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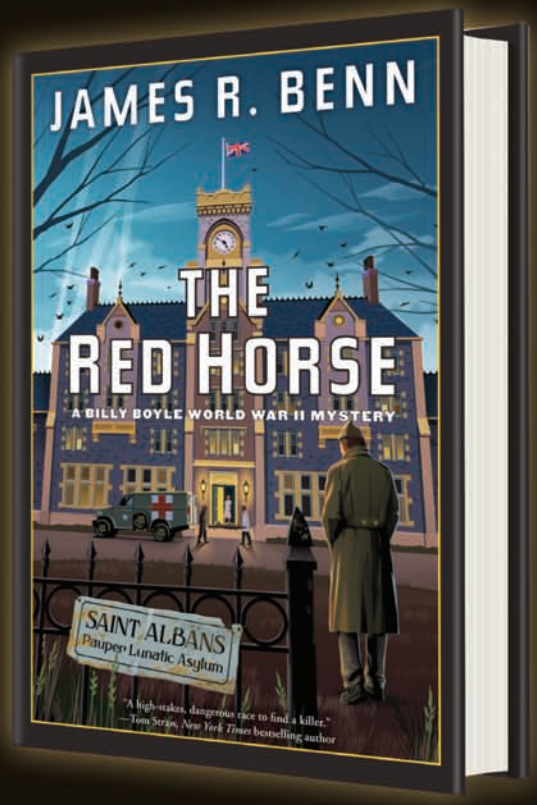

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Cover: Sergeant Audie Murphy poses for a promotional photo during filming of the Holywood movie, "To Hell and Back." The film was based on Murphy's exploits during World War II. Photo: Alamy

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WWII HISTORY

Volume 19 ■ Number 6

General Jonathan M. Wainwright survived the privations of captivity at the hands of the Japanese.

AMID THE GREAT ASSEMBLY OF SENIOR ALLIED OFFICERS WHO STOOD BY while the representatives of the Japanese government and those of the victors of World War II in the Pacific signed the instrument of surrender aboard the battleship USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945, in Tokyo Bay, two of the most unlikely attendees waited solemnly to step forward.

General Douglas MacArthur presided over the ceremonies, and as he signed the document, he turned and presented the first pen to American Lieutenant General Jonathan M. Wainwright. The second pen was handed to British General Arthur Percival. These two officers had surrendered the Allied forces in the Philippines and Singapore, respectively, to the marauding Japanese in 1942. The gesture was a fitting but unlikely moment during the proceedings.

Wainwright, who had succeeded General MacArthur as commander of Allied troops in the Philippines when the latter was evacuated to Australia, went into Japanese captivity, first in the northern part of the island of Luzon, then on Formosa, and finally at Xi'an in the desolation of Manchuria. Wainwright was one of more than 80,000 American and Filipino soldiers surrendered with the fall of the Bataan Peninsula and the island of Corregidor in April and May 1942.

Despite being the highest-ranking American officer taken prisoner during the war, Wainwright endured the same starvation and ill treatment as his men. Already nicknamed "Skinny," he lost considerable weight. While many POWs died in captivity, Wainwright managed to survive more than three years in Japanese hands.

The award of the Medal of Honor had been proposed for Wainwright as early as 1942. MacArthur, however, vehemently opposed it, believing that Corregidor should have held out longer and that Wainwright had surrendered too soon. In 1945, Wainwright was again proposed for the Medal of Honor, and this time MacArthur did not object to its presentation on September 19.

The citation lauds his heroism in command of the doomed defenders and reads in part: "…At the repeated risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in his position, he frequented the firing line of his troops where his presence provided the example and incentive that helped make the gallant efforts of these men possible. The final stand on beleaguered Corregidor, for which he was in an important measure personally responsible, commanded the admiration of the Nation's allies. It reflected the high morale of American arms in the face of overwhelming odds. His courage and resolution were a vitally needed inspiration to the then sorely pressed freedom-loving peoples of the world."

After he was freed by OSS operatives, Wainwright worried that he was considered a coward, derelict in his duty, by the American people. When he was informed that he was actually a national hero, the emaciated general was incredulous. Nevertheless, Wainwright returned to the Philippines and accepted the surrender of his former captors there. He was honored with a ticker tape parade in New York City on September 13, 1945, and promoted to the four-star rank of full general.

Wainwright later commanded Second Service Command and Eastern Division Command on Governor's Island, New York. He took command of the Fourth Army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, in early 1946, and retired from the Army the following year after 41 years of service. In civilian life, he served on several corporate boards of directors and became a Freemason. He died of a stroke on September 2, 1953, fittingly the eighth anniversary of the surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay. He was 64. His funeral was held on the lower level of the Memorial Amphitheater in Arlington National Cemetery, and he is buried there.

For the remainder of his life, Wainwright bore no grudge or malice against MacArthur or any other senior American commander involved in the decision to "abandon" his command to its fate in the Philippines. He never expressed disdain for MacArthur for opposing the award of the Medal of Honor in 1942, and in fact would have delivered the nominating speech at the 1946 Republican National Convention had MacArthur succeeded in securing the party's nomination for President of the United States.

—Michael E. Haskew

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By Michael D. Hull

All: National Archives

The Allies' Armored Workhorse

Produced in vast numbers, the M4 Sherman countered the performance of opposing German tanks and proved superior to Japanese armored vehicles.

EARLY ON THE GRAY, CHILLY AFTERNOON OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1944, A column of mud-stained Sherman medium tanks, armored cars, and half-tracks of the U.S. 37th Tank Battalion halted on a road in southeastern Belgium.

For five grueling days, the battalion—spearheading Maj. Gen. Hugh Gaffey's 4th Armored Division—had advanced 22 miles in a bid to relieve the besieged town of Bastogne, where the 101st Airborne (Screaming Eagle) Division was making a valiant stand against superior German forces.

The firebrand commander of the U.S. Third Army, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., had ordered the 4th Armored to "drive like hell." The tankers had, however, made slow progress, hampered by snow, fog, land mines, shell craters, icy roads, and the German 5th Fallschirmjäger (Parachute) Division. The 37th Battalion was now just five miles short of the objective as its commander, 30-year-old Lt. Col. Creighton W. "Toots" Abrams, Jr. of Agawam, Massachusetts, stood on a hill and gazed north towards Bastogne. He was down to 20 tanks, which he reasoned would barely be enough for one more assault.

Climbing back onto his Sherman—named "Thunderbolt IV"—the lantern-jawed Abrams radioed Gaffey and asked permission to continue the attack. Gaffey telephoned Patton, and a few minutes after 3 PM, Abrams was handed a message. He read it impassively, but his eyes glinted. Sticking a large cigar into his mouth, he clambered into the turret of his tank and radioed to his men, "We're going in to those people now. Let 'er roll!"

Supporting artillery pounded the village of Assenois south of Bastogne as the 37th Battalion clanked forward. Followed by the half-tracks crammed with infantrymen, the Shermans rumbled through woods and down a steep hill as dusk began to veil the snow-clad countryside. With Lieutenant Charles Boggess commanding the first nine tanks, the column blasted through Assenois toward the outskirts of Bastogne.

At 4:50 PM, Boggess jumped from his tank when a grinning 101st Airborne Division engineer emerged from a foxhole. The seven-day siege had been lifted, "and as dusk started to come down," reported a *Yank* magazine correspondent, "Colonel Abrams rode through—a short, stocky man with sharp features—already a legendary figure in this war." The historic relief of Bastogne made him an instant hero in the American press.

Abrams and his staunch tank crew wore out seven Shermans, winding up with "Thunderbolt VII" by the time the war had ended in Europe in May 1945. Painted on the side of

ABOVE: During the U.S. 6th Marine Division drive to the west coast of Okinawa in April 1945, men of the 29th Marines hitch a ride atop an M4A3 Sherman of Company A, 6th Tank Battalion. TOP: An M4 Sherman medium tank of the U.S. 4th Armored Division plows toward besieged Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. The white star on the turret has been darkened to make it less visible to German troops.

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M4 Sherman tanks proceed down the assembly line at the Lima Locomotive Works in Ohio in 1942. The plant was the first to produce the Sherman, completing a total of 1,655 tanks during the war years.

each was a large white thunderhead pierced by two jagged bolts of red lightning and the name "Thunderbolt."

The ubiquitous Sherman M4 was the front-line symbol of America's World War II "arsenal of democracy." It not only became the U.S. Army's workhorse medium tank in all theaters of operation from 1942 to 1945, it also saw extensive use by the U.S. Marine Corps as well as by British, Commonwealth, Free French, and Polish Armies. Four thousand M4s were sent to Russia alone through the Lend-Lease program.

Nevertheless, the M4 had many weaknesses: less-powerful guns, a high profile, thin armor, and an alarming tendency to burst into flame when hit. The German panzers consistently outclassed it, but on the plus side, it was easy to mass-produce and handle, speedy and mechanically reliable, and available in large numbers.

Named for General William Tecumseh Sherman of Civil War fame, the Sherman was the successor to the stopgap Grant and Lee M3 medium tanks. After the British Tank Commission made design suggestions in 1940 based on field experience, Lees and Grants were ordered, built, and then used by British and Commonwealth armored forces in the Western Desert. In March 1941, after completing work on the Lee M3 series, the U.S. Ordnance Department immediately began work on a replacement, the Sherman M4.

By April of that year, five tentative M4 designs had been drafted. One was for the medium T6 trial vehicle, which was chosen by the Army's armored force because of its simplicity. It retained the Lee's proven chassis, engine, transmission, and lower hull, but it mounted a 75mm main gun in a cast turret with full 360-degree traverse, eliminating the limited targeting ability of the M3's smaller 37mm sponson gun and reducing the crew to five. The T6 inherited the Lee's sponson doors, but these were removed by the time the design of the M4 tank was standardized on September 5, 1941. America was at war by the time the pilot model of the Sherman rolled off the assembly line at the British-funded Lima, Ohio, Locomotive Works in February 1942.

Mass production got underway the following month. Besides the Lima plant, the 10 major manufacturers that produced thousands of M4s were American Locomotive Company, Baldwin Locomotive Works, Chrysler's Detroit Tank Arsenal, Federal Machine & Welder Company, the Fisher Grand Blanc (Michigan) Arsenal, Ford Motor Company, Pacific Car & Foundry Company, Pressed Steel Car Company, and Pullman Standard Manufacturing Company. It was one of America's many industrial triumphs during the war. At the Fisher tank plant, workers rolled out the first Sherman only three months after ground had been broken.

The original Sherman featured a welded hull, soon replaced by a cast version. The tank weighed between 32 and 35 tons; was 19 feet, 6 inches long; had an armor thickness of 1.5 to 2.5 inches; was armed with a 75mm gun, a 50-caliber Browning machine gun, and two .30-caliber machine guns; had a road speed of 24 miles an hour; and carried a crew of five.

By the time production ended in June 1945, a staggering total of 49,234 Shermans had been built, 21,000 during 1943 alone. This constituted more than half of America's wartime armor production and surpassed the total combined wartime tank output of Great Britain and Germany. The Canadians also built 188 M4A1s, which they called the Grizzly I.

Sherman tanks arrived in northern Egypt in September as General Bernard L. Montgomery's revitalized Eighth Army was gearing up for its next major offensive against Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's vaunted Afrika Monty was glad to receive the "excellent" Shermans, whose 75mm turret guns made them a match for Rommel's panzers. The M4 received its baptism of fire when British and Commonwealth "ironsides" and infantry surged forward on the night of October 23, 1942, in the Second Battle of El Alamein, the first turning point of World War II. The Afrika Korps fought hard, but it was soon in full retreat.

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ABOVE: This M4 Sherman has been modified to include steel teeth to push through the hedgerows of the bocage country in Normandy. Nicknamed the 'Rhino,' this type of Sherman gained needed mobility among the hedgerows. RIGHT: This M4 Sherman Crab has been outfitted with chain flails rotating at high speed to detonate land mines. The Crab was one of the specialized Shermans developed by British General Percy Hobart and labeled Hobart's Funnies.

On November 8, 1942, the Allied invasion of North Africa began. The first use of Shermans in combat by American troops occurred in Tunisia the following month. The M4 was in the thick of the action when the inexperienced U.S. First Army was mauled by the Afrika Korps, and then later as the American forces came of age in the early months of 1943. The tank proved robust, reliable, and easy to handle and maintain on the battlefield. The Sherman's rubber-block tracks had about five times' the life expectancy of German steel tracks.

But the Sherman's limitations came to light dramatically when faced with the enemy's deadly 88mm flak guns, 20-ton Mark III panzers, 26-ton Mark IV panzers, and 63-ton Tiger E Mark VI tanks. Shermans took terrible punishment in February 1943, when Maj. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall's U.S. II Corps was routed at Sidi Bou Zid and Kasserine Pass, the first major American defeat of the war.

German gunners were quick to discover the thinly armored, gasoline-burning Sherman's fatal weakness. A single shot glancing off its rear sprocket would turn the tank into a fiery coffin. It burst into flame as easily as a cigarette lighter, gaining it nicknames like "Zippo," "Ronson," and "Tommy-cooker" from its American and British crews and their German foes. Such "brew-ups" continued to plague Sherman crews until diesel fuel was adopted for use in the A-2 and A-6 variants.

A Kasserine survivor reported, "Everywhere, the Shermans were rumbling to a stop, taking up the hull-down position and waiting for German tanks to come within range, but the Germans were not doing them that favor. Sherman after Sherman was hit, rocking from side to side with the impact, and almost immediately engulfed in an explosion of smoke and fire as the five-man crew scrambled their way out and doubled for safety, pursued by the angry red hornets of tracer bullets."

Sergeant James H. Bowser said of his Sherman, "...this is my third tank, although I've still got my original crew. We were burned out of the other two. If they were diesels, it wouldn't have happened, but these gasoline engines go up like torches on the first or second hit. Then you've got to barrel out and leave 'em burning."

General Omar Bradley reported, "In their first engagement, the American tankers learned that, tank for tank, their General Grants and Shermans were no match for the more heavily armored and better-gunned German panzers. Two years later in the Battle of the Bulge, this disparity had not yet been corrected. Although the Shermans eventually mounted heavier (76 mm) guns, at no time could they engage the enemy's Panthers and Tigers in a direct frontal attack. But it was in dependability that the American tank clearly outclassed the German. Its powerful engine could always be counted on to run without a breakdown. This advantage, together with our U.S. superiority in numbers, enabled us to surround the enemy in battle and knock out his tanks from their flanks."

Crew losses mounted, morale declined, and the Sherman "scandal" was exposed later by C.L. Sulzberger in the *New York Times*. A G.I. was quoted as saying, "The people who built the tanks I don't think know the power of the Jerry gun. I have seen a Jerry gun fire through two buildings, penetrate an M4 tank, and go through another building." Despite this, more and more Shermans rolled off the assembly lines and went into action.

By 1943, the Sherman had become the standard U.S. Army and Marine Corps tank. Although it was under-gunned and thin-skinned, it could generally outfight its more powerful adversaries because of superior maneuverability and superior numbers. Despite its shortcomings and crew complaints about its performance against panzers, the M4 constituted a triumph of engineering and mass-production techniques. It used less than half the gasoline of larger tanks, was faster, and had more range. Its tracks lasted for 2,500 miles, while German Panther and Tiger treads were good for only about 500 miles.

The Sherman also had the advantage of being driven and maintained by G.I.s more mechanically experienced than their opposite numbers. Mobile workshops and the recovery of damaged tanks, pioneered by the British in North Africa, meant that half of the M4s put out of action could be repaired and sent back on the line within two days. The Germans and the Red Army frequently abandoned vehicles when they were hit or broke down.

In the Pacific Theater, where the Japanese fought fanatically but were hampered by obsolete and inferior weapons of all types, Shermans clearly outclassed enemy light tanks.

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A duplex drive (DD) M4A1 Sherman medium tank on Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Note that its canvas flotation screen is partially lowered. Also visible are two Sherman wading tanks, incorporating waterproof hulls and tall intake and exhaust vents that allowed them to operate in shallow water.

Marines first used Shermans in Operation Galvanic, the November 1943 invasion of the Gilbert Islands. After amtracs paved the way across the fire-swept reefs at Makin and Tarawa, Shermans ground ashore to blast Japanese pockets of resistance. M4s fitted with Mark 1 flamethrowers, which could spew napalm 150 yards, proved particularly effective in destroying gun batteries, mortar emplacements, concrete pillboxes, caves, and coconut-log bunkers. Sergeant Bill Reed of *Yank* magazine reported from Iwo Jima in February 1945, "The Japs were afraid of our tanks, so afraid that they ducked low in their shelters and silenced their guns when they saw them."

On D-Day, Shermans rolled across the five invasion beaches and played a major role in supporting the Allied infantry divisions as they fought their way inland. Along with Churchill tanks modified as flamethrowers (or "Crocodiles"), bridge carriers, carpet layers (or "Bobbins"), and recovery tanks, many Shermans involved in the landings also performed special functions. A number of them, fitted with inflatable canvas skirts, were duplex-drive amphibians that could go ashore directly from landing craft. Others were fitted with dozer blades, and still others had been specially equipped to clear mines and other obstacles. The specialized Churchill and Sherman tanks were known as "Hobart's Funnies" after Maj. Gen. Percy C. S. "Hobo" Hobart, an armored-warfare pioneer who oversaw their design. The Funnies included Sherman "Crabs" fitted with flails to explode mines and "Fireflies" armed with British 17-pound guns. These M4s, particularly the flail tanks, proved invaluable to the British, Canadian, and Free French troops and commandos at Gold, Juno, and Sword Beaches.

Unfortunately, at Omaha Beach, where the U.S. 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions were pinned down and mauled for several critical hours on D-Day morning, the DDs were launched too far out and sank in heavy seas, so only a few made it to shore. The 741st Tank Battalion lost 27 of its 29 tanks. The Funnies, which were effectively neutralizing mines in the other landings, could have minimized the losses on Omaha Beach.

After D-Day, the Shermans forged ahead as the Allied armies broke out of the Normandy beaches and headed inland. By this time, the Sherman lent itself to other uses, including the chassis and hull for the powerful M10 tank destroyer, the 105mm Priest and 155 mm howitzer motor carriages, the British 25-pound Sexton, the Calliope and Whiz Bang rocket launchers, the Skink antiaircraft tank, and a variety of engineer vehicles.

With the Firefly and its 17-pounder, the best Allied antitank gun of the war, the British had for the first time a tank almost equal to the panzers. Until the Comet cruiser appeared, the Firefly was the only British tank capable of engaging the Tigers and Panthers on anything like equal terms.

While British and Canadian units battled the bulk of German armor around historic Caen, the Americans to the west struggled to gain a breakthrough and reach strategic Cherbourg as planned. The terrain, which was ideal for defense rather than mobile warfare, forbade it.

An American breakout depended on their armor being able to move forward, but attempting an offensive in the bocage was risky, costly, and time-consuming, with the infantry denied crucial support. Tankers tried again and again to go over or through the bocage embankments, but they proved virtually impassable to the Shermans. They were not powerful enough to break through the concrete-like earthen barriers, and if they managed to climb the embankments, their bellies were sitting targets for enemy Panzerfausts (antitank guns). The Allied offensive was stalled by the stubborn German defense in the bocage, but American mechanical ingenuity came to the rescue in time for Operation Cobra, the U.S. First Army's breakout that started July 25, 1944.

Less than a week before the planned launch of Operation Cobra, General Bradley received a telephone call from Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, commander of the V Corps, summoning him to the 2nd Armored. "Bring your ordnance officer along," said Gerow. "We've got something that will knock your eyes out."

Bradley complied and found Gerow and several staff officers clustered around a Stuart tank to which a crossbar had been welded. Four tusk-like metal prongs protruded from it. Bradley watched as the tank backed off and

Continued on page 82

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By Blaine Taylor

National Archives

On the 11th day of Operation Bagration, Red Army soldiers ride aboard tanks and trucks through the city of Minsk, capital of White Russia. Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky played a key command role in the Soviet offensive.

Marshal of Two Historic Enemies

Konstantin Rokossovsky led the forces of both Poland and the Soviet Union during his storied military career.

THE YEAR WAS 1944, AND THE EMBATTLED SOVIET UNION'S TOP-LEVEL field commanders were meeting in conclave to discuss Operation Bagration, an upcoming offensive against the retreating German Army. Presiding over the affair was Communist Party General Secretary Josef Stalin himself, and the boss was at odds with his "Polish" cavalry hero from the Russian Civil War days, Konstantin K. Rokossovsky.

At issue was whether the Red Army should stick with Stalin's longstanding military policy of making a sole breakthrough of the enemy front—in keeping with Red Army combat doctrine—or go with the fractious Rokossovsky's demand for a dual-penetration approach instead.

Rokossovsky, was on thin ice, as Stalin wasn't used to being contradicted in front of his own commanders, especially by one who had already narrowly missed being executed during an earlier three-year imprisonment after being falsely charged as both a Polish and Japanese spy.

In the course of torturing Rokossovsky, his jailers had beaten him badly, cracking his ribs and breaking his fingers, while the NKVD secret police pulled out some of his fingernails. They twice subjected him to the charade of faked firing squads when he had refused to denounce his loyal collaborators or admit his false guilt.

His ordeal only ended in March 1940, due to the catastrophic initial defeat of the Red Army by the Finns during the first stage of the Russo-Finnish War. Stalin himself had admitted that he needed men like the stubborn but competent Pole like never before.

Now, this same man stood firm a third time, murmuring quietly, "Two breakthroughs, Comrade Stalin, two breakthroughs." As all present froze in terror at what might happen next, Stalin silently walked over to his dissenting commander, placing a hand on one of his shoulders.

Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky contradicted Soviet Premier Josef Stalin and survived.

"Your confidence speaks for your sound judgment." The operation, then, was to be conducted in the manner that Rokossovsky, the Polish-Russian warrior, had proposed.

Operation Bagration proved to be the decisive victory, as the stolid Rokossovsky had predicted, and was followed by the defeat of German Army Group Center in Belarus. Rokossovky's dreaded legion of "Ivans" crossed the Vistula River opposite Nazi-occupied Warsaw in mid-1944, and the Polish-born

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Soviet troops advance behind the cover of a tank during the desperate fighting at Kursk in the summer of 1943. Rokossovsky believed that Stalin had entrusted him with a key role that led to the defeat of the German forces and doomed their Operation Citadel to failure.

military commander was soon named a Marshal of the Soviet Union by Stalin. Indeed, the plucky Pole's famed luck had held.

Born in what was then called Congress Poland (referring to the Congress of Vienna in 1815) under a hated Russian regime on December 21, 1896, to a father employed as an inspector of railways in the capital, Rokossovsky's family moved to Warsaw.

The family hailed from hereditary nobles who had supplied officers for generations to Poland's famed cavalry regiments, known for their sabers, lances, and quaint, historic, four-pointed *czapka* helmets. Polish cavalrymen were renowned as some of the finest of European horsemen, battling elite British riders for Napoleon against Wellington at Waterloo in 1815.

At 14, Rokossovsky found himself suddenly orphaned, surviving as a stocking-factory laborer. In 1914, he enlisted in the Imperial Russian Army's 5th Kargopol Dragoon Regiment, his Polish name of Ksaverovich morphing into the more Russified Konstantinovich.

Rokossovsky fought in World War I from start to finish as a handsome, dashing, broad-shouldered, and accomplished horseman, ending it as a junior non-commissioned officer in the armed wing of the Communist Party.

After the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War came one of the more colorful periods of the future marshal's career, when, in 1921, he crossed swords with the escaped White Russian general Roman von Ungern-Sternberg, a mystic who saw himself as the reincarnation of Mongol leader Genghis Khan and who later became the dictator of Outer Mongolia.

The following summer, the new khan attempted to detach Soviet Asia from the western Soviet Union, but Rokossovsky's Red forces, allied with Sukhbaatar Mongolswas, defeated him in a two-day battle. The victorious campaign climaxed with the capture of modern Ulan Bataar.

It was in Mongolia that the romantic Pole met his wife. Shortly afterward, he also met Zhukov at the Leningrad Higher Cavalry School. After training the new Mongolian People's Army, Rokossovsky was posted to future Red Army Marshal Vasily Blyukher's Red Banner Far Eastern Army and helped defeat Chiang Kai-shek's warlord ally Zhang Xueliang to secure the area's vital railway line for Stalin.

Rokossovsky's career then dovetailed with future Soviet marshals Zhukov and Semyon Timoshenko, this time with Timoshenko as his corps commander and Zhukov under him as a brigadier of horse. Rokossovsky later served in World War II under both men.

In the late 1930s, Rokossovsky became an early proponent of Soviet armored operations. He was a protege of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, whom a suspicious Stalin later shot as a traitor during the great purges that almost destroyed the top leadership cadre of the Red Army.

Now, during this, the greatest armed conflict of his career (the "Great Patriotic War," in Soviet parlance), Rokossovksy fought opposite most of Germany's major infantry and armor commanders: Gerd von Rundstedt, Hermann Hoth, Heinz Guderian, Fedor von Bock, Erich Hoeppner, Friedrich Paulus, Erich von Manstein, and Walter Model. Against those he did not defeat outright, he gave almost as good as he got, waging arduous withdrawals to fight again another day.

Rokossovsky described his philosophy toward the war: "The German Army is a machine, and machines can be broken! We began going over to the offense by delivering blows against the Germans…that helped strengthen discipline and confidence among the officers and men, who saw that they could actually beat the enemy. That meant a lot at the time! [The Germans] saw that our troops not only fought back, but also attacked!"

Indeed, as Rokossovksy proudly reported to Stalin, "Twenty-two [enemy] divisions have been destroyed or taken prisoner" at Stalingrad alone, where the Red Army also killed 300,000 German troops. That same month, Rokossovsky noted in his diary, "Stalin has entrusted me to play the key part in the summer Kursk campaign," a reference to what would become the largest armored baittle in the hosiery of warfare.

During his command of the Soviet 16th Army, Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky plans the defense of Moscow as he reviews a map of German dispositions prepared following an aerial reconnaissance.

Rokossovsky, the Polish-born commander, never forsook Stalin, despite the dictator's former cruelty toward him, and he never forgot the honors that Stalin showered upon him for his outstanding service to the Motherland. Even Nikita S. Khrushchev's denunciation of the late Stalin in his 1956 Kremlin Secret Speech failed to shake Rokossovsky's loyalty to the former

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British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery (center) walks with Marshal Georgi Zhukov (left) and Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky (right) following ceremonies in Berlin in July 1945. The famous Brandenburg Gate, scarred by recent fighting, stands in the background.

Soviet leader.

Rokossovsky, a soft-spoken pioneer of Soviet armor, commanded massive forces in nearly every major Red Army campaign of World War II. This included the great battles at Dubno, Smolensk, Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk, Belarus, and Warsaw. At the very end, however, Stalin insisted that Rokossovsky stand aside so that others could command the battle for Berlin. For the sake of domestic politics, the Soviet dictator wanted to reserve that honor for Russian commanders instead.

No one realized this better than Rokossovsky himself, who lamented quietly, "In Russia, they say I'm a Pole, while in Poland, they call me a Russian."

When the Soviet victory parade was held at Moscow in June 1945, Rokossovksy organized it, riding a black stallion next to Zhukov, who rode a white horse. The marshal again appeared with Zhukov when they jointly welcomed British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery to conquered Berlin.

After World War II, a grateful Stalin compensated Rokossovsky by giving him command of the Red Army occupation force in "liberated" Poland, a fitting use of his dual identity.

Stalin also demanded that the Polish communists name Rokossovsky a Marshal of Poland, a title that carried with it nothing less than leadership of the Polish Ministry of Defense. This gave Rokossovsky responsibility for developing the country's new communist Polish Army during 1949-56.

The new Polish marshal, looking as resplendent in his garish uniform as he had in his Russian uniform, had gotten his way in all things martial, both Sovietizing and Stalinizing the new Polish armed forces while wielding a firm and heavy hand. The most infamous of his draconian measures was the establishment of military work battalions, requiring all able-bodied men considered politically or socially undesirable to be drafted, especially if their families were found to be living abroad.

As a result, fully 200,000 Poles labored under harsh, Siberia-like conditions in coal mines, uranium mines, and rugged quarries, with over a 1,000 dying outright and tens of thousands more becoming crippled for life.

Just as he had run his war machine with a brutal disregard for high casualties in keeping with Red Army practice, Rokossovsky now systematically set about destroying those surviving Polish resisters who had surrendered to the Germans in 1944 when the revolt collapsed. Rokossovsky was revealing himself to be a dedicated Stalinist once again.

In June 1956, the brutal Soviet occupation of Poland boiled over in the Poznan Protests, sparked by poor working and living conditions in general; and it was now that Marshal Rokossovsky overplayed his Russian hand.

"Stalin's Bagratian" deployed 10,000 troops and 360 tanks against the civilian protesters, killing at least 74 people while suppressing the demonstrations.

During his spectacular career, Rokossovski rose to command both cavalry divisions and corps; a mechanized corps; armies and army groups; five Red Army fronts; and, finally, the entire Polish armed forces, having served in the period from 1914-37, and then again in 1940-62.

Just as Rokossovsky's survival and subsequent rapid rise to the highest echelon of martial power had been both unpredictable and meteoric, so, too, his subsequent political fall came as a sudden surprise.

Rokossovsky's postwar position as Marshal of Poland ended when fellow Pole and Warsaw Communist Party leader Wladislaw Gomulka became premier of that unhappy land in 1956.

Marshal Rokossovsky (left) and Marshal Georgi Zhukov exchange military greetings during the victory parade in Moscow held in June 1945 to celebrate the defeat of Nazi Germany.

In Moscow, Khrushchev realized that a lighter, defter touch was called for in tamping down the riots, and so he "restored" the public image of Polish Premier Gomulka.

Khrushchev also rejected his own marshal's request to deploy more armed repression against the recalcitrant Poles, and as an olive branch to both Gomulka and his new subjects, he fired Marshal Rokossovsky, recalling him to the Soviet Union.

Like Stalin before him, however, Khrushchev used Rokossovsky again, this time by firing the

politically formidable Marshal Zhukov a second time in July 1957 for domestic reasons. Rokossovsky was elevated to two new posts: Soviet deputy minister of defense and commander of the Trans-Caucasian Military District.

The following year, Rokossovsky was promoted yet again, becoming the Defense Ministry chief inspector, a post he held until he retired at last in April 1962. Once more, a defeated Rokossovsky had bounced back, showing martial and political resilience that, by any standard, had been truly amazing.

This remarkable communist warrior died after six years in peaceful retirement after drafting his memoirs at age 71 on August 3, 1968, while the Soviet Union was invading its postwar satellite Czechoslovakia for the second time in less than 25 years. His ashes are still interred in Moscow's elite Kremlin Wall Necropolis on Red Square.

Recalled the marshal's granddaughter later, "[Soviet General Secretary Leonid] Brezhnev was crying at the funeral of my grandfather!" Indeed, Rokossovsky's chest full of medals included not only the tsarist Cross of St. George, but a veritable host of communist decorations as well, including a pair of Gold Star Hero of the Soviet Union awards; seven Orders of Lenin; and Orders of the October Revolution and of the Red Banner.

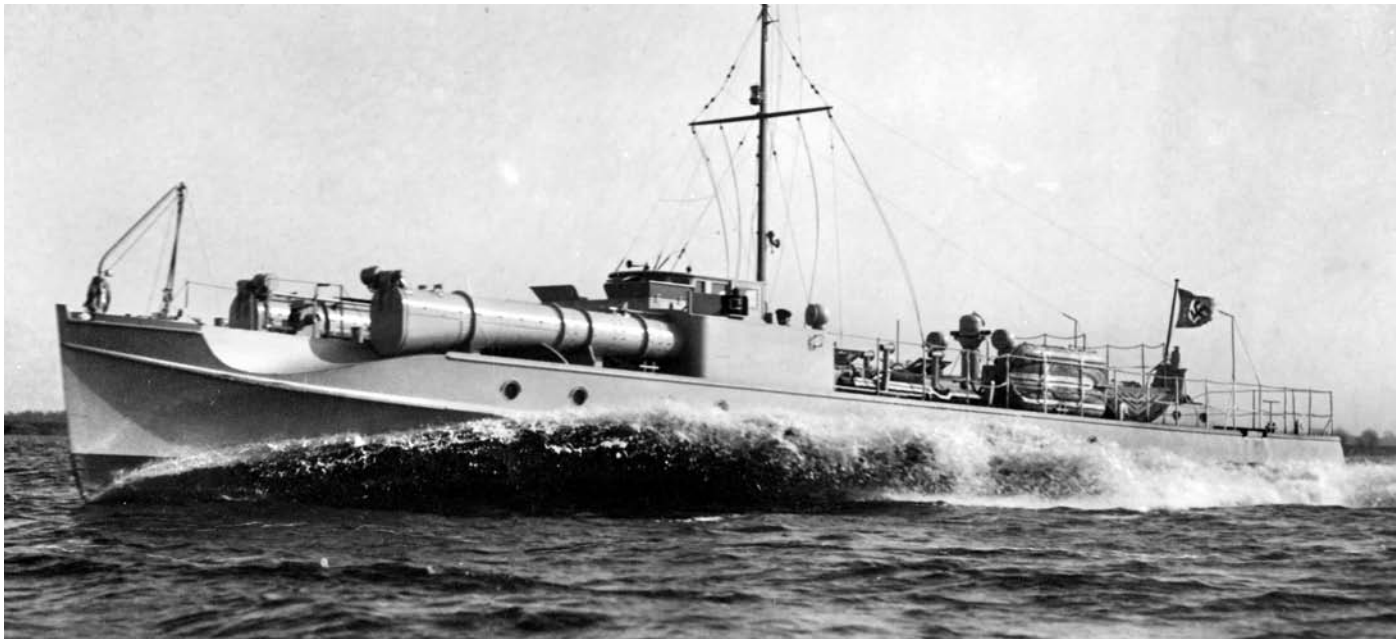
These had been bestowed on him for the defense of Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kiev, the liberation of Warsaw, and the capture of Königsberg and Berlin. He also wore a phalanx of foreign decorations, including the Polish Virtuti Militari, the French Cross of War and Legion of Honor, the British Order of the Bath, and the American Legion of Merit, among many others.

Today, monuments to Rokossovsky's martial glory stand in both Poland and Russia, while two subway stations bear his name in Moscow, and a 1968 Sword of Honor was inscribed to him with the emblem of the Soviet Union emblazoned on it.

Overall, Rokossovsky led a remarkably charmed life amid the intrigue and paranoia that surrounded the Soviet leadership and the Red Army command structure of the period, outliving many of his contemporaries and in doing so rendering immense service to the Soviet Union.

Blaine Taylor is the author of 23 illustrated books worldwide in a trio of languages. He is a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War (1966-67) and was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) for direct action against enemy forces.

By Phil Zimmer



Suppressing the E-boats

It took a team effort to knock out the German torpedo-boat threat to the Allied landings on the Normandy beaches.

A WILY BRITISH SCIENTIST, A SECRET WEAPON, AND A DARING DAYTIME BOMBING raid helped break the back of the deadly German E-boat attacks on the Allied ships that supported the early D-Day landings at Normandy.

Real-time breaking of top-secret German codes and modern-day analytics were central to the little-known but crucial June 14, 1944, raid against the Nazi naval base at Le Havre, just east of the Normandy beaches.

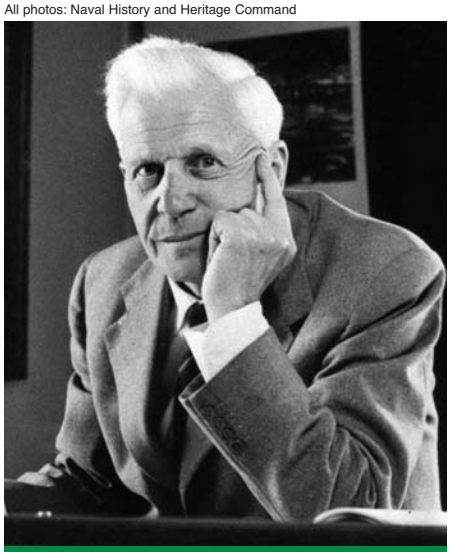
A total of 337 Allied aircraft were committed to the initial raid; these included 22 Avro Lancaster bombers from the prestigious Royal Air Force No. 617 "Dambusters" Squadron, which dropped the secret 12,000-pound "Tallboy" bombs onto the concrete-hardened pens the Germans had built to protect their naval assets. The devastating raid was the largest by Britain's RAF Bomber Command since the war had begun almost five years earlier.

The attack created several fires, and debris was scattered everywhere in the port. German rescue and firefighting work was well underway when, two hours later, another flight of 119 Lancasters appeared overhead and pounded the harbor in a second surprise bombardment.

The British estimated the Germans lost 38 vessels sunk and another 31-34 ships damaged. These included 10 E-boats (called *Schnellboots* by the Germans) sunk by direct bomb hits, three more so damaged they were beyond repair, one beached, and another with its bow blown off. Only one remained combat-ready.

The covered pens, heavy, concrete shelters designed to protect naval craft, were easily penetrated by the powerful Tallboys. Even those new bombs that missed their marks often created "tidal waves" inside the confined pens, which tossed the German vessels about and created substantial damage. Intercepted German reports confirmed the extensive damage, which included the sinking of three torpedo boats, another heavily damaged, and one of the sunken boats blocking the pens. The Kriegsmarine also lost additional war vessels, including dozens of smaller minelayers, minesweepers, patrol vessels, harbor launches, tugs, and a huge floating dock to the carnage wrought by the Tallboys.

All photos: Naval History and Heritage Command



ABOVE: British engineer Barnes Wallis is credited with designing the devastating 12,000-pound Tallboy bunker busting bomb. BELOW: A Tallboy plummets earthward toward its target in Nazi-occupied France. TOP: German E-boats such as this heavily armed craft posed a serious threat to Allied cross-Channel traffic during and after the D-Day landings.

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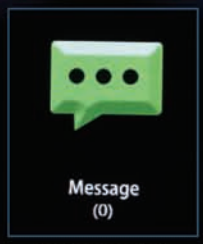

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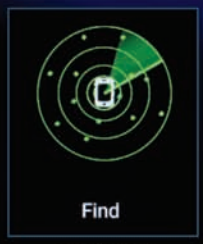

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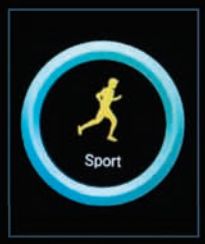
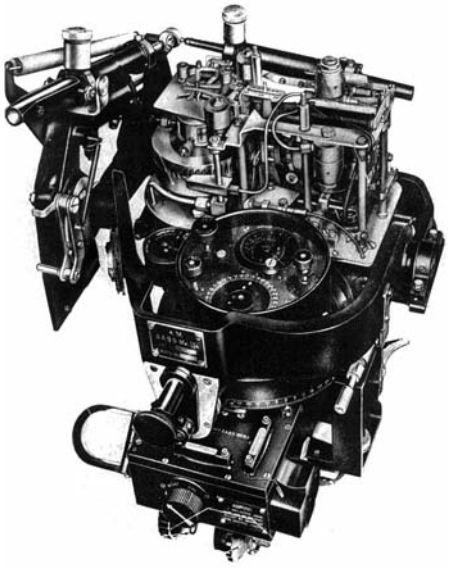


Track steps and calories

Imperial War Museum

The imposing size of the Tallboy bomb is revealed in this image of RAF personnel maneuvering one of them into storage with the assistance of a crane.



The stabilized bomb sight (SABS) utilized by RAF No. 617 Squadron, famous as the "Dambusters," improved the accuracy of raids as heavy bombers delivered their payloads. It was similar to the American Norden bomb sight.

The fierce attack on a naval site, unprecedented to date in the war, also destroyed warehouses, uprooted all the crucial cranes in the harbor, blocked vital access roads, and took out the port's only torpedo-loading facility. In addition, all the torpedo warheads stored at Le Havre were destroyed. Some 200 German naval officers and men were killed, and another 100 were seriously wounded.

The Germans quietly admitted the raid was catastrophic, while the Allies rightly believed that it ended "effective E-boat opposition in the English Channel." Bomber Command had scored an impressive win. To back things up, the very next night the Brits launched a similar, but initially smaller, attack on the port of Boulogne, with a follow-up blanket raid there by 300 Lancasters. Thirty-one ships, including a number of minelayers, were sunk and nine other vessels damaged.

Both attacks used the new Tallboy bombs and clearly demonstrated that the Kriegsmarine could no longer rely on hardened pens to protect their boats. The pens, in fact, had become magnets for attracting undue attention on the part of the destructive Tallboys. Admiral Theodor Krancke, German naval commander in the West, assessed the situation and said the "heavy losses completely put an end to our offensive operations in the second week following the invasion."

Some remaining E-boats did continue to make runs from other ports, but their ability to swarm over and disrupt shipping in the Channel was substantially lessened as the result of the raids. This enabled the Allies to continue to send men, weapons, and related supplies largely unimpeded to the crucial Normandy beachheads.

Several individuals contributed to this development, including a brilliant innovator named Barnes Wallis. The engineer had made a name for himself with the interwar development of the Vickers Wellesley and Wellington Bombers. The latter plane proved itself so capable that it was used well into World War II.

With World War II looming on the horizon, Wallis began to consider the use of a big bomb to destroy sites protected by concrete embedded in earth or surrounded by water. Such a large bomb, he theorized, could produce shockwaves around a target to bring it down. He envisioned it as a large, steel-encased, 10-ton bomb dropped at 40,000 feet with newly developed methods so it would slam into the earth at supersonic speeds and "burrow" deep into the surface and explode beneath the target. The shockwaves would travel upward, shatter the hardened concrete, and cause it to fall into the cavity created by the explosion.

Wallis initially met resistance because the British lacked a bomber capable of handling such a weapon and because studies revealed an inability to hit a target with the precision necessitated by such a bomb.

The researcher nevertheless continued with development of a thin-skinned bomb that could explode underwater against a target like the wall of a dam. Here, the explosion in the water would create shockwaves and bring down the structure, he theorized. He submitted a proposal along those lines, and on the night of May 16-17, 1943, Lancaster bombers dropped the four-ton cylindrical "bouncing bombs" behind the Mohne and Eder gravity dams near the Ruhr, the industrial heart of Germany. The four-ton bombs skipped over torpedo nets and sank some 30 feet before being detonated by hydrostatic fuses. The shockwaves punched holes in the dams and created extensive flooding and a loss of water supplies for crucial industries in the Ruhr.

Squadron 617 executed the precise bombings, and the squadron would later be pressed into service at Le Havre and Boulogne to use further-improved aiming and bombing techniques along with the Tallboys designed by Wallis. The 617 had been equipped with an ingenious new device that one pilot aptly dubbed a "magic wand." The Stabilized Automatic Bomb Sight (SABS) was a hand-built device somewhat like the Americans' Norden bombsight, and No. 617 was the only squadron equipped with the craftsman-made device. The crews were strictly instructed to destroy them should their planes develop difficulties over enemy territory. That action would ensure that the enemy never got their hands on them.

The SABS had a telescopic sight mounted on a gyroscopically stabilized platform used by the bomb aimer, who was located in the nose of a Lancaster. The ingenious device generated corrections automatically while the aimer held the sight on the target. For it to work, there could be no deviation from course as the plane flew at its designated altitude and speed. Needless to say, this placed heavy demand on the crew, as they

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More and more Americans are reaching the age where mobility is an everyday concern. Whether from an injury or from the aches and pains that come from getting older– getting around isn't as easy as it used to be. You may have tried a power chair or a scooter. The ***Zinger*** is NOT a power chair or a scooter! The ***Zinger*** is quick and nimble, yet it is not prone to tipping like many scooters. Best of all, it weighs only 47.2 pounds and folds and unfolds with ease. You can take it almost anywhere, providing you with independence and freedom.

Years of work by innovative engineers have resulted in a personal electric vehicle that's truly unique. They created a battery that provides powerful energy at a fraction of the weight of most batteries. The ***Zinger*** features two steering levers, one on either side of the seat. The user pushes both levers down to go forward, pulls them both up to brake, and pushes one while pulling the other to turn to either side. This enables great mobility, the ability to turn on a dime and to pull right up to tables or desks. The controls are right on the steering lever so it's simple to operate, and its exclusive footrest swings out of the way when you stand up or sit down. With its rugged yet lightweight aluminum frame, the ***Zinger*** is sturdy and durable yet convenient and comfortable! What's more, it easily folds up for storage in a car seat or trunk. Think about it, you can take your ***Zinger*** almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life. It folds in seconds without tools and is safe and reliable. It holds up to 275 pounds, and it goes up to 6 mph and operates for up to 8 miles on a single charge.

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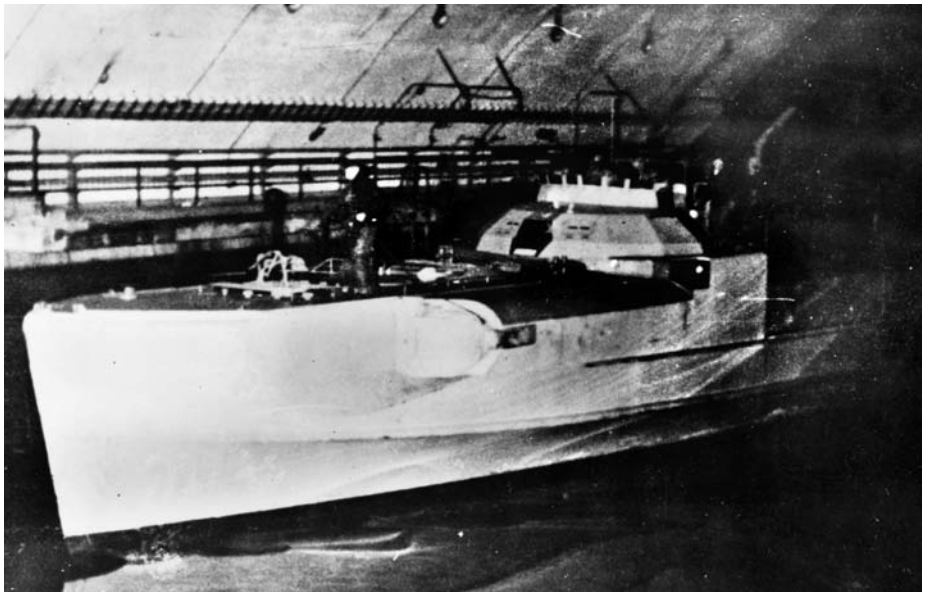
Naval History and Heritage Command



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ABOVE: These views of the Kriegsmarine facilities in the harbor of Le Havre, France, were taken after the heavy RAF bombing raid of June 14, 1944. Damage to a concrete shelter is visible in both frames. TOP: A German E-boat lies moored in a concrete shelter intended to protect it from Allied bombs. The coming of the Tallboy rendered such shelters vulnerable from the air.

often headed through flak toward a target. This helps explain why No. 617 Squadron was generally used for only the most important bombing missions.

The Tallboys themselves came in three sizes: a 4,000-pound Tallboy S (small), a 12,000-pound Tallboy M (medium) and a staggering Tallboy L (large) that came in at 22,000 pounds and was produced in early 1945.

The initial testing of the Tallboy S models in December 1943 showed that when dropped from 20,000 feet, the bombs became unstable as they approached the speed of sound and ended up too far from the target. They also tended to disintegrate on impact rather than penetrate deep into the ground as intended. Wallis solved the problems with thickened steel in the nose and the use of fins to create a rapid spin to the casing. This gave the newly streamlined, 21-foot-long, three-foot-wide bomb the necessary ballistic stability as it approached Mach 1 and made it exceptionally accurate when coupled with the SABS.

The Tallboy S used torpex, a combination of 40 percent TNT; 42 percent RDX, a powerful new explosive; and 18 percent aluminum powder, plus other ingredients. The researchers had discovered that the aluminum powder enormously boosted the heat levels. They also found that sealing the mixture under pressure magnified the blast effect. Torpex, in fact, produced a higher blast level than any other standard explosive used in the war. The mixture had also proven itself earlier in the bombs used against the two dams in the Ruhr.

Squadron 617's accuracy was aided significantly in the winter of 1943-44 with advances by the RAF's Pathfinder Force (PFF). On the nights of January 24 and 25, 1944, the pilots of two pathfinder de Havilland Mosquito fighter bombers elected to ignore the prescribed altitude of 2,500 feet and swept in much lower to mark V-1 "buzz bomb" launch sites in the Pas de Calais region of France. The results were astounding, and the follow-up bombing by the Lancasters proved remarkably accurate.

These improved marking techniques helped pave the way for the devastating bombings of the Kriegsmarine at Le Havre and Boulogne. But other factors played significant roles as well. These included the breaking of the special Dolphin code used by the E-boats crews. The British were often able to read a Dolphin transmission within three hours, and occasionally within a half hour.

Using that information, they were able to better track where the E-boats were moored at any given time, thus bringing to an end the previous "whack-a-mole" efforts to put the marauders out of business. The Brits knew, with certainty, going into the raids on Le Havre and Boulogne that the boats would be in port, so they could go all-out to destroy them.

Another often-overlooked element came into play, as well: The Allies had recovered a number of E-boat crew members from the chilly English Channel after their craft were sunk. The young German sailors, disturbed by the quick departures of their comrades and warmed by British tea and apparent friendliness, often proved to be fountains of information on the scope and nature of the E-boat fleet. That information provided further details on the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy boats, as well as details on German torpedoes and mines.

In summary, the devastating raids on Le Havre and Boulogne proved instrumental to the long-term success of the D-Day landings, which were dependent on the continuing arrival of men, food, and equipment to support and expand the toehold on the Normandy coast. While the attacks did not fully knock the E-boat flotillas out of action, they did significantly lessen the impact of the boats on the long-term pursuit of the war. And it was a successful, cooperative team effort on the part of men like Wallis, the codebreakers, interrogators, and the dedicated crews of No. 617 Squadron, among others, that made the difference.

Author Phil Zimmer is a U.S. Army veteran and a former newspaper reporter. He has written on a number of World War II topics.

EMERGENCY PRODUCTION!

Rush Production of U.S. Silver Dollars Creates 2nd Lowest Mintage in History

One of the most popular ways to buy silver is the Silver Eagle—legal-tender U.S. Silver Dollars struck in one ounce of 99.9% pure silver. When the COVID-19 pandemic began sweeping the world, demand skyrocketed. But there was a problem...

U.S. Mint Halts Production

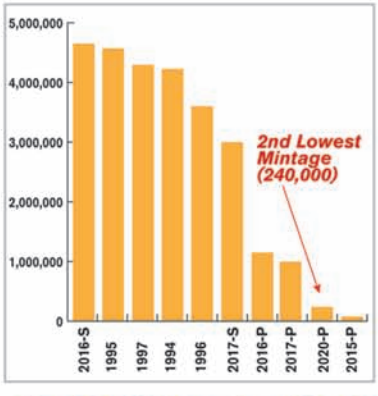
West Point, the U.S. Mint branch that normally strikes Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) Silver Eagles, went into lockdown. Prices quickly shot up, and freshly struck Silver Eagles became much harder to find at an affordable price. To meet the rising demand, the U.S. Mint knew it had to act—and act fast.

Philadelphia Steps Up

For just 13 days, the U.S. Mint struck an "Emergency Production" run of U.S. Silver Dollars at the Philadelphia Mint. This was great for silver buyers, and *really* great for collectors. Here's why:

The Mystery of Silver Bullion

A coin's value is often tied to its rarity. One way to determine a coin's rarity is by its mint mark—a small letter indicating where a coin was struck. Since Silver Eagles are almost always produced solely in West Point, the coins don't feature one of these mint marks. But this year's Silver Eagles were also produced in Philly—so few (a scant 240,000) that they are now the second smallest mintage of Silver Eagles ever struck! So how do we tell a 2020(W) Silver Eagle from a 2020(P)?



Certified "Struck at" Coins

Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC) is one of the world's leading third-party coin grading services. Thanks to some skilled detective work, they have certified these coins as being struck at the Philadelphia Mint during this special Emergency Production run. What's more, a number of these coins have been graded as near-flawless Mint State-69 (MS69) condition—just one point away from absolute perfection!

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By Duane Schultz

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Coming Home

> There were nearly 94,000 American POWs in Germany. The end of the war did not end their suffering.

AT THE AGE OF 91, NORMAN BUSSEL STILL VOLUNTEERED AT THE VETERANS Administration hospital in Montrose, New York, where he counseled veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. He did it because he knew exactly what they were going through. He wrote that almost every veteran he worked with "displays mannerisms—fidgeting in their seats, knees bobbing up and down during interviews, avoiding eye contact—that indicate that they have PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). The symptoms jump out at me because I have lived with PTSD for more than 70 years."

After his bomber was shot down over Berlin in 1944, Sergeant Bussel, a 19-year-old radioman, spent a year in German POW camps. When he came home, he went through "alcoholism, a broken marriage, claustrophobia, and a constant struggle with nightmares." The reason he had such great success in counseling veterans was because "I can persuade them to talk by being forthright about my own decades-long battle…I tell them how I avoid elevators, crowds, and July 4th fireworks [and that] 'survivors' guilt' is still my strongest stressor. I make them privy to my emotional baggage to show them that they are not unique or weird. I tell them…about the day that my B-17 exploded over Berlin, how I am plagued with guilt over the loss of four of my crewmen that day." Why, he still asks himself, did I live when the others died?

There were 93,941 Americans held in German POW camps during World War II, and a majority of them returned suffering from a variety of symptoms like Bussel's, which were generally classified as neuropsychiatric (NP), a term then in use for what had previously been called "shell shock."

What they had experienced in the POW camps—hunger, cold, disease, guilt, boredom, and fear—was bad enough, but as British and American forces drew closer to Germany from the west and Russian armies advanced from the east in the final months of the war, their situation became far more dangerous. The majority had to endure forced marches through an increasingly desolate countryside as the German Army moved them farther from the relative safety of their camps into Germany's interior during the last cold, winter months of the war.

Marching every day with even less food than they had in the camps (the Red Cross trucks that had delivered food parcels were no longer able to get through from Switzerland because of the bombing raids), new terrors presented themselves. One was the growing fear that Hitler would have them exterminated rather than free them. The other fear was the growing

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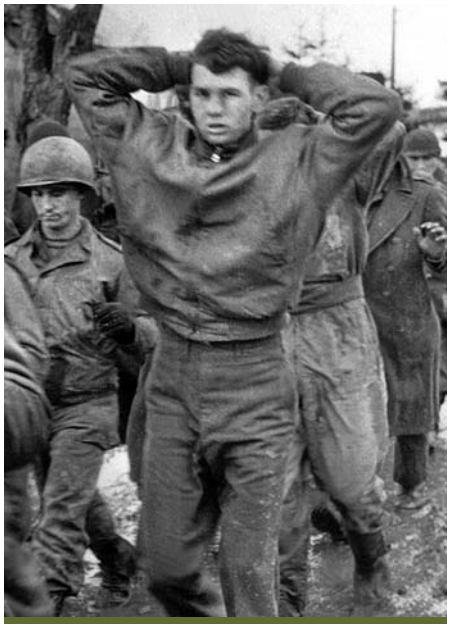

ABOVE: A look of despair and uncertainty in his eyes, an American soldier captured by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge marches into captivity. Many former prisoners of war faced challenges when they returned from the war in Europe and the Pacific. TOP: The horror of war is reflected on the face of this Marine who has endured the fighting on the island of Iwo Jima in this image by combat artist Harry Reeks.

Men's Virility Restored in Clinical Trial; 275% More Blood Flow in 5 Minutes

A newly improved version of America's best-selling male performance enhancer gives 70-year-old men the bedroom performance they enjoyed in their 30's.

America's best-selling sexual performance enhancer just got a lot better.

It's the latest breakthrough for nitric oxide – the molecule that makes erections possible by increasing blood flow to your penis.

Nitric oxide won the Nobel Prize in 1998. It's why "the little blue pill" works. More than 200,000 studies confirm it's the key to superior sexual performance.

And this new discovery increases nitric oxide availability resulting in even quicker, stronger and longer-lasting erections.

One double-blind, placebo-controlled study (the "gold-standard" of research) involved a group of 70-year-old-men.

They didn't exercise. They didn't eat healthy. And researchers reported their "nitric oxide availability was almost totally compromised," resulting in blood flow less than HALF of a man in peak sexual health.

But only five minutes after the first dose their blood flow increased 275%, back to levels of a perfectly healthy 31-year-old man! "It's amazing," remarks nitric oxide expert Dr. Al Sears. "That's like giving 70-year-old men the sexual power of 30-year-olds."

WHY SO MUCH EXCITEMENT?

Despite the billions men spend annually on older nitric oxide therapies, there's one well-known problem with them.

They don't always work.

A very distinguished and awarded doctor practicing at a prestigious Massachusetts hospital who has studied Nitric Oxide for over 43 years states a "deficiency of bioactive nitric oxide… leads to impaired endothelium-dependent vasorelaxation."

In plain English, these older products may increase levels of nitric oxide. But that's only half the battle. If it's not bioactively available then your body can't absorb it to produce an erection.

Experts simply call it the nitric oxide "glitch." And until now, there's never been a solution.

NEXT GENERATION NITRIC OXIDE FORMULA FLYING OFF SHELVES

Upon further research, America's No. 1 men's health expert Dr. Al Sears discovered certain nutrients fix this "glitch" resulting in 275% better blood flow.

He's combined those nutrients with proven nitric oxide boosters in a new formula called *Primal Max Red*. In clinical trials, 5,000 mg is required for satisfying sexual performance. *Primal Max Red* contains a bigger, 9,000 mg per serving dose. It's become so popular, he's having trouble keeping it in stock.

Dr. Sears is the author of more than 500 scientific papers. Thousands of people listened to him speak at the recent Palm Beach Health & Wellness Festival featuring Dr. Oz. NFL Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Namath recently visited his clinic, the **Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine.**

Primal Max Red has only been available for a few months — but everyone who takes it reports a big difference. *"I have the energy to have sex three times in one day, WOW! That has not happened in years. Oh, by the way I am 62,"* says Jonathan K. from Birmingham, AL.

HOW IT WORKS

Loss of erection power starts with your blood vessels. Specifically, the inside layer called the endothelium where nitric oxide is made.

The problem is various factors THICKEN your blood vessels as you age. This blocks availability causing the nitric oxide "glitch." The result is difficulty in getting and sustaining a healthy erection.

How bad is the problem?

Researcher shows the typical 40-year-old man absorbs 50% less nitric oxide. At 50, that drops to 25%. And once you pass 60 just a measly 15% gets through.

To make matters worse, nitric oxide levels start declining in your 30's. And by 70, nitric oxide production is down an alarming 75%.

Primal Max Red is the first formula to tackle both problems. Combining powerful nitric oxide boosters and a proven delivery mechanism that defeats the nitric oxide "glitch" resulting in 275% better blood flow and stronger erections. There's not enough space here to fully explain how it works, so Dr. Sears will send anyone who orders *Primal Max Red* a free special report that explains everything.

MORE CLINICAL RESULTS

Nutrients in *Primal Max Red* have logged impressive results.

In a *Journal of Applied Physiology* study, one resulted in a 30 times MORE nitric oxide. And these increased levels lasted up to 12 hours.

"I measured my nitric oxide levels, you can buy a test kit from Amazon," reports 48-year-old Jeff O. "Monday night I showed depleted."

Then he used ingredients in *Primal Max Red*

A new discovery that increases nitric oxide availability was recently proven in a clinical trial to boost blood flow 275% resulting in even quicker, stronger and longer-lasting erections.

and, "The results were off the charts. I first woke around 3 a.m. on Tuesday with a throbbing boner. My nitric oxide levels measured at the top end of the range."

FREE BONUS TESTOSTERONE BOOSTER

Every order also gets Dr. Sears testosterone boosting formula *Primal Max Black* for free.

"If you want passionate 'rip your clothes off' sex you had in your younger days, you need nitric oxide to get your erection going. And testosterone for energy and drive," says Dr. Sears. "You get both with *Primal Max Red* and *Primal Max Black*."

HOW TO GET PRIMAL MAX

To secure free bottles of *Primal Max Black* and get the hot, new *Primal Max Red* formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at 1-800-329-8903. "It's not available in drug stores yet," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about Primal Max, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. "Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back," he says.

Call 1-800-329-8903 to secure your limited supply of *Primal Max Red* and free bottles of *Primal Max Black*. You don't need a prescription, so call now to qualify for a significant discount. Use Promo Code WW1120PMAX when you call in. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered.

number of attacks by Allied aircraft. Their chances of surviving the war so close to its end seemed to be diminishing.

Kurt Vonnegut, a 22-year-old army private, was captured on December 22, 1944, in Luxembourg during of the Battle of the Bulge. He and 6,000 other captives were marched to the east for two days before being crammed into railroad boxcars. In the railyards at Koblenz, their train was attacked by British planes, killing some 150 men, 63 in one boxcar alone.

On January 12, Vonnegut and 150 others were transported to Dresden, where they were herded through a door marked *Schlachthof Fünf* ("Slaughterhouse Five") and down 60 feet into the basement of an abattoir, where livestock was killed and butchered. It was 9:51 on the night of Tuesday, February 13, 1945, when the air-raid sirens first sounded.

The POWs stayed trapped in the quaking cellar for two days while 1,200 British and American bombers wiped out the city center, killing at least 25,000 people (some estimates go as high as 135,000). For weeks after the raid, Vonnegut and other POWs were forced to retrieve the thousands of bodies and drag them to huge funeral pyres. "Every day, we walked into the city," he wrote, "and dug into basements and shelters to get the corpses out."

Another group of several hundred American prisoners was caught out in the open on April 5, 1945, during an American bombing raid on the city of Nuremberg. The cold and starving men were near total exhaustion, having marched 93 miles over the previous nine days. Chief Warrant Officer Harry Thompson called it "our walk through hell."

Thompson looked around when the bombing stopped. "The carnage was sickening. Dead and wounded men lay all around them, some crying in pain, some with arms and legs blown off, bodies blown apart with intestines and organs on the ground, all covered in blood, either their own or that of stricken comrades. Some of us had bits of human flesh all over us…Fifty years have passed, and I can still close my eyes and see it all over again." Twenty-four of his fellow prisoners were dead and 105 were wounded by their own side, less than a month before they would have been free. No one knows how many American POWs were killed or wounded during bombing and strafing attacks by their own planes in those last weeks and months of the war.

When the war in Europe ended and the POWs started going home, many quickly found that their transition to civilian life was not going to be easy. As with so many veterans of World War II, POW or not, the momentary ini-

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The bodies of German civilians killed during the Allied bombing onslaught against the city of Dresden are piled on a wagon awaiting burial in a mass grave. American author Kurt Vonnegut and other prisoners of the Germans also endured the intense bombing.

tial excitement and euphoria of seeing family and friends again did not last. According to surveys in 1946, a full 40 percent of returning POWs expressed disappointment.

At least one of every three returning American veterans felt completely estranged from the civilian world they had left when they went to war, and as many as half believed the war had left them worse off. Forty years later, in 1985, a study of former POWs found that 25 percent said they were still bothered by anxiety, irritability, depression, exaggerated startle response, body tremors, insomnia, and nightmares. And almost three out of every four ex-POWs reported intermittent problems with these kinds of symptoms. Only four percent said that they had never been troubled emotionally by their experiences during captivity.

Studies in 2018, more than 70 years after the war, found that 30 percent of British POWs had developed what was called a "stalag mentality," which included feelings of guilt at having been a prisoner of war, along with intense depression, a belief that their mental and physical health had been permanently damaged, and intense anxiety about being able to reintegrate back into civilian life.

Many American POWs felt estranged from their wives and families, and many marriages were damaged as a result. The first two postwar years saw a divorce boom in the United States, with veterans divorcing at twice the rate of people who had not served in the war. Many wives felt that, as one put it, "I got engaged to one man, then a different man came home."

One million returning American servicemen, including POWs, were classified as neuropsychiatric. One year after the war, by 1946, more than 10,000 veterans a month were trying to get help at veterans' hospitals for NP-related problems. By the following year, more than half of all patients in VA hospitals had been diagnosed as neuropsychiatric.

One veteran said, "I would wake up at night drenched with sweat and a sense of terror. I

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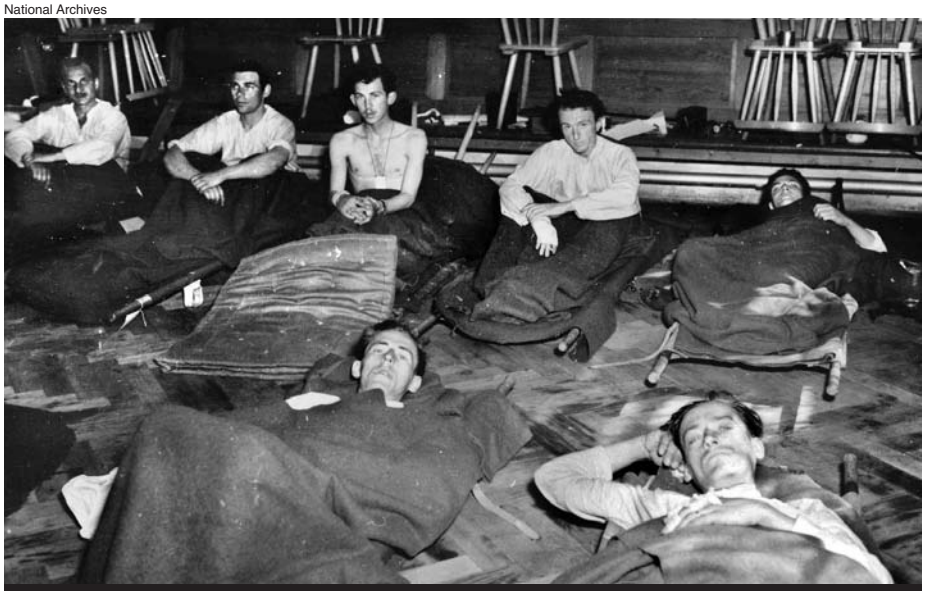

After surviving a grueling death march from a German POW camp, newly liberated American prisoners of war recover at a U.S. Army hospital in May 1945. For many the road to recovery was long and arduous.

would lie awake and stare at the insides of my eyelids. Every one of those young dead soldiers [he had seen in combat] went by like a slide show. Why did I survive when so many others had been killed? Why had I not been wounded when so many others were maimed for life? I didn't recognize the fact that I had indeed been wounded, and severely at that. It was a wound that would take fifty years to heal."

Kurt Vonnegut spent more than 20 years after the war trying to come to terms with his experiences at Dresden, writing and destroying thousands of pages before completing his most famous book, *Slaughterhouse-Five*. His daughter said Vonnegut "was writing to save his own life" and that he was constantly dealing with heavy drinking, flashbacks, nightmares, sleepless nights, periods of dissociation from reality, and sudden bursts of intense anger.

A major problem for returning veterans after the war was that the VA lacked enough psychologists and other mental-health counselors to treat their disorders. The VA also failed to fully comprehend the array of emotional problems plaguing returning veterans. Norman Bussel wrote, "For those of us who recognized that we had a problem, a trip to a VA hospital for help quickly convinced us that they didn't have a clue as to what was wrong with us. So we went back to our jobs and self-medicated with alcohol at night and on weekends."

Many returning POWS and combat veterans could not bring themselves to talk about their feelings. It was considered "unmanly" to admit to having feelings of stress—or psychological problems of any kind, for that matter. They did not want their families and friends to know that they had such problems, or worse, to admit they were accepting treatment. Many were also afraid, with some justification, that having "NP" stamped in their files would follow them throughout life and keep them from finding meaningful employment.

Men Over 40 Celebrate Breakthrough Pill

Doctor-developed natural formula supports prostate health, normal urinary frequency, and optimal male health

By S.A. Nickerson, Health Correspondent

Renowned holistic physician David Brownstein, M.D., knows most men feel embarrassed to talk about their prostate.

However, if you're a man over 40 or 50, your prostate is probably talking to you — and it's time to listen.

"With aging, your prostate gland can swell," warns Dr. Brownstein. "This pressure begins to affect urinary control, forcing you to look for a bathroom wherever you go. You may have difficulty sleeping because of multiple nightly bathroom trips."

Rogue Testosterone Starts Attacking Around Age 40

Once you hit middle age, your body begins to secrete the enzyme 5-alpha reductase. This causes your normal "manly" testosterone to turn into a rogue testosterone compound called DHT (dihydrotestosterone).

The build-up of DHT is a primary reason why prostate size increases as you age — and is associated with the unpleasant urinary symptoms that result.

What you need, says Dr. Brownstein, is something to block the 5-alpha-reductase enzyme so it can't do its dirty work and encourage higher levels of this rogue testosterone.

Collateral Damage

Inflammation, the second culprit contributing to prostate concerns, represents collateral damage. As your body's response to injury, inflammation leads to the release of chemicals that cause fluid to accumulate in and around your prostate.

So you also need a solution that promotes a healthy inflammatory response in your prostate's tissues.

Based on his two decades of research and treating patients, Dr. Brownstein formulated one of the top-selling prostate support formulas available on the market today. Since 2013, **PROSTATE REVIVE®** has been helping thousands of men across the country.

A Proprietary Blend of 15 Ingredients

PROSTATE REVIVE is truly a male health breakthrough, with 15 powerful, handpicked nutrients working together in a synergistic formula.

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Another issue for returning POWs was the sense that while millions of others had been fighting and dying for their country, they were often thought to be "safe" in the camps. In the occasional letters from home that got through, loved ones would ask such questions as what color bedroom slippers were wanted for Christmas, or offer advice such as not to overeat and to exercise and stay in good shape.

The Red Cross may have unwittingly contributed to the attitude that POW camps in Germany were not so bad in its monthly *Prisoner of War Bulletin*, begun in June 1943 and sent to families of POWs. Its commendable purpose was to calm the fears of family members by describing Red Cross efforts to send parcels of food and cigarettes to the camps. It published letters from prisoners to their families, including one from an officer who had been repatriated from Germany because of his serious wounds. Before he came back to the United States, other prisoners urged him not to tell civilians the truth about how bad their lives were, so that their families would not worry. While he was recovering at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C., he sent an open letter of reassurance that was published in the *Prisoner of War Bulletin*.

He wrote that the German guards were treating them fairly and that morale was high. He described the weekly Red Cross parcels that supplemented the camp food. He went on to describe how the YMCA provided books, musical instruments, sports equipment, and costumes for shows and plays.

No wonder some people had the attitude that POWs were lucky to have been so comfortable and safe from the fighting. Once at home, people asked them how they had liked German beer, or German girls, as if they had been on holiday. It was difficult to talk about what they had really experienced.

As a result, there was an official reluctance to honor, or even recognize, the status of the POWs for many years after the war. In 1970, some 25 years after the end of the war, the Department of Defense rejected the idea of issuing a medal for those confined as POWs. As British historians John Nichol (himself a POW) and Tony Rennell wrote in 2002, such formal recognition "did not fit the historic image of the American fighting man, the spirit of the Alamo, where the likes of Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie had fought to the last man and died rather than give in."

In 1986, after a long campaign, the U.S. Congress finally approved the Prisoner of War Medal, but the issue of cowardice, of having surrendered to the enemy, remained alive. On

August 8, 1988, historian Brian Farwell published an article in the *Washington Post* entitled "Why Should We Honor Soldiers Who Surrendered?" Farwell argued that presenting a medal to every POW made no distinction between those who'd been wounded and surrendered because they had no choice, and cowards who'd put up their hands the moment they saw the enemy.

On August 18, the *Washington Post* printed a response to Farwell's article, written by Senator Frank Murkowski of Alaska, calling Farwell's letter "an insult to the men who have proven their dedication and loyalty to our nation under circumstances few of us could imagine and none of us would willingly endure. Few, if any, prisoners of war chose to be captured. Their aircraft were shot down or their positions overrun. POWs did not sit the war out. Almost universally, their captors forced them to perform hard labor work with little food, primitive sanitation, inadequate shelter, and little or no medical care. They were subject to mistreatment or torture at the whim of their captors. Their loyalty to their nation was tested by pain, malnutrition, and mind-numbing fatigue."

In 1995, during the official commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, Senator John Warner of Virginia finally paid public homage to all who had been POWs, regardless of the circumstances of their capture. He described them as "a group who made a large contribution to the Allied victory while also enduring more than their fair share of personal suffering and sacrifice. We owe them a great debt of gratitude and undying respect."

The men who were prisoners of war paid a terrible price for which neither the awarding of medals, nor official statements of recognition, nor noble expressions of gratitude—no matter how well intentioned—could erase the damage and suffering. Chief Warrant Officer Harry Thompson wrote that his experiences continued to haunt him 60 years later. An anonymous former POW said nearly 70 years after the war was over: "Not a day passes that I do not in some way recall some portion of the past."

Duane Schultz is a psychologist who has written more than two dozen nonfiction and fiction books and numerous magazine articles on World War II, as well as the U.S. Indian Wars and the Civil War. His more recent books include Crossing the Rapido: A Tragedy of World War II*;* Into the Fire: Ploesti*; and* Patton's Last Gamble: The Disastrous Raid on POW Camp Hammelburg in World War II. *He can be reached at www.duaneschultz.com.*

Audie Murphy strikes a pose during the filming of his autobiographical feature movie *To Hell and Back*. Despite commercial success, Murphy was critical of the film and tried to have the scene in which he received the Medal of Honor deleted from it.

Alamu

Audie Murphy: MOST HIGHLY DECORATED

A young soldier of the 3rd Infantry Division became the most highly decorated soldier in the history of the U.S. Army.

MICHAEL D. HULL

SHORT, SLIGHTLY BUILT, BABY-FACED, AND SOFT-SPOKEN, Audie L. Murphy of Texas was far removed from the popular image of a warrior or hero.

When he tried to enlist for service early in World War II, he was initially rejected by both the Army and the Marine Corps, and yet he went on to become America's most decorated soldier in history. In a span of less than two years, his fighting spirit, leadership qualities, and courage under fire made him a living legend in the martial tradition of Sergeant Alvin C. York, General Theodore Roosevelt Jr., and Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller.

The young man who would earn no less than 28 medals and citations, including the pale-blue ribbon of his country's highest honor, sprang from the most humble origins. Born on June 20, 1924, into a sharecropper's family near the small town of Farmersville in northeastern Texas, Audie Murphy was the seventh of 12 children. He grew up in extreme poverty. In school, his classmates nicknamed him "Short Breeches" because his only pair of pants had shrunk from relentless washing.

Audie's father, Emmett Murphy, hired himself out to farmers, working on the local onion and cotton crops, and the boy joined him as soon as he was able to do so. Life was hard, and food was scarce. Audie's quiet, sad-eyed mother, Josie Bell Murphy, toiled endlessly both indoors and in the fields. The family moved frequently in search of work and finally settled a few miles away in the little Hunt County community of Celeste.

The Murphys lived for a time in a converted railroad boxcar on the edge of town before moving into a rundown house. Because he was needed to help earn money, young Audie had to neglect his education. He quit school after completing the fifth grade. He was nine years old.

The boy loved to hunt in the local scrubland. Blessed with sharp eyesight, quick reflexes, and a determined personality beneath his mild demeanor, he displayed uncanny accuracy with a rifle and was able to bag rabbits and squirrels for the family table. He was a natural marksman. These traits would serve him well later.

Restless and despondent about the hard times as the Great Depression gripped the nation, Emmett Murphy deserted his family several times, and in 1940 he left for good. Audie observed wryly, "My dad wasn't lazy; he just had a genius for not considering the future." A few months later, the boy suffered the most heart-rending experience of his life when his

Lieutenant Audie Murphy posed for this portrait after receiving the Medal of Honor for heroism on the battlefield in France. Murphy remains the most highly decorated soldier in U.S. history.

National Archives

beloved mother died of a heart disease on May 23, 1941. Always close to her, he mourned for several months. Most of his siblings disappeared into orphanages as Audie spent several teenage years in casual labor – selling newspapers, picking cotton, and working in a filling station, a grocery store, and a radio repair shop.

He became keenly interested in military matters after listening to stories related to him by two uncles who had soldiered in France in 1918, and the boy often told friends that he wanted to enlist. Besides the possible adventure and glory it promised a youth, the profession of arms meant escape from grinding rural poverty. So, when the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, plunged America into World War II, Audie Murphy, now 17 years old, trudged off eagerly to a recruiting station.

His ardor was quickly dampened. Standing only five feet, five inches tall and weighing just 110 pounds, he was rejected by Marine Corps and Army airborne recruiters. But he was undeterred. On the advice of one of the recruiters, he went home and spent the next few months gaining weight with bananas and milk. Then, brandishing a letter from his sister attesting to his age as being 18, Audie presented himself to recruiters in Dallas and was accepted into the Army on June 30, 1942.

After 13 weeks of basic training at desolate Camp Wolters in Texas, during which he passed out while learning close-order drill, Audie was sent to Fort Meade, Maryland, in the late fall of 1942 for advanced infantry training. He adapted easily to Army life. Amid the camaraderie of barracks, mess halls, and pup tents, he felt he had finally found a home where he belonged. Because of his almost girlish features, he was nicknamed "Baby" by his comrades. An officer suggested that the unimposing youth become a headquarters runner rather than a rifleman, but he resisted stoutly. He was determined to prove himself in combat. He impressed his superiors with his bearing, leadership potential, and loyal attitude and was soon wearing the two stripes of a corporal.

In February 1943, Murphy rode a troopship to North Africa and the start of a brief but unprecedented military career. In North Africa, he joined B Company of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, part of the proud 3rd "Rock of the Marne" Infantry Division of World War I fame. He would spend 28 months with the unit, though he had to wait for several months in North Africa before seeing action.

Audie's introduction to war came early in July 1943, when the British Eighth and U.S. Seventh Armies invaded Sicily to dislodge the German and Italian defenders and push toward the key port of Messina, stepping stone to the Italian mainland. Audie's regiment landed at Licata on July 10. The hard struggle to capture the dusty, craggy island dispelled notions that the young Texan had harbored earlier about war being adventurous or romantic; it was a matter of mountains, pack mules, lonely nights, hunger, thirst, and exhaustion.

But Audie, self-disciplined and no stranger to hardship, volunteered for patrols, was eager to take the point during advances, and demonstrated dexterity with weapons. He also exhibited early on a hard, matter-of-fact approach to infantry warfare that was uncommon among citizen soldiers. On one occasion, when he spotted two Italian officers escaping on white horses, he coolly shot them. Disturbed, his platoon leader asked him, "Why'd you do that?" Audie replied tersely, "That's our job."

Murphy was felled by malaria for several weeks in Sicily. When he recovered, he fiercely resisted efforts to send him as a replacement to another unit, and he rejoined his company at Salerno. The 3rd Infantry Division had landed there nine days after the British and American armies had gone ashore in Italy.

Enraged, Murphy grabbed an abandoned German MG-42 machine gun from the ground and charged along the hillside, firing from the hip and throwing grenades with his free hand.

The division fought a series of actions around the Volturno River, and Audie soon found that if the Sicilian campaign had been bad, Italy was infinitely worse, with more mountains to climb, rainy days and cold nights, mud, and shells crashing down incessantly. He witnessed enough pain and death to last a lifetime. Out on patrol one dark night after a skirmish with German troops, Audie and his men took cover in an abandoned quarry. The enemy pursued them but were halted by American fire, which killed three men and caused the others to surrender. The action gained Murphy three stripes.

He and his comrades slogged up the Italian boot, through Mignano and Monte Lungo, and into the terrible Monte Cassino campaign. The doughty little Texan was never far from the front and became well known for enthusiastically venturing out alone to stalk and kill Germans wherever he could find them. He won his first Bronze Star for leading a night patrol to destroy with rifle grenades and Molotov cocktails a damaged German tank, which its crew was striving to repair.

Audie was the consummate infantryman. He handled small arms with assurance, and, unlike many citizen soldiers, did not hesitate to kill the enemy. Historian S.L.A. Marshall reported after World War II that a large percentage of American foot soldiers had seldom fired their weapons in action and rarely hit their targets when they did so. Murphy always fired and usually hit his target.

Although claiming to be as prone to fear as any of his comrades, Audie possessed tactical judgment that helped him to keep his nerve when others lost it. Despite his dearth of schooling, he had natural intelligence and a facility for assessing a combat situation. He said, "Experience helps. You soon learn that a situation is seldom as black as the imagination paints it. Some always get through."

After another bout of malaria that sent him to a field hospital for 10 days, Murphy was offered a battlefield commission. But he declined it because he did not want to leave his company. Then, in January 1944, came the almost disastrous invasion at Anzio, where British and American forces were kept penned in the beachhead and pounded by German artillery and bombing for four months. Mere survival day by day was a victory for the hapless GIs and British Tommies at Anzio, and Audie Murphy watched many of his friends die there. He said ruefully, "I began feeling like a fugitive from the law of averages." One of his friends, cartoonist Bill Mauldin, later incorporated the comment in one of his famous "Willie and Joe" drawings depicting the woes of U.S. foot soldiers in World War II.

Audie made it through the Anzio debacle unscathed, one of the few men in his company not to be wounded and awarded the Purple Heart. He was eventually the last of the 235 original members of his company to survive. A grave, solitary figure who seldom received letters at mail-call time, Audie was most at home with his comrades on the front lines. He was intensely loyal to his company. "As long as there's a man in the line," he said, "maybe I feel that my place is up there beside him." He felt

Universal Pictures

ABOVE: Audie Murphy fires a Thompson submachine gun while leading his platoon in in another scene from *To Hell and Back*. Murphy joined the 3rd Infantry Division in North Africa and was soon hardened to the realities of infantry warfare. BELOW: During the Italian Campaign in 1944, American soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division advance near the village of Cori. After arriving in Italy, Murphy was awarded his first Bronze Star for leading a night patrol to destroy a German tank.

National Archives

uneasy while on leave in Rome after the capital's liberation by General Mark W. Clark's U.S. Fifth Army on June 5, 1944. "We prowl through Rome like ghosts," he reported, "finding no satisfaction in anything we see or do. I feel like a man briefly reprieved from death; and there is no joy within me. We can have no hope until the war is ended. Thinking of the men on the fighting fronts, I grow lonely on the streets of Rome."

After the liberation of the Eternal City, the hard-fighting 3rd Infantry Division was pulled out of the line to retrain and re-equip for Operation Dragoon, the upcoming Allied amphibious invasion of Southern France between Toulon and Cannes. Bolstered with replacements, the division, now led by short, stentorian Major General John W. "Iron Mike" O'Daniel, landed on the beaches in the Bay of Cavalaire and at Pampelonne on August 15, 1944.

Audie Murphy's B Company splashed ashore that morning near the town of Ramatuelle, south of St. Tropez. Three hours after crossing the beach and heading inland, the 1st Battalion, 15th Regiment was pinned down by a German machine-gun nest on "Pillbox Hill." Audie's company was moved forward from reserve to find a new line of approach, but it too was pinned down. So, on his own initiative, the little Texan crawled back downhill to the heavy weapons platoon, borrowed a .30-caliber machine gun, and scrambled back up the slope with his best friend, Private Lattie Tipton, to find a firing position. They swiftly killed two German defenders.

After exhausting their belt of ammunition, Murphy and Tipton charged and overran a German trench using carbines and hand grenades. When an enemy soldier in a nearby foxhole waved a white flag, Tipton carelessly rose to accept his surrender. He was shot dead. Enraged, Murphy grabbed an abandoned German MG-42 machine gun from the ground and charged along the hillside, firing from the hip and throwing grenades with his free hand. Alone, and shooting at anything that moved, he wiped out several enemy positions and killed five Germans, wounded two, and captured five. The rest of Audie's unit, which had failed to support him despite his shouted curses, then moved up to occupy the ridgeline. The Texan's gallantry earned him the Distinguished Service Cross, awarded on March 5, 1945. But it did not make up for the loss of his friend, Tipton. "I won the DSC," he said, "but all he got was death."

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: During Operation Dragoon, the invasion of Southern France on August 15, 1944, soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division take cover on the beach at St. Tropez. Audie Murphy was with the 3rd Division as it came ashore. LEFT: General John W. O'Daniel, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, offers congratulations to Lieutenant Audie Murphy after awarding him the Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star. OPPOSITE: A camouflaged M4 Sherman tank accompanies American and French infantrymen as they advance toward the front in the area of Colmar, France, in the wintry Vosges Mountains. Audie Murphy received the Medal of Honor for heroism in combat in the Vosges.

Supported by Free French and Resistance groups coming out of hiding, the American forces advanced swiftly up the Rhone Valley in the summer of 1944. For the men of the 3rd Infantry Division, the campaign was heartening after the hellish months in the interminable mountains and muddy valleys of Italy. "We experience great exhilaration," reported Sergeant Murphy, "for there is nothing so good for the morale of the foot soldier as progress." But, late in August 1944, a shell fragment nicked Audie's heel and put him in a field hospital for two weeks.

In the fighting near Besancon on September 15, a German mortar round exploded near Murphy, killing two men nearby and sending him to a hospital for another week. He could not help wondering whether his luck was beginning to run out. By now, all of the men in his platoon with whom he had found comradeship in North Africa and Italy were either wounded or dead. The loss of comrades affected him deeply, and he resisted forging close relationships with their successors. He was perceived as a soldier fighting a war of his own.

Audie was also growing embittered. "So many men have come and gone that I can no longer keep track of them," he lamented. "I have isolated myself as much as possible, desiring only to do my work and be left alone. I feel burnt out, emotionally and physically exhausted. Let the hill be strewn with corpses, so long as I do not have to turn over the bodies and find the familiar face of a friend." He kept on fighting, and, like all of his comrades in the line, tried to stay alive day by day.

During the fighting around Cleurie on October 2, 1944, Audie unwittingly led a patrol into a German ambush. The GIs were pinned down by severe fire, so Murphy crawled around to a flank and charged alone against the enemy. Firing a Thompson submachine gun and tossing grenades, he wiped them out. He was awarded the prestigious Silver Star. Three days later, on October 5, several of Audie's men were shot in a similar encounter. The gallant Texan stealthily worked his way forward until he could see the enemy positions and called down artillery and mortar salvos by radio. The Germans withdrew with heavy casualties, and Sergeant Murphy received an oak leaf cluster to his Silver Star.

Because of his courage and leadership, senior officers recommended Audie for a battlefield commission several times, but he always turned them down. He felt that his sparse education would preclude him from coping with the administrative duties of an officer. Also, the Army routinely rotated new officers out of their units, and Audie did not want to leave B Company. However, his battalion commander wangled a waiver on the rotation policy and assured Audie that he would receive help with his paperwork. So, Sergeant Murphy became 2nd Lieutenant Murphy on October 14, 1944.

Twelve days later, on October 26, he suffered his most serious wound of the war. While his unit was attacking through the Montagne Forest near Les Rouges Eaux, he was taken by surprise and shot in the right hip by a German sniper. Audie managed to kill his assailant, but he suffered intense pain for several hours before he could reach a field hospital. The wound turned gangrenous, and he had to endure two and a half dreary months of treatment and recuperation. Penicillin saved his life. He had plenty of time while in bed to indulge in the fatalism endemic to all infantrymen.

"These Krauts are getting to be better shots than they used to be, or else my luck's playing out on me," he noted. "I guess some day they will tag me for keeps." After his recovery, Murphy could have gone home with his wounds and decorations. But his fighting spirit was undiminished.

The enemy was still fighting hard, and seasoned warriors like Audie Murphy were sorely needed on the front lines as the British, American, Canadian, and Free French Armies pushed, yard by yard and with heavy losses, toward the German border. So, after a well-deserved furlough in Paris, Murphy rejoined B Company on January 14, 1945. His most spectacular battlefield feat—the one that would earn him the coveted Medal of Honor—was yet to come.

The 3rd Infantry Division was getting ready for the push to the Alsatian city of Colmar in northeastern France, south of Strasbourg on the eastern slopes of the rugged Vosges Mountains. There, a German bridgehead west of the River Rhine intruded 80 miles wide and deep into the Allied lines. Eight enemy divisions, helped by a brutal winter, were preventing the French First Army—part of Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers' Sixth Army Group—from reaching Colmar. A two-pronged French-American offensive was planned, starting on January 22, 1945, with the U.S. II Corps driving from the north and the French I Corps pushing from the south. The 3rd Division was spearheading II Corps.

On January 23, the 30th Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division had been ordered to clear a wooded area, the Bois de Riedwihr, on the outskirts of the villages of Holtzwihr and Ried-

wihr, but a German counterattack of at least 10 tanks and 100 infantrymen had decimated the 30th, which withdrew after its soldiers were unable to dig foxholes in the frozen ground.

Lieutenant Murphy's battalion had moved out of reserve to follow lead units of the 3rd Division across several rivers and through forests toward Riedwihr and was ordered to take the Bois de Riedwihr the following day. When the 15th Regiment stepped off, the enemy fire was intense, and casualties mounted quickly.

When the Texan awoke early on January 25, he found his hair frozen to the side of his foxhole. That afternoon, he was wounded yet again when German mortar fragments bloodied his left leg. He bandaged it hastily and refused to go to an aid station. Nevertheless, by midnight on January 25 Murphy's men had reached a position 600 yards deep in the woods just north of Holtzwihr. They tried to dig in, but the ground remained frozen.

"This night seemed unusually long, and the snow colder than I ever dreamed it could be," Murphy later wrote. "The sound of picks on frozen ground beat against my eardrums like mad."

When the commander of B Company was wounded early on the morning of January 26, Murphy assumed command. Every officer in Company B was dead or wounded except Murphy, and the company's strength was depleted from 120 to only 18 effective riflemen. The lieutenant was concerned that his position might be overrun by a German counterattack.

Just after dawn on the 26th, a pair of M-10 tank destroyers from Lt. Col. Walter E. Tardy's 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion arrived to bolster Company B's precarious position. Murphy took advantage of the time he had and deployed one of the tank destroyers and five small armored vehicles of the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion on his right flank. The second tank destroyer took up a position 40 yards in front of the thin American line, and Company B made contact with Company A, 15th Regiment on its left. Murphy's command post, in a drainage ditch just forward of the first tank destroyer, maintained radio contact with battalion headquarters a mile to the rear.

By early afternoon, expected reinforcements from the 2nd Battalion, 30th Regiment, still had not arrived in support, but Murphy's orders were to hold the position until reinforced.

Just as the 15th Regiment was getting ready to push forward near Holtzwihr on January 26, the enemy launched an armor-infantry counterattack. Around 2 PM that day, Murphy and his men saw six big Mark VI Tiger tanks and more than 200 German infantrymen coming toward them. These Germans were later identified as men of the 2nd Mountain Division, transferred from Norway to the Colmar area recently and trained in winter combat.

Audie shouted to his men to prepare for action. In front of him, one of the tank destroyers tried to move into a firing position on the icy ground but slid into a ditch. Its crew scampered to the rear as the Germans advanced toward Murphy's position, attempting to cut the road from Holtzwihr and threaten the entire 3rd Division position.

Spreading a map in front of his foxhole, Murphy called on a field telephone for artillery support. The 90mm shells from the tank destroyers did not deter the German tanks as they rolled relentlessly forward.

"I saw the enemy tanks get direct hits," Murphy remembered, "but the rounds proved ineffective against the heavily armored German tanks. Advancing and firing viciously, they knocked out a Company B machine-gun crew. Then the rear tank destroyer was hit by an 88mm shell that pierced its thin armor and killed the commander and gunner. The surviving crew members scurried out and retreated into the woods."

American artillery shells crashed down, killing German soldiers in the open. Murphy called in coordinate corrections to the artillery battalion, and shells continued to kick up showers of snowy dirt among the enemy force, hurling bodies in all directions. But the German tanks lumbered on, untouched.

The situation seemed hopeless for the Americans. How were 18 riflemen expected to stop a German armored task force? Murphy told his platoon sergeant, "Get the men back—I'm going to stay here with the phone as long as I can." The sergeant was reluctant to leave him alone. "Get the hell out of here!" yelled Audie. "That's an order!" Hesitantly, the sergeant took his men back deeper into the cover of the woods 200 yards to the rear, and the resolute Texan faced the oncoming enemy alone.

With the German troops now only 200 yards away, Audie shouted into the field telephone, "Let's have some artillery!" Then he fired his

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M-1 carbine until the ammunition ran out. The Germans came on. Murphy was desperate, but then he noticed that on the hull of the still-burning tank destroyer was a .50-caliber machine gun, loaded and idle. It was his only chance. Dragging his telephone line behind him, Audie ran to the TD and clambered aboard. After pulling the dead commander out of the way, he started firing at the enemy troops.

His bullets could have no effect on the Tiger tanks, but he hoped that the loss of their infantry support might drive them off. As he fired the machine gun, Murphy kept calling for artillery fire to knock out the tanks. After calling in a correction to coordinates, the voice on the other end of the line asked, "How close are they to you?" The Texan answered drily, "Just hold the phone and I'll let one talk to you." He swung the .50-caliber gun from side to side and fired repeatedly. Germans crumpled in the snow.

Enemy rounds rocked the tank destroyer, which could have blown up at any instant, and Audie almost fell off twice. But he caught himself and kept firing. Swirling smoke from the burning TD gave him cover. He called for more artillery fire, and shells plowed up the ground 50 yards in front of him. By now, most of the Germans lay dead or wounded.

"I loved that artillery," Murphy wrote. "I could see Kraut soldiers disappear in clouds of smoke and snow, hear them scream and shout, yet they came on and on as though nothing would stop them."

One group of German infantrymen got to within 10 yards of Murphy's position aboard the flaming tank destroyer. He saw them just in time and shot them down in the snow.

Miraculously, the Tigers started to withdraw. Audie called in a final coordinate correction. "Correct fire," he shouted, "fifty over!" The voice on the line warned, "That's right on your position." Jumping from the TD, Audie replied, "Let her go—I'm leaving!" His leg wound from the previous day started bleeding as he limped hurriedly back toward the woods. The tank destroyer finally blew up in a ball of flame, and the concussion sent Murphy sprawling in the snow. Scrambling on, he soon rejoined his company. Singlehandedly, he had turned back an armored force and saved his men from annihilation.

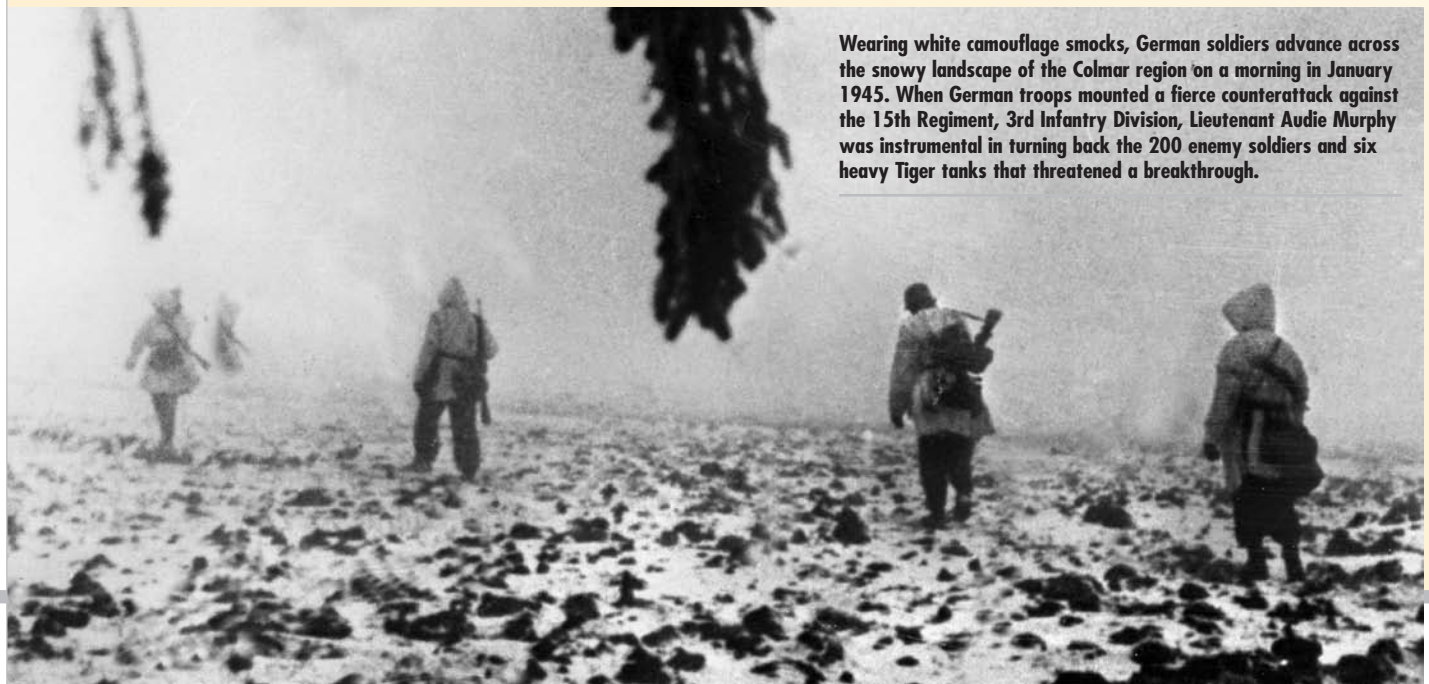
The little unit regrouped in the woods and then cleared the area of Germans. The next day, B Company fought its way into Holtzwihr, and the town was captured by 10 AM. Murphy took part in the subsequent weeks of action to clear the Colmar Pocket of the enemy. The city itself fell to the Allies on February 8. Promoted to 1st lieutenant eight days later, Audie was assigned to battalion headquarters for several weeks and was not with his company when it advanced across Germany and into Austria. He would resume command of B Company late in May 1945.

For his heroism in the Holtzwihr woods, Murphy was recommended for the Medal of Honor. He wrote home, "Since that is all the medals they have to offer, I'll have to take it easy for a while." After a furlough in Paris, he spent several weeks serving as a liaison officer while the European war waned. His superiors did not want to risk sending him back on the line. Audie was dismayed but found excuses to explore the forward areas.

The high point of Lieutenant Audie Leon Murphy's military career came on June 2, 1945, when Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, commander of the U.S. Seventh Army, placed the pale-blue ribbon of the Medal of Honor around his neck at a ceremony near Salzburg, Austria. His citation read in part: "…His directing of artillery fire wiped out many of the enemy; he killed or wounded about 50…."

In addition to his nation's highest honor, the Texan had earned the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star with oak leaf cluster, the Legion of Merit, the prized Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Bronze Star with cluster, a Purple Heart with cluster, the Presidential Unit Citation, the French Fourragere, the French Legion of Honor, the Croix de Guerre with Palm and Silver Star, the French Liberation Medal, the Belgian Croix de Guerre with Palm, and campaign ribbons—28 medals and citations in all. He had spent 400 days on the front lines in Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany, and was officially credited with having killed, wounded, or captured 240 enemy soldiers. And he had saved the lives of many of his own men. Yet he was still too young to vote.

With the German troops now only 200 yards away, Audie shouted into the field telephone, "LET'S HAVE SOME ARTILLERY!" Then he fired his M-1 carbine until the ammunition ran out. The Germans came on.



Wearing white camouflage smocks, German soldiers advance across the snowy landscape of the Colmar region on a morning in January 1945. When German troops mounted a fierce counterattack against the 15th Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, Lieutenant Audie Murphy was instrumental in turning back the 200 enemy soldiers and six heavy Tiger tanks that threatened a breakthrough.

Ullstein Bild

America's most decorated serviceman flew home from Paris on June 10, 1945, to national adulation. Everywhere he went, people sought him out to shake his hand, and some wept when they met him. When he stepped into a barber shop to get a haircut, fascinated bystanders gathered outside and peered through the window. In his home state, Audie was welcomed back with parades and banquets, and his photograph was hung at the state capitol in Austin. The threadbare sharecropper's son was now a national figure—shy, diffident, and uncomfortable with all the attention. And he was weary.

Deficient in schooling and skills suitable for the civilian world, Audie wondered what to do with the rest of his life. He suffered persistent pain from his hip wound, and an application to the U.S. Military Academy was turned down. So an Army career was ruled out, and he was discharged on September 21, 1945.

It was a photograph of the smiling, baby-faced war hero on the cover of the July 16, 1945, issue of *Life* magazine that opened a path to opportunity for Audie Murphy, though he was ill equipped for it.

That path led to Hollywood, thanks to legendary screen star James Cagney. When the two men met, Cagney, who was exactly Murphy's height, exclaimed, "Dignity from within, not the kind imposed on you from without! Spiritual overtones. He looks like Huckleberry Finn grown up. No, not really grown up. There's something in those eyes that is as old as death and yet as young as springtime."

Acting like a father, the celebrated actor put the young veteran on a salary and personal contract and tried to turn him into an actor.The Texan bunked in the star's pool house for a year while the groundwork was laid for his new career. The association with Cagney led to a screen test, a series of minor film roles, and a three-year marriage to Wanda Hendrix, a comely starlet from Jacksonville, Florida.

In July 1950, the month after the outbreak of the Korean War, Murphy returned to Dallas to join the 36th Infantry Division of the Texas National Guard. But he did not go to Korea. His final rank later was major in the Texas Guard.

Audie Murphy made a total of 44 feature films, most of them low-budget westerns, in the 1950s and 1960s. His first and most effective starring role was that of a frightened Union Army soldier in John Huston's critically acclaimed Civil War film based on the classic Stephen Crane story *The Red Badge of Courage* in 1951. The cast included Audie's wartime friend, Bill Mauldin.

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ABOVE: During his postwar acting career, Audie Murphy (right) is shown during the filming of the 1951 motion picture The Red Badge of Courage. His friend Bill Mauldin (left), cartoonist for the Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes,* was also featured in the film. LEFT: Murphy uses a map during a 1948 press conference in which he described the action that led to his receiving the Medal of Honor.

With the aid of ghostwriter Spec McLure, Audie published his memoir, *To Hell and Back*, in 1949—a simply told, forthright, and sometimes harrowing record of World War II from the foxhole perspective. "The main reason that I wanted the book to be written was to remind a forgetful public of a lot of boys who never made it home," Audie explained. "The present tense was chosen for the book because in a combat man's life there is little left but the present tense. It was my purpose to tell the story as simply and honestly as I could, avoiding heroics because I do not believe in heroics. The great man of the war to me was the little fellow who did what was asked of him and paid whatever price that action cost."

When a screen version of the book was later made in Hollywood, with Audie Murphy uneasily portraying himself, he cringed at Universal Studios' poster hype: "Just a kid too young to shave…but old enough to win every medal his country had to give!" Audie was outspokenly critical of the film, which he considered a glamorized betrayal of the dogface foot soldiers among whom he had served. He fought to get the bowdlerized script toughened, depicting the squalor, pain, and sorrow of war. But he failed. Released in 1955, directed by Jesse Hibbs and costarring Marshall Thompson, Charles Drake, and Jack Kelly, *To Hell and Back* was a sprawling action film marred by a static, clichéd script. It proved to be Universal's top-grossing picture for two decades.

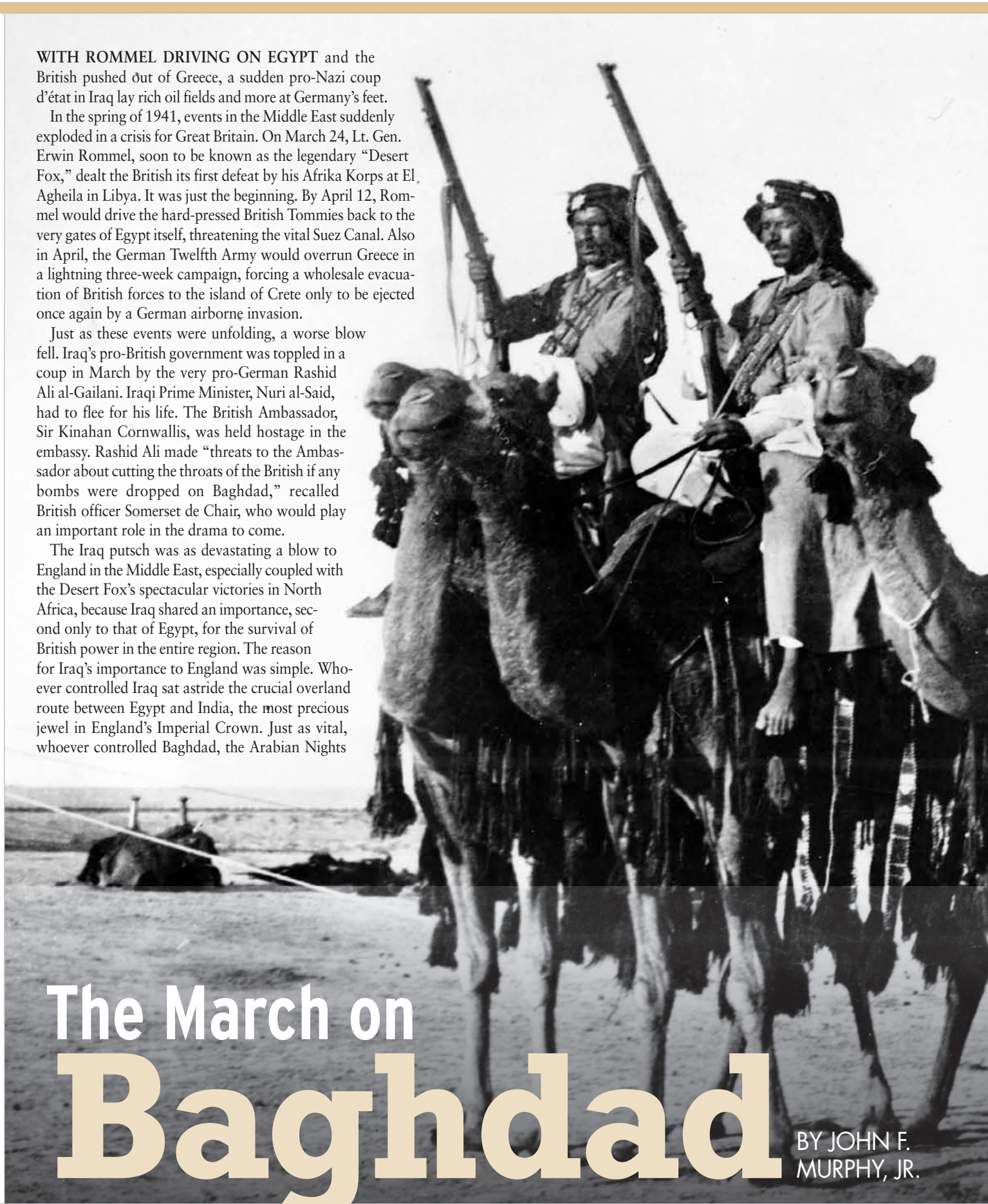
Shortly after divorcing Wanda Hendrix, Murphy married Pamela Archer, a vivacious airline stewardess and fellow Texan, in April 1951. They had two sons, Terry Michael and James Shannon, whom the war hero adored. Meanwhile, he wrote poems and the lyrics for 16 country-and- western songs. The most popular, *Shutters and Boards*, written with composer Scott Turner in 1962, was recorded by several artists, including Dean Martin and Porter Wagoner. Another song, *When the Wind Blows in Chicago*, was recorded by Eddie Arnold. Audie also raised thoroughbred horses, became a Shriner, and worked on behalf of troubled children.

But success in Hollywood had turned sour for Audie Murphy. Public interest in westerns

Continued on page 82

The March on Baghdad

BY JOHN F. MURPHY, JR.



WITH ROMMEL DRIVING ON EGYPT and the British pushed out of Greece, a sudden pro-Nazi coup d'état in Iraq lay rich oil fields and more at Germany's feet.

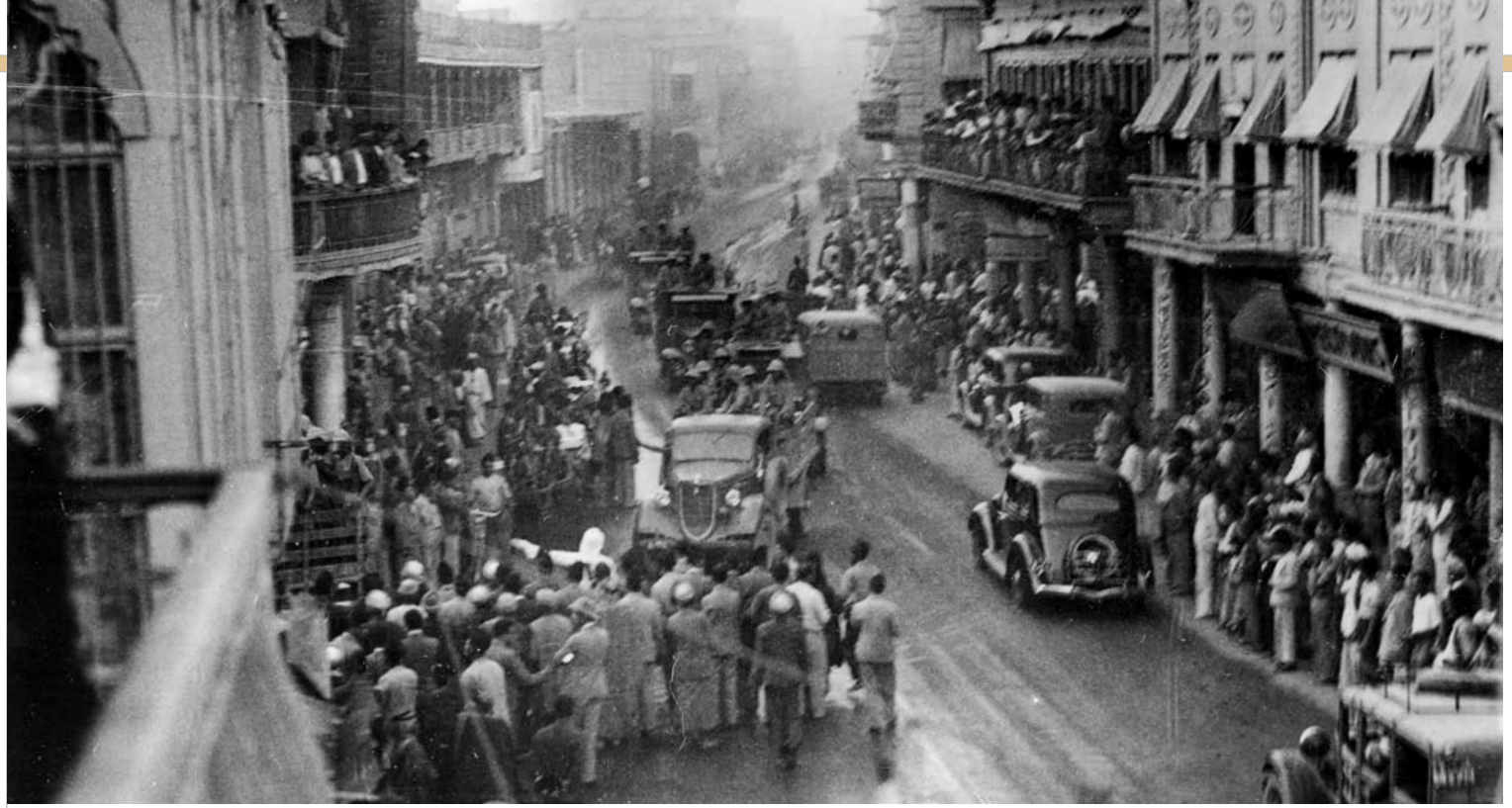
In the spring of 1941, events in the Middle East suddenly exploded in a crisis for Great Britain. On March 24, Lt. Gen. Erwin Rommel, soon to be known as the legendary "Desert Fox," dealt the British its first defeat by his Afrika Korps at El Agheila in Libya. It was just the beginning. By April 12, Rommel would drive the hard-pressed British Tommies back to the very gates of Egypt itself, threatening the vital Suez Canal. Also in April, the German Twelfth Army would overrun Greece in a lightning three-week campaign, forcing a wholesale evacuation of British forces to the island of Crete only to be ejected once again by a German airborne invasion.

Just as these events were unfolding, a worse blow fell. Iraq's pro-British government was toppled in a coup in March by the very pro-German Rashid Ali al-Gailani. Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Said, had to flee for his life. The British Ambassador, Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, was held hostage in the embassy. Rashid Ali made "threats to the Ambassador about cutting the throats of the British if any bombs were dropped on Baghdad," recalled British officer Somerset de Chair, who would play an important role in the drama to come.

The Iraq putsch was as devastating a blow to England in the Middle East, especially coupled with the Desert Fox's spectacular victories in North Africa, because Iraq shared an importance, second only to that of Egypt, for the survival of British power in the entire region. The reason for Iraq's importance to England was simple. Whoever controlled Iraq sat astride the crucial overland route between Egypt and India, the most precious jewel in England's Imperial Crown. Just as vital, whoever controlled Baghdad, the Arabian Nights

A coup d'état opened the Middle East oil fields to the Nazis. Seizing them would be a tremendous prize.

Fighting a war in the Middle East in the 1940s demanded a mixture of the traditional and the new. Here, warriors display their best rifles as well as their age-old means of transportation, the camel.



Baghdad at the time of the German-leaning coup. Soldiers are seen riding through the streets in open trucks.

capital of Rag, could sever the vital oil pipelines that flowed across the deserts to the Mediterranean and from Iran to the Iraqi Persian Gulf port of Basra, from which fat-bellied tankers carried the precious fuel that was now the very life's blood of England and her Empire.

Rommel, whose panzer tanks depended on oil, realized the value of the vast oil reservoir of the Middle East. "In 1939," he wrote, "Persia and Iraq together provided in all some 15 million tons of mineral oil, compared with Romania's 6.5 million tons." Romania was the site of the famed German-controlled oil fields of Ploesti, the target of heavy Allied bombing during the war.

Ever since World War I overthrew the power of the Ottoman Turks, having a friendly government sitting in Baghdad had been a cornerstone of British policy. The League of Nations had given Iraq, like Palestine, to England as a mandate—almost a colony, but technically under League of Nations' supervision. When the famed T.E. Lawrence helped Winston Churchill broker the British settlement of the Middle East, Emir Feisal, Lawrence's leader in the famed Arab Revolt, was installed in Baghdad as king. To ensure Feisal's rule (and protect Britain's interest), the British patrolled the vast Iraqi desert and its Bedouin tribes by Royal Air Force (RAF) planes from above and Rolls-Royce armored cars on the desert floor.

But Rashid Ali al-Gailani's March 1941 coup, led by the secret "Golden Square" society, had toppled this careful settlement. For Rommel, the possibility of a pro-Axis ruler in oil-rich Iraq was a dream come true. With sufficient support from Hitler (which, good for the Western Allies, never materialized, owing in no small part to the Führer's preoccupation with the coming attack on the Soviet Union), Rommel saw the Afrika Korps striking through the Middle East to seize the oil fields and then, with plenty of fuel for his panzers, be poised to strike, if needed, the underbelly of Russia.

In his crisp, soldierly prose, the Desert Fox spelled out his campaign plans in a note to himself to be used for post-war memoirs: "We could have defeated and destroyed the British Field Army, and that would have opened the road to the Suez Canal.... With the entire Mediterranean coastline in our hands, supplies could have been shipped to North Africa unmolested. It would then have been possible to thrust forward into Persia [present-day Iran] and Iraq in order to cut off the Russians from Basra [which became a main source of supply for Russia once Hitler invaded], take possession of the oil fields and create a base for an attack on southern Russia." In short, Rommel's conquest of the Middle East oil fields "would thus have created the conditions for victory in the Russian plains."

But the Germans had done more than merely dream of Middle East conquest. The groundwork for the plot had been very carefully laid. German secret agents, spies for the famed Abwehr of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, had carefully infiltrated Iraq, under the very noses of the British, fomenting discontent and building support for their candidate for power, Rashid Ali. Already a base was in readiness next door in Persia, where a sizable German—and pro-Nazi—colony already existed.

Somerset de Chair has left an ominous picture of what was going on inside neighboring Persia. "We soon noticed how the stream of German armaments to Persia, by way of Turkey, had been increasing in recent months.... We examined closely the set-up of the German Fifth Column in Persia, where 4,000 Germans in commercial occupations were organized under Gauleiters [Nazi Party leaders] and could be mobilized on the telephone. At the most recent maneuvers the Persian Army had displayed ninety tanks; and we could not rule out the possibility that Germany was going to 'borrow' these from Persia to reinforce the Iraqis."

Already the German Army had formed two special units trained and ready to assist the Iraqis, the 287th and 288th Brandenburg companies [the 288th was commanded by Colonel Menton, an old friend of Rommel's from the Great War]. The danger was obvious, and growing worse. It was clear that something had to be done about Rashid Ali in Baghdad. It was in this grave hour that one of the most exciting, and least-known, campaigns of World War II was launched—the story of Kingcol and the British march on Baghdad.

Still facing an Afrika Korps bent on the conquest of the Land of the Pharaohs, the British

daringly assembled a strike force for the advance on Baghdad. Commanded by Brig. Gen. Joe Kingstone, whom de Chair said some considered "the best fighting Brigadier in the British Army," the British force assembling for this Arabian Nights' adventure was called King Column, or "Kingcol" for short, taking part of its name from part of its leader's name. A more colorful army had not been gathered together in the Middle East since Lawrence of Arabia, mounted on his fleet racing camels, had marshaled the wild Bedouin to do battle with the Turks.

Massing for the searing 750-mile trek across the desert sands from Palestine were soldiers from some of the oldest regiments in the British Army—baptized under fire with the great Duke of Marlborough—standing beside warriors of some of the most picturesque units mustered to guard the frontiers of Britain's far-flung empire, now led by Marlborough's descendant, Winston Churchill. De Chair described this colorful and barbaric cavalcade: "We were a motley crowd. His Majesty's Life Guards and Royal Horse Guards jostled along in their army trucks beside the Bedouin of the Arab Legion—Glubb's Desert Patrol, swathed in garish robes, who raced about in light trucks armed with Lewis guns," like the commandos of David Stirling's Long Range Desert Group fighting against Rummel farther west.

Of all the array led by the capable Kingstone, none was more exotic than the Arab Legion, nor more legendary than Sir John Bagot Glubb, Glubb Pasha [pasha is an old Turkish title loosely meaning "commander" or "leader"]. Second only to Lawrence in the dramatic history of the British Empire in the Middle East, by this time Glubb Pasha was the warrior sheikh of the Arab Legion. He had taken over command of the Legion in 1939 from F.G. Peake, who had formed the desert corps. During World War I, Peake had first been in the Egyptian Camel Corps, and then had been sent to serve under T.E. Lawrence in the Arab Revolt. After the war, Peake entered the service of Feisal's brother Abdullah, who ruled as Emir, and later as King, of the Arab state of Transjordan, now part of the Kingdom of Jordan. The Arab Legion was formed to control the Bedouin tribes in his new domain, and to defend it from outsiders.

Under the leadership of Peake, and later Glubb, the Arab Legion soon gained such a bold reputation that Arabs from all over the region flocked to join. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre have described Glubb Pasha in *0, Jerusalem*, their account of the birth of Israel, in 1948. "Yet of all the long line of British Arabists that had followed the master [Lawrence] east, he was indisputably the greatest. No Westerner alive had mastered the intricacies of the Bedouin dialect as completely as Glubb. He could hear a Bedouin's history in the inflections of his accent and read his character in the folds of his kafriyeh [headdress]. He knew Bedouin lore, their customs, their tribal structure, the complex web of unwritten law governing their lives."

On May 2, 1941 the Kingcol, burdened with the knowledge of British defeats all through the Middle East, and like a medieval army from the Crusades, began its advance. Out in front were the hawk-eyed Bedouin of Glubb's Arab Legion scouting for signs of the mutinous Iraqi forces. Soon Somerset de Chair and Kingcol caught up with the Legion at the desert watering-hole of Rutbah, whose 10,000-gallon water tank made it a vital spot for the British to hold in the water-parched sands.

Already the British had fought—and won—the first battle of the war for the possession of this oasis. On May 9 Fawzi Qawukji, the leader of the Iraqi fighters, had defended Rutbah with machine guns and a hundred members of Iraq's Desert Police, like the Arab Legion armed and trained by the British. (Fifty years later, Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army would also turn its Western arms and armor against the same Western Powers that had armed it.) The next day, May 10, as Glubb reported to Brigadier Kingstone, Qawukji "fought an action with RAF armored cars, as a result of which he retired east in evening and contact has not been reestablished." The Bedouin tribes, however, did not join with the Iraqis in the fight, for their loyalty to Glubb Pasha, "Abu Hunaik" to the tribesmen, proved too strong. Qawukji, however, was an old enemy of the British: He had won the Iron Cross second class while fighting against them in the Turkish Army during WWI.

As Kingcol rested for two days at Rutbah before the next leg of their desert trek, Somerset de Chair, the intelligence officer of the expedition [he had held the same job against Rommel], received some disturbing news: "Seven unidentified aircraft had passed over Aley, near Beirut, heading for Iraq," recalled de Chair. "Another 17 were reported to be refueling at Mezze. We knew they were Germans. Was this the advance guard of the 22nd Airborne Division which I knew to be ready for action? Was it going to be sent through [Vichy French] Syria to assist the Iraqis, to whom lavish promises of German assistance were hourly made by Axis propaganda?" Worse yet, "one of our pilots on reconnaissance over Mosul [in northern Iraq's oil fields] had been fired at by an Me 110." Had the Wehrmacht already joined the battle on the side of 40,000 hostile Iraqi soldiers?

If this were so, things would be even worse for another British force than it would be for de Chair and Kingcol. Entrenched at the airport at Habbaniya on the Euphrates River west of

The Iraqi rebel stronghold at Rutbah is photographed from the cockpit of a Royal Air Force Bristol Blenheim aircraft. The RAF harassed rebel bases effectively throughout the campaign.

National Archives

Baghdad was a detachment of the RAF, with its planes and armored cars, 1,500 troops of Assyrian levies under British command, and a battalion of the British King's Own Royal Regiment (KORR). They had already driven off an Iraqi attack with bombing runs at sanddune level, but the British force at Habbaniya would be in serious peril if the German 22nd Airborne entered the fight—their airfield would be a prime objective. Also endangered would be another British force, Indian troops, who were currently blockaded at the port of Basra.

More than ever Kingcol had to move fast to get to Baghdad before the Germans. De Chair recalled in his eyewitness account, *The Golden Carpet*, "the real advance now lay ahead of us. We were faced with the waterless stretch of desert, about 200 miles to the shores of Lake Habbaniya, which was fed from the Euphrates. But Ramadi at the north-west corner of the lake was held by one or possibly two brigades of the Iraqi army [two as it turned out] and was also surrounded by natural floods." A long culvert on the road between Ramadi and Habbaniya had already been blown up by Iraqi engineers to block the relief of the besieged British by Kingcol. Now, the troops at Habbaniya were hurriedly building "an alternative trestle bridge" over the flood waters so Kingcol could come to their rescue.

But, as de Chair noted ominously, "If this trestle bridge were bombed by the Germans before we got across, we would not be able to relieve the Air Force garrison at all." Accordingly, Kingcol lost no time in heading out into the desert in a race against the Germans. Still keeping to the ancient traditions of the British Army, the Life Guards and the Royal Horse Guards, "the Household Cavalry, should lead off, with a truck load of Glubb's Girls [as the British called the Arab Legion because of its long Bedouin robes] to guide them." So Kingcol moved out, "gathering speed in clouds of dust on a mysterious course to the northwards, drawn on by the incalculable will-o'-the-wisp Bedouin who were their guides."

ABOVE: Charging through a grove of date palm trees, Iraqi insurgents attack British positions. BELOW: Iraqi artillerymen service an obsolete field weapon in shelling a British position near the town of Ramadi.

Both: ullstein bild

Along tracks charted by the first British who explored the desert on the backs of camels, the men of Kingcol moved through the shimmering heat. De Chair plotted their course, although with the rough route laid out by those intrepid camel-riders as guides, he was not sure he was headed where he should. "I was going to Baghdad, but I prayed to my several gods at stated intervals to take me there by the right route." Soon, though, de Chair's fears of the column "streaming into Rutbah again over a wide front, as sunset closed a long and exhausting march," were overtaken by a tragedy of a far graver kind. While ascending a rise in the ground, he looked back at Kingcol, snaking 20 or 30 miles out behind him like some long armored dragon, and then "suddenly I saw, with surprised eyes, two black tulips of smoke blossom far down the line, and, while the bomb bursts still hovered in the air, I saw the bright white-hot flash of anti-aircraft fire stream upwards across them. We had been discovered at last."

The bombs from the unidentified planes—Iraqi, or German, the British could not be sure—had found their target. "A truck of the Essex Regiment had been hit, and some men were killed." If the bombing raid were just the prelude to a major airplane attack, Kingcol would be desperately exposed on the flat desert. The column was forced to dig shelter trenches every time it halted for fear of an air raid striking from the cloudless desert sky, "all this in weather which made it impossible to touch metal where the thermometer reached 118 degrees. In the sun the metal seemed to have become incandescent. Men handled it with rags, grimed handkerchiefs, anything they could lay hold of."

Suddenly, at this worst possible time, a series of disasters began to rain down on the troops. Brigadier Kingstone issued orders "to start the head of the column on a compass bearing that should bring it to the Wadi Abu Farouk [a "wadi" is a dried-out river bed], where it would turn west until it struck the flood race south of Lake Habbaniya at Mujara," closer still to Baghdad. But when the column reached a point about 14 miles west of Ramadi, from where it would have been within striking distance of Baghdad, everything seemed to go wrong. First, perhaps feeling the effects of the incinerating heat, de Chair and the other leaders of Kingcol, like Major May of the Essex Regiment, were unsure of which path to follow

RIGHT: An armored car, vital to the British force crossing the desert. An RAF biplane is at right. BELOW: British General Sir John Bagot Glubb, called Glubb Pasha by the men of the Arab Legion he commanded.

National Archives

Finally, with the Assyrians **"tearing open the tanks with their hands"** and reinforcements called up from the column, the Iraqi attack melted away.

by their compass, a critical factor when an error of only a few degrees might put the force miles off its route.

Then, finally deciding on a compass heading to set them on the best path to Wadi Abu Farouk, the column turned off into the desert—only to find that the dunes would not support the heavy trucks. Dispersed out of fear of an air raid, soon "the great supply monsters were everywhere floundering in soft sand," noted de Chair. Those which had driven up the crisp ridges were now bedded down to the axles, while their crews labored in the desperate heat to dig them out." At the same time, thirst began for the first time to become a serious problem for the already-suffering men of Kingcol.

The situation, especially the lack of water, became so alarming that Kingstone was forced to consider abandoning the entire mission. At a council of war, the brigadier told de Chair and the other officers that "we have enough supplies of water to stay here one more day. After that we go on or go back." Then he addressed Glubb, "I shall want your dusky maidens to help us find an alternative route." The next morning, three Arab Legion reconnaissance parties raced off in search of a better track to follow, and Somerset de Chair was sent off to find water, thirst becoming a more crucial problem with every hour the sun stood overhead.

As de Chair realized, he and his searchers might run into Bedouin, who would also be seeking water for themselves and their herds. Their interpreter, a man named Reading, suggested, just in case, that they should pretend to be Iraqi soldiers should any herdsmen discover them. Reading proved correct, and for good reason, because these Bedouin were enemies of the British. Encountering one, and asking if she had seen any British soldiers, an old woman answered no. "But," she added fiercely, "I know what to do if I do," and proceeded to produce an enormous knife. "After which," de Chair concluded, "we thought it about time to return to our own encampment." Fortunately, however, they succeeded in finding water at a place called Abu Jir. At the same time, Brigadier Kingstone, guided by the unerring Glubb, had found another line of march for the men, and had even reached Habbaniya unmolested by the rebels.

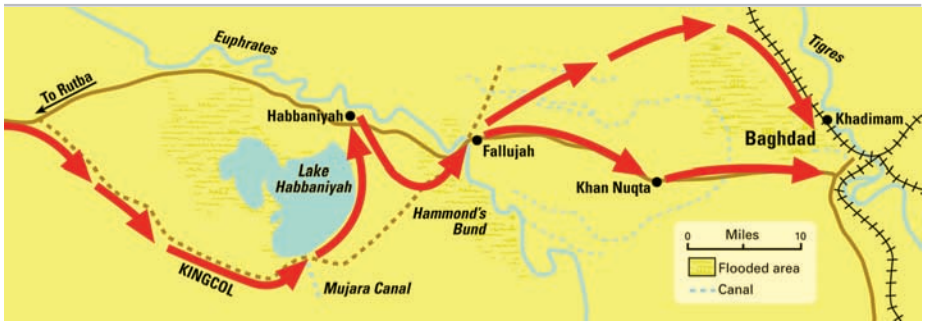
Kingcol was fortunate to have received its new march directions when it did. Once again, death struck from the air. "Just as the tail of the column had been moving off from the camp, four black fighters had roared across the desert drilling the lorries [trucks] on the ground with bullets and cannon fire," de Chair wrote. Had the planes, which de Chair was sure were German, struck earlier, "they would have found us the day before, immobilized in the soft sand," and radioed bombers to fly in to massacre the trapped soldiers below.

Fortune, however, was now with the British, as they doggedly continued their march. The column reached Mujara, and from there went on to relieve the force holding Habbaniya, the Habforce, just like a relieving column in British India in the days of Gunga Din. Yet, as de Chair wrote, "the odds still seemed heavily against us. But we had been fortunate so far. And as the signpost on the aerodrome reminded us, Baghdad was now only fifty-five miles distant."

During a council at Habbaniya, the fateful plans were made for the final advance on Baghdad. Now, however, it was made terribly clear that the British would be fighting not one enemy, but two, because the German *Luftwaffe* openly entered the fight on the side of Rashid Ali's Iraqis. Before Kingcol departed Habbaniya, "three light-green Heinkel bombers [came] flying over, the black cross clearly distinguishable through our binoculars." No sooner had the German bombers dropped their deadly payload on the RAF hangers than four Messerschmitt fighters strafed the camp. How much longer would it be before the *fallischirmjagers* [paratroopers] of the 22nd Airborne Division joined the combat too?

Before long, the first battle for the recapture of Baghdad erupted at Falluja. In a dawn attack, the Iraqis took the British by surprise in a determined assault with some small tanks. House-to-house fighting flared with the King's Own Royal Regiment and the Christian Assyrians in the British force, mortal foes of the Muslim Iraqis. Kingstone himself rushed into Falluja to take over, for the Iraqis were gaining the upper hand, supported by townspeople sniping at the British from rooftops. Finally, with the Assyrians "tearing open the tanks with their hands," and reinforcements called up from the column, the Iraqi attack melted away.

ABOVE: On June 11, 1941, British soldiers sporting pith helmets contemplate the sprawling ancient city of Baghdad from across the expanse of the Tigris River. BELOW: The British march on Baghdad suffered several stops and fights along the way, some of which were against floods and swamps.



Falluja now became the base for the last push on Baghdad. Kingstone organized two columns to fight their way through any Iraqi—or German—opposition: the Northern Column comprised "most of the Household Cavalry, four 25-pounders, Glubb's Desert Patrol, and the rest of the RAF armored cars;" the Southern Column comprised "one Squadron of the Household Cavalry, the two companies of the Essex Regiment, the independent anti-tank troop, three RAF armored cars and the Field Ambulance Section." The main firepower rested in the 25-pounder guns. The Northern Column under Andrew Ferguson "was to be ferried across the Euphrates and reach Baghdad from the north after a wide detour around the Aqqa Quf floods. The Southern Column of 750 men under Joe Kingstone was to advance directly upon Baghdad down the road from Falluja." The mighty 25-pounder artillery, ranked among the best field guns in the world, would serve as Kingcol's battering ram.

The greatest obstacle for the British columns now was not the Iraqi Army, however, but a natural roadblock called Hammond's Bund, a swampy gap in the vital causeway that was the main attack route into the capital. Immediately troopers were drafted to fill in the Bund. They worked around the clock, but as they filled in from the sides the middle channel only cut deeper.

Finally, working under de Chair, the Madras Sappers and Miners, the elite engineering corps of the Indian Army, devised another way. They used a large iron barge as a ferry. Recalled de Chair: "The sappers [laid] a pair of heavy ten-foot iron ramps from the end of the bund on to the end of the pontoon, in order to provide a pair of movable tracks for the vehicles to be run on to the ferry. A similar pair of steel ramps would be lifted on to the ferry from the bund when it reached the farther side." The operation seemed simple enough except for one thing: The entire bridging operation and crossing had to be done under cover of night, with only the light of torches to guide the men. Once the sun came up, the Messerschmitts would be hunting their prey and the vehicles would have to scatter into the desert for safety.

The bridging action went forward like clockwork and, by dawn, the caravan of the attacking force had passed over the Bund like the Hebrews crossing the Red Sea. Now it was time to confront the Iraqis, who had used the time Kingcol had spent spanning Hammond's Bund to fortify the village of Khan Nuqta, 25 miles away. But faced with the British and the devastating power of the 25-pounders, the Iraqis surrendered. Somerset de Chair with the Southern Column arrived to see "our troopers were darting about among the network of ditches with bayonets on their rifles, stirring up Iraqi soldiers who quickly came out to surrender."

It was here, with the Iraqis in disarray, that de Chair was able to use his intelligence background. In their haste to surrender, the Iraqi communications officers had forgotten to cut the telephone link to Baghdad, and now de Chair and the British were able to listen in on all the plans the Iraqis made to defend the city. More than that, de Chair was able to play a deception game that threw the Iraqi defenders into a panic. Using the interpreter Reading, de Chair was able to convince the enemy that the British had a huge force of tanks, when there was not one with the entire Kingcol. De Chair reported that the excited defenders were completely taken in by the ruse. A patrol sent out to investigate from the 3rd Iraqi Division actually reported to Baghdad that "the British had at least fifty tanks, of which fifteen were already across the floods"!

Ultimately, an Iraqi technician discovered that the British were listening in on their conversations, and cut the line to Khan Nuqta, but not before, de Chair wrote, "the captured telephone had given me a complete X-ray of the forces ahead of us, besides enabling me to launch a wholly imaginary but very powerful tank attack of my own." With the seizure of Khan Nuqta, "the first phase of the battle for Baghdad had been won."

But while de Chair's column was moving on to Baghdad, Glubb's force was being held up by stiffening Iraqi resistance at the holy city of Khadimain, where the Iraqis, all devout Muslims, had thrown up entrenchments. Moreover, Glubb's column, the Northern Column, was deprived of the impact of bombarding the

enemy at Khadimain for fear of alienating the overwhelmingly Muslim population of Iraq. Here, the battle for Baghdad was at the stage where things could have taken a decidedly bad turn for the British forces, for the Arab Legion were all Muslim, too.

But their loyalty to their regiment and to Glubb proved a stronger tie, and they fought the Iraqis for the city with a fierceness born of a pride in themselves and in their unit. As Glubb wrote later, "they were quite certain that, even if we beat the Iraqis, they were on the losing side and that the Germans would soon arrive. But in spite of this they not only fought on our side (the only Arabs who stood by us), but they were themselves continually pressing for more active operations, and making suggestions for new ways of attacking the enemy."

While the Northern Column met determined opposition at the holy city, de Chair's column was facing a hardened enemy as well. All of a sudden it seemed that the conquest of Baghdad was not going to be the easy exercise everybody in Kingcol had thought it would. Had the Iraqis received word that the Germans were on the way?

In Baghdad's outskirts fighting centered around the Palace of Roses. "C" Squadron of the Household Cavalry dismounted from their trucks to begin the final rush on foot, across open ground commanded by enemy weapons. Recalled de Chair: "Machine-gun fire was opening up on us now, all along the belt of trees which screened the Palace of Roses, and the Blues [Royal Horse Guards] and the Life Guards were getting well down" into the dikes to shelter from the machine guns. Heavy artillery fire now joined in the bombardment of the Southern Column, and an even worse danger entered the picture: friendly fire, for the Southern Force was now within range of the 25-pounders of the Northern force.

But with the Northern Column still tied down before Khadimain, and the Indian Army units at Basra barely moving, the main assault on Baghdad rested on the shoulders of the men of the Southern Column. "So we were left alone, to seize victory if we could—and Baghdad was very near."

It began to seem that taking the city would be a costly operation because, as de Chair wrote, that night the "Iraqi guns on the Tigris seemed to be opening up into a furious barrage. It might presage a counter-attack in the dark." Then, at "a quarter past midnight," de Chair heard an officer giving a message to Kingstone: "Two delegates from the Iraq Army will appear on the Iron Bridge at two o'clock in the morning. Will we send two officers to meet them to discuss terms of the armistice?" Quickly, de Chair volunteered to go with fellow officer Ian Spence, and one from the Household Cavalry, Rupert Hardy, as well as an adventurous British diplomat, Gerald de Gaury.

Not knowing if they were heading into an ambush, de Chair and the other members of the truce party drove in the dark to an antitank ditch near the Iron Bridge leading into Baghdad. "There we were to erect our white flag. The Iraqi delegates were to show their headlights on the Iron Bridge and if we could see these, we were to respond by switching on our own." As de Chair described their tense ride, "we were now moving forward, without escort, into No Man's Land, where the fighting had been going on all afternoon.… There was no moon up and the darkness closing in on either side of the road brushed past the windows of our cars."

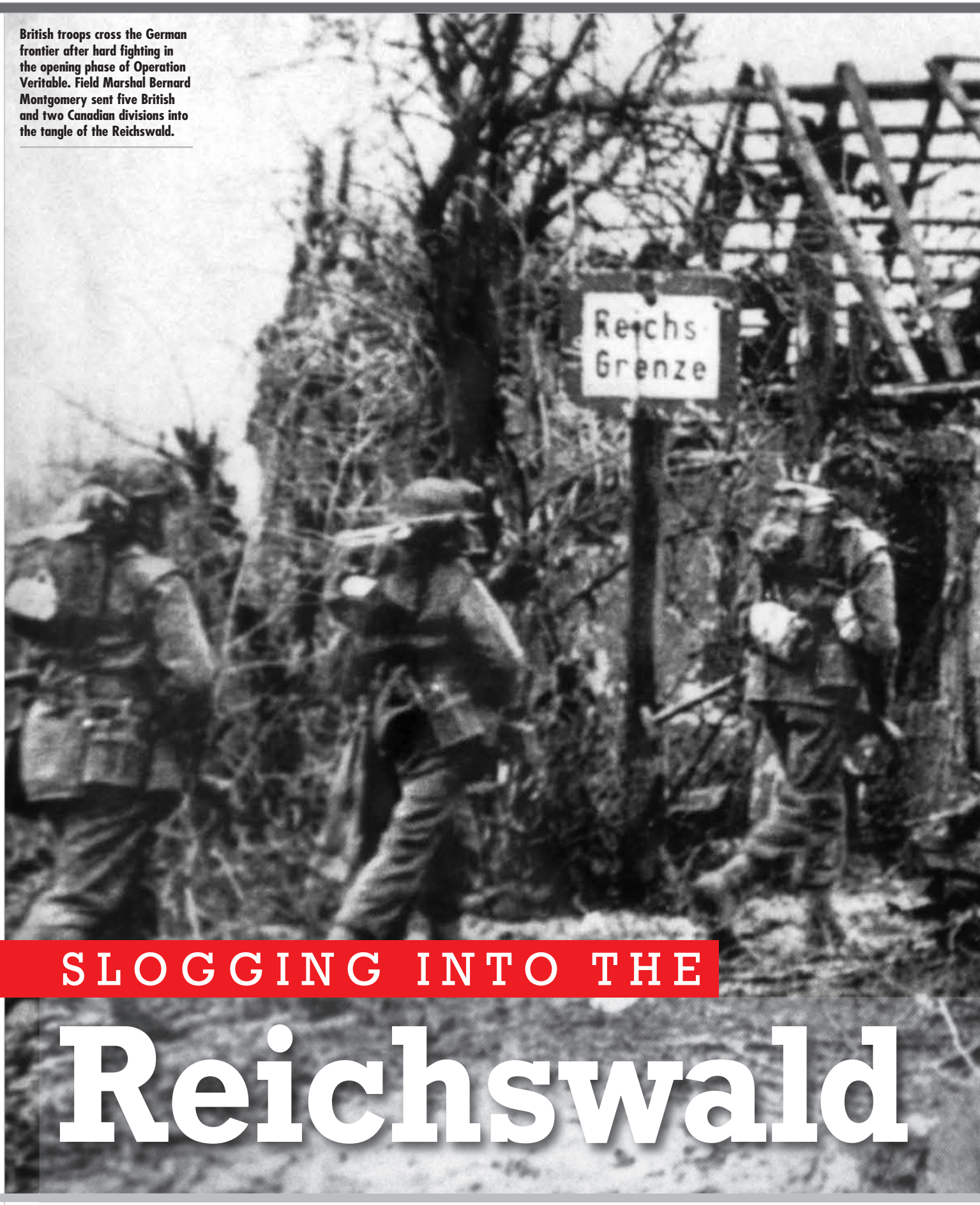
When de Chair arrived at the antitank ditch for the rendezvous with the Iraqis, nobody was there. Spence and de Gaury moved out along the ditch, but they were stopped by barbed wire. Fearing trouble, de Chair went back to Kingstone for instructions. The brigadier told him "the Iraqi delegates are now expected at four o'clock." De Chair and the others were to wait for daybreak and then return to Kingcol. De Chair returned with Kingstone's orders and they waited alone for the Iraqis to come, not knowing if a machine gun might open up on them any minute from the darkness. Then, "suddenly from the right, following unexpectedly the course of the anti-tank ditch itself, came two cars rapidly, with headlights blazing. It was exactly four o'clock." The Iraqis had finally come.

With Maj. Gen. George Clark, Kingstone's senior commander, taking over the negotiations, work for an armistice began. Glubb Pasha came down from Khadimain to be a part of the victory for which he had fought so hard. De Chair was taken to Baghdad with Spence and de Gaury, guided by an Iraqi officer named Daghestani, to make contact with the Iraqi government and Ambassador Cornwallis. Rashid Ali, it was learned, had fled the country and the rebel's military leader, Fawzi Qawukji, had taken refuge with the Vichy French across the border in Syria. The pro-British Regent Abdul Blah was on his way to take power. Terms for an armistice were rapidly concluded. All POWs were to be released on both sides, and any Germans or Italians in Iraq were to be interned. Most important, the Iraqis were to "facilitate in every way the task of British forces in the war against Germany and Italy." Baghdad lay open to Kingcol. The Iraqi gateway to the oil fields of the Middle East had been barred forever to Rommel and his Afrika Korps.

After the agreement was signed, de Chair took the flag of truce and cut it in three pieces. "Taking from my map case a thick black lead pencil I wrote in bold writing on the corner of each third of the flag, 'part of the flag of truce with which the emissaries from Baghdad were received at 0400 hours May 31st, 1941, to surrender the city and accept terms of armistice.'" De Chair gave one piece to Kingstone, another to Spence and kept the third for himself. □

Iraqi troops in Baghdad await developments during the shifting fortunes of war in the Middle East.

National Archives



British troops cross the German frontier after hard fighting in the opening phase of Operation Veritable. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery sent five British and two Canadian divisions into the tangle of the Reichswald.

SLOGGING INTO THE

Reichswald

Alamy

THE SINISTER VALLEY, PART 2:

Allied forces continued their bloody slog into Germany after a successful first day of fighting during Operation Veritable.

BY DAVID H. LIPPMAN

JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT ON FEBRUARY 9, 1945, across the diamond-shaped mass of forest, hills, and flooded terrain that defined the Reichswald, rain fell in a steady downpour upon a battlefield that had already seen some of the most ferocious fighting of World War II in Western Europe. British and Canadian artillerymen had delivered more than 8,000 tons of shells on the Germans, crushing their defenses and enabling the infantry to advance into the forest despite the mud created by rain and the flooding caused when German forces had opened sluice gates along the Rhine River. The first day of Operation Veritable had been a bloody success.

The following week would be even bloodier, and for the British and Canadian forces, victory would seem elusive at best, impossible at worst.

Veritable, one of the largest battles the British would fight in Europe during the war, was the brainchild of Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery. The plan called for five British and two Canadian divisions of XXX Corps, under Lt. Gen. Sir Brian Horrocks, part of General Sir Harry Crerar's 1st Canadian Army, to attack the land gap between the Maas and Rhine Rivers from the German-Dutch border to the Rhine River. The Veritable drive was the northern hook of a giant pincer with the U.S. 9th Army, under Lt. Gen. William Simpson, as the southern hook, called Operation Grenade. Together, the two armies would meet at the Rhine, having caught 150,000 defending Germans in a huge net. From there, both armies would drive across the great river and into the Nazi heartland.

But before any of that could be accomplished, Horrocks' men had to clean out the Reichswald. That would not be easy. Despite the massive losses the Germans had suffered in the Battle of the Bulge, they remained a formidable foe. The Reichswald was a forest with valleys, hills, and two major towns, Cleve—home of Henry VIII's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves—and Goch. There was only one paved road from the Allied lines to Cleve. In addition to the natural defenses, the Germans had begun in 1938 creating a fortified line from the Reichswald to the Alsace called the "Westwall" by the Nazis and the "Siegfried Line" by the Allies, an impressive array of defenses and fortifications ranging from immense blockhouses to wooden "S-mines," called "Bouncing Betties" by Tommies and GIs. When an unwary soldier stepped on one, it popped up to waist height and exploded, severely wounding the Briton or Yank.

These defenses, however, required troops. In the Reichswald, they were led by General der Fallschirmtruppen Alfred Schlemm, a veteran paratrooper, who commanded the 1st Parachute Army. Few of the German paratroopers were actually jump-trained. They were, however, highly skilled battlefield soldiers, possessing high morale and hard-won expertise in last-ditch stands.

Schlemm had other advantages. His men were equipped with many weapons that were superior to those in the British arsenal: the 88mm guns in the field positions; self-propelled armor; the world's first disposable anti-tank weapon, the powerful Panzerfaust; and the MG42 medium machine gun, which could fire off an immense number of bullets at an astonishing rate, sounding like a buzzsaw. The MG42 had a major weakness, though: over-engineered, its metal tended to overheat and melt down.

Schlemm also added to his defensive positions; a fortified line between the flooded areas south of the Rhine and the Maas helped the German *frontkämpfer* (front-line troops) with a double series of trenches and anti-tank ditches. Behind that was the Westwall, which included defenses around Cleve and Goch. Behind that was yet another line, the Hochwald Layback, as a backup, with more trenches, wire belts, and mines.

The four-mile-wide Reichswald itself provided plenty of natural defenses: flooded land south of the Rhine, thick woods, narrow trails that went north to south—perpendicular to the planned advance—and most of all, soft soil, which would turn into mud under thaw and rain. Most of the woods were young pines four to seven feet apart. Along the northern flank and within its tree line, the Materborn Ridge ranged between 200 and 250 feet above sea level before pivoting in the northwest corner. There it created a 300-foot hill called the Branden Berg, which provided artillery spotters with a perfect box seat for the whole area.

But all this had very little impact on 1st Canadian Army and Veritable. The original plan had been to hit the Germans in December 1944, when the ground was frozen, making it possible to maneuver vehicles easily on the snow. But on December 16, Hitler disrupted those plans with his Ardennes Offensive, and XXX Corps was assigned to block the German offensive at the Meuse as a stopline. After American troops blunted this blitzkrieg, XXX Corps joined the GIs in cleaning up the Bulge. The XXX Corps fought well but cautiously to avoid taking casualties in a force needed for Veritable.

After the Germans began their retreat, Horrocks' troops headed back to their assembly areas between the Maas and Rhine, which had been held by the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions during the Battle of the Bulge. It was one of the worst winters in European memory, and even the Canadians, used to harsh winters in Alberta and Saskatchewan, suffered.

Now Horrocks and Crerar prepared their plans and supplies for the massive assault. A total of 470,000 British and Canadian troops would assault the German defenses, ranging from Tommies in battle-dress to Canadian psychiatrists to deal with shell-shock.

This was the largest single offensive since the Normandy landings and breakout, and the British were determined to avoid the embarrassment of the Market-Garden fiasco in Holland in September, where the entire XXX Corps had been compelled to fight off of one road, called "Club Route." Worse, this was a winter assault, creating special needs. Roads had to be repaired, strengthened, and maintained. A sudden thaw and heavy rain were turning the whole area into a giant morass.

When the battle started on February 8, a steady drizzle turned into pouring rain, but, backed by the heaviest British artillery barrage of the war, British and Canadian troops advanced steadily. They crushed six battalions of the German 84th Infantry Division, suffered almost no casualties from "shorts" (friendly artillery rounds accidentally targeted on one's own troops), and took 1,115 prisoners for a loss of 349 Canadians and Britons. German dead totaled more than 3,000. Tommies found German telephone lines wrecked and gun positions mangled. Captured German officers told their interrogators that they could not give orders to their men. All the 84th could do was defend disjointed positions and penny-packets until their men died or surrendered. All the concrete works had been destroyed.

As the second day of the great offensive began, the normally ebullient Horrocks battled two difficult enemies: defiant Germans and a fever of 103 degrees, the continuing after-effects of lung wounds suffered in North Africa. Buoyed by the positive results of the first day and determined to maintain the pace of the offensive, Horrocks made what he would later describe in his own memoirs as one of his worst decisions of the war. He would send forward his major reserve force, the 43rd Wessex Division, at noon on February 9.

While the 43rd slogged east on roads rapidly turning to morasses, the battle raged on in forests whose trees had been turned into ghoulish wreckage and in towns reduced to rubble-strewn chaos, all surrounded by brown mud soaked in intense rain.

For the British and Canadian troops at the front, it was a miserable night, punctuated by

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: British soldiers of the 2nd Seaforth Highlanders march along a muddy road in the Reichswald accompanied by a supporting medium tank. BELOW: The soggy roads that traversed the Reichswald were a tremendous obstacle to Allied offensive movement. In this image, Canadian vehicles are mired in the muck, creating a huge traffic jam and slowing Field Marshal Montgomery's timetable.

National Archives

Imperial War Museum

Soldiers of the 53rd Welsh Division are riding in a Kangaroo personnel carrier manufactured from the modified chassis of the M4 Sherman medium tank.

artillery duels, the endless downpour of rain, the slogging struggle to move through mud, and the stench of death.

On the extreme right, the 51st Highland Division's specialized armor worked throughout the night. Flail minesweeping tanks cleared a lane through German minefields that enabled an armored bridge to be placed in position. That, in turn, enabled support vehicles to bring the Scots the most important supply item of the day—500 tins of self-heating soup.

The 15th Scottish Division in the center was commanded by six-foot-nine-inch-tall Maj. Gen. Colin "Tiny" Barber. His height gave him an advantage in studying the forward battlefield, unlike his colleague, Maj. Gen. Ivor "Butch" Thomas, who was the size of a jockey.

Barber intended to send his reserve brigade, the 44th Lowland, with Grenadier Guards tank support (including deadly Crocodile flamethrowing tanks), through the front and across the German anti-tank ditches east of Frasselt, and then to assault the main Siegfried Line defenses while the two battered leading brigades took time to refuel, draw ammunition, and eat bully beef.

The 44th's attack was intended to kick off at 9 PM on the 8th and to take Netterden by 1 AM. Once that was done, the other two brigades would resume attacking toward Cleve starting at dawn, the 43rd Wessex Division behind them.

But now the appalling weather had crushed Horrocks' and Barber's hopes. Rising flood water from the Rhine to the north and rain from above left XXX Corps almost immobile. The two leading 15th Scottish brigades had reached their objectives two and a half hours behind schedule.

Even so, the 44th trundled off in Kangaroo armored personnel carriers joined by grenadiers; mobile, small-box girder-bridge layers; and "fascine" tanks that could lay bundles to fill anti-tank ditches. The division had been assigned two routes of advance: the hard-surfaced road from Nijmegen to Cleve for the 227th Brigade, and a narrow track on the right for the 46th Brigade. But because of stiff German resistance, the main road could not be used, and now everything was jammed onto the muddy track—tanks, trucks, Bren carriers, jeeps, halftracks—in the rain and mud.

After seven hours of frustration, C Company of the 6th King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSBs), a company of flail tanks, and a collection of Grenadier Guards tanks reached the German anti-tank ditch. At 5 AM, 20 minutes before a murky dawn rose over the battlefield, 44th Brigade launched its attack. Lacking order, a senior Grenadier Guards officer yelled, "Advance!" and everybody did, just moving forward as quickly as they could.

Five flail tanks drove forward in five parallel columns, their whirling drums spinning, which enabled their hooks to slam against the ground, setting off anti-personnel mines, clearing a path for the infantry behind them. But three tanks bogged down in the mud. The two survivors advanced to the German anti-tank ditch. Armored Vehicle Royal Engineers (AVRE) fascine tanks moved in next and bridged the obstacle. The King's Own Scottish Borderers pushed forward and seized two villages—Schottheide and Konigsheide—taking some badly shaken prisoners. Company C consolidated its position to await the rest of the battalion.

Captain Robert Woollcoombe later recollected: "It was one of the great moments of the campaign. We were the first British unit to breach the main belt of the Siegfried Line. The mist had cleared and the rain was holding off for a while. The sky was dull and overcast. Tactically it was mighty ground…various small hills, or knolls partly wooded stood about, the chief of which, named Hingstberg, was near Nuttenden, which gave its name to the whole sector."

Once the entire KOSBs formed up, their commander, Lt. Col. Richardson, ordered A and B Companies to head east in their Kangaroos to Wolfsberg, where German troops were reported holding in position. Incredibly, the defenders had had enough. German NCOs led columns of men out to surrender. Medium gun positions were overrun, and a battalion headquarters and 10 officers surrendered to the KOSBs.

But the Germans were not idle. Schlemm saw that this was clearly a major offensive, and the defensive strategy was simple: hold on and counterattack. That would not be easy. The 84th Infantry Division was out of the game. General Johannes von Blaskowitz, commanding Army Group F, agreed to send in the tough but understrength 7th Parachute Division, but it arrived piecemeal. The 6th Parachute Division, in a similar condition, would follow, and then the 47th Panzer Corps under General der Panzertruppen Heinrich Freiherr von Luttwitz, an Olympic equestrian and veteran of two world wars.

Luttwitz put his corps, consisting of the 15th Panzergrenadier Division and 116th Panzer Division, on the road with orders to hold Cleve.

Meanwhile, the battle raged on. German troops, suffering from British shelling, also endured the miserable weather. Leutnant Hans Hueneborn of the 2nd Parachute Regiment led a 10-man reconnaissance patrol into the Reichswald.

"I was three days in the woods," he said later. "My commander, a major, said I was to report to him in the cellar where he had his headquarters. I was just 50 meters from the house when I saw the British soldiers—there were many tanks. I shot three tanks with my Panzerfaust. I believe they were damaged. Then a grenade hit the trench where we were and I was wounded. We were in danger of being surrounded and captured. I called to my men, 'Run and duck, run and duck! Get under cover in the cellar!' and we got away. That night, I walked out of the forest and went to my parents' house in Haversum."

The 51st Highland Division, which planted its "HD" signs everywhere it went, continued its movement. The 2nd Seaforths of the 152nd Brigade suffered more than 100 casualties trying to clear the Kranenburg-Hekkens road in the heart of the forest. Two forward companies

Bundesarchiv Bild 183-J28747; Photo Erwin Seeger

ABOVE: A pair of German panzergrenadiers serve their machine gun during fighting near Cleve. The German weapons were well respected due to their high rate of fire, and the defenders of Cleve were not easily dislodged. OPPOSITE, LEFT: A Churchill AVRE tank armed with a heavy spigot mortar grinds forward through the mud near Cleve, February 12, 1945. OPPOSITE, RIGHT: Men of the 6th Royal Welsh Fusiliers man a trench in the Reichswald. During the early stages of Operation Veritable, the Germans often put up a stout defense and then withdrew to sturdier fortifications deeper in the forest.

faced heavy German mortar and shellfire but fought their way across the main road. Major Ian Murray, the acting commander, chose boldness. "Profiting from the enemy's concentration on our two forward companies, I pushed through my two reserve companies and they reached positions flanking the two forward companies on this road. We'd have been a rather thin red line had there been a counterattack. It was tough going. Fortunately the Camerons came through us with flame-throwing Crocodiles," he said later.

The 5th Camerons faced tough going despite their flamethrowers. Lt. Ross Mesurier was attached to them with his scout platoon. "Without tank support which had become bogged down, machine-guns, snipers and mortars took their toll throughout the morning of the 9th," he wrote. "My head was creased by a bullet, then a piece of shrapnel hit my back. Later on another fragment hit my upper left arm which stiffened up. The day dragged on, progress was slow and darkness came early. It also started to rain. Our company wireless operator was badly wounded in great pain, his uncontrollable moans seemed to draw gunfire. My company commander, Major Donald Callender, yelled out, 'For God's sake, Ross, do something.' The wind was blowing toward the Germans, so I cocked a phosphorous grenade to throw it. It was hit by a bullet or a piece of shrapnel and burst in my face which was covered by blobs of burning goo. One lens of my glasses was covered. I rubbed handfuls of snow mixed with mud in my face to stop the burning. Some Germans began advancing towards us. Our firing forced them to go around. A few of us charged them firing from the hip. My Sten gun jammed so I used my shovel. They started to run and we chased them. I hit one with the shovel blade in the neck. He hit the ground in a heap. I swung at another but he ducked and it glanced off his shoulder. I was a little in front of my boys, so I decided to go back to my platoon," he said later. Mesurier was evacuated to hospital.

Other 51st units also found hard going. A shortage of tracks and trails meant the division had to share routes with the 53rd Welsh, which led to traffic-control chaos. A Jock (51st Highlander) recalled, "Up this one route quantities of vehicles, gun, and men were sweating, swearing, and squabbling for priority rights. The Argylls wanted to come through on to their objective, the gunners wanted to come through and take up their positions for the morrow's shooting program, the battalions of the Watch wanted to get up their food and greatcoats: nobody knew what the hell the Welsh wanted."

Yet the 51st kept attacking. The division's reserve 153rd Brigade was to clear the entire area between the Reichswald and the Canadians on their left, along the Maas River's east bank. Major Martin Lindsay's 1st Gordon Highlanders found ruts of mud two feet deep, forcing them to leave their amphibious Weasel troop carriers behind.

The Gordons reached the Mook-Gennep road by mid-afternoon. Lindsay ordered a series of artillery shoots ahead of the advancing infantry, which had the benefit of pummeling the defenders but the disadvantage of possibly killing the Gordons. But the Gordons kept to their tradition of "Strike Sure," and C Company stormed through a deep valley and moved on the hamlet of De Hel, finding it was a well-defended German battalion headquarters.

"The Germans were all around us," Company Sergeant-Major George Morrice said later. "I was able to get our company piper—Piper McLaughlin—into a trench and he played the pipes. It had a great effect on the Germans. We fixed bayonets and charged and were able to round them up. We captured an enormous number of prisoners at their headquarters. I caught the CO of the battalion and disarmed him myself."

The battalion was then ordered to seize a strongpoint across the Mook-Gennep road that was holding up the 153rd's advance. Lindsay himself led the attack. As the lead company moved forward, a platoon commander was wounded in the leg by a stick grenade. The men fought their way out and to the German entrenchment, a group of farmhouses surrounded by ditches and barbed wire. Lindsay ordered a two-minute blast of fire followed by a bayonet attack from the rear. In the first rush, six Germans were killed and many more taken prisoner.

"There was a cheer and a wild burst of Sten," Lindsay said later, "and a wild surge forward, and in a moment a shout of 'Kamerad' and a column of Huns, 71 in number, came running out with their hands up…We went forward in the moonlight, climbing over broken walls and piles of rubble interlaced with a honeycomb of trenches. I was afraid some enthusiast in the (Canadian) front might shoot at us, so I passed the word back to the two pipers with Company HQ to play the regimental march, and before long we heard the distant strain of 'Cock o' the North'…(Then) heard the pipers of the Camerons of Canada and knew we had not far to go." The sound of the Scottish pipes added to the German discomfort.

But disaster then befell Lindsay. As his men advanced, an explosion went off, and the company commander fell to the ground in pain, clutching his knee. The area they were advancing through was thoroughly mined. Lindsay froze, calling for engineers with mine-prodders to move in while still under fire. Canadian Camerons coming toward them did the same and began pulling mines out of the ground. Once done, Lindsay followed their precise steps for the link-up.

Other 153rd Brigade battalions had a rough

day, too. The 5th Black Watch made a dawn assault across the Niers River and entered the village of Gennep, launching a two-day hand-to-hand battle. Maj. Alec Brodie led his company by walking down a street, carrying an open umbrella. Asked why he was doing so, he had a simple answer. It was raining.

Brodie's contempt for danger and the Black Watch's determination enabled the Scots to take Gennep, which in turn allowed Royal Canadian Engineers to build a 4,000-foot-long Bailey bridge across the Maas on February 20.

The Welshmen of the 53rd Division had a tough day as well, worsened by their traffic struggles with the 15th Scottish. The 160th Brigade pushed onto the northern edge of the Reichswald while the 158th Brigade, on their right, did the same, putting them 1,000 yards from the main German defense of the Materborn ridge, a hilly area that was the key to the defense of Cleve. The Germans had reinforced it with the tough men of the 6th Parachute Division, who attacked the 4th Welch several times. The Welch beat them off, and the Germans lost six guns, but the 158th Brigade had lost the initiative.

The 53rd Division also lost most of the roads in its rear, which collapsed in the pouring rain and mud and had to be closed. Royal Engineers and working parties spent the day trying to create hard surface. Sherman tanks, with their narrow track width, easily bogged down.

To the north, the two Canadian divisions were struggling with both the Germans and the flooded terrain. The 2nd Canadian Division was pinched out of the battle and could only be a spectator until the next round, leaving fighting to the 3rd Canadian Division.

The Germans had blown dikes in the Rhine River, which turned the low-lying land into a vast swamp. At dawn on February 9, the 8th Brigade's North Shore Regiment mounted their Buffalo amphibious armored-transport vehicles and drove through the water to Kekerdom, clearing three factories. They had lost one officer and nine other ranks (enlisted men in U.S. parlance) killed, another officer and 12 other ranks wounded, and captured 95 Germans.

The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada passed through them and met no opposition in the rising water, capturing 11 lost German soldiers and freeing two trapped civilians.

Meanwhile, 8th Brigade was facing a major defense point called "Little Tobruk," which consisted of a blockhouse, a concrete pillbox, and field defenses all surrounded by dugouts and barbed wire. The 1st Canadian Scottish (Can Scots) got the job, but they had to advance across the narrow Querdamm over flooded ground, making the advance difficult. Even so, they overran several dugouts and sent back 23 POWs. Now they faced the blockhouse, and Lt. W.G. MacIntosh ordered his No. 10 Platoon to advance. German MG42s opened fire with their distinctive buzzsaw sound to deadly effect, wounding several men and killing Lance Cpl. Edwin Fiddick and Cpl. Arthur Sidney Low. Private Mayeso Mayes tried to rescue Low and was cut down himself.

The company's PIAT (antitank) team took aim at the bunker, but their shells only scratched the concrete. MacIntosh realized he could not take the bunker from the front and called on 11 Platoon to get its Buffaloes to the edge of the dam near his company HQ. MacIntosh wanted them to turn a Buffalo into a floating bunker-buster. He loaded Sergeant L.A. Cummings and five men from 12 Platoon aboard, armed with Bren medium machine guns and a PIAT. The Buffalo was equipped with 20mm and 50mm guns. While the Canadians loaded up the Buffalo, No. 10 Platoon cleared a house to the pillbox's right, capturing five Germans and eliminating a machine gun.

Now Cummings' Buffalo made a wide circle in the dark and drove down on Little Tobruk from the left and rear, opening fire with everything it had. As they did, No. 10 Platoon

[The Germans] were equipped with many weapons that were superior to those in the British arsenal: the 88mm guns; self-propelled armor; the powerful Panzerfaust; and the MG42 medium machine gun, which could fire off an immense number of bullets at an astonishing rate, sounding like a buzzsaw.

Both: Imperial War Museum

leaped up and attacked the pillbox. Caught in the vise, Little Tobruk was doomed, but not without the loss of Private George Robertson, a platoon old-timer.

The assault had taken all day, and B Company moved on, with No. 12 Platoon clearing out Little Tobruk's defenders. Twenty-four-year-old Sergeant David Janicki of Vernon, British Columbia, one of the platoon's few D-Day veterans, led his section up the length of the dam and broke into the battered blockhouse, capturing three officers and 61 soldiers while killing a good number more. While Janicki sorted out the prisoners, a German sniper shot him dead.

Major Earl English, commanding B Company and overseeing the final operation, studied the new prisoners and found one of the captured captains was very nervous. English ordered his men out of Little Tobruk and down a dam embankment. Moments later, German shells blasted the pillbox. One of the last German radio messages out of it before surrender had been to announce that fact and to request a bombardment on the position to kill the incoming Canadians. English's alertness had saved his men—and the POWs.

The Can Scots had more work to do. Their attack had begun in the dark with Buffaloes taking the troops into battle, each carrying 20 men. The Buffaloes battled ground obstacles—underwater fences, shrubs, and terrain that would jam the vehicles' tracks and spin them around, putting them off course.

The strange flotilla finally hit terra firma too far to the right on a road running into the tiny village of Germenseel, a mile and a half south of Niel. A Company's Captain Joseph Andrews and D Company's Major Dave Pugh convened to figure out where they were and what to do. Andrews hopped back on a Buffalo and probed the village from the north while Pugh sent a patrol along the raised road to enter it directly. Andrews found an anti-tank ditch ahead of him, and his maps showed he was at Germenseel—they were attacking the wrong village. Worse, they couldn't report the mishap to the Can Scots' commander, Lt. Col. Desmond Crofton, as their radios weren't working.

Meanwhile, Crofton wasted no time. He loaded up his HQ team on two Buffaloes to find out what was going on and reached Niel, where they came under Panzerfaust fire. A German rocket hit the lead Buffalo, setting it ablaze, killing its British driver and Can Scot Privates Bernard Merlyn Krislock and Max Bradie Brown. Crofton suffered a bad compound fracture himself. The following Buffalo tried to assist the men in the leader but was turned back by heavy fire. Crofton and his injured colleagues crawled into a nearby barn and took cover, waiting 12 hours for assistance.

Meanwhile, Corporals R.G. Allen and O. Quesseth swam, waded, and crawled past the buildings to a road covered in three feet of water. From there they waded back to the battalion's CP and reported to Maj. Larry Henderson, who would now have to take over the battalion in Crofton's wounding and absence. He sent an amphibious Weasel to rescue the HQ's wounded.

However, A Company and D Company maintained their attack on Niel in the cold, hard rain and dense cloud cover. A Company moved in from the southwest and D Company from the northwest; their junction point was the church. More than 100 Germans defended Niel but were in no mood to hold the flooded town, and they quickly surrendered. A few diehards fought on until 7 AM, when A Company raised its battle flag on top of a building to honor its first successful action on German soil.

The two company commanders repaired to the church to make dispositions, and as they talked, German artillery near Cleve hurled shells at them. A Company's leadership went unscathed; Pugh and his runner fell gravely

National Archives

ABOVE: A British Archer tank destroyer navigates the narrow streets of the German town of Kranenburg on February 11, 1945. The town was flooded by the Germans, and the high water impeded the progress of Allied armored vehicles. BELOW: A British Humber scout car and a universal carrier splash across the flooded landscape near the towns of Beek and Kranenburg in Germany.

National Archives

wounded, and Pugh's acting second-in-command, Lieutenant Donald Neville Fergusson, and Private Eric Sekov Hansen were killed. That was the only bombardment Niel suffered; Buffaloes then rumbled in to haul off the wounded and POWs. The remaining Can Scots soon realized that the town they had taken was being flooded.

The Can Scots climbed into higher stories of the village's buildings and watched the water swirl past them below. Their job now was to hold on while the Royal Winnipeg Rifles clattered by in their Buffaloes for the attack's next stage. The Can Scots had lost one officer and seven other ranks killed, three officers and 14 men wounded, and one missing.

As February 9 closed on the Reichswald, the rain kept pouring. The British advance was slowed by mud, traffic jams, and German resistance, but Horrocks could count on several gains—the 15th Scottish Division was moving on Cleve, 2,700 German POWs in shabby mud-covered uniforms were shuffling into "the bag," the guts of the Reichswald forest had been cleared, and the first-phase advance line—a reverse letter "L" from Gennep to Asperden to Cleve—was taken.

The next day, reinforced by the 43rd Wessex, Horrocks' men were to crack the main Siegfried Line. On the right, the 51st Highland Division would clear Gennep and Hekkens in preparation for the attack on Goch, Udem, and Weeze. The 53rd Welsh would drive on the Cleve-Goch road. The 43rd Wessex would finally pass through the 15th Scottish, wheel right, and capture Goch. The 15th Scottish would clear Cleve and move on Emmerich and Calcar. Most importantly, the southern half of the great pincer, Operation Grenade, would open on the 1st Canadian Army's right, tying down the Germans.

Crerar's intelligence summary forecast the German reactions thusly: "If he has forces available either from the Hochwald (a smaller forest east of Cleve) or from across the Rhine he will be tempted to regain Cleve or at least seal it off. If he cannot do so, then he must hold Goch and also cover the nearest Rhine crossings."

But on the 9th, the US 1st Army, under Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges—south of the 9th Army—attacked toward the massive Schammeneauel Dams, which held back millions of gallons of water from the Roer River. The 9th Army was to attack across the Roer on the 10th. The Americans intended to seize the dam before the Germans could blast it open and set off a torrential flood on the Roer that would drown the 9th Army's offensive. The Germans didn't blast the dam open; instead, they released the sluice-outlet gates that held its reservoir, which set off a gradual flood of 100 million tons of water down the Roer, heading north, raising the river by five feet. This would make it impossible for the Americans to throw pontoon bridges over the Roer.

Imperial War Museum

A British Churchill bridge-laying tank and another armored vehicle carrying fascines to be dropped into ditches to allow vehicles to cross ditches and other depressions in the ground follow the road toward the front during the Battle of the Reichswald.

Montgomery went to Simpson's HQ to review the floods, situation, and maps, and agreed with Simpson that the Americans would have to postpone the assault by a minimum of 11 days. The Germans would thus be able to send in reserves to stop Horrocks' attack.

The Americans released two of their own divisions to the British sector, which in turn enabled Montgomery to assign two more divisions to XXX Corps, the 52nd Lowland Division and the 11th "Black Bull" Armored Division.

So as the rain fell, mud deepened, floods worsened, and troops became exhausted, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander, penned a realistic assessment of the situation to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington, describing the battle as a "bitter slugging match in which the enemy had to be forced back yard by yard."

February 10 called for the 53rd Welsh, like all British divisions, to continue their attacks, but communications were a complete mess. The main divisional axis was closed to all vehicles but top-priority traffic. Every man available was ordered to create road surfaces, and the combatant men restricted themselves to patrolling.

That day, the 15th Scottish, 43rd Wessex, and the 9th Armored Brigade finally took Cleve. The 43rd Wessex had a fine combat record under Thomas. They had spent the years from 1939 to 1944 training hard under difficult conditions so that combat would seem easy in comparison. Many believed the Wessex men were the most "over-exercised" division in the British Army, but when put to the test, they hammered the Germans in Normandy, Falaise, and all the way to the Dutch border, suffering 10,000 casualties.

The 129th Brigade attacked first, with the 4th Wiltshire (Wilts) riding into action on the tanks of the Nottinghamshire Yeomanry (known as the Sherwood Rangers) amid icy rain and heavy mud, moving in fits and starts, delayed by massive bomb craters left by the RAF Bomber Command's savaging of Cleve the night before the assault.

The 4th Wilts grabbed 75 POWs quickly, but then a Sherman tank appeared from the east. This turned out to be a "Trojan Horse"—a captured tank in German colors leading an enemy assault force. The Wilts opened fire and stopped the attack.

The fighting was ferocious. Even 129th Brigade HQ was caught in the battle, which raged in the town's buildings as well as the Siegfried Line's emplacements. Twenty-nine Germans were found dead in the Brigade HQ's back garden. When two Germans broke away

National Archives

to surrender, their comrades shot them dead.

The 94th Field Regiment's gunners, following the infantry attack, set up shop in the Siegfried Line using its trenches and dugouts. They were impressed at how deeply they were constructed, including electric lights and bunks.

Sydney Jary of 4th Wilts plodded past 15th Scottish men and noted how they were "strangely silent." In a short time, they were facing a Mark V Panther tank, and Private Tipple hit it with his PIAT. The wounded tank shuffled away, but German paratroopers in their mottled uniforms engaged the 4th Wilts with their MG42s from positions in the rubble.

In another artillery duel, Sergeant Les "Bozzy" Bosworth and his entire anti-tank gun's crew were killed when a German shell hit their ammo supply. Bosworth's death greatly upset his comrade, Corporal Doug Proctor, as the pair had played piano duets to entertain their buddies.

In the fighting, an officer and 20 gunners of the 29th Anti-Tank Regiment cornered and captured a German officer and 78 men.

The 129th Brigade's commander, Brigadier Hubert Essame, a veteran of World War I and Dunkirk, said that February 10 was distinguished "by a traffic jam of huge and bewildering proportions." All communications with Essame's brigade were totally broken down, and vehicles, tanks, and guns of the 15th Scottish and 43rd Wessex were intermingled in the mud and flooding.

The two divisions battled in Cleve amongst ruins and bomb craters. Isolated groups of Wessex men regularly faced being overrun by German paratroopers but held on, fending off the attacks.

Despite the chaos, Thomas pushed his 214th Brigade forward, the 5th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (5th DCLI) and the divisional-reconnaissance regiment leading the way down a white sand track and into open ground east of a forest near the Materborn feature. German troops opened fire, knocking out some British vehicles while others bogged down in the mud. The 5th DCLI got to work, storming the small village ahead at dusk. Thomas's third outfit, the 130th Brigade, could not advance at all.

The whole 43rd Division was supposed to be clear of Cleve. Instead it was held in place by massive traffic jams, cratered terrain, mud, and German defenses. This situation made the 15th Scottish's task almost impossible. The division and its supporting specialized armor were to move up a road jammed by the 214th Brigade's vehicles. Unit commanders got into arguments over which unit had priority.

But the British kept trying despite the chaos. The Royal Scots Fusiliers cleared the bare top of the Cleveberg hill, a mile and a half from Cleve's center. Seeing troops on the feature, 43rd division guns treated it to a bombardment, resulting in casualties from friendly fire. It was clear the two divisions would have to spend February 10th regrouping before pushing on.

To the south, the 51st Highland Division on the right flank maintained its attack. The 2nd Seaforths had to take their usual objective, a well-defended strongpoint on the Siegfried Line. This one consisted of three large pillboxes made of four-inch steel and two-foot concrete, packed with mines and trip wires. The 2nd Seaforths attacked with what was now becoming their usual method, using smoke to blind pillboxes followed by high-explosive shells directly into the embrasures. After that, an AVRE Petard—a tank whose main weapon was a giant mortar—would fire its "dustbin" shell at the embrasure, blasting open a hole. The flamethrowing Crocodiles would then burn out the defenders. Through this grim and somewhat time-consuming method, the 2nd Seaforths accomplished the task. The 5th

Seaforth was less lucky; they met heavy defensive fire, but eventually took 35 prisoners.

After that, the 152nd Brigade drove on Hekkens, intending to take the village and wheel right. Instead, the whole brigade was pinned down in a ditch just 50 yards from the German positions. The 154th Brigade moved up through the muck to add power to the assault. In the evening, the 153rd Brigade loaded two battalions into assault boats to cross the River Niers, now swollen 100 feet wide by the Roer Dam spill, and the 5th Black Watch gained the dubious honor of finally taking Hekkens.

On February 11, the German reserves—47th Panzer Corps with its two divisions, the 15th Panzergrenadiers on the left and 116th Panzer on the right—headed north, arriving in their assembly area that evening. Neither division was as tough as it had been earlier in the war, having been worn down by the Battle of the Bulge; the entire corps mustered only 50 tanks. But it still had plenty of other armored vehicles and veteran troops, and the tanks were superior to their British opponents.

Two British and one Canadian division resumed the offensive on February 11. To the north, the 3rd Canadian took the town of Duffel before dawn and headed east, mopping up German resistance by early evening along the Spoy Canal.

The 15th Scottish and 43rd Wessex Divisions had spent a day struggling to sort out their administrative issues, and now moved to sort out the Germans. The 15th Scottish hurled a two-pronged attack on Cleve, with the 227th Brigade and Scots Guards tanks on the left and 44th Brigade and Grenadier Guards tanks on the right. The Germans counterattacked against 44th Brigade but failed; the 44th took 180 POWs. These steps allowed some of the exhausted frontline Tommies of the 43rd Division who were fighting in Cleve to stand down and get their first hot meals and real sleep in more than 50 hours.

The 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers led the 44th into Cleve, defeating German Panzerfaust teams as they advanced. The fighting for the ruined town went on all day. Scottish troops wrecked Cleve, creating or finding what the 4th Wiltshires historian described: "There were bomb craters and fallen trees everywhere, bomb craters packed so tight that the debris from one was piled against the rim of the next in a pathetic heap of rubble, roofs, and radiators. There was not an undamaged house anywhere, piles of smashed furniture, clothing, children's books and toys, old photographs and bottled fruit, were spilled in hopeless confusion from the sagging crazy skeletons of houses."

Neither the men of the 15th nor the 43rd were particularly bothered by wrecking Cleve. Captain Woollcombe wrote: "So our first night in Germany came down in utter destruction and the crackling of fires. It is hard to reflect the violence of it. Always there was one more river, and during the opening days of the Veritable offensive, a wave of bitterness swept through the streets as never before. At last it was Germany. The thought never left you: Germany. It did not matter what damage we did."

The 43rd Division's 214th Brigade ordered a set-piece attack to finally overwhelm the Materborn Ridge, doing so with a heavy artillery barrage followed by a tank-infantry attack by 5th DCLI and 4th/7th Dragoon Guards. The massed assault demolished the German position, but the surviving paratroopers showed their usual enthusiasm for last-ditch stands, and did so in the face of the 7th Somerset Light Infantry ("Sets"), which stormed Materborn under fire from German self-propelled guns, houses crammed with infantry, and heavy sleet.

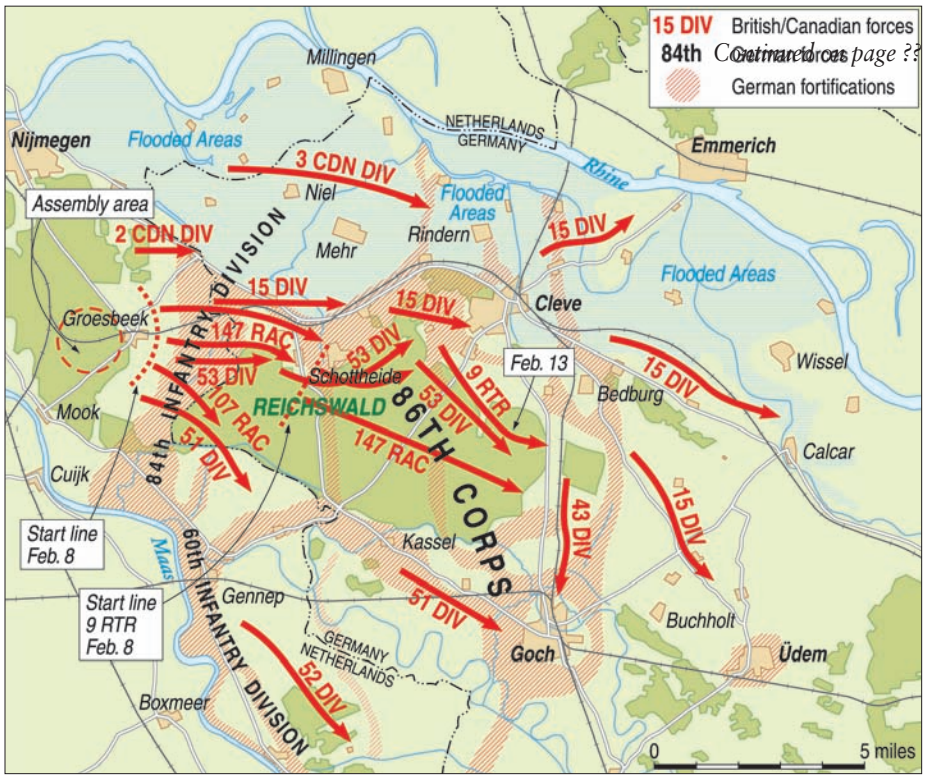
Private Len Stokes of the Sets described the day's work: "We had spent the whole night on the tanks; it was bitterly cold, icy rain, and driving sleet. I could not find any footholds and could only just manage to hold on with my fingers. We could not sleep for fear of falling under the following tank. Breakfast consisted of one tin of self-brewing soup divided between two men. I shared with the Company Sergeant Major. My hands and arms were useless, must have been in the last stages of frostbite. The CSM fed me. Later orders were given for the Somersets to cross the start line at 1600 hours to attack along the Goch road and capture the village of Hau. Delay because the crossroads were being shelled. The road was straight for hundreds of yards. Everyone was by now exhausted in the cold, wet, and sleet, and very dark between farms. B Company got into the cellar of a house where we reached our first objective, a farm at 0430 hours following two nights on the road and 13 hours of night fighting without sleep. During the rest of the night and all the next day, 12 February, we were heavily shelled and mortared."

The day's final objective, Hau, was still another half-mile away, but the Sets pressed on, tanks unable to follow. For five hours they struggled to push down the road. By midnight all ranks were exhausted, and the commander tried one last shot—a drive straight down the Goch road to a bend south of Hau. Hand-to-hand fighting went on all night.

The 5th Seaforths, pinned down all day on the

Continued on page 82

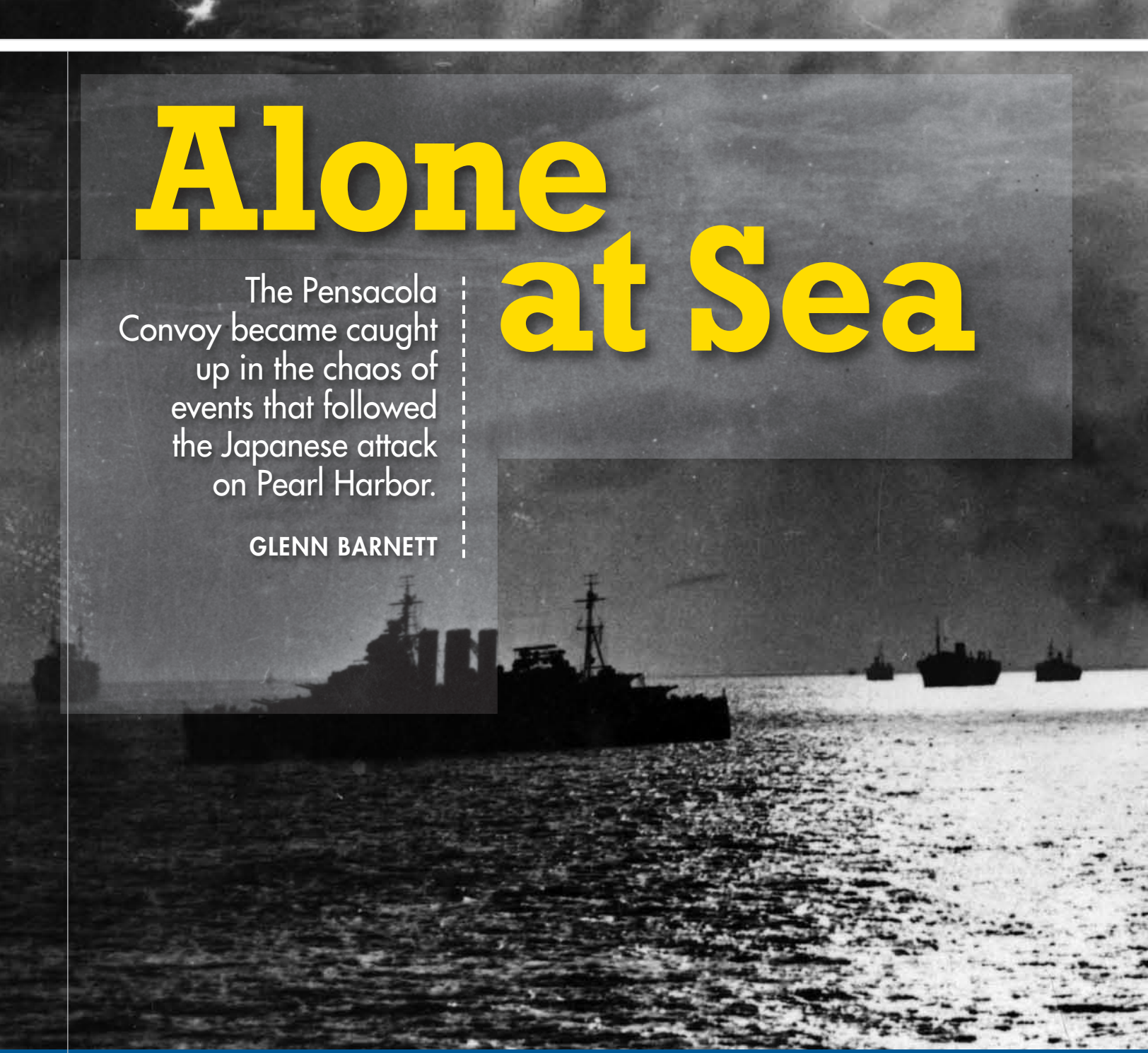
BELOW: Multiple Allied thrusts by the divisions of XXX Corps against German defenders in the Reichswald were met with stiff resistance despite the heavy bombardment that preceded the ground assaults.
OPPOSITE: Advancing steadily through the ruins of war-torn Cleve, British infantrymen sprint around a corner.



Alone at Sea

The Pensacola Convoy became caught up in the chaos of events that followed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

GLENN BARNETT



THE American military presence in China, which stretched back to the 1850s, came to an abrupt end in November 1941. Since the sinking of the U.S. Navy gunboat *Panay* in December 1937, the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, and especially the Yangtze River Patrol, had faced growing Japanese aggression in China on land and at sea. That Japanese hid their belligerence beneath a thin veil of traditional courtesy.

During November, naval authorities in Washington ordered all remaining U.S. Navy vessels to leave China and proceed to Manila to augment the defensive forces in the Philippines. The transfer of the ships of the China Station was complete by December 5, but the Philippines needed a lot more military resources to defend against the Japanese threat.

In Washington, D.C., as American authorities were beginning to write off China's ability to resist overwhelming Japanese military might, steps were being taken to reinforce the American presence in the Philippines. In July 1941, the Army reorganized its command in that nation into the United States Army Forces in the Far East, with General Douglas MacArthur in overall command.

MacArthur was the logical choice for the position; he had been the military advisor to the Philippine Army since 1935, and his father, Arthur MacArthur, served as the military governor of the Philippines in 1900.

MacArthur complained about the antiquated weapons and stingy financial resources at his disposal, and he insistently urged Washington to send more of everything. At the slow pace characteristic of prewar officialdom, the War Department authorized reinforcements of men and material to augment the small Philippine

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the cruiser USS *Pensacola* was caught up in the confusion of the early days of American involvement in World War II while escorting troops and materiel to the Philippines. In this photo a convoy of ships assembles for a hazardous wartime voyage.

garrison in mid-August 1941. Sporadic convoys of supplies and troops, escorted by Navy vessels, began to arrive in September and continue through November.

One such convoy, typical of the movement of men and materiel slated for the Philippines, consisted of 2,000 National Guard artillerymen and 2,600 men of the Army Air Corps, along with their artillery, P-40 fighters, A-24 dive bombers disassembled in crates, ammunition, and aviation gasoline. The convoy's manifest included 20 British-made 75mm field artillery pieces, antiaircraft ammunition, 2,000 500-pound bombs, 3,000 30-pound bombs, 340 motor vehicles, 9,000 barrels of aviation fuel, 500,000 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition, 9,600 rounds of 37mm antiaircraft shells and the crated airplanes.

One at a time, the ships were loaded on the West Coast and made their way individually to Hawaii, where they assembled in the peacetime safety of Pearl Harbor. They were then assigned to the heavy cruiser USS *Pensacola* for escort. The convoy was officially designated as Task Group 15.5. Other identifying names included the Republic Convoy, an Army designation named for the largest of the transport ships, *Republic*, displacing 17,800 tons. Another name was the Plum Convoy, but it would be popularly known as the Pensacola Convoy after the escorting cruiser.

The *Republic* (AP-33) was built in 1903. Her career at sea had alternated between being a

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In this painting by artist Griffith Bailey Coale, soldiers aboard a transport ship headed somewhere in the Pacific take advantage of the tropical sun while lying on the open deck. The Pensacola Convoy originally carried 4,600 National Guard and Air Corps personnel.

passenger liner and a Navy troop-transport ship. Three times between the wars, *Republic* was taken over by the Navy, the last time being in July 1941. Her latest assignment had been to carry troops to Iceland. Her new assignment was to ferry the ground crews and mechanics that would support a squadron of Boeing B-17s of the 7th Heavy Bombardment Group that were being flown over to reinforce air strength in the Philippines. The B-17s these men were to service were the same ones that arrived at Oahu from the mainland in the midst of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Also aboard *Republic* were the 190 officers and men of the 453rd Ordnance (Aviation) Bombardment Company along with their equipment. These were the ground crews for the crated P-40 fighters and A-24 dive bombers being transported in the convoy. There were also 48 fighter pilots of the 35th Pursuit Group aboard.

During the '20s and '30s, USS *Chaumont* (AP-5) had supported American interests in China with deliveries of supplies, mail, and personnel. In the Pensacola Convoy, she carried civilian workers and cargo that included aircraft, bombs, guns, ammunition, and other supplies.

The convoy also included two U.S. Army transport ships. The USAT *Willard A. Holbrook*, (formerly the SS *President Taft*) functioned as a passenger-and-mail liner until June 1941, when she was requisitioned by the War Department for use by the Army. For this convoy, she would embark the men of the 147th and 148th Field Artillery of the South Dakota, Texas, and Idaho National Guards. Other passengers included 39 newly graduated pilots awaiting assignment to units in the Philippines. The USAT *Meigs* was purpose-built as an Army freighter and transport in 1921; *Meigs* would carry 52 crated A-24 dive bombers on her crowded decks, as well as munitions and general supplies.

The SS *Admiral Halstead* was a U.S. merchant ship, which carried 18 crated P-40 fighter planes and 3,000 barrels of high-octane aviation fuel (avgas) in the convoy.

The SS *Coast Farmer* carried general cargo and reportedly some peacetime commercial goods for Manila shops. She would later be one of only three ships to slip through the Japanese blockade of the Philippines to land supplies on Mindanao. Unfortunately, the guns and munitions she carried never reached Luzon and were either destroyed or captured by the Japanese.

The M.S. *Bloemfontein* was a Dutch armed merchantman. Her prior service included taking American airmen to China and Burma to serve with the First American Volunteer Group, the famed Flying Tigers. In the convoy, she carried 75 aircraft ground crewmen. She also carried the headquarters staff of the 26th Field Artillery Brigade, as well as the 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery, along with their guns, including 48 British-made 75mm guns. Finally, she carried some civilian passengers and cargo meant for the Dutch East Indies.

The USS *Niagara* (PG-52) shared responsibilities for escort duty. Built as a private yacht in 1929, she was purchased by the Navy in 1940 and refit as a patrol gunboat and subchaser.

The heavy cruiser USS *Pensacola*, mounting 10 eight-inch guns in four turrets, was commissioned in February 1930. The lead ship of her class, the cruiser displaced 9,200 tons, and her complement totaled 85 officers and 445 crew.

Once the convoy was assembled at Pearl Harbor, it departed on the evening of November 29, 1941. Cruising speed was about 10 knots to match that of the slowest ship. The convoy did not steam directly toward the Philippines but veered to the south to keep clear of the Japanese-held Marshall Islands, administered under a post-World War I League of Nations mandate. The planned approach to the Philippines included steaming south of New Guinea and then north through the Dutch East Indies to Manila.

The next day, the frivolity ended abruptly. Early in the morning, the convoy's radio operators began receiving disturbing messages: "AIR RAID ON PEARL HARBOR X THIS IS NO DRILL." Soon afterwards, Commander Guy Clark, commander of the *Republic*, was handed a message that read, "Japan started hostilities. Govern yourself accordingly." Clark relayed the message by loudspeaker to his crew.

All ships were put on high alert. The crews brought out their stores of wartime naval-gray paint and worked all day to cover their ships and lifeboats with new coats to make them less visible. Extra lookouts were assigned, and all guns were manned 24 hours a day. Everyone was ordered to put on life jackets and carry full canteens of water. Life rafts were placed on deck for easier access.

At the same time, all flammable substances and objects were thrown overboard, including the ships' pianos. Every sailor in the convoy scrounged for weapons and ammunition.

Search parties on each ship went below to locate guns that could be used for defense. Back in September 1940, *Pensacola* was one of the first six ships to be equipped with the RCA-made CXAM naval radar system, which was now being constantly monitored.

On *Republic*, four 75mm artillery guns of the 453rd Ordnance (Aviation) Bombardment Company were found, hauled topside, and secured to the deck. Unfortunately, no ammunition was located aboard. However, while in drydock on the west coast before her departure, four 3-inch guns and one 5-inch gun had been mounted on the ship. These were now manned and made ready.

Aboard *Holbrook*, meanwhile, the men had found their 75mm guns and ammunition but were compelled to improvise gun sights and mountings for the artillery pieces once they were brought on deck. The ordnance men also improvised deck mounts for the .50-caliber machine guns originally meant for airplanes.

Even as the crews—Army, Air Corps, and Navy—prepared for war, the convoy continued to steam slowly toward the Philippines. The next day, news came that the Japanese were landing on Luzon and that American air and sea assets there were being bombed. Officers back in Hawaii had a lot on their plates, as the sunken battleships were still smoldering in Pearl Harbor. No one was sure what to do about a small convoy in the middle of the ocean with nowhere to go.

Another radio message complicated matters: a Japanese task force was spotted in the Ellice and Gilbert Islands, a British possession that included the soon-to-be famous Tarawa Atoll. The Japanese flotilla was only 300 miles away, supporting the invasion of those islands. To buy some time, authorities in Hawaii ordered the convoy to steam to the port of Suva in the Fiji Island group.

On December 9, it was determined that the convoy should return to Hawaii to reinforce the garrison there. The Joint Board, forerunner of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, approved this move, and orders were issued for the convoy to return to Pearl Harbor.

Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall had misgivings. Although the defense of Hawaii loomed large in the minds of the war planners, he believed that recalling the convoy would indicate to General MacArthur that he and the Philippines were being abandoned.

While the convoy reversed course in compliance with the new orders, another meeting was held the next day to reconsider its destination. This time it was at the White House, where it is said that President Franklin D. Roosevelt suggested the convoy be sent to the Southwest Pacific, where reinforcement was desperately needed. The issue was referred to the Joint Board, which approved the president's suggestion and ordered the convoy to proceed to Brisbane, Australia, via Fiji. Hawaii would be supplied from the mainland. Official orders arrived on December 12, and the beleaguered convoy reversed course yet again.

The ships arrived at the Fijian port of Suva on December 13, allowing one more day to continue painting everything gray and rummage through the disorganized cargoes. For the sailors and soldiers aboard the ships, confusion reigned, but at last, they had clear and decisive orders: they were going to Australia.

While in Fiji, the crews had only a limited amount of time to sort out their cargoes and match up guns, ammunition, and many of the correct parts with their intended equipment.

In the lazy days before the war, stevedores were typically somewhat casual in their

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ABOVE: The heavy cruiser USS *Pensacola* is shown underway in early 1942. The lead ship of her class, *Pensacola* was launched in 1929 and survived the war. Japanese propagandist Tokyo Rose had nicknamed the warship the 'Grey Ghost.' BELOW: Carrying a contingent of U.S. Marines to duty on the China Station, the transport USS *Chaumont* docks in Shanghai. This photo was taken prior to the American withdrawal of shipping from China due to escalating Japanese aggression. *Chaumont* later participated in the Pensacola Convoy.

Naval History and Heritage Command

approach to loading cargo aboard a ship. Where and how materiel were stored didn't really seem to matter; the crews could sort it out upon arrival at their destination. This attitude now greatly slowed the combat-preparation efforts of the Pensacola Convoy, and cargo-storage procedures would hereafter become a matter of great priority among the American Naval and Merchant fleets.

The news of the convoy's redirection reached General MacArthur on December 13. He asked about the possibility of escorting the ships directly from Brisbane to Manila, emphasizing how limited his resources were. He wired Marshall that the Navy was able "…with its own surface forces and with assistance of Australian and Dutch naval and air forces to bring in the present convoy and keep my line open."

The limited British and Dutch forces, however, were completely preoccupied with the defense of Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, while the Japanese, with superior naval, land, and air forces, were creating a blockade around the Philippines.

MacArthur continued to insist on support that was beyond the ability of the American military to provide in a timely manner. Meanwhile, the convoy put out to sea from Suva on December 14. The next day, General Leonard Gerow of the Army's War Plans Division sent a personal note to General Marshall, relating that the Pensacola Convoy was due in Brisbane shortly and asking about the Navy's ability to escort the convoy to the Philippines. "If the ships can go directly to Manila, the supplies, except aircraft, should not be unloaded in Australia." The planes could be off loaded in Brisbane, assembled, and flown to Manila via the Dutch East Indies.

More discussions were held at the White House. President Roosevelt told the Navy to do all it could to assist the Army in reinforcing MacArthur. Marshall promised MacArthur that there would be "no wavering in the determination to support you," and that fighters and bombers would be rushed to the Philippines as quickly as possible. The only fighters and bombers immediately available, however, were still in crates aboard the Pensacola Convoy, which was still at sea a few days out from Brisbane.

The American military establishment in Australia, meanwhile, was making plans to meet, escort, and protect the incoming ships. On December 12, the heavy cruiser HMAS *Canberra* (D33) and the light cruiser HMAS *Perth* (D29) put to sea from Sydney, stopping at Brisbane along the way on December 15. Rushing eastward from there, they were joined by the New Zealand light cruiser HMNZS *Achilles* (70) near New Caledonia. On the same day, the troops aboard the Pensacola Convoy were given a new name: they were to be known as Task Force South Pacific. The senior officer in the convoy, Brig. Gen. Julian F. Barnes, was placed in command.

The Allied ships would meet up with the *Pensacola* and her charges on December 19. Both groups of ships were slowed by the wartime necessity of steering a zigzag course to defend against submarine attacks. The slower pace that the Americans maintained to allow the slowest ship to keep up also impeded their progress.

On December 21, the American ships were joined by the sloops HMAS *Swan* (U74) and *Warrego* (U73). When the two sloops joined up, they immediately began anti-submarine and anti-mine patrols, replacing *Niagara*, which had been recalled to Pearl Harbor from Suva. Also that day, the convoy came within range of Lockheed Hudson patrol bombers of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), which, in their coastal reconnaissance role, provided further protection against enemy attack.

Aboard the American ships, the original trip was taking longer than planned, and the crews and passengers within the Pensacola Group had their rations cut to two meals a day. The convoy completed its approach to Brisbane without interference.

The four-nation flotilla (American, Dutch, Australian, and New Zealander) arrived at Brisbane's Moreton Bay at noon on December 22. A harbor pilot came aboard *Pensacola*, and she was refueled immediately from an Australian fleet tanker. The other ships then took their turns at fueling.

Meanwhile, crowds gathered from Brisbane, 14 miles upriver. The city's 300,000 people were jubilant. Australians came out to cheer the first Americans to arrive in their country during the war. As one observer put it, "Brisbane locals gave them a right royal welcome." Their arrival underscored the fact that most of the military manpower of Australia was away fighting a losing battle in Malaya and holding off German General Erwin Rommel in North Africa.

The troops gladly disembarked the next day.

Task Force South Pacific would soon receive yet another name. The few troops aboard were now known as the United States Forces in Australia (USFIA), still temporarily under the command of General Barnes. The number of Americans who would be sent to Australia during the war (including the author's father) would eventually outnumber the population of Brisbane.

Without facilities to house the Americans, their Australian hosts set up tent cities at two local racetracks, which would become Camp Ascot and Camp Doomben. From the ships, the American soldiers and airmen marched directly to the new camps. General Barnes and his staff were housed at the Lennon Hotel in town, which became his headquarters and later the home and unofficial headquarters of General MacArthur and his staff.

Library of Congress

It was hoped that the convoy's men and supplies could quickly be shipped to Manila, but the hard-charging Japanese quickly closed any window of opportunity. Nevertheless, the artillerymen and sailors got to work immediately, unloading the ships, organizing the material, and reloading the ships for ease of unloading—a task that took six days to complete.

The Air Corps ground crews got to work assembling the planes from the parts and pieces sent over to them by the artillerymen who were unloading the ships. Due to the emergency situation in the Philippines, the men worked on Christmas Day, taking a break for a Christmas dinner consisting of bologna sandwiches.

As they assembled the uncrated airplanes, the crews discovered that there had been some serious omissions when the aircraft were loaded onto the ships stateside. There was no engine coolant to be found for any of the planes, and none of the dive bombers had their trigger motors, gunsight solenoids, gun mounts, or self-sealing gas tanks.

At the command level, General Barnes was

In this aerial view from May 1942, a U.S. Pacific convoy prepares to depart waters off Hawaii for a destination hundreds of miles away. Such convoys were the logistical lifeline of the U.S. offensive against Japan during World War II.

replaced on December 26 by Brig. Gen. Henry B. Claggett, who had flown in from Manila. MacArthur wanted his own men directing the efforts to reinforce him. Barnes temporarily became Claggett's chief of staff. It was intended that General George Brett would arrive from an Allied conference in Chungking, China, to take command of all U.S. Army forces in Australia. He reached Australia on February 23, 1942, and would remain in command until MacArthur arrived from the Philippines.

In late December, though, there was a rush to support the deteriorating American position in the Philippines. On the evening of December 28, *Pensacola* stood out to sea, joined by the fastest of the transports, *Chaumont* and *Holbrook*. *Bloemfontein* caught up with them on January 2, 1942. Together, they carried two battalions of artillerymen, their guns, and ammunition.

The next day, *Pensacola* reached the Torres Strait between Australia and New Guinea, where she was relieved by the heavy cruiser USS *Houston* (CA-39) and several destroyers, which escorted the mini-convoy to Darwin while *Pensacola* prepared to return stateside.

Most of the artillerymen went ashore at Darwin due to new Japanese activity in Borneo, which effectively cut them off from the Philippines. Only the 2nd Battalion, 131st Field Artillery Regiment continued on to Surabaya in eastern Java to support Allied forces there. When the Dutch surrendered, most of the 2/131 became POWs for the duration of the war. The officers of the field-artillery headquarters, however, evacuated Java on February 27, 1942, and returned safely to Australia.

The rapid advance of the Japanese in the Dutch East Indies also blocked 17 out of 18 P-40 fighters from getting through. They made it as far as Java, where they joined the fight, but their pilots and crew were evacuated on March 1, and the planes were turned over to the Dutch.

As for the A-24 dive bombers, 11 of them made it to Java, but all were lost in combat. Most of the rest would later be shot down on July 26, 1942, while attacking Japanese shipping off Buna, New Guinea. None of the planes, men, or supplies of the Pensacola Convoy ever reached MacArthur's command in the Philippines.

As for the fate of the ships in the convoy, *Republic* would survive the conflict and was converted to a hospital ship at war's end. *Chaumont* would also be converted to a hospital ship and renamed USS *Samaritan* (AH-10). *Holbrook* survived the war doing the important work of carrying men and supplies wherever they were needed. *Meigs* was sunk on February 19, 1942, in a sudden attack by Japanese bombers on Darwin harbor.

Halstead was also in the harbor at Darwin with *Meigs* but was the only ship not destroyed or damaged on February 19 or during follow-up raids. Only six men were aboard *Halstead* during the repeated attacks; manning the two available machine guns and using skilful steering, they warded off every Japanese assault. These six men were awarded the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal. *Halstead* survived the war and was decommissioned in 1949.

Coast Farmer was sunk by the Japanese submarine *I-11* near Jervis Bay in New South Wales in July 1942. *Bloemfontein* was used by the Americans as a troop-and-cargo ship for the remainder of the war and returned to the Netherlands at the conflict's end. *Niagara* was sunk on May 23, 1943, by Japanese bombs off Tulagi during the battle for Guadalcanal.

Pensacola was active throughout the war. Among other assignments she participated in the Battle of Midway, the Battle of Santa Cruz, the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, the Battle of Tassafaronga (where she was heavily damaged), and the Battle of Leyte Gulf. She would survive the war, as well as two atomic-blast tests at Bikini Atoll. In 1948, her hulk was sunk off the Washington state coast as a barrier reef. □

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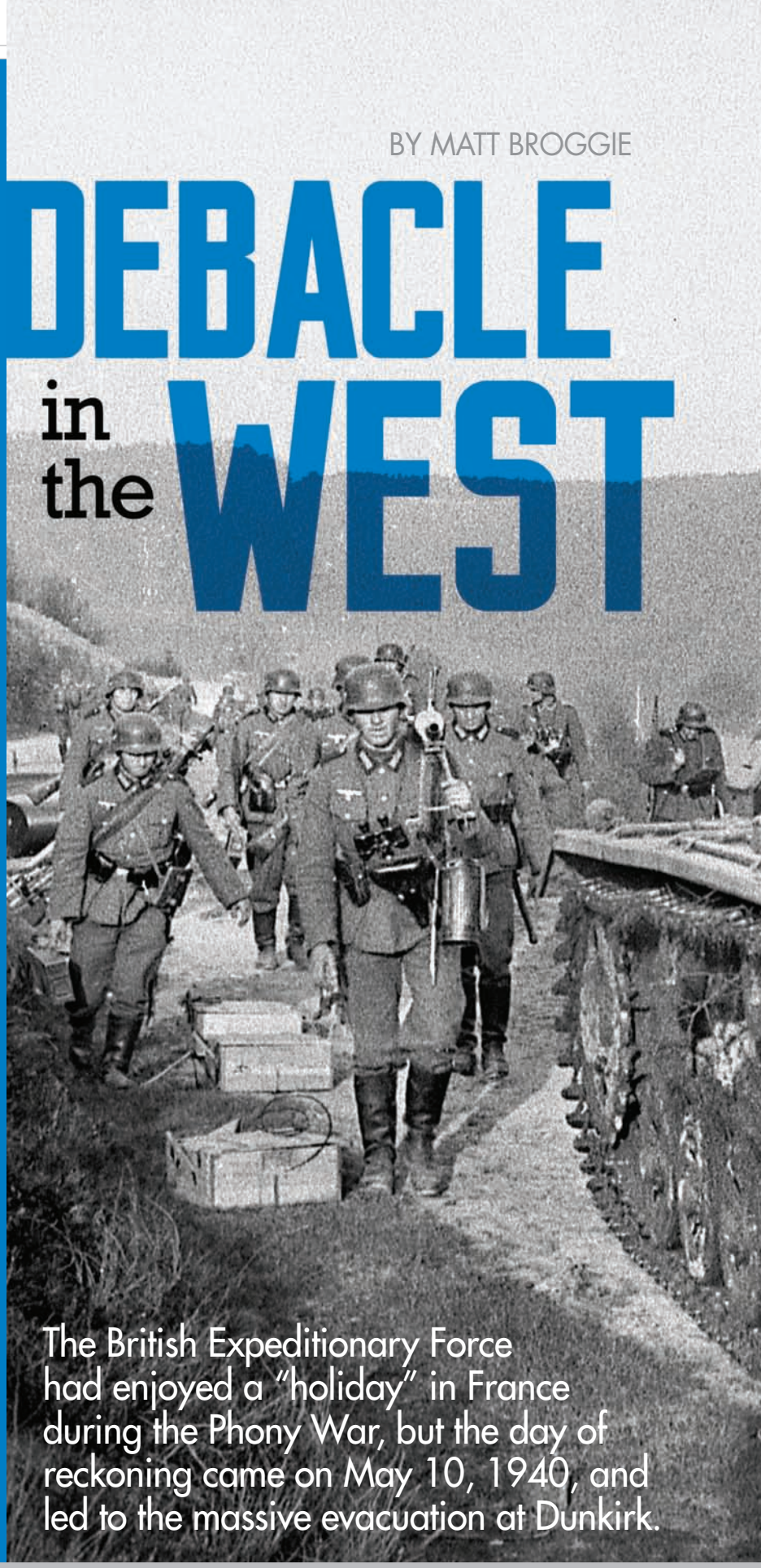
BY MATT BROGGIE

DEBACLE in the WEST



The British Expeditionary Force had enjoyed a "holiday" in France during the Phony War, but the day of reckoning came on May 10, 1940, and led to the massive evacuation at Dunkirk.

"Thanks—seven divisions of them concentrated at one point, the weakest position in the Western defenses—that was what did it." So stated historian William L. Shirer's as the reason for the swift German victory in the West in May 1940.

When the German blitzkrieg came crashing through European borders that spring, Allied defenses quickly crumbled under the pressure, causing one of the worst defeats in British military history. In the chaos of the retreat, though, Allied leaders pulled off an evacuation of British and other troops from France, Operation Dynamo, that became known as one of the greatest miracles of World War II.

Britain had declared war on Germany after Nazi forces invaded Poland in September 1939, sending the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to France beginning on September 9, 1939. For nine months, soldiers had nothing more to do than march eastward and enjoy whatever pleasantries French culture had to offer. This period, labeled the "Phony War" by British troops, lulled the BEF into a false sense of security. The beginning of combat operations, though, exposed two glaring weaknesses that would handicap the BEF's effectiveness: undertrained, ill-equipped soldiers, and an inaccurate estimation of Germany's military capabilities.

The German Army eventually launched its invasion of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands in May, catching the BEF off guard. Their lack of discipline and inadequate training doomed Britain's chances of repelling the overwhelming numbers of the German Army. Many British soldiers later admitted they did not know how to fight in combat and made poor decisions when under attack. Journal entries of BEF soldiers often described the time in France before the German breakout as some form of holiday experience rather than war. Most BEF soldiers had little to no combat experience, and therefore had no realistic expectations about warfare. As they marched into battle, they demonstrated naiveté about the dangers that awaited them.

On May 1, British officer Peter Hadley wrote in his diary about the day his battalion arrived in the coastal city of Le Tourquet: "It was not intended to be a seaside holiday, although it developed into something like one for most of the battalion." Many of the soldiers of the BEF "succumbed to the boredom of the Phony War, with the result that their preparations were lackadaisical."

In these early weeks, things became so casual for some British soldiers that "shopping expeditions" were common. On May 9, Captain Basil Bartlett "bought a tennis racket for thirty francs." Nonetheless, Bartlett suspected the pleasant time in France would end and later penned in his diary that "this [was] perhaps a rather optimistic gesture." In addition to the "tennis clubs," British soldiers enjoyed nightclubs, cinemas, and bars. In Lille, businesses thrived off of British commerce so much that citizens who had evacuated began "to trickle back" and "ordinary trade [was] at least up to normal." Unfortunately, Bartlett's suspicion was accurate, and this holiday atmosphere was fated not to last. Soon, the British would have to flee for their lives.

German infantrymen march past a PzKpfw. III tank that has momentarily halted during the rapid advance of the Wehrmacht through France and the Low Countries in the spring of 1940. The German onslaught on May 10 shattered the uneasy months of peace that had been labeled the 'Phony War.'

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-124-0245-10A; Photo: Heinz Boesig

Hitler's offensive in western Europe began on May 10, the day after Captain Bartlett purchased his tennis racket. "So, there's to be a real war after all," he wrote in his diary. Some soldiers welcomed the outbreak of fighting, since it disrupted the routine of boredom and monotony, generating terrific excitement. At five in the morning on May 10, British soldier Wilf Saunders of the 48th Division's signal unit woke up to the "terrific noise of [antiaircraft] fire." He ran outside and saw three bombers flying overhead "being fired upon to no effect." As he scurried to his duties, he felt a "highly elated sort of feeling" and thought to himself: action at last!

Saunders later confessed, "We were too excited and ignorant to go for cover till after they passed."

On the evening of May 15, there was a "continuous roar of artillery and…a stream of refugees from the direction of the guns." The Germans had bombed the Belgian capital of Brussels, and Saunders could see the flames in the distance.

The movement of the BEF and French armies into Belgium was exactly what Hitler had hoped for. "In the fashion of a bull reacting to a matador's cloak," the BEF fell into the trap laid out by German Field Marshal Erich von Manstein. In accordance with Manstein's plan, a portion of Germany's forces had invaded the Netherlands in the hopes of drawing the main force of the Allies into northern Belgium.

THE ARMORED DIVISIONS STRETCHED 100 MILES IN THREE COLUMNS ON THE DAY THEY CHARGED THROUGH THE ARDENNES.

Imperial War Museum

On September 16, 1939, British soldiers of the 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers disembark from the steamer *Royal Sovereign* at the French port of Cherbourg.

The BEF immediately crossed into Belgium and set up defensive positions around the River Dyle. This was in accordance with the Allied operation known as Plan D (Dyle). All along the journey, German bombers dropped their payloads on the British forces; Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive-bombers constantly flew overhead and dived low to harass the columns of troops. Saun-

The Allies took the bait, leaving the Germans free to focus their efforts on a weakened breakthrough point defended by two French armies: the 9th Army, commanded by General Andre-Georges Corap, and the 2nd Army, commanded by General Charles Huntzinger.

Neither of these armies comprised the best troops and equipment the French could muster, since they were deployed in an area thought to be safe from direct German attack—along the Meuse River, west of the Ardennes Forest. Allied commanders believed the Ardennes was impenetrable and thus required minimal attention, but the Germans chose the area as the primary focus of their offensive.

Despite a hard-fought defense by the French, the Germans inevitably broke through; Corap's army was no match for the superior speed, radio communication, and–above all–leadership of the German divisions. This break in the defensive line initiated the withdrawal of all French, Belgian, and British forces. Military historian Theodore Draper described it as "the original sin which poisoned the position of every part of the Allied line." British Prime Minister Winston Churchill described the invasion as "a German eruption [that] swept like a sharp scythe around the right and rear of the armies of the north."

According to British historian and retired Maj. Gen. Julian Thompson, German forces greatly outnumbered those of the Allies. The French had 84 division, but 12 were static divisions stationed in the Maginot Line. The 72 French mobile divisions, combined with the four divisions of the BEF, totaled 76 Allied divisions, while the Germans had 116 divisions at the time of the invasion. But the key to the German advance, more than its superior numbers, was the thrust by seven armored divisions through the Ardennes Forest.

Choosing the Ardennes as the main point of attack was cunning strategy and brought rapid success for the German army. The German tanks involved were unprecedented in their number, concentration, mobility, and striking power; the armored divisions stretched 100 miles in three columns on the day they charged through the Ardennes. The massive German Army faced French, Belgian, Dutch, and British forces that were completely unprepared for an invasion force of such magnitude.

Thompson attributes the ease of German success to the fact that "too many of the BEF lacked the demanding, realistic, and exhaustive training that is one of the ingredients in inuring soldiers to the unpleasant surprises and shocks of war."

Deployed along the banks of the River Dyle, the British linked up with the Belgian Army on their left flank to the north and the First French Army on the right flank to the south. It was in this position that many British soldiers made their first contact with the German Army. Captain Henry Walker of the 7th Guards Brigade

recalled his first experience of German shellfire. "None of us—and this was a great fault in our training—had been prepared for receiving shellfire. Nobody had warned us what it was like, and what was dangerous, and what could be ignored."

Without this training, members of the 7th Guards Brigade instinctively ran for cover or jumped into nearby trenches every time an artillery shell came whistling overhead. "It was a very undignified procedure, because many of these shells were completely harmless."

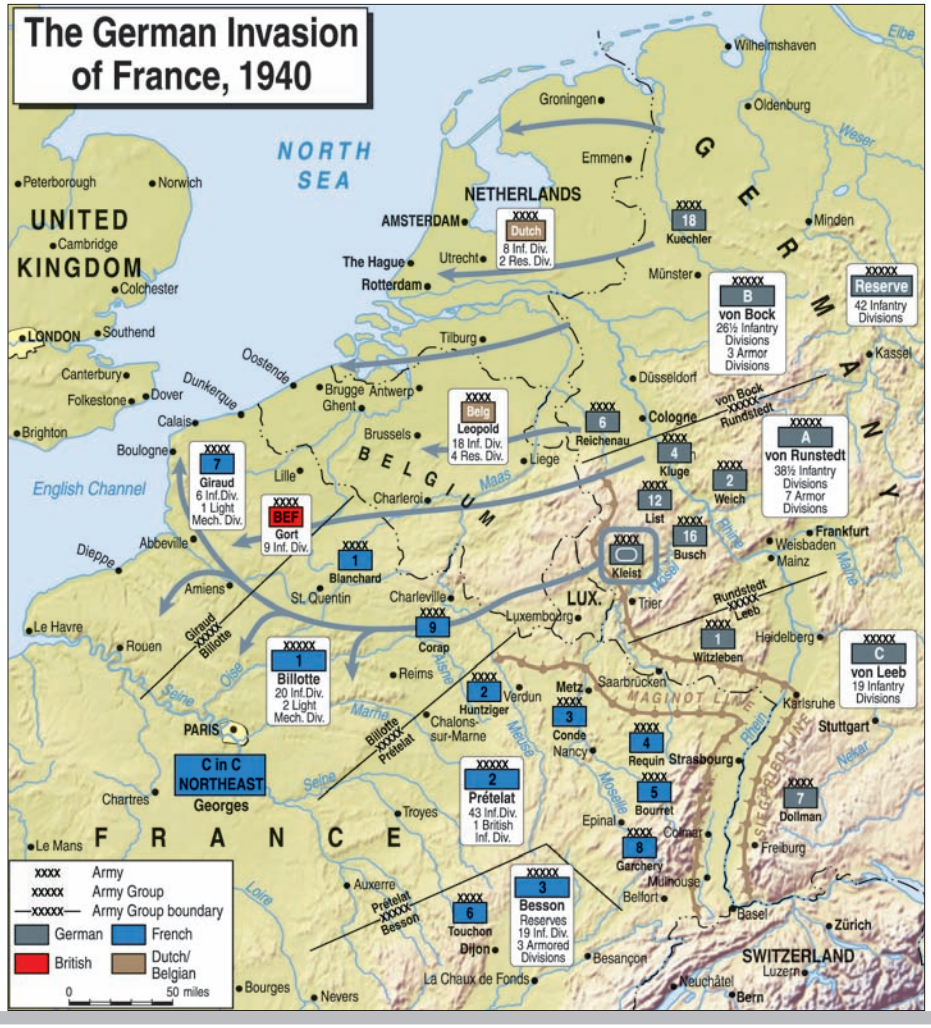
Once in contact, German soldiers displayed another advantage over the British. Private Robert Brown of the Royal Norfolk Regiment noticed a significant difference in the German mindset compared to that of his countrymen: "The Germans were more ruthless than we were. Whatever they wanted to do, they did it, no matter who was in the way." Brown recalled avoiding church property to lay telephone wire, while the Germans would use churches as observation posts or defensive positions. The Wehrmacht displayed a higher degree of commitment and tenacity than the British soldiers, who fought a "polite" war and avoided trespassing on private property and unnecessary destruction.

Many soldiers of the BEF were not prepared for the psychological effects of having to kill the enemy. Peter Vaux of the Royal Tank Regiment remembered how his machine gunner was plagued with sympathy for a German soldier they caught in the open. The machine gunner fired as the German "ran down the street, zigzagging with the tracer bullets flying on either side of him." He escaped into a garden, and Vaux recalled his machine gunner feeling so sorry for the lone German soldier that he had nightmares about him for the next few nights.

Another critical difference between the German and British militaries was the disparate level of logistical preparation. German generals coordinated their divisions' movements and communicated with one another continually during the offensive. In contrast, British organization disintegrated as soon as units entered combat.

Furthermore, soldiers of the BEF were often placed on the front lines of battle with minimal weapons training. Private Sidney Nuttall of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps was placed in position to cover an area and fire on any approaching German units. Nuttall had never before fired his rifle. "When I say I hadn't fired a shot," he recalled, "I really mean that. I'd never fired a shot in training, because I hadn't been trained." Nuttall eventually fired at someone he suspected to be a German soldier 100 yards away, but he was unaware that his rifle's sight was set at 600 yards. "It went bang, and

ABOVE: British soldiers of the 2nd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery train in the French countryside. When the Germans struck, many British troops deployed in France had little training and some had never fired their weapons. BELOW: During the German attack, Army Groups A and B swept across the Low Countries and France, reaching the English Channel and forcing the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force at Dunkirk.



ullstein bild, The Granger Collection, NY

A German column, including armored and motorized vehicles, pauses momentarily as it penetrates the dense Ardennes Forest during the opening days of the attack. Allied planners before the war considered the Ardennes impenetrable.

the chap kept on walking. He never even ducked." Not all British soldiers lacked training to the extent of Private Nuttall, but the responsibility given to him despite his inexperience indicated how desperate the BEF was to place men in uniform and how poorly they matched up against the German Wehrmacht. Unable to spare even the most poorly trained soldier, Nuttall's commanding officers forced him to learn while in combat.

As the Germans broke through to the south of the BEF, a withdrawal was ordered to prevent the entire force from being outflanked. The British, who faced relatively light German pressure compared to the French to their south, were bewildered at the withdrawal order. Second Lieutenant Peter Martin of the Cheshire Regiment described the withdrawal as "incomprehensible…as my battalion hadn't been troubled desperately by the Germans at all." Captain Anthony Rhodes of the Royal Engineers wrote, "On the 14th, we got the order to withdraw, but we had no idea what had happened. We were simply told we were to withdraw back to the River Escaut."

Captain Rhodes didn't realize that several panzer divisions had broken through French defenses on the right flank of the BEF and were racing along the Somme River to Abbeville on the English Channel. This German advance had split the majority of the French armies off from the British and Belgian armies. The supply lines of the BEF originated at the ports of Cherbourg and Brest in western France; as soon as the panzer divisions reached the channel, those supply lines would be completely severed, and the Allies would be encircled.

In an attempt to "cut the net which the Germans had cast across the rear of the Allied armies," commander of the BEF, Lord John Gort, launched one of the only counteroffensives of the entire campaign. Aware that German panzers were charging through the right flank of the BEF, Lord Gort knew his supply lines were in jeopardy. To slow the German advance, three British divisions, the 12th, 23rd, and 46th, were sent south of Arras into the path of the panzers. These three divisions had antitank guns and signals units (radio communications), but they had no artillery detachments. Each platoon possessed a single Bren machine gun. Approximately 25 percent of the soldiers sent to curb the panzer advance had not finished basic weapons training.

On May 20, the 7th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment of the 23rd Division spent its entire supply of antitank ammunition against General Erwin Rommel's 7th Panzer Division. Due to poor training, the Sussex Regiment resorted to attacking the tanks with Bren guns and rifles. Needless to say, the British suffered devastating casualties. The Germans killed 631 members of the 7th Battalion's original 701. The remaining 70 became POWs of the Germans.

The next day, Lord Gort launched a more organized offensive with the hope of cutting off the panzers' own supply-and-communication lines and linking up with the French Army south of the Somme. This attack plan involved British tanks that were pulled off the defense line at the Escaut River in Belgium. The tanks had to cover 120 miles in five days to assist in the counteroffensive, and they met the Germans near the town of Arras.

"My great impression of the counterattack," Lt. Col. Peter Jeffreys recalled, "was the action by the 4th Royal Tanks. They were all regulars, but they were thrown into the battle in a very haphazard manner. They had travelled on their tracks for a very long way before this engagement." As the British tanks and infantry began their attack, they gained momentary success, but they were eventually thwarted when Rommel used his 88mm antiaircraft guns in an antitank role against the oncoming British armor. Rommel's ingenuity and the support of the Luftwaffe put an end to the only British tank attack of the campaign. The British lost 46 tanks at Arras, a stunning 62 percent of their armored strength.

Famed CBS News correspondent William L. Shirer was in Belgium at the time of the Battle of Arras. On May 20, he came across a group of British prisoners that he described as "a sad sight…some obviously shell-shocked, some wounded, all dead tired." Their physical appearance was especially alarming to Shirer, but it was not due to treatment from the Germans. "They were hollow-chested and skinny

and round-shouldered…. Typical, I concluded, of the youth that England neglected so criminally in the twenty-two postwar years."

Shirer continued to speak with the prisoners, and they told him their military training had begun nine months before the war started. "But it had not, as you could see," Shirer wrote in his diary, "made up for the bad diet, the lack of fresh air and sunshine and physical training of the postwar years."

As he conversed with the prisoners, German infantry marched by, and Shirer could not help but notice the stark contrast. "The Germans, bronzed, clean-cut physically, healthy-looking as lions, chests developed and all. It was part of the unequal fight."

Shirer's observation of the British and German soldiers captured the disparity in the levels of training between the two militaries. He blamed the British soldiers' scrawny physiques not only on inadequate training, but also on England's complacency towards the growing threat posed by Germany. He implied that Britain had time to recognize the need for a well-trained, well-prepared, youthful military, but that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had instead opted to bury his head in the sand while Hitler violated the Versailles Treaty over and over again. When Britain was finally forced to respond to German aggression, an undertrained, unfit, underequipped British Expeditionary Force was sent to war.

Once Allied forces were thrown into chaos from the overwhelming German advance, the BEF began making a hasty retreat. British soldier Harry Sargeant later remembered, "From this time onwards, it was just a succession of retreats at night, 40 miles in one case, and very unsuccessful attempts to get rest and food during the day."

As the bulk of German forces were pushing from the southeast, the BEF was driven toward the English Channel along the northern coast of France. The German advance was so fierce and consistent that Allied soldiers were constantly on the move and had no opportunity to rest. Marching at night and digging defenses during the day, British soldiers became exhausted. Peter Hadley recalled actually sleeping while marching, "a feat I should never have considered possible, if I had not experienced it."

As they continued to retreat, British soldiers lived in fear of the ever-advancing German juggernaut. No matter how far a day's retreat would take them, they were never out of reach of the Luftwaffe, and always in the distance, they could hear the booming of German artillery. Confusion and disorder pervaded the British ranks.

"We had no idea of the general situation at all," wrote Harry Sargeant. "All we knew was that the Germans seemed to be everywhere, and that reinforcements were being continually asked for and there weren't any free to send to us."

Peter Hadley tried to find any news he could from other British units or by portable wireless. On May 28, Hadley did not know what state the BEF was in, nor did he know what the next step was for his division. From the "blazing fires near and far" around his unit's position, he was sure that a battle was taking place and that the Germans were not too far away. That afternoon, he counted 64 German fighters and bombers flying overhead. He began to hear rumors that "Calais was still holding out, and that Dunkirk remained in our hands." At this point, he recognized their only remaining hope was to reach Dunkirk, but he was doubtful his unit could make it to the coast before being cut off by the Germans. "We were 40 miles or so away, and I did not feel particularly optimistic," Hadley wrote.

The situation for the Allies became even more dismal when King Leopold of Belgium unexpectedly ordered the surrender of his army to Germany. In a speech to the House of Commons, Churchill stated that Leopold's decision was made "suddenly, without prior consultation, with the least possible notice, without the advice of his ministers and upon his own personal act."

To some members of the BEF, the Belgian capitulation came as no surprise. Captain Bartlett confided to his diary that "the Belgians have shown very little stomach for the fight. It's true that with their horse-drawn, 1914 artillery and their totally inadequate air force, they didn't stand a chance." The outdated equipment of the Belgian Army stood out in comparison even to the British equipment. The Belgian surrender completely exposed the flank of the retreating troops. The sole mission of the BEF was now to retreat to Dunkirk and evacuate France as quickly as possible.

As retreating soldiers raced to Dunkirk, the dilemma of evacuating over 300,000 men loomed dauntingly large. The British Admiralty developed a plan that required every available naval ship as well as hundreds of brave civilians. The Allied armies were spread over 50 miles of shoreline; every day, thousands of retreating soldiers arrived at the beaches looking to escape from the Germans. On May 26, a nationwide broadcast crackled on British radios: "The Admiralty wants men experienced in marine internal combustion engine or service enginemen in yachts or motorboats. Others who have had charge of motorboats and good knowledge of coastal navigation are needed as uncertified second hands. Applications should be made to the nearest registrar, Royal Naval Reserve, or to the fishery officer." Operation Dynamo had commenced.

Merchant mariners, tugboat crews, lifeboat crews, yachters, sail boaters, London fireboat crews, boaters from the Thames Estuary, and anyone with general seamanship knowledge

Imperial War Museum

British troops march toward the front on May 12, 1940, two days after the German onslaught began as Belgian refugees stream away from the advancing Germans. Within days the British would also be in retreat before the swift enemy offensive.

volunteered their services to evacuate soldiers from France. John Osborne heard his seaman experience was requested while attending Captain O.M. Watts' navigation school. He assumed the announcement was an invitation to an interview with the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, so he "went home, smartened myself up, [and] put on my best suit."

When he learned that the radio broadcast he had heard was not an invitation to a job interview but to a desperate rescue effort, Osborne had volunteered just the same; his courage was repeated by many British volunteers during Operation Dynamo.

Even though Dunkirk lay just 40 miles due east of southern England, the rescue boats had to travel at least twice that far to bypass known minefields. The small, shallow-draft civilian craft were needed to navigate low tide and ferry soldiers from the beach to larger ships offshore.

John Osborne was assigned to a seven-man crew on a 30-foot lifeboat taken from a larger ship. His boat lined up with four or five other lifeboats that were all in tow behind a tug. The group departed Britain well after sunset "for a midnight rendezvous off the Dunkirk beaches…. My vivid and lasting impression of this stage of the operation is of a calm, flat sea covered with an armada of assorted ships and boats."

Under cover of darkness in the early morning, Osborne's boat group moved toward the beaches of Dunkirk. The tide was out, and therefore "only small vessels with relatively shallow draught could approach nearer than 12 miles from the shore." The Luftwaffe was heavily bombing Dunkirk, and artillery shells constantly poured down on the beaches. Several buildings and oil tanks were on fire, casting thick, dark clouds of smoke across the scene.

When Osborne first witnessed the soldiers on the beach, he was impressed at their organization as they formed long columns anxiously waiting their turn for evacuation. "They were all dead beat," he recalled, "having had a terrible time fighting their way to the beaches." The tug took his lifeboat in as far as possible, and then the seven crew members took to the oars. His boat made it to shore, and immediately 30 British soldiers piled in.

"We rowed away from the shore and took our 'passengers' to the nearest craft lying off shore that we could find, a tug, a drifter, a trawler, anything that could risk coming in so close," he recalled.

After dropping off the soldiers, Osborne and his crew headed back to the beach for another load. When they hit the beach the second time, a crowd of French soldiers ran out to their boat and climbed aboard. Osborne did not discriminate between French and British soldiers and helped them aboard. The boat began to struggle in the surf, and Osborne was forced to jump into the water to keep the bow pointed into the waves. "At one time I was almost up to my neck in the water…still in my interview suit!" he remembered.

Ed Parker was a coxswain of the Margate lifeboats. He learned of the trouble the BEF was in and called the rest of his crew, who were "standing by in their favorite pub, playing a quiet game of darts." He asked them if "they'd take the boat to Dunkirk to help rescue our boys. That was a shock to them, but they all volunteered without a murmur."

When Ed Parker first witnessed the scene as he approached the beach in his Margate lifeboat, he saw "the shells bursting and fires raging" and thought "it was like hell." His lifeboat received wounded soldiers from the hospital at La Panne, which was being shelled by German artillery. Some of the wounded were

CONFUSION AND DISORDER PERVADED THE BRITISH RANKS. "WE HAD NO IDEA OF THE GENERAL SITUATION AT ALL. ALL WE KNEW WAS THAT THE GERMANS SEEMED TO BE EVERYWHERE."

National Archives

floated out to his crew on rafts, while others were carried in the arms of soldiers wading into the water. Parker began ferrying the wounded to a nearby destroyer.

One myth of the Dunkirk evacuation maintains that all evacuees had to be transported directly from the beaches due to the destruction of the port at Dunkirk. According to Royal Navy history, however, not only was the harbor intact during Operation Dynamo, but 239,446 soldiers boarded ships from the harbor. The remaining 98,780 troops (nearly 30 percent of Allied forces) who were stranded on the beaches around Dunkirk relied on the efforts of the Royal Navy and hundreds of volunteers like John Osborne and Ed Parker, with their small lifeboats, to snatch them out of France.

Despite Peter Hadley's doubts, he and his BEF unit reached the English Channel 10 miles east of Dunkirk at Bray Dunes on May 31. "The beach was an extraordinary sight," he recalled. The remains of the BEF, like "some mighty ant heap upturned by a giant's foot," stretched down the enormous beach as far as he could see. As he scanned the scene, he saw troops standing at the water's edge waiting their turn to be transported to the ships offshore while others huddled in the limited shelter of the sand dunes. He led his unit across the beach and eventually met up with other members of his division.

With thousands of soldiers spread across the beach, Hadley worried about German dive-bombers and strafing fighters, but on that day, due to the valiant efforts of the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the low-hanging clouds, there was "no sign of German planes, and an uncanny quiet reigned along the beach."

Although many British soldiers expressed frustration with the RAF as German bombers relentlessly attacked the beaches, the British fighters worked tirelessly to protect the soldiers on the ground. On May 30-31, British Fighter Command conducted patrols at an average strength of three to four squadrons; eight patrols in all were flown, involving 289 sorties.

While the RAF flew patrols, Hadley waited on the beach. Eventually, a large rowboat crewed by civilian sailors removed troops from his section of beach. Hadley's turn finally came, and he was ferried to a paddle steamer, the *Duchess of Fife*, which then departed for Britain.

Captain Bartlett arrived at Dunkirk on May 27. "Dunkirk was a nasty shock. I knew it had been bombed, but I hadn't realized quite how seriously." Bartlett arrived before any organized evacuation from the beaches had begun. He spent his first day organizing the endless line of troops pouring into the city, destroying any abandoned equipment or sensitive documents,

National Archives

ABOVE: British dead and the debris of war litters the beach at Dunkirk following the British evacuation during Operation Dynamo. The Germans captured large quantities of weapons and supplies, while 50,000 British soldiers were left in France,11,000 of them killed and the remainder taken prisoner. OPPOSITE: British soldiers, trapped in the open on the beach at Dunkirk, fire their rifles at low-flying German fighter planes intent on strafing them. British veterans remembered that the rifle fire had the desired effect of driving away some aggressive German pilots.

and gathering information on the pending evacuation. He moved to the beach in the evening and watched as soldiers flooded into the dunes all night. He assumed command of his section of beach and divided troops into groups of 20.

"It was terribly exciting to hear sailors' voices and the splash of oars," Bartlett wrote in his diary. "Again and again, the boats came in, and we duly loaded them up." He continued to help load the soldiers onto the boats throughout the night. "It was queer to be loading up strange soldiers into strange boats and handing them over to strange sailors." Bartlett eventually put himself on a boat and was taken to a destroyer sitting offshore.

On May 29, Harry Sargeant was able to get safely aboard a "fair-sized French steamer" at Dunkirk amid a German artillery barrage. Wilf Saunders narrowly escaped the German advance and made it inside Dunkirk's defenses. Already exhausted, he still had 20 miles to go before making it to the beach. Finally arriving at the shore, Saunders waded into water up to his armpits and heaved himself onto a small motorboat, only to have it capsize and sink as it was hit broadside by a wave. He spotted a second boat near the shore and waded over only to see that boat get swarmed by desperate soldiers, capsize, and sink. He was forced to go back to the shore and wait.

Finally, a third boat appeared, and with the help of its crew, Saunders was lifted aboard and taken to a large ship and embarked for Britain. Similar scenes took place across the beaches. Boatload by boatload, Allied soldiers streamed out of France, until all that remained among the dunes were the smoking wrecks of destroyed British vehicles, artillery pieces, anti-tank guns, and other heavy equipment.

The BEF had come to France with no concept of what the German forces were about to unleash. The discipline and training that were necessary to effectively fight against the German blitzkrieg were clearly lacking throughout British ranks. As Hitler was staging his panzer divisions for a devastating offensive, soldiers of the BEF were comparing their time in France to a holiday experience.

However deficient the BEF was in proper training, British civilians compensated with audacity and valor. British historian John Masefield summarized the civilian contribution: "Hope and help came together in their power into the minds of thousands of simple men, who went out in Operation Dynamo and plucked them from ruin."

From the beginning of Operation Dynamo until Churchill deemed it complete on June 4, 1940, a total of 338,226 Allied soldiers were lifted from 50 miles of coastline surrounded by the Germans.

Operation Dynamo was a valiant, herculean effort to evacuate, regroup, and fight the forces of the Third Reich another day. □

By Christopher Miskimon

Naval History and Heritage Command

During the desperate Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, an avalanche of American shells strike home against the Japanese battleship *Kirishima* and churn the surrounding waters.

Naval Showdown in the Solomons

The campaign for the Solomon Islands resulted in several of the most hard-fought naval battles in the Pacific.

THE FIRST NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL BEGAN WITH A DELAY. SHORTLY before 1:30 AM on November 13, 1942, the American cruiser USS *Helena* spotted a Japanese task force: "Radar contact. Bearing, 312 True. Distance, 27,100 yards."

Ahead of the U.S. task force sailed the Japanese Kongo-class battleship *Hiei* along with her sister ship *Kirishima* and a number of destroyers. The Japanese ships were sailing for Guadalcanal to shell Henderson Field, the American air base. The Japanese commander, Admiral Hiroaki Abe, had not expected to encounter enemy ships on the run into Guadalcanal, so the battleships' 14-inch cannons carried high-explosive incendiary shells in the gun tubes. The Japanese had to wait as the crews reloaded the main armament with armor-piercing rounds before they could open fire.

The situation proved complicated, however. *Hiei* carried only a few armor-piercing shells deep in the ship's magazines, and the large stores of explosive rounds for the shore bombardment stood in their way. It took eight minutes to get the high-explosive rounds stowed and to load the armor-piercing ammunition, but fortune favored the Japanese that night. The Americans failed to act quickly and did not fire a single shot during that time. Abe ordered *Hiei*'s searchlight switched on to help the task force spot the enemy ships and maintain their protective formation around the battleships.

When the powerful light shone out across the water, the real situation caused Abe shock, not satisfaction. The screening ships were too far apart, having drifted out of formation. *Hiei* was exposed. The USS *Atlanta*'s own searchlights snapped on. The American ship, an antiaircraft cruiser, was armed with 16 5-inch guns in eight turrets. *Atlanta*'s first salvo fell short, but after a quick range correction of 2,000 yards, rounds began slamming into *Hiei*. The shells had no effect on the thick armor of the Japanese ship's hull, but the 5-inch rounds did heavy damage to the superstructure. *Atlanta* also fired on a Japanese destroyer that had turned on its own spotlight.

Hiei returned fire, and several 14-inch rounds slammed into the American antiaircraft cruiser. In all, the ship suffered some 30 hits before a torpedo struck her, lifting *Atlanta* out of the water for a moment. Power failed as more rounds hit the hapless American ship.

The battle had become a melee. In the words of one observer, it was a "no-holds-barred barroom brawl, in which someone turned out the lights and everyone started swinging in every direction, only this was ten thousand times worse."

Even in all the confusion, *Hiei* remained the focus of the American ships. The Japanese battleship was easily the largest target in the immediate area, and her searchlights pierced the darkness. The heavy cruiser USS *Philadelphia* and several American destroyers fired on *Hiei*. The destroyers' guns were ineffective against the battleship's hull, so they continued to focus on its pagoda-like superstructure; debris tumbled down from it onto the gun turrets below.

The punishment *Hiei* took in those few minutes was just the beginning of the hardship and agony the ship's crew would experience; the ship sank the next day with the loss of 188 of her crew. It was the first Japanese battleship lost during the war, but it would be far from the last ship to sink to the

EMERGENCY PRODUCTION!

Rush Production of U.S. Silver Dollars Creates 2nd Lowest Mintage in History

One of the most popular ways to buy silver is the Silver Eagle—legal-tender U.S. Silver Dollars struck in one ounce of 99.9% pure silver. When the COVID-19 pandemic began sweeping the world, demand skyrocketed. But there was a problem...

U.S. Mint Halts Production

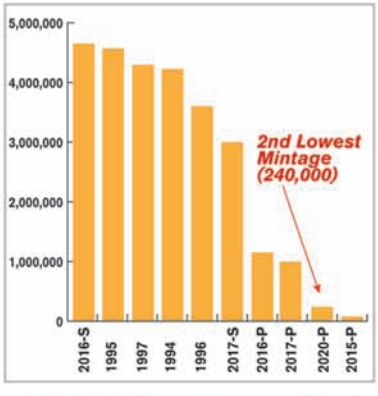
West Point, the U.S. Mint branch that normally strikes Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) Silver Eagles, went into lockdown. Prices quickly shot up, and freshly struck Silver Eagles became much harder to find at an affordable price. To meet the rising demand, the U.S. Mint knew it had to act—and act fast.

Philadelphia Steps Up

For just 13 days, the U.S. Mint struck an "Emergency Production" run of U.S. Silver Dollars at the Philadelphia Mint. This was great for silver buyers, and *really* great for collectors. Here's why:

The Mystery of Silver Bullion

A coin's value is often tied to its rarity. One way to determine a coin's rarity is by its mint mark—a small letter indicating where a coin was struck. Since Silver Eagles are almost always produced solely in West Point, the coins don't feature one of these mint marks. But this year's Silver Eagles were also produced in Philly—so few (a scant 240,000) that they are now the second smallest mintage of Silver Eagles ever struck! So how do we tell a 2020(W) Silver Eagle from a 2020(P)?



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Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC) is one of the world's leading third-party coin grading services. Thanks to some skilled detective work, they have certified these coins as being struck at the Philadelphia Mint during this special Emergency Production run. What's more, a number of these coins have been graded as near-flawless Mint State-69 (MS69) condition—just one point away from absolute perfection!

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Condition:	**Mint State-69 (MS69)**
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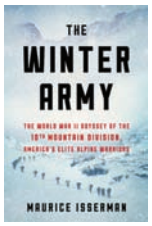
bottom of the waters around Guadalcanal.

The story of the naval battles for Guadalcanal is expertly conveyed in Jeffrey R. Cox's ***Blazing Star, Setting Sun: The Conclusion of the Guadalcanal-Solomons Naval Campaign of World War II*** (Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2020, 512 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover).

This is a thoroughly detailed account of the naval fighting in the Solomons. Rather than summarizing the action in a few pages or a single chapter, this work covers the fighting with almost minute-by-minute, blow-by-blow descriptions of officers making decisions and issuing orders in the heat of battle and sailors struggling to survive the consequences of those decisions. Despite this mass of detail, the narrative flows smoothly, keeping the reader focused on the action and able to follow the movements of multiple ships in the confusion of the fighting. The author's analysis of the campaign is straightforward and logical. This is his third book on naval warfare in the Pacific during the war's early years, and it stand alongside those previous volumes in quality and storytelling.

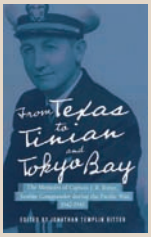


The Winter Army: The World War II Odyssey of the 10th Mountain Division, America's Elite Alpine Warriors (Maurice Isserman, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishers, New York, 2020, 318 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $28.00, hardcover).

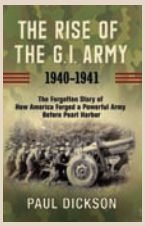
April 14, 1945, proved a hard day for the GIs of the 10th Mountain Division. The 85th Infantry Regiment attacked Hill 913 near Italy's Po Valley, and the action soon turned into a meatgrinder. Second Lieutenant Robert Dole led the 2nd Platoon of I Company as it fell under concentrated German attack. Mortar bombs, artillery shells, and machine-gun fire ripped into the unit. Dole's radioman, William Sims, lay badly wounded and exposed to enemy fire. Dole left cover to drag his man to safety but suffered a bad hit himself, just behind the right shoulder. It would be six hours before he could be evacuated to a field hospital. He spent over three years in army hospitals, but he never regained the use of his right arm. Dole received a Bronze Star for attempting to save his radioman and went on to a career in politics, eventually becoming a presidential candidate.

Dole's story is just one of many in this new history of one of the U.S. Army's most famous divisions. Most of the unit's men never gained Dole's fame, but they struggled and suffered alongside him in the Italian Theater in the final months of World War II. Mountain divisions were common in European armies, but the United States only raised one—for the first time—during this war. This book traces the unit's formation, training, and combat service from the slopes of Colorado to the peaks of Italy.

New and Noteworthy

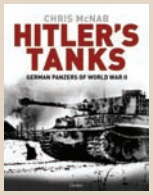


From Texas to Tinian and Tokyo Bay: The Memoirs of Captain J. R. Ritter, Seabee Commander During the Pacific War, 1942–1945 (Edited by Jonathan Templin Ritter, University of North Texas Press, 2020, $24.95, hardcover). This memoir reveals the author's service in the Seabees during the war. The work is clearly written and meticulous in detail.



The Rise of the G.I. Army 1940–1941: The Forgotten Story of How America Forged a Powerful Army Before Pearl Harbor (Paul Dickson, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2020, $30.00, hardcover). This book reveals how the U.S. Army organized itself for the coming war. Even before the nation's industrial mobilization, the Army created a vast network of installations able to handle the massive influx of recruits.

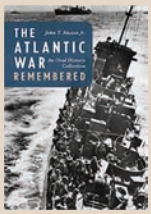
Dead Reckoning: The Story of How Johnny Mitchell and His Fighter Pilots Took On Admiral Yamamoto and Avenged Pearl Harbor (Dick Lehr, Harper Collins, 2020, $28.99, hardcover). When codebreakers learned where Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto—the architect of Pearl Harbor—would be, a mission was planned to shoot down his plane. This book tells that story in full detail.



Hitler's Tanks: German Panzers of World War II (Chris McNab, Osprey Publishing, 2020, $40.00, hardcover). This well-illustrated book covers the development and operational history of all major German tank designs. Attention is also given to the training and tactics of their crews.

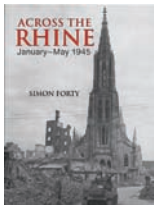
German Ground Forces of World War II: Complete Orders of Battle for Army Groups, Armies, Army Corps and Other Commands of the Wehrmacht and Waffen SS, September 1, 1939 to May 8, 1945 (William T. McCrodenm, Thomas E. Nutter, Savas Beatie, 2019, $54.95, hardcover). This is a thorough reference work compiling information on all the major commands of the Third Reich's ground forces.

Poland's Struggle: Before, During, and After the Second World War (Andrew Rawson, Pen and Sword Books, 2019, $34.95, hardcover). This overview describes Poland's fight to defend its borders and its efforts to deal with occupying forces.



The Atlantic War Remembered: An Oral History Collection (John T. Mason Jr., Naval Institute Press, 2020, $34.95, hardcover). This is a reprint of a classic work compiling the statements of naval officers who later attained senior rank. Most were junior leaders at the time and learned from these formative experiences.

The Battle of the Peaks and Long Stop Hill: Tunisia, April–May 1943 (Ian Mitchell, Helion Books, $59.95, hardcover). This book sheds light on a number of largely forgotten battles British troops fought in Tunisia shortly before the German capitulation. It is detailed with excellent maps.



Across the Rhine: January–May 1945 (Simon Forty, Casemate Publishers, Haverstown, Pennsylvania, 2020, 224 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $29.95, hardcover).

The final months of the Third Reich were a period of great tumult: continuing combat for the soldiers of both sides, hardship for the civilians trapped in between, and grinding horror for the inmates of the concentration camps. In Western Europe, Allied armies massed against what remained of Nazi Germany's once-formidable military power.

The only real obstacle to victory was the Rhine

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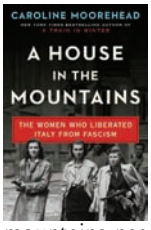
River, defended by desperate German troops. In the north, the British 21st Army Group conducted an airborne operation to enable an amphibious assault. To the south, General George S. Patton's Third Army made its own crossing, while in the center the U.S. First Army managed to seize an intact bridge at Remagen and create a bridgehead. After getting over the Rhine, nothing lay in front of the Allies except inadequate defenses, cities already half in rubble, and towns that surrendered if their leaders were wise. Often, however, they were not. Along the way, the Allied soldiers liberated the camps and ground the remaining resistance under the heel of artillery, air power, tank treads, and rifles.

The last days of Nazi Germany involved a complicated series of attacks and movements. This new book encapsulates the actions of the various armies and units involved. Each section contains detailed maps and is fully illustrated. This book does an excellent job of covering the war's twilight.

A House in the Mountains: The Women Who Liberated Italy from Fascism (Caroline Moorehead, Harper Collins, New York, 2020, 390 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, notes, index, $29.99, hardcover)



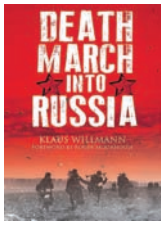
In late summer 1942, Italy changed sides in the war, and Nazi Germany occupied the northern portion of the country. A quartet of young women—Ada, Frida, Silvia, and Bianca—took to the mountains near Turin and became resistance fighters. They performed all the roles of the guerrilla: fighting; minelaying; transporting messages, weapons and supplies; and preventing the enemy from enjoying security in their rear areas. Ada's mountain home became their refuge as they struggled to evict their former allies.

This is the author's fourth book on resistance fighters, focusing on the personal stories of individuals and families at war. Detailed and well written, this work continues her tradition of thorough storytelling.

The Stringbags (Garth Ennis, Dead Reckoning Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 2020, 192 pp., illustrated, $29.95, softcover).

The Fairey Swordfish torpedo bomber was obsolete before the war started. Slow and poorly armed, the Swordfish bore the nickname "Stringbag," a term of both affection and irony. Despite all its disadvantages, Swordfish crews flew the plane on numerous daring missions. First, they struck the Italian Navy at anchor in Taranto in November 1940, sinking or damaging three battleships. Swordfish crews then helped in the hunt for the battleship *Bismarck* in May 1941; one of them launched a torpedo, wrecking the German ship's steering gear. In February 1942, Stringbags flew against German ships making the "Channel Dash," an attempted breakout from French ports. Despite its obsolescence, the Swordfish and its crews made their mark on the war effort.

This new graphic novel tells the story of the men who flew the Swordfish in vivid color and dramatic artwork. The author is well known for his historical military comics, and this new work incorporates his skill and attention to accuracy. Graphic novels are popular with younger readers, and books like these are a good way to introduce them to military history.



Death March Through Russia: The Memoir of Lothar Herrmann (Klaus Willman, Greenhill Books, South Yorkshire, UK, 2020, 256 pp., $32.95, hardcover).

Born in 1920, Lothar Her-

Simulation Gaming

BY JOSEPH LUSTER

CHANGE WWII HISTORY WITH A TOY-SOLDIER STYLE BATTLE FOR THE AGES, AND TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE TABLETOP.

TOTAL TANK SIMULATOR

PUBLISHER 505 GAMES • **GENRE** SIM
SYSTEM PC

For a World War II simulator with a surprisingly colorful twist, developer Noobz from Poland recently came through with the aptly titled *Total Tank Simulator*. The name is about as straightforward as the game itself, which gives players access to a couple of hundred different units and tasks them with setting out across over 50 distinct maps to take part in large-scale strategy battles. While there's no multiplayer yet at the time of this writing, there's still plenty of attention to detail and fun CPU warfare to be had in this 505 Games-published PC outing.

The unit variety is certainly a standout from the start, but what really separates *Total Tank Simulator* from the rest of the sim games out there is the unique visual style. Whether you're duking it out on the snow-covered plains of Russian Taiga or the scorching Sahara Desert, *Total Tank Simulator* almost gives off a toy-soldier aesthetic with its colorful environments and simplified, blocky vehicles. To make matters more interesting, pretty much everything on the maps can be destroyed, ensuring that each skirmish plays out as explosively as possible.

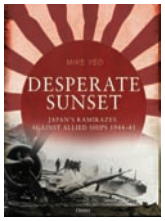
The main campaign of *Total Tank Simulator* has a few different flavors within, from standard last-man-standing deathmatches to missions where you have to kill specific enemy units within a time limit, defend special allies for a set amount of time, and protect your units from waves of incoming enemies. Beyond that, sandbox mode lets you play out your own absurd scenarios, while shadow mode has you attempting to survive against your own victorious armies from earlier battles. Think of the latter as a war-sim version of competing against your own ghost in a racing game.

The different vantage points from which you can experience this game are another strong suit. In addition to zooming out and playing with a grip on the bigger picture of combat, you can opt to zoom in as close as possible and play as an infantry unit for some pure first-person shooter action. You can approach battle in the manner that best suits your style, and even when you're losing you tend to do so in such a spectacularly explosive way that it's not too annoying in the

rmann grew up in Nazi Germany. Conscripted in 1940, he joined a mountain division and in 1941 went across the Ukraine when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Lothar served in an artillery unit, making him one of the lucky few who travelled in a vehicle. Then, as the Germans retreated out of Russia in 1944, the young German suffered arrest at the hands of the Rumanians, who promptly turned him over to the Soviets as a prisoner of war. This proved the beginning of a horrible ordeal as Lothar went to a forced-labor camp. Hundreds of his fellow Germans died in the camps just in the first few weeks, and many more would perish in the years to come. Lothar wasn't released until 1949, returning to what was now West Germany.

Fully one-third of the German prisoners of war taken by the Soviets died in captivity. This memoir delves into the experiences of these prisoners, shedding light on their suffering at the hands of a horribly abusive regime. Relatively few books on the subject of German POWs in the Soviet Union are available in English. This work adds notably to that small number. It is well translated, with clear prose and interesting detail.

Desperate Sunset: Japan's Kamikazes Against Allied Ships, 1944–45 (Mike Yeo, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2020, 352 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $45.00, hardcover).



The kamikazes represented Japan's last desperate bid to stave off defeat in a war they had already lost. The flower of Japanese aviation lay dead in a dozen places across Asia and the Pacific. All that remained were ill-trained youths manning the remaining aircraft with scant fuel and perhaps a bomb to increase the explosive power of impact. The idea that these men could save Japan was beyond hope and reason, but nevertheless they tried. Beginning in the aftermath of the naval battles at Leyte Gulf, kamikazes dove on Allied ships relentlessly through the battle of Okinawa. They couldn't change the course of the war, but they did raise the price, sinking or damaging hundreds of ships and causing thousands of casualties among Allied sailors.

This is a well-done first book for the author, an aviation enthusiast and journalist specializing in the Asia-Pacific region. It includes the Japanese point of view, drawn from war records, diaries, and firsthand accounts. The author deftly explains the Japanese rationale for their actions, which is alien to Western thought. The book is smartly laid out and lavishly illustrated, providing excellent visual accompaniment to the clear and flowing text. □

end. Not every unit is fully optimized as far as the quality of the controls, but this is something that could always be improved in the future.

With decent CPU AI, a bunch of different ways to participate in battles, and some standout visuals, *Total Tank Simulator* is worth checking out. It's definitely a little rough around the edges, and it could use some more standard features, such as multiplayer. If they throw some competent online competition into the mix in the future, this indie tank/war sim will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with some of the bigger entries out there.

UNDAUNTED: NORMANDY

PUBLISHER OSPREY GAMES • **GENRE** BOARD GAME • **SYSTEM** TABLETOP

Unless you're already deep into the tabletop world, it would be easy to assume there aren't that many World War II board games. There are, in fact, *quite a lot*, but one of the best to grace the tables in recent years is publisher Osprey Games' *Undaunted: Normandy*. Rather than taking on massive battles across huge maps with dozens of units, *Undaunted* boils things down to two players, with one platoon a piece, for some up-close-and-personal sessions you won't soon forget.

The setup is simple: One player takes control of a U.S. infantry platoon, while another controls a platoon of German soldiers. Platoons consist of three squads each, with soldier types ranging from riflemen and scouts to snipers, machine gunners, and officers. Rather than placing plastic figurines on a map, *Undaunted* has you building decks and setting tokens on a modular battlefield composed of cardboard tiles.

The intimate nature of these showdowns is immediately clear. When a casualty occurs, the affected player removes a single card from the squad, representing an individual human loss and a significant blow to the unit. Further complicating matters are Fog of War cards, which help simulate the chaotic nature of battle by slowing opponents down and generally taking up valuable space in your hand. Battles inevitably get messy by design, and that's part of the beauty inherent in *Undaunted*.

If you're even remotely interested in war-based tabletop gaming, *Undaunted: Normandy* is a must. Each game is a very short commitment, so you can pretty much always expect to go for at least one more round once the initial outcome has been decided. Find a like-minded friend to play this with and you'll have a mainstay for any board-game night to come. □

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Ordnance

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then ran head-on toward a hedgerow at 10 miles an hour. The tusks bored into the hedgerow, and the tank butted through successfully under a shower of dirt. "It was so absurdly simple that it had baffled an army for five weeks," Bradley reported.

Within a week, three of every five Shermans and other tanks, dubbed "Rhinos," had been fitted with the crossbars in time for the breakout. The inventor of the tusked crossbar was 29-year-old Sergeant Curtis G. Culin, Jr., of the 2nd Armored Division's 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for his ingenuity. Four months later, after losing a leg in the bloody Huertgen Forest campaign, Culin returned home.

Shermans were the first tanks delirious Parisians saw when Maj. Gen. Philippe Leclerc's proud 2nd Free French Armored Division fought its way into the Nazi-occupied French capital on August 25, and British- and American-manned M4s rolled through Holland in the ill-fated Operation Market Garden the following month.

Shermans clanked on until the Allied armies finally brought Nazi Germany to its knees in the spring of 1945. The sterling service of the Shermans all the way from El Alamein to Okinawa contributed immeasurably to the Allied victory.

After the war, many armies worldwide used M4s. About 200 later M4A3E8 models were rushed in August 1950 to Korea, where they joined Chaffees, Pershings, Pattons, Walker Bulldogs, and British Centurions in battling Soviet-built T-34s. The sturdy, wide-tracked "Easy Eight"-model Shermans saw considerable action with the U.S. Eighth Army and the British Commonwealth Brigade, proved a match for the Communist forces' much-feared T-34s. M4s were also used in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and the Indian-Pakistani conflicts.

Supplanted in recent years by such modern behemoths as the American Abrams and the British Challenger and Conqueror, the World War II Sherman has become just a distant name in the history of armored warfare. Yet a few preserved models remain as reminders of their gallant service in World War II and can be seen at Bastogne and other locations, including the famous Bovington Tank Museum in Dorset, England; Sainte-Mere-Eglise, Utah Beach, Juno Beach, Ecouche, and Saumur in France; Wiltz and Ettelbruck in Luxembourg; and Arnhem and Overloon in Holland. □

Audie Murphy

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flagged in the late 1950s and 1960s, and his box-office appeal faded. He gambled heavily and unluckily, became involved in a number of unsuccessful business ventures, and went bankrupt in 1968. Two years later, he was acquitted of a murder charge after beating up a man in a barroom brawl. Increasingly troubled by his battlefield experiences, Audie had frequent nightmares, was plagued by insomnia and depression, and slept with a pistol under his pillow. He got hooked on prescription drugs, and adverse publicity about his woes drove him into seclusion. He gave away his medals, and when the Army replaced them, he gave them away again.

Eventually, Audie tried to pull himself together and became a representative for an investment group. He planned a business trip that he hoped would put him back on his feet. On May 28, 1971, he flew with four other people in his light plane from Atlanta, Georgia, to Martinsville, Virginia, to visit a prefabricated housing plant. Late that morning, the plane crashed in rain and fog near the tiny town of Galax in southwestern Virginia. There were no survivors.

Flouting the wishes expressed in Murphy's 1965 will that his burial be simple and non-military, America's World War II hero was laid to rest with full honors in Arlington National Cemetery on June 7, 1971. His gravesite, near the amphitheater, is the second most visited year-round; only President John F. Kennedy's grave draws more visitors.

Meanwhile, schools, hospitals, highways, and Army clubs were named in honor of Audie Murphy; statues of him were erected in San Antonio and Greenville, Texas; he was inducted posthumously into the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City; then-Governor George W. Bush of Texas proclaimed June 20 as "Audie Murphy Day" in 1999, and the war hero was pictured on a 33-cent postage stamp in 2000.

Audie Murphy is a tragic figure in the pantheon of American heroes. Reared in hardship and less than a success in civilian life, he is remembered for his valor in the war against fascist tyranny. But the shadowy demons of the battlefield continued to stalk him, and he found no peace until death. □

Author Michael D. Hull, who passed away recently, wrote extensively for WWII History *on a variety of topics. He resided in Enfield, Connecticut.*

Reichswald

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11th, now tried to break the German defenses in Hekkens, which consisted of an anti-tank ditch and the usual array of mortars and machine guns, the latter firing at stomach level. Mortar shells exploded in trees. The only cover was a narrow road ditch; men had to lie three deep to avoid being shot. They could hear German paratrooper NCOs giving orders to their men.

Lieutenant Colonel John Sym, the 5th Seaforth's CO, was hit in the neck by a rifle grenade but refused to evacuate. He called for tank support but was told it wouldn't reach him until the morning of the 12th. Meanwhile, stretcher bearers risked their lives to carry wounded men back through the mud.

When the tanks arrived, a German 88mm anti-tank gun opened fire, forcing them back. At noon, the exhausted Sym collapsed, and the 5th Seaforths were ordered to withdraw, covered by the surviving tanks. They had suffered 94 casualties.

Having battered the Seaforths, the Germans prepared to withdraw, but the Black Watch surprised them with a charge on Hekkens, backed by artillery. The Germans were stunned by the violence of the barrage and the Scots. Without any British casualties, more than 300 Germans surrendered. Major Landale Rollo interrogated a German officer soon afterward. "He told me, 'If you had been 10 minutes later, you wouldn't have got us.' But we were so close behind the bombardment that we were still all in the cellars. We got in just as it lifted. Another few minutes and they would have got away."

That evening, Montgomery signaled to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke: "Enemy resistance against 'Veritable' is becoming greater and the operation is drawing up north most of the immediately available reserves…. We have made steady progress. We now hold the road center of Cleve securely and own the whole of the Reichswald Forest and have pushed the enemy well south of Gennep at which place we are building a Class 40 bridge which will be ready for use on Thursday morning. Our prisoners now total 5,000 and our casualties total 1,100."

It was steady progress, but unbelievably slow. The flooding of the Roer dams, the German reinforcements, and the unceasing rain were turning a blitzkrieg into a crawl. The battle was far from over. □

Author David Lippman resides in New Jersey and writes frequently on a variety of topics for WWII History.

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