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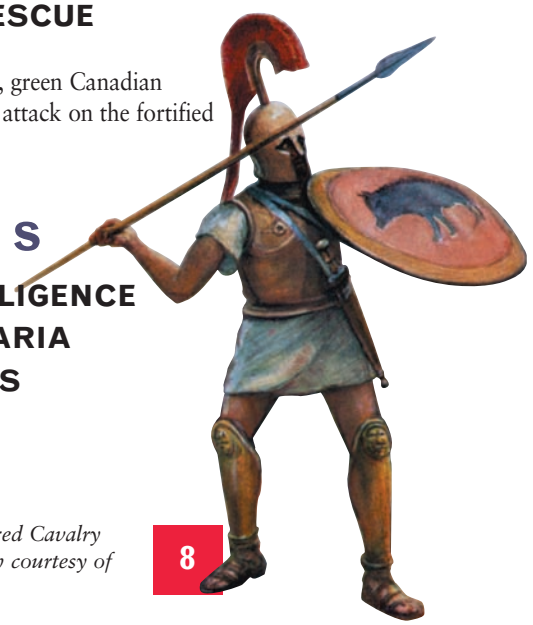

COVER: Pfc. Derik Boyd of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment patrols Tal Afar, Iraq. Photograph courtesy of U.S. Army/by Staff Sgt. Aaron Allmon II.

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The Tokyo War Crimes Trials sought justice for millions of nameless victims.

WHEN THE TOKYO WAR CRIMES TRIALS OPENED IN the former hilltop headquarters of the Japanese military at Ichigaya on May 3, 1946, American-born chief prosecutor Joseph Keenan faced a difficult task. Unlike the Nazi leaders then on trial at Nuremberg, the 28 Japanese defendants facing Allied justice were not part of a well-documented and fanatically organized governmental effort to exterminate an entire people, led by a single charismatic leader such as Adolf Hitler.

Instead, the Japanese defendants were brought to the dock of justice for the more ambiguous, if no less heinous, crime of planning and conducting a "purely acquisitive and aggressive war," in the words of a 1945 United Nations War Crimes Commission report. Despite the fact that Japan had signed the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing purely offensive war, defense attorneys—and millions of Japanese citizens—considered the Tokyo trials to be merely "victor's justice," at best, and naked racism, at worst. Keenan, in his opening statement, sought to meet the issue head-on. "It is high time," he said, "that the promoters of aggressive, ruthless war and treaty-breakers should be stripped of the glamour of national heroes and exposed as what they really are—plain, ordinary murderers."

Whatever the legal niceties, the 2½-year-long trial, which included 419 witnesses ranging from American and Allied buck privates to the last emperor of China, left little doubt that former Japanese Premier Hideki Tojo and his 27 fellow defendants were indeed evil men who had deliberately planned and systematically carried out a brutal war in which "inhabitants of countries which they overran [were] ruthlessly tortured, murdered and massacred in cold blood." From the Rape of Nanking in 1937, when a quarter of a million residents of that city were killed in six weeks, to the mass murder of 18,000 Filipino men, women, and children at the village of Lipa; the Bataan Death March; the Siam-Burma Death Railroad; the forced labor camps and sex-slave "comfort women" in Korea, the witnesses described a leering, sadistic policy of cruelty that had few counterparts, even among the Nazi abuses in Europe.

In the end, Tojo and six other defendants—including Kenji Doihara, Koki Hirota, Seishiro Itagaki, Akira Muto, and Heitaro Kimura—were sentenced to death and hanged. Sixteen others were given life sentences, although most were paroled within a few years. Two cheated justice by dying before the trial was over, and a third went insane (or pretended to go insane) on the first day of the trial and died in his bed of a heart attack on Christmas Day, 1948.

The executions, held in strict privacy without members of the press being allowed to witness or photograph the workings of justice, did not put an end to the matter of Japanese guilt. Fourteen of the war criminals, including Tojo, later were secretly enshrined as "martyrs" at Yasukuni Shrine, Japan's most revered Shinto temple. Japanese Premier Masayoshi Ohira made a much-publicized pilgrimage to the temple in 1978, and school textbooks in Japan still give virtually no coverage to World War II, except to exhibit photographs of the American bombing at Hiroshima and to characterize the Japanese invasion of China as an "advance" and the enslavement of forced laborers in Korea as a "mobilization." Nearly six decades after the verdicts at Tokyo, one is reminded of the words of Whitney R. Harris, a member of the Allied prosecution team at Nuremberg, who warned that "in shunning the evil of yesterday we do not forget the wrongs to which it led—and having forgotten them believe them never to have happened."

Roy Morris Jr.

Congratulations to Eric Niderost on his 2005 Army Historical Foundation Distinguished Writing Award for "Victory Denied by the Fog of War," which appeared in the February 2005 issue of *Military Heritage.*

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CARL A. GNAM, JR.
Editorial Director, Founder

ROY MORRIS JR.
Editor
editor@militaryheritagemagazine.com

LAURA CLEVELAND
Managing Editor

MAE ARIOLA
Art Director

KEVIN HYMEL
Research Director

Contributors:
Eric T. Baker, Nicholas Bolash, Louis Ciotola, Al Hemingway, Charles Hilbert, Bernd Horn, Peter Kross, Mark S. Longo, Mark Skrzynski, Blaine Taylor, John Walker

ADVERTISING OFFICE:

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By Charles Hilbert

Mercenary general Chabrias the Athenian confounded enemies of the famed city-state for more than three decades.

ON A WARM SUMMER DAY IN THE YEAR 378 BC, A LARGE SPARTAN army stood baffled on the plain of Boeotia in central Greece. Before them at the top of a small hill were their enemies, the Thebans and Athenians, standing at ease with their shields resting against their knees and their spears held upright, pointing harmlessly at the sky. They seemed entirely unconcerned at the approach of 18,000 red-cloaked Spartans, the most feared warriors in all of Greece, soldiers whose very appearance caused large armies to melt away before a single blow was struck. The Spartan king, Agesilaus II, who had terrorized the Persians and most of the Greek world for the past 30 years, was literally stopped in his tracks by the unexpected maneuver.

The man responsible for Agesilaus's perplexity was Chabrias the Athenian. Diodorus, the Sicilian historian, first mentions the shadowy mercenary in his account of the Corinthian War (394-386 BC), in which the Spartans and their allies fought the Athenians, Corinthians, and Thebans. Diodorus records that Chabrias was sent to command the Athenian contingent at Corinth sometime in late 390 or early 389. While the Athenians were sending Chabrias to Corinth, Euagoras, the king of Cyprus, was sending messengers to the Athenians, asking for help in his revolt against the king of Persia. In 388 the Athenians, answering his appeal, gave Chabrias 800 lightly armed mercenary peltasts and some Athenian heavy infantry, called hoplites, and sent him to Cyprus. Along the way he stopped at the island of Aegina, a base for the Spartan naval blockade of Athens. He beached his galleys, called triremes, under cover of night, and marched inland with his peltasts. At dawn the hoplites landed.

Apprised of the invasion but unaware of Chabrias's nighttime maneuvers, Gorgopas, the Spartan commander, led his men toward the hoplites, walking headlong into an ambush set by Chabrias the night before. As Gorgopas passed the hollow where the peltasts lay concealed, Chabrias and his men rose up, threw javelins, and slung stones. Gorgopas and those in front were immediately struck dead on the spot. The Athenian hoplites then advanced. With their leader slain, the Spartans and Aeginans fled with Chabrias in hot pursuit. Xenophon, a contemporary of Chabrias, recorded the aftermath in his *Hellenika*: "After this, the Athenians, as if at peace, sailed the sea."

Chabrias continued on to Cyprus, from which according to the Roman biographer Kornelius Nepos, "He didn't leave until he had conquered the whole island by fighting." In 386 the Persian king, along with Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, gave the Spartans some ships with which to blockade the Hellespont. Since most of Athens' grain was imported and

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This 7th-century BC jug depicts heavily armed Greek hoplites advancing in battle, followed by a flute player sounding the marching beat.

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had to pass through the Hellespont, the Athenians were forced to surrender. They signed the Peace of Antalcidas, named after the Spartan ambassador to Persia, in 387, which returned Cyprus to Persia. It took six more years of fighting before Euagoras submitted.

Chabrias left Cyprus in accordance with the terms of the treaty, but by 385 he was again fighting the Persians, this time in Egypt, leading the forces of the Egyptian King Akoris. The Persians complained to the Athenians, who replied that Chabrias was acting on his own, without orders from the government. Having designed and built fortifications to guard the Nile Delta, Chabrias spent the next three years defending them against the Persians.

In the meantime, the Spartans occupied Thebes in the summer of 382. By winter 379, revolt was brewing among the Theban exiles in Athens. The Athenians, anxious at the growing power of Sparta and eager to help the Thebans, recalled Chabrias from Egypt, ostensibly in reply to the Persian demands. The Theban revolt was successful, the Spartan garrison of Thebes was expelled, and Chabrias arrived just in time to prevent the Spartan relief column under King Cleombrotus from entering Theban-controlled Boeotia. Cleombrotus turned and took the road to Plataia, but being the leader of Sparta's peace party, he took no offensive action, and after camping in Boeotia for about two weeks, he returned to Sparta.

The next spring, unimpressed by Cleombrotus's ineffectual invasion, the Spartan Ephors, or ruling council, sent Agesilaus, the leader of Sparta's war party and an inveterate enemy of the Thebans, to invade Boeotia. He planned to force the Thebans to fight a decisive battle and destroy them. But the Thebans had not been idle; they encircled the plain and the most valuable lands about the city with a ditch and palisade. A determined Agesilaus broke through the stockade while his enemies slept and headed for Thebes.

As soon as the Athenians heard of the Spartan invasion, they sent 5,000 hoplites and 200 horsemen to reinforce the Thebans. Once Agesilaus had passed the stockade, the Athenian reinforcements occupied the crest of an oblong hill about two miles from Thebes. Perhaps the position had been chosen by Chabrias, who had brought with him between 1,000 and 2,000 veterans of his Cyprian and Egyptian campaigns. He may even have been the architect of the Theban stockade, since he had helped to fortify the approaches to Egypt against Persian invasion a few years before, and most recently had been responsible for the construction of a stone wall and a system of watch-

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Climbing mountain paths in full armor in the summer was extremely difficult, even for experienced hoplites like these.

towers designed to prevent access to Attica by way of the Elusinian plain, the usual invasion route followed by the Spartans.

Agesilaus, observing the Theban position, led his men forward in battle order and sent his peltasts ahead to test the Theban dispositions. The Thebans, having the advantage of being on higher ground, beat them back easily. Then Chabrias put into operation a plan he had prearranged with his Theban allies, most notably Gorgidas, who commanded the famous Sacred Band of Thebes. Chabrias and the Athenians held the left of the line, directly opposite Agesilaus and the Spartans. Marching forward on Agesilaus's left were the Spartan allies, directly opposed to the Thebans, whose Sacred Band formed the right of the Theban line. The Spartans came on slowly to preserve order, marching in step to the sound of flutes.

Meanwhile, the Theban army moved as if in response to a single word of command. They took off their shields, rested them against their knees, and stood with their spears at the upright position. Agesilaus was amazed. This was something no Spartan had ever seen. He halted the advance with a trumpet call. He may have been amazed, but he wasn't stupid. To continue uphill against such a determined and obviously well-disciplined force would have been senseless slaughter. Had the enemy shown signs of wavering or indecision, the advance would surely have continued. But with the Thebans holding the high ground, the issue hung in the balance, and even a Spartan victory would have been too costly. Agesilaus waited a while to give his enemies a chance to advance against him. According to Diodorus, "Since the Thebans did not come down, the phalanx of foot he [Agesilaus] led away, the horse and light infantry having been sent away, he ravaged the land fearlessly and of much spoil he became master." Chabrias had gained a strategic victory by denying Agesilaus the opportunity to fight a decisive battle.

Chabrias's defiance of the Spartans went down in history as his most famous exploit. To commemorate his stratagem, the Athenians erected a statue to him in the Agora at public expense. It portrayed him as a hoplite with shield against his knees and spear upright. Afterward, athletes and other artists had their own statues posed in similar attitudes when they won their victories. The next summer, Agesilaus was back. He made a two-day march in one day and passed the Theban stockade at Skolos before the Thebans knew what was happening. He then devastated the Theban fields as far as the walls of Tanagra. The Thebans advanced and occupied a hill that lay between Agesilaus and Thebes.

For the second time, Agesilaus chose not to advance uphill in the face of a determined enemy. He simply led the Spartans around the hill and straight toward Thebes itself in an attempt to put his army between the Thebans and their city and force them to fight. The Thebans on the hill hurriedly left their position and headed back to Thebes at a run. Some of the Spartans ran after them. But the Thebans held the high ground and threw their spears down at the attacking Spartans. The Spartan light infantry and some of the cavalry charged up the hill and attacked the Theban rear guard, but as they got near the walls of Thebes, the Thebans turned around and stood their ground. The light troops stopped their pursuit and retreated from the high ground. Agesilaus led his men back to the Thebans' original position and camped for the night. The next day he led the army back to Thespiai. Outmaneuvered for the second time by Chabrias, Agesilaus returned to Sparta, having failed again to annihilate the Thebans in a pitched battle.

Impotent on land, the Spartans decided to try a naval blockade, a tactic that they had used to defeat the Athenians in 404 and again in 386. The Athenians, giving command of their fleet to Chabrias, sent him out to break the blockade. With 83 triremes, he met the Spartan commander Pollis and his 65 vessels near the island of Naxos in September 376. Both commanders stationed themselves on their respective right wings. At first Pollis had the upper hand, ramming his way through the

Athenian left, destroying the trireme of the left-wing commander, Kedon, and killing Kedon himself. But Chabrias used his superior numbers to good effect, reinforcing his left and defeating the ships in front of him, sinking more than 20 and capturing eight, with a loss of 18 of his own vessels. If Chabrias had not stopped to pick up the Athenians whose ships had sunk and the bodies of those who had been killed, he would have destroyed the entire Spartan fleet. But Chabrias, remembering the Battle of Arginusae, when victorious Athenian commanders were condemned to death for failing to pick up survivors and bodies even though a fierce storm was raging, took care not to make the same mistake.

In Athens, the population was ecstatic at Chabrias's return. The Battle of Naxos was their first naval victory in almost 30 years. It happened to fall on the Festival of the Great Mysteries, and every year on that day Chabrias, whose fondness for parties was well known, would distribute wine to the celebrants. He spent the next year sailing around the eastern Mediterranean, gaining allies for Athens. By now all the Greek states needed a breather, and in 375 they signed another treaty. The peace proved illusory; almost as soon as it was signed, the Athenians and Spartans engaged in a cold war in the west of Greece, and Chabrias again was in the thick of it. The fighting dragged on until 371, when all the Greek states except Sparta and Thebes signed another peace treaty.

Twenty days later, the Spartans suffered the worst defeat in their history at the hands of the Theban commander Epaminondas, who invented the oblique order of battle for just that occasion. He invaded Sparta and gained allies all over Greece. Soon the Thebans and their allies were camped on the banks of the Eurotas River, across from the unwalled city of Sparta. Epaminondas did not press his luck; the river was high, and he knew that Agesilaus and the Spartans were desperate. The Thebans and their allies contented themselves with raiding the length and breadth of the land and carrying off anything of value.

In 369, Epaminondas launched another invasion, and the Spartans sent ambassadors to their old enemy, Athens, asking for military aid against the Thebans. The Athenians, fearing the increased power of their former ally, assented. To enter the southern part of Greece, the Peloponnese, Epaminondas would have to lead his army past Corinth, the city that controlled the southern part of the isthmus connecting the Peloponnese with the rest of the Greek mainland. In a daring attempt to take the city, the Theban Sacred Band appeared suddenly on the heights above Corinth and rushed toward the open gates. Within 100 yards of the city wall, they ran into a body of Chabrias's peltasts. Unburdened by the hoplites' huge shields and body armor, the peltasts climbed onto burial monuments lining the road and rained down stones and javelins. Men in the front ranks of the Sacred Band were struck. Some fell dead in their tracks; others suffered painful wounds caused by the sharp javelins and bullet-like sling-stones. Unable to come to grips with their foes, the Thebans turned in flight. The peltasts climbed down and chased them for about half a mile, then they returned to the city and hauled away the bloody bodies of their enemies.

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Spartan men such as these, armed with spears, valued their city and comrades more than they did themselves and their families.

Three years after his successful defense of Corinth, Chabrias was charged with treason for failing to prevent the defection of Oropos, a town on the border between Attica and Boeotia. Defended by the philosopher Plato, he was acquitted, and in 360 he returned to Egypt, where he commanded the Egyptian fleet while his old adversary Agesilaus commanded the infantry. After successfully and profitably helping the locals slaughter each other, the two Greeks sailed for home. Agesilaus was 84 years old and had been cut, stabbed, and beaten by every weapon known to man throughout a long and violent career. He died of old age on the voyage back to Sparta.

By 357, Athens' allies were tired of playing second fiddle to the Athenians and sought to break away from the Second Athenian Confederacy. Chabrias was sent to persuade them to reconsider. His first target was the island of Khios. Sailing into the harbor, he outdistanced his own fleet and was soon surrounded by the triremes of his enemies. His ship, struck by a ram, began to sink. Although he would have been able to escape if he had thrown himself into the sea, Chabrias preferred to die. The rest of his crew jumped overboard and swam to safety. But Chabrias, thinking that a noble death was preferable to a dishonorable life, was killed fighting hand-to-hand with the enemy.

Chabrias was a hard-drinking, hard-fighting, front-line general. But he was also a careful, methodical tactician who excelled in all manner of armed combat, and he was an expert in field fortifications. He successfully commanded light and heavy troops as an infantry general and was also admiral of the fleet. He fought victoriously wherever the Athenian people sent him, on three continents, on land and on the sea. Although he spent a lifetime battling Athens' many enemies in various far-off places, it was his psychological victory over the Spartans at Boeotia that was admired and remembered the most. □

By Nicholas Bolash

Like its counterpart at City Point, Broadway Landing was a major supply depot for the Union army at Petersburg, Va.

IN 1864, THE CIVIL WAR WAS RAGING ACROSS THE UNITED STATES. AT THE epicenter of the seemingly stalemated conflict was the vital Confederate stronghold at Petersburg, Va. As Union and Confederate forces settled in for a lengthy siege—the Confederates inside the city and the Federal troops surrounding them to the south and east—the North set up numerous supply depots as spots for offloading siege ammunition. The best known supply depot was located at City Point. However, another small town in the area also served to bring heavy artillery, ammunition, and other supplies from the James and Appomattox Rivers to the army in the field. This town was Broadway Landing, located eight miles northeast of Petersburg.

The history of Broadway Landing began soon after the establishment of the Virginia colony. A number of settlers who lived farther east explored down the James River and in 1619 established Bermuda Hundred on a peninsula between the James and Appomattox Rivers. They were the first Europeans to set foot in what would become the town of Broadway Landing. Later in the 17th century, a man named Thomas Broadway moved into the area and named his land along the Appomattox River after himself. The town he established consisted of no more than his home and a few surrounding buildings for his relatives and slaves, but it soon began to grow. It quickly became the largest town in Prince George County, and because of its size, the Virginia Assembly granted the town the right to have a ferry cross the Appomattox River at that point. This began a long tradition of Broadway Landing as a major transportation center for the area south of Richmond.

An impressive array of Union artillery sits ready for use on the beach at Broadway Landing in the summer of 1964.

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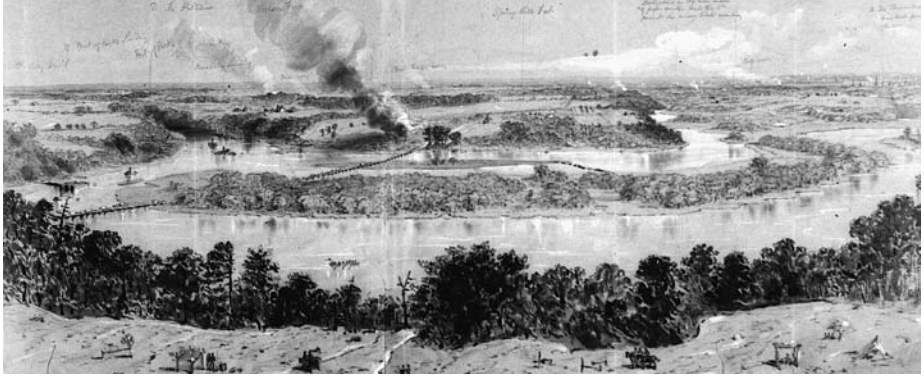

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TOP: A drawing of the area south and east of Broadway Landing from the 180-foot-high Cobb's Signal Tower shows Point of Rocks Bridge, the town, and its pontoon bridge. ABOVE: This famous photo shows mortars and other large artillery pieces on the beach below the town.

When the Revolutionary War came, the British used Broadway Landing as a base for their preliminary attacks on Richmond during the 1781 campaign. After the victory of the American colonies, the Appomattox River grew in importance because of the emergence of the nearby town of Petersburg as the most important regional center of commerce. The river channel was deepened up to Broadway Landing in 1788 by an act of the Virginia legislature, and the town became the official port of Petersburg. It continued to be an important commercial center with the construction of the Munt Brick Plant. However, with the closing of the plant around 1830 and the subsequent movement of much of Petersburg's trade to City Point, Broadway Landing began to fall into decline. By 1860, it was less a town than a tiny cluster of homes. The 1860 census reported Broadway Landing as having 8,411 people, 4,997 of them slaves, with 2,900 whites and 515 free blacks.

After the 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln as president and the secession of 11 Southern states, life seemed to move on normally at Broadway Landing. To the citizens of the small village, the opening shots fired in anger at Bull Run may as well have been a thousand miles away. Union Maj. Gen. George McClellan's Peninsular Campaign in 1862 changed that misguided notion. After leaving the peninsula, Union troops passed within 15 miles of the town, and townsfolk could hear gunfire echoing across the James River. Within two years, the everyday life of every citizen of Broadway Landing would change dramatically as Union troops by the thousands entered the town and made it into a huge supply depot that would help sound the death knell of the Confederacy.

After three years of devastating conflict, the Union Army was frustrated in its repeated attempts to take Richmond. The Federals had over twice as many troops as Confederate General Robert E. Lee, but the core of their problems lay with their leadership. After suffering through years of incompetent generals, President Lincoln appointed Ulysses S. Grant commander-in-chief of the Union Army in the spring of 1864. Beginning that May, Grant assumed the task of taking Richmond at all costs. His two-part strategy involved winning battles to the north and east of Richmond while also sending a group of infantry under Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler to Bermuda Hundred. Grant's strategy did not begin well, with his army suffering three consecutive defeats at Spotsylvania, North Anna, and Cold Harbor. Undeterred, he decided to follow Butler across the James River and ultimately invest the major stronghold and transportation hub that was keeping the Confederacy alive—Petersburg.

Crossing the James and Appomattox Rivers required some preliminary exploration of the area before attacking Petersburg. Butler's campaign at Bermuda Hundred had been costly and had accomplished very little. Except for the first death at Broadway Landing during the war (William Carroll, who drowned), there was not much action at this point within the town proper. All that was about to change. Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard reported on May 30 that he had seen Union soldiers hastily withdrawing from the town. These were probably the last elements of Butler's troops. However, 10 days later, Union soldiers led by Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore crossed the river. The final preliminary raids taking place around Broadway Landing were conducted by Brig. Gen. August Kautz, who led three cavalry forays in the month of June in the Petersburg-Bermuda Hundred area. Kautz's June 22 raid attacked Confederate positions at Bermuda Hundred, around Petersburg, and at Broadway Landing. These raids were an important step in paving the way for the siege to come. It was apparent to townsfolk that something major was about to happen in the area.

By the end of June, Grant had established a number of supply depots along the James and Appomattox Rivers. The most important and largest was the sprawling City Point complex at the confluence of the two rivers. Broadway Landing was chosen as a site for a second supply depot because of the depth of the water there and its central position between City Point, Bermuda Hundred, and Petersburg. The depot was established on June 25 in the lower part of the town along the Appomattox River. One or two divisions (mostly Ohio national guardsmen and Connecticut Heavy Artillery) were permanently stationed at the depot, but many others moved through it at different points of the siege, including the 138th Ohio and the 4th

National Archives

Matthew Brady's photograph of Broadway Landing was taken at the time of the Battle of the Crater. Cobb's Hill Signal Tower and the pontoon bridge are clearly visible on the left.

New York. The most important regiment stationed at the depot was the 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery, a division with a great deal of distinguished combat experience. Divisional headquarters was established at Broadway Landing, and Colonel Henry L. Abbot was appointed commander.

Under Abbot's watch, Broadway Landing would become a fully operational supply depot. When the depot was established, there was one wharf at Broadway Landing; eventually there would be three. There was also a laboratory on one of the wharves for combining artillery shells and gunpowder. This laboratory is shown in a number of Civil War era photographs of the landing, including one by the most famous Civil War photographer, Matthew Brady. Brady's photograph, labeled "The Ordnance at the Depot," shows a couple of buildings, along with guns, boats, wharves, and a pontoon bridge. Guns and shells of every kind passed through Broadway Landing on their way to the front, from Coehorn mortars to the 30-pound Parrot guns. The photo displays how extensive the weaponry was. Some 1,200 tons of ammunition passed through Broadway Landing in the month of July alone.

Although not as big a contributor of arms as City Point, Broadway Landing did have one major accomplishment to show for its time—many of the materials used in the Battle of the Crater on July 30 passed through the town, including the explosives used to blast the famous hole beneath the Confederate line. Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan, better known for his raids in the Shenandoah, created a diversionary raid to distract the Confederates from the Crater preparations massing at Broadway Landing. In all, the town served as an excellent supply depot, with goods being transported from the landing to almost any point on the various battlefields. From Bermuda Hundred to Five Forks, Union troops could take solace in the fact that they had a smooth-running supply depot behind them at Broadway Landing.

Although its major function was as a supply center, Broadway Landing also served as a transportation center. With 50 wagons sending supplies all over the area at any one time, it was the place to go when someone needed to hitch a ride. The wagons were laid next to the wharves on the riverbank for both supply and transportation use. Broadway Landing's most important transportation application, however, came from its pontoon bridge across the Appomattox River, which was for a time the sole Union crossing point on the river. Another pontoon bridge just upstream was built on September 19. As proof of the proficiency of Abbot's Union engineers, the bridge was built with 23 boats in one hour and 15 minutes. Although Abbot had warned his superiors about repairing the bridge frequently, it soon broke down when an excessively heavy cannon was brought across. After the bridge was fixed, Broadway ran smoothly as a transportation artery. Remains of the bridge pilings still dot the Appomattox River.

Broadway Landing also served as the center of communication lines (it had a telegraph depot that connected Butler's troops in

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By Peter Kross

Although hailed as the father of American military intelligence, spy master Ralph Van Deman left behind a tarnished legacy.

IN THE LONG HISTORY OF AMERICAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE, the names that come to mind most often are those of Nathan Hale, Benedict Arnold, Herbert Yardley, and William Donovan. But one man's exploits in the field of military espionage have been given little coverage by historians. He was Maj. Gen. Ralph Van Deman, considered by many to be "the father of military intelligence."

Van Deman was born in Delaware, Ohio, in 1865. He graduated from Harvard University in 1889 and went on to law school before enrolling in medical school at Miami University in Cincinnati, Ohio. He entered the Army in 1891, attending the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth and serving for a time as an Army surgeon. While stationed at Fort Leavenworth, he came under the tutelage of Major Arthur L. Wagner, a visionary in the field of military intelligence. In 1897, Van Deman joined Wagner, who had become head of the War Department's Military Information Division in Washington, D.C. His first assignment was with the mapping section of the MID.

During the ensuing Spanish-American War, Van Deman was considered too valuable to be sent into the field. Instead, he remained at the MID's Washington headquarters, helping update maps at the White House. Wanting to get into action, Van Deman went to the Philippines in 1899, serving in the military information section there under the direction of Maj. Gen. R.P. Hughes. In July 1901, then-Captain Van Deman was sent to Manila along with two other men, Lt. Col. Joseph Dickman and Captain John Taylor. The three were assigned by Maj. Gen. Arthur MacArthur to organize a military information division for the Philippines. Van Deman and his colleagues soon made the Manila MID a well-tooled intelligence-gathering agency. They collected valuable information on the growing threat of Japan, which was trying to extend its influence in the Far East, as well as compiling information on the various home-grown guerrilla groups operating throughout the Philippine archipelago. Not incidentally, they were also able to foil an assassination plot on General MacArthur's life.

In 1904, Van Deman was one of nine officers chosen for the elite first class of the Army War College. After graduating from the AWC, he undertook an intelligence mission to China for the War Department, surveying and mapping the rail lines and roads leading to China's major seaports. Six years earlier, the Western powers had found it necessary to intervene during the so-called Boxer Rebellion to rescue their nationals, and Van Deman's mission was to map out escape routes if and when American citizens had to be evacuated again. While in China, one of Van Deman's

ABOVE: Under Van Deman, the Military Intelligence Section had wide powers of intelligence collection and investigation. RIGHT: American doughboys enter World War I. By that time Ralph Van Deman had been working secretly for months reorganizing the Army's intelligence branch.

Both: National Archives

house workers turned the tables on him, sending the contents of Van Deman's mail directly to Peking.

Returning to Washington in 1907, Van Deman took over the map section of the MID as part of a general reorganization of the service under President Theodore Roosevelt. The MID's first order of business was to send its agents into Latin America, where they initiated a large-scale clandestine communications and intelligence-gathering operation. One of Van Deman's agents in Guatemala was then-Lieutenant Joseph Stilwell, who later would become a famous general during World War II in the China-Burma-India Theater.

Knowing Van Deman's background in the Philippines and China, Roosevelt ordered the captain to supply him, on a weekly basis, with all intelligence regarding Japan's movements. It was this priceless intelligence that allowed Roosevelt to send the Great White Fleet around the world in December 1907 to demonstrate American naval strength. Just when Van Deman thought he was positioned to play an important role in the future development of American intelligence, however, the rug was pulled out from under him. He was transferred to the War College Division of the War Department's General Staff, which had taken over the MID's intelligence functions.

Van Deman immediately ran into trouble with Maj. Gen. Franklin Bell, the chief of staff, whom he'd known in the Philippines. The two men disliked each other, and Bell got his revenge on Van Deman by cutting him out of the espionage loop in Washington. On June 24, 1908, the MID was shut down and the War College redesignated G-2, or Military Intelligence. The Army was left without a way to collect foreign intelligence at a time when the United States was beginning the process of becoming a world power in its own right.

For the next seven years, Van Deman conducted a number of covert missions in the Far East before returning to Washington in July 1915 with the rank of major. He rejoined the War College Division of the War Department's General Staff and immediately undertook a one-man campaign to have MID restored as a separate division and reactivated as the Army's intelligence-gathering wing. World War I had broken out in Europe, and the United States, while still neutral, was receiving a large number of intelligence reports, which were going unread and unanalyzed. From his desk at G-2, Van Deman took matters into his own hands to correct this appalling situation, writing a "Historical Sketch" of intelligence-gathering efforts for the Army Chief of Staff,

National Archives

Brigadier General Joseph E. Kuhn, chief of the War College Division, fully supported Van Deman's sub rosa intelligence efforts.

Maj. Gen. Hugh Scott, and urging the reestablishment of the MID.

"The most necessary and essential kind of information, the information without which no war plan can be made that is worth the paper it is written on, does not come in of its own accord or a matter of routine," Van Deman wrote. "It must be actively sought, traced out and proved out. To sum up the matter in a single sentence, we are no better prepared, insofar as organization for intelligence duties in the field are concerned, than we were the day the General Staff was created, and as far as military information is concerned we are not so well prepared since much of the information on hand at that time has not since been corrected or added to and is now so old as to be practically worthless."

Scott, a West Point graduate who had spent much of his career fighting Indians out West, was not impressed with Van Deman's suggestions. "Our allies would provide all the intelligence we would need about our German adversaries," Scott told the major. Undeterred, Van Deman continued his one-man crusade to reorganize the Army's intelligence wing. The new chief of the War College Division, Brig. Gen. Joseph Kuhn, supported Van Deman—with one simple stipulation. Van Deman was on his own and would get no official help from the Army's powers-that-be. Working strictly on his own, Van Deman toiled in the bowels of the War College, single-handedly remaking the Army's intelligence apparatus from the ground up. Top officials in President Woodrow Wilson's administration knew nothing of Van Deman's work, and Kuhn kept the secret to himself.

Following the American entry into World War I, Kuhn decided that it was time to inform his superiors of Van Deman's sub rosa efforts. On April 11, 1917, he wrote a letter to Scott laying out his subordinate's work. "As a master of fact, the Intelligence section (under the direction of Major Van Deman), has been engaged in secret intelligence work for the past year in close cooperation with the various secret organizations of the various departments of the civil branch of the government—the State Department, the Department of Justice, the Treasury Department, etc.," Kuhn wrote. "This work has necessarily been accomplished with practically no funds and with such a limited personnel as to make effective work of any kind almost an impossibility. The officer personnel has consisted of a single General Staff officer and one retired officer, as assistant."

In a gutsy move, Van Deman took his case directly to Scott. Three times he asked the general to read his reports, but to his deep disappointment Scott did not want to hear anything about the Army's role in creating a separate intelligence section of its own. "No amount of talking or argument could change the Chief of Staff's opinion," Van Deman recalled, "and after two or three interviews he became exasperated and ordered the writer to cease his efforts with the organization of a military information service."

As a career military officer, Van Deman knew the chain of command as well as anyone, but he still endeavored to bypass Scott, and despite the general's orders to go no further with the matter, Van Deman appealed indirectly to his fellow Ohioan, Secretary of War Newton Baker, for a hearing. The two met for a private chat on April 30 in the secretary's office. Whatever Van Deman told Baker worked, and less than a month later Van Deman was promoted to lieutenant colonel and ordered to establish a Military Intelligence Section as its head. Congress chipped with a $1 million appropriation earmarked "Contingencies—Military Intelligence." Van Deman now had the money and the political backing to create a new organization that would put American intelligence on the right track. The new agency was broad in scope and included an Administration Branch; an Information Branch, which included espionage and coun-

terespionage duties; and a Censorship Branch. In the new pecking order, the MIS would have wide powers in the field of intelligence collection and coordination.

Van Deman set to work organizing the flow of information coming in from the battlefields of Europe, making sure that it made it to the proper governmental authorities. Realizing that he still had a lot to learn about organizing a secret intelligence unit, Van Deman contacted British Lt. Col. Claude Dansey, an experienced 41-year-old intelligence officer stationed at the British Embassy in Washington. If anyone knew how to develop a modern system of spying, Van Deman reasoned, it was the British. As their friendship deepened, Dansey gave Van Deman advice on everything from how to catch enemy spies to how to organize his headquarters. In time, Dansey even set up shop inside Van Deman's office to be on hand whenever he was needed.

After its modest start on a balcony overlooking the War College Division library, MIS rapidly expanded, going from two officers and two clerks to a staff by war's end of 282 officers and 1,159 civilian employees. The scope of the service expanded as well. It was obvious to Van Deman that the United States needed the means of reading Germany's secret codes. Accordingly, he set up a code-breaking group called MI-8 and tasked a young first lieutenant named Herbert Yardley to head the efforts. Yardley's brilliant organization, known as the Black Chamber, played a huge role in cracking German and Japanese codes during and after World War I, and proved indispensable in aiding American foreign policy for years to come.

Under Van Deman, MIS also undertook a somewhat less creditable mission: spying on American citizens. During the war, the threat of a so-called German "fifth column" in the United States took on a life of its own. Across the country, vigilante groups sprang up with the sole objective of rooting out real or imagined German spies. One of the largest of these groups was the American Protective League, founded in Chicago by advertising executive Albert M. Briggs. With its headquarters in Chicago, the APL soon grew to include branches in all major American cities (movie mogul Cecil B. DeMille organized a branch in Hollywood). A quarter of a million volunteers flocked to the APL banner, and league members in telephone and telegraph offices, banks, and businesses facilitated illegal snooping of citizens' private records.

Although Van Deman understood that the rights of individuals had to be protected, he

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By Mark Skrzynski

The distinctive white helmets worn by guards during the Nuremberg trials became symbols of ultimate justice.

ON OCTOBER 16, 1946, BETWEEN 1 AND 3 AM, AMERICAN MILITARY police escorted 10 condemned high-ranking Nazi prisoners to their execution by hanging. Twelve Army photographers from 3264th Signal Photo Service Company, as well as other journalists from around the world, recorded the historical trial and preserved it forever in photographs and publications. This marked the first time in modern history that an international tribunal had called for individual accounting for crimes committed against other nations or ethnic groups during wartime.

Most of us are familiar with the famous photos of young American MPs in their white helmets standing in court behind the vanquished leaders of the disgraced Third Reich. Some of us even own small pieces of memorabilia from those days, passed down from generation to generation as a symbol of victory and justice. A few months ago I came across an old, white-painted helmet with two shield-like decals on each side, and it took me only a moment to realize that I was holding the same helmet that had been used by young American MPs during the trials at Nuremberg. After an initial burst of euphoria, I started looking for more information. Several questions needed to be answered, most importantly, who was the helmet's original owners. I was looking for its provenance, the primary fact that separates special, almost sacred objects of the past from ordinary ones.

First, I looked in all my helmet books and found some helpful but limited clues. Then I turned to helmet collectors, the Army Historical Center, the National Archives, and friends at the local library. Not surprisingly, my first solid information came from two helmet authorities, Dave Powers and Chris Armold. Dave shared some pictures from his huge collection, and Chris provided the name of the U.S. Army MP outfit securing the trial, as well as the name of their commandant. This was a great start, but there was more to be discovered. Who were the young soldiers guarding the process of final justice? What units did they belong to? How many served in Nuremberg during the trial? What kind of symbol did they carry on

Author's collection

ABOVE: The DUI worn by the guards at Nuremburg represeted prison security, the scales of justice, and a broken Nazi eagle surrounded by flames.

RIGHT: White-helmeted MPs provide massive security at the Palace of Justice.

National Archives

their helmets? Who designed it and when? How many helmets were issued and how rare are they today?

I started building a time line and struggled to establish a full list of participating units. I was searching for any information associated with my helmet, trying to draft a chronicle of the days when its owner witnessed history from the front row of the Nuremberg court. By 1945, the Allies had begun to concentrate the prisoners most likely to be tried as war criminals in a former four-star hotel at Bad Mondorf, Luxembourg. The U.S. Army gave the camp the sarcastic codename ASHCAN (the British called it DUSTBIN). More than 70 elite prisoners were gathered in the camp. The camp commandant was a crusty American cavalry colonel named Burton C. Andrus. In August 1945, Andrus took charge of 21 Nazi military and civilian officials who were charged with some of the uncountable criminal acts of the Third Reich. He was given full responsibility for their security, their physical and mental well-being, so that they could stand trial.

The 1st Infantry Division, Third U.S. Army, was to provide the headquarters command and guards for the court, as well as furnishing food, housing, and transportation for court personnel and correspondents. Initially, only one understrength company from 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, supported Andrus's assignment. By the time the trial commenced, Military Police from the 802nd and 821st Military Police Companies, 1st Infantry Division, had been added to the guard force.

On November 20, 1945, the trial began in the Palace of Justice at Nuremberg. Until August 31, 1946, all sessions of the tribunal were held in this building under the presidency of Lord Justice Geoffrey Lawrence. The Allies had chosen Nuremberg because the Palace of Justice with its attached jail was the most compact and intact facility available within Germany for such a trial. Ironically, the building had been spared by Allied bombing raids, even though it had served as the site of Nazi Party congresses and rallies. The American Zone was selected, since the United States was the only country capable of providing the necessary material and logistical support. To appease the Soviets, the tribunal's permanent seat was located in Berlin, where its charter was also signed.

After Andrus's intervention, additional soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, under the command of Lt. Col. John T. Corley, were added to his staff. The so-called "Blue Spaders" were the same unit that previously had been given the honor of carrying the

national colors at the Allies' Victory in Europe parade. Along with providing security, the units operated four hotels, two nightclubs, a bus line, and 90 private homes for trial officials. On July 25, most of the 26th Infantry Regiment moved into a former artillery complex on Steubenstrasse. Other units, including the 1st Battalion, Company C of 18th Infantry Regiment, and soldiers from the 94th and 99th Infantry divisions also contributed to the trial. In addition, ceremonial guards from the four Allied nations pulled sentry duty at entrances.

In April 1946, the 793rd Miltary Police Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division absorbed the Nuremberg Trial military police and took control of the prisoners. This merger provided the foundation for the creation of the 6850th Internal Security Detachment. The battalion was housed first at Zellenstrasse Military Police Station, and in February 1947 moved with the rest of the regiment to Fürth Kaserne artillery camp. Companies K and C were assigned to serve as the trial's honor guards.

During the trial, MPs escorted the accused to and from jail and provided security within the courtroom itself. Ten guards plus an officer, all wearing white helmets, white belts, and white billy clubs, remained at "parade rest" behind and to the side of the prisoners' dock. Only Colonel Andrus and the officer in charge of the military police detail carried sidearms. Rather than the white helmet worn by the MPs, Andrus wore a red shellacked liner with his rank attached to the front. As a proud ex-cavalry officer, he also carried his riding crop.

The 6850th detachment was fully staffed with doctors, chaplains, lawyers, dentists, plumbers, psychiatrists, carpenters, masons, and electricians. There were enough supplies to survive a long-term lockdown without being re-supplied from the outside. A and B Companies of the 793rd Battalion were responsible for patrolling the city. A Company was also in charge of patrol around the outside of the Palace where the trials were being held.

Security around the building was very tight. As an added precaution, armed patrols cordoned off a nine-square-block area surrounding the Palace of Justice, and MPs armed with Thompson submachine guns manned jeeps and armored cars in front of the building. Soldiers from these companies did not wear the white helmet liners associated with the trial, but rather typical green helmets with white MP markings. The Military Police kept prisoners under constant surveillance. Andrus instituted round-the-clock watches after one of the accused hanged himself. In three-hour shifts, the MPs observed prisoners through small windows in their cell doors.

On October 1, 1946, after 216 court sessions, the verdicts were handed down. Twelve of the defendants (including the absent Martin Bormann) were sentenced to death by hanging. Seven were given lengthy prison sentences—Rudolf Hess, Walther Funk, and Eric Raeder for life. Three others—Hjalmar Schacht, Franz von Papen, and Hans Fritzche—were acquitted. The executions were set for midnight, October 15. On October 16, between 1 and 3 AM, MPs escorted the 10 condemned prisoners one-by-one to their execution in the old gymnasium of the Nuremberg prison, where three scaffolds had been built. The eleventh condemned man, Herman Göring, cheated the hangman that night, two hours before execution, by swallowing cyanide from a glass vial he somehow had managed to keep with him despite numerous searches of his person and cell.

The place of execution was brightly lit, the three wooden scaffolds painted black. Thirteen steps led up to the platforms on which the gallows were erected. The lower part the gallows was draped with a black curtain. With hands tied behind their backs and a black hood pulled over their heads, one by one each man went to

his death. The executioner was short, chunky, 43-year-old Master Sergeant John G. Woods from San Antonio, Tex. In his 15 years as a U.S. Third Army executioner, Wood had hanged 347 people. During the Nuremberg executions he had two assistants.

The condemned were to be hanged in the order of their indictment: Göring, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Wilhem Keitel, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Alfred Rosenberg, Hans Frank, Wilhelm Frick, Julius Streicher, Fritz Sauckel, Alfred Jodl, and Arthur Seyss-Inquart. Since Göring was already dead, Ribbentrop was the first to be hanged, at 1:11 AM. Seyss-Inquart was the last at 2:45. The bodies, still wearing nooses and hoods, were then placed in coffins, loaded onto two trucks, and taken in a heavily armed convoy to the crematorium at Dachau concentration camp. The defendants' ashes were then strewn in an estuary of the Isar River near Munich.

The other prisoners found guilty were moved to Spandau Prison to be guarded by the Allied powers until their sentences expired. The last of the prisoners, Rudolf Hess, died in 1987 after spending 46 years in total isolation. He was 93 years old. Contrary to the original plans, no subsequent international tribunals took place. After the conclusion of the first Nuremberg trial, 12 more trials were held in each of the four zones of occupied Germany. About 185 individual Nazis faced justice in these cases.

BOTH: Author's collection

ABOVE: The insignia on the helmet decal was widely recognized as the official symbol of the military police. RIGHT: Former calvary colonel Burton C. Andrus wore a red-shellacked liner rather than a white helmet.

A few weeks after the Nuremberg trial, most of the guards received discharge orders. Andrus, too, quickly returned home to take care of his sick wife. In 1947, the 1st Infantry Division began serving as a tactical reserve and quick reaction force in support of U.S. Constabulary operations. On October 20, 1947, the 793rd MP Battalion was reorganized and redesignated as the 793rd Military Police Service Battalion. By January 1948, most of the 26th Infantry units, including the service and headquarters companies, regimental headquarters, and 1st Battalion, moved out of the Palace of Justice and Fürth Kaserne to Ludwigsburg, Monteith, and Pinder barracks.

But what about the helmets? Who designed the symbols visible on decal and distinctive unit insignia(DUI)? Based on many published books and memoirs, it is virtually certain that the designer of IMT insignia and the initial outfit for the guards was none other than Colonel Andrus himself. It was his vision and determination that gave the group of war-tired and homesick soldiers a new sense of pride and unit integrity. As commanding officer of the 6850th, he recognized early the importance of his assignment and the historical role his soldiers were about to play. The 6850th was not just an elite guard unit; it represented all American armed forces during the final stage of the war against Nazism.

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THE ROCKETS' RED GLARE

WITH THE PRESIDENT AND HIS CABINET IN FULL FLIGHT, THE BRITISH ARMY HALTED OUTSIDE BALTIMORE AS THE VAUNTED ROYAL NAVY BEGAN POUNDING THE STAR-SHAPED BASTION OF YANKEE STUBBORNNESS, FORT MCHENRY.

BY BLAINE TAYLOR

BY THE LATE SUMMER OF 1814, THE INVADING British Army had routed the entire American Army—both federal and state troops—on the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. At the Battle of Bladensburg, on August 24, the Redcoats mockingly dubbed their victory "the Bladensburg Races" because the Americans ran away so fast. That night the British entered the eerily deserted capital of Washington, D.C., and set various public buildings on fire, including the President's Mansion, the Capitol Building, the Library of Congress, the Treasury Building, and the Washington Navy Yard.

The rest of the nation's eastern cities lay equally open to the invaders' heel—Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Annapolis were high on the list—but Baltimore came before them all as the ship-building center the British angrily called "that nest of pirates." It was there that American privateers launched the famed "Baltimore clip ships" that sailed boldly into Great Britain's home waters to strike at her shipping. Because they were both lighter and faster than King George III's vaunted "walls of wood," the American ships evaded the Royal Navy effortlessly, coming and going wherever they pleased.

In response, the British planned to take Baltimore and burn it to the ground—even private homes and businesses—which they had neglected to do in the District of Columbia, where only official structures were torched. The British meant to do to Baltimore what the ancient Romans had done to their mortal foe, Carthage: inflict total, catastrophic destruction, with the hated privateer ships hauled away as prize booty. But first they had to take the city.

In overall command of American forces at Baltimore was Maryland militia Maj. Gen. Samuel Smith, who guessed correctly that the British would land at North Point and begin marching inland. On September 12, a waiting militia force led by Brig. Gen. John S. Stricker blunted the British spearhead at the Battle of North Point. Adding insult to injury, the British commander, Maj. Gen. Robert Ross, was killed early in the fight. Hearing gunfire to his front, Ross rode out to investigate. Two teenage saddler's apprentices from Baltimore, Daniel Wells and Henry McComas, were among the militiamen lying in wait for the British. One of them fired the fatal round that struck Ross in the right arm and passed through his chest and lungs. Neither boy lived to receive credit for the general's death; both were killed by British return fire.

Colonel Arthur Brooke of the 44th Regiment of Foot took over for Ross. After driving off the American militia, he had the army camp for the night and then pushed on toward Baltimore the next day. There he ran up against Smith's eastern defense line, which linked the inner harbor with the fortified heights of Commodore John Rodgers' bastion, Loudenslager, and Hampstead hills in east Baltimore. With about 4,500 British regulars, Royal Marines, and Navy tars well in hand, Brooke stared up at 20,000 American militiamen and sailors armed to the teeth behind strong breastworks. These men were determined not to run away as their comrades had done at Bladensburg—they were defending their homes and families.

The Peale Museum, Baltimore

Artist Percy Moran's 1905 painting of Francis Scott Key and John S. Skinner watching the bombardment of Fort McHenry takes dramatic license by putting them a good deal closer to the action than they really were.

Brooke tried to turn Smith's left flank, but was shadowed by tailing American forces. In desperation, he planned a night bayonet assault and called on British Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane of the Royal Navy to create a diversion by bombarding the American entrenchments for him. Just then, Cochrane had his hands full preparing a much larger bombardment of the imposing structure guarding the mouth of the Baltimore harbor, Fort McHenry. The fort, commanded since 1813 by Major George Armistead, sheltered 700 regular infantrymen and artillerists in three regiments, as well as around 300 additional militiamen and 23 cannon.

Ninety percent of Smith's overall force at Baltimore was raw, untrained militia, most of whom had never fought anyone, let alone the best trained troops and sailors on earth. They had not yet seen action, and drilling had been infrequent at best. Armistead's professionals at Fort McHenry assumed even more importance, for they alone could be counted on to stand fast under fire: a salient virtue in light of the British naval bombardment. Their commander, Armistead, was an extraordinary soldier. A career Army officer, he was born in 1779 at New Market, Va. A second lieutenant at the age of 18 in the elite artillery corps, he rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel within 18 years, a remarkable progression in those days. He was assistant military agent at Fort Niagara, N.Y., from 1802 to 1807, and from 1809 to 1812 he served his first tour of duty at Fort McHenry as assistant commander. In 1812, he returned to Fort Niagara, being promoted to major of artillery in 1813 and winning military honors at the Battle of Fort George. In July of that year, Armistead assumed full command at Fort McHenry and immediately joined Smith in preparing to defend the city from British assault.

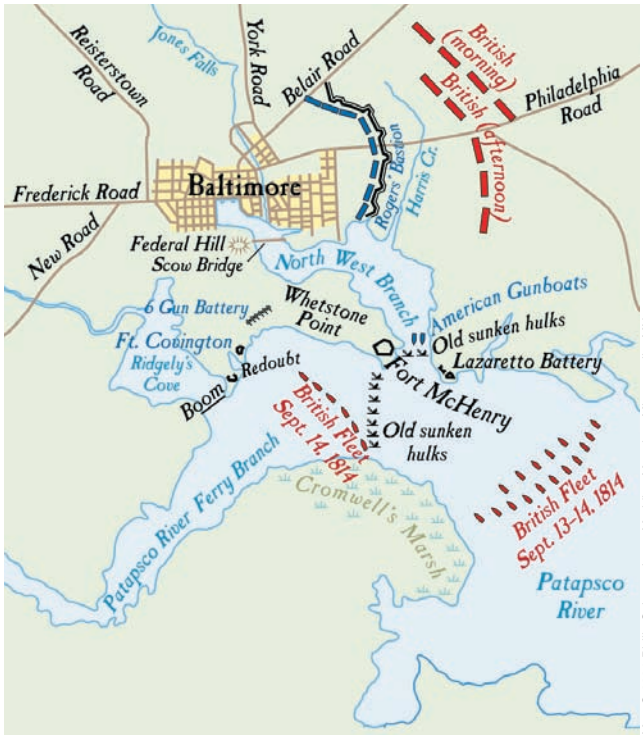
In the build-up to the battle, Armistead suffered from his solitary knowledge of a terrible secret, namely, that Fort McHenry's brick magazine was not bomb-proof—a direct hit could blow the entire fortress to bits, killing the garrison within. The fort, one of several such bastions built up and down the East Coast to defend against seaborne invasion, had its origins in 1776 with the construction of Fort Whetstone on the same site. Although the British never challenged it during the American Revolution, it was thought wise to improve it anyway, and construction continued from 1794 to 1805. In 1798, the fort was renamed after Baltimore native James McHenry, then serving as secretary of war in President George Washington's cabinet.

The original plans for the fort were drawn up by a French Army engineer officer, Jean Foncin. Military engineers of the era liked the five-pointed star shape of the fort because it enabled soldiers to mount a crossfire from the ramparts against the enemy below. A row of tall trees, houses, sheds, barracks, storehouses, embankments, and a wooden rail fence stood at different points around the fort, while an expanse of broad, flat lawn ran down to the water's edge. Solidly built dirt walls faced with red brick comprised the high parapets and ramparts guarding the fort's 26.5 acres, which also included a powder magazine, barracks, and guardhouse. The fort's main armament consisted of guns removed from the damaged French warship *La Poursuivante*, which had limped into Baltimore harbor after fighting it out with the Royal Navy's HMS *Hercules* during the Napoleonic War.

Flag House, Baltimore

Maryland Historical Society

Major George Armistead (far left) and General Samuel Smith (left), painted by Rembrandt Peale.



Map © 2006 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

The city of Baltimore was well guarded by Fort McHenry and other American defensive emplacements at Fort Covington and Lazaretto Point.

On September 10, Brig. Gen. William Winder, commander of the 10th Military District, discovered on an inspection tour of nearby Fort Covington that half of its 93 men in the command of Captain William Addison's Sea Fencibles, or Coast Guard, were sick with fever, and promptly reported this to Smith. The latter, concerned that Fort McHenry's rear be adequately protected, ordered Commodore Rodgers to send a naval detachment to reinforce Fort Covington and ensure that Battery Babcock's guns were properly manned. That night the commodore notified Lieutenant Solomon Rutter, commanding the battery across the harbor at Lazaretto Point, that 12 British sailing ships had been sighted at Annapolis, and smaller vessels were seen heading up the Chesapeake Bay.

The next day, Baltimoreans were still at church services across the city when at 1:30 PM the alarm gun on the courthouse green sounded a signal of three blasts. Citizens cried out, "The enemy is upon us! Every man to his appointed station!" In front of the Wilkes Street Methodist Church, the soldier-worshippers had stacked their arms in neat rows. As the cannon blasts startled the congregation, the minister halted his sermon, closed his Bible, and intoned, "My brethren and friends, the alarm guns have just fired. The British are approaching, and commending you to God and the Word of His Grace, I pronounce the benediction, and may the God of battles accompany you." The Reverend John Gruber at the Light Street Methodist Church closed with equally defiant words: "May the Lord bless King George, convert him, and take him to Heaven—as we want no more of him here!"

Excitement reigned supreme in the streets, as citizens scampered about to join their militia units and rushed to the top of Federal Hill, where an incredible sight greeted their eyes: dozens of British warships riding at anchor 12 miles away down the Patapsco River at Old Roads Bay off North Point—just as Smith had predicted. The British fleet stand-

ing off North Point consisted of 50 capital ships and 86 smaller craft, for a grand total of 136, probably the greatest single fleet ever assembled in Maryland waters. Major vessels included five bomb ships, a single rocket-launching ship, five schooners, 10 ships of the line, six sloops, 21 frigates, and a lone tender. In terms of firepower, the fleet encompassed a massive 1,824 guns of all calibers, weight, and shot.

In keeping with a predetermined plan, Rodgers and his sailors began sinking two dozen merchant vessels in the channels between Fort McHenry and the two shore batteries, making the waterways unnavigable by the larger British ships. Meanwhile, Smith was handed an urgent message from Armistead: "From the number of barges and the well known situation of the enemy, I have not a doubt that an assault will be made this night upon the fort." Back on the Patapsco River, Cochrane had weighed anchor around 1:30 PM, after seeing that Ross, and was well on his way up North Point Peninsula, and headed toward Baltimore, shifting his flag from the *Tonnant* to the shallower draft frigate *Surprize*. Even as he ordered his bombardment squadron to get underway upriver to fulfill his part of the two-pronged offensive—the conquest of Fort McHenry and Baltimore's inner harbor—Cochrane was ignorant of the fact that he had already lost his experienced ground commander, Ross, and that the much less capable Brooke was about to wage the first land battle of the current campaign.

Cochrane was eager to assault Fort McHenry, boasting, "We'll take it in two hours!" In his view, blasting the earth-and-brick fort to powder would be child's play and, indeed, he had formidable naval muscle to back up his boast. Cochrane took with him the frigates *Madagascar*, *Hebrus*, *Severn*, *Havannah*, *Euryalus*, *Fairy*, *Rover*, *Wolverine,* and *Seahorse*; the schooner *Cockchafer*; and the real terrors of the bombardment section, the rocket ship *Erebus* and the bomb ships *Meteor*, *Volcano*, *Aetna, Terror,* and *Devastation*. Cochrane had at his disposal a total of 364 guns of all sizes and weights, including the terrifying Congreve rockets. Surely a little mud fort could not withstand the greatest floating siege artillery the world had yet known. Fort McHenry must fall.

Cochrane had been forced to leave the larger battleships behind because they could not make it up the shallow Patapsco, which was full of shoals that threatened to ground the ships. Sailing on *Surprize*, which was commanded by newly promoted Captain of the Fleet, Admiral Edward Coddrington, Cochrane noted the backbreaking work it took for his tars to warp slowly upriver. Even with three experienced pilots to guide them, *Seahorse* ran aground and was stuck for four hours, while Captain James Nourse sent out boats to take soundings in a futile effort to prevent any more such groundings. At around 3:30 PM, as the Battle of North Point was ending, *Surprize* dropped anchor five miles below Fort McHenry, along with the frigates and brigs. The rocket ship *Erebus* and her five sister bomb ships went in another 2½ miles where they, too, dropped anchor.

The main act of the drama was now at hand. At Fort Covington, Lieutenant Henry Newcomb entered in his log for September 13: "At 6 AM, five bomb ships and ships of war got under way and took their station in a line abreast of Ft. McHenry." The British ships were now 2½ miles south of Fort McHenry and three miles from Fort Covington. In overall command, Cochrane left operational command to Coddrington. From their vantage point before the opening of the bombardment the two could see Fort McHenry, its auxiliary forts, and the shore batteries, as well as the masts of the frigate *Java*, the sloops of war *Erie* and *Ontario*, and several merchant vessels and privateers, all tempting prizes for the two veteran sailors.

While they watched, American sailors completed sinking the final block ships in the harbor to prevent access to Fells Point and the city itself. Included in the underwater obstruction were the vessels *Temperance*, *Father and Son*, *Packet,* and *Enterprize*, but not the 130-foot-long steamboat packet *Chesapeake*, which was merely anchored sideways above the sunken ships. Baltimore's fortifications were now as complete as Smith could make them.

National Maritime Museum, London

BELOW: Author's collection. LEFT: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

TOP: Rear Admiral Sir George Cockburn, "the man who burned the White House," as depicted by Sir Thomas Beechey. RIGHT: British Royal Marine in an 1815 engraving. BELOW: Fort McHenry as it appears today.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY AND "THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"

Lawyer, poet, and Maryland militiaman Francis Scott Key (1779-1843) was born in Frederick County, Md. He graduated from St. John's College in Annapolis, where he remained to study law. In 1801, he opened a legal practice in Frederick with fellow law student Roger B. Taney, later chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, before moving to Georgetown to continue his practice. Years later, as an assistant U.S. attorney in Washington, D.C., his most famous case involved the prosecution of Richard Lawrence, an unemployed house painter who became the first attempted presidential assassin in American history when he tried to fire two shots at Andrew Jackson, hero of the War of 1812. Found not guilty due to insanity, Lawrence was committed to an insane asylum.

When Upper Marlboro, Md., physician William Beanes was seized by the British following the Battle of Bladensburg in August 1814 and accused of committing treason against the Crown, Beanes's friends asked Key to approach Maj. Gen. Robert Ross, the British commander, under a flag of truce to seek the elderly doctor's release. Accompanying Key on his mission was Colonel John S. Skinner, a government agent for prisoner exchange. Like Key, Skinner was a practicing attorney and the successful publisher of *American Farmer* and *American Turf Register*.

Key had been authorized by President James Madison to secure the release of Dr. Beanes after his run-in with some drunken British Army stragglers whom he had arrested for pillaging his home on their march back to the Royal Navy troop transports at Benedict after torching Washington, D.C. Ross, wrongly believing that Beanes was a Scottish-born British citizen (he was actually a third-generation American), had intended to deport him to British territory at Halifax, Nova Scotia, for trial, but Key and Skinner persuaded the general to release him after the bombardment of Fort McHenry. Thus, all three men remained captive witnesses to the grand spectacle that led to the writing of Key's epic poem.

One of the many controversies surrounding the incident is where Key's vessel was located. Baltimore-born historian Walter Lord placed the sloop on the eastern side of the present-day Francis Scott Key Bridge, anchored on Old Road Bay off North Point (today the site of the Veterans Administration facility at Fort Howard) with the main British fleet, and thus not with the bombardment section six miles closer to Fort McHenry. Key's ship, which some accounts call the *Minden*, was eight miles distant. A May 5, 1979, letter from the Public Record Office in Surrey, England, stated that "in all probability, Key was still on board the *Surprize* on the 14th, and the sloop in company, with *Surprize*'s party on board."

Bostonian Society/Scott Sheads, Fort McHenry

The mammoth painting by George Grey that hangs in the second floor offices of the fort is probably the most accurate in this respect. Grey was the only one to depict Beanes (right center) standing with Skinner (center), making this the only known image of the Maryland physician in existence. A British naval officer stands at left, and a trio of Royal Marines is on guard at right.

Throughout the long and dreary night, Beanes kept asking the two younger men if they could still see the fort's American flag. Finally, "by the dawn's early light," Key saw "that our flag was still there," which meant that the fort was still in American hands. But which of two known flags did the young lawyer-poet actually see? The possibility exists that he saw two flags flying at different times. The smaller storm flag most likely was the one he had seen throughout the night of the long bombardment, while the larger of the two was hoisted the next morning by Armistead's men to herald their victory in surviving the British naval assault. It is this second and larger flag that survives today and is on public display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. No one knows what happened to the smaller flag.

Maryland Historical Society

ABOVE: Francis Scott Key. LEFT: The original Star-Spangled Banner on display at Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston, 1873.

Key's poem, originally entitled "The Defense of Fort McHenry," was typeset by 14-year-old printer's apprentice Samuel Sands, and first published in the Baltimore *American* newspaper on Sept. 17, 1814, a mere three days after the battle's end, copied directly from the Sands handbill. It was set to the music of a popular British drinking song of the era, "To Anacreon in Heaven," and immediately became the unofficial national anthem of the American republic.

Both the Union and the Confederacy claimed it as their own during the Civil War. After the war, the song became popular among all branches of the reunited American armed forces. In 1889, the U.S. Navy declared that it would be played at morning colors, and the Army followed suit in 1904. During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson directed that the song be played at all armed forces events, and a movement began to make it the national anthem.

Not surprisingly, the two main driving forces behind the effort for official recognition were Baltimoreans: Congressman J. Charles Linthicum and the widow Mrs. Reuben Ross Holloway, nicknamed "the Hat" because of her unusual chapeaux: tall, stovepipe creations that resembled the shakos worn by the 1814 Maryland militia. The pair finally succeeded when President Herbert Hoover signed Public Law 823 on March 3, 1931, declaring the song the national anthem of the United States. This was six years to the day from when Fort McHenry had become a National Monument and Historic Shrine, also through the efforts of Representative Linthicum.

Today, Key's original poem manuscript is preserved in a helium-filled niche in the Enoch Pratt House wing of the Maryland Historical Society at 201 West Monument Street in downtown Baltimore, where it can still be seen, flanked by the flags of the United States and the State of Maryland. □

At 6:30 AM, the bomb ship *Volcano* lobbed two mortar rounds to ascertain the target's range, but these fell short of the fort and she and the other vessels maneuvered closer. Led by *Cockchafer*, the British frigates and schooners let loose a series of broadsides at the fort and its sister fortifications. The noise of the pounding shook the city's windows, roofs, and walls. The fort's guns were primarily firing 18-, 24-, and 36-pound solid iron cannonballs, and many were mounted on barbette garrison carriages, designed to fire at a horizontal slant. Because of their limited range, they had difficulty in reaching the attacking vessels. Nevertheless, Armistead ordered his guns to return fire, and one onlooker noted with satisfaction, "The whole fort let drive at them. We could see the shot strike the frigates in several instances, when every heart was gladdened. We gave three cheers, and the music played *Yankee Doodle*."

Inside the sturdy walls were two furnaces preparing glowing-red iron balls that could be sent skipping across the water to hit and burn through the wooden walls of Cochrane's hulls. Any mounted British frontal boat assault was extremely risky. Armistead realized this fully, and so did an alarmed Cochrane. These were not the tactics he had planned to use, but he refused to risk having his large sailing vessels sunk by Yankee shore gunners, whose skill and aim proved to be surprisingly accurate. At 9 AM he gave the order to withdraw to a point two miles away from Fort McHenry and just out of range of her pesky guns. As his frigates anchored on the Patapsco, the admiral realized that he had just lost the first naval round of the battle for Baltimore. His frigates had been driven off by the American shore defenses, and he had lost their considerable advantage in firepower. Within the first 2½ hours of the battle, the Royal Navy's guns had been effectively rendered useless by Smith's superior planning and the surprising marksmanship of Armistead's homegrown gunners.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

The British bombardment of Fort McHenry, center, opened on the morning of September 13, 1814. Lazaretto Point is shown at left, Fort Covington at right. Sunken ships were used to block the inner harbor.

Having rejected a frontal assault, Cochrane fell back on his one remaining option: a classic naval bombardment by the bomb and rocket ships. He was confident that if he could not take the fort by storm, a sustained, indirect bombardment would reduce the will of the terrified garrison and force its surrender, or else endanger the complex to the point that Smith would be forced to reduce his Hampstead Hill defenses by sending land reinforcements to the fort. While he did not think the defensive line could be taken by frontal assault, Cochrane thought it might fall by being outflanked on its right, at Rodgers' bastion. This was what Brooke was planning to do that very evening, with a diversion created by Cochrane at the waterline that hopefully would weaken the American line and enable his men to take it with a sudden bayonet attack. It was the method traditionally most favored by the British and most feared by Smith, who prayed that Fort McHenry and the other water defenses would hold out.

Armistead, for his part, was confident that he could repel any ground force attack. If the British were foolish enough to attempt a frontal attack by barge and boats, the American gunners would simply blow them out of the water. Assuming by some miracle that the enemy managed to get ashore in force, the fort's defenders would stop the invaders at the waterline by pouring withering cannon and musket fire into their ranks from the dry ditch and other emplacements surrounding the fort. Then there was the flat, open ground the invaders would have to cross to reach the walls, exposed to American gunfire all the while. Any survivors who managed to reach the walls would be wiped out by guns carefully placed along the five star points to blast any wooden scaling ladders that might be placed.

As the 25-hour-long bombardment began in earnest, Armistead vowed to keep the British ships as far out to sea as possible. To this end, he increased the effective range of his own guns by the dangerous expedient of using extra charges of powder and elevating the barrels higher to send their rounds farther. Not only did this risk blowing up the guns and killing his gunners, it also proved to be ineffective, for the maximum range of the 24-pounders was 1,800 yards, and the 36-pounders no more than 2,800. The idea of shooting back was good for the morale of his beleaguered artillerists, but not worth risking their lives and expending ammunition that might be needed when a real assault came. Reluctantly, Armistead ordered the Americans to cease fire.

Now the initiative shifted back to the Royal Navy, whose monster ships could hurl rounds weighing 200 pounds from their 10-inch and 13-inch mortars at an astounding 4,200 yards. (Armistead later would estimate that over 1,500 bombs were fired at the fort, with 400 striking on top or inside.) Since the mortars were heavy weapons, it had been necessary for British shipbuilders to construct special supports beneath the weapons to prevent their plunging through the ships' bottoms or shaking them to pieces from the blasts' concussion. The mortars were mounted on pivots, with strong, reinforced timber supports built beneath the deck to allow for the great guns' massive recoil.

Although Captain Thomas Alexander's *Volcano* had fired the first shot at 6:30 AM to test the range, the main bombardment was opened in earnest at 7 by Samuel Robert's *Meteor*, followed by Richard Kenah's *Aetna*, John Sheridan in *Terror,* and David Price in *Devastation*. Neither Cochrane nor Coddrington supervised this part of the bombardment; that honor fell to Captain Nourse aboard *Severn*, and

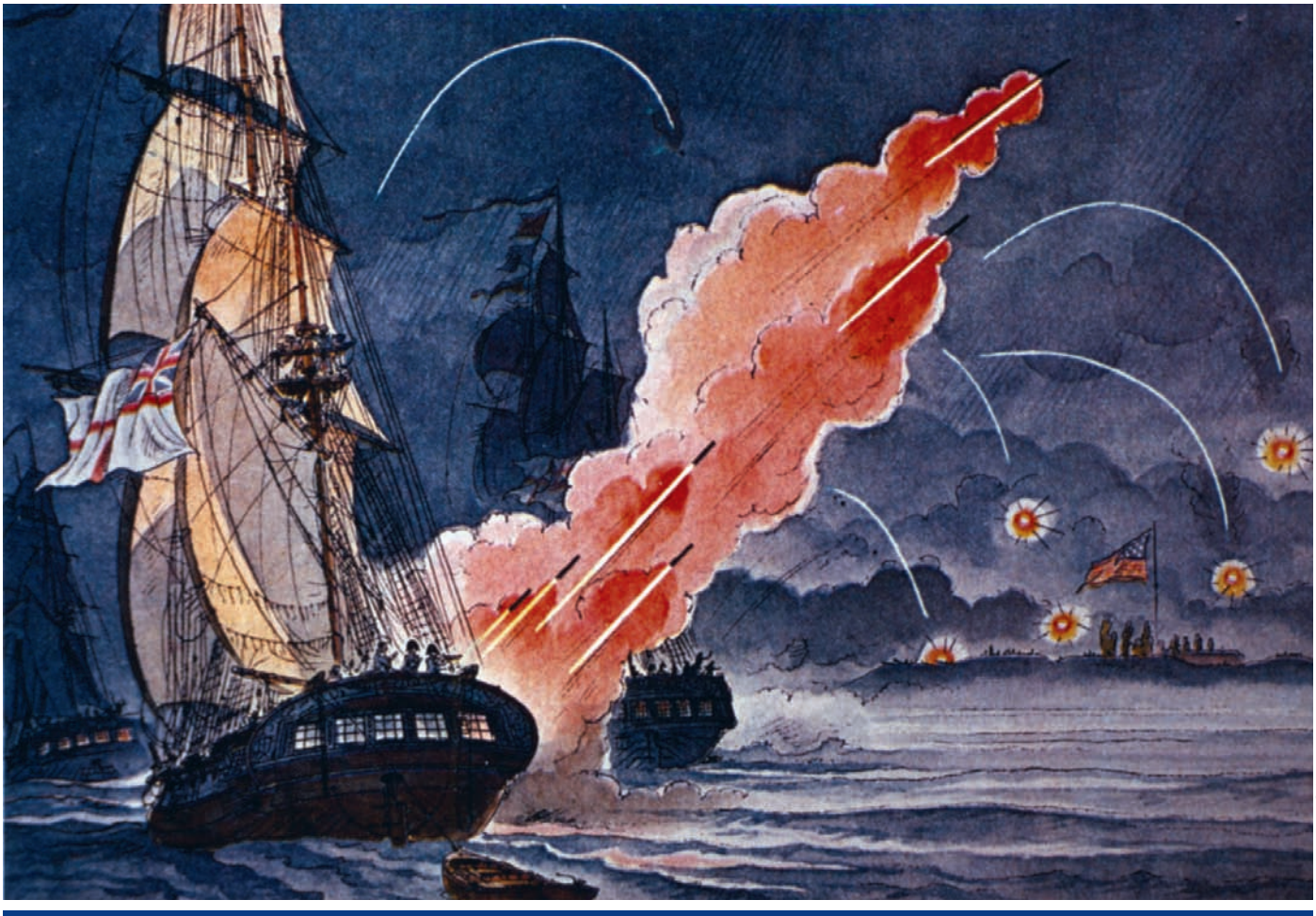
it was under his leadership that the next phase of the battle for Baltimore was waged. Joining the bomb ships were the frigate *Cockchafer* and the rocket ship *Erebus*. The rockets' red glare in the dawn sky was truly frightening, but their fire was wildly inaccurate, and Armistead's disciplined garrison calmly ignored them.

At 2 PM, the fort's southwest bastion took a direct hit from a bomb that exploded atop a 24-pounder gun mount, killing Lieutenant Levi Claggett. While the wreckage was being cleared away, a second bomb struck nearby, killing Sergeant John Clemm when a slice of shrapnel cut through his body and buried itself two feet in the ground. In all, four defenders at Fort McHenry would be killed and 24 wounded before the bombardment was over. Unable to fire back, the men inside felt like sitting ducks. As Captain Joseph Nicholson later wrote, "We were like pigeons tied by the legs to be shot at!" The tension was broken when one of the men noticed a rooster strutting along the parapet in the very midst of the bombardment. A soldier vowed that he would buy the rooster a pound cake if they lived through the shelling. He kept his promise, and when the rooster died it was buried with full military honors within the fort. A legend persists that the ghost of the slain Lieutenant Claggett still appears from time to time along the ramparts.

Observing that the hit had caused some consternation in the fort, the British tried again to move closer. *Devastation* and *Volcano*, accompanied by *Erebus*, weighed anchor and sailed toward Fort McHenry. Armistead saw them, and so did Rutter at Lazaretto Point and the American gunboats on the water. When the three British vessels came within range, they all opened fire with a general blast that shook the harbor and surrounding area with a deafening roar. The British were caught by surprise. A gunboat traveling slightly ahead of the trio of larger vessels was hit, and a Royal Marine colonel was sliced in half by a cannonball. *Volcano* received five hits, while *Devastation* took a ball through her main topsail and another in the port bow, starting a leak when her timbers were smashed.

Stunned, Nourse ordered the ships to pull back. Now the British naval command found itself in a predicament. Despite the heaviest bombs and rockets they could throw at them, none of the American fortifications seemed to be materially damaged or willing to surrender. His frigate captains offered to take the fort by storm by simply sending in *Severn*, *Havannah*, and *Hebrus* alongside the walls and blasting them to bits, but Cochrane declined. If the fort did not surrender, it would have to be taken by land.

As the bombardment continued, Brooke decided to launch his attack at 2 AM on September 14 with all four of his regiments—the 4th, 21st, 44th, and 85th—in a bayonet assault concentrated on Rodgers' bastion on Hampstead Hill. Brooke asked the admiral for his promised diversionary effort. At 8 PM, Lieutenant James Scott returned with the admiral's reply. Since the Navy could neither pass the block ships nor subdue the fort, its continued support would be minimal. Cochrane urged the colonel to give up his plan to attack Hampstead Hill and instead re-embark the army at North Point.



Artwork by Peter Spier

Artist Peter Spier created this vivid rendering of the "bombs bursting in air" above Fort McHenry.

Brooke met with his officers and argued with them until midnight, then decided to retreat without an attack of any kind on the American line. He advised Cochrane that the retreat would take place the next morning.

Because Cochrane did not receive Brooke's letter in time, the scheduled naval diversion on Fort McHenry went ahead as planned. About midnight, just as Brooke was adjourning his tumultuous council of war, a flare burst high in the air over the bombardment squadron on the Patapsco. The Ferry Branch, Cochrane reasoned, was the back door into the city's southern portion via Ridgely's Cove. A British naval boat division of anywhere from 300 to 1,200 officers, sailors, and Royal Marines—the numbers vary—served as a strike landing force under the command of Captain Sir Charles Napier of the *Euryalus*. Using muffled oars, Napier's force assembled quietly alongside *Surprize* to await final orders from the admiral. They were to row between a mile and a mile and a half out into the Ferry Branch and drop anchor. The bombardment of the forts would begin again at 1 AM, and Napier would fire everything he had. It was hoped that the noise would lead the Americans to believe that a sea landing was being attempted from that direction, or that some vessels had gotten in closer to shell them.

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The boats got underway at midnight, and the dark, rainy murk was both a help and a hindrance. It concealed the decoy marauders from the enemy, but it also reduced visibility in the pitch blackness to nil. Napier, in fact, had a dual mission. If the diversion succeeded, he was to proceed with a landing. As it happened, he could do neither. Even as his boats were assembling, American Lieutenant Newcomb noted in his logbook at 10 PM: "The enemy's barges all in motion." Civilian onlookers from Federal Hill could also see the supposedly secret diversion in progress, despite the rain and haze. Meanwhile, as Napier's oarsmen pulled ahead in the darkness, 11 of the boats lost their way and rowed instead to the Northwest Branch. Realizing their error at last just off Lazaretto Point, the boats reversed course. Unable to rejoin the rest of Napier's force, they steered back toward the fleet.

Not knowing that he already had lost the majority of his force, Napier and his remaining nine boats plunged ahead into the Ferry Branch to carry out the plan. They passed Fort McHenry safely, then Battery Babcock, and were approaching Fort Covington to drop anchor when the commander at Battery Babcock, Sailing Master John Adams Webster, was awakened by the sound of oars sweeping by his post. Jumping to his feet, Webster looked into the darkness and saw the lights of gun matches 200 yards away on the water. He ordered all hands to their battle stations and gave the order to open fire. Newcomb, 500 yards upstream, also saw the lights and fired Fort Covington's guns as well. The surprised Napier was caught in a crossfire. The guns at Fort McHenry opened up as well, and with the British squadron already pounding away, the melee became general.

While the citizens of Baltimore looked on from their rooftops, bombs, signal flares, cannonballs, and Congreve rockets whizzed across the horizon. Webster, who dislocated a shoulder manhandling an 18-pounder into position, sent a messenger back to Lieutenant George Budd asking him to return the 30 men he had loaned him previously. Budd balked, stating that he would keep the men to cover Webster's retreat. Believing this to be the case, Budd's messenger panicked, and instead of returning to the battery he went into Baltimore, telling everyone who would listen that the British had taken Webster's position and were even now marching on the city from the south. General panic ensued.

Meanwhile, the cannonading continued. The British shots were all aimed too high, and most of them missed the forts altogether, although one man was wounded behind Fort Covington and Webster himself was wounded twice in the action. Budd kept firing his own seven guns at Fort Lookout, and the Battle of the Ferry Branch went on for about two hours, with two of Napier's barges hit by enemy fire. A surprise landing was now clearly impossible, and Napier decided to retire back to the fleet before the first rays of dawn made his nine remaining boats sitting ducks for the Yankee gunners.

Back at Hampstead Hill, Brooke ordered the army roused from sleep, and the men assumed that they were going to storm the American positions at last. But for them the battle was already over. The actual retreat began at 3 AM, with pickets left behind to disguise the fact that they were leaving. As the men realized that they were being withdrawn, there was general, malcontented grumbling among them. Second Lieutenant George Gleig, later to become chaplain-general of the British Army, lamented, "Poor Ross, indeed, threw himself away, by exposing himself unnecessarily in a trifling skirmish. Had he lived, the chances are that we should have fought two battles in one day." But he had not lived, and the British plan to take Baltimore had failed.

As the British ships began sailing out of the bay, Armistead ordered his men to haul up a huge new flag, 42 feet wide and 30 feet high, that Baltimore seamstress Mary Pickersgill had sewn for them. The giant flag, with 15 stars and stripes and representing the first 15 states (the other three were not yet represented by a star), was clearly visible from the deck of the truce ship *Minden*, where local attorney Francis Scott Key had spent a sleepless night watching the bombardment as an unwilling guest of the British Navy. Key had carried a message to General Ross a week earlier, asking him to free American captive William Beanes, a Maryland physician who had been wrongly arrested for treason against the king. Ross was willing to do so, but he could not release the Americans until the planned invasion of Baltimore had been carried out. They had spent an uneasy night tethered to a British vessel eight miles out from Fort McHenry. When Key saw the giant new flag flying above the fort, he was moved to begin a poem, "The Defense of Fort McHenry," on the back of an envelope. It began: "Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light …" □

FIVE HILLS

FRENCH GENERAL HENRI NAVARRE HOPED TO LURE THE PEOPLE'S ARMY TO ITS DEATH AT DIEN BIEN PHU. INSTEAD, HE PUT 15,000 OF HIS BEST TROOPS INTO A STEAMING DEATH TRAP OF THEIR OWN. BY JOHN WALKER

IT BEGAN WITH THE NOW-FAMILIAR sound, like thunder, coming from the hills to the northeast of the entrenched camp, as hidden Viet Minh mortar and artillery sites began raining destruction down upon the French fortifications in the Dien Bien Phu valley. The commander of the insurgent People's Army, General Vo Nguyen Giap, had chosen this night, March 30, 1954, to unleash the second major phase of his ground attacks—and the first actual assaults upon the main camp itself—against the multiracial French Far East Expeditionary Corps (CEFEO) garrison, consisting of about 12,000 men, waiting behind minefields and barbed wire in their frail blockhouses, bunkers, and trenches.

Giap's objective was an ambitious one. After weeks of shelling from ingeniously constructed artillery emplacements in a network of manmade caves sunk into the hillsides facing Dien Bien Phu, he was about to commit five full regiments of well-trained and well-equipped regulars in an all-out, simultaneous strike against the fort's entire eastern defensive perimeter. By doing so, he hoped to capture five strategic hill outposts—Dominique 1 and 2 and Eliane 1, 2, and 4—along a north-south front three quarters of a mile long. A diversionary attack would be mounted along the fort's northwestern perimeter against the isolated strongpoint Huguette 7, far to the west of the camp's destroyed, unusable airfield. Once the hills were captured, the way would be clear for a final assault on the base itself. The fate of Vietnam hung in the balance.

The French garrison, made up of Frenchmen, Algerians, Moroccans, French Foreign Legionnaires, enlisted Vietnamese, T'ai tribal partisans, and a small unit of West Africans, had been forced into a precarious defensive

AT DIEN BIEN PHU

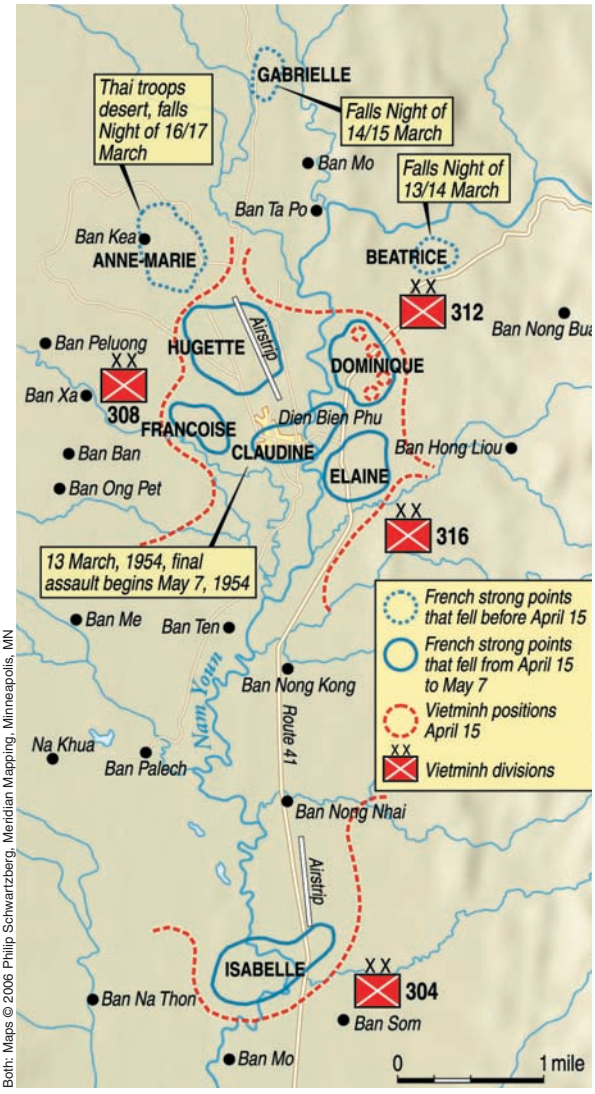
French Foreign Legion reinforcements parachute into Dien Bien Phu on March 16, 1954, two weeks before the massive Communist assault on the main camp.

akg images/ullstein bildakg images/ullstein bild

situation. Its only hope for victory was that the combined firepower of French artillery and airplanes would be sufficient to destroy the massed concentrations of Viet Minh infantry as they entered the valley, the same way the insurgents had been defeated at Na San in late November 1952. Lt. Col. Pierre Langlais, a respected and aggressive paratroop officer, was the entrenched camp's central sub-sector commander, but in reality had already assumed overall command. The garrison's commander, Colonel Christian de Castries, had withdrawn to his command bunker during the night of March 13, the first night of the enemy's preliminary ground assaults, and had in effect turned over responsibility for tactical decisions to Langlais and another paratroop officer, legendary Major Marcel "Bruno" Bigeard, commanding officer of the elite 6th Colonial Parachute Battalion. De Castries confined himself to dealing with logistical matters and maintaining daily contact with his direct superior, Brig. Gen. René Cogny, commander of land forces in North Vietnam, the most prestigious and important theater command in Indochina.

Anticipating an attack, Langlais moved to back up the five hills with added firepower and deployed counterattack units on both sides of the Nam Youm River. Unhappily, Langlais realized immediately that he did not have nearly the numbers of men needed to fill his reserve units. Since the first attacks on March 13, the French garrison, dubbed Operational Group North-West, or GONO, had already lost the equivalent of four infantry battalions in killed, wounded, and missing, and reinforcements being parachuted in piecemeal could not keep up with the casualties. Also, three battalions of able-bodied troops were being wasted at the satellite strongpoint Isabelle, a dismal patch of marshes and swamp six miles to the south, which functioned well as an artillery base but whose garrison soon would be permanently cut off from the main camp by large concentrations of interdicting Viet Minh troops. By early March 1954, after losing both the war of logistics and the ensuing battles for the hill lines encircling the valley, GONO, although stiffened by the finest paratroop and Foreign Legion battalions in all of Indochina, was both outnumbered and outgunned at least three-to-one.

It was not supposed to be this way. When the new French commander in Vietnam, Lt. Gen. Henri Navarre, arrived in-country in May 1953 to assume command of the CEFEO, he immediately began formulating a strategy for luring the elusive Viet Minh forces into a stationary battle of annihilation. Operation Castor, as it came to be known, called for a massive parachute drop of 15,000 French forces into the Nam Youm valley of northwestern Vietnam, near the Laos border. By occupying and fortifying the abandoned Japanese World War II-vintage airbase at Dien Bien Phu (Vietnamese for "big frontier administration center"), Navarre hoped to entice the Viet Minh to attack him there, where French air power could tip the balance decisively against the ragtag peasant army. As Navarre's subordinate, General Cogny, put it, "I look forward to a Viet Minh assault. Certainly, their artillery will be bothersome for a while, but we will silence it. Since Giap is unable to move into Laos in force through fear of an obstacle rising up behind him, he finds himself forced to attack."



Both: Maps © 2006 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

Giap obliged the French, but only on his own terms and at his own pace. The Viet Minh's fundamental principle of war, as formulated by Giap and Communist Party chief Ho Chi Minh, mandated: "Attack with a sure blow, advance at a steady pace. If we are sure to win, fight to the end; if not, resolutely refuse combat." Giap had followed that precept to a number of victories since the Viet Minh began fighting the French in 1946; he had also suffered setbacks, of which the stinging defeat at Na San in late 1952 was a painful reminder to stick to that primary injunction. But Giap had also learned a valuable lesson at Na San: to successfully attack a fortified French airbase, it was necessary first to take and hold the high ground around it, and to patiently and relentlessly degrade the air strip itself, thus cutting off the enemy from reinforcement and resupply. To do so at Dien Bien Phu, Giap needed to amass a large number of ground troops, as well as artillery, and to create and maintain a 300-mile-long line of supply by stockpiling food and ammunition weeks in advance. Only after the French had been suitably weakened would he attack in force. It seemed a simple enough plan—at least in retrospect—but it came only after Giap had subjected himself to a long and painful process of "revolutionary self-criticism" after Na San.

The French defense at Dien Bien Phu was based on a series of centers of resistance, or CRs.

The French—or more accurately, the topography around Dien Bien Phu—obliged Giap beyond his wildest dreams. To protect the vital airstrip in the center of the Nam Youm valley, the defenders had to stretch their forces dan-

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: A 4.7-inch mortar line in action during Operation Castor. Huts in the background were torn down to clear fields of fire and build defenses. LEFT: Colonel Christian de Castries, the garrison commander at Dien Bien Phu, rarely emerged from his underground bunker.

gerously thin. There were too few troops to maintain an airtight perimeter defense, so the French decided on the concept of centers of resistance, or CRs, localized strongpoints that theoretically would be able to resist direct attacks by providing mutually interlocking fields of fire. To preserve these CRs, it was absolutely crucial to hold the high ground on the eastern flank, where a series of hills, known collectively as the Five Hills, rose an average of 130 feet above the valley floor. Crack French paratroop battalions were placed on the hills, codenamed Dominique 1 and 2 and Eliane 1, 2, and 4. Behind them, across the 30-yard-wide Nam Youm River, the main French camp sprawled behind a chaotic welter of barbed wire and sandbags.

Strongpoint Dominique was too spread out, almost two miles long and one mile wide, to be held by its understrength garrison of three companies of the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Algerian Rifle Regiment, who were tired, ragged, homesick, poorly equipped, and short of seasoned officers and NCOs. The spirit of the Algerians had plummeted after the tragic events of March 14, the second night of the siege. Some 800 of their countrymen in the 5th Battalion, 7th Algerian Rifle Regiment were posted on strongpoint Gabrielle, one of three outworks on the fort's northern front and the most sturdily constructed redoubt in the valley. After heavy fighting that raged all night, Gabrielle was overrun and the Algerian garrison virtually destroyed. Langlais was alarmed to find Dominique 1, the northern anchor of the eastern perimeter, defended by just one company of 90 Algerians, although they were backed by French Foreign Legion mortar crews. Langlais ordered them replaced by a company of paratroopers of the 5th Vietnamese Parachute Battalion, the only regular unit of Vietnamese soldiers from the non-Communist national army that was present in the valley.

Southeast of Dominique 1, across a 1,000-yard gap through which Route Provinciale 41 (RP41) entered the valley, was the highest of the five hills, Dominique 2, rising 180 feet above the valley floor. Present on D2 were the headquarters and two companies of the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Algerian Regiment, under the command of Captain Jean Garandeau. On the southern edge of RP41, between the two hilltop Dominiques, lay the small, lonely outpost Dominique 6. In some hillocks to the south of D2, guarding the gap between D2 and Eliane 1, lay another small outpost, Dominique 5. A thousand yards southwest of where D6 bordered RP41, in the flatlands near the Nam Youm, stood Dominique 3; it was home to four 105mm howitzers manned by West African gunners in Lieutenant Paul Brunbrouck's 4th Battery, 2nd Battalion, 4th Colonial Artillery Regiment. Providing infantry protection to the battery was a company of Algerian riflemen from the 3rd Regiment.

On the west bank, between the river and the southern end of the airstrip, Langlais established a new outpost, Epervier, to back up the Dominiques; it became home to the better part of Captain Pierre Tourret's 8th Parachute Assault Battalion, also known as the 8th Shock Battalion. Close by, in an old drainage ditch that paralleled the Japanese-constructed airstrip, several units of the 2nd T'ai Battalion were dug in. Two lethal Browning M2 50-inch machine

guns, known as quad-.50s, were placed on elevated mounts, aiming to the east. The Elianes were manned by fairly well-regarded soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 4th Moroccan Rifle Regiment, as well as more paratroopers of the 5th Vietnamese Parachute Battalion. Eliane 1 was just 1,000 yards south of D2 and held one company from the 4th Moroccan Rifle Regiment; another 500 yards to the southwest was Eliane 4, home to the headquarters of Captain André Botella and two companies of the 5th Vietnamese. Finally, 1,000 yards south of E4 lay the vital strongpoint Eliane 2 (later referred to by Viet Minh survivors as "the fifth hill"), which rose 130 feet above the valley floor. Major Jean Nicolas had his headquarters and two rifle companies of the 4th Moroccan Rifles dug in on Eliane 2, and had constructed a strong summit position consisting on bunkers, fortified trenches, and parapets.

Two salient terrain features lay close to Eliane 2 that would present grave problems for the defenders—two outlying hills of the same elevation, dubbed Baldy and Phoney, which had not been brought into the French defensive perimeter due to lack of men and materiel. Eliane 2's lower eastern slope led directly to Baldy, while Phoney lay just to the northeast. De Castries had been assured by his artillery officers that these two outlying hills could be kept free of enemy activity by artillery fire alone—a grave miscalculation, as it turned out. The two hills hid much of the Viet Minh activity in this sector. Eliane 2's lower eastern slope, nicknamed the Champs-Elysées, offered a straight, broad path directly to the strongpoint's crest and was vulnerable to attack from the wooded gullies surrounding Baldy. Langlais, for his part, was not convinced that the single company of Moroccan riflemen posted in the relatively weak entrenchments on the lower slope could hold out, and he ordered them replaced by a company of paratroopers of the elite 1st Foreign Legion Parachute Battalion.

A number of smaller, more lightly defended outposts (Eliane numbered 12 hills in all) were situated in the flatlands between the eastern hills and the river. Among these were the so-called "low Elianes," 3, 10, 11, and 12. Eliane 10, west of E4 and E1, was manned by one of the reserve units, a company from the 8th Shock Battalion. Near the Bailey bridge, one of two short spans connecting the eastern hills with the central camp, was Eliane 12, occupied by remnants of the disgraced 2nd T'ai Battalion, which had deserted the strategic strongpoint Anne-Marie, the third and last of the northern defensive outworks to fall, just days into the siege. Many had fled into the hills, while others were relegated to work as porters or became "internal deserters"—men too demoralized or shellshocked to properly function. The better part of Bigeard's 6th Colonel Parachute Battalion was held in reserve in a bivouac area in the flatlands between the eastern hills and the river near Eliane 12. A second new outpost, Junon, was established at the southern end of the central camp to back up the Elianes; it housed a force of 1st Foreign Legion Battalion paratroopers, T'ai partisans, French Air Force personnel, and two more of the fearsome quad-.50s.

The People's Army assault units left their staging areas east of the hill strongpoints at about noon on March 30 and moved forward under continuing rain. At 5 PM that afternoon, Giap's 105mm howitzers and 120mm heavy mortars opened fire in earnest, and the maelstrom of the Five Hills Battle began. Every GONO position came under heavy punishment; the Five Hills and strongpoint Claudine in the central camp, where the bulk of the garrison's artillery was housed, were especially hard hit. Shells began falling on Dominique 1 at the worst possible moment, just as the Algerian 13th Company was relinquishing its positions to the 4th Company, 5th Vietnamese Parachute Battalion. The Tirailleurs, as they were known, had just dismounted their heavy weapons and were exiting their trenches when deafening explosions began to rock the hillsides. On both of the Dominique hills, the Communist preparatory barrage ended sooner than usual; it had lasted less than 90 minutes. In the confusion on D1, about 30 riflemen of the 3rd Algerian returned to their trenches to fight alongside the Vietnamese and Legion mortarmen, but the majority jostled their replacements aside in their unseemly haste to get off the hill.

On both hilltop redoubts, the first Viet Minh assault units seemed to spring up from nowhere, leaping from trenches that had been pushed up almost to the barbed wire barriers. French artillery shots fell harmlessly behind the advancing columns. The forward artillery observers on both hills had been seriously wounded, leaving the central camp's batteries without fire correction orders. The mixed garrison on D1, less than 200 strong, was vastly outnumbered when the full weight of Viet Minh Infantry Regiment 209 fell like a sledgehammer blow on the battered, muddy outpost. The defenders managed to hold back the attacking columns for almost three hours before finally succumbing at about 9:50 PM. No such stout resistance was offered a short distance to the southeast, where the panicky Algerians on Dominique 2 collapsed almost immediately. There was still daylight left at 7 PM when Bigeard, in his command post on Eliane 4, radioed Langlais that he could see large groups of Algerians streaming down the reverse slope of D2 in the direction of the river. Other defenders on D2 simply remained in their trenches and discarded their weapons, waiting with their hands on their heads to be taken prisoner. Dominique 2 was lost just after 8 PM.

On Eliane 1, the Moroccans watched the sudden fall of D2, and after the heavy pounding they had absorbed in the opening barrage were drained of any will to fight. It was 7 PM

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ABOVE: Vietnamese machine gunners in the French Army open fire with a Chatellerault M1924/29 light machine gun. The weapon weighed 20 pounds and used a 25-round box magazine.

when Captain Botella, also on Eliane 4, reported seeing swarms of Moroccan infantrymen falling back from E1 past his own position. The garrison on E1 was overrun by the enemy's Infantry Regiment 174 in a little under an hour. GONO reported the loss of Eliane 1 at 7:30 PM. Fortunately for the GONO garrison, the defenders on Eliane 4 proved to be made of more sturdy material than their comrades on E1. Botella's Vietnamese paratroopers had also been punished by the opening round of shelling, then attacked in waves by Regiment 174, their heavy weapons platoon wiped out and several officers and NCOs killed or wounded. Still, after witnessing other units to their front and on their left flank collapse, and with a vicious pitched battle breaking out in the semidarkness on E2 on their right flank, the redoubtable Vietnamese on Eliane 4 fought bravely all night and successfully held their position against overwhelming odds.

Although they had failed to breach the perimeter on Eliane 4, the Viet Minh attackers, after overrunning three of the five hill redoubts, were in position to inflict further losses upon the camp's weakened eastern defenses and possibly achieve a breakthrough to the central camp. The assault on Eliane 2 had only begun; the Communists enjoyed a huge advantage in numbers, at least five-to-one, and still had one entire regiment in reserve with which to exploit their earlier successes. On Dominique 3, the West African gunners and Algerian Tirailleurs sensed an attack was imminent. In the last rays of sunlight, they were stunned to see broken companies of Algerians retreating down the slopes of D2 about 1,000 yards to their front. Brunbrouck reported the retreat but couldn't convince his superior officers back at the battalion HQ that both hilltop Dominiques had indeed been overrun.

Dominique 3 was bracketed by the southward sweep of RP41 to the east and a dead arm of the Nam Youm to its rear; an old north-south drainage ditch, six feet wide and deep, provided a sunken lane down the center of the battery's position. Command posts, shelters, and ammunition dumps were dug into both banks of the ditch. Four sandbagged gun pits led off from D3's eastern edge; the ditch was sealed off to the north by barbed wire entanglements sown with mines. Another barbed wire barrier and minefield led out to the east, to protect the battery's front. The Algerian riflemen were dug in from north to south around the gun pits.

As they neared D3, most of the fleeing Algerians veered off to the south, heading for the two bridges that led back to the safety of the central camp. A few small groups, including a handful of the 5th Vietnamese Parachute Battalion, survivors from D1, sought refuge inside Brunbrouck's perimeter. The victorious, green-clad Viet Minh columns, advancing from due east, were surprised by machine-gun fire from D3 and halted temporarily. After the last of the refugees cleared his front, Brunbrouck ordered his Tirailleurs to open fire as well. Some of the West African crewmen had infantry weapons, and a French officer incorporated those who could be spared into the defensive front alongside the Algerians. But the night and the weight of overwhelming numbers were on the side of the Viet Minh—it was only a matter of time before they came on again.

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The smoke-shrouded airstrip at Dien Bien Phu was closed in late March 1954 after heavy Viet Minh shelling.

Brunbrouck, an experienced and resourceful young officer and a veteran of Na San, had by now managed to convince his battalion HQ of the direness of the situation and passed on new target coordinates to the 4th Artillery Regiment's command post. Soon, the battery's two sister batteries on the west bank of the river were firing in her support. Before the Communist columns charged the battery's perimeter again, Brunbrouck ordered his gun crews to lower the barrels of their howitzers to zero elevation and set the fuses to minimum delay; when the attack came, the weapons would be firing horizontally, point-blank, at the massed enemy formations. The high-explosive shells would detonate just instants after exiting the muzzles of the big guns.

When the Communist onslaught by Regiment 141 began, the leading columns were met by machine-gun and small arms fire from D3's front, supporting artillery from the central camp, and ruinous, prolonged bursts of fire from the quad-.50s on Epervier, in addition to the terrible gauntlet of round after round of high-explosive shells from four 105mm howitzers bursting in their midst. Soon, huge, bloody gaps were being torn in the closely packed columns of Viet Minh attackers. In the garish, dim glare of parachute flares, the carnage was beyond belief. Heaps of slain attackers began to appear along the barbed wire barrier; dozens of broken, bloody Viet Minh corpses festooned the wire itself. Against such a murderous fusillade, Regiment 141's columns wavered and began to fall back. The defenders on D3 enjoyed a short respite, but the human-wave attacks were far from over.

Brunbrouck took advantage of the lull to visit his gun crews, encouraging the exhausted men of his battery and their Algerian defenders. At around 2 AM, renewed human-wave assaults began once more. A fresh unit, the 54th Battalion of Viet Minh Regiment 102, until now held in reserve, looped around the long southern flank of D2 and attacked Brunbrouck's perimeter from the southeast. As columns of fresh troops pressed up to the wire, moving over and around the bodies of those who had gone before, Brunbrouck's howitzers, now red hot to the touch, again opened fire, alternating between impact and minimum-delay fuses to shred both the enemy's front ranks and the columns coming up behind them.

Again, the People's Army attackers halted, but only temporarily; Major Knecht, at battalion headquarters, worried that Brunbrouck's tired garrison of 180-odd men might not be able to hold against further attacks, and requested infantry reinforcements from Langlais. With simultaneous battles raging on the Elianes and on Huguette 7, Langlais had

no troops to spare and had to refuse. Langlais spoke directly with Brunbrouck over the radio, instructing him to sabotage his weapons and fall back if the situation became impossible. The 4th Battery's gunners continued their killing fire; an attempt by the Viet Minh to outflank Brunbrouck's position from the north was halted by the fire of the quad-.50s on Epervier. Another group of attackers attempted to break through and reach the drainage ditch, but was stopped by the heavy machine gun that covered the battery's northern perimeter.

Brunbrouck was told a second time that he could spike his guns and pull back his garrison if he deemed it necessary. Again he refused. A force of Communist infantrymen looking for cover in a sunken lane near the perimeter's northern edge was wiped out to the last man by command-detonated charges buried there several days earlier on Langlais's instructions; the next morning, at least 200 dead enemy soldiers were counted at that spot. Finally, the People's Army attacks lost momentum, and before dawn the survivors of the 54th Battalion fell back. There would be no breakthrough this night, at least not on the northeastern front. Two regiments from Giap's most experienced division had failed to get past the guns on D3. The crews there had fired an incredible total of almost 1,800 shells, an amazing feat under the best of conditions. Given the atrocious casualties his men inflicted on the enemy, Brunbrouck's losses were surprisingly light—none killed, three wounded, and a handful of burn cases.

Over on Eliane 2, staunch French resistance had kept the Viet Minh from digging trenches up to the perimeter. To advance on E2, the People's Army first had to move up and secure Baldy hill. This was accomplished by Regiment 98 in about an hour while the garrison on E2 was being pounded by the artillery barrage beginning at 5:30 PM. Prior to their attack upon Champs-Elysées, the Communists raked its trenches unmercifully with recoilless rifle, machine-gun, and mortar fire from Phoney hill, inflicting heavy casualties on the Legion paratroopers there. Despite that punishment, however, the first Viet Minh attack turned into a disaster. At 7 PM, two separate battalions of Viet Minh soldiers marched up a dry streambed and approached Eliane 2 bunched too closely together, breaking a cardinal rule of infantry tactics. The two columns attempted to breach the barbed wire just 100 yards apart and were butchered by artillery fire coming from strongpoint Isabelle. The 105mm guns on the southern satellite were firing airbursts, particularly lethal against massed concentrations of infantry.

Peter Newark's Military Pictures

Highly trained and motivated Viet Minh troops mass for combat against the French occupiers.

Although the first thrust upon his position had been halted, Major Nicolas was aware that the 1st BEP paratroopers in the lower trenches had suffered heavy losses, and a little after 9 PM he ordered their company commander, Lieutenant Jean Lucciani, to pull his troops back up the hill to join the 4th Moroccans in stronger positions near the summit CP. Shortly after 10 PM, after occupying the battered trenches at the foot of Champs-Elysées, the troops of Viet Minh Regiment 98 rose and charged up the slope of Eliane 2 in waves. In minutes, the fighting escalated into furious hand-to-hand combat, and the outnumbered Moroccans and legionnaires were forced to fall back toward the crest of the hill.

Langlais lost communication with Nicolas, whose obsolete radio malfunctioned when he attempted to report the renewed assault. Langlais, assuming E2's summit had been overrun, called down an artillery strike on it. Bigeard, monitoring the battle from his post on E4, saw that the garrison on E2 had contained the immediate threat and countermanded the fire order. He also dispatched one of his own companies of paratroopers to aid the defenders on E2; they arrived at the vital outpost at about 1 AM. As the night wore on and the fighting continued, Langlais cobbled together five successive counterattacks to support the outnumbered defenders on Eliane 2. Two U.S.-made tanks crossed the Bailey bridge to join the battle, and by about 3 AM, Regiment 98 had been fought to a standstill. At 4:30 AM, the surviving attackers began falling back. A fresh Communist battalion had been brought up to occupy Champs-Elysées, but after the final GONO counterattack just before dawn, the new unit held only a small toehold on the edge of E2's eastern slope.

When the sun finally rose, the surviving Moroccan riflemen and Colonial and Legion paratroopers, spent from their ordeal and suffering heavy casualties, gathered near the parapets overlooking Champs-Elysées and gazed down the hillside to find the slope totally blanketed with dead and wounded. Patrols moving cautiously down the hill counted 1,500 Viet Minh and 300 CEFEO dead. On the northwest front, strongpoint Huguette 7 had been shelled heavily and then attacked by a veteran regiment from the 308th Division. After suffering the loss of several trenches early in the fighting and being refused reinforcements by Langlais, who had his hands full on the eastern front, the outnumbered company of Vietnamese paras of the 5th Vietnamese Battalion, under the command of Captain Alain Bizard, rallied and retook all lost ground. By dawn on March 31, Huguette 7 was secure.

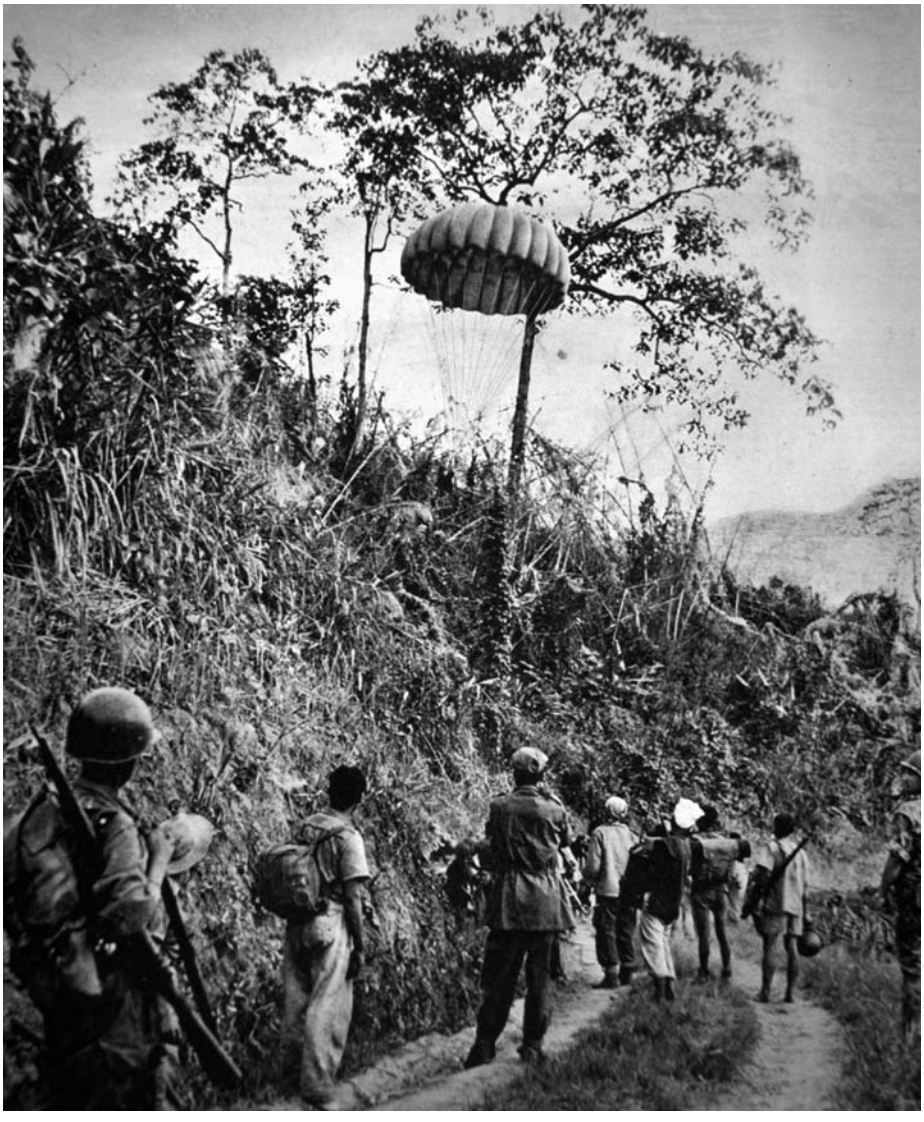
The first night of the Five Hills Battle was over. Although intact, the French fortifications were heavily damaged and Giap's forces had, at heavy cost, captured three of the five hills. The battle on the eastern front now degenerated into an ugly war of attrition that dragged on unabated, day and night, until the morning of April 4, when the Viet Minh began pulling back from Eliane 2. The Communist battalions seized territory during the night, only to have the French counterattack at dawn. With every piece of new ground his soldiers secured, Giap moved his big guns closer to the French perime-

National Archives

ABOVE: French soldiers could find little cover from Viet Minh artillery.
RIGHT: Hard-pressed French and Vietnamese soldiers wait for airlifted supplies.

ter, which shrank every time a redoubt was lost due to the cumulative effects of constant shelling, human-wave attacks, trench warfare, and heavy monsoon rains.

The appalling losses his army suffered in the Five Hills fighting precipitated a serious crisis in morale in the Viet Minh ranks, and Giap was forced to revert to the nibbling-away tactics of siege warfare while he waited for reinforcements and supplies to arrive at the front. As April dragged on into May, and negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland, got under way, the exhausted GONO garrison trapped inside the sweltering "chamber pot" no longer fought to win, but only to hold out for as long as possible, believing someone would come to their rescue. Lt. Gen. Navarre, who had ordered the reoccupation of Dien Bien Phu in the first place, still held out hope that a cease-fire agreement could be negotiated before the fortress was overrun. The fate of the beleaguered garrison was the focus of worldwide attention.



Peter Newark's Military Pictures

Because the camp's airstrip had been closed in late March due to unexpectedly heavy and accurate shelling, several thousand seriously wounded CEFEO soldiers were now lying, stranded and in desperate need of evacuation, in dank underground hospitals where French surgical teams worked feverishly in knee-deep mud and filth. The garrison's numbers had been reduced by the loss of hundreds, if not thousands, of troops to "internal desertion." More and more supply loads being parachuted into the basin were misdropped into enemy territory; and large areas of the defensive works were either underwater or had become waist-deep sewers. The garrison's last faint hopes for rescue—overland relief by a column of Laotian and French troops on the march from Laos and a proposed operation of massive bombing raids against Communist troop concentrations and supply lines by American aircraft—proved illusory.

General Giap was nearing the pinnacle of his career. He had succeeded in harnessing that particularly Asian strength—the weight of massive, overwhelming numbers. Now, after transforming his guerrilla forces, with massive Communist Chinese and Soviet bloc assistance, into a modern, conventional army, he was poised to bring an end to French hegemony in Indochina and continue the Viet Minh struggle to bring all of Vietnam under Communist rule. When the guns finally fell silent in the Dien Bien Phu valley early on the morning of May 8, the war, which had lasted almost eight years, was over. But in the ensuing weeks, at the negotiating tables in Geneva, the groundwork was laid for decades of further bloodshed and strife. Tens of thousands of young American soldiers would find themselves fighting and dying in place of the long-departed French, whose dreams of colonial glory foundered and sank in the self-made morass at Dien Bien Phu. □

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IN MANY WAYS, FLAVIUS AETIUS personified the tumultuous changes that rocked the Western Roman Empire during its final years. As Rome faded into the twilight of nations, Aetius's military and political acumen were all that stood between the Eternal City and the barbarian hordes. His stunning victory over the Huns at the Battle of Chalons is enough to secure his legacy among the pantheon of legendary Roman commanders. However, Aetius was far more than a military leader.

THE

He was also a ruthless political operator whose cold-blooded pursuit of power changed the course of world history.

It is one of history's great ironies that the man known as the "last of the Romans" was himself a barbarian. His father was a Scythian soldier who rose to the rank of *magister equitum* (master of horse) in the Roman army, his mother was a noblewoman of Italian descent. Aetius's heritage made him uniquely suited to deal with the challenges facing Rome at the dawn of the fifth century. From almost the moment he could walk, Aetius was schooled in the ways of war and politics. As a young boy, he was sent as a hostage to the camp of the Visigoth king Alaric. His time among the Visigoths was well spent perfecting his riding skills and learning how to fight from horseback. He also became familiar with the barbarians' tactics, knowledge that would serve him well in later years.

After returning from the Visigoths, Aetius soon found himself a political hostage once more. This time he was sent to the court of the Hun king Rugila. His time with the Huns was the formative experience of his life. He learned Hun tactics firsthand and became friends with Rugila's nephew, a young boy named Attila. The two men's fates, as well as the fates of their respective empires, were locked together permanently in their youth.

Soon after his return from the Huns, Aetius was caught up in the savage internal politics of the Roman Empire. His father had parlayed his rank of *magister equitum* into the title of Count of Africa. This elevated Aetius's own standing within the empire and opened new political possibilities for him. It also made him new ene-

LEFT: Attila and his minions march on Paris in this 19th-century fresco. OPPOSITE PAGE: Ruthless Galla Placidia, mother of Valentinian III, is pictured on a Roman coin.

FLAVIUS AETIUS: LAST ROMAN

FOR THREE DECADES, ROMAN GENERAL FLAVIUS AETIUS PLAYED A DEADLY GAME OF POWER POLITICS AND PALACE INTRIGUE. EVENTUALLY, IT CAUGHT UP WITH HIM. BY MARK S. LONGO

mies. During his time as a hostage, Aetius had established relationships with the leaders of both the Huns and the Visigoths, and his contacts within the barbarian world made him a valuable resource. Many influential Romans sought his advice on how to deal with the barbarians. They also came to him when they needed barbarian muscle to further their political careers, a need that brought him to the attention of Emperor Joannes in 423 AD.

Joannes had seized power in a bloodless coup after the death of Emperor Honorius. However, in order to hold onto the throne, he needed an army to defeat the supporters of Valentinian III. Joannes knew of Aetius's friendship with Rugila and sent the ambitious young man to raise an army among the Huns. Aetius accomplished his mission and marched into Gaul at the head of a large Hun force. Unfortunately, he arrived too late to save the emperor. Joannes already had been defeated by an army sent by Eastern Emperor Theodosius II. After Joannes's defeat, six-year-old Valentinian III was crowned emperor of the Western Roman Empire. Since he was too young to rule, Valentinian's domineering and ruthless mother, Galla Placidia, took over the imperial duties.

The defeat of Joannes left Aetius in an unusual position. By taking up arms against the new emperor, he had committed treason. On the other hand, the Hun army under his command gave him a great deal of leverage. Afraid that Aetius would use his Hun army to unseat Valentinian, Placidia offered him a truce. If he disbanded his army, she would drop all treason charges against him and give him the title *magister militum per Gallias* (master of soldiers in Gaul). She would also give him enough gold to placate the Huns and convince them to return home. Realizing that his only other choice was open war with Rome, Aetius agreed to her terms. He was still a young man, but he was well on his way to becoming a dominant force in the empire.

Although his political standing had improved, Aetius still had two major hurdles in his path to ultimate power. The first hurdle was Placidia herself. She never forgave him for supporting Joannes, and she distrusted his close relationship with the Huns. The second hurdle was a rival military commander, Bonifacius, who had earned the undying gratitude of Placidia by supporting Valentinian in the struggle against Joannes. As long as Bonifacius remained in Placidia's good graces, Aetius's path to advancement was blocked.

In return for Bonifacius's support, Placidia rewarded him with the governorship of Rome's African territories. This was a prestigious assignment, and Bonifacius immediately left Rome to attend to his new position. With Bonifacius in Africa, Placidia was deprived of her closest friend and adviser. Sensing an opportunity, Aetius struck. His plan was relatively simple. He spread a rumor that Bonifacius was planning to use his newfound authority to rebel against Valentinian. Placidia became alarmed and recalled Bonifacius to Rome, but Aetius was one step ahead of her. He had already sent a letter to Bonifacius warning him that Placidia suspected him of treachery and was planning to summon him back to Rome to assassinate him. His suspicions raised, Bonifacius refused Placidia's summons when it arrived. This confirmed Placidia's fears, and she immediately began preparing for war. With one swift stroke, Aetius had set his two main opponents against each other.

Bonifacius realized that his small African garrison was no match for the imperial legions, and he began looking desperately for an ally. He finally found one in the Vandal king Gaiseric. With the full might of the Vandals behind him, Bonifacius felt he could withstand Placidia's assault. The Vandals were currently occupying Spain, but Bonifacius offered them land in Africa as part of the alliance. It was a strategic error that would have catastrophic results for Rome. The Vandals, having crossed the strait of Gibraltar in response to Bonifacius's summons, established a firm foothold in North Africa. Bonifacius tried to drive them out, but he was defeated at Hippo (the siege of the city claimed the life of St. Augustine). Bonifacius eventually abandoned his troops and fled to Italy, where he was forgiven and restored to his former rank and title by Placidia.

But all was not forgiven between Bonifacius and Aetius. Soon after Bonifacius returned to Italy, he prepared to settle the score with his

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The Granger Collection, New York

ABOVE: Attila, "the Scourge of God," was both friend and foe of Flavius Aetius.
OPPOSITE: Flavius Aetius, Roman commander in the West, used his diplomatic and military skills to gain power.

former friend. While Bonifacius had been fighting in North Africa, Aetius had been solidifying his power in Gaul. With the aid of his trusted Huns, he had defeated a Frankish invasion in 431 AD and put down a peasant revolt. Aetius was now the undisputed master of Gaul, but Bonifacius's return threatened his status within the empire. Aetius marched into Italy to challenge his rival. Civil war had begun.

At Ariminum in 433 AD, Aetius emerged victorious after slaying Bonifacius in hand-to-hand combat. With Bonifacius out of the way, his only remaining rival was Placidia, whose position in Rome had weakened during his exile. With Valentinian approaching adulthood, her influence as the emperor's regent was waning. Aetius stepped in and immediately filled the void as an adviser to the young emperor. The foolish and sheltered Valentinian was no match for the ruthless general. Although Aetius had enough support in the military to eliminate the boy emperor and his conniving mother, he chose to operate from behind the scenes. However, from that point on, Aetius was the true ruler of the Roman Empire.

Although Aetius had finally seized power, holding onto it was another matter. Rome was beset by enemies on all sides. It would take a masterful combination of diplomacy and military strategy to keep the empire from collapsing. Aetius's first act was to negotiate a treaty with the Vandal king Gaiseric that secured Rome's grain supply in Africa and forced the Vandals to pay an annual tribute to Rome. This brilliant maneuver secured Rome's southern border, allowing Aetius to devote his energy to stemming the barbarian tide that threatened to overwhelm Rome from the north.

Rome lacked the manpower to defend against incursions by the Visigoths, Armoricans, Burgundians, and the countless other tribes that threatened its northern border. Having defeated the Alans and Franks in earlier encounters, Aetius now enlisted them as confederates of the empire and used their cavalry to bolster his own forces. Experience had taught him that gold was Rome's most powerful weapon against the barbarians, and in 436 Aetius bribed Rugila to unleash his Huns on the encroaching Burgundians. In the slaughter that resulted, the Burgundians were effectively eliminated as an independent people.

Aetius's diplomatic and military victories were impressive. But for every enemy that he removed, another one quickly rose up to take his place. Shortly after the Burgundians were defeated, the Visigoths once again crossed the border into Gaul. Aetius had already defeated them once at Arles. To prevent further hostilities, he bribed the Visigoth king Theodoric to embark on a campaign against Rome's enemies in Spain. This worked for several years, but Theodoric's eyes remained fixed on Gaul. In 436, the Visigoths turned away from Spain and besieged the Roman city of Narbonne. Aetius's forces relieved the city, but a war with the Visigoths was looming on the horizon. At the same time, the Vandals were stirring again in North Africa. Gaiseric, realizing that Aetius was distracted in Gaul, moved in on Rome's remaining African territories. To make matters worse, Gaiseric's son had recently married Theodoric's daughter, signaling an end to the long years of conflict between the Vandals and the Visigoths. An alliance between the two tribes was Aetius's worst fear—their combined forces could easily overwhelm Rome's meager legions. The wily general became determined to prevent an alliance by any means necessary.

Aetius set his sights squarely on Gaiseric. The Vandal conquest of Africa posed the most immediate threat to the safety and security of the empire. After seizing Rome's seaports in North Africa, Gaiseric's forces had established themselves as a major naval power. The growing Vandal fleet posed a direct threat to Rome and the rest of the Mediterranean. Africa supplied the bulk of Rome's grain along with a good deal of its trading income. Without the flow of gold from Africa, Aetius would be unable to continue his policy of bribing the barbarian tribes. The empire would truly be defenseless.

Unfortunately for Rome, Gaiseric was not interested in negotiating. With Aetius occupied in Gaul, he knew that he had a free hand to devour Roman territory. By 439, he had captured Carthage and most of North Africa. His fleet poured into the Mediterranean and invaded Sicily in 440. The Vandal invasion of Sicily sounded alarm bells throughout the Mediterranean world. Emperor Theodosius was so alarmed that he dispatched a massive

armada to bring the Vandals to heel. Unfortunately for him, the Huns invaded the Eastern Roman Empire a short time later, forcing the armada to return to Constantinople before it could accomplish its objective.

With Vandal forces occupying Sicily and the Visigoths straining Roman defenses in Gaul, Aetius knew that he had to act quickly or the empire would be overrun. He decided to focus his efforts on the Vandals since they posed the most pressing threat. Aetius offered an alliance to Gaiseric if he would cease his hostilities toward Rome. To sweeten the deal, he also offered to betroth Valentinian's daughter to Gaiseric's son. It was a shrewd move. Aetius knew that Gaiseric's son was already married to Theodoric's daughter. If his ploy worked, it would cement an alliance with one of Rome's greatest enemies while simultaneously driving a wedge between the Vandals and the Visigoths.

Aetius's plan succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. Gaiseric's forces had been stretched thin during his rapid conquest of North Africa and Sicily and he needed time to consolidate his gains without the threat of attack from Aetius or the Eastern Roman emperor. He also was enticed by the idea of marrying his son into the Roman royal line. The fact that his son was already married to Theodoric's daughter mattered little to the Vandal king. He simply accused her of trying to poison him, cut off her nose and ears, and sent her back to Theodoric. The sight of his mutilated daughter infuriated the Visigoth king, and the two powerful barbarian nations teetered on the brink of war. Aetius's last-ditch political maneuver had managed to save Rome for another day.

While he was busy protecting Rome's future, Aetius was also hard at work securing his own. He strengthened his standing within the empire by betrothing his son Carpilio to Valentinian's daughter Placidia, adding much-needed legitimacy to Aetius's house and helping to erase the stigma of his earlier acts of treason. It was a political masterstroke.

Aetius next returned his attention to the barbarians at the gate. Throughout his rise to power, he had relied on the support of King Rugila of the Huns. When Rugila died in 433, shortly after helping Aetius destroy the Burgundians, command of the massive Hun horde fell to his nephews Bleda and Attila. The good relationship between Aetius and the Huns continued during the dual reign of Attila and Bleda. Aetius sent the new rulers several slaves to serve as their Latin secretaries, and Bleda responded by sending Aetius his beloved dwarf slave Zerco. These diplomatic gestures paid big dividends for Aetius. For the rest of the decade, the Huns continued to serve as his iron fist in Gaul.

Although Aetius had beaten back many threats to the empire's northern borders, new ones continued to emerge. One of the most dangerous threats during this period was an uprising of the Bagaudae in 435 in northwestern Gaul. Roman sources dismissed them as little more than brigands and thieves, but the Bagaudae showed a remarkable level of sophistication and tenacity in their tactics. Under their leader, Tibatto, they managed to resist Aetius and his Huns for two years before they were finally defeated in 437. Even after their defeat, the Bagaudae remained a potent threat. Aetius was forced to settle his allies, the Alans, near Bagaudae territory to prevent another revolt.

Although he was busy dealing with the Burgundians and Bagaudae, Aetius had to always keep one eye on the Visigoths. Their armies in Spain remained a serious threat to the empire, and Theodoric repeatedly attempted to expand his domain into southwestern Gaul. In 439, the Visigoths made another incursion into Gaul. Aetius happened to be in Rome at the time, so he ordered Litorius to lead the Huns against the Visigoths. Unfortunately, Litorius did not possess Aetius's skill at leading barbarian forces. In the ensuing battle at Toulouse, Litorius was killed and his army was virtually annihilated.

Mary Evans Picture Library

The defeat at Toulouse was a disaster for Rome. Aetius eventually managed to negotiate a truce with Theodoric, but the damage was done. The Visigoths established a permanent capital at Toulouse, giving them a firm foothold in Roman territory. The defeat also deprived Aetius of his valuable Hun army. Without them, he lacked the manpower to hold back the hordes of barbarians that threatened Gaul. He requested reinforcements from Attila and Bleda, but the Hun kings needed every soldier for their ongoing war with the Eastern Roman Empire. For the first time in years, Aetius was on his own.

Aetius spent the next six years desperately trying to hold the crumbling empire together. However, an event occurred in 445 that changed his plans and forever altered the course of western history. Attila, tired of sharing power, murdered his brother and became the sole ruler of the Huns. Aetius undoubtedly welcomed this change in leadership. He had befriended Attila during his time as a hostage in Rugila's camp, and the two men had since collaborated on numerous military campaigns against Rome's enemies. Aetius had even bestowed the honorary title of *magister militum* on Attila. This entitled the Hun king to a hefty salary and a regular supply of grain for his troops. Aetius now sent his son to Attila's court as a hostage. He must have hoped that Attila's reign would usher in a shining new era of cooperation between the Huns and the Romans. Unfortunately, things did not turn out as he hoped.

During the dual reign of Bleda and Attila, the Huns had waged a bloody war against the Eastern Roman Empire, plundering territory and exacting a hefty annual tribute from Emperor Theodosius. Both Aetius and Theodosius expected these raids to continue under Attila. But a few years after he seized power, Attila suddenly turned his attention toward the west. The reasons behind this abrupt change of strategy are still debated. Some historians have suggested that the lack of plunder in the east drove him toward the west. Anger at the Visigoths may be another reason for Attila's prompt change of direction. The Visigoths had outraged the Hun king by refusing to pay tribute, and Gaiseric's brutal mutilation of Theodoric's daughter reignited the long-standing hatred between the two tribes.

Whatever his reasons, Attila abandoned the long-standing policy of coexistence with Rome shortly after he rose to power. Although he continued his diplomatic embassies with Aetius, he quietly began preparing for the climactic confrontation with his old ally. Attila's first step was to disengage his forces from the protracted conflict with the Eastern Roman Empire. In 450, he negotiated the Treaty of Anatolius with Theodosius. With his rear secure, he was now free to focus all of his energy on the west. However, a direct invasion of Rome risked alienating the barbarian allies that formed the bulk Attila's army. He needed a pretext for war and, as luck would have it, he got two.

Attila's first pretext for war was the death of the Frankish king Clodion. After Clodion's death, his two sons began fighting to claim his throne. The schism deepened when one son appealed to Aetius for aid and the other appealed to Attila. The wheels of war began to stir. However, the Frankish power struggle alone was not reason enough to start a war between Rome and the Huns. Another impetus was needed before hostilities could commence. As fate would have it, while the Frankish princes were vying for power, a strange drama was playing out inside the Roman royal family. This absurd soap opera would have devastating consequences for all of Rome.

Valentinian's sister, Justa Grata Honoria, was an ambitious and beautiful woman. After being passed over for the Roman throne in favor of her brother, she began scheming to seize power for herself. After a string of scandalous affairs, she eventually seduced Eugenius, Valentinian's royal chamberlain. The two hatched a plot to assassinate Valentinian and seize the throne, but it was discovered and Eugenius was executed. Honoria was exiled from Rome and sent to live in a convent in Constantinople. Unfortunately, even exile to a convent could not silence Honoria's ambition. When no one in the Roman court came to her aid, Honoria wrote a letter to Attila begging him to free her. In return, she promised her hand in marriage and half of the Roman Empire as her dowry. Honoria's letter gave Attila the pretense he had been waiting for. He immediately announced his intention to marry Honoria and demanded that Valentinian surrender his bride along with half of the Roman Empire. Valentinian naturally refused, and the final conflict between Rome and the Huns began.

Attila invaded Gaul in 451 AD. It is hard to imagine what raced through Aetius's mind when he learned that his former ally was advancing through Gaul at the head of an invasion force. Whatever his initial response, it was tempered by the Huns' deceptive diplomacy. While Attila told his allies that he was marching to rescue Honoria, he told Aetius that his target was the Visigoth capital of Toulouse. At the same time, he sent envoys to Theodoric insisting that his ultimate target was Rome. It was an elaborate shell game designed to keep his enemies off balance. Had it not been for Aetius, the ruse probably would have worked.

After he got over his initial surprise, Aetius quickly realized that Italy was Attila's target. He knew that the handful of legions and confederates guarding the border were no match for the full might of the Hun Empire. Reluctantly, Aetius swallowed his pride and sent envoys to the Visigoth king. The fact that he could put aside his intense hatred of Theodoric is a good example of Aetius's quicksilver ability to adapt to shifting political realities. Like Caesar and Scipio Africanus before him, he recognized that victory required more than just tactics and logistics—it also required a thorough understanding of the political environment. Once Attila was finished with Rome, he would undoubtedly move against the Goths. Aetius used that fear, along with rumors of a possible alliance between Attila and Gaiseric, to persuade Theodoric to ally with him against the Huns.

Aetius linked up with Theodoric in early summer. Their combined armies quickly set out toward Orleans to intercept Attila. They caught Attila's advance forces inside the city and, after a bloody skirmish, drove away the Huns. Aetius pursued swiftly, and the two armies came together at Chalons, in central Gaul, on June 20, 451. A great famine gripped Italy at the time of the battle, making it difficult to gather sufficient manpower inside Rome, and the bulk of Aetius's army consisted of Alans, Burgundians, Franks, and other barbarian confederates, along with Theodoric's Visigoths. On the other side of the battlefield, Attila found himself in the same predicament as his former ally. Although the core of his army was made up of Huns, he also commanded Gepids, Ostrogoths, and a number of other Germanic tribes.

The battle between the two armies was fierce and bloody. Aetius's men took up defensive positions on a small hill overlooking a broad plain and repeatedly repulsed Hun attempts to drive them off. As the day wore on, the battle degenerated into a brutal close-quarters contest and casualties mounted on both sides, including the Visigoth king Theodoric. It is not known whether he was trampled by his own men or killed by the enemy, but his death infuriated the Visigoths. They attacked with renewed vigor and forced the Huns to retreat. Attila's men took up defensive positions behind their war wagons, and after repulsing several Visigoth assaults, the battle became a bloody stalemate.

At this point, Aetius made the most fateful and controversial decision of his career. His strategy up until that point had been a success. Attila's forces had been driven from the field and they were trapped inside their camp. For the first time in his life, the Hun king was on the verge of defeat. Instead of attacking Attila or surrounding his camp for a long siege, Aetius decided abruptly to end the battle. He met with Theodoric's son Thorismund and convinced him to return home before one of his brothers could challenge his claim to the throne. Without the Visigoths, Aetius no longer had the manpower to defeat Attila. Both sides were forced to withdraw. It was a remarkable stroke of luck for Attila, and the beginning of the end for Rome.

Aetius's decision to spare Attila is still hotly debated among historians. Why would a cunning and ruthless commander make a decision that endangered himself and the entire Roman Empire? The conventional wisdom is that he was influenced by his long history with the Huns. They had always been there for him whenever he needed help. In many ways, he was closer to the Huns than the Romans. Even though Attila had openly defied him, Aetius may have clung to the hope that he could restore ties with the Huns. The volatile nature of Roman politics made it prudent to have a powerful ally. The Huns were an enemy at the moment, but all that could

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Private Collection/ Ken Welsh/ The Bridgeman Art Library

Theodoric, king of the Visigoths and ally to the Romans, falls in battle against Attila near Chalons in this 19th-century engraving.

change quickly. On the other hand, the Visigoths were an ally of necessity who undoubtedly would turn on Rome if given the chance. Given the two, the Huns were a safer long-term choice.

Aetius's victory at Chalons cemented his standing as the savior of Rome, but his growing popularity began to anger his many enemies in the Roman court. Like many successful generals before him, Aetius's success was ultimately his undoing. Placidia had passed along her distrust of Aetius to her son, Valentinian III. The emperor tolerated Aetius's continued acts of defiance mainly out of fear of his close relationship with the Huns. Now that the Roman-Hun alliance was broken, Aetius was vulnerable to reprisals from inside the empire. With the emperor and rival generals determined to undermine him, Aetius was in no position to repel Attila's second incursion into Roman territory in 452.

The Huns crossed the Alps that spring and laid waste to many towns in northern Italy. Despite the meager force at his disposal, Aetius continued to argue for military resistance against Attila. But Valentinian refused his advice and fled the capital, leaving Aetius behind to shadow Attila's army and attempt to prevent widespread damage, an attempt that ultimately proved futile. In the end, famine, bribery, pestilence, and an invasion of Hun territory by the Eastern Emperor Marcian ultimately saved Rome. Attila withdrew his forces from Italy in late autumn. He vowed to return and finish the job the following year, but he never got the chance. The fearsome Hun king died from a humble nosebleed shortly after returning from his Italian campaign.

The death of Attila lifted a great weight from the shoulders of the Roman Empire. Its inhabitants were finally able to enjoy a brief period of peace. Aetius set about rebuilding the army that had been decimated by the bitter battles of the past two years. However, while the death of Attila brought peace to the empire, it also emboldened Aetius's enemies within the empire. The most prominent of these enemies was Petronius Maximus, a former consul who had his eye on the imperial throne. He found a sympathetic ear in Heraclius, a eunuch and adviser to Valentinian. Both men were jealous of Aetius's power, and they hatched a plot to rid the empire of the domineering general, convincing Valentinian that Aetius was planning to assassinate him and seize the throne. Their whispers fed Valentinian's already strong distrust of the general, and he promptly summoned Aetius to a meeting in the imperial palace.

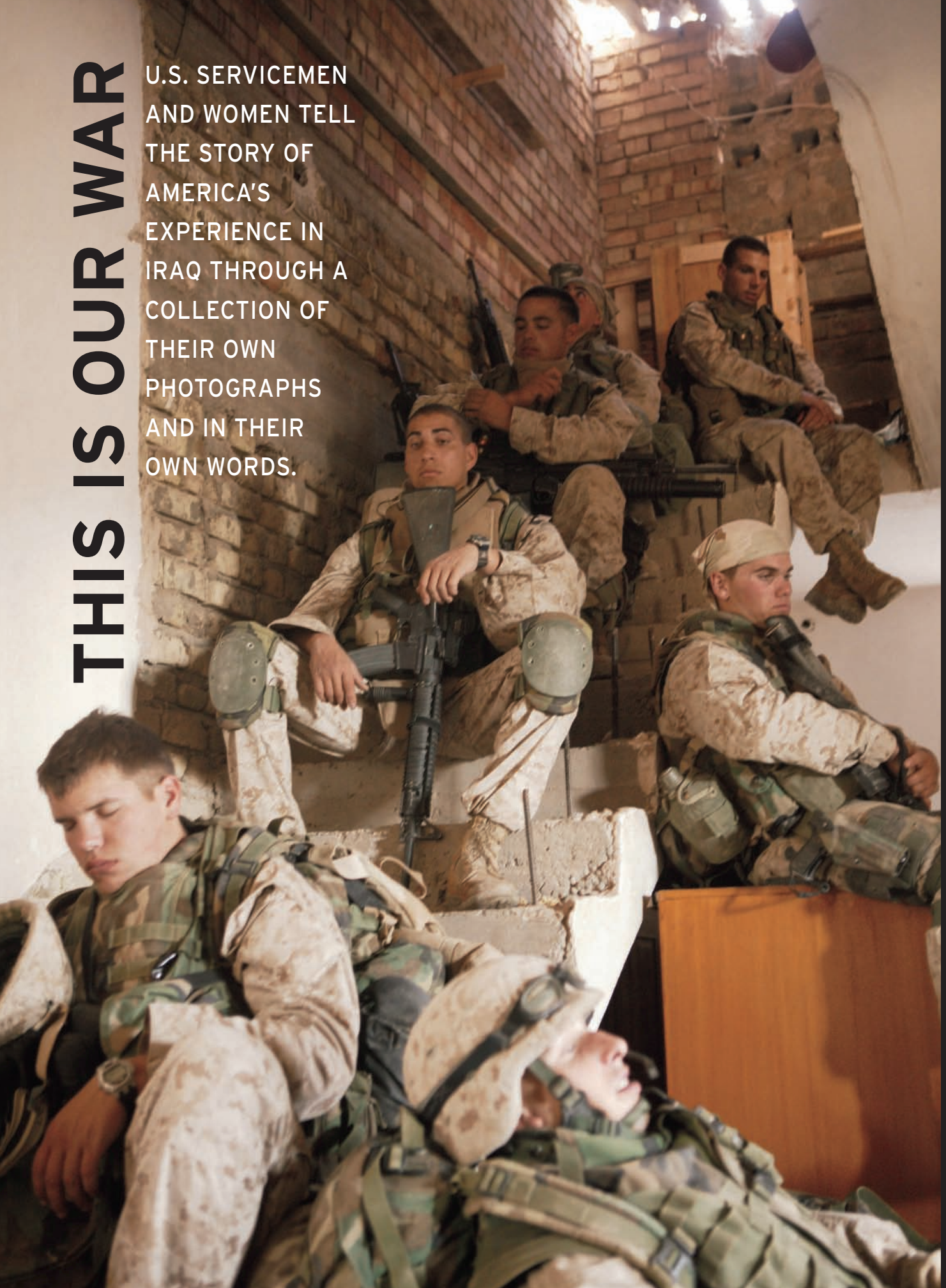
For a man who had risen to power on the strength of his own ruthless political instincts, Aetius did not suspect ulterior motives in the emperor's summons. Perhaps he was unaware of the scheming of Maximus and Heraclius, or perhaps he was so dismissive of Valentinian that he thought him incapable of an elaborate conspiracy. In any event, he followed the rules of protocol and attended the meeting unarmed and without bodyguards. It was a fatal mistake. During the meeting, Valentinian drew a sword and stabbed Aetius to death. By murdering the only man who had been able to keep the barbarians at bay, he had sealed his own fate, along with the fate of the Western Roman Empire.

With their main rival dead, Maximus and Heraclius immediately turned on each other.

Continued on page 72

THIS IS OUR WAR

U.S. SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN TELL THE STORY OF AMERICA'S EXPERIENCE IN IRAQ THROUGH A COLLECTION OF THEIR OWN PHOTOGRAPHS AND IN THEIR OWN WORDS.



American servicemen and women around the globe don't have to wait months for a letter from home; they are able to share their daily lives with friends and family via e-mail. Journalist Devin Friedman and the editors of *GQ,* recognizing that Operation Iraqi Freedom is our first "digital war," collected thousands of personal photos, selected 256 of the very best, and put together a portfolio of military life in Iraq.

In his foreword to *This Is Our War*, General Wesley Clark writes, "The war can't be found in Pentagon statistics, or clips on the nightly news, or even the quick flashes that we see, rarely, of the most horrid tragedy. No, the war is in these faces—and in the posture, the uniforms, the stark contrasts of order and disorder, light and darkness, joy and fear that endure on these pages."

12.09.2002
SERGEANT FIRST CLASS DAVID K. DISMUKES, U.S. ARMY
Udairi Range, Kuwait
Private Second Class Christopher Nauman strides out of a Bradley fighting vehicle in Kuwait.

05.05.2003
CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER L'HEREUX, U.S. ARMY
Camp New Jersey, Kuwait
Members of the 1st Armored Division make the 1.5-kilometer trek from their sleeping quarters to their camp's dining area as a sandstorm kicks up. This camp is a temporary stop: Soldiers will spend the next 10 days here preparing for the 42- hour drive north to Baghdad. "We came to Camp New Jersey from Germany, where there was still snow on the ground," says the photographer. "Getting used to triple-digit temperatures in 40 pounds of body armor was draining. If you didn't have water on you at all times, you were wrong."

12.01.2004
PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS KRISTOPHER WILSON, U.S. NAVY
USS *Harry S. Truman*, Persian Gulf
"On the ground, they're not that pretty," says the photographer, describing life up close to jets like this F-18 Hornet waiting its turn on the carrier's steam-powered launch catapult. "They leak. They don't even look like they could run, because of all of the oil pans and stuff underneath them." But in the air, he says, "the sleek lines, curves, everything—it's ridiculously sexy."

04.2003
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER BRENT McKINNEY, U.S. ARMY
Baghdad
This photographer was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division during its march from Kuwait to Baghdad. Upon arriving in the city, he took this photograph of a soldier in a carriage rumored to have been Saddam's.

07.2003
SPECIALIST EDOUARD H.R. GLUCK, U.S. ARMY
Ramadi
A member of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry keeps watch on an overpass in downtown Ramadi after an IED explosion. "If you look at the family on the balcony, you can see broken glass in the windows above them," says the photographer. "That was from the IED blast.

04.22.2003//PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN//Jalibah

Members of the 7th Engineer Support Battalion pose around an Iraqi rocket launcher that they destroyed just a week earlier. Sergeant James Kimmerle, who contributed the photo, says, "You can see the spray-painting on it, where we all put our names. At the time, we thought we were leaving. It was right around the time Bush said the war was over. We were like, "Yeah, let's go home! But it was actually a while before we left."

04.30.2003

PETTY OFFICER FIRST CLASS KEVIN H. TIERNEY, U.S. NAVY

An Nasiriyah

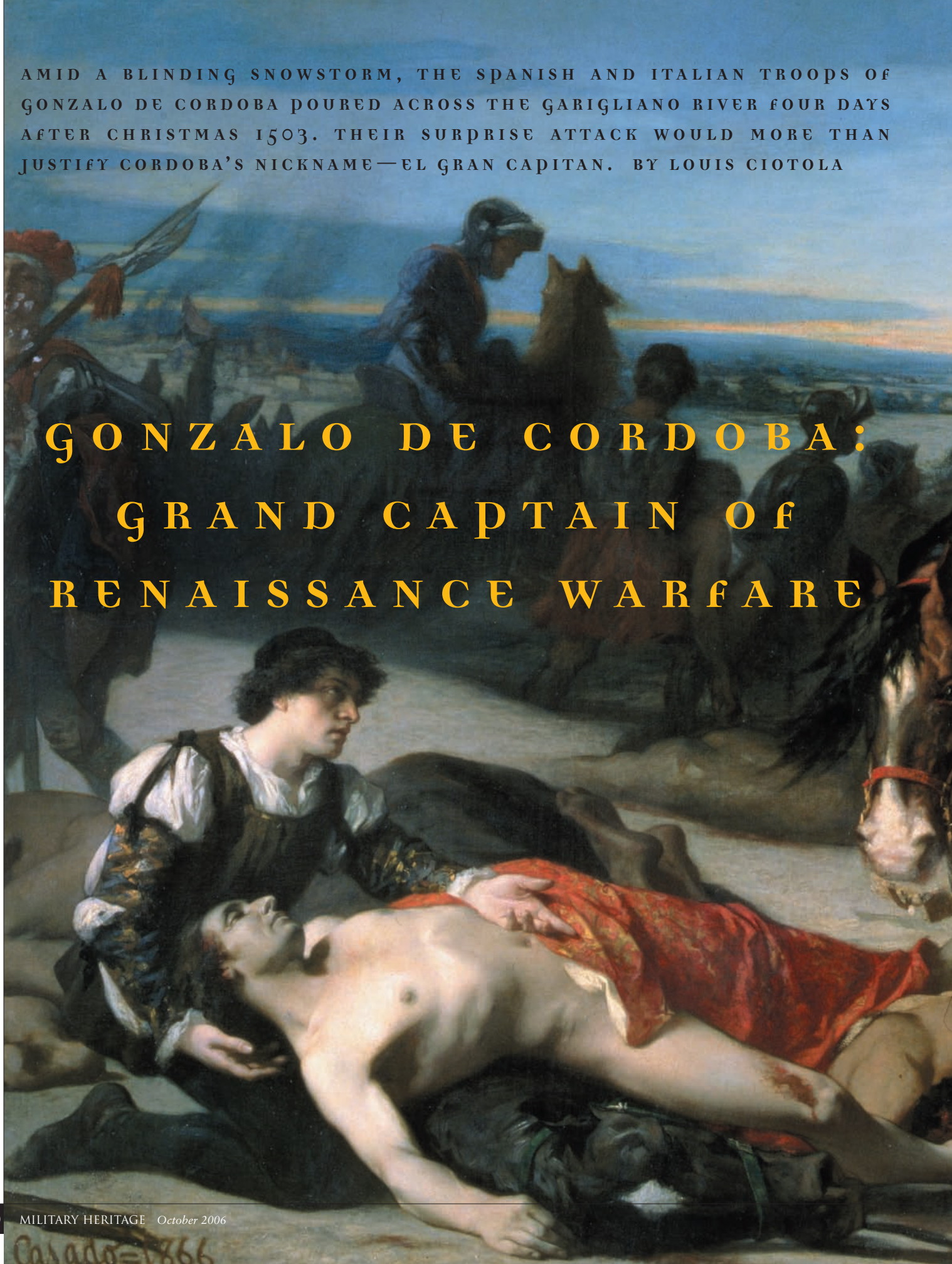
Chief Warrant Officers Andrew T. Arnold and Robert W. Channell were killed by a rocket-propelled grenade near Al Kut. With only live rounds available during the field memorial service a few days later, the 21-gun salute was fired into the ground.

03.08.2005

PETTY OFFICER FIRST CLASS BRIEN AHO, U.S. NAVY

Iskandariyah

In Iraq, soldiers like this one from a Mississippi National Guard unit were told to be careful of local sensibilities regarding women and girls while they were out patrolling. "We didn't approach them, we didn't talk to them," says the photographer. "We weren't supposed to look at them." And for their part, these girls seem to have the same idea. "We weren't supposed to take many photographs of them either," admits Aho.



GONZALO DE CORDOBA: GRAND CAPTAIN OF RENAISSANCE WARFARE

AMID A BLINDING SNOWSTORM, THE SPANISH AND ITALIAN TROOPS OF GONZALO DE CORDOBA POURED ACROSS THE GARIGLIANO RIVER FOUR DAYS AFTER CHRISTMAS 1503. THEIR SURPRISE ATTACK WOULD MORE THAN JUSTIFY CORDOBA'S NICKNAME—EL GRAN CAPITAN. BY LOUIS CIOTOLA

A solemn Gonzalo de Cordoba looks down at the body of his French opponent, Louis d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours, following the Battle of Cerignola. The young duke fell leading a doomed cavalry charge.

Prado, Madrid, Spain/The Bridgeman Art Library

The Spanish Empire is best remembered for its great voyages of exploration, its conquest of the New World, and its mighty Armada. Certainly, these accomplishments helped forge Spain's world empire. But before the Americas were subjugated, allowing galleons laden with gold to sail across the Atlantic, Spain had already become the dominant military power on the European continent. In the closing years of the 15th century, Spanish arms, recently victorious against the Moors, turned to face other rivals. It was a time when the Renaissance was ushering in radical new ideas of how to conduct warfare. The man most responsible for bringing these changes to the Spanish Army was Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordoba, popularly known as *El Gran Capitan*. His triumphs brought military glory to Spain, made traditional medieval warfare obsolete, and ushered in the deadly new age of the firearm.

Cordoba was already a grizzled veteran of the Reconquista wars to free Spain from the Moors when his monarch, King Ferdinand V, summoned him to lead a Spanish army into southern Italy in the spring of 1495. Earlier in his career, Cordoba had distinguished himself in the liberation of Granada. Now, in his early 40s, Cordoba set off to assist Spain's ally Naples in its war with France. The preceding year, in a campaign that displayed the new marvels of Renaissance warfare, the French king, Charles VIII, had plunged into Naples with an army equipped with a powerful siege train, redoubtable heavy cavalry, and Swiss pikemen. His frightening weapons and forceful methods of attack proved more than a match for the Italians. Without Spain's aid, Naples' collapse was inevitable.

Cordoba disembarked at the southernmost extremity of Italy in May commanding 500 genitors (light cavalry), 100 men-at-arms (heavy cavalry), and 1,500 infantry. King Ferrante of Naples and 6,000 Italians quickly joined him in a march northward to recapture the town of Seminara. The French, led by Everard Stuart d'Aubigny, were already there, poised to attack, when the Spanish arrived a month later. The two opposing armies drew up three miles east of town. Upon seeing the strength of the French force, Cordoba thought it prudent to withdraw immediately. The Neapolitans, eager to reclaim their kingdom, insisted on doing battle. Since the largest portion of his army was Italian, Cordoba felt compelled to follow his allies' wishes.

Author's Collection

Arquebusiers flourish their lethal new weapons in this 15th-century German manuscript. Cordoba caught on early to the weapon's revolutionary potential.

The result was an utter disaster. The Spanish and Italians took the offensive, but the French stood firm. Following several failed assaults, the Neapolitans falsely believed the Spanish were abandoning the fight and began leaving the field themselves. D'Aubigny unleashed a devastating counterattack. The French heavy cavalry charged, scattering Cordoba's genitors. In one fatal push, France's Swiss allies, the most feared and disciplined infantry in western Europe, decimated their Spanish opponents. Cordoba managed to save much of his army from complete destruction, personally leading a cavalry charge to extricate many of his Neapolitan allies. Fortunately for them, the French halted their pursuit prematurely, allowing the Spanish and their allies to slip away unmolested.

The Spanish, however, were not completely thrown out of Italy following the defeat. Cordoba wisely altered his conduct of the war to one that favored raiding tactics, matching those he had conducted in the Moorish wars. The raids continued after he left Italy in 1498. Soon afterward, the Spanish and French signed the bilateral Treaty of Granada, stripping Naples of its independence and dividing the kingdom, France holding the north and Spain retaining the south.

Seminara was essentially a cavalry victory. The French heavy cavalry, or gendarmarie, easily swept the lightly armed genitors from the field. With two-thirds of the French force consisting of cavalry and the Spanish relying on their genitors, it was easy enough for the French to emerge victorious in straight-out cavalry combat. It was necessary for Cordoba to discover a way to neutralize the French superiority. This would require the complete reorganization of his infantry. Foot soldiers were fast becoming the dominant military arm in western Europe. The Swiss pikemen who had so thoroughly decimated their Spanish opponents at Seminara were the quintessential model. By the middle of the 15th century, Swiss pikemen had become the mercenaries of choice for European monarchs. They were heavily employed by France, which had been allied diplomatically to the Swiss. Their only competition for the favor of Europe's monarchs was the South German Landsknechts, another group of skilled infantry.

It was primarily the Swiss who made infantry dominant over the medieval men-at-arms who formerly commanded the battlefield. Swiss pikemen were a highly disci-

plined offensive and defensive force, the first infantry utilized effectively as shock troops in Europe since Roman times. The Swiss infantry consisted of pikemen, halberdiers, and handgunners closely packed together in companies of 200 men drawn up in echelon formation. The pikemen were the most numerous of the groups, being charged with protecting the other two. Each pikeman carried a pike 18 feet in length, topped by a 10-inch spike. The pike was mainly a defensive weapon, being too large and cumbersome on the attack. It was the halberdiers who engaged most effectively on the attack, moving in for close-quarter combat to use their axe-like weapons to slice down the enemy.

The rapid development of handguns was another reason why infantry was becoming increasingly important on the battlefield. The first capable firearm, the arquebus, began to be used effectively in Europe around the middle of the 15th century. The arquebus, or "hook gun," was a heavy matchlock handgun, three feet in length. It had been adapted specifically for infantry, being too large for use by mounted soldiers. Although having a range of only 150 yards and minimal accuracy except at close distances, many European armies preferred the arquebus to the longbow and crossbow because of its penetrative power and its greater effectiveness in windy conditions.

Early handheld firearms were utilized most effectively in concert with fortifications. The Swiss pikemen were virtually mobile fortifications in themselves. Arquebusiers constituted one-tenth of the Swiss infantry. Used exclusively as skirmishers, they crouched beneath the pikes or collected on the flanks of the pikemen to deliver their murderous shots while remaining adequately protected. The Landsknechts also used the arquebus but in fewer numbers. Despite being a new and terrifying weapon, the arquebus had yet to be the deciding element in battle. Following Seminara, Cordoba realized its lethal potential.

At Seminara, infantry had constituted three-quarters of the Spanish strength. The infantry, however, was critically undisciplined in comparison to the Swiss. Cordoba, endeavoring to modernize his tactics, determined that it was his foot soldiers who required the most modification. First and foremost was the necessity to increase the infantry's use of the arquebus to the point that it almost entirely replaced the crossbow. Cordoba dramatically increased the number of arquebusiers until they amounted to one-sixth of the total infantry. Furthermore, Cordoba modified their tactics. Unlike the Swiss, who utilized their arquebusiers entirely as skirmishers, Spanish handgunners were adapted to play a more direct role in battle as a massed unit with more offensive and defensive firepower. In addition, they would continue their more traditional role as independent skirmishers harassing the enemy from the protection of the pikes.

Cordoba also faced the challenge of recreating his infantry as a force that could withstand and defeat the formidable Swiss pikemen in close-quarter combat. Finding his existing companies inadequate in size, he merged four of them together to form coronelias. The coronelia was the origin of the even larger tercio that would dominate battlefields until the Thirty Years' War. Attempting to increase their mobility as a counter to the brute strength of the Swiss,

Peter Newark's Military Pictures

Gonzalo de Cordoba was known across Spain by his hard-won nickname, El Gran Capitan.

Spanish pikemen, comprising fully half of the coronelias, were equipped with lighter armor, helmets, and pikes. Their primary role was to protect the arquebusiers and the remaining infantry, the sword-and-buckler men.

The sword-and-bucklers were Cordoba's answer to the Swiss halberdiers. Armed with a short sword and a small shield, or buckler, the sword-and-bucklers mixed among the pikemen, waiting for an opportunity to strike when the armies of pikemen locked together. The lightly armed sword-and-bucklers moved through the ranks swiftly, penetrating enemy pike formations for the kill. They held a significant advantage over the halberdiers, whose ponderous swinging motions were much less potent in close-quarters combat than the quick thrusting of a short sword or dagger.

Cordoba changed the make-up of his cavalry very little. The genitors, who had been the core of Spanish armies throughout the Reconquista, retained their importance in Cordoba's remodeled armies, although the shift toward a more infantry-oriented force reduced their numbers to only one-sixth of the army's strength by the time of Cordoba's second campaign in Italy. Their principle weapons remained the javelin and the round shield. Cordoba did, however, alter the genitors' role in battle. Designed for offensive warfare, Cordoba decided that the most advantageous use of his light cavalry would be as skirmishers to harass, delay, and pursue the enemy. Perhaps the best light cavalry in western Europe, the genitors were still not strong enough to face directly the overpowering French gendarmaries.

The most valuable lesson emerging from Seminara (one that Cordoba already understood) was to engage in battle only when in clear possession of the upper hand. Rather than follow the medieval tradition of accepting battle in nearly all circumstances and rashly charging forward despite the strength of the enemy, Cordoba developed a doctrine of maneuverability. Avoiding battle and remaining on the defensive for extended periods of time were perfectly acceptable tactics if they kept the Spanish armies effectively in the war. This willingness to exchange the risky pursuit of immediate glory for a safer long-term strategy was a fundamental precept in Cordoba's second Italian campaign.

The Treaty of Granada proved to be only a brief respite in international competition. Tensions mounted as the Spanish and French raced each other to secure the surrender of the remaining Neapolitan forces. Cordoba returned to southern Italy to aid in this endeavor. Unsurprisingly, armed hostilities soon reopened between the Spanish and French. In June 1502, the French, 8,000 strong under Seur d'Aubigny and the young Louis d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours, invaded Spanish-held Naples after being refused additional territory. Although King Ferdinand was partial to making peace with the French, Cordoba vowed to fight the invaders, even though the Spanish and their Italian allies were critically inferior in number to the French and their Swiss mercenaries.

The Spanish were inadequately supplied and spread throughout southern Italy in var-

ious garrisons. Cordoba decided that the wisest strategy would be to muster all his resources and withdraw to the coastal town of Barletta. There he would await reinforcements and an inevitable French siege. He believed that the enemy's march through hostile territory would greatly reduce their strength. Furthermore, he was certain that Barletta could withstand a siege. His monarch and many of his generals doubted this course of action, but Cordoba assured them that "time will testify the wisdom of my decision."

In September, Spain officially declared war on France. Men and materials began leaving Spanish ports bound for Barletta. It was not a moment too soon. Conditions within Barletta were deteriorating—the town was on the verge of famine. But Cordoba fought on. The Spanish arquebusiers performed magnificently behind Barletta's walls, while Cordoba launched numerous raids from the town, testing his opponents' strength and boosting the morale of his own army. During one such raid, a French chronicler observed, "The Spaniards fought like devils and the Great Captain ran up and down in the first line of the attack, calling his men-at-arms by their own names and giving them heart."

By the spring of 1503, conditions had improved within Barletta. Supplies from Spain were streaming in and Cordoba would soon be strong enough to take the offensive. He eagerly anticipated the arrival of German Landsknechts to bolster the strength of his infantry. During the course of the last few months, Cordoba had realized his error in diminishing the size of his pikemen—he required the heavy pikes of the German mercenaries to counter the Swiss. When the Landsknechts arrived, Cordoba learned much about his Swiss enemies from the similar German pikemen, including both sides' reluctance to adopt the use of the arquebus. Spanish reinforcements from Tarento, led by the talented general and engineer Pedro Navarro, followed the Germans into Barletta in April. His strength sufficiently enhanced, Cordoba prepared to leave the shelter of Barletta's walls and face the French in open battle.

On April 28, Cordoba left Barletta. A tough 16-mile march through blazing heat brought the Spanish opposite the French position. The Germans in particular suffered on the trek, being ill prepared for the hot weather. A number of them died of heatstroke along the way. For a time there was a danger that the Landsknechts would refuse to continue, but Cordoba successfully urged them on. At 4 PM, the Spanish took up battle positions outside the small town of Cerignola, located near Cannae, where Hannibal had met the Roman legions during the Punic War. Now, centuries later, it was the army of *El Gran Capitan* facing the rapidly approaching French under the Duc de Nemours, in a contest that would mark another turning point in the history of warfare.

The Spaniards took up positions atop a vine-covered hill that rose before a small stream. Cordoba ordered the stream widened into a larger ditch. He decided to hold the high ground in front of the ditch and fight a defensive battle against the likely charges of the gendarmaries and the Swiss pikemen. Stakes were added to make the trench more hazardous, and the excavated earth was used to construct a small parapet behind the ditch. To complete his defenses, Cordoba positioned 13 cannons on the wall of dirt.

The Spanish force of roughly 8,000 men was separated into six units, with just enough space between each to permit cavalry access. The Spanish infantry were further divided into battalions commanded by colonels. Those battalions in turn were separated into three parts, or escuadrons. The Spanish foot soldiers were placed on the wings and commanded by Diego Garcia de Paredes and Gonzalo Pizzaro, the father of Francisco Pizzaro, who would later conquer the Incas. The Landsknechts, led by the Basque commander Fabricio Zamudio, held the center. Additional troops were posted among the stakes in the ditch. Navarro directed the cannons on the parapet. His purpose was to greet a French attack with a quick volley, after which the infantry on the left flank would move forward to protect the heavy guns. Meanwhile, the cavalry was placed on the flanks, with a third force in reserve behind the Germans. This force was to launch a counterattack if the situation allowed. Pedro de la Paz commanded the genitors.

By the time the French arrived to face Cordoba, it was already late in the day. Some French commanders were certain that victory could be obtained quickly in the little daylight that remained. Nemours, however, was hesitant to commence a battle so close to nightfall. Although he was unaware of the extent of the Spanish preparations, he could see clearly that they were well-positioned defensively and could hold out through the night. His subordinates responded to their commander's well-reasoned concerns by questioning his courage. Nemours reluctantly consented to launch an attack, but warned, "We will fight them tonight, then; and perhaps those who vaunt the loudest will be found to trust more in their spurs than their swords."

The French drew up in three divisions, each placed slightly behind and to the left of the one before it. The forward division on the far right was comprised of men-at-arms commanded by Louis d'Ars. In the center, Chandieu commanded 4,000 Gascon infantry and a contingent of Swiss pikemen regarded as some of the finest to have ever taken the field. Behind the infantry and on the left flank were 400 men-at-arms and light

The French were still celebrating Christmas when Cordoba launched his final attack north of the Garigliano River on December 29, 1503.

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This 17th-century engraving captures some of the ferocity of the fighting between the French and Spanish pikemen at Cerignola.

cavalry led by Ives d'Alegre. The total French strength was roughly equal to that of their Spanish adversaries.

The battle about to commence, Cordoba rode past the Spanish lines shouting words of encouragement to his men. He protected himself with Toledo mail, a scarlet cuirass and breastplate, carrying a rapier and a dagger but wearing no helmet. Many in Cordoba's army were concerned about the obvious manner in which he made himself known. Cordoba answered their concerns by stating, "Whoever has my duty on a day such as this must uncover more, not cover his face."

With only half an hour remaining until sunset, the French attacked. As Cordoba anticipated, the gendarmaries charged first, bent on delivering a quick knockout blow. Nemours himself led them forward. The French men-at-arms drove past the genitors, who had been sent out to harass them and continued toward the Spanish lines. When the French were within range, Navarro fired a round from his cannons. The wind carried the cannon smoke into the faces of the French. Just then, a Spanish magazine exploded, spreading disorder and alarm among Cordoba's troops. Cordoba quickly calmed his men, declaring the blast a favorable sign. "Courage," he said. "Don't you see the first victory beacon is lit?"

The combination of the genitors' harassing tactics and the smothering smoke prevented Nemours from seeing what awaited his cavalry. The French men-at-arms unexpectedly encountered the newly constructed ditch as they were on the verge of smashing into the Spanish left. The ditch stopped the gendarmaries dead in their tracks. It was impossible for the horsemen to cross the ditch and surmount the parapet. Nemours frantically began searching for an alternate route.

The moment had come for Cordoba to unleash the real surprise. Two thousand Spanish arquebusiers in four ranks stood waiting at the parapet. The gendarmaries, bunched together before the trench, were within ideal range of the arquebuses. The order was given to fire. Nemours was one of the first victims of the ensuing massacre, falling dead with a musketball to the chest. Defenseless and leaderless, the surviving gendarmaries abandoned their attempts to reach the enemy and fled ignominiously from the field.

With Nemours dead, Chandieu took control of the French Army. While the gendarmaries were retreating, Chandieu was leading the Swiss, Gascon, and French infantry toward the Spanish fortifications. His advance, too, met an abrupt end at the trench. As Chandieu's men poured into the ditch, they were met by fierce arquebus fire. Still they pushed on. The Swiss, invincible in so many battles, tried desperately to scramble up the parapet, but could not climb the loose soil while bearing their heavy equipment in the midst of enemy fire. Like Nemours before him, Chandieu fell to arquebus fire. Crowded together among the stakes within the trench, the French and their allies collapsed in disarray.

As night descended and the enemy advance floundered, Cordoba ordered a counterattack. As usual, he led from the front. An eyewitness reported that "the *Gran Capitan* was here, there and everywhere, giving a helping hand wherever he thought it was needed." The Spanish

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Spanish horsemen pour across the lone bridge over the Garigliano River at the height of the battle.

infantry charged forward while the genitors hit the enemy flanks. The gendarmaries managed to escape relatively intact, but the Swiss and Gascon infantry proudly stood steadfast and consequently suffered tremendous casualties. The battle degenerated into a rout. The French reserve wing failed to become involved in the fight, not knowing what was going on in the darkness. The Spanish genitors chased the retreating French relentlessly, cutting them down with ease until exhaustion halted the pursuit. After a battle that had lasted only one brief hour, the French withdrew into the night, leaving behind 4,000 dead. Spanish dead numbered around 1,000.

Following the Battle of Cerignola, the Spanish began reconquering the rest of Naples. On May 14, they entered the kingdom's capital. The French, meanwhile, retreated to Gaeta, a coastal fortress situated on the end of a small peninsula just beyond the Garigliano River. Cordoba pursued the French and laid siege to Gaeta in July. The siege, however, was a failure. Cordoba could not breach Gaeta's walls, and French cannon fire inflicted heavy casualties. To make matters worse, a relief force of Swiss and Italians was quickly approaching from the north. The Spanish were compelled to withdraw across the Garigliano.

Four months later, on November 6, the French made an attempt to break out of their trap and cross the Garigliano in order to avoid having to spend the winter at Gaeta. Under cover of artillery fire, the Marquis de Mantua led French forces in a charge across a single bridge directly at the defending Spanish. The attack failed miserably. The Spanish in turn counterattacked but also failed to gain ground. Severe cold weather swept the battlefront. The French would be forced to spend the winter at Gaeta, after all. Mantua handed over control of French forces to an Italian nobleman, the Marquis de Saluzzo, and departed. Operations could not resume until drier conditions prevailed.

Unlike the French commander, Cordoba remained with his army to share their misery. He was determined to capture Gaeta, regardless of the bitter winter conditions and his own numerical inferiority. Cordoba knew that the French Army was suffering tremendously, as well, and that their strength was gradually decreasing. Far behind the front lines, at the castle of Mondragone, the Spanish began constructing a bridge for fording the Garigliano when the opportunity arose.

In late December, Cordoba got his wish with the arrival of Italian reinforcements under Bartolomeo de Alviano. These reinforcements, known as the Orsini Division, consisted of 400 men-at-arms, 1,000 light cavalry, and 4,000 infantry. Although Cordoba was still far inferior to the French in total strength, having only 14,000 men to Saluzzo's 22,000, he felt he had sufficient numbers to launch a cleverly timed offensive. The Christmas season provided Cordoba with his chance to take the French by surprise. A holiday truce was proposed by the Spanish and accepted by the French, to be honored on December 25 and 26. After the agreement was struck, Cordoba stepped up preparations for his attack.

The French were still busy celebrating on the 27th when Cordoba transported his completed bridge from Mondragone to the banks of the Garigliano, near the town of Sujo, which sat on the right flank of the Spanish army held by the Orsini Division. Cordoba chose the site because the banks of the river in that sector were more even in height and the ground was firmer than in other places. This was where he intended to launch his attack.

Although the French held slightly higher ground, Cordoba trusted in the element of surprise to neutralize his enemy's natural advantage. Farther south, in the center of his lines, Cordoba commanded the Spanish infantry and heavy cavalry, assisted by Prospero Colonna and Drego de Mendoza. The left flank consisted of German infantry and genitors under the command of Fernando Andrada, who was instructed to await events to the north before attempting to cross the existing bridge that stood in his sector.

On December 29, the Spanish attacked in a blinding snowstorm. Alviano's Orsini Division and 3,000 Spanish and Italian troops poured across the Sujo bridge just before dawn. The French defenders on the opposite bank were caught flatfooted—half-drunk, unarmed, and completely surprised. They were also leaderless, their officers having departed for warmer accommodations in the rear. A few French soldiers somehow managed to escape destruction and alert the Castelforte garrison of the enemy assault. The warning fell on deaf ears. The Swiss failed to assemble in time, and they too were scattered by the hard-charging Spanish and Italian cavalry.

The French cavalry was stationed too far behind the front to save Castelforte. Meanwhile, the Spanish assault on the French left continued to grow in intensity as Colonna and de Mendoza's men-at-arms followed Alviano's lead. Behind them came Cordoba with his genitors, Landsknechts, and bodyguards. The last of the attackers were across the Garigliano by dark. Cordoba established his new headquarters in Castelforte.

The offensive resumed at dawn. Saluzzo had fallen back on Trajetto after being forced from Castelforte. There he attempted to organize his forces for a counterattack. All that he could manage was an ineffectual cavalry charge led by Yves d'Alegre, which served only as a distraction to allow for a further retreat. The French continued to withdraw toward Gaeta. Realizing that the retreat would isolate his men in the south who were still facing Andrada's Spanish along the Garigliano River, Saluzzo ordered the bridge destroyed and the artillery evacuated.

The order came too late. Seeing Cordoba's success to the north, Andrada had already begun his own attack. His attempts to cross the bridge met the heaviest French resistance of the battle. The bridge itself was badly damaged in the fighting. Using captured boats and materiel, however, the Spanish were able to construct a second, temporary bridge to get them across the river. With the only feasible defensive barrier in the area breached, the French retreated westward to link up with Saluzzo's men. All of their artillery had to be abandoned and quickly fell into Spanish hands.

The entire French Army was now retreating toward Gaeta. Saluzzo decided to make one more defensive stand to avoid being driven back into the fortress. The French halted their withdrawal and drew up in a carefully planned location known as Molo de Gaeta. The defile was a narrow passage between the sea to the south and mountains to the north. There the French commander Seigneur de Bayard formed what remained of the French cavalry for a last attempt to end the Spanish advance. He successfully held off Cordoba's forces for an hour until Andrada's army arrived to reinforce the attackers. The added weight of the Spanish assault proved much too strong for the exhausted French. The defense collapsed and the French fled desperately back to the protection of Gaeta's walls.

The Spanish advance was relentless—the pursuit continued right up to the fortress walls. Although it remained possible to escape from Gaeta and flee northward with an army that despite its heavy losses still outnumbered the Spanish, the French chose instead to give up the fight, surrendering the fortress to Cordoba on January 1, 1504. The fighting from the Garigliano to the walls of Gaeta had cost the French and their allies over 6,000 killed, wounded, or captured, and all nine of their cannons. Spanish losses were insignificant in comparison.

In the ensuing peace treaty, the French forfeited all claims to southern Italy, and the Kingdom of Naples came under complete Spanish control. For the 50-year-old Cordoba, the victory at Garigliano was his final battle and his greatest success. It was a masterpiece of surprise and maneuver that proved without a doubt that the remodeled Spanish Army was a superbly effective offensive and defensive force.

Even after his victories at Cerignola and Garigliano, there were some who argued that Cordoba was an overrated commander. At Cerignola, so the argument went, the French had charged recklessly into a fortified position without even attempting to bombard the Spaniards with their cannons. Once the French were halted, the recently discarded crossbow could have achieved the same results as the arquebus. A Spanish soldier who fought at Cerignola, Fabrizio Colonna, scorned his commander and stated that victory there was obtained because of "a little ditch and a parapet of earth." It is also debatable whether or not the Spanish could have succeeded at Garigliano had the French Army been even the slightest bit prepared for a possible attack.

But these arguments can be easily refuted. By 1503, Cordoba knew his enemies well. He anticipated that the French were likely to charge heedlessly at Cerignola, since he had seen them do the same thing at Seminara. His strategy ideally matched the prevailing situation. Perhaps the ditch had won the battle, but Cordoba had ordered the ditch constructed. Before Garigliano, Cordoba had created the circumstances that would allow him to launch a surprise offensive. Had the French been adequately prepared, Cordoba would have been prudent enough to have called off the attack. Lastly and most significantly, Cordoba had shown how to use firearms more effectively and in greater numbers for maximum advantage. Soon his use of firearms would be recognized as the most important innovation of modern warfare. The age of the pike had come to an end. The age of the arquebus had just begun. □

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On October 11, 1899, Great Britain officially went to war with the Republic of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Conflict in South Africa had long been brewing, and by the summer of 1899 the relationship between the British and the Boers had deteriorated dramatically, ostensibly over the denial of civic and social rights to the Uitlanders (nonresidents) in the Boer republics. This alleged affront to the fair treatment of British subjects was too much for the Crown to bear. The fact that large deposits of precious minerals were recently discovered in the breakaway territories did little to help ease the tensions.

The British government was largely unconcerned over the looming war. Its political and military leaders were confident the conflict would be quickly and successfully concluded. The Boers, said one official, were little more than "the levies of two insignificant Republics whose forces were but loose gatherings of armed farmers." Cavalry commander Lord Dundonald so doubted the capability of his upcoming opponents that he asked an officer of locally raised scouts, in all seriousness, if the Boers would actually fight when they saw British troops.

Such arrogance quickly disappeared. As the war opened in the autumn of 1899, British soldiers and politicians alike were shocked at the fighting prowess of the Boers, who inflicted a series of humiliating and costly defeats on British forces in the field. The nadir came during the week of December 10-15, when three separate British forays were decisively turned back at the Battles of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso—seven fateful days appropriately labeled "Black Week" by the public back home.

The impact of Black Week was enormous. The British high commissioner in Capetown, Alfred Lord Milner, despondently cabled Joseph Chamberlain, the colonial secretary in London: "This is the worst blow we have sustained yet during the war. The impression it has created here is simply deplorable, and this is sure to be the case throughout the Colony." Milner's entry in his diary the next day contained more than a hint of panic: "The news to-day is again extremely bad. There can be no doubt that General [William] Gatacre's defeat on Sunday was a very severe one, and the effect of a large number of British prisoners being taken through a rebel district of the Colony into the Orange Free State cannot but be most injurious. One consequence is that, as reported by various magistrates, armed men are leaving their homes in various parts of the eastern districts, and going to join the enemy."

Two days later, Milner acknowledged a deep depression in loyal circles after the three disasters of the past week. "General [Redvers] Buller's defeat on the Tugela [River], coming on the top of Stormberg and Magersfontein, has been rather too much for the bravest," Milner informed Chamberlain. "The effect of the reverses at Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso is cumulative. Even in the remotest country districts it is now known that the enemy have had great successes. The spirit of rebellion has received an enormous impetus—even in districts hitherto comparatively quiet."

The effect elsewhere in the empire was similarly dramatic. "The military situation is without doubt at this moment most grave and critical," reported Winston Churchill, the future prime minister of Great Britain, then working as a newspaper correspondent. "We have been at war three weeks [and] the army that was to have defended Natal, and was indeed expected to repulse the invaders with terrible loss, is blockaded and bombarded in its fortified camp." He added: "At nearly every point along the circle of the frontiers the Boers have advanced and the British retreated. Wherever we have stood we have been surrounded. All this is mainly the result of being unready. It is also due to an extraordinary under-estimation of the strength of the Boers."

In desperation, England turned to her former colonies for additional fighting men. Among those answering the call were the 1,039 largely inexperienced Canadian volunteers forming the 2nd Special Service Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment. The green Canadians were eager to fight. Despite their inexperience, the raw material was there. "Of the physique and high intelligence of all ranks of the Battalion," wrote Lt. Col. William Otter, their commanding officer, "I could not but form the very highest opinion, and it was in a great measure due to these qualities that ultimate success accrued."

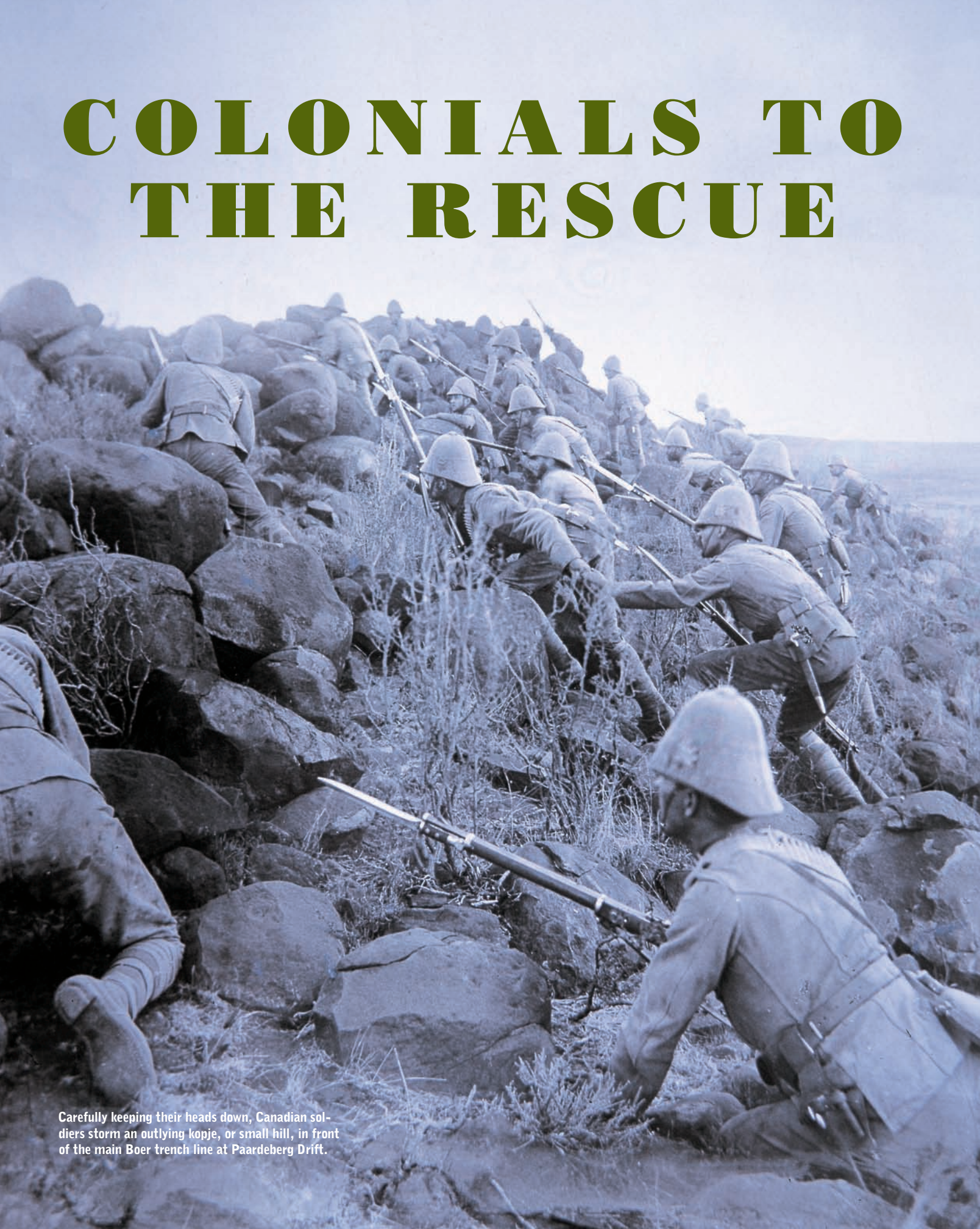
The battalion disembarked at Cape Town on November 30, 1899. The dire situation in the field necessitated their immediate presence at the front, and the Canadians entrained the next day for Belmont. However, contrary to their expectations and desires, they were not deployed in battle. Rather, they spent the next two hot and monotonous months securing lines of communication. Their first battles were with boredom, hunger, and the harsh African environment. These conditions, exacerbated by a rigid and uncompromising commanding officer, created serious morale problems in the ranks. "Our present duties have, I think, a depressing effect upon the men," reported Otter. "These duties consist of outpost fatigues and working parties and are very heavy." One private wrote home to his family that he hadn't had his boots off for nearly two weeks, and had forgotten entirely what a bath was like.

The harsh environment tested the troops. "Little or nothing to eat, stinking slushy water to drink, no tents for shelter on a hot summer day in Africa and a terrible rain storm," reported one participant. When it was not raining, there was another constant irritant. "There is nothing but sand, sand, sand and a

In the sweltering trenches of South Africa, green Canadian troops mustered their courage for a night attack on the fortified Boer position at Paardeberg Drift. By Bernd Horn

Peter Newark's Military Pictures

COLONIALS TO THE RESCUE



Carefully keeping their heads down, Canadian soldiers storm an outlying kopje, or small hill, in front of the main Boer trench line at Paardeberg Drift.

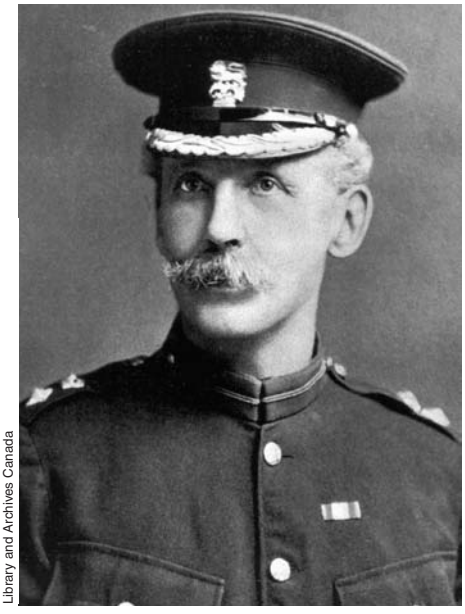
few little tufts of sage brush here and there and then there are sand storms," complained Private Jesse Briggs. "They are dense, choking, blinding and penetrate every crevice."

Otter was another major aggravation. Although experienced and skilled, he was dour and uninspiring. The men chafed at his harsh discipline and endless drill and resented his refusal to allow a dry canteen, such as existed in other regimental bivouacs. In addition, they felt that he did not push his British superiors for more active employment. "I don't think much of Colonel Otter. The boys call him the Old Woman and many other pretty stiff names," confided one soldier in a letter home. "He is too fond I think of giving the men too much marching, and that at a time when it interferes with a fellow's grub time."

The arrival of the British-appointed post commander, Lt. Col. Thomas Pilcher, further enflamed the problem. Within a week, Pilcher had organized a flying column and launched a successful strike against a group of Boers who were conducting operations near the town of Douglas. On January 1, 1900, he surprised the Boers at Sunnyside Kopje. As the artillery shelled the unprepared enemy, the Canadians seized a small kopje three-quarters of a mile from the enemy position and opened fire on the Boers. After four hours of fighting, the Boers fled toward Douglas. The small British force had killed six enemy troops, wounded 12, and captured 34.

The attack at Sunnyside simply increased the grousing about Otter. It was not lost on the RCR soldiers that Pilcher, even though newly arrived, had used his time to plan and conduct offensive operations instead of miring himself in administrative details. Not surprisingly, the criticisms of Otter grew, although soldiers' expectations were somewhat misguided. Otter's experience against the Fenians in 1866 and during the North-West Rebellion in 1885 had taught him the importance of drill, discipline, and fitness. His emphasis on marching and drilling, specifically the new rushing tactics that arose from the painful lessons of Black Week, was instrumental in preparing the Canadians for what lay ahead.

Clamoring for action, the battalion would soon get its wish. On February 12 the Canadians moved to Gras-Pan and joined the 19th Brigade under Maj. Gen. Horrace Smith-Dorrien. The battalion was now to begin an epic campaign. Field Marshal Lord Frederick Roberts' army of 35,000 men was set to march to Bloemfontein and relieve the sieges of Kimberley and Ladysmith. The march would be done without railway support, which necessitated the bare minimum of supplies. Tents, extra equipment, and all other superfluous materials were left behind. The march for the RCR, which now numbered 31 officers and 865 soldiers, commenced on February 13. The first three days were exceedingly difficult. Although only marching an average of 12 miles a day, the hot climate, difficult terrain, and supplemental fatigue duties such as assisting heavy naval guns cross rivers, took its toll on the men. The capture of a convoy of 200 British supply wagons by the Boers two days later also had a significant impact. It meant that everyone would be on short rations for the foreseeable future.



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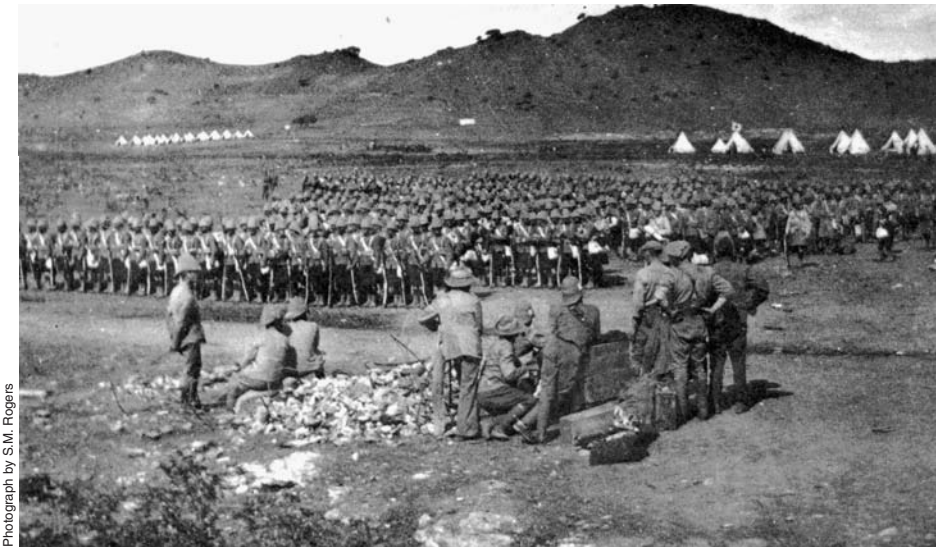
ABOVE: Lieutenant Colonel W.D. Otter commanded the troops in the 2nd Special Services Battalion in South Africa.
BELOW: The Royal Canadian Regiment camp at De Aar, South Africa, in 1900.

The battalion moved into Jacobsdal and remained there during the day. Due to the excessive heat, the advance was resumed at night. That evening the battalion departed for Klip Drift on the Modder River. Seven hours later it arrived at its objective and rested until 6 PM, when it set off once again for Paardeberg Drift. At 6 AM on February 18, the Canadians reached their destination, worn out and famished. Immediately, arrangements were made for a much-anticipated breakfast, despite the meager rations available.

The meal was barely started when shots rang out in the distance. The British field force had caught General Piet Cronje's army of 5,000 Boers on the Modder River. The hunter had become the hunted. The Boer army that had besieged Kimberley now was trapped itself. The RCR was ordered to dislodge or capture them. By 7:20 AM, the Canadians, most still without a meal, deployed for action. "The state of many of the men was now pitiable," reported one embedded journalist. "The short rations, want of water, lack of sleep, and long, tedious and irregular marches had told on them. Others were chafed and bleeding with the sand. We threw ourselves down half-dead and were just in the act of getting breakfast, when the order came that we were to form for the attack."

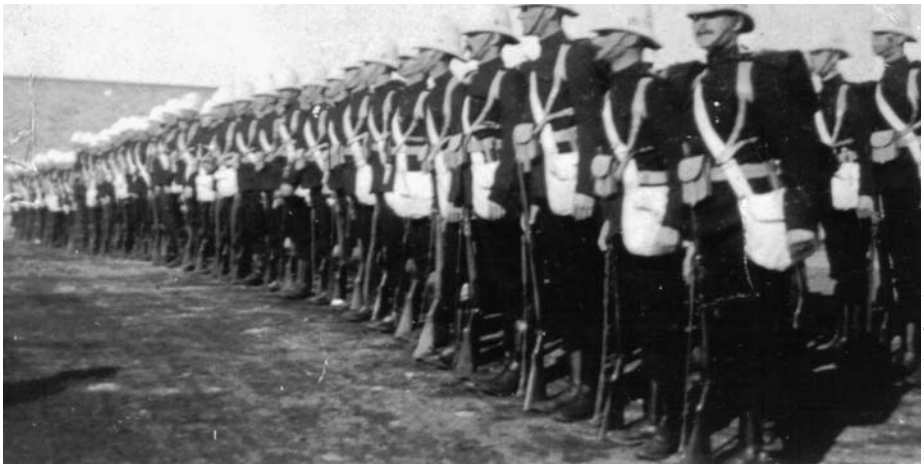
The perspective of the soldiers was not much different. "We were pretty well fatigued as we had not slept or ate or even had a drink of water since yesterday," scribbled Lance Corporal John Kennedy Hill in his diary. Another account reinforced the state of exhaustion: "On the night of the 17th we made a forced march (about 23 miles) arriving on the scene at daybreak," recorded Private Frank Dunham in his diary. "We thought that before we went into action we should receive some food to fill our



Photograph by S.M. Rogers

shrunken stomachs but no, we had hardly halted when we were ordered to wade the Modder & attack the N[orth] side."

The river proved to be a formidable obstacle. It was five feet deep and the current ran at approximately 15 miles an hour. Ropes were strung from bank to bank to assist with the crossing, but to speed up the process, groups of four men linked arms and struck for the opposite side. "We did wade across that swiftly flowing river right up to our necks, four abreast," explained Dunham. "If one slipped he was supported by his comrades. Thus we gained the opposite bank." Hill, in something of an understatement, recounted, "We had quite a time crossing as water was up to our chins and current very strong."



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ABOVE: Members of D Company stand at attention on parade. LEFT: Boer General Piet Cronje stands with Lord Roberts' ADC after surrendering at Paardeberg.

Once on the other side, the men were immediately deployed in the direction of the Boer positions. By 9:30 AM, the battalion was firmly on the other bank and began what would become nine days of fighting for Paardeberg Drift. The baptism of fire was a true test of the men's mettle. "This was the first time our Regiment as a whole were engaged," wrote Dunham. "Within 1800 yards of their position the bullets began to hum around. But nothing daunted us as we kept steadily marching forward. A sort of wild excitement to be at them came upon us so we hastened forward. Within 800 yards we supported the front or firing line. Things began to be rather hot so we adopted the rushing tactics, that is running fifty yards then lying down for a few minutes for breath and again pushing on. This we kept up to within 450 yards for the fire was too hot and their aim too sure. Here we lay for several hours keeping up a hot fire all the time. The sun showed no mercy on us. Instead it seemed to shine with greater fierceness so that the sweat rolled from us as it never rolled before."

The battalion advanced with A, B, and C Companies in the forward firing line under Lt. Col. Lawrence Buchan, the battalion second-in-command. D and E Companies were in support, the remainder in reserve. They were flanked by the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (Cornwalls) on the right, across the river, and the King's Own Shropshire Light Infantry (Shropshires) and Gordon Highlanders on the left. The confusion on the battlefield was great. "The bullets were whizzing past us, and throwing little sprays of sand in all directions as they struck the ground," recalled Sergeant William Hart-McHarg. "In a very few minutes we were well in the fire zone, and were ordered to lie down." All around them were men from the other British regiments. The advance continued until the Canadians reached the forward firing line, where they intermingled with the British regulars. Often, the men could not fire at the Boers for fear of hitting their own comrades.

Once the Canadians reached the firing line, the advance came to a grinding halt—the Boer fire was simply too overwhelming. Their accurate and smooth-firing bolt-action Mauser rifles cracked ceaselessly at any target that showed itself. "We lay in the burning sun, under the cover of small bushes or anthills, or lying flat on the open, jamming ourselves into the very ground to escape the peppering hail of bullets which ripped, whirred, and whinged a continual chorus of malignant warning," recounted one participant. The Canadians were strung out in front of the Boer positions from approximately one-fourth of a mile on the right to one-third of a mile on the left, the difference owing to the fact that the terrain on the right allowed the troops more cover. Many of the men, overcome with fatigue and feeling the effects of the relentless burning sun, fell asleep clinging to the ground behind whatever scanty cover they could find. Some died this way, the victims of crack Boer marksmen who continued to shoot at any target they could locate.

At 3:30 PM a brief thunderstorm drenched the pinned-down soldiers, providing much-needed relief. Thirty minutes later the commanding officer of the Cornwalls, Lt. Col. William Aldworth, who had been ordered to "finish this thing" by Maj. Gen. Sir Henry Colvile, arrived on the battlefield. After a brief and unpleasant discussion with Otter, he proposed mounting a bayonet charge. Aldworth ordered three of his companies across the river and moved them forward to the firing line. Then, at approximately 5:15 PM, after offering five pounds' reward to the first man into the enemy's trenches, Aldworth ordered his men to charge and "invited" all others from the wide array of gathered regiments to join them. The effect was electric. All along the line the intermingled soldiers of the various regiments were seized by the sudden excitement. The Canadians, no different from the others, immediately rose and joined the charge.

"It was about 4:30 in the afternoon that the order passed along the line like a thunderbolt to 'fix bayonets,'" recalled Private Dunham. "Never for a moment did we flinch, so when the order came to prepare to charge we jumped to our feet with a stifled cheer & charged." Excitement and enthusiasm, however, were not enough. "When we started to move," recalled Lieutenant J.C. Mason, "the bullets fell like a perfect hailstorm." One journalist who was present wrote of the attack, "The men tumbled like skittles on every side." Dunham conceded, "It was too hot for us; we were compelled to stop." Both Mason and Dunham agreed that the charge was a needless

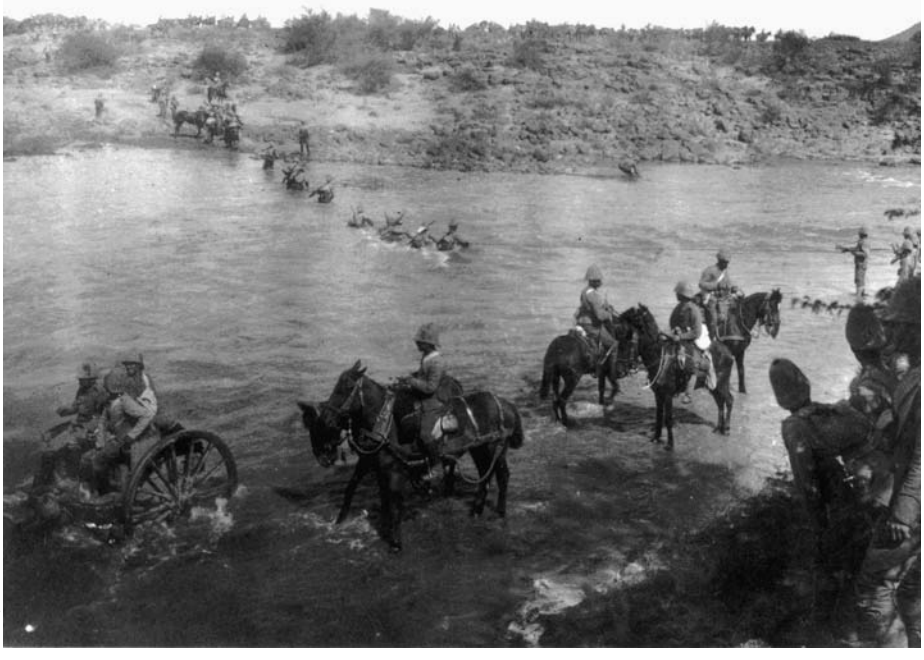
act. "It was a hopeless undertaking to cover 600 yards of open ground when the enemy had the exact range," Mason wrote. And Dunham agreed that "the order to charge was another of those blunderings which cost our army so dear." The brigade commander, Maj. Gen. Smith-Dorrien, later told his troops that he had not ordered the charge.

The charge occurred nonetheless. Aldworth was one of the first to fall, fatally wounded, in the ill-fated assault. In the end, the charge netted only another 200 yards. At that point, the soldiers once again were forced to fling themselves to the ground and desperately attempt to melt into any available crack or crevice to avoid the deadly reach of Mauser bullets. Darkness was their only salvation. Once the battlefield was cloaked in obscurity, Otter gave the order to withdraw. "Within a few hundred yards of the enemy we lay till night closed around us, then quietly retired," scribbled Dunham in his diary. "It was a sad moment for us, to leave the ground we had so dearly won." The day's action had cost the battalion 21 killed and 60 wounded. Although darkness provided a reprieve, it was clear to all that the battalion had been severely bloodied. Moreover, its young adventurers now realized war's grim side. "We all agree," wrote one young soldier, "that we have had all the fighting we want, and will be glad to get back to the line of communication as soon as possible."

Despite the unsuccessful assault, the British had achieved some success. At nightfall the Boers withdrew as well, albeit to better a defensive position. Cronje's large army was now completely surrounded by an overwhelming British force. Moreover, the trap was sufficiently strong that he could not break out, nor could Boer reinforcements relieve the pressure and save him. A siege began with the antagonists manning entrenchments and mounting a constant harassing fire on each other with both artillery and small arms. The Canadians took their turn manning outposts and the main entrenchment facing the Boers. On the 19th, the battalion buried its dead and manned a series of outposts three miles upriver and approximately two miles from the Boer laager. Two days later the battalion was sent to Artillery Hill to support the naval guns that were shelling the Boers with lyddite. On the 22nd they were reassigned with the remainder of the brigade to a line of kopjes west of Cronje's position as a blocking force. After three days of incessant heavy rain, the battalion moved back to Paardeberg Drift for a brief rest. This proved to be of little value as the torrential rains continued throughout the night and turned their bivouac into a quagmire.

The mud was the least of their concerns. The heavy rains caused the river, which ran through their bivouac and was their only source of drinking water, to flood. The swift current also ran through the Boer laager and carried away the debris of the besieged camp, specifically its dead and its waste. Otter reported that the greater part of their rest day was spent poling dead men and animals from the banks of the bivouac to prevent them from creating a dam. In the brief 24-hour period spent in the camp, Otter estimated that some 720 bodies and carcasses had drifted down from the Boer laager. The fouling of the drinking supply would create grave problems in the form of enteric and typhoid fever, which eventually affected 350 men in the battalion, 10 percent of whom would die from disease. The soldiers dubbed their encampment "Stinkfontein."

The British artillery continued pounding the Boer defenses. Boer commando leader Christiaan De Wet, who had arrived too late to camp with Cronje, watched the destruction from afar through field glasses. "All around the laager



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Peter Newark's Military Pictures

LEFT: RCR soldiers cross the treacherous, swift-flowing Modder River at Paardeberg Drift, February 18, 1900. BELOW: A badly wounded Boer is carried out of danger as his comrades keep watch with their Mausers.

Canadian Military Museum

This contemporary drawing, "Dashing Advance of the Canadians at Paardeberg," is out of scale and completely inaccurate, but it does capture the excitement of the final British assault. Note the Gordon Highlanders in their kilts.

were the guns of the English, belching forth death and destruction," he wrote, "while from within it at every moment, as each successive shell tore up the ground, there rose a cloud—a darkened cloud of dust." Conditions inside the camp were appalling. "Food supplies ran desperately low," one defender recalled. "The stench of the decomposed oxen and horses is awful. The water of the river is putrid with carrion. The sufferings of the wounded are rendering. Little children huddled together in bomb-proof excavations are restless, hungry and crying. The women are adding their sobs to the plaintive exhortations of the wounded All the time the shelling never abates. Nearly every man, woman and child is lyddite stained. It is too much for flesh and blood."

On the morning of February 26, the Canadians were ordered back into the trenches to relieve the Cornwalls. The entrenchments were gradually being pushed toward the enemy position. When they arrived, they found themselves approximately a third of a mile from the Boer lines. For the remainder of the day, the Canadians and Boers exchanged small arms fire. The British commanders decided to put additional pressure on the Boers. In the afternoon, the battalion received word that a night attack would be conducted at 2 AM. Preparations were undertaken and the Canadians braced for their second major engagement of the war. They were not overly enthusiastic. "Nothing is so trying on the nerves as a night attack," confided Private Dunham to his diary, "and we had lots of time to ponder on it."

The plan of attack was for six RCR companies in the main trench to advance on the Boer trenches at the assigned hour. In support, in the main trench to the right of the Canadians, were 200 Gordon Highlanders. To the left, approximately a mile away, was the Shropshire Light Infantry. They were to provide covering fire if needed. For the assault, the front rank of each company was to move with fixed bayonets and hold their fire until fired upon by the enemy. The rear rank, with engineer support, was to sling their rifles and carry shovels and picks to dig in once the advance ground to a halt and could go no farther.

At 2:15 AM, in the inky Transvaal darkness, the Canadians crept out of their entrenchments and moved forward. They maintained an interval of one pace between men and 15 paces between ranks. Initially, the advance seemed too good to be true. The front rank moved forward without interruption for about a quarter-mile. Then a few stray shots rang out and a terrific fire engulfed the darkness. Luckily for them, the initial shots served as a warning, and many of the soldiers threw themselves down to the ground before the main gunfire erupted. "Silently we advanced for several hundred yards, then the order came to ease off to the left," Dunham recalled. "We hardly had moved two steps when a wall of fire opened up in front of us, not fifty yards away and a hail of bullets whizzed past us, sending death with it. We all dropped as flat as pancakes."

The noise of the battle duly impressed Private William Jeffery. "The explosive bullets," he wrote, "sounded like flying devils hissing and smacking through the air." One journalist witnessing the event described it as "a brief fight, but a long half hour of deadly combat, ten minutes of triple hell and twenty minutes of an ordinary inferno." The Boer volley had a disastrous effect on F and G Companies, which were caught in the open within 200 feet of the

enemy's advanced trench. The companies suffered six killed and 21 wounded in mere minutes. "How we got back is a wonder to us all," Perkins remembered. "It was like being in a swarm of bees."

The Canadians in the front rank hugged the ground and returned fire. They were supported by the Shropshires, who unleashed volleys of fire from their distant entrenchments in a vain effort to provide covering fire. The rear rank of the Canadians began to entrench, but progress was mixed. The trench on the right, being constructed by Royal Engineers, made rapid progress. The trenches on the left were not faring as well. Suddenly, the fog of war took hold of the battlefield. In the murky darkness, an authoritative voice ordered everyone "to retire and bring back your wounded." The apparent directive was enough for most men—the entire left side of the line, four companies in all, collapsed in a rush to the rear. "I think all records for the 100 yards were broken that night," Durham joked.

The precipitous withdrawal angered Otter. The hasty retreat, he felt, put the reputation of the Canadians at risk. Conscious of the disdain that the British regulars held for colonial troops, Otter was concerned this would simply reinforce their prejudice. He need not have worried. Daylight found G and H Companies well entrenched, with the Royal Engineers still pushing on with their work. It was unclear whether the tenacious troops simply were oblivious to the general withdrawal that took place in the dark, or whether strong, decisive local leadership prevailed. Regardless, at 4 AM, as the light of dawn slowly seeped onto the battlefield, the unwary Boers rose from their trenches to investigate their night's work.

Suddenly, the tables were turned, and the Boers came under fire from the newly constructed trench less than 100 yards from their position. The firefight continued for over an hour, then, unexpectedly, a white flag fluttered over the advanced enemy trench. The Boers had had enough. The Canadians, however, were leery of the flag, since the Boers previously had used such tactics as a ruse. As a result, they kept up a well-disciplined fire until 6 AM, when an individual carrying another white flag emerged from the enemy trenches. Firing stopped immediately. Soon, groups of dazed, exhausted Boers began to clamber out of their entrenchments.

The Battle of Paardeberg was over. By 6:15, division commander Colvile arrived and dispatched an officer into the Boer laager to discuss the terms of surrender—unconditional. Despite the questionable night attack, the tenacity of G and H Companies had not only saved the reputation of the Canadians, but had also created the conditions for the first major British victory of the war. The date of the victory was very significant. Nineteen years earlier, to the day, the Boers had inflicted a humiliating defeat on the British at Majuba Hill and secured their independence. That embarrassment was now avenged.

The victory was a distinctly Canadian one. "The supporting companies of the Gordon Highlanders were not engaged, although the trench which protected them was subjected to a fairly heavy fire from the enemy," reported Otter. "The battalion of the Shropshire Light Infantry on our left, fired volleys at long ranges for some time after our attack developed and materially assisted us." Otter was clear in his appraisal. "That the duty entailed on the Royal Canadian Regiment was most difficult and

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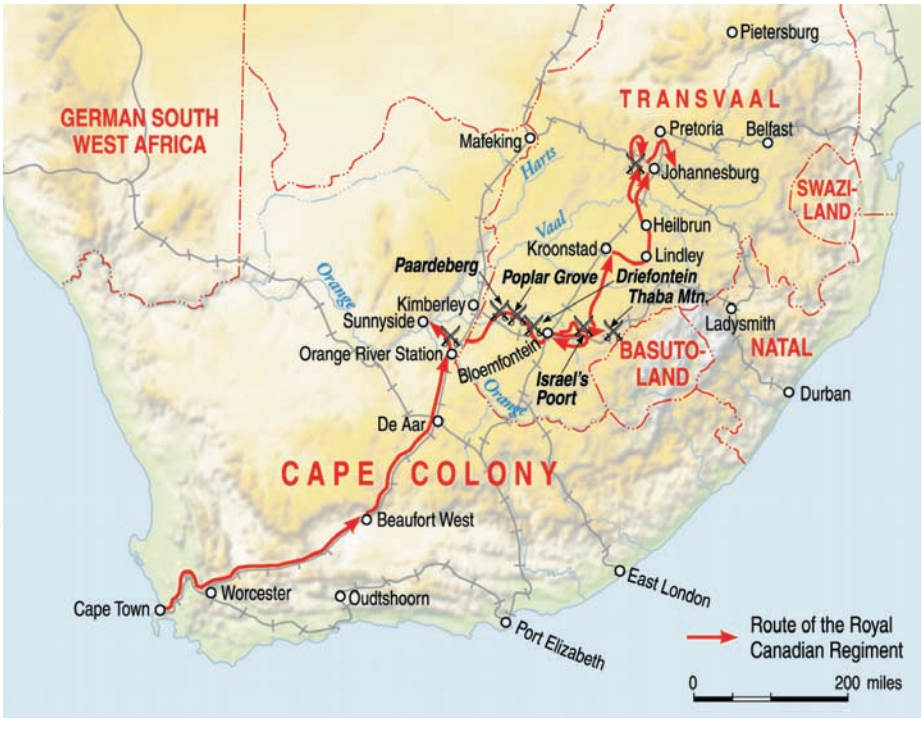

Map © 2006 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

RIGHT: Seeking the spoils of war, RCR soldiers rummage through the captured Boer position at Paardeberg Drift. BELOW: The route taken by the Canadian forces in South Africa in the winter of 1899-1900.

Peter Newark's Military Pictures

British troops assault the heavily defended Boer laager in artist Richard Caton Woodville's painting, "Paardeberg."

dangerous no one will deny," he wrote, "and though the advance was not so successful at all points as was hoped for, yet the final result was a complete success, and credit can fairly be claimed by the battalion for such, as it was practically acting alone."

The success of the Canadian troops and the respect they garnered triggered a nationalist outpouring of pride in Canadian military prowess. Even Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, who initially was hesitant about sending troops to South Africa, was not immune from exploiting the success. "Is there a man whose bosom did not swell with pride, the pride of pure patriotism, the pride of consciousness," thundered Laurier in the House of Commons. "That day [Paardeberg] the fact had been revealed to the world that a new power had arisen in the West." Field Marshal Roberts, the British commander-in-chief, concurred. The Canadians, he said, "had done noble work, and were as good a lot of men as were in the British Army. *Canadian* now stands for bravery, dash and courage."

All in all, the Royal Canadians had done Canada proud. They had served with distinction and demonstrated a martial spirit, endurance, and tenacity that rivaled the vaunted British regulars. "There are no finer troops or more gallant troops in all the world," wrote Smith-Dorrien of the Canadians. He was not alone in his praise. "The men of the RCR," commented the battalion medical officer, "were a jolly lot and saw the humor in any difficulty." Even the journalists were impressed. "We have seen the First Contingent," wrote one reporter, "side by side with the bravest and the best of the Imperial regiments, taking with them the hardships met with on campaign." In the end, the Canadian troops at Paardeberg had helped to deliver the first British victory in the war and changed—at least for a while—the way the English viewed colonials. □

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By Al Hemingway

Marine lieutenant Ilario Pantano's battlefield went from Iraq to a courtroom to clear his name and honor.

ON APRIL 15, 2004 IN THE SUNNI TRIANGLE OF AL ANBAR PROVINCE in Iraq, a known haven for terrorists, elements of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines (code-named Warlord) were conducting search and clear operations. Two suspected insurgents were apprehended attempting to flee the scene. A check of their vehicle uncovered material that could have been used in manufacturing IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) that had been killing and maiming troops on the roads in that area.

With the discovery of the suspicious material, the pair was instructed to do a search of their automobile while 2nd Lt. Ilario Pantano stood a few feet behind them, carefully observing their every move. Within a few seconds both were dead after they turned to overpower him and ignored his commands to halt. A few months later he was charged with premeditated murder—and if convicted, he could have faced the death penalty.

In his new book, entitled ***Warlord: No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy*** (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2006, 416 pp., illustrations, index, $26.00, hardcover), which he co-authored with Malcolm McConnell, Pantano graphically describes what happened on that fateful day and how it altered his life forever.

Duty, Honor, and Country were not mere words to Pantano. They embodied the spirit of America and of the U.S. Marine Corps which he proudly served on two occasions. During the first Gulf War, then an enlisted man, Pantano fought in Kuwait and eventually was trained as a scout sniper.

When he was honorably discharged, he graduated from college and went to work for various ad agencies and media groups and had a successful stint as a stockbroker on Wall Street.

Then came September 11, 2001. Pantano gave up his lucrative business and opted to become an officer in the Marine Corps because he felt so strongly about defending America against the new threat toward our way of life.

The book will take you through the author's tenure at Basic School, joining his unit, and eventually into the harsh, unforgiving close-quarters combat of Iraq. He miraculously escaped death when the truck he was riding in passed over an IED that did not fully detonate.

Although Pantano was exonerated of all charges, the nerve-racking experience, and the smear tactics utilized by the prosecution, soured him toward the Marine Corps. He felt he had become a scapegoat. The months of emotional tension put a severe strain on his family (they even received death threats from Pakistan) and left Pantano with no choice but to tender his resignation.

Warlord is a gripping, gutsy account of war. It gives the reader a

U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marines take cover to plan their next move during an operation in Fallujah, Iraq. Ilario Pantano fought for his country and his life in Iraq and in a courtroom after being falsely accused of murder.

SIMULATION GAMING | *By Eric T. Baker*

Ancients is a terrific wargame genre, but it is hard to hold it to the same standards of historical accuracy as genres set in more recent historical times. ***Rise and Fall: Civilizations at War*** makes no grand claims of accuracy, but it does offer units and heroes that at least have a historical basis for the four civilizations it models: Rome, Egypt, Persia, and Greece. Thus, the Greeks have their Spartans and the Persians have their chariots with scythes and so on. Players can also have their nations led by appropriate heroes, for example, Cleopatra or Ramses for the Egyptians.

The form of *R&F* is that of a real-time strategy game. Players command an empire and grow and stock it over

time, creating armies to send against computer or human foes. Two things make *R&F* different from most historical RTS games. The first is a fully realized naval combat system that allows triremes to be armed and manned and pitted against one another or shore targets. The second is that heroes can enter the battles using their special abilities for a period determined by their endurance. Thus Cleopatra, for example, can sow destruction with her sword or bow, but not for as long as Ramses, who in his turn is slower moving around the battlefield.

Cossacks II: European War is a stand-alone sequel to CDV's *Cossacks II: Napoleonic Wars* for the PC. It covers European conflict from the 16th to 18th century including the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), the English revolution, the English and Dutch wars, the War of Spanish Succession, the Northern war, the War for Austrian Succession, the Seven Years War, and the Ukrainian independence war (1648-1657). It does this by letting the player choose between preset, historical battles (about 80 of them) or more RTS-style campaign games, or even just pickup battles on random terrain.

Beyond its increased scope, what sets *CII:EW* apart from previous *Cossacks* games is the improved multiplayer modes. With this version, players can play against other humans in pickup or historical battles. Up to eight players can now get together, team up, and split up the armies among themselves.

The last game can't be recommended to new or casual wargamers. ***The Star and the Crescent: Arab/Israeli Armored Combat from 1956 to 2009*** is targeted at players who are as at home pushing counters around hexes as they are mousing at their computers. The research, detail, and accuracy of this game are at the highest level, and the AI does a terrific job of challenging players in any of the 15 scenarios, including two well-envisioned possible future conflicts.

All of that said, *S&C* has a 130-page manual and players will need to read all of it before playing. There is an online community whose posts and guides lend much needed help, but even so, the more familiar the players are with board games and their more or less direct translations to the computer, the easier time they will have picking up *S&C* and getting the most out of it. Not a pretty game, but a clean and accurate one. □

close look at the ferocity of combat and the dangers our troops are facing every day in Iraq. Men like Pantano are following the rules of engagement, as prescribed by the U.S. military, while the terrorists are using mosques as supply areas, prayer as a means of communicating with each other, and setting up ambushes and IEDs in civilian communities, placing innocent people in harm's way.

Disgusted with the tactics being used, he writes, "If we don't get this right, I thought, heading for my rack one baking July morning, my son will be fighting in Fallujah in twenty years."

I highly recommend ***Warlord*** to all Americans who care about our fighting men and women serving in today's volatile war in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will make you laugh and, at times, cry. Most of all, however, it will make you angry. America must win the war on terror—or all the brave men and women who have died or been wounded while serving will have done so in vain.

The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope, by Jonathan Alter, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2006, 414 pp., illustrations, notes, index, $29.95, hardcover.

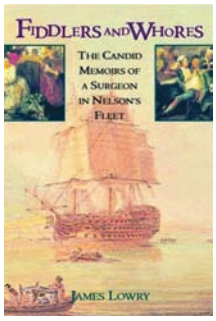
Throughout the history of the United States of America individuals have emerged during times of crisis to lead the nation from the depths of despair. George Washington was at the forefront during the Revolution and Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.

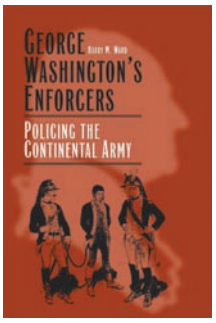
Franklin Delano Roosevelt performed the same miracle, if you will, in 1932. He successfully won the Democratic Party's nomination for president and went on to demonstrate courage and hope and lead the nation from the grasp of economic turmoil.

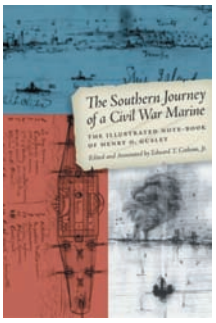
Historian Jonathan Alter does a masterful job of bringing FDR to life, focusing on his childhood and his first hundred days in office. FDR's early life was certainly shaped by his doting mother Sara, the person he always turned to for inspiration and advice. Also, his relationship with his wife Eleanor and how they formed a political partnership in lieu of the traditional marriage are examined in some detail.

Always the consummate politician, FDR had an uncanny ability to bring people he could trust into his inner circle—the group that would be called "The Brain Trust"—men like Louis Howe, who skillfully maneuvered FDR into position for the presidency.

FDR went through his own tragedy when he contracted polio. Although stricken with a debilitating affliction, he never lost hope that







one day he would walk again. He established a clinic in Warm Springs, Georgia, and developed treatments that, although they never cured anyone, brought new hope to those who sought relief from the awful disease. It was this relentless drive and exuberance that FDR instilled in the American people during the dark days of 1932 and carried the nation from its worst economic crisis in its history to prosperity. From his first inaugural address to his celebrated fireside chats, he charmed the nation and slowly transformed America into a super power. It would be the same energy and hope that would rally the American people and lead the country to victory during World War II. FDR demonstrated through his own personal suffering that anyone, even a country, can overcome any ordeal and triumph in the end.

Recent and Recommended

Fiddlers and Whores: The Candid Memoirs of a Surgeon in Nelson's Fleet, by James Lowry, edited and introduced by John Millyard, Chatham Publishing, London, UK, 2006, 192 pp., illustrations, notes, index, hardcover.

James Lowry was a surgeon who sailed for seven years on various British Navy ships. His vivid and enlightening account of what it was like aboard the different vessels and in the strange ports of call he traveled to are most entertaining.

The young doctor was taken prisoner in June 1801 when his ship was defeated in battle by the French. They transported him to Toulon where he was treated with much respect. He assisted a French doctor who was treating sick sailors and was even offered money for his services. This display of friendship was wrought with irony and prompted him to write in his dairy, "Although we fight desperately against each other, after surrender we act more like brothers."

His sojourns took him to Egypt, Italy, France and Sicily. The doctor's brother preserved the diary and passed it down so future generations would know of their ancestor's life at sea. As editor John Millyard writes, "[He] can finally share with a broader audience his fascinating thoughts, observations and adventures in a world now long gone."

George Washington's Enforcers: Policing the Continental Army, by Harry M. Ward, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL, 2006, 268 pp., illustrations, notes, index, $45.00, hardcover.

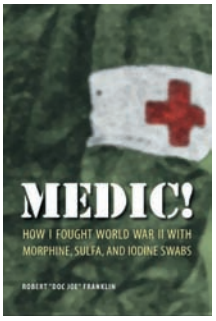
"An army without discipline is nothing more than an unruly mob," someone once said. No truer words were ever spoken. In the Continental Army, however, discipline was strictly enforced and those who disobeyed any of the regulations, even if it were the smallest of infractions, were severely punished. General George Washington, always portrayed as the benevolent "father of our country," was a strict disciplinarian. He patterned his code of disci-

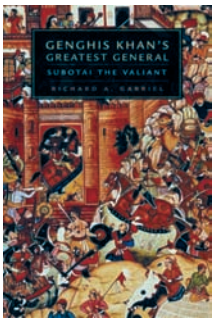
pline after the British Army, where he had served as a colonel commanding Virginia troops during the French and Indian War. Flogging was the preferred punishment of the period with as many as 300 lashes meted out to those unfortunate enough to be caught. Other harsh methods, up to and including execution, were employed for the more serious offenses. Officers, on the other hand, were often excused of the very same crimes. Despite this rift between officers and the enlisted ranks, Washington held his army together and went on to achieve victory and independence from Great Britain for his country.

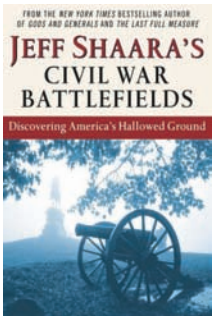
The Southern Journey of a Civil War Marine, edited and annotated by Edward T. Calhoun, Jr., University of Texas Press, Austin, 2006, 213 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, index, $24.95, hardcover.

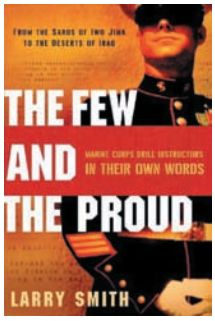
History always seems more fascinating when the words describing it are from those who participated in the events. Henry O. Gusley, who was born in Lancaster, Penn., answered Abraham Lincoln's call for volunteers by enlisting in the United States Marine Corps at the outbreak of the Civil War.

An educated and well-read individual, Gusley decided to record his thoughts and observations in a "note-book" he began writing as soon as he left New York aboard the USS *Westfield,* a steamer assigned to the mortar flotilla during operations on the Mississippi River. He was later reassigned to the USS *Clifton*. Gusley's accurate and perceptive depictions of life aboard the vessels and the battles he participated in bring the boredom and terror of war alive. The shipboard Marine was captured with other crewmembers at the Battle of Sabine Pass in September 1863. His journal was confiscated by his Confederate captors and made its way to Galveston, Tex., where it was published in the *Galveston Tri-Weekly News* in various installments. The "Yankee Note-Book" caused great









excitement among the local populace when it was first printed, giving new insight into the "enemy the South was fighting."

Edward Calhoun, Jr., who edited Gusley's papers, accidentally discovered an artist's drawings of scenes along the Mississippi River and Texas shoreline during the same period. The artist was Dr. Daniel D.T. Nestell, surgeon aboard the *Clifton*, who was also taken prisoner at Sabine Pass. Nestell's sketches coincide with Gusley's entries and add a new dimension to the book.

Medic! How I Fought World War II with Morphine, Sulfa, and Iodine Swabs, by Robert "Doc" Franklin, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2006, 151 pp., illustrations, index, $21.95, hardcover.

It is a sad fact that over 1,100 World War II veterans are dying each day across the United States. With their passing, living history is dying as well. Participants of some of the greatest battles in that terrible conflict are not among us to relate their experiences and pass them on for future generations.

"Doc" Franklin, however, chose to put down his memories so people can understand the hardships he and his comrades experienced during combat in the European Theater. A member of the 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, Franklin witnessed some of the fiercest fighting of the war. From Sicily to Germany, he treated wounded soldiers from his unit and in the process was awarded two Silver Stars.

Franklin's writing is similar to that of Ernie Pyle; he doesn't concentrate on the big picture but rather focuses on the common infantryman. He shares their comical escapades as well as some touching moments when a fellow soldier is killed or wounded. His vignettes will help the reader understand what being in war is all about—the laughs, the pain, the sorrow, and, most important, the pride of having served.

Jeff Shaara's Civil War Battlefields: Discovering America's Hallowed Ground, by Jeff Shaara, Ballantine Books, New York, 2006, 270 pp., illustrations, maps, $18.95, softcover.

Jeff Shaara, a highly respected Civil War historian, has written a new book taking the reader through 10 of the most important battles of that terrible conflict. Beginning with Shiloh in April 1862 and ending with Petersburg in 1865, Shaara gives a brief synopsis of each battle entitled "What Happened Here," then explains the significance of the action in a brief section called "Why Is This Battle Important?" He also relates some interesting facts in "What You Should See Here" for anyone who wants to visit the battlefields today.

The book could also serve as an indispensable classroom tool. Shaara's easy approach to the subject should relate well to high school students studying the Civil War. His descriptions of the battlefields and the lesser known facts surrounding the campaigns are imaginative and enjoyable to read.

Proceeds from the book will be donated to various groups attempting to preserve many of the "shrinking and endangered historical sites" across America.

"In the end," Shaara writes, "I'm simply hoping that this book may inspire more parents to lead their children across some extraordinary piece of ground. Perhaps *their* lives will be changed as well."

Genghis Khan's Greatest General: Subotai the Valiant, by Richard A. Gabriel, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2006, 164 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, index, $14.95, softcover.

ONLINE ARCHIVE OF MILITARY HISTORY

The Internet is a vast resource for information on almost any subject. Type an obscure name or place into the Google search engine and hundreds of hits will show up on your computer screen. When it comes to all things historical, MagWeb (www.magweb.com) is the go-to site for a comprehensive archive of articles from over 150 magazines, newsletters, and other publications. Whether you are looking for information on an obscure battle, a specific weapon, or military tactics, you are likely to find it among MagWeb's 50,000 fully illustrated articles. Collectors of historical miniatures or war toys and war gamers will find much of interest to them on this site. Among the publications represented, some are current issues while others are no longer published and thus are unavailable anywhere else. Each month, more than 26 complete issues are uploaded to the site.

MagWeb was launched in 1996 with 200 articles from eight publications. Ten years later it has achieved its goal of being the largest online archive of military history and related magazines.

The greatest military leaders in the world are often fortunate to have a cadre of gifted people surrounding them to offer advice on military matters. One such person was Subotai, who advised Genghis Khan as he conquered most of the then-known world.

A brilliant tactician and military genius, Subotai developed the concepts of maneuverability, speed, envelopment, and other tactics that are common practice in today's military. Little, unfortunately, is known of him with the exception of brief outlines and sketches from his life in other books.

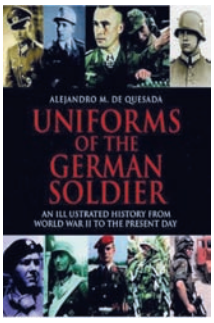
Author Richard A. Gabriel has done painstaking research to uncover as much as possible concerning this intriguing individual. A person who lived to the ripe old age of 73 and "had conquered thirty-two nations and won sixty-five pitched battles," Subotai lived a truly remarkable life.

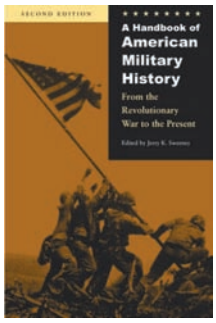
The Few and the Proud: Marine Corps Drill Instructors in Their Own Words, by Larry Smith, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2006, 325 pp., illustrations, $26.95, hardcover.

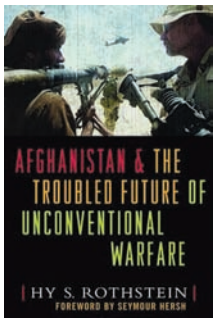
Ask any former Marine about his drill instructors, commonly referred to as DIs, and he will proceed to tell you some of the most outlandish tales imaginable. And they are probably all true. The Marine DI is a larger-than-life figure. He has the awesome responsibility of taking 80 raw recruits and making them Marines in a mere 12 weeks. Whether his drill field is San Diego, Calif., or Parris Island, SC, it makes no matter; his job is arguably the most important in the Corps. In this book, the words of DIs are brought to the printed page as some of the legends are interviewed by author Larry Smith. This book is a must-read for all former Marines or for anyone who is entertaining thoughts of enlisting. The unforgettable "Smoky the Bear" cover, worn by all DIs, still strikes fear in the hearts of those who stood in the yellow footprints at either Marine Corps Recruit Depot. As a former Marine, I know it can still send chills up and down my spine.

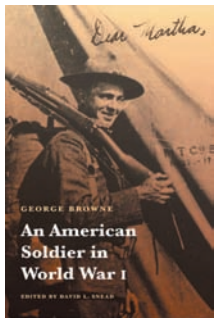
Uniforms of the German Soldier: An Illustrated History from World War II to the Present Day, by Alejandro M. De Quesada, MBI Publishing Co., St. Paul, MN, 2006, 223 pp., illustrations, bibliography, glossary, $34.95, hardcover.

The German Army uniform has undergone some radical changes since the end of World War II. From their distinctive helmets (that the U.S. has adopted as well) and jackboots, to the modern-day red berets, the uniform for the German soldier has changed dramatically. Ale-









jandro M. De Quesada has compiled 40 beautiful color photographs and another 160 black and white prints to illustrate the transformation, from the end of World War I until the present day. Every picture is accompanied by a thorough caption that describes the uniform with its medals and insignia. This coffee table book is a must for the any World War II aficionado who has a keen interest in this aspect of military history.

A Handbook of American Military History: From the Revolutionary War to the Present, 2nd Edition, edited by Jerry K. Sweeney, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2006, 383 pp., glossary, index, $19.95, softcover.

For anyone who is doing research on American military history, or is an avid reader of the subject, no library is complete without reference books. Jerry Sweeney's newest edition begins with the birth of the United States of America and ends with today's war on terrorism. He chronologically takes the reader through the important aspects of our nation's military past. The author categorizes each specific period and offers a brief description of the people and the events that shaped that era in U.S. history. In what he refers to as the "Asymmetric Period, 1995-2004," the book offers a comprehensive reading list dealing with "Military Transformation in the Post-Cold War World" to the more recent accounts of the current Gulf War.

Afghanistan & the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare, by Hy S. Rothstein, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2006, illustrations, notes, index, $26.95, hardcover.

"The smaller the unit the better its performance," said T.E. Lawrence, also known as Lawrence of Arabia, legendary British Army officer in World War I. This is a fitting quote to start this book because author Hy Rothstein knows something about small units. A graduate of West Point and a Special Forces officer, he gives the reader an in-depth look at the methods the United States is currently using to engage terrorists in Afghanistan. He contends that the initial phase of the war was fought in a conventional manner, which was a "masterpiece of military creativity." Now, however, the war should be handled in a more unconventional mode to track down and eliminate Al Qaeda members. Although the terrorists were disorganized after the overthrow of the Taliban government, the United States failed to deliver a knockout punch. Because of this, many of the terrorists have reorganized and adapted to the U.S. presence in the region. The author believes that Special Forces operatives from all branches of the military should be used more effectively if we are to achieve victory in the war on terror.

An American Soldier in World War I, by George Browne, edited by David L. Snead, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2006, 201 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, index,, $29.95, hardcover.

George "Brownie" Browne was inducted into the U.S. Army in September 1917 for service in World War I. During his 18 months away from home, he wrote more than a hundred letters to his fiancée, Martha "Marty" Johnson. These letters give the reader an excellent description of camp life and training stateside, the arduous sea voyage to France, and the bitter combat that ensued. Browne served with the 117th Engineering Regiment, part of the famous 42nd "Rainbow" Division, where he participated in numerous campaigns. At the end of October 1918, while taking part in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, he was wounded. Browne's letters display the thrill of seeing new lands, the fear of combat, and the yearning for the conflict to end so he could be home with his sweetheart. Unlike today, when service personnel have access to e-mail, Browne and his comrades had to wait weeks for a letter to reach them. He did survive the war and made it home and he and Marty were finally married in 1919 soon after his discharge. As editor David L. Snead writes, "While the letters reveal the war's strain on Brownie and Marty's relationship, their love never seemed to wavier." □

Aetius

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Heraclius began whispering in the emperor's ear that Maximus was plotting against him. But the emperor's rash act had put him in a vulnerable position, and there was little he could do. By murdering a popular general, he had turned both the public and the military against him. With few supporters left, it was only a matter of time until Valentinian suffered the same fate as Aetius. When Maximus learned of Heraclius's treachery, he dispatched assassins to murder both Heraclius and Valentinian. The assassinations took place on the Campus Martius in full view of Valentinian's guards. Instead of rushing to stop the murder of their emperor, the guards merely watched as Valentinian was stabbed to death. In one of history's greatest ironies, one of the assassins was a Hun who had sworn to avenge the death of Aetius. The Roman world had truly come full circle.

With Aetius dead and the emperor slain, the Western Roman Empire was a tempting target for foreign invaders. Maximus attempted to seize control of the empire, but his rule was short lived. A few months after he took the throne, a massive Vandal fleet descended upon Rome. Chaos engulfed the empire and Maximus was cut to pieces by his own guards. The Western Roman Empire lived on under barbarian domination for another 21 years until Germanic king Odoacer finally put an end to the farce in 476 AD.

What would have happened if Aetius had survived? Would the wily general have been able to repel the Vandal invasion? Would he have used his influence to put his son on the imperial throne, or perhaps even seized the throne for himself? Would the Western Roman Empire have survived, or was its fall inevitable? In the end, it is unknowable. Aetius, more than any other figure of the late Roman period, was a product of his age. Half-barbarian, half-Roman, he straddled the line between the old world and the new. Because of his unique upbringing, he had personal and political attachments on both sides of Rome's borders. For much of his life, he defended the empire to further his own ambitions. Although he was cold-blooded in his pursuit of power, he ultimately needed Rome as much as she needed him. In an era of unprecedented danger, Aetius used all his considerable talents to keep the wolves from Rome's door. If the empire had included more men like him, perhaps he would not have been "the last of the Romans." □

militaria

Continued from page 23

The coat of arms he sketched consisted of a shield with a key at the top to symbolize prison security. Under the key was the scale of justice dominating a broken Nazi eagle at the bottom surrounded by red flames. Andrus's insignia was used later in various ways—from helmet decals, shoulder patches, and DUIs to the official IMT letterhead and printed court flyers. The 6850th coat of arms was eventually accepted as an official symbol of the IMT and almost continually employed throughout later trials. The characteristic white helmets were implemented only during the first court case. Soldiers visible in period photos from subsequent trials apparently did not follow Andrus's courtroom fashion, but wore all sorts of uniforms and helmets in various colors and markings. Another set of pictures from the first trial shows guards watching the 21 condemned Nazi leaders in the prison area. These pictures, many of them close-ups, reveal blue or green helmets, some with the decal of 26th Infantry Regiment applied to the side.

Other photos from the period show the use of either decals on both sides of the white helmet liners or a complete lack of any markings. There is no indication in any documents or photos that a single metal DUI was attached via insignia eyelet on the front of the helmet liner, or that a single decal was applied there. Perhaps this was a postwar invention of some creative veteran or collector. One thing to consider is the fact that the DUIs were made of soft metal with colored enamel, and therefore were unable to bend easily to the curve of the helmet without cracking the enamel. Based on the manufacturer's markings, it is likely that the decals, DUIs, and shoulder patches were all manufactured in occupied Germany, most likely in the Nuremberg area. It would appear that only the officers wore the patches and the DUIs. All courtroom security guards held onto their old unit badges.

Although I can't be sure who the exact owner of my white helmet was, I am still convinced that it is a rare and unique item that carries more than mere elite unit markings. It is an object of historical importance with a fascinating story behind it and, as such, will remain forever in my collection, hopefully to be passed down to another generation. And as in all great stories, there is a twist at the end—the young Army photographer who took of most of these pictures is Raymond D'Addario, who lives only 10 minutes from my home. But that's a story for another time. □

Weapons

Continued from page 15

Bermuda Hundred with City Point and the western battlefields). No major battles took place at the landing, but skirmishes were all around. At Port Walthall, Baylor's Farm, and a number of other places in the area, shots were exchanged and men killed. By the end of July 1864, 32 men had been killed and 107 wounded in the areas surrounding Broadway Landing. Even with all the nearby carnage, Broadway Landing had one more challenge—protecting the Appomattox River. Grant had already laid mines in the river, but they were not enough to stop crafty Confederate ironclad commanders, whose attacks became increasingly frequent along the James and Appomattox as the South's military condition became dire. The final act of desperation came on January 30, 1865, when a Rebel ironclad advanced as far as Broadway Landing before it was forced back by a hail of gunfire from Union gunboats. This was the last major Confederate attempt to infiltrate Petersburg.

Although Broadway Landing had done its job admirably, its usefulness was coming to an end. The siege depots of the Union Army had exploited the enormous advantage the Union had in supplies, and the Confederate defenders inside Petersburg were wearing down. Finally, after 10 months of hard fighting, Union soldiers broke through and took the town. On the same day that Richmond was captured by the Union troops, April 2, 1865, the siege depot at Broadway Landing ended its operation. Because the siege was over, the landing was no longer needed. The troops soon cleared out, with the last soldiers leaving on May 1 for Drewry's Bluff. As his last act as commander of the Landing, Abbot asked Grant to keep the pontoon bridge at the landing for the townsfolk to use. Grant refused, and an 1866 map of the area shows the town and surrounding area with no surviving pontoon bridges.

With the end of the war came the end of an era. The town welcomed back it long-lost citizens, but returning residents found Broadway Landing much changed from its use as a supply depot. The pontoon bridge was gone, and the church that had made Broadway Landing a major center of Prince George County was never mentioned again by any source. The town persevered into the 20th century, ceasing to exist by 1935. Today, the remains of Broadway Landing lie beneath what is now Atwater Road, on the far west of the present-day city of Hopewell. □

Continued from page 19

nevertheless tasked the MIS to create a unit of "secret watchers" who would report any suspicious activities by members of the military. He also organized a number of security checkpoints at important government buildings around the nation and created a huge file on suspected German agents, including a large data base on American citizens who posed no threat to national security. And while he considered the growth of the APL "an extremely dangerous development," Van Deman secured a captain's commission in the Army for one of its national directors, Charles D. Frey, and put him to work in the MIS.

This quasi-official liaison was problematical from the start. "In the beginning," recalled Van Deman, "there was a little trouble in getting some of the members to understand exactly what orders meant, and some of the smaller groups did make more or less trouble in questioning the loyalty of persons in their communities. However, that was dealt with a pretty strong hand and within a short time such activities ceased." The APL link was of little practical use to the Army. Of some six million estimated investigations, the league failed to turn up a single German spy.

As part of his own efforts to locate enemy spies, Van Deman set up separate police units in eight American cities to look for potential troublemakers. These civilian investigators, drawn from the ranks of the New York City Police Department's Neutrality and Bomb Squad, worked out of a private office building designated the Personnel Improvement Bureau. Although intended originally as a guard force, the unit soon began screening military personnel and applicants for federal jobs. In addition, Van Deman organized an extensive counterespionage unit within the Army itself, with agents reporting directly to the MIS on suspected disloyalty and subversion in the ranks. To supplement this work, Van Deman created a new military organization, the Corps of Intelligence Police, which soon grew to 250 agents, including 23 former policemen from the New York field office of the Personnel Improvement Bureau.

More problematically, Van Deman established a parallel branch, MI-4, to conduct what he termed "counterespionage among the civilian population." The legality of the Army investigating civilians was dubious at best, and Van Deman commissioned a prominent New York attorney, George S. Hornblower, into the ranks to serve as general counsel for the MIS domestic spying program. Operating under the questionable premise that "the misbehavior, disloyalty, or indifference of native Americans is as important a material of military intelligence as any other," MI-4 was tasked with investigating labor unrest in the West, racial disturbances in the South and Southwest, and supposed foreign agitation in eastern cities with large immigrant populations. Field offices were established in New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Seattle, Pittsburgh, and New Orleans. To help with the investigations, Van Deman turned to the American Protective League and its brother organization, the Plant Protective Service. Another special unit, MI-10, dealt with censorship of prisoner of war mail, telegraph and telephone lines, radio activities, books, newspapers, and motion pictures.

Van Deman's very success in expanding MIS proved to be his undoing. In August 1918, the new Army Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Peyton C. March, ended MIS's subordinate role as a section of the War College Division and made it a separate division of the General Staff. Army policy required the director of a General Staff division to be a brigadier general, and Van Deman was still a colonel. He was relieved of his command and transferred to the American Expeditionary Force in France, where he was given the job of roving consultant for American and Allied intelligence officers. The grandiloquently named Brig. Gen. Marlborough Churchill was appointed his successor.

After handling security for the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Van Deman returned to the Philippines as commander of the 31st Infantry Division. He held various other commands before retiring from the Army in 1929 at the rank of major general. Settling in San Diego, he started a private counterespionage organization staffed by a number of men from the old APL. In time he was able to gather private information on almost 100,000 people, information he shared with both the FBI and the Office of Naval Intelligence. He also assisted the Los Angeles Police Department in rooting out suspected communist sympathizers among the general populace.

During World War II, Van Deman returned to Army intelligence, working with the War Department in a still-classified position. For his unpublicized services, he was awarded the Legion of Merit in 1946. The "father of military intelligence" died in 1952 at the age of 81, his legacy shrouded in secrecy and tainted by civil-rights abuses stemming from his investigation of private citizens during World War I. □