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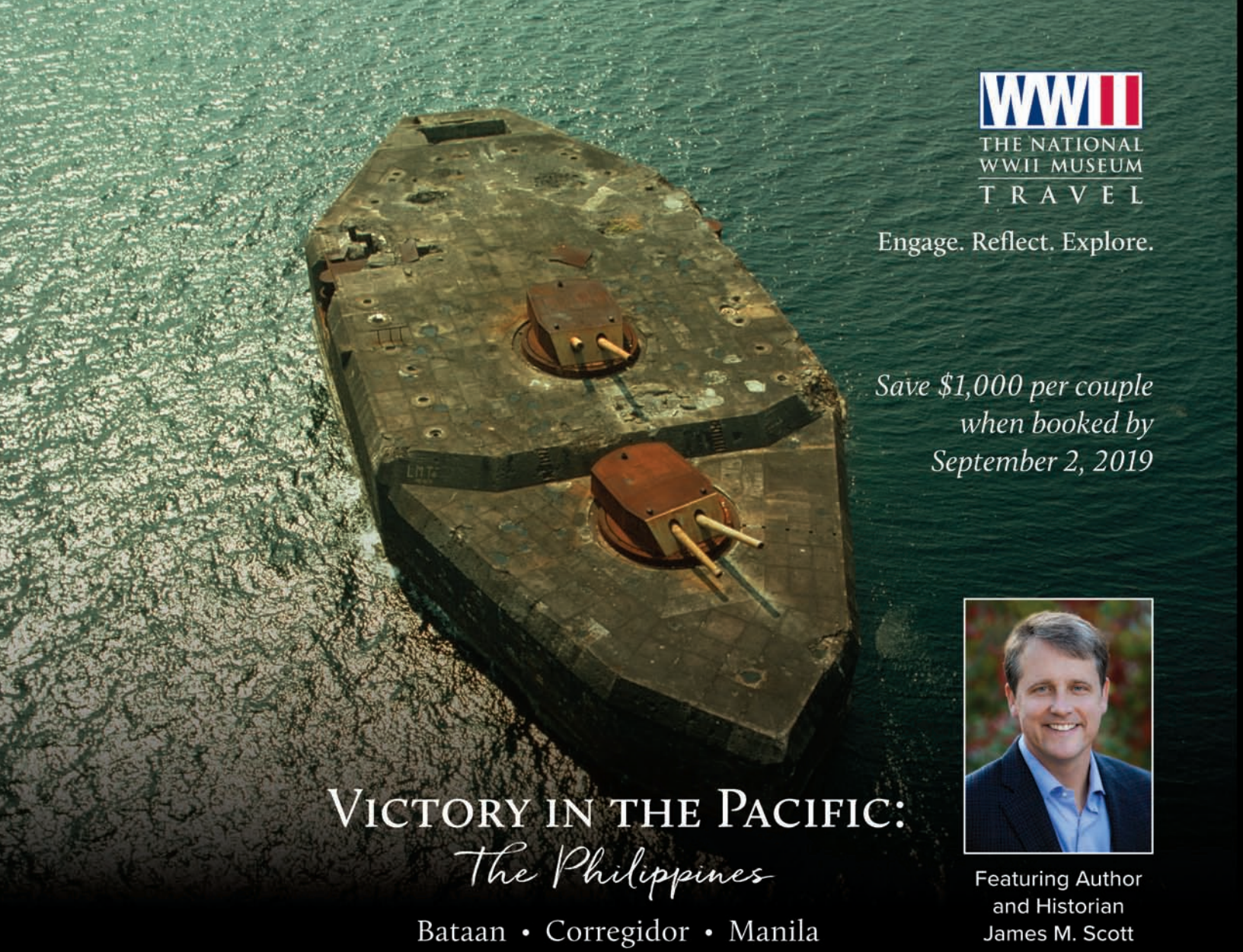

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Photo: National Archives

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THE AUSTRIAN PAINTER
BY WILLIAM STROOCK

THE YEAR IS 1964
and Germany is commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Great War. Victorious over Britain and France, Berlin sits at the center of an empire reaching into Asia and the heart of Africa. At the age of 75 the Austrian Painter is a respected artist looking back on a successful career. As he watches the victory commemoration, the Austrian Painter recalls his participation in the Great War and his subsequent travels and encounters with an eclectic cast of characters across the Reich's global empire.

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Editorial

General James Van Fleet overcame a terrible misunderstanding and rose to the highest echelon of command in the U.S. Army.

COLONEL JAMES VAN FLEET, COMMANDER OF THE 8TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 4th Division, which splashed ashore at Utah Beach 75 years ago on D-Day, June 6, 1944, was an uncommon soldier. True enough, he had graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point as a member of the class of 1915. In itself, that class became the academy's most famous. Dubbed the "Class the Stars Fell On," 59 of its 164 members achieved the rank of brigadier general or higher during their careers. Its graduates included such legendary leaders of the U.S. Army as Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower and Omar N. Bradley.

Van Fleet was among those memorable men, but recognition was a long time coming. He struggled academically at West Point and managed to graduate ranked 92nd. During a particularly tough stretch at the academy, he was buoyed by a letter from his father, who wrote: "Stick with it! Persevere ... plug along.... Be ever watchful, studious, and work hard. Banish from your heart all unhappy memories. After the first year, you will have it easier. When one task is finished, jump in another. Don't hesitate, and do not falter. Don't waver, don't wait, keep on going. Merit begets confidence; confidence begets enthusiasm; enthusiasm conquers the world. You have got the ability to win, and all you need is confidence. My dear son, if you want knowledge, you must toil and work hard for it."

By the time of the D-Day landings, Van Fleet had honed the 8th Infantry into one of the finest regiments in the Army. Still, he could look around and see that many of his classmates had passed him by. Although he had fought with bravery in World War I, his career had also seen a shuffle of assignments to and from several nondescript posts. While Eisenhower, Bradley, and others were wearing the stars of general rank, he had been held back—not by any direct wrongdoing or lack of command ability, but primarily due to a case of mistaken identity.

Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall was an observer of character and potential among rising officers and was said to have made notes on a number of them in a small black book. Apparently, Marshall's knowledge of Van Fleet included the label of an alcoholic. In truth, Van Fleet was a teetotaler, and in an interview years later he told a reporter that it was odd Marshall should have thought such of him since the two were neighbors at Fort Benning, Georgia, between the world wars, and attended many of the same social gatherings—in which Van Fleet never took a drink.

Nevertheless, it took combat to right a wrong that had held James Van Fleet's career in check for decades. When Bradley, commander of the U.S. First Army, was asked by General Leslie McNair, commander of U.S. Army Ground Forces, about the performance of the divisional and regimental officers that reported to him, Bradley singled out his old classmate Van Fleet for high praise. Van Fleet had handled his regiment brilliantly and led from the front, actually suffering a wound and receiving the first of three Distinguished Service Crosses he would earn in Europe directly from Bradley.

McNair replied to Bradley's praise with an offhand comment that it was too bad Van Fleet had a fondness for the bottle. In his memoirs, Bradley notes that he was quick to right the egregious wrong that had been done to Van Fleet and soon he had the capable officer promoted to brigadier general and in command of a division. Other officers, including General J. Lawton Collins, commander of the VII Corps, wanted credited for correcting the screw-up as well.

For Van Fleet, however, it really made no difference as long as he was at the head of a fighting unit. He went on to command the 90th Infantry Division and III Corps with distinction during World War II. He commanded the U.S. Eighth Army during the Korean War, rose to four-star rank, advised presidents, and lived to be 100 years old. His father's words, it seems, had held him in good stead for a lifetime.

Michael E. Haskew

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By Patrick J. Chaisson

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Fighting for His Life in Pacific Skies

A young American pilot experienced a particularly tough day in combat against the Japanese while flying his fighter over New Guinea.

THE FOUR CURTISS P-40 WARHAWKS PLUMMETED 10,000 FEET OVER NEW Guinea's coastline to ambush their quarry. Flight leader 1st Lt. Donald F. Lee, Jr., concentrated intently on his target, a silver-gray Aichi D-3 Type 99 "Val" dive bomber. After centering the Japanese plane in his gunsight reticle, Lee riddled it with a long burst of .50-caliber gunfire.

Just then he heard and felt a loud "thump." One 7.7mm bullet fired by the Val's rear gunner had hit his fighter in the radiator. Banking away, the veteran watched with alarm as his engine temperature gauge began to rise. Lee's wingman next reported seeing a thin stream of white vapor trailing from the disabled Warhawk. That meant it was rapidly losing coolant.

Don Lee realized he would never make it home in this aircraft. As he prepared to bail out, the 23-year-old pilot coolly evaluated his chances of survival in the perilous waters off Cape Ward Hunt. They were not good. Even if he survived the jump, man-eating sharks and enemy patrol boats lurked everywhere. Could friendly rescue craft reach him in time?

Lee put those questions out of his mind as he unbuckled his safety harness and stepped onto the wing of his P-40. The plane suddenly rolled, however, smashing him against its rudder. Stunned, he fell toward the Huon Gulf, only 800 feet below.

This incident, which took place on July 14, 1943, was but one footnote in the saga of the 49th Fighter Group (FG), United States Army Air Forces (USAAF). Hurriedly thrown into the defense of Australia and New Guinea, the "Fighting 49ers" fought relentlessly in a most austere theater of operations against well-trained Japanese adversaries flying modern, maneuverable, and extraordinarily lethal warplanes.

During its 3½ years in combat, the 49th FG claimed 668 enemy aircraft shot down. Notable unit members included Major Richard I. Bong, America's "ace of aces" with 40 victories (21 scored while assigned to the group), and Colonel Gerald R. Johnson, who made all of his 22 kills with the Fighting 49ers.

But for every Dick Bong or Gerry Johnson, there were dozens of capable, heroic airmen who day after day flew hazardous missions over inhospitable terrain in worn-out aircraft. One of these aviators was Lieutenant Donald Lee, who served with the 49th FG for 18 grueling months before he had to abandon his plane off New Guinea's northern coast. Present at the start, when green American pilots clashed with battle-tested Japanese pilots flying the vaunted Mitsubishi Zero fighter over the Australian port of Darwin, Lee amassed a solid 600 combat hours in the P-40 Warhawk.

During his year and a half with the 49ers, Lee intercepted Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" bombers, strafed enemy troops, and escorted countless Allied transport planes as they helped advance General Douglas MacArthur's forces toward victory. Along the way, he scored four air-to-air victories. His story is one of courage, perseverance, and luck, both good and bad.

Donald Harwood Lee, Jr., was born in Ypsilanti, Michigan, on June 29, 1920, to Donald and Hazel Estelle Lee. He graduated from Ypsilanti High School in 1938 then attended the University of Michigan for two years to study architecture. Soon, however, his life would undergo a drastic change.

Like many people his age, Don Lee yearned to fly. At the time, young men with two years of college and who met stringent physical standards could volun-

Flying a Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk that is trailing smoke in the skies over New Guinea, an American pilot of the 49th Fighter Group finishes off a Japanese Zero fighter in air-to-air combat.

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ABOVE: Pilot Don Lee poses with his Curtiss P-40E fighter nicknamed *Pistoff*. Lee was flying this plane when he was forced to bail out. RIGHT: A flight of P-40 fighters from the American 49th Fighter Group wings its way toward the Japanese enemy over Australia.

teer for a seven-month course of instruction called the Aviation Cadet Training Program, which was held at private flying schools and military air bases all across the country. Standards were high—many cadets "washed out"—but those who persevered would earn both their pilot's wings and a commission as a second lieutenant in the Army Air Corps (redesignated the Army Air Forces in June 1941).

Joining these aviation cadets was an idea that appealed to the bright, athletic Lee. Opportunities in Ypsilanti were limited, while anyone who followed current events recognized that the United States would eventually be drawn into the coming war. He entered the U.S. Army on April 28, 1941, in Detroit, Michigan.

Following primary and basic flight training, Don went to Ellington Field near Houston, Texas, for advanced instruction in the North American AT-6A "Texan" two-seat trainer aircraft. There, he polished his night-flying techniques, air navigation, and formation maneuvers, all under the critical gaze of USAAF instructors. While at Ellington Field, Lee "ground-looped" an AT-6A on October 28 when his plane dug a wing into the grass and spun around after a poorly executed landing.

This accident did not prevent him from receiving his wings. On December 12, 1941, four days after the nation declared war on Japan, 2nd Lt. Donald Lee graduated from flight school and received his commission in the USAAF. He did not have much time to celebrate this achievement, though, as orders soon arrived posting Lee to duty at Morrison Field near West Palm Beach, Florida.

On December 21, Lee reported to the 49th Pursuit Group (PG) at Morrison Field. He was assigned to the 7th Pursuit Squadron (PS), one of three flying outfits that made up the 49th PG (the other squadrons were the 8th PS and 9th PS). Don heard his unit was supposed to be shipping out soon; these rumors proved correct when, on December 26, the group received an alert for overseas deployment.

Lee and his squadron mates must have felt lost in the chaos that followed. After hurriedly packing all their personal and organizational equipment, the 49ers boarded a troop train that departed from West Palm Beach at 11:45 PM on January 4, 1942. Four days later, the aviators arrived in San Francisco, where they were billeted at a former livestock pavilion nicknamed the "Cow Palace."

While the men of the 49th PG waited for transport to arrive, their ranks were filled by dozens of officers and more than 500 mechanics, clerks, electricians, cooks, and other enlisted soldiers who would keep the organization running smoothly. On January 12, the airmen at last began boarding a former luxury liner named the SS *Mariposa,* their transportation to an unknown destination.

After the *Mariposa* passed underneath the Golden Gate Bridge that afternoon, senior officers finally divulged their destination: Australia. The 49th was the first pursuit group formed in the United States to deploy overseas after Pearl Harbor, yet it did so in a manner indicative of the nation's general unpreparedness for war. Of the outfit's 102 pilots, 95 including Lee, had never flown a fighter before, and no one knew what type of aircraft they would operate once the unit arrived "Down Under."

After nearly three weeks at sea, the *Mariposa* arrived in Melbourne, Australia, on February 1. The next day, Lee and his companions disembarked. Within a week, the 7th PS had settled in at a training base at Bankstown, New South Wales. There, the airmen immersed themselves in the task of learning how to fly their new mounts, a set of freshly manufactured P-40E Warhawk pursuit planes.

The Curtiss P-40E Warhawk distinguished itself as the USAAF's best fighter available in large numbers when World War II began. An all-metal, low-wing, single-seat interceptor, the E model was powered by a 1,150-horsepower Allison V-1710-39 inline engine driving it to top speeds of over 360 miles per hour. Six

Browning M2 .50-caliber machine guns constituted the P-40E's main armament, and it came equipped with shackles that could carry one 500-pound bomb or a drop tank.

Many aircraft were damaged during this training phase. The Warhawk's powerful engine generated considerable torque, causing several rookies to veer off the runway on takeoff. Overheating was always a problem with the P-40's liquid-cooled Allison, while its narrow-track landing gear led to frequent ground loops—just what Don Lee experienced in Texas. The group suffered more than 60 accidents, many of them fatal, while its pilots learned to fly these tricky Curtiss fighters.

While Lee and his fellow 49ers familiarized themselves with the warplanes that would carry them into battle, their aggressive enemy reached ever closer to Australia. By February 1942, Japanese airpower had wrested control of Philippine skies from USAAF and Filipino aviators. The Netherlands East Indies was next. Dutch, British, and American aircraft based on the island of Java proved no match for overwhelming numbers of expertly flown

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A P-40 nicknamed *Poopy II* belonging to the 7th Fighter Squadron warms up on the dirt runway at Dobodura airfield on New Guinea.

Japanese Zero fighters.

Papua New Guinea, part of a vast landmass sitting directly north of Australia, represented the last natural barrier between approaching Japanese invasion forces and the Australian continent. On February 3, enemy bombers hit Papua's capital city of Port Moresby, preparatory to an amphibious invasion set for later that year.

More alarming to the Allies were two large-scale air raids that struck their advance base at Darwin in Australia's Northern Territory on February 19. Some 242 Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) carrier- and land-based planes demolished port facilities and airfields there, encountering only feeble resistance from surprised USAAF interceptors and Australian antiaircraft gunners.

Ready or not, the Fighting 49ers were desperately needed to help check Japan's next move. On March 4, the 7th PS sent 12 planes north 3,000 miles from its Bankstown base to Horn Island, Queensland. Lee was among those who lifted off at dawn on March 7 to make this long staging flight. He got as far as the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) airdrome at Charters Towers, where his P-40 (serial number 41-5313) was severely damaged. Together with RAAF personnel posted there, Lee eventually repaired the Curtiss—now christened *Bitza-Hawk*—and flew it to Darwin in late March.

By this point, the Americans had begun pulling mission-essential personnel out of the Philippines and Netherlands East Indies. On March 17, a careworn but defiant General Douglas MacArthur flew into Australia, ordered to organize defenses there while planning his eventual return to the Philippines. That same day, another group of combat veterans arrived to help bolster the 49ers' inexperienced ranks. These 12 pilots, survivors of the Java-based 17th Pursuit Squadron (Provisional), had earlier been evacuated from that doomed garrison. Captain Boyd D. "Buzz" Wagner, the first USAAF ace of World War II, became deputy group commander. Another five-victory "Java Boy" was Lieutenant William J. Hennon, who served with the 7th PS.

Hennon gave the outfit (redesignated the 7th Fighter Squadron on May 15) its new nickname when he painted an image of Bunyap, a fiendish Aboriginal jungle creature, on the tail of his Warhawk. His squadron mates soon adopted this "Screamin' Demon" as their unit emblem.

In April the 7th FS assembled at Batchelor Field near Darwin to provide air defense for that strategic outpost. Lee patrolled with them frequently, but had yet to encounter the G4M "Betty" bombers and their A6M "Zero" escorts that often raided Australia.

That all changed on July 30. Coastwatchers reported a large enemy formation heading toward Port Darwin, causing the Americans to scramble 46 P-40s in response. Lee, flying wingman for Lieutenant Ray Melikian in X Flight, was holding *Bitza-Hawk* at 25,000 feet over the harbor when he spotted nine Betty bombers heading directly toward him.

Closely following Melikian, Don dove on the target. "We made a head-on attack," he reported, "and the enemy fired at us. As a result of the engagement, one P-40E went down. One enemy bomber probably [hit]." Escorting Zeros then scattered the American interceptors, forcing X Flight's 2nd Lieutenant Gene Drake to ditch his Warhawk off Wagait Beach.

Lee's first combat lasted 90 seconds and failed to put him on the scoreboard. His second encounter with the Japanese, which took place three weeks later, would prove more fruitful. For what would be their final attack on Darwin, the IJN sent up 27 G4M bombers and 15 A6M escorts on August 23. The Screamin' Demons were waiting for them.

Flying again with Ray Melikian, Don roared through the bomber formation to challenge some late-arriving fighters. During the dogfight, he became separated from the rest of his flight, so after regaining some lost altitude, Lee set a course for home. Along the way, he spotted an unwary Zero and flamed it in a stern attack. The 7th FS claimed seven Japanese planes downed that day for the loss of one P-40, inspiring General MacArthur's headquarters to term the action of August 26 "a brilliant tactical interception."

Indeed, Lee and his fellow Screamin' Demons had matured into an efficient, deadly air combat team. But, as the fighting over Darwin subsided, their talents were needed elsewhere. Now part of Maj. Gen. George C. Kenney's Fifth Air Force, the squadron would serve as an aerial spearhead for Allied counterattacks in New Guinea.

On September 14, the 7th FS staged 1,100 miles across the Arafura Sea into 14-Mile Drome, so named for its road distance from the center of Port Moresby. Conditions there were extremely primitive, as General Kenney recollected: "There was no mosquito screening anywhere. Swarms of flies competed with you for the food, and unless you kept one hand busy waving them off as you ate, you were liable to lose the contest." Also awaiting the airmen in New Guinea were clouds of choking dust and a blazing-hot, humid sun.

While at 14-Mile Drome, Lee exchanged his trusty but worn-out *Bitza-Hawk* for a newer P-40E (serial number 41-5553) that he nicknamed *Pistoff*. The provocative moniker may well have been chosen as a reaction to his surroundings, or perhaps the type of missions he was now flying.

By September, Australian infantrymen had managed to halt the enemy's ground offensive on Port Moresby. The "Diggers" then began advancing steadily back up the Kokoda Track toward Japanese bases on New Guinea's northern shore. Lee and his compatriots flew frequent ground attack sorties in support of their allies that season. It was unglamorous but important duty. Everyone wanted another crack at the Zeros, which they could not do with 500-pound bombs hanging from their planes' bellies.

Don's situation began to improve on October

ADVERTISEMENT

The New $1 Cream for All Your Neuropathy Discomfort

A cream, not a pill, may be the most effective solution yet for neuropathy sufferers; increases sensation in the legs and feet, relieving burning, tingling, and numbness

By Dr. Henry Esber, Ph.D.

BOSTON – An exciting clinical use survey study shows that a new cream can relieve leg and foot discomfort in just 15 minutes of applying.

And according to the study participants, burning, tingling, and numbness were the most common symptoms to be relieved.

The cream, called *Diabasens*, recently developed by scientists in San Diego and became an instant hit among those suffering with neuropathy.

It's patent pending formula works within minutes of contacting the skin, initiating two phenomena's in the body.

The first phenomenon is known as vasodilation which triggers arteries to expand, improving circulation in the extremities.

The second is called TRPA1 activation and this is what really has people excited.

Research Shows Correlation Between Nerve Damage and Sensation

Published research shows that neuropathy symptoms arise when the nerves in your legs and feet break down and blood flow is lost to the areas which surround them.

As the nerves begin to die, sensation is lost. This lack of sensation is a major cause of burning, tingling, and numbness.

Remarkably, *Diabasens* contains one of the few known substances to activate TRPA1, a special sensory pathway right below the skins surface which controls the sensitivity of nerves. It's these nerves that allow you to feel hot, cold, and touch.

And although this pathway has been known about for years, neither a drug or a pill has been able to target it successfully. That's why *Diabasens* is so impressive.

"It all comes down to sensation. When sensation is lost the foot feels constantly asleep. It may also burn and tingle. When sensation is increased, these nagging symptoms often go away", explains Dr. Henry Esber, one of the scientists behind *Diabasens*.

"That's why *Diabasens* performed so well in our clinical use survey study. It increases sensation and blood flow wherever it's applied. It's impressive to say the least"

A Brilliant Technology Most Failed to Consider

Until now, many pharma companies have failed to develop a means of TRPA1 activation to manage neuropathy. *Diabasens* is one of the first to take full advantage of this amazing discovery.

"Today's treatment methods have focused on minimizing discomfort instead of attacking its underlining cause. That's why millions of adults are still in excruciating discomfort every single day and are always battling effects" explains Esber

"*Diabasens* is different. Since the most commonly reported symptoms...burning, tingling and numb legs and feet...are caused by lack of sensation of the nerves, we've designed the formula increase their sensitivity.

And since these nerves are located right below the skin, we've chosen to formulate it as a cream. This allows for the ingredients to get to the site faster and without any serious side effects" he adds.

Study Finds Restoring Sensation the Key To Effective, Long Lasting Relief

With the conclusion of the human clinical use survey trial, the makers of *Diabasens* are offering it nationwide. And regardless of the market, its sales are exploding.

Men and women from all over the country are eager to get their hands on the new cream and according to the results study participants reported, they should be.

In the trial above, participants taking *Diabasens* as needed experienced relief in just 15 minutes after applying! Burning, tingling and numbness were the most commonly reported symptoms to improve.

Even more impressive, when asked if this was the best product they used for their legs and feet, 90% gave a resounding "Yes" with all participants concluding they would absolutely recommend it to someone else.

A breakthrough in neuropathy management and supportive care, Diabasens is shown to provide relief from:

- Discomfort
- Numbness
- Tingling
- Swelling
- Poor Balance

Targets Nerves Right Below the Skins Surface

Diabasens is a topical cream that is to be applied directly the legs and feet. It does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a compound known as cinnamaldehyde.

A NEW WEAPON FOR FIGHTING NEUROPATHY DISCOMFORT: Diabasens increases sensation and blood flow wherever its applied. It's now being used to relieve burning, tingling, numbness among other discomforts.

Studies show that neuropathy and discomfort caused when peripheral nerves breakdown and blood is unable to circulate into your legs and feet.

As these nerves deteriorate, sensation is lost.

This is why you may not feel hot or cold and your legs and feet may burn, tingle and go numb.

Worse, without proper blood flow, tissues and cells in these areas begin to die, causing pain that seems to never go away.

The cinnamaldehyde in *Diabasens* is one of the very few compounds in that can activate TRPA1, a special sensory pathway that runs through your entire body.

According to published research, activating this pathway increases the sensitivity of nerves, relieving feelings of tingling and numbness in your legs and feet.

Supporting ingredients boost blood flow, support cellular health and stimulate the nerves for increased sensation.

Amazing Relief Exactly Where You Need It

With daily use, *Diabasens* users report remarkable improvements in their quality of life without of the serious side effects or interactions associated with prescription drugs.

Readers can now enjoy an entirely new level of comfort that's both safe and affordable.

Users have found is also extremely effective, especially if nothing else has worked with 90% ravings it's the best leg and foot product they've ever tried.

How to Get Diabasens

In order to get the word out about *Diabasens*, the company is offering special introductory discounts to all who call. Discounts will automatically be applied to all callers, but don't wait. This offer may not last forever. **Call toll-free: 1-800-641-6738.**

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16 when he received promotion to first lieutenant. Also that month, a batch of factory-new P-40K replacement aircraft arrived at 14-Mile Drome. Lee badly wanted one of these K models, which sported 150 more horsepower than his current mount, but he would have to wait several months for one to become available.

Meanwhile, the 7th FS began escorting fighter-bombers against Japanese strongpoints along New Guinea's northern coast. Over Buna on November 30, a flight of 16 Screamin' Demons collided with a large group of A6Ms intent on disrupting the American strike.

Now an element leader in Green Flight, Lee saw the enemy fighters diving in among billowing clouds to strike. "We were about at 7,000 feet when some Zeros were sighted above and behind us," he stated later. "Two Zeros attacked our flight from the rear. The leader dove out and I followed…. I [then] got on the tail of another Zero and shot at him. He pulled up in a stall turn and came head on into me. I fired another burst and he broke into flames, half-rolled and dove in."

The new year brought both a change of base and a new, emerging threat. Beginning in January 1943, Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) fighters began operating over New Guinea to reinforce IJN forces already in-theater. In battle, their nimble Nakajima Ki-43 "Oscars" were easily confused with the Navy's A6M Zeros, and when flown ably, both types represented a serious threat to the Warhawk-equipped 7th FS.

Starting in February, Lee's squadron began staging out of a recently constructed airbase at Dobodura near Buna. While muddy and infested with scorpions, "Dobo" offered some long-forgotten luxuries such as hot, American-style rations, nightly movies, a baseball diamond, and regular mail service, although it took until May 7 for the outfit's Christmas packages to arrive.

That spring, Don Lee finally received his present, a new P-40K-1-CU Warhawk (serial number 42-45979). He put this warplane, again named *Pistoff,* to good use on March 5 while escorting RAAF Bristol Beaufighters on a strafing run over the Japanese airstrip at Malahang northeast of Lae. Together with Captain Ray Melikian and 2nd Lt. Dave Baker, Lee jumped two tan-colored Ki-43s that were trying to escape into the overcast.

Don wrote: "About this time, another [Oscar] crossed ahead and a little below me from left to right. He pulled up towards the clouds. I followed him, firing, and he pulled on back into a loop. At the top of the loop, I saw two big pieces fall off, and he burst into flames at the wing roots on both sides of the fuselage." This Ki-43 became Lee's third confirmed kill.

CACTUS Collection

Don Lee was pulled from the shark-infested waters off New Guinea by the crew of *PT-150,* above, after he bailed out of his stricken plane.

As summer neared, the squadron completed its move to Dobodura while flying a full schedule of bomber and transport escort missions. For Lieutenant Lee, the hazards of combat extended well beyond the cockpit of his P-40. On May 10, he wrecked an Australian-built Tiger Moth trainer while attempting to deliver repair parts to a radar site on Oro Bay. His biplane, known to U.S. airmen as a PT-24, struck some unseen oil drums at the end of the runway and nosed into the ground. Neither Lee nor his passenger was hurt in the mishap.

Now leading Orange Flight, Lee took off at 7:30 AM on July 14 to escort USAAF C-47 transport planes to the Mubo camp near Salamaua. While flying high cover at 21,000 feet, 14 U.S. fighters under Ray Melikian's steady leadership pounced on a pair of "Val" dive bombers cruising just offshore. Melikian and his three wingmen in Blue Flight crippled one Val before tearing off after its partner, last seen entering a cloudbank.

Orange Flight, with Don Lee in front, then spiraled down to engage. Maneuvering behind the damaged bomber, Don set it aflame in a torrent of machine-gun fire. The Val fought back, though, its gunner putting a lucky slug through Pistoff's coolant system. With his Warhawk mortally wounded, Lee radioed a distress signal and headed for Allied-held Lasanga Island, several miles off mainland New Guinea.

Unable to reach Lasanga, Don bailed out of the stricken P-40 at 800 feet. He broke his left arm on the plane's tail when it suddenly shifted underneath him but managed to deploy his parachute. Upon hitting the water, though, Lee found he could barely stay afloat—both his inflatable raft and Mae West life jacket had malfunctioned. While Melikian circled the area coordinating rescue efforts, Lee's squadron mates all attempted to throw him their own life rafts to no avail.

At this point, wingman Lucius LaCroix noticed a school of sharks beginning to encircle the struggling airman. LaCroix dove down twice to strafe the maneaters but had to head home along with his fellow Demons due to low fuel. Two Douglas A-20 Havoc light bombers then arrived, expertly dropping a large life raft right into Don's hands. Thirty minutes later, he was rescued by the crew of American patrol torpedo boat PT-150.

Returning to Dobodura for medical treatment, Lee received both a transfer to Group HQ and promotion to captain. He also was awarded the Purple Heart medal in a ceremony held August 25. His tour of duty concluded, Lee then went home to recuperate and attend command school.

Advanced to major, he returned to the Southwest Pacific in September 1944. On the 15th of that month he took over another famous fighter squadron, the 67th "Fighting Cocks," then operating out of the Philippines with the Thirteenth Air Force. Lee saw plenty of action with the 67th but never downed another enemy aircraft. He ended the war with four confirmed victories, one shy of making ace status.

Don Lee continued to serve his country as an Air Force reserve officer. Recalled for the Korean conflict, he flew North American F-86 Sabre jets in combat there. Retiring as a lieutenant colonel, his military awards included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, and Bronze Star medal with two oak leaf clusters. In civilian life, he worked in the insurance industry while raising a family of five children and 13 grandchildren.

Donald H. Lee, Jr., passed away on February 20, 2011, at the age of 90 in Edmond, Oklahoma. His boyish face does not appear in any aviation hall of fame—indeed, most historians know more about Don's saucily named P-40 Warhawk than they do the heroic young man who flew *Pistoff* into battle. That is a pity, for Don Lee stood proudly with a small number of American pilots who experienced the whole of the Pacific air war from its darkest days over Darwin to ultimate victory against Japan. □

A retired U.S. Army officer, Patrick J. Chaisson writes on a variety of World War II topics from his home in Scotia, New York.

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By Michael D. Hull

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The Loyal "Lumbering Lib"

The versatile Consolidated B-24 Liberator heavy bomber served in numerous roles in all theaters of World War II.

A HOST OF FAMOUS FIGHTERS AND BOMBERS IN THE ALLIED ARSENAL SPEAR-headed the aerial offensives that helped secure victory against the Axis powers in World War II.

They included Great Britain's Supermarine Spitfire, Hawker Hurricane, Vickers Wellington, De Havilland Mosquito, and Avro Lancaster of Dambusters fame; and America's North American B-25 Mitchell, Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk, Douglas A-20 Havoc, North American P-51 Mustang, Republic P-47 Thunderbolt, and the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, immortalized by the best-selling novel and classic film Twelve O'Clock High.

Overshadowed by all was an aerial workhorse that served almost everywhere and did almost everything. Produced in greater numbers than any other American military aircraft, the four-engine, high-wing Consolidated B-24 Liberator was the only bomber to be used in all theaters of operation.

Big, ungainly, and disparaged as an underpowered, hard-to-fly "widow-maker," the "Lumbering Lib" was not fully developed when World War II broke out and was essentially obsolete by the time it ended. But it proved rugged, had great endurance, and outdid the graceful, legendary B-17 in its speed, range, and operational ceiling. It carried more bombs than the Fortress, yet some Army Air Forces wags joked that it was "the packing box the B-17 came in."

From early in the war until its end, and from England to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean to the Far East, Liberators were assigned to the longest, toughest missions. The durable B-24 was the most versatile American bomber. Before the advent of the Boeing B-29 Superfortress, the Liberator was one of the few land-based heavy bombers used in the Pacific Theater because it could handle the long flights where no emergency landing fields were available.

Like that of the B-17 and many other U.S. wartime aircraft, the Liberator's origin dated back to the mid-1930s and experiments with such "big bombers" as the Boeing XB-15 and Douglas XB-19. The necessity of a heavy bomber with superior performance grew critical in view of the tense political situation in Europe and Japanese militancy in the Far East. In January 1939, Maj. Gen. Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, commander of the Army Air Corps, foresaw the need for a bomber that could exceed 300 miles per hour and have a range of 3,000 miles and a ceiling of 35,000 feet.

Consolidated Aircraft Corporation founder Reuben H. Fleet and design engineer I.M. "Mac" Laddon were approached that month and asked to create a production outlet for the B-17. But Consolidated made a counteroffer to build a better plane. The company wasted no time and, after a period of frantic work, created a mock-up of a radically new type of bomber. Powered by four Pratt & Whitney Twin Wasp radial engines, and equipped with a tricycle undercarriage to permit faster takeoffs and landings, Model 32 was designed around a high, low-drag wing patented by David R. Davis. This would increase the plane's speed, range, and load capability.

Fleet, a U.S. Air Service pilot in World War I who had organized the first airmail flight from Washington, D.C., to New York, was proud of his plane but troubled about its aesthetics. The big, slab-sided bomber had an ugly snub nose, so he decided to add three feet to the fuselage and make it look prettier.

In this painting by artist Robert Taylor, Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers trail smoke from heavy flak damage during their mission to bomb the oil refining facilities at Ploesti, Romania.

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The experimental XB-24 bomber, forerunner of the famed Liberator, takes wing on December 29, 1939.

The Army selected Model 32 on February 21, 1939, and a month later ordered a single XB-24 prototype. Even before it made its maiden flight on December 29, 1939, Consolidated began to receive orders for its new bomber. Early test flights proved successful. That March, meanwhile, the Army ordered seven service-test YB-24s, six of which were eventually sold to Britain as transatlantic ferry transports. A French purchasing commission sought 139 of the planes. The British and French wanted the new plane. When France capitulated in June 1940, her order for the bombers was transferred to Britain.

Production continued at five eventual aircraft plants run by four companies—Consolidated at San Diego, California, and Fort Worth, Texas; Douglas at Tulsa, Oklahoma; Ford at Willow Run, Michigan; and North American at Dallas, Texas—and Liberators went into service with the newly formed U.S. Army Air Forces and the British Royal Air Force.

The American B-24s were initially used as transports and ferries, while the first batch to cross the Atlantic became unarmed transports for British Overseas Airways Corporation and crew ferries for the RAF Ferry Command. The second batch of planes joined RAF Coastal Command at Prestwick, Scotland, where they were modified and fitted with radar, increased armament, and Leigh lights for illuminating surfaced submarines at night.

The first B-24s to see action in World War II were deployed against German U-boats preying on Allied convoys in the Atlantic. Liberators helped to close the mid-Atlantic "gap," where bitter battles were fought, and where U-boats had been beyond the reach of land-based planes and even the formidable Short Sunderland "Flying Porcupine" flying boats of Coastal Command. The long-range B-24 quickly established itself as highly effective in this particular combat role. Lockheed Hudson bombers could operate almost 500 miles from base, Wellingtons and Armstrong Whitworth Whitleys could spend two hours on station at that distance, the Sunderland could spend two hours at 600 miles, and the Catalina PBY the same amount of time at more than 800 miles. But the Liberator, with a maximum fuel load of 2,500 gallons, could spend three hours patrolling more than 1,100 miles from base.

B-24s proved invaluable in the long Allied struggle to turn the tide against U-boat wolf packs in the unforgiving Atlantic. Later, in March 1945, RAF Liberators sank seven U-boats in six days.

As production increased, more B-24 variants rolled off the American assembly lines and went into service with the USAAF and Allied air forces. The RAF took delivery of about 1,900 of the bombers, several hundred went to the U.S. Navy, and others served with the Royal Canadian, Australian, and South African Air Forces.

Manned by a crew of eight to 10 and mounting 10 .50-caliber machine guns, the Liberator was 67 feet long, had a wingspan of 110 feet, a cruising speed of 290 miles an hour, and carried a maximum bomb load of 12,800 pounds. Though eventually easy to mass produce, the B-24 was an advanced and complex aircraft for its time. It consisted of 1,225,000 parts held together by 313,237 rivets and cost $215,000 to build. The price tag for a B-17 was $187,000.

The bulky Liberator had a few faults. It required considerable strength to handle the controls. Pilots said that it was difficult to fly, particularly in formation and at altitudes above 20,000 feet, and that it demanded maximum skill. As one recalled, "In the air it was like a fat lady doing a ballet." The plane's distinctive twin tails made it slightly unstable, and its fuel system was flawed. The interior was roomy yet seemed cramped, and at high altitudes it was always numbingly cold. But the virtues outweighed the faults. As another pilot said later, "This was the workhorse of all the bombers." Like the Fortress, it could take great punishment, hand it out, and get its crew home.

The production of B-24s, like that of Sherman tanks and Liberty ships, was one of the marvels of America's wartime industry. The plane underwent almost continuous modification, with increases in bomb load and defensive firepower. On the half-mile-long assembly line at Ford Motor Company's sprawling plant in the village of Willow Run 30 miles west of Detroit, a B-24 was assembled every 51 minutes when production reached its peak. A total of 19,203 Liberator variants were eventually built.

Shortly before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, two specially equipped B-24s flew to the Philippines for reconnaissance flights over enemy bases in the Caroline and Marshall Islands. One of these planes was destroyed on the ground at Hickam Field, Hawaii, on that fateful Sunday morning. Following the attack that thrust America into World War II, the 75 Liberator IIs awaiting delivery to the British were requisitioned by the USAAF.

While some of the new American bombers were rendering sterling service on antisubmarine sorties with RAF Coastal Command, others were readied to join B-17s in the gradual U.S. Eighth Air Force buildup in England. The 93rd Bomb Group was the first to arrive in England with B-24Ds in September 1942. Nicknamed "The Traveling Circus," the group had made the first formation crossing of the North Atlantic by Liberators. Other B-24s were deployed to the Middle East, where they served with the USAAF and the RAF.

In May 1942, a force of 13 B-24Ds led by Colonel Harry H. Halvorson was assigned to fly to China and join the Tenth Air Force for raids against Tokyo. Its staging base was the RAF airfield at Fayid on the Great Bitter Lake in northeastern Egypt. Halvorson's detachment did not make it to the Far East, but instead gained the first public attention for Liberators. On June 12, they took off on a mission to attack the oil refineries at Ploesti, 35 miles north of Bucharest, Romania. It was the first USAAF heavy bomber mission and the first of

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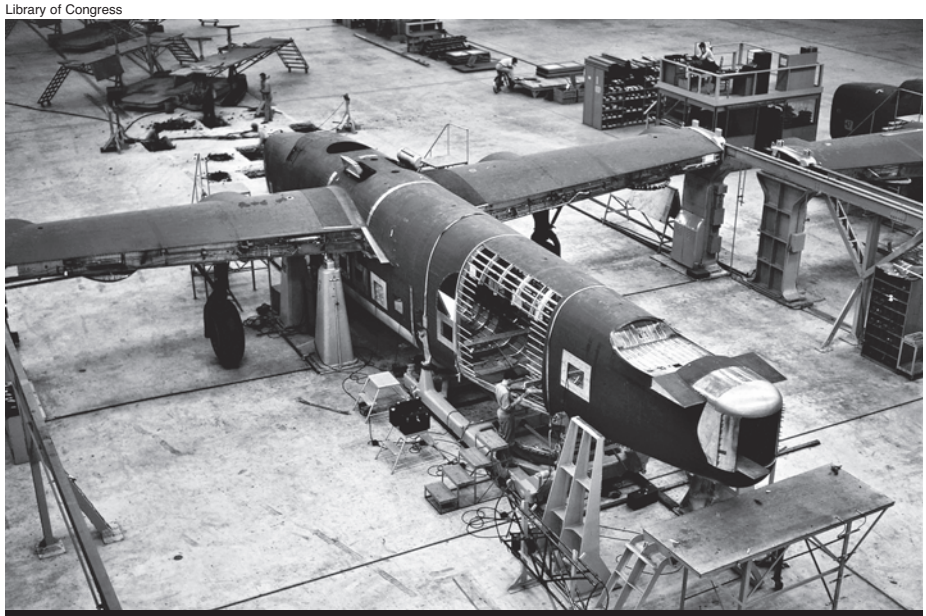

A C-87 transport aircraft, a modification of the Liberator design, sits on the Consolidated Aircraft factory floor in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1942.

several attacks by B-24s based in North Africa on Nazi Germany's vital source of petroleum.

The bombers flew over the refineries at low level in heavy cloud cover and caused minimal damage. There were no American losses during the 2,400-mile round-trip operation, but only seven bombers landed as planned in Iraq, two made it to Syria, one crash-landed, and four were interned in Turkey. Another such mission the following year would also prove disastrous.

B-24s flew their first combat mission from England on October 9, 1942. Colonel Edward J. Timberlake, Jr.'s 93rd Bomb Group took off from Alconbury and took part in a five-group raid on the French city of Lille. Sergeant Arthur Crandall, one of Timberlake's gunners, shot down a Focke-Wulf 190 fighter that day to chalk up the first aerial victory for an Eighth Air Force Liberator.

The next B-24 group to reach England was the 44th Bomb Group, the "Flying Eight Balls," which arrived at Shipdham on November 7. Although its first operation consisted merely of seven bombers creating a diversion for an attack by Fortresses, the 44th Bomb Group was destined to take part in 343 missions up to April 1945. It flew more missions and dropped more bombs (18,980 tons) than any other B-24 group except the 93rd. Over the course of the war, the group lost 192 planes and claimed 330 Luftwaffe fighters destroyed.

The 93rd Bomb Group was uprooted from England and deployed to North Africa on December 13, 1942. As part of the Twelfth Air Force and later the Ninth Air Force, its Liberators flew strikes against Axis supply ports. The air and ground crews had to cope with primitive facilities, furious winds, rain, and mud. Sometimes it was impossible to taxi a B-24D because the mud was such an obstacle. The group mounted 22 missions in 81 days before returning to England.

The numbers of Liberators grew so great that for most of the war, they constituted one-third of Eighth Bomber Command's strength and outnumbered Fortresses in bomber groups in the Mediterranean and Pacific Theaters. By the end of 1943, there were more than 550 B-24s in Europe. The RAF, meanwhile, began using Liberators in the Middle East in June 1942 and then in the Indian Ocean area.

B-24s were not well liked in the European Theater because of the difficulty in mixing B-24 and B-17 formations, the respective flight per formance capabilities of which were not compatible. There was a defensive need for tight formations in missions over Germany. B-17 crewmen joked that their best escorts were Liberators because they attracted enemy fighters. The B-24 performed better over North Africa and Italy, and even superlatively in the Pacific Theater.

Electronically modified and flying singly at low level, B-24 night raiders had a remarkable success rate in the Pacific. There, Liberators almost completely replaced the shorter-range B-17s and carried most of the burden of USAAF bombing operations until the Superfortresses arrived late in 1944.

The most famous—and costly—Liberator mission of the war came when the bombers returned to Ploesti in the summer of 1943. The eight refineries ringing the city supplied Germany with 10 million tons of fuel oil a year, meeting a third of Luftwaffe and Panzer Corps needs. Because Germany possessed virtually no oil of its own, Allied planners believed that if the refineries could be destroyed, the enemy's war-making capacity would be seriously crippled. Operation Tidal Wave was painstakingly planned by a team led by Colonel Jacob Smart as a rooftop-level assault to minimize the need for a return mission. Such an approach, it was reasoned, would enhance the bombing accuracy and reduce the effect of enemy antiaircraft batteries.

Aircrews spent several weeks maneuvering their 60,000-pound B-24Ds a few feet above the scorching desert around Benghazi on the Libyan coast. Though the plan was a bold one, Smart and his planners believed there was a better than average chance of success for the mission. But they were working with erroneous information. Allied intelligence had reported that Ploesti was lightly defended by flak guns manned by Romanians whose hearts were not fully in the German cause.

In fact, the local military commander, Colonel Alfred Gerstenberg, was a diehard Nazi who had turned Ploesti into one of the most heavily defended cities in Europe. Almost 300 deadly 88mm flak guns, 20mm and 37mm rapid-fire cannons, hundreds of heavy machine guns, and barrage balloons ringed the target area. A flak train was stationed there, and half a dozen fighter squadrons were based nearby. All were manned, not by reluctant Romanians, but by highly trained Germans. Early-warning systems extended all the way to Axis-occupied Greece to give Gerstenberg an early alert about any threat to Ploesti.

Unaware of what was waiting for them, the Americans made final preparations at Benghazi. Crews were briefed, and 178 Liberators were fueled and armed. The five bomb groups taking part were the 44th, 93rd, and 389th of the Eighth Air Force, and the 98th and 376th of the Ninth Air Force's Ninth Bomber Command. The mission leader was 43-year-old, Pennsylvania-born Brig. Gen. Uzal G. Ent, a 1924 West Point graduate and highly decorated commander of the Ninth Bomber Command.

At dawn on Sunday, August 1, 1943, the B-24s began thundering along the Benghazi runways on their seven-hour, 2,400-mile mission. They climbed northward across the Mediterranean. Things went wrong from the start. A Liberator crashed and burned on takeoff, killing its 10-man crew, a second plane flew into the sea, and another jettisoned its bombs and crashed after being attacked by a Messerschmitt 109 fighter. As the bombers rendezvoused, 10 more B-24s had to abort and return to base with engines fouled by the desert sand.

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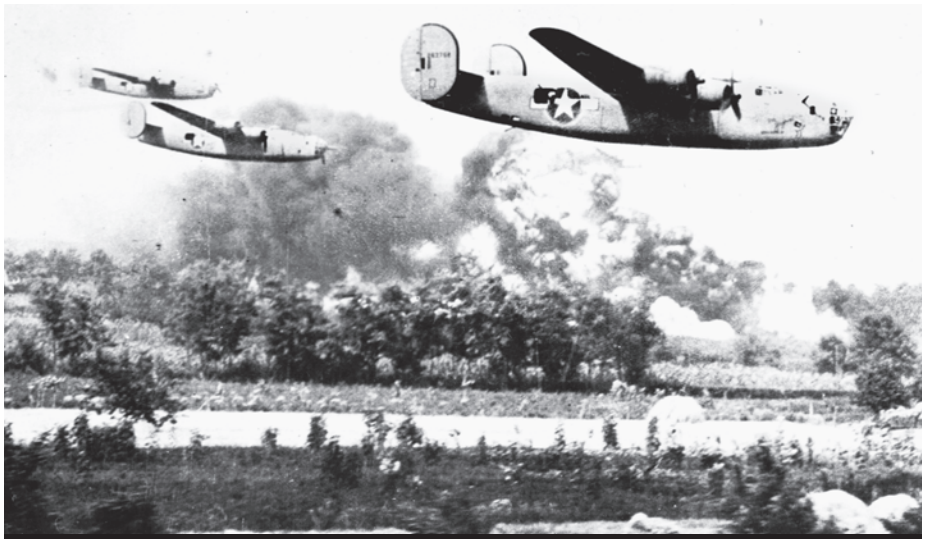

Smoke and flames billow from refinery structures at Ploesti, Romania, as B-24 Liberators fly low over their target during the difficult hours of Operation Tidal Wave.

The strike force was to head northward to the island of Corfu off the southwestern coast of Albania and then swing northeastward toward Romania. Near Corfu, the lead bomber, Wongo-Wongo, piloted by Lieutenant Brian Flavelle, inexplicably began pitching violently. After standing abruptly on its tail, it shuddered, flipped over backward, and plummeted into the Ionian Sea. No one knew what had happened because radio silence was being observed.

As the B-24s crossed the Albanian mountains, unexpected cloud cover and wind shear split the formation. The plan to have all five bomb groups hit their targets simultaneously was falling apart. A navigation error resulting from the misreading of a checkpoint diverted two of the groups toward Bucharest. The error was eventually corrected, but the new flight path was bringing the bombers toward the densest flak corridor. German intelligence, meanwhile, had deciphered a "don't shoot" radio message to Allied naval units, and Gerstenberg's gun crews at Ploesti were ready. The five Liberator groups would hit the target area in three waves instead of one, and they would be approaching from directions unfamiliar to them. Operation Tidal Wave was heading for disaster.

The 22 Liberators of Lt. Col. Addison E. Baker's 93rd Bomb Group were the first to arrive at Ploesti. Piloting the lead plane, Hell's Wench, the tall, stern-jawed Baker drove hard for the target city as the bombers tightened formation and skimmed 50 feet above farm fields. All hell soon broke loose as German guns opened up. Machine guns and flak batteries hidden in haystacks poured fire into the sky and more barrage balloons rose. The "Traveling Circus" bore on, but several bombers began trailing smoke, erupting in flames, and going down. Hell's Wench hit a balloon cable, took several hits, and eventually crashed in flames. There were no survivors, and Baker and his copilot, Major John L. Jerstad, were awarded posthumous Medals of Honor.

Fifteen minutes behind the "Traveling Circus," the final two formations—Colonel Leon Johnson's "Eight Balls" 44th Group and the

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Imperial War Museum

A formation of Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers flies toward a target. The B-24 rendered tremendous and versatile service to the Allies in World War II.

"Pyramiders" of Colonel John R. "Killer" Kane's 98th Group—made a correct turn and headed for Ploesti on course. The bombers pressed through a curtain of fire to their targets, but the losses mounted. One after another, burning B-24s fell. Johnson lost nine of his 16 planes, but he and Kane pressed on staunchly. "It was like flying through hell," Johnson reported. "It was indescribable to anyone who wasn't there. We flew through sheets of flame, and airplanes were everywhere, some of them on fire, others exploding."

Johnson and Kane, who later rose to four-star rank, were awarded the Medal of Honor for their intrepidity. Another posthumous Medal of Honor went to Lieutenant Lloyd D. "Pete" Hughes of the 389th Bomb Group, who dropped bombs squarely on target while his doomed B-24 was burning fiercely. It was the only single engagement in World War II in which five Medals of Honor were awarded. The five bomb groups received Presidential Unit Citations.

A 389th Bomb Group squadron led by Captain Philip Ardery, who had flown on the first Ploesti raid, was the last to drop bombs after plunging into a cauldron of greasy black smoke and pillars of flame. "Already the fires were leaping higher than the level of our approach," he reported. "From the target grew the column of flames, smoke, and explosions, and we were headed straight into it. As we were going into the furnace, I said a quick prayer. During those moments I didn't think that I could possibly come out alive." A total of 167 bombers dropped 311 tons of bombs on the refineries.

Once past Ploesti, the surviving Liberators were ambushed by 125 German fighters, and more went down in flames. Seven crippled bombers limped to neutral Turkey, where the crews were interned; 19 landed in Sicily, Malta, or Cyprus; some failed to reach Libya and fell into the Mediterranean, while 92 battered B-24s made it back to Benghazi. The casualty toll for the mission, one of the costliest of the war, was 532 killed or wounded.

Operation Tidal Wave knocked out about 42 percent of Ploesti's refineries for six months, but repairs were made and delivery rates for refined crude oil were unaffected. Ploesti remained a strategic magnet for the USAAF, and many more B-24s returned there. Seventeen

Continued on page 73

By Blaine Taylor

Mussolini's Fall from Power

Sources suggest that many individuals plotted to topple Il Duce from his leadership in Fascist Italy.

AT 10:30 ON THE NIGHT OF MAY 9, 1936, AS 400,000 PEOPLE STOOD CROWDED together on Rome's Palazzo Venezia underneath the most famous balcony in the world, Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini, 52, the leader of the country's ruling Fascist Party, strode forward and began to speak to the silent masses below him.

"The destiny of Abyssinia has been sealed today!" he intoned in the deep, powerful voice that enthralled millions via radio down the length of the Italian "boot," and millions more around the globe.

"Italy has her empire!" he roared, thus having avenged the defeat in 1896 at the Battle of Adowa in far-off East Africa of the Royal Italian Army in what had been the most humiliating massacre of any white colonial force in history, all the more galling at the hands of a black host.

At one stroke, Mussolini made Italian King Victor Emmanuel III of the reigning House of Savoy an emperor too.

Bathed in the light of flood lamps, the king's appointed head of government since 1922 stood immobile, his hands gripping the stone balustrade of the balcony, gazing immobile as his worshippers below chanted over and over, "Duce, Duce, Duce!"

Drunk with the hyped euphoria of the moment, one of Mussolini's top Fascist satraps blurted out of their chief, "He's like a god!" but another corrected him thus, "No, not like a god—he is a god!"

But both they and the object of their overripe veneration had forgotten the dictate of an earlier Italian premier, Count Camilo Cavour, who asserted, more correctly, "The roar of the crowd in the piazza is not the voice of the people."

By Mussolini's last appearance on May 5, 1943, which happened on that same balcony, his world had fallen apart on many levels in an almost unprecedented historical reversal of fortune.

The British Eighth Army in Egypt had not only routed a much larger Italian force driving on Cairo, but had also taken hundreds of thousands of prisoners, thus imperiling Italy's Libyan colony in North Africa, taken from the Turks in 1911.

Il Duce's invasion of Greece in October 1940 was not only repulsed by the hardy Greeks, but yet another Italian invading force had been driven off, with the Greek Army invading Mussolini's neighbor Albania, occupied in 1939.

In 1941, the former captive Italian colony of Ethiopia had been returned to its rightful ruler, Emperor Haile Selassie, after a British army badly defeated the Fascist occupiers who had conquered it in 1936.

In the cases of both the Western Desert and the rugged mountain terrain of ancient Greece, the crestfallen Duce had suffered double embarrassments from which his stronger German allies had to bail him out with their own troops, winning victories that his armies had failed miserably to achieve.

The expeditionary corps that he had sent to help Hitler conquer the Soviet Union had been blamed for a major part of the German debacle at Stalingrad in November 1942, with its veterans returning home hating their contemptuous German "allies." Many even joined the anti-Axis Communist partisans in protest, fighting the Nazis instead.

His much vaunted fleet had been badly

ABOVE: Mussolini accompanies his Nazi benefactor Adolf Hitler during a summit meeting. Hitler came to Mussolini's aid on more than one occasion during the war years. TOP: Fascist Italian dictator Benito Mussolini greets a cheering crowd at the Palazzo Venetia in Rome. In a few short years, the crowds turned on Il Duce.

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ABOVE: Some of the thousands of Italian prisoners captured during Operation Compass in North Africa in 1941 are headed toward a holding area for eventual transport to prison camps. RIGHT: Mussolini bows before King Victor Emmanuel III after leaving the Church of St. Maria degli Angeli in Rome. This photo was taken in 1927, when Il Duce was popular among the Italian people.

mauled at the Italian naval base at Taranto, and the famed Italian Folgore parachute troops had failed in their attempt to seize Malta. Thus, the Mediterranean was still a British lake rather than what Il Duce most desired, "our sea," while the Royal Navy remained steadfastly at anchor at Gibraltar, the rock that remained a British bastion at the gates of the Mediterranean.

In the "conquered" Balkans, the Italian armed forces were waging a no-win, antiguerrilla war against both former Yugoslav royalist troops and a newly risen force, Communist partisans under Tito.

After the surrender of all Axis forces in Tunisia in May 1943 came the stunning Allied invasion of Italian territory itself, starting with the island of Pantelleria, followed by Sicily, the latter being defended far more by the Germans again than by the resident Fascist forces.

Everyone, especially Mussolini himself, could predict the Allies next move, the invasion, conquest, and occupation of Italy.

Only one man could prevent that dire outcome and thus save Il Duce his premiership, the Fascist Party its rule, and his majesty's throne: German Chancellor Adolf Hitler, but the Führer would not do what Mussolini urged to reverse the dire situation in the Mediterranean.

In a blunt appeal at Salzburg, Austria, in April 1943, Il Duce urged Hitler to radically reverse his own major war aim since June 1941, admitting that he had lost the war against Soviet Russia and had to make peace with Josef Stalin, thereby abandoning the East for the southern theater of war instead, and transferring all German forces from Russia to the Mediterranean.

This and this alone, Mussolini argued, would save his regime and Italy from complete defeat. Hitler rejected it completely, and as their next summit scheduled for that summer in Italy approached, Il Duce faced a plethora of plots against him and his all-too-personal regime that had ruled Italy since 1922.

These included a major triad of opponents: his own Fascist Party ruling class, the Italian Royal Army and its top leader, and King Victor Emmanuel, who alone had the legal, constitutional power to fire the man he had named premier two decades earlier.

First, there were the various disparate leading elements of Mussolini's Fascist bosses. Among these were two bitter rivals, Dino Grandi and Roberto Farinacci. The former wanted to retire Mussolini and also be named by the king to succeed him, while the latter wanted Italian leadership of the fighting in the Mediterranean to cease altogether and taken over by the far more ruthless Germanic hordes, already in force in much of Italy proper anyway.

A third would-be administrative usurper was Il Duce's own son-in-law, former Italian Foreign Minister Count Galeazzo Ciano, husband of Mussolini's oldest daughter, Edda. An additional potential conspirator or enemy of Il Duce was the man who succeeded Ciano as foreign minister in February 1943, the former ambassador to Poland and current undersecretary Giuseppe Bastianini. The new foreign minister urged his boss to leave the lost war behind by declaring a replay of the Italian neutrality of 1914-1915, a tack that Mussolini thought Hitler would never allow.

Giuseppe Bottai, Fascist National Minister of Education during 1936-1943, was still another potential rival. Bottai had been one of many officials ruthlessly purged from office that February when the alarmed Duce thought he had squelched all intraparty resistance to his continued mishandling of the lost war with an across-the-board shakeup of his cabinet.

He was wrong. All it really accomplished was to both solidify and expand the growing anti-Mussolini feeling among his oldest followers.

The officers of the Italian Army presented a threat of their own to Mussolini's grip on power, chief of which was the reigning Italian Army Chief of Staff, General Vittorio Ambrosio, and his largely royalist officer corps. Ambrosio

loathed Il Duce for both losing the war and constantly kowtowing to Hitler. Witnessing yet another Hitlerian browbeating of his nominal master during their meeting at the Italian town of Feltre, Ambrosio made his own, inner, final decision. Mussolini would have to go.

Then came King Victor Emmanuel III, who had already reigned in Savoyard Italy for 22 years by the day that Mussolini, then aged 39, had first taken office in 1922. He had his own secret candidate in mind to succeed the discredited Duce if it came to that, Marshal of Italy Pietro Badoglio, conqueror of Ethiopia in 1936, whom Mussolini had forcibly retired after he lost in Greece four years later. Directing the palace revolt was his majesty's most constant in-house adviser, the Duke of Acquarone.

Despising the peasant Mussolini, the elder Marshal Badoglio simply bided his time, awaiting the expected summons from his majesty when Fascism's fall would seem imminent. He had wanted to shoot down Mussolini and his street thug Black Shirts in 1922 with Army weaponry, but the king had balked at the

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Karen James is a noted journalist and expert in sex and relationships.

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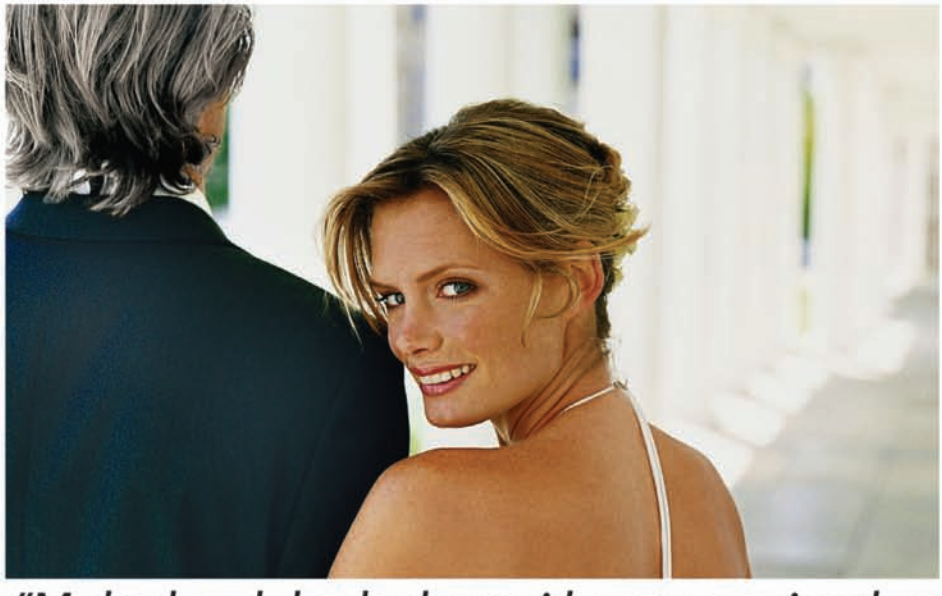

"My husband shocked me with more passion than he's had in years. I'm so glad I discovered this new product"

Tina writes: Dear Karen,

For years my husband and I had a wonderful love life, but when he reached his 50s, he lost some of his old spark, especially in the bedroom. He tried every product available, but nothing worked. For the past few years, it's felt like we were roommates, not husband and wife.

Well, last month he came home from a business trip in Europe and shocked me with more energy and passion than he's had in years. He took me in the bedroom like we were newlyweds and gave me a night I'll never forget. It was just incredible, and our love life has been like that ever since. So here we are, closer than ever and enjoying the best sex of our lives… in our 50's!

On his trip, my husband stayed in a hotel room next to an Italian nutritionist and his wife and heard them passionately making love every night. He figured they must be in their twenties, but one morning he encountered them in the hallway and it turns out, they were in their 70s!

Instead of being embarrassed that they'd been found out, they were positively glowing and happy to share their "secret." The man pulled out a small pack from his satchel, gave it to my husband and said "These tablets come from a small town up north and are made from naturally pure extracts, packed with densely rich sexual nutrients. They will give you back your vigor in the bedroom and you will perform even better than you did as a young man. Then he laughed and said, "You will become an Italian Stallion like me!"

Karen, my husband has been taking one tablet each morning with breakfast, but the pack is almost empty and we both desperately want more. Do you know about these European tablets and how to get some in the States?

Sincerely,

Tina D., Fort Worth, TX

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Aren't you glad you asked?

Karen

prospect of civil war. Badoglio let it be known privately that he was going to overthrow the failed dictator this time, with or without his majesty's assent.

By mid-1943, however, Victor Emmanuel worried even more about not only losing his throne, but also the overthrow of the entire ruling Savoyard dynasty if his son, Crown Prince Umberto, was forced to abdicate with him, as had happened with the German Hohenzollerns in 1918.

The king had privately decided to use the Army to remove Il Duce from office only as a last resort, knowing as he had all along that the professional military would stand with him under the leadership of Badoglio and Ambrosio, and not with Mussolini if push came to shove.

In 1943, as it turned out, only one officer of the Italian Army marshalate remained loyal to the fallen Duce to the bitter end in April 1945, even after Mussolini's first of two falls from office.

Both the king and his premier shared a fear of the Germans more than an Allied occupation. Each man realized full well that Hitler would exact a fearsome revenge if Italy left the Axis pact, much less joined the Allies in the middle of a world war. A ruthless Nazi occupation of Italy would follow, with both Rome and Vatican City garrisoned, the pope imprisoned, maybe the royal family murdered, and the possible eruption of civil war to boot.

With the exceptions of the predicted papal takeover and the flight of the royal family, all the other feared outcomes would take place.

Thus, the stage was set when Mussolini went to meet Hitler again at the Feltre Conference in northern Italy on July 19, 1943, in the middle of which an Italian aide burst in with stunning news. Rome was being bombed for the first time in history, and the king himself was watching American bombers from the lawn of his home.

This incident persuaded Victor Emmanuel to act at last, but he first wanted a legal means to do so, via the ruling Fascist Party, and surprisingly this actually happened, as few (including Mussolini) foresaw.

On the favorable balance sheet of his political ledger, the besieged Duce could count on his innermost circle of advisers, men like Carlo Scorza, as well as on his immediate family members. Chief among the latter was his long-suffering wife, Rachele, who had already personally confronted many of the men she rightly believed were conspiring against her philandering husband, urging him to arrest them all.

The most prominent of his many mistresses, Claretta Petacci, went a giant step farther than Mussolini's wife, however. "Execute them all!" she advised. Instead, he told Rachele, "I'm more worried about American tanks than conspiracies!" He placated Claretta with assurances that his earlier purge had made them all fear him even more.

Mussolini and his German rescuers leave the Campo Imperatore Hotel on the Gran Sasso Massif in the Apennine Mountains after the former dictator had been held under guard there in 1943.

They were right, and he was wrong.

Here is how it all transpired in the actual event. The first meeting of the Fascist Grand Council since 1939 occurred over many long hours during the night of July 24-25, 1943. For the very first time, however, members of Mussolini's elite personal guard, the Musketeers, were not present at Palazzo Venezia, although numerous other security men were on duty.

The plotters nonetheless internally overdramatized the alleged possible, personal threat to themselves. However, two of them foolishly brought into the meeting hall concealed hand grenades to prevent their either being arrested or even murdered on the spot. Combat veterans both, they either should have known or ignored the fact that their detonation on-site in an enclosed room most likely would have killed everyone present.

In his own 1944 memoirs of the events, Mussolini asserted that no such Latin theatrics of any kind occurred. What did happen was that all present got to air their grievances to Il Duce twice in speeches that droned on for far too long, with Grandi's alone lasting 90 minutes.

Grandi made a motion that the king retrieve all the martial command powers that he had been forced to hand over to Mussolini on June 10, 1940, when Il Duce declared war on Britain and France. In a countermotion, Farinacci demanded that the Germans be allowed to run the war completely. All of the senior Fascists believed that with Mussolini retired the king would retain every one of them in their current offices, in a sort of Fascism without Il Duce.

Mussolini alone predicted that his firing would result in the simultaneous overthrow of the entire Fascist regime, meaning that all of them would go—starting with would-be Mussolini successors Grandi and Ciano. He turned out to be right.

Nevertheless, Mussolini was voted out 19 to eight, prominent among those against him was his own relation, the traitorous Ciano, who was shot by a Fascist firing squad six months later. As Mussolini was driven home, Grandi carried the news of the event to his majesty, setting the scene for the next afternoon meeting at the king's Villa Savoia residence in Rome.

Given back his military powers of command, Victor Emmanuel now also had the legal pretext he had counted on, since Mussolini's own party had voted "no confidence" in Il Duce's leadership.

As Grandi, his longest serving premier in office, began giving his own account of the session to the king, the latter cut him off abruptly, saying that his time in power had ended, and in effect that his resignation was accepted, all within but a few minutes of the civilian-clad Mussolini's last arrival there.

Promised a retirement in safety at a place of his choosing, instead the ousted Fascist leader found an ambulance awaiting him outside, his own car and chauffeur out of sight. An Italian military police officer and enlisted men with pistols and submachine guns hustled him into the ambulance. Mussolini was told that the arrangement was "for your safety." Off the ambulance raced at high speed to a local police barracks.

It was only there that the dismissed Mussolini realized that he had, in fact, been arrested and was under armed guard. That night, an unannounced public radio bulletin simply blared out the news to a shocked Roman and Italian public that Il Duce had been replaced by the new premier, Marshal Badoglio.

The latter moved swiftly to stifle any loyalist countermeasures by firing the head of the Fascist Militia, disbanding it entirely en masse, and then merging all its members into the Royal Army, both its headquarters and barracks occupied by soldiers loyal to the king rather than the disgraced man who had lost the bungled war. In the event, none of the Duce's much ballyhooed "nine million bayonets," and especially no Fascist daggers, were raised in any way in his defense.

Rome erupted in an orgy of anti-Fascist celebrations that Marshal Badoglio allowed for but a single night and day, with all pictures of the former ruler destroyed, symbols torn down, and party emblems literally ripped from uniforms. Stunned, the crestfallen Count Ciano hid in his Roman residence for five weeks. Grandi fled to South America until the late 1980s, and Bottai joined the French Foreign Legion, later taking part in the Allied invasion of Nazi Germany. Farinacci was shot by the Communists in April 1945.

As their former ruler had correctly forecast,

none of them retained their posts or received new ones under the marshal, who announced instead that the war would continue at the side of their Axis Pact partners.

Hitler knew better, however, and ordered the immediate German military occupation of Rome, with the Americans backing off from a parachute drop to forestall it because the Royal Italian Army could not be counted upon to fight with the paratroopers against the Germans.

The king, the entire royal house, and all of Badoglio's government fled from the Eternal City southward to eventual safety behind Allied lines. Over the course of the infamous "46 Days," Italy was basically without a functioning government. Then came the expected announcement of September 8, 1943, that the country had changed sides in the middle of the war, now against the Third Reich and fighting alongside its former enemies, the Western Allies.

Now the Italian boot found itself engaged simultaneously in a pair of brutal wars, as the Allies invaded from the south and took Rome on June 6, 1944, with the Nazis holding northern Italy until war's end in May 1945.

The secondary struggle was the internal civil war between the new Nazi-backed Fascist state of the Salo Republic in the German-held north versus the Communist Red and Socialist Partisans, with the Prince of Piedmont, Crown Prince Umberto, serving as his father's stand-in field commander of the regular army with the title of Lieutenant General of the Realm from June 1944 to April 1945.

The mutilated bodies of Mussolini and his mistress Claretta Petacci are strung up along with those of other Fascists after their execution.

Mussolini, after enduring several stations of imprisonment on land and sea, finally found himself at a ski resort in the Italian Alps, where he was rescued by German airborne troops on September 12, 1943, the day before Badoglio was planning to hand him over to the Allies as part of the secretly negotiated armistice terms.

Until 2018, this feat of derring-do had been credited to SS commando Otto Skorzeny, but a new book just published restores it to its rightful place, the German Luftwaffe commanded by General Kurt Student and the on-site officer, Major Harald Mors.

On April 23, 1945, Mussolini and Claretta were murdered by their Communist captors. Rachele and Edda were both allowed to live out their remaining lives peacefully in their native land, while King Victor Emmanuel died in exile in Egypt in 1947. His son, King Umberto II, was voted out of office in 1946 after only 34 days on the throne in favor of the present Italian Republic. Umberto died at age 78 in Geneva in 1983.

An incredulous Hitler had once asked the just freed Mussolini, "What is this Fascism that melts like snowflakes in the sun?"

Amen! □

Blaine Taylor is the author of the 1996 illustrated work Fascist Eagle: Italy's Air Marshal Italo Balbo. *He resides in Towson, Maryland.*

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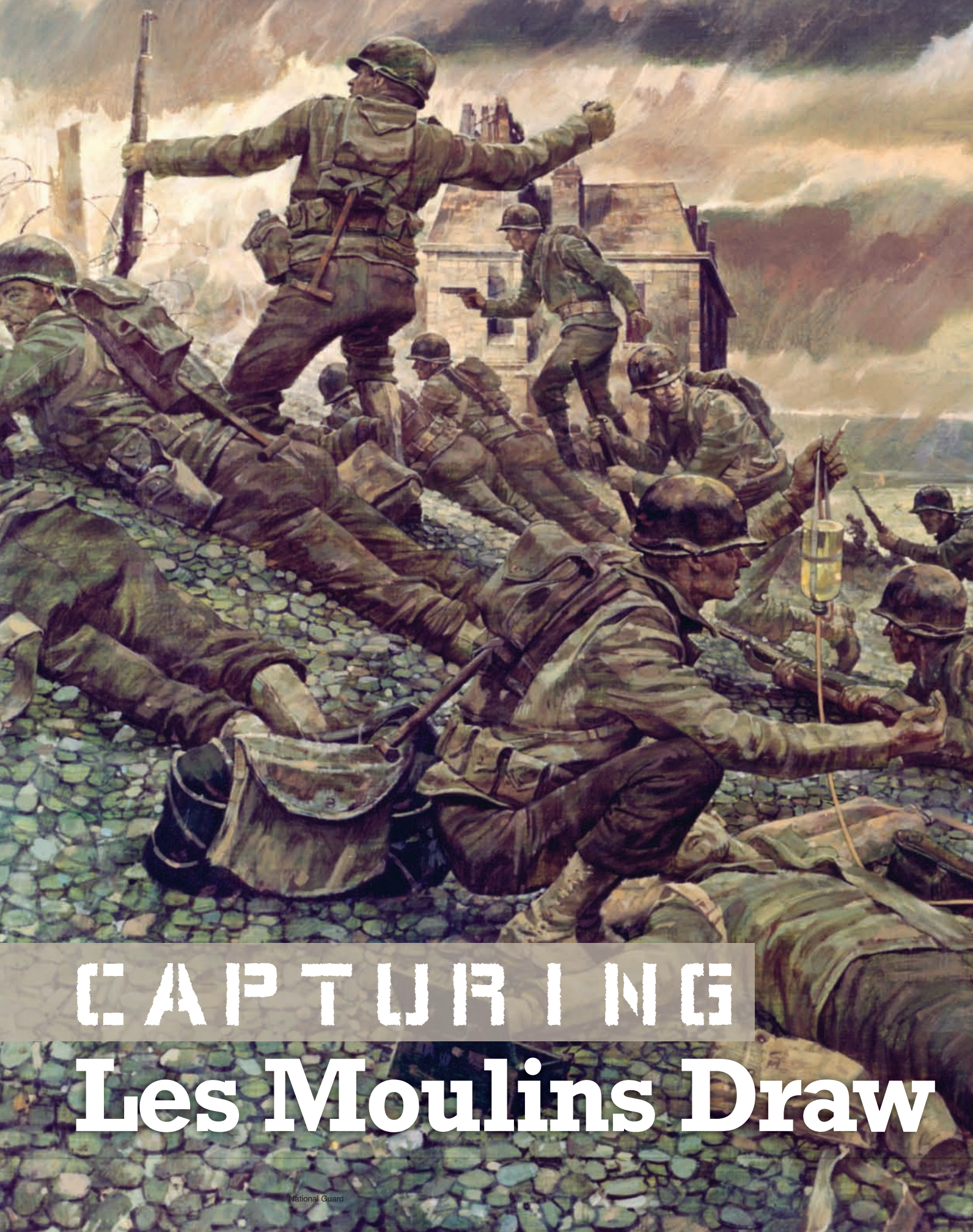

CAPTURING Les Moulins Draw

National Guard

ON D-DAY, ELEMENTS OF 12 BATTALIONS FROM THE 29TH INFANTRY DIVISION GAVE THEIR ALL TO SEIZE ONE OF OMAHA BEACH'S VITAL DRAWS.

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

Twelve Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel (LCVPs) carrying Captain William Callahan's F Company and Captain Eccles Scott's G Company—some 400 men—slapped the English Channel's rough waves as they approached Omaha Beach's Les Moulins Draw. Each LCVP carried 35 American infantrymen. As the craft formed up and headed to shore, most of the soldiers became seasick. Anyone popping his head over the side to vomit was shouted to duck back down. It was 6:30 AM on June 6, 1944—D-Day—and the Western Allies were attacking France's Normandy coast.

Some assault boats took direct hits as they approached the shore; others zigzagged to evade enemy fire, throwing their coordinated landing into chaos. The two companies were supposed to land abreast but instead were hopelessly intermixed. Four Sherman tanks had landed just minutes before, ready to support the infantry.

Rows of enemy obstacles covered the beach. To the right of the draw, 15 wooden breakwaters, built to prevent erosion, stretched like fingers from the beach into the water. Halfway up the beach, a shingle of smooth stones stood like a shallow hill. The beach ended at a seawall supporting a parallel-running road. A perpendicular road, the Les Moulins Draw, cut through the bluffs beyond and led away from the beach.

As the small craft neared the shore, their coxswains slowed and dropped their ramps. When the ramp failed to lower on one of Callahan's LCVPs, the lieutenant in command yelled to his sergeant, "What do we do, sergeant?" The answer came back, "Go over the side, lieutenant!" As some men cupped their hands, the lieutenant stepped into the man-made stirrups and boosted himself over. Just then, the ramp dropped. The men struggled into the water and activated their inflatable life belts.

Private First Class John Robertson, in another of Callahan's landing craft, leaned over the side to vomit. When his comrades yelled at him to duck, he shot back, "I'm dying of seasickness, it won't make much difference." The ramp dropped, and men jumped into water up to their necks. An artillery shell exploded nearby, killing their lieutenant. The soldier carrying a flamethrower exploded in a fiery ball as he waded ashore.

Soldiers of the 116th Infantry Regiment, the Stonewallers, fight their way off the Les Moulin Draw's rocky shingle, in *First Wave at Omaha Beach: The Ordeal of the Blue and the Gray,* by Ken Riley. The mansard-roofed house in the background served as a German strongpoint and a distinct marker for troops coming ashore, telling many that they had landed in the wrong place.

On another landing craft, the ramp dropped and the lieutenant in the van took a bullet to the throat and dropped into the water. Sergeant Harry Bare took over and tried to get the men across the beach to the safety of the seawall, but they froze on the beach, refusing to move. A few yards away, enemy fire blew the head off Bare's radioman. Other men fell. Only six men from Bare's craft reached the seawall.

Sergeant Warner Hamlett made it to the beach and ran to the seawall. He jumped into a hole, landing atop one of his comrades. After catching his breath, he started running again but stopped between obstacles. His wet clothes and equipment had drained his strength. Another soldier fell beside him, paralyzed with fear. "Let's stay separated as much as we can," Hamlett told him, "because the Germans will fire on two quicker than one." A shell exploded, cutting off the other man's chin down to the bone. Holding what was left of his chin in place, he and Hamlett charged back to the seawall, where Hamlett gave him a morphine shot. The man died a half hour later.

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A landing craft churns up water as it heads ashore between soldiers struggling inland on Omaha Beach. Many Americans were killed while exiting their landing craft or while wading through the surf.

The Germans poured fire on the men struggling across the 400 yards of sand. More men fell. Others took shelter behind German beach obstacles. Some of the most intense and accurate fire came from a three-story mansard-roofed house near the beach, which had been converted into a bunker surrounded by double coils of barbed wire.

One tank roared up behind Private Robertson, who was lying in the water. He got up and ran across the beach, preferring the dangers ahead of him than the prospect of getting flattened. Once ashore, Captain Callahan realized his radio could not contact the tanks, so he jumped onto a tank and directed its fire. While pointing out targets, enemy rounds hit both his hands, feet, face, and his right hip. He struggled to the seawall where a medic dressed his wounds.

While some of Callahan's men huddled behind the breakwaters, others ran far enough to reach the shingle. The shingle offered scant protection from mortar fire, but the Germans had yet to deploy arcing fire on the beach. As many of the men reorganized or just caught their breath, they looked up at the mansard-roofed house and realized they had landed in the wrong place. They had no idea where they were.

The Les Moulins Draw (Exit D-3) lay between Omaha Beach's St. Laurent Draw (Exit E-1) to the east and Vierville Draw (Exit D-1) to the west. Its 200-yard gap between the bluffs near the beach was the widest, most open, and most exposed of Omaha's draws, assuring easy fields of fire for the defending Germans. Colonel Charles Canham's 116th Infantry Regiment—the Stonewallers—of the 29th Infantry Division assaulted the Les Moulins and Vierville draws on D-Day, while Colonel George A. Taylor's 16th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division assaulted St. Laurent as well as the Colleville Draw (E-3) and Cabourg Draw (F-1) farther east.

Oddly enough, it was the Les Moulins Draw, not the St. Laurent Draw, that led to the town of St. Laurent, half a mile south of the beach. Three Allied beaches faced Les Moulins: Dog White to the west, Dog Red directly in front of the draw, and Easy Green to the east.

As one of Omaha Beach's five draws, the Americans had to capture Les Moulins if they wanted to bring tanks, artillery, and heavy equipment off the beach and onto the high ground, linking with troops advancing through the other draws.

Major Sidney Bingham's 2nd Battalion—more than 700 men—assaulted the draw, although that was only part of its mission. Callahan's F and Scott's G Companies were supposed to land abreast, with Captain Taylor Feller's A Company, 1st Battalion to their right. Callahan was supposed to land opposite the Les Moulins Draw with Captain Lawrence Madill's E Company to his left, but the plan did not survive the journey to the beach.

According to the plan, some 20 Sherman tanks from Lt. Col. John S. Upham's 743rd Tank Battalion were supposed to land first in Bingham's sector. Duplex drive (DD) tanks (floating tanks) and waterproofed tanks, delivered by Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs), would land at 6:30 AM at low tide. Infantry would follow, with E, F and G Companies landing on Easy Green, Dog Red, and Dog White, respectively.

Next would come three teams—Teams 7, 8, and 9—from Lt. Col. Carl Isley's 146th Engineer Combat Battalion to clear paths through the obstacles, mark navigation hazards, and determine landing points. As they cleared the way, H Company and various headquarters units would land. More engineers would follow.

Once Bingham had secured the beach, Lt. Col. Lawrence Meeks' 3rd Battalion—consisting of I, K, L, and M Companies—would land,. With the infantry pushing the enemy away from their defenses, more engineers would land to clear obstacles, followed by field artillery, heavy weapons, and amphibious trucks. Finally, Colonel Eugene Slappey's 115th Infantry Regiment—some 3,000 men—would arrive at 10:00 AM for the push inland.

The Germans defended the Les Moulins Draw with four Wiederstanznests (WNs)—formidable independent strongpoints. WNs 66 and 68 stood on either side of the draw, while WN 69 stood directly south of the draw, housing launching tubes for Nebelwefers—rockets the Americans called "Screaming Meemies." WN 67 guarded the town of St. Laurent. To the left

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As the tide comes in on D-Day, men and vehicles cram the shortening beach. Many of the troops landing with Major Sidney Bingham's 2nd Battalion, and the supporting units, landed farther east, here, in the 16th Infantry Regiment's landing zone. The zigzagged antitank ditch (upper left) did not prove to be much of an obstacle.

of the draw, down near the seawall, stood the mansard-roofed house. A series of trenches connected it to other defensive positions. To the right stretched the wooden breakwaters.

A row of 10-foot-high antitank Belgian Gates (also known as Element C) stood as the first line of German beach defenses. Next were mine-topped poles sticking out of the sand, designed to destroy any waterborne craft floating at high tide, followed by a series of ramp-like log structures designed to drive landing craft onto a mine on top the structure. Finally, there were hedgehogs, five-foot high iron rails welded together at angles, and tetrahedrons, triangular cement obstacles, both designed to stop vehicles. Past the obstacles stood the shingle, the shallow, six-foot-high pile of stones that ran the length of the beach. Beyond the shingle, a seawall sloped up the road, lined with coils of barbed wire, and the 150-foot-high bluffs beyond. A 600-yard-long antitank ditch stretched atop the bluffs, making the draw's capture all the more important.

Rough seas in the English Channel had disrupted the assault's timing. Ship and landing craft captains struggled to coordinate their efforts. An LCT sank, taking four tanks with it. When the captains realized the waves were too heavy to risk discharging their DD tanks, they landed them directly, further delaying the tanks' arrival. The storm tides also pushed almost all the initial landing craft left of their intended destinations.

Callahan's and Scott's men landed too far left of their destinations, unable to support Feller's A Company, which was subsequently wiped out at Vierville Draw. Captain Madill's E Company LCVPs drifted almost half a mile to the left, completely isolated from Callahan's assault. Worse, four of Scott's six LCVPs landed between two of Callahan's groups, while two (including Scott's) landed to Callahan's left, depriving most of G Company of its commander and placing the rest of the company under command of a man they did not know.

Some of Scott's men who landed with Callahan decided to head back to where they were originally supposed to land, farther to the right, but the trip was dangerous, with men dropping as they shifted position. The men caught a break when a German bullet pierced a private's flamethrower tank but it did not ignite. The men sought refuge between the breakwaters' wooden walls, which protected them from enemy crossfire but deprived them of the unit cohesion they had trained so hard to maintain.

While Scott's men executed this ragged maneuver, Callahan's soldiers and the rest of Scott's men advanced only as far as the shingle, knowing that if relief did not arrive soon they would be wiped out. Sergeant Francis Ryan reached the shingle and suggested his men clean their rifles. As they did, a shell exploded nearby, and a bloody chunk of flesh landed on Private Rocco Russo's lap. He pointed to it and asked Ryan if it was part of him. Russo did not think so but was too scared to find out. Eventually, Russo calmed down enough to help Ryan search for a way off the beach, but the two soon realized that with so few men able to fight they would have to wait for more.

Some support came from the sea. U.S. Navy battleships USS *Arkansas* and USS *Texas* had been pouring shells on enemy shore batteries since before the men landed, setting the dry grass on the bluffs afire, while the destroyers USS *Thompson,* USS *Emmons,* and USS *Carmick* fired over the men's heads and hit enemy bunkers, either by aiming at enemy tracer fire or by following American tank fire. The destroyers would eventually close to within 800 yards of the beach and knock out at least eight gun emplacements along the entire four-mile length of Omaha Beach.

Finally, more soldiers, tanks, and a few bulldozers arrived. One lieutenant directed his platoon over the seawall until a bullet smacked into his forehead. He continued his job, though, then sat down, put his hand to his head, and fell over dead. Once someone arrived with wire-cutters, the men dashed forward individually, giving the Germans smaller targets, and cut away at the wire.

Men carrying TNT attached to wooden poles charged two pillboxes, but the Germans cut them down as they made their way through the barbed wire. The Stonewallers reorganized and charged again, this time between the pillboxes, where they found connecting trenches. They

threw grenades at the Germans while jumping into the trenches and maneuvering toward the pillboxes. They then threw grenades at the pillboxes, charged in, and killed any survivors.

Engineers were next to land, but they were also off course. Teams 9, 8, and 7 landed abreast. Many engineers were cut down and unable to clear a path through the defenses. Most who made it to the beach picked up rifles and assisted the infantrymen.

Team 8's Lieutenant Wesley Ross's Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) landed directly opposite the draw. The men jumped into water up to

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American soldiers crawl past German obstacles, including mine-tipped ramps, mine-tipped poles, and (left) hedgehogs, on Omaha Beach. This photo, one of only 10 that survived the ordeal, was taken by *Life* magazine photographer Robert Capa, who landed with elements of the 1st Division on Omaha Beach. OPPOSITE: An American officer takes cover behind the stone-filled shingle, which offers protection from direct enemy fire. Other men lay prone on the shingle, while a few dare to move.

their knees and struggled to get ashore, running in short dashes and dropping. As enemy bullets splintered the tops of the beach obstacles, Ross and another soldier wrapped explosives around one while other engineers did the same. After attaching 45-second detonators to the explosives, they tossed out purple smoke grenades to warn the infantry, then moved inland. The resulting explosion destroyed some of the obstacles, but too many remained.

Team 7 landed to the right of Team 8. The engineers finished attaching explosives to their obstacles and were getting ready to detonate when a landing craft crashed into the area, setting off mines and smashing though timbers. Another craft followed. Fearing they might kill arriving Americans with their explosives, the engineers abandoned their task and helped carry the wounded away from the rising tide.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Ploger, commander of the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion, landed a half hour after the initial assault with elements of his staff and 40 engineers. He dropped into water over his head but inflated his life belt and struggled to shore. After resting behind a German hedgehog, he charged across the beach and dropped into a shell hole, where German fire hit his left ankle.

Within an hour of the assault landing, follow-on troops approached Les Moulins. When the coxswain of one of Captain George Boyd's H Company landing craft asked the soldiers if they recognized their draw, Boyd ordered, "Take us on in. There's a fight there anyway." Inside Boyd's boat, Lieutenant Edward McNabb could see tanks on the beach. Some were firing, others were on fire. Soldiers hid behind some. "The majority of these were wounded and many dead were floating in with the tide," recalled McNabb.

Sergeant Murphy Scott led his men off the landing craft to the left of the draw shouting, "Let's go!" Once on the beach, his men gathered behind a knocked-out DD tank. Farther up the beach, another tank fired at enemy targets. When the tank stopped firing, Scott led his men to the seawall. They assaulted some pillboxes and trenches but found them empty. These may have been the same pillboxes Callahan's F Company had previously captured.

As Captain Charles Cawthon, commanding the Headquarters Company, approached the shoreline in his craft, a soldier cried out, "I'm hit!" Cawthon turned to his left to see a horrible sight: "The white face, staring eyes, and open mouth of the first soldier I saw struck in battle remains with me." He tried to offer words of comfort, but the man died without ever leaving his craft.

Cawthon exited into neck-deep water and worked his way to shore. He could not believe what he saw. "All around was incredible chaos: bodies, weapons, boxes of demolitions, flamethrowers, reels of telephone wire, and personal equipment from socks to toilet articles. Discarded life belts withered and twisted in the surf like brown sea slugs. The waves broke around the wrecked tanks, dozers and landing craft."

While still in the water, Cawthon could see men behind the shingle and the seawall, some scooping out holes in the sand. Something exploded nearby, jarring the side of his face. As blood dripped down his chin, he rose up to run inland but found it difficult in his wet clothes and heavy equipment. He shrugged off his assault jacket and charged the shingle. Once there, he unholstered his .45 pistol only to find it encrusted with sand. When he pulled the slide back to chamber a round, it stuck halfway.

Things were not going much better for the battalion commander. Major Bingham's boat landed to the right of the draw. His craft flipped over as he scrambled off into shoulder-deep water. What he thought were engineers blowing up obstacles in the water were actually German artillery rounds exploding on his troops. When he stopped at a tetrahedron to catch his breath, he noticed sand kicking up at his feet. Despite his exhaustion, he ran across the beach, reaching the shingle where he caught up with Callahan's soldiers. He only saw one officer besides himself, a dazed and wounded lieutenant.

At 7:30 AM, soldiers who were supposed to support Bingham arrived in the wrong place. Strong currents had pushed the four companies of Lt. Col. Lawrence Meeks' 3rd Battalion—K, I, L, M, and Headquarters Companies—too far to the left and onto the St. Laurent Draw beaches designated for the 16th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division. Fortunately, the men arrived where German defenses were weakest.

Captain William Pingey's K Company landed closest to Les Moulins, while Captain Miflin

Clowe's I Company, Captain Charles East's L Company, Captain Charles Kidd's M Company, and Captain Archibald Sproul's Headquarters Company landed closer to the St. Laurent Draw. The companies encountered mostly small-arms fire as they came ashore. Some of the landing craft got caught on a sandbar and became easy targets for the Germans. "Seasick men who'd stayed on board were blasted to smithereens," recalled Staff Sergeant Felix Branham.

The ramps went down, and most men charged into waist-deep water. With the tide beginning to rise, they had to traverse 300 yards (100 less than the assault troops) to clear the beach. Shells rained down on the landing craft, one exploding among a group of men racing down the ramp. Men screamed as enemy fire tore into them, others ran as fast as their equipment would allow. Equipment flew everywhere. One of Captain Pingey's soldiers, Gino Ferrari, hesitated as he made his way up the beach. Staff Sergeant Branham called to him, "Gino, move up," as he ran past him, but a bullet caught Ferrari in the head.

When the ramp refused to drop on one landing craft, a quick-thinking sailor pulled out a pistol to shoot the ramp cable. The crowded soldiers backed away, worried that a ricochet would hit one of them. Suddenly, the ramp dropped, and the grateful soldiers charged out of the craft. A group of East's men charged into waist-deep water and sought refuge behind the shingle. The Germans zeroed in with mortar and artillery fire, keeping the men's heads down.

Clowe's and East's soldiers landed to find men from the first wave still hunkered on the beach. Meanwhile, a sergeant from Pingley's K Company roamed the beach, urging men forward. Pingley, meanwhile, knelt on the sand smoking a pipe and staring at the defenses ahead of him.

When Lieutenant Donald Anderson discovered the men on the beach were from Scott's company and had been on the beach for the last hour, he ordered Sergeant Joseph Dana, "Get the team on its way. We sure as hell are not staying here. This beach has too many people on it." Dana then moved ahead and, lying on his back, began cutting through the coiled barbed wire blocking the route off the beach. Another man came over and helped until his clothes caught on the wire and enemy fire cut him apart.

When Dana finished cutting, Lieutenant Anderson led his men through the gap and up the bluff through a minefield, stopping along the way so the men could catch their breath. When enemy artillery exploded on their position, Anderson called out, "Get the hell out of here!" and the men continued up. Two of Scott's sergeants cut the wire blocking their men and led a column through the minefield.

Captain Kidd's M Company men had landed closest to the St. Laurent Draw. Like the previous waves, most of the men were seasick. Some ran out of motion sickness bags, while one man vomited four times before reaching the beach. When the ramp dropped on one landing craft, a squad leader in the front froze and the men shoved him out of the way as they charged out.

Corporal Earl Davis stepped on an underwater mine. The explosion broke his leg and shoulder while peppering his body with shrapnel. He pulled himself up the beach, away from the rising tide, and lay there until nightfall. Private Tom Lasater ran a zigzag path up the beach to prevent German snipers from zeroing in on him. "My comrades were falling around me all the way in," he recalled. "The dead soldiers were everywhere." Once off the beach, Lasater watched as a medic ran back into the surf to aid an injured soldier, only to be cut down by enemy fire.

Despite seasickness, injuries, and fright, the men who made it to the shingle managed to drag all their equipment with them. "The burdens that we could ordinarily carry, we had to drag," reported Sergeant Bruce Heisley. "But we dragged it." Some were so exhausted that they had to crawl across the beach while their NCOs shouted encouragement. Within 10 minutes, Kidd's M Company had traversed 100 yards of shrinking beach.

Lieutenant Colonel Meeks' craft hit a mine on an underwater obstacle as it headed ashore. The explosion tore the landing ramp off the craft, killing the men up front. A dead officer slumped onto Meeks. "I noticed he had blood oozing from his nose and mouth," he recalled. Water poured into the craft, and the men found themselves in shoulder-deep water. They shed their equipment and waded ashore. Once on the beach, Meeks called out for the men to cross as fast as possible but to avoid bunching up.

Lying behind the shingle, Major Bingham found himself torn between feelings of futility and shock, futility that he had no control over the situation and shock at all the dead and wounded around him. The men around Bingham who could still hold a rifle were also in shock. Many had lost their weapons on their way up the beach. Captain Richard Bush felt

While Bingham tried to send men up the bluff, four LCTs headed in abreast and discharged men, jeeps, and bulldozers. German artillery fire splashed around them as machine guns swept the surf.

National Archives

the unarmed men "didn't seem to see that there were weapons lying around them and that it was their duty to pick them up."

More troops came ashore when two Landing Craft Infantry (LCIs), 90 and 94, each capable of holding 200 men, made it to the beach at 7:45. LCI 90 carried engineer and beach battalion companies, while LCI 94 carried a medical battalion and a military police platoon. After LCI 94 disgorged its troops, three enemy shells from well-camouflaged 88mm cannons exploded in the pilot house, killing three sailors and wounding two.

Clowe's, Pingley's, and East's soldiers from Meeks' 3rd Battalion ascended the bluffs to the left of Les Moulins under cover from grass fires. Captain Carroll Smith, the battalion's operations officer, who joined the climb, felt the muzzle blast from a well-camouflaged 88mm cannon to his left. A sergeant stopped climbing and headed back to the beach to direct a tank to fire on it, but machine-gun fire cut him down before he reached the tank. Smith then crawled down the bluff to the tank, banged his rifle butt against the turret, and directed the tank crew to fire on the 88. The tank blasted away, but its 75mm cannon could not penetrate the 88's protective concrete nest. The German crew, realizing they were under fire, switched to rapid fire, peppering anything they saw. The Americans eventually placed charges around the nest and blasted it inward.

As more and more Americans ascended the bluff, some of Captain Kidd's M Company men set up a machine gun outside the mansard-roofed house and exchanged fire with the Germans inside. Every time someone manned the machine gun, a German sniper would get the gunner in his sights and fire. "He killed one man and wounded three or four of us," recalled Private John Hinton.

Around 8 AM, Bingham gathered 50 men from his staff and one of Callahan's F Company platoons and led them in a charge against the house. They crossed the coiled barbed wire and pressed their bodies against the sea wall. Bingham tried to raise the Navy on his radio but failed. When he realized no one had a working weapon, he ordered the men to clean their rifles and pointed out where others could find weapons. Once the men were confident about their weapons, they charged the house.

Inside, they managed to clear the first floor, but when they made it to the second, despite a destroyed staircase, they discovered their weapons still would not fire. A frustrated Bingham ran back to the seawall where he again tried unsuccessfully to radio the Navy. He then sent 10 men around the left of the house where, using wirecutters, they penetrated more barbed wire and climbed the bluff. Bingham sent reinforcements, but the soldiers returned, complaining that their weapons would not fire.

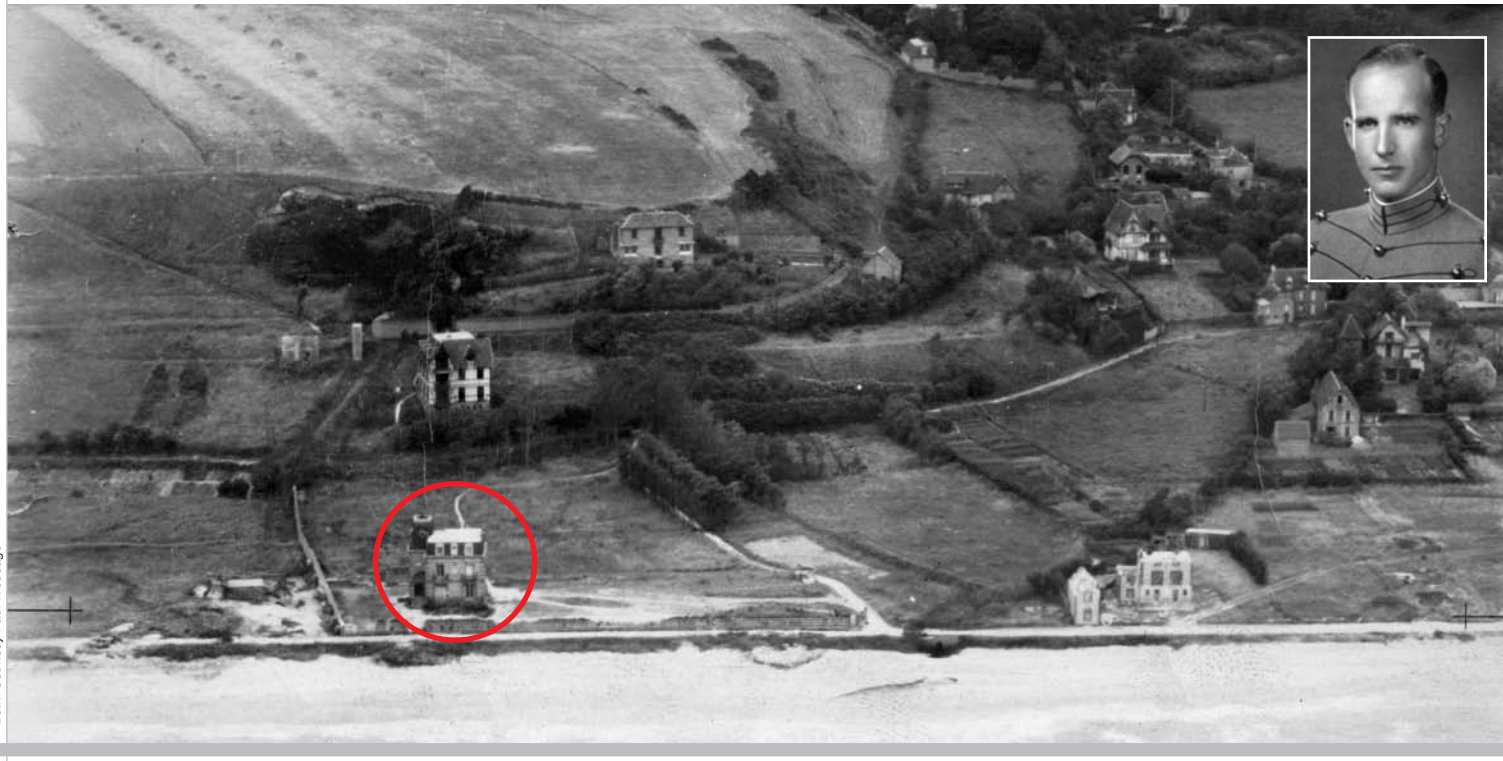
Sergeant John Thaxton of Callahan's F Company charged past the fortified house and into an enemy trench near the base of the bluff. He landed next to a still-warm enemy machine gun. When he stood up, he saw another American soldier with arm cocked, ready to throw a hand grenade at him. The man stopped himself.

Colonel Paul Thompson, commander of the 6th Engineer Special Brigade, joined Bingham's assault, leading men against a German machine gun. Thompson blew another gap in the barbed wire and led the charge until enemy fire caught him in the neck and shoulder. A soldier treated his neck wound, but when Thompson pointed to his shoulder and then to the man's first-aid pack, the soldier told him, "To hell with you, you son-of-a-bitch, I might need it later on today for myself."

While more men assaulted the bluffs, Bingham looked for more men to send up. He came across Captain Cawthon, the Headquarters Company commander, cleaning his weapon with the other men, his face cut up from the shell that had exploded near him earlier. "This is a debacle," Bingham told him, then ordered Cawthon to round up some firepower. Cawthon ran down to the beach looking for discarded weapons. He was shot on the opposite side of his face from his first wound, but it did not kill him.

While Bingham tried to take the house and send men up the bluff, four LCTs headed in abreast and discharged men, jeeps, and bulldozers. German artillery fire splashed around them as machine guns swept the surf. Several bull-

Major Sidney Bingham, inset, led a handful of his men on repeated assaults on the mansard-roofed house (circled). The three-storied house dominated the beach landscape and took numerous hits by U.S. Navy ships.



Both: Courtesy Paul Woodage

National Archives

After the battle, the Americans ready Omaha Beach for landing craft. They eventually bulldozed sections of the shingle out of the way of vehicles and tanks rolling off ships. Barrage balloons floating in the air attest that the beach is in American hands.

dozers rumbled off one LCT into deep water, yet managed to reach shore, only to be put out of action by phosphorous shells. A few men followed, holding their rifles over their heads, but when two men were shot heading down the ramp, the rest of the men refused to leave. Ensign Donald Irwin, the ship's captain, tried in vain to get the men to disembark for an hour, until word came to withdraw from the beach.

As Irwin withdrew, he noticed two soldiers ashore, one with his arms wrapped around a wooden pole obstacle while the other held onto his waist. Enemy bullets splintered the wood around the men. To make matters worse, they were fighting the incoming tide, which forced them to cling higher and higher to the pole. "Sooner or later they would have no log left for protection," Irwin wrote in his diary. "I often wonder if they survived." Irwin returned to the beach around 2 PM, and his men went ashore. Unfortunately, all the jeeps that rolled off stalled in the deep water.

Two LCTs delivered truck-towed 57mm guns of the 116th Antitank Company, but they were practically useless on the shrinking beach, with no room to maneuver or set up. Lieutenant Forrest Ferguson made it to the shore to find men pinned down. He led three men to the coils of barbed wire and rammed Bangalore torpedoes underneath before detonating them with a hand grenade. With a gap in the wire, Ferguson stood up and shouted, "Let's go men!" The soldiers followed him until an enemy bullet hit his head. Although it did not kill him, it took him out of the battle.

Most of the support artillery never made it to the beach. Almost every one of the DUKW amphibious trucks carrying the 105mm howitzers for Lt. Col. Thornton Mullins' 111th Field Artillery Battalion foundered in the Channel. British patrol boats picked up some of the artillerymen. Master Sergeant John Hickman, on an LST carrying the DUKWs, watched the vehicles roll into the water and sink. "I can still hear those men calling for help over the noise."

Around 9 AM, a Rhino Ferry packed with jeeps, trucks, supplies, and men from the 111th touched shore. "The beach was a mess with wrecked equipment and dead soldiers," remembered Private Forrest Brooks, "but the heavy shelling had slowed down quite a bit." The surviving artillerymen stood dumbfounded until Lt. Col. Mullins called out, "To hell with our artillery mission! We've got to be infantrymen now!" Mullins spotted targets for a tank. Eyeing a machine-gun nest, he directed the tank until a sniper's bullet tore into his abdomen.

LCVPs carrying mortarmen from a chemical mortar company approached the beach in a hail of enemy fire. The men climbed off their landing craft into waist-deep water, pulling carts filled with unassembled mortars. They had wrapped the carts with inflatable life belts to ensure their safety. The Germans fired on the carts, quickly deflating the belts and sinking the mortars in the surf.

By 11 AM, Lt. Col. Meeks' men reached the top of the bluff to the left of the draw and yelled back to the men following to watch out for mines. Private Lasater, from Kidd's company, followed a trail up the bluff despite his training to the contrary. Men on either side of him triggered mines. One man was blown to the bottom of the hill. "The trails up the hills were the safest place because that was what the Germans used," Lasater later wrote.

While Meeks' men fought their way south, Bingham shifted his hodgepodge of soldiers to the left of the Les Moulins Draw, paralleling Meeks' route up the bluffs and penetrating farther south before turning right to St. Laurent. His men ran up against both WN 67, defending St. Laurent, and WN 69, with its Screaming Meemie rocket battery. The Germans were firing rockets on the beach as fast as they could reload the launch tubes.

Two groups of Meeks' men and a group of Bingham's attacked the battery. Around noon, Captain East's L Company, reinforced by soldiers from Captain Clowe's I Company, pushed into an orchard where they could see the rocket battery. They set up mortars and brought the area under fire. The Germans retreated into a house. Then, Lieutenant Robert Garcia from Captain Madill's E Company ordered a machine-gun crew to open fire on the rockets. The gunner pulled the trigger, and a stream of bullets arced toward the launchers. "We could see the Germans begin to move their guns, but not soon enough," Garcia reported. "All of a sudden there was a terrific explosion and a big ball of flame." The explosion may have actually been from the guns of the destroyer USS *Thompson,* which fired some 30 rounds at the smoke trails left by the launching rockets. The battery went dead.

Some of Captain East's men advanced across a series of hedgerows. When they came under fire, Lieutenant Anderson looked over a hedgerow, but as he did so a German sniper shot him in the back of the head. The bullet came out Anderson's mouth. As he lay wounded, a sergeant came over and stole his watch.

Soon, Captain Pingley's K Company joined the other men as they pushed to the edge of the draw. They spotted Germans on the opposite bluff, but heavy enemy machine-gun fire, artillery, and snipers prevented the Americans from crossing. They stayed in that position for the rest of the day, waiting for reinforcements.

Out in the Channel, Colonel Eugene Slappey's 115th Infantry Regiment was supposed to arrive at 10 AM for the drive inland, but when the skippers of the 12 LCIs carrying Slappey's men saw the heavy enemy fire on the beach and obstacles still intact, they turned around. They instead disgorged the men to the left of the St. Laurent Draw an hour later and a mile and a half from Les Moulins, in the 16th Infantry Regiment's area. When Brig. Gen. Willard Wyman, the 1st Infantry Division's assistant commander, saw the 115th arrive intact, he ordered Slappey to assault the town of St. Laurent from the west. Slappey's fresh troops advanced some 1,000 yards inland, crossed the St. Laurent Draw to their right, and worked their way through hedgerows, fields, and a minefield, marking it with handkerchiefs and bandages as they went.

On their way to St. Laurent, Slappey's men had a perfect view of the destruction on Easy Green Beach below. They saw dead and

Continued on page 74

BY SEPTEMBER 1942, after numerous aerial strikes against the advancing Imperial Japanese Navy, the Battle of the Coral Sea in May, and numerous attacks against enemy convoys along the New Guinea coast in the summer of that year, Maj. Gen. George Kenney was convinced that it was too hard to hit a moving ship from high altitude with his four-engine Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bombers.

General Kenney had taken over General Douglas MacArthur's air force on July 29, 1942, and had found the situation in shambles. Kenney discovered that after almost a year of trying to stop the advancing Japanese juggernaut most of the men belonging to the 19th Bomb Group (BG), which had retreated from the Philippines, were in desperate straits. "The crews were thinking only of going home," Kenney commented. "Their morale was at a low ebb and they didn't care who knew it." Out of the 32 B-17s based at Mareeba Airfield at the base of Australia's York Peninsula, General Kenney discovered that only 14 were combat ready, with the others waiting for repairs or parts or both. All 32 airplanes, however, were battered and worn. "Anywhere else but this theater," he wrote, "they would probably have been withdrawn from combat, but they were all we had so I'd have to use them if we wanted to keep the war going."

Pioneers of Skip Bombing

BY GENE ERIC SALECKER

AMERICAN BOMBERS IN THE PACIFIC, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF THE FIFTH AIR FORCE, PERFECTED THE TECHNIQUE OF ACCURATELY SKIP BOMBING JAPANESE SHIPPING.

Jack Fellows

In spite of this deplorable first impression, Kenney worked hard and had 16 B-17s ready to attack the strong Japanese air and naval base at Rabaul on the northern tip of New Britain island on August 7, 1942, in conjunction with the Marine Corps attack on Guadalcanal. The town of Rabaul sat on the northern end of Blanche Bay. The bay's entrance was four miles wide, and the entire bay was deep enough to take any ocean-going man-of-war. Inside the bay, directly below Rabaul, was horseshoe-shaped Simpson Harbor. After capturing the town and harbor from the Australians in January 1942, the Japanese had turned Rabaul into a major base complex that included the excellent deep-water harbor and two nearby airfields, Lakunai, almost immediately southeast of the town and harbor, and Vunakanau, nine miles almost due south. On August 7, 1942, the 19th BG struck Vunakanau Airfield for the first time, successfully damaging dozens of planes and drawing attention away from the Marine invasion of the Solomon Islands.

Over the next month, the 19th BG, joined by the 43rd BG, and now part of General Kenney's newly christened Fifth Air Force, struck at Rabaul and at Japanese convoys moving out to reinforce their invasion forces on northern New Guinea. With the B-17s dropping their bombs from at least 25,000 feet, the Japanese ships had plenty of time to move out of the way of the falling bombs before the projectiles reached water level. It was estimated that less than one

A Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber nicknamed *Aztec Curse* flies low over the Solomon Islands in October 1942. The B-17 became a successful skip bombing platform after much effort.

percent of all bombs dropped from high altitude on moving ships actually hit their mark. To be more effective, something had to change.

Back in July, General Kenney and his aide, Major William Benn, had discussed the possibility of low-level skip bombing attacks from about 50 feet altitude. When the bomber was about 100 feet away from the target ship, it would release a bomb that would skip across the surface of the water, like a flat pebble skipping across the surface of a lake, until it bumped into the side of the vessel. Then, with a five-second delay fuse, the bomb would sink beneath the ship and blow a hole in the hull when it detonated.

The idea of skip bombing had originated with the British, but they had been unsuccessful in perfecting the technique and had abandoned its use as being too dangerous. Reviving the idea, General Kenney and Major Benn began experimenting. According to Lieutenant James T. Murphy, "Major Benn and General Kenney had originally thought that bombing enemy ships at extremely low altitude could only be accomplished by a medium bomber—the A-20, B-25, or B-26." The three planes all mounted forward-firing machine guns, which was thought to make them perfect for coming in at a low altitude against an enemy vessel before dropping their bombs. After a few trial runs, the two men realized that "experiments and a lot of practice would be required," and that "the aircraft would be shot down coming in

HRA/Maxwell AFB via IHRA/Jack Fellows

A B-25 practices low-level strafing and skip bombing against the hulk of the SS *Pruth,* near Port Moresby, Australia. The *Pruth* was wrecked in 1923 and became known as the "Moresby Wreck" by air crews.

during daylight hours if the Japanese ships had much gun protection on their decks."

Still believing that they could make skip bombing work, General Kenny removed Major Benn from his staff and placed him in charge of the 63rd Bomb Squadron (BS), part of the newly formed 43rd BG. Reported Lieutenant Murphy, "Benn was given full authority from General Kenney to develop low-altitude and skip bombing for use against Japanese ships." Both Kenney and Benn knew that their best chance to destroy Japanese ships was to hit them when they were anchored at their home base, Rabaul. Although both men wanted to use medium bombers for skip bombing, they knew that only their big four-engine B-17 bombers had sufficient range to strike the Japanese at Rabaul. Commented Murphy, "Therefore, they had no choice. The Allies had to stop the Japanese freedom of movement on the seas and hit them at the major Southwest Pacific installation."

Major Benn began by looking for the right fuses. He started using Australian 10- and 12-second delay fuses. Lieutenant Murphy, a member of Major Benn's 63rd BS, recalled, "We started dropping the bomb from 50 feet altitude. We quickly found many things that had to be changed. The altitude was too low—the bomb would almost bounce back at us. The timing accuracy of the supposed 10- and 12-second delay was totally unreliable. The detonation varied from milliseconds to 30 seconds." Unable to get the correct type of fuses in Australia, Major Benn put in a requisition to Army command in the States while his crews continued to practice their bombing runs.

Experimenting with different size bombs, the crews of the 63rd BS began practicing against the hulk of the SS *Pruth,* an old freighter that was hung up on a reef just inside the harbor of Port Moresby, New Guinea. Although each pilot preferred his own speed and altitude, the general practice was to fly at approximately 2,000 feet altitude while searching for an enemy ship. Once one was spotted, the B-17 dropped down to about 250 feet and approached the side of the ship in level flight and at a speed of about 220 miles per hour.

Usually, the bombardier dropped the bomb 60 to 100 feet away from the side of the ship. If done correctly, the bomb would hit the surface of the water, skip into the air, strike the side of the vessel, and sink beside it. "From that low altitude," reported the 43rd BG historian, "the bombs did not have time to point down. Instead they struck the water, still with more forward than downward momentum, skittered across the waves and struck the side of the freighter." Lieutenant Murphy added, "[After skipping the bomb] I would fly directly over the ship, retaining my same airspeed and altitude. With the 4- to 5-second delay fuse in the bomb, I had time to get away while the bomb sank by the side of the ship. The explosion underwater often broke the ship in half and created almost immediate fire and explosions."

On the morning of September 20, 1942, General Kenney watched a skip bombing practice off Port Moresby. Captain Ken McCullar proved to be "especially good," skipping six out of 10 bombs against the side of the *Pruth*. To get the bombs to detonate at the precise moment, Kenney learned that the aircrews had been able to modify Australian 10- to 12-second fuses to 5-second fuses. Noted Kenney, "So far they worked pretty well. Sometimes they went off in three seconds, sometimes in seven, but that was good enough." Until the American 5-second fuses arrived, the men would have to rely on the modified Australian fuses. Although Kenney liked what he saw, he knew that it was still too early to risk the skip bombing technique in combat. The 63rd BS was told to keep practicing.

Knowing that Rabaul's Simpson Harbor was protected by the Japanese planes from Vunakanau and Lakunai airfields, Major Benn stressed to his pilots that their number one advantage was the surprise night attack. Although the Japanese had hundreds of planes based in the Rabaul area in September 1942, they lacked an effective night fighter. Not until May 1943 would the Japanese develop the Nakajima J1N1-C "Gekko" twin-engine night fighter (American codename "Irving"). By that time, however, dozens of ships were already resting on the bottom of Simpson Harbor. "From our first skip bombing mission to our last, we skip bombed only at night," recalled Lieutenant Murphy. "I made my approach into the rising moon or toward the east at daybreak to catch the first light of day. My bombardier and I could then see the ship before the crew saw us."

Major Benn instructed his crews to get in and out as quickly as possible to "give them the least amount of time to get a shot at you." Usually, the crew on the Japanese ship would spot the incoming American bomber at the last minute and attempt to turn their antiaircraft guns toward the low-flying airplane. "They were either too late, or we only received minor damage," recalled Murphy. "We would then fly directly away without gaining altitude; when at a decent distance over the water, we then began to gain altitude to return home." Sometimes the B-17 crew went back for a second run against another ship if they had not dropped all of their bombs on the first ship, but as Benn stressed, the planes had to be far away before it got too light. Reported Murphy, "Once it got daylight, we could always expect a mass of fighters to try to find us, so we didn't stay around very long."

The highest priority targets for the skip bombing B-17 crews were the Japanese transports. "We have one objective and that is to bomb the Japanese," stressed Major Benn, "to

hurt them where we can, and especially in their shipping—transports, cargo, and whatever protection they have, i.e., warships." Lieutenant Murphy verified this, writing, "We would be at different altitudes searching for the first priority—Japanese transports and cargo ships."

The men of the 63rd BS continued to make regular bombing runs against the Japanese infantry at Buna and Gona in northern New Guinea, and at an occasional enemy ship moving along the New Guinea coast, but with whatever spare time was available, they practiced their skip bombing runs against the derelict freighter off Port Moresby. "Even though we were flying missions from Australia into New Guinea," wrote Murphy, "we practiced skip bombing on the water at Port Moresby between missions. We were always testing our ability to skip bomb for the maximum effectiveness."

By October 1943, the U.S. Army had begun to supply General Kenney's Fifth Air Force with American-made fuses. On the night of October 22-23, the first skip bombing raid in American history occurred when the 63rd BS of the 43rd BG attacked a buildup of Japanese shipping at Rabaul. At midnight on October 22, six Fortresses from the 63rd BS took off from Port Moresby behind six from the 64th BS/43rd BG. While the 64th BS hit the town of Rabaul from 10,000 feet, attracting the searchlights and antiaircraft fire, the 63rd BS engaged the enemy ships in skip bombing.

The first successful skip bomber was Captain Franklyn T. Green. Before even entering Simpson Harbor, Green successfully skip bombed a light cruiser and a 5,000-ton cargo ship, then climbed in altitude and entered the harbor where he scored two direct hits on a 15,000-ton cargo ship. As he turned away, Green noted that both cargo ships were sinking and that the light cruiser was on fire with her stern already under water. Minutes later inside the harbor, Captain Carl Hustad skip bombed a 10,000-ton cargo vessel, setting it on fire, while Captain Ken McCullar in B-17F #41-24521 (*Black Jack*), skipped two bombs into the side of a Japanese destroyer.

In only a matter of minutes, the 63rd BS had managed to sink or damage at least five Japanese ships. "This was jackpot night," noted the 63rd BS historian, "and the first use of skip-bombing. It paid dividends." Informed of the success of the raid, General MacArthur immediately congratulated Major Benn for his persistence in the development of skip bombing and presented him with a Distinguished Service Cross.

Only a few days after the first successful skip bombing mission, General Kenney began sending the first crews from the battered 19th BG home to the United States. The 90th BG, fresh from the United States and flying the longer range Consolidated B-24 Liberator four-engine bombers, was beginning to trickle into Australia and New Guinea. For months General Kenney had promised the 19th BG crews that they would soon be going home, and near the end of October that promise became a reality. Unfortunately, as soon as the 19th BG was gone, it was missed. Upon inspection of the B-24s of the 90th BG, it was discovered that every plane had a cracked nose wheel gear, a manufacturing flaw. Until the defect could be repaired, General Kenney had to rely solely on his few remaining Fortresses from the 19th BG and the B-17s of his 43rd BG, which "now constituted about all the

RIGHT: Officers of the U.S. 43rd Bomb Group, an accomplished skip bombing unit, attend a briefing at Mareeba, Australia, in November 1942. BELOW: Flying in formation, B-17 heavy bombers of the Fifth Air Force wing their way toward the Japanese bastion of Rabaul. Despite early skepticism, the B-17 proved a capable skip bombing aircraft.

National Archives

National Archives

heavy-bomber strength I had."

On the night of October 25, the 63rd BS set out to skip bomb the Japanese ships in Rabaul's Simpson Harbor once again. The 43rd BG historian dramatically wrote, "Eight planes nosed toward Rabaul like winged tigers who had the taste of blood still in their mouths." Once again, the 63rd BS scored big. Lieutenant Jack Wilson, flying B-17F #41-24551 (Fire Ball Mail), sank a 5,000-ton cargo ship, and Captain Hustad badly damaged another. Additionally, Captain Green bombed and set fire to a coaling jetty next to the harbor. As the planes fled the scene, the fire from the jetty was still visible 80 miles away.

Unwilling to ease the pressure on Rabaul, General Kenney sent a total of 10 planes from the 403rd BS/43rd BG and the 28th BS/19th BG against Simpson Harbor on October 30. Having trained with the crews of the 63rd BS, the 403rd BS went in low, skip bombing and claiming hits on a large cargo ship and two destroyers. Noted General Kenney, "Photos taken the next day showed all three vessels half under water and aground."

While Kenney continued attacks against Rabaul and the northern coast of Papua New Guinea, General MacArthur was contacted by the commanders of the South Pacific area to lend them assistance in attacking Japanese ships in the northern Solomons, specifically at Tonolei Harbor on the southern end of Bougainville Island. A few B-17s from the 43rd BG hit the harbor on November 11, and upon leaving the area noticed a number of enemy vessels lining both the east and west sides of the harbor.

With plenty of enemy targets available, four B-17s from the 63rd BS took off to strike Tonolei Harbor at 1:30 AM on November 12. Flying the buddy system, the flight broke into pairs, with one pair attacking the transports on the west side of the harbor while the other pair struck the ships on the east side. Approaching at 2,000 feet, Lieutenant Murphy in B-17F #41-24384 (*Pluto*) spotted the phosphorescent wake of a 10,000-ton transport moving across the harbor and dropped down for a skip bombing run. "When I leveled off at 200 feet, I picked up the wake of the ship," reported Murphy. "As I moved closer, the 'X' mark [I had scratched] on my window met the middle of the ship. I called, 'Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb.'" With each command, Murphy's bombardier toggled loose a bomb. As *Pluto* passed over the ship, the antiaircraft guns belatedly opened fire. "Our bombs had been delivered very accurately," Murphy continued. "The transport was immediately on fire—explosions were seen on board, and [wingman, Captain Byron] Heichel and his crew confirmed that it had turned on its side."

On the other side of the harbor, the other pair of pilots was having similar luck. Also using skip bombing, Captain Ed Scott hit an 8,000-ton cargo ship with two bombs, causing substantial damage, while Captain Folmer Sogaard, flying B-17F #41-24520 (*Fightin' Swede*), sank a 10,000-ton transport with one bomb amidships and two more on the waterline.

The next night, Lieutenant Murphy, still flying the *Pluto*, and his wingman Captain Heichel, set out from Port Moresby at 1 AM for another raid on Tonolei Harbor. The two ran into a violent storm that had the crews "holding their breaths that the engines would continue running" between New Guinea and Bougainville but managed to reach the harbor just as the moon was rising.

Spotting a 10,000-ton cargo ship, Murphy was just starting his descent for a skip bombing run when an antiaircraft shell hit his No. 4 engine. Quickly feathering the propeller, Murphy steadied *Pluto* at 200 feet and skipped two 1,000-pound bombs into the ship. "We then flew over a runway and became the target for more antiaircraft fire, "he wrote. "There was another 8,000-ton cargo vessel at the harbor by the runway, so we dropped the other two 1,000-pound bombs and hit the ship; fire erupted immediately." A second later, an antiaircraft shell tore a two-foot hole in the upper left side of *Pluto*'s Plexiglas nose.

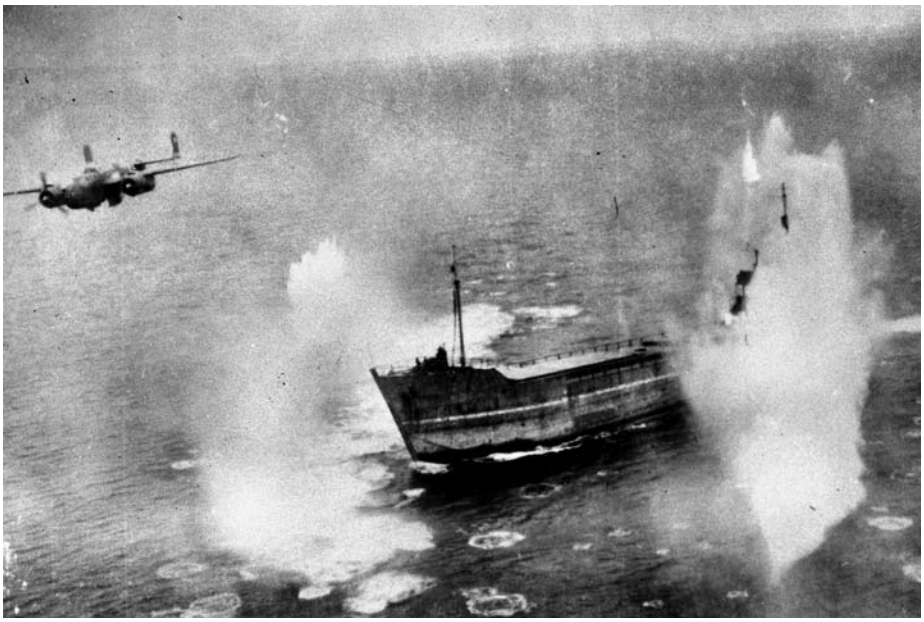
"It felt as though we were in a hurricane," Murphy said as the airstream rushed in through the hole. "Everything was flying around in the nose and up in the cockpit." In spite of the hole in the nose and the loss of partial power in another engine, Murphy successfully brought *Pluto* through the same violent storm that he had faced on the way out and managed to land safely at Port Moresby. "The crew really took a physical pounding," he reported, "and I still have great praise for the ability of the Boeing Flying Fortress to take punishment."

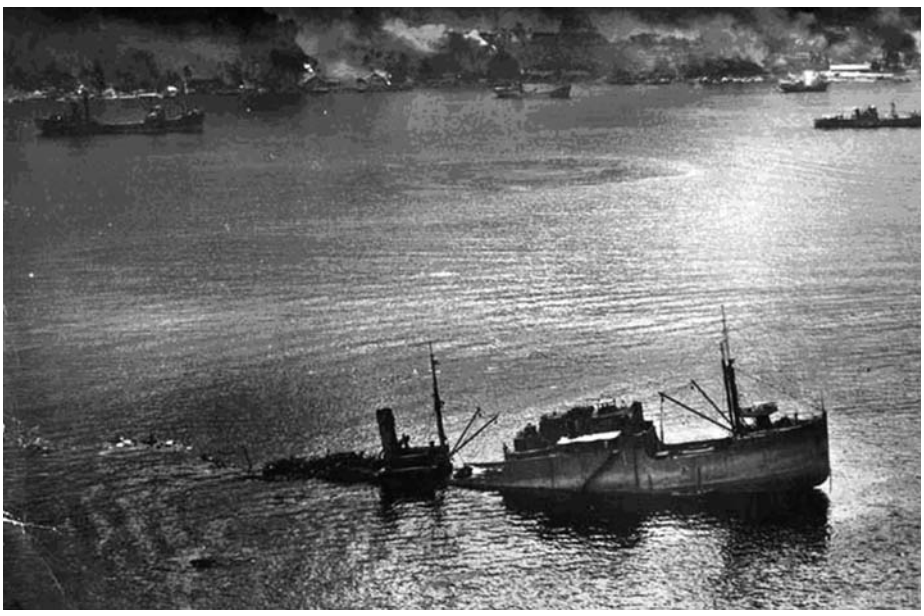
Throughout the rest of November, the Fifth Air Force concentrated on aiding the Allied drive against the Japanese strongholds of Buna and Gona on the northern coast of New Guinea. Whenever enemy ships were spotted bringing supplies or reinforcements to the two bastions, Kenney's men attacked. After sunset on November 24, a convoy of five Japanese destroyer transports was spotted making a run toward Buna. While most of the seven B-17s of

the 63rd and 65th Bomb Squadrons attacked from low altitude, damaging two ships and sinking the *Hayashio,* Captain McCullar, in the *Black Jack* once again, went in at 200 feet and skipped a couple of bombs against the stern of another destroyer. "The bombs hit just off the end of the boat," McCullar reported, "and the AA [antiaircraft] hit in [our] tail gunner's ammunition can exploding about 70 shells and starting quite a fire." While McCullar circled for another bomb run, the crew frantically extinguished the fire.

Staying at 200 feet, McCullar hit the destroyer again, "starting a fire on the right front of the ship." Again, antiaircraft fire hit McCullar's Fortress, wounding two men and damaging the No. 1 engine. Climbing to 4,000 feet, McCullar went over the burning vessel one last time and dropped his last few bombs, which fell harmlessly into the sea. When another burst of antiaircraft fire took out the No. 3 engine, McCullar feathered the propeller and headed *Black Jack* back to Port Moresby. At the same time, the badly damaged Japanese convoy, less the *Hayashio*, headed back to Rabaul.

Both: National Archives





ABOVE: Following an air raid on the Japanese base at Rabaul, a freighter slowly sinks in the harbor. As American forces advanced across the Pacific, Rabaul was reduced by air raids and left to wither as its supply lines were cut. TOP: A North American B-25 Mitchell medium bomber successfully skip bombs a Japanese tanker in the South Pacific. The B-25 was also armed with heavy machine guns and cannons to devastate Japanese vessels. OPPOSITE: B-17 Flying Fortress bombers and their ground crews prepare for a mission from an airfield located near Port Moresby on the coast of New Guinea.

The Fifth Air Force B-17s continued to use skip bombing against Japanese ships whenever possible, with Captain McCullar leading the way. Promoted to major on January 16, 1943, McCullar was given command of the 64th BS and quickly started training his men in the techniques of skip bombing. Noted the squadron historian, "Capt. McCullar inspired the officers and men with his flying tactics. The Capt. was a skip-bombing expert."

Although skip bombing with a B-17 had been proven successful, General Kenney felt that the lack of forward firing guns in the nose of the Flying Fortresses limited their ability to do damage against the enemy vessel prior to the bomb strike. Because of this, he had Colonel Paul I. "Pappy" Gunn begin modifications on the lighter, faster North American B-25 Mitchell medium bombers of his 3rd BG. Eventually, Gunn mounted 10 forward-firing .50-caliber machine guns in the nose and alongside the fuselage of his B-25s.

In early March 1943, the Japanese put up a maximum effort to reinforce their garrisons on New Guinea, sending out eight destroyers, seven transports, and one special service vessel carrying the Japanese 51st Division. Spotted in the Bismarck Sea on March 2, the Japanese were soon under attack by hundreds of Allied planes.

Among the first to reach the convoy were seven B-17s of the 63rd BS. While five of the planes attacked from about 4,000 feet, Lieutenant Murphy in B-17F #41-24381 (*Panama Hattie*) and his wingman Captain Sogaard in the *Fightin' Swede* went down to skip bomb the transports. Spotting the 8,000-ton *Kyokusei Maru*, Murphy battled through the heavy antiaircraft fire of the protecting destroyers to hit the transport squarely amidships. "I turned the plane around, dropped closer to the water, and saw one end of the transport pointed towards the sky," he wrote. "The ship had been split apart and was sinking." Not to be outdone, Sogaard skip bombed a 5,000-pound transport, stopping her dead in the water.

During the rest of the day and into the early evening, the B-17s continued to attack the remaining vessels, although they dropped their bombs from about 4,000 feet and scored few hits. The next morning, March 3, 1942, a total of 106 Allied planes, both Australian and American, prepared to hit the convoy in waves. While the B-17s of the 43rd BG scored a number of hits from low altitude, the most successful attack came from 12 of Colonel Gunn's B-25 medium bombers that came in low using

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CAPTURED

PRIVATE LEON GOLDBERG fought off German attacks for three days before becoming a prisoner of war.

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

PRIVATE LEON GOLDBERG pulled the trigger on his heavy, water-cooled M-1917 Browning machine gun and fired bursts of .30-caliber rounds into the attacking German infantry. The Germans below the forested hilltop Goldberg and his comrades occupied had to cross a stream and charge uphill to engage them. American riflemen added to Goldberg's torrent of fire as the Germans collapsed in the snow. Goldberg could see a dead German lieutenant at the bottom of the hill, lying half in the stream.

"The current washed his leg up and back," he said. Those who survived the fire, about 20 Germans, surrendered to the Americans. "The troops who attacked us were certainly not the best troops," he explained. "They were pretty green and relatively young."

The Americans, who were also green, felt proud of their baptism of fire. "We thought we had won the war," said Goldberg, a member of Company D, 422nd Infantry Regiment, 106th Infantry Division (the Golden Lions). But they had not. The date was December 16, 1944. The attack was just the opening assault of Adolf Hitler's last gamble to win the war in the West—the Battle of the Bulge—in which three German armies smashed into Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges' First Army with the goal of splitting the Western Allies and capturing the Belgian port of Antwerp.

Simultaneous with the German attack had come an enemy artillery barrage that screeched over Company D, which targeted the division's own artillery, killing Goldberg's battalion commander, Lt. Col. Thomas Kent. Major William Moon took over. The weak enemy attack had been a feint, while other Germans encircled the regiment.

But Goldberg knew none of this. He had done his job, repulsing the enemy, yet had little time to reflect on his actions. Soon, the order came to move out. The men pulled back to the outskirts of the Belgian town of Schönberg, where they set up on the edge of the forest overlooking a wide valley that sloped down and then up to another forested hill about 400 yards away.

"We got orders to attack," explained Goldberg.

He ran with the other men across the valley, but he stopped halfway and set up his machine gun to fire over their heads, while another machine-gun crew leapfrogged from behind him. When Goldberg saw enemy fire coming from an open cabin door, he zeroed in on it, watching his tracers pepper the door frame. He later learned that experienced gunners removed the tracers from their rounds, since the enemy could follow them back to the source.

"I wasn't in combat long enough to do that," he said.

No sooner had Goldberg fired on the cabin door than the attacking infantrymen came running back from the woods, calling out that they had seen German tanks. Goldberg could hear the sounds of the attack, but did not stick around to see what was happening. He and his second gunner disassembled the machine gun and joined the retreat.

A machine gunner fires his water-cooled M-1917 Browning machine gun at retreating Germans across a frozen European field. The soldier behind him uses binoculars to direct his fire, while a third stands ready with a box of ammunition. Private Leon Goldberg with Company D, 422nd Infantry Regiment of the 106th Infantry Division, manned an M-1917 machine gun during the Battle of the Bulge's first days. Like the soldier with the binoculars, he carried a Colt .45-caliber pistol for protection.

National Archives

AT THE BULGE

The men pulled back and set up in another location. "We were just waiting to see what happened next," said Goldberg. "The enemy approached, and we retreated again." And so it went for the next two and a half days. With the Germans encircling the regiment, the men ran from position to position, trying to stay away from the enemy. The Golden Lion men dug in, set up, fired at the Germans, then ran to another position. They rarely ate or slept and were running low on ammunition and fresh water. "You tried to close your eyes while other men stood guard, and if you did fall asleep, someone would wake you up and tell you to move," explained Goldberg. Through it all, none of the men panicked or complained, but "everyone was exhausted."

Despite the fighting, Company D remained mostly intact. On the third day of combat, December 19, the men were dug in atop a small hill when a German officer approached, waving a white flag on the end of a rifle. Gold-berg's lieutenant went out to talk to him and then followed him back to the German lines. The lieutenant returned an hour later and told everyone they were going to surrender. "He told us the Germans had a lot of armor, and it would take them 15 minutes to blow this area to smithereens."

National Archives

Soldiers of the 422nd infantry Regiment assault an objective during their training at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Private Goldberg was fortunate to live with his wife while he trained for war.

"Nobody wanted to surrender," said Goldberg, "but we had to. We had a habit of obeying officers." The riflemen removed the firing pins from their rifles and threw them away, then broke up their rifles. "Then we marched out." The lieutenant led the men out of the woods to a small town where they sat down on the grass beside a paved road. The Germans came by and checked the Americans' pockets. Goldberg said, "I had nothing to give them, but they did take things from the others."

Goldberg grew apprehensive as the Germans rifled through his fellow GIs' pockets. He knew his dog tags possessed a single letter that could immediately change his treatment. The letter was an "H," which stood for Hebrew.

Goldberg had grown up in a Jewish household in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His parents, Russian immigrants, brought their three boys, Martin, Leon, and Edward, to B'nai Abraham Synagogue for all the high holidays. When war broke out in Europe and Asia and war clouds neared the United States, Leon's older brother Martin joined the Army and went to work on something called Manhattan. Goldberg found out 50 years after the war that he had been working on the Manhattan Project, the development of the first atomic bomb.

Goldberg was a 19-year-old student at Overbrook High School when he learned about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He ran track and cross-country and had a girlfriend, Esther Meadow. After graduation, he enlisted in the Army, but when he received no notification to report, he registered at the University of Pennsylvania, where he had been accepted for early admission. He had completed a year and a half of studies when the Army sent him to the Infantry Replacement Center at Camp Wheeler, Georgia, for nine weeks of basic training.

Goldberg was then selected for Officer Candidate School (OCS). Two weeks before basic training ended, he was picked for the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), which sent qualified candidates to college to study medicine, dentistry, or engineering. Goldberg chose engineering and traveled to Alabama Polytechnical Institute, today's Auburn University. "I went to college during the week, but weekends were free," he said. "I thought I would never go overseas." While in ASTP, he married Esther, and the two rented a room in a professor's house.

After Goldberg had spent three semesters at Auburn, the U.S. Army became desperate for frontline soldiers and disbanded the program in February 1944. Goldberg was sent to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, where he joined Maj. Gen. Alan W. Jones's 106th Infantry Division and was assigned to Captain Charles Porter's D Company in the 422nd Infantry Regiment. Esther soon joined him and rented a room in a farmhouse outside the camp gate. "It wasn't easy," said Goldberg, "but it was great."

Goldberg trained as the first gunner on the M-1917 water-cooled Browning heavy machine gun. When moving, he carried the machine gun's 50-pound tripod over his shoulders, while the second gunner carried the barrel. "I would swing the tripod off my shoulders and set it down," he explained. "Then the second gunner set the barrel, locked it, and fed it ammo." Fully assembled, it weighed 103 pounds. Goldberg would then man the machine gun. Two soldiers carried extra water for the barrel to ensure it would not overheat, while three other men carried extra ammunition. For his own protection, Goldberg carried a Colt .45-caliber pistol.

In October 1944, Goldberg and his regiment shipped out to England aboard the RMS *Aquitania,* a British passenger liner converted into a troop ship. The ship was fast enough to travel without an escort, zigzagging for eight days as it made the journey. "I was sick the whole time," he recalled. "I was not a good sailor." His quarters were stuffy, the air stale. "The previous soldiers had cut holes in the air conditioning ducts so they could get air down there." He spent most of his time up on deck "getting sick." His meals consisted of cheese and bread with an occasional plate of scrambled eggs.

The ship arrived in England on November 1, and the Americans trained for a month at Batsford Park outside Oxford. During training, Goldberg would hear German V-1 "Buzz Bomb" pulse jets flying overhead and see an occasional explosion. "It was really scary," he said. "We could hear them and see some of them. We felt bad for the people under assault."

On November 26, the division shipped across the English Channel to Le Havre, France, where Goldberg got his first sight of the war's destruction. "There were sunken ships in the harbor and nothing but devastation in the town," he explained. "It was a horrible sight; it made us realize how bad things really were."

They headed to the front to replace the vet-

National Archives

Leon Goldberg

ABOVE: American soldiers advance through Belgium's snow-covered Ardennes Forest. Private Goldberg and his fellow soldiers constantly marched to different locations during three days of combat against the attacking German army. RIGHT: Private Leon Goldberg looked healthy and happy before heading off to war. He lost 45 pounds as a POW in Germany.

eran 2nd Infantry Division east of the Belgian town of Schönberg on the German border on December 11. As Goldberg and his comrades marched into the woods, the 2nd Division infantrymen walked past in the opposite direction. "Go get 'em!" the veterans encouraged. Some gave their overcoats and overshoes to the green soldiers. "That helped us a lot," said Goldberg. "We were anxious to fight."

The Golden Lions occupied the veterans' positions and resided in cabins built three feet above the ground. In the December snow and winds, the men stood guard in their foxholes and rotated two hours on the line and four hours off. "We didn't expect any action until spring," Goldberg said. Still, he could hear enemy activity. "We heard lots of noises on the other side of the mountain." He heard German trucks and tanks. He learned later that scouts had reported activity back to headquarters, but their warnings were either ignored or responded to quite slowly. "We just kept patrolling and manning our positions."

Goldberg and his crew set up their machine gun atop a slope that overlooked a stream. Sergeant John Adams commanded the crew. "He was a tall, slender woodsman from West 'by God' Virginia," said Goldberg. "He loved the outdoors and was very much at home out there. He was a great leader."

On the morning of December 16, German artillery screeched over Goldberg's position. Almost simultaneously, German infantry charged across the stream, and Goldberg opened fire. For three and a half days, the men of D Company fought the Germans wherever they encountered them. When the men were finally ordered to surrender, Goldberg worried the Germans would see the "H" on his dog tags and single him out for punishment, or worse. "I was the only Jewish soldier in the company that I knew of," he explained. "I didn't know what was going to happen."

But the Germans made no move to check his dog tags. Instead, they organized the Americans into rows, four abreast, and began marching them east into Germany. Altogether, they had captured some 7,000 GIs from Goldberg's 422nd Infantry Regiment and the 423rd. It was one of the worst defeats in American history. The men marched for eight days through forests and towns, stopping periodically for rest. "They did not feed us except for a large piece of bread about the size of your fist once a day," explained Goldberg. The captors also passed out buckets of drinking water.

One day, they marched into a city under an arch that spelled out "COBLENZ" in large metal letters. They slept that night on pieces of slate in a factory. "At night, we were lucky to have some shelter," said Goldberg. The men eventually reached a railroad siding and were put into 40&8 boxcars. "They packed us in so tight we couldn't sit. We were shoulder to shoulder," he recalled. As they headed east, American fighter aircraft strafed the train and dropped 500-pound bombs. "The bombs never hit the train, but the strafing did."

As planes swooped in, the train stopped and the Germans ran into the woods, leaving the Americans in the boxcars. "I could see planes

diving on targets through the slits in the boards in the boxcars," said Goldberg. "We were just sitting ducks. I could hear the bullets tear through the boxcar, and all you could do was pray." One round hit the soldier next to him.

The fighters flew away, and the Germans returned and opened the sliding doors. Goldberg moved away from the soldier. "He never made a sound; he just dropped," he said. "I'm sure he was killed." The Germans pulled out the injured and dead, laid them by the side of the road, and called out, "Move on!" The attack left Goldberg shaken. "That was the most traumatic experience."

On December 31, the train arrived at Stalag IVB, a prisoner of war camp for British noncommissioned officers near the town of Mühlberg, halfway between Leipzig and Dresden, east of the Elbe River. Most of the British had been captured in North Africa and Italy and had been there for at least four years. There were also Palestinian Jewish prisoners who fought with the British. "Do they bother you?" Goldberg asked one of the British soldiers. "No they don't bother me," he responded. "I have no problem with that."

Goldberg and his fellow POWs filed by a long table where British soldiers registered them and gave them small postcards to write home. Goldberg wrote to his wife, but she did not receive it until three months later in mid-March 1945. A week after that, she received a notice from the Army that her husband was a POW.

Goldberg's first meal consisted of watered-down wheat soup, a chunk of bread, and some small potatoes. "That was your ration," he said, "morning and night."

If the meal proved despairing, Goldberg's first shower proved terrifying. "The shower room was like a gas chamber," he recalled. Fortunately, water flowed from the shower nozzles, not gas. Once a week, the men were entitled to three minutes of hot water and three minutes of cold. "They forced you to take a shower even if you didn't want to," he said. The men used the shower to wash their uniforms since the Germans issued them no new ones. For shaving, the men shared a single rough and worn razor. Some of the prisoners possessed scissors for haircuts, otherwise, the men had to rely on the razor.

So began Goldberg's routine for the next five months. Every morning at 6, he fell out for roll call, where the Germans counted the inmates. He ate two meals a day. "Once in a while, they served oatmeal; that was the best they would give you," he explained, "and weeds they called vegetables."

All prisoners were given one hour of mandatory exercise in the yard, rain or shine. The rest of the time was spent in the barracks, where the highest ranking British noncommissioned officer was in charge. Goldberg appreciated the hour of exercise. "If you didn't keep moving or get enough nutrition you'd die," he said. When he first arrived in the barracks, he noticed a very skinny GI, sleeping two bunks away, who spent all his time in his bunk. "A couple of days later they carried him out," he explained. "He had starved to death."

The barracks proved cold and drafty, with the only warmth coming from a lone stove. "I had a burlap sack for a blanket," said Goldberg. A separate room contained a long trough with running water that acted as the latrine. "If you went outside to take a leak, other than on your exercise time, you'd get shot."

The men spent much of their time talking about cooking, food, and the first things they planned to eat after the war. "Food was a big topic of conversation," recalled Goldberg. "We talked about things like fried chicken and just went through the whole menu." Goldberg himself craved his mother's holiday meals. "She made roast beef and special confections only on holidays."

To get additional nutrition, Goldberg volunteered for work details. "It was very good," he said. "You got exercise and you got out of the camp." He either picked potatoes or gathered wood, collecting tree branches to burn in the barracks stove. He used a worn-out pick and his hands to dig for small potatoes. "It took a lot of work to get them out of the ground," he recalled, "but you got a double ration when you had dinner, enough of a portion so you would survive."

The POWs were supposed to receive Red Cross packages once a week, but they rarely arrived. "We were lucky to get one package a month," said Goldberg, "and we had to share it with two or three other guys." The boxes included canned foods, cheese and crackers, and cigarettes. The German guards often raided the packages or sabotaged the contents. "If it had a can of fish, they'd punch a hole in it," he explained. "That way, if you escaped, it would spoil."

As a former track athlete, Goldberg did not smoke, so he traded his cigarettes for food. "The guys who smoked would rather smoke than eat," he said. Other men illegally gambled for food and for fun. After the 9 PM "lights out" call, when everyone had to be in bed, the gamblers would gather in the latrine and play craps with homemade dice.

The Americans did have one window to the outside world, courtesy of the British: a radio. They had fashioned a radio and followed the war's progress once a week through BBC broadcasts. They relayed any news to their American buddies. When the Germans learned of the radio, they searched the barracks. "We were told the radio was not in one piece, but held by different guys," said Goldberg, "so we never knew who had the radio or where it was. It was really very clever." One day in mid-April someone told Goldberg that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had died on April 12. "I got pretty upset," he recalled. "I was very sad."

The men also learned from the radio that American troops, racing east, would halt at the Elbe River, a few miles west of the camp. The POWs knew that if they were going to be liberated it would come from the Russians. Soon, the German guards fled. The next day, on April 23, 1945, the Soviet Red Army arrived and liberated the camp. "The Russians operated it the same way as the Germans," said Goldberg. "We had the same food, but they didn't have any guards, and they didn't care what we did." By the time Goldberg was liberated, he had lost 45 pounds.

Since none of the POWs knew where they were in Germany, they remained in the camp. After a few days, the Russians brought the POWs to some college dormitories in a small town, but the liberators were focused on killing and capturing Germans and did not feed their recent charges. The POWs resorted to breaking into homes to steal food.

One day, Goldberg and a few of his fellow POWs were scrounging for food when they came upon a farmhouse with some rough-looking Russians armed with submachine guns eating lunch at a long picnic table. Chickens ran around freely in the yard. Using sign language, Goldberg asked them for something to eat. The soldier at the head of the table instructed another soldier to kill one of the chickens. The man opened fire with his submachine gun on one of the chickens but missed. "I think he was the butt of their jokes," Goldberg recalled. Eventually, someone trapped and killed one of chickens. "It was a little raw," he remembered, "but it was delicious."

POWs began leaving in small groups and heading west in search of the U.S. Army. Goldberg took off with a group of about eight soldiers. When they would pass a house, they asked the residents, "Americanski?" The locals would point, and Goldberg's group would head out in that direction. One farmer invited the POWs into his home for dinner and let them sleep in his barn.

After a few days of hiking, Goldberg's group came across Americans from an armored unit

cleaning their equipment. "It was such an enormous relief and such a great feeling," he said. "You were home at last." The POWs looked pretty scraggly, so the armored soldiers took them into town for haircuts from German women barbers. Afterward, Goldberg and his friends were put on Douglas C-47 Skytrain aircraft and flown to Paris.

The plane landed in Garches, a commune in the western section of Paris, where the men were put into an American hospital. While entering the building, Goldberg saw his first American flag in five months. "The flag was a symbol, and it was beautiful to see," he said. Goldberg snapped to attention and saluted. The men stayed in isolation while the Army arranged their flight back to the United States. They received three meals a day, but Goldberg and his friends simply jumped into the back of the line and repeated. "We got six meals a day."

After a few days in the hospital, Goldberg came down with hepatitis. The doctors and staff treated him for three months until he was well enough to board a hospital plane on July 4—Independence Day—to fly across the ocean to Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Goldberg recovered at the Chalfonte Hotel and Hadden Hall, a pair of buildings on the Jersey boardwalk. Goldberg remained there for the rest of the year but was given 10-day furloughs to visit with Esther. Finally, on Christmas Day 1945, he left the Army's care and returned home to Philadelphia. He and Esther moved to a house and had two daughters: Diane, born in 1947, and Shelley, born in 1950. Goldberg returned to the University of Pennsylvania and majored in accounting, then studied to become a certified public accountant.

In 1973, after 30 years of marriage, Esther passed away. Goldberg did not date for two and a half years. "I didn't think I could find anyone who made me as happy as Esther," he said. That changed when he met Elaine Fisher, who shared his love for tennis. The two married, and as of 2019 have been together for 37 years.

The war remains with Goldberg. He wrote an article for his local paper about his experiences. He has also attended a number of 106th Infantry Division Association reunions and served as president for three years. He credits others for the association's success. "The families do all the work," he said. "Mine was really an honorary position." He looks forward to the 2019 reunion where he hopes to see the five other Golden Lion veterans who joined him at the 2018 reunion.

Reflecting on his time in uniform, Goldberg expresses chagrin. "We were gung-ho to kill Germans, so it was a major disappointment that we were captured. I would have liked to have seen the war through to the end." □

ABOVE: Under guard by a pistol-wielding German soldier, American soldiers captured during the early days of the Battle of the Bulge head east to German prison camps. The men look north, possibly to see German V-1 pulse jets or American fighter aircraft attacking ground targets. Goldberg experienced both during the war. BELOW: Newly liberated American prisoners of war received new uniforms, medical care, and plentiful meals at Camp Lucky Strike in La Havre, France, before heading home to the United States. When Goldberg saw an American flag for the first time in five months, he snapped to attention and saluted.

Both: National Archives

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Lighting the TORCH of Liberation

On November 8, 1942, the Allied invasion of North Africa initiated a long offensive road to victory against the Axis.

BY MICHAEL D. HULL

Coming after a series of bitter defeats from France to Norway to Crete, news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II was one of the early high points of Prime Minister Winston Churchill's leadership years.

Great Britain now had a powerful ally in the struggle against fascism, and ultimate victory was a certainty. "So, we had won after all!" Churchill exulted. "We had won the war." But the conduct of war is never simple, and the waging of a coalition war is fraught with challenge.

The warrior leader who had inspired his island nation when it alone ensured the survival of Western civilization in 1940 could not foresee in December 1941 just how difficult it would be to coordinate a common strategy for defeating the Axis powers. The trouble had started with the massive German invasion of Russia in June 1941.

Acting on the principle that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," Churchill rallied to the aid of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, dispatching convoys of tanks, trucks, planes, and other essential equipment that Britain could ill afford to spare. But with German troops pushing toward the gates of Moscow, Stalin demanded more on July 19. The Soviet leader was adamant about the opening of a second front to take the pressure off Russia.

With her armed forces depleted after almost two years of war and stretched so thin around the world, Britain was hardly in a condition to plan a second front—an attack across the English Channel against Nazi-occupied Europe—in 1941. When U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt agreed in September 1941 to ship Lend-Lease matériel to Russia, Stalin again called for a second front. And he would heighten his demand during the next three years.

Britain and the United States, which was still neutral but coming to her ally's side through Roosevelt's strategic insight, could only hope in 1941 for Russia's survival while calculating how to distract dictator Adolf Hitler from his eastern campaign and weaken his army at the periphery of the Nazi empire. Planning the locations and intensity of such thrusts in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, for instance, were to preoccupy Churchill for the next three years.

He was already running one such campaign in the Western Desert and had triumphed in another, the destruction of Benito Mussolini's Italian Fascist empire in East Africa. Britain had failed in a third venture, the intervention in Greece, though she retained the power to strike again. After the ill-fated Anglo-French campaign of 1940, Norway was also a sector constantly on Churchill's mind. Once America entered the war, the prime minister realized, it could be only a matter of time before they jointly opened a second front to breach the concrete-and-steel Atlantic Wall Hitler was building along the northern coast of France.

Four months before Pearl Harbor, Churchill and Roosevelt had agreed during their first talks in Placentia Bay on a "Germany first" policy, but most Americans, including some of FDR's top military advisers, regarded Japan as the foe that deserved the more immediate retribution. During the first year of the Pacific War, therefore, Churchill found himself frustrated in an unfamiliar situation. He was no longer fearful of defeat, but he was equally no longer the overlord of his own nation's strategy.

Because the British Empire could win the war only with the support of America, the awakening "arsenal of democracy," Churchill, the foremost strategist among World War II national leaders, had no choice but to accommodate the views of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. While its members were eager and impatient, most had little or no combat experience, and few comprehended fully the magnitude of the Nazi threat. Roosevelt was inclined to follow the prime minister's lead and listen to him, but Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest J. King were not so disposed.

The acerbic King was interested in the Pacific, where the U.S. Navy was heavily committed, to the exclusion of all other theaters, while the impassive Marshall—a first-rate organizer rather than strategist—was committed to Europe. The latter believed that a second front should take the shortest possible route into Germany at the earliest possible date, as Stalin was demanding. Marshall, therefore, became deeply suspicious of all attempts to postpone or divert effort away from this.

Churchill knew that such a venture was both impractical and perilous in 1941 or in 1942, and he shrank from committing too early. "Remember that on my breast there are the medals of the Dardanelles, Antwerp, Dakar, and Greece," he exclaimed to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden on July 5, 1941, referring to four disastrous amphibious campaigns he had directed in the two world wars. The Allied strategy, Churchill believed and would try to impress on FDR and his generals, should be "Germany first, but not quite yet."

It was one thing, as Churchill saw it as 1942

National Archives

During the opening moments of Operation Torch, American infantrymen crowd aboard a landing craft for the run to the North African shoreline at Oran on November 8, 1942.

Navy History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless dive bombers and Grumman F4F-4 fighters prepare for takeoff on the flight deck of the escort carrier USS *Santee*. Some of the planes have been painted with yellow recognition rings on their fuselages for Operation Torch. OPPOSITE: Hoping that the Vichy French do not open fire on them, American soldiers land on the beach near Algiers as Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa, gets underway on November 8, 1942.

drew on, for the U.S. Navy and a few Marine Corps and Army divisions to invade Japanese-held islands in the Pacific and to plan wider amphibious leaps in 1943. But a second front in Europe was something quite different. It would commit the whole of the Anglo-American expeditionary forces—not easily replaced if lost—to an assault on a fortified continent defended by an army of 300 divisions that was backed by the world's most powerful war-making machine.

In 1941 and on, Churchill found himself treading a narrow and slippery path. On the one hand, he dared not play down Britain's commitment to a second front lest the Americans conclude that their strength would be better deployed in the Pacific; on the other hand, he could not play up the British commitment lest he got caught up in an American rush to invade the Continent before success could be reasonably guaranteed.

Churchill had nightmares about a bloodbath on the French beaches and insisted that a second front would prevail only if it was launched with overwhelming land, sea, and air strength. But trained manpower, sufficient landing craft, and vital air support were not available in 1941 or 1942. The Allies had to simply build up their strength and consider the possibility of a second front in the spring of 1943.

This was what Churchill had to tell Stalin when he went to Moscow with Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, early in August 1942. The Soviet leader was convinced that Britain and America had connived to let the German and Russian Armies bleed each other into impotence before a Western second front was launched. Churchill tried to pacify him by revealing that the Western Allies would invade North Africa later in 1942, but the crude, ruthless Soviet leader accused the British of cowardice. A furious Churchill responded with a torrent of oratory, although vodka was flowing freely and the mercurial Stalin eventually praised the North Africa plan and the valor of the British.

An assault was made on the coast of France on August 19, 1942, which underscored tragically the wisdom of Churchill's caution about a cross-Channel invasion. In Operation Jubilee, a "reconnaissance-in-force," 1,000 British Commandos and 5,000 Canadian troops attacked the fortified port of Dieppe, with disastrous results. Hard lessons were learned for the Normandy invasion two years later, but at the cost of 3,623 men killed, wounded, or captured. Field Marshal Brooke snorted, "It is a lesson to the people who are clamoring for the invasion of France [in 1942]."

The fiasco served to convince the American high command, even General Marshall, that an invasion of France in 1942 was now out of the question. Meanwhile, under Operation Bolero, increasing numbers of U.S. troops had been arriving in England, and Roosevelt wanted to see them committed to action that year. So, after much wrangling and deadlock among FDR, Churchill, and their military chiefs, a compromise was reached: Operation Super-Gymnast (soon renamed Operation Torch for dramatic effect). The invasion of North Africa was seen as a more realistic alternative to an immediate invasion of France.

The risks would be fewer, it would require fewer landing craft, and it would offer a less bloody baptism of fire for the untried American troops involved. The objective of the first Anglo-American offensive in World War II was to overcome Vichy French opposition, gain control of French North Africa, and eventually link up with General Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery's Eighth Army advancing westward after its climactic victory at El Alamein. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's German-Italian Afrika Korps would be squeezed between the two forces and Allied control of Northwest Africa assured.

Torch was to be primarily an American operation, with the significant British role downplayed because of lingering animosity following the Royal Navy's bombardment of the French Mediterranean Fleet at Mers-el-Kebir on July 3, 1940, to prevent it from falling into German hands. The operation planners believed that Vichy forces would be less hostile to American invaders than to the British.

Roosevelt and Churchill agreed on August 8, 1942, that Operation Torch—scheduled for November 8—should be led by amiable Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, an obscure but able staff officer who was commanding U.S. troops in England after having served in the

war plans division of the War Department. He had no combat experience. Ike's deputy was the rangy, high-strung Maj. Gen. Mark W. Clark, a World War I infantry veteran, while Brig. Gen. James H. Doolittle, who had led the famous B-25 medium-bomber raid on Japan on April 18, 1942, was the Western air commander. Eisenhower's other top staffers, all British, included the distinguished Admiral Sir Andrew B. Cunningham, commander of the British Mediterranean Fleet, as Allied naval leader, and abrasive Lt. Gen. Kenneth A.N. Anderson, who would lead the newly formed British First Army. Ike strove to achieve a truly unified command, operating "as though all its members belonged to a single nation."

Torch was the largest, most complex, and riskiest military operation yet mounted and would eventually prove to be a dramatic success. Yet it was hastily planned and patched together, a catalogue of confusion, blunders, and high-level discord. It would point up serious problems with planning, coordination, invasion tactics, and equipment. The Allied leaders in London and Washington were apprehensive, and one of the task force commanders, the fire-eating Maj. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., was also less than hopeful. He said, "The job I am going on is about as desperate a venture as has ever been undertaken by any force in the world's history.... Never in history has the Navy landed an army at the planned time and place. But if you land us anywhere within 50 miles of Fedala [one of his task force's three objectives] and within one week of D-Day, I'll go ahead and win."

Even the location of the landings provoked argument. Anxious to surround Rommel in Libya before the arrival of his reinforcements, the British wanted to invade as far east as was feasible, on the Mediterranean coast of Algeria. The American planners preferred the Atlantic coast of Morocco in order to avoid the hazards of the Mediterranean and a possible threat of French (or Spanish) aggression at their rear. The eventual result was a compromise, with one landing in Morocco and two in Algeria. They were synchronized to take place at 1 AM on Sunday, November 8, 1942.

The political situation in French North Africa was uncertain and complicated. The invasion was preceded by cloak-and-dagger maneuvering—with some comic interludes—by American diplomats and officers to try and minimize feared opposition from Vichy French forces sympathetic to the Germans. There were more than 100,000 such Vichy troops scattered around Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

Able, affable Robert Murphy, Roosevelt's top diplomat in North Africa, was active in paving the way for the Allied landings by sounding out French officers he felt were sympathetic. He relied primarily on General Charles Mast, the commander of troops in the Algiers sector, and General Emile Bethouart, the Casablanca area commander. Meanwhile, General Clark was taken secretly in a British submarine, HMS *Seraph,* to a coastal villa west of Algiers, where he informed General Mast of the coming invasion. Clark and his four staff officers had to hide in a wine cellar when police searched the villa, and the American general then narrowly escaped drowning in heavy surf while returning to the submarine.

Starting early in October, three task forces were assembled under the tightest security to carry out Operation Torch, two in Britain and one in the United States. More than 500 ships, ranging from converted freighters to once luxurious liners, had been pressed into service to carry about 107,000 troops and thousands of tons of equipment and supplies.

Shortly after 1 AM on the fateful day, November 8, 1942, the darkened Allied fleet started disgorging its landing craft. Shipboard loudspeakers blared a message in French across the water: "Don't shoot. We are your friends. We are Americans!"

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British and American soldiers, most of whom were untried and only partially trained, were crammed aboard troop transports and merchantmen along with medium tanks, field guns, and equipment. They would be transported to the Mediterranean in three convoys escorted by ships of the Royal Navy, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Coast Guard. Later in October, the three Allied armadas got underway.

Under the command of Rear Admiral Henry Kent Hewitt, the Western Task Force sailed from Hampton Roads, Virginia. It carried an all-American force of 24,500 troops led by General Patton, and its destination was three locations near Casablanca in Morocco. The assault troops included men of the 2nd Armored and 3rd Infantry Divisions and elements of the 9th Infantry Division. The naval force of 102 ships comprised two battleships, a fleet carrier, four escort carriers, numerous cruisers and destroyers, and 29 transports.

Escorted by a Royal Navy fleet under Commodore Thomas H. Troubridge, the Central Task Force sailed from the River Clyde and carried 39,000 troops of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division and 1st Armored Division who had been shipped to Scotland and Northern Ireland early in August. They were led by Maj. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall. The naval force of 47 vessels included two escort carriers, and the objective was beaches in and near Oran.

The Eastern Task Force, comprising 52 ships and also sailing from Britain, was commanded by Rear Admiral Sir Harold Burrough of the Royal Navy. The assault force consisted of 33,000 men of the U.S. 34th Infantry Division, elements of the U.S. 9th Infantry and 1st Armored Divisions, and the British 78th Division, all under the command of U.S. Maj. Gen. Charles W. "Doc" Ryder. The destination was three beaches near Algiers.

The two large convoys—one slow and one fast—coming from Britain set sail on October 22 and 26, respectively. The timing was arranged so that they could pass through the Straits of Gibraltar simultaneously during the night of November 5. From there, they were covered by British Vice Admiral Neville Syfret's powerful Force H, based at Gibraltar, which comprised three battleships, three fleet carriers, cruisers, and destroyers. The three task forces arrived off their respective landing zones after nightfall on November 7. Despite the previous clandestine contacts, it was not known whether the French Army of Africa would resist or welcome the invasion.

Shortly after 1 AM on the fateful day, November 8, 1942, the darkened Allied fleet started disgorging its landing craft. Shipboard loudspeakers blared a message in French across the water: "Don't shoot. We are your friends. We are Americans!" At 5:15 AM, troops of the Western Task Force went ashore in Morocco at three locations—at Safi, 125 miles southwest of Casablanca; at Fedala, 15 miles northeast of the city; and at Mehdia and Port Lyautey, 70 miles to the northeast. Fedala offered the nearest suitable landing beaches to Casablanca, the only large harbor on the Moroccan Atlantic coast. Mehdia was chosen because of its close proximity to the Port Lyautey airfield, the only one in Morocco with a concrete runway. Safi was selected because an Allied force positioned there could prevent the strong French garrison in Marrakech from intervening at Casablanca and also because it had a harbor where medium tanks could be disembarked.

Patton's troops made it onto the beaches in spite of brave resistance from some French units and confusion caused by the Americans' lack of experience. Trucks that should have been moving weapons and ammunition ashore remained onboard ships, as did the engineers needed to lay steel mats on the soft sand. Landing craft waited to be unloaded, and troops crouched in foxholes while French planes strafed the beaches. Patton hastened ashore and stalked around angrily among his men, cursing and bellowing orders.

Vehicles fell overboard from overloaded ships, troops were landed on the wrong beaches, and some equipment-laden soldiers drowned when their landing boats hit reefs.

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French Admiral François Darlan (left) and American General Mark Clark shake hands after signing a treaty of peace. LEFT: A pair of American soldiers pulls guard duty on the beach in Morocco, covering landing craft the morning of the landing. One of the craft has broached into an awkward sideways position at the shoreline.

When the ramp of one landing craft was lowered prematurely, an officer drove a jeep into eight feet of water. On one beach, supplies of needed reserve ammunition lay buried beneath tons of combat rations. Yet, despite the confusion on the beaches, Patton's assault waves were able to get ashore before sporadic fire from the hesitant French defenders became serious. By then, the light was good enough to help naval guns subdue coastal batteries.

Off Casablanca, a naval battle started just before 7 AM when a coastal battery on Cap El Hank and the new but uncompleted French battleship *Jean Bart* opened fire on Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen's covering group, comprising the battleship USS *Massachusetts,* two

heavy cruisers, and four destroyers. The El Hank guns and the *Jean Bart* were silenced temporarily, but other French ships joined the fray. The clash lasted for several hours. The French fought gallantly, but were eventually beaten off by Giffen's ships. At the height of the battle, seven French destroyers, the cruiser Primauguet, and eight submarines sneaked out of Casablanca harbor under a smokescreen. Their aim was to attack the Allied landing force at nearby Fedala. But as soon as the French vessels emerged from the smoke, they were fired on by the cruiser USS *Augusta* and other ships. The French squadron lost seven ships and three submarines and suffered 1,000 casualties.

The landings at Oran met stiffer resistance than Patton's force did at Casablanca, but Maj. Gen. Terry Allen's spearheading 1st Infantry Division, backed by elements of Maj. Gen. Orlando Ward's 1st Armored Division, had the advantage of good planning and cooperation between the American task force and the British fleet that delivered it ashore. The plan was to capture the port of Oran by a double envelopment, with two regimental combat teams landing in the Gulf of Arzew, 24 miles to the east, while a third led by Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., went ashore at Les Andalouses, 14 miles west of the city. Then, armored columns were to push inland, seize two airfields south of Oran, and close on the city to the rear before its 10,000-man garrison could be reinforced.

The landings began at 1 AM. No opposition was met on the beaches, and the disembarkation and unloading went smoothly on the whole. Medium tanks were offloaded from transports onto the quay in Arzew harbor after it had been captured by Colonel William O. Darby's 1st U.S. Ranger Battalion. The American landings progressed with fewer than 400 casualties. French resistance stiffened on the second day, but a coordinated attack by men of the 1st Infantry and 1st Armored Divisions penetrated Oran. The French commanders there surrendered on November 10.

The only serious reverse in the Oran landings was a "suicide mission" undertaken by HMS *Walney* and *Hartland,* two aging U.S. Coast Guard cutters that had been transferred to the Royal Navy in 1941. Crammed with 400 American assault troops and accompanied by two motor launches, the cutters sped into Oran harbor to capture the docks before they could be sabotaged. But sustained blasts from French shore batteries ripped both cutters. The *Walney* rolled over and sank, and the *Hartland* drifted helplessly before blowing up. More than 300 soldiers and crewmen were killed, and the rest, mostly wounded, were taken prisoner.

Navy History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: French shells splash around the cruiser USS *Wichita* off the North African coast on November 8, 1942, as she engages the French battleship *Jean Bart,* firing from the harbor of Casablanca, where she later sank. BELOW: American soldiers interrogate a Vichy French soldier captured during fighting near Oran. While most of the Vichy troops did not oppose the Allied landings during Operation Torch, some resisted.

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Assault teams of General Ryder's Eastern Task Force began wading ashore at 1 AM on November 8 on both sides of Algiers. Despite rough beaches, the landings proceeded without mishap for the 10,000 American troops and 45,000 British infantry and Commandos. French soldiers encountered a short way inland said they had been ordered not to resist; General Mast, the local French commander, was cooperating with the Allied invaders.

Nevertheless, Ryder's troops encountered problems. On the eastern side of Algiers, the landings were late and somewhat confused, but the situation was soon straightened out thanks to the absence of opposition. Allied columns rolled inland, and the vital airfields at nearby Maison Blanche and Blida were reached after a few shots had been fired as token French resistance.

In the landings west of Algiers near Cap Sidi Ferruch, there was much delay and confusion when a number of landing craft went astray and landed on the British beaches farther west. Many of the boats were wrecked in the heavy surf or delayed by engine trouble, and components of several assaulting battalions were scattered along 15 miles of shore. A costly fiasco was avoided when General Mast intervened personally. After hastily regrouping, Allied columns of medium tanks and armored cars pushed on toward Algiers, encountering resistance at several locations.

As at Oran, an Allied attempt to seize the Algiers docks came to grief. Just before dawn

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on November 8, two British destroyers, HMS *Broke* and *Malcolm,* sped toward the harbor flying large American flags and carrying a U.S. infantry battalion and 74 British infantrymen. As the destroyers approached the harbor entrance, searchlights and heavy artillery fire engulfed them. The *Malcolm* was crippled and forced to retire. On a fourth attempt, the *Broke* rammed the harbor booms, ran the gauntlet of shellfire, and managed to berth alongside a quay. She disembarked 250 men.

Around 8 AM, the severely damaged *Broke* was shelled by the French, forcing her to cast off and withdraw into the Bay of Algiers. After seizing a power station and oil dump, the landing party, led by U.S. Lt. Col. Edwin T. Swenson, was hemmed in by French African troops. With their ammunition almost gone, the Allied troops surrendered just after midday. They were held briefly by the French.

Meanwhile, after their beachheads were secured, Patton's men started moving into Casablanca on the second day of the invasion. French General Auguste Nogues directed a spirited opposition to the Americans in the Casablanca area, and at Port Lyautey there was heavy fighting between French tanks and Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott's 60th Regimental Combat Team. But the men of Patton's 3rd and 9th Infantry Divisions and 2nd Armored Division managed to consolidate their lodgments, and three days after the invasion the French surrender was accepted.

Oran still held out, but General Anderson, who had landed to take command of the British First Army, was able to send armored columns rushing to the east. Algiers was soon ringed on the land side, and French General Alphonse Juin surrendered the city to General Ryder on the evening of the invasion. Algiers was the first Allied objective to fall.

A fortuitous event had worked to the Allies' advantage. Admiral Jean François Darlan, commander in chief of Vichy forces, happened to be in Algiers visiting his sick son. The Americans had chosen General Henri Giraud, who had escaped from German captivity in France, to assume local control, but when it became clear that he lacked the authority to establish it, they turned to Darlan. Taken into protective custody, the wily admiral was persuaded by the Allied strength to change sides. He broke with the odious Vichy regime, and an armistice was signed on November 11, the anniversary of the 1918 accord ending World War I. Darlan also agreed to cooperate with the Allies in driving the Germans out of neighboring Tunisia.

Also on November 11, Hitler ordered Wehrmacht units to move into Vichy, and the following day the first German supply ships began docking in the Tunisian port of Bizerte, despite the efforts of the local French commanders to block the harbor. To the east, advance units of the British Eighth Army reached Halfaya Pass and moved into Libya.

The armistice enabled the British and Americans to swiftly take control of coastal Morocco and Algeria. Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, the Vichy head of state and once revered hero of Verdun, immediately disowned Darlan. General Giraud, meanwhile, was put in charge of French forces in North Africa on November 13. That same day, General Clark and Admiral Darlan signed an agreement recognizing the latter as head of the French civil government in North Africa.

On the fighting front, General Anderson's British First Army pushed eastward, occupying the Algerian coastal towns of Bougie and Bone on November 11 and 12, respectively, and crossing the frontier into Tunisia three days later. To the south, U.S. paratroops occupied Tebessa, Algeria, on November 15 and reached Gafsa, in west-central Tunisia, on November 17.

The balance of military power in North Africa ought now to have swung decisively in the Allies' favor. Two large Allied armies dominated most of the coastline: Montgomery's Eighth Army in Libya and Eisenhower's First Army in Algeria and Morocco, with the French Army of Africa veering to the Allied side. As late as a week after the Operation Torch landings, the only Axis force still operational in Africa was Rommel's battered panzer army, fleeing northward from El Alamein and 1,000 miles from the Tunisian border. But the enemy was about to deprive the Allies of their advantage and win the race for Tunisia.

The British and American Armies made steady advances from east and west, but by mid-November 1,000 German troops were arriving each day in northern Tunisia. The first enemy units coming from Vichy on November 16 were the 10th Panzer, Hermann Göring Panzer Parachute, and 334th Divisions, together constituting the formidable Fifth Panzer Army. They were immediately deployed westward to hold the line of the eastern Atlas Mountains against Eisenhower's advancing forces. Unready yet for a major overland offensive, Allied units attempted a piecemeal eastward rush on strategic Bizerte.

The situation and the weather were turning sour for the Allies. Advance elements of Anderson's British First Army moved into the mountainous region southwest of Bizerte, while a screen of U.S. paratroops spread southeast. Aggressive German troops led by General Walther Nehring checked the British advance, while mud and rain delayed Allied reinforcement columns rolling from Algiers, 500 miles to the west. British spearheads reached to within 20 miles of the prize city of Tunis on November 28 but were blocked by enemy counterattacks. By December, General Eisenhower had to concede defeat in the race. The

year ended with Anderson's army and General Hans-Jürgen von Arnim's Fifth Panzer Army facing each other in stalemate. Much bitter fighting, with serious reverses for the inexperienced American troops, lay ahead in Tunisia.

Operation Torch succeeded because of strategic surprise, effective—though hasty and flawed—joint military-naval planning, and Darlan's check of French resistance. However, the chaotic French political situation and the prompt German reaction in Tunisia combined to impede the Allies' next move. Involved in the furor resulting from dealings with Darlan, Eisenhower exercised scant command supervision of the eastward advance, enabling the eventual linkup of Rommel's and von Arnim's powerful armies.

The four-day war was costly. The casualties were 556 killed, 837 wounded, and 41 missing for the Americans; almost 300 for the British; and more than 700 killed, 1,400 wounded, and 400 missing for the French. But Operation Torch yielded dividends. It enabled Allied officers from diverse backgrounds to learn how to work together under Eisenhower's wise leadership. What he lacked in battlefield insight he more than made up for with a unique talent for instilling harmonious efficiency, as demonstrated later during the Normandy campaign. Ike was not one of the great captains, but he inspired universal respect and loyalty.

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Lack of experience in amphibious operations generated considerable confusion and disorder during the Torch landings, and it was fortunate that the Vichy French offered only desultory opposition. The biggest flaw, however, was that the Allies lacked a coherent and integrated theater strategy to prosecute the war in North Africa. Full cooperation between the British and American forces was lacking, unit performance was variable, and, in the early stages, Operation Torch was hobbled by a serious lack of antitank guns and effective air support.

The invasion came close to foundering because of its half-trained force, inadequate weapons, communications breakdown, traffic jams, and beach unloading snarls. General Patton said three days after the shooting stopped, "It is my firm conviction that the great success attending this hazardous operation … could have been possible only through the intervention of Divine Providence." Operation Torch was a close-run thing, yet it succeeded.

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ABOVE: American soldiers occupy positions near Oran on November 10, 1942, two days after the Operation Torch landings. Soon after Torch, American troops engaged German forces on land for the first time. LEFT: General George S. Patton, Jr., (right) walks with French General Auguste Paul Nogues, the resident general of Morocco. OPPOSITE: American infantrymen advance warily through a street in Algiers as rifle fire rings in the distance. Operation Terminal, an effort to capture Algiers harbor intact, failed, and a similar attack was launched at Oran.

The deployment of green U.S. forces in strength on the periphery of the Nazi empire proved to be sound strategy. Although it delayed the invasion of France until 1944, the Mediterranean diversion provided the U.S. Army with invaluable combat experience. Poorly led, lacking motivation, and undisciplined, U.S. troops in North Africa often advanced recklessly and with little coordination. The result was that they suffered a number of local defeats. But they learned hard lessons quickly, and the foundations were laid in North Africa for the powerful American armies that rolled across northwest Europe two years later. Operation Torch was a proving ground on which generals and privates alike learned the harsh facts of warfare before having to face Rommel's vaunted Afrika Korps and the rest of the battle-seasoned Wehrmacht.

Prime Minister Churchill hailed Operation Torch as a "brilliant" and "remarkable operation," but with reservations. He said, "Through the vacillations of the French commanders in Tunisia we were robbed of complete success." Admiral Cunningham agreed in his report. "The enemy were surprised and off their balance. We failed to give the final push which would have tipped the scales."

Nevertheless, after Torch and the ensuing campaigns, Italy and Nazi-occupied southern Europe were now vulnerable, the Mediterranean was opened to Allied shipping, the threat to the strategic Middle East and the Suez Canal was gone, and the German aura of invincibility had been shaken. Much hard fighting lay ahead, but the Allies now had their feet planted squarely on the road to eventual victory.

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NIGHT BATTLESHIP ACTION OFF GUADALCANAL

BY DAVID ALAN JOHNSON

On November 14-15, 1942, SG radar played a decisive role in the second phase of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal.

Rear Admiral Willis Augustus Lee has been called, among other things, "one of the best brains in the Navy." Although his critics and detractors had any number of unkind things to say about him, Admiral Lee had the ability to make quick decisions under the stress of battle and was certainly more technically minded than most officers of his age group.

Lee had been director of fleet training between the wars and had been a major advocate of upgrading and modernizing U.S. warships. His special interest was in radar and the use of radar at sea. It was said that Admiral Lee "knew more about radar than the radar operators." This knowledge, as well as his faith in the still largely untried and mysterious device, would prove to be indispensable on the night of November 14-15, 1942, in the waters north of Guadalcanal.

Admiral Lee and a six-ship task force had been sent to Guadalcanal by Vice Admiral William F. Halsey, overall commander of the South Pacific area, to block another Japanese effort to put Henderson Field out of operation. A task group of cruisers and destroyers under Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan had prevented Japanese cruisers and battleships from bombarding the airfield on November 13. The ensuing battle, the first phase of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, left Admiral Callaghan dead and six of his ships sunk. The survivors of this group were in no condition to stop another Japanese task force. Admiral Lee was given the job of stopping the latest enemy bombardment force with two battleships, *Washington* and *South Dakota,* along with four screening destroyers, a unit that had been designated Task Force 64.

During the afternoon of November 14, a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft discovered Task Force 64 steaming on a northerly course about 100 miles south of Guadalcanal. The pilot incorrectly identified *Washington* and *South Dakota* as cruisers accompanied by destroyers. At about the same time, a Japanese force under Vice Admiral Nobutake Kondo was discovered steaming south toward Guadalcanal. The American submarine Flying Fish came across Kondo's force at about 4:30 PM and fired several torpedoes at the cruiser Atago. All of the torpedoes missed, but Flying Fish sent a plain language report regarding Admiral Kondo's task group to Fourth Fleet intelligence. Admiral Kondo's group consisted of the battleship *Kirishima* with an escort of four cruisers and nine destroyers.

Thanks to the information from Flying Fish, Admiral Lee knew that he would be up against a large Japanese force. His own task force was approaching Guadalcanal's western shoreline when he received the report. His six-ship column was led by four destroyers—*Walke, Benham, Preston,* and *Gwin,* in that order—followed by the battleships *Washington,* which was Admiral Lee's flagship, and *South Dakota.* Admiral Halsey had given Lee permission to maneuver and position his ships as he saw fit. Admiral Lee decided to situate his task force just off the northwestern coast of Guadalcanal between Cape Esperance and Savo Island, where it would be able to intercept any Japanese force coming from the northwest.

Lee's important advantage, gained by having been alerted that a Japanese force was approaching, was offset by the problem of never having worked with any of the accompanying ships in his task force before. The four destroyers were from four different divisions and had no division commander. The only reason that these particular destroyers had been assigned to Task Force 64 was that they had more fuel than any others in the area. And the two battleships had never operated together before, either. The six warships had only sailed together for the past 36 hours, during their run to Guadalcanal. To prevent any accidents during their first operational sortie, Lee ordered an interval of 5,000 yards between the destroyers and the two battleships. A collision in the restricted waters of Guadalcanal was the last thing he needed.

At about 9 PM on November 14, Lee ordered a 90-degree change of course, which would put his task force past Savo Island and into Iron-bottom Sound. Before the war, that stretch of water was known as Savo Sound; that was the name given on all the charts. But sailors

Flames and smoke erupt from the Japanese battleship *Kirishima* as a hail of shells strike home and churn the waters around her during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. *Kirishima* was sunk by fire from the battleship USS *Washington.*

All: Navy History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: Telltale smoke trails mark the end of two Japanese aircraft, shot down during a raid against American ships off Guadalcanal on November 12, 1942. In the distance the attack cargo ship USS *Betelguese* is making smoke to help conceal the ships from further attack. BELOW: Smoke rises from the cruiser USS *San Francisco* in the distance after a Japanese plane has crashed into its aft superstructure in another photo taken during the action in the photo above. Antiaircraft fire dots the sky as well while the transport USS *President Jackson* is also under attack in the foreground. RIGHT: The presence of SG radar aboard the battleship USS *Washington* was a key factor in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. This image of the *Washington*'s forward director tower shows the SG apparatus.

decided that so many ships had been sunk in this narrow strait since the invasion of Guadalcanal in August that its bottom must be lined with iron.

Admiral Lee knew that the enemy was on his way, but he badly needed more recent, and more specific, intelligence. His task force had departed the naval base at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, in such haste that it had not been given a radio call sign. When Lee tried to contact Guadalcanal—call sign "Cactus" —for any up-to-date information, he signed the communiqué with his last name. In response, he received the curt reply, "We do not recognize you!" The admiral decided to try again with another signal: "Cactus this is Lee. Tell your big boss Ching Lee is here and wants the latest information." The "big boss" in question was General Alexander Vandegrift, commander of the 1st Marine Division and a friend of Lee's since their Naval Academy days. "Ching Lee" was the admiral's nickname when he was at the Academy (class of 1908).

Before General Vandegrift could be located, radio operators aboard *Washington* picked up some frightening talk between three nearby torpedo boats regarding Lee's two battleships: "There go two big ones, but I don't know whose they are!" The admiral thought it imperative to send some sort of message as quickly as possible, something containing some personal information that his friend Vandegrift would know, before the three PT boats fired their torpedoes at him. He decided to send another "Ching Lee" communiqué, which he knew Vandegrift would recognize immediately.

There are at least three versions of Lee's signal to Vandegrift. The first, sent in a rhymed couplet, is the most colourful: "This is Chung Ching Lee—you mustn't fire fish at me!" The second is an interchange between the admiral and the PT boats. "This is Lee," he broadcast. "Who's Lee?" came the response. "Tell your boss this is Ching Lee." The PT boat's response to this is not on record. Version number three is the most straightforward: "Refer your big boss about Ching Lee; Chinese, catchee? Call off your boys!"

The admiral's colorful messages achieved at least one of their goals: they convinced the PT boats that the two "big ones" were not Japanese, and no fish were fired at Chung Ching Lee. But his requests did not supply him with any additional information regarding Admiral Kondo's approaching force. Sometime after 10:30, "Cactus" responded, "The boss has no additional information." For all of his lively radio messages with Guadalcanal, Lee was no better informed than he had been before.

While Lee was busy communicating with "Cactus," Kondo split his 14 ships into three separate units. The light cruiser Nagara headed a six-destroyer column made up of *Shirayuki, Hatsuyuki, Samidare, Inazuma, Asagumo,* and *Teruzuki*. A column of three destroyers, *Uranami, Shikinami,* and *Ayanami,* along with the light cruiser *Sendai,* was sent off on a course that would take it east of Savo Island. The main bombardment group, which had been assigned to attack Henderson Field, consisted of the battleship *Kirishima* and the heavy cruisers *Atago,* which was Admiral Kondo's flagship, and her sister *Takao*. Four troop transports, along with a screen of nine destroyers, were also approaching Guadalcanal. According to Kondo's plan, the transports would land reinforcements for the Japanese garrison on Guadalcanal while *Kirishima* and the bombardment group shelled

Henderson Field. The other two groups of cruisers and destroyers would deal with any American warships that came out to interfere with either the bombardment group or the landing of reinforcements. It was a plan that looked good on paper.

Sendai made first contact with Lee's force at 10:10. Her radio reported, "Two enemy cruisers and four destroyers" northeast of Savo, heading toward Ironbottom Sound. *Sendai* and *Shikinami* changed course to pursue Admiral Lee's force, and Admiral Kondo issued an immediate order to attack the American ships. *Nagara* and four of her escorting destroyers were also sent toward Ironbottom Sound at full speed. While his cruisers and destroyers were taking on the enemy, Kondo would bring *Kirishima* and his two heavy cruisers to the vicinity of Henderson Field to carry out their bombardment assignment.

Lee reached the southernmost limit of his course toward Guadalcanal at 10:52 and ordered a change of course to the right, steering his six ships due west. About eight minutes after changing course, *Washington*'s SG radar located an enemy ship about nine miles away and to the north—*Sendai*. Radar continued to track the cruiser until 11:12, when the main battery fire control director made visual contact. *South Dakota* also established visual contact, but none of the destroyers were able to spot the enemy cruiser. Four minutes after making contact by radar, Admiral Lee gave the order, "Open fire when you are ready."

Washington held a vital edge over the Japanese task force: the new and efficient SG radar, which had proved itself vastly superior to the older SC search radar. SC radar had been introduced to American warships shortly before Pearl Harbor, in the autumn of 1941, and probably provided as many liabilities as benefits. Many senior officers blamed SC transmissions for giving away the positions of American ships to Japanese radar operators. Instead of allowing American warships to track the enemy, officers feared that the process was being reversed—Japanese ships were using SC emissions to track American vessels. But the newer, shorter wave SG radar produced no such doubts. Even officers who were almost totally ignorant regarding radar and its capabilities, who tended to be in the majority, were aware that SG radar represented a vast improvement in technology over the old SC sets.

At 11:17, about 17 minutes after the first radar contact, *Washington*'s 16-inch batteries opened fire on *Sendai* and her escorts. Her 5-inch guns fired star shells to light up the Japanese column. The 16-inch shells landed in the vicinity of *Sendai* and her escorts, which were 18,000 yards to the north, but none of them scored hits. *South Dakota*'s radiomen could hear excited Japanese voices jabbering away at each other. A short while later, Admiral Shintaro Hashimoto, commander of *Sendai*'s task group, turned to the north with the destroyer *Shikinami* behind a smoke screen. *Washington*'s radar operators were able to track the Japanese ships in spite of the smoke.

Admiral Hashimoto's other two destroyers, *Uranami* and *Ayanami,* continued to steam southward toward the American column. The destroyer USS *Walke*, at the head of Lee's column, opened fire with her 5-inch guns at 11:23, followed shortly by "rapid gunfire" from *Benham* and *Preston*. About four minutes after *Walke* began firing, *Gwin* discovered the cruiser *Nagara* and her destroyer screen. For the next several minutes, *Gwin* became involved in what has been described as "a private gun duel" with the Japanese warships.

It did not take long for the Japanese to begin returning fire. *Nagara* and her escorting destroyers hit *Preston* several times, putting her boiler room out of action and toppling her after stack. Other shells, probably from *Nagara,* hit the engine room and turned the area surrounding the aft gun mounts into "a mass of blazing red-hot wreckage." The gunnery officer tried to keep the forward guns firing, but *Preston* was already beginning to sink, settling by the stern and listing to starboard. The order to abandon ship was given at 11:36, roughly 14 minutes after *Walke* had opened fire. Less than a minute later, according to the destroyer's survivors, *Preston* rolled over on her starboard side and went down. Crewmen aboard *Gwin,* about 3,000 yards astern, watched as their sister destroyer was being pummelled by enemy gunfire. *Gwin* had to make a hard turn to starboard to avoid colliding with the sinking wreckage.

The Japanese warships were partially concealed by the dark gray backdrop of Savo Island. The ships also made good use of flashless powder, which helped to conceal their positions. Even though their gunfire had been extremely accurate, the primary Japanese weapon was the Type 93 Long Lance torpedo, which was about to inflict more damage to the unfortunate American destroyers.

The Long Lance was the bogeyman of American warships. Everything about it was impressive, including its size—30 feet long and 24 inches in diameter. Its maximum range was an incredible 22,000 yards (11 nautical miles) at a speed of 49 knots; it carried a warhead of 1,180 pounds. By comparison, the U.S. Navy's

ABOVE: The destroyer USS *Benham* was badly damaged during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal and later sunk by the destroyer USS *Gwin* after it was deemed unsalvageable. BELOW: The Japanese battleship *Kirishima* is shown in China in 1938, while the destroyer USS *Pillsbury* is visible in the distance. When the *Kirishima* was sunk off Guadalcanal it was one of the oldest battleships in the Imperial Japanese Navy.

Both: Navy History and Heritage Command

Mark 14 torpedo had a range of 6,000 yards at 45 knots, with a warhead of only 825 pounds. The Long Lance was also oxygen-fuelled, as opposed to air-fuelled, which left an almost invisible wake and allowed it to travel faster and farther. The Imperial Navy equipped its cruisers and destroyers with the Long Lance, which were launched from 24-inch tubes that were mounted on deck. The tubes could be quickly reloaded, which essentially doubled the number of torpedoes that could be brought to bear on enemy ships.

The destroyer *Ayanami* launched her Long Lances at 11:30 PM; the others fired theirs about five minutes later, before making a turn to port. At about 11:38, one of the torpedoes, probably from *Ayanami,* struck *Walke*. The explosion of the warhead was intensified by the detonation of the forward magazines; everything forward of the bridge was blown clear of the rest of the hull. Power and all communications instantly failed throughout the ship, and *Walke* sank bow first. As she went down, her depth charges exploded, killing several of the survivors in the water.

Another torpedo struck *Benham* at the forward extremity of her hull. The explosion blew a large hole in her bow but did not sink her. After executing an evasive maneuver to avoid enemy gunfire, *Benham* returned to her original course at a speed of 10 knots—reduced in speed, but still afloat. *Gwin*'s turn to avoid *Preston* probably allowed her to escape the enemy torpedoes, although she was hit by three shells. One of the hits damaged her torpedo safety links, which allowed the torpedoes to slide harmlessly out of their tubes and into the sea.

The damage had not been completely one sided. *Ayanami*'s gunfire had given away her position—her muzzle flashes were clearly visible against the dark gray silhouette of Savo Island. *Washington* opened fire on the Japanese destroyer and hit her several times, setting her alight and leaving her dead in the water. Her sister destroyers had been more fortunate. None had been damaged, and all of them remained in the fight with torpedo tubes reloaded.

The four destroyers of Admiral Lee's column had not been nearly as lucky. *Preston* and *Walke* had been sunk; *Benham* and *Gwin* were badly damaged but still afloat. They had taken "the brunt of the fighting," according to one writer, but they had also done their job. As the escorts for *South Dakota* and *Washington,* they had protected the two battleships from enemy gunfire and torpedoes at a great cost to themselves. At about 11:48, Admiral Lee ordered *Benham* and *Gwin* to withdraw from the battle area. The battleships were now on their own.

But even before the two destroyers left the area, *South Dakota* experienced what has been politely described as "a stroke of bad luck" — the ships electrical circuit breakers "jumped out." Immediately, to the frustration of everyone on board, all lights failed and all radar screens went dead. "The psychological effect on the officers and crew was most depressing," as understated by the *South Dakota*'s captain, Thomas L. Gatch. "The absence of this gear gave all hands the feeling of being blindfolded." The battleship's lights were out for only six minutes, from 11:30 to 11:36, but when power was restored, the ship's radar operators discovered that their radar picture was "incomplete—radar was back, but it was not working to full capacity. "The SG radar was inoperative," as stated by the official damage report, "which complicated station-keeping and detection of new targets."

To make matters worse, *South Dakota* had turned to starboard instead of port when avoiding *Preston* and *Walke,* which put her squarely between the burning destroyers and the Japanese warships. The battleship was now silhouetted by the fires, making her an inviting target for Japanese gunners and torpedo crews. When radar came back, operators were startled to find enemy warships—Admiral Kondo's bombardment group—less than three miles away. Kondo did not spot *South Dakota* until 11:58. Several of his ships, including *Atago* and *Asagumo*, fired their torpedoes at the battleship, and *Atago* turned her searchlights on her. At this point, lookouts positively identified *South Dakota* as a battleship. Previously, she had been reported as a cruiser. But now, with her towering foremast and massive superstructure brightly lit up by Japanese searchlights, there could be no doubt as to *South Dakota*'s true identity.

All the torpedoes missed, but the gunfire certainly found its mark. In the space of about four minutes, just after midnight, *South Dakota* sustained 26 hits. The ship's gunfire report specified, "It is estimated that one hit was 5-inch, six were 6-inch, eighteen were 8-inch, and one was 14-inch." Another report states, "The ship was badly cut up topside by 6- and 5.5-inch shells, although the armor had withstood two 14-inch hits." Several of the shells did not explode. A sailor aboard *South Dakota* recalled that an exploding shell sounded like "a loud crash, a rolling explosion," followed by "the sizzling sound that metal fragments make when they crash into cables, guns, and the superstructure."

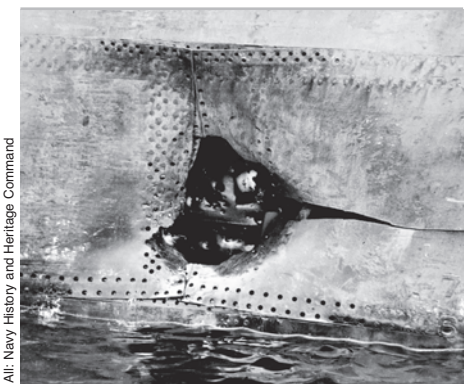
"In spite of numerous hits," the official report concludes, "*South Dakota* received only superficial damage. Neither the strength, buoyancy, nor stability were measurably impaired." *Kirishima*'s assistant gunnery officer had a much more optimistic assessment of the situation. "We think we hit the *South Dakota* many times," he said, "inflicting much damage."

Numerous naval battles took place in the waters off Guadalcanal as the Japanese and Americans fought savagely for control of the key island in the Solomons chain.

Map © 2019 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

Damage control parties put out fires and performed emergency repairs as best they could, working around wreckage in every department along with 39 bodies of their fellow crewmen. Captain Gatch came to the conclusion that his ship was no longer in any condition to assist Lee in stopping Kondo's bombardment group and asked permission to withdraw from the battle area. At 12 minutes past midnight on the morning of November 15, Admiral Lee gave his permission.

ABOVE: Japanese Admiral Nobutake Kondo (left) and American Admiral Willis A. Lee faced one another during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. BELOW: The battleship USS *South Dakota* sustained damage to her hull plating from a Japanese shell during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. RIGHT: Photographed at sea in April 1942, the new battleship USS *Washington* and her sister *South Dakota* were the product of a reinvigorated U.S. naval production program. Eventually, U.S. industrial capacity resulted in the tremendous growth of American naval power.



All: Navy History and Heritage Command

With *South Dakota* safely out of the vicinity, *Washington* now faced Kondo's warships all alone. In the words of historian Samuel Eliot Morison, she became "a lone-ship task force." This should have put Lee and his flagship in a precarious position. But the lookouts in Kondo's force had become so preoccupied with *South Dakota* that no one seemed to notice *Washington*, only about 8,400 yards away. *South Dakota* was already under fire, was brilliantly lit up by searchlights, and had suffered a good many hits. "In Kondo's ranks, there was a general rush to get the brightly illuminated *South Dakota*," said one writer. Admiral Lee recognized his incredible good luck and prepared to open fire on *Kirishima*, the fattest target in Kondo's task force.

A British writer romantically described the fight between the German battleship *Bismarck* and the battlecruiser HMS *Hood,* which had taken place a year and a half earlier, as a joust between two medieval knights "with guns for lances and armored bridges for visors and pennants streaming in the wind." The battle between *Washington* and *Kirishima* was more like a bout between two heavyweight boxers in a blacked-out ring. *Washington*'s SG radar gave her a great edge, but one of her 5-inch guns also sent up a star shell to illuminate *Kirishima* and to give her lookouts a better visual contact. *Washington*'s radar was humming accurately and giving her a good picture of the enemy, but her radar operators were also confronted with a touchy technical situation. *South Dakota* was tucked away in the radar's blind spot on her starboard quarter, and *Washington* could not see her sister ship on any of her radar screens. Lee was afraid that the fattest target on his SG might be *South Dakota* and feared that he might be shooting at one of his own ships. When *South Dakota* was safely accounted for and the admiral was assured that his sister ship was actually behind him, he gave the order to open fire.

While two 5-inch turrets fired at *Atago,* all nine guns of *Washington*'s 16-inch main battery, along with two of her 5-inch mounts, let loose at *Kirishima* at exactly midnight. The battleship's gunnery officer officially noted that *Washington* opened fire at the target, which he described as "a Kongo battleship," at a range of 8,400 yards. All guns were loaded with armor-piercing ammunition, which was designed to penetrate *Kirishima*'s decks and explode inside the hull. Admiral Kondo's ships, on the other hand, were firing explosive shells with impact fuses, which were meant for destroying the shore facilities at Henderson Field and inflicting casualties among troops. The inability to cause more damage to *South Dakota* was due to the fact that the wrong ammunition was used against the battleship.

"ON THE SECOND MAIN BATTERY, TARGET TRACKING WAS DONE ENTIRELY BY RADAR FOR AT LEAST FIVE MINUTES. WHEN THE TARGET FINALLY CAME INTO VIEW OPTICALLY, CHECKS GIVEN BY THE POINTER INDICATED THAT THE RADAR WAS EXACTLY ON."

Washington's shells rocketed toward *Kirishima* at speeds in excess of 2,600 feet per second. To the men aboard the Japanese battleship, the muzzle flashes of *Washington*'s guns must have been frightening—they knew that the big American shells were in the air and were heading straight for them. Less than a minute later, *Kirishima* was all but hidden from view by the splashes of exploding shells; great geysers of white water shot high into the air, higher than *Kirishima*'s superstructure, all around the ship. But not all the shells were near misses. *Washington*'s gunnery officer noted, "Fire was opened at 8,400 yards and a hit was probably obtained on the first salvo and certainly on the second."

Kirishima was hit repeatedly, by both 16-inch and 5-inch shells. Several fires were started deep within her hull as well as in her superstructure, two of her main turrets were put out of action, her steering apparatus was jammed, and she was also hit below the waterline, causing severe flooding in several compartments. "It is of interest to note that … 'overs' as well as 'shorts' could be seen optically," reported *Washington*'s gunnery officer. "Salvos were walked back and forth across the target."

Although target tracking was done optically, radar was largely responsible for *Washington*'s excellent shooting. "On the second main battery, target tracking was done entirely by radar for at least five minutes," the same gunnery officer said. "When the target finally came into view optically, checks given by the pointer indicated that the radar was exactly on." Admiral Lee, who had been preaching the practical virtues of radar since it had first been introduced to the fleet, was greatly satisfied with this report. It supported everything he had been saying about this new and mysterious device that allowed gunners to see their targets in the dark and regardless of the weather.

"Within seven minutes, *Kirishima* was out of the fight," a naval historian recounted, with "steering gear hopelessly wrecked, topsides aflame." *Kirishima*'s assistant gunnery officer gave a more detailed account of the battleship's predicament. "Shortly after the American ships opened fire," he said, "the steering of the *Kirishima* was so badly damaged that we were unable to steer or repair it. We kept turning in a circle but couldn't get away. We slowed down to try to steer with the engines but it was no use. Our engines were not badly damaged, but we were receiving many hits from the *Washington*." He went on to say, "We received about 9 x 16 hits and about 40 x 5 hits"—nine hits by *Washington*'s 16-inch guns and 40 by her 5-inch batteries.

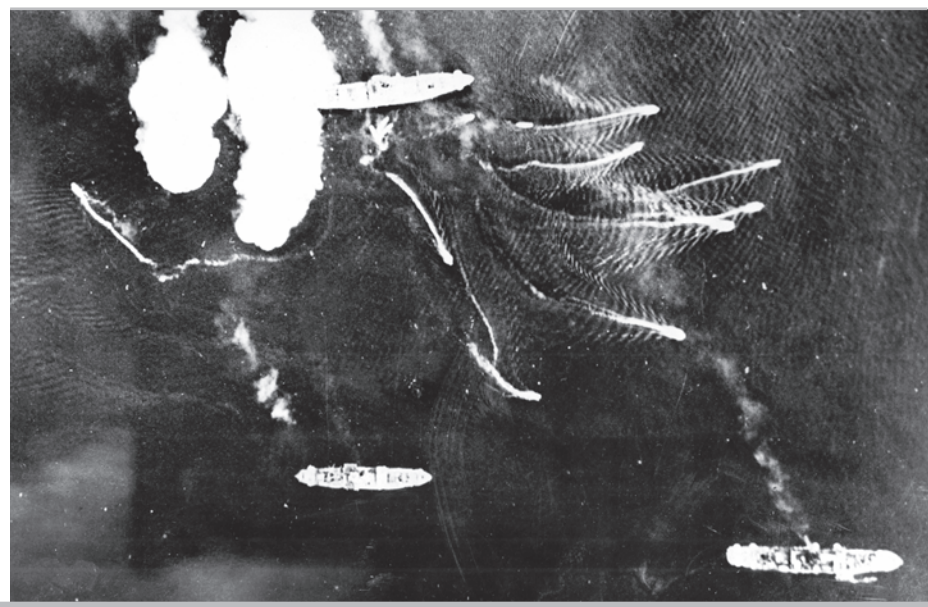
At seven minutes past midnight, exactly seven minutes after opening the battle with *Kirishima, Washington* ceased firing. Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison's assessment agrees with that of *Kirishima*'s assistant gunnery officer: "Nine out of 75 sixteen-inch shells from *Washington* scored, as did about 40 fast-shooting 5-inchers."

Admiral Kondo's bombardment group was still a force to be reckoned with, even though *Kirishima* was now out of the battle. *Atago* and *Takao*, along *Nagara* and *Sendai,* as well as about a half-dozen destroyers from Kondo's two support groups, were still in the area west of Savo Island. But Kondo was concerned over the safety of his transports, so he ordered the bombardment of Henderson Field aborted and detached several destroyers to attack *Washington*. The American battleship had changed course to the north-northwest about 13 minutes after she stopped shooting at *Kirishima*; Admiral Kondo was determined to keep her from interfering with the troop transports. At about 12:40, the destroyer *Oyashio* fired her torpedoes at *Washington*; about six minutes later, *Samidare* also fired her Long Lances. Atago added three torpedoes of her own. All of them missed their mark, although lookouts reported that some of the torpedoes came "uncomfortably close."

Kondo was having second thoughts about attacking *Washington* and reached the decision that it was no longer viable to remain in the vicinity of Savo. At 12:45, he ordered all ships not actively engaged in the attack to withdraw, and all ships attacking *Washington* to retire after firing their torpedoes. At about 12:35, Kondo's bombardment force retired from the waters off Savo Island behind a dense smokescreen. "Admiral Lee observed this move with satisfaction," as understated by Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison. But before withdrawing, in a final gesture of defiance, two destroyers, *Kagero* and *Oyashio,* launched torpedoes at *Washington*. At least two of them exploded when they encountered the turbulence of the battleship's wake.

Washington was the last American warship to leave the battle zone. *South Dakota* had

ABOVE: On November 15, 1942, American aircraft strike Japanese convoys off Guadalcanal with devastating results. In this photo, Japanese ships burn after being bombed and strafed by U.S. planes.
BELOW: Japanese ships maneuver violently while under attack by U.S. aircraft near Guadalcanal. At left smoke rises from a Japanese troop transport that has just taken a direct hit from a bomb dropped by a U.S. Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber.



Both: National Archives

already been out of the area for about 15 minutes. The destroyer *Gwin* was escorting *Benham* back to Espiritu Santo, but the noseless destroyer was too badly damaged to complete the journey. On the afternoon of November 15, *Gwin* removed *Benham*'s crew and prepared to scuttle the crippled destroyer with a spread of torpedoes. All four torpedoes either missed or malfunctioned. *Gwin* finally sank her sister destroyer with gunfire and reached Espiritu Santo without further incident. South Dakota also arrived at Espiritu Santo accompanied by W*ashington*. Because of the damage that had been inflicted to her superstructure, *South Dakota* returned to the United States for refitting, where she received an overhaul and complete repairs of all battle damage.

The Japanese destroyer *Ayanami* suffered the same fate as *Benham,* except *Ayanami* did not have to be scuttled. *Uranami* removed *Ayanami*'s crew and watched the destroyer sink at around 2 AM. *Kirishima* was still afloat at this time, but was barely making headway and still taking water through the shell holes below her waterline. The battleship's assistant gunnery officer recalled, "The captain decided that since we couldn't steer and the engines were damaged, it would be better to scuttle the ship. He then gave the order to open the Kingston valves."

After the Emperor's portrait was transferred to the *Asagumo*, and as the sea valves were opened, *Kirishima* slowly settled into the waters west of Savo Island. "It took about two and one-half hours to sink," the same officer recalled. "Destroyers came alongside and took off about one quarter of the men. The rest of the men jumped over the side and were later picked up by destroyers. We had about 1,400 men on board and lost about 250." The battleship finally went down at 3:25 on the morning of November 15.

In the summer of 1992, nearly 50 years after her battle with *Washington,* underwater explorer Robert Ballard discovered the wreckage of *Kirishima* about 11 miles west of Savo Island. Dr. Ballard found that the ship had turned completely upside down on her way to the bottom and that her superstructure had jammed itself into the mud. Only the bottom of the ship's hull could be seen, with her propellers and rudders visible above the keel. It is probable that the battleship's tall pagoda mast made her top-heavy and caused her to turn over after she had gone down. Dr. Ballard also noticed that *Kirishima*'s bow had broken off, suggesting that her forward magazine had blown up sometime after sinking.

Even though the warships of both sides had gone back to their respective bases, the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal was not quite over. The four transports of the reinforcement group were ordered to run themselves aground on the northern coast of Guadalcanal. After running up on the shore, the ships would land their troops on the beaches, and then the soldiers would join Japanese units already on the island. Kondo had not succeeded in shelling Henderson Field. Hopefully, the commander of the reinforcement ships, Admiral Raizo Tanaka, would be able to put his troops ashore and accomplish at least one of the task force's assigned goals.

By 4 AM, all four transports—*Sangetsu Maru, Yamura Maru, Kinugasa Maru,* and *Hirokawa Maru*—had run themselves up on the beaches near Tassafaronga. But shortly after sunrise, the air group from the carrier *Enterprise,* along with fighters and bombers from Henderson Field, began bombing and strafing the ships. They continued their attacks until about 3:30 in the afternoon. The transports were decimated by the air attacks, which were assisted by gunfire from the destroyer *Meade*. The water off Tassafaronga was covered with blood and dead bodies. Only about 2,000 soldiers reached the shore, along with about 260 cases of ammunition and 1,500 bags of rice.

Both sides claimed a "tremendous victory" as a result of the fighting on November 14-15. Some Japanese sources claimed eight American destroyers sunk. Others mentioned two battleships either sunk or damaged. American claims were just as inflated: several cruisers sunk, along with a number of destroyers and one battleship. The actual numbers varied according to which source was consulted. But though Lee lost three of his four destroyers and had one of his battleships badly shot up, he had stopped Kondo from shelling Henderson Field as well as from reinforcing Japanese troops already on Guadalcanal. In addition, he sank *Kirishima* and one destroyer.

The outcome of the battle also gave Japanese leaders their first misgivings about the possible end of the Guadalcanal campaign, as well as the war itself. They knew that they could not replace warships or transports the way the Americans could. "The Imperial Army did not give up Guadalcanal for another ten weeks," an American historian wrote, "but the Navy performed its ferryboat duties with increasing reluctance and made no further bid to rule the adjacent waves."

The wreck of *Kinugawa Maru,* a Japanese transport hit by American aircraft off Guadalcanal on November 15, 1942, lies beached and bombed along the shore of the island a year after it was secured by American forces.

Admiral Lee had no doubts in his mind that he had won the battle, but he also knew how he managed to win. He later wrote, "We … realized then, and it should not be forgotten now, that our entire superiority was due almost entirely to our possession of radar. Certainly we have no edge on the Japanese in experience, skill, training or performance of personnel." □

Author David A. Johnson has written for WWII History *on a variety of topics. He is also the author of numerous books on subjects ranging from the Civil War to World War II. He resides in Union, New Jersey.*

By Christopher Miskimon

"Spearhead" by Gareth Hector, courtesy www.ValorStudios.com

The American Heavy Tank

An American crew manned their country's newest war machine amid the hell of 1945.

A BLACK OPEL AUTOMOBILE RACED THROUGH THE STREETS OF COLOGNE, Germany, on March 6, 1945. The driver, 40-year-old Michael Delling, was making a run for it. Rather than stay in the city as American and German troops fought, he and his clerk, 26-year-old Katharina Esser, chose to run for the last remaining bridge to the east. Making his way through the rubble-strewn streets, Delling dashed into an intersection near the city's famous cathedral. The split-second decision was fatal. Machine-gun fire tore into the car. Tracer bullets ripped through its thin metal shell and into the bodies of the two civilians. The car came to a stop; Deller was dead, slumped over the steering wheel, and Esser managed to open the passenger door before tumbling to the pavement.

A few yards away American Corporal Clarence Smoyer released the trigger of the coaxial machine gun in his T26 Pershing tank. The car looked like a German Army staff car, so he fired on it. He had no idea who sat inside. A few blocks in the other direction, German tanker Gustav Shaefer peered through his Panzer IV's sights. He saw the orange American-style tracers flashing through the intersection. Were the Americans coming? He had to be ready. A dark shape appeared, and the young tanker squeezed the trigger on his own coaxial machine gun. Green German tracers lashed out as well, smashing into the staff car and blowing out its windows. Gustav saw the woman fall out of the car and wondered what she was doing in a combat zone.

It was a terrible tragedy of war, an accident no one wanted but could not be avoided. It would haunt Clarence for decades, but that was for later; the war continued. A block away another German tank, a Panther, lay in ambush. The crew spotted a Sherman approaching and fired. The round struck squarely, knocking out the American tank. The high-velocity projectile severed the tank commander's leg. He tumbled out of the hatch onto the Sherman's engine deck but died a few minutes later in the rubble of Cologne. The Panther moved from its hiding spot to take up position in a square, ready to continue the fight.

This artist's rendering depicts an M26 Pershing heavy tank in Cologne, Germany, shortly after it destroyed a German Panther medium tank near the city's famed cathedral. Clarence Smoyer (circled, right) was a crewman aboard the tank.

Clarence and his crew sat in their Pershing less than 300 yards away. Their tank carried better armor and a more powerful gun than the Sherman. A combat cameraman caught the attack on film and then came back to the Pershing to ask for help destroying the Panther. Clarence's tank commander, Sergeant Robert Early, went forward to scout the situation. Minutes later, the Pershing rumbled forward to engage the Panther at point-blank range.

The rest of this story is the climax of *Spearhead: The World War II Odyssey of an American Tank Gunner* (Adam Makos, Ballantine Books, New York, 2019, 385 pp., maps, pho-

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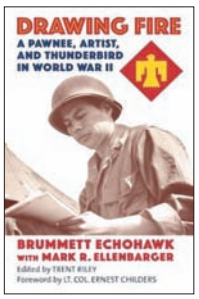
tographs, notes, bibliography, index, $28.00, hardcover). The book shows the world of tank crewmen at the gunsight level as they struggle to fight and survive the dreadful conclusion of the war in Europe.

This new work is engaging and dramatic, giving the reader a sense of the strain and emotion of a tank crew manning one of the U.S. Army's then-new Pershing tanks in early 1945. The author also covers how the crew got to that point along with the experiences of the armored infantrymen who accompanied them and the German tankers who opposed them. The book concludes by revealing how these men dealt with their memories postwar. It is also well illustrated. The writing is insightful and does an excellent job bringing the tanker's war to light.

Drawing Fire: A Pawnee, Artist, and Thunderbird in World War II (Brummett Echohawk with Mark R. Ellenbarger, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2018, map, illustrations, glossary, index, $29.95, hardcover)



Brummett Echohawk joined the Oklahoma National Guard in 1940. His unit, the 179th Infantry Regiment of the 45th "Thunderbird" Infantry Division, mixed farmers, cowboys, and more than 1,000 Native Americans into a formidable American unit. Brummett and his comrades shipped overseas in the spring of 1943 and soon entered combat. The invasion of Sicily came first, followed by the ordeal of Salerno and the crucible of Anzio. The fighting proved difficult; Brummett lost many friends along the way, but he did justice to their memories by capturing their experiences on paper. Brummett was an artist, a skill gained at the Pawnee boarding school he attended as a boy. His combat sketches and portraits of soldiers drawn at a military hospital capture the sacrifice, courage, and suffering of the frontline soldier. Brummett had firsthand experience of this; he was not an official combat artist. Rather, he was an infantryman who often served as a scout for his company, a dangerous role fraught with risk.

This new work is part sketchbook and part memoir. Many of Brummett's drawings are interspersed throughout the extensive text, which poignantly relates the reality of infantry combat. The text is straightforward and easy to follow, conveying its meaning effectively to the reader. There is emphasis on the experi-

New and Noteworthy

Shot Down and in the Drink: True Stories of RAF and Commonwealth Aircrews Saved from the Sea in World War II (Graham Pitchfork, Osprey Publishing, 2018, $15.00, softcover) This is a fascinating account of air-sea rescue during the war. It covers situations from different theaters of the war.

Heroes of Telemark: Sabotaging Hitler's Atomic Bomb, Norway 1942-44 (David Greentree, Osprey Publishing, 2018, $20.00, softcover) The Norsk Hydro Plant in Telemark made heavy water for the Nazi nuclear program. This is the story of the Anglo-Norwegian mission to destroy the plant.

With Rommel in the Desert: Tripoli to El Alamein (David Mitchelhill-Green, Pen and Sword Books, 2018, $22.95, softcover) This photobook contains hundreds of photos of Rommel and his troops in the North African desert. It mixes battlefield scenes with images of everyday life for the soldiers.

Sam Goudsmit and the Hunt for Hitler's Atom Bomb (Martijn van Calmthout, Prometheus Books, 2018, $24.00, hardcover) Goudsmit was a leading Dutch-American physicist. He helped in the search for the Nazi nuclear weapons program.

The Greatest Treasure Hunt in History: The Story of the Monuments Men (Robert M. Edsel, Scholastic Inc., 2018, $18.99, hardcover) The Monuments Men scoured Europe to save priceless art from the Nazis. This book tells their story for younger readers.

The Escape Line: How the Ordinary Heroes of Dutch-Paris Resisted the Nazi Occupation of Western Europe (Megan Koreman, Oxford University Press, 2018, $29.95, hardcover) The Dutch-Paris escape line funneled 1,000 people to safety from Nazi oppression. This new book gives it well-deserved recognition.

Mussolini and Hitler: The Forging of the Fascist Alliance (Christian Goeschel, Yale University Press, 2018, $30.00, hardcover) This comprehensive study of the two Fascist leaders argues Mussolini had more influence over the relationship than is generally acknowledged.

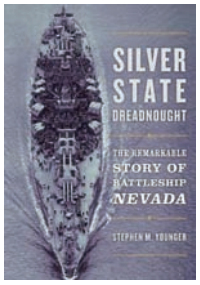
Ian Fleming and Operation Golden Eye: Keeping Spain Out of World War II (Mark Simmons, Casemate Publishing, 2018, $32.95, hardcover) Ian Fleming, future author of the James Bond books, plotted to keep both Spain and Portugal out of the war. The complex plans to do so are covered in detail in this new work.

Hitler's Death: The Case Against Conspiracy (Luke Daly-Groves, Osprey Publishing, 2018, $22.00, hardcover) The author argues Hitler died of suicide and rejects the various conspiracies surrounding his last days. He uses academic principles and existing evidence to argue his case.

The Gestapo's Most Improbable Hostage (Hugh Mallory Falconer, Pen and Sword Books, 2018, $39.95, hardcover) This memoir covers the author's time as a prisoner of war. He served in the Special Operations Executive before his capture.

ence of Native American soldiers, who made up a large portion of the unit, faced occasional prejudice, but proved themselves the equal of any soldiers on the battlefield.

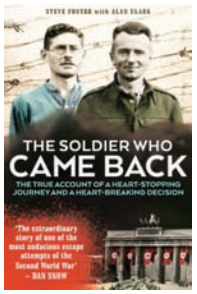
Silver State Dreadnought: The Remarkable Story of Battleship Nevada (Stephen M. Younger, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2018, 320 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $54.00, hardcover)



USS *Nevada* and the sailors who crewed her spent three decades in service to the United States. She was the first oil-fired American warship and the first to have three guns in a main turret. After convoy service in World War I and modernization in the 1920s, *Nevada* was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. She was the only battleship to get underway that day but was grounded and beached after receiving heavy damage. The Navy repaired the ship and sent her to the Atlantic, where she provided shore bombardment at D-Day and the invasion of southern France. Afterward, *Nevada* went back to the Pacific and served at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Obsolete at the end of the war, the ship was used as a target in two atomic tests but survived both. Too radioactive to scrap, *Nevada* was towed near Oahu and used for target practice. After five days of shelling, she was still afloat; a torpedo finally sent her to a warrior's death.

The author neatly tells the story of this proud warship. The stories of her crew combine with the ship's history to show how the two blend to make a functioning warship. Any ship that serves for so long accrues a myriad of interesting tales and anecdotes; this book collects many interesting vignettes of *Nevada*'s service along with numerous photographs.

The Soldier Who Came Back: The True Account of a Heart-Stopping Journey and a Heart-Breaking Decision (Steven Foster with Alan Clark, Mirror Books, London, UK, 2018, 288 pp., $15.95, softcover)



Fred Foster was 24 when World War II began. In May 1939, he volunteered as a pri-

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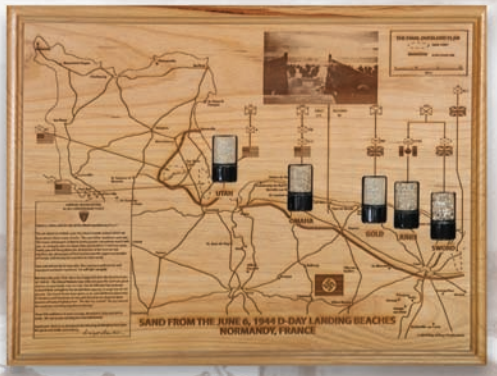

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Simulation Gaming

BY JOSEPH LUSTER

HEARTS OF IRON EXPANDS ITS NAVAL CAPABILITIES, AND *WARSAW* INTRODUCES HAND-PAINTED TURN-BASED STRATEGY.

HEARTS OF IRON IV: MAN THE GUNS

PUBLISHER PARADOX INTERACTIVE • **GENRE** STRATEGY • **SYSTEM** PC • **AVAILABLE** NOW

If you've played through *Hearts of Iron IV* at this point, you've likely gotten a feel for the ups and downs of the naval aspect of Paradox Interactive's latest World War II-based grand strategy game. Those who found using navies to be a lacking piece of the larger puzzle now have a more fleshed out solution to turn to in the form of the latest expansion, *Hearts of Iron IV: Man the Guns*.

Man the Guns focuses on the naval innovations made in both the realms of technology and tactics, from the Pacific front of World War II to the Battle of the Atlantic. Players will find new command options, customization abilities, and even new alternate history paths for the major democracies of the war to consider. That customizability is a key selling point here. Players can either refit old models with new specifications or start from scratch and design their own ships. Taking advantage of new knowledge and burgeoning technological advances is a great way to gain a little extra advantage in the battles to come.

Man the Guns is, as one might expect, almost purely for those who wanted more out of their navies from the base game. All the new features add up to a ton of options when it comes to controlling and dispatching units across the map and prepping for future showdowns, but it's not going to mean too much to those who didn't find navies to be a compelling part of the whole in the first place. You either love every moment of it or find it to be one of the more laborious processes in the game. For anyone who falls into the former category, the ability to dive deeper into this aspect of World War II will be seen as a major boon.

Thankfully, this expansion didn't just go all in on naval additions and leave it at that. There also are a bunch of additions to the base game, including the way fuel has been changed into a trackable commodity, as well as expanded focus trees for the United States, Britain, Mexico, and the Netherlands. Some of the updates are simply quality of life improvements, while others will have a more sizable impact on how you play and your odds of success in any given campaign. You can enjoy some of these changes by simply updating your game free of charge, so it might be worth seeing how much you enjoy the free features before deciding how much more of your time and money you feel like investing in war waged on the open seas.

WARSAW

PUBLISHER GAMING COMPANY • **GENRE** SHOOTER • **SYSTEM** PS4, SWITCH, PC • **AVAILABLE** Q3 2019

In the grand scheme of things, World War II games tend to stick to a similar aesthetic regardless of genre. Hyper realism is often implemented in place of a more stylistic presentation, but that's not the case with *Warsaw,* the latest from publisher gaming company and developer Pixelated Milk (*Regalia: Of Men and Monarchs*). Due out in the third quarter of 2019, *Warsaw* offers up tough turn-based combat dressed up with beautiful hand-painted 2D graphics, and the results are an entry in the genre that definitely stands out on visuals alone.

Warsaw puts players in the boots of the leader of a small, dedicated outfit of civilians and soldiers, each with their own unique skills that will help them take down the occupying forces that surround them at any given moment. The Nazi oppressors standing in the way of this band of accidental heroes present situations of varying difficulty, as players must survive in and defend their home city by any means necessary. The resources at your disposal are completely up to you, so you can use any outing as an opportunity to scour the ruined streets for historically accurate uniforms, ammunition, and other essential items. Scouts will need to be properly equipped for these situations, and it's important to know when to fall back to your shelter to regroup before or after battles of all sizes.

The Secret Army members at your disposal run the gamut from rescued civilians to underground army members, scouts, and even criminals. Regaining the city takes top priority over whatever past incidents led each member to this point in history, but you'll also be able to take some time to explore those histories in a few different ways. In addition to a mix of historical and fictional events happening around your squad, gameplay is used to convey character backstories to the player. In practice, this will hopefully take various members of your team out of their rote class role and into a more interesting three-dimensional territory.

Tactical RPGs may not be a rarity within the realm of World War II, but those that can boast a style like *Warsaw* are few and far between. Occasionally we'll run into outliers; Ubisoft's *Valiant Hearts: The Great War*—which used inspiration from World War I letters to weave a touching and gorgeously presented narrative—comes to mind. Hopefully *Warsaw* falls into a successful category of its own when it makes its way to PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch, and PC later this year.

vate in the 8th Battalion, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment, known as the Sherwood Foresters. It was a reserve unit of Britain's Territorial Army. When the war started that September, his unit became part of the 148th Infantry Brigade. In April his unit went to Norway to resist the German invasion, and Fred was captured. He and other prisoners were shipped to a POW camp in Poland. There, Fred met Captain Antony Coulthard, and the two became close friends. Soon they hatched an escape plan that took many months to put into action. They donned disguises and simply walked out of camp, using trains to travel west into Germany. After many adventures they reached the Swiss border, but only one of them made it across.

The journey and tragedy of these two young men is well told in this new book. Their different backgrounds and upbringing are explained before delving into how these men formed both their friendship and a daring escape plan. The prose flows clearly, making this work easy to read and quite engaging. It also has an emotional ending, which pulls readers in and keeps them involved until the story's surprise conclusion.

Smoky the Brave: How a Feisty Yorkshire Terrier Mascot Became a Comrade in Arms During World War II (Damien Lewis, Da Capo Press, Boston, MA, 2018, 320pp., photographs, $28.00, hardcover)

No one knew Smoky's origin or her original home. A group of American soldiers found her in February 1944. The tiny Yorkshire Terrier huddled in an artillery-blasted foxhole, her fur matted and tangled around her frail, shivering body. The men took her in as GIs often do, back to the U.S. Army Air Forces airfield they manned. They were part of the 26th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron, tasked with missions deep behind Japanese lines. The little dog soon proved her worth. She barked a warning about enemy fire to Corporal William Wynne and saved his life. Smoky accompanied aircrews on their missions and even learned to jump using a specially designed parachute. The plucky little dog also dragged communications wire through a 70-foot pipe at a recently captured airbase, saving the men from having to brave incoming fire to do the work. Smoky was a lucky dog. She came home to celebrity after

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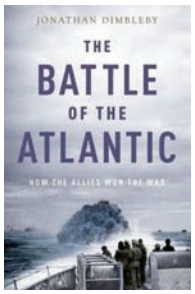
the war ended.

This book uses previously unpublished material to tell Smoky's story. Her "missions" and assistance to young men far from home are covered in detail, providing the reader a fascinating story of a dog's wartime adventures with her newfound friends. The prose is clear and relates the wider events of the war to the activities of the squadron and their mascot.

The Battle of the Atlantic: How the Allies Won the War (Jonathan Dimbleby, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2018, 530 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $22.95, softcover)

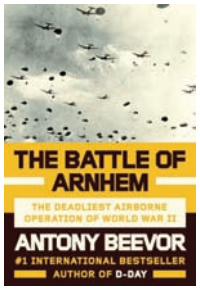


After the war, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said the only thing that ever really frightened him was the menace of Nazi Germany's U-boats. They came closer to defeating England than bombers, rockets, missiles, or panzers ever did. Most of England's supplies came from the United States via merchant vessels, and those ships were targeted by wolf packs of deadly submarines. While intelligence services struggled to follow the German naval message traffic, shipyards turned out destroyers and sub-chasers by the hundreds alongside thousands of new cargo ships. Allied and Axis sailors and aircrews fought hundreds of battles vying for supremacy in the North Atlantic. The death rate, proportional to the number of people engaged, was the highest for either side in any theater during the war. In the end the Allies succeeded in abating the Nazi threat, allowing supplies and troops to pour into Europe and end the war.

Strategy mattered in the Battle of the Atlantic, and the author does a thorough job exploring and deciphering the myriad separate tasks carried out to bring the Allied plans to fruition. He also does excellent work describing the personalities who made that strategy successful through leadership and sheer endurance. The book is both informative and entertaining, using vivid descriptions to bring the action to life.

The Battle of Arnhem: The Deadliest Airborne Operation of World War II (Antony Beevor, Viking Books, New York, 2018, 459pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover)

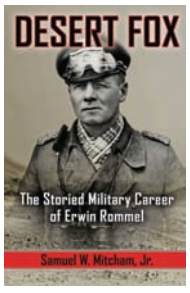
Major Julian Cook led his men into the



River Waal in flimsy canvas and wooden boats on September 20, 1944. The Germans waited on the other side, well dug in and prepared to defend the road bridge the Allies needed to continue their advance. Artillery and tanks blasted smoke rounds to cover the crossing, but the Germans knew something was coming. They fired mortars and machine guns into the haze, taking a fearful toll of the young American paratroopers. When the first wave of boats reached the far bank, the survivors climbed onto the shore amid a hail of bullets. The wounded and exhausted took cover; the able, angry and ready for revenge after their ordeal, formed into groups and attacked. The Germans were unprepared for the ferocity of the airborne men, who advanced shooting and throwing grenades. The Americans killed the German troops in their foxholes and stacked the bodies on the edges to provide cover while they caught their breath for the next push forward. Soon they overwhelmed the defense and seized the bridge and surrounding area, enabling British tanks to cross and continue their way to Arnhem, where more paratroopers were surrounded and awaiting relief.

There are many books telling the myriad stories of Operation Market Garden. This one stands out with its battlefield level detail, which places the reader squarely in the middle of the action. The author is well known and regarded for his previous works, which often cover the large, famous battles of the war in a way that makes them relatable to the audience. This work continues that tradition, delivering both narrative and detail.

Desert Fox: The Storied Military Career of Erwin Rommel (Samuel W. Mitcham Jr., Regnery History, Washington, D.C., 2019, 460 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $29.99, hardcover)



Erwin Rommel earned the sobriquet "Desert Fox" in dozens of battles across North Africa during World War II. When discussions of the conflict's greatest generals arise, either Rommel or Patton are invariably mentioned. Rommel was known for his aggressiveness and daring, always seeming to push the British to the edge of their capacity or luring them into deadly ambushes. Despite this skill, he never managed to achieve a decisive victory. However, he did so in France, establishing his reputation and further burnished it in North Africa, but for all his efforts, the Axis was ultimately defeated there. Likewise, his preparations in France for the inevitable Allied invasion were formidable but failed to repulse the D-Day landings. The excuse is given that he and his fellow military leaders were hamstrung by Hitler and the Nazi Party, giving the impression he was robbed of his opportunities for victory. In the end even his life was stolen when he was forced to commit suicide in the aftermath of the July 1944 plot on Hitler's life.

The complexities of Rommel are deftly explored in this new book. The author looks into the facts and myths surrounding the Desert Fox, his relationship with Hitler, and how he often tried to serve honorably under a regime bent on wickedness. The book is well illustrated with dozens of photos of Rommel, his soldiers, and those closest to him.

Glory in Their Spirit: How Four Black Women Took on the Army During World War II (Sandra M. Bolzenius, University of Illinois Press, Champaign, 2018, 256 pp., photographs, tables, notes, bibliography, index, $19.95, softcover)

The U.S. Army during World War II was a segregated force. African Americans were allowed to join the services but extremely limited in the roles they could fill. Four of the young African American women who joined the Women's Army Corps (WAC) did so to serve their country and show what their people could do for a nation that denied them full rights. In doing so, Mary Green, Anna Morrison, Johnnie Murphy, and Alice Young hoped to lay claim to those rights. Soon, however, they were assigned to orderly duties while white WACs received more skilled work and the opportunities that went with it. Unwilling to accept the situation, in 1945 they conducted a work strike along with 50 other WACs. The strike attracted media attention and ignited strong debates amid public uproar. The four women chose courts-martial rather than meekly returning to their prior duties. Patriotism, racism, and women in the military all became

topics of discussion, pushed to the forefront by the bold but risky actions of these four WACs.

Little known today, the subject of this book is an episode that helped push the United States military down a road toward desegregation just a few years later. It is well researched and one of the first to look at the service and protest of African American enlisted women during the war. This work does justice to its topic.

Air Combat: Dogfights of World War II (Edited by Tony Homes, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2018, 320 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $35.00 hardcover)

On March 18, 1945, the Corsair fighter-bombers of U.S. Marine squadron VMF-221 took off from the aircraft carrier USS *Bunker Hill* and flew to the Japanese mainland. They reached the island of Kyushu and attacked an aircraft factory near the town of Kumamoto. One after another they dove on the facility, firing rockets mounted on their gull-shaped wings. After shooting up the factory, the squadron turned east to return to its carrier and prepare for the next mission. On the way they ran into a formation of 25 Japanese fighters, scrambled from both the Imperial Army's and Navy's air forces to oppose the attacks on their homeland. The Corsair pilots attacked. Captain William Snider flew almost head on at his adversary. An experienced ace, Snider held his course until he almost collided with his opponent, setting the Japanese fighter aflame with machine-gun bursts. He dove on another, setting it afire as well, the enemy pilot bailing out. His wingman, Lieutenant Donald MacFarlane, shot down another plane. By the day's end VMF-221 claimed 13 Japanese fighters downed. The tide had long ago turned against Imperial Japan.

Success in aerial combat for World War II pilots required training, skill, and daring. This new book takes four different clashes and shows how technical and human factors contributed to success or failure. The Spitfire vsersus the BF-109, Wildcat versus Zero, Soviet LA-5/7 versus FW190, and the Corsair versus the Ki-84 Frank are each given in-depth attention. The book is well researched, liberally illustrated, and written with clear prose. □

Ordnance

Continued from page 23

more missions were mounted, with the loss of more than 200 bombers and more than 2,000 crewmen. The refining capacity was reduced by 80 percent before the end of the war in Europe, and Soviet troops overran Ploesti in late August 1944.

Liberators under American and foreign colors played an extensive and versatile role in the air war as the Allies gradually gained the upper hand during the second half of the global conflict. The U.S. Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces continued to equip new groups with B-24s. There were 2,000 of them in service by April 1944, and the number peaked at 2,685 that August. Global B-24 frontline strength reached 6,000 in September 1944. By May 1945, there were 1,500 Liberators in action with the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces. They gave sterling service all over the globe, from Northern Ireland to the Azores, from Gibraltar to Burma, from India to China, from Rabaul to the Indian Ocean, and from Borneo to Okinawa.

Modified as tankers, B-24s carried fuel over the "Hump" from India to China, while others joined the great silver fleets of B-29s in their punishing firestorm raids on Japan in 1944-1945. The number of frontline B-24s in service in the Pacific peaked at 992 in May 1944. High-tailed, sophisticated, lengthened versions of the Liberators, PB4Y-2 Privateers, entered U.S. Navy service in January 1945. Flying from Hawaii, Tinian, Midway, and the Philippines, they served as ocean patrol bombers and Marine Corps transports. Twenty-six of them were transferred to RAF Transport Command.

Of all the B-24s that wore the red-white-and-blue roundel of the RAF during the war, the most famous was Commando (AL-504), the personal transport of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

During his many long, hazardous journeys, he flew in it to meet Soviet Marshal Josef Stalin in Moscow, to Tripoli to inspect the Eighth Army, to confer with President Franklin D. Roosevelt at Casablanca and Cairo, and to Ankara for talks with Turkish President Ismet Inonu.

A total of 45½ U.S. bomber groups flew B-24s in World War II, compared to a maximum B-17 force of 33 groups. When the European war ended in May 1945, the production of Liberators stopped and orders for 5,168 B-24N variants were canceled. □

Author Michael D. Hull has written for WWII History *on a variety of topics. He resides in Enfield, Connecticut.*

D-DAY

Through A Soldier's Eyes…

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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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Les Moulins Draw

Continued from page 37

wounded men, destroyed tanks and other vehicles, intact enemy defenses, and landing craft and boats aflame. Enemy artillery and mortars exploded on the beach and the shore. Farther out to sea, they could see battleships and destroyers blasting away at German defenses. "At this point," recalled Lieutenant William Ford, "I didn't think I would ever see England again, let alone the United States."

When a German sniper stymied elements of the 115th by picking off its point men, American snipers took up positions. Private Vincent Bognanni heard one of the sniper's shots and pinpointed him in a tree with the help of his sergeant as a spotter. Bognanni got a bead on his target and fired. "You got him!" yelled the sergeant. Bognanni fired again for insurance. The German didn't fall out of the tree. He had tied himself to it.

Slappey attacked St. Laurent with Lt. Col. William Warfield's 2nd Battalion and Major Victor Gillespie's 3rd Battalion. Warfield sent Captain Waldo Schmitt's E Company and Captain Robert Kaiser's F Company to lead the charge. Locals told two of Schmitt's scouts that the Germans were ensconced in the town church, surrounded by a stone wall and a wrought iron fence. As the men entered the town, they came under sniper fire and soon realized that many of the German defenses were connected by tunnels, allowing the snipers to change positions. German machine gunners, also in the church steeple, fired at anything that moved.

Lieutenant Colonel Warfield, showing calm amid the bullets whizzing past him, sat nonchalantly on a curb while tossing pebbles at a lounging dog. As the fight raged, a joint assault signal officer radioed the Navy to fire on the church. The first round crashed into the steeple, collapsing it. More followed. For the rest of the day, the Americans found themselves dodging enemy fire as well as their own Navy's.

While Warfield's and Gillespie's men captured the village, Slappey sent Lt. Col. Richard Blatt's 1st Battalion south of St. Laurent, flanking it and cutting it off from German reinforcement. Blatt completed his mission around 4 PM.

Back on the beach, things had calmed down. Engineers worked to make the Les Moulins Draw suitable for vehicles and armor by disabling mines and bulldozing obstacles. A sergeant with the Engineer Special Brigade, who had lost an eye, directed the engineers. When the men utilizing a bulldozer were wounded, he treated them even though he was in worse condition than some of them.

As the sun lowered in the sky, Colonel Slappey ordered Warfield to the western end of St. Laurent, although the enemy still controlled several buildings near the road heading south. To clear out the Germans, Slappey ordered Gillespie, supported by tanks that had made it up the draw, to conduct a night assault. The men and tanks pushed through the town, clearing out machine-gun nests, but as a tank pushed down a narrow road between two stone farmhouses, a high-velocity projectile streaked by. Germans in the upper stories poured fire on the Americans, forcing a retreat.

Gillespie's men then got some unexpected support. Eleven M-7 Priests, self-propelled artillery howitzers, from Lt. Col. Bernard McQuade's 58th Field Artillery Battalion had made it ashore around 6:30 PM. Lt. Col. John Cooper, the 110th Field Artillery Battalion commander who had landed with Slappy's 115th, requested some of the Priests to ferret out the Germans. The Priests roared into town and blasted their howitzers at farmhouses. "The Germans began to fly out of the windows left and right," recalled Cooper.

The Germans were finished in St. Laurent. The collapse of enemy resistance also meant that American engineers, who had been scarce during the day, could remove more beach obstacles and enable a heavier flow of traffic through the draw.

Warfield and Blatt set up defensive positions south of St. Laurent, trapping the last German defenders of the Les Moulins Draw. Before midnight, Blatt was looking for a place to set up his mortars when an enemy mortar barrage exploded around him. A piece of shrapnel ripped into his head above his right ear. He was sent to an aid station where he insisted the medics take care of the other wounded. He died the next day on a ship crossing the Channel.

Les Moulins Draw had been a tough fight. Elements of 12 battalions had spent the day fighting across the beaches, bluffs, and hedgerows, and through the town of St. Laurent, all within a single square mile. By the time the sun rose the next day, scattered Germans continued to harass them, but it was clear the Americans now controlled the draw. □

Frequent contributor Kevin M. Hymel is a historian for the U.S. Air Force Medical Service and the author of Patton's Photographs: War As He Saw It. *He is also a historian/tour guide for Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours where he leads tours of General Patton's European battlefields and often visits Omaha Beach.*

Skip Bombing

Continued from page 43

skip bombing and hit 11 different ships, sinking one destroyer and one transport. The next day, the B-25s went in at masthead level again and sank two more destroyers and severely damaged two transports.

The Battle of the Bismarck Sea ended on March 4 as a resounding victory for the Allies. For the loss of three fighters, one B-17, and 13 airmen, the Allies had stopped the Japanese dead in the water, sinking all seven transports, one service vessel, and four destroyers, with a total loss of about 3,000 men. Although the B-17s had played a big part in the battle, being credited with sinking six ships, it was the B-25s that had shown their effectiveness at skip bombing against moving ships in broad daylight.

Lighter and faster than the B-17s, the twin-engine B-25s and their counterparts, the twin-engine Martin B-26 Marauder medium bomber and the Douglas A-20 Havoc light bomber, were highly maneuverable and made small targets when coming in at masthead level against an enemy vessel. Armed with multiple forward-firing machine guns and even cannons, the B-25s, B-26s, and A-20s could do plenty of damage to a Japanese ship before they ever got close enough to skip their bombs across the surface of the water.

Although the B-17 would continue to be used in both high- and low-level attacks for a few more months, its time in the Pacific was drawing to a close. As the Allies began to win the war in the Pacific, employing the "island-hopping" strategy to moved ever closer to Japan, the longer range B-24s began to replace the shorter range B-17s. By the end of 1943, the B-17 was no longer being used for combat missions in the Pacific. By that time, Major Benn was no longer around. On January 18, 1943, he had gone out in a B-25 on a reconnaissance mission. The plane never returned.

Although the B-17 was gone from the Pacific, the big Flying Fortress had pioneered the skip bombing technique and had proven to the world that skip bombing was a viable tactic, one that would be used repeatedly by the crews of the smaller, faster twin-engine bombers until Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945. □

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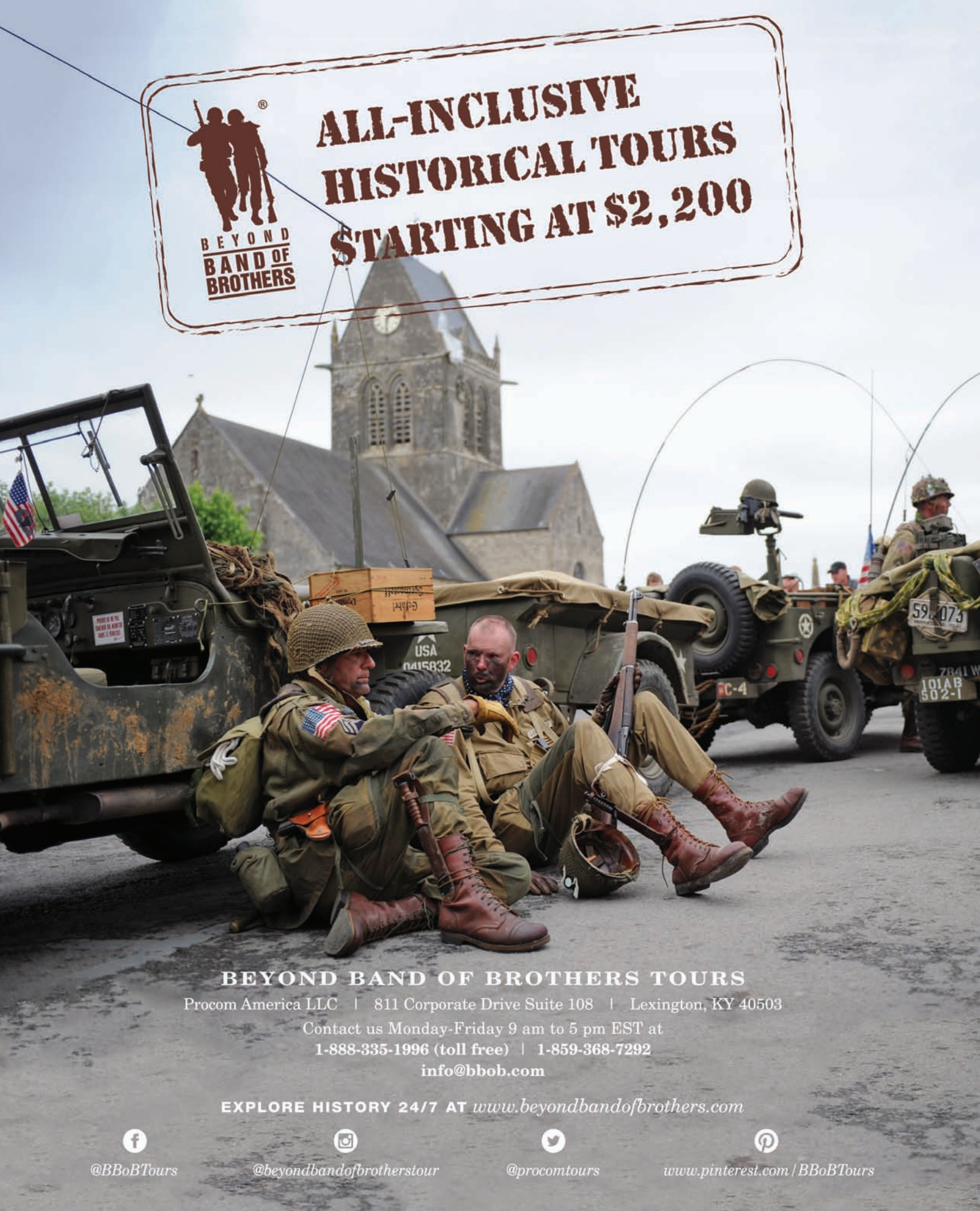

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