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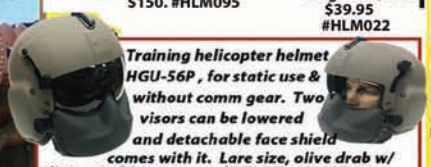

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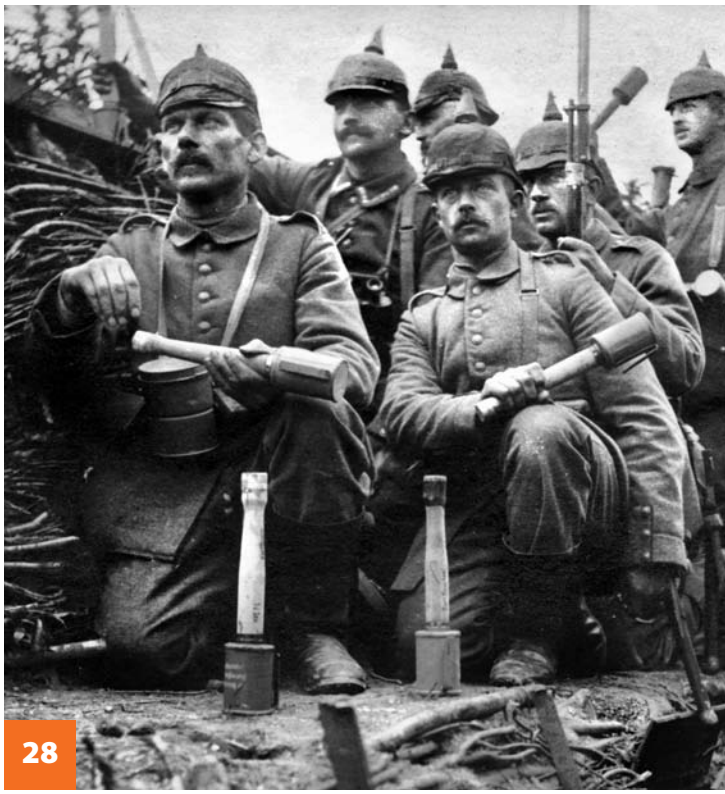

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COVER: Field Marshal Erwin Rommel scans the North African horizon somewhere between Tobruk and Sidi Omar in June 1942. See story page 48. Photo: Bundesarchiv Bild 146-1977-018-11A; Photo: Ernst A. Zwilling

COLUMNS

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EDITORIAL

If Lessons are Learned, 'Fighting the Last War' can Yield a Positive Result

An astounding range of human capacities can be found throughout military heritage—bravery, fortitude and sacrifice of ordinary men and women engaged in the often heartbreaking act of making history. Unfortunately, there is also ineptitude. It is there aplenty, and Americans unfortunately have to lay claim to their fair share. We need look no farther than the Father of Our Country, George Washington, whose first battle of more than a quarter hour was a day-long disaster.

Washington was 22 years old in 1754 and in co-command of 400 Virginia militia and regular British troops sent from the settlements to the upper Ohio River Valley to resist—as the British saw it—the encroachment of the French. A vanguard—Washington being many miles to the rear—had attempted to fortify the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongehela Rivers, but a large contingent of French had forced their withdrawal. Then a vanguard of the French approached Washington's small army. In a raid, Washington attacked them in a 15-minute fight that killed the French commander.

A larger French force then marched on Washington's command, which in late June retreated to a meadow in southwestern Pennsylvania and erected a stockade, which he called "Fort Necessity." Washington had poorly chosen the ground for his stand (he had done so before the arrival of his British counterpart). He picked the confluence of two creeks and, although he erected a palisade of stout logs and excavated outlying trenches, the site was surrounded by forest encroaching to within musket distance.

Washington was too far in advance of reinforcements and without substantial supplies. He expected the French and Indians to approach in the open field where he might conduct a traditional battle. Instead, when they appeared, they scattered throughout the woods and were quickly firing on the stockade from three sides.

Rain swelled the creeks, flooded the trenches, wetted the powder, and aggrieved the wounded. Throughout the day, the French and Indians fired from the higher ground and shelter of the woods, picking off all of the horses and cows and a growing number of men. Throughout this immensely long day for the young Washington, more and more of his men fell until a third were dead or wounded, all without telling countereffect on the French, the hope of reinforcement, or a considerable possibility of a sortie that would break the siege. He was caged, and when the French called out for his surrender, he and his British co-commander took it. The following morning, ironically the Fourth of July, he led what was left of his force out in disgrace. For much of the rest of his life, the date would remind him of a painful lesson.

A common rebuke of generals is that they "fight the last war." Sometimes we can be glad they did. Say what you will about George Washington's abilities as a military man, he surrendered only once in his lifetime. He never forgot it and he never was forced to do it again. In all of his major battles in the American Revolution, he got into some very sorry scrapes, but he always had a line of retreat and he always scooted out to fight another day. And in his two most telling victories—Trenton and Yorktown—he shaped the battlefield so that it was his enemies, not he, who had no lines of retreat.

Washington knew a lesson when he was presented one. He learned it and he retained it all his life.

—Brook C. Stoddard

MILITARY HERITAGE

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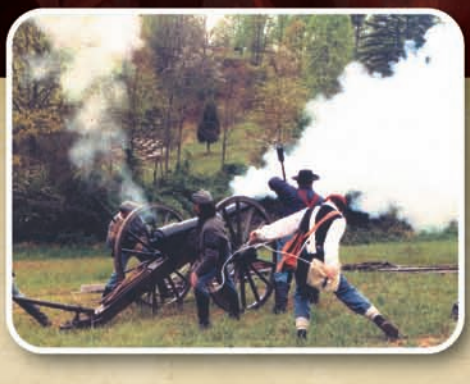

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TEAM KENTUCKY

Stalingrad Museum

Mariya Vasilyevna Oktyabrskaya and the T-34 medium tank 'Fighting Girlfriend.'

By Kevin Seabrooke

Mariya Oktyabrskaya was a Soviet Ukrainian tank driver and mechanic who fought on the Eastern Front against Nazi Germany during World War II.

Her courage and devotion to the Russian war effort would make her the first female tanker to be named as a "Hero of the Soviet Union," the U.S.S.R.'s highest military honor for bravery in combat. She was also awarded the Order of Lenin.

One of 10 children, Mariya Vasilyevna was born into a peasant family around 1905, in Kiat, Taurida Governorate, Russian Empire (Southern Ukraine today, near Crimea). After finishing school, she worked in a cannery in Simferopol and then as a telephone operator.

In 1925, she married a calvary school cadet, Ilya Fedotovich Ryadnenko. The pair adopted the name Oktyabrskaya—"October," an allusion to the *Oktyabrskaya Revolyutsiya* or October Revolution. By all accounts Mariya enjoyed being the wife of a Soviet Army officer and got involved in the "Military Wives Council" and trained as a nurse in the army.

"Marry a serviceman, and you serve in the army: an officer's wife is not only a proud woman, but also a responsible title," She reportedly said.

She also learned how to use weapons and drive vehicles. She even earned the honorary badge of "Voroshilov's Shooter," from a society formed by Marshal Kliment Voroshilov in 1932 to train civilians as a kind of civilian reserve force that would eventually grow to 41 battalions.

When the eastern front of World War II opened with Germany's push toward Moscow in June

Wikimedia

ABOVE: Mariya Oktyabrskaya became a tank driver and mechanic for the Red Army to avenge the death of her husband. She saw combat in several battles and was the first woman tanker named a Hero of the Soviet Union. She received the award postumously in August, 1944. TOP: A panoramic painting of the Battle of Stalingrad depicts Soviet soldiers and T-34 tanks advancing against the invading Germans. The five-month siege ended in February, 1943, with a German defeat and two million deaths. Mariya Oktyabrskaya would see her first combat that October in Smolensk.

All: Wikimedia

1941, Mariya was evacuated to Tomsk in Siberia, where she again worked as a telephone operator.

Two years later, the news came that her husband had been killed fighting the Germans near Kyiv in August 1941.

Enraged, she was determined to fight the Germans to avenge her husband's death. She went to the enlistment office and requested to be sent to the front, but was rejected. She was deemed unsuitable for combat because she had spinal tuberculosis, also known as Pott's disease, which can lead to the collapse of the vertebrae.

She sold all of her and her sister's possessions to donate toward the building of a T-34 tank for the Red Army. With whatever savings benefits she had as the widow of a regimental commissar, along with embroidery work she did on the side, she reportedly managed to raise 50,000 rubles, which she donated to the national defense fund.

She then reportedly sent a telegram to Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin expressing her desire to avenge her husband by killing "fascist dogs" and asking to be allowed to drive the T-34 medium tank she would call "Fighting Girlfriend" (Боевая подруга). Perhaps thinking it was good propaganda, the State Defense Committee agreed to this.

By this time, Oktyabrskaya was 38 years old. She enrolled in a new five-month tank training program at Omsk Tank Engineering Institute immediately after the donation. Before this, manpower shortages had meant that most tank crews were rushed straight to the front line with minimal training. She was then posted to the 26th Guards Tank Brigade, part of the 2nd Guards Tank Corps, as a driver and mechanic

Though women made an enormous contribution to the war effort for both the Axis and the Allies, relatively few were directly involved in combat. Nearly 200,000 women in Britain, mostly through the Auxiliary Territorial Service, were involved in many military roles traditionally held by men and were recruited as radar operators, as well as spotters on anti-aircraft gun crews. Neither the Brits, the Germans or the U.S. were comfortable with women pulling triggers.

American women also replaced men in manufacturing and many other roles during the war. In order to free up male pilots to fight overseas, some 1,100 civilian women also volunteered for the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) program to ferry planes—even the big B-26 and B-29 bombers—from factories to bases and between bases. The expectation was that WASPs would become an official part of the military, but the program was canceled after two years. (The WASPs were finally given veteran status in 1977, the same year the U.S. Air Force Academy graduated its first female pilots).

As in the Allied countries, German women worked in auxiliary positions: administration, manufacturing, agriculture, ferrying aircraft. It was prohibited to train women on the operation of guns, lest they become a "gun woman" flintenweiber—like the Red Army women depicted in official Wehrmacht propaganda as the "evil" other, hated by German soldiers as a challenge to the social and gender order.

In France and Greece, and everywhere the Nazis invaded, women played vital roles in partisan fighting and underground networks.

At first, communist Russia also prohibited women in combat. After Operation Barbarossa—the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union—began on June 22, 1941, thousands of women volunteered to fight, but were turned away. Women were only allowed to serve in medical and auxiliary units. There was one exception to this rule—Stalin's secret Order No. 0099, issued October 1941—permitting the formation of three women's air regiments by that December.

Much has been written about one of those three, the 588th Night Bomber Regiment that became famous as the "Night Witches"—a nickname given to them by the Germans (Nachthexen), who could hear the rush of air through the the struts of the obsolete canvas and plywood Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes, as the pilots cut their engines to glide over the target. Of the 95 women to earn the distinction of Hero of the Soviet Union, 30 were members of the women's air regiments. Though the Soviets would publicly deny that they were mobilizing women soldiers up until 1944, the Night Witches once flew 324 sorties in a single night and more than 24,000 combat missions over the course of the war.

ABOVE: The crew of the T-34 tank "Fighting Girlfriend." Mariya kept a photograph of her husband with her in the driver's seat. OPPOSITE: The "Fighting Girlfriend" at the moment of its transfer to the crew by the team of the Sverdlovsk bread and pasta plant. The tank was built at the expense of the plant's mostly female workers. RIGHT: A monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Mariya Oktyabrskaya in Tomsk, Russia.

By 1942, the Party Central Committee decided to allow women volunteers in combat, no doubt influenced by the fact that by then 4.5 million Soviet soldiers were killed, captured or missing. Ultimately, some 800,000 women served in the Red Army during the war, making up about five percent of Soviet Armed Forces. The majority of women serving at the front lines were medics and nurses. But by 1945, some 246,000 women were in combat roles as snipers, machine-gunners, partisans and even paratroopers. Nearly 200,000 women were decorated, including the 95 of them who received the Hero of the Soviet Union.

Also famous were the more than 2,000 Soviet women snipers, none more so than "Lady Death," Lyudmila Pavlichenko, who had 309 confirmed kills. Most of those came at the sieges of Odessa and Sevastopol in 1941-42. After she was wounded a fourth time, Lt. Pavlichenko was sent to the U.S. on a propaganda tour to drum up support for the Soviet Army fighting the Germans on the Eastern Front. On the trip she became the first Soviet citizen to visit the White House.

Women in tank crews were much less well known, though one, Aleksandra Grigoryevna Samusenko, actually commanded a T-34 tank. Another, Alexander(ra) Rashchupkina, posed as a man to serve as a tank driver from 1942-45. Her secret was only revealed when she was seriously wounded. There was a scandal, but Raschupkina received the Order of the Red Star as other medals.

Mariya had been the first woman graduate from the new tank training program, just ahead of Aleksandra Samusenko. By October she was already on the front lines of the Soviet's Western Front.

As the driver and mechanic of Fighting Girlfriend, Mariya shared the cabin with Commander Piotr Chebotko, gunner Guennádiy Yaskó and radio operator Mikhail Galkin.

She saw her first action in the city of Smolensk, along the Dnieper River on October 21, 1943. The Red Army had retaken the city, but there were still pockets of resistance. Mariya drove the tank throughout the intense fight in which she and her fellow crew members destroyed machine-gun nests and artillery, as well as any German soldiers they could find.

When her T-34 was damaged, Mariya jumped out to make repairs under heavy fire. Though she had disobeyed orders by doing so, she was promoted to sergeant. For her fellow crew members and any others who had thought Mariya had gotten where she was strictly as a propaganda stunt, there was no longer any doubt about her toughness or capabilities.

Just about a month later, Soviet forces took the town of Novoye Selo in the Vitebsk region of Belarus in a night battle on November 17-18. Mariya's reputation for toughness and courage grew after her tank was disabled by a German artillery shell to one of its tracks. She and one of the crew climbed down to fix the track while the rest provided covering fire from the turret. Repairs made, "Fighting Girlfriend" was able to rejoin its unit a few days later.

Her second round of mechanical repairs under fire did not rattle Mariya, who still burned for revenge against the Nazis.

She reportedly wrote a letter to her sister, exclaiming "I've had my baptism by fire. I beat the bastards. Sometimes I'm so angry I can't even breathe."

Two months later, on January 17, 1944, Mariya took part in another night attack, also in the Belarus region, in the village of Krynki near Vitebsk. She drove through German defenses, knocking out machine-gun nests and taking out defenders in trenches. Her T-34 reportedly took out a German self-propelled gun before, once again, it was hit in the tracks—this time by an anti-tank shell. Amid heavy small arms and artillery fire, Mariya characteristically jumped quickly out of the tank and made the repairs. But her luck had run out. She was knocked unconscious when shell fragments struck her in the head. She was taken to a Soviet military field hospital near Kiev after

the battle and then to a military hospital in Smolensk. She never regained consciousness. In a coma for two months, she died on March 15, and was buried with military honors at the Heroes Remembrance Gardens in Smolensk.

The crew of the "Fighting Girlfriend" kept fighting and made it to Victory Day on May 9, 1945. After the original "Fighting Girlfriend" was destroyed, the crew went through several replacement tanks —all with the same name as a tribute to Oktyabrskaya—until they reached the Baltic Sea near Königsberg at the end of the war.

In August 1945, Oktyabrskaya was recognized as a Hero of the Soviet Union. ■

Confederate Major John Pelham's flying battery made him a hero when he was only 23.

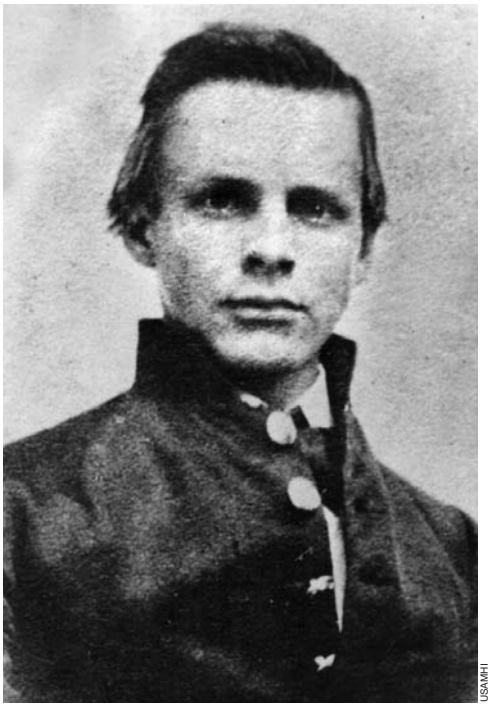
By Nat R. Louis

During the Battle of Williamsburg, Virginia, in May 1862, General Joseph Hooker's Union forces were in pursuit of the withdrawing Confederates. Although slowed by rain and mud, Hooker's troops attacked Fort Magruder, the strongest section of the Rebel lines. Lending support on the Confederate right was a mountain artillery unit that had been drilling for only three weeks.

The young leader of the battery, John Pelham, was complimented on his coolness under fire. Before the end of 1862, the planter's son from Alabama would be known as "The Gallant Pelham," and would redefine the concept of the flying battery for Confederate artillery.

Born in Benton City, Alabama, in 1838, Pelham was a descendant of the American painter Peter Pelham. His early years were spent like many Southern boys—school, horses, athletics, and exploring the outdoors. He enrolled in an experimental five-year curriculum at West Point in 1856. While there, he was considered the best athlete and was noted for his fencing and boxing. But he was especially remembered for his skill as a horseman, even drawing praise from the Prince of Wales, who visited West Point in 1860.

On April 22, 1861, within weeks of graduation, he resigned from West Point and entered Confederate service as a lieutenant and ordnance officer posted to Lynchburg, Virginia. It is said that he was



USAMHI

ABOVE: Pelham's penetrating eyes are caught on film in this remarkable image of the young warrior. TOP: Fearless although in an exposed position, John Pelham leads his men in bombarding the Union left at Fredericksburg. Painting by Don Troiani.

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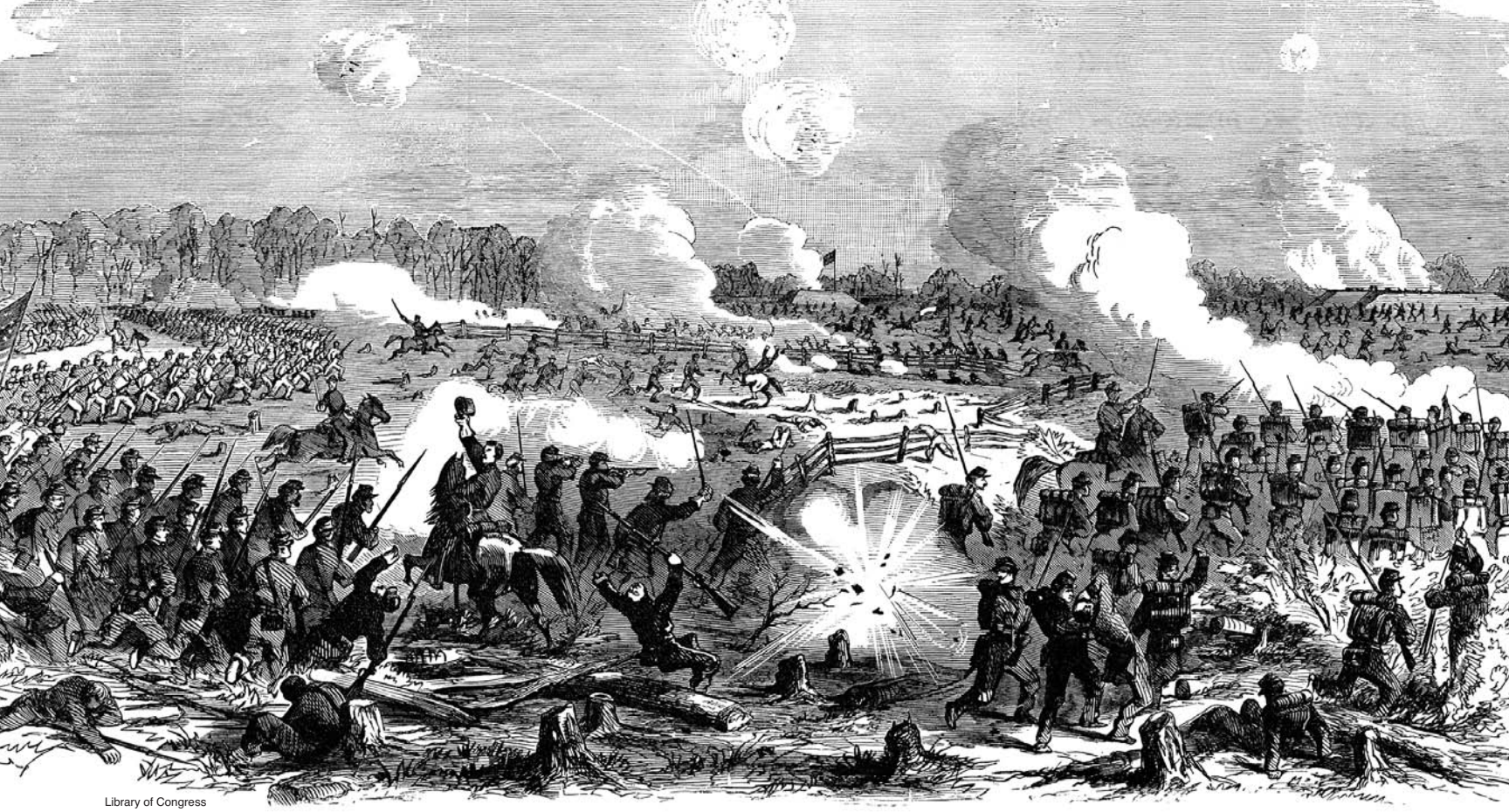

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The Battle of Williamsburg May,1862, depicted in this illustration from *Frank Leslie Famous Leaders and Battle Virginia Scenes of the Civil War*, published in 1896. It was here that the young artillery officer John Pelham first drew praise for his "coolness under fire."

able to get through the Union lines into Kentucky with the help of a woman in Indiana whose affections he won.

At the First Battle Of Bull Run Pelham's skills were noticed by Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, who immediately promoted him to captain owing to his vast knowledge of artillery tactics, at which he had excelled under Maj. Henry J. Hunt at West Point.

Pelham was with Gen. "JEB" Stuart's Horse Artillery during the battle of Gaines's Mill in June 1862 and was dispatched into the night to uncover a position from which he could sweep the James River Road. Stuart was anxious to know if Union Gen. George B. McClellan was extending his lines northward, and needed the information by morning. Before dawn, Pelham informed Stuart that the Union troops were near the famous Byrd mansion at Westover. It was dominated by a long ridge line called Evelington Heights. Pelham suggested that his artillery be placed on these heights. Stuart agreed.

Scattering some Union cavalry already on the spot, Pelham positioned his lone gun on the heights. With the cry of "Let them have it," the little howitzer barked and sent shells screaming at a group of unsuspecting teamsters, although with little effect. However, Pelham's barrage did give Stuart time to pass on information to Lee that the Union Army was camped under the heights adjacent to the river. Soon, Rebel sharpshooters situated themselves alongside the little gun to harass a Yankee advance forming on their flank.

Despite his heroics, Pelham was forced to flee when he exhausted his ammunition and a Union battery suddenly appeared east of Herring Creek. With Longstreet six or seven miles away, any attempt to hold the heights would prove futile.

Pelham was showered with praise by Stuart who wrote in his report: "The only artillery under my command being Pelham's Stuart Horse Artillery, the 12-lb. Blakely and Napoleon were ordered forward to meet this bold effort (at Gaines's Mill) to damage our left flank. The Blakely was disabled at the first fire; the Union forces opening simultaneously with eight pieces, proving afterward to be Weed's and Tidball's batteries. Then ensued one of the most gallant and heroic feats of the war. The Napoleon gun, solitary and alone, received the fire of these batteries, concealed in the pines on a ridge commanding its ground; yet not a man quailed, and the noble captain directing the fire himself with a coolness and intrepidity only equaled by his previous brilliant career … the Napoleon clung its ground with unflinching tenacity."

Upon learning of Pelham's action, General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson reinforced the Horse Artillery with several batteries of rifled pieces. From then on, it was Pelham's Flying Battery that made a name for itself. It was Pelham who cleared the way for Stuart's advance to White House Landing; Pelham who chased the USS *Marblehead* down the Pamunkey River; Pelham who challenged the Federals across the Chickahominy; and Pelham who, at Stuart's call, opened fire from Evelington Heights. The young officer was modest when presented to General Jackson, who gravely shook his head. Pelham bowed deeply and blushed as he was recommended for promotion to major by Stuart.

At the Second Battle of Bull Run, it was Pelham's three pieces of artillery that were sent for by Jackson and which saved the day for the Confederacy. For two-and-a-half hours, the artillery of both sides exchanged broadsides.

And so it was at the Battle of Antietam in Maryland. Although Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was cornered and eventually quit the field, it was Pelham's artillery that won the honors. Even though they were outranged, outgunned, and exposed to Union shelling, Pelham performed magnificently. A dominating hill on Jackson's left was considered necessary to hold the advanced line of battle. And Major Pelham was there with his Horse Artillery matching the Yankee guns, salvo for salvo.

On October 12, 1862, Stuart selected 1,800 of his most reliable cavalrymen for an incursion into Pennsylvania. Pelham was put in charge of the four guns of Stuart's Horse Artillery. When the raid was ready to get under way, he set two guns in front of the column and two in the rear. Upon their return from the Chambersburg raid, Stuart's gray riders confronted union horsemen on the road from Beallsville. Without hesitation, Pelham deployed a pair of his pieces and swung them into action. He saw a crest that overlooked not only the road, but all approaches to White's Ford, Stuart's avenue of retreat. Pelham unlimbered his Napoleon and covered Stuart's crossing. After all the riders were across, he did likewise. Once again, the Pelham demonstrated his swiftness and intelligence, his trademarks since the Battle of Williamsburg.

Near Union, Virginia, in November 1862, Pelham again distinguished himself by boldly advancing one of his howitzers beyond a point where Stuart could support him. The quick-thinking Rebel found a covered niche and commenced a bombardment on a column of Yankee cavalry, causing them to break into a headlong flight. Close behind, Pelham's mounted cannoneers picked up discarded equipment and other "booty" as souvenirs.

A month later, in December 1862, at Fredericksburg, Virginia, young Pelham distinguished himself again. With a Blakely rifle and his 12-lb. Napoleon, the indomitable Confederate set out for the intersection of the Richmond Stage Road. Though risky, from this vantage point he could let loose his artillery upon any troops moving against Jackson.

Pelham didn't have to wait long before a flanking party of infantry was spotted marching toward them. Excited at the prospect of engaging infantry, the Alabamian fired solid shot into the blue-clad ranks. But answering Union artillery crippled Pelham's Blakely. Left with just the Napoleon, the crew fired and reloaded it so fast that the Union forces thought they had encountered an entire battery of guns.

Impressed by Pelham's deed, Stuart nonetheless instructed his staff officer Maj. Heros Von Borcke, to tell Pelham to withdraw. Disregarding Stuart, the fearless Rebel told Von Borcke he could hold his position. As his men were killed and wounded, the dauntless major continued to shift his Napoleon, reloading until the Yankee attack seemed to lose its momentum. Stuart again sent word but, as before, Pelham maintained his post. Finally, out of shot, Pelham was forced to abandon his location. As Yankee rounds crashed all around him, Pelham backtracked to Hamilton's Crossing.

Peering through his field glasses, Lee asked to what battery that gun belonged. Hearing it was

Pelham's, the Virginian responded: "It is glorious to see such courage in one so young."

Bolstered by artillery from General A.P. Hill's command, Pelham hastily repositioned his Napoleon to further impede the Federal advance that was beginning to mass. At 1 p.m., the Union batteries launched a furious cannonade. Hill's 14 guns, coupled with the spunky little Napoleon, returned the fusillade. As the blue surge assaulted their lines, Pelham's guns on the right and Maj. Reuben Walker's pieces on the left ripped into the Yankee columns. Crossing their fire, the butternut cannons repulsed the Union attack. Word spread swiftly of the Alabamian's courage under fire and it was about then that he was christened "The Gallant Pelham."

During Stuart's Dumfries Raid later in the month Pelham, to the astonishment of all, drove his guns through the Occoquan River at Selectman's Ford which was considered by many to be impassable. Stuart heaped praise on his young major for keeping pace with his cavalry and many wondered if the bold Confederate could do no wrong. He pursued the enemy with his field pieces as if they were cavalry and others regarded him as a genius in the deployment of artillery.

Despite all the adulation, Pelham was modest. He never spoke of himself or his exploits and his eyes "gentle and merry … were lighted with friendship.…" He once confided in a friend that he "was not destined to be killed in the war." He was "tall and slender, beautifully proportioned, with golden hair, and dazzling blue eyes." Constantly admired by the ladies, Pelham was "as grand a flirt as ever lived."

When not with his beloved artillery, Pelham spent considerable time with Stuart at his headquarters. The two shared a strong friendship, with Stuart looking after the younger Pelham as an older brother would.

An avid reader, Pelham studied the Bible and other classics. His tent was next to that of William Blackford, Stuart's chief engineer, and the two enjoyed long conversations. Clearly Pelham was a rising star. Numerous people predicted the young Confederate would be promoted to lieutenant colonel and then to brigadier general by spring.

But as that spring dawned, on the morning of March 17, 1863, Stuart received alarming reports of large numbers of Union troops marching in the direction of Culpeper. Arriving at Stuart's field headquarters, near Kelly's Ford, Pelham waited for one of his batteries that had been temporarily attached to Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee. Together with Stuart and Lee, Pelham rode toward Kelly's Ford from the west, where Rebel pickets discovered the Federal forces. As the gray-clad sharpshooters started to harass the bluecoats, Pelham reconnoitered to determine an advantageous position for his artillery.

MUSEUM OF THE CONFEDERACY

Tall and lanky, 25-year-old John Pelham was a popular officer whose fearlessness and gunnery skills helped him rise swiftly to the rank of major under Gen. "JEB" Stuart's horse artillery.

Returning, Pelham saw the action was developing at a fast pace. Stuart was rallying his men and pressing them forward. When Pelham witnessed the 3rd Virginia Cavalry charging pell-mell at a stone wall that was acting as cover for the Union forces, the impetuous youth drew his saber and joined them. Cutting across the field to lead the assault, Pelham shouted: "Charge!" Finding an opening in the stone barrier, the butternut horsemen attempted to outflank their blue counterparts.

Pelham belted at the gate and cried encouragement to the cavalry as they galloped ahead. Waving his saber in the air, he stood upright in the saddle with a broad smile and a look of sheer ecstasy on his face as the Confederates began routing the Yankees.

An explosion caused Pelham's horse to buck, throwing the youth from his saddle. Lying motionless, face up, with the smile still on his lips, "The Gallant Pelham" was apparently dead.

When informed of Pelham's death, Stuart lowered his head and muttered: "Our loss is irreparable." But, upon closer examination, attendants discovered that Pelham's heart was still faintly beating. The major's body was quickly transported to the home of a woman he had wooed and to whom he was engaged, Bessie Shackelford in Culpeper. A trio of surgeons found that a tiny piece of shrapnel, no larger than the tip of a little finger, had entered through the back of his skull just above the hairline. It had done irreversible damage to the nerves.

Early in the afternoon of March 17, Pelham opened his eyes, drew a long breath, and passed away. It is now widely believed that if surgical aid had been given sooner, Pelham's life could have been spared.

At Hanover Junction, Major Heros Von Borcke met the train that carried Pelham's body and accompanied it on to Richmond. At the Confederate capital, Pelham's body was placed in a metal casket and laid in state. A small window was built into the top of the coffin so his admirers could view him one last time. Amid a multitude of flowers, the citizens of Richmond lined up to pay their final respects. A guard of honor was detailed to escort the remains back to his home state of Alabama.

Lee proclaimed: "I mourn the loss of Maj. John Pelham. I hope there will be no impropriety in presenting his name to the Senate, that his comrades may see that his services have been appreciated, and may be incited to emulate them." It was as a lieutenant colonel that Pelham went home.

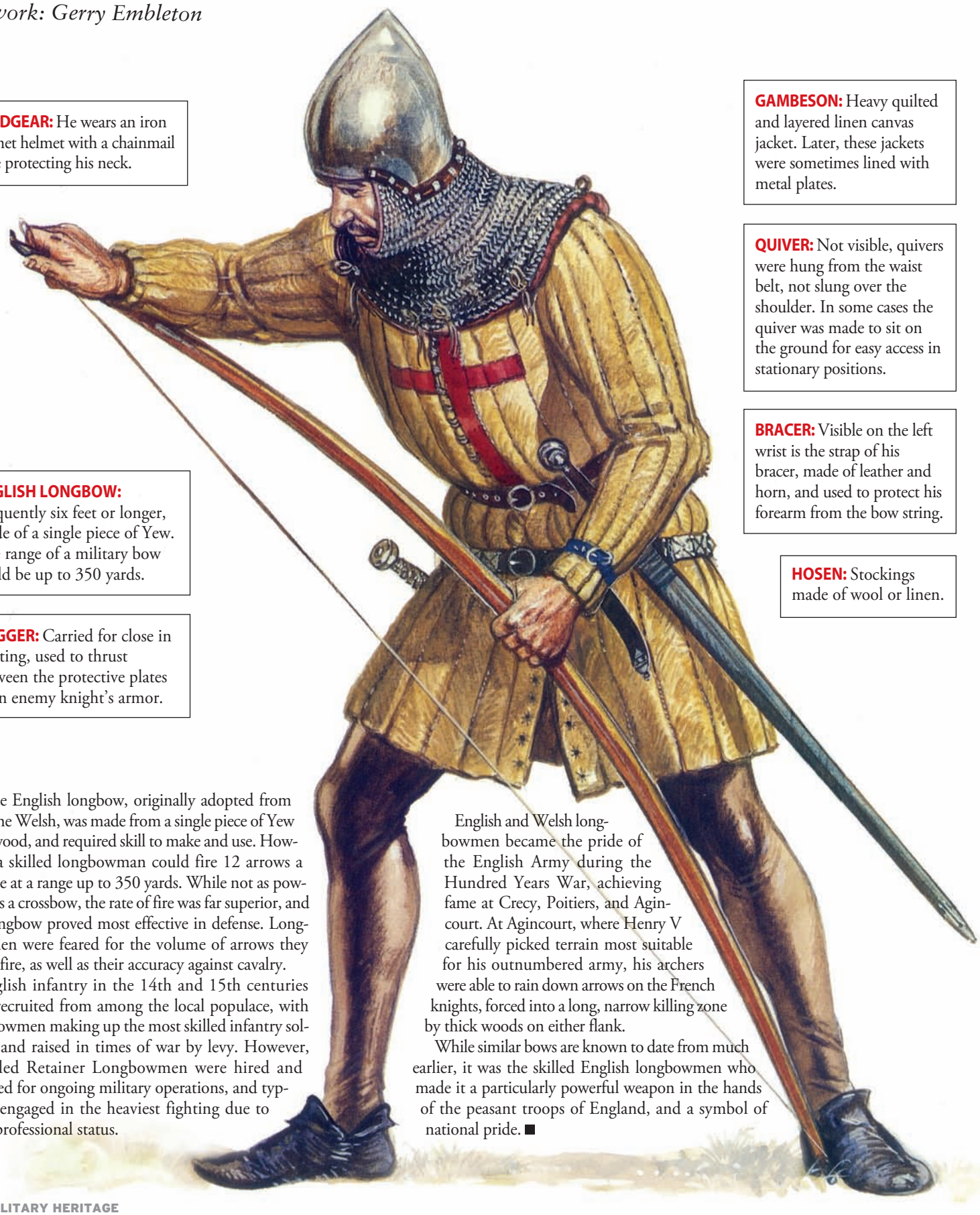
He was buried in Jacksonville, Alabama, southeast of Gadsden. At the graveside, a family member said: "I heard a voice near me say, 'made white in the blood of the Lamb' and I knew it to be the voice of his mother. The father and sister were crushed and stayed in their rooms but the spartan mother met her beloved son … and directed that he … be laid where the light would fall on his face when Sunday came."

In Stuart's general order to the division, announcing his death, no finer tribute could be more applicable to the gallant Pelham; it concluded "that he was calmly and recklessly brave, and saw men torn to pieces around him without emotion, because his heart and eye were upon the stern work he was performing."

In the ensuing years, Southern writers immortalized the heroic accomplishments of the brave, young Confederate major who improvised the use of artillery as an important supporting arm of the cavalry. ■

UNIFORM Retained English Longbowman, 1350-1425

Artwork: Gerry Embleton



HEADGEAR: He wears an iron bacinet helmet with a chainmail coife protecting his neck.

GAMBESON: Heavy quilted and layered linen canvas jacket. Later, these jackets were sometimes lined with metal plates.

QUIVER: Not visible, quivers were hung from the waist belt, not slung over the shoulder. In some cases the quiver was made to sit on the ground for easy access in stationary positions.

BRACER: Visible on the left wrist is the strap of his bracer, made of leather and horn, and used to protect his forearm from the bow string.

ENGLISH LONGBOW: Frequently six feet or longer, made of a single piece of Yew. The range of a military bow could be up to 350 yards.

HOSEN: Stockings made of wool or linen.

DAGGER: Carried for close in fighting, used to thrust between the protective plates of an enemy knight's armor.

The English longbow, originally adopted from the Welsh, was made from a single piece of Yew wood, and required skill to make and use. However, a skilled longbowman could fire 12 arrows a minute at a range up to 350 yards. While not as powerful as a crossbow, the rate of fire was far superior, and the longbow proved most effective in defense. Longbowmen were feared for the volume of arrows they could fire, as well as their accuracy against cavalry.

English infantry in the 14th and 15th centuries were recruited from among the local populace, with longbowmen making up the most skilled infantry soldiers, and raised in times of war by levy. However, so-called Retainer Longbowmen were hired and retained for ongoing military operations, and typically engaged in the heaviest fighting due to their professional status.

English and Welsh longbowmen became the pride of the English Army during the Hundred Years War, achieving fame at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. At Agincourt, where Henry V carefully picked terrain most suitable for his outnumbered army, his archers were able to rain down arrows on the French knights, forced into a long, narrow killing zone by thick woods on either flank.

While similar bows are known to date from much earlier, it was the skilled English longbowmen who made it a particularly powerful weapon in the hands of the peasant troops of England, and a symbol of national pride. ■

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Both: U.S. Army Air Force

Machine guns in the sky: The evolution of fighter aircraft as a weapons platform advanced rapidly during World War II.

By Mark Carlson

Since the early days of the Great War, when pilots and observers brought rifles and pistols into the skies to shoot at enemy observation planes, the world of air combat has been a rapidly changing arena of technology and innovation.

The first real fighters flew in 1915 carrying what is generally known as "rifle caliber" machine guns using .30 caliber (7.62mm) ammunition, much the same as a deer hunter. The light bullets were effective well into the 1930s against the unarmored and fragile planes of the time.

But by the beginning of World War II, the heavier construction of warplanes, along with their increased speed and power, necessitated a drastic change in military thought. What to arm an airplane with? What caliber? Should it be cannon or machine gun? What was the primary mission and target? How many rounds could or should a plane carry? What rate of fire, effective range and how many guns were needed?

All these and more questions were constantly under consideration by the War Department as the United States drew closer to war in Europe and the Pacific. Fortunately, a great deal of information on the aircraft armament of British, German and Japanese planes was available for analysis. A careful review of tactics and pilot accounts revealed that most air combat took place within a 1,000-yard range, and often at speeds of less than 300 mph.

With its huge Pratt & Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp radial engine, a bulky P-47D Thunderbolt like "Torrid Tessie," seen here flying over Italy in 1945, could carry eight Browning .50 caliber machine guns and 3,200 rounds—more than any other plan in the war. INSET: Armorers load .50 caliber ammunition belts into the four ammo trays of a P-47 Thunderbolt.

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ABOVE: At 34,000, the Messerschmitt Bf 109 was the second most produced fighter during World War II, just behind the Russian Ilyushin Il-2 Shturmovik (36,000). Me/ Bf 109 variants made up about 28 percent of Germany's Luftwaffe. Could be armed with two rifle caliber machine guns in the cowling, two 20mm cannon in the wings and sometimes a 15mm or 20mm cannon in the propeller hub. TOP: Japanese ace Hiroyoshi Nishizawa flies a Mitsubishi A6M3 Model 22 over the Solomon Islands in 1943. The Zero was typically armed with two 20mm cannons, two 7.7mm (.303-inch) machine guns and two 60-kg (130-lbs.) bombs.

On the Allied side, the British had been highly successful with the Hawker Hurricane and Supermarine Spitfire against the Luftwaffe. The Hurricanes were most often sent against the bombers during the Battle of Britain, and the Spitfires took on the fighter escort. While these were the two primary roles for fighters, both used essentially the same armament.

The tough Hurricane had one of the most varied weapon loads in history. More than a dozen variants were produced, most often carrying the Browning .303 machine gun, the same caliber carried in First World War biplanes.

The Hurricane MkIIA used 12 Brownings with an average of 300 rounds per gun. The .303's small size allowed for more rounds to be carried but the Hurricane was limited in range so a compromise between fuel and ammo had to be reached. Other models carried Hispano MkII 20mm cannon, as did the Spitfire. Col. Steve Pisanos, who had served in No. 71 RAF Eagle Squadron, commented on the Spitfire's guns. "I never had any victories in the Spitfire. But I destroyed a lot of locomotives. Those little .303 machine guns weren't much use but the cannons worked fine. They fired pretty slowly. I could hear the individual shots. We could select between gun and cannon."

On the Axis side, the Luftwaffe primarily used fighters for bomber escort and air defense. The Messerschmitt Bf-109s were often armed with two rifle caliber machine guns in the cowling, two 20mm cannon in the wings and sometimes a 15mm or 20mm cannon in the propeller hub. The wing cannon were largely abandoned by the time the Bf-109G was developed.

This made for a great deal of firepower when used against American and British bombers, particularly when they were unescorted. But the heavy punch afforded by the cannon meant less ammunition and slow rate of fire, so pilots were unable to rake their targets and do maximum damage. Dogfighting was most often done from close range, at rapidly changing angles, where light machine guns were often more effective than cannon.

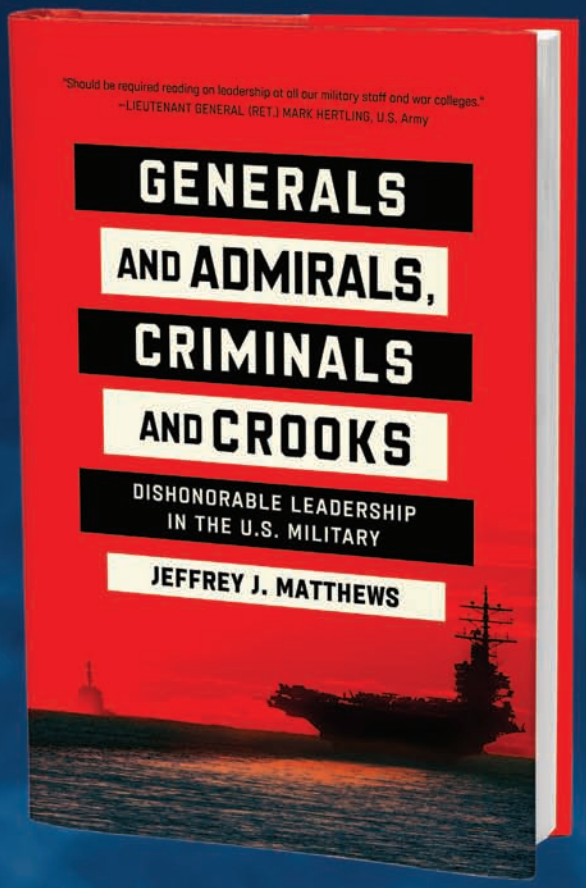
On the other side of the world, the Japanese were in a war of conquest deeply laced with the code of *Bushido*—the way of the Samurai. Pilots trained in the warrior code were to attack and bring down their opponents without mercy. Their targets were often other fighters encountered during the pacification of China and the Allies over the Pacific. Japanese pilots considered them a worthy enemy. Their fighters were the modern version of the Samurai sword, and to be used only for worthy opponents. But that same code was what made their planes extremely vulnerable to enemy fire. The Mitsubishi A6M Zero was a light, highly maneuverable fighter with large control surfaces and low wing loading. But in the effort to reduce weight, the Zero—as with most Japanese front-line fighters and bombers—carried no armor or self-sealing fuel tanks.

A Zero could outrun any plane in the U.S. inventory in a dogfight but it was very delicate nonetheless. At altitudes above 15,000 feet the Zero's large wings and low power were a liability, resulting in less maneuverability. An American Naval aviator once observed that "trying to hit a Zero was like swatting a mosquito with a baseball bat. But when you hit it, the damn thing came apart. The trick was in hitting it."

The A6M's primary armament were two Type 99 20mm cannon in the wings and twin 7.7mm machine guns, again rifle caliber, in the cowling. The small caliber wasn't able to penetrate armor and often did little more than punch holes in a plane's skin. The cannons' heavy punch was offset by the limited ammo load of 60 rounds. On early A6M models the cannon barrels were cut short to minimize drag, diminishing muzzle velocity and range.

Saburo Sakai, Japan's fourth-ranking ace, commented on the cannon. "Our 20mm cannon were big, heavy and slow-firing. It was extremely hard to hit a moving target." Japanese pilots often used the Zero's superior maneuverability to rake the enemy with the 7.7mm machine guns—then strike with the cannon to score the kill. "Our opponents were tough," Sakai said.

American fighter doctrine intended to use fast and heavy planes in hit-and-run attacks. The method was originally developed by the Luftwaffe, in contrast to the Japanese preference for



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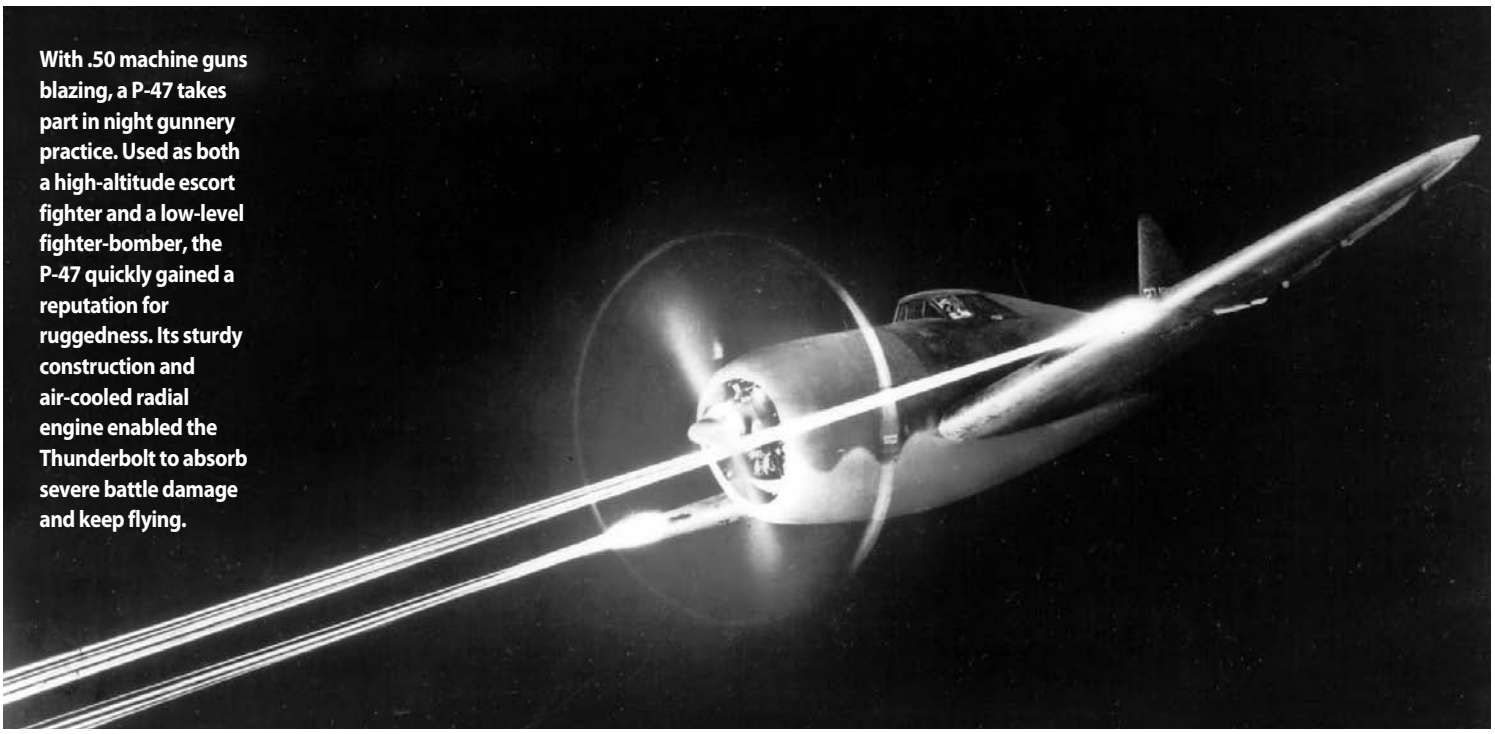

With .50 machine guns blazing, a P-47 takes part in night gunnery practice. Used as both a high-altitude escort fighter and a low-level fighter-bomber, the P-47 quickly gained a reputation for ruggedness. Its sturdy construction and air-cooled radial engine enabled the Thunderbolt to absorb severe battle damage and keep flying.

National Archives

dogfights. In fact, studies proved that maneuverability was the least important ability for a fighter to have. What was important was a high power-to-weight ratio, high-altitude performance and long range. Rugged construction was also a U.S. standard.

Last on the list of needed attributes was firepower. A fighter is a flying gun platform, the aerial equivalent of an old West gunslinger. Unlike Britain, Germany or Japan, the United States was not likely to have to contend with home defense from high-altitude, heavy bombers as neither Germany nor Japan possessed any.

The USAAF, Navy and Marines were looking at both air defense of bombers and offensive use of the proposed front-line fighters. Later, the concept of ground attack and infantry support was added to the equation. It came back to the choice between rifle caliber machine guns or explosive cannon shells. The smaller guns had a much higher cyclic rate, often more than 1,000 rounds per minute, but they also lost much of their killing power after a few hundred yards, particularly in a chase when the target was moving in the same direction. A machine gun weighed about 25 lbs; the large cannon, 200 lbs.

When all these factors were considered, some albeit in hindsight, American air policy chose a "middle ground" between heavy firepower with a slow rate of fire, and smaller caliber with more ammunition carried per gun. A series of single-caliber machine guns was a more effective means of filling the air with lead and steel than a mixed cannon/machine gun combination.

The caliber finally adopted was the .50 (12.7mm) cartridge, made in several variants, such as armor piercing, tracer, incendiary and jacketed lead. Developed during the First World War, long before it was recognized as the perfect caliber for air combat, the .50 was made for anti-tank use in an age when tank armor was far thinner than it would be a generation later. The steel-tipped armor-piercing round may not have had an explosive head but it was capable of boring holes in pilot armor and cracking engine blocks. A hailstorm of steel from six machine guns would be more effective than a pair of cannon with a slower rate of fire.

The incredibly versatile M2 Browning was developed by John Browning in 1918, just as the war in France was winding down. Air-cooled, the Browning was perfect for the role of a defensive and offensive air-to-air weapon. The robust machine gun was made in several variants and the one for aircraft was the ANM2 for "Army/Navy" use. It was officially designated the Browning Machine Gun, Aircraft, Cal. .50 ANM2 (Fixed) or (Flexible).

With a muzzle velocity of over 2,900 feet per second and an effective range of more than 2,170 yards, the M2 Browning was carried in nearly every single U.S. warplane from bombers to patrol planes to fighters. When fitted onto a flexible mount the ANM2 served as a defensive weapon. The aircrews of thousands of B-17s, B-24s, B-25s and other planes swore by their "wonderful fifties," often giving them pet names. The bristling black muzzles of Brownings in Liberators and Fortresses gained a healthy respect from Axis fighter pilots and it was only through constant innovation and determination they were able to approach the deadly envelope of flying steel.

Several American aircraft companies competed for the lucrative military contracts early in the war. This resulted in many weapon variants. Thus there were a few warplanes with armament that fell outside the norm.

The Lockheed P-38 Lightning's twin engines and central fuselage was uniquely suited to carry a 20mm cannon in the nose, surrounded by four Browning machine guns. Likewise the Bell P-39 Airacobra, having its engine mounted behind the pilot via a long driveshaft to the propeller afforded a space for a tank-busting cannon and two .50 caliber machine guns, along with four .30 caliber machine guns in the small wings. The P-39 was certainly the most eclectic of the fighter concepts. It is not surprising that it had little success in any theater other than as a Lend-Lease fighter for the hard-pressed Soviet Air Force in its desperate battles against the German invasion.

The typical, if such a word can be applied here, American fighter carried only one caliber of weapon. In multiple fixed wing mounts for fighters the ANM2 carried the fight to the enemy's planes, troops, trains, trucks and war industry. Having the same guns and calibers in nearly every single warplane made supply and maintenance far easier to manage.

The electrically-fired ANM2 was fitted with a lighter barrel than the standard M2, which increased cooling and cyclic rate. The ANM2

could fire, at maximum, 750-850 rounds per minute (rpm). The fighter's slipstream cooled the barrels. The cyclic rate varied from gun to gun, depending on barrel wear, lubrication and ammunition type. The lighter armor-piercing and tracer rounds slowed the rate of fire slightly.

Since much aerial combat took place in nearly subzero temperatures, electric heaters were fitted around the breech to keep the oil from freezing. On many fighters the inboard guns had blast tubes to minimize the muzzle flash and powder burns on the fuselage. The perforated sleeve of the .50, being lighter and shorter than those on ground M2 models, was the same as on a ground-mounted Browning .30 caliber.

Armorers loaded the guns and charged them—pulled the bolts prior to takeoff.

Colonel Pisanos, after his time in the RAF, joined the USAAF and became a double ace in the 4th Fighter Group.

"Both the P-47 and P-51 had a switch on the panel which electrically armed the guns," Pisanos said. "When we crossed into enemy territory the flight leader signaled, 'Guns up!' We never took off with them on."

Four, six and eight guns were the most common armament for the Navy and Army planes. Early on, four guns was considered adequate, but increased engine power allowed an increase to six in the case of the P-51 Mustang and F4F Wildcats. Early Vought F4U Corsairs also had four guns but this was quickly increased to six.

The design of each type of aircraft made it necessary to find solutions which allowed for the maximum firepower. In the case of the Mustang, the slim laminar-flow wing's profile was too low for the high breech mechanism of the Browning. North American's elegant solution was to tilt the guns almost 45 degrees to one side on its long axis—lowering of the gun's profile enough for it to fit inside the wing.

With its huge Pratt & Whitney R-2800 Double Wasp 18-cylinder radial engine, the beefy Republic P-47 Thunderbolt was able to carry eight Brownings and a total ammo load of 3,200 rounds, far more than any other U.S. or Axis fighter. Firing at about 12.5 rounds per second per gun—nearly 100 shells a second—the Thunderbolt could fill the air with steel.

"The P-47 was a fantastic ground-attack plane," Pisanos said. "Those eight guns just ripped apart anything they hit."

In every fighter the cartridges were fed from the ammunition trays along carefully placed belt feeds. Spent cartridges were ejected from the bottom of the breech and fell free from ports located on the underside of the wing.

Colonel Don Blakeslee, the C.O. of the 4th Fighter Group was learning to fight with the P-

51B Mustang after his Fighter Group changed over from the Thunderbolt. Pisanos recalled an encounter Blakeslee had with a Messerschmitt. "Me-109 pilots avoided making sharp right turns, because the aircraft would often tumble over and go into a spin. They usually made left turns while evading. Anyway, one day Blakeslee was behind a 109, and it dove to the left to evade. He stayed with it in the tight diving turn and hit the trigger. A few shots came out and the guns stopped. He tried again and again. Nothing. Of course the German got away."

Blakeslee returned to base and chewed out his ground crew. "They could hear him screaming in Washington," Pisanos chuckled. "Fighter Command and Materiel Command were called in to look at it. What had happened is that in a steep turn with many G's the gravity-fed belts were failing to feed the rounds. So that's when the Ordnance people designed an electrically-driven motor on the belts for the P-51 and P-47."

Despite Hollywood depictions, fighter pilots didn't have unlimited ammunition to waste—hosing it at a hapless Zero while maintaining a witty repartee with the doomed pilot. At most, depending on the aircraft, the total firing time was just over 30 seconds. This is based on the rpm of 750-850 at maximum sustained fire. However pilots most commonly fired in short bursts of a few seconds.

National Archives

For instance, the P-51D Mustang, carrying six Brownings, was loaded with 400 rounds for the four inboard guns, and 270 for the two outboards. The total load was 2,140 rounds. This was enough for 35 seconds. "We never used all our ammo in one long burst," Pisanos said. "We always tapped the firing button for a few seconds at a time. When you saw puffs of smoke from your hits, then you kept it up."

The ammunition was, from research the author conducted at the San Diego Air & Space Museum Archives, and interviews with fighter pilots, often a sequence of 1 Tracer, 1 Armor Piercing, 1 Incendiary and 2 Ball. While this varied depending on the fighter group/squadron protocol, the most common was to have a single tracer as every fifth round, providing a visible streak as an aiming aid.

"We didn't use tracers in the 4th Group," Col. Pisanos noted. "All our rounds were ball or armor-piercing. But a lot of other groups used them."

The range of the "kill zone" was a matter of personal preference. Some pilots preferred to have all the shells converge on a small area about a foot in diameter 1,000 yards away.

"My guns were aimed at about 500 yards," Pisanos said. "That was just about right for me. When I saw the target dead center in my gunsight ring I hit the trigger."

Others wanted a broader "basket," having some guns zeroed in at 500 yards and others filling a

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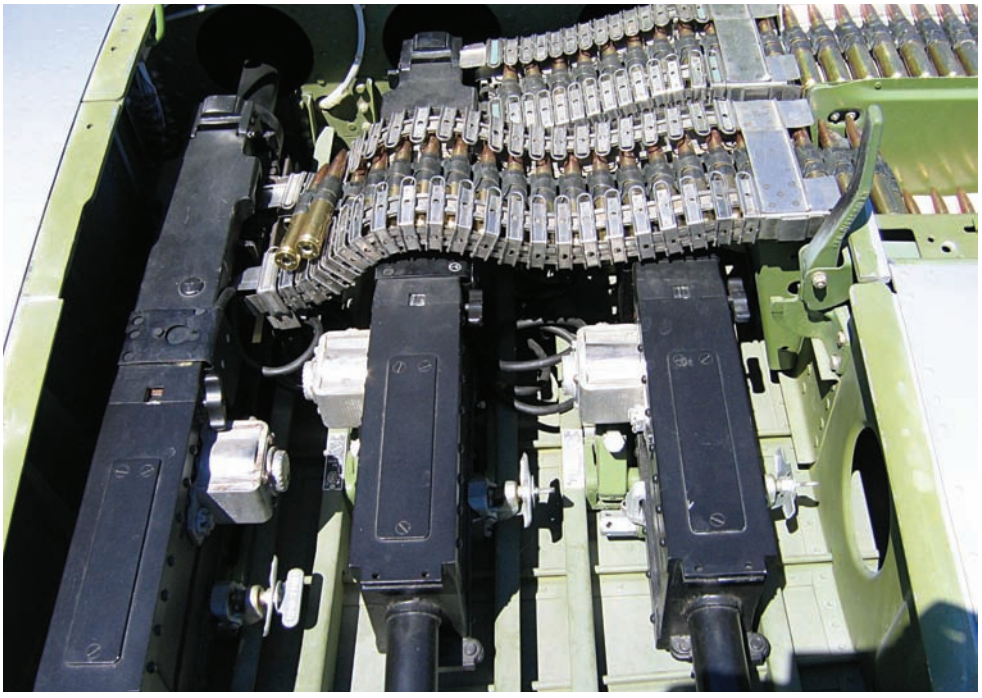


ABOVE: The P-51 Mustang had six 50-caliber (12.7 mm) AN/M2 Browning machine guns, three in each wing. OPPOSITE: A P-47 Thunderbolt from 406th Fighter Group silhouetted against an exploding ammunition truck as the pilot strafes ground targets in France on June 23, 1944.

narrowing cone out to 1,000 yards. It depended on the target, the plane's capacity and how the pilot fought. Some put themselves in close and hammered the enemy plane when it had no room to maneuver. This was the tactic employed by the top Luftwaffe ace, Erich Hartmann, who scored 352 victories. Surprisingly, Hartmann avoided dogfighting. The "hit and run" attack became U.S. fighter doctrine throughout the war.

The final outcome of the air war was decided as much by superior pilot training as advanced aircraft. But as far-reaching as those factors were, the standardization of armament greatly aided ultimate victory.

It would be easy to assume the era of the machine gun and/or cannon ended with the birth of the jet plane. But nothing could be further from the truth. After all, the North American F-86 Sabre carried the same armament into the skies over the Yalu River in Korea as its predecessor, the Mustang. Machine guns and cannon continued to be used well into the jet age, superseded only when the air-to-air missile became a reliable weapon. Even so, today's high-technology multi-million-dollar jets with sophisticated avionics and weapons still carry a gun. The Lockheed-Martin F-22 Raptor carries a 20mm M61 Vulcan rotary cannon with 400 rounds, just as the M2 Browning had in the 1940s. But that's where the comparison ends. The Vulcan is a "last-ditch" weapon, not the primary means of bringing down a foe. At the Vulcan's 6,000 rounds per minute, the ammo will only last five seconds. ■

Mired *in the* TRENCHES

BY VICTOR KAMENIR

"The Assault of Vermelles, 1915" by Georges Bertin Scott, a French war correspondent and illustrator for the French magazine *L'Illustration*, depicts a French infantry assault during Allied fighting around the mining village of Loos in Northern France. On September 25, the British and French made their largest assault of the war against well prepared German defenses.

The new U.K. volunteer army went into combat in great numbers for the first time at the Battle of Loos—and saw the first British use of poison gas.

A jubilant British populace joyfully greeted the declaration of war on Germany on August 4, 1914. "I remember when war was declared, going outside Buckingham Palace and cheering with all the crowds as the king and queen came out on the balcony and being frightfully excited and thinking it was splendid that we were going into the war and all the rest of it," recalled Londoner Angela Limerick.

While most expected a short, glorious conflict, some, like Colonel Knight, commander of the 1st Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, foresaw a different reality. "None of you men will come back nor the next lot nor the next after that nor the next after that again, but some of the next might," Private F.A. Bolwell remembered Knight greeting reservists reporting for active duty, "But we'll give those Germans something to go on with, and we'll give a good account of ourselves."

Dorking Museum

Hopes for a quick war died in the mud and trenches, which stretched from Switzerland to the English Channel by the end of 1914. Having captured large swaths of territory on the Western Front, Germany went on a strategic defensive in the West while concentrating its forces in the East, intending to crush Russia first.

Taking advantage of the Allied temporary numerical superiority, Gen. Joseph Joffre, Commander-in-Chief of the French General Staff, in conjunction with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) launched several unsuccessful offensives in the first half of 1915. In response to the severe losses suffered by the small professional pre-war British Army, Lord Herbert Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, launched a massive recruitment campaign to bring volunteers to colors. These "New Army" or "Kitchener's Army" volunteer divisions soon began arriving in France.

The failed offensives had also depleted British pre-war artillery ammunition stocks. The resulting "Shell Crisis" led to the creation of the Ministry of Munitions. During a conference in Boulogne in June 1915, British Minister of Munitions David Lloyd George and French Munitions Minister Albert Thomas concluded that any significant offensive would require at least 36 divisions advancing over a front of 25 miles supported by at least 1,150 heavy guns. Since required artillery, ammunition, and new divisions would arrive in the spring of 1916, the two ministers advocated postponing the offensive until then.

Undeterred by the shell shortage and objections by senior British officers, Joffre insisted on another push in the fall of 1915. In May an offensive had partially breached the German lines, leading Joffre to believe that a decisive breakthrough, followed by rapid exploitation by mobile reserves, could be attained by a greater application of force—one "Big Push." Although BEF commander Field Marshal Sir John French disagreed with Joffre, he was obliged to consent in the spirit of political cooperation.

Joffre planned two widely separated offensives: Champagne in the southeast and Artois in the northeast. It was essentially the same offensive as in the spring, but on a larger scale. Four French armies would carry out the main attack in Champagne. In Artois, the mining region of northeast France, the French Tenth Army would assault the Vimy Ridge sector south of Lens. The British First Army would attack along a six-mile stretch between the mining village of Loos (*Loos-en-Gohelle*) and La Bassee Canal.

After reconnaissance of the region, General Sir Douglas Haig, commander of the First Army, became skeptical of the location of the northeast offensive—several small villages, mines, slag heaps, railroad branches, and mining infrastructure dotted the area, leaving little room for maneuver. Instead, he proposed attacking north of the La Bassee Canal. Despite Haig's misgivings, he was overruled by French. The two had been good friends serving in India, where Haig loaned French a substantial sum to see him through financial difficulties. But now there was an undercurrent of animosity in their relationship.

The formidable German positions were an in-depth system of primary and fallback trenches, machine-gun nests, and extensive wire obstacles—all linked by communication trenches. Tunnels in the slag heaps held elevated observation and fighting positions. Fortified strongpoints (*stützpunkt*) bristled with machine guns overlooking the crater-pocked no-man's-land. Planes from the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) observed the Germans constantly improving defenses, including establishing second and third defensive lines.

The village of Auchy in the north and Loos in the south anchored the first German defensive positions. To the southwest of Auchy, on a slight rise, lay a powerful defensive works called Hohenzollern Redoubt (*Hohenzollernwerk*). Aerial photographs showed the redoubt as a spider web of

ABOVE: Germany infantry pose for a trench photo brandishing their "potato masher" grenades and "pickelhaube" leather helmets. The German "stick" style grenade was capable of being thrown somewhat further than the British "Mills bomb." The pickelhaube, like British headgear, offered little protection and was replaced by the "Stahlhelm" steel helmet beginning in 1916. The French replaced their cloth "kepis" with their distinctive "Adrian" steel helmets beginning in July 1915. OPPOSITE: A company from a Scottish Regiment parade in Dorking, south of London, prior to embarking for France. Despite severe losses during repeated offensives in 1914 and 1915, Britain was able to successfully enlist troops into the "New Army."

trenches set up for all-around defense. Behind it was a fortified pit head, Fosse 8, and a slag heap (*crassier*) called the Dump.

The second German defensive line ran from La Basse in the north to Hulluch in the center to the hamlet of Cité St. Auguste east of Loos. Northwest of Hulluch, in front of the hamlet Cité St. Elie, was a fortified node at The Quarries. The ground between Loos and Cité St. Auguste gently sloped up to 70 feet, with strong defensive points at Hill 70, Chalk Pit (a wood), and Puits 14bis (a coal mine). An interlinking chain of machine-gun positions on reverse slopes was placed out of direct observation and range of British field artillery. British observation aircraft reported wire obstacles up to 30-yards across in front of the second defensive line. Farther back, German artillery kept up harassing fire against British positions and roads to the rear of them.

The German Sixth Army under Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria faced the upcoming British onslaught. The VII Army Corps—14th and 117th Infantry Divisions—defended the German north flank between La Bassee and Hulluch. The IV Army Corps—7th, 8th, and 123rd (7th Royal Saxon) Infantry Divisions—held the Loos sector. General Haig's First Army consisted of I, III, and IV Corps, each of three divisions. Deployed north to south were the 2nd, 9th, and 7th Divisions of the I Corps and the 1st, 15th, and 47th Divisions of the IV Corps.

Haig assigned the III Corps to conduct a diversionary attack at the village of Bois-Grenier, some eight miles north of La Bassee, supporting the main assault by the I and IV Corps. He initially planned to advance with two divisions of each corps, keeping the third division in reserve. After Sir John French promised Haig reserves of two newly arrived New Army divisions, the 21st and 24th, from the XI Corps, Haig decided to attack with all six of his divisions in line. He asked French to subordinate the two divisions directly to him, but French believed they were best used the next day and kept the reserve formations under personal control.

Haig's modified plans called for his divisions to attack in successive waves of infantry brigades moving forward in timed intervals. One field artillery brigade would support every two infantry brigades, with heavy artillery conducting counter-battery fire. Once infantry went forward, artillery fire would shift deeper into German defenses. Estimates of guns available to Haig vary from 466 to more than 800. In any case, they were woefully inadequate for the task. The ubiquitous QF 18-pounder field guns and similar calibers focused on damaging forward German defense, especially the extensive wire obstacles. To try to disrupt German logistics, Haig had 24 heavy naval guns, adopted for field service and manned by Royal Marines, 24 massive BL 60-pounders and three BL 15-inch howitzers.

To compensate for the insufficient artillery, Haig was permitted to employ Chlorine gas for the first time in British military history. This was despite the outrage expressed by France and Britain at the German use of gas—resulting in more than 1,000

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: The famed Black Watch Regiment, with kilted machine gunners from the city of Dundee, Scotland, suffered more than 50 percent casualities at the Battle of Loos. TOP: In the distance the British 46th (North Midland) Division attacks the Hohenzollern Redoubt as a cloud of smoke and gas released from cylinders blows over the battlefield. This was the first use of poison gas by the British Army in WWI. The following year, artillery shells would be used to distribute gas from a greater distance.

deaths and some 7,000 injuries—at the Second Battle of Ypres on April 22.

For that task, special companies of Royal Engineers accumulated 5,100 metal cylinders containing 140 tons of gas. Since German gas masks were believed to be only good for about 30 minutes, smoke rounds would be intermixed with the gas to create an impression of a larger volume—an attempt to compel the Germans to wear their masks past the point of effectiveness.

In case of a breakthrough, two cavalry corps had orders to exploit the gap—but they had not been given any objective beyond advancing in the general direction of the Belgian border some 30 miles away. The date of the offensive, postponed several times to stockpile enough artillery shells for the task, was finally set for September 25.

The first phase would be a Royal Flying Corps bombing campaign. At this stage of the war, pilots had to fly low—exposing themselves to ground fire—to have any hope of a direct hit. As a result, bombing by either side caused little damage.

The primary role of the RFC was photo reconnaissance and artillery spotting utilizing wireless communications. Superior German Fokker fighter planes, called the "Fokker scourge" by the British—firing synchronized machine guns through the propeller arc—posed a significant

Imperial War Museum

British troops advance to the attack through a cloud of poison gas as viewed from the trench which they have just left: a remarkable snapshot taken by a soldier of the London Rifle Brigade on the opening day of the Battle of Loos.

threat to British planes. Bad weather hampered aircraft performance on both sides.

The Allied preparations did not escape notice by German intelligence. British prisoners reported heavy artillery arriving at the front, and work on saps extending into no-man's-land was observed from German positions. By September 21, when the British commenced preliminary artillery bombardment, Prince Rupprecht was convinced that an attack was imminent. However, he expected the main allied push to come from the French Tenth Army in the area of Souchez and the Vimy Ridge.

Despite prodigious shell expenditure, German trenches and wire obstacles remained largely intact. The four-day artillery barrage showed the Germans where the new Allied offensive would occur—only the date was unclear. Haig anxiously monitored weather reports, fretting whether there would be sufficient wind in the morning of September 25 to carry gas toward German trenches. The evening before, he received a forecast of adequate wind conditions and gave final approval. Overnight, work parties removed overhead cover from saps and linked them by trenches at the ends closest to German positions.

While those preparations were being made, Sir John French moved the advance party of his headquarters from St. Omer to Chateau Philomel outside Lillers, some 15 miles behind the British front lines. Until his full headquarters were in place, French's only means of communication was a civilian telephone system. At the same time, French ordered the 21st and 24th Divisions, followed by the Guards Division, to move to Noeux-les-Mines and Beuvry, less than 10 miles behind the front lines, where they arrived exhausted around 6 a.m. the following day.

In a light drizzling rain at 2 a.m. on September 25, British infantry brigades began moving from the rear trenches to the jump-off positions in the sap trenches. Clutching their bayonet-tipped rifles, the men anxiously watched Royal Engineers make final adjustments on the gas cylinders. Narrow lead pipes, held in place by sandbag revetments, snaked over parapets toward the Germans from metal cylinders dug in vertically in the trenches.

At 5:50 a.m., Royal Engineers opened the stopcocks on Chlorine cylinders. At the same time, British artillery increased the fire tempo as the wall of yellow-greenish gas up to 80-feet high slowly drifted toward German positions. The gas release signified to the German command that an attack was imminent, and defenders rushed to man the trenches. German artillery came alive, raining shells on the British lines to disrupt the attack.

In the area of the IV Corps, the wind largely pushed the gas cloud forward while barely moving or blowing back toward British positions in the I Corps sector. "At 6:20 a.m., the wind changed slightly, and the gas and smoke began to drift back. The alarm was given, and gas helmets were at once adjusted," remembered 2nd Lt. Sidney Major from 1/18th London Irish Rifles, "A few men, who were not quick enough in adjusting their masks, fell to the floor of the trench, writhing and choking in an agony of suffocation as the chlorine worked on their lungs."

At the 6:30 a.m. H-Hour, long whistle blasts sent leading echelons of gas-masked British infantry over the top from sap trenches. On the far left of the I Corps, the attack of the 2nd Division quickly stalled in the face of heavy German machine guns and artillery fire.

The 9th (Scottish) Division advanced in the center of the I Corps against the heavily fortified Hohenzollern Redoubt. Although taking withering fire, the leading Scottish battalions leaped into German trenches. With bayonets and hand grenades, the Scots overran the redoubt against determined German opposition around 7 a.m. and continued to Fosse 8 pithead. Reserve units had to run the gauntlet of flanking fire from a German stützpunkt called Mad Point just outside of Auchy, and the 8/Black Watch Regiment took

The Stapleton Collection / Bridgeman Images

particularly severe casualties.

One battalion, the 8/Gordon Highlanders Regiment from the 26th Brigade, penetrated 1,000 yards farther to take The Dump slag heap by 8 a.m. At the cost of the 11/Royal Scots Regiment decimated by machine gun fire, the 27th Brigade moved up to support what appeared to be a breakthrough.

On the left flank of the 9th Division, the wind blew the gas back to the British lines and being heavier than air, it settled into the trenches. Cylinders destroyed by German artillery fire flooded the area with more gas, incapacitating hundreds of Scottish infantrymen. "Piper Daniel Laidlaw, King's Own Scottish Borderers, seeing that his company was somewhat shaken from the effects of gas, with absolute coolness and disregard of danger, mounted the parapet, marched up and down, and played the company out of the trench," reported the *London Gazette*, "The effect of his splendid example was immediate, and the company dashed out to the assault. Piper Laidlaw continued playing his pipes till he was wounded."

When the 28th Brigade pushed into the open through the gas clouds, it was devastated by machine gun fire and thrown back. Only some 70 men from the 6/King's Own Scottish Borderers Regiment made it back to their trenches unscathed. Another attempt by the 28th Brigade at noon similarly failed.

In the sector of the 7th Division, "…the gas went whistling out, formed a thick cloud a few yards off in no-man's-land, and gradually spread back into our trenches. The Germans, who had been expecting gas, immediately put on their gas helmets…," remembered Lt. Robert Graves of Royal Welsh Fusiliers, "Then their batteries opened on our lines. The confusion in the front trench must have been horrible; direct hits broke several gas cylinders, the trench filled with gas, and the gas company stampeded." More than 100 men from the 1/South Staffordshire Regiment were incapacitated before the battalion left its trenches.

Machine guns reigned supreme over the battlefield. Robert Graves saw a lieutenant urging his platoon to continue the advance. When the men did not respond to his command, the lieutenant shouted, "You bloody cowards, are you leaving me to go alone?" His wounded platoon sergeant reportedly replied, "Not cowards, sir. Willing enough. But they're all f**king dead."

Two battalions, the 1/South Staffordshire Regiment and the 2/Royal Warwickshire Regiment, suffered 70 percent casualties before coming to grips with the Germans. One horse artillery battery was deployed forward of British trenches, and two field artillery batteries were set up immediately behind the line to support the advance with direct fire. By 9:30 a.m., the 7th Division breached the first German line and pushed to The Quarries northwest of Hulluch, encountering uncut wire in front of the second German trench line. While the men with wire cutters struggled to cut their way through the obstacles, German machine gun fire rained on soldiers pinned down in the open.

Gas drifting into British trenches delayed the 1st Division on the left flank of the IV Corps. In its sector, German wire remained largely intact, and the British suffered heavy casualties while attempting to break through. By 7:30 a.m., the smoke and gas cleared, and German artillery and machine-gun fire raked the exposed British troops. Suffering heavy losses, the 1st Division reached the midpoint between the German lines by 9 a.m. but could not advance farther.

In the center of the IV Corps, the gas was slow to advance and even blew back into British positions, causing casualties among the advancing troops of the 15th (New Army Scottish) Division. As the men emerged from the gas cloud, German machine-gun fire scythed into them, causing heavy losses. Pressing forward, some Scottish battalions wearing their distinctive kilts breached the first German defensive line and entered Loos from the north. In house-to-house fighting with bayonets and hand grenades, the 15th Division cleared Loos by 8 a.m. Heavy officer casualties led to a communication breakdown and disorder among intermixed units. Driven on by surviving officers and NCOs, the Scots pushed the Germans from Hill 70 and began advancing down the eastern slope. Murderous machine gun fire from the second German line gutted the disordered battalions, and by

The Chelsea Society

ABOVE: "Footballers at Loos," a 1916 watercolor by artist Lady Elizabeth Butler, depicts the real-life exploits of Rifleman Frank Edwards of the London Irish Rifles Regiment, who led his battlion forward by dribbling a soccer ball across No Man's Land. Soon wounded, he survived the war, as did his football, proudly displayed in the unit's regimental museum in London. OPPOSITE: British troops wearing their gas hoods advance on Germans during the Battle of Loos. Officers found it difficult to locate their objectives in the thick cloud of smoke and gas—the small lenses on the hoods only added to the difficulty.

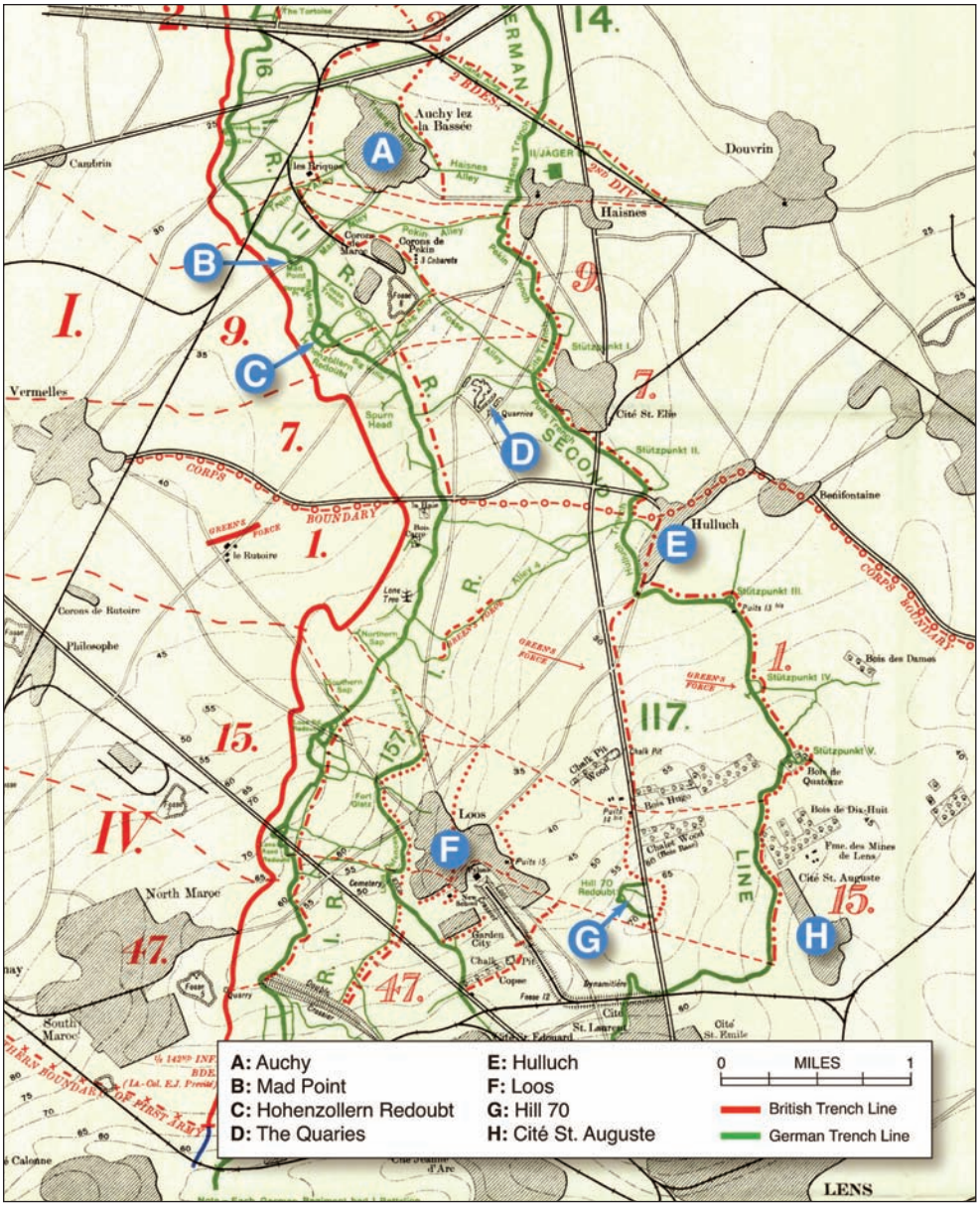
10:30 a.m., the attack faltered. Reserve brigades moved up to dig in on the western slope of Hill 70.

On the right flank of the IV Corps, following a steadily moving gas cloud, the infantry of the 47th (London Territorial) Division reached the German positions, suffering minor casualties. "The heads of the attackers were shrouded by large blue-gray flannel gas masks and through the large, round, goggles, intent eyes stared, while the projecting outlet of the mouthpiece rose and fell as the men moved and breathed," wrote Sidney Major, "The cowled figures, with rifles and bayonets 'at the ready' hung about with picks, shovels, bags and bombs and other impediments—exaggerated to giant size by the effect of the smoke and gas—presented a fearsome spectacle and might well strike terror into the stoutest heart as they pressed forward."

As the 1/18th London Irish surged out of their trenches, Rifleman Frank Edwards, captain of the battalion's football team, tossed a football into no-man's-land. Kicking the ball ahead, Edwards and his comrades advanced toward the Germans. Hit in the thigh, Edwards, who became known as the "Footballer of Loos," was pulled back to the rear and survived the war. His football was later recovered in front of German wire entanglements and is currently on display in the regimental museum.

The artillery bombardment damaged the wire obstacles south of Loos sufficiently, allowing the British infantry to clear the first line of trenches. Apprised of the situation, Rupprecht sent all his reserves to General Friedrich Sixt von Armin's beleaguered IV Corps and requested more from higher command. By 7 a.m., the Germans took back most of their initial positions, but the 47th Division retained possession of the Double Crassier and the Loos Crassier slag heaps. In the afternoon, the German 178th Regiment (13th Royal Saxon) recaptured Hill 70. Another determined German attack took back a large part of the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The Germans launched multiple local counterattacks during the night, keeping the British off balance. In one incident, a German assault party trapped a small group of soldiers from the 27th Brigade, 9th Division, including brigade commander Brig. Gen. Clarence Dalrymple Bruce, in a dugout. Hand grenades tossed into the dugout killed several men and rendered others, including the general, unconscious. General Bruce became the first British general taken prisoner in World War I.

Hand-to-hand fighting in trenches was brutal as men grappled in the mud with bayonets, entrenching tools, and hand grenades. Dug at sharp angles to minimize casualties from shelling, trenches created a labyrinth of deadly tight spaces. Blindly rushing around a corner was surely met



This trench map, actually used in battle during the 7th Division's frontage of attack, highlights some of the key locations of the action in France during the Battle of Loos, September 25-28, 1915.

with certain death. Hand grenades, or hand bombs, were invaluable in clearing out pockets of resistance. Although carrying less explosive, German stick grenades could be thrown farther, proving superior to their heavier British counterparts. At this stage of the war, the British industry still needed to ramp up grenade manufacturing, and many British bomb throwers still used bombs made from tin ration cans packed with bits of metal and explosives.

Not yet aware of the grievous losses, Haig was encouraged by the news of multiple penetrations of the first German defensive position. With his reserves fully committed by 9 a.m., Haig sent an aide by car to Chateau Philomel to request Sir John French to release the reserves from the XI corps. Apprised of the situation, French dispatched the 21st and 24th Divisions forward. Delayed by the roads targeted by German artillery and ambulances full of wounded streaming west, the two New Army divisions reached Haig in the early afternoon. In their place, French moved the Guards Division to Noeux-les-Mines, which reached the town around 8 p.m.

At 12:45 p.m., the French Tenth Army attacked south of Lens in the area of Vimy Ridge and Souchez. Although the French made initial progress, their attack failed in the late afternoon.

Although Haig did not have a clear picture of the situation, he felt another attempt the next day could breach the second German defensive line, and ordered a renewed offensive at 11 a.m. on September 26. Because of bad weather, the Royal Flying Corps could not provide accurate information about the second German defensive line.

Marching to the sound of the guns in the darkness and pouring rain, Private William Walker slogged toward the front among the 13th Northumberland Fusiliers, "Vivid wicked flashes could be seen, and bright dazzling balls of red, green, and yellow illuminated the flattish land in front," Walker remembered, "We tramped on; the jingling of our equipment, the squelching of boots in the mud, the labored breathing of weary men, an occasional curse, was like an obbligato to the thunderous storm of war that surged around us."

In the late morning of September 26, the untried 21st and 24th Divisions received orders to attack without a specific objective other than general move forward. At 11 a.m., amid great confusion, four battalions from the 72nd Brigade of the 24th Divisions entered the killing ground in front of the second German defense line west of Hulluch. Swept by withering fire, the Brigade could not overcome the wire obstacles and fell back, losing all three battalion commanders. Private Walker remembered seeing a British field artillery battery deploying forward obliterated by German artillery fire, "There did not seem to be anything but brown dust and rubbish left."

Pinned down, many disordered detachments were unable to retreat and were either wiped out or taken prisoners. The Germans took over 500 men from the 24th Division prisoner.

The 21st Division suffered heavily as well. Brigadier General Norman Nickalls, commander of its 63rd Brigade, was shot attempting to rally his shaken men. When the Brigade pulled back, Nickalls' body was left behind and never recovered. At 1:30 p.m., Haig called off the futile attack.

Needing fresh troops, around 4 p.m., Haig asked French to place the Guards Division under his command as well and received approval. During the night, the three brigades of the Guards Division and dismounted troopers of the 3rd Cavalry Division relieved the 15th, 21st, and 24th Divisions at Loos and Hulluch.

Exhausted troops spent a miserable night in the pouring rain in trenches overflowing with mud. "We spent it getting the wounded down to the dressing station, spraying the trenches and dugouts to get rid of the gas, and clearing away the earth where trenches were blocked," wrote Lieutenant Graves, "The trenches stank with a gas-blood-lyddite-latrine smell."

In the afternoon of September 27, the 3rd Guards Brigade attacked Hill 70 but was thrown back with heavy casualties. The 2nd Guards Brigade fought through Chalk Pit and Chalk Pit Wood before being stopped at Bois Hugo copse, Hulluch, and Cité St. Augustine.

Both: Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: British dead near barbed wire defenses outside a captured German machine-gun emplacement, near Loos, September 28, 1915. Britain lost about 20,000 soldiers during three days of fighting. LEFT: Ruins of the village of Loos, France, where men of the British 15th (New Scottish) Division fought the Germans with bayonets and hand grenades.

Rudyard Kipling's son John, an 18-year-old lieutenant in the 2/Irish Guards who had landed in France barely a month before, was lost and believed killed at Bois Hugo. The Kiplings searched for their son for years, but his remains were not identified until 1992 and confirmed in 2015. He is now buried in St Mary's ADS Cemetery.

Despite failure by the 21st, 24th, and Guards Divisions, Sir John French was not ready to call off the offensive, ordering the 12th (Eastern) and 46th (North Midland) Divisions to move down from Ypres to Loos.

While the British prepared for another try, the Germans launched a series of counterattacks, recovering most of the trenches around Hohenzollern Redoubt by October 3 and retaking Fosse 8 by October 8. With the exception immediately east of Loos, both sides returned to their starting positions. The French offensive in Champagne was also a bloody failure.

In preparation for another attack, Royal Engineers placed 3,170 gas cylinders facing the Hohenzollern Redoubt sector. At 11:30 a.m. on October 12, clouds of gas again began drifting toward German positions, followed by bombardment by more than 400 guns, followed by more gas. Again, the gas largely settled down; instead of moving and advancing British men, soldiers immediately came under heavy fire.

At 2 p.m., a British infantry attack began. The 1st Brigade from the 1st Div attacked from 300 yards away between Loos and Hulluch, but only limited damage was done to the wire obstacles, and the attack was stopped. British officers, disregarding their safety again and again, rallied depleted battalions and urged them forward, leading to disproportionate officer casualties. Lt. Col. Angus Douglas-Hamilton of the 6/Cameron Highlanders led four attacks against Hill 70, after which his battalion was reduced to 50 men. He led them forward again the fifth time and fell mortally wounded.

"The gas hung in a thick pall over everything, and it was impossible to see more than ten yards. In vain, I looked for landmarks in the German line to guide me to the right spot, but I could not see through the gas," wrote 2nd Lt. George Grossmith from the South Staffordshire Regiment to his fiancé, "…Men were disorganized and walking in the direction of the German trenches, looking like ghouls in their gas helmets…We reached the German wire, only to find it intact." Halted before the Hohenzollern Redoubt and Fosse 8, the 46th (North Midland) Division suffered more than 1,200 casualties. In two companies of 1/5 South Staffordshire, every single man was killed or wounded.

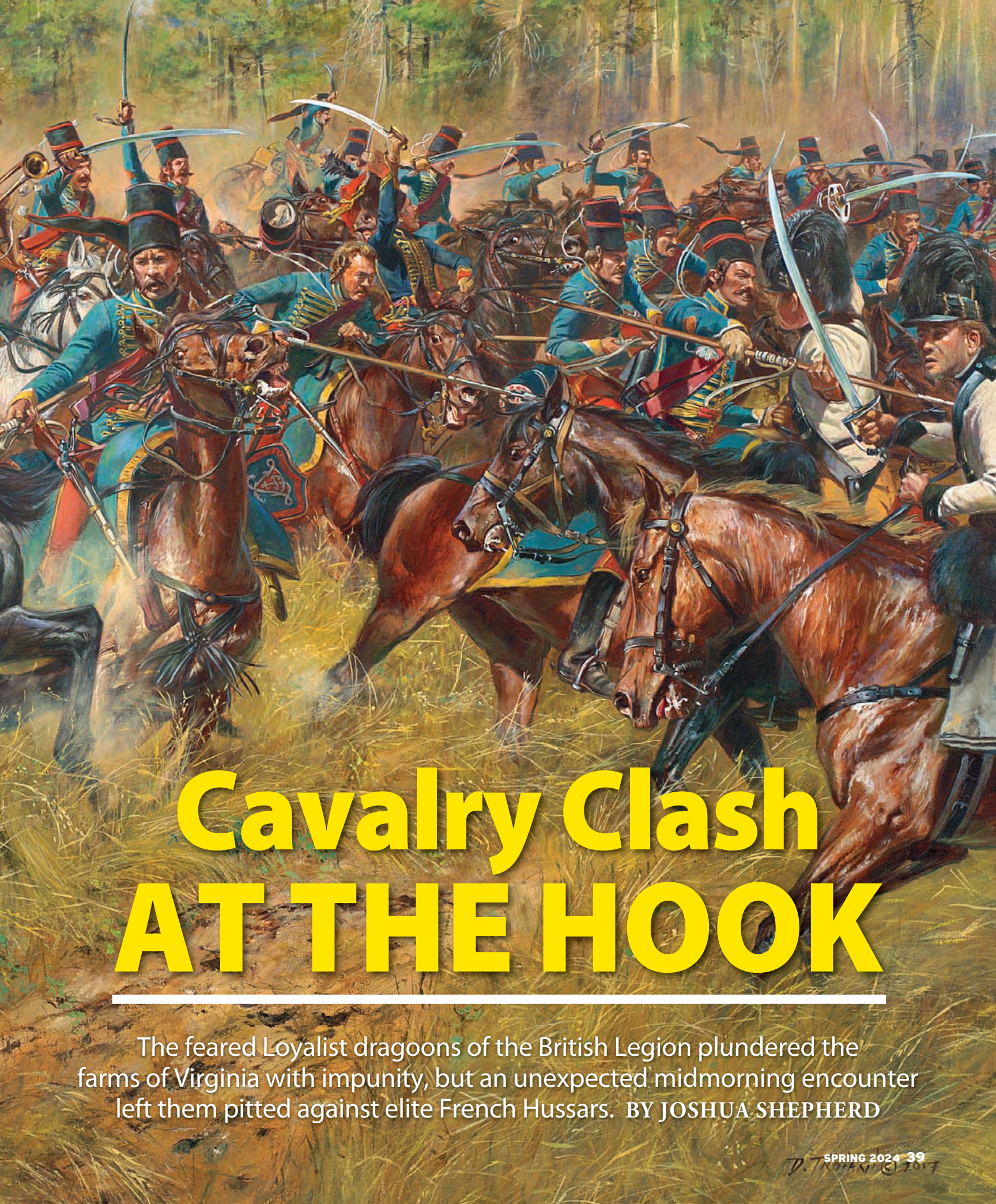
The 12th (Eastern) Division attacked between the Quarries and Hulluch. One battalion, the 6/Buffs, lost more than 400 men within the first few minutes, falling back after advancing 100 yards. The 35th Brigade, braving a firestorm, captured a small foothold in the Quarries but could advance no further. Sporadic fighting continued until 8 p.m. but gradually died down.

French attacks in the Champagne and Vimy Ridge sectors also failed, and Joffre called off the Artois offensive on October 15.

Having failed to achieve a breakthrough, the BEF suffered close to 60,000 casualties, including

Continued on page 98

This painting by Don Troiani depicts the unhorsing of Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton during the cavalry skirmish at The Hook in Gloucester, Virginia. The lance of a hussar struck the horse of a Loyalist dragoon, whose wounded animal careened out of control, colliding with Tarleton's mount. Recent research suggests Tarleton's troopers, typically uniformed in green jackets, wore white stable jackets on a foraging patrol that day.



Cavalry Clash AT THE HOOK

The feared Loyalist dragoons of the British Legion plundered the farms of Virginia with impunity, but an unexpected midmorning encounter left them pitted against elite French Hussars. BY JOSHUA SHEPHERD

Early on the morning of October 3, 1781, a detachment of French hussars trotted down a sandy road in Gloucester County, Virginia. The Frenchmen, newly arrived from Connecticut, were acclimating to the weather. The nights had been cold but daytime temperatures could soar into the 80s. The sun was quickly climbing, and for the cavalrymen, it was sure to be a warm day's work.

As the hussars rode out into an open field, they spotted a small group of British horsemen. Both groups hastily raised and fired pistols and carbines, shattering the morning stillness. That frantic moment of chance would begin one of the largest cavalry battles of the Revolutionary War.

The swirling cavalry fight that would break out north of Gloucester Point was considered a modest scrape at the time, but would play a crucial role in the most crushing British defeat of America's War for Independence.

The fateful contest for Virginia in the autumn of 1781 came about as the direct result of increasing strategic incoherence in the British high command. Subsequent to their capture of Charleston, South Carolina, in May of 1780, Crown forces drove deep inland, sweeping aside the remnants of the Southern Continental Army and establishing a strong line of outposts across the Carolina upcountry.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: Continentals and local militia under the command of Horatio Gates, were badly defeated by Cornwallis at the Battle of Camden in South Carolina. LEFT: German Captain Johann Ewald commanded Tarleton's Hessian Jaeger Corps. These men, typically recruited from the forests of Germany, were armed with short rifles and were experienced skirmishers. OPPOSITE: Washington and Rochambeau salute as French infantry march past en route to Yorktown. Armand-Louis de Gontuart, Duc de Lauzun, who accompanied Rochambeau, salutes at far right.

In spite of such early success in the south, the Crown's effort to subdue the southern countryside had quickly faltered. Over the summer of 1780, Patriot militias struck back with ferocity, annihilating isolated Loyalist units, threatening British supply lines, and ushering in a civil war characterized by old grudges, mutual brutality, and outright revenge.

Lord Charles Cornwallis, the overall British commander in the south, nonetheless enjoyed stunning success against the Southern Continental Army. On August 16, Cornwallis smashed General Horatio Gates' field army at Camden, South Carolina. The remains of the Patriot army fled beyond British reach, and Cornwallis sought to strengthen his hold on the Carolinas. With no effective Continental army remaining in the field, British victory in the south seemed within reach.

But over the succeeding months, Cornwallis' plans began to unravel. On January 17, 1781, British arms suffered outright calamity. American General Daniel Morgan, at the head of a flying column of 1,000 men, had been dispatched to western South Carolina to threaten Cornwallis' left. Keen to neutralize the threat, Cornwallis turned to 27-year-old Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton, one of his most trusted officers.

Considered one of the best cavalry commanders in the British Army, Tarleton seemed ideally suited to the task of destroying the Morgan's small Patriot army. Driving men and mounts mercilessly, Tarleton caught up with Morgan at open meadows known as the Cowpens.

Morgan opted to stand and fight. On the morning of the 17th, Tarleton lashed the American lines, which bent, but did not break. An American counterattack crashed into Tarleton's battered troops, who fled in confusion. The battle resulted in a near-rout, and Tarleton himself narrowly escaped capture.

Subsequent events during the year would prove pivotal for the British war effort, as well as for Cornwallis. On March 16, Cornwallis caught up with the reorganized southern Continental Army at Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina. Both sides were badly mauled in the battle, and Cornwallis, who faced superior numbers, drove the Americans from the field. But it was a ghastly pyrrhic victory that cost him a quarter of his men in the bloody fight.

Exasperated by the stalemated war in the Carolinas and increasingly convinced that occupying the state of Virginia was the key to winning the war in the south, Cornwallis made a decision that would have epic consequences. Rather than remain mired in the strategic morass of the Carolinas, the Earl decided to lead a portion of his men into Virginia—the primary source of men and material for the Patriot war effort in the south. He hoped that a firm subjugation of America's most populous colony would once and for all break the back of the rebellion.

In fact, the British were already plaguing the Old Dominion. Operating from Hampton Roads, a raiding party commanded by the traitorous Brig. Gen. Benedict Arnold had swept up the James River in January of 1781. Largely unopposed, Arnold burned much of Richmond and fell back to Portsmouth.

In the spring, more British troops were funneled into the state. In April, Major General William Phillips led 2,500 Redcoats in another raid up the James River. Phillips brushed aside hastily-raised militia, raided Petersburg, and then pressed on for the state capital. By the time he reached Richmond, however, the strategic landscape had changed.

Overlooking the city were fresh American troops—seasoned Continentals—that constituted a much tougher foe than local militia. A small army of crack troops had arrived in the state under the command of Major General the Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette's small army had been ordered to the state by General George Washington, who was determined to contest the mounting British threat to his home state.

On May 20, Cornwallis' exhausted troops trudged into Petersburg. After assuming command of British troops already in Virginia and receiving a fresh batch of reinforcements from New York, Cornwallis commanded a respectable army of 7,000 men. With that force, the Earl intended to crush Lafayette and assume firm control of the Old Dominion.

Lafayette, however, had no intention of risking an all-out fight with Cornwallis' superior forces. He would harry Cornwallis' army while staying just out of reach. As the British nipped at his heels north of Richmond, Lafayette retreated far to the north, seeking safety in the forested Wilderness south of the Rapidan River. Cornwallis, frustrated that he couldn't bring the French nobleman to bay, ordered Tarleton to lead his Legion on a lightning raid toward Charlottesville.

Cornwallis was further hamstrung by an unwelcome directive from General Henry Clinton—dispatch 3,000 of his men north to reinforce the garrison of New York City. He was also ordered to occupy a deep water port that could facilitate Royal Navy vessels. His army now weakened, and facing increased opposition from a reinforced Lafayette, Cornwallis opted to occupy the seemingly insignificant port city of Yorktown, Virginia. In ways almost imperceptible at the time, the Royal cause in America had taken a catastrophic turn.

Watching from a distance and closely studying his maps, General Washington saw an opportunity to pounce on Cornwallis' weakened army. Though he longed to seize New York from the British, the strategic opportunities unfolding in Virginia proved irresistible. "It has been judged expedient to turn our attention towards the South," Washington wrote.

He combined forces with Comte Jean-Baptiste Rochambeau's French army and pleaded for assistance from Admiral Francois de Grasse's French fleet, then operating in the West Indies. Hoping that De Grasse could block any reinforcement of Cornwallis by sea, Washington made plans to trap the Earl by land. Leaving a token force opposing New York, Washington and Rochambeau turned south on August 19 for the 400-mile march to Virginia.

Oblivious to the mounting threats to his army, Cornwallis set about securing his position at Yorktown, situated on the York River, a wide estuary that fed Chesapeake Bay. There the river was only a half mile wide. To control the York, Cornwallis made plans to fortify the opposite bank—a narrow spit of land known as Gloucester Point, or more colloquially as "the Hook."

As Cornwallis built redoubts and dug earth-

National Gallery, London

works, the combined armies of Washington and Rochambeau arrived at Yorktown on September 28. With the grand Allied army surrounding the town, Cornwallis was completely cut off on the south bank of the river. North of the river, Washington assigned the task of containing British troops on the Hook to Virginia militia under the command of Brigadier General George Weedon.

Weedon had served in the Continental Army's Third Virginia Regiment, later rising to the rank of Brigadier General. After fighting in most of the battles in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, he resigned and returned home, where he secured command of a brigade of state militia.

Accompanying Weedon was 22-year-old John Mercer, who had also served in the Third Virginia before becoming aide-de-camp to Continental Army General Charles Lee. When Lee ran afoul of General Washington at the Battle of Monmouth and was court-martialed, both he and Mercer resigned in July 1779.

Weedon allowed Mercer to create an additional battalion of militia by picking men who had previously served in the Continental Army, and who's enlistments there had run out. Mercer then added "the most likely young men who volunteered... and young gentlemen as officers." After enlisting 200 men, the unit was referred to as the "Grenadier Regiment," and would be attached to Lauzun's Legion.

At Gloucester Point, Weedon's instructions were to contest British foraging parties, but not risk a major action with his militia. Weedon was delighted with his task, as well as American prospects in the coming campaign. By his estimation, Cornwallis had been trapped "handsomely in a pudding bag."

This wasn't quite true, as north of the Point, the prosperous farms of Gloucester County offered rich pickings for British foraging parties, who regularly raided for food and fodder.

Two small roads led north from the British encampment, affording Crown forces quick access to the interior for foraging operations. To the west, a well-used wagon road flanked the York River and passed by the largest farm in the area, Seawell's Plantation. Leading directly north from the encampment, the main road out of the Point led directly to Botetourt Town (present day Gloucester Courthouse), about a dozen miles to the north.

Command of the point was assigned to Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Dundas, who ordered a line of works constructed across the narrow confines of Gloucester Point. The four redoubts and intervening artillery batteries were manned by crack outfits, including Lt. Col. John Graves Simcoe's Queen's Rangers, elements of the 80th Regiment of Foot, and the riflemen of the Hessian Jaeger Corps.

The Jaegers were under the command of Captain Johann Ewald, a seasoned veteran who looked the part. After a youthful spat resulted in a duel, Ewald had lost his left eye and consequently wore a black eye patch. Having fought in North America since 1776, Ewald was a resourceful commander known for coolness under fire.

His troops were also ideally suited for foraging operations, an unavoidable assignment which Ewald nonetheless found distasteful. The Hessian officer later described one particular operation in which he and his men discovered more than 500 head of cattle. The locals had attempted to hide the livestock from enemy reach, only to lose them all. Ewald understood that the beeves were needed for the army but later confessed that "I felt sorry for the people and wished they had escaped from me."

Cornwallis' supply problems worsened on September 5. Admiral Samuel Graves arrived at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay with 19 ships out of New York, but found De Grasse's fleet already anchored there. The French weighed anchor and angled for Graves' battle line. After mercilessly pounding each other, the French superiority in numbers began to tell, and Graves drew off.

The two fleets jockeyed for position for five more days, but avoided contact. Finally, on September 10, De Grasse withdrew and re-anchored in the mouth of the Bay. Dispirited by the affair, Graves returned to New York, effectively surrendering the sea lanes to Yorktown to the French. Any hope Cornwallis had of evacuation or resupply by the British Navy had evaporated.

North of Gloucester Point, there was a new Allied commander. Weedon had been superseded by the arrival of French General Claude Gabriel, Marquis de Choisy. Choisy assumed overall com-

Toronto Public Library

Château de Versailles

Simcoe's Military Journal

ABOVE LEFT: Colonel John Graves Simcoe commanded the loyalist Queen's Rangers. ABOVE RIGHT: General Claude Gabriel, Marquis de Choisy commanded the Allied forces in Gloucester, including the Virginia militia, Lauzun's Legion, and 800 French Marines. RIGHT: Simcoe's Rangers, seen here in a period drawing, included infantry and mounted troops, which made them effective for foraging operations. OPPOSITE: Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton commanded the Loyalist British Legion. In this famous portrait by Joshua Reynolds, Tarleton hides his right hand because he had two fingers shot off at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

mand of Allied forces north of the Hook, which included the Virginia militia and 800 French marines, newly-arrived from the West Indies. Among the best under his command was the Lauzun Legion.

The Legion acquired its name from its colorful commander, Armand-Louis de Gontuart, Duc de Lauzun. Not untypical of his class, Lauzun had lived the prodigal youth of an entitled nobleman, and sought glory and redemption under the arms of France. His command, the Lauzun Legion, was a mixed bag of chasseurs, grenadiers, and hussars, bolstered by an artillery detachment. The outfit was a colorful lot recruited from every corner of Europe. Among its ranks were found Germans, Poles, Dutch, Swedes, Russians, and Swiss.

Lauzun's well-dressed hussars possessed the swaggering élan of an elite corps. The troopers were resplendent in short blue jackets, heavily decorated with elaborate piping. Topped with distinctive hussar shakos, the troopers further set themselves apart by sporting tightly braided hair and rakish mustaches. Despite their gaudy appearance, the French horsemen were formidable opponents. Armed with short carbines, curving sabers, and deadly cavalry lances, the hussars were well drilled and under tight discipline.

Watching these developments from the earthworks at the Point, Captain Ewald gave grudging respect to the makings of the French troops. The Jaeger regarded them as well-disciplined professional soldiers, and, as he thought, "when these soldiers are properly led, everything goes well with them."

Although Weedon had been ordered not to bring on a full scale battle north of the Hook, Choisy was determined to press the enemy with more resolution. Foraging parties continued to raid north of Gloucester Point, but with French cavalry on the loose, it was becoming a more perilous undertaking.

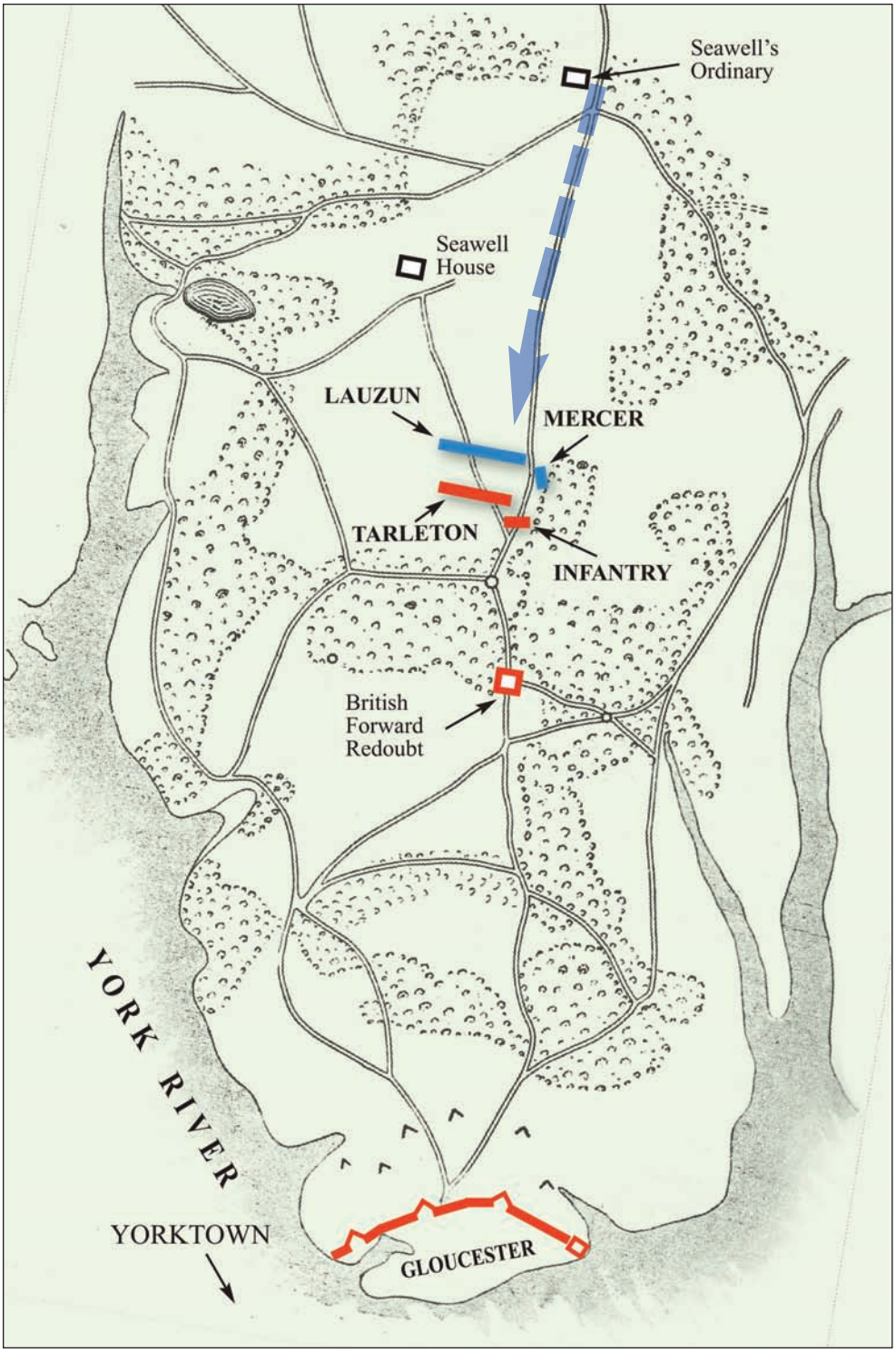
On the morning of October 3, Dundas headed north from the Hook leading various detachments of the troops under his command. It was expected to be a routine foraging operation. As customary, the troops were keen to nab any foodstuffs of use. The column was composed of infantry, but included a detachment of Tarleton's cavalry that would serve as security. In tow were a number of wagons necessary for making off with anything of value.

As an additional precaution, Dundas ordered Ewald out with a body of jaegers and Queen's Rangers who were to take up an advanced position between Seawell's and Whiting's Plantations. Ewald was to screen the movements of the foraging party, and set up an ambush for any approaching Allied troops.

After moving inland about three miles, the Britons met with success, locating a field of standing corn that, by early October, possessed full, dry ears that made fine table fare for hungry soldiers. With wary troopers standing guard on horseback, fatigue parties hastily loaded the wagons with corn. By ten o'clock, the wagons were full and Dundas, wasting little time, ordered his column back toward their works on the Hook.

Dundas also rode out to Ewald's forward position and ordered him to withdraw slowly. The German captain reported that enemy troops were in the area. There had been skirmishes with enemy scouts, but he had been unable to draw them into an ambush. As ordered, Ewald fell back, but noticed that he was dogged by enemy troops every step of the way.

At some point on the return march, Tarleton passed a house near the road, rumored to belong to Mrs. Elizabeth Seawell Whiting, widow of the Commissioner of the Virginia Navy, John Whiting. As the British column marched south, the lady of the house, described as "a very pretty woman," appeared at the front door to watch the British troops file by. Tarleton, a self-described lady's man, couldn't help but stop for a moment and trade a few words. With a good bit of braggadocio



intended, no doubt, to impress, Tarleton mentioned that he soon hoped to shake hands with the Duc de Lauzun. To his credit, Tarleton was a commander who routinely led his men directly into combat, and he clearly relished the prospect of crossing sabers with the French nobleman.

With the wagons protected by infantry, some of Tarleton's dragoons lagged behind to maintain a rear guard. The horsemen chose a likely spot for an ambush, then quietly waited. Within minutes, a handful of mounted Virginia militia, on patrol out of Weedon's lines, trotted into view. The dragoons waited until the Americans were within range, then unleashed a ragged volley. It seems that all of their shots flew wide.

The gunfire, however, succeeded in scattering the terrified Virginians, who immediately turned their mounts and rode for the rear. There, they encountered a detachment of French hussars with Lauzun at their head. The Virginians breathlessly announced that the British dragoons were out in force, but could report little else. Lauzun, a little disgusted by what he considered the militia's reluctance to fight, immediately spurred his mount and led his men toward the front.

Crown forces, meanwhile, realized that the French cavalry was operating in the area. Lt. Allen Cameron, leading a group of Legion cavalry bringing up the rear, caught sight of a large dust cloud in the distance, and immediately understood its meaning. He rode up to report the French arrival to Tarleton, who welcomed the news.

True to character, he turned for a fight. Tarleton ordered all of his available mounted troops—which included Legion cavalry, British Light Dragoons, and mounted troops from Simcoe's outfit—to turn around and form up along a wood line facing an open field. Still unsure precisely where the enemy was, Tarleton accompanied Cameron's scouting party back out into the field for a personal reconnaissance.

The field was an unused plantation plot, an open meadow known in Virginia as an "old field." After the soil had been depleted growing tobacco, it had been left fallow. Covered with native grasses and treeless, it was good ground for a cavalry fight.

The French, in fact, were rapidly coming up. Trotting along the road, Lauzun passed by the farmhouse whose matron, still standing by the doorway, struck up a brief conversation with the Duke. Tarleton, she warned, had been there just minutes before, and he was eager to shake hands with the Duke. The Frenchman observed that most Americans considered Tarleton to be invincible in battle, and the housewife was overcome with pity. Lauzun, unperturbed by the exchange, simply quipped that "I had come on purpose to gratify" Tarleton's desire for a face-to- face meeting.

Lauzun hadn't ridden 100 yards past the house when he heard the sound of fighting ahead of him. His lead horsemen had abruptly run into Tarleton's men in the field and both sides had opened fire. Eager to come to grips with the enemy, Lauzun rode forward to take stock of the situation. In the middle of the field, Tarleton and his men were in the open and trading pistol shots with the French. Lauzun could also make out a larger force of British cavalry formed up in the wood line behind Tarleton.

Without hesitation, Lauzun charged into the open. Tarleton, immediately recognizing the splendidly uniformed officer as Lauzun, likewise spurred his horse and charged for the French duke. As their men watched in disbelief, both officers raced in the open between the lines.

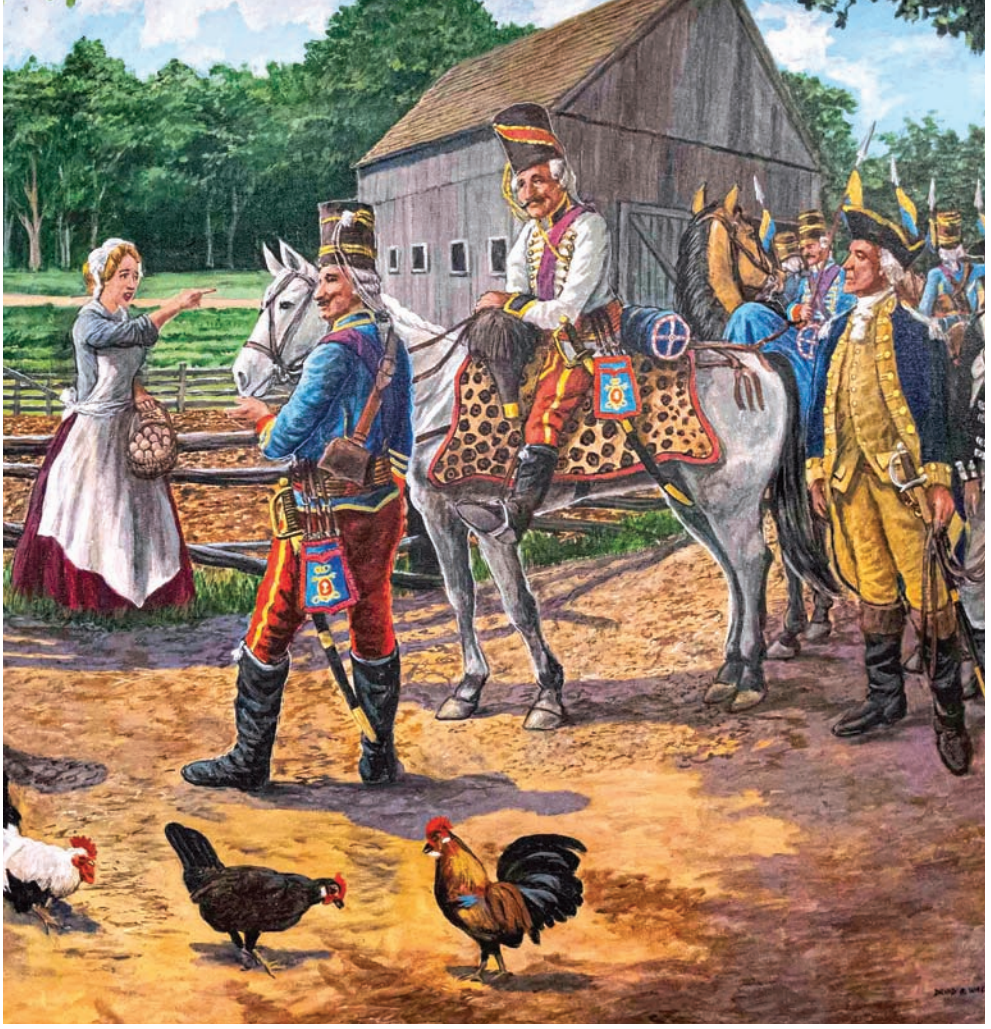
Tarleton raised a loaded pistol as he closed the distance. To onlookers, it appeared that a dramatic duel was about to take shape. But in the melee, a stray lance thrown by one of the hussars

struck a dragoon horse, and as the Loyalist's wounded animal careened out of control, it collided with Tarleton's mount. Both Tarleton and his horse plunged to the ground. In a cloud of dust, Tarleton regained his feet and, remarkably, was unhurt. Lauzun, at full speed, continued charging ahead in hopes of capturing him.

Despite his reputation for personal valor, Tarleton wisely decided for caution. When his men saw his plight, they dashed in front of Tarleton, cutting off the French who were attempting to capture their dismounted colonel. Tarleton made a narrow escape, but was forced to abandon his horse, which Lauzun happily seized as a trophy.

More Loyalists, however, began to pour into the fight. When they witnessed Tarleton's near-capture, the main body of Legion cavalry, on their own initiative, burst from the wood line and made an impetuous charge on the French Hussars. Their uncoordinated attack fell piecemeal on the French; rather than drive back the Hussars, isolated knots of Legion dragoons drove into the French; a vicious melee ensued.

The staccato popping of pistols and carbines rent the air, and then a fierce metallic rattle reverberated across the field as horsemen clashed sabers. Through a sulfurous haze of powder, mounted men grappled with their enemy nearly face-to-face, shouting with both anger and terror. Mercer's Virginia Grenadiers, who were coming on the run, began forming up along the northern edge of the field. As the winded Virginians dressed their ranks, they watched the fighting turn against their French allies. Lauzun's hussars, whose own ranks had gone into action in a disjointed fashion, began to fall back.



Painting by David R. Wagner, Courtesy Gloucester Parks, Recreation & Tourism

ABOVE: This painting by David R. Wagner shows the Duc de Lauzun speaking to a local woman, who warns him that Tarleton had just ridden past looking for him. Unperturbed by the fearsome reputation of the British commander, Lauzun reportedly replied that he "had come on purpose to gratify" Tarleton's desire for a face-to- face meeting. OPPOSITE: The drawing for this map was made for the Marquis de Choisy and sent to General Washington after the battle. While not to scale, it shows the locations of key landmarks.

Militiaman Robert Forester recalled running down one of the farm lanes of Seawell's Plantation until his company reached the edge of the wood line. To the Virginians' front was the open field where Lauzun's cavalry was in full retreat. The Frenchmen cantered to the rear to reorganize, while the militiamen opened up a fire on the Legion cavalry still milling about the field. Another green militiaman, Gabriel Hughes, was startled by the entire scene. To his inexperienced eyes, the French cavalry had been "badly cut up" by the enemy horsemen.

About 160 Virginians under Mercer's command succeeded in forming up at the edge of the field. They had plenty to occupy their attention. Loyalist dragoons were to their right front, but a new threat appeared from the left. Tarleton had ordered a party of 40 infantrymen to work their way through a thicket around the Virginians' left flank.

An exhilarated Mercer watched in admiration as his troops, part of whom stood behind a rail fence, commenced fighting. Mercer later explained that his men didn't have time to contemplate the coming battle; they had come up on the run, flushed with adrenaline, and commenced firing immediately. Half of the men targeted the enemy dragoons who were about 250 yards away in the field. The other half of Mercer's men fired at Tarleton's flanking column of infantry, which had worked its way through a thicket to within 150 yards of the Americans.

Mercer's battalion fired at the Loyalists and reloaded in good order. Soon, the Virginians began to run low on ammunition; some of the men likely held empty cartridge boxes. Mercer thought that his entire command was down to no more than 100 rounds. Men began to fall as they were struck by enemy gunfire, but despite their precarious position, the militia Grenadiers held firm. Mercer proudly reported that his men exhibited "as much gallantry and composure as any regular corps that I ever saw in action."

While the Grenadiers kept the enemy at bay, Lauzun rallied his disorganized hussars and prepared for a grand cavalry charge. Lauzun formed up eight troops of his horsemen—about 300 men—into two crisp lines. Hughes watched in admiration at the stirring sight of the French cavalry, which charged out of the woods and thundered back onto the field. As he put it, the hussars gamely "sallied and went at it again."

Only furious skirmishing, however, would take place. Tarleton's dragoons had been galled by enemy fire coming from the rail fence, and he had already ordered his men to begin pulling back. From Lauzun's perspective, it looked as if his hussars "overthrew" the enemy. The two sides sparred, but avoided a major clash. Tarleton and his officers made several attempts to draw the French cavalry into a position where they could be ambushed, but failed to lure the hussars into the trap.

By now aware that the invaluable supplies of corn had made it safely into the lines at Gloucester Point, Tarleton ordered his men to disengage and fall back to safety. His forces warily gave ground, and hussars followed at their heels. Ewald came up in support of Tarleton's troopers. Accompanying 100 mounted Queen's Rangers under the command of Captain David Shank, Ewald fought

a delaying action, trading scattered gunfire with the enemy and keeping them at bay while Tarleton made good his escape. Without further trouble, Tarleton's troops withdrew into the British entrenchments.

After watching the retreat unfold, Ewald offered a blunt assessment of the day's lost opportunities. A shrewd tactician, Ewald lamented that the British Legion had gone into action in a disorganized manner, and that the French took too long to launch a counterattack. "One perceives from this action," he wrote, "how disorder and delay can spoil the game."

The fighting had been brief but furious. Mercer reported that in the ranks of his militiamen, 2 men had been killed and 11 wounded. The French hussars had suffered 3 dead and 16 wounded. Tarleton reported that his Legion had suffered an officer and 11 men killed or wounded. During the chaotic rush for Gloucester Point, the French had likewise captured a number of prisoners. Perhaps with a bit of exaggeration, Lauzun claimed that total British losses amounted to over 50 men.

Tarleton regarded the clash at the Hook as little more than a skirmish. But such tactical observations made little difference for the unfortunate souls who were killed and maimed during the fighting. Hughes witnessed the tragic consequences of the battle. He had not been in action before and watched in horror as surgeons frantically scrambled to save the life of one of the stricken French hussars. The man had received a ghastly wound to the neck and was bleeding profusely. The surgeons attempted to sew up the wound but were unable to halt the flow of blood. As Hughes watched in disbelief, the hussar's life slowly ebbed away.

The result of the Battle of the Hook was far from inconsequential. After receiving further Marine reinforcements from the French fleet later that day, Choisy began tightening the noose around Gloucester Point. The following day he succeeded in stretching a firm line of troops from the York River to Sarah Creek, effectively sealing off Crown forces in their entrenchments. Advanced pickets were thrown out toward the British works, and Choisy strengthened his main line by ordering fatigue parties to fell trees and form a defensive abatis.

Subsequent to the fighting on October 3, Crown forces would not be able to mount foraging operations north of Gloucester Point. Cornwallis' troops on both sides of the York River were entirely choked off from foraging for desperately needed food and fodder.

On the south bank of the river, the situation dramatically worsened for Cornwallis. On October 6, the Allies commenced digging the first siege trenches; three days later, American and French batteries were positioned to fire on Yorktown. A thunderous bombardment allowed the Allies to inch closer to the town, while Crown forces scraped the earth in a desperate attempt to find cover.

On the evening of October 14, Cornwallis' position was rendered all but untenable. Attack columns of American and French troops stormed two positions, Redoubts 9 and 10, which were keys to the British defenses. After vicious night fighting at close quarters, the Allies were left in possession of the redoubts, and could complete a second siege trench a mere 300 yards from enemy lines. From such close range, Allied artillery was sure to pound the British army into submission.

To save his army, and perhaps the entire British war effort, Cornwallis latched on to a desperate,

Painting by David R. Wagner, Courtesy Gloucester Parks, Recreation & Tourism

ABOVE: Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton is shown center, thrown from his horse as the Duc de Lauzun rides by on a white horse. Mercer's Virginians and French infantry fire on the British in the background at right. OPPOSITE: John Trumball's famous painting of the surrender of Cornwallis's British Army outside Yorktown shows the Duc de Lauzun wearing a tall hussar cap, mounted at far left. To his left is the Marquis de Choisy. The British in Gloucester laid down their arms an hour after the Yorktown surrender—the last Crown forces in North America to do so.

Yale University Art Gallery

last-minute plan. While leaving a skeleton force to man the works at Yorktown, the Earl hoped to make a crossing of the York River with the bulk of his troops. Once the army was over the river, it would attack Choisy's forces north of Gloucester Point and then make a series of forced marches north. As long as the Redcoats could keep one step ahead of the Americans, Cornwallis' army could potentially reach the safety of British-held New York.

The operation was planned for the evening of October 16. For the troops manning the works at Gloucester Point, it was an incredibly tense evening. Ewald, deathly sick with a raging fever, was nonetheless on his feet and in command of Redoubts 3 and 4. His troops, who were apprehensive of an attack, stared blindly across the top of the earthworks. The night, recalled Ewald, was "as dark as a sack." Making matters worse, sickness raged through the ranks. Men by the score were prostrated by fever, leaving the defensive works dangerously undermanned.

At 11 p.m., the first wave of transport boats shoved off from Yorktown. The night sky was beginning to look ominous, but the first batch of troops crossed the river safely by about midnight. As the exhausted Redcoats reached the northern shore, Lt. Col. Robert Abercromby held a brief meeting with the fevered Ewald. Abercromby inquired how many men from the Gloucester garrison could be assembled for a breakout. He blanched at Ewald's response. The Hessian matter-of-factly announced that Simcoe, most of the Ranger officers, and all the Jaeger officers were dangerously ill. Of the Jaeger rank and file, only a dozen men were well enough to march.

Out on the York River, the situation was worsening. As the second wave of troops was crossing, a tremendous storm swept across the York River, scattering the boats and terrifying the men. A staggering wind blew across the water, and immense thunderclaps rent the sky. Straining at the oars, the men made little headway and were thankful just to stay afloat. After watching the storm for two hours, his anxiety mounting by the minute, Cornwallis called off the whole operation and ordered all of the troops returned to the south bank of the river.

In hindsight, Ewald thought that the entire idea of a breakout to the north was "worthy of admiration" but "the greatest impossibility." Choisy's troops were far from pushovers, and even if they could have been brushed aside, two heavily defended ravines were positioned behind the French lines. Moreover, the idea that Cornwallis' army could have survived swarms of angry Americans across Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey was simply too much to believe.

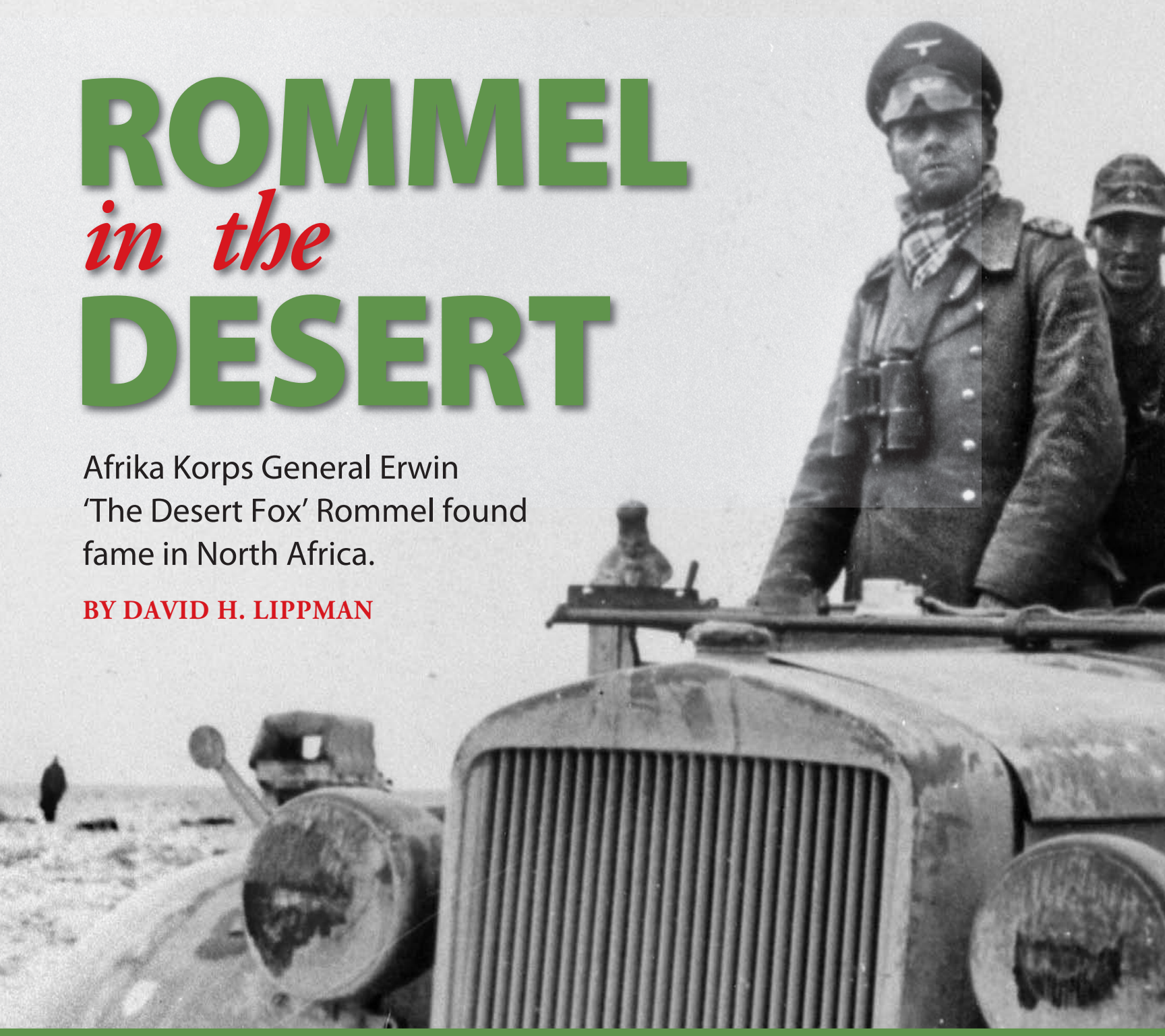
With no hope of escape, Cornwallis came to grips with his fate. The following morning the Earl dispatched an officer across the lines. Cornwallis was prepared to discuss terms of surrender. After two days of haggling over conditions, Cornwallis relented to Washington's demands. The garrisons of Yorktown and Gloucester—some 8,000 British, Loyalists, and Germans—were surrendered to the Americans.

Although sporadic fighting would continue for another year, the successful siege of Yorktown constituted the last major operation of the Revolutionary War. Cornwallis' surrender staggered the courts of Europe, spelled an end to British attempts to subdue the colonies, and ensured the independence of the United States.

The mortifying fate that awaited Cornwallis at Yorktown had come about due to a lengthy string of missteps, faulty decisions, and outright strategic bungling. But the grand course of history often hinges on seemingly minor events. The cavalry skirmish at the Hook, as well as the abortive attempt at a last-minute breakout, had helped seal the fate of the British army at Yorktown.

For his part, Banastre Tarleton thought that the entire debacle at Yorktown had become unavoidable due to the failed breakout from Gloucester Point. "Thus expired the last hope of the British Army," he said. ■

ROMMEL *in the* DESERT



Afrika Korps General Erwin 'The Desert Fox' Rommel found fame in North Africa.

BY DAVID H. LIPPMAN

Lieutenant General Erwin Rommel, a rising star in Germany's equally rising war effort, was tasked with saving Italy, Germany's key ally, from a grave disaster in North Africa. He would do so and, in those victories, the "Desert Fox" would become a military legend that would continue to the present day.

By February 1941, the Axis situation in Africa was quite grave. A force of 30,000 Britons, Australians, and Indians making up three divisions had defeated an Italian army of 10 divisions in Libya, bagging 130,000 prisoners and capturing 850 guns and 400 tanks, for a loss of less than 2,000 men. The one-sided Allied victory boosted their morale, humiliated Fascist Italy, and put British troops a step away from conquering the entire colony.

With Italian troops also bogged down in a failed invasion of Greece, Adolf Hitler could afford no further humiliation of his ally and one-time mentor, Benito Mussolini. Even as Italian troops were fleeing westward to Tripoli, Mussolini pleaded with Hitler to provide a "blocking force" to protect Libya's capital.

Hitler was planning a variety of offensives against the obstinate British—attacks on Malta, Gibraltar, Greece, and Crete—and sending two mobile divisions to North Africa would fit in well. He intended to fight his war in North Africa on the cheap, so as not to distract from his primary objective, the invasion of the Soviet Union.

Chosen to lead the force was Rommel, a bold Swabian and career military man, who had earned the Reich's highest decoration for valor—the Pour le Mérite (now often referred to as the"Blue Max")—by leading successful attacks in the

Lieutenant General Erwin Rommel in his staff car in North Africa in 1941. Arriving in Tripoli in February 1941, he was quickly on the advance, forcing British troops to retreat back into Eqypt.

National Archives

Romanian and Italian mountains during the Great War. After Versailles, he stayed in the army, becoming a renowned instructor. He had published a collection of his lectures as a book, *The Infantry in Attack*, which had impressed Hitler. During the invasion of Poland, Rommel, now a major general, had commanded the unit that guarded Hitler and his retinue. A skillful self-promoter, Rommel had used that position to persuade the Fuehrer to give him command of the new 7th Panzer Division, preparing for the invasion of France. In that campaign, Rommel had gained ground and the attention of German propaganda efforts with his bold style, victorious battles, and frontline leadership. His private life was also appropriately wholesome. He was devoted to photography, stamp collecting, and his family. He seemed an appropriate choice for this high-profile assignment.

Two German divisions, the 15th Panzer and the 5th Light, both fully motorized units, were picked out and ordered to Tripoli to reinforce other Italian divisions already on their way there. All German and Italian mobile forces would come under Rommel's command in what would be called the "Afrika Korps."

Rommel himself arrived in Tripoli on February 12, to find Italian troops having thrown away their weapons to jam overloaded trucks and flee to the city, junior officers packing their bags to head for Italy, and the local commander dubious about holding the city.

Rommel wasted no time, boarding a Heinkel He-111 bomber for a personal look at the battlefield. Then he ordered the two arriving Italian units, the Brescia and Pavia Infantry Divisions of

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ABOVE: Italian General Italo Gariboldi, left, reviews German Afrika Korps troops with General Rommel in Tripoli. Adolf Hitler sent Rommel to North Africa to bolster Italian forces that had been routed by the British. Gariboldi was the commander of all Axis forces in North Africa, but Rommel disregarded his orders. OPPOSITE: A German Pz.Kpfw I belonging to the 5th Light Division is unloaded in Tripoli Harbor in March 1941. By this time, Rommel's *Deutsche Afrika Corps* (DAK) consisted of 37,000 Italian and 9,300 German troops and he now had the support of Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers and Messerschmitt Me-110 fighters from the Luftwaffe's X. Fliegerkorps (10th Air Corps) which had arrived from Europe.

the 10th Corps, to halt the British advance. While they did so, Italy's best armored unit, the Ariete (Ram) Division, under Gen. Ettore Baldasarre, would deploy its 80 obsolescent M13 tanks behind the infantry.

The first German units arrived in Tripoli on February 14, the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion and the 5th Panzer Regiment, part of the 5th Light Division, and Rommel ordered the port fully lit to speed the unloading. On the 15th, the German troops and their sand-painted vehicles paraded through Tripoli to buck up local morale, wearing uniforms designed for them by the Tropical Institute of the University of Hamburg. Aside from the uniforms, Rommel's troops had no special training or equipment for the desert. They would have to learn the hard way.

Watching the parade was Rommel's new aide, Lt. Heinz Werner Schmidt, who was impressed by the large number of tanks rolling past—until he noticed that one of the tanks clattering along in front of him was suffering the same fault in it tracks as a previous one he had noticed rumbling past. Rommel was trying to impress the Italians and fool the British by parading the same tanks two or three times to make them think he had thrice his actual numbers.

The numbers were pretty impressive—80 medium Mark III and Mark IV tanks and 70 Mark II light tanks—but Rommel had more deception in mind. He had his engineers turn Kubelwagen staff cars into dummy tanks with wood and canvas to further confuse the British. Knowing the British might bomb the decoys, Rommel told the commander of the fake tank unit: "I won't hold it against you if you lose a few."

At the parade, Schmidt was amused, but he was more concerned afterward, when the Italian tanks drove past. They got a better reception than the Germans. It was clear that the Italians were proud of their countrymen but barely tolerating the Germans. By day's end, however, the 5th Panzer Regiment was on the road to Sirte, to prepare to face the British at El Agheila.

But while the Germans assembled for battle, their British opponents became disorganized and gave up the initiative as Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell, the commander-in-chief, was no longer focused on Libya, but on defending Greece. He had siphoned off the troops that had won the great victories, the Australian 6th Infantry Division and parts of the 7th Armored Division, to defend that nation. The rest of the tanks and vehicles of the 7th Armored—the famed "Desert Rats"—had been sent back to the workshops in Egypt desperately needing repairs. They had been replaced by two brigades of the 9th Australian Division, which lacked transport, was heavily equipped with captured Italian equipment—most of it actually reliable—and the determined leadership of Maj. Gen. Leslie "Ming the Merciless" Morshead, given that nickname for how his face scrunched up when concentrating on a problem. While unblooded, the Australian "Diggers" were well trained and heirs to a tradition of toughness that dated back to Gallipoli and the settlement of their nation.

The 3rd Indian Motorized Infantry Brigade benefited from long-serving Indian regular soldiers and officers and 200 trucks, but it had only half its allotment of Bren machine guns, and instead of the 42 Boys' Anti-tank Rifles assigned to them, they had only 3.

Finally, the new 2nd Armored Division's tanks and guns were mostly a hasty assemblage of outdated captured Italian equipment. The division's 3rd Armored Brigade deployed 200 tanks, but two-thirds of them were light tanks, and the one regiment of medium cruiser tanks had only 23 "runners," mostly Italian M-13s, which had already proved their inferiority in earlier battles. Some only mounted machine guns instead of 47mm cannon.

The entire force lacked signaling equipment, artillery, air support, and transport, which forced the British to rely on static dumps scattered around the Libyan desert to keep the men fed, fueled, and armed.

The British also suffered from weak leadership. The man who had led the desert triumph, Gen. Sir Richard O'Connor, had been sent back to Egypt to recover from his ulcer. In his place was Lt. Gen. Philip Neame, who held a Victoria Cross earned in the Great War and had gained a gold medal in shooting in the 1924 Paris Olympics, the only British or Commonwealth soldier to hold such a double distinction. He was an able man but nowhere near as skilled in mobile warfare as the brilliant O'Connor.

None of this seemed to matter to the British, though. Wavell's intelligence, aware of the arrival of German troops in North Africa, did not believe they could be assembled, equipped, trained for desert fighting, and unleashed before April at the earliest. That would give Wavell time to prepare his men, deliver reinforcements, and bring up his own supplies.

But Rommel ignored Wavell's timetables. He also ignored Hitler's directives. The German plan for North Africa, Operation Sunflower (*Sonnenblume*), called for Rommel to maintain an active

defense of Tripoli and its environs so as not to drain scarce German resources from the upcoming invasion of Russia.

Instead, Rommel prepared an offensive, determined to drive the British back into Egypt. He personally oversaw the measures, studying the desert hills and wadis from his Fieseler Storch reconnaissance plane and hustling, encouraging, and sometimes bullying his men to move troops, guns, vehicles, and supplies forward.

The efforts paid off on February 20, when a Marmon-Herrington armored car commanded by Corp. Harry Short of the King's Dragoon Guards of the 2nd Armored Division was on a patrol led by Lt. Bill Williams (who would go on to become Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's chief intelligence officer), spotted an unusually heavy eight-wheeled armored car heading toward them.

The two armored cars raced past each other, skidded to a halt, and Short recognized the interloper's design and crew caps as being of German manufacture. "My God! Weren't those Germans?" Short yelled before the two vehicles exchanged fire and then raced back to their bases to report spotting the enemy.

Four days later, the battle heated up when a dawn British patrol at the abandoned Agheila fort found seven German tanks, three armored cars, and a section of troops on motorcycles waiting for them. The Germans shot up the lead armored car, wounding one man and taking two men as prisoners. Ten minutes later the Germans were riding off victorious with more armored cars blasted, POWs in hand, and a British staff car wrecked.

The tentative moves continued as March began. Rommel ordered Maj. Gen. Johannes Streich, commanding the 5th Light Division, to place minefields to prevent further British advances on Tripoli. By now, Rommel had 37,000 Italian and 9,300 German troops under his command. Most importantly, the Luftwaffe's X. Fliegerkorps (10th Air Corps) had arrived in Sicily from Europe. Based in Sicily and Libya under Maj. Gen. Stefan Fröhlich, part of Fliegerführer Afrika's mission was to support Rommel with 50 Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers as flying artillery and 20 Messerschmitt Me-110 twin-engine fighters as escorts. They were backed by the Italian Regia Aeronautica's 90 fighters, 10 dive bombers, and 28 medium bombers, and while the Italian Army had suffered a bad reputation so far, nobody questioned the engineering of its aircraft or the courage of its airmen.

Rommel was pleased with how his men were training hard and adapting to the ghastly desert climate. The North African desert that Rommel and his men would fight in for the next two years was an incredible theater of war, stretching 1,200 miles from the River Nile to Tunisia and 1,000 miles from the Mediterranean to the southern edge of the scrubland. The western part of Libya was Tripolitania, dominated by the colonial capital of Tripoli, while the eastern half, Cyrenaica, was centered on the magnificent natural harbor and otherwise unmemorable town of Tobruk. Inland were endless sand seas and marshes like the Qattara Depression near El Alamein, across the Egyptian frontier. Near the coast were rugged escarpments difficult even for tracked vehicles. The only paved road was the Via Balbia, an Italian-built road that followed the seacoast. Inland, trails and tracks connected occasional wells, Ottoman-era forts, and oases.

Across this land was human emptiness—no towns, villages, people, or even drinking water.

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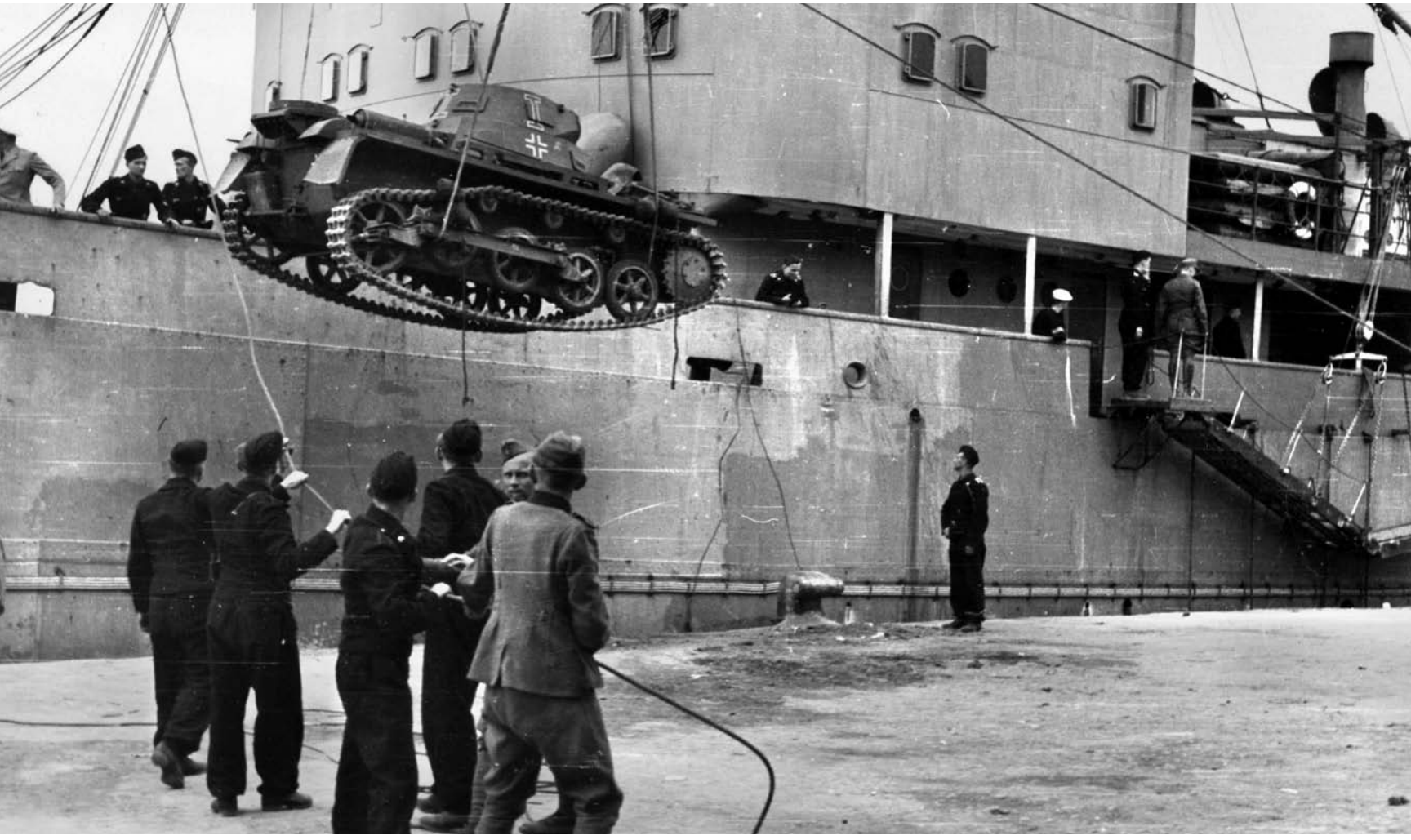

Ubiquitous rodents, scorpions, vipers, and flies were the only life. In summer it could become too hot to fight, especially in armored vehicles. German propaganda cameramen would make a great show of filming tankers frying eggs on panzer hulls but not revealing that the hull section had been doused in paraffin. At night, however, men had to wear overcoats as temperatures could drop 60 degrees.

Historian John Strawson noted that the Afrika Korps men expected to find endless soft sand. Instead they found "vast stretches of hard sand and of stony ground riddled with black basaltic slabs; there were bony ridges and ribbed escarpments and deep depressions; there were flat pans which held water after the rains…. There were wadi-fed flats which sprang overnight into flowery glory in spring; there were endless undulated sand and gravel dunes whose crests marched in rhythm, like waves at seas." Rommel himself would compare desert fighting to sea warfare, regarding his panzers as battleships and ground merely as waves, possession of which was unimportant. What mattered was destroying the enemy's army, something he grasped immediately while his opponents did not.

Heavy sandstorms that raced along as quickly as 90mph clogged rifle breeches, filled nostrils, buried food and equipment, and inflamed eyes. In winter, rain turned the dust-like sand into mud.

Water was the most precious item in the desert. In a 1942 battle, the Germans required three quarts per day per soldier, four quarts for each truck, and eight quarts for every tank. Both sides struggled to stay hydrated, drawing their drinking water from desert wells called "birs" and saving the stuff by washing clothes in sand and gasoline. The Germans had a superior water and gasoline pannier, while the British ones leaked. Very quickly the British started seizing captured German *Einheits-Kanisters*, and both British and American factories produced them under the name the British troops gave them: "jerrican." They are being used in modern production forms to this day.

The jerrican was standard German army issue, but desert training was not. Rommel's men had to add air and oil filters to their vehicles, adjust their carburetors to accept the lower-grade gasoline the Italians were providing, and even reorganize field ration packs to increase the amount of vegetables.

While this went on, Fliegerkorps 10 got down to business, hammering the British defenders of the King's Dragoon Guards and the Tower Hamlets Rifles. Neither outfit was used to the Luftwaffe's offensive style. The latter battalion's officers were enthusiastic weekend soldiers, one of whom traveled with a bell-tent, carpet, and tin bath. The enlisted men were made up of London Cockneys, who were greatly worried about their East End families who were being bombed nightly by the Luftwaffe. Facing other Luftwaffe planes in North Africa, the Tower Hamlets men treated the incoming Stukas to both determined machine-gun fire and colorful East End invective.

Meanwhile, Rommel flew back to Berlin on March 21 to report on his progress, explain his plans, and receive the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves from Hitler for his feats in France. At the briefing with Army Chief of Staff General Walther von Brauchitsch and General Franz von Halder, Rommel was told to limit his offensive activity. Germany was about to invade the Soviet Union, and the North African war was to be a sideshow. However, the best defense was a good offense, and Rommel was ordered to take Agedabia, a hamlet beyond the British lines at El Agheila, and possibly Benghazi, and advance no further. Lengthening supply lines of an offensive would be intolerable. More importantly, Rommel was to wait until his second panzer unit, the 15th Panzer Division, had arrived in Libya and been acclimated before attacking.

Rommel protested and reportedly called Halder a bloody fool and asked him what he had ever done in war except sit on his backside in an office chair. Rommel flew back to Africa on March 23, and chose to attack anyway.

On March 24, Winston Churchill reacted to the sparring in the North African desert by sending Wavell a telegram that read, "I presume you are only waiting for the tortoise to stick his head out far enough before chopping it off."

On March 31, Rommel answered Churchill's telegram by unleashing the 5th Light Division against the 1st Tower Hamlets Rifles, hurling tanks and armored cars against their positions on the appropriately named Cemetery Hill and quickly pushing them back with sheer force amid 100-degree heat. With this done, the 5th Panzer Regiment stormed forward and met the 25-pounder guns of the 104th Royal Horse Artillery positioned behind the hill, firing over open sights. The Germans called down Stukas, but the British held the ground.

However, Rommel had already made a personal

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ABOVE: In April, 1941, General Rommel surveys the approach to Tobruk—the best natural harbor on the Libyan coast with a water distillation plant that produced 40,000 gallons per day. Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered Field Marshal Wavell to defend Tobruk "to the death, without thought of surrender." OPPOSITE: German Afrika Korps armored column advances across Libya in April, 1941. Most of the roads were unpaved "tracks" across the barren rocky landscape, subject to 90-mph sandstorms that clogged rifle breeches, buried supplies and equipment, and inflamed eyes. Gasoline and water shortages were also a constant problem.

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reconnaissance of the area in his Storch airplane and spotted an alternate attack route through the sand dunes along the coast. At 4:30 p.m., Streich led a battle group of tanks and infantry centered around Lt. Col. Gustav Ponath's 8th Machine-Gun Battalion around the Tower Hamlets Rifles, broke through, and rolled up the British defenses.

However, the British had foreseen this, and the local commander called for the 6th Royal Tank Regiment (RTR) stationed in the rear to counter-attack by night. The request went to Maj. Gen. Michael D. Gambier-Parry, commanding the 2nd Armored, and he vetoed it on the rational grounds that a night tank attack would be a disaster. Ironically, the 7th Armored Division, which his unit had replaced, specialized in night tank attacks. He chose to trade space for time and withdrew.

But Rommel had no appetite for a night tank attack, either, and he used the night hours to bring up troops, ammunition, and supplies. His offensive resumed on April 2, with his tanks and motorized infantry rolling up the Via Balbia, headed for Agedabia, 60 miles away. They ran into some 6th RTR cruiser tanks on their southern flanks and quickly destroyed seven of them and captured five more. By nightfall, the 5th Light was in Agedabia, one of a number of villages scattered the length of the Via Balbia.

That was as far as they were supposed to go under the orders given to Rommel. However, with 800 British POWs in the bag, Rommel sensed a complete victory. He took another calculated gamble, maintaining the offensive and splitting his forces into three columns. If the British had a concentrated armored force nearby, they could have destroyed him in detail, but the nearest such unit was an Australian brigade at Benghazi.

"One cannot permit unique opportunities to slip by for the sake of trifles," Rommel later wrote.

Rommel sent his 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion on its three-man motorcycles with the Brescia Infantry Division on its left to Soluch and Ghemines. In the center, a column of tanks and motorized troops from the 5th Light and Ariete Divisions under the 5th Panzer Regiment's Colonel Friedrich Olbrich would head across the central Cyrenaican tracks for the trail junctions of Antelat and Msus. On the right, the Ariete Division's reconnaissance battalion and the German 8th Machine-Gun Battalion, under Col. Graf von Schwerin (who would later command the tough 116th Panzer Division in the Battle of the Bulge), would head at top speed across other tracks to cut off the base of the thumb of the Cyrenaican peninsula. Finally, the rest of the Afrika Korps and the Italian 10th Corps would follow along the coast road.

Most of Rommel's columns would meet up at the track junction at Mechili, an oasis guarded by an Ottoman-era fort, which was also the largest British supply dump west of Tobruk with vast amounts of fuel stored in underground tanks. If Rommel captured the valuable stores, he would be able to keep driving forward. If not, his troops would be trapped in the barren desert.

Rommel's plan was daring and simple. His mobile troops would drive across the Libyan desert toward Tobruk and cut off the British troops from behind. Italian General Zamboni protested, saying the desert route was a death trap. To prove him wrong, Rommel hopped into a staff car with two aides and drove along the track.

So the orders were cut, and the troops and vehicles roared off. The British withdrew, except for some cruiser tanks of 5th Royal Tank Regiment, which skirmished unsuccessfully with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Panzer Regiment, losing seven tanks for three panzers.

But logistics stopped the Germans where British shells could not. The Afrika Korps ran out of gasoline. Streich told Rommel that it would take at least four days to maintain the offensive. Rommel ordered all of 5th Light's trucks and light vehicles to be unloaded where they were and sent back to the divisional fuel dump at Arco dei Fileni for gasoline, rations, and ammunition. For 24 hours much of the Afrika Korps was immobilized in the desert, potentially open to a devastating counter-attack. It never came. Right after Agedabia fell, Wavell, aware of his shortage of troops and increasingly worried, flew to Neame's headquarters at Barce, intending to replace the seemingly-hapless field commander with O'Connor, the victor of the earlier desert campaign, now recovered from his stomach ulcer.

Neame told Wavell that he had ordered 2nd Armored to move to an agreed deployment area near Antelat to cover routes to Benghazi or Mechili. Wavell countermanded that order, still convinced that Rommel did not have enough troops to take

National Archives

all of Cyrenaica. Benghazi had to be the only objective. The order was sent at 9 p.m., but Gambier-Parry did not receive it until 2:30 the following morning. By then, 2nd Armored's vehicles were scattered, short of gasoline, and breaking down. The infantry was down to half strength.

Closer to the scene, Gambier-Parry figured the only thing he could do was disobey the order and regroup at Sceleidima. This habit of British generals regarding orders as suggestions to be digested rather than commands to be obeyed would continue through the North African campaign, resulting in many British defeats.

Next, O'Connor persuaded Wavell to leave Neame in charge. The quiet Anglo-Irishman could not "pretend I was happy at the thought of taking over command in the middle of a battle which was already lost." O'Connor suggested that he function as an adviser to Neame. Wavell agreed. O'Connor would later describe it as "the worst proposal he had ever made."

Wavell instructed Neame to fall back on a position near Benghazi if he was pressed and gave him permission to evacuate the city. The British simply lacked a powerful maneuver force that could counterattack the Afrika Korps. The troops who could do so were in Greece.

On the evening of April 3, Rommel drove to the northern flank, visiting the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, and met with the battalion's commander, Lt. Col. Baron Irnfried von Wechmar, who had a surprise for Rommel—an Italian priest who had slipped out of Benghazi to inform his countrymen and the Germans that the British were feverishly working to abandon the port.

Rommel changed the north column's orders, telling Wechmar to drive straight for Benghazi, adding the reward of authorizing Wechmar to represent the Reich in the Benghazi victory parade.

Wechmar did so immediately, sending his scout cars, motorcycles, and trucks roaring north toward the city. In Benghazi, Neame ordered the demolition plans executed, and 4,000 tons of captured Italian ammunition exploded. By dawn, the harbor was an appalling mess of wrecked ships and harbor vessels. But Wechmar's vehicles were in the city receiving a rapturous welcome from the city's residents—the much-conquered Benghazi citizens greeted all their invaders warmly.

Meanwhile, Rommel headed back to his tactical headquarters to find an unexpected visitor, his nominal Italian superior, Gen. Italo Gariboldi, who commanded all Axis forces in North Africa. Gariboldi was furious with Rommel's aggressive actions and violations of orders from Berlin—supported by Rome—which were unconventional and could easily lead to disaster. Gariboldi worried about Rommel's flanks and supplies. As Rommel's superior, he could halt Rommel dead in his tracks. Any further offensives had to be approved by the Italian Comando Supremo in Rome. Rommel flatly refused to obey any of Gariboldi's orders and strictures.

Gariboldi started off by saying, "I am very displeased…"

Rommel cut Gariboldi off, saying, "I'm one up on you. I'm furious."

As the two generals exploded at each other in harsher terms, a signals officer turned up with a message from Hitler—the one authority that nobody, German or Italian, could argue with. His reaction to Rommel's offensive moves had been immediate and enthusiastic, and the Fuehrer, with Mussolini's support, was now granting Rommel freedom of action in North Africa.

Rommel's offensive had appealed to Hitler's desire for unexpected, violent, and hard-driving attacks that rocked his foreign enemies back on their heels and annoyed his domestic detractors even more. The former lance-corporal enjoyed humiliating and berating generals. Just as important, victorious generals were good propaganda, and Hitler often saw battles, campaigns, and even military technology, purely in terms of their value as such. Rommel was good press and Hitler wanted more.

A livid Gariboldi turned on his heels and strode out of the room.

A buoyant Rommel wrote his wife that evening, "Dearest Lu: We've been attacking since the 31st with dazzling success. There'll be consternation amongst our masters in Tripoli and Rome, perhaps in Berlin, too. I took the risk against all orders and instructions because the opportunity seemed favorable…We've already reached our first objective, which we weren't supposed to get to until the end of May. The British are falling over each other to get away…. You will understand that I can't sleep for happiness…."

On April 4, Rommel spent the morning harrying the 5th Light Division's supply officers to resupply his tanks and ordering the 3rd Recon-

naissance Battalion, once finished with securing Benghazi, to head directly east for Mechili while the Brescia Division would tramp up the Via Balbia, suffering in the intense heat.

At Msus, a Free French motorized battalion had just arrived to guard the supply depot and saw tanks approaching. Assuming they were Rommel's panzers, the Frenchmen blew the underground fuel dumps, and thousands of gallons of gasoline exploded in a spectacular ball of fire. The approaching tankers of the British 5th Royal Tank Regiment were not impressed. They needed the fuel to reach Mechili. They were down to 9 cruiser and 14 light tanks. As they clattered along to Mechili, more vehicles dropped out, and the survivors were refueled from the derelicts. By nightfall, the 5th RTR was down to eight tanks. The 6th RTR was in worse shape, down to two tanks.

In the face of Rommel's drive, the British seemed both hapless and hopeless. Neame and O'Connor moved their headquarters from Barce to Maraua but could not stay in touch with their own men. The only capable leadership seemed to be Morshead, who kept his head and his Australian troops together.

By day's end, Rommel's 5th Panzer Regiment had occupied the village of Ben Gania, while the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion ran into three companies of the 2/13th Australian Battalion and a company of machine gunners from the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers holding the pass at Er Regima. The Germans pushed up the road but lost two tanks. With help from Ponath's 8th Machine Gun Battalion, they forced the Australian-British force to withdraw as darkness fell.

The competing leadership styles were clearly visible. Rommel seemed everywhere at once, scouting the terrain and his troops' movements from his airplane, visiting with frontline commanders and issuing orders on the spot, urging supply and transportation officers to keep vehicles moving. Meanwhile, Neame never left his headquarters at Barce, 50 miles northeast of Benghazi. He was an unseen figure to his troops, who called the conflicting orders and hasty withdrawals the "Tobruk Derby" or "Benghazi Handicap."

On April 5, however, the Germans also began to suffer from confusion. The Ariete Division fell behind schedule. Olbricht's 5th Panzer Regiment could not reach Msus on time, either. Fuel shortages and maintenance problems were the reason. German and Italian columns were strung over 20 and 30 miles of desert as vehicles broke down in the gritty terrain. Rommel sent his intelligence officer, Captain Baudissin, to fly over the battlefield in a Heinkel He-111 to find out what was going on, but he was shot down and captured.

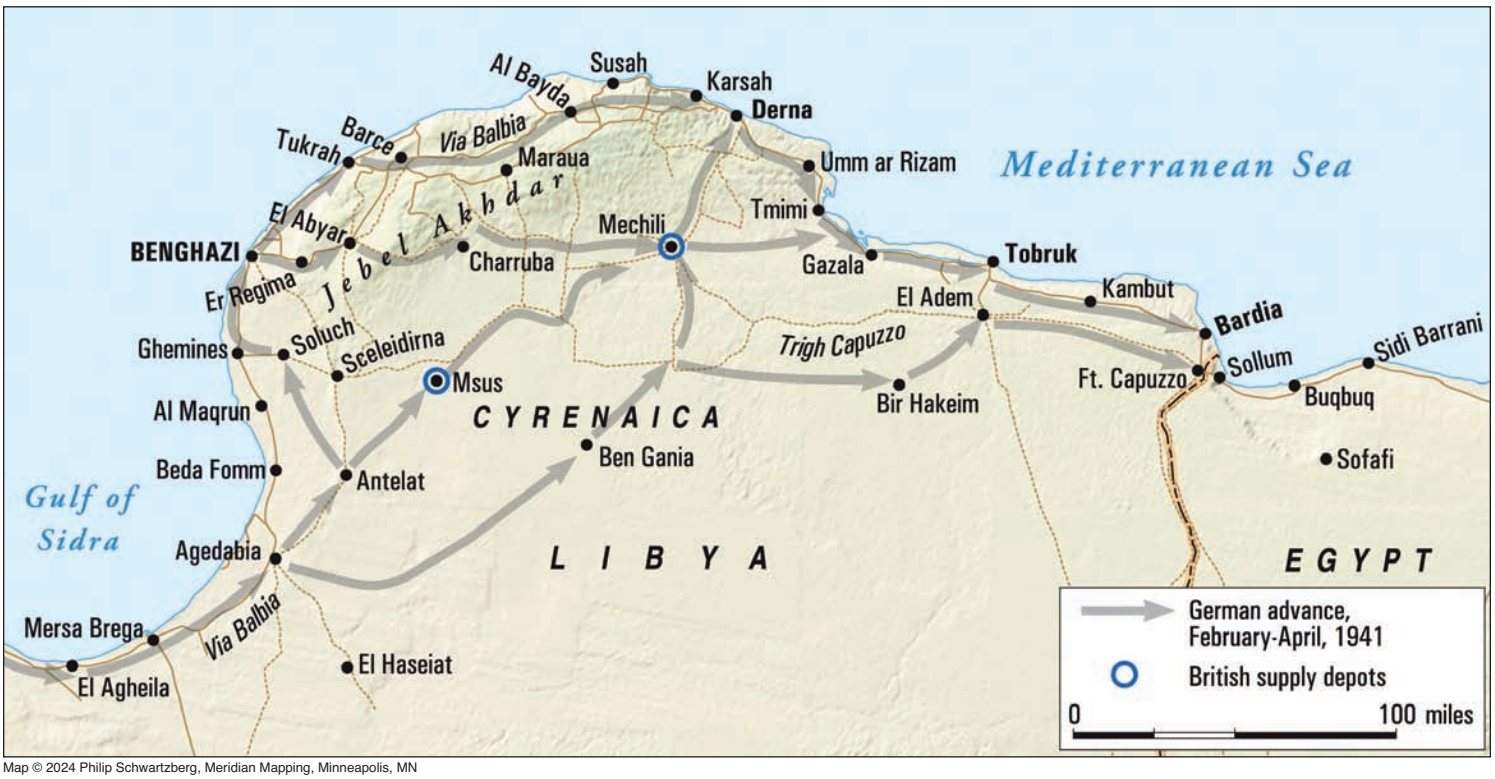
Rommel once again imposed his formidable presence on his men. When Streich asked his boss for permission to halt the drive for four days for maintenance and resupply, Rommel snapped that the advance would continue.

"Impossible," Streich answered.

"I couldn't care less," Rommel retorted. He called the request to halt a "ridiculous pretext" and told Streich to take the fuel from nonessential vehicles, which could wait until the tanker trucks arrived from the rear. The advance continued.

At 2 p.m., Rommel got word from the Luftwaffe that the British had abandoned the Mechili junction. He ordered Schwerin: "Mechili clear of enemy. Make for it. Drive fast. Rommel." He flew off to take personal command of the leading 8th Machine Gun Battalion, reaching the column by late afternoon. He personally led their drive through the night, keeping their headlights on to spot minefields and wrecked vehicles in their path, ignoring the possibility of Royal Air Force attack.

At 6:30 a.m. on April 6, Rommel was 15 miles south of the old Turkish fort, but with only his machine gunners at hand. There was no sign of Streich and his tanks. Rommel dispatched aides to locate his division commander and found him miles from where he was supposed to be. Rommel



ABOVE: Rommel arrived in Tripoli on February 12, and by March 24 his Afrika Korps had captured El Agheila and was pushing hard into Cyrenaica toward Benghazi and Mechili. By April 10 elements of the Afrika Korps arrived outside Tobruk and were ordered to attack. OPPOSITE: A British Crusader tank burns following a direct hit, as an injured crew member crawls away. Though more manueverable, the Crusader was under-armed and its light armor was no match for the Panzer III and Panzer IV medium tanks it faced in combat. Plagued by mechanical problems, it would not see combat after North Africa, where it was replaced as the main tank by the M3 Grant and then by the M4 Sherman medium tanks, both supplied by the U.S.

National Archives

ABOVE: From left, Brigadier Combe , Lieutenant-General Sir Philip Neame, Lieutenant-General Richard O'Connor, and Major-General Michael Gambier-Parry (right) following their capture by the Germans, April 6,1941. OPPOSITE: Afrika Korps infantry move across the desert, carrying an abundance of weapons and gear. Rommel's demanding advance on the British caused frequent supply issues for his vehicles, as well as his soldiers.

raced back to find Streich and ordered him to attack Mechili at 3 p.m.

Streich refused. His division was scattered across 100 miles of desert, most of its vehicles with overheated engines or no gasoline. Rommel flew into a rage and called Streich a coward.

The 5th Light Division's commander ripped his Knight's Cross from his neck and roared, "Withdraw that remark, or I'll throw this at your feet!" For once, Rommel realized he had gone too far and offered a halfhearted apology.

While the two generals argued, the 5th Light Division tried to sort out its difficulties and maintain its advance, finally taking the burned-out wreckage of Msus. But it had 85 miles to go before reaching Mechili, and all the fuel tanks at Msus had been destroyed.

The British were having their nightmares, too. Neame spent most of April 6 looking for Gambier-Parry in the Got Derva area east of Charruba, not knowing that the 2nd Armored Division's commander had withdrawn to Mechili. It was clear that the headquarters of the Western Desert Force—now called the Cyrenaica Command—had to run for it. Neame offered a seat in his staff car to O'Connor, who lacked transport, let alone an official job, while sending his chief of staff, Brigadier John Harding, on separately with other officers. The two generals hopped into Neame's Lincoln Zephyr staff car with Brigadier John Combe, another hero of the original campaign, and headed east with Neame driving. The regular driver was exhausted. Behind them was another staff car full of officers, including Neame's aide-de-camp, Captain The Earl of Ranfurly.

As night fell, Neame and O'Connor took a wrong turn heading too far north. O'Connor was certain such was the case and said so three times to Neame, who said that the road was very twisty and the lack of traffic was because they had passed it all. As the night wore on, the driver recovered and took the wheel again while Neame and O'Connor slept in the back.

The officers came up to a long, slow-moving line of trucks and other vehicles. They started to overtake the column, but had to halt. Lord Ranfurly heard the strangers' crews talking in a foreign language and asked his driver who they were.

"I expect it's some of them bloody Cypriot drivers, sir!" the driver said, presuming they were members of transport companies drawn from the British Mediterranean island colony. Ranfurly climbed out and walked to Neame's car intending to order the Cypriots to move along, but instead felt a submachine gun being shoved in his ribs by an Afrika Korps soldier. The soldier moved down the staff cars, and Ranfurly and Combe warned the two generals to get down on the floor so they might be able to slip out and crawl away.

It was too late. A posse of Germans descended on the two cars and took the whole lot prisoner—the top British field general in Libya, Neame, and perhaps Britain's finest field commander of the entire war, O'Connor. Both would go in the bag for three years until they escaped Italian captivity and returned to British lines.

O'Connor would never cease to blame both himself and Neame for their capture—Neame for taking the wrong road, and himself for not insisting they take the right direction. Still, O'Connor wrote later: "I must confess that the possibility of being on the wrong track did not really worry me very much, as I felt that we should strike the Derna-Tobruk road rather further west than Martuba, and I had no idea whatever that there was any chance of meeting a German force in that area."

O'Connor's capture was a disaster of the first order, and the entire British leadership took it heavily. Wavell suggested to London that an offer be made to exchange six captured Italian generals for O'Connor, but the chiefs of staff were reluctant to do so. Wavell's successor, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, said he was willing to trade as much as £20,000 for O'Connor.

Neither general quite fully recovered from the capture despite their courageous escape from captivity. After Neame returned to Allied hands in 1943, he was interviewed by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Field Marshal Harold Alexander, and Prime Minister Churchill on his experiences but was offered no further wartime jobs. He became lieutenant governor of Guernsey after the war, gained a knighthood in 1946, and died in 1978. However, his son, also named Philip Neame, commanded D Company, 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, in the Falklands War, and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel, commanding 10th Battalion, the Parachute Regiment.

O'Connor fared better. He was given command of the 8th Corps in the invasion of France, leading it in bloody and fairly successful fighting in Normandy and Holland, but was sacked by Montgomery in November 1944 for not being "ruthless enough" on American subordinates. He then served in India, coordinating supplies and logistics for the drive in Burma, and as aide-de-camp to King George VI until retiring from the army in 1948 after another row with the prickly Montgomery. Probably to soften the blow, he was installed as a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath, and in 1971, created Knight of the Thistle. Yet his tremendous victory over the Italians was never remembered properly. The force was called "Wavell's 30,000" in popular press and histories, and he missed the chance to use his flexibility, superb tactical and operational skills, and deep understanding of warfare against Rommel and other worthy opponents.

While O'Connor and Neame went in the bag,

one future top British leader narrowly avoided it, John Harding, who arrived at Tmimi on the morning of April 7 to discover that his bosses had vanished, he was the senior officer in the area, and the British position was collapsing.

Harding, a superb planner and future field marshal, moved immediately, working with Morshead to form a line of Australians from the 9th Division's 18th and 24th Brigades to build up the defenses of Tobruk, restoring and strengthening the old Italian fortifications that had been damaged in the 1941 British offensive.

April 7 was no improvement for the German drive, either. The Italians, already behind schedule, fell further behind when they ran out of fuel. Rommel ordered all available fuel—35 cans—rounded up for them. Olbricht's 5th Panzer Regiment got lost amid sandstorms in the empty desert, and Rommel flew off in his Storch to find them. He spotted a column and ordered the pilot to swoop down beside it, figuring it was 5th Panzer—they had even laid out a cross upon which to land. But it was actually a British column. The cross was meant to fool Rommel, and they greeted him with machine-gun fire, which hit the plane but did not wound the occupants.

It was not until the night of April 7, that Rommel's forces were assembled before Mechili's defenders, which consisted of elements of the 2nd Armored Division and its commander, Gambier-Parry himself. The British tried to extricate their troops but found themselves surrounded. Rommel wrote to Lucie that he was hoping for a modern-style Cannae.

At dawn, Rommel sent an officer to ask Gambier-Parry for his surrender, and the Briton refused. At 6 a.m., Streich opened the attack while Rommel gave overall direction from his Storch. Shortly after takeoff, Rommel's plane flew over an Italian engineer battalion at a height of 150 feet. The astonished Italians opened fire on Rommel with everything they had but missed the Storch. "It did not speak well for Italian marksmanship," Rommel wrote later. He flew to 3,000 feet to observe the battle better.

Rommel saw no sign of Olbrich's force, which he presumed was still coming up, but did spot one of his 88mm guns a mile or two just west of the British. Rommel decided to land there to check on the advance. As the plane taxied to a sand hill, it piled up and became a write-off.

The gun commander reported that his gun had been attacked and shot up by tanks while arriving the previous day, and he was the only Axis unit in that neighborhood. Rommel observed an approaching dust cloud and asked the gunner to open fire on these advancing British vehicles, interested in the air crash. The gunner said the man who had gone off in their truck had taken the firing pin. However, they had another truck at hand. Rommel later wrote, "It was obviously high time for us to be off if we were not to find our way to Canada!" That nation was the final destination for most German POWs at the time.

All hands decamped, and Rommel found his way back to Afrika Korps headquarters. Once there, he headed out again to find his advancing troops and check on the attack. After this, he would not try to command battles from the sky.

Meanwhile, Streich's attack had paid off. Not only was the old Turkish fort taken intact, so were the critical fuel dumps along with 3,000 British prisoners, including Gambier-Parry and Brigadier Edward Vaughan of the 3rd Indian Motorized Brigade.

Gambier-Parry was caught in his armored command vehicle (ACV), found on a slight rise along with two others, and as Lieutenant Schmidt and other senior Germans were looking them over, Rommel landed on the fort's landing strip, dodging wrecked Italian and British aircraft. He strolled over to an ACV and inspected its immense tires, wireless sets, and desks for paperwork. He promptly seized two of them, calling them "Mammoths" for their large size, to use as his mobile field headquarters vehicles. The two Mammoths were dubbed Max and Moritz for two characters in German children's stories.

Rommel also briefly interviewed Gambier-Parry and his command team and then looked through their abandoned gear. One item fascinated Rommel, a large pair of sun-and-sand antigas goggles. He grinned, and said, "Booty. Permissible, I take it, even for a general." He picked them up and adjusted the goggles over the gold-braided rim of his cap peak. They would stay there, except when in use, pretty much for the duration of his war in the desert and became symbolic of his image as the "Desert Fox."

National Archives

Another part of the desert war's image was established that day as well. A severely wounded British officer asked Schwerin to get word to his wife in Alexandria that he was alive but captured. Schwrin promised to try, and sent a message "in the clear" over the British radio frequency to that effect. The British acknowledged the message and an hour later radioed back that the message had been delivered. The desert campaign was becoming, as Rommel would later write, a "war without hate."

With Mechili and Gambier-Parry in hand, Rommel turned his POWs over to Italian troops and ordered Olbrich to refuel his panzers and follow von Schwerin's light forces to Derna, a small town near the coast northwest of Tobruk, which had been specifically created by the Italians as a colonial settlement—modern homes and shops with electricity and running water. Most of these homes and shops had fallen victim to the earlier battles and Arab looting, but some were still intact.

The advance did not take long. By 6 p.m., Rommel himself was in the battered community, connecting with Ponath and the Brescia Division. Also on hand was Maj. Gen. Heinrich von Prittwitz und Gaffron, commander of the 15th Panzer Division, which had started unloading in Tripoli. Having an experienced major general on hand, Rommel put Prittwitz in charge of the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, the 8th Machine Gun Battalion, and the 605th Anti-Tank Battalion, ordering him to take this combined arms group along the coast road and quickly drive the Australians out of Tobruk. Prittwitz was happy to do so, having been an energetic panzer commander in Poland and France. They charged down the Via Balbia and took more than 800 prisoners in their advance.

Both sides knew the importance of Tobruk, an otherwise unimpressive community of barely 4,000 people living in a few hundred white houses. Tobruk had the best natural harbor on the Libyan coast and a water distillation plant that produced 40,000 gallons per day. Churchill ordered Wavell on April 7 to defend Tobruk "to the death, without thought of surrender." Wavell's response was to fly to Tobruk on April 8 and put Maj. Gen. John Lavarack, commander of the 7th Australian Division, in charge of Neame's old command, providing him with troops by land and sea.

The 7th Australians had originally been set to reinforce the defense in Greece and Crete. Nazi troops were storming into Greece and Yugoslavia, and British forces there were being evacuated. A coup in Iraq had put a pro-Axis government in power in that nation, central to Britain's oil supply. Other British forces were struggling to clear out Italian East Africa, whose defenders were proving surprisingly tenacious. Rommel's advance in Libya could not have come at a worse time for the British.

Wavell asked Lavarack if he could hold Tobruk, and the Australian replied that he could. Wavell then said, "Well, if you think you can, you'd better get on with it!"

Under Lavarack were his 7th Division and two brigades of Morshead's 9th Australian Division, four artillery regiments with 4.5-inch howitzers, reliable 25-pounder field guns, the Northumberland Fusiliers with their machine-guns, two antitank regiments, 75 antiaircraft guns, 45 tanks, a squadron of RAF Hawker Hurricane fighters, and a total of 36,000 men.

Those were not Tobruk's only defenses. With the formidable engineering ability that had been the hallmark of the Italian Army since the Roman legions, the Italians had created a 16-mile perimeter defense around the town with a series of 128 concrete posts in two rows along with tunnels, underground chambers, anti-tank ditches, barbed wire, firing pits, and trenches. Behind this Red Line stood the Blue Line, two miles closer to Tobruk, with pits for mortars.

But these impressive defenses had not held up the attacking 6th Australian Division's assault on the port for long in 1941, and had not been much improved. In fact, some positions were damaged from the previous battles. Rommel was aware of this and also aware that the defending Australian-British force, like the Italians in 1941, was regrouping after a demoralizing series of defeats and retreats.

Rommel ordered Prittwitz to attack Tobruk on the morning of April 10, from the west, while the Brescia Division's infantry and Trento Division's artillery provided a diversionary attack to the southwest. Rommel ordered Streich and his armor to head there as well, but both Streich and Olbrich made protests. Their tanks needed maintenance. Rommel flew to Mechili and ordered Olbrich to get his panzers moving. Then Rommel raced back to Prittwitz's area, arriving at dawn. Rommel found Prittwitz had driven through the night to catch up with his command and had gone to sleep. Rommel ordered Prittwitz out of his bedroll, saying Prittwitz was giving the British time to do another Dunkirk, and ordered him forward.

Amid this tale of exhausted Germans struggling to advance, one German leader was still moving. Ponath and his 8th Machine Gun Battalion were within 16 kilometers of Tobruk when they reached a bridge that spanned a wadi. As they raced for it, sappers of the Australian 2/3rd Field

Australian War Memorial

ABOVE: Australian soldiers man a strongpoint during the siege. These partly concealed, roofless pillboxes were located about every 1,000 feet around the perimeter. OPPOSITE: An Afrika Korp panzer, loaded with gear, travels over a desert track during the advance on Tobruk in March, 1941. The besieged Allied forces in Tobruk, supplied by sea, would hold out for 242 days until New Zealand troops of the British Eighth Army broke through on December 7, 1941. Rommel would finally take Tobruk on June 20, 1942.

Wikimedia

Engineer Company hit their detonators, blasting the bridge and stopping the machine gunners cold. British artillery and Northumberland Fusiliers machine guns opened fire, delaying the Germans long enough for Prittwitz to arrive with Schwerin's armored cars. Prittwitz set the German example, personally leading a charge down the highway amid sandstorms. The British set three cars on fire, and Prittwitz was killed by a direct hit on his vehicle from a British anti-tank gun. With that, having lost three dead and 30 wounded, the Anglo-Australian force withdrew into the fortress, leaving behind the first German general to die in North Africa.

The attack was poorly organized and coordinated and was a mark against Rommel's generalship. So was his continued disdain for supply. His tanks and vehicles kept outrunning their fuel trucks, and he ignored his junior officers' requests to take time to refuel and repair battered vehicles. Instead, Rommel would berate those officers for not maintaining the pace of the offensive. He didn't seem to have much sentimentality for his officers at all. After Prittwitz's death, Rommel met again with Streich and Olbrich, who argued with Rommel over the pointless death of Prittwitz. Rommel just said, "We probably tried too much with too little. Anyhow, we are in a better position now."

The meeting had more unpleasantness. When Streich's two-car convoy came up for the conference, Rommel saw them through his binoculars, identified the vehicles as British, and ordered his escort to get their 20mm antiaircraft gun ready to tear them apart in case it was a British raiding group. It turned out to be Streich in captured cars, and Rommel shouted that Streich should never have followed Rommel in a British car—he might have been shot.

Streich coolly replied, "In that case, you would have managed to kill both your panzer division commanders in one day, Herr General."

Rommel sent the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion to the Bardia roadblock to release Wechmar, who was to drive on to Bardia and seize that coastal town. A mixed force of infantry was to dash to Sollum and cut off British escape routes to Egypt. With that, the encirclement of Tobruk was complete, and it was time to attack the port. However, Rommel and the Afrika Korps lacked decent maps of the place. While the Italians had created the entire fortified complex, their cumbersome bureaucracy was having a hard time locating the original maps and blueprints.

No matter. On Good Friday, April 11, Rommel would attack. After three days of moving vehicles, men, and fuel forward, the Luftwaffe had finally set up landing strips close enough to the battlefield for the dreaded Stuka dive bombers to operate. Aware that Tobruk's defenders were growing stronger every day and that he lacked hard information on the defenses, Rommel ordered Olbrich to attack blind. Olbrich objected, citing that his tanks were not battleworthy.

"You will attack nevertheless," Rommel snapped, adding that he would personally join the assault.

Olbrich's tanks and Ponath's machine gunners moved up the dirt road from El Adem airfield, Tobruk's landing strip, in the afternoon against the 2/13th and 2/17th Battalions of the Australian 20th Infantry Brigade, fighting their first battle. Ponath's men went in first, expecting that the green Australians would flee and leave behind their nation's excellent beer to drink.

Instead, the Australians greeted the Afrika Korps with heavy fire, and the 8th Machine Gun Battalion had to hit the dirt and summon tanks. About 10 of them came rumbling up, hurling shells against the Australian bunkers. The Australians, lacking antitank guns, could not shoot back. But they did not need to. The German tanks clattered up to the Italian-built anti-tank ditch and stopped.

A frustrated Olbrich ordered his tanks to turn east and drive parallel to the massive ditch and find a way in. Meanwhile, the British responded, sending five cruiser and eight light tanks of the 1st Royal Tank Regiment, part of the fortress reserve, to counterattack. The British and German tanks traded salvos across the anti-tank ditches and fortifications like warships on the high seas. The battle lasted for half an hour with both sides blasting holes in each other's tanks. At that point, British heavy artillery opened fire on the Germans, and Olbrich decided he had had enough, leaving behind three blasted tanks and Ponath's men, trapped in bare rock and scraping hollows. These Germans remained in place until nightfall, when Pioneers of the 200th Engineer Battalion reinforced them with explosives for a night attack to penetrate the defenses.

The Australians had not been idle. They put out aggressive patrols that spotted the pioneers, and the Diggers struck back in the dark, forcing the pioneers to abandon the project. The pioneers shuffled back to their lines in the dark while Australian troops laid additional mines

ABOVE: German Army pioneers (*Pioniere*) construct a passage across an Allied antitank ditch during the 1941 Axis offensive on Tobruk. Despite Rommel's repeated attempts, with costly losses, during the April-August siege of Tobruk, some 14,000 Australian troops held the city. BELOW: Australian troops march along the bottom of an antitank ditch, which the Italians had dug when they possessed Tobruk.

Australian War Memorial

before their positions.

At dawn, Ponath's men were still in position, lying under the burning sun, thirsty, covered in flies, suffering from heat and Australian small-arms fire. The Luftwaffe added humor to the situation by dropping leaflets calling upon Australian troops to surrender by displaying "white handkerchiefs" on their rifles. The Australians were in no mood to give in, and nobody had any white hankies, anyway, so they used the leaflets as toilet paper.

Rommel had to face facts and take time for supplies and maintenance, but berated Streich, saying "Your Panzers did not give their best and left the infantry in the lurch!"

Streich answered, "The panzers would have reached their objective despite strong anti-tank fire, if the whole sector had not been protected by deep and well-protected anti-tank traps." There weren't any such traps, but there was an anti-tank ditch.

Rommel said Streich and Olbricht "lacked resolution" and ordered the 5th Light Division's commander to attack Tobruk, saying, "I expect this attack to be made with the utmost resolution under your personal leadership." Rommel's aide, Heinz Werner Schmidt, would accompany the attack to make sure Rommel's orders were carried out.

The attack went off at 6 p.m. on April 13, Easter Sunday, with Schmidt riding with Streich in the latter's staff car. Behind rolled a tank that Streich would mount to lead the attack. The division commander held the only operational map the 5th Light had and used it to figure out where he was in the desert wasteland. Schmidt seemed to have a better grasp of the terrain than Streich but was reluctant to tell the general what to do until they took a wrong turn, came under British fire, and all hands leaped into the tank.

With that, the panzers finally rolled forward, running late because of Streich's wrong turn, and headed west to their assault area.

Meanwhile, Ponath's machine gunners and pioneers tried again, backed by a battalion of antiaircraft guns. In the darkness they finally were able to create a breach in the minefield and demolish the anti-tank ditch.

The Australians counterattacked with heavy fire, and a patrol under Lieutenant Austin "Mummy" Mackell of seven men went out to find the Germans. Among them was an immense sheep farming corporal named Jack Edmondson, who put two German machine guns out of action with his grenades and bayoneted an enemy soldier, suffering wounds in the stomach and throat. When Mackell's bayonet got stuck in the body of one German and his legs were held by that man, another German attacked Mackell from behind. Mackell yelled for help. Edmondson ran over and killed three Germans, freeing Mackell and sending the Germans packing. Edmondson then stood up and collapsed.

Australian War Memorial

An aerial photo of a key strongpoint in the southern sector of the Tobruk defenses reveals the strength of the network of defenses that enabled the Australians to repulse Rommel's elite units.

His buddies carried him to the rear, where he died upon arrival. His valor earned him Australia's first Victoria Cross of the war. He was buried in the Tobruk Commonwealth War Cemetery.

Ponath and his men finally established a bridgehead beyond the antitank ditch, got behind strongpoint R33, and promptly unleashed machine-gun fire on the Australian positions as the pioneers expanded the gap for the tanks.

By 5 a.m., Olbrich's panzers were finally on the right course and headed for the bridgehead. The defending Australians held their fire while Olbrich's infantrymen unloaded from their trucks and half-tracks and the tanks stopped advancing to wait for Streich himself to catch up with them.

At that point, the Australians opened fire with everything they had, and everybody, even Streich and Schmidt, was pinned down, first by Australian small arms and machine guns and then by British artillery. Morshead ordered two tank squadrons to counterattack, and they did so with gusto, knocking out 16 of Olbrich's 38 tanks. Streich and Olbrich ordered their tanks to withdraw, leaving Ponath's men trapped.

Rommel was enraged. Later he would sack both Streich and Olbrich. He ordered another attack, this one not to take Tobruk but to save the surviving men of 8th Machine Gun Battalion. The only force available was the Italian Brescia Division. German troops wagged that the Italian army was the bravest in the world because its men fought with the ghastly weapons they were issued.

The Brescia Division tried, but British shells and Australian bullets stopped them. "The confusion was indescribable," Rommel wrote later. "The division broke up in complete disorder, turned tail and streamed back in several directions."

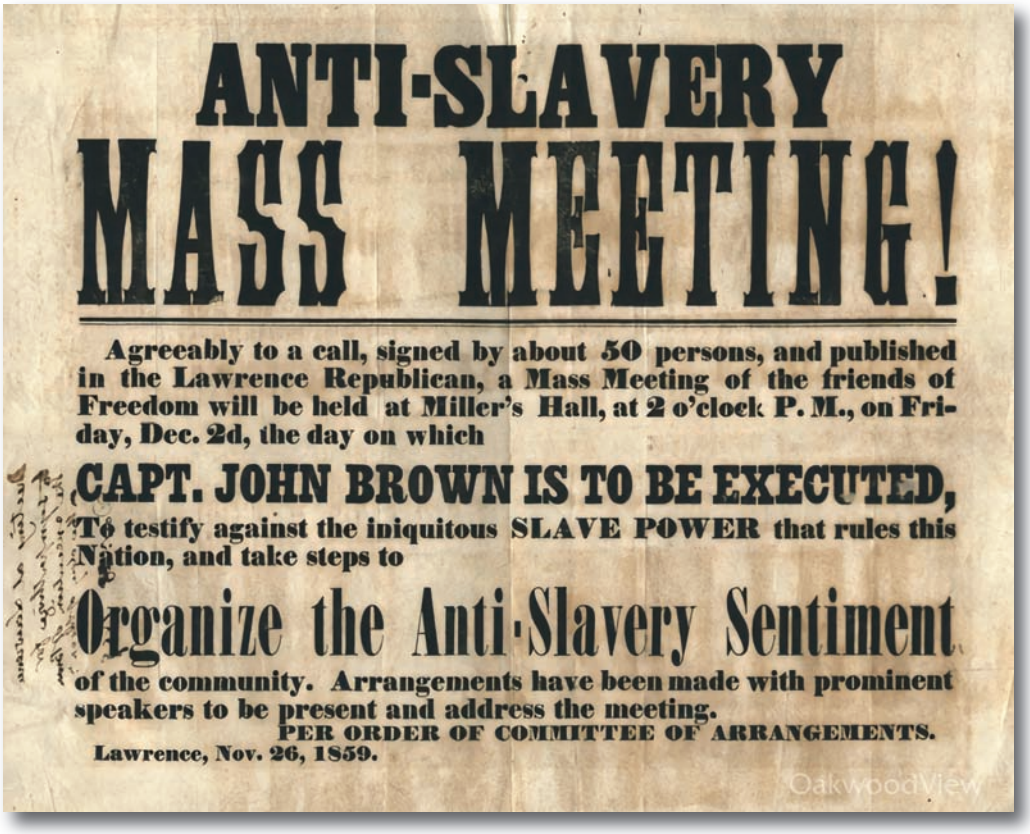
Rommel could not save Ponath's battalion, which dug in amid the stony terrain lacking food, water, and ammunition. Ponath himself was twice wounded. The Australian troops and British tanks began to mop up the exhausted machine gunners, and the Germans began to surrender—except for one individual who dropped his hands, picked up a gun, and shot Lance-Sergeant Hulme. Other Aussies gunned down this individual.

Ponath was among the Germans who died. There were a number of them, including one who suggested that he lead a last charge with 60 survivors to break through the British defenses. But the second-in-command, Captain Bartsch, recognized the futility of the situation and surrendered as many men as he had under his command to an Australian major standing on the field. The two officers met face to face and saluted. The Digger reached into his vest to produce a cigarette case and gave one to the German saying, "Good fight."

Rommel had some kind words for the 300 survivors of the battalion who reached German lines or had been left out of the engagement, too. He told them that they should not let their heads hang down; getting killed and losing battles was the destiny of soldiers. Sacrifices had to be made, the material and manpower losses would be made good, and Ponath himself would receive a posthumous Knight's Cross for his courage, which spoke for the entire battalion, living or dead.

Rommel's words cheered the men up and told them why things had gone wrong—the breakthrough was on too narrow a gap. The Afrika Korps would attack again and win again. The men believed their commander. They had good reason to. In a mere two weeks, his rampaging force of one German light armored division, an Italian armored division, and an Italian infantry division had driven the British from Tripoli to Tobruk, shattered their defenses, wiped out a British

Continued on page 98



ANTI-SLAVERY
MASS MEETING!

Agreeably to a call, signed by about 50 persons, and published in the Lawrence Republican, a Mass Meeting of the friends of Freedom will be held at Miller's Hall, at 2 o'clock P. M., on Friday, Dec. 2d, the day on which

CAPT. JOHN BROWN IS TO BE EXECUTED,

To testify against the iniquitous SLAVE POWER that rules this Nation, and take steps to

Organize the Anti-Slavery Sentiment

of the community. Arrangements have been made with prominent speakers to be present and address the meeting.

PER ORDER OF COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

Lawrence, Nov. 26, 1859.

JOHN BROWN's Bloody Abolitionist CRUSADE

A group of insurgents, probably abolitionists fiercely dedicated to ending slavery, had seized the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry—that was the news Charles W. Welsh, Chief Clerk of the Navy Department, had for the officer in charge of the Marine Barracks at the Washington Navy Yard. At noon on Wednesday, October 17, 1859, the senior line officer present at that moment just happened to be First Lieutenant Isaac Greene.

Promotion in America's military was notoriously slow; though only a Lieutenant, Greene already had served a dozen years in the Marine Corps. Welsh lost no time in briefing Greene about the developing crisis at Harper's Ferry. Situated at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, the arsenal was a cluster of buildings that also included an armory. Nearby was the Hall Island Rifle Factory, another tempting target for would-be insurrectionists.

Welsh explained that the nearest regular army troops had been dispatched from Fort Monroe, a journey that was likely to take two days. This emergency needed a rapid response. "How many Marines were available for immediate service?" Welsh asked. Greene took a moment to add the numbers on duty and those still in the barracks. "About 90," he said.

Now it was Welsh's turn to calculate. The crisis was real, but panic combined with wild rumors tended to exaggerate the numbers of "insurgents." Some reports put the number of armed abolitionists in Harper's Ferry at 200. But the necessity of sending federal troops as quickly as possible overrode all other considerations.

Satisfied, Welsh left to get Secretary of the Navy

Thomas Hovenden's 1884 painting, "The Last Moments of John Brown," immortalizes an apocryphal story of a black woman offering her baby for him to kiss as he went to the gallows. However, the episode never occurred as no civilians were allowed within earshot of the execution.

From 'Bleeding Kansas' to Harper's Ferry, abolitionist John Brown was a major figure in the tide of violence sweeping the nation toward civil war.

By Eric Niderost

Yale University Art Gallery

Library of Congress

ABOVE: "Border Ruffians Invading Kansas," pen, ink and wash drawing by Felix O. C. Darley (American, 1822–1888). "Border Ruffians" were pro-slavery activists from Missouri who crossed into Kansas Territory between 1854 and 1860 to promote slavery. RIGHT: A photograph of two unidentified Border Ruffians with swords. When Kansas held its first elections for territorial legislature on March 30, 1855, pro-slavery Missouri men like these came over to cast ballots and suppress anti-slavery voters.

Isaac Toucey to formally approve use of the Marines while Green began preparations for the expedition. There would be 86 Marines in all, each armed with a model 1842 rifled musket. They would also bring two 3-inch howitzers which, if needed, would be put to good use as Greene was an artillery instructor for the Corps.

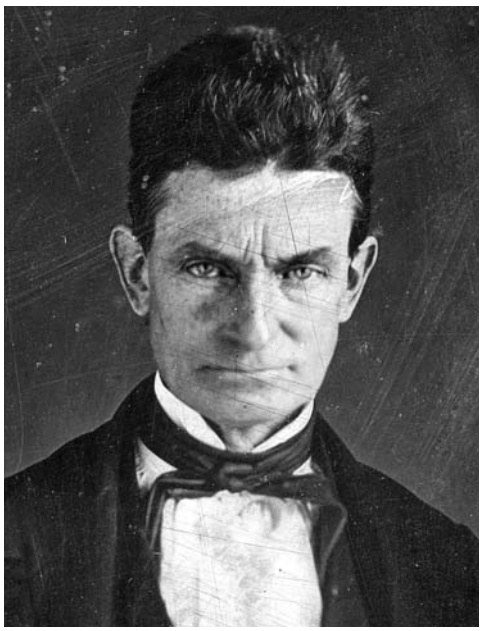
In the late 1850s the U.S. armed forces were ending a tumultuous decade of Indian war and civil strife. The U.S. Army was often despised by the public in times of peace and starved of funds by a parsimonious Congress. Its chief mission was to defend the republic against enemies foreign and domestic, the latter often meaning indigenous tribes trying to save their lands and cultures from the white tide of settlement.

The Army won new laurels in the Mexican War of 1846-1848, but its success created new problems and added responsibilities. As the nation extended to the Pacific, the U.S. Army now had to safeguard some 2 million square miles of territory—much of it wilderness beyond navigable rivers, roads, or existing railroad lines.

It was tough enough dealing with the Plains tribes, but in the mid-1850s the American military had to take on the problems that increasingly arose as Kansas was opened for settlement. The immediate cause of the trouble was the Kansas-Nebraska act of 1854, a law that in effect abolished the old line—36 degrees, 30 minutes—separating the free North from the slave-holding South. Instead, a concept known as "popular sovereignty" would determine if a new territory would ultimately become a free or slave state. The people of a new territory themselves would determine if they wanted slavery or not, free from any meddling from Congress or the federal government. On paper it seemed the epitome of democracy, but in practice it was to prove a pandora's box of increasing complexity and growing violence.

Southern cotton production was indelibly linked with African American slaves and as plantation profits soared, southern apologists lost no time in defending their "peculiar institution." Abolitionism—the movement to end slavery in America—gradually gained momentum in the north, though it was still only a vocal minority. But even if most northerners were indifferent to the plight of slaves, they did fear slavery as an institution that would compete, and ultimately degrade, free labor. For that reason, virtually all northerners were adamantly opposed to the spread of human bondage.

The Kansas-Nebraska act decreed that Kansas would be free or slave according to the wishes of the majority of its residents. The New England Emigrant Aid Company was formed to assist new Free-Soil settlers into the contested territory. Missouri, a slave state that bordered Kansas, had the advantage of geography.



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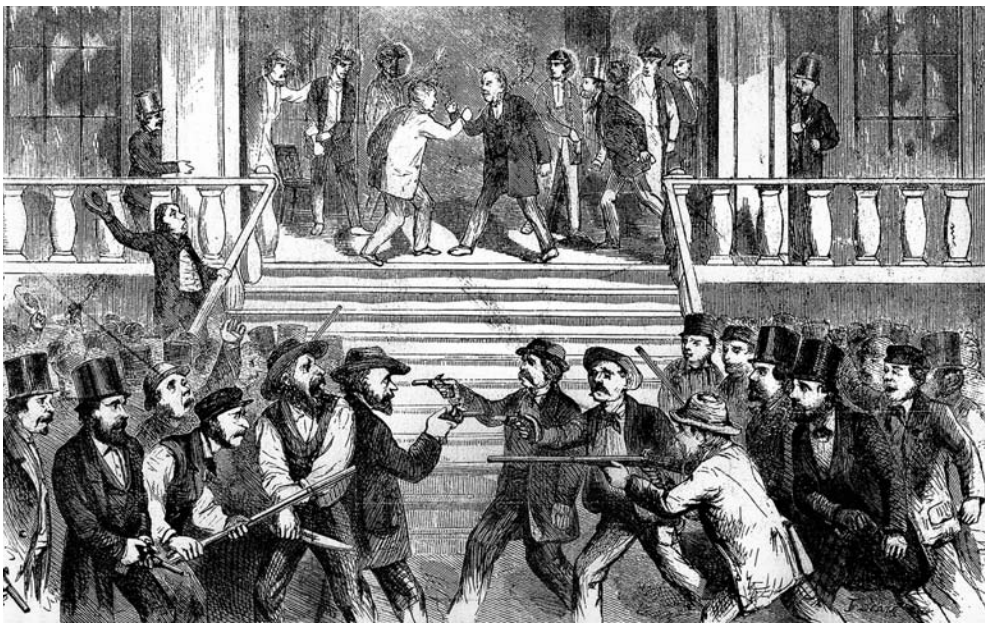

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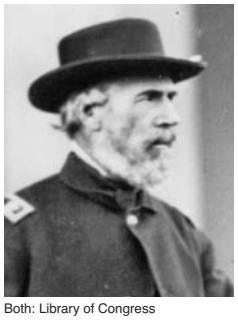


Both: Library of Congress

ABOVE: Not yet a state, the territory of "Bleeding Kansas"was embroiled in its own civil conflict between pro-slavery and abolitionist settlers following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Two buildings across the square from each other in old Fort Scott were converted into hotels—the Fort Scott or Free State Hotel and the Western or Pro-Slavery Hotel—leading to scenes of violence and confrontation such as depicted in this undated engraving "Peace Convention At Fort Scott." TOP LEFT: An 1847 photo of John Brown taken by Augustus Washington, an African American photographer working in Springfield, Massachussets. The son of a former slave, Washington immigrated to Liberia in 1852, and later served in the country's government. FAR LEFT: Colonel Edwin V. Sumner, commander of federal troops in Kansas, found himself in the middle of political firestorm. LEFT: Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee led the Marine detachment sent to Harper's Ferry to capture John Brown.

"Come on, Southern men!" a proslavery newspaper urged, "Bring your slaves and fill up the territory!"

When an election was going to be held to form a territorial legislature, thousands of Missourians flooded into Kansas to vote illegally. Missouri Senator David Atchison personally led a group of illegal voters—called "Border Ruffians" by northerners—into Kansas.

"There are eleven hundred men coming over from Platte County," Atchison gloated, "and if that ain't enough, we can send five thousand!"

Predictably, the pro-slavery faction won an overwhelming victory and soon established a territorial legislature at Lecompton, Kansas. President Franklin Pierce, called "doughface" because of the perception that he could be molded to any position the south wanted, dismissed the allegations of fraud and recognized the Lecompton lawmakers as the only legitimate government of the territory.

Northern Free Staters, refusing to be cowed, responded by quickly drawing up a Free-State constitution and calling for another election for a legislature and governor. The pro-slavery faction boycotted this election, which predicably led to the creation of a Free State territorial legislature.

In early1856, Kansas had functioning legislatures at Topeka (Free State) and Lecompton (pro-slavery). Despite the official endorsement of the Pierce Administration, the Lecompton legislature was based on fraud and illegal voting. By late 1855, Kansas residents who originally hailed from the north far outnumbered those from the south. That meant the Topeka government, scorned by the Pierce Administration as extralegal and illegitimate, actually reflected the real majority wishes of the Kansas population.

In the meantime, Congress relented and decided to boost army numbers by adding two regiments of infantry and two of cavalry. At the time there were three regiments in the regular army: The First Dragoons, Second Dragoons, and the Mounted Riflemen. The new units would be designated the First Cavalry and the Second Cavalry. The First would be organized in the spring of 1855 and commanded by the newly promoted Colonel Edwin V. Sumner.

Sumner was an excellent choice, a man who was well respected, competent, and seasoned by many years in a service he genuinely loved. The First Cavalry would be stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, while the Second Dragoons would be posted at Fort Riley. These Federal Army troops soon found themselves in the center of an unprecedented political maelstrom, the calm "eye" of a swirling hurricane of sectional strife.

The first violence occurred when a Missourian killed a Free Soil settler over a disputed land claim. The murder set off a series of incidents that threatened the overall peace of the troubled Kansas territory. Unfortunately, the current Kansas governor was Wilson Shannon, a political hack guided by the strict instructions of U.S. Secretary of State William Marcy—request federal troops only as a last resort, and even then, only to assist U.S. Marshals in the performance of their duties of serving warrants, conducting arrests, and so on.

At the same time, Colonel Sumner was getting orders from Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. The man who would later become the president of the Confederacy was a stickler for the rules, insisting that Sumner's federal troops were only to act at the request of Governor Shannon and only as support for U.S. Marshals. Even then, the army was supposed to act only when the U.S. Marshals were unable to suppress an insurrection themselves.

Under no circumstances was the Army to act as a constabulary. Many American institutions and political attitudes had formed as a reaction to colonial British rule. One of these was an abhorrence of professional standing armies as potential ser-

Missouri Historical Society exhibit in Missouri State Capitol

Courtesy of the Kansas Historical Society

ABOVE: Armed "Free Staters" pose with abolitionist Dr. John Doy (seated) after they broke him out of jail in St. Joseph, Missouri, where he was serving five years for freeing 13 slaves and trying to take them north to Nebraska. TOP: The Marais des Cygnes Massacre was one of the last big acts of violence during Bleeding Kansas. Charles Hamilton, a pro-slavery man who had been run out of the territory, led 30 men into the village of Trading Post, Kansas, on May 19, 1858. They forced 11 unarmed free-staters into a ravine and shot them—killling five and wound five others. One man escaped injury by pretending to be dead. OPPOSITE: Drawing of a skirmish between Free Staters and Border Ruffians during the "Wakarusa War." Artist William Breyman—who drew himself driving the wagon at right—was a Free Stater who was imprisoned at Lecompton, Kansas.

vants of tyranny and instruments of despotism.

Things came to a head when Shannon called out the militia to "restore order." Happy to have official sanction, the pro-slavery Kansas militia besieged Lawrence, the Free Soil bastion of the territory. Lawrence was ready for any assault; some 800 Free Soil militia, some armed with the new sharps rifle, took up defensive positions.

Desperate appeals by Shannon, coupled by bitter December weather, eventually defused the conflict. The siege was lifted and the militias went home. But the situation was still volatile, with both sides determined to win over Kansas, even at the cost of bloodshed.

The pro-slavery forces again descended on Lawrence, this time taking it by surprise and virtually defenseless. David Atchison was the leader of this group of Southern avengers, and by his own admission, "this is the happiest day of my life." He was exultant, and quickly added "If one man or woman dare stand before you"—offers resistance—"blow them to hell with a chunk of cold lead."

The slavery men responded with a cheer, and set to work sacking Lawrence with a thoroughness that the survivors long remembered. The invaders came into town proudly flying flags emblazoned with such slogans as "Southern Rights" and "White Supremacy." The offices of abolitionist *Kansas Free State* and the *Herald of Freedom* newspapers were destroyed, the printing machinery smashed, the type thrown into the river.

The sack of Lawrence created a sensation, and one of the men who vowed revenge was John Brown. A resident of Kansas since 1855, Brown was from New England. He owned a successful tannery for a time, but his restless spirit sought something more. Brown eventually became active in the abolitionist movement and was known as a man who not only wanted to end slavery, but was dedicated to making African Americans equal in both society and in law.

Not long after the sack of Lawrence came the news that Senator Charles Sumner (a distant relative of General Sumner) had been beaten nearly to death in the Senate chamber in Washington by Preston Brooks, an enraged southern Representative. Brown also knew that at least two Free Soil men had been killed in Kansas, and he wanted to even the score. To Brown, the killings he planned were not murder, but righteous executions that had a biblical, eye-for-an-eye flavor to them.

With the mercilessness of a true zealot, Brown dragged five men out of their cabins on the night of May 24-25, 1856 and slaughtered them with a brutality that shocked the nation when it became known. Some of the victims were shot, others were hacked with the broadswords. John Doyle, who was spared by the attackers, reported that when he found his brother's dead body the "arms were cut off; his head was cut open and there was a hole in his breast."

The incident, dubbed the "Pottawatomie Massacre," set off a chain reaction of violence that brought Kansas territory to a state of near anarchy. For the next three months Kansas entered its bloodiest period, with 29 killed due to internecine strife. Shannon was now willing to dispense with legal wrangling, and even President Pierce, appalled at the growing violence under his watch, was more willing to use the army to restore order.

Sumner welcomed the change, and accepted Shannon's plan to clear roads and check invasions—any invasions, north or south—with regular army troops. The gloves were off, but the gauntlets were on and the troopers were in the saddle. The soldiers were now constabulary, with police duties that did not require a U.S. Marshal. Their new

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

duties were dangerous; ambushers wounded one trooper and two horses near Lawrence.

Henry Clay Pate, a newly commissioned Deputy U.S. Marshal, was a passionate pro-slavery man who made it his mission to track Brown down for the Pottawatomie massacre. Pate assembled about 50 men and set off in search of the now-notorious Free Soil leader. Brown welcomed a fight, and when he felt the time was right he halted and formed his 30-odd men into a skirmish line. Pate's men came up and soon there was a lively—if sporadic—exchange of fire for the next two hours.

Eventually Brown's men got the better of the Pate posse—for the most part, Missourians—and one of them attached a white flag to a ramrod and waved it. Pate himself seized the white flag, stood up, and said "We are government officers sent out in pursuit of criminals. You are fighting against the United States."

Brown, who initially didn't see the white flag, replied, "If that is all you have to say, I have something to say to you. I demand of you unconditional surrender." As he said these words Brown leveled his weapon at Pate. One of the Missourians shouted, "We don't surrender until our captain (Pate) gives the order." The Missourians cocked their weapons and pointed them at Brown.

Unfazed and unintimidated, Brown called to his men "Put a dozen balls through the first man of them that shoots." As if to underscore his fearlessness, Brown put the muzzle of his colt revolver so close it almost touched Pate's chest. "Give the order (to surrender)," Brown demanded. After a moment that must have seemed like an eternity, Pate surrendered.

Brown didn't have his prisoners in custody for long. The ever vigilant Sumner found out about the clash between Pate and Brown—now known as the Battle of Black Jack—and decided to take action. He personally led 50 dragoons to Brown's camp on Ottawa Creek, taking a U.S. Marshal with him to cover any legal issues that might arise.

Sumner told Brown he must disperse and release his captives immediately. Pate and the others were freed, and admitted they had been well treated when in custody. Sumner also broke up a party of some 250 pro-slavery men under J. W. Whitfield whose intention was to rescue Pate. It is not known what Brown said to Sumner when they met, but the abolitionist had no real intention of disbanding his group.

A few weeks later Sumner was given what he admitted was the hardest order he ever had to obey as an officer of the United States Army, namely the disbanding of the free state Topeka legislature. Governor Shannon had instructed Sumner to "disperse" the legislature "peaceably if you can, by force if necessary."

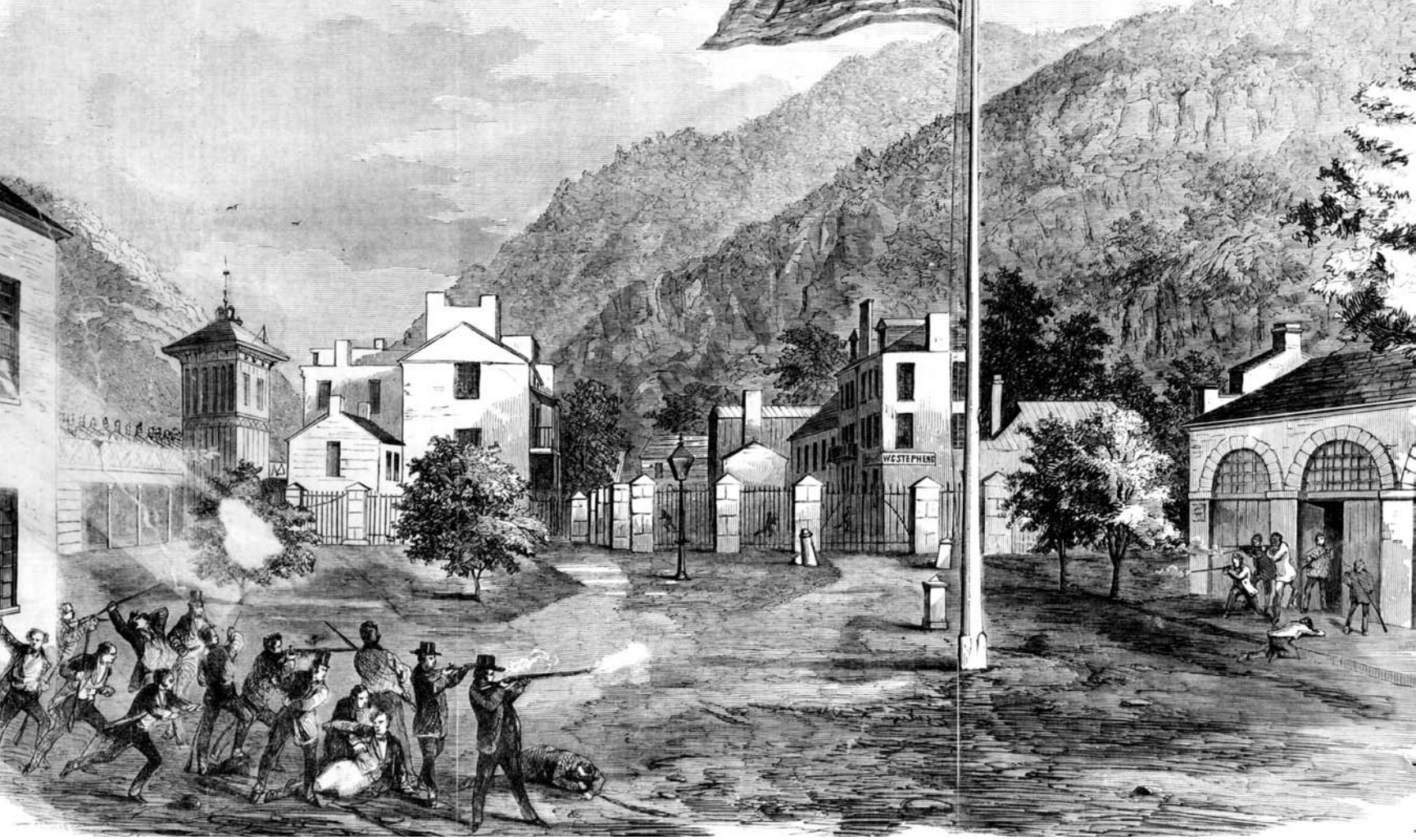
Ironically, the date given for the action was July 4, 1856. The Free Soilers were notified of Sumner's approach when a man came into Constitution Hall where they were meeting and announced "the regulars are coming." Here was another irony, for these were the same words Paul Revere used to alert citizens the British soldiers were on the move.

Hundreds of Free Soil men women, and children were on hand to watch the cavalry troopers ride in, disciplined and orderly. Sumner himself was an imposing figure, ramrod straight in the saddle, with a piercing eye and well trimmed black beard. He gave orders in a booming voice—hence his nickname "bull of the woods"—that echoed down the street.

Sumner reassured the group that he was here to send them home, not to disarm the local militia, a statement that produced a round of "cheers" for the soldier. Dismounting, he walked into the building and proceeded to the legislative chamber where the Free State politicians had assembled. He asked the legislators if they wanted to make him speaker, a small joke that nevertheless eased the tension and produced gales of laughter.

The Free Soil legislature went home, but the setback was only temporary. John Brown and his partisans were still active. Determined to win Kansas for slavery once and for all, JohnW. Reid and an army of more than 300 Missourians headed for Osawatomie, another Free Soil stronghold. On the morning of August 30, 1856, the Missourians approached Osawatomie, and in the early fighting Free Soiler David Garrison and Brown's son, Frederick, were killed.

Brown was outnumbered seven to one, having



only about 38 men, but he handled the situation with skill and courage. By using natural cover and displaying good marksmanship, Brown's men put up a surprisingly effective defense. At least 20 Missourians were killed, and more than 40 wounded, but at last sheer numbers began to tell. Brown and his men retreated over the Marais des Cygnes River and the Missourians turned to sack and burn Osawatomie.

Brown paused for a moment to look at the flames engulfing Osawatomie, and his son Jason saw tears running down his cheeks.

"I only have a short time to live, and one death to die, and I will die fighting for this cause. There will be no more peace in this land until slavery is done for. I will give them something else to do than to extend slave territory. I will carry the war to Africa." To Brown, the rhetorical "Africa" was the slave states, where slavery was legal and accepted.

By 1857 a fragile peace had been established in "Bleeding Kansas." A tough new Territorial governor, John W. Geary, used the U.S. Army in a series of pre-emptive moves that snuffed out the burning embers of discord before they could ignite into a full scale conflict. Sometimes even Colonel Sumner had been reactive, responding to violence that already occurred, as when he went to free the prisoners after the so-called Battle of Black Jack.

With Kansas largely pacified, and a price on his head for the Pottawatomie killings, John Brown left Kansas in early 1858. For a good 20 years, he had dreamed of a slave rebellion in the south—now he was determined to make that dream a reality. There are several different versions of what he had in mind, perhaps the recollections of the great black abolitionist Frederick Douglass comes as close as we will ever get to Brown's overall scheme.

Brown envisioned a small cadre of men, no more than 25 or so, that would be the foundation of the slave rising, partisan leaders who would be natural magnets for slave recruits to flock to in their desire for freedom. They would be sent out, apostle-like, to spread the word and gather recruits throughout the south.

He would create a mountain stronghold in the Blue Ridge, Virginia's part of the Appalachian chain, the first of many such "safe places," each a base and an inspiration to revolting black slaves. Brown needed guns and ammunition for the thousands he hoped would flock to his banner. He already had a stockpile of weapons, purchased from funds donated by abolitionists. Brown for some reason was prejudiced against the new Sharps repeating rifle, and ordered pikes for the slaves to arm themselves.

Nevertheless, the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia) seemed a logical choice to get additional arms and ammunition. There were around 100,000 rifles and muskets there, and untold quantities of ammunition. Seizure of the arsenal might also give encouragement to the slaves and correspondingly strike fear in the hearts of their masters.

The next two years were anything but easy for Brown. By nature bold and swift, he was forced by circumstances to be furtive and patient.

"One of the U.S. Hounds (marshals) is on my track," he once complained, "and I have kept myself hid for a few days to let the track grow cold." He was also plagued by ill health. Malaria, endemic in the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys, kept him in bed for weeks at a time.

Luckily for Brown, modern police detective work was in its infancy. He grew a long beard to disguise his identity, and used a variety of aliases—Nelson Hawkins and Ian Smith, for instance—that served him well in his peripatetic life. As time went on, the raid on Harper's Ferry seemed more and more quixotic. Frederick Douglass pointed out that Harpers Ferry was surrounded by mountainous peaks, and the few roads or bridges in and out of the town could be easily blocked by authorities. The idea that 25 men would be enough to take on the state of Virginia, much less Federal government, also seemed suicidal, and the bad publicity would hurt the abolitionist cause.

Brown went ahead with his plans, and managed

Both: Library of Congress

ABOVE: The Federal Armory's engine house in Harpers Ferry (now in West Virginia) photographed some 30 years after Brown's Raid. By then the building, with "John Brown's Fort" painted on it, had become a tourist attraction. OPPOSITE: John Brown's raiders clash with the militia on Monday, October 17, in this image from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. Initially enthusiastic, the local militia fired on Brown's men outside the Armory's engine house (on right). The militia's members were later described as being poorly armed, disorderly, cowardly, and, at times, roaring drunk by the time Col. Robert E. Lee and the U.S. Marines captured Brown on Tuesday, October 18.

to rent a farm in nearby Maryland as a base of operations. Locals suspected nothing, and some felt the men they saw coming and going were part of a fledgling mining operation. Brown's men, who he dubbed the "provisional Army," had 22 members, counting himself. The Harper's Ferry expedition set out about 11 p.m. on Sunday, October 16, 1859. Three men, including his son, Owen Brown, were left behind as a kind of rear guard and also to keep watch over their cache of weapons.

Brown detached a few men to seize some hostages and free local slaves. One of their main targets was Colonel Lewis Washington, grand nephew of George Washington. They captured Washington without a struggle, and also took one of George Washington's swords, given to him by King Frederick the Great of Prussia. When they arrived with the prisoners, about a dozen in all, Brown appropriated the sword, considering it a talisman of victory.

After the hostage gathering party was dispatched, the rest crossed the Baltimore and Ohio railroad bridge that spanned the Potomac River and soon found themselves in Harper's Ferry. Brown made sure some men were posted to control both the Potomac and Shenandoah River bridges that led into the town. The Armory was quickly taken, and the single watchman was surprised and taken prisoner without incident. More hostages were taken, till the number of captives stood at about 60.

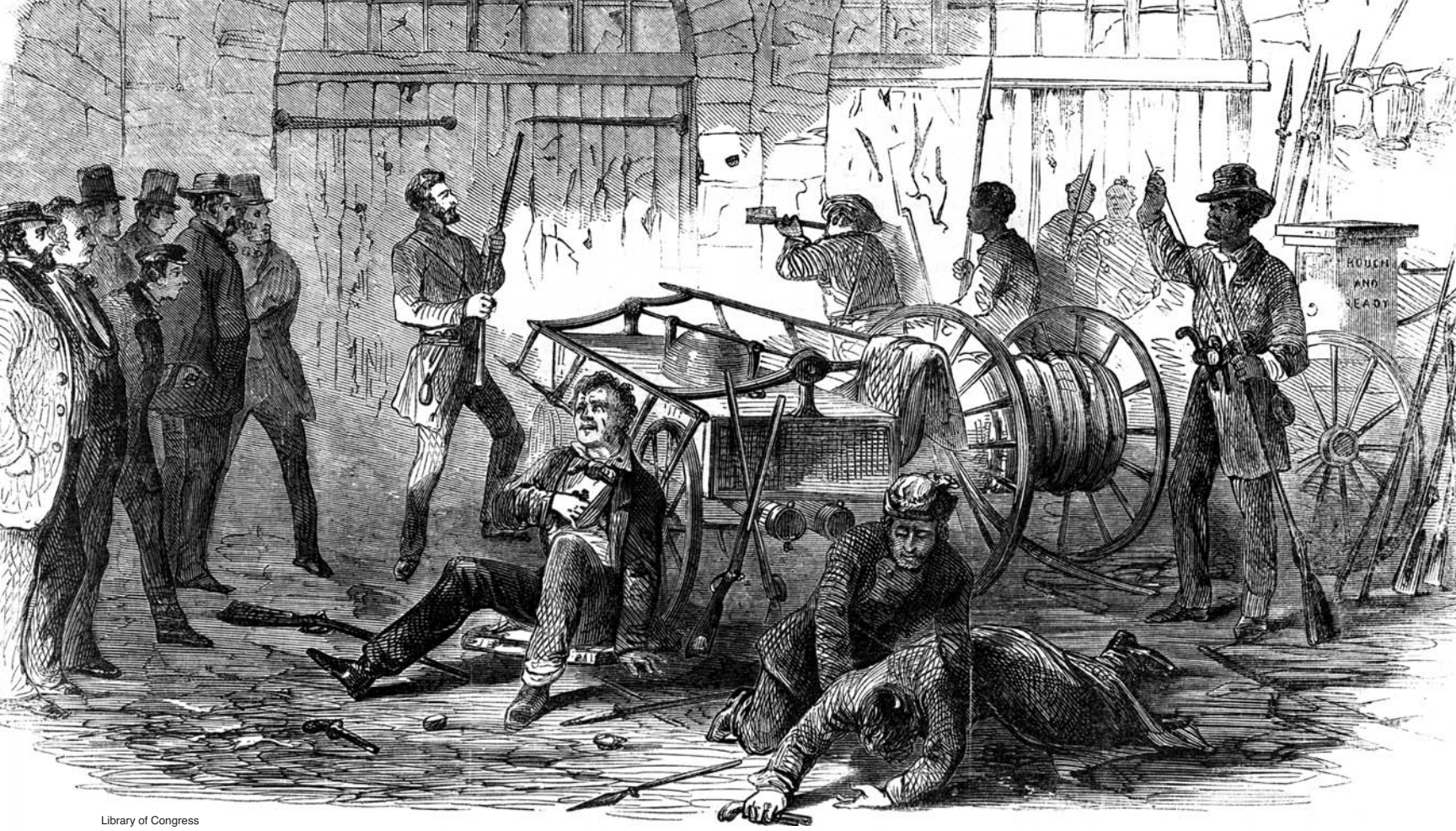
Heyward Shepherd, a Harper's Ferry train station baggage handler, felt something was amiss and started walking over the railroad bridge in search of the night watchman. It was about 1:15 in the morning, and still pitch black. A call to halt came out of the inky void, but Shepherd chose to ignore the command and turned back to the station. One of the raiders, perhaps thinking he would spread the alarm, shot Shepherd in the back of the neck.

A local doctor, who by chance lived nearby, heard the commotion and did what he could for the stricken baggage porter, who later died of his injuries. Ironically, Sheperd was a free African American. But it was 1:30 a.m. when the Baltimore and Ohio "Through Express" train rolled into Harper's Ferry. Brown took the train, but let it proceed to Washington D.C, a blunder of colossal proportions that sealed the fate of the raiders.

The train spread the alarm, and the news reached the desk of Secretary of War John B. Floyd, who immediately telegraphed the nearest available federal troops at Fort Monroe. By noon Captain Edward Ord with 150 Artillerymen would be on the way, but would take them a couple of days to arrive—much too late.

That's when the idea of using the U.S. Marines came to the fore. But Floyd realized that the Harper's Ferry expedition needed a senior officer to direct operations. He remembered that Brevet Colonel Robert E Lee of the Second Cavalry was on leave at his Arlington home, just across the Potomac River from the capital. By chance another cavalry officer, J.E.B. Stewart, was sitting in Floyd's outer office, waiting to be seen on another matter and barely able to cope with the boredom of his situation.

Stuart was recruited to send a message to Lee,



Library of Congress

which he was more than happy to do. Colonel Lee accepted the assignment, and took Stuart along as an informal aide de camp. In the meantime militia units had already been arriving at Harper's Ferry, and their sheet numbers, if nothing else, forced the raiders to abandon many of the buildings they formerly occupied and concentrate on the brick engine house.

Brown had lost the initiative, and by waiting too long, was now trapped in the engine house, where the armory's fire engines were stored. The raiders used the two fire engines and hose cart to block the heavy doors. They reinforced the doors with rope and knocked loopholes in the walls to exchange fire with the militia. The exchanges of gunfire, though sporadic, were often very heavy.

During the course of the day four townspeople were killed, and eight militia wounded. One of the fatalities was the Mayor of Harper's Ferry. The Virginia militia proved to be an embarrassment, upsetting state Governor Wise. They were a poorly armed, disorderly mob, and frequently "roaring drunk." Worse still, they also seemed a cowardly rabble, whose performance the *Charleston Mercury* labeled a "broad and pathetic farce."

Brown sent his son Watson and raider Arron Dwight Stevens out with a white flag; it was not honored by the militia, who mortally wounded Watson and captured his companion. Another son, Oliver, was also mortally wounded during this time. The raiders who had been posted outside the engine house were killed or wounded, and the hostages held there rescued. Only Brown and a handful of raiders held out.

Brown's raid had reawakened memories of the 1831 Nat Turner slave rebellion, when 55 whites, men women and children, had been killed by slaves. This latent fear, hidden just below the surface of antebellum southern society but always present, produced a rage that manifested itself in a callous brutality. When African American raider Dangerfield Newby was killed, his ears and genitals were cut off "for souvenirs," and the corpse was cut open. His body lay in the street for a long time, permitting neighborhood hogs to rend the corpse and eat their fill.

The Marine detachment boarded a special train at 3:20 p.m. that same Monday. To underscore the importance of their mission, their departure was witnessed by President James Buchanan, Secretary Floyd and Secretary Toucey. Colonel Lee and his aide J.E.B Stuart took a later Baltimore and Ohio train. Lee was in civilian clothes, not having a uniform available in time, while Stuart had to borrow a uniform coat.

Lee and the marines arrived the night of Oct. 17, but it was late, so Lee decided to wait until dawn before dealing with Brown and the desperate raiders holed up in the engine house. The next morning, his basic attack plans formulated, Lee asked the local militia if they would like to lead the assault. They declined, so the job was given to Lieutenant Greene and the Marines.

Brown would be given the chance to surrender—but unconditionally. Lieutenant Stuart would deliver Lee's terms under a flag of truce. If Brown refused, Stuart was to wave his hat as a signal to begin the assault on the engine house.

There would be 12 men in the storming party: a sergeant, a corporal, and 10 privates, with another 12 marines to act as a reserve. In addition, two sledgehammer wielding marines would provide the muscle—literally and figuratively—to batter down the engine house doors. Word of the Brown raid had spread far and wide, and as many as 2,000 people gathered at Harper's Ferry to witness history being made.

Brown and Stuart had a parley, but as expected "Old Osawatomie," as he was sometimes called, refused to surrender. Stuart waved his hat as a signal to advance, and the marine storming party surged forward. The sledgehammer men pounded away, but the door resisted their best efforts. The raiders had reinforced the door with ropes and braced it with hand brakes from one of the engines.

Even with all hope lost, and marines closing in, Brown was a tower of strength to the defenders, encouraging, exhorting, and showing by his personal actions an example of courage and resolution. Even the hostages, particularly Colonel

Washington, were greatly impressed.

Since the sledgehammers seemed ineffective the marines had to improvise with a heavy 40-foot ladder as a battering ram. Two strong shoves did the trick, and a low hole was punched through the door. As the door gave way, the watching crowds gave a mighty shout of triumph that nearly drowned out the sound of the gunfire that still came from the defenders.

Lieutenant Greene was the first to enter, and as he did so he spied a kneeling man with a carbine, pulling the gun's lever in an attempt to reload. Green later recalled "Quicker than thought I brought my saber down with all my strength upon his head. He was moving when the blow fell… for he received a deep saber cut in the back of the neck."

The man Greene has sabered was John Brown. The marine lieutenant instinctively tried a coup de grace by running the saber though Brown's breast, but the weapon he carried was a ceremonial "dress" saber and bent double instead of fully penetrating. In the excitement and confusion perhaps Greene's aim was off and he hit Brown's leather belt.

A Marine private, originally a native of Ireland, was the next man through the door, but as he entered he was hit by a bullet in the stomach. He dropped his musket, staggered a few feet, then fell to the ground. Four or five additional marines entered the building, "rushing in like tigers." Strict orders had been given not to fire their weapons for fear of hitting hostages, so they went to work with the bayonet.

Raider Dauphin Thompson tried to evade them by hiding under a fire engine, but was soon discovered and bayoneted, while Jeremiah Anderson was impaled against a nearby wall. Both men died of their wounds. The action only took about three minutes. There was only one other marine casualty: Private Mathew Rupert had a flesh wound in the upper lip, and several teeth had been knocked out.

Brown had been severely wounded, and had gone without food or sleep for more than 24 hours. Nevertheless, he was interviewed for an another 24 hours by a number of people, including Virginia Governor Wise. Brown turned the tables on his interrogators, and before long it was almost as if he was holding court rather than languishing in captivity. People like Wise were amazed at his deft answers, and all came away with a grudging admiration for his courage, honesty and truthfulness, if not his cause.

John Brown was tried for murder and treason, and everyone—Brown included—knew what the verdict would be. His followers fared little better. Of the 22 people involved in the raid, Brown included, 10 were killed during the raid, seven were captured and hanged, and five escaped. Brown's trial received widespread press coverage, and his execution by hanging was witnessed by hundreds, including actor John Wilkes Booth.

Hobbled by an almost crippling lack of men and money, and by political superiors who were biased in favor of the south, the U.S. Army tried to keep the peace and prevent factionalism from tearing the country apart. The army itself reflected the growing divide between north and south, with officers as well as rank and file hailing from different parts of the country. Yet on the whole, with officers like Colonel Edwin Sumner in command, the army managed to postpone the "irrepressible conflict" of the Civil War. ■

Alamy

ABOVE: First Lieutenant Israel Greene leads his Marines into the engine house, as depicted in this diorama at the National Museum of the Marine Corps Heritage Center in Virginia. OPPOSITE: Inside the engine house, John Brown clutches his rifle moments before the Marines break in. Wounded raiders huddle in the foreground, while Colonel L. W. Washington, of Jefferson County, Virginia, and the other hostages watch the action from the left. Several pikes that Brown had planned to use to arm the slave uprising (which didn't happen) appear to be stacked against the far right wall.

In January 1953, tracked armored vehicles support infantry movements during Operation Lorraine, the largest French offensive in Vietnam.

OPERATION LORRAINE:
French Launch Offensive to Regain Territory in Vietnam

In the rugged terrain of Vietnam, General Vo Nguyen Giap and the Viet Minh prove to be an effective and elusive opponent during Operation Lorraine as colonial forces struggle to hold French Indochina

On the evening of October 29, 1952, a group of French combat engineers worked feverishly to repair a ferry ramp on the Red River across from the village of Trung Ha in French Indochina. The men had news that a pontoon ferry carrying the first tank for the newly-created bridgehead was on its way. These initial troops felt relieved that armored support had arrived as the American-supplied M24 Chaffee landed and drove past them.

BY JOHN E. SPINDLER

In a conflict that had started in 1946, these soldiers represented the spearhead for Gen. Raoul Salan, the overall Commander of French forces in Indochina, in his latest military campaign against the Viet Minh. As more men arrived, the bridgehead expanded and engineers began constructing a pontoon bridge to allow quicker movement of armor across the river. Further northeast along the waterway at Viet Tri, another group of engineers did the same. At both sites, it was a race against darkness for funneling as many men and vehicles as possible over the Red River.

General Vo Nguyen Giap, overall commander of Viet Minh armed forces, had inflicted significant reverses upon French forces over the past couple of weeks during a major campaign in the nearby Ta'i Highlands. Knowing immediate action was required, Salan stripped the Red River Delta of men and equipment, gathering the largest French military force in the history of the French-Indochina War, even larger than the one that would later fight at Dien Bien Phu. The operation would use his Mobile Groups (*Groupes Mobiles*), armor, airborne, and naval forces (*Dinassaut*) for use on the rivers in a multi-faceted plan to attack Giap's supply route, compelling the Viet Minh commander to redirect his forces from the Ta'i Highlands into a major confrontation on French terms.

Those soldiers remaining to safeguard the pontoon bridges watched as French, Algerians, Indochinese and Foreign Legionnaires crossed and worked together to consolidate the bridgeheads. "Operation Lorraine" was a bold plan if not a major gamble, driving through jungle that forced

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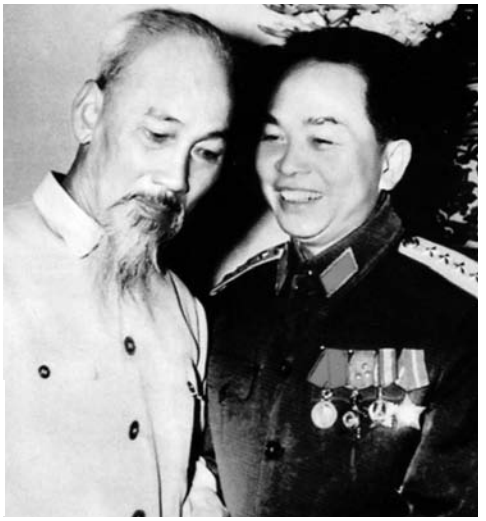

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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Troops and equipment make their way across the delta near Phu Doan at the intersection of the Chay and Clear rivers in January 1953; President Ho Chi Minh and General Vo Nguyen Giap; General Raoul Salan, fourth French commanding general during the First Indochina War; Colonel Marcel Bigeard was the highly decorated head of the 6th Colonial Parachute Battalion (*6ème Régiment de Parachutistes Coloniaux*).

the European power to operate along roads, while the Viet Minh, not confined to the roads, could ambush at any time, at any place.

The current fighting between French and Viet Minh was the latest bloodshed between the two combatants. In the 19th Century, France had gradually taken over this part of Southeast Asia. Starting with Saigon in 1859 and the rest of Cochinchina by 1867, French troops methodically added the rest of the region to its colonial empire: Cambodia, Annam, Tonkin, and finally, Laos. The newly-created French Indochina Union provided a wealth of raw materials—rubber, rice, tea, coal—for France and her empire.

The seeds for the conflict following World War II had been planted in 1919 at the Versailles peace negotiations. It was there that the man who would become known as "Ho Chi Minh" failed in an attempt to discuss independence for Vietnam. Within a couple of years, Ho Chi Minh was heavily involved in the Communist movement. After Germany invaded France in1940, the puppet Vichy regime agreed to the occupation of its Southeast Asian colonies by Imperial Japan. Shortly after the Japanese arrived, Ho escaped to China where he chanced to meet another supporter of Communism–Vo Nguyen Giap. They developed a relationship that would shape the future of Southeast Asia. During the war, both returned to Vietnam to build and run an underground movement in opposition to the Japanese occupiers. While Ho and Giap were developing their nationalistic/communist views, a decorated World War I French officer named Raoul Salan spent a number of service tours in Northern Vietnam and Laos, becoming very familiar with the region. During World War II, Lieutenant-Colonel Salan served under esteemed General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny from the invasion of Southern France to the final push through Germany in 1945.

Japan's capitulation at the end of World War II brought hope of an independent Vietnamese nation. Ho Chi Minh sent his troops to Hanoi, setting up a government. Unknown to them, the leaders of the three world powers had agreed France would resume control of her colonial empire, including the French Indochina Union. For the purposes of disarming the Japanese and maintaining order, an agreement was reached in which the British occupied the southern half of Vietnam and the Chinese held the north until France could dispatch its own troops.

In 1946, Ho Chi Minh worked out an agreement with France that the northern state of Tonkin would be an autonomous state in the French Indochina Union with the French retaining control of foreign policy. Both sides competed to control the population centers from cities to villages, which only escalated tensions. In December, war erupted after a surprise attack by Giap in Hanoi and his subsequent call for the people to rise up against the French. In response, Paris created the French Far-Eastern Expeditionary Corps (*Corps Expeditionnaire Francais d'Extreme-Orient*). Due to the limited road network, the French developed the rapid response tactic of employing paratroopers and riverine forces. In the 1947 Operation Lea, paratroopers dropped near the city of Bac Kan, almost capturing both Ho and Giap.

For the next few years, the limited number of available forces resulted in a struggle in which neither side could gain total victory. Underestimating the genius of Giap and the capabilities of the Viet Minh soldiers, the French were shocked after a series of defeats in 1950, such as Dong Khe and Cao Bang. Giap developed and executed a strategy of eliminating isolated French outposts, particularly those on the border with the People's Republic of China. Any relief force and the retreating forces were ambushed as a result of

being roadbound. The losses seriously demoralized French soldiers and exposed the ineffectiveness of its leadership.

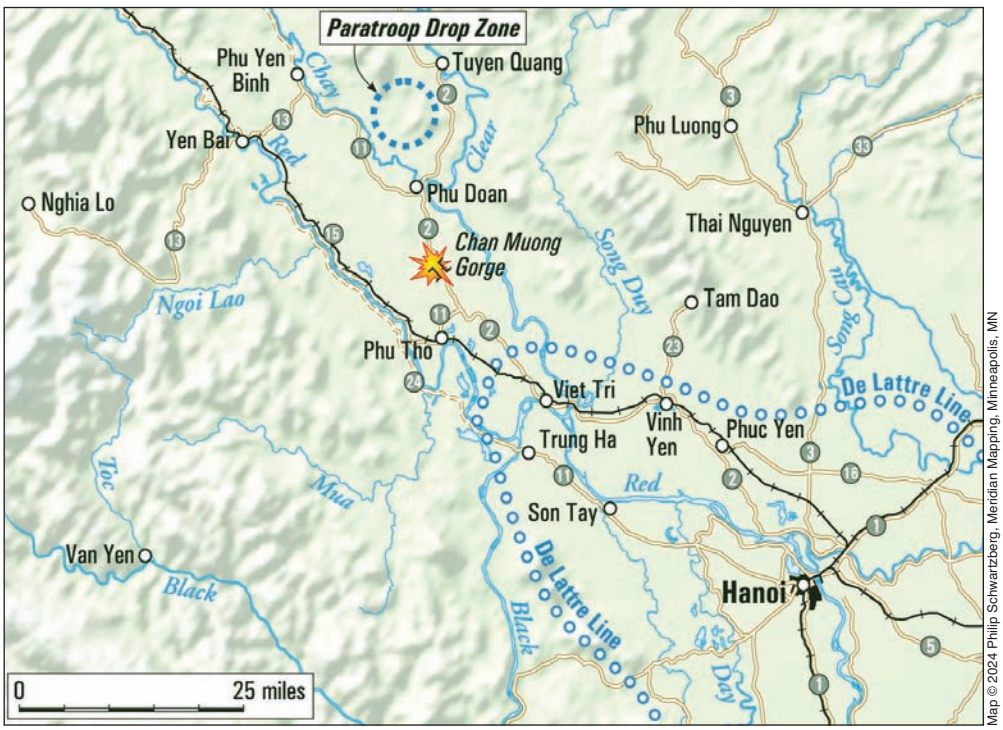
In response, France asked Marshal de Lattre de Tassigny if he would go to Indochina. After extracting promises that he had total control, he traveled to Hanoi. General Salan, who had been in Tonkin since 1947, was named de Lattre's deputy. Meanwhile, Giap became overconfident, launching three different attacks on the French in the Red River Delta between mid-March to the end of May 1951. At Vinh Yen, Mao Khe and along the Day River, de Lattre employed the combined might of artillery, armor and air support to his benefit. Finally engaging the enemy in set-piece battles with a technological advantage, the French exacted a heavy toll on the Viet Minh and their morale received a much-needed boost. After that first victory at Vinh Yen, the Marshal set up the "De Lattre Line," a defensive zone enclosing the Red River Delta, including the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong. This series of 1,200 blockhouses was designed to keep the Viet Minh out of this critical region. He expanded the reliance upon Groupes Mobiles (GM) as a rapid response force. Three infantry battalions, three artillery batteries, an armored platoon and a platoon of auxiliaries went into the composition of a GM, numbering between 3,000 to 3,500 men. De Lattre was diagnosed with cancer and left for Paris at the end of 1951. After his death in January 1952, Salan succeeded him as overall commander.

Throughout 1952, Salan continued the policy of fortified bases and mobile operations. He cleared out any remaining opposition in the Red River Delta during the monsoon season. Whether it was Salan's idea or a result from the collective brainstorming of ideas of how to increase French presence in key locations, the concept of the base aero-terrestre (air-land base) was conceived. These fortified bases possessed sufficient firepower and would be supplied via air, an idea that appealed to the French High Command. A major obstacle that constantly hampered French tactics was the insufficient quantity of military aircraft.

While Salan spent time clearing the Delta, Giap strengthened his military forces. With the border with China unguarded, he now received equipment and supplies from China. In July 1952, the Viet Minh and Beijing worked out the final details of a trade agreement. Giap's soldiers received weapons in exchange for a partial payment made in the form of timber, rice, and opium. Additional Chinese advisors were sent, bringing the total to around 12,000. Specialized manpower support in the form of medics, radio operators, construction workers and truck drivers also arrived from China. The force that the Chinese helped was one of a 200,000-man regular army and a militia force two million strong. Giap had organized the regular force into five divisions, a number of independent brigades, and smaller support elements such as artillery.

As the monsoon season came to an end Giap put into motion a campaign in the Ta'i Highlands to eliminate the French outposts. Following up, this force would drive to the Black River and eradicate French bases, such as Na San and Son La. This new offensive was quite possibly based on recommendations from the Chinese Military Advisory Group. By focusing on these isolated strongpoints along the Nghia Lo Ridge, both the Chinese advisors and Giap knew the enemy would have difficulty bringing their superior firepower into play. If Salan countered, he would have to confront the issue of supplying a large enough relief force. Also, to find the manpower to build such an army, the French would be required to draw it from Red River Delta units.

Although Giap had hoped to begin in mid-September of 1952, his latest campaign to liberate his country was delayed until October 11. Three divisions crossed the Red River abreast, about 30 miles northwest of the De Lattre Line, along a 40-mile front this force was centered by the 308th Division, also known as the "Iron Division," with its target the base at Nghia Lo. To the east, on its left flank, the 316th Division would pass through Yen Bai and strike towards Van Yen on the Black River. On the "Iron Division's" right flank, Giap deployed his 312th Division. It was to capture the small enemy position at Gia Hoi. Farthest west, the 149th Independent Regiment had the task of advancing on Than Uyen and if possible, proceed to a village called Dien Bien Phu. Fighting broke out on October 15 when the 312th



ABOVE, LEFT: An overview of the French colonial holdings in southeast Asia, following World War II . ABOVE, RIGHT: The De Lattre Line in the Red River Delta area and the French Operation Lorraine launched in October 1952 to try to regain territory taken by General Võ Nguyên Giáp and the Viet Minh.

Wikimedia Commons

Division surrounded and assaulted Gia Hoi.

Salan responded by having the 6th Colonial Parachute Battalion (*6ème Régiment de Parachutistes Coloniaux* - 6 BPC) drop into the nearby village of Tu Le the next day. Led by the experienced Col. Marcel Bigeard, the paratroopers arrived to reinforce Tu Le and protect the withdrawal of outpost troops. Perhaps the news of paratroopers in the area distracted the men of the 312th Division as the small garrison of Gia Hoi broke out. A brilliant strategist, Bigeard knew his battalion had the difficult task of providing rearguard duty, especially as he and his paratroopers understood their role could mean their destruction. At 5 p.m. on October 17, a heavy mortar barrage hammered the Nghia Lo defenders. Following this, the "Iron Division" attacked. The key point of the Nghia Lo Ridge defense line fell in less than an hour. French casualties numbered around 700. Departing Tu Le on October 20 before he could be completely surrounded, Bigeard's battalion and the Gia Hoi survivors headed towards the Black River. With Viet Minh in constant contact, the 6 BPC fought a hard-pressed rearguard action. By the time they reached the "safe zone," the battalion had incurred a 60-percent casualty rate. Viet Minh casualties are unknown but probably significant due to the aggressiveness of the French paratroopers, whom the Viet Minh soldiers detested immensely.

The French reacted to Giap's campaign by dispatching reinforcements to their Black River locations, including the base aero-terrestre at Na San. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Salan and his staff devised Operation Lorraine. With the goal of targeting the Viet Minh supply lines, the French hoped to induce Giap to divert his army from the Ta'i Highlands to counter this threat. This grand and intricate scheme would be the largest ever implemented by the French. Fielding 30,000 men, it was broken into four stages, with the last being optional.

Stage I comprised establishing a pair of bridgeheads over the Red River for a thrust in the direction of the Viet Minh supply base at Tuyen Quang. Stage II projected the linking up of the two bridgeheads in a drive up Colonial Route 2 (*Route Coloniale* 2-RC2) to the enemy supply depot in the village of Phu Doan on the Clear River. Coordinating with the land force's advance, an airborne force, under Operation Marion, would drop across the river from Phu Doan. These paratroopers were to be ferried into the village by a Dinassaut unit. The Dinassaut would provide support fire and prevent any enemy from escaping. Once the land forces arrived, the boats were to evacuate wounded and dead back down the river to home bases. For Stage III, the destruction or confiscation of Viet Minh weapons and equipment in Phu Doan was planned. At this point a judgment call by Salan came into play. If he opted not to order a withdrawal back to the De Lattre Line, Stage IV centered around the dangerous gamble to continue further north and target important supply bases at Tuyen Quang and Yen Bay. Every French soldier knew the risk of pressing further inland would be a lengthier withdrawal through Viet Minh-infested terrain and the almost certain odds of having to experience a large number of ambushes.

For such an undertaking, four Groupes Mobiles, including GM 1 and GM 4, furnished the bulk of the men. Among the units comprising the GMs were a battalion each from the 2nd Foreign Legion Infantry Regiment (*2ème Régiment Etranger d'Infanterie* -2 REI) and the 7th Algerian Rifle Regiment (*7ème Régiment de Tirailleurs Algériens* -7 RTA). Also included was the Indochinese March Battalion (*Bataillon de Marche Indochinois* - BMI), a mixture of French, Cambodians and Vietnamese soldiers. All three ranked

among the best units stationed in Southeast Asia. Accompanying the GMs and providing heavy firepower were a pair of armored subgroups (*Sous-Groupements Blindes*) bolstered with a pair of tank destroyer squadrons as well as reconnaissance forces. Supplementing the built-in artillery of the Groupes Mobiles, a further two artillery units accompanied the strike force. A mere three engineer battalions were deployed in a massive operation that would need roads and bridges repaired.

When Operation Lorraine land forces arrived within a certain distance from Phu Doan, the airborne component of Salan's complicated plan took off from airfields located in and around Hanoi and Haiphong. Already pulling men from positions throughout the Red River Delta, Salan had even more difficulty scrounging up the necessary aircraft for the operation. Whether the planes were American-supplied Bearcats for ground support or venerable C-47s for airborne assaults and dropping supplies to the GMs, not enough aircraft existed for sufficient support. The combat veterans of three airborne battalions would drop across the river and be met by a unit of the Naval Assault Division, Dinassaut 12 - DNA 12. *Dinassaut* represents an acronym for *Division Navale d'Assaut*, which usually consisted of a dozen or so river craft. These were American landing craft used as riverine artillery support that either had been modified with tank turrets, or carried 81mm mortars. Each Dinassaut possessed a Commandos Marine company.

To maintain the element of surprise, the initial assault boats departed from Trung Ha and Viet Tri late in the day on October 29. Crossing the Red River and expanding inland to secure bridgeheads, the French found no opposition as Stage 1 began. Spearheading the advance, the *Sous-Groupements Blindes* stood ready to eliminate any threat to the bridgeheads. Armed with a 75mm cannon, their M24 Chaffees outgunned anything the Viet Minh militia possessed.

National Archives and Records Administration

ABOVE: French troops capture Viet Minh weapons and ammunition at Phu Doan, January 1953. In nearby Phú Yên, two Russian Molotova trucks were also discovered, the first proof that the Soviet Union was backing the Viet Minh. OPPOSITE: French paratroopers landing to participate in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, (March 13 to May 7, 1954). In mid-October 1953, Col. Marcel Bigeard and the 6th Colonial Parachute Battalion dropped into the village of Tu Le to help the garrison at Gia Hoi evacuate back to the De Lattre Line. Fighting a rearguard action all the way, the battalion had a 60-percent casualty rate.

Salan knew the element of surprise would not last. However, Giap already knew about the French plans. Through his network of spies, the Viet Minh mastermind had a rough estimate of the size of the land force and the routes their enemy were going to travel. Knowing how much difficulty the French would have advancing in the jungle, Giap was not overly concerned and felt the local Viet Minh was sufficient to harass and discourage the French. Being an adept military genius, he took the precaution of detaching a regiment from two of his divisions in the Ta'i Highlands—the 308th division's 36th Regiment and the 176th Regiment from the 316th Division—and sent them south.

After a week of consolidating the bridgeheads and transporting the land component across the Red River, on November 4 both groups moved towards the appointed rendezvous near Phu Tho. A combination of inclement weather, sporadic opposition from regional Viet Minhs and damaged infrastructure hindered the desired rapid advance through the swamps and rice paddies at the outset. The next day, Colonel Bonichon led a spearhead from the Viet Tri bridgehead force with the intent to reach the village of Phu Tho. Not wanting to be caught between the two French units, the recently-arrived 176th Regiment battalions withdrew. Later that day, the two French columns met at Phu Tho. Colonel Dodelier, as the senior officer, assumed overall command. Having encountered weak resistance thus far, morale rose among the French troops.

Taking command of a task force composed of GM1 and GM4, plus the two Sous-Groupements Blindes, Dodelier led the drive towards the next goal, the Viet Minh supply base at Phu Doan (modern Doan Hung). On the morning of November 9, it was felt that the task force would reach the village that day, in time to coordinate the arrival of the airborne and riverine forces with the land element. After the Chaffees barreled through an ineffectual road block manned by elements of the 36th Regiment at the southern end of Chan Muong Gorge, the French soldiers could have not thought of this location as anything but ambush terrain as they progressed through the gorge itself.

As the task force advanced, DNA 12 made their way up the Clear River for their appointed reinforcement of the airborne assault. The 2,350 paratroopers of the 3rd Colonial Parachute Battalion (*3ème Bataillon de Parachutistes Coloniaux)*, 1st Foreign Legion Parachute Battalion (*1er Bataillon Etranger de Parachutistes*), and 2nd Foreign Legion Parachute Battalion (*2ème Bataillon Etranger de Parachutistes*) boarded C-47s trans-

port aircraft, both military and appropriated civilian. Arriving at the drop zone, the French observed no anti-aircraft fire targeted their aircraft. The ensuing drop seemed like nothing more than a training jump. At 3 p.m., the paratroopers controlled the area across from Phu Doan and boarded the first arriving landing craft of DNA 12. Within minutes, the first wave of paratroopers crossed the Clear River, took up key locations in Phu Doan, and awaited the arrival of the land force. Although the village residents deserted their homes upon sighting the paratrooper jump, the local Viet Minh had been taken aback at how quickly the enemy had arrived, as evidenced by what the French troops would soon uncover. At 7 p.m. the lead armored group under the command of Bonichon drove into Phu Doan as land, airborne and riverine components linked up without incident to complete Stage II.

Initial investigations verified the gathered intelligence that Phu Doan was indeed a significant Viet Minh supply center. As soldiers searched each house, the volume of discovered equipment grew. Not lulled by the relative ease of the force's advance, an armored company drove a little further north along the Phu Doan–Yen Bay route. Their orders were to set up a defense line against a potential enemy counter-attack. While the screen force drove out, men from a tank squadron made a discovery that changed everything—four heavy-duty trucks (though some accounts list two) that did not look like the usual American-built General Motor trucks. Their markings and kilometers-per-hour speedometers revealed these trucks to be Soviet-made *Molotovas*. The group had revealed proof that the Soviets were supplying the Viet Minh, a startling revelation to the French High Command.

The Molotova trucks turned out to be just the start of validating Soviet-bloc military assistance to the enemy. A pair of Soviet-made 120mm heavy mortars and some rifles as well as automatic weapons added to the increasing evidence of outside assistance. In total, the French captured 1,400 rifles, 100 Thompson sub-machine guns, 22 machine guns, 30 American-made Browning Automatic Rifles, 40 light mortars, 14 medium mortars, 3 recoilless rifles, 23 bazookas, and one jeep. The search parties uncovered a significant amount of ammunition with the amount ranging from 150 to 250 tons depending on the source. Lieutenant Marion, who was in command of the force sent north for defensive purposes, discovered the Viet Minh had also hidden weapons outside of the village. In an interview with historian and author Bernard Fall, Marion said the French found 200 tons of ammunition in the Phu Doan area.

The speculation that if Phu Doan was an important, yet minor supply depot for the enemy,

All: Naval History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: Infantry and armor move along Highway 2 across the forested country of North Vietnam toward Phu Doan, a suspected Viet Minh weapons depot. OPPOSITE, TOP: French paratroopers search for the source of Viet Minh gunfire. Forced to travel on the limited road system, the French were often ambushed by Viet Minh moving through the jungle. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: French paratroopers climb a mountain pass to get into position ahead of advancing Viet Minh forces on November 1, 1952.

imagine the amount of weapons and equipment that had to be stored at the key supply centers of Yen Bay and Tuyen Quang. Of more importance at the moment would be General Salan's decision now that Stage III had been completed. Either the strike force returns to the De Lattre Line or drives further to seize Giap's supply centers.

Salan decided to exploit what he saw as a success so far and push further inland, thus initiating Stage IV. Part of this rests on the fact Giap had not yet redirected his divisions from their campaign in the Ta'i Highlands. There was also the underlying hope that Giap could still be pulled into a traditional set-piece battle which would allow Salan to use the French superiority in firepower to annihilate him. Leaving a detachment to safeguard Phu Doan, and most likely to deal with the confiscated materials, the main French force made their way to Phu Hien. Along the route, snipers inflicted a small number of casualties. Word of their coming had already reached Phu Hien and the advance units found it empty.

The French continued driving towards Phu Yen Binh. Patrols of armor and infantry were dispatched in the direction of Tuyen Quang to the northeast and west towards Yen Bay. On November 14, they arrived in Phu Yen Binh, 30 kilometers from Phu Doan. This would be the limit of the French advance in the operation. Troops were likely uneasy realizing they were 80 kilometers from the safety of the De Lattre Line. They knew they had to retrace their route and be subjected to ambushes.

Salan then learned the enemy had reached the Black River. The effort to divert Giap had failed. Air transport was stretched beyond capability and his forces were strung out along a very precarious path—with no chance of reaching either main Viet Minh supply center. Salan ordered the withdrawal back to the Red River Delta that afternoon, officially ending Operation Lorraine.

The same day that Salan terminated the advance, those paratroopers who had not accompanied the drive north departed from Phu Doan. The next day the French arrived back at Phu Doan and spent the next couple of days in the village. Accounts as to what the French did with the confiscated materials are difficult to find. More than likely anything the French could use, particularly American weapons and ammunition as well as the Molotova trucks, went with them and then they took measures to make sure that Phu Doan was not used as a Viet Minh supply depot again.

As the French consolidated for the drive back to the Red River Delta, the 36th Regiment prepared a major ambush site in the narrow Chan Muong Gorge. The 176th Regiment positioned itself further south. The 304th and 320th Divisions received orders to employ guerilla-style attacks along the De Lattre Line to further pressure Salan. Early on the morning of November 17th, the French left Phu Doan. Groupes Mobiles 4, under the command of Col. Louis de Kergaravat, led the column. Taking rearguard duty was Groupes Mobiles 1. As GM 4 approached the village of Chan Muong at the north end of the gorge at 7 a.m., the battalion from the 7 RTA took point and swept the village. Finding fresh holes dug in the road an hour later, the Algerians and every man along the column

Both: Naval History and Heritage Command

went on increased alert. All had the feeling they were driving into an obvious ambush, but there was no choice but to follow the road.

The Chan Muong Gorge stretched for 4 kilometers in a roughly north-south orientation that narrowed to 150m about halfway through the defile. RC 2 passed through these jungle-covered hills, hemmed in by steep cliffs at the narrowest section. In the southwestern sector of the gorge, an old Chinese fort sat atop Hill 222. The Viet Minh regimental commander set up his command post here with orders to destroy the French before they reached the village of Thai Binh at the southern end. He had his men construct a makeshift barricade across the road.

The Algerians reached the barricade at 8:20 a.m. at which time the Viet Minh opened up with small arms fire, thus starting the only major battle of Operation Lorraine. A tank platoon responded to their request for assistance. Ten minutes later and the situation had not improved. The battalion from 2 REI added their support. The addition of the Legionnaires overcame the Viet Minh ambush and the barricade was removed 30 minutes after the initial aid request, allowing GM 4 to move forward. At 9:30 a.m. de Kergaravat and the lead elements of the GM arrived at Thai Binh. The French column was strung out for 2 kilometers with the overall headquarters, reserve ammunition for the artillery, and engineering equipment having reached the midway point. Just passing into the gorge, GM 1 remained the rearguard.

The fear of ambush became reality as heavy mortars and artillery hit the Moroccan tank platoon at the head of GM 1, successfully knocking one out and blocking the road. The Viet Minh at the southern end of Chan Muong Gorge pinned down the infantry of GM4 leaving the "soft" targets, such as trucks, of the column's center vulnerable. Along an 800-meter front, the 36th Regiment attacked. By 10:15 de Kergaravat learned how serious the situation was, fortunately both he and the GM 1 commander were outside ambush and able to direct the battle. In addition to requesting immediate close air support and ordering all artillery to commence firing on rapidly designated targets, the French colonel changed command boundaries with GM 1 now in charge of all elements north of the gorge.

For the next 90 minutes, the French were hard pressed as Viet Minh closed around the trapped vehicles of the column's center. Vicious hand-to-hand fighting lapsed into a massacre as accounts of Viet Minh executing French wounded emerged. At noon, French aircraft arrived in support of their comrades on the ground. The Viet Minh command post and artillery on and near Hill 222 received immediate attention. These air

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ABOVE: Troops from Viet Minh Regiment 98 (Regiment 316) charge up Hill C1 (*Eliane 1* for the French) for a scene filmed by Russian propaganda director Roman Karmenstill after their 1954 victory at Dien Bien Phu. OPPOSITE, TOP: French troops dig in every night to meet possible counterattacks by the Viet Minh in North Vietnam, January 1953. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: The 1st Foreign Parachute Battalion (1er BEP) during the Battle of Hòa Bình (November 1951 to February 1952) in which the French tried to lure the Viet Minh into fighting more conventionally in open country.

strikes allowed the French to regroup into a better position and as they continued to hold, the battle momentum began to change. The French commanders knew two tasks had to be accomplished simultaneously: remove the vehicles blocking the road and clear the surrounding hills. On the positive side, all their units still had mutual communication. At 2 p.m. a plan was developed, though it would be an hour before French units began to disengage and organize.

The Algerian battalion spread out to cover the convoy. Infantry from the GMs attacked towards the trapped convoy. At 3:30 p.m., two companies from the BMI launched a counterattack to secure enemy positions in the hills on the eastern side of the route. The third company went to clear the road. Simultaneously, the 2 REI's remaining 1-1/2 companies inside the gorge launched themselves aggressively towards the old Chinese fort. With less than 500 men between them, the BMI and Legionnaires violently counter-attacked, supported by artillery, armor, and heavy machine guns. Over the next hour, the attackers cleared out enemy positions. The French, Cambodians and Vietnamese of the BMI had a more difficult time than their Legionnaire brothers. The 36th Regiment outnumbered them three to one. At 4:30 p.m. a bugle cut through the din of combat. All French soldiers knew that signaled a bayonet charge. The men of the BMI struck the enemy with such ferocity that the remaining Viet Minh withdrew from Chan Muong Gorge by 5 p.m. Post-battle reports revealed all destroyed Viet Minh artillery had been eliminated through the hard work of the BMI and Legionnaires, not bombs or shells.

With infantry tired from nine hours of continuous combat, the French column reached Thai Binh at 5:15 p.m. Seventy minutes later, elements of the 36th Regiment attacked the rearguard armor with bazookas and Molotov cocktails. With artillery support, the tanks drove off the attackers, sustaining only minor damage to one vehicle. De Kergaravat made the decision that the column would halt only upon reaching Ngoc Thap. Driving in the dark, the force safely arrived at 10:30 p.m. While Viet Minh casualties can only be speculated, the Battle of Chan Muong Gorge cost the French 56 dead, 125 wounded, and 133 missing—most of these were presumed to have been executed by the enemy. Material losses amounted to six half-tracks, six other vehicles, and one tank.

By November 23, the French bridgehead had been reduced to a 5-mile-deep area at the Viet Tri crossing. Throughout the journey, the French dealt with ambushes, but nowhere on the scale experienced in the Chan Muang Gorge. At 2 a.m. the next day, elements from both Viet Minh battalions struck the French perimeter. A French strongpoint covering RC 2 was lost after two hours of intense fighting, including hand-to-hand combat. At 5 a.m. an armored counter-attack forced the Viet Minh to withdraw. At the start of December, the French took down all pontoon

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"The Catapult," by Edward John Poynter (British, 1836-1919) depicts a siege engine manned by Roman soldiers at the walls of Carthage during the Third Punic War. "Carthage must be destroyed" (*Delenda est Carthago*), the words of Cato the Elder as quoted in Pultarch's "Life of Cato," are carved on one of its massive beams.

DEATH OF AN EMPIRE

With the siege of Carthage in the Third Punic War, Rome finally destroyed its rival in the Mediterranean.

BY DAVID A. NORRIS

According to legend, Carthage was founded by Dido, daughter of the king of the Phoenician city of Tyre. Fleeing after her brother Pygmalion killed her husband, Dido made her way to the North African coast where she founded a new city on the Hill of Byrsa, on land purchased from a local chieftain. Around the hill grew the great city of Carthage that rose to contest Rome for control of the western Mediterranean. Centuries later, in 149 BCE, Carthage was only a shattered remnant of its past glory. Her colonies were conquered by Rome and hostile neighboring kingdoms; her army and navy were destroyed; and the very city of Carthage was a panorama of blazing ruins. Only the Hill of Byrsa held out against Rome—with the last citizens who preferred death to life as Roman slaves.

The Third Punic War was the last of three clashes between the growing western Mediterranean powers of Rome and Carthage. The First Punic War lasted 23 years between 264-241 BCE, and the 17-year Second Punic War ground on from 218-201 BCE In the second war, Carthage was led by the legendary Hannibal. Despite bringing a contingent of war elephants over the Alps into Italy, and crushing the Roman Army in the Battle of Cannae, the war ended with Rome victorious over the Carthaginians. A shaky peace stretched out for three decades.

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ABOVE: Disarmed during the Second Punic War, the Carthaginians managed to build 50 triremes during the siege—to the surprise of the Romans. This illustration depicts the crew of a Roman trireme boarding a Carthaginian ship. Powered mainly by oars, both vessels have a rostrum, usually a single piece of fused bronze, extending from the bow at the waterline to ram and sink enemy ships. OPPOSITE: Built on the coast of Africa in what is now Tunisia, the affluent city of Carthage was one of the most important trading hubs of the ancient world, with the most powerful navy in the western Mediterranean before the First Punic War.

Carthage stood on a peninsula jutting into the Mediterranean from the mainland of what is now Tunisia. Its naval and maritime power aroused the suspicion and hostility of Rome, which was cementing control of the Italian peninsula and spreading to other western Mediterranean lands. The Romans called the Phoenicians the *Poeni*, from which we get the word Punic.

Rome and Carthage were each republics that grew from large, powerful capital cities into sprawling empires. A major difference was their attitude toward their armies and navies. Rome depended on its massive army, drawn from its property-owning male citizenry, and its navy was secondary in importance. Carthage depended on its maritime strength and a large navy. So much of Carthage's manpower went into the fleet that it had to fill its army with mercenaries and colonial soldiers.

By 264 BCE, Carthage controlled lands far beyond the city and the surrounding territory, to include coastal strips and enclaves of modern Morocco, Algeria, and Libya; the southern Iberian Peninsula (Spain); the Balearic Islands; Corsica; and parts of Sardinia and Sicily.

The Second Punic War ended with Carthage defeated and shorn of most of its empire, and its military power. The Romans allowed their enemy only 10 war vessels, and forbade them to keep war elephants. Indeed, Rome prohibited Carthage from taking up arms against anyone.

In the uncertain interval of peace after the end of the Second Punic War, a son was born to the noted Roman military commander Amelius Paullus. This son, first known to history as Scipio Aemilianus, was only 17 when he first went to war. The young Scipio accompanied his father, who earned considerable distinction in Rome by conquering Macedonia in the Third Macedonian War. After Amelius Paullus divorced his wife, as the family fractured, the young man was adopted by Publius Scipio. This adoptive father was the son of the famous Scipio Africanus, who defeated Hannibal's formidable Carthaginian forces in the Second Punic War. Young Scipio gained further military and political experience in Spain. He steadily worked his way up the cursus honorarium, the system that drew young men of senatorial rank through a course of steadily rising posts, alternating between military and civilian jobs in Rome and abroad.

Rome still glowed with the glory of their victory, but worries about Carthage smoldered. Carthage's military power was devastated by the previous wars, but its trade flourished enough to concern the leaders of Rome. The statesman Cato the Elder led the political opposition to Carthage. He famously ended his speeches in the Senate, on whatever topic, with the grim warning: "Carthage must be destroyed!" (*Carthago delenda est*).

After Carthage's defeat, all of their North African territories save the region around their capital were part of the kingdom of Numidia. Masinissa, king of Numidia, had once supported Carthage but switched his allegiance to Rome in 206 BCE. Masinissa and his Numidian cavalry helped the elder Scipio defeat Hannibal at the Battle of Zama. Since that time, Masinissa took advantage of Rome's good will. Shielded by the peace treaty, he nibbled away at Carthage's remaining land.

In 150 BCE, Carthaginian patriots could no

longer abide the constant aggressions of the Numidians and declared war on them. A general known as Hasdrubal the Boetharch ("boetharch" was a high military or civil rank among the Carthaginians) led an unsuccessful attack on Numidia. War with Numidia, though, threatened a war with Rome. Carthage's leaders realized they had gone too far. They sent envoys to Rome to negotiate. The leaders of the patriot faction, Hasdrubal and Carthalo, were sentenced to death.

As tensions rose, the city of Utica informed the Romans that they had switched their allegiance from Carthage to Rome. Utica's betrayal ended centuries of political alliance and cultural ties; this port had been the earliest Phoenician colony in North Africa. At a stroke, the Romans gained even better odds in the impending clash, and secured a safe landing place for their army that was only 20 miles north of Carthage.

Rome then declared war—to be carried out by the two consuls then in office, Manius Manilius and Lucius Marcius Censorinus. Since the end of the ancient monarchy in 509 BCE, Rome was ruled by two elected consuls chosen each year. Although they had some executive functions such as presiding over the senate, the chief duty of the consuls was command of the Roman military.

With the two consuls, 80,000 Roman troops disembarked at Utica in 149 BCE. To mollify the Romans, Carthage agreed to make amends by sending 300 hostages to Sicily. The hostages, children taken from the most prominent families, were not enough for the Romans. Carthage was now under Roman "protection," and had no need of weapons. So, Rome's envoys demanded the surrender of all weapons and military equipment.

Some 200,000 sets of armor and stands of weapons, as well as 2,000 catapults and numerous projectiles, were handed over to Rome. The historian Arrian recorded, "It was a remarkable and unparalleled spectacle to behold the vast number of loaded wagons which the enemy themselves brought in".

But the elite hostages, along with all the weapons and military equipment from their old enemy was not enough to assuage the enmity of the Romans. Addressing a delegation of Carthaginian ambassadors and senators, Censorinus decreed that the price of peace was the abandonment of the city of Carthage. Its citizens must find a new site for their city that was at least 10 miles from the sea. Unable to survive being cut off from the sea, Carthage had no choice but to go to war with Rome a third and, ultimately, final time.

The members of the Carthaginian delegation faced not only the ruin of their city, but their personal doom as well. Some so feared the reaction of the population that they stayed in the Roman camp and never returned home. Others were mobbed at the gates of the city, their lives only spared so they could make a formal report to the senate of Carthage. The senate received the news in shocked silence before giving way to "a loud and mournful outcry," according to the Roman historian Appian.

At the terrible sound arising from the senate, cit-

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izens burst in and learned the devastating news. In "a scene of indescribable fury and madness," wrote Appian, "… Some fell upon those senators who had advised giving the hostages and tore them in pieces, considering them the ones who had led them into the trap. Others treated in a similar way those who had favored giving up the arms."

On the same day the ambassadors returned from the Roman camp, the senate of Carthage declared war. All slaves were freed. Couriers went to tell the condemned patriot leader Hasdrubal that his death sentence was remitted, and offered him the military command of the city. Hasdrubal the Boetharch had gathered soldiers to march against Carthage, but he accepted command and threw in his lot with his countrymen. The city's gates swung shut. With their catapults gone, the townspeople carried stones to the ramparts to drop upon the Romans when they surged under the city walls.

The Second Punic War had already left Carthage much less powerful than it had been in the previous wars with Rome. Most of their colonies and possessions were gone, eliminating anything that might delay or distract Rome from concentrating on the remaining patch of territory around the capital itself.Carthage's available manpower had mostly gone into its navy, and the armies had depended on mercenaries. Now, far fewer soldiers could be found in their shrunken territories.

Nonetheless, the people of Carthage made an incredible effort to defend their city. Makeshift workshops, some of them set up in temples, immediately opened. Women joined men in running the workshops, which operated night and day without cease. Lead roofing was seized, and whatever iron could be scrounged was melted down for new weapons. Appian noted that "Each day they made 100 shields, 300 swords, 1,000 missiles for catapults, 500 darts and javelins, and as many catapults as they could." He also wrote the women cut off their long hair, to make ropes for the new catapults.

Expecting no resistance, the overconfident Censorinus and Manilius did not stir from their camps for some time. When finally the Romans did advance to receive the surrender of Carthage, they found instead closed gates and walls bristling with soldiers and new weapons.

The great city stood on the southeastern edge of a peninsula that jutted eastward into the Gulf of Tunis and the Mediterranean Sea. With the sea to its east, Carthage was nearly surrounded by water. To the southwest was a salt lake, (*Stagnum Marinum*) now known as the Lake of Tunis; to the northwest, another body of salt water called the *Salinae*.

A triple layer of walls ran from north to south between the lakes, protecting the city's western side. A single stone wall ran east from the northern edge of the western wall, then turned south toward the city, surrounding a suburban area called Megara. Much of the district was given over to gardens and orchards, divided by low stone fences and hedges. Steep cliffs facing the sea gave extra protection to the Megara.

The city itself, south of Megara on the southeastern portion of the fortified peninsula, was protected on the land approaches from the north by a formidable wall, with the outer face being 45 feet high and up to 7 feet thick. Stone towers rose every 200 feet along the perimeter. Sea walls protected the city from attacks via the Mediterranean.

Two harbors had been built in the southeastern part of the city. The oblong mercantile harbor ran north to south just under 1,400 feet, and was 1,066 feet wide. There was only one narrow

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art

ABOVE: "The Capture of Carthage," by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (Italian, 1696–1770). In the third and final Punic War, the Romans laid siege to the city of Carthage for three years and ultimately destroyed it. OPPOSITE: An idealized woodcut Illustration of the city of Carthage from the 1493 "Nuremberg Chronicle" (*Liber Chronicarum*) by Michael Wolgemut (German, 1434–1519).

entrance, in the southeastern corner. North of the mercantile harbor was the naval harbor. A vast circle, 1,066 feet in diameter, the naval harbor surrounded a round island with a naval headquarters. There was room for 220 ships along the wharves lining the circular shore. There was only one way to get into the naval harbor, by an opening to the south that was accessible only through the mercantile harbor. The openings to both harbors could be closed with massive chains. Stone walls around the harbor area offered further protection.

The Roman army launched attacks on the city walls. Manilius hurled his men against the western walls that crossed the isthmus. His plan was to fill in a section of ditch in front of the defenses, then cross the parapet of the outer layer and climb the main wall with ladders. Expecting to break through into the weakened city, they were thrown back by the surprisingly sharp resistance.

There was only one obvious weak point in the defenses of Carthage. The southwestern corner of the city touched a narrow stretch of land called the Taenia, which separated the Lake of Tunis from the Mediterranean Sea. Taenia was the one angle of the city that could be attacked by land or sea, but the fortifications were not as formidable as those on the north.

Censorinus had his eye upon this Achilles' heel of the city. He squeezed his troops onto the narrow shelf of land before the walls. They pushed ladders against the stone facing, while others tried to climb up the sea walls from ladders placed on Roman ships. This attack was also foiled.

Knowing they now faced a long siege, and that Hasdrubal the Boetharch roamed free with a sizable army, the consuls paused to fortify their camps. While Manilius waited outside the western wall, Censorinus brought the Roman ships into the Lake of Tunis. The latter commander sent an expedition to cut timber for the construction of siege engines. The troops were then attacked by Carthaginian light cavalry under Hamilcar Phameas, and the Romans lost 500 legionnaires.

Despite the setback, the troops brought back the timber needed. To have more land to assemble their attack, the Romans filled in a great stretch of Lake of Tunis with sand and rock. On the newly claimed ground, engineers constructed two gigantic battering rams. Each of the massive rams required 6,000 men to operate. One of the rams knocked a gap into the wall, but the garrison managed to blunt a Roman assault and hold off the enemy until nightfall.

The Carthaginians rushed to mend the gap in the wall. Worried that the work could not be completed by daybreak, their commanders sent out a raiding party that surprised the Romans. Some raiders carried torches that they used to set fire to the siege machines. While a Roman counterattack saved the machines from completely burning, the rams were damaged enough to make them useless for some time.

The breach had not yet been sealed by first light, allowing Roman soldiers to rush through the gap, pouring into an open area "where the Carthaginians had stationed armed men in front and others in the rear provided only with stones and clubs, and many others on the roofs of the neighboring houses, all in readiness to meet the invaders."

Not all the Romans fell into the trap set by the defenders. Scipio Aemilianus, who had risen to the rank of tribune, was suspicious and held his men back. The attacking legionnaires were driven out through the breach, with Carthaginians in hot pursuit. Scipio sent his men into the fray and saved the assault party from slaughter. His cool thinking in averting a minor disaster brought him to the notice of the commanders.

After the attacks on the Taenia stalled, sickness broke out in the Roman camps. Censorinus, to preserve the health of his men, moved his troops out of their camps onto ships. Seeking purer air, they sailed from the Lake of Tunis into the sea.

As the Romans floated on the sea, the Carthaginians obtained some small vessels, which they filled with flammable material. When the wind blew away from the city walls toward the Roman fleet, the improvised fire ships were doused with pitch and brimstone and set on fire. The Carthaginians then raised the sails and sent the boats toward the Roman fleet, causing great destruction.

Next came a surprise attack on the camp of Manilius. Under cover of darkness, armed Carthaginians slipped out of the city, accompanied by men carrying planks. The bearers dropped the planks to form bridges across the ditches around the Roman camp, and the soldiers clambered across them and began hacking down the palisade.

Though most of Manilius' camp was thrown

Rijks Museum, Amsterdam

LEFT: "Landing of Scipio Africanus at Carthage," attributed to Michiel Coxcie (Belgium,1499-1592), shows the Roman general arriving in Africa. He would defeat Hannibal and the Carthaginians at the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE, effectively ending the Second Punic War. BELOW: "Scipio Africanus the Younger"—adopted grandson of Scipio Africanus, famous for defeating Hannibal in the Second Punic War—was commander of the Roman siege and destruction of the city of Carthage. OPPOSITE: "Conquest of Carthage by Scipio Africanus," by Gerard van Groeningen (Netherlands, 1515–1599) shows fighting outside the walls of Carthage. Expecting a surrender, the Romans were surprised when the Carthagians left the fortified city to attack.

Museo Nazionale Romano

into chaos, Scipio Aemilianus stayed characteristically calm. Thinking quickly, he and his cavalry rode out of the camp through a gate not yet under assault. When the horsemen loomed out of the darkness, the Carthaginians broke off the attack and rushed back to the safety of their walls. For the second time, this junior officer had saved the army from a potential reverse.

Manilius, concerned with his supply lines, built a fort by the sea where ships could land under protection. Tribunes scoured the countryside for food, forage, and wood. Phameas, still in charge of the enemy's light cavalry, harassed the foraging parties. His men rode "small but swift horses that lived on grass when they could find nothing else." Finding cover in thickets and ravines, the horsemen waited for favorable moments to fall upon the Romans with surprise attacks. Scipio Aemilianus, though, took precautions. His foragers set to work only when surrounded by lines of armed infantry and mounted men. Scouting parties searched the surrounding countryside, on the lookout for Phameas. Thus, Scipio's foraging expeditions were always successful, with minimal casualties.

Censorinus returned to Rome, leaving Manilius to continue operations. Hasdrubal and Phameas still maintained large numbers of infantry and cavalry in the field. Masinissa refused when the Romans asked for help. A breach between the Numidians and Rome was averted by the death of the now elderly Masinissa. Cato the Elder, who lived to see the start of the war he'd done much to start, also died about this time.

Hasdrubal had his main army at Nepheris, about 20 miles south of Carthage. With a secure base, Carthaginian foot and horse soldiers raided Roman supply lines, and saw that food and supplies got into the besieged city. Manilius decided to attack Nepheris. Scipio, knowing that the Romans had to march through rugged terrain of mountainous crags, ravines, and thickets to attack an enemy force holding high ground, advised against the plan. Other tribunes scoffed at Scipio's caution, thinking his attitude showed more cowardice than prudence.

Manilius went ahead with the attack and, after heavy fighting with little success, realized that Scipio had been right and ordered a withdrawal. The Roman retreat stalled at a river, where steep banks and difficult fords slowed their passage. Hasdrubal launched a deadly assault on the vulnerable Roman column, inflicting severe losses. Among the dead were three of the tribunes who had ridiculed the caution of Scipio, and urged Manilius to make the attack. Scipio again led his horsemen to hold off the enemy, and allowed the infantry to get across the river.

Although Scipio enabled most of the Roman soldiers to withdraw safely, four cohorts of legionnaires were left stranded on the enemy side of the river. The four detachments were surrounded by Hasdrubal's troops. Some of Manilius' officers reluctantly urged the consul to leave them. Scipio,

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unwilling to lose so many men—and their treasured standards—led a rescue party that drove off Hasdrubal's men. Then and there, the relieved Roman soldiers honored Scipio with a crown, woven from grass plucked from the field of battle. Later, Scipio notched another success by convincing Phameas to join the Romans, bringing with him 2,200 cavalry.

In the first year of the Third Punic War the Romans had made a poor start. There was hope in 148 BCE for better leadership from a new consul, Calpurnius Piso and his legate Lucius Mancinus, who commanded the fleet. They continued the war but with no better success.

Fortune smiled on Rome the following year as Scipio Aemilianus took leave from the army to sail to Rome and run for election as an aedile, a step up for him in the cursus honorarium. The young officer's achievements were so well known in Rome that he won an even higher prize than he sought: election as a consul. This was unexpected, as legally, Scipio was six years too young to serve as a consul. Further stretching law and precedent, there was an understanding that the consulship might not be limited to the customary one year, but would last until Scipio could win the war.

Scipio returned to Africa to take full command. With him was Gaius Laelius, whose father of the same name had been a friend of the elder Scipio Africanus during the Second Punic War.

Upon his return, Scipio found that Mancinus had tried to attack the city from the sea, and gotten his army into a tight spot. They scaled some lightly defended cliffs and secured a foothold by the edge of the main city walls, but a counterattack left them trapped on the rocky heights overlooking the sea. Piso, meanwhile, had been frittering away his time campaigning against small inland towns and strongholds, rather than pressing the main siege. Scipio relieved Mancinus and continued to press Carthage.

Soon after taking command, Scipio captured the suburbs of Megara. At first, he launched two simultaneous attempts against the wall that stretched across the isthmus, but both attacks failed. The Romans found a weak spot, though, by a privately-built stone tower that stood outside the walls. Soldiers hauled up planks and bridged the gap between the top of the tower and the ramparts, and poured over the wall to seize all of Megara. Hasdrubal the Boetharch was compelled to bring his field army into the city. He deposed the garrison commander, whose name was also Hasdrubal, and ordered his execution after conviction on false charges.

The first action of the new commander Hasdrubal doomed all Roman prisoners within the walls. He ordered them taken to the parapets to be tortured in plain view of the Roman troops,

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then hurled off the walls to their deaths. Any of his countrymen who raised objections to the unneeded provocation received similar treatment.

Next to draw the attention of Scipio was the entrance to the merchant harbor. Blockade runners still slipped in and out, bringing in food and reinforcements. To close the harbor, Scipio set his men to haul giant stones to build a mole blocking the entrance. Two months of patient work had just about sealed the harbor when the Carthaginians revealed a surprise to the Romans.

Fifty newly built triremes, accompanied by a host of smaller war vessels, shot out of a newly cut gap in the sea-facing side of the round naval harbor. Although Carthage had given up nearly all of its navy, there remained vast stocks of timber, ropes, sailcloth, and other maritime materials in the city. Thousands of workers constructed a powerful new fleet, hidden from the Romans by the harbor walls and a remarkable veil of secrecy.

Powered by sails and oars, the Carthaginian ships surged out to sea. As if reveling in their freedom, they sped far from shore and maneuvered some distance from Scipio's warships. Had they attacked the Roman ships immediately, the element of surprise could have given them a resounding victory and dealt a disastrous setback to the siege. Instead, the new fleet safely returned to their harbor.

Three days later, the Carthaginian fleet again poured out of the harbor, and this time, made for the Roman ships. The Carthaginians got the better of the battle, but they opted to head back to the harbor before nightfall. Several of their ships were lost by collision when trying to squeeze back into the narrow entrance. Their partial success made no real impact on the Roman siege.

The siege quieted for the winter months. Nepheris, then commanded by an officer named Diogenes, still sheltered Carthaginian troops who attacked Roman detachments and gathered supplies for Hasdrubal's garrison. Scipio and Laelius led successful assaults on the outlying enemy camps and Nepheris itself. With the fall of Nepheris and the destruction of Diogenes' army, the remaining North African forts and towns surrendered to Rome, leaving Carthage reduced to the city itself.

Under the special arrangement devised in Rome, Scipio retained the post of consul, and command of the forces in North Africa for the year 146 BCE. He led a formal prayer ceremony to the gods of Carthage, asking them to abandon the city and its people. The gods, he promised, would find new temples and sacrifices among the victorious Romans.

Back at the city, Scipio and Laelius led a new offensive. This time, they burst through the southern defenses and captured both of the inner harbors and the surrounding lower part of the city. The soldiers and townspeople who still resisted pulled back toward the Byrsa, a hill covering much of the core of the old city. Covered with buildings and temples, the Byrsa was protected by steep sides and stone walls.

Three broad streets led from the harbor area to the Byrsa. The distance was measured in city blocks rather than miles, but it took six days of urban warfare for the Romans to reach the slopes

of the hill. The streets on the way were lined with massive apartment buildings as high as six stories. From their windows, the Romans were "assailed with missiles."

The legionnaires adapted themselves to the grim realities of urban warfare. They attacked one building at a time, breaking down the doors and fighting their way up the stairs to each floor. In every story, they fought room to room, smashing down doors and through walls as necessary. Everyone found inside, from enemy soldiers to children and families, was put to the sword. Once a rooftop was captured, legionnaires laid timbers across gaps between buildings and charged onto the next roof. Each building thus became an isolated fortress, with the defenders fighting Roman troops from above and below. Fighting continued on the ground as well. Soldiers battling in the streets faced not only projectiles dropped or shot at them from the high windows, but combatants on the upper stories "were hurled alive from the roofs to the pavement, some of them alighting on the heads of spears or other pointed weapons, or swords," wrote Arrian.

Once the three streets leading to Byrsa were secured, the Romans set the captured district on fire. Untold numbers of women, children, and old men who found temporary shelter in the lofty tenements were killed by the flames or crushed beneath collapsed timbers and bricks. The cruel and grim fate of the conquered city was likely what Scipio's soldiers imagined would have been their own fate, should the war have ended differently, with a vengeful Carthaginian army grinding its way into the heart of Rome.

Rising above the top of the Byrsa was the Temple of Eshmoun, the Phoenician and Carthaginian god of healing. Among the last defenders of Carthage were 900 Roman deserters, who preferred certain doom in the besieged citadel than the harsh justice their former army would inflict upon them.

After holding out as long as they could, the Roman renegades and die-hard Carthaginians gathered in the Temple of Eshmoun, looking out over the dying city. It was as if Scipio's prayer had worked, turning their own gods against them.

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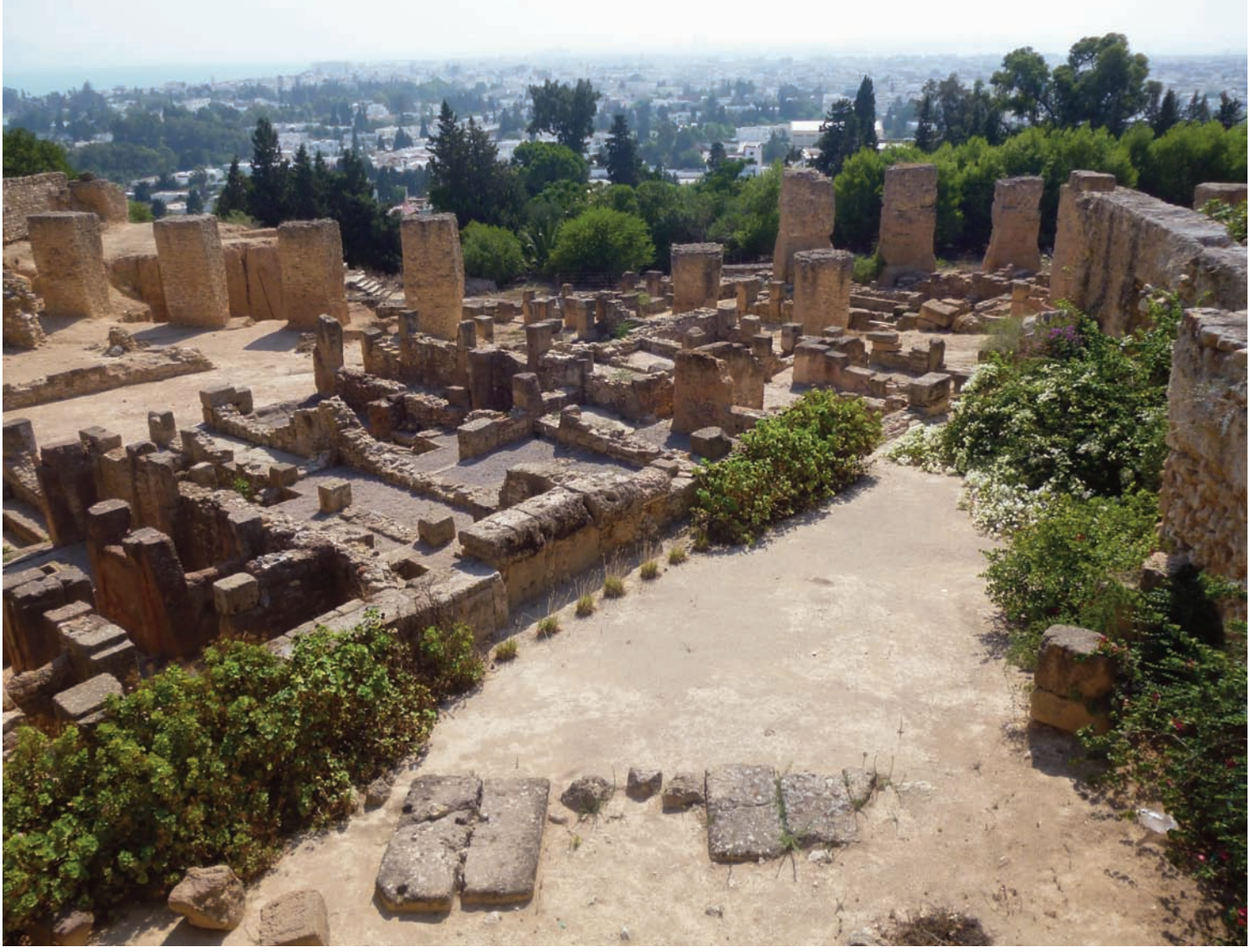


ABOVE: The ruins of Punic Carthage on Byrsa Hill, Tunis, Tunisia. Though the siege ended with the city's destruction, the story of Scipio Africanus the Younger plowing over Carthage and sowing it with salt is considered to be a legend, with no confirmation in ancient sources. Some 100 years later the Romans, realizing the strategic value of the site, built their own city called Carthage. OPPOSITE: "Ingestion of Carthage," a print by Barbara van den Broeck (Netherlands, 1560–1670) that shows the clash between the army of Roman general Scipio Africanus the Younger and the Carthaginians, as their city burns behind them.

Both: Wikimedia

Decades of war among the English, Danes, and Normans culminated at Hastings.

By Christopher Miskimon

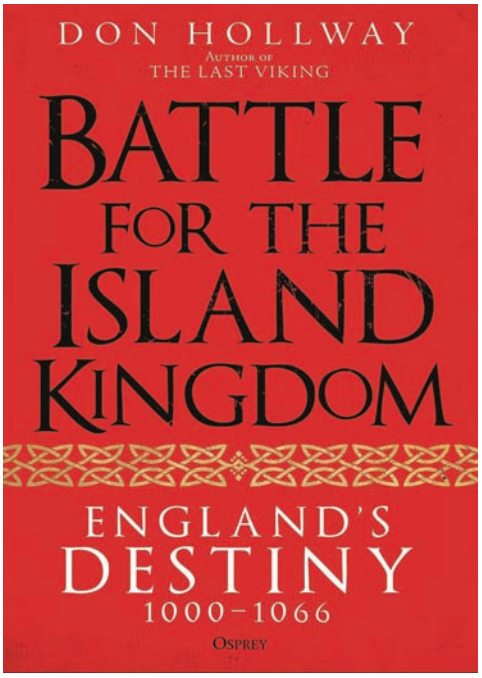
English King Aethelred wanted London back. He lost it in February 1014 to Svein Forkbeard, the Danish ruler. Svein died not long after taking the city, however, so Aethelred chose to try and retake the city from the Danes who still occupied it. The biggest obstacle to his plan was London Bridge. The bridge was stout, made of wood on piles driven into the river bottom. Large for the time, two wagons could cross side by side. It was an important symbol, crossing the Thames to connect the north and south of England.

Taking the bridge would be no easy task. After taking the city the Danes reinforced the bridge's defenses with towers, parapets and barricades. A walled fortification known as a burh protected the northern end of the bridge while a trading place called a Sudvirke sat at the southern end. At the Sudvirke the Danes dug a moat and used the soil to make an embankment which they topped with stone and timber. Such a defense would be difficult for any army of the period to breach, even with siege weapons. The bridge had to be taken or destroyed, however, since it allowed the Danes to move quickly across if King Aethelred's army moved downriver to cross. Scouts would inform of any such movement.

The first attempt to take London Bridge ended in failure for Aethelred. The Danes put up a spirited defense and the fighting was heavy. Archaeologists have discovered axes, spearheads and even a grappling iron from the riverbed around where the bridge stood, attesting to the ferocity of the battle. At the end, the Danes still held the bridge.

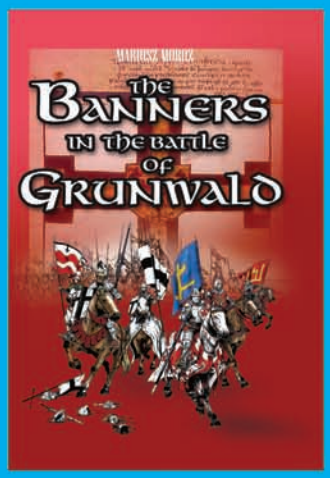
Olaf Haraldsson, also known as Olaf the Stout, fought on the English side, now stepped forward with a plan to destroy the bridge. Not far downstream lay an abandoned village. Olaf had the thatched roofs taken from the huts in the village and placed atop his fleet of longships. This provided cover against Danish arrows. The fleet rowed downstream and attacked the bridge. The Danes shot arrows at the approaching ships when they came into range, but the missiles could not penetrate the thatching.

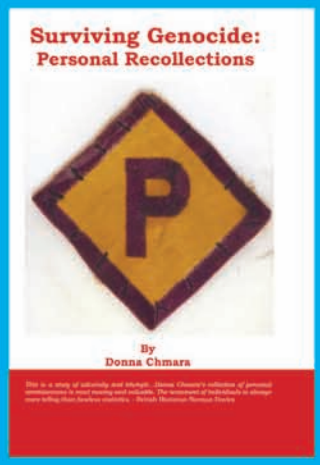
The Danes had some catapults and ballistae; those took a toll on the English force, causing

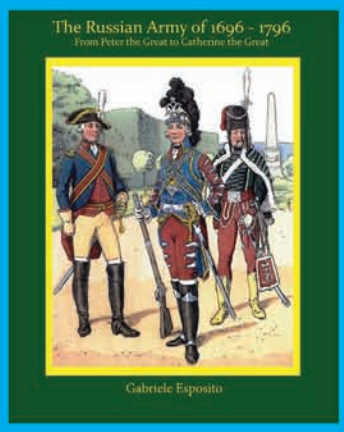


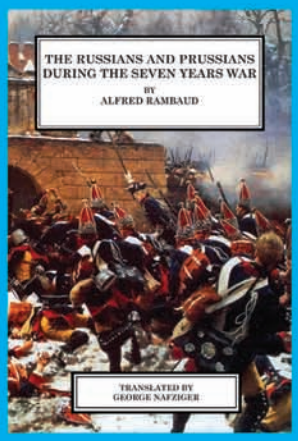
TOP: The "Battle of Stiklestad" in 1030 CE, where King Olaf II of Norway (also known as Olaf II Haraldsson) was allegedly killed by a peasant army. Contemporary sources suggest Olaf was ambushed and murdered, possibly by his own people. Beatified a year after his death, the story of the battle grew over the next two centuries—as it was more fitting for a saint to have died in a battle for Christianity. LEFT: Artist rendition of English King Aethelred the Unready on a cigarette card.

Winged Hussar Publishing









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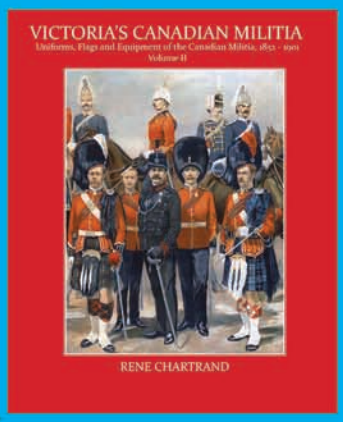

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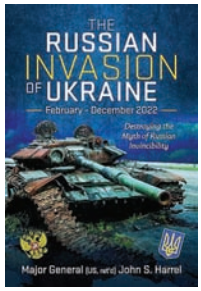
some of them to retreat. Olaf and his men went ahead, rowing under the bridge and attached grappling hooks and ropes to the bridge's pilings and supports. Afterward the rowed hard downstream, pulling at the bridge, The Danes attacked with every ranged weapon they had, but Olaf and his men remained at their task until finally the pilings gave way. The bridge was heavy with men, and the piles of rocks and weapons for the battle. It soon fell into the Thames, taking many men into the water with it. Others retreated into the city or fled south. Aethelred could now move his troops across at will and they moved to surround London. Soon the city surrendered and Aethelred was their King again.

The years 1000—1066 were full of battles, intrigues, betrayals and divided loyalties. The destruction of London Bridge is just one example of the events which took place. The reader gains an intimate knowledge of the period through ***Battle for the Island Kingdom: England's Destiny 1000–1066*** (Don Holloway, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2023, 432 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $30, HC)

The six decades that marked the 11th Century before the Battle of Hastings saw Anglo-Saxons, Normans and Vikings all struggling for control of the island that would one day become England. In his latest work on this era, the author brings this period to vivid life through engaging prose, a coherent narrative and a mind for the most minute yet interesting detail. The references from relevant source material are plentiful but do not bog down the storytelling. This book is lively and easy to read. Most readers know about the Battle of Hastings and its outcome and while this book informs on that event, fewer know about the events leading up to it, but this work delivers that to the reader as well.

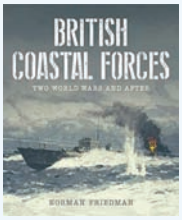


The Russian Invasion of Ukraine February-December 2022: Destroying the Myth of Russian Invincibility (John S. Harrel, Maj. Gen. U.S. Ret'd, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire UK, 2023, maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $36.95, HC)

The battle for Antonov Airport near Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, began at 8 a.m. on February 24, 2022. A battalion of Russian paratroopers from the 11th and 31st Guards Air Assault Brigades, aboard Mi-8 helicopters with escorting Ka-52 gunships, moved to capture the airport. If successful the Russians could fly in more troops and armored vehicles, outflanking the city's defenses. They flew fast and low, avoiding target-

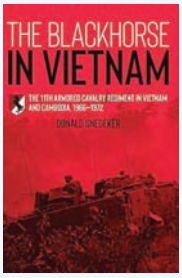
SHORT BURSTS

U.S. Naval Aviation 1945–2003 (Leo Marriott, Pen and Sword Books, 2023, $22.95, SC) Part of the publisher's *Images of War* series, this book contains hundreds of photographs of naval aircraft in action.

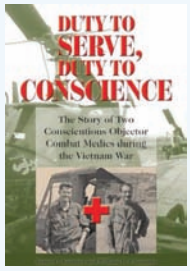


British Coastal Forces (Norman Friedman, Seaforth Publishing, 2023, $100, HC) The Royal Navy operated a plethora of small coastal attack craft and other specialized vessels. This well-illustrated book covers them in great detail.

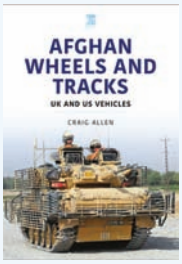
Only the Light Moves: Flying Covert Reconnaissance Missions in the Vietnam War (Francis Doherty, Air World Books, 2023, $32.95, HC) Memoir of covert missions for the famed Studies and Observations Group during the Vietnam War.



The Blackhorse in Vietnam: The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Vietnam and Cambodia, 1966 – 1972 (Donald Snedeker, Casemate Books, 2023, $24.95, SC) The story of one of America's most famous units in the Vietnam War from the unit associations' official historian.



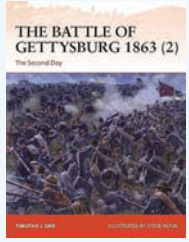
Duty to Serve, Duty to Conscience: The Story of Two Conscientious Objector Combat Medics during the Vietnam War (James G. Keraney and William H. Clamurro, University of North Texas Press, 2023, $34.95, HC) This is one of the few memoirs by legal conscientious objectors from the Vietnam War. Both served as medics in accordance with their beliefs while still fulfilling their patriotic obligations.



Afghan Wheels and Tracks: UK and U.S. Vehicles (Craig Allen, Key Books, 2023, $24.95, SC) The two nations used various types of vehicles for the challenging terrain of Afghanistan. This book gives both design details and numerous illustrations.

German High Seas Fleet 1914 – 1918: The Kaiser's Challenge to the Royal Navy (Angus Konstam, Osprey Books, 2023, $23, SC) Germany built its fleet to face the Royal Navy. This book gives extensive background on that fleet and how it fared against its opponent.

British Light Infantryman versus Patriot Rifleman: Americna Revolution 1775–1783 (Robbie MacNiven, Osprey Books, 2023, $23, SC) These specialist formations were among the best troops on each side during the conflict. This work compares their preparation and experience against each other in combat.

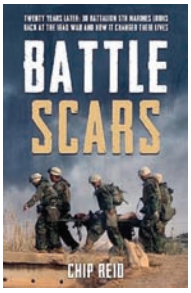


The Battle of Gettysburg 1863 (2) The Second Day (Timothy J. Orr, Osprey Books, 2023, $25, SC) The second day of Gettysburg proved the bloodiest and most difficult. The action was wide-ranging, involving the bulk of both armies.

War In Ukraine, Volume 3: Armed Formations of the Luhansk People's Republic 2014–2022 (Edward Crowther, Helion Books, 2023, $29.95, SC) Luhansk is one of the separatist enclaves in Eastern Ukraine. This work explains its armed forces since it broke away.

ing radars but were observed visually. Machine guns and shoulder fired missiles soon deluged the Russians; their gunships replied to suppress the Ukrainians but two Mi-8s were shot down. Russian Su-25 ground attack aircraft joined the fight, destroying some Ukrainian positions, though a Ka-52 was lost to a Ukrainian missile. The Russian paratroopers pushed the defenders out of the airport, called for the transports carrying their reinforcements and formed a perimeter against the expected counterattack. It was not long in coming. Ukrainian militia, special forces and a mechanized battalion assaulted the airport; the Russians held but their perimeter was slowly shrinking. A second counterattack caused casualties to both sides. The Russians still held but realized the incoming transports would be shot out of the sky if they approached, so their commander used his radio to turn them away.

The first year of the Ukraine War proved a chaotic period of attack, counterattack and desperate defensive actions. This new book, by a former US Army general who trained with the Ukrainians, lays out the war's prelude, the armies of both sides, and how the fighting unfolded. While the author admits a bias for Ukraine, the book does not gloss over Ukrainian problems and shortcomings and gives a reasonably balanced view of the conflict. It provides good insights into an ongoing war where propaganda and fact compete for attention.



Battle Scars Twenty Years Later: 3D Battalion 5th Marines Looks Back at the Iraq War and how it Changed their Lives War (Chip Reid, Casemate Books, Havertown PA, 2023, 256 pp., photographs, index, $34.95, HC)

It took the Marines of 3rd Battalion 5th Marine Regiment 22 days to get to Baghdad. The author was a journalist embedded with them. Before crossing the border, a Marine officer told him, "when the shit hits the fan, you're on your own." He meant that in combat the Marines have vital jobs to do and he couldn't expect them to pause to help him. Later, however, a Marine did help him, throwing him in the back of a truck when a fight broke out. The rest of the invasion of Iraq was a cacophony of violence. Marines moving down trench lines shooting Iraqis, picking up AK-47s when they ran out of ammunition for their M16s. Others ran to cover as bullets kicked up spurts of dust all around them. Hunting for Iraqi soldiers hiding in spider holes and bunkers.

Twenty years later, the author sought out Marines from 3-5, most of them now civilians, to talk about both their battle experiences and what they went through after they came home. Some suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Others had somehow avoided it, or at least the worst of its effects. Some had survivor's guilt. Most remembered the camaraderie of their service and the heroism of their fellow Marines. The book is a tribute to them and an engaging read for those who wish to understand as best they are able what these men went through on their behalf.

The Killing Ground: A Biography of Thermopylae (Myke Cole and Michael Livingston, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2023, maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $35, HC)

Thermopylae is famous as the location of the battle between a force of 300 Spartans (albeit with thousands of other Greek troops present) and the invading Persian army in 480 BCE. However, it has also been the location of other battles throughout history. There have been at least 27 other actions at Thermopylae, ranging from later Greek armies to the Romans and Byzantines through to the Huns and Ottomans in later centuries. Finally, three fights against the attacking Germans of the Third Reich during 1941-43 showcase the area's long-lasting value. They range from simple crossings of the area during various wars to set piece battles to commando raids to sabotage the occupying Nazis.

This new work details 27 separate actions which occurred at Thermopylae over more than two millennia of history. The authors personally surveyed the ground to gain insight into their subject. They also used their personal knowledge of several ancient languages to produce personal translations of the source material. Rather than try to glorify the events, they present them as accurately and rationally as any historian is able. The book is engaging and easy to follow, with thorough explanations of the troops, weapons, tactics and commanders who have moved and fought over Thermopylae over many centuries.

King of the Gunrunners: How a Philadelphia Fruit Importer Inspired a Revolution and Provoked the Spanish-American War (James W. Miller, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson MI, 2024, 277 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $35, HC)

By the early 1890s, John D. Hart was one of the largest importers of bananas on the East Coast. His ships brought a seemingly endless supply of the fruit to a large and hungry market. This came to an end with the Financial Panic of 1893, when the many unemployed could no longer afford luxuries such as bananas. Hart was on the brink of bankruptcy when Emilio Nuñez, a member of the exiled Cuban Revolutionary Party, approached him with an offer. Nuñez soon convinced Hart to become what was then known as a "filibuster," transporting weapons and ammunition to Cuba to support the simmering uprising against Spain. Hart performed this role for three years, along with other shipping owners. Along the way, he angered both the Spanish and American governments, became a hero to many Cubans and a darling of many in the American press. In many ways Hart prepared a path for eventual war between the United States and Spain in 1898.

This book reveals how Hart and others like him paved a path for America to enter the world stage, even though not everyone in the U.S. wanted to do so. The story of American gunrunners to Cuba in this period is largely unknown today; this new work sheds much-needed light on the subject. It provides an entertaining and informative mix of diplomacy, espionage, piracy and gunrunning.

The Miracle of Father Kapaun: Priest, Soldier and Korean War Hero (Roy Wenzl and Travis Heying, Ignatius Press, San Francisco CA, 2013, 160 pp., photographs, appendices, bibliography, index, $17.95, SC)

Father Emil Kapaun served as a U.S. Army chaplain during the Korean War. His acts of bravery sound almost like legends. He tended to troops on the battlefield and was captured because he refused to leave their side. On the forced march to the prison camp, he carried a wounded soldier. Once there, he tended to the injuries of his fellow POWs, often scrounging extra food for them or giving them portions of his own rations. If a soldier became sick, he cared for them and washed their clothes. When his North Korean captors gave lectures on communist ideology, he argued with them calmly, refuting their theories and statements. Kapaun strove constantly to keep up the spirits of the other prisoners. For all this he was treated harshly by his captors and died on May 23, 1951. For these selfless acts Kapaun was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

GAMES

WORLD OF WARSHIPS ENTERS 2024 IN STYLE AND *BROADSWORD* BRINGS MORE MEDIEVAL HEAT

By Joseph Luster

World of Warships

Genre: Naval combat MMO • Platform: PC, PlayStation, Xbox • Publisher: Wargaming • Available: Now

We've got a little something for everyone in this issue of *Military Heritage*, including more from Wargaming and a trip way back in time for some medieval warfare. First up is the latest out of *World of Warships*, which saw fit to enter 2024 in style with some new additions to the naval combat game's stable of aircraft carriers.

This particular update focuses on U.S. Aircraft Carriers, specifically with three new ships joining the game in Early Access. These ships include Tier VI *Independence*, Tier VIII *Yorktown* and Tier X *Essex*. Since each of the new ships is limited to a single standard squadron, they all enter the MMO with a different style of play. With torpedo bombers supplemented with two tactical squadrons—including attack and dive bomber aircraft—there's plenty for players to work with. Add in the new Smoke Curtain Generator consumable with which these squadrons come equipped starting at Tier VIII and you have a new wrinkle in the mix of your strategic arsenal.

Wargaming celebrated the addition of the new U.S. carriers with a special event that paved the way for a handful of fresh unlocks. Commemorative flags, camouflages and special containers were on order for those who made it through 20 levels of daily and weekly missions, and an additional progression line awaited with 20 more levels upon unlocking.

Beyond that, February marked the return of the Bounty Hunt event, which packs in four new achievements along with rewards, access to the Star Emissaries collection and other changes. Those who rolled the dice on random bundles had the chance to unlock Star Emissaries content like the STAR *Kitakaze* and STAR *Edinburgh* ships, as well as a pair of Commanders that boast 10 skill points each. Update 13.0 also ushered in Season 15, featuring the return of Ranked Battles and more Brawls.

There's still plenty of building to partake in for those who don't feel like waging war all the time. The fun continues at the Sestri Ponente Dockyard, and those who put in the work can earn Tier IX Italian cruiser Michelangelo. Not content with updating sans VTubers, *World of Warships* said hello to hololive production once again in Update 13.0, with popular stars like Shishiro Botan, Moona Hoshinova, Takanashi Kiara and Watson Amelia taking the helm as Commanders. It's nice to see

that there's still plenty to sink your teeth into here, whether you're a newcomer or a longtime *World of Warships* vet. The MMO is currently available across PC, PlayStation and Xbox platforms alongside *World of Warships Blitz* on mobile devices.

Broadsword: Warlord Edition

Genre: Strategy • Platform: PC • Publisher: GS2 Games • Available: Now

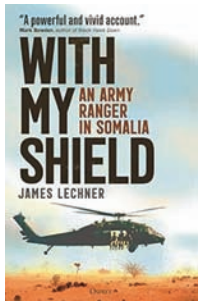
Those looking to go deeper back into history would do well to check out *Broadsword: Warlord Edition*, a turn-based strategy game developed by Hoplite Research and published by GS2 Games. The setup is relatively straightforward as players are tasked with completing missions throughout the Middle Ages, taking charge of either the English, the French, the Spanish, the Poles or the Hapsburgs. In battle you'll be implementing everything from standard knights to archers, pikemen, catapults and other units, including special hero units like Joan of Arc, Wladylaw I of Poland, Peter of Castile and Henry III.

When you're not unleashing the battlefield-impacting powers of those special hero units, there's plenty to do outside of combat. More units can be raised through the construction of various buildings—such as mills, farms, mines and town centers—and resources will need to be created and managed to further build up the empire. There's also technology research to take into account through categories like ballistics, forestry and many more. When everything comes together just right it can grant a major strategic advantage over opponents.

Missions can be further complicated in a manner of ways. There are different maps to learn, of course, with each boasting unique weather conditions. Movement penalties and defensive advantages are both distinct possibilities depending on the terrain, and much thought should be put into each scenario's respective battle matchups.

On top of the five main single-player campaigns available at the time of this writing, *Broadsword: Warlord Edition* includes a Champion Mode that lets players create custom single-player matches using many different battlefields as the basis. Even if Hoplite doesn't update the core game much further, as long as fans stick with it there should be other interesting creations to look forward to in the future. ■

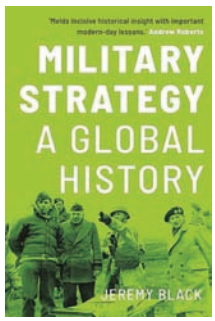
The story of this stalwart priest is revealed in this detailed biography. Kapaun touched the lives of many soldiers and they remembered him; their accounts are used liberally in this book. The volume also looks at current efforts to canonize Kapaun as a saint. The book will be of interest to anyone interested in the power of faith under the terrible circumstances of war



With My Shield: The Experiences of an Army Ranger in Somalia (James Lechner, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2023, maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $32, HC)

Lieutenant James Lechner, a member of the 3rd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, went to Somalia in 1993 as part of a U.S. task force deployed to restore order in that war-torn nation. The Rangers soon became involved in the capture of Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed. In October the unit is assigned to carry out a daylight raid to capture two of the warlord's senior lieutenants. The group fast ropes from helicopters and enters the city via a ground convoy; they quickly achieve their initial objective but are soon beset by a quick response from hostile fighters. When one of the mission's Black Hawk helicopters is shot down, the mission devolves into a bloody battle to rescue the helicopter's crew and get the American force out of the heart of Mogadishu. Thousands of local fighters descend upon them intent on wiping out the U.S. force.

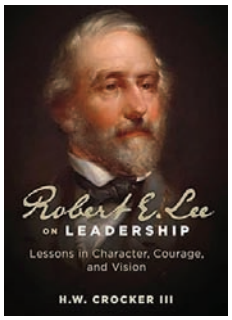
The author relays his firsthand account with detail, a professional's analysis and the authenticity of someone who was there. Despite the odds, the Rangers stayed together and fought through despite the incredible odds against them. The author's descriptions of the action are impressive and engaging. The book provides a new perspective on the famed "Black Hawk Down" incident made famous in books and film.



Military Strategy: A Global History (Jeremy Black, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2023, 306 pp., notes, bibliography, index, $24, SC)

In 1861, only the lower southern states seceded at first. Once it became apparent President Lincoln intended to use force to prevent secession, Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia joined the Confederacy. Those last three states added much to Confederate resources, providing half its crops, more than half its industrial capacity and 40 percent of its military forces. This transformed their military strategy, as it was important to defend these productive states, which were close to Union territory. The Confederacy was now a block of coherent territory which could be defended using a coherent strategy. It shifted much of the fighting in the east northward to Virginia. The lower South was now only vulnerable to naval and amphibious attacks. It also changed the Union's strategy, as it was no longer possible to march into the heart of the rebellion and occupy the seceding state's territory. As the competing strategies played out, in the war's first two years there was a chance for Confederate survival. During 1863, that possibility evaporated.

Strategy is the way by which nations, leaders, or others seek to shape their situation and achieve goals. At least, that is one definition. The author of this new work studies and reviews military strategies throughout history to reveal how they were devised, how well they worked and what can be learned from them and applied to the future. The author is a respected scholar with extensive knowledge of his subject and it shows through in the book's high level of detail and consideration of the topic



Robert E. Lee on Leadership (H.W. Crocker III, Regnery History, Washington DC, 2023, 256 pp., bibliography, index, $17.99, SC)

Though controversial today for his choice of sides during the American Civil War, Robert E. Lee was indisputably an able military leader. Though he ended the conflict in defeat, Lee managed to fight, usually outnumbered and outgunned, for four years. During his life he willingly took on difficult tasks, created and organized military forces, and then led them into battle time and again. He trusted his subordinates while pushing them to their best efforts. Lee was known for not taking advantage of his position, usually eating the same food his troops did in the field.

Lee's leadership lessons are myriad and the author has combined them into one volume for easy absorption by those who would emulate him. This volume gives the reader numerous examples of Lee's character to emulate in their own lives. The book engagingly shows how Lee overcame adversity and challenges in a way that can be used in the reader's own life and business. ■

Carthage

Continued from page 91

Facing a hopeless present with no future, the besieged soldiers and refugees assembled inside the temple, and set it afire.

Hasdrubal the Boetharch was not among the last hold-outs on Byrsa. He conducted quiet negotiations on his own behalf with the Romans. They agreed the Carthaginian general would surrender in exchange for his life and favorable treatment, including an estate where he could live in retirement.

According to Roman historians, Hasdrubal's spouse was ashamed of her husband. No one wrote down her name, at least not in any surviving texts, and she is known to history as "the wife of Hasdrubal." It was said that she stood on the ramparts of Byrsa, and gave a blessing to Scipio. Although he was the destroyer of her city, the Roman leader himself had conducted himself honorably according to the rules of ancient war. Then, she uttered a curse upon her husband for his abandonment of his country and his family. Earning the admiration of future generations of Romans, the wife of Hasdrubal dressed in her finest raiment and took two sons by the hand. They walked together, and made their way to the roof of the blazing Temple of Eshmoun, which became their funeral pyre. The Hill of Byrsa, the mythic birthplace of Carthage, was also the scene of the last moments of the Carthaginian Empire.

After his victory, Scipio Aemilianus became known as Scipio Africanus the Younger. According to legend, he had the very ground of the conquered city plowed up and sown with salt, so that nothing would ever grow there. This tale is no longer taken literally. Just the same, the burned and ravaged city was left empty and abandoned. Some 50,000 survivors—perhaps one-fifth of the prewar population—were spared to be sold into slavery.

Even its conqueror was appalled at the immensity of Carthage's fiery and blood-soaked end. "Scipio, beholding this spectacle," wrote Arrian, "is said to have shed tears and publicly lamented the fortune of the enemy." Reflecting on the fall of past empires, and perhaps with a premonition of the end of Rome, he recited from the Iliad, "The day shall come in which our sacred Troy/ And Priam, and the people over whom/ Spear-bearing Priam rules, shall perish all."

Eventually a new city grew on the site of Carthage, but it was a new Roman city that left nothing to be seen of the old. The religion, language, history, literature, poetry, and the very culture of Carthage were practically obliterated, leaving this once dominant civilization much shadowed in mystery. ■

Battle of Loos

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7,766 killed, with the Regular army units hit particularly hard. Four divisions lost more than 5,000 men each, and 51 battalions suffered more than 300 casualties. Although more than 2,600 British soldiers were incapacitated by their gas, fewer than 10 succumbed to it. Leading from the front, British officer casualties were grievous. Three division commanders, three brigade commanders, and 29 battalion commanders were killed, and a division commander was taken prisoner. Company-grade officers died in the hundreds. The loss of so many general officers led the British High Command to order that they not visit the front: "no staff officer was to go nearer to the trenches than a certain line."

More than 20,000 British losses came from the 45 Scottish battalions which took part in the battle. The "Dundee's Own," the 4th Battalion of the famous Black Watch Regiment, suffered 19 officers killed or wounded out of 20, as well as 230 out of 420 enlisted men. Almost every family in Dundee lost someone.

But the losses didn't break the British spirit. The 1st Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, which lost 489 men at the Battle of Loos, cheered upon discovering they were returning to the trenches. A photo of the smiling Lancashire soldiers became so popular it was sold as a postcard in Britain.

German casualties in the Battle of Loos were substantially less, at around 26,000. While it was a tactical victory, it was a costly one. Similar to the British, some of their units were decimated. The 117th Infantry Division lost 6,572 men killed or wounded out of almost 8,000 at the start of the battle.

After the battle, Haig was highly critical of Sir John French, blaming him for mishandling reserves. The resulting political fallout led to French's resignation and the appointment of Haig to command the BEF.

Multiple causes contributed to the British costly failure in their largest offensive of 1915. Suffering from a dire shortage of ammunition, British artillery failed to suppress German machine gun and artillery positions and defensive works, leaving wire obstacles largely intact. Inclement weather prevented the British Royal Flying Corps from providing accurate observation for the artillery. The tight confines of the battlefield limited maneuver, forcing British divisions to launch successive futile frontal attacks.

Despite all the sacrifices, courage, and expenditure of lives and resources, the British command failed to learn from their mistakes, resulting in another bloodbath at the Battle of Somme in July 1916. ■

Rommel

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armored division and a motorized brigade, captured their supply dumps, and even bagged three top British generals—one of them quite likely the best British general of the entire war.

In doing so, Rommel had established himself as a flawed master of the desert battlefield, driving mechanized forces at high speed across the terrain, doing what seemed impossible despite shortages of supplies, troops, and gasoline. He was now the image of Germany's ability to wage successful blitzkrieg war, down to the sun goggles he had "liberated" from a British command vehicle.

The German propaganda machine was quick to capitalize on this with Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels making sure that images of Rommel in his gritty jacket, sun goggles, peaked hat, and World War I Pour le Mérite around his throat, would be prominent in newsreels and in newspapers and magazines. Soon Rommel's opponents would be respecting him and honoring him as well, including Winston Churchill himself. Privately the prime minister snarled, "Rommel! Rommel! Rommel! What else matters but beating that man! But publicly, he called Rommel "across the havoc of war, a very great general."

The Australians on the other side of the Tobruk defenses on the evening of April 14, 1941, were experiencing a different epiphany. They had just delivered the first defeat to German ground forces in World War II. While Rommel would attack again in his efforts to seize Tobruk, these assaults would also fail, and the port would remain besieged in a desert version of Great War trench fighting for 242 days until New Zealand troops of the British Eighth Army broke the siege on December 7, 1941, a feat obscured by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the Russian counteroffensive at Moscow the same day.

The Germans had been stopped. This had never happened before. The captured men of 5th Panzer Regiment and 8th Machine Gun Battalion knew it, too. The Australians tried to make them comfortable as they herded them back to POW camps, offering them cigarettes and tea. Some were in tears, others devastated, a few defiant, threatening the Diggers, saying, "You will pay for this."

But some simply did not realize what was going on. "I cannot understand you Australians," a German told his captors. "In Poland, France, and Belgium, once the tanks got through the soldiers took it for granted that they were beaten. But you are like demons. The tanks break through and your infantry still keep fighting."

The Germans had never encountered anyone as tough as the Australians and the British in their conquest of Europe. It was a rude awakening. ■

Lorraine

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bridges over the Red River, only after having demolished any permanent installation in the bridgeheads and sent all heavy equipment back into the safety of the De Lattre Line.

Salan reviewed the cost of Operation Lorraine, which was higher than the returns. From the crossing on October 29 to removal of the pontoon bridges on December 1, around 1,200 dead, wounded, and missing have been calculated for the French casualties. Almost all of them in the week of November 17 to 24. No reliable Viet Minh casualty figures have been published. The failure to divert Giap from his campaign or significantly disrupt the Viet Minh supply system only added to the misery.

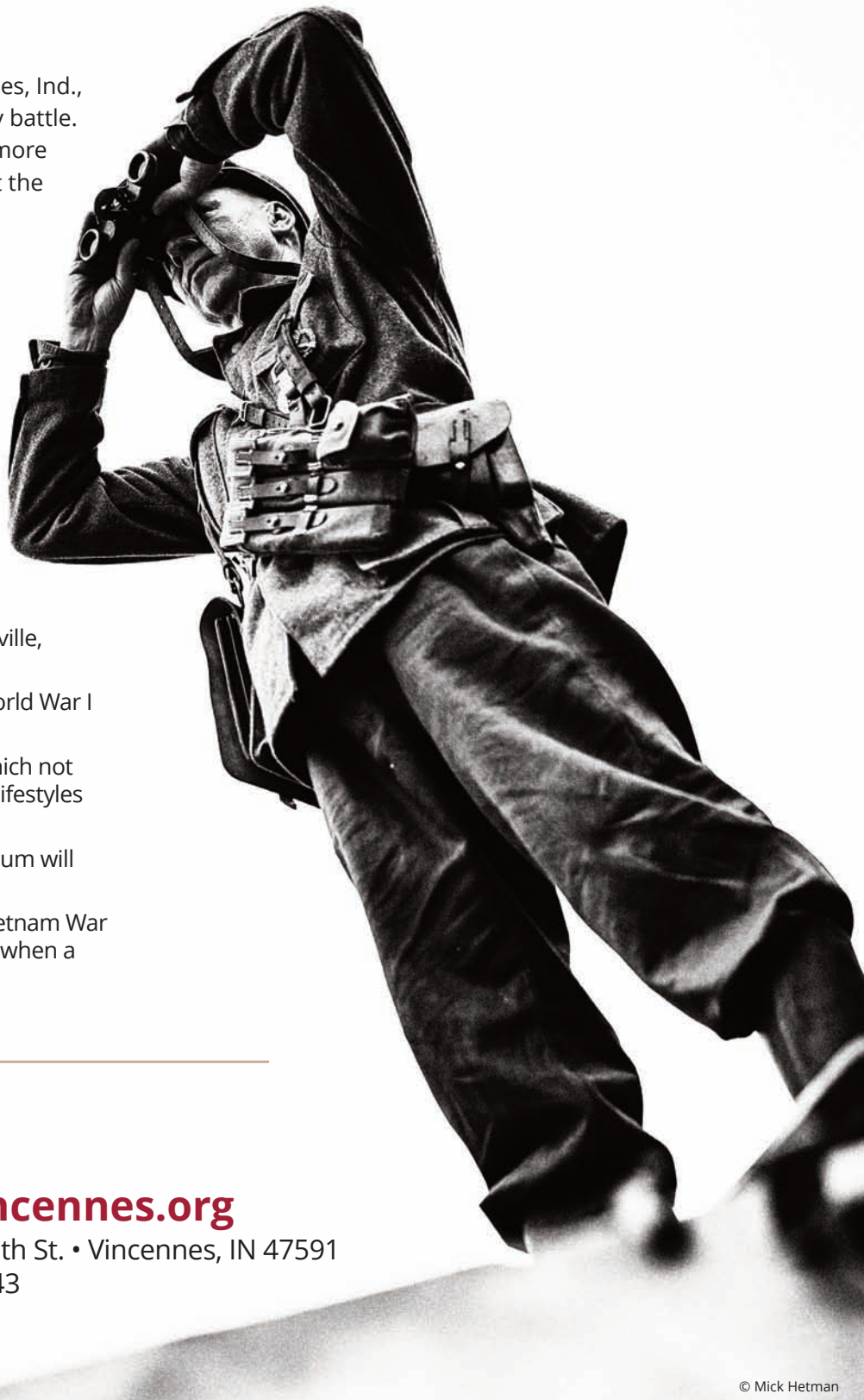
At the same time the French were withdrawing down Route Coloniale 2, Giap implemented his attack plan upon the French installations along the Black River. He sent his 308th Division against the base aero-terrestre at Na San. For the first time since the battles against Marshal de Lattre de Tassigny, Giap miscalculated. He believed the ease at which the Viet Minh had forced Salan to end his offensive indicated the French were tired and overextended. On this rare occasion, his intelligence network failed him. The French had twice as many defenders and more firepower than believed. In addition, Salan had the isolated base supplied via the air. The French dealt Giap a heavy loss at Na San. The victory drastically influenced the French High Command into believing bases aero-terrestres could be used to extend their influence in isolated areas.

The 30,000 soldiers taking part in Salan's grand operation did occupy the Viet Minh supply base at Phu Doan and seized a significant number of weapons. However, those initial troops who crossed the Red River had no idea that their future accomplishments at Phu Doan would be insignificant in relation to the casualties incurred, especially at the Chan Muong Gorge battle. Plus, Giap never deviated from his campaign. For the costs in terms of men and material in relation to damage inflicted upon their enemy, Operation Lorraine can be listed as a failure.

Operation Lorraine and the subsequent Giap defeat at Na San influenced French strategy in Indochina. The success of defeating Giap at the Na San base aero-terrestre convinced the French they would be able to maintain air-supplied bases. This belief would lead to the establishment in November 1953 of the base aero-terrestre at Dien Bien Phu. Six months later and after eight weeks of intense fighting, the French surrendered to Giap and paved the way for eventual American involvement in Vietnam. ■

Relive the Story at INDIANA MILITARY MUSEUM

At the **Indiana Military Museum**, in Vincennes, Ind., relive the glory and the heartbreak of military battle. See aircraft, vehicles, artillery, uniforms and more spanning from the Civil War to present day at the museum recently featured on the History Channel hit show "American Pickers." In the museum's annex, tour immersive, life-sized scenes from the World War I trenches and home front, complete with sound effects and even trench rats. This museum is also completely handicapped accessible, all on one floor, for people of all abilities.



LIVING HISTORY EVENTS

February 24: Reenactors will relive the last leg of the George Rogers Clark march on Fort Sackville, reading passages of Clark's journals.

April 6-7: Indiana Military Museum will host World War I and World War II reenactments.

May 25-26: Spirit of Vincennes Rendezvous, which not only re-enacts the Revolutionary War, but also lifestyles and food of people at the time.

August 31-September 1: Indiana Military Museum will host a WWII reenactment.

July (TBA): Indiana Military Museum plans a Vietnam War reenactment, but will set the date according to when a helicopter can land.

Dates subject to change.

Historic VINCENNES KNOX COUNTY Visitors and Tourism Bureau

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