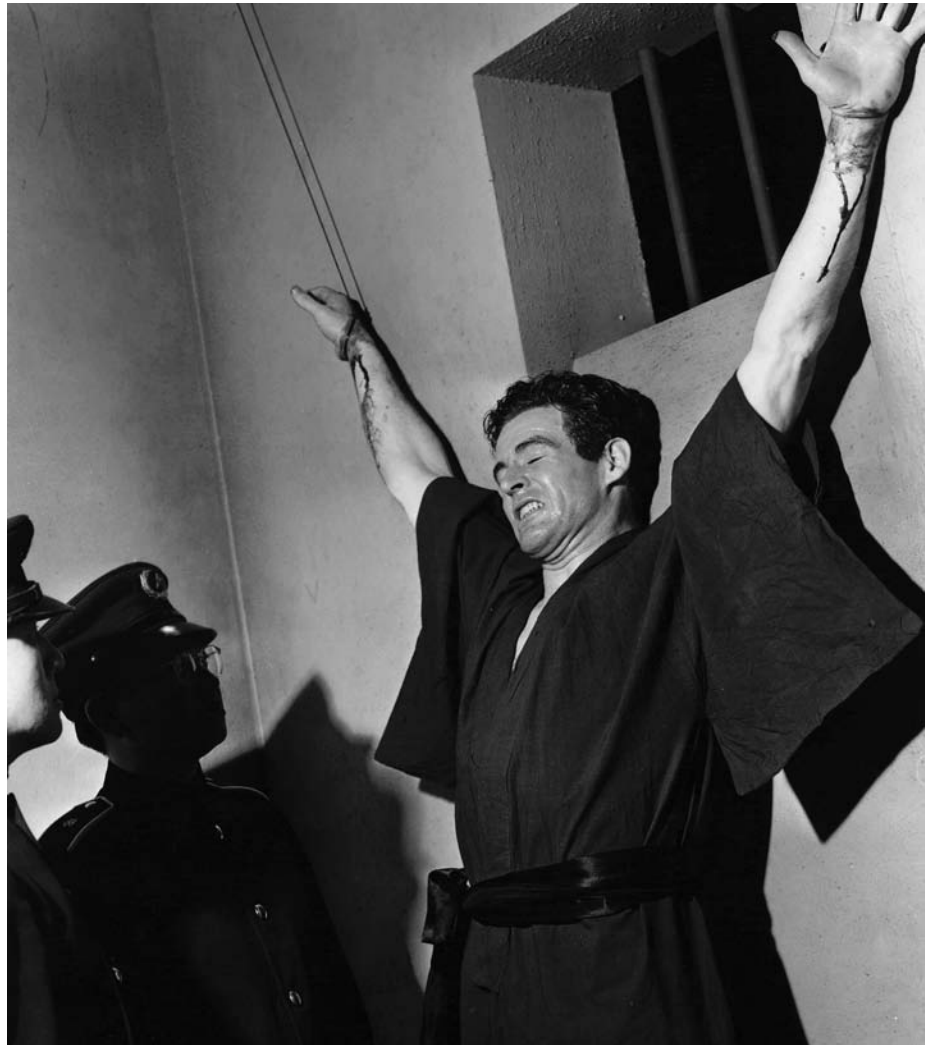
The wholesome family from middle America survives all challenges, only buckling when the dastardly Japanese kill all five brothers by sinking their ship. Stunned, but far from defeated, the family survivors manage their grief, and hope for a glorious end to the war comes with the film’s final scene, in which the spirits of the five deceased brothers join arms as they march to heaven.

Claudette Colbert accomplished much the same in 1944’s *Since You Went Away*, a film produced by David O. Selznick that highlighted the role of women in the war. Joined by a stellar cast that included Jennifer Jones, Shirley Temple in her first adult role, Hattie McDaniel, Joseph Cotton, Lionel Barrymore, and the ever-present Robert Walker, the movie presents one year in the life of a family anxiously awaiting news about and the return of their father and husband.

The film, appropriately set in a Midwest town to convey that the war touched America’s heartland, immediately divulges its focus by opening with the words, “This is a story of the Unconquerable Fortress: the American Home ... 1943,” as the camera pans across familiar domestic items—photographs of childhood exploits adorning end tables, a pair of bronzed baby shoes, the husband’s pipe, left untouched since he departed.

In the midst of uncertainty and doubt stands Mrs. Hilton, the anchor around whom the other characters gather. Though plagued with her own doubts about how to handle affairs in

RKO/The Kobal Collection



**Edward Dmytryk was the first director to distinguish between the Japanese military and the Japanese people in 1943’s *Behind the Rising Sun*. Robert Ryan’s character, Lefty O’Doyle, takes on a Japanese soldier who intends to kill him in a boxing-martial arts match, suffers a savage beating, but prevails in the end, thus delivering the message that America will not be defeated in the war.**

the absence of her husband and how best to raise their two daughters, Colbert as Mrs. Hilton hits the right notes with each calamity. By film’s end she has gained confidence in herself, held the family together as a strong unit, and even taken a welder’s job in a local factory, where she labors alongside a Czech woman, an immigrant Mrs. Hilton says has a name “like nothing we ever heard at the country club.”

The girls chip in as well. Shirley Temple’s character, Brig, plants a victory garden and collects salvage while Jennifer Jones’s character, whose fiancé Robert Walker is killed in the fighting, becomes a nurse. While the family retains its strength, through the course of the film each character is challenged by the war and emerges a stronger, more complete individual.

“The Selznick characterizations are authentic to a degree seldom achieved in Hollywood,” asserted *Time*. “What makes *Since You Went*

*Away* sure-fire is in part its homely subject matter, which has never before been so earnestly tackled in a film....”

This is an unofficial, unscientific selection of the most powerful films produced about the war’s early years. The collection provides fun, tugs at one’s heart, delivers some Academy Award performances, and sprinkles gross oversimplification and near absurdity among the handful of thoughtful scenes that asked the viewer to ponder the world situation. While one can debate the aptness of including a film or two, no one can deny that taken as a whole the movies contain the fears, doubts, joys, and emotions of a nation trapped in a world conflict few foresaw. □

*Author John Wukovits has written several well-received books on the Pacific War and is a regular contributor to WWII History.*

# Devils *in the*

THE GERMAN PARATROOPERS MARCHED THE CAPTURED CANADIAN OFFICER through the dark forest to the damp underground bunker that served as their platoon headquarters. It was the great misfortune of Lieutenant S.W. Nichols of the Canadian Black Watch to be nabbed inside the Reichswald Forest in the first week of February 1945, while leading a patrol to gather information on enemy dispositions.

Once inside the damp shelter, the cocky paratroopers introduced themselves to the young officer as members of Hitler's "Green Devils." The nickname was derived in part from the forest camouflage color of their uniforms and also from their menacing demeanor as elite troops of the Third Reich. It was an encounter that would remain seared on the young officer's mind for the rest of his days.

Hustled off to the nearby fortress town of Kleve, Nichols was turned over to the Gestapo and subjected to a preliminary interrogation. In a lax moment afterward,

Imperial War Museum



**ABOVE:** A phalanx of M4 Sherman medium tanks assembles for the initial push of Operation Veritable, an Allied offensive to clear the area between the Rhine and Mass Rivers, on February 8, 1945. **RIGHT:** With smoke rising and the barrel of their Bofors gun hot from rapid discharging, the weapon's crew fires over open sights during support for British and Canadian troops in Operation Veritable. This photo was taken in the Netherlands at Nuttderden on the road to Kleve, as British and Canadian troops moved forward.

Nichols slipped away from his captors and sneaked through the ruins of the recently bombed town until he was able to reenter the forest. For the next three days, he worked his way west, hiding in unoccupied trenches and dark patches of wood as he traveled nine miles back to friendly lines. Once back among the safety of his unit, Nichols told his superiors that the forest was inhabited by men who fancied themselves as Satan's accomplices.

At the time of Nichols's capture, the Allies had closed to within 25 miles of the Rhine

River. Although German units that had participated in Hitler's ill-fated offensive in the Ardennes Forest in December had managed to effect an orderly withdrawal in mid-January, they knew without a doubt that it was only a matter of time before the Allies reclaimed the offensive.

The question in the minds of German commanders up and down the 600-mile front that stretched from the North Sea to Switzerland was where the Allies would make their next major thrust. Unlike the upper reaches of the



# Forest

THE FIRST CANADIAN ARMY BROKE THROUGH THE WEST WALL DESPITE FANATICAL RESISTANCE BY GERMAN TROOPS. BY WILLIAM E. WELSH





**The objectives of Crerar's First Canadian Army for Veritable were to smash through the northern section of the Siegfried Line, capture or destroy together with Simpson's 9th Army all German forces in the northern Rhineland, and secure points for possible Rhine crossings.**

Rhine, where strong fortifications were nestled in rough terrain, the lower Rhine flowed through flat, open plains that offered the Allies the possibility of a rapid breakout into the German heartland. However, such an assault would require defeating a large number of crack paratroop and panzer units that had survived the Battle of the Bulge.

These troops were bundled into Army Group H, under the command Col. Gen. Johann Blaskowitz. Two corps belonged to the Twenty-fifth Army stationed in northern Holland, while three corps of the First Parachute Army protected the northern Rhineland. The latter had the added advantage of manning the northernmost section of Hitler's West Wall, also known as the Siegfried Line. While Blaskowitz believed the Allies would make their main thrust across the Roer River on the southern end of his line, others such as First Parachute Army commander General Albert Schlemm fully expected the Allies to try to outflank the Siegfried Line with a quick thrust through the Reichswald.

In preparation for such an attack, Schlemm held his best divisions well back from the front so that they could respond rapidly to any penetration of his line. On the front line at the western edge of the Reichswald he placed the 84th Infantry Division under General Heinz Fiebig to absorb the shock of the initial attack. A reconstituted unit, the 84th Division comprised old and sick men recently pushed into service. Rethinking his initial strategy, Schlemm ordered three battalions of paratroopers into

the forest to strengthen the resolve of the hapless recruits.

The Germans had begun construction of the West Wall in 1938 to protect Germany's frontier with France from invasion. In subsequent years, the fortified line was extended the entire length of the French-German border and eventually as far north as Kleve. In the north, the barrier protected the highly vulnerable Rhineland, that part of Germany which lay on the west bank of the Rhine. The Allies, who failed to punch across the lower Rhine in Holland during Operation Market-Garden in September 1944, next turned their attention to gaining access to potential crossing points in a pincer attack on the northern end of the Siegfried Line.

For the coming offensive, Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight Eisenhower once again would entrust overall command of the campaign to British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, a move that dismayed Montgomery's American counterparts. Despite the failure of Market-Garden, Montgomery hounded Eisenhower to provide him with sufficient forces to ensure a successful thrust into northern Germany.

Montgomery's single-thrust strategy conflicted with Eisenhower's broad-front strategy, implemented in the wake of Market-Garden, by which the Allies would push forward slowly but steadily along the entire Western Front until a breakthrough was achieved. To indulge Montgomery, Eisenhower agreed to reinforce his Twenty-first Army Group so that the field

marshal could exploit a bridgehead over the Maas River that the Allies retained following Market-Garden. The strategy that Eisenhower and Montgomery hashed out involved launching a two-pronged attack that would clear the northern Rhineland of German forces. To do this, the First Canadian Army, under General Harry Crerar, would strike east from Nijmegen, while Lt. Gen. William Simpson's 9th U.S. Army, detached from General Omar Bradley's 12th Army Group and placed under Montgomery's command for the campaign, would cross the Roer River and drive north to link up with the First Canadian Army. Crerar was ordered to launch his attack, designated Operation Veritable, on February 8, 1945, and Simpson was instructed to start his attack, called Operation Grenade, two days later.

The offensive, first conceived in October 1944, was postponed and revised as many as five times before it was finally launched. Limited successes on other parts of the front, coupled with the German surprise attack through the Ardennes, forced Eisenhower to rethink his broad-front strategy. One serious flaw in the strategy of the upcoming campaign was the difficulty that Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges's 1st U.S. Army, to Simpson's immediate south, was having in its attempt to capture the seven dams that controlled the Roer River. Until these dams were in Allied hands, the Germans might flood the Roer behind Simpson, cutting his supply line. In the weeks following the Ardennes campaign, Eisenhower ordered Bradley, Hodges's

superior, to ensure that the dams were captured before the two offensives began. As events would show, the Germans held the upper hand in the matter of the dams.

The objectives of Crerar's First Canadian Army for Veritable were to smash through the northern section of the Siegfried Line, capture or destroy together with Simpson's 9th Army all German forces in the northern Rhineland, and secure points for possible Rhine crossings. Despite its name, the First Canadian Army contained a large number of British units. Crerar entrusted the initial assault to Lt. Gen. Brian Horrocks, who commanded British XXX Corps, and put seven of the eight divisions from the 1st Canadian Army under Horrocks's direct command. Its total strength on paper was estimated at 470,000 men. To his south, Simpson's army had been reinforced with additional units from Hodges's U.S. 1st Army for a total troop strength of 378,000.

The low-lying regions in much of Holland and along the upper Rhine consisted of marshland drained by dikes. To slow the advance of the First Canadian Army, the Germans had flooded the marshlands north of the Reichswald, creating a shallow lake 10 miles wide and 40 miles long, making the area unsuitable to the Allies for anything other than amphibious operations. In the run up to Veritable, this meant that Horrocks's XXX Corps, which would advance east along the Nijmegen-Kleve road and through the Reichswald, was sandwiched into an eight-mile front between the flooded Rhine and the Maas River, making it impossible for Horrocks to bring the full weight of his forces to bear in the initial attack. Because of the flooding, the division commanders would be able to commit just one or two of their brigades in the initial attack.

Despite being outnumbered in men and material, the Germans would enjoy distinct terrain advantages. The Reichswald was a managed state forest in which old and new stands of timber were mixed together throughout an area five miles wide by eight miles long. The timber had been planted in a geometric fashion, and sections were divided by open lanes, known as "rides," to facilitate logging. The rides, which ran east to west through the forest, provided excellent fields of fire for German 88mm guns. The rides were largely unpaved, rendering them unsuitable for armored vehicles. On the western edge of the Reichswald lay the outer layers of the Siegfried Line, consisting of extensive minefields followed by a double line of trenches protected by an antitank ditch.

Three miles inside the forest lay the main Siegfried Line. Here the Germans had incorpo-

rated a wide array of defensive features designed to defeat a determined assault, including a second antitank ditch, concrete pillboxes and reinforced bunkers, barbed-wire entrapments, and hundreds of machine-gun, mortar, and gun emplacements. In addition, the Germans had fortified the towns of Kleve and Goch, located at the eastern end of the forest, with a ring of barriers and trenches to prevent their capture. Crerar was keenly aware of the nature and extent of the fortifications that lay in front of his forces, and he knew they were in for a costly battle similar to that encountered by U.S. forces in the Hürtgen Forest the previous fall.

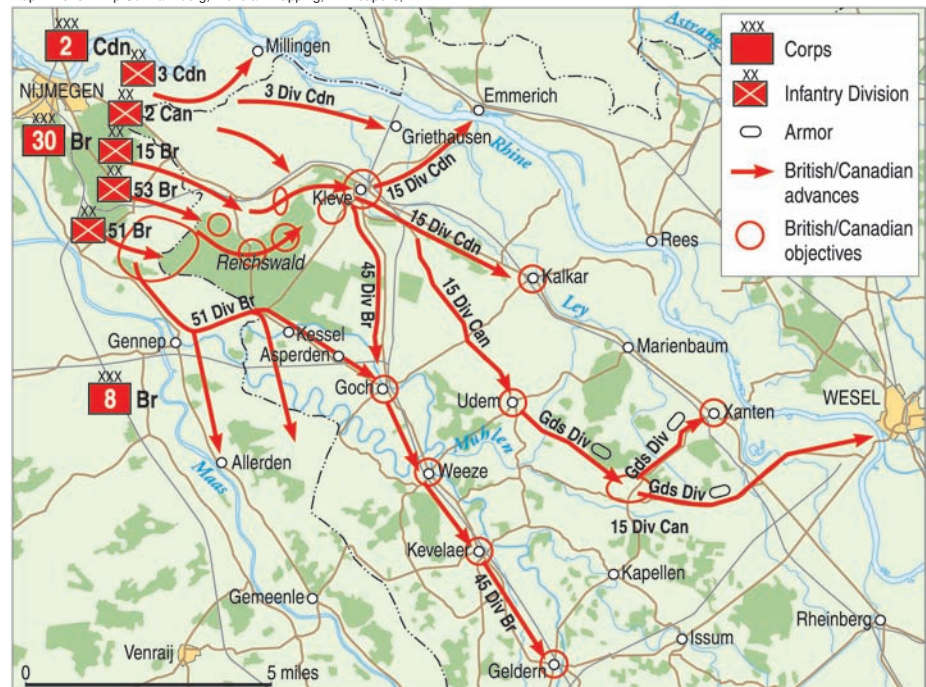
Blaskowitz may have had overall command of the German forces opposing the First Canadian Army, but Schlemm directed the divisions

to Germany's war machine.

Schlemm placed his strongest units astride the road that ran from Nijmegen to Xanten, skirting the Reichswald to the north. The German right flank, well back from the main lines in the vicinity of Kalkar, was anchored by the XLVII Corps under the command of General Heinrich von Luttwitz, consisting of the 116th Panzer Division and 15th Panzergrenadier Division and augmented by the 6th Parachute Division from the Twenty-fifth Army stationed in Holland.

The center was occupied by General Eugene Meindl's II Parachute Corps, comprising the 7th and 8th Parachute Divisions stationed east of the Reichswald, and the 10,000-strong 84th Infantry Division holding the western edge of

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



**ABOVE: Operation Veritable was the immediate forerunner of Operation Grenade, each designed to penetrate the defenses of the Siegfried Line along the German frontier, clear the Rhineland of German troops, and possibly capture the region's vital dam network. OPPOSITE: A British infantryman, his bayonet fixed, peers warily from a roadside as he prepares to move forward with comrades during the early stage of Operation Veritable. Note the concentration of armored vehicles in the background.**

at the front. A veteran of many bloody battles on the Eastern and Italian Fronts in which he showed a knack for the fighting withdrawal, Schlemm had seven divisions organized into three corps under his command. The commander of the First Parachute Army planned to employ his forces in such a fashion as to parry the Allied attacks and launch well-planned counterattacks when opportunities arose. He believed this approach was necessary to keep the Allies from gaining the west bank of the Rhine which, if they were to do so, would enable them to halt barge traffic that transported coal and steel vital

the Reichswald. The left flank guarding the open terrain between the Reichswald and the Maas River was occupied by General Erich Straube's LXXXVI Corps made up of the 180th and 190th Infantry Divisions. In addition to moving 2,000 experienced paratroopers into the Reichswald to stiffen the resolve of the questionable troops of the 84th Infantry, Schlemm also committed 36 self-propelled artillery vehicles and four battalions of heavy artillery to the defense of the forest. A number of 88s were incorporated in the main Siegfried Line, but Hitler would not allow Schlemm to

move them from their static positions.

Crerar had developed a three-phase plan for Operation Veritable. The first phase called for the capture of Kleve, which Horrocks hoped to achieve within the first 24 hours, and also the clearing of the Reichswald. To achieve that ambitious timetable would require low temperatures that would keep the ground frozen and allow for the rapid advance of Allied armor, and also the assistance of the U.S. 9th Army to tie up German reserves and keep them from launching counterattacks against the First Canadian Army. The second phase involved establishing a north-south line that ran from Kalcar to Udem to Weeze and included the capture of Goch. The third and final phase consisted of securing a line from Xanten to Geldern and seizing high ground known as the Hochwald Layback. Although he hoped for a rapid breakthrough, Crerar realized the whole campaign might last three weeks.

Horrocks drew up the plans for the initial assault entrusted to four divisions backed by three armored brigades from the British Guards Armored Division. The 15th Scottish Division would push east toward Kleve from Nijmegen. The 51st Highland Division would assault the northern Reichswald, while the 53rd Welsh pressed its attack on the southern Reichswald. These three divisions would receive substantial armored support, even though the armor designated for the Reichswald was likely to get

bogged down on the soft rides.

The 2nd Canadian Infantry Division would play a limited role on the first day assisting the 15th Scottish Division and then take on a much more prominent role in the second phase of the operation. To deal with scattered German strongpoints in the flooded area between the Nijmegen-Kleve road and the Rhine, the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division, which had extensive experience in waterborne operations in Normandy and Holland, would make an assault in amphibious vehicles. In the land-based assault into the Reichswald and along the Nijmegen-Kleve road, the attackers fielded 50,000 troops initially against 12,000 defenders, thus outnumbering them by more than four to one. For the overall operation, the First Canadian Army had at its disposal 500 tanks and 500 "funnies," a term that referred to a host of specialized armored vehicles including mine clearers, flamethrowers, bridgelayers, and others.

The British Bomber Command sent 1,200 heavy and medium bombers into the night sky on February 7. The heavy bombers concentrated on reducing the towns of Kleve and Goch to rubble, while the medium bombers pummeled smaller towns such as Kalcar, Udem, and Weeze. After the bombers were on their way back to their bases at 5:30 AM, Crerar's First Canadian Army unleashed a devastating artillery barrage on the German positions. Taking his cue from Montgomery, who believed

strongly in the use of artillery before and during a major operation, Crerar had assembled more than 1,000 guns from units at the corps and divisional levels. The barrage was intended to blast trenches and bunkers and also strike terror in the hearts of the defenders.

Fiebig, whose headquarters was located in Kleve, realized that a major assault from the direction of Nijmegen was imminent and issued orders for his forward units to abandon their positions and fall back to the main Siegfried Line. The majority of his units did not respond to the order because they were either destroyed or unable to pull back until the shelling let up. From his headquarters at Emmerich, Schlemm dispatched orders to the commanders of the 6th and 7th Parachute Divisions to prepare their troops for battle.

The infantry and armored attack began at 10:30 AM on February 8. Horrocks employed a rolling artillery barrage in front of the attackers as a protective screen. Much to the disappointment of Crerar and his staff, a thaw had occurred several days before the start of the operation and the heavy rains that followed turned the ground to mud. The rain, which would continue for the next five days, raised the height of the floodwaters to the point that they covered sections of the Nijmegen-Kleve road, making it impassable to tracked and wheeled vehicles. Thick cloud cover prevented tactical aircraft from supporting the advance.



Imperial War Museum

Major General Colin Barber, who commanded the 15th Scottish Division, was able to advance two of his three brigades along the corridor north of the Reichswald that led to Kleve. The 227th Brigade advanced along the Nijmegen-Kleve road toward Kranenburg, while the 46th Brigade drove for the village of Frasselt. The infantry began its assault in Kangaroo armored personnel carriers. Because the Scotsmen were advancing along the fastest route to the Rhine, they received substantial armored assets, including 170 Churchill tanks, two squadrons of Crocodile flame-throwing tanks, and two regiments of various other special vehicles.

The 2nd Canadian Infantry Division captured the village of Wyler just outside Nijmegen from the Germans in a pincer movement on the first day to allow the 15th Scottish Division to concentrate on bigger prizes. Horrocks's plan was for the 15th Scottish to capture Kleve as quickly as possible, after which he planned to relieve the exhausted Scotsmen with the 43rd Wessex Division, which would wheel south toward Goch to carry out the second phase of the operation. The 227th initially found the going easy, but when the brigade crossed into Germany the Churchills and Kangaroos came under heavy fire from 88s. By virtue of larger numbers the Churchills prevailed, and the 227th closed on Kranenburg, the first of two significant towns west of Kleve.

At Kranenburg, the Scottish infantry came under a withering fire from German machine-gun nests sheltered in houses and buildings on the outskirts of the town and, as a result, began a mortar barrage that enabled the riflemen to clear out the defenders. By 5 PM, the 227th had captured the town. Immediately to the south, the 46th Brigade relied on its Crocodiles to torch the houses in Frasselt. The conflagration that tore through the village demoralized soldiers from Fiebig's division, who were subsequently rounded up and sent off to the rear under guard. By 5 PM, Frasselt also was in Allied hands.

After its capture of Kranenburg, the 227th found that it could no longer proceed along the paved surface of the Nijmegen-Kleve road as it was covered by two feet of floodwater. The infantry dismounted from the Kangaroos and proceeded to assault Nutterden, which was situated in the strongest part of the Siegfried Line. Despite a lack of supporting armor, the Scotsmen managed to secure Nutterden the morning of February 9.

To keep up his division's momentum, Barber committed the 44th Brigade, his reserve, to press the attack on the main defenses of the

Siegfried Line. The capture of Frasselt gave the brigade unhindered access to the 15-foot anti-tank ditch a few hundred yards beyond the village. Before nightfall, engineers accompanying the 44th Brigade laid three bridges across the antitank ditch, and Kangaroos bearing infantry

Imperial War Museum



**ABOVE: The Reichswald was a natural barrier to advancing Allied troops who crossed the German frontier during Operation Veritable. These soldiers are advancing in column with full packs weighing more than 70 pounds. OPPOSITE: Consolidating the hard-won gains, soldiers of the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 15th Scottish Division, dig in near the town of Kleve on February 10, 1945, two days into the Veritable offensive.**

assaulted the far side while Churchills and Sherman Crab flail tanks provided cover against German fortified positions. Shocked by the speed of the assault, enemy troops from Fiebig's division promptly surrendered.

Because of the narrow front, the two British divisions assaulting the Reichswald initially were able to attack with only one brigade each. Maj. Gen. R.K. Ross led the 53rd Welsh Division on the left, and Maj. Gen. Thomas Rennie commanded the 51st Highland Division on the right. The immediate task before Ross was to clear a series of hills, known as "features," on which the Germans had gun emplacements that could shell the 15th Scottish Division as it drove for Kleve. Another objective was to cut the Kranenburg-Hekkens road to prevent the Germans from using it to funnel troops into the fight.

Like their fellow units in the British XXX Corps, the 71st Brigade of the 53rd Welsh Division found the inexperienced enemy soldiers of Fiebig's 84th Division, which occupied the western fringe of the Reichswald, more than willing to surrender without a fight. It was not until the Welshmen reached the Brandenburg feature that they met enemy resistance. Atop the Brandenburg, the Welshmen came up against experienced paratroopers in fortified trenches protected by rows of barbed wire. Savage fighting raged throughout the first half of

the afternoon, but by 3:30 the feature was firmly in the hands of the Welshmen. The paratroopers who survived the battle withdrew to the main Siegfried Line to continue the fight. At 11 PM, Ross relieved the 71st Brigade and sent the fresh 160th Brigade into the fight.

Some of the hardest fighting on the first day occurred in the southern Reichswald. It was there that the lead elements of the 51st Highland Division ran headlong into the majority of the 2,000 paratroopers that Schlemm had shifted into the forest before the battle began. The 154th Brigade advanced first, reinforced by elements of the 153rd Brigade. Before reaching the forest, the 154th had to clear the village of Breederweg, after which its Churchills came under fire from German antitank guns at the forest edge. The fighting was so fierce that the 154th did not reach the edge of the forest until nightfall, at which point Rennie sent the 152nd Brigade into action. By morning on February 9, Rennie had all three of his brigades in action and had sent part of the 153rd Brigade south to cut the Nijmegen-Gennep road, denying its use to German reinforcements that might join the battle.

The Canadian 3rd Infantry Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Dan Spry, launched its attack on the fortified villages in the flooded zone south of the Rhine at 6:30 PM. The water rats, as they were called, sailed across the lake in Buffaloes and other amphibious vehicles outfitted with machine guns and bazookas to provide covering fire. Hawker Typhoon aircraft had rocketed positions earlier in the day to soften them up, and the assaulting infantry made rapid progress floating easily over minefields and obstructions that would have slowed an attack over dry ground. During the night fighting, Spry's water rats managed to clear the enemy from more than a dozen isolated villages and reduce the threat that enemy long-range artillery positioned in the villages posed to the 15th Scottish Division. The next day they pushed on to Millingen, which was situated on the Rhine, and prepared to advance south along the Spoy Canal toward Kleve.

On the morning of the second day, the First Canadian Army was poised to attack Kleve and to press its attack in the northern Reichswald against the main Siegfried Line. Despite the setback that the 51st Highland Division had experienced in the southern Reichswald against the paratroopers, Horrocks was more concerned with ensuring that his troops captured Kleve as quickly as possible to keep the attack on schedule. To ensure he had sufficient forces on hand, Horrocks sent a message to Maj. Gen. Ivor Thomas to prepare his 43rd Wessex to assist in the capture of Kleve.



**The progress of British armored vehicles was impeded when the Germans flooded low-lying areas. A British Humber scout car and a universal carrier are shown crossing a flooded road between the towns of Beek and Kranenburg.**

On the German side, the first day's battle had greatly reduced the strength of Fiebig's 84th Infantry Division. Altogether, the division had experienced 3,000 casualties and had lost another 1,200 captured. Despite evidence that a major operation was under way, Blaskowitz clung to his belief that the Reichswald battle was a feint and that the main attack would come farther south. Therefore, he refused to allow Schlemm to commit his panzer reserves to the spreading battle. As a concession, Blaskowitz gave permission for Erdmann's 7th Parachute Division to join the fight.

The heaviest fighting on the second day occurred at the Materborn feature overlooking the southern outskirts of Kleve as elements of the 7th Parachute Division rushed to occupy the crucial high ground. At the same time, the Scotsmen who had reached the western outskirts of Kleve were advancing on the Materborn. Heavy fighting occurred throughout the day as the two sides clashed on a spur of the Materborn known as the Bresserberg. Although the Scotsmen gained the upper hand and seized the crest of the spur, the paratroopers clung tenaciously to the eastern slope and fortified their positions on the second night of the battle using rubble from ruins on the southern edge of Kleve.

As the fighting raged at the Materborn, Horrocks fretted over the failure of his troops to take Kleve on the first day. Because of this, he ordered the 43rd Wessex Division into battle on the afternoon of February 9, hoping to capture Kleve on the second day of the operation. Unaware of the precise situation at the front, Horrocks later conceded that he acted prematurely given the road

conditions. Since parts of the Nijmegen-Kleve road were closed to armored traffic on account of high water, the Wessex men were forced to use the same rides through the Reichswald that the 15th Scottish was using to bypass the flooded sections. The result was a traffic jam; and the 129th Brigade, which was the lead unit in the 43rd Wessex column, would not reach the front until the third day.

On February 9, a day before Operation Grenade was scheduled to begin, soldiers of the U.S. 1st Army finally captured the Schwammenauel Dam, the largest of the seven Roer dams. Although they captured the dam intact, they discovered the Germans had destroyed the discharge valves, resulting in a steady torrent of water that flooded the Roer valley and made it impractical for Simpson's 9th Army to begin its attack on schedule. The stark implications were that Crerar's First Canadian Army was on its own against the First German Parachute Army. To compensate Crerar for the delay, Montgomery arranged for two American divisions to take over positions on the front line held by the British Second Army's 52nd Lowland and 11th Armored Divisions, which enabled those two units to reinforce the First Canadian Army.

The 15th Scottish Division reached the outskirts of Kleve on the third day of the operation. Ironically, it was not the Scotsmen who entered Kleve first, but the 129th Brigade of the 43rd Wessex Division, which, while trying to move into position to assist the attack from the south, accidentally took a wrong turn and wound up inside the town. A series of firefights broke out between the Wessex men and the town's

defenders, which included both Fiebig's infantry and Erdmann's paratroopers. The German defenders enjoyed superb defensive positions among the rubble and craters left behind from the aerial bombardment that preceded the operation. The fighting continued throughout the day, and gradually the Wessex men forced the defenders out of the southern section of the town. Meanwhile, the 15th Scottish Division brought up its heavy guns in preparation for a final assault the following day.

Realizing that the main Allied attack was indeed coming from the direction of Nijmegen and that the 84th Infantry Division was no longer an effective force, Blaskowitz gave Schlemm permission to feed more reinforcements into the battle on the third day of the offensive. As a result, the fighting grew in intensity south of the Materborn when General Hermann Plocher's 6th Parachute Division arrived in the sector. Plocher's crack paratroopers slowed the advance of the 43rd Wessex and the 53rd Welsh Divisions. Through a series of ferocious counterattacks, the paratroopers managed to hurl back the 53rd Welsh and keep it from crossing the Kleve-Hekkens road. Unknown to the advancing Allies, Schlemm had ordered the 116th Panzer and 15th Panzergrenadier Divisions to take up a position on the Kleve-Goch road from which they could not only check the Allied advance but also possibly attempt to retake Kleve should it fall.

On February 11, the 129th Brigade, 43rd Wessex Division broke off from the battle of Kleve to avoid friendly artillery fire from the guns of the 15th Scottish. Once that occurred, the 227th Brigade attacked Kleve, capturing the town by nightfall. It was assisted in its effort by units of the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division, which had advanced along the west bank of the Spoy Canal and linked up with the Scotsmen.

Thomas then replaced the battle-weary 129th Brigade with the fresh 214th Brigade, which he instructed to press its attack toward the Kleve-Goch road. House-to-house fighting occurred as the Wessex men steadily drove the Germans back. The Wessex men found well-camouflaged paratroopers darting from one fortified house to the next as they stubbornly fought to delay the Allied advance. Tanks were brought up to blast the paratroopers from their positions with high-explosive shells. To counter this, the defenders used *Panzerfaust* shoulder-fired anti-tank weapons to stop the armored vehicles. Despite tenacious fighting by the paratroopers, by day's end the 214th had secured the town of Bedburg and the adjacent village of Hau in preparation for a shift southward toward Goch. Meanwhile, furious fighting in the Reichswald

between the British 53rd Welsh and 51st Highland Divisions and the German 6th Parachute Division led to only limited gains.

Schlemm knew that it would be only a short time before the Allies had cleared the Reichswald of all its defenders. To buy the paratroopers time to fall back and form a new line, Schlemm ordered von Luttwitz on the morning of February 12 to launch a counterattack with his two panzer divisions toward Kleve. Luttwitz's 47th Corps was one of the best-led units in the German Army. What it lacked in resources, it made up for in the skill and cunning of its headquarters staff.

The 15th Panzergrenadier Division, led by General Wolfgang Mauke, took up a blocking position between the Reichswald and the forest of Kleve astride the Kleve-Goch road. Once this was accomplished, Mauke sent a battle group into the Reichswald with orders to strike north toward Kleve. Ross was pushing his division through the Reichswald two brigades abreast (the 160th on the left and the 158th on the right).

Mauke's battle group ran headlong into the hard-fighting Welshmen a short distance from the Kleve-Goch road. The grenadiers tried to drive a wedge between the two supporting brigades, but the latter employed mortars and called in artillery to break up the German attack. The high-explosive artillery shells wreaked havoc on the grenadiers, blasting men and equipment alike. Meanwhile, the 116th Panzer Division under General Siegfried von Waldenburg circled around the forest of Kleve and struck the 214th Brigade of the Wessex Division, which was mopping up in Bedburg. The panzer division, which was tasked with blocking the road to the Rhine after the fall of Kleve, was only at half strength and could muster just 14 tanks, a mix of Panzer IVs, Panthers, and Tigers, for the counterattack. Like the Welsh brigade to its south, the 214th Brigade relied on its divisional artillery to blunt the counterattack and force the Germans to retire. By nightfall, the 53rd Welsh Division had gained the Kleve-Goch road, and Kleve remained firmly in Allied hands. Only the southeastern portion of the Reichswald remained in German control.

The heaviest fighting on February 13, the sixth day of the battle, took place east of the forest of Kleve as Thomas ordered two battalions, the 4th and 5th Wiltshires from the 129th Brigade, to try to flank the 15th Panzergrenadiers by pushing south on the Kleve-Udem road farther east rather than attempting to force their way through the grenadiers blocking the Kleve-Goch road. The Wiltshires pushed off in a driving rain, and the Sherman

tanks supporting them quickly became mired in the mud. Fanatical fighting by paratroopers from the 6th Parachute, who were backed by armor from the 116th Panzer, made the advance difficult. The Wiltshires sought to clear German trenches and fortified farmhouses using little more than grenades and automatic weapons. That night, the Germans launched a ferocious counterattack with Panzer IVs and Tigers, overrunning a company of the 4th Wiltshire. The battalion managed to maintain the rest of its line despite the mayhem, and the Germans withdrew to their original positions.

On February 14, a week into the battle, Crerar divided his forces into two independent wings to carry out the second phase of Operation Veritable. After the capture of Kleve, the front had expanded from eight miles to 14 miles, allowing for additional Allied divisions to join the battle. On the left, General Guy Simonds, commanding the Canadian II Corps,

on Goch. Not counting the 15th Scottish, Simonds had four divisions, two armored (11th British Armored and 4th Canadian Armored) and two infantry (2nd Canadian Infantry and 3rd Canadian Infantry), under this command. To assist the XXX Corps in its advance on Goch, the 52nd Lowland Division from the British Second Army would join the battle on the far right. Its job was to ensure that Staube's LXXXVI Corps in Goch could not cut its way out to the south.

Allied morale received a substantial boost on February 14 when the skies cleared and friendly aircraft began flying sorties against German positions. On the right, Thomas would employ all three of his brigades, one after another, in the final advance on Goch. The 129th Brigade battled the 15th Panzergrenadiers east of the forest of Kleve on February 14. The following day, Thomas placed the 130th in the lead. Trying to stall the advance of the Wessex men, the Ger-

National Archives



**After crossing the Niers River on March 2, 1945, British soldiers exit their small boats and scramble up the riverbank. Their objective was the nearby town of Weeze.**

would assume responsibility for capturing Kalcar. He would have command of the 15th Scottish Division for a few days before it was returned to XXX Corps.

On the right, Horrocks's XXX Corps would drive south for Goch. One of the first orders that Simonds issued was for two brigades of the 15th Scottish Division to rest and refit before rejoining the XXX Corps in the attack

mans cobbled together a new battle group and launched several counterattacks against the Wessex men. When the 130th reached a state of exhaustion on the afternoon of February 16, Thomas ordered the 214th Brigade to pass through its fellow brigade and renew the push south.

Following the fall of Kleve, the Germans had rushed reinforcements to the area just east of



**The Germans used machine guns, mortars, and self-propelled artillery to turn back the Highlanders. When some of the Highlanders attempted to skirt the village using a sunken road, they were counterattacked and driven off.**

Kleve in the hope of delaying as long as possible the First Canadian Army's advance to the Rhine. The 15th Scottish had made little progress east on its own, and Simonds intended to introduce fresh troops on the left wing to break through German resistance and capture Kalcar. The German paratroopers, who had cleverly entrenched in the Moyland Wood on the south side of the Kleve-Kalcar road, were particularly tenacious in their resistance and managed to inflict serious casualties on the Allied units sent to pry them loose.

While he waited for the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division to arrive from its location west of Kleve, Simonds ordered the 46th Highland Brigade of the 15th Scottish Division and elements of the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division to continue attacking the paratroopers. On February 14, the fighting was particularly heavy when the 46th Highland attacked the village of Tillemanskath just east of the Moyland Wood in an effort to isolate the paratroopers. The Germans used machine guns, mortars, and self-propelled artillery to turn back the Highlanders. When some of the Highlanders attempted to skirt the village using a sunken

road, they were counterattacked and driven off.

On the right wing, Thomas sensed the German paratroopers and panzer troops he was battling were becoming exhausted, and he introduced the 214th to the battle late on February 16. Without allowing the Germans a respite, two battalions of the 214th advanced under cover of a rolling barrage with substantial armored support. The tanks blasted every structure the Germans might possibly use for cover as the brigade drove south. The force of the drive broke the German lines almost immediately, and the 214th was able to advance two miles against light resistance.

When the 214th reached the village of Pfalzdorf, Thomas ordered a battalion of infantry to mount up in Kangaroos and sent the battalion east to cut the Goch-Kalcar road to prevent reinforcements from reaching Goch. That night he ordered another battalion to attack German outposts on the Goch escarpment in an effort to seize the high ground north of the town before the Germans could solidify their defenses. The night assault was a complete success, and by daylight the Wessex men were in firm control of their objective. Thomas's

unstoppable drive had carved a great swath in the enemy's line, severed the connection between the Germans at Goch and Kalcar, and captured the high ground north of Goch. The success of the 43rd Wessex before Goch marked a turning point in the battle.

The Moyland Wood would occupy Simonds's attention on the left wing for his first five days of command. Elements of the 6th Parachute Division occupying the woods put up tenacious resistance. From their concealed positions, the Germans occupying the wooded tract could fire on Allied troops advancing either north or south of their position. On February 15, a battalion of the 46th Highland Brigade attacked two knolls in the forest but was driven off by German mortars. After heavy fighting over a two-day period, elements of the 46th Brigade of the 15th Scottish Division and the 7th Brigade of the Canadian 3rd Division were able to capture the villages of Tillemanskath and Louisendorf, respectively, which further isolated the paratroopers in the Moyland Wood.

Fighting in the Moyland Wood continued on February 17 with the Allies managing to cap-

ture 150 paratroopers but failing to eradicate a group of defenders who clung to an area on the east end of the Moyland Wood no larger than 1,000 yards long and 500 yards wide. Daily reinforcements and long-range artillery fire from batteries on the other side of the Rhine River had sustained the German foothold.

Before the war, Goch had been a bustling commercial center with 10,000 residents. Bisected by the Niers River, it was a rail town with three major roads converging on it. Schlemm had not entrusted its defense to Straube, whose two infantry divisions occupied the town, but rather to Meindl, the shrewd commander of the II Parachute Corps. By the time the 43rd Wessex took possession of the Goch escarpment, the Germans had constructed two deep antitank ditches around the town to make it difficult for enemy armor to breach the defenses.

Horrocks mustered four Allied divisions for the final assault on Goch. On February 17, the 43rd Wessex consolidated its position on the left of the Goch escarpment while the 15th Scottish, having arrived from Bedburg, took up a position on the right of the escarpment. To the west, the 51st Highland, having cleared the last of the German resistance from the Reichswald, took up positions on the right of the 15th Scottish, and the 52nd Lowland moved to anchor the far right of the Allied line before Goch. Horrocks planned for the 43rd Wessex to make a diversionary attack on the left, while the 15th Scottish and 51st Highland launched the main attack on Goch from the west. Both attacking forces included a substantial mechanized element consisting of tanks, bridge carriers, and Kangaroos.

The 43rd Wessex began its diversionary attack on February 18 and successfully bridged both antitank ditches, which drew the bulk of the German forces to the north bank of the Niers River in an effort to halt the progress of the Wessex men. On the following day, the 15th Scottish began its advance but encountered heavy opposition from German infantry in pillboxes and fortified houses on the northern outskirts of town. The 51st Highland was more fortunate. The Highlanders swept into town on the south side of the Niers River against light opposition. Ferocious fighting engulfed Goch for the next 48 hours as the three divisions expanded their control of the town and worked to clear the Germans one street and one building at a time. Although the Allies could boast that they controlled Goch by February 20, it would take two more days for them to round up the last of the town's defenders.

As Simonds continued in his attempts to dis-

lodge the fanatical paratroopers from the eastern edge of the Moyland Wood, the Germans were marshalling additional panzer units for a major counterattack to stop the Allied advance on Kalcar. With instructions to use the unit only in an offensive capacity, the German high command issued orders for the Panzer Lehr Division to join Schlemm's First Parachute Army. On February 17, the 1st Battalion of the Panzer Lehr arrived by rail from Wesel to Marienbaum. The battalion, which comprised two companies of Panther tanks and one company of Jagdpanther tank destroyers, joined up with two panzergrenadier battalions in preparation for its attack. The return of wet weather made it possible for the Panzer Lehr to make the 45-mile journey by rail undetected by enemy aircraft.

While the 7th Brigade of the Canadian 3rd Division continued to press its attack on the Moyland Wood, Simonds introduced the 4th Brigade of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division into the battle on February 19. General Fred

Imperial War Museum



**ABOVE:** Sherman Firefly tanks advance through the ruins of Kleve during an attack on the nearby village of Goch on February 16, 1945. The Firefly was a British innovation that replaced the original 75mm cannon of the M4 Sherman with a high-velocity 17-pounder (76.2mm) gun which was more capable in tank versus tank combat. **OPPOSITE:** Wary British troops of the 2nd Gordon Highlanders scan windows for German snipers in the town of Kleve.

Cabeldu sent his three regiments forward from Louisendorf with orders to seize and hold the Goch-Kalcar road. Two regiments, riding in Kangaroos and backed by tanks, advanced side by side toward the road, while a third regiment followed. On the left was the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI), and on the right the Essex Scottish.

The rainfall of the preceding days had turned

the fields into a muddy quagmire, and the infantry had to dismount and proceed on foot. When Sherman tanks entered the action, they were quickly knocked out by 88s. By mid-afternoon, the RHLI had lost 11 tanks. The fighting grew in intensity as long-range artillery from across the Rhine sent high-explosive shells into the Canadian infantry in an attempt to break up the assault. German machine guns raked the Canadian infantry as it advanced. To drive off the enemy, the Canadians brought forward flamethrower sections that gave those who survived the flames no choice but to retire.

At 2 PM, the 116th Panzer attacked the Essex Scottish, managing to roll back its right flank, which had been left unprotected by the 43rd Wessex Division to its south. Nevertheless, by late afternoon both regiments had advanced 400 yards beyond the Goch-Kalcar road. At that point, Cabeldu sent orders to the Royal Regiment of Canada, which had been held in reserve, to prepare to join the fight the follow-

ing day. When the sun went down, the Sherman tanks that participated in the daylong fight were sent to the rear to rearm and refuel. What seemed like a simple decision would prove to be a fatal mistake.

German artillery began shelling the Allied front line south of Kalcar that night in preparation for a major counterattack. The Panzer

*Continued on page 81*

## THE TRIUMPHS AND TRENCHES OF MEDAL OF HONOR

*War, peace, and gaming's great cycle*

Heavy is the burden on the first horse out of the gate. There's the pressure of setting the pace; establishing the flow for those approaching from the rear. Most intimidating of all, however, is the very real possibility of completely burning out, allowing others to gracefully pass by. While Electronic Arts' *Medal of Honor* series may not be the absolute



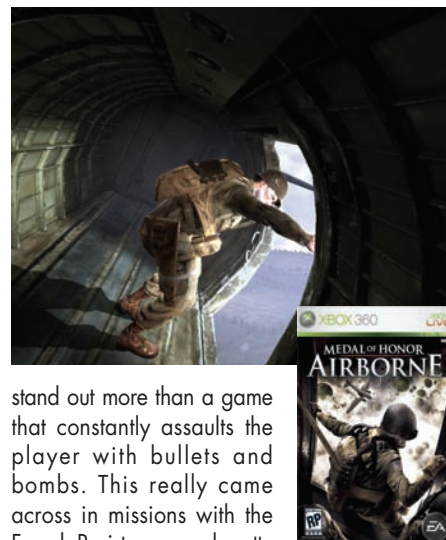
visual presentation at the time—especially now, when PSone games look almost like impressionist artwork at best; strange mixes of harsh polygons strewn across scorched, jagged earth—the experience beyond the graphics alone was full of atmospheric nuances. One of the most effective parts of the whole came in the form of Michael Giacchino's rousing score. Giacchino is probably best known at this point for his scores for mega-popular shows like *Lost* and, well, pretty much everything else J.J. Abrams has put his name on.

There was also a palpable air of authenticity about the experience, regardless of how truly grounded in history the whole thing may have been. Retired U.S. Marine Captain Dale Dye acted as military adviser, overseeing the crucial details in the journey of protagonist Lieutenant Jimmy Paterson. (This would mark but the first instance of his involvement with EA's franchise.) I'd like to think the strict supervision of a military adviser was the one thing keeping the series from going full-on *Wolfenstein*; after all, who's to say taking on a mechanized Hitler is an inherently bad thing?

The original was inevitably followed by many—pinned not under the weight of numerical sequel indicators, but plenty of subtitle variations. *Allied Assault*, *Under-*

*ground*, *Frontline*, *Rising Sun*, *Vanguard*, and so on, from PC to console and even a handful of portable systems. The next in the series, which is scheduled for release in October, marks the first notable departure from the World War II setting that established its name in the first place.

One of the aspects that made the earlier *Medal of Honor* games unique in an endless line of similar shooters was the focus on more stealthy, behind-the-lines missions. That's not to say the games have you pressing your back to walls like Solid Snake and snapping necks in the dark, but there's a discreetness to it that makes the combat



stand out more than a game that constantly assaults the player with bullets and bombs. This really came across in missions with the French Resistance, and pretty much any operation that had you donning some sort of disguise. Things changed as the series progressed, offering up blazing frontline action that's more equatable with modern-day efforts, even if the artificial intelligence in the enemy lineup was decidedly ... not.

In the grand scheme of things, it hasn't been that long since we've heard from *Medal of Honor*. However, in the game world, 2007 sure does seem like more than a stone's throw away. That might have something to do with the gradual downward slope the series faced, both critically and commercially. Now, in just a few years, the landscape has changed enormously, and competition is tougher than ever.

In an interview with Gamasutra, EA Games president Frank Gibeau admitted that the problem with series such as theirs often lies in the annual releases (and this is coming from the publisher of *Guitar Hero!*). That same issue can be attributed to other popular franchises, even if they've yet to feel the effects. Much like what hap-



first of its kind, it did tread new ground in a relatively untapped market, and did so with the foresight of a true franchise.

In a few months, things might seem back to normal, with a new *Medal of Honor* title screeching onto store shelves. Though that particular entry in the series follows in the footsteps of modern warfare a la current *Call of Duty* games—call it a case of the teacher becoming the student—let's not forget the path the series has blazed through the trenches of World War II, and what it can teach us about the successes and failures of the medium in general.

In 1999, a first-person World War II shooter was about as novel a concept as could be, at least as far as the home console front was concerned. Landing somewhere between the splash made by Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* and the looming next generation of game consoles, *Medal of Honor* offered a uniquely cinematic experience for the original Playstation, which was more or less on its way out at the time.

While it's difficult to get across the success of the



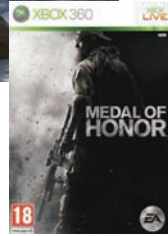
pened to *Medal of Honor*, Gibeau says that “they get in a rut, they become over-annualized. They run out of innovation.”

If this holds true, then there’s certainly a lesson to be learned from their past mistakes. Maybe the folks at Activision should take note, since their *Call of Duty* series—currently the juggernaut to beat in the retail world of war—has been an annual endeavor for quite some time. Sure, it’s only growing more popular with each release, but the same could be said for *Medal of Honor* when it was at its prime. Add to that the recent hoopla with Infinity Ward employees heading for greener pastures after a round of firings for “insubordination” (for reasons that Activision states were necessary, but only those involved know the real story), and you have the potential for a franchise in trouble down the line.


Then again, the results can be observed by all

when the Treyarch (*Call of Duty 3*, *Call of Duty: World at War*) developed *Call of Duty: Black Ops* is released this November.

Getting back to *Medal of Honor* and the issues that go hand-in-hand with over-annualization, it would appear that even EA is gearing up to repeat history. In the conversation with Gamasutra, Gibeau went on to lay out their plans for a very aggressive marketing campaign when their *Medal of Honor* reboot hits, and stated that, between the quality of this entry and the IP’s pedigree, they’re “going to be in the *Medal of Honor* business for a long time.”



Is this the very definition of a vicious cycle, or is it just the nature of the industry itself? Maybe both, and only time will tell if these are actually mistakes being made, repeated cyclically until there’s nothing but powder to be milked. Frankly, the game industry grows and evolves at such a rapid rate that we’re already living in a different era than we were in 2007, based on both internal and external factors. Between this and their *Battlefield* series, though, EA seems primed and determined to take the war market over, one medal at a time.

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**UPCOMING BATTLES: AERIAL EDITION**

**Combat Wings: The Great Battles of WWII**

Defending Great Britain against the German Luftwaffe can be a stressful experience, which makes arcade-centric fare like City Interactive’s *Combat Wings: The Great Battles of WWII* somewhat of a breath of fresh air. I like strategy and realism as much as the next person, but sometimes it’s a little easier to tackle the lighter

side of things, with more emphasis on immediate action and less on how to properly fly an aircraft.

As far as those are concerned, *Combat Wings* features over 25 types, including American, British, and Russian planes. The 20+ missions available—spanning the Battle of Britain, the Eastern Front, and the Pacific—come in the form of straight-up dog-fights, escorts, and bomb runs. Despite being a more arcade-centric experience, the wii remote layout options do include a simulation-style setting, so those with more “hardcore” inclinations won’t be left in the cold.

**Heroes in the Sky**

Now for something completely different. *Heroes in the Sky* is set to fill a void you may not have even been aware of: the massively multiplayer online dog-fighter. Boasting fast-paced third-person aerial action, *Heroes in the Sky* pits players against one another in both cooperative and player-versus-player game types.

*Heroes* boasts a chronicle of air combat from the beginning to the end of World War II, and it should be interesting to see how it all works when the game releases this summer. Best of all, the cost of entry to find out won’t be steep. In fact, the game—in closed beta as of June—will be free to play.



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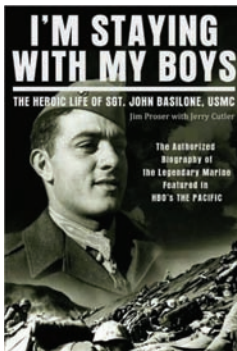
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## Hero of the Marine Corps

Pacific legend John Basilone earned the Medal of Honor in combat with the Japanese.



John Basilone is laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors on April 21, 1948. He died and was originally buried on Iwo Jima.

**NO ONE LOOKS LIKE A HERO. BUT WHEN CERTAIN MEN** are placed in impossible situations, they rise to the occasion and perform spectacular deeds that defy imagination.

Such a man was John Basilone. While serving with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines on Guadalcanal in 1942, he and his machine-gun squad held off thousands of fanatical Japanese. He continuously exposed himself to enemy fire when racing from position to position to ensure his men had enough water and ammunition. For this incredible feat, he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Author Jerry Proser worked closely with Basilone's nephew Jerry Cutter to write *I'm Staying with My Boys: The Heroic Life of Sgt. John Basilone, USMC* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 2010, 352 pp., notes, index, photos, \$14.99, softcover). What is more interesting about this book is that it is told in the first person, as if Basilone was telling the

reader his own story, in his own words. Cutter was able to do this after numerous hours of interviews with close friends, family, and people with whom John Basilone served.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Basilone was a product of the Great Depression. He worked odd jobs and spent much of his time caddying. He grew strong by carrying a golf bag on each shoulder to earn more money, which was hard to come by during that depressed era.

Prior to his Marine Corps service, Basilone did a hitch in the U.S. Army. He saw extensive service in the Philippines, where he earned the nickname "Manila John." He was also an accomplished boxer, never losing a match while compiling an impressive 19-0 record.

While Basilone praised all of his squad members, he had the utmost respect for Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, his battalion commander. While on Guadalcanal, the New Jersey native was amazed at his courage, bravery and leadership skills. He referred to him as the "Old Man."

"I made up my mind that minute—if I could be half the Marine Chesty was, I would be satisfied with my life," he wrote. "My path, just like my Father Joe said it would be, was finally clear to me. To live without fear like the Old Man was the only life I could think of that was worth living."

According to his family, Basilone had the uncanny ability to foretell his own future at times. His sister Phyllis and older brother Carlo both heard him do this on three different occasions. His last premonition was of his own death. Although he could have easily stayed out of the fighting because of his Medal of Honor, Basilone badgered his superiors to return to combat. It was where he belonged, he felt.

"I'm staying with my boys," he explained. "They need me."

Basilone was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, 5th Marine Division and became a machine-gun section leader. On February 19, 1945, his unit stormed ashore on the island of Iwo Jima. He personally destroyed a Japanese pillbox and directed a trapped tank through a minefield, all under intense enemy fire. While making his way around the perimeter of the airfield, a mortar round struck him and four other leathernecks, killing them all. He was given the Navy Cross posthumously—the only Marine in World War II to receive both the Medal of Honor and Navy Cross, the nation's second highest military award for naval personnel.

In the HBO miniseries, *The Pacific*, Basilone is one of three Marines whose stories are told. The others are Robert Leckie and Eugene

*You deserve a factual look at . . .*

## Jerusalem (III)

### Should Israel be able to build residences in its capital city?

A great brouhaha has arisen about a mid-level bureaucrat in Israel's Ministry of the Interior releasing a routine notice that 1,600 residences were to be built in Jerusalem. To the surprise of many, this routine announcement was construed as an insult or worse to Vice President Biden, who was visiting in Israel at the time. Mrs. Clinton, the Secretary of State, also was "shocked" and sent a "stern message" of displeasure to Mr. Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel.

#### What are the facts?

**Capital of Israel.** Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and will remain that whatever the final accommodation with the Palestinians may be and whatever the "world," including the United States, may desire. That has been understood and recognized by every U.S. administration since the very birth of Israel. Therefore, to be "shocked" by an announcement that Israel will build housing for its citizens in its capital is strange. This is a trumped-up situation and puts the relationship with Israel with one fell swoop on an entirely different level. It is strange because the President himself has stated that Jerusalem should remain undivided as Israel's capital. So has Mrs. Clinton, especially when she was senator of New York and felt to be much dependent on Jewish support. It almost appears as if somebody in the Administration wanted to produce a "crisis" and was looking for an expedient way to accomplish that.

The Muslim Palestinians also claim Jerusalem, or at least its eastern part, as their capital. They want the city to be divided – as it was between 1948 when the Jordanians occupied the eastern part of the city – until 1967, when the Israelis liberated it in the Six-Day-War.

The principal basis for the Muslim claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Muslims and Jews) with its two mosques, El Aksa and the Dome of the Rock. It is the place from which Mohammed, who never in his life had set foot in the city, is believed to have ascended to heaven. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Muslim history did this mosque or this city compare in significance to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina – cities that no "infidel" may visit.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have synagogues and other holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous and people wouldn't accept it. Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel and will remain so. That is why there is no reason at all that the Israeli government could not plan and build residences for its citizens – Jews and Arabs – in any part of the city. Those who get out of joint about that are either misinformed or looking for a pretext to create a "situation."

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# FLAME

*Facts and Logic About the Middle East*  
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159  
Gerardo Joffe, President

**A tenuous Muslim claim.** It is on the basis of this religious tradition that the Muslims designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Muslim sensibilities, has largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Muslim control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Muslim tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and if the

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"Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel...there is no reason at all why the Israeli government could not plan and build residences for its citizens..."

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Muslim Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Muslim claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Muslim Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On

the tenuous claim of their right to the Temple Mount, they have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city." And, it would be an insult to all Muslims and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews."

**Jerusalem: Never an Arab capital.** The city of Jerusalem – in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo or Damascus – has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Muslim Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national, or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country, since Biblical times. It was the site of one Muslim holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Muslim Arabs until most recent history.

But Jerusalem has stood at the center of the Jewish people's national life since King David made it his capital in 1000 BCE. After the return from Babylonian exile, Jerusalem again served as the capital of the Jewish people for the next five-and-a-half centuries.

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# Short Bursts

**Lucky Thirteen: D-Days in the Pacific with the U.S. Coast Guard in World War II** by Ken Wiley, Casemate Publishing, Havertown, PA, 2010, 256 pp., index, maps, photos, \$19.95, softcover.

Some of the most enduring images of World War II are of landing craft hitting the beaches during amphibious assaults. Photographs and films of soldiers and Marines disembarking to seize an enemy position are still recognized today.

Ken Wiley, a former U.S. Coast Guardsman, has penned a marvelous autobiography dealing with his time as a coxswain on an attack transport and aboard his own Higgins boat, which was called *Number 13*. His travels took him to the massive amphibious landings in the Marshalls, the Marianas, the Philippines, and Okinawa.

He had the perilous assignment of guiding his vessel through rough seas and intense enemy fire to deliver the troops to the beaches. He also delves into other aspects of the landing craft's duties such as ferrying wounded back to safety and carrying equipment and supplies to shore. It is an exciting but little-known chapter of World War II, which needs to be told.

**The Liberators: America's Witnesses to the Holocaust** by Michael Hirsh, Bantam Books, New York, 2010, 358 pp., index, photos, \$27.00, hardcover.

From the outset, author Michael Hirsh asks the question: "How do you prepare to see that?" When Allied troops first liberated the Nazi death camps, combat-hardened soldiers who had witnessed months of blood and carnage recoiled at the sight of the emaciated, skeleton-like figures they encountered while pushing deeper into Germany. These soldiers were greeted by unforgettable sights of piles of dead "stacked like cordwood," the horrible living conditions, and lurid tales of torture at the hands of their sadistic SS guards.

Hirsh, a Vietnam combat veteran, has done yeoman's work in telling this terrible story. He has compiled more than 150 interviews of U.S. soldiers who participated in the freeing of death camp inmates and those who survived the harrowing ordeal. Although an uncomfortable subject to some, it is a part of the conflict that needs to be visited in more detail.

In a letter to his wife, Pfc. Delbert Cooper of the 71st Division wrote, "There are two things about all this that I want to tell you: 1. I never again want to see anything like that happen to

anyone. 2. I wish 130 million American people could have been standing in my shoes."

**Shepherds of the Sea: Destroyer Escorts in World War II** by Richard F. Cross, U.S. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 320 pp., index, notes, photos, \$34.95, hardcover.

Nearly 600 destroyer escorts were built during World War II, serving in both the Atlantic and Pacific. These sturdy vessels, often referred to as the "mighty little ships that could," had tremendous maneuverability and firepower that enabled them to protect the Allied shipping lanes in the European Theater. The cost, sadly, was high with more than 1,300 seamen paying the ultimate price.

The author received firsthand accounts from 96 sailors and officers who had served aboard 56 various ships. These crews, including many sailors who were teenagers barely out of high school, were recognized for sinking 70 German U-boats and snaring another—the only Nazi U-boat seized intact during the fighting and the first enemy ship captured at sea by the U.S. Navy since the War of 1812.

America has the eccentric William Francis Gibbs to thank for designing and building the escorts. Utilizing unused equipment and mass-production methods made famous by Henry Ford, he produced numerous vessels. In fact, his company, Gibbs & Cox, designed 74 percent of all naval ships during the war—a true testament to American ingenuity.

**Helluva Town: The Story of New York City During World War II** by Richard Goldstein, Free Press, New York, 2010, 305 pp., notes, \$28.00, hardcover.

Even with the shock of Pearl Harbor or the hunt for Nazi spies by G-men, New York City continued to party throughout World War II. That is not to say that the "Big Apple" did not do its part for the war effort. Countless factory

workers producing arms and equipment and the huge Brooklyn Navy Yard that cranked out ships which eventually defeated Germany and Japan were just two of New York's important contributions.

New York was a city of lights. From the Bowery to the Harlem jazz joints to the wonderful Broadway shows along the "Great White Way," nothing could compare to its mystique and glamour.

However, the city was not without its problems. With nearly three million servicemen passing through during the war, troubles were bound to happen. Tensions ran high as many New Yorkers were well aware that their bustling community would be on top of the enemy's hit list if its forces neared American shores. Racial tension also increased as blacks rioted in Harlem, and anti-Semitism was on the rise with Jewish children being beaten in the city streets.

Despite these flaws, no other city can compare to New York. Like a magnet, it attracted millions of people, both civilian and military, who would ultimately win the war.

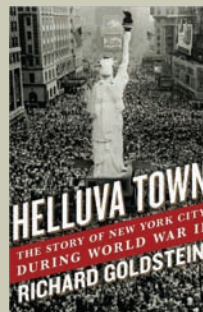
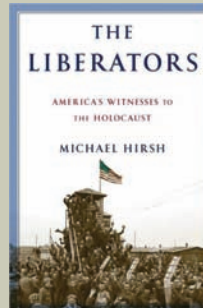
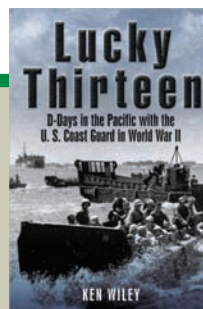
**Islands of Hell: The U.S. Marines in the Western Pacific, 1944-1945** by Eric Hammel, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2010, 284 pp., index, \$50.00, hardcover.

Here is a wonderful addition to any library containing material on the Marines in the Pacific War. Noted military historian Eric Hammel takes the reader from fighting in the Marianas to the final land battle of the Pacific—Okinawa. *Islands of Hell* is crammed with dozens of action photographs to accompany the text.

During the first 18 months of the fighting in the Pacific, the Marine Corps did not send many photographers overseas

to chronicle the island campaigns. Not until the later part of 1943, during the Tarawa and Bougainville operations, did this ultimately change. Cameramen followed their infantry counterparts and endangered their own lives so Americans on the home front could be eyewitnesses to the intense combat these Marines had to endure.

Hammel's newest offering is evidence that a picture is worth a thousand words. □



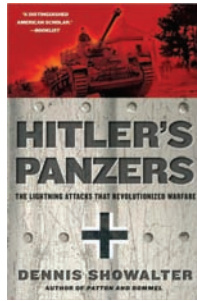
Sledge. It is a fitting tribute to a true American hero who in every way was the embodiment of the word “Marine.”

*Hitler's Panzers: The Lightning Attacks that Revolutionized Warfare* by Dennis Showalter, Berkley, New York, 2009, 390 pp., index, \$25.95, hardcover.

Blitzkrieg! Nothing could strike more fear in the hearts of soldiers than hearing that unforgettable word. Adolf Hitler's fast-moving, seemingly unbeatable panzer units drove with lightning speed through Europe, seizing everything in their path in the early days of World War II.

The core of this war machine was the panzer divisions of the regular army, or Wehrmacht, and the deadly Waffen SS. From their humble beginnings in World War I when German officers first viewed the tank, these self-contained mechanized outfits became the heart and soul of Germany's military ground forces.

The author not only did meticulous research on the subject but also interviewed survivors of the Third Reich who served in panzer units. Showalter concentrates several chapters of his



book on the Eastern Front. From its initial success in Operation Barbarossa to its final, bloody turning point at the Battle of Stalingrad, where it is estimated two million perished, he follows the panzer units.

Each panzer division contained not only its mechanized arm, such as half-tracks and trucks, but also its infantry, artillery, anti-aircraft guns, and signal corps. Formed into brigades, these all-inclusive units could operate independently. Both the Wehrmacht and the SS units received identical equipment, at least at the beginning of the conflict.

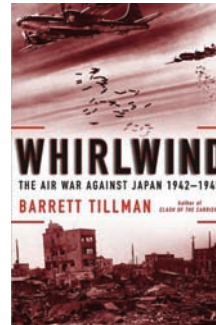
Showalter quotes noted Israeli military historian Martin van Creveld to gain a better understanding of the mind-set of Hitler's soldiers. Honor, that all-important factor imbedded in the Prussian officer corps, seemed to be absent.

“Call this honor,” Showalter writes. “Call this something the panzers abandoned—from expediency, from ambition, from temptation—and not least from principle: the end justifying the means. Call

this something that was expected to be reclaimed—sometime in an undefined future.”

“Martin van Creveld offers two relevant consequences of honor's absence,” Showalter continued. “One is the wild horde. Lawless and disorganized, committed to destruction for destruction's sake, it can neither give nor inspire the trust necessary for civilization. The other is the soulless machine. It makes war mindlessly and mechanically, never developing beyond an identity as a self-referencing, self-defined elite. Hitler's panzers incorporated both. Yet never did men fight better in a worse cause.”

*Whirlwind: The Air War Against Japan, 1942-1945* by Barrett Tillman, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2010, 368 pp., index, notes, maps, photos, \$28.00, hardcover.



Did the tremendous air campaign against Japan bring the island nation to its knees in World War II? Did the bombing that killed hundreds of thousands of civilians fail? Did the war end only after Emperor Hirohito emerged from behind his “Chrysanthemum Curtain” and gave the order to halt hostilities?

Tillman gives the reader an excel-



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lent overview of the strategy of airpower—from both the American and Japanese perspective—and their shortcomings. From the Doolittle Raid in 1942 to the extensive fire bombing of Tokyo, the author explains in great detail how the strategy, although flawed, did work.

As with the Japanese, the U.S. Army and Navy were extremely jealous of each other, resulting in inefficient methods of operation. As Tillman suggests, each service was riding a train to the same station. If they had cooperated, they might have both reached their destination ahead of schedule.

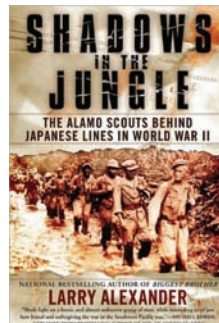
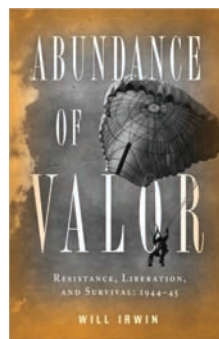
The author gives praise to Army Air Corps General Curtis LeMay, who saw the benefits of the newly arrived but extremely costly Boeing B-29 Superfortress heavy bomber in 1944. It would be prove to be the workhorse in the air campaign against the Japanese homeland by dropping more than 161,000 tons of conventional bombs that laid waste to 40 percent of the urban areas and one-third of civilian homes. In the end, it would be two lone B-29s, the *Enola Gay* and *Bockscar*, that would drop the first atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ushering in the nuclear age.

Today, visitors can view the fully restored *Enola Gay* at the National Air and Space Museum located in the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles International Airport outside Washington, D.C. It is frightening to think that one aircraft, carrying one weapon of such magnitude, could do what thousands carrying conventional bombs could not. Although thousands died from the first atomic blasts, they ironically saved millions more by averting a bloody, protracted invasion of a country that would have been defended by a fanatical enemy.

*Abundance of Valor, Resistance, Survival, and Liberation: 1944-45* by Will Irwin, Presidio Press, New York, 2010, 416 pp., index, notes, photos, \$28.00, hardcover.

Although much has been written about with the ill-fated Operation Market-Garden in September 1944, little has been said about the important role that the Jedburgh teams played during its implementation.

Jedburgh was the codename for Allied clandestine activities behind enemy lines in both the European and Asian Theaters. These highly trained soldiers were drawn from a pool of British, American, French, Dutch, and



Belgian operatives, who assisted the local resistance organizations. They usually were comprised of three-man teams that consisted of a leader, a second-in-command and a radio operator, normally a non-commissioned officer. Usually the leader of the group would be a British or U.S. officer and the executive officer would be a native of the country in which the team would be operating.

The author was able to obtain firsthand accounts from several Jedburgh members of the three teams who parachuted into Holland to support Market-Garden. Of the nine men, three were killed, another three wounded, two seized as prisoners of war, and only one survived the harrowing ordeal unscathed.

Irwin's account is full of suspense and intrigue as he traces the routes of the teams serving with the Dutch resistance. At the end of the book, the author has an epilogue that explains what happened to each member, including their awards and decorations. For those World War II buffs who are fascinated with the Jedburghs, this book is a must.

*Shadows in the Jungle: The Alamo Scouts Behind Japanese Lines in World War II* by Larry Alexander, New American Library, New York, 2010, 352 pp., index, photos, \$16.00, paperback.

When Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger, commander of the U.S. Sixth Army, created an all-volunteer reconnaissance force in November 1943, he quickly called it the Alamo Scouts. Because of his long association with the city of San Antonio, Texas, the Prussian-born officer had admired the defenders of the Alamo and decided to remember them by naming his unit after them. These highly trained soldiers were formed into teams to operate deep within the enemy's backyard and provide the Sixth Army with valuable intelligence for future combat operations.

Of the 325 men who graduated from Scout training on New Guinea, a mere 138 of them were assigned to the dozen teams that would be operating behind Japanese lines. When the conflict was over in August 1945, they had conducted 108 missions, killed an estimated 500 Japanese soldiers and captured another 60. To their credit, no Alamo Scout was ever killed in combat according to the author.

Arguably their most noteworthy missions were the Cabanatuan and Los Banos Raids,

where the Alamo Scouts provided tactical support. These two highly successful incursions resulted in the release of hundreds of Allied prisoners of war.

In 1988, the Alamo Scouts were awarded the coveted Special Forces Tab and were included in the Special Forces lineage. They were “the best of the best.”

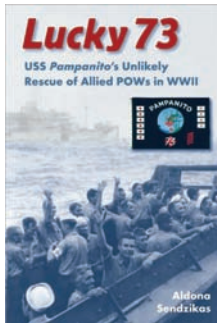
*Lucky 73: USS Pampanito's Unlikely Rescue of Allied POWs in WWII* by Aldona Sendzikas, University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 2010, 208 pp., notes, index, maps, photos, \$24.95, hardcover.

Here is an incredible story of heroism and fortitude involving a U.S. submarine that attacked and sank Japanese transports during World War II only to return several days later and find Allied prisoners of war adrift in the water from the enemy vessels they had helped sink.

The USS *Pampanito*, SS-383, was commissioned in November 1943 and immediately departed for the Pacific. She had an illustrious career, participating in six wartime patrols with six enemy ships destroyed and another four put out of commission. On her battle flag, however, is a red cross emblazoned with the number 73. This is the number of British and Australian soldiers she pulled out of the South China Sea after she torpedoed their transport.

The POWs had worked on the Burma-Thai Railroad, also known as the “Railway of Death,” that was later overly glamorized in the classic movie *Bridge on the River Kwai*. Many had perished while constructing the rail line, and now the emaciated survivors were being sent to Japan to endure more grueling labor. The prisoners never reached their destination. American submarines, including *Pampanito*, attacked the convoy, sending some of the vessels to the bottom.

Returning to the area on a routine patrol, the sub discovered the rafts bobbing in the water and immediately set about bringing the POWs aboard. Once cleaned and fed, the survivors were encouraged by the crewmembers to write down their experiences while being held as “guests of the emperor.” These accounts remained unnoticed until the author stumbled upon them while she was serving as the curator of the *Pampanito*, which is still intact and open to the public at Pier 45, Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco.



Giles MacDonogh

*1938: Hitler's Gamble* by Giles MacDonogh, Basic Books, New York, 2009, 324 pp., notes, index, photos, \$27.50, hardcover.

For Germany, 1938 was certainly a pivotal year. The historic and momentous events that occurred within Germany were leading that country on a path to war, with horrifying results.

Adolf Hitler had risen to power in 1933 spouting his Nazi ideology, and he quickly embarked on a program to rid the country of the one thing he bore an intense hatred for—the Jewish population—whom he blamed for the country's woes. But other historic events, not of his doing, also erupted in 1938.

In January, German War Minister Werner Von Blomberg's wife was accused by police of posing for pornographic photographs. When he refused to dissolve the marriage, he was forced to tender his resignation. A few weeks later, it was learned that Blomberg's second-in-command, Werner Von Fritsch, was accused of being a homosexual. This charge, however, had been trumped up by Luftwaffe chief Hermann Göring and SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, who both wanted Fritsch removed from office. Even though he was acquitted of the charges, he left public life, his name ruined.

It was the Munich Conference in September 1938, however, that catapulted Hitler into a powerful position among the European leaders. The Nazis had previously cajoled the other countries to allow them to annex the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, which they claim was occupied by ethnic Germans. Hitler had pushed to see the reaction of the other European nations, especially England and France. With the horrific memories of World War I fresh in everyone's mind, they took a pacifist stance that the Nazi dictator quickly leveraged at the talks. Confident that no one would interfere with his plans for world conquest, he later told his generals to prepare for the invasion of Poland and said, “Our enemies are small worms. I saw them at Munich.”

MacDonogh's account of 1938 and its ramifications that propelled the world into another global conflict is a must read. Germany's tyrannical despot took them from their crowning achievement at the Munich Conference to an underground bunker where he committed suicide amid the scarred and bombed-out buildings of a once beautiful country. □

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When assaulting antitank defenses, the tanks would be formed in attack waves. If the defenses were light, they would be massed forward. Infantry would closely follow the armor and sometimes ride into battle on the machines. Tank training stressed rapid and concentrated fire. Fire tactics included firing on the move, firing as the vehicle moved and stopped and moved again, and firing at the halt. Acknowledging their light armor, Japanese tankers tried to fire from behind terrain or obstacles that would completely hide the tank from enemy view. A favorite tactic of the Japanese was the night attack.

After the Russo-Japanese fighting in 1939, the Japanese improved their antitank tactics. The use of smoke shells allowed the Japanese tanks to maneuver to the flanks and rear of the enemy. Ambush proved effective against road-bound American armor in the Philippines in 1944-1945. When on the defensive, especially on the Pacific islands, tanks were dug in with only the turret exposed to allow all-around fire. Such tank positions were mutually supporting when possible.

Considering all the inherent problems the Japanese armored force had to contend with as the war went on, its shortcomings were not anticipated by senior officers during the first year of the war. This condition was bolstered by the spectacular victories over the Western powers in the Malaya and Philippine campaigns of 1941-1942. Here Japanese armor proved to be an indispensable tool in achieving early conquests.

The assault force against Malaya was made up of General Tomoyuki Yamashita's 25th Army. As part of his host, Yamashita had at his disposal the 3rd Tank Brigade composed of two armored regiments, about 120 operational vehicles. Tanks were used aggressively and uncharacteristically en masse as Lieutenant Colonel Saeki, commander of Tank Detachment Saeki (some 50 Type 94s and Type 97 tankettes), detailed Lieutenant Sigeru Yamane's 3rd Tank Company (11 Type 97 medium tanks and a few tankettes), 1st Tank Regiment, to race ahead on the road leading from the landing beaches near the border with Thailand through British defensive positions.

The shock of the attack forced the enemy to retreat in panic and threw open the route to the rest of Malaya. Using tanks to continually leverage the British, Australian, and Indian defenders out of positions, the Japanese advanced south. Without tanks of their own or any reliable antitank weapons, the Common-

wealth troops were powerless against the ram-paging Japanese armor. The 25th Army drove quickly for Singapore, 400 miles to the south, smashing the British river defenses at the Slim River in January 1942 with a night attack by 10 Type 97 medium and five Type 95 light tanks. The landing of armor on the island of Singapore in early February 1942 sealed the fate of the fortress as well as its 70,000-man garrison.

As Japanese troops landed in Malaya and Burma in early December 1941, General Masaharu Homma's 14th Army invaded the American protectorate of the Philippines. Supported by two armored regiments, the 4th and 7th, the Japanese quickly overran their American and Filipino opposition. Colonel Sonda's 7th Tank Regiment, fielding 34 Type 89-B medium, 14 Type 95 light, and 2 Type 97 medium tanks, made its presence felt during the campaign and contributed greatly to its success by supporting Japanese infantry attacks.

This operation also witnessed the first employment of the type 97 Shinhoto CHI-HA in combat. Pushed to the forefront during every advance on Luzon, the Japanese armor conducted numerous running fights with the 100 American M5 Stuart light tanks on the island, losing many machines to the better U.S. armor and antitank guns. But the Japanese tide could not be halted. The March-April 1942 offensive to capture the American-held Bataan Peninsula was successfully headed by 25 tanks of the 7th Regiment against stiff U.S. resistance.

After the stunning triumphs of 1941-1942, the Japanese wave of conquest receded in the face of the inexorable march of the Allies across the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Japan's armored corps participated in defensive operations, occasionally as a mobile strike force. This was the case on Saipan in June 1944, when a mixture of 37 Type 97 light and Type 97 medium tanks of Colonel Masa Goshima's 9th Tank Regiment launched a predawn assault on the U.S. 2nd Marine Division and was almost wiped out for its trouble.

In January 1945 on Luzon, the Japanese 2nd Tank Division lost 108 of its 220 machines during a week of combat. More often dug in and acting as armored pillboxes, Japanese tanks and their crews fought to the end against superior American armored fighting vehicles and other firepower brought to bear on them. In these bitter actions, the tankers of the Rising Sun exhibited the same courage and fierce determination to win or die as they showed during their glory days in the first year of the war. □

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expert at the Russian embassy in Ottawa, defected to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Gouzenko brought documents that revealed startling and chilling information regarding the Soviet penetration of the Canadian, British, and American governments. Prominent Canadian scientists and government officials were identified as being active members of Soviet espionage networks.

The chilling revelations also confirmed that the Canadian Communist Party was under Moscow's control and not simply a radical but independent domestic political group.

William Stephenson, the World War II spy master known as Intrepid, became the coordinator of the operation that was codenamed the Corby Case, named after Corby's Canadian rye whiskey that Stephenson and his staff consumed during late-night strategy sessions.

Cliff Harvison, now chief of the RCMP Intelligence Branch, became a major player in the Corby Case. He supervised the security protection of Gouzenko and his family at Camp X, the Canadian World War II spy school near Toronto. Harvison also led the methodical investigation of the Canadian officials who had been identified as having subversive connections to the Soviet Union. Mountie counterspies pursued intensive interrogation of the Canadians mentioned in the Soviet files, which resulted in many arrests and convictions.

Harvison continued his successful career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in October 1960 he was appointed commissioner. Janowski remained an Allied prisoner until 1947. His postwar life was characterized by divorce, marginal employment, and financial problems.

During an official visit to Germany in 1963, Harvison received a surprising phone call. The caller was Werner Alfred Waldemar Janowski. He requested a meeting for the following day. The Mountie agreed, but Janowski did not come. However, the German spy sent a short telegram to his wartime adversary. "Cannot see you after all. Only wanted your pardon for causing trouble during the last war. All the best."

A display depicting the Janowski affair, entitled, "The Spy from the Sea," can be seen at the RCMP Centennial Museum in Regina, Saskatchewan, along with the rest of the colorful history of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. □

*Author John Mancini is a retired U.S. Army colonel. He resides in Sierra Vista, Arizona.*

## devils

Continued from page 71

Lehr, which had arrived at the front, was reinforced the night of February 19 by an additional company of Panzer IV tanks. The Germans cobbled together the best men and weapons from the 47th Corps and the Panzer Lehr to serve in Battle Group Hauser, commanded by Colonel Paul Hauser, which would spearhead the counterattack. Battle Group Hauser was supported on the right by the 6th Parachute, and on the left by the 116th Panzer.

At midnight the ground shook and buildings shuddered as the tanks and tank hunters of Battle Group Hauser lurched forward toward enemy lines. In the first hours of the night assault, two Canadian battalions were overrun and the survivors scurried for shelter in slit trenches or cellars of ruined buildings in an effort to escape the onslaught. In one instance documented by the Essex Scottish regiment, an enemy tank stuck its gun through the front door of a building and blew it to pieces. Allied radios crackled with frantic voices from the front lines pleading for immediate artillery support. The 4th Brigade's field artillery fired more than 5,400 rounds in the first 12 hours in support of the beleaguered infantry. By launching the counterattack, the Germans had bought themselves a respite of several days from the determined Allied advance.

At daylight on February 20, two Canadian tank regiments roared to life and entered the action. To stop the German tanks, the Canadians wheeled 17-pounder antitank guns into action, which temporarily checked the German advance. Matthews ordered the Royal Regiment of Canada to rescue the remnants of the Essex Scottish, which had become unraveled by the counterattack, and to stabilize the right side of his brigade's line. As the Royal Regiment of Canada entered the fight, the Germans resorted to mortar fire in an effort to break up its advance.

At 7 PM, Battle Group Hauser launched a counterattack directly at the RHLI in an effort to overrun the regiment. While Panther and Mark IV tanks attacked head on, groups of German soldiers attempted to work their way around the regiment's flanks in an effort to cut it off from supporting units. Once again, the intervention of Allied tanks and antitank guns stabilized the situation.

The attacks by Battle Group Hauser and its supporting units on the 4th Brigade continued for a full week. As the fighting dragged on, the officers and men of the First Canadian Army learned that the Americans had at last crossed

the Roer on February 23 and begun a steady drive north in an effort to link up with the First Canadian Army. Meanwhile, the battle around Kalcar seesawed as Canadian infantry and German paratroopers fought for control of key terrain features, even down to the hedges that surrounded fields and buildings.

The Germans launched daily attacks in an effort to break through the 4th Brigade's front line, but Allied armor and artillery turned them back each time. On February 26, the Germans made an orderly withdrawal, leaving possession of the scarred landscape in the hands of Cabeldu's men. The fighting along the Goch-Kalcar road resulted in 400 casualties for the 4th Brigade. That same day, the U.S. XVI Corps under Maj. Gen. John Anderson crossed the Roer at Hilfarth and began driving north on a course that would link up with the elements of British XXX Corps outside Geldern on March 3.

After more than two weeks of fighting, the First Canadian Army had punched through the northern section of the West Wall and expanded its front to 20 miles between the Rhine and Maas Rivers. The First Canadian Army had suffered a total of 6,000 casualties in the fighting. Exact German casualties are not known but were likely considerably higher. The Germans had squandered a major portion of their panzer reserves in an effort to turn back the attackers. Still, they had kept their forces intact and would continue to fight hard for every inch of ground in the Rhineland.

The capture of the Hochwald Layback, which was supposed to be the third and final phase of Operation Veritable, became part of Operation Blockbuster, which was launched on February 26. In the subsequent operation, the Canadians bore the brunt of the fighting. In five days of continuous combat that was some of the bloodiest of the war, Simonds hammered German fortifications in the Hochwald Layback until his forces finally broke through to Xanten.

By March 2, the Hochwald Layback was firmly in the hands of the Canadians. At that point, it was only a matter of days before the Germans retreated across the Rhine. Exactly one month after Veritable began, Schlemm ordered his troops to cross the Rhine and enter Wesel. In accord with Hitler's orders, the Germans blew up the two bridges over the Rhine at Wesel two days later, denying them to the enemy. The battle for the northern Rhineland was over. □

*William E. Welsh, of Vienna, Virginia, previously wrote for WWII History on the Ju-52 and the Marder.*

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fighter cover. At the time of the attack, the air cover was being replaced—thus doubling the defense. The attack was a disaster for the Japanese, he said.

I do not recall why I was carrying the message to Marshall's office, but I entered a full office and delivered the message. As I stood awaiting dismissal or reply, Marshall read the contents. He then remarked to the several senior officers present how much he admired MacArthur's ability, commenting that—and I think these were his exact words—"General MacArthur knows what the Jap is going to do before the Jap knows it himself."

Stilwell's feelings toward the British came visibly to light one night in a message describing his first encounter with British Field Marshall Sir Harold Alexander. He commented on Alexander's long nose and rather brusque manner, and Stilwell saw Alexander's opinion of him as being one of astonishment—that a mere American could be in command of Chinese troops. He felt Alexander's opinion was probably best expressed in the British term of "Extrawdinary!"

OPD was not a large agency by old General Staff standards. The front office included General Handy and two full colonels, Charles K. Gailey and Godwin W. Ordway, two sergeants, and two civilian female typists. The agency itself consisted of small staff sections known by the area for which they were responsible—for example, China-Burma, Africa-Middle East, ETO. Each was headed by a senior colonel with a small supporting staff. In my view, all were brilliant men, and many became general officers in field commands before the war ended.

Our immediate message center boss was a fairly senior lieutenant colonel, but somehow he wangled a right to observe the initial assault wave in the attack on Salerno, Italy. When he returned some weeks later we asked him about his experiences in the attack, believing him to be full of hair-raising tales. He replied that he did not see much as most of the time he had his pants down. He had been stricken with a violent case of the GIs, a fate that apparently afflicted a number of those in the assault wave. He described his actions as being four steps forward and squatting, four more and squatting!

The front office was manned daily, including Sundays, by the two colonels and staff, as were the various area offices. During the times when General Handy was present, no one was allowed to pass into his office without the verbal okay of Colonel Gailey, who, in my opin-

ion, was perhaps the most imperious, authoritative, and ruthless man I ever met. How he survived in the service, I never understood, but he eventually rose to general officer rank. His deputy, Colonel Ordway, I found to be less than brilliant and obviously had to struggle with Gailey. I witnessed one instance of Gailey's unwarranted behavior in which he attempted to foist responsibility for his own mistake onto the shoulders of a message center officer and Colonel Ordway.

It was discovered that a message that should not have been sent had been dispatched. The message center officer had been summoned to the front office, where he had received the message properly initialed in red by Gailey for dispatch. It was about 15 minutes later when Gailey learned it had been sent and flew into a rage, accusing Ordway of unauthorized dispatch. He then summoned the message center officer, blaming him as well. But here Gailey met his match.

The officer was a 40-year-old former Reserve captain, who had been deemed too old for line duty. He had been a successful businessman and had volunteered for active duty. He was not about to take the unwarranted accusation. The officer turned and headed back to the file section, returned with the properly initialed cover sheet, and dumped it on Gailey's desk. Gailey quickly saw his initials, threw the paper on his desk, and turned to other matters without issuing any sort of apology. I can add that Gailey inflicted a similar act on this writer, who was too young and inexperienced to rebut the man and ended up transferred. I realized in later years that I could have demanded a formal inquiry and pinned Gailey's hide to the wall.

A sergeant told me about another unwarranted Gaileysm he observed that occurred a year before I arrived. According to the witness, an Army Air Forces lieutenant colonel entered the front office and said he was sent to see General Handy, apparently by General Arnold. But Gailey merely waved his hand at the officer and told him to take a seat although General Handy had no one in his office at the time.

Almost an hour passed, and the officer arose and left. It was a year or more later, the sergeant said, when that same officer returned again to General Handy's office, this time wearing the silver star of a brigadier general and saying something to the effect, "Colonel Gailey, I am here to see General Handy, and I do not intend to sit on that couch for an hour!"

According to the sergeant, Gailey looked up, recognized the man as well as his rank, and immediately led him into General Handy's office without a word.

I had the opportunity toward the end of my tour to make the brief acquaintance of Lord Louis Mountbatten, commander of Allied forces in the China-Burma-India Theater and to encounter for the first time a very characteristic piece of the British Army uniform. Again, it was while I was headed up the ninth corridor toward the E-Ring and General Handy's office that I heard a most unusually loud clack-clacking. As I turned the corner, I almost ran into Lord Louis. He was wearing the issue type of British hobnailed boots. A polite "excuse me" came from the Britisher, who then clacked his way on down the E-Ring.

One last memory of my OPD days is a tale often heard about the office. General Marshall's deputy, General Joseph McNarney, was a U.S. Army Air Forces officer serving as Marshall's deputy. It was the belief that he often sat in on the very high level meetings with the Combined Chiefs of Staff—the joint sessions with the British staff in Washington and Marshall's office. In these sessions, he supposedly acted as Marshall's hatchet man. As such, he acquired the nickname of "Jumpin' Joe" McNarney, the individual who jumped up and took strong issue when contentious points or subjects were brought up. Marshall thus retained his dignified composure, but the U.S. position was strongly presented.

It was in OPD that I learned to drink coffee. One of my fellow message center officers was a Cajun captain from Louisiana. Like the officer who had rebuffed Gailey, this officer was a volunteer and deemed to be too old for active field command as a captain. But he brought to the little office a Cajun ritual of coffee making. His utensils were a very small tin coffee pot in two parts.

He carefully inserted a piece of clean cheesecloth in the upper part. This was then filled with a carefully measured amount of very dark coffee that he had sent to him periodically from his home in Bastrop, Louisiana. Later, I learned it was laced with chicory. What emerged after boiling water had been poured through was a heavy black coffee strong enough for a spoon to stand in it. But we learned to stomach it by diluting it with generous amounts of condensed milk and heavy doses of sugar. I soon became addicted to strong coffee, and the habit continues to this day.

Now in my elderly years, I look back with fond memories of my time with OPD—except for the memories of Colonel Gailey. □

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*U.S. Army veteran L. VanLoan Naisawald is a writer and historian who resides in Lynchburg, Virginia.*



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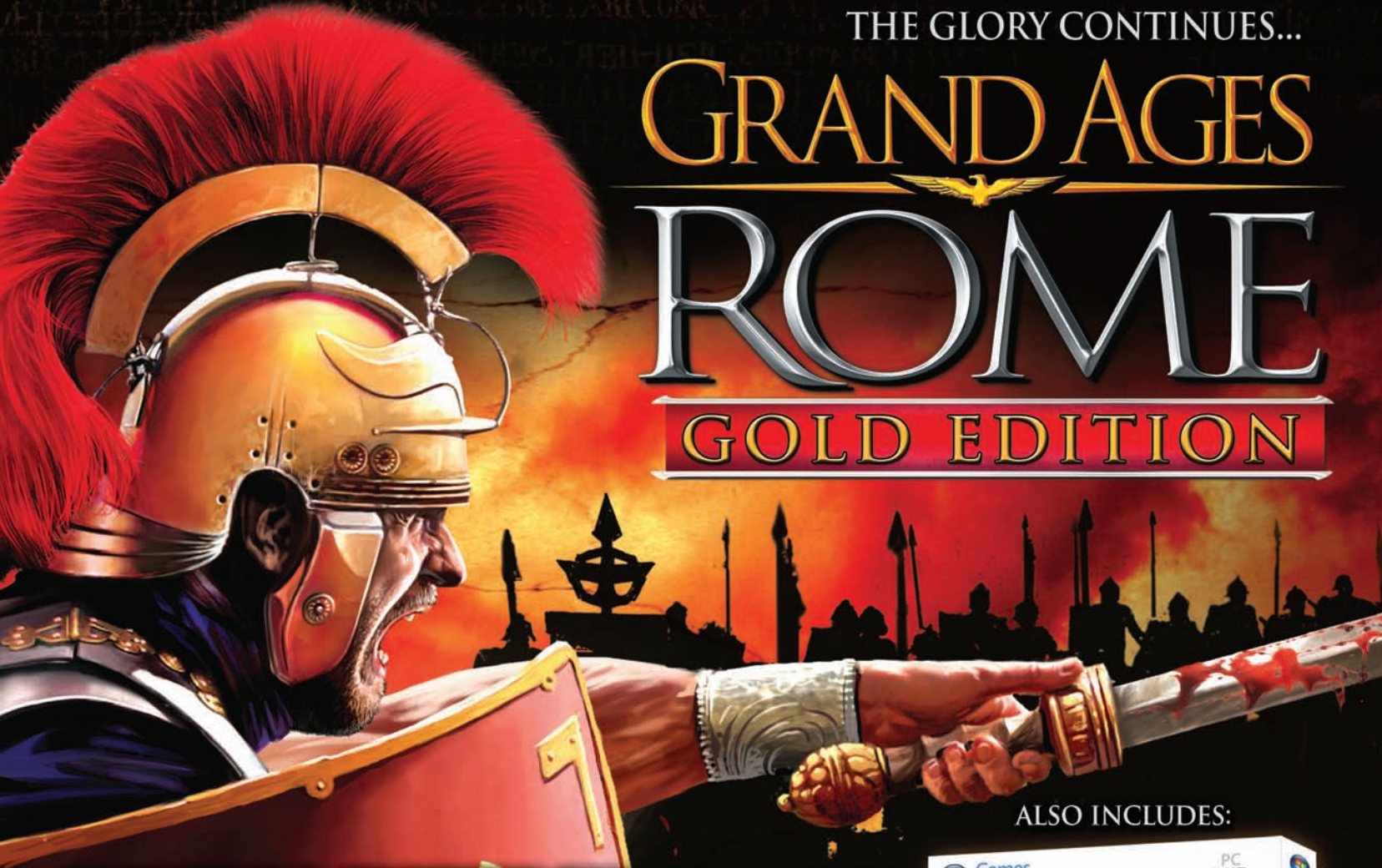
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