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Late Fall 2011

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Cover: Grizzled Marine PFC T.E. Underwood, photographed on Saipan in 1944. One of the Marine Corps' first fights of World War II took place near the Tenaru River on Guadalcanal. Story page 36.

Photo: National Archives

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Editorial

Deep hatred remains among Poles of Jedwabne.

THE TRAGEDY THAT ENGULFED THE POLISH TOWN OF JEDWABNE DURING World War II continues to rear its ugly head today.

On the morning of July 10, 1941, a group of Poles in the town, allegedly under the close supervision of German policemen, assembled with the purpose of rounding up the local Jewish citizenry. When they had found enough victims, the Poles made the Jewish men march to the town square, where they were beaten and brutalized and forced to pick blades of grass with their hands. Some of the men were ordered to destroy a statue of Lenin and carry the debris out of town while singing Soviet patriotic songs.

A monument dedicated to the Jews murdered on July 10, 1941, in Jedwabne, Poland.

This group of adult males, numbering roughly 40, was led by a local rabbi into a barn, where they were shot to a man. The corpses were then dragged from the barn and buried along with fragments of the Lenin statue.

Later that day, the remaining Jews that had been rounded up earlier, approximately 300 women and children, were taken to the same barn and locked inside. The structure was then doused with gasoline and set afire. The occupants were burned alive.

The sad saga of Jedwabne in World War II did not begin with the atrocity of July 10. It was initiated with the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. Two weeks after the Germans rolled across the Polish frontier, the Soviets did the same—the forces converging on the hapless country from east and west. According to prearranged treaty terms, the Germans, who had initially occupied the town, turned it over to the Soviets some time later.

During the Red Army and NKVD (Soviet Secret Police) occupation of Jedwabne, it was reported that Jews and Poles alike were either enlisted into civil service or auxiliary jobs, rounded up and deported to Siberia, or summarily executed. Some observers recalled that the Soviets allowed Jews who swore allegiance to Moscow to be placed in positions of responsibility, often enough guarding Poles on their way to an unknown collective fate. Herein may have laid the root of the Polish reprisal against the local Jews following the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. The reported massacre of Jews on July 10 occurred only two weeks later.

Following World War II, a series of investigations was conducted in an effort to fix blame for the massacre of the Jews. The first of these was under the jurisdiction of the Polish Communist government with the intent of also punishing Poles who had collaborated with the Nazis. This was followed by German inquiries. From 2002 to 2004, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance released a series of reports that acknowledged the perpetrators were Polish Gentiles and apologized for the atrocity. They also confirmed the presence of the German authorities during the tragedy.

Most recently, in August of this year, vandals struck a monument that had been erected to the memory of those murdered on July 10, 1941. The apparent neo-Nazis or Polish ultra-nationalists scrawled across the monument with spray paint the dreaded SS runes and the hateful comment, "I don't apologize for Jedwabne—they were flammable."

Apparently in response to the Polish government's acceptance of its people's participation in the atrocity and the courage of then President Aleksandr Kwasniewski to own up to the fact, these individuals felt compelled to deface the memorial. At press time, an investigation is continuing.

While World War II ended more than six decades ago, incidents such as this indicate that mankind still has far to go when it comes to tolerance and forgiveness. Consider that those who committed the vandalism were very likely born at least 30 years after the end of the war. Another generation of hate? For everyone's sake, let us hope this is not so.

Michael E. Haskew

WWII HISTORY

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Dispatches

Tito's War

Dear Editor:

In "Tito's War" (November 2011 issue), author John Brown's account of General Draza Mihailovich's capture and trial for alleged war crimes and collaborating with the enemy, omits a few important details, such as President Harry S. Truman having awarded The Legion of Merit on March 29, 1948, to General Draza Mihailovich for the rescue of over 500 downed American airmen in what was known as Operation Halyard, the largest ever rescue of Allied forces behind enemy lines. The fact that even the existence of the award was kept secret for 20 years for fear of offending Tito, and not officially presented to General Mihailovich's daughter until 2005, is evidence of the political distortions associated with Yugoslav history.

Major Richard Felman, with whom I spoke two weeks before his death, was one of the aviators who was shot down over Yugoslavia. Their target was the Astro Romano oil refinery at Ploesti, Romania. In his "An Open Letter to our troops in the Former Yugoslavia," written in 1999 in opposition to U.S. policy in the Balkans, Major Felman wrote: "If there was one piece of bread in the house, or one egg, it went to the American airmen while the Serb went hungry. If there was one bed or one blanket, it went to us while the Serb slept on the bare ground. No risk or sacrifice was too great to insure our safety and well-being. One experience which is forever seared in my memory is the time a village with 200 women and children was burned to the ground by the Germans because the Serbs would not tell them where they were hiding us. To this day, I can smell the terrible stench of their burning flesh. One does not forget such things.

"The most incredible part of our rescue was that before each mission, our bomber crews were briefed by the highest levels of American intelligence that if shot down over Yugoslavia, we were to stay away from the Serbian people as they were collaborating with the Germans and cutting off the ears of American airmen before turning them over. Only after we were shot down did we find out the amazing thoroughness with which the truth about the Serbs was being distorted.… Further complicating this distortion is the fact that while the Serbs were our allies in World War II, Croatians and Muslims [whom we are favoring today] were allies of the Nazis, shooting at us and responsible for killing many of our fellow American fliers."

As to the charges of Chetnik collaboration with the Germans, in a *Washington Times* commentary of June 11, 1985, Milt Copulos wrote, "Information contained in documents [previously classified OSS files and Nazi documents] now makes it clear that the leader of Yugoslavia's nationalist forces [Chetniks], Gen. Draza Mihialovich, was the victim of an active campaign of subversion conducted by James Klugman, a highly placed communist agent in British intelligence and close associate of master spy Kim Philby.... Surprisingly, Gen. Mihailovich remained loyal to the Allied cause to the end, and held no bitterness toward the United States. He chose to remain behind after the war, and was eventually caught, imprisoned, and executed by Tito for collaboration, a charge which had been fabricated by Tito's mole in Cairo" ("State Shuns Heroic Ally," *The Washington Times*).

Because of Allied perfidy, the Serbs were condemned to live under Tito's communist rule for almost 50 years. A fate they did not deserve.

It may have been "Tito's War," but the real hero of the war who fought against both the Germans and the Communists, was General Draza Mihailovich, executed on July 17, 1946.

George Jatras, Col. USAF (Ret.)
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Anachronism: CPR

Dear Editor:

Just received your November 2011 issue and, as always, excellent. That said, I do have one correction. On page 41 of the article "Delaying Action at Hosingen" in describing the actions of Private Sansom treating a mortally wounded comrade in December 1944, the author writes, "In response, he started CPR." While there have been various forms of resuscitation practiced throughout history, CPR did not come into use until the 1960s. The first use of mouth-to-mouth (pulmonary) resuscitation on adult patients was by Dr. James Elam in 1954. (Cardiac) chest massage was introduced in the 1960s. The two methods were then combined to form CPR.

While Private Sansom obviously rendered intense medical aid to the wounded soldier, it would not have been CPR.

Rodney Millner
Laurel, Maryland

Replacing the BAR

As a user of the weapons described, I must correct SSG McKee. The BAR used a 20-round magazine not 30. The M60 was not its replacement. The M14 was originally the replacement for the M1 rifle, carbine, and BAR. The M14 was available in both semi and full auto mode. Also used a 20-round magazine. A BAR version of the M14 had a heavier barrel and straight stock, but was never adopted as far as I know. The M60 replaced the Browning light machine gun. Other than the minor differences mentioned, pretty good article. P.S. I had additional duty as Training NCO, instructed my unit on the M14 and M60 when they were issued to our unit sometime in 1963-1964.

Thomas J Mokrzycki, CWO, USAR, Ret.

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By Michael D. Hull

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The Legendary Lifeline

The Red Ball Express kept the Allies rolling during the arduous campaign in Western Europe.

AUGUST 1944 SAW A ROSY MOOD OF OPTIMISM AND SELF-DECEPTION SWEEP through the Allied high command in France as a result of the sudden, dramatic end to the campaign in Normandy.

There were some short-sighted souls who perceived that the European war was virtually over, with the German Army retreating in apparent disarray after suffering nearly 450,000 casualties. But the premature celebrants at SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) were overlooking the fact that there were still more than a million enemy troops in front of them, and these were committed to defending the Reich.

In this painting by artist H. Charles McBarron, troops unload supply trucks in Western Europe. During the Allied advance toward the German frontier, logistics played a key role in the pace of the campaign.

Despite many costly lessons in Tunisia, Sicily, at Salerno and Anzio, and in the Normandy *bocage* country, the Allied high command was again failing to comprehend the will and tenacity of well-trained German troops to resist against overwhelming odds. In August 1944, they were retreating but fighting stubbornly, and an appropriate Allied strategy was lacking. It was time for pursuit rather than consolidation. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, and his headquarters staff had not drawn up a clearly stated blueprint for a post-Normandy campaign except for Eisenhower's own broad-front strategy. There had been no proposal from SHAEF on how to deal with the aftermath of the Normandy victory on an epic scale.

When the Allied armies neared the Siegfried Line, the heavily fortified western perimeter of the Third Reich, their lightning advance ground to a halt. "We have advanced so rapidly," Eisenhower reported to General George C. Marshall, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, "that further movement in large parts of the front, even against very weak opposition, is almost impossible."

Eisenhower's army had moved so far ahead of schedule that it had outrun its supply line, which stretched all the way back to the invasion beaches. There, 90 percent of its reinforcements and matériel still came from across the Channel in England. The Allied armies were critically short of supplies, especially gasoline.

Due to a lack of foresight at SHAEF, the Allied victory in Normandy had produced a logistical nightmare, what war correspondent Ernie Pyle described as "a tactician's hell and a quartermaster's purgatory."

The advancing armies were consuming fuel at a rate of about 800,000 gallons a day, and one U.S. division in combat required at least 500 tons of matériel—ammunition, rations, clothing, and medical supplies—a day. The First and Third Armies each consumed about 400,000 gallons of gasoline daily as their Sherman medium tanks, tank destroyers, half-tracks, and field guns rolled out of Normandy. There was plenty of fuel and other supplies, but it was all in Normandy, stacked on the beaches, alongside roads, and around the villages. Few supply dumps existed between Normandy and the front lines, while some of the Allied forward units were 300 miles distant.

The man behind the logistical crisis was short, swaggering Lt. Gen. John C.H. "Jesus Christ Him-

self" Lee, chief of U.S. Services of Supply, who had failed to improvise an adequate and flexible supply system. While a spit and polish martinet and prodigious worker respected by Eisenhower, Lee was more preoccupied with establishing an elaborate, overstaffed headquarters in Paris than in ensuring the advancing armies were adequately provisioned. They had outrun their supply lines, and getting necessities to the front was a daunting challenge. The French railway system had not recovered from Allied preinvasion bombing raids, and the Germans were still holding a number of major ports, including Calais, Le Havre, Brest, and Dunkirk. Cherbourg on the French northwestern coast was available, but its harbor facilities had been severely damaged by the Germans.

Eisenhower noted, "With 36 divisions in action, we were faced with the problem of delivering from beaches and ports to the front lines some 20,000 tons of supplies every day."

The advancing forces had to be kept armed, fed, and moving, and the only solution was a long-range trucking system. As early as June 14, the U.S. Army had launched POL (petrol, oil, and lubricants) routes in France, with trucks and tankers delivering fuel and oil from the beachheads to inland depots. Other trucks picked up gasoline in jerry cans and hauled it forward during the early days of the pursuit. But it was not enough, and a more efficient, orderly system was needed. So, officers of the Services of Supply and other field commanders assembled to find a solution to the crisis.

The principal planners were two officers from COMZ (communication zone) headquarters, Lt. Col. Loren A. Ayers and Major Gordon K. Gravelle. After 36 hours of intense study, they devised a novel plan for a nonstop convoy network, utilizing the abundance of vehicles available to the American armies. Trucks were being unloaded in Normandy from cargo ships and landing craft at a rate of 3,000 per day. The aim of Ayers, Gravelle, and their staffs was to deliver 82,000 tons of supplies between August 25 and September 2. Borrowing a traditional railroading term for fast freight, the planners chose the name "Red Ball Express." Their quick thinking met the logistical challenge and created a military legend.

Army Transportation Corps and Services of Supply officers hastily organized the transport system in August 1944. They mobilized 23,000 drivers and mechanics, three-quarters of them black soldiers, and assembled more than 6,000 trucks, tankers, and escort jeeps. The blacks were recruited from service units, and most welcomed the opportunity to drive trucks rather than spend the rest of the war toiling at menial tasks. The segregated U.S. Army barred blacks from combat duty, except in the case of a few units such as the Third Army's 761st Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Both: National Archives

TOP: Near Alençon, France, on September 5, 1944, a corporal of the 783rd Military Police Battalion waves trucks of the Red Ball Express forward along a road dedicated to logistics transport. The sign behind the MP illustrates the can-do spirit of the Red Ball Express drivers, many of whom were black soldiers. ABOVE: Their contents consumed by an Allied unit advancing eastward toward the border of the Third Reich, empty gasoline cans lie scattered around the site of a fuel dump somewhere in Belgium.

The primary vehicles assembled for the Red Ball Express were standard two-and-a-half ton Jimmy cargo trucks, six-by-six cab-over-engine cargo and tractor trucks, two-and-a-half ton amphibian DUKWs, and four-by-four tractor trucks. The General Motors Jimmy, also popularly known as the "deuce-and-a-half," formed the backbone of the Army's supply chain.

The Red Ball Express was launched on Friday, August 25, 1944, with 3,558 trucks, mostly Jimmies, of 67 truck companies hauling 4,482 tons of supplies. They rolled out of St. Lo, in northwestern France, heading eastward on a one-way rout for 125 miles to the Chartres-Dreux area, where depots had been set up to supply the U.S. forces advancing beyond the River Seine toward Germany.

The trucks were crammed with matériel as they thundered out of the green Norman countryside, refueled in their first bivouac area at Alençon, and highballed on through ancient villages and past farms, flowery fields, and apple orchards until they came to the wide plain and saw the famous twin spires of the 13th-century Chartres Cathedral gleaming in the distance. Supplies were unloaded, and the empty trucks barreled back to St. Lo on another one-way route, where the process was started again.

All along the Red Ball Highway, the truckers passed grim signs of war: wrecked German tanks and trucks pushed to the sides of the roads or resting in fields, the graves of fallen enemy soldiers, and dead and decaying cattle. Destroyed bridges had to be bypassed, and when the convoys came to hamlets along the route, they had to slow to a crawl. The drivers of heavily loaded 10-ton tractor trailers had to summon all their skill to maneuver through narrow village streets, and even the smaller Jimmies hauling one-ton trailers found it hard going.

By the fourth day of operations, the system had been expanded, with 132 truck companies using 5,958 vehicles to carry more than 12,000 tons of supplies. Rest areas and regulating stations had been established along the route, and the Red Ball was in business. The bumper-to-bumper convoys became a familiar sight to Allied soldiers and French villagers, with endless streams of trucks jouncing and fuming through their one-way route.

Getting supplies to the frontline armies was the primary concern, and the Red Ball muleskinners would stop for nothing. Inevitably, they soon developed a reputation for recklessness and speeding, and wrecked Jimmies at the bottom of a steep hill or near a sharp curve became commonplace sights. British soldiers joked that if they saw a Red Ball truck approaching they should scramble out of the way and climb a tree. French pedestrians and bicycle riders scattered clear when they heard the roar of approaching supply convoys.

The original Red Ball route was a one-way loop road running one way to Chartres and back on another. The total length, outbound

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and inbound, was about 300 miles. It was kept strictly off limits to other vehicles. Military Police units were stationed to direct the trucks and keep unauthorized vehicles clear. The supplies had to get through, and the rest of the roads in France were jammed with Allied transport. The outgoing Red Ball convoys had difficulty leaving St. Lo because the town had been almost destroyed by bombing and artillery, and there was only room on the streets for one truck to get through at a time.

To avoid attracting the attention of enemy snipers and aircraft, truck headlights were not used. The drivers had to negotiate the roads with only tiny blackout lights, "cat's eyes" on the front and rear of the vehicles. These lights were designed primarily for identification. But when the need for supplies became even more critical, COMZ allowed the convoys to use headlights in areas at least 10 miles from the front lines.

Besides much-needed gasoline for tanks and tank destroyers, the Red Ball trucks carried ammunition, rations, clothing, spare parts, and medical supplies. They also carried British-built Bailey bridge sections and a wide assortment of other items such as wire, soap, soft drinks, brooms, flour, potatoes, and candy. Between August 29 and September 15, 1944, a total of 6,000 Red Ball trucks carried 135,000 tons of matériel on two highways running from St. Lo to the supply depot at Chartres. On occasion, the Red Ball drivers were pressed into service to transport replacement soldiers, Army nurses, and elements of the 26th, 30th, 90th, and 79th Infantry Divisions.

"We carried anything, from straight pins to tank parts," reported one driver, "and we carried them in all kinds of conditions and all kinds of weather."

Organized hastily, the Red Ball Express was plagued by both administrative and operational breakdowns. Overlooked trucks were run so much that they virtually wore out, and the Red Ball itself was contributing to the Allied armies' shortage of fuel. During the last week of August 1944 and the first week of September, Red Ball vehicles consumed more than 300,000 gallons of gasoline a day on their runs to the front. A tire shortage arose, maps were often unavailable to drivers, and many disabled Jimmies were left stranded on roadsides because of a scarcity of tow trucks. A spot check on September 10 revealed 81 loaded vehicles waiting for servicing along a section of the Red Ball Highway between Vire and Dreux.

Truck crews often used side roads and ignored speed limits and maintenance stops. MPs who tried to check them were cursed at. The MP companies assigned to traffic control were essential to the success of the operation, but they had hundreds of miles to cover. They did their best to ride herd on the convoys, but there were never enough MPs. They had a thankless task.

Thefts from parked trucks by black marketers, American deserters, and hungry French citizens became a serious problem. Army officers tried to requisition Red Ball trucks when they needed instant transportation, and troops from Patton's Third Army sometimes even ambushed convoys and pirated gasoline.

It was a tiring, dangerous existence for the Red Ball drivers, assigned two to a truck. They were under heavy pressure to deliver their precious loads in double-quick time. Although the penalty could be severe, some drivers and mechanics removed the speed regulating governors from beneath the carburetors on vehicles so that they could run at 60 miles an hour. When one driver became exhausted, he and his relief man would switch seats while the truck was barreling along the road. If the exchange was done right, a foot was always on the gas pedal. Many truckers drove for 48 hours straight without sleep.

"God, it was awful," one recalled. "Sometimes I felt like screaming. You couldn't sleep,

and they wouldn't let you stop." Another driver said, "Whenever possible, we stopped by the side of the road to take a pee or get five or 10 minutes of sleep. Then we'd get back in and keep going."

The Red Ball muleskinners sometimes delivered gasoline in the heat of combat and earned high praise from the GIs on the front lines. "We often refuel and rearm even while fighting," said one soldier. "That takes guts. Our Negro outfits delivered gas under constant fire. Damned if I'd want their job. They have what it takes."

During their long runs across France, the Red Ball drivers occasionally faced peril from German snipers, strafing Luftwaffe fighter planes, and V-1 flying bombs and V-2 rockets. Trucks hauling ammunition and explosives were at particular risk. Six truckers were killed when a V-2 rocket hit an ammunition dump in northern France. Mines were a constant danger, and the truckers sometimes piled sandbags on the floorboards of their vehicles to absorb the blast if they should run over a mine.

National Archives

Trucks loaded with fuel for an Allied armored column enter the French town of St. Gilles, rolling past the burned-out hulks of two German armored vehicles. Military Police personnel stand by to direct traffic and keep the supply trucks rolling through the village.

As the Allied armies pushed eastward toward the German border, the Red Ball truck columns rolled on with their route extended into eastern France. It was the second and longest phase of the operation. Beyond Paris, the Red Ball Express set up two new loop routes branching north and south to serve an expanding Allied line that stretched from Belgium almost to the Swiss frontier. The length of the Red Ball Highway was almost tripled.

By early September 1944, when the First Army had advanced well into Belgium and was getting ready to assault German territory near Aachen, Red Ball trucks were pushing as far as the Belgian city of Liege, where a big supply depot was being established. The convoys also converged on Verdun, where another massive depot was set up to support a Third Army thrust into the Third Reich. The depots also supported the U.S. Ninth and 15th Armies. The Red Ball Express helped to support General Montgomery's airborne invasion of Holland on September 17, Operation Market-Garden, by hauling 500 tons of supplies a day from Bayeux to Brussels.

Lessons learned on the Red Ball Highway paved the way for the creation of several other fast trucking lines. These were the White Ball

Express, launched on October 6, 1944, to complement Red Ball operations; the short-lived Green Diamond Express, launched on October 14 to move supplies from Normandy to railway depots; the Red Lion Express, set up to haul British fuel and American supplies from Normandy to the 21st Army Group; the Little Red Ball to deliver small quantities of urgently needed matériel to the front, and the ABC (American-British-Canadian) Express Line, established to pick up supplies from the Antwerp docks. Running from November 30, 1944, to March 26, 1945, the ABC hauled almost a quarter of a million tons of supplies 90 miles to depots serving the First and Ninth Armies.

The Red Ball Express trucks, meanwhile, rolled on through September and into October 1944, but the great logistical experiment was losing steam. Severe overloading and a shortage of tires and spare parts began to remove thousands of vehicles from service, and the maintenance system could not keep pace. Quartermaster companies struggled constantly to keep the trucks serviceable and overcome the tire crisis. They stripped tires from nonessential trailers, unused gun carriages, and abandoned enemy vehicles, and more and more Red Ball trucks had to roll on retread tires.

While it could provide only a small fraction of the supplies needed at the front, the Red Ball had itself been consuming 300,000 gallons of precious fuel a day, almost as much as a field army. Its drivers had hauled a prodigious amount of supplies, with a peak delivery of 12,342 tons on August 29, and the system had fulfilled its purpose by the autumn of 1944. But the need for it was diminishing day by day.

The Allied armies had defeated German forces in France and the Low Countries, and the Channel ports had been recaptured. After a bitter campaign, British and Canadian troops had liberated Antwerp, the most prized of ports, and supplies were being shipped to the Liege and Verdun depots, and on to the front lines. The French railway was rebuilt, truck to rail transfer centers were set up, and materiel could now be shipped by train. There was no longer the urgent need for the Red Ball lifeline reaching all the way back to the Normandy beaches.

Paying tribute to the Red Ball in September 1944, *Time* magazine stated, "This miracle was in the American tradition, a tradition the Germans have never really understood. It was begotten of a people accustomed to great spaces, to transcontinental railways, to nationwide trucking chains, to endless roads and millions of automobiles."

The material hauled declined to 5,088 tons a day in October and then to 2,711 tons a day. Out of the 132 truck companies that had been operating on the Red Ball routes, only five remained by mid-November. The total daily haul was then 1,644 tons, and it seldom surpassed 2,000 tons later.

The heyday of the Red Ball Express was over, but many of its truck companies rolled on. When the Germans broke through the American lines in the Ardennes on December 16, 1944, hundreds of trucks were deployed to evacuate huge stores of fuel from dumps in Belgium to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. Red Ball companies carried men of Maj. Gen. James M. Gavin's 82nd Airborne Division to Werbomont in time to halt Nazi panzer columns and rushed Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor's 101st Airborne Division to Bastogne, where it made a gallant stand against heavy odds under the command of Taylor's artillery officer, Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe.

Without the Red Ball Jimmies and drivers speeding men and supplies to Belgium and Luxembourg in the critical early days, the outcome of the Battle of the Bulge might have been different. The Red Ball's prompt assistance helped the retreating Americans to regroup, make stands, and with help from Patton's Third Army and British troops, block the German offensive aimed at Antwerp.

When the U.S. Army's pool of manpower ran low during the Battle of the Bulge, black soldiers in service units were asked to volunteer as replacements in white infantry platoons. It was a radical change in War Department policy, opposed by both General Patton and Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's chief of staff. Many former Red Ball drivers joined the infantry, and by February 1945, a total of 4,500 blacks had signed on for combat duty.

In only 81 days of operation, the Red Ball Express became a legend in both the U.S. Army annals and American folklore, a remarkable logistical achievement unparalleled during World War II. Soldiering in a segregated army in which blacks represented less than 10 percent of the personnel and relegated mostly to the Transportation Corps or other service units, the Red Ball's drivers were proud of their contribution to the Allied victory in Europe.

The name lived on with Red Ball Express supply lines in Korea in the summer of 1950 and in South Vietnam in 1966. □

Author Michael D. Hull is a frequent contributor to WWII History. *He resides in Enfield, Connecticut.*

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By David Luhrssen

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Last Voyage of a Luxury Liner

The German liner *Bremen,* which ran a British blockade, ended her career in a scrap yard.

AFTER DOCKING IN NEW YORK ON AUGUST 28, 1939, ONLY FOUR DAYS BEFORE the outbreak of World War II, Captain Adolf Ahrens of Germany's North German Lloyd shipping line was faced with a decision.

The independent-minded skipper could disobey orders again by allowing his ship, the passenger liner *Bremen,* the jewel of the German merchant fleet, to be interned by the neutral United States, or he could obey instructions and make a run for it, piloting the *Bremen* on a mad dash for home under the eyes and guns of Britain's Royal Navy, whose surface fleet dominated the North Atlantic. Ahrens opted to pilot his ship to its berth in Germany.

It proved to be the longest journey the *Bremen* had ever undertaken. After a dangerous three-month odyssey, the luxury liner finally returned to her mooring at Bremerhaven's Columbus Quay. Ahrens relied on skillful seamanship, good fortune, and the assistance of Nazi Germany's ally at the war's onset, the Soviet Union.

The *Bremen* was among the most highly pedigreed blockade runners in maritime history. Along with her sister ship, *Europa,* the *Bremen* represented North German Lloyd's bid to challenge the Cunard Line and the French Line for luxury transatlantic passenger service in the years between the world wars. Architect Bruno Paul, whose work won prizes for Germany at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and whose buildings were noted for their clean, classic elegance, led her design team. Paul, who had blueprinted one of Berlin's first high-rise buildings, gave the *Bremen*'s salons and cabins a thoroughly modern appearance. Among his innovations was a unique split-funnel design in which both of the ship's twin stacks, obstructions on most passenger vessels, parted on the promenade deck to provide additional space for salons and entertainment rooms.

The *Bremen* was built for speed as well as comfort, taking the coveted Blue Riband for fastest Atlantic crossing on her maiden voyage in July 1929. Cruising at 27.83 knots, she beat the Cunard

Author's Collection

ABOVE: Captain Adopf Ahrens of the German liner *Bremen* decided to dash for home rather than be interned for the duration of the war. TOP: In this painting, the German luxury liner SS *Bremen* is shown embarking on her maiden voyage in 1929.

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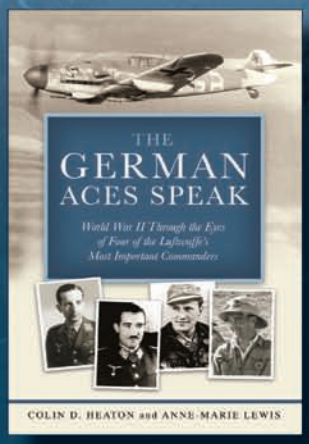

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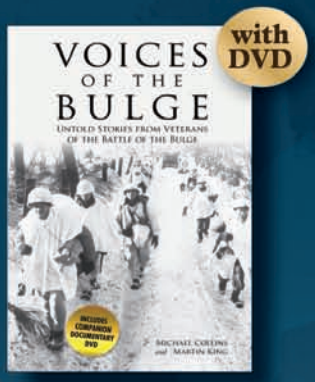

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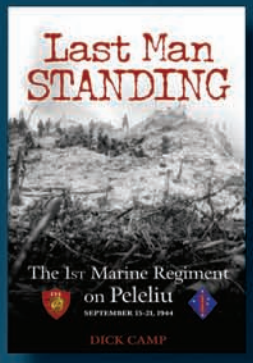

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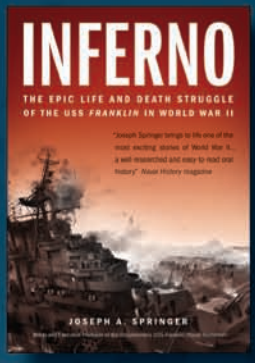

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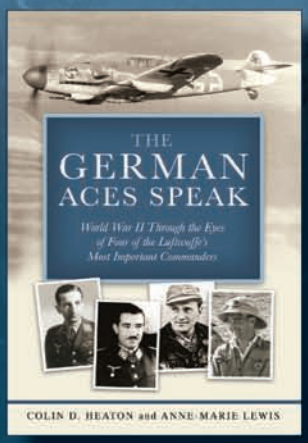

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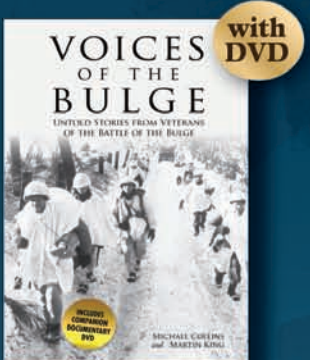

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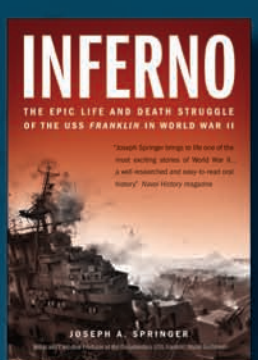

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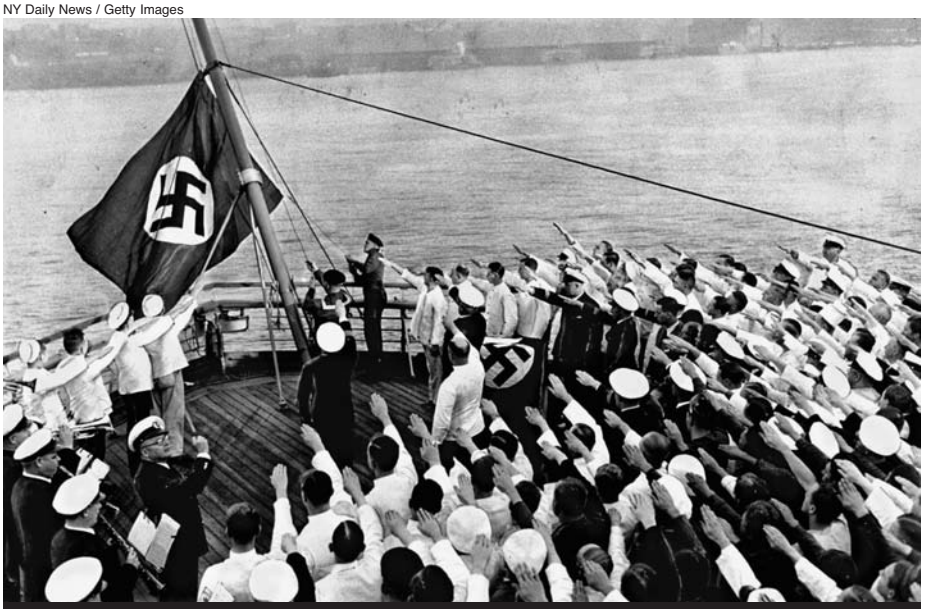


Captain Adolf Ahrens presides over a ceremony aboard the liner SS *Bremen* in September 1935. The new German flag was raised aboard the ship as it lay docked in New York harbor. Ahrens is seen behind the area where the flag was raised.

liner and previous Riband holder RMS *Mauretania* by two knots, traveling from Cherbourg to New York in only four days, 18 hours, and 17 minutes. The *Bremen* was nearly as fast as light cruisers, the greyhounds of the world's navies. It was as up-to-date as possible and was equipped with desalination machinery, transforming seawater into drinking water.

The German liner appeared on the seas only months before the Wall Street stock market crash of October 1929, which caused a global depression and created circumstances favorable for the rise of Adolf Hitler. Labor unrest, including the periodic shipyard strikes that delayed the *Bremen*'s construction in the old commercial city whose name she bore, would never slow the ship in the years following Hitler's appointment as German chancellor in 1933. The *Bremen*'s crew of over 900 men and a few women included a Nazi Party cell and even a unit of the SA, the brown-shirted storm troopers who helped Hitler bully his way to power, but the passengers who traveled on the *Bremen* after 1933 were seldom disturbed by politics.

In a bid to retain foreign clients and to polish Germany's image as a modern, moderate state, it was the expressed policy of German shipping lines to downplay Nazism. Except for the swastika flag fluttering from the stern, the Nazi takeover brought few changes to the *Bremen* from the passenger's perspective.

The mood was decidedly less than carefree, however, when the *Bremen* sailed from Bremerhaven on August 22, 1939, with cargo, thousands of mailbags, and 1,200 passengers onboard, most of them U.S. nationals trying to outrun the storm clouds gathering over Europe. On the following day the liner anchored briefly as scheduled in the ports of nations that would soon be at war with Germany, taking on an additional 500 passengers at Southampton and Cherbourg before making for the open Atlantic.

On the evening of August 25 at 56 degrees longitude, the *Bremen* received word from Germany that all German ships on the high seas were to return to home port before the outbreak of war. Captain Ahrens ignored the order and continued sailing for New York.

Likewise, on the following day he again broke the rules by radioing Germany of his intention to proceed to New York. On August 27, Ahrens broke radio silence again by informing his superiors that he had only enough fuel left for three days and would sail to Havana, where passengers would disembark. This time the German Admiralty and Transportation Ministry issued him clear and direct orders to disembark his passengers in New York, refuel, and return to Germany as soon as possible. Ahrens finally obeyed.

After the *Bremen* arrived in New York on August 28, greeted by reporters and newsreel cameras along with tugboats and customs officers, Ahrens quickly and ingeniously prepared the ship for what promised to be her roughest journey by purchasing black paper from a theatrical supply company to black out the hundreds of portholes and windows. Although North German Lloyd's New York bureau passed on instructions from the home office for the liner's swift departure for Bremerhaven, U.S. Customs officials were not eager for the *Bremen* to leave. Working under the authority of recently enacted neutrality regulations, 26 customs agents boarded the liner on the morning of August 29, searching her from stem to stern for weapons and contraband, inspecting the lifeboats, counting the lifejackets, and taking breaks for coffee and meals. At the end of the workday the customs agents departed, explaining that their report had to be read by the chief of customs in New York before the ship could leave.

Because of the unexpected delay, Ahrens granted his crew a furlough for the night. Many of the sailors had been so familiar with New York from previous trips that they jokingly referred to the city as "a suburb of Bremerhaven." As they sauntered through Times Square, they found a message about their ship's arrival running on the electrically lit billboard of the *New York Times* building. Some of the sailors repaired to the German restaurants of Manhattan, while others took in such sights as Broadway and Rockefeller Center.

The *Bremen*'s officers believed that the Roosevelt administration delayed their departure in order to give the Royal Navy time to establish pickets in the Atlantic or in the hope that Ahrens would lose heart and allow his ship to be interned and, perhaps, eventually seized by the U.S. Merchant Marine.

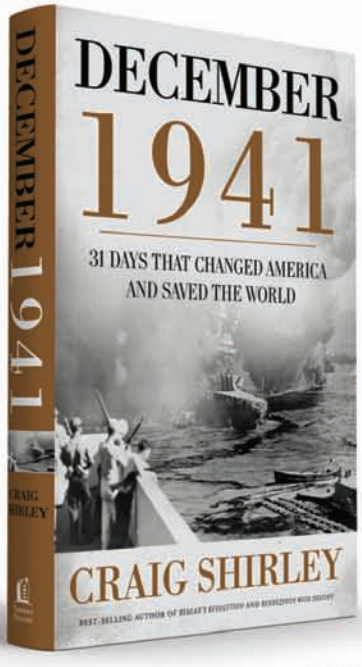
On the morning of August 30, customs agents boarded the liner again, this time removing paneled walls, searching the tanks in the engine room, and probing the deepest recesses of the ship. They returned the following morning, checking the ship's pumps and, according to an account later published in Germany, milling around and dragging their feet. The crew could only take comfort from observing that customs agents were also inspecting the French liner *Normandie* docked nearby.

Late that afternoon, U.S. authorities, finding nothing, finally authorized the *Bremen* to depart. At 6:30 PM, she finally set sail. Slowly gliding past lower Manhattan on her way to the Atlantic, the ship's band struck up "Deutschland Uber Alles" and the Nazi Party anthem, "Horst Wessel Lied." Many of the crew members had assembled on deck, their arms raised in the Nazi salute. But political zeal and martial fervor did not cancel out the ancient courtesies of the sea. When the *Bremen* passed the *Normandie,* sailors from both ships waved and dipped their colors in salute. Unlike the *Bremen,* the *Normandie* would never leave New York harbor. It was interned and eventually requisitioned by the United States as a troopship before being destroyed at dockside by a mysterious fire in 1942.

After passing the lightship *Ambrose,* the *Bremen*'s crew, working from lifeboats suspended

DECEMBER 1941

31 DAYS THAT CHANGED AMERICA AND SAVED THE WORLD



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above the waterline, rapidly painted the liner's black hull a dull gray to match the overcast North Atlantic. The *Bremen*'s white superstructure and yellow funnel were also painted in a mixture of white and black paint once the gray ran out. The ship's name and home port were also covered in dark paint. Speeding at 27-28 knots, the *Bremen* continued northeastward through heavy seas and thick fog. Running lights were extinguished, radio silence was maintained, and extra lookouts were posted on deck and on the masts. At the first indication of another ship on the horizon, the *Bremen* changed course to avoid being spotted.

While hoping either for peace or to outrun the start of war, the officers drew up detailed plans for scuttling the ship and evacuating the crew in the event of being captured by the British. Mattresses, wood, and gasoline were piled in key places in order to set the ship ablaze, even as the engineers planned to open ducts to flood the liner's lower decks. Sandbags were positioned around the wheelhouse in case British aircraft strafed the ship.

On September 1, tension thickened when the wireless received word that the German Army had rolled across the Polish border. The Germans had hoped that France and Great Britain would stay out of Hitler's way, as they had so many times before in recent years. News updates were regularly posted on the ship's bulletin boards. By September 3, when Britain declared war against Germany, the *Bremen* was south of Iceland and entering the Denmark Strait. The captain assembled the crew in the main dining hall to relay the disheartening news.

By that time the *Bremen* was being hunted by considerable units of the Royal Navy, anxious to seize or sink the pride of Germany's merchant fleet. British submarines lurked near the entrances of Germany's ports. Two British cruisers accompanied by eight destroyers prowled the coast of Norway, and heavier units of Britain's Home Fleet patrolled the North Atlantic. But the British never expected the *Bremen* to brave the threat of icebergs by crossing the Arctic Circle into the chilly Denmark Strait. Lacking clothing warm enough for the cold, the crew availed themselves of clothes that would normally be on sale for passengers in the ship's store, piling on layers to retain body heat.

On September 6, Germany's ambassador in Moscow, Count Friedrich Werner von der Schulenberg, informed the Kremlin of his government's intention to divert blockade runners to the ice-free northern Russian port of Murmansk on the eastern shore of the Kola Inlet, 30 miles from the Barents Sea. Soviet authorities were expected to unload German ships and send their cargo by rail to Leningrad, where German freighters waited. The Soviets complied willingly.

Ahrens received orders to steam for Murmansk while in the Denmark Strait. Given the confusion of war, the crew of the *Bremen* entered Russian waters in a state of anxiety. The Germans reversed direction and withdrew to sea at the sight of a plume of smoke from low in the waterline, steaming toward them from the shore. They easily outran the warship, which turned out to be a Soviet torpedo boat. After it was identified as friend and not foe, the *Bremen* resumed course and rendezvoused with the Soviet warship. A boarding party was dispatched from the torpedo boat. The German and Soviet officers tried to communicate in halting English but were relieved to discover that one of the *Bremen*'s stewards, born in Kronstadt before World War I, was fluent in Russian.

On September 6, the *Bremen* finally dropped anchor, having covered 4,045 nautical miles since leaving New York six days and 13 hours earlier. Lining up on both sides of the deck for a view, the crew saw a port city that was raw, unfinished, and largely unpaved. Among the few modern amenities offered by Murmansk were the Hotel Arctic and a clubhouse for foreign sailors, mainly Swedish, Dutch, and Nor-

wegian merchant seamen.

During the *Bremen*'s sojourn in Murmansk, the liner's whereabouts were the subject of avid speculation in the foreign press. An Italian newspaper put the *Bremen* at Veracruz while a Stockholm paper claimed the liner had been reflagged under Italian colors and was making her way to Italy. In Antwerp reporters speculated that the *Bremen* had arrived in Reykjavik, Iceland. One Belgian paper guessed the truth, calling Murmansk the ship's destination.

On September 18, about 850 crew members were sent home to Germany aboard a pair of Russian trains, leaving behind a skeleton detail of 70 officers and men to stand watch and maintain the ship. Winter came early in that part of the world. It was already snowing when the trains pulled out of Murmansk.

NY Daily News / Getty Images

The *Bremen* lies docked on the Hudson River in New York on August 29, 1939. The ship was detained in the harbor while customs officials searched for weapons and contraband despite a vigorous protest from the German government.

Boredom set in during the months when the *Bremen* waited for the last leg of its journey home. By the end of September a German tanker arrived in Murmansk to replenish the *Bremen*'s fuel. The outbreak of the Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland after Stalin invaded the neutral country on November 30 dampened spirits. After a Finnish air raid damaged a nearby air base, the Soviets insisted that all ships in the harbor darken their lights.

Murmansk was busy with German shipping during this time. Also in port was the U.S. merchantman *City of Flint,* which had been seized by the pocket battleship *Deutschland* in the North Atlantic for carrying contraband bound for Britain. Ironically, Murmansk would become a key destination for Anglo-American convoys supplying the Soviets after Hitler turned on Stalin in 1941. Ahrens bided his time, waiting patiently for the snow squalls of winter before taking the *Bremen* back to sea and to Bremerhaven. Fifty-seven of his crew secretly returned to the *Bremen* in preparation for the journey home.

Early morning on December 7, the ocean liner pulled out of Murmansk before sunrise and under cover of a heavy snowstorm. She was a gray ghost sailing against a dark horizon; the long nights and rough seas at those latitudes in the last weeks of the year aided the voyage. However, the *Bremen* had one close call with the Royal Navy after leaving the safe haven of Murmansk. On December 12, the British submarine *Salmon* intercepted the *Bremen* off the Norwegian coast. The *Salmon* was enjoying an eventful patrol in the North Sea, which included the unusual feat of torpedoing an enemy submarine, the *U-36*.

The *Salmon*'s skipper, Lt. Cmdr. E.O. Bickford, surfaced after identifying the *Bremen* through his periscope and gave the liner repeated warnings to surrender. Bickford was unable to claim his prize. He was forced to

crash-dive when a Dornier Do-18 flying boat, dispatched by the German Navy to escort the *Bremen,* appeared on the horizon. The *Salmon* survived to cripple the German cruisers *Leipzig* and *Nuremberg* before returning to base.

On December 13, the *Bremen* finally returned to its berth in Bremerhaven's Columbus Quay. "The joy at having won the race twice, and having brought safely home our beloved *Bremen,* this precious possession of the German mercantile fleet, can be seen in everyone's eyes," Ahrens said.

The captain and crew received a hero's welcome from the chairman of North German Lloyd and the Reichsminister of Transportation. A band played, and a company of naval sailors presented arms. Ahrens's earlier disobedience on the high seas before the outbreak of war was forgotten. He was promoted to commodore for his derring-do and seamanship. He was lionized in the German news media and received thousands of letters from well wishers. The *Bremen* won its battle, but would never go to sea again.

In the following months, the ship was painted in camouflage colors and refitted as troopship No. 802 for Operation Sea Lion, the German invasion of Great Britain that would never be launched. Aware of the *Bremen*'s new mission, the Royal Air Force attempted but failed to sink her. On March 16, 1941, a fire broke out in her expensively furnished woodpaneled dining room, which had been converted to a mattress storeroom. It spread over the entire ship, and despite a vigorous response from Bremerhaven's fire brigades burned out of control. Badly listing toward the quay, the *Bremen* was flooded so that she could right herself and sink in the shallow water of the Weser River, making salvage of machinery easier.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

German crewmen and passengers raise their arms in salute as a band plays the German national anthem aboard the *Bremen.* The vessel was released by customs agents in New York and set sail for Germany despite the threat of interception by the British Royal Navy.

The Gestapo initially suspected that British intelligence had a hand in the destruction of the ship, but before long the investigation fell upon a 15-year-old deckhand from the *Bremen,* Walter Schmidt, who eventually confessed to having set the fire in revenge for a clip on the ear given him by a supervisor. Wartime justice was swift and severe. Schmidt was executed.

The *Bremen,* which began the war with a storybook adventure, ended it as charred hulk brooding over the ruins of Bremerhaven, a port city regularly visited by the RAF and U.S. Eighth Air Force bombers. In 1946, the *Bremen* was towed to a sandbar three miles up river. The mammoth ship, resembling by then a beached and decomposing whale, was gradually dismantled and scrapped between 1952 and 1956. □

David Luhrssen has taught history at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, and Milwaukee Area Technical College. His writing has appeared in a number of periodicals, and he is the coauthor of A Time of Paradox: America Since 1890.

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U.S. Air Force

America's First Jet

A "black program" produced the Airacomet but it was too late to fight in World War II.

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In an important and secret meeting at the Ministry of Aircraft Production in London, British officials briefed U.S. Army Colonel A.J. Lyon and General Electric engineer D.R. Shoults on a new type of gas turbine powerplant for aircraft that did not use a propeller. Lyon, who represented Army Air Forces (AAF) commander Maj. Gen. Henry H. "Hap" Arnold on technical matters talked a few days later to the brilliant British engineer Frank Whittle. Lyon also visited the British aircraft factory operated by Gloster where a new plane called the E.28/39 was taking shape. The Americans were learning about something that few people in the world knew about—the jet engine.

American air boss Arnold chose the Bell Aircraft Corporation of Buffalo, New York, to undertake a secret project known as MX 397. Only a handful of people around company president Larry Bell knew that the term referred to the first American jet fighter, which was soon renamed the XP-59A. Germany, Italy, and Britain were ahead of the United States in developing jet aircraft, but Americans were making faster progress than they are usually given credit for; they possessed considerable scientific know-how and they were good at keeping secrets.

Almost everything about the project was given labels that were designed to disguise the project's real purpose and to fool German or Japanese agents. General Electric routinely referred to the engine it was developing with help from Britain's Whittle as "our spare part." The P-59 designation in the Army's "pursuit" series of warplanes had previously been assigned to an aircraft that was never built; the number was reused to discourage attention.

Two of the world's great scientific pioneers, Germany's Hans von Obain and Whittle, were exploring gas turbine jet engines in parallel but separate efforts. Whittle secured a patent on a jet engine in 1930 but waited almost a decade for the British government to notice.

Germany's tiny Heinkel He-178, under 25 feet in length and weighing just 3,565 pounds, made its first flight on August 27, 1939, using an S-3b turbojet designed by von Obain and his engineering team. It was the first jet aircraft in the world to fly.

Italy flew its Caproni-Campini CC.2, resembling a long cigar with wings, on August 17, 1940. The Italian aircraft had no propeller, relying on a piston-powered ducted fan to push it through the air. It was a "jet" in a sense but different in design from the gas turbine-powered planes being developed in Germany and Britain. The ducted fan concept never led anywhere, and no air force in the world ever fielded a warplane with this form of power.

Britain's Gloster E.29/38 using Whittle's W.1 turbojet engine finally took to the air on May 15, 1941. Later in life, Whittle would

U.S. Air Force

ABOVE: The German Heinkel He-178 made the world's first jet-powered flight in 1939. TOP: The Bell P-59B Airacomet, the first jet powered aircraft built in the United States, was used for training purposes and never saw combat.

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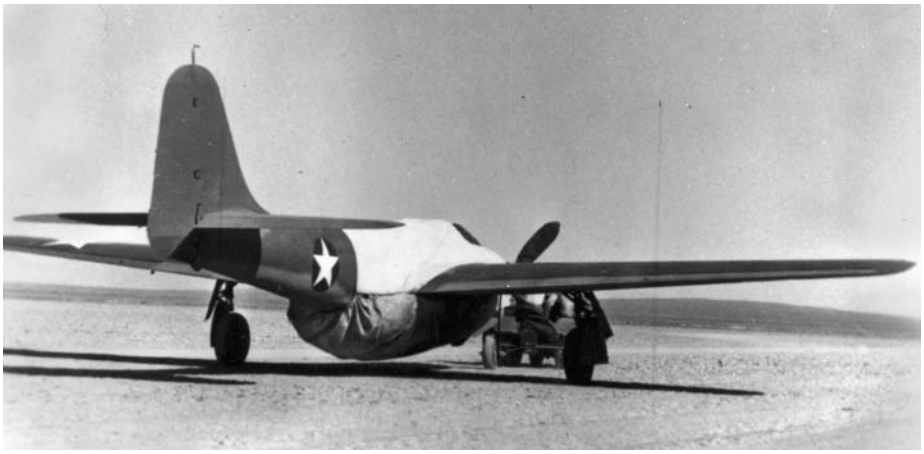

argue that if anyone had listened to him it could have happened a decade sooner. The serial number of the Gloster was W 4041/G, with the "G" indicating that an armed guard was required at all times for the aircraft.

The Heinkel, the Caproni, and the Gloster were all flying test beds, laboratories for technology. None was ever expected to fulfill a military role. On the other hand, Bell Aircraft, which was in the process of manufacturing 9,529 of its P-39 Airacobra and 3,303 P-63 Kingcobra prop-driven fighters, many for the Soviet Union under Lend-Lease, had no intention of being satisfied with a test bed. From the start, Larry Bell's company intended to create a jet fighter capable of combat.

As 1941 and 1942 unfolded, the size, shape, and inner workings of the turbojet engine were being altered and revised as Bell, General Electric engineers, and Whittle collaborated. Two British samples of Whittle's turbojet engine were secretly whisked to the General Electric laboratory in Lynn, Massachusetts, in the bomb bay of a Consolidated B-24 Liberator.

Much of the technical work was done in a building belonging to General Electric in Lynn, chosen because it looked bland and plain and was marked with a sign on the door reading "MISCELLANEOUS." General Electric later boasted that its engine, largely copied with permission from Whittle's work, had but two moving parts, a pair of impellers, and that its compact shape, dictated by the centrifugal flow of air passing through the engine, made it practical for many applications on aircraft.

It has never been completely clear why Bell was chosen. Its P-39 and P-63, after all, were mediocre. Brig. Gen. Benjamin W. Chidlaw, who was overseeing Anglo-American cooperation on jet engine development on Arnold's staff, wrote in a document, "Bell [has] certain isolated facilities which could be made readily available to start this project under the strict conditions of the 'SECRET' classification as

Imperial War Museum

TOP: A Bell XP-59A jet aircraft is towed at Muroc Dry Lake, California. Great effort was taken to conceal the jet aircraft research being conducted there, and false wooden propellers were attached to this plane to conceal its propulsion system. ABOVE: A prototype of the German Messerschmitt Me-262 jet fighter takes off from an airfield in 1943.

imposed by General Arnold." Chidlaw also liked the fact that Bell's Buffalo plant was relatively close to General Electric's Schenectady and Lynn facilities.

In fact, it was the existence of the XP-59A that was classified "secret" and also required the equivalent of what today would be called a compartmentalized security clearance. Many details of the engineering work on the General Electric engine and the XP-59A were officially top secret. That would change over time, but in 1941 and 1942 when the XP-59A was being built the project was so hush-hush that not even the Army Air Forces plant resident at Bell was informed of the project.

Larry Bell was an aviation executive who hated to fly. He chose as XP-59A project manager his chief test pilot, Robert M. Stanley, who loved to fly but hated executive duties. In June 1942, Stanley took over the project for the company and began making arrangements to ship the first XP-59A to a remote test site he had never heard of before.

The location was Muroc Army Air Field located between the San Bernardino and Shadow Mountains and named in reverse for the Corum brothers who had settled the area. Chidlaw called it "way to hell and gone" away from Los Angeles. The site offered remoteness and the hard surface of Rodgers Dry Lake. In mid-1942, engineers and technicians began arriving there, many of them unaware of the purpose for their transfer to the California high desert. Today, Muroc is known as Edwards Air Force Base and no longer feels nearly as remote as it did then.

The first operational fighter, not a test bed, to take to the air was Germany's Messerschmitt Me-262 on March 25, 1942. The XP-59A was not far behind. Stanley took the aircraft on its maiden flight at Muroc on October 1, 1942. Britain's two operational wartime jets, the Gloster Meteor and De Havilland Vampire, made their baptismal flights on March 5, 1943, and September 20, 1943, respectively.

The United States was also developing the Lockheed P-80, later called the F-80 Shooting Star, which first flew on January 8, 1944. Like Whittle, the Lockheed Skunk Works' brilliant engineer, Clarence L. "Kelly" Johnson, had urged development of a jet years earlier and had been rebuffed to the extent that the P-80 was now far behind the XP-59A in its development. Of all of these pioneering jet designs, only the Me-262 and the Meteor saw combat in World War II and only in limited numbers.

Stanley reported that the XP-59A had enormous potential. But even at the time of its initial flight, he and others were questioning whether it would ever see combat. Yes, the XP-59A had been conceived as a fighter and not just as a flying guinea pig, but despite its advantages the Airacomet, as it was nicknamed, was not much faster or much more maneuverable than prop-driven fighters like the North American P-51 Mustang and the Vought F4U Corsair.

Not having a propeller up front meant that the Airacomet's armament of three Browning M2 .50-caliber machine guns and one M-10 37mm cannon could be placed in the nose and positioned to fire straight ahead rather than placed in the wing and positioned to converge. This made the XP-59A a better gunfighter than any prop-driven warplane, but early tests also showed that it was an unstable gun platform. Stanley reported that the entire aircraft shook when he pulled the trigger.

By mid-1943, five XP-59A Airacomets were in the test program at Muroc and at Wright Field, Ohio. The Army Air Forces had placed orders for 300, or enough planes for about nine combat squadrons. The first aircraft was modified with an open cockpit in front of the pilot, to enable an observer to monitor and record test flights. In November 1943, there were 13

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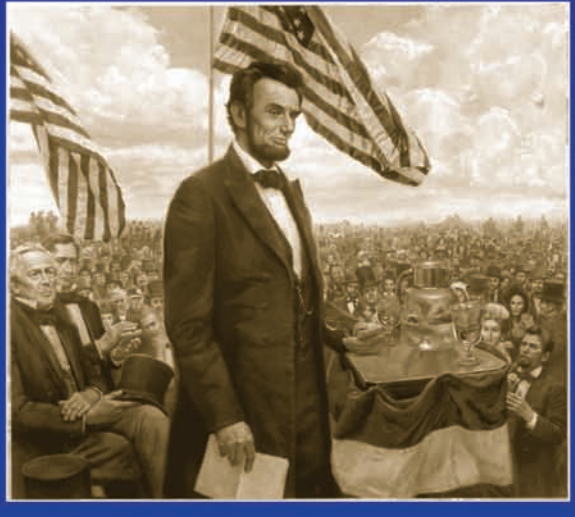

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pre-production XP-59As in inventory, some with improved versions of the General Electric engine. The Army turned three of them over to the Navy. They went to Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, to introduce Navy pilots to the unique characteristics of jet-powered aircraft.

When it became apparent that the XP-59A would not be tangling with Messerschmitts or Mitsubishis, the number of aircraft built was reduced to 66, including three XP-59As, 13 YP-59As, 20 P-59As, and 30 P-59Bs, all with only minor differences and with progressively improved versions of the General Electric engine.

No photograph of an XP-59A had yet appeared in public, and officials in the newly constructed Pentagon building had released no details about the project or about the P-80 that Lockheed was developing separately and had yet to fly.

Both the XP-59A and the P-80 were part of what would be called a "black program" in today's parlance, not outlined in traditional budgeting documents, revealed to only a select few on Capitol Hill, and unknown to the public until late 1944. In the book *Flame Powered*, historian David M. Carpenter wrote: "All of the jet propulsion projects were originally placed in a 'SPECIAL SECRET' category and this classification remained in effect until May 1943 when the project was reduced to 'SECRET.' In November 1943, the security classification was reduced to 'COINFIDENTIAL,' with the actual airplane performance remaining 'SECRET,' and, finally, in August 1944 this classification was further reduced to 'Restricted.'"

On several occasions when an Airacomet was moved by ground transportation, a fake propeller covered by a tarpaulin was placed on the nose of the aircraft to deceive any observer about the source of its power.

In 1944, in exchange for a Gloster Meteor, the Pentagon sent a YP-59A (the "Y" suffix meant "service test") to Britain's test center at Farnborough, England. The aircraft was given Royal Air Force serial number RJ 362/G, with the "G" once again signaling a need for an armed guard. Britain was making good progress with its Meteor, which saw limited combat, mostly against German V-1 pulse-jet buzz bombs, and its Vampire, which did not see action during the war, so Royal Air Force officers exhibited only a little interest in the Airacomet and evaluated it only briefly. They shared the view that while it was an epoch-making advance in aviation it was not suitable for combat. By then, ultra long-range P-51

U.S. Air Force

A pilot poses in the cockpit of a Bell P-59 Airacomet. Although powered by a jet engine, the performance of the P-59 was not appreciably better than that of the propeller-driven fighter aircraft of the day, such as the North American P-51 Mustang.

Mustangs were escorting bombers over Berlin and flying at least as fast as the Airacomet could fly.

Nevertheless, the Airacomet became operational. In June 1945, the Army Air Forces stood up the 412th Fighter Group at Muroc. The war ended weeks later, and the group was transferred to March Field near Riverside, California. By then, everyone knew the Airacomet would not live up to the initial expectation that it could serve as an operational, combat-ready fighter. The P-80 had begun flying and was demonstrating superior performance. Moreover, a dozen other jet designs were in the postwar pipeline, including the immortal North American F-86 Saber of Korean War fame. Once top secret, the XP-59A, YP-59A, P-59A, and P-59B Airacomets were now handy "hacks" to teach pilots the basics of single-seat jet flying.

Captain Eugene A. Wink of the 412th was one of the first line military pilots to fly the Airacomet. He had flown the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt in combat in Europe and had been impressed with its ruggedness. In contrast, "the Airacomet seemed a little flimsy, a little fragile," Wink recalled. He said, however, that it "could turn on a dime" and "I always wondered what it would be like to get into a dogfight with it."

In 1949, the Air Force finally retired the last example of its first operational jet fighter, which was developed with high hopes, blazed new trails, but ultimately proved to be something of a disappointment. □

Robert F. Dorr is a U.S. Air Force veteran, a retired diplomat, and author of the book Air Force One, *a look at presidential aircraft and air travel.*

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By Michael D. Hull

All Photos: Imperial War Museum

Frontline General

Brian G. Horrocks survived a grievous wound and led the British forces in North Africa and Western Europe.

A BIG CHALLENGE FACED MAJ. GEN. BRIAN G. HORROCKS, AN INFANTRYMAN, when he was cross-posted to take command of the British Army's 9th Armored Division in March 1942.

Its standard of individual training was excellent, but the division's mechanized state was another matter. A couple of days after his arrival, Horrocks called the divisional officers to a nearby cinema and addressed them. He told them he had just taken a look at the vehicle park and been shocked to find that only about half of the division's tanks, armored cars, and personnel carriers were in running order.

"You know all about mechanical things," Horrocks told the officers. "I don't. However, in the infantry division I have just come from, almost all the vehicles are serviceable. Perhaps you would care to explain why so many of yours are not." An officer of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (a recent offshoot of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps) rose to answer the general's question but was politely told that perhaps he would be better employed making sure that the vehicles would run rather than explaining why they could not.

A man who minced no words yet radiated vigor, enthusiasm, and good cheer, Horrocks endeared himself instantly to the men of the 9th Armored Division, as he did elsewhere throughout his long career. Some tank officers who had filed into the cinema to see "a bloody infantryman whom they had never heard of" were now telling each other how fortunate they were to have a spirited, no-nonsense general in command. Horrocks overcame any lingering prejudice against infantrymen commanding armor.

Although having barely recovered from severe wounds, and never in robust health after his captivity by the Germans in World War I and then the Bolsheviks, he was a hard-driving and gallant soldier. Horrocks always led from the front and proved to be one of the ablest Allied field commanders of World War II. General James M. Gavin, heroic commander of the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division, who soldiered with him in Holland in September 1944, considered Horrocks "the finest general officer I met during the war, and the finest corps commander."

The 9th Armored Division trained in northern England in the spring and summer of 1942.

During the rapid advance across France in the summer of 1944, Horrocks rides through the town of Argentan, which has been occupied by American troops.

Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks, standing second from right, studies a map while conferring with officers aboard a universal carrier at the Europa Docks in Bremen, Germany, on April 27, 1945.

At 7 PM on August 15, Horrocks received a cryptic message ordering him to report to London overnight and telling him that he was going overseas and moving "one up." Within 36 hours, he was the sole passenger in a plane taking off from the Lyneham airfield in Wiltshire. His destination was Cairo. It was a critical time for British fortunes in the Middle East. General Bernard L. Montgomery, Horrocks's mentor since Dunkirk, had just taken command of the weary Eighth Army after its two years of bitter seesaw struggles against the German Afrika Korps and Italian forces.

Monty summoned Horrocks because he considered him

John D. Hoptak | Instructor, School of Art & Humanities

John D. Hoptak is an American and Civil War historian and educator. Author of *The Battle of South Mountain*, *Our Boys Did Nobly*, *First in Defense of the Union*, and *Antietam: September 17, 1862*, Hoptak brings to life the riveting conflicts that divided a nation. Hoptak's laboratory is the Antietam National Battlefield, where as a Park Ranger he shares his vast knowledge about the bloodiest day of battle in U.S. history.

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"exactly what was wanted for the job which lay ahead"—revitalizing and re-equipping the Eighth Army before delivering a knockout blow to Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps. Monty urgently wanted someone reliable and loyal, a man he knew and who would work directly under him. Horrocks arrived three days after Montgomery and was placed in command of the infantry-heavy XIII Corps with the rank of lieutenant general. He replaced Lt. Gen. William H. "Strafer" Gott, who had been killed when his plane was shot down en route to Cairo.

Dramatic changes were under way in the Eighth Army with intensified training and the arrival of reinforcements and new weapons and equipment. The brusque, professional Montgomery had issued firm orders that there were to be no more withdrawals. He told Horrocks that he planned to form a strong mobile reserve consisting largely of armored divisions, and then, when this was ready, he would "hit Rommel for six out of Africa." Monty announced that he would defeat Rommel on ground of his own choosing—near the remote railway station at El Alamein in northwestern Egypt. When the Eighth Army, comprising British and Commonwealth units, was at top fighting pitch it would attack. "We are going to finish with this chap, Rommel, once and for all," Monty promised.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill rides with General Horrocks atop a Covenanter tank during an inspection of the British 9th Armored Division in May 1942.

The Battle of El Alamein, one of the major turning points of World War II, opened with a deafening thousand-gun barrage on the night of Friday, October 23, 1942. Horrocks led the XIII Corps in heavy fighting at El Alamein and also at the Alam Halfa ridge, where determined German assaults were beaten back by minefields, artillery fire, and Royal Air Force bombers and fighters.

Later, in December 1942, Horrocks was switched to succeed Lt. Gen. Herbert Lumsden as commander of the tank-heavy X Corps, comprising the 1st and 10th Armored Divisions. The gallant, handsome Lumsden had suffered heavy losses and fallen out of favor with Montgomery. At the end of April 1943, Horrocks was reassigned again. This time, he was loaned to General Noel Anderson's British First Army, which, with U.S. Army support, was struggling to

defeat Axis forces in Tunisia. Horrocks took over the IX Corps, replacing Lt. Gen. John Crocker, who had been wounded in action and had distinguished himself in the Mareth Line campaign in March 1943.

With Monty's Eighth Army pushing from the east, British and American armies bottled up and crushed the German and Italian forces in Tunisia. The enemy troops surrendered by the thousands, and the Allies were triumphant in North Africa. Meanwhile, preparations were under way for the Allied invasions of Sicily and Italy. The IX Corps was detailed to land at Salerno, Italy, as part of General Mark W. Clark's Fifth Army, and General Horrocks went to Bizerte to watch the British 46th Division rehearse its assault.

Horrocks and the divisional commander stood on a Bizerte street watching the effects of a smoke screen being tried out by the Americans. Suddenly, a German fighter burst through the billowing smoke with its machine guns blazing. Horrocks was struck in the chest, and the bullet passed through his lungs and intestines and came out near his spine. Another round hit his leg. No one else was touched. Horrocks was lucky to be alive, but he had to undergo a series of operations in a Tunisian field hospital and at the Cambridge Hospital in the garrison town of Aldershot, Hampshire. He would be out of action for 14 months.

Like many young men of his generation, Brian Gwynne Horrocks had followed his father into the Army. He was born on September 7, 1895, at Ranniket, a British hill station in northern India, the son of William Heaton Horrocks of Little Bolton, Lancashire, and his Irish-born wife, Minna. Brian's father was an Army doctor and later director of Army hygiene during World War I. He was knighted for his services.

The Horrockses were happily married, and young Brian had an idyllic childhood. As he reached school age, his father was posted to Gibraltar, which the lad described as "a small boy's paradise." He was sent to the Bow Preparatory School in Durham and then spent three years at the 16th-century Uppingham School in Rutland. Brian enjoyed his school years and drifted into the Army class at Uppingham. But he was more of a sportsman than a scholar, and cricket and other games took up much of his time. When he passed into the Royal Military College at Sandhurst in Berkshire on February 12, 1913, he ranked one from the bottom of his class.

Meanwhile, mobilization was about to take place on August 4, 1914, with the outbreak of World War I, and all Sandhurst cadets who had completed the course were commissioned and posted to various regiments. Glad to leave the Royal Military College on July 15, 1914, Horrocks found himself a second lieutenant in the proud Middlesex "Die-Hard" Infantry Regiment, which had fought in Canada, India, Spain, and the Crimea. Within two weeks, Horrocks was in France with a draft for the regiment's 1st Battalion.

The lean, dynamic young subaltern with a toothy grin led the battalion's 16th Platoon in the Battle of the Aisne. He took part in the famous fighting retreat from Mons in the late summer of 1914, when British infantry were outnumbered 10 to one, and in early actions of the Battle of Ypres that autumn. On October 21, Horrocks's platoon was surrounded by a superior German force, and he was wounded in the lower stomach. He was taken prisoner.

In 1917, while in captivity, Horrocks was promoted to captain. After his wounds gradually healed, he made several unsuccessful attempts to escape, resulting in his transfer to harsher camps—at Custrin in western Poland, and then Aachen, Holzminden, back to Custrin, and Clausthal in the Harz Mountains. Horrocks helped to dig tunnels and continued his escape

On August 31, 1944, tanks of the British 11th Armored Division, attached to Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks's XXX Corps, advance through fields near the French town of Thillers-en-Vexin.

attempts. He was successful several times, walking toward neutral frontiers, hiding in barns from Germans and their dogs, and scrounging what food he could find. But he was always recaptured.

Repatriated in 1919, Horrocks was still young and physically fit, but his nerves were in tatters. After spending four years of back pay in six weeks, he volunteered for service in Russia, where the British were helping the White Russians against the Bolsheviks. He served with the British military mission, was awarded the Military Cross, and was again taken prisoner.

Eventually, Horrocks and his British comrades were repatriated. "Our departure was entirely spoilt for me, at any rate, by the sad, white faces of our fellow prisoners," he reported. "Their fate was all too certain."

Back in England at the age of 26, Horrocks rejoined his regiment, which was busy with security duties before being posted to Aldershot in October 1923. The Army was seriously understrength and ill equipped, and the training was rudimentary. Bored, Captain Horrocks took up the modern pentathlon, which provided an outlet for his energy and his skills as a runner, horseman, and marksman. He represented Britain in the 1924 Olympic Games, but standards were high and he made only a modest showing.

He served as adjutant of the Middlesex Regiment's 9th Battalion, and his father tactfully but firmly urged him to seek admission to the Staff College at Camberley, Surrey, otherwise he was not likely to go much higher in the Army. The athletic but unacademic Brian Horrocks made four attempts before finally gaining entry to the Staff College in 1931.

After serving on the staff at the War Office for two years and as a brigade major with the 2nd Infantry Division, Horrocks received a surprise posting in 1938. He was ordered back to the Staff College as a member of the directing staff under Maj. Gen. Bernard Paget, another officer of strong character and honor. It fell to

Continued on page 85

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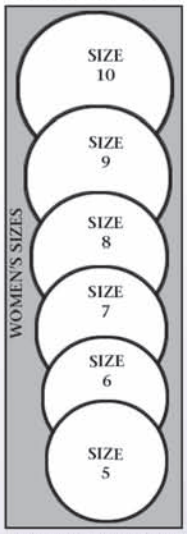

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Airborne Close Encounter

AN AMERICAN AIRBORNE ENGINEER RECALLS HIS DROP INTO SOUTHERN FRANCE AND AN OPERATION WITH BRITISH COMRADES.

BY CHRIS BLENDHEIM

AT MIDNIGHT, the jumpers of 2nd Battalion, 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, as well as the 596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company, still dripping from the paint-spray line, shuffled across Ombrone Airfield to the waiting C-47s of Serial 6 and climbed aboard. Some were so weighed down that air corpsmen had to assist them aboard.

The airborne combat engineers were not only weighed down with a heavy load, but with dangerous explosives. "We jumped with boxes of tetro caps above our reserve chutes," Hal Roberts, combat engineer of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, said. "These were wooden boxes, felt-lined, with 24 caps each about the width of a pencil. If those exploded, there'd be nothing left of you. So you protected those things. They figured the only way we could get them down without exploding was with us absorbing the impact shock of landing."

The details of Operation Dragoon were mind numbing. Three hundred thousand men. Several thousand planes. A thousand ships. An advance force of 5,600 paratroopers in 396 C-47s, so large it demanded its own oper-

A group of British and American airborne troops takes a break beside a stone farmhouse in southern France. These soldiers have made contact with local resistance fighters and have received information on the nearest concentrations of enemy forces. Hal Roberts participated in action against the Germans along with a group of British paras. INSET: Airborne Engineer Hal Roberts is shown in full jump gear, ready for Operation Dragoon, the invasion of southern France.

National Archives

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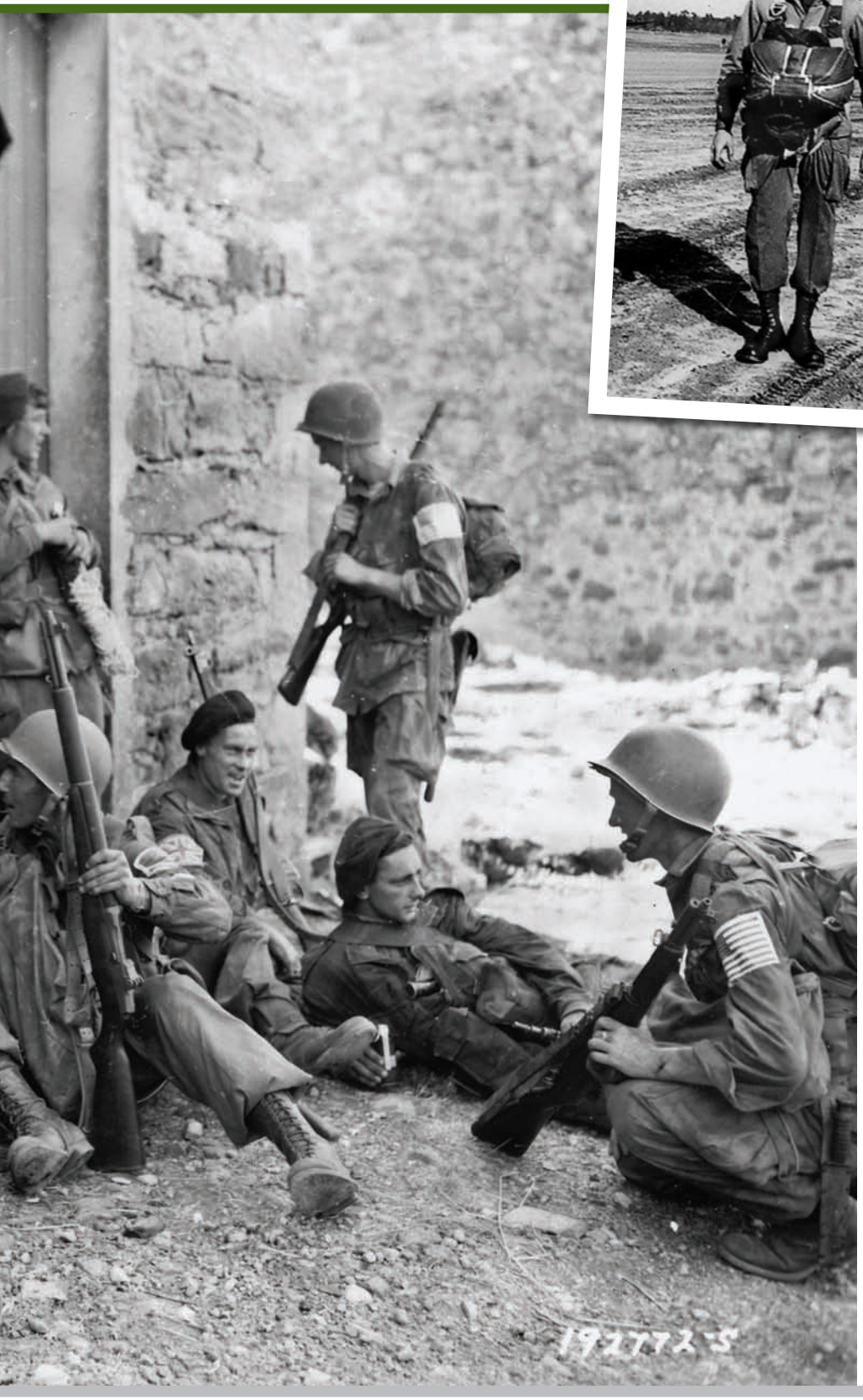

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ation title: Albatross.

Before equipment was packed up, it was neatly laid out on shelter halves for an officer's inspection, then packed. Each man had two bandoliers of .30-caliber rifle ammunition, half a belt for the squad machine gun, Mae West, a full musette bag, escape pouch, canteen, entrenching tool, an M-1 carbine with a folding stock or a standard M-1 rifle broken down into three parts in a Griswold case, bayonet, three knives, shelter half, raincoat, main parachute, reserve parachute, and enough K rations, C rations, and concentrated chocolate D bars to last three days.

Most of the men painted their faces with black and green camouflage from Lily Daché cosmetic tubes, and some shaved their heads to resemble Mohawks. The Nazi propagandists used this as proof to the French people that the Americans were murderers and lunatics. Some GIs, later lost in the French countryside, had asked Frenchmen for directions, only to scare them silly.

The engineers did not jump as a company. Third Platoon jumped with 3rd Battalion, while Company Headquarters and 2nd Platoon came with Regimental Headquarters. First Platoon jumped with the 509th Combat Team. As part of Company Headquarters, Hal Roberts's plane lifted off around 1:30 AM, flew north along the coast of Italy, then veered northwest at Elba.

"We could see the marker ships below," he remembered. These were positioned to guide the armada with marker lights. "After the last one of them, we turned inland, so I thought, 'I'm not going to need this Mae West anymore,' and I chucked it."

Anticipating the jump, the last man, the pusher, inched forward, causing the whole stick of jumpers to close in tightly before the door. All the men had the forward lean of marathon runners on their mark. Hal put his shoulder into the man in front as he watched the red light. Before the jump, Lieutenant Larson said three lasting words that echoed in his mind until he jumped: "God bless you…."

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ABOVE: The Douglas C-47 transport aircraft was the workhorse of the U.S. Army airlift operations in Western Europe. These two C-47s are en route to the skies above southern France on August 15, 1944, during Operation Dragoon. BELOW: The airborne drop zones for Operation Dragoon were clustered in areas to support the amphibious landings by Allied troops on the coast of southern France; however, a number of airborne units were scattered over wide areas and missed their drop zones by miles. Hal Roberts came down near the village of Le Muy, some distance from his intended area of operations.

green light pushed reality into gear.

"Go! Go!"

The jumpers literally pushed the men in front of them so that the plane flushed the men out in a long string within about four seconds. Any sizable gap between men could mean a jumper lost or dead. They went out at 1,500 feet, twice that of a normal combat jump.

Just before the jump, the planes had climbed above the thickening clouds where the moon illuminated the blanket of white into what appeared like a shimmering sea. "As I got out into the sky," Roberts recalled, "I thought, 'Oh God, I thought we went inland! Am I going into the drink without my Mae West?'"

Weighed down by his rucksack, a trooper tangled in a mass of suspension lines might well drown. But relief swelled within him as he slipped silently through a sheet of moonlit clouds and into the black night below.

"Before I hit the ground, I could hear the rapid burp of gunfire," Hal related. This was the German MG-42, a machine gun that could fire up to 1,200 rounds per minute. Instead of emitting the familiar bup-bup-bup-bup of the American M2 .50-caliber machine gun, it emitted the sound of ripping canvas, a buzzsaw, or a protracted belch.

"I crash-landed in the bushes," said Hal. "I didn't know what I was in or where I was, but there was lots of burp gun fire. And they fire so fast! I thought, 'This is not good.'"

Hal had landed in a vineyard in the town of Le Muy, miles away from his planned drop zone and the rest of Headquarters Company. Row after row of low-growing grapevines striped the rock-hard soil and ran lengthwise between a road and a dry riverbed. All around him were pockets of gunfire and shouting men, all veiled in darkness.

"I wasn't able to double up, due to a bush that was jammed into the parachute backpack, so I couldn't get my chute off," he said. So Hal called out for help to any jumper who might be in the next row of low-level shrubs. The MG-42 immediately ripped through his area.

The only thought to rush through his head was, "They're shooting at me! I can't believe they're shooting at me!"

Fear paralyzed him. Adrenaline shot through his veins.

Clyde Hoffman, who had been right behind Hal in the jumping stick, crashed in the distance and in Hal's row of grapevines. Hoffman crawled to his position.

"You alright? You hit?"

"No, I'm okay. But this is one helluva way to greet visitors."

"Hey, are you flipping your wig?"

"I can't get outta my chute."

Hoffman took out his trench knife and cut away at the harness material.

"Wait a minute, you're cutting me!" Hal grimaced, pushing at the edge of a whisper. Rounds were tearing up the bushes all around them since Hal's white chute, draped clearly over the shrub, marked his position. Soon he was free, and they moved under the only cover the orchard would afford at a low crawl, lower than a snake's belly, low so that your helmet is plowing a trough for you to crawl through, low so that your waistband scoops dirt into your underwear and you don't care, just as long as the German machine gun does not find you.

Every time Hal pulled his leg up to move, it bumped his entrenching tool and the sound invited more fire. The Germans were listening very intently.

He ditched it and his rucksack; they were too big. Any sound made the enemy machine gun come alive, and each man's insides recoiled with

the thought that any one of those rounds had his name on it.

They remained still, and all was silent between bursts.

Hal and Clyde weighed their situation. At one end of the row was a two-story building, beside it a tree that held a paratrooper above the ground. His body gently rotated in the harness like a hanged man at the gallows. The eastern sky showed some color.

"Listen," Hoffman whispered. "It's going to be daylight soon. With that machine gun, we're not getting out of here. And they're gonna be patrolling through here at daylight."

"What're we gonna do?"

"Listen, the gliders should be coming in soon. Once they do, that'll take some of the heat off of us. Then we can move."

After weighing a certain death against an uncertain future, they agreed to dig in. For over an hour, the two paratroopers carefully cut free strands of shrubbery and camouflaged each other. Each man slipped into the small hole he had made in the bush and pulled more branches in, above, and behind.

"How do I look?" Hal whispered.

From his side in the shrubbery, Clyde nodded. Sunrise soon discovered them, shining light through the leaves and quickening their feelings of vulnerability. They watched as a group of German soldiers swung a dead American paratrooper, hanging in his harness, against the side of the tree he landed in. The Germans smoked cigarettes and laughed.

The two Americans heard slow footsteps from behind. Hal thumbed the safety of his .45-caliber pistol.

A pair of boots and the muzzle of a rifle came into view. The German's leather soles crushed pebbles into the soil. Hal shifted only his eyes into the next row where Hoffman lay, hoping Clyde's camouflage resembled that of his own.

The faceless Nazi passed them by. Hal thought the soldier would hear his thumping heart. After what seemed an eternity, they slowly crawled free of the vines so that anyone watching the rows could not detect movement. At the opposite end of the orchard was another two-story building heavily fortified by a rock wall. Hal motioned to Hoffman to go toward the riverbed. They began their long journey on their bellies over and through the bushes, not as men, but as clumps of vegetation moving slower than the eye suspected.

They found other 517th jumpers—dead. They had tried to run out of the orchard in a low crouch, which put them high enough for the MG-42 alongside the road to be effective. The gun had worked the whole orchard that night.

From the last row of grapevines they spotted the riverbed. "The rocks were white as snow," Hal recalled. "We'd have been dead before two steps."

They turned back and crawled past the fortified building. A sentry on top of the building looked out over the orchard and the surrounding countryside, then turned and disappeared for a few moments, only to return. They found a pattern to the guard's boredom, and they moved during his absence.

With dead ends on three sides, that left only one option: the road, which was protected by the machine-gun emplacement. They slowly moved their way into a position alongside the road where they could view it. It took six hours to crawl this route of a few hundred yards at a snail's pace with hearts beating time.

National Archives

American paratroopers, with U.S. flags emblazoned on their shoulders for easy identification and bayonets fixed, take cover along a dirt road near the town of La Motte, France, on August 15, 1944.

Two German soldiers manned the machine gun, a triggerman and a belt man who also had to frequently change barrels on a weapon with such a high rate of fire. They focused their gun over the open field and into the hills where activity was increasing. Hal raised his M-1 Garand and fired two rounds, one right after the other. They were so close that he did not even use his sights. The triggerman fell, then his assistant.

Hal mused, "There was only one way out, and that's what I had to do to survive."

Running parallel to the road was a ditch full of water. Had they known about it from the beginning, it would have saved them hours of low crawling. They slid into the ditch just as mortars started dropping where they had been. Hal found himself up to his neck in water. Clyde was about a head shorter. They slogged along this waterway, passing underground and into the cattails, covering their trail as they went. After being in the cold water so long, the sun-warmed cattails felt wonderful.

"We came across this little French kid, 10 years old or so," Hal recalled. "He came up to me and grabbed my arm and kissed my shoulder patch. He said, 'L'anglais est là,' pointing the way, and I said, 'Merci.'" We made our way over there and met up with 40 Brits commanded by an English major. They had been running into trouble, so I told them, 'You're going to have clear going because there was a machine gun there that's not there anymore.' They said, 'Yank, come on aboard!' Hoffman and I didn't have our packs; we had left them in the orchard and donated them to the enemy. So the English gave us food and ammunition."

The unit, likely part of the British 2nd Independent Parachute Brigade, was preparing a raid on the fortified command post, the same one with its inattentive guard that Hal and

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Out of Ashes

General Charles de Gaulle defied the Vichy government of France and maintained the dignity of a defeated nation in the process.

BY MICHAEL E. HASKEW

AS FRENCH RESISTANCE to the Nazis collapsed following the lightning invasion of May 10, 1940, General Charles de Gaulle chose exile in Great Britain, cloaking himself in the mantle of guardian of his nation's honor. De Gaulle had held but a lowly office in the government of Prime Minister Paul Reynaud. When Reynaud was succeeded by octogenarian Philippe Pétain, a hero of World War I, and his collaborationist Vichy regime, de Gaulle became a wanted man in his own country for refusing to participate in a tragedy of unspeakable shame.

From London, de Gaulle delivered a stirring address to his countrymen on BBC radio, galvanized opposition to the Vichy government and the Nazis in French colonies around the world, and organized the Free French movement. In the process, de Gaulle managed even in defeat and destitution to maintain France's position among the preeminent nations of the world. Few men in history have displayed such single-minded purpose and succeeded against such long odds.

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Michael E. Haskew, editor of *WWII History* magazine, has researched the life of Charles de Gaulle extensively, and the following is an excerpt from his book *De Gaulle: Lessons in Leadership from the Defiant General,* recently released by Palgrave Macmillan.

In leaving for London, de Gaulle had crossed his personal Rubicon. With the 84-year-old Pétain in power, he had effectively turned his back on the government of France. By refusing to be a party to an armistice with the Nazis, he had stepped back from much of what he held sacred, including the discharge of his duties as an officer in the French Army. He chose exile and had no legitimate claim to authority or to represent his country. He had come to Britain totally dependent on the goodwill of his hosts and until a few days earlier had been an obscure brigadier general.

Considering his situation, de Gaulle later reflected on his intentions while writing his memoirs. "I was nothing to begin with. But this very destitution pointed out my line of conduct. It was by taking up the cause of national salvation, without troubling about anything else at all, that I might acquire authority. It was by acting as the unbending champion of the nation and the state that it might be possible for me to gather agreement and even enthusiastic support among the French and to obtain respect and esteem from foreigners. In short, although I was so restricted and alone, and indeed because I was so restricted and alone, I had to reach the heights and never come down again."

After sizing up the situation, de Gaulle was informed that Churchill would meet with him that afternoon. Working under the shade of the trees in the garden at 10 Downing Street, the prime minister greeted the French refugee warmly, and the two men conferred briefly. Each of them wanted to keep France fighting as long as possible, and it was apparent to Churchill

Eight days after the D-Day landings, Charles de Gaulle returned to the continent of Europe for the first time in four years. Here he is shown walking with local leaders in the recently liberated town of Bayeux during his historic return to France on June 14, 1944. OPPOSITE: From the BBC radio studios in London, General Charles de Gaulle calls upon the French people to resist the Nazis and the collaborationist Vichy government.

Rue des Archives / The Granger Collection, New York

that having a Frenchman in London to help cultivate a resistance movement against the Nazis would be a benefit.

The most effective means of reaching and rallying the French people would be by radio broadcast over the BBC, asserted de Gaulle. Churchill agreed, but he had to persuade several members of his war cabinet, who believed that there was no solid ground on which de Gaulle could stand. Britain still maintained relations with the Pétain government, they reasoned, and the more proper course of action might be to see how its negotiations with the Nazis proceeded before allowing de Gaulle access to the BBC.

Churchill disagreed but intended to allow Pétain to add legitimacy to de Gaulle's intended broadcast by announcing his intent to parlay with the Germans. If Pétain made such an announcement, it would be seen as a breach of the agreement with Great Britain and would further rally those Frenchmen who did not share the old marshal's defeatist sentiment. Pétain obliged, broadcasting from Bordeaux on the afternoon of June 17. He intoned, "I give to France my person to assuage her misfortune. It is with a broken heart that I tell you today it is necessary to stop the fighting."

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Charles de Gaulle, then a colonel in the French Army, stands with a group of officers during maneuvers in Eastern France in 1938. De Gaulle was among the few officers in the French Army who realized the significance of mechanized units in modern warfare.

One of de Gaulle's associates in France had given him the keys to a small apartment in London, and there he began to write the text of his address, which would come the following evening. Courcel had already contacted a longtime friend, Elisabeth de Miribel, who was working at the time in the Economics Mission at the French Embassy, and asked her to come to the apartment to do some typing of a very important nature.

De Gaulle wrote and rewrote the text of his address, which came to be known as the Appeal of June 18. Just before 6 PM, he and Courcel arrived at Broadcasting House, the BBC headquarters. The Frenchmen were greeted by Stephen Tallents, the head of the BBC News.

Elizabeth Barker of the BBC remembered that de Gaulle was "a huge man with highly polished boots, who walked with long strides, talking in a very deep voice ... above all, icily contained within himself—not at all what one imagines a Frenchman to be. There was something different about him, different from other men. One could sense that straight away. I don't mean the 'man of destiny' business, but he was most remarkably self-possessed."

When he reached Studio 4B, on the fourth floor of the building, two announcers, Maurice Thierry and Gibson Parker, were present, and Thierry was reading the news. De Gaulle was asked to give a voice level and said only two words, "La France." The level was acceptable.

In that clear, resonating voice for which he was known, de Gaulle delivered his first address to the French nation. Its duration was only about four minutes, and it was given during a time slot generally reserved for a news broadcast to France. The BBC personnel had been given scarcely an hour's notice that de Gaulle was coming, and no arrangements for a recording were made. Few people were reported to have actually heard the appeal as it was broadcast; however, it was reproduced in print.

De Gaulle stared at the microphone and began: "The leaders who have been at the head of the French armies for many years have formed a government.

"This government, on the pretext that our armies have been defeated, have made contact with the enemy in order to cease the fight.

"Certainly we have been, we are, overwhelmed by the enemy's mechanical strength on land and in the air.

"Far more than the numbers of Germans, it is their tanks, their planes, and their tactics which have taken our leaders by surprise and brought them to where they are today.

"But has the last word been said? Must hope be abandoned? Is our defeat complete? No!

"Believe me when I tell you that nothing is lost for France. I speak in knowledge of the facts. The same means which have defeated us can bring us victory one day.

"For France is not alone! She is not alone! She is not alone! She has a great empire behind her. She can unite with the British Empire which rules the seas and is continuing the fight. Like Britain, she can make unlimited use of the immense industrial resources of the United States.

"This war is not restricted to the territory of our unhappy country. This war has not been decided by the Battle of France. This war is a world war. All our errors, all our delays, all our sufferings do not alter the fact that the world contains all the resources needed to overwhelm our enemies one day. Struck down today by mechanized might, we can conquer one day in the future by superior mechanized might. The fate of the world turns on that.

"I, General de Gaulle, now in London, call on all French officers and soldiers now present on British territory or who may be so in the future, with or without their arms; I call on engineers and specialist workers in the arms industry now present on British territory or who may be so in the future, to get in touch with me.

National Archives

In the forest of Compiegne, the Nazis dictated the terms of France's surrender in 1940 in the same railroad car that was used to conclude the armistice of 1918. Hitler attended the proceedings and occupied the same chair French Marshal Ferdinand Foch had used more than 20 years earlier.

"Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and will not be extinguished.

"Tomorrow, as today, I shall speak on the radio from London."

This four-minute appeal, heard by few, and delivered without fanfare, was by no means the commencement of a Free French movement. There was the ring of defiant nationalism, however, and in it the last vestige of any willingness to serve a collaborationist government. The Vichy leaders, preparing to sign an armistice with the Nazis, had ordered their armed forces to cease resistance. An obstinate junior officer had refused these orders, fled to the protection of another country, and was urging others to do the same. Each, in the eyes of the other, had committed high treason.

For the British, June 18 did not present a moment of realization that Charles de Gaulle was the last or even the best hope for rallying the French nation to continue the fight. Actually, Monnet had persuaded Churchill to organize yet another mission to France to seek the support of any senior French soldier or diplomat who might be willing to return to Britain and lead the nation. Among them were Reynaud, Weygand, Lebrun, and former prime minister Leon Blum. There were numerous men with political standing who might have stepped forward to accept the challenge. For various reasons, none did.

The spacious flying boat, with room for more than 30 passengers, which Churchill had provided to fly French leaders to Britain departed virtually empty. Some Frenchmen had invoked the flimsy prospect that a resistance government might still take root in North Africa. Indeed, on Friday, June 21, the liner *Massilia* was released by Admiral of the Fleet and de facto commander of the entire French Navy, François Darlan, and set sail for Casablanca. Chief among the passengers was former prime minister Daladier, and those aboard may well have believed that they were headed to North Africa to continue the fight.

Meanwhile, the drama of capitulation played out in the forest of Compiegne. Hitler and the Nazis had seen fit to exact their retribution for the armistice of November 1918, which had ended World War I, with a spectacle to humiliate the representatives of Pétain and the entire French nation. The old railroad car in which the Germans had signed the earlier armistice was brought from a museum in Paris, and the French delegation was led to it in the same place where the signing had occurred nearly a quarter century earlier.

Hitler denied Mussolini's request that Italy be awarded territory including the port cities of Toulon and Marseilles, the valley of the River Rhone, and dominion over Corsica, Tunisia, and Djibouti, a city in the horn of Africa that was adjacent to Italian-held Ethiopia. Instead, the Führer had opted to present the French with 23 conditions for the end of hostilities, none of which, he hoped, would induce them to continue armed resistance.

Intending to separate France from Britain, Hitler sought to "secure, if possible, a French government functioning on French territory. This would be far preferable to a situation in which the French might reject the German proposals and flee abroad to London to continue the war from there."

While the British had been rightly concerned with the disposition of the French Fleet, and Churchill had been repeatedly assured that it would not be surrendered to the Germans, Hitler had conversely determined that the fleet should not fall into British hands. In order to assuage any French concern on this point, he offered a dubious assurance to the delegation in the surrender terms. "The German government solemnly declares to the French government that it does not intend to use for its own purposes in the war the French fleet which is in ports under German supervision.... Furthermore, they solemnly and expressly declare that they have no intention of raising any claim to the French fleet at the time of conclusion of peace."

At 7 PM on June 22, General Huntziger signed the armistice agreement on behalf of the Pétain government. When they heard that the armistice had been concluded, those French officials aboard the *Massilia* en route to Casablanca attempted to persuade the captain of the vessel to change course and sail for Britain. However, the request was refused. When the ship arrived in North Africa, its passengers were placed under arrest and confined to the ship in the harbor.

In London, a politically astute de Gaulle moved to establish himself as either the legitimate leader of the French resistance or as a willing subordinate to the authority of a more senior officer or diplomat. Debate continues as to his actual motivation. Regardless, he did send a telegram to the headquarters of General Auguste Nogues, in Rabat, Morocco, on June 19 stating, "Hold myself at your disposal, whether to fight under your orders or for any step which might seem to you useful."

Nogues, the commander of French forces in North Africa, had expressed a sentiment to resist the Nazis but abruptly changed course when the armistice was signed, as evidenced by his request for instructions on dealing with the diplomats aboard the *Massilia*. Curiously, he maintained a degree of independence under the Vichy government and kept his Moroccan troops, the fierce Goums, armed and under his personal control. Eventually, these troops were released to Allied command and fought with distinction in Italy. On this occasion, however, de Gaulle received no reply of substance.

Further, on June 20 de Gaulle appears to have parted with his standard course of action and swallowed his pride in a personal letter written to Weygand, whom he detested. "I feel

that it is my duty to tell you quite simply that I do wish for the sake of France and for yours that you may be willing to remove yourself from disaster, reach colonial France and continue the war. At this time, there is no possible armistice with honor. I could be of use to you or to any other prominent Frenchman who is willing to place himself in command of a continued French resistance movement."

The letter, which was sent to Weygand through the French military attaché in London, was returned to de Gaulle three months after it was written. Along with it was a note that advised the sender to communicate with Weygand through appropriate government or military channels.

With the outward appearance of a willingness to be led, Charles de Gaulle had invited another individual, someone better known and possibly better received by the governments of Great Britain and the United States, and more important, someone to whom the armed forces of the far-flung empire would rally, to come forward and assume the role of leader of the resistance. One tantalizing question lingers. How would he have reacted if a notable Frenchman had done just that?

As it was, shock and paralysis gripped the diplomatic and military leadership of France. As Pétain capitulated and the Vichy regime was born, not a single person came forward to contest de Gaulle for the role he had always believed himself destined to play.

As he had promised, he took to the BBC microphone again on Wednesday, June 19. This time, his tone was much more emphatic. "Faced by the bewilderment of my countrymen," he said, "by the disintegration of a government in thrall to the enemy, by the fact that the institutions of my country are incapable, at the moment, of functioning, I, General de Gaulle, a French soldier and military leader, realize that I now speak for France.

"In the name of France, I make the following solemn declaration: It is the bounden duty of all Frenchmen who still bear arms to continue the struggle. For them to lay down their arms, to evacuate any position of military importance, or to agree to hand over any part of French territory, however small, would be a crime against our country.... Soldiers of France, wherever you may be, arise!"

This second appeal was delivered while Monnet was in Bordeaux on his last-ditch British-sponsored mission to find a prominent Frenchman to come to London. Apparently, de Gaulle was also keenly aware of his opportunity to move while Monnet was absent. Although the two had been cordial, they disagreed on the method and the means by which to shape a cohesive French resistance to the Nazis.

Monnet saw events as moving too rapidly and was concerned that de Gaulle's declaration that he represented the country might alienate the leadership of the French empire across the globe. Such a situation would only make matters of resistance more difficult. He also believed that any resistance movement organized and centered in London would look to all the world as a puppet of the British government.

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A TOUS LES FRANÇAIS

La France a perdu une bataille!
Mais la France n'a pas perdu la guerre!

Des gouvernants de rencontre ont pu capituler, cédant à la panique, oubliant l'honneur, livrant le pays à la servitude. Cependant, rien n'est perdu!

Rien n'est perdu, parce que cette guerre est une guerre mondiale. Dans l'univers libre, des forces immenses n'ont pas encore donné. Un jour, ces forces écraseront l'ennemi. Il faut que la France, ce jour-là, soit présente à la victoire. Alors, elle retrouvera sa liberté et sa grandeur. Tel est mon but, mon seul but!

Voila pourquoi je convie tous les Francais, où qu'ils se trouvent, à s'unir à moi dans l'action, dans le sacrifice et dans l'espérance.

Notre patrie est en peril de mort.
Luttons tous pour la sauver!

VIVE LA FRANCE !

GÉNÉRAL DE GAULLE

QUARTIER-GÉNÉRAL
4, CARLTON GARDENS,
LONDON, S.W.1

The text of the Appeal of June 18 was printed and widely distributed. De Gaulle's impassioned plea to the French people began with the pronouncement that France had lost a battle but had not lost the war against the Nazis.

For de Gaulle, the moment to act was at hand. His intense nationalism trumped the perceived need for consensus among Frenchmen outside the immediate reach of the Pétain government. Monnet later chose not to join de Gaulle and the Free French, but accepted an appointment by the British government to work with its purchasing mission in Washington, D.C.

When news of the armistice reached London, there was undoubtedly a final acknowledgment that a resistance movement was the best hope for Frenchmen to continue fighting. On June 23, the British government issued two landmark statements. The first condemned the separate peace, and the second, without specifically naming de Gaulle, expressed its intent to work with French leaders in exile.

"The Armistice which has just been signed, in violation of the agreement solemnly concluded between the allied governments, places the Bordeaux government in a state of total subjection to the enemy, depriving it of all freedom and of any right to represent free French citizens. Consequently, His Majesty's government no longer considers the government of Bordeaux as that of an independent country," read the initial communiqué. This was followed by the announcement that Britain had become aware of a "plan for the formation of a provisional French National Committee" that would represent those "independent French elements resolved to fulfill the international obligations contracted by France" and that it "would recognize ... [and] discuss with it all matters connected with the prosecution of the war."

Of course, the head of this French National Committee was to be Charles de Gaulle, who was given as office space the third floor of the St. Stephen's House along the bank of the river Thames and near the House of Commons. There was to be an oath—to serve this newly and largely self-appointed leader with honor, fidelity, and discipline. A number of French government officials shied away, including Corbin, who chose retirement in South America rather than partnership with the Free French, as the committee soon came to be known. Those who chose early to enlist with de Gaulle occupied offices near their leader, on the third floor of a somewhat dingy building in a foreign country.

By June 26, any ambiguity as to the British position with regard to the Free French and its de facto leader was erased. A British diplomatic mission to Morocco had been rebuffed, and Churchill called de Gaulle to his quarters at 10 Downing Street. "You are all alone," said the prime minister. "Well then, I recognize you all alone." This was followed by a declaration that "recognizes General de Gaulle as leader of all the Free French, wherever they may be, who join him in the defense of the Allied cause." Although this aroused some protest within the government, it was at long last done. In an evening radio address, de Gaulle stated boldly, "I take under my authority all the French who are now living in British territory or who may arrive later."

Setting about the business of government—or something similar to government—posed great challenges for the fledgling Free French. The 100,000 francs contributed by Reynaud were exchanged for only 100 pounds sterling, a paltry treasury at best. Diplomatic relations with the British were entrusted to Gaston Palewski, who had been personally summoned to London from Tunisia. As for the military,

remnants of French Army units were scattered in London and southern England, some of which had been ferried to safety from the debacle at Dunkirk.

Altogether, about 20,000 French soldiers were in Britain, including the 13th Demi-brigade of the Foreign Legion, a light division of mountain troops, a few dozen pilots, and an odd collection of volunteers. Only a trickle of men came to the Free French recruiting station at Olympia Hall. A poster bearing the French Tricolor was printed, and the message was from the leader in exile. "To all Frenchmen," it read. "France has lost a battle, but France has not lost the war. Some chance-gathered authorities, giving way to panic and forgetting honor, may have surrendered, delivering the country over into bondage. Yet nothing is lost! That is why I call upon all Frenchmen, wherever they may be, to join me in action, in sacrifice and in hope."

Soon, the Free French adopted the Cross of Lorraine as their symbol. It was a reminder of the province of Lorraine, which had long been disputed territory and was now again under the control of the Germans. Perhaps even more powerfully, it reminded the French people of the emblem under which Saint Joan of Arc had fought an occupying enemy centuries earlier.

A division, which had been involved in an unsuccessful campaign in Norway, arrived as well. Its commander, General Émile Béthouart, was for a time the senior French Army officer in Britain. He declined to join de Gaulle or to subordinate himself to his junior. Instead, he eventually made his way to North Africa and fought on, serving capably. Before he departed, Béthouart arranged for de Gaulle to address several units and enlist their support for the Free French cause. Following one address, de Gaulle was reportedly successful in persuading 1,000 men to join him. Nevertheless, the recruiting process was painfully slow.

One of Béthouart's junior officers, Captain André Dewavrin, sought the Free French headquarters on his own and finally reached St. Stephen's House after a confusing journey that had been all the more complicated because road signs had been removed or camouflaged. Courcel received the young officer and presented him to de Gaulle.

Years later, Dewavrin remembered the meeting: "I walked into a spacious well-lit room. Two large windows opened onto the Thames. The huge form unwound and stood up to greet me. [The General] made me repeat my name and then asked me a series of short questions in a clear, incisive, rather harsh tone:

'Are you on the active list or the reserve?'

Rue des Archives / The Granger Collection, New York

Charles de Gaulle and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill confer in Paris in November 1944. Churchill was often irritated by de Gaulle's intransigence; however, the two leaders cooperated for their mutual benefit.

'Active, sir.'

'Passed staff college?'

'No.'

"Where were you?"

'The École Polytechnique.'

'What were you doing before the mobilization?'

'Professor of Fortification at the École Spéciale Militaire de Saint Cyr.'

'Have you any other qualifications? Do you speak English?'

'I have a degree in law and I speak English fluently, sir.'

'Where were you during the war?'

'With the expeditionary corps in Norway.'

'Then you know Tissier [newly appointed chief of staff]. Are you senior to him?'

'No, sir.'

'Very well. You will be the head of the second and third bureau on my staff. Good day. I shall see you again soon.'

The conversation was over. I saluted and went out. The reception had been glacial."

The Vichy government did not sit idly by while the spectacular Free French affront developed. By the end of the month, de Gaulle's temporary rank of general had been rescinded, he had been forced into retirement and summarily stripped of his French citizenship, and a message delivered through the French embassy in London ordered him to report to prison in Toulouse within five days in preparation for trial on charges of disobedience. This tribunal found him guilty, sentenced him to four years in prison, and levied a fine of 100 francs.

In a second trial held in early July, he was found guilty of desertion and undertaking to serve a foreign country. This tribunal voted five to two to convict and sentenced him to death in absentia. Although Pétain voiced his agreement with this verdict and the sentence, he was reported by some to have vowed that the death sentence would never be carried out.

De Gaulle responded to the events at Vichy with disdain, saying that he considered its actions null and void and that he would have a discussion after the war with those who pronounced his guilt and his sentence. Only de Gaulle could actually grasp the potential personal consequences of the path he had chosen; however, it was not time to count the cost. There was a swirl of activity and business at hand.

Meanwhile, Yvonne had reached London and eventually decided to relocate to an unpretentious home outside the city. Charles would commute via Victoria Station on those occasions when he was able to see his family.

Even as efforts to establish the Free French organization were bearing some fruit, events occurred that nearly stopped the progress in its tracks. The Vichy government had already reneged on its pledge to transfer captured German airmen to British custody in order to prevent their taking part in the coming Battle of Britain, and indeed these pilots and crewmen were active once again with the Luftwaffe. The disposition of the French Fleet remained an open question, and Darlan, commander of the Vichy armed forces, was not to be trusted.

Churchill decided to take action to maintain the preeminence of the Royal Navy, particularly in the Mediterranean. Elements of the French Fleet were already in the British ports of Plymouth and Portsmouth, and these were seized on the morning of July 3, with Royal Navy and Marine boarding parties taking control and marching the French crews to internment. Four British participants were wounded, and a French sailor was killed. A total of 130 French vessels were taken under British control.

Other French warships were under either German or Vichy control at Cherbourg, Toulon, and Brest, or scattered in North African ports. The most substantial concentration of French naval assets was located at the port of Mers el-Kébir, in Algeria. These included the battleships *Strasbourg, Dunkerque, Bretagne,* and *Provence,* six destroyers, and a complement of support vessels and submarines.

Churchill ordered Admiral Sir James Somerville to sail from Gibraltar with an ultimatum for the French commander, Admiral Marcel Gensoul. The French could sail with the Royal Navy warships and continue to resist the Germans; sail to British ports with reduced crews, tender their ships, and be repatriated to France; or sail to the island of Martinique in the West Indies, where they would be disarmed and out of the reach of the Germans.

Somerville, whose Force H consisted of the battleships *Valiant* and *Resolution,* the battlecruiser *Hood,* the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal,* and several cruisers and destroyers, reached the French anchorage on July 3 with firm instructions from Churchill to conclude the difficult task by the end of the day. A British destroyer entered the harbor and delivered the message to Gensoul. Its conclusion was ominous should the French choose not to comply with one of the three options offered: "We must with profound regret require you to sink your ships within six hours or it is the orders of His Majesty's government to use whatever force may be necessary to prevent your ships from falling into German or Italian hands."

Gensoul, who took his orders from Darlan, rejected the ultimatum, and just before 6 PM the British opened fire on the anchored French ships. Only the *Strasbourg* and an escorting destroyer managed to raise steam and escape from the carnage. Nearly 1,300 French sailors were killed and more than 350 wounded. It was a moment of supreme and tragic irony, in which the defenders of freedom had come to blows

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"ONLY IF I ACTED AS THE INFLEXIBLE CHAMPION OF THE NATION AND THE STATE COULD I WIN SUPPORT AMONG THE FRENCH AND RESPECT FROM FOREIGNERS.... PRECISELY BECAUSE I WAS ALONE AND WITHOUT POWER I HAD TO CLIMB THE PEAKS AND NEVER AFTERWARDS DESCEND FROM THAT LEVEL."

and the oppressors would find fodder for their propaganda machine.

Churchill regretted the decision to fire on the French but considered it a necessity. He later wrote, "Here was Britain, who so many had considered down and out, which strangers had supposed to be quivering on the brink of surrender to the mighty power arrayed against her, striking ruthlessly at her dearest friends of yesterday and securing for a while to herself the undisputed command of the sea. It was made plain that the British War Cabinet feared nothing and would stop at nothing."

De Gaulle received word of the Mers el-Kébir tragedy on the evening of June 3 and erupted in both anger and anguish. As the leader of the Free French movement, supported by Great Britain, he appeared at worst to have potentially been a party to the terrible event. At best, it was those on whom he depended who had placed his entire effort in jeopardy. Recruiting to the cause would only be more difficult, and even more troublesome, he would be required to speak to the situation on the BBC. Prolonged silence would be unacceptable. He would gather himself and do what was necessary.

Churchill, at times a harsh political realist, understood the precarious position in which the action at Mers el-Kébir had placed de Gaulle and invited the Frenchman to lunch at 10 Downing Street. Together with Mrs. Churchill he conversed with de Gaulle, and inevitably the discussion turned to the unfortunate situation. Fluent in French, Mrs. Churchill expressed a hope that the navies of the two countries might yet work together. De Gaulle responded that the French Fleet might gain its greatest satisfaction by actually turning its guns on the British.

When Mrs. Churchill replied in perfect French that the remark was unbecoming for an ally or guest of Great Britain, the prime minister intervened and attempted to settle the conversation down. However, Mrs. Churchill persisted and stated, "No Winston, it is because there are certain things that a woman can say to a man which a man cannot say, and I am saying them to you, General de Gaulle."

Taken aback, de Gaulle, for one of the few times in his life, apologized to Mrs. Churchill and sent a large basket of flowers to her the following day. The general and the lady remained friendly from that time on, and it was said that she was an advocate for him with her husband whenever possible.

On July 8, a resolute de Gaulle took to the radio once again. His higher calling had not diminished the sorrow and frustration of Mers el-Kébir, but somehow he knew that it was bound to happen. Perhaps on that evening he displayed his finest diplomatic ability of the entire war. "Though seeing this tragedy as what it is, I mean as lamentable and hateful, Frenchmen worthy of the name cannot be unaware that the defeat of England would confirm their bondage forever. Our two ancient nations, our two great nations remain bound to one another. They will either go down both together or both together they will win."

As horrific as Mers el-Kébir had been, it served to strengthen the bond between the Free French movement and Great Britain, and certainly the personal ties between Churchill and de Gaulle. Despite the fact that the Vichy government would use Mers el-Kébir as a propaganda weapon, it also severed political ties with Great Britain, a development that further legitimized and strengthened de Gaulle's authority. He had contemplated giving up and relocating to a quiet

life in Canada, but only momentarily. Capable of comprehending the noble purpose that lay ahead, de Gaulle chose leadership and vision rather than a base, reactionary response. Therein lay the foundation of greatness.

Within weeks of the appointment of Free French staff officials, agents were secretly sent to France to contact those pledged to resist the occupiers from within. A coordinated resistance, embryonic though it was, began to take shape. On Bastille Day, July 14, 1940, the Free French, such as they were, gathered in Grosvenor Gardens. There were actually more British than French in attendance, but all joined in a rendition of "La Marseillaise," the French national anthem. The moment bolstered de Gaulle's confidence that he had won the admiration of the British people. To many of them, he stood out as the only Frenchman willing to continue an armed resistance against the Nazis, the only man who would work to restore his country's honor, and the only man who understood the solemn pledge his nation had made to fight side by side with Britain to the end.

While the Vichy government might posture and pronounce, its reach would prove limited. Its soon to be vilified collaborationist prime minister Pierre Laval might push for even greater cooperation with the Nazis, but with each passing day the prospect of a quick British surrender became less likely. It was to vanish altogether with the Battle of Britain. Further, the will to resist was revived in the French empire. The distant New Hebrides had declared an allegiance to the Free French by the end of June. The governor of Chad, Félix Éboué, pledged his support as well. There were also stirrings in the French Congo. Emissaries were dispatched to secure these colonies.

By August, the Free French and the British government had concluded an agreement for continuing cooperation, including the financing of the Free French movement with the equivalent of $40 million from the British treasury.

De Gaulle had also sought guarantees from the British for the restoration of France and its empire, control over the Free French armed forces that he was actively recruiting, and an understanding that French soldiers fighting under the command of British officers would not be required to fight other Frenchmen. Churchill was in no position to fully guarantee these points. After all, the outcome of the war was far from certain. Britain's own colonial empire was at risk, and a guarantee of French colonial possessions was quite a stretch. As for Frenchmen fighting Frenchmen, the question would sort itself out should Free French soldiers confront those of Vichy on the battlefield.

While he did not achieve the full measure of his requests, de Gaulle had successfully solidified his hold on the leadership of Frenchmen in exile. The British would deal with him. He would shape the future course of French resistance.

With the heroic defense of the skies over Britain ongoing, Churchill was on the offensive. Hitting the Germans by some means was attractive, and involving the forces of the Free French might enhance the movement's prestige around the world. At the western tip of the continent of Africa was the port city of Dakar, which had been a French possession since 1857. Although strong-willed pro-Vichy governor Pierre Boisson was in firm control, a joint military operation involving British and Free French troops might succeed in capturing the port, hopefully without bloodshed, and could bring all of French West Africa into the Allied sphere. From the beginning, de Gaulle had misgivings about such an operation, acknowledging that Dakar might be strongly defended. However, he decided to move forward believing that if he did not act the British might do so on their own in the future to prevent Dakar from becoming a haven for German U-boats operating in the Atlantic.

In late September, a naval task force arrived off Dakar with de Gaulle himself aboard one of the ships and 2,500 Free French troops and two battalions of Royal Marines poised to land. Boisson, however, was resolute. Appeals for peaceful cooperation were flatly rejected, and Free French sympathizers in Dakar had already been rounded up and jailed. Under a flag of truce, de Gaulle approached the shore only to be informed that an order for his arrest had been issued. An argument ensued, and it became apparent that no progress would be made. As the Free French delegation backed out of the harbor, machine guns opened fire and injured at least one person.

Fog hampered the operations of Royal Navy warships, which exchanged gunfire with the French battleship *Richelieu* moored in the harbor. An attempted landing was aborted when the escorting Free French warship was hit by fire from shore batteries. To make matters worse, a Vichy submarine slipped from the harbor and slammed a torpedo into the British battleship *Resolution*. At last, the invasion force was compelled to withdraw to Freetown in the British colony of Sierra Leone. The entire adventure had ended in failure and colossal embarrassment for Churchill. Most of the blame, though, fell unjustly on the shoulders of

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ABOVE: Charles de Gaulle reviews sailors aboard a Free French destroyer during preparations for the disastrous operation against the West African port of Dakar, Senegal. The failure to capture Dakar was a blow to what little prestige the Free French movement had garnered, and de Gaulle contemplated retiring to Canada. OPPOSITE: During observances of Bastille Day in London in June 1940, de Gaulle reviews Free French troops. Initial recruiting efforts for Free French units were discouraging.

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French warships burn furiously following their bombardment by units of the British Royal Navy at Mers el-Kébir in 1940. Prime Minister Winston Churchill deemed the destruction of French naval vessels as necessary to prevent their control by the Vichy government or falling into the hands of Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy.

de Gaulle.

Although postwar German naval records confirmed that neither Vichy nor German authorities had been aware of the Dakar operation ahead of time, rumors of security breaches among the Free French were rampant. It followed that de Gaulle and company might not be trustworthy or even capable of cooperating in any future military endeavor. Doubtless, Dakar was the low point of the Free French movement.

Churchill defended de Gaulle to the best of his ability and told the House of Commons that mistakes had been made at Dakar. De Gaulle, despondent over the failure, contemplated suicide. Nevertheless, the Allied reception elsewhere in equatorial Africa was more enthusiastic. During the coming weeks, de Gaulle traveled through the French colonial possessions in the region. Aware that the British and Vichy governments were in contact with one another through diplomatic channels, this was a bold step that reached beyond the scope of de Gaulle's understanding with the British government. It also rattled the British Foreign Office, which had hoped to keep Vichy from completely changing sides and entering the war as an Axis minion.

Continuing his efforts to rally support for the Free French movement among France's colonies, de Gaulle imperiled his tenuous relationship with the British government. He asserted control that had been granted by no real authority. De Gaulle was filling a power vacuum with decisive, rapid, and independent action.

On October 27, 1940, at Brazzaville, in the French Congo, de Gaulle issued a declaration announcing the formation of a Defense Council of the Empire, which was tantamount to the establishment of a dictatorial government of French possessions, and asserted, "Decisions will be taken by the leader of the Free French, after consultation, if the need arises, with the Defense Council." A few days later, a second communiqué declared that the government of Pétain was unlawful. De Gaulle had not consulted with the British prior to issuing the declaration, and to compound the difficulty he contacted the U.S. consulate at Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo, hoping to open a discussion of the administration of French colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

While it was true that more and more of colonial France and well-known officers in the French military were rallying to the Free French, it was also apparent that de Gaulle was quickly tiring of simply being the head of a national committee backed by the British. His was to be a government with full diplomatic standing and recognition among nations. For their part, the Americans were not at war in the autumn of 1940 and had little interest in de Gaulle or the Free French. In their estimation, the Vichy government was the government of France. Dakar had done nothing to change their opinion, and now the upstart de Gaulle had the audacity to communicate as a head of state. There is no record of a reply from the U.S. State Department.

De Gaulle returned to London on November 12, following a rather curt communication from Churchill, which read in part, "I feel most anxious for consultation with you. Situation between France and Britain has changed remarkably since you left.... We have hopes of Weygand in Africa and no one must underrate advantage that would follow if he were to be rallied. We are trying to arrive at some modus vivendi with Vichy which would minimize the risk of incidents and will enable some favorable forces in France to develop.... You will see how important it is that you should be here."

Since the debacle of Dakar in September, Charles de Gaulle had no doubt been keenly aware of the danger that existed. For as much as the Free French might need the British, an overture from Vichy or the rise to greater prominence of someone of stature, such as Weygand, who had in fact been sent by Pétain to assume the post of Delegate General of the French North African colonies, could prove his undoing.

Therefore, his action at Brazzaville is understandable. The growth of the Free France movement with the pledge of allegiance from possessions in the Pacific, the Indian subcontinent, and equatorial Africa would make any deal that excluded de Gaulle from a prominent place at the table more difficult. De Gaulle also realized that he needed the British but remained wary of both Churchill's government and the Americans throughout the war years and beyond.

In the mid-1950s, he wrote in his memoirs, "To start with ... I was nothing. Not the semblance of a force or an organization was behind me.... But my very poverty showed me the line to take.... Only if I acted as the inflexible champion of the nation and the state could I win support among the French and respect from foreigners. The critics who persisted in frowning on my intransigence refused to see that I was controlling countless conflicting pressures and that the least yielding would have led to total collapse. Precisely because I was alone and without power I had to climb the peaks and never afterwards descend from that level."

Constantly intending to prove that he was no puppet of the British, de Gaulle clashed with his hosts over military and diplomatic issues in the Middle East, quelled dissent against his course of action and rivalry among the members of his own national committee, and managed to stir

the anger of even his closest friends in the British government. During one sharp exchange with his liaison officer, General Spears, he spewed venom. "I do not believe that I will ever get along with the English. You are all the same, absorbed in your own interests and business, and very insensitive to the requirements of others. You believe that I am interested in England winning the war? I am not! I am only interested in the victory of France."

From 1941 on, the relationship between the Free French and the British and American governments was one of wary suspicion. The strained relationship was heightened when America entered the war in December of that year.

During the summer of 1941, British and Free French troops fought side by side in a successful campaign to secure Syria and Lebanon from pro-Axis regimes and potential occupation by the Germans. Meanwhile, however, terms were concluded with the Vichy forces in the Levant by British military commanders who did not fully appreciate the delicate nature of Anglo-Free French relations. The interests of the Free French were virtually dismissed. An amended agreement was signed and a crisis averted. Again, the hand of de Gaulle had been inflexible, and his policy of intransigence had paid a dividend.

There were other rifts between Churchill and de Gaulle, not the least of which had to do with an interview the Free French leader granted to George Weller, a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News*. In the published article, de Gaulle criticized the British.

"England is afraid of the French fleet," Weller quoted.

"What in effect England is carrying on is a wartime deal with Hitler in which Vichy serves as a go-between. Vichy serves Hitler in keeping the French people in subjection and selling the French empire piecemeal to Germany. But do not forget that Vichy also serves England by keeping the French fleet from Hitler's hands. Britain is exploiting Vichy the same way as Germany, the only difference is in purpose. What happens is in effect an exchange of advantages between hostile powers which keeps the Vichy government alive as long as both Britain and Germany are agreed that it should exist."

Churchill fumed and refused to see de Gaulle until he had sufficiently cooled off. During a subsequent meeting, the prime minister warned the Frenchman that he should be careful in cultivating concerns that he was anti-British. Such was the nature of the tempestuous relationship.

Three weeks after Pearl Harbor, de Gaulle also wrangled with the U.S. government over the tiny islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, off the coast of Newfoundland. Concerns had arisen as to the possibility of weather equipment transmitting information that might be useful to the Germans. While the islands were French possessions, the United States objected to Free French forces from Halifax, Nova Scotia, occupying them. Instead, the Americans had agreed to a Canadian operation. When de Gaulle was informed, he ordered his small force to the islands ahead of the Canadians. The hostile U.S. response was soothed by Churchill, who worked out a compromise allowing the parties at odds to save face. Still, de Gaulle had done little to endear himself to the Americans.

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Admiral Jean-Francois Darlan was de facto leader of the Vichy French military and the highest ranking representative of the Vichy government in North Africa.

Since their early communications with the British government and their ongoing effort to support Weygand in North Africa were seen as the best hope to keep Vichy out of the war, the American government was reluctant to vest de Gaulle with any specific endorsement of substance. In the autumn of 1941, Free French representative René Pleven had traveled to Washington, D.C., and requested a meeting with Roosevelt or Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Neither would receive him. The reception from Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles was icy.

After U.S. entry into the war, the Roosevelt administration assumed a somewhat more pragmatic approach to de Gaulle and on July 9, 1942, issued a statement that affirmed the contribution of the Free French movement to the war effort and pledged military and humanitarian aid. The United States maintained the stance that the French people should be allowed to freely elect their governing officials after the war. Whether de Gaulle would play a role in the postwar government was for the French voter to decide.

As the war continued, Free French forces fought with distinction in the desert at Bir Hacheim and elsewhere, participated in the abortive Commando raid on the French port city of Dieppe, and supported covert resistance operations inside the Vichy-controlled region of France, which the Germans occupied on November 11, 1942, following the Allied landings on the coast of North Africa three days earlier.

Operation Torch, as the landings were codenamed, involved the first offensive action of American troops on the ground during the war against Nazi Germany. U.S. and British landings were to occur on the North African coast at the major cities of Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers. It was hoped that the Vichy forces in control in these areas would quickly surrender and potentially rally to the Allied cause. The long-term goal was to crush German forces under Field Marshal Erwin Rommel between the British Eighth Army, which was advancing westward from the Egyptian frontier under General Bernard Law Montgomery following its victory at El Alamein, and the Americans in the west.

Although the Americans had initially pushed for an assault on the European continent, British military planners prevailed, and it was decided in July 1942 that French North Africa would be the location of the Allied offensive. However, there can be no doubt that Churchill otherwise accepted that the center of Allied power had shifted from London to Washington, D.C., when the United States entered the war. The continuing mistrust of de Gaulle by the Roosevelt administration contributed mightily to a concerted effort to marginalize Free France, or Fighting France, as the movement had been renamed in June.

Hitler had launched his invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and during subsequent discussions with Soviet officials de Gaulle had promised to urge the opening of a second front in Europe as soon as possible. However, when Roosevelt and Churchill made their decision for North Africa, they also concluded that the Free French were not to be consulted, their aid would not be solicited, and above all, de Gaulle was to know nothing of Operation Torch.

By the summer of 1942, relations between Churchill and de Gaulle reached another low point. British troops had landed on the island of Madagascar, off the coast of East Africa, two

months earlier, and de Gaulle had not been made aware of the operation even though he had proposed a joint effort to capture the island as early as December 1941. Perhaps the most adversarial meeting of their careers occurred at 10 Downing Street in September, and both men were smarting from its bitter conclusion, with Churchill even threatening to abandon de Gaulle in favor of another more agreeable French leader.

At the same time, the Roosevelt administration had embarked, with Churchill's quiet agreement, on a course to identify another prominent Frenchman who might supersede de Gaulle as the leader of the Free French. Further overtures to Weygand were thwarted when the general voiced his lasting allegiance to Pétain and evaporated when the Germans demanded his recall to France following the Torch landings.

The Americans then settled on General Henri Giraud, under whom de Gaulle had served at Metz in 1938. Giraud had escaped from a German prison and made his way to Vichy, where he declared his support for Pétain in glowing terms. Giraud was contacted by Allied agents, and heated negotiations ensued, with Giraud finally withdrawing his demand that he be placed in command of all Allied forces landing in North Africa. He agreed to command only French troops and to attempt to halt any Vichy resistance to the Torch landings. In exchange, he would be named governor general of North Africa.

It turned out that Giraud was every bit as difficult to deal with as de Gaulle might have been. To complicate matters, Admiral Darlan, commander of all Vichy armed forces, was coincidentally in Algiers on the day of the Torch landings. He had visited his son, who was suffering from polio, and his presence there did trump, to a great extent, any authority Giraud might attempt to exert over Vichy forces.

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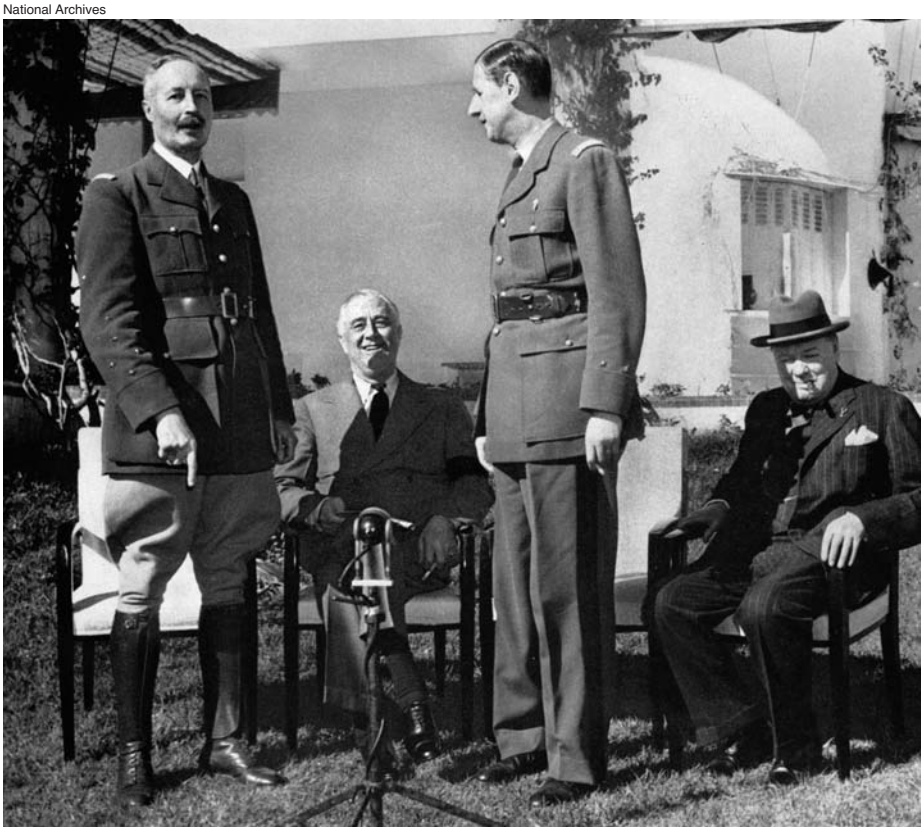

ABOVE: During the tense Casablanca Conference, Charles de Gaulle and French General Henri Giraud pose warily for the camera as President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill look on. OPPOSITE: Legionnaires of the First Free French Brigade advance on the run at Bir Hacheim. The stand by the French troops at Bir Hacheim legitimized de Gaulle's assertion that his country was still contributing to the Allied war effort. French Colonial troops fought in the Italian Campaign, and Free French forces advanced with the Allies across Western Europe.

De Gaulle, meanwhile, had been made aware as early as August that something was afoot in North Africa. That warning may have come from the Soviets, who formally recognized the French National Committee as the "executive body" of Fighting France with the authority to organize French participation in the war.

On the morning of November 8, de Gaulle was awakened in London to the news of the Torch landings. "I hope the Vichy people will fling them into the sea! You can't break into France and get away with it!" he snarled.

It fell to Churchill to brief the Fighting French leader on what was taking place, and by the time of their lunch appointment at Chequers, de Gaulle had cooled down a bit. In his memoirs, he recalled Churchill explaining, "We were forced to accept it. You can be sure that we are not in any way renouncing our agreements with you. As the business takes on its full extension, we British are to come into action. Then we shall have our word to say. It will be to support you. You were with us during the worst moments of the war. We shall not abandon you when the horizon clears."

De Gaulle explained in a meeting with the National Committee that Churchill assured him that Giraud would play only a military role; however, it cannot be fully accepted that the politically astute de Gaulle was willing to simply take Churchill at his word. The Americans were running this show, and their man was Giraud. The days ahead might find de Gaulle without standing, and he knew it.

When he took to the BBC microphone on the evening of November 8, 1942, de Gaulle had completely changed his tune from the anger of the morning. It was evident that the liberation of France had begun with this offensive in North Africa. His comments were both reflective of his conviction that the future still held a prominent role for him and of the fact that the rank and file of the Fighting French and the French people as a whole needed a leader to stand firm.

"The Allies of France have undertaken to draw French North Africa into the war of liberation," he remarked.

"They are beginning to land enormous forces there. It is a question of so ordering matters that our Algeria, our Morocco and our Tunisia form the base, the beginning point for the liberation of France. Our American allies are at the head of this enterprise.

"The moment is very well chosen. Our British allies, seconded by the French troops, have just expelled the Germans and Italians from Egypt and they are making their way into Cyrenaica. Our Russian allies have definitively broken the enemy's supreme offensive. The French people, gathered together in resistance, are only waiting for the moment to rise up as a whole. So French leaders, soldiers, sailors, airmen, officials, and colonists rise up now! Help our allies!

"Come! The great moment is here. This is the time for common sense and courage. Every-

where the enemy is staggering and giving way. Frenchmen of North Africa, let us, through you, return to action from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. Then, the war will be won, and won thanks to France."

The Allied landings in North Africa were met with varying degrees of resistance, and after nearly three days of fighting negotiations with Vichy France's Admiral Darlan ended in a cease-fire. However, the deal brokered by General Mark Clark, chief of staff to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the overall Allied commander, raised a considerable degree of ire. Darlan was to be installed as the High Commissioner of France for North and West Africa with Giraud as his military commander.

Eisenhower had seen what was coming and told his senior commanders that he would accept responsibility for the political fallout that was certain to follow. Darlan was mistrusted and had commanded Vichy forces that had fired upon Allied troops—not to mention that de Gaulle was to once again be left out of the political picture. The Darlan fiasco hung like a cloud over the Allied governments, and sharp criticism was raised from every quarter. Although his motive remains unclear, a young assassin, Fernand Bonnier de La Chapelle, shot Darlan twice as he entered his office on December 24, killing him and removing a major embarrassment.

Darlan's body was barely cold when Giraud was installed as civil and military commander in French North Africa. Immediately, de Gaulle began to push for a meeting of the two French leaders to discuss the future. However, while Giraud delayed, Churchill and Roosevelt decided to meet at Casablanca and invited both Frenchmen to join them. When de Gaulle declined, Churchill twisted his arm, threatening to cut off financial support of the French National Committee if he refused. When he did come to Casablanca, Giraud had already been present there for five days. Roosevelt chided Churchill that he had been able to produce the bridegroom, Giraud, but that Churchill was having difficulty coaxing the bride, de Gaulle, to the altar. When the conference was over, there had been no shotgun wedding.

"THE SUPREME BATTLE HAS BEGUN. IT IS THE BATTLE IN FRANCE, AND IT IS THE BATTLE OF FRANCE.... THE CLEAR, THE SACRED DUTY OF THE SONS OF FRANCE ... IS TO FIGHT THE ENEMY WITH ALL THE MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL."

De Gaulle arrived on January 22 and was presented with a proposal that a council be formed with Giraud, de Gaulle, and General Alphonse Georges, a prominent officer in North Africa who had refused to swear allegiance to Vichy, serving as copresidents. The council would include old Vichy enemies of de Gaulle, including Nogues and Boisson, who had resisted at Dakar and during the Torch landings. De Gaulle refused such a proposal, which would in effect have given Free France over to Giraud, the vassal of Britain and the United States.

In an attempt to salvage something, Roosevelt asked de Gaulle if he would at least agree to be photographed shaking hands with Giraud. When the shutter clicked, one of the more famous images of World War II was preserved, and the look of disdain on de Gaulle's face is readily apparent. Subsequently, the two Frenchmen did agree to exchange liaison officers.

For de Gaulle, the meeting at Casablanca had been an exercise in personal resolve. He had refused to buckle under pressure from Roosevelt and Churchill, and he had won a foothold in North Africa. In reference to Giraud, he had measured the man. During the months to follow, Giraud would prove no match for the politically savvy de Gaulle.

By March, support for Giraud among the population of North Africa and within the French National Committee had eroded substantially, and when he cabled de Gaulle to request a meeting to discuss a unified French leadership it was de Gaulle who advised that the proposal of a copresidency put forward at Casablanca was as dead as Darlan. Early 1943 marked the rising tide of Charles de Gaulle. The resistance movement within France had grown steadily under the leadership of Jean Moulin,

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and when the two conferred in London in February plans were set in motion to convene the National Council of the Resistance, pledged to the support of the Free French.

Just as heartening, the Germans and Italians were expelled from North Africa in May, and the Frenchmen under arms there numbered 450,000. The Free French units there had actively participated in the fighting and were well respected for their contribution to the victory. Thus, the leader of Free France was well positioned to come to North Africa on his own terms rather than being summoned by another

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De Gaulle marches triumphantly down the Champs-Elysees in Paris following the city's liberation from the Nazis in August 1944. On his right is Georges Bidault, head of the Conseil National de la Resistance. On his left is Alexandre Parodi, de Gaulle's personal delegate to the resistance body.

individual of greater perceived stature.

Churchill was still under pressure from Washington to dump de Gaulle, and the prime minister was still smarting from the intransigence of the Frenchman at Casablanca. The extent of his exasperation was such that he confined de Gaulle to London, restricted his access to the BBC, and even requested that the War Cabinet sanction a break with the French National Committee as long as de Gaulle was at its head. The request was denied, and it was plain to most observers who were close to the situation that time was running out for Giraud.

Roosevelt, too, had been vexed by the stubborn de Gaulle. In mid-May, he cabled Churchill the following: "I am fed up with de Gaulle and the secret personal and political machinations of that committee in the last few days indicates that there is no possibility of our working with him. I am absolutely convinced that he has been and is now injuring our war effort and that he is a very dangerous threat to us. The time has arrived when we must break with him. It is an intolerable situation. We must have someone whom we can completely and wholly trust."

Roosevelt was continually astounded that de Gaulle could assert any authority whatsoever. His country had been conquered. He had depended on the goodwill of others. France had lost control of its own destiny. The government at Vichy represented Roosevelt's idea of France—a nation that had capitulated and was to be rescued by the force of Allied arms.

Roosevelt saw de Gaulle as an impudent upstart who likened himself to the reincarnation of Joan of Arc and Clemenceau. The president's superficial view of France and French history failed to comprehend the depth of the philosophical differences between the Fighting French and the collaborationists at Vichy. For de Gaulle, each slight, each insult was not only taken personally but also as an insult to the French nation. He was unapologetic, refusing to bend a knee or to beg for anything.

In turn, Roosevelt believed that de Gaulle had committed a serious affront with the occupation of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The president often openly questioned de Gaulle's motivation, assessing the Fighting French leader as a would-be dictator and even a fascist sympathizer. Roosevelt did not trust de Gaulle, and the feeling was mutual. The president believed that the best approach to pressuring de Gaulle was through his British benefactors, and at times Churchill found himself caught between the rock of de Gaulle's obstinance and the hard place of Roosevelt's stubbornness.

Despite their recent wrangling, de Gaulle wrote to Churchill on May 27, 1943, "As I leave London for Algeria, where I am called by my difficult mission in the service of France, I look back over the long stage of nearly three years of war which Fighting France has accomplished side by side with Great Britain and based on British territory. I am more confident than ever in the victory of our two countries along with all their allies, and I am more convinced than ever that you personally will be the man of the days of glory, just as you were the man of the darkest hours."

De Gaulle visited British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, who smiled and commented, "Do you know that you have caused us more difficulties than all our other European allies put together?" de Gaulle smiled in response, saying, "I don't doubt it. France is a great power."

The time had come for the headquarters of Free France to relocate to Algiers as de Gaulle set about consolidating power, leaving an outmaneuvered Giraud in his wake. In less than a week, the two announced the formation of a French Committee of National Liberation, with de Gaulle and Giraud as copresidents and a council of five others. However, when Giraud departed for a three-week visit to the United

States de Gaulle attended parades and was received enthusiastically across French North Africa. With the Allied invasion of Sicily, he provided logistical support in Giraud's absence.

By the time Giraud returned, de Gaulle had convinced the committee that his original plan, with himself as the political head of the committee and Giraud as the military commander, was the proper course. De Gaulle would be the committee chairman, and the copresidency would survive in name only. All this was accomplished by the end of July 1943. By the autumn, de Gaulle had consolidated power and constructed the basis for a provisional government over which he intended to assume authority in France following victory over the Nazis.

While the political jockeying continued, Allied armies were advancing on all fronts. The liberation of Sicily was followed, in September 1943, by Allied landings at Salerno on the Italian mainland, and Mussolini had been deposed two months earlier. The Soviet Red Army had won its victory at Stalingrad and embarked on a great offensive surge that would carry it all the way to Berlin. In the West, Britain and the United States had been planning an invasion of the European continent for months.

During that summer of victory, Yvonne and Anne relocated from London to a villa in the hills above Algiers. De Gaulle's daughter Elizabeth worked in the office of the National Committee, while his son, Philippe, served with the Free French navy.

Just as he had been excluded from official planning and discussion for the North African operation, de Gaulle was only on the periphery of the negotiations with Italian authorities that concluded with that nation officially switching to the Allied side. In addition, plans were under way for a military government in France after the war, under the administration of Great Britain and the United States. For de Gaulle, the intent was plain. France was to have a secondary role in the postwar world. Even Stalin had stated previously that he attached little importance to the Fighting French, which did not represent a great power and were of no consequence to the Soviet Union.

True to form, Roosevelt blocked any detailed disclosure to de Gaulle of the plans for Operation Overlord, the D-Day invasion, and it was not until de Gaulle arrived in London on June 4, 1944, to confer with Churchill that any part of the plan for the liberation of Western Europe was shared with him, including plans for the future of the French government.

De Gaulle had no interest in discussing some cooperative arrangement with the British and Americans for the administration and government of liberated France. His Fighting French were the government. On that point, he would never yield. He also wanted to ensure that French troops, particularly the 2nd Armored Division under General Jacques Leclerc, should be equipped and landed in France as soon as possible to play some significant role in the liberation of Paris.

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During a candid moment, de Gaulle and U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower are photographed following a conference to discuss Allied strategy. De Gaulle strongly urged Eisenhower to order Allied troops to liberate Paris rather than bypass the City of Light.

"Why do you seem to think that I am required to put myself up to Roosevelt as a candidate for power in France," he told the prime minister. "The French government exists. I have nothing to ask of the United States of America, any more than I have of Great Britain."

Churchill responded with equal ardor, "And what about you? How do you expect us, the British, to adopt a position separated from that of the United States? We are going to liberate Europe, but it is because the Americans are with us to do so. Any time we have to choose between Europe and the open seas, we shall always be for the open seas. Every time I have to choose between you and Roosevelt, I shall always choose Roosevelt."

Following the audience with Churchill, de Gaulle visited the headquarters of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme Allied commander in Europe, and was shown the text of a radio message the general intended to deliver regarding a provisional government of France. De Gaulle rejected the statement out of hand, withheld the deployment of a cadre of French liaison officers that were to accompany the Allied invasion force, and did not participate in a joint declaration with representatives of other governments in exile in support of Overlord. Instead, he chose to address the French people alone on the BBC on the afternoon of June 6, 1944.

"The supreme battle has begun," he said in a measured tone. "It is the battle in France, and it is the battle of France. France is going to fight this battle furiously. She is going to conduct it in due order. The clear, the sacred duty of the sons of France, wherever they are and whoever they are, is to fight the enemy with all the means at their disposal.

"The orders given by the French government and by the French leaders it has named for that purpose are to be obeyed exactly. The actions we carry out in the enemy's rear are to be coordinated as closely as possible with those carried out at the same time by the Allied and French armies. Let none of those capable of action, either by arms or by destruction or by giving intelligence or by refusing to do work useful to the enemy, allow themselves to be made prisoner. Let them remove themselves beforehand from being seized and from being deported.

"The battle of France has begun. In the nation, the empire and the armies there is no longer anything but one single hope, the same for all. Behind the terribly heavy cloud of our blood and our tears here is the sun of our grandeur shining out once again."

De Gaulle made no concessions. His intentions were clear, and during the spring of 1944 numerous governments chose to recognize the de facto leadership of France. Grudgingly, both Roosevelt and Churchill would come to the same conclusion. The leaders of Great Britain and the United States fumed, considering de Gaulle a hindrance and distraction to the business at hand. However, it was apparent that de Gaulle's control of the French Resistance, his influence with the French forces in the field, and his popularity among the French people as a whole constituted a force with which to be reckoned. The headstrong Frenchman made plans to return to his homeland for the first time in four years. □

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Marine Stand on GUADALCANAL

DURING THE BATTLE OF THE TENARU, U.S. MARINES ANNIHILATED A DETACHMENT OF ELITE JAPANESE TROOPS.

BY DAVID ALAN JOHNSON

AT ABOUT 2:30 on the morning of August 21, 1942, U.S. Marine units east of Henderson Field on the embattled island of Guadalcanal were awakened by several bursts of machinegun fire. Marine outposts on the west bank of Alligator Creek also heard the firing. But the noise soon slackened off, and everyone decided that the exchange had only been a patrol action between a listening post on the perimeter and an advance Japanese unit.

This was nothing out of the ordinary. Every night brought some sort of contact with small enemy patrols. The Marines had been on Guadalcanal only since August 7, exactly two weeks before, but certain routines had already been established.

The American landings on this island in the southern Solomons chain had taken the Japanese completely by surprise. By the following day, the Marines had accomplished their objective of securing Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo, small islands north of Guadalcanal. They had also accomplished their main objective on Guadalcanal—capturing the vitally important Japanese airfield near Lunga Point that was still under construction. They named the airfield Henderson Field after Major Lofton Henderson, a Marine flyer who had been killed in action at the Battle of Midway two and a half months before.

While Henderson Field was being completed, Marine units formed a defensive semicircle around it. Maj. Gen. Alexander Vandegrift, commander of the Marines on Guadalcanal, realized that an enemy counterattack was only a matter of time. Japanese cruisers and destroyers had already made their first move toward retaking the island and its airfield. On August 8, the night after the Marine units landed on Guadalcanal, three American cruisers and one Australian cruiser had been sunk at the Battle of Savo Island, which had been fought within sight of the Marines on Guadalcanal.

All U.S. naval forces had been withdrawn from the area after Savo, leaving the Marines on their own. A counterattack was the logical next step for the enemy. Vandergrift ordered all 11,000 of his men inside the defensive perimeter, along with all food supplies and ammunition. The Marines completed the airfield and waited.

General Vandegrift was absolutely correct in his assumption regarding a Japanese counterattack. Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) in Tokyo

Japanese combat artist Sentara Iwara produced this image of Japanese soldiers preparing to embark on a patrol. The soldiers are dressed in full combat uniform. Note the long bayonet attached to the belt of the soldier at right. Japanese troops developed a reputation as ferocious jungle fighters early in World War II. OPPOSITE: The half buried bodies of Japanese soldiers of the Ickiki Detachment, killed in action during the Battle of the Tenaru on Guadalcanal, offer mute testimony to the ferocity and volume of fire leveled at them by U.S. Marines in the predawn hours of August 21, 1942.

U.S. Army Art Collection

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During a tropical rainstorm, General A.A. Vandegrift (left), U.S. Marine commander on Guadalcanal, confers with Colonel Merritt A. "Red Mike" Edson, whose 1st Marine Raider Battalion played a key role in the defense of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal.

may have been surprised by the landings, but the Japanese were quick to react. The first meeting of the joint Army and Navy contingents at IGHQ took place on August 7, just hours after the Marines had come ashore. At first, the senior officers concluded that what had happened on Guadalcanal was only a reconnaissance in force, but aerial and naval reconnaissance provided evidence that an entire division of Marines had landed.

This was an accurate estimate. The unit that had come ashore was the 1st Marine Division, minus one of its regiments. The evaluation was summarily downgraded, however, when a senior staff officer from Rabaul flew to Guadalcanal to observe the enemy for himself. The officer could not see very much movement from the reconnaissance plane, and it seemed to him that the Marine contingent was a lot smaller than a division. He concluded that the Americans had withdrawn most of their troops because of their losses at Savo, and he reported his opinions to Tokyo.

On August 12, IGHQ assigned Seventeenth Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Harukichi Hyakutake, the task of retaking Guadalcanal. Several of Seventeenth Army's units had already been sent to participate in the New Guinea campaign, but the 35th Infantry Brigade, the 4th Infantry Regiment, and the 28th Infantry Regiment were available for assignment. The 28th Regiment, under the command of Colonel Kiyono Ichiki, was stationed at Guam and was closest to Guadalcanal.

General Hyakutake ordered an advance detachment of about 900 men to land on Guadalcanal before the rest of the regiment. This first element, including Colonel Ichiki himself, was put ashore by Destroyer Squadron 2 of the Imperial Japanese Navy on August 19 along with ammunition, supplies, and enough rations for seven days.

The men and their supplies were put ashore at Taivu Point at around 1 AM. Colonel Ichiki left about 100 men behind to look after the supplies while he and the rest began trudging through the jungle toward Lunga Point. Before dawn, Ichiki made camp about nine miles from the Lunga defensive perimeter.

Colonel Ichiki had been an instructor at the Army's Infantry School, where he acquired a reputation as a first-rate infantry tactician. He was also known to be impulsive and something of a hothead. Before he left Truk for Guadalcanal, Ichiki was advised to avoid frontal attacks. It was good advice, but whoever gave it did not know Ichiki or his temperament.

As soon as he came ashore at Taivu Point, Ichiki radioed the Japanese base at Rabaul on the island of New Britain, "We have succeeded in invasion." According to his orders, Ichiki was to wait until the second half of his unit arrived before trying to retake Henderson Field, but he was confident that his men would have no trouble wiping out any Americans they encountered.

Ichiki had very little use for Americans and thought his men would be able to dispose of them without the rest of his unit. His confidence was given an added boost during his march eastward from Taivu. "No enemy at all," he radioed Rabaul. "Like marching through a no-man's-land." It seemed to him that the cowardly Americans were avoiding contact.

Ichiki did not know that the Americans had broken the Japanese naval code and that General Vandegrift was well aware that an attack was imminent. On August 8, Station Hypo, an intelligence unit in Hawaii, intercepted and decoded a message that connected Ichiki's unit with Destroyer Squadron 2. Six days later, another interception disclosed that "IKKI" detachment's destination was "RXI," and should arrive on the 18th. RXI was the naval code for Guadalcanal. As soon as he received this information, Admiral Chester Nimitz, the U.S. Navy's senior commander in the Pacific, immediately notified General Vandegrift to expect an attack as early as August 20.

Vandegrift also received news of an imminent Japanese attack from other sources. On August 19, a force of 60 Marines led by Captain Charles H. Brush was alerted by native guides that a Japanese patrol was approaching. Captain Brush and his men had already left the Lunga perimeter to investigate a report of a Japanese force to the east. They encountered the scouting patrol, 37 men sent by Colonel Ichiki, around noon. In a fight that lasted less than an hour, the Marines killed all but five of the enemy. The survivors ran off to warn Colonel Ichiki.

Captain Brush examined the dead Japanese and, mainly by their brand new uniforms and shiny boots, concluded that they had just landed on Guadalcanal. Diaries and maps were also found on the dead soldiers. Brush and his men gathered all the papers and headed back to the perimeter. In the fighting, he had lost three men along with three wounded.

The papers disclosed that the Japanese had come from Guam and had just landed on Guadalcanal, as Captain Brush had concluded, but the size of the enemy force was not mentioned. Neither was its immediate intention. Vandegrift decided to stay inside the Lunga perimeter and wait for the Japanese to make the next move. If they wanted to take the airfield, they would have to attack the perimeter

regardless of how many had landed, and he would be ready and waiting.

News of the strength of Ichiki's force came from an unexpected source. A native scout, Sgt. Maj. Jacob Vouza, discovered the Ichiki detachment on August 20. Vouza was a retired member of the British Solomon Islands Constabulary and volunteered to work for the Americans against the Japanese. He was captured while attempting to get closer to the Japanese camp and brought to Colonel Ichiki for interrogation.

When Vouza refused to answer any questions, his captors tied him to a tree and searched him. They discovered a small American flag hidden in his clothing, a souvenir given to him by the Marines. Incensed by this and by the fact that Vouza refused to talk, the soldiers hit him in the face with their rifle butts, bayoneted him several times, and finally stabbed him in the throat and left him for dead.

Although Vouza had been badly hurt and was losing blood, he was far from dead. He managed to chew through the grass ropes that kept him tied to the tree and painfully made his way toward the Lunga perimeter. A Marine sentry found him, and Vouza was shortly rasping out a description of the Japanese unit he had been observing. Vouza was taken to a field hospital, where he began an almost miraculous recovery. Within two weeks, he was back on his feet.

By this time, Ichiki had already disregarded his orders and had begun his attack. First contact between the Japanese and the Marines was made at about 2:30 AM on August 21. It soon became apparent that the noise that had awakened the Marines east of Henderson Field was not just a routine patrol action. The Marines on Alligator Creek's west bank were startled by a green flare that arced overhead, a signal for Ichiki's 2nd Company to charge against them.

Alligator Creek is not much of a waterway, flowing primarily after a rainstorm. Its mouth is blocked by a sandbar. Two battalions of Marines had taken up positions on the west side of the creek and strung a single strand of barbed wire across the sandbar, running north to south. Several machine guns and 37mm cannons also covered the sandbar. If the enemy decided to charge the Marine positions on the west bank, the sandbar was the most logical place to cross the creek.

This is exactly where Ichiki intended to cross. He wanted his men to charge through the Marine lines and capture the former camp of the 11th Construction Unit, which had been building the airfield when the Americans landed. Then they were to take the airfield.

Ichiki's impulsive nature had clearly gotten the better of his ability as an infantry tactician. Two Marine battalions commanded by Lt. Col. Edwin A. Pollack stared across the sandbar at the gathering enemy attack.

There was not much to see—the night was absolutely black—but Pollack and his men could hear the enemy soldiers screaming and shouting, working themselves into a frenzy. Before 2 AM, they heard sand crunching under boots. Someone fired a flare. Its light cast an eerie green glow on the Japanese attackers as they began advancing across the sandbar. The Marines waited until Ichiki's men were halfway across before opening fire.

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ABOVE: A U.S. Marine dive-bomber sits on the edge of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal as a pair of ground crewmen assist the pilot in readying for takeoff. The Japanese had partially completed the construction of the airfield when it was captured by the Marines and renamed for a pilot lost during the Battle of Midway. LEFT: Colonel Kiyono Ichiki recklessly led his elite troops to destruction at the Battle of the Tenaru.

The Japanese charged at the Marine line, shouting and shrieking. "Squad after squad, platoon after platoon, burst from the covering darkness of the coconut grove to dash against the line," reported one account. The Japanese ran in a slightly stooped position with bayonets thrust forward; officers waved their swords. The firing from the Marine positions drowned out the shouting as the men of Ichiki's detachment ran forward.

Rifles and machine guns let loose with what seemed to be an enormous single muzzle flash. The 37mm cannons added to the noise with rounds of canister that tore into the enemy. Although the fire took its terrible toll, killing and wounding dozens of Japanese before they could even get close to the Marine lines, the survivors kept coming. When they reached the western side of the sandbar, the barbed wire stopped them about 90 feet in front of the Marines. More of Ichiki's men were killed as they became tangled in the wire.

Some of the Japanese officers thought the fence must have been electrified because so many men were stopped in front of it and were examining the wire. For most of them, it was their last act on earth. Others were not as curious and cut their way through it. Even after the canister, the machine guns, and the barbed wire, enough of 2nd Company managed to get beyond the fence to charge at the Marines with bayonets.

The Marines of G Company set up a 60mm mortar section and began dropping shells on the edge of the coconut grove. The mortars were aimed almost perfectly; bodies and parts of bodies flew into the air along with great splashes of mud and bits of palm tree. Japanese soldiers in the vicinity tried to make a break for it and ran from the target area as fast as they could. As soon as they became visible, they were cut down by rifle fire from the other side of Alligator Creek.

Pollack's men stood their ground in spite of the fact that this was the first combat for most of them. An American writer described them

as "grass-green, but resolute." As author Richard B. Frank put it, "For all they knew it was always supposed to be like this."

Ichiki's men were anything but green. They were veterans. Most of them had been in combat as far back as 1937 and showed it, charging into Marine positions with fixed bayonets as though they did it every day. But the Marines were just as determined. A rifleman with 2nd Battalion recalled, "Colonel Pollack was standing and walking around erect, telling everyone to stay low and squeeze them off."

Pollack was doing his best to keep his men's morale up. One Marine remembered, "His Jeep was parked nearby with bullet holes in it. Jap bodies covered the sandspit from the water's edge slightly behind us to the opposite grove across the lagoon."

One encounter between Ichiki's men and Pollack's 2nd Battalion involved a three-man machine-gun crew behind a log and dirt shelter just yards from the sandbar. Private Johnny Rivers fired his .30-caliber machine gun at the oncoming enemy until he was killed, shot in the face. As he died, Private Rivers continued to fire another 200 rounds. Corporal Lee Diamond replaced Rivers and kept shooting until he was wounded in the arm. The third member

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of the crew, Private Al Schmid, took over and fired until an exploding grenade blinded him.

Schmid and Diamond then worked together to keep the gun going. Diamond, who could see, directed Schmid's fire, and Schmid, who had the use of both arms, fired where Diamond told him. This episode was dramatized in the 1945 film *Pride of the Marines*. Diamond and Schmid both received the Navy Cross for their action at the sandbar, and Schmid eventually regained partial sight in one eye.

The 37mm guns also kept up their truly withering fire, expending so much canister that their barrels glowed in the dark. The two guns not only played a major role in stopping Ichiki's attack but apparently broke up a planned second attack as well. Ichiki tried outflanking the Marine line by sending a company around the barbed wire, through the surf. Machine-gun fire and canister stopped this maneuver before it could develop into an attack. Dozens of Japanese dead washed up on the shore and were half buried in the sand.

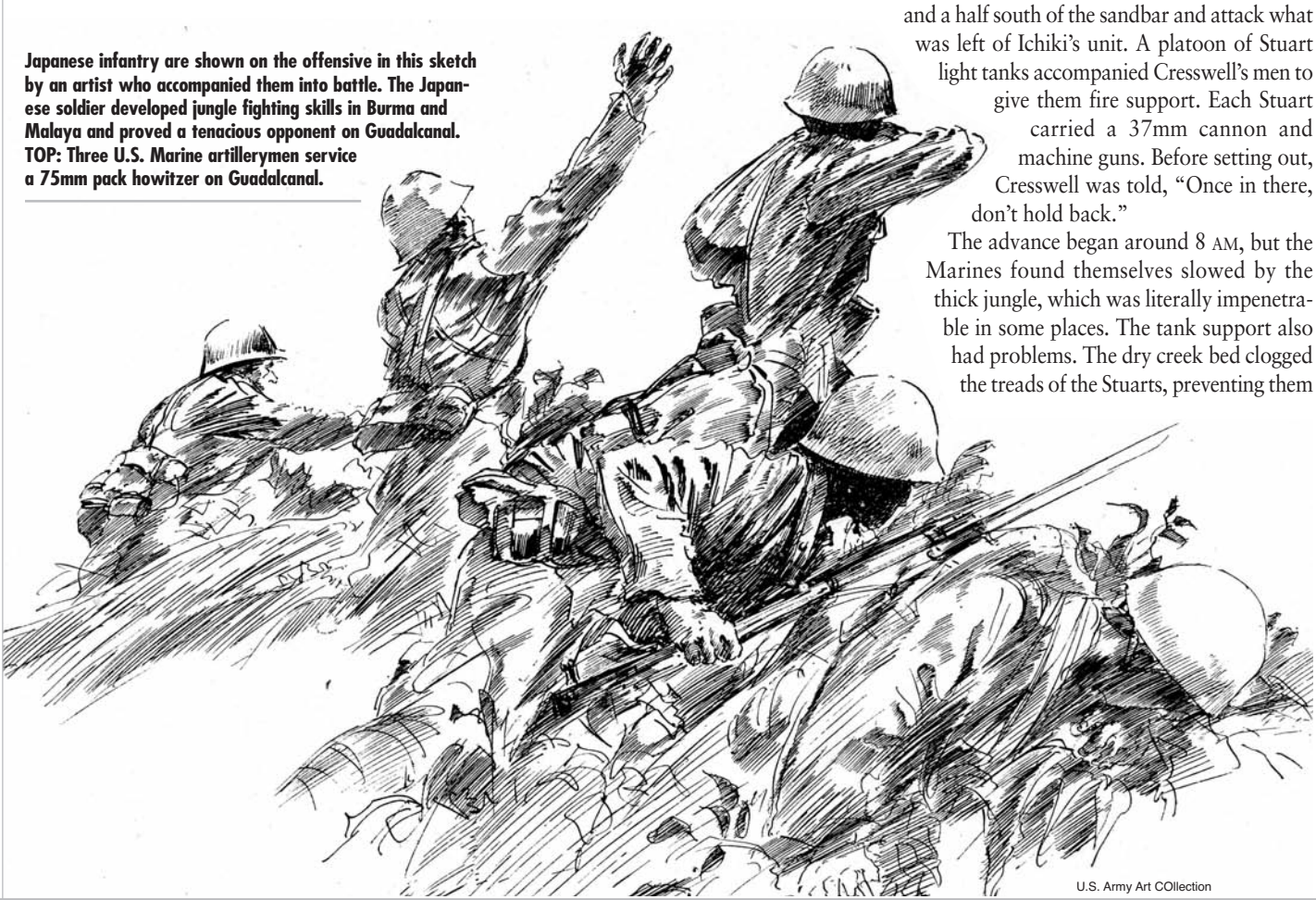
All of Ichiki's attempts to break through the American defenses had ended in disaster. He ordered the rest of his troops to pull back into a coconut grove about 200 yards east of the sandbar, but the thought of giving up had not occurred to him. The attempt to outflank the Marines through the surf had taken place at 5:30 AM. When the sun rose a short while later, Ichiki and his men were still lying low in the coconut grove. Apparently, the new plan was to wait until nightfall before charging at the Marines again. The Americans guessed what Ichiki was up to.

"We aren't about to let those people lay up there all day," announced Colonel Clifton B. Cates, commander of the 1st Marine Regiment. "We've got to get them out today."

His method for getting the Japanese out of the grove was to outflank them. Cates ordered four rifle companies under Lt. Col. Leonard B. Cresswell to cross Alligator Creek about a mile and a half south of the sandbar and attack what was left of Ichiki's unit. A platoon of Stuart light tanks accompanied Cresswell's men to give them fire support. Each Stuart carried a 37mm cannon and machine guns. Before setting out, Cresswell was told, "Once in there, don't hold back."

The advance began around 8 AM, but the Marines found themselves slowed by the thick jungle, which was literally impenetrable in some places. The tank support also had problems. The dry creek bed clogged the treads of the Stuarts, preventing them

Japanese infantry are shown on the offensive in this sketch by an artist who accompanied them into battle. The Japanese soldier developed jungle fighting skills in Burma and Malaya and proved a tenacious opponent on Guadalcanal. TOP: Three U.S. Marine artillerymen service a 75mm pack howitzer on Guadalcanal.



U.S. Army Art COllection

from following the riflemen. The attack was nearly two hours late. Vandegrift was not at all happy when he heard about the delay and gave Cates a tongue lashing Cates described as "billy-hell."

The Marines crossed Alligator Creek, turned north, and chopped their way toward the coconut grove. Three of the four companies swung east away from the grove and then turned westward to approach Ichiki's position. Company D continued north, parallel with the creek. The idea was to cut off all escape routes, back the Japanese into the sea, and corner them against the sandbar.

Company C made contact with the Japanese around noon. Ichiki's troops reacted with machine-gun fire and then with the customary bayonet charge. The Marines stopped the charge with a fusillade of well-directed rifle fire. The other three companies continued toward the grove as quickly as the jungle would allow while encountering little opposition. By early afternoon, Ichiki's men had been compressed into a triangle-shaped area at the mouth of Alligator Creek, boxed in between the sandbar and the sea.

Deciding that nothing should be left to chance, Cates ordered four Stuart tanks across the sandbar into the coconut grove. Correspondent Richard Tregaskis had been watching Japanese soldiers running along the strip of beach along the northern edge of the palm grove—"black violently moving blobs." Shortly afterward, Tregaskis heard rifle fire from the Marine lines and saw the black blobs drop onto the sand. The first sign of the tanks was a rumbling of powerful engines behind the correspondent. The four Stuarts clattered toward the sandbar and the Japanese positions beyond.

The M3A1 Stuart was a light (14-ton) tank, but it was just right for this assignment. It was light enough get around the palm trees and heavily armed to pound the Japanese sheltering in the grove. Tregaskis watched as the "awful machines" rattled toward the edge of the grove and began flushing the enemy soldiers from among the trees. "It was like a comedy of toys, something unbelievable, to see them knocking over palm trees," he later wrote.

The 37mm guns fired round after round at Ichiki's soldiers, spewing sheets of orange flame. Sometimes the tanks would fire into clumps of underbrush, where Japanese machine-gun positions had been hidden. The rattle of machine-gun fire would quickly be overcome by the heavier reports of 37mm cannon.

One of the tanks came to a sudden stop, crippled after one of its tracks was blown off by a grenade or antitank mine. The other three tanks moved to remove the crew. After performing their errand of mercy, the remaining Stuarts went back to their job of flushing out the enemy.

Cates, fearing that all the tanks might be knocked out with no one to rescue their crews, sent a radio message to the tank commander, ordering him to withdraw from the grove. But the commander, Lieutenant Leo Case, snapped back, "Leave us alone. We are too busy killing Japs."

The Stuarts went on blasting the enemy, running over bodies of Japanese dead and wounded. The roots of the coconut trees, which were large and thick and sometimes protruded several feet above the ground, saved the lives of several Japanese. One of the fortunate few was Sergeant Sadanobu Okada of Ichiki's headquarters unit.

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A Marine patrol moves out along a jungle trail on Guadalcanal. Early U.S. setbacks in naval battles off the island resulted in a withdrawal of supply ships and vessels that could provide supporting fire for the Marines ashore.

Okada played dead as the tanks rolled in. One drove right over him, but a coconut root took the tank's full weight. When the three Stuarts returned to the American lines, they literally dripped with blood. Vandegrift wrote, "The rear of the tanks looked like meat grinders."

Ichiki's men fought back. As Cresswell's rifle companies advanced from the jungle, Japanese rifle and machine-gun fire surprised the Marines. Several of them were hit.

"There was now bitter fighting in the grove," Tregaskis noted. "We realized that the tanks had not mopped up completely, for we could still hear the snapping of Jap machine-gun and rifle fire." Cresswell's men kept moving forward.

"Like everyone else," a Marine with the headquarters company recalled, "Burnham and I had fired our rifles and emptied our cartridge belts—100 rounds and then some."

The only escape for the Japanese was the sea. Many of them made a run for it but were cut down by rifle fire before they could get as far as the beach. Those who managed to get to the water bobbed about on the surface, with only the black dots of their heads showing. Marines shot at the dots and killed many more of the enemy in the water.

Those who managed to escape headed east, away from the grove, and ran into Cresswell's fourth rifle company, Company C, and newly arrived Grumman F4F Wildcat fighter planes. The Wildcats, which had arrived on the 20th, strafed the beach. The remaining handful of survivors straggled back to Taivu Point.

The Battle of the Tenaru, as it was called, was over by 5 PM. The battle was actually misnamed. The Marines thought they were fighting at the Tenaru River, which is actually about 2,000 yards to the east, so history books con-

tinued to call the battle by its incorrect name for years afterward. And Alligator Creek itself is actually misnamed—the reptiles that inhabit it are in fact crocodiles. The fight is also known as the Battle of the Ilu River.

Marines wandered out into the coconut grove to get a closer look at the scene, collect souvenirs, and tend the wounded. Some of Ichiki's men were not about to let the battle end and decided to take at least one of the enemy with them when they died. Japanese soldiers pretending to be dead shot several Marines; others used grenades to blow themselves up along with an unsuspecting Marine. Three officers, including Cresswell, were startled when a Japanese sergeant suddenly sat up and tried to shoot them. When his automatic pistol failed to fire, he turned it on himself. This time it worked, and blew the top of his head off.

The word spread quickly—Japanese who appeared to be dead should still be considered dangerous. Taking no chances, the Marines put bullets into every enemy corpse that happened to be nearby.

"I watched our men standing in a shooting-gallery line, thumping bullets into the piles of Jap carcasses," Tregaskis wrote in his diary. "The edge of the water grew brown and muddy. Some said the blood of the Jap carcasses was staining the ocean."

This ruthless fighting came as a shock to Americans. Even senior officers were taken aback. "These people refuse to surrender," Vandegrift wrote to Marine Corps commandant General Thomas Holcomb. "The injured wait until men come up to examine them … and blow themselves and the other fellow to pieces with a hand grenade. You can readily see the answer to this."

Ichiki's men certainly preferred death to surrender. Only 15 Japanese were taken prisoner, and only one gave himself up voluntarily. The rest were dead—790 men. Among them was Colonel Ichiki, although exactly how he died has never been discovered. According to the official Japanese version, Ichiki ordered the regimental colors burned and then committed ritual suicide. However, Japanese witnesses insist that he was killed in the fighting in the vicinity of the sandbar.

Marine Pfc. Andy Poliny claimed to have shot Ichiki. According to this account, Poliny saw a wounded Japanese officer roll over and shoot a Marine in the face with a small-caliber pistol. Poliny rushed over with his Browning Automatic Rifle and fired several rounds into the officer. He was certain that the Japanese officer was Colonel Ichiki.

The Marines were relieved that the battle was over and even more relieved that they had lived through it. Thirty-eight of their number had been killed in the fighting, and another 78 were wounded. But there was almost as much revulsion as rejoicing over what had taken place in the coconut grove and at the sandbar.

"Well of course I went down and viewed the battlefield," a Marine officer stated. "When you haven't seen war before and you see the remains of 700-800 men lying dead, it is a shattering experience….You looked and thought, 'There but for the grace of God go I.'"

By the following day, unburied Japanese bodies had begun to swell and change color in the tropical heat, but on the day of the battle they had not yet started to turn. Some of the dead looked quite peaceful, as though they had drifted off to sleep at low tide.

There was nothing peaceful about the scene in the grove. "We saw groups of Jap bodies torn apart by our artillery fire, their remains fried by the blast of the shells," one observer wrote.

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THE M3 STUART LIGHT TANK PROVED EFFECTIVE IN THE JUNGLES OF GUADALCANAL.

"It was a great sight seeing them weaving through the coconut grove, knocking down snipers from the palms by butting the trunks, and chasing survivors on the run," remembered a Marine on Guadalcanal. The Stuart light tank certainly gave the Marine infantrymen on the island something to cheer about. Although the British Army had used the M3 in the North African desert, the tank had not proved to be very popular or battleworthy against heavy German armor. But the Marines on Guadalcanal loved it. The Stuart was just what they needed against well-defended enemy positions, especially when they were situated in poor, often muddy, terrain.

A column of M3 Stuart light tanks moves toward the front line on Guadalcanal. The American tanks were versatile combat assets on the island, their 37mm cannon and machine guns providing mobile fire support.

The two main complaints the British had against the M3 Stuart were that it was undergunned and that it had only limited range. Its main armament was a single 37mm cannon, and its operational range of 74 miles was not long enough for desert warfare. The tank often ran out of fuel and had to be abandoned miles from the British lines.

When the Americans landed in North Africa during Operation Torch, they also found the Stuart unsuitable. Following the Battle of Kasserine Pass, the M3 was relegated to scouting duties and reconnaissance patrols.

In the Pacific, the Japanese deployed relatively few tanks. The Stuart's 37mm cannon was effective on Guadalcanal and provided mobile firepower. Its armor-piercing shells were usually effective against both the Japanese Type 95 and Type 97 tanks. A secondary armament of three .30-caliber Browning air-cooled machine guns was also effective against infantry. □

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Photographed the day after the Battle of the Tenaru, the bodies of Japanese soldiers killed by U.S. Marines lie in the tropical sun at the mouth of the Ilu River. More than 800 Japanese troops died in the nocturnal fighting of August 21, 1942.

Cates remarked that he had not seen anything more terrible throughout World War I.

Photographers took still pictures and film of the enemy dead. One photographer was told by his superior to stop filming—the images were too graphic, he was told. They showed the war as it was, and the American public was not ready for anything that raw. The Marine did what he was told. He stopped taking pictures but did send the films he had taken of the dead to Marine headquarters. His commanding officer was wrong. The motion pictures he had taken were released to the newsreels without a single cut.

One officer appraised Ichiki's assault bluntly. "Ichiki was a fool for attacking so hastily," he said many years after the war ended, "not waiting for the rest of his regiment."

When news of the Ichiki debacle reached Rabaul, the reports were initially dismissed. On the night of August 21, the Seventeenth Army headquarters received a message, "The First Echelon of the Ichiki Detachment was almost annihilated this morning at a point near the airfield."

Lieutenant Colonel Hiroshi Matsumoto, the operations officer who had met with Ichiki shortly before his detachment left for Guadalcanal, told the commander of Seventeenth Army that it was a false report. It did not seem possible that Colonel Ichiki, a veteran whom Matsumoto knew personally, had been killed along with most of his men.

Two days later, the Japanese at Rabaul were optimistic. "Gunfire still heard near the airfield," read one report. "Aircraft with lights are flying all over the place." IGHQ in Tokyo was informed, "The Ichiki Detachment is still in good shape near the airfield. They are apparently still storming it."

A report from one of the survivors of Alligator Creek brought home the terrible truth. At 10 AM on August 23, Lieutenant Yoshiaki Sakakibana radioed Rabaul from Taivu Point, "The detachment's losses have been fairly large, but now we are holding firmly the area around Taivu Point and we have some ammunition and foodstuffs."

Sakakibana went on to report that Colonel Ichiki had been killed in the fighting and that 100 men were isolated at Taivu Point. Both Tokyo and Rabaul were completely taken aback.

General Hyakutake did his best to put a brave face on the unexpected rout and radioed Tokyo: "The attack of the Ichiki Detachment was not entirely successful." He also suggested that another attempt to retake the airfield be planned as soon as possible.

For the Americans, the battle proved that they could fight Japanese troops in the jungle and win. The Marines had faced a veteran Japanese unit and prevailed. "They ain't supermen," a Marine corporal explained. "They're just tricky bastards."

U.S. naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison said the same thing somewhat more elegantly: "The Marines' first stand-up fight with the much-touted jungle-fighting Jap, it [the battle] proved to the Corps and their countrymen that the American was the better fighting man, even on the enemy's chosen terrain."

Six months after the Battle of the Tenaru, the Japanese withdrew from Guadalcanal. The campaign for control of the island proved a turning point in the Pacific War and steeled American soldiers and Marines for more brutal fighting that lay ahead. One American historian wrote, "If the Japanese wanted to fight to the death with no quarter asked or given, the Marines were ready to oblige them fully." □

Author David A. Johnson has written extensively for WWII History. *He resides in Union, New Jersey.*

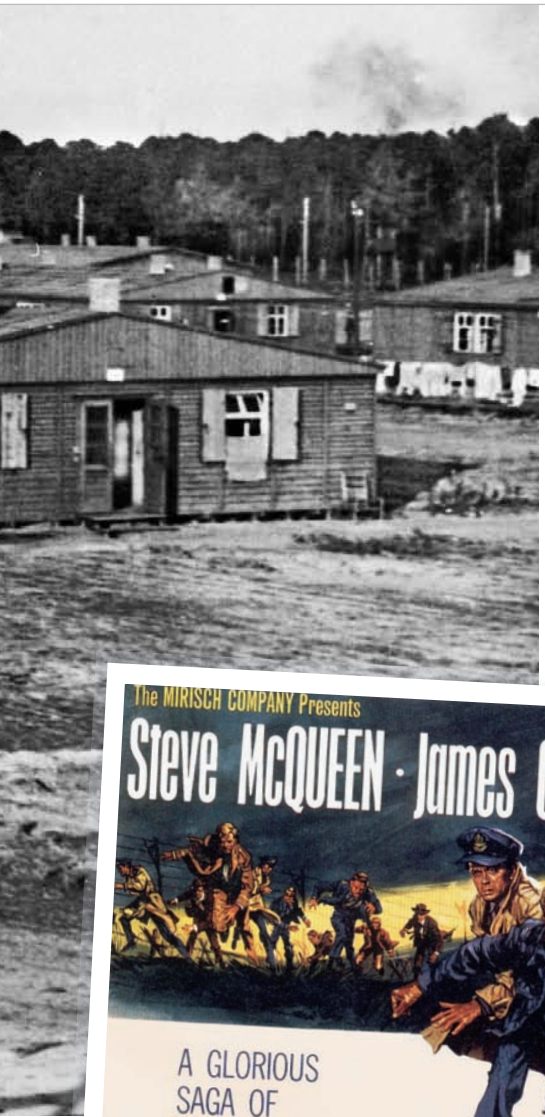
One *Magnificent* Gesture

During the "Great Escape" a group of Allied prisoners from Stalag Luft III paid a terrible price. BY JEFFREY A. DENMAN

IN EARLY 1942, the air war over Germany was taking its toll on the Royal Air Force. Prisoner-of-war camps throughout Germany were bursting at the seams, and as February rolled around rumors began to spread that the Germans were building a new camp somewhere in Upper Silesia near the Polish border. The Germans spent a great deal of time and effort on the construction of this new camp. It was to be situated far from any Allied or neutral country. Therefore, if escapes were attempted, they would be extremely difficult and recapture the likely result.

For most airmen fortunate enough to survive their plane being shot down, the war took on a different role once they found themselves behind the wire. No longer were bombing runs or engaging enemy fighters the primary concerns. Now, the airmen needed to survive, harass the enemy to the best of their ability, and escape. Sometimes, just getting to the camp could be hazardous.

Flight Lieutenant Nathaniel Flekser reflected on his own experience: "How lucky I really was dawned on me when I later met RAF prisoners who were shot down while on bombing missions over Germany. They were attacked by angry civilians, brutally interrogated by the Gestapo, and packed into cattle cars. One crew was thrown into a furnace."



met him on a forced march in the dead of winter. He met him in the mare's nest of Stalag VIIA," wrote the historian of the Association of Prisoners of Stalag Luft III.

RAF aircrews were regarded with some degree of respect by the Germans and, given their reputation as excellent soldiers, their escapes had a better chance of succeeding. Therefore, the new camp would have tight security.

Stalag Luft III was located just south of the town of Sagan (now Zagan, Poland), approximately 100 miles southeast of Berlin. The camp was one of six POW camps operated by the Luftwaffe for British and American airmen. The Wehrmacht and the Kriegsmarine also operated their own system of stalags. Geographically, the area was desolate, a perfect location for a POW camp. Winter temperatures plummeted well below zero, and the surrounding countryside consisted of either flat farmland or dense pine forest.

The usual greeting from the German captors, "For you, the war is over," was the furthest thing from the truth. It now became a different kind of battle—a battle that involved physical and mental endurance and still the possibility of death outside the wire.

"His duty was now survival, escape, communication. He no longer engaged his enemy in the air. He met him in the isolation of an interrogation cell at Dulag Luft.... He met him behind the barbed wire at Stalag Luft III. He

The Germans had learned a great deal about incarcerating prisoners. They originally cut two new compounds out of the forest with six huts in each, and all the huts were raised off the ground so the detection of tunnel activity could be more easily ascertained by the German ferrets, guards whose duty it was to detect escape attempts. Later, the Germans would regret the fact that they built concrete foundations underneath the washrooms and the stoves. In addition, trapdoors were built in the floors and ceilings to make the process of inspection more efficient. Eventually, Stalag Luft III would expand to hold 10,000 POWs by war's end.

The barbed-wire fences had an ominous appearance. There were two fences with a gap of several yards between them and an overhang on the side facing the compound, which made them virtually impossible to scale. About 10 yards inside the double fence ran the warning wire. All prisoners knew that to cross the warning wire meant certain harm from the machine guns situated in the guard towers, or goon-boxes, that were spaced at distances of about 100 yards.

When the Germans chose the location of the camp, the composition of the soil was certainly an advantage for them. Under the topsoil was yellow sand that would make dispersal an almost impossible task for anyone attempting to tunnel out of the camp. Lastly, the huts were situated a good distance from the wire, making tunneling a difficult affair.

The new commandant of the camp was Colonel Friedrich-Wilhelm von Lindeiner-Wildau, a 61-year-old veteran of World War I and the winner of two Iron Crosses. Although he joined the Luftwaffe and became a member of Reichsmarshal Hermann Göring's personal staff, von Lindeiner was not an adherent to the Nazi cause. When he was not allowed to retire, he made his way to Sagan as commandant.

Although food was in short supply, the POWs were treated fairly within the context of the Geneva Convention. It was the International Red Cross that saved the day for prisoners throughout the Reich. Since the camps provided only small rations for their prisoners, the Red Cross provided one parcel per man per week. Each parcel contained soup, corned beef, powdered milk, Spam, chocolate, coffee, cheese, and real jam. Nonetheless, given the rigors of camp life and escape activities, one never had the satisfaction of experiencing a full stomach. The prisoners were always able to hoard enough food for special occasions throughout the year, but food remained an obsession.

Prisoners were also permitted to receive mail and to send four cards and three letters per month. They were allowed to receive a 12-pound parcel every three months or so. These packages from their families consisted of daily necessities such as toothbrushes, clothes, and razors. The mortality rate was very low consid-

ering the circumstances. Some prisoners died from natural causes and others from trigger-happy guards who fired random shots into the compounds.

Late in 1942, Squadron Leader (S/L) Roger J. Bushell, commanding officer of No. 92 (Spitfire) Squadron, arrived at Stalag Luft III. He had been shot down on May 23, 1940, during the Battle of France. Taken to the Dulag Luft (Luftwaffe Transit Camp), he subsequently escaped and almost made it across the Swiss border before being recaptured.

He was then sent to Barth on the Baltic coast. After several months there, Bushell and a few others were being transferred to another camp when Bushell and a Czech officer in the RAF, Jack Zafouk, slipped under the floorboards of the truck they were riding in and made their way to Czechoslovakia. At this time, the assassination of SS Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia, had taken place in Prague, and Czechoslovakia was in an uproar.

Bushell was captured by the Gestapo and sent to Berlin for interrogation. Members of the Czech family that had harbored him were shot, and Zafouk was sent to Colditz. By the time Bushell reached Sagan, his hatred of the Germans was evident. Although he did not divulge his experiences with the Gestapo, it is thought that their tactics disregarded the provisions guaranteed by the Geneva Convention.

One prisoner recalled that Bushell was as tough as nails. The senior British officer was immediately made Big X, and no one did anything without his permission. He would decide who made an escape. He was a ruthless individual. He also knew full well that if he escaped again and was recaptured he would be shot.

Big X began organizing his escape committee right away. Some of the most notorious escapers were gathered at Sagan. Crump Ker-Ramsay and Wally Floody were in charge of tunneling. The American, A.P. "Junior" Clark, was put in charge of security. Ralph Abraham and Tommy Guest assumed control of the tailoring department, replicating German uniforms and civilian clothes. Johnny Travis created escape kits, while Tim Walenn and his forgers were copying ID papers and all sorts of passes. Forging was a painstaking and arduous task.

Bob van der Stok described the dangers of forging: "Most false papers were made with watercolor which was risky because it runs when wet. Type writer ribbon ink, stencil ink and printing inks do not run when the paper gets a little wet."

Imperial War Museum

British prisoners tend their garden at Stalag Luft III. The garden was a convenient location to disperse dirt from the tunnels being dug beneath the ground. Prisoners wore specially designed bags with drawstrings to release the dirt through the legs of their trousers.

Luckily, a number of guards proved helpful to the prisoners by providing maps, railway schedules, and a host of passes such as *Ausweise, Vorlaufweise* (pass and temporary pass), and *Urlaubscheine* (military leave pass). Many official documents took up to a month to create.

All in all, Bushell was able to assemble the most competent surveyors, forgers, tailors, engineers, and security experts for a mass breakout of over 200 men that would cause such a severe internal disruption that resources from the war effort would have to be diverted to the escapers. It was hoped that several men would be able to make their way back to England.

The X organization had several adversaries within the camp who had to be controlled, particularly the ferrets. The two main ferrets were Corporal Karl Griese, nicknamed Rubberneck, and Staff Sergeant Hermann Glemnitz, whose camp name was Dimwits. Rubberneck was not a favorite of the prisoners. He did not really like the prisoners, which was evident, and he had a very distasteful personality. Glemnitz was a different sort of man, conscientious in his work; he was the reason for many failed escape attempts. He was actually well liked by the prisoners and had the respect of many in the compound.

Underneath Glemnitz and Griese were several other ferrets known simply as Keen Type, Adolf, and Rudi. Keen Type was just as his nickname suggests, while Adolf wore a Hitler-like moustache. Rudi was nondescript other than, as with all ferrets, he had to be closely observed.

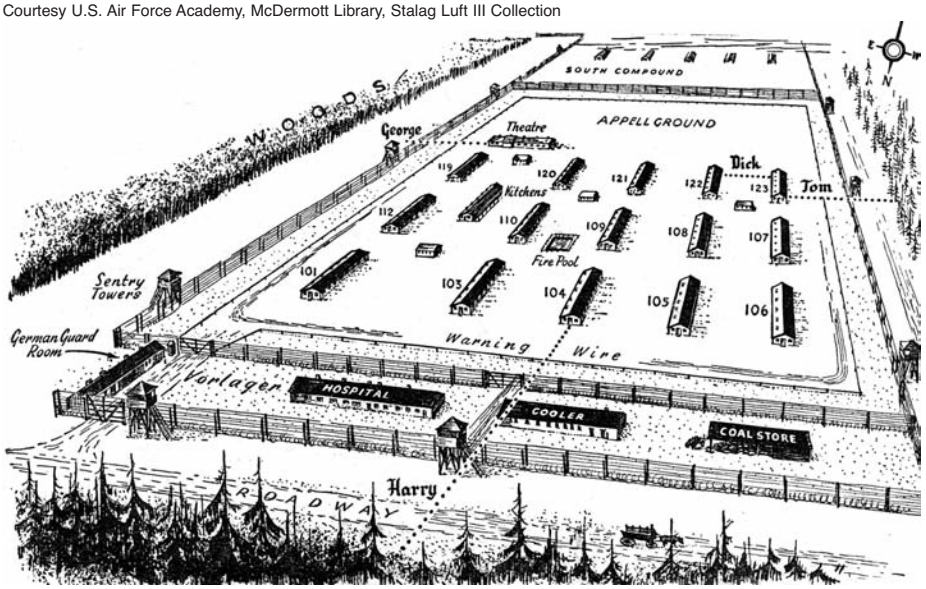
All ferrets could search any hut without warning, which made them extremely dangerous. Luckily, the prisoners instituted the Duty Pilot system under the direction of George Harsh, the head of internal security. All Germans would be logged in and out of the camp to ensure that no German was left in the compound to sniff out escape activity.

To protect all the illicit work being conducted, a complex set of hand signals was used to warn the various departments of Germans in the compound, thus giving them time to conceal the work that was being carried out. This system did not fail the prisoners. Alan Bryett recalled, "The Germans were wandering around in every hut so you had to be slick."

By early April 1943, Bushell and Floody had chosen the locations for three tunnels. "Tom" was to go from Block 123 heading west toward the woods. This hut was the farthest from the main gate and thus received the longest warning of a snap inspection. The location of the trap was in the concrete floor by the chimney. "Dick" was to go from 122 and was to start in the washroom. An inside hut was not likely to be suspected. "Harry" was to head north from 104 and would be the least likely to be suspected because of the length involved. Harry was to begin under a stove in one end of 104.

Delmar T. Spivey, an American, had the opportunity to inspect the traps. "So skillfully were they constructed that I couldn't find the trap leading to any of them [tunnels] even when I was told I was looking at it.... The entrance was so cleverly hidden that I couldn't find it even

Courtesy U.S. Air Force Academy, McDermott Library, Stalag Luft III Collection



Library of Congresslag Luft III Collection

ABOVE: This detailed diagram of Stalag Luft III shows the routes of the four tunnels dug by the prisoners of the Great Escape. The men nicknamed the tunnels Tom, Dick, Harry, and George. LEFT: Luftwaffe Colonel Friedrich-Wilhelm von Lindeiner-Wildau served as commandant of Stalag Luft III at the time of the Great Escape.

when I got down on my knees and searched the spot where I knew it to be."

Bob van der Stok, a Dutch pilot, observed that there was a trapdoor 10 feet down the tunnel shaft with a false bottom, so that if the Germans found the trap and destroyed it the real tunnel would be preserved and the prisoners would still be able to access it from another location.

The ingenuity of the prisoners was brilliant. For instance, to start Harry's trap an old pick head taken from a Russian POW was attached to a baseball bat and used to hammer away at the concrete until dirt was reached. Many diversions took place outside the hut that helped mask the noise inside.

Sand dispersal was a huge obstacle to overcome. The problem was how to spread the yellow sand among the ordinary garden soil. Peter Fanshawe came up with the brilliant solution to use trouser bags. The legs of woolen underpants were cut off and the ends tied with a piece of string. The string went around a man's neck with the underpants legs inside the legs of his trousers. There was a pin attached to the bottom of each bag and a string tied to each pin. The strings went up inside the trousers to the pants pockets. At the trap, the bags would be filled and then the "penguin" would go to a particular spot, pulling the string, and out would come the sand from the bottom of his pant legs.

The actual tunneling was a very dangerous proposition. There were always two diggers working together, one facing toward the dig and one facing away. The man facing away dragged the dirt away from the face of the tunnel. Each tunnel was shored with bed boards, but there were often situations where the roof would cave in and the number two man would have to pull the other digger out, usually while he was choking on sand and dirt. A wooden railway system was used for sand removal, and the railway cars were pulled back along the length of the tunnel by another member of the tunnel team.

At the bottom of each shaft was a chamber that contained an air pump and a storage area. The tunnel was ventilated using old tins that were connected and laid under the floor of the tunnel. At the other end was an air intake pipe that led up to the surface.

Fat lamps were originally used to light the tunnels. The fat from mutton soup or a similar concoction was put into a small container, and then a makeshift wick that was made from the drawstring of a worn set of pajamas was inserted. Fat lamps were smelly and created soot, so it was not the greatest lighting technique. However, when a prisoner stole 800 feet of electrical wire, the tunnels were wired for light after being connected to the camp's power source. Fat lamps did have to be used for daytime tunneling, as the camp's generator was not turned on during the day.

In mid-June 1943, a piece of news shook the prisoners. Russian prisoners were now clearing the trees on the south side of the fence so that Americans would have their own compound. If the compound were finished before the tunnels, the Americans would miss out on the escape. Bushell decided to go all out on Tom because it was the longest.

Work progressed until the tunnel was 260 feet long. Bushell decided that it was long enough even though it was some 40 feet short of the wood, but 140 feet outside the wire. However, one of the penguins was careless and left yellow sand on the ground before it was covered up. Glemnitz saw it, and the compound was abuzz with ferret activity. In the summer of 1943, Tom was finally discovered. It was a devastating piece of news.

After the discovery, Bushell decided that it was important to lie low, so tunneling ceased for about two months. Unfortunately, soon after the Germans blew up Tom, the Americans were moved to their new compound. It was a hard day for the Americans, but the loss of Tom was most frustrating for the British and other Allied POWs who had already been behind the wire for several years.

Charles Huppert, one of the Americans involved in the escape organization, was frustrated yet resigned. "I didn't like it because all the work I did was for naught. But, there was nothing you could do about it, so you accept it."

In late 1943, with the Germans clearing the woods to the west where Dick was supposed to go, Harry seemed the only logical choice. It was decided to reopen Harry on January 10, 1944. The escape committee decided to put the sand underneath the theater seats, as there was a gap of about one meter between the floor of the theater and the ground below. With the snow covering the ground, it would be impossible to hide the yellow sand outside.

By the middle of February, Harry was two-thirds of the way complete. There were a few setbacks, but work on Harry continued to move forward. The mood was lighter among the prisoners. It did not last long, as the escape business took on a more ominous air. At the end of February, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, chief

of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, issued the order known as Stufe Romisch III, which said that every escaped Allied officer was to be handed over to the Gestapo. The recaptured officers were to be officially reported as "escaped" and not recaptured.

Shortly after the news broke, the Gestapo paid a visit to Stalag Luft III, informing von Lindeiner that harsher measures would be meted out to future escapers. The Allied bombing campaign over Germany was taking its toll, and civilian casualties and the destruction of the German war machine were surely the two main factors in this directive from Himmler's office.

The stakes grew higher in early March. SS General Heinrich Müller, head of the Gestapo, issued what is known as the Kugel (Bullet) Order, stating that recaptured escapee officers, other than British and Americans, were to be taken in chains to Mauthausen Concentration Camp. The commandant at Mauthausen was instructed that prisoners transferred under the Kugel Order were not to be entered on the camp books but, instead, taken to underground cells and either gassed or shot.

After the order was issued, von Lindeiner assembled the senior officers, chaplains, and doctors and asked all of them to end all escape attempts. "It is not worth it, gentlemen," he said. "The public temper outside is running very high, particularly against the Allied Air Forces, and escapers may suffer harsh consequences. The war may be over in a year or two … it is not worth taking unnecessary risks now."

Although the news brought a sense of uneasiness, the prisoners pushed forward. Harry was now 348 feet long. The surveyors among the prisoners had said it was 335 feet to the edge of the wood. The escape date was moving closer. As it did, the escapers began the process of teaming up in pairs. Bushell paired up with Lieutenant Bernard Scheidhauer, a member of the Free French Forces.

Over the course of the preceding year, over 600 prisoners had been involved in the escape process. The escape committee and Big X decided that 200 should make the escape through Harry. The first 100 to go were the ones who had the best chances; this was largely based on the ability to survive outside the wire due to language capability, nationality, and knowledge of the territory. The second 100 were men who had contributed in some way to the daily operation. All of the places were determined by ballot, which took place a month or so prior to the escape.

All: Courtesy U.S. Air Force Academy, McDermott Library, Stalag Luft III Collection

LEFT: One of the German ferrets, nicknamed Rubberneck by the British and American prisoners, operates the ventilation system used to supply fresh air to one of the tunnels. RIGHT TOP: The prisoners used boards from their beds to support the walls of the long tunnels and even rigged an electric lighting system after makeshift lamps proved problematic. RIGHT BOTTOM: Following the discovery of the escape, a German soldier crawls from the exit of one of the tunnels.

The exit order was decided by giving the first 30 places to train travelers with the best chances of successful escape. The next 40 were given to those whose contributions to the process had been indispensable, and the last 30 to the next most important workers. The remaining places were determined by the escape committee, and they were those whose names had not come up in the ballot.

By March 14, the tunnel was finished. All that remained was to break the last foot or so of the exit shaft. The escape committee had decided to schedule the breakout on the night of the 23rd or 24th of March, as there was no moon on either of these nights. Escapers were briefed on their particular escape routes, and escape kits as well as clothes and food were distributed. Bushell and the committee met on the morning of March 24, and it was decided that this was the night. The forgers began dating all the documents. The trapdoor was readied, and the anticipation around camp was palpable.

As night fell on the 24th, the first escapers began moving to hut 104. By 8:40, the first group of prisoners entered the tunnel. Johnny Bull was in front and went up the shaft to loosen the ceiling boards. He could not do it, so Johnny Marshall went up after removing his escape clothes. They were already behind schedule, and as Marshall cleared the last bit of dirt from the tunnel ceiling he poked his head out. Harry was short of the woods. Luckily, the guards were watching the compound and not the other side of the road. Marshall descended and told Bushell.

After recovering from the disappointment, Bushell and the others at the bottom of the shaft decided to use a signal rope. The escaper would wait at the top of the exit shaft, hold the rope that was tied to the ladder, wait for two tugs and crawl out to the woods.

It was now 10:30, and the plan was 90 minutes behind. Sentries circled the compound at regular intervals, but the men were able to get clear of the tunnel. However, delays were taking place in the tunnel. The cases that train travelers were carrying were taking a toll. Some cases were getting caught behind the frames in the tunnel, while other men held their cases too far in front of the trolley line inside the tunnel, causing it to tip. It was about 11:30, and only six escapers had followed the first 17 through the tunnel.

To complicate matters, the air raid siren went off. Minutes later, with the power source cut, the lights went out in the tunnel, paralyzing the escape process. Bryett recalled, "Between 12:00 and 1:00 no one got out."

Wings Day, who was at the base of the exit shaft, moved back through the tunnel to light the fat lamps. That took about half an hour. But more problems continued. Ropes broke on the trolleys. Frames were knocked out of place, causing sand to fall, which meant reframing the damaged section. Blanket rolls got caught on

the frames and under the wheels of the trolley, causing it to derail.

Bob van der Stok, escaper 18, was on his way to the railway station during the air raid and was actually stopped by a German soldier en route. Asked where he was going, van der Stok told the German that he was a foreign worker, and luckily was directed by the soldier to the shelter at the railway station.

By 4:55, a total of 87 escapers had left 104. Roger's goal of 200 men getting out was not going to materialize. The men controlling the trap in 104 decided that number 87 was to be the last. The first traces of dawn were appearing on the horizon.

The men traveling cross-country had the toughest going of all the escapers. Thomas Nelson endured terrible conditions. He remembered, "The majority of people going through the woods like myself were heading for Czechoslovakia. We were … somewhere between fifty and a hundred kilometers from the Czech border. But it was a difficult border because it was so mountainous."

Nelson and his partner Dick Churchill traveled by night and slept during the day. "So at a very early stage in our escape attempt we had to wade through flooded streams. And consequently we were very quickly wet and uncomfortable. But the conditions were extremely bad. We continued on this kind of basis for two nights."

Near the exit hole, the situation was becoming more intense by the minute. One of the guards had deviated from his path and was heading straight toward the hole. He was walking on the near side of the road closest to the woods. Mick Shand, a New Zealander, was lying face down in the snow not moving a muscle. The guard came within a foot of the hole before he must have noticed the path made by the prisoners to the edge of the trees. He unslung his rifle and pointed it at Mick Shand. Lawrence Reavell-Carter, just inside the trees, saw the entire situation develop. He jumped out from behind the trees waving his arms yelling, "Nicht schiessen! (Don't shoot)" The guard fired a shot wildly as Shand ran into the woods. The game was up!

Kens Rees, who was at the bottom of the shaft, recalled, "I heard the shot straight away and realized what had happened. So I backed up very quickly…."

Bryett lamented years later, "We got so close to being out in the open and we lost it."

After the shot was heard, all the men who were in the tunnel scampered back to the safety of 104. Identity papers were destroyed and rations eaten in fear of German reprisals. The trap was closed and the covering stove returned to its original position. Soon, there was a tapping noise under the stove and the ferret Charlie Pilz emerged.

When von Lindeiner reached hut 104, he was in an extremely agitated state, warning the prisoners that they had made a grievous mistake and the Gestapo was sure to be involved. "I have never seen men so annoyed. They were absolutely livid…. The Germans had discovered 76 men had escaped and all hell broke loose," remembered one prisoner.

The German reaction to the escape was not surprising. First, von Lindeiner made all the necessary calls up the chain of command, including a call to Max Wielen, head of the Breslau Kriminalpolizei office, who then ordered a "Grossfahndung," the highest form of national alert. German troops, local police, Gestapo, and Landwacht (Home Guard) were all informed.

The Führer was informed of the situation the morning of the escape. As expected, he flew into a rage and demanded that all the escapers be shot. Himmler finally convinced Hitler that not all should be shot, and so the number 50 was settled upon. Slowly but surely, the escapers were recaptured and turned over to the Gestapo. In small groups or alone, they were driven to remote locations and shot. All the Gestapo reports said the same thing: shot while escaping.

Jimmy James was caught near the Czech border and was taken to a new camp. When he arrived, he asked another prisoner, "Where are we?" The prisoner replied, "Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp and the only way out is up the chimney."

Wings Day and Flying Officer Pawel Tobolski had a different experience. "Flying Officer Tobolski and I caught the 0105 train for Berlin and got through without incident," wrote Day. "We left the Silesian railway station separately, met outside and made the contacts we wanted. We stayed the night in Berlin and went off to Stettin but the contacts which F/O Tobolski helped to make there failed. We made contact with two French prisoners of war about midnight on 27/28 March and they housed us with a small French prisoner of war working party in

Continued on page 84

Both: Courtesy U.S. Air Force Academy, McDermott Library, Stalag Luft III Collection

ABOVE: A German soldier demonstrates the operation of the trolley system and one of the sand trucks used to haul dirt from the farthest end of the tunnel to the dispersal point. LEFT: These two British soldiers were caught attempting to escape from Stalag Luft III wearing German uniforms and carrying wooden rifles made in the camp under the noses of the German guards.

Little Stalingrad:
The Struggle for

Ortona

In December 1943, the First Canadian Infantry Division was ordered to capture the Italian port town of Ortona. What ensued was some of the worst street fighting of World War II. BY JEROME BALDWIN

Canadian War Memorial

By the autumn of 1943, the Allied armies fighting in Italy had discovered that Winston Churchill's description of Italy as the "soft underbelly of Europe" had been a falsehood of monumental proportions. Sicily had been invaded the previous July and had been taken in just over a month. Fascist Italy had been knocked out of the war, but the Germans had disarmed the Italian Army and, under the command of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, had been making the Allies pay in blood for every mile they advanced northward up the mountainous terrain of the Italian boot.

The First Canadian Infantry Division had landed in Sicily in July, part of Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery's Eighth Army. Twenty-six thousand strong, they had distinguished themselves in the fight for Sicily and had been in the vanguard of the invasion of Italy after Sicily had been overrun. Now, at the end of November, the Canadians were near the town of Campobasso when Montgomery launched an offensive to capture Rome.

Monty's plan called for the British to cross the Sangro River, capture the northern ridge across the Moro River, and move north to take Pescara on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. They were then to move west through a wide valley that ran through the Apennine Mountains to Avezanno, 50 miles east of Rome. With the Italian capital threatened from the east by the British, Allied command anticipated that the enemy would take forces away from the line facing the Americans, who were south of Rome on the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea. With German defenses weakened on their front, General Mark Clark's U.S. Fifth Army could then punch through the Gustav Line and link up with troops that were to be landed at Anzio, approximately 35 miles south of the city. Squeezed within this Allied vise, Axis-held Rome would have to surrender.

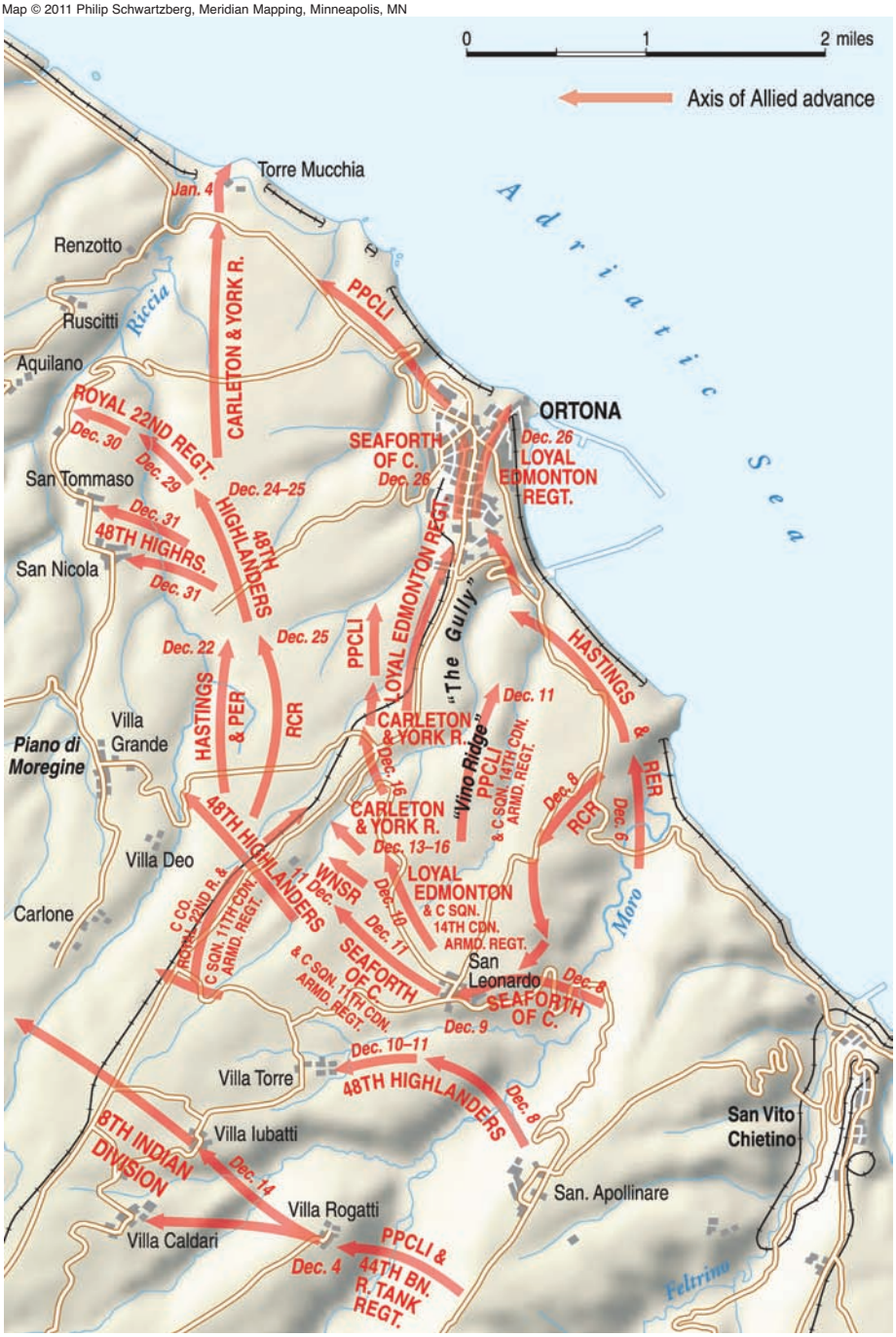
However, the plan soon went awry. German resistance was stiffer than expected, and the British never got beyond the Moro. Monty was forced to admit failure, but he decided that if Pescara could not be taken, the city of Ortona would suffice. It was a worthwhile objective, with its deep-water port, dock, and rail facilities that in Allied hands would alleviate their growing supply problems. Allied intelligence expected the town to fall without much fighting. Cross the Moro, move across the Ortona-Orsogna lateral highway, and the enemy would abandon the city to retreat to better defenses north of the Arielli River. It was not an overly optimistic expectation by any means, but it would prove to be completely hollow.

Library and Archives Canada

ABOVE: Using a .303-caliber water-cooled Vickers machine gun, a Canadian soldier of the Saskatoon Light Infantry places suppressing fire on German positions near Ortona on January 7, 1944, more than a week after the town had been cleared. The street fighting for control of Ortona was some of the most bitter of World War II. LEFT: Major Charles Fraser Comfort painted this stark image of an M4 Sherman tank of the Calgary Armored Regiment rumbling through the war-torn streets of Ortona. The German defenders frequently destroyed buildings and rigged the rubble with booby traps to slow the Canadian advance into the town.

The Canadians managed to breach the Moro River defenses by December 9, after three days of hard fighting. They were facing the 90th Panzergrenadier Division, veteran troops that fought with tenacity. The next move for the Canadians was to get across the lateral highway, and the commander of the First Canadian Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. Chris Vokes, did not foresee a problem.

Vokes had only recently taken over the division. Believed by many to possess a gruff and bullying personality, he was considered by an unimpressed Montgomery to be nothing more than "a plain cook." Vokes's plan called for the Loyal Edmonton Regiment to move up the main road out of San Leonardo, on the northern bank of the Moro River, toward its junction with the Ortona-Orsogna lateral road, which the Canadians called Cider Crossroads. After the Edmontons reached Cider Crossroads, the PPCLI, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, were to move up on their right, cross what the Canadians called Vino Ridge and the gully beyond it, gain the lateral highway, and move into Ortona. Meanwhile, the Seaforth Highlanders would move up on the Edmontons' left flank.



The crossing of the Moro River and the battle for control of the town of Ortona on the Adriatic Sea were critical to the northward advance of General Bernard Montgomery's Eighth Army through Italy in late 1943.

Canadian intelligence still expected the Germans to retreat north of the Arielli River, but they were in for a shock; all three regiments, designated battalions, were about to encounter what the Canadians would refer to simply as "the Gully."

The Gully was one of countless natural fissures running from the Apennines down to the Adriatic coast. Running south of and parallel to the lateral road, the Gully was three miles in length, averaging 200 feet in depth and ranging from 200 yards wide at the coast to 80 yards in width where it leveled off close to a secondary road linking San Leonardo with the lateral road. It formed an excellent natural trench that provided cover on its southern, or reverse, slope that was impervious to Canadian artillery fire, and the lateral road provided an excellent highway for men, supplies, and armor along its entire length. The Canadians missed its potential as a formidable defensive position, but the Germans certainly did not.

At 9:45 AM on December 10, the Loyal Edmonton Regiment moved out of San Leonardo. Initially things went well. They had to cross Vino Ridge and the Gully before reaching Cider, and the code word signaling they had reached the ridge was "Punch." At 10 AM, 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade headquarters received the Punch signal, or so they thought. Perhaps it was a garbled radio transmission. Some later suggested it was the Germans who knew the signal and sent it from a captured radio, but the fact was that the Edmontons were nowhere near Vino Ridge when the message was received. At 1:30 PM, the Edmonton commander reported that Cider had been taken when his men were not even at the Punch objective. Not believing Cider had been taken despite the radio reports, and against his better judgment, PPCLI commander Lt. Col. Cameron Ware moved his battalion up Vino Ridge according to the plan and according to the orders he received. His apprehension was soon justified.

The Edmontons were only now closing on Vino Ridge when several German machine guns and antitank guns that fired with deadly accuracy opened up on them, knocking out two supporting tanks in seconds. Company D commander Major Jim Stone ordered an attack up the ridge to take out the antitank guns, but it was repulsed.

The Princess Patricias fared no better. The Germans waited until they had gotten very close before letting loose a devastating fire as Canadians and Germans began to throw grenades at each other across the ridge. Hearing that the Edmontons had been attacked on their left, Ware ordered his men to break off the fight and move over to support them. The Edmontons were holding, but both battalions had found that the Gully was almost impregnable.

If the men in the line knew this, Vokes did not. Canadian patrols had sneaked up right to the lip of the Gully and had reported the position was excellent for defensive fighting and heavily manned by the Germans, but Vokes ordered more frontal attacks for the next day. Each had the same result: devastating German machine-gun fire stopping Canadian attacks cold with heavy losses, reducing the Canadian battalions' strength alarmingly. By early afternoon, two attacks, one by the PPCLI across Vino Ridge in an effort to link up with the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment on the coast and one by the Seaforth Highlanders to capture a manor house called Casa Berardi, had been driven back. With the mine-infested terrain covered in tangled wire from shell-blasted vineyards, moving anywhere was difficult and dangerous.

By now Vokes was realizing how formidable the Gully really was but it did not seem to change his tactics. He ordered the West Nova Scotia Regiment to attack through the Seaforth Highlanders and take Casa Berardi after nightfall. At 6 PM they started out and were immediately struck by artillery and mortar fire, losing their communications and their artillery forward observation officer. By 10 PM they had reached the lip of the Gully but were hit by devastating German machine-gun fire and forced to dig in.

The following morning, December 12, due to inaccurate maps, their commander, Lt. Col. M. Pat Bogert, ordered a reference coordination fire by the artillery. It landed squarely on the West Novas' position instead of the enemy, killing and wounding several of them. This was immediately followed by German shellfire that caused more of the same. After the chaos was sorted out, an attack was scheduled for 11 AM, but it was preempted by the Germans, who attacked at 10:30. The West Novas repulsed the attack, some of them leaping out of their trenches to pursue the retreating enemy. It was for many a fatal mistake; dozens of machine guns opened up on them. One of the wounded was Bogert, who had rushed forward to call his men back.

And so it continued, piecemeal attacks against a dug-in enemy, well concealed and completely protected from the artillery barrages that signaled an imminent Canadian attack, armed to the teeth with devastating machine-gun firepower, and supported by tanks, heavy artillery, and mortars. Vokes was under mounting pressure to get things moving; Montgomery's Canadian liaison officer came to Vokes's headquarters on December 12 to find out what the delay was.

Vokes exploded, "You tell Monty if he would get to hell up here and see the bloody mud he has us stuck in, he'd damn well know why we can't move any faster!" Vokes was feeling it from the press as well, who were beginning to take notice of the battle. "The whole current Eighth Army thrust hinges on success of the Canadians in capturing Ortona," declared the *Ottawa Citizen*. It was not accurate. Some have suggested the town could have been bypassed altogether, but it was played up to be much more crucial than it was in reality.

December 13 saw different tactics put into action. Two Gully crossings had been discovered by the Canadians near its western end the previous day; a platoon of West Novas had actually reached the lateral road across one of them, discovering it was suitable for tanks before they had to retire. The other was an earth-covered culvert discovered by A Company of the Seaforth Highlanders.

At 7 AM, the same West Novas platoon that had discovered it, along with three tanks, attacked over the Gully crossing, surprising the half-awake Germans and capturing a headquarters. The rest of their company moved up and began moving toward Casa Berardi but were held up by a ravine that ran 90 degrees to the Gully and blocked their advance. Because of the previous days' heavy fighting, there were no reserves available to exploit the success.

Library and Archives Canada

ABOVE: On December 21, 1943, soldiers of the Canadian Loyal Edmonton Regiment fire from the corner of a building at German troops lying in a slit trench 100 yards from their position. As the fight for Ortona wore on, the struggle was often at close quarters. BELOW: Wary of German snipers and antitank teams, a pair of tanks belonging to the Canadian Three Rivers Regiment advances into Ortona on December 22, 1943. Six days later, the Germans had withdrawn from the town despite an order from Hitler to stand fast.

Imperial War Museum

Company A of the Seaforths, with tank support, attacked over the culvert they had found with the same surprising results. They gained the other side of the Gully but, within 800 yards of Casa Berardi, lost their last tank when it bogged down in the mud. Still, two companies with a few tanks had managed to get across the Gully after massive artillery bombardments and costly battalion-sized infantry attacks had failed for days. The 13th also saw the 90th Panzergrenadiers, fought to exhaustion, begin handing over their positions to the elite 1st Parachute Division, many of whose soldiers were combat-hardened veterans of the Eastern Front, Crete, and Sicily. It was an unmistakable sign of German intentions to hold Ortona.

Imperial War Museum

Canadian wounded are evacuated from Ortona on December 13, 1943. For those left behind, two weeks of difficult combat lay ahead before the Germans pulled out of the city on December 28.

The next day, Casa Berardi was taken by the Royal 22nd, a French-Canadian battalion called the Van Doos. When they captured it after a hard fight their hold on it was precarious. Short of ammunition, the 79 desperately thirsty men—a nearby well was covered by German snipers—received orders to hold it at all costs with reinforcements and supplies brought up after dark. Vokes needed it held as he began rearranging his battalions for a major operation in two days to capture Cider Crossroads and move on Ortona.

The 18th saw the operation get under way. It was a two-phase plan: Orange Blossom and Morning Glory. Orange Blossom had the 48th Highlanders move north from San Leonardo west of the Van Doos, swing right, and block a road running from Cider Crossroads to the village of Villa Grande.

Morning Glory would then be put into action, with the Royal Canadian Regiment, the RCR, taking the same route as the 48th Highlanders but swinging right sooner. They were to continue eastward until they reached the same road the Highlanders had blocked, then follow it toward the lateral road, and take Cider Crossroads from the north.

The Highlanders managed well. They had a chance to use observed artillery fire to correct for the inaccurate maps and so had protective fire when they advanced. The RCR, however, got no such chance because of deteriorating weather and the danger posed to the Van Doos still at Casa Berardi. With only wildly ineffective shellfire available when they advanced, they were stopped and did not take Cider Crossroads until the next day. By then the Germans had realized the Gully had been turned and were already moving back to Ortona.

By the evening of the 20th, the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and the Seaforth Highlanders had worked their way into Ortona, with tanks in support. They were cautiously optimistic; their initial attacks were swift and successful, but they were about to discover how expertly the German paratroopers had prepared the town for battle on their terms. German engineers had blown up many buildings, and huge rubble piles, infested with antitank and antipersonnel mines, blocked side streets, forcing the Canadians down main avenues transformed into killing zones. There was also the menace of explosive booby traps left behind: doorways were wired and dimly lit corridors concealed tripwires for the unsuspecting. Some were even wired to the flush handles of toilets to give the soldier happy to find indoor plumbing a nasty surprise.

New arrivals to the Canadian battalions were particularly vulnerable, as many had little training and there was no time to break them in. One new man in the Seaforth Highlanders discovered a German knife stuck into a jar of wheat grains sitting on a windowsill. When he reached out to grab it as a souvenir, Private Ernest Smith, a veteran commanding a six-man section, yelled, "Don't touch it!" When the man asked why, Smith demonstrated. When he threw it out the window, the grenade that was wired to the knife and concealed in the wheat grains exploded before it hit the street.

The German Army placed much more of an emphasis on sniping than the Allies did. Their snipers were not used for anything else, and the 1st Parachute Division had more than most German units. Because they were expertly concealed and lethally accurate, their presence stretched nerves to the breaking point; venturing into the open meant taking a deadly risk. Lieutenant Bill Longhurst, an officer in the Edmontons, came up with a solution called "mouseholing."

Buildings in Ortona, like most of Europe, were each attached to the next. Longhurst came up with the idea of using a beehive-shaped explosive charge to blast a hole through the wall into the next building, ideally from the top floor. From there the Canadians could work their way down to street level, lobbing grenades down on the enemy. Climbing back to the top floor and blasting another hole meant no one had to go into the street and into a sniper's

Library and Archives Canada

Tanks of the Three Rivers Regiment are supported by infantry of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment trudging through the rubble-strewn streets of Ortona.

crosshairs. Word of this improvised tactic spread quickly through the Canadian ranks, and soon both battalions were using it.

The battle raged on with no letup in ferocity. The air was filled with the choking dust of collapsing walls and roofs, the acrid smoke of burning fires, and the smell of death. The incessant staccato bursts of machine guns, the dry crack of rifle fire, the sound of exploding grenades, booby traps, and artillery and mortar shells mixed with the roar of tank engines and the shouts of soldiers in this veritable hell on earth among the ruins. The depleted Canadian battalions marked their progress by the number of houses taken as they remorselessly pushed the Germans back.

The lines were close to each other, Canadians and Germans sometimes sharing the same buildings. An English-speaking German named Fritz Illi called out to the Canadians frequently, yelling to them to toss over some of their corned beef rations or some cigarettes, to which he sometimes got sworn at in reply.

In the middle of it all were the civilians. Captain Thomas, A Company, Seaforth Highlanders was beckoned by an old woman to enter a cellar where she offered him a steaming cup of tea. Wide-eyed children stared at him in the dim candlelight as he gratefully accepted it. But the respite was brief. Gulping the tea, Thomas handed the cup back to the old woman before bounding up the stairs, back to his men and the war.

Ortona had become a battle of prestige for both sides, largely due to the press, before the Canadians even reached its outskirts. Kesselring had said he did not want to defend the town, but "the English have made it as important as Rome ... you can do nothing when things develop in this manner."

On December 24, Hitler ordered the town to be held at all costs, but on the 28th quiet fell over the town for the first time in a week. The Germans had pulled out. A few days later, Canadians found a decorated Christmas tree in a rail tunnel with a message attached: "Sorry we can't stay to put mistletoe on, but we'll make it hot for you in the hills."

For the exhausted First Canadian Infantry Division the end of the battle marked the beginning of a static period. It had been fought out. The 1st Parachute Division men, having left the battle when they chose and still intact as a fighting unit, did not consider themselves defeated. Both they and the panzergrenadiers would meet the Canadians again in Italy before the war ended.

For a staggering number of men at Ortona, the war was over. The First Canadian Infantry Division suffered 502 men killed during December out of a total of 2,339 casualties. German casualty figures are vague, but the 90th Panzergrenadier Division was effectively destroyed. By the end of December, all battalions of the 1st Parachute Division had the strength of only one company.

In the annals of the Italian campaign during World War II, engagements such as Salerno, Anzio, and Monte Cassino are most remembered—lesser-known places like Ortona, not so much. But the far too many grave markers of soldiers killed there at the end of 1943 that dot the picturesque Italian countryside stand as constant silent reminders that Ortona was one of the bitterest and bloodiest street fights of the entire war. □

Author Jerome M. Baldwin is a resident of Amherstburg, Ontario, Canada. He is a veteran of the Canadian Army, having served as a fire control systems technician.

By Joseph Luster

YOUR ACTIONS AFFECT THE THEATER OF WAR IN *HEROES & GENERALS.*

PUBLISHER Reto-Moto
DEVELOPER Reto-Moto
SYSTEM(S) PC
AVAILABLE TBA

HEROES & GENERALS

It goes without saying at this point that war-based first-person shooters are practically a dime a dozen. The same could be said about strategy titles, as well, so it always comes down to a particularly innovative touch applied on the creator's part. Developer Reto-Moto is putting an interesting spin of its own on the World War II FPS with the upcoming *Heroes & Generals*, a browser-based title that takes the actions of every player and gives them an actual effect on the overall theater of war.

Heroes & Generals may at first glance seem like a somewhat flimsy endeavor. But, pretty amazing things can be done in browser now, and the concept behind *Heroes & Generals* mashes up online and single-player in a way that, well, pretty accurately echoes the title. Players can battle their way through missions and online modes with customizable characters in the manner one would expect of the genre, but it's the way those battles shape the collective experience that forms the game's true hook.

Every battle affects one large world map, the European Theater itself, on the game's War Server. This creates an opportunity for other players to take on the "thinking man's" role as a strategic officer, managing resources and making battlefield decisions—the Big Picture, if you will—while others fight the subsequent battles below. As the game's official website puts it, "Your actions can turn the tide of a persistent online war being fought by thousands of players."

At the time of this writing *Heroes & Generals* is a freshly announced title, with sign-ups available for Alpha testing. Despite being in such an early state, the concept alone shows plenty of promise and accessibility to a variety of gamer types. Hopefully the Alpha—which Reto-Moto is using for feedback and insight into the constantly evolving development process—will yield even more compelling ideas as it progresses. The release date for *Heroes & Generals* has yet to be formally announced.

PUBLISHER Deep Silver
DEVELOPER X1 Software
SYSTEM(S) PC
AVAILABLE Q4 2011

IRON FRONT—LIBERATION 1944

In development by the folks at X1 Software (*Pacific Fighters: Banzai!*), *Iron Front—Liberation 1944* is a tale of two sides: the Germans and the Red Army. You can choose between suiting up as infantrymen on either, taking on tasks crucial to stopping their opponents via tactical combat. As the story progresses, you'll be able to take control of everything from tanks to fighter planes, in addition to the harrowing fight on foot.

Liberation 1944 takes place in southern Poland, and each side has a distinct objective. Take control of the Germans and your soldiers will be working hard to consolidate and regroup troops to stop, or at the very least slow, the advance of the Red Army. Red Army soldiers, on the other hand, will need to break the German resistance and make their way in to attack directly.

X1 is keeping things fairly large scale with *Liberation 1944*. The total number of vehicles and planes comes in at over 40, including the Königstiger, the Katyusha, the Focke-Wulf Fw-190, and the two-man German ground-attack aircraft, the Stuka, aka the Junkers Ju-87. Weapons receive similar attention to detail across the eight-mission campaign, as does the environment itself, and the damage models for tanks and other units.

Of course, there are also some meaty multiplayer modes, ranging from Capture the Flag to Attack and Defense. There's even a pretty extensive mission editor—after players develop their own missions, they can share them with friends online, adding to the longevity of this particular PC-exclusive campaign.

PUBLISHER City Interactive
DEVELOPER City Interactive
SYSTEM(S) Xbox 360, PlayStation3
AVAILABLE Q4 2011

COMBAT WINGS: THE GREAT BATTLES OF WORLD WAR II

It's been interesting to follow the trajectory of *Combat Wings: The Great Battles of World War II*, a title that has been featured in these pages before but has yet to hit store shelves as of this writing. The aerial combat game, developed by City Interactive, is finally nearing its release on Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3, so what better time to get primed for the latest attempt at capturing the deadly thrills of dogfighting.

One of the most intriguing aspects of *Combat Wings* is its attempt to bring the intimacy of aerial war combat to the virtual world. Without the assistance of modern drones, dogfighting meant getting up close and personal, and City Interactive aims to simulate that with its inclusion of Ace Mode. This mode is initiated by holding the left trigger, putting a flight assist mechanic into effect, and steering the player on a blazing trail directly toward the nearest primary objective.

While Ace Mode can also auto-correct trajectory, it's not a go-to get-out-of-Hell free card during all missions. In some instances it's disabled, but when used properly it should help enhance that feeling of a screaming opponent lit by the relentless fires of war ... if you manage to claim victory, that is. Ace Mode may also help those who choose to play with PlayStation Move motion controls on the PlayStation 3 version. I'm just saying, I've tried dogfighting in games with motion controls before, and it ain't easy!

Those hoping for true multiplayer might not want to hold their breath, but it's still not entirely out of the question. At worst, the multiplayer component will be axed due to time constraints, as City Interactive is looking to meet its release date and doesn't want to delay the game any further. It could always be added later, however, and when *Combat Wings* ships it will include leaderboards, add-on support, and a split-screen cooperative mode. □

You deserve a factual look at . . .

The Promised Land of Milk and Honey

Could it have been? Could the dream still come true?

In 1947, the British, who had the Mandate over Palestine, decided that they had enough of the decades of fighting and slaughter between Arabs and Jews. They washed their hands of the Mandate and turned it over to the United Nations.

What are the facts?

A solution not accepted. Wishing to end the bloodshed and to create a stable and, hopefully, permanent solution to the decades of conflict, the U.N. decreed a partition of the country west of the Jordan River into an Arab and a Jewish state. In deference to Arab Muslim insistence that it was their "third holiest city," the city of Jerusalem, the focus of all Jewish aspirations for two millennia, was to be "internationalized." For the Jews this was bitterly disappointing. Still, in order to create their dreamed-of state, to normalize the lives of the Jewish inhabitants, and to make possible the ingathering of the Holocaust survivors, they accepted the partition plan. They declared their state, *Eretz Yisrael* – the Land of Israel – and became a nation. Forever to his credit, US President Harry Truman recognized the nascent state of Israel within minutes of its declaration of independence.

> "Then the dream could finally be fulfilled . . . Milk and Honey could indeed flow."

The Arabs rejected the partition proposal out of hand. Instead, six Arab armies invaded the country from all sides. They vowed to wage a war of extermination. The Jewish population of only 650,000 people was lightly armed and almost hopelessly outnumbered. But in an almost Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. They suffered horrendous casualties – about 1 per cent of the population. It was as if the United States were to lose 3 million people in a conflict. The Arabs also suffered greatly. Goaded mostly by their leaders to make room for the invading armies, about 650,000 fled the fighting. They were not accepted by their Arab brethren. They were interned and live to this day in so-called refugee camps, slum cities, in which they lead miserable and totally unproductive lives, dependent on the dole of the world. They are consumed with hatred against the Jews who, they believe, have deprived them of their patrimony.

Prosperity despite unending attacks. But Israel was not allowed to live in peace. Virtually without interruption, it was victimized by attacks from Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. There were two major wars: the Six Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Israel prevailed in both. It acquired major territories, most of which, in its never-ending quest for peace, it returned. Following these unsuccessful wars, the Palestinians subjected Israel to almost uninterrupted "intifadas," essentially one-sided civil wars, in which suicide bombings and other assorted terrors were the main weapons.

Despite these unending tribulations and absorbing close to 4 million migrants from all parts of the world, Israel prospered mightily. Its population is now close to 8 million. Over 1 million of them are Arabs. They are Israeli citizens, have all the rights of their fellow Jewish citizens, serve in the Knesset (Israel's parliament) and in the diplomatic corps. They are full participants in the economic prosperity that permeates Israel. Israel's product per person is on the same or higher order as that of most European countries. It is a center of science and of culture. Its industrial output encompasses some of the most advanced technology and sophisticated production in the world. Next to Canada, Israel is the most represented country on US stock exchanges. Most major high-tech companies have facilities – factories and research establishments – in Israel.

All of this is admirable, of course. But there is a flip side to this edifying story. That is the fate of the Arab descendants of those who fled Israel in the 1948 War of Liberation. Had they followed the example of the Jews and agreed to the partition decreed by the U.N., they could today be in the same advanced position as Israel, instead of the misery in which they live. Because there is no question that Israel would have been more than willing to enter into a federation with Palestine, in which citizens of both countries could peacefully partake in common prosperity.

Can that dream still come true? Of course it can! Israel has accepted virtually all of the "conditions" for reconciliation on which the Palestinians have insisted, with the sole exception of the demand for the "right of return." That "right" would swamp Israel with hundreds of thousands of Arabs. And it would with one stroke be the end of Israel as the Jewish state. Even for the thorny question of Jerusalem a compromise could be found. But, having been misled by the thuggish Arafat for decades, Arab Palestine needs a wise leader in order to finally make peace with Israel. In view of Israel's experience in Lebanon and Gaza and because it would be fatally vulnerable if an armed enemy occupied the Judean heights, the state of Palestine would have to be totally demilitarized and controlled (probably by US military) for compliance. It would be a difficult condition to swallow, but it would have to be the price to gain their own country. But the dream could then finally be fulfilled and peace and prosperity could be extended over all of the Promised Land. Milk and Honey could indeed flow.

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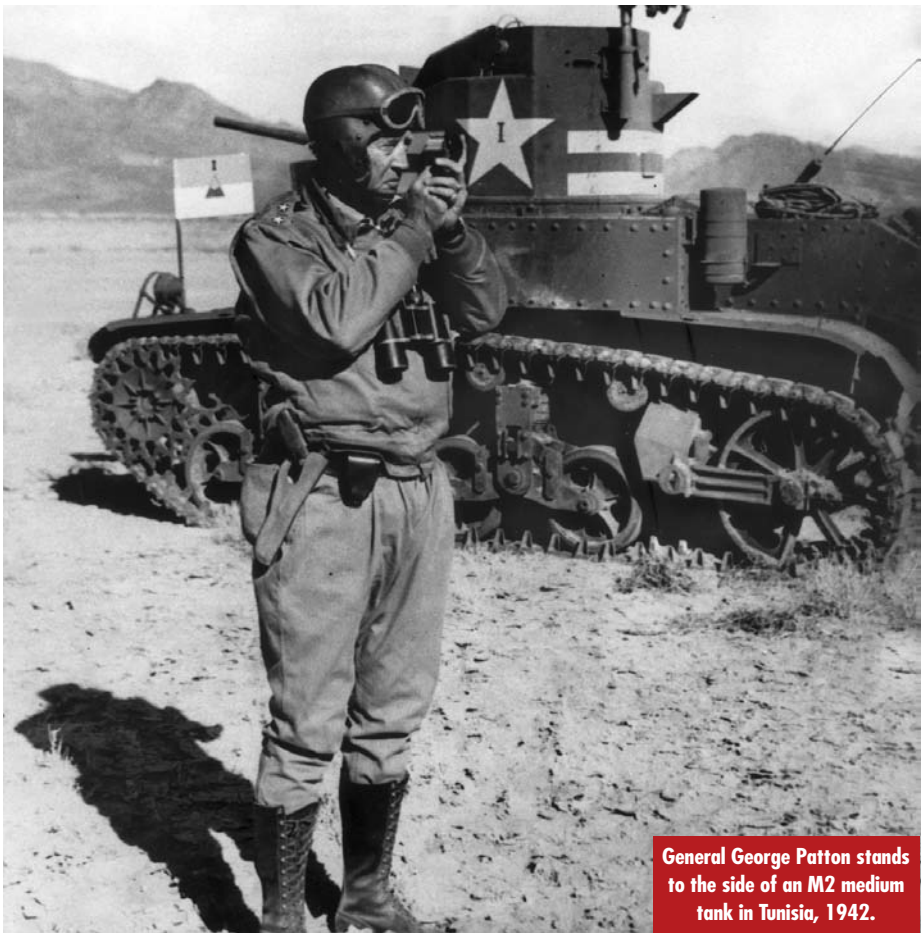
By Al Hemingway

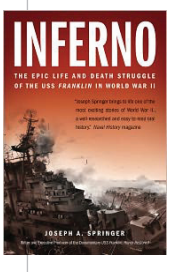


General George Patton stands to the side of an M2 medium tank in Tunisia, 1942.

Through the Eyes of His Enemies

Another look at the leadership skills of George Patton.

NOTED IRISH WRITER AND POET OSCAR WILDE ONCE SAID, "I CHOOSE MY friends for their good looks, my acquaintances for their good characters, and my enemies for their intellects. A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies."



Regardless of their political leanings, many of the German officers who fought against George S. Patton fall into that category. They certainly demonstrated exceptional leadership during both world wars—and had the distinction of facing one of America's premier generals as well.

Much has been written about the prowess of "Old Blood and Guts." Patton was certainly a daring individual who excelled in combat—from his days as a young officer with General John J. Pershing's expeditionary forces seeking the notorious Mexican bandit Pancho Villa to the killing fields of World Wars I and II.

In his new book, ***Fighting Patton: George S. Patton Jr. Through the Eyes of His Enemies*** (Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2011, 514 pp., photographs, notes, index, $30) military historian Harry Yeide has written an absorbing account of Patton and the adversaries he faced during both conflicts.

During World War I, Patton and his German counterparts began to see the advantages of mechanized warfare. Still in its infancy, tank warfare was an unknown factor on the battlefield. Men like Patton, and German officers Fritz von Broich, Otto von Knobelsdorff, Hans von Obstfelder, and Hans-Gustav Felber, used the battlefields of France as their training to learn and hone tactics using tanks for the first time on a large scale in war.

Between wars, Patton, like many of his future enemies, was not actively involved with mechanized units. However, with the invasion of Poland in September 1939, Patton watched with keen interest and learned as much a he could about the German blitzkrieg. Patton also read many papers, articles and books written by German officers including one book by Erwin Rommel, who although never having served with a tank unit in World War I was given command of a panzer division and proved to be a remarkable commander.

In the aftermath of World War II, the surviving German field commanders that Patton faced spoke out saying, for the most part, that he was a bold and competent leader. In their opinion, he was not afraid to take risks, unlike his British rival General Bernard Montgomery.

Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, German Army commander in the West, noted that Patton was "speedy in the advance." Heinz Guderian, father of the blitzkrieg, echoed Rundstedt's comments and added that Patton was "very quick," and "the essential thing in panzer command is speed."

Even Rommel, who had considerable experience against Montgomery, praised Patton in a paper he wrote while recovering from wounds he suffered in France. He said that Montgomery was a strategist, and a "multidimensional commander." Patton, on the other hand, he viewed as a tactician and even though he felt that the Americans did well in North Africa, it was Patton "in France to see the most astonishing achievements in mobile warfare."

Inferno: The Epic Life and Death Struggle of the USS* Franklin *in World War II by Joseph A. Springer, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2011, 320 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $19.99, paperback.

Here is a moving chronicle focusing on the bombing of the aircraft carrier USS *Franklin*. While conducting operations off the coast of Japan in 1945, just prior to the assault on Okinawa, one lone Japanese bomber managed to let loose a single 250-pound bomb that would strike the flight deck and ignite aviation fuel and ordnance that would eventually kill and

From the Publishers of WWII History Magazine

D-DAY

Through A Soldier's Eyes…

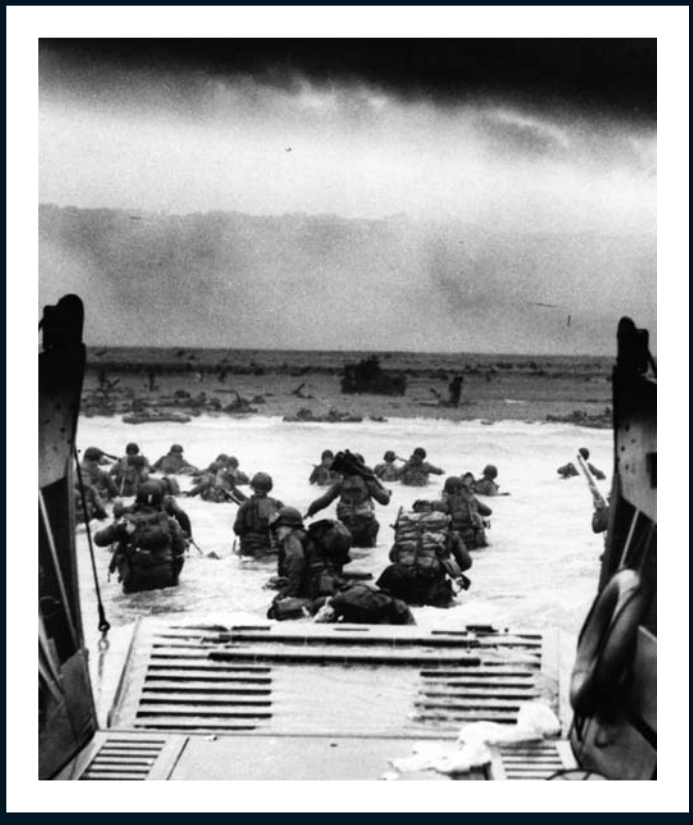
Limited Edition Print

The storm was violent, the waves were huge and the noise was deafening for the soldiers in the landing craft on D-Day, June 6, 1944. As they neared the beach, the door dropped open… and this photo lets you see exactly what they saw, and feel what they felt: treacherous breakers, withering machine gun fire, a long beach, huge cliffs, and near-certain death.

None hesitated. These brave unselfish men jumped into the cold Atlantic waters. Two thirds of them died soon after, so that we could live in freedom.

This historic photograph shows American soldiers from Company E, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division exiting their LCVP landing craft under heavy German machine gun fire on Omaha Beach. The photo was taken by Coast Guard Chief Photographer's Mate Robert F. Sergeant.

Company E landed on Easy Red Beach at 0645 in the face of murderous fire. Those few who survived kept wading right into everything the enemy had and took their objective, which provided the only exit from the beach that the entire Fifth Corps had for two days. Company "E," perhaps by strength of will and courage alone, helped keep the entire landing force from being thrown back into the sea. For a month afterwards, those who survived remained almost in a daze.



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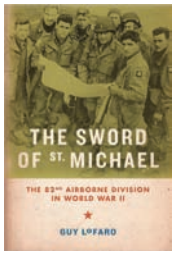
wound nearly 1,000 crewmen.

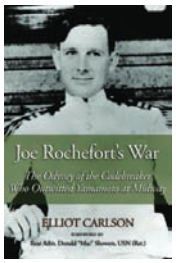
The author relies on numerous first-person accounts of what happened on that terrible day to give the reader a gripping tale of not only tragedy, but also of extreme heroism. Many of the crewmen were decorated for performing extraordinary tasks to keep the ship afloat and to administer aid to the survivors. One such individual was Father Joseph O'Callahan, who had lost a sister in the Philippines and would earn the Medal of Honor. He was a much respected member of the ship's complement, and even "went toe-to-toe" with its superiors for the men. He was referred to as "Father Joe."

Towed to Pearl Harbor by the cruiser USS *Pittsburgh*, after a quick repair job the Franklin was able to make her way to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, arriving there in April. The ship, often referred to as "Big Ben," was open to the public for Navy Day celebrations and was decommissioned in 1947.

The *Franklin* received four battle stars in World War II, and her crew would become the most decorated in U.S. naval history. She truly lived up to her name, "The ship that wouldn't die."

The Sword of St. Michael: The 82nd Airborne Division in World War II by Guy LoFaro, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2011, 746 pp., photographs, notes, index, $40, hardcover.





During the Battle of the Bulge, a U.S. tank commander asked a young soldier their location. He replied, "You've just arrived at the American front lines…. I'm the 82nd Airborne Division, and this is as far as the bastards are going."

With a fighting spirit like that, it is easy to see why the 82nd Airborne Division was one of the most highly decorated outfits in World War II. Its esprit de corps began at the very top with commanding generals such as Matthew Ridgway and James Gavin, who led their troops from the front.

LoFaro, a graduate of West Point and a veteran of the division, has written the definitive account of the unit's history, including its inception in 1940, its baptism of fire in Sicily in 1943, the Italian Campaign, Normandy invasion, Operation Market Garden, and its leading the victory parade down Fifth Avenue in New York City.

The unit compiled an impressive wartime record: 422 days in combat, five campaigns, 15 Presidential Unit Citations, and three awards from foreign governments.

LoFaro has really done his homework and has scoured official reports and personal letters, diaries, and oral histories from the men who participated in the various operations. A really masterful job and a real tribute to those "devils in baggy pants" that gave the 82nd Airborne Division its much deserved reputation as a premier fighting unit in World War II.

Joe Rochefort's War: The Odyssey of the Codebreaker Who Outwitted Yamamoto at Midway by Elliot Carlson, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2011, 616 pp., photographs, maps, notes, index, $36.95, hardcover.

This book is a real gem. The life of Joseph Rochefort, the man who is credited with breaking the Japanese code that allowed Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to defeat them at the Battle of Midway, is surrounded in mystery. Joining the Navy at the age of 17, the Ohio native fixed his birth certificate to read that he was 18. He quickly rose through the ranks and was commissioned an officer, although not among the Annapolis crowd.

Rochefort could be irascible and short tempered. His frankness and eccentric manners irritated many of his superiors, including those who had the ear of Chief of Naval Operations

Short Bursts

Voices of the Bulge: Untold Stories from Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge by Michael Collins and Martin King, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2011, 320 pp., maps, photos, index, $28.00, hardcover.

What sets this oral history apart from the many others that have been published is that it is accompanied by a 47-minute DVD of the authors' documentary of the Battle of the Bulge. Both men are filmmakers and spent a dozen years compiling the personal vignettes that bring both the book and DVD to life. Collins and King collected anecdotes from American and German soldiers and civilians.

The massive German onslaught began on December 16, 1944, and lasted until January 1945. Hitler's last desperate gamble in the West was the largest land battle in U.S. military history. The authors have done an excellent job in describing the action.

Made in Hanford: The Bomb That Changed the World by Hill Williams, Washington State University Press, Pullman, 2011, 190 pp., photos, index, $22.95, paperback.

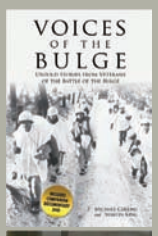
During World War II, the quiet little town of Hanford, Washington, situated near the Columbia River, was transformed into a nuclear facility that was part of the ultra-secret Manhattan Project.

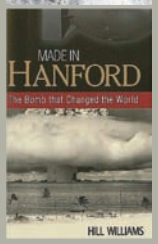
The city was home to the first plutonium production reactor in the world, and its product was used in "Fat Man," the atomic bomb dropped over Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, to end the war in the Pacific. During the Cold War, the huge complex would continue producing plutonium that would be used in bombs tested at Bikini and Eniwetok Atolls, and the Marshall Islands.

The author, a former *Seattle Times* science writer, relied on the diaries and journals of those intimately involved with the project and interviewed the island inhabitants and anthropologists who worked closely with them.

The SS Dirlewanger Brigade: The History of the Black Hunters by Christian Ingrao, Skyhorse Publishing, New York, 2011, 224 pp., notes, $22.95, hardcover.

The 36th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS was a step above other Nazi units when it came to committing terrible atrocities against civilians, especially the Poles. Commanded by Oskar Dirlewanger, twice convicted of sexual assault, his men were responsible for torture, rape, and murder with no repercussions.





The soldiers, also known as poachers because they hunted the partisans like game, were given a free hand by SS chief Heinrich Himmler to rid the countryside of any freedom fighters. They were even used to suppress the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 and are believed responsible for killing approximately 35,000 men, women, and children in just one day. The author has performed exhaustive research to tell the story of a disturbing chapter in World War II.

Battle Surface! Lawson P. "Red" Ramage and the War Patrols of the USS Parche by Stephen L. Moore, Naval Institute

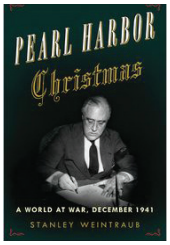
Admiral Ernest J. King. When Rochefort was recommended for the Distinguished Service Medal for his outstanding intelligence work that helped defeat the Japanese Navy at Midway, it was rejected.

Carlson gives the reader an excellent view into Rochefort's innermost thoughts from those that would work closely with him in the small, cluttered basement at Pearl Harbor where he read and interpreted Japan's every move. It was not until 1986, years after his death, that Rochefort was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by President Ronald Reagan. After more than 40 years, the skinny kid from Ohio was finally recognized for his brilliant achievements during America's dark, early days of World War II.

Ostkrieg: Hitler's War of Extermination in the East by Stephen G. Fritz, University of Kentucky Press, Louisville, 2011, 664 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, $39.95, hardcover.

There is no doubt the Ostkrieg, or war in the East, was savage and brutal. It consumed more than 35 million people, both military and civilian. While many have believed over the years that Hitler attacked the Soviet Union out of desperation, the author states, in his opinion, that it was a well thought out plan and had always been Hitler's top priority.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, records never before seen in the West have been discovered, shedding new light on the Eastern Front. They detail the massive land assault that began in June 1941, how it was planned and carried out, and the final solution, the extermination of the Jews that played an important role in it as well.



Fritz, professor of history at East Tennessee State University, delivers an all-inclusive account of not only the military action of the German war machine, but also its economic goals, the utilization of the massive amounts of natural resources within the country itself, and the Nazi plan for a new Aryan race.

This is an in-depth book focusing on the killing ground of the Eastern Front that, in many ways, dwarfed the fighting in the West.

Pearl Harbor Christmas: A World at War, December 1941 by Stanley Weintraub, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2011, 224 pp., photos, index, $24, hardcover.

America was shocked when the Japanese dealt such a devastating blow to its naval forces on the quiet Sunday morning of December 7, 1941, a mere 18 days before Christmas. How did Americans observe that Christmas holiday?

Although most Americans went about their business, purchasing gifts, setting up Christmas trees, and planning family get-togethers, the war was on everyone's mind. There was no way to escape it—Marines fighting for their lives on Wake Island, General Douglas MacArthur preparing for a Japanese invasion of the Philippines, Singapore, or Southeast Asia, the Nazis steam rolling through Europe. It appeared as if the enemy was winning.

Out of this chaos, however, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited the United States to spend Christmas with President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The crafty leader realized that he now had the ally he needed to win the conflict and he knew he must sit face-to-face to plan the strategy that would defeat their common enemies.

Despite the seriousness of the situation, the White House still had time to decorate the Christmas tree, go to church Christmas morning, and celebrate New Year's Day, as an example to Americans. No one knew what lay ahead. But men like Roosevelt and Churchill had the resolve to see it through to the very end. It was indeed an incredible holiday season. Despite the fear and anxiety, the pair conveyed a message of hope to the world. □

Press, Annapolis, MD, 2011, 360 pp., photos, maps, bibliography, notes, $34.95, hardcover.

Only seven submariners received the Medal of Honor during World War II, and the hard-charging captain of the USS *Parche,* Commander Lawson "Red" Ramage was one of them.

During one combat patrol in late July 1944, the *Parche* and the USS *Steelhead* combined to sink several huge cargo ships and tankers and barely escaped being rammed by an enemy vessel in the process. The crew of the *Parche* was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, and Ramage was presented the nation's highest award.

Ramage, however, wrote a certificate for every crew member of the *Parche* acknowledging their important role during the night action in which he earned the medal. He wrote in part that every officer and man "has an equal share in this award."

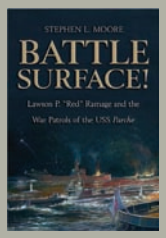
The book also lists the enlisted men and officers of the *Parche,* other awards and decorations, and the enemy ships that the submarine sank during the war.

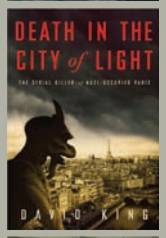
Death in the City of Light: The Serial Killer of Nazi-Occupied Paris by David King, Crown Publishers, New York, 2011, bibliography, notes, $26, hardcover.

Marcel Petiot is not a well known name. However, this doctor was captured and convicted of murder after police unearthed the remains of 27 people in his home in Paris.

Petiot was mentally unbalanced at an early age. During World War I, he was wounded and gassed, which enhanced his already unstable condition. After the war, he received his medical degree and established a successful practice in the city.

Petiot formed an escape route for individuals who wanted to escape Nazi-occupied France and charged 25,000 francs. Unfortunately, the would-be escapees were never seen again. The mad doctor was eventually caught and beheaded for his grisly crimes. Although the authorities knew of the 27, they believed he may have murdered more than 100. This is a fascinating book that delves into another obscure aspect of Paris during World War II.





Home Front Baltimore: An Album of Stories from World War II by Gilbert Sandler, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2011, 164 pp., photos, index, $29.95, hardcover.

Here the author, a U.S. naval officer during World War II, has selected stories from his hometown of Baltimore, Maryland, during the conflict and intertwined them with news from the front.

Ironically, as U.S. soldiers were storming the beaches at Normandy on June 6, 1944, the Orioles of baseball's International League were making their move for first place. Sandler found items such as these when he was perusing old newspapers at a library one day.

He writes that people back at home could not envision what war was like, but those men in the thick of it knew of its savagery. They could only dream of the life they left—and pray to God that they would be able to return to it. □

airborne encounter

Continued from page 43

Hoffman had passed that morning. The plan was to approach the command post on the opposite side where a huge cornfield lay.

One of the first things they told their American friends was, "You don't need that helmet."

They tore off triangles of camouflaged parachute silk and gave them to the Americans.

"Why?"

"It makes less noise, and you don't need anything that doesn't stop bullets. That helmet doesn't stop bullets. Maybe a little shrapnel and mud and dirt falling on your head, that's all."

Seeing how the Brits wore bandanas, the Americans followed suit. They sat in a cornfield in the warmth of the sun, preparing their equipment for the task at hand, packing plastic balls of composition C2 explosive with tetra caps.

"What're we doing?" Hal asked.

"Yank, we're making Gammon grenades!"

At about 2:30 PM, the major gave his men the command, and the two Yanks went along for the ride. The lead element sprinted across the field, a number of them yelling, "Bash 'em! Bash 'em!" The first set of men who made it to the wall tossed Gammon grenades over and stood there, the next set hunched down behind them, the third set crouched on hands and knees—all together forming a human staircase. The remaining Brits ran up their backs, shouting and throwing grenades. Plumes of black smoke erupted from behind the wall, and the Brits jumped headlong into them with Tommy guns firing.

By the time Hal and Clyde got over the wall, the Brits had opened the gate from inside. They ran into the command post to find the Brits stitching the ceiling both ways with hundreds of rounds. "They were just running those Tommy guns, constantly firing. Those guns were hot," Hal remembered.

They had taken the command post in less than 10 minutes. The Germans suffered 30 dead and 80 taken prisoner. Then Hal discovered why the British had worked so fast: tea time. "These Limeys," Hal recalled with a laugh, "they took out their Bunsen burners and had their spot o' tea! Three in the afternoon, time to take a vacation from the war! I thought if I was these Germans, I'd time everything to take place at three in the afternoon!" □

Chris Blendheim served in the airborne forces of the U.S. Army from 1989 to 1992. He is a high school teacher and resides in Sebastian, Florida.

great escape

Continued from page 71

a room in a disused factory. They told us all the other Frenchmen were friends. However on the next morning between 1000 and 1100 hours after all the Frenchmen, except two, had gone to work two Gestapo officials in plain clothes came in with revolvers demanding the two 'Tommies.' It seemed clear that we had been betrayed. We were arrested and marched through the streets with our hands over our heads to the Gestapo H.Q. at Stettin."

Three men made it to freedom. Per Bergsland and Jens Muller made it back to England via Sweden, and Bram van der Stok made it to Gibraltar. Fifty escapers were shot by the Gestapo, 17 were brought back to Sagan, four went to Sachsenshausen, and two to Colditz. Back at Stalag Luft III, von Lindeiner had been arrested and taken away. He escaped execution. The new commandant, Colonel Franz Braune, had just taken over when the senior British officer, Herbert Massey, was summoned for a meeting. Through an interpreter, Colonel Braune announced that 41 prisoners had been shot while escaping. When asked how many were wounded, the commandant replied that there were none. Soon, the number 41 would grow to 50.

After the war, the British government began the task of tracking down those responsible for the murders. The Special Investigation Branch of the RAF began the painstaking task. Over the next several years, they accounted for 69 of the 72 criminals. Many were convicted and served prison sentences, while others were hanged for their roles in the murders. Some of the perpetrators disappeared into the Soviet bloc and were never tried. By May 1968, nearly a quarter century after the escape, the last trial was over.

The British prisoners stood face-to-face with death on that cold March night and yet pressed forward, knowing that their chances for success were slim. In far from optimal conditions, these men executed one of the most miraculous feats ever accomplished by a confined group with few resources other than their own ingenuity.

Was it worth the price? It depends. Roger Bushell wanted to break out as many men as he could to create internal havoc within the Reich. He certainly did that and paid the ultimate price. □

First-time contributor Jeffrey Denman is a U.S. history teacher in the Brookline, Massachusetts, public school system. He is a former member of the Great Escape Memorial Project from Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

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Lt. Col. Horrocks to anticipate needs for the war threatening in Europe, organizing courses for would-be staff officers drawn from the Territorial Army (National Guard). The work was hard and the hours long, but Horrocks gave his all. His students found him to be "energetic, inquiring, and imaginative."

Inevitably, war came. Early in May 1940, Horrocks handed over his duties at the Staff College after being told he was to command the 2nd Battalion of his old regiment, the Middlesex, in France. After the inertia of the 1939-1940 "Phoney War," events on the Continent were now moving fast as the German Army swept through the Low Countries in its Blitzkrieg offensive.

On the morning of May 10, Horrocks learned that the enemy had invaded France and the Low Countries. Realizing the urgency of the situation, he sped within a couple of hours to the Southampton docks in the commandant's car. Three days later, he arrived at the front in a dental truck and joined the 2nd Battalion at Louvain, Belgium. About an hour after his arrival, the commander of the 3rd Infantry Division visited Horrocks's headquarters.

Horrocks reported, "I saw a small, alert figure with piercing eyes sitting in the back of his car—the man under whom I was to fight all my battles during the war, and who was to have more influence on my life than anyone before or since." Although Horrocks felt uneasy, his first meeting with General Montgomery went smoothly. The Die-Hards were the division's machine-gun regiment, and Horrocks saw Monty every day. His orders were clear and concise, and Horrocks found him always confident and cheerful.

Promoted to brigadier, Horrocks assumed command of the 4th Infantry Division's 11th Brigade and acquitted himself well during the British Expeditionary Force's (BEF) fighting retreat to the French port of Dunkirk. His service was noted by Monty and General Alan Brooke, commander of the II Corps and later chief of the Imperial General Staff. During the evacuation of the bulk of the BEF from Dunkirk, Horrocks escaped in a small Dutch cargo boat to Ramsgate. He manned the forward Lewis antiaircraft gun during the perilous journey across the English Channel.

After a few days of leave, Horrocks was ordered to take over the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division. A German invasion of England was feared, and the brigade was responsible for defending the Channel coastline from Rottingdean in East Sussex to Shoreham in West Sussex. The brigade worked with the ill-equipped but enthusiastic Home Guard, and Horrocks found himself somewhat embarrassed at conferences during joint exercises in Dorset when confronted by rows of bemedaled former officers now serving as privates.

In January 1941, Horrocks was appointed brigadier general staff of Eastern Command, and during a five-month stint organized large-scale maneuvers. That June, he was happy to be promoted to acting major general and given command of the 44th (Home Counties) Division, a well-established territorial unit guarding the area from the Isle of Thanet to Dover and Folkestone, believed most threatened by invasion.

On July 31, 1944, although he was far from recovered, Horrocks was called upon to command the powerful, five-division XXX Corps in the Normandy beachhead around Falaise. On August 2, Montgomery, now commander of the British 21st Army Group, sent his private airplane to carry Horrocks to France. On the way to Normandy, Horrocks persuaded the pilot to circle over his small cottage at Compton, near Winchester, so that he could wave farewell to his wife and daughter.

The XXX Corps, which had slogged through the difficult Normandy bocage country after landing on Gold Beach at Arromanches, included the 7th Armored Division, the 43rd Wessex and 50th Northumberland Divisions, and the 8th Armored Brigade. Horrocks replaced Lt. Gen. Gerard C. Bucknall, who had fallen out of favor with Monty. Horrocks, nicknamed "Jorrocks" by Montgomery, officially took over the corps on August 1, 1944.

As part of General Sir Miles "Bimbo" Dempsey's British Second Army, the XXX Corps broke out of the beachhead after heavy fighting. Horrocks's 11th Armored Division moved so rapidly in taking the historic cathedral city of Amiens on the night of August 30-31 that it captured General Heinrich Eberbach, commander of the German Seventh Army, in his pajamas. Although often feverish and in pain from his wounds, Horrocks projected fighting spirit and optimism to all ranks. Like his patron, Montgomery, he inspired his men by keeping them informed of situations in forthright, concise terms. Frequently using a tank as his command post, Horrocks led from the front and pushed his corps hard.

After the Germans had been forced back through Falaise, the race through northern France and into Belgium began. But, shortly after giving orders for the crossing of the River Seine at Vernon, General Horrocks became ill and feverish. Bedridden in his caravan, he was

soon visited by Monty, who told him, "Ah, yes, Jorrocks, I guessed something was wrong…. But don't worry, I shan't invalid you home." He gave orders for the caravan to be moved alongside his own at his headquarters.

By August 26, 1944, Horrocks was sufficiently recovered to be given the task of again leading the spearhead XXX Corps. The corps, whose insignia was a fierce black boar, fought hard and moved fast. With the XII Corps on its left and an American division on the right, Horrocks's force covered an unprecedented 250 miles in only six days and liberated Brussels, the Belgian capital, on September 3, 1944. Horrocks's columns rolled into the great port of Antwerp the following day. Jubilant Belgians swarmed around the weary British tank crews, gunners, and riflemen.

Meanwhile, Field Marshal Montgomery was planning Operation Market-Garden, a bold and complex operation involving a massive British-American airborne invasion of Holland, scheduled for Sunday, September 17, 1944, preceding a thrust up into the Ruhr Valley, it was hoped could bring about Germany's defeat by the end of the year. As the Allied airborne units assembled on airfields in southern England, General Horrocks—poised with his corps in Belgium—was equally hopeful about Operation Market-Garden. But he had misgivings. "I was uneasy that this vast operation was starting on a Sunday," he said later, "not, I am afraid, on account of any religious scruples, but because no attack which I had launched on a Sunday had ever been completely successful."

On the morning of Saturday, September 16, 1944, the cobbled streets of the grimy little mining town of Leopoldsburg in northern Belgium, barely 10 miles from the front lines, were choked with 2,227 tanks, scout cars, and jeeps of the XXX Corps. Horrocks and his men were eager to get rolling again. From the Seine to Antwerp, their tanks had often averaged 50 miles in a single day, but ever since a disastrous halt on September 4 to "refit, refuel, and rest," the going had been hard. The British momentum had been lost, and the enemy had recovered.

Horrocks had no illusions about the German opposition, but he was confident that his forces could batter through it. He said later, "I knew that it would be a very tough battle; especially so, owing to the nature of the country, with its numerous water obstacles and the single main road available for thousands of vehicles; but failure never even entered my head."

On the following Sunday morning, Horrocks stood on the roof of a factory near the Meuse-Escaut Canal and watched the Allied glider formations thunder overhead. Operation Market-Garden was under way. Led by Sherman, Cromwell, and Valentine tanks of the Guards Armored Division, Horrocks's XXX Corps rolled forward. But its commander's misgivings were to prove prophetic as German artillery soon began plastering the spearhead armored columns. Resistance increased, and delays plagued the corps as it repeatedly came under fire and tried to negotiate around demolished vehicles on the narrow highway. The route was cut several times by enemy attacks.

King George VI awards Horrocks with the Distinguished Service Order and honors him as a Commander of the Bath in October 1944. Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery stands in the foreground.

Ultimately, despite valor and sacrifice shown by the Allied troops, almost everything went wrong and Operation Market-Garden ground to a halt. Horrocks never gave up hope of reaching Arnhem to relieve the Red Devils, but his corps was unable to get there in time. It was a near thing. Horrocks blamed himself for not having had a high-ranking Dutch officer at his headquarters who might have suggested a left hook well west of Nijmegen.

Early in December 1944, the XXX Corps was pulled out of the line to prepare for the Battle of the Reichswald. General Horrocks stayed with Queen Elizabeth of the Belgians near Brussels. When German forces broke through thinly held American lines in the Ardennes Forest region on December 16, the XXX Corps, the only strategic reserve available, was rushed behind the River Meuse to cover Brussels. Christmas came, and Horrocks was ordered home on compulsory sick leave. He was taken aback and thought he was being sacked. "Don't be stupid," Monty told him. "You're not being sacked. I want you to go home and have a rest before a big battle I've got in store for you as soon as we've cleared up this mess here (in the Bulge)."

On his return, the interrupted preparations were resumed for the Reichswald campaign code-named Operation Veritable, which was designed to destroy the enemy forces between the Meuse and the Rhine. General Dempsey's British Second Army took part, and Horrocks's corps numbering 200,000 men was attached to General Henry Crerar's First Canadian Army for the battle.

Starting on February 8, 1945, and ending on March 10 with a German withdrawal across the Rhine, Veritable was a bitter struggle fought in atrocious weather. The British and Canadians faced a well-trained enemy in carefully prepared defensive positions, but they defeated three panzer, four parachute, and four infantry divisions. The losses were appalling; the Canadian Army suffered 15,634 casualties, two-thirds of whom were British, while the Germans lost 44,000 men. Horrocks called it a "horrible" battle and the greatest he had ever fought.

Back in Dempsey's army for the momentous Allied crossing of the Rhine, the XXX Corps was beset by fierce counterattacks during the advance into Germany. The corps battled for five days to capture Bremen and secured the great port city on April 27, 1945. Horrocks's troops were clearing the Cuxhaven Peninsula when Germany surrendered.

Knighted in 1945, General Horrocks served as general officer commanding (GOC) of Western Command in 1946-1948 and GOC-in-chief of the British Army of the Rhine in 1948-1949. After becoming ill again, he was invalided out of the service in 1949. Nevertheless, he embarked on an active retirement. Besides serving as Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod in the House of Lords for 17 years, he took up journalism; wrote articles and two memoirs, *A Full Life* and *Corps Commander*; edited regimental histories; held a directorship in a construction company; and undertook extensive charity work. His retirement was marred by the death of his daughter, who drowned while swimming in the River Thames in 1979.

While he was not a headline grabber during the war, Sir Brian became famous in the 1960s with a television series in which he analyzed World War II campaigns and battles. His knowledge, wide experience, and cheery, direct manner won him a wide following. He died at the age of 89 on January 4, 1985, and was honored with a memorial service in Westminster Abbey on February 26 of that year. □

Michael D. Hull is a frequent contributor to WWII History. *He has written on a variety of subjects and resides in Enfield, Connecticut.*

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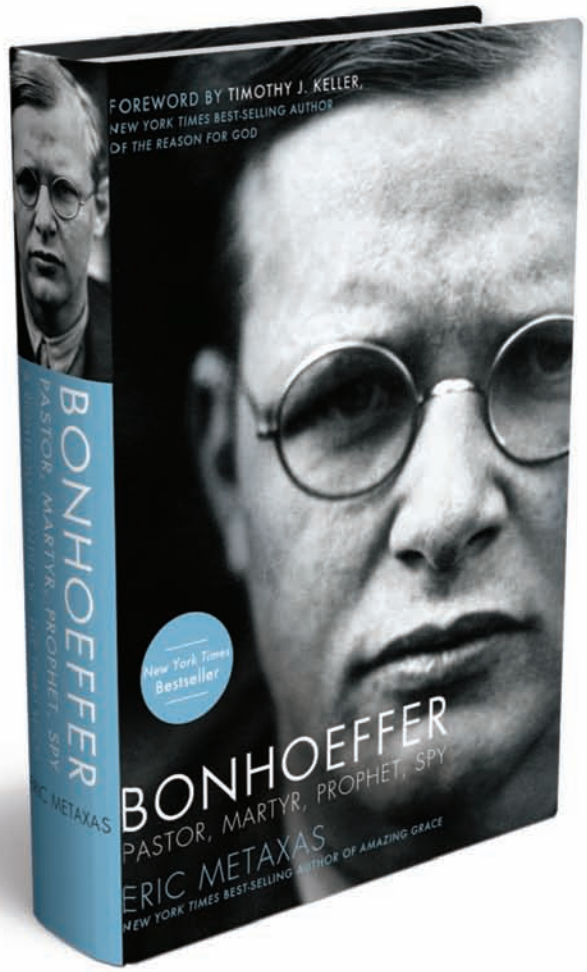

From *New York Times* best-selling author

ERIC METAXAS

WHO BETTER TO FACE THE GREATEST EVIL OF THE 20TH CENTURY THAN A HUMBLE MAN OF FAITH?

As Adolf Hitler and the Nazis seduced a nation, bullied a continent, and attempted to exterminate the Jews of Europe, a small number of dissidents and saboteurs worked to dismantle the Third Reich from the inside. One was Dietrich Bonhoeffer—a pastor and author, known as much for such spiritual classics as *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together* as for his 1945 execution in a concentration camp for his part in the plot to assassinate Hitler.

In the first major biography of Bonhoeffer in 40 years, author Eric Metaxas takes both strands of Bonhoeffer's life—the theologian and the spy—and draws them together to tell a searing story of incredible moral courage in the face of monstrous evil. In a deeply moving narrative, Metaxas uses previously unavailable documents—including personal letters, detailed journal entries, and firsthand personal accounts—to reveal dimensions of Bonhoeffer's life and theology never before seen.

Bonhoeffer gives witness to one man's extraordinary faith and to the tortured fate of the nation he sought to deliver from the curse of Nazism. It brings the reader face to face with a man determined to do the will of God radically, courageously, and joyfully—even to the point of death. *Bonhoeffer* is the story of a life framed by a passion for truth and a commitment to justice on behalf of those who face implacable evil.

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Eric Metaxas tells Bonhoeffer's story with PASSION AND THEOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION. ***—The Wall Street Journal***

IN THIS FINE BIOGRAPHY, Metaxas stays close to the story and refrains from any efforts at theory. All the more reason to read it. ***—The New Republic***

A moving, comprehensive, and engaging biography of the martyr's life...Metaxas tells a compelling story. VERDICT: RECOMMENDED. ***—Library Journal***

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