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**$29.95** MISC678

Rarely offered with tapered finger handle, used for identifying it in the dark by touch.

Breaks down into separate components for display.

## German WW2 M39 Egg Grenade

Accurate inert steel reproduction with detachable Fuse assy. Full Size. **$22.95** MISC680 (Inert)

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**$19.95** HAT07

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*Please note: No dummy grenades to California - Some States may have restrictions on ownership of INERT grenades. Check your local & State laws.*

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All steel construction, this full size WWII German Panzerfaust Rocket Launcher was the precursor for the RPG series. Our Panzerfaust comes complete with a reprint of the original WWII operator instructions, flip up sight/trigger unit, and rocket with flexible fins. A terrific display piece for museums, static displays or reenacting. **$180.00** RL002

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**$145.00** MISC684

## French Foreign Legion "Sahara" Kepi

Our Kepi is the NCO type with blue wool cover with red top and blue piping. An embroidered green bursting bomb is sewn into the front. Finished with brass chinstrap buttons and leather visor and chinstrap. We have included the DESERT COVER, which fits over the top, and the "Saharan" neck protector. Well-made. U.S. Sizes: 7-1/4", 7-3/8", 7-1/2", 7-5/8", 7-3/4"

**$49.95** MISC285

## GERMAN K98 MAUSER BAYONETS

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**$39.95** BAY254

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As used by Japanese forces during WW2. Complete with handle and monopod. New.

**$99.95** MISC443

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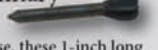

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2oz pack **$4.95** MISC288

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**$24.95**/1 lb MISC307

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## Napoleonic Flag

Represented the personal guard of Napoleon.

Size: 3x5 feet **$34.95** FLAG03

## German Imperial WWI Flag

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Chest Bandolier w/ Mosin Pouch.....**$65.00** MISC429
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Model 1935 German helmet with rolled edge, metal banded liner with 8 tongue leather liner and leather chinstrap assembly mounted by 3 rivets on the 1.7-1.9mm thick steel shell in German 'Feldgrau' Afrika Korps Tan color. Helmet fits 7-1/4" to 7-5/8" head size (large). New, well made and great for static displays or reenactments. We have purchased the remaining stores of these from 'Kamabee Keep' along with various German helmet decals which we are using to provide one set of helmet decals with each helmet at no charge as long as supplies last. M35 helmet with decal - Sorry, no choice on decals as they are quite limited. **$34.95** HLM058

## U.S. Pineapple Grenade (inert)

Inert cast iron body with inert US GI fuse lends authenticity to this iconic staple of the American serviceman in the last century. Introduced in WW1, the original designed grenade progressed through evolutions to serve in WW2, Korea, and beyond to retirement @1969. A very deadly grenade due to its girth and castellated body which reminded GIs of a Pineapple. Comes with WW2 era, (1943) 'overpaint Yellow' band and O.D. green body.

**$11.50 ea, 3 for $32.00** AM026

*(Some States may have restrictions on ownership of INERT grenades. Check your local & State laws)*


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Steel & Brass helmet with leather liner, chin strap, and solid brass face plate.....$95.00 HLM056

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*This suit of armor has a $90 shipping fee.*


## Japanese Rising Sun Flag

Cotton 3 x 5 feet with loop on top and cord on bottom like the original WW2 flags. Originally adopted by the Army, but later dominated for use by the Japanese Navy.

**$18.00** FLAG12

## Vietnam Advisor's Bush Hat, US Military

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U.S. Sizes: 7-1/4", 7-1/2", 7-5/8", 7-3/4", 7-7/8" **$34.95** HAT06

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**$210.00** REP02

## French General Officer's Kepi

Truly Museum Quality, metal gold thread embroidery meticulously applied over black and red wool 'form fit' Kepi with leather brim and braided gold chin cord. The peak of French military fashion in the early 20th century! These are of the highest quality and a rare find in the world market. Newly embroidered by a military contractor working with Kamabee Keep. Very limited quantity and only XL size is available. A gorgeous addition to any display or for art décor in your office! Eye catching quality and will get people talking for sure.

**$89.95** MISC722

## VIKINGS OF DANELAND HELMET

Alfred the Great probably had to fight the 'Northmen' wearing these Scandinavian helmets w/ Chainmail. Substantial strength and weight made these ornate helmets almost impenetrable. We have a dozen or so of these beautiful helmets ready to wear to your next LARP meeting or trip to Valhalla! Steel and brass construction w/ real chainmail.

**$95.00** HLM052

Well made wood and metal replica and has a cocking mechanism that moves back and forth and trigger that allows the bolt forward. Magazine catch also works. Comes with steel 50rd. display drum.

(non-firing) **$249.95** REP01

**1928 Thompson Display Gun**

## British Grenadier Guards Regimental Flag

Whether storming fortress Tangiers, repelling Napoleons Imperial Guard at Waterloo, Crimea, or the Gothic Line, this Regiment has famously made great 'in roads' in the history of warfare. 3 x 5 feet flag with fringe is a beauty for wall display and perfect for any 'Anglophile'! **$25.00** FLAG30

## MEDIEVAL HELMET BOOKENDS

Unique hardwood bookends stand about 7 inches high and each holds a classic steel medieval helmet which can be swiveled to your desired position. Helmet styles are the European 'Maximillian' helmet and the 'Pig Face Bascinet', both with opening visors and brass accents.

**Pair of Medieval Bookends** **$29.95** MISC825

**REMEMBER THE MOVIES ZULU & ZULU DAWN? HERE IS THE REGIMENTAL FLAG OF THE BRITISH 24TH WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT**

2nd Battalion, 24th Foot Colors with their battle honors is a beautiful tribute to their sacrifices from clashing with Napoleon at Talavera, charnel conflagration at Chillianwallah, and the truly legendary stand of their unit at Rorkes Drift , South Africa where against all odds and with stellar leadership, a Company of the 24th defended against an attack by over 4,000 Zulu warriors. A beautiful wall hanger. Size 53" x 33". 2 grommets for use on pole. **$29.95** FLAG32

## German Balkenkreuz 'Vehicle Cross' Flag

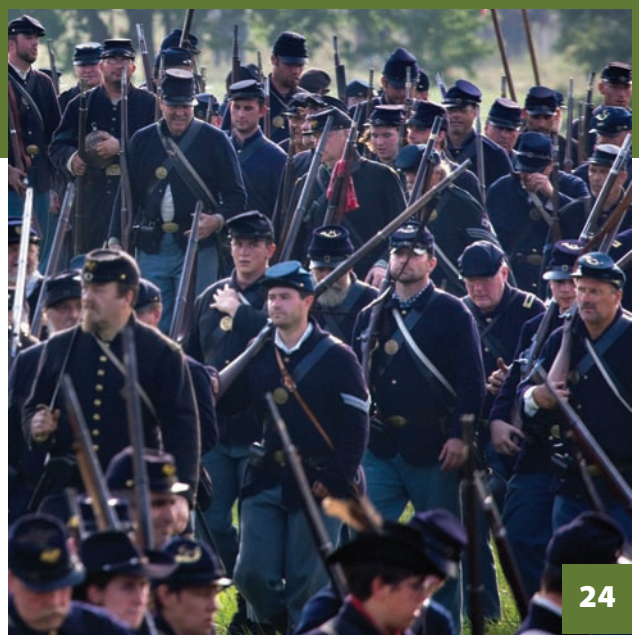
Adopted emblem from WWI that found greater prominence during the WW2 where it was painted on hulls and as a 'Flag' applied to the top of the engine compartment to allow visual recognition by the Luftwaffe pilots, primarily in the Eastern campaign. All cotton, size 3 x 5 feet with loop and bottom draw cord. **$18.95** FLAG21

# MILITARY HERITAGE

Spring 2020

## FEATURES







## COLUMNS



*Cover:* A soldier of the Waffen-SS poses with a Bergmann MP-28 somewhere in the Soviet Union in 1941. See story on the Waffen-SS on page 54. Photo: Bundesarchiv Bild 101III-Melters-074-14; Photo: Melters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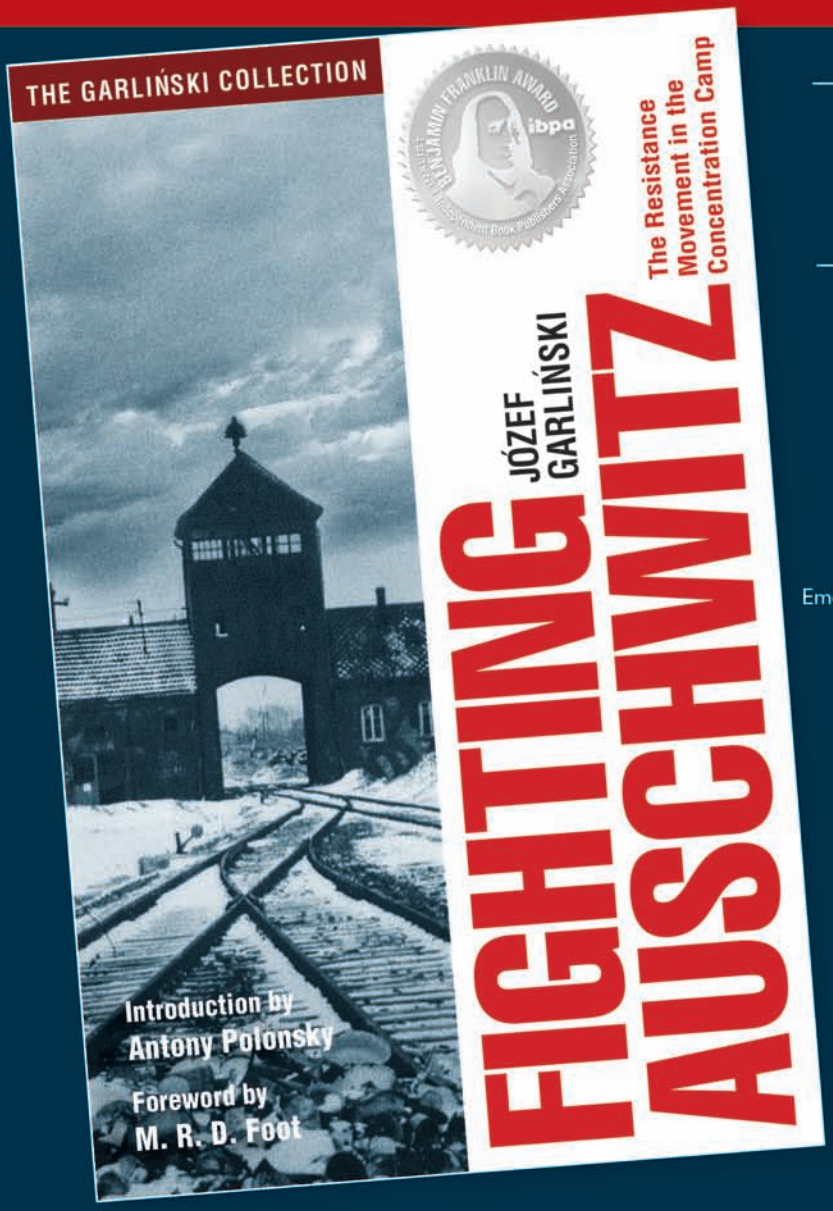


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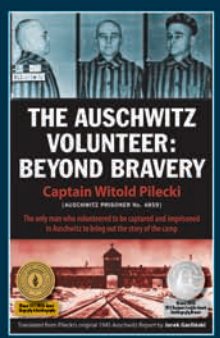


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# EDITORIAL

## RANS WRIGHT'S "MAD GEORGIANS" AT GETTYSBURG

On the extreme left of the Confederate attack on July 2 against the Union Forces defending Cemetery Ridge, there came a moment when Union commander George Meade's personal safety was in danger. Throughout the Confederate attack on the Union left that began at 4:00 p.m. that day, Meade had been bringing forward reinforcements and inserting them in holes to plug his battle line on Cemetery Ridge.

At dusk he was riding on the ridge with a few aides when he spotted a wave of gray soldiers about to surge into a hole south of the Union II Corps. Meade cast an anxious glance north towards Cemetery Hill, where reinforcements from the Union I Corps were expected to arrive at any moment to save the day. The stakes were high. If the Rebels burst through the gap between the II and III corps, it could potentially cause the Union line to collapse.

Meade straightened in his stirrups, as did those with him. Would they have to defend themselves against the approaching Georgians of Brig. Gen. Ambrose Ransom Wright's Brigade? Just as they were bracing for contact, reinforcements were on hand.

"There they come, general!" shouted one of the aides. He had spotted the Yankees of Abner Doubleday's I Corps division, led by Maj. Gen. John Newton. Newton rode up to Meade and asked where to put his men. As Newton's troops deployed from column to line, Meade waved his hat over his head and shouted, "Come on, gentlemen!"

Fortunately for the Union army, the Georgian tide had already crested; Rans Wright's men were streaming back towards Seminary Ridge. In his report of the battle, Wright embellished the success of his soldiers, stating that they had swept all the way across the crest of the hill. Wright had sent calls to the generals commanding the brigades on his flanks, but they gave him little support. Nevertheless, it was a grand charge, according to soldiers on both sides who witnessed it.

Wright's Georgians swept across Emmitsburg Road and struck elements of two brigades of Maj. Gen. John Gibbon's Second Division of the Union II Corps. Arrayed behind a low stone wall on Cemetery Ridge were the veterans of the 69th Pennsylvania Regiment. Despite canister fire from Union batteries on the ridge, "still came on the mad Georgians until they reach[ed] point-blank range of our rifles," recalled Private Anthony McDermott. The fury of the attack of the 48th Georgia Regiment is revealed by the fact that its flag fell seven times. When the seventh man carrying it was killed, Union troops captured the fallen flag.

Rans Wright's Georgians had been hell-bent on exploiting the gap that Meade fretted might enable the Confederates to gain the Union rear. But Anderson's attack was weaker than those made by Hood and McLaws. Piecemeal assaults like those of Wright, although made with great bravery, were not enough to defeat a larger, well-led Union army at Gettysburg. Wright's attack was one of many "what-ifs" during the titanic clash.

*–William E. Welsh*

**PUBLISHER'S NOTE:** We're excited to be bringing you the first issue of our updated, enhanced *MILITARY HERITAGE* magazine. We've increased the number of pages in each issue to 100 to allow our writers to fully explore the history behind the world's most important battles, and to include more articles per issue. We've also enlarged the size of the magazine, as well as increased the weight of the cover stock to allow your archived issues to better stand the test of time on a bookshelf. These improvements, of course, are expensive, so to keep the price you pay in line, we've changed the frequency from bimonthly to quarterly. You'll enjoy more top-quality military history articles, research and illustrations per year in these four quarterly issues than with smaller bimonthly issues. And you'll receive them in a significantly more engaging format. I hope you enjoy!


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# COLONEL WILLIAM O. DARBY MOLDED THE U.S. ARMY'S NEWLY CREATED RANGERS INTO AN ELITE AND HIGHLY RESPECTED FORCE IN WORLD WAR II.

*By William E. Welsh*

All photos: National Archives

On the morning of Friday, February 18, 1944, fresh groups of German panzergrenadiers backed by tanks swept south from their defensive positions at Anzio and overran American forward positions at Aprilia, eight miles north of the landing beaches.

Among the American units hardest hit in the German counterattack were the 179th and 180th Infantry Regiments, recently committed from the American reserve. Hundreds of American soldiers surrendered to the Germans when they found themselves surrounded. In the demoralizing aftermath, Maj. Gen. John Lucas, the 45th Infantry Division commander, sent Ranger force commander Lt. Col. William O. Darby to take command of the shattered 179th Infantry.

Darby arrived at the regimental headquarters that afternoon to restore order and, he hoped, the regiment's morale. When a battalion commander asked if he was going to be relieved for losing his battalion, Darby had a ready response. "Cheer up, son," he said. "I just lost three of them. But the war must go on."

Darby was no stranger to the frustration, self-doubt, and heartache felt by the American troops at Anzio. The veteran commander was referring to the major losses suffered by three Ranger battalions, which he had raised and trained, in an ill-conceived attack against entrenched German positions at Anzio on January 30. Darby still had not fully reconciled himself to the devastating event, but he knew that duty required that he persevere.

Two years earlier, in late January 1942, then-Captain Darby had arrived in Belfast, Ireland,

**ABOVE: Darby, wearing the distinctive British helmet, trained with British commandos alongside his men at Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland, during the Fall of 1942. TOP: Army Rangers in combat near Santa Maria, Italy, in November 1943.**

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**American Ranger battalions, training under British Naval instructors, practice an opposed landing operation within the United Kingdom. Live ammunition and trench mortar bombs were used to create a realistic atmosphere and prepare the men for combat conditions.**

with Maj. Gen. Russell Hartle's U.S. 34th Infantry Division. The 34th Infantry and the 1st Armored Division constituted the U.S. V Corps.

Darby served at the time as Hartle's aide. The division had sailed to Ireland to train for the pending invasion of Vichy French-controlled North Africa.

Darby was born in 1911 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Ruggedly handsome with a square jaw, bright blue eyes, and a wide grin, his innate enthusiasm compelled U.S. Representative Otis Wingo to nominate Darby as a second alternative candidate to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. When the principal and first alternative nominees were unable to attend, Darby filled the void.

Darby graduated from West Point in 1933 with a commission as a second lieutenant in the artillery. He ranked 177 out of 346. He reported to Fort Bliss, Texas, where he was assigned to the 82nd Field Artillery of the 1st Cavalry Division. After eight years of service in the artillery unit, he was promoted to captain in 1940. On January 15, 1942, he sailed for Belfast with the first elements of the 34th Infantry Division to land in Northern Ireland.

The soldiers of the V Corps who had reached Ireland first had to sit relatively idle while the rest of the division arrived over the next four months. Darby yearned for activity so much that he put in a request for transfer, but it was denied. In the meantime, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall issued orders to Colonel Lucian Truscott, one of the most promising officers the infantry division possessed, to arrange for training with the British forces.

Truscott subsequently arranged for Lord Louis Mountbatten, chief of combined operations for the British Commandos, to give a select group of Americans training alongside experienced soldiers. Truscott conceived the idea of a U.S. Ranger force modeled after the British Commandos. When Hartle offered Darby the chance to lead the nascent Ranger force, the Arkansan leaped at the offer.

The U.S. Army planned to initially establish five Ranger battalions for service. Four would serve in the North African and European Theaters and one in the Pacific Theater. More would be raised later if necessary. Each volunteer Ranger battalion was to have six 63-man rifle companies led by a captain or lieutenant, in addition to one headquarters company.

The Army promoted Darby to major on June 1. He and a staff officer from V Corps personally interviewed and selected the officers for the new unit. The officers who were selected then visited each unit to interview the enlisted volunteer candidates.

Training for the provisional Ranger battalion took place at Camp Sunnyland in Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland. Almost immediately, a real-life mission developed in which a few of the volunteers would have the chance to get actual combat experience. From the several hundred trainees, Darby sent a small number of officers and enlisted men to train with the British Commandos and 2nd Canadian Division forces slated for a raid within Normandy, France. When the Allied forces arrived at Dieppe on August 19, a dozen of the Rangers landed on the beach while the rest observed from the safety of the fleet. The Germans killed three of the 12 and captured several others.

The training at Camp Sunnyland was arduous. It consisted of rapid marches, obstacle courses, and weapons training. The Rangers had to learn to overcome the difficulties and challenges inherent in amphibious landings and nighttime raids.

For their first missions in North Africa, as part of Operation Torch, the Rangers were equipped with weapons associated with both stealth and heavy firepower. Each company initially had four .45-caliber Thompson sub-machine guns. These were to be given to the lead scouts on an operation. In addition, each company had eight Browning Automatic Rifles (BARs). Every Ranger also carried a British Fairbairn–Sykes fighting knife.

Darby decided that the headquarters company would do double duty as the weapons company and that mortars, bazookas, and antitank rifles would be concentrated there. Darby also decided that the company light machine guns would be replaced by additional BARs.

In November 1942, to reduce pressure on Allied forces in Egypt and eventually open a second European front through Italy, the Allies undertook amphibious landings against Vichy-French forces in Morocco and Algeria.

Darby's Rangers conducted key raids during Operation Torch. The first involved knocking out two forts on November 8, 1942, at the port of Arzew in Algeria to pave the way for regular Army forces. Two Ranger companies silenced the 75mm guns of Fort de la Point, while the other four companies captured a larger installation called Fort du Nord, which mounted four 105mm guns. "Their initial mission was accomplished with great dash and vigor," said Maj. Gen. Terry Allen, commander of the 1st Infantry Division.

The Rangers also played a pivotal role in the landings at Sicily during Operation Husky in July 1942. Maj. Gen. Terry Allen, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, tasked Darby with leading a battle group known as Force X. In addition to

the 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions, Darby's ad-hoc force included a 4.2-inch chemical mortar company and a battalion of engineers. The attack was scheduled for the predawn hours of July 10.

Force X's objectives were to seize the high ground, eliminate Italian artillery positions, and help secure nearby airfields for Allied fighter aircraft. The 1st Ranger Battalion, mortar teams, and engineers assaulted the beach in west Gela, while the 4th Ranger Battalion stormed ashore in east Gela. Gela was defended by the Italian 429th Coastal Battalion.

The Ranger companies landed in waves. The men of the 1st and 4th Battalions first had to cut their way through a maze of beach obstacles that included layers of wire and antipersonnel and antitank mines. The 1st Battalion knocked out a number of enemy machine-gun nests and makeshift bunkers in house-to-house fighting. One of their most important objectives was to silence two naval gun batteries positioned on the western outskirts of the city.

In the course of the fighting, the 4th Battalion found itself in a heated firefight with Italians who had barricaded themselves in a schoolhouse. Darby observed the action in which the Rangers cleared the schoolhouse, inflicting 50 casualties on the Italians in the process. For the rest of Operation Husky, the Rangers covered the flank of Army forces advancing on Palermo and stood guard over Axis prisoners. Shortly afterward, the Army promoted Darby to lieutenant colonel.

The Rangers' next mission occurred during the Salerno landings on mainland Italy, when they secured the Sorrento Peninsula, which divided the Gulfs of Naples and Salerno. U.S. Fifth Army commander General Mark Clark assigned Darby a staff, which allowed him to establish a formal Ranger headquarters. The Rangers established positions for artillery forward observers, secured key mountain passes, and blew up bridges and railroad trestles to thwart German movement. "The terrain was in our favor, and we quickly developed strongpoints, covering the gaps with machine-gun fire," recalled Darby. He was promoted to full colonel on December 11.

German Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's brilliant defensive campaign in Italy forced the Allies to undertake another major landing in an effort to outflank the formidable German defenses of the Gustav Line. Clark entrusted Darby's Rangers with securing the port of Anzio, a mission they successfully accomplished on January 22, 1944. The Allies initially put ashore 50,000 troops, but Kesselring shifted his forces to contain the new threat. The German panzer and motorized troops were backed by heavy artillery on the Alban Hills.

Major General John Lucas, commander of the U.S. VI Corps, planned a two-pronged attack against the Germans at Cisterna for January 30. The weaker right prong of the attack consisted of elements of the 3rd U.S. Division, the 504th Parachute Regiment of the elite 82nd Airborne, and Darby's three Ranger battalions. Allied planners tasked two battalions of Rangers with infiltrating Cisterna during the night preceding the attack, while the other battalion secured the road leading to the town for American armor.

**ABOVE: Colonel William Darby on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle speaking to a Ranger officer in North Africa. His M1903 Springfield rifle is slung on the motorcycle. BELOW: Darby speaks to a Ranger officer in Chiunzi Pass above Salerno, September 1943.**

Moving through a half-dry irrigation ditch, the Rangers stealthily passed by German positions. Loaded down with extra ammunition, the men slogged their way through knee-deep water. When the Rangers emerged from the ditch at the first light of dawn, the Germans opened fire on them from every direction. They fought back fiercely, breaking into small groups as their casualties mounted. The situation worsened when a German panzer column overran them. Those who were not killed outright were forced to surrender.

The 4th Battalion was sent forward to reinforce the 1st and 3rd Battalions, but the Germans mauled it, too. Only 500 of the 1,500-strong Ranger force survived the ordeal. The U.S. infantry units closest to the Rangers were pinned down by German machine-gun fire and so were unable to come to their rescue.

Back at Ranger headquarters, Darby was helpless to prevent the disaster. After informing his superiors of the fate of the Rangers, he asked his staff to leave the room. He then put his head down and sobbed quietly.

Lucas gave Darby command of the 179th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 45th Infantry Division on February 18, and Darby led it through the Rome-Arno campaign. After a return stateside in mid-1944, where Darby served briefly in a desk job at the War Department, the 34-year-old colonel returned to Italy as an assistant commander of the 10th Mountain Division.

On April 23, Darby replaced the wounded assistant division commander of the 10th Mountain Division. He subsequently led a task force that spearheaded the Fifth Army's breakout from the Po River Valley bridgehead and the pursuit into northern Italy of withdrawing German forces.

It was in that capacity that he was killed on April 30, 1945. On that fateful day, Darby was issuing orders for an attack on German forces near Trento when he was killed by shrapnel from an artillery shell. Just two days after the incident, all German forces in Italy surrendered. Darby was posthumously promoted to brigadier general on May 15.

Darby's legacy was synonymous with his Rangers. His West Point obituary sang his praises. "Whether enlisted men or generals, they applauded Darby's leadership, his insights into men's hearts, and his desire to have his men trained to the highest pitch," read the obituary.

An incident on the beach at Sorrento sums up his leadership style. An officer who came ashore needed to find Darby. He asked a number of Rangers if they knew his location. One of them broke into a wide grin when asked the question. "You'll never find him this far back," he said. ■

# THE U.S. NAVY'S RIVER PATROL BOATS PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE MEKONG DELTA DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.

*By William F. Floyd Jr.*

All photos: U.S. Navy

**Crewman aboard a fiberglass-hulled Mark II River Patrol Boat watch closely for enemy activity during a mission in the Mekong Delta. PBRs worked together with helicopters and ground units to interdict the flow of enemy troops and supplies on rivers and canals.**

The U.S. Navy deployed a variety of small boats to South Vietnam during the Vietnam War, but perhaps the best known of these is the river patrol boat. The PBR was the first watercraft built for the so-called brown water navy in Vietnam. During the height of the conflict, Navy personnel scouted the rivers and canals of the sprawling Mekong Delta for communist guerrilla forces, arms, and ammunition. In addition to patrolling, PBRs participated with Navy and Army troops in hit-and-run raids, reconnaissance patrols, and day and night ambushes.

The origins of the PBR can be traced to Hatteras Yacht Company of New Bern, North Carolina, which in 1965 responded to a U.S. Navy request for a prototype for a small patrol boat to operate in shallow waters. The Navy's Bureau of Ships sought a prototype for what it designated as "patrol boat, river" that could achieve speeds between 25 to 30 knots, draw only nine inches of water, and skim over sandbars. The boat would be crewed by four sailors and have heavy armament. Its armament would consist of a twin .50-caliber machine gun in an armored forward turret, as well as a .30-caliber mounted gun in the aft section. Additionally, the boat would need to be able to reverse direction, turn on a dime, and come to a quick stop from full speed within a few boat lengths.

Hatteras stated its intention to build a 28-foot fiberglass hull powered by water-jet pumps as opposed to screw propellers. The water pumps would enable the new boat to go into shallow water. The Navy put the PBR contract out for bid, and eight companies responded with bids. United Boat Builders of Bellingham, Washington, ultimately won the contract. The company built the PBR around its existing 31-foot fiberglass hull. This boat became PBR Mark I. The Navy initially requested 120

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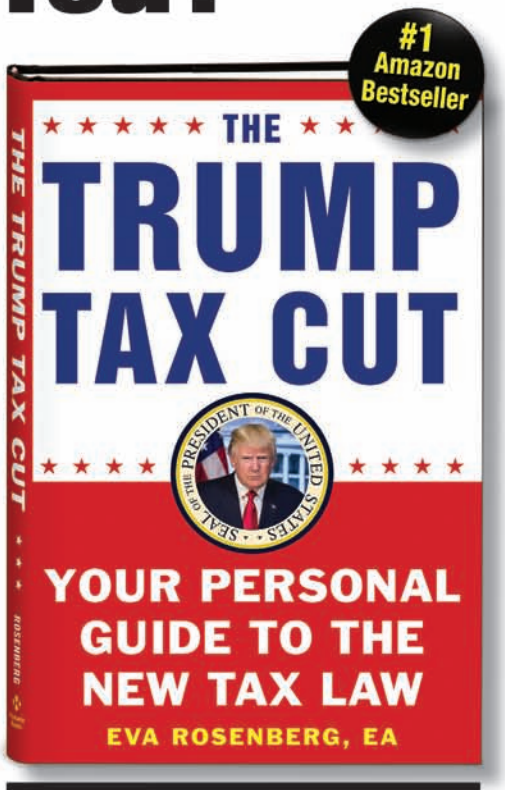


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**ABOVE: A flotilla of PBRs fires on enemy positions during Operation Bold Dragon III in March 1969. PBRs were capable of delivering Navy SEAL teams and other ground troops to remote locations in the Mekong Delta. LEFT: A sailor mans his twin air-cooled, belt-fed .50 caliber machine gun mount while patrolling for Viet Cong activity. The weapon was positioned in an armored forward turret.**

PBRs. Eighty of the PBRs were assigned to the Mekong Delta and 40 to the Rung Sat Special Zone south of Saigon.

The dark-green Mark I was powered by twin General Motors 220-horsepower diesel engines and water jet pumps supplied by Jacuzzi Brothers. The jet pumps shot out streams of water from nozzles located below the waterline on the stern. The jets of water had sufficient thrust to propel the boat. Steering was accomplished by rotating the nozzles left or right. For stern propulsion, a so-called u-gate slipped down over the nozzles and rerouted the flow 180 degrees, which propelled the boat backward. When fully loaded, the boat topped out at 14,600 pounds and could reach a speed of 25.7 knots.

The builder installed ceramic armor designed to deflect bullets up to .30 caliber around the coxswain's flat and at the weapons stations. The boat's heaviest weapon, the twin .50 caliber, was installed in an open turret in the bow. In the fantail area, a single machine gun was affixed to a pedestal. Amidships on both sides of the boat were open-ended receptacles to which could be mounted either an M-60 machine gun or an MK-18 grenade launcher. A similar receptacle built into the aft machine mount allowed an MK-18 to be piggybacked with the stern machine gun.

In addition to the mounted machine guns, the crew also took along M16 rifles, M-79 grenade launchers, handguns, and hand grenades. The boat came equipped with a Raytheon 1900/N radar system and two AN/VRC046 FM radios.

The hull could be repaired quickly and easily. It was designed so that enemy rounds would pass through it without exploding. There was no solid surface that would cause detonation.

The PBR Mark I was not immune to problems. When fully loaded, the Mark I drew 22.5 inches of water, which greatly exceeded the nine inches originally requested. Added to that, the Mark I never attained the desired speed of 25 knots. This was because the jet pumps put a heavy strain on the boat's diesel engines. Added to this, Styrofoam blocks that kept the boat high in the water frequently became waterlogged as a result of seepage through the hull.

The four-man crew for the PBR included a first-class petty officer who served as the boat's captain. Owing to battle casualties and other reasons, both chiefs and second-class petty officers also captained the boats. The other crew members were an engineman, a gunner's mate, and a seaman.

Large numbers of communist forces operated in the Mekong Delta region, not only because it contained half of South Vietnam's population and was responsible for half of the country's rice production, but also because of its close proximity to Saigon. The communists routinely transported men and supplies through its 3,000 miles of waterways. As they did so, the communists actively recruited in the region and extorted funds from the local people to finance their operations. Communist forces carried out an estimated 1,000 small-scale attacks each month in 1966 on government posts and villages in the Mekong Delta.

One of the fundamental tactics developed for the PBRs was to operate in pairs while conducting patrols. The two boats would travel in a column, with the trailing boat following 400 to 600 yards behind the lead boat. This way the two boats were close enough to cover each other. The crews conducted patrols and searches during the day and at night. When searching a vessel at night, the boat conducting the search approached the suspect craft at high speed, illuminated the vessel, and ordered all occupants to show themselves on the near side of the watercraft.

The PBRs sought to stay in the middle of the channel to maintain as much distance between the boat and shore as possible in case enemy forces were lurking in the foliage. During a search, the crew of the PBR kept a .50-caliber machine gun trained on the shore opposite the vessel being searched in case it was fired upon from behind.

The U.S. Navy launched Operation Game Warden on December 18, 1965, and established a River Patrol Force in South Vietnam to maintain military curfews and implement the interdiction program in both the Mekong Delta and Rung Sat Special Zone. As part of the program,

PBR crews routinely stopped and searched suspect sampans to see if they were transporting guerrilla troops or smuggling military provisions for communist forces.

The River Patrol Force, also known as Task Force 116, was composed of a number of river divisions. Each division had two 10-boat sections. The River Patrol Force operated from LSTs (landing ships, tank) that served as floating bases complete with troop quarters. The PBRs served as the core watercraft for these riverine divisions. The first batch of PBRs arrived in country in March 1966 during the continuing buildup of U.S. forces in South Vietnam.

To furnish close air support for the PBRs in the delta, the Navy activated Helicopter Attack Squadron 3 at Vung Tau. In addition, Navy SEAL platoons operated with the River Patrol Force, giving it the ability to conduct clandestine intelligence operations.

The PBR crews routinely used tape recorders and loudspeakers to announce curfew hours and issue instructions to Viet Cong who might wish to defect. They also performed humanitarian missions, such as transporting medical personnel to isolated villages and wounded villagers to field hospitals.

After their initial experience using their new watercraft, PBR crews made some key improvements to the weapons systems on the boats. First and foremost, they replaced the .30-caliber machine gun aft with a .50-caliber to reduce the necessity of having to carry two different types of ammunition. They also added an M-18 grenade launcher and stripped most of the armor from the forward machine-gun position to improve the gunner's field of vision.

A joint service Mobile Riverine Force began operating in June 1967. The principal organizational elements of the force were Navy Task Force 117 and the U.S. Army's Ninth Infantry Division's Riverine Forces. The riverine force was capable of deploying 150 miles from its base within 24 hours. It possessed a 5,000-man combat force that could engage the enemy immediately upon arrival at its destination. The riverine force's initial anchorage was at Vung Tau on the coast southeast of Saigon, but it eventually moved to Dong Tam in the upper Mekong Delta.

The advent of the Mobile Riverine Force in the delta marked a shift in the balance of power in the region, with the allies gaining superiority over the communists. The Riverine Force fought five major actions during 1967, in which it killed 1,000 communist troops. The enemy frequently fought in battalion strength in the larger of these engagements. In addition to small arms, they used a variety of heavy weapons, including machine guns, rocket launchers, and recoilless rifles.

**ABOVE: Armored PBRs of the Mobile Riverine Force on a mission in the Mekong Delta in 1967. A 5,000-man rapid-reaction force was established that year to deal with large-scale enemy threats. BELOW: Navy PBR boats cruise past Tan Dinh Island, trying to draw fire from enemy fortifications along the river bank. Once the boat crews had pinpointed the enemy positions, helicopter gunships would attack the strongpoints from overhead.**

The Mobile Riverine Force conducted a series of major combat operations, including Coronado I through XI from 1967-1968, Giant Slingshot from 1968-1969, and Sealords from 1968-1971. The purpose of these operations was to isolate and destroy Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units and dismantle their infrastructure in the Mekong Delta and the Capital Military District.

In September 1967, the River Patrol Force obtained a new, completely modified PBR, the Mark II. The new model had larger, improved water jet pumps made from a metal less prone to corrosion. Additionally, the boats boasted a new circuitry system for the forward twin .50-caliber machine guns. The boat was also capable of much higher speeds than its predecessor. Not long after the introduction of the Mark II, a new Alfa model was introduced with even more upgrades. By early 1969 there were 250 river patrol boats in South Vietnam, including 130 Mark II and Mark II Alfa PBRs, as well as 120 Mark I PBRs.

Communist troops attacked more than 100 of South Vietnam's cities and towns on January 31, 1968, during the Vietnamese Lunar New Year holiday known as Tet. The size and the ferocity of the Tet Offensive put U.S. and South Vietnamese forces on the defensive.

In the Mekong Delta region, the communists attacked 64 district capitals. The Tet Offensive resulted in an uptick in riverine units being used

for fire support, troop transport, and amphibious assault. Up until Tet, PBRs typically called for naval or aerial assistance and then withdrew until help arrived before re-engaging the enemy; however, the Navy loosened the rules of engagement during Tet: If the patrol officer in charge of the PBR decided his boat could stand and fight, he had the discretion to do so. Another change in doctrine occurred regarding where the PBRs patrolled. Before Tet, PBRs generally stayed in the main rivers of the delta region, but during the communist offensive they began to operate in canals and other narrow waterways.

The PBRs in the Vietnam War played a key role in riverine operations and achieved positive combat results. In the course of their patrols and operations, U.S. Navy riverine forces killed 3,000 communist soldiers and sank, damaged, or captured upward of 6,500 boats.

Some key statistics offer insight into the hazards of PBR service. One of every three PBR sailors was wounded during his tour of duty. Yet this in no way deterred the volunteers who clamored to serve aboard the boats. Volunteers for the PBRs came from all U.S. Navy rates, ratings, and ranks. Furthermore, morale among the PBR crews remained high throughout the conflict.

For these reasons, the PBR crews that served during the Vietnam War were highly respected by sailors and soldiers alike. "We were volunteers [and] patriots," said Petty Officer Jere Beery, reflecting on his service on a PBR. "We were gung-ho as hell. We looked for trouble." ■

**A SEAL team debarks from a PBR to destroy bunkers and round up Viet Cong during a raid in Kien Hoa Province. PBRs were powered by water-jet pumps, as opposed to screw propellers, which enabled them to operate in extremely shallow water.**

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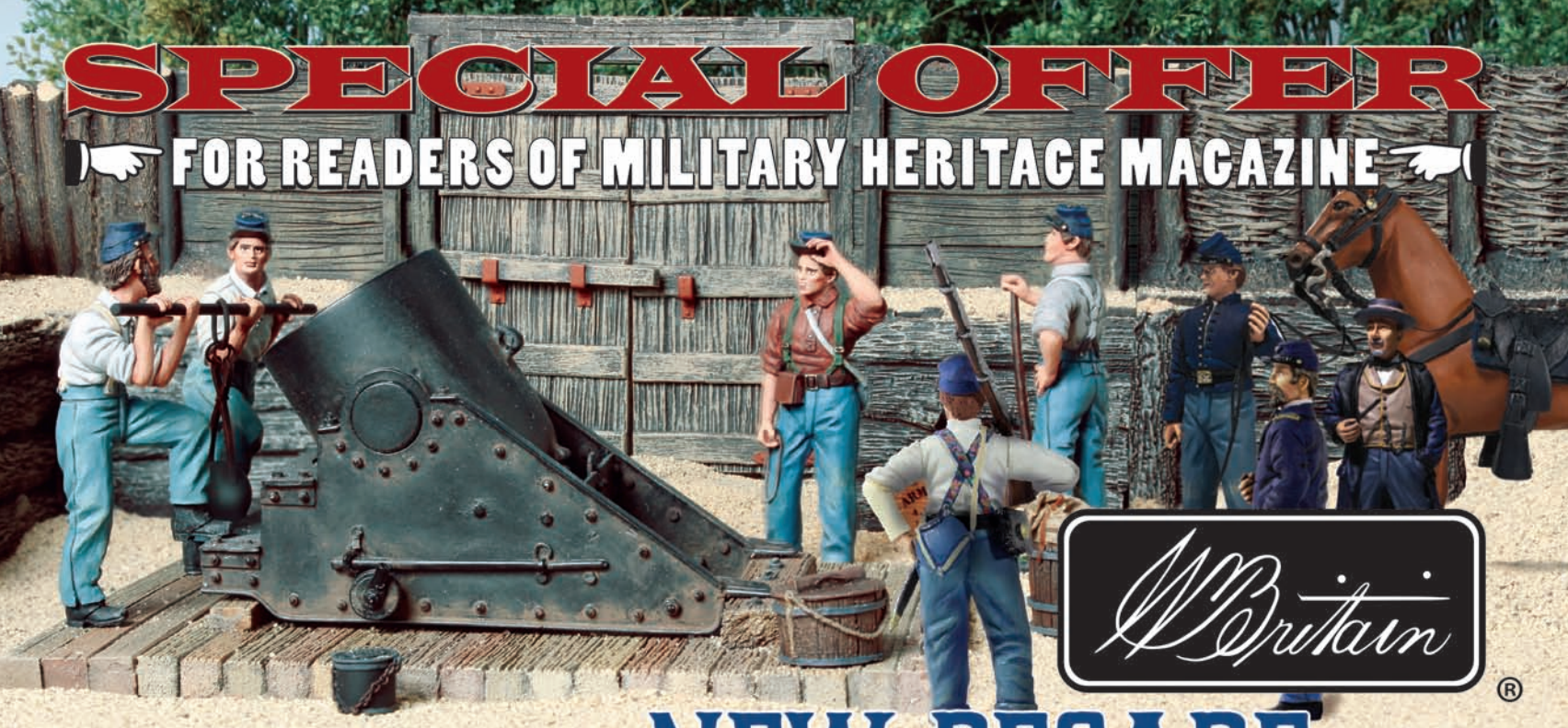

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# UNIFORM KNIGHT TEMPLAR, 1240

*By Johnny Shumate*

**SWORD:** A crusader's sword was double-edged and broad-shaped with a rounded point. It was about 38 inches long and intended for slashing and cutting rather than thrusting. It had a simple cross-guard and pommel. They were well suited for hand-to-hand combat and effective against the mail armor of the period.

**MAIL COIF:** From the middle of the 13th century on, the mail coif was no longer attached to the mail shirt but was worn as a separate defense.

**MAIL ARMOR:** The most common form of armor available after the fall of Rome was mail. It was easy to produce and did not require large masses of iron. It was formed from rings of iron, each of which was linked through four others—two above and two below it. Mail armor was used to protect the body from the head to the thighs with a padded gambeson (vest) worn underneath. The full weight of a Templar's weapons and equipment was between 53 and 60 pounds.

**BARREL HELM:** His helmet is an evolution from the conical type with a nasal guard to this so-called barrel helm type. Helmets were not only for protection, but also projected power and prestige.

**KITE-SHAPED SHIELD:** He is equipped with a large, almond-shaped kite shield that is made of wood and covered in painted leather.

**SURCOAT:** From the middle of the 12th century, knights wore a long textile garment over their mail armor that was known as a surcoat. It was a loose, sleeveless garment with a deeply slit skirt that reached to mid-thigh. In the Holy Land it is believed that their use stemmed from a desire to copy the fashion of the crusaders' Muslim enemies and also helped keep the desert sun from heating the chain mail underneath. The surcoat was rare until about 1310. Surcoats did not display heraldry identifying the wearer until the early 14th century.

The Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon, also known as the Order of the Temple, was the first religious military order of the Latin Church. The order was founded in 1119, during the reign of King Baldwin II of Jerusalem. A Knight Templar performed a dual role as both an austere monk and a well-trained knight. On the battlefield, these highly disciplined warriors were renowned for their shock charge.

The Templars' initial mission was to protect pilgrims on the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. Throughout the 12th century, they amassed considerable resources and attracted many recruits. Their broader mandate included garrisoning castles and furnishing troops for crusader armies. In so doing, they became an integral part of the defensive infrastructure of the Outremer. They eventually controlled about 50 castles and strongpoints in the Holy Land. ■

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VALOR

# ON A RAIN-SOAKED RIDGE ON GUADALCANAL, SERGEANT MITCHELL PAIGE LED HIS MACHINE-GUN PLATOON IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS AND SPEARHEADED A BAYONET ATTACK THAT REPULSED THE JAPANESE.

*By William E. Welsh*

As the 33 men of his machine-gun platoon set up their four M1919 Browning machine guns along the ridge facing south toward a jungle-shrouded ravine where the Japanese were massing for an attack on the evening of October 25, 1942, Sergeant Mitchell Paige crawled in front of their position and rigged a makeshift trip wire designed to alert his troops should Japanese forces approach their line.

Shells from Japanese howitzers on the west bank of the Matanikau River slammed into the ridge during a driving rain as Paige worked as quickly as possible. After the wire was strung, he placed C-ration cans at intervals on the wire and put an empty cartridge in each so that the cans would rattle if disturbed. He then rejoined his platoon and hunkered down to await the enemy assault.

Paige was born on August 31, 1918, and grew up in Charleroi, Pennsylvania. As a young boy growing up in the quaint town, Mitchell looked forward to the annual Armistice Day parade with a keen sense of anticipation. He deeply respected the veterans of the Great War who marched with pride along the town's main street. He admired their ribbon-bedecked uniforms and dreamed of the day that he might go to war to prove himself in battle.

When he turned 18 in 1936, the broad-shouldered youth enlisted in the Marine Corps. The following year he shipped out to the Philippines. From there he journeyed in 1938 to Peking, China, where he joined the Marine detachment guarding the American embassy in the Imperial

City. The Second Sino-Japanese War had begun the previous summer, and the Japanese were fighting their way deeper into China. During his tenure at the embassy, Paige served as an armed guard on supply trains shunting badly needed supplies from Shanghai to Peking. Riding on the train as it chugged its way through the war-torn Chinese countryside, Paige frequently saw Japanese soldiers willfully killing Chinese civilians. It was his first encounter with the ferocity of the Japanese Army.

Paige left the horror of the war in China behind in 1940. He was among the troops bundled into Maj. Gen. Alexander A. Vandergrift's newly created 1st Marine Division. Sergeant Paige was assigned to Lt. Col. Herman H. Hanneken's 2nd Battalion of the 7th Marine Regiment.

In April 1942, five months after the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, elements of the division deployed to forward bases in Samoa and New Zealand. Not long afterward, the Japanese began constructing an airfield on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. The move threatened the ocean supply corridor between the United States and Australia, and the Americans prepared to counter the move by capturing Guadalcanal.

Eleven thousand Marines began landing on Guadalcanal and the neighboring islands of Tulagi and Gavutu-Tanambogo on August 7, 1942. Japanese aircraft and warships counterattacked immediately. They drove off the American and Australian transports and warships in the waters off Guadalcanal, initially leaving the Marines to fend for themselves. Although the Marines had secured a beachhead and taken control of the airfield, which they renamed Henderson Field, the Japanese controlled the rest of the island.

The Marines had to make do on an island where the elements were as much an enemy as the Japanese. They lived in a primitive fashion in a harsh, tropical climate on an island that was mostly jungle except for the coconut groves along the shore.

The Japanese began probing the American perimeter between Lunga Point and the Tenaru River in late August. The Allies won the Battle of the Tenaru on August 21, as well as the large-scale battle known as Edson's Ridge fought over three days in mid-September. Japanese reinforcements arrived on Guadalcanal via the Tokyo Express, a name the Americans gave to the troop landings conducted by Japanese destroyers, transports, and submarines. The landings were made at night so the vessels could not be intercepted by American aircraft.

The Americans expanded their perimeter in the first two months on Guadalcanal. On the west side, the Marines clashed twice with the Japanese in the Matanikau River sector. The actions in late September and early October were known, respectively, as the Second and Third Battles of the Matanikau.

It was imperative that the Marines hold the Matanikau line, which included the sandy beaches along the coast, because it was the only possible route of advance from the west by which Japanese forces could employ tracked and wheeled vehicles. The sector was situated about four miles west of Henderson Field.

By mid-October, two Marine battalions, the 1st/7th and the 2nd/5th, held the high ground on the east side of the Matanikau near the coast.

**ABOVE: Paige made a courageous stand in which he alternated between machine guns to help stave off the Japanese infantry's last and most desperate attack against the Lunga Perimeter. OPPOSITE TOP: Two Marines man a hastily constructed machine gun nest on Guadalcanal. INSET: Pennsylvania native Sergeant Mitchell Paige.**

The Americans intercepted a Japanese map indicating that three Japanese divisions would attack the perimeter from three separate directions. Although the Americans spotted enemy forces building up to their west and south, there was no indication that they would be attacked from the east.

Colonel Akinosuku Oka, commander of the reinforced 124th Infantry Regiment of the Imperial Japanese Army's 35th Brigade, received orders on October 19 to cross to the east bank of the Matanikau, attack the two Marine battalions defending the river line from the flank and rear, and secure the high ground on the east side of the Matanikau for further operations.

When the Americans spotted Japanese infantry massing in the thickly wooded ravines south of the Marine position on the Matanikau on the morning of October 24, Vandergrift ordered the 2nd/7th on October 25 to conduct a forced march from its position near Henderson Field to defend an east-west ridgeline against Oka's expected attack. Sergeant Paige and his men fell in with the rest of the battalion as they tramped rapidly to their new position.

The 2nd Battalion arrived at its assigned position in the early evening of October 25. The Marines found themselves under bombardment not only by howitzers on the west bank of the Matanikau, but also Japanese destroyers positioned offshore. The three rifle companies were deployed from west to east, with Company E holding the lower of the two hills to the west, Company G on the saddle in the center, and Company F on the higher hill to the east.

Paige's machine-gun section set up between Companies F and G. Paige personally positioned the guns to protect Company F to his left and Company G to his right. After the guns were in place, he strung the trip wire. The Marines soon began lobbing mortar shells into the ravine to inflict as many casualties as possible on the Japanese foot soldiers.

The Japanese struck Hanneken's battalion at 3 AM on October 26. Company F was hardest hit.

Vicious hand-to-hand fighting erupted on the battalion's front line as the Japanese tried to dislodge them from the ridge.

When a Japanese soldier thrust his bayonet at Paige's head, the sergeant threw up his left hand to block it. The razor-sharp blade cut deeply into his hand, nearly severing his fingers. In a lightning move, Paige drove his Ka-Bar knife into his attacker's neck, killing him instantly.

During the fighting, the two Marine rifle companies positioned behind Paige's platoon withdrew a short distance, isolating and exposing Paige's machine gunners. The repeated charges by the wild-eyed, bayonet-wielding Japanese took a heavy toll on the 2nd Battalion in the hours before sunrise.

When one of the machine guns was damaged beyond use, Paige braved enemy fire to bring up another one. The members of Paige's section fought valiantly, but the Japanese managed to kill or severely wound all of the men in the platoon expect Paige. In the third hour of the battle, Paige ran back and forth from one machine gun to the next in the darkness to deceive the Japanese into believing that there were still a lot of Marines on the ridge.

The Japanese ultimately succeeded in driving Company F from its position. As the Japanese swept past him, Paige remained at one of the guns. He swiveled it to the left and right, firing into shadowy figures that swept past his position.

The first flicker of dawn occurred after three hours of frenzied combat. The light of morning revealed a landscape blanketed with the dead and wounded bodies of American and Japanese soldiers. A lull settled over the battlefield at sunrise as Japanese officers rallied their men for a final assault.

Paige said the Japanese knew the lay of the land east of the Matanikau River very well and had a clear plan in mind when they made their attack. "They were hoping they could catch the Marines someday in a position like this where they could break through with enough people," he said. "There were no obstacles behind me," he said, adding that it was "just a straight shot through the coconut trees right down to the beach road."

Paige devised a plan for deceiving the Japanese into believing that American reinforcements were on hand. He draped two cartridge belts over his shoulder, and with one cartridge belt in his Browning machine gun, he unclamped it. Cradling his machine gun in his left hand, he charged down the hill. Before he did so, though, he shouted, "Fix bayonets and follow me!" to the Marines of Company G to his right rear. Paige then charged down the hill toward the Japanese firing his Browning machine gun from the hip as he went.

Paige spotted a Japanese officer and his guards standing up in the kunai grass below him. "He was firing at me as I was charging at him. He had probably as many as 18 men with him…. As I bounced down the hill I raked them and they all fell over." The officer, though, remained standing.

"The Japanese officer had exhausted his ammunition," Paige recalled. "He threw his revolver to the deck, and he started to pull his samurai sword as I approached him from about four feet away. One burst of the machine gun came right down his face and chest and as his samurai sword started out, [it] hit the sword and the scabbard."

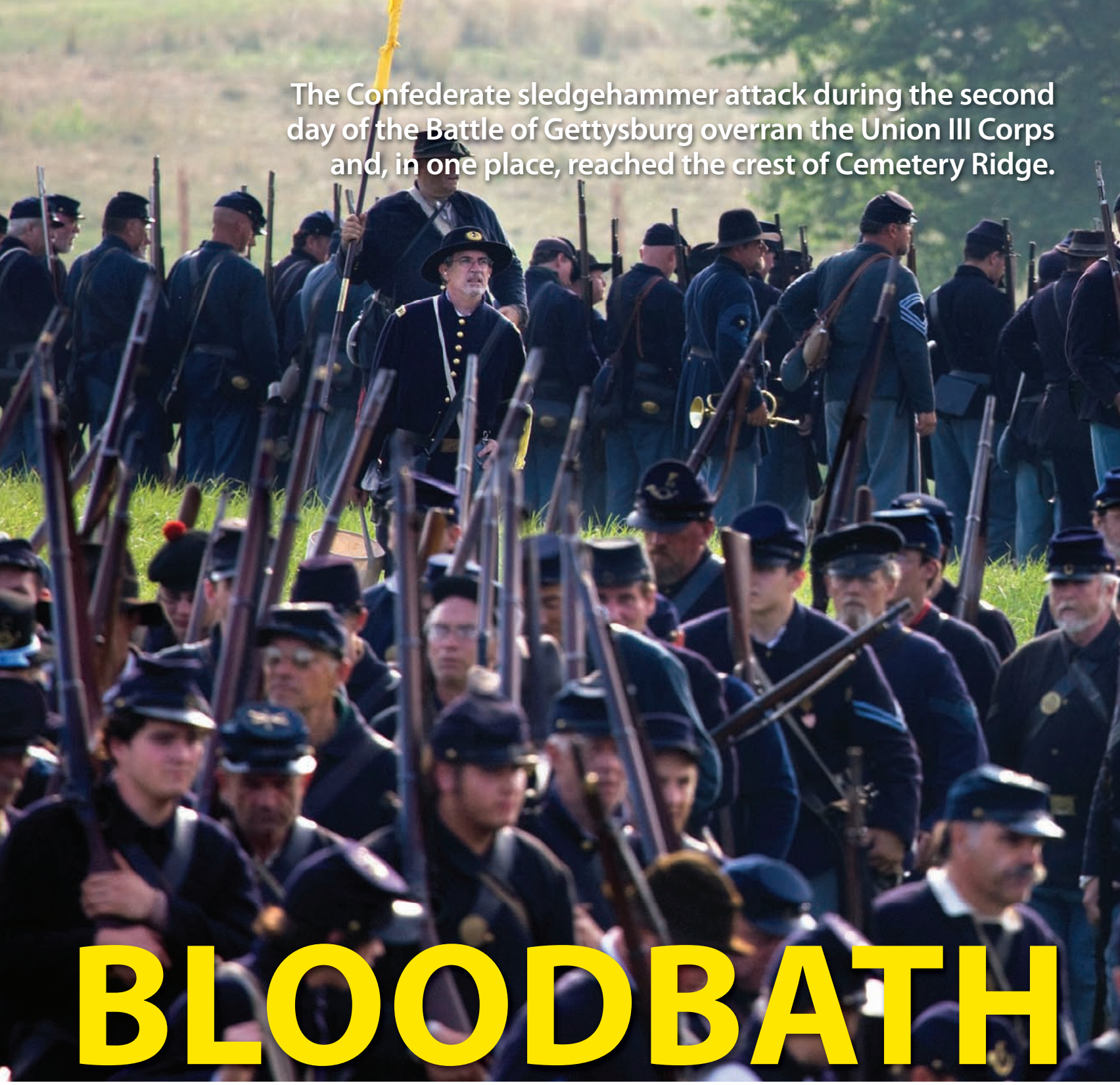
At that time, the Marines to his right rear came charging down the hill with fixed bayonets. The executive officer of the 2/7 had scraped together rear-echelon troops and along with Marines from Company G, the Americans launched a counterattack, driving the Japanese back into the jungle. By that time, they knew the Japanese attack had been defeated and were yelling with joy. "It was the greatest sight I have ever seen in my life," Paige said. Ninety-eight Japanese dead lay on the ridge and another 200 in the ravine.

The Japanese decided in late December to withdraw from Guadalcanal. The extraction was handled skillfully in the first week of February 1943. As many as 10,000 Japanese soldiers were loaded onto destroyers and removed to safety. During the Battle of Guadalcanal the Japanese lost 25,000 men compared to 1,700 American dead.

After Guadalcanal was secured in February 1943, Paige was promoted to lieutenant and transferred to Australia. Vandergrift presented him with the Medal of Honor on May 21, 1943.

In addition to the usual accolades set forth in a Medal of Honor narrative for "extraordinary heroism and conspicuous gallantry in action above and beyond the call of duty," Paige's citation mentioned that he had continued fighting with "fearless determination" after his gunners were all either killed or wounded. It described how he had shifted from one gun to another while maintaining a "withering fire against the advancing hordes until reinforcements finally arrived." Lastly, it noted how he had spearheaded a bayonet charge that resulted in the Japanese withdrawal from his battalion's sector. His valor was a reflection of the courage and bravery shown by the thousands of Marines who conquered Guadalcanal. ■

**Marines relied on their machine guns to repulse Japanese human-wave attacks. In the final moments of the battle, Paige sought assistance from a neighboring Marine company and urged its riflemen to follow him in a counterattack.**



The Confederate sledgehammer attack during the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg overran the Union III Corps and, in one place, reached the crest of Cemetery Ridge.

# BLOODBATH

Army of the Potomac commander Maj. Gen. General George Meade had inspected the ground on his army's left flank at dawn on July 2 and ordered Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles to hold the southernmost end of Cemetery Ridge with his III Corps. Yet ridge was a misnomer for the ground that Meade ordered Sickles to defend. In some places it was not a ridge at all. Indeed, its southern end was commanded by Little Round Top to the south and even by a low ridge due west on the near side of Emmitsburg Road.

Sickles fumed over the injustice of Meade's decision. At 11 AM he rode to Meade's headquarters and complained about his poor position. Meade stifled the anger he felt at Sickles' objections and reiterated his orders. Sickles was bound and determined, though, to have his way. He believed that Meade's orders put his troops in peril. He also believed they would be crushed in the near-certain Confederate attack against that sector of the field.

For that reason, Sickles advanced his two divisions 1,500 yards west of the line on Cemetery Ridge that he had been instructed to hold. The

In violation of his orders, Dan Sickles advanced his III Corps to Reverend Joseph Sherfy's 50-acre farm on the afternoon of July 2. Modern-day Yankees perform the maneuver at a Gettysburg re-enactment.

# IN THE Peach Orchard

By Mike Phifer

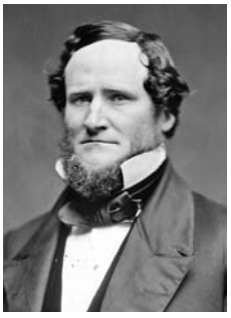
Alamy

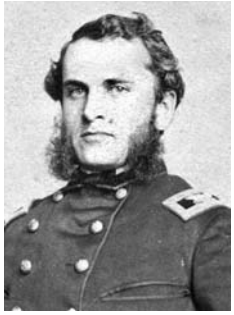
new position his troops occupied was a low ridge where farmer Joseph Sherfy's Peach Orchard was located. Events would prove that Sickles was right about the Confederate attack but wrong regarding the best position to receive such an attack. His understrength corps, composed of just two divisions, did not have enough troops to adequately defend his new position. Sickles, a headstrong politician who lacked West Point training, deployed his troops in a sharp angle, known as a salient, which was difficult to defend in the face of a determined attack.

Arriving at the edge of the woods on Seminary Ridge on the west side of Emmitsburg Road at mid-afternoon that day, Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws was astonished at what he saw. The Georgia-born general saw just 600 yards of ground swarming with Yankees. He had been told by his scouts that there were no large bodies of Union troops in the area. Indeed, a Confederate reconnaissance at dawn had revealed that only one regiment of Union infantry and one battery was positioned on Emmitsburg Road in front of McLaws' path of attack.

All: Library of Congress

**ABOVE: James Longstreet disagreed with Robert E. Lee's attack on Cemetery Ridge but dutifully carried it out. BELOW: Clockwise from top left: Union Maj. Gen. Dan Sickles, Confederate Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws, Union Colonel Strong Vincent, and Confederate Brig. Gen. William Barksdale. RIGHT TOP: Union infantry lie prone during the Confederate artillery bombardment that preceded Longstreet's attack in a painting by combat artist Edwin Forbes. Sickles' small corps of two divisions was not sufficient to successfully defend a frontage greater than that it had on Cemetery Ridge.**





Both Maj. Gen. John Hood's division on the extreme Confederate right and McLaws' division to his left awaited orders to attack in the late afternoon from First Corps commander Lt. Gen. James Longstreet. Confederate Army of North Virginia commander General Robert E. Lee had ordered Longstreet to roll up the Union left flank using his two divisions on hand.

Lee had even gone so far as to inform McLaws that he should place his troops perpendicular to the Emmitsburg Road and to attack north along its axis. Lee's orders were that McLaws was to attack first followed by Hood. Based on what he saw to his front, McLaws believed Sickles' new position threatened to derail his attack.

Twice a staff officer dispatched by Longstreet arrived to ask McLaws why he had not begun his attack. McLaws said that he needed to destroy the enemy's batteries with his own artillery before sending his infantry forward. When he received a third order stating that he was to attack immediately, McLaws told the aide-de-camp that he would attack within five minutes.

Before the five minutes had elapsed, though, McLaws received orders from Longstreet that Hood would attack first. The change in plans was both a blessing and a curse. It gave McLaws more time to plan how he would attack the Union III Corps, but it also robbed him of the element of surprise. Once Hood advanced, the Yankees would know that other Confederates on Seminary Ridge were likely to attack as well.

After the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville, Lee decided to invade the North a second time. In the wake of the death of Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson on May 10, Lee reorganized the Army of Northern Virginia. Longstreet retained the I Corps. Lieutenant generals Richard Ewell and A.P. Hill would command, respectively, the newly created II and III Corps.

The Confederates crossed the Potomac on June 15 and headed for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. But on June 28 Lee ordered his dispersed army to concentrate at Gettysburg to deal with the threat posed by Maj. Gen. George Meade's Army of the Potomac whose lead elements had reached Frederick, Maryland.

Finding the Federals in possession of Gettysburg, the Confederates attacked with their II and III Corps on July 1. The day went well for the Confederates, but the Union Army withdrew to strong positions atop Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill just below the town. Arriving late in the day, Meade noted that Cemetery Ridge and the two Round Tops east of Emmitsburg Road also would make fine defensive positions. He therefore decided to stay and fight at Gettysburg.

In his meeting with Lee on the night of July 1, Longstreet said he was against an assault against Union forces on Cemetery Ridge; instead, he favored seeking a better ground to fight in another location. Lee disagreed. "If the enemy is there tomorrow, we must attack him," said Lee.

By 12 PM on July 2 the majority of the Army of the Potomac had arrived. Meade's forces were arrayed in a fishhook-shaped position. The Union defense began at the two Round Tops and ran north along Cemetery Ridge to the edge of town. From the town it curved east toward Culp's Hill to form the hook. Meade would benefit from interior lines. This meant he required fewer troops to man his line than Lee and could shift troops faster than Lee.

Anchoring Culp's Hill was Maj. Gen. Henry Slocum's XII Corps. Adjacent to it to the west was the I Corps. Following the death of Maj. Gen. John Reynolds on July 1 in Herbst Woods, command of the corps had devolved to Maj. Gen. Abner Doubleday. Holding Cemetery Hill was Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard's XI Corps. The northern end of Cemetery Ridge was held by Maj. Gen. Winfield Hancock's II Corps, and the southern end by Sickles' III Corps. Maj. Gen. George Sykes' V Corps formed the Union Army's reserve. Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick's VI Corps was en route to Gettysburg. It was expected to arrive late on July 2.

While the Union corps commanders organized their respective positions on the morning of July 2, Lee dispatched several scouting parties. Lee directed Captain Samuel Johnston, an engineer on his staff, and Major John Clarke, an engineer on Longstreet's staff, to reconnoiter the Union left.

While awaiting the scouting parties' return, Lee

met again with Longstreet near the Lutheran Seminary Building on Seminary Ridge shortly after sunrise on July 2. The I Corps consisted of three divisions: Maj. Gen. John Hood's division, Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws' division, and Maj. Gen. George Pickett's division. Pickett's division was not on hand and did not arrive until the night of July 2.

While they were discussing the plan of attack for the day, Hood joined the conference. "The enemy is here, and if we do not whip him, he will whip us," said Lee, pointing at a map. Longstreet was reluctant to attack without all three of his divisions present. "I never like to go into battle with one boot off," Longstreet said to Hood. To compensate for this, Lee ordered Maj. Gen. Richard Anderson's division of the III Corps to go into action on McLaws' left.

Johnston returned in mid-morning to find Lee, Longstreet, and Hill sitting on a log. Johnston told Lee that he had scouted south along the west side of Seminary Ridge where he had reconnoitered Sherfy's Peach Orchard. He also had scouted Little Round Top. He told Lee that there were no large Union formations in that area. This gave Lee the impression that the Federal left was exposed and that Longstreet would be able to roll up the Union left flank. Unfortunately, Johnston's report was grossly inaccurate.

McLaws arrived to meet with Lee. The Confederate commander pointed on a map to a location along Emmitsburg Road near the Peach Orchard. "I wish you to place your division across this road, and I wish you to get there if possible without being seen by the enemy," Lee told the Georgian.

Once McLaws and Hood had placed their divisions in position southwest of Cemetery Hill, they were to attack north along the Emmitsburg Road, driving the enemy before them. As their attack progressed, they were to clear the Federals from Cemetery Ridge and, if possible, from Cemetery Hill. Anderson's corps was to help clear the Federals from Cemetery Ridge. To pin down the forces on the Federal right wing, Lee ordered Ewell to launch a diversionary attack against Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill.

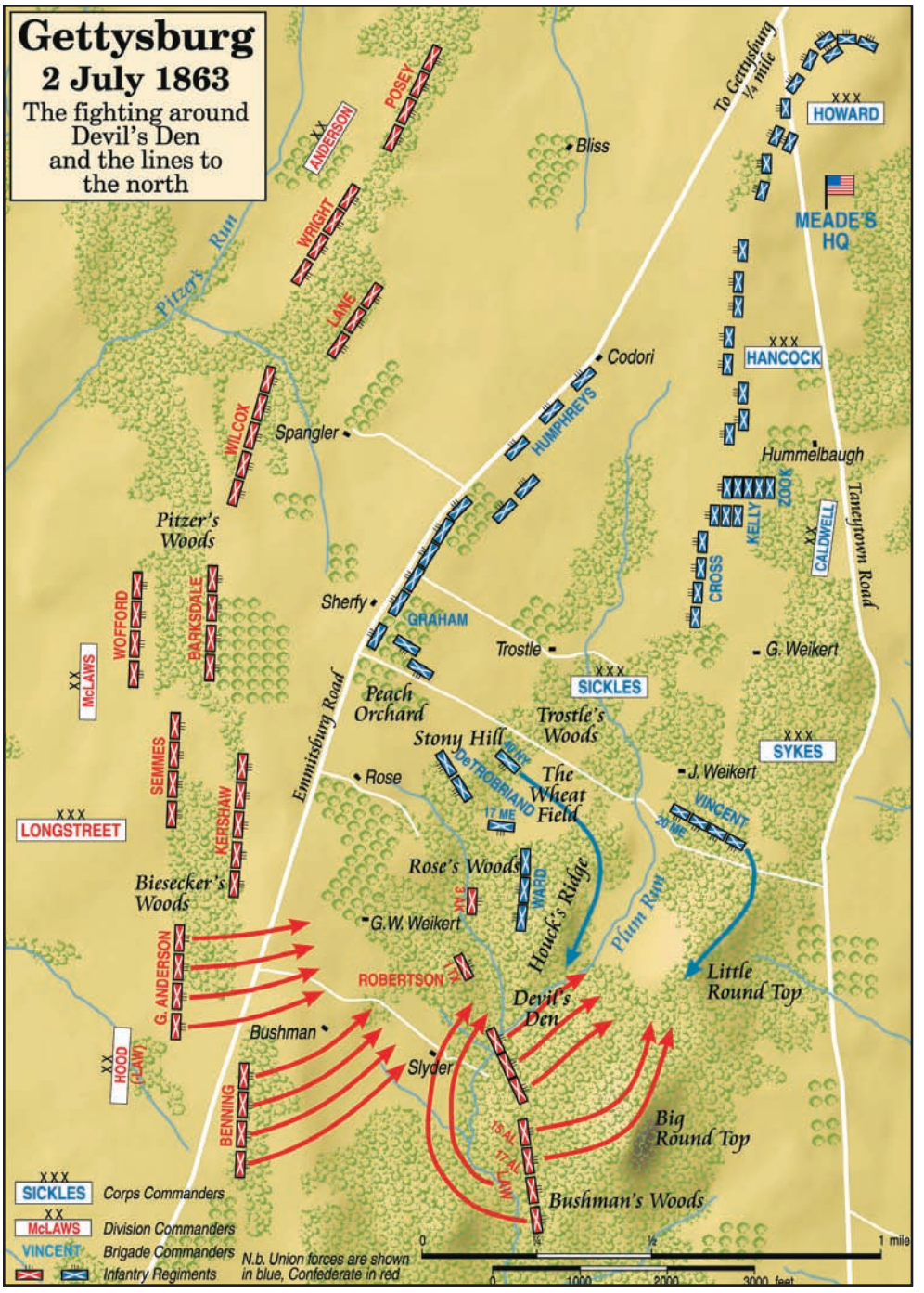
Longstreet did not want to get underway until Brig. Gen. Evander Law's brigade of Hood's division arrived after a 24-mile march. Shortly after noon 14,500 Confederate troops set off from Herr's Ridge on their approach march. McLaws' division led the column with Hood's division following behind. The column stretched for three miles.

Brigadier General Joseph Kershaw's Palmetto State brigade led the advance. The brigade had just passed Black Horse Tavern on the Fairfield Road when Kershaw received an order from McLaws to halt. The problem was that if the column crossed the crest of a hill that lay ahead it would be visible to the prying eyes of Yankees manning a Union signal station atop Little Round Top.

McLaws and Johnston set out at once to find a route by which the column could avoid being detected. Longstreet soon rode up from the rear of the column to see what had caused the delay. McLaws showed Longstreet how the column could be seen from the crest of the hill. "Why this won't do," said Longstreet. "Is there no way to avoid it?" McLaws said there was a way to avoid the hill, but it would require countermarching. Longstreet gave his approval. The column marched all the way back to Herr's Ridge, followed Fairfield Road toward Gettysburg for a short distance, and then turned south on a country road leading to Pitzer's Schoolhouse just west of Seminary Ridge. The foot soldiers quickened their pace to make up for lost time.

After the terse rebuke he received from Meade, Sickles returned in the late morning to his corps. He was accompanied by Brig. Gen. Henry Hunt, the Army of the Potomac's chief of artillery, who Meade had dispatched to assist Sickles in placing his field artillery. Sickles showed Hunt the Peach Orchard where he wanted to deploy his corps. Sickles could not bear to let the Confederates occupy the position. Sickles showed Hunt how the high ground where the Peach Orchard was situated offered enemy artillery a commanding advantage over his guns. As a professional soldier, Hunt knew that the position Sickles proposed was impracticable.

Map © 2020 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN




As Hunt prepared to return to Cemetery Hill, Sickles asked him if he had his permission to move his 10,600 troops forward to the Peach Orchard. Hunt said that he had no authority to authorize such a move. Before riding off, Hunt suggested that Sickles send a reconnaissance party to scout Pitzer's Woods on Seminary Ridge west of Emmitsburg Road to determine whether the Confederates held the wooded tract in force.

Sickles dispatched four companies of the First U.S. Sharpshooter Regiment led by Colonel Hiram Berdan and a detachment of the Third Maine Infantry led by Captain Joseph Briscoe at noon to probe the woods. The force was composed of 100 sharpshooters and 210 regular infantry. Berdan and Briscoe, both of whom were mounted, ordered their troops into skirmish lines and proceeded west over ground strewn with rocks and branches.

The Yankees moved into Pitzer's Woods just as two regiments belonging to Brig. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox's Alabama brigade of Anderson's division were about to occupy them. Wilcox had sent Colonel William Forney's 10th Alabama and Colonel John Sanders' 11th Alabama Regiments of his brigade forward to feel for the enemy.

The Yankees fired into the 11th Alabama's right flank. The unexpected enemy fire disrupted the 11th Alabama, and it fell back on its supporting line. Having had the advantage of seeing what had occurred without suffering any casualties, the 10th Alabama rushed forward and delivered several crashing volleys at the Federal troops that had unwisely passed through the woods into an open field. The Yankees rushed back to the woods. The two sides exchanged fire for 20 minutes at which time Forney ordered his men to charge. This time it was the Federals who fled back to their supporting line.

The reconnaissance party reported to Sickles that there were numerous Confederates in Pitzer's Woods. Sickles already had made up his mind to occupy the Peach Orchard despite Meade's rebuke. With flags fluttering in the wind and bayonets gleaming in the sun, the III Corps advanced to the Peach Orchard at 2 PM Sickles made no effort to inform Meade of his advance.

Observing the III Corps move forward from its position on Cemetery Ridge, Hancock was aghast. "What in hell can that man Sickles be doing!" he exclaimed to Second Division commander Brig. Gen. John Gibbon.

Sickles deployed Brig. Gen. Andrew Humphrey's Second Division along Emmitsburg Road. This deployment left a critical 500-yard gap between Humphrey's men and the left flank of Hancock's II Corps on Cemetery Ridge. Sickles directed Maj. Gen. David Birney to place his First Division in the Peach Orchard in such a way that it angled southeast along a 24-acre Wheatfield to Houck's Ridge.

Longstreet's two divisions reached Seminary Ridge at 3 PM, but it would be another hour before they were ready to attack. As the first of his troops crested the ridge, Union artillery opened fire. McLaws ordered Kershaw to deploy his South Carolina troops for battle. The burly division commander then rode off to hurry forward his rear brigades. As he did so, he ordered Colonel Henry Cabell, who commanded the division's artillery, to rush his guns forward to respond to the Union batteries already in action. Cabell's guns were the first of many that would be deployed against Sickles' III Corps salient. Confederate Colonel Edward Porter Alexander, Longstreet's artillery chief, posted four batteries from the First Corps' Artillery Reserve to supplement four of McLaws' batteries. Altogether, McLaws had 36 pieces in position to pound the Peach Orchard.

While Longstreet's two divisions were getting into place for their attack, Meade was meeting with his corps commanders at his headquarters located in a farmhouse on the reverse slope of Cemetery Ridge. During the course of the meet-

ing Meade learned that Sickles was not in position on Cemetery Ridge. When Sickles arrived to join the meeting, an irate Meade told him to return immediately to his corps. Meade also told Sickles that he would ride out to assess the situation in person. Before departing for the Peach Orchard, Meade sent orders to Sykes, whose brigades were two miles to the rear, instructing him to move his corps forward as quickly as possible to anchor the Union left flank. The orders instructed Sykes to hold the position at all costs.

Meade also instructed army engineer Gouverneur K. Warren to go to Little Round Top to make sure it was well defended. Meade had instructed Sickles to defend it, and he had a sinking feeling that the inept corps commander had neglected that key responsibility. Riding to the top of Little Round Top where the flag signal station was located, Warren found no infantry force stationed there. He dispatched Lieutenant Ranald McKenzie of his staff to request that Sickles send one of his brigades to defend the key position. McKenzie then sought out Sykes and made the same request. Sykes sent a courier to hurry forward his First Division under Brig. Gen. James Barnes. When the staff officer ran headlong into Colonel Strong Vincent, who commanded Barnes' Third Brigade, the spirited Pennsylvanian, who was the youngest brigadier in Meade's army, volunteered his four regiments to defend Little Round Top. They would arrive in position just 15 minutes before Hood's troops reached the rocky hilltop.

Meade's temper had not cooled any when he saw the exposed position in which Sickles had placed his men. "General Sickles, this is neutral ground, our guns command it, as well as the enemy's," said Meade. "The very reason you cannot hold it [also] applies to them." As Meade admonished Sickles, McLaws' batteries opened fire on the Union III Corps infantry 400 to 600 yards away. When Sickles offered to return his corps to their original position, Meade wistfully said he wished that it would be possible; however, the Confederates were not about to let him. Meade knew all too well that the enemy would not miss an opportunity to attack an exposed corps.

While Rebel guns on Seminary Ridge and Federal guns in the Peach Orchard dueled, McLaws kept close watch on Hood's progress to the south. Hood's four brigades moved into position for their attack up Emmitsburg Road at 3:30 PM. They were deployed on high ground in Biesecker's Woods east of the Emmitsburg Road. The front line consisted of Brig. Gen. Evander Law's Alabama brigade deployed on the right and Brig. Gen. Jerome Robertson's Texas-Arkansas brigade on its left. The supporting line, which was situated 200 yards behind the front rank, consisted of Brig. Gen. Henry Benning's Georgia brigade on the right and Brig. Gen. George T. Anderson's Georgia brigade on the left. Hood ordered the divisional batteries commanded by Captain James Reilly and Captain Alexander Latham to open fire in an attempt to locate the Union line.

No sooner had the Confederate artillerists begun firing their shells than they received counterbattery fire from the Federals. Captain James Smith's Fourth New York Battery, consisting of six 10-pounder Parrot rifles, had unlimbered on the high ground at Devil's Den in order to have a suitable field of fire against the Federals. He went into action against Hood's guns as did Captain Judson Clark's Battery B of the 1st New Jersey Light Artillery, which was deployed facing south beyond the east edge of the Peach Orchard.

The Federal artillery fire rattled the troops in the front line of Hood's division as they anxiously awaited orders to advance. Solid shot came screaming down to burst among the soldiers. A number of the waiting soldiers were killed in a gruesome manner. The Confederate officers ordered their men to lie prone, but this did not diminish the terror they felt.

Shortly after 4 PM Hood gave the order to advance. The broken terrain across which they attacked disrupted their advance. Law's men rushed ahead at the double-quick, but their officers tried to slow their advance given that they had a lot of ground to cover before they struck the Union line.

Plum Run ran along the eastern periphery of this rough ground and meandered between Little Round Top on the east and Houck's Ridge on the west. At the southern end of Houck's Ridge was a jumble of boulders and rock slabs known as Devil's Den. Just west of the northern end of Houck's Ridge was a trapezoidal-shaped 40-acre woodlot belonging to farmer George Rose. The combination of rocky fields, woodlots, and orchards, nearly all of which were set off by stone fences, made it extremely difficult to maneuver large bodies of infantry in any coordinated fashion.

Bloody fighting erupted in Rose's Woods and Devil's Den where Birney's left flank was anchored. The woods were situated directly south of the Wheatfield and 500 yards west of Little Round Top. Union Brig. Gen. J.H. Hobart Ward's Second brigade of Birney's division faced west. His line stretched from Rose's Woods to Houck's Ridge. Helping to anchor his left flank were Smith's rifled guns.

Hood took his customary position in front of the Texas brigade he had once commanded and gave a rousing speech. He then pointed to the east and said, "Fix bayonets, my brave Texans; forward, and take those heights!" The 2,600 Rebels in Hood's front line streamed out of Biesecker's Woods, but instead of advancing north along Emmitsburg Road as Lee had intended, they headed straight toward the two Round Tops.

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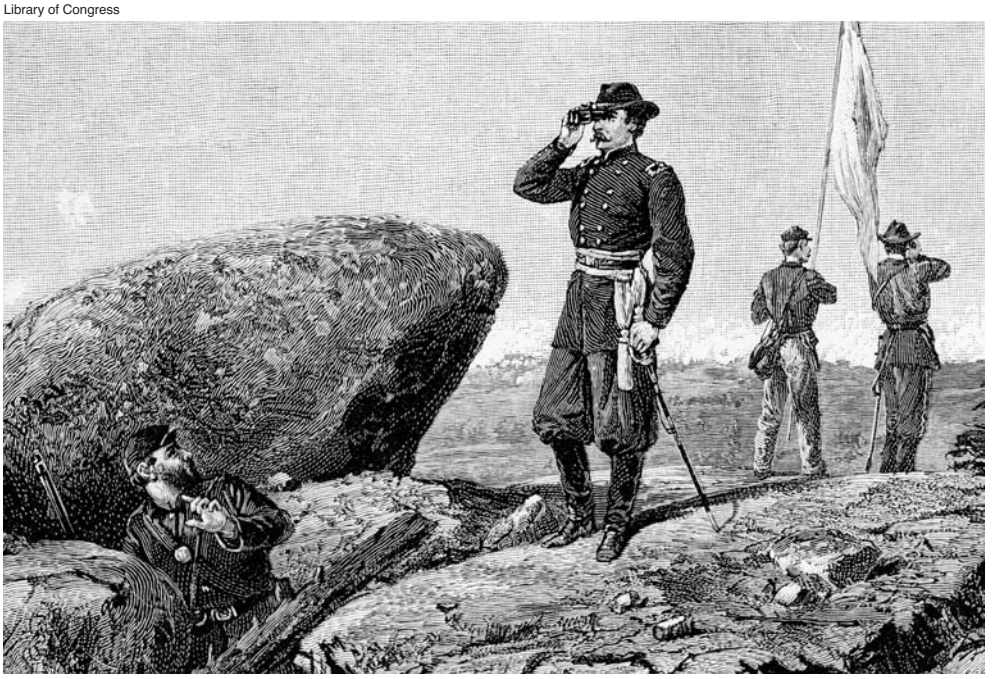

**ABOVE: Union chief engineer Gouverneur K. Warren observes the Confederate attack from the Union signal station atop Little Round Top. Fortunately, Strong Vincent's brigade was headed that way. OPPOSITE: John Hood's attack over rough ground quickly lost its cohesion. Struck by shrapnel early in the attack, Hood was not on hand to make the most of his division's assault.**

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**ABOVE: Joseph Kershaw's South Carolinians storm the Peach Orchard during Lafayette McLaws echeloned attack against the Union III Corps. OPPOSITE: A series of desperate charges and counter-charges occurred at Houck's Ridge as John Bell Hood's Georgians and Texans sought to wrest control of the high ground from its Union defenders.**

The 2,800 troops in Hood's second line, though, angled northeast toward Devil's Den and Rose's Woods. Because of the broken terrain, Robertson's brigade soon became divided. The two right regiments, the 4th Texas and 5th Texas, swept forward toward Plum Run and Little Round Top. But the two left regiments, the 1st Texas and 3rd Arkansas, advanced against Ward's brigade on Houck's Ridge.

Hood was mounted on his horse 20 minutes into the attack in a small peach orchard on the Bushman Farm when a Union shell burst over his head. At the time he was holding the bridle with his left hand. A fragment struck the top of his forearm and exited just below his elbow. Hood reeled from the shock of the blow. His aides caught him just before he toppled from his saddle to the ground. Law assumed command of Hood's division but had little influence on the progress of the attack.

Ward's men initially held their ground, but the brigade became stretched to the breaking point when the brigadier shifted the bulk of his troops to support Smith's endangered battery. As the fighting progressed, Smith lost three of his six guns to the attacking Confederates.

Birney's hard-pressed brigade desperately needed help. He received one regiment from each of his other two divisions. But these reinforcements were not enough to stem the Rebel tide. Ward had no choice but to order his regiments to fall back. This allowed Benning's Georgians to secure Devil's Den.

Birney's other two brigades were posted just south of the Millerstown Road that ran perpendicular to the Emmitsburg Road, crossing it at the Peach Orchard. French-born Brig. Gen. Regis De Trobriand's Third Brigade of Birney's division held the southern end of the Wheatfield and part of Stony Hill. Brig. Gen. Charles Graham's First Brigade occupied a position from the southernmost edge of the Peach Orchard to the Trostle Farm Lane.

Anderson was getting his troops ready to advance when a messenger arrived from Robertson. The dispatch stated that the Texans needed immediate reinforcement. The four Georgia regiments advanced under Union artillery fire toward Rose's Woods. "Had our advance been slow, they would have swept away all of us," wrote Lieutenant John Reid of the 8th Georgia. "We understood that too well to loiter, and so we dashed on through small Wheatfields and over stone fences, filling up every gap made by a hit."

Once inside Rose's Woods, the Georgians moved at an oblique angle facing northeast. Because De Trobriand had to send his 40th New York to assist Ward's brigade on Houck's Ridge, he received reinforcements in the form of the 8th New Jersey and 115th Pennsylvania from Colonel George Burling's Third Brigade of Humphrey's Second Division of the III Corps. De Trobriand's right regiments, the 110th Pennsylvania and 5th Michigan, were deployed on the slope of Stony Hill behind Rose's Run. Lt. Col. Charles Merrill's 17th Maine on the brigade's extreme left flank faced south behind a 30-inch-high stone wall in the southwestern corner of the Wheatfield. "Scarcely had we got into position when we heard the fearful Rebel Yell," wrote Captain James Hamilton of the 110th.

The left wing of Anderson's brigade made contact first. After 30 minutes of hard fighting, Burling, who was personally directing his regiments, withdrew them abruptly into the Wheatfield because he feared they were being flanked. This left a gap into which Colonel John Tower's 8th Georgia advanced, along with elements of the 9th Georgia.

As they advanced into the gap, the Georgians were able to enfilade the right flank of the "Down Easters." Merrill adroitly refused his right flank to negate the threat. Meanwhile, Colonel Francis Little's 11th Georgia blazed away at the Maine infantry behind the stone wall. Fighting grew in intensity as the Georgians charged the wall. They sought to plant their colors on it, but they were soundly repulsed.

During the close-quarters fighting, Captain George Winslow's Battery D, 1st New York Light Artillery, rendered invaluable artillery support to De Trobriand's hard-pressed regiments. He had unlimbered his six Napoleon brass 12-pounder smoothbores on high ground in the Wheatfield 300 yards behind the brigade's left flank. His gunners fired solid shot into the woods to disrupt the Georgians' attack. The 8th Georgia charged the Union line three times and was flung back each time. The 9th Georgia lost its commander, Lt. Col. John Mounger, who took a minie ball in the chest and shrapnel in his bowels. After nearly an hour of fighting, Anderson withdrew his regi-

ments to the southern edge of the woods.

During the lull after Anderson's first assault, Brig. Gen. James Barnes, commander of the First Division of Maj. Gen. George Sykes' V Corps, sent the brigades of Colonel William S. Tilton and Colonel Jacob Sweitzer into position on Stony Hill. During the lull in fighting that occurred after his brigade's first attack, Anderson was struck by a minie ball in his right thigh. He was taken to a field hospital and Colonel William Luffman of the 11th Georgia took command of the brigade.

When all of Hood's troops had been committed to battle, Longstreet decided it was time for McLaws to attack. Colonel Cabell, McLaws' artillery chief, ordered his gunners to stop firing. He then ordered three guns fired in quick succession as the prearranged signal for the infantry to advance. As soon as this was done, the guns resumed their fire.

The arrangement of McLaws' division mirrored that of Hood's division. McLaws was to attack on a two-brigade front with Brig. Gen. Joseph Kershaw's South Carolina brigade on the right supported by Brig. Gen. Paul Semmes' Georgia brigade. On the left was Brig. Gen. William Barksdale's Mississippi brigade supported by Brig. Gen. William Wofford's Georgia brigade. The attack was to be "en echelon" formation with Kershaw advancing first with Semmes following behind him. Kershaw intended to have the center of his brigade strike Stony Hill.

Hunt had moved additional Federal batteries into position along the Millerstown Road that divided the northeastern portion of the Wheatfield from Trostle's Woods. These guns opened fire on Kershaw's South Carolinians who were passing across their front. Kershaw's three left regiments wheeled north. They passed the stone buildings of the Rose Farm in an attempt to storm the Union guns. But an order to move by the right flank caused the three regiments to veer to the right away from the enemy guns. The Federal gunners who were preparing to pull their guns out of harm's way now opened up with a vengeance. "Hundreds of the bravest and best men of [South] Carolina fell," wrote Kershaw. "[They were] victims of this fatal blunder."

Meanwhile, the rest of the Kershaw's brigade advanced on Stony Hill. As they did, they joined the left regiments of Anderson's brigade engaged against the Federals.

Through the smoke and dust that clouded the field the bluecoats on Stony Hill could see in the distance a gray line with battle flags fluttering advancing toward them. The 17th Maine braced for another attack behind their stone wall. Anderson's Georgians surged forward once again in a bid to capture the wall.

Barnes grew deeply concerned over the position of his troops on Stony Hill in the face of McLaws' attack. He therefore ordered both brigades to withdraw through the Millerstown Road and take up a new position in Trostle's Woods. With casualties mounting and Barnes's two brigades withdrawn, De Trobriand had little choice but to order his brigade to fall back as well. For this reason, the 17th Maine abandoned the stone wall for which it had shed so much blood.

Winslow's Napoleons continued to hammer away at the Rebels. The 115th Pennsylvania also poured its fire into Anderson's troops. Minie balls whipped through the wheat stalks, felling horses and gunners as Kershaw's men fired into Winslow's battery. Winslow gave the order to withdraw the guns to the Trostle Woods. In a herculean effort, his men managed to save all six pieces.

With the Wheatfield and Rose Woods in Confederate hands, the Federals rushed fresh troops to the sector. Brig. Gen. John Caldwell received orders to march his First Division of Hancock's II Corps to support the V Corps. Leading the column was Colonel Edward Cross's First Brigade. The other brigades in order of march were Colonel John Kelly's Second Brigade (Irish Brigade), Colonel John Brooke's Fourth Brigade, and Brig. Gen. Samuel Zook's Third Brigade.

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Cross pushed into the Wheatfield and about halfway across traded fire with Anderson's Georgians positioned along the edge of Rose Woods. Cross was preparing his men for a charge when a Rebel sharpshooter shot him. While Cross was being carried from the field, Sergeant Charles Phelps killed the enemy sharpshooter. Cross succumbed to his wound the following day.

Cross's bluecoats advanced steadily. On their right, the Irish Brigade kept up a spirited fire with its emerald flags flapping. But the advance of Zook's companies was slowed considerably by the retreating troops of the V Corps. "If you can't get out of the way, lie down and we will march over you," shouted Zook from his horse.

Zook's and Kelly's brigades moved against the graybacks on Stony Hill. They met fierce resistance from Kershaw's South Carolinians. Some men from both the 3rd and 7th South Carolina fired at Zook as he rode up the slope of Stony Hill. Minie balls ripped into his shoulder, chest, and stomach, mortally wounding him.

Kershaw requested that Semmes move his men into the gap between his own brigade and Anderson's troops. As Semmes led his men forward in a charge, he was mortally wounded in the thigh. He died eight days later. The arrival of Caldwell's division overwhelmed Kershaw's brigade. Realizing his men could not hold their position, Kershaw ordered his men to withdraw in stages to the Rose Farm.

Confederate prospects worsened when Caldwell sent Brooke's brigade into the fray. Advancing quickly across the Wheatfield, the Yankees came under enemy fire. Brooke ordered a bayonet charge, which succeeded in evicting Anderson's Georgians from the Wheatfield. Reaching the western edge of Rose's Woods, Brooke's muskets came to a halt as Confederate resistance stiffened. For the time being, the Wheatfield and most of Rose's Woods were back in Federal hands.

While Kershaw's and Semmes' brigades had advanced, Barksdale grew increasingly impatient for Longstreet's signal to send his troops into battle. His brigade was taking casualties from the six Napoleons of Captain John Bucklyn's Battery B, 1st Rhode Island Light, as well as a two-gun section of Captain James Thompson's Pennsylvania Battery on the Sherfy Farm. "I wish you would let me go in, general," said Barksdale. "I would take

Richard Holland

**ABOVE: Captain John Bigelow's 9th Massachusetts Battery, which was ordered to hold its position no matter the cost, is shown in action in a sketch by one of its men. BELOW: Photographer Timothy O'Sullivan recorded for posterity the horses killed by Bigelow's battery on the Trostle Farm. OPPOSITE: Confederate dead at the southwestern edge of Rose's Woods. The Confederates took full advantage of Sickles' amateur generalship to inflict high casualties on his unfortunate corps.**

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that battery in five minutes." But Old Pete would not be rushed. "Wait a little, we are all going in presently," he said.

Barksdale got his orders to advance on the Peach Orchard. Barksdale's 1,600 Mississippians were as anxious to get moving as their commander. Climbing over a stone wall at edge of Pitzer's Woods, the men advanced in two lines that stretched for 350 yards. Barksdale, the fire-eating secessionist former congressman, waved his saber over his head and led his men forward. The moved with such momentum that they smashed through the wooden fences on both sides of Emmitsburg Road as they advanced.

Brigadier General Charles Graham's brigade held the Peach Orchard. Only four of his six Pennsylvania regiments, totalling 1,000 men, were in position along the Emmitsburg Road to defend against Barksdale's attack. As Barksdale's Magnolia Staters advanced, the Federal artillery blew gaping holes in their ranks. To lessen the time they had to spend under the cannon fire, Barksdale ordered his men to double quick. The Mississippians let out a Rebel yell as they rushed toward the enemy.

When Barksdale's soldiers came to within 40 yards of Bucklyn's guns, they halted and fired a deadly volley that felled a good number of horses and gunners. The 114th Pennsylvania Zouaves advanced past the battery as Bucklyn issued orders to his men to limber up and withdraw to the rear. The 57th and 105th Pennsylvania Regiments also advanced. Graham requested aid from two brigades of Humphrey's division nearby that not yet been engaged. The 73rd New York Zouaves of Colonel William Brewster's Second Brigade dashed forward and took up position behind the 114th Pennsylvania.

Barksdale's charge swept like a storm tide over Graham's brigade. Colonel Benjamin Humphreys directed his 21st Mississippi to attack Colonel Andrew Tippin's 68th Pennsylvania holding the left flank of Graham's brigade in Sherfy's Peach Orchard. Colonel William Holder's 17th Mississippi joined the attack on the hapless Pennsylvanians by assailing the regiment's right flank. Heavily outnumbered, the 68th Pennsylvania lost half its men in a matter of minutes.

Having smashed the 68th Pennsylvania, Barksdale swept the rest of Graham's brigade from the field. The 57th Pennsylvania, which had been defending the Sherfy farm buildings, broke and fled east toward Cemetery Ridge. Barksdale's men rounded up hundreds of Pennsylvanians from Graham's shattered brigade. One of the prisoners was Graham, who had been wounded by shrapnel in the hip and shot in the upper body.

Deployed facing south at the Peach Orchard were three Union regiments from three different brigades. Barksdale's Mississippians were astride the right flank of the line formed by the three regiments. One of these regiments, Graham's 141st Pennsylvania, tried to slow the Confederate advance and lost three-quarters of its men in short order.

Porter Alexander ordered six Confederate batteries to advance to support McLaws' division. Meanwhile, Barksdale's Magnolia Staters pushed east toward Abraham Trostle's farm where Sickles had his headquarters. Confederate guns bombarded the Trostle Farm. Sickles was riding his battle line when a shell struck his right leg. He had enough presence of mind to order a tourniquet fashioned from a saddle strap. He was whisked away in a wagon. A surgeon amputated his leg just above the knee. When Meade learned that Sickles was out of the battle, he gave Hancock command of Sickles' beaten corps.

While Barksdale crushed Graham's brigade, Wofford sought to exploit the gap between Graham's brigade in the Peach Orchard and De Trobriand's brigade on Stony Hill. The arrival of Wofford's Georgians breathed fresh life into the brigades of Kershaw, Semmes, and Anderson.

The Federals holding Stony Hill and the

Wheatfield were in serious danger of being outflanked. Barnes sent Sweitzer's brigade to assist Caldwell. Sweitzer's 1,000 Yankees advanced through the Wheatfield as the hard-pressed troops on Stony Hill began to fall back. The Confederates caught Sweitzer's brigade in a murderous crossfire, forcing them to withdraw as well.

As Caldwell's division withdrew east from the Wheatfield, Sweitzer's brigade wound up covering its retreat. Rebels streamed into the trampled wheat and took possession of the field. The only Union forces left in good order on the west side of Plum Run were two small brigades of U.S. Army regulars deployed in two lines south of the Millerstown Road. They belonged to Brig. Gen. Romeyn Ayres' division of the V Corps.

Farther north Barksdale exhorted his left regiments to press their attack against two brigades of Brig. Gen. Andrew Humphreys' Second Division of the III Corps. Adding weight to his attack were the fresh Alabama regiments of Brig. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox's brigade of Richard Anderson's division.

Colonel Humphrey's 21st Mississippi moved east along Millerstown Road toward four Federal batteries totaling 22 guns facing south. The Federal artillerymen limbered up their guns and rode east as minie balls zipped through the air, felling men and horses alike.

Captain John Bigelow's 9th Massachusetts Light Battery was positioned the farthest east. Bigelow knew that once his six Napoleons stopped firing the Rebels would be on him. He fired canister that shredded the attacking Confederates. Instead of rolling the guns back into position, he allowed their recoil to move them steadily back. Having reached the Trostle Farm in this manner, he ordered his guns limbered up. It was now 6 PM and Barksdale's men were only a quarter mile from Cemetery Ridge.

When he reached the Trostle Farm, Bigelow had gained enough distance from the attacking Confederates to limber up his guns. Before they were limbered, Lt. Col. Freeman McGilvery, his commanding officer, arrived and ordered him to hold his position at all hazards. Bigelow then ordered his gunners to load double canister. McGilvery then rode off to scrape together guns to thwart the Confederate advance toward a three-quarter-mile gap on Cemetery Ridge. The Mississippians charged his battery and got among the guns. Bigelow was able to save only two of them. Shortly afterward, Colonel Humphrey halted his Mississippians having realized they had advanced too far to the front and were unsupported.

A short distance to the north, Barksdale was out front leading his troops as they attacked northeast. "Forward men! Forward!" he cried, pointing his sword at the Yankees on Cemetery Ridge. When his regimental commanders requested that he break off his attack and regroup, he dismissed the idea. The Mississippians got as far as the west slope of the ridge, but by then Hunt had massed 40 guns to thwart them. Meanwhile, Hancock plugged the gap in his line with Colonel George Willard's brigade of Brig. Gen. Alexander Hays' Third Division of the II Corps.

Willard's New Yorkers launched a vicious counterattack. The 126th New York wanted revenge for having been forced to surrender at Harpers Ferry during the Antietam Campaign. They came on shouting "Remember Harpers Ferry!" Willard fell in the counterattack, but his men succeeded in repulsing the Mississippians. Barksdale was mortally wounded trying to rally his men. Shot in both legs and the chest, he was captured by the Yankees. He died before morning. Of the 1,600 Mississippians in his brigade, 789 were killed, wounded, or missing after the attack.

The fighting then shifted north as Maj. Gen. Richard Anderson's troops advanced against the Federals. Only half of Anderson's 7,000-strong division went into action, though. Both Longstreet and his fellow corps commander Lt. Gen. A.P. Hill thought the other was responsible for overseeing Anderson's attack.

As for Anderson, he did not provide strong direction. Before Lee's reorganization of the Army of Northern Virginia, Richard Anderson had commanded a division in Longstreet's I Corps, and Old Pete always kept a close eye on his division commanders. Anderson gave his brigade commanders too much independence. One of Anderson's brigade commanders, Brigadier William Mahone, never committed his Virginia regiments to the attack, claiming he had orders to sit tight. Despite these problems, Brig. Gen. Ambrose Wright's Georgians gained the crest of Cemetery Ridge. But when no reinforcements came to support him, Wright withdrew his men rather than have his brigade destroyed.

Longstreet had captured Devil's Den, the Peach Orchard, and the Wheatfield, but none of these areas were key ground. Importantly, Hancock and Sykes retained Little Round Top and Cemetery Ridge. Of the 22,000 Confederates in three divisions that participated in the attack against the Union left on July 2, 7,000 were casualties. The butcher's bill for the Union III Corps amounted to 4,323 casualties from the 10,750 that went into battle that day.

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Confederate valor was never in question. Taken on the whole, the troops of Hood's and McLaws' divisions fought heroically on July 2. Three Confederate divisions took on six full Union divisions and parts of three more divisions in an attack that lasted for four hours. But the Yankees no longer panicked and fled the field in the face of a Confederate flank attack as they had at Second Manassas and Chancellorsville.

Longstreet told McLaws after the war that his intention had not been to press the attack on July 2 if the enemy's position proved too strong for his two divisions. But Old Pete did not stop the attack. He delighted in seeing his troops smash Sickles' III Corps. It was "the best three hours' fighting ever done by any troops on any battlefield," he said. ■

# Bloody Brawl at the NAKTONG BULGE

Understrength U.S. Army forces slugged it out with the North Korean 4th Division in the Naktong Bulge in August 1950. The North Koreans punched through the American front line, putting U.S. forces in a precarious position.

**By Robert L. Durham**

A battalion of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) crossed the Naktong River under cover of night on August 5, 1950. Once across the river, the communist troops moved into position to attack the U.S. Army infantry regiments defending the west side of the Pusan Perimeter.

North Korean machine-gun fire tore into Company C of the 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, catching it completely by surprise. Deployed on higher ground, the North Korean infantry held a distinct advantage over the U.N. Command (UNC) troops below them. Most of the soldiers of Company C sought cover in a grist mill. As their casualties mounted, they piled their dead against the outside wall to protect the living.

**Marines take cover behind an M-26 Pershing tank at a roadblock near the Naktong River. The Marines launched a massive counterattack with aircraft, artillery, and mortars in mid-August to regain the strategic high ground. INSET: "Kill your enemies completely without mercy!" proclaims a North Korean propaganda poster produced at the time of the battle.**

**Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division step ashore in Korea in July 1950. Soldiers of the beleaguered 24th Infantry Division fought tenaciously to buy time for elements of the 1st Cavalry and other reinforcements to move into position to fight the North Koreans.**

The survivors of Company C were eventually rescued by Company A. The Americans holding out for reinforcements knew that they were out of danger when they heard the rumbling of an M-24 Chafee light tank at the front of a relief column. Company A found a large number of wounded and dead soldiers inside the mill. Only a lucky few from Company C had emerged unscathed. If Company A had not arrived when it did, there might have been no survivors.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea fought a series of border skirmishes that gradually escalated in intensity along the 38th Parallel in 1949. With the tacit approval of the Soviet Union, which furnished tanks and combat aircraft to the North Koreans, the North Korean People's Army invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950. The North Koreans captured Seoul three days into its invasion.

The United Nations scrambled to remedy the situation. It established the UNC to organize and direct the defense of South Korea. In early July, South Korea placed its military forces under the control of the UNC and its commander, General Douglas MacArthur.

At the start of the war, the North Koreans had 135,000 troops against South Korea's 95,000 troops. At the time of the invasion, there were only a few U.S. combat units in South Korea. These belonged to the dismounted 1st Cavalry and the 7th, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions.

The American forces lacked one-third of their authorized size. Instead of having approximately 18,800 men per division, each had 12,500 men. Similarly, the divisions had just two-thirds of their antiaircraft-artillery allotment and only about 20 light tanks in each division, as opposed to the authorized 142 tanks per division. The U.S. Marines had a small number of M-26 Pershing heavy tanks, but the Army was equipped primarily with M-24 Chafee light tanks. These light tanks were no match for the 150 T-34 medium tanks that the Soviet Union had furnished to North Korea.

At the Battle of Osan, fought on July 5, 1950, the North Koreans swept aside the poorly equipped U.S. Task Force Smith. By mid-July the North Koreans were deep into South Korea. By late July, the U.S. and South Korean forces had established a defensive zone in the southeastern corner of South Korea around the port city of Pusan. The UNC forces received no respite, for the North Koreans immediately began assailing their positions along the Pusan Perimeter. This further weakened the U.S. forces defending South Korea.

The perimeter was 100 miles deep and 50 miles wide. The western line paralleled the Naktong River as it flowed toward the Korea Strait. The steep-banked river is about 1,300 feet wide and has a normal depth of six feet. The Naktong formed a defensive barrier for the U.S. forces deployed behind it. A bend in the river about 30 miles from the coastline was known as the Naktong Bulge.

The 3rd Battalion of the 34th Infantry Regiment of Maj. Gen. John H. Church's 24th Division held the bulge, covering a frontage of 15,000 yards. U.S. Army doctrine called for a full-strength battalion to man a 10,000 yard-long front, but in this case the three battalions defended a five-mile front. Deployed behind the Naktong from north to south were Companies I, L, and K. There was a two-mile gap between I and L Companies, and a three-mile gap separated L and K Companies.

There were at least six ferry crossings along the stretch of the river guarded by the 3rd Battalion. Although the ferryboats were gone, the roads leading to and from the crossings made good fording points. The 4.2-inch mortars supporting the 3rd Battalion were more than a mile to the rear.

Major General Lee Kwon Mu's NKPA 4th Division faced the Americans across the river. It held the honorary title of the "4th Seoul Division," having captured the South Korean capital. At midnight on August 5 approximately 800 North Koreans of the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 16th Infantry Regiment, prepared to slip into the Naktong. More would cross the following night.

Most of the men stripped and waded across the shoulder-deep river at the Ohang Ferry site, holding their clothing and equipment over their heads. Others made rafts, which they pushed ahead, to float their clothing and equipment across. No heavy weapons were brought across in this initial crossing.

When they reached the far bank, the North Koreans dressed and advanced toward Yongsan in column of platoons. They moved quietly through the gap between I and L Companies. They had orders not to engage any of the U.S. units defend-

ing the river unless the Americans blocked their advance or they were detected.

Nevertheless, the North Koreans assaulted the right flank of Company L, which was deployed at the head of the bulge, early that night. Rifleman Leonard Korgie said they heard movement and fired. The firing seemed to set off a rush of North Koreans from the rear and both flanks.

"They wrestled the weapons from us as we fired," said Korgie. The enemy soldiers clearly were trying to take prisoners from whom they hoped to glean valuable intelligence. Korgie threw his helmet at them and made a run for it. After running up two hills, he collapsed from a combination of dysentery, heat exhaustion, and fatigue. He tumbled headfirst down the hill and rolled for about 40 yards. He and several other Company L soldiers made it to the relative safety of the 34th command post at 2 AM.

The North Koreans eventually overran the Americans' 4.2-inch mortar position. Most of the troops escaped to the rear. Lt. Col. Gines Perez, commander of the 3rd Battalion, made his way back three miles to the 1st Battalion command post, where he gave Lt. Col. Harold Ayres a report on the North Korean troops' river crossing. North Korean artillery and mortar fire had severed the Americans' communications lines.

Approximately 200 North Koreans attacked Battery B of the 13th Field Artillery Battalion at dawn. North Korean machine-gun fire tore into the battery. Shortly afterward, the North Koreans began shelling the battery with their 82mm mortars. This knocked out Battery B's fire direction center.

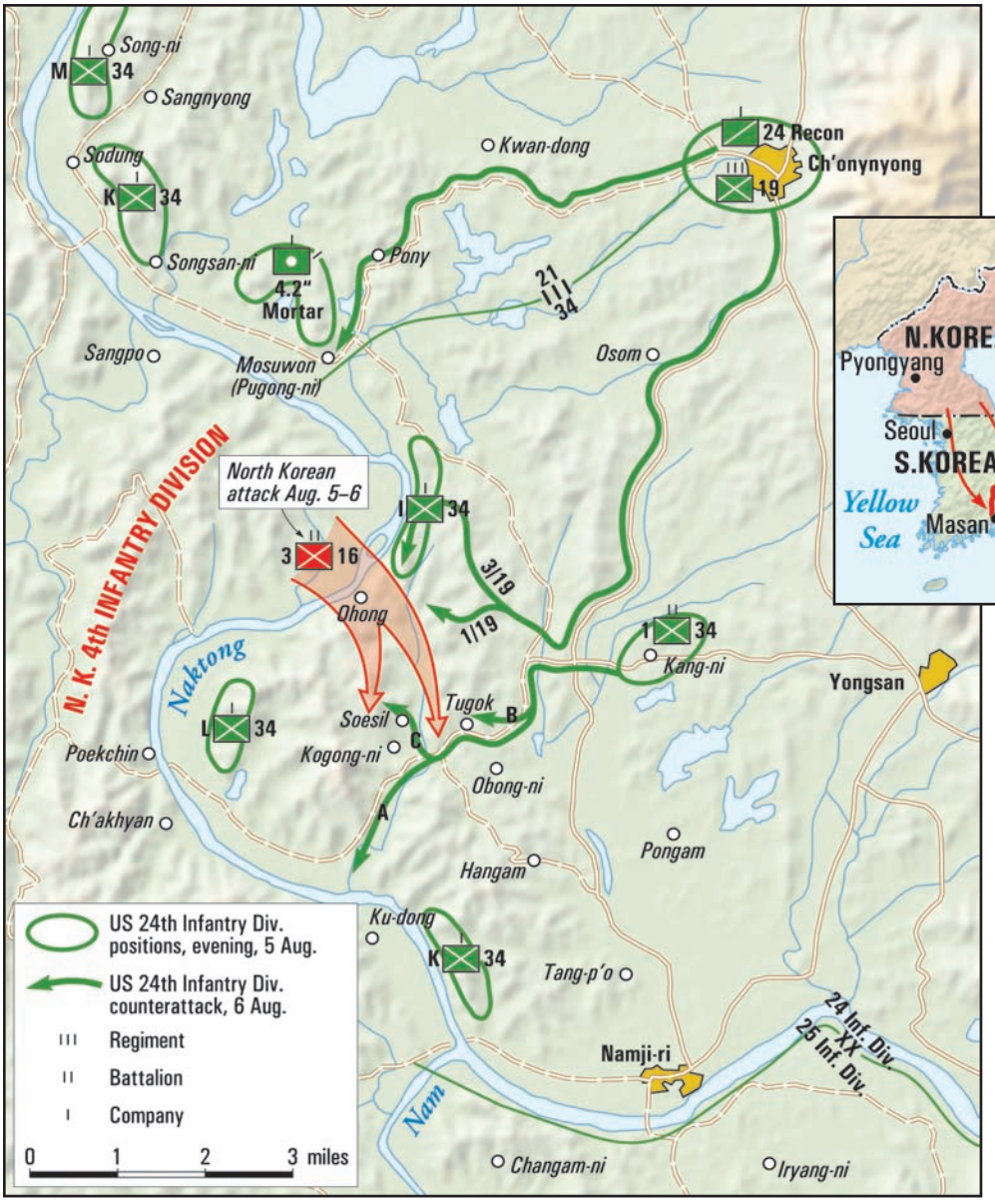
A few American artillerymen tried to escape by running through rice paddies, but none of them made it. The battery engaged the North Koreans for two hours, during which it took fire from three sides.

The artillerymen had only one escape route, which was the road behind the guns. They withdrew with one howitzer and seven trucks. Most of the men retreated on foot while under fire. They were forced to crawl through the rice paddies on their stomachs to avoid getting hit by small-arms and machine-gun fire. Most of the men escaped.

Colonel Charles E. Beauchamp, commander of the 34th Regiment, ordered Ayres to launch an attack along the Yangson-Naktong River Road with his 3rd Battalion. Ayres issued orders for the men of Company C to mount trucks and advance along the road. Meanwhile, the men of Companies A and B, as well as the battalion's weapons company, would follow on foot. The previous day 187 replacements had joined the battalion, but the new troops were untried in battle.

Ayres set out in a jeep ahead of the troops with his operations officer and assistant operations officer. They arrived at the 3rd Battalion command


**ABOVE: Task Force Smith was roughly handled by North Korean People's Army during its invasion of South Korea in summer 1950. The task force was poorly equipped, and its soldiers had only eight weeks of training. BELOW: Battle-weary troops of the U.S. Army's 24th Infantry Division man a strongpoint on the Naktong River.**




post, which had been vacated, and waited for the trucks to appear. When they arrived, the enemy opened on them, wounding two men. Ayres ordered Captain Clyde Akridge, commander of Company C, to seize the high ground. The tempo of the enemy fire increased dramatically. Enemy rounds hissed past. Akridge was struck three times.

Ayres took shelter with the weapons platoon leader and mortar men. They fired 60mm mortar fire on the North Korean position until they ran out of ammunition. The mortar sergeant stood up to direct the fire, only to be almost cut in two by machine-gun fire. Casualties mounted. Ayres knew that to influence the outcome of the battle, he would have to return to Companies A and B. He and several staff members dashed through a rice paddy. "I had never heard a bullet hit water," recalled Ayres. "It was a weird sound."

The North Korean assault threatened two key positions, Cloverleaf Hill and Obong-ni Ridge, in the center of the Naktong Bulge. Most of the Americans reached the slopes of Obong-ni Ridge, and from there they worked their way to a vacant artillery position. Battery B of the U.S. 13th Field Artillery Battalion had been forced to retreat after battling the enemy for two hours. The artillerymen abandoned four howitzers and nine vehicles when they withdrew. It took Ayres several hours to reach the two companies.

The North Koreans continued firing their small arms and automatic weapons. Dead and wounded soon filled the dry creek bed where the Americans had taken shelter. The fight continued for several hours until nearly half the company was killed. Those in the gristmill resolved to hold their ground. Soldiers manning a .50-caliber machine gun on an abandoned personnel carrier kept the enemy at bay. First Lieutenant Charles E. Payne, the company's senior officer, asked for volunteers to go for help. Private Robert Witzig offered to undertake the dangerous mission.

Witzig dashed 25 yards to a field and then crawled through its furrows. "I probably got about 20 yards and was blown up into the air and landed on my back," he said. The shell, which peppered his back with shrapnel, knocked him unconscious.

Witzig regained consciousness only to find a North Korean trying to strip him of his grenades. Witzig killed the enemy soldier with his .45-caliber automatic pistol. He lay in the field for a long time until two of his friends found him and dragged him to safety. In the meantime, the troops had successfully made contact with friendly forces and reinforcements were on the way.

The tank spearheading the relief column inadvertently fired on the American soldiers in the gristmill in the mistaken belief that communist troops were inside. However, Company C did not suffer any additional casualties from friendly fire. The arriving American infantry found only a handful of Company C survivors of holding out at the mill.

Since the North Korean attack was still unfolding, Company A scrambled to stabilize the situation, but the enemy by then had captured Cloverleaf Hill and Obong-ni Ridge. Church instructed his 19th Infantry Regiment to retake the lost ground. The Americans succeeded in regaining part of Cloverleaf Hill, but they could not dislodge the North Koreans from Obong-ni Ridge.

The Americans trapped roughly 300 enemy infantry in a village east of Ohang Hill, a mile from the river, and killed almost all of them. This did not stop the North Koreans, who reclaimed Cloverleaf Hill. Extreme heat and lack of food and water had brought American offensive efforts to a standstill. For that matter, the Americans were even having a difficult time holding their ground. Each time they gained ground, the North Koreans drove them back.

To reinforce the beleaguered American frontline troops, senior commanders rounded up engineers, mechanics, and cooks and pressed them into action as riflemen. But replacements were not keeping up with losses. The effectiveness of both the 24th and 34th Infantry Regiments was at roughly 40 percent. The battalions each had fewer than 300 riflemen. The rifle battalions were critically short of ammunition, Browning Automatic Rifles, machine guns, and mortars. In addition, the American infantry regiments lacked trucks needed for transporting troops to the battlefront.

It had been almost impossible for the North

Koreans to reinforce their troops engaged on the east side of the Naktong because of the threat of bombardment during the daylight hours by American artillery and aircraft. North Korean engineers worked feverishly to construct makeshift bridges that could carry their troops across the Naktong during the night.

They completed several bridges made of sandbags, logs, and rocks across the Naktong River on August 7. The bridges were one foot below the normal level of the river, and for that reason were hard for the enemy to destroy.

As the campaign was in progress, the NKPA bridged the Naktong and sent tanks and towed artillery across the river to support their troops. The North Koreans also reinforced the forces already engaged by sending two more infantry battalions across using as many as 70 boats.

Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, commander of the Eighth Army, reinforced the American forces engaged along the Naktong Bulge by committing the 9th Infantry Regiment to the fight on August 8. The 9th Infantry was a fresh regiment, but its addition did not really help. The North Koreans had infiltrated into the 24th Infantry Division's rear area. The American infantry regiments could not clear the enemy from their rear.

Early in their attack the North Koreans had succeeded in encircling Companies A, C, and L of the 34th Infantry, stranding isolated infantrymen two miles behind enemy lines. The troops in the pocket were resupplied by American aircraft, although many of the supplies landed outside their perimeter. On the night of August 8, the Americans came under mortar fire as the North Koreans registered their mortars on the American positions. Fearing that this would be followed by a human wave attack that would overrun their position, the Americans requested and received permission that night to fight their way out.

Captain A.F. Alfonso, commander of Company A, prepared his troops to break out of the encirclement. He placed one squad on point 500 yards ahead of the main body. He instructed his troops that the wounded, who were to be carried in litters, would be in the center of the column. He designated one platoon to serve as the rear guard.

Company A set out along the Yongsan Road. They had no sooner departed the position than the North Koreans attacked their abandoned position. When the North Korean troops found it unoccupied, they began firing their automatic weapons down the road.

Alfonso set out with a small reconnaissance squad to find the safest route to friendly lines. He found the battalion command post and organized a rescue convoy of trucks and ambulances to pick up the troops. But while he was gone, his company broke up into smaller groups. One group of

**ABOVE: Trucks transport soldiers of the 24th Infantry Regiment to the front lines on the Pusan Perimeter. Despite desegregation of the U.S. Army in 1948, the regiment remained largely African-American. BELOW: Battle-weary troops of the U.S. Army's 24th Infantry Division man a strongpoint on the Naktong River. OPPOSITE: The Naktong Bulge was situated on the western flank of the Pusan Perimeter. In their initial assault, the North Koreans threatened to split the American defenses and sever supply lines to units deployed further north.**

70 men from the rear guard found itself pinned down for several hours by heavy machine-gun fire. Only 40 men escaped; the rest were either picked up by the rescue convoy or wandered into the command post from various directions.

The men carrying the wounded on litters had the most difficulty. The wounded troops screamed and moaned as they were transported—there was no way to carry the wounded men without jostling them. The original plan had been for the stretcher bearers to be relieved periodically by men from the rear guard, but that did not happen given that the marching column disbanded. The survivors eventually located the relative safety of the 9th Infantry's command post.

The North Koreans widened their hold on the Naktong Bulge, giving them more opportunities to infiltrate the rear areas of the U.S. forces. On

August 9 they occupied the village of Namji-ri, just inside the 24th Division's sector. The 25th Division was to the south. A bridge still stood at this town, which enabled the NKPA's entrance into the 25th Division's northern flank. By midday on August 10, the North Koreans had moved toward Yongsan and established a roadblock south of the city. That night the North Koreans were less than three miles from the city. Possession of Yongsan would cut the 24th Division off from supply and reinforcement.

By the following day, the entire NKPA 4th Division had crossed the Naktong River and entered the bulge. Colonel Beauchamp believed Yongsan would fall soon. The 24th Division headquarters assembled about 135 reinforcements from eight different rear-echelon units. These clerks, bakers, military police, and reconnaissance troops were placed under the command of Captain George B. Hafemen. The force had two tanks for support. Hafemen's orders were to stop the enemy's eastward advance.

The 2nd Battalion of the 27th Infantry Regiment was assigned the duty of helping to clear the enemy south of Yongsan. A constant stream of Korean refugees clogged the road. The battalion was pushing its way through this traffic flow when a refugee cart overturned and a load of rifles and ammunition spilled out. A dozen North Koreans disguised as refugees bolted across an open field and American riflemen shot eight of them.

At dusk the North Koreans started putting increasing pressure on the defenders of Yongsan. A regimental commander said there were dozens of American and enemy troops all over the area and they were all busy surrounding each other. In one of these encounters, Private Lawrence Y. Bader of the 9th Infantry covered his patrol's escape. He remained behind and held off the enemy until he was killed, which earned him a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross.

The 2nd Battalion of the 17th Infantry pushed north toward Yongsan on August 12. The battalion ran headlong into entrenched enemy troops, who fought back with machine guns, mortars, and small arms. An air strike helped to drive the enemy from their positions. The strike aircraft killed 100 North Koreans and wounded many more. The Americans captured a dozen machine guns and several 14.5-caliber antitank rifles.

A major menace to the Americans, besides the enemy push on Yongsan, was the blocking of the main supply route between Yongsan and Miryang, which were about 20 miles apart. Before midnight on August 11, vehicles passed over the main supply route with no difficulties except for a few sniper shots. In the predawn hours of August 12, two ambulances of the 1st Ambulance Platoon from Yongsan, loaded with wounded, were hit by automatic weapons fire. The driver of the second ambulance was wounded and the ambulance pitched into a ditch. The first ambulance turned around and the medics rushed the wounded from the second ambulance into the first for the journey back to Yongsan.

A detachment from the 14th Engineer Battalion guarded a three-and-a-half-mile section of the main supply route. The 100 men were divided into four groups stationed at "engineer posts" at 800-yard intervals.

The North Koreans struck engineer posts three and four on the main supply route at dawn with heavy rifles, machine guns, and grenades. The fighting lasted for several hours. The engineers at post three withdrew to post one. The Koreans cut down all of the retreating Americans, except for Sergeant John Kavetsky, who hid in a rice paddy, and took possession of both engineer posts. Meanwhile, the soldiers at engineer post four split up, half heading for engineer post one and the other half unwittingly heading for the abandoned post three. When the retreating American soldiers reached the deserted post three, they were captured by the North Koreans.

On the morning of August 13 the soldiers of Task Force Hill, under Colonel John G. Hill, moved east from Yongsan to clear the main supply route. As they advanced, they cleared North Koreans from foxholes. Some of the foxholes contained as many as six enemy soldiers. Offered a chance to surrender, the North Koreans either fought to the finish or blew themselves up with their own hand grenades. During this operation, the Americans capture four pieces of heavy artillery, two of which were U.S. 105mm howitzers that the North Koreans had captured.

By the end of August 13, Task Force Hill had eradicated NKPA resistance south and east of Yongsan, relieving the city of enemy pressure. Hill then ordered K and L Companies to withdraw from their exposed positions along the Naktong. He instructed their commanders to take up a new position behind the 1st Battalion where they would serve as reserve for the regiment.

Task Force Hill then sought to push the North Koreans back across the Naktong River. First, the troops focused on eliminating enemy positions south and east of Yangson. Next, Colonel Hill assaulted the enemy positions on Cloverleaf Hill and Obong-ni Ridge. The task force was far from full strength for this attack. The two battalions of the 9th Infantry were down to two-thirds of their strength, and the three rifle companies of the 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry had barely enough men to form Company A.

A heavy rainfall, starting in the early hours of August 14, prevented the planned air strike. The artillery delivered a 10-minute preparation, and then the infantry started for the objective. The two battalions of the 9th Regimental Combat Team attacked Cloverleaf Hill, while Company B of the

**ABOVE: A wounded soldier from the 25th Infantry Division waits stoically at an aid station behind American lines. Evacuating wounded men from the front lines during the initial North Korean attack proved a daunting task. OPPOSITE: A U.S. soldier comes upon an American prisoner who was executed by the North Koreans. The enemy showed little regard for the rules of the Geneva Convention.**

34th Infantry began an assault on the north end of Obong-ni Ridge.

Cloverleaf Hill was shaped like a four-leaf clover, hence its name. There was a gap between Cloverleaf and Obong-ni Ridge through which the main supply route ran. Obong-ni Ridge, which ran northwest to southeast, consisted of a half dozen connected hills, each of which was known by its height in meters. They ranged in height from 102 to 153 meters.

The soldiers of B Company nearly secured Obong-ni Ridge but were driven back by 8 AM. On the other side of the road, on Cloverleaf Hill, a fierce battle of attack and counterattack occurred. The 1st Battalion suffered 60 casualties in one hour of fighting. The two battalions in the assault managed to secure the lower slopes but not the main mass of the hill. The night of August 14 was marked by continuous combat as the North Koreans repeatedly attacked the American defensive perimeters.

On the morning of August 15, the Americans continued the attack on Cloverleaf Hill and Obong-ni Ridge. A savage grenade fight ensued on the southern slopes of Obong-ni. The 2nd Platoon of Company A traded rifle fire with the enemy at 10 paces. After almost an hour, 24 of the 35 soldiers involved the attack had either been killed or wounded. All along the line, the North Koreans fought the Americans to a standstill.

Hill and Church suspected that by this time the North Koreans were worn down by attrition. North Korean bodies, weapons, and equipment were scattered all around the northern end of Obong-ni Ridge. Unfortunately, the Americans no longer had the manpower to take the enemy positions. General Walker decided to send Church the 5th Marines as reinforcements. The Marines were already on their way to Miryang, where they were to act as Army Reserve, so it was a small matter to have them move farther forward to Obong-ni Ridge.

On August 17 Marine Corps air and artillery prepared the ridge for the attack. They knocked out many enemy mortars and either cut down or scattered many NKPA troop concentrations. The rear of the North Korean position showed much confusion. Company B of the Marines, which was led by Captain John Tobin, advanced to the attack. Tobin positioned his machine guns and the 3rd Platoon on nearby Observation Hill to support the rest of Baker Company's assault.

Tobin was preparing to reinforce the 1st and 2nd Platoons on the ridge when he received a severe wound from enemy machine-gun fire. After making sure that Tobin received medical care, Captain Francis Fenton joined the heavily engaged platoons on Obong-ni Ridge. He arrived in time to find both platoons pinned down by North Korean gunfire. The enemy fire was coming from several peaks on the ridge, as well as from the town of Tugok on the opposite side of the road.

The Marines on Observation Hill committed the 3rd Platoon to reinforce the attack. The main hindrance to the assault was the flanking fire coming from Tugok. The platoon requested fire support from its weapons company. The mortar men lobbed shells at the enemy position, suppressing the fire coming from Tugok. The 1st Platoon then outflanked the North Korean 18th Regiment. Just before dusk, the riflemen captured Hill 102. The 2nd Platoon fought its way up the ridge to capture Hill 109. At that point, they were relieved by Company A. As they withdrew, the soldiers of the 2nd Platoon took their casualties with them.

Company A's 1st and 2nd Platoons moved off the southern end of Observation Hill and crossed the rice paddy in front of Obong-ni Ridge. Meanwhile, Marine aircraft and heavy artillery blasted the forward and rear slopes of the ridge. The two platoons each had a machine-gun section. Company A reached the halfway point, encountering only sniper fire, but soon came under heavy machine-gun fire. First Lieutenant Robert Sebilian pushed his 1st Platoon up the draw between Hills 109 and 117. He stood in the open, pointing out enemy positions to his NCO, until an explosive bullet shattered his leg. Technical Sergeant Orval McMullen took command of the platoon and pushed his riflemen forward. When the 1st Platoon advanced southward toward Hill 117, it found itself pinned down by heavy fire.

On the 1st Platoon's left flank, North Korean artillery cut the 2nd Platoon in half. The Americans pressed up the draw between hills 117 and 143 but were brought to a halt when the casualties in its skirmish line became too heavy to sustain the assault. Second Lieutenant Thomas H. Johnston, the platoon leader, rushed upward

alone, only to be gunned down by enemy fire. Command devolved to Technical Sergeant Frank Lawson, who attempted to resume the attack. North Korean guns and grenades thwarted the renewed advance, bringing it to a halt. By that point in the battle, the 2nd Platoon had suffered so many casualties that it was at squad strength.

Company A then committed the 3rd Platoon to the attack. First Lieutenant George Fox, the platoon commander, led his troops into a rice paddy where they were hit by a mortar barrage. Fox tried twice to charge the ridge, but he could not get a foothold. Fox and one of his riflemen attempted to reach Johnston, but they could not retrieve his body because of enemy machine-gun fire. Yet they did confirm his death.

While the attacks on the ridge were underway, the four M-26 Pershing tanks of the 3rd Platoon, Company A moved forward of the road cut, supporting the attack with 90mm shells and machine-gun fire. They concentrated their fire on the crest of Hill 102, destroying a dozen antitank guns and several automatic weapons. The North Koreans put up a tenacious defense. One of the tanks received three direct hits from enemy mortars, and all four tanks were hit by a total of 25 antitank projectiles. One man was slightly wounded, but the tanks did not sustain significant damage. When Company B secured Hill 102, the tanks returned to their command post to refuel and replenish their ammunition supply.

The Americans soon learned that four North Korean T-34 tanks were approaching their lines on the main supply route. Marine tank crews scrambled to engage the North Korean tanks. Second Lieutenant Granville Sweet, the tank commander, ordered his first section to load 90mm armor-piercing shells. The Americans called for air support, and F4U Corsairs of Marine Aviation Training Support Group 33 responded. The strike aircraft made a run against the enemy tanks, destroying the last tank in the column of four. The first three tanks continued down the road. When the first tank reached the bend in the road, it became visible to the troops on Observation Hill. American 75-mm recoilless rifles and M20 Super Bazookas that fired 3.5-inch antitank rockets were positioned on the hill.

The first enemy tank received fire on the right track from a 3.5-inch rocket, but it continued moving forward. Two 75mm rounds disabled the left track and blasted the front armor. The enemy tank burst into flame but kept shooting, its 85mm rifle and machine gun blasting away aimlessly. The enemy tank wobbled around the curve and came face to face with the leading Marine M-26 tank. The American tank fired two quick rounds from its 90mm gun, both of which hit the NKPA tank, which exploded. One member of the crew climbed out of the burning tank, but the Americans cut him down.

The second T-34 came around the bend and was struck in its right track by a 3.5-inch rocket. The injured tank tottered around the curve and took another shot in the gas tank from a 3.5-inch rocket. The tank wobbled off the road, firing its 85mm rounds wildly into the air.

The second M-26 pulled up beside the first, and the two tanks fired six 90mm rounds into the T-34 without effect—it kept up its firing into the sky. A North Korean tank crewman opened the turret hatch and tried to escape, but a bazooka team fired a 2.36-inch white phosphorus incendiary round that ricocheted off the turret and into the tank. The interior of the T-34 cooked off.

The Marine Corps tanks fired seven more shells into the enemy tank, one of them ripping through the turret and exploding the hull. Marine tanks, recoilless rifles, and rockets tore into the tank. The NKPA tank exploded into a fireball.

The Americans used Corsairs, Pershing tanks, recoilless rifles and rockets to destroy the North Korean T-34s. Although considered invincible before this battle, the T-34 proved vulnerable to these weapons systems.

Throughout the day, evacuation of the dead and wounded had been a major concern. Litter bearers carried their loads across the rice paddies under enemy fire. The Marines had to use every ambulance they had, as well as additional Army ambulances, to transport the wounded to the 5th Marines' aid station. With night coming on, the soldiers on Obong-ni Ridge established defensive perimeters.

Across the main supply route, the 9th Regimental Combat Team cleared Tugok and Finger Ridge with little enemy resistance. By darkness, the 19th and 34th Army Regiments had seized their objectives. Although their ranks were thin, the Army and Marine units were in good positions for the next days' assault. The American troops had the 4th NKPA Division nearly encircled.

But the North Koreans were not yet whipped. Just before 10 PM the NKPA hit the center of Company A with a barrage of mortar shells, fol-

lowed by white phosphorus. In the gully where Company A's 60mm mortar battery was stationed, almost every man was seriously wounded, leaving Company A's Captain John Stevens without a mortar section. The edge of the barrage caught 3rd Platoon's area, leaving several men wounded. The most serious casualties were evacuated, but the slightly wounded stayed where they were. Although injured three times, platoon commander Fox stayed to fight with his men. After the initial attack, everything settled down to an eerie quiet as the men sheltered in their foxholes, waiting for the North Koreans' next move.

At 2:30 AM on August 18, the Marines of Company A heard enemy movement on Hill 117. Suddenly, machine guns on the peak delivered a hail of bullets. Hand grenades were rolled down the hill into the Marine perimeter. A North Korean platoon attacked them, ending up in the middle of the exhausted and depleted 2nd Platoon. For 30 minutes the 2nd Platoon battled with North Korean troops three times their number. One reason for their holding out for so long can be contributed to Lawson, who refused to be evacuated even though wounded multiple times. The fatigued survivors of the 2nd Platoon were overrun in the predawn hours, and the brigade line was pierced. For some reason, the North Koreans did not exploit the penetration.

At the same time as the North Korean troops attacked Company A's 2nd Platoon, two platoons assaulted Company B's defensive perimeter on Hill 109. Despite illuminated shells fired by 81mm mortars, the enemy attacked painstakingly by throwing squadrons of grenadiers and submachine gunners against B Company. Automatic weapons fire from Hill 117 covered the NKPA soldiers. North Koreans slipped past Marine foxholes and overran the rocket gunners, mortar men, and clerks of Captain Fenton's command post, succeeding in eradicating the defenders.

Stevens had lost effective control of Company A during the night, although the situation was not as desperate as it appeared. While Stevens stabilized the center, his commanding officer, First Lieutenant Fred F. Eubanks, made lone forays up the gully.

After the North Korean breakthrough, Second Lieutenant Francis Muetzel, Company A's machine-gun officer, was wounded and left for dead. When Muetzel regained consciousness, he fought his way back to the Marine lines and assisted Eubanks. Company A eventually pulled back and called in artillery fire on the position it had abandoned.

By first light on August 18, the NKPA attackers had spent their strength. This left Company B in undisputed possession of Hills 102 and 109. North Korean machine gunners on Hill 117 covered the retreat of their surviving fellow soldiers.

The U.S. Marines called in an airstrike on Hill 117, and a lone fighter plane dropped a 500-pound bomb. The Marines swarmed up Hill 117 and secured it. The North Korean soldiers panicked and fled down from the crest. Stevens' machine gunners and riflemen mowed down the retreating North Koreans.

Company A swept south and captured Hill 143 with little resistance. The 3rd Platoon assaulted Hill 147, where most NKPA retreated while a few fought to the bitter end. The Marines marched in column of fours down the western slope. When they opened fire on the North Koreans, the enemy formation broke and the troops fled in panic. The Marine infantrymen moved southward down Obong-ni Ridge, capturing the rest of the peaks with no resistance.

While the 1st Marine Battalion secured Obong-ni Ridge, the 3rd Battalion started an assault from the northern end of Obong-ni Ridge to Hill 206, the next peak to the west. The 9th Infantry Regiment supported this attack from its position on Cloverleaf Hill. The 3rd Marine Battalion secured the hill within an hour with essentially no opposition.

U.S. forward air controllers, forward artillery observers, and frontline infantry units all reported seeing the enemy retreating west toward the Naktong River. The forward artillery observers adjusted air bursts and quick-fuse artillery fire on these forces. Some of the artillery fire directed at the river crossing sites consisted of delayed fuses for greater effectiveness against infantry swimming across the river. Fighter aircraft caught large numbers of North Koreans in the open and strafed them.

By the evening of August 18 it was clear that the Americans had soundly defeated the North Korean 4th Division. The division lost 34 artillery pieces, the largest of which was a 122mm howitzer.

The Americans suffered 600 killed and 1,200 wounded, captured, or missing in the First Battle of the Naktong Bulge. North Korean casualties were estimated to be 1,200 killed and 2,300 wounded. Half of the North Korean wounded died from lack of sufficient medical care.

**ABOVE: A Marine patrol walks the high ground overlooking the Naktong River. The North Korean army attacked over the same ground in September, but was hurled back by United Nations forces buttressed by armor and heavy weapons. OPPOSITE: Marines march past a North Korean T-34 tank that was knocked out by one of their M-26 Pershing tanks during the battle. The Marines also used their recoilless rifles and bazookas to destroy enemy tanks.**

The upshot of the First Battle of the Naktong Bulge was that it resulted in the complete erosion of the combat effectiveness of the NKPA 4th Division. The famous division never recovered from its devastating losses in the hard-fought battle.

The U.S. Army succeeded over the course of the battle in substantially improving its antitank capabilities to the point that the North Koreans no longer had a decisive advantage as a result of their T-34 tanks. As the fighting continued at the Pusan Perimeter into September, the U.N. Command forces gradually gained superiority as the Americans buttressed their frontline units with additional armor and heavy weapons capable of defeating the North Korean Army. ■

Prussian King Frederick II tried unsuccessfully to draw the Austrian Army in Saxony into battle in October 1758. He then relaxed his vigilance, leaving his army vulnerable to attack. By David A. Norris

# Prussian Blunder at HOCHKIRCH

**Scottish expatriate and Prussian Field Marshal James Francis Edward Keith was a bold and astute commander whose fatal wounding at Hochkirch proved a devastating loss for the Prussian army.**

Art Resource

Cannons roared and muskets crackled in the darkness below the hill of Rodewitz, but King Frederick the Great of Prussia was in no hurry to move. During this campaign, many a night's sleep had been cut short by noisy predawn attacks by Croatian pandours serving with the Austrian Army.

The king refused to take the firing seriously. Soldiers encamped near his quarters rushed to take up arms, but he scoffed, "What are you about, lads? It is nothing—only those scoundrels the Croats!" But this time, the firing heralded more than a mere picket-line skirmish. It was not yet dawn, but tens of thousands of Austrian grenadiers, regular infantry, cavalry, and gunners had already smashed the right flank of the Prussian Army at the village of Hochkirch in Saxony. Thousands of Prussian soldiers awoke to the sound of captured guns turned to rake their camps with shot and shell.

One of the greatest military strategists of the 18th century had been taken completely by surprise. The next few hours of the morning of October 14, 1758, would tell whether Frederick the Great's Prussian Army would survive the Battle of Hochkirch.

The Seven Years' War was in its second year. Frederick the Great's Prussian Army held the German lands of Silesia and Saxony. Surrounded by the great empires of France, Austria, and Russia, Frederick deftly parried attacks from vastly greater armies than his own with the limited help of allied German states, and financial aid and some troops from King George

II of Great Britain.

The Prussian king had some advantages that helped balance the odds against him. He possessed uncanny ability as a strategist and military leader, and he held seemingly boundless confidence in his own strategic and political skills. Most important of all, his system of intense training and discipline mixed with his willingness to share the hardships of campaigning with his soldiers won him their devotion.

In the summer of 1758, another threat to Prussia materialized when a Russian army under General Wilhelm von Fermor marched from the east toward the Oder River. Frederick took most of his troops to deal with the Russians, leaving a 20,000-man army in Saxony under his brother, Prince Henry of Prussia. The prince's small force faced an Austrian army of 90,000 men under Field Marshal Count Leopold von Daun.

On August 25, 1758, Frederick won a narrow and costly victory over the Russians at Zorndorf, a place now in western Poland. A few days later, General Fermor withdrew with his battered army, and Frederick hurried to rejoin his brother in Saxony. On October 8, Daun's army arrived to confront Frederick and camped at Kittlitz, about 40 miles east of Dresden.

Frederick the Great's army was largely drawn from his dominions. His kingdom, a growing European power, included several noncontiguous parcels stretching from the Dutch border to the Baltic, in addition to the larger regions of Brandenburg and East Prussia. The Austrian force, in contrast, was a multilingual combination of soldiers from the German-speaking lands of Austria, as well as Croatians, Italians, Hungarians, and troops from other Hapsburg lands. Frederick ruled perhaps four and a half million subjects, compared to 25 million living in the Austrian dominions.

Among Frederick's commanders was one of his few close friends, Field Marshal James Francis Edward Keith. Exiled after serving in the ill-fated Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1719 in Scotland, Keith served with the armies of Spain and Russia before accepting a commission from Frederick the Great in 1747. The Prussian king appreciated the Scottish officer not only as a brave and dependable battlefield commander, but also as a sophisticated and cultured gentleman. The Prussian king promoted Keith to field marshal, and Keith's sterling leadership in the early battles of the Seven Years' War amply confirmed Frederick's judgment. In late 1758 Keith was recovering from a breakdown in his health.

On October 10 Frederick's 37,000 troops encamped at Hochkirch in Saxony. The substantial village was situated on a low rise that commanded the surrounding plain. Looming

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

**Croatian pandours, who fought for the Austrians as light infantry, harassed the Prussian army incessantly.**

over the cluster of cottages, cabbage gardens, and narrow lanes was a new church, one rather surprisingly grand in scale and style compared to the modest village. By the church was a large cemetery surrounded by a sturdy stone wall. Many local inhabitants were Wends, people of Slavic ancestry whose language is reflected in some Saxon place names.

The Prussians erected a redoubt to shield the southern approaches to the village. The redoubt bristled with 20 12-pounder cannons and half a dozen smaller guns. Some battle accounts refer to this field work, which rested on a rise slightly higher than Hochkirch, as the Grand Battery. Grenadiers in smaller nearby works protected the flanks of the artillery position. The Prussian forces were deployed on a three-mile front from Hochkirch to Rodewitz. From his new camp, the king planned to strike the nearby Austrians and drive them out of Saxony.

Frederick's army, though, was in a precarious position. Although the site of Hochkirch itself provided a good field of fire, it overlooked only a rather narrow stretch of pastures and hayfields. These sunlit fields quickly ended in barriers of dark woods covering hills to the south and east that rose much higher than the village. The hills and forests offered cover to potential enemy attacks.

With his experienced eye for terrain, Frederick noted that a hill known as the Stromberg, which was located two miles from the Prussian left at Rodewitz, was a key position. The Prussian king believed that by holding the Stromberg his troops would be able to menace Daun's right flank and compel the Austrians to withdraw. Conversely, if the Austrians held that hill, Frederick's own position would be in danger. To ensure that the Stromberg was in Prussian hands, Frederick ordered Lt. Gen. Wolf Frederick von Retzow to secure the important hill.

The Austrians, though, had already occupied the hill. When he approached the Stromberg, Retzow found Austrian troops swarming over it. Certain that an attack would be costly and futile, the general did not act on the king's orders. Under the impression that the Stromberg was lightly held, the king again ordered Retzow to attack the hill. Frederick's initial assessment had been correct, as at first only a small force held the hill. While Retzow hesitated, however, Daun dispatched a substantial infantry and artillery force to occupy the strategic hilltop. When Retzow declined a second order to attack, Frederick became enraged. Despite the angry king's stipulation that his head would be forfeit if he failed to move, Retzow's forebodings were so strong that he submitted to arrest and gave up his sword rather than give the order to assault the position.

Besides the Stromberg, the Austrians also held two thickly forested hills south of Hochkirch. One was the Kuppritzerberg, and the other farther to the southwest was the much larger Czarnabog. The latter hill's name, drawn from the Wendish language, meant "Devil's Hill." The name aptly symbolized the menace of the dark forests hiding enemy movements around Hochkirch. Not only did the much larger enemy force control the higher ground overlooking it, but Frederick's troops were stretched thin. Indeed, the Prussian line was too long for a successful defense. What is more, a dangerous gap of about two miles separated the Prussian troops at Rodewitz from Retzow's 9,000 men who were deployed at the village of Weissenberg.

The Prussian king was well aware of the potential risks of staying at Hochkirch. But with strong faith in his own military ability and deep contempt for his enemies, Frederick would not make a quick withdrawal to a safer camp. Keith saw that their camp was within artillery range of an enemy holding the Stromberg as well as other high pieces

Wikimedia


**Frederick fought the Russians to a draw in one of the Seven Years' War's bloodiest battles at Zorndorf two months before Hochkirch. The Prussian general then quickly marched his army to Saxony.**

of ground in their front. "If the Austrians leave us alone here, they deserve to be hanged," Keith warned the king. "It is to be hoped that they are more afraid of us than of the gallows," replied Frederick.

Up to that point, the Austrian strategy had been strictly one of defense. Daun was often called "Fabius Cunctator" after Roman dictator Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus, an opponent of Hannibal who used delaying tactics rather than direct attacks on the legendary Carthaginian commander.

During the campaign, offensive moves by the Austrians had been so rare that Frederick never expected Daun to roll the dice and launch a surprise attack. The Prussian king therefore waited for his supply train, and the armies seemed to settle more or less quietly into their lines. The big guns of the Grand Battery, aimed at the menacing wooded hills, remained silent. Little broke the dull daily routine other than the Croatian pandours of Daun's army.

The pandours were irregulars from Croatia and the Balkans. Instead of military uniforms, they wore their regional clothing, which resembled the dress of the Ottoman Empire. Each one typically carried a saber, a dagger, and one or more pistols. They harassed communication lines, killing or capturing couriers, or fell on isolated detachments and baggage trains. Regular officers looked down on them as wild and undisciplined, considering them more like bandits than soldiers; indeed, they had a notorious reputation for looting. Nevertheless, the pandours were tolerated for their superb skills as woodland fighters and guerrillas.

The pandours controlled large stretches of forests and woods around Hochkirch in front of the Austrian lines. They lurked near the Prussian camps, often hitting them before dawn and then disappearing into the mist-filled woods. Since the attacks were mere pinpricks compared to the massive scale of the campaign in Saxony, officers who were any distance away from the dawn raids paid no attention to them.

In the Prussian camp, Army chaplain Carl Daniel Kuster fretted about his clammy tent staked on the cold, wet ground. Worried that he would be unable to preach if his damp and chilly quarters made him sick enough to lose his voice, he left his tent and paced up and down by the Grand Battery. A sympathetic officer offered him a place to sleep in a shed near the redoubt. From his new vantage point, Kuster saw to his dismay that they seemed to be very close to the enemy. Changing his mind, the chaplain walked to the village and accepted the offer of a cot in a farmhouse occupied by a Captain Kotulinsky and his infantry company.

On the night of October 13, 1758, Frederick and his officers watched a vast stretch of glowing

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**Frederick initially dismissed the sounds of battle as nothing more than a skirmish with the Croatians. He and his generals found the streets of Hochkirch jammed with disrupted Prussian units.**

campfires from the enemy positions. As Kuster learned, some stretches of the opposing lines were a half mile away, close enough that one could hear Austrian soldiers talking or singing. It sounded as if the enemy had no inkling that the Prussians were ready to attack the next day.

Far from lazing unaware of Frederick's intentions, the Austrians were lining up for an assault before first light. Lt. Gen. Franz Maurice von Lacy persuaded his cautious commander that this was a perfect time to hit the unsuspecting Prussians.

The sounds and lights seen by the Prussians that night were all a ruse. Practically everyone was gone, leaving a small number of troops to put on a performance. Officers barked orders to nonexistent units. Soldiers wandered amid the empty tents all night, stoking campfires while singing and talking loudly enough for the sound to carry to the enemy. Work parties made as much racket as possible, chopping trees and branches by lantern light, giving the impression that Daun was settling deeper into the abatis surrounding his camp.

The rest of Daun's army slipped toward the right flank and front of the enemy position. Covered by darkness and the pandours, on previous nights Austrian pioneers had cut roads through the woods in preparation for the surprise attack of October 14. The noise of chopping and singing from the vacant camps covered the sounds of marching feet, clopping hoof beats, and creaking wheels edging toward the staging points for the attack.

Well before dawn, the Austrians loomed near the mist-shrouded Prussian camp. Daun and about 30,000 men marched over the Kuppritzerberg, poised to fall on Hochkirch from the south. To Daun's left, Lt. Gen. Ernst Gideon von Laudon aimed at the Prussian right from the southeast. A Latvian-born Austrian commander, Laudon claimed kinship with the Scottish earls of Loudoun.

Farther past Daun's left, a cavalry force under Lt. Gen. Count Karl O'Donnell (a member of a family of Irish exiles) rode down the road from Steindorfel, placing it on a direct course to the rear of the Prussian right. Lt. Gen. Charles Marie Raymond d'Arenberg led 20,000 to Daun's right, aimed at the Prussian left. To keep Retzow's troops separated from the rest of their army, the Prince of Baden-Durloch and 16,000 men would attack him at Weissenburg.

The fog and the pandours both worked to screen Daun's maneuvers from the Prussian sentries. Nothing was seen of the Austrians until several chosen men, pretending to be deserters, trickled into the Prussian picket posts and surrendered. But more and more Austrian "deserters" appeared; enough of them gathered to outnumber the men assigned to guard the outposts.

At 5 AM the village clock of Hochkirch struck the hour. When the fifth and final chime echoed away, the Austrian pickets near Rachlau fired a volley. Mistaken by the Prussians as a pandour raid, these shots were the signal to spring Daun's trap. Confident of their king's preparations and strategy, most of Frederick's men had gone to sleep without any particular worries. The attack was a stunning surprise. Hardly had the village clock struck when the Austrian deserters overwhelmed the picket posts in front of the camps. Captured cannons were turned around to fire into the Prussian tents and moments later Daun's foot soldiers came at the Prussians with musket fire and bayonets.

Georg Friedrich von Tempelhof, later a noted artillerist and mathematician, was a young subaltern in charge of a pair of 24-pounders supporting a battalion of infantry. Awake at 3 AM, Tempelhof stood by a watch fire, expecting the customary threat of the pandours and wondering, in his words, "what form it would take this morning." By 5 AM, Tempelhof was almost disappointed. There was "not a mouse stirring," he rec-

ollected. It seemed to the subaltern that there would be no pandour activity.

When the first musket shots rattled in the misty darkness, Chaplain Kuster awoke. At first, he thought it was only another attack by the pandours. He awoke Captain Kotulinsky, who also agreed that the outbreak of gunfire meant nothing but still thought it best to turn out his men just in case.

Outside, foot soldiers formed on either side of Tempelhof's guns. Tempelhof knew by then that this was no mere escapade of the pandours. He ordered his guns to fire into the darkness "to learn whether there was anything in front of us," he wrote. For a few minutes, there was nothing but "mere crackery," taken to be scattered shots exchanged with pandours. But the firing grew louder as the enemy drew nearer. The 24-pounders and the infantry fired into a mass of enemy troops perhaps 200 yards away. After his guns fired about 15 rounds, the young officer fell unconscious to the ground.

When Tempelhof came to, he felt blood running down his face and thought he had been shot. He drew himself onto his hands and knees and saw that he was surrounded by "Austrian grenadiers, who had crept in through our tents to the rear." One of them had slammed him in the head with a musket butt.

It was still dark, and Tempelhof got only brief glimpses of the action from the glare of the watch fires and the flashes of muskets. The opposing forces were so thickly crowded and desperately pressed that "they did not fire much, having no room, but smashed and stabbed and cut." Austrian troops took the dazed subaltern prisoner, but Tempelhof was freed when Prussian cavalry cut its way into the fighting.

After Kuster left the farmhouse, he joined Kotulinsky, who had his men in line. The chaplain felt the ground shake as the big guns roared in the Grand Battery. "The howitzer shells fell like hailstones," recalled Kuster. As the armies rushed together, the opposing forces were so close that orders shouted by Prussian and Austrian officers in their shared language were getting mixed up by the soldiers. There was only enough light that the soldiers could distinguish friend from foe by grabbing their hats, the metal plates of the Prussian headgear setting them apart from the Austrian hats.

Meanwhile, Frederick was at his headquarters at Rodewitz, about two miles northeast of the church at Hochkirch. Sounds of cannon blasts and musket fire easily carried to the king's quarters. Signal rockets traced brightly colored alarms into the skies.

Among the soldiers there was a young ensign, Ernst von Barsewisch of the Wedel Regiment. Barsewisch's commanding officer, suspecting trouble, had ordered his men to sleep in their uniforms to be ready at a moment's notice. Scattered musket shots awoke some of the men, and they stepped out of their tents to investigate. As the firing quickly intensified, the officers ordered the men into line.

For some time, though, the king refused to believe the cannons and rockets signified anything more than irritating noise. He turned to Barsewisch's regiment and asked, "What are you about, lads? It is nothing—only those scoundrels the Croats."

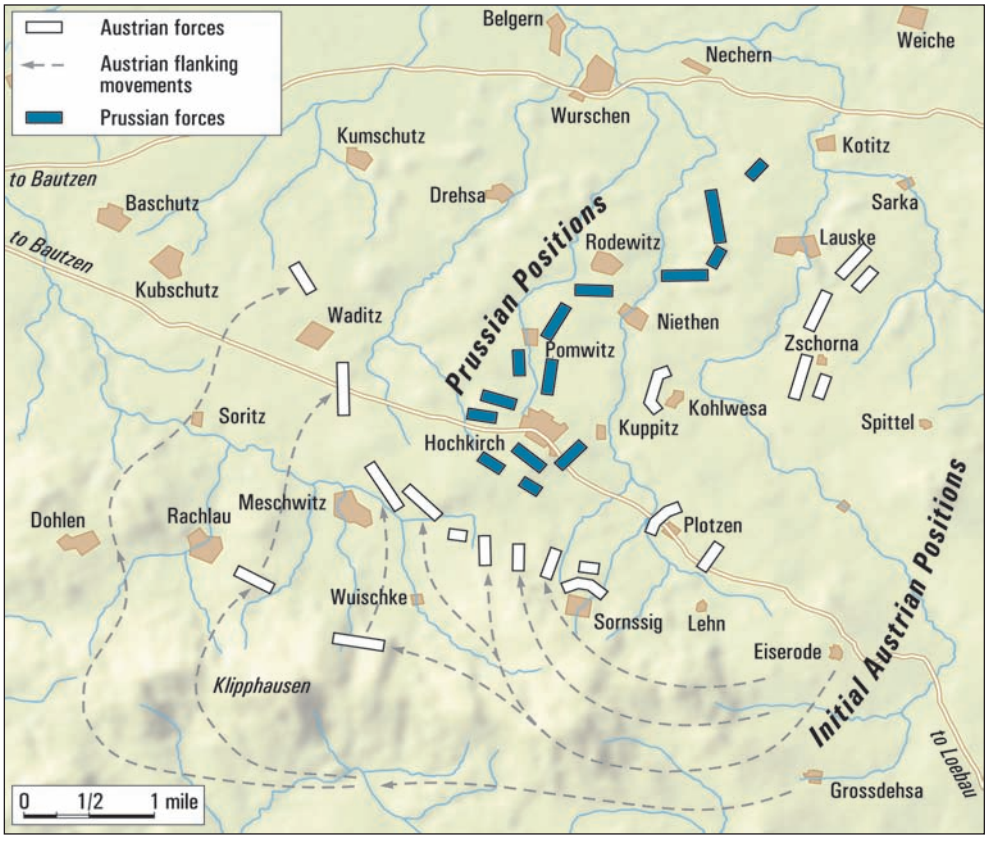
Just as the king ordered the men back to their tents, an aide arrived with disastrous news. Captain Karl Ludwig von Troschke warned that the redoubt south of the village had fallen and that the Austrian artillery would soon be within range of Rodewitz. Frederick still did not believe the aide until enemy artillery rounds soared over their heads. "Troschke, you are right!" said the king. Turning to his soldiers, he ordered, "Men, get your muskets!" He immediately pushed himself to action, ordering his men into line and sending for his horse.

Marshal Keith already was riding toward the rising sound of battle. He was lodged with Duke Frederick Francis of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel, a brother-in-law of Frederick, in a nearby chateau owned by a major in the Saxon Army. "At the first alarm in the night, he mounted his horse, assembled a body of troops … and marched directly to the place that was being attacked," wrote a correspondent of *The Gentleman's Magazine*. When Keith learned that the enemy had overrun the Great Battery south of the village, he set out to recapture the pieces. He sent a courier to the king, promising to hold on until the last man. The Scotsman then gathered enough fragments of broken battalions to retake the battery, but there were too many Austrians on hand for his scratch force to hold on. Keith had to abandon his prize and withdraw to rally troops for another attempt.

Riding with the marshal was an English soldier, who in contemporary sources was identified as John Tebay. According to Samuel Johnson's biographer James Boswell, Tebay was none other than British Lt. Gen. James Oglethorpe. Most famous as the founder of the American colony of Georgia in 1733, Oglethorpe also had a long military career. His prospects blighted by a court-martial and the enmity of King George II, Oglethorpe spent several years as a wandering exile in Europe.

Whoever Tebay was, the details of his experi-

Map © 2020 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN




**The Austrians held a commanding position at Hochkirch, and their surprise attack at dawn against the Prussian right flank went off without a hitch.**

ence in the battle reached the British press. Tebay stated that Keith's aides deserted him, leaving the marshal escorted only by Tebay and a footman. Keith smashed his way into Hochkirch three times, only to be repulsed by greater numbers of enemy troops. While leading another attack to retake the Grand Battery, Marshal Keith was shot twice. Remaining in the saddle, he directed his troops until he was instantly killed by a cannon ball. Tebay caught the marshal as he fell from his horse. Keith's horse was shot twice but survived; Tebay's mount was hit five times.

Foot soldiers from fractured Prussian units packed the village of Hochkirch. One street was jammed with soldiers squeezed so tightly together that the dead were held upright by the pressure of their comrades. Blood poured from the packed bodies and flowed as if the lane were the channel of a stream. So many men died there that the lane was named Blutgasse, meaning Blood Street.

Near the Blutgasse, a Lieutenant von Marwitz of the regiment of Margrave Carl of Brandenburg-Schwedt held the church cemetery with a small detachment. After he was shot in the chest, the lieutenant leaned on the stone wall to hold himself up while he directed the defense of the churchyard. More men of the battalion, under the command of Major Simon Maurice von Langen, reached the churchyard and fired into the Austrians.

From the north, Prussian reinforcements pushed into the burning village of Hochkirch. Prince Francis led three regiments of infantry into the battle. To support this attack, Field Marshal Prince Maurice of Anhalt-Dessau rallied as many troops as he could and followed.

The two princes cut their way into Hochkirch. For a short time they gave Langen's men in the churchyard a few moments of relief. From the south, Austrian gunners in the Grand Battery poured shot and canister into the village.

In the hazy, dim light, the nearsighted Prince Maurice nearly rode into the enemy lines. He realized the troops near him were the enemy and was shot as he rode away from them. Before he could rejoin his troops, the prince was captured.

A cannon ball decapitated Prince Francis. Wild with panic, his fine light gray horse bolted. Galloping madly, it first dashed toward the Austrians then back to the Prussians.

Pressure on Hochkirch mounted as the Croats attacked from the left, and General Lacy threw in his cavalry. Major Langen's defense of the churchyard spurred desperate attacks by the enemy to clear the last Prussian stronghold in the village. Eventually, Langen faced seven Austrian regiments. An Austrian officer, Captain Jacob Cogniazo, compared the stubborn regiment of the Margrave Carl as a dam holding back the flood of troops trying to capture Hochkirch. Indeed, Langen's tenacious stand tied up thousands of men who might have been better employed in sweeping away the fragments of Frederick's battered army.

**Flames rise from the thatched roofs and wooden buildings of Hochkirch in this period panoramic painting. The Prussians withdrew from the village and formed a new line at Pomeritz one mile to the north.**

Langen saw his ammunition dwindling away, and his support was falling back to the north. Holding on any longer was impossible. "My children, we must dash through them," ordered the major. Bayonets lifted, they charged out through the back gate of the churchyard while the enemy fired into them. All but a few of the churchyard's "garrison" were killed or captured. Wounded by 11 musket balls, Langen fell and was taken prisoner. He died one week later.

By 6 AM Hochkirch was lost for good for the Prussians. Flames rose from thatched roofs and wooden buildings, and the ruined village was a burning beacon visible for miles in the dim light of early dawn. Frederick's troops pulled back and formed a line at Pomeritz, about one mile north of Hochkirch.

Earlier that morning, Barsewisch's hat was shot through twice by enemy musket balls. Three officers, including two brothers named Hertzberg, were with him when the second shot knocked the hat to the ground. Barsewisch joked about how much the Austrians seemed to like his hat. Then, the elder Hertzberg brother produced a snuffbox and teased that they could all do with a pinch of courage. After three of the officers took snuff, the elder Hertzberg was about to take his turn when a musket ball struck him through the forehead. Hertzberg gasped, "Lord Jesus" and fell dead.

The trees and growth on the higher ground near the Prussians gave the Austrians excellent cover. Veterans remembered the enemy fire was intense and accurate, often shooting soldiers in the upper body or head, as they did with Hertzberg. Frederick was so intent on watching the action that he seemed surprised when an officer warned him that his horse was bleeding. Indeed, the king's mount, a fine brown horse from England, had been hit several times. Soon after

Art Resource

the monarch changed mounts, the English horse collapsed and died.

Barsewisch's company lost man after man until it dwindled down to a small remnant. His company commander and battalion major fell, leaving the young ensign as the only officer among a handful of men. Their ammunition running low, and Austrian cavalry preparing to overrun them, Barsewisch resolved to save their three stands of colors.

Enemy cavalrymen spotted the flags and gave chase. Barsewisch's hat, which had already been pierced by two bullets, was lost for good when an Austrian cuirassier hacked at him with his saber. The Austrian's saber knocked off the ensign's hat. Luckily for Barsewisch, the saber slash sent the hat spinning up into the air and spooked the cavalryman's horse, enabling him to escape. Shortly thereafter, Barsewisch took off his bright new sash and hurled it at two pursing enemy horsemen. Tempted by the sash, the riders stopped and one of them dismounted to pick it up, allowing the Prussians to escape with their colors.

By 10 AM, the fighting ebbed. Prussian foot and horse soldiers made their way to join Frederick at a new defensive line formed at Pomeritz. Among them were Barsewisch's little band with their banners. But nearly all of their artillery was captured or abandoned during the morning's disastrous fighting. Retreat was the only option, and the king ordered a withdrawal. Troops from the left, first a few battalions and then several thousand of General von Retzow's men, guarded the rear.

The army flowed across a stone bridge that came under heavy fire from the Austrian artillery. Fortunately, the sturdily built bridge held. Daun's army, disorganized and worn by the night's marching and the intense battle, made no effort to pursue their enemy. Frederick managed to get away with a loss of nearly 10,000 men killed, wounded, or captured. Also left on the field were 101 pieces of artillery and most of the army's tents, supplies, and baggage. Daun lost 7,500 men.

Keith's body was found by looters who stripped him of his possessions, even his clothing, and left him covered only with a Croatian cloak. With other anonymous dead soldiers, Frederick's field marshal was laid out in the church in Hochkirch. Marshal Daun, with General Lacy and other high-ranking officers, entered the church. Lacy noticed a large and distinctive scar on the leg of one of the dead. In shock, he broke down and wept after exclaiming, "It is my father's best friend!" Growing up in a family of Jacobite exiles in Russia, Lacy had long known and admired Keith as a fellow exile and a dear friend of his father. Fate taking them into different armies, they had not seen each other in years. The next day, Keith was buried in the churchyard. Lacy and other commanders attended the funeral, and they gave their fallen enemy the tribute of two 12-gun salutes.

Carts filled with Prussian wounded bumped over the country roads leading away from the battlefield. There was not enough straw for padding, so the wounded were slammed about the wooden floorboards. Neither were there enough carts, and badly wounded men plodded along on foot until someone died and opened a space for them. Teamsters halted their carts again and again so dead patients could be buried. Quarrels broke out over the dead men's shoes and shirts. A few such as Chaplain Kuster wanted the dead buried with their shirts. Many soldiers needed shirts of their

## PRUSSIAN Commanders at Hochkirch

**King Frederick II** Frederick irresponsibly went into bivouac in a position commanded by the Austrians. To the south and east of his line of battle at Hochkirch were forest-covered hills of a higher elevation than Hochkirch. These hills offered the Austrians cover for an attack.

**Field Marshal Prince Maurice of Anhalt-Dessau** Prince Maurice was a competent and reliable commander. When Frederick's brother-in-law, Prince Francis of Brunswick, advanced with three regiments, Anhalt-Dessau scraped together as many deserters and stragglers as he could find and followed Prince Francis to stabilize the Prussian position.

**Field Marshal James Francis Edward Keith** A first-rate subordinate commander, Keith was experiencing serious health problems by the time of Hochkirch. Nevertheless, his mind was sharp enough for him to be deeply alarmed by the flaws in Frederick's deployment. He gave Frederick a stern warning that his position was highly vulnerable to attack.

**Duke Frederick Francis of Brunswick-Wolfenbuettel** The twenty-six year-old duke was Frederick's brother-in-law. With multiple Austrian columns attacking the Prussian right flank at Hochkirch, the duke led three regiments of infantry into the village. The Austrians pounded the village with cannon fire, and one of the cannonballs decapitated the duke.

## AUSTRIAN Commanders at Hochkirch

**Field Marshal Leopold Joseph von Daun** The Austrian field marshal suffered from an ongoing fear of Frederick. He squandered an opportunity to crush Prince Henry of Prussia's meager covering force in Saxony before Frederick arrived from Zorndorf. His aggressive subordinate commanders compensated for his shortcomings.

**Lieutenant General Franz Maurice von Lacy** The Austrian Army's aggressive chief of staff had a sharp eye for tactical opportunities and possessed the offensive fighting spirit that Daun so glaringly lacked. Lacy succeeded in persuading the overly cautious Daun to strike a heavy blow against the vulnerable Prussian position at Hochkirch.

**Lieutenant General Charles Marie Raymond d'Arenberg** As the commander of the Austrian right wing at Hochkirch, he dispatched five grenadier battalions and artillery to hold the Stromberg. He succeeded admirably in pinning down the Prussian left while the Austrian sledgehammer blow fell upon the Prussian right at the village of Hochkirch. All things considered, he handled the tasks before him with great skill.

**Lieutenant General Ernst Gideon von Laudon** Daun tasked Laudon and Lt. Gen. Count Karl O'Donnell with striking the Prussian right wing in the flank and rear. Coming up from the southeast, Laudon's dragoons and hussars did a superb job of pursuing routed Prussian infantry units.

Wikimedia

**The well-disciplined Prussians recovered from their initial shock enough to launch a counterattack and withdraw in good order.**

own, while others sought to tear the shirts of the dead into bandages, as there was no other cloth available.

King Frederick, while not particularly close to his slain brother-in-law Prince Francis, was shattered by Keith's death. Prince Maurice would never recover enough to take the field again; he would die of cancer the next year. Two other talented Prussian generals, Hans Caspar von Karnow and Karl von Geist, were mortally wounded.

A worse tragedy was in store for the king. While the battle was raging at Hochkirch on the morning of October 14, his beloved older sister, Margravine of Brandenburg-Bayreuth Wilhelmine, died. Three days later, the news reached him, plunging Frederick into despair. He had a long conversation with his secretary Henri Catt, in which the king showed him a pillbox hanging around his neck. Inside were opium pills, which the king would have taken in the event of his capture.

After such a defeat, it was necessary for Frederick to project confidence to his army. His soldiers passed around the king's post-battle remarks. "My dear Goltz, they did not wake us up very politely," Frederick said jokingly to Maj. Gen. Karl Christof von der Goltz.

Daun's gamble on a surprise attack indeed paid off in a victory, but he soon frittered away any advantage gained by the battle. An aggressive pursuit of Frederick's battered and outnumbered army had at least the potential of knocking Prussia out of the war, but Daun resumed his cautious strategy once again. There were a few minor clashes, and Daun laid siege to Dresden. But Frederick marched his army to relieve the city, and the Austrians withdrew. The armies settled into their winter quarters.

Frederick the Great's defeat at Hochkirch was all the worse for being an unnecessary battle, brought on by his stubborn refusal to seek a less dangerous and exposed position in front of an army twice the size of his own. After Frederick had been caught by surprise, he aggravated his disadvantages by not taking the attack seriously during the early stages of the battle.

Major General Antoine-Marie de Malvin Comte de Montazet, the French attaché serving with Daun, dismissed the idea of condemning his talented enemy. De Montazet was impressed by the way Frederick molded his army into a force that could withstand anything, even his own flaws.

"It is very easy to criticize him," wrote De Montazet. The French attaché noted that even though Frederick was surprised and beaten at Hochkirch and lost all of his artillery, his army nevertheless made "the finest of retreats," having halted just four miles from the battlefield. De Montazet marveled that Frederick's army went over to the offensive just four days after his defeat. The Prussian king "has an army which permits him fault after fault, because it is always ready to retrieve a reverse," De Montazet noted with unabashed admiration. ■

The Russians struck the Germans defending Berlin with massed artillery, armor, and infantry that unnerved even the battle-hardened foreign-born Waffen SS troops who volunteered to defend the city. Inset: A poster in Dutch exhorts Waffen SS recruits from the Netherlands to join the fight against Bolshevism.

Alamy

# Last Stand IN BERLIN


Bundesarchiv Plak 003-025-063

A band of foreign Waffen-SS troops formed up to resist the Red Army in Berlin in the last week of April 1945.

**By Christopher Miskimon**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

National Archives

**ABOVE: Reichsfuhrer Heinrich Himmler reviews troops from Ukrainian SS Division Galizien. Many joined in the belief that they were fighting for Ukraine's eventual independence. RIGHT: SS Obergruppenfuhrer Gottlob Berger spearheaded the recruiting of Waffen SS volunteers from conquered countries in Europe.**

In the predawn hours of April 24, 1945, SS-Brigadeführer Gustav Krukenberg received orders from Army Group Vistula defending Berlin to immediately lead the remnants of the 57th Battalion of the 33rd Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS Charlemagne from its staging area at the SS training camp at Neustrelitz to the German capital.

Krukenberg's orders called for him to report to the Reich Chancellery for further orders upon arrival in the besieged city. He then awoke Hauptsturmführer Henri Fenet, commander of Sturmbataillon Charlemagne, as the 57th Battalion also was known. Krukenberg instructed Fenet to assemble his men so that Krukenberg could address them. Attired in a gray leather greatcoat, Krukenberg asked for volunteers to go with him to fight the Red Army in Berlin.

Although most of the troops wanted to go, just 90 were chosen because there were only a handful of vehicles available to transport them. They set out at 8:30 AM in two half-tracks and three heavy trucks. Krukenberg led the convoy along back roads through pine forests where possible to avoid being strafed by marauding Soviet fighters.

Because Soviet forces were blocking the northern entrances into Berlin, the convoy had to take a circuitous route into the bombed-out city. Entering the city from the west, they passed columns of retreating German troops. Some of the retreating Germans taunted them by shouting that they were going the wrong way. Others tapped the sides of their heads to convey that they believed the Charlemagne soldiers were crazy to be heading into battle rather than away from it. The convoy had to navigate its way around barricades and through rubble-choked streets to reach its destination. At 10 PM the convoy stopped for the night at the Olympiastadion on the east bank of the Havel River in the western section of the city.

While the Charlemagne troops rummaged for refreshments of any sort in a Luftwaffe supply depot, Krukenberg made his way to the Reich Chancellery. He received orders from General of Artillery Helmuth Weidling to take command of Defense Sector C in southeast Berlin. To defend the sector, Krukenberg would have the volunteers of Sturmbataillon Charlemagne, the remnants of two regiments of the 11th SS Panzergrenadier Nordland Division, and whatever other soldiers Weidling's staff could scrape together.

The Waffen-SS soldiers of the Charlemagne and Nordland Divisions were willing to fight to the death with other troops of the so-called Berlin Garrison, not because they were ardent Nazis, but rather because they were vehemently anti-Bolshevist. Their last stand in the streets of Berlin was made in the face of insurmountable odds against which any sort of victory was utterly impossible.

The foreign Waffen-SS units of Nazi Germany were an outgrowth of the native German Waffen-SS. The Waffen-SS organization has attained near-mythic status in the annals of World War II history. The organization began as part of the Nazi Party's private security apparatus known as the Schutzstaffel. The soldiers in the unit furnished security at Nazi Party functions.

The SS expanded in the wake of Adolf Hitler's appointment as chancellor of Germany in January 1933. Shortly afterward, the organization comprised three distinct branches. The first branch was the Allgemeine, or General SS, which oversaw administrative and policing functions. The second branch was SS-Totenkopfverbande, the Death's Head Units, which operated concentration and extermination camps.

The third branch was the Waffen-SS, meaning Armed SS. This part began as a small armed force loyal only to Hitler. The Waffen-SS later expanded into a major military organization. Although the lines were not always clear between the three branches, it was the Waffen-SS that was equipped for war and eventually deployed for battle.

A dichotomy exists in the popular conception of the Waffen-SS. On one side, they are viewed as criminals who killed prisoners, massacred civilians, and showed little mercy. Indeed, SS troops were guilty of all these behaviors. On the other side, they are seen as modern knights and regarded as patriots who fought for their country against the scourge of Bolshevism. In this sympathetic portrait, they are painted as superbly trained and equipped soldiers who inflicted heavy casualties on their battlefield opponents.

The latter view of the Waffen-SS is flawed for two reasons. First, it endorses Nazi propaganda, which presented SS troops as elite for political

and recruiting purposes. Second, most existing first-hand accounts of the Waffen-SS in action were written by SS soldiers. Like many accounts penned by soldiers, there is always the temptation to embellish their achievements. As defeated soldiers serving a criminal regime, their memoirs often seek to justify their service on patriotic grounds or to deny that any atrocious conduct occurred. Many SS veterans worked tirelessly after the war to repair the Waffen-SS's tarnished reputation. Whatever the individual member's actions or conduct, the Waffen-SS served a government guilty of extensive and pervasive criminal behavior and, therefore, is forever tainted by that association.

Yet SS lore also omits the fact that many of the men who served in the Waffen-SS were not German citizens. By war's end, there were numerically more non-Germans serving in the Waffen-SS than natural-born Germans. The Waffen-SS leadership recruited and fielded entire divisions along ethnic lines. In the latter part of World War II, all regular SS divisions had some foreign soldiers assigned to them. Of the 38 Waffen-SS divisions, 21 were raised with non-Germans as their primary personnel.

The entry of foreign citizens into the Waffen-SS began early in the war. The recruitment of volunteers for the Waffen-SS outside the borders of Nazi Germany was part of SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler's dream of a pan-European army for the Third Reich. He conceived as early as 1938 the concept of recruiting men of sufficiently Germanic heritage and blood for the Waffen-SS.

The success of the Wehrmacht in the first years of the war placed this dream within reach. As the Nazis conquered and occupied Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France in 1940, millions of Western Europeans came under their dominion. These were exactly the captive populations Himmler wanted for recruiting his European Waffen-SS.

Himmler assigned SS Obergruppenführer Gottlob Berger to assist in this effort. Berger, a decorated World War I veteran, joined the brown-shirted Nazi Party paramilitary organization known as the Sturmabteilung (SA) in 1930. An arrogant and belligerent individual, Berger was roundly disliked by the majority of the SA membership. He transferred to the SS in 1936 and subsequently became its chief of recruitment. An advocate for the addition of foreign volunteers, he played an instrumental role in the expansion of the SS.

After the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, non-German membership in the Waffen-SS grew in importance. The Waffen-SS and the Wehrmacht competed for recruits. The Wehrmacht had an edge in the recruitment race because it could restrict the number of volunteers who could enter the SS.

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**Volunteer foreign SS units were designated either as legion or free corps. Soldiers of the Danish Free Corps parade with their flag in Germany in 1941.**

Berger realized it was going to be difficult to bring in enough replacements to keep the existing SS units at sufficient strength, much less create new formations. At that time, the SS did not have a reserve system like the Wehrmacht's that funneled new recruits into combat divisions.

The Wehrmacht, though, did not control two groups of potential recruits. One group was the Volksdeutsche. These were individuals of German descent who had settled throughout Europe in the preceding centuries. The Nazis regarded the Volksdeutsche as ethnically German. Their language and culture had German origins, but they were not German citizens.

The other group was composed of individuals who looked Germanic. This group included those of Nordic descent who were Teutonic enough to serve in the military forces of Nazi Germany. This group included Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Finns, Dutch, Belgian Flemings, and Swiss from

the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland.

Once the Nazis had occupied these countries, it became easier to recruit within their borders. This put Himmler's dream of an Aryan European army within reach. Although Hitler considered the Third Reich as an entirely German and Austrian endeavor, Himmler thought in terms of ethnicities rather than strict national borders.

Berger moved quickly. The first Waffen-SS recruiting offices in the occupied countries were established in June 1940. Berger had made contact before the war with various right-wing groups throughout Western Europe; this sped the recruiting process. The Waffen-SS soon had offices in Oslo, Copenhagen, Antwerp, and The Hague. Since Sweden and Switzerland were officially neutral, German embassies in those nations worked quietly with right-wing groups to gather recruits.

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**ABOVE: The 5th SS Viking Division saw heavy action during Germany's fighting withdrawal on the Eastern Front from 1943-1945. OPPOSITE: Soldiers of the 14th Waffen SS Grenadier Division Galizien in winter camouflage man a 50mm anti-tank gun on the Eastern Front in 1944.**

Berger's optimism for the rapid creation of a multinational Waffen-SS was soon dashed. Few men appeared at the recruiting stations. Those who did show up were often treated as collaborators by their countrymen. They had different motivations for volunteering. Some were dedicated Nazi sympathizers or simply Germanophiles. They wanted to join the seemingly unstoppable Nazi juggernaut. Others enlisted for more mundane reasons, such as to escape poverty. For the impoverished, the Waffen-SS offered the promise of warm barracks and hot meals.

It was a myth that all SS men were volunteers. Recruiters deliberately misled some enlistees regarding what they would be doing. For example, a group of Danish men were told that they were going to Germany to participate in political and athletic training. Similarly, 500 Flemish factory workers employed by the Germans in northern France volunteered for work in Poland under the pretense of higher pay. These men discovered upon arrival that they had been whisked into the Waffen-SS.

Waffen-SS recruiters were instructed to turn a blind eye to volunteers who were awaiting criminal prosecution in their countries or who were known juvenile delinquents. Berger believed that criminals made outstanding soldiers—if one knew how to handle them. He said that he knew some of the recruits would be less than ideal and would join for other than ideological reasons. He dismissed these concerns on the grounds that these were age-old recruiting problems for all nations.

Recruitment increased in many areas in the wake of Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Men who were not committed Nazis, but instead staunch anticommunists, enlisted in the hope of eradicating the threat that Bolshevism posed to Western Europe.

"I joined the Waffen-SS to help the Finns," said Asbjorn Narmo, a member of the Norwegian Waffen-SS. "I wanted to go earlier to help them fight the Russians, but they wouldn't let me. So when the Germans said they would send volunteers there, I enlisted."

Narmo joined a specialized company of ski troops and fought alongside the Finns in the so-called Continuation War, a portion of the fighting on the vast Eastern Front. The Continuation War had begun just 15 months after the conclusion of the Winter War in which the Soviets had tried to annex part of Finland's eastern frontier.

The SS leadership formed these early volunteers into several new regiments that grouped recruits of similar national heritage into the same unit. The first two regiments were named Westland and the Nordland. The Waffen-SS Regiment Westland was composed of Netherlanders and Belgian Flemings. The Nordland Regiment was composed of recruits from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden.

None of these regiments reached its projected manpower goals, though. The SS leadership added Germans to the regiments to bring them to full strength. These units were combined with SS Infantry Regiment Germania and designated the 5th SS Panzer Division Wiking. Yet despite their best efforts, less than 10 percent of the recruits in the unit were foreign nationals when it took part in Operation Barbarossa.

The Nazis also began recruiting new nation-based SS units, in an effort to boost the numbers of volunteers through a sense of national identity. SS leadership generally designated these units as either "legion" or "free corps" to reflect that their members were volunteers. Most of these units numbered 1,000 volunteers, which was slightly more than made up a standard Wehrmacht infantry battalion. The small units could hardly be expected to have a real influence on a theater of war as vast as the Eastern Front, given that 3.8 million Axis troops participated in Operation Barbarossa.

The Germans used these national units later in the war to form the nucleus of new SS divisions as the need for new combat formations became desperate. A new division was usually brought up to strength with whatever personnel were available. Under such conditions, any semblance of national or cultural identity was superficial at best.

The training of the new units became another point of contention. Most of their instruction came from German Waffen-SS cadre. The recruits complained of poor treatment. Their complaints were not about the rigorous training, but rather about the abuse and dismissive attitude they encountered. A number of high-ranking Waffen-SS officers stepped in to stop these abuses, but they were never completely successful.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Most of the newly established Waffen-SS foreign units did not fare well on the Eastern Front. The SS leadership attributed their poor performance to inferior leadership. But the real reason was a lack of proper training and equipment. The Wehrmacht generals looked with disdain upon the Waffen-SS. They viewed them not as elite soldiers, but instead as poorly trained fanatics who achieved their objectives at a high cost in casualties. Often they did not receive the same standard of training as Wehrmacht units.

Despite the Waffen-SS having more than its share of the training and other problems common to any military force, it saw its share of fighting. Ivar Corneliussen, a Danish volunteer in the Westland Regiment, recalled the hard fighting in the Ukraine. "I saw a Cossack attack with my own eyes, all of them on horseback and waving their sabres," he said. "They charged towards us, it was madness, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. We mowed them down, dozens and dozens of them. It was just slaughter, the machine guns shredded them." He said that when it was all over, the Danes went out onto the steppe and shot the wounded horses to put them out of their misery.

When Germany turned its attention to the East, it opened up entirely new recruiting possibilities for the Waffen-SS, for there were untapped areas of Volksdeutsche scattered throughout Eastern Europe. Himmler and Berger recruited them and formed them into new units. They recruited heavily among the ethnic Germans in Romania and Hungary. Since these countries were key Axis allies, however, they naturally recruited their citizens to serve in their own armies. To circumvent this, Waffen-SS recruiters went so far as to hide Romanian recruits among German units. Thus, when the German unit moved out of the country, the recruits went with it.

Occupied countries, as opposed to allied countries, were different propositions altogether. In the case of Yugoslavia, the Nazis took advantage of the country's long-standing ethnic and religious tensions to recruit as many troops as possible.

Himmler ardently pushed for the creation of an SS division in Yugoslavia to combat partisans. The Serbs were formed into an SS-led militia force that became the nucleus of the 7th SS Volunteer Mountain Division Prinz Eugen. But like most foreign-based Waffen SS divisions, there were not enough recruits to fill its ranks.

Himmler, who feared that Hitler would withdraw his support for the unit if it could not be fully manned, ordered his subordinates to use coercion to complete the task. His henchmen began covertly conscripting men. This occurred among the Volksdeutsche throughout the rest of the war, thus ending the pretense of the Waffen-SS as an all-volunteer organization.

New recruits also came from German-occupied territories in the Soviet Union. Many Latvians, Estonians, and Ukrainians, themselves unwilling subjects of Stalin's empire, joined the Waffen-SS out of a desire to prevent the communists from returning to their countries. Even the German Waffen-SS leadership realized these men had no real love for either Germany or for Nazi doctrine, but instead hoped to garner privileges for their homelands in postwar Europe should Germany win. Although these units were often used against partisans, they also saw action on the front lines.

Oskars Perro, a Latvian volunteer assigned to a special-employment unit of the Waffen-SS, found himself in the Novgorod town of Kholm in January 1942. He was part of a 15-man detachment sent to Kholm for antipartisan work. Before this assignment, Perro's unit was attached to Einsatzgruppe A, one of the death squads that conducted mass executions of Jews and other groups in German-occupied Europe.

In the predawn hours of January 18, a Soviet partisan force attacked the town, which was defended by a mixed group of German rear-echelon personnel. Perro and his fellow SS men were sleeping on beds of straw in a school building when the sharp crack of a rifle shot woke them. They heard shouting outside and quickly took up arms. Each man took his position at a window. Perro heard machine guns chattering in the distance and the muffled crump of grenades exploding in the deep snow. After the attack, Perro's

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Bundesarchiv Bild 146-1989-050-00; Photo: Mielke

squad walked to the center of town. They found before them the bodies of slain partisans. There were also several dead German sentries with knife wounds in their backs, indicating that partisans had succeeded in infiltrating German lines to carry out retaliatory attacks.

The 7th SS Volunteer Mountain Division remained in Yugoslavia, where it fought Tito's partisans from late 1942 on. The unit, which was equipped with obsolete or captured weapons and commanded by German officers and NCOs, engaged in operations marked by brutality. They gave no quarter, and neither did their opponents. The division was not remembered for its combat prowess, but instead for the atrocities it committed.

The Prinz Eugen Division performed badly in its first confrontations with the Red Army in mid-1944. Although a few of its soldiers received decorations for valor, these were generally ethnic Germans rather than non-German troops. Once the tide of war had turned in favor of the Russians, the Balkan soldiers began deserting in droves.

Two other Waffen SS divisions raised in the Balkans became infamous as a result of their atrocities. The 13th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS (Handschar) was created in the spring of 1943. It was composed of Bosnian Muslims, a seemingly odd choice for the race-sensitive Nazis. It was a deliberate choice, though. Most of the communist partisans came from Christian areas. The Nazis deliberately exploited the simmering racial hatreds of the region. This was perhaps the only division with an excess of recruits, because the local Muslims wanted an opportunity to strike at their lifelong enemies. Members of the unit wore a patch with a scimitar over a swastika on their collar instead of the typical SS lightning bolt runes. They also wore the fez as their headgear. They donned a gray fez for service in the field, and they wore a red one for their dress uniform. An SS Death's Head insignia adorned the fez.

The Handschar was trained in France, where some of the soldiers mutinied and killed their German officers. The Germans executed some of the ringleaders in retaliation and sent others to concentration camps. The Handschar went into action against partisans in early 1944 and quickly gained a reputation for brutality. By the end of the year, the division had suffered thousands of desertions and was soon disbanded. The SS leadership sent the remaining Bosnians to labor units. The reliable German elements of the division were transferred to other Waffen-SS units.

The other unit formed in the region was the 24th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS (Karstjager). The Karstjager was formed primarily of Volksdeutsche from Yugoslavia, Hungary, Roma-

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**ABOVE: Waves of communist soldiers backed by Soviet tanks made quick work of the patchwork defenses of Waffen SS, Wehrmacht, and Volksgrenadier units scraped together to defend the streets of Berlin. OPPOSITE TOP: Soldiers from 7th SS Volunteer Mountain Division Prinz Eugene with capture partisans in Croatia. The 7th SS was built around a core of Serbian volunteers. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Fez-wearing troops of the 13th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS (Handschar) in formation. Its Bosnian Muslim troops allegedly committed atrocities against civilians.**

nia, and the Ukraine. It started as a battalion and was later expanded to a division in the summer of 1944, although in reality it was never larger than a brigade.

The Karstjager Division first operated against partisans in northern Italy and in Dalmatia; after that, it was sent to North Africa, where it contended with the British 8th Army. While it fought hard against the British, the Karstjager never became infamous for the types of atrocities committed by the other Balkan-raised units; unlike those formations, it retained a reputation for reliability and esprit de corps. What was left of the Karstjager Division surrendered to the British in May 1945.

While the Waffen-SS divisions in the Balkans were fighting partisans, other foreign-born SS troops were fighting and dying on the Eastern Front. As with the enlistment of Bosnian Muslims, the SS leadership relaxed other racial rules. As the war progressed, Waffen-SS divisions became for the most part mixed units.

When the soldiers of the SS Nordland Division were sent to the Balkans to refit, they found no respite. Instead, they found themselves heavily engaged against Tito's partisans, with brutality against the enemy becoming a routine occurrence. By 1945 most German units, whether Wehrmacht or SS, were fighting not only to hold off the Soviets a little longer but also for simple survival.

In mid-March 1945 the Germans formed elements of various SS units into a battle group to defend the Hungarian village of Sored from a Soviet attack. Hans Geissendorf, an officer of the 3rd SS Panzer Division Totenkopf's Sturmgeschutz battalion, witnessed the futile struggle of his SS soldiers. Having run out of ammunition for their various weapons, the SS soldiers resorted to using their knives and entrenching tools to defend themselves.

Russians emerged from foxholes 50 yards away. They offered the Germans an opportunity to surrender. When the Germans declined the offer, the Russians attacked in force. Waves of communist soldiers advanced, supported by Soviet heavy tanks. A reconstituted battalion of the Nordland Division, which subsequently had been attached to the Wiking Division, accompanied the assault gun battalion.

"The Danes of Panzergrenadier Regiment 24 Danmark fought heroically," said Geissendorf. "I was with our Sturmgeschutz at the outskirts of the town with an infantry squad. In the midst of this inferno, a messenger came and yelled out that it was over and we should attempt to escape towards the West."

The reason for this was that other assault guns had become mired in the sodden fields west of the town. The assault guns that Geissendorf and his squad accompanied soon became stuck in the soggy terrain, as well. "I blew up our assault gun with a panzerfaust," Geissendorf said. "We ran for our lives [with] artillery rounds always exploding just in front of us. I saw several officers from both our division and SS Panzergrenadier Regiment 24 Danmark shoot themselves because they could go no further."

As the Soviets encircled German units in the nearby village of Stuhlweissenburg, the morale of the Wiking Division started to break. Oberführer Karl Ullrich decided to save his division from destruction. He ordered his troops to break out on March 22. This flew in the face of Hitler's longstanding policy that German forces were not to give ground.

Another German SS division, the 9th SS Panzer Division Hohenstaufen, fought to keep an escape corridor open for the Wiking troops. Hitler flew into a rage upon learning of the retreat of the Wehrmacht and SS units. Five days later he issued orders that the men of the Hohenstaufen Divi-

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**ABOVE: French General Philippe Leclerc de Hauteclocque speaks with captured soldiers of the SS Charlemagne Division on May 7, 1945. Some accounts assert that he threatened to have them shot as traitors. OPPOSITE: Dead troops and a destroyed half-track of the 11th SS Nordland Division. The Nordland troops were among those who fought to the bitter end in Berlin.**

sion were to remove their distinctive armbands that indicated they belonged to an elite division.

The death knell of Nazi Germany came in Berlin. Trapped between advancing Allied armies from the East and West, many Waffen SS units were ordered to Berlin to take part in the final defense. At this point, virtually all German units were shadows of their former selves, depleted of men and short of weapons, equipment, and fuel. Divisions were by then reduced to battalion strength.

Still, the SS fought on. The bonds shared by its soldiers as the result of having fought side-by-side for years held many of them together. This was true for ethnic Germans, as well as for foreign-born SS troops. They were willing to fight to the finish, in large part, because they had nowhere to go. They could not return to their homelands, and capture by the Soviets meant almost certain death. "Even in the last hopeless days there was no question of laying down our weapons," said one SS soldier.

Some of the SS men still felt there was a chance for victory even when the war had only weeks left, believing in the promise of wonder weapons. "We knew important things were going on, that sensational weapons would soon be put into action, and thanks to that, the war would take on a completely new character," said Erik Wallin, a Swede in the Nordland Division. "We knew that even better things were coming."

The Red Army forces fighting their way into Berlin found a special way to honor Hitler's birthday, April 20, 1945. They celebrated the occasion by bombarding the center of Berlin with their long-range artillery.

Hitler flew into one of his last rages two days later when Steiner's 11th SS Panzer Army, created in the final weeks of the war by Himmler, failed to carry out an attack order. Hitler's outburst is believed to have occurred because the Waffen-SS, which he believed had never before failed him, finally gave out. Within the city, though, were a number of Waffen-SS units, including the remnants of the Nordland and Charlemagne Divisions. They were determined to fight to the very end.

The street fighting in Berlin followed the Soviet victory at Seelow Heights, fought from April 16 to April 19 on the west bank of the Oder River. The last large-scale battle between the Germans and Russians had pitted Marshal Georgi Zhukov's 1st Belorussian Front against Generaloberst Gotthard Heinrici's Army Group Vistula.

The Soviets, who outnumbered the Germans 10 to one, fought their way through Heinrici's layered defense and entered the city. At that point, Stalin also directed Marshal Ivan Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front, which was situated southeast of Berlin, to fight its way into the city. This produced a heated rivalry between Zhukov and Konev in which each sought to be the one regarded as the conqueror of Berlin.

The Russians relentlessly struck the Germans with a blend of massed artillery, armor, and infantry. Most of the Volkssturm scattered, but the Hitler Youth fought heroically in the last week of April, to the admiration of the foreign SS troops.

The foreign SS troops found the intensity of the Soviet artillery bombardment unnerving. SS Nordland soldier Erik Wallin and his comrades took position in an abandoned house, but they could not escape the ferocity of the Red Army's heavy guns. "[The artillery] sang and thundered all around and the blast waves threw us, half conscious, to and fro between the walls," wrote Wallin. "The defenders who were killed by collapsing walls, ceilings and iron girders numbered more than [those] who got a direct hit. It became unendurable to stay in this inferno. Whirling stone, scrap iron and bloody body parts made the air impossible to breathe, filled as it was with limestone dust and gunpowder gases." Wallin and his fellow SS soldiers evaded encirclement by escaping through narrow passages and backstreets. All the while their losses mounted.

On April 25 Fenet's soldiers joined forces with the remnants of SS Nordland Division's Danmark and Norge Regiments, as well as some of the men of the division's pioneer battalion. The Nordland troops, who were led by Sturmbannfuhrer Rudolf Ternedde, also possessed a few tanks and assault guns. They had continued to fight after the Battle of Seelow Heights even as other German units fled west in the hope of surrendering to the Americans at Charlottenburg rather than the deeply embittered Russian troops. The SS troops were augmented by a smattering of other Waffen-SS personnel, including Finns, Latvians, Spaniards, and Hungarians. In addition, their numbers included some fanatical Hitler Youth and poorly armed Volkssturm.

The combined force assembled near Tempelhof airport on the south side of the city. They managed to advance just over half a mile before Soviet resistance stopped them. Col. Gen. Vasily Chuikov's 8th Guards Army spearheaded the Russian assault. The Russian infantry was supported by tanks from Col. Gen. Mikhail Katukov's 1st Guards Tank Army. By noon Fenet's command post was under heavy enemy machine-gun fire. The foreign Waffen-SS soldiers launched their own counterattack. They initially forced back the Russians, but reinforcements arrived. They soon found their flanks assailed by the enemy as the Soviet soldiers sought desperately to encircle and destroy the assembled force.

The foreign Waffen-SS soldiers withdrew and set up a defensive position at nightfall. The Nordland panzer troops positioned some of their assault guns behind barricades made of paving stones. When more Russian tanks arrived, the assault guns opened fire. They knocked out several enemy tanks before running out of ammunition. The Nordland panzers withdrew. Without their armored support, Fenet's men fell back. The

Frenchmen bedded down for the night in a beer hall near the Anhalter train station.

The fighting continued the next day with the foreign SS troops heavily engaged against Chuikov's spearhead. "Our men advanced as if on maneuvers, leapt from door to door and fell upon the Red snipers hidden in the upper storey," wrote one SS-Charlemagne soldier. "The tanks behind them spewed fire and flames and barely gave the enemy infantry the opportunity to fire effectively. Our attack gained ground, but then we suffered a severe blow."

The Hitler Youth fought heroically, attacking Soviet tanks at close quarters with handheld panzerfausts. As for his troops, Fenet claimed that they destroyed 62 Soviet tanks in the desperate fighting.

The Soviets made heavy use of tanks in the Berlin fighting and suffered heavy losses in the close-quarters fighting to panzerfausts and other antitank weapons. "There was no limit to their tank forces," recalled Wallin. "The infantry we saw less and less…. We realized the forces ranged against us were exclusively tanks, assault guns and entire battalions of Stalin organ rockets. There wasn't an infantry soldier among them."

Fenet said the Soviet infantry also used flamethrowers to clear out German pockets of resistance. "There was fighting everywhere," he recalled, "in the backyards behind the houses, on the roofs, with assault rifles, with hand grenades and with bayonets. The smoke and dust almost choked and blinded us. We could only see for half a meter. Our tank hunters were constantly on the alert. Wilhelm Street was littered with burning tanks, their ammunition exploding and their fuel tanks blowing up in flames."

A small number of Charlemagne troops had barricaded themselves in a basement of the former Gestapo headquarters. About 100 military policemen fought alongside them. Fenet, who was wounded in the foot, continued to lead them. Generalmajor Wilhelm Mohnke, a former commander of the German SS Division Leibstandarte, presented him with a Knight's Cross.

Many of the Charlemagne troops were eager to earn a Knight's Cross, so Fenet passed out the few he had to deserving soldiers. The next morning the French hid in a building at the Air Ministry. At that point, all was quiet. A few cars flying white flags appeared. Russian troops accompanied by German officers exited the cars and implored the French SS men to surrender. A Luftwaffe major told Fenet the surrender document was signed and that his unit should capitulate.

The Frenchmen decided to try to break out. They moved through subway tunnels until reaching the Kaiserhof station. They could hear Russian troops in military vehicles on the streets above blowing their horns in celebration. The SS men eventually reached a bridge near the Potsdam train station and hid beneath it. Their plan was to resume their flight at night in the hope of reaching the formation commanded by General of Panzer Troops Walther Wenck

Wenck had directed his troops to fight solely for the purpose of keeping open an avenue of escape so that civilians and soldiers fleeing Berlin might reach Allied lines. But before the French SS soldiers could leave the bridge, the Russians captured them. They were among the 130,000 German troops taken prisoner by the Russians in and around Berlin.

A few Waffen-SS foreign fighters did manage to escape Berlin, but the reprieve they attained was temporary. One Norwegian SS soldier was captured but escaped his drunken guard and made it to the British. Another hid in a cellar before making his way to the coast and boarding a boat to Denmark, where he was soon arrested.

SS Nordland soldiers Wallin and Hans-Gota Pehrsson managed to successfully escape from Berlin. Disguising themselves as Italian refugees,

*Continued on page 98*

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A mighty Viking fleet sailed up the Seine River and laid siege to Paris in 885. The Franks desperately needed good leadership, and two heroic men filled the void.

# GREAT VIKING SIEGE OF PARIS

By Victor Kamenir

During ancient times more than 300 islands dotted the length of the Seine River, reduced over the centuries by human impact and natural changes to slightly more than 100. During the Iron Age, the Celtic tribe of the Parisii made their home around a cluster of islands at the spot four miles downstream from where the Marne River joins the Seine. After conquering Gaul, the Romans built the city of Lutetia atop the ruins of the old Parisii settlement. Due to its location at an important road nexus, Lutetia grew in importance, becoming the capital of the Roman Western Gaul province by the end of the 4th century.

For protection from barbarians migrating into Gaul, the Celts living along the banks of the Seine at Lutetia relocated to the two largest islands in the river, named the Ile de la Cité and the Ile de St-Louis. Using stones recovered from damaged buildings, the Romans built defensive walls on the 56-acre Ile de la Cité. The Ile de St-Louis, which was roughly half the size of the neighboring island, was used mainly as pastureland and left undefended.

The defensive walls largely followed the outline of the island. The builders attempted to place the walls as close as possible to the water's edge, but the marshy and muddy banks of the Ile de la Cité permitted only approximately half of the island to be enclosed. Due to the uneven terrain, the actual height of the walls varied from 12 to 25 feet, placing the top of the wall at roughly uniform level. Eight feet thick at the base, the walls tapered to six feet at the top. The Seine River with its swift current acted as a natural moat over which two bridges anchored on the Ile de la Cité connected the two sides of the river.

**The year-long attack by the Norsemen on Paris was the first time that the Vikings conducted a formal siege as opposed to a swift raid.**

After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the name of the town reverted to Civitas de Parisiis and was eventually shortened to Paris. During Charlemagne's reign, Paris became one of the most important cities of the Frankish Empire. Charlemagne's conquest of Saxony in the late 8th century brought the borders of his empire into direct contact with Danish kingdoms. The collapse of centralized Danish monarchy around the beginning of the 9th century coincided with the explosion of Scandinavian expansion, which was spurred by the innovations in Scandinavian shipbuilding.

Raids by Scandinavian pirates against Western Europe began in the late 8th century, with the attack on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne off the northwestern coast of England in 793 ushering in the Viking Age. The term "Vikings" as we know it appears to have originated in the 18th century. Their Western contemporaries typically referred to Scandinavian pirates and raiders as the Norse or the Danes. In Eastern Europe, the Vikings were typically called the Rus in reflection of their Swedish origin. Lasting until the end of the 11th century, Viking raids took place over a vast territory from the Western European seaboard to the Black and Caspian Seas in the East and the Mediterranean Sea in the South. Sailing the inshore waters of the North and Celtic Seas and the English Channel, the Vikings were within easy striking distance of rich targets in the British Isles and Western Europe.

The Vikings built shallow-draft vessels known

Raid on Lindisfarne

**793** Raid on Lindisfarne off the northeast coast of England.

**799** Vikings sack Monastery of Saint-Philibert on Noirmoutier off Brittany's Atlantic Coast.

**810** A large Viking fleet attacks Frisia and imposes tribute.

**820** A small Viking fleet plunders Aquitaine.

**836** Vikings begin raiding the interior of Ireland.

**844** Raids on Toulouse, Galicia, and al-Andalus.

**848** Vikings besiege and capture Bordeaux.

**852** Vikings winter in the Seine Valley.

**853** Vikings winter in the Loire Valley.

**865** Great Heathen Army arrives in England.

**878** Wessex king Alfred the Great defeats Danelaw Vikings at Edington.

**881** Carolingian forces defeat the Danish Vikings at Saucourt.

775 800 825 850 875

Recreated Viking ship

as longships. They used their longships not only at sea, but also to penetrate large land masses by rowing them upriver. The longships, which could pass through water just a few feet deep, were light enough to be portaged short distances when necessary. The symmetrical design of the Viking boats allowed them to reverse course without turning, a feature especially useful within the relatively narrow confines of a river. With emphasis on speed and maneuverability, the main source of propulsion was by oar, but a square sail was added when traveling on the open sea.

The Vikings initially raided in one to three ships; however, as they grew in power and their raids became more ambitious, their fleets grew to as many as 200 longships. But these great fleets were the exception rather than the rule. Due to the shallow hull construction of their ships, the Vikings could land directly on the beaches or river banks. This allowed rapid egress and prepared the Norsemen to strike where they were least expected. After initially raiding coastal areas, the Vikings began penetrating deeper inland using rivers as highways.

Raiding was a young man's business, a sort of rite of passage to earn reputation and wealth. Once having started a family, the majority of former Vikings settled down to farming, the primary means of earning a living in Scandinavia. The Icelander *Egil's Saga* describes its Viking protagonist, Egil Skallagrimsson, as conducting both trading and raiding.

Virtually all Viking activities depended on exploration and navigation of seas and rivers. Shipbuilding was expensive, and only rich men like kings and earls could afford to build or buy and outfit a ship or fleet of ships. Those with lesser means could buy a share in a longship, while those without means served as warriors or crewmen.

**ABOVE: Count Odo's successful direction of the defense of Paris solidified his military reputation and ultimately led to his succession to the West Frankish throne. OPPOSITE: The shallow hull construction of Viking ships enabled the Norsemen to penetrate deep into West Francia using its long rivers as highways.**

During the heyday of the Viking Age, a typical force of Norse raiders consisted of approximately 400 men. Large fleets usually did not have central command, being a conglomeration of war bands with their own leaders. Operating in the manner of modern-day commandos, they avoided pitched battles with local forces in favor of quick, hard strikes against specific targets and fading away before local response could be organized. When forced to fight in an open field and with the battle going against them, a Viking war band would give way and scatter, avoiding crippling losses and reforming at a different location.

In 882 a relief force of Franks pursued the Vikings, who "betook themselves to a wood and scattered hither and yon, and finally returned to their ships with little loss," according to the *Annals of St. Vaast,* a collection of historical records produced in the 10th century by the Abbey of St. Vaast in Arras.

When staying in one location for a period of time, the Vikings encamped on river islands or on easily defensible river banks. Since longships were not designed to carry horses, the Norsemen captured or bought horses from local residents. The horses allowed them to raid deep inland.

The main goal of a Viking raid was to carry off portable valuables and slaves. It was a common tactic for Vikings to demand tribute of gold, silver, or foodstuffs in exchange for sparing a town from looting. After gathering plunder in one place, the

Viking chess figures

**886** Danelaw is formalized in England.

**896** Viking army in England disbands.

**911** Rollo's Viking raiders suffer defeat at Chartres but receive permission to occupy the lower Seine valley to strengthen Frankish defenses.

**914** Ragnall defeats the English and Scots at Corbridge in Northumberland.

**917-919** Ragnall raids Ireland and Scotland and conquers York.

**921** Vikings receive permission to settle in the lower Loire Valley.

**991** Danish Vikings defeat the English at Maldon.

**1016** Viking Cnut the Great's victory at Ashingdon enables the Danes to conquer the whole of England.

**1070** The Danish fleet leaves England.

900 925 950 975 1000

Battle of Stamford Bridge

**1066** King Harold Godwinson defeats the Viking army of King Harald Hardrada of Norway at Stamford Bridge.

Vikings frequently sailed to another location. Here they would trade their loot with the locals and return to raiding farther down the line.

The Vikings regularly targeted churches and monasteries because they held considerable wealth. The well-known vulnerability of religious institutions made them attractive targets. In the course of plundering these ecclesiastical institutions, the Norsemen would indiscriminately slaughter monks and clerics. While Christian combatants, for the most part, left churches and holy sites unmolested, the pagan Norsemen harbored no such inhibitions.

The first Viking attack against Charlemagne's empire came in 799. Charlemagne responded by establishing a defensive system the following year north of the Seine estuary. The Franks fortified key coastal locations and conducted regular ship patrols in river estuaries. This initially helped prevent Viking river raids.

After Charlemagne's death in 814, his empire was divided among his three sons. The power struggle among his progeny prevented the Franks from bringing the full weight of their defensive resources against the Viking menace. By the middle of the 9th century, the Vikings had firm control of large parts of France's northern coast and regularly raided along the Seine and Loire Rivers.

The Vikings eventually began colonizing large swaths of territory in the lands they regularly raided. They built settlements in England, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland, and northern France beginning in the 9th century. Local rulers frequently made treaties with strong Viking chieftains, bestowing land grants and hiring Viking mercenaries. In some internecine clashes between Frankish domains, Viking war bands served on both sides.

The Vikings established a particularly strong presence in Neustria, the northwestern Frankish territory that extended from the Loire River to the south of modern Belgium. A powerful Viking chieftain named Rollo controlled the Seine estuary and territory as much as 50 miles inland. This put Paris within easy striking distance.

The first Viking attack on Paris came in 845 under the war chief Reginherus. After plundering the city, the Vikings withdrew after King Charles II the Bald of West Francia paid an exorbitant ransom of almost 5,200 pounds in gold and silver. The Vikings returned three more times in the 860s but withdrew after being bought off with sufficient bribes while looting the surrounding countryside and burning churches.

Charles eschewed battle with the Vikings; instead, he channeled his resources toward the construction of fortifications along the Seine and other rivers that would prevent the passage of Viking longships. In his Edict of Pistres in 864, the King of West Francia detailed the need to strengthen key locations in France against the raids. He ordered fortified bridges constructed at all towns on major rivers to prevent Viking longships from passing beyond them.

In addition, Charles the Bald revamped the *lantweri* system under which all able-bodied men were required to report for service against the invaders. The king forbade his people from trading in arms and horses with the Norsemen. He made selling or trading horses with the Vikings a crime punishable by death.

The pattern of Viking raids changed by the time another large host of Norsemen arrived at Paris in 885. King Alfred's last Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex in Great Britain withstood the Viking onslaught, while large parts of the kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, and East Anglia were divided between powerful Viking leaders, forming an extensive swath of territory called the Danelaw. With no new profitable territory to conquer, those Viking war bands yet to gain their fortune turned their attention to the European continent.

A large coalition of Viking forces assembled in the territory controlled by Rollo in July 885 in preparation for a large-scale campaign against West Francia. The main forces belonged to Rollo and Earl Sigfred, another powerful chieftain, who were joined by several smaller bands. Neither Rollo nor Sigfred was in overall command of the assembled host. The combined Viking forces first sacked Rouen, after which they advanced against Pont-de-l'Arche, a fortified bridge on the Seine River 10 miles southeast of the city. A small body of Frankish troops under the command of Count Ragenold, Margrave of Neustria, assembled at the bridge to oppose the Vikings. The Vikings soundly defeated the Franks at Pont-de-l'Arche on July 25, 885. Ragenold was slain in the sharp clash.

On the move again in early November after solidifying their hold on Rouen, the Vikings advanced overland and by river to the fortified bridge where the Oise River joins the Seine. Easily capturing the bridge on the Oise, the Vikings continued to Paris. As they drew closer to Paris, the locals began fleeing their homes to safety deeper inland or taking shelter behind the walls of Paris on the Ile de la Cité, bringing their valuables and foodstuffs with them.

Among the refugees taking shelter in Paris was a young Benedictine monk named Abbo Cernuus. Abbo was a monk at the Abbey of St-Germain-des-Prés. He came from the region between the Seine and the Loire and was in Paris during the siege. A decade later Abbo wrote an extensive Latin poem called *Bella Parisiacae Urbis* describing the events that unfolded at Paris in 885-886. While the verse is at times exaggerated, flowery, and grandiloquent, Abbo nonetheless supplies many crucial details about events that could only have been provided by a witness.

Arriving before Paris on or about November 25, 885, the Vikings under Rollo and Sigfred found their way upriver barred by two low-slung fortified bridges. The shorter bridge, the Petit Pont, which linked the island to the south bank, was constructed of wood. Its bridgehead was fortified by the Petit Chatelet, a wooden tower. The longer, northern span, known as the Grand Pont, was made out of stone, with crenellations along its length. Its bridgehead was defended by the stone Grand Chatelet, which was only partially completed. Nevertheless, its foundations were solid and stood firmly grounded. Catapults and ballistae mounted on city walls could take under fire any ship attempting to reach the Ile de la Cité along either channel of the Seine River.

Count Odo of Paris and Bishop Gauzlin of St. Denis directed the defense of Paris on behalf of King Charles. Odo was an experienced warrior whose father, Robert the Strong, Count of Anjou, was killed on July 2, 866, in a clash with a force of Viking-Breton raiders at Brissarthe on the right bank of the Loire. Gauzlin had no love for the Vikings, having been captured in 858 with his younger brother Louis. The Norsemen released their captives upon payment of a substantial ransom.

The force defending Paris was a meager one. In addition to a handful of nobles, there were approximately 200 troops, according to Abbo. He was most likely only counting men-at-arms trained for war. With this in mind, there might also have been lightly armed spearmen and crossbowmen from the local militia. These men would have handled mundane tasks such as standing watch and hauling supplies.

When it became apparent the Vikings were threatening Paris itself, preparations began in earnest. "For very hastily arrows were being sharpened, repaired, forged, and bucklers were all sorted out; even old arms were restored," wrote Abbo. "Seven hundred high-prowed ships and very many smaller ones, along with an enormous multitude of smaller vessels" sailed up the Seine carrying 40,000 Norsemen, according to Abbo. A more accurate estimate, though, is that the Viking army consisted of 12,000 men traveling in 300 ships.

Rather than demanding tribute from Paris, Rollo and Sigfred initially requested free passage up the Seine River. "Give us your consent that we might go our way, well beyond this city," they purportedly said. "Nothing in it shall we touch, but shall preserve and safeguard." To add weight to their request, the Vikings threatened to attack Paris if free passage was refused. Co-commanders Odo and Gauzlin, unfazed by the threats, flatly

**Count Odo conducts a sortie against the Vikings besieging Paris. The Franks often sallied forth at night to attack Viking outposts and bring back prisoners who were interrogated and then executed.**

refused to accommodate the Vikings.

Having been refused passage, the Vikings attacked on November 26. They sought to overwhelm the defenders in a single, furious assault. Vikings armed with swords and axes assailed the towers guarding the two bridges. They were supported by Viking archers in the longships on the river who showered the defenders with arrows. Another large body of Vikings landed on the Ile de la Cité and attempted to scale the city walls.

Furious fighting erupted all around the city, especially at the towers. Braving Viking archers in the boats, defenders rushed reinforcements to the towers. Especially heavy fighting broke out at the Grand Chatelet. Unable to break down the gates, a group of Vikings attacked the base of the tower with picks. The defenders "served them up with oil and wax and pitch, which was all mixed up together and made into hot liquid on a furnace," wrote Abbo. Engulfed in flames, Vikings struck by the fire writhed on the ground, while others jumped in the river to extinguish the flames. More Vikings joined the fight at the Grand Chatelet as defenders fired arrows and dropped stones on the crowd of attackers at the bottom of the tower.

After several hours of fighting in which they failed to gain a foothold in any place, the Vikings withdrew. They fell back, taking their dead with them. The Vikings had some female family members with them on the campaign, and the women began heckling their men for retreating. A number of Vikings renewed the attack against the Grand Chatelet and attempted to set its gate on fire, as their "[women's] rude mouths drove them to make their own domed furnace near the bottom of the tower," wrote Abbo. The attackers made a breach in the tower's foundation but were not able to break in against the defenders' determined resistance. Likewise, the Vikings attacking the walls on the Ile de la Cité boarded their ships and withdrew. The defenders completed the upper story of the Grand Chatelet during the night using wooden planks.

During the next several days, the Vikings cut down a large tree, which they fashioned into a battering ram mounted on a wheeled frame with overhead cover. Once the ram was completed, the Vikings advanced against the Grand Chatelet, taking cover under the ram frame's overhead protection and behind its large wheels. At the same time, more Vikings landed from their ships on the island and attacked the city walls. Both Count Odo and Bishop Gauzlin were in the thick of the fighting. They shouted encouragement to their men. Their very presence prevented panic. Gauzlin, firing a bow from the city wall, was lightly wounded by a Viking arrow. Despite their best efforts, the second Viking attack against Paris failed as well.

Recognizing that Paris could not be taken by storm, the Vikings settled in for a protracted siege and began raiding deeper into the countryside for provisions. In early December, they established a permanent camp on the right side of the river in the area of the modern-day suburb of Saint-Denis. Their camp was protected by stone and earth ramparts and a deep ditch bristling with sharpened stakes.

After looting the Abbey of St-Germain-des-Prés, the Vikings turned it into a stable for their horses. They also established an outpost on the left side of the river to blockade the Petit Chatelet. Like a horde of locusts, the Vikings stripped the countryside. In the process, they indiscriminately killed local residents who had the misfortune of falling into their hands.

"The Danes ransacked and despoiled, massacred, and burned and ravaged," wrote Abbo. "The

**ABOVE: Parisian defenders atop the Grand Chatelet tower rain down arrows and stones on the attacking Norsemen. OPPOSITE: West Frankish King Charles the Fat paid the Vikings 700 pounds of silver as tribute and sent them off to plunder the rebellious Burgundians.**

men in arms, in their keenness to flee, sought out the woods. No one stayed to be found; everyone fled." Abbo lamented that the people of the countryside put up no opposition to the Vikings, allowing them to plunder at will. "The Danes took away on their ships all that was splendid in this good realm, all that was the pride of this famous region."

As the siege wore on, the Vikings constructed two additional rams and began building siege weapons that Abbo described as mangonels and catapults. They also removed a belfry from one of the churches and used it as a mobile tower, shooting arrows from its slits. Abbo says that the Franks attempted to interfere with these efforts by firing their own defensive weapons at the Vikings. "Then from the tower was launched a javelin, shot with great force and accuracy," he wrote.

Whether the Vikings had siege engines is subject to debate. They likely had been exposed to siege engines in the course of their various campaigns against the Anglo-Saxons and Franks. Owing to the shallow draft of their longships and their initial intentions to raid farther upriver, it is highly unlikely that Rollo and Sigfred brought siege artillery with them. Instead, they would have detailed work parties to construct them on site. The siege weapons the Vikings built during the siege would have been of simple design and not the torsion-powered onagers or ballistas capable of knocking down stone walls. Such weapons did not arrive in northern Europe until the late 12th century.

Most fortifications in the early Medieval Era were made of earth and wood and would typically be brought down by fire and mining. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the skills of siege-engine building in Europe largely fell into disuse, and only the crudest forms existed. The siege engines known to the Vikings were most likely descendants of Roman field artillery pieces, basically slinging perrier engines and giant crossbows, for no engine in the medieval period depended upon torsion power. The term "mangonel" used by Abbo is derived from the Greek "magganon," meaning "engine of war." The term is frequently used interchangeably with any stone-throwing catapult, including the onager and ballista.

Once the Vikings had constructed a number of siege weapons, they launched another attack. "Into the city they hurled a thousand pots of molten lead, and the turrets on the bridges were knocked down by the catapults," wrote Abbo. The new attack, both along the bank and from the river, was against the Grand Chatelet and the Grand Pont. The Vikings attacking the Grand Chatelet formed a *testudo*. "They advanced behind painted shields held up above to form a life-preserving vault," Abbo wrote. "Not one of them dared lift his head out from under it. And yet underneath they felt constant blows."

The defenders again rushed to the threatened areas, and defensive fire was taking a great toll on the attackers. Abbo says, "No path to the city was left unstained by the blood of men." Numerous Frankish monks from the despoiled monasteries fought among the Paris defenders. Abbo described an incident during the attack when a Viking warrior was struck in the mouth by an arrow. A second man rushed to help him and was struck down in turn, and then a third man succumbed to the same fate before their comrades formed a wall of shields around them and pulled them to safety under the covering fire of their own archers. Abbo noted that the Viking arrows were poisoned. After several hours of fighting, this attack petered out as well.

Periodic attacks continued through December and into January 886, primarily directed against the Grand Chatelet. In the lull between the assaults, the defenders dug ditches around the tower, reducing the usefulness of the Vikings' rams by making it difficult to drag them into position. To ease the approach of the rams, one group of Vikings would attack the tower, while others began filling in ditches with debris, animal carcasses, and the corpses of captured Franks.

To further counteract the battering rams, the defenders constructed so-called ram-catchers that they used to immobilize the ram's log. "[These] hefty shafts of hard wood, each one pierced at the far end with a keen tooth of iron, with which to strike rapidly at the siege engines of the Danes," Abbo explained.

The Viking assaults also came under fire from

Frankish heavy weapons. For their part, the Franks also constructed mangonels using thick planks. These instruments of death and destruction "shot forth great, massive stones that landed cruelly, smashing utterly the humble shelters of the vile Danes; the brains of those wretches were battered out of their sculls," Abbo wrote.

Failing to take the Grand Chatelet, the Vikings undertook a new tactic against the Grand Pont Bridge: They portaged three ships a short distance around the city on February 2, 886, and placed them back in the water upriver. The Vikings then loaded these ships with firewood and set them ablaze. "Spewing flames, these ships began to drift from east to west; they were guided and pulled by taut ropes along the river bank," wrote Abbo. "The enemy hoped either to burn the bridge or the tower."

The fire ships rammed into "a high heap of stones, so that no harm came to the bridge," wrote Abbo. The defenders put out the fires with water from the river and then kept the hulks to use as they saw fit. During the attack against the bridge, the Vikings left the rams unguarded, so the Franks sallied forth from the Grand Chatelet tower and captured and destroyed two of them.

The siege dragged on through the winter, with rains adding to the misery of the besiegers huddled in their camps. During the night of February 6, the rain-swollen Seine River overflowed its banks, and the bridge supports of the wooden Petit Pont failed, leaving the Petit Chatelet tower isolated on the left bank. The following morning, the Vikings launched a strong attack against the vulnerable wooden tower, which was defended by just a dozen Franks. Braving the defenders' arrows, the Vikings pushed a wagon loaded with hay against the tower and set it ablaze. Despite the defenders' attempts to suppress it, the fire spread, forcing the Franks to retreat to the remnants of the destroyed bridge. The defenders formed a small shield wall bristling with swords at the bridgehead and braced for a fight to the death.

The Vikings promised to spare them if the Franks surrendered to be held for ransom. Faced with certain death otherwise, the 12 defenders laid down their arms. Believing a Frank named Eriveus to be a person of some importance, the Vikings bound him with ropes with the intention of ransoming him. The others, not so fortunate, were put to the sword by their captors. Seeing his comrades being slaughtered, Eriveus demanded to share their fate. The Vikings obliged him by slaying him the following day. They then tore down the remains of the burned tower and flung the bodies of the slaughtered defenders into the river.

With the obstacle of the Petit Pont removed, restless Earl Sigfred took his men on a major operation up the Seine River, raiding over a wide swath of the Frankish interior south of Paris, from Troyes to Le Mans. Believing the Viking camp on the right bank abandoned, Abbot Ebolus from the St. Denis Monastery sallied across Grand Pont with a small troop of soldiers intending to destroy the camp and free his despoiled home. But Rollo and his men were still in the camp, and Ebolus had to beat a hasty retreat back to Paris.

With the numbers of besiegers reduced by Sigfred's departure and the environs of Paris being sparsely patrolled, Count Odo was able to send several messengers through enemy lines with requests for relief. He appealed for help to Holy Roman Emperor Charles the Fat, who was campaigning in Italy, and his senior military commander, Count Heinrich of Fulda. As the Margrave of Saxony, Heinrich was the senior Carolingian commander in East Francia and had led several successful campaigns against the Vikings in the recent past.

Responding to Odo's call for relief, Count Heinrich arrived at Paris in March 886. He and his men were exhausted from having made a forced march in inclement weather. Heinrich led his Frankish troops in a surprise night attack against the Viking camp but was thrown back. After a few more days of desultory skirmishing, Heinrich withdrew to Saxony.

Shortly after Count Heinrich's departure, Sigfred returned and added his men to the siege. Heinrich's unsuccessful attempt to lift the siege and Sigfred's return had an understandably adverse effect on the defenders' morale. In late March, Odo and Gauzlin were forced to enter into negotiations with the Viking leaders; however, the negotiations with Odo fell apart when the Vikings made an unsuccessful attempt to kidnap him during the talks. Despite this, Gauzlin continued negotiations and reached a separate agreement with Sigfred. The agreement stipulated that the church would pay Sigfred 60 pounds of silver to vacate the Abbey of St-Germain-des-Prés and quit the siege of Paris. Abbo seems to have differentiated in his account between the church's ecclesiastical authority and Odo's administrative authority.

Gauzlin's tribute came at an opportune time, for the Vikings did not have the temperament for long sieges, and their morale had dipped considerably. After taking possession of the silver, Sigfred led his warriors farther inland in search of more plunder.

Rollo continued his investment of Paris because he wanted to establish a permanent presence on the Seine River. He undertook another assault against the Grand Chatelet, but it was repulsed. As the siege dragged on, the situation inside Paris became dire, with an outbreak of plague carrying away many Parisians. One of them was Gauzlin, who succumbed to the plague on April 16, 886.

In late May 886, Odo himself slipped out of Paris, leaving Abbot Ebolus in charge of the defenses. Under command of the fighting abbot, the defenders conducted frequent nighttime sallies against Viking sentries and outposts and sometimes brought back prisoners who were exe-

*Continued on page 98*

# Last Chance for Victory

In the wake of two costly defeats against the Sikhs at the outset of the Second Anglo-Sikh War, Sir Hugh Gough's heavily reinforced army sought to crush the Sikh army at Gujrat in February 1849.

By David A. Norris

British regulars storm the village of Burra-Kalra at left as Sikh cavalry charge British batteries from the rear at Gujrat.

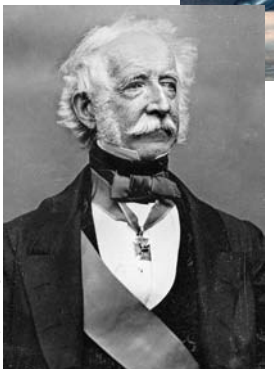
As 18 elephant-drawn heavy guns of the British East India Company's Bengal Artillery opened fire, Major John Fordyce's troop of the Bengal Horse Artillery rushed their 9-pounders ahead of the infantry. They unlimbered between two mud- brick villages, with thick clay walls holding networks of houses and courtyards. Thought to be empty, the villages of Burra-Kalra and Chota-Kalra instead were held by Sikh troops. Their commander, Sher Singh, led the Khalsa, the army of the maharajah of the Punjab.

Firing from rooftops and loopholes bashed through the brick walls, Sikh foot soldiers poured fire into both flanks of the enemy battery. Horses and gunners fell, and the battery pulled back. The sudden withdrawal exposed the sepoys and British regulars holding the front line to enemy muskets and cannons. The reckless deployment of the British guns marked the beginning of the Battle of Gujrat, fought on February 21, 1849. The outcome of the pitched battle would decide whether the Sikh Empire of the Punjab would remain independent or would become the last region of India to come under British control.

India's once powerful Mughal Empire was in its last years of decline by the 1840s. Most of the subcontinent was effectively under British control, either by direct rule or alliances with the

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Both: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection



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**ABOVE: Soldiers of the British 41st Bengal Native infantry (left) and Sikh irregular cavalry. Sikh irregular cavalry and British native cavalry were easily confused as they both wore civilian dress. LEFT: Lt. Gen. Sir Hubert Gough.**

monarchs of Indian states. These lands were ruled not directly by the British Crown, but by a vast private corporation, the British East India Company. The Company administered the government, ran a postal system, and also maintained armies that outnumbered most of those in Europe. Company territories were divided into three districts, called presidencies: Madras, Bengal, and Bombay. Each presidency had its own army, mainly of Indian troops with some regiments of Europeans. The majority of the Europeans were either British or Irish.

The last substantial section of India that was not under East India Company control was the Punjab. A district in northwest India, the Punjab lay strategically between the company-controlled Northwest Provinces and Afghanistan. During the 18th century, India's Mughal Empire was in decline, and its control of the Punjab loosened. An alliance of Sikh rulers began to unify the region's collection of Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu states into a single entity and sought independence.

At the turn of the 19th century, Maharaja Ranjit Singh consolidated power in the Punjab and ended Mughal control. Squeezed between the openly hostile Afghans and the quietly menacing British, the maharaja depended on his military force, an army known as the Khalsa.

Most soldiers originally had served as cavalry, the most prestigious arm of the Sikh military. The Sikhs undervalued infantry and artillery. The status of those serving in the two military branches was low, and they formed only small portions of the military.

All too aware of the power of the East India Company's armies, Ranjit Singh launched an ambitious plan of modernization soon after 1800. While retaining large numbers of traditional Sikh cavalry, the maharajah built a new royal army patterned after the regulars of the East India Company and the European powers. At first he relied on former East India Company sepoys or Anglo-Indians with military experience. By the 1810s he hired European veterans of the Napoleonic Wars to train his regulars. His foundries made serviceable copies of British cannons for batteries of horse or bullock-drawn field artillery. Flintlocks replaced matchlock muskets among the regulars. By the late 1820s the maharaja's regulars compared favorably with those of the European powers.

Although commanded by a Sikh monarch, the Khalsa included Muslim and Hindu troops, and some Ghurkas also served. Only the cavalry was completely Sikh. The Sikh cavalry was composed of regular regiments and gorchurras, which were irregular cavalry raised by aristocratic landowners. To balance potential power plays, the artillery was commanded by Sikh officers, but the gunners were Muslim.

With the aid of the Khalsa, Ranjit Singh ruled the last substantial portion of India not yet under British control or influence. Carefully maintaining neutrality with the British, the maharajah concentrated on his other rivals. He expelled the Afghans from his domains and captured Afghan-ruled territories, including Jammu and Kashmir, to add to his realm.

For a time, the British were much less worried about Ranjit Singh than they were about Afghanistan's ruler, Emir Dost Mohammed Khan, whom they were convinced was plotting with the Russians to combine in an attack on India. With the consent of the Sikh regime, British forces passed through the Punjab on their way to invade the emir's domains in the First Afghan War of 1839-1842.

Initially successful, the British captured the capital of Kabul and installed a new emir. But resurgent Afghans drove out the British and destroyed an army commanded by Maj. Gen. William Elphinstone in 1842. In retaliation, another British army recaptured Kabul. After destroying part of the city and freeing some prisoners, the British withdrew and Dost Mohammed regained his throne.

Stability ended in the Punjab with the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839. Several successors were murdered after brief reigns. Eventually Ranjit Singh's five-year-old son Duleep Singh was installed as maharaja, with his mother Maharani Jind Kaur as regent.

The British, wary of the Punjab's powerful army and the instability of the regime, bolstered their forces near the Punjabi border. Tensions rose until the First Anglo-Sikh War broke out from 1845-1846. After defeating the Sikh Army, the British demanded reparations and territorial concessions. The young Duleep Singh remained the nominal ruler, but his mother was ousted as regent and real control went to a British official known as the Resident. British troops were stationed in the Punjab. The Khalsa, once numbering more than 100,000 men, was ordered cut down to 32,000; that force was slashed yet again in a new treaty.

Conflict flared again after April 20, 1848, when Sikh troops at Multan killed two British officers. Multan was ruled by Diwan Mulraj, a Hindu vassal who owed allegiance to the Sikh maharajas. Governor-General James Andrew Broun Ramsay, Lord Dalhousie, sent a force under Maj. Gen. William Sampson Whish to Multan. Alongside Whish's regulars and East India Company troops was a contingent of Sikhs under a high-ranking

nobleman, Sher Singh.

In the northern Punjab, Sher Singh's father Chattar Singh had been deposed as a provincial governor at British insistence. Chattar Singh began a revolt to overthrow the Punjab regime and establish a government without British influence. He persuaded Khalsa troops to join him, and many of the soldiers who had been forcibly dismissed from the service by the British joined his banner. The Sikh rebels made overtures to their old enemies, the Afghans. Messages also went from Chattar Singh to urge his son to join him.

On September 14 Sher Singh tossed in his lot with his father. He defected from Whish's army, taking 4,500 men with him. With the defectors greatly strengthening the garrison of Multan, Whish halted siege operations to await reinforcements. Unable to come to agreement on an alliance with the ruler of Multan, Sher Singh withdrew his troops to join his father.

Lieutenant General Sir Hugh Gough, Great Britain's commander in chief of India, took the field at the head of his army. Nearly 70 years old, the Irish-born Gough was a veteran of the Peninsular War and several British colonial wars. He made a point of sharing the dangers of battle. "I never ask the soldier to expose himself where I do not personally lead," he wrote. On the battlefield, Gough was easily recognized by his long white hair and his flamboyant white battle coat. The coat made him conspicuous to the men he led under fire, despite the risk of drawing the aim of the enemy as well. Although Gough was popular among the rank and file, some officers deplored his recklessness in battle.

Gough and 20,000 troops crossed the Sutlej River on November 9 and entered Punjab. Sher Singh was known to be at Ramnagar, on the Chenab River. Dalhousie ordered Gough to wait until Multan fell before engaging the enemy, but Gough hastily moved to attack this Sikh force before it could unite with others.

On November 22, Gough's army neared the south bank of the Chenab at Ramnagar. Some of the 14th Regiment of Light Dragoons dismounted. Searching for food, they started digging up a turnip field. They had little time to forage. Without waiting for a proper examination of the enemy defenses, Gough ordered the army to attack. A sergeant in the dragoons by the name of Clifton had just pulled up a large turnip; not wanting to lose it, he clapped it under his shako and rode off with his company.

As the battle unfolded, two heavy batteries of Sikh guns opened fire from the opposite bank, joined by another battery on an island in the river. Gorchurras, the Sikh irregular cavalry, crossed the Chenab.

Sikh regular cavalry resembled European dragoons or lancers, with Western-style military jackets and weapons topped off with Asiatic touches. The more numerous Sikh irregular cavalrymen wore their regular civilian clothing but often added protective armor of chain mail, plates, and heavily quilted clothing. Irregulars usually carried matchlocks as firearms, although they preferred using swords in combat. Lieutenant G.A. Bace of the 61st Foot noted how easy it was for the British to mistake the gorchurras for their own Bengal irregular cavalry.

Taking personal command of the British horse, Gough ordered the 14th Light Dragoons and the 5th Bengal Light Cavalry after them. Colonel William Havelock of the 14th led the charge, and the cavalry galloped all the way to the riverbank. Brig. Gen. Charles Robert Cureton, once an officer of the 14th Regiment, saw the cavalry was riding into a trap and rode to head them off. Cure-

**The 14th Light Dragoons charge the Khalsa at Ramnagar in 1848. Gough's attack across the Chenab River was repulsed with heavy losses.**

Both: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ton was shot dead before he could stop them, and Havelock was killed at the river. In the clashes with the Sikh cavalry, Sergeant Clifton took several sword cuts on his shoulders. His shako was slashed and hacked, but his head was safely protected by the turnip inside his headgear.

The Battle of Ramnagar ended with Gough holding the battlefield. Despite controlling the ground, he had accomplished very little. What is more, the attack cost him 150 men. Cureton and Havelock, both old veterans of the Peninsular War, were deeply respected officers who were sorely missed.

Heavily reinforced, Whish resumed his siege of Multan. The city fell on January 4, 1849, after heavy house-to-house fighting resulting in high death tolls of civilians and soldiers alike. Many of the regulars and Company troops who stormed into the city turned to looting and pillaging. The diwan and a few hundred soldiers remained defiant in the city's battered citadel until January 22. Mulraj was sentenced to exile for the deaths of the two British officers the previous year.

Near the Jhelum River at Chillianwallah, Gough with 14,000 men encountered more than 30,000 men under Sher Singh on January 13, 1849. Officers interested in classical history knew that a dozen miles northeast of the battleground, Alexander the Great had crossed the Jhelum in 326 BC.

With a much larger army, the Sikh line overlapped both British flanks. Gough intended to launch an attack the next morning, but after the Sikh artillery opened fire in mid-afternoon, he ordered an immediate attack without waiting to assess the enemy position. His troops hacked their way through thick undergrowth to get at the enemy.

Lieutenant Colonel John Pennycuick's brigade became separated from the other infantry. His regulars of the 24th Foot reached the Sikh lines. By some mistake, the 24th had been ordered to charge a Sikh artillery position by bayonet only, with orders not to fire. They broke through the enemy lines, but the Khalsa rallied and hurled them back with heavy losses. Pennycuick's other regiments, the 24th and 25th Bengal Native Infantry, were also overwhelmed by the charging Sikhs. Pennycuick was killed in the fighting, as was his 17-year-old son Alexander, who was an ensign in the 24th. The brigade suffered 800 casualties. Each regiment lost at least one of its colors.

Some British successes elsewhere on the field were outweighed by the bungled attack of Lt. Col. Alexander Pope's cavalry brigade. A semi-invalid, Pope had to be helped to mount a horse, and his vision was poor. He gave conflicting and confused orders until confronted by a Sikh cavalry charge. His misunderstood commands sent the brigade reeling in flight. Pope was mortally wounded.

Gough suffered heavy casualties in only three hours. His losses totaled 602 dead, 1,651 wounded, and 102 missing. His troops spiked several guns that could not be brought off and withdrew. Fortunately for him, the Sikhs also stopped the attacks and pulled back to the river.

Chillianwallah became a byword for failure. After the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava on October 25, 1854, a worried Lt. Gen. George Charles Bingham, the Earl of Lucan, discussed the charge with Quartermaster-General Sir Richard Airey. The latter tried to reassure Lucan. "These sorts of things will happen in war," he said. "It is nothing [compared] to Chillianwallah."

Ramnagar had been bad enough, but Chillianwallah stirred a storm of criticism of Gough in the press and government circles. An effort was under way to replace Gough with a more deliberate and level-headed commander. Maj. Gen. Charles James Napier was appointed in Gough's stead. Napier sailed for India to take up his new command.

Sher Singh tried without success to bait Gough into another battle. While the British commander bided his time, reinforcements joined the Khalsa. A booming 21-gun salute that startled the nearby British in their camp greeted the arrival of a Sikh force led by Sher Singh's father, Chattar Singh. With them were 1,500 Afghan horsemen under a son of Emir Dost Mohammed Khan.

Soon it was the Sikh camp's turn to hear an enemy 21-gun salute. On January 25 news reached the British that Multan had fallen. Whish's troops, freed from the siege operations, would soon reinforce Gough's army.

British estimates of the size of the combined Khalsa forces ran as high as 60,000 troops. It is probable this figure was highly exaggerated, but the Sikhs still outnumbered Gough and whatever troops might join him.

The soldiers of the Khalsa stripped the Chillianwallah region of food and began a 30-mile

march east to the city of Gujrat on February 2. (This Gujrat, which is now located in Pakistan, is not to be confused with the Indian state of Gujarat). In the surrounding Gujrat district, they hoped to replenish the army's rations in the countryside along the Chenab River. Ranjit Singh's imperial capital of Lahore was only 75 miles from Gujrat. Taking the capital and its British garrison was a tempting goal for the army.

Gough followed the Khalsa into Gujrat; meanwhile, columns of British reinforcements marched to join him. On February 17 and 19 two brigades of Whish's division joined the main army, followed by Whish's third brigade on February 20.

This raised Gough's army to 23,000 men. His cavalry division was commanded by Maj. Gen. Sir Joseph Thackwell. Whish, Sir Walter Raleigh Gilbert, and Sir Colin Campbell, each of whom held the rank of major general, commanded his three infantry divisions. Four regiments of cavalry and five regiments and a battalion of foot were British regulars. The bulk of the force was drawn from the Bengal Army, rounded out with some units from the Bombay Army. Most of these Company troops were Indian. All of the artillery belonged to the Bengal or Bombay Armies.

Mindful of the near disaster of Chillianwallah, Gough and his commanders spent February 20 planning the next day's battle. Sher Singh held a line south of Gujrat (often spelled with variations such as Goojerat in contemporary accounts) about five miles west of the Chenab River. "This is a rich and beautifully fertile countryside," wrote Ensign Daniel Augustus Sandford of the 2nd Europeans (the Bengal Army's 2nd Light Infantry Regiment). "For miles and miles round there is nothing but luxuriant green corn fields."

Sher Singh aligned his infantry between two nullahs (dry riverbeds), but neither presented a serious barrier to the attacking forces. On their right, the then-dry Dwala was described as "a deep sandy-bedded rivulet" by a British officer. The Katehlah, the nullah shielding the Khalsa left, had a shallow flow of water. Yet it was so insubstantial that a British observer thought that the left flank was in the air; that is, completely unprotected.

British officers later believed that the Khalsa was overconfident after the outcome of the Battle of Chillianwallah. The three miles of terrain between the nullahs was level plain, and little provision was made for defensive works. Most of the Khalsa heavy artillery had been sent elsewhere, but 59 guns remained for placement along the line of infantry. The Sikh cavalry was posted on the flanks, separated by the nullahs from the infantry.

W.G. Mainwaring, then a subaltern of the 1st Bombay European Regiment, recalled the preparations on the morning of February 21. "By 5 AM the whole camp was alert and stirring—tents and baggage being packed in one direction [and] officers eating their breakfast on the ground in another—everything and everybody in a hurry, but at the same time little or no noise," he wrote.

When Gough's troops approached from the south, they heard drums beating within the Sikh lines. Far to the northeast, the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas overlooked the plain. "As the enemy's masses very early had taken up their position, there was no dust of moving columns to cloud the purity of air and sky," recalled staff officer Captain Henry Durand. "A looker-on might have thought the army drawn out on some gala occasion for the baggage being packed in safety … the force moved free of encumbrance, and the whole had the appearance of a grand review."

The British force was divided by the Dwala. The larger portion to the right of the Dwala, with two brigades each from the divisions of Gilbert and Whish, would strike the Sikh left and center. They would push back the enemy onto their right, where the British left under Major Gen. Sir Joseph Thackwell would attack. Cavalry brigades, moving en echelon, protected the British flanks.

When the British line reached the village of Hariawallah, the Sikh batteries opened up. Firing at a range of 2,000 yards, the initial Sikh bombardment had little effect. The harmless firing revealed to the British gunners where the Sikh batteries were located.

As the British moved closer, the enemy fire took more effect. Sandford's regiment advanced a quarter of a mile, and "round shot flew about us, and ploughed up the ground in all directions," wrote Mainwaring. "All this time the fire was very hot upon us, carrying three men off at a time, shells bursting over us, or burying themselves in front, scattering the earth in our faces. There was a constant line of doolies from our regiment to the hospital, as, one after another, the men were carried off," he wrote.

A doolie was a covered litter, used in India both for civilian travel as well as transporting the wounded. The doolie was fitted with a cot suspended from the long pole borne by the bearers. A cloth canopy and curtains protected the patient from heat and dust.

With large East India Company contingents from the Bombay and Bengal Armies, Gough had nearly twice as many guns as Sher Singh. At 9 AM, the ground shook as nearly 100 Bengal and Bombay guns opened fire. Ten 18-pounders and eight 8-inch howitzers were brought up to close the distance to the enemy. Elephants pulled the big guns, and bullocks drew the ammunition carts.

Several troops of horse artillery rushed far ahead of the line and unlimbered closer to the enemy. One company from each foot regiment was assigned to move ahead and cover the gunners.

Shielding Sandford's regiment was Major John Fordyce's troop of the Bengal Horse Artillery. The troop's 9-pounders took position ahead of the

Both: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

**ABOVE: The British 24th Foot was ordered at Chillianwallah to charge a Sikh artillery position by bayonet only, with orders not to fire. They suffered mightily. OPPOSITE: British troops storm the fortified city of Multan on the Chenab River. Maj. Gen. William Whish besieged the city in September 1848, and it fell to his forces in January 1849.**

infantry between the fortified villages of Burra-Kalra (Great Kalra) and Chota-Kalra (Little Kalra), which were in advance of the Khalsa's main line. Fordyce's gunners "suffered dreadfully— every shot pitched right into them," wrote Mainwaring. "Twice had they to retire to the rear for fresh horses and men." In holding their position, Fordyce's troop suffered the highest losses of any Bengal Artillery unit at Gujrat. Eight enlisted men and 25 horses were killed, and another 23 men and 13 horses were wounded.

To counter the Company's heavy guns, the Khalsa had only two 16-pounders and one 18-pounder. The rest of their guns were smaller field pieces. The muzzles of some of the Sikh guns had been sawed off, enabling them to keep using pieces damaged in previous battles. For two and a half hours, Gough's artillery tore gaps through the Sikh ranks and their artillery. Occasionally, a tumbril exploded, throwing up a puff of smoke visible from the British lines. Return fire gradually slackened as more and more of the Khalsa guns were knocked out of action.

The Khalsa troops pulled back to a new line closer to the city, behind Burra-Kalra and Chowta-Kalra. These villages, each a tight network of adobe houses and small courtyards divided by narrow streets, served as redoubts for Sher Singh's army. After picking off Fordyce's horses and gunners, they now waited for the main attack of the British and sepoy regiments.

For much of the morning, Gough held his forces in check. A tale would spread across British India that early in the morning Gough climbed a ladder into a tower to survey the battlefield. Expecting him to yield to the temptation to send his soldiers in before waiting for the artillery to soften up the enemy line, the staff officers took away the ladder. Gough was stranded in the tower long enough for the guns to finish their work. The story was disproven, but just the same, it catches something of the impression many officers had of Gough.

Gough pleasantly surprised some of the officers by leaving his gunners to their work for a good part of the morning before ordering two brigades to attack the fortified villages. Colonel Andrew Hervey's brigade suffered 150 casualties while driving the enemy from Chota-Kalra. Burra-Kalra, a small village of a few dozen houses, saw some of the most intense fighting of the Battle of Gujrat. Lt. Col. Nicholas Penny's brigade charged through the dry nullah. They fired a volley and then rushed into the village. Ensign Sandford of the 2nd Europeans saw many enemy troops hastily leaving Burra-Kalra. "Those who remained were shot or bayoneted on the spot," he wrote. "There was no quarter given. A number of them shut themselves up in their houses, but our men beat down the doors, and poured in volley after volley, and sullenly and savagely they died, fighting to the last."

"The left wing, climbing up the mud walls, sprang onto the roofs of the houses, many of them letting themselves down into the narrow and torturous streets, driving the enemy out at the further side. As soon as the [Sikh] artillery outside the village saw their comrades being overpowered, they elevated their guns so as to clear the tops of the houses, notwithstanding the British and Sikh soldiers were intermixed when they struggled for the mastery," wrote a regimental historian.

Penny took 300 casualties in taking Burra-Kalra, half from the 2nd Europeans and the rest from two Indian regiments, the 31st and 70th Bengal Native Infantry. Two Khalsa colors were captured. The enemy soldiers defended their standards to the death.

Major John Kennedy McCausland of the 70th Bengal Native Infantry had a narrow escape from death. Having been wounded, he was placed in a doolie. As the bearers took him toward the rear, a cannon ball sliced through the cloth curtain at one end and passed safely over the major to tear an exit hole in the back of the doolie.

West of the Dwala, Campbell's division with a mix of Bengal, Bombay, and regular troops held Gough's left. They faced Khalsa troops holding the small villages of Narawalla, Jumna, and Loonpoor. Five batteries of Company artillery cleared the villages, and Campbell's regiments pressed forward. This enabled their batteries to get close enough to enfilade the right flank of the Khalsa's main line. The 14th Prince of Wales' Scinde Irregular Horse of the Bombay Army charged and drove back the Sikh cavalry.

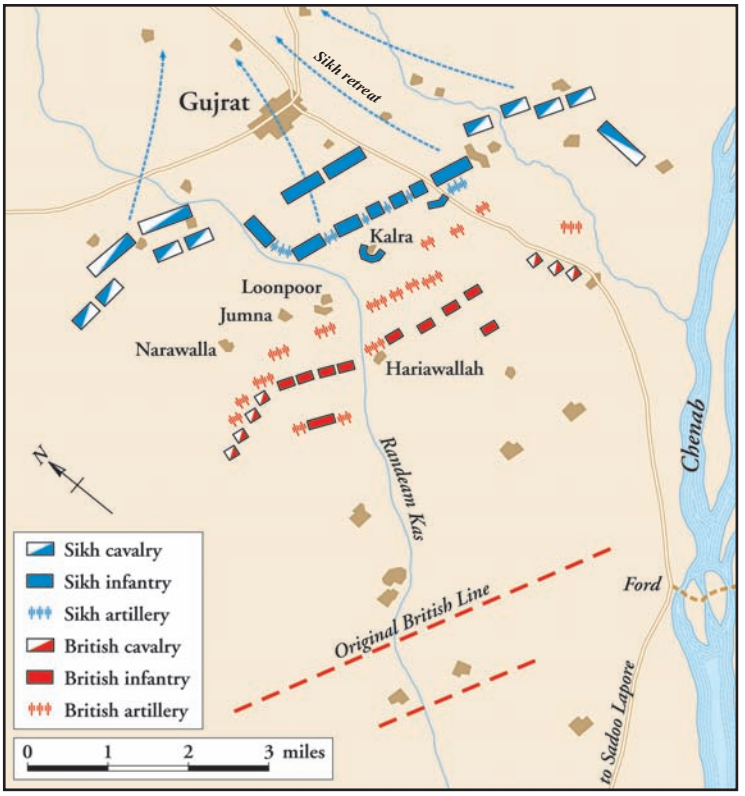
Cavalry on the British left captured a cannon, which turned out to be one of four guns lost at Chillianwallah by Captain Alfred Huish's troop of the Bengal Artillery. Huish was so overjoyed at the return of his cannon that he actually hugged it.

The British respected the Khalsa's artillery. One Briton watched a Sikh gun come under the concentrated fire of several British cannons. Only two gunners were left standing, but they continued to work the gun as the British advanced closer. One of the gunners fell, but the lone survivor stayed to load and fire two rounds before abandoning the piece to the onrushing soldiers.

A group of 30 horsemen wearing Indian clothing dashed around the British right. They rode toward the headquarters detachment, intent on capturing Gough. At the time there were detachments of irregular Indian cavalry under British officers, riding about on raids and scouting expeditions. For a few anxious moments, the approaching horsemen were taken for friendly troops.

The illusion was quickly dispelled when the horsemen tried to hack their way through the headquarters guard. The raiders were variously described as either Sikhs or Afghans wearing mail. "Our men finding their swords made no impression, sheathed them, and took to their firearms," wrote one soldier. Another soldier wrote that Gough himself drew his pistols to fire at the attackers. The headquarters escort and staff wiped out the attackers. Lieutenant H.G. Stannus of the






**The British plan for Gujrat called for the right wing to drive the Sikh left and center back upon the Sikh right wing. At that point, the British left would deliver the death blow.**

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

**The British army's devastating artillery fire won the day at Gujrat. Sher Singh and Chattar Singh were imprisoned until 1854; after their release, they were not allowed to return to the Punjab.**

5th Bengal Light Cavalry, who led Gough's bodyguard, was severely wounded in the action.

As Sher Singh's army reeled back, Markham's brigade entered the city of Gujrat. All over the field, the Khalsa fell back in a fighting retreat. Redcoat infantry pressed them for two miles and then halted in a new line northeast of the city of Gujrat. Company and regular British cavalry continued the chase for another 15 miles.

An estimated 2,000 of Sher Singh's men were lost in the battle. Soldiers taken in the city of Gujrat were reported as prisoners, but few were taken alive in the pursuit of the Khalsa. The Sikhs took no prisoners at Chillianwallah. At Gujrat it was the Anglo-Indian forces who as victors slaughtered potential prisoners of war. Fifty-three artillery pieces were taken as well as most of the Sikh army's ammunition and baggage.

Gough's camp followers plundered the Sikh tents, which were left standing when the army abandoned Gujrat. Desperate civilians fed themselves with the meat of dead horses and bullocks, which they butchered on the battlefield.

Gough's losses were much lower than at Chillianwallah: 92 dead and 683 wounded. Half the casualties resulted from the attacks that cleared the enemy from Burra-Kalra and Chota-Kalra. A few casualties occurred after the battle. A soldier smoking a pipe set off a supply of abandoned gunpowder, killing or wounding several men. Accidents claimed other soldiers who were assigned to blow up captured munitions.

On the day after the battle, Gilbert continued after the Khalsa. His aggressive pursuit meant that Sher Singh could not halt to reorganize and replenish their rations. The Afghans who fought at Gujrat were pursued out of the Punjab.

On March 14, 1849, Sher Singh surrendered 16,000 troops to General Gilbert at Rawalpindi. Each Sikh sepoy was given one rupee, the equivalent of two shillings, by the East India Company, and allowed to return home.

Troops were posted to watch the fords of the Chenab. Sikh cavalrymen heading for their homes were stopped and released after their weapons were taken up. Among the river guards some officers of the irregular Company cavalry expressed the wish that they might recruit some of the veterans of the Khalsa. The Sikhs would form a loyal contingent for the British when rebellion flared in India in 1857. They had little love for the British, but neither did they trust the Mughals, whom the Sikhs saw as fomenting the Great Mutiny. Approximately 20 percent of the soldiers in the Indian Army were Sikhs by World War I.

Some Sikh leaders were kept in captivity for years. The father and son at the head of the rebellion were imprisoned until 1854. Pensioned after their release, they were never allowed to return to the Punjab. Chattar Singh died in Calcutta in 1855, and Sher Singh died in Benares three years later.

Gujrat revived Gough's prestige. Every British military post in India fired a 21-gun salute in commemoration of the victory. When General Napier arrived in India to take Gough's place, the Second Anglo-Sikh War was already over. Gough soon retired from field service and returned to Ireland. On June 4, 1849, he was pronounced Viscount Gough by Queen Victoria.

The so-called Last Treaty of Lahore, signed on March 29, 1849, officially ended the Second Anglo-Sikh War. Ten-year-old Maharaja Duleep Singh was compelled to renounce his claim to the throne, and the Punjab was annexed by the East India Company.

Duleep Singh became a prisoner. Although isolated from his mother and all Indians other than servants for many years, he nevertheless was kept in lavish style. He was exiled to England in 1854. He was treated with the respect due to his being a foreign royal. Queen Victoria became fond of the lad when he spent time with the British royal family. Awarded a substantial pension, Duleep Singh could afford to live in splendid rented mansions and travel around Europe. He was allowed just two brief visits to India before his death in 1893.

By a provision of the 1849 treaty, the magnificent Koh-i-Noor Diamond was taken by the British. Once the property of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, the builder of the Taj Mahal, the diamond was acquired by Ranjit Singh in 1813. Presented by an East India Company official to Queen Victoria in 1850, the Koh-i-Noor remains part of the crown jewels of Great Britain. ■

# Churchill *to the* RESCUE

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Fortress Antwerp proved no match for the German Army's Krupp guns in the autumn of 1914 despite the best efforts of Great Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty to bolster the city's defenses.

By Eric Niderost

German heavy guns shell the Fort de Loncin near Liege. The brick and concrete forts were no match for the German super guns. OPPOSITE: Winston Spencer Churchill in the uniform of the First Lord of the Admiralty.

Joseph Mary Nagle Jefferies, a correspondent for Britain's *Daily Mail*, was assigned to cover the opening phases of World War I in Belgium in October 1914. One day in early October, Jeffries was standing on the Lier Road, not far from the city proper. As the minutes passed, the scene quickly dissolved into chaos. Jeffries was at a crossroads, but he did not know the exact location. The commotion and confusion were so great that he had lost his bearings.

Tensions ran high among the soldiers and civilians in whose company Jeffries found himself. This was because monstrous German artillery guns that could maim and kill with horrifying ease might start a terrifying barrage at any moment. A traffic jam of immense proportions developed at the crossroads.

"The jamming of vehicles to and from the front, rearing of horses and shouts, ambulances involved with ammunition wagons, cars all honking and screaming at each other, [and there was] no one to direct, no one to disentangle the jumble, which grew worse every minute," wrote Jefferies.

Seemingly out of nowhere, a man jumped out of a car and began directing traffic with unusual verve and surprising skill. He climbed atop what appeared to be a platform, although Jefferies could not see exactly what he was standing on. The platform raised the man slightly above the seething mass of animals, vehicles, and men. The red-haired, slightly balding man was flamboyantly dressed in a "flowing dark blue cloak [with] silver lion-head clasps," Jeffries wrote. The man's stint as a traffic guard was a virtuoso performance, with precise movements and sharp gesticulations that he punctuated with loud commands given in a crazy mixture of English and French.

Jefferies watched in awe as the stranger's efforts actually helped the traffic flow and ended the chaos. But the most remarkable thing about the man was his identity. He was none other than Winston Spencer Churchill, Great Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty. The ministerial civilian position was the Royal Navy's political head, appointed by the ruling party.

It was highly unusual for an Englishman to be directing foreign traffic in the middle of a war, but even more unusual for the First Lord of the Admiralty to be in Belgium. Churchill was on a mission that, if successful, might rescue Antwerp from the clutches of the Germans. At the very least, a successful defense of Antwerp would buy time and prevent the Germans from pushing on and taking the Channel ports, Great Britain's gateway to Europe and a vital link to its ally France.

Churchill was in Belgium to assess the situation and persuade the wavering Belgian government that London had both the will and the means to keep Antwerp out of German hands. His French was serviceable but far from perfect. Could he talk the Belgians into continuing their stout-hearted defense of Antwerp?

Antwerp's crisis had its roots in the outbreak of the war, a scant two months earlier. Germany, faced with the prospect of a two-front war, thought it had the solution in a modified Schlieffen Plan. The first step was to fight a holding action against the Russians in the East. The Russian steamroller was a lumbering giant, ponderous and slow, and would take time to mobilize fully. While the Russian bear tried to wake from its peacetime hibernation, the Germans intended to knock France, and perhaps even Britain, out of the war.

The Germans planned to lure French armies into the disputed Alsace-Lorraine region of northeastern France, and if the French took the bait, the second phase of the operation would commence. The German First and Second Armies, massing on the Belgian and Luxembourg borders, would suddenly spring forward in a wide, sweeping arc, a great enveloping movement that would continue into northern France and get behind the unsuspecting French armies. If executed well, this right hook would also take Paris in the bargain.

To perform this maneuver, however, German troops had needed to march through Belgium, whose neutrality had been guaranteed by the Allied powers. Belgium prided itself on its strict adherence to neutrality principles but was far from naive when it came to the exigencies of European power politics. A minnow surrounded by predatory sharks, Belgium knew its small field army could never fend off an invasion from one of the European great powers such as France or, after its

unification in 1871, a militaristic Germany.

Belgium had won admirers from around the globe for its heroic, month-long stand against the German juggernaut following Germany's invasion of the country in August 1914. The stubborn resistance of its small army had bought precious time for the French and British to marshal their forces and achieve victory at the Marne River in September.

Although Franco-British forces had checked the German onslaught at the Marne, the Germans still seemed to have momentum enough to turn defeat into ultimate victory. Antwerp, which was situated on the lower Scheldt River, was Belgium's great commercial emporium, a major seaport, and a mighty fortress.

The German Army's mop-up operations in October included the reduction of Antwerp, which the Germans invested on September 28. Jefferies was on hand to witness what seemed to be the death throes of Belgian independence.

Antwerp's strategic importance had been recognized for centuries. The Spanish had erected a bastion wall around the city in the 16th century, and other works were built as the years went on. But the port city's real life as a fortress began in the late 1850s, nearly 30 years after Belgium's independence. Belgian planners recognized the country had few viable options. The national territory was only about 150 miles east to west and 100 miles north to south, so a system was developed that divided Belgium into fortified zones. The Belgian Army, too small to fend off a major invasion in the field, would use the rivers and a series of fortresses to slow enemy progress until help arrived. Sooner or later, one or more of the Allied powers would come forward to rescue the tiny nation.

As plans developed, the idea of a National Redoubt became firmly lodged into the Belgian national consciousness. Antwerp was designated to become an impregnable fortress where the government and army could find refuge in time of war. The Belgians began constructing a series of eight forts in 1859 along the southern flank of the city. The works, which were numbered One to Eight, were situated between the outskirts of Wijnegem and Hoboken.

But that was not all. Fort van Merksem was erected on the right bank of the Scheldt facing the Netherlands and Germany, and on the left bank, Forts Kruibeke, Zwijnddrecht, and St. Marie were intended to protect the city from a coastal attack from France or Great Britain. In the murky, ever-changing world of European power politics, it was better to hedge your bets as to who would ultimately be your friend or foe.

General Henri-Alexis Brialmont was taking no chances. A brilliant military engineer, he was nicknamed the Belgian Vauban for his talented designs. But forts One though Eight and the other posts generally had been built between 1861 and 1871, a time of rapid advancement in artillery and fort construction. By 1880, even the newest of these were approaching obsolescence. They were mainly made of brick, serviceable enough to withstand the artillery of the 1850s but woefully inadequate against the heavier guns being developed in the latter half of the 19th century.

Recognizing this, an ambitious plan envisioned a new defensive ring of concrete fortresses that would be situated just forward of the natural borders formed by the Rupel and Nethe Rivers, between Lierre and the lower loop of the Scheldt. This new ring would feature fortresses of the very latest design, with reinforced concrete and revolving steel turrets. These steel cupolas were designed to absorb the pounding of 21cm siege guns.

The majority of the forts were to be polygon-shaped. Each had a water moat and a spannning bridge. The steel turrets boasted 15cm, 12cm, and 7.5cm guns, all capable of dealing out considerable punishment. The approaches to the forts

All: Library of Congress


**ABOVE: Churchill and British Expeditionary Force Commander John French. Churchill hoped to persuade the Belgians to hold Antwerp as long as possible. BELOW: The German Zeppelin Sachsen bombed Antwerp, but the damage was slight compared to that of the German artillery. OPPOSITE: The Germans intended to knock France out of the war before dealing with the Russians.**

were defended by 5.7cm rapid-fire guns, also encased in steel turrets. Forward observation posts, each of which was sheathed in concrete, would give excellent target information to fort guns, the data communicated through a series of telephones.

Unfortunately, politics and budget restrictions got in the way of construction goals. There were the usual bureaucratic squabbles, and it was not until 1906 that construction on the new ring of forts began in earnest.

By 1914 much had been accomplished, but the so-called National Redoubt was still incomplete and riddled with flaws. To save money, some older-model cannons were emplaced. These weapons used old-fashioned gunpowder, whose telltale smoke gave away an artillery position. There were gaps in the telephone lines, some turrets did not yet have guns, and concrete had not been poured in some places.

This is not to say that the defenses of Antwerp were not strong, for even with these critical flaws the forts had enough firepower to give an enemy pause. The 65,000 fortress troops were taken from the oldest classes of Belgian troops, undertrained and often poorly supplied, but they were stubborn defenders of their native soil. Antwerp would be a hard nut to crack.

Both: Library of Congress

**ABOVE: Belgian carabineers with dog-drawn machine-gun carts move up to the front in late August. BELOW: A Belgian machine-gun crew prepares to ambush advancing Germans near the city of Malines in August 1914. OPPOSITE: British soldiers from the Royal Welch Fusiliers and the Cheshire Regiment arrive in Belgium to slow the German attack on Antwerp.**

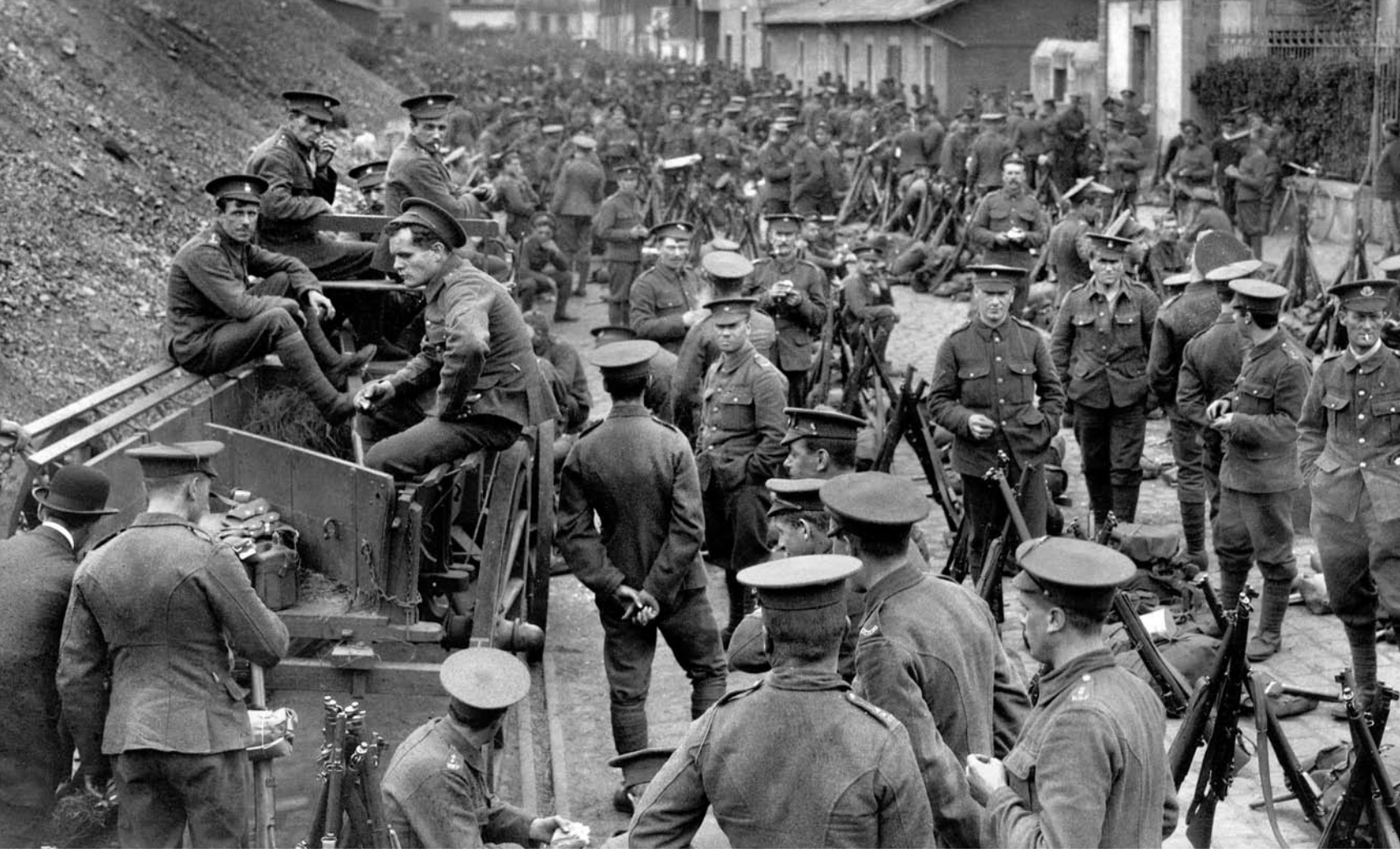
The National Redoubt, however, had a secret, hidden flaw that was not readily apparent: improvements in artillery were fast rendering forts like the ones that ringed Antwerp seriously compromised, even obsolete. In the years preceding World War I, the Germans were preoccupied with the looming threat of a two-front war, one that involved the French and possibly British in the West and the Russians in the East. More importantly, they knew that their potential enemies had powerful fortresses that might impede the German Army. Worse still, the fortresses might actually stop the German juggernaut in its tracks.

There was nothing for the Germans to do about this other than develop more powerful guns, which they did in earnest. The Germans to secretly began to develop massive howitzers and mortars, artillery that could overcome the modern French, Russian, and Belgian fortifications. Undoubtedly the most famous of these, at least in retrospect, was the Big Bertha 42cm siege howitzer. It could fire projectiles up to 1,785 pounds about six miles. One type of shell fired by this behemoth was a delayed-action type that detonated after the projectile had penetrated up to 40 feet of concrete and earth.

These super weapons were first unveiled in the opening days of the war, and they caught the Allies completely by surprise. The first obstacle the Germans encountered in their invasion of Belgium was the fortress of Liege. General Gerard Mattieu Leman was the Belgian commander at Liege, tough, courageous, and stubborn, and his men followed his example. The Liege forts had to be literally pounded into submission, and one by one they were smashed into heaps of concrete rubble and twisted metal.

Liege had fallen, but its sacrifice had not been in vain. The Germans had suffered more than 42,000 casualties and, most importantly, they had lost precious time. The unforeseen delays gave the French and British time to gather their forces and plan a suitable riposte to the German thrust. But it was clear that in the short term the badly outnumbered Belgians could do little to stop the field-gray avalanche. It looked like the main Belgian Army might be enveloped, cut off from Antwerp, and compelled to surrender.

To prevent this, Belgian King Albert I ordered a withdrawal: The king, Belgian government, and the main field army fell back to Antwerp, making it the new epicenter of national resistance to the invader. Brussels fell to the Germans on August



Imperial War Museum

20. The Germans were in a hurry and desperate to make up for lost time, so they bypassed Antwerp and continued west. The invaders felt that the Belgian Field Army was a spent force, bottled up in its fortress city and no longer any appreciable threat to Teutonic plans.

As August turned to September, German armies met both the French under General Joseph Jacques Cesair Joffre and the British Expeditionary Force under General Sir John French. The armies fought a series of clashes known as the Battle of the Frontiers. The Germans swept into northern France, only to received their celebrated check at the Battle of the Marne, which raged from September 6 to September 12.

General Victor Deguise was appointed commander of Fortress Antwerp, the National Redoubt. He had control of both the Field Army and the troops manning the forts that ringed the city. In the early, uncertain days of late August, when the situation was in flux and the French seemed on the edge of defeat, King Albert was determined to help his Gallic allies as best he could. A popular and resolute monarch, Albert was keen on offensive operations, so he ordered Deguise to mount a sortie from the city. The general responded with alacrity.

The first sortie took place on August 25 against the German III Reserve Corps between Wolvertem and Aarschot. The Germans, whose overconfidence bordered on arrogance, had only a thin screen of troops watching the city. Taken by surprise, the Germans were driven back several miles before they could mount an effective defense. When King Albert received a message from General Joffre that a general retreat was in effect, the monarch ordered the four Belgian divisions taking part to disengage and fall back to the outer fortress line.

The sortie had proved useful, distracting the Germans and spreading consternation in the rear areas. On the evening of August 25, when Belgian troops were still returning from their sortie, Antwerp experienced another new and terrifying aspect of modern war: the air raid. The German zeppelin *Sachsen*, commanded by Captain Ernst Lehmann, dropped seven or eight small bombs on the city. It was entirely random and literally hit or miss; one bomb landed in a park, another landed in an empty street. At least two houses were destroyed. The bombing run killed 10 people and wounded another 15.

Lehmann cut the motors when he glided over the city and made sure the moon had set—a necessary precaution because the weight of the bomb load was such *Sachsen* was only a little more than 5,000 feet in altitude, well within range of ground fire. It was said that one of the bombs fell near where the king and the royal family were staying, but they emerged unscathed. Lehmann became a celebrated airship officer who was fated to die on the *Hindenburg* in 1937.

Another sortie on September 9 achieved mixed results. Belgian cavalry units chased the Germans out of Aarschot and bagged 350 prisoners in the bargain. But once again the Belgian offensive ran out of steam, partly because its infantry attacks had been halted by powerful German artillery. There was also a third, somewhat abortive, sortie later on.

Antwerp was rapidly becoming a thorn in the German side, a troublesome presence on their right flank and rear. The Germans resolved to eliminate this pocket of Belgian resistance, so a German siege corps of 125,000 men was tasked with capturing the city. General Hans Hartwig von Beseler commanded the force. It was composed of the III Reserve Corps, IV Ersatz Division, one division of Marine Rifles from Marine-Korps-Flandern, and one Bavarian division. Rounding out the force were the 26th and 27th Landwehr Brigades, one brigade of siege engineers, one brigade of light artillery, and nine powerful heavy siege mortar batteries.

Both: Library of Congress

**ABOVE: Belgium artillerymen deploy a field gun outside Antwerp. Belgian troops fought valiantly despite being heavily outnumbered. BELOW: Germans marching into Belgium pass by Belgian refugees fleeing the fighting. OPPOSITE: The Krupp-built German siege gun known as the Gamma Morser had a 17-inch barrel. The Germans deployed a battery of these guns by rail during the siege of Antwerp.**

The formal siege opened on Sunday, September 27, with an attack by the 5th and 6th Reserve Divisions advancing between Dijle and Nete. They were opposed by the Belgian 1st and 2nd Divisions, which fought bravely but were forced back by superior German artillery fire. The Germans then committed an atrocity, one of many that outraged world opinion. The small town of Mechelen was about two miles from the nearest Belgian fort, with no intrinsic military or strategic value, but was shattered by German shells. The civilian population in Mechelen was given no advance warning, so many died in the ruins of their city.

The Belgians still had a few tricks up their sleeve, however. At one point, one of the forts was seen to erupt in sheets of orange-yellow flame. Encouraged, the Germans rose up and launched an infantry assault to capture the prize only to find that it was all a ruse. As the gray-clad troops surged forward, they were met with devastating machine-gun and rifle fire from the fort support trenches. A Teutonic brigade was cut to pieces, its ranks thinned by the hail of bullets, and the survivors found their escape barred by an electrified barbed-wire fence.

At least two German batteries and several other infantry battalions were also fooled by similar tricks; there seemed to be no limit to Belgian ingenuity. But the next day the tables were turned, and the fate of Antwerp was in the balance. The primary German targets were Forts Waelhem and Wavre St. Catherine, two of the main posts in the city's outer defense line. It was time for the super heavy guns to make their Antwerp siege debut. Massive 30.5cm and 42cm Big Bertha artillery were emplaced at Boortmeerbeek, about 10 miles south of the fortress line, a distance that constituted their maximum range. These positions were well out of the range of the Belgian fortress guns, so the dangers of counterbattery were negligible.

The bombardment began around noon. The two fortresses became living hells as the huge shells rained down. Concrete cracked and split under the ceaseless pummeling. The bombardment was intense, the projectiles coming down at the rate of 10 shells per minute. Each ear-splitting detonation was accompanied by gouts of acrid smoke and flame. Some of the explosion fumes seeped down into the fort interiors through the shattered concrete, filling the passageways with the stench of cordite.

General Gerard Leman, the heroic commander of Liege, described what it was like to experience this shelling when he endured it earlier in the campaign."We heard them coming," he said of the one-ton shells. "We heard them howling through the air, and finally the noise of a furious hurricane, which ended in a terrific thunderclap, and then clouds of dust and smoke above the trembling ground."

The forts still held and returned fire as best they could. Shells from their 15cm guns rained down on German infantry positions. Nevertheless, the Belgian forts simply could not stand up to the punishment they were receiving from the Teutonic 42cm and 30cm mortars.

Fort Waelhem was a wreck, even though most of its guns remained in action. Only one 15cm gun turret had been destroyed, so the garrison stayed on, inspired by its commandant. He initially ordered an evacuation of the fort but some troops apparently stayed on with him. The Germans automatically assumed that Fort Waelhem would be abandoned. A patrol was sent forward to scout the position only to discover the garrison

was very much alive and ready to do battle. Heavy Belgian fire forced the German patrol to scamper for cover.

But the Germans persevered, and one by one the forts were captured. This continued until all the forts south of the Nethe River were in German hands.

Nothing, it seemed, could stop the inexorable German advance. On October 2 the Belgian Supreme Council on National Defense, which was presided over by King Albert, gathered to determine a future course of action. After much deliberation it was decided that the king and his family, the Belgian government, and the Field Army would evacuate Antwerp the next day. The citizens of Antwerp were told as much in a royal proclamation. It was a tough decision, but there seemed to be little alternative. It was imperative that none of these important national figures or entities fall into the hands of the Germans.

Field Marshal Herbert Kitchener, Great Britain's secretary of state for war, was not pleased when he heard the news. In fact, he was appalled. Kitchener's main concern was the Channel ports, such as Calais, Ostend, and Dunkirk. They were the vital links that connected Great Britain to its French ally, where men, equipment, and supplies could reach the Continent. More importantly, at least in Kitchener's eyes, if the Germans occupied the Channel ports they might use them as springboards to invade Britain itself.

Kitchener's fears were not entirely unfounded and were backed up by history. It had been a cornerstone of British foreign policy not to allow any hostile powers to control the Low Countries or any regions bordering the North Sea or English Channel; if they did, as during the time of Louis XIV or Napoleon, British policy was to oppose them.

Prime Minister Herbert Asquith was out of town, so Kitchener asked Foreign Secretary Edward Grey to come to his home in Carlton Gardens, London, to discuss the situation. When he discovered Churchill was on a train bound for Dover, Kitchener had the train stop, reverse direction, and return to Victoria Station. When the train pulled into the station, Churchill piled into a waiting car that drove him to Carlton Gardens.

Apprised of the situation, Churchill responded with alacrity. There were no regular troops available, so he suggested his newly formed Royal Naval Division be sent as a temporary stopgap measure. In addition, there was a force in France that could be dispatched immediately: A Royal Marine Brigade, 2,000 men with some Oxfordshire Yeomanry, was already posted in Dunkirk. This force also included armored cars and some Royal Naval Air Service airplanes under Commander Charles Rumney Samson. The Royal Navy Division, still in England, would join them one or two days later.

Churchill's main mission was to assess the situation in Antwerp, as well as to also use his considerable powers of persuasion to try and get the Belgians to hold the city for a few more critical days. The First Lord of the Admiralty was to assure the Belgians that help was on the way in the form of the 2,000 Royal Marines and 8,000 men of the Royal Naval Division. Moreover, he was to inform them this was just the beginning of the reinforcements they could expect. A new British Army division, the 7th Division, was forming under General Henry Rawlinson and would arrive within 10 days. The French also offered support in the form of the 87th Territorial Division and the Brigade de Fusiliers Marins.

Churchill possessed a fertile imagination, boundless energy, and a restless ambition that always sought new paths to advancement. He was capable of real brilliance, of thinking outside the box, and was always fascinated with innovation, including airplanes. He formed a naval aviation branch in 1912 called the Royal Naval Air Service. Such traits, although often admirable, made him seem to his more conservatively inclined colleagues to be a glory hound at best and a near-madman at worst.

His Royal Naval Division had reservist brigades named for the most part after famous English admirals, such as Francis Drake, Edward Hawke, and Horatio Nelson.

These reservist brigades comprised both experienced mariners and raw recruits. The "old salts" resented the fact that they would be used as land soldiers and would not be going to sea again. Churchill specifically stated that raw recruits should not be sent to Antwerp. But, whether by intention or by design, that is precisely where they were sent.

Churchill arrived in Antwerp on October 3. When his car roared up to Antwerp's Hotel de Ville, which served as city hall, one wag said it

was like a "melodrama where the brave hero dashes up bare headed on a foam-flecked horse."

The First Lord of the Admiralty was dressed in the uniform of an Elder Brother of Trinity House, Britain's lighthouse service—a getup that included a pea jacket and visored naval cap. It looked unusual, so a Belgian official asked what this outfit meant.

Churchill, using his slightly lisping French, was eager to reply. *"Moi, je suis un frere aine de la Trinity,"* he proudly responded. "I am an elder brother of the Trinity." The Belgian, who thought that Churchill was saying that he was divine, was astounded. *"Mon Dieu!"* he exclaimed. *"La Trinite?"*

Heartened by Churchill's words and his optimistic tone, King Albert and the thickly mustachioed Belgian Prime Minister Charles Broqueville agreed to hold out for six more days, and maybe even 10 days if fortune favored the Belgian cause. There was one caveat to this agreement: if the Germans were on the verge of taking the city, the Belgian Field Army would withdraw, escaping to fight another day. Some elements of the Belgian Field Army, including the new recruits, were already withdrawing. All parties agreed to these arrangements.

Always eager for action, Churchill visited the front again the next morning, this time observing a sector near Lierre occupied by his own Royal Marines. "German soldiers were creeping from house to house or darting across the street," recalled Churchill. But as evening arrived and the scene grew dark, such visual observations were replaced by auditory ones. There was the dull crack of rifles and the staccato chatter of machine guns, including a Royal Marine machine gun on a balcony. "Streams of flame pulsating from the mouth of machine guns lit up a warlike scene amid crashing reverberations and the whistle of bullets," Churchill wrote.

Churchill's boyish enthusiasm could not be suppressed. He directed troops, sat atop guns, and bombarded London with cable messages asking for entrenching tools, field telephone sets, high-explosive shells, and Maxim machine guns and ammunition.

General Rawlinson was supposed to arrive in Antwerp in advance of his 7th Division, but he was delayed. Nature abhors a vacuum, and Churchill suddenly saw an opportunity to take real command. He wired Prime Minister Asquith that in light of the situation he was willing to resign as First Lord of the Admiralty and literally take command of the forces now at Antwerp, both the defensive troops on hand and the relieving troops en route.

Asquith read the telegram with a mixture of amazement and horror. Churchill had seen active service in India, Sudan, and South Africa, but only as a junior officer. At the outbreak of the war, he was nothing more than a civilian and a cabinet minister. Asquith read Churchill's message aloud to the cabinet, which responded with gales of laughter. Many in the government disliked Churchill. His detractors considered him to be stark-raving mad.

Asquith responded negatively to Churchill's requests, but oddly enough, Kitchener, who was no friend of Churchill's, actually thought the idea had merit. Surprisingly, Kitchener was fully prepared to welcome Churchill back into the Army with the rank of lieutenant general. But Asquith stood firm on the matter. Winston was to return to England and resume his duties as First Sea Lord.

The rapidly changing situation rendered the matter of Churchill's promotion irrelevant. The Germans took Fort Kessel. Afterward, they pressed on with an eye toward crossing the Nethe River and establishing a bridgehead on the other side. The German troops hastily assembled a ramshackle bridge across the river. When they attempted to cross it, they were met with a hail of bullets and shells from the Belgian defenders. The bridge collapsed into the river, forcing the Germans into a headlong retreat.

The Germans then tried to cross the Nethe at another location, erecting a shoddy but serviceable trestle bridge on the river between Lier and Duffel. By sheer coincidence, the location was defended by both British and Belgian troops. The British Royal Marines in particular were crack shots. They mowed down the Germans by the score. The Allied troops joked that the Germans now had a bridge of bodies over which they could cross.

Nevertheless, the Germans managed to get enough troops across the river to form a bridgehead, which forced the Allies to withdraw. It was the same story elsewhere along the river line. The Germans succeeded in establishing multiple footholds on the northern bank. The time had arrived for the Belgian Field Army to make good its escape, so King Albert gave the necessary order. What was left of the Royal Naval Brigades and the Belgian fortress troops received orders to fight a rearguard action.

The Belgian government left the city by boat for Ostend on October 7. As for Churchill, he returned to London. At that point, the Germans were chipping away at the second ring of fortresses—the older brick forts that dated back to the 1860s. The German heavy artillery made quick work of these weak structures. Moreover, German artillerymen had begun shelling the city. The big shells touched off fires. The Belgians added to the growing conflagration by torching their petroleum tanks.

The Germans were going to take Antwerp—that much was certain. But the British still had a

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**ABOVE: Chaos descended on Antwerp as hundreds of thousands of civilians sought to flee the stricken city by both land and sea before its fall to the Germans. OPPOSITE: German Hussars ride through Antwerp after the city's surrender. The Allies succeeded in their strategic objective of preventing the Germans from capturing the French ports on the English Channel.**

Library of Congress

few cards to play before they cashed in their chips. One of Churchill's ideas turned out to be useful. The Royal Naval Air Service launched a series of 11th-hour raids into Germany, targeting the zeppelin sheds at Cologne and Dusseldorf.

When asked to approve new raids, Churchill rejected the idea. It was said that one of the pilots argued his case through the lavatory door while Churchill was using the toilet. The First Lord of the Admiralty finally agreed to get rid of this verbal tormentor. Squadron Commander Spencer Grey took off October 8 in a Sopwith Tabloid biplane at 1:20 PM to bomb the airship sheds at Cologne. It was 112 miles from Antwerp to Cologne, and the only minor issue was flying over neutral Holland's Maastricht peninsula.

Unfortunately, Grey ran into a thick mist and could not find the zeppelin sheds. Cologne itself had better visibility, so he dropped his bombs on the main railway station right next to the city's celebrated medieval cathedral. He returned home without incident by 4:45 PM. Another pilot, Flight Lieutenant R.L.G. Marix, had better luck. He found the zeppelin sheds at Dusseldorf, but they were heavily defended by machine guns. He dove and released his two 20-pound bombs from a height of 600 feet. One bomb did not do much damage, but the other scored a direct hit. The bomb crashed into the shed, and when it exploded it sprayed hot shrapnel into the sides of the zeppelin Z IX that was sheltered there. The airship's hydrogen gas cells immediately ignited, causing a conflagration whose flames shot through the roof and 500 feet into the air. Coils of black smoke generated by the flames rose even higher.

The German machine guns protecting the facility scored a number of hits on Marix's aircraft. Although the aircraft was badly shot up, Marix nursed his crippled airplane to within 20 miles of Antwerp. After ditching the aircraft, he borrowed a bicycle from a peasant and peddled his way back to the city. In the end, he was successfully evacuated at the last moment.

In the meantime, Antwerp was experiencing the chaos of impending defeat. Hundreds of thousands were fleeing the stricken city, with the booming reports of German artillery the funeral dirge of a soon-to-fall metropolis. At one point, a war correspondent reported as many as 150,000 people were trying to flee across the Scheldt River. The Germans pounded the old brick forts into submission one after another.

General Deguise formally surrendered at his headquarters at Fort St. Marie on October 10, 1914. But Belgium's king, its government, and the bulk of the Belgian Field Army successfully escaped. A handful of city officials led by Antwerp Mayor Jan de Vos also escaped. Even General Deguise, Antwerp's military governor, had managed to give his would-be captors the slip after the surrender. He made his way to Holland, where he was interned for the rest of the war.

The Germans paraded into the city, but Antwerp was a ghost town. There were few inhabitants left to witness their triumph. The siege had lasted almost two weeks but, when all was said and done, the Germans had little to show for it. They had experienced heavy casualties, and the conquest of the city was something of a hollow victory. A disappointed General von Beseler remarked, "Such a fortress, and no general." By this he meant that he had been denied the satisfaction of capturing Deguise and that the fortress was completely devoid of any military value.

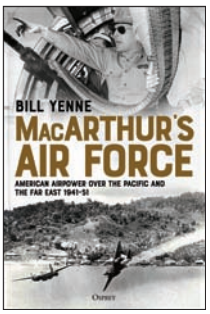
The bulk of the 10,000 British Marines and Naval Division personnel had also managed to escape the closing German trap. The British experienced light casualties; specifically, they suffered 57 killed, 138 wounded, and 936 captured. But, unfortunately, in the confusion of the withdrawal some Naval Division units did not receive their orders until it was too late. About 1,500 men had little choice but to cross the border into Holland where they were interned for the remainder of the war.

After he returned to England, Churchill had to bear the brunt of a lot of negative publicity concerning the Antwerp affair. Critics pilloried the First Lord of the Admiralty as prone to grandstanding. Yet quite the opposite was true; he had gone to Antwerp with the blessing and approval of Prime Minister Asquith, Kitchener, and others. Prolonging the defense of Antwerp distracted the Germans to the extent that the Allies were able to retain control of the vital Channel ports linking France and Great Britain. After all was said and done, his efforts had produced a positive outcome for the Allied powers. ■

# DOUGLAS MACARTHUR EMPLOYED THE U.S. AIR FORCE'S SECOND-LARGEST AIR FLEET TO BRING IMPERIAL JAPAN TO ITS KNEES IN WORLD WAR II.

*By Christopher Miskimon*

Balikpapan was the most important oil refinery complex in the Pacific during World War II. Located on the island of Borneo in what was then the Dutch East Indies, one expert considered it "the most complete oil refinery outside the continental limits of the United States."




Intelligence estimates rated it capable of supplying 80 percent of the Japanese naval air arm's need for high-octane aviation fuel, though in reality that figure was likely much lower. Nevertheless, Balikpapan was as important to Japan as Ploesti was to Nazi Germany. This made it an important target for Allied planners, who set it in their crosshairs in 1942.

Major General George Kenney, commanding the Fifth Air Force, wanted to hit Balikpapan as quickly as possible but was hampered by a lack of aircraft and the long distances involved, which prevented fighter escort. He also knew the Japanese were building up their air power in the Philippines, and he wanted to deny them sufficient fuel to operate those planes effectively. Kenney initially hoped for some of the new, long-range B-29 Superfortress bombers to hit the refinery, but when they became operational in mid-1944, none was assigned to his command.

The break came in late 1944, when the islands of Noemfoor and Morotai were captured. Establishing airfields on both islands reduced the range to less than 1,000 miles and enabled drop tank-equipped P-38s and P-47s to escort the bombers to the target. Extra-large drop tanks were developed, and famed aviator Charles Lindbergh was brought in to teach the pilots how to conserve fuel on extended journeys. The new airfields also allowed Kenney's staff to increase the number of bombers in each attack. Although the first missions against Balikpapan often contained a few as six bombers, the attacks might now include 100 bombers or more, a much more significant force but still only a third or less of the

Both: National Archives

**ABOVE: Long-range B-29 bombers pounded the Japanese oil refinery at Balikpapan in the Japanese-occupied Dutch East Indies, inflicting heavy damage to processing plants, docks, and storage tanks. LEFT: Maj. Gen. George C. Kenney directed the bombing of Balikpapan.**

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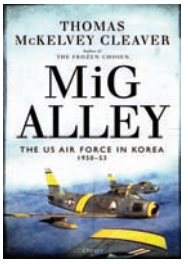
numbers being used to attack Ploesti. This only highlighted the comparative dearth of resources allocated to the Pacific Theater.

Fighter escort proved vital. Early attacks went in without fighter cover and took heavy losses. Along with the fighters, the units involved practiced flying in the mutually supporting "box" formations the European bomber groups were using. They also switched to larger 500-pound bombs to increase the damage to the target. In addition, planners became better at coordinating the attacks so the bombers arrived all at once and sent night missions to keep the Japanese unbalanced.

The results were much the same as the bombing mission in August 1943 against the oil refineries in Ploesti, Romania: Heavy damage was done to the refineries, docks, and storage tanks. Kenney believed the operations a success, stating, "We just about finished off Balikpapan for the rest of the war." In reality, the Japanese launched a major effort to rebuild the facility, which apparently had never sent much fuel to the Philippines anyway. Some estimate that the naval and submarine campaign against Japanese tankers was much more effective. Still, occasional bombing raids hit Balikpapan later in the war, until production practically ceased; by then, however, the Japanese could no longer transport any fuel it made anyway.

The Allied operations against Balikpapan were just some of the many carried out by American air forces in the Pacific and later during the Korean War. Like most of them, what seemed a success or failure at the time was often reconsidered in hindsight. The author presents these viewpoints as well as a dramatic history of American airpower in the Asia-Pacific region in ***MacArthur's Air Force: American Airpower Over the Pacific and the Far East, 1941-51*** (Bill Yemen, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2019, 319 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $30.00, hardcover).

By the end of World War II, MacArthur's command had more than 5,000 aircraft. In Korea he led forces that ushered in the jet age of air warfare. This was a long way from the humble beginnings of U.S. air power in the Pacific Theater, when Americans were lucky to get a small number of aircraft over a target simultaneously. This is a sweeping history, but the author is well-equipped to tell it, having written a number of aviation titles previously. This new work continues his tradition of engaging storytelling, in-depth research, and an ability to make a broad subject accessible and relatable to the reader. The book admirably compiles the history of the Far East Air Forces into one useful volume.




***MiG Alley: The US Air Force in Korea 1950-53*** (Thomas McKelvey Cleaver, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2019, maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $30.00, hardcover)

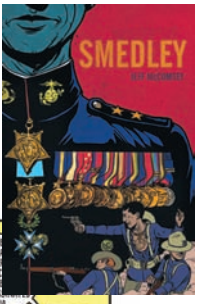
Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Hinton found himself separated from the rest of his flight as they attacked a formation of MiG-15s just south of the Yalu River in North Korea. It was December 17, 1950, and his flight of F-86 Sabres had achieved the element of surprise. Using fake call signs and specific flying patterns at lower altitudes, they fooled the enemy into thinking they were poorer performing F-80s. When the MiGs came up to fight, Hinton's flight pounced. As his wingman struggled to keep up, Hinton fired into the nearest MiG, which slowed. Forced to close the distance, the American pilot put three more bursts into the enemy plane. It exploded into flames and dove into the ground. The F-86 Sabre had scored its first aerial victory.

The air war over Korea is largely overlooked, but it was one of the most intense in history. More bombs fell on North Korea in three years than were dropped on Nazi Germany during all of World War II. Despite such statistics, the Korean conflict is often called a forgotten war. The author seeks to redress this imbalance with an in-depth look at the air campaign, with a focus on the U.S. Air Force. He uses numerous personal stories from combatants on both sides to provide vivid detail in the text, revealing that the air war was much messier and less one-sided than the accepted version of events would indicate.


*Smedley*; Jeff McComsey / Dead Reckoning / Naval Institute Press

***Smedley*** (Jeff McComsey, Dead Reckoning/ Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2019, 176 pp., photographs, $26.95, softcover)

Major General Smedley Butler is a legend in the United States Marine Corps. He is one of the most decorated Marines in the organization's history. But like all Marine officers, he started as a young lieutenant, unsure of himself but brave enough to try anyway. His service began in Cuba during the Spanish-American War and continued in the Philippines; he then Marines in the Boxer Rebellion. He went on an intelligence-gathering mission into Mexico during a period of tension there. The so-called Banana Wars were next for him, followed by World War I, even though he did not see combat there. During this long journey, Smedley earned two Medals of Honor, among his other awards. Eventually, he became disillusioned with continued service, believing the blood and sacrifice of American servicemen was often squandered to advance corporate interests.

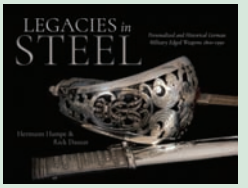



This work is part of a new series of military-history-related graphic novels aimed at young adults but equally interesting to older readers, as well. The narrative begins with Smedley visiting the famed Bonus Army in the 1930s and relating his military life through his conversations and storytelling with the Bonus Marchers. The book is well- written and clearly relates Smedley's biography in an innovative and interesting way. The illustrations are well-drawn and attractive.


***Yank and Rebel Rangers: Special Operations in the American Civil War*** (Robert W. Black, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire, UK, 2019, 370 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $32.95, hardcover)

On April 3, 1865, Confederate Brig. Gen. Rufus Barringer rode with his column of cavalry along a dusty road near Sayler's Creek, Virginia. As they rode toward battle, he turned in his saddle and saw a group of 15 horsemen moving up his line, chatting with

# SHORT BURSTS

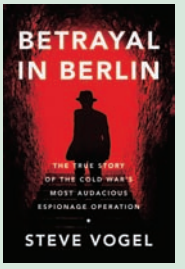



**Legacies in Steel: Personalized and Historical German Military Edged Weapons 1800-1990** (Hermann Hampe, Rick Dauzat, Casemate Books, 2019, $200.00, hardcover) This high-quality volume exhibits nearly 100 examples of the personal swords and daggers of German military personnel from 1800 to 1990. The book reveals the legacy and honor of each owner as it details the history of the artifacts.

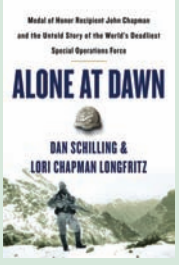

**Images of War: United States Airborne Divisions** 1942-2018 (Michael Green, Pen and Sword, 2019, $32.95, softcover) This photo book contains hundreds of images of American paratroopers, from their inception to the current day. Included are depictions of training, combat, and specialized equipment.


**Those Bloody Kilts: The Highland Soldier in the Great War** (Thomas Greenshields, Helion Books, 2019, $49.95, hardcover) The life and character of Highland troops during World War I is the focus of this new work. It examines their lives, experiences, and their identity, with attention paid to the kilt as part of their uniform.

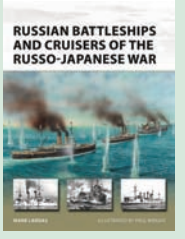

**Cold Warriors: Writers Who Waged the Literary Cold War** (Duncan White, Custom House, 2019, $32.50, hardcover) The ideological battles of the Cold War were often waged with the written word. This book looks at some of the writers, such as George Orwell, who fought with their pens and their minds.



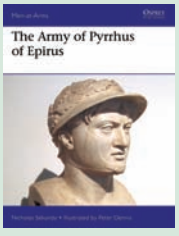

**Betrayal in Berlin: The True Story of the Cold War's Most Audacious Espionage Operation** (Steve Vogel, Custom House, 2019, $29.99, hardcover) This is the story of Operation Gold, a plan to dig a tunnel under the Berlin Wall during the early 1950s. The concept held promise for espionage against the Soviet Union, but an enemy mole was involved.



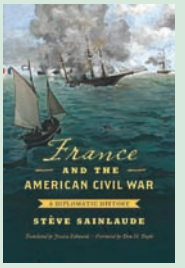

**Alone at Dawn: Medal of Honor Recipient John Chapman and the Untold Story of the World's Deadliest Special Operations Force** (Dan Schilling and Lori Chapman Longfritz, Grand Central Publishing, 2019, $29.00, hardcover) John Chapman displayed incredible bravery during a mountaintop battle in March 2002. This book details that battle and men who fought it with him.



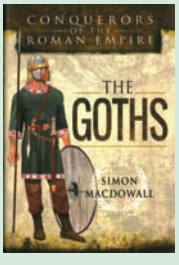

**Russian Battleships and Cruisers of the Russo-Japanese War** (Mark Lardas, Osprey Publishing, 2019, $19.00, softcover) Warship design advanced rapidly in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This book highlights the vessels Russia possessed during its ill-fated war with Japan.




**The Army of Pyrrhus of Epirus: 3rd Century BC** (Nicholas Sekunda, Osprey Publishing, 2019, $19.00, softcover) Pyrrhus was the Greek general whose name gave rise to the term *Pyrrhic victory*. This book covers the organization, equipment, and history of his army.




**France and the American Civil War: A Diplomatic History** (Steve Sainlaude, University of North Carolina Press, 2019, $45.00, hardcover) The author reviews the relationship between France and the two warring American powers. He asserts that France had a major stake in the war's outcome.



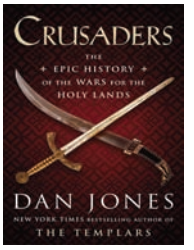

**Conquerors of the Roman Empire: The Goths** (Simon MacDowell, Pen and Sword, 2019, $34.95, hardcover) The Goths were at times Rome's allies, but they eventually became one of its most implacable foes. This new book covers examples of conflict and cooperation between Roman and Goth.

his men as they approached.

It did not seem unusual. When the group approached him, though, Barringer frowned at their easy familiarity. The group's officer bid Barringer a good afternoon and the general frostily replied "You have the advantage of me, Sir!"

"You're right, I have, General!" replied the officer. Barringer suddenly realized the cavalrymen were pointing revolvers at him and his staff officers and orderlies. They held their weapons so the rest of the Rebel column was unable to see what was happening. Barringer realized the futility of his position and soon he and his party were quietly led away. Union Major Henry Young and his rangers had captured a general right in front of his own men.

Rangers fought in six wars before the United States was even formed. By the Civil War, the ranger was a standard, if unorthodox, concept in military circles. This new book reveals the wide-ranging use of rangers by both sides. It is exhaustively researched and well written. The author presents gripping accounts of the various exploits of these unusual soldiers.



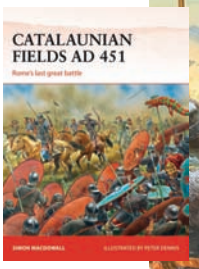

*Crusaders: The Epic History of the Wars for the Holy Lands* (Dan Jones, Viking Press, New York, 2019, 424 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $30.00, hardcover)

The Crusades in the Holy Land from 1095 to 1291 were a bloody period of religious warfare that still resonates in the modern era. When Christian armies took Jerusalem in 1099, they ignited centuries of conflict between Christian and Muslim, leading to the slaughter of thousands of people at the time.

Yet the Crusades were not entirely religious in nature. Economic and political issues frequently prompted crusader campaigns in the *Outremer*. It was as often about gold as about God. The Crusades eventually ended with the fall of Acre in 1291, but even today extremists on both sides still reference them in the commission of acts of terror and atrocity.

The author has written widely on the medieval period. His latest work tells the story of the Crusades through portraits of various people on both sides. Included in the narrative are Saladin, Frankish rulers, and Mamluk slave soldiers. These vignettes offer fascinating glimpses into the region and period. One of the most compelling accounts concerns Margaret of Beverley, an Englishwoman who fought during the Siege of Jerusalem armed with only a slingshot.

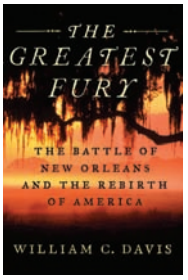
*The Battle of the Catalaunian Fields AD 451* (Evan Michael Schultheis, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire, UK, 2019, 262 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, glossary, index, $34.95, hardcover)




The Battle of the Catalaunian Fields is considered by many to be one of the pivotal battles of European history. It was the climax of Attila the Hun's invasion of the Western Roman Empire. That campaign reached as far as Orleans in France before Attila's defeat saved the West from conquest by the Huns. It was a battle fought between two armies liberally reinforced with allied forces. Unfortunately, sources for the battle are often fragmentary and overused, limiting the understanding of the battle to long-accepted accounts that do not benefit from modern historiography and new research.

This new study of the famous battle brings a fresh look to the reader, blending the common sources with new research and material from Roman military manuals to create a narrative that reconsiders the traditional view of the battle. The author portrays the Hun army as a complex, combined-arms force rather than a horde. Roman use of allies is also explored, along with studies of the Germanic tribes who fought on both sides. Good maps, color illustrations, and detailed appendices complement the writing to present a new perspective of the battle.

*Catalaunian Fields AD 451;* Pen and Sword Books




*The Greatest Fury: The Battle of New Orleans and the Rebirth of America* (William C. Davis, Caliber Press, New York, 2109, 560 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $32.00, hardcover)

The American line at the Battle of New Orleans was a mixed force of militia, regulars, Marines, and even a few pirates, interspersed with artillery positions. General Andrew Jackson intentionally mixed different types of troops with his cannons so they could support and encourage each other. Much of his army was untrained and poorly disciplined; some of the soldiers even arrived unarmed. They stood against a battle-hardened British army that expected to win despite the numerical imbalance and the stout American position.

The stakes were high at New Orleans. If the British took the city, they would hold the mouth of the Mississippi River and control the economic lifeline of the midwestern interior of the country. The actual battle was over quickly, the Americans soundly defeating the British in just a few hours. Most of the British army's senior officers were either killed or wounded in the battle. The Americans' one-sided victory had enduring effects on both the United States and North America in general.

The Battle of New Orleans has been the subject of many books. What makes this new work stand out is its clear and engaging narrative. The smooth prose immerses the reader in the story, and the level of detail is high. The author successfully integrates the varied factors that combined to create and shape this battle: geopolitical maneuvering, personal ambition, and patriotic fervor. The result is a single volume that both describes the battle and explains it wider significance.


*Nieuwpoort 1600: The First Modern Battle* (Bouko De Groot, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2019, 96 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $24.00, softcover)

The 80 Years War began as a small Dutch rebellion aimed at achieving religious freedom from the ruling Spanish, but it soon escalated into one of Europe's longest conflicts. Events convinced the Dutch to go on the offensive, leading to a campaign pitting Albert of Hapsburg against Maurice of Nassau. Albert led an army of the famed Spanish tercios. Maurice instituted a series of revolutionary military reforms. Although unproven in battle, the Dutch army held great promise.

The Dutch planned to land near Nieuwpoort and march to Dunkirk, the northern home port of the Spanish navy. But the Spanish army cut off the Dutch. The two armies then met on the beach and dunes north of the city. The battle was a decisive Dutch victory and is often identified as the first modern battle. It ensured the survival of the new Dutch Republic, and the novel tactics and procedures employed by its reformed army began a transformation of warfare in Europe.

Osprey's Campaign series brings the reader thorough yet concise accounts of the greatest battles, campaigns, and operations of history. This superb volume covers Nieuwpoort in standard fashion, giving readers the full scope of the battle. It describes the background, commanders, armies, equipment, and events of the engagement. Moreover, the book has excellent maps and illustrations not found in many other books on the topic.


*Spain in Arms: A Military History of the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (E.R. Hooten, Casemate Publishing, Havertown, PA, 2019, 256 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $32.95, hardcover)

On the night of February 10, 1937, Moorish infantry supported by engineers crept toward the Pindoque railroad bridge in Spain. The span was an imposing steel structure set upon white stone pillars over a river swollen with winter precipitation. The Moors moved out of the inky darkness, slitting the sentries' throats and attacking a defending company of Frenchmen. Only four of the Gallic fighters managed to escape the slaugh-

ter. They quickly stripped off the demolition charges placed on the bridge and laid planks over the rails so their own infantry could cross easily.

One demolition charge had been overlooked, but its explosion did little damage. Troops were soon pouring across, forming a bridgehead for the Nationalist troops to advance. Opposing tanks and aircraft soon appeared, pouring deadly fire into the Nationalist ranks, but their artillery held the enemy back until antitank guns could be brought forward and cavalry swept the opposite slopes of infantry. More troops crossed the bridge into the battle that night, securing the bridgehead.

The Spanish Civil War is often portrayed as a conflict of polyglot armies using foreign weapons and mercenaries. The author asserts that while there is some truth to this characterization, the war was mainly fought by Spaniards, improvising and using their often-scant resources to maximum effect. The book takes advantage of records in both the British and French archives to provide a new context to the war and those who fought it.


*A Machine Gunner in France: The Memoirs of Ward Schrantz, 35th Division, 1917-1919* (Ward Schrantz, edited by Jeffrey L. Patrick, University of North Texas Press, Denton, 2019, 525 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $34.95, hardcover)

Ward Schrantz was a National Guard officer in the 35th Division, made up of troops from Kansas and Missouri. He served on the Mexican border for several years before World War I catapulted him and his division into the trenches of Western Europe. As a captain, he commanded Company A, 128th Machine Gun Battalion, serving in the Vosges Mountains of France. He observed during his time in France the grim realities of war as opposed to the tales of glory so often recounted. One of his officers had to steal parts for their vehicles, and several of his men were killed in tragic accidents, both in training and on the front lines. When Ward returned home after the war, his experience working for a small-town newspaper helped him create a memoir he never intended for publication.

It is to the modern reader's benefit, though, that Ward's writings have been published in this new work. It is an unvarnished, realistic look at a soldier's life in the Great War. The editor does creditable work in organizing and supporting this memoir, making it flow easily on the page. It also sheds new light on one of the more obscure American units of the war. ■

# A CLASSIC STRATEGY SERIES STEPS INTO THE NEXT GEN, AND WARS BOTH HISTORIC AND FANTASTIC TAKE CENTER STAGE

*By Joseph Luster*

## Commandos

**Genre: Strategy, Platform: PC, Publisher: Kalypso Media, Available: TBA**

Following up on the PC version of *Commandos 2 - HD Remaster*—which has Kalypso Media digging into the past to spruce up a classic of the strategy gaming genre—the publisher recently formed a new studio to look ahead to the future. This one has a very specific task: Bring the *Commando* series into the next-generation of gaming with a brand new entry.

The *Commando* series of real-time tactics games, which have a strong focus on stealth among their many deployable player strategies, kicked off back in 1998. With over 20 years of history behind the World War II-set games—the last new entry of which launched in 2006—it's definitely high time for something new beyond a remaster. Kalypso's new studio aims to deliver just that, in what it hopes will be a "truly worthy successor" to a series that's iconic to many strategy fans.

At the time of this writing, Kalypso is still in the recruitment stage for its new studio, and by the time you read this the, location and name may have already been revealed. As for what's in store for the future of *Commandos*, the fact that the 2006 *Commandos 2* remaster provided beta access is a good sign that there will be plenty of room for feedback once development is underway on the next-gen entry.


## Imperiums: Greek Wars

**Genre: Strategy, Platform: PC, Publisher: Kube Games, Available: Spring 2020**

Moving away from World War II, we have developer and publisher Kube Games taking us deeper into the past. *Imperiums: Greek Wars* is an upcoming game that mixes turn-based 4X and historical grand strategy with what Kube calls a "mythological twist," offering up a potentially interesting concoction that includes a healthy dose of the "truth" behind some of the great fantasies of the era.

As far as timelines are concerned, *Imperiums: Greek Wars* begins in 359 B.C., right as Philip II of Macedonia takes the throne. His ambitions involve the dream of one day leading the entirety of Greece, and it's a dream in which players will become embroiled as they choose from one of 30 playable factions of the era, from Macedonia to Sparta, Athens, and beyond—all the way down to the smaller, nomadic societies and city-states on the outskirts of Greece.

The real scope of *Imperiums* is where grand strategy comes into play. This game offers a true overview of life as a ruler, as players are tasked with developing prosperous nations, including economic management and the cultivation of stable government. When a military threat arises, you'll need to make swift decisions and employ tactical thinking to come out on top. Kube is hoping to represent the politics and military strife of the era with as much fidelity to history as possible, replicating the hefty weight that was placed on rulers of all nations, no matter their size or level of influence.

And if the aforementioned mythology has your interest piqued, it appears that *Imperiums* will explore these stories as they existed within the reality of the Greek people. Behind many of these stories lies a possible kernel of truth—whether it be the tale of a real artifact or the history and lessons that fuel a colossal metaphor—and you can make them a part of your nation's efforts if you so desire. This may go as far as sending generals down the same paths the ancient heroes took in search of priceless treasures, so it's going to be cool to see how deep they go with this particular aspect of the narrative.

Naturally, there will be plenty of multiplayer options on the menu with this one, so you won't be limited to exploring what Kube has to offer in the solo campaign. In all regards, though, an emphasis is being placed on learning the ins and outs of the game and bettering yourself by seeking guidance. If that holds true in the finished product, this might be both enjoyable for veterans and a great entry point for those who are just now dipping their toes into the strategy genre.

## Vestaria Saga I: War of the Scions

**Genre: Strategy, Platform: PS4, Publisher: Dangen Entertainment, Available: Now**

Now, for something completely different yet still military-focused, *Vestaria Saga I: War of the Scions* recently made its way to PC via Steam. Those who are into the Japanese-developed side of strategy games will recognize what makes this one special: It comes from Shouzo Kaga, known for creating the immensely popular *Fire Emblem* series of strategy-RPGs. And while the two titles share a similar aesthetic—at least as compared to the older *Fire Emblem* entries—*Vestaria Saga* has maintained a heavier focus on strategy without as much of the interpersonal trappings with which the *Fire Emblem* series has come to be associated.

In this particular tale, a young warrior named Zadrian gets pushed into a war that has the future of his kingdom at stake. Larger imperial forces have him on the run, forcing him to band together with a modest but faithful group of knights in an effort to protect the kingdom's princess and the lineage on which they all depend for a bright future. He'll do so with the help of heavily-armed units and a grid-based map that hearkens back to some of the most stalwart samples of the tactical genre.

*Vestaria Saga* is interesting precisely because of the pedigree behind it. Shouzo Kaga and other veterans of the strategy world have come together to deliver a story full of international intrigue and espionage, with plot paths that branch off depending on surviving party members and the various choices made along the way. There are plenty of character classes, skills, and weapons to explore, and the maps provide a unique way to approach most situations. If your strategy sensibilities fall on the more narrative-driven (and distinctly ahistorical) side of the equation, this play on traditional Japanese SRPG quirks is well worth a look.

*Vestaria Saga I: War of the Scions* is currently available in English on PC through publisher Dangen Entertainment. ■

## Waffen SS

*Continued from page 62*

they made their way past two Soviet checkpoints and onto a ferry that took them across the Elbe River into British-controlled territory.

Most of the German soldiers who reached Allied lines were returned to their home countries, where they were arrested and put on trial. The Russians captured Fenet and returned him to France where he received 20 years at hard labor. He was later released after serving only half of his sentence.

The Russians and Cossacks who served in various SS formations were returned to the Soviet Union. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin ordered the execution of many and the remainder he sent to the so-called Gulag Archipelago in Siberia.

Of the Soviet soldiers serving in the Waffen-SS, the Ukrainians of the Galician Division fared the best. The Red Cross, the Vatican, and the Polish Army all intervened on their behalf. Because of this, they were not returned to the Soviet Union. After a brief internment, they were allowed to emigrate to the United Kingdom and North America.

In Yugoslavia the results varied. Many SS men were poorly treated, but President Josip Broz Tito realized he would have to tread lightly in order to successfully unite the disparate ethnic groups within Yugoslavia's borders. Those accused of specific crimes against Yugoslavians were put on trial, while amnesty was granted to the rest, including former SS men.

The effectiveness of these Waffen-SS divisions was mixed. Although some of them evolved into formidable fighting units, many never performed well and were often limited to fighting partisans. Yet whatever their record in combat, almost all Waffen-SS divisions were involved in various crimes, including the execution of prisoners of war, massacres of civilians, and various other misdeeds. Some foreign-born Waffen-SS fighters came from units that were involved in the deportation of Jews and others to the concentration camps. On the whole, the criminality of the Waffen-SS is beyond dispute and forever tied to the regime it served.

There's no denying that the foreign Waffen-SS units were vital to the expansion of the Waffen-SS. Indeed, through the incorporation of foreign troops, the Waffen-SS managed to double in size every 12 months beginning in late 1942. The strength and effectiveness of the Waffen-SS in the second half of World War II would have been vastly reduced without the infusion of hundreds of thousands of foreign troops, many of whom served until the bitter end. ■

## Viking Siege

*Continued from page 71*

cuted after being questioned.

Count Odo returned in June 866 with a small body of fresh troops and some supplies, coming up from the direction of Montmartre. The Danes attempted to block his approach, but, aided by a sally from the Grand Chatelet, Odo and his men were able to fight through to Paris.

The Vikings launched sporadic attacks against Paris throughout the summer and well into the autumn. King Charles the Fat arrived in October 886 with a large body of troops drawn from various lands. To the chagrin of the Paris defenders, the king did not attack the Vikings but established his own camp on the heights of Montmartre and entered into negotiations with Rollo. Charles the Fat promised Rollo 700 pounds in silver, to share with Sigfred, if he were to lift the siege and withdraw. Since the sum was significant, Charles requested until March of 887 to gather the money. In the meantime, Charles promised the Vikings free passage to pillage the Duchy of Burgundy, which was in revolt against his authority.

After campaigning for several months in Burgundy, during which time they unsuccessfully besieged Sens, Rollo and Sigfred returned to Paris in late 886. True to his word, King Charles paid the tribute, and the Vikings finally withdrew from Paris. Sigfred moved on to Friesland, where he was later killed in battle.

Rollo fared much better. In addition to the monetary tribute, Charles the Fat gave Rollo a land grant along the lower Seine River. Rollo made Rouen his base. While similar land grants to other Viking chieftains eventually reverted to the locals, Rollo's land grant remained in effect. The territory under his control was known as the land of the Norsemen, who became known as Normans. This region soon became the Duchy of Normandy. Rollo's progeny and followers became more French than Danish, and Rollo's direct descendent William the Conqueror came to rule England in the 11th century.

King Charles the Fat, loathed by Frankish nobles and notables for the shameful capitulation to the Vikings, died on January 13, 888. Count Odo, whose reputation had been enormously enhanced by his role in the defense of Paris, was elected king shortly afterward by the nobles of the realm. Odo was crowned king of West Francia in February 888. When a Viking force threatened Paris that summer, Odo's troops defeated it at Montfaucon Forest on June 24, 888. Over the course of the next quarter century, Viking war bands appeared in the vicinity of Paris several more times, but they never attacked the city. ■

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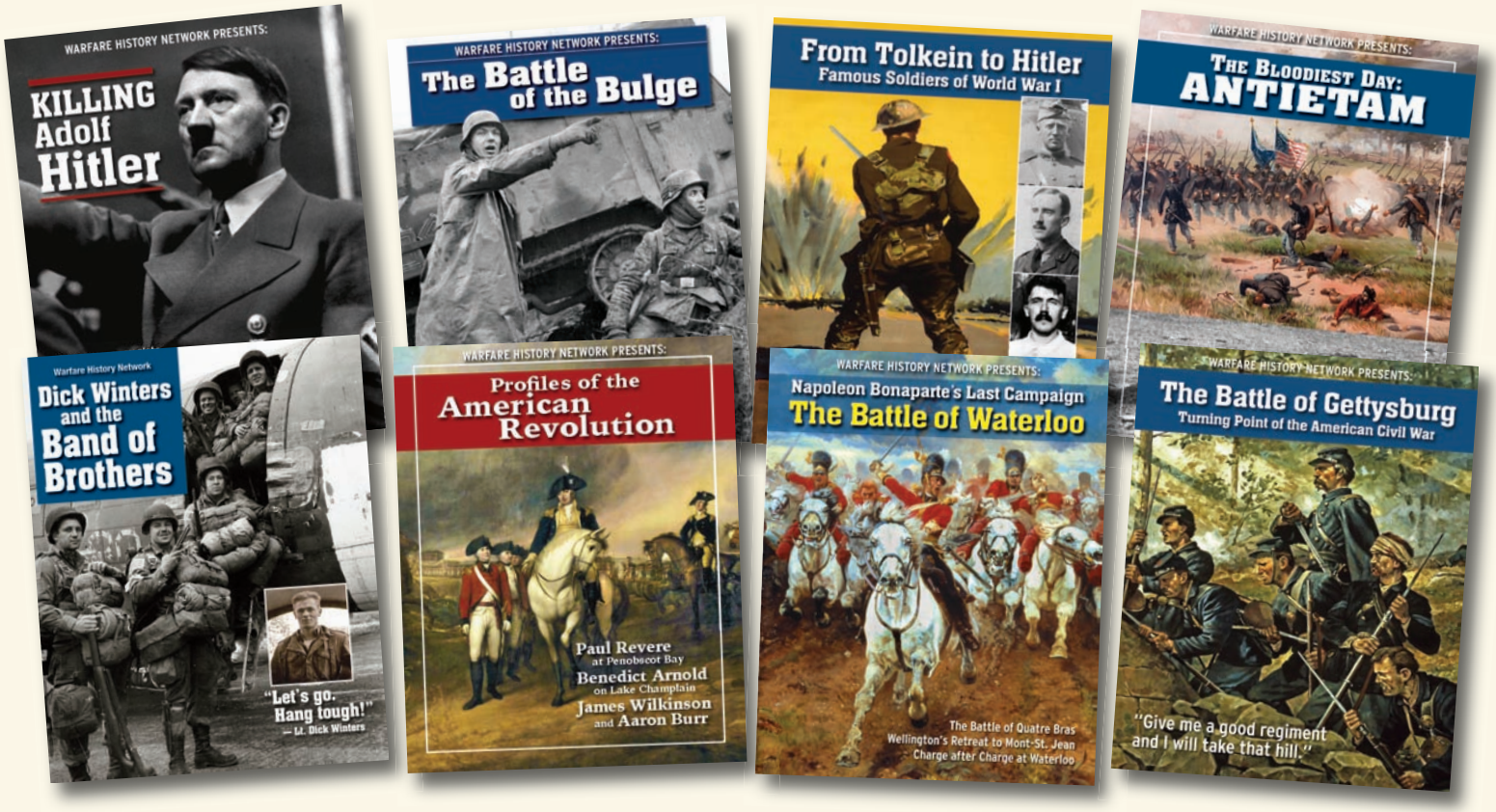


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