

# MILITARY HERITAGE



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INVASION OF CANADA

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RETAILER: DISPLAY UNTIL JUNE 18

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COVER: A German paratrooper is outfitted for Operation Mercury, the attack on the island of Crete off mainland Greece, May 20-June 1, 1944. Photo courtesy of akg-images.

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## The Whig Party had better luck electing presidents than keeping them in office once they were elected.

**T**HE SHORT-LIVED WHIG PARTY HAD A FAIR DEGREE OF success electing candidates for president, winning two of the five presidential elections in which it fielded a candidate. It was no accident that both winners were former generals—William Henry

Harrison in 1840 and Zachary Taylor in 1848. The Whigs had come about in the first place as a reaction to Democratic President Andrew Jackson, himself a famous general and war hero. Indeed, they took a page from Jackson's campaign strategy when they selected Harrison to run against Jackson's former vice-president, Martin Van Buren, in 1840.

Mindful of the success Jackson had enjoyed by running on his war record and his homespun background as "Old Hickory," the Whigs marketed the aristocratic Harrison as a virtual Jackson clone—"Old Tippecanoe"—a nickname they brazenly manufactured from Harrison's rather inconclusive victory over the Shawnee-led Indian confederation at Tippecanoe Creek, Indiana, in November 1811. Shamelessly comparing Tippecanoe to the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, where Jackson decisively bested the flower of the British Army, the Whigs trumpeted Harrison as the new Jackson.

In truth, Harrison's troops had been surprised and badly mauled at Tippecanoe by the forces of Tecumseh's brother, Tenskwatawa, but a last-ditch stand had enabled them to hold off the Indians until the enemy withdrew unhurriedly into the woods, allowing Harrison to claim a technical victory by controlling the battlefield. From that distinctly unemphatic triumph, Harrison was put forth nearly three decades later as a suitable successor to Old Hickory. He easily defeated Van Buren, who was saddled with the (then) worst depression in American history, in the ensuing election. "We have taught them how to conquer us," *The Democratic Review* lamented.

Eight years later the Whigs replicated their triumph by choosing another war hero, this one a good deal more plausible. In the just-con-

cluded war with Mexico, Zachary Taylor had led his army to an unbroken series of victories over much-larger Mexican forces at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterrey, and Buena Vista. Once again, the Whigs gave their candidate a memorable nickname—"Old Rough and Ready." And once again, they rode their candidate to victory. Unfortunately for the Whigs, they were a good deal less successful keeping their candidates alive once they had elected them to the White House. Harrison, who at 68 was the oldest man (to that date) elected president, unwisely delivered a

nearly two-hour-long inaugural address in the biting wind without benefit of a coat or hat. Already worn down by the rigors of the campaign, Harrison caught a cold that worsened rapidly into pneumonia. He died exactly one month after his inauguration.

Taylor, who was a still-vigorous 63 at the time of his election, did a little better than Harrison, serving as president for 16 months before ill-advisedly drinking a glass of fresh milk and eating some unwashed fruit at the height of the sweltering Washington summer. He caught cholera morbus from the tainted food and died five days later.

Four years later the Whigs disintegrated as a political party, undone by the growing turmoil over slavery, which fatally divided their northern and southern wings. They almost enjoyed the last laugh, however. In 1860 a former Whig, Abraham Lincoln, was elected president. He, too, had a colorful nickname, "the Rail Splitter," but he too died in office, the victim not of a sudden illness but an assassin's bullet. Once again, the curse of the Whigs came true. □

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By William McPeak

## For half a century, Blaise de Monluc served the French crown as a soldier, marshal, and posthumous author.

**A** HUNDRED MILES NORTH OF THE MOUNTAINOUS REGION NEAR the Pyrenees was the rolling land of the Garonne River, home of the Gascon noble families. One such family was the Monlucs, lesser gentry whose lands had shrunk from the need to sell. It was said that Gascony as a whole was so poor in good soil that all it could raise was soldiers. One of those soldiers, Blaise de

Monluc, was born in 1501, the first of 11 children, at the family's modest castle of St. Puy. At the age of 15, Monluc was apprenticed as a page to the court of Lorraine at Nancy in far-off northeastern France. It was an eye-opening experience—the young man saw firsthand the power politics of the outside world and learned early on that preferment came more from knowing the right people than from doing the right thing.

In 1520, Monluc passed through the home country to pick up a little money and a Spanish horse. He was on his way south to Milan, the only substantial toehold that France retained in Italy. Like other ambitious young men of the time, Monluc faced the dilemma of choosing a particular branch of French military in which to serve. He had two maternal uncles already in the army, and they gave him a leg up by rec-

ommending him as a horse archer in the company of Thomas de Foix, *Sieur de Lescun*, whose brother *Odet de Foix, Vicomte Lautrec*, was the overall commander in Italy. There were several fellow Gascons in the company. Monluc was able to rise to a man-at-arms position and saw plenty of early action, having five horses shot from under him in a two-year period.

At the ill-fated Battle of *Bicocca* near Milan in April 1522, where France's mercenary Swiss pikemen rashly charged the imperial trenches and were mowed down on their flanks by the *Marquess of Pescara's* quick-firing arquebusiers, Monluc had fought in the infantry. Three years later, at the even more ill-fated Battle of *Pavia*, French King *Francois I* rashly led his heavy cavalry against *Pescara's* arquebusiers, using the forest for cover. That day a ghastly number of French knights went down, including *Lautrec*, from arquebus shots. The king paid a huge price for leading his men into battle—he was captured and carted off to Spain to be ransomed. Monluc was also captured, but since he was not worth ransoming, he was quickly set free.

In 1527, Monluc joined the French expedition to take the kingdom of Naples. Among other misfortunes, the army was beset by plague. *Lautrec* himself was stricken and died. In the meantime,

-----  
 Called "the Hammer of the  
 Huguenots," Blaise de  
 Monluc led the king's  
 Catholic forces in France's  
 religious wars. Here he  
 attacks Boulogne-sur-Mer.



Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection



846-images

**In 1536, Monluc had his men attack an imperial grain mill at Auriol, killing all the defenders in a daring raid.**

Monluc became a well-schooled arquebusier officer. He had learned the effectiveness of firearm volley fire the hard way, and he had his men kneel or go to a prone position as a defense. In addition, he experimented with the effectiveness of different shot against various cavalry formations.

Thus far, Monluc had come up decidedly short in his military career. Lautrec had been his only true sponsor, and he was dead. Disheartened, Monluc returned to Gascony and his wife of two years and began a family that eventually would include four sons, three of whom would follow their father into the military. By 1535, Monluc was only too glad to leave domestic life behind and return to the scene of hostilities in Italy. By then, Francois I had gotten serious about improving the weak link in the French army—its overdependence on Swiss mercenaries—and had issued a call for homegrown infantry. He organized seven new infantry legions (a French unit of about 6,000 men), and Monluc got the nod for a lieutenant's commission in one of them. In his new command capacity, Monluc was part of the force sent into Provence against imperial incursions that same year. Feeling that he had to stand out more, he volunteered for a dangerous mission to destroy some grain mills at Auriol, near imperial lines. Although successful, Monluc

received no special recognition. He further distinguished himself in the 1537 campaign in southern France, but credit again was slow in coming, and at nearly 40 he was still a captain of foot.

Another phase of the war erupted in Italy, and by late 1543 hostilities centered in the northwest region, the Piedmont, with French forces taking up positions around Turin and imperial forces in fortified positions south. Again, Monluc had wasted no time in marking himself for royal favor, concocting an ambush and destroying a bridge at fortified Carignano. He found himself preparing to meet the imperialists, under Alfonso D'Avalos, coming northward to relieve Carignano. The French commander, François de Vendôme, Count of Enghien, was not an experienced general, and he sent Monluc all the way to Paris to obtain permission from the king to join the battle. Monluc urged Francois to say yes and returned with royal approval to the front. The two forces, with significant arquebus troops, met on opposing hills above the town of Cerisoles on April 11, 1544.

Enghien sent Monluc down the French-held side with 800 arquebusiers to slow advancing imperial skirmishers. What transpired was the first running firefight in military history, lasting

some four hours. Monluc used all his experience in maneuvering and ordering effective counterfire. When the main battle was joined, the usual pike column with arquebusiers on the flanks was substituted on the French side with alternating pikemen and arquebus troops. The imperial landsknechts came on similarly, but with pistol-toting infantry in the second rank (one of the earliest appearances of the relatively new wheel lock pistol on the battlefield). The ensuing battle resulted in heavy casualties for the imperial forces. Although Monluc took full credit, the true key to victory for the French was the timely cavalry flanking attack.

Whatever his role in the victory, Monluc at last found himself covered in glory. He was knighted on the battlefield and made a camp master (something on the order of a brigadier). A new king was on the throne in 1547, and Henri II had already taken note of Monluc. He was also favored by the new queen, Catherine de Medici, and the rising strongman Francois, second Duke of Guise and a principal relative of his old boyhood host. During the last period of Italian warfare with the Hapsburgs, beginning in 1551, Monluc was given yet more preferment for his siegecraft. In 1554 he assumed command of the defense of Siena against an imperial siege. It was an epic feat of arms, and Monluc and his men held out for six months until starvation and disease forced their surrender. Professionally, he had reached his high point. He was made a Knight of the Order of the King and promoted to colonel-general of the infantry. He fully justified those honors by taking Thionville on the Moselle River in 1558.

The political and religious atmosphere in France flared into open, sometimes bitter, civil war in 1562. The antagonists were the Catholic royalists and the Huguenot (French Protestant) nobles. The conflict marked the return of heavy cavalry to the wheel lock carbines and pistols became the primary weapons. As Monluc would later declare, "We quit them [lances] for the German pistol." Repercussions from the religious warfare ultimately would pitch Monluc from fortune's favor.

Henri II's son Francois II (first husband of Mary Queen of Scots) followed him as king, but died prematurely in 1560. His younger brother Charles, only 10, found himself trapped between his regent-mother, Catherine de Medici, and the increasingly aggressive Francois Guise and his brother Charles, the cardinal of Lorraine, who called for forceful suppression of the Huguenots. Monluc became enmeshed in the dynastic struggle, trying to serve both the crown and the Guises. Inevitably, he found himself criticized by both sides. Polit-

ical maneuvering kept him from besieging the fortified Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle in 1568, where the Queen of Navarre (and mother of future King Henri IV), Jeanne d'Albret, took refuge from the Catholics. She was infuriated by Monluc's advice to the crown to attack her stronghold in Béarn as well as his insulting remark that he wished "to find out if it was as much fun to sleep with queens as with other women." Pro-Huguenot pandering at court found Monluc roundly condemned for his brutal treatment—he was called "the Hammer of the Huguenots" and accused of illegal profiteering from confiscations and fines.

Under adverse circumstances, Monluc found himself commanded to invade Béarn. In July 1570 he laid siege to the fortress of Rabastens, in the foothills of the Pyrenees. By the 23rd, his cannons had opened a breach in the walls. Preparing for an all-out assault under intense arquebus fire, Monluc noted that several officers already had been killed or wounded. His own son Fabien had been shot in the chin. Monluc, who had already suffered six arquebus wounds in combat and had lost two other sons to shot, had a premonition that he would be killed or wounded during the engagement. When many younger officers balked at crossing the open distance to the breach, Monluc—he

was nearly 70 years old—declared that a true nobleman would always do his duty regardless of danger. He gathered his senior officers around him and set off for the wall. Monluc was in the process of calling for a scaling ladder when a shot rang out from the ruined barricade. It hit him in squarely the face, passing through both cheeks. When his fellow officers tried to help their profusely bleeding leader, he commanded them to continue the attack. (Later, Monluc would say matter-of-factly that the men had taken the fortress and put all the enemy to the sword to avenge him.) Amazingly, Monluc survived—a surgeon took out shattered bones and cut away ruined skin—but the old soldier's military career had come to an end and he was horribly disfigured. From then on, he would only appear in public wearing a mask to shield his lower face.

Having lost his livelihood, Monluc decided that he must vindicate himself and focus attention on all his past services to France. He began to dictate a book of memoirs tracing his remarkable rise from "a poor cadet of Gascony" to high military office. As he convalesced

through the winter of 1570-1571, he worked on recounting his nearly 55 years of warfare. It was a ready reference manual of practical warfare, but also a lively history with personal accounts of battles that read like high adventure. Such details set his work apart from the more generalized histories of the time, which he complained overemphasized "the great and powerful" rather than the standout deeds of "men of lesser degree."

Within its pages, Monluc's *Commentaries* recorded the major shift of 16th-century warfare toward firearms and away from pikes. The book struck the right chord in the right places. Manuscript copies circulated among influential people, achieving all he could have hoped in the way of recognition and acclaim. With the death of Charles IX, Henri, Duke of Anjou, to whom the book had been dedicated, became king in 1574. He immediately raised Monluc to Marshal of France, the highest military rank for one who was not a peer. Dying in 1577, Monluc did not live to see his book published in 1592 and hailed by no less a personage than King Henri IV as "the Soldier's Bible." □

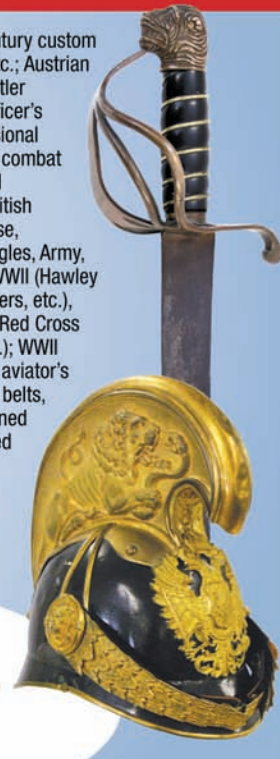


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Blaise de Monluc.

# 2007 MILITARIA AUCTION

FRIDAY, JUNE 1  
SATURDAY, JUNE 2



Auction 57 features an American Revolutionary War Horseman's saber; Austrian M1763 pallasch, massive 18th Century custom Damascus "kilij", circa 1850 Hussar saber; Imperial German helmets - Prussian Artillery officer, 1870, Cuirassier, etc.; Austrian M1905 Dragoon Officer, Lifeguard officer, shakos, etc.; Adolf Hitler watercolors; "Mein Kampf" with a handwritten Hitler dedication to an SS officer; "AH" serving tray; Rommel photo/autograph; Hitler's pilot Hans Bauer's (unique) SS officer's dagger and Hitler's special drinking glass - from his personal aircraft; U.S. WWI Marine Corps caps/uniforms, Divisional uniforms (Observer, Navy Pilot, etc.), collection of Divisional insignia, experimental/"painted"/Student Pilot helmets, combat equipment; WWI German pilot Eitel F.R. von Manteuffel's medal bar, Balloon Pilot and two presentation swords; WWI uniforms - Austrian (General, Gallician Regt., etc.), German (Aviation, 177th Regt.), Russian (Dragoon, Navy, etc.), British pilot's, French Foreign Legion and "Poliu" (o'coat/trousers); Helmets - WWI Portuguese, German camouflage (some with shrapnel damage), Japanese WWII (Tanker w/goggles, Army, Marine, Beach Defenses, etc.), German WWII (Army, Transition, Police, etc.), U.S. WWII (Hawley Liners, etc.); Third-Reich medals ("75" Gen.Assault and Panzer Badges, Eagle Orders, etc.), caps (General o'seas and M1943, AK M1943 Panzer and o'seas caps, etc.), daggers (Red Cross Officer, Customs, etc.), uniforms (Army/summer officer, SA, Police, etc.); WWII uniforms - U.S.M.C. "para" camouflage, CBI, USAAF, etc.; Japanese - aviator's fur-lined flying suit, officer tunics, etc.; Imperial German Hussar dress belts, portopees, etc.; WWI and WWII photo albums; collection of framed/signed Taylor and Wooten prints; books; art items, plus American bell-crowned shakos, Civil War frock coat/"shell" jackets, "Hardee" hat, painted drum, etc.

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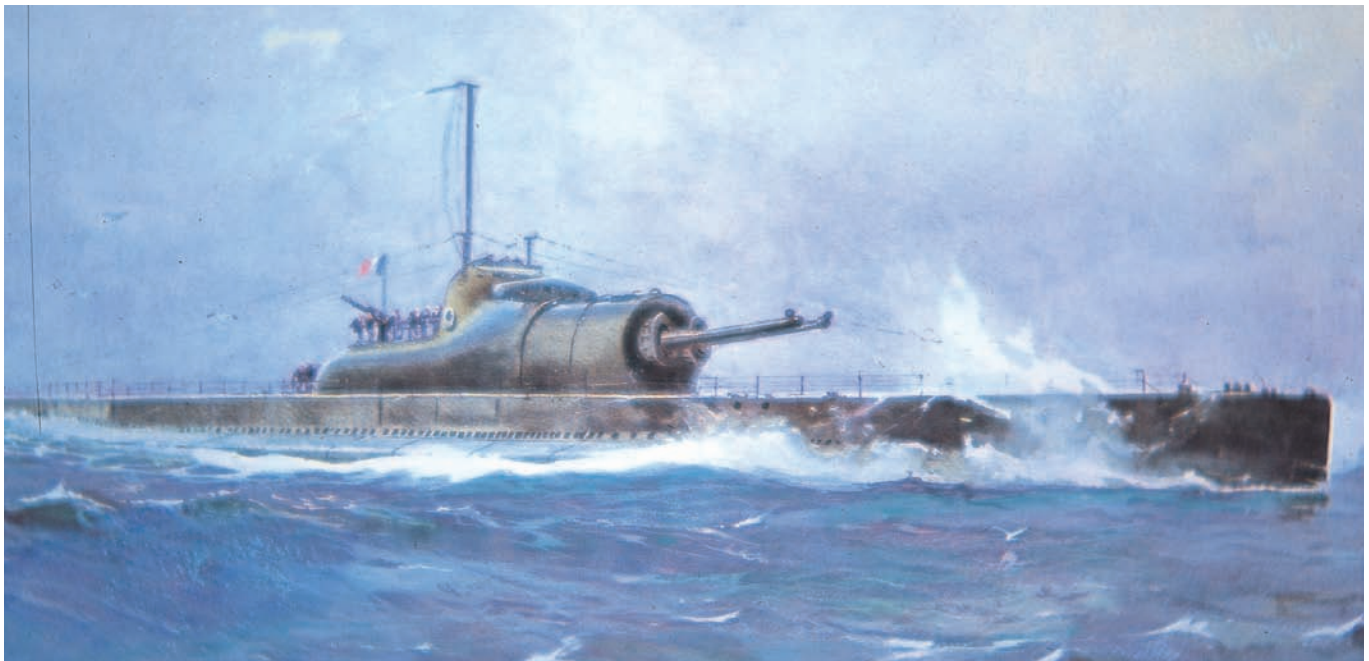
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By William H. Langenberg

## The giant French submarine *Surcouf's* mysterious fate made her the true *Flying Dutchman* of World War II.

THE LEGENDARY *FLYING DUTCHMAN* OF MARITIME LORE WAS A spectral ship of disastrous portent that haunted the high seas and endangered anyone who came into contact with it. If any real-life vessel fit that description, it was the French World War II submarine *Surcouf*. During her abortive wartime career, *Surcouf* displayed all the ghostly, rumor-generating characteristics of the *Flying Dutch-*



Peter Newark's Military Pictures

-----  
 French submarine *Surcouf*  
 -----  
 at sea during her abortive  
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 career. Her disappearance  
 -----  
 in 1942 remains one of the  
 -----  
 great unsolved mysteries  
 -----  
 of World War II.

*man*. To this day, whispers and innuendos follow the ill-fated sub, which disappeared without a trace 65 years ago, making her a veritable lode-stone of controversy, suspicion and latent fear.

*Surcouf's* genesis can be traced back to the waning days of World War I, when Imperial Germany deployed three large, powerful submarine cruisers designed specifically to be commerce raiders. The three new submarines, designated *U-139*, *U-140*, and *U-141*, were armed with two 5.9-inch deck guns mounted fore and aft of their conning towers.

These cruisers, with an extended range of over 12,000 nautical miles, were tasked with taking the war to Allied seaborne commerce, from the Atlantic coast of the United States southward into the South Atlantic as far as the Cape of Good Hope. Illustrating the importance assigned to the new vessels, *U-139* was placed under the command of Kapitänleutnant Lothar Von Arnauld de la Perriere, Germany's leading U-boat ace. Arnauld sank six Allied ships totaling over 72,000 tons during his one brief patrol with *U-139* in 1918.

Germany's successful development

of U-boat cruisers did not go unnoticed by opposing Allies. Great Britain, France, and the United States all were impressed by the apparent potential for the new weapon, and commenced developing similar vessels during the 1920s. But severe funding restrictions and improved defensive measures for merchant ships rendered the new concept less effective. By the late 1930s, submarine commerce raiders clearly had become obsolete, rendered ineffective by the implementation of enemy convoys that, acting in concert, could outgun and outspeed any sub-

marine raider. By the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, the United States and Great Britain had curtailed or abandoned their submarine commerce raider programs, partly out of fear that Japan, the rising sea power in the Pacific, might emulate the weapon if it proved successful.

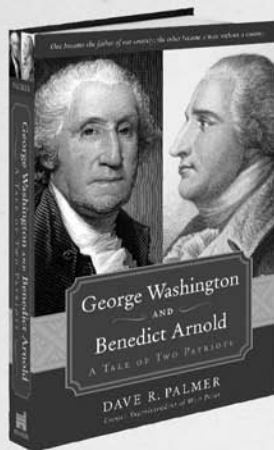
The one maritime power that moved forward with development of a powerful submarine cruiser was France. After refusing to execute that part of the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 that proposed the eventual abolition of submarine raiders, France began an aggressive construction program divided between oceangoing and coastal-type boats. Among the oceangoing submarines was *Surcouf*, the French Navy's first and only cruiser submarine designed specifically for open-ocean surface raiding. *Surcouf* was begun in 1927 and eventually commissioned in May 1935, a lengthy period that was extended by continued revisions and additions to the sub's design and armament.

When completed, *Surcouf* appeared to be a formidable vessel. She was the largest submarine in the world, displacing 3,404 tons submerged. She was 350 feet long, with a beam of over 29 feet. Powered by two 3,800-horsepower Sulzer diesel engines on the surface and two 1,700-horsepower electric motors for undersea propulsion, *Surcouf* had a range of 10,000 nautical miles and carried a crew of 120 men. The most formidable aspect of the vessel was her armament. She mounted two 8-inch guns in a twin turret located forward of the conning tower. Aft of the structure on deck was a watertight hangar containing a Besson/ANF Murceau MB-411 scout seaplane. The seaplane had two functions: to locate potential shipping targets over the horizon, and to spot the fall of shots from the submarine's guns after she commenced an attack. *Surcouf* carried 600 rounds of 8-inch ammunition for her two guns, plus a wide optical range finder mounted high enough above the sea to give a seven-mile horizon. The giant submarine also carried a 16-foot-long motorboat and an internal compartment designed to house up to 40 prisoners. *Surcouf* was equipped with six external torpedo tubes, none of which could be fired when submerged. Sixteen spare torpedoes also were carried.

Fittingly, *Surcouf* was named after France's most famous privateer, Robert Surcouf (1773-1827). Classified as a common pirate by the British, Surcouf commanded the four-gun *Creole* during the 1793 war with Great Britain, capturing four British ships, breaking a blockade, and becoming a national hero. Obtaining an official

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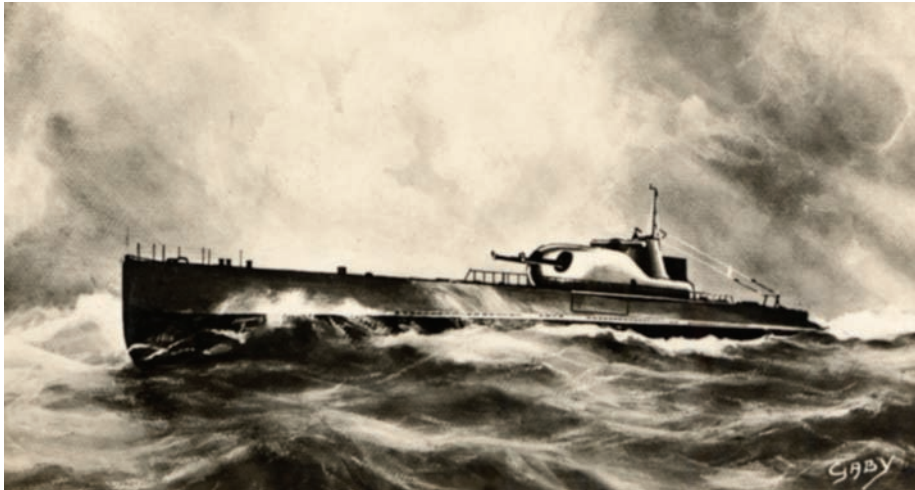
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**Surcouf depicted in all her glory on an old French postcard.**

letter of marque from the revolutionary government, *Surcouf* took over the 18-gun *Clarisse*, from which he captured six ships in the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. Switching to the 18-gun *Confiance*, he captured nine more British merchant ships, including the 38-gun *Kent* with a crew of nearly 400 men, plus a company of naval riflemen. This action made *Surcouf* a living legend in France and a public enemy in England, with a posted reward of five million francs for his capture. Named a baron of the empire by Napoleon in 1809, *Surcouf* lived out his life on the island of Mauritius, where he became a prosperous ship owner and merchant.

After her commissioning in 1935, *Surcouf* was stationed at Brest, a French submarine base with open access to the Atlantic Ocean. For the next four years, *Surcouf* operated sporadically in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, spending the vast majority of her at-sea time on the surface. Although she remained the world's largest submarine, *Surcouf* revealed several serious problems in design and safety. The boat was cumbersome, rolling alarmingly in heavy seas, and her diesel engines were unreliable. She also leaked continuously through and around the gun turrets. Most serious was her slow diving time, which required four or five times as long to submerge to periscope depth as smaller, conventional submarines. Lacking radar, *Surcouf* was vulnerable to attacks from the air.

With the fall of France to Nazi Germany in June 1940, *Surcouf's* crew faced a confusing political situation. Many crew-

men had divergent loyalties, and all feared that their families or friends remaining in France might be badly treated by the occupying Germans if *Surcouf* threw in with the Royal Navy. Her crew members might also be treated as traitors when they returned to France, which now had a collaborationist government based at Vichy. On June 15, *Surcouf's* commanding officer, Captain Paul Martin, was warned that Brest would be captured by the Germans within three days. Acting promptly, Martin sailed *Surcouf* toward the British naval base at Plymouth, docking five days later alongside the French battleship *Paris*.

After an incident with British boarders, *Surcouf's* crew was given the option of repatriation to France or returning to their submarine under the aegis of the new Free French navy. Only 16 officers and men opted to serve aboard *Surcouf*; Captain Martin chose repatriation. Captain Pierre Ortoli, second senior officer in the Free French navy, was named *Surcouf's* new commander. His executive officer was Lt. Cmdr. Louis Blaison, a holdover from the former crew. The remainder of the sub's new crew was recruited from French naval officers and sailors stranded in England, many of whom, like Ortoli himself, had little or no

prior training in submarines.

The question arose in the British Admiralty of what to do with *Surcouf*. Initially, the submarine was the responsibility of the Royal Navy Vice Admiral Max Horton, who was the navy's flag officer for submarines. Horton concurred with dockyard experts at Plymouth that *Surcouf* was essentially useless as an effective combat vessel, but Free French leader Charles de Gaulle insisted that the sub be sent to sea as a symbol of French greatness. Unwilling to overrule de Gaulle, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill instructed Horton to keep the vessel on active service.

Led by an inexperienced commanding officer and an equally unprepared crew, *Surcouf* readied for combat. On November 30, 1940, Horton ordered *Surcouf* north to the Royal Navy training base in the Clyde region of Scotland. *Surcouf* spent less than two weeks training, insufficient time for a ship burdened by eight months of enforced idleness and an essentially novice crew and commander. Horton, still convinced that *Surcouf* was unfit to operate in cruiser mode, decided to send her to Canada to operate as a convoy escort in the western Atlantic, where there would be no threat from German air attacks. *Surcouf* duly departed Clyde for Halifax, Nova Scotia, on February 19, 1941, arriving six days behind schedule and spending nearly a month in port for additional repairs. Ortoli exacerbated tensions between the crew and their hosts by forcing the men to live onboard their crowded submarine while in port, sparking rumors of aloofness about the crew.

*Surcouf* finally joined an easterly bound convoy on April 1 as an escort vessel. The ship became a target for malicious rumors among other sailors, who suggested that she was more a threat than a protective escort. Horton eventually ordered *Surcouf* to break away from the convoy and proceed to Devonport naval yard at Plymouth. German warplanes attacked Plymouth soon afterward, and *Surcouf* suffered one man killed and six injured. The Besson float plane and motorboat were damaged and



**Cutaway view of *Surcouf*, then the largest submarine in the world.**

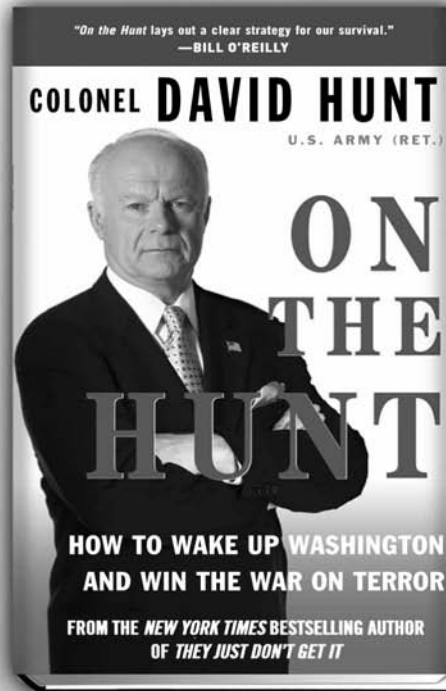
removed from the submarine, never to return. *Surcouf's* crew, still forced to live in crowded conditions aboard ship, became even more divided and depressed by events.

Still confronted with the task of creating a viable mission for the submarine, Horton decided to send *Surcouf* to the South Atlantic, a region largely devoid of hostile enemy aircraft but one in which German surface raiders were sinking Allied merchant ships. He reasoned that *Surcouf* might actually sink one of the raiders with her superior firepower, thus quelling rumors about her mixed loyalty. Accordingly, *Surcouf* sailed for Bermuda on May 14, arriving a month later. She departed from Bermuda for her first war patrol on June 30. The effort was a complete disaster. Three major electrical failures ensued aboard ship, compounded by a fire in the switch gear room and an incomprehensible dive with the conning tower hatch improperly closed, which resulted in flooding and the release of chlorine gas within the pressure hull. *Surcouf* limped back to Bermuda on July 20.

The United States Navy granted *Surcouf* priority to receive a complete overhaul at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in New Hampshire. The submarine sailed from Bermuda on July 25, arriving at Portsmouth three days later. It soon became obvious that the ship required a total refitting, one that would require more money than her original building cost. Meanwhile, morale among the crew was adversely affected at Portsmouth. The United States had not yet entered the war, and Republican-dominated New Hampshire remained a stronghold for isolationism. In nearby Canada, there was a strong pro-Vichy movement, exacerbated by rumors that American President Franklin Roosevelt did not like or trust Charles de Gaulle. Ortoli was removed from command and replaced by Blaison, and *Surcouf* returned to Bermuda, only to sail back to Halifax on December 7. During the return voyage, *Surcouf* encountered the Norwegian tanker *Atlantic*, and the sub's behavior was so bizarre that *Atlantic* broadcast a distress call, claiming that she was under attack by a large submarine flying the French flag. The misunderstanding was explained away as Blaison not knowing or executing proper procedures to stop and question a neutral merchant ship, but rumors continued to fly about which side of the war the submarine was really on.

While at Halifax, *Surcouf* took part in the controversial Free French invasion of two small islands under Vichy control 12 miles south of Newfoundland. Saint Pierre and Miquelon were important because they lay just off the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, near the point

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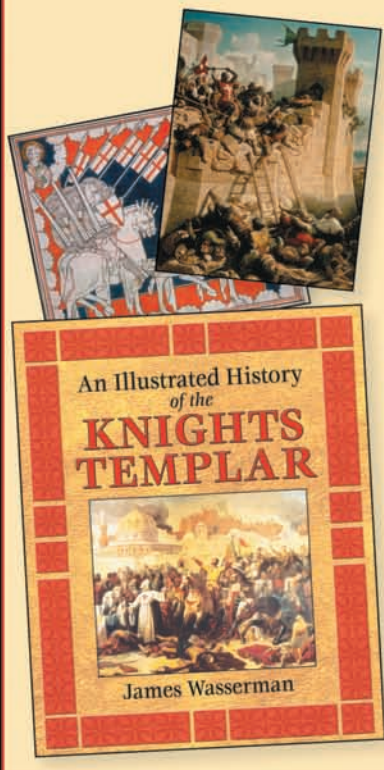
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At Plymouth, *Surcouf's* crew forcibly opposed repatriation into the Free French navy.

where Allied convoys assembled. The invasion was a near-bloodless success, but one that antagonized both Great Britain and the United States and cast *Surcouf* increasingly as a rogue submarine. The rumor mill came alive with stories that *Surcouf* had shelled an American destroyer in the area, supposedly killing two American sailors. Such tales only added to the ship's reputation as an untrustworthy ally, but Roosevelt classified the occupation of the islands as "a tempest in a teapot" and moved on with his conduct of the war.

*Surcouf* sailed from Halifax to Bermuda on February 3, 1942, arriving four days later. British Admiral Sir Charles Kennedy-Purvis sent Horton a top-secret message stating that *Surcouf* "is of no operational value and is little short of a menace." British intelligence officers reported that over half of the ship's crew was pro-Vichy and could not be trusted to serve the Allied war effort. Horton concurred, directing *Surcouf* to sail from Bermuda to French-controlled Tahiti, where her 8-inch guns might be effective in defending the islands against a possible Japanese invasion, and her loyalty—or lack thereof—might not be so striking.

The submarine departed Bermuda for Colon, en route to Tahiti, on February 12, sailing unescorted through an area now active with German U-boats. Because *Surcouf* had only one operational electric motor necessary for underwater propulsion, she was forced to steam on the surface, using just one of her two propellers and limited to a speed of 10 knots. In keeping with her previous suspicious behavior and rumors, the submarine never arrived at Colon. No distress message was received from *Surcouf* after she departed Bermuda, and

no trace of her ever was found.

What had happened to the now-notorious submarine? A convincing case can be made that *Surcouf* was lost after a collision at sea with the U.S. merchant freighter *Thompson Lykes* on the night of February 18. Under charter by the U.S. Army, *Thompson Lykes* had departed Colon bound for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that afternoon. At 11:28 PM, her crow's-nest lookout reported seeing a white light one point off her starboard bow. Shortly afterward, the light appeared dead ahead, and before the rudder could be shifted to full right, *Thompson Lykes* struck something squarely in the water. The impact was followed a few seconds later by a loud explosion and a sheet of flame on both sides of the merchant ship's bow. Captain Henry Johnson burst onto the bridge and turned on the ship's navigation lights, activated a searchlight, and brought his vessel around to pass through the impact point in search of survivors. There was nothing at the scene but the smell of oil. No survivors or wreckage of any kind came to the surface.

Crew members and U.S. Army passengers aboard *Thompson Lykes* reported that they had seen something long and cigar-shaped pass down the freighter's port side and disappear into the darkness astern. *Thompson Lykes* remained searching the area until 10:45 the next morning, when she was relieved by a U.S. Navy destroyer and returned to Colon for repairs. A subsequent Coast Guard inquiry concluded that the collision between *Thompson Lykes* and the unknown other vessel was purely accidental, asserting that "the collision was caused by the operation of two vessels on intersecting courses, without lights due to the exigencies of war."

Unsurprisingly, *Surcouf's* mysterious disappearance fueled rumors that the sub had been deliberately sunk by the British or Americans. Such tales rested on the premise that the *Surcouf's* crew was loyal to the Vichy government and had taken over the ship during or after her last stop in Bermuda. One variation on the theory alleged that at least one of *Surcouf's* officers was a Nazi submariner, fluent in French, who had infiltrated the submarine during her recruiting efforts in Great Britain. The British supposedly became privy to the situation and placed two mines on the exterior of *Surcouf's* hull, set to detonate in deep water. A still unexplained letter from FBI director J. Edgar Hoover to the director of naval intelligence in Washington, dated March 12, 1942, asserted that according to a "highly confidential source," *Surcouf* had been sunk off the island of Martinique on March 3.

Speculation continued to run rampant on Bermuda and elsewhere following *Surcouf's* disappearance. One rumor asserted that *Surcouf* had attempted to torpedo the huge Allied troop carrier *Queen Mary* as she departed Boston. According to another tale, the sub was observed refueling a German U-boat and was promptly sunk by the American experimental submarines *Marlin* and *Mackerel* or by a Coast Guard blimp. Further departing from the realm of reality, other tales asserted that *Surcouf* was lost in the infamous Bermuda Triangle or sunk in Long Island Sound while carrying a huge cargo of French government gold in her large prisoner compound. Famed French aquanaut Jacques Cousteau was said to have located and dived on the wreck site in 1967, but he remained unaccountably silent about his findings.

No documentation or evidence has ever been discovered to confirm any of the foregoing tales, although one verifiable event detailed the bombing and sinking of a "very large" submarine lying low in the water by the U.S. 3rd Bombardment Squadron operating out of Rio Hato airfield in Panama at 9 AM on February 19, 1942. Coming one day after *Thompson Lykes* had collided with an unidentified vessel at sea, the bombed submarine conceivably could have been the mortally damaged *Surcouf*. Why she would have been bombed by American planes was left unexplained.

An object of rumor, speculation, and conjecture while she was afloat, *Surcouf* continues to arouse speculation today, 65 years after her disappearance. Neither the sub nor any member of her crew has been seen since the winter of 1942, fueling her unwanted but unavoidable reputation as the true *Flying Dutchman* of World War II. □

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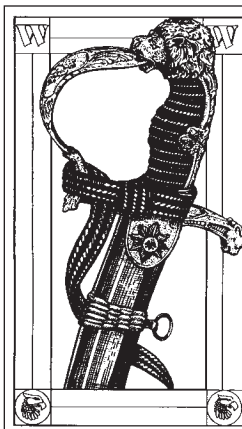
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By Bruce L. Brager

## For three contentious decades the Berlin Wall symbolized the true dividing line between freedom and tyranny during the Cold War.

**I**N JUNE 1961, WALTER ULBRECHT, LONGTIME COMMUNIST PARTY leader of East Germany, denied that his government had any intention of building a wall between East and West Berlin. “The construction workers of our capital are for the most part busy building apartment houses, and their working capacities are fully employed to that end,” Ulbrecht said indignantly. “Nobody intends to put up a wall.”

On first glance, constructing a wall seemed a drastic solution to a major East German problem, the hemorrhaging of the “best and brightest” to freedom in the West. The wall would cut off the flow of people between the two parts of the city, which helped the economy of both sides. Putting up a wall would also provide the West with a ready-made symbol for the oppressive nature of a tyrannical system that needed a wall to keep its own people from leaving.

By 1961, Berlin had long been a

symbol of freedom and resistance to Communist expansionism during the Cold War. The conflict began in late June 1948, when the Soviet Union cut off all land communications to West Berlin. Within days, all supplies to the city, including electricity, were cut off. General Lucius Clay, the commander of American forces in Germany, immediately proposed that an armored convoy fight its way into Berlin. The British commander in Germany, General Sir Brian Robertson, rejected the idea as too dangerous. Robertson had

already anticipated the Soviet move and had been preparing an alternative. British figures showed that it would be possible to fly food and supplies, particularly coal, into Berlin by air. The Allied governments quickly approved, and the first flights began on June 26.

Technical problems had to be worked out. Landing fields in Berlin were not equipped to receive coal. Some B-29 bombers had been sent from Great Britain as a kind of subtle threat to Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. One of these B-29s had its bomb bay loaded with coal. It flew low over the Berlin Olympic Stadium, site of the Jesse Owens-dominated 1936 Olympics, and opened the doors. Unfortunately, when the coal hit the floor of the stadium it was pulverized into useless dust. For subsequent drops, the coal was wrapped in canvas bags, which made it possible to unload the cargo normally.

With flights eventually landing in Berlin 24 hours a day, sometimes only one minute apart, accidents were sure to happen. The first crash occurred on July 9. Two weeks later, a C-47 coming into Berlin’s main Tempelhof Airport crashed into an apartment building. The two pilots were killed and the building was damaged, but there were no casualties on the ground. Berliners put up a plaque at the crash site reading, “You gave your lives for us,” and brought flowers every day.

An armed West German policeman keeps a close watch on the East Zone across the Berlin Wall. The nearest mound of snow marks the remains of Adolf Hitler’s underground bunker.



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**LEFT:** Checkpoint Charlie, famous in postwar spy novels and movies.

**BELOW LEFT:** A West Berliner poses in uniform while an East German guard aims his gun menacingly over the wall.  
**BELOW RIGHT:** A remnant of the Berlin Wall today.



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The Berlin blockade ended on May 4, 1949, and the airlift stopped soon afterward. On June 20, the four occupying powers formally agreed to ensure normal functioning of rail, water and road transport between Berlin and West Germany. During the 11 months of the airlift, 2.3 million tons of food, fuel, and medical supplies had been flown into the city.

The Americans and British learned several lessons from the airlift. First, they learned restraint, but also the need to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the people of Berlin, Germany, and all of Western Europe. Technically, as the Soviets noted, Berlin was behind the Iron Curtain. But Berlin was an outpost of freedom, a symbol of Western commitment to democracy. The Iron Curtain was not just a border between democracy and Communism, but also a defensive line for democracy, a limit to the expansion of Soviet control in Europe. Maintaining that border required both a practical and a verbal commitment. The Americans and British rejected a direct ground attack on

Soviet forces. The Soviets, for their part, made sure never to intentionally shoot down any airlift planes. With some dramatic exceptions, this practice evolved into a system of “managing” the Cold War, in Europe and elsewhere. Outside of Berlin, every major confrontation of the Cold War would occur in such peripheral areas as Korea and Cuba.

The American presidential election of 1960 guaranteed a generational change in leadership. Incoming Democratic President John F. Kennedy believed that his Republican predecessor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, had not been tough enough with the Soviets. Kennedy would stand up to the Soviets in Europe and the developing world. At the same time, he would respond to any hopeful signs of Soviet desire to cooperate. Kennedy said in his Inaugural address that he would “never negotiate out of fear, but never fear to negotiate.”

Kennedy’s message to the Soviets may have been a bit confusing, conveying elements of both confrontation and cooperation. Kennedy, however, was also responding to a tough-minded speech Nikita Khrushchev made on January 6, 1961. As a Soviet expert noted at the time, “There is a new administration and [Khrushchev] feels compelled to show that he is not going to be intimidated, that he is going to continue on his merry way. He wants to test

our resolution, as he has done in earlier instances. Above all, he wants to intimidate the new leaders. An old Communist trick is to execute ‘tests of strength’ at the beginning of a new administration to find out how far they can go.”

At a face-to-face meeting with Kennedy in Vienna that spring, Khrushchev came out swinging, doing his best to intimidate the new president, who was about 20 years younger than the Soviet leader. Khrushchev declared that the Soviets were bound to eventually win the battle of ideas. Kennedy warned about the dangers of nuclear war by miscalculation, at which point the Soviet leader angrily responded that the Soviets did not make war by miscalculation. The most ominous point of the meeting came near the end, when Khrushchev announced that he was going to sign a peace treaty with East Germany in December. This would give the Western allies six more months of free access to West Berlin. Kennedy assumed that Khrushchev meant that the West would be expelled after six months. Khrushchev likely meant merely that the West would have to renegotiate a new long-term agreement with the East German government.

On June 4, 1961, the Soviets issued a document demanding a four-power conference to come up with a peace treaty for both Germanys and a final settlement of the Berlin issue. They

were willing to accept another temporary settlement, but only for a limited and specific period of time. Should the West not agree to Soviet conditions, the Soviets would sign a separate treaty with East Germany. The West would then have to negotiate access with East Germany. The Soviets were going public with what Khrushchev had told Kennedy privately at their meetings.

The Americans' response to the Soviet note was cleared in advance with their European allies. There were some curious differences of opinion, with Great Britain favoring negotiation and France and West Germany wanting to stand firm. The United States finally decided to express a willingness to negotiate, but to refuse to do so under pressure. The official American reply declared that "with regard to Berlin, the United States is

between East and West Berlin. People went back and forth daily by the thousands. However, sizable numbers of people who went across to West Berlin stayed there permanently. East German border controls tried increasingly to stop those who were fleeing. People with lug-

the entire production capacity of East Germany. The East German government and its Soviet protectors simply could not allow this to continue. On Friday, August 11, some 1,532 people fled East Berlin. This was actually down 200 from the day before. The next day an addi-



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**TOP LEFT:** The Berlin Wall under construction in 1948.

**TOP RIGHT:** Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev at the United Nations in September 1960.

**FAR LEFT:** A propaganda poster proclaims: "DDR—Bastion of the Free in Germany."

**LEFT:** President John F. Kennedy and Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt at a White House meeting in 1961.

insisting on, and will defend, its legal rights against attempts at unilateral abrogation because the freedom of the people of West Berlin depends upon the maintenance of these rights."

Kennedy spoke to the nation on July 25, 1961, declaring the American intention not to back down over Berlin. "The endangered frontier of freedom runs through divided Berlin," Kennedy said. Concrete measures included sending a 1,500-man military force from West Germany to Berlin, accompanied by Vice President Lyndon Johnson. It was allowed to pass. A scary postscript occurred in October, with a brief face-off by American and Soviet tanks at the border. Both sides soon withdrew their forces.

The underlying cause of the new Berlin crisis was not just Soviet bluster or Khrushchev playing power politics within his own government. The Iron Curtain effectively did not yet exist

and got particular attention at the border, as did families traveling together. The creators of a security-based, arbitrary border could not continue to tolerate its effective nonexistence in one key location, especially when this endangered the total border.

Fleeing to West Berlin had some risk, although nothing close to later situations. Those who fled were people with the most initiative. They also tended to be the more economically productive members of society, the more talented and better educated. Nearly 200,000 people fled East Germany in 1960, the population of a good-sized city—and not just any city, but a very productive one at that. Khrushchev's aides, presumably not in their boss's presence, had begun joking that "soon there will be no one left in the GDR except Ulbrecht and his mistress."

The continuing emigration risked destroying

tional 2,662 people fled to the West. On Sunday, August 13, the East Germans began to carry out their solution to the refugee problem. Soon after midnight, the American mission in Berlin received a phone call noting a considerable decrease in rapid rail traffic to the West. "The trains ran into the East and weren't coming back again," said the message. West Berlin taxi drivers were spreading the word to each other not to accept fares to the East, for fear of not being able to return.

A Warsaw Pact press release declared, "The present traffic situation on the borders of West Berlin is being used by the ruling circles of West Germany and the intelligence agencies of the NATO countries to undermine the economy of the German Democratic Republic. Through deceit, bribery and blackmail, West German bodies and military interests induce certain unstable elements in the German Democratic

Republic to leave for West Germany. In the face of the aggressive inspirations of the reactionary forces of West Germany and its NATO allies, the Warsaw Pact proposes reliable safeguards and effective control be established around the whole territory of West Berlin.”

The East Germans were closing the border. Ulbrecht, despite his earlier statements, had gotten Soviet permission to build a wall. The wall actually started out as barbed wire emplacements blocking off exits, with the actual wall being constructed a few months later. The afternoon the wall was started, a young boy talked his way across the wall. The guard who let him go was spotted and arrested for his troubles. Most guards did not react so nicely. On August 19, Rudolf Urban fell from a building while trying to cross the wall. He died in the hospital a week later. Five days later, Günter Litwan, 24, was shot by border guards while trying to cross, the first of some 250 people to be killed attempting to escape. An estimated 5,000 managed to escape in the 28-year history of the wall. This was less than the week's totals before the wall was built.

The United States and its allies could do little to counteract the wall, which was built entirely on East German territory. By creating the artificial border of the Iron Curtain, East Germany in essence created itself as a real government, however questionable its long-term legitimacy. As such, it had the recognized right to seal its own borders. The West had to be content with protests and with using the wall as a physical symbol of the failures of European Communism.

In the wake of the wall's construction, East and West Germany became accepted as mutually legitimate governments. The dream of eventual reunification, however, never went away entirely, with experts confidently predicting that one day it would happen. No one anticipated just how soon it would happen.

In August 1989, a large group of East Germans were at a picnic in Hungary. The Hungarians had already removed the border fortifications facing Austria; they now opened the gates. Some 661 East Germans celebrated European Unity Day by walking across the border into Austria. Eventually, 325,000 East Germans joined them, a far greater number than in 1961. And the same types of people were fleeing now—the young and educated. With Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's permission, the Hungarians made no effort to stop the flow.

Early in October, Gorbachev visited East Germany, where he was greeted by huge, cheering crowds. A few days later, 100,000 East Germans demonstrated for democracy in Leipzig, near

Berlin, the largest unauthorized demonstration in Germany since 1953. Erich Honecker, East German Communist Party leader since 1971, was removed from office a few days later, to be replaced by Egon Krenz. Krenz had a reputation as a hard-liner when he was head of domestic security. However, a few weeks earlier he had persuaded Honecker to revoke an order to use armed force against the demonstrators. Between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people demonstrated in East Berlin on November 4. In that week alone, 50,000 East Germans fled west through Czechoslovakia.

November 9, 1989, would come to be considered one of the most important days in world history. That morning, attempting to solve the problem of refugees crowding into Prague, the East German government passed new regulations to permit freer travel with visas. Basically, the Krenz government was opening the borders. Crowds began to gather that evening at the Berlin Wall. A photographer watching from the Western side of the wall noted that “by now the Guards didn't look aggressive and they had not a clue what was going on. They didn't pull back behind the wall in formation. They looked very undecided among themselves. First one or two pulled back, then a few more, then a few more.”

Crowds that evening on both sides of the wall were so great that local border commanders, unable to reach central headquarters for instructions, ordered the gates in the Berlin Wall opened. One commander told his men, “We don't need to press our rights, we need to just let this happen. This is a moment for the German people.” The commander at another checkpoint, Bornholmer Strasse, was concerned about the crowds on both sides and the potential for serious trouble. Getting no help from his immediate superior, the harried commander told his men, “It cannot be held any longer. We have to open the checkpoint. I will discontinue the checks and let the people out.” When he called his wife to tell her what was happening, she thought at first that he was joking.

The evening newsbreaks on American television featured some of the most remarkable images ever seen. It was about 4 AM in Berlin. People were not only crossing the Berlin Wall, they were dancing on top of the symbol of the Cold War, the physical manifestation of the Iron Curtain. Discussing his decision to open one checkpoint, an East German border commander was told by an associate, “That's it, that's the end of the GDR.” He was correct. East Germany survived the fall of the Iron Curtain by only a year. Germany was reunited on October 3, 1990. □



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By Peter Suci

## A group of British hobbyists stages set-piece battles that take nearly as long to prepare as the real thing.

**T**HE SCENE APPEARS TO BE ONE OF UTTER CHAOS, AS SEVERAL dozen soldiers react to an enemy attack on their troop train. Numerous photos show the level of destruction, along with the soldiers' frantic commotion. But nothing is actually moving except the smoke that passes across the field.

Everything is exactly where it should be, down to the smallest detail. What seems to be frenzied activity is in truth a staged scene in 1/6 scale, and the epic recreation, which took weeks of planning, will be virtually gone by the end of the day.

At times it is hard to believe that the epic scenes, which often include vehicles and a not-so-small army of soldiers, are just action figures posed for the camera. But for John Sander, who is part of a small team of military history enthusiasts based in the United Kingdom, these massive dioramas involve much more than just setting up scale-model figures and photographing them. "Part of our focus is to achieve a degree of realism

and create as much as we can in a very finite amount of time," says Sander, one of the group's principal photographers. His efforts can be

viewed at the group's website: [www.tiger1.co.uk](http://www.tiger1.co.uk).

Sander stresses that he doesn't do this alone. "There is a team of about

RIGHT: While it doesn't take an army to produce,

the scene is the result of many working together.

BELOW: The detail in accessories, as well as the team's efforts to correct any imperfections, help make for a very convincing setting that could fool the eye into thinking this is a full-sized display.



All photos courtesy of John Sander

eight of us. This is very much a joint effort." Those making the effort include Peter Shaw, the man with the land, as Sander explains. An experienced model builder and hobbyist, Shaw is now retired and sometimes spends seven days a week creating the primary elements that will be used to recreate the battlefield. Other team members each have their particular roles, and creating the simulated battle scenes requires almost as much planning as it would take to stage the real thing.

The devil is in the details, as they say, and the group goes the extra mile to ensure that those details would impress anyone. Many mod-

ern movie epics should enjoy such dedicated attention to realism. Team member Vince Abbott is known for providing the super-detailed vehicles for the 1/6 scale figures (12 inches tall), while Tim Catton works to ensure that the smaller elements, including weapons and equipment, look as realistic as possible. Hugh Abbot and Mark Winter function as the equivalent of set decorators on a movie set, and take the time to set everything up. Sander and Abbott are the primary photographers.

Everything a viewer sees in the photos is set up, photographed, and taken down in a single day. “We do what we can,” says Sander, “without being too obsessive. You could spend months just trying to prepare one figure.” Part of what makes the scenes possible is technology. Today’s high-end digital cameras allow Sander to photograph the scenes in ways that wouldn’t have been possible with SRL cameras a decade ago. The efforts to capture the 1:1 perspective couldn’t be done, he explains, without digging a trench and seriously impacting the battle scene, but the latest developments in digital cameras with flip-up LCD displays allow the photographers to get right in the middle of the action and frame the shots as they would with a traditional film camera. The other benefit of digital technology is that team members can quickly preview the results and make adjustments in seconds. This couldn’t be done with film.

Another primary factor making the dioramas possible is the introduction of high-quality action figures during the past decade. Without these figures and their highly detailed uniforms and accessories, it would be virtually impossible for Sander and the others to even consider creating such elaborate scenes. All of the various members have backgrounds building model vehicles, but the 1/6 scale offers much more in the way of details, particularly in the armaments and vehicles.

While numerous companies produce action figures, Sander says the team is quite picky in its choices. “At this point we’re very particular about what we use,” he says. “Without excep-



**ABOVE:** While it looks like a battle has taken place, the only activity has been to set up everything as quickly as possible to allow for photography of the figures. **LEFT TOP:** Vehicles, such as this motorcycle, play a major part in these epic scenes. **LEFT MIDDLE:** The forced perspective effect with trees and figures really does make it seem like this scene has unfolded somewhere in the vast openness of the Soviet Union. **LEFT BOTTOM:** The chaotic nature of the scene further suggests movement, while the smoke and fire adequately add to the end results.

tion, I would say we use Cyber-Hobby and Dragon.” The Hong Kong-based Dragon Models has been one of the industry leaders, and its online exclusive Cyber-Hobby line offers details that few other companies can come close to replicating. Despite the quality of the figures, however, Sander says that Dragon has its own limitations, notably the company’s primary focus on German World War II figures, with far fewer Allied figures to work with. “The range of American and British figures is fairly limited, and that does make it difficult,” he says. “As a result, we’ve only done one Allied photo shoot. There are more Russians, but no French and only now a couple of Italians. If other figures are made we’ll certainly consider it.”

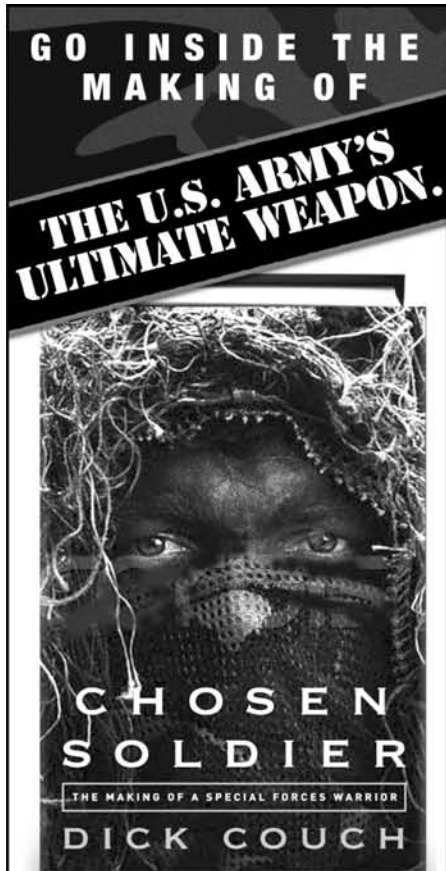
In some ways the company already has taken note, posting links from its official websites to those of the displays. “It has taken a while to make contact, but we’re now on their radar,” Sander says, adding that this will expose the team’s efforts to a wider audience. Possibly get-

ting some corporate sponsorship, or at least the occasional free figure, wouldn’t hurt either. Highly detailed action figures such as those from Dragon don’t come cheap, costing \$50 or more in the United States when first released. Sander says that he and the others each have more than a hundred figures, while Vince Abbott has more than a thousand.

Keeping track of the figures is difficult, and for this reason the group runs a private forum where members can post messages such as “I’m missing a helmet” or “I’ve found an extra shovel in my kit.” After the massive scenes they create, it is a wonder that whole platoons don’t go missing. It is primarily for this reason that the setup, photography, and breakdown typically occur in one day.

For each of the larger re-creations, there is about three to four weeks of preparation, with various members preparing different elements of the setting, such as the train locomotives and cars. During this time, Hugh Abbot is able to prepare the ground in advance of the arrival of the little men. Inclement weather is a constant concern, since the dioramas aren’t designed to remain outside in the elements for long periods of time.

The group hopes in the future to be able to



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**ABOVE:** As with a film set, photography is done from a number of angles and distances to get just the right shot. **RIGHT TOP:** Far fewer Allied figures have been produced by Dragon Models, but that hasn't seriously affected the efforts to use these to their full advantage. **RIGHT BOTTOM:** Part of the joy of seeing a scene—and part of the joy for those creating it—is finding all the small details.



set up semipermanent displays that can be photographed over the course of days instead of hours. Already, preparation is under way to build an undercover area for use as a photo studio, where the group plans to build a town or village setting that wouldn't be possible in normal open-air settings. This will also ensure that the weather, which isn't always agreeable in the United Kingdom, won't spoil a setup or damage any of the expensive figures and vehicles. “The most frustrating part,” says Sander, “is having to disassemble it. We do it in one day because we can and because we have to.”

In the meantime, there are plans for a couple of weekend layouts this year, which should let the scenes increase in size. There is also the hope of creating even longer lasting displays. The team has had experience with life-sized 1:1 aspect creations, and team members have been in talks with a local museum about creating semipermanent displays, which would no doubt be updated to keep things interesting. For the time being, however, the scenes will come and go. One thing that everyone wants to avoid is having any two scenes resemble each other too significantly. While it might seem as though Dragon Models has released an army of thousands, there is in fact a limited number of action figures. New scenes take a great deal of careful planning and rotation of the figures.

One of the most important decisions is how and where to set up each individual figure. The dioramas have to be more than just 20 to 40 figures randomly placed or standing in a field. Attention must be paid to make sure that everything is just right, since a whole day's work, not to mention weeks of planning, can be lost if a

mistake is noticed after everything is packed up. To accomplish the ultra realism requires a unique talent. It isn't merely a matter of standing up the figures. Tim Catton works with the body structures to craft just the right poses. This involves some tweaking of the figures themselves, such as carving out the hips or necks to create a more lifelike stance or tilt of the head.

The changes can't be so drastic that the figure has to be retired afterward. A small tear in the fabric of the trousers might look good once, but it would be noticeable if that same infantryman showed up repeatedly with the same tears in the same places. The point of the displays to create a natural-looking battlefield that is populated with anonymous soldiers, and for this reason the team steers clear of figures that are representations from movies or television. Cyber-Hobby has created a line of quasi knock-offs, which look as if they might be officially licensed from movies, but aren't. The popular “Sergeant Steiner” is one example, since the figure closely resembles James Coburn's character from the film *Cross of Iron*. Likewise, historical characters such as German General Heinz Guderian and Colonel Otto Skorzeny, among others, won't be making an appearance on the miniature battlefields.

Sander emphasizes that the team is careful in its efforts not to cast any stars from the hundreds of figures that are used, but the same figures will occasionally pop up often enough. Such figures tend to get more upfront and foreground exposure, if only because the details in their equipment, uniforms, and head sculptures are so much better. One aspect that has to be addressed often is the smaller details, including webbing, chin-

straps, and shoulder straps. Early Dragon models were good, but not at the level of realism required for the massive recreations. A bigger problem thus far has been the lack of variety in the face sculptures and the resultant blankness on the figures' faces. There haven't been enough people laughing, talking, or smoking, says Sander. To get around this, the team often poses the figures with their heads hung low and their shoulders slumped to reveal grim determination.

While there are plans for bigger displays, there are no immediate plans to move to another scale. The 1/6 scale is what the team knows and does best. Sander does envision possibly going to the 1:1 ratio, and toward the more traditional military reenactment community. This could entail photographing regular engagements or helping stage smaller settings. For the time being, however, "I absolutely can't see us moving into the smaller scales," says Sander, noting that the smaller figures lack detail, while traditional model dioramas can't be constructed on such a large level. The 1/35 and other smaller scales are more appropriate for a single-model builder, not a full-fledged team of enthusiasts. Plus, the investment in time and material should allow the team to happily craft large scenes for years to come. "We have so much now with the vehicles and the train," Sander says. "I think it is safe to say that we have four or five years worth of work ahead of us at the very least."

Because of the equipment already on hand, World War II will likely continue to be the backdrop for the creations. "The dioramas are just an extension of our interests, but again we're somewhat limited by the figures available," says Sander. "This is the way we've done the settings we've done, and why they have been mostly German focused." Sander says that other settings, such as World War I, are doable, but not in their plans right now. "There are excellent figures from Sideshow Toys for the First World War, but so far we feel that to achieve the focus we want, we're best to stick to World War II, especially since we've come to this place from modeling vehicles."

The group is careful not to tread on other people's history. They hope that veterans and other history buffs will find what they are doing respectful. "We don't want to trivialize wars," says Sander. "The worst thing that mankind has done is to go about and start killing each other. So we don't want to glamorize it, nor do we want to trivialize it." Thus far, the British veterans of World War II who have seen the photos of their dioramas have been impressed. "We were very happy that these chaps had enjoyed it so much," he notes. "That did make us feel good about it." □

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# OLD ROUGH AND READY AT BUENA VISTA

Outmanned 3-to-1, the tiny American army of General Zachary Taylor prepared to meet the oncoming hordes of Mexican leader Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.



**B**Y THE SPRING OF 1846, it had become apparent to everyone that diplomatic efforts between the United States and Mexico had failed. For the Mexicans, old injustices had become unbearable. A decade earlier, the upstart Texans had declared their independence, but the sovereign nation of Mexico still considered the land a northern province. Then, in 1845, the United States had annexed Texas while offering Mexico the insultingly low amount of \$35 million to purchase California and other lands in western North America.

**BY MIKE HASKEW**

The diplomatic wrangling had been exacerbated by the concept of “Manifest Destiny,” which had captivated the geopolitical thinking of many Americans in the mid-19th century. Adherents of the ideal believed that God had divinely sanctioned the expansion

of the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Indeed, James K. Polk, a Democrat, had been elected president in 1844 on a platform of just such expansion.

The Mexicans, for their part, believed that insult had been heaped upon injury. They disagreed with the United States over the boundary between the two countries. Rather than the Rio Grande, Mexican officials held that the border was farther north, at the Nueces River, and they dispatched troops to back up their claim. Following the declaration of a “defensive war” by Mexican President Mariano Paredes on April 23, 1846, Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to march to the Nueces with a strong contingent of American troops. Inevitably (as Polk had intended), war soon broke out between the two countries.



General Zachary Taylor, aboard his horse, Old Whitey, confers with artillery Captain Braxton Bragg, left, at the height of the Battle of Buena Vista in an oil painting by William H. Powell.

DURING THE WAR'S FIRST MAJOR BATTLE AT PALO ALTO, THE MEXICANS WERE FORCED TO RETREAT, AND on the following day at Resaca de la Palma the retreat turned into a rout. Throughout the summer of 1846, Taylor pressed deeper into the enemy's country, and in September his forces captured the fortress city of Monterrey. The unbroken string of victories had made "Old Rough and Ready" a national hero and prompted him to continue a successful if risky campaign in northern Mexico.

Meanwhile, American forces were triumphant on all fronts. An army of 1,600 men under Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny occupied Santa Fe, New Mexico, that summer, and by the end of the year all of California was in American hands. Another army of 1,200 men under Colonel Alexander Doniphan occupied El Paso, Texas. As far as Polk and Army General-in-Chief Winfield Scott were concerned, the stage had been set for the war's coup de grace. Scott, they deter-

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**ABOVE:** Santa Anna's messengers hear a blunt rejection of their surrender demand: "General Taylor never surrenders." **RIGHT:** Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. **FAR RIGHT:** Old Rough and Ready caught in an uncharacteristic moment of relaxation.

mined, would land another army at Vera Cruz on the Gulf of Mexico and press on to the enemy's capital. Once Mexico City was occupied, the United States would dictate the terms of a favorable peace to the stubborn Mexicans.

In preparation for the grand offensive in the south, Taylor was ordered to remain at Monterrey and dispatch all but 500 of his U.S. Army regulars, commanded by Brig. Gen. John Worth, to join Scott at Tampico. The diminutive but fiery Taylor was outraged. Poised to strike deep into the heart of Mexico, he saw his supreme opportunity being usurped by his superiors in Washington. He would obediently release the bulk of the regulars, but remaining idle while the war came to a climax was unthinkable to Taylor.

Although unimposing physically, Taylor had earned the respect and admiration of his soldiers, even fighting on foot with them at Monterrey. He was a familiar figure sitting astride his favorite horse, Old Whitey. A junior officer described him, not unfavorably, as "short and very heavy, with pronounced face lines and gray hair, wear[ing] an old oilcloth cap, a dusty green coat, a frightful pair of trousers and on horseback looks like a frog." Aesthetics notwithstanding, the general still seethed that he had been "stripped of nearly the whole of the regular force and half of the volunteers, and ordered to act on the defensive." One of his officers observed that Taylor was "very angry and flies about like an old hen with one chicken."

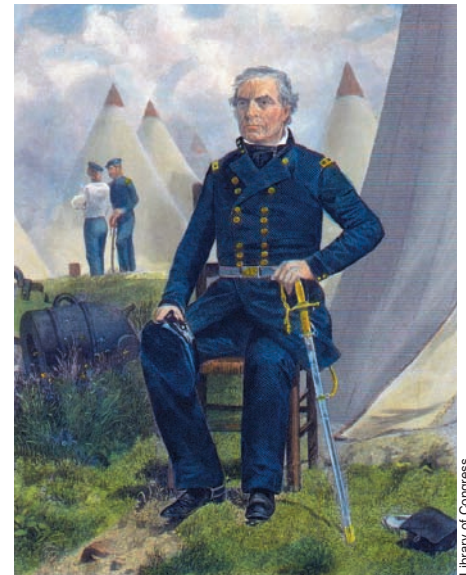
With every intention of carrying the fight to the Mexicans and securing a role for his army and himself in the endgame, Taylor advanced to the town of Saltillo and ordered the Center Division,



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under Brig. Gen. John Wool, to abandon its independent expedition in the Mexican state of Chihuahua and join him. Even with the addition of Wool's troops, Taylor's so-called Army of Occupation numbered fewer than 5,000 soldiers—and precious few of them were regulars.

A professional soldier himself, Taylor had entered the military as a volunteer in 1806. Two years later, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and became a first lieutenant. A veteran of the war against the Indian chief Tecumseh, the War of 1812, the Black Hawk War, and the Second Seminole War, Taylor was well aware of the risk inherent in his bold advance. However, he was also convinced that a conspiracy with its roots in Washington was bent on denying him a



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major role in the final victory. An air of near invincibility contributed to Taylor's impetuous decision. Like many prideful generals before him, Taylor was about to stumble.

General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna had once again taken center stage in Mexico. Like the proverbial phoenix, Santa Anna seemed to continually rise from the ashes of defeat and exile. The victor at the Alamo during the 1836 war with Texas, he had slaughtered the prisoners to a man, only to be humiliated by the forces of Sam Houston and captured at San Jacinto a few weeks later. Banished from his country, Santa Anna nevertheless returned to military and political prominence during a short but vicious fight against French invaders two years later. He lost a leg fighting the French, but he regained power in 1841. Three years later, he was again thrown out of his homeland. Then, in 1846, he was called home from exile in Cuba to assume the office of president and defend the honor of Mexico against the United States.

To many, Santa Anna appeared to be nothing more than a strutting peacock, dressed in military regalia dripping with gold braid, striking martial poses, and likening himself to Napoleon. In reality, he was much more than that. Possessing superb organizational skills, he inspired a renewal of patriotic fervor among his people, pledging his own personal fortune, borrowing heavily from the Catholic Church, and procuring weapons and animals from the populace. In a remarkably short period of time, he raised an army of 25,000 soldiers. While many of these men had little military training, the sheer weight of numbers might hold the key to victory, particularly under the right circumstances.

While Taylor fumed and Santa Anna schemed in January 1847, a young American courier, Lieutenant John Richey, was intercepted and killed and the contents of his packet delivered into the hands of the Mexican commander. Here was the American plan in its entirety. Amazed by his good fortune, Santa Anna determined to send his army north to overwhelm Taylor before wheeling southward to deal with Scott and the threat to Mexico City. On January 28, the imposing but inexperienced Mexican army set out from San Luis Potosi across 400 miles of inhospitable terrain to find and annihilate Taylor's force, which Santa Anna reckoned would still be in the vicinity of Saltillo.

With his flair for the theatrical, Santa Anna addressed his soldiers of the Lombardini, Pacheco, and Ortega infantry and Juvera cavalry divisions on the eve of their departure. "Today you commence your march, through a thinly settled country, without supplies and without provisions," he said, "but you may be assured that very quickly you will be in possession of those of your enemy, and of his riches; and with them, all your wants will be superabundantly supplied."

THROUGH WIND, RAIN, AND MUD, SANTA ANNA'S army trudged across the desert wasteland, where temperatures soared by day and plunged by night. Many died of exposure or starvation during three weeks on the march. A number of women who had gathered their possessions and followed their husbands also perished on the march. Desertion thinned the ranks, and by February 20, only 15,000 soldiers remained with their leader.

Taylor initially had scoffed at the possibility that an enemy force of any consequence could undertake such an arduous trek. Confidently, he had advanced as far as Agua Nueva, seven miles south of Saltillo. As rumors of the Mexican advance filled his camp, Taylor sent Major

Ben McCullough of the Texas Rangers to scout southward in search of Santa Anna. When McCullough returned with the unwelcome news that a massive Mexican army was only 60 miles away, Taylor decided to stand and fight at Agua Nueva. His lieutenants, however, argued vigorously against such action.

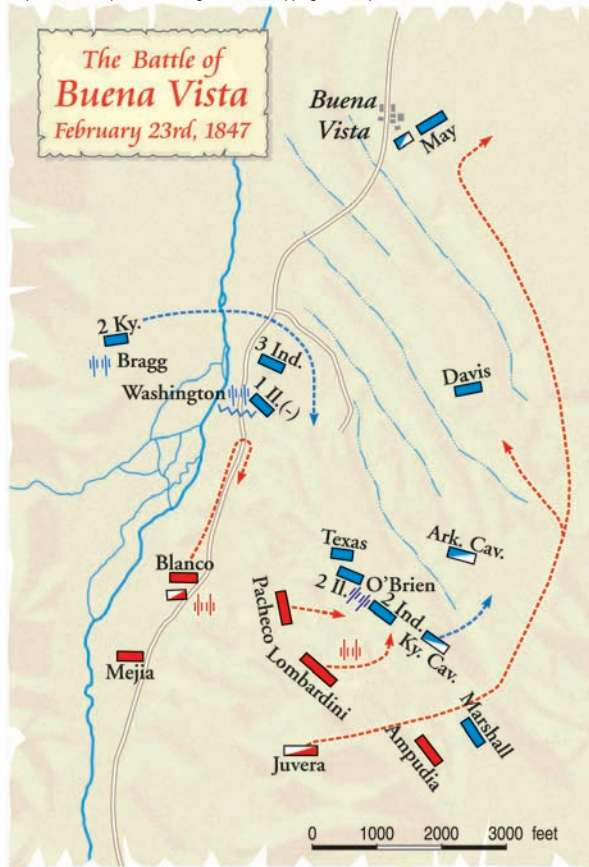
TAYLOR RELENDED AND ORDERED A WITHDRAWAL TO ANGOSTURA, WHERE THE ROAD TO SALTILLO passed through the mountains of the Sierra Madre, one mile from the established supply base at Hacienda San Juan de la Buena Vista. Wool had selected Angostura two months earlier as an ideal location from which to fight a defensive battle. The road to Saltillo passed through a narrow valley; to the west of the road, the landscape was severely broken by deep and precipitous arroyos to form an effective barrier against enemy movement. On the other side of the road, the terrain was rugged but passable. The American troops took up positions and waited for the enemy to approach.

Although seriously outnumbered, Taylor's army was bolstered by the 500 regulars. They included three artillery batteries and two companies of dragoons. Wool was charged with the

deployment of the American forces. He placed the eight guns of the 1st Battery, 4th U.S. Artillery, commanded by Captain John M. Washington, atop a slight rise where the road narrowed to less than 50 feet. Infantry support for this position was supplied by the 1st Illinois, led by Colonel John J. Hardin. Behind these positions stood the 2nd Kentucky Infantry of Colonel William R. McKee, which was supported by Colonel William H. Bissell's 2nd Illinois several hundred yards behind. On the left of the American line were Colonel Archibald Yell's 1st Arkansas Cavalry and the 1st Kentucky Cavalry of Colonel Humphrey Marshall. Two regiments of Brig. Gen. Joseph Lane's brigade, the 2nd and 3rd Indiana, manned a secondary line across an adjacent ridge. The U.S. dragoons and one company of Texas infantry were held in reserve.

On February 21, Santa Anna's army marched another grueling 35 miles with no opportunity to replenish canteens, which were rapidly emptying. When they reached Agua Nueva, the Mex-

Map © 2007 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



**Although seriously outnumbered, the Americans held the high ground at Buena Vista. A thrust by General Julian Juvera's lancers around the U.S. left flank was beaten back by Colonel Jefferson Davis's Mississippi Rifles.**

icans found stores of supplies going up in flames and Yell's Arkansas cavalymen riding hell for leather into the darkness. It appeared to be an all-out retreat. Hoping to achieve something positive after the travails of the long march, Santa Anna leaped instantly to that conclusion.

The pursuit of the Arkansans was halfhearted at best, owing mainly to the fact that the Mexicans were near total exhaustion. Shortly after daylight, however, Santa Anna discovered that the Americans were not running. He deployed his army, battle flags flapping in the morning breeze, with a cavalry brigade under Brig. Gen. Julian Juvera and the infantry brigade of Maj. Gen. Pedro de Ampudia, supported by two artillery batteries, placed toward the mountains. On the left flank, Colonel Santiago Blanco's regiment of engineers and three heavy cannons were situated, while in the center were the divisions of Maj. Gens. Francisco Pacheco and Manuel Maria Lombardini,



with a concentration of 14 artillery pieces. The plan of attack was simple. A thrust against the American left would turn their flank, and the cavalry would cut off the American retreat by taking Buena Vista.

Drawn up in full view of Taylor's inexperienced army, the Mexicans were an imposing sight "in their long tall hats, bedecked with tinsel & their blue overcoats streaming in the wind & what was more interesting to us just then," recalled a volunteer from Illinois, "their long glittering muskets pointing directly at us as if they were really trying to shoot us."

When he arrived from Saltillo the next morning, February 22, Taylor was greeted by cheers and the trill of the regimental bands playing "Hail Columbia" and "Yankee Doodle." It was George Washington's birthday, and Wool reminded the troops that their conduct on the field that day should be worthy of the honor of the father of their country.

At 11 AM, SANTA ANNA'S SURGEON GENERAL, PEDRO VANDERLINDEN, RODE INTO THE AMERICAN LINES and delivered a surrender demand from the self-styled Napoleon of the West. It read, "You are surrounded by twenty thousand men, and cannot in any human probability avoid suffering a rout and being cut to pieces with your troops; but as you deserve consideration and particular esteem, I wish to save you from a catastrophe, and for that purpose give you this notice, in order that you may surrender at discretion, under the assurance that you will be treated with the consideration belonging to the Mexican character; to which end you will be granted an hour to make up your mind."

Taylor's response was not long in coming. He bellowed to his aide, Major William Bliss: "Tell Santa Anna to go to hell! Bliss, put that in Spanish for this damned Dutchman to deliver!" Bliss actually answered in a more formal manner, stating respectfully, "In reply to your note of this date, summoning me to surrender my forces at discretion, I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request."

With that, the die was cast. After another three hours of maneuvering, Santa Anna ordered a single cannon to fire. The Mexican attack commenced with a weak feint on the American right, where the terrain was rough enough to quell any threat of a real attack, although the 2nd Kentucky Cavalry and a section of artillery were moved to the area, just in case. Late in the afternoon, Ampudia led four battalions of infantry in the planned flanking movement against the American left. In response, riflemen from Kentucky and Indiana, along with the Arkansas cavalry, moved to impede

their progress. Each time the Mexicans swung wide, the Americans were racing to higher ground, extending their flank but thinning the line dangerously. To shore up the extended positions, Wool sent three guns under Captain John Paul Jones O'Brien and the 2nd Indiana Regiment, commanded by Colonel William A. Bowles, to an area of flat ground near the center of Taylor's line. As daylight ebbed, so did the first hours of indecisive fighting.

Without campfires, the Mexican soldiers lay down in a drizzle. Their commander, however, restlessly prowled the encampments of each unit, stopping to exhort the men to victory with the renewal of battle. Brig. Gen. Manuel Michel-torena located favorable ground for several sturdy 8-pounder cannons, placing them more than 700 yards from the American position, which had been reinforced earlier in the day. A change in strategy was to be implemented. Since the Americans had managed to secure their left flank against the mountains, Santa Anna directed a new assault on the portion of their line where the center and left converged.

At the same time, Wool was bringing up the 2nd Illinois and another battery of artillery to support the American left and center, while Texas infantry and elements of the 1st Dragoons came forward as well. Taylor returned to Saltillo with the 1st Mississippi Rifles and a detachment of dragoons to allay concerns

about the safety of the army's supplies.

February 23 dawned clear and bright. The Mexicans massed to attack the American left once again. Ampudia's brigade pressed hard against the Kentucky, Arkansas, and Indiana riflemen under Marshall, and three companies of the 2nd Illinois advanced to reinforce them. The mounting pressure of the attack compelled the volunteers to grudgingly yield ground. The Mexican 8-pounder cannons barked incessantly, and O'Brien's guns replied in kind. Simultaneously, Santa Anna ordered his elite engineers, supported by cavalry, to attack directly through the narrow confines of the San Luis Road. Anchoring the center of the American line, Washington's artillery shredded this ill-advised move with a withering fire of grapeshot and canister. Leaving heaps of dead and wounded behind, the Mexicans fell back in confusion.

With neither of these jabs proving successful, the Mexican commander launched his haymaker at 8 AM. The divisions of Pacheco and Lombardini moved forward in the half light, taking advantage of gullies and ravines along the way. Seven thousand strong, the soldiers emerged from cover and began to deploy in front of the 2nd Indiana and the artillery commanded by O'Brien. One of the Americans watching them was Lieutenant John F. Reynolds, destined to lose his life at Gettysburg while commanding a corps of the Union Army during the Civil War. On this day, Reynolds was an artilleryman who was awestruck by what he saw. "I never in my life beheld a more beautiful sight," he later wrote, "their gay uniforms, numerous pennants, standards, and colors streaming in all their pride and pomp."

The heavy assault bowled into Lane's 2nd Indiana Regiment, and O'Brien operated his three cannons efficiently, tearing gaps in the ranks of the advancing Mexicans. To the left, the 2nd Illinois poured fire into the enemy flank. For half an hour, the Americans would not be moved, but the relentless enemy came on again and again. Wool instructed Lane to hold at all costs, and under increasing pressure Lane ordered O'Brien to move to a better firing position. As the artillery limbered up, Colonel William A. Bowles, commanding the 2nd Indiana, interpreted the move incorrectly and shouted, "Cease fire and retreat!" The result was a near disaster as Bowles's command disintegrated. One soldier vividly remembered the desperate moment: "Mexicans came out of the ravine in masses. Men left the ranks in all the regiments, and soon our rear was a confused mass of fugitives, making for Buena Vista Ranch and Saltillo."

Like dominoes, successive positions on the American front became untenable. Without infantry support, O'Brien, whose cannons had taken fearful casualties, was forced back and abandoned one of his guns. Marshall's command swung back like a gate on a hinge and steadied itself, facing east rather than south. On the extreme left, artillery capably handled by future Civil War Generals George H. Thomas and Samuel French held off Ampudia for a while, but Mexican troops finally flanked the positions on the high ground and advanced on the run to widen the break in the center of the American line. The dismounted Arkansas cavalrymen climbed back onto their horses and rode for their lives back to Buena Vista.

FIGHTING LIKE VETERANS, THE MEN OF THE 2ND ILLINOIS REFUSED TO PANIC AGAINST OVERWHELMING odds. Buoyed by the arrival of Captain Braxton Bragg's artillery and troops of the 1st Illinois and 2nd Kentucky Regiments, the Illinois soldiers began to slow the Mexican advance. Bragg's cannons and another battery, commanded by Captain Thomas Sherman, cut loose with a terrific barrage of grapeshot and canister against the overextended left flank of the oncoming Mexicans. The infantry fired virtually point-blank at the buttons on the blue overcoats of the enemy soldiers.

Although the Mexican infantry staggered and stopped, Juvera's Jalisco Lancers and 4th Cav-

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection



**ABOVE:** American soldier Sam Chamberlain painted this watercolor of the fighting at Buena Vista. He served under Lieutenant Colonel Charles May during the battle. **OPPOSITE:** Taylor was unflappable at Buena Vista. When aides worried that they were whipped, he replied, "I know it, but the volunteers don't know it. Let them alone."

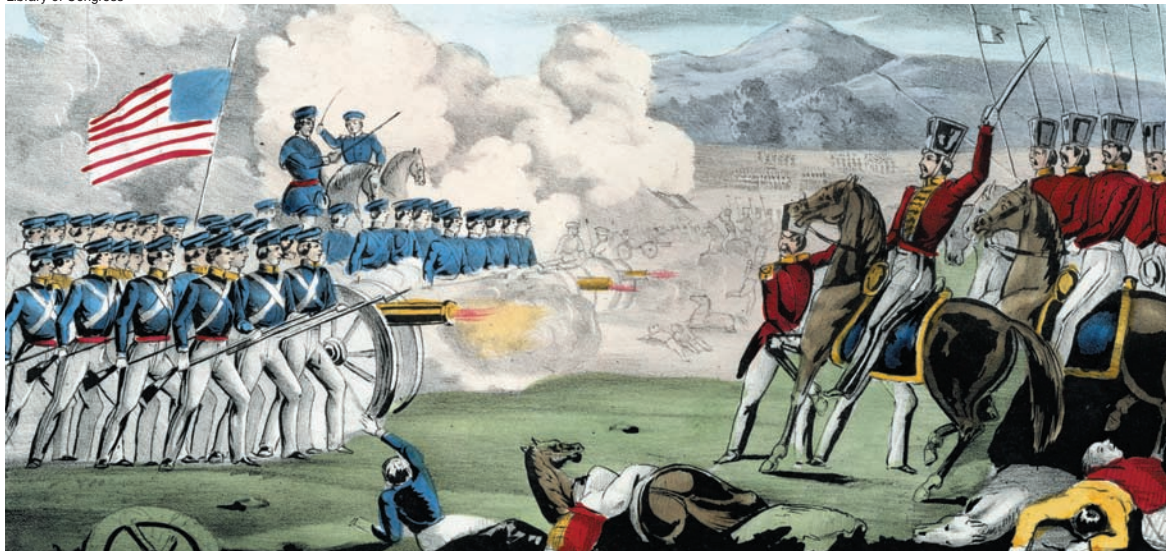
alry Regiment found the necessary opening. The horsemen rode around and through the confused fighting. Their objective was Buena Vista—just minutes away. General José Maria Ortega's fresh infantry division joined the dash for the ranch and the American supplies. Despite their heavy casualties and the stubbornness of the American defense at Angostura, seizure of the hacienda at Buena Vista would mean certain defeat for Taylor and his troops.

At this decisive moment, Taylor returned from Saltillo. In company with the general were the Mississippi Rifles, commanded by his son-in-law, Colonel Jefferson Davis, who would later rise to the presidency of the Confederate States of America. Also adding their weight to the American defense were a squadron of mounted infantry from Arkansas and two troops of the 2nd U.S. Dragoons under Brevet Lt. Col. Charles May. As Taylor assessed the situation, either Wool or Bliss apparently blurted out that the volunteers were whipped. The reply was vintage Old Rough and Ready. "I know it," he quipped, "but the volunteers don't know it. Let them alone. We'll see what they do." Taylor reacted quickly and dispatched the dragoons and volunteer cavalry to Buena Vista to meet the immediate threat. The Mississippians were deployed along a nearby ridge.

Yell and Marshall had squabbled over who was in command of the cavalry regiments from Kentucky and Arkansas and the remnants of the 2nd Indiana, which had formed a patchwork defen-

**RIGHT:** Captain Braxton Bragg's flying artillery drove back the Mexicans with double shots of canister from their 6-pounder guns. **BELOW LEFT:** Colonel Humphrey Marshall's Kentucky cavalry, augmented by veteran dragoons, splits the Mexican flank and drives it from the field. **BELOW RIGHT:** Lieutenant Colonel Henry Clay, Jr., son of Kentucky Senator Henry Clay, was mortally wounded in the fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

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Library of Congress

sive perimeter. When the Mexican cavalry charged, Yell rashly attacked and was killed when a lance entered his mouth, wrenched off his lower jaw, and shattered the side of his face. Captain Enoch Steen and the veteran dragoons of the regular army, however, used the momentary confusion caused by Yell's advance to assail the Mexican flank and split the attackers in two.

The riflemen rallied at Buena Vista, firing from windows and rooftops and throwing back the Mexican horsemen. A number of Juvera's cavalry, shocked by the ferocity of Steen's assault, fled the field, but the commander led others in an ineffectual ride completely around the hacienda, accomplishing nothing.

WITH THE EFFORT TO WREST CONTROL OF BUENA VISTA FROM THE AMERICANS COMING TO NAUGHT, some 1,500 of Juvera's lancers massed for an attack on Davis's Mississippi Rifles. A resplendent sight dressed in their red shirts, slouch hats, and white pants, with bowie knives thrust into their belts, the Mississippians had already gained a reputation for deadly accurate fire with their lethal Whitney and Model 1841 U.S. rifles, which could be fired accurately at targets as distant as 500 yards. When Ampudia's soldiers stumbled toward them, Davis ordered a series of tremendous volleys that felled Mexicans like a scythe. Joined by the 3rd Indiana, Davis's command chased the enemy infantry down the ridge and through a nearby ravine.

Taken under fire by troops from three other Mexican divisions, Davis saw the enemy lancers passing on his left and directed his troops to retire to their original positions. Painfully wounded in the

right foot by a bullet, which lodged a bit of brass from a spur deep in his flesh, Davis refused to leave his men. He would spend two years on crutches and feel the effects of the wound for the rest of his life. Scores of dead and wounded soldiers from Mississippi and Indiana lay in the ravine, but worse was yet to come.

Taylor observed the action as Davis ordered his troops atop the ridge into a large V formation with the open end toward the enemy. "Steady, boys!" Old Rough and Ready bellowed. "Steady for the honor of old Mississippi!" The Mexican horsemen, lances poised for a close-quarters clash, thundered across the battle-scarred landscape. Davis later wrote that "a body of richly caparisoned lancers came forward rapidly and in beautiful order—the files and ranks so closed, as to look like a solid mass of men and horses." At 80 yards' distance, they slowed inexplicably to a walk.

While the artillery of Thomas and O'Brien boomed in support, the riflemen decimated the attackers with a veritable wall of fire. "It was appalling," remembered an American soldier. "The whole head of the column was prostrated." Nearly 2,000 lancers were trapped in the mouth of the V and being shot to pieces until a flag of truce appeared and a junior offi-

cer approached the Americans with the false assertion that Santa Anna wanted to meet with his counterpart. Although the ruse was quickly discovered, it bought precious time for the survivors to slip out of the deathtrap.

Meanwhile, Santa Anna scraped together enough troops for another attempt to crack the American center. More than 5,000 soldiers from the divisions of Pacheco and Lombardini, now under the command of General Francisco Perez, lurched forward to confront the Illinois and Kentucky troops of Hardin and Bissell, supported by the artillery of Thomas and O'Brien. When the Mexican skirmish line came into view, the American cannon pounded it mercilessly, and the enemy melted away.

Hardin, who had previously held the Illinois seat in the U.S. House of Representatives that now was occupied by Abraham Lincoln, assumed that the Mexicans were retreating and boldly led his command forward in a counter-attack. Actually, the majority of the troops under Perez were just arriving, and the two enemy forces clashed head-on. Hardin grabbed the flag of the Hidalgo Battalion but fell mortally wounded moments later. Also lost in the melee of hand-to-hand combat was Lt. Col. Henry Clay, Jr., son of the eminent senator from Kentucky. The overwhelming numbers of Mexican soldiers forced the Americans to fall back.

O'Brien, whose cannon seemed to be everywhere on the field, was wounded in the leg but refused to retire, pressing infantrymen totally unfamiliar with cannons into servicing his guns. Finally, with most of his horses and men dead or wounded, he withdrew all but two of his 6-pounder cannons. He was "delighted to find that I had maintained my ground sufficiently long to cause the victory to be secured, for, at this moment, the rest of our artillery arrived and came into action." The superb handling of American "flying artillery" had already staved off disaster on more than one occasion.

The latest battery to arrive at the critical moment belonged to Bragg, who years later would become commanding general of the Confederate Army of Tennessee. As his men unlimbered their 6-pounder guns, Bragg asked Taylor which infantry units would be providing support. Taylor replied wryly, "Major Bliss and I will support you."

Taylor then questioned the artillery officer. "What are you using, Captain, grape or canister?"

Bragg responded, "Canister, General."

"Single or double?" Taylor quizzed back.

"Single."

"Well, double-shot your guns and give 'em hell, Bragg."

The little cannons belched smoke and shell, tearing into the advancing Mexicans, while Davis's Mississippians poured successive volleys of rifle fire at them. Second and third salvos from Bragg's guns ripped through the enemy troops and took the fight completely out of them. They retreated hastily as a sudden rainstorm broke across the battlefield.

After the sun had set, Santa Anna held a council of war and decided to withdraw his tattered army to Agua Nueva. On February 24, he headed back to the south and San Luis Potosi. He had lost 591 men killed, 1,048 wounded, and 1,394 missing—nearly a fourth of his army. In comparison, American casualties totaled 271 dead, 387 wounded, and six missing.

SANTA ANNA HAD DISPLAYED LITTLE TACTICAL ABILITY DURING THE PIVOTAL BATTLE. HE HAD ATTACKED the enemy over difficult terrain but failed to successfully exploit breaches in the American line. He had an even larger problem to deal with: Scott's army would soon land at Vera Cruz. Although Santa Anna displayed the artillery pieces O'Brien had lost at Buena Vista and falsely claimed that his troops had won a victory, seven months later soldiers of the U.S. Army would march victoriously through the plaza of Mexico City.

In August, during the Battle of Padierna, the two lost guns were recaptured by the 4th U.S. Artillery. Transferred to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, they were placed on exhibit beneath a plaque reading simply, "Lost without dishonor, recovered with glory."

The following year, Taylor was elected president of the United States. His victories on the battlefield and at the ballot box may be attributed equally to good luck and good leadership. Fortune, they say, favors the brave. Following his advance against Scott's orders, Taylor's stirring command presence, the remarkable toughness of his untried volunteer infantry, and the outstanding skill of the regular army artillery had combined to win the day and, eventually, the White House.

A decade and a half later, Davis, Bragg, Thomas, Reynolds, and the other heroes of Buena Vista would take up arms once again—this time against each another in the tragic crucible of the American Civil War. □

## SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF A PRESIDENT

On July 4, 1850, Zachary Taylor, hero of the Mexican War and 12th president of the United States, attended a special Independence Day celebration and delivered a speech to mark the laying of the cornerstone for the Washington Monument. The weather was particularly hot and muggy in Washington at the time, and Taylor was dressed in restrictive clothing. His high-collared shirt, thick dress coat, vest, and top hat were neither loosened nor removed. The president complained that he was extremely thirsty. His face grew red and flushed, and his speech became slurred.

Shortly after he arrived at the ceremonies, Taylor walked to a refreshment table and drank a substantial amount of water directly from a pitcher. A little later,

he washed down a snack of cold cherries and pickled cucumbers with iced milk. Upon his return to the White House, Taylor collapsed. Doctors pronounced the medical problem as cholera morbus, which included symptoms of severe gastroenteritis but was not true cholera. Five days later, the president was dead.

For more than 150 years, an air of mystery has surrounded Taylor's death. Although the food and water he consumed during the July 4 celebration may have been contaminated with cholera, other possible causes for his death have been advanced, including typhoid fever and heat stroke, which was not well known in medical circles of the day. Another potential cause, deliberate arsenic poisoning by a political

opponent, has also been suggested.

In 1991, with members of Taylor's family present, the body of the president was exhumed from its grave in Louisville, Kentucky. An autopsy was conducted at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, and traces of arsenic indeed were found in samples of hair. Since arsenic exists naturally in the human body, the medical examiner concluded that the level present in Taylor's body was substantially less than would have been detected had he been the victim of deliberate poisoning. The exact cause of Taylor's death will probably never be known, but the sinister possibility that an assassin went unpunished and a president's murder went unsolved was greatly diminished by the medical findings. □

FOR THE PAGAN WENDS LIVING ALONG THE  
BALTIC SEA, THE SECOND CRUSADE QUICKLY BECAME  
A DESPERATE STRUGGLE FOR TRIBAL SURVIVAL.

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# BAPTISM OR DEATH

## THE WENDISH CRUSADE, 1147-1185

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BY KIRK FREEMAN

By the middle of the 12th century, much of western Europe had settled into a tenuous, often interrupted peace, and many modern nation-states had begun to emerge. France, England, and Germany had each developed into roughly autonomous kingdoms with distinct cultures. In vast sections of eastern Europe, however, it was a different story. The Holy Roman Empire, a loose organization of fiefdoms bound together in a shaky confederacy under a figurehead emperor, held titular sway over much of the countryside. East of this realm, along a rough line from the Baltic Sea to Hamburg, Germany, a wild Slavic people called the Wends consistently resisted incorporation into the empire. When

much of the pan-European community became caught up in the frenzied call for a second crusade to Palestine in 1147, the Wends refused to rally under the Christian cross to fight against the Saracen infidels. For their demonstrated independence of mind, they would soon find themselves imperiled and beset by fanatical crusaders enflamed by feelings of religious and moral superiority.

The seeds of the Wendish Crusade of 1147 had been planted over a half century earlier. During the late 11th century, Byzantium, to the south and east of Wendish lands, was threatened repeatedly by the ever-aggressive Turks, who seized large portions of the empire after the Byzantine army's catastrophic defeat at Manzikert, in eastern Asia Minor, in 1071. Ten years later, Emperor Alexius I Comnenus came to the throne in Con-

stantinople and managed to hold off the Turks long enough to ask the pope in Rome for his assistance. Alexius had no idea what he had unleashed with a simple letter.

The pope who received this cry for help, Urban II, long had sought to bring all of Christendom under the authority of the papacy. He saw this plea as a divinely inspired means to achieve that aim. Instead of sending a limited force of 1,000 cavalymen, as Alexius had requested, Urban II called for nothing less than a holy war, a crusade, to be waged against the Muslims in the Holy Land to free Jerusalem from the infidels (although technically the Muslims allowed Christians to worship freely in the city). Urban II proclaimed that any man who went to free the Holy Land would be absolved of all his sins on earth and guaranteed a heavenly reward in the afterlife. This was the basis for the First Crusade.

From 1096 to 1099, western European crusaders and Muslim forces fought savagely against each other without result, until Jerusalem finally fell into Christian hands in 1099. Soon afterward, a Christian military state was set up to protect the holy city. However, less than a half century later, in 1144, a new Islamic leader named Imad al Din Zangi unified the Arabic world long enough to launch successful attacks against the European strongholds in Palestine. When the first



Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux summons the Christian faithful at Burgundy for a Second Crusade to the Holy Land in this 19th-century steel engraving.

The Granger Collection, New York

large crusader-held city, Edessa, fell to Zangi's forces in 1146, panic spread across Europe that the new Muslim threat was deadly serious. A cry went up for a Second Crusade to destroy the infidels before Jerusalem was retaken. Unlike the First Crusade, which was ordained by the pope, the new call came from private individuals, including the fanatical Cistercian abbot, Bernard of Clairvaux, who tore up his own habit to make cloth crosses for the departing soldiers. It was in this environment of violent religious retribution that the idea of a separate Wendish crusade took root.

AT THE TIME, THE WENDS WERE LIVING AROUND THE BALTIC SEA IN NORTHERN EUROPE, OCCUPYING parts of what would become Germany, Prussia, and Poland. During the Middle Ages, the Baltic was known as "the Barbarian Sea," which indicates the prevailing attitude that western Europeans held toward the Wendes at the time. The Wendes practiced a pagan faith, and by the 12th century they found themselves trapped on a virtual island of supposed impiety, surrounded by a sea of fervent Christians. Most of western Europe had converted to Christianity centuries before, and the eastern lands of the Poles and Russians had also become Christianized. The Wendes' southern border abutted the remnants of the Byzantine Empire; to the north resided the recently converted Norsemen—the Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians.

The Wendes' unorthodox social behavior confused visiting monks, who reported that the Wendes had a perplexing habit of kindness to strangers and a wealth of resources that they adamantly refused to exploit, believing as they did in the natural sanctity of the earth. While they used their abundant furs and agricultural goods to trade for woolen cloth, the Wendes had little use for gold or silver. Despite their reputation for reflexive hospitality, the Wendes did not like Christian mis-



German knight Heinrich der Lowe, or Henry the Lion, was a cousin and supporter of Frederick Barbarossa, the Holy Roman emperor in the late 12th century.

sionaries coming into their lands uninvited, and they either drove out or killed the more determined priests who were foolish enough to ignore their threats.

The Wendes violated the natural order of God, according to western Christian thought, by having no organized feudal government. Instead, the majority lived under a primitive form of democracy, with a sitting council of elders, including both men and women, that held court to rule on thorny issues. Military power was in the hands of local warlords who might loosely rule an area, but their power was weak at best, held together only by feats of arms. Internal fighting between the warlords kept the Wendes divided and disjointed. Meanwhile, they were constantly under assault from European slave hunters and would disappear into the forests whenever they felt threatened. (The word "slave" is derived from "Slav," so not all their evasion efforts were successful.)

Wendish slaves were much prized in both Muslim courts and Christianized Europe. The Wendish men were tall and muscular, the women pleasant to look at and physically endowed. Both sexes

were noted for their ash-blond hair and piercing blue eyes, and both were taller than most other people of the time. It was not until the Wendes were driven out of their lands by the Germans and Danes and began breeding with other cultures as they moved eastward that they eventually lost their characteristic physical appearance. The majority began taking on the darker skin, hair color, and eyes that much later would be used to "prove" that the Slavs were non-Aryan and therefore subhuman.

In the 6th century the Wendes were conquered by the Avars, a people who, like themselves, came originally from the steppes of Russia. The Avars forced the Wendes to herd and store fodder for their cattle, their main food supply and basic staple of economy. So great was the Avars' dependence on their cattle herds that they even ordered the Wendes to rebuild their villages in a giant circle so that the inner courtyards could be used as large pens for the cattle. Eventually, the Avars' empire began to crumble, and the Wendish population conversely exploded near the end of the 7th century, spreading along the Baltic coast to the land west of the Elbe River and almost the entire Balkan peninsula to the south, and from the Danube River to Russia in the east.

The inability of the Wendes to unite militarily proved to be their Achilles' heel. No one doubted that they were formidable warriors. As excellent metalworkers, they far surpassed most Europeans in the production of fine weapons and armor. Their superb military skills and superior armament would have made them a force to contend with if they had ever managed to unite under one ruler. The Byzantines—no mean warriors themselves—openly feared the Wendes, and the Germans, for all their vaunted skill at arms, would need centuries to conquer the Slavic region.

In the 12th century, there was still no monolithic German state. Each city and region had its own rulers and bishops, loosely under the control of the Holy Roman emperor, who theoretically protected the region against foreign invasion. However, the emperor at that time, Henry V, had been preoccupied for decades with the Rhineland, Italy, and southern Germany; most of the northern regions, such as Bremen and Magdeburg, were left to fend for themselves. None of the minor kingdoms, however, had forsworn their right as Christians to seize the territories to their east from the supposed heathens who inhabited the land. In 1108, the religious leaders of Magdeburg called on their fellow Christians to take such land from the Slavs. From 1110 to 1124 one noble named Lothair attempted to do just that. He formed alliances

with local warlords and grabbed a large portion of eastern territory for himself. In 1125, Lothair became king of the Germans, but when he died in 1137 a dispute arose over his rightful successor, and the Slavic lands he had conquered were mostly neglected.

During the search for a new successor, many of the poor German landowners on the borderlands between the Slavs to the east and the Saxons to the west decided to increase their holdings by taking land from their Wendish neighbors. From 1140 to 1143, scores of Saxon families streamed into Wendish lands and set up wooden palisade forts, halls, and stone towers. Two of the larger and more powerful lords, Count Adolph II (who believed the Wends and Germans could live side by side) and his powerful rival, Henry of Badewide (who did not) advanced farther east and seized several towns that had been christianized years before and technically were not up for grabs. However, Henry quickly and conveniently made the missionary priest in one of the towns a bishop, and all political and theological quibbles were swept under the rug.

By 1147, the once-powerful Wendish overlord, Prince Nyklot, had lost a large portion of his western kingdoms, while territory in the south had been seized by another German warlord, Albert the Bear. What already had been a century of constant border raiding and small-scale skirmishes was turning into a flood of German invaders. To make matters worse, at the start of the year the Wends themselves initiated a raid that ultimately would work against them.

The Wendish lands under Count Adolph II were actually in a good situation. The count believed that the Wendish people and his German newcomers could work together. His policy was working, but it also inadvertently caused fear among neighboring tribes that their own ways of life might be endangered. Shortly after the start of the new year, fanatical Wendish warriors from one of these tribes attacked and slaughtered the people of Adolph's lands, Germans as well as Wends. This large and ill-timed raid ruined Adolph's fortunes and ended the career of the Wends' best German ally. When Bernard of Clairvaux came to Germany a short while later to call for a crusade against the Saracens, the anger from this residual raid helped tip the scales against Nyklot's people.

With his enormous personal charisma, Bernard quickly raised 25,000 crusaders from France and southern Germany to head for the Holy Land (only a fifth of that number actually reached Palestine). Bernard made little headway raising troops in Spain, where constant skirmishes between various small kingdoms



The Art Archive/National Museum Copenhagen/Dagji Orit (A)

**Danish King Valdemar the Great united Denmark and annihilated the Wendish fleet off the Falster coast in 1172.**

preoccupied the Spanish more than the call for a new crusade. Northern Germany was a different matter—the Germans had both the manpower and the funds to answer the call, but as Bernard was about to discover, they did not necessarily have the will.

When Bernard attended a Reichstag (townhall meeting) at Frankfurt, he found the nobles arguing for an attack against the pagans to their east. So animated was their argument that Bernard sent the matter to Pope Eugenius for consultation. On April 13, 1147, Eugenius issued a divine dispensation permitting the Germans to attack the pagan Wends under the spiritual guidance of Bishop Anselm of Havelburg. The crusaders were allowed to wear sacred crosses on their surcoats, and Bernard instructed the crusaders on the fine points of how to treat the Slavs who fell under their control. “With God’s help,” said the abbot, “they shall be either converted or deleted.” Mercy was not to be allowed—it was either baptism or slaughter. During the rush to convert the heathens, no one seemed to notice that most of the money used to outfit the crusade had come from tribute regularly paid by the Wends themselves to the Germans living along their border.

THE GERMANS WERE NOT THE ONLY SUPPORTERS OF A WENDISH CRUSADE. THE DANES ALSO SAW A golden opportunity, not so much to gain land and wealth, but to eliminate a troublesome people who had waged piracy on Denmark’s ships for generations and vied with them for the lucrative sea trade in the Baltic region. To the east of the Wends, the Poles also saw a chance to grab land for themselves, again with the full authority of the pope. In the ill-starred year of 1147, the Wends found themselves facing simultaneous invasions from the west, east, and north.

When he realized his predicament, the capable and fiercely proud Prince Nyklot, who had lost lands in the south and along the western frontier over the past several years, launched a counterattack into Wagria, a region belonging to Adolph II, in June 1147. Weakened and shaken by the loss of the lands to the east in the earlier attacks, the region fell quickly to the Wendish attackers, and the immense devastation of the German villages gave added inducement to the assembling armies to attack the heathens who had dared take German lands.

By the late summer of 1147, two Danish fleets and two large Saxon armies attacked the Wends.



**Cape Arcona, on the island of Rügen, was seized by Valdemar in 1168. Remains of a pagan temple dedicated to the four-headed god Swietowit are still present today.**

While the Danes harried the northern shore, Duke Henry, the so-called Lion of Saxony, launched his army against Nyklot's outpost at Dobin. At the same time, the southern pincer attacked with two armies—one led by the legate Anselm from Havelburg and at least six other bishops—driving toward Poland. The other army was led by two southern German margraves, or military governors, Conrad and Albert the Bear, who initially started toward the Wendish stronghold at Demmin, 135 miles away. Instead of driving to the original objective, however, the bishops convinced the two nobles to unite with them and march eastward.

Nyklot was not without tactical reasoning. He had chosen to make his stand at Dobin because it was the only ground surrounded by both marshland and a lake. From this strongpoint, Nyklot kept two armies in the northern pincer occupied with a much smaller defensive force. The Danes, the third army in the northern forces, having landed in Wendish territory, were hampered by the need to protect the harbors for the Danish fleet. Nyklot sallied forth from Dobin and mauled the Danes, cutting off the Danish warriors from Saxon support while a Wendish fleet made a surprise attack on the Danish shipping that lay at anchor in the northern harbors. The fighting was done close-in with war axes, 5-foot-long swords, and 11-foot-long lances equipped with iron, leaf-shaped heads ideal for piercing. Mounted warriors also favored maces (iron-headed clubs) and war hammers (sledges fixed to iron shafts). Heavy armor made of chain mail, scale mail, or toughened leather provided a modicum of protection.

THE TWO DANISH KINGS, CANUTE V AND SWEYN III, SOON BECAME FED UP WITH THEIR COMBINED defeats and, blaming each other for the losses, raced back to Denmark to continue their long-standing civil war. Meanwhile, Henry the Lion and Archbishop Adelbero lay siege to Dobin until the Wends, battle weary and starving, finally agreed to relent and be baptized. Once the Wends fulfilled their promise, the Saxon forces quickly withdrew and the knights even stopped their foot soldiers from pillaging the area, declaring the land and its people to be fellow Christians. (Nor did they want to destroy a perfectly good base for future attacks.)

To the south, the armies of Conrad, Albert the Bear, and various ad hoc religious leaders began to fall apart. Instead of attacking the Wends, they marched to the Christian city of Stettin, near Poland, and lay siege to the town. Both the bishop and the prince of the besieged city came out to parley with the southern army leaders, arguing successfully that they were in the wrong area and had no rights to the city. The Saxons discussed taking the city anyway, but in the end the religious leaders won out and the Saxon army, disgusted that no great plunder was to be allowed, returned home empty handed.

The first year of the crusade against the Wends was more show than conquest. Nyklot, who eventually surrendered the Dobin garrison and instructed his men to convert, had no real intention of embracing Christianity. The pagan shrines and idols remained, and the Wends returned to them as soon as the last Saxon banner was out of sight. The cohesion of the Saxons, Danes, and Poles crumbled in less time than it had taken church leaders to convince the various groups

to unite in the first place. The Danes, for their part, believed that the Saxons had accepted a bribe to stand by idly while the Wends mauled the Danish forces. The Saxons, in contrast, thought the Danes weak and unfit for alliance. The bishops could not stop bickering among themselves over tithes and titles, and the barons despised the fact that the church claimed all conquered land for its own. Most important, for Nyklot at least, was the fact that not a foot of Wendish territory had been taken.

The church suffered most from the Wendish debacle. Saint Bernard had urged the soldiers to convert the heathens, but as the bishop of Stettin said when he watched the crusading army depart, "If they had come to strengthen the Christian faith ... they should do so by preaching, not by arms." Many churchmen felt that conversion of the Wendish pagans should depend not on military might, but on missionary zeal. Bernard's reputation as a crusading leader dwindled. Other Christian monks, however, began preaching that their divine mission was still being hindered by devil-worshipping Wendish pagans. These pagans, they said, were either going into the baptismal pool or under the sword. For over a century, German missionaries had attempted to convert the heathens in the region, with martyrs by the score to show for their efforts. By 1147, the religious community of Saxony felt strongly that Wendish soil had been sanctified by these martyrs, and that the heathens—native or not—had no right to sacred land made holy by the blood of their martyred saints.

For the time being, the Wends were left relatively alone, blissfully ignorant of the coming storm, while the Germans bickered among themselves over who would rule the Holy Roman Empire. In 1152, Frederick Barbarossa became the new Holy Roman emperor. Barbarossa, like his predecessors, was more interested in southern Europe and Italy, caring little about the Wendish pagans to the east. Unfortunately for the Wends, however, his cousin Henry the Lion had his eyes set firmly on the east and already had started building a power base to seize more Wendish territory. In the process, Henry made an enemy of the equally greedy and land-hungry archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, who claimed a portion of the Wendish lands for the church (and himself), even though not a single church had been built there, nor had he ever visited the region.

Henry the Lion's intrusion into Wendish territory was sporadic and temporary, but to the north of him lay the lands of Adolf II of Holstein, who waged almost nonstop war against the Wends, not for religious reasons, but for

territorial and mineral rights. At the same time, the religious orders continued with their own schemes as well.

The most zealous of these orders was led by Eskil, a Danish noble who became archbishop of Lund in 1138 and held the position for 40 years. Eskil encouraged the building of monasteries and ordered Danish warriors to stop slaughtering those Wends who promised to be baptized. But Eskil had a warlike side, as well. When his army and that of Danish king Valdemar moved against the Wends in 1159, Eskil led his men with such unrelenting vigor that he reprimanded his warriors whenever they stopped to rest. Eskil and his minions harried the Wends relentlessly until his death in 1177.

After their brief respite in 1147, the death knell began ringing again for the Wends. Henry the Lion had grown wealthy off the land he had conquered, building cities and trade centers and profiting equally from his beneficial arrangement with both the German and Wendish peoples. He and the majority of his vassals made peace with Nyklot, who had fought hard to hold onto his land but now found the trade with Henry and his allies more profitable and far less painful. From 1147 to 1164, however, several other Wendish princes fought to recover the taxes Henry had wrung from their lands. During one of these rebellions, Henry joined forces with Danish King Valdemar to attack the Wends once more. While the Danes ravaged the coasts, Henry marched his forces into the hinterlands. In a ferocious battle in 1160, Nyklot was killed and his sons were driven across the Warnow River. In 1164, one of Nyklot's sons, Pribslav, attacked and retook the lands lost four years before and even smashed a large Saxon army at Verchen, near Demmin. For the last time, Henry allied with Valdemar and finally drove off Pribslav, but the two Christian leaders had a falling out a year later, when Valdemar refused to share the spoils he had acquired during a raid on the Baltic coast.

A reorganization of the church in 1164 stopped the intense taxation on the conquered territory, and the Wendish princes in the area curtailed their efforts for independence. In 1166, Pribslav even married one of Henry's daughters. Their son, Henry Burwin, eventually became the Duke of Mecklenburg, a large area of northern Germany north of the Elbe River. This marked a period of uneasy peace between the Wends and the Germans. A more dangerous threat existed with the Danes, against whom Henry now encouraged the Wends to fight.

The Danes and Wends had raided and plundered each other for centuries, but strife within

the Danish kingdom had always barred the Danes from making a true military campaign against their ancient rivals. All this changed in 1162, when King Valdemar united Denmark under his rulership. One of his first orders of business was to take the northern coast of the Wendish lands as his own. Accordingly, he seized Arcona and harried Mecklenburg so much that Pribslav was forced to appeal to the Germans for aid against the Danish attacks. The Germans were unable (or unwilling) to help, aside from sending a few advisers and engineers, and the Wendish fleet subsequently was annihilated by the Danes off the Falster coast on December 6, 1172.

In 1177, Valdemar defeated the Mecklenburg Wendish forces in battle and seized their territory. When Valdemar died in 1182, the Wends again rose in rebellion, but subsequently were defeated by Valdemar's son, Canute. Canute captured and imprisoned the major Wendish leaders in the region, including Henry Burwin, Pribslav's son. Eventually, Canute relented and restored Burwin as Duke of Mecklenburg. But although Germany still controlled the region's churches, the land was effectively under Danish rule.

By now, a large chunk of Wendish lands had been irretrievably lost, and even though this area would later regain a measure of autonomy, the Wends' cherished way of life was gone forever. During the most recent Danish raids, the Wends' land was burned and flooded, and the people living on it were slaughtered mercilessly. The Wendish will to resist had been completely crushed

by countless years of unrelenting warfare. In 1185, the final Wendish prince with any real power, Bogislav, made one last attack against the Danes and lost—he even managed to lose his horse. The next day he opened surrender negotiations with Archbishop Absalon of Denmark and was carried back to his tent, weeping and drunk, after the negotiations were completed.

From 1147 to 1185, northern Europe went through a great metamorphosis. The German Christian church gained power internally while the nobility was off fighting for Wendish lands. In civil war-torn Denmark, a new unity became possible after the people joined forces against their ancient enemies, the Wends. With the forced conversion of the Wends, the church assumed a divine right to lead future crusades for the conversion of the east. Future generations of Wends would even join these crusades, their nobles and knights entering such holy orders as the Teutonic Knights of Germany to wage holy war for land and profit.

Many of the Wendish people escaped eastward, but those who remained behind eventually made common cause with the Christians to root out their cousins. Until the mid-16th century there

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**The pagan Wends, on the eastern edge of Western Europe, unwittingly brought destruction on themselves by refusing to support the Second Crusade. As slaves, they were much prized by both Christians and Muslims.**


would be almost continuous warfare against pagan enemies real or imagined. The Wendish Crusade was merely the first of many, including the Baltic Crusade against Livonia, Prussia, Estonia, and Finland (1200-1292), the Lithuanian Crusade (1283-1410), and the Novgorod Crusade against the Russians (1400-1562).

In the end, the Wends were shunned by history and even by the very people who conquered and absorbed them. When Adolf Hitler rose to power in the 1930s in Germany and denounced the Slavs as subhuman and corrupt, he was only echoing the words of those fiercely devoted Christian knights who rode out to battle eight centuries before to destroy the devil-worshipping heathens to the east. Hitler didn't invent ethnic cleansing—he merely hearkened back to the fate of the Wends. □

# “TO THE STORMING WE MUST COME”

## BENEDICT ARNOLD'S INVASION OF CANADA

On the snow-blasted Plains of Abraham, exhausted American forces prepared to launch an all-out attack on the English citadel at Quebec. It was a recipe for disaster.



The death of Colonial Brigadier General Richard Montgomery at Quebec is vividly, if romantically, depicted in this oil painting by John Turnbull done 11 years after the attack.



**FRESH FROM HIS CAPTURE OF FORT** Ticonderoga, Colonel Benedict Arnold in the summer of 1775 lobbied hard to the Continental Congress for authorization to lead an expedition to the lower St. Lawrence River and attack the English citadel at Quebec. He was prepared, said Arnold, “to carry the plan into execution and, with the smiles of Heaven, to answer for the success of it.” However, after careful consideration, Congress gave the command to Maj. Gen. Philip Schuyler, a prominent New York landholder, with Brig. Gen. Richard Montgomery, an ex-British captain, serving as his second in command.

Enraged, Arnold hastened to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and requested an immediate interview with General George Washington, commander-in-chief of the American forces. Washington was so impressed with Arnold’s bearing and fire that he authorized him to lead a second, complementary invasion of Canada. According to the best information available to Washington, the British had only one company at Quebec but could draw on an additional 1,100 troops from Montreal and other forts. Washington was afraid that even the weak force under General Sir Guy Carleton’s leadership might prevail against a Schuyler-Montgomery attack. To improve the invasion’s chance of success, Washington modified his original plan of attack to include Arnold’s diversionary force. He reasoned that if Carleton followed Arnold’s force, it would leave the way open for Schuyler, or if he blocked the Schuyler-Montgomery expedition, this would allow Quebec to fall into Arnold’s hands.

The logistical difficulties behind Washington’s plan were formidable. First, a force of about 1,100 men, the equivalent of a battalion including three rifle companies, would be required for the diversionary expedition. They were to land in Maine, where they would ascend the Kennebec River in flat-bottomed boats (bateaux), then negotiate a hard portage to the Dead River. From there they would pole on to Height of Land and finally move up the Chaudiere River to its mouth, opposite Quebec. This trek looked feasible on a map. However, plans, maps, and surveys all failed to take into account the heavy waterfalls, boiling rapids, killing portages over steep ridges, and normal run of accidents that men might encounter traveling by bateaux. Most of all, the plan failed to take into account the unforgiving climate the men would have to face.

**BY EARL ECHELBERY**



**ABOVE:** Wet, freezing weather and epidemic dysentery afflicted the American forces on the arduous trek to Quebec. **OPPOSITE:** General George Washington authorized Benedict Arnold to mount a second, complementary invasion of Canada, hoping to increase the chances of success.

Following the advice of Washington to “use all possible execution, as the winter season is now advancing,” Arnold threw himself headlong into the task of recruiting volunteers from the troops stationed around Cambridge. As a result of his zeal and promise of action, Arnold was able to assemble 10 companies of men from the New England colonies. To these numbers Washington added three additional rifle companies, two from Pennsylvania and the other one from Virginia, drawn by lot. The men were dressed like typical backwoodsmen, in buckskins, hunting shirts, and moccasins. Across the fronts of their broad-brimmed hats they had stitched the words: LIBERTY OR DEATH.

ARNOLD’S COMMAND WAS NOW READY TO MARCH. SPEED WAS THE PRIMARY REQUISITE—THE MARCH must begin before summer slipped away. Washington had chosen wisely in selecting Arnold to lead the expedition. He was a man of stamina, enterprise, ambition, and daring, a natural-born leader but not a driver, a man with complete confidence in his native ability.

Arnold placed Captains William Hendricks and Matthew Smith in charge of the two Pennsylvania rifle companies and Captain Daniel Morgan was in charge of the Virginians. The first battalion was headed by Lt. Col. Roger Enos, with Major Jonathan Meigs serving as his assistant. The first battalion comprised four companies headed by Captains Thomas Williams, Henry Dearborn, Oliver Hanchet, and William Goodrich. The second battalion was led by Lt. Col. Christopher Greene and Major Timothy Bigelow. The second battalion’s company commanders were Captains Samuel Ward, Jr., Simeon Thayer, John Topham, Jonas Hubbard, and Samuel McCobb. A detachment of 50 artificers led by Captain Reuben Colburn joined the expedition prior to its ascent of the Kennebec River. The expedition also had a surgeon, Dr. Issac Senter, along with a surgeon’s mate, two assistants, two adjutants, two quartermasters, and a chaplain, Samuel Spring. There were also five “unattached volunteers,” including 19-year-old Aaron Burr (who was accompanied by a teenage Abenaki Indian

princess nicknamed “Golden Thighs”), Matthias Ogden, Eleazer Oswald, Charles Porterfield, and John McGuire.

Since Carleton had stripped off troops to reinforce General Thomas Gage in Boston, prospects of success seemed excellent as Washington addressed Arnold’s men and enjoined them to respect the rights of property and freedom of conscience. He also composed an address to the Canadians: “The cause of America and of liberty is the cause of every American whatever may be his religion or his descent. Come, then, ye generous citizens, range yourselves under the standard of General Liberty, against which all the force and artifice of tyranny will never be able to prevail.” To Arnold, Washington advised, “Upon the success of this enterprise, under God the safety and welfare of the whole continent may depend.”

On the dangerously late date of September 19, Arnold sailed from Newburyport with approximately 1,100 men. They landed three days later at Gardinerstown, where Arnold arranged for a little fleet of coasters and fishing boats to carry his men to the mouth of the Kennebec River. The next day the fleet of boats made its way up the twisting and troublesome river for 49 miles to Reuben Colburn’s shipyard. As the landmen disembarked, overjoyed to have solid ground underneath them again, they saw the bateaux that were to be their transportation up the Kennebec River. Above the bay at Fort Western, Arnold’s men and supplies were transferred to the bateaux. Arnold spent the next several days organizing his army for its 385-mile plunge through the wilderness. On the 25th, two advance reconnaissance patrols were sent upriver to clear a path. A day later the second battalion, led by Greene and Bigelow, followed with three companies of musketeers. Meigs followed with part of the first battalion, while Enos and the remainder of the men made up the rear guard. Each company carried 45 days’ worth of provisions.

From the very first, the going was hard. It took the main body two days to cover the first 18 miles upriver to Fort Halifax. At Taconic Falls the men faced their first challenge, a portage of half a mile around the falls. On aching and raw shoulders the men hauled over 65 tons of supplies, before hoisting each bateaux (weighing 400 pounds apiece) and carrying them to the other side of the falls. The boiling rapids of Five Miles Falls came next, followed by the dangerous half-mile approach to Skowhegan Falls.

In wet and frozen clothes, they continued. Traveling through the heavy rain, they reached Skowhegan Falls on October 1. Getting the

boats up the falls seemed impossible, for the crevice that split the face of the rock was steep and treacherous. Still the men trudged onward, dragging their awkward bateaux. At the top, the boats were patched and reloaded, and the army prepared to move forward. On October 4 they passed the last vestiges of civilization. Taking leave of the settlements and houses at Norridgewock, they spent the next three days navigating Norridgewock Falls.

Rowing, dragging, and sometimes carrying their craft, they moved past rapids and cataracts and across morasses and craggy highlands. With each portage, more and more supplies were ruined. Checking his position, Arnold found that he had spent twice the time allotted for the trip, and he was still on the Kennebec River. Realizing that half the provisions already had been spent, Arnold cut daily rations to half an inch of raw pork and half a biscuit. It was not long before Dr. Senter began to note rampant dysentery and diarrhea among the men.

On October 9 the column pushed forward toward the Curritunk Falls, the next major portage. Having reached the Great Carrying Place, an advance party of seven men was sent out to mark the shortest portage from the Kennebec to the Dead River. After eight miles of portage through forests of pine, balsam fir, cedar, cypress, hemlock, and yellow birch and four miles of rowing across three ponds, they reached the brown waters of the Dead River on the 11th. The rest of the men followed, carrying their boats, baggage, stores, and ammunition, and the next day the expedition reached the Dead River.

Arnold had determined that the distance from the mouth of the Kennebec to Quebec was only 180 miles, requiring 20 days of travel. Although he had provided food for 45 days, his army had been on the journey seven days longer than he had calculated for the whole march and had come less than halfway. Provisions were running low, and his men were now reduced to boiling rawhide and candles into a gelatinous soup. An unfortunate dog that someone had brought along as a mascot was killed and “instantly devoured” by the hungry trekkers.

By October 24, realizing that something needed to be done, Arnold ordered Greene and Enos, commanding the two rear divisions, to send back as “many of the poorest men of their detachment as would leave fifteen days provision for the remainder.” Greene and Enos called their officers together to determine whether they should turn back. “Here sat a council of grimacers,” said Senter, “melancholy aspects who had been preaching to their men the doctrine of impenetrability and non-perseverance.”

While Greene’s men voted to march on, Enos started to the rear with about 300 men, his own division plus stragglers and the sick from other divisions. The retreat was accomplished in 11 days of relatively easy travel.

AFTER 17 PORTAGES, THE MAIN BODY ARRIVED AT HEIGHT OF LAND, GATEWAY TO THE CHAUDIERE River. The gaunt, starving, half-dead men, under the load of the few remaining bateaux, fought their way through a chain of ponds and up the granite walls of the snow-covered Height of Land. The mountains had been clad in snow since September. Now with the winter wind howling around them, the weary men dropped to the ground; some died within minutes. Many of his companions, wrote one soldier in his diary, “were so weak that they could hardly stand on their legs. I passed by many sitting wholly drowned in sorrow. Such self-pitying countenances I never before beheld. My heart was ready to burst.”

The army was reduced to fewer than 700 men in near danger of starvation. Undaunted, Arnold pressed on, hoping to obtain food for his weakened and famished men. On October 27, at the Chaudiere, Arnold received heartening news. Two Indians brought him a letter saying that the people of Quebec rejoiced at his approach and would join the Americans in subduing the British forces. Provisions were pooled, and each man was issued five pints of flour and about two ounces of pork to sustain him for the last 100 miles before the army reached the Canadian settlements.

In the men’s eagerness to descend the rocky channel of the Chaudiere, three boats laden with ammunition and precious stores overturned. With starvation still ahead of them, the army pressed toward the St. Lawrence River. As they proceeded down the Chaudiere, they came upon a French-Canadian settlement, where they were charitably received and given a heaven-sent meal of fresh vegetables and beef. “We sat down,” Senter noted, “ate our rations, and blessed our stars.”

Washington had told Arnold to send an express messenger back to Cambridge if problems arose during the march. From Arnold’s optimistic report stating that his provisions would last another 25 days and that he expected to reach the waters of the Chaudiere in 10 days, putting him within striking distance of Quebec, Washington assumed that Arnold would be in Quebec by November 5. When that day came, Arnold was facing new problems. He had only 650 men left, many of them shivering in their shirts from the winter winds.

On November 8, in an epic struggle against hunger, weather, and terrain, Arnold’s men pushed down the last stretches of the harrowing Chaudiere River. Finally, on November 9, the ragged band of men emerged from snow-covered forests onto the south bank of the St. Lawrence. Their feet shod in raw skins and dressed in tattered clothes, the men marched upriver to Point Levi on the Isle of Orleans. They had taken 45 days, not the estimated 20, to cover 350 miles. But they had arrived, and even though they were too weak to make an effective attack on the Quebec citadel, they were going to attack nonetheless.

In peasant disguise, Carleton had successfully evaded Montgomery in Montreal. Traversing the countryside, he arrived in Quebec on November 19 and at once took command of the British forces stationed there. During the French and Indian War, Carleton had served under Brig. Gen. James Wolfe and had witnessed the rashness of French General Louis Joseph de Montcalm de Saint-Veran in risking battle outside the walls of Quebec. Carleton had his men burn all the boats on the St.

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Colonial gunners wheel a 9-pounder cannon into position outside British-held Quebec.

Lawrence River to prevent Arnold from ferrying troops across the river.

Faced with yet another stumbling block, Arnold set his men to the task of obtaining canoes, dugouts, and scaling ladders. After allowing the men time to recover their strength, Arnold finally was prepared to cross the mile-wide St. Lawrence. His plan was to make a night crossing and land at Wolf's Cove. Using the same rugged path that Wolfe had used during the French and Indian War, Arnold intended to climb to the Plains of Abraham. From there the Americans would boldly challenge the garrison. Just as Montcalm had been drawn into battle outside the garrison's perimeter, Arnold expected Carleton to make the same mistake.

By November 13 Arnold had enough boats to transport his army, except for about 150 men whom he left at Point Levi. At 9 PM, Arnold began the river crossing with 30 vessels. Moving fewer than 200 men at a time, Arnold managed to slip past two armed British vessels three times before daybreak on the 14th. Landing at Wolfe's Cove without cannon and short of ammunition, Arnold led his 500 half-armed musketeers up the steep path to the expanse of land known as the Plains of Abraham, a mile and a half from the city. Marching to the walls of Quebec, Arnold ordered his band to give a cheer. The noise seemed to provoke curiosity inside the town, but nothing more. Inside, Carleton, having served as a subaltern with Wolfe, wasn't going to be tricked by the same stratagem the British had used at Quebec a few years earlier.

Doubting the sympathies of the inhabitants, Carleton kept his men inside the fortress. That evening Arnold sent a messenger under a flag of truce to demand the fort's surrender. Arnold knew his bluff had been called when the British fired upon his emissary. Standing before the towering walls of the great fortress, Arnold realized that his force was far too weak to attempt a move against the great natural citadel. His only hope was that the inhabitants within the walls would rise, but there were no signs of this. Lacking the firepower to mount an attack—his men had only five rounds apiece—and realizing that it was useless to attempt to besiege the town without cannons, Arnold exercised his only remaining option and called for an orderly retreat to Pointe aux Trembles to await the arrival of Montgomery.

Even before Montgomery prepared to leave Montreal, he had reluctantly reached the conclusion that the only way to conquer Quebec was by assault, regardless of the loss in lives that such an attack would entail. He reasoned that a siege would be a long and drawn-out affair, ending when the ice thawed in the spring and allowed British reinforcements to navigate down the St. Lawrence River.

Montgomery's command consisted of little more than 800 men, which he needed to both garrison his conquests and attack Quebec. As the cold winds of November blew, Montgomery sent word to Arnold that he would soon join him at Point aux Trembles. On November 26, Montgomery set

out with 300 men to join Arnold before the gates of Quebec, leaving St. John's under the command of Captain Marinus Willett and entrusting Montreal to Brig. Gen. David Wooster.

On December 2, Montgomery linked up with Arnold, bringing fresh clothes, artillery, ammunition, and provisions of various kinds captured at Montreal. Assuming command of Arnold's famished veterans, Montgomery's combined force consisted of about 1,000 American troops and a volunteer regiment of about 200 Canadians. On December 5, Montgomery's force advanced toward Quebec through a fresh snowfall. Montgomery set up his headquarters on the Plains of Abraham between St. Roche and Cape Diamond and posted Arnold's men in the half-burned suburb of St. Roche.

Intercepting messages between the American commanders, Carleton was well-aware of the strength and disposal of the colonial forces. After Arnold's futile challenge, Carleton had strengthened his force by having Lt. Col. Allan MacLean force-march 400 recruits from Sorel. With these additional men, Carleton now had 1,200 men at his disposal. He confidently awaited Montgomery's advance.

As the fierce Canadian winter set in, snow began to pile up and a raw, blistering wind howled on the shelterless heights around Quebec. Realizing that his ammunition and supplies would not last long enough to starve Quebec into submission, Montgomery sent a peasant woman into the fort with an ultimatum demanding the citadel's surrender. To emphasize his demand, he advanced riflemen near the walls of Quebec. But Carleton again refused to capitulate, saying that he would not parley with rebels. To emphasize his point, he had a drummer boy take the letter from the woman's hands with a set of tongs and toss it, unread, into the fireplace. As the American sharpshooters picked off sentries in exposed positions, Montgomery attempted to throw up earthworks and to raise a battery of six 9-pounders and a howitzer.

The small shells that were thrown by the battery did no essential injury to the garrison. Under a second flag of truce, Montgomery tried again to coerce Carleton to surrender. Again he was rebuffed. It was plain to Montgomery that his bluster and guns had failed to make any visible impression on Carleton. With no heavy guns to batter the walls of Quebec, food running short, and enlistments about to expire, Montgomery prepared for an all-out assault. Montgomery and Arnold decided to wait until the next snowstorm to conceal their movements from the town, then attack the cliff city. Ordering a general review on Christmas night, Montgomery told his men bluntly, "To the storming we must come at last."

Carleton was a capable commander who knew what had to be done for Quebec to hold out. Sensing that Montgomery's attack would be directed against the lower town, he set his defenses accordingly. Montgomery was also a man of capacity, but he lacked Carleton's principal advantage—the great triangular stone citadel. Instead, Montgomery conceived a bold plan for a predawn attack. Following the road that ran along the base of the towering cliffs, Montgomery would lead one division from the west, while Arnold would lead a second attack from the north. Joining forces in the lower town, they would then drive up the slope into the upper town. At the same time, feinting movements were to be launched against the western walls facing the Plains of Abraham.

Preparations were rushed. Men hammered together scaling ladders and armed themselves with hatchets and spears, expecting hand-to-hand combat. Montgomery issued a proclamation designed to inspire his troops: "The [Americans] flushed with continual Success, confident of the Justice of their cause, and relying on that Providence which has protected them, will advance with alacrity to attack the works incapable of being defended by the wretched Garrison behind them." Carleton, expecting an attack, kept flares burning all night along the fortress walls.

On the afternoon of Saturday, December 30, snow clouds gathered and high winds moved in from the northeast. Final orders were issued and the men prepared to launch the attack, which would begin at 2 AM. By early morning on the 31st, with a blizzard howling around Quebec, the two false attacks were launched ahead of schedule. Colonel James Livingston's small Canadian force approached the St. John's Gate but quickly broke and ran, while Captain Jacob Brown's Massachusetts men delivered a sustained fire against the Cape Diamond bastion without any significant effect. The British garrison, now alerted, began beating drums and ringing church bells. Officers ran through the streets of Quebec turning out their troops. Quickly the barricades in the lower town were manned.

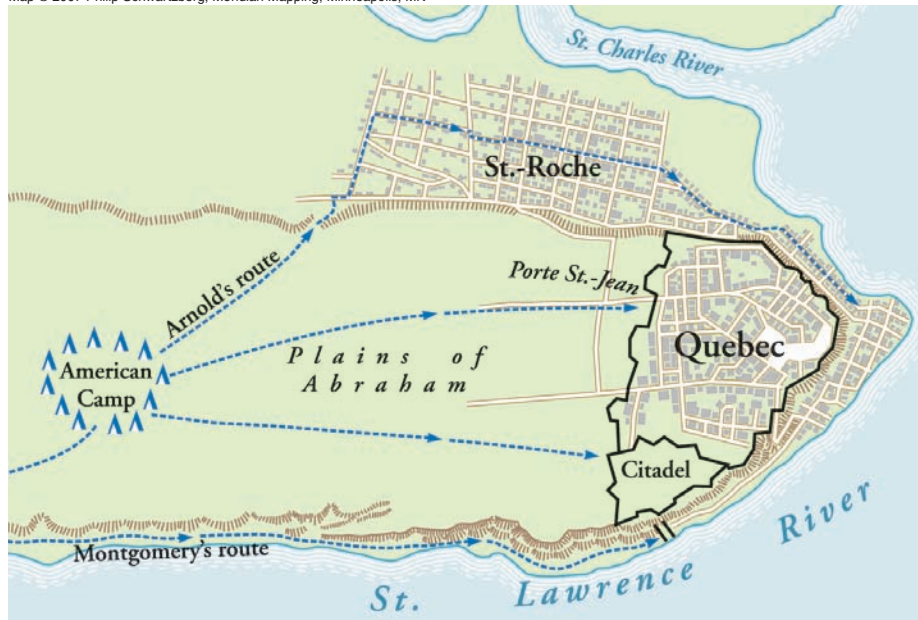
In the early morning hours British Sergeant Hugh McQuarters was alerted by the lights of lanterns descending from the Plains of Abraham, as well as signal rockets. Looking along the track that led east from Wolf's Cove, he soon detected movement. Within the swirling snow the movement became clearer, finally resolving itself into a body of men in formation cautiously pushing forward. In a blinding snowstorm, Montgomery's men descended from the Plains of Abraham and passed safely

around Point Diamond. Upon reaching the first barrier and finding it undefended, Montgomery sent messengers urging his men to hurry along. Moving forward through a narrow defile, he spotted a log house containing loopholes for musketry and two 3-pounders loaded with grapeshot. Inside the blockhouse, McQuarters awaited the enemy's approach with lighted fuses.

Montgomery waited until about 60 men joined him. Then, urging his men forward, he rapidly advanced on the battery. McQuarters, in charge of the loaded cannon, held his fire. The Americans closed to within about 50 yards and halted in the blinding snow. Trying to make out the nature of the obstacle ahead, Montgomery slowly moved forward, followed by two or three others. McQuarters dropped his match to the breech of the cannon. A sheet of flame spewed forth, and a devastating blast of grapeshot tore through the advancing Americans. Montgomery was instantly cut down, along with most of his advance party, leaving the cluster of bodies lying dead in the snow. The balance of the men fell back in panic. Morale shattered, Colonel Donald Campbell assumed command and, leaving the bodies of the slain Montgomery and his men where they fell, ordered an immediate retreat.

Arnold, meanwhile, led his troops in single file on a path along the St. Charles. They passed the Palace Gate unchallenged. No sooner had the main body passed the Palace Gate, however, than the city bells began to ring and the drums beat a general alarm. From the ramparts above came a tremen-

Map © 2007 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



**On December 31, Montgomery and Arnold advanced toward Quebec in a raging snowstorm.**

dous fire. Pelted by musketballs, Arnold and his men ran the gauntlet for a third of a mile. Driving forward into the narrow street, they came upon a barricade mounted with two guns. A musket ball struck Arnold in his left leg, pitching him forward into the snow. Trying to continue the charge in spite of a broken leg, he was finally led to a military surgeon a mile from the battle.

Morgan assumed command, and his men rushed to the portholes in the first battery and fired into them while others mounted ladders and quickly carried the battery. Greene, Bigelow, and Meigs soon joined Morgan at the head of his Virginians and a few Pennsylvanians, swelling their meager force to 200 Americans. They quickly pressed down a narrow lane toward the second barricade at the extremity of Sault au Matelot. Upon reaching the barricade, Greene made a heroic effort to carry it, but upon scaling its walls he was met with a wall of bayonets. The Americans were exposed to heavy fire from both sides of the narrow street. Unable to push forward or retreat, the attackers were quickly overpowered and forced to surrender. A few individuals managed to make their way back to their own lines, but Morgan and 425 other colonials were taken prisoner. Another 60 were killed outright.

The fight for Quebec was over. Arnold and Montgomery's attempt to seize Canada died during the howling snowstorm on December 31. Everything had conspired against its success. Arnold's long trek through the wilderness and Montgomery's delay at St. John's placed their armies before Quebec ill-equipped to either breach the citadel's walls or mount a siege. Their ensuing attack

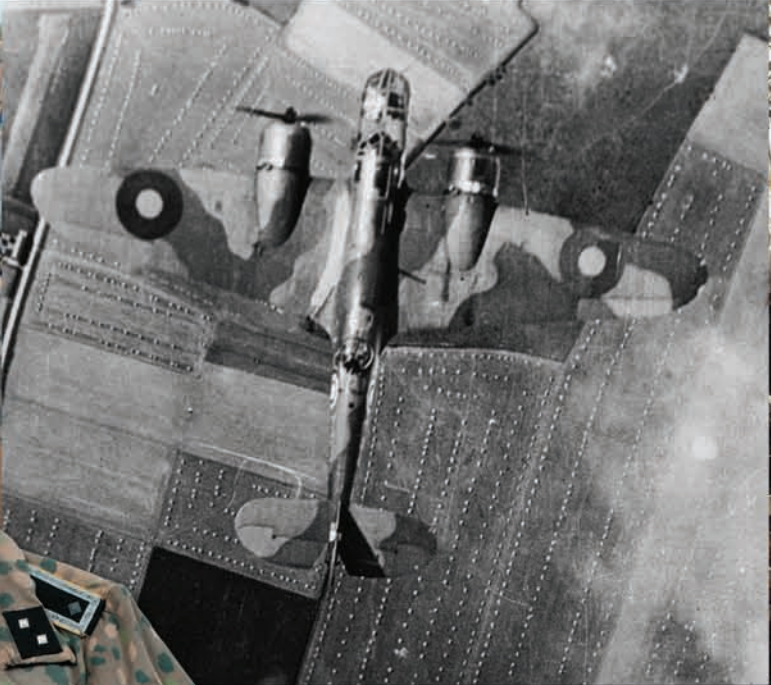
*Continued on page 73*

# CAMOUFLAGE IN WAR AND PEACE

The fascinating story of camouflage tells of the interplay between military developments and the worlds of art, design, and popular culture.



U.S. Army



Imperial War Museum

**TOP:** World War I British hand-painted canvas sniper smock. **ABOVE:** A U.S. soldier (right) in new desert pattern camouflage on patrol with an Iraqi soldier wearing old U.S. chocolate-chip desert camouflage. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A Bristol Blenheim Mark IV in flight; its camouflage reflects the light and dark tones of the fields below. **RIGHT:** A German Waffen-SS combat jacket, trousers, and mittens in the *Erbsemuster*, or pea pattern, introduced in 1944.



Imperial War Museum



INSPIRED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF CAMOUFLAGE IN NATURE, CREATIVITY in the military art of disguise was spurred in World War I by threats of aerial reconnaissance and long-range enemy fire. During World War II, teams of artists, designers, and scientists worked together to create ever more sophisticated modes of camouflage. Today, with modern advances in radar, heat-seeking missiles, and thermal imaging techniques, scientists are developing super high-tech solutions.

Author Tim Newark and publishers Thames & Hudson, Inc., have compiled a stunning coffee table book containing 280 illustrations, most in color. Jonathan Miller, a doctor of medicine who has worked in opera, television, and the visual arts, contributes the first chapter on visual subterfuge in the natural world. He describes the work of the great 19th- and early 20th-century naturalists whose studies paved the way for the military uses of camouflage. Subsequent chapters cover the military applications of camouflage during World Wars I and II. A final chapter covers current and future military uses of camouflage and its popularity as a symbol of subversion, particularly during the Vietnam War. The worlds of high fashion, art, and architecture as well as pop culture in general embraced camouflage patterns, which inspired everything from haute couture gowns to surf boards to modern architectural designs. The interest in camouflage is timeless and universal.



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**ABOVE:** British gunners of the Shropshire Yeomanry operating a 5.5-inch howitzer in Italy during World War II are concealed under camouflage netting.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Venezuelan paratroopers participate in an Independence Day parade in Caracas, July 6, 2005.

**RIGHT:** A British Matilda tank was painted in desert camouflage for combat in North Africa during World War II.



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"CAMOUFLAGE HAS ALWAYS ATTRACTED VISUAL AND CREATIVE TALENTS.... WHEN PICASSO SAW CAMOUFLAGE-PAINTED ARTILLERY IN THE STREETS OF PARIS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR, HE DECLARED 'IT IS WE WHO CREATED THAT.'"

© Reuters/CORBIS



Tim Newark

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**TOP:** British Army sealed pattern khaki tunic of 1902. **ABOVE:** Members of the Women's Voluntary Service attach cloth garnish to camouflage netting in 1942. **RIGHT:** Jean Paul Gaultier designed this camouflage chiffon gown in 2000.





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ABOVE: A model ship was painted in an intricate Dazzle pattern during World War I. The models were viewed through a periscope to see if the pattern successfully deceived the eye.

LEFT: Shakespeare describes Scots warriors using foliage to disguise their advance on Macheth's castle. This image is one of a series of advertising cards used to promote a German meat extract product.

BELOW: During World War II, a Lockheed aircraft factory in Burbank, California, was hidden under a vast array of shrubs, grass, and fake houses.



V-826  
Lockheed Martin Corporation



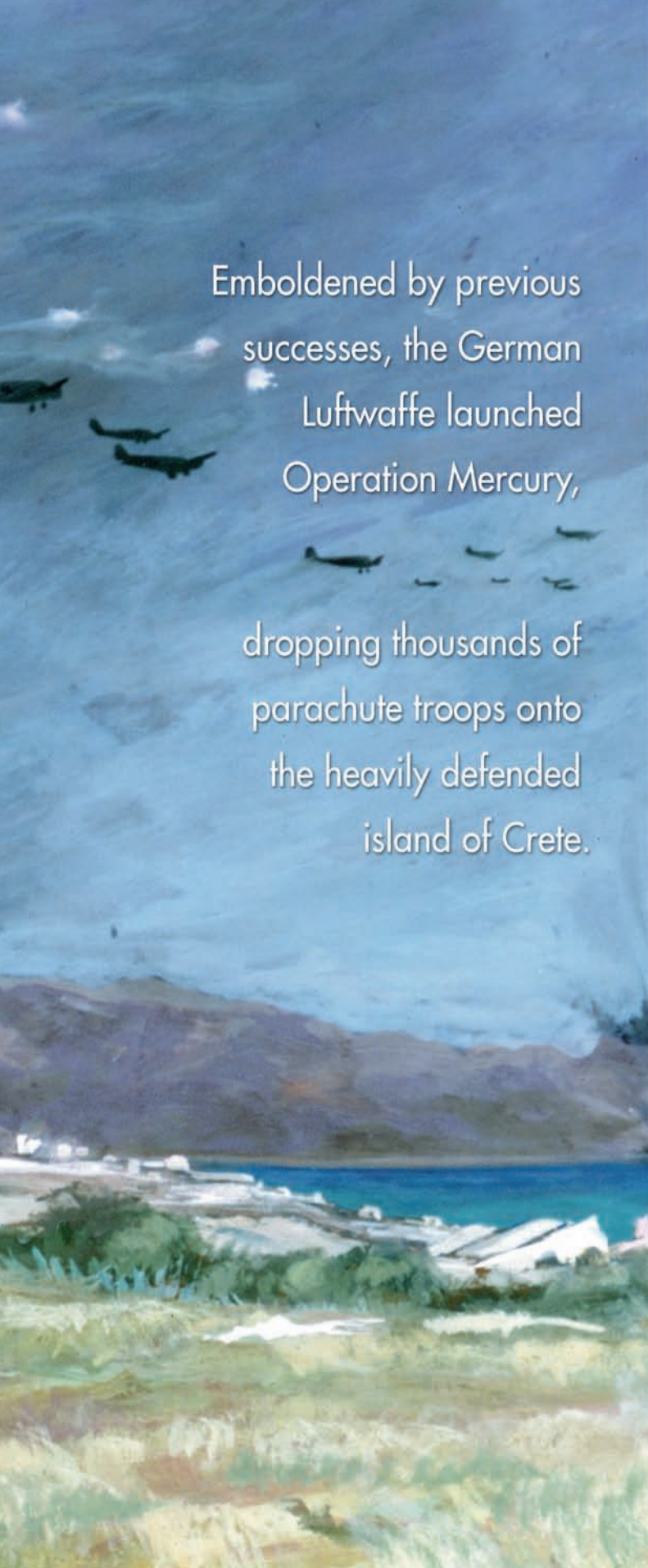
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# DESCENT INTO THE INFERNO

German paratroopers advance across a dangerously open field as their comrades drop from Junkers Ju-52s in the sky above Crete during the opening of Operation Mercury.

A German veteran painted the scene from memory.



Emboldened by previous successes, the German Luftwaffe launched Operation Mercury, dropping thousands of parachute troops onto the heavily defended island of Crete.

BY MAY 1941, THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE'S FORTUNES had risen to great heights and plummeted to equally startling depths in the course of a single year of blitzkrieg warfare in Western Europe. Led by the narcissistic Hermann Göring, a former World War I flying ace, the Luftwaffe had been the perfect complement to the land-based Wehrmacht in the opening months of the war. In Scandinavia and the Low Countries in the spring of 1940, the Luftwaffe's parachute light infantry, or Fallschirmjäger, had seized key objectives to speed the advance of Germany's panzer forces, while high-level and dive bombers had hastened the capitulation of stubborn nations with the deliberate, unmerciful bombing of European cities that dared defy Adolf Hitler.

But Luftwaffe fortunes soured during the evacuation of Dunkirk and the ensuing Battle of Britain, when the air force failed to deliver promised victories. In the wake of the disastrous air war, Göring was like a gambler down on his luck. The Reichsmarschall was desperate to restore his prestige and that of his beloved Luftwaffe. The Royal Air Force may have gotten the better of the Luftwaffe in the skies over Britain, but Göring's paratroopers were as yet undefeated. After Nazi forces surged into the Balkans in the spring of 1941 to redeem Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's misbegotten invasion of Greece, Göring hoped the Luftwaffe would have another opportunity to shine for the notoriously hard-to-please Führer.

Lieutenant General Alexander Löhr, the commanding general of the Luftwaffe's 4th Air Fleet, and Major General Kurt Student, commander of the XI Air Corps, presented plans for an invasion of Crete that would be conducted solely by Luftwaffe paratroopers. Göring was sold on the idea immediately. A successful airborne invasion of Crete would restore him to the Führer's good graces. The stakes were high—Göring was betting that his airborne corps could conquer the strategic island with little or no assistance from the Wehrmacht.

## BY WILLIAM E. WELSH

The island, located 60 miles from the southernmost tip of mainland Greece, measures 160 miles east to west and ranges from 12 to 30 miles north to south. Its people live mostly on narrow strips of fertile land on the north and south shores. The fertile belts give way to foothills, which are overshadowed by volcanic mountains that soar to more than 8,000 feet. Its large size could accommodate multiple airfields, and an enormous natural harbor at Suda Bay could shelter a large number of vessels. Student's plan for invading Crete was to make simultaneous drops at seven key objectives on the northern coast of the island and reinforce those bridgeheads while the separate groups linked up with each other. But Löhr wanted to concentrate the entire invasion on the western end of Crete, where Maleme airfield and the port of Suda were located, and then march east to capture the rest of the island.



**ABOVE:** Hard-fighting Greek soldiers and civilians displayed a wide variety of uniforms and gear, but all were committed to defending their homeland to the death. **RIGHT:** Brigadier General Julius Ringel and Major General Bernard Freyberg.

To settle the dispute, Göring devised a compromise. Under the final plan for Operation Mercury, Student would command more than 22,000 troops, all of whom would participate in the invasion, either in the initial series of attacks or as reinforcements. Student's XI Air Corps comprised the 7th Airborne Division as well as the 5th Mountain Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. Julius Ringel. The latter replaced the 22nd Air Landing Division, which had been detached to guard the Romanian oil fields. The plan called for 750 troops, drawn from the parachute division, to land by glider, 9,250 by parachute, 5,000 to land on captured airfields, and 7,000 to arrive by sea. Since there were not enough transport aircraft to drop all of the paratroopers at once, two shuttles would be necessary. The plan was to drop the first wave shortly after daybreak and the second wave by mid-afternoon. The first would focus on capturing Maleme airfield, the capital city of Canea, and the port of Suda, while the second would concentrate on taking the Retimo and Heraklion airfields.

ON THE MORNING OF THE FIRST DAY, THE FOUR BATTALIONS OF THE 7TH AIR DIVISION'S STORM Regiment would descend on Maleme airfield by glider and parachute, while the 3rd Parachute Regiment would land near Canea, the capital of Crete, and capture it as well as the port of Suda. The air transport fleet of about 500 Junkers Ju-52s would then return to the mainland, where it would refuel and return with the remaining paratroopers six hours later. In the second wave, the 2nd Parachute Regiment would drop on Retimo, while the 1st Parachute Regiment would land atop Heraklion.

The attacking forces were divided into three groups. Brig. Gen. Eugene Meindl commanded the Storm Regiment that formed western group, Maj. Gen. Wilhelm Sussman commanded the 2nd and 3rd Parachute Regiments in the middle group, and Colonel Bruno Brauer commanded the 1st Parachute Regiment in the eastern group. On the second day, the 5th Mountain Division would be airlifted to the three captured airfields, and Axis convoys would land troops, tanks, artillery, and supplies at the deepwater ports of Suda Bay and Heraklion. The VIII Air Corps, under General Wolfram von Richthofen, would provide air support before and during the invasion, using 650 aircraft, including 280 medium bombers, 150 dive bombers, 180 fighters, and 40 reconnaissance planes.

By May 14, the units of the 7th Air Division had reported to the seven airfields from which they would be flown to Crete. The following day, regimental and battalion commanders were briefed

by Student at his headquarters in the Hotel Grande Bretagne in Athens. Although the glider landings and paratroop drops originally were scheduled for May 17, a delay in transporting 5,000 tons of aviation fuel by tanker through the Adriatic Sea forced Student to postpone the attack until May 20. To further complicate matters, the Germans had failed to accurately estimate the size of the enemy force on Crete, despite regular reconnaissance flights. Not until the final hours leading up to the invasion did Student and his men learn that the Allied force on Crete was four times larger than previous estimates of 10,000 troops.

When mainland Greece fell to the Germans in April, about 18,000 soldiers went to Crete, where they were joined by 12,000 fresh troops from Egypt. The Allied units were integrated, in theory, with 12,000 Greek troops divided into eight regiments, for a total troop strength of about 42,000. General Sir Archibald Wavell, the



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commander-in-chief of the British Middle East Command, flew to Crete on April 30 and immediately replaced General Maitland "Jumbo" Wilson with Maj. Gen. Bernard "Tiny" Freyberg, commander of the New Zealand Division, who had fought under Wilson on the Greek mainland. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent Wavell a message that made it clear the Allies would not give up the island without a fight. "It ought to be a fine opportunity for killing the parachute troops," Churchill wrote. "The island must be stubbornly defended."

Freyberg inherited a difficult situation. The Allied troops evacuated from Greece had abandoned nearly all of their vehicles and heavy weapons. On Crete, their meager arsenal consisted of 49 field guns, eight 3.7-inch howitzers, and 22 tanks. Air cover was nonexistent. Any aircraft that could still fly had returned to Egypt. The various positions around the island were unfortified, and most units were without radios. As for the Greeks, they were armed with antiquated rifles and as little as three rounds of ammunition each.

The British had several advantages, however,

that might help them stall or even repel the Nazi invaders. Most important, they controlled the seas and therefore could intercept any German reinforcements, equipment, or supplies arriving by boat to the island. The Allies would also have more men on the ground during the first day of the battle than the Germans could drop from the sky. Thanks to Ultra, the name given to the deciphered German codes, Freyberg knew shortly after he arrived that the Germans were planning a massive airborne invasion aimed at capturing the three major airfields on the north coast of Crete at Maleme, Retimo, and Heraklion. British intelligence mistakenly believed that the Germans might storm the beaches in the Maleme sector with the help of the Italian Navy, but the Germans had no intention of mounting any sort of beach assault.

Believing that they would one day recapture the island if they lost it to the Germans, the Allies did not destroy the airfields to keep the enemy from using them. Instead, Freyberg selected five key objectives to defend. In addition to the three working airfields, he would also defend Canea and the port of Suda. Holding down Maleme was the New Zealand Division, consisting of the 4th, 5th, and 10th Brigades, along with the 1st, 6th, and 8th Greek Regiments. At Suda Bay, the defense consisted of the Mobile Naval Base Defence Organization under Maj. Gen. Eric Weston, reinforced by two Australian battalions and the 2nd Greek Regiment. In close proximity and guarding the capital of Canea were the 1st Battalion (Royal Welsh Fusiliers), the 1st Ranger Battalion, and the Northumberland Hussars. Freyberg's headquarters was hidden in a quarry near Canea.

The Retimo sector some 31 miles east of Canea was commanded by Australian Brig. Gen. George Vasey. For the sector's defense, he had his 19th Australian Brigade, three batteries of artillery, and the 4th and 5th Greek Regiments. Vasey controlled the brigade from his headquarters at Georgioupolis, located midway between Retimo and Suda Bay. Lt. Col. Ian Campbell of the 1st Australian Infantry Battalion led the Australians who would defend the sector against the initial attack. Another 30 miles eastward was the Heraklion sector commanded by Brig. Gen. B.H. Chappel, who would defend the town and airfield with his 14th Brigade, a battalion detached from the 19th Australian Brigade, and the 3rd and 7th Greek Regiments. Owing to the acute shortage of transport vehicles, the forces at Retimo and Heraklion would be on their own during the invasion.

In the predawn darkness of May 20, the elite paratroopers of the German 7th Air Division boarded the transports and gliders at seven cap-

tured Greek airfields for the flight to Crete. Fifteen men boarded each of the 502 Ju-52s, while another 750 men climbed aboard 75 DFS-230 gliders that would whisk them to the ground fully outfitted to assault anti-aircraft batteries and various key installations. At 4:30 AM, the first of the heavily laden planes bounced down the makeshift runways in southern Greece. Not long after daybreak, the Luftwaffe began a series of bombing runs in preparation for the airborne assault. Hearing the drone of bombers high overhead, Allied troops raced for cover. They huddled in narrow slit trenches as bombs exploded atop their positions, sending white-hot shrapnel slicing through the air. Richthofen employed hundreds of medium bombers to soften up the targets for the first wave of the airborne assault. As soon as the bombers turned back, Stuka dive bombers and Messerschmitt 109s raced in seeking targets of opportunity.

THE SMOKE AND DUST FROM THE BOMBING HAD HARDLY CLEARED BEFORE ALLIED INFANTRY STATIONED around the airfield spotted the gliders carrying elements of the Storm Regiment. One string of gliders touched down in the dry riverbed of the Tavronites, just outside the barbed wire from Lt. Col. L.W. Andrew's 22nd New Zealand Battalion. Meanwhile, transport planes flew over the coastline and began releasing small specks into the sky that blossomed into parachutes in a dazzling array of colors—white, red, green, and yellow. The troops floated to earth under white parachutes, while chutes in other colors denoted weapons canisters, equipment, or supplies. The landscape erupted in small-arms fire. The New Zealanders blasted away at the gliders, killing many of the assault troops before they had a chance to exit the aircraft. One of the first casualties was Major Franz Braun, commander of the 3rd Glider Detachment. Despite the loss of Braun, the paratroopers attacked and captured the Tavronites bridge. Troops on both sides scrambled for cover and good fighting positions.

The capture of Maleme airfield was the sole responsibility of Meindl's four-battalion Storm Regiment, which would arrive by both glider and parachutes. The Germans had plotted a three-pronged attack to capture Maleme. One group of paratroopers would land west of the Tavronites River, another group would land east of the airfield along the coast road, and a third group would land on Hill

107 directly south of the airfield. About two-thirds of the gliders, which formed a strike force known as Task Force Comet, would seize key objectives located adjacent to Maleme airfield. The men from the task force were drawn from Major Walter Koch's 1st Battalion of the Storm Regiment.

The gliders carrying 2nd Lt. Wulff von Plessen's 1st Glider Detachment, which was nearly identical in size to Braun's, bounced to a landing directly behind a battery of Bofors guns at the river's mouth. The paratroopers easily overwhelmed the gun crews, who were armed with only pistols. After disabling the guns, Plessen's men advanced on the northern perimeter of the airfield but quickly found themselves pinned down by the soldiers of Company C of the 22nd New Zealand. While trying to disengage and retreat to German lines along the Tavronites, Plessen was struck and killed by enemy rifle fire.

At the same time that Braun's force scraped to a landing in the riverbed, the gliders of Koch's group and the headquarters of the Storm Regiment's 1st Battalion swooped down onto Hill 107. Fifteen gliders under Koch angled for the southwest slope of the hill, while another 15 gliders touched down on the northeast slope. The glider in which Koch was seated clipped a stone wall, spun around in a circle, and split in half. Despite suffering a severe head wound during the land-

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**This early in the war, British soldiers still carried sword bayonets of the pre-WWI pattern. The older weapons proved invaluable for hand-to-hand fighting in Crete.**

ing, Koch took personal control of the situation, dispatching runners to instruct the paratroopers on his side of the hill to assemble near the wreckage of his glider in a protected seam in the hillside. Like the two other glider groups that landed near Maleme, Koch's paratroopers took heavy fire from the New Zealanders. The losses in Koch's group were so severe that only 25 paratroopers of the 150 who had landed on the southwest side of the hill gathered with Koch in a feeble attempt to storm the hill. The attack was broken up as soon as it was launched.

THE OTHER THREE BATTALIONS OF THE STORM REGIMENT WERE TO DROP BY PARACHUTE ALONG THE coast farther away from Maleme airfield and secure the approaches to the airfield. The 2nd and 4th Battalions of the Storm Regiment, under Major E. Stentzler and Captain Walter Gericke, respectively, dropped west of the Tavronites. These paratroopers reached the ground safely, found their weapons canisters, and formed into cohesive units. Gericke landed closest to the Tavronites, Stentzler farther west. The battalions included two heavy-weapons companies armed with mountain howitzers and antitank guns. Sizing up the tactical situation and realizing that Koch's detachment was in grave peril, Meindl dispatched Stentzler with two companies from the 2nd Battalion on a wide flank march to the south in the hopes of capturing Hill 107 from the rear. Shortly afterward, Meindl was seriously wounded in the chest and Gericke assumed command of the Storm Regiment.

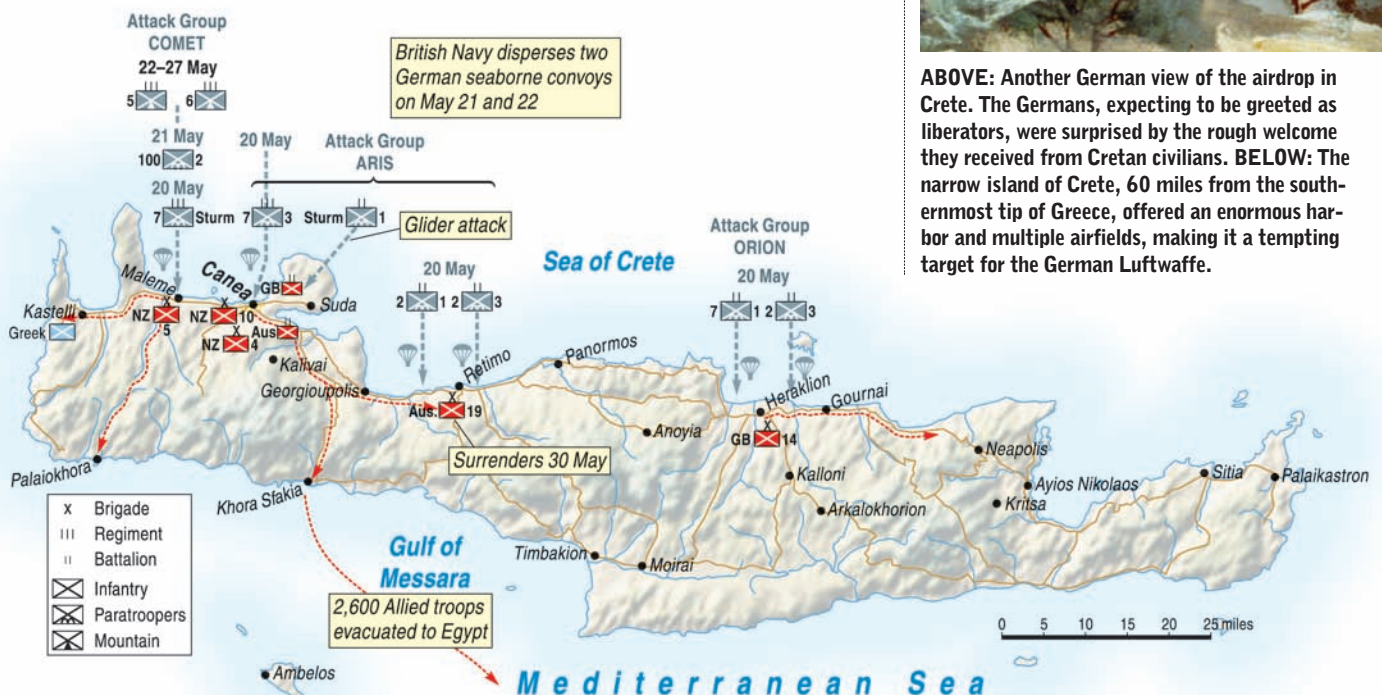
The unluckiest group of Germans in the Maleme sector was the Storm Regiment's 3rd Battalion commanded by Major Otto Scherber. Rather than dropping these men onto the beaches as initially planned, the Ju-52 pilots released them onto the short hills beyond the coast road, where they were shot up by the 21st and 23rd New Zealand Battalions. "They were right on top of us," wrote a New Zealand officer. "Around me rifles were cracking. I had a Tommy gun and it was just like duck shooting." Some of the paratroopers managed to cut their way through to friendly forces along the Tavronites, while others simply took up defensive positions to await rescue.

As the day wore on, the 22nd's Andrew grew increasingly concerned about the consolidation of German paratroop forces along the Tavronites. By the afternoon, Stentzler's flanking group was putting pressure on Hill 107 from the west. Without any reserve, Andrew requested reinforcements from the 5th New Zealand commander, Brig. Gen. James Hargest, but the request was denied on the grounds that the other three battalions in the brigade were equally hard-pressed. Andrew committed his only two tanks to a feeble counterattack toward the Tavronites bridge. One tank turned back because it had the wrong ammunition; the other got stuck on a boulder in the river bed. In light of the failed counterattack, Andrew began to doubt whether he could hold the hill without reinforcements. At one point, he radioed Hargest that he might be forced to withdraw, to which his superior airily replied, "If you must, you must."

The first assault wave at Canea and Suda Bay occurred simultaneously with the airborne attack



ABOVE: Another German view of the airdrop in Crete. The Germans, expecting to be greeted as liberators, were surprised by the rough welcome they received from Cretan civilians. BELOW: The narrow island of Crete, 60 miles from the southernmost tip of Greece, offered an enormous harbor and multiple airfields, making it a tempting target for the German Luftwaffe.



Map © 2007 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN.



U.S. Army Art

on Maleme airfield. One formation of 15 gliders led by Captain Gustav Altmann assaulted an anti-aircraft battery on the west side of Suda Bay, only to find that it was a dummy position with logs arranged to appear from the air as a working battery. The paratroopers were spotted and rounded up by British reserves stationed around Allied headquarters. The second group was scarcely more fortunate. A formation of about nine gliders led by 2nd Lt. Alfred Genz landed virtually on top the 234th Heavy Anti-aircraft Battery. After taking out the battery, the paratroopers were repulsed by Royal Marines when they tried to seize a central wireless station.

The remaining Ju-52s dropped the 3rd Parachute Regiment south of Canea in Ayia Valley for a general advance on Canea and Suda Bay. The area was known locally as Prison Valley because a number of large buildings there formed the island's penitentiary. The men

belonging to the regiment's three battalions floated to earth around 8:15 AM. From their position, they could hear fighting to the north in the direction of Galatos. The 1st and 2nd Battalions landed safely, but the 3rd Battalion was not so fortunate. It landed atop two battalions of Brig. Gen. L.M. Inglis's 4th New Zealand Brigade and suffered a fate similar to that of Scherber's 3rd Battalion of the Storm Regiment. Meanwhile, the four gliders carrying the division headquarters, minus Meindl's glider that crashed before reaching Crete, made a rough landing north of the town of Agia. Lt. Col. Howard Kippenberger, leading the newly formed 10th New Zealand Brigade anchored in Galatos, had made a serious tactical error by not occupying the prison south of his position. The unoccupied compound provided the 3rd Parachute Battalion with a ready-made assembly point from which to launch operations.

THE 3RD PARACHUTE FACED FIERCE RESISTANCE NOT ONLY FROM THE ANZAC TROOPS IN THE CANEA sector, but also from Greek units assigned to both the Canea and Maleme sectors. The 2nd Greek Regiment was deployed to the southeast of Prison Valley, while the 8th Greek Regiment held the area southwest of Prison Valley, including Agia and the roads passing through it. The German high command had assumed that the Cretans, who had no love for the current regime on the mainland, would welcome the invaders. Just the opposite was true. Greek troops and Cretan citizens hunted the German paratroopers with the same determination as the Allies.

Student waited anxiously at his headquarters for reports of the battle. If the attack had gone well, most if not all of the objectives would be in German hands by noon. Since Greek partisans had cut the lines between his headquarters and the Luftwaffe, he received little information in the



**ABOVE:** A Junkers Ju-52 burns furiously as it plunges to the ground on May 21, 1941, over the Akrotiri Peninsula. **BELOW:** Dead German assault troops lie beside the wreckage of their glider. Many were killed before they could even exit the aircraft.



first hours of the attack. Without a reliable communications network, Student had no choice but to let the operation proceed as envisioned. The timetable for the second wave, which was to begin departing as early as 1 PM, quickly became unraveled because the refueling had to be done by hand, and the dust created by the rotor wash on unpaved runways reduced visibility during takeoffs and landings. As a result, the planes took off in small groups. Under such conditions, units would be dropped understrength and might be destroyed piecemeal by the enemy.

The Ju-52s carrying the second wave of Group Center, consisting of about 1,500 men of the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 2nd Parachute Regiment, arrived over the Retimo sector about 4 PM. The planes flew over the coastline east of the drop zone and turned west to make their drops. As during the drops that morning, the paratroopers were scattered widely over a three-mile area. Lt. Col. Alfred Sturm, who would lead the attack at Retimo, had divided his forces into three groups. The 1st Battalion was to land east of the airstrip and capture it intact, the 3rd Battalion

was instructed to land farther west and capture the town and port, and Sturm and about 200 men would attempt to surprise the defenders by dropping directly on the airfield.

Campbell had left the defense of the town of Retimo to an aggressive, 800-strong unit of Greek gendarmes and deployed the two Australian battalions under his command to defend the small airfield located about three miles east of town. His 2/1 Battalion was deployed next to the airfield on a rocky plateau the Allies called Hill A, while the 2/11 Battalion under Major R.L. Sandover was deployed in supporting distance to the west on another promontory known as Hill B. The Australians were dug in tight among the hillside vineyards and determined to hold the airstrip. They had several artillery pieces and two tanks in reserve.

THE 500-STRONG 1ST BATTALION LANDED IN good shape in and around Stavromenos, just east of the Retimo airfield. The force included the regiment's heavy-weapons platoon of mortars, antitank guns, and light artillery, as well as a heavy machine gun company. The 800-man 3rd Battalion was not so fortunate. Only half dropped in their intended location, with the remainder landing adjacent to the eastern slope of Hill A, where they were cut down by Campbell's battalion. Those who landed in the correct location made little headway against the Greek gendarmes. They rushed to take cover among the sand dunes along the beach.

As the 1st Battalion advanced on the airfield, the Australians laid down a wall of fire. Four Australian machine gun teams had stitched themselves into the landscape on the forward slope of Hill A and their fire temporarily halted the better-armed Germans. But the attackers deployed their mortars and methodically set about eliminating the machine gun nests. Outgunned, the Australians pulled back to the reverse slope.

The 2,400-strong eastern battle group in the second wave was bound for Heraklion. Chappel, commanding the Allied forces at Heraklion, positioned the various battalions of his 14th British Infantry Brigade, which were reinforced by an Australian battalion, around the airfield east of the city and braced for the pending airborne assault. The transports began appearing at 5 PM, thundering overhead in classic "V" formations to drop their contingents of paratroopers. The drops, which were spread over a 12-mile area, dragged on far longer than planned because of delays at the mainland airfields. As the planes thundered past, the infantry raked the transports with small-arms fire from atop two rocky peaks known as "the Charlies."

Chappel ordered his reserve tanks into the fight shortly after the paratroopers landed. Two Matildas stationed on opposite ends of the airfield roared to life, as did six more infantry tanks from the 3rd Hussars. The tanks chased down the paratroopers, who were either shot by the tank commanders or run over by the vehicles. Meanwhile, Brauer landed with the 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment, under the command of Major Eric Walther, about a mile east of Heraklion in an area unoccupied by the Allies. Walther's paratroopers immediately marched to assist their surging comrades.

To the west, the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment, under Captain Gerhard Schirmer, landed and set up a blocking position along the coast road in an effort to prevent Allied reinforcements from reaching Chappel. Captain Karl-Lothar Schulz's 3rd Battalion landed near Heraklion and immediately attacked the Greek garrison battalion, which Chappel had assigned to defend the town. A fierce firefight developed as the Germans tried to fight their way into the town. As darkness descended, a counterattack by the 3rd Hussars' tanks drove elements of Walther's 1st Battalion from the eastern edge of the airfield.

When the fighting tapered off after nightfall in the Maleme sector, Freyberg wired Cairo: "The margin by which we hold them is a bare one, and it would be wrong of me to paint an optimistic picture." Shortly after midnight, Andrew issued orders for the 22th Battalion to fall back to the east. Lacking radio communications with his companies, he sent runners to alert the forward companies to withdraw and begin moving east with Companies A and B. Andrew's decision was catastrophic to the Allied defense. By retreating from Maleme, he simply turned over the airfield to the Germans. By 5 AM, the entire battalion was marching toward ground occupied by other units of the 5th New Zealand Brigade.

Not knowing that the 22nd New Zealand Battalion had abandoned Maleme, the Germans feared that a British counterattack the following morning might solidify the Allied hold on Maleme and drive the Germans beyond the Tavronites. That evening word filtered up to the German high command of a possible debacle on Crete. The first day's losses, which later were found to exceed 1,800, shocked the German commanders. Under growing pressure to abort the invasion, Student wracked his brain for a way to turn the battle in the Germans' favor. Working under the assumption that it would be possible to begin landing transports at Maleme on the second day, he ordered 600 reserve paratroopers bound for Heraklion to reinforce the Storm Regiment at Maleme, and



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**Wearing their distinctive rimless helmets, three German paratroopers march toward an assembly point as others land behind them.**

instructed Ringel to prepare the first wave of mountain troops to fly to Maleme that afternoon. Transports began landing at Maleme at 8 AM on the 21st with supplies and ammunition, but the mountain troops would not arrive until the afternoon. Student ordered four more companies of paratroopers dropped in the sector that afternoon. Two companies dropped safely to the west of the airfield, but the other two dropped to the east of the airfield were badly mauled by the 28th New Zealand.

WITH THE GERMANS NOW LANDING TROOPS DIRECTLY ON THE AIRFIELD, FREYBERG ORDERED THE 20th Battalion, 4th New Zealand, and the 23rd Battalion (Maoris), 5th New Zealand, to retake Maleme airfield. Because the attack involved a complicated reshuffling of troops, the Allied attack did not begin until 3 AM on May 22. With less than three hours until daylight, the New Zealanders advanced west along the coast road. The 20th New Zealand moved toward the airfield north of the coast road, while the Maoris advanced south of the road. The New Zealanders quickly became bogged down in house-to-house fighting against isolated groups of paratroopers from Stentzler's battalion, which had been reinforced. By dawn the Allied force was still short of the airstrip and under attack by Luftwaffe fighters and bombers. The Allies broke off their attack that afternoon.

In a significant action at sea that began the night of May 21 and continued the following day, the Royal Navy repulsed two lightly protected German convoys bound for Crete. The first convoy carrying 2,330 men was attacked by a task force made up of three cruisers and four destroyers when it was within 18 miles of Canea. Although most of the Germans were eventually res-

cued from the water, their vessels loaded with weapons and equipment were sunk. A separate task force composed of four cruisers and four destroyers intercepted a larger convoy carrying 5,000 troops bound for Heraklion less than 12 hours later and forced it to return to the mainland.

Despite occasional shelling, German transports were landing at a rate of 20 per hour, at a time when Allied units were exhausted and running short on ammunition. After its unsuccessful counterattack, Hargest's 5th New Zealand withdrew east the morning of May 23. As a result, Maleme became fully operational for the Germans, and ME-109s began operating from Maleme airfield. Ringel, who had arrived May 22, divided the troops into three battle groups for the advance from Maleme to Canea. The next day the Germans drove the Allies back onto a series of hills known as Galatos.

When the sun rose on May 25, five resupplied German battalions faced two New Zealand battalions low on ammunition. Throughout the morning, the Germans pounded the Allied positions with mortar and heavy artillery fire in preparation for the assault. At noon, they advanced across the intervening ground. In the fighting that afternoon, Brig. Gen. Hermann Ramcke's paratroopers overran D Company, 18th Battalion, and the battalion's other three companies fell back to reorganize. At 4:30 PM, a dozen Stukas screamed down on Major John Russell's position around Galatos.

By late afternoon, a steady stream of Allied soldiers was flowing to the rear. With the withdrawal from Galatos, the last Allied hopes of stopping the German offensive and retaining the island evaporated.

Australian War Memorial



**ABOVE:** German soldiers zero in with their light machine guns on Allied artillery on the island of Crete. **OPPOSITE:** German shells burst among the waterfront installations during the evacuation of Australian troops. This photo was taken aboard HMAS *Perth*.

ated. The New Zealand Division, along with Vasey's two veteran Australian battalions, had no other choice but to fall back on Canea. The next morning, Freyberg informed Wavell that the Allies were losing the battle because of the number of fresh German troops arriving daily and the constant harassment by German fighters and bombers. "No matter what decision is taken by the Commanders in Chief from a military point of view our position is hopeless," he wrote.

As the situation grew increasingly chaotic, Freyberg radioed Wavell on May 27 that the garrison must be evacuated before it was destroyed. Wavell informed Churchill of the situation, and the prime minister reluctantly gave his permission for the British Navy to once again remove Allied ground forces from harm's way. Wavell suggested that Freyberg retreat east toward Heraklion, but Freyberg planned a fighting withdrawal through the mountains to the small fishing village of Sfakion on the southern coast. From there, the troops from the

western sector would be evacuated by ship to Alexandria, Egypt.

As Freyberg and Weston prepared to depart for Sfakion, the reserve force braced itself to receive the German attack. The attack began at 8:30 AM, when German mortars began pounding the Allied positions. Soon, the men on the battle line heard a large volume of fire in their rear. With the continuing influx of reinforcements, Ringel had reorganized his forces into five regimental-size battle groups. Ramcke and the 100th Mountain tied down the reserve's front, while the 3rd Parachute swung behind, catching it in a classic pincer move. Ringel ordered the 85th and 141st Mountain Regiments to tramp east toward Suda Bay.

The Germans quickly annihilated the reserve force. The front line evaporated and the British soldiers were reduced to fighting in small isolated groups. About one-fifth of the 1,250-man force managed to escape, while the rest were killed or captured. By the time the reserve force was annihilated, the Allied forces in western Crete were in full retreat south toward Sfakion. Ringel assigned Lt. Col. August Wittman, the 5th Mountain's artillery commander, to lead a motorized vanguard to relieve the 2nd and 1st Parachute Regiments at Retimo and Heraklion, respectively. The force included a battalion each of motorcycle, antitank, motorized artillery, and engineers.

The Allied troops marching toward Sfakion fought a series of small actions on May 28 with elements of the 5th Mountain Division as var-

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Australian War Memorial

ious elements withdrew south through the villages of Megala Khorakia, Stilos, and Baba Hani. The following day, the Germans divided their forces. The main body, consisting of Wittman's advance guard and the 85th and 141st Regiments, pushed eastward, encountering little resistance until they reached Retimo later in the day. Deceived by poor intelligence into thinking that only a small portion of the Allies were retreating south, Ringel dispatched a single regiment, the 100th Mountain, to follow the Allies to Sfakion.

As soon as Churchill approved the request to withdraw the Crete garrison, the British Navy steamed into action. Since the deepwater port at Heraklion could accommodate large naval vessels, Wavell and Admiral Sir Andrew Browne Cunningham, the commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Station, decided to withdraw Chappel's men immediately. On the night of May 28, the Royal Navy loaded nearly 3,500 men onto two cruisers and their destroyer escorts for the voyage back to Alexandria. The force protecting the Retimo airfield had no decent option for evacuation. Lacking a deepwater harbor, Campbell had to decide whether to try to cut his way out toward Sfakion or to surrender. He chose to stay at the airfield in the hope that the Royal Navy would find a way to evacuate his troops from the beaches.

The German force that arrived in the town of Retimo on May 29 outnumbered and outgunned its foes. Not only did Wittman have artillery, antitank weapons, and mortars, but the Germans had offloaded tanks at Kastelli, a seaside village west of Maleme, which had joined Wittman's command. The Germans called on

the Allies to surrender, shouting, "The game's up, Aussies!" Campbell surrendered along with about 700 men, but Sandover and 51 others retreated into the hills, where they held out for several months until a submarine picked them up.

The evacuation from Sfakion was carried out over a four-day period from May 28 through May 31. The Allies established a screen of units on a wide front to keep the 100th Mountain from interfering with the evacuation. The task force assigned to the evacuation sailed to Sfakion for the last time on the evening of May 31. Nearly 4,000 troops were carried back to Alexandria that night when the ships raised anchor at 3 AM. Nevertheless, a large number of Allied troops were left behind. On June 1, Lt. Col. Theo Walker of the 2/7 surrendered 5,000 Allied troops to an Austrian officer of the 100th Mountain.

BETWEEN THE EVACUATIONS FROM HERAKLION AND SFAKION, THE ROYAL NAVY TRANSPORTED ABOUT 16,000 Allied troops to Egypt. Although the Germans had driven the garrison from the island and captured its three airfields intact, they had suffered serious casualties. From an assault force numbering 22,000 paratroopers and air landing troops, the Germans had recorded nearly 6,500 casualties, including 3,352 killed or missing in action. More than half of the losses occurred on the first day among the unfortunate paratroopers of the 7th Air Division. The Allied forces, excluding the Greeks, suffered about 3,500 casualties, including 1,700 killed. Far worse was the fact that 12,000 British and Anzac troops were taken prisoner. Since the Greeks were not evacuated, the roughly 10,000 who survived the battle also went into captivity.

The Allies lost the battle largely because of confused communications and miscalculations at headquarters. Had he taken the initiative, Freyberg had the resources at hand to defeat the Germans during the first few days of the battle. However, he refused to commit his reserves in the Canea-Suda sector to keep Maleme airfield out of German hands. Throughout the battle, Freyberg remained fixated on the idea that the Germans planned a simultaneous beach assault, and he withheld key reinforcements from the main battle. Still, the Allied forces fought heroically, and Freyberg's ability to conduct a fighting retreat enabled the Royal Navy to extract more than 16,000 soldiers—nearly two divisions' worth of infantry.

For Student, the triumph at Crete was bittersweet. Not only had he seen his beloved 7th Parachute Division mauled by the enemy, but the days of large-scale German parachute drops were over. On July 19, Hitler summoned Student and other senior parachute commanders to his headquarters. After congratulating each of them and presenting them with the Knight's Cross, the Führer took time to confer separately with Student. He stunned the architect of the German parachute troops by telling him that, from then on, paratroopers would play a less active airborne role in the war. "Of course you know, General, we shall never do another airborne operation," Hitler said. "Crete proved that the days of the parachute troops are over." Three years later, in Normandy, the Allies would prove him wrong. □



The Armada that left Spain in the spring of 1588 numbered an astonishing 130 vessels, 8,000 sailors, and 20,000 soldiers. It was still not enough to defeat the brilliantly led English fleet, bad weather, and bad luck.

**OPPOSITE:** Sir Francis Drake, in Spanish eyes, was nothing more than a bloodthirsty pirate.

# DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH



# ARMADA

In the summer of 1588, the mightiest oceangoing fleet in history set sail from Spain. Its target was the island kingdom of England, realm of the formidable Queen Elizabeth I. At stake was nothing less than Catholic control of Western Europe.

ON FRIDAY, JULY 29, 1588, A GROUP OF ENGLISH GENTLEMEN decided to play a friendly game of bowls after a hearty midday meal. They walked over to the Hoe, a grassy stretch of ground overlooking the harbor at Plymouth, one of England's leading seaports. The men were dressed in full Elizabethan splendor, costumes that marked them as no ordinary mortals. One player was Lord Charles Howard of Effingham, first cousin to Queen Elizabeth I and Lord High Admiral of England. Howard was an efficient administrator with a genuine concern for the welfare of ordinary seamen, yet he was also a political appointee, chosen more for his rank than his nautical skills, which were largely nonexistent. Howard was fortunate, however, in having under his command some of the greatest mariners of the age. One of his playing companions that day, Sir Francis Drake, was England's foremost privateer, a man known for his bold raids on Spanish colonies and shipping on the high seas. The stocky seaman from Devonshire had become famous—or infamous—as “El Draque,” the personification (in Spanish minds, at least) of a bloodthirsty pirate.

Library of Congress



BY ERIC NIDEROST

Howard and Drake knew that a large invasion force, called by the Spanish *Grande y Felicissima Armada*, had set sail some weeks before and was probably nearing the southern shore of their island nation. Tensions were growing, and preparations had been made to resist the invaders, but there was not much else the English could do until they received definite word of the Armada's whereabouts. Word came soon enough. Captain Thomas Fleming, of the scout bark *Golden Hind*, arrived to report startling news. The Armada had been spotted near the Scilly Isles, not far from the southwestern tip of Cornwall. The long-awaited crisis was now at hand, but Drake reacted with his customary sangfroid. He quipped, “We have time enough to finish the game and beat the Spaniards too.” The privateer knew the waters well, and at the moment the incoming tide was at full flood. There was also a strong southwesterly wind, which meant that the English fleet was temporarily bottled up in Plymouth. There was nothing to do but wait for the ebb tide, which would arrive at about 10 PM.

The Spanish Armada had its origins in the political and religious rivalries that threatened to tear 16th-century Europe apart. King Philip II of Spain was the most powerful ruler in Christendom, with far-flung dominions in Castile, Aragon, Sicily, Milan, Naples, the Netherlands, Dijon, and the Franche-Comte. Thanks to the epochal voyages of Columbus, Spain had gotten a head start in colonizing the New World. By the mid-16th century, gold and silver from Mexico and Peru were flooding into the Spanish treasury, making Philip rich as well as powerful. In 1580 Spain absorbed nearby Portugal, inheriting a vast commercial empire in Asia. Spanish power was at its height, and Spain was a seagoing colossus that straddled the globe.

Spain was also the leading Catholic power in a Europe still in the grip of the Protestant reformation. Mutual antipathy gave rise to bigotry, religious persecution, and sometimes open warfare. In France a Protestant minority, the Huguenots, were battling Catholics for control of the kingdom. In England the situation was different. King Henry VIII had established the Anglican Church because the pope had refused to grant him a divorce from his queen, Catherine of Aragon. The king soon married a very pregnant Anne Boleyn, but to his great disappointment Anne delivered the future Queen Elizabeth I. In Catholic eyes, Elizabeth was the “daughter of adultery,” a bastard with no real claim to the English throne.

ELIZABETH WAS ESSENTIALLY A TOLERANT WOMAN. WHEN SHE CAME TO POWER IN 1558, SHE reestablished her father’s Anglican Church. It was a middle-ground, compromise church, Protestant in doctrine but with many trappings of Catholic ceremony. It was also an attempt to unite her people and end religious strife. Most Englishmen fell into line and attended Anglican services, although the Puritans—radical protestants—and a few hard-core Catholics rejected the compromise.

In the early years of Elizabeth’s reign, relations between England and Spain were cautiously cordial. The first hints of trouble between the two countries came in the 1560s. As the English economy revived, the nation developed a new interest in overseas trade and commerce. John Hawkins, a Devonshire trader, felt that Spain’s New World colonies were an untapped source of commercial wealth, but Spain discouraged foreign trade with her American possession. To all intents and purposes, it was illegal to trade with any of Spain’s colonies, and anyone caught doing so faced grave consequences. Hawkins was willing to take the risk, and in the 1560s he began a series of slave-trading voyages to America that proved exceedingly lucrative. Even the queen took her share of the profits.

Eventually, Hawkins’s luck ran out. When his storm-battered vessels limped into San Juan de Ulua, a powerful Spanish treasure fleet arrived on the scene and effectively bottled him up. After some negotiations, a gentleman’s agreement was reached that would permit the English to depart in peace. But it was really a trap that was soon sprung on the unsuspecting English. The Spanish attacked, and after heavy fighting only two English ships managed to slip the net and escape. One was commanded by Hawkins, the other by his young cousin, Francis Drake. The incident was remembered bitterly by Hawkins, Drake, and other English mariners, who swore revenge. English privateers—the Spanish called them pirates—raided Spanish colonial ports and treasure ships on the high seas. Although England and Spain would remain officially at peace for another 30 years, the die was cast for an eventual collision between the two superpowers.

Philip soon had other grievances against England’s “heretical” queen. The Netherlands had openly revolted against Spanish rule, which Philip tried to brutally suppress. The fact that most of the rebels were Protestants added to Spanish zeal and brutality. As time went on, it became clear that it was not in England’s best interest to have a powerful and potentially hostile Spanish army just across the English Channel. Elizabeth began sending Dutch rebels secret aid. The growing war between the

faiths also forced Elizabeth’s hand. In 1570, Pope Pius V issued *Regnans in Excelsis*, a document that excommunicated Elizabeth as a heretic and usurper. Her Catholic subjects were absolved from any allegiance to her or the government. Later, the pope issued a bull that encouraged English Catholics to take up arms to overthrow the queen. This was a direct challenge, and over the years several plots to assassinate Elizabeth and replace her with her Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, were uncovered. Mary, under house arrest in England, was finally executed in 1587 for her role in the plots.

For Philip, the execution of the Scottish queen was the last straw. He had no great love for Mary, who had had strong ties with France, but the king’s patience had run out. On the evening of March 31, 1587, Philip issued a flurry of orders from the Escorial, his gloomy palace and monastery on the sun-baked plains of Castile. Couriers sent dispatches to every corner of Spain’s extensive empire. Arsenal at Barcelona and Naples were ordered to send all available weapons to the Atlantic fleet. The royal missives were precise, omitting no detail. Ships must be added to the fleet, and existing vessels made ready for a long sea voyage.

Lisbon became a beehive of activity, with ships overhauled, caulked, and covered with tallow. Cargoes of hemp, sailcloth, tackle, and spars were brought down from the Baltic in preparation for the great enterprise. It had taken Philip years to make up his mind, but once the decision was made, he grew increasingly impatient. Admiral Alvaro de Bazan, Marquis de Santa Cruz, was told to have the fleet ready to set sail before the spring of 1587. The marquis was one of Spain’s greatest admiral-

The Armada campaign marked the beginning of a new age in naval warfare. Before this time, naval encounters were essentially land battles fought at sea. Ships were designed to close with an enemy, then grapple as soon as was feasible. Once the two vessels were

region, to maintain a force of them. A typical galley was long and sleek, a thing of beauty to those who beheld it from afar. But it was propelled by oars, with muscle provided by galley slaves, and these whip-driven wretches were a poor substitute for a regular complement of

soldiers in times of battle. The galleons did sport some powerful guns, but the Spanish were still wedded to the close-and-grapple form of naval warfare.

By the last half of the 16th century, English shipwrights were experimenting with a whole new concept of ship design. John Hawkins, one of England’s leading sea dogs, is usually given credit for being the catalyst for these changes. When Queen Elizabeth I appointed him Treasurer of the Navy in the 1570s, Hawkins set to work implementing his ideas. It was during this period that the so-called “race-built” ship, or English galleon, was born. The English galleon was lower and sleeker than its Spanish counterpart, with lower sterns and forecastles. The lower profile lessened wind resistance and made the ships much more maneuverable.

## SHIPS OF THE ARMADA CAMPAIGN

locked in a deadly embrace, soldiers would fight it out until one side or the other was vanquished. In this style of warfare, sailors were mere transporters whose main mission was to carry soldiers close enough to carry on the fight. Seamanship was secondary, and tactics were straightforward if not crude.

The galley had dominated Mediterranean waters since the age of the Greeks, and it was natural for Spain, as a leading power in the

masts and sails. Low in the water, the galley’s shallow draft performed poorly in the rougher, storm-tossed Atlantic waters.

The Spanish gradually abandoned the galley, putting their faith in treasure-fleet galleons. The galleons were magnificent if cumbersome engines of war, displacing from 250 to 1,000 tons apiece and carrying up to 50 guns. They were literally floating fortresses, with high forecastles and sterns crowded with



Drake and other gentlemen casually finish their game of bowls before turning to face the Spanish in this 1944 painting by Frank Moss Bennett.

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als, battle-hardened and experienced. He knew that England would be a tough nut to crack, and he wanted a force so formidable that nothing could stand against it. Santa Cruz asked for a fleet of 556 ships and an army of nearly 95,000 men. Philip's eyes must have glazed over when he saw the estimated cost, an astronomical four million ducats, or four years' worth of revenue from Spain's New World colonies. Santa Cruz's idea was rejected because of its prohibitive cost, but preparations continued for the holy crusade to defeat the heretics and reestablish the Catholic Church in England.

In the meantime, the English were watching events with growing alarm. Preparations on this scale could not be hidden, and the queen's spymaster, Sir Francis Walsingham, had an efficient network of operatives. Ever chafing at the bit, Francis Drake proposed a preemptive strike

against Spain before the Armada could sail. The queen cautiously approved; she genuinely wanted peace, but the threat was too great to ignore. Drake set sail for Cadiz, Spain's largest port on the southeast coast, with 25 vessels. When he arrived, he found the harbor crammed with 60 ships, from the smallest caravel to a magnificently armed Genoese merchantman. He took what prizes he could and burned the rest. By his own reckoning, Drake destroyed 24 Spanish ships and took another six ships packed with supplies.

THE RAID AT CADIZ THREW SPANISH PLANS INTO DISORDER AND DELAYED THE ARMADA BY A FULL YEAR. By some estimates, Philip sustained losses amounting to 200,000 ducats, and the Cadiz segment of the Armada was virtually destroyed. The Spanish monarch took the news calmly, more determined than ever to push forward. It was almost unnoticed at the time, but Drake had followed up his Cadiz raid with a foray to Cape St. Vincent. He sailed through the tuna-fishing grounds, sinking many of Spain's fishing boats in the process. The Armada needed stocks of salted fish for the long voyage—now they would be in short supply. The wily Englishman also encountered merchantmen carrying barrel staves, seasoned wood ideal for water casks and other containers. These ships were sent to the bottom. In the months to come, the Armada would have to rely on barrels made of green wood, which caused water and food to spoil more rapidly.

Philip chafed at the seemingly endless delays, bombarding Santa Cruz with a steady stream of letters urging haste. "Success depends mostly on speed," the king wrote in a typical missive. "Be

The new design also provided more stability for artillery of various kinds, making the galleon a gun platform. Under this concept, a race-built ship would pound the enemy from afar, its maneuverability enabling it to stay safely away from the enemy's lethal grappling hooks. Although there would still be boarding on occasion, naval warfare essentially would become long-range artillery duels.

*Revenge* was a typical race-built galleon, and the favorite ship of Sir Francis Drake. Built in 1574, she was a two-deck ship of about 500 tons. *Revenge* boasted four masts, and was so fast and maneuverable it was counted as one of the queen's finest vessels.

For all its innovations, the English galleon



*San Martin*, flagship of the Armada.

Amber Books

shared some defects common in the 16th century. Most of these ships carried an excessive variety of ordnance, and *Revenge* was no exception. Her main battery of 18-pounder can-

ons was supplemented by culverins, and probably falcons, minions, and small bronze pivot guns. In long, protracted fights, it was difficult to keep ships supplied with such a bewildering variety of shot. Once a certain type of shot ran out, those particular guns fell silent. It must have been frustrating for ever-aggressive sailors such as Drake.

By 1588, even the Spanish were starting to learn these new concepts of war, although they still clung stubbornly to their old ways of battle. Although

it didn't affect the outcome, some effort was made to supply the Armada with longer range culverins. This is mute testimony that King Philip II was starting to copy, however tentatively, English methods of war on the high seas. In his case, it would prove too little, too late. □



The Art Archive/Eileen Tweedy

quick!” Worn out by the sheer scale of his responsibilities, Santa Cruz took ill and died unexpectedly on February 9, 1588. His death at age 62 made a questionable project even more dubious. By this time, however, Philip had convinced himself that he was God’s instrument for the punishment of an impious England. After a short deliberation, he named Don Alonzo de Guzman el Bueno, Duke of Medina-Sidonia, to replace Santa Cruz.

Medina-Sidonia was appalled when he heard of his appointment and did everything in his power to be excused. In one pleading missive, he wrote, “I know by experience of the little I have been at sea that I am always seasick and always catch cold.” When this pitiful ploy fell on deaf ears, the duke tried a more rational argument, stating that “since I have had no experience either of the sea or of war, I cannot feel that I ought to command so important an enterprise.” The king would not change his mind, so Medina-Sidonia manfully accepted his fate. In the spring of 1588, the Armada was at last ready to set sail. It was a powerful force of 130 vessels, made up of nearly every kind of craft imaginable. There were stately galleons, oar-driven galleys, square-rigged carracks, and big-bellied transports. The fleet was handled by 8,000 sailors and carried some 20,000 soldiers, with an impressive array of ordnance, including 2,431 guns.

THE MEN NEEDED SUSTENANCE, AND PHILIP MADE SURE THAT THE ARMADA HAD ENOUGH SUPPLIES TO last six months. There were 800,000 pounds of cheese, 600,000 pounds of salt pork, 11 million pounds of ship’s biscuits, and 14,000 barrels of wine crammed into cargo holds. Nothing was forgotten—there were also 11,000 extra pairs of sandals, 5,000 pairs of shoes, and thousands of spades and shovels for digging trenches in siege warfare. Since this was a holy crusade, much care was taken to provide for the expedition’s spiritual welfare. Some 180 priests and friars were also aboard to conduct religious services and possibly convert the English.

The 130 ships were divided into 10 squadrons. The first two squadrons contained the Armada’s most powerful ships, mainly galleons from Castile and Portugal. Medina-Sidonia was in this group, sailing on the Portuguese galleon *San Martin* with his chief of staff, Diego Flores de Valdes. There

was also a Biscay squadron, a Guipuzcoa squadron, an Andalusia squadron, and a Levant squadron, mainly armed merchantmen. The Levant squadron was a hodgepodge of vessels from every part of Europe—eloquent testimony of the far-flung power and influence of Spain. There were also ships from Venice, Genoa, Naples, Barcelona in the Mediterranean, Ragusa on the Adriatic, and Hamburg on the North Sea.

Back in England, Drake and others urged the queen to launch another preemptive strike. Elizabeth was a brilliant ruler, but she could be exasperating at times, especially when she continued peace negotiations and prepared for war simultaneously. Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, was Philip’s governor general of the Netherlands, and he encouraged Elizabeth to think that a negotiated settlement was still possible. Whether the queen really believed Parma’s rhetoric is a moot point. Elizabeth was a master of pragmatic politics. If a negotiated peace could be accomplished, well and good. If not, she could still rely on England’s fine ships and mariners to protect her realm.

The Armada finally set sail from Lisbon on May 28, with a total complement of 19,000

English fireships, stuffed with tarred fagots and red-hot guns, drift into the Spanish Armada, sowing panic and confusion.



soldiers and 10,000 sailors. There were so many ships that it took the multitude two full days to clear the harbor. Hopes were high, but bad luck plagued the enterprise from the start. The spring was unseasonably stormy, and the ships had to plow through periods of bad weather. Progress was slow because the heavily laden supply ships moved at a snail's pace and the fleet had to keep together. When water barrels were opened, their contents were found to be green and stinking. The food was spoiling, too, because Spanish coopers were forced to make barrels from green wood. The Armada put in at Corunna, a port on the northwest corner of Spain, for repairs and reprovisioning, before setting sail for England in early July.

For all its power and might, the Armada's mission was essentially a passive one—namely to ferry the Duke of Parma's 30,000-man army from Flanders to England. Without modern communications, coordinating the Armada's movements with Parma's army would be difficult at best. The invasion plans seemed to rely on wishful thinking that took little account of the real challenges facing the project. The Armada lacked a deepwater port to rendezvous with

Parma and to serve as an embarkation point for the invasion army. Much of Flanders was problematic: its coast was filled with deadly sandbanks and treacherous shoals, its inland areas laced with a bewildering labyrinth of canals and waterways. Parma was busy building scores of flat-bottomed barges, in the hope that these vessels could reach the Armada in deep water. The English Channel and adjacent waters posed more than just natural dangers. Dutch rebels sailing in flyboats—shallow-draft, two-masted gunboats—would find the clumsy barges easy prey on the open sea.

When Howard learned of the Armada's approach on July 29, he ordered the English fleet to set sail at once. This was easier said than done—a strong wind was blowing into the harbor, and the ships had to be towed by long strings of rowboats. Once out of the Plymouth harbor, the English were still at a disadvantage. The Armada plowed up the Channel at a steady pace, its progress aided by a strong south-southwest wind. The Spanish thus had the weather gauge, and with the wind at their backs they could maneuver more effectively than the English, even though the English ships were generally smaller and faster.

CONVENTIONAL THINKING HAD HOWARD GOING TO THE EAST TO BLOCK THE ARMADA'S PASSAGE UP the Channel. But Howard, no doubt influenced by his vice admiral, Francis Drake, had other ideas. The English fleet would tack against the wind, skirting around the Armada in an attempt to get behind the enemy fleet. English seamanship was superb; during the night of July 30-31, Howard managed to slip past the seaward flank of the Armada, while a smaller English squadron went past its landward flank. On the morning of July 31, Spanish lookouts saw a large group of sails on the horizon—it was the English fleet, far to the Armada's rear and enjoying the same south-southwest wind. The Spanish were both amazed and dismayed.

As the English closed, it was their turn to be amazed. The Armada was a truly awesome sight, long remembered by those Englishmen fortunate enough to have beheld its magnificence and splendor. "You could hardly see the sea," one English sea dog recalled, "so thick was the gaudy clutter of masts, sails, banners, and battlements." Another declared there were so many great ships "the ocean was groaning under the weight of them." Many of the Spanish sails were emblazoned with red crosses, and a colorful array of banners, pennants, and flags waved gracefully in the wind. Each squadron had its own emblems and colors, including the red castles of Castile, the dragon and shields of Portugal, and the crosses and foxes of Biscay. The great galleons rose up from the water like wooden mountains, their high forecastles and sterns towering fortresses threatening to rain destruction down on the enemy.

Around 9 AM, the two fleets were close enough to give battle. The formal opening of hostilities harked back to the age of chivalry. Howard dispatched his personal pinnace, aptly named *Distain*, to "show the Duke of Medina defiance." The little vessel sailed toward San Martin, fired a solitary culverin at the Spanish flagship, then beat a hasty retreat. The gauntlet had been thrown down.

In reply, Medina-Sidonia raised a silk standard, the sacred banner of the expedition, bearing the Latin legend, "*Exurge Domine et Vinica Causam Tuam*," or "Arise O Lord and Vindicate Thy Cause." The duke ordered a cannon to be fired, a signal for the Armada to assume a defensive posture. In response, the entire Armada formed itself into a large defensive crescent, with the more vulnerable supply ships in the center and the most powerfully armed ships defending the wings. The English, witnessing the spectacle, could not help but admire the way the polyglot

**"YOU COULD HARDLY SEE THE SEA, SO THICK WAS THE GAUDY CLUTTER OF MASTS, SAILS, BANNERS, AND BATTLEMENTS."**

force—Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, and others—got into position so quickly and efficiently.

Wasting no time, Howard bore down on the southern horn of the crescent, his flagship *Ark Royal* in the lead and the rest of his squadron in single-file formation. Although he didn't know it, Howard was closing on the Spanish Levant squadron. In fact, by sheer coincidence, Howard was about to engage the 800-ton carrack *Rata Santa Maria Encoronada*, commanded by Don Alonzo de Lieva. De Lieva was every inch the dashing cavalier, noted for his flaxen hair and dazzling blond beard. *Ark Royal* and *Rata Santa* traded broadsides, their gunports erupting in long fingers of smoke and flame accompanied by deafening roars. The other members of the Levant squadron joined the fray, including the 1,200-ton *Branzona*, the Armada's largest single vessel.

The differences between English and Spanish tactics and basic philosophies of war stood out in sharp relief. To the Spanish, ships were floating fortresses to be grappled and taken at sword's point, but to the English, they were fast and maneuverable gun platforms. As much as possible,



**English archers and cannoners blast away aboard Lord Howard's flagship, *Ark Royal*. Although a Spanish grapple hovers above them, the Spaniards never got close enough to board.**

the Spanish preferred to fight sea battles the same way they fought on land—at close quarters with arquebus, pike, and sword. The English, on the other hand, had adapted new techniques, including battering an enemy into submission by long-range cannon fire. The English galleon, fast and maneuverable, allowed gunners to rake enemy ships with a hail of cannonballs from stem to stern.

The first engagement set the pattern for the coming days. Try as they might, the Spanish could not get close enough to the English to grapple and board. Hundreds of Spanish soldiers, their armored breastplates and helmets glistening in the sun, packed the decks, eager to come to grips with the enemy. Instead, they were impotent spectators of an artillery duel they could not participate in—except to fall wounded or die.

WHILE HOWARD BATTERED THE LEVANT SQUADRON, DRAKE TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THE ARMADA'S landward wing. Taking the lead in *Revenge*, accompanied by a number of ships that included John Hawkins in *Victory* and Martin Frobisher in the 1,000-ton *Triumph*, Drake headed straight for the Biscay squadron, which was downwind from the rest of the Armada. One large galleon stayed behind, a seemingly illogical gesture that must have puzzled Drake and his men. The ship, *San Juan de Portugal*, was a 1,000-ton galleon boasting 50 guns and 500 fighting men. She was the flagship of the Biscay squadron, commanded by the proud and pugnacious Don Juan Martinez de Recalde. Recalde was looking for a fight, hoping to act as bait for a larger engagement. Perhaps the English would throw caution to the winds and get close enough for his men to grapple and board in the time-honored fashion.

It was not to be. For two hours *Revenge*, *Victory*, and *Triumph* peppered *San Juan* with a barrage of cannonballs. When other Spanish ships belatedly came to the ship's rescue, the English followed Howard's orders and broke off their attack. At about 4 PM, *Nuestra Senora del Rosario* collided with another Spanish ship and lost her bowsprit, then lost her foremast in heavy weather. These twin misfortunes left the vessel dead in the water and unable to keep up with the rest of the Armada. Eventually she was captured by Drake. Worse was to follow. *Salvador* blew up, killing 200 men. It may have been sabotage or a tragic accident, but the ship was reduced to a wreck that had to be towed out of line.

The next three or four days were much the same as the first hours. The Armada was invincible in its crescent formation, but it could not come to grips with the English fleet. A tactical stalemate developed, and the English soon found they were running low on ammunition. Eventually, Howard decided to split the English fleet into four squadrons. He would take one unit, but the others would be commanded by the three finest captains of the age: Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher.

The Armada headed for Calais—still not a deepwater harbor, but for Medina-Sidonia and his weary sailors literally and figuratively a port in a storm. Calais was a French town, and although most Frenchmen had little love for Spain, the English feared they might cooperate with the Armada. Drake and the others worried that the French might permit the Duke of Parma to use

Calais as an embarkation port. The Armada had to be sent packing, and the sooner the better. On Sunday, August 7, Howard held a council of war in his cabin aboard *Ark Royal*. After some deliberation it was decided to send fireships to scatter and confuse the enemy. A total of eight English ships were donated for the scheme, including one of Drake's vessels, *Thomas*. The ships were stuffed with tarred fagots, and their guns were double-loaded to add to the overall terror and confusion. Once the guns grew red-hot in the spreading conflagrations, they would explode.

The Spanish were expecting a fireship attack and had posted pinnaces to give early warning and fend them off. Sure enough, flickers of light appeared on the horizon, orange-yellow dots that pulsed in the inky darkness. As they drew nearer, every detail of the burning vessels could be seen in horrifying detail. Each ship was a funeral pyre, her masts and spars consumed by greedy tongues of flame that shot high into the sky and showered the dappled waters with cascades of sparks. The Spanish pinnaces managed to grapple and tow away two fireships. The others drifted into the Armada, where they caused confusion and panic far greater than the English had anticipated. The panic spread when the fireships began to explode. No Armada vessel was set afire, but most ships still cut their anchor cables and fled pell-mell into the night.

The early morning of Monday, August 8, showed the Armada ships in complete disarray. The galleass *San Lorenzo* had collided with another ship the previous night and had sustained serious damage. With her rudder smashed and her mainmast cracked and threatening to topple, the wounded vessel made a desperate bid to escape the English. The galleass was a hybrid, both sailing ship and oared galley, and her sweating slaves pulled at the oars and flailed at the waters with a steady beat. *San Lorenzo* slammed into a hidden shoal and stuck fast.

Since the shoals were too dangerous for his own galleons, Howard lowered soldier-filled boats to claim the prize. *San Lorenzo* offered fierce resistance, fighting furiously as the English clambered over the sides in an attempt to board. Spanish arquebus fire was heavy, until English boats were filled with dead and wounded. Then the English had a stroke of luck. *San Lorenzo's* commander, Don Hugo de Moncada, was killed when a musket ball smashed into his skull. Spanish resistance collapsed with his demise. English sailors began to gleefully loot the ship, which was stuck fast on the sand bank.

While Howard was busy trying to capture *San Lorenzo*, Drake and some of the other sailors were after the handful of Spanish ships



Library of Congress

that faithfully remained with Medina-Sidonia's flagship, *San Martin*. Medina-Sidonia had only six galleons at first, but as time went on more Spanish ships belatedly arrived on the scene. There were perhaps 25 Spanish ships in all, most of them well armed and ready to give a good account of themselves. The resulting engagement, known to history as the Battle of Gravelines, was the climax of the Armada campaign. The English, encouraged by their successes thus far, closed with their prey and unleashed broadside after broadside into the towering Spanish galleons. Drake led the way in *Revenge*, followed by the rest of his squadron.

English cannonballs punched holes into *San Martin's* sides, smashed guns off their mountings, and splintered her upper works. Still the galleon fought on. Frobisher's squadron followed Drake's, circling the Spanish flagship like a pack of wolves around a wounded stag. Other Spanish ships also came in for a share of punishment. One unnamed carrack heeled over

**Spanish seamen abandon a sinking galleon off Gravelines at the height of the battle, while other vessels in the Armada flounder and burn under the relentless English onslaught.**

before the wind, blood pouring from her scuppers. Cannonballs took off arms and legs with horrifying ease and smashed through bulkheads, sending lethal showers of wooden splinters whizzing through the air.

Heavy seas and a sudden squall finally broke off the action after several hours. Two Spanish ships, *San Felipe* and *San Mateo*, were run aground to prevent them from sinking, but after a soaking rain the Armada was able to reform its defensive crescent. Bloody but unbowed, the Spanish were ready to renew the fight, but the English declined. Most of the English vessels had simply run out of ammunition. What was left of the Armada headed north, hoping to reach Spain by circling the British Isles. All hope of affecting a rendezvous with Parma was gone, replaced by a grim determination to survive.

NOT KNOWING THAT THE ARMADA WAS IN EFFECT DEFEATED, QUEEN ELIZABETH WENT TO TILBURY, about 20 miles from London, to join troops gathering to defend the Thames River basin. Elizabeth showed her customary defiance, exclaiming, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England, too."

The Armada was in bad shape, with many vessels resembling sieves. Some were held together by cables, while others had pumps working day and night to prevent them from sinking. Storms assaulted them, causing about two dozen ships to be wrecked along the Irish coast. By some miracle, 67 ships and about 10,000 men eventually reached Spain, but many of the survivors died later of disease. Medina-Sidonia was among the survivors. Philip did not punish the nobleman, who returned to his orange groves a chastened man. The Spanish king took the news of the disaster with his customary stoicism. "I sent my ships to fight against the English," he commented drily, "not the elements."

In military terms, the Armada campaign was a tactical draw. The English fleet was relatively unscathed, but some 4,000 or more sailors subsequently died of typhus and dysentery. Spain remained a great power for decades to come, her coffers replenished by a steady stream of New World silver and gold bullion. But in political and psychological terms, the Armada campaign was a great English victory. Protestant Europe rejoiced, and the Elizabethan Age, the age of Shakespeare, was allowed to flourish without fear of foreign rule or the unspeakable terrors of the Spanish Inquisition. □

## FURTHER READING

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By Al Hemingway

## Should Confederate cavalry leader J.E.B. Stuart continue to shoulder the lion's share of the blame for the Southern defeat at Gettysburg?

**H**ERO OR SCAPEGOAT? EVEN WITH THE PASSAGE OF NEARLY 144 years since the pivotal Battle of Gettysburg was fought in the rolling hills of southern Pennsylvania, controversy still shadows the role—or lack of role—played by one of General Robert E. Lee's most trusted lieutenants, Maj. Gen.

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Major General J.E.B.

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Stuart was a fine leader  
and an excellent soldier.

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His actions prior to the

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Battle of Gettysburg were

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not the sole reason for the

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Confederate defeat.

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James Ewell Brown Stuart. Did Stuart venture irresponsibly on a “joy ride,” as some

have suggested, depriving Lee of his “eyes and ears” on the eve of the war's most pivotal battle, or did Stuart merely follow Lee's orders to the letter and in an attempt to provide him with invaluable intelligence on the movements of the Army of the Potomac?

In their new offering, *Plenty of Blame to Go Around: Jeb Stuart's Controversial Ride to Gettysburg*

(Savas Beatie, New York, 2006, 428 pp., illustrations, maps, photos, index, \$32.95, hardcover), authors Eric J. Wittenberg and J. David Petruzzi have done a wealth of research in an attempt to answer those and other pertinent questions surrounding the mysterious disappearance of Stuart's horsemen during the crucial period just

prior to the battle.

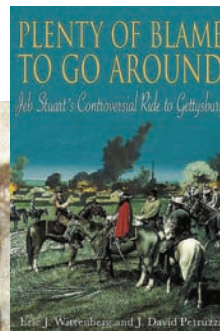
The writers traced every foot of Stuart's ride, from the moment he departed Salem, Va., on June 24, 1863, until he finally reached Lee's command on the second day of the battle on July 2. They gleaned information from every possible source in

an attempt to provide unbiased answers to the myriad questions that fostered heated arguments among veterans of the battle and carried over to Civil War historians down through the years to the present.

Much has been written about Stuart's interpretation of Lee's orders and

his supposed failure to provide the Confederate Army with the proper screening and intelligence. The authors, however, discovered an overlooked dispatch from Stuart to Lee warning him of the movement of the Army of the Potomac four days prior to the clash at Gettysburg. Obviously, the all-important letter never reached Lee's hands. Lee further wrote in his official report that “Stuart acted within the scope of his orders in making his ride.”

In spite of all the finger-pointing directed against Stuart, Lee had ample cavalry at Gettysburg to gather information on the Union Army's whereabouts. Brig. Gen. Albert G. Jenkins's brigade was with



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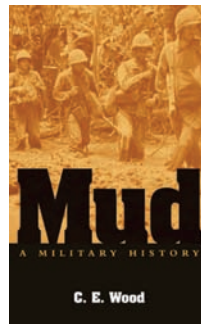
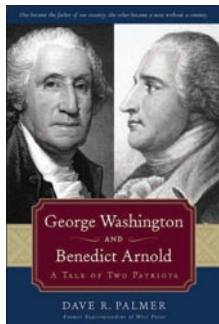
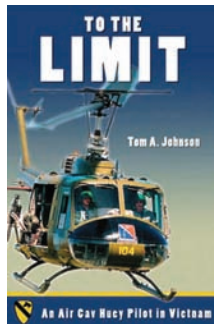
Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell's corps on the battlefield, and Brig. Gens. William E. "Grumble" Jones and John D. Imboden were ordered by Lee to remain in Maryland and provide a line of retreat for his army. Consequently, they played virtually no role in the battle, although they could have been summoned if Lee thought it was necessary.

As for a "joy ride," it was anything but that for the gray horsemen. The ride to Gettysburg was a grueling test of man and animal. Most Confederate mounts were in dire need of feed and shoes when Stuart's men fortuitously captured 150 wagons of oats and supplies. Some of Stuart's detractors have made an issue of this, charging that the cumbersome vehicles slowed down his rate of march. That is undeniably true but, as one of Stuart's officers later commented, the captured food was a "godsend" for the horses.

The Union cavalry also deserves at least a portion of the credit for the Confederacy's defeat at Gettysburg. Stuart's men fought some nasty scrapes against the Federals in towns such as Westminster, Hanover, and Hunterstown, where the blue riders fought brilliant delaying actions to further impede his progress. The 1st Delaware Cavalry's brave stand at Westminster and the suicidal charge of the 11th New York Cavalry at Fairfax Court House are but two such instances that the authors cite in their book.

Stuart deserves a portion of the blame as well. Instead of opting for the Hopewell Gap route, as suggested by his scout John Mosby, Stuart elected to take Glasscock's Gap instead. By doing so, he ran headlong into Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock's II Corps. He then waited for Mosby for 10 long hours at Buckland Mills before continuing his ride, a decision that further disrupted his fragile schedule.

"If Stuart disappointed anyone at Gettysburg, he more than redeemed himself during the retreat to Virginia," Wittenberg and Petruzzi write. "His performance during those difficult days, as well as that of his vaunted cavaliers, to whom the previous few weeks must have seemed a lifetime, was nothing short of magnificent. As we hope this study has demonstrated, no single person or condition can or should be made to shoulder the blame for the crippling Southern loss at Gettysburg. Rather, a combination of circumstances led to the Confederate disaster."



*To the Limit: An Air Cav Huey Pilot in Vietnam*, by Tom A. Johnson, Potomac Books, Va., 2006, 409 pp., photos, maps, index, \$26.95, hardcover.

Helicopter pilots, sometimes called "rotor heads," were a special breed during the Vietnam War. They often ignored regulations by sporting handlebar mustaches, unconventional dress, and an open disdain for authority. But ask any Vietnam veteran who ever needed a medevac or resupply, and they will tell you that there were no braver individuals in the war.

One such person was CW2 (Chief Warrant Officer) Tom Johnson, who served with the prestigious 229th AHB (Assault Helicopter Battalion) from 1967-68. His unit received numerous accolades for performing outstanding service, from the Ia Drang Valley to Hue City to Khe Sanh. Johnson's account of his service is both funny and poignant. He pays due homage to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice during the conflict. The death rate among helicopter crews was extremely high: one out of 18 was killed. Nearly 2,200 pilots and 2,300 crew members died in Vietnam.

Surviving the war, Johnson returned home and became a successful businessman. His awards are numerous and impressive: the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with five Silver Leaf clusters, and a Bronze Star. He logged an astronomical 1,600 hours flying time in his year tour of duty. Today, one of the choppers he piloted is located at the Smithsonian Institute's Air and Space Museum. Another is situated at the Pacific Coast Air Museum.

*To the Limit* is an absorbing book. Whether or not you served in the military or ever flew in a helicopter, it will grab you and hold your attention.

*George Washington and Benedict Arnold: A Tale of Two Patriots*, by Dave R. Palmer, Regnery Publishing, Inc., Washington, DC, 2006, 412 pp., maps, illustrations, \$29.95, hardcover.

"One became the father of our country, the

other became a man without a country," writes military historian Lt. Gen. Dave R. Palmer, USA (Ret.) of George Washington and Benedict Arnold, two individuals who started out on identical paths and ended up in radically different camps during the American war for independence.

In the beginning, both men felt the same patriotic fervor toward their new country. Both were passionate

about the personal freedom and liberties the fledgling United States had to offer. In the early days of the Revolutionary War, Washington suffered a series of setbacks, while Arnold's star shone. Realizing that he had a competent officer in Arnold, Washington favored the younger man by promoting him to brigadier general. Jealousies within Washington's officer ranks stymied Arnold's career, and he was overlooked for promotion to major general (Arnold finally received the higher rank, but was junior to other officers, he felt, were incompetent).

Arnold's patriotism faded, and the Connecticut merchant planned to desert the Continental Army and offer his services to the British. Before his departure, he met with British Major John Andre to plan the surrender of West Point, a key military installation on the Hudson River in New York. Arnold's scheme was uncovered and he barely managed to escape, while Andre was captured and later hanged as a spy. As a result of his treachery, Arnold's name has been synonymous with "traitor" ever since.

Although undeniably brave and competent in battle, Arnold lacked the one essential ingredient that makes a person stand out—character. Washington, on the other hand, was the very embodiment of such qualities. As David Abshire, former president of the Center for the Study of the Presidency, has remarked: "The heart of Washington's leadership was pure character."

*Mud: A Military History*, by C.E. Wood, Potomac Books, Washington, D.C., 2006, 190 pp., illustrations, \$23.95, hardcover.

Ask a soldier from any war about the terrible weather conditions he endured, and he would probably place mud at or near the top of the list. Not only did the infantryman have to slog through the mire, but trucks, jeeps, tanks, artillery pieces, and other equipment bogged down in the slurry mixture as well.

Not even the greatest strategists could foresee the effects from mud. As the author explains, if Napoleon had not waited for the

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mud to dry, the Battle of Waterloo might have had a very different outcome. The gooey slime also stopped the seemingly indestructible German Army during the Russian campaign of World War II, and the Nazis were forced to wait for colder weather to freeze the mud and allow them to continue their advance. By then it was too late—"General Winter" had become their greatest enemy, and the Russians' greatest ally.

During the Vietnam conflict, the United States attempted to seed the clouds so that torrential monsoon rains would continue for a longer period and curtail the movement by North Vietnamese Communists of supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. As the reader learns, a simple thing such as mud "can be a very significant factor of success or failure on the battlefield."

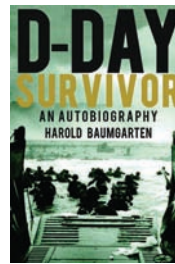
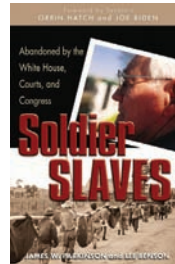
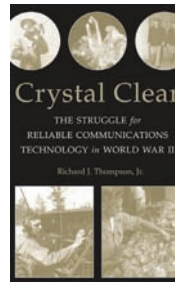
*Crystal Clear: The Struggle for Reliable Communications Technology in World War II*, by Richard J. Thompson, Jr., John Wiley & Sons, Inc., NJ, 2007, 230 pp., illustrations, index, notes, \$54.95, hardcover.

Whether you are commanding a regiment, battalion, or division in battle, the ability to communicate with your subordinates is paramount. Movement of troops, artillery, and other supporting arms is essential to defeating the enemy. Prior to today's modern technology, commanders had to rely on runners or couriers mounted on horseback to deliver their messages in a timely manner.

World War II ushered in a whole new world of communications with the widespread use of the radio. From its infancy, quartz crystal was only used by amateur radio aficionados. With the start of the war, however, the American military quickly grasped its importance. The mineral, they realized, could vastly improve their ability to communicate.

Second only to the Manhattan Project in its scope, the U.S. government set out to mine quartz and transport it to laboratories to create a quartz crystal unit. Engineers designed a crystal oscillator, but then had to go back to the drawing board to repair a major flaw called "aging." In the end, however, the effort proved to be a huge success.

Because of their efforts, quartz is commonly used today in such electronic devices as watches, color televisions, cell phones, and computers. This is an engrossing story of one of



the lesser-known projects of World War II and how it improved our way of life tremendously.

*Soldier Slaves: Abandoned by the White House, Courts, and Congress*, by James W. Parkinson and Lee Benson, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2006, 249 pp., illustrations, index, \$28.95, hardcover.

The ordeal of those who endured and survived the horrific Bataan Death March in April 1942 has become legendary. But what happened to the surviving POWs after their infamous trek? Most faced three and a half years of forced labor. In essence, they were slaves of the Japanese government, required to work long, grueling hours at one of the 169 camps dotted throughout the country. If they stepped out of line, they would suffer beatings or inhumane torture by sadistic prison guards.

Upon their return, the men were told to remain silent concerning their terrible treatment, and for years nothing was mentioned about their hor-

rendous suffering. Finally, their plight became public knowledge and their case went before Congress to receive compensation from the Japanese government. With the assistance of Senators Joseph Biden and Orrin Hatch, a team of lawyers tried unsuccessfully to have long overdue reparations given to the survivors.

James Parkinson, a lawyer who was on the case, and journalist Lee Benson have written a compelling story of the human tragedy. As suggested by the book's title, the brave men who were abandoned at the outset of World War II were abandoned once again six decades later. The Japanese government has still not made adequate restitution or reparation to the victims of their sadism—American or otherwise.

*D-Day Survivor: An Autobiography*, by Harold Baumgarten, Pelican Publishing, 2006, 176 pp., illustrations, index, \$25.00, hardcover.

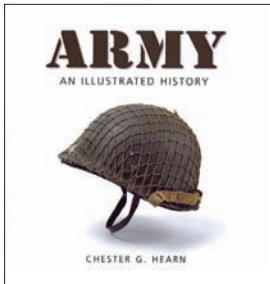
There has been a plethora of books on D-Day depicting the exploits of the famed 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions' battles behind enemy lines attempting to secure vital objectives for the advancing troops. And all of these accounts deserve to be told. The heroic exploits of these men must never be forgotten.

However, one unit that landed at Omaha Beach on that fateful day in June 1944 has received scant attention. These were the soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division. The 29th, dubbed

the “Blue and Gray Division,” has a long, proud lineage in the U.S. Army, dating all the way back to the French and Indian War.

Harold Baumgarten landed with the 116th Infantry, 29th Division, on D-Day and was wounded five times before being medically evacuated. Before 8 AM that day, his unit sustained an incredible 85 percent casualty rate. He wrote this vivid description of the terrible events on Dog Green Beach to let people know of the sacrifices endured by him and, more importantly, his comrades.

After the war, Baumgarten received a bachelor of arts degree from New York University and a master’s and medical doctorate from the University of Miami. Today he lectures on D-Day, especially on the role of the fabled 29th Division, throughout the country. Baumgarten has received numerous awards and accolades over the years, but the highest honor that is bestowed upon him and his comrades is simply being a “Twenty-niner,” a soldier in one of the finest units in the United States Army.



Paul, MN, 2006, 192 pp., illustrations, \$29.95, hardcover.

From its humble start as a motley group of militia in the American Revolution to the present day high-tech force of the 21st century, the United States Army has served our country honorably for over two centuries. Military historian Charles Hearn not only provides the reader with a comprehensive look at the Army’s past exploits, but also delves into the Army of the future. The book has numerous black and white and color photographs of the weapons, garments, and equipment that will be used by our soldiers in the ensuing years.

One interesting area the author mentions is the rapid advance of electronics in tomorrow’s Army. Hearn writes, “Weapons engineers have told General Peter Schoomaker, army chief of staff, that by 2010 computers will be replaced by electronics so tiny they can be embedded in clothing or eyeglasses and broadcast on the human retina.” With all the new technology being incorporated for use, the U.S. Army will indeed be a force to be reckoned with around the globe.

*Grace Under Fire: Letters of Faith in Time of War*, edited by Andrew W. Carroll, Doubleday, New York, 2007, 160 pp., illustrations, \$16.95, softcover.

At no time in a person’s life does the specter of death weigh so heavy as during time of war. The old adage that there are “no atheists in a foxhole” illustrates the fear that accompanies those individuals on the front lines. Andrew Carroll of the Legacy Project has gathered a series of letters, from the American Revolution to the present-day men and women fighting in the war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan. Before each piece of correspondence is a brief synopsis explaining the events in that particular period of our nation’s history.

*Grace Under Fire* offers the reader a glimpse at the life of a serviceman in a combat situation through his or her own words. Some letters are lighthearted, while others express the sadness at losing a friend in battle. It is an inspirational work that details the religious beliefs not only of those men and women in uniform, but also of the gallant clergymen who also risk their lives to bring solace to the soldiers under fire.

*Army: An Illustrated History*, by Chester G. Hearn, Zenith Press, St.



*Wilson’s Creek, Pea Ridge & Prairie Grove: A Battlefield Guide with a Section on Wire Road*, by Earl J. Hess, Richard W. Hatcher III, William Garrett Piston, and William L. Shea, University of Nebraska Press, 2006, 282 pp., maps, illustrations, \$19.95, softcover.

For anyone planning a trip to the Wilson’s Creek, Pea Ridge, or Prairie Grove battlefields, this book would be an excellent choice to take along as a handy reference guide. Considered by historians as the “three most important battles fought west of the Mississippi River,” the battles are still little known by the public at large. The authors have sought to address that anomaly by assembling detailed directions to the historic sites as well as brief summaries of the action, people involved, and letters from the common foot soldiers involved in the fighting there.

Each map has a stopping point where the Civil War enthusiast can gain a better knowledge of the campaigns and the reasons why the commanders utilized the strategies they did at the time. In the back of the book, the authors list all the units involved in the battles as well. This

## FINDING THE TARGET: THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN MILITARY POLICY

by Frederick W. Kagan  
ISBN 978-1-594032-04-2 \$29.95

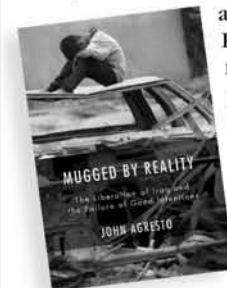
Frederick Kagan has emerged as a leading figure in military analysts. In *Finding the Target*, he describes with unusual clarity the three basic transformations within the U.S. military since Vietnam. The balancing of these issues of transformation lead Kagan to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld’s vision of a “new” military; the conduct of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars; and the disconnect between such grand strategic visions as the Bush Doctrine.



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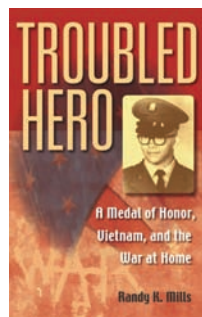
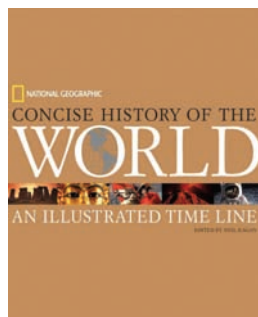
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indispensable guide is the first of its kind for these three crucial battles fought in territory that each side considered vital to its successful prosecution of the war.

*Concise History of the World: An Illustrated Time Line*, edited by Neil Kagan, National Geographic, Washington, D.C., 2006, 416 pp., maps, illustrations, \$44.00, hardcover.

One of the premier publishers of one of the longest running magazines in the United States has produced a coffee table book that will delight any history buff. The editors begin at the dawn of time and follow each century, touching upon individuals, battles, religions, diseases, inventions, and other epochal events of the age. Each chapter begins with a brief essay that puts that era into historical perspective. The timeline then examines different parts of the world and explains what was occurring in the world at the time.

Middle school and high school students will find the book a tremendous asset in their social studies classes. It is easy reading and filled with breathtaking black-and-white and color photographs that bring the accompanying text to life. *National Geographic* has provided the reading public with another excellent reference source for people of all ages.

*The Hungarian Revolution 1956*, by Erwin A. Schmidt & Laszlo Ritter, Osprey Publishing, 2006, 64 pp., illustrations, index, \$17.95, softcover.

Osprey Publishing of Great Britain has long been one of the leaders in printing brief accounts of historical episodes, military equipment, battles, and fortifications. Their newest offering dealing with the Hungarian uprising in 1956 is no exception. The authors explain how the political climate of the period shaped the Hungarian nation after World War II. But it was a peaceful student demonstration 11 years after the war, in October 1956, that sparked a gallant if short-lived revolution in Hungary. Word soon spread that unarmed civilians had been fired upon. This report enraged and spurred the population to take up arms

against their Russian occupiers.

Although the Hungarians fought bravely, the revolt was crushed by the mighty Soviet military machine that November. The writers have delivered an excellent overview of that tragic moment in European history, and its ultimate bearing on the fall of European Communism in the late 1980s and 1990s.

*Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy*, by Frederick W. Kagan, Encounter Books, 2006, 444 pp., notes, bibliography, index, \$29.95, hardcover.

Military analyst Frederick W. Kagan has written a thought-provoking book on the future strategic policies of the American military. Tracing the metamorphosis of the military from Vietnam, when it underwent a gigantic rebuilding process, to the present-day crisis in the Middle East and North Korea, he discusses the shortcomings of the strategy supported by the Pentagon and other defense agencies.

Kagan maintains that the heavy dependence on the technological aspect of the armed services is secondary to the most important aim of any war, which is the “use of force to achieve political objectives.” The basic tenets of war, written by Carl von Clausewitz in his influential study, *On War*, written over 175 years ago, still remain true today, Kagan observes. To be successful on the battlefield and achieve victory, Clausewitz maintained, one must successfully control the “trinity of war”—the people, the government, and the army. “A theory that ignores any one of them,” he wrote, “or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless.” One wonders whether the architects of the current war in Iraq bothered to read Clausewitz’s book.

*Troubled Hero: A Medal of Honor, Vietnam, and the War at Home*, by Randy K. Mills, Indiana University Press, 2006, 167 pp., illustrations, notes, index, \$24.95, hardcover.

Ken Kays was a baby-faced 20-year-old college dropout when he went to Vietnam as a

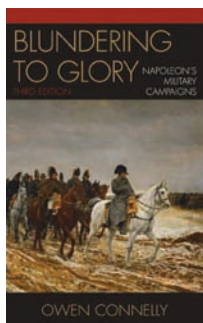
conscientious objector. Even though he was refused the official status by the U.S. Army, he was assigned to an infantry platoon as a medic. Just two and a half weeks into his tour “in country,” the Illinois native saved numerous lives when his firebase came under a savage ground attack from Vietnamese Communists. As a result of his bravery, Kays was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Kays’s real war, however, began upon his return home. Haunted by the ghosts of Vietnam, he increasingly withdrew and refused help from concerned friends and family. Sadly, he committed suicide in 1991—another casualty of the Vietnam War as surely as if he had died there. This is a heartbreaking tale of a legitimate hero who just wanted to live in peace. It should be read by all Americans to understand the peculiar plight of the combat veteran upon his homecoming.

**Blundering to Glory: Napoleon’s Military Campaigns**, by Owen Connelly, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, New York, 2006, 269 pp., bibliography, index, \$24.95, softcover.

Napoleon Bonaparte can arguably be called the greatest military commander of all time. His uncanny ability to “read” the battlefield to strategically place his cavalry, infantry, and artillery for maximum effect to assure victory was second to none on most occasions. Military historian Owen Connelly asserts, however, that Napoleon made tactical blunders at many of his famous victories. One such example came when the “Little Corporal” erred in locating Baron Karl Mack von Leiberich’s army in Germany during the Ulm Campaign in 1805. Realizing his mistake, Napoleon was forced to backtrack and engage the enemy miles away. Despite the mix-up, he was still able to achieve a stunning victory.

Miscalculations did not discourage Napoleon—quite the contrary. When he recognized his errors, he quickly improvised and altered his plans to adapt to the ever-changing conditions on the battlefield. Like a quarterback scrambling to find a receiver downfield in a football game, Napoleon became a master scrambler. “War is composed altogether of accidents,” he wrote in the waning days of his life while imprisoned on St. Helena. “A [great] commander never loses sight of what he can do to profit by these actions.” □



## Invasion of Canada

Continued from page 45

resulted in Montgomery’s death and Arnold’s wounding. Recuperating quickly, Arnold assumed command of the remnant army outside Quebec. Stubbornly attempting to maintain the siege, he began pulling his forces together, checking the flight of deserters, and imploring the lethargic Wooster, Montreal’s commander, to send as many men and equipment as he could spare. Wooster replied that he could send little help. This, along with the refusal of the New York regiment to reenlist, caused Arnold’s chances for a renewal of the conflict to disappear.

Meanwhile, Carleton bided his time safe inside the walls of Quebec, allowing the winter cold and sickness to further reduce the American force. General John Thomas replaced Wooster and assumed command of the Canadian expedition. Shortly after his arrival in May 1776, British ships sailed up the St. Lawrence, their decks crowded with the scarlet and white of the British Army and the blue and white of the British Army and the blue and white of 2,000 German mercenaries. This eliminated any hope the Americans had of capturing Quebec. Thomas issued orders for a retreat toward Montreal. The colonial army began a slow withdrawal toward Richelieu, St. John’s, Ile aux Noix, Crown Point, and Ticonderoga.

At St. John’s, Brig. Gen. John Sullivan replaced Thomas, who had died of smallpox during the retreat. Sullivan briefly considered making a stand at Montreal, but decided against it. Arnold wrote to Schuyler, “The junction of the Canadians with the Colonies—an object which brought us into this country—is at an end. Let us quit then and secure our own country before it is too late. There will be more honor in making a safe retreat than hazarding a battle against such superiority which will doubtless be attended with the loss of our men and artillery. These arguments are not urged by fear for my personal safety. I am content to be the last man who quits the country.”

Arnold assumed charge of the rear guard and waited until the British army came into view before firing off one last pistol shot and joining the retreating soldiers in boats ferried south to Isle aux Noix. From there, the remnants of Montgomery’s and Arnold’s commands fell back to Crown Point. Strangely, Carleton broke off his pursuit and withdrew, leaving the shaky garrison at Ticonderoga in American hands. The ambitious Canadian campaign had ended in defeat, but once again the American forces had lived to fight another day. □

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## Go to battle for Sparta, Persia, or Egypt in *Ancient Wars: Sparta*.

GOING IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER THIS TIME, THINGS BEGIN WITH Torsten (*The Settlers*) Hess's new game, *Ancient Wars: Sparta* for the PC from Playlogic and Eidos Interactive. The time period for the game is 500 to around 400 BC. The game pits three different nations against one another: Sparta, Persia, and Egypt. Each nation has nine unique single-player missions so that players will want to command each nation in turn to play through all of the content. There is also a multi-player mode for up to eight players.

The form of AWS is that of a real-time strategy game. The designers did not attempt to create a hardcore historical simulation. Instead, the game is a balanced RTS that uses forces, weapons, kit, and battlegrounds that are inspired by the historical forces. For instance, the game includes not just ships (there is naval combat as well as land), chariots, and elephants as units, but also priests who



use trained panthers and women who can shower snake venom on the enemy. The backbone of the game is the various infantries and their historical weapons, but the designers have added some "color" to the mix.

There is no limit on manpower in AWS so players have to be careful not to recruit more men than they can equip and feed. In fact, one of the unique things about AWS is that the soldiers can loot the bodies of fallen enemies, taking their weapons. In this manner, players can build special units that use nontraditional weapons and tactics. Another unique point is the power of weather in the game, where wind and fire can work in concert to influence the outcome. AWS makes for an entertaining simulation: a good mix of units, the right level of automation, and just enough challenge.

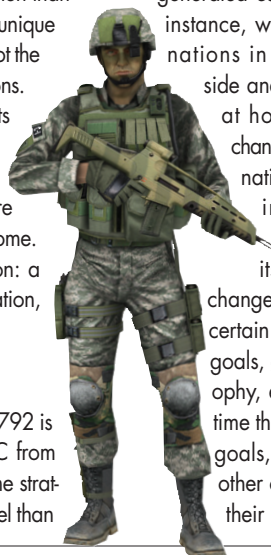
### **Europa Universalis III**

Moving forward to the era from 1454 to 1792 is the game *Europa Universalis III* for the PC from Paradox Interactive. This is another real-time strategy game, but on a much, much higher level than

AWS. Where AWS concerns itself with armies and battles, *EU3* is about nations and civilizations. Instead of three possible countries, players in *EU3* can choose to start as any nation or principality of Europe during that period, and they can choose the date in the period when they want to start. The game doesn't just throw it open, though; it suggests starting countries and times based on events from history and rates the choices by difficulty.

The choice of where to start the game illustrates what will strike new players about it most. *EU3* contains a lot of choices but the players have to bring their own goals. There are no missions; there isn't a rival that has to be crushed. Unlike many games of this sort, world domination isn't even a possibility, much less the goal. Players can expand their boundaries or explore the new world or spread their state religion or try to become technologically superior or several other options or several combinations of these options. They can even fight wars if they like.

The methods of influencing the world around the players' country are diplomacy, spies, military, and missionaries. Of course, all these things work together. Launching a war without a diplomatically generated *causus belli*, for instance, will bring other nations in on the other side and cause unrest at home. And the chances of a player's nation winning a war or spreading the gospel or whatever depend in large part on how its sliders (which can only be changed at certain times and only by certain amounts) that track its internal goals, government, economy, philosophy, etc. are adjusted. And all the time that the player is working on his goals, the computer is running the other countries, having them pursue their historical goals.



There is a lot going on in *EU3* and a lot of options to toy with. It is such a deep game that it can be replayed over and over. It is both a good game and an accurate simulation. History buffs of the period will enjoy it most, but every fan of strategy games will enjoy it a lot.

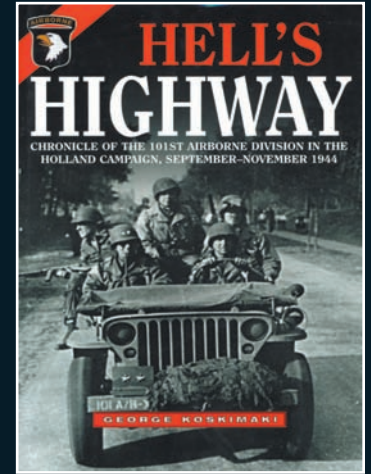
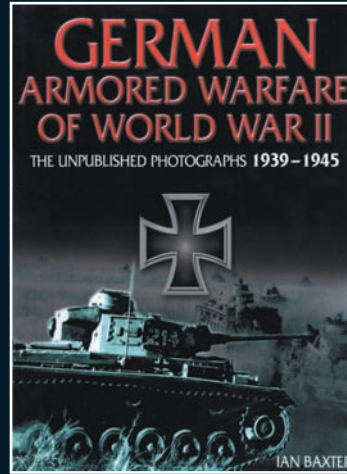
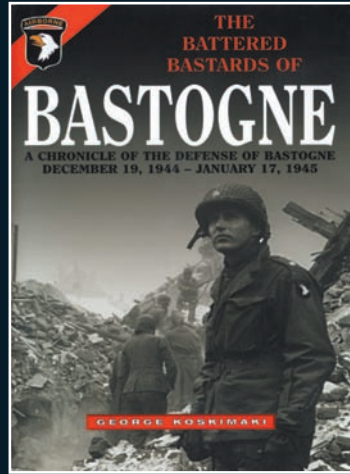
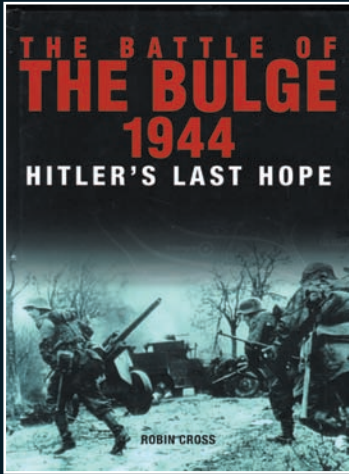
### **Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2**

Barely a year after the first one delighted fans, Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2* is out from Ubisoft for the PC, Xbox 360, PS3, and even the PSP. The Ghosts are an elite army team of specialists; the first ones into hot spots and the last ones out of danger. *GRAW2* is set in 2014, which is far enough into the future to let the creators play with history and give the Ghosts some high-tech toys, but close enough to the modern day that the game feels and plays like reality, not science fiction.



As the players lead their team of Ghosts, they have an insert video that shows what is going on from the point of view of whoever the player selects: the other Ghosts, their aerial spotting drone, or their robot tank. A press of a button makes that image fill the screen. A press of another button sends the team to attack or take cover or rally around. As the game goes on, more weapons and specialists are unlocked. In short, *GRAW2* delivers one of the most immersive, flexible, and "real" simulations of being a squad leader on a hyper-modern battlefield. □

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