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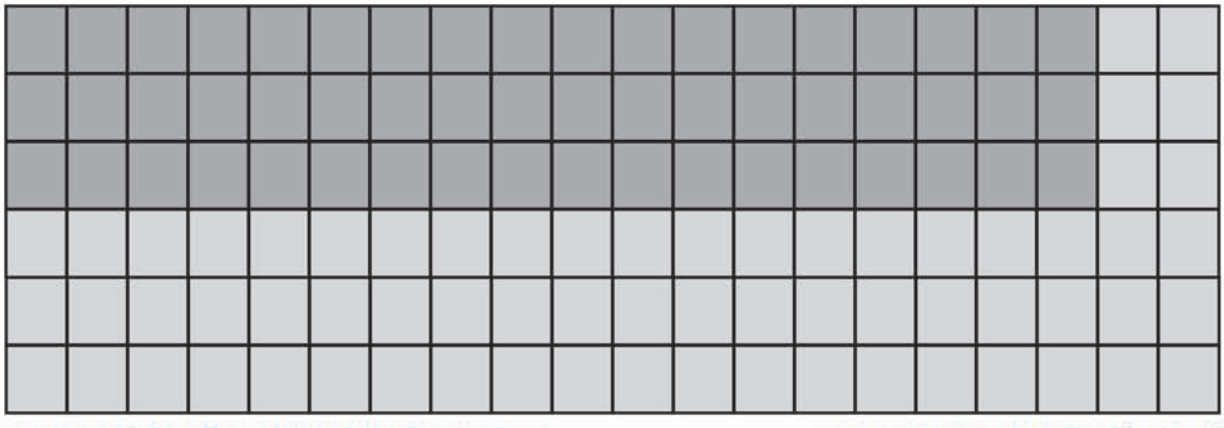

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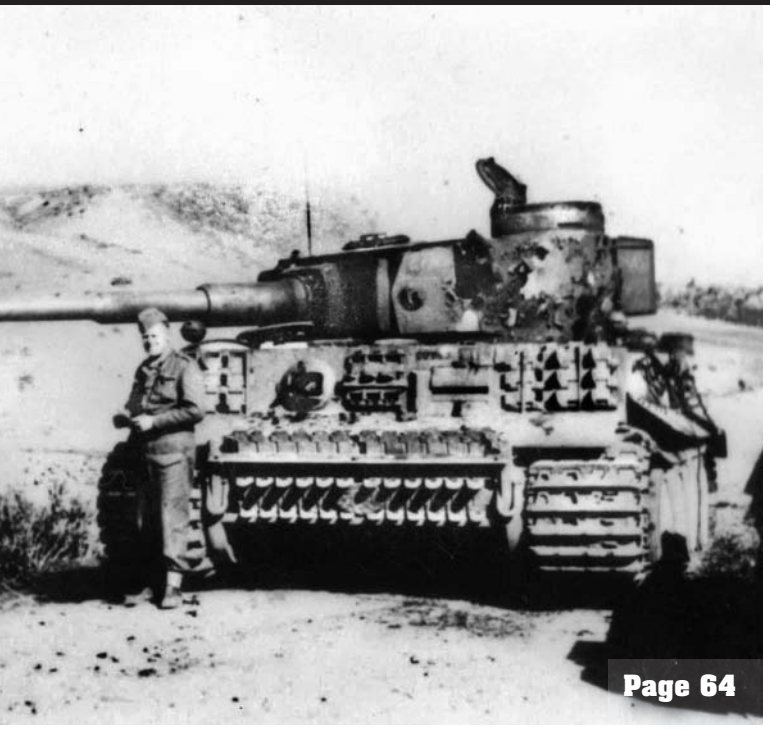

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Cover: Sergeant Abraham Aranoff shows Private Henry W. Beyer how to roll a cigarette during a break after 27 days at the front with the 317th Infantry Regiment. See story page 84. Photo: National Archives.

WWII History (ISSN 1539-5456) is published four times yearly (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall) by Sovereign Media, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite C-100, McLean, VA 22101. (703) 964-0361. Periodical postage paid at McLean, VA, and additional mailing offices. *WWII History*, Volume 24, Number 1

Editorial Office: Email Michael Haskew, Editor, at mhaskew3734@comcast.net. Articles, proposals, and synopses should be sent as Word attachments; please include a brief description of your submission within the body of your email. Authors' guidelines are available upon request. WWII History assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.

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USS *Squalus* rises after fatal tragedy.

It was a problem the U.S. Navy thought they had solved after several deadly incidents during the pre-World War II evolution of its submarine service—the frightening situation of a submerged submarine taking on water.

Built in the Portsmouth Navy Yard in New Hampshire, the USS *Squalus* had been commissioned on March 1, 1939. The submarine had completed 18 test dives in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast when the failure of its main induction valve led to disaster. Water poured in during the 19th dive, flooding the aft torpedo room, both engine rooms, and the crew quarters and swiftly drowning 26 sailors. Earlier such accidents had plagued the service, including notable incidents involving USS *Sturgeon* and USS *Snapper*.

National Archives

USS *Sailfish* (SS-192) near California's Mare Island Navy Yard, April 1943.

Eventually these issues finally would really be solved and the prospect of a recurrence was minimized. But on May 23, 1939, the lives of the remaining 33 men aboard *Squalus* hung in the balance. During the frantic rescue operation that ensued, USS *Sculpin*, the Sargo-class sister of *Squalus*, located the sunken submarine. The two craft were able to communicate for a while via telephone marker buoy, but rough currents severed the line while the rescue was in progress.

As precious time slipped away, Lieutenant Commander Charles B. "Swede" Momsen led the recovery effort that saved the lives of the men trapped aboard *Squalus*. Momsen and company utilized the relatively new McCann rescue chamber to complete the operation. In the process, the diving techniques employed also validated theories regarding nitrogen narcosis, a syndrome marked by the anesthetic effects of prolonged deep dives. Four enlisted diving experts participating in the rescue received the Medal of Honor for their heroism.

In the wake of the rescue and salvage operation that followed, *Squalus* was repaired and refitted, renamed USS *Sailfish*, and returned to service with commissioning on May 15, 1940. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, both *Sailfish* and *Sculpin* went to war. The heroic *Sculpin* would make nine war patrols before it was scuttled by its crew after severe damage in action with enemy destroyers on November 19, 1943.

It is worthy of mention, however, that *Sailfish* also went on to deliver commendable wartime service. Interestingly, its commanding officers prohibited the mention of the word "Squalus" and meted out punishment to those sailors who violated the order. Meanwhile, *Sailfish* attacked, struck hard, missed opportunities, dove deep, and recorded victories through the course of a dozen combat patrols from December 1941 through December 1944.

Sailfish was credited with sinking seven Japanese vessels, both merchantmen and warships, most notably the aircraft carrier *Chuyo*. Ironically, the enemy carrier was transporting 21 survivors of the *Sculpin* captured during the submarine's final encounter. Sadly, 20 of these men perished. By the end of World War II, *Sailfish* had sunk more than 40,000 tons of Japanese shipping and earned nine battle stars and a Presidential Unit Citation.

Up from the depths of the Atlantic, the resurrected *Squalus* had gone on to render outstanding service in the Pacific War, while the deaths of the prisoners aboard *Chuyo* offer a tragically ironic postscript to the *Sailfish* relationship with its sister hero submarine USS *Sculpin*. After the war, *Sailfish* was decommissioned on October 27, 1945. Efforts to preserve the submarine in its entirety as a monument failed, but the conning tower was preserved at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, dedicated in 1946 as a memorial to the crewmen lost in a six-year career as both *Squalus* and *Sailfish*.

The rest of the veteran *Sailfish* hulk was sold for scrap in 1948.

WWII Quarterly Volume 24 • Number 1

WARFAREHISTORYNETWORK.com

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Circulation Fulfillment

COMAG MARKETING GROUP
WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

SOVEREIGN MEDIA COMPANY, INC.
6731 Whittier Ave., Suite C-100
McLean, VA 22101-4554

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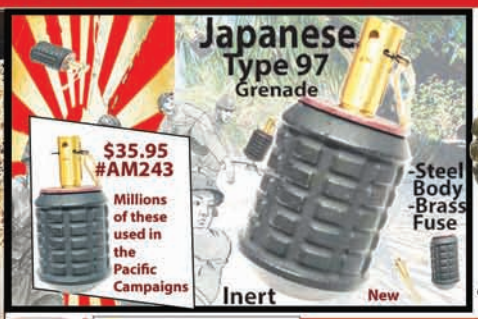

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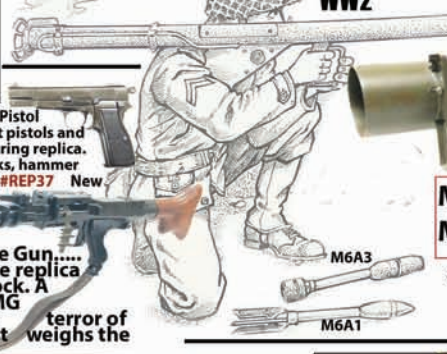

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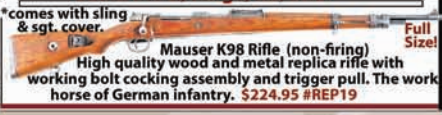
Russian PPsh-41 SMG Beautiful full sized non firing metal and wood replica with drum magazine,cocking handle that charges and trigger that clicks. A staple of WW2 Russian forces, North Koreans, Chinese, and other authoritarian countries. Looks realistic and likewise feels like the real thing. GIs referred to this as a 'Burp Gun' during the Korean War. $225. #REP29

MG34 ANTI-Aircraft Sight $38. #MG34102



*comes with sling & sgt. cover.

Full Size!

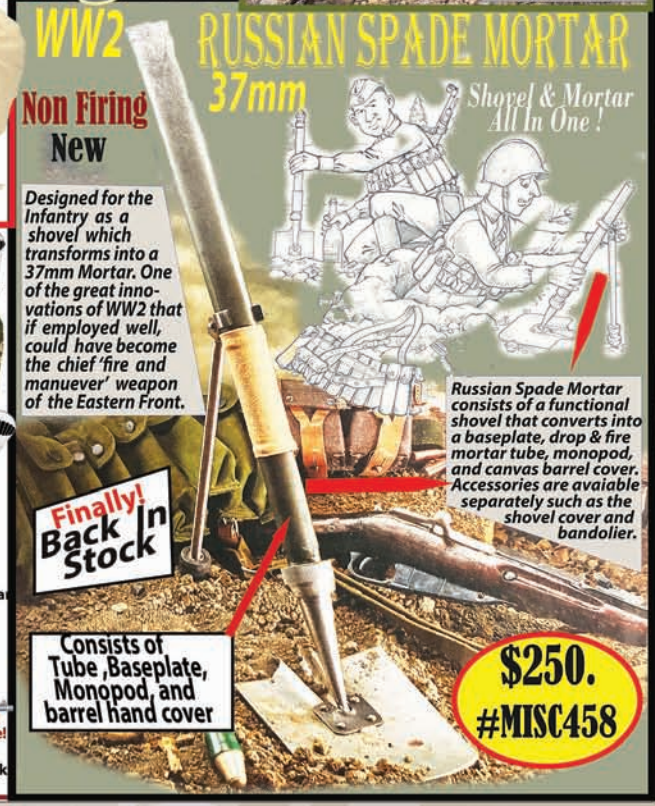
Mauser K98 Rifle (non-firing) High quality wood and metal replica rifle with working bolt cocking assembly and trigger pull. The work horse of German infantry. $224.95 #REP19

WW2 RUSSIAN SPADE MORTAR 37mm

Shovel & Mortar All In One !

Non Firing New

Designed for the Infantry as a shovel which transforms into a 37mm Mortar. One of the great innovations of WW2 that if employed well, could have become the chief 'fire and manuever' weapon of the Eastern Front.



Finally! Back In Stock

Consists of Tube ,Baseplate, Monopod, and barrel hand cover

Russian Spade Mortar consists of a functional shovel that converts into a baseplate, drop & fire mortar tube, monopod, and canvas barrel cover. Accessories are avaiable separately such as the shovel cover and bandolier.

$250. #MISC458

Turkish Army Camo. Gloves Current issue and these are unissued from the Govt. overrun' contract. Nice earthy camo w/ grid pattern w/ generous 'over the wrist' protection & internal expansion band. Med./Large size with soft fleece lining. $24. # MISC985 (Glove pair)

Norwegian Army Gloves 'Mild Weather Glove' Current issue overrun stock. Camo pattern w/no lining, but w/ rubberized palm support for gripping items in foul weather. A good 3 season glove for work or play. $12. #MISC893

WW1 Springfield Rifle Cartridge Belt New. $34.95 #SPF146

New

M1 Garand Cartridge Belt New. $34.95 #GRD125

New Browning Automatic Rifle Magazine Belt $34.95 #BAR117

Belgian FAL Magazine Belt Original $34.95 #FAL329

French 30' Parachute, white w/ cut lines. See web site. Only a handfull remain! $80. #CHUTE

GI Gauze Pack

USMC WW2 camo 'pup' tent with poles, stakes & cord. New Mnfr. $158. #TENT04 also available as shelter half.

New WW2 M1A1 Carbine Paratrooper carry canvas bag. Has double mag pouch sewn on the front. $24.95 #CRB212-

1911 Magazine pouch for .45 cal. pistol mags for Model 1911. $7.95 #C45280-OD Also Tan#C45280-KH

WW2 Packs

1944/1945 Backpacks

-LOWER PACK- we have some original packs in excellent like new condition ! Bound to go quickly. Just arrived from Europe. $32. #MISC1051

-TOP PACK- we have some inbound from Europe at this time. Should be in soon. -Strap assemblies to assemble the packs coming in too-inquire.

Digital Winter Camouflage Tactical Suit= Very effective digital snow pattern with mottled profile which works particularly well when everthing around you is not perfectly white with snow. The arms and legs can be unzipped so you can customize your suit to your needs. This can be worn over your clothing. Sizes: Large, XL, 2XL $115. # MISC796

Snow Camo Rucksack Covers 2 options- British *XL cover for 'Bergen' or large heavy pack,* $16.95 #MISC1062

Also- *Small backpack cover:* $12. #MISC1063 unissued surplus small cover XL cover

WW2/Korean War Medic Pouch with Original Bandage New mnfr. WW2 medic pouch with 'Original' gauze pack containing 2 units of gauze. Option of KHAKI pouch or OLIVE DRAB pouch. Khaki Medic Pouch $18.95 #MISC1056-KH Olive Medic Pouch $18.95 #MISC1056-OD

New

Splinter Zelt

Oak Zelt

German Zeltbahns available in SPINTER & OAK camouflage. Used as ponchos & for making troop tents when soldiers combined them together using the buttoned edges fastened together. Also good as tarp or ground cloth, but the camo patterns are excellent for concealment !

SPLINTER Zelts $59.95 #MISC626
OAK Zelts $64.95#MISC1061

WW2 style US Roughout Boots in stock $75. #BOOT-02 New Sizes: 10,11,12,13"

82nd Airborne Stencil $14.95 #MISC929 10x8" (Metal)

Prices Subject to Change w/o Notice. See Web Site for Current Pricing

Holsters ? See our Web SIte for hundreds! ... and Gun Parts galore

U.S. Trench Knife with heft of solid brass handle and 6.5 inch blade. A real mauler for Trench Warfare! New $39. #BAY333

Metal Afrikakorp stencil. 10"x7". $15. #MISC643

More stencils on Web Site !

PANZERFAUST 30 Meter Launcher w/Rocket 'Gretchen Model'...full sized antitank weapon of the early years of WW2. New, Inert. Made from Steel. Trigger unit cocks' and button trigger clicks. Very limited. $180. #RL022

PANZERFAUST 60 Meter Launcher & Rocket...Tank Terror and very appropriate for the concern that Allied Tank crews had for these. Full size and all steel. Inert. $180. #RL002

New

*These units are olive drab green *Paint scheme may differ from that shown

German Splinter Camouflage Poncho Heavy duty adult size poncho with one of the classic camouflage schemes of WW2. Perfect for staying under the radar in the forest, stalking game, and 'cool' enough for civilian wear in public. Nice sizable hood with cinching cords. $29.95 #MISC1021

USN / USMC warm weather flight jacket of the 1930s & 1940s. Khaki jacket with two lower pockets USN logo and leather left breast tag with USN wings emblem. Sizes Med.,Lg, XL,2XL. $75. #JKT05

Very Limited

New

Comfortable & Sporty!

British WW2 Era Cigarettes Yes.... Original pack of Cigarettes out of storage in Belgium. We've only obtained these twice in the past 25 years. Pack contains 10 unfiltered British cigarettes in one of the popular brands that allied troops had at their disposal in wartime Europe. Excellent condition. Must be 21 or older to order. Not for consumption-collectible only. Very Limited ! $39.95 #MISC1059

Heavy Duty & Rugged!

USMC 'Frog' Camo Shirt as used by Ex Legionaires working securityat the Indochina rubber plantations in the 60s/70s. An adation of the French Foreign Legion green paratroop shirt. Sizes Med., Large, Extra Lg. $62.95 #SHIRT-01

German WW1 Pioneers & Sappers bayonet & scabbard. Long Bayonet with very aggressive sawteeth for the 98 Mauser of WW1. A rare bayonet with a blade 20-1/4 inches. New. $75. #BAY301

1898 'Pioneer' Mauser Bayonet

MauserK98 Bayonet New. w/ wood grips & scab. $54.95 #BAY165

MauserK98 Bayonet with scab. With Bakelite style mottled grips. New $44.95 #BAY254

Rockets have German lables on them.

USMC Korean War Long Sleeve Shirt - herringbone olive drab combat shirt with 2 open hip pockets, and left breast pocket with USMC cartouche. A great work shirt . Sizes Med., Lg.,XL,2XL $55. #SHIRT-03 New

WW2 Panzerfaust Klein Launcher

STEEL LAUNCHER WITH INERT ROCKET & TRIGGER SIGHT WITH COCKING MECHANISM. REPLICA OF THE FIRST PANZERFAUST USED BY THE 3RD REICH IN NORTH AFRICA AND EUROPE. NEW.

$165. #MISC684

Full Size

Non-Firing

New

New

U.S. M1A1 Carbine Famous Paratrooper carbine designed for compact portability by airborne troops and found favor throughout the infantry. Full Size with folding stock assy., detachable mag, charging handle and trigger that funtion. Gun is non firing, for display or reenacting. $244.95 #REP11

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"TOWARDS THE HOME FIRES," by Robert Taylor; © Military Gallery www.militarygallery.com

How a Dutch farm family sheltered a downed American fighter pilot from the Nazis and formed a life-long bond.

Antiaircraft tracers screamed past Jim Frolking's P-51 Mustang as he flew over the coast of occupied Holland, heading back to England after escorting a bombing run. He tried to evade the flak, but soon heard a round hit his tail. He could deal with the loss of hydraulic pressure he saw on his gauge, but he had bigger problems as he felt the stick go slack. With the control cables severed, Frolking had no choice but to undo his harness, release the canopy and ditch the fighter.

His group had recently begun flying the North American P-51 instead of the twin-engine Lockheed P-38 Lightning and this was only Frolking's second mission in the new plane. He liked the Lightning, "the sweetest airplane ever made." The aircraft's twin-boom configuration meant that if one engine "went bad, you had another one to fly." But Frolking felt comfortable in the Mustang, which was well-suited for the long-range, high-altitude escort missions needed to win the war.

The longest, and last, mission for James Edward Frolking would be his most memorable. His 51st combat mission had started well on October 7, 1944. Assigned to the 436th Fighter Squadron of the 479th Fighter Group, the 20-year-old son of a World War I machine-gunner from Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and his squadron mates would be escorting heavy bombers that day to Most, Czechoslovakia (*Brüx*, in German). The expected flight time was up to seven hours to and from the target, just 43 miles northwest of Prague.

James Edward Frolking Collection / Library of Congress

ABOVE: North American P-51 Mustang fighters of the 479th Fighter Group fly over the estuary town of Maldon in Essex, England, in "Towards The Home Fires," by Robert Taylor. INSET: Pilot James Frolking, a veteran of air combat over Europe, failed to return to base after a mission in October 1944, embarking on an odyssey that involved the kindness of a Dutch farm family.

Frolking, a 1st lieutenant by this time, had amassed about 200 combat flight hours since D-Day, when he flew top-cover missions for Allied vessels carrying troops and supplies to the Normandy beaches. "It appeared you could step from one ship to another all the way from England to France," he recalled

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American Air Museum in Britain / Imperial War Museum

A trio of P-51 Mustang fighters fly over Nazi-occupied Europe. First Lieutenant James Frolking flew one of these with the 479th Fighter Group and was shot down over occupied Holland in October 1944. He was sheltered on a farm for about a month until the Dutch Underground got him to safety.

after the war.

The Brux mission's fighters got airborne at 0915 hours, launching from Wattisham Airfield in the Suffolk countryside near Ipswich. Because Frolking's squadron was known as the Bison gang, his call sign was "Bison 58." That day he was part of Bison Blue Flight led by his friend and squadron mate, 1st Lt. Victor Wolski.

After rendezvousing with the bombers near the target area, 30-40 Messerschmitt Me-109 fighters approached from below. As Frolking and his squadron released their underwing fuel tanks and dove on the enemy interceptors. Most of the Luftwaffe fighters escaped into low-level clouds.

In the heat of the chase, Frolking and Wolski became separated from the squadron. Running low on fuel, they landed at the newly established British airfield in Antwerp, Belgium, before crossing the North Sea. With internal tanks topped off, they departed together on a direct heading of 310 degrees for Wattisham Airfield.

They were at 5,000 feet over the Dutch coast when the antiaircraft fire found them. Frolking started evasive maneuvers, but took a hit to the tail. The instrument panel's hydraulic pressure gauge quickly dipped to zero. At first, Frolking thought little of it. The leak would simply mean he would have to manually crank down the plane's landing gear on approach to Wattisham.

Soon, though, things started to unravel. The right rudder pedal dropped to the floor as Frolking noticed its limp control cable. Then all aileron/elevator authority was lost—his control cables were severed, rendering both the rudder pedals and the stick useless.

Frolking bailed from his plane and yanked his D-ring. As his parachute floated earthward in slow motion, he noticed it was a cool fall day. He felt sick as he watched his Mustang veer out of control, then explode on impact. But there was no time to wallow in self-pity. He was alive because his training had kicked in.

As Frolking followed his plane into the sea, he released the parachute's suspension cables and unfastened the harness to keep from getting tangled. As he extended his legs, he found to his relief that the water was only chest deep. Fighter crews on over-water missions were outfitted with one-man dinghies. Frolking inflated his dinghy with its CO_2 cartridge, climbed in and established situational awareness.

He saw a sandbar with stacks of baled hay about 300 yards away and paddled to it. Wolski circled overhead watching Frolking, but there was nothing he could do but, in a gesture of undying devotion to a wingman in distress, swoop down and buzz his friend, rocking his wings. Frolking waved to his friend as the fighter sped by, hoping that help would soon be on the way.

Wolski used his radio to relay the position of his downed wingman to British Air Sea Rescue (ASR). But as he made his way back toward Wattisham over the North Sea, he found his plane had also been damaged. He was forced to bail and was soon picked up by ASR.

While an ASR boat had been dispatched for Frolking, the sun was setting by the time it arrived in the general vicinity and no sighting was made. As darkness fell, the ASR put the rescue attempt on hold for the evening.

Hoping for rescue, Frolking spent the night on the sandbar. He watched the stars shine brightly in the moonless sky, the serenity a stark contrast to the day's chaotic happenings.

Leaning back against one of the bales of hay, Frolking feared missing his rescuers by falling asleep, so he gulped down stimulant tablets pulled from his survival kit and lit a succession of cigarettes. Thoughts of his mother fretting over his fate flooded his mind since he knew that standard procedure in the case of missing airmen involved the sending of an advisory notice to next of kin.

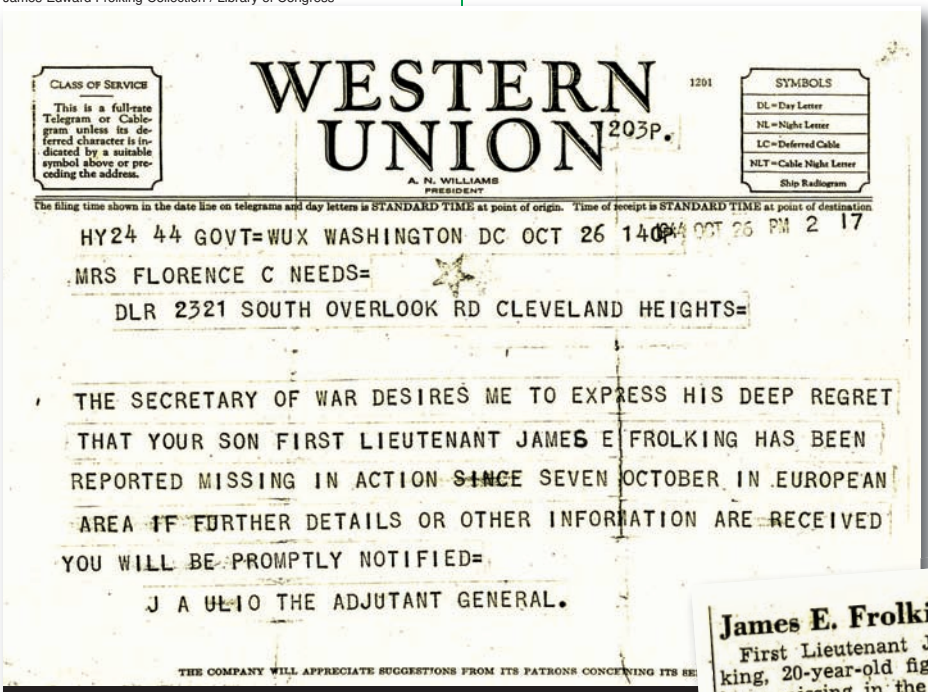
At the same time, not being able to enjoy the company of his squadron mates back at Wattisham was a deeply felt void. In the 57-page reminiscence that he wrote in 1999, "Down in the Dutch Islands," Frolking described the loneliness and how slowly the time passed on his first night away from base. "It's the guys I'll never forget," he said after the war, noting that the best part of his service was the camaraderie.

Some time in the night, Frolking spotted the lights of a ship at a considerable distance. Thinking it might be ASR, he quickly ignited a flare, but it jerked out of his grip and landed on the dinghy, burning a hole in it.

At dawn, a heavy fog shrouded the sandbar, but slowly burned off as the morning warmed. Assessing his predicament, he decided to leave the sandbar. He patched the dinghy and inflated it with a hand pump. Two porpoises escorted him part of the way as he paddled toward the nearest sizable landmass.

After a couple of hours, Frolking clambered out of his dinghy onto a dike where he

James Edward Frolking Collection / Library of Congress



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THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SE

James E. Frolking

First Lieutenant James E. Frolking, 20-year-old fighter pilot, has been missing in the European theater since October 7, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Needs, 2321 S. Overlook Rd., Cleveland Heights, said today.

Holder of the Air Medal, the pilot had recently been promoted from second lieutenant at his English Eighth Air Force station. An alumnus of Cleveland Heights High School, Lieutenant Frolking was employed by Ball Cooms & Co. before he entered the Air Force. He received his wings in November, 1943, at Williams Field, Ariz.

ABOVE: First Lieutenant James Frolking's family received this telegram from the War Department after he was shot down in the fall of 1944. RIGHT: His local newspaper also published an article regarding the missing pilot.

could see two civilian men talking. Frolking had trepidations about revealing himself, but he thought it was now or never.

He approached cautiously, not wanting to startle them, but the men knew immediately that he was a downed American airman who must have recently parachuted into the area. They did not speak English, but they led him to a nearby farmhouse where a family took him in and fed him. It was his first meal in a day and a half. Exhausted and relieved to be in friendly hands, he fell fast asleep.

The next day, the two men from the dike returned, and somehow Frolking and his helpers managed to communicate enough to where Frolking, with his map in hand, realized he was on the Dutch island of Noord (north) Beveland, a rural enclave dotted with farms. German soldiers roamed the island, so caution was his watchword. The good news was that intelligence reports shared earlier with Frolking's squadron indicated that Allied troops were gaining ground in their march from Belgium to the Netherlands.

Frolking's odyssey resumed that night when one of his helpers took him down a country lane, then motioned for Frolking to continue down the road. Frolking followed the instructions on good faith, eventually reaching the village of Kamperland. He felt it imprudent to knock on doors this late at night and chose to sleep under a hay wagon until daybreak.

A horse's whinny woke him early the next morning and he knocked on the back door of the nearest house. Frolking tried to communicate with the boy who answered using a printed card in the Dutch language from his survival kit. Baffled by the American at the door, the boy, Makail, went to fetch his parents. A few minutes later, the boy's father showed up with shaving cream on his face, quickly sized up the situation and invited Frolking into the house.

Frolking's new acquaintances were the van Hee family. The couple provided a meal and gave him the means to wash and shave so that he could feel, as he later put it, "somewhat presentable." Another man came to advise Frolking with a sheet printed in English that the Dutch Underground was working for his safe passage. Civilian clothes were supplied and Frolking handed over a photo of himself in civilian clothes. All American air crew carried such a photo for creating a fake ID.

The Dutch Underground had devised an elaborate system to help downed Allied airmen, and when night fell it was time to move again. This move entailed an hour-long bicycle ride to a prosperous farm in the village of Kats. Here Frolking met a local constable by the name of Willem "Wim" de Vor, a member of the Underground who spoke English. Wim explained that the farm belonged to Izak and Marie van der Maas, and that they would be putting him up until the Underground could repatriate him. Frolking was then invited into the farmhouse, where he met the couple that would be his hosts for roughly the next three weeks. Their five-year-old son, Huib (pronounced "Hibe") was in bed asleep.

Frolking spent his days in a windowless second-floor bedroom until dark when Huib went to bed. Izak and Marie did not want the boy to know about Frolking for fear he might inadvertently disclose the information to a playmate, potentially causing the cover to be blown. There would be harsh consequences if the Nazis found out that the van der Maas family was sheltering an American pilot.

Marie brought meals up to Frolking with a smile twice a day. It was usually potatoes, as that was his host's main crop. There were plenty of apples as well. Frolking especially liked Marie's *pannekoeken*, an ultra-thin pancake lathered in jam, rolled up and diced into bite-size slivers. Meat was a rarity. Tea usually accompanied the food.

Within a few days, Wim delivered an authentic-looking ID to Frolking. His alias was "Nico van der Maas," a purported cousin of Izak. To deter questioning of Frolking, the ID card cleverly listed the holder as "doofstom," meaning deaf and dumb.

After dark when Huib was asleep, Frolking would come downstairs for dinner. Wim often joined them. The four talked about

James Edward Frolking Collection

In 1987, Jim Frolking returned to the area of the Netherlands near the Noord Beveland dike where he came ashore on October 7, 1944. He is shown with members of the family that assisted him after his fighter was shot down by German ground fire. From left are Marie van Der Maas, Patty Frolking, Jim Frolking, and Huib van Der Maas.

Holland, America, flying, and the war. When electricity was not interrupted, they listened to BBC radio broadcasts, catching up on the latest war news. Frolking read the few English-language books in the house.

He later wrote that there were nine, but he could only remember *Main Street*, by Sinclair Lewis.

Things got dicey when the house cleaners were scheduled to come as part of a regular routine a few times a year. Rather than bring suspicion with a change in the appointment, Frolking spent five days at the home of Izak's mother and father in the adjoining village of Kortgene.

Though Frolking enjoyed his time with Izak's parents, he saw German soldiers for the first time from behind drapes of a second-floor window. Also, in a potentially worrying harbinger, when he returned to the farm in Kats, German troops meandered about the property. The enemy's proximity heightened Frolking's concerns about being discovered.

Near bedtime one night, it seemed his nightmares were about to come true when German officers came to the front door. But they were only looking to spend the night and Izak dared not refuse them. Frolking was alerted and made a mad dash from the house's sole bathroom up to his hiding place.

The Germans slept in the spare bedroom on the first floor, while directly above them upstairs Frolking did his best not to make a sound.

After about three weeks with the van der Maas family, the Underground was finally ready to transfer him to advancing Allied troops. Frolking was taken by rowboat to Zuid (south) Beveland. There he linked up with the Royal Canadian Dragoons. According to Frolking's written reminiscence, the first words spoken came from a trooper with the Dragoons' forward reconnaissance team, who remarked, "We find you guys in the oddest places!"

Frolking asked if he could go back to Kats to thank them for their hospitality, but the Dragoons would not allow it. Disappointed at not being able to express appreciation to his brave hosts but happy to be out of danger, Frolking was driven to Antwerp.

After a comprehensive interrogation Frolking signed a document that precluded him from revealing any information about his time being sheltered. Separately, the interrogating officer expedited a cablegram to Frolking's mother back in Cleveland Heights to advise that he was out of harm's way. Eleven days after the War Department telegram had arrived with "deep regret" about the status of her son as missing in action, Frolking's mother received the new message, which stated: "All well and safe. Please don't worry. Hope to see you soon. James E. Frolking."

Issued a Canadian uniform, he was off to take in the night scene in Antwerp, including dancing and a movie.

Arrangements were made the following day for Frolking to England. Downed airmen who had come into contact with members of European resistance groups were not permitted to fly more missions in the theater of operations because if downed again and captured, they might be coerced into revealing the identities of those who had previously assisted them. Frolking was flown back to the U.S., where the Army Air Forces assigned him as an instructor on Republic P-47 Thunderbolt fighters. In September 1945, not quite a year after his adventure in the Dutch Islands, Frolking's active-duty service ended.

But the story does not end there.

Frolking returned to Ohio and became a ticket agent at what is now Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. It was there that the thrill of the pylon heats of the National Air Race in the 1930s had inspired him to join the Army Air Forces as soon as he turned 18 in 1942.

He met fellow ticket agent Patty Lou Schoonover and they married in 1948. They started a family, moved to the Cleveland suburb of Shaker Heights, where they raised sons, James, Tod, and Stephen. Adjusting to civilian life also meant earning a degree with the help of the GI Bill at what is now Case Western Reserve University. In 1949, Frolking completed a management training program at a major Cleveland bank, followed by a nearly 40-year career as an executive at several of the area's savings and loans.

In the fall of 1960, the Frolkings had an unannounced visitor on their doorstep—a handsome 21-year-old who spoke with a Dutch accent. It was Huib van der Maas, the little boy who Frolking had never met or seen while sheltered in the van der Maas home. Participating in a 4-H Club farm study program in America's heartland, Huib wanted to be sure to track down the airman who his parents had helped to rescue.

In 1987, Frolking and his wife Patty traveled to the Netherlands for the first time after the war to link up with the van der Maas family and the other members of the resistance who had done so much to make Frolking's evasion and escape possible 43 years earlier. Izak died in the 1970s, but Marie was delighted to welcome Frolking back after

Continued on page 97

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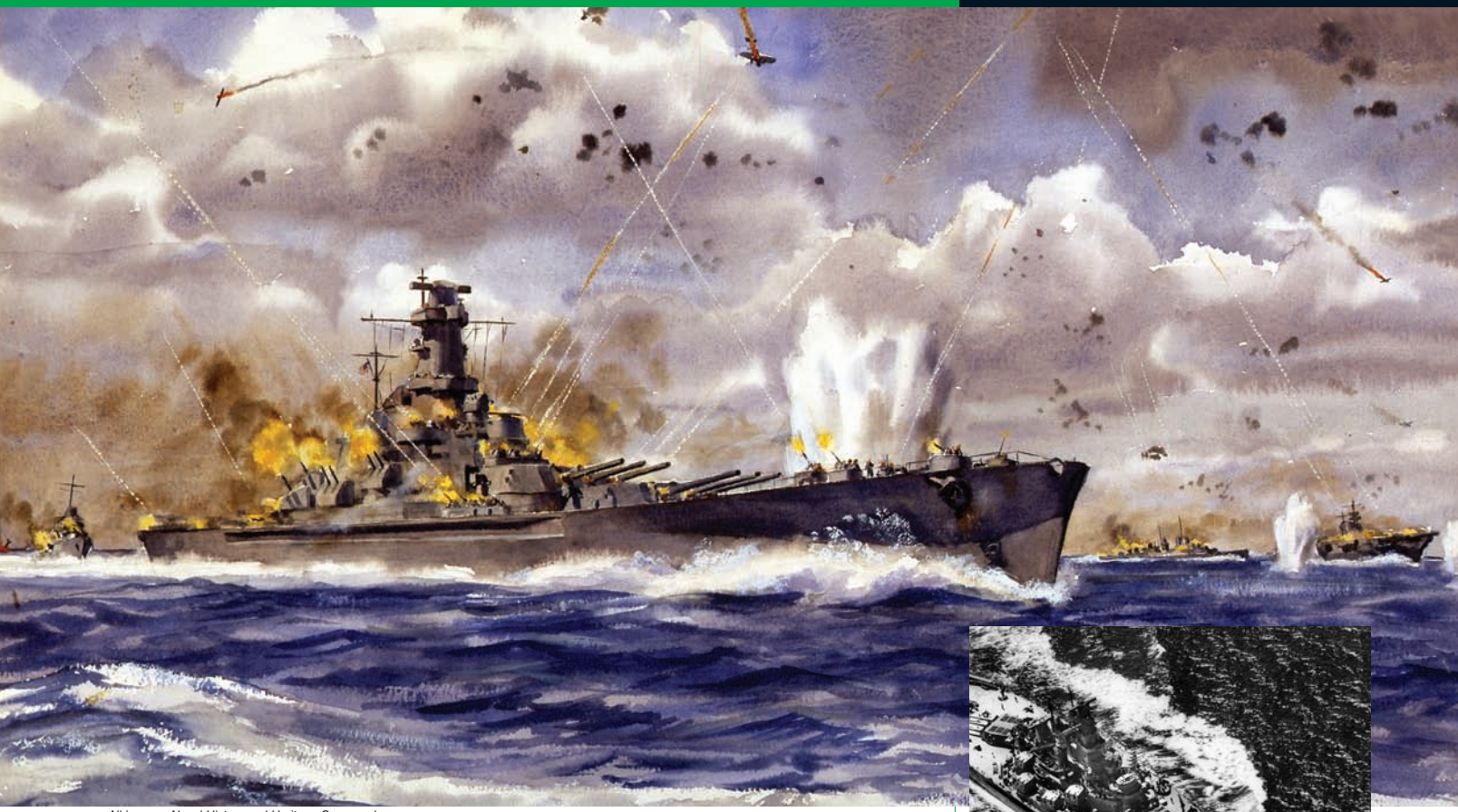

All images: Naval History and Heritage Command

Lesser known battleship took part in major Pacific campaigns, supported the invasions of Leyte, Luzon, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

Some of the 64 battleships built by the U.S. Navy in the 20th century, such as the iconic *Maine*, *Arizona*, and *Missouri*, have earned a place in history while most have long since faded into obscurity for all but their crews.

The USS *South Dakota* (BB-57) is part of this latter group—a ship that never made headlines, but whose sailors and officers did their duty from 1942 until the end of the war, adding to the collective effort that eventually brought victory for the Allies.

In 1936, upon hearing of Japan withdrawing from the terms of the 1931 Naval Limitation Treaty, the Navy decided to use the expansion clause in the treaty and design three new classes of battleship averaging 45,000 tons. This resulted in the North Carolina-class, the South Dakota-class, and the Iowa-class.

South Dakota, the lead ship in her class, was built at the New York Shipbuilding Corporation and launched on June 7, 1941. At 45,000 tons displacement fully loaded and 680 feet long, she wasn't the largest of the new battleships, but her main armament of nine 16-inch, .45-caliber Mark 6 guns in three turrets was formidable. She could fire nine tons of heavy shells at a target 37,000 yards away, far beyond the visible horizon. She was built for speed and long-distance hitting power.

South Dakota was fitted with SK air search and SD surface search radar, giving her a big advantage over Japanese battleships, which did not yet have radar. In addition, she carried the Mark 3 fire control system for her main batteries and the Mark 4 for her secondary guns.

The new fast battleships were considered "a tremendous leap forward in technology, orders of magnitude over the old battleships, even those that had been modernized." In addition to their speed and modern fire control, they used a third less fuel than the pre-war battleships.

ABOVE: The battleship USS *South Dakota* fires at attacking Japanese aircraft in the Battle of Santa Cruz in a painting by U.S. Navy combat artist Dwight Shepler. INSET: The USS *South Dakota* underway on her shakedown cruise in June 1942.

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest King ordered the new ship to the Pacific to support the navy and Marines on Guadalcanal on August 14, 1942. Rear Adm. Willis "Ching" Lee commanded Battleship Division 6 (BatDiv 6), which consisted of his flagship *South Dakota* and the USS *Washington*. In concert with the antiaircraft light cruiser USS *Juneau*, *South Dakota* arrived at Tongatabu on the morning of September 6. Bound for

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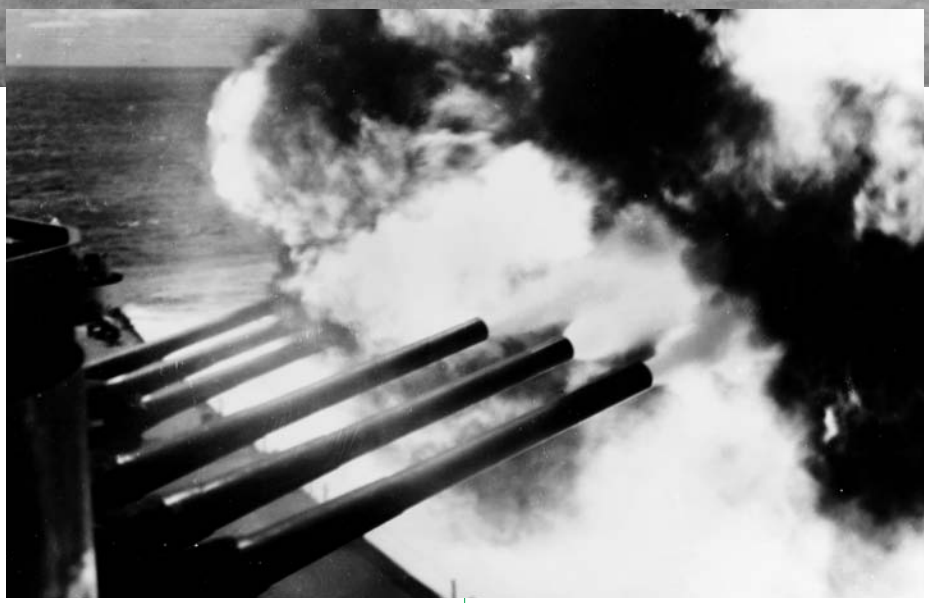


Bound for the Solomons, the ships weighed anchor and left port, passing the cruiser USS *Atlanta*, sister of *Juneau*, escorting the carrier USS *Saratoga*, damaged by the Japanese submarine I-26 on August 31.

But the new battleship was back at Tongatabu in less than four hours. Relying on outdated charts, Gatch had run aground on a coral reef, tearing an 18-inch gash the length of her hull. She was ordered back to Pearl Harbor with the *Atlanta* and *Saratoga* for repairs. *South Dakota* would be out of action for at least three weeks, a serious blow to the navy's plans for the fast battleships.

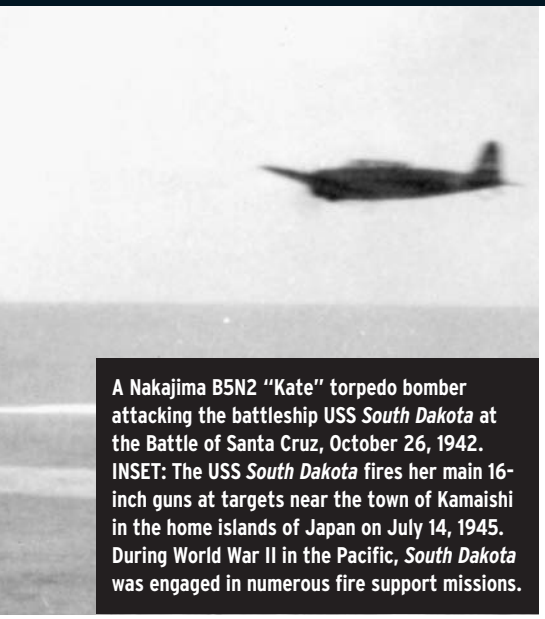
She finally arrived off Guadalcanal in October as part of Task Force 16 under Adm. William F. Halsey. *South Dakota*'s first fight against the Japanese was at the savage Battle of Santa Cruz on October 26. While her main guns did not participate, the dense forest of *South Dakota*'s antiaircraft guns dealt heavy losses to Japanese dive and torpedo bombers attacking the carrier *Enterprise*. Kate torpedo bombers missed *South Dakota*, but Val dive bombers put one bomb on the ship's forward turret which failed to penetrate. Gatch was wounded while directing the ship. The bomb tore deep gouges into two of the guns of Number 2 turret, making them unusable until replaced.

Another destroyer, the *Smith*, was struck on her foredeck by a damaged Kate, starting a huge blaze. Her skipper, Lt.-Com. Hunter Wood, directed his burning ship in behind *South Dakota*, then moving at full speed toward the *Enterprise*. The spray from the big battleship's wake doused the flames.

The *Enterprise* was damaged and the *Hornet*, beyond repair, was intentionally sunk. While en route to Nouméa, New Caledonia, with the rest of TF 16, a Japanese submarine caused several ships to take evasive action on October 27 and, in the confusion, *South Dakota* and the destroyer *Mahan* collided. While the *Mahan* had to return to Hawaii for a new bow, *South Dakota*'s repairs at Nouméa were completed on November 6.

Halsey ordered *South Dakota* to join *Washington*, the heavy cruiser *Northampton*, and nine destroyers to stay with *Enterprise*, now the lone carrier in the southwest Pacific. They steamed toward Guadalcanal to head off a predicted bombardment of Henderson Field. Lee was going to face Adm. Nobutake Kondo's force comprising the battleship *Kirishima*, two heavy cruisers, and a destroyer screen. Japanese search planes spotted the task group but identified them as cruisers and destroyers. Kondo, who was expecting battleships, was confused until the two fleets discovered each other that night off Savo Island.

Washington and *South Dakota* had little experience with their main batteries and almost no training for night fighting. *Washington* fired at 2317 hours on November 14, using her fire control radar. *South Dakota* followed suit, targeting two of Kondo's destroyers. The battleship's gunners claimed to have sunk both enemy ships, but neither was seriously hit. In the early part of the action, *South Dakota* was hampered because two of her forward guns were still out of commission. At 2330, her luck took a turn for the worst. A short in her main electrical panel cut off the radar and most of her fire control, leaving her virtually blind. She was silhouetted by two burning American destroyers, making her visible to Kondo's heavy ships.



A Nakajima B5N2 "Kate" torpedo bomber attacking the battleship USS *South Dakota* at the Battle of Santa Cruz, October 26, 1942. INSET: The USS *South Dakota* fires her main 16-inch guns at targets near the town of Kamaishi in the home islands of Japan on July 14, 1945. During World War II in the Pacific, *South Dakota* was engaged in numerous fire support missions.

At 2340 hours, she fired her aft main guns at two of Kondo's destroyers. The first three-gun salvo set fire to the Kingfisher search planes on the quarterdeck. The second salvo blew the blazing planes overboard. Again her electrical system was disabled by shock, leaving her gunners blind for five minutes. Just before midnight, the repaired radar picked up the approaching *Kirishima* and two cruisers.

Following Japanese night doctrine, Kondo fired several torpedoes at the battleship, but they all missed. *South Dakota* was closely engaged with the Japanese, only 5,000 yards away. She received 26 hits from the cruisers' 8-inch guns and one 14-inch hit from *Kirishima*.

While *South Dakota* acted as Kondo's whipping boy, *Washington* was unmolested. She concentrated salvos on *Kirishima*. *South Dakota*, despite having only part of her main battery functioning and a balky radar, managed to hit one Japanese cruiser and hit *Kirishima*.

Kirishima was fatally damaged by the 16-inch shells, and Kondo withdrew after firing more torpedoes. Lee ordered Gatch to retire at high speed. The battleship had sustained heavy damage. Forty crewmen were dead and 140 were wounded. *South Dakota* received the Navy Unit Commendation for the Second Battle of Guadalcanal. Japanese destroyers sank *Kirishima*.

At Nouméa, *South Dakota* tied up alongside the repair ship *Prometheus*, but she wouldn't return to the Solomons. By November 29, she was bound for the Panama Canal and New York for Atlantic deployment. At Brooklyn Navy Yard, she went into drydock for repairs and refit. Interestingly, she was lauded in the press as the ship that won the naval battle of Guadalcanal. This was when she was given the code name "Battleship X" as a security measure.

In early 1943, Captain Gatch was relieved by Captain Lyndee McCormick. *South Dakota* was sent to the North Atlantic along with her sister, *Alabama*, and the carrier *Ranger* to protect arctic convoys queuing to Murmansk.

For three months, in concert with Royal Navy warships, *South Dakota* provided escort for Murmansk convoys. In August, she returned to Norfolk. As part of Battleship Division 9 under Admiral Edward Hanson, *South Dakota* again sailed for the Pacific, arriving at Fiji in November. She took part in the pre-invasion bombardment of Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. After Tarawa fell, *South Dakota* and BatDiv 9 were again under Admiral Lee. With four other battleships, she bombarded Nauru, which fell with little opposition. Then it was on to the Marshall Islands for Operation Flintlock, the largest combined amphibious, naval, and air assault in history.

The United States' Fifth and Third Fleets under Adm. Raymond Spruance boasted four task groups consisting of 12 fleet and light carriers, eight battleships, 20 cruisers, 100 destroyers, almost 1,000 planes, one Marine division, and one army division. The objectives were the islands of Kwajalein, Roi-Namur, Majuro, Enewetak, Jaluit, and Mili.

South Dakota was at last part of a major campaign, and her crew was determined to put the bad luck behind them.

The huge Japanese anchorage at Truk in the Carolines was the next U.S. Navy target. Battleships and naval aviation bombarded the islands and ships at Truk, sinking and damaging a large portion of the Japanese support fleet. *South Dakota* and two other battleships were tasked with bombarding the island of Pohnpei in late April. Now part of a task group of nine battleships and four heavy cruisers, *South Dakota* escorted aircraft carriers during the invasion of the Marianas.

After Admirals Lee and Marc Mitscher, who commanded the carrier task force, conferred, they had the battleships stay with the carriers and add their radar and antiaircraft support to protect against air attack. On June

19, Lee's battleships were circling in the Philippine Sea, awaiting a Japanese air strike. *South Dakota*'s radar was the first to spot the incoming force. She received one bomb hit, tearing a 12-foot hole in the steel deck. Through the next day, Lee's ships handled the air attacks while Mitscher's carrier planes mauled the Japanese.

After raids on Formosa to Okinawa, *South Dakota* joined Task Force 34 under Rear Adm. Forrest Sherman. In the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the fleet supported landings on the Philippine island of Leyte. *South Dakota* was directed northward, away from the landing beaches where Japanese surface forces threatened to disrupt operations, to protect carriers chasing a Japanese decoy force.

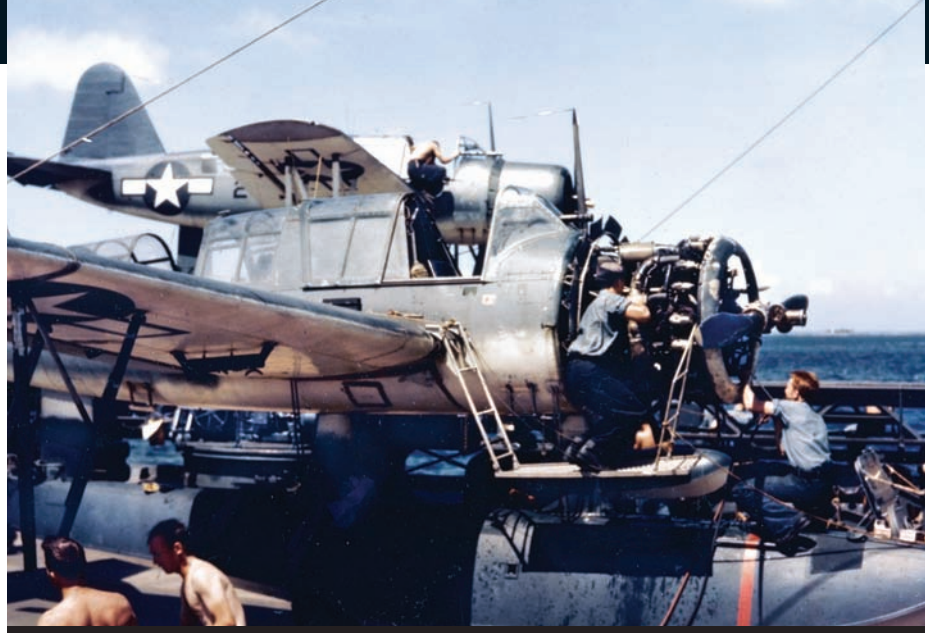
South Dakota provided fire for the troops on Leyte on November 4 and on Luzon the next week. While most of her non-combat time was spent refueling destroyers, more was in store for Battleship X. When Spruance took command of the Fifth Fleet, the fast carriers and battleships still under Lee were designated Task Force 58.

During the landings on Iwo Jima, the battleships were sent north to bombard targets in the home islands of Japan, but bad weather canceled numerous operations. *South Dakota* supported strikes and bombardments on southern Kyushu and the naval base at Kure, destroying airfields and ships.

South Dakota and the other battleships refueled at Ulithi and sortied to begin the first bombardments of Okinawa for landings in April. The war was creeping ever closer to Japan. *South Dakota*'s run of bad luck seemed to have been left behind, but there would be little argument that her career had more than its share of bad luck. But luck can change. It did on a day in May 1945.

Captain Charles Bowers "Swede" Momsen was best known as a submarine driver, but his restless drive had earned him a special command, USS *South Dakota*.

During the Okinawa campaign, the was cycling from bombardment assignments on southern Okinawa and replenishment offshore. On May 6, Momsen watched from his bridge while *South Dakota*'s nine 16-inch rifles rained shells on the Japanese defenders. When ammunition was low, he ordered the ship offshore to replenish. He waited as the ammunition ship *Rangle* tied up alongside



A pair of Vought OS2U Kingfisher observation aircraft undergo engine overhauls during basic maintenance aboard the battleship USS *South Dakota*.

and began hoisting shells and powder canisters into chutes that led deep into the ship's magazines. All was going well when suddenly a cloud of dirty yellow smoke erupted from the vents at the base of Turret Number 2. Suddenly, there was a deep roar and a single muffled boom. *South Dakota*'s 45,000-ton hull shook.

Momsen realized the magazines were exploding. Hundreds of tons of high-explosive were potentially turning his ship into a crematorium. Without a moment's pause, he slapped the 1/MC intercom to the damage control station. "Flood the magazines for number two turret!"

All Momsen could do was wait. Every other vessel nearby was running as far as possible from the doomed battlewagon. The ship shuddered as a second explosion shook her sturdy hull, followed by three more. It was terrifying to feel the heavy battleship rock violently with each muffled boom deep in the hull.

Just then, Lee reached the bridge, his eyes wide. "For Christ's sake, Swede," he roared. "What in the hell is happening?"

A quartermaster at his post at the helm recalled the exchange. Momsen did not take his eyes off the clouds of yellow smoke pulsing from the fore turret as he replied, "Admiral, I believe the forward magazines are exploding."

No stranger to danger in combat, Lee stared at the tall captain. "Good God, man, what are you doing about it?"

"I have ordered the magazines flooded." Momsen's voice was calm, level, and clear.

"Well, is it being done?" Lee asked.

Momsen never stopped looking at the hulking turret. "I hope so, Admiral. But I'm not going to call them now to find out. Anyway, we'll know soon enough." Then he looked up and pointed his finger to the sky. "If they are not, that's where we will be in about 30 seconds."

Actually, several minutes after the first explosion, the rumbling subsided. The battleship stopped shuddering. Soon the normal routine of running the ship took over again. But it had been close.

When all was again quiet, Momsen pondered the cause. How could the routine loading of ammunition lead to the annihilation of a powerful battleship? Three men were dead, and eight more fatally wounded from fire and severe concussion. Another 24 were injured.

Momsen, with his intuitive engineer's mind, examined the possible causes. He was aware that nitrocellulose propellant was susceptible to ignition by spark. But the silk bags that tightly bound the cordite were supposedly immune from generating a spark. He wondered about the stainless steel canisters. They were 16 inches in diameter, a foot long, and contained one propellant bag. Normally used only for transporting the propellant, they were opened and discarded when the powder bags were sent up the hoist to the turret.

One possibility entered Momsen's mind. The silk bags could shift inside the canisters, making them easier to remove before putting

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them on the hoist. Momsen was also an experienced chemist, having worked with exotic gases during his trials with early breathing and diving tests. Heat and friction could generate a static charge. This seemed plausible as he wrote up his report and opinions on the accident. He theorized that the transport of the canisters from man to man shifted the silk bags, creating friction and generating static electricity. But how to prove it? Momsen knew he had a hard fight ahead of him to convince the Navy Department, and specifically the Bureau of Ordnance (BuOrd), that the battleships were floating powder kegs.

Now, armed with this evidence, Momsen inquired about other incidents of accidental explosions on other battleships. He did not concern himself with destroyers or cruisers since, in most cases, they utilized shells with larger brass cartridges rather than silk powder bags of nitrocellulose cordite propellant. He was determined to find out how the accident happened and, more importantly, how to prevent it from happening again.

In late May, Lee was sent to the East Coast to head an investigation to find and test defenses against kamikaze attacks. Momsen waited until a reply arrived from BuOrd. They had considered his theories and flatly refuted them. Thousands of powder bags had been used in the fleet for years. It was impossible for a spark to be generated, and it certainly couldn't ignite an explosion. In short, Momsen was out of his mind.

Undeterred, Swede pressed on. He gathered support from sympathetic officers and forced BuOrd to reconsider. He was on familiar ground. This was not the first time he had encountered BuOrd's intransigence. Problems with the Mark 14 torpedo had come first. It had been Momsen's tenacity and brilliance that helped favorably resolve that issue, but the experience had earned him no friends at BuOrd. Now, 18 months later, the audacious former submariner was again backing BuOrd into a corner. There is little doubt that they were still smarting from the Mark 14 debacle, and having the unconventional Momsen come up with a "crackpot" theory of the silk powder bags exploding from friction and static electricity was absurd and insulting.

But true to his nature, the redoubtable Momsen did not give up. He gathered enough clout, in the form of Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest J. King, to force BuOrd to conduct a month-long series of tests to find out if his theory had any validity. At the Pearl Harbor Ammunition Depot, officers and engineers ran several tests in which the metal canisters containing the silk powder bags were moved and transported. Days and weeks went by, and with each test no spark was created. The smug smiles on the faces of the BuOrd officials widened. Then, on the very last day, when it appeared Momsen had been wrong, one canister was being moved in accordance with conditions in a battleship's magazine. A spark suddenly ignited the test powder. It happened exactly as Swede Momsen predicted.

An antiaircraft gun crew aboard the USS *South Dakota* services its 1.1-inch (.75-caliber) weapon during training. The 1.1-inch gun was prone to jam and proved unpopular with its crews during the Pacific War.

BuOrd had no choice but to accept the truth. It was determined that the friction between the metal canister and the bag could generate a charge of static electricity strong enough to cause the powder to burn.

The temptation to say "I told you so" had to have boiled in Momsen, but that was not in his nature. Having helped avert more deaths and potential disasters, he resumed his duties.

There were, of course, more explosions on American battleships, the most famous being the April 1989 explosion in USS *Iowa*'s Number 2 turret during training exercises. While the navy originally claimed that a disgruntled sailor deliberately set the explosion, a second independent investigation showed that poor training of the turret crews and old powder from the 1930s were the culprits. The old bags had been improperly stored and were highly volatile. It is likely that Swede Momsen, had he been alive, would have recognized the cause far earlier than the first investigative board.

As for USS *South Dakota*, her narrow brush with annihilation required her to sail to Ulithi for repairs. She entered the Auxiliary Floating Drydock ABSD-3 for inspection, which revealed that her propellor shafts and screws were pitted and required replacement or repair. This was done by May 27, and she was sent for assignment for antiaircraft training and, surprisingly, an anti-submarine drill with two destroyers. After this, she returned to Leyte Gulf as part of Task Group 38.1 as the flagship of Rear Admiral John F. Shafroth. The antiaircraft artillery training was in anticipation of what were sure to be relentless kamikaze attacks during the planned November invasion of Kyushu, the southernmost home island of Japan.

South Dakota, along with battleships Indiana and Massachusetts, two heavy cruisers, and nine destroyers, were to shell the Kamaishi Steel Works on Kyushu. The task group then provided antiaircraft artillery support for the carriers launching air strikes on Honshu and Hokkaido. During late July, she worked in concert with Royal Navy ships, including the old warhorse HMS *King*

Continued on page 97

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Commando Team Delays German effort to Produce an Atomic Bomb with Daring Raid on Norwegian Heavy Water Facility.

On an overcast February night in 1943, nine British-trained commandos worked their way down the icy slope of a ravine in southern Norway. In addition to skis and packs, each man carried chloroform to silently disable any guards he came across. The wind was blowing in strong gusts.

At the bottom of the ravine, hidden in the darkness, the men could see the lights of the factory above them, a bridge over the river, even the tiny silhouettes of German guards. They crossed the Mana River at a ford that had been located earlier, slipping occasionally on ice that was hidden below the surface of the water. Once across, they started up the other side of the ravine, finally reaching an unguarded railroad track, which they followed to massive metal gates. Covered by the sounds of the factory, one of the commandos snipped the lock on the gates, and they were in.

Four of the men took positions on guard just inside the gate, with a fifth man further inside the factory. The remaining four men split into two pairs, each party carrying explosives and pre-cut fuses.

The commandos had infiltrated the Vemork chemical plant of the Norsk Hydro Company, the only facility in Europe producing heavy water (deuterium oxide), a "neutron moderator" that enhances nuclear reactions. Deuterium oxide was essential to the production of an atomic bomb, a project Germany had been working on quietly since 1939.

Prior to their occupation by the Germans on April 9, 1940, the Norwegian government

ABOVE: A 1949 photo of the Norse Hydroelectric plant near Vemork, Norway. During the war, it produced "heavy water" for the German nuclear program and was a target of sabotage by the Allies. INSET: Norwegian Major Leif Tronstad was also a chemistry professor and researcher. Tronstad assisted with the design of the Norsk Hydro facility and later participated in the planning for the Allied Commando attack of 1943.

contacted French military intelligence for the removal of the plant's total inventory of heavy water, about 408 pounds. It was first shipped to Oslo, then to Scotland and, finally, to France. When Germany invaded France a month later the heavy water, along with some scientists, was hurriedly moved from France to England.

For now heavy water had been kept out of German hands—out of the Nazi atomic bomb project—but the plant remained and

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was still functioning. It had to be destroyed.

On October 19, 1942, a four-man team of Norwegian commandos, trained by Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE), gathered in London to plan an attack on the plant. Maj. Leif Tronstad, a chemistry professor in civilian life, planned the attack and the proposed sabotage. The Norwegians chosen for the mission were people local to the area and with extensive outdoors experience. SOE nonetheless put them through added outdoor training in Scotland, where they were also trained for operations in occupied territory, sabotage, radio communications, and "irregular warfare." At first, the team leader alone was briefed on the proposed mission while the other three men then involved were led to believe they were preparing for a training mission with the Norwegian resistance codenamed Operation Grouse.

After two failed attempts—one due to severe weather and the other an airplane engine problem—the Grouse team was finally parachuted into Norway on October 18, 1942.

"We ended up in rough terrain, in boulders and rocky mountain slopes," Claus Helberg, a member of the commando team, later wrote. "But all four of us plus our 12 containers with food, equipment, weapons, and ammunition landed nicely. Even our radio transmitter seemed to have survived the rocky landing."

They were in Norway, but continuing harsh weather meant the drop zone was moved 60 miles from where it was originally planned.

Once on the ground, the other three members of the assault team were told the real aim of the mission: they were to hit the plant at Vemork, destroy whatever heavy water was in the plant, and do as much damage to the facility as they could.

The men then gathered the supplies and equipment that had been dropped with them. It took them two days to find everything, and on their third night they began hiking east toward the plant carrying what they could. They hid the rest of their supplies. That night the weather switched to snow, but the snow on the ground remained bad for skiing. Every day was a struggle as they each had to carry half their equipment ahead, then doubled back to get the other half.

"On good snow, an experienced skier would have covered that distance in a day or so," Helberg wrote. It would take the commandos more than two weeks.

This photo depicts several of the true 'Heroes of Telemark," who carried out the Commando raid against the Norse Hydro facility in 1943. These individuals of the Gunnerside team, photographed in London, include Fredrik Kayser and Joachim Ronneberg on the front row and Hans Storhaug, Kasper Idland, and Birger Stromsheim behind, left to right.

Near the plant, the commando team took refuge in an abandoned cabin to wait for the British engineers to be brought in by glider to do the actual demolitions. The commandos also contacted local Allied sympathizers who provided news and some needed supplies.

"We were to find a good landing site for two British gliders," Helberg wrote, "[and] reconnoiter the plant in advance." They found a suitable site for glider landings near the Skodal Marshes.

The German military had successfully used an airborne attack force, paratrooper, and gliders, as early as the Battle of France in 1940; their success was quickly copied by Britain with Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordering the development of a 5,000-man parachute and air attack unit. During planning for this force, it was quickly decided that gliders would be important components for moving men and heavy equipment.

Tested in November 1940, Britain's first military glider, the Hotspur, was only able to carry eight soldiers. In February 1941, the RAF put in an initial order of 400 for the Horsa glider, which had a capacity of 30 troops. The first prototype was tested and approved in September, going into production using woodworking facilities that would not have to be diverted from other wartime uses.

The Horsa was first used in this ill-fated mission to drop Royal Engineers into Norway dubbed Operation Freshman. On November 19, the Royal Engineers left the RAF Skitten station in Scotland aboard two Airspeed Horsa gliders, each towed by Handley Page Halifax bombers. Each glider carried two pilots and 15 Royal Engineers of the 9th Field Company, 1st British Airborne Division. Once the planes were over Norway, weather conditions worsened with severely limited visibility, and one of the Halifax bombers crashed into a mountain dragging its glider with it.

The other Halifax arrived at the area but could not find the landing zone.The bomber pilot eventually aborted the mission and headed for home. Heavy turbulence caused the tow rope to break and the second Horsa crash landed not far from the first glider.

Twenty-three survivors from the two crashes were captured and turned over to the Gestapo. They were interrogated, tortured, and eventually executed under Hitler's infamous Commando Order—issued a day before the original group of Norwegian commandos had landed. That order specified that all Allied commandos captured by German forces would be killed at once without trial, even if

they were in uniform or tried to surrender.

When the four-man Grouse team received the news of the crashes via radio, they moved north to a second cabin hideout to await further orders. The first cabin had been only three miles from a German camp. Now they were stuck in the mountains to survive as best they could, while also dealing with German forces that were on high alert after the plane and glider crashes and were searching local villages for survivors.

For two weeks the commandos moved further into the mountains, surviving on rationed oats, margarine, sugar, and Iceland moss that they pulled from beneath the snow. On Christmas Eve one member of the party killed a reindeer, and the men celebrated the holiday with fresh meat. For the next two months, the men survived on reindeer meat.

Defenses at the Vemork plant had also been stiffened, with double the number German guards brought in to replace the Austrians who had been sentries at the facility. All were guarding the single 246-foot bridge that spanned the 660-foot-deep ravine in front of the plant, which the German command considered the only access. They further considered the ravine to be uncrossable by any other means. Additional mines and floodlights were also installed.

Finally, during Operation Gunnerside on February 16, 1943, three months after the disastrous bomber and glider mission, a second team of six Norwegian commandos was parachuted into Norway about 30 miles north of the original "Grouse" group, now referred to as the "Swallow team." The bomber pilot was again unable to find the designated drop zone, and shortly after the commandos plummeted to ground a storm struck. The Gunnerside group, SOE-trained Norwegians chosen after the use of Royal Engineers and gliders was abandoned, took refuge in a nearby cabin before venturing out to connect with the Grouse/Swallow team.

Together, the two commando groups developed final plans for their assault. They could fight their way across the bridge, which would be noisy and would alert the Germans to their presence, or descend 600 feet into the gorge, cross the icy Mana River, and scale the cliff on the other side, a feat that local people and the Germans believed was impossible. They chose the second option, and Helberg made a

lone daylight scouting foray to decide if their plan was possible and to work out a route.

On the night of February 27-28, the combined team of nine men approached the Vemork plant and the ravine. The raiders wore British uniforms and carried their skis and packs. The wind and the ice along the ravine made the going rough, but the men got down to the bottom without too much trouble. The river had risen from the time Helberg was there the day before, and the water was flowing over ice. However, the commandos managed to cross and start up the other side, making their way to the rail line Helberg had discovered and into the facility.

Once there, they split into a covering party and a demolition party. The covering party took positions from which it could attack if the Germans discovered the infiltration. If there was no discovery, the covering party was to stay in place until they heard the explosions, then withdraw. If the Germans discovered what was happening and sounded an alarm, the party was to attack the guards at once. If something unexpected happened that disrupted the attack plan, everyone was to act on his own to complete the mission as best he could.

"I was with the cover party," Helberg wrote. "We covered the German guardhouse and the entrances of the factory. Fortunately, we did not see a single guard. The noise from the factory was quite loud, and there was no other sound. It was pitch dark, and, even if a German had come, I do not believe he would have seen us leaning against the factory wall."

The attack party forced a second gate open and left one man on guard there. The remaining four members of the party split into two pairs, each carrying a complete set of explosives in case one of the two teams did not reach the heavy water. The men were familiar with the plant's layout from plans that had been obtained by a collaborator and headed straight to a cellar door. They found it locked and tried an entrance on the floor above. That too was locked. The cellar door was to have been left unlocked by an agent in the plant, but he had fallen ill and did not come to work that day. The commandos could see a man working in the cellar, but no guards were visible.

There was one more alternative. The diagrams of the plant showed a narrow shaft into the cellar the commandos had been told to use as a last resort. They found the hatch to the shaft, and it had been left unlocked as they had been promised. One of the two pairs of saboteurs entered the shaft and crawled forward over a mass of wires and pipes, pushing their sacks of explosives ahead of them. At the end of the shaft, they found a ladder and slipped into the plant's basement.

During a reenactment of the famous Commando raid on the Norse Hydro facility, Norwegian soldiers trek across a snowy mountain plateau. The Commando raid set back the production of heavy water for several weeks, while air raids and further efforts crippled the Nazi atomic bomb research program further.

There they encountered a frightened night watchman, who was held at gunpoint by one member of the demolition party as the other man placed the explosives they had brought. Meanwhile, the second team had found a window into the area, broken the glass, and entered. The men finished setting their charges and shortened their planned fuse time of 2 minutes to 30 seconds, fearing they wouldn't hear the explosion if they got too far away. A Thompson submachine gun was purposely left behind as a sign the sabotage was done by British commandos in hopes of mitigating any reprisals against the local community. The night watchman was told to run upstairs as fast as he could, and the saboteurs rushed back through the steel cellar door into the night. They were about 20 yards away when they heard an explosion muffled by the noise of the power station and the thick concrete walls.

"[It] was not very loud," recalled one of the men. "It sounded like two or three cars crashing in Piccadilly Circus."

But the plant's entire inventory of heavy water, some 1,102 pounds, was flooding the basement and flowing toward the drains. The essential electrolysis chambers that produced the heavy water were also severely damaged. Meanwhile, the four members of the covering party who had been left on guard waited for a German reaction. They saw only a single German soldier appear in the doorway of a nearby hut. He swept the area with a light, which came dangerously close to the Norwegians, turned, and went back into the hut. Unknown to the saboteurs at the time, dull thuds such as that caused by the explosives were common at the installation. Small explosions occasionally were caused by the machinery, and cracking ice or thawing snow near the plant caused similar noises.

Eventually, the damage was discovered, and 3,000 German soldiers were dispatched to search the area for the commandos. But the entire commando party was able to escape, five of the men skiing 249 miles to Sweden wearing British uniforms and carrying British weapons. Another member of the team went alone to Oslo and then on to Sweden and England. Two others went west and set up a headquarters for resistance forces in the Vinje region; one of those men was back in England by Christmas, while the other

stayed in Norway until the end of the war. Another member of the group set up a radio station in the Hamre Mountains and ran it for the rest of the war.

The sabotage mission had succeeded, but the damage was repaired. By April, the Vemork plant was back in operation. And by the fall, the Allies were ready to hit it again. This time they came by air. The need for ground assaults was reduced from a year earlier as there was now the alternative of night bombing, which had previously been unrealistic owing to German air supremacy. Several Allied bombing raids were launched against the plant, including a massed daylight raid of 143 U.S. Army Air Forces Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bombers that unloaded 711 bombs on the plant and its vicinity. Only 18 of these bombs hit the Vemork facility, but it was enough to heavily damage the plant and its power station. The bombs also destroyed about 132 pounds of heavy water, a little less than a month's production. Twenty-two civilians were killed, and six civilian residences destroyed.

On November 16 and 18, 1943, a total of 35 American Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers attacked the hydroelectric power station at Rjukan, an attack that convinced the Germans that the Vemork facility was vulnerable to future air attacks. In early 1944, they decided to abandon the plant and move its remaining stocks of heavy water and critical manufacturing components to Germany. Resistance fighters also attacked a shipment of deuterium oxide sent from the plant as it was ferried across Lake Tinn, sinking the ferry and its cargo in 1,400 feet of water on February 20, 1944.

Nazi plans for an atomic bomb were all but scuttled. The project sputtered along before finally stalling completely. The electrolysis equipment from the Vemork plant was found disassembled in Germany after the war.

"In modern history, there are few examples of such small works of sabotage leading to such dramatic effect," one historian wrote. "Had the Nazis worked [on an atomic bomb] unhindered, the world's first atomic mushroom cloud may have loomed over London by the mid-1940s." □

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The 'Bloody Bucket' AT COLMAR

The veteran U.S. 28th Infantry Division, known for its distinctive red shoulder insignia, helped to clear the Colmar pocket and drive the last Germans out of France in early 1945. | **BY DR. WALTER S. ZAPOTOCZNY JR.**

National Archives

Not long after they landed at Normandy in July 1944, Pennsylvania's 28th Infantry Division earned a begrudging nickname from their German foes in the hedgerows—the "Bloody Bucket Division," after their blood-red "Keystone" shoulder patches and vicious fighting tactics.

The name would fit them well as they went on to help close the Falaise Pocket and were the first American troops, briefly, into Germany in fighting at the Siegfried Line, where they took 3,000 casualties.

After fierce fighting in the Hürtgen Forest in November 1944, Maj. Gen. Norman Cota's 28th Division suffered nearly 6,000 casualties was sent to a 30-mile front on the west bank of the Our River in Luxembourg, a place that First Army thought would be a quiet sector to rest and replace their losses.

Then, on December 16, the Battle of the Bulge began with the German Wehrmacht tearing through the 28th Division front on their way to Belgium. They fought hard and managed to disrupt Hitler's timetable while sustaining more than 5,100 casualties.

Finally, the battered Keystone Division was brought back up to strength with thousands of new replacements and they spent early January 1945 near Charleville refitting and defending the Meuse River from Givet to Verdun. Troops manned outposts at road junctions and bridges in key cities.

But as the Allies turned the tide at Bastogne in late January 1945, an 850-square-mile section on the far eastern border of France was still held by the Germans—the Colmar Pocket. The 6th Army Group, along with the French First Army, had been trying since November of 1944 to force Wehrmacht Gen. Siegfried Rasp's 19th Army, comprising seven infantry divisions, one mountain division and one Panzer brigade, out of Alsace and back over the Rhine.

Though they were hampered in their task partly by manpower shortages, mountainous geography and winter weather, the biggest factor was that that the Germans laid claim to the French regions of

Soldiers of the U.S. 28th Infantry Division, a veteran combat unit that took heavy casualties in the Hurtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge, parade through the streets of Colmar after having helped to clear the liberated French city of German forces.

National Archives

Alsace and Lorraine and Hitler had ordered a do-or-die defense of the area around Colmar, a town since the Middle Ages. In November, French First Army commander Jean de Lattre de Tassigny's unsuccessful first effort to collapse the pocket had been interrupted by the Bulge crisis, and had also been affected by the decision to send many of the colonial African troops—experienced veterans who had fought in Italy—to the south. They were replaced with Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (French Forces of the Interior), many of whom were militia and local draftees of varying quality and experience.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander on the Western Front, wanted the last German toe-hold in France removed as soon as possible, calling it "a sore" on the 6th Army Group front. De Lattre and 6th Army Group commander Lt. Gen. Jacob Devers requested U.S. reinforcements for the offensive. Eisenhower's aide, Maj. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, offered the 10th Armored Division and the 28th ID, but warned that after what the latter had been through, they were "capable of only limited offensive action."

In less than three weeks after it was relieved from battling the German forces in the Ardennes, the 28th Division would be involved in what has come to be known as the "forgotten campaign." In the middle of winter, they traveled southeast to the Vosges Mountains south of Kaysersberg by train on frigid French "forty and eights"—railcars from World War I made to hold 40 men or eight horses.Still badly battered from the Ardennes fighting, the division was tasked to establish a line in the First French Army sector that curved from the vineyards of the Colmar plain to the rugged fringes of the Vosges mountains.

The 28th Division is the oldest continuously serving division in the U.S. Army. It was officially established by General Order Number 1 on March 12, 1879. Elements of the division can trace their histories back to 1747, when Benjamin Franklin organized his battalion of Associators in Philadelphia. Other units of the 28th Division had their beginnings in the Revolutionary War to include Troop A, First Squadron, 104th Cavalry and the 109th Artillery Regiment organized as the 24th Connecticut Militia. These units fought with George Washington's Army.

General Cota became commander of the 28th Infantry in August, 1944, after landing in Normandy on D-Day with the 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division. He had been heavily involved in the planning and execution of the Allied invasion and became famous for personally leading the assaults on Omaha Beach and motivating the troops grounded by the heavy fire of German machine guns.

Now the Keystone Division was to take over the northwestern perimeter of the pocket, along the Kaysersberg Valley just above Colmar, while the 3rd Algerian Division screened the extreme northern perimeter south of Strasbourg. The 28th was given the task of protecting the flank of the 3rd and 75th U.S. Infantry Divisions. The 2nd and 4th Moroccan and the 9th Colonial Infantry Divisions, along with the 1st French Armored Division, would assault the southern portion of the pocket. The 3rd Infantry Division and two other French divisions would be concentrated in between, south of Sélestat, for the thrust at Neuf-Brisach and the Rhine River.

At first the 28th ID was merely holding positions in the snow-swept Vosges Mountains, sending out patrols through waist-deep snow to test the enemy strength and lobbing artillery fire from one mountain crest to another. There were mine fields under the deep snow, and some of the infantrymen who went out on patrols failed to return. German mortar fire landed continuously around the American positions. The men huddled in foxholes dug in the snow and ate frozen C-Rations for days before it was possible to bring up warm food.

In addition to treating wounds from small arms, mortars, artillery and mines there were

many casualties from frostbite and trench foot. The wounded had to be hauled back to aid stations on sleds where freezing temperatures made the administration of plasma to the wounded difficult. Then suddenly the division was ordered to attack.

General Cota's message to the commander of the 109th Infantry Regiment, Colonel James Rudder, was brief and to the point: "We go to Colmar." Rudder, who had been in command of the 2nd Ranger Battalion on D-Day when his Rangers scaled the cliffs at Pointe-du-Hoc, would lead his regiment in spearheading the division's attack down the slopes of the Vosges foothills, across the flat, marshy plain, and through a forest to reach the outskirts of the strongly defended city of Colmar, the third largest in Alsace. With the late start, it was pitch black by the time they had entered the forest.

The French city was so well fortified and defended that the Colmar pocket was still occupied by the Germans, though the Allies had advanced all along its fringes. As they reached a vineyard on the outskirts of town, the men divided up to navigate through the rows . Not finding any resistance, they emerged from the vineyard to find the highway to Colmar. As they marched down the highway, units regrouped and moved to a row of trenches as they approached the town.

The 109th IR moved with extreme haste, as they had learned from Rudder training them in the way of the Army Rangers. They were also trained in night operations.

Their speed on the way to Colmar put them in an area scheduled for friendly artillery that was meant to precede their approach. As shells began falling around them, 109th Infantry officer William Pena remembered the artillery observer having to radio back for a cease fire.

In the coordinated thrust with the French Armored Combat Command 4, the 109th IR had rooted the Germans out of their concealed trenches and overran their artillery positions before the Germans had time to depress the muzzles of their high-velocity 88mm guns.

Tom W. Hickman, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 109th IR, wrote in his diary on February 4: "Entered Colmar at 9 a.m. Street fighting in the outskirts. Pretty rugged for a while. Many casualties from mines and booby traps. The Germans have

BELOW: As the U.S. Seventh Army advances in southern France American soldiers trudge through snow, sleet and rain. These troops, including the 28th Infantry Division, engaged in bitter fighting with German defenders around the city of Colmar in early 1945. INSET: General Norman Cota, commander of the U.S. 28th Infantry Division, accepts a cookie from a soldier who has received a package from home. Cota was recognized as a strong field commander in Normandy on D-Day and went on to lead American troops through the end of the war in Europe. OPPOSITE: During fighting in the rugged Vosges Mountains of France, American-built tank destroyers manned by French soldiers slog through muddy terrain in a devastated village. This photo was taken in January 1945 as Allied forces pushed the Germans out of the region surrounding the city of Colmar.

Both: National Archives

Alamy

them planted everywhere. We would never have made it this morning had it not been for the presence of our two flak wagons. The 447th Anti-Aircraft Artillery came along with us and those boys really did a marvelous job. They had multiple .50-caliber machine guns mounted on each truck throwing a grand total of 1,000 rounds per minute at the Germans. They kept the Germans pinned down long enough for us to get to them."

The French 5th Armored Division caught up to the 109th IR on the outskirts of Colmar on February 2. Rudder let the French lead the way, and by 11:30 a.m. they had taken back the town that had been in enemy hands for nearly five years. By 11:45 there was only scattered resistance in the city, and by 4 p.m. Colmar was mostly in Allied hands.

The cost to the 109th IR was relatively light despite the difficulty of the mission: 125 men killed, wounded, or missing. The 109th set up a defensive perimeter south of the city in case of a German counterattack. When morning came the next day, mopping up operations in Colmar were underway. Happy crowds of French townspeople greeted the men of the 28th ID as they patrolled the streets. In recognition of their skills, the infantrymen of the 109th were later awarded the French Croix de Guerre.

On February 4th, coordinating with the 109th ID, the 12th Armored Division launched an attack toward Sundhoffen.

The 112th Infantry Regiment, meanwhile, had the task of attacking along the 28th ID's right flank, capturing a string of small towns to the west of Colmar. The 112th was commanded by Col. Gustin M. Nelson, a 1921 West Point graduate. He was the former Trains commander for 5th Armored Division—in charge of personnel, vehicles and equipment that make up the rear echelon—but wanted a more active combat assignment. He'd gotten his wish with an assignment to the 28th Division.

The 3rd Battalion of the 112th IR left Kaysersberg, about five miles northwest of Colmar, about 10 p.m. on February 1 and went south to Ammerschwihr, where the companies separated to attack toward their objectives. On February 2, Company K went on to Niedermorschwihr and took it against light opposition. Company L took Katzenthal. The next day, Company I was to attack Turckheim. In the morning they left for Turckheim in platoon formation, when the Germans were observed at the top of a hill about 200 yards outside of Niedermorschwihr waving their hands. A squad from the 1st platoon was sent up through the open field toward the crest of the hill, and the Germans yelled "Comrade" and then followed that appeal with rapid small-arms fire. The remainder of the 1st and 3rd platoons was ordered to form a line and suppress the Germans while the 2nd platoon was ordered to enter the outskirts of the town and hold it until the skirmish was cleaned up.

The Americans had underestimated the strength of the enemy and their superior observation positions. "All we could do was lay there," said Sergeant Curtis, "there was no cover. They were hitting us from all sides with mortars and everything they had." The whole company came under a barrage of phosphorus and fragmentation rounds from heavy mortars. Having come under terrific fire from the Germans, the Americans had to withdraw.

Orders were given for Company I to move to Wintzenheim. The men were exhausted, resting in any corner and asleep in any available place, while some listened on their SCR 300 radios to Company K's attack on Turckheim. On February 4, Turckheim was freed by Company K, supported by elements of the French 1st Shock Battalion. The 112th's 3rd Battalion

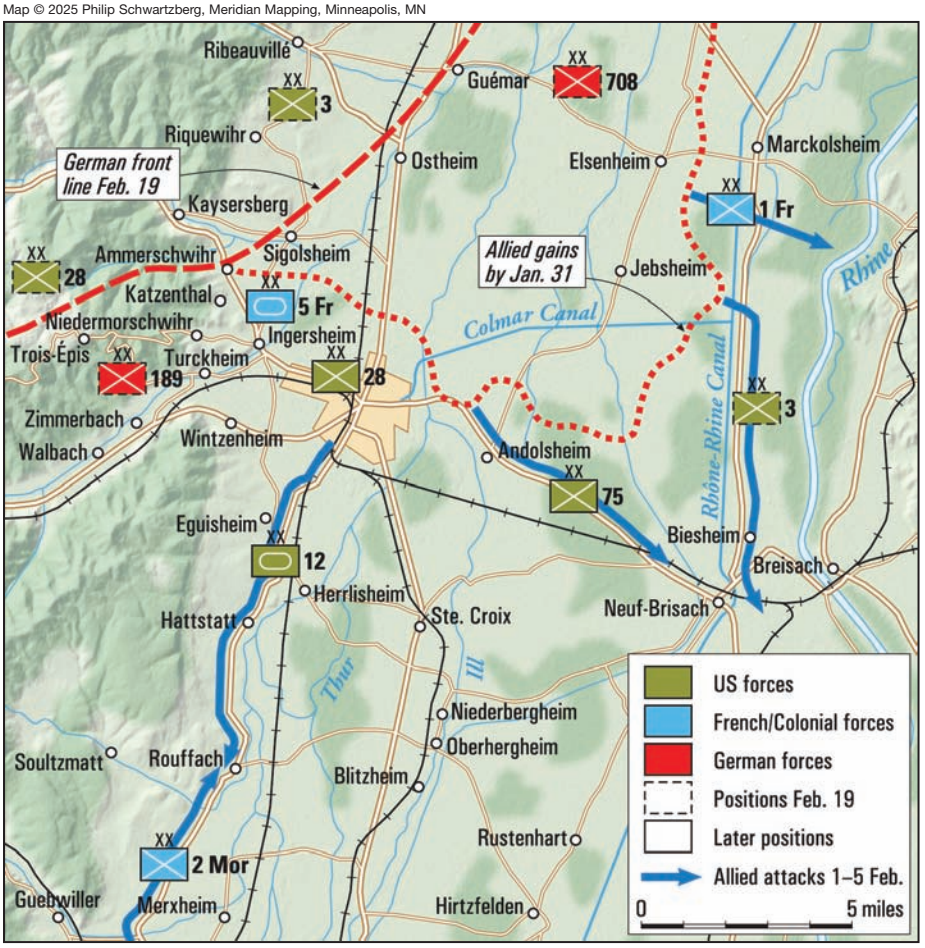
moved south with Walbach as their objective. No opposition was encountered, and various elements of the battalion went through the towns of Niedermorschwihr, Turckheim, Zimmerbach, and Walbach.

Company B, 1st Battalion had been sitting in Sigolsheim for two weeks when orders finally came to attack into the vineyards directly in front of their positions. Their first big objective was to capture the town of Ingersheim. Charles Haug remembered that they had only gone 500 yards when they ran into terrific small-arms fire. The Germans seemed to have placed machine guns all over the vineyards, and many of the Americans were hit.

The 112th IR men finally knocked out the guns and by mid-afternoon found themselves at the edge of Ingersheim. After meeting little resistance, they moved into the town. The 1st Battalion took over Ingersheim while the 2nd Battalion protected its right flank.

The Americans received new orders to capture the small town of Trois-Épis located on the mountainside about 15 miles from Ingersheim. They got about a mile outside of Ingersheim when they met their first German resistance. About 20 Germans were dug in along the mountainside and started to fire on the men from the 112th IR, but after firing a few rounds, they raised their hands and surrendered.

A couple of men took the prisoners back to Ingersheim. The rest made slow progress on the rugged path up the mountain until they came to a place where the Germans had felled



ABOVE: The Germans defended village after village in the Vosges Mountains during the winter months of 1944-45. The 28th Infantry Division joined the Allied effort in January and, after heavy combat, helped liberate the city of Colmar in February 1945. OPPOSITE: German soldiers of a mountain artillery unit scurry to new positions during the fighting in the Vosges Mountains in early 1945. Efforts to stem the Allied tide toward the German frontier eventually failed and the city of Colmar and its surrounding area were lost to the advancing American and French forces.

hundreds of trees across the path. Climbing over, crawling under, and squirming in and out of the trees, the men got within a few hundred yards of the town by 4 a.m.

Patrols were sent into the town and the German resisted at the first house the Americans approached before they scattered through the town. By noon, the Americans had killed or captured most of the defenders. As the men searched the houses, they came across civilians in the basements. The Germans had bound their wrists with wire and told them to stay there.

The Germans had told the villagers that the Americans usually killed all civilians as they took a town. As the men helped the people out of the basements and untied them, the villagers would fall on their knees and beg for mercy. When they found out that the Americans weren't going to kill them, they would throw their arms around the men with joy.

The 110th Infantry Regiment came out of Corps reserve on February 4 to get into the fight. It was commanded by Colonel Daniel Strickler, who had been in Company B, 109th Machine Gun Battalion, as the youngest U.S. Army captain during World War I.

Strickler's 3rd Battalion was alerted to repel a counterattack in the 112th IR sector and moved to the vicinity of Ingersheim, just northwest of Colmar, where it took up a position to protect the bridge there. At the same time, the 1st Battalion was ordered to seize and hold the town of Herrlisheim, just south of Colmar.

On the morning of February 5, the town was taken against light resistance. On February 6, the 2nd Battalion moved to Biltzheim on the Ill River and then east toward the Rhône-Rhine Canal. By 2 p.m., a crossing was made using improvised bridges of debris and pontoon boats. Some small-arms fire was received on the march east, but all objectives had been seized by mid-afternoon.

Toward evening, however, the 3rd Battalion was subjected to heavy fire from the entrenched Germans and was forced to withdraw to the vicinity of Rustenhart to allow friendly artillery to fire on the hostile positions. German machine-gun fire inflicted approximately 30 casualties on the battalion, and during the night it suffered a heavy

German artillery barrage.

There were many who made the ultimate sacrifice around Colmar. For example, 1st Lieutenant Thomas Ferguson was commanding Company G, 110th IR. Ferguson was leading a small reconnaissance force of three men in the mountains near Colmar, probing the German positions to determine the locations of their outposts. Three- and four-foot snow drifts made progress difficult as the men pushed cautiously into the German lines with Lieutenant Ferguson in the lead. As they followed a narrow, tortuous mountain path that was half-hidden in the drifting snow, Ferguson felt his foot trip a wire hidden beneath the snow's surface. The sharp crack of the detonator flashed its own warning, and in the split-second before the mine exploded, Ferguson shouted for his men to hit the ground. At the same time, Ferguson threw himself forward to cover the mine's blast with his own body and was killed instantly. A sergeant that was following closely behind was wounded over the eye, but he and the two other men undoubtedly owed their lives to Ferguson's instant action and heroic self-sacrifice.

The 110th regimental command post moved to Oberhergheim on the Ill River, and by 2:30 a.m. on February 7, a Bailey bridge had been constructed across the river at that location. Battalion transportation began to cross the bridge immediately, and by mid-morning the vehicles, together with boats and bridging equipment, had rejoined their parent units, which were attempting to force a crossing of the Rhône-Rhine Canal. Before noon both the 1st and 3rd Battalions had crossed the canal and established bridgeheads. In the afternoon the 2nd Battalion moved up and relieved the 3rd of its mission of protecting the site, while the 2nd Battalion moved on toward the Rhine River. That night the 1st Battalion also moved east from the canal toward the Rhine.

On February 8, 28th Infantry Division soldiers led the color guard at the Colmar Victory Parade. Then, both the 109th and 110th regiments swung east toward the Rhine. A patrol from Company I, 110th Infantry, reached the Rhine the next morning.

That same day, the German rearguard at Chalampé was eliminated, leaving no major German forces on the Rhine's west bank and signaling the end of Allied operations to reduce the Colmar pocket as well as the 28th Infantry Division's involvement in Alsace.

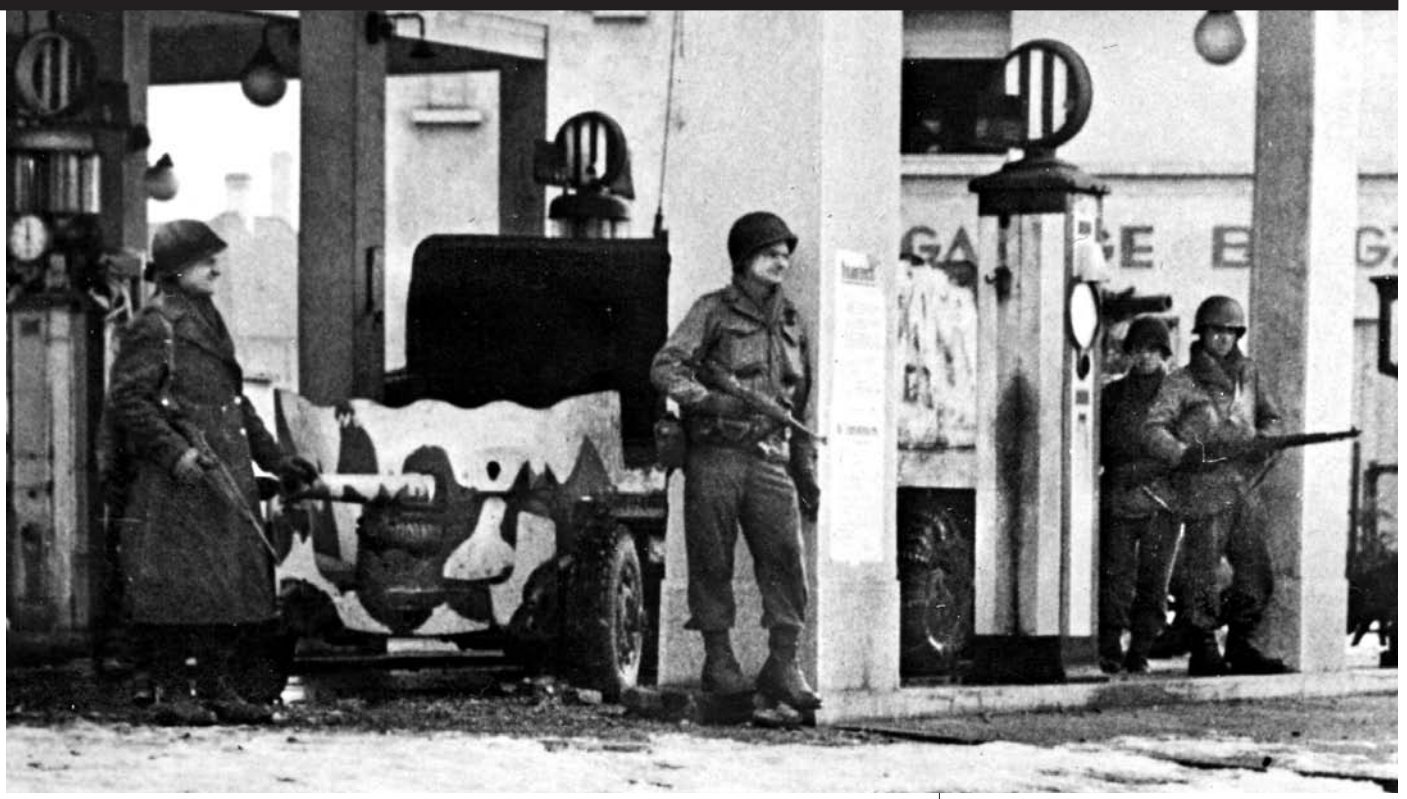
In addition to the 28th's infantry, many other elements took part in the Colmar battles. The 28th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, for example, reached Colmar on February 2 and from the 3rd to the 9th, they conducted various missions consisting of liaison and contact between the 12th Armored Division and the 110th Infantry Regiment.

On February 4, they were sent to Wintzenheim, about two miles west of Colmar, to assist the French Rangers in the defense of the town, using roadblocks and roving patrols. The next day the Troop went to Hattstatt, five miles south of Colmar, to contact the French forces and act as flank protection for the 110th Infantry in its attack toward the Rhine. On the 6th, the Troop moved to Oberhergheim continuing the mission of flank protection.

Bundesarchiv Bild 183-2013-0226-500; Photo: Bauer-Altvater

German soldiers used dog sleds to transport food, ammunition, and other supplies to defensive positions in the rugged Vosges Mountains of northwestern France in the winter of 1944-1945. Heavy snow and extreme cold hampered the movements of troops and supplies for both sides.

National Archives



ABOVE: American soldiers of the 28th Infantry Division rest at a gas station in the city of Colmar after its liberation on February 2, 1944. When they entered Colmar along with the French First Army, the Allied troops encountered booby traps and mines intended to impede further progress. Nevertheless, the Allies continued their push toward the Rhine River and the German frontier, liberating small French towns along the way.

Some additional examples include the 108th Artillery Battalion that fired concentrations for the 109th Infantry on Sainte-Croix-en-Plaine and Niederhergheim. The 28th Quartermaster Company provided supplies, burial and graves registration, and laundry and shower service throughout the period. In conjunction with the Colmar operation, the 103rd Medical Battalion set up medical clearing stations in numerous towns throughout the Colmar area.

The 103rd Combat Engineers assisted with the division operations. It snowed constantly, and the drifts were higher than a man's head on the main supply routes. Every step of the way into Colmar was dependent upon engineer work. Every road was heavily mined, and booby traps were common. Many times the engineers turned into infantrymen and fought alongside the foot soldiers in the rough mountain skirmishes. There were many more units that contributed to the success of the 28th Division.

As the Colmar Pocket collapsed along with the remaining German defenses, American soldiers shifted their attention to the final part of their mission: to eliminate the German threat on the west side of the Rhine once and for all and align their forces for the final offensive into Germany. As the men of the 28th Division moved east, they were proud to have helped liberate the French towns, and veterans of the Colmar pocket spoke fondly of the French citizens they met along the way.

The 28th Division would have one final action. Moving back north on February 23 and attacking across the Ahr River in Germany before being placed in defensive positions.

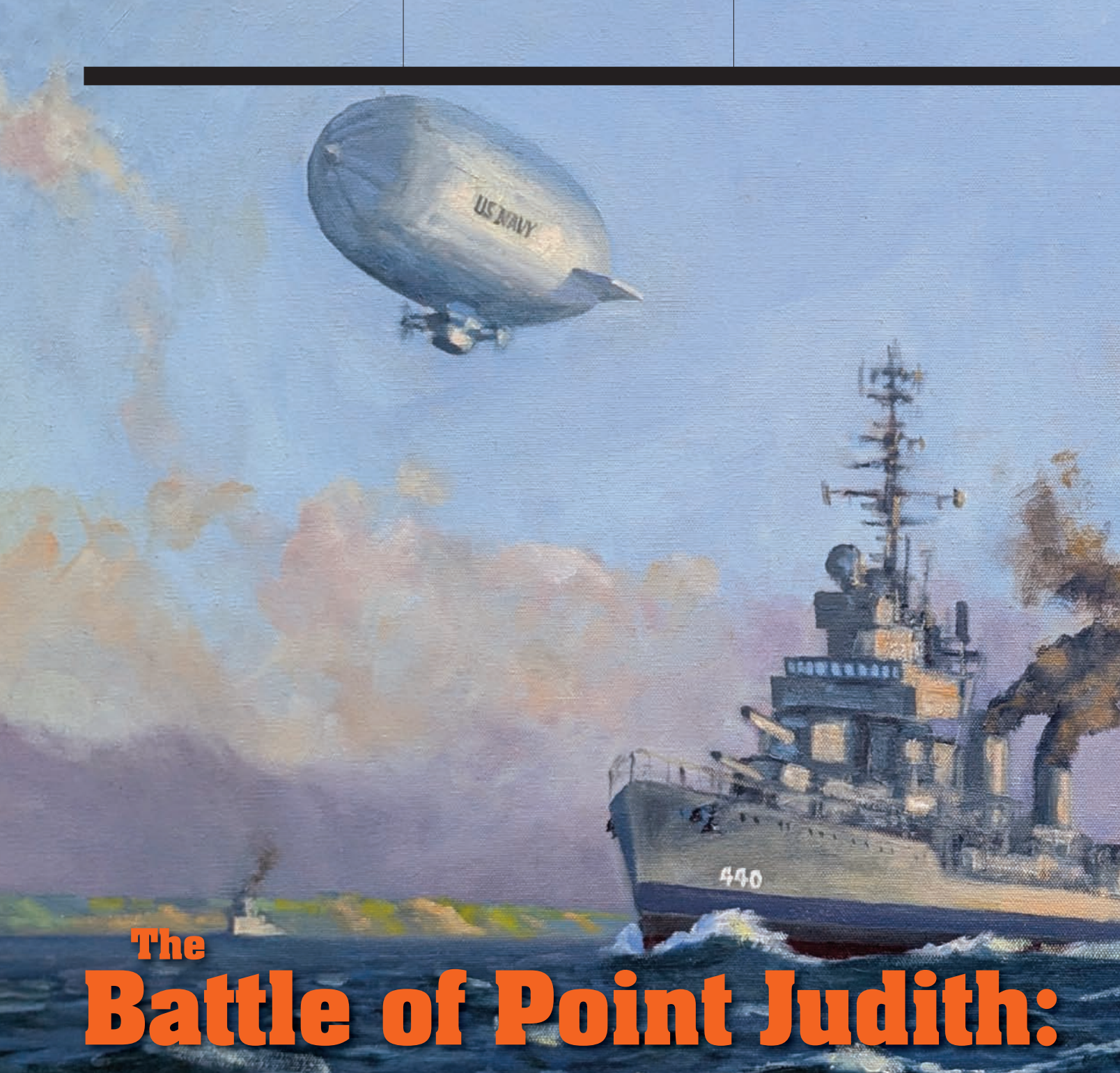
In all, the 28th ID would be on the front line for 196 days of combat before they returned to the United States on August 2, 1945. Their casualties during that time totaled 16, 762 (2,316 killed in action; 9,609 wounded in action; 884 missing; 3,953 POWs).

The 109th Infantry Regiment received the French Croix de guerre from General Charles de Gaulle, the President of the Provisional Government of France. One of its members, Technical Sergeant Francis J. Clark, U.S. Army, Company K, would also receive the Medal of Honor for gallantry during the Siegfried Line Campaign in September 1944. Another, Private Edward Slovik, would become the only American soldier to be executed for cowardice since the American Civil War. More than 21,000 soldiers were sentenced during the war, including 49 death sentences. Only Slovik's, in January 1945, was carried out.

Members of the 28th ID also received the following awards for their European campaign—Distinguished Service Cross: 16, Legion of Merit: 4, Silver Star: 258, Soldiers Medal: 16, Bronze Star: 2,029 and Air Medal: 92.

In an essay for *Link* magazine, the 28th Division's Private Henry Johnson wrote that in addition to freedom of worship and freedom from fear, he was fighting for "what I consider to be the American way of life. That great ideal is high enough and fine enough to challenge me to fight, and, if need be, to die to guarantee its realization." □

Dr. Walter S. Zapotoczny Jr. is a retired U.S. Army historian and professor of history. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and has published 11 books and operations documents. He resides near Hershey, Pennsylvania.



The Battle of Point Judith:

Clary Edwards was rousted from bed at 5 a.m. by the sound of loud pounding. Wearing only shorts, he opened the front door of his home in New London, Connecticut, to find the unwelcome view of the Shore Patrol. "These two guys are telling me to get dressed because there's a U-boat cornered off Block Island," recalled Edwards, who was a Navy diver serving aboard the submarine rescue ship USS *Penguin* (ASR-12). "Well, I thought these guys were nuts. The war is over."

Indeed, on May 6, 1945, it certainly seemed like World War II in Europe was at an end. Hitler was dead, Berlin had been captured, and the once-vaunted Nazi military machine was all but finished. Just the day before, Hitler's successor Adm. Karl Dönitz had sent an emissary to Allied Supreme Commander Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower to negotiate Germany's surrender.

However, rogue submarines lurking in the North Atlantic during the last weeks of the crumbling Third Reich, would deliver a final, fatal blow. On May 5, an American collier headed to Boston was sunk by a torpedo fired by a German submarine. Now, ships of the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard were locked in a deadly cat-and-mouse game with the U-boat just a few miles off the coast of Rhode

Hours from the end of World War II in Europe, U.S. warships chased down a German U-boat just off the coast of Rhode Island in one of the last naval engagements of the Atlantic.

BY DAVE KINDY

'They were all good boys'

Island. With the capitulation of Nazi Germany only hours away, the Battle of Point Judith was underway.

As Edwards pulled on his uniform, he wondered about the rest of the *Penguin* crew. The day before, in the wee hours of the morning, sailors crawled back to base in New London after a ship's party involving copious amounts of alcohol. Held at Central Gardens Restaurant in nearby Uncasville, Connecticut, the celebration marked the pending end of hostilities in the European theater with rounds of "power drinking," according to the party program.

The hungover *Penguin* sailors probably felt like they had dodged a bullet. The war with Germany was about to end, and they had survived the worst of the Battle of the Atlantic, which had claimed an estimated 72,000 Allied lives, 3,500 merchant vessels,

"The Battle of Point Judith," by Jonathan McPhillips depicts the USS *Ericsson* (DD-440) and Navy blimps, along with the USS *Amick*, USS *Atherton*, and USS *Moberly* hunting for U-*853* off the coast of Rhode Island on May 6, 1945. The *Moberly*, manned by U.S. Coast Guardsmen, along with *Atherton* was credited with sinking one of the last submarines of the war in the Atlantic.

and some 175 warships. Yet, sailors along the New England coast were headed back into harm's way.

"It's like Yogi Berra said, 'It ain't over till it's over,'" said retired U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Samuel Cox, Director of the Naval History and Heritage Command and Curator of the Navy. "No one wants to be the last to die in a war, but there has to be a last one. Most of the sailors were probably thinking, 'We have a duty to do and we're going to do it.'"

Few Americans were prepared for the events of that spring day 80 years ago, when a torpedo fired by *U-853* sliced off the stern of the SS *Black Point*, the last American merchantman sunk in World War II. She sank in 85 feet of water in Block Island Sound, just two miles from the village of Point Judith at the entrance of Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island.

The naval engagement is remembered by some as "The Last Battle of the North Atlantic" in World War II, though other German submarines were still on the prowl elsewhere. At about the same time, *U-881* was sunk off the coast of Newfoundland in Canada by the destroyer escort USS *Farquhar* (DE-139). Two other U-boats were damaged or destroyed by British forces on May 7 in the waters in and around Denmark and Norway.

Aboard SS *Black Point*, Captain Charles Prior had just stepped out on the deck. At about 5:40 p.m. on May 5, he left the bridge to have a cigarette. With the war almost over, he felt like he could let down his guard a bit while his 337-foot freighter, loaded down with 5,353 tons of coal, passed the R-2 buoy about 1.5 nautical miles from the Point Judith Lighthouse.

"That's when it hit the fan," he later remembered. "The clock was blown off the wall and the barometer off the bulkhead. The wheelhouse door was blown open and I don't remember if I lit the cigarette or swallowed it. I could smell gunpowder in the air and the stern of my ship was completely blown off."

Howard Locke was also caught off guard by the attack. The 19-year-old merchant marine from Georgia was in the fire room shoveling coal into the furnace of a boiler when he heard a loud explosion and felt a violent shudder. The lights went out, and water surged all around him.

Locke ran to the main deck and was stunned to see the stern missing. As he prepared to abandon ship, he heard a terrible scream: it was the *Black Point*'s mascot, a chimpanzee, who was below decks. Locke then dove into the ocean.

"The last thing I remember was that monkey hollering," he later told a newspaper reporter.

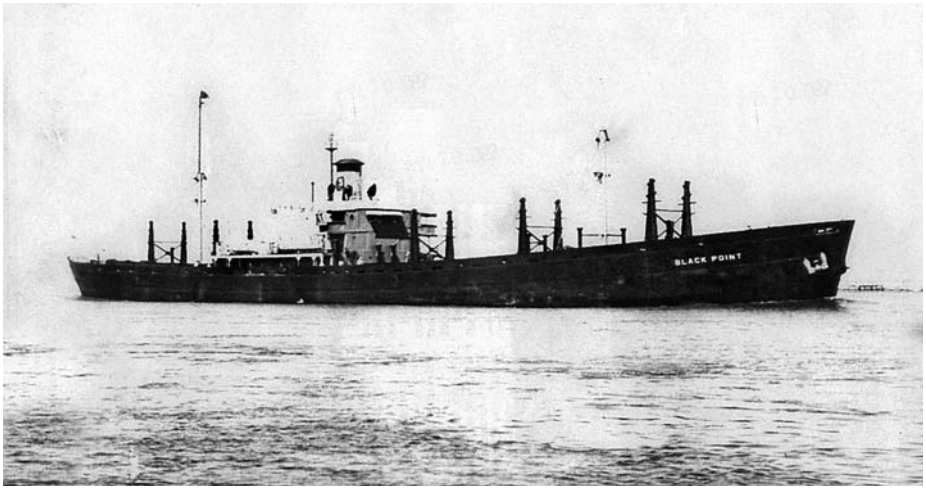
At the time of the explosion, U.S. Navy gunner Stephen Svetz was manning the 6-pound cannon on the ship's stern. He had no memory of what happened next. When the torpedo hit, it sent him and a quarter-ton section of the gun mount spiraling through the air. Svetz was found on the bow and helped off the ship as it sank. He was the only survivor from the fantail.

Svetz's battery mate, Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Lonnie Whitson Lloyd, was not so lucky. The Naval Armed Guard gunner was the last U.S. sailor to die in combat in the North Atlantic.

Within minutes of the torpedo attack, Prior ordered the crew to abandon ship. Clinging to life rafts and debris were 34 survivors. Including Lloyd, 12 men were either killed instantly or died trapped below decks when the bobbing stern slipped below the surface

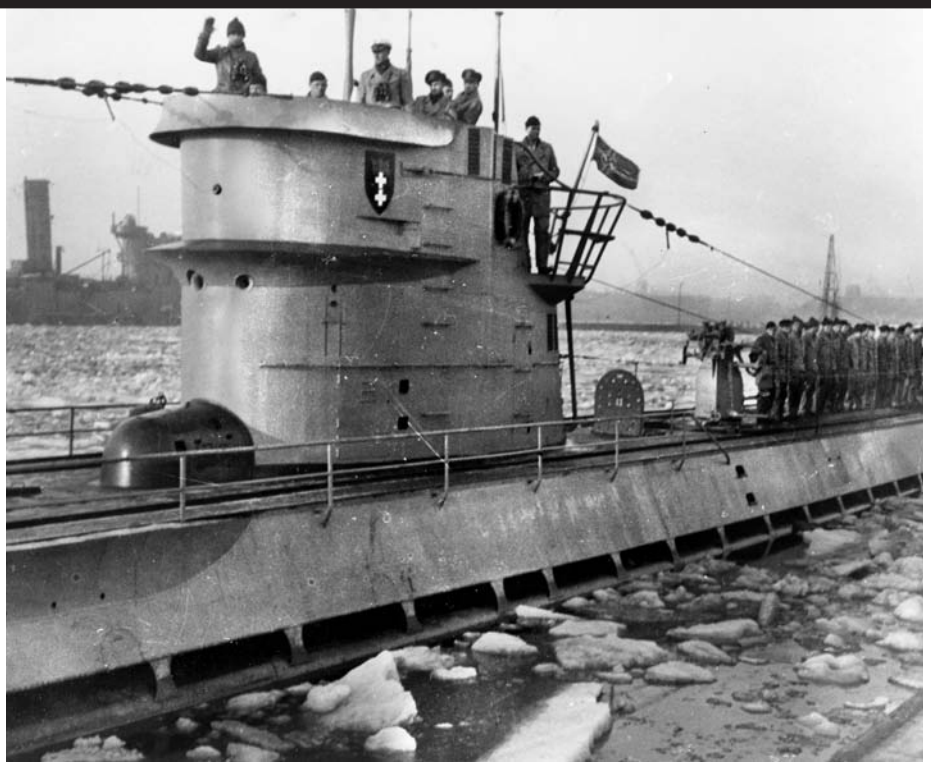
The SS *Black Point* foundered for about 25 minutes, then rolled over on its side and sank

American Merchant Marine at War, www.usmm.org



Naval History & Heritage Command

ABOVE: Undated photo of the SS *Black Point*. As it made its way from New York to Boston, the collier was torpedoed by U-*853* on May 5, 1945—the same day all German subs were ordered to cease operations and return to base. The sinking off the Rhode Island coast prompted a hunt for the U-boat that ended with its demise. TOP: The World War I-era patrol boat USS *Eagle Boat 58*, pictured, was a sistership to the *Eagle Boat 56* that was towing targets for U.S. Navy dive bombers in training three nautical miles off Cape Elizabeth when she was torpedoed by U-*853* on April 23, 1945. The subsequent sinking took the lives of 54 of the 67 crewmen aboard the patrol boat.



National Archives

ABOVE: The Type IXC/40 U-boat U-*534* under the command of Kapitanleutnant Herbert Nollau is shown while taking evasive action on the high seas. At the time of this photo, the sub was under attack by a Consolidated Liberator G bomber of No. 86 Squadron of RAF Coastal Command, May 5, 1945. TOP: Like this German Type IX U-boat, U-*853* (Type IXC/40) belonged to a group based in Norway. Note the conning tower insignia visible on this U-boat. U-*853* bore a similar distinctive mark when it put to sea in the spring of 1945. The U-boats like U-*853* were equipped with the snorkel apparatus that allowed the submarine to remain submerged and take in outside air RIGHT: Crewmen of the U-*853* enjoy a night out between patrols, in what is perhaps the last photo of the ill-fated group. Their 24-year-old commander, Oberleutnant zur See Helmut Frömsdorf, is the one wearing a necktie.

in Block Island Sound, about 22 miles northeast of Montauk Point on Long Island. Rather than run, *U-853* slowly settled on the seafloor, apparently waiting for another opportunity to strike. However, time was running out for the German submarine as ships from U.S. Navy Task Force 60.7 were storming to the scene to hunt it down.

Though no one realized it at the time, the Battle of Point Judith had actually begun weeks earlier off the coast of Maine. At noon on April 23, the patrol boat USS *Eagle 56* (PE-56) was towing targets for bombing exercises in Casco Bay, a few miles from Port Elizabeth. Suddenly, a geyser of water shot 300 feet into the air as an explosion rocked the World War I-era patrol boat amidships. The 200-foot vessel split in two and sank within minutes, taking 49 sailors to the bottom with her. It was the greatest loss of Navy personnel in New England waters.

Machinist Mate Second Class John Breeze of Washington was one of 13 survivors. As he desperately scrambled off the sinking *Eagle 56*, he noticed a submarine conning tower with red and yellow markings. "I only saw it momentarily," he later told a newspaper reporter. "We didn't know what we'd hit or what had hit us. You don't think about things like that. All you think about is saving your own life."

Nearby, the crew of the collier SS *Plymouth* witnessed the attack. Merchant Marine Loring "Bud" Small of Maine was on watch in the engine room when he heard his chief exclaim, "Christ Almighty, they just sank our escort!"

At a Naval Court of Inquiry a week later, five sailors testified they had also seen the U-boat with its colorful insignia. Remarkably, the board ruled that a boiler explosion had sunk the *Eagle 56*. That decision was overturned in 2001 after a reexamination of the evidence.

Small, as well as many others, didn't accept the initial determination. "The Navy didn't want it out that the *Eagle* was sunk by a submarine," he told a reporter years later. "I knew it. The fellows on the deck saw a submarine but the Navy Department said, 'Shut up.'"

Amazingly, Small also was on hand for the sinking of the *Black Point*. On May 5, the freighter *Plymouth* was trailing the *Black Point* by just a few miles. Laden with coal, both ships chugged up the coast to Boston. Small remembered the engine room chief uttering a similar expletive the second time

Naval History & Heritage Command

ABOVE: A depth charge dropped by the Navy frigate *Moberly*, manned by U.S. Coast Guardsmen, raises a geyser during the hunt for the Nazi U-boat U-*853*, which had sunk the collier SS *Black Point* hours earlier. Navy blimps as well as the destroyer USS *Ericsson* and destroyer escorts *Atherton* and *Amick* were involved in the hunt for U-*853*. The *Atherton*, which made first sonar contact with the sub, and the *Moberly* were credited with sinking the U-boat. OPPOSITE: The U.S. Coast Guard crew of the USS *Moberly* watch the pattern of depth charges they dropped detonate on the location of U-*853*. The coordinated attacks of several U.S. Navy warships and blimps ended with the sinking of the German U-boat on Sunday, May 6, 1945.

around: "Christ Almighty, they just sunk [sic] the *Black Point*."

The architect of this death and destruction off the coast of New England was the 24-year-old captain of *U-853*. Oberleutnant zur See Helmut Frömsdorf was at the helm of the Type IXC/40 U-boat when it departed Norway on February 24, 1945. He had taken over for Oberleutnant Helmut Sommer, who had been wounded 28 times when the submarine was strafed the previous year by two Grumman FM-1 Wildcat fighters from the escort carrier USS *Croatan* (CVE-25).

U-853 was nicknamed *Der Seiltaenzer* ("The Tightrope Walker") after Sommer, who had deftly extricated the submarine from several close calls on its first patrol in 1944. The conning tower featured a large yellow shield with a red horse—the same colors as reported by witnesses during the sinking of the *Eagle 56*.

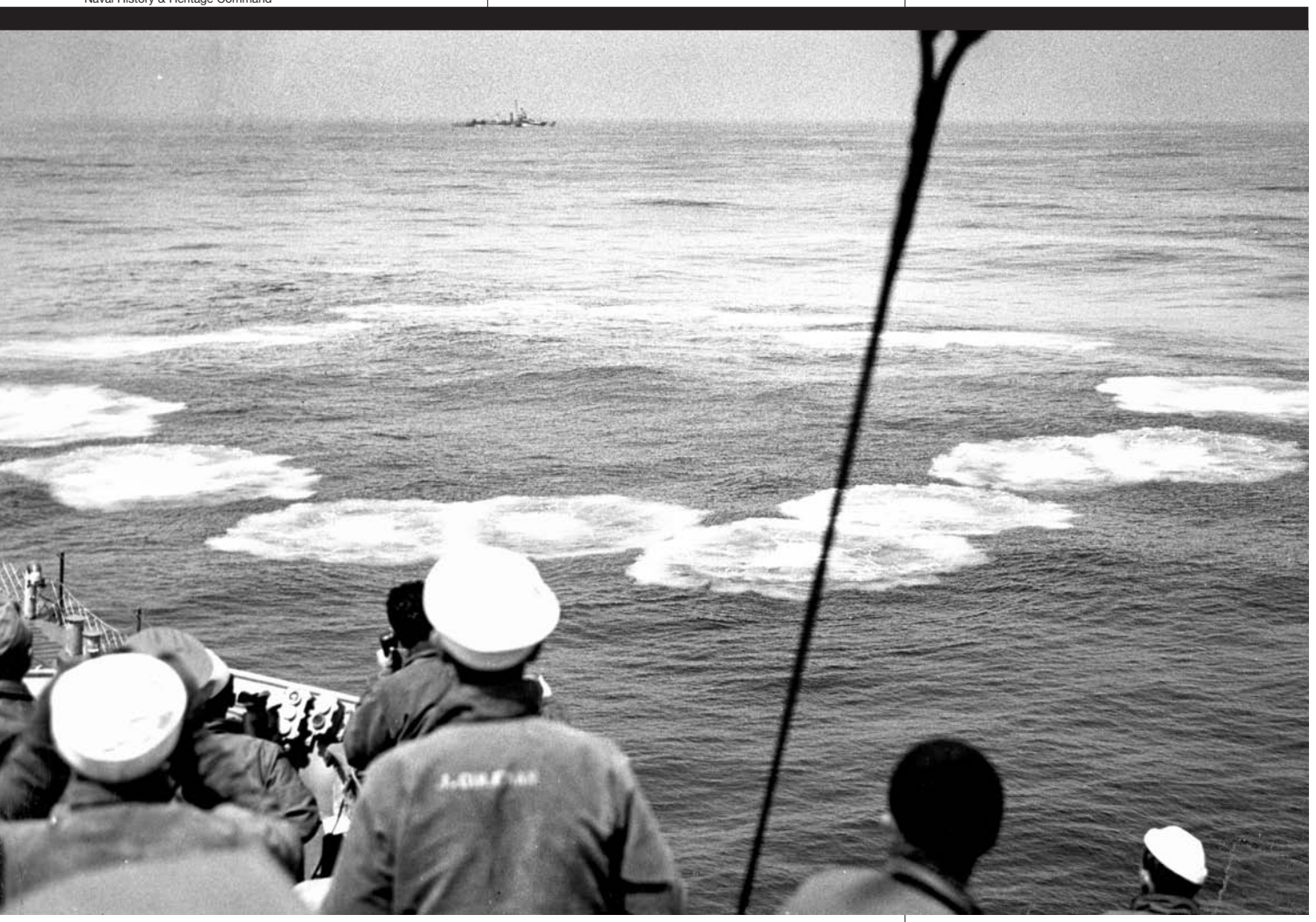
Before departing on *U-853*'s third and final patrol, the 6-foot, 10-inch Frömsdorf met with Sommer, who was still recuperating in the hospital. Now a kapitänleutnant, the older submariner cautioned his protégé about the mission he was about to undertake: "The war is nearly at an end. Do not be frivolous with the crew. They are all good boys. Make sure you bring them home."

Unfortunately, Frömsdorf may have had notions of glory. On previous missions, *U-853* had failed to score a kill. With no sunken ships to the sub's credit, the young commander appeared willing to risk crew and craft in an attempt to earn an Iron Cross.

Captain Bill Palmer, a scuba diver and charter boat captain based in Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, believes that was the case. For his 2012 book *The Last Battle of the Atlantic: The Sinking of the U-853*, Palmer wrote that Frömsdorf had a *Halsschmerzen*, or "sore throat"—that is, he was desperate for the prestigious German military decoration to be placed around his neck.

"I spoke to a number of U-boat officers and sailors and was told Frömsdorf had a 'sore throat,'" Palmer said in a 2020 interview. "He was looking to distinguish himself before the war ended. But you don't do that when 50 men are depending on you for survival."

Naval History & Heritage Command



If that is the case, it would explain why Frömsdorf disobeyed at least two direct orders from Admiral Dönitz. The acting leader of Germany and head of the Kriegsmarine sent out a May 4th radio message, effective May 5th, to all submarines to cease combat activities and return to base. Either Frömsdorf ignored that directive or never received it. Either way, it was a tragic failure.

"More likely he missed the order rather than ignored it," Cox said. "There were a couple of other diehard submarines out there."

In addition, Dönitz had banned U-boats from attacking at depths of less than 200 feet because of the risk of being spotted from the air or hunted down by ships. When Frömsdorf torpedoed the *Black Point*, he was operating in about 100 feet of water. Inexplicably, the young U-boat commander did not leave the area and instead rested on the bottom of the shallow waters off coastal New England.

It was Frömsdorf's second deadly mistake.

When the *Black Point* went down, ships of Task Force 60.7 were on their way to Boston. They had just escorted a convoy of merchant ships to New York City from Oran and were moving at full speed up the coast when orders came to reroute to Point Judith.

The task force was led by Commander F.C. McCune, who was on board the USS *Ericsson* (DD-440), captained by Lt. Cmdr. Charles Alexander Baldwin. When the radio message arrived, the Benson/Gleave-class destroyer was in the Cape Cod Canal. The other ships—destroyer escorts USS *Amick* (DE-168) and USS *Atherton* (DE-169) and frigate USS *Moberly* (PF-63)—were strung out behind it in Massachusetts' Buzzards Bay.

With the flagship out of the picture, U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Leslie B. Tollaksen of the *Moberly* took temporary command of the task force. Manned by Coast Guard officers and crew, the U.S. Navy frigate and the other two ships arrived off Point Judith at around 7:20 p.m. and began searching for the U-boat.

About an hour later, Lieutenant Commander Lewis Iselin of the *Atherton* reported contact with a possible submarine. The Cannon-class destroyer escort made a sweep with magnetic depth charges. One exploded, so Iselin followed with three rounds of hedgehog projectiles. Each attack resulted in more explosions. A quick check with searchlights detected "oil geysers, air bubbles and considerable debris," according to the after-action report.

McCune resumed command of the task force when the *Ericsson* arrived. Unsure if they had hit the submarine or a previously sunken ship, he ordered the *Atherton* to mark the spot while all four vessels continued searching throughout the night.

While Atherton's crew was doing its best

to destroy *U-853*, the ship's doctor was trying to save a German life. In sick bay, Lt. Maurice Vitzky was performing emergency surgery on prisoner Franz Krones, a captured Wehrmacht private, who was critically ill with a ruptured appendix. Krones had been transferred to the *Atherton* so Vitzky, a Jewish doctor, could remove the organ.

Gunner's Mate Preston Davis of Virginia was fascinated that a German prisoner was onboard his ship. He snuck down to sick bay to see Krones. "I'd just walk by and look at him every now and then," Davis told a reporter years later.

Krones survived the operation and went back to Germany after the war, where he told his family and friends how "a Jewish doctor saved his life," said Davis, who reached out to Krones in 2006.

At daybreak, the task force returned to the original contact site and discovered a grim scene floating on the surface: "German officer's cap, believed to be that of the commanding officer of the submarine; southwester; several emergency abandon ship kits containing canteens, rations, and inflatable rubber life rafts; considerable air bubbles; oil slicks extending for a distance of over a mile; considerable other debris much of which had German markings; a jackstaff; chart table top; planking; considerable other miscellaneous debris."

McCune was not convinced the U-boat was dead, so he ordered a resumption of sweeps. The *Amick* had departed to escort a Canadian freighter, so the duties fell to the crews of the *Moberly*, *Ericsson* and *Atherton*. Other destroyers had joined the hunt, searching outside the initial contact area in case the sub slipped through the cordon.

The task force was joined by two U.S. Navy blimps, the K-16 and K-58, from Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey. Part of Airship Squadron ZP-12, the dirigibles deployed sonobuoys and magnetic anomaly detectors along with dye and smoke flares. K-16 fired six rocket bombs while K-58 also dropped two depth charges, after which more debris was spotted.

Incredibly, sonar readings showed that *U-853* was still moving, creeping slowly along the bottom. McCune determined the sub was likely damaged, though the pressure hull had not yet been breached. He ordered the *Moberly* and *Ericsson* to move in for the kill, each firing a series of hedgehogs. After that, no more movement was detected. The U.S. Navy later gave credit to the *Atherton* and *Moberly* for sinking *U-853*.

On the off chance there might be survivors, USS *Penguin* was ordered to the last known contact site. On May 7—the day Nazi Germany surrendered—two Navy divers descended to the bottom, where they detected two holes in the U-boat's hull.

In hopes of securing the logbook, one of the divers opened a hatchway and found several

U.S. Coast Guard/National Archives

After their depth charges sank the German U-boat U-*853* with all hands in the North Atlantic off the coast of New London, Connecticut, on Sunday, May 6, 1945, U.S. Coast Guard crewmen of the frigate USS *Moberly* celebrate their victory by painting the silhouette of an enemy submarine on their ship's stack.

NOAA Ocean Exploration

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum, Albany, NY

ABOVE: Recovered after the sinking of U-*853* on May 6, 1945, the captain's hat bears mute testimony to the violent destruction of the U-boat hours before World War II came to an end. TOP: This synthetic aperture sonar image of the German U-*853* reveals that the U-boat hull remains largely intact in its final resting place off the U.S. coast. The submarine was dispatched with all hands after sinking two ships during the last days of World War II in the Atlantic. This image is courtesy of Kraken Robotics.

bodies blocking the way. He removed one and brought it to the surface. The remains were later identified as those of Matrosenobergefreiter (sailor corporal) Herbert Hoffman, who was 23 at the time of his death. His body was later sent to a hospital at Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island. What happened to his remains after that is unknown.

Scheduled for the next dive on the sunken U-boat, Clary Edwards was suited up on the diving platform when he was ordered to stand down.

"I said, 'What's going on?' and was told that all diving operations were to stop due to unexploded depth charges," he later told Bill Palmer, a Mystic Seaport scuba diver, who has explored the wreck several times over the past 50 years. No further dives were ordered by the Navy, which had future nautical charts of the site marked with the cautionary "Danger: Unexploded Depth Charges."

The story does not end here, though. Rumors abounded in the 1960s that the *U-853* carried Nazi gold at the end of the war. The scuttlebutt proved to be false.

Also in the 60s, a wealthy entrepreneur wanted to salvage the *U-853* and raise it as a tourist attraction. He even went as far as to remove skeletal remains from the wreck. His plans were halted after objections from the U.S. and German governments, local officials, and religious leaders. Now considered a military grave for the remaining 53 dead sailors, the site is protected from looting by international law.

"We, the Navy, consider it a war grave," said Admiral Cox. "Official policy is that a sunken ship is a fit and final resting place for the sailors who went down with it. That was Navy tradition until recently when it was codified into regulation."

The unidentified remains were turned over to the U.S. Navy, which buried them with full military honors at Newport's Island Cemetery Annex. Each year, representatives of the German navy and government attend graveside services honoring all who perished at sea in World War II.

"There was a bag of bones," Palmer said. "It may not have been one individual."

Next to the Naval War College Museum in Newport rests a stark reminder of the cost of war: the *U-853*'s two propellers. The memorial is a testament to the sacrifices made by tens of thousands of American and German boys during the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest continuous military operation of World War II. Whether through bravery or folly, their deaths serve as a symbol of what can happen when societies bang the drum of war.

"This is the end result of war," Palmer said. "It's not a video game where players come back to life. These men gave their lives when the war was really over." He added, "They were all good boys." □

Freelance author David Kindy has written extensively on World War II for HistoryNet, Smithsonian, *and numerous other publications. He lives in Plymouth, Massachusetts.*

Screaming Eagles of MERCY

BY PAUL WOODADGE

Around noon on June 6, 1944, a German soldier wielding a machine gun burst into a small church six miles from Utah Beach in Normandy, France, ignoring the Red Cross flag hanging from the door. He had been fighting most of the day against American paratroopers in the towns, farms, and hedgerows. Inside the church, he found wounded soldiers laid out on pews and the floor as two American medics tended to them. The German leveled his MG-42 machine gun at the occupants and prepared to fire, but then he noticed the medics were treating German soldiers as well as American soldiers. He lowered his weapon and headed back to the door. Before he left, he made the sign of the cross then locked eyes with one of the medics. Then he was gone.

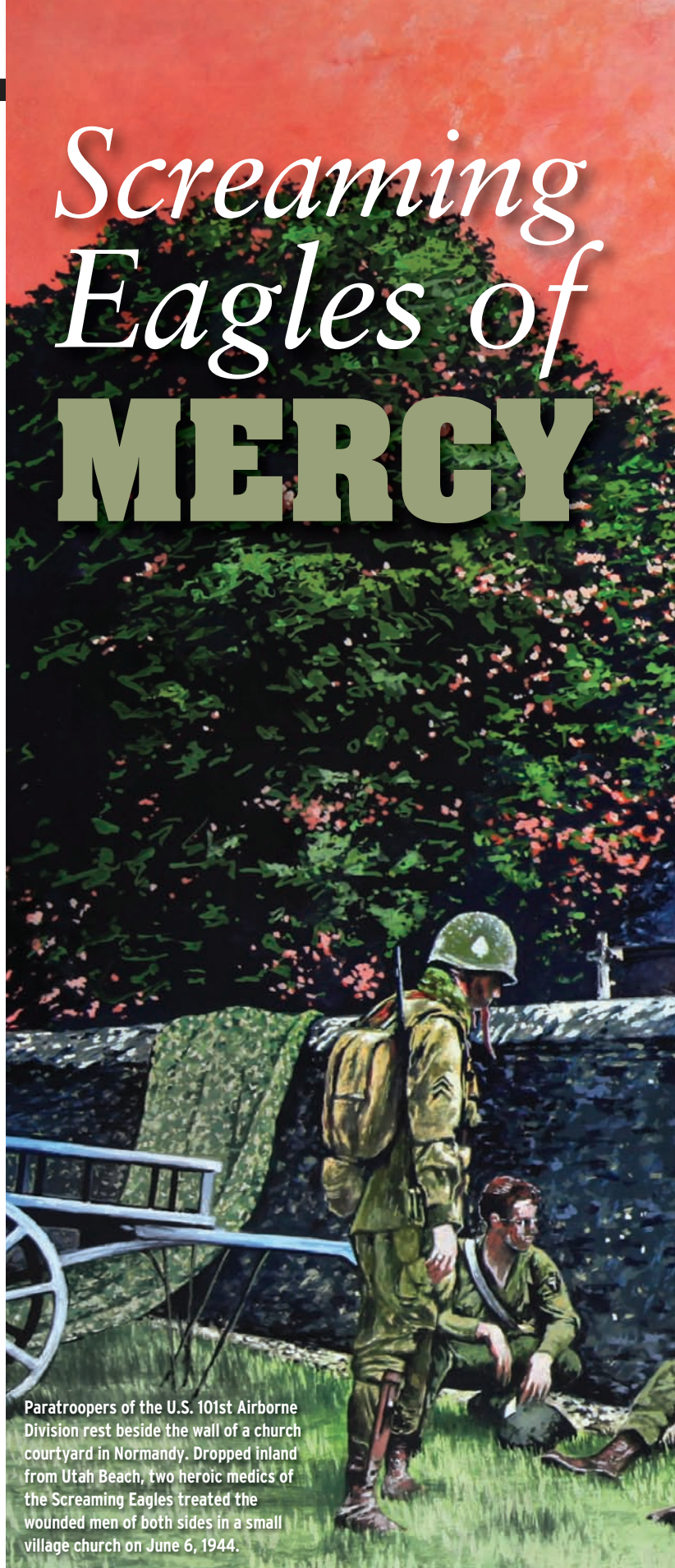
The two medics, Tech/5 Robert E. Wright and Private Kenneth J. Moore, with the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, had parachuted into Normandy 12 hours before and had turned the church into a medical aid station in the village of Angoville-au-Plain.

Wright, from Columbus, Ohio, and one of the shortest men in the regiment, enlisted in the Army in November 1942 at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. He volunteered for the airborne service and joined the 501st at Camp Toccoa, Georgia. Soon after, he attended Surgical Technician's School at Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta. He completed his training but was kept at the school as an instructor until he complained to one of his officers and returned to the regiment. He claimed to be part Cherokee, but recent historians have pointed out that African-Americans often claimed Native American heritage to enter all-white establishments.

Two 101st Airborne medics treated U.S. and German wounded in the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damien on D-Day.

Moore, from Los Angeles, California, and standing more than six feet tall, enlisted in the Army soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor and volunteered to be a paratrooper. He completed his airborne training with the 501st, and, after serving several months as a rifleman with Company D, also went to the school at Lawson General Hospital. He only attended the school for two weeks before rejoining his company and shipping out.

Both men parachuted into Normandy with the rest of the 101st and the 82nd Airborne Divisions. Wright jumped from his C-47



Paratroopers of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division rest beside the wall of a church courtyard in Normandy. Dropped inland from Utah Beach, two heroic medics of the Screaming Eagles treated the wounded men of both sides in a small village church on June 6, 1944.

Painting courtesy of the author

National Archives

Skytrain and landed safely on solid ground. Moore had a more tortuous jump. His C-47 dropped out of formation with mechanical trouble soon after takeoff from Merryfield, Somerset, England. The pilot successfully landed and the crew was able to fix the wing. The aircraft took off again, but near the drop zone in Normandy a falling bundle of equipment from another plane sheared off part of its right wing.

The aircraft plummeted through heavy flak as the pilot struggled to regain control, throwing the men around the cabin. Moore picked up one of the shorter paratroopers and helped him attach his static line to the anchor line before throwing the man out the open door. As Moore exited, the C-47's prop blast tore off his leg bag, crammed with most of his medical equipment. His parachute deployed only seconds before he splashed down into a few feet of water. Wind blew his parachute, dragging Moore through the water until he managed to cut himself free with his jump knife.

Meanwhile, Wright walked for almost two hours through swampy terrain until he came to the church. A young girl accompanied him and pointed out that the area was free of Germans. Wright decided the church would make a good aid station and draped a Red Cross flag over the door. Moore arrived soon after, having treated four paratroopers for wounds and parachute injuries on the way. The sun had yet to rise.

Dating back to the 12th Century, the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damien (*Église Saint-Côme et Saint-Damien*) had statues of the two saints near the stone altar. A wall and large trees surrounded the churchyard. The wall included fish-bone carvings—symbolic of the area's fishing trade.

Silently noting each other's medical armbands, the two men began carrying wounded paratroopers inside and laying them on the pews, where their blood stained the wood. Word quickly spread that the church had become an aid station.

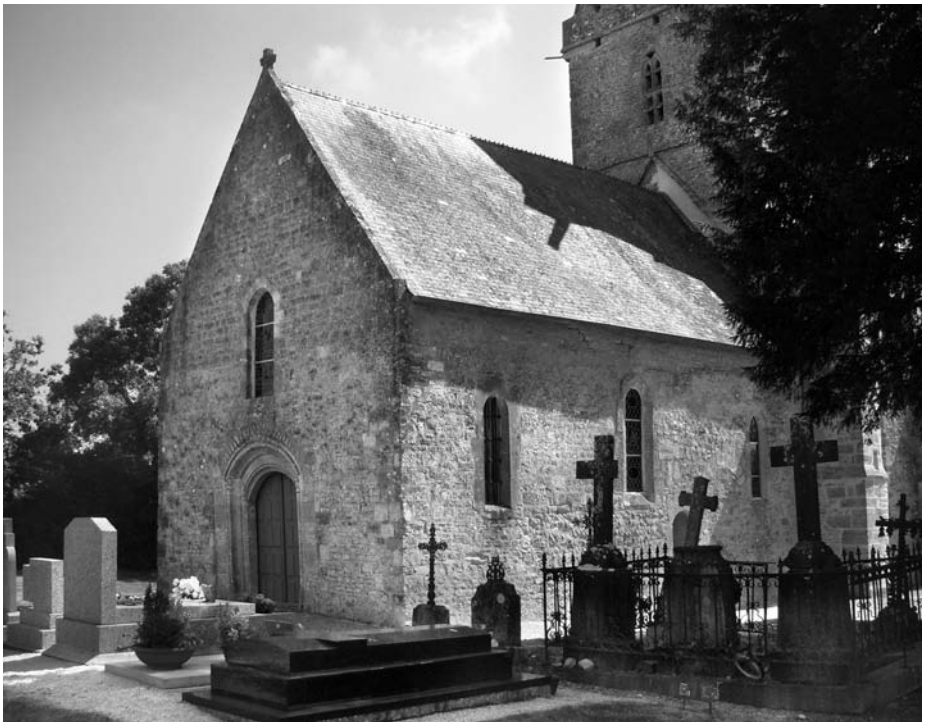
The medics positioned the wounded on the pews with their heads toward the aisle. As more wounded arrived, they resorted to placing them on the floor. Men with light wounds sat on benches that lined the walls near the altar. Moore and Wright wrapped the men in parachute sections to fight off the chill inside the church.

Ever mindful of maintaining morale, Wright followed triage protocols by separating the men by the severity of their wounds. Those with non-life-threatening injuries, either men lightly wounded or those in need of extensive assistance, were kept in the pews, the gravely wounded were placed near the altar, and those who seemed close to death were placed in the Sacristy area behind the altar, where they were given morphine and kept as comfortable as possible.

Both Wright and Moore insisted that, in order to keep the church neutral, no weapons would be allowed inside. Wounded men from both sides stacked or piled their arms outside the door before entering.

Outside, seesaw fighting continued between German paratroopers (*Fallschirmjäger*), and American paratroopers, mostly from the 501st, as both tried to get the upper hand. Bullets ricocheted inside the church while artillery explosions shook the structure, releasing dust that floated down from the ceiling. Exploding mortar rounds shattered the ancient stained glass windows. One of the wounded soldiers, lying on a pew, quickly rolled under it to escape the falling glass. He later recalled, "Hearing the glass and a wounded soldier calling out for his mother did not do anything for your morale."

Before noon, an ad hoc group of American paratroopers from Company C of the 326th Engineer Battalion, Company F of the 506th, and other strays, finally pushed the Germans out of Angoville.



BOTH: Courtesy of the author

ABOVE: A 21st century photo of the interior of the church where U.S. airborne medics Robert Wright and Kenneth Moore treated at least 80 casualties in their makeshift medical aid station, June 6-7, 1944. In order to keep the church neutral, Wright and Moore insisted no weapons would be allowed inside. When the church was full, they began treating patients outside. TOP: A 2011 photo of the 12-century Church of Saint-Côme and Saint-Damien in Angoville, Normandy, where medics Robert Wright and Kenneth Moore of the 101st Airborne Division treated wounded American, French and German soldiers on June 6-7, 1944. OPPOSITE: Shortly after parachuting into Normandy on D-Day, U.S. airborne troops make their way through a French village whose name has been blotted out by a U.S. Army Signal Corps censor.

Throughout the fighting, the two medics only left the church to retrieve wounded and draw water from a pump, which they then used to clean wounds and keep men hydrated, preventing shock. Moore departed more often than Wright since Wright had completed more medical training. Moore often moved the wounded in a wooden farm cart he found outside.

At times, the medics ventured out together to nearby farm houses and manors to retrieve the wounded from the battlefield. Bullets snapped all around but, to the medics' amazement, neither was ever hit as they dragged their cart around.

Inside the church, Wright worked feverishly to keep men alive as sweat dripped from under his helmet and blood dripped from his hands. Darting from pew to pew, he expertly tried to stop bleeding, set broken bones, and stitch open wounds. He also offered men water and tried to keep them as comfortable as possible.

The medics worked on everyone, no matter how catastrophic their injuries. When paratroopers brought in a comrade who had almost half his face blown off, Moore worked on his injuries in a desperate attempt to save the man's life. His efforts unfortunately failed, and the paratrooper was brought out behind the church for burial.

When Moore departed to pick up more wounded, he encountered a paratrooper with bullet wounds to his legs whose buddies had just dropped him off. As Moore helped the soldier onto his cart, another paratrooper wished his wounded friend good luck and waved to him. Then the paratrooper told Moore about another buddy nearby who had been wounded by a mortar round. Moore found the man and brought him to the church for treatment.

From time to time, the medics asked soldiers to head out in search of medical supply bundles dropped from C-47s, but they always came back empty. The medics would have to make do with the scant medical supplies they had or what they could lift from soldiers' medical packs. As the day wore on, the medics saw fewer jump injuries and more battle injuries.

With two other soldiers helping him, Moore stepped outside to find two wounded paratroopers standing in front of the church. One,

Sergeant Edward Hughes, fired on a concealed German sniper with an M3 grease gun in one hand, while he held his swollen eye open with his other. His other eye dangled from its socket. The other paratrooper, PFC Charles Ray Johnson, had already received multiple wounds, including a glance to the scalp from the concealed sniper. Both men were from Fox Company, 501st. Moore and his two helpers brought the men into the church.

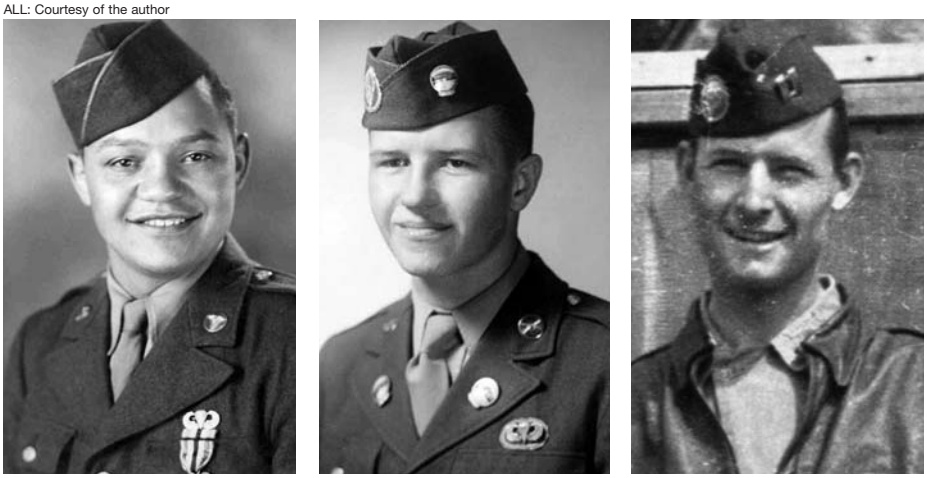
Moore laid Johnson on the church altar and Hughes on a pew. He then washed the congealed blood from Hughes' face and eyes. When Hughes regained his sight a little later, he credited Moore. Johnson's injuries, however, were grave. When Moore brought him some hot bullion, Johnson told him, "Give it to someone else as I'm not going to make it." Moore tried to reassure Johnson, but he passed away a little after midnight and was also brought behind the church for burial.

On another trip outside, Moore found Private James Luce, also from Fox Company, lying in a pool of his own blood with his right hand almost severed. With enemy machine-gun fire cutting the air, Moore grabbed some parachute silk from his cart, crawled to Luce, rolled him onto the parachute, and dragged him to safety. He then placed Luce on the cart and quickly wheeled him back to the church. After laying him on the floor between pews, Moore realized Luce's entire arm was only held on by tendons. He cleaned the wound and applied a tourniquet. When Moore realized that Luce could not survive without a plasma infusion, which was not available, he moved him to the sacristy area where he died later that night.

Moore treated two other Fox Company paratroopers: Clifton Moore and Blanchard Carney. Clifton Moore's wounds were only superficial and, after treatment, he returned to combat.

Moore also picked up a rather large paratrooper named Ed Turer, who had been a boxer in civilian life. Turer had been hit in the face with shrapnel from his own hand grenade, which had bounced off some foliage when he threw it. Moore and another soldier picked up Turer (they did not have the cart with them) and attempted to carry him back to the church, but, just as he reached the door, he collapsed. "Sorry," Moore told Turer as he sprawled out in the dirt and gasped for breath, "I just can't get you any further." "That's all right," Turer responded, "I can walk," and he stepped into the church and sat on the floor.

ALL: Courtesy of the author



ABOVE: From left, U.S. Army medics Robert Wright and Kenneth Moore treated Captain Bill Osborn, who was brought to them in the church suffering from two broken legs. The medics also left the church on several occasions to retrieve wounded men and bring them in for treatment. BELOW: Two American medics treat a wounded soldier in Normandy. When Germans occupied the area around the temporary aid station they'd set up in a church, 101st Airborne medics Robert Wright and Kenneth Moore stayed with their wounded.

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Later that afternoon, the German with the MG-42 machine gun burst into the church. After he lowered his weapon and locked eyes with Wright, Wright considered the German his comrade, if only for a brief second.

For the rest of the day, the Germans left the church alone. Wright later recalled that the enemy appreciated what was going on in the aid station. One German dropped off two wounded comrades and other Germans helped carry wounded on stretchers into the church.

From time to time, enemy mortars landed on or around the church. Late in the afternoon, a mortar round hit the roof and exploded, dropping a piece of plaster onto Moore's unhel-

Wikimedia

Map © 2025 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

LEFT: Luftwaffe paratroopers (*Fallschirmjäger*) take cover against a wall during combat with Allied troops in Normandy. When Germans tried to enter the church where medics Moore and Osborn were treating wounded they were told to leave their weapons outside. Seeing that both German and American soldiers were being treated, they did so. BOTTOM: The tiny hamlet of Angoville-au-Plain, inland from Utah Beach and about three miles north of Caretan, was the scene of heavy fighting in Normandy on D-Day and afterward. Privates Robert Wright and Kenneth Moore, medics from the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, turned the village's 12th-century Church of Saint-Côme and Saint-Damien into an aid station where they treated at least 80 wounded and dying American, French, and German soldiers over a period of 72 hours, earning Silver Stars for their heroism amid difficult conditions.

meted head. A bit later, another mortar crashed through the roof and fell to the floor between the rows of pews filled with the wounded. The mortar cracked one of the stone squares on the floor but failed to detonate. Wright quickly scooped it up and tossed it outside. The single round, exploding inside the confined space of the church, could have easily killed them all.

That evening, paratroopers brought in Capt. Bill Osborne, Company D's commander. He had been found in a tree with two broken legs, one bent directly in front of him. Moore and Wright set his legs in splints.

As the sun began to set, an officer ran into the church and declared: "We can't hold the village, the Germans are everywhere. We're falling back to the DZ [Drop Zone]—we've gotta go right now!" The officer gave Moore and Wright the choice to pull back with the Americans or stay in the church and continue to treat the wounded. Both elected to stay.

By now, wounded American and German soldiers packed the small church. Some of the Germans eventually departed and returned to their positions. When Wright ran across them while looking for wounded, they simply waved to him.

Almost immediately after the Americans pulled back, the German Fallschirmjäger dug in around the church and set up their machine guns. A German officer, accompanied by two enlisted men, showed up at the church, and Moore told the small party they would have to leave their weapons outside if they wanted

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During the fighting around the town of Angoville, American airborne troops move along a country lane beside a village church. American medics Robert Wright and Kenneth Moore continually braved enemy fire to remove wounded American, French and German soldiers from combat areas and bring them to the church in Angoville. The pair saved many lives over the 72 hours of D-Day and D-Day+1.

to come in. Surprisingly, the Germans complied. The two medics explained that they were treating the wounded but needed a doctor. Without responding, the officer walked the cramped aisles, looking intensely at the wounded. When he noticed Germans lying next to Americans, he relaxed. The officer told Moore that he would send a doctor and advised the medics to stay inside the church.

The two medics went back to work until, a few hours later, another German officer, wounded in the groin and wielding a pistol, tried to enter the Church. Wright, who happened to be standing near the door, drew up his short self and blocked the doorway, insisting that the officer drop his pistol outside before he could come in for treatment. At first, the enraged officer threatened Wright, but common sense took over and he reluctantly sat down outside the church and awaited treatment, still with his pistol holstered.

Wright held his ground. Every time he passed the door on his rounds, he reached out and tapped the officer's pistol handle and pointed to the pile of weapons. Finally, after a few hours and a loss of blood, the officer drew his pistol and handed it to Wright. Then both medics cleaned his wounds, bandaged him, and offered him water. When they tried to administer morphine, the officer refused and chose to simply sit on the floor grimacing in pain.

Moore and Wright worked well into the night. Moore, having exhausted himself retrieving wounded, finally dozed off for a few minutes. Any peace the medics might have found was quickly shattered when another mortar barrage hit the village.

Soon after the smoke settled, two teenage German soldiers poked their heads out from the belfry's rafters and looked down on the shocked medics. They then made their way down to the first floor. The two terrified boys were not Fallschirmjäger but possibly artillerymen. Wright told them to sit down, keep their mouths shut, and not bother them, but the two young men offered to help and were put to work caring for the wounded.

The next day, June 7, the medics continued to treat the wounded. Around noon, the Fallschirmjäger pulled back from Angoville. The U.S. infantrymen who had landed the day before at Utah Beach had pressed inland, supported by Allied aircraft, naval guns, and massed artillery, and connected with the airborne forces, forcing the Germans to retreat. Paratroopers and an American tank advanced on the town. The tank fired its machine gun at the church door, and bullets ricocheted inside the stone walls, scaring everyone.

Then the tank pulled back to get a better range and opened fire on the windows. Seeing a catastrophe in the making, Wright grabbed an orange smoke grenade—the color for friendly forces—and stepped outside, pulled the pin, and tossed it. As orange smoke spewed from the canister, another church occupant waved an orange marker panel from one of the smashed-out windows. A third paratrooper ran to the tank and grabbed the phone in its rear and told the crew to stop firing. The triple effort succeeded, and the tank moved on.

By this point, the church had filled to capacity. New arrivals were treated outside, but that did not keep them from coming. Paratroopers now delivered the wounded in either an airborne equipment carrier or a captured German Kübelwagen.

At about 4 p.m., paratroopers from the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, supported by

ALL: Courtesy of the author

ABOVE LEFT: A stained glass window at the Angoville church memorializes the heroism and sacrifice of the American airborne troops who parachuted into battle on D-Day in Normandy, June 6, 1944. ABOVE RIGHT: Heroic medic Robert Wright returned to the church at Angoville where he risked his life to treat wounded men on D-Day. This photo was taken in 2008. Wright died in 2013 at the age of 89. Though his final wish to be buried at Angoville was not granted, some of his cremated remains were reportedly smuggled into France and spread in the churchyard under a stone plaque with his initials, R.E.W. Kenneth Moore died the following year at the age of 90. TOP: Blood stains are still visible on this wooden pew inside the church at Angoville. Many wounded men were treated inside the church by the heroic medics Robert Wright and Kenneth Moore of the 101st Airborne Division.

two Sherman tanks, advanced into Angoville. One of the tanks roared in the direction of a wounded paratrooper on the equipment carrier. Seeing this, an airborne sergeant fired his Thompson submachine gun at the tank, alerting the tank commander to change course. The tank swerved, narrowly missing the wounded man.

ABOVE: Damage from a mortar round that penetrated the belfry of the Angoville church on D-Day was repaired with plywood after the fighting moved away from the area. BELOW: This floor tile in the church at Angoville was shattered by a mortar round during the fighting in Normandy and remains broken as a remembrance of D-Day.

With the area now in American control, a lieutenant with the 501st entered the church to set up an observation post in the tower. Wright refused, explaining the church's use and the fact that the Germans respected its neutrality. The infuriated lieutenant ordered Wright to step aside, but Wright refused and the lieutenant stomped off.

Later in the day, Lieutenant Colonel Ballard, the 2nd Battalion, 501st commander, arrived at the church and asked Wright about his insubordination. Wright denied that he had been insubordinate but admitted his refusal of the lieutenant's order. Ballard departed without saying a word. No punishment ever came to Wright.

As the American reinforcements occupied the area, other medical personnel took over the church. It was time for the medics to turn over their aid station. Moore departed and

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Operation Torch Naval Encounter

During their landings on the coast of French North Africa in November 1942, the Allies were opposed by elements of the Vichy French Navy and other armed forces.

BY VICTOR KAMENIR

In the predawn hours on November 8, 1942, Rear Adm. Henry K. Hewitt and Maj. Gen. George S. Patton anxiously scanned the Moroccan shore from the bridge of the heavy cruiser USS *Augusta*. Around them was an armada of 102 American ships poised to commence Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa.

The troopship convoy UGF1 (United States—Gibraltar, Fast) left Chesapeake Bay, Virginia, on October 23. The convoy joined en route with two surface combat groups, forming Task Force 34 under Hewitt's overall command. The troopships carried 35,000 soldiers of Patton's I Armored Corps, comprising the U.S. 3rd and 9th Infantry Divisions, the U.S. 2nd Armored Division, and two separate tank battalions and supporting troops. Almost the same number of sailors crewed the vessels of the task force.

The target of Hewitt's command, designated as the Western Naval Task Force, was the port city of Casablanca on Morocco's Atlantic coast. Two similar task forces, designated as Central and Eastern, were moving into positions in the Mediterranean Sea for landings at Oran and Algiers in Algeria.

After the fall of France, Hitler's Germany occupied the northern part of the country and its Atlantic coast. The southern part of France

and its African colonies comprised the collaborationist "Vichy France," so named after its seat of government in the city of Vichy.

Vice Admiral Frix Michelier commanded French forces in the Casablanca sector. Michelier's naval forces comprised the battleship *Jean Bart*, one light cruiser, nine destroyers, eight small surface combatant vessels, eleven minesweepers, and eleven submarines. The cruiser *Primauguet* and the nine destroyers formed the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron under Rear Adm. Gervais de Lafond. Under construction at St. Nazaire, the *Jean Bart* barely escaped German arrival there in June 1940 and only one of its two turrets, each mounting four 8-inch guns, was operational.

Naval gunners manned the shore defenses, with a formidable battery at Point El Hank mounting four 7.6-inch and four 5.4-inch guns. Ground forces under Brig. Gen. Antoine Bèthouart consisted of four poorly equipped colonial regiments of questionable quality. Close to 170 aircraft, mainly older models, rounded out Michelier's forces.

Shells from the Vichy French battleship *Jean Bart* land near the USS *Augusta* during the Naval Battle of Casablanca in November 1942. The action was part of Operation Torch, the invasion of French North Africa, and the first major offensive for the Allies during World War II.

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On October 21, a British submarine covertly delivered Eisenhower's deputy, Maj. Gen. Mark Clark, to Algiers to contact high-ranking French officers to persuade them not to resist their recent allies. Foreign service officer Robert Murphy, President Roosevelt's personal representative already in Algiers as a member of a trade mission, had a similar task. They had contacted several French generals, Bèthouart among them, who readily agreed to cooperate. Admiral Michelier, believed loyal to the Vichy government, was not approached.

"The plan had to be based on the assumption that the French forces would resist, although it was devoutly hoped that they would not," Hewitt would later write. "The strong fixed defenses of Casablanca, the presence of French naval forces in the port, and the absence of suitable landing beaches in the area ruled out any direct attack on that city."

Three widely separated attack groups would conduct the capture of Casablanca. The northern group was to capture the airfield at Mehdia-Port-Lyautey, 80 miles up the coast. The main landing would be in the center at Fedala, 10 miles north of the city, and the southern group was to land at Safi, 120 miles away.

Each group of transports was protected by a covering group of combatant ships, screened on the flanks by destroyers and minesweepers from submarine attacks. The center group, the largest, was covered by the battleship USS *Massachusetts*, heavy cruisers USS *Augusta*, USS *Wichita*, USS *Tuscaloosa*, light cruisers USS *Cleveland* and USS *Brooklyn*, aircraft carrier USS *Ranger*, and escort carrier USS *Suwannee*.

The northern covering group consisted of the battleship USS *Texas*, escort carriers USS *Sangamon* and USS *Chenango*, light cruiser USS *Savannah*, and attendant destroyers and minesweepers. The battleship USS *New York*, light cruiser USS *Philadelphia*, escort carrier USS *Santee*, and its destroyers and minesweepers formed the southern group.

Aboard the *Ranger*, and the four tankers converted into escort carriers were 108 F4F Wildcat fighters, 36 SBD Dauntless dive bombers, and 28 TBF Avenger torpedo bombers. The ships also carried 76 P-40F Warhawk fighters from the U.S. Army Air Forces, which could be launched from a carrier but couldn't land on one.

Hewitt's ships began maneuvering into place late on October 7 in preparation to commence landings at 4 a.m. the next day. "So closely was the timetable executed that the Northern Attack Group arrived at its planned position off Mehdiya at 2400, the Southern Attack Group made Safi at 2345, and the Center Group was in Fedala Roads at 2353," wrote naval historian Rear Adm. Samuel Morison, "For precision planning and faultless execution, this on-the-minute arrival of a large, complicated Task Force after a voyage of about 4,500 miles merits the highest praise."

General Bèthouart received the alert 32 hours before the scheduled landings and departed Casablanca for Algiers to organize the uprising. During the night of November 7-8, Bèthouart commandeered an unwitting Colonial infantry battalion and occupied several government buildings as well as the headquarters of Gen. Charles Noguès, Commander-in-Chief of French forces in North Africa. Noguès and several high-ranking officers were detained at the head-

quarters. Commander-in-Chief of Vichy forces Adm. François Darlan, who was visiting his sick son in Algiers from France, was also arrested. While Bèthouart occupied the telephone exchange, Noguès headquarters had a separate telephone system, and he remained in contact with subordinate commands.

While detained at his headquarters, Noguès received word about Allied landings at Oran and Algiers around 3 a.m. on November 8 and passed the alert and orders to resist the invasion. By noon, Bèthouart was arrested, his abortive uprising put down, and Noguès and Darlan freed.

At 0:30 a.m. on November 8, Patton's soldiers began loading into landing craft from troopships positioned eight miles offshore. With the first light expected at 5:30 a.m. and sunrise at 7 a.m., the time to move to the shore was set for 3:30 a.m. However, operations in total darkness in heavy swells pushed the jump-off time back almost an hour. Once loaded, the landing craft and tank lighters moved to the line of departure 4,000 yards from the shore, from where it was supposed to take 15-20 minutes to land.

The landings were to commence without preparatory naval and air bombardment because Eisenhower wanted to avoid a confrontation between the erstwhile allies. The signal from the French that there would be no resistance was the French searchlight elevated to the vertical. All ships and aircraft received orders not to fire unless fired upon or in the face of imminent hostile action. American commanders worked out a signal system using American baseball terminology, "Batter Up" meant "I am being fired upon," and "Play Ball" was an order to open fire.

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ABOVE: Flying an air support mission during the opening hours of Operation Torch, a Grumman F4F Wildcat fighter plane takes off from the deck of the aircraft carrier USS *Ranger*. Fighters struck Vichy troop concentrations and other ground targets until the resistance was ended, playing a key role in the success of the Torch landings at Oran, Algiers, and Casablanca in November 1942. OPPOSITE: In early November 1942, Allied ships make their way toward the coast of North Africa prior to the inception of Operation Torch. This section of the Allied invasion force, photographed from a Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber, is headed for waters off Morocco and includes more than 20 transport vessels escorted by the battleship USS *Texas* and the cruiser USS *Augusta*.

With no indications of French intentions by 4:30 a.m., Hewitt ordered the first wave of Higgins boats (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel—LCVP) and tank lighters escorted by destroyers to proceed to their designated landing zones. Minesweepers began laying anti-submarine minefields north of Port Lyautey and south of Safi, while destroyers screened the outer perimeter of the task force against submarine attacks.

Converted destroyer-transports USS *Bernadou* and USS *Cole*, carrying K and L Companies, 47th Infantry Regiment, raced ahead of the first wave at Safi. They were fired upon by shore defenses as they entered the harbor, and signaled "Batter Up!" reports which were relayed to Rear Adm. Lyal Davidson, commander of the Southern Attack Group. Without waiting for acknowledgement, one of the escort destroyers, USS *Mervine*, and machine gunners on the landing craft returned fire. When the "Play Ball!" command was given, the battleship *New York* and cruiser *Philadelphia* began pounding the shore batteries.

Infantrymen from K and L Companies went ashore at 4:45 a.m. and quickly captured port facilities. Opposition from the French garrison, numbering less than 1,000 men, was minimal. There were few casualties among the U.S. Army troops, although a significant number of landing craft, primarily made of wood, were damaged or destroyed on the rocky shore. Destroyer *Mervine* suffered minor damage to its steering gear from a near miss by a shore battery. By 3:30 p.m., all of Safi was in American hands.

Almost immediately, "Batter Up" reports began coming in as French anti-aircraft guns opened fire on American aircraft in the north around Port Lyautey-Rabat area. At the command of "Play Ball," American fighters engaged their French counterparts coming up to meet them, as American dive bombers attacked French aircraft still on the ground. Supported by naval gunfire and aircraft, troops from the Northern Attack Group began coming ashore. As at Safi, opposition was light, and by 11 a.m., the Port Lyautey area was secured, and the Army P-40F Warhawk fighters began landing at the captured airfields.

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American infantrymen come ashore in North Africa during Operation Torch, November 8, 1942. Allied ground troops landed unopposed in some areas but experienced fierce Vichy French resistance at other locations.

As the landings at Port Lyautey commenced, a French armed sloop *Victoria*, escorting two steamers, blundered into the northern screening force. Ignoring the warning shots from the minesweeper USS *Hogan*, *Victoria* opened fire. The return fire from *Hogan* killed its gunnery officer and forced the French ships to beach.

At the site of main American landings at Fedala, the French shore batteries, the most powerful of which mounted four 5.4-inch guns with a range of up to 11 miles, opened fire in the dawning light. Cruisers *Wichita* and *Tuscaloosa*, hovering at the extreme range of French guns, returned fire after receiving permission to "Play Ball!"

The landing beaches at Fedala, 12 nautical miles from Casablanca harbor, were well within the range of El Hank battery and Jean Bart's guns, which joined the fray. They, in turn, were engaged by cruisers *Augusta* and *Brooklyn* and destroyers *Wilkes*, *Swanson*, *Ludlow*, and *Murphy*. Fighters from *Ranger* and *Suwannee* quickly established air superiority as American bombers attacked French shore batteries and ships in the harbor.

The *Massachusetts* scored multiple hits on *Jean Bart*, but most of its shells, as discovered later, failed to detonate due to faulty fuses. One round, however, hit Jean Bart's only operational turret and jammed its drive train, rendering the turret inoperable. Three French submarines and three passenger ships, fortunately with no passengers aboard, were sunk at their piers.

French return fire, although spirited, was largely ineffective. A hit on the destroyer USS *Murphy* opposite Fedala killed three sailors and damaged an engine, and the minesweeper USS *Palmer* suffered minor damage from two hits.

Around 8 a.m., six French destroyers sortied from Casablanca harbor and headed for Fedala to attack troopships. They managed to damage several landing craft before being intercepted by U.S. destroyers *Wilkes* and *Ludlow*. French destroyer *Miland* dueled with *Wilkes*, scoring hits on each other before the arrival of cruisers *Augusta* and *Brooklyn* forced the French vessels back.

Shortly after 10 a.m., the light cruiser *Primauguet* and several submarines on the French side and *Massachusetts* and *Tuscaloosa* joined the action. French destroyers *Fougueux* and *Boulannais* succumbed to multiple hits and went down. Augusta took a hit from El Hank battery, but the damage was minor. Despite multiple French torpedoes in the water, none of the American ships were hit. Deftly maneuvering American ships avoided the worst of French fire, although there were a few close calls. "I was on the main deck when a shell hit so close it splashed water all over me, and later, on the bridge, one hit even closer; I was too high to

get wet," Patton remembered, "It was hazy, and the enemy used smoke well. I could just see them and make out our splashes with our ships firing like hell and going in big zigzags and curves to keep the enemy from our subs."

By noon, outgunned and strafed by aircraft, French vessels were getting the worst of it. The cruiser *Primauguet* and destroyers *Milan*, *Frondeur*, and *Brestois* were heavily damaged, disengaged, and retreated to port. Destroyer *Albatros*, its engines damaged, was left behind. Of the seven French vessels engaged, only *L'Alcyon* returned to port undamaged.

Very few American landing craft were damaged or destroyed by French fire or strafing by aircraft. However, heavy waves capsized some boats while others dashed apart on rocky beaches. Over a hundred landing craft were damaged or destroyed on November 8. Such high loss of landing assets severely delayed American ground forces coming ashore. Nevertheless, sufficient troops landed to overcome Fedala's garrison of 2,000, and by noon, the town was in American hands.

Around 12:45, the French armed dispatch vessel *La Grandière*, two minesweepers, and a tug left Casablanca harbor to rescue survivors at Fedala. However, their foray was viewed as hostile and fired upon. The tug took *Albatros* in tow but, attacked by American fighters, beached the wounded vessel. *Primauguet* and *Milan* barely limped to port and settled on the shallow bottom. In the late evening, destroyers *Brestois* and *Frondeur* were finished off by aircraft from *Ranger* and sunk in the harbor. The 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron was effectively out of action, with only destroyers *Tempête* and *Simoun*, which did not engage in the morning, remaining operational in addition to *L'Alcyon*.

Despite the valiant efforts by the French, the action on November 8 was overwhelmingly one-sided. Of the four American ships hit by French shells, none suffered serious damage, and only three sailors were killed on *Murphy*. Six American aircraft were lost at the cost of more than 20 French planes shot down and a roughly equal number destroyed on the ground. Three French submarines were sunk in the harbor, and eight sortied to meet the Americans. They launched 20 torpedoes at American vessels with no hits. Of the eight French subs, three were sunk by depth charges, one damaged and beached, one escaped to Cadiz, Spain, and two to French-held Dakar in Senegal. Only one, *Orphée*, made it back to Casablanca undamaged.

American vessels, other than providing gunfire and air support, were not engaged with their French counterparts on November 9. The action primarily took place on land and in the air as American ground forces closed in on Casablanca from north and

In this photo, probably taken on November 9, 1942, General George S. Patton, Jr., is shown at lower left aboard a landing craft headed for his first visit to the Moroccan landing zone during Operation Torch. Patton commanded the Western Task Force, which came ashore at Casablanca. At the far left, behind Patton, is Rear Admiral John T. Hall.

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south. On November 9 and 10, Hewett and Pattons sent Michelier armistice offers, which he rejected.

On November 10, two French corvettes sortied from Casablanca harbor to fire on American troops advancing along the shore from Fedala. As Augusta and four American destroyers drove off the French ships, the turret on *Jean Bart* came alive. The French had repaired the damages to its turret on November 9, but left the guns in their prior position so that it appeared to be still out of action.

"Suddenly, two huge orange splashes rose, so close alongside the bridge of the *Augusta* that I and others on the flag bridge were doused with the spray," wrote Hewitt. "We promptly rang up full speed, put the rudder full right, made smoke and zigzagged away, but not before we had been near-missed several times more by the *Jean Bart*'s two-gun salvos."

Around 3 p.m., American SBD Dauntless dive bombers scored two hits with 1,000-pound bombs on *Jean Bart*. The French battleship took on water and settled to the bottom of the harbor with its guns elevated to an angle where they could not fire on American vessels.

By the end of November 10, American forces surrounded Casablanca. Everything was ready for the final assault the following day. At 5:30 a.m. on November 11, Patton sent a captured French officer to Michelier with emphatic demands to surrender immediately or be destroyed.

Unbeknown to Michelier, Darlan was captured by Americans on November 10. In a deal with Eisenhower, in exchange for being recognized as a French High Commissioner and commander of French forces in Africa, Darlan signed an armistice and ordered the French forces to surrender and cooperate with the Allies. Patton's demands coincided with orders relayed to Michelier by Darlan, who was seconded by General Noguès, also captured by Americans, and brought to Casablanca. By 7 a.m., Michelier ordered his forces to lay down their arms, and Casablanca was fully occupied by 11 a.m.

"At 2 o'clock, Admiral Michelier and General Nogues came to treat for terms," Patton wrote, "I opened the conference by congratulating the French on their gallantry and closed with champagne and toasts. I also gave them a guard of honor—no use in kicking a man when he's down."

On the evening of November 11, two German submarines arrived at Casablanca. Shortly before 8 p.m., the U-*173* under Oberleutnant zur See Hans-Adolf Schweichel, hugging the shallow waters off the coast, snuck in between the minefield and the shore and fired five torpedoes, all of which hit the transport USS *Joseph Hewes*, tanker USS *Winooski* and destroyer USS *Hambleton*. Most of the troops from Joseph Hewes had already come ashore, but approximately 100 men died, including its captain, Robert Smith.

The *Winooski* and *Hambleton* remained afloat. A torpedo hit *Winooski* on an empty fuel compartment, and the ship continued operations. The *Hambleton* suffered serious damage to its engine room and 20 men were killed. She was towed to Casablanca harbor and eventually returned to the United States. The second submarine, U-*130* under Kapitän zur See Ernst Kals, did not score any hits, and the two vessels slipped away despite frantic efforts to find them.

On November 12, as American aircraft and light vessels hunted the two German submarines, U-*130* snuck in again, firing five torpedoes for five hits. Transports USS *Edward Rutledge*,

Tasker H. Bliss, and *Hugh L. Scott* went down with the loss of almost 80 men. The U-*130* slipped away unscathed again.

In their hunt for the German U-boats, American aircraft mistook the French submarine *Sidi Ferruch*, which did not take part in earlier fighting, and sank her off the coast of Fedala.

On November 15, the U-173 scored a torpedo hit on the cargo ship USS *Electra*, but the ship remained afloat for two days before being beached at Casablanca. She eventually returned to the United States. In turn, the U-*173* was run down by destroyers *Woolsey*, *Swanson*, and *Quick* and sunk by depth charges on November 16.

The U-*130* left the area to continue haunting Allied shipping under a different captain, Oberleutnant zur See Siefried Keller. By the time American destroyer USS *Champlin* sank her with depth charges off the Azores on March 12, 1943, the U-*130* sent 24 Allied ships to the bottom of the sea.

Except for the loss of life inflicted by the two German U-boats, American casualties during the battle of Casablanca came to approximately 170 killed and 400 wounded. French casualties came to over 400 killed and 200 wounded.

Being treated with respect and courtesy by Hewett and Patton, Michelier and Darlan offered full cooperation to the Americans. Released French prisoners were allowed to keep their arms, and French flags continued flying over administration buildings. Local authorities worked hand-in-hand with the Americans in swiftly repairing damages to harbor facilities, ensuring speedy disembarkation of American troops, equipment, and supplies.

Of the French ships damaged during the battle, some, like destroyer *Albatros*, were fully repaired and served with the Free French. The cruiser *Primauguet*, damaged beyond repair, was sold for scrap after the war. The battleship *Jean Bart* was refloated, but it was still incomplete and did not enter active service.

Its mission completed, the Western Naval Task Force left Casablanca. The troopships and their escorts returned to the United States, while the combatant ships were assigned other missions. The UGF2 convoy, which arrived off Casablanca on November 13, began disembarking the next wave of troops and supplies. For his successful operation completion, Hewett received his third star as a Vice Admiral.

Admiral Darlan was assassinated by a monarchist member of French Resistance Fernand Bonnier de la Chapelle in December 1942. Admiral Michelier was placed on leave after Darlan's death. After his disagreements with Admiral Phillippe Auboyneau, commander of the Free French Navy, Michelier was forcibly retired in December 1943.

Hitler was enraged with the French going onto the Allied side in Africa. As a result, German troops occupied most of the Vichy France territory. On November 17, Hitler ordered the launch of Operation Lila, aimed at capturing the French fleet in Toulon. In defiance, the French admirals ordered the scuttling of the fleet. More than 70 ships, including three battleships and seven cruisers, were damaged and sunk by their crews.

Now a major hub of Allied operations in Northwest Africa, Casablanca hosted a conference in January 1943 between Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was invited but did not attend, citing ongoing fighting on the Eastern Front. Generals Charles de Gaulle and Henri Giroud, representing the Free French Forces, attended as observers.

Between them, Roosevelt and Churchill worked out multiple steps regarding further conduct of the war, the most important being the decision to invade Sicily in 1943 and the doctrine of Axis powers' unconditional surrender.

While the successful Operation Torch resulted in the opening of the second front against German and Italian forces in northwestern Africa and a staging point for eventual invasion of Southern Europe, there was much hard fighting ahead. □

Naval History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: The incomplete Vichy battleship *Jean Bart*, refloated after she was hit by 16-inch shells from the USS *Massachusetts* and two hits from 1,000-lb. bombs dropped by SBD Dauntless dive bombers from the USS *Ranger*. OPPOSITE: American soldiers scurry off the beach in French Algeria in the opening hours of Operation Torch, November 8, 1942. Once Vichy resistance had been subdued, the Allied invasion was successful.

Victor Kamenir is the author of The Bloody Triangle: The Defeat of Soviet Armor in the Ukraine *and a frequent contributor to* WWII History *and* Military Heritage *magazines.*

TIGER'S *First Defeat*

British, American, and French forces met the dreaded German PzKpfw. VI Tiger tank in Tunisia's Robaa Valley in a clash that turned green British and American troops into veterans. | BY IAN MITCHELL

Early on the morning of January 31, 1943, Lt. Stanley Edwards, a troop commander in the British 72nd Anti-Tank (AT) Regiment, was roused with news that enemy tanks were moving through their isolated valley in northern Tunisia. Having just gone to sleep at 2 a.m., Edwards threw a trench coat over his pajamas and went out to command his troop of 6-pounder anti-tank guns facing the terrifying sight of German PzKpfw. VI Tiger tanks moving down a dusty road.

Edwards and 1st Troop, A Battery, 72nd AT Regiment were supporting the 5th Battalion of the East Kent Regiment, who in turn were in positions northeast of the Tunisian town of Robaa. Known as the "Buffs," due to the buff facings of their uniform adopted during the 17th Century, the East Kents had been enjoying a rest since January 16, when it had been relieved and moved to the town of Beja.

The Buffs weren't new to battle, having experienced a tough time in France in 1940 and recently fought several engagements with both Italian and German troops. Unfortunately, their time in reserve would be short. The following day the battalion's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Penlington, handed unit command over to Lt.-Col. A.D. "Ginger" McKechnie, who ordered the men to end their briefest of rests and head back to the front within days.

That order did not endear McKechnie to his command, especially as the officers and men were fond of their old colonel and didn't know why he'd been relieved. McKechnie had two more strikes against him: he was a Territorial Army (TA) officer, and worse still, he was not even from the regiment. He had been commissioned into The Sherwood Foresters Regiment but spent much of his time with the Honourable Artillery Company. McKechnie probably had hoped that he might be given a grace period to get to know his battalion a little better while they

Alamy

Fighting raged in the Djebel Hills of Tunisia during the 1943 Tunisian Campaign. In this image British gunners battle Axis forces of the Afrika Korps near the site of the encounter that took place in the Robaa Valley that winter.

were in reserve before going into combat, but it was not to be. Instead, McKechnie and his unit were quickly on the move and facing a German tank attack in the Robaa Valley on January 31.

At 7:24 that morning, with the main force occupying the small hamlet of Sidi Said, McKechnie's leading companies were a mile down the road watching with deep concern as a column of German tanks, including at least two huge Tiger tanks, advanced toward them. It appeared to his soldiers that their new commander's time leading the 5th Buffs might be quite short. After all, if their new boss managed to lose most of his battalion within days of taking command he was unlikely to be around for very long. McKechnie, however, seemed unperturbed.

On January 18, while the Buffs were resting near Beja, German General Von Arnim, the commander of the Axis forces in the north, had developed a plan to take advantage of the overextended Allied positions in northern Tunisia. He had previously identified that the weak, ill-equipped, and poorly supplied French forces located in central Tunisia made a tempting target for his combat-hardened and recently reinforced army. In the middle of January, Von Arnim tasked Major General Webber, the commander of the 334th Infantry Division, with undertaking a new operation, codenamed *Eilbote* (German for courier or fast express), that would have two aims.

The first part of Operation Eilbote was designed to be a diversion but could still cause significant damage to British forces located in and around the town of Bou Arada.

The main attack was intended to inflict damage on French units of the XIX Corps and split their forces in two by driving over the mountains and down the Ousseltia Valley 100 miles south of Tunis. Arnim's plan was deliberately conceived to strike close to the boundary between the French XIX Corps and the British V Corps so that it might cut off French forces based on one side of the Dorsal range from those on the other side.

At this point the French, under the command of General Juin held almost half of the Allied front line covering central and southern Tunisia despite the odds—colonial forces were not only poorly equipped, armed, and supplied, but held large swathes of territory against more experienced well-equipped German forces. This made the French extremely vulnerable to German counterattacks led by tanks, modern artillery, and the Luftwaffe, which held local air superiority.

When the Germans launched the opening phase of Operation Eilbote on January 18, 1943, they inflicted significant damage on the French. General Kenneth Anderson commander of the Allied First Army, was forced to send weary British troops to reinforce the French, particularly the Tunis Division of XIX Corps south of the German-held town of Pont Du Fahs 35 miles southwest of Tunis.

The threat created by Eilbote to the French led Anderson to send orders to McKechnie and the 5th Buffs and other units on January 20 to move from Beja to the small town of Robaa Oulad Yaha in the Robaa Valley. There the British 36th Infantry Brigade assumed responsibility for the defense of the valley against a further attack by the Germans.

The original plan for Eilbote assumed the main attack would begin near the Kebir Reservoir, then move briefly down the Robaa Valley to the junction of a road leading over the mountains southeast to the Ousseltia Valley. It was not intended to drive any further down the Robaa Valley.

McKechnie and the 5th Buffs took up positions around the small town of Robaa on January 21, reinforced by a single squadron of the 17th/21st Lancers. On January 25 the battalion moved forward to just northeast of the hamlet of Sidi Said, about eight miles north of Robaa.

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: In early January 1943, two British soldiers maintain vigil on a hilltop near the town of Mateur, Tunisia, which was in enemy hands at the time. Serious fighting was soon to erupt in the Tunisian desert. OPPOSITE: On December 31, 1942, a crew from No. 255 Anti-tank Battery takes up a position at Medjez el Bab with their 6-pounder anti-tank gun—a significant improvement over the earlier 2-pounder.

Alamy

For the next few days, the 5th Buffs patrolled and improved its positions. Engineers laid mines, and the anti-tank platoon gunners positioned their 6-pounder guns.

Meanwhile, on January 28, substantial reinforcements had arrived with the 6th Royal West Kents from the 36th Infantry Brigade, a squadron of the Derbyshire Yeomanry, and the 12th Royal Horse Artillery (RHA). Additional reinforcements included the U.S. 2nd battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division. The 1st Infantry Division, nicknamed the Big Red One, had landed in Algeria at Arzew and engaged briefly in fighting with Vichy French units before moving to Tunisia in January. It had not yet encountered the German army in battle.

The initial German attack ran into fierce resistance and got bogged down. A combat command of the U.S. 1st Armored Division had been placed under French command and sent to the Ousseltia Valley, and the German offensive was then halted on von Arnim's orders. However, on January 28, von Arnim ordered Eilbote resumed, and he specifically encouraged an attack down the Robaa Valley.

McKechnie had placed his A and C Companies in positions, respectively, on the north and south side of the main road. His other two rifle companies were located with his Headquarters Company and battalion headquarters about 1.5 miles south and closer to the few mud houses of the hamlet of Sidi Said. The area on both sides of the road had a number of gullies and trees, which made offroad vehicular movement by the Germans difficult and created something of a choke point. His right flank was protected to the southeast by the 6th battalion of the Queen's Own West Kents and the Americans of the 2nd battalion, 16th Infantry located in the hills east southeast of his location. The 2nd Battalion was commanded by Lt.-Col. Joe Crawford, a tough 38-year-old West Pointer from Texas, ably assisted by his executive officer Maj. Charles T Horner, who had somehow acquired the nickname "Batshit" from his subordinates, presumably for his usual reaction when one of them got into trouble.

Although A Company of the Buffs was shelled and mortared on January 30, there had been no significant signs of a major German armored attack. Meanwhile, Crawford's G Company had managed to secure a key position on Hill 727, which overlooked the Robaa Valley. During that move the company also incurred some casualties including their company commander, who was killed with a patrol trying to recover a wrecked jeep. The patrol was only able to withdraw because their attached British Forward Observation Officer, Captain Cracknell of the 12th RHA, was able to call down accurate artillery fire. On the night of January 30, the Americans heard engines but could not confirm the location, so no report was made to 36th Infantry Brigade.

Therefore, it was a shock to the 5th Buffs on the morning of January 31, when a column of 12 tanks was sighted moving south down the road. This column was part of Kampfgruppe Lueder named after the commander of the 501st Panzer Battalion (*Abteilung*) and comprised its 2nd Company supported by the 1st Battalion, 69th Panzergrenadier Regiment and possibly a 2nd company of tanks from the 10th Panzer Division. Most sources state that the leading tanks were two Tigers, but the 5th Buffs' war diary is unclear on this issue, and German armored tactics were to lead Tiger battalion advances with PzKpfw. III or IV tanks. The leading German tanks advanced while machine-gunning both sides of the road, and the British infantry quickly crouched down in their slit trenches. The soldiers watched with increasing nervousness as the first couple of tanks drove to within 200 yards of their location, then almost up to their positions, and nothing had happened.

Suddenly, a Verey flare shot into the sky

and at least 10 anti-tank guns opened up from hidden flank positions on both sides of the road. The German tanks came under fire from at least two troops of 6-pounder anti-tank guns from A Battery, 72nd AT Regiment, Royal Artillery (RA) along with a couple of 2-pounder anti-tank guns of the 5th Buffs—the ace up McKechnie's sleeve.

The 2nd Troop was commanded by Stanley Edwards, and though his sartorial standards might not have been those expected of a British Army officer he had ensured that his gunners' aim was true. They scored multiple hits on the three leading tanks. According to one contemporary account, the anti-tank guns waited until the German tanks exposed their sides before commencing fire at distances ranging from 680 to 800 yards, well within their effective range.

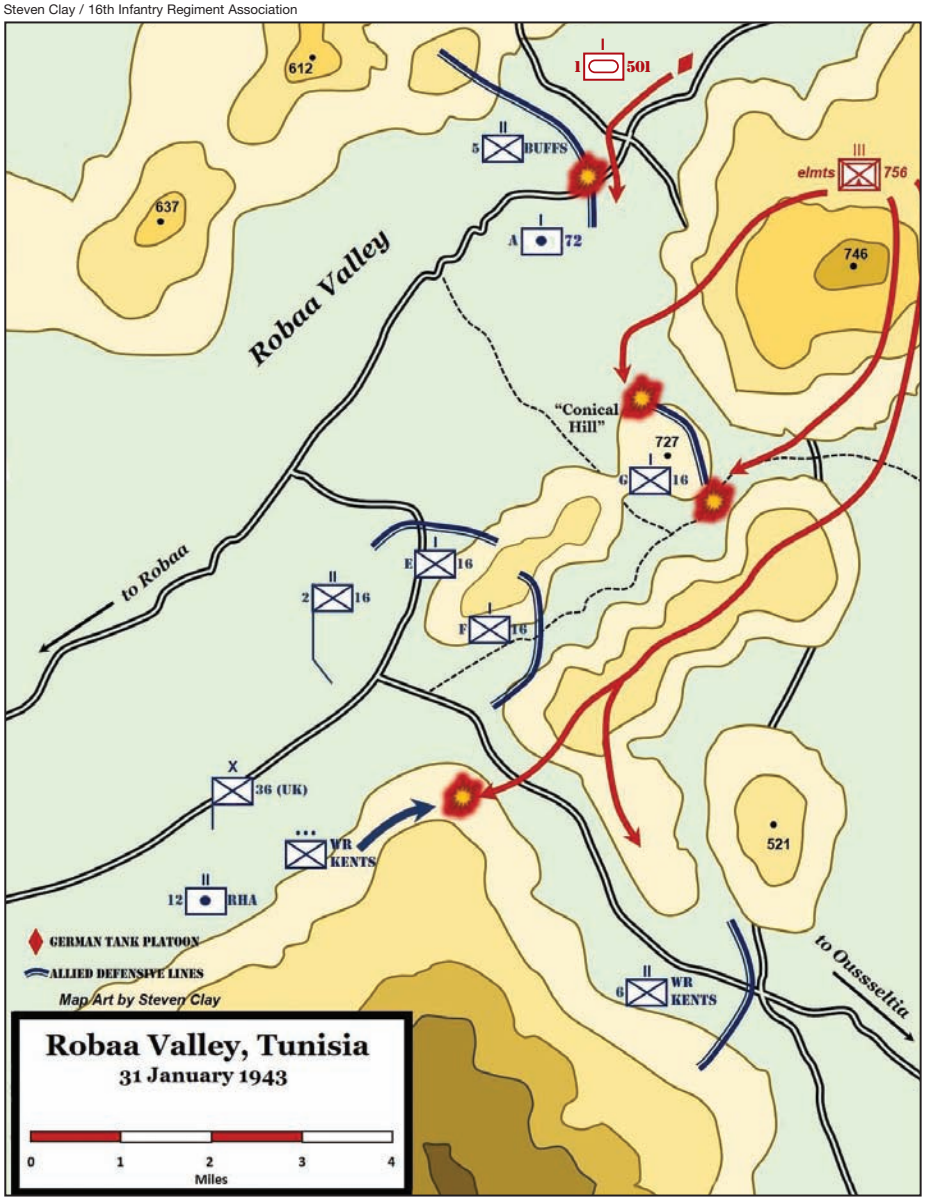
According to accounts of the battle, the first five armor piercing (AP) solid shot shells glanced off the sides of the lead Mark VI Tiger, but the next three immobilized it or possibly destroyed it. In tandem with firing their 6-pounder guns, the anti-tank crews also ensured the German tank crews stayed buttoned up as they engaged the tanks with light machine-gun fire, probably using Bren guns. This made it difficult for the German tank commanders and gunners to spot the anti-tank positions or maneuver. What seems to be less clear is whether it was the 6-pounder shells or recently emplaced anti-tank mines that caused the first tank to stop followed by the two that followed. The 5th Buffs' war diary says two tanks hit mines, while other accounts credit the damage and then destruction of all three tanks to the anti-tank guns. The crew of the first Tiger soon decided that discretion was the better part of valor and abandoned their disabled tank.

Despite this success, neither Edwards nor the Buffs were able to rest on their laurels. The first attack was followed by a second starting at about 8:25 a.m., and this one was supported by German infantry and a second Tiger tank. Within 30 minutes, the first three German tanks had been completely set ablaze, and another three tanks had stopped firing. One of the German tanks in the second group was confirmed as the first Mark VI Tiger tank to be destroyed in Tunisia. The Tiger in the first group remained immobilized. The loss of six tanks seemed to have deterred a further attack, and the Buffs watched the remaining tanks withdraw down the road. But the Germans had not given up, and for the next eight hours the 5th Buffs came under a series of attacks. Eventually, A Company, 5th Buffs, which interestingly was under the command of a Canadian Infantry officer, Major McLachlan, was dislodged from its position on a hill north of the road.

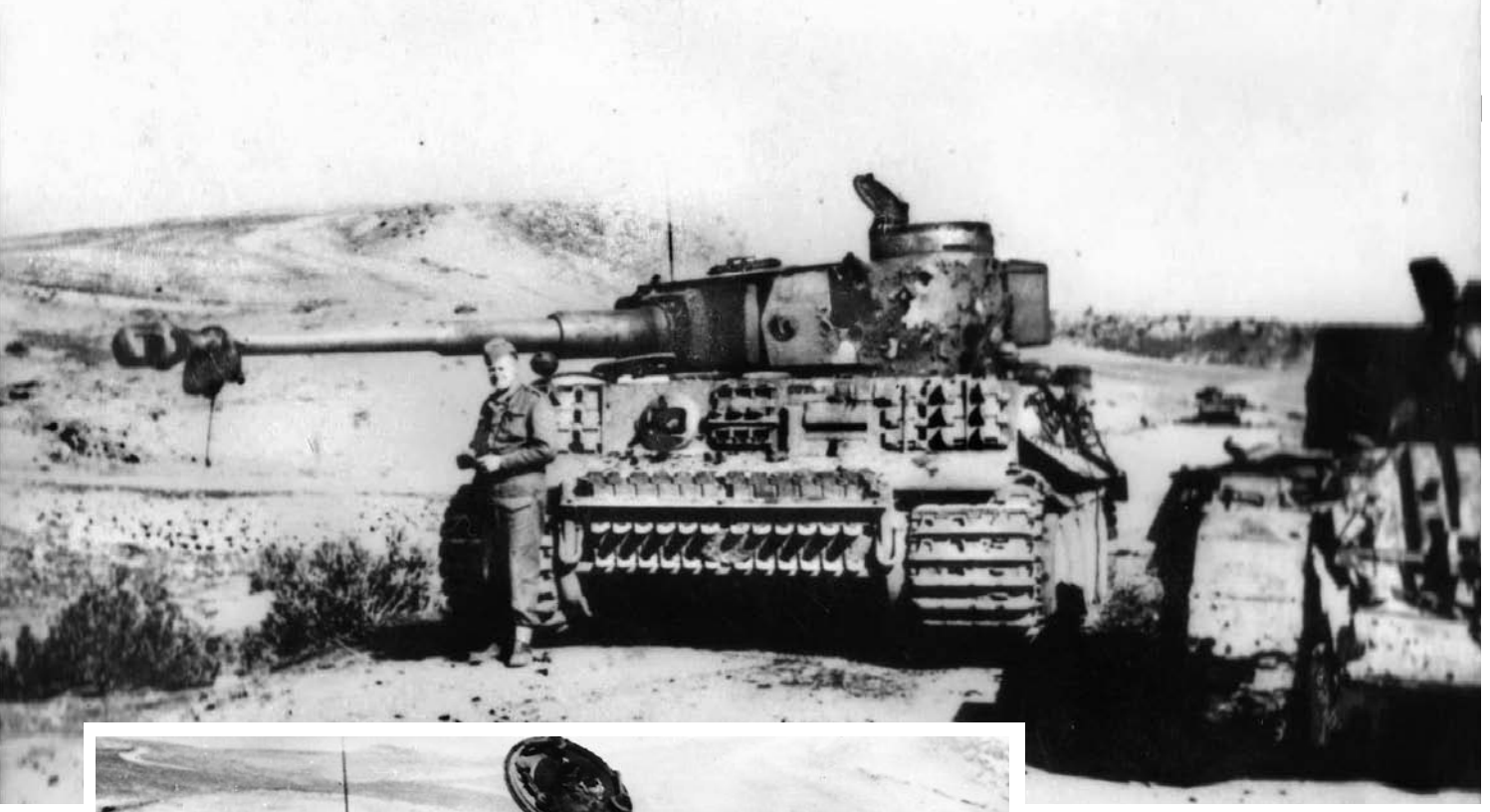
As these events transpired, down in the valley the Americans also found themselves under attack. Company G, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment under the command of its executive officer, managed to hold on for a time to Hill 727 but was then pushed off the crest. After losing a second position, the battalion was able to stop the German advance with the help of the 12th RHA. Meanwhile, the companies of the 5th Buffs near the road were regularly probed by tank forays and accompanying panzergrenadiers. Both Royal Air Force and Luftwaffe aircraft bombed and strafed troops and vehicles.

Two attacks by RAF Hawker Hurricane fighter-bombers from No. 225 Squadron, during

Steven Clay / 16th Infantry Regiment Association



In the Robaa Valley of Tunisia in January 1943, Allied forces took on the brunt of a German thrust during Operation EILBOTE II, opposing enemy armour and infantry.



Both: The Tank Museum, Bovington, UK

ABOVE: Canadian Army Major Cyril Brown, commanding officer of 256 Royal Engineer Field Company, inspects a Tiger tank of the 501st Heavy Panzer Battalion. The tank was disabled during the fighting in the area northeast of Robaa and is believed to have been the first PzKpfw. VI tank destroyed in action during World War II. LEFT: This photo of the knocked out Tiger tank was taken after the tank had burned for several hours, as evidenced by the blistering of the exterior paint. The tank was later destroyed by an explosive, though it remains unclear whether British sappers or German Pioniere were responsible for planting the demolition charge.

the morning may have helped finish off the destruction of some of the stationary tanks. According to one of the pilots involved in their second attack, the Hurricanes "well and truly clobbered a German infantry unit." One Hawker was shot down, but the pilot survived. Tragically, an errant British bomb appears to have accidentally caused two friendly casualties.

The remaining immobile Tiger attracted the attention of the British, who wanted to study it. The 5th Buffs' war diary suggests that an attempt was briefly made to recover it early that afternoon, but it is unclear how that might have been achieved. The only tank unit nearby was the 17th/21st Lancers, and their recovery vehicles might not have had the power to recover the Tiger.

What is clear is that at some point a small party from the 256th Field Company, Royal Engineers sortied into no man's land to inspect the Tiger and then inspect or immobilize any other remaining German tanks. The engineers were led by Major Brown, a Canadian officer on loan to the First Army, who commanded the 256th Field Company. Brown and his men came under fire, and Brown was wounded. It is likely that the same happened to the German party who tried in daylight to recover their tanks, since they were actively discouraged by the 5th Buffs. It was the Germans, however, who were successful later that night as they managed to recover the immobilized Tiger.

Throughout the day and into the evening, German infantry and tanks endeavored to outflank and destroy the garrison at Sidi Said and the Americans in the hills, but they failed to do so. Moreover, they also suffered significant casualties at the hands of the 25-pounder guns of the 12th RHA, which were directed by observation parties located within the company positions of the 5th Buffs. The East Kents' infantry companies added to the problems faced by the Germans whenever they tried to advance. In addition, the 12th RHA also hit another German tank and an armored car while several trucks were shelled and bombed by the RAF.

In the hills northeast of the 5th Buffs, the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry came under further heavy mortar fire and then infantry

attack from three sides. After suffering several casualties and the loss of its mortars, the battalion was forced to withdraw again. To their credit and despite their losses, the three American companies G, E and F, then held firm and inflicted significant losses on the Germans. Like all inexperienced Allied troops in Tunisia, they were learning their profession under fire. To the south, the 6th Queen's Own West Kents were also briefly engaged and had to counterattack and retake a hill lost by the French to an Italian unit.

However, by 10 p.m. that evening all the action died down, and the Germans ended their assault. It had been a busy day for McKechnie, Edwards, Crawford, and many other soldiers, but it ended with the British still in possession of the local real estate while their gallant American allies retained most of their defensive positions in the hills. Although all present expected the Germans to renew their assault the following day, this was not the case. The British positions were shelled, but there were no further attacks as Kampfgruppe Lueder withdrew northward toward Pont du Fahs.

Although there is no formal tally of German losses, it is likely that the Germans probably lost four PzKpfw. III tanks, one armored car, and several trucks destroyed. The action at Sidi Said in the Robaa Valley also led to the complete destruction of one Tiger tank and damage to a second. This event was important as no Tiger losses had occurred during previous battles in late 1942 and the tank was gaining a reputation for being invincible. The remains of the destroyed Tiger were inspected by technical officers from the British Army a couple of days after the battle, and they were able to learn a great deal. In addition to the tank and vehicle losses, the German infantry suffered significant casualties both in the valley and in the hills with estimated casualties of at least 200 killed, wounded, or captured.

The 5th Buffs lost only two men killed that day and a number of wounded, while the anti-tank gunners seem to have led a charmed life with only two casualties identified. The 12th RHA lost at least two of their gunners killed on January 31. In addition, the companies of the West Kents located in the hills to the southeast lost three soldiers killed and a number of wounded during the fighting there. Crawford's unit suffered five officers and 60 men killed, wounded, or missing. Their pride was more than a little dented as in their first engagement with the Germans they had lost possession of Hill 727 and were unable to regain it. They were relieved by a French unit a few days later.

Although some of McKechnie's soldiers may have been taking odds on whether their new commander was going to stay in command for long, by the following day all bets were off. McKechnie was a successful stockbroker in civilian life, and he also proved to be an excellent officer. The officers and men of the East Kents quickly learned to respect and then admire their new boss for his coolness under fire that day at Robaa. They also warmed to his avuncular command style though they also learned that he had high standards.

McKechnie would successfully command the 5th Buffs through the rest of the Tunisian campaign, throughout the Sicilian campaign, and in the fights at Termoli and Cassino in Italy, leading the unit nearly all the way to the Sangro River in November 1943 before handing over command. Subsequently and unusually, he would briefly command an Infantry Brigade in Italy, earn an OBE (Order of the British Empire), and after long service back in the TA, retire in 1960. His former battalion ended its war in Austria in 1945 after building a reputation as a formidable fighting unit of the fabled Eighth Army.

The commanding officer of the 5th Buffs was not the only one who learned under fire in the Robaa Valley and went on to build a reputation. It had been the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry's first battle with the Germans, and they had been forced to withdraw from the hill they held, though their performance in this action had been worthy of praise. They were a proud outfit and learned from this experience and many others during the rest of the Tunisian campaign and in Sicily. The battalion's officers and soldiers rapidly became skilled and tough.

National Archives

Soldiers of the U.S. 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, march along a track in the Tunisian desert in February 1943. They were among the first American troops to engage the Axis enemy in combat during World War II.

Imperial War Museum

A crew from the Queen's Own Royal West Kents mans its 3-inch mortar in the desert on January 31, 1943. The harsh desert campaign resulted in some 850,000 casualties and the eventual defeat of the Axis in North Africa in May. With the Suez Canal and the oil fields of the Middle East secured, the Allies invaded Sicily in Operation Husky two months later.

It is worth noting that Crawford would go on to build a distinguished combat record, first in command of another infantry battalion in Sicily and then as the commander of an infantry regiment in Italy. Two-and-one-half years after the fight in the Robaa Valley, the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry showed its mettle, landing amid a storm of German fire at Easy Red and Fox Red sectors of Omaha Beach on D-Day in Normandy.

In command of the battalion on June 6, 1944, was 27-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Hicks, who had been the regimental supply officer for the 16th Infantry in Tunisia and knew all about the battalion's battle in the Robaa Valley. By now, his battalion's officers and men were tough and capable veterans of two campaigns and numerous battles, so Hicks and his soldiers fought their way off the beach against the worst of odds. In Hicks' case this was quite literal as he personally destroyed two German machine gun nests. Other officers and men demonstrated the same level of bravery for officers, and soldiers of the 2nd Battalion were awarded a staggering 21 Distinguished Service Crosses for their actions on D-Day.

The chaos of D-Day meant that companies of the 3rd Battalion, 16th Infantry which were supposed to land on Fox Green to the east actually landed there but also on Fox Red. They also suffered from the heavy German fire, took many casualties, and were initially pinned down. A less experienced battalion might have become bogged down, but not when its commander was now "Batshit" Horner. Chuck Horner's performance in Tunisia had not gone unnoticed, and he assumed command of the 3rd Battalion in time for the Sicily landings. Horner and his battalion distinguished themselves both in the initial landings and in the later battle of Troina, where his leadership earned him the first of two Distinguished Service Crosses.

Horner had trained his officers and men well, and it was no surprise that one of his officers, First Lt. Jimmie Monteith, played a key role in getting the regiment off the fire swept beach. Monteith's performance under fire on D-Day earned him the Medal of Honor, awarded posthumously as he was killed later in the day. There is little doubt that Horner used his difficult experience at Robaa in a positive way to later forge his new battalion into one that fought its way off an embattled beach in France and eventually into Germany.

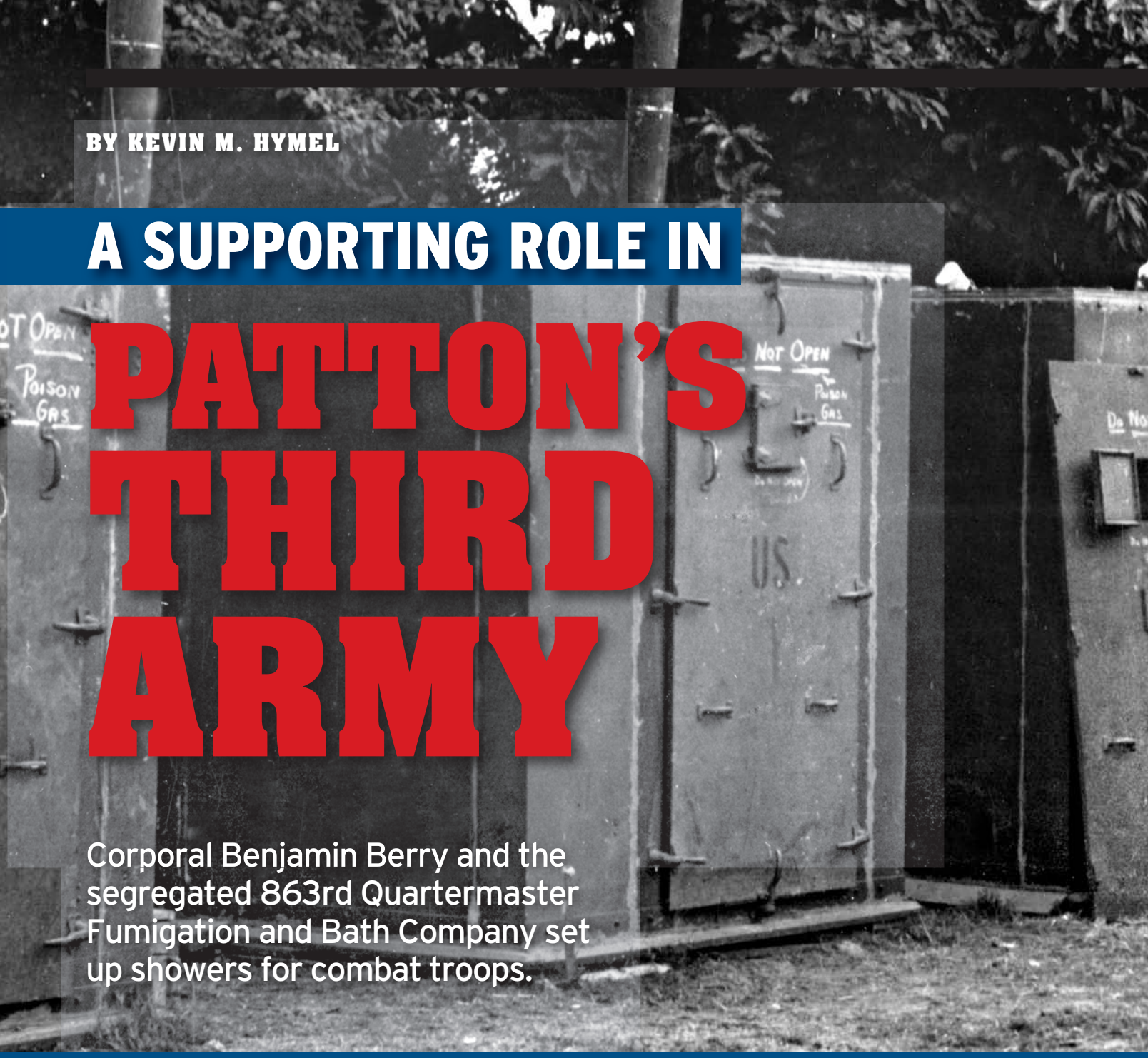
It is also worth noting that despite the many losses the French troops suffered in January-February 1943, they would also learn under fire and be transformed in the crucible of battle. Subsequently in 1943, the French would rebuild, retrain their forces, and equip their units with modern American arms. Later the French troops would also demonstrate that they could achieve great success in combat in the mountains of Italy near Cassino and during Operation Dragoon, the Allied landings in southern France.

That the small battle in the Robaa Valley in Tunisia contributed to the professional development of three excellent combat leaders and forged the fighting spirit and skill of three Allied infantry battalions that later established a battle record worthy of enduring fame. □

Ian Mitchell served as an officer in the British Army. Now retired, his first book, The Battle of the Peaks and Longstop Hill, *was published in 2019. He lives in Wiltshire, England.*

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

A SUPPORTING ROLE IN PATTON'S THIRD ARMY



Corporal Benjamin Berry and the segregated 863rd Quartermaster Fumigation and Bath Company set up showers for combat troops.

If there was one thing frontline soldiers looked forward to after weeks of fighting in Europe's mud and ice, it was a shower and a change of clothes. Making that happen was the mission of Corporal Benjamin Berry and the soldiers of the 863rd Quartermaster Fumigation and Bath Company.

As the 863rd began setting up the tents, showers and other equipment for their temporary oasis, it was Berry who was tasked with locating a local water source. Once the water was decontaminated, Berry would pump it into a tank and truck it to the company where it was heated by portable units and directed into the showers. Next to the showers, an Army quartermaster laundry outfit set up tents supplied with clean uniforms.

The frontline soldiers showed up looking haggard and dirty. "They brightened up when they saw us," Berry said. They stripped off their dirty clothes and handed them to Berry's team, who would, in turn, give them to the laundry unit. Some soldiers took off their dog tags, rings, wallets, and watches, while others held on to them. Then Berry and his men handed out towels.

The naked soldiers then filed under the hot showers. Berry's team let them stay in as long as they wanted. "They were happy," he said. When the men finally exited the showers, Berry's company, working with the laundry unit, issued them clean clothes as close to the original size as possible. If a soldier needed a size 38 pants and Berry only had a size 42, he would give the GI the larger pair. "They were

National Archives

Army Quartermaster Foundation

In support of the advancing U.S. Third Army, the 863rd Fumigation and Bath Company provided essential services that were welcomed by frontline GIs. In this photo, Private John Puller, Jr., and Corporal Russell Robinson check salvageable materials being placed in fumigation chambers near Longueville, France, July 19, 1944. INSET: Corporal Benjamin Berry was inducted into the U.S. Army Quartermaster Foundation's Quartermaster Hall of Fame in 2002. During World War II, Berry served with the 863rd Fumigation and Bath Company in support of Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.'s Third Army operations in France and Belgium.

so glad they were clean that they didn't care they were dragging their clothes," he said.

Sometimes the soldiers were so happy about the shower and new clothes they forgot their personal items, leaving Berry's team to find them and return the items before the soldiers returned to the front.

Berry enjoyed his mission. "It was a nice unit, well organized and well thought out, and it worked out great," he said. "And the soldiers were always grateful."

During some of the shower stops, Berry noticed French civilians washing their clothes in the soapy water that rolled down from the showers. Even more impressive, the GIs in the showers also spotted the civilians and would often let their soap slip and flow downstream for the civilians. "They appreciated it and we appreciated it, too," he said. "Whenever we left the area, they would be out to wave goodbye."

Berry was a 17-year-old high school student working as a dishwasher at the Casa Cani Italian Restaurant in Glenside, Penn-

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TOP: Black soldiers board a transport ship at a port on the West Coast of the United States in 1942 en route to duty overseas during World War II. African-American service personnel were regularly assigned to support units within the U.S. armed forces prior to desegregation after the war. INSET: A young Corporal Benjamin Berry in uniform prior to deploying overseas with the 863rd Fumigation and Bath Company.

sylvania, when he heard one of the waitresses burst out, "Those damn Japs!" He did not understand what she was talking about until he learned about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. "That was the first time in my life I ever heard a woman curse," Berry said.

Berry lived with his parents, brother, and two sisters in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. He was a senior at Abington High School, in a suburb of Philadelphia, when he received his draft notice in January 1943. The Philadelphia Draft Board granted a deferment until his graduation in June. He was drafted in July and allowed to choose the Army or Navy. "I could not swim," said Berry, "so I took the Army." Before departing, he said farewell to his girlfriend, Lois Miller Graves, a student at Haverford High. They would write to each other his entire time overseas.

Berry headed to Camp Ellis, Illinois, for four months of training in a segregated Black unit. He found the training difficult. "I saw other guys jumping over hurdles and climbing under barbed wire and I'm struggling," he recalled. He had decided he was too out of shape for the Army when one of his drill sergeants told him, "You can peel potatoes." As the weeks went by, Barry did not peel any potatoes, but his arms and legs turned to muscle and he completed training.

Berry and the other Black recruits trained on the M-1 carbine .30-caliber rifle. "The carbine was just like a pea shooter compared to the M-1 Garand," he said. "All it was good for was shooting rats or mice, but with humans you gotta hit the right spot or he won't fall." Berry went overseas with the carbine, but neither he nor any of the other Black soldiers in his unit were issued ammunition.

After basic training, Berry learned how to drive a truck. "It was quite different from a civilian vehicle," he explained. "You're sitting high, and the gear shifts were different." With truck driving under his belt, he reported to the headquarters of the 863rd Quartermaster Fumigation and Bath Company, where he received a Dodge WC series Three-quarter-ton weapons carrier, which he would drive for the rest of his time in the service.

Berry teamed up with Thomas Stevens, a soldier with whom he had a lot in common. "We didn't gamble, and we didn't do a lot of cursing and card playing," said Berry. "We hooked up because we were the same kind of person."

It was during Berry's training that he first encountered racial prejudice. He and some fellow soldiers traveled to St. Louis, Missouri, to watch one of the opening World Series games between the St. Louis Cardinals and the New York Yankees in early October 1943. They took a bus to Sportsman's Park, home of the Cardinals, but the game was sold out.

They noticed some men sneaking under a stadium fence, but since Berry and his comrades were in their uniforms, they thought better of it. Instead, they headed into a restaurant for

something to eat. They ordered hamburgers and hotdogs without any trouble, but when they sat down the restaurant manager told them, "No. You cannot eat that here."

Infuriated, the soldiers stood up and left without touching their meals. "Here we were, service men all in uniforms out to serve our country," recalled Berry, "and our country treats us like this?" The soldiers departed St. Louis, never knowing or caring who won the World Series. "It hurt quite a bit."

Once training ended, Berry and his company traveled to Fort Dix, New Jersey, to depart for Europe. With an off-post pass and time to kill, Berry decided to go home to Philadelphia to see Lois. He invited Stevens to accompany him. Once there, he introduced Stevens to Lois and her sisters. Stevens would go on to correspond with one of the girls.

Back at Fort Dix, Berry and his comrades boarded a converted steamer and headed below deck. "It wasn't fancy," he recalled. Once at sea, he quickly succumbed to sea sickness. Every time he threw up, he had to clean the mess himself. The ship felt like it was rocking and rolling until Berry went topside and saw the calm sea and other ships headed to England. "It was me that was rocking and rolling," he laughed.

One day in the middle of the Atlantic, the ship's engine stopped. "We said uh-oh," said Berry. One of the men jokingly told the troops, "Get out and push." The men later learned the ship's captain discovered there were German U-boats in the area so he cut the engines to prevent their sound from giving away his position. After about an hour, the captain restarted the engine. The dangerous situation led Berry to promise to God, "I said, 'if you ever get me out of this, I'll serve you until I die.' And I have."

After six days at sea, the steamer docked in Northern Ireland. The company then traveled to Liverpool, England, where the men got their first taste of war. Berry saw destroyed buildings, civilian dugouts, and air raid wardens in their famous white British Doughboy helmets. The soldiers spent their time training, waterproofing their vehicles, and awaiting the cross-Channel invasion of France, which would come on June 6, 1944.

On June 28, 22 days after D-Day, Berry and his company landed at Omaha Beach in a Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM), which carried Berry's weapons carrier, a Jeep, and a couple of two-and-a-half-ton trucks. The craft's front ramp dropped into shallow water, and all the vehicles drove off. As Berry reached the beach, he looked up at the camouflaged bunkers built into the overlooking cliffs. "We could see the pillboxes the Germans built," he recalled, "and I realized how hard it was for our guys to get ashore because the Germans in the pillboxes could pick them off with ease." Berry credits the survival of the American troops at Omaha Beach to the grace of God.

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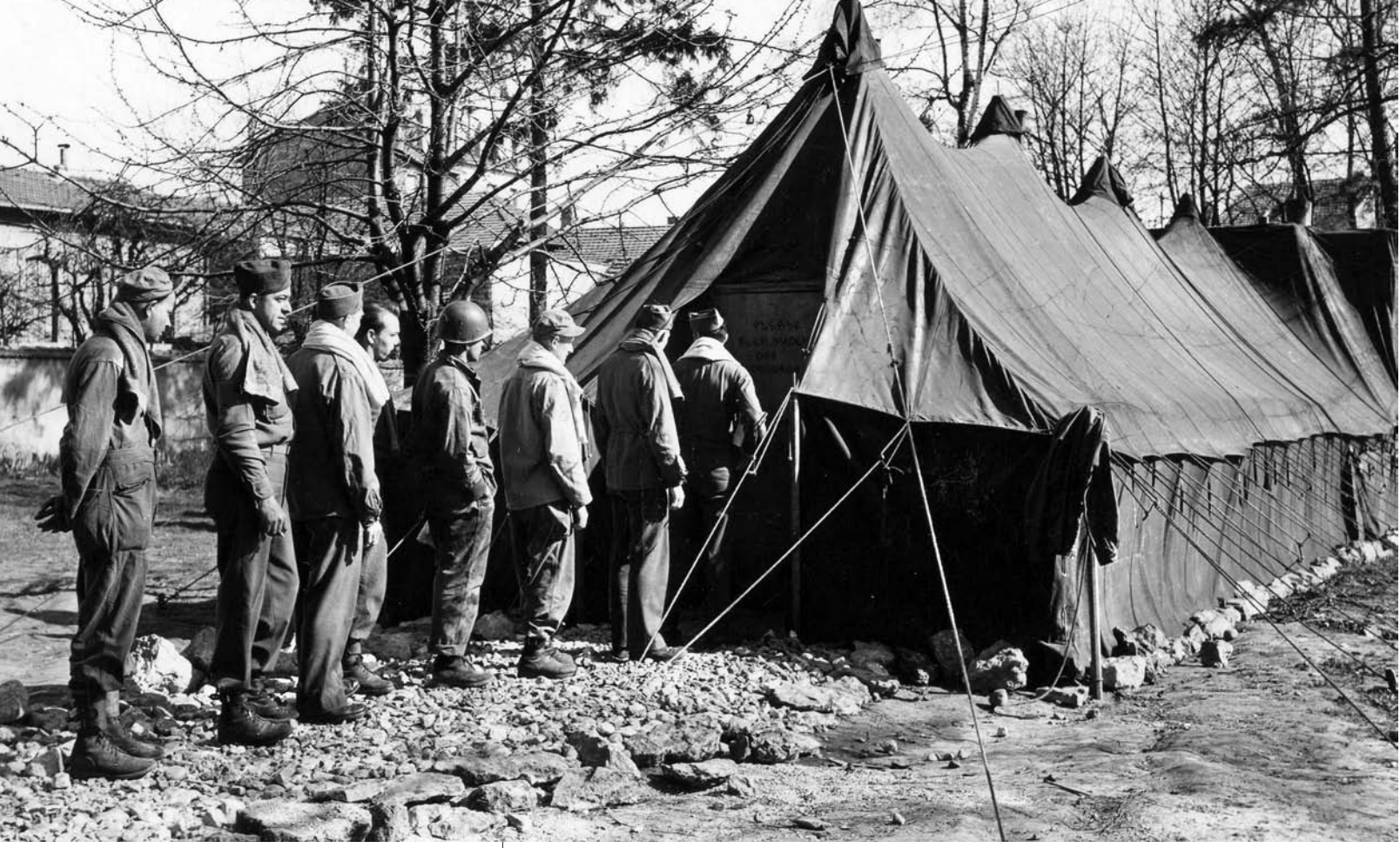
Working in the drycleaning department of the 461st Quartermaster Laundry Company in Le Havre, France, three Black soldiers contribute to the Allied war effort overseas. From left are Sergeant Edward Hopkins, Private John T. Leslie, and Corporal Emmitt Taylor.

Once inland, Berry found that the civilians accepted the Black troops well, except they were curious about these Americans. The white GIs had told them not to mix with the Black soldiers because they were descended from monkeys and had tails. The civilians wanted to see the Black soldiers' tails, so Berry and his comrades dropped their pants. "That was quite an experience to see the expressions on their faces," reminisced Berry, "especially the embarrassment on the girls' faces."

Berry's company was assigned to Lieutenant General George S. Patton's Third Army, which became active on the continent on August 1, 1944. But the GIs initially had little use for showers. "They were too busy chasing Hitler," he explained. Several times Berry and his comrades set up their showers, only to take them down because the soldiers had advanced too far east.

Berry first came under enemy fire when his company left the nearly-destroyed town of St. Lo. They had set up camp about eight miles behind the front lines when Berry heard the unmistakable noise of a German Nebelwerfer—a multi-barreled rocket launcher that fired with a shrill howling sound, earning it the nickname "Screaming Mimi."

"We could hear that guy," Berry said. But he had learned by then that if you could hear the screaming, it was safe because the rocket had passed over. "If you heard it cut off before then," he explained, "then you were in trouble." Sometimes the noise would cut off directly overhead, meaning that it would still land in the distance. "One landed near us when it exploded," he said. "It was close but not a danger."



As Berry drove his weapons carrier across liberated France, he noticed that the towns were nothing but rubble. "There was no life at all," he said. "You'd think you'd see a chicken or dog, but no." He and his team would often pass shot-down aircraft or destroyed vehicles and tanks. "We saw one tank that had caught fire and the operator was trying to get out," he recalled. "He got halfway out when he collapsed, but by the time we saw him he was pretty well bloated."

Berry spent every night sharing a two-man tent with a buddy. "If he wasn't your buddy before then," he recalled, "he would be now." Most of the meals were served hot since the unit was behind the lines, and most consisted of eggs. Berry's best meal of the war came at Thanksgiving, when the men were fed real turkey.

In the skies above, Berry could see fleets of American bombers flying east to bomb Germany. "They were pretty high," he recalled. "You could see them and a few minutes later you could hear them." He knew they would be combing back with their bomb bays empty. "What a great sight."

As Patton's lightning advance eventually slowed at the end of August, some troops were allowed to leave the front lines for some rest and relaxation and, of course, showers. That's when Berry found a water source, and his men prepared the showers for the frontline soldiers.

At one stream, Berry got a taste of home. He struck up a conversation with a soldier charged with purifying the water, who was also from Philadelphia. The soldier turned out to be Stanford Frank, the grandson of Jacob Frank, who founded Frank's Beverages, best known for their Black Cherry Wishniak soda. "They had the best soda water," said Berry. "We had a nice chat."

Sometimes, Berry and his team set up their showers in French and German towns, which included hotels and USO entertainers. In one town, the famous boxer Joe Louis entertained the troops. When the 863rd Company received permission to attend, Berry was charged with escort duties. "That's how I got to get a glimpse of Joe Louis," he recalled. Berry's company even bivouacked in Paris, where he visited the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame cathedral, and the Arc de Triomphe.

On December 16, 1944, the Germans broke through the American lines in Belgium and Luxembourg—the Battle of the Bulge. With the Army desperate for riflemen, Berry and his team were finally issued ammunition for their carbines and were told to man the front lines and show resistance.

Berry's team headed out in the snow and freezing temperatures and tried to dig foxholes, but their shovels could not crack the frozen ground. Instead, they laid their tent halves over the snow or other equipment and lay prone to fire. "We couldn't do anything but let the enemy know there was someone there firing back," he recalled. "That's all we could do in the face of all that firepower."

By the end of January 1945, the Germans had been driven out of Belgium and Luxembourg and the Allies cracked the German Siegfried Line—a belt of anti-tank defenses known as Dragon's Teeth interspersed with concrete bunkers and machine-gun nests. When Berry passed through the Siegfried Line, it was under American control. Still, he had to show iden-

tification and use a password to prove he was not a Black Nazi. A few days later, Berry returned to have his picture taken among the Dragon's Teeth. He took the film to a local developer, but his unit pulled out before he could pick up his photographs.

Berry rarely saw an intact bridge in Germany; most had been blown by the retreating Germans. There was also very little civilian life to be seen. "Almost all the civilians were females," he recalled. "The groups I saw were 8-to-80, and they were blind, crippled, or crazy," he said with a laugh. "That's an old Army saying."

One day in a German town, Berry saw a large group of women crying. He wondered what had happened until he saw Army trucks hauling German prisoners of war to the rear. The crying women waved to the prisoners. "When I saw that I said to myself, 'I'll never go into town on a furlough because one of these woman might say you have a male prisoner and I don't know what you're going to do to him so I'm going to do something to you.'"

On April 12, 1945, President Franklin Roosevelt died. "It was quite a shock to us," said Berry. "We paused and recognized his death, wishing him God's speed, but the war had to go on."

Berry was in for a bigger shock when he and his company entered Mauthausen Concentration Camp, which had been liberated on May 5. "We were there to fumigate the Jews and the camp," he said. There were only a few inmates left when he arrived, but they made Berry feel like a giant compared to their emaciated bodies.

One tall and thin inmate approached Berry. "I could see nothing but skin and bones," he recalled, "and the skin was holding the bones together." It was an image he never wanted to see again. "How could human beings be treated that way?" he asked.

As the war in Europe wound down, Berry and his company set up camp in a Luxembourg schoolhouse. Berry was there on May 9 when he learned that the Germans had surrendered. "There was some excitement and gunfire," he said. "And the civilians came out, since they were as happy as we were." All Berry could think about was his mother's cooking and seeing his girlfriend.

Berry's company was one of the many Army units slated for the Pacific, to help win the war against Japan. The men of the 863rd Company boarded a ship bound for the United States, where they would all get a 30-day furlough before heading across the country and shipping out of California. But about halfway across the Atlantic, word came in that an atomic bomb had been dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The date was August 6, 1945. "There was so much excitement on the ship," Berry recalled. The war would soon be over.

Berry arrived back at Fort Dix and traveled home to Philadelphia. His mother greeted him with a big smile and said, "This is my boy! He's home!" Both Berry and his mother cried tears of joy. His father was more stoic. "He was tough," Berry recalled, "but he made me a man." His two sisters were there, but his brother was still in the service. His mother was ready for Berry's return, having made his favorite meal: pork chops, applesauce, and cornbread. Still in his uniform, Berry went to see his girlfriend, Lois. Her entire family welcomed him with open arms. "Oh, happy day!" he said, recalling the moment.

The U.S. Army discharged Berry in October 1945. That same month, his buddy Tom Stevenson married Lois's sister, whom he met before shipping out. Berry served as best man, and Lois served as maid of honor. The wedding inspired Berry and Lois to elope.

In January 1946, Berry found a Justice of the Peace, who told him he needed a girl and a ring. Berry had the girl, but it took him a week to find the ring. The two showed up at the Justice's office, a converted room in the Justice's house. They needed a witness, so the Justice called his wife, who came in and witnessed the ceremony.

Because of the post-war housing crunch, Berry and his new bride rented a room from

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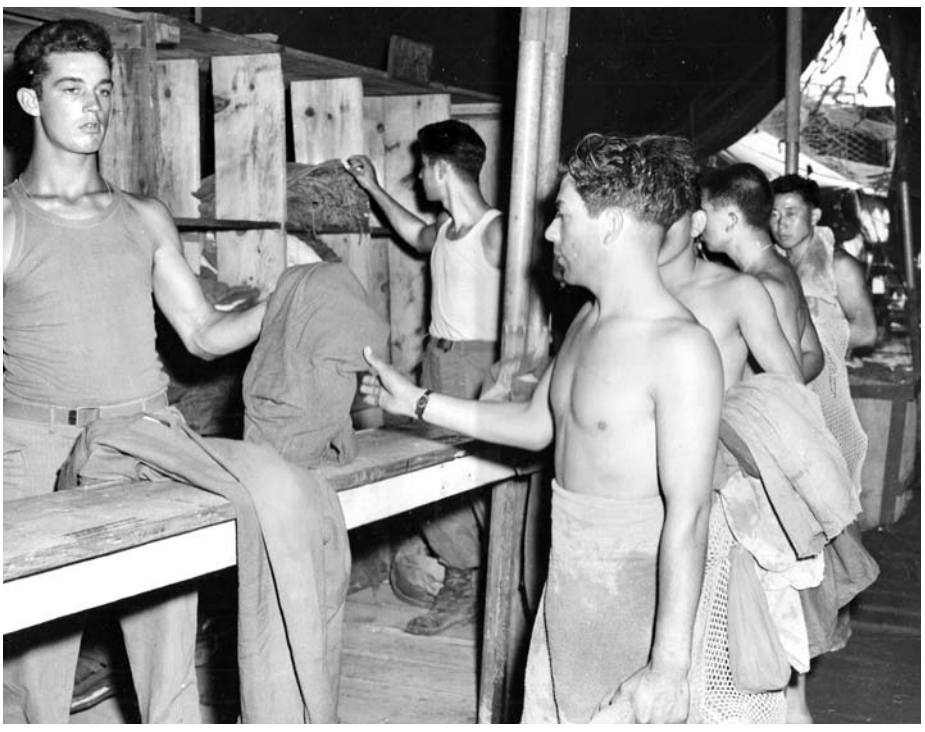
Both: National Archives

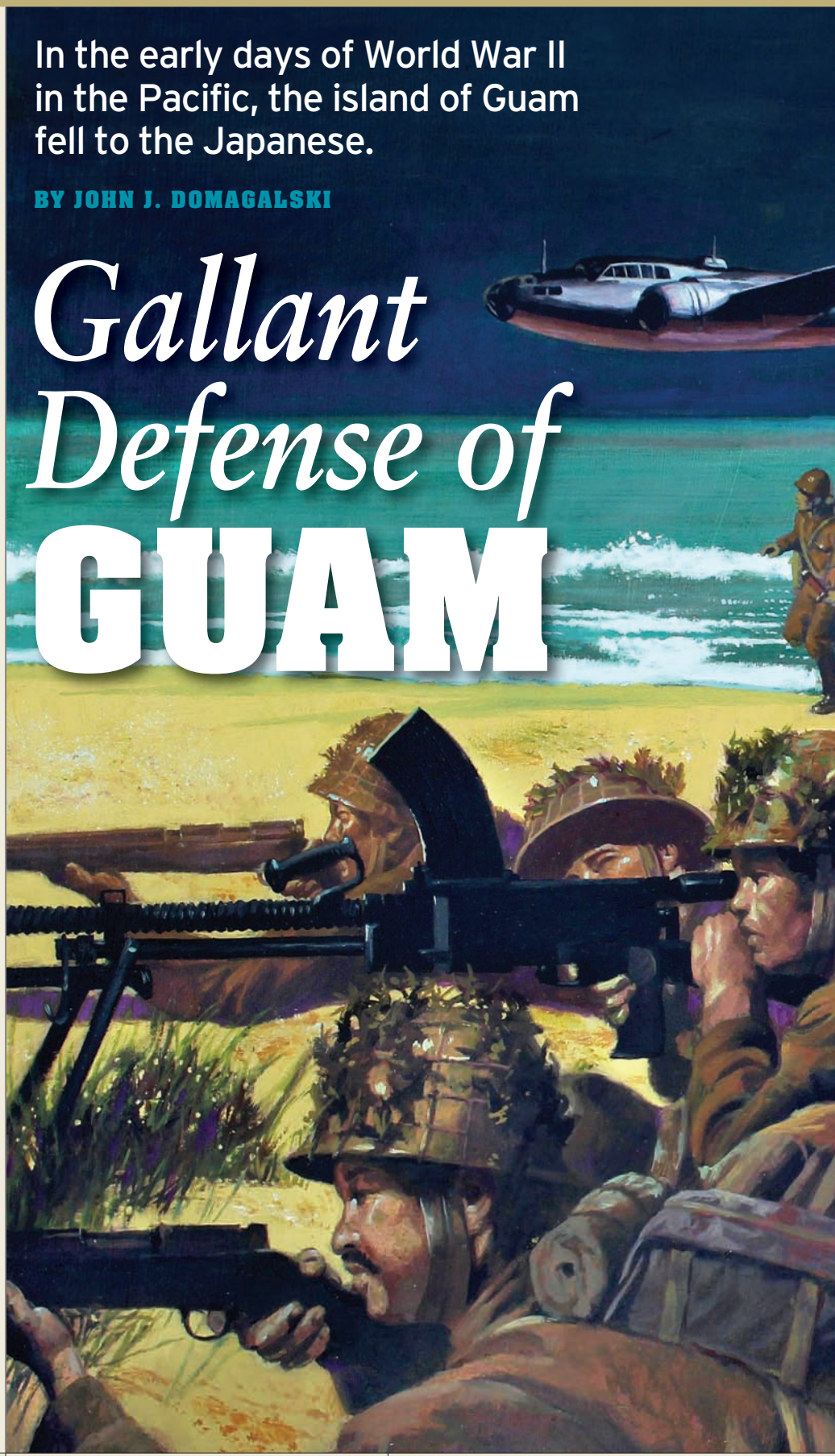


ABOVE: After a hot shower provided by the 826th Quartermaster Sterilization Company in the vicinity of Cecine, Italy, in August 1944, Private A.R. Alarcon of Company A, 168th Regiment, 34th Infantry Division swaps his war-worn government-issue trousers for a new pair—or at least a clean pair. OPPOSITE: The line forms in the early afternoon for American servicemen at the 814th Quartermaster Sterilization and Bath Company location overseas. Lines steadily lengthened into the evening as men of the U.S Army Air Forces, infantry, engineers, and ordnance troops were drawn from within a 10-mile radius in anticipation of one of the rarest commodities in the field during World War II, a hot shower.

In the early days of World War II in the Pacific, the island of Guam fell to the Japanese.

BY JOHN J. DOMAGALSKI

Gallant Defense of GUAM



As the ruins of the Navy's Pacific Fleet were still burning at Pearl Harbor, Japanese planes appeared over the island of Guam some 4,000 miles to the west where, across the International Date Line, it was already December 8, 1941. The United States and Japan were now at war and the weakly-defended U.S. territory was nearly surrounded by Japanese holdings, including the island of Saipan, with no friendly military bases for thousands of miles.

Aside from the attack on Pearl Harbor, the start of hostilities came as no surprise to those on Guam. Relations between the two nations had been strained for decades. Things had worsened considerably over the past year due to Japanese expansionism, American embargos on critical raw materials, and failing diplomacy. Most on the island, U.S. military and Guamanians alike, knew they were now on the front lines. Many expected an immediate Japanese attack, and almost everyone knew Guam did not have the resources to repel an assault.

About 225 square miles, Guam has a land area about the size of Chicago. The island is 32 miles from north to south. At the north and south ends, it's about 10 miles across. The central part of the island narrows to an isthmus four miles wide. It has a tropical climate, with thick equatorial jungle.

The Orote Peninsula juts out from the western side of the island for several miles making it a prominent geographical feature. The peninsula and a nearby elongated island form Apra Harbor, the main port on Guam. Agaña was the largest city and seat of the American government on the island.

Seized in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, Guam was put under navy control with an American officer as civilian governor and head of a small military garrison.

Though strategically situated, the island was never developed into a military bastion as resources instead went to Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. As World War II began in the Pacific, Navy Capt. George McMillin was the governor, in charge of 153 Marines and about 270 navy personnel. This was augmented by the Guam Insular Guard Force, a local police force or militia made up of Guamanians and numbering about 250.

This modern painting by Shannon Stirnweis depicts Japanese troops coming ashore on the island of Guam in December 1941. Stirnweis based this image on a famous contemporary painting of the invasion of Guam by Japanese war artist Kohei Ezaki. Soldiers are shown splashing from landing craft and taking up defensive positions while aircraft fly overhead and ships maintain station offshore.

There was no airfield, and the troops possessed no heavy weapons beyond a small number of machine guns.

The military facilities comprised a Marine barracks, a naval hospital, and the small Piti Navy Yard. The "Guam Navy" was a small assortment of old ships. The minesweeper *Penguin* was the most powerful vessel on station. Naval personnel operated two communications stations—Radio Agaña, the main military and commercial radio post, and a smaller station near the town of Libugon. Navy Commander Donald Giles held the positions of vice governor and executive officer of the naval station.

The plans for an invasion of Guam were in place before Japan's aircraft carriers set out for Pearl Harbor at the end of November. Reconnaissance flights were made that month, and Imperial warships patrolled nearby at night to avoid detection. Naval planes from Saipan were to bomb Guam once the Pearl Harbor attack was confirmed. The air strikes were in preparation for a full invasion scheduled to begin on December 10.

The morning of December 8 began quietly on Guam. The *Penguin* was returning to Apra Harbor from her night patrol and tied up to a buoy. The mine-sweeper's 3-inch gun was the island's most powerful weapon. Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Edward Hale had been part of her crew since September. "The motor launch took a few men immediately after breakfast and went to Piti Landing for provisions," he recalled. The *Penguin*'s commander, Lt. James Haviland, wasn't yet aware of the Pearl Harbor attack.

There was activity at the Pan Am station in preparation for the arrival of the Philippine Clipper later in the day. The large passenger flying boat was traveling west across the Pacific from California to the Orient and was leaving Wake Island, about 1,300 miles northeast. The passengers and crew planned an overnight stay on Guam before the clipper continued the next day to Manila.

About 5:45 a.m., the naval radio station received a message from Admiral Thomas Hart in the Philippines—*Japan started hostilities. Govern yourselves accordingly*.

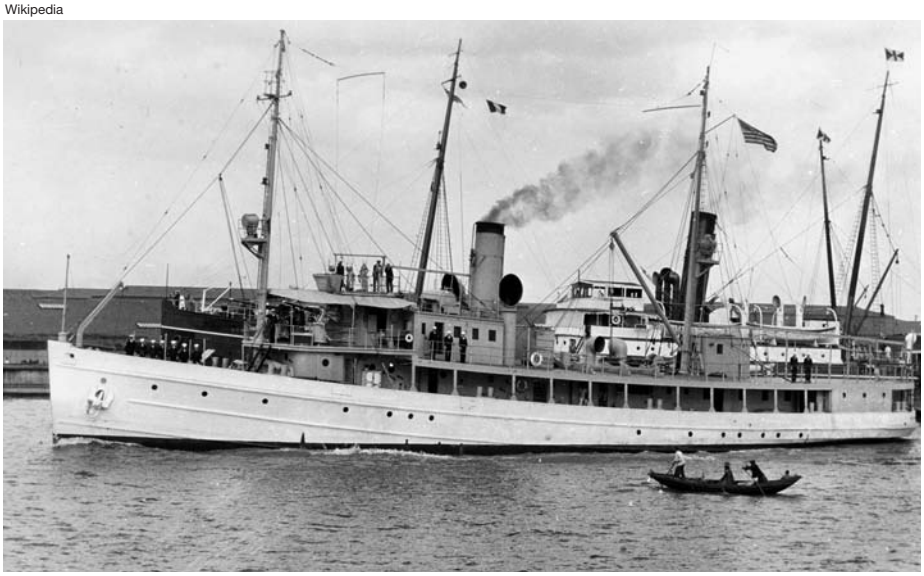
Receiving the news from a messenger, McMillin called Commander Giles, who quickly notified the naval hospital before dressing and rushing to the Government House. The administration building was located on the Plaza de España in the central part of Agaña.

Giles found McMillin with a small group of officers. "Although we had known that war was imminent, we were stunned, both because the target of the Japanese attack had not been foreseen with any accuracy, and because of the manner in which the attack had occurred," Giles later wrote. "We were still fighting by gentlemanly standards and did not realize that war was no longer a gentleman's game."

An attack on Guam could come at any moment and that all knew they had neither the weapons nor the manpower to fight off the enemy. "Steps were taken immediately to evacuate the civil population from Agaña, and from the vicinity of possible military objectives, in accor-

War in the Pacific National Historical Park

Wikipedia



ABOVE: The gunboat USS *Penguin*, constructed during World War I, was originally intended for riverine patrol duties in China before assignment to Guam. *Penguin* carried the largest gun available to the defenders of Guam, a 3-inch deck weapon. TOP: During peaceful times, the Governor's Palace in the island of Guam is shown surrounded by palm trees. The building was located across from the open space of the Plaza de Espana and was an objective of the invading Japanese in December 1941.

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ABOVE: The fabled Pan American Airways Philippine Clipper flying boat arrives in the lagoon at Guam. On the day of the Japanese attack against the island, the Philippine Clipper was expected to arrive from Wake Island; however, when news of the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor was received the flight was cancelled. RIGHT: The color guard of the Insular Guard Force, Guamanian service personnel who provided island securing and fought the Japanese invasion troops, parades during ceremonies on the island in the Marianas. The Insular Guard personnel are wearing uniforms supplied by the U.S. Navy.

dance with a plan previously prepared," McMillin later wrote. "All Japanese nationals were arrested at once and confined in jail." A blackout order was put in place for the entire island.

Many civilian activities were suspended, including commercial business, school classes, and church services. Urgent messages sent to Wake Island recalled the Pan Am Clipper and cancelled the flight to Guam. Some of the Pan Am employees and civilian construction workers evacuated to Mount Almagosa on the southern part of the island.

The phone lines were cut at 7:30 a.m., most likely by Japanese sympathizers. Switchboard operators fled their posts. Communication was reduced to hand delivered messages.

Military units jumped into action across Guam on McMillin's orders. Some of the Marines were at scattered stations around the island and worked with local civilian administrators. "Because they lived in these villages, they knew the residents and were familiar with the local terrain," Giles said. "These Marines were our eyes and ears, serving as lookouts both prior to and during the forthcoming attack."

Most of the troops were at the Marine barracks near the town of Sumay. Apra Harbor was a likely landing area for the Japanese. The Insular Guard Force assembled at its barracks in Agaña. Leaders distributed weapons and dispatched groups to set up defensive positions in the Plaza de España around the Government House and other key buildings.

After attempted contact by radio, a small boat from the Piti Navy Yard pulled alongside *Penguin* in the harbor, delivering the news of war in a confidential envelope. Haviland immediately ordered general quarters and the small vessel began moving toward the harbor entrance after crewmen worked to untie her moorings.

At 8:27 a.m., nine Mitsubishi F1M2 "Pete" floatplanes appeared flying at 1,500 feet. The old biplanes were primarily used for reconnaissance and observation roles rather than attack missions. The lack of defenses on Guam made the slow planes ideal for the operation. Each aircraft was armed with three machine guns and two 60-kilogram (about 130 pounds) bombs.

Lieutenant Junior Grade Leona Jackson was a member of the small group of navy nurses stationed at the hospital. She heard the news of the Pearl Harbor attack when the head nurse knocked on the door of her quarters. "They'll probably be here next," her supervisor said. It was not long before Jackson heard approaching planes. She was familiar with the distinctive sound of propellers. "When they came over I wondered for an instant, I think, if it was the

Wikipedia

Clipper returning but there hadn't been any Clipper in the day before and as the sound came nearer, I realized that it couldn't be a Clipper, it didn't sound like a PBY which had come sometimes to the island on their way to the Far East," Jackson later recalled. She knew the planes were Japanese.

Sailors aboard *Penguin* heard the recognizable sound of approaching planes and Hale looked up to see three planes with red circles on the wings heading right toward them.

Gunners opened fire with the 3-inch cannon and machine guns. Haviland ordered the old ship to make for open sea. The gunfire drove the planes higher, likely reducing the accuracy of the first bombing run. One Pete swooped lower to spray the ship with machine-gun fire. Ensign Robert White was killed while manning a gun. Haviland and other sailors were also wounded.

Several bombs exploded in the water alongside the ship during the final pass and the explosions ripped open the hull. Filling with

Fujimi Models

water and listing, the old ship was done by 9:30 a.m. They were a mile and a half from shore when Haviland gave the order to scuttle and the crew abandoned ship.

White's body and the wounded were placed aboard a raft. Many sailors swam for shore. Marines later helped load the wounded into trucks and cars for transport to the hospital.

Nurse Jackson completed her afternoon shift while the air attacks continued across the island. "In about an hour, I should say, the casualties had come in," she remembered.

The Japanese bombed and strafed across Guam at will until about 5 p.m. The targets included the Piti Navy Yard, Marine barracks, radio stations, and the Pan Am facility.

A dugout landed at dusk near the northern end of the island. The men fled into the jungle, but were later captured and questioned at the Government House.

They were Saipan islanders sent by the Japanese to act as interpreters for the invasion. They said the Japanese would land in the morning just east of Agaña. "I was inclined not to accept the story at the time since I thought it might be a trick to have the Marines moved from Sumay to the beach during the night, in order that they might make a landing in the Apra Harbor area unopposed," McMillin later wrote. The location, but not the time, were correct.

No landing took place on the morning of December 9. Japanese planes returned to continue the devastation. Many of the key facilities on the island were destroyed during the second day. The fuel dump and buildings at the Piti Navy Yard were either leveled or heavily damaged. The radio station near Libugon was abandoned. Radio Agaña did not sustain any direct bomb hits, but a series of near-miss explosions knocked the station out of commission. The Marine facilities at Sumay were destroyed, as was the Pan Am station.

The remaining vessels of the "Guam Navy" were damaged or destroyed, except for the freighter *Gold Star,* which had remained in the Philippines since the start of the war.

A series of short radio messages told the outside world of Guam's plight. "Guam attacked," read the first to Hawaii and the Philippines on December 8. The second read, "Guam being attacked by air by two Japanese squadrons. Casualties four Chamorros on Pan American dock while securing radio station. Hotel destroyed. Gas tanks aflame. Office and machine shops machine-gunned." The Pan Am station only sent a quick "signing off" message.

In an ominous sign of what was to come, a small group of ships—presumed to be a Japanese invasion force—were sighted on the horizon late in the day on December 9. Radio Agaña later transmitted: "One large ship believed to be a transport, two destroyers off Guam. Pending landing expected soon at several points." McMillin ordered all codes and confidential materials to be destroyed. A final message from Radio Agaña simply reported, "All codes destroyed."

The Japanese Guam invasion force—four destroyers, a minelayer, and nine transports—departed from Hahajima in the Bonin Islands south of Japan on December 4. Along with equipment and supplies, the transports carried almost 5,000 army soldiers under the command of Maj.-Gen. Tomitara Hori. The troops assembled in Korea before traveling to Hahajima.

The heavy cruisers *Kako*, *Furutaka*, *Aoba*, and *Kinugasa* would provide a bombardment, if needed. A Special Naval Landing Force (Japanese marines) of 370 joined the convoy en route from Saipan. The ships stayed east of the Marianas to avoid detection by the Americans.

It was a substantial force for the lightly defended island. The Japanese estimate of about 300 Americans and 1,500 native soldiers was reasonably accurate. However, there was concern of possible American coastal defense guns and artillery batteries positioned on the island.

The Japanese invasion convoy arrived near the island of Rota just north of Guam on December 8, receiving orders to begin the assault on December 10. The force divided into smaller groups to land in multiple locations around the island.

The soldiers of the Special Naval Landing Force were to be the first ashore. Three transports moved into position north of Agaña in the early hours of December 10. The assault troops climbed into six small boats, moving slowly toward Dungcas Beach, on the coast near Agaña.

An Insular Guard Force patrol at the beach saw something—soon identified as a landing craft—approaching about 3 a.m. Seaman 2nd Class Juan Perez fired his rifle toward the first boat before the men ran to the capital to alert Americans that the Japanese had arrived.

McMillin had news of the invasion in less than an hour. He knew he couldn't stop the enemy and ordered any documents and materials useful to the Japanese to be destroyed.

The main battle for Guam took place in the Plaza de España in Agaña in the central part of the capital and home to a variety of military and civilian buildings, many featuring ornate Spanish architecture from the days of colonial rule. Nearby was the Government House, naval hospital, governor's mansion, jail, a Catholic church, and a public school.

A small group of American sailors and Marines joined the Insular Guard Force to set up defensive positions. The men overturned concrete benches, dug ditches, and stacked sandbags for cover. Their main firepower of three .30-caliber machine guns was augmented with rifles and pistols. The machine guns were set up in foxholes behind sandbags.

The Japanese Special Naval Landing Force troops met no resistance when they came ashore. The invaders initially assembled on the beach before moving inland to a two-lane road pointing southwest toward Agaña. The troops showed little mercy to anyone encountered on their trek to the capitol. A six-man Insular Guard Force patrol was shot and bayoneted close to the beach after encountering a group of Japanese soldiers. Several groups of civilians fleeing Agaña were mercilessly attacked. Gunfire killed some and wounded others. Two unlucky American sailors encountered the Japanese while walking to see their girlfriends. Their lives were spared—the pair became the first prisoners taken on the island.

The Japanese invasion forces came ashore at two additional locations following the initial landing at Dungcas Beach. A battalion of army soldiers landed northeast of Dungcas Beach at Tumon Bay. A second group planned to come ashore on the southwestern coast before advancing north to capture the Orote Peninsula and Apra Harbor. The landing was temporarily delayed and moved north to a different location after the Japanese determined the area lacked a suitable road for the move north. The delay would keep the southern group out of the short battle for control of the island.

National Archives

ABOVE: In this disturbing photo, prisoners are shown kneeling beside their open graves, freshly dug in the sandy soil of Guam. The photo was taken shortly before the prisoners, captured while defending the island, were summarily executed by their Japanese captors. OPPOSITE: A pair of Japanese Mitsubishi F1M2 "Pete" floatplanes are depicted during air operations in the Pacific. The floatplanes conducted early bombing raids and strafed targets on the island of Guam prior to the Japanese invasion in December 1941.

The first group of Japanese soldiers advanced before dawn toward the Plaza de España with bayonets fixed to their rifles from the north and northwest. Commander Giles grabbed a Colt .45-caliber pistol before crouching behind a small stone wall with some others. "The suspense was terrible until the enemy appeared along three streets, crouching in attack formation," he later wrote. "Upon sighting these troops at the plaza, I ordered our forces to commence firing." The calm morning exploded with the sound of machine guns and rifle fire. One of the American machine guns briefly stopped a group of Japanese soldiers who were moving toward the plaza near the church.

A naval officer in the administration group was near the officer's club on a bluff above Agaña when the fighting started. Lieutenant Graham Bright decided to join the battle and jumped into his car for the short trek to the plaza. The unlucky officer drove directly into a cluster of Japanese soldiers who riddled his vehicle with bullets before dragging Bright from the car and bayoneting him to death.

The Americans and Guamanians put up a stiff resistance at the plaza, but were hopelessly outgunned. A barrage of heavy rifle fire from Japanese soldiers took out their machine guns and the enemy poured into the plaza. The defenders retreated to the west side.

The Japanese moved machine guns and a small pack howitzer into position. Bullets sprayed across the plaza, as the Allied defense was crumbling. The news of more Japanese landings came 20 minutes later.

McMillin remained in his command post inside the Government House during the battle for the plaza. "The situation was simply hopeless, the resistance had been carried out to the limit," he later wrote. He was not surprised when Giles brought him news of the landings. McMillin conferred with other officers before making the decision to surrender.

Giles was in the plaza when he was notified of the decision at about 5:45 a.m. He

Continued on page 98

Ferocious Fight at Farébersviller

Soldiers of the U.S. 317th Infantry Regiment endured heavy combat in a small French village in November 1944. | BY LEON REED

The heady days of summer—when Third Army made 600 miles in a week as the German troops fled for their lives—were a distant memory, a sort of story the veterans told the waves of replacements. Now, in mid-November, rain, mines, and replacement troops were the three constants of GI life as Third Army slogged through the mud and muck of the French province of Lorraine.

Two of those replacements were Private Thaine Hogue, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 317th Regiment, and Private Joseph Drasler, who was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, in the same regiment.

Drasler came across the English Channel to Omaha Beach on November 4, 1944, rode inland to the city of Nancy in a Red Ball Express 6x6 truck full of soldiers, and joined the 317th on November 17. Hogue arrived with a truckful of replacements on November 15. He was paired up with another replacement, Valie Hotz, and they were both made scouts. In a combat branch where turnover was so high many soldiers never learned the names of their mates. Hotz and Hogue instantly became fast friends.

By now, the 317th was a combat experienced regiment, having received its baptism by fire three months earlier at Argentan and borne the brunt of the fighting and casualties when the 80th Division crossed the Moselle River in September. Following that came the fights to hold the Moselle bridgeheads, the bloody assaults on Mount St. Jean and Mount Toulon, the Seille River crossing, and finally the tough slog through Lorraine. By the time Hogue and Drasler joined it,

National Archives

A pair of soldiers from the U.S. 80th Infantry Division make their way through the rubble strewn streets of St. Avold, France, in November 1944. The 317th Regiment, 80th Division occupied St. Avold briefly before encountering stiff German resistance at the town of Farebersviller just down the road.

National Archives

Soldiers of the 80th Infantry Division cross the Moselle River in September 1944, several weeks before the arrival of replacement Privates Joseph Drasler and Thaine Hogue, who experienced combat with the 317th Infantry Regiment at Farebersviller, France, in November 1944.

the regiment had suffered more than 1,000 killed or severely wounded in action. One officer observed that the 317th had become "a regiment of replacements."

Shortly after Hogue had joined the 317th, the chaplain had come along the line, asking the men if they wanted to get together and Hogue and Hotz both went,"even though it was not Sunday," he recalled. "However, about the time the chaplain got going good a German plane came over and strafed the street." The chaplain led the worshippers to the basement, where they waited a while to make sure the plane wasn't returning for a second pass. The chaplain finished by saying the soldiers could relax—the 317th would not be making an attack for a while. "That is how he got the reputation of always being wrong, and he maintained that reputation as long as I knew him," Hogue said.

After moving forward one rainy evening, they received orders to dig in. The sergeant showed Hogue and Hotz the exact spot to dig their foxholes. "And dig we did; right in a dead furrow of a plowed field. The rains came, ran down the dead furrow, and filled our fox hole. Hotz and I dug and then dipped water." They finally gave up and dug a new fox hole on higher ground. "I decided that our sergeant had never seen a farm and that was his excuse for telling us to dig in a dead furrow. I really can't say what my excuse was but I was learning." Hogue also learned he could sleep for about a half hour lying in the mud and water. He was pretty sure Hotz had no sleep that night.

Hogue had one valuable experience during these early days. "Hotz and I got very well acquainted, and I learned to really appreciate his companionship. We had one great thing in common: we trusted our lives to each other. We were forced into it, but it was also a great satisfaction. I could put real faith in him. There was 10 years difference in our ages, but it did not mean a thing here. Only the real character of the man counted now."

Drasler and Hogue both had their first experience with combat maneuvers almost immediately, with the 80th Division's November 20 crossing of the Nied Allemande River, followed by their assault on the Maginot Line five days later. It was a relatively gentle introduction to combat, since the Nied Allemande crossings weren't defended and the German Maginot Line defenders in the sector attacked by the 317th surrendered after a short fight.

Next was a brief stop in St. Avold, which was less restful to the troops than originally planned because of the 30-plus time bombs left behind by the Germans, which made everybody jumpy. Then came the final push to the German frontier. During this advance, Hogue said, "There was little rest because one man had to be alert and ready in every foxhole at all times. Most days we dug two or three foxholes and were never inside a building. We ate cold C rations only, and we had two or three hours sleep each night. It was rainy and foggy every day, and we had no raincoats. We had no overshoes because they were never issued to us. From the map, it looks like we marched about 20 miles, but we never traveled in a straight line."

Standing squarely in the 317th's way was the village of Farebersviller. There was nothing that made Farebersviller different from any other French village, except that the Germans holding the town were ready to fight like they were defending the Fatherland.

Just before the fight, Drasler's company had a moment of comfort. Reaching a little

town just outside Farebersviller at dusk on the 27th, the Blue Ridge soldiers dug in for the night. "French people from the village brought out buckets of pears, black bread, and cognac for our use," Drasler said. Unfortunately, enemy artillery fire kept the soldiers from getting too comfortable.

The village was enveloped in a heavy mist and fog when the 317th entered it at 8:30 a.m., on November 28. Drasler characterized it as "a day and a town I will never forget." The battle for Farebersviller raged all day. Once they started forward, the 3rd Battalion was in trouble immediately, as the leading elements had to fight their way into town. Once they had a foothold, the Germans withdrew slowly, forcing the Blue Ridgers to fight from house to house. "The Germans used their 88 artillery weapons extremely well as anti-tank, anti-aircraft guns, or for firing fragmentation shells against attacking troops," Drasler observed.

At the same time the 3rd Battalion was moving into the firefight, the 2nd Battalion (including Hotz and Hogue's company) was taking up a supporting position. At about noon, Hogue walked out on a trail through timber outside of Farebersviller. "There was fog and mist in the air and to my surprise there were three of our tanks by the edge of the timber. What a relief. We had open ground ahead, and tanks were there to help us!"

The 2nd battalion was assigned to clear the area on the right side of the town and dig in on the high ground beyond. The soldiers were grateful that they would apparently have tank support. But the feeling didn't last long, though, because as the patrol started across the open area, the tanks pulled back.

The patrol moved ahead with no armor and no overhead artillery fire support. The sounds they could hear in the distance made it clear that the units attacking the town had a fight on their hands. "We advanced to a line even with the town, and here it came, everything we expected and more," Hogue said. "They hit us with everything: small arms, machine guns and mortar. It came suddenly, and we all hit the dirt." Soon there was a pause, and the troops were ordered to withdraw. Hogue called for Hotz and got no answer. "I wanted to go back to Hotz, but I knew I would have drawn more fire on him and me both. I did hope we would remain where he was until it was dark enough not to be seen from town. If I was put in this situation later, I would have handled myself differently. At that time we were conditioned to jump on command."

Valie Hotz was seriously wounded in action on November 28, 1944 (Morning Report). He was 19 years old and from DeWitt County, Texas. He had two years of high school when he was drafted, and his occupation was listed as "farm hand, general farms," on his enlistment record. He had been in combat for only 14 days. Hotz eventually spent more than a year in hospitals, but did recover and return home.

By dusk, after a full day of fighting, the 3rd Battalion had cleared less than half of Farebersviller. The soldiers of the 317th took shelter in basements to protect themselves from heavy German artillery fire. Unfortunately, the Germans counterattacked with Tiger tanks at about 9 p.m.

"This was one of their favorite maneuvers, we learned to our sorrow," Drasler said. "Enemy night attacks of this nature were invariably carried out with drunk troops, riding on their tanks and shouting like crazy. That was probably the only way they had of getting up enough courage to attack. The German army used liquor extensively for this purpose."

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Author Collection

Private John Pavelda, Private Thaine Hogue, and Lt. Col. William Boydstun were in the thick of the fighting at Farebersviller. Boydstun received the Silver Star for the action and was later killed in Luxembourg. LEFT: A week after replacements Thaine Hogue and Joseph Drasler joined the 317th Infantry Regiment, a group of GIs observes Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 1944, by eating their K Rations in a dugout near the town of Faulquemont, France.

The Germans relied heavily on concussion grenades in city fighting. One grenade landed in the command post on the ground floor of the building where Drasler and about 20 other GIs were sheltering in the basement. The Germans captured several men and officers in the ground floor command post. "It was impossible to know which companies the officers represented," Drasler said. "Generally, following a tough battle, it took a day or two for all men to get straightened out with their C.P. and officers."

When the grenade exploded upstairs, one of the GIs in the basement began to scream hysterically and would have gone raving mad if Drasler and several others hadn't grabbed him and gagged him. The soldiers were aware that one concussion grenade, coming from the window opening at street level, would have taken care of all of them, since the walls and ceiling of that basement were of solid concrete. "The motivating purpose of these people, every time they built their home and basement, seemed to be to make it a bomb-proof shelter," Drasler said.

This incident proved to be one of the very closest scrapes Drasler had with death, "and I still believe the only reason the drunken Germans didn't toss a grenade at us was that they were too jittery and too anxious to get out of town." Thinking they might be captured, the soldiers huddling in the basement abandoned and hid their Luger pistols and other souvenirs. "Getting captured with any of that stuff on you was equivalent to losing your life," Drasler said. "Germans had no sympathy for us at best and much less if they caught you toting their 'hardware' as they didn't have to think twice about how you acquired it."

Not knowing if the enemy was still in town or not, the group in the cellar were effectively German prisoners for a night.

The next morning, November 29, Drasler was relieved to see help coming. "One of the happiest sights of the entire war was observing one of our jeeps entering the town next morning," he said. "It didn't take long for us to clear out of the basement."

They rejoined a new set of soldiers whose counterattack on the town was led by Lt. Col. William J. Boydstun, commander of the 2nd battalion of the 317th. When the German attack had commenced the previous night, Boydstun ran from his command post to organize his men, but it was too late. An article in *The New York Times* described the scene: "Tanks—8 to 10 of them—stormed into the streets of the village, firing in every direction and tearing around like mechanical monsters gone berserk. With them were 100 or more infantrymen, who fired at anything that moved and hurled grenades into any opening where there seemed to be life remaining."

With communications cut off and unable to gather his men because of the fury of the German counterattack, Boydstun crept through underbrush until it was safe to make a dash toward the nearby town of Seinhousse, where he rounded up 200 men and four tanks. Boydstun brought his new army back to the town and found that the Germans were dug in on the eastern side of the village and were using a church as their main headquarters. Boydstun gathered as many of his original men as he could find and launched a counterattack.

"Tank clashed with tank until one or the other gave way; men fought with rifles, pistols, bazookas, and machine guns, separated sometimes only by the width of a street," *The New York Times* article continued. "The Germans had converted the church into a fortress and were firing from windows, doors, and a steeple, while in other parts of the village the battle was on a house-to-house basis. Bullets were spurting from roofs, doorways, and cellar apertures, with no quarter given on either side. The fight went on throughout the night but slackened by morning, when both sides were nearing exhaustion. By early afternoon the Americans had taken back most of the town and were in command of the church."

"We got into town at 10:30 a.m. and by dark we had driven them out," Boydstun later told *Stars and Stripes* reporter Jimmie Cannon. "I was in my CP when it happened. The tanks came through the fog that had sprung up like a suddenly recruited German ally. The infantry followed, spraying fire like insane gardeners with deadly hoses."

At the same time, the 2nd battalion was attacked by a force of several hundred infantry, led by five tanks. Hogue wrote, "We knew our objective, and we could see the outline of a

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ABOVE: German tanks, festooned with branches to provide some concealment against Allied air attacks, deploy in an unidentified French village in the autumn of 1944. The 317th Infantry Regiment fought throughout the day on November 28 during the effort to secure the town of Farebersviller, and then stood against a German counterattack supported by tanks that night. OPPOSITE: In the midst of the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944, soldiers of the 317th Infantry Regiment, 80th Division, slog along a highway en route to the fighting. After traveling 150 miles in a single night, the 317th Regiment and other Third Army units stemmed the German advance.

National Archives

hill in the fog ahead of us an estimated two miles away. There were not many of us left, but we moved forward in a disorganized manner across a big ditch and up a big hill. I was alone, so I looked around and found John Pavelda who had lost his partner (the nice young man from Nebraska). We dug in together and stayed all night in that hole. The 'hell to pay' was downtown. Rifle fire continued all night long. It was obvious that G Company was not able to clear the town. I kept remembering that the town (still occupied by Germans) was behind us, not in front of us and that put us in a bad position."

"The fog was worse in the morning, and we knew even less about what was going on. There was a company commander with us who came over on the same ship with me. They took our platoon guide, Sgt. Hill, and put him in charge of the first platoon. This left Sgt. Reece with us but no Lieutenant to help. We were not much more than a squad (12 men) anyway. There were so few men left that I did begin to learn some names."

"There was trouble behind us and a question in front of us." About a quarter mile ahead, near the edge of the fog, there was a woods, and the soldiers could hear a tank. Late in the afternoon they could still hear the sounds of battle in town, and the German tank hadn't gone anywhere." Hogue's tiny platoon had only their rifles for defense if the tank came in their direction. An artillery observer who was with them earlier could have placed a few artillery shells on that tank, but he had gone.

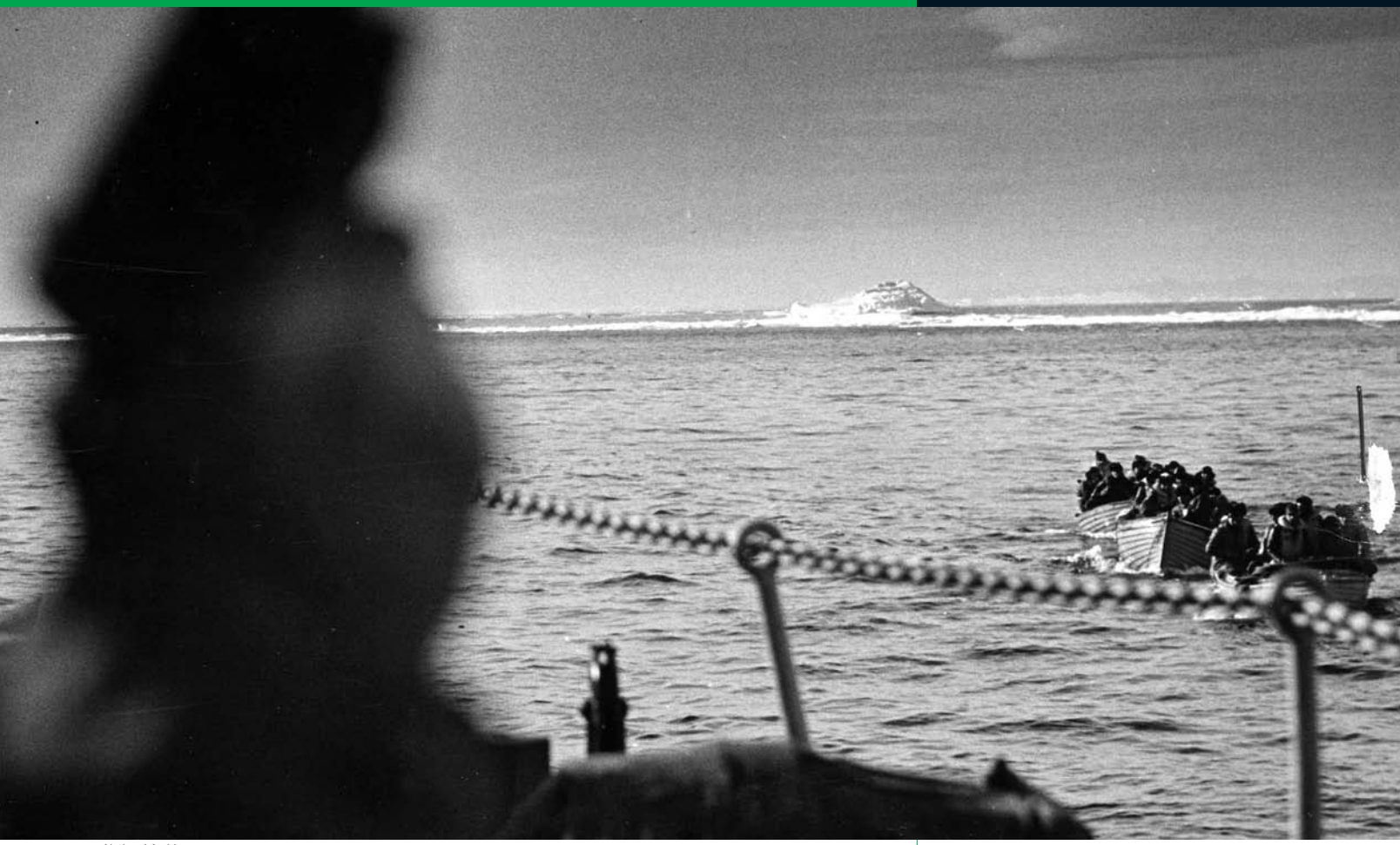
After an 88 shell wounded several of the men, they realized their position was impossible. Darkness was coming, and the tank was moving toward them. The commanding officer ordered the men to pull back.

Two weeks later, the exhausted and depleted 80th Division was pulled out of line for rest, refresher training, and replacements, ready to pitch into German territory on December 19, 1944. By then, Hitler's "Watch on the Rhine" counteroffensive had begun, and the 317th—along with the rest of the 80th Division—would undertake its 150-mile overnight sprint to Luxembourg to keep General Patton's promise that they could attack within 72 hours.

"The dead hold Farebersviller now," Cannon wrote after the battle. "Once the enemy did and then we came. But they returned, and so did we. Today only the dead are here. The fish in the shallow creek are the only living things in the town, which lies prostrate in the basin between disfigured hills."

For his efforts to organize a counterattack, Lt. Col. Boydstun earned a Silver Star. He continued to command the 2nd Battalion until January 21, 1945, when he was killed by a German shell while organizing a movement toward Bourscheid, Luxembourg. □

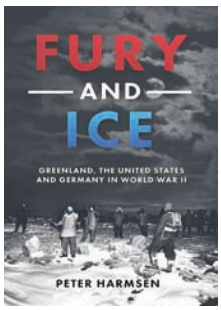
Leon Reed is a former U.S. Senate aide and U.S. History teacher. He is the co-author of (with his wife, Lois Lembo) A Combat Engineer with Patton's Army: The Fight Across Europe with the 80th "Blue Ridge" Division in World War II *(Savas Beatie, 2020) and is currently editing Walter Carr's memoirs and writing a book on army training in World War II. He is the editor of* Bulge Bugle, *the quarterly magazine of the Battle of the Bulge Association.*



National Archives

The Allies fought a long campaign against the Nazis over weather and resources on Greenland's rocky shores.

Weather prediction was vital to nearly all the war efforts of the Axis and the Allies during World War II. The D-Day landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944, offer an example of one of the most crucial events that depended upon accurate weather forecasting. Whether on land, at sea, or in the air, soldiers, sailors and airmen needed to know when the elements were working for or against them. Predicting European weather conditions benefited greatly from weather monitoring in the North Atlantic region. This is why Nazi Germany set up covert weather monitoring stations in Greenland during the war.



The Allies knew the advantages these monitoring stations provided and made extensive efforts to find and eliminate them. Much of the work fell to the United States Coast Guard and teams of Scandinavians formed into patrols using sled dogs to navigate the barren coastal areas. Just staying alive in the brutal cold and winds of an arctic region required specialized equipment and skills. Both sides sought men with polar and mountain experience to plan and lead the groups which set up the stations and those who searched for them.

Greenland also held deposits of cryolite, valuable for its use in aluminum production. The allies had to safeguard shipments, something the Germans knew and deliberately targeted. Without cryolite, Allied aircraft production would suffer at a critical time. A perilous game of cat and mouse ensued. Coast Guard cutters sailed the waters along the coast, sailing into fjords in search of the small freighters the Germans used to land their teams. U-Boats were a constant threat; in one instance on February 2, 1943, a German submarine sank the SS *Dorchester*. The converted U.S. Army transport carried 900

The cover photo for *Fury and Ice* shows the capture of a German crew operating a weather observatoin station on Greenland during World War II. TOP: On September 1, 1944, a crewman with a handgun stands by on the U.S. Coast Guard Combat Cutter *Northland* after it overtook an armed Nazi trawler on a mission to set up a weather station on Greenland. The Germans scuttled their ship in the ice-clogged waters near the Arctic Circle and took to small boats to surrender.

Popular CoQ10 Pills Leave Millions Suffering

Could this newly-discovered brain fuel solve America's worsening memory crisis?

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA — Millions of Americans take the supplement known as CoQ10. It's the coenzyme that supercharges the "energy factories" in your cells known as *mitochondria*. But there's a serious flaw that's leaving millions unsatisfied.

As you age, your mitochondria break down and fail to produce energy. In a revealing study, a team of researchers showed that 95 percent of the mitochondria in a 90-year-old man were damaged, compared to almost no damage in the mitochondria of a 5-year-old.

Taking CoQ10 alone is not enough to solve this problem. Because as powerful as CoQ10 is, there's one critical thing it fails to do: it can't create new mitochondria to replace the ones you lost.

And that's bad news for Americans all over the country. The loss of cellular energy is a problem for the memory concerns people face as they get older.

"We had no way of replacing lost mitochondria until a recent discovery changed everything," says Dr. Al Sears, founder and medical director of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Palm Beach, Florida. "Researchers discovered the only nutrient known to modern science that has the power to trigger the growth of new mitochondria."

Why Taking CoQ10 is Not Enough

Dr. Sears explains, "This new discovery is so powerful, it can multiply your mitochondria by 55 percent in just a few weeks. That's the equivalent of restoring decades of lost brain power."

This exciting nutrient — called PQQ *(pyrroloquinoline quinone)* — is the driving force behind a revolution in aging. When paired with CoQ10, this dynamic duo has the power to reverse the age-related memory losses you may have thought were beyond your control.

Dr. Sears pioneered a new formula — called **Ultra Accel Q** — that combines both CoQ10 and PQQ to support maximum cellular energy and the normal growth of new mitochondria. **Ultra Accel Q** is the first of its kind to address both problems and is already creating huge demand.

In fact, demand has been so overwhelming that inventories repeatedly sell out. But a closer look at **Ultra Accel Q** reveals there are good reasons why sales are booming.

Science Confirms the Many Benefits of PQQ

The medical journal *Biochemical Pharmacology* reports that PQQ is up to 5,000 times more efficient in sustaining energy production than common antioxidants. With the ability to keep every cell in your body operating at full strength, **Ultra Accel Q** delivers more than just added brain power and a faster memory.

People feel more energetic, more alert, and don't need naps in the afternoon. The boost in cellular energy generates more power to your heart, lungs, muscles, and more.

"With the PQQ in Ultra Accel, I have energy I never thought possible at my age," says Colleen R., one of Dr. Sears's patients. "I'm in my 70s but feel 40 again. I think clearly, move with real energy and sleep like a baby."

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and Dr. Sears receives countless emails from his patients and readers. "My patients tell me they feel better than they have in years. This is ideal for people who are feeling old and run down, or for those who feel more forgetful. It surprises many that you can add healthy and productive years to your life simply by taking **Ultra Accel Q** every day."

You may have seen Dr. Sears on television or read one of his 12 best-selling books. Or you may have seen him speak at the 2016 WPBF 25 Health and Wellness Festival in South Florida, featuring Dr. Oz and special guest Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people attended Dr. Sears's lecture on anti-aging breakthroughs and waited in line for hours during his book signing at the event.

Will Ultra Accel Q Multiply Your Energy?

Ultra Accel Q is turning everything we thought we knew about youthful energy on its head. Especially for people over age 50. In less than 30 seconds every morning, you can harness the power of this breakthrough discovery to restore peak energy and your "spark for life."

So, if you've noticed less energy as you've gotten older, and you want an easy way to reclaim your youthful edge, this new opportunity will feel like blessed relief.

The secret is the "energy multiplying" molecule that activates a dormant gene in your body that declines with age, which then instructs your cells to pump out fresh energy from the inside-out. This growth of new "energy factories" in your cells is called mitochondrial biogenesis.

MEMORY-BUILDING SENSATION: Top doctors are now recommending new *Ultra Accel Q* because it restores decades of lost brain power without a doctor's visit.

Instead of falling victim to that afternoon slump, you enjoy sharp-as-a-tack focus, memory, and concentration from sunup to sundown. And you get more done in a day than most do in a week. Regardless of how exhausting the world is now.

Dr. Sears reports, "The most rewarding aspect of practicing medicine is watching my patients get the joy back in their lives. **Ultra Accel Q** sends a wake-up call to every cell in their bodies… And they actually feel young again."

And his patients agree. "I noticed a difference within a few days," says Jerry from Ft. Pierce, Florida. "My endurance has almost doubled, and I feel it mentally, too. There's a clarity and sense of well-being in my life that I've never experienced before."

How To Get Ultra Accel Q

This is the official nationwide release of **Ultra Accel Q** in the United States. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to anyone who calls during the official launch.

An Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try **Ultra Accel Q**. And your order is backed up by a no-hassle, 90-day money back guarantee. No questions asked.

The discount offer will be available for a limited time only. All you have to do is call TOLL FREE **1-800-998-3497** right now and use promo code **WWHUAQ225** to secure your own supply.

Important: Due to **Ultra Accel Q** recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

troops to reinforce the Greenland garrison; 675 perished in the frigid waters. This included four chaplains who gave their life preservers to others who needed them. All four died, becoming forever immortalized as the "Four Chaplains."

The sled patrols were at first civilians, but the governor of Greenland, Eske Brun, soon militarized them, giving each a military rank and armband to identify them. He feared the Germans might otherwise shoot them as partisans, as Denmark was under German occupation at the time. Soon the patrols carried machine guns, grenades and pistols instead of hunting rifles. Interestingly, they had to start carrying full metal jacket ammunition instead of their normal hollow point 'dum dum' bullets, which were more effective at stopping polar bears, but were considered illegal to use in warfare under existing conventions.

The battles in and around Greenland are little known today, despite their importance in supporting the overall war effort. This shortcoming is thoroughly rectified in ***Fury and Ice: Greenland, The United States and Germany in World War II*** (Peter Harmsen, Casemate Publishing, Havertown PA, 2024, 224 pp., maps, photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index, $34.95, HC).

The fighting for Greenland is told in personal stories of diplomats posturing for advantage, Allied and Axis leaders trying to win the war and most importantly the soldiers, sailors and airmen fighting both each other and nature. The author has over two decades of experience as an international correspondent; his eye for detail and expert storytelling ability show through in this book. The volume also contains good maps and a set of interesting photographs. The narrative is readable and full of the small details which normally escape a more general account.

Simulation Gaming

BY JOSEPH LUSTER

SNIPER ELITE IS BACK TO TAKE ON A NEW WUNDERWAFFE THAT COULD TILT THE WAR IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

SNIPER ELITE: RESISTANCE

PUBLISHER REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS • **GENRE** SHOOTER • **SYSTEM** PlayStation 5, Xbox Series, Switch, PC • **AVAILABLE** JANUARY 2025

The latest entry in the *Sniper Elite* series is finally upon us. If you're reading this at the tail end of January, *Sniper Elite: Resistance* is here at last, with Rebellion Developments launching the shooter across PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X|S and PC via Steam, Epic Games Store and Microsoft Store. With no shortage of places to pick it up from, let's take a look at what we can expect from this one.

This time around, players are being treated to a new standalone story set in parallel to that of *Sniper Elite 5*. *Resistance* follows Special Operations Executive agent Harry Hawker, who takes the lead for the first time as he uncovers something so powerful it could lead the Nazis to victory in World War II. That something is the vile new Wunderwaffe, a potential superweapon that could lead to catastrophic results in the wrong hands.

Naturally, it's up to Harry to make sure those hands never get a chance to put it to use. He'll be able to do that in both single-player and co-op, challenging a full-length campaign that takes him into occupied France with a new target-filled Kill List. Players will need to approach each mission via multiple infiltration and extraction points, using authentic World War II weaponry that can be customized and upgraded depending on individual preferences.

It wouldn't be a *Sniper Elite* game without the brutal X-ray kill cam, which puts the largest of exclamation points at the end of your deadly sniping sentences. You'll be able to revel in the extremely brutal power of your shots with this one again, and once you fancy yourself a truly expert sniper you can take your skills online for some intense multiplayer showdowns.

One of the new features in *Resistance* is the addition of Propaganda Missions. To unlock them, first you'll have to find a Propaganda poster located somewhere in each of the levels of the main campaign. Once you've got one, you can then become a Resistance Fighter in a special mission. These missions offer up time-sensitive objectives, putting your sneaking and sniping abilities to a uniquely conditional test.

Sniper Elite has become a series we can depend on to deliver memorable and exciting shooting action, making for one of the best World War II takes on the genre. *Sniper Elite: Resistance* looks to continue the tradition in style, and if what we've played thus far is any indication, Rebellion has nailed it all over again. Here's hoping the community continues to embrace what this series has to offer.

GRIT & VALOR: 1949

PUBLISHER MEGABIT • **GENRE** STRATEGY **SYSTEM** PC • **AVAILABLE** 2025)

If you need a break from the reality of war, join us in taking a look ahead to 2025 and into the more fantastical frontlines of *Grit & Valor: 1949*. Billed as a "dieselpunk roguelite real-time strategy game," publisher Megabit and developer Milky Tea have concocted an alternate history spin on World War II that puts you in command of an elite squadron of mechs.

In the world of *Grit & Valor*, World War II continues in 1949, and the Axis has all but secured victory for its side. Europe is down for the count, and Axis soldiers patrol what's left of the landscape in massive and deadly robots in an attempt to take out any remaining rebels. It's up to you to join the resistance, raise your hopeful flag and dash into enemy territory to unleash an EMP weapon that will turn the tide of war back in your favor.

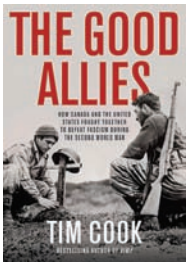
These mech battles make for a nice strategical setup. Maps are loaded with imposing encounters, from your run-of-the-mill Axis mechs to bigger boss characters like General Harmsworth and their even more intimidating spider-like mechanical monstrosity. Region bosses serve as an additional challenge at the end of each run, making players square off against various Axis generals and the cannon fodder surrounding them.

Grit & Valor: 1949 kicked off a closed beta test on PC in December, so players have already had a chance to see the real-time action it has to offer. When the full game launches sometime in 2025, it will be available on PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X|S, Nintendo Switch and PC. Personally, I'm always interested to see how a fictional alt-history story takes something we know so well at this point and sends it off in a wild new direction, so I'm looking forward to taking the final version for a spin. ■

The Death of General Sikorski: The Polish Leader's Last Flight in 1943, and the Tangled Web of Poland, the Allies, and the Soviets (Peter Zablocki, Frontline Books, South Yorkshire UK, 2024, 275 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $42.95, HC)

When the Nazis and Soviets partitioned Poland in 1939, the Polish government in exile was set up first in France, then in the United Kingdom in 1940 as France fell. The Polish Prime Minister, General Wladyslaw Sikorski, established a relationship with Winston Churchill, only to see the relationship suffer once the Soviet Union joined the Allied cause in 1941. The Polish leader could get no help in dealing with the Soviet occupation or Soviet atrocities. This harmed his relationships with other Poles. In mid-1943 Sikorski went to Iran to visit Polish troops stationed there. His RAF Liberator aircraft stopped at Gibraltar on July 4, 1943, for a layover. When his plane took off, it crashed sixteen seconds into the flight, going into the sea. Afterward, theories about plots and accusations of blame began.

This new book is a thorough investigation into the death of General Sikorski. It is a complicated story, with many actors and factions involved, but the author effectively clarifies the various factors into a coherent and readable narrative. The book provides a fascinating look at one of the war's lesser-known political incidents.



The Good Allies: How Canada and the United States Fought Together to Defeat Fascism During the Second World War (Tim Cook, Allen Lane Publishing, Canada, 2024, 576 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $30, HC)

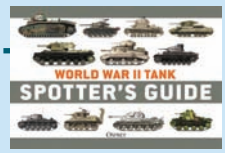
The United States and Canada share a border thousands of miles long; this naturally gives rise to friction. The two nations had their share of that when the United States entered the war in December 1941. The Canadians possessed two years of experience at running convoys and raising troops for the war effort, but when America joined the fight, it would inevitably take a larger role in managing the conflict due to its large size and industrial capacity. The Americans were brave and energetic, but they could be arrogant at times and had much to learn. The Canadians had their own troubles as they strove to raise enough troops and mobilize their own economy for wartime. Nevertheless, the two nations learned to work together and combine their economies toward the goal of ultimate victory. Both thrived in their own ways and did their parts to win the war.

This new work looks at both the North American home front and its forces abroad. It is well written and very detailed. The author effectively shows how two nations previously at odds learned to cooperate against their mutual enemies. The book also looks at how each nation's leadership shaped their country's efforts.

Hero City: Leningrad 1943-44 (Prit Buttar, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2024, 464 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $40, HC)

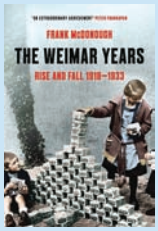
During World War II, the Soviet city of Leningrad endured a siege lasting 900 days. The suffering and starvation of the populace became as legendary as their endurance. In late 1943, the German Army began to retreat from their perimeter around the city, having suffered severe defeats elsewhere and dealing with extreme weather. Realizing an opportunity, the Red Army launched an attack. The German suffered heavy casualties, losses they could no longer afford to replace. German fighting capabilities gradually eroded just as the Soviets gained hard-won experience and combined this with their numerical and material superiority. The pressure became too much, and the Germans finally were pushed back far enough to per-

New and Noteworthy



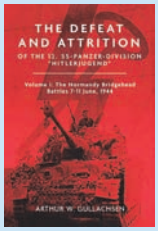
World War II Tank Spotter's Guide (Compiled by Chris McNab, Osprey Publishing, 2024, $12, SC) This compact reference guide provides technical and historical data on the major tank types of the war.

Roza's War: Diary of a Soviet Sniper (Brenda Muller Ellis, Hellgate Press, 2024 $14.95, SC) This well-written novel is based upon the diary and other records of the Red Army sniper during World War II.

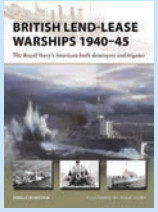


The Weimar Years: Rise and Fall 1918-1933 (Frank McDonough, Head of Zeus, 2024, $45, HC) The Weimar Republic was an attempt to stabilize and democratize Germany. This book examines its origins, history and ultimate failure.

Forgotten War: The British Empire and Commonwealth's Epic Struggle Against Imperial Japan, 1941-1945 (Brian E. Walter, Casemate Publishers, 2024, $37.95, HC) As the U.S. dominanted the Pacific, in South Asia the British Commonwealth played the major part in defeating the Japanese.



The Defeat and Attrition of the 12.SS-Panzerdivision Hitlerjugend, Volume I: The Normandy Bridgehead Battles 7-11 June 1944 (Arthur W. Gullachson, Casemate Publishers, 2024, $37.95, HC) This new analysis of this German's division's failure at Normandy examines German and Canadian leadership.

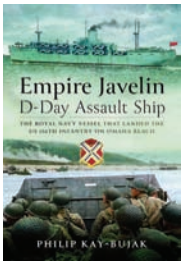


British Lendlease Warships 1940-45: The Royal Navy's American-built destroyers and frigates (Angus Konstam, Osprey Publishing, 2024, $20, SC) This new work reveals the history of the small combatant warships the United Kingdom acquired for convoy escort during the Battle of the Atlantic.

Crusader Versus M13/40 North Africa 1941-42 (David Greentree, Osprey Publishing, 2024, $23, SC) These two tanks were mainstays of the British and Italian armies in the early years of the desert war. This book examines their technical specifications and service during this period.

manently break the siege.

The author is one of the foremost experts on the Eastern Front in both world wars, with numerous titles to his credit. In this latest work he recounts the events around the end of the siege of Leningrad. This includes the combat between German and Soviet, the deprivations of the civilians, and the complicity of German forces in war crimes committed in the vicinity.



Empire Javelin, D-Day Assault Ship: The British Vessel That Landed the US 116th Infantry on Omaha Beach (Philip Kay-Bujak, Pen and Sword Maritime, South Yorkshire UK, 2024, 223 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $36.95, HC)

The Empire Javelin carried five companies of the 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment across the English Channel over the night of June 5-6, 1944, en route to their appointment with destiny at Omaha Beach on D-Day. The ship was constructed in the United States and transferred to the United Kingdom, where it soon had a place in the Royal Navy. The landings proved difficult and perilous. One third of the ship's landing craft were destroyed in the first wave alone and many of the soldiers they carried ashore died that morning. The ship itself sank in December 1944, victim to a U-boat torpedo or a mine.

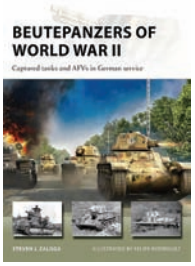
This interesting book looks at the history of the ship, including its post-D-day service. It also goes into depth on the soldiers of the 116th who travelled aboard the Empire Javelin and went ashore at Omaha Beach. The author uses first-hand accounts and new photographs to tell the story. Less glamorous than frontline warships, Empire Javelin nevertheless performed vital service toward victory in Europe.

US Battleships 1939-45 (Ingo Bauernfeind, Casemate Publishing, Havertown PA, 2024, 240 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $49.95, HC)

On December 6, 1941, most people considered the battleship the queens of the world's oceans. A day later that notion lay smashed and sinking at the bottom of Pearl Harbor.

Despite the ascendancy of the aircraft carrier, however, the battleship still had a role to play. The US Navy entered the war with 16 older battleships (including the partly demilitarized *Wyoming*, retained for gunnery training). Ten modern ships built in the late 1930s or during the war joined them. They escorted carriers, carried out shore bombardments, including a duel between USS *Texas* and German shore batteries in 1944. A handful of the older battleships took part in the last battleship versus battleship action in history at the Battle of Surigao Strait.

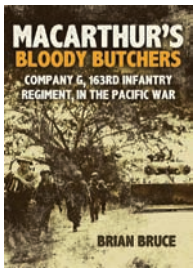
This new work is a well-illustrated coffee table book providing detailed information on each of the battleships which sailed in the US Navy during the war. Hundreds of photographs and charts accompany the text, with thorough data on the ship's armament, protection, propulsion and more. The book has interesting sections on the Cold War service of the Iowa class and diving on the USS *Arizona*.



Beutepanzers of World War II: Captured tanks and AFVs in German Service (Steven J. Zaloga, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2024, 80 pp., photos, bibliography, index, $20, SC)

As Germany conquered neighboring nations in Europe, it made use of whatever military equipment and vehicles were used or manufactured in the occupied territories. Tanks were especially in demand as the Germans had not entirely mobilized their own industry to increase production. Over the course of the war tanks captured from active enemies were also put into service, sometimes in an organized way but more often on an ad hoc basis by the small units which captured them. Modern tanks would be used on the battlefield while the Germans employed obsolete models against partisans and in rear-area security roles. The Germans kept the factories in the occupied nations open, producing chassis that were converted to anti-tank or self-propelled guns.

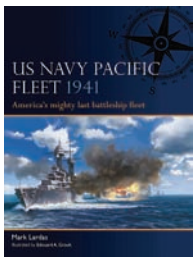
This book provides an interesting survey of how the Third Reich collected and employed captured tanks, known as Beutepanzers, or "war-booty tanks." The author is an acknowledged authority on World War II armor and uses his usual depth of knowledge and research to present a concise but detailed work on the topic.



MacArthur's Bloody Butchers: Company G, 163rd Infantry Regiment, in the Pacific War (Brian Bruce, Casemate Publishing, Havertown PA, 2024, 224 pp., maps, photos, notes, bibliography, index, $34.95, HC)

The U.S. Army had hundreds of thousands of troops serving in the Pacific Theater, among them G Company, 163rd Infantry, of the 41st Division. This Montana National Guard unit began the war with its citizen-soldiers but soon received draftees from across the country. The unit trained in the Pacific Northwest before moving to Australia. From there the company entered combat in the jungles of New Guinea, where it played a key role in defeating Japanese forces at the Battle of Sanananda. Company G later fought at Biak, on Mindanao and in the Sulu Archipelago in the Philippines before going to Japan at the end of the war.

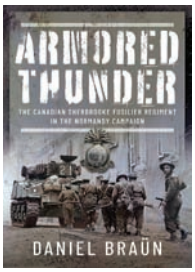
The author tells the story of an infantry company in the Pacific through the narratives of official records, and more importantly the experiences of four members of the company. Each significant battle is covered in detail from the individual to the divisional level. The book provides an engaging and fascinating look at a small unit at war and its effects on its members.



U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet 1941: America's mighty last battleship fleet (Mark Lardas, Osprey Publishing, Oxford UK, 2024, 80 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $23, HC)

As the age of the carrier dawned the Pacific Fleet, the most powerful in the U.S. Navy, was still dominated by battleships. While critics decried this state, the Navy was aware of the potential of aircraft and was actually building both air and battleship strength, hedging its bets against the need for both. The Pacific Fleet's leaders worked to integrate both types into its battle plans for war with Japan. The most crucial development in the Pacific fleet proved to be the large fleet trains, able to support the combatant vessels thousands of miles from their home ports. These were as important to victory in World War II as carriers, aircraft and submarines. While the Pacific Fleet suffered tactical and operational defeat at Pearl Harbor, it laid the strategic foundations for victory in the coming war.

The author deftly cuts through misconceptions about the Pacific Fleet and the Navy just prior to the war. The book effectively shows where the Navy's preparations and thought were taking the force when the war interrupted planning. It also shows where shortcomings existed, whether recognized or not. This work makes good use of the publisher's customary original artwork and maps and its always-excellent use of photographs. all unit at war and its effects on its members.



Armored Thunder: The Canadian Sherbrooke Fusilier Regiment in the Normandy Campaign (Daniel M Braun, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire UK, 2024, 262 pp., maps, photos, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $49.95, HC)

During World War II the Sherbrooke Fusiliers was an independent armored regiment attached to 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade during the Normandy campaign. Its initial assignments were to support several infantry units. The day after the D-Day landings, the regiment fought the first tank battle of the campaign against the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend. From there, it went on to fight at Caen and during Operation Atlantic, the battle for Verrieres Ridge. Next came Operations Totalize and Tractable, the fighting around the Falaise Gap. After clearing the town of Falaise, the Sherbrooke Fusiliers pursued the now-retreating Germans toward the Seine River at Rouen. It was hard fighting, with only more to follow.

This book provides a deep look at a Canadian tank unit during some of its hardest fighting. The author is a retired Lt. Colonel of the Canadian Army with ties to the regiment and its legacy. He uses his military expertise to create a solid image of the unit and its exploits against some of the best units the German army could field in Normandy. The book is solidly researched and well-written. A planned follow-up book will examine the regiment's later battles. □

PROFILE

Continued from page 16

such a long hiatus. Huib translated for the two old friends.

Another reunion of sorts occurred in May 2003. A ceremony was held at Wattisham Airfield (now a British Army helicopter base) to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the base's handover to the U.S. Army Air Forces from the British Royal Air Force. Frolking was asked to attend as the guest of honor, representing U.S. service personnel who had served at the base during the time it operated under American auspices. The occasion was bittersweet, for while there were flashbacks of the officer club partying and friendships forged in war there was no ignoring the grim statistic that 70 of the 479th Fighter Group's 350 flyers had been killed in action.

At a D-Day commemorative event along the Lake Erie beachfront in 2015, Frolking and four other D-Day veterans who had either stormed the beaches at Normandy or flown air missions received the French Legion of Honor. For Frolking the medal was a fitting end cap to his other decorations, which included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, World War II Victory Medal, and the French Croix de Guerre. On June 6, 2019, the 75th anniversary of D-Day, Frolking was on hand in Normandy for the solemn commemoration.

Frolking died at the age of 100 in a hospice in greater Cleveland on September 5, 2024.

In the years that followed their wartime experience, Frolking and his Dutch friends exchanged letters. Izak once wrote that he and Marie had spoken many times of Frolking, adding, "We hope with all our heart that you have survived the war unhurt." Izak expressed regret that Frolking's sudden departure from Kats meant that there could be no goodbyes. Nevertheless, looking at both Frolking's hastily-arranged repatriation and the bigger picture, he added, "We were very pleased for you and our liberation."

In closing his reminiscence of his time spent at the van der Maas farm, Frolking praised his courageous hosts, calling them a "wonderfully unselfish family" that "shall always be in my heart." □

A first-time contributor to WWII History, Philip Handleman is a longtime pilot, aviation author and photographer.

ORDNANCE

Continued from page 24

George V, to shell Tokyo, sinking several warships and other craft.

This duty continued until August 15, when she was recalled upon hearing of the Japanese surrender. Entering Tokyo Bay on August 27, she hosted Admirals Halsey and Chester Nimitz. As Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC), Nimitz remained aboard until the morning of September 2, 1945, when he took a launch over to the USS *Missouri* for the surrender ceremonies. *South Dakota*, the hard-working battleship, was there to see the end of the war. Halsey made the ship his flagship while he worked with Douglas MacArthur to oversee the dissolution of the remains of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

South Dakota sailed in company with scores of warships to Okinawa, then on to Pearl Harbor, arriving in San Francisco on October 27, Navy Day. Governor Earl Warren boarded the ship for the double celebration. After transiting the Panama Canal, *South Dakota* arrived at the Philadelphia Navy Yard on January 20, 1946. For just under a year, she was the flagship of the short-lived Fourth Fleet, a reserve unit. On January 30, she was decommissioned and laid up in the Atlantic Reserve Fleet. For the next 15 years, the battleship was under consideration for modernization to carry Talos guided missiles. But the renovation of *South Dakota* and her sisters was deemed too costly, and she was ignominiously struck from the navy roll in February 1962.

In November, she was towed to New Jersey for breaking up. Almost exactly 20 years after fighting her first battle at Guadalcanal, USS *South Dakota* was no more.

South Dakota's anchor and bell were retained by the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Chamber of Commerce for a memorial. A low concrete wall outlines the full-scale shape of the ship, with mockups of her superstructure and a forward turret on display.

While *South Dakota* might not have been one of the outstanding battleships of World War II, she did her duty, through bad luck and good. She and her crew deserve to be honored. □

Mark Carlson a student and researcher of military history and a resident of Prescott, Arizona.

BENJAMIN BERRY

Continued from page 77

a friend of a friend in Germantown, Pennsylvania. They lived there until Lois became pregnant. Eventually, they had four children, Linda Marlene, Benjamin Douglas, Susan Elenor, and Lisa Annet.

Berry worked as a paperhanger, putting up wallpaper in homes. The job paid little, so he took a night job at the Standard Press Steel Company, which he eventually quit. "I had a wife stuck in this little apartment in North Philly who didn't know anybody and got bored," he explained. When Berry made enough money, they moved into a house with a yard and basement. "We converted the basement to a kitchen so my wife could see the children in the yard."

Berry stayed in the wallpaper business the rest of his career, retiring around 2009. Since then, he has returned to Normandy with a tour group, where he was treated like a celebrity. He has received medals from France and Luxembourg for helping liberate their countries, and he has visited places like Gettysburg and Arlington National Cemetery to speak about his war experiences and honor his fellow soldiers.

Reflecting on the war, Berry regrets the U.S. Army's segregation policies and how they kept races separate and unequal. "We all bleed the same, we all want the same things, desire the same things," he said. "We are our brother's keeper, but a lot of times people won't accept you as a brother."

At age 100 in 2024, Barry says the war stays with him. Whenever he flips through magazines or books on World War II, he still looks for pictures of himself on the Siegfried Line, hopeful that someone developed the film he dropped off in 1945. He does not need film to see the image that haunts him to this day—the tall concentration camp survivor who approached him at Mauthausen. "I have a mental picture of him quite often." □

Frequent contributor Kevin M. Hymel works as a historian at Arlington National Cemetery. He is the author of Patton's War, Volumes 1 and 2 *and leads tours of General George S. Patton's battlefields for Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours. His article "Fighting a Two Front War" for this magazine is now a major motion picture called* Six Triple Eight *by Tyler Perry for Netflix.*

EAGLES OF MERCY

Continued from page 55

joined his comrades in D Company. Wright stayed another day, helping to move the wounded to the rear before rejoining the regiment. By the end of June 7, the two medics had treated at least 80 casualties in their makeshift medical aid station.

Both Moore and Wright earned the Silver Star for their life-saving actions in the church. Both also survived the war and returned home to marry and have children. Moore worked for Chevron and owned his own gas station. Wright worked in the oil industry and later remodeled gas stations. In their later years, they both attended 501st reunions and returned to the Angoville-au-Plain church. Wright died in 2013 and Moore followed almost exactly one year later.

Today, a memorial adorned with American and French flags stands outside the church, dedicated to both Wright and Moore. Etched onto the bottom of the memorial are the words: "FOR HUMANE AND LIFE SAVING CARE RENDERED TO 80 COMBATANTS AND A CHILD IN THIS CHURCH IN JUNE 1944."

While Moore and Wright had toiled in the church on D-Day, they might not have noticed several silver-dollar sized seals carved into the stone altar. They had been chiseled by passing Knights Hospitaller, a Catholic military order of knights founded after the Christian conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, to protect a hospital in the city during the First Crusade. The order later expanded to escorting European pilgrims journeying to the Middle East. How appropriate it was that warriors dedicated to healing in the 12th century had left their lasting mark in the church, just like the blood-stained pews left from two 20th century warrior healers. □

British writer Paul Woodadge is the author of the book, Angels of Mercy: Two Screaming Eagle Medics in Angoville-au-Plain on D-Day*, on which this article is based. He hosts WW2 TV on YouTube and worked as a Normandy battlefield guide from 2002 to 2018. He has also served as a historical advisor and consultant for TV and film projects.*

GUAM

Continued from page 83

cautiously moved toward his Chevrolet parked nearby. "Carefully opening the door so as to not be targeted by the Japanese, I sounded three blasts on the horn, a signal recognized by anyone in the military as meaning secure," he wrote. "This was not a prearranged signal to cease fire, but it seemed to be understood by both sides," McMillin later explained.

An eerie silence came across the plaza. It was soon broken by a Japanese voice speaking poor English: "Send over your captain." Giles carefully turned the head of his naval academy ring inward. He and Chief Boatswain's Mate Robert Lane began walking toward the enemy line.

The Americans were marched under guard to the landing site where they met with Hayashi, who spoke no English. With no interpreter, they used sign language and Giles understood they wanted to see the top American official on the island. Back in the plaza, the remaining defenders laid down their guns and put their hands in the air to be among the first prisoners of the Pacific War.

Giles and Lane found McMillin already at Agaña. "I was captured in the reception room of my quarters about 20 minutes after the cease firing signal," he wrote. "The leader of the squad of Japanese who entered my quarters required me to remove my jacket and trousers before marching me into the plaza, where officers and men were being assembled, covered by machine guns."

The communication barrier between the two sides persisted. A Japanese officer learned there were Japanese citizens in a nearby jail. He ordered their immediate release, and one was pressed into service as an interpreter. A letter of surrender was drafted after some wrangling. An American yeoman typed a short letter with three sections as dictated by the Japanese. Captain McMillin signed the document to formally surrender the island.

The battle for Guam was over. The short duration kept the number of casualties down. Seventeen military defenders were thought to have perished—13 Americans and four Insular Guard members—along with about 30 civilians killed and 35 wounded. The Japanese lost one soldier killed and six wounded.

News of the capitulation slowly spread across Guam, the first American territory taken by the Japanese. The rising sun flag was hoisted in Agaña to make the surrender official. General Hori issued a proclamation. "We proclaim herewith that our Japanese Army has occupied this island of Guam by order of the great Emperor of Japan. It is for the purpose of restoring liberty and rescuing the whole Asiatic people and creating the permanent peace in Asia. Thus our intention is to establish the New Order of the World." The general warned of execution for acts of defiance and spying.

Jackson was at the hospital with the medical staff during the fighting in the plaza and remembered hearing the gunfire stop around dawn. "I think the most bitter moment in my life came at sunrise when standing in the library door I saw the rising sun on the flag pole where the day before the Stars and Stripes had proudly flown," she later recalled.

Most of the prisoners were herded into the plaza shortly after the surrender and were forced to strip to their underwear. The Americans were later sent to prison camps in Japan where they endured years of brutal treatment until the end of the war. Jackson also went to Japan and was considered a civilian internee. She was repatriated in 1942 during an exchange of civilians and diplomats.

Not all of the American servicemen heeded the order to surrender. Navy Radioman 1st Class George Tweed was one of six sailors who escaped. He spent the next two and a half years on the run—using the help of Guamanian, his survival skills, and some good luck—to stay one step ahead of the Japanese. He was the only sailor of the group to survive.

The Guamanians suffered greatly under Japanese occupation. American forces eventually fought their way across the Pacific to the island in July 1944, liberating it after the brutal and bloody battle. □

John Domagalski is the author of numerous books and magazine articles, including Forgotten Island: The World War II Story of One Sailor's Survival on Japanese-Occupied Guam *(Post Hill Press 2024).*

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