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NOVEMBER 2005

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Cover: Germans advance through Russia in this 1942 photo from Signal *magazine. (Photo: Bridgeman Art Library/Private Collection)*

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FEATURES

COLUMNS

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The Soviet Secret Police massacred thousands of Polish Army officers in the Katyn Forest and attempted to conceal the slaughter.

BY RICHARD RULE

On September 17, 1939, in the wake of Hitler's invasion of Poland, the Soviet Red Army crossed the Polish frontier from the east. Within 10 days, the valiant Poles were completely overwhelmed and forced to surrender.

Partitioned between Germany and Russia, 77,000 square miles of Poland had now fallen into Soviet hands. In the months that followed the invasion, Stalin dissolved the Polish state and unleashed his security police, who, acting without restraint, orchestrated a campaign of terror to suppress all resistance. The very fabric of Polish society was soon being systematically torn to shreds, while over 1.5 million Poles were deported, arrested, or executed to facilitate the Soviet takeover of the nation.

Soviet Premier Josef Stalin's designs on the men of Poland's defeated army were no less frightful, and he decreed that the 240,000 Polish officers and men in captivity were to be treated as political prisoners. To this end the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, created a Directorate of Prisoners of War, under which most of the enlisted men found themselves dispatched to labor camps deep inside the Soviet Union.

The officers, however, were to be handled in a different manner. At least half were placed in the "special" prisons that had been created on the grounds of former Orthodox monasteries at Kozelsk, Starobelsk, and Ostashkov. Here, these men, recognized as Poland's elite, were to undergo a rigorous "re-education" program incorporating lengthy interrogations and constant political agitation.

Stalin's murderous designs on eastern Poland, however, were thrown into chaos by Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. The entire political landscape of Eastern Europe was to change once again as three million German troops poured through occupied Poland and into the Soviet Union itself. Stalin, a longtime antagonist of the West, suddenly found himself aligned with other nations already at war with Germany. In a dramatic turn of events, he now found himself allied with the Polish government-in-exile in London.

It was an uneasy alliance, but incredibly, now faced with a common enemy, Polish authorities and the Soviet Union agreed to form a Polish Army on Soviet territory drawn from the Polish prisoners interned inside the Soviet Union. The gates of over 138 Russian prison and labor camps were suddenly thrown open, allowing tens of thousands of emaciated Polish prisoners to make their way to a collection point at Buzul'uk where they would join with their new Polish commander, General Wladyslav Anders.

With so many men arriving daily from all parts of the Soviet Union, General Anders desperately needed officers to organize and process the troops, but strangely, very few

The Art Archive / Private Collection / Marc Charmet

A propaganda poster depicts a polish officer being executed in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk.

appeared. When the camps had emptied and numbers were finalized, the Poles discovered that approximately 15,000 men, mostly officers and specialist NCOs, were still missing. Despite repeated Polish inquiries, the Soviets claimed to have no knowledge of their whereabouts; not even officials of the notorious NKVD, who maintained meticulous records, could shed any light on their fate. Stalin's improbable view was that they had escaped to Manchuria!

For so many men to simply vanish within the Soviet prison system was incomprehensible to the Poles, and General Anders immediately established a search team to find his soldiers. The Russian authorities were far from helpful, but Anders' team soon established that most of the missing men had been held in the prisons at Kozelsk, Ostashkov, and Starobelsk. Information regarding the prisoners held at Ostashkov and Starobelsk was scant, but the Poles learned that in the spring of 1940 the prison at Kozelsk had been systematically emptied and the prisoners taken under heavy NKVD guard to a location near Smolensk.

What became of them from there remained a mystery. The tireless search continued, but not a trace of the missing men was found. They had simply vanished. The Soviets were saying nothing, but Polish authorities in London suspected foul play.

More than two years would pass before a report from a Wehrmacht unit stationed in the Katyn Forest 12 miles west of Smolensk found its way to the desk of Germany's Propaganda Minister, Dr. Josef Goebbels, in February 1943. Within a short time of reading the contents of the message, Goebbels had German radio broadcast to the world that they had discovered the mass graves of over 10,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Forest. The Germans claimed the victims, who had each been bound and executed with a shot to the back of the head, had formerly been prisoners of the Red Army and murdered in cold blood by Soviet security forces.

The Soviets vehemently denied the allegation, stating that the Nazis were clearly trying to cover up their own atrocity by blaming the Soviet Union. Soviet authorities claimed that in 1941 the Polish prisoners had fallen into the hands of the invading Germans and were in fact their prisoners. This stark revelation from Moscow left Polish authorities astounded; for nearly two years they had been led to believe that the Soviets had no knowledge of the missing men. Now, they were claiming otherwise.

Polish suspicions were further fueled by the location of the graves deep inside the Katyn Forest. The Poles had known that this location had for years been regularly used by Stalin's security forces as an execution site to eliminate those who had opposed or displeased the Kremlin.

Many of the London Poles began to suspect that the Katyn killings were the work of the NKVD, but Nazi atrocities in Eastern Europe left few willing to believe the Goebbels version

National Archives

A pathologist dissects a body unearthed in the Katyn Forest during a German investigation of the incident.

of the discovery. It seemed likely that the Germans were using the Katyn massacre to destabilize the Allied camp, and confirmation that the bullets used in the execution were of German manufacture served to strengthen the Soviet argument that the Nazis were, in fact, responsible. The Polish authorities in London were not convinced. German companies had supplied ammunition to many nations before the war, including the Soviet Union.

Far from being satisfied with the Soviet explanation, the Poles contacted the International Red Cross in Geneva, seeking an impartial investigation. Upon making their request, they were astonished to learn that the Germans had made a similar submission less than an hour before. Perhaps sensitive to the political machinations in play over the matter, the Red Cross made it clear that no inquiry could be undertaken unless they received a similar request from the Soviets.

With political storm clouds building over the Western alliance, an outraged Stalin believed the Germans and Poles were now cooperating with one another. Goebbels was delighted. This is exactly what Berlin had wanted, and he counted on a swift and destructive reaction from the Kremlin. He was not to be disappointed.

Stalin, who had no intention of calling for an investigation, tersely demanded the Poles publicly declare their belief that the Germans were guilty of the crime. Not surprisingly, the Poles refused. Instead, they issued a statement that deliberately avoided singling out who they thought was responsible for the massacre at Katyn and merely condemned aggression against Polish citizens. The ink had barely dried on the Polish statement before Stalin vented his anger.

By mid-1943, the war had clearly begun to turn against Germany, and the destabilizing fallout from the Katyn affair was a damaging and unwelcome distraction for the Western Allies. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill tried to defuse the situation by encouraging the Poles to drop the matter, reasoning, "If they are dead, nothing you can do will bring them back."

Desperate to repair the breach in the Allied front, Churchill assured Stalin that the Poles had not collaborated with the Nazis and were still willing to work with the Soviet government. The British Prime Minister's placating maneuvers, however, had come too late—Stalin would not change his mind and proceeded to formally break diplomatic relations with the London Poles and set up a puppet Polish government in Moscow.

With the Allied camp fracturing over the Katyn disclosure, Goebbels drove the wedge deeper by instigating his own public inquiry headed by an independent international commission of distinguished forensic specialists drawn from neutral countries. To enhance the perception of impartiality, Goebbels invited a 12-person medical team from the Polish Red Cross (which secretly included members of the Polish Underground) along with journalists from numerous countries, including Sweden, Holland, Belgium, and Hungary. Granting the reporters unfettered access to the site, Goebbels was doing everything in his power to ensure that Katyn remained on the international stage as long as possible.

The Poles on the investigating team dismissed out of hand the Germans' air of moral indignation over the killings and refused to do interviews for radio, make anti-Soviet statements, or tour Polish POW camps and lecture the prisoners on the Katyn atrocity. Their sole aim was to identify the murderers and pass the information back to London.

The frustrated Germans decided to have Polish and other Allied prisoners flown to the site in the hope that they would be more inclined to make the "appropriate" observations for propaganda, but they, too, refused to cooperate. Finally, in a blaze of German orchestrated publicity, delegates from the international commission, the Polish delegation, and a German Special Medical-Judiciary Commission

began the macabre and grisly undertaking of inspecting the burial pits.

Eight graves were opened and found to vary in depth from six to 11 feet, holding 10 to 12 layers of bodies carefully arranged face down, one on top of the other. The victims had their hands secured behind their backs with white Soviet-made cord and were shot in the back of the head. A number of bodies were found to have puncture wounds consistent with the four-sided bayonet used by the Soviet military.

In a distressing discovery, some of the younger officers who had perhaps vocally resisted appeared to have had sawdust or rags stuffed in their mouths. Nearby, the bodies of Soviet civilians executed many years earlier were also unearthed, and it was noted that they were bound in identical fashion to the Poles.

The Nazis had originally announced in their broadcast that 10,000 bodies had been found, but despite efforts to persuade the Polish delegates to corroborate this figure the final tally was reduced to approximately 4,443. The wealth of personal items—letters, diaries, and identification disks—found confirmed that the victims were from the POW camp at Kozelsk. There was no doubt the information was authentic, as much of it had to be forcibly removed by cutting through pockets that had rotted closed.

Among the professional soldiers executed, the investigators also found 20 university professors; 300 physicians; several hundred lawyers, engineers, and teachers; and more than 100 writers and journalists. All had been reserve officers called to the colors during the German invasion.

The Polish community, which had hoped the Katyn discovery was a German hoax, was stunned to learn that the bodies of the Kozelsk prisoners were really there. The families of those missing from Starobelsk and Ostashkov were gripped by paralyzing fear. Had their men suffered the same fate? Nobody knew.

The key to the whole investigation quickly came to depend on establishing the date the massacre had taken place. The independent findings of three investigating teams determined from the condition of the bodies, the documents found, and the age of the trees that were planted over the graves, that the bodies had been in the ground for nearly three years. The teams placed the date of the executions somewhere around the spring of 1940, which was a year before the German invasion and at a time when the area was under the control of the NKVD.

This revelation was explosive and ignited public outrage on both sides of the Atlantic. While the British and American governments trod warily around the Katyn issue, the possibility that one Allied government had actually murdered much of the officer corps of another had shocked the world and left the public demanding answers.

It was a difficult position for the Western leaders. With the tide of the war having turned against the Nazis, they had no desire to fuel an internal quarrel to disrupt their relationship with Stalin. Looking beyond the Katyn controversy, the Western Allies did not want to jeopardize the possibility of Soviet troops joining them in the Pacific War against the Japanese and, as such, publicly accepted the Soviet countercharge that the Germans committed the crime.

Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt secretly harbored suspicions of Russian guilt, but neither establishing the identity of the murderers nor locating the whereabouts of the 10,000 Polish officers still missing appeared to be in their best interests. They chose to view it as a matter of concern for the Poles alone to deal with.

The political fallout from Katyn had not achieved the decisive split in Allied unity that Goebbels had predicted or hoped for, but he observed the growing rift with unbridled delight and noted in his diary, "The Poles are given the brush-off by the English and Americans as though they were enemies."

When the Smolensk region was reoccupied by Red Army troops in September 1943, Soviet authorities began their own inquiry into the fate of the Poles. With no foreign representatives or Polish communists initially invited, the Soviet delegation, known as the Burdenko Commission after the surgeon who chaired it, immediately went to work discrediting the findings of the three previous investigating teams.

One of the first tasks undertaken concerned the small cemetery established in Katyn by the Polish Red Cross for the disinterred bodies. With little ceremony or explanation, it was immediately destroyed by NKVD personnel.

The Burdenko Commission's subsequent report on the massacre stated that the murdered prisoners had in fact been carrying out road construction near Smolensk until captured by the Germans, who found them too difficult to control. According to the Soviets, during the fall of 1941 the Germans had run out of patience and in great secrecy executed all of the Poles.

This claim was supported by local Russian witnesses, who stated that trucks packed with Polish prisoners were seen driving into the for-

est, followed a short time later by the sound of gunfire. This was confirmed by the German-appointed mayor of Smolensk, B.G. Menshagin, who confided to a colleague that the Nazis were exterminating the Polish prisoners in the Katyn area.

The Soviet report stated that the Germans had exhumed the bodies in 1943, removed all documentation beyond April 1940, and then reburied them. The 500 Russian workers who had carried out the macabre task were themselves shot and buried. Some weeks later, a staged discovery of the Polish graves was carried out by Wehrmacht troops and immediately labeled as a Soviet atrocity. The delegates who formed the German commissions were said to have fabricated evidence under Nazi coercion to incriminate the Soviets.

No one doubted the Germans were capable of the murders at Katyn; they had done far worse in Poland and elsewhere, but observers were puzzled as to why the Soviet report overlooked key points without explanation. First, if the men were murdered in September 1941, which was a very warm time of the year, why were the majority clad in heavy winter coats? Second, if the Poles had spent 16 months in a labor camp, why didn't the officers' highly polished leather boots show signs of wear and tear consistent with road construction?

According to those who visited the site, the boots on the bodies were in excellent condition, and the heels were not worn. Lastly, if the men had fallen into the hands of the Germans in June 1941, why hadn't the Soviets admitted this when the search for their whereabouts first began some years earlier? The many inconsistencies within the report left the Poles deeply troubled, but without any hard evidence there was little prospect of unraveling the truth until after the war.

With the Katyn region now back in Soviet hands, Goebbels ensured that the evidence already in German hands was preserved at all costs. The letters, diaries, and other personal items were put in nine wooden crates and taken to the Polish Institute of Forensic Medicine in Krakow for processing and further analysis.

In close contact with their countrymen in London, members of the Polish Underground were encouraged to view exactly what the Germans had collected. A number of resistance men managed to closely examine a great deal of the material and noted that most diary entries abruptly ceased during April and May 1940. Research also revealed that this period coincided with the time the men had stopped writing letters home. With the German Army being forced back toward its own border, the Poles were desperate to steal the boxes before they were moved out of reach or fell into the hands of the advancing Soviets. Unfortunately the theft was thwarted at the last moment.

National Archives

German investigators examine a mass grave in the Katyn Forest. Shortly after the discovery of the graves in 1943, the German government broadcast the news to the world. Soviet officials denied any involvement.

It seemed the last earthly possessions of the murdered Polish officers had now become some of the most sought after items in Eastern Europe. Stalin, however, was satisfied that the Red Army's contribution to defeating the Nazis would make it unlikely that the West would dare confront him over the Katyn matter after the war. Nonetheless, when Krakow fell to his troops, Stalin had agents immediately scour the city for the containers. The Germans, however, had already spirited them to Breslau, Germany.

By May 1945, both the Soviet security police and Polish Underground were in hot pursuit of an SS detachment that was transporting the cargo through Germany. The SS troops got as far as Radebaul near Dresden, but with the Red Army now only a few miles away the boxes and their contents were destroyed by fire. Nothing survived. For the time being, the matter of the Katyn massacre was lost among the euphoric worldwide celebrations of Nazi Germany's defeat.

At the Nuremberg trials, the Soviet Union was handed the responsibility for prosecuting the Germans for their crimes against humanity in Eastern Europe. In spite of Stalin's secret demand for sanitized disclosure of the Soviet Union's own questionable wartime conduct, the Soviet prosecution team surprisingly included the matter of Katyn in the formal indictment against the Germans. Neither the American nor the British prosecutors were pleased by its inclusion and made their concerns known to their Soviet colleagues. They believed the Soviets not only lacked credible witnesses to support their case but were making a grave error in judgment if they expected that the court would accept on face value the Russian government report on Katyn as evidence of German guilt.

A number of the American and British prosecutors had already read the Soviet document, and despite its air of great realism they knew it to be false from beginning to end. Fearing that the Katyn affair could lead to a major embarrassment in open court, they tried to argue the Soviets out of their folly, but the latter were unmoved. Katyn stayed in the indictment.

Observers suspected that the Soviet team had little choice but to prosecute the Germans for such a widely publicized "Nazi" atrocity. Silence over the matter would have merely fueled the perception that the Soviets had, in fact, committed the crime. The German defendants at Nuremberg could scarcely believe the Soviets were including Katyn in the trial. They eagerly awaited the showdown over the massacre, and they expected it to show the world that many of Stalin's henchmen should be sitting alongside them in the dock.

The hearing on the Katyn massacre commenced on July 1, 1946. The Soviet team proposed to deal with the matter of Katyn based solely on the "evidence" contained within their own report and petitioned the court to bend the rules of evidence to make their own state's report binding.

The Soviets' crude attempt to brusquely sweep the crime into the lap of the Germans without further discussion threatened to cause the proceedings to devolve into a judicial circus. German counsel opposed the move and gained a ruling allowing each side to present three witnesses. Not surprisingly, two very different versions of the story were aired in court.

The Soviet case hinged on establishing the date of the executions, and they brought forward a Bulgarian pathologist, Doctor Marko Markov, who had been a member of the international investigation team set up by the Germans in 1943. What was not widely known was that after the war Markov had been arrested by Soviet security police as an enemy of the people for being a signatory to the report incriminating the Soviet Union of the murders. Markov had endured months of

imprisonment for aiding the Germans and had virtually come straight from his prison cell to Nuremberg to testify.

In the witness box, Markov recanted his original claims, announcing that his findings were faulty and had been made under duress. He was now adamant that the forensic evidence indicated that the bodies had been in the ground for no longer than 18 months, a claim supported by a Russian pathologist named Dr. Prosorovsky, who had been a member of the Soviet commission. The shootings, they claimed, had taken place in the autumn of 1941 and had been carried out by the German Staff Engineer 537 unit commanded by a "Lieutenant Colonel Arnes." The Soviet team was confident that coupling the disclosure of the German unit responsible with the expert testimony of their witnesses had effectively laid the blame squarely at the feet of the Germans. The tactic, however, was about to rebound on them.

In a remarkable development, German defense counsel produced the very officer identified as having been responsible for the murders. His appearance in court not only surprised the Soviets but brought into question the accuracy of their entire case. The Wehrmacht officer, Colonel Aherns, not "Arnes," had commanded the 537th Signals Regiment, which occupied the Katyn area in late 1941. The German officer, who had volunteered to testify, endured rigorous cross-examination by the Soviets but was able to demonstrate that Soviet reports identifying his men as the culprits was wrong.

In 1941, Colonel Aherns' men were deployed in the Katyn Forest, but his overstretched regiment had lacked the logistical support, manpower, and weapons to undertake executions on such a scale. The Soviet prosecutors then tried to blame an *Einsatzgruppe* extermination unit, which was in the in the district in the autumn of 1941, but once again they lacked the evidence to connect it with the murders. To the acute discomfort of the entire Allied prosecuting team, the Soviet case had completely foundered.

With the Soviet inability to conclusively prove German guilt, the German defense counsel pressed the court to determine who should then be made responsible for the massacre. The answer was short— no one. It was made clear to the German barristers that if Nazi guilt for the crime could not be proven it was not the function of the court to look for the murderers elsewhere. With the Germans absolved of blame, Katyn was abruptly dropped from the proceedings.

When the final judgment at Nuremberg was eventually delivered on November 1, 1946, the charges relating to the Katyn massacre were excluded without explanation.

The omission of the Katyn Forest massacre, compounded by the peculiarly inept Soviet handling of the case, outraged the Polish community. The Poles knew that there was copious evidence available to determine the identity of the killers had the tribunal insisted on a more thorough investigation. During the war, Polish soil had soaked up the blood of millions of foreign victims whose murders had been, in some way, avenged by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. However, the murderers of their own military elite had deliberately been left unrevealed and unpunished without protest.

In his memoirs, Churchill said of Katyn that the victorious governments decided that the issue should be avoided. Postwar relations made it clear that in order to secure the cooperation of Stalin in the organization of the United Nations the matter would never be probed in detail.

In the years following the war, Katyn was a forbidden topic in Poland, erased from the

Continued on page 81

The repair ship USS *Vestal* survived Pearl Harbor and became the most decorated non-combat ship of World War II.

BY GLENN BARNETT

On Saturday, December 6, 1941, the repair ship USS *Vestal* eased alongside the USS *Arizona* at her berth at Pearl Harbor. *Vestal* moored herself outboard of the battleship, port side to port side. The *Arizona* had just returned from maneuvers and had scheduled some long overdue maintenance. She was due to move into dry dock the next week. The *Vestal* would begin the routine of rewinding the armatures of the battleship's huge electric motors and other tasks that would shorten her stay in dry dock.

The crews of both ships settled down for a relaxing weekend. Scheduled work on the *Arizona* would begin Monday. For Seaman First Class Henry Emlander, Sunday was a day to sleep in. Aboard the *Vestal* only a month, he was still finding his way around. Assigned to the print shop, he also bunked in that compartment, forward on the port side, three decks down.

The next morning, he was awakened by a jarring blast on the other side of the bulkhead. It was a bomb meant for *Arizona*. The next 60 hours were a nightmare.

The *Vestal* was already one of the oldest ships in the fleet in 1941. She had been launched during another era, as a collier in 1909. Even as she slid down the ways at the New York shipyard, she was becoming obsolete. The world's navies were converting from coal-fed engines to cleaner, far less smoky fuel oil. In 1913, *Vestal* was converted for use as a repair ship, though ironically she continued to burn coal in her boilers until 1921. Other colliers were also being converted at this time. The collier USS *Jupiter* became the *Langley*, America's first aircraft carrier.

National Archives

Declassified in March of 1950, this photo of the USS *West Virginia* conveys the destruction and horror of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

In 1927, *Vestal* was assigned to the Pacific Fleet. A leisurely cruise (her top speed was 16 knots) through the Panama Canal brought her to San Diego where she began her depression era service to the fleet. Belt tightening in the armed services kept older ships like *Vestal* working for longer periods of time than they had been designed.

In May 1940, the Pacific fleet moved its headquarters from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. To the United States this was a defensive move aimed at protecting national interests in the Philippines and the Far East. To the Japanese, moving the American fleet 3,000 miles closer to their shores was a provocative act of aggression.

The crew of the *Vestal* was not concerned. A full day of activities was planned for Sunday December 7, 1941. Reveille was at 6:30 AM, breakfast at 7. The crew was to muster to stations at 8, followed by shore leave for the starboard watch. There would be mail call, inspections, and a movie in the evening. But, of course, that Sunday was far from routine.

Seaman Emlander was jolted from his sleep by the blast starboard of his print shop. He heard the call to general quarters and rushed on deck. Once topside, he was sent below again to make sure everyone had gotten out of the blast area. He poked through the blast-damaged decks but found no one. When he tried to return topside he found most of the hatches closed and sealed. At last he found an open hatch and squeezed out on deck.

His action station was in the aft magazine at the other end of the ship. As he rushed there, he passed a wounded sailor. He pulled the man into the nearby officers' companionway to give him some shelter from the carnage. "Don't leave me here," the wounded man scolded, "This is officer's territory." Emlander told him to rest easy and continued on to his post.

Before he could reach the aft magazine, he learned that it had been flooded to prevent an explosion after a second bomb hit aft. He ran

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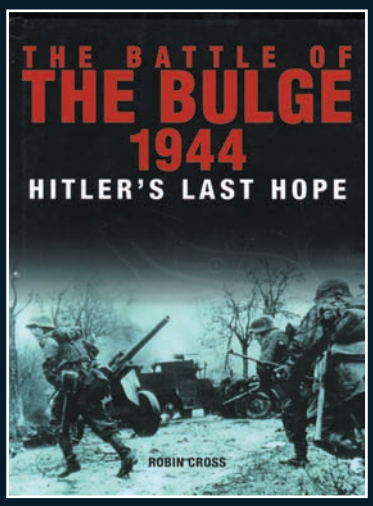

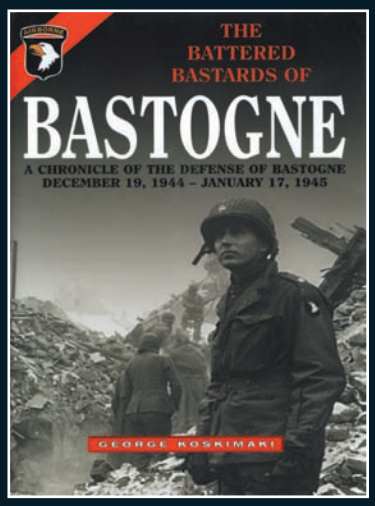

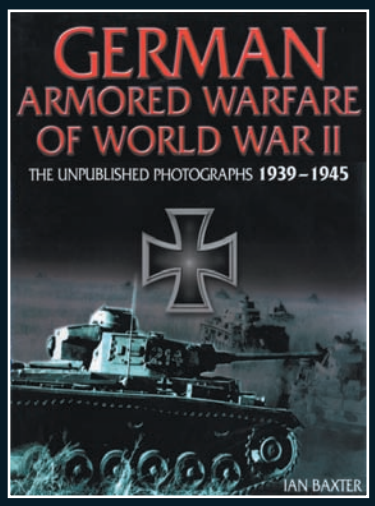

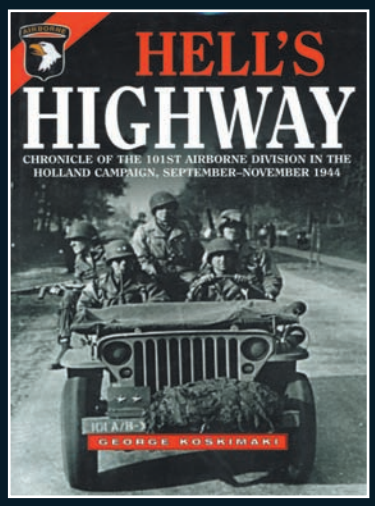

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ABOVE: The USS *Vestal* sits just behind the USS *Arizona* (foreground) at Pearl Harbor. RIGHT: After being twice bombed by Japanese fliers, the USS *Vestal* sits beached following flooding triggered from the damage she sustained.

forward again. The next thing he knew, the order was given to abandon ship. He flagged down a passing launch, yelling that he couldn't swim. The launch came alongside for him and some of his mates.

Below decks, the damage control parties were working feverishly to shore up the bulkheads against the pressure of seawater flooding in through buckled hull plates blown open by the bomb blast aft. The chief engineer instinctively fired the boilers to work up steam. There were many leaks and ruptured lines hindering the work.

Communication with the bridge was cut off, so a seaman was sent topside to assess the situation and receive orders. He returned with the order to abandon ship, and all moved out of the boiler room to obey. When they came out into the flame-and smoke-shrouded sun, the public address system ordered all hands back to their battle stations. The Captain wanted to slip the *Vestal's* moorings and save the ship by getting away from the doomed *Arizona*.

Vestal's captain also had a busy morning. Commander Cassin Young, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, had been a submariner in the last decade and was navy to the core. He was named for a naval hero of the War of 1812 and ironically a destroyer, the USS *Young*, named for the same hero, was also in Pearl Harbor that day.

For reasons of his own, Commander Young left the bridge the morning that his ship was attacked. He found himself commanding the ship's three-inch antiaircraft gun. That is where he was when the *Arizona*'s forward magazine blew up. The force of the explosion rattled *Vestal* as if she had been hit again, and Commander Young and other members of his gun crew were thrown overboard into the oily water.

At that time, the executive officer (also named Young) gave the order to abandon ship. Henry Emlander found his way off the deck, and others began the search for safety.

Commander Young, soaking wet and covered in oil, emerged from the burning sea fuming that the ship was not to be abandoned. "Get back here," he screamed at men trying to jump overboard. He ordered everyone to return to battle stations and prepare to get underway. The chief engineer and his men doggedly descended back into the smoky, leaking boiler room and fueled the fires to get any pressure possible from the leak-strewn steam system.

Ordinarily it would take 250 pounds of steam pressure to get under way. All the *Vestal* could manage that day was 50 pounds, but it was enough to turn over her engines and get moving. Other crewmen were ordered to cut the mooring lines to the *Arizona*, which was burning out of control and settling into the mud below, never to rise again.

Commander Young hailed a passing tug to assist *Vestal* in maneuvering the harbor. As damage reports came in it was clear that the ship would not stay afloat much longer. She was taking water from the aft bomb hit. She also began listing to starboard as the men frantically sealed compartments and shored

up bulkheads. Captain Young made the decision to beach his ship to save it.

The momentous day ended for *Vestal*, aground but safe. That could not be said for all of her crew. Seven men were officially reported dead, many others wounded. A detachment from *Vestal*'s weld shop was sent to the capsized battleship *Oklahoma* that evening as desperate efforts were made to cut through the upturned hull and rescue sailors trapped inside.

The following weeks were busy ones for the crew of that repair ship. Not only did *Vestal* require repair to her bomb-damaged hull and bulkheads, the crew was constantly called upon to assist in the repair of the fighting ships, which had a higher priority to dry dock

National Archives

facilities.

So it was that on April 18, 1942, the commander of the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester Nimitz, was piped aboard the still-damaged *Vestal*. He had come to award the newly promoted Captain Young the Medal of Honor for his fearless actions on December 7. *Vestal* herself would be awarded a battle star for her courageous action under fire that day, a rarity for a service ship.

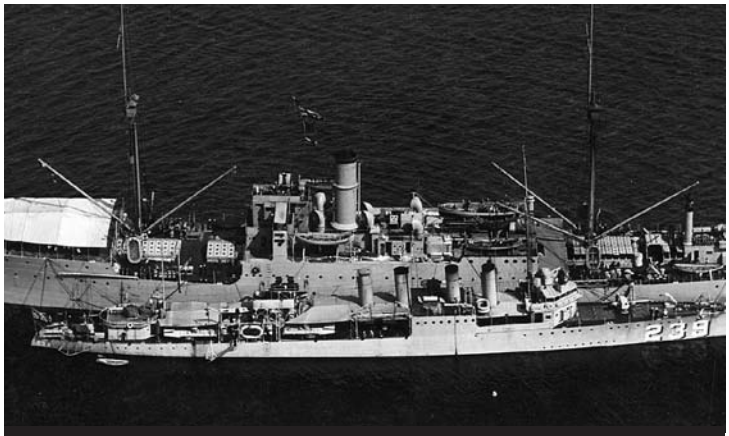
Repairs to the *Vestal* were finally completed in August 1942, and she was urgently dispatched to the South Pacific where the Marines had just begun offensive operations at a place no one had ever heard of — Guadalcanal.

The naval battles in support of the landing on this remote island were some of the most crucial of the war. Despite their setback at the Battle of Midway, the Japanese still had naval capabilities which exceeded those of the Americans. In their first engagement, the Battle of Savo Island on the night of August 9, the Japanese sank four Allied cruisers without any loss of their own. *Vestal* arrived at the scene on August 29, and none too soon.

Two days later while on patrol the aircraft carrier USS *Saratoga* was hit by a single torpedo from a Japanese submarine. While no one was killed, the damage played havoc with the ship's electrical system, and she was soon dead in the water. She was towed to the nearest

repair base at Tongatabu, where *Vestal* had just dropped anchor. Divers found a gaping 40-foot hole in the carrier's starboard hull.

Repair crews from *Vestal* and other ships trimmed and braced the hole, sealed and pumped out nearby compartments, and prepared *Saratoga* for the trip to Pearl Harbor where major repairs could be accomplished. In all, *Vestal*'s crew worked on projects large and small involving over 50 ships while at Tongatabu.



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The *Vestal* assists a U.S. Navy destroyer.

In late October, *Vestal* was transferred closer to the action at Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia. Admiral William "Bull" Halsey had just arrived at Noumea and he was shaking things up. He promised to support the Marines with everything he had, and that meant that a lot more ships would be sent into harm's way. He also did not want his precious few warships sent to Pearl Harbor for repair. If at all possible, ships were to be repaired on site and returned to action as soon as possible. *Vestal* arrived in Noumea on October 31 and began work the same day.

The *Vestal's* arrival in Noumea also brought a promotion for Captain Young. He was given command of the cruiser USS *San Francisco* with unforeseen consequences. There was little time for ceremony as there was so much to do. Ships large and small were limping back from the battles around Guadalcanal in need of immediate attention.

One of the most important was the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*, which had been severely damaged by three bombs during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons. She was not to be sent back to Pearl Harbor. She had to be repaired on site.

Vestal's crew got right to work on the *Enterprise*. Two of the carrier's aircraft elevators were out of commission as well as a torpedo elevator. Crew quarters were severely damaged, and arrestor cables were severed, their gear damaged.

On November 12, the First Naval Battle of Guadalcanal was developing. A strong force of Japanese battleships supported by cruisers and destroyers was observed heading for Henderson Field to bombard the facilities there. Admiral Halsey responded by dispatching the only surface units he had available, a cruiser squadron whose flagship was Captain Young's new command, the *San Francisco*.

In a confused night action, the Japanese battleship *Hiei* was sunk, but every single American ship engaged was damaged, including the *San Francisco*. Much of her bridge was shot away at point blank range, killing the officers on duty, including Captain Cassin Young. The *Vestal*'s crew was shocked and saddened by the news. Repair work to the *San Francisco* would be bittersweet.

The war, however, would not wait for mourning. More Japanese ships were spotted headed for the American positions on Guadalcanal. Admiral Halsey had to use everything available. The crippled carrier *Enterprise* was ordered into action.

Forty of *Vestal*'s officers and men were still aboard *Enterprise*, working furiously to repair the ship, when she stood out to sea. They were at work until preparations were made to launch planes. *Enterprise*, still not completely repaired, could only launch and land at half capacity. Her planes were sent over Henderson field and returned that way so enemy spotters could not follow them directly back to the crippled ship.

The *Enterprise* played an important part in winning a victory at the Second Battle of Guadalcanal, for which she was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. *Vestal*'s crewmen aboard at the time shared in that honor.

Vestal was only at Noumea for twelve days, but during that time her crew worked on over 20 ships, completing some 158 job orders. From there, she was ordered forward to Espiritu Santo, some 500 miles closer to the fighting.

Vestal would spend over a year in the South Pacific, and except for a two-week overhaul and barnacle scraping in Australia, the work never ended. There were light moments however. The Vestal Virgins softball team went 24–1 in games against other ships' companies. They became the South Pacific Softball Champions of 1943.

All the while, the battered ships came in. The cruiser *Pensacola* limped in from the Battle of Tassafaronga with heavy damage. She had taken a torpedo in her stern, which almost completely severed it from the rest of the ship. Only a few bent beams and hull plating held her together while the whole weight of her stern was resting on one propeller shaft. This was a new problem, but the *Vestal* repairmen were up to it. Compartments were sealed and pumped out and the stern shorn up gingerly for the long but necessary trip back to Pearl Harbor.

The cruiser *Minneapolis*, also damaged at Tassafaronga, showed up with 75 feet of her bow blown off by a torpedo. Another Tassafaronga veteran, the cruiser USS *New Orleans*, also had her bow blown off, yet still made it to port. In all, 279 ships came to *Vestal* for triage during her year in the South Pacific. *Vestal*'s crew serviced merchantmen, amphibious craft, service ships, and tankers, as well as every type of fighting ship.

As the war moved into the Central Pacific, *Vestal* moved too. Serving briefly in the Ellice Islands, from November 1943 to January 1944, *Vestal* serviced more than 70 vessels supporting the deadly landings at Makin and Tarawa. At the end of January, she was ordered forward again to the just-captured Makin Island, but events intervened.

A powerful American naval squadron was pounding Kwajelien atoll in preparation for invasion. On the night of the February 1, two leviathans collided. During fleet maneuvers, the battleship USS *Indiana* was ordered to the front of her battle squadron. She abandoned her zigzag course in order to take up her new station. When her sister ship, the battleship USS *Washington*, made her scheduled turn to port she sliced into *Indiana* amidships. *Washington's* bow telescoped back in upon itself, and as she pulled away most of the bow dropped into the sea. The captains of both injured ships, fearing submarine attacks, struggled to bring their vessels to the safety of Majuro harbor at a labored four knots.

Vestal was ordered to meet them there. Her crew was used in patching up destroyers, cruisers, carriers, and anything else afloat. The *Washington* was just another job, only bigger. Within 10 days, *Washington* was patched up sufficiently to steam to Pearl Harbor and on to Seattle where a new bow awaited her. She was back in action in three months.

After a year and a half of continuous sea duty, *Vestal* herself was in need of an overhaul. She steamed to the Mare Island shipyard to have her evaporators replaced and other new equipment fitted.

After a well deserved rest for her war weary crew and the much-needed refit, the aged *Vestal* was back on station by September 1944, in time for the Battle of Leyte Gulf. During the battle, the American fleet's forward base was at the large atoll of Ulithi. A whole fleet could shelter within the protective embrace of the atoll's coral barrier.

During her time at Ulithi, *Vestal* completed jobs on over 140 ships, large and small. The grand old lady of the fleet, *Vestal* was often referred to as the "Mighty V" or by some wags as the "Mighty Lucky V."

Beginning in February 1945, *Vestal* would spend two months off the coast of Saipan supporting naval operations. Most of her jobs were on amphibious craft involved in the invasion of that island. In April, she was ordered north to support the landings on Okinawa. *Vestal* was given an anchorage that was already considered jinxed. The three previous occupants of that space had been hit by Kamikazes.

Once again, as at Pearl Harbor, she found herself in the line of fire. Fifty times during the month of May, her crew was summoned away from work by the call to battle stations. Again, her three-inch gun fired on an incoming enemy, and more than once an attacking plane crashed nearby. Repair jobs had to be accomplished between attacks. Many of those jobs consisted of patching up destroyers from the picket line, which had been hit particularly hard by the suicide planes.

For her service under fire at Okinawa, *Vestal* was awarded a second battle star. She was one of the few ships to survive both world wars and perhaps the most highly decorated service ship in the navy.

War's end found *Vestal* still hard at work, repairing vessels damaged by typhoons that she herself barely avoided. She remained in Japanese and then Chinese waters to support the occupation, finally returning home in April 1946, to be decommissioned at last and broken up.

Vestal's surviving crew is still active at reunions, and the ship's veterans remember their World War II odyssey that began that Sunday morning at Pearl Harbor. □

Glenn Barnett is a frequent contributor to WWII History. *He lives and writes in the Los Angeles area.*

Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a Portuguese diplomat, defied his government and saved thousands from the Nazis.

BY MICHAEL D. HULL

Panic and confusion reigned across France as the bright, warm spring of 1940 turned into summer.

Blitzkrieg, a brutal new mode of warfare, was on the loose in Western Europe. After crushing the gallant Polish Army in 28 days in the fall of 1939, fast-moving German Army panzer and infantry columns rumbled across the Belgian and Dutch borders on May 10, 1940, bypassing the vaunted Maginot Line and thrusting into France.

The invaders crossed the River Meuse at Sedan on May 14, and their spearheads fanned out across France. Outmaneuvered and dispirited, the French Army reeled before the German juggernaut. Individual French units and the small British Expeditionary Force fought desperate delaying actions, but Field Marshal Heinz Guderian's panzers rolled on.

On the morning of June 14, mounted and foot units of the German Fourth Army marched triumphantly down the Champs Elysées in Paris, and on the morning of June 22, ministers of the defeatist, uncoordinated French government signed a humiliating armistice in a railway carriage in the forest of Compiegne. By that day, the Germans had covered more than half of France.

To the southwest, the dusty roads of France were jammed with refugees fleeing toward the Pyrenees. Hundreds of thousands of French men, women, and children were joined by Belgians, Dutch, Poles, and Jews—a seething, straggling mass of humanity gripped by fear and desperation, and with only one aim: to keep moving, away from the advancing Germans.

Weary, hungry, and thirsty, the refugees used everything that could move—cars, trucks, farm wagons, pushcarts, and bicycles, all laden with their belongings. They wept, shouted, and cursed. When their battered Renaults and Citroëns eventually broke down or ran out of gasoline, they were abandoned. There was no fuel to be found.

Few had much money, and few knew exactly where they were going, but they trudged on. Their only hope was to make for the southwestern port of Bordeaux, beyond which lay the Pyrenees and neutral Spain and Portugal. The German Luftwaffe added to their miseries.

Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive-bombers and Messerschmitt Me-109 fighters pounced out of the sun, machine guns clattering, upon the defenseless columns. The planes roared at treetop level along the roads, raining hellfire on the helpless people. Screams pierced the air as they scrambled for cover in ditches and beneath trees. Spread-eagled bodies lined the roads after each strafing.

But the bedraggled columns wound slowly on toward Bordeaux, and the historic city braced for the deluge of humanity. By the hundreds, the people straggled into Bordeaux. On June 14, officials of the French government joined them, and the city overflowed. The streets were choked with thousands of cars, and the exhausted refugees fell asleep on park benches and sidewalks. Thousands of Jews congregated around the city's Great Synagogue.

Tempers were frayed and fear was rampant. Many, who knew only too well what their fates would be when the Germans arrived, scrambled for passports or visas to enable them to leave France. Most of them received short shrift. Sea passage was difficult to obtain, except for the few wealthy who were willing to pay skyrocketing prices.

Escape by land was possible only through Spain and Portugal. From Lisbon, sea passage to countries beyond Europe was obtainable. A

Photo by Hugo Jaeger, Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

With whatever personal possessions they can manage, Belgian refugees flee the German army in the summer of 1940.

Portuguese transit visa was needed to exit France, for Spain permitted no refugees to enter her territory who could not present one. Staunchly neutral but sympathetic to German Führer Adolf Hitler, Generalissimo Francisco Franco was determined to keep Spanish soil closed off to the pitiful multitude fleeing the jackboots of Nazism. In addition, the country was suffering post-Civil War chaos and widespread starvation. Spain wanted no settlers, or new mouths to feed.

In Bordeaux, thousands of frantic refugees besieged the handsome Portuguese consulate at 14 Quai Louis XVIII, each hoping to gain an all-important Portuguese transit visa before the German Army arrived. There, they found a man who virtually held their lives in his hands.

He was Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a dedicated career diplomat, devout Roman Catholic, and father of 12. He had an unshakable conscience and the plight of the refugees touched him deeply. However, under the orders of Portugal's autocratic dictator, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, there was little that Sousa Mendes was permitted to do for the displaced host. The neutral countries of Europe feared provoking Hitler, and Salazar had instructed his diplomats to this effect at the start of the war.

Nevertheless, the Portuguese consul swiftly became a beacon of hope for the wretched thousands in Bordeaux, and he felt that he had to do something to help them. So, he did the diplomatically unthinkable: He rebelled against his inhumane orders. First in Bordeaux, and then in Bayonne and on the streets of Hendaye near the Spanish border, Aristides de Sousa Mendes issued transit visas for entry into his tiny, peaceful country to 30,000 refugees, saving them from the Nazis. It was an act unprecedented in diplomatic history.

By the magnitude of his daring and by weight of numbers, he effectively opened up a refugee escape route where none had existed. It would remain through World War II and be used by an estimated one million refugees. Sousa Mendes, who would become known as the "Angel of Bordeaux," paved the escape route with all he had—his good name, livelihood, health, friends, and the future of his loved ones.

Ten thousand of the men, women, and children he saved were Jews who would have ended up in German labor or death camps. One of them, Moise Elias, told the Yad Vashem Holocaust Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem 26 years later, "I recognize as an act of God that such a man as this was at the right place at the right time." Aristides de Sousa Mendes was the first of the war's "righteous Gentiles."

But the consul's conscience pitted him against the Portuguese leader, Salazar. Although a mild version of the dictators around him (Hitler, Franco, and Italy's Benito Mussolini), Salazar brooked no disobedience. Sousa Mendes and his humanitarian feat were officially repudiated by the Lisbon government. For decades during and after the war, no mention of Sousa Mendes was permitted in the country where he and his wife spent the rest of their days as outcasts.

The man who stood alone in 1940 to defy three dictators in defense of humanity was put on trial for disobeying regulations, shunned, and relegated to poverty and oblivion. He died a martyr and was denied even a footnote in the record of World War II.

Aristides de Sousa Mendes was born on July 9, 1885, in the village of Cabanas de Viriato in the scenic northern province of Beira Alta, Portugal. He was the son of Jose de Sousa Mendes, a well-to-do high court judge, and Maria Angelina de Abranches. The family lived in a picturesque three-story mansion with a gray slate mansard roof and the coat of arms painted on the ceiling of the entrance hall. Next door was the village church.

Aristides and his twin, Cesar, were raised with strong values centered on the family's monarchic traditions and profound Catholicism. Aristides and Cesar learned to respect the law at their father's knee, and they pursued law degrees at Coimbra University, one of the oldest universities in Europe. They graduated in 1907 with identical grades. Opting for careers in the diplomatic corps, they were assigned to successive posts over the globe. They both married, but the bond of twinship remained constant.

Aristides wed his beautiful cousin, Angelina, before entering the Foreign Service in 1910. "Gigi," as he called her, was a warmhearted woman of simple tastes and uncommon courage. She would share the burdens of her husband's one-man crusade against inhumanity and would be victimized along with him, die in poverty, and be denied even a common obituary.

During diplomatic assignments in British Guyana, East Africa, Brazil, California, and elsewhere, Aristides and Angelina produced 14 children. The glamour and adventure of their lifestyle was tempered with many serious bouts of malaria and struggles to find adequate housing and proper schooling for the children.

In 1929, Sousa Mendes was promoted to consul general and assigned to the bustling Belgian port of Antwerp. The family settled in nearby Louvain, where the older sons and daughters attended the famous university. At family gatherings in the evenings, the children played instruments and the consul sang tenor. It was a happy and loving family. Before bedtime, the father led the rosary with the children and the maids, and after church on Sunday mornings, the family took outings in the Belgian countryside.

In order to dispense with frequent head counts, Sousa Mendes bought a truck and converted it into a bizarre-looking bus that could seat 17. The children dubbed the vehicle the "White Pigeon," and it drew many amused stares when it pulled into parks and disgorged its occupants.

Sousa Mendes became the dean of the diplomatic corps in Antwerp, and his home was a favored social center. The mayor was a frequent guest, and other visitors included Count Maurice Maeterlinck, the famed poet and dramatist, and physicist Albert Einstein. Family vacations were spent at the homestead in Cabanas de Viriato, which the consul enlarged and improved.

Tragedy struck the family in Antwerp in 1934. Manuel, the second son, died at 23 of a ruptured blood vessel just after completing his university degree, and a few months later, the youngest daughter and 14th child also died.

In 1938, Sousa Mendes asked his superiors in Lisbon for a promotion and a post in the Far East, but Premier Salazar, who had taken the reins of the Foreign Ministry, responded by naming him the consul-general in Bordeaux. He appealed twice, but Salazar turned a deaf ear.

The family moved into the consulate at 14 Quai Louis XVIII in August 1938, and life resumed. The children found new schools and friends, and everyone welcomed the mild and sunny climate. Weekends were spent aboard the trusty "White Pigeon" heading for picnics in the French countryside.

Then came the fateful month of September 1939. Germany invaded Poland on September 1, and Great Britain and France declared war two days later. Portugal swiftly declared neutrality, while quietly assuring Britain that it would adhere to the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance dating back to the Treaty of Windsor in 1386.

Neutrality proved to be a hard road for dictator Salazar. He admired Mussolini, owed loyalty to Britain, was anxious to keep adjoining Spain out of the war, and had no desire to

anger Hitler. On November 11, 1939, he issued a directive forbidding his diplomats in Europe from granting transit visas to certain categories of people, without express permission from Lisbon. The categories included "Jews expelled from the countries of their nationality or those from whence they issue, stateless persons, and all those who cannot freely return to the countries whence they come." The directive, said Salazar, was meant "to avoid abuses or loose practices" which the Police of Vigilance and Defense of the State (PVDE) deemed "inconvenient or dangerous."

Consul Sousa Mendes objected strongly to the orders as morally and legally objectionable, and in violation of Portuguese constitutional guarantees of nondiscrimination on the basis of religious belief.

Within days of the issuance of Salazar's edict, the country judge's son was called to task by his superiors for issuing a visa to a Viennese refugee, Professor Arnold Wiznitzer. The consul explained, "He [Wiznitzer] informed me that, were he unable to leave France that very day, he would be interned in a concentration camp, leaving his wife and minor son stranded. I considered it a duty of elementary humanity to prevent such an extremity."

It was the compassionate diplomat's first infraction. By April 1940, he had violated enough regulations to earn a stern reprimand. "Be warned," he was told in a letter, and the Portuguese border patrol, an arm of the PVDE, was ordered to keep watch on him.

As Bordeaux became inundated with refugees in May and June 1940, the Portuguese consulate was besieged day and night. Crowds clamored for transit visas—Army officers from occupied Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia; French, Belgian, and Luxembourgois anti-Nazis; intellectuals and writers who had denounced fascism; artists and journalists; priests, nuns, and rabbis; and countless ordinary citizens who now had no homes. Some were old and some were sick. There were pregnant women, and many orphaned children who had seen their parents killed on the roads by German planes.

Sousa Mendes did what he could for them, but he was too prudent to defy Foreign Office rules needlessly. His authority had been virtually suspended. As of May 17, Premier Salazar had issued new regulations. Under no circumstances was any visa to be granted unless authorized by Lisbon on a case-by-case basis.

Reluctant to disobey further, the consul made every effort to comply and fired off hundreds of telegrams to Lisbon with the aid of his son, Pedro Nuno, 20. Each telegram was written in code, detailing the individual visa request. Pedro Nuno carried stacks of telegrams to the post office, but from Lisbon there was mostly silence.

National Archives

A Spanish police officer examines papers at a border crossing in 1940.

By the second week of June, with talk of an impending Franco-German armistice in the air, tensions increased in Bordeaux. Policemen were stationed in and around the consulate. Sousa Mendes and his wife opened their living quarters to as many people as the rooms would hold. The couple's youngest children had been taken to Portugal at the start of the war. The housemaids had left with them, so Angelina cooked, washed clothes, and cared for the neediest refugees. One was a 10-year-old Belgian boy whose parents had vanished, probably killed by the Germans. He clutched tightly to a little bag of diamonds. Another was a renowned Sorbonne professor so distraught that he stayed in his pajamas all day long. And there was Rabbi Chaim Kruger, who had fled from Poland through Belgium with his wife and six children. He and the consul became friends.

The lives of the refugees crowding around the consulate were momentarily on hold, and they looked to Sousa Mendes for survival. The Germans were drawing nearer, and time was running out. The consul felt himself marooned amid the thousands of "shipwrecked," and he cabled his superiors twice requesting authority to deal with the emergency. He was tersely referred to the directives in place. He had his orders, and only Lisbon could approve visas.

On June 12, Franco changed Spain's status from "neutral" to "nonbelligerent." Salazar depended on Teotonio Pereira, his ambassador in Madrid, to keep a finger on Franco's pulse. The envoy opposed any change in policy regarding the refugees and warned that sheltering "the scum of the democratic regimes" boded ill for Portugal in the eyes of Spain.

Sousa Mendes's student nephew, Cesar, had left Paris and taken refuge in Bordeaux. He observed, "All the rooms in the consulate building were full of people. They slept on chairs, on the floor, on the rugs. Even the consul's offices were crowded with dozens of refugees who were exhausted, dead tired, because they waited days and nights on the street, on the stairways, and finally in the offices. They could not take care of their needs, they did not eat or drink for fear of losing their places in the lines, which happened nevertheless and caused some disturbances. My uncle fell ill, and had to take to his bed … He got up, impelled by a 'divine power'—these were his own words—and gave orders to grant visas to everybody."

During the three days of Sousa Mendes's confinement, June 14-16, Angelina sustained her exhausted husband and tried to calm the pressing refugees. The couple spent one entire night in prayer, reported their son, Sebastian. During the three days, the consul's hair turned white.

On the morning of June 17, Sousa Mendes arose, his mind made up and having freed himself of all constraints. Regardless of the consequences, and refusing to be intimidated any further by the bureaucrats in Lisbon, he would start issuing visas freely.

The work started immediately. It was an assembly-line operation. Passports were gathered in stacks and bags. One person stamped them, others filled in the required wording, and the consul signed them. To save time, he abbreviated his signature to "Mendes." No fees were collected, and no entries were made in the consular registry. Rabbi Kruger, the consul's older sons, and some refugees assisted on the assembly line. Countless visas—many written on scraps of paper—were handed out.

The work continued all day and night, and through June 18. That day, Count Henry Degenfeld entered the consulate with 19 passports for the imperial family of Austria. Otto of Habsburg's name was at the top of Hitler's blacklist. The count was told to return later that night. The woes of the Habsburgs weighed no more heavily on Sousa Mendes than those of the ordinary people who had waited days and nights. After 10 PM, the count and the archduke himself returned to pick up visas for the Habsburg household and Austri-

an refugees in hiding.

The consul's stand was a fait accompli to which Salazar and his political police had to bow. A mechanism had been set in motion; once the refugees crossed the international bridge at Hendaye-Irun and were granted passage through Spain, there was no return. The noncompliant consul had forced open an escape route for thousands. "It was indeed my objective to save all those persons, whose affliction was beyond description," he explained later at a Lisbon hearing. "The imperatives of my conscience … never ceased to guide me in the performance of my duties, with perfect knowledge of my responsibilities."

The siege of the Portuguese consulate continued through June 19. That night and the following day, German planes bombed Bordeaux. Panic-stricken, the crowds of refugees ran for Bayonne and Hendaye, closer to the Spanish border. Bayonne, a small city, was soon deluged with refugees.

The consulate in Bayonne fell under Sousa Mendes's jurisdiction, so he drove there on June 20. He found 20,000 refugees lining the city streets, and another 5,000 encircling the consulate. Its staff was under siege and could enter or exit only through the roof. The Bordeaux consul-general shouldered through the mob and entered the front door. The Bayonne consul, Machado, was observing Lisbon regulations, and activity was at a halt. Sousa Mendes ordered him to start issuing visas immediately.

He led the effort, and the hesitant Machado assisted. But the subordinate consul, fearing for his job, wired Lisbon the following morning to report the breach of regulations. He also telephoned Ambassador Pereira in Madrid. Pereira had no jurisdiction over consulates in France, but he felt compelled to hasten to the frontier.

Sousa Mendes issued visas freely at Bayonne until the afternoon of June 22, and then drove to Hendaye. That day, cablegrams from Lisbon arrived in Bordeaux and Bayonne instructing him to stop his activities. But by then he was on the streets of Hendaye, handing out large numbers of visas. Many of them were assorted scraps of paper, each bearing the consular stamp and Sousa Mendes's priceless signature, asking the Spanish border patrol to grant passage to the bearer. The unorthodox documents kept the great exodus moving.

At the border post of Irun, Sousa Mendes found the gate closed to a mass of desperate, imploring Czech, Polish, and Jewish people. He went inside, pleaded with the Spanish guards for two hours, and returned to open the gate himself. The refugees scrambled onto Spanish soil. The Bordeaux consul also personally led a large group of refugees to the obscure border post at Behobia, which he had known in peacetime, and convinced the lone Spanish guard to admit the visa holders.

On June 23, Ambassador Pereira found the weary Sousa Mendes in Irun, still issuing visas.

Both: National Archives

LEFT: Aristides de Sousa Mendes. RIGHT: French General Jacques Philippe Leclerc.

"I came across Consul Aristides Mendes and asked him to explain to me such an extraordinary behavior," Pereira reported to the Foreign Office in Lisbon. "From all that I had heard, and from his greatly unkempt appearance, my impression was of a disturbed man, not in his right mind." Pereira declared null and void the visas Sousa Mendes had given to the refugees still in France.

However, the noncompliant consul continued to lead groups of refugees to Behobia and did not leave the streets of Hendaye until June 26, when German troops entered Bayonne. Returning to Bordeaux, Sousa Mendes found that he had been relieved of his post and ordered to leave France. Werhmacht units started occupying Bordeaux on June 27, and Hendaye the following day. Thousands of refugees were now trapped.

The heroic consul-general did not rush, for he had more work to do. Portuguese passports could prevent deportation to concentration camps, so he issued them discreetly until July 8. Many individuals and families were spared from Nazi clutches by his actions. Among them was the gallant General Jacques Leclerc ("the modern d'Artagnan"), who had fought in the Battle of France, suffered a serious head wound, and since evaded capture. He left his wife and six children in a temporary haven near Bordeaux on July 3 and fled through Spain and Portugal to London. He later distinguished himself with the British Eighth Army in Libya and Tunisia and triumphantly led the Free French 2nd Armored Division in the liberation of Paris on August 25, 1944.

Sousa Mendes was again censured by Lisbon. He had become an acute thorn in the side of the Portuguese premier, who ordered administrative action against him. A disciplinary council was named to define charges and determine penalties. Specifying charges was not easy, for Sousa Mendes had been a loyal and hard-working diplomat and was an honorable man.

Many refugees who had reached Portuguese cities and towns were openly voicing gratitude to the regime that had supposedly saved them, and the word was out that Portugal was a haven in war-torn Europe. Sousa Mendes's disobedience had brought the Salazar government much good press. A *Life* magazine article on July 29, 1940, dubbed the dictator "the greatest Portuguese since Henry the Navigator." It would therefore be incongruous to accuse the consul-general of dishonoring his post.

The foreign accolades did not soften Salazar. The line had been crossed and government policy overturned by the man who would say later that he had stood "with God against man, rather than with man against God." Officials in Lisbon produced testimony, minions combed the records of Sousa Mendes's 30 years of loyal service to uncover petty infractions, and a flimsy case was made for "professional incapacity." The consul-general was rendered contemptible and officially shunned. The voluminous case files were closed, classified, and locked up.

Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who had stood alone against the blitzkrieg and saved the lives of 30,000 people, was now a disgraced nonperson in his homeland, and the rest of his days would be one long Calvary.

He tried many times to obtain a proper and fair hearing but met a wall of official silence while the Salazar regime basked in universal praise for having opened up the country to refugees. Sousa Mendes's brother, Cesar, attempted to intervene on his behalf and was suspended from his own post for five years.

Shunned by former friends and colleagues and unable to find a worthwhile job, Sousa Mendes and his family faced destitution.

The education of the younger children was cut short, and the older ones could not find work. Official ears were deaf to their plight. The family that had lived in stylish consular residences around the world was forced to take meals along with refugees at a Lisbon soup kitchen run by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. One day there, Sousa Mendes remarked to Isaac Bitton, a young Portuguese

Jew, "We, too, are refugees."

Occasionally, the disgraced consul-general was summoned for a supposed interview with Premier Salazar. He would be kept waiting in the vestibule all day and then dismissed. He was closely watched and was interrogated by the PVDE. Active files were kept on his older children. "We were too notorious, as if we were evildoers," reported son Pedro Nuno.

The financial hardship and protracted humiliation took its toll. A few weeks before the end of the war, Sousa Mendes suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed. The children stood by him, as did the noble Angelina, but her own health was failing. She suffered a cerebral hemorrhage in 1948 and never regained consciousness. With no insurance and little money, medical care was minimal. Angelina remained in a basement apartment in Lisbon where the water rose when it rained. She died at 59 after languishing for six months in a state of growing decomposition, according to the youngest son, John Paul. The censored newspapers did not run an obituary.

The noncompliant diplomat outlived his devoted wife by six years. He kept hope that some day his good name would be restored by the Lisbon government, but it did not happen. Meanwhile, with the help of the HIAS, the traumatized Sousa Mendes sons and daughters emigrated because there was no future for them in Portugal. One by one, they left to seek new lives in Belgium, Africa, Canada, and the United States.

Still an outcast in his own country, their father died on April 3, 1954, at the Franciscan Hospital of the Tertiary Order in Lisbon. One niece, Madalena, was at his bedside. There were no obituaries for him, either, with the exception of one in a newspaper in the Belgian Congo.

The heavily mortgaged homestead at Cabanas de Viriato—minus some doors which had been burned for firewood in winter—was auctioned to pay debts. Then it was looted of its contents.

Recognition of what the noncompliant consul did for 30,000 World War II refugees came first in Israel, where memorial trees were planted in 1961 and 1967, respectively, at the Holocaust Museum and the Garden of the Righteous in Jerusalem. The Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority posthumously declared Sousa Mendes a "righteous Gentile," and a commemorative medal was stamped. Later, a grateful descendant of one of the refugees he saved had 10,000 trees planted to

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On the eve of the Battle of the Bulge, was Hitler a madman or a military genius?

BY CHARLES WHITING

By early autumn, he was taking 60 pills a day. They ranged from "speed" to the poison strychnine. He took pills to make him wake up; he took pills to make him sleep. Although to his entourage he seemed to have retained his old willpower and energy, it was really the tablets that kept him going.

By now, Hitler's secretaries noticed that his knee shook all the time. Sometimes he had to control the shaking in his left knee with his right hand. What his adoring young female secretaries did not know was that his knee continued to tremble even when he was in bed. There, too, he was plagued by stomach cramps. What the secretaries did notice—they could not help but do so—was that the Führer passed gas all the time due to his vegetarian diet and weight-reducing tablets. His doctors—there were four of them—called it "meteorism" from the violence of his constant breaking of wind. The female secretaries called it something else.

The July, 1944 bomb attempt on his life had not helped his condition much. His eardrums had been injured, and he no longer heard well. He could not shave himself because his hands trembled so much. His sinus headaches were beginning to keep him awake all night. So, he begged his doctors to give him cocaine injections to keep the pain at bay, commenting, "I hope you are not making an addict out of me."

National Archives

Its commander riding in the open air for better visibility, a German panzer rolls into Belgium in December 1944.

In truth, they had done that long ago. He was now subject to hallucinations and giddy spells, snarling angrily at the medics until he lost his voice. Then, every one of the toadies at his court started talking in whispers as he was now forced to do.

In the first week of September 1944, the Führer took to his bed. There, the hypochondriac that he had become studied medical textbooks and examined the various instruments his doctors left behind. Otherwise, he spent hours just staring at the ceiling of his bunker bedroom. It was as if he had forgotten the war and the fact that his enemies were coming ever closer to Germany's frontiers, from both east and west.

Suddenly, however, completely out of the blue, he asked his cunning-faced chief of operations, Col. Gen. Alfred Jodl, to bring him a large—scale map of Germany's western frontier. Together, the two men studied it as they had done years before when they had mounted their adventurous attack westward against the Anglo-French armies.

Jodl knew the Führer was very ill. His doctors were already talking of cancer and Parkinson's disease. Yet, this day the sick leader seemed to possess new energy as he pored over the map of the German Eifel region and across the border into nearby Belgium and Luxembourg, the same terrain through which the Wehrmacht had launched its victorious blitzkrieg in 1940.

Peering through the nickel-framed glasses in which it was forbidden to photograph him, he went into detail, examining the country roads that led through the bunkers of the Westwall (Siegfried Line) into the enemy countries now being rapidly taken over by the victorious Western Allies. That September day, he established a new SS panzer army in Germany, giving command of the Sixth SS Panzer Army, as it was to

be called, to the old party bullyboy SS General Sepp Dietrich. Obviously he had a new plan!

A week later, Hitler attended his regular war conference. On September 16, 1944, he listened somewhat apathetically to the routine details of the latest situation on the Eastern Front. When the situation report was over, Hitler asked certain senior officers to remain behind. Among them was a relatively unknown Luftwaffe general, General Werner Kreipe, who represented "Fat Hermann" as the gross Luftwaffe head, Hermann Göring, was known behind his back.

Kreipe, who knew that both the Luftwaffe and its commander had fallen into disfavor at Hitler's court, did something that day which could have cost him his life if he had been discovered. He kept a diary record of the proceedings, something which was totally illegal. He recorded in that diary that Jodl explained there were currently 55 German divisions on the Western Front confronting 96 enemy divisions. Almost in passing, Jodl mentioned that the Germans were presently enjoying a breathing spell in the Eifel and Ardennes Forest sector, where 80 miles of front were being held by a mere four U.S. divisions.

Suddenly, at the mention of the Ardennes, Hitler came to life. He raised his hand dramatically and, as Kreipe's diary states: "The Führer interrupts Jodl. He had resolved to mount a counterattack from the Ardennes, with Antwerp as the target . . . the present front can easily be held. Our own attacking force will consist of thirty new *Volksgrenadier* divisions and new panzer divisions, plus panzer divisions from the Eastern Front. Split the British and American armies at their seam, then a new Dunkirk! . . . Our offensive will begin in a bad-weather period when the enemy air force is grounded . . . [Field Marshal Gerd] von Rundstedt will take command." Finally a new and seemingly invigorated Hitler ordered the select few senior officers present to keep this secret plan to themselves "on pain of death."

On the same day Hitler announced to his generals what would be known to them as the Rundstedt Offensive, though the aged, cognac-drinking field marshal always scornfully disclaimed any responsibility for it, and to the Allies as the Battle of the Bulge, a whole American corps had crossed the German border in Eifel-Ardennes region. Three U.S. divisions, the 4th and 28th Infantry and the 5th Armored, had already battered their way through the Westwall and seemed well on their way to the Rhine River, Germany's last great natural defensive barrier. Indeed, so dangerous did the situation appear on the Western Front that von Rundstedt, who had made that great blitzkrieg of 1940 possible, needed personally to take over command and ensure the Americans were driven back.

US Army Art Collection

By autumn of 1944 the Führer was taking dozens of pills and was in poor health.

What then do we make of Hitler's decision to attack in the West under such circumstances? His Reich was already under intense pressure from East and West. His people were weary, and 70 percent of Germany's great cities had suffered tremendous damage due to years of Allied bombing. Were these the fanciful delusions of a madman, or the sick fantasy of a very ill leader, who suffered from drug-induced hallucinations? Was this some kind of megalomania, fed by sycophants and courtiers who pandered to the Führer's every crazy notion?

In this context, it might be noted that all great men often have seemed to their critics to have done things that were not quite normal or even damned abnormal. What do we say, for instance, about Churchill, Hitler's contemporary? Back in 1940, when the British Prime Minister had first tried to establish his "special relationship" with the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had called him a "drunken bum." The President had also commissioned an investigation by the FBI to find out more about Churchill's drinking habits, which included whisky for breakfast and various other strong waters for the rest of the day.

As Churchill admitted cheerfully himself, "I must point out that my rule of life prescribes as an absolute sacred rite, smoking cigars and also drinking alcohol before, after, and, if need be, during all meals and in the intervals between them."

How could one rely on the decisions of such a "drunken bum?" In truth, Roosevelt was little different. By 1943-44 he was visibly dying, and his health was declared a state secret. Now, but not then, everyone knows that the most powerful man on earth, crippled by polio, had to drag himself across the floor of his office whenever he lost his balance and that he had to hide his crippled legs from public view for all his three terms in office. How could one trust such a crippled leader, preoccupied as he was with his own terrible illness?

Further, what do we make of Churchill's obsession with the success of what he called his "soft underbelly of Europe strategy?" Later, the GIs involved in nearly two years fighting in Italy called it a "tough old gut." Was this some subconscious wish to make up for his failure with the same strategy in World War I, when he launched the disastrous attack on the Dardanelles in 1915?

What about Roosevelt's snap decision in 1942 to launch the first U.S. attack of the war in Europe on French North Africa? Instead of attacking the Japanese in the Pacific to avenge the day of infamy at Pearl Harbor, he completely surprised his generals when he announced that French North Africa would be America's primary military objective. The French had been allies during World War I. Now, it was conceivable that these same French might soon be killing American boys. Was this sideshow against the French really a reflection of Roosevelt's long-term dislike of the French and their Empire?

In short, can it not be said that great men, even sick or crazy ones, listen to their inner voices and not those of their advisers? They go their own way, regardless of the consequences. This may explain Hitler's decision to launch the last great German counterattack of the war against the American forces in the Ardennes. All his generals were against his decision.

Even Dietrich of the SS thought the plan was crazy. He complained. How was he expected to push an armored force through the rugged, hilly Ardennes in winter snow with a limited supply of gasoline? As his chief of staff, General Fritz Kraemer, told Lt. Col. Joachim Peiper, who would lead the 6th SS Panzer Army's attack, "Give me one tank on the River Meuse and I'll be happy—just one tank!" Kraemer had little faith that the SS would ever reach Antwerp.

General Hasso von Manteuffel, who would lead the 5th Panzer Army in the coming battle,

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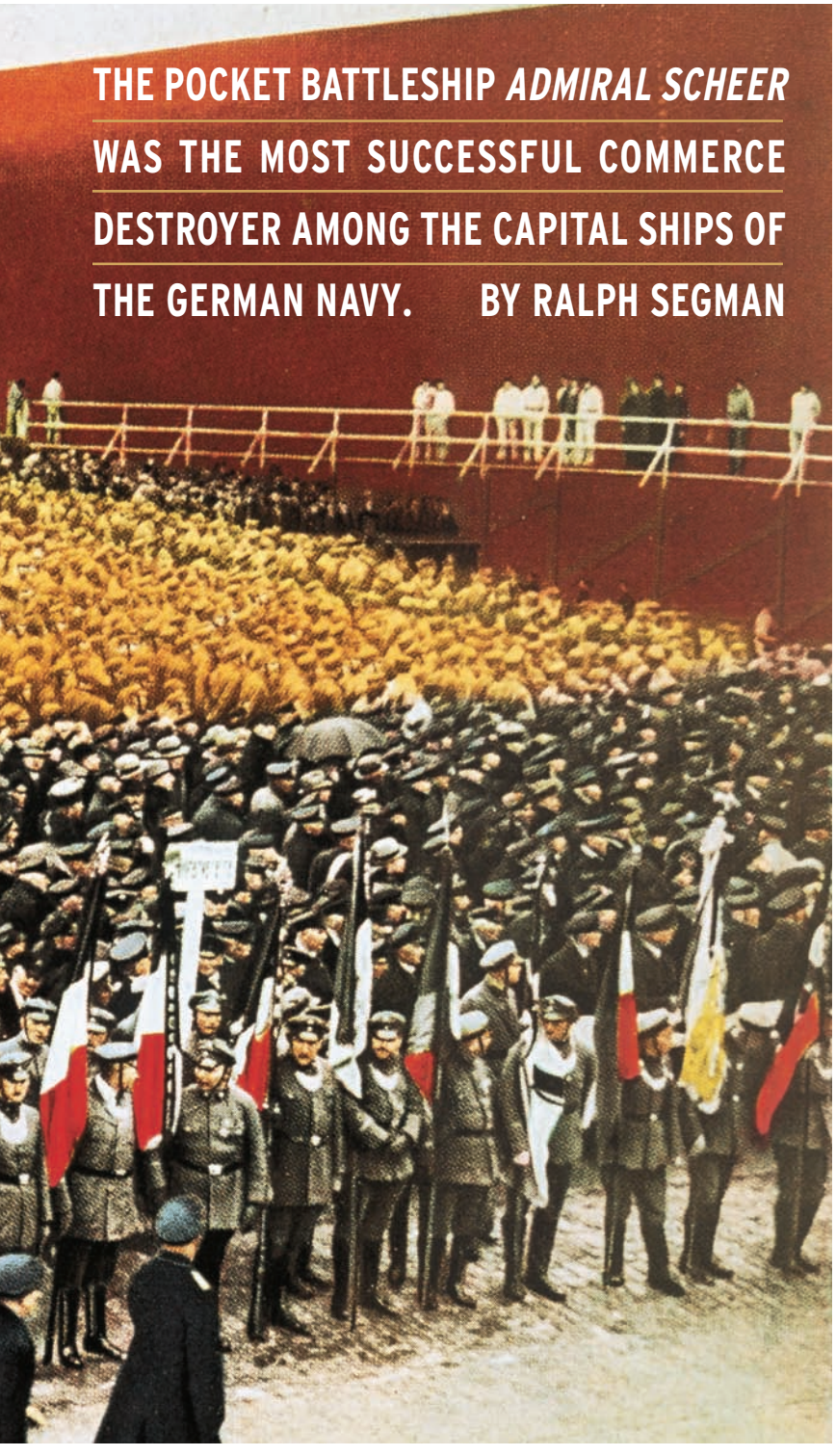
Masses of SS, SA, and members of the German army crowd the docks at Wilhelmshaven during the launching ceremonies for the pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer*. The *Scheer* was arguably the most successful German surface raider of WWII.

MARAUDING



THE POCKET BATTLESHIP *ADMIRAL SCHEER* WAS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL COMMERCE DESTROYER AMONG THE CAPITAL SHIPS OF THE GERMAN NAVY. BY RALPH SEGMAN

Kriegsmarine RAIDER

SAY THE WORDS "POCKET BATTLESHIP" AND UP pops the name *Admiral Graf Spee*. Her two sister ships, the *Deutschland/Lutzow* and the *Admiral Scheer* are virtually unknown to Americans. The *Deutschland* deservedly belongs in the dustbin of naval history. On the other hand, the *Scheer* was the star of the entire German surface warship fleet.

The three *panzerschiffe* (dubbed "pocket battleships" by the British) were designed to prey on Allied trade routes. With their six 11-inch guns and 27-knot top speed, they could outfight smaller but faster warships and outrun bigger but slower ones. At the beginning of the war, only three old British battlecruisers, *Hood*, *Renown*, and *Repulse*, were capable of both outgunning and overtaking them. Merchant mariners feared them even more than U-boat packs.

The *Graf Spee* gained notoriety on her first and only wartime cruise. Leaving Wilhelmshaven 11 days before the war started, she sank nine cargo ships totaling 50,089 tons by December 7, 1939. She was ambushed by three Royal Navy cruisers and forced into the neutral harbor of Montevideo, Uruguay. Given three days to repair and leave, the Germans were misled by reports that a major British task force was approaching the harbor. Berlin sent orders to scuttle. The pocket battleship sailed just outside the harbor and, at sunset, six torpedo heads exploded and gave 750,000 waterfront spectators a tremendous sound and light show. Three days later, the *Graf Spee*'s Captain Hans Langsdorff killed himself. Thus, the *Graf Spee*, with a short and mediocer career as a commerce raider, became a legend.

The *Deutschland* was a hard-luck ship from start to finish. A half-hour after she arrived at Ibiza during the Spanish Civil War on May 29, 1937, two Republican aircraft approached out of the sun and hit her with two 110-pound bombs. She suffered considerable damage and 141 casualties, 31 of them deaths.

In October 1939, the *Deutschland* sank two freighters in the North Atlantic, her tally for the entire war. During mid-ocean refueling and reprovisioning in a November storm, her superstructure was split in several places and three motor rooms were flooded. At Grand Admiral Erich Raeder's suggestion, Adolf Hitler changed her name to *Lutzow*, mainly to offset an enemy propaganda advantage should she be sunk.

During the Norwegian campaign in April 1940, the *Lutzow* was heavily damaged by 5.9-inch shore batteries. On the way back to Germany, she was torpedoed by the British submarine *Spearfish* and had to be towed to Kiel. Repairs

kept her out of action for more than a year. She had hardly taken to the sea again when, on June 14, 1941, a torpedo bomber sent her back to a Kiel drydock. After seven more months out of the war, the *Lutzow* sailed into an ice-ridden Baltic and sustained propeller damage. She made it back to Swinemunde for four months in a shipyard.

On July 2, 1942, as a primary player in an operation to attack convoy PQ 17 on the Murmansk run, the *Lutzow* ran aground in Tjeldsund. Several holes and dents in her bottom necessitated a return to Kiel. She arrived, only after a tortuous, multilayover passage, on August 17. During the two months of repair work, several onboard fires and one in the dockyard occurred. As the pocket battleship left Kiel, she struck a floating crane, leaving the left gun of B turret out of true.

Except for the failed Operation Rainbow against Allied convoy JW 51B in December 1942, in which her guns were silent, for the next two years she passed most of her time in quiet coastal waters or in shipyards for refits or diesel overhauls. In September 1944, the *Lutzow* and other ships were in Finnish waters protecting German troops from advancing Soviet forces. Shore bombardment continued sporadically a few days at a time from October to March 1945. While docked in Swinemunde in April to rearm, 100 feet of her port side were torn open from a near miss by an Avro Lancaster's five-ton bomb.

After a patching up, her final captain, Ernst Lange, took her out again to shell Soviet troops. When she ran out of ammunition in early May, with Germany about to surrender, charges were set to scuttle her. In a final blow by her incubus, the explosives detonated prematurely as a result of a shipboard fire.

Good fortune smiled upon the 13,660-ton *Admiral Scheer* during most of her lifetime. Overall, her one and only commerce-raiding cruise was a resounding success. She ran 46,419 miles in 161 days from the Baltic Sea around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean and back to Germany, accounting for 17 Allied ships (128,000 tons).

At the beginning of the war, the *Scheer* was anchored at Schillig Roads off Wilhelmshaven. On September 4, the watches were relaxed. A ship's officer and a Luftwaffe flier were studying aircraft recognition charts. They were interrupted by the blare of a loudspeaker: "Three aircraft at six o'clock. Course straight toward the *Scheer*."

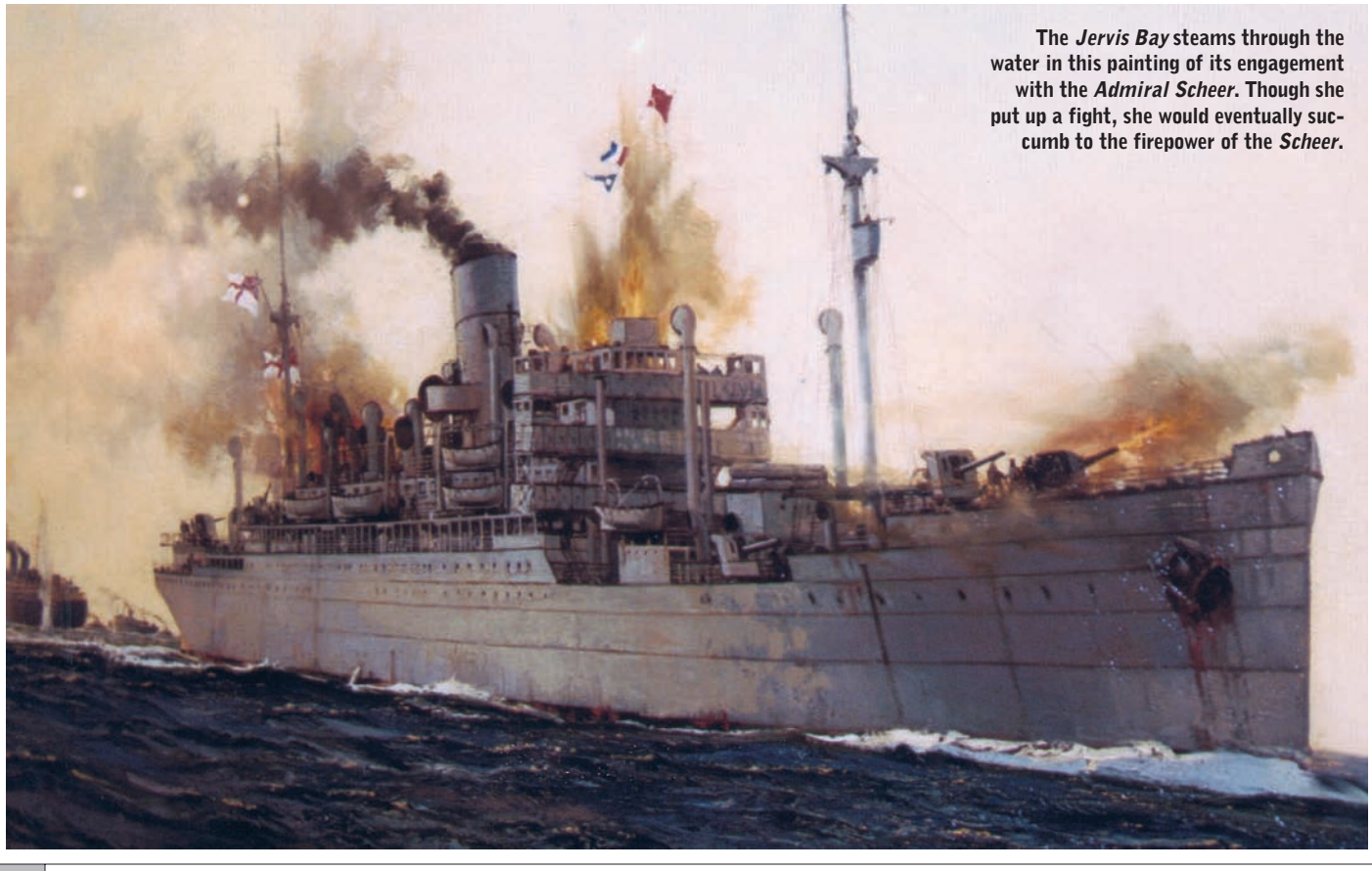
Inexperienced radar operators identified them as German Heinkel He-111s. It did not take long for the Luftwaffe officer to shout: "They're not ours. They're Bristol Blenhiems."

Royal Air Force Squadron 110, led by Flight Lieutenant K.C. Doran, approached under low clouds, altitude about 500 feet. They spotted the *Admiral Scheer* straight ahead. Doran came in just over mast height and dropped two 500-pound bombs. Both ricocheted off the deck and superstructure and chunked into the water. They did not explode because their fuses needed 11 seconds to arm, not possible from their low level of release.

Such luck became a trademark of the pocket battleship.

At the end of October, her command was handed over to Captain Theodore Krancke. He took the ship on uneventful cruises in the Baltic and the North Sea. On February 1, 1940, the *Scheer* docked in Wilhelmshaven for a refit and a major overhaul of her eight linked diesels. Her bows were raked and her pagoda-like fighting mast was replaced with a lighter tubular structure. Her foretop was remodeled to accommodate an FuMO 25 radar system. As part of the overhaul, the engine's underpinnings were rebuilt to reduce vibrations, which had stressed the crew and interfered with fire control.

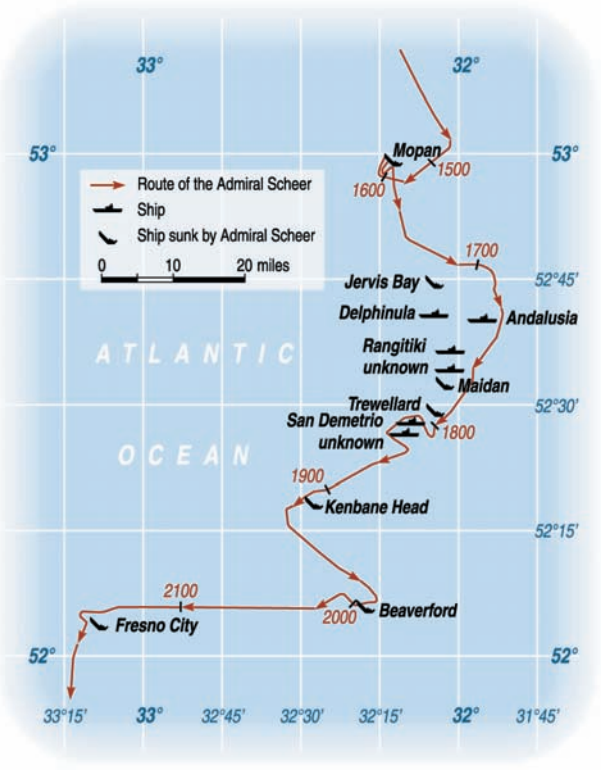
The layup took five months, during which most of the German Navy was involved in the invasion of Norway. While the land fighting went well for them, their small fleet took dam-



The *Jervis Bay* steams through the water in this painting of its engagement with the *Admiral Scheer*. Though she put up a fight, she would eventually succumb to the firepower of the *Scheer*.

age and major losses. Had the *Scheer* been in the battle, she could well have been hit hard. As luck would have it, she was high and dry in the Wilhelmshaven clinic. By the end of June, she was ready to sail, and Krancke, who had been tapped to head naval planning for the Norway operation, returned to his bridge.

After three and a half months of crew retraining, sea trials, repairs, adjustments, and exercises with the *Nordmark*, her designated mid-ocean supply ship, the *Scheer* sailed out of Gotenhafen on October 23. It was her first commerce-raiding cruise. That night, in the Great Belt between the Danish islands of Fyn and Sjaelland, a propeller was fouled by the chain of an unmarked navigation buoy. She hove to, and a diver dropped off the stern. By noon the next day, she was underway. Crossing the Kattegat, the *Scheer* was ordered to turn back to Kiel to avoid British submarines in the Skaggerak. She passed through the canal, and, four days late, headed up the North Sea.



On November 5, 1940, the *Scheer* engaged the *Jervis Bay* convoy. During the ensuing battle the *Scheer* would sink a total of seven ships.

Although the *Scheer* was to encounter good fortune throughout her wartime career, this delay was the first of three spates of bad luck that blemished her encounter with Convoy HX 84 and its sole escort, the armed merchant cruiser HMS *Jervis Bay*, which had been converted from a passenger liner.

Krancke's mission was to attack a convoy on the Halifax to Britain run. His destination was a square in the North Atlantic bounded at 52-54 degrees north and 32-35 degrees west. The German high command believed most HX convoys passed through the approximately 120-by-120-square-mile area. They expected HX 83 and HX 84 to be there between November 4 and 6.

On her breakout via the Denmark Strait, the *Scheer* passed painfully through an extremely powerful hurricane, with waves as high as 100 feet. She lost two crewmen overboard, and her sickbay filled with injured men. Unsecured equipment and loosened fittings ricocheted off bulkheads. Seawater, washing through opened ventilators, damaged food supplies. Two motorboats were severely damaged. The captain and the helmsman were slammed into a corner of the bridge. The ship reached the target area on November 3, but the heavy seas kept her Arado scout plane perched on its rails. No convoys were sighted that day or the next. A calm November 5 dawned with a slowly advancing overcast to the north and clear skies to the south.

The seaplane took off, flew a fruitless triangular pattern, and returned with no news. Reconnoitering a second sector, the pilot came back quickly with a multiship sighting 88 sea miles to the south—about three hours of top-speed sailing. The officers and crew cheered; they were about to engage in their first action after 14 months of war.

About 2:15 in the afternoon, spikes appeared on the radar screen. The new technology was not refined enough to distinguish the proximity of any of them. At 2:27, the *Scheer*'s lookout reported smoke at 50 degrees, much earlier than expected. Only a smudge, it puzzled Captain Krancke, who thought it might be an armed merchant cruiser scouting ahead of the convoy. It turned out to be the 5,400-ton *Mopan*, carrying 70,000 stems of bananas from Jamaica. She had overtaken and declined an invitation to join the slower convoy.

Krancke signaled the banana boat to maintain radio silence, which she did as her crew abandoned her and rowed slowly toward the pocket battleship. Wishing to avoid endangering the men in the lifeboats, the impatient German captain moved his ship to one side and sank the *Mopan* with 4-inch antiaircraft weapons and 1.5-inch rapid-fire guns.

By the time the British prisoners were taken aboard the *Scheer* and she got underway again, it was 3:30. A full hour had been lost, the result of her second brush with misfortune. The earliest possible encounter with the convoy now was a half-hour after the 4:31 sunset. Twilight would last another half-hour. Krancke figured that while darkness would be a problem, the radar would give him a major advantage. Earlier, after the Arado's sighting, he had considered several alternatives: attack at once, despite the lateness of the day; wait until morning, though that would move his ship 130 miles closer to the Western Approaches and the Royal Navy; or wait a few days for HX 85. His impatience, like his crew's, ruled the day.

At 4:30, a profusion of masts began growing against the sky. Silhouetted superstructures and then hulls appeared. After scanning the horizon for warship escorts, Krancke mused aloud: "Have they got no protection at all?"

"There's only one ship there with what strikes me as an unusual deck structure for a freighter," said navigation officer Lieutenant Peterson.

"Looks like some sort of auxiliary cruiser," said the captain. "She's turning out of line now. I should say they've spotted us."

When the distance between the *Scheer* and the convoy's apparent escort, which was coming straight at his ship, shrank to 10 miles, he ordered his 11-inch guns trained on the armed merchant cruiser and his 5.9-inchers on a tanker close to her. Then he noticed that the escort captain put his ship in front of a large two-funneled cargo liner (the *Rangitiki*). He thought it might be a troop carrier. He would get to her after taking care of the 14,164-ton *Jervis Bay*.

On identifying the pocket battleship to the north, Captain Edward Stephen Fogarty Fegen suggested a 40-degree starboard turn to the convoy's commodore, H.B. Maltby. Then he brought the *Jervis Bay* up to full speed, 15 knots, and executed a sharp port turn straight at the *Scheer*.

At 5:15, Krancke ordered a ranging salvo from the *Scheer*'s forward turret. Twenty-three seconds later, three 200-foot spouts appeared almost simultaneously about 50 yards short of the escort's bows. Maltby immediately launched a series of Very rockets

The *Scheer* slowly approaches a German port, as its crew line the decks in white dress uniform.

signaling the convoy to scatter, proceed with the utmost speed, and make smoke. M.L. McBrearty, second officer of one of the freighters, later wrote: "'Scatter' meant just that. You were now on your own and had to find the best way out."

Krancke wondered whether the rockets were a signal to scatter or to alert escorts on the other side of the convoy. He decided, risk or no risk, he would continue attacking. Before the raider's corrected second salvo from both turrets came down, he could see gun flashes on the escort. The enemy gun crews, he thought, were ready and well trained. Their first few splashes fell several thousand yards short. Probably maximum range, the German captain thought. This helped him choose his first tactic: pound the escort from beyond her range until she sinks or is beaten into impotence. Then chase down the convoy ships.

A few seconds later, the *Scheer* was sprayed by a near miss. A freak cordite charge had given one of the escort's shells a prodigious flight. This troubled Krancke. Was the British armed merchant cruiser capable of drilling his ship with 6-inch shells? Any damage would make the pocket battleship more vulnerable in the expected Royal Navy search, but no other shots came near and his concern melted away.

The Germans' second ranging salvo came down just behind the oncoming *Jervis Bay*. It was good bracketing.

During the first few minutes of the battle, the *Scheer* also targeted the 8,100-ton tanker *Delphinula*. After being straddled by the first ranging 5.9-inch salvoes, the tanker captain ordered a smoke float attached to her starboard quarter and ignited. It glowed intensely red and produced heavy smoke, giving the impression the ship was burning. Three more floats were tied to the port side and lighted. Krancke believed she was destined to sink, and he decided to waste no more shells on her. The *Delphinula* entered a nearby smoke screen and escaped to the north.

The *Scheer*'s third 11-inch salvo hit the target. One of the 780-pound shells took out part of the *Jervis Bay*'s bridge, severely wounded Captain Fegen, killed several officers, and destroyed the radio room, generators, and backup batteries, leaving the director, the range-finder, and the fire-control equipment out of action.

Sometime between the first and third salvos, the *Scheer* experienced her third stroke of bad luck. The muscular recoils of her big guns cracked the radar crystal and put the ship's key spotting and ranging device out of action. Although the fire-control system was now degraded, it remained superior to anything the Royal Navy had at that point in the war. Smoke screens and the deepening dusk diminished the Germans' ability to detect convoy ships. By dark, the raider's success would depend on fate and searchlights.

Krancke kept pounding away at the *Jervis Bay*. In 15 minutes, the vulnerable convoy escort was in flames and much of her superstructure was jagged wreckage. Her main and after steering controls were lost, and her seven guns were silent. But she was not sinking. The German captain almost irrationally insisted on putting her under before concentrating on the cargo ships. He did not know the escort's former cargo spaces and 'tween decks were loaded with 24,000 sealed, empty 45-gallon barrels to retard her sinking. In the early darkness, he mistook flashes of exploding cordite bags on the *Jervis Bay*'s decks for gunfire, giving him another reason to keep the big guns on her. Finally, after an hour of dealing with Captain Fegen's "close the enemy" tactic, he shifted his primary attention to other ships.

Krancke swung his main turrets to the 16,698-ton *Rangitiki*, the supposed troop ship, which actually carried 75 passengers and several thousand tons of cargo. Keeping his medium guns on the *Jervis Bay*, he ordered ranging salvoes on the next target. Captain H. Barnett turned the big freighter to the starboard toward a smoke bank. The first projectiles fell about 500 yards short on the starboard side. As the *Rangitiki* began dissolving like an apparition into the outer smears of smoke, the second salvo straddled her amidships. The third set of shells got within 50 yards, spraying the bridge and forward areas with sea water and splinters.

Krancke believed the last salvo hit the ship's stern. The final German shots were fired blind, one of which, because of the way the screen lighted up, they wrongly thought was a hit. The cargo liner swung northwest behind the smoke and ultimately reached a British port with minor shrapnel wounds. Without the distraction of the *Jervis Bay*, Barnett later said, the raider "could have picked off the ships of the convoy one by one."

The action had been underway for about an hour and ten minutes, and the *Scheer*'s captain could claim no confirmed sinkings, not even the tortured escort. He headed south into the dispersing array of merchantmen. This maneuver raised the risk of collision in the dark and put the *Scheer* within range of their small caliber but potentially damaging guns. At 6:11, the 7,900-ton iron and steel carrier *Maidan* loomed, barely visible, at short range. All the raider's starboard armament opened up on her. Within moments, she was engulfed in flames and sank like a cast iron anchor.

The burning *Jervis Bay* remained the most visible object in the darkness, and Krancke sporadically ordered his medium gunners to pepper her until she receded out of range. With thousands of steel barrels rolling out of the holes in her sides, she finally sank about 7 PM

German spotters soon located another ship

by the gun flashes on her poop. She was another iron and steel freighter, the 5,200-ton *Trewellard*. The *Scheer*'s first projectile entered her after hold, hurling pig iron into the sea and silencing her gun. A second shell pierced the port side of the engine room and lifted chunks of machinery out through the skylight. Although her cargo was dead weight, she went down more slowly than the *Maidan*, and 25 of her crew survived in three lifeboats.

The 8,100-ton tanker *San Demetrio* had just maneuvered away from a near collision with another convoy ship and headed straight at the *Scheer*. She came under fire and was hit by the third salvo. The tanker captain, convinced the 11,200-ton cargo of aviation fuel was going to turn his ship into a huge incendiary bomb, ordered his men to abandon her. A few minutes after three loaded lifeboats hit the water, "the *San Demetrio* was blazing furiously," one of her officers said. Two days later, 14 men in one of the lifeboats reboarded the ship, doused the fires, repaired equipment, nursed her through a storm to her Rothesay Bay destination port, and discharged her precious cargo at an oil dock.

The pocket battleship then established a southwesterly track, and after a while her sharp-eyed observer spotted a faint silhouette. Krancke swung around so that the port side faced the dark form. A searchlight illuminated a freighter about two miles off the beam. Before its crew had a chance to react, the 5,200-ton *Kenbane Head,* with a general cargo, began taking hits from 5.9-inch shells. The lifeboats were destroyed, but they got two jolly boats and a raft overboard, and 20 men lashed them together as a makeshift catamaran. About 7:30 PM, the ship sank.

The *Scheer*'s big gun crews took a break on station. The tight turret chambers were stifling. Jutting instruments, controls, dials, levers, and other gear contributed to the crowding. The men rested against the little available wall space or they squatted. Their faces and torsos were smoke-blackened, and rivulets of sweat left dirty white patches and trails on their foreheads, cheeks, necks, and down their backs. The big, gleaming breech blocks, each containing a shell, were closed and ready to fire. Empty brass casings rolled and clanged together as the seas mounted.

After a while, a lookout spotted another dark shape. Alarms rang and the gunners hurried to their stations. This time, instead of a searchlight, Captain Krancke ordered small incendiary shells, which lighted up the quarry when they hit her. The 10,000-ton *Beaverford* carried a load of maize, meats, cheeses, aluminum, copper, munitions, and chemicals in her holds and timber on her deck. Fires broke out in several areas then she was torn open by 11-inch projectiles. She had been transmitting details of the battle. Krancke heard the doomed vessel's final message: "It is our turn now. So long. The Captain and Crew of the *SS Beaverford*."

She was slow sinking. The timber cargo was propping her up. The *Scheer*'s big guns had registered three hits, and her 5.9-inchers 16 hits. Rather than expend more of his dwindling supply of shells, Krancke ordered a coup de grace: "Torpedo tube number 8, fire." The explosion raised the forward section out of the water, and the *Beaverford* quickly heeled over and plunged bow first—no survivors. The time was 8:30.

The German captain felt he had completed the first phase of his mission to sink Allied merchantmen and disrupt the operations of the Royal Navy. He expected the British to have already mounted a massive search for the *Scheer*. Their ships probably were converging on the battle scene and moving to cut off possible escape routes. Krancke's task now was to put as much due-west distance as possible between his ship and the hunters.

At 9:17, the relaxing gun crews were jolted back to their posts by the action-station alarms. Moving to about 3,000 yards range, the captain ordered the searchlight on, and the 5,000-ton *Fresno City* lit up like a movie screen. The guns fired independently, a mix of 11-inchers and 5.9-inchers. Six shells almost immediately penetrated the maize-carrying freighter. Thirty-five survivors in two lifeboats pulled away from the blazing hulk, which remained visible until she sank at 3:35 AM.

The final score on November 5 was five convoy ships, the escort, and the *Mopan*. Although it may seem unjustified to claim that sinking seven ships in a single action was a dismal failure, the *Scheer* was fully capable of destroying the entire 37-ship convoy. Her missed opportunity had several roots. Most pivotal was the *Jervis Bay*'s Nelsonian charge, which had immediately drawn Krancke's attention and held it for a good hour and a half while the HX 84 freighters and tankers scattered into the night and the mounting gale. Captain Krancke's decision to shell the *Jervis Bay* until well after she had been beaten into impotence botched what might have become Germany's greatest sea victory. Captain Fegen was posthumously awarded the war's only Victoria Cross for convoy defense.

Another factor was the *Scheer*'s four-day timetable setback at the beginning of her cruise, which brought her into contact with a smart, tough opponent. The hour lost in her unexpected encounter with the independently sailing *Mopan* delayed her engagement with the convoy until a half-hour before nightfall. And her ability to spot and range the convoy ships at night was seriously degraded by the destruction of her radar crystal.

In another sense, the outcome of the attack was a rousing success. All told, the British hastily assembled five widely dispersed task forces totaling two battleships, three battlecruisers, an aircraft carrier, five cruisers, and 15 destroyers to hunt for the Admiral *Scheer*. The search kept the Royal Navy scurrying for two frustrating weeks before it was called off. Several convoys returned to their ports of assembly; others remained in their ports. Harbors became congested and chaotic. At this time when every shipload was critical, cargo deliveries were delayed up to two weeks. According to naval historian Captain S.W. Roskill, "The loss of imports caused by the pocket battleship's sudden appearance on our principal convoy route was … far greater than the cargoes actually sunk by her."

Krancke's run of bad luck and costly command decisions took an about face for the remainder of the pocket battleship's cruise. He headed west at full speed for a while, then he swung south toward a rendezvous with the supply ship at Point Green near the Tropic of Cancer. Just after noon on November 16, the 23,000-ton *Nordmark*, manned by friends who had trained with the *Scheer*'s crew, steamed into view. Krancke called out the ship's band to celebrate the occasion. The bandleader mischievously considered playing "The Star Spangled Banner" in recognition of the Nordmark's masquerade as an American merchantman with the name *Prairie* on her bows and a big U.S. flag painted beneath. But, as he later told the captain, he thought better of it.

Refueling the pocket battleship was tricky, with swells so heavy that at times the ships were not visible to each other. The *Nordmark* moved slowly ahead, and the *Scheer* fell about 300 yards behind her. The tanker dropped a light line off her stern. Its end was kept at the surface by a balloon. It was caught and lifted to the bow of the trailing ship, followed by a somewhat thicker line that was tied on, then a strong rope that, in turn, was attached to a heavy towing hawser. Under the urging of the first officer and a rhythmic whistle, a muscle-bound crew lugged the hawser aboard and made it fast to the tow stanchion. Grasping two lines that came up with the cable, they lifted two diesel-oil pipelines from the tanker and connected them to the fuel intakes.

The *Nordmark* took the *Scheer* under a

slow tow to keep the ships from drifting apart and rupturing the slack fuel lines. During the several hours it took to top off the bunkers and for the next two days, every boat was used in the heavy seas to replenish the raider's ammunition and other stores. One 11-inch shell was damaged, and a keg of beer was dropped three decks. None of the crew was injured. The hazardous operation was a remarkable success.

On November 24, about 400 miles southeast of Bermuda, a lookout spotted a square-built ship with big cases on her deck. The *Scheer* turned, and Krancke set a top-speed collision course. The wireless room picked up the British "RRR" (raider) signal from the 7,500-ton *Port Hobart*. The German captain's tactic was to allow the freighter to continue signaling, draw Royal Navy search groups to the area, and be long gone before they arrived. He raised "Heave to" pennants, but the ship showed him her stern and a boiling wake. "What the devil does he think he's up to," growled Krancke, who did not like using unnecessary violence. "Warning shots over the bow."

The *Port Hobart* stopped. A crew headed by a Lieutenant Engels boarded her and went to the captain's cabin. "How many people on board?" Engels asked. "Sixty-eight," the captain replied. "There are eight passengers, seven ladies and a man. What's going to happen to the ladies?"

"If they behave themselves like ladies they'll be treated like ladies."

"Did you identify us in your wireless?"

"Unfortunately not," said the captain.

The deck began piling up with items the prize crew wanted to take back to the *Scheer*, such as nautical instruments, tables and charts, nautical text books, coils of rope, ship's tackle, machine tools, and small arms. At the captain's insistence, a door was forced open with a crowbar, revealing a large supply of Scotch. They were interrupted by a sudden "abandon ship" shout. The scuttling crew had set the fuse timers prematurely. Engels and his three men remained on the bridge where they felt safer. Five explosions went off in quick succession, and the ship began to heel over. The last boat, standing 200 yards off, picked them up.

Then Engels remembered: "There should have been two more charges."

They were about 100 yards off when two more explosions ripped through the hull. The freighter refused to go down. Several shots with an antiaircraft gun finished her off. The *Port Hobart*, which had been held in port for 10 days after the HX 84 convoy attack, finally sank with her cargo of airplane parts, paint, phosphates, paper, lubricating oil, linoleum, and slate.

After taking the 68 prisoners aboard, Krancke moved the *Scheer* due east and settled in an area southwest of the Canary Islands, where he felt he could strike again, unexpectedly. He claimed the radar was working again, although he had left no reports on its repairs or operations.

On the late afternoon of December 1, about 500 miles off the Canaries, a lookout sighted smoke and then two masts. Krancke kept the raider at the edge of visibility, hoping the other ship would not spot her. At nightfall and moonset, the captain rang for 23 knots and depended, he said, on the radar's rotating "mattress" antenna to keep the target in view. At a range of 1,000 yards, a searchlight lit the freighter brilliantly. She was the 6,242-ton *Tribesman*, carrying electrical equipment, bicycle parts, wire, cloth, photographic materials, glass items, drugs, and mail.

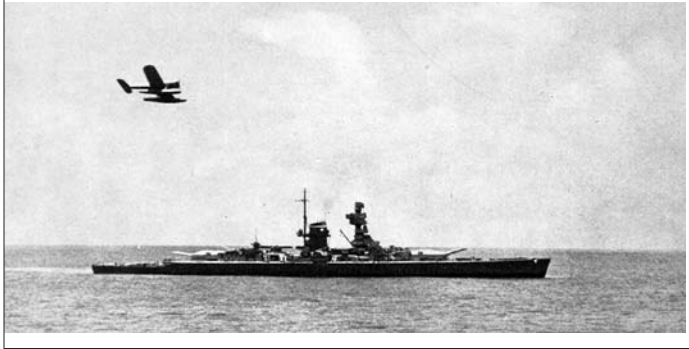
She began turning away, and men were running to the stern gun. Krancke threw a medium shell across her bow and signaled: "Heave to. Don't use your wireless or we fire." Another searchlight to the stern revealed her gun crew elevating their 4-incher and swinging it around. He puzzled for a moment over the cargo ship captain's audacity, then ordered one medium gun to open fire. Almost simultaneously, a shell buzzed over the *Scheer*.

"Good Lord, they're firing back," said the *Scheer*'s meteorologist.

The pocket battleship blasted away with all her starboard 5.9-inch guns and antiaircraft artillery. After his ship took 22 rounds, the British captain told his gunners, who had continued firing at the two blinding searchlights, to abandon their station. Krancke ordered a cease- fire. He took two boatloads of 76 men aboard as prisoners. To his dismay, he learned that a motorboat had been lowered off the far side of the ship with her captain, first officer, chief engineer, and 18 other crewmen aboard. Since she was not sinking, he sent a scuttle crew to finish the job. The motorboat was allowed to escape, and the raider moved away from the site.

Captain Krancke relaxed in his darkened cabin, his nose glowing softly with each draw on his invisible black Brazil cigar. He played a mind game imagining himself as an Admiralty officer. How would he react to the sinking of the *Port Hobart* and six days later the *Tribesman* 2,000 miles east. As a fantasized British admiral, he suspected it was the work of the *Scheer*, which must have laid low for about two weeks after her attack on the *Jervis Bay* convoy. He then visualized the British analyzing past actions and movements of the *Scheer* and her two sister ships, finding out who the captain is, and predicting his next move.

After some hours of immersion in this exercise, the captain concluded that the Royal Navy would watch for his ship at more southerly latitudes close to Africa. There, they would think the pocket battleship could prowl the Cape Town-Freetown shipping lanes and,



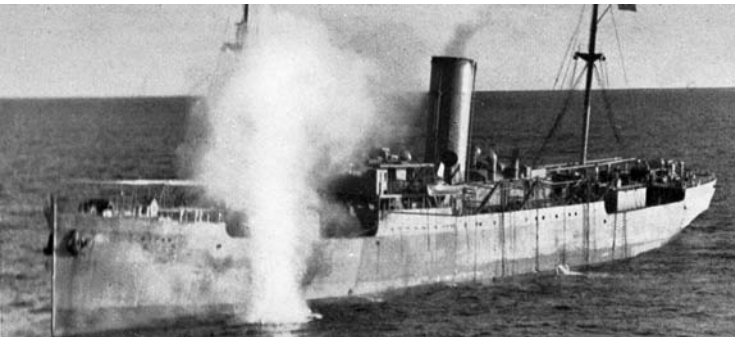
LEFT: The *Scheer* steams ahead, while its Arado float plane flies above. The Arado performed aerial reconaissance duties for the surface raider. RIGHT: In a frame taken from a 16mm film shot by a crewman of the *Scheer*, the *Jervis Bay* (far left) is seen turning towards the *Scheer* shortly before suffering a hit from an 11-inch shell on her stern.

like the *Graf Spee*, she could quickly cross over to the heavy trade routes off South America.

Krancke set a course to the northwest, figuring that if he attacked a merchantman in that region and the position were radioed by the victim, the Admiralty would reckon they had been wrong about his intentions. They might think that the ship was sailing to a home port, and they would set out to intercept her heading to the Denmark Strait or Brest.

The *Scheer* cruised around an area about 1,500 miles due west of the Canaries for 10 empty days. The captain's imagined chess match produced no results. Moving southeast-by-south, the ship was refueled and reprovisioned by the *Nordmark* a few miles north of the equator. On December 18, operating astride the South America-Freetown trade route, where Brazil and Africa jut closest to each other, Krancke sent out his scout plane. The pilot discovered a freighter paralleling the raider's course.

As the *Scheer* approached from the stern, the 8,654-ton *Duquesa* radiated "RRR" calls. The Germans fired two warning shots before the freighter slowed down and hove to. The boarding party discovered she carried 9,000 tons of meat, vegetables, and fruits; 15 million eggs; and whiskies, wines, liqueurs, and stores of other goodies. After transferring 43,000 eggs and several tons of meat to the *Scheer*, the captain considered taking her as a prize and sending her home. He was told, however, that she carried only enough coal to take her as far as Freetown. Since raider supply ships carried no coal, the *Duquesa* became a welcome member of the little German mid-ocean fleet and was christened "The Floating Delicatessen."



The abandoned *Mopan* takes the brunt of a 4.1-inch shell from the *Scheer*.

As the *Scheer* took a hunting and evasion run to the southeast, the British deployed three task forces comprising two aircraft carriers, four cruisers, and an armed merchant cruiser. They cut off escape routes to the north and, of course, never sighted the raider. Again, Captain Krancke caused disruption in Royal Navy operations and then disappeared like a wraith.

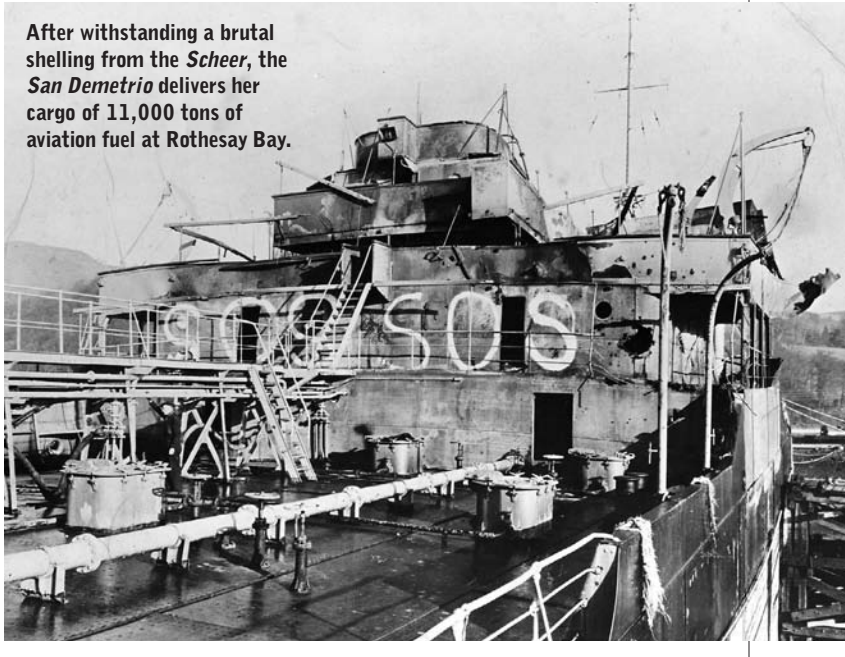
The *Scheer*'s chief engineer felt that the diesels, having run almost continuously for two months, needed overhaul. He and the black squad labored below with the ship underway and temperatures well over 100 degrees. The engine room deck was slippery with their sweat. They removed the cylinder covers, lifted out the heavy shafts, and cleaned and reconditioned them. One cylinder was replaced, a job that required .01 millimeter precision by the machine shop. The overhaul, to be completed by January 5, included maintenance and repair on electrical apparatus, armament, and safety and fire-fighting equipment.

They sailed to Point Andalusia, one of their mid-ocean rendezvous sites, for resupply and a Christmas gathering with the *Nordmark*, the auxiliary cruiser *Thor*, the tanker *Eurofeld*, and the *Duquesa*. Krancke opened the hatches of the *Duquesa* and invited anyone in the fleet who could send a boat over to loot her refrigerators and shelves. On finishing the overhaul as scheduled, prisoners from the raiders' operations, including the seven *Port Hobart* women, were transferred to the *Storstad*, a Norwegian tanker captured by the *Thor* a few days before, until 600 of them were packed in makeshift secure quarters.

The *Scheer* then swung into a northeasterly course toward the Gulf of Guinea shipping lanes. Along the way, Krancke stopped the engines and hove to for several days, until the moon had moved well away from its brightest phase. He anticipated night action not far from the Royal Navy base at St. Helena, and he wanted darkness to cut the risk. He also reasoned that the British would not expect an enemy surface raider to be in a region they controlled. Again, it was a chess match. One could never be sure of the countermoves.

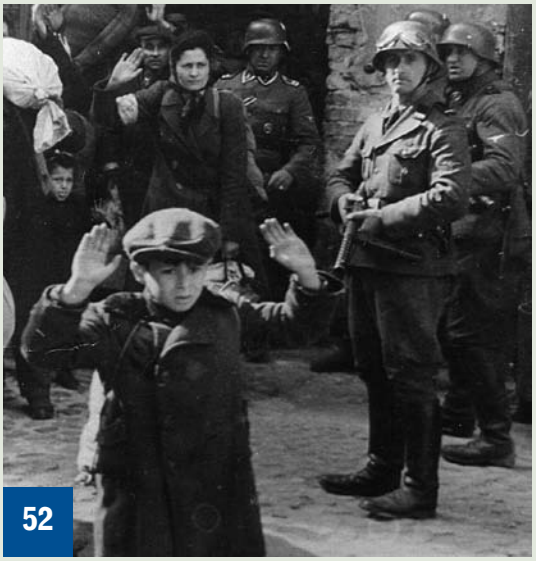
To mask the defining triple turret characteristic of pocket battleships, one gun in each turret was lowered out of sight and the other two were raised slightly. The captain also had the *Scheer* painted in a British zigzag camouflage mode to slow down recognition of her German origin. Every minute's delay in identification would add to the *Scheer*'s attack and escape advantage.

Krancke restarted the engines on January 14. Three days of leisurely cruising in a northeast-by-east direction brought them to the main lanes connecting Freetown and Cape Town. On the 18th, a lookout reported smoke. Using the radar to dog the unknown vessel, the raider kept out of sight until nightfall. Then the diesels jerked her into high speed and took her into a parallel course a few hundred yards from the other's starboard side. In the sudden glare of a searchlight, the stranger turned out to be the Norwegian tanker *Sandefjord* carrying 13,000 tons of crude. She did not transmit "RRR" signals, thus saving her skin, and she was taken over by a prize crew.



After withstanding a brutal shelling from the *Scheer*, the *San Demetrio* delivers her cargo of 11,000 tons of aviation fuel at Rothesay Bay.

On the morning of January 20, a northbound cargo ship was sighted. The *Scheer* began tailing her in the same tactic she had used with the *Sandefjord*. At 3 PM, the radar spotted another ship heading south. Shortly after lighting a black cigar in his creative mode, Krancke turned to his officers and told them



Cover: Germans advance through Russia in this 1942 photo from Signal *magazine. (Photo: Bridgeman Art Library/Private Collection)*

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they were going to get two for the price of one: "I think the time has come to use a little guile."

He rang for full speed and turned east, away from both freighters. Out of sight, he came about and waited until they were about to pass each other along the *Scheer*'s line of sight. Then she moved at top speed toward the nearer southbound ship. As the other one disappeared behind her, Krancke altered course slightly to the south. This kept the raider hidden from the northbound merchantman while approaching the first target. When the *Scheer*'s signalman flashed the British recognition code "M.A.G," the freighter showed her stern, the normal reaction on sighting another vessel, and then she blinked a response.

"Have secret orders for you," flashed the German. "Put about to facilitate delivery."

The 5,200-ton Dutch cargo carrier *Barneveld* reversed her course and approached the supposed British warship. By the time her captain recognized the pocket battleship, it was too late to transmit an "RRR" signal, despite the insistence of a British lieutenant, one of 51 Royal Navy passengers. The armed prize crew discovered to their chagrin that they were outnumbered nearly four-to-one by enemy naval officers and ratings. Since Krancke had already taken after the second freighter, they were vulnerable. They pointed their guns menacingly, quickly disarmed the few men who carried weapons, and herded the 51 British prisoners, one Indian, and the 50 Dutch crewmen into a confined space, and waited for their ship to return.

At 26 knots, the *Scheer* rapidly overtook the 5,600-ton *Stanpark*. The British master, not realizing the other cargo ship had been seized, stopped his ship, put on a white uniform, and prepared to greet the expected Royal Navy boarding party. He dropped Jacob's ladders for them. When bearded German commandos with guns and grenades clambered over the railing, an awful moment of hallucination overcame him. He quickly recovered his composure and handled the situation with British aplomb.

Captain Krancke brought the crew aboard his ship and ordered the *Stanpark* scuttled. Following the explosions, she settled 10 feet and stopped, apparently due to swelling cotton seeds in her cargo. The captain feared the flames and oily smoke would be visible beyond the horizon. He ordered a torpedo at 400 yards range. It missed. Krancke shook his head in disbelief.

"Try another one, Schulze," he told the torpedo officer.

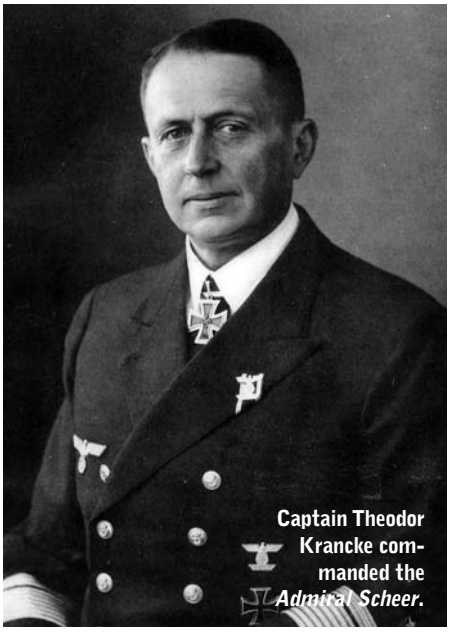
"By the way," he asked the lookout, "where's the [prize crew's cutter]?"

"On the port side, sir."

"Starboard tube, fire."

The torpedo sprang out of its compressed air launcher on the quarter deck. Plunging about 20 feet into the water, its steering gear struck the cutter's gunwale. How in hell, the captain wondered, did the motor launch get from port to starboard so fast?

Following the projectile's wake, the officers and men on the bridge were horrified to see it take a U-turn and head straight back at the *Scheer*. The ship was not underway and nothing could be done to avoid disaster. A strange silence descended over everyone who could see the oncoming warhead.



Captain Theodor Krancke commanded the *Admiral Scheer*.

"[I]t was just unbelievable," Krancke later wrote. "No one could really grasp what seemed to be the obvious fact that the *Scheer* was about to be hit fair and square amidships by one of her own torpedoes."

About 20 yards from the ship's hull the torpedo nose dived and disappeared.

"You were right, Voichckovski," Krancke told the signals officer.

"Me, sir?"

"Wasn't it you who said the *Scheer* is a lucky ship."

The third torpedo blew the *Stanpark* in half, and both sections went down without ceremony.

The raider returned to the *Barneveld*, took aboard the 102 prisoners, and sank her with her cargo of six fighter planes, 86 trucks, 1,000 tons of ammunition, and other equipment slated for the British forces in Egypt. The tally in the Gulf of Guinea was three ships in two days. And, because no raider attacks were signaled, the British did not know what had happened to the victims until they examined the *Scheer*'s papers after the war.

With her bunkers, magazines, refrigerators, and shelves again replenished at Point Andalusia, the pocket battleship headed southeast, rounded the Cape of Good Hope beyond the range of the South African Air Force, entered the Indian Ocean, and swept out a sterile search pattern south of Madagascar. She then headed northeast, giving the British air base at Mauritius a wide berth. She rendezvoused with the German auxiliary cruiser *Atlantis* and three other ships, one of them a tanker.

Atlantis Captain Bernhard Rogge, who had been raiding in the Indian Ocean for a year, told Krancke his success in the area had compelled the British to reroute cargo traffic to longer but safer coast-hugging lanes where Royal Navy protection was more efficient. He suggested that the pocket battleship sweep the zone between Mombasa (Kenya) and the northern tip of Madagascar. The *Scheer* took on fuel from the tanker and sailed to her next killing field off Zanzibar.

On February 20, the wireless room received the sad news that "The Floating Delicatessen" had been scuttled. She had run out of coal. The crew kept her refrigerators going with anything that was combustible—decking, doors, hatch covers, bridge timbers … even a piano went into the furnace.

The same morning, the Arado pilot spotted a northbound freighter. Krancke rang for full speed, but when they reached the estimated position of the ship the sea was empty. The pilot went up again to find her. He was barely off the catapult when the lookout called: "Two masts at 20 degrees." The quarry was identified as a tanker heading south. The captain wondered whether he was going to have another two-ship day, and he turned the bow straight at her. At about 10,000 yards, he began playing the Morse lamp and two guns up and one down game. Since the tanker master knew the coastal route was sailed by Royal Navy units, he felt secure flashing answers to the warship's questions and waiting for her to close. At pointblank range, the *Scheer* signaled: "Heave to. Stop wireless or you will be shelled."

Krancke turned the raider broadside and gave the tanker a good look at her two triple turrets. He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the gun crew running aft to man the single 4-incher. He blinked a final warning: "Don't be foolish, Captain. Call your men away from that gun. And don't use your wireless."

The 6,994-ton *British Advocate*, carrying 8,000 tons of fuel and crude oil to Cape Town, was a relatively easy capture. As the prize crew's takeover was completed, the scout plane returned with news that the "lost" freighter was farther east than expected but still heading north. Krancke ordered the prize crew to meet the *Atlantis* at a point he had arranged with Rogge.

Darkness was falling when the *Scheer*, her radar again in a failed state, caught up to the other ship, passed her, swung across her course, and signaled, "What name?" The question was repeated several times. The answer was finally returned in an unknown language.

"Reply in English."

"Ship, *Gregorios*. Country, Greece"

She is a neutral, the captain thought. A bit of a dilemma, but, what is a Greek ship doing here? He sent some boarders across who found papers indicating the 2,546-ton freighter's itinerary was from New York to Athens with a load of Red Cross materials. Krancke did not believe that for a minute. She should have gone past Gibraltar, not around the Cape of Good Hope. His men opened a very heavy case labeled "Cotton Wool" and found machine-gun parts. They checked more cargo and came up with sheet metal, airplane tires, armored plate, and other war materials. The *Gregorios* crew was transferred to the *Scheer*, and she was scuttled the next morning.

While most of the crew was having breakfast, the pilot took the Arado up again. He returned at 9:15, having sighted a medium-size freighter. The raider stalked her until twilight, then signaled for identification. The four-letter response was coded. While the Germans worked at decrypting the ship's name with the latest British merchant key, which had been sent to them by their intelligence service, they pretended they knew it and blinked another Morse message: "Have secret orders for you."

The unknown ship's master was uneasy. "What sort of orders?"

"Put about to facilitate their reception. I'll send you a boat with instructions for your new course."

"You have no right to stop a neutral on the high seas. This is an American ship."

Just then the signal officer returned to the bridge. He identified the ship as the 7,178-ton *Canadian Cruiser* out of Halifax.

The freighter turned and ran, Krancke taking the move almost personally. "Stop at once and don't force me to open fire. You're behaving very suspiciously."

"So are you," came the immediate reply. "You're acting like a German."

The *Scheer* overtook her. Searchlights lit her from stem to stern, revealing a big Stars and Stripes on her side, the letters USA under the bridge, and an American flag being run up the stern mast.

"Is she really a neutral?" one seaman asked.

"Yeah," said another, "like our *Nordmark* is the *Prairie*."

The Canadian ship signaled the attack and her position, and she began to run again. The Germans started firing 1.44-inch antiaircraft guns. The freighter finally hove to. Her entire crew was found to be British and taken aboard the pocket battleship. After her protesting master was removed by force, the *Canadian Cruiser* was sunk with her cargo of titanium ore.

The same night, Grand Admiral Raeder informed Captain Krancke by coded message: "The Führer has been pleased to award the Knight's Cross to you." A second message contained instructions to return home as unobtrusively as possible by the end of March and to pick up radar crystals from a U-boat near the equator.

The airwaves filled with messages from Aden, Ceylon, Mombasa, and South Africa mounting a search for the *Scheer*. The pocket battleship headed southeast at flank speed. Then, reminiscent of her encounter with the *Fresno City* while leaving the scene of her battle with the HX 84 convoy, a lookout sighted a vessel emerging from a storm straight ahead. For the fourth time in two days, the alarm bells sounded.

The 2,542-ton Dutch coal-carrying freighter *Rantau Pantjang*, having picked up the *Canadian Cruiser*'s "RRR" transmissions and thereby aware that a raider was near, turned tail and headed into a rain curtain. She sent out her own raider and location signals. Krancke was not happy. Now the British knew his escape route. He chased the freighter through several deluges and finally stopped her with medium gunfire. Her crew was taken prisoner, and she was quickly scuttled.

Almost at once, the *Scheer* was spotted by an airplane, which transmitted wireless signals. The captain changed the ship's bearing from southeast to east-by-northeast, hoping the observer was not aware of her escape direction and would be deceived by her new bearing. The plane maintained a 10-mile distance for about an hour and then left. The pocket battleship stayed her fake course for another hour in case the pilot had backed off just enough to be invisible to the Germans. As night began to fall, she returned to her original southeastern tack at top speed.

Just after midnight, a signalman was nearly knocked out of his chair by a sudden, deafening burst of nearby transmissions. It was from the heavy cruiser HMS *Glasgow*, whose search plane had spotted the *Scheer* earlier, about 25 miles away. The warships, one without radar and the other with an inoperative unit, had been passing each other in the darkness with neither of them realizing it.

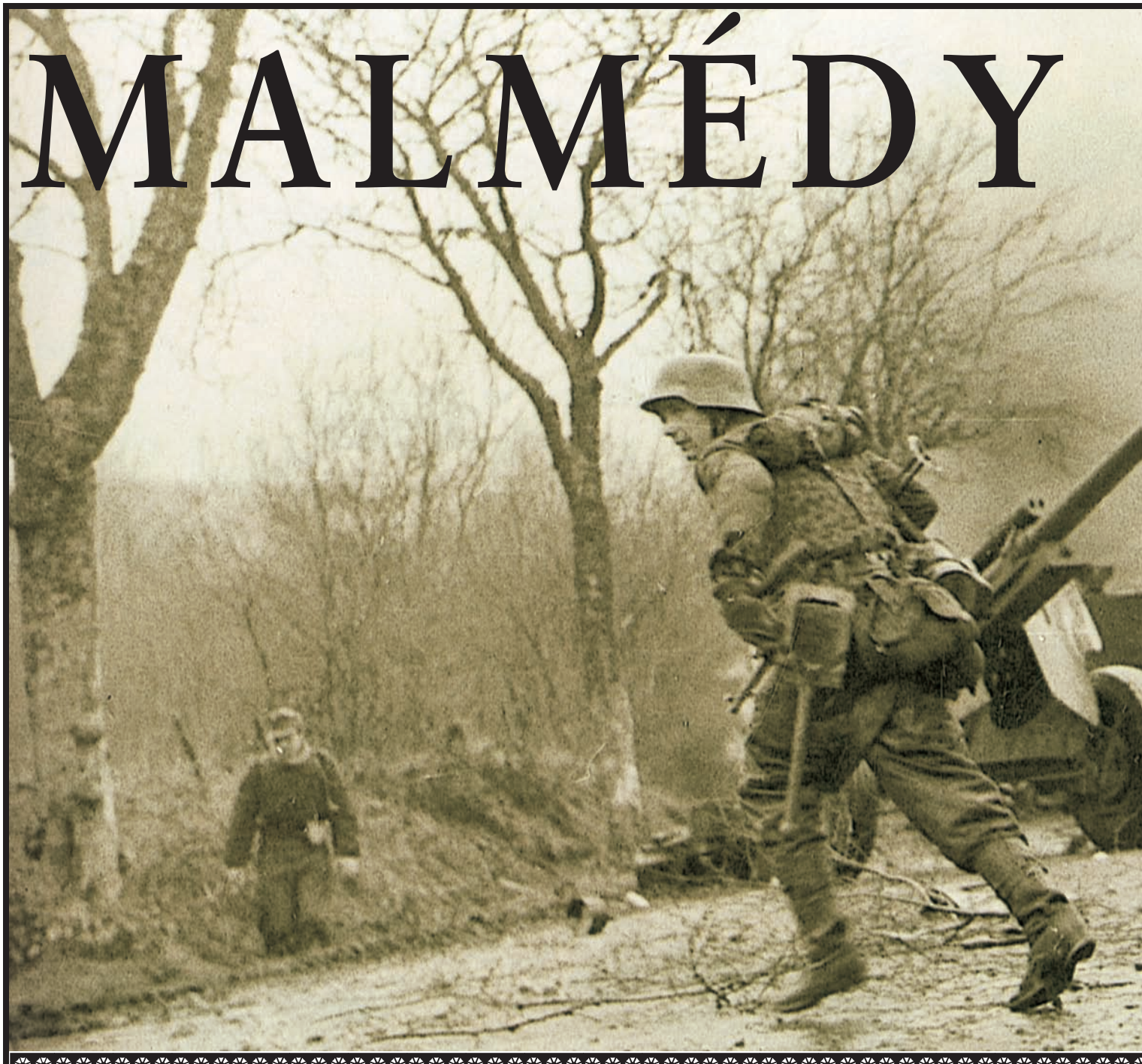
The aircraft carrier *Hermes* and the cruiser *Capetown* were dispatched from Mombasa. Two heavy cruisers, the *Canberra* and the *Shropshire*, on patrol in the southern Indian Ocean, were ordered north between Madagascar and Mauritius. In the South Atlantic, three cruisers were detached from their convoys and headed around South Africa to find the *Scheer*.

In the morning, with no Royal Navy ships in sight, Krancke moved south between Madagascar and Mauritius. Barely into her new course, the raider ran headlong into another turn of good luck. Her radioman picked up a call from a cargo ship sailing between the two

Continued on page 80

Falling victim to an Allied air raid on the German port at Kiel, an undefended *Scheer* capsizes.

MALMÉDY



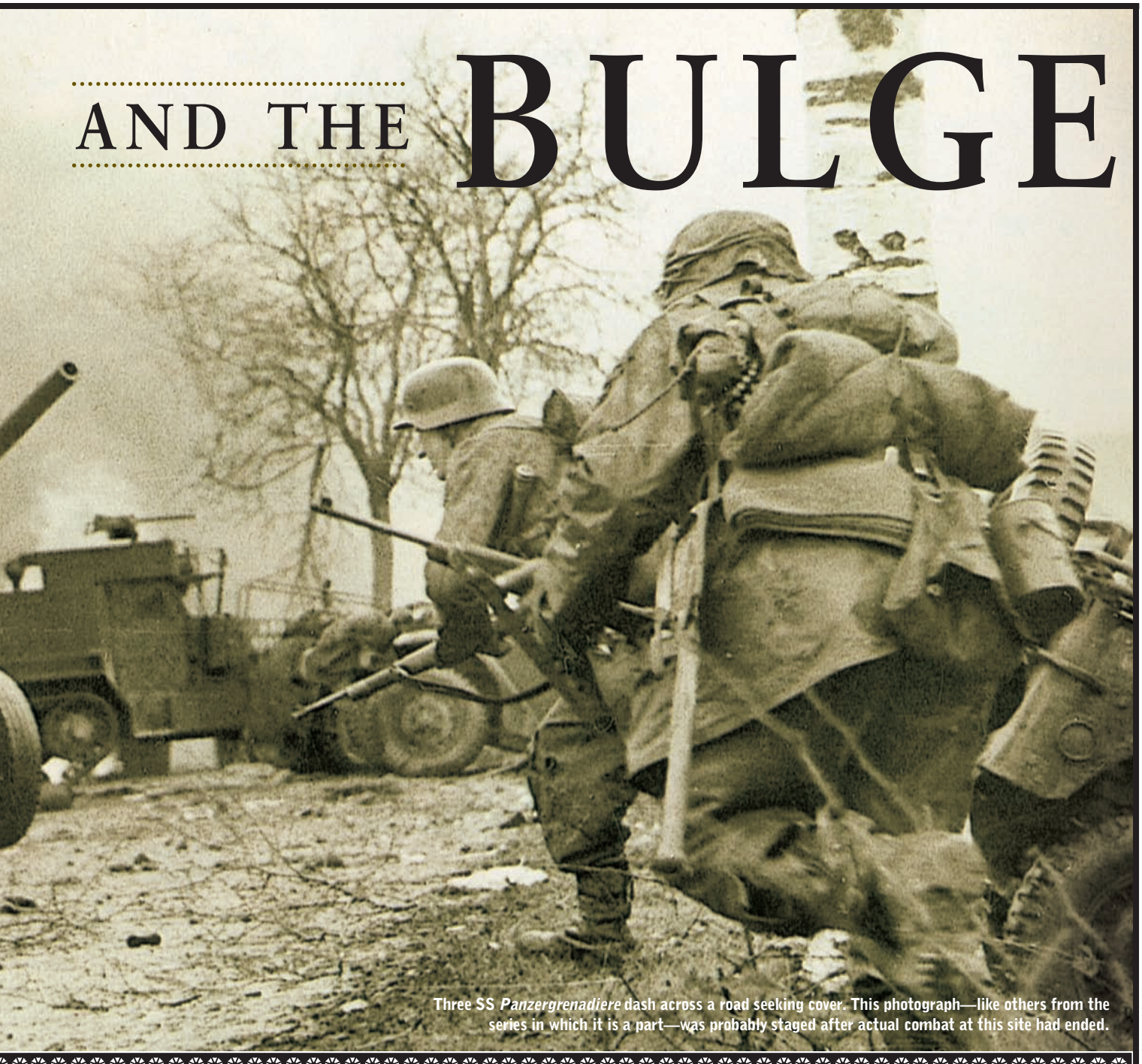
THE BELGIAN VILLAGE NEAR THE SITE OF AN INFAMOUS MASSACRE WAS SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED AGAINST GERMAN ATTACKS DURING THE GREAT BATTLE.

BY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL REYNOLDS

Malmédy is an attractive and prosperous town situated in eastern Belgium, 15 miles from the German border. But it was not always so. In 1871, it was part of the Prussian Reich (Empire) and it was only after Germany's defeat in World War I that, under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, it was ceded to Belgium.

Needless to say, this forced change of nationality was unpopular with most of the

AND THE BULGE



Three SS *Panzergrenadiere* dash across a road seeking cover. This photograph—like others from the series in which it is a part—was probably staged after actual combat at this site had ended.

National Archives

inhabitants who continued to speak, and consider themselves, German. Then, on May 10, 1940, Belgium was again invaded by the Germans and Malmédy found itself returned to Hitler's Third Reich. However, this new status was again short-lived. In September 1944, following the successful Allied landings in Normandy and subsequent race across France, American troops entered the town, and Malmédy once more became part of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Just three months later, at 0700 hours on Saturday, December 16, four mammoth 310mm shells fired from German railway guns fell on the town, killing 16 civilians and causing considerable damage. Hitler had launched his last great offensive in the West and, although neither the local inhabitants nor the Americans stationed in the town knew it, they were lying directly in the path of Waffen SS General Sepp Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army!

Hitler's basic plan for his Ardennes offensive called for three armies under the command of Field Marshal Walter Model, the commander of Army Group B, to break through the American front in the Ardennes and Luxembourg and, with the main weight on the right flank, cross the Meuse River south of Liège and then exploit to the great

port of Antwerp. This, it was hoped, would cut off the British and Canadian 21st Army Group and the U.S. Ninth Army from the rest of the Allied front, causing mass surrenders and depriving the Allies of their most important port. Indeed, Hitler saw it as the basis for another Dunkirk.

Sepp Dietrich had three corps to command: I SS Panzer Corps with the 1st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions (Leibstandarte and Hitlerjugend), plus one parachute and two Volksgrenadier divisions; II SS Panzer Corps with the 2nd and 9th SS Panzer Divisions (Hohenstaufen and Frundsberg), and the LXVII Corps with two Volksgrenadier divisions.

The plan called for the parachute and Volksgrenadier divisions to make a break in the crust of the American defense, and then form a hard shoulder on the right flank of the proposed advance. The 1st and 12th SS would then surge across the Meuse south of Liège in one all-powerful wave, followed by the II SS Panzer Corps, which would then exploit to the northwest and seize Antwerp. Malmédy was the first major objective of the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend.

To aid the 1st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions in their dash for the Meuse, Hitler ordered a special operation, code-named Greif. It was commanded by SS Lt. Col. Otto Skorzeny, who had made his name in the daring rescue of Mussolini in 1943. In essence, he was to form two groups who would wear American uniforms and use captured American equipment. The task of the first group, comprising about 50 English speakers in teams of four or five, was to penetrate U.S. lines and then sabotage important installations and generally cause confusion.

The second, much larger group had the collective title of 150th Panzer Brigade; it comprised some 3,000 men and was to be equipped with armored vehicles. Its task was to move at night in three *Kampfgruppen* (battle groups, KGs), on parallel lines to the advancing panzer spearheads and seize bridges over the Meuse. During the event, some of Skorzeny's four-man commando teams, using U.S. jeeps and uniforms, successfully penetrated American lines, with at least one reaching Malmédy and another getting as far as Huy on the Meuse.

After the war, Skorzeny said 44 of his men got through successfully. Whatever the exact number, there is no doubt that they achieved some success in that they made the Americans very jittery and security-conscious. Twenty-three of these commandos were captured and 18 executed by the Americans for contravening the rules of war by wearing enemy uniforms.

A number of American units were based in Malmédy in December 1944. Along with military government personnel and military police, there was a field evacuation hospital, a reinforcement depot, B Company of Lt. Col. Dave Pergrin's 291st Engineer Combat Battalion, and the 962nd Engineer Maintenance Company. These latter two units were part of Colonel Wallace Anderson's 1111th Engineer Group.

Dave Pergrin, age 27, was a civil engineer by profession and a keen soldier by inclination. After graduating from Penn State College in 1940, he joined the Army and by September 1943 had risen to command the 291st. His unit landed in Normandy on June 24, 1944, and after the breakout through France reached the Ardennes the following September. By December, his companies were based in Malmédy, Stoumont, and Werbomont and were fully involved in road maintenance and an Army winterization program that saw them cutting timber in the forests and working sawmills in the local towns. Over the two months they had been there, Pergrin's men had come to know the area and its people extremely well.

Life for these rear-based troops was really quite pleasant. After the German withdrawal in September, life in Belgium quickly reverted to normal; the Walloons (French-speaking Belgians) and Americans got on well together, and the tensions of the German occupation soon eased. However, it was not quite as relaxed in Malmédy where many of the German-speaking inhabitants treated the Americans with a sullen indifference. After all, some of the men from the town and the immediate area were still serving in the Wehrmacht!

Food rationing for civilians was still in force, but blackout restrictions were virtually forgotten, and by early December everyone had begun to think about Christmas. Certainly, no one thought the Germans were capable of taking any offensive action at this stage of the war, and the arrival of the four 310mm shells came as a great shock. Indeed, one of the most remarkable things about the American side on December 16 is that although the 99th Infantry

LEFT: Caked with mud and accompanied by a German war correspondent, an officer and driver belonging to Kampfgruppe Peiper examine a map to determine their next move. RIGHT: An American prisoner gestures toward a group of SS officers as he seeks directions during his march into captivity. The German 1st SS Panzer Division took large numbers of prisoners during the opening phases of the Battle of the Bulge.

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Division was engaged in very heavy fighting just to the east and northeast of Malmédy throughout the day, the Americans in the town were seemingly unaware of what was happening and that they were about to be engulfed in a major German offensive. There is not a single entry in the daily log of Colonel Anderson's 1111th Engineer Combat Group to indicate anything unusual, and Pergrin himself was certainly in the dark about what was going on.

He wrote later: "Captain John Conlin, our B Company commander in Malmédy came to see me [about the 310mm shells]… I immediately took off [for Malmédy]… and discovered great damage near the General Hospital…. After Conlin had taken over the job of taking care of the wounded and repairing craters in the road, I left Malmédy… I [did not] have the faintest idea that the spearhead of the Sixth Panzer Army would come crashing through in the next 24 hours."

Fortunately for both the Americans and the civilians in Malmédy, Hitler's great plan went badly wrong on the first day of his offensive. By midnight on December 16, the American 99th Division, although by then reduced to half-strength, was still holding most of its positions and the German Volksgrenadiers and paratroopers had failed to achieve any sort of breakthrough. Indeed, the Hitlerjugend's armored KGs were still on the German side of the frontier! Similarly, the Leibstandarte's advance was over 12 hours behind schedule, and its two leading KGs were also still in Germany.

On Sunday morning, December 17, Lieutenant Frank Rhea, a West Point officer commanding 3rd Platoon in B Company of the 291st Engineer Combat Battalion, decided to visit some of his men working on road maintenance between Waimes and Bütgenbach, just to the east of Malmédy. He had no idea that a major German offensive had started, but as he drove east he was puzzled by the heavy volume of U.S. traffic moving past him, heading west. He visited his work detail and then decided to go on to Bütgenbach to the 99th Division headquarters to find out what was happening.

On arrival, Rhea was told that German tanks had broken through just to the east of Bütgenbach. Needless to say, he rushed back to Malmédy to report to his company commander, Captain John Conlin. This alarming news was immediately passed on to Dave Pergrin. At about the same time, Pergrin's superior, Colonel Wallis Anderson, heard from his liaison officer at V Corps headquarters that German tanks had been seen in the vicinity of his 629th Engineer Light Equipment Company at Bütgenbach earlier that morning but had been repelled. Although this was inaccurate information, Anderson naturally decided to take action. He ordered the 629th Engineer Light Equipment Company to pull back to Malmédy and told Pergrin to go to the town and assume command of all the engineer units there.

Camouflaged with white paint, German tanks traverse an icy road toward the River Meuse and a date with destiny.

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During his drive to Malmédy, Pergrin ran into an armored column of the 7th Armored Division moving through Trois Ponts, and on arrival in Malmédy he found another column of the same division transiting the town. Both these columns were heading south to help the battered and beleaguered 106th Division in the St. Vith area. The report of German tanks near Bütgenbach had made Pergrin very uneasy, but there was little he could do other than send out an exploratory jeep reconnaissance on the road toward Waimes, call for the machine guns and machine gunners of his A Company at Werbomont, and order roadblocks to be set up on all the major approaches to Malmédy.

At about midday, the jeep patrol brought back more disturbing news. German tanks were approaching Thirimont, only four miles southeast of Malmédy. They were part of KG Peiper, the leading element of the 1st SS Panzer Division. Pergrin realized at once that if these tanks turned northwest toward Malmédy there was virtually nothing he could do to stop them. Fortunately for Pergrin and his men, the eyes of the commander of the KG, SS Lt. Col. Jochen Peiper, were firmly set on Ligneuville to the south. As far as Peiper was concerned, Malmédy was the responsibility of the 12th SS Hitlerjugend.

The only uncommitted troops in the U.S. First Army on the morning of December 17 were the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate); the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion, less C Company, which was guarding 12th Army Group commanding general Omar Bradley's tactical headquarters in Luxembourg City; and A Company of the 825th Tank Destroyer (TD) Battalion. They were all based to the west of Spa. These three units were alerted for a possible move between 1100 and 1300 hours.

At roughly the same time, General Courtney Hodges, the First Army commander, asked for the 30th Infantry Division, part of General William H. Simpson's Ninth U.S. Army, to be moved south to the Stavelot–Malmédy area as soon as possible. His request was granted, and units of the division received a warning order at 1140 hours. The first regiment, the 119th, was on the move at 1625 hours. The 117th and 120th Infantry Regiments were directed to the Malmédy area and the 119th farther to the west.

In Malmédy itself there had been something of a panic on that Sunday morning. Apart from Pergrin, his B Company, and the 962nd Engineer Maintenance Company, everybody else had "bugged out." Pergrin knew that these few engineers could not possibly hold the largest town in the region without substantial reinforcements in the form of infantry, TDs, and artillery; nevertheless, he made the brave decision to stay on in the town.

At about midday, one of the serials in the 7th Armored Division column transiting

Malmédy, B Battery of the 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, arrived outside Pergrin's temporary headquarters in the Renz house on the St. Vith road. In the leading jeep were two officers who told Pergrin they were heading south through Ligneuville to St. Vith. Pergrin warned them that German armor had been seen just to the east of their proposed route and advised them to turn around and divert via Stavelot, Trois Ponts, and Vielsalm.

However, the two officers decided to continue the way they were heading and moved off at about 1230 hours in the direction of Ligneuville—with disastrous results. Little did they know that four miles down the road they would run into KG Peiper and become involved in the single largest massacre of U.S. troops in Europe in WWII.

As a result of this meeting with KG Peiper, 84 Americans died and 25 were wounded. Fifty-six men survived, of which seven became prisoners of war. There were no German casualties. Although the massacre took place in the hamlet of Baugnez, this tragic incident became known as the Malmédy Massacre. John Bauserman's excellent book *The Malmédy Massacre* or this author's book *The Devil's Adjutant: Jochen Peiper, Panzer Leader*, describe the circumstances of the massacre in detail.

At about 1430 hours, Dave Pergrin, having heard gunfire to the southeast, decided to make a reconnaissance in that direction. Sometime between 1515 and 1615 hours, after dismounting from his vehicle at Geromont and proceeding with one of his sergeants, Bill Crickenberger, on foot, he encountered three of the American survivors. He rushed them back to his headquarters and sent a message to his rear headquarters at Haute Bodeux stating that there had been some sort of massacre of American soldiers in the vicinity of Malmédy. At the same time, he ordered his own C Company, based 14 miles to the west at Stoumont, to reinforce him in the town.

Pergrin's message about a massacre no doubt helped to focus minds at First Army headquarters, for at 1700 hours the 99th Infantry and 526th Armored Infantry Battalions and A Company, 825th TD Battalion, already on standby, were ordered to proceed to Malmédy at once. At about the same time, Pergrin sent a further message to his boss, Colonel Wallis Anderson, telling him that the German armored column had moved south from Baugnez toward Ligneuville. He had learned this from the B Battery survivors. This message made a major impact on Anderson. It meant that German tanks were only 16 miles from First Army headquarters at Spa and only 12 miles from his own at Trois Ponts.

By last light on the 17th, the immediate threat to Malmédy had been lifted, but there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the defenders were still in grave danger. At 2315 hours, Colonel Anderson, knowing the 629th Equipment and 962nd Maintenance Companies were of little use in an infantry role, ordered Pergrin to send them back to a location near the Meuse.

Between 0300 hours and dawn on Monday, December 18, major U.S. reinforcements reached Malmédy. Pergrin, with his 180 engineers, had bravely stayed in the town, but with only mines, demolition charges, light machine guns, and bazookas, for which they had precious little ammunition, the seven roadblocks they had set up on the major approaches into the town formed only a very primitive defense. One can only wonder what might have happened if the armored KGs of the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend had broken through the stubborn American defenses at Krinkelt and Rocherath, or Jochen Peiper had been ordered to switch routes and advance through Malmédy!

The first infantry unit to arrive in Malmédy was Lt. Col. Harold Hansen's 99th Infantry Battalion, consisting mainly of first-generation Norwegian Americans. It was completely in the town by 0300 hours. Shortly after this, the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion, less two companies, and A Company of the 825th TD Battalion, less a platoon, came in and deployed on the east and south sides of the town. This group was subordinated to Hansen, and by first light a reasonable defensive posture had been adopted, absorbing Pergrin's roadblocks.

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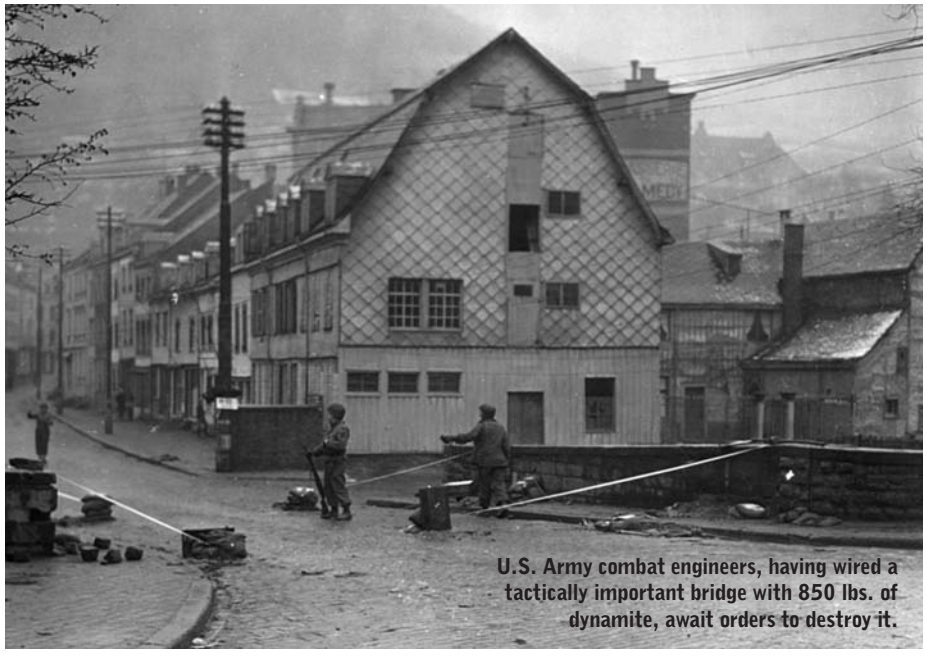
A battleworn column of American troops makes its way through the remains of a village in the Ardennes.

At 1010 hours, Colonel Walter Johnson, commanding the 117th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Infantry Division, arrived in Malmédy, with his 3rd Battalion. They had been expecting to find the town in German hands and were relieved to find Hansen and Pergrin there with the situation under control. They were disgusted, however, with the scenes that met their eyes: abandoned American equipment, clothing, documents, and



National Archives

U.S. Army combat engineers, having wired a tactically important bridge with 850 lbs. of dynamite, await orders to destroy it.

food wherever they looked. The 3rd Battalion immediately started to prepare positions on the southeast side of the town.

During the first daylight hours of December 18, KG Peiper, having advanced through Ligneuville the previous evening, attacked Stavelot, five miles west of Malmédy. Despite some heroic actions by the American defenders, the battle was over by 1000 hours and the town abandoned to Peiper's column. Part of the defending force, the 1st and 2nd Platoons of A Company, 526th Armored Infantry Battalion and the one remaining TD of the 1st Platoon, 825th TD Battalion, withdrew to Malmédy, which they reached at midday.

The afternoon of the 18th saw a major strengthening of the Malmédy defenses. At 1300 hours the command post of Colonel Branner Purdue's 120th Infantry Regiment was established in Bevercé, a mile north of the town. At this stage, the plan was for the regiment to act as a reserve. Accordingly, one battalion was deployed at Bevercé, one to the east of Malmédy at Chodes, and the other to the west of the town on the Stavelot road.

Following the deployment of the 3rd Battalion of the 117th Regiment on the southeast side of Malmédy, another battalion of the regiment, the 2nd, took up positions on the west side of the town between Burninville and Masta. The 1st Battalion of this regiment had been diverted to Stavelot where a major crisis had developed following its fall to KG Peiper.

On Tuesday, December 19, the commander of the 30th Division, Maj. Gen. Leland Hobbs, decided to concentrate the whole of the 117th Infantry Regiment in the Stavelot sector and give responsibility for the defense of Malmédy to Colonel Purdue's 120th Regiment. Accordingly, all existing units in the town were placed under Purdue's command, Lt. Col. Ellis Williamson's 1st Battalion of the 120th Infantry, supported by 1st Platoon, B Company, 823rd TD Battalion, and 3rd Platoon, A Company, 825th TD Battalion, relieved the 3rd Battalion of the 117th Regiment on the eastern flank, and Lt. Col. Peter Ward's 3rd Battalion took up positions on the southwest side of Malmédy.

The 2nd Battalion was held in divisional reserve at Bevercé. Pergrin retained responsibility for the demolitions on the Warche River bridge, the large railway viaduct on the west side of the town, and the three railway underpasses on the southern side. His engineers, now relieved of responsibility for five of their original roadblocks, put out more mines, while his machine gunners thickened up the infantry on the railway embankment.

During the afternoon, K Company of the 3rd Battalion, 120th Infantry established strong positions on both sides of the Warche bridge. The other two TDs of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 825th were located near a house, now demolished, on the south side of the bridge. The four M-10s tank destroyers of 2nd Platoon, B Company, 823rd TD Battalion were held as a mobile reserve behind the railway embankment. Two 90mm, one 40mm, and two quadruple 50-caliber antiaircraft guns of the 110th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Robert Wilson, also joined the defenses and were placed on the high ground to the north of Malmédy in a position where they could dominate the southern approaches.

By last light on the 19th, the Malmédy defenses were in good shape, and the arrival of the 1st Infantry Division in the Butgenbach–Waimes sector ensured that the efforts of the 12th SS Panzer Division to break through toward the town from the east would be frustrated.

There was no fighting in the Malmédy sector on Wednesday, December 20, although intermittent artillery fire fell on the town. However, in the latter part of the day KGs X and Y of SS Lt. Col. Otto Skorzeny's 150th Panzer Brigade assembled in the Ligneuville area for action against the town on the 21st. Kampfgruppe Z had been unable to reach the area in time for the attack but was seen as a potential reserve.

Kampfgruppe X was equipped with one Sherman and five Panther tanks disguised to look something like Shermans. It comprised two infantry companies of about 120 men each and a heavy company with two panzergrenadier, two heavy mortar, and two antitank platoons; it also had pioneer and signal platoons. Kampfgruppe Y had the same organization, but was strengthened by Sturmgeschutze (StuG, armored assault guns) instead of tanks.

Combat engineers attempt to remove an abandoned German tank. Disguised with U.S. markings, this vehicle was probably used in the attack on Malmédy.

National Archives

Sepp Dietrich's orders to Skorzeny were simple. On Thursday the 21st, he was to capture or at least neutralize Malmédy and, most importantly, to open up a route toward Spa for the 12th SS Panzer Division and also clear the road from Malmédy to Stavelot. This latter task was vitally important for the resupply of KG Peiper, which was now in trouble well to the west in the area of La Gleize and Stoumont.

German intelligence on Malmédy was sketchy. It was based on one of Skorzeny's own commando patrols, which had penetrated the town on the 17th and found only Pergrin's few engineers. The Germans had no idea that since then it had been strongly reinforced.

Skorzeny was given no artillery support for his attack, so he decided his only hope of success was to surprise the Americans. Both KGs were to attack in the dark, KG X from due south and KG Y down the main Baugnez–Malmédy road. Kampfgruppe X was targeted not on the town, but on the vital road

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U.S. soldiers, crowded into a foxhole, prepare for a defensive stand against German troops. At Malmédy, individual acts of heroism in the face of the enemy were commonplace.

junction south of Burninville. This initially required securing the Warche River bridge.

Unfortunately for Skorzeny, one of his men was captured near Malmédy on Wednesday afternoon and revealed, under interrogation, that the town was to be attacked at 0330 hours the following morning. By midnight, all the American units had been warned.

When Skorzeny's men advanced down the hill toward Malmédy at 0300 hours on the 21st, Lt. Col. Ellis Williamson's 1st Battalion of the 120th Infantry and the four TDs of 3rd Platoon, A Company, 825th TD Battalion were ready for them. The fact that this attack was launched nearly four hours before the attack by KG X on the south side of Malmédy would indicate that it was seen by Skorzeny as more of a decoy than a serious attempt to capture the town. By attacking that much earlier, he probably hoped to draw U.S. reserves to the eastern approach. The leading infantry company of KG Y ran straight into B Company, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry near the railway crossing on the main road to the east of Malmédy.

Captain Murray Pulver, the company commander, described what happened in his book *Longest Year*: "Company B was given a position on the main road leading south to St. Vith… we quickly set up a road block at a small settlement called Mon Bijou… at 3 AM, an American half-track came down the road followed by a column of tanks and other vehicles. The half-track hit a mine and lost its front wheels… when the half-track was disabled a group of German soldiers moved forward and one yelled 'Hey! We're American soldiers—don't shoot!' But they didn't fool those two great soldiers. Sergeant Denaro let loose with his Browning automatic rifle and Sergeant Henderson fired and knocked out a TD following the half-track. Very soon the whole of 1st Platoon were engaged. The road was narrow with a high bank on the right and a gully on the other side making it impossible for the German tanks to advance. Barbed wire prevented foot soldiers circling us to get the mines [laid by Dave Pergrin's men] off the road.… Very soon we began receiving heavy mortar and machine gun fire.… I think every gun in the 230th Artillery fired in our support… Things remained pretty hot until daylight. We could hear the tanks moving around but our artillery was giving them hell. Soon the tanks backed off, turned round and retreated… We lost two men killed and had four wounded."

This was one of the first occasions when American artillery used the new and highly secret "Pozit" fuse. This caused a shell to burst above, rather than on contact with, the ground, thus showering fragments over a much wider area. This had a devastating effect on the attacking German infantry and the KG, having lost two StuGs, was stopped dead in its tracks. One of the StuGs had been abandoned practically intact after a high explosive round had caused minor damage at the rear.

Skorzeny's main attack came at 0650 hours on the 21st, not 0400 hours as some reports say, against the American right flank. It will be remembered that the main Malmédy defense line was the railway embankment running roughly west to east on the south side of the town. B Company of the 99th Infantry Battalion, with two TDs of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 825th TD Battalion, was responsible for the Rue de Falize railway underpass. B Company, 526th Armored Infantry had its 2nd and 3rd Platoons with the other two TDs of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 825th covering the other two underpasses, while its 1st Platoon with two 57mm antitank guns was sited at the railway viaduct over the main road leading into Malmédy from the west.

Companies I and L of the 3rd Battalion of the 120th were located in the western part of the town, well inside the railway embankment, and they do not seem to have been involved to any extent in the day's fighting. Company K, on the other hand, with a machine gun platoon of M Company and the four towed TDs of 1st Platoon, B Company, 823rd TD Battalion, sited as they were in the area of the Warche River bridge and the vital road junction just to its west, would bear the brunt of the German attack.

A large paper factory still stands just to the east of the bridge, and until a couple of years ago there was a lone house on the opposite side of the road. The headquarters of 1st Platoon, B Company, 823rd TD Battalion was located in this house with two of its TDs nearby; the other two TDs were north of the river. South of the paper mill was a large open area, now completely built over, stretching a good half-mile before the ground rises quite steeply. This area had been heavily mined and sown with trip flares by Pergrin's engineers. Four M-10 TDs of the 2nd Platoon, B Company, 823rd TD Battalion were in reserve in a central position behind the railway embankment.

Six artillery battalions were capable of firing in support of the Malmédy defenses, and it will be recalled that the antiaircraft guns of the 110th AAA Battalion were deployed on the north side of Malmédy. In reserve, in

the area of Bevercé, were the 2nd Battalion of the 120th, the rest of Hansen's 99th Infantry, and B Company, less one platoon, of Lt. Col. George Rubel's 740th Tank Battalion which had now arrived as part of Hobbs's divisional reserve. Skorzeny's men had an impossible task.

Despite all these forces there were two serious defects in the Malmédy defenses. First, the Americans had not appreciated that the road junction just to the west of the Warche River bridge was more important to the Germans than the town itself. Its capture would open up the roads to Spa and Stavelot. This misappreciation had led to only weak forces being positioned at the Warche bridge and road junction complex, and this weakness was further exacerbated by the fact that the boundary between the 117th and the 120th regiments was drawn too near to the vital road junction. As one regimental history puts it, "It must be said that the responsibilities of the two sister regiments at the vaguely defined

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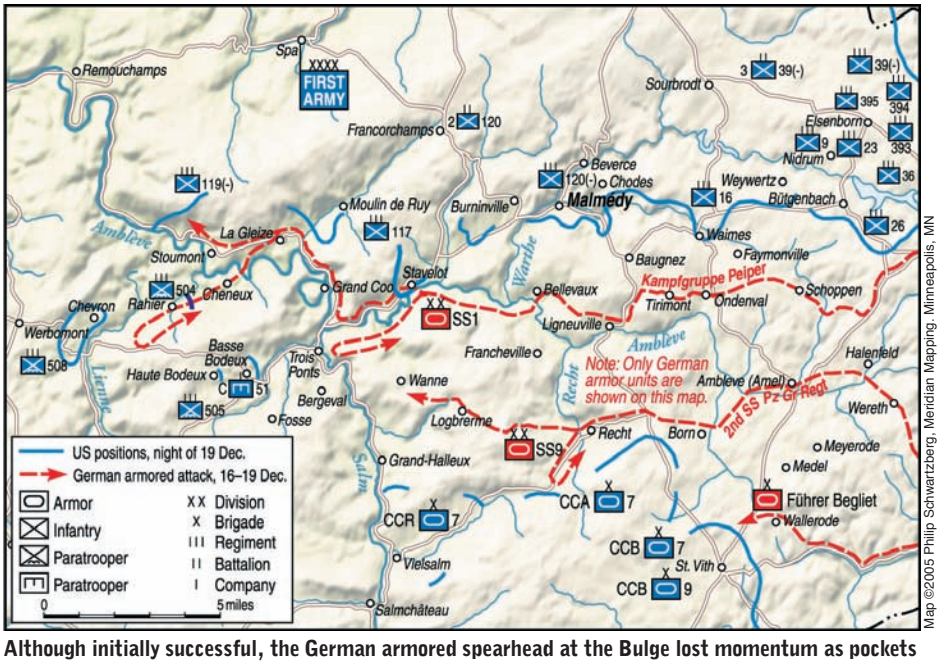
LEFT: SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny commanded the elite 150th Panzer Brigade, which staged numerous commando operations. RIGHT: SS Lt. Col. Joachim Peiper was tried as a war criminal for the massacre of American POWs at Malmédy.

inter-regimental boundary were none too explicit."

The other incredible weakness was that the Warche River bridge could not be blown because the detonator for the demolition had been removed. It had always been the intention of the First Army chief engineer to withdraw Pergrin's battalion from Malmédy as soon as it could be relieved by the 30th Division's engineers, but Hobbs had argued for it to remain under his command, and he had won the day. In preparation for their expected withdrawal, however, Pergrin's men had handed over responsibility for the demolitions on the Warche River bridge and the railway viaduct to the infantry. For safety reasons, the detonators had been removed.

Shortly after 0600 hours, the entire area around the paper factory was illuminated by flares set off by the attacking infantry and tanks of KG X. One part of the KG followed the Rue de Falize toward the railway underpass where the leading Panther tank "brewed up" on a mine. The 99th Infantry Battalion's after-action report says the attacking column consisted of three U.S. jeeps, one half-track, an American M-8 armored car, a Tiger tank, and two Shermans. The 825th TD report speaks of a jeep, half-track, and Tiger being knocked out. In fact, there was only one Sherman in the whole of Skorzeny's force, and the so-called Tiger was, of course, a Panther. For some two hours the accompanying infantry tried to breach the American defenses at the railway embankment, but B Company, 99th Infantry and the TDs of the 825th held firm and, helped by artillery using the new pozit fuse, the Germans were repulsed with, according to the 99th Infantry, 100 killed. The 825th TD section claimed to have captured two jeeps and an M8 in working order and rather magnanimously added in their report, "Company B, 99th Inf Bn also engaged the enemy at this point." They admitted the loss of one of their TDs and to suffering four casualties.



Map ©2005 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

Although initially successful, the German armored spearhead at the Bulge lost momentum as pockets of American troops provided stiff resistance at key points, such as Malmédy and Bastogne.

As soon as flares illuminated the area in front of the paper mill, the main group of KG X headed straight for the Warche bridge. The fact that it could not be blown was a tragedy for the defenders. The history of the 120th Infantry Regiment says two 3rd Battalion outposts were overrun before the enemy reached the area of the paper factory. The lone house near it became the center of severe fighting. The TDs sited there took the attacking tanks under fire, but the house was soon surrounded by German infantry, and it was not long before the 823rd crews abandoned their TDs. They managed to remove or destroy the firing pins and sights on all four guns before most of them took refuge in the house along with three of Pergrin's engineers and some members of K Company—33 men in all. By 0830 hours, one of the Panthers had crossed the bridge to the north side while others covered it from near the house.

When it began to dawn on the Americans that the Germans were focusing on the road junction and the boundary between the two regiments rather than the town, a crisis of confidence began to set in. At 0840 hours, G Company of the 2nd Battalion, 117th Infantry, on K Company's right, was on full alert, and a section of 3rd Platoon, C Company, 823rd TD Battalion operating with it was moved to face the threat. A single gun of this section claimed to have destroyed a Tiger, a Sherman, a German manned M-10, and two more Panthers or Tigers! This claim was certainly never substantiated. Two days later, a sergeant of the 291st Engineers was told to check the whole area north of the Warche River for abandoned or knocked-out German vehicles—he found none!

Rumor then began to take over. At 1030 hours, an unconfirmed report said there were Germans in Meiz, a mile northwest of the road junction. This was untrue, but certainly

by midday the Germans had driven two K Company platoons some distance to the north of the bridge and road junction area and had written down the third platoon. Survivors took shelter in the paper factory, and one of them, Pfc. Francis Currey, was to be awarded a Medal of Honor for his gallantry during this action.

Lieutenant Kenneth Nelson, commanding the machine-gun platoon with K Company, was to be awarded a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross for his part in the fighting, and his platoon sergeant, John Van Der Kamp, the same medal. The situation was now considered serious enough to move the reserve 2nd Battalion of the 120th to the area of Burninville, north of the threatened road junction and to deploy two 90mm AAA battalions as far back as Francorchamps.

It is not clear how many, if indeed any, more Panthers crossed the river, but by early afternoon the situation had begun to stabilize. KG X was simply not strong enough to break through. Two Panthers had been disabled near the bridge, one by Francis Currey, and the paper mill position was holding firm. American artillery fired 3,000 rounds during this battle. Amazingly, the lone house too remained in American hands despite the fact that, believing it to be in German hands, the Americans took it under fire from the railway embankment at about 1000 hours with both artillery and machine guns.

One of the engineers and a K Company corporal eventually got out of the house in the early afternoon and managed to get back to the main U.S. position behind the railway embankment; there they reported that the house was still in U.S. hands and that only 12 men remained alive out of the original 33. Considering that tanks and infantry were fighting around the house for several hours, it is remarkable that anyone there survived at all; but this report, and similar statements that entire TD crews were killed or wounded, are not supported by the actual casualty returns.

The 30th Division report for December 21 shows B Company, 823rd TD Battalion had one man wounded and six missing; the 1st Platoon lost all four TDs (two were later recovered), two half-tracks, four jeeps, and a 1-ton truck with trailer; the 3rd Battalion of the 120th Infantry suffered seven men killed and five wounded. The 291st Engineers had one man killed and another wounded at the lone house and a third man killed by mortar fire. The 526th Armored Infantry counted four men wounded.

For Otto Skorzeny, observing the action on the high ground to the south, it was obvious that by midafternoon his attack had failed at considerable cost. His tanks had barely managed to cross the bridge, and none of his force had breached the railway embankment. The KG commander, who had personally led his men in the battle around the paper factory, came limping back on the arm of a medical officer, wounded in his rear end. By 1525 hours, the Germans were clear of the road junction, bridge, and paper factory area; at 1600 hours two M-10s of 2nd Platoon, B Company, 823rd moved through the Falize underpass.

Their after-action report noted that they fired on two German tanks concealed in buildings south of their positions. After first knocking off a corner of a building to expose the tank hiding behind it, three armor-piercing rounds sent the tank up in flames. Another tank in the vicinity was also destroyed, but it is believed that this tank might have been previously damaged by friendly artillery.

The tank behind the building was a disguised Panther later found beside the café at La Falize. The Operational Research Section of the 2nd Tactical Air Force visited the Malmédy area in early 1945. It found "Panthers all disguised as Shermans by the addition of thin sheet metal superstructures. One of these had been destroyed by the crew and the others by American artillery."

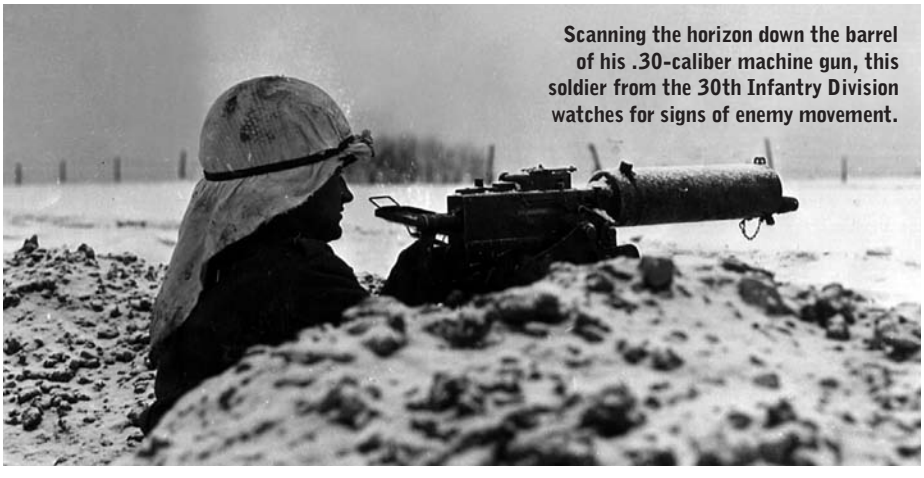
At the end of the day, the American defenses had held and, despite all the problems, Malmédy was safe from the Germans. The 150th Panzer Brigade had lost 150 men killed, wounded, or missing. Skorzeny himself was wounded in the face by artillery shrapnel as he neared his original headquarters in Ligneuville that evening.

On Friday, December 22, Dave Pergrin was ordered, rather belatedly, to demolish the Warche River bridge, the massive railway viaduct, and the Rue de Falize underpass. It ensured that Malmédy became a fortress on its southern and western flanks, but it proved to be a waste of time and explosives. There would be no more enemy attacks on Malmédy, although intermittent German artillery fire continued to fall upon the town for the rest of December. However, it was the Americans rather than the Germans who now wreaked death and destruction on the town, its people, and its defenders.

Perhaps due to the mass evacuation of the town by all but Pergrin and his brave engineers on the 16th and 17th, there was a general misconception throughout First Army that Malmédy had fallen to the Germans. The fact that the better part of two regiments of the 30th Division, two independent battalions, and numerous subunits had moved into or through the town was virtually unknown in the chaos of the American bugout. Even the *Stars and Stripes* described Malmédy as being occupied by the enemy, as did the Belgian national newspaper, *La Libre Belgique*, and the Belgian Radio Nationale.

Even allowing for some confusion over the status of Malmédy, there can be no excuse for the bombing of the town at 1526 hours on the 23rd by six U.S. B-26 Marauders of the IXth Bombardment Division's 322nd Bombardment Group, part of the Ninth U.S. Air Force. The flight, led by Major C.F. Watson, dropped 86 500-pound bombs on the town, in conditions the pilots described as "unlimited ceiling and visibility."

Malmédy lies 33 miles from the intended target, Zulpich. The pilots admitted that they had failed to find their primary target and reported that they had bombed Lammersum, six miles farther on. Five of them reported excellent results. This is not surprising since much civilian property in Malmédy was damaged and many people were killed or injured.



Scanning the horizon down the barrel of his .30-caliber machine gun, this soldier from the 30th Infantry Division watches for signs of enemy movement.

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Standing watch at a crossroads near Malmédy, U.S. troops wait for the inevitable clash with the Germans.

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The 120th Regiment lost three killed, four wounded, and three men missing. After this raid, a First Army spokesman announced that as the Germans had entered Malmédy the town had been bombed. Peter Lawless of the British *Daily Telegraph* newspaper interrupted to tell him that he had just returned from the town, that there were no Germans there, and they had bombed their own troops.

The following day, Christmas Eve, at 1400 hours in perfect visibility and with the snow-covered Malmédy valley looking like a Christmas card, 18 Consolidated B-24 Liberator heavy bombers of the Eighth U.S. Air Force struck again, causing massive damage. The main square and town center were leveled and many other parts of the town devastated by bombs and fires. The 120th Regiment casualty report for the day shows 98 killed, wounded, and missing, although some of these casualties occurred in the three companies of the regiment, which by then were involved in the fighting around Stavelot. The 291st Engineers, who did sterling work with their skilled manpower, had one man killed and the commanding officer of B Company, which had been in Malmédy since before the offensive started, was badly injured. No evidence to explain this bombing has been found in Air Force reports, and the unit responsible remains unknown.

On Christmas Day at about 1600 hours, there was a third and final air raid. Four B-26s of the 387th Bombardment Group dropped 64 general-purpose bombs on the town despite the ground-to-air recognition panels that had been displayed on many buildings. The intended target was St. Vith, 12 miles to the south, and aircraft-to-ground visibility was three to four miles.

The Malmédy town memorial names 178 civilians killed during the three air raids. Many more were injured. Although the IXth Bombardment Division acknowledged the mistakes made on the 23rd and 25th, the Ninth Air Force did not. The only official reference ever made to these tragic raids was when General Carl Spaatz, the ranking general of the U.S. Army Air Forces in Europe, mentioned an alleged misbombing of Malmédy during an Allied air commanders' conference on January 4, 1945. In the postwar years, various excuses for these attacks have been offered in mitigation. The real reason why they happened is very simple and was known to those responsible within a few hours—human error.

By Christmas Day, the ground threat to Malmédy had disappeared, and the overall situation in the Ardennes had changed radically in favor of the Americans. Both the 1st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions had been pulled out of the line and were reorganizing for a new attack designed to cross the Meuse between Huy and Namur some 25 miles to the southwest. They had been replaced in the Malmédy and Stavelot areas by Volksgrenadiers in a defensive role.

On January 13, 1945, the 30th Infantry Division attacked south from the Malmédy sector as part of an offensive designed to finally eliminate the Bulge. Dave Pegrin's 291st Engineers were with them. They had built a new Bailey bridge across the Warche at the site of the old wooden bridge which had seen so much fighting on December 21, and they cleared routes through the numerous minefields laid by the Germans to the south of Malmédy. By a strange quirk of fate, it fell to Pergrin's C Company to uncover the bodies of the victims of the Malmédy Massacre in the field beside the Ligneuville–St. Vith road at Baugnez. A few days later, the 291st said goodbye to Malmédy forever.

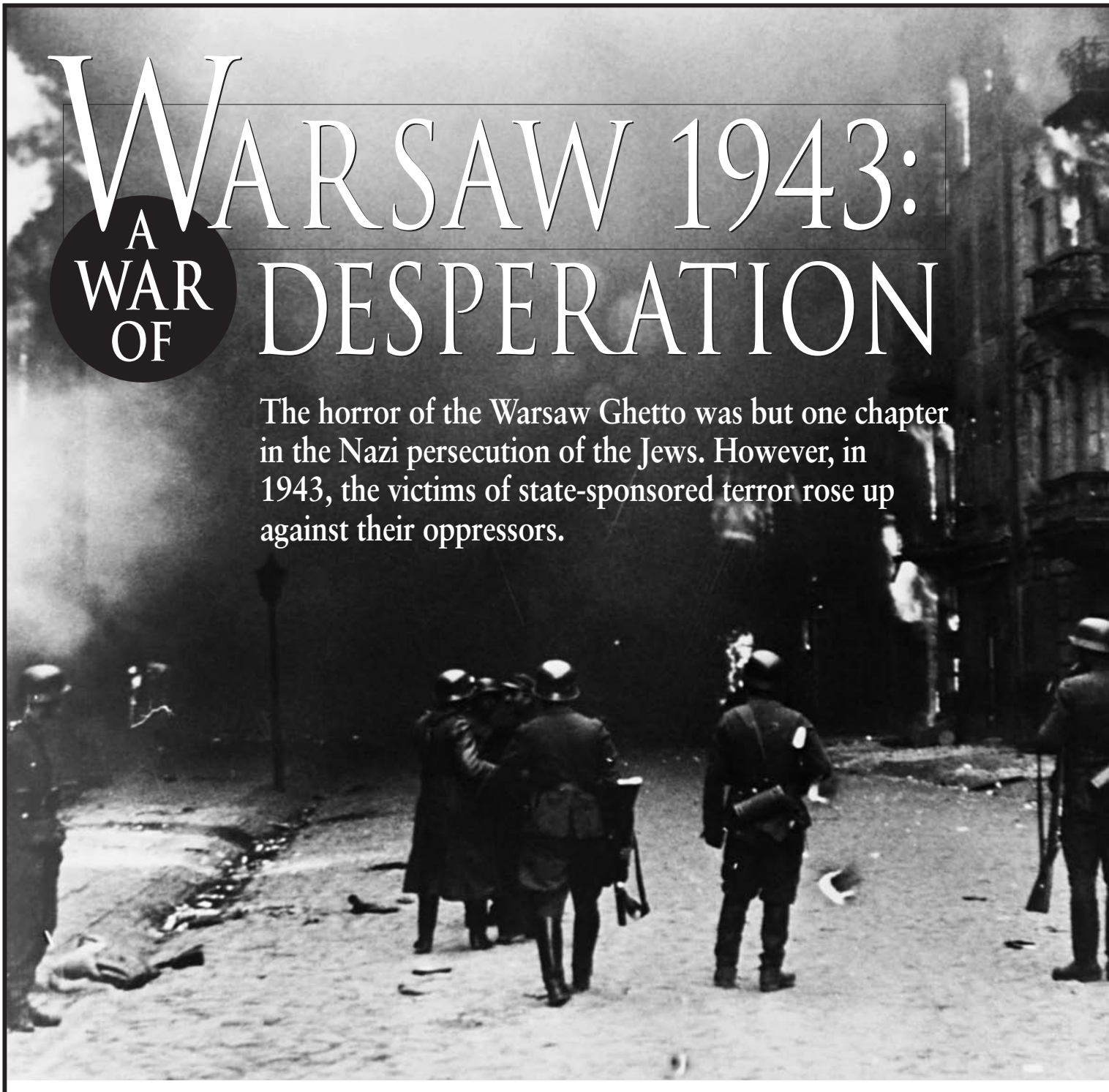
The author first met Dave Pergrin in 1982 and now counts him among his close friends. He and Dave have spent many hours together in the Ardennes and in Pennsylvania, and through Dave the author has been privilaged to meet a number of veterans of the 291st Engineers. Over the years he has also met many veterans of the 30th Infantry Division, including Francis Currey, the 120th Regiment Medal of Honor recipient.

Malmédy is now a thriving town with excellent hotels, restaurants, and shops, and there are no signs of what happened more than 60 years ago—only at the memorials by the main church and at the Baugnez crossroads is one brought face to face with the tragic events of December 1944. □

Michael Reynolds is a retired major general in the British Army. He is a veteran of the Korean War and the former director of NATO's Military Plans and Policy Division. Reynolds is a recognized expert on the Battle of the Bulge. He initially directed and later appeared as a guest speaker on some 50 British Army and NATO battlefield tours in the Ardennes. Since retiring from the Army, he has written three well received-books on the subject.

WARSAW 1943: A WAR OF DESPERATION

The horror of the Warsaw Ghetto was but one chapter in the Nazi persecution of the Jews. However, in 1943, the victims of state-sponsored terror rose up against their oppressors.



IN APRIL 1940, ADOLF HITLER'S SS began building a walled compound in occupied Warsaw in which to imprison Jews who had survived the previous autumn's bitter fighting as the German juggernaut romped through western Poland.

The Führer figured the best way to implement his longed-for extirpation of European Jewry was to first imprison the Jews in urban ghettos while vast extermination centers were constructed at Treblinka, Belsec, Sobibor, and Auschwitz.

Polish Jews were forced to pay German contractors to build massive, high walls around a hammerhead-shaped enclosure roughly 300 by 1,000 yards. Topped with barbed wire and studded with countless pieces of broken glass, this barrier encircled a pen into which 380,000 Jews from Warsaw and its environs were crammed at gunpoint.

By the autumn of 1940, this teeming slum was a netherworld of imponderable misery as the inmates were tortured and killed by starvation, cold, disease, and outright murder as patrolling Germans and their viciously anti-Semitic Ukrainian collaborators casually sniped at victims imprudent enough to raise their heads over the wall or show themselves at the entrances. These unfortunates generally were not trying to escape but to temporarily exit in

ABOVE: Soldiers watch from a distance as the Warsaw Ghetto burns. ABOVE RIGHT: A fearful young Jewish boy marches at gunpoint.

attempts to procure food and medicine to smuggle back in to their families. The majority were children small enough to squeeze through the handful of miniature apertures or slip unnoticed through the gates.

By the spring of 1942, the Nazi guards had become such lethal marksmen that prisoners seldom ventured near the borders except at night. Some blood-lusting SS took to strolling ghetto streets and pumping bullets through baby carriages, doors, windows and the limp forms of those who had collapsed from starvation and illness. Two officers, Josef Blosche and Heinrich Klaustermeyer, became particularly adept at this pastime, and when they tired of shooting they were fond of creasing their faces into compassionate-looking masks and offering emaciated Jews flasks of coffee or milk laced with arsenic.

Simple barbarism was too slow for the Nazis, however. By this time they had finished the mass murder centers. On July 22, 1942, the SS and its lackeys began plastering posters on buildings throughout the slum to inform the Jews they were to be "resettled." Within days, masses of people of all ages were packed into cattle cars and taken to the killing complexes. These round-the-clock deportations ended September 13, by which time 300,000 victims had been shipped to their deaths. Survivors decided there was no point in going down meekly.

BY KELLY BELL

Almost all of those still in the ghettos were bereave and therefore unencumbered and vengeful. A 24-year-old named Mordechai Anielwicz came to the forefront during the organization of the Zydowska Orgawizacja Bojowa (Jewish Fighting Organization, or ZOB.) Anielwicz had grown up quickly in one of Warsaw's poorest neighborhoods. His scarred knuckles, fearlessness, and keen wits caught the attention of his comrades as they assembled and laid plans. His ideas on how to arm, train, and deploy the fighters-to-be were consistently sound and promising. He had been an urban warrior since he learned to walk, and before long the Jewish patriots came to regard him as their leader.

Armed defiance of the Nazis broke out as early as January 18, 1943, when a line of Jews waiting to be loaded onto a death train pulled revolvers and opened fire on their persecutors. This outbreak was swiftly pulverized, but it was a beginning. After four more days of frustrating cat-and-mouse clashes with the insurgents, the SS fled the ghetto.

Knowing the enemy would return in force, the Jews hastily enlarged existing cellars to accommodate their wounded and noncombatants. Anielwicz decided against his armed forces' using bunkers, however. He feared such secure sequestering might make his troops feel too safe and thereby lessen their resolution to violently resist their tormentors. He also worked closely with a blond, blue-eyed Jew named Arie Wilner, who helped him obtain arms via the black market. Because he looked so "Aryan," Wilner passed easily for a Gentile. Anielwicz and Wilner had hoped the Polish Underground (known as the "Home Army") would supply the Jewish rebels with arms, but the Resistance generally was almost as anti-Semitic as the Nazis. Its initial assistance was inconsequential.

Likewise, the crooked merchants in the black market were often Nazi sympathizers, and soon after the January shootout the Gestapo was tipped off and arrested Wilner in his gun-filled apartment. Following prolonged, unsuccessful attempts to torture this hero into betraying his comrades, the SS decided to execute him, but because of a clerical error he was instead imprisoned in one of the city's civil jails. The ZOB slipped into the lockup late one night, freed Wilner, and carried him to momentary safety. Although unable to walk due to the Gestapo's having stripped the flesh from the bottoms of his feet, the youthful freedom fighter quickly resumed working for his people.

Despite his courageous determination, Wilner could no longer work outside the ghetto because the Germans now knew his face. Another blond haired Jew named Yitzak Zuckerman replaced him. Time was dwindling as Zuckerman worked feverishly to arm his people while the SS coiled to strike.

Scattered attacks on the Nazis and their sycophants mounted as springtime crept across the ghetto. Despite their miserable circumstances, many of the oppressed people were determined to celebrate Passover and prepared holy meals called Seders throughout the enclosure. The sacred day was April 19, but the Nazis had no intention of allowing the prisoners to worship in peace.

Early that morning, 850 Waffen SS from commanding Brigadeführer (Major General) Jurgen Stroop's 28th Regiment, pushing a line of scared Jewish collaborators before them, entered the walled inner city and started down Zamenhoff Street, where the bulk of the surviving inmates were concentrated. A shower of grenades, Molotov cocktails, and gunfire quickly engulfed the invading column. Never having dreamed their quarry was so well armed, the attackers were decimated and scattered. Despite the best efforts of whip-swinging SS officers to lash their Ukrainian auxiliaries back into the battle, this first probe was hurled

out of the ghetto in 30 minutes.

Unhappily for the fearless defenders, the enemy had 9,000 soldiers of the Third SS Infantry Division held in reserve in Warsaw, and at this point Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler personally ordered Stroop to take hands-on command of the campaign. As a child, Stroop had been mercilessly beaten by his parents. He grew into a hard, soulless soldier who had little patience with excuses from subordinates.

The units Stroop earmarked for assaulting the ghetto resisters were the SS Panzergrenadier Training and Reserve Battalion No. 3, the resident SS Cavalry Training and Reserve Division, the SS Police Regiment No. 22's 1st and 3rd Battalions, the Regular Army Light Antiaircraft Alarm Battery 3/8, a detail of engineers from the Reserve Rembertow Division, Reserve Engineer Battalion No. 14, 335 renegade Ukrainians calling themselves the 1st Trawniki Battalion, and 533 Warsaw city police officers and firemen.

On the evening of the 19th, Stroop tried to surprise the defenders by suddenly sending in a tank and two armored cars. The rebels used their Molotovs to immolate the tank and one of the armored cars and their crews. The surviving vehicle pounded a prudent retreat.

Stroop's own uncompromising superior was leaning over his shoulder. As dispatches of the morning's fighting reached Berlin, Himmler grabbed a telephone and rang up his man in Warsaw. The Reichsführer SS was fearful the fighting would spread throughout Poland, and with German forces in the East already hard pressed by the rebounding Red Army, a nationwide insurrection far to the rear would be a catastrophe. If this occurred, Himmler himself would have some serious explaining to do when his Führer asked for an update, and Adolf Hitler was the least understanding Nazi of all. Himmler pressured Stroop heavily, and with both men driven by fear results had to come.

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ABOVE: Zivia Lubetkin and Yitzhak Zuckermann founded the Jewish fighting organization ZOB. BELOW: A Jewish freedom fighter is photographed exiting one of many hiding spots in the ghetto. OPPOSITE: Jewish workers labor during the construction of the ghetto wall.

STROOP DEVISED A PLAN TO SEND SMALL units of well-armed SS to independently assault and destroy individual Jewish strongholds noted by the unfortunate first wave. Almost 2,000 men would move in with self-propelled armor and artillery. At first it seemed there would be a replay of the earlier rout as ZOB forces upended a squad that erected a protective wall of thick mattresses to hide behind as they fired on a rebel-occupied warehouse. Using their Molotovs, the Jews set the mattresses aflame then gunned down panicked Germans and Ukrainians as they bolted. However, the Nazis began using their own hand-thrown incendiary charges to ignite the buildings.

Still, the attackers were unable to take a single resistance fighter prisoner, though they did round up another 2,000 noncombatants and herd them to the rail yards for deportation. When the throng at the terminal became too large to manage, the SS began marching the captives into a large courtyard and shooting them. A number of Jews burrowed beneath the corpses on carts used to haul the dead away for burial. With the killers distracted by so many events inside the ghetto, they neglected the gates and many survivors were able to crawl from beneath the lifeless bodies of their loved ones and escape.

Stroop was trying to establish a powerful combat presence at the ghetto's center so he could send his forces on search-and-destroy missions into surrounding areas. The ZOB was concentrated around the slum's perimeter, and when the SS pierced this border they assumed the heaviest fighting was done. However, it was at this point that the Jewish Military Organization flew into the invaders.

Although numerically smaller than the ZOB, the JMO had begun preparing for this crusade earlier than its colleagues and was hence better-armed. Operating independently of the ZOB, these warriors seldom stayed long in one location. They would attack a Nazi element, inflict severe casualties, then expertly withdraw as soon as the enemy set up his defenses. Although Anielwicz could no longer call himself the overall rebel commander, he was nonetheless delighted by his brothers' entry into the fight.

The JMO was headquartered in a large building in the central ghetto. Its fighters had strongly fortified this base, installing a pair of heavy machine guns on its roof. As the Germans and Ukrainians neared the big structure, the lofty gunners opened a lethal, plunging fire. The unsuspecting Nazis dropped in bunches as survivors opened up on street-level, long-abandoned shops where they incorrectly assumed the Jews were positioned. As the infantrymen emptied their weapons into deserted ruins, panzer crewmen panicked under this assault and retreated, leaving the dwindling foot soldiers bereft of armored support.

As the machine gunners savaged the enemy, their comrades hoisted a Polish national flag next to the rooftop gun nests. They next ran up the Star of David-emblazoned ensign that would soon become the banner of the recreated state of Israel. Along with being enraged and humiliated by this action, the Nazis realized the standards were high enough to be seen outside the wall and might incite Gentile Warsaw to riot.

As surviving SS men shuffled toward the gate through which they had entered that morning, they were being watched. Singing an anti-Semitic lampoon in a forlorn effort to lift their spirits, they got yet another shock when they were again showered with Molotovs and grenades. Those not roasted or blown to bits scrambled through the egress. In the gathering darkness behind them, a cast whose fighting prowess and spirit would have impressed King David began to emerge from hiding and take stock of its situation. They had accomplished much, but still had little to lose.

April 20, 1943, the second day of the uprising, was Hitler's 54th birthday. With an anxious Himmler awaiting results, Stroop divided fresh troops into a dozen 36-man units to be dispersed in an effort to force the Jews to fight in multiple locations simultaneously and dilute their strength. The savvy irregulars, however, correctly perceived this strategy when they noted the mass of troops pouring through the main gate that morning and attacked before the Nazis had time to deploy.

The Germans and their vassals had expected to shoot first, so this quick thinking by the insurgents meant the invaders were again taken aback. In minutes, a third of this latest wave of intruders was dead or wounded. The Nazis carried their injured to the center of the ghetto,

assuming they would be out of range of the defenders. The rebels followed through attic passageways and shot down 11 more of the enemy.

Elsewhere, an SS company, bent on removing the taunting flags, made straight for the JMO nerve center. Running a gauntlet of small arms fire, they left their dead and wounded where they fell as they stampeded for the building. As they drew near, one of their Molotov-splattered tanks exploded, and the twin machine guns reopened their killing volleys. Although the besiegers used a flamethrower to temporarily set the rooftop afire, the heavy guns remained undamaged and beat back the attack.

Nevertheless, the invaders seemed to be achieving moderate territorial gains as the day continued, but the Jewish withdrawals being noticed by the Germans and Ukrainians were a masterfully staged ruse. As they followed the retreating Jews, they were approaching a lethal ambush. As hundreds of SS poured into a courtyard along their quarry's path of flight, the pavement beneath them erupted as a sapper ignited a bushel of dynamite secreted beneath the cobblestones. The blast killed over 100 men and shattered the Nazis' budding confidence.


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ANOTHER GERMAN COLUMN, CHURNING down a street in the ghetto's brush-making district, was virtually annihilated when it drove into a hastily arranged ZOB ambush. When Stroop learned of this latest outrage, he sent an entire regiment into the sector. Using portable artillery, heavy machine guns, and flamethrowers, the SS hosed the buildings with tons of lead, steel, and oily tongues of flame in fruitless efforts to flush out the unseen gunmen. They finally drew fire from a rooftop, but it was only a tiny rear guard the partisans sacrificed as the bulk of the resistance fighters slipped away. By nightfall, the Jews remained firmly in control of their ghetto.

By this time Stroop was close to panic. He had lied to Himmler, telling him just nine soldiers had died in the fighting instead of the 300-plus who had actually fallen. It was only a matter of time before Berlin learned the truth, and for his own sake he had to crush the rebellion first. Stroop concluded that the sole remaining means by which he could accomplish this was to employ his artillery, which had been held back for fear of destroying the ghetto's Gentile-owned armaments facilities. The factories would be pulverized regardless of their value to the Reich.

Distraught executives rushed to their plants and bellowed for remaining workers to surrender while the buildings still stood. As slow-moving trucks lumbered along picking up dispirited Jews emerging from the factories, German infantrymen accompanying the vehicles were decimated by snipers. Shortly afterward, rebels hurling the now-dreaded grenade and Molotov cascade bushwhacked an SS convoy ferrying troops out of the central ghetto. Tumbling from the blazing transports, the Nazis were cut down by sharpshooters.

At this point, as the defenders were busy with targets in the streets, some of Stroop's other men began furtively positioning barrels of gasoline in front of the buildings, out of sight of the preoccupied partisans directly above them. After affixing detonators to the drums, the sappers primed the charges and scurried to a safe distance.

The roiling fireballs had exactly the result Stroop had hoped. The area quickly became a swirling inferno. As tons of charred debris fell on them, the subterranean bunkers where the Jewish noncombatants sheltered began to collapse. Some fighters on upper floors were trapped by flames and hurled themselves to their deaths through windows. Others who tried to surrender to the humiliated SS were gunned down in cold blood. Some ZOB sol-

THE SS WAS AN INSTRUMENT OF BOTH COMBAT AND TERROR FOR THE NAZIS.

THE SS SERVED AS MUCH MORE than an independent branch of the Nazi military. Although its main function was as a front-line political and ideological fighting force, it also served as its country's and conquered territories' tireless and omnipresent security watchdog.

SS security chief Obergruppenführer (General) Reinhard Heydrich claimed to have a file on every single resident of Germany ... including Hitler. He and his immediate superior, Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler, saw the SS as a pseudo-religious fraternal order dedicated, among other tasks, to safeguarding the Third Reich and its conquests from "undesirables." These unfortunates were generally defined as those whose racial purity and/or political orientation was not in accord with Nazi dogma.

When dealing with those human beings who did not meet ethnic and ideological standards, the SS was literally above the law. Mass murder, torture, and consignment to fatally brutal slave labor camps were routine means used to deal with those not in accord with the doctrine of this security apparatus. The SS was indeed the ideal instrument to be used to deal with the uprising of the Jewish "subhumans" in the Warsaw Ghetto. □

National Archives

ABOVE: Josef Blosche (far right, facing camera) was given the name "Frankenstein" by inhabitants of the ghetto. He earned his nickname raping women and beating the men. RIGHT: SS officers gather to coordinate an attack on the ghetto. OPPOSITE: General Jürgen Stroop and comrades look on as the Warsaw Ghetto burns.

diers charged straight through groups of startled Germans and managed to escape, for the moment.

Anielwicz realized that his decision to not excavate underground hideouts for his troops had been a colossal error. Now his men and women had nowhere to take cover except in structures that would soon be cinders. Their sole prayer was that the terrified civilians in the remaining intact bunkers would be able to make room for them, but when they tried to gain entry to these hideouts they received a shocking reception. The women, children, elderly, cripples, and cowards huddled in these holes refused to open the concealed doors to armed rebels for fear they were unhealthy company.

The unarmed people in hiding knew the SS would continue combing the smoldering ruins as long as armed resistance persisted. If the fighting died out, the enemy might be convinced that every Jewish life had been snuffed out, overlook the survivors, and leave the ghetto. The noncombatants were anxious for the revolt to end and considered the partisans *persona non grata*.

As Anielwicz tried to resolve this awkward development, the JMO was becoming similarly hard pressed. Continued attacks on its headquarters had killed a number of its members, and shellfire had knocked out one of the precious rooftop machine guns. JMO commanders realized their men were exhausted and weak from hunger, but still game to fight. Removing the remaining gun from the roof, they left the flags as bait to lure the Germans into attacking.

THE REMAINING REBELS HID ON THE ground floor and waited for the enemy to charge the building while still expecting its garrison to be aloft. For a quarter of an hour, the SS held back, suspicious of the suddenly silent structure. Then, an Aryan-looking Jew in a stolen SS uniform strolled out the front door and approached the Nazis. After convincing them he was a fearless German who had earlier entered the building alone to scout it, the youthful resistance fighter lured the murderers inside after telling them the JMO had fled.

As a platoon of the enemy followed their bogus guide to a staircase, the hidden Jews opened fire, killing a dozen SS and hounding the survivors from the post. Stroop handpicked a second unit to assail the stronghold, but the highly decorated lieutenant who led the charge, Otto Dehmke, was killed at the beginning of the attack when he held on to a grenade too long. Unnerved and leaderless, his men ran.

Resuming his scorched-earth tactics, Stroop

had his men torch the neighborhood around the JMO headquarters. Soon the afternoon was punctuated by the screams of women and children trapped by the conflagration. Many jumped from upper floors rather than burn. Others threw down mattresses first in hopes of softening their landings. Those who did survive the fall were immediately murdered. Many shot themselves or gulped poison, while others tried too hard to find exits and were surrounded by flames. At last, Maj. Gen. Stroop was fulfilling his assignment. The ghetto Jews were dying—horribly.

Using sound-detecting equipment and dogs, the Nazis hunted remaining insurgents like they were wild animals. The few who were still walking were taken for deportation, while those too badly burned or otherwise injured were shot or beaten to death with rifle butts. Elderly Jewish men were forced to dance before being murdered: young women were beaten and raped.


National Archives

ANIELWICZ AND HIS SURVIVING MEN used the enemy's preoccupation with committing atrocities to duck unnoticed into a cavernous bunker excavated by thieves and smugglers before the war. After settling into the well-equipped robbers' den, Anielwicz sent word to Zuckerman, pleading for more weapons and ammunition. Despairing of receiving substantial support from local Gentiles, Zuckerman began circulating a flyer throughout Warsaw and its environs. It urged all locals to actively aid the revolt and truthfully assured them they were not safe from Nazi avarice. This call to arms fell into Stroop's hands just after he received a cable from Himmler castigating him for not having already crushed the rebellion.

The terrified general issued draconian decrees forbidding area Gentiles from so much as entering the ghetto or assisting Jews by any means. He then had an entire Christian family shot for hiding a Jewish child. He called on the Luftwaffe to bomb sections of the ghetto suspected of still containing insurgents, but the Home Army finally began attacking SS patrols in the ghetto. Non-Jewish civilians also started donating whatever they could to assist the valiant resistance.

As bombers hammered unburned sectors of the slum, fear-crazed crowds emerged and begged ZOB members to save them, but the hysterical Nazi attacks had succeeded in disrupting the rebels' command and communication. Anielwicz could not contact and coordinate the units still topside. Now that resistance had decreased, Stroop decided it was safe enough to have his men continue their depredations through the night.

The general intended to burn all but a narrow strip of territory in the central ghetto, forcing survivors into this slender corridor. By April 24, up to 2,500 people had been captured via this tactic, and the rail depot was again swamped. So, Stroop's first order of the day on that Easter morning was for his men to force captives into the courtyard of Pawiak Prison and shoot them in small groups. He also decided the collaborationist Jewish police force had outlived its usefulness. Many of these traitors had become wealthy by taking bribes from those who had no choice but to trust in the turncoats' empty promises of safe passage out of the city. After taking all these desperate people had to offer, they would turn them over to the SS. Expecting to use their blood money to live comfortably in postwar Europe, these men were jarred back to merciless reality when they too were knocked face-down in the penitentiary's plaza and shot in the back.

USING SOUND-DETECTING EQUIPMENT AND DOGS, THE NAZIS HUNTED REMAINING INSURGENTS LIKE THEY WERE WILD ANIMALS.

Later that day, a couple of JMO operatives dressed in SS garb sauntered into a German supply depot and opened fire on the station's personnel. A great deal of confusion developed because Nazis running to the fray could not tell foe from friend. As the Germans blazed away at each other, the disguised Jews and a few of their comrades who had surreptitiously followed grabbed as many gun and ammunition crates as they could carry and bolted back to the ghetto.

Weapons shipments were also arriving from the Home Army, but partisan manpower was so depleted that further resistance could be little more than a show of defiance. At month's end, Anielwicz had a letter smuggled from his bunker for delivery to the Polish government-in-exile in London. It outlined the ongoing genocide and sundry Nazi barbarism and called on the Western powers to do everything in their ability to cripple Germany before European Jewry ran out of time. The missive did not reach England until a full month after the end of the ghetto uprising.

The captured armaments never reached Anielwicz, so when he and those with him decided to go out in a blaze of glory on May 1, they did so with hopelessly inadequate weaponry. Watching as a Jewish traitor led a squad of SS to a burned-out structure where a few Jews still huddled, remaining rebels were nonplussed when, seconds after the collaborator pointed out his peoples' hiding place, a German officer drew his sidearm and shot this guide.

Poking their muzzles through the windows of an adjacent building, the partisans uncorked a volley at the astounded Nazis. Three immediately fell, and the others took to their heels. The guerrillas moved to another position, and when the reinforced killers returned less than an

Continued on page 81

National Archives

FACES OF BATTLE

Soldiers of the 69th Infantry Division spoke about what it was like to come under fire for the first time.

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

What was it like to come to grips with the enemy, to fight and survive combat? For every man the experience was different and almost impossible to relate to those behind the lines or an ocean away. In an effort to better understand the human condition in combat, the U.S. Army asked a few soldiers who had just experienced their baptism by fire with the Germans to offer a few words about their ordeal.

On March 3, 1944, several soldiers of the 69th Infantry Division, who had just dueled with the Germans on the Siegfried Line, were asked to explain what they thought of their first time under fire. Their answers were varied and insightful; but despite their best efforts, they could not completely convey the essence of the combat experience to those who had not been there. □

"I was scared to death."
—Private Raymond L. Roth

All photos: National Archives

"I didn't have much time to think; being a squad leader kept me busy."
—S.Sgt Alexander Walegir

"It was different from anything I ever saw."
—Private Fred I. Green

"I was pretty busy. I hate those screaming meemies."
—Pfc. Robert M. Sokoloff

"Didn't mind the small arms fire, but damn that mortar and artillery fire."—S.Sgt Aloysius Ruthoviski

"I prayed like I never prayed before."
—Pfc. Willey E. Thompson

"Hell."
—Private Harold R. Sprang

"Cold weather was the worst part of it all."
—Private James B. Gray

"The weather really was the worst part."
—Private Charles D. Doriocourt

"I just thought of my wife and kid through it all."
—Pfc. Earl W. Higgins

The Katyn Forest massacre helped reveal the tenuous nature of Allied relations.

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY FRIEND, SO AN OLD SAYING GOES. PERHAPS IT WAS THE grandest exercise in political pragmatism and expediency that the world has ever known. However, the strange alliance between the United States and Great Britain and the Soviet Union was a necessity for victory in World War II.

Few would dispute that the Soviets bore the brunt of the fighting against Nazi Germany and that the cost in lives on the Eastern Front was appalling. It can also scarcely be disputed that Great Britain held the line—alone—against the Nazis and staved off a defeat which may very well have ushered in a new Dark Age. The United States, the great arsenal of democracy, supplied men and materiel to its allies through Lend-Lease, fought Japan virtually alone across the expanse of the Pacific, and shouldered its share of the fighting against Germany as well.

While the Nazis and the communists, political polar opposites, had been sworn enemies, the regimes of Hitler and Stalin had shocked the world in the spring of 1939 when they announced the signing of a non-aggression pact. Further, a secret protocol agreed to the division of Poland between the two countries following coordinated invasions from east and west.

For some time, the Soviets had aided their "enemies" during Germany's covert rearmament effort between the wars, in violation of the terms of the Versailles treaty. Some accounts of events even assert that Stalin had grown so confident of his relationship with Hitler that he refused to believe the Nazis were planning to stab his country in the back. Only when he was confronted with indisputable evidence that Operation Barbarossa was in progress did Stalin realize he had been duped. By then, the conquest and division of Poland had been completed and thousands of Poles were dead at the hands of Stalin's minions, in the Katyn Forest and elsewhere.

As for relations between the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States, more than two decades of animosity and distrust had preceded their uneasy alliance. Even before World War I had ended, the U.S. had sent 5,000 military personnel and railroad workers to Siberia in hopes of delaying the advance of the Bolshevik revolution and preventing the Russians from making a separate peace with Germany. During the counter-revolutionary activity of the 1920s, Great Britain and France both supported the opposition to the Communist takeover, 70,000 Japanese soldiers occupied the Pacific port of Vladivostok, and American troops arrived there to monitor the Japanese.

After being forced together, the Big Three—Stalin, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Prime Minister Winston Churchill—were wary of one another, jockeying for position during strategic conferences at such places as Tehran and Yalta. Roosevelt and Churchill led democratic governments. Stalin was a ruthless dictator. His own paranoia had been fueled by the icy relations between the three powers, but he had savagely purged the Red Army officer corps during the 1930s and authorized the murder or imprisonment of millions of his own people.

Politics makes strange bedfellows. Prior to the invasion of Normandy, Stalin continually pressed for a meaningful second front against the Nazis and accused his allies of allowing the Soviet military to be bled white from horrendous losses. Each leader sought to further his nation's interests, particularly as it related to the redrawn post-war map of Europe. Each was required to acknowledge the military might of the other. Consider the Red Army advance across Eastern Europe to Berlin and the U.S. possession of the atomic bomb.

Thrust together out of necessity, the alliance which led to victory in World War II had begun to fragment even before the guns fell silent. Conflicting ideologies and world visions ushered in the Cold War. But, for a time, political expediency brought together a mighty confluence of military power. The dead of the Katyn Forest had to wait. □

Michael E. Haskew

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CARL A. GNAM, JR.
Editorial Director, Founder

MICHAEL E. HASKEW
Editor

CHRISTOPHER R. D'AMORE
Managing Editor

MAE ARIOLA
Art Director

KEVIN HYMEL
Research Director

Contributors:
Eric T. Baker, Glen Barnett, Kelly Bell, Richard L. Hayes, Michael D. Hull, Sam McGowan, Eric Niderost, Harold Raugh, Maj. Gen. Mike Reynolds, Richard Rule, Ralph Segman, Charles Whiting

ADVERTISING OFFICE:

JEFF KIGHT
Advertising Director
(570) 322-7848, ext. 17

MARK HINTZ
Vice President & Publisher

TINA POUST
Comptroller

KATHY PAULHAMUS
MARY NOLAN
SANDRA HILLYARD
Subscription Customer Services

KEN FORNWALT
Data Processing Director

CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY
Worldwide Distribution

SOVEREIGN MEDIA COMPANY, INC.
453 Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 20170

SUBSCRIPTION CUSTOMER SERVICE AND BUSINESS OFFICE:
The Hart Building, 30 W. Third Street
Williamsport, PA 17701
(800) 219-1187

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BY RICHARD L. HAYES

On the morning of December 7, 1941, a flight of 18 dive bombers from the carrier USS *Enterprise* flew straight into the Japanese attack.

SCOUT SQUADRON SIX AT

Many people have heard of the six American Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk fighters that actually got off the ground and contested the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Some know about the 11 Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers winging toward Pearl Harbor from California unarmed and out of gas. A few are aware of the six obsolete Curtiss P-36 Hawk that were able to take off. However, almost no one knows the story of 18 Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bombers from the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* that arrived over Pearl Harbor simultaneously with the Japanese. These were the planes of Scouting Squadron Six.

Three U.S. aircraft carriers were operating in the Pacific that day. The *Saratoga* (CV3) was being overhauled in San Diego. The *Lexington* (CV2) had just left Pearl Harbor to deliver 18 Vought SB2U Vindicator dive bombers to Midway. The *Enterprise* (CV6) was just returning from a similar delivery of 12 Grumman F4F Wildcats to Wake Island. She was due back at Pearl on December 6. Fortunately, a storm loomed, so Halsey reduced speed and the ship did not actually reach port until the 8th.

Halsey knew war was imminent. Drills had been conducted regularly over the past few months, the most recent on November 27. When Halsey was given his orders to reinforce Wake, he had deliberately asked, "How far do you want me to go?"

Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, replied, "Use your own common sense."

That was all Halsey needed to hear. In his famous "Battle Order Number One," the first item read, "The *Enterprise* is now operating under war conditions." When his operations officer challenged this order, Halsey replied, "I'll take [responsibility]. If anything gets in the way, we'll shoot first and argue afterwards." He intended to bomb anything on the sea and shoot down anything in the sky.

It was ironic. Unlike the rest of the Navy on December 7, the *Enterprise* fliers saw the enemy first. Their guns were loaded. Their crews were trained. But still, like everyone else, they did not quite expect an attack at home. They were looking for submarines. When they arrived, they thought the smoke was from burning sugar cane fields. They thought the shell fire was just a drill. They thought the stacks of green aircraft belonged to the Army. Only when they saw the antiaircraft blossoms over Pearl did they realize the truth.

Both the Japanese and American forces had launched aircraft at first light. At 0615 on December 7, the Japanese carriers sent their first attack wave aloft 250 miles north-northwest of Oahu. At exactly the same moment, the *Enterprise* launched what was thought to be a routine patrol directly in front of the ship's advance. As usual, the patrol would search

A pair of Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bombers depart a carrier in the Pacific as they embark on a mission in late July 1944.

National Archives

PEARL HARBOR

a hemisphere of 180 degrees directly ahead of the task force. The flight consisted of nine pairs of SBD-2 Dauntless dive-bombers, mostly from Scout Squadron Six, but including a few planes from Bomb Squadron Six. Each pair of aircraft would conduct a zigzag search in an arc 150 miles long and approximately 10 degrees wide. Instead of returning to the ship, they would then continue on to land at Ford Island, thus getting a jump on shore leave.

At 0645, the destroyer USS *Ward* fired on and sank a Japanese midget submarine operating within the defensive perimeter of Pearl Harbor. Seventeen minutes later, the Army radar station at Opana Point picked up the first wave of Japanese attackers. Thirteen minutes later, the second Japanese wave was launched. At 0748, Kaneohe Airfield was strafed and bombed. At 0752, Lt. Cmdr. Mitsuo Fuchida, tactical commander of the first wave, sent the message, "*Tora, Tora, Tora*," meaning that surprise had been achieved. At the same time Scouting Six planes began to arrive over Oahu.

To maintain radio silence, Halsey had not informed Pearl Harbor his location or of his reconnaissance patrol. When news of the attack reached him, his first thought was, "My God, they're shooting at my own boys!"

One of the first two-plane sections to arrive was aircraft 6-S-16, piloted by Frank A. Patriarca with a gunner named DeLuca, and 6-S-15, piloted by Ensign W.M. Willis with gunner Fred J. Ducolon. They almost made it to Ford Island. The two had passed Barbers Point, rounded Ewa Field, and were actually lining up on their landing approach when the attack began. They noticed the antiaircraft fire, but it was not until a Japanese Aichi "Val" dive-bomber winged over and flashed the rising sun insignia that Patriarca knew something was very wrong. At the same instant, tracers began whizzing past his plane.

Immediately, Patriarca opened throttle, diving back toward the coast. He had decided to try and make it all the way back to the *Enterprise* when he realized he was alone. After searching for 6-S-15, his fuel was low, so he landed at Burns Field on Kauai. Willis and Ducolon were never found, although Mitsubishi Zero fighters led by Lieutenant Masaji Suganami from the carrier *Soryu* would later claim three SBDs.

At about the same time, S-B-3 and S-B-12 approached Pearl Harbor. Ensign Manuel Gonzalez and gunner Leonard J. Kozelek were in S-B-3, and S-B-12 was piloted by Ensign Frank T. Weber with a gunner by the name of Keany. Their segment of the search had finished 20 miles north of Kauai, whereupon they turned and headed toward Oahu and Pearl Harbor. No one knows exactly what happened to Gonzalez that day, but when the two planes were about 25 miles off Oahu, Weber noticed a group of 40 to 50 planes he thought belonged to the Army circling at about 3,500 feet. Although he had been flying just 500 feet above and behind S-B-3, when Weber looked back Gonzalez was gone.

Gonzalez's last message, which several other aircraft heard, was something like, "Do not fire. We are American aircraft," or words to that effect. Moments later, Gonzales was calling to his gunner to break out the rubber raft. Nothing else was heard from them, and no trace was ever found.

National Archives

Flying in formation, a squad of Dauntless dive-bombers from Scout Squadron Six return to the USS *Enterprise*.

It seems incredible that an aircraft could have shot down Gonzalez and missed Weber, but such may well have been the case, since Weber innocently began a search of the area and performed four or five slow "S" turns looking for his comrade. It was just Weber's bad luck that he had told his radioman to change frequencies and get some homing practice on the approach into Pearl, thus missing Gonzalez's last message.

Still unaware of the attack and unable to spot S-B-3, Weber continued on toward Pearl until he noticed an aircraft about 2,000 feet directly ahead of him. Thinking it was Gonzalez at last, he increased speed and attempted to form up on him when the unknown plane suddenly turned 180 degrees and approached. Weber performed a slow, wide turn to help close on the approaching aircraft. Only when it was close off his starboard bow and finally made a flipper turn was Weber able to see the red circles that identified it as Japanese. He immediately increased speed and dove to an altitude of 25 feet.

The Japanese pilot did not follow, and Weber flew on to Barbers Point where he formed up on 6-S-10, piloted by Lieutenant W.E. Gallaher, and began circling a few miles off the coast as other *Enterprise* planes were arriving.

Weber described the Japanese plane as resembling a German Junkers Ju-87 Stuka type dive-bomber. Such a description would seem to describe the Japanese Val dive-bombers operating over Pearl Harbor. A Japanese report confirms that Vals from the aircraft carrier *Shokaku* were returning to sea after bombing Hickam Field and were 20 miles off Keana Point when they shot down an SBD.

At about 0820, 6-S-14, piloted by E.T. Deacon with gunner Audrey G. Coslett, and 6-S-9 flown by W.E. Roberts with gunner D.H. Jones, arrived off Kaena Point. There they noticed about 30 aircraft in a long column at an altitude of 100 feet and only 400 feet away. Roberts saw their green camouflage and assumed they were U.S. Army aircraft. One plane came so close that the Japanese pilot even waggled his wings as he flew by. "The significance of the red circles on the wings did not occur to me until later," said Roberts.

The column of planes did not attack, and neither did the Dauntlesses. At the same time, the Dauntless pilots noticed the large amount of smoke and geysers of water produced by coastal antiaircraft guns. Dauntlesses 6-S-14 and 6-B-9 kept flying toward Ford Island until they heard the "Don't shoot" call of Ensign Gonzalez. Then they charged their guns and climbed to 1,000 feet, observing about 20 Japanese fighters over Pearl Harbor. Worse, coming straight toward them were 25 dive-bombers that had just completed their dives. Both Deacon and Roberts dove to the water and headed for Hickam Field, flying directly over Fort Weaver.

When the American pilots were just overhead at an altitude of 200 feet, Army gunners opened fire on them with 20mm cannon and .50-caliber machine guns. Beginning to sputter and trail smoke, 6S-14 turned back toward the water. Two hundred yards past the beach, Deacon splashed down in two feet of water. The fliers were still under rifle and machine gun fire when Coslett was hit in the right arm and neck.

Deacon was nicked in the thigh,and another shot cut through his parachute harness. Stumbling out of the swamped Navy plane, he used a radio cord to tie off Coslett's wound and broke out the life raft to escape. After paddling about 100 yards from their plane, the two were picked up by a rescue boat.

Meanwhile, aboard 6-S-9, Roberts and Jones had also noticed the tracers streaming upward but were able to land at Hickam even though their left wing was streaming gasoline. They stayed there until the second wave of Japanese attackers arrived. Jones fired his rear-mounted guns until all his ammunition was expended.

Lieutenant Commander Howard L. "Brigham" Young, commander of the *Enterprise* air group, was flying with Lt. Cmdr. Bromfield B. Nichols, one of Halsey's tactical officers, in the gunner's seat. Young's wingman was 6-S-2 piloted by Ensign P. L. Teaff with a gunner by the name of Jinks. When they neared Barbers Point, they too saw a large column of "Army" planes and gave them a wide berth, continuing toward Ford Island.

Teaff was above and behind Young, watching attentively as one of the Japanese planes winged over and attacked. Although he saw the fighters approaching from behind, he made no effort to maneuver. At a range of 75 yards, one of them opened fire. Teaff pulled to the right, allowing Jinks to get off a short burst as the plane passed them by and concentrated on Young. Neither Teaff nor Jinks was hit, but their plane was "liberally sprinkled" with slugs. Teaff even noted that a few were shot at such an angle that some of them glanced off his wings.

Closing on Young, the Japanese pilot opened fire at close range. Young remembered that the cascade of bullets was instantaneous with his realization that Pearl was under attack. He immediately dove away and zigzagged. Again there was no damage. Two American dive-bombers flying straight and slow had been attacked at close range by a veteran Zero fighter pilot who missed.

Young and Teaff remained together. Since it was obvious they would be fired on no matter what direction they went, they continued toward Ford Island. At about 0835, both planes landed safely. Even though they had their wheels down and flashed recognition signals, they endured heavy antiaircraft fire all the way. Young recalled, "I was under fire until my wheels touched the ground on Ford Island—some of the guns being not more than 50 yards distance from me."

Even more incredibly, no one was injured, nor was either plane seriously damaged, though Teaff's took a few .50-caliber slugs in the tail and the hydraulic system was hit. Since the *Enterprise* was still under radio silence when the men hopped out of their aircraft, the commander of Ford Island, Captain George Shoemaker, rushed to the pilots and shouted, "What the hell goes on here?" Only then was Young able to disclose the location of the *Enterprise*, the presence of the 18 SBDs, and their mission.

The next planes to make contact apparently were 6-S-4, piloted by Lieutenant Clarence E. Dickinson with gunner William C. Miller, and 6-S-9, piloted by Ensign John R. "Bud" McCarthy with gunner Mitchell Cohn. At about 0825, they were approaching Barbers Point when they saw thick smoke from what turned out to be the stricken battleship USS *Arizona*. Then they saw splashes in the water. Like the others, Dickinson thought the smoke was from burning cane fields and the splashes were just an Army gunnery drill. The firing was so wild that he thought, "Just wait. Tomorrow the Army will certainly catch hell for it." Finally, he realized the harbor was covered with antiaircraft blossoms.

Dickinson immediately ordered his wingman to close formation and climb to 4,000 feet, where McCarthy was attacked by two fighters. Together, the SBDs dove back down to 1,000 feet where four more fighters attacked. Looking aft, Dickinson saw McCarthy's plane catch fire "from the right side of the engine and the right main tank. It lost speed and dropped about 50 yards astern and to the left. I could see it still attempting to fight as it slowly circled to the left losing altitude."

The plane lost speed and crashed. Dickinson saw only one parachute. McCarthy had managed to get out, although he broke his leg, presumably after hitting the rear stabilizer on the way out. Cohn did not make it.

Meanwhile, Dickinson was still under attack by as many as five Zeroes. As he dove, his gunner returned fire and said, "Mr. Dickinson, I have been hit once, but I think I have got one of those sons of bitches." When Dickin-

Pilots and crewmen from Scout Squadron Six pose for a group photo. Several of these airmen fell vicitm to friendly or enemy fire during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

National Archives

son glanced rearward, he saw a Japanese plane on fire losing altitude and speed. It was the first Navy aerial victory of the war. A few minutes later, Miller reported that all six cans of his ammunition were gone ... and then he screamed.

As the attacking fighter sped past, Dickinson was able to get in two short bursts from his forward guns, but they had little effect. The attacks continued, and he could only watch helplessly as holes began appearing in his wings. Amazingly, he was not hurt, but his ankle was nicked and there were horizontal cuts in his sock. Soon, his left fuel tank was on fire, he lost all control of his plane, and it began to slip to the right. As it started to spin, Dickinson called for Miller to bail out and then jumped at an altitude of 800 feet. He landed alone and unhurt near Ewa Field.

On the ground, Dickinson was able to catch a ride with an elderly couple in a blue sedan who had not quite realized what was going on. They were going to a picnic and did not want to be late. How unfortunate that the military was causing all this fuss. They finally figured things out when a van just ahead of them was rocked by machine-gun and cannon fire. Moments later, it careened off the road on flat tires, Coming to rest covered in dust and peppered with holes.

The couple dropped Dickinson off at Ewa Field where the sentries told him that some Japanese planes were so low they had thumbed their noses at them as they flew by. Another had clasped his hands together over his head in a victory salute. Be that as it may, Dickinson kept going until he got to Pearl Harbor just in time to see the destroyer USS *Shaw* go up in a ball of flame. A bomb had penetrated the forward magazine and blown off the ship's bow.

Lieutenant Commander Halstead L. Hopping was piloting 6-S-1 with a gunner named Thomas, while 6-S-3 was piloted by Ensign J.H.L. Vogt with Sidney Pierce as gunner. While on their patrol, Hopping spotted a ship and left Vogt's company to investigate. When he returned, he was unable to locate 6-S-3 and continued alone. Landeding at Ford Island during the dive-bombing attack, 6-S-1 endured heavy friendly antiaircraft fire. Miraculously, his aircraft was only hit once, a bullet in a battery that did not have any effect.

Vogt, having been left by Hopping, continued alone and ran into a flight of Zeros probably led by Lieutenant Yoshio Shiga from the aircraft carrier *Kaga*. Eyewitnesses near Ewa Field stated that Vogt's SBD attacked and clung tenaciously to the tail of a Zero, firing constantly until it pulled up and stalled, causing Vogt to slam into it. The two planes fell entangled to the earth. Some say the action was a simple collision, but others remember it as a twisting dogfight. This is a particularly interesting version of a combat sequence, given the mismatch of the relatively slow SBD and the highly maneuverable Zero.

Ensign Carlton T. "Misty" Fogg was piloting 6-S-11 with a gunner named Dennis, and 6-S-8 was piloted by Ensign E.J. Dobson with a gunner by the name of Hoss. They tried to land at Ford Island, but realizing it was under attack, they returned to Barbers Point and joined up with the other circling *Enterprise* planes for about 45 minutes. At that time, they all tried to land at Ford but were met with such heavy antiaircraft fire that the formation scattered. Fogg turned back, while Dobson actually made it in. Having landed at Ewa, Fogg kept watch with a field phone from inside the metal scoop of a steam shovel during the second attack wave.

National Archives

Briefed on their objectives for Pearl Harbor, Japanese pilots rush across the deck of an aircraft carrier on the morning of December 7, 1941.

Dauntless 6-S-7, piloted by H.D. Hilton with a gunner named Leaming, and 6-B-5, piloted by Ensign E.J. Kroeger with a gunner by the name of Chapman, arrived off Barbers Point at about 0845. They could not see the attack at Pearl but did notice two large groups of aircraft. They circled with the others for a while and then tried to land at Ewa Field where "definite evidence of the attack was first noted." They were immediately waved off for fear they would draw strafing Japanese planes, and the SBDs headed for Ford where they met heavy antiaircraft fire. Both planes broke off and returned to Ewa where they were refueled and loaded with 500-pound bombs.

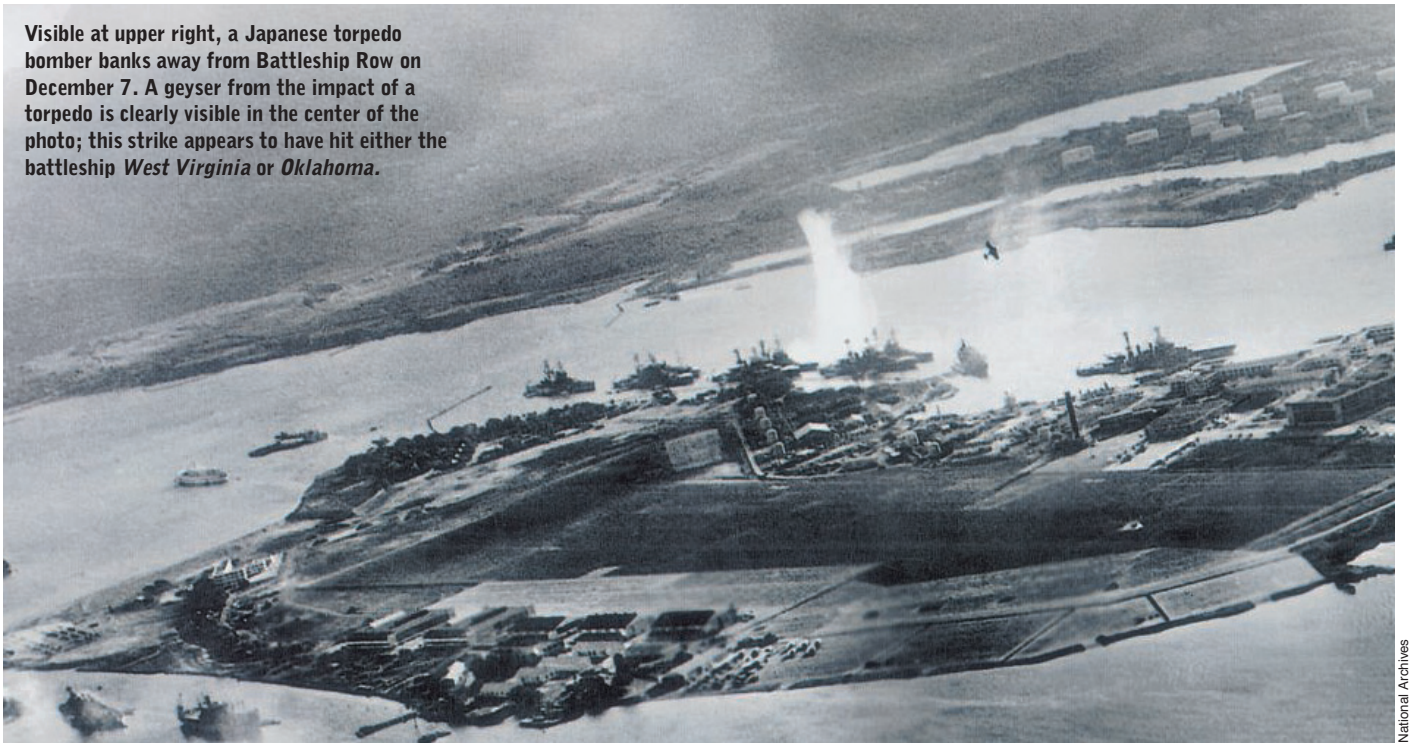
Dauntlesses 6-S-10, piloted by Lieutenant Gallaher with a gunner named Merritt, and 6-S-5, piloted by Ensign W.P. West with a gunner named Hansen, also passed over Kauai as they approached Oahu from the northwest. Ensign West noticed approximately 10 monoplanes marked in bright colors but mistook them for Army observation planes. These Dauntlesses also continued along until they reached Barbers Point and saw what they thought were burning cane fields. Only when they got closer to Pearl did they realize the truth. With the others, they landed at Ewa and then left immediately for Ford Island.

Enemy planes circled above Barbers Point at 3,000 to 4,000 feet. About 10 miles further out to sea, even more Japanese planes formed up and waited. In all, seven of the *Enterprise* planes gathered and eventually tried to land at Ewa but were waved off by the ground crew and flew on to Ford Island. The formation which included Gallaher, West, and Dobson actually managed to land, while the others broke off and returned to Ewa where this time they were refueled and rearmed.

By now, the Japanese had retired completely, and at 1030 Hopping took off alone from Ford Island to investigate a report of two Japanese carriers 25 to 40 miles west or southwest of Barbers Point. He returned at 1145. He met with light antiaircraft fire both on takeoff and landing.

At 1115, Hilton, Kroeger, and Weber were ordered to accompany an attack flight of Army bombers from Hickam Field. After receiving some antiaircraft fire at takeoff, the three approached Hickam and found no Army bombers to join with, so they returned to Ford Island.

Other sightings abounded. Both the heavy cruisers *Minneapolis* and *Indianapolis*, operating separately, were identified as Japanese carriers. Even the *Enterprise* herself was rightly identified as a carrier, but wrongly attacked. Army Captain Brooke E. Allen, having saved his B-17 from destruction by taxiing it away from the flight line at Hickam, rose alone into the afternoon sky with orders



Visible at upper right, a Japanese torpedo bomber banks away from Battleship Row on December 7. A geyser from the impact of a torpedo is clearly visible in the center of the photo; this strike appears to have hit either the battleship *West Virginia* or *Oklahoma*.

National Archives

to search to the southwest. There he found "this beautiful carrier" that opened fire on him. Accordingly, he began a bombing run but, "God had a hand on me, because I knew this was not a Jap carrier."

Thirteen *Enterprise* planes were launched from their new land base at 1210: nine planes in three flights to search to the north and four planes to search south. The northern search consisted of Hopping, Teaff, and Kroeger; Gallaher, West, and Dobson; Dickinson, Hilton, and Weber searching an area from 330 to 030 degrees and extending 200 miles north of Oahu. No contacts were made, and the flight returned at 1545.

A search patrol from the *Enterprise* to the south included Ensign C.R. "Bucky" Walters and Ensign Ben Troemel of Bomb Squadron Six. Walters made contact with what he described as a *Soryu*-class Japanese carrier. As he investigated the ship, he "found an enemy plane closing on my starboard quarter. The plane was a silver twin-engine monoplane carrying two vertical stabilizers. Attack was evaded by applying full throttle and diving to within 25 feet of the water." He then spotted a Japanese cruiser of the *Jintsu* class, which he followed for some time until ordered to return. No Japanese ships or aircraft were in that area, and what he actually saw is unknown.

The two of them were unable to return to the ship and headed for Kauai and then on to Oahu to land at Kaneohe Naval Air Station after dark. The field had been badly shot up in the morning and was now blacked out. Walters and Troemel managed to land successfully but had to maneuver violently to avoid hitting all the vehicles that had been deliberately parked on the runway. Troemel came to rest directly beneath a boom crane, while Walters almost ran into a cement mixer. The base commander explained that he had put the vehicles there to prevent the Japanese from landing and was a little upset that the two SBDs had managed to do so.

It was not until 1700 that a viable attack force was organized by the *Enterprise*. Eighteen Douglas TBD Devastator torpedo bombers; the remaining six Dauntlesses of Bombing Six, which were fitted with smoke generators to mask the torpedo planes; and an escort of six Wildcats were launched to attack a force supposedly 100 miles southeast of the *Enterprise* and her escort vessels, which were still west of Hawaii. Nothing was located, and the Devastators and SBDs returned to the *Enterprise*.

By this time it was dark, and the *Enterprise* did not turn on landing lights. Instead, the Wildcats were ordered to land at Pearl Harbor. Although both the Army and Navy had been informed several times about the six approaching Wildcats, the night sky tragically filled with tracers.

One sailor noted, " Everything in Pearl Harbor opened up on them. They didn't have a ghost of a chance" Another witness stated, "You could read a newspaper by the light of the tracers."

When the guns opened up, one of the Wildcats radioed, "What the hell is going on down there?" To which the tower replied succinctly, "Turn off your lights and beat it."

Wildcat pilot Ensign James Daniels tried a novel defense when the firing started. Upon seeing the tracers, he headed his plane directly toward the antiaircraft gunners, hoping that the glare of his landing lights would momentarily blind them. It worked. The firing became erratic, and Daniels was able to circle around, turn off his lights, and land on Ford Island in the dark. However, Ensign Gayle Herman took a 5-inch round in his engine. Miraculously unhurt, he bailed out over a golf course. Ensign David Flynn kept out of range until his plane ran out of gas and then parachuted into a cane field. Ensign Herbert Menges, Lieutenant Francis Hebel, and Lieutenant Eric Allen, Jr., all died. Allen was shot out of his parachute.

As December 7, 1941, passed into history, the consequences and mistakes of the day would be evaluated many times, but the men of Scouting and Bombing Squadron Six had reason to be proud of their role in the days' events. They reacted well to a confusing situation, fought hard, and then persevered under heavy fire, most of it friendly.

Richard L. Hayes is a freelance writer from Chicago. He has been published in numerous military history magazines.

CAUGHT ON THE GROUND

BY SAM MCGOWAN

IN THE POPULAR HISTORY OF WORLD WAR II, the assertion that the United States was caught unprepared in Hawaii and the Philippines has become widely accepted as fact. However, in the case of the Philippines, the proper word should be "underprepared," as this term more accurately represents the true situation that existed in the Philippine Islands in the early morning hours of December 8, 1941.

While neither the War Department nor the U.S. Navy expected the Japanese to attack the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, for several months before the day that President Franklin Roosevelt prophesied would "live in infamy," authorities in Washington, D.C., had been planning for war to break out in the Pacific. When it did, they fully expected that the Philippines would be involved and preparations were being made to defend the islands. Unfortunately, the Japanese attack came before the preparations had begun in earnest. The allegation has also often been made that General Douglas MacArthur facilitated the destruction of the Army Air Corps in the Philippines through indecision. This is also more myth than fact.

In 1941, the Philippine Islands were a possession of the United States and had been for four decades. The islands had come into U.S. hands as a condition of the treaty with Spain that ended the Spanish-American War in 1898. Since that time there had been mixed emotions on the part of the Filipino people. While many had come to love the United States, which was a benevolent master in comparison to Spain, they also yearned for independence. Located just off the Asian mainland and stretching from the northernmost island of Luzon to Mindanao, the islands were the United States' westernmost possession in the Pacific. The Japanese-owned island of Formosa lay some 450 miles to the north of Manila, the Philippine capital, while portions of mainland China that had been occupied by the Japanese were only a few hundred miles further, but to the west. The oil-rich East Indies lay to the south.

During the years between the world wars, the United States developed a series of contingency plans in the event of war with one or more foreign powers. These contingency plans were known as the Rainbow series. Planning for a potential war in the Pacific was found in the Rainbow No. 5 war plan, which basically called for the United States to fight a defensive war against Japan while concentrating the main effort on an offensive in Europe.

The attack on the Philippines is starkly depicted in this captured Japanese painting.

National Archives

U.S. FORCES IN THE PHILIPPINES FELT THE BRUNT OF JAPANESE MILITARY MIGHT ON DECEMBER 8, 1941.

Under the provisions of Rainbow No. 5, the Philippines would be written off and abandoned to the enemy, while all U.S. forces would withdraw to a defensive line running from Alaska through Hawaii. Rainbow No. 5 was approved in the spring of 1941, but the plan was revised as the threat of war intensified. Because of their proximity to Japanese territory in the Pacific, the War Department decided that the Philippines was revised to one of strategic importance in the defense of the region.

Prior to 1941, the War Department paid little attention to the Philippines except for maintaining the garrison forces at Fort Stotsenberg and cavalry and infantry troops made up of Filipinos led by American officers. The Navy maintained facilities at Cavite on Manila Bay, where a few destroyers and PT boats were based, along with a seaplane squadron equipped with Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boats. As late as the spring of 1940, Army Air Corps assets in the islands consisted of a few obsolete open-cockpit, fixed landing gear Boeing P-26 pursuit planes, a handful of B-10 bombers, and three more modern Douglas B-18s.

Things began to change in the Philippines in the late summer of 1941 as American relations with Japan deteriorated. When Japanese forces occupied French Indochina, President Franklin Roosevelt responded with an embargo on the sale of oil and other products to Japan in keeping with previous economic sanctions against the country. The move precipitated worsening relations, and it soon became apparent that war in the Pacific was inevitable—and that the Philippines would be in the line of the Japanese advance southward toward the oil fields in the Netherlands East Indies.

The United States began to build up its Philippine-based forces, and former U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur, who had retired in the Philippines where he served as field marshal of the Filipino military, was recalled to active duty to take command of all military forces based there. Several U.S. Army air and ground units were alerted for movement to the Philippines.

The buildup of air strength in the islands was crucial to the new American plan. New Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk fighter planes were sent to replace the outmoded P-26s, along with two squadrons of Seversky P-35s. While the P-35s were of a more recent design than the open-cockpit P-26s, they were already obsolete by 1941 standards. Additional B-18s were sent to replace the antiquated B-10s in the 28th Bombardment Squadron. By August 1941, Air Corps strength in the Philippines consisted of one squadron of P-40s, two squadrons of P-35s, and two squadrons of B-18s. One Filipino squadron was still equipped with P-26s. The B-10s had also been transferred to the Philippine Air Force.

Map © 2005 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

More modern aircraft were on the way; the newly created Army Air Forces Headquarters believed that the presence of a large force of heavy bombers would serve to secure the islands and perhaps deter Japanese threats to the region. The theory would soon be proved unfounded, but in 1941 four-engine Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses and the newly developed Consolidated B-24 Liberators that had been designed as their replacements were believed to be capable of destroying powerful naval forces while the ships were still at sea.

Additional fighter planes were authorized for delivery direct from the factories to the Philippines, with others to be taken from operational units in the United States. War Department plans for the Philippines called for four heavy bomber groups with 272 operational airplanes and an additional 68 in reserve along with two pursuit (fighter) groups of 130 airplanes to be in place by April 1942.

In May, elements formerly with the 19th Bombardment Group arrived at Hickam Field, Hawaii, for duty with the Hawaiian Air Force. At that time, they were the only U.S. heavy bombers stationed outside the United States. In late July, the Army Air Corps relocated the entire group to the Philippines, with a provisional squadron from the Hawaiian Air Force making the initial move. On the morning of September 5, 1941, nine Flying Fortresses with 75 air and ground crew members aboard left Hickam for Midway Island on the first leg of a journey that would take more than a week to complete.

From Midway, Major Emmett "Rose" O'Donnell led the flight of B-17s on to Wake Island, then south to Port Moresby on Papua, New Guinea. This leg of the flight brought the bombers over territory that belonged to Japan by mandate. The flight departed Wake at midnight so the bombers would be over Japanese territory during the hours of darkness to avoid detection. Their final stop before proceeding northward to their destination at Clark Field in Central Luzon was Darwin, a town on the north coast of Australia.

The arrival of the B-17s reassured the senior officers in the War Department in Washington that the Philippines could, in fact, be reinforced by air if need be. Impressed by the flight, General MacArthur authorized the establishment of refueling sites in New Guinea and Australia in preparation for future movements.

Plans were made for the transfer of additional Army Air Forces groups to the islands. In November, the Rainbow No. 5 plan was revised somewhat in that military strength in the Philippines was to be increased substantially, including a major buildup of air power. By the end of the month, the U.S. Army in the Philippines was to receive an additional 26 B-17s to fill out the complement of the 19th Bombardment Group. In addition, the 27th Bombardment Group (Light) was to arrive aboard


Several American pilots pose at Clark Field in August 1941. Standing left to right are: Carl Gies, Max Louk, Erwin Crellin, and Varian Kieler.

Varian Kieler White

Fred Bamberger

ship, with its complement of 52 Douglas A-24 dive-bombers to follow.

Although the United States military was strapped for personnel and equipment, the defense of the Philippines was given the highest priority. The War Department scraped the bottom of the barrel to find units to deploy, while additional air assets and ground troops were being trained for movement to the islands. Since the Wake Island-to-Moresby route came MacArthur's staff. On November 16, the Far East Air Force (FEAF) was activated under Brereton's command. Authorization had been given for the establishment of the Fifth Air Force, but the headquarters had not been activated before the war broke out, although the bomber and pursuit commands were. The new FEAF included V Bomber Command under Lt. Col. Eugene L. Eubank and V Interceptor Command under Brig. Gen. Henry B. Claggett. Squadron was based at Iba, a small grass field on the China Sea across the 2,000-foot Zambales Mountains from Fort Stotsenberg and Clark. Iba Field was barely large enough to accommodate the 18 Curtis P-40Es that made up the 3rd Pursuit Squadron, but it was the closest fighter airfield to the approach routes to the American military installations around Manila. Previously, Iba had been used primarily as an advanced field for gunnery training on

U.S. forces in the Philippines received the Curtiss P-40 Tomohawk fighter as a replacement for the aging P-26.

National Archives

Lt. Col. Eugene L. Eubank.

National Archives

Lieutanant Joseph H. Moore (pictured as Lt. Gen.).

National Archives

Maj. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton

in close proximity to Japanese territory, a new South Pacific ferry route was considered. Plans were also made for a route over which fighters could be delivered to the Philippines from assembly points in Australia.

After the initial deployment of the 14th Bombardment Squadron, the entire 19th Bombardment Group was alerted in mid-October for movement to the islands. The group's remaining 26 Flying Fortresses departed Hamilton Field, Calif. and had arrived at Hickam by October 22. By November 6, barely a month before the outbreak of the war, 25 B-17s had arrived at Clark. One airplane was temporarily grounded at Darwin but arrived within a few days.

Only two squadrons of the 19th Bombardment Group made the trip to the Philippines. The 28th Bombardment Group, which had been in the Philippines for more than a decade, joined the unit along with the 14th Bombardment Squadron, which had arrived from Hawaii in September. Personnel from the 28th gave up their twin-engine B-18s and joined the 19th to fly B-17s. The B-18s were reassigned to liaison duty.

With the arrival of the additional B-17s, U.S. heavy bomber strength in the islands was up to 35 airplanes and more were scheduled to make the trip. Maj. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton was sent to Manila to take command of all air units in the islands and assume a place on General

In early November, an order was put out that all "modernized" B-17s would be sent to the Philippines. Additional heavy bomber squadrons, including some that were set to be equipped with the new B-24 Liberator, were also ordered to the islands. The 7th Bombardment Group was on its way to Clark Field, with the ground components setting sail from San Francisco on November 21. The first flight of B-17s was scheduled to depart California in late November and early December. Additional B-17s and B-24s would follow as they were delivered from the factories.

While the arrival of the heavy bombers would give the American forces in the Philippines the power to strike at Japanese positions on Formosa and in parts of China, the increase in pursuit capabilities would provide protection from air attack. In early October, the Air Corps activated the 24th Pursuit Group in the Philippines. A month later it was joined by elements of the 35th Pursuit Group, although that group's headquarters was still at sea when the Japanese attack came. By the end of November, all of the pursuit squadrons had been equipped with either P-40Bs or Es, except for the 34th Pursuit Squadron, which was still flying P-35s.

To protect Luzon, the fighter squadrons were dispersed with the 17th and 21st squadrons operating out of Nichols Field outside Manila and the 20th at Clark Field. The 3rd Pursuit

the ranges in the nearby Zambales.

Along with the basing of the 3rd Pursuit Squadron at Iba, General Brereton stationed an aircraft early warning radar team there, although the technology was still new and the operators were just learning their trade. Because of its location, Iba was a logical choice for a radar site. In all, seven radar sets had arrived in the Philippines by early December, but Iba was the only one operational. Another at Manila was in the process of being set up when war came.

General MacArthur borrowed from the Chinese practice of establishing a rudimentary aircraft warning system that depended on Filipinos stationed at crucial locations and connected to V Fighter Command by telephone and telegraph. Information received from the sites would then be transmitted to a plotting center at Clark Field. It was a burdensome system made even more so by the primitive Filipino communications. During early tests, it took nearly an hour for word of spotted aircraft to reach the interceptor command post at Nichols Field.

Iba was not the only airfield that the Far East Air Forces elected to develop in its plan for the defense of the Philippines. Members of Brereton's staff felt that a heavy bomber base in the Southern Philippines on Mindanao was needed, a proposal that was initially opposed since the Rainbow No. 5 plan did not call for

A Boeing B-17D Flying Fortress sits on the tarmac at Clark Field in 1941. B-17s and other heavy bombers gave U.S. forces the ability to strike targets in China and Formosa.

Robert F. Dorr collection

ground forces to be used to defend that particular island. But the soil on Mindanao was ideally suited for all-weather runways, a factor that weighted the argument in favor of a southern base.

Until a new airfield could be constructed, a temporary base was set up at the airstrip on the island's Del Monte pineapple plantation. On December 5, two squadrons from the 19th Bombardment Group, half the heavy bomber strength then in the islands, deployed to Del Monte Field. Brereton's operations plan called for the bombers to be based on Mindanao but to stage through Clark on missions against Japanese positions on Formosa if war came. The Fifth Air Base Group arrived at Manila aboard the transport ship USS *Coolidge* in early December and was sent immediately to Mindanao by island steamer to support the B-17s.

The United States initially based its build-up in the Philippines on a timeline that would see war with Japan beginning sometime in the spring of 1942. However, a worsening diplomatic situation was leading to an increase in the potential for hostilities—to the point that by November it was apparent that war could break out at any moment. In early November, the War Department sent a message to commanders in the Pacific advising that war with Japan was imminent but that it was extremely important for the Japanese to carry out the first hostile act.

Apparently, the leadership in Washington believed the American public would be more likely to support a war if the Japanese attacked first. General MacArthur apparently interpreted this letter to include any action that could be considered hostile and forbade reconnaissance missions over Formosa even when unidentified aircraft were reported around and over Luzon. In late November, in response to a British suggestion, the War Department notified General MacArthur that two long-range B-24 Liberators equipped with photographic equipment would depart for the Philippines by November 28. Their mission would be to photograph Japanese installations in the Marshall Islands and the Carolines.

As it turned out, the departure of the modified Liberators was delayed and the first arrived in Hawaii on December 5. It was held at Hickam Field for armament modifications and would become the first American aircraft loss of the war when Japanese planes struck Hickam on December 7.

The Air Corps intensified its preparations for war in early November, and General Brereton ordered all of his commanders to be prepared for any emergency. Aircraft were to be dispersed and kept on an operationally ready status, with their crews on two-hour alert day and night. The 19th Bombardment Group was ordered to maintain one squadron for reconnaissance and bombing missions at all times, while the 24th Pursuit Group was to have three planes from each squadron on alert from dawn until dusk. The orders were put into effect on November 10, nearly a month before war broke out. Within less than a week, all pursuit aircraft in the islands were placed on constant alert, with the airplanes fully armed and the pilots on a 30-minute alert. Some fighter pilots slept by their airplanes.

Early December saw an increase in the effort to beef up American air strength in the Philippines. While only 35 heavy bombers had arrived in the islands, others were on the way, along with 52 A-24 dive-bombers for the 27th Bombardment Group and 18 additional P-40s that were bound for the islands aboard ship. On December 1, Army Air Corps commanding general Henry H. Arnold notified the commander of the Hawaiian Air Force, "We must get every available B-17 to the Philippines as soon as possible."

On December 6, a flight of 13 B-17s left Hamilton Field for Hickam on the first leg of their journey to Clark. Their arrival at Clark would have continued the buildup of the heavy bomber force that was expected to be at full strength by April 1942. Unfortunately, time was running out at a rate much faster than expected.

Even though new aircraft were arriving in the Philippines on a regular basis, that did not mean they or the men who flew them were operationally ready. The fighters arrived in crates and required assembly and maintenance before they were combat ready. Engines had to be broken in and slow-timed, while guns had to be bore sighted. Many of the fighters were still not operationally ready when war broke out. A major problem for the fighter pilots was the lack of a source of oxygen in the islands, which restricted the P-40s to sustained operations at altitudes of 15,000 feet and below.

The pilots themselves were inexperienced, which was a factor in what happened when war came. Most were fresh from pilot training and had very little experience in the P-40s they were to take into combat. More fighters would be lost in the battle for the Philippines to accident and mechanical failure or simply running out of fuel than to combat. Their radio equipment was primitive, and everyone in the islands used the same frequencies. Even though the P-40s were first-line fighters, one squadron, the 34th Pursuit, was still equipped with obsolete P-35s.

During the more than 60 years since December 7, 1941, many historians have concentrated on the "lack of decisiveness" on the part of General MacArthur during the first hours of the war. They have given the impression that no action was taken by the air forces in the Philippines, that the Japanese caught the air force on the ground and destroyed it within minutes. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth.

The American forces in the Philippines learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor within an hour after it started, not through timely notification by the War Department, but through a local radio station that picked up a broadcast from a Honolulu station and contacted the military. The Navy already knew of the attack but had failed to inform MacArthur's headquarters in Manila. Upon receiving the news,

MacArthur immediately informed his subordinates that the country was at war and instructed them to take appropriate action.

The Army Air Forces squadrons were informed. They were already on a status of high alert and had been for several weeks. On the evening of December 7, the officers of the newly arrived 27th Bombardment Group, which still had no airplanes, threw a party for General Brereton at the Manila Hotel. Brereton was called out of the party for conferences with Admiral W.R. Purnell, the senior naval officer in the islands, and General Richard Sutherland, chief of staff for MacArthur, who informed him of a message from Washington advising that war could break out at any moment.

Brereton notified his air units and canceled a training operation for the B-17s that was scheduled for the next day. Within an hour after the party broke up at 2 AM (December 8, Philippine time) word reached the Philippines that Hawaii was under attack.

Within 30 minutes after the first word of the attack reached Manila, the Army Air Forces radar site at Iba picked up a large formation of unidentified airplanes about 75 miles offshore and plotted their track toward the island of Corregidor. The 3rd Pursuit Squadron dispatched its fighters to make the intercept, and they were tracked by radar as they flew toward the unknown formation. The radar operators saw the blips merge on their scope, but the fighter pilots never saw the unknown aircraft in the predawn darkness. Apparently, they had flown beneath the Japanese. After failing to locate the unidentified aircraft, they returned to Iba and breakfast. What the Japanese did is unclear, since the first attacks were still several hours away. Apparently, they were on a reconnaissance flight.

The U.S. forces in the Philippines were officially notified at 5 AM Manila time that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. At this point the record becomes confused. Air Force historians Wesley Craven and James Cate point out that no real record exists of the events of December 8, 1941, as they took place in the Philippines. What records were kept were lost during the coming events in the islands, while unit histories were written after the fact and were possibly—even probably—considerably contrived.

At the request of General Arnold, author and historian Walter D. Edmonds eventually took over a project, which had begun in 1942, involving interviewing participants in the battles for the Philippines and Java. Edmonds interviewed dozens of airmen and carefully scrutinized diaries and combat reports. He published the results in the book *They Fought With What They Had*, which was originally published in 1951.

Edmonds believes that the official records were compiled after the fact and were sometimes doctored so they agreed with the positions of certain senior officers. General Brereton published his *Brereton Dairies* right after the war, and General MacArthur promptly denied some of the information contained therein. General Arnold claimed that he never really knew what happened in the Philippines on December 8 even though it was widely known that a detailed report was sent to him within days of the event.

Many historians focus on the Japanese 11th Air Fleet being grounded at its airfields around Tainan on Formosa due to a thick fog. While the Japanese naval aircraft did not launch until the fog lifted, Army bombers were not hampered by the weather. A formation of twin-engine bombers attacked Baguio at around 9:30. Accounts differ as to when Iba was attacked. Although most historians record that the field was attacked simultaneously with Clark, other reports indicate that Iba was first struck at daybreak, shortly after the 3rd Pursuit Squadron returned from its attempted interception of the Japanese formation just before dawn. Based on reports from those interviewed by Edmonds, the Iba attack came shortly before the attack on Clark.

At 5 AM General Brereton was at General MacArthur's headquarters at Manila. The Air Corps commander wished to gain permission from MacArthur for a strike on the Japanese airfields on Formosa, or so he said in his memoir. According to legend, General Richard K. Sutherland, MacArthur's chief of staff, kept Brereton from meeting with his boss. MacArthur claimed that he was never consulted about an attack and that he would not have approved it anyway, as it would have been futile. Whether MacArthur's observation was based on the reality of the time or came through the gift of hindsight, it was pretty astute.

Regardless of what really happened, at 10:14 Brereton reported that he received a

QUESTIONS LINGER CONCERNING THE DEPLOYMENT OF U.S. HEAVY BOMBERS ON THE FIRST DAY OF WORLD WAR II.

Ever since word of the disaster in the Philippines reached the rest of the world, there has been much speculation about what would have happened if the B-17s had been launched against the Japanese airfields on Formosa immediately after word of the attack on Pearl Harbor reached the islands.

Many, including his biographer, William Manchester, have accused General Douglas MacArthur of being personally responsible for the failure to mount an attack. But those who make the accusations fail to consider the true situation of the bomber force in the Philippines on December 8, 1941. For one thing, only half of the 35-plane heavy bomber force was on Luzon that morning. Two squadrons had been transferred some 500 miles south to Mindanao. Even if all of the B-17s at Clark had been able to take off for a mission against the Japanese airfields, they would have made up too small a formation to effectively defend themselves against the hordes of Japanese fighters they would have likely encountered over Formosa. The two squadrons at Del Monte would have had to fly to Clark or San Marcelino to refuel and take on bombs and ammunition for their guns before they could fly a mission.

Another consideration is the weather that lay over the Japanese airfields. The same fog that kept the Japanese naval aircraft on the ground until midmorning would have also prevented the American B-17 crews from finding the airfields and the bombardiers from successfully bombing the targets. Furthermore, all of the B-17s at Clark had been ordered into the air in the early morning so they would not be caught on the ground by the inevitable Japanese attack. In fact, it was the decision to recall them to refuel and rearm for an attack on Formosa that caused them to be on the ground when the Japanese bombers and fighters struck Clark.

The gift of hindsight indicates that the best course of action would perhaps have been to send the bombers south and keep them aloft until after the attack. They could have then been recalled to Clark, along with the two squadrons that were at Mindanao, for a night or early morning attack on the Japanese airfields on Formosa. Or, the bombers could have been held in reserve at Clark to attack the Japanese invasion fleet when it came.

Still, either action would have merely prolonged the inevitable. The U.S. Pacific Fleet was in such disarray after the attack on Pearl Harbor that reinforcement of the Philippines had become impossible. It is unlikely that the B-17s could have done anything to change the eventual outcome.

phone call from MacArthur authorizing him to carry out an attack on Formosa in late afternoon at his discretion. A few minutes before the phone call, Lt. Col. Eugene Eubank, the commander of V Bomber Command, left for Clark with orders to dispatch a reconnaissance flight over the Japanese airfields on Formosa in preparation for a strike. There is reason to believe that Brereton received authority, possibly from Sutherland, to mount an air strike against Japanese installations on Formosa as early as 8 AM.

Instead of taking no action, as so many have asserted, the Army Air Forces in the Philippines were very active from the moment they were notified of the attack on Pearl Harbor and Hickam, and even earlier in the case of the squadron at Iba. Fighter patrols were in the air within an hour of the notification that war had come. Around 8 AM, at the insistence of Colonel Harold George, the chief of staff of V Fighter Command, all of the B-17s at Clark were ordered to take off so they would not be caught on the ground by an expected Japanese attack. The detachment at Mindanao was notified to prepare to return to Clark for a bombing mission.

At 9:23, Colonel George reported that two formations of multiengine bombers were over northern Luzon. The 20th Pursuit Squadron was directed to make the interception, but the Japanese turned east and struck the Filipino summer capital of Baguio instead of continuing south toward Clark Field or Manila as expected. Other Filipino cities were reportedly bombed during the morning hours, including Tarlac, a town just north of Clark Field, and Tugegararo, a city in northern Luzon. American P-40s from the 20th Pursuit Squadron had expected to intercept the Japanese fighters over Rosales, a town south of Baguio, but failed to make contact with the enemy.

By all indications, Iba was the first Air Corps field to be attacked. Some have written that the tiny airstrip was attacked shortly after dawn as the P-40s from the 3rd Pursuit Squadron were returning from their predawn attempted interception over the China Sea. Such, however, apparently was not the case. Nor were all of the 3rd airplanes destroyed on the ground. In fact, only one was on the ground when the Japanese bombers appeared overhead. The rest were still airborne. Edmonds reports that the telephone line between Iba and Clark went dead at 11 AM, leaving radio contact as the base's only means of communicating with other units. Thirty minutes later, the Iba radar picked up a large formation about 100 miles out to sea. The 3rd Squadron commander, Lieutenant H.G. Thorne, ordered his pilots to start their engines, but to remain on the ground since the Japanese seemed to be milling around over the ocean.

Shortly after the 3rd Pursuit pilots manned their aircraft, they received an order from Interceptor Command headquarters to take off and climb to 15,000 feet and to remain over Iba. All 18 airplanes took off, in three flights of six airplanes each, but they never assembled as a squadron, apparently due to the difficult communications from the radio clutter on the fighter frequency. At the time, there were fighters in the air all over Luzon, and all were trying to obtain instructions.

One flight from Iba headed for Manila in hopes of receiving explicit instructions. After circling over Nichols Field for a while and receiving no orders, the flight commander led them back toward Iba as their fuel supply began to dwindle. They arrived over Iba to discover the field under attack. The P-40s dove into the Japanese and broke up a strafing attack before it got started, but their fuel was low and they had to get on the ground. Four were shot down while trying to land at Iba; one pilot crash-landed in the sea just off the airfield, and one flight went to Clark and joined the combat there. Several 3rd Squadron airplanes found safety at Rosales, a strip near Lingayen Gulf.

Even though the P-40s broke up the Japanese strafing attack, the level bombers hit the field with pinpoint accuracy, destroying the radar site, killing the operators, and hitting the few buildings on the field. Casualties were reported as 50 percent either wounded or killed, and the airfield was rendered useless. The flight surgeon, Lieutenant Frank Richardson, rounded up as many trucks as he could find and loaded them with wounded. He then set out down the coast for Manila.

Lieutenant F.C. Roberts, the pilot who crash-landed on the beach, organized the uninjured survivors and led them on a march through the mountains toward Clark. Failing to find a cart track leading toward Fort Stotsenberg, many of the men got lost and wandered in the jungle-covered mountains for several days.

After receiving approval to launch an attack on Formosa, Brereton recalled the bombers to Clark to refuel and rearm. He ordered Eubank to have the B-17s armed with 100- and 300-pound bombs and to have the crews briefed for an attack on Japanese airfields in southern Formosa late that evening. He also sent word to Del Monte ordering the two squadrons of B-17s that were there on deployment back to Luzon in preparation for an attack the next morning, but to use an emergency strip at San Marcelino rather than Clark itself. They were to be prepared to fly a mission at daybreak the following morning. Two B-17s were dispatched on reconnaissance missions over Formosa. It was not until 11:30 that the last bomber landed.

Although it is commonly believed that the attack on Clark came without warning, in fact the radar report from Iba of a large formation

Built for Sweden but diverted to U.S. forces after a 1940 embargo on overseas sales, P-35s of the 20th Pursuit Squadron fly over Clark Field in the summer of 1941.

Lloyd Stinson via Robert F. Dorr

over the China Sea had been sent to Fighter Command. The target was believed to be Manila, and the 17th Pursuit Squadron was ordered into the air to patrol over Manila Bay. The 34th Pursuit was supposed to take off and cover Clark but failed to get the word. When Japanese planes appeared over Clark, the 21st Pursuit took off to intercept them but was diverted to patrol over Cavite. The 20th Pursuit was on the ground at Clark refueling after its fruitless mission over northern Luzon in the morning. The 19th Bombardment Group B-17s were in the process of refueling and rearming. Some of the crews had gone to the mess tent for the noon meal.

Charred and burning buildings line the streets in Manila shortly after a Japanese bombing raid.

National Archives

The first attack on Clark came from a 54-plane formation of level bombers, which flew over at 18,000 feet. The bombs impacted across the field diagonally, and most of the buildings were hit. The flight line where the B-17s were parked received very little damage from the attack, but most of the P-40s were hit. When the bombs began falling, Lieutenant Joseph H. Moore led a four-plane formation of P-40s off the ground. Ten others were behind them preparing to take off. They were caught in the bomb pattern, and most were destroyed without getting off the ground.

At this point, the B-17s were still largely undamaged, but the bombing was followed several minutes later by a vicious strafing attack by Japanese fighters that came right down on the deck, pouring cannon fire into the parked bombers. The Japanese were not unopposed. The first flight of Zeros was intercepted by Joe Moore and his three wingmen. Lieutenant Randall D. Keator promptly shot down a Zero and was awarded the Silver Star for the first recorded American victory of the Southwest Pacific War. Moore got two more.

The P-35s of the 34th Pursuit took off from Del Carmen for Clark and were promptly intercepted by Japanese fighters. Although the victories could not be confirmed, 34th pilots claimed to have shot down three of the Japanese fighters. Another interception was made by the six P-40s of C Flight from the 3rd Pursuit which had rushed to Clark after receiving word that it was under attack. Unfortunately, all six airplanes were low on fuel and one pilot bailed out when his engine quit. He was strafed by Zeros while he hung in his parachute. One P-40 flew into the side of Mt. Ararat, a huge volcano just east of Clark Field. Lieutenant Herbert Ellis had to bail out of his burning airplane, but not before he shot down three Japanese fighters.

Unfortunately, the effort of the American P-35 and P-40 pilots was too little and perhaps too late. The devastation to the Air Corps at Clark was overwhelming. All of the B-17s on the ground were severely damaged in the strafing attack, but three would be repaired. Damage to the fighter force was equally great, although many of the fighters were lost to causes other than enemy action. Several ran out of fuel and others crash-landed due to engine trouble because they had not been properly broken in. Nearly every airplane on the ground at Clark was destroyed, with the most serious losses being the B-17s and the 10 P-40s that were caught in the bomb pattern before they could get off the ground.

The disaster at Clark was not caused so much by a lack of preparedness on the part of the military as by a combination of factors that stacked up against the U.S. forces. Had the B-17s remained aloft or been sent south to Mindanao until the Allied force could get organized, they would have been spared. Had the fighters from Nichols Field continued to Clark, they might have broken up the strafing attack as the 3rd Pursuit P-40s did at Iba. The loss of the 10 P-40s from the 20th Pursuit was more a matter of timing than anything else. The airplanes were refueled, armed, and ready to go, but they started taking to the air a few minutes too late.

Regardless of the reasons , the Air Corps at Clark had suffered grievously. The remaining pilots would fight gloriously over the next few weeks and months, but the ultimate fate of the Philippines had been determined long before the first bombs fell at Clark Field. □

Sam McGowan is the author of The Cave, *a novel of the Vietnam War. He has also written extensively on the subject of air power during World War II.*

The submarine U-*505* made an epic journey from Germany to Chicago.

BY LT. COL. HAROLD E. RAUGH, JR., PH.D., U.S. ARMY (RET.)

THE GERMAN U-BOAT U-*505* WAS, ACCORDING TO AUTHOR JAMES E. WISE, JR., "PROBably one of the unluckiest U-boats in Adolf Hitler's submarine service during World War II." After being involved in a series of unfortunate incidents, coupled with poor leadership and "mysterious equipment malfunctions," in June 1944, U-*505* became the first enemy combatant ship to be captured by the U.S. Navy in battle on the high seas since the War of 1812.

The final resting place of U-*505* was not the bottom of the sea. It was, quite unexpectedly—and still is—on permanent display at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. The unparalleled odyssey of the U-*505* is chronicled by Wise with a crisp and detailed narrative supported by scores of fascinating photographs in ***U-505: The Final Journey*** (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2005, 204 pp., maps, illustrations, appendices, works consulted, $32.95, hardcover).

The 750-ton, 252-foot U-*505* was launched from Hamburg, Germany, in May 1941. Larger than earlier submarines, U-*505* could carry extra fuel, giving it a surface cruising range of 13,450 miles. This gave U-*505* the opportunity to operate thousands of miles from its base as a "lone wolf," and not in a wolfpack with other U-boats.

U-*505* sailed initially to the German submarine base at Lorient on the French coast. Its second war patrol, during which it sank 25,000 tons of shipping in 86 days at sea, was conducted mainly off West Africa. A third war patrol in the Caribbean followed, as did a new captain, as the submarine war began to favor the Allies. Aborted missions and bad luck then seemed to follow the U-*505*, and the second captain shockingly committed suicide in the control room.

U-*505*'s last patrol was also off the coast of West Africa. U.S. Navy Task Group 22.3, consisting of the escort carrier *Guadalcanal* (CVE-60), four destroyers, and an air group commanded by Captain Daniel V. Gallery, sailed for Casablanca to refuel in early June 1944. On the way, aircraft reported radar contacts with U-*505*. U.S. depth charges caught the U-boat completely by surprise and forced it to the surface. Boarding party members quickly closed U-*505*'s open valves and saved the boat from being scuttled. Among the prizes captured were two Enigma machines and codebooks.

U-*505* was towed to Bermuda, renamed the USS *Nemo*, and guarded for the rest of the war. When the war ended, the boat visited ports to help sell war bonds.

Gallery's brother recommended that U-*505* be brought to Chicago, Gallery's hometown, and made into a "memorial to the thousands of seamen who had lost their lives in the two great Battles of the Atlantic." The Museum of Science and Industry, after active campaigning, received title to the former German sub-

U-*505* surfaces in R.C. Moore's cover art to *U-505: The Final Journey*. Eventually captured and renamed the USS *Nemo* it was eventually moved to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, where it was put on permanent display.

marine in 1954. U-*505* was towed from Portsmouth, N.H. through the Great Lakes, and to its place on reinforced concrete cradles near the museum.

In 2001, a study revealed that almost a half-century of exposure to the elements and over 24 million visitors had taken their toll on U-*505's* condition. Accordingly, a new underground, self-enclosed exhibition hall was constructed, and U-*505* was renovated and moved to its new permanent location in 2004.

This outstanding book, which also describes submarine warfare and World War II strategy in general, helps one experience the living legacy of U-*505* today.

Recent and Recommended

American Iliad: The 18th Infantry Regiment in World War II, by Robert W. Baumer with Mark J. Reardon, Aberjona Press, Bedford, PA, 2004, 415 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, index, $24.95, softcover.

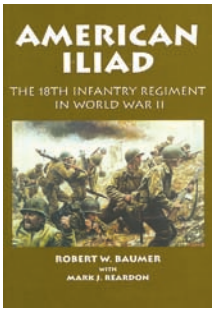
The 18th Infantry Regiment was one of three regiments of the lauded 1st Infantry Division, "The Big Red One," during World War II. Beginning with the regiment's organization day on May 3, 1941, to VE day, May 8, 1945, this outstanding volume chronicles the unit's wartime operations and activities. The 18th Infantry entered combat during Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa, in November 1942. The regiment's infantrymen gained proficiency and confidence as they fought across North Africa and in the invasion of Sicily. On D-day, June 6, 1944, the 18th Infantry stormed the Normandy beachhead to reinforce the initial assault force. After piercing the Norman hedgerows, the regiment advanced through the meat grinder of the Hürtgen Forest, fought in the Battle of the Bulge, pushed through the Siegfried Line, and was in Czechoslovakia at war's end.

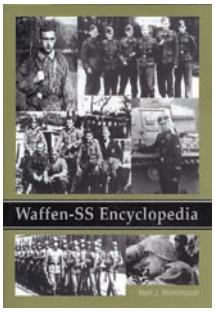
This impeccably researched and finely crafted study—interspersed with participant accounts and supplemented by excellent maps and illustrations—is a model unit history. It is a fitting tribute to the courageous and tenacious soldiers who served in the 18th Infantry Regiment during World War II and merits the largest audience.

In Brief

Waffen-SS Encyclopedia, by Marc J. Rikmenspoel, Aberjona Press, Bedford, PA, 2004, 285 pp., illustrations, appendix, annotated bibliography, $19.95, softcover.

The German SS (*Schutzstaffel,* or Protection Force) is one of the most notorious yet least understood of World War II German military





organizations. It had three sections, the last of which, the Waffen-SS (Armed SS), was formed in 1940 after the campaign in France. The Waffen-SS was the true military component of the larger SS, and it is the main focus of this superb study. While not a traditional encyclopedia, this book is divided into eight parts. The first two cover in unparalleled detail the formations (units) and their evolution, and the structure of its divisions. The following three fascinating chapters describe Germans, Germanics (ethnic Germans from outside Germany), and non-German and non-Germanics in the Waffen-SS. Chapter 6 includes biographical sketches of 13 leading Waffen-SS personalities, including Paul Hausser, Felix Steiner, and Sepp Dietrich. These are enhanced with excellent photographs. Chapter 7 describes Waffen-SS weapons. The volume concludes with "Misconceptions and Controversies About the Waffen-SS." This thoroughly researched and well-written study is an indispensable reference book for anyone interested in World War II.

Duty, Honor, Applause: America's Entertainers in World War II, by Gary L. Bloomfield, Stacie L. Shain, and Arlen C. Davidson, Lyons Press, Guilford, CT, 2004, 497 pp., illustrations, bibliography, $29.95, hardcover.

America entered World War II during the golden age of Hollywood. The motion picture studios, actors and actresses, musicians and comedians, and directors and filmmakers all mobilized to support the war effort. Leading actors such as Jimmy Stewart, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Clark Gable, and a host of lesser luminaries served on active duty, some in combat. Bob Hope, the Andrews Sisters, Jack Benny, and the Three Stooges traveled to many military installations, frequently overseas, to entertain soldiers and help bolster military morale. Documentary war films were made by John Ford, John Huston, Frank Capra, and other renowned directors. Other stars helped sell war bonds, visited wounded soldiers in hospitals, and hosted servicemen at the USO, while starlets and models lent their svelte figures to wildly popular "pin-ups." This fascinating book, almost encyclopedic in scope and profusely illustrated (which would have benefited from the inclusion of an index), contains much more than this brief review can highlight. This superb volume hearkens back to a bygone era of patriotism, sacrifice, and national unity.

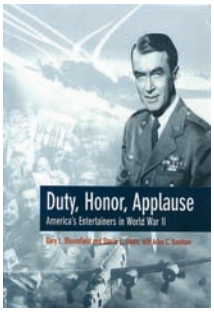
Fighter Boys: The Battle of Britain, 1940, by Patrick Bishop, Penguin Books, New York, 2004, 448 pp., illustrations, map, notes, references, index, $16.00, softcover.

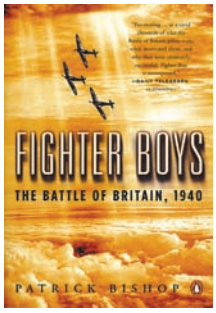
For a few short months in 1940, after the fall of France in June, all that stood between Great Britain and a possible German invasion was the English Channel and a few thousand stalwart Royal Air Force (RAF) pilots. These outnumbered "Fighter Boys," sweeping out of the skies in their sleek Hawker Hurricanes and Supermarine Spitfires, turned back the overwhelming German aerial onslaught from August to November 1940. During the Battle of Britain, as this campaign was called, 1,733 German planes were shot down against the loss of 915 British planes. The cost was quite high. Of the 2,917 RAF pilots who fought in these 1940 battles, 540 were killed, and another 795 died

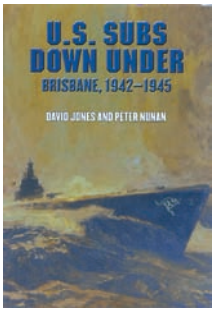
JUST IN TIME FOR VJ DAY

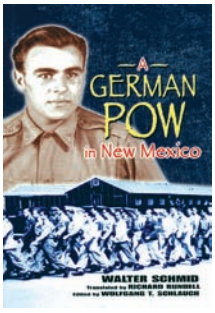
>>> This summer the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) will be releasing a comprehensive, detailed look at the defining events which both comprised and shaped World War II. Shipping in a 12-disc DVD box set, and entitled *BBC History of World War II*, this ambitious release contains over 35 hours of material comprised of 10 separate miniseries and related special features. Ripe with commentary, narration, follow-up discussion, and generous amounts of archived and lesser seen film footage, the set covers WWII from the rise of the Nazis to the final days in the Pacific Theater with meticulous attention to detail. Released on July 19, it arrives just in time for the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII and looks to be a must-have for any historian or serious WWII buff.

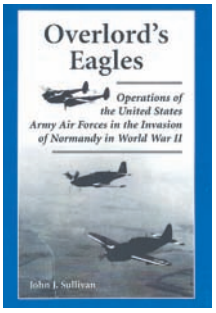
—C.R. D'Amore

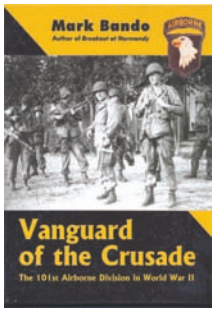












before the end of the war. Journalist Patrick Bishop has skillfully interwoven wartime letters and diaries, later interviews, and other documents to produce an enthralling account of the "Fighter Boys" at war, their trials, tribulations, heroism, and sacrifices. This riveting book—about these brave pilots whom Prime Minister Winston Churchill lauded with the words, " Never, in the field of human conflict, was so much owed by so many to so few — is a real page-turner.

U.S. Subs Down Under: Brisbane, 1942-1945, by David Jones and Peter Nunan, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2005, 320 pp., maps, illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $34.95, hardcover.

On February 15, 1942, the Japanese captured Singapore, and four days later Japanese planes conducted a devastating raid on Darwin, Australia. Two months later, to buttress the defense of Australia, six U.S. Navy submarines arrived in Brisbane, a port on the country's east coast. From that time until April 1945, when the U.S. submarine base and repair unit was moved to the Philippines, almost 200 submarine war patrols departed from Brisbane. These combat patrols destroyed 117 enemy ships (including three heavy and two light cruisers) totaling 515,000 tons sunk and damaged many others. This represented about one-tenth of Japanese shipping sunk by American submarines during the entire war. Other submarine missions included providing support for coastwatchers and clandestine forces, search and rescue, and reconnaissance operations. These important submarine missions, the relatively unknown port and repair activities, and the interrelationships between U.S. sailors and Australian civilians at Brisbane are chronicled in rich detail in this interesting study.

A German POW in New Mexico, by Walter Schmid, University of New Mexico Press with the Historical Society of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 2005, 167 pp., illustrations, appendix, bibliography, $24.95, hardcover.

Walter Schmid was one of the lucky ones, as far as German prisoners of war go. A soldier in the Afrika Korps, he was one of a quarter million German and Italian soldiers who surrendered to the Allies in North Africa in May 1943. Schmid, one of about 380,000 German soldier interned in the United States during the war, was held initially at Camp Gruber, then Camp McAlester, both in Oklahoma. In mid-1944, he was transferred to another camp near Las Cruces, N.M. At the latter, Schmid worked mainly as a field laborer in a little-known wartime program of contract labor, in which local farmers could hire POW labor if there was a manpower shortage in the area. Believing in Aryan superiority, Schmid noted the American contradiction of treating Mexicans and blacks as second-class citizens. Schmid's nicely written memoir, based on his POW diary, vividly portrays his "battleground experience, captivity, long separation from family and home, loneliness, isolation, and the uncertainty of the future." After returning to Germany in 1947 and seeing Germans returning from Russian POW camps, Schmid finally realized how fortunate he had been.

U.S.S. Solomons, CVE-67: The History, Memories, and Photos of an Escort Aircraft Carrier in the Atlantic Theater during World War II as Told by Her Crew and Pilots, by Joseph E. Comeau, Jr., Trafford Publishing, Victoria, BC, Canada, 2004, 547 pp., illustrations, map, source notes, $36.95 large format softcover.

The USS *Solomons* (CVE-67), an escort aircraft carrier, was converted from a maritime commission hull and launched on October 6, 1943. It served mainly in the Atlantic Theater, and while it saw little combat, it still made a significant contribution to the American war effort. The *Solomons* frequently ferried planes and troops from one distant location to another. During an early voyage, the ship participated in a simulated aerial attack on the Panama Canal. In June 1944, planes from *Solomons* detected a German U-boat and eventually sank it. This was *Solomons'* sole U-boat engagement of the war. In 1946, *Solomons* was decommissioned and sold for scrap, but its spirit lived on in the sailors who had served on her. This interesting book was put together by Joseph S. Comeau, Jr., in honor of his father who was a *Solomons'* sailor. It contains numerous accounts and biographical sketches of the ship's officers and men, copies of photographs, scrapbook items, and other ephemera, such as the ship's memos. This quaint book, almost like a family photo album and scrapbook, was clearly a labor of love.

Overlord's Eagles: Operations of the United States Army Air Forces in the Invasion of Normandy in World War II, by John J. Sullivan, McFarland, Jefferson, NC, 2005, 223 pp., illustrations, maps, glossary, notes, bibliography, index, $29.95, softcover.

Allied air superiority was a prerequisite for the success of the amphibious landings at Normandy on D-day 1944. Author John J. Sullivan's well-researched and finely written study traces the air preparations and support of the Normandy landings and includes contemporary and current evaluations of their effectiveness. More significantly, Sullivan, by using numerous official documents and personal papers, chronicles the philosophies of the senior generals and the strategic debate surrounding these operations. Prior to D-day, air assets focused on bombing French and Belgian rail centers to disrupt German strategic mobility and their ability to reinforce Normandy. Other generals believed it was more important to destroy the Luftwaffe and implemented plans to accomplish this goal. On D-day, tactical air forces provided effective close air support to the Allied ground troops. This excellent book makes a meaningful contribution to the study of air support to the Normandy landings and other military operations in northwest Europe.

Vanguard of the Crusade: The 101st Airborne Division in World War II, by Mark Bando, Aberjona Press, Bedford, PA, 2003, 311 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, index, $29.95, large format hardcover.

Mark Bando is a recognized authority on the operations of the 101st Airborne Division, the "Screaming Eagles," during the great crusade of liberating Europe from tyranny in World War II. He has conducted over 950 interviews with division combat veterans since 1968 and has collected thousands of rare unit wartime photographs. The results of his research were published in two earlier volumes that have been combined, expanded, and published as *Vanguard of the Crusade*. This enthralling saga is the story of the officers and men of the Screaming Eagles, told largely by the paratroopers themselves, in poignant and riveting detail. While the night combat jump into Normandy on D-day, fighting through the Norman hedgerows, Operation Market Garden, and the vicious winter battle at Bastogue are well known, this book brings to life the many equally fierce but smaller engagements and the sky soldiers who fought them. This compelling study, accented by hundreds of mesmerizing photographs, showcases the wartime accomplishments of the Screaming Eagles and the human element of combat.

Taught to Kill: An American Boy's War from the Ardennes to Berlin, by John B. Babcock,

Potomac Books, Washington, D.C., 2005, 249 pp., illustrations, $27.95, hardcover.

Admitting that his account is "a small chip of a broad mosaic," World War II infantryman John B. Babcock has written a poignant, candid, and gut-wrenching memoir of his combat service in Europe during the final months of the war. Born in 1922, Babcock was serving in the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) when, as the pool of ground soldiers was shrinking and the program was ended in 1944, he became an infantry mortarman. Babcock and his unit, the 78th Infantry Division, entered combat in the Hürtgen Forest three days before the German counteroffensive of the Battle of the Bulge. Through the frigid, fierce fighting in the Ardennes, being wounded at Remagen, surviving the war, and serving on occupation duty in Berlin, Babcock records in compelling and frequently gruesome detail his actions and thoughts. Fear, confusion, violence, and death dominated a battlefield abandoned by logic, fairness, and sympathy. This is a compelling account, revealing that Babcock's soul was scarred much deeper than his body. It is a fitting corrective to the notions of unending selflessness and heroism in combat and the idea of World War II veterans being "the greatest generation."

Forgotten War, Forgiven Guilt, by David A. Witts, Yucca Tree Press, Las Cruces, NM, 2003, 262 pp., maps, illustrations, references, bibliography, $19.95, hardcover.

Author David A. Witts flew the amphibious Consolidated PBY5A Catalina aircraft in the Pacific Theater during World War II. This provocative book, based upon his wartime experiences, limited research, and seemingly festering sense of resentment, consists of a number of vignettes. They are organized into chapters that focus on four main themes. The first is that the "accomplishments [of the 13th Air Force) have gone unrecognized and unrecorded due primarily to 'turf' issues." Elsewhere, Witts states the 13th Air Force's

>>> First off is a very personal, one on one take on the Second World War. Published by Namco and available on the Xbox, PC, and PS2 is Sniper Elite. The game is set in Berlin during the spring of 1945. Against a backdrop of Russians and Germans street-fighting for control of the city, the player takes the role of a veteran American soldier, trained as a sniper by the OSS. Reports that the Russian secret service (NKVD) is in Berlin looking for atomic bomb technology has the Allied intelligence commanders worried. Taking the role of the best of an elite unit, the leaders assign the player to stop the NKVD and to get the bomb secrets for the Allies. Donning a German disguise and working alone, the player infiltrates hostile enemy environments using stealth and sniping skills.

This is a stealth game that takes both its time period and its sniping seriously. Unlike so many first person games for consoles, SE is less about hand-eye coordination and more about care, positioning, and environment. The game engine takes into account

gravity, elevation, wind speed and direction, heart rate, breath, posture, and background noise when computing the effects and the after-effects of each shot. The player isn't locked into any path, they can roam the game world to find the safest and best places to take the perfect shot against the enemy forces.

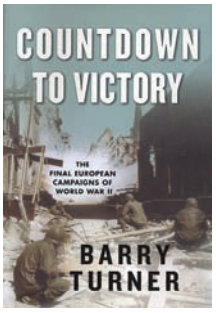
Strictly for the PC, CDV is releasing Blitzkrieg II, a WW II simulation for whose genre there is not a good abbreviation. BII is nominally a real-time strategy game, but with its emphasis on historical detail and neglect of resource gathering, it is less of a traditional RTS video game and more like a war-inspired boardgame brought to the computer. Players don't have to send their troops out collecting wood to build new units, but the players do decide what missions to play and can accumulate and

call in multiple types of reinforcements, and capture train stations or airfields to receive more troops.

The game is very complete allowing the player to play in such locales as the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Tobruk, Moscow, Stalingrad, and the Ardennes Forest. Most of the hot spots of the war contested by the three playable armies (Germany, the Soviet Union, and the U.S.) are on display. The game plays in campaigns of four or five battles; the first two or three battles can be played in any order, each giving a specific advantage in the battle that follows it. There are lots of authentic weapons and troops and vehicles, including: the "Satan" flamethrower tank, the Tiger II, the T-35, "Zero" fighters, V-2 ballistic missiles, 305-mm railroad guns, special forces, sappers, assault engineers, guard dogs, and more.

On the board game front, a new entry is Mark H. Walker's Lock 'n Load: Band of Heroes. It is the second in the Lock 'n Load series and covers the trials of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions during World War II. The game contains six mounted geomorphic maps with 480 large counters representing the men and equipment from the 82nd, 101st, 17th SS Panzergrenadier, 6th Fallschirmjager, 91st Airlanding, and 352nd Infantry Divisions. There are skill cards that provide the game's characters with special abilities. All of this is used to play out sixteen scenarios, including the defense of Neuville and the American Airborne battle during the Normandy landing.

A squad-based game, BoH brings intense tactical battles to the tabletop. There is a system of random events to make each game both different and immediate. Some are negative like ambushes or panics; some are positive like unexpected air or artillery support. BoH is a worthy and enjoyable sequel. □



"official story" was written years later, and adequate research would have revealed numerous volumes on the topic. Witt also states that the operations in the European Theater have overshadowed those in the Pacific. With some accuracy, the author observes, "Japanese atrocities were more bestial, of longer duration, and more widespread than those in Germany." Witts remains convinced that, unlike the Holocaust in Europe, Japanese war crimes were "forgotten and forgiven." While some of the information in this book is worthwhile and eye opening, the reader may not want to wade through the author's opinionated and sarcastic comments, especially his uninformed and jingoistic 9/11 jeremiad, to find it.

The Siege of Budapest: 100 Days in World War II, by Krisztian Ungvary, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2005, 496 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, tables, bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover.

The Soviet steamroller ravaged much of Eastern Europe in early 1945 on its relentless drive to capture the Nazi capital of Berlin. The opposing forces marched and fought at Budapest, Hungary, as Soviet Premier Josef Stalin thought this was the key to dominating Europe and Hitler wanted to maintain his grip on Vienna and block the southern approach to Berlin. The siege and vicious battle of Budapest lasted about 100 days, and it was one of the bloodiest of the entire war. Hungarian historian Krisztian Ungvary has used documents from previously inaccessible Eastern European archives and hundreds of participants' account to write a meticulously detailed, almost block-by-block, chronicle and assessment of the battle of Budapest. More than 80,000 Soviet soldiers and about 38,000 German and Hungarian soldiers were killed, as were many Hungarian civilians. This compelling story about the battle of Budapest, considered the "second Stalingrad" by the Germans, makes an important contribution to World War II literature.

Countdown to Victory: The Final European Campaigns of World War II, by Barry Turner,

William Morrow, New York, 2004, 494 pp., chronology, illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, index, $27.95, hardcover.

The last months of World War II in Europe, writes Barry Turner, were much more than "a short epilogue" to a conflict assumed to be over with Allied victory inevitable. After the Allies were surprised by the determined German counterattack in the Ardennes in December 1944, which began the month-long Battle of the Bulge, the Allies had to fight their way foot by foot to the German heartland. The majority of this book is a chronicle of demanding land operations on the European continent, penetrating the Siegfried Line, advancing to the Rhine, and finally linking up with the Soviet forces at Torgau on the Elbe River. Other chapters highlight various facets of the war, including the Allied bombing campaign, Danish and Norwegian resistance, the famine in the Netherlands during the severe winter of 1944-1945, competing strategic concepts, and the death throes of the German Army and the Third Reich. As seems to be the vogue in many history books today, this narrative contains various anecdotal materials and is aimed at a popular readership.

At the Dragon's Gate: With the OSS in the Far East, by Charles Fenn, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2004, 226 pp., illustrations, $32.95, hardcover.

Charles Fenn's World War II experiences read like a fast-paced adventure novel. After serving as a journalist in Asia, 36-year-old Fenn was recruited by the Office of Strategic Service (OSS), the precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency. Based on his earlier experiences, Fenn was commissioned as a Marine 1st lieutenant after undergoing Marine training. Of the five sections in the OSS, Fenn was assigned to MO or Morale Operations, which was responsible for propaganda and deception activities. He was assigned to the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater. Initially, he worked with Detachment 101 in Burma and then established a circuit of spies and informants in Southern China. Fenn was later posted to its Air Ground Aid Services in Indochina, where one of his accomplishments was recruiting Ho Chi Minh as an Allied agent. "Fearless" Fenn's interesting activities and candid comments on ill-chosen OSS leadership, Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek, and famed leader of the Flying Tigers fighter group General Claire Chennault are especially provocative. Fenn's book is a fascinating wartime intelligence memoir. □

Profiles

Continued from page 29

create what became the "Aristides de Sousa Mendes Memorial Forest" near Jerusalem.

Rehabilitation took much longer in his homeland, where the unyielding Premier Salazar remained in power until almost the end of his life. He died in 1970. A crusade to restore Sousa Mendes's good name, spearheaded by the consul's daughter, Elisa Joana, gained impetus when moderate Mario Soares was elected president of Portugal. United States Representative Tony Coelho of California and 68 other congressmen sponsored a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives calling on the Portuguese government to recognize the diplomatic hero.

Finally, on May 19, 1987, President Soares awarded the Portuguese Order of Liberty and the Grand Cross of the Order of Christ to the Sousa Mendes children. A park in Montreal, and a square in Jerusalem were named for Sousa Mendes. Bordeaux honored him in May 1994 with a bust next to a statue memorializing the French Resistance and a plaque at 14 Quai Louis XVIII. It reads, in part, "He who saves a life, saves as it were a world."

Portugal paid belated homage in 1995 with a memorial Mass and the unveiling of a plaque at the Parque subway station in Lisbon. Also that year, a postage stamp honoring Sousa Mendes was issued. It read, in part, "Aristides de Sousa Mendes: his signature saved thousands."

In 2000, he was honored at the United Nations in New York City along with Pope John XXIII, who, as the papal nuncio (ambassador) in Bulgaria, Istanbul, and Greece in 1940-1945, rescued scores of Jews "from the tyranny of the Nazi era."

Meanwhile, the consul's youngest son, John Paul Abranches of Pleasanton, Calif., and the International Committee to Commemorate Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes have been working for several years to have the dilapidated family home at Cabanas de Viriato restored and turned into a museum and archival center promoting Christian-Jewish relations.

It has been estimated that a million refugees fled from Nazism through Portugal during World War II. Their path was forcibly opened in 1940 by Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who sacrificed everything for it. □

Michael D. Hull writes frequently on the subject of World War II from his home in Enfield, Connecticut.

255th Infantry Regiment

Dear Editors,

I enclose a copy of pages 60 and 61 of your May 2005 issue, which may contain an error. It states that the picture is of "soldiers of the 225th Infantry Regiment." The correct identification is the *255th* Infantry Regiment, of the 63rd "Blood and Fire" Division. I was a scout-observer in the Combat Intelligence squad of the 2nd Battalion of the 255th.

After capturing Heidelberg and crossing the Neckar River on April 1, 1945, we pursued the German army retreating toward Bavaria, but making many rear-guard stands. Waldenburg sits atop a high butte, and is ringed with a high medieval stone wall; the top half of the hillside was heavily forested with pine trees, and the lower half was wide open. An SS unit, estimated at 550 in number, chose to make a stand there, as its height gave them excellent visibility in all directions.

Our efforts at infantry assault were met by withering small-arms fire, and our guys could not reach the wooded top areas. We therefore pulled back, and brought up several batteries of 4.2-inch mortars, which fired a lengthy barrage of WP (white phosphorus incendiary) shells, until the entire town was ablaze. As the flames died down we moved in easily, captured the few surviving enemy, and resumed the pursuit toward the Danube.

Shortly thereafter the *Stars and Stripes* published a photo substantially similar to yours, properly identifying the 255th.

Thanks for listening.

Ralph K. Smith
Locust Valley, New York

PBM Martin Mariner

Dear Editors,

I especially enjoyed your *Iwo Jima and Okinawa 60th Anniversary Collectors Edition*. Since I went to the Pacific Theater late in 1944 and ended up flying over the *Missouri* on September 2, it covers most of the action I saw as a Navy combat aircrew gunner.

However, I would like to make a correction in Gerald Astor's article about the sinking of the *Yamato*. He mentions that the Japanese battleship was spotted by "Marine twin engine flying boats" (page 14) and that "pilots of the two Marine flying boats" rescued Lieutenant J.G. Delaney (page 78). An "r" was left off in both instances. These were PBM Martin *Mariner* flying boats (either from my squadron or a sister squadron based at Okinawa). One was piloted by Lieutenant J.G. Richard Simms.

Morton Kail
Eastchester, New York

Thank you for pointing out this information. We regret the error.

General Casualties

Dear Editors,

I was impressed with the article by Colonel Thomas R. Cagley on generals that lost their lives in WWII. The article was interesting and covered a subject I have been only vaguely aware of in my reading of WWII history. However, in the fifth paragraph Colonel Cagley mentions the numbers of German generals executed by Hitler and the number of generals killed in action—his figures are off.

Continued from page 41

islands reporting two cruisers bearing north. The men on the bridge had never before heard the captain whistle in relief. He gratefully turned east, then southeast, and took a wide swing around Mauritius. He rounded the Cape of Good Hope, sailed almost to Point Andalusia, then stopped to scrape the hull clean of large clusters of barnacles.

On March 9, at the rendezvous site, the *Nordmark* filled the *Scheer*'s bunkers, magazines, and larders with provisions, including meat and eggs saved from the late "Floating Delicatessen." The last of the raider's prisoners were transferred to the supply ship.

The *Scheer* then meandered north unobtrusively as ordered and laid off St. Paul's Rocks until *U-124* showed up on March 16 and delivered the replacement radar crystals. In return, Krancke gave the submarine crew, whose food barely passed the test for palatability, a boatload of fresh baked rolls and cakes, corned beef, and eggs.

With her radar now in working order, the pocket battleship headed for the Denmark Strait. By March 25, she passed the southern tip of Greenland and swung north-by-east for the crucial passage. The next day, she entered the strait. The wind was down almost to zero; the air was cold, dry, and very transparent; visibility stretched to the horizon. Sure his ship would be observed on the breakthrough, Krancke headed for the Greenland ice pack where the sharp difference in temperature between the ice and the Gulf Stream might produce fog. The fog was there. Instead of edging along the pack, Krancke engaged in some inexplicable maneuvers—due east, due south, due west, then east-by-northeast toward the narrows.

Two days later, the *Scheer* encountered a snow squall, and for a while the crew depended entirely on their electronic eyes. At 7:52 AM, the radar room reported: "Large object at 337 degrees, range 20,000 yards, 15 knots, course 60 degrees."

"It's one of their heavy cruisers," Krancke said. "She's probably looking for us near the ice pack, expecting us to be where the visibility is poorest."

"She's making for the narrows, too," one of the officers said.

"I expect she's not alone, probably meeting another cruiser there," the captain said. "We'll continue this parallel course, but we'll raise our speed to 23 knots."

Three hours later, the British cruiser *Fiji* faded then disappeared from the screen. Another cruiser, the *Nigeria*, was sighted in the late afternoon. The *Scheer* abruptly altered her course to the starboard, straight south. As she turned, a large puff of smoke rose from her funnel. The enemy lookout apparently did not spot it. In any case, it seemed none of the Royal Navy cruisers were fitted with radar.

At 6:30 PM, just after the pocket battleship renewed her setting to the narrows at full speed, an aggravating report came to the bridge: "Radar out of order." This was a serious loss with enemy patrols in the area. The cause was soon found to be moisture condensation. It would be easy enough to fix but would take several hours.

A heavy cruiser was sighted about an hour later as a night shadow through the fine optics of the torpedo sighting scope. A starboard turn placed them only 8,000 yards away. Luckily, the night was a couple of hours old, and the British, whose visual acuity had not been heads up all day, sailed blithely on. One of their crewmen committed the cardinal sin of flashing a match or a cigarette lighter on deck. The momentary flare gave the Germans an exact range.

The *Scheer* could take her out fairly quickly, but *Scapa Flow*'s 30-knot battlecruisers with their 15-inch guns were less than 1,000 miles away—near enough to intercept the raider's flight home. RAF bombers based in Iceland were within range. So, in spite of the temptation to go after the cruiser, Krancke ordered a turn to port and again made for the narrows. At 3 AM, on March 28, they broke out.

With her radar working again, the pocket battleship cut through the Arctic seas as fast as she could go. No more spikes on the screen. No more distant masts or shadowy shapes.

It was an auspicious day, April 1, when she docked in Kiel after her 46,419-mile cruise, with 17 enemy ships sunk or captured and the Royal Navy and British shipping schedules thrown out of kilter at least three times. It was her eighth birthday. She had been launched with the words, "Serve your Fatherland loyally and may good luck go with you." Fate had certainly favored her, except for the less than triumphant action against the *Jervis Bay* and her convoy.

The spruced up *Admiral Scheer* and her 1,300 officers and crew, wearing their best uniforms, piped Grand Admiral Raeder aboard. After his inspection, Raeder announced that Iron Crosses would go to the entire ship's company. Krancke later was told he was promoted to rear admiral.

Three days later, British bombers attacked Kiel harbor. The *Scheer*'s antiaircraft gunners shot down two of them. Asked what their main target was, one of the captured fliers said: "Your bloody pocket battleship, of course. What else?"

The remainder of the *Admiral Scheer*'s career turned out to be little more than a fizzle. While she was getting a thorough overhaul in Kiel between April 15 and July 1, the new pride of the Kriegsmarine, the 45,000-ton battleship *Bismarck*, probably the most formidable battleship in the world at the time, was sunk on her commerce-raiding debut by a Royal Navy task force. Two weeks later, the *Scheer*'s luckless sister ship *Lutzow* was disabled by a torpedo bomber.

After the *Bismarck* and *Lutzow* calamities, Germany's top admirals, influenced by Hitler's naval anxiety, treated what was left of their surface fleet as if it were in a long-term care facility. The *Scheer*'s next raiding cruise was canceled. From then until near the end of the war, her experience resembled that of the *Lutzow*, except her luck remained as good as her sister's was bad. That is, until the night of April 9, 1945.

At 10:30 PM, the first of 600 Allied bombers began dropping their loads over Kiel. The pocket battleship, now as defenseless as her raiding victims in 1940 and 1941 had been, was hit eight minutes later. This time the bomb exploded. More bombs tore holes in her starboard side and put her command and lighting systems out of commission. She listed 16 degrees away from the dock. By 10:45, further hits and near misses nearly doubled her list to 28 degrees.

An abandon ship order was sounded. Men climbed through smoke-and flame-filled spaces, up strangely tilted companionways, and through portholes. Due to electrical failure, many of the skeleton crew did not hear the order. Fifteen crewmen were killed by explosions, fire, asphyxiation, sliding machinery and other heavy equipment, and drowning. A few minutes later, the ship capsized in about 50 feet of water.

After the war, under British supervision, valuable metals, gun housings, and turrets were removed, and the mangled torso was covered over with rubble. In 1950, the remains of the magnificent, innovative *Admiral Scheer* became the foundation for a British-built parking lot. □

Ralph Segman is co-author of If The Gods Are Good: The Epic Sacrifice of HMS Jervis Bay, *co-authored by the late Gerald L. Duskin. Segman is a retired journalist and has served in the U.S. Army and the U.S. Maritime Service.*

Warsaw 1943

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hour later they were again taken unawares and went scurrying like hares, abandoning their dead and wounded.

This incident renewed Stroop's dread. He hurried to the ghetto's main gate to personally oversee the rounding up of one of the last groups taken for deportation. Suddenly, a young rebel jerked out a revolver and pumped three fatal rounds into an SS officer. Stroop joined in the instant fusillade that tore into the unbowed hero. The Brigadeführer walked over to the dying Jew and looked into his fearless eyes. The boy raised his head and spat on the general, then sank back to the pavement.

That afternoon, the SS tortured a child into revealing the bunker's entrance. Over the next two days, the killers used bullets, bombs, and gas to slay most of its final occupants. The fighting had simmered down to sniping from a few diehard holdouts and to the escapes of a few survivors, most of whom were shot as they emerged from sewers through which they had fled. By this time, the Home Army was ardently assisting, but its units were repeatedly betrayed by canine patrols.

On May 5, Stroop's top aides informed him that approximately 45,000 Jews had been killed or caught during the rebellion. Unknown to the Germans, Anielwicz had survived the assault on his bunker and was still alive in its reeking depths. On the 9th, the murderers returned and, to play it safe, pumped the cellar full of gas and wiped out the few pathetic survivors. They then dynamited the bunker.

Over the next few days, tiny knots of Jews trickled out of the ghetto and into the forests bordering Warsaw in hopes of joining the Home Army, although Stroop recorded stout armed resistance as late as May 10. An uneasy quiet descended onto the charred, smoking ruins, but it was shattered on the 16th when Stroop had the huge 66-year-old Warsaw synagogue blown to bits. That evening, he sent a cable to Himmler: "The former Jewish quarter of Warsaw no longer exists."

Jurgen Stroop was awarded the Iron Cross First Class for his actions against the Warsaw Jews and was promoted to command all SS forces in Greece. After the war, he was returned to Warsaw and tried for his crimes against humanity. He was hanged March 16, 1952. □

Kelly Bell is a full-time freelance writer who specializes in historical subjects. He resides in Tyler, Texas.

Top Secret

Continued from page 15

nation's official history. Despite the censorship, the massacre itself and the fate of the other 10,000 men missing from the Ostashkov and Starobelsk camps remained an open wound that refused to heal. Many Polish historians and private citizens, buoyed by compelling evidence from Western sources, moved to have the crime investigated further. However, the communist government of Poland refused to countenance anything other than the official Soviet version that, since 1943, had blamed the Germans for the killings.

For 50 years, the Soviet files on Katyn remained closed until the era of Mikhail Gorbachev and glasnost in 1987. It was then that a joint commission was formed to investigate "blank spots" in the troubled history of the two nations.

Finally, in October 1990, the Soviet premier solemnly handed the Polish leadership a folder containing documents outlining the chilling truth. The NKVD, on Stalin's direct orders, had been responsible for the killings.

As many had suspected all along, the massacre was not a rogue secret police action but a carefully and officially sanctioned operation that commenced soon after the cessation of hostilities with Poland in 1939. The principal targets were the Polish officers held in the three camps at Kozelsk, Ostashkov, and Starobelsk, who were at that time enduring an incessant barrage of Soviet propaganda and political re-education. Stalin did not feel threatened by the rank or military bearing of these men, but rather their standing as the professional and military elite around whom a resurgent, independent Poland could emerge.

From October 1939 to February 1940, the prisoners had been subjected to lengthy interrogations which, in effect, formed the basis of a selection process to determine who would live and who would die. With the exception of a few hundred prisoners, the NKVD categorized the majority as "hardened and uncompromising enemies of Soviet authority."

That was all the reason Stalin needed, and on March 5, 1940, he signed an order condemning 21,857 prisoners to death. Every morning at 10 AM, the camp commandant at Kozelsk would be contacted by NKVD headquarters in Moscow with a list of prisoners to be moved that day. Those selected were taken to a nearby railway station and transported to an undisclosed destination.

In the early hours of the morning, the first of the Kozelsk prisoners were detrained at a small station near Smolensk and, under the supervision of a grim-faced NKVD colonel, bundled into a bus with whitewashed windows. They were then taken along a road leading into the Katyn Forest.

Arriving at the destination, the Poles emerged from the bus and each was grabbed by a guard. The prisoners were led to the edge of the pit, and on the command of an NKVD officer the shootings began.

As the graves filled with hundreds and then thousands of men, the executioners were forced to climb down and rearrange the bodies to obtain an even distribution. During the next four weeks, the rest of the men at Kozelsk were murdered either in Katyn itself, in the basement of the NKVD headquarters in Smolensk, or at a nearby abattoir in the same city.

With the gruesome task completed, the last of the pits was covered with soil, and young pine saplings were planted over the mounds. Less detail is known about the executions of the other 10,000 men except that their fate was as final and absolute as those of the men from Kozelsk. Controversy still surrounds the exact locations, but the 3,841 men from the Ostashkov camp were believed to have been shot at Dergacki, near Kharkov, and 6,376 from Starobelsk were killed near Bologne.

The massacre of the 15,000 men, not including more than 7,300 other anti-Soviet military prisoners that were murdered, had been planned and carried out with great speed, secrecy, and skill and then covered up with an equal degree of shameful overt and covert support from other nations.

While the truth behind Stalin's far-reaching killing fields and the circumstances surrounding the fate of the missing men had been finally laid bare, the place most commonly identified with the murders will probably always remain the Katyn Forest. It was the scene of only one of many cold-blooded mass executions committed during a war whose enduring legacy was the savage treatment inflicted upon noncombatants and prisoners alike.

Despite the Soviet Union's remorseful disclosure of the facts behind the massacre, its assurances that any perpetrators still living would be brought to justice remains unfulfilled. To date no former member of the Soviet military or NKVD has ever been arrested or charged with the killings. □

Richard Rule is a veteran of the Australian Army who has written several books, works in sales management, and enjoys fly fishing. He writes from his home in Heathmont, Victoria, Australia.

insight

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thought the same: the offensive could not succeed. He saw Hitler during the last conference before the great battle as "a stooped figure with a pale and puffy face, hunched in his chair, his hands trembling, his left arm subject to violent twitching which he did his best to conceal, a sick man apparently bowed down by his burden of responsibility." In Manteuffel's opinion, the best Hitler could hope for was a limited success, a pincer movement that would trap at the most 10 Allied divisions.

In the event, all of them were wrong. Whether sick, crazy, or deluded, Hitler's attack shattered two American divisions within days. The Germans took 25,000 U.S. prisoners in the first week and were well on their way to the River Meuse, the last natural barrier between their armored spearheads and Brussels, the Belgian capital, and the great Allied supply port of Antwerp.

Despite his chronic illnesses, Hitler had correctly interpreted the Allied situation in the West as he had lain on his sick bed in East Prussia during those early days of September. He had realized that General Dwight D. Eisenhower's broad front strategy, which entailed bringing up all the Allied armies to the German frontier before attacking, had meant the enemy forces were too thinly spread. According to the traditional German strategy of "*klotzen und nicht kleckern*" (mass not spread), any German army massing at one particular spot where the enemy was thinly spread, such as in the area defended by General Troy Middleton's VIII Corps in the Eifel-Ardennes, would inevitably ensure a breakthrough. This it did in the Bulge.

Hitler had seen, too, that there was little real cooperation between the Anglo-American armies, especially when General Bernard Montgomery, the British commander, had proved such a thorn in Eisenhower's side. A successful breakthrough at the seam between those two armies might well knock Britain out of the battle, especially since the British were scraping the barrel for manpower. Churchill purportedly was carefully husbanding his resources to protect the future interests of the British Empire and perceived Roosevelt as intent on doing away with it—something which Hitler had also believed.

What Hitler had not considered when he had started on Germany's last great military adventure in the West were the imponderables. The foremost of these was the stubbornness of some of the American troops. The Führer thought the Americans would break and allow the whole front to be shattered as his Central European and Italian allies had done at Stalingrad. They did not.

Then, there was the weather. He had hoped for bad weather for the whole of the battle so that the Allies would not be able to use the massive superiority of their air forces. But, the weather obeys no one, not even military geniuses. It broke, giving clear blue skies in which Allied fighter bombers could fly and create havoc among the defenseless German troops below.

Finally, there was the inability of the attacking Germans, relying on a quick dash to the great Allied port of Antwerp in the style of the 1940 blitzkrieg, to find fuel necessary for the armor to complete such a lightning stroke. The tanks ran out of the "juice," as the Germans called it. It was something else that Hitler apparently had not taken into consideration. If he had, he had not given it the importance it needed. However, military geniuses, mad or sane, mainly believe what they want to believe, blind to factors that do not fit into their plans.

In the final analysis, Hitler failed in the Ardennes. His armies did not reach their objectives. The Battle of the Bulge was a German defeat. In retrospect, however, one cannot truly say that it was an Allied victory. Not only did it postpone the end of the war for another two months and cost the valuable lives of many thousands of Allied servicemen, but it also enabled the Soviets to win a great political victory. Due to Allied entanglements and shortcomings in the West during the winter of 1944–45, the Red Army was allowed to penetrate deep into the heart of Central Europe.

Within months of the end of the war, General George S. Patton, Jr., was already telling one of Eisenhower's deputies: "I really believe that we are going to fight them (the Soviets), and if this country does not do it now, it will be taking them on years later when the Russians are ready for it and we will have an awful time whipping them."

The Cold War was on its way, and one might say that this 40-year struggle, which involved the Korean and Vietnam wars, was in a fashion, Hitler's revenge. Crazy or not, the Führer had, that September, dreamed up a long-term scenario of death and destruction in that little wooden bed of his in that remote East Prussian forest. □

Well-known author Charles Whiting has written numerous books on topics related to World War II. He resides in England.

According to the book *Opfergang der Generale* by Josef Folttmann and Hans Moller-Witten, first published in 1952, 223 German army generals were killed in action during the war; only 20 were executed by Hitler. Most of those executed by Hitler were in connection with the July 20, 1944 plot on his life. This book also details German flag officers from all services—Army, Navy, Air Force, Waffen SS, and Police—who were killed in action, committed suicide, or died in hospitals or captivity.

James H. Stevenson
Pinehurst, North Carolina

Latino Contributions

Dear Editors,

I would like to suggest that you include more articles covering the history of Latino or Hispanic soldiers in the U.S. Armed Forces, especially those from the Southwest or California. The contributions made by Hispanics in World War II and in other wars has rarely been documented or acknowledged. I recently read an excellent book titled *Among the Valiant* by Raul Morin which speaks to this very subject. I feel it is very important that the Hispanic youth and other segments of our society learn of the participation that Latinos and Hispanics have had in the wars this country has fought, and that we begin to acknowledge these contributions.

Hector R. Mesa
Tuscon, Arizona

Dieppe Raid

Dear Editors,

I address my immediate comments to your article in the July 2005 issue of *WWII History*. The article is titled "Tragic Dress Rehearsal" and is written by Australian Richard Rule. Mr. Rule is very good at keeping within the confines of Operation Jubilee and its benefit to Operation Overlord, but he fails to make any meaningful mention of the previously cancelled Operation Rutter, Lord Mountbatten, and how they affected the outcome of Jubilee. In my opinion this affect is quite pertinent to Mr. Rule's commentary. As you may know, it was Lord Mountbatten and his unauthorized rejuvenation of Rutter (albeit without anywhere near the air/sea support assets) on July 11, 1942 that led to Jubilee. Its lack of authorization can be directly attributed to the overall failure of the raid in terms of those killed, wounded, and captured. Assets that were planned for the larger Operation Rutter such as warships bigger than destroyers, the use of RAF Bomber Command "heavies," and most importantly, the Inter-Service Security Board and the Joint Intelligence Committee were not in place. Rutter was planned for July, and almost five weeks separate it from August 12, 1942. Aside from no security plan for the troops that were briefed on Rutter, no new intelligence was provided to Mountbatten and his staff at Combined Operations. That which they had was horribly faulty in the make-up and location of German forces both in and around Dieppe. I feel this piece could have benefitted from putting this raid into context by speaking on Rutter first. Nonetheless, a fine article by Mr. Rule. In closing, I wish to say that you publish a fine magazine and your topics and authors are as interesting to read as can be. Keep up the good work.

Darrell Zinck
Petawawa, Ontario

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