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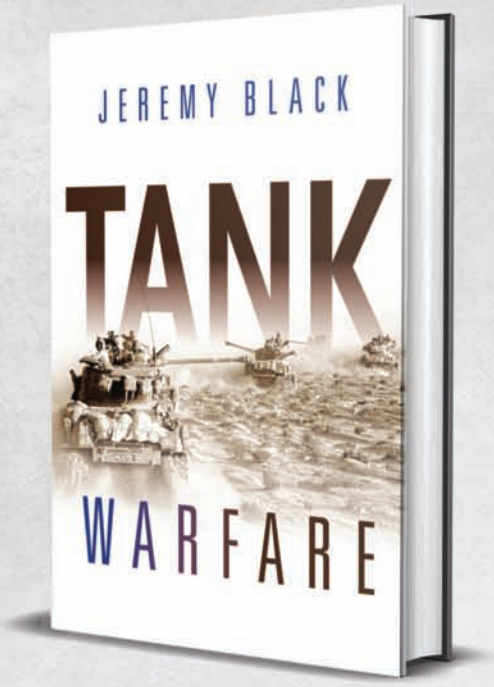

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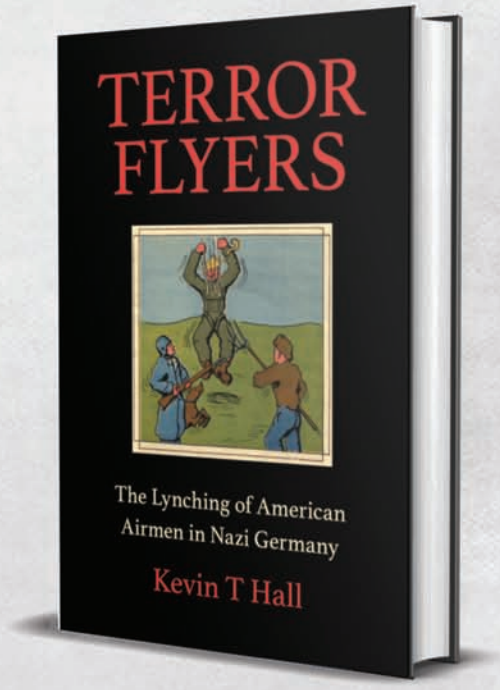

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Cover: A Marine fires on a Japanese sniper with his Thompson machine gun. Marine scout Larry Kirby preferred the Thompson. See story page 40. Photo: National Archives

WWII History (ISSN 1539-5456) is published six times yearly in February, April, June, August, October, and December by Sovereign Media, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite C-100, McLean, VA 22101. (703) 964-0361. Periodical postage paid at McLean, VA, and additional mailing offices. *WWII History*, Volume 20, Number 1 © 2021 by Sovereign Media Company, Inc., all rights reserved. Copyrights to stories and illustrations are the property of their creators. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without consent of the copyright owner. ***Subscription services, back issues, and information:*** (800) 219-1187 *or* write to ***WWII History*** **Circulation, WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.** Single copies: $6.99, plus $3 for postage. Yearly subscription in U.S.A.: $24.95; Canada and Overseas: $38.95 (U.S.). Editorial Office: Send editorial mail to *WWII History*, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite C-100, McLean, VA 22101. *WWII History* welcomes editorial submissions but assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. Material to be returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We suggest that you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a copy of our author's guidelines. **POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.**

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McLean, VA 22101-4554

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Yuki Okinaga Hayakawa remains a symbol of racial inequity in the United States.

It was a turbulent time, and perhaps when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, it was considered a reasonable response to the perceived treachery of the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor that had occurred only weeks earlier.

As the country reeled from the shock of the attack, the realization that there were "aliens" among us reverberated across the United States. The perpetrators of Pearl Harbor were of a different race, Asian, and their customs and practices were indeed foreign — much more so than those of European countries. Japanese Americans, no matter whether they were born U.S. citizens or immigrated to the country from their homeland across the Pacific, were potentially subversive. They were possibly even active spies or would-be saboteurs.

To eliminate the concerns surrounding an enemy within, an expedient and patently unjust measure was enacted, and during the early months of World War II approximately 110,000 people were "relocated" to 10 camps in the western U.S. They had no choice. Stripped of their homes, businesses, and dignity, they were shipped to camps in remote areas, desert flatlands ringed by soaring mountains, surrounded by barbed wire and guard towers.

One image of the period remains iconic to this day. A little girl, only two years old, sits on a suitcase at Union Station in Los Angeles, surrounded by bags filled with family belongings, essentially just what they were able to carry. In one hand she clutches a small purse; in the other an apple with a few bites gone. She looks somewhat puzzled, too young to grasp the magnitude of change into which her family has been swept, but aware of the uncertainty that lies ahead.

Young Yuki Okinaga Hayakawa accompanied her mother to the Manzanar War Relocation Center, more than 200 miles away in California's Owens Valley. It would be their home for the next three years.

"I think it was terribly worse for adults," Yuki told the *News-Gazette* in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, years later. "My mother was 23. I could not have done what she did. My memories were fun. When you put a bunch of children close together, you make friends. Honestly, kids don't always know they're being deprived until you tell them."

The rest of Yuki's story is one of achievement, success, and reflection on an experience that became more meaningful over the years. When they were allowed to leave the camp in 1945, Yuki and her mother received $25 and a ticket to Cleveland, Ohio, where the *News-Gazette* noted they had sponsors. She went to school, and her mother worked as a seamstress.

Yuki was talented in the classroom and earned a scholarship, graduating from Lake Forest College near Chicago in 1962 with a bachelor's degree in dramatic arts. She continued her studies at Tulane University in New Orleans and met her future husband, Don Llewellyn, while working on a graduate thesis.

Subsequently, Yuki took a job at the flagship campus of the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana and became a mother. Although she and Don later divorced, they remained friends. Yuki worked as a secretary in public relations and rose to the office of Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Registered Student Organizations.

Yuki spent 37 years there, putting together a cookbook to raise money for band uniforms on behalf of the University of Illinois Mothers Association, among many other activities. She was a voracious reader and a skilled bridge player. She granted interviews and openly discussed her recollections of Manzanar.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, when she returned to the camp in 2005, Yuki gathered a rusty nail, a small piece of bamboo, and a handful of sand that she tucked into a plastic sandwich bag as mementos. "As an adult, it would have been hell on Earth," she wrote of her experience. "I was lucky to have been a child—a young child at that. I didn't know what it was like not to be incarcerated."

On March 8, 2020, Yuki Llewellyn passed away at the age of 81. The Union-Station photograph remains to resonate across the years, a warning to seek dialogue and solutions in matters involving race and other aspects of human diversity.

Yuki was a young girl caught up in extraordinary events—and she was an American.

—Michael E. Haskew

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By Christopher Miskimon

Both: Australian War Memorial

Australia's Heroic Son

Corporal Jack Edmondson earned Australia's first Victoria Cross of World War II in a terrible hand-to-hand fight that cost him his life.

"*Dear Mrs. Edmondson,*

What can I say that will in the slightest degree convey my sympathy for you in your great loss? I fear that there is absolutely nothing that describes any feeling on the matter. Unfortunately, I have not had, as yet, the honour of meeting you, but I intend to come and see you when all this ghastly business is over. Although I had only known Jack since last December, I think I can quite rightly claim the distinction of calling myself his best friend. My loss, and speaking for his section, ours, is colossal, but of course, we realize that it is not to be compared to yours.

Jack died a hero Mrs. Edmondson, acclaimed by everyone. When he was hit he was performing a deed of great valour, and after he was hit he saved his officer's life. Words cannot be found to express our praise and gratitude.

I have all Jack's personal things, his watch, pen, diary, collar badges, letter and colour patches, which I will send on to you at the earliest opportunity.

He was cheerful to the last and his last words to me were, "Tarz, give my love to the folks and good luck, old boy." Fortunately he died very quietly and painlessly.

I must close now as we are about to move back into the lines, — for revenge. I shall write a longer letter to you at some future date.

Once again let me give you my heartfelt sympathy.

I am yours very sincerely, Athol L. Dalziel"

John Hurst Edmondson, known to his friends as Jack, died April 14, 1941, lying on the concrete floor of a sand-swept fighting outpost in the perimeter around Tobruk, Libya. Blood poured from bullet wounds in his neck and stomach. Hours earlier, he and his lieutenant led his section of five men against a much larger force, killing and wounding many and driving the rest away.

During the siege of the Libyan port city of Tobruk, Australian soldiers work to improve defenses originally occupied by Italian troops. INSET: Corporal Jack Edmondson earned a posthumous Victoria Cross during the fighting at Tobruk.

Jack's bravery and steadfast refusal to abandon his mates resulted in an award of the Victoria Cross, tragically as a posthumous decoration. The letter above is just one of many his parents received from Jack's fellow soldiers in 2/17th Infantry Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, written just two days after Jack's death.

Born at Wagga Wagga in New South Wales on October 8, 1914, Jack Edmondson grew up on a rural farm near Liverpool, now a suburb of Sydney. Along with a love of animals, young Jack also enjoyed shooting and gained a reputation as an excellent rifle shot, earning an Australian National Rifle Association's medal at the age of 17. Significantly, he had no desire to harm living things and wouldn't use his rifle to shoot animals around the farm.

In 1939, Jack joined the militia and served in the 4th Battalion on coastal-defense duties north of

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Australian War Memorial

Tough Australian soldiers man frontline trenches on the defensive perimeter at Tobruk.

Sydney. In May 1940 he volunteered for the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF), the name given to Australia's volunteer army, which was eligible for overseas service. (The 1st AIF was the volunteer army raised for World War I. When World War II started, a second army of volunteers was raised; hence the numbering.) At the time, Australian militia units could not be compelled to serve outside Australian territory. Many young men felt the call to aid the British Commonwealth overseas, and the AIF was the path to do so.

Upon transfer to the AIF, Jack was assigned to the 2/17th Infantry Battalion, the number "2" designating that the unit was raised as part of the 2nd AIF. The unit trained at Ingleburn Camp in New South Wales until September 1940, when it embarked for Palestine. The battalion was one of three that made up the 20th Brigade, initially part of the 7th Division but soon transferred to the Australian 9th Division.

The Australian 9th did not take part in Operation Compass, the British counterattack against the Italian invasion of Egypt. That operation ejected the Italians from Egypt and allowed the small British force to advance deep into Libya, decisively defeating the Italian army in North Africa. The operation was perhaps too successful, however, as it spurred Nazi Germany to send the Afrika Korps to Libya under the command of one their most aggressive commanders, General Erwin Rommel.

Rommel wasted no time preparing a counteroffensive against the British and Commonwealth troops. This came at a bad time for the Allies, as many of their most-experienced troops were withdrawn from North Africa at the time to serve in Greece, denuding the British command of their veterans just when a German-Italian army prepared to attack. The Australian 9th Division transferred to Eastern Libya, known as Cyrenaica, to replace the withdrawn veterans in early March 1941. Much of the division's artillery and cavalry stayed behind in Palestine, and there were shortages of other heavy weapons and equipment.

Within days Rommel and his German-Italian combined force attacked eastward into Cyrenaica just after Jack's unit reached Marsa Brega on the Mediterranean coast. The Australians fell back toward Tobruk, a fortified coastal town captured months earlier from the Italians. The town had a small but functional port, making it useful for bringing supplies forward. This made it a prize equally valuable for both the Axis and Allies.

When the Australians arrived on April 9, 1941, they combined forces with a number of British units along with an Indian cavalry regiment and bolstered the incomplete defenses begun by the Italians. Australian Major General John Lavarack assumed command and received orders to hold the town. The Battle of Tobruk quickly evolved into one of the most famous sieges in history, lasting months and becoming an important morale booster to citizens of the Commonwealth.

Tobruk's defenses included a perimeter that combined barbed wire and an antitank ditch averaging nine miles from the town. These defenses were incomplete, and in a few places the ditch was covered by boards with sand strewn over them to provide camouflage. Mines were laid in some places. Outposts overlooked the perimeter: an outer line with strongpoints 750 yards apart, with a second line 500 yards behind. The system was designated the Red Line, with reserve units manning another set of strongpoints three miles closer to Tobruk. Each strongpoint contained positions for two machine guns and one antitank gun. The bunkers were made of concrete and connected by trenches.

The infantry manning these strongpoints were told to allow enemy tanks to pass and then fire on their accompanying infantry, stripping the enemy armor of support. A mobile reserve of tanks, artillery, and antitank guns would deal with the panzers.

This was the situation Jack Edmondson and his unit faced when they arrived at Tobruk. As a corporal, Jack led Number 3 Section, 16 Platoon, D Company, 2/17th. The unit received orders to man outpost R33, on the southern side of the outer perimeter. This placed them at the forefront of any attack on their portion of the line. Due to the shortage of antitank guns, R33 didn't have one, though it had a few captured Italian machine guns to bolster the Bren light machine guns the Australians deployed.

When Rommel's forces reached Tobruk, he ordered immediate attacks, hoping to maintain the momentum of his offensive and take Tobruk before an effective defense could be solidified. The first attack on April 10 failed, as did the second attack on April 13, but only after hard fighting.

Despite this setback, Rommel was determined to capture Tobruk quickly to facilitate his eastward advance. Another attack was ordered, and its advanced elements were to go in that night.

A small force of 30-40 Germans was tasked with infiltrating the perimeter and clearing out Outpost R33 to allow follow-on forces to pierce the Australian defenses and rampage through to Tobruk. This German group was heavily armed with machine guns, mortars and a pair of infantry field guns. These small cannon were light enough for a few soldiers to drag through the gap in the barbed wire but packed the punch needed to obliterate Outpost R33.

The infiltration began soon after dusk. A few yards inside the wire, they set up their heavy weapons and opened fire at about 11:00 PM Rifle and machine-gun fire lashed at R33 while mortar bombs and cannon shells crashed around it. The Australian defenders could see the tracers from the enemy machine guns striking the concrete of the outpost. Jack's section crouched in one of the communications trenches, the outpost to their right.

Some of the Australians in the outpost

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returned fire, but it wasn't enough to suppress the Germans, who kept pounding away with their mortars and cannon while their machine guns sent burst after burst just inches over the heads of 16 Platoon, squatting low in the trenches. The platoon commander, Lieutenant Franklin Austin Mackell, appeared out of the darkness and told Jack to bring his section back into the outpost. Mackell, a 23-year-old from Merrylands, New South Wales, wasted no time issuing Jack new orders, cool-headed but shouting to be heard over the din of gunfire. Edmondson's Number 3 Section would act as a fighting patrol, and the men in the outpost would lay down covering fire to cover the patrol's movement while it flanked the German position and drove the enemy back.

The lieutenant wasn't sure how many Germans were out there, but thought there had to be at least a dozen, the minimum needed to man the weapons being fired at the outpost. Despite the odds of being badly outnumbered, Mackell chose to use just Edmondson's section—six men including Jack. If he had sent more, it would have left the outpost undermanned.

The section included Ron Keogh, Ted Smith, "Splinter" Williams, Ron Grant, and "Snowy" Foster. Lieutenant Mackell was coming with them, as well. Though they couldn't know it at the time, the ensuing struggle would pit seven men against at least 30.

Mackell outlined the plan. The soldiers in the outpost would open fire at 11:40, shooting and shouting to attract German attention. At 11:45 they would cease fire, and the section would move around the German right flank and rush them in a line. Bayonets were to be fixed, and each man was to bring a grenade. When they reached grenade-throwing range, Mackell would order them to drop to the ground and throw. After the grenades exploded, they would go in firing from the hip and using the bayonet to kill or drive off the remaining enemy.

Jack's section gathered quickly at the left wall of the outpost and then Mackell ordered them forward and took the lead. The entire section followed, Edmondson behind Mackell and a little to the right. Tracer bullets spat from the muzzles of the German machine guns just about 200 yards distant, lighting up the night. There was also the occasional flash from one of the guns or mortars.

Australian War Memorial

Under the wary eyes of their Australian captors, German and Italian prisoners of war await disposition at Tobruk, the scene of an arduous seven-month siege during the desert war.

The section managed to make it most of the way to their target before the enemy noticed them. The veteran German troops may have been expecting a flanking movement; they would have done the same. One of their machine guns pivoted and started firing at 3 Section as the Australians were about 100 yards away. The section kept moving, bent over, forging steadily ahead over the stony desert surface. The Australians dropped to the ground about 50 yards from the Germans and tried to catch their breath. The Australian outpost was scheduled to cease firing in another minute.

Despite the incoming machine-gun fire, the section made another dash forward, trying to get within grenade range before the men in the outpost stopped firing. As they closed the range to 30 yards, Jack was hit in both the stomach and neck, letting out a gasp of shock at the impacts. Despite the wounds he continued forward another few strides, then the entire section dropped to the ground again.

Jack and his men lay flat in the sand, dark figures among the desert rocks. Suddenly, all the shooting and shouting from the outpost stopped. The night was far from silent, however, as the German machine guns continued to chatter at the new threat. Mackell shouted, "Right, boys!" and the section rose and hurled their grenades toward the enemy position. Within a few seconds the grenades detonated, sending sand and rocks roiling into the air along with deadly shards of jagged shrapnel. The enemy fire stopped completely. As the grenades went off the Australians charged the Germans, yelling and firing their bolt action Lee-Enfield rifles from the hip.

It took only a few seconds before Mackell, Edmondson, and 3 Section were on top of their enemy. There seemed to be at least 30 or 40 of them. The grenades had done their work; a few Germans lay wounded on the ground, and none of them were able to return to their machine guns after taking cover to avoid the blasts. A number of the Germans ran off into the night, back toward their lines. Now the fight became hand-to-hand. Ted Smith plunged his bayonet into a German who had just emptied a pistol at him. Edmondson did his own work with the bayonet, stabbing two Germans within seconds. Several Germans were clearly surprised by the Australian onslaught. One of them repeatedly screamed, "Wife! Children!" while another shouted "Peace! Peace! S'il vous plait!" combining French and English.

While Jack and his men fought the remaining Germans, Lieutenant Mackell engaged in a desperate struggle of his own. Facing off against two Germans, he smashed the stock of his rifle over the head of one and stabbed the other with his bayonet. The bayonet became stuck in the German's body, and Mackell fought to extract it as another German lunged at him, grabbing him around the legs. The lieutenant saw Edmondson nearby and called out to him, desperate for help. Just as Jack started toward him, a second German jumped onto Mackell's back, wrapped his arm around the Australian officer's head, and jerked it backwards.

Despite his wounds, Jack rushed to the aid of his platoon commander. He thrust his bayonet into the German on Mackell's back, and the man fell to the ground. Next, Jack turned his rifle to the German clutching the lieutenant's legs and stabbed that man as well. The German stiffened, then went limp and relaxed his grip. Mackell got free, but his bayonet snapped as he yanked it out of the German's body. He continued to use the rifle as club.

There was no more shooting now, and only a few Germans were left; the rest were dead, wounded, or running back toward their lines through the hole they had made in the wire earlier. Edmondson reportedly saw a German trying to reload a pistol and lunged at him with his

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German engineers construct a bridge across one of the many tank traps that defended the approaches to Tobruk.

bayonet, but he passed out while doing so. With the fight over, Mackell and the rest of 3 Section quickly returned to the outpost, carrying the wounded Edmondson with them. They also brought back one prisoner and a captured machine gun. Smith thought they killed about a dozen Germans, and at least 20 had run off at the beginning of the fight.

When Jack regained consciousness, he was in the outpost, lying on the concrete. He had four wounds in his stomach and neck, all received before the grenades were thrown. The echoes of machine-gun and rifle fire reverberated off the walls of the tiny fortress; the battle had started again.

A medic arrived and bandaged Jack's wounds, but the blood loss was severe. Two soldiers, Bill Taylor and Athol "Tarzan" Dalziel, put him on a stretcher and attempted to carry him to the aid station at battalion headquarters. They didn't get far, as the battle for Tobruk raged around them and heavy enemy fire quickly drove them back to the cover of the outpost. Trapped by the maelstrom around them, 16 Platoon had to stay in place, wait out the battle, as their friend Jack slowly died.

He lay awake through the night. Lieutenant Mackell stopped to talk to him for a few minutes. At 6:30 on the morning of April 14, Jack called for Athol and gave him a message for his parents, "Tarz, give my love to the folks and good luck, old boy." Athol promised to deliver his words. Jack grew steadily weaker and lost consciousness at about 6:45 AM. He never woke again and died at 7:00 AM.

As Jack's life ebbed away over those few hours, the First Battle of Tobruk seethed around Outpost R33. The German actions of the prior few days were mostly probing and testing of the perimeter after the first push. This was a set engagement, designed to puncture the perimeter and defeat the garrison. By dawn on the 14th, the Germans had the equivalent of a battalion each of tanks and infantry inside the perimeter.

The D Company commander, Captain J.W. Balfe, reported that after 16 Platoon's successful attack, the enemy did little until about 2:15 AM, when hundreds of Germans advanced through the gap near R33. German engineers worked on the ditch so their tanks could cross, and the first panzers came through at about 5:20 AM. Over a dozen came right past Balfe's headquarters outpost, and the Australians let them pass only to open up on the groups of 15-20 infantrymen following each tank. The gunfire drove them to cover while the tanks continued.

Minutes later, another 30 panzers came through, but they also continued on and left their infantry behind. The Australians called in artillery to keep the German infantry pinned. Three German antitank guns also appeared, and Balfe let them get within 50 yards of the outpost before opening fire. Other outposts did the same as more of the German guns appeared. The enemy crews were all killed or wounded, many before they could get off a single shot.

Behind the outposts, the German tanks rumbled toward the town. These panzers, now unsupported by infantry, ran through a gauntlet of artillery, British tanks, and antitank guns. Within minutes, 17 of them lay knocked out on the battlefield. The rest turned back, and at 7:15 Balfe saw them retiring toward the gap in the perimeter in headlong retreat. The Australian infantry added their fire to the fray, cutting down more of the enemy troops as they fled with the panzers, several of which were burning.

The battle was over, though D Company spent several hours mopping up pockets of Germans who hadn't escaped with their armor. Balfe observed the Germans' surprise that the outposts hadn't surrendered once the tanks were in. "That day we learned the value of holding on no matter what happens," he stated.

It was a great victory, securing Tobruk and proving the German blitzkrieg was not unbeatable. The Australians had put up a stiff defense, holding their positions even after the Germans had penetrated their perimeter. Jack Edmondson played his part in that achievement, though tragically at the cost of his life. His remains were carried back to Tobruk and buried in the military cemetery there. His actions so impressed the members of his battalion that the battalion commander, Lt. Col. John Crawford, submitted his name for a valor award to the General Sir Archibald Wavell, General Officer Commanding, Middle East.

Wavell's office suggested that Jack's deeds warranted a posthumous award of the Victoria Cross, the highest award for valor in the Commonwealth, which was approved in July 1941.

Finally, on Saturday, September 27, 1941, an investiture was held at the Admiralty House in Sydney, Australia. The Governor-General, Alexander Hore-Ruthven, titled Lord Gowrie, presented the Victoria Cross to Mr. and Mrs. Edmondson in a private ceremony. As this was the first Victoria Cross awarded to an Australian during World War II, it received widespread newspaper coverage throughout the country.

To honor the fallen soldier, a memorial was established at his former high school along with a public clock in his hometown of Liverpool. A portion of Liverpool is now known as Edmondson Park. In 1960, Mrs. Edmondson donated Jack's medals, including his Victoria Cross, to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. They can be seen next to his portrait by artist Joshua Smith. □

Author Christopher Miskimon is a regular contributor to WWII History. *He writes the regular books column and is an officer in the Colorado National Guard's 157th Regiment.*

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By Nigel Price

Cpl Phil Major ABIPP/MOD

Flying above Lincolnshire, vintage Avro Lancaster PA474 from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) is painted in camouflage and markings of No. 460 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force.

The Workhorse Lancaster

The Avro Lancaster bore the brunt of the RAF bombing campaign against the Third Reich.

Powerful, brisling with firepower and able to carry an amazingly large bombload, the majestic Avro Lancaster, along with the iconic Supermarine Spitfire, has come to symbolize the might of the Royal Air Force in World War II.

The Lancaster's impressive combat record—carrying out some 156,000 individual missions, including several that dropped the 22,000-pound (10,000kg) Grand Slam "Earthquake" bomb—is proof of its credentials. Indeed, the type's design was so good it was developed into the Lincoln bomber and later the Shackleton, which was still in frontline RAF service in 1991.

But the Lancaster is an aircraft that had a troubled birth, and it very nearly wasn't built at all.

Few in Europe envisaged the need for long-range, four-engine bomber aircraft as the continent sped headlong into World War II in the mid-to-late 1930s. The general consensus—outside of America—was that a fast, medium-sized twin-engine craft with a modest payload would be equal to the task of strategic assault. In fact, while Boeing was designing its highly advanced, long-range, four-engine B-17 Flying Fortress bomber in the U.S. in 1934, Hitler's Germany was developing a twin-engine attack force—Heinkel He-111s, Dornier Do-17s and Junkers Ju-88s. Britain responded with the similar-sized Bristol Blenheim, the HP Hampden, and the larger Vickers Wellington twin. The twin-engine bomber concept had worked for German's Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War, with large numbers of He-111s being supported by a smaller force of Do-17s.

The Blitzkrieg unleashed on Poland, Western Europe, and Scandinavia during the early years of World War II again validated the twin-engine approach, although fighter tactics to counter the medium-bomber threat were rapidly being developed. In fact, the mauling dished out by the RAF's Fighter Command to the Luftwaffe in the summer of 1940 proved that medium bombers were highly vulnerable and often weren't able to drop enough explosives on their targets to render their missions a success.

As the British went on the attack following the Battle of Britain, it was clear that its bomber force wasn't going to achieve its objectives. Most types in service were too slow to escape Luftwaffe fighters, couldn't fly high enough to avoid flak antiaircraft guns, or couldn't carry sufficient bombs far enough to reach targets deep into occupied territory. Bomber Command flew mainly night missions to reduce casualties, but early loss rates were still horrendous—close to 330 precious aircraft and crews in the last six months of 1940 alone.

In addition to acquiring small numbers of U.S.-made B-17s, the British developed a trio of new four-engine bombers. First to fly was the Short Stirling. Entering service in the fall of 1940 and flying its first combat missions the following year, the Stirling was complex, and although it flew more than 10,000 separate sorties, it suffered a high loss rate.

Next up was the Handley Page Halifax. It entered service at around the same time as the Stirling but was far superior. It was easier to fly, faster and, importantly, could fly higher. But the third of the RAF's heavy bombers, the Lancaster, is perhaps the best known. But how that

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ABOVE: This Avro Lancaster heavy bomber of No. 617 Squadron RAF engages in training for Operation Chastise. During its training run, the bomber drops the Upkeep weapon on the bombing range at Reculver, Kent. RIGHT: Checking instrument settings in the crew compartment of his Lancaster B Mk. III, a flight engineer prepares for a mission

came about was unusual, to say the least.

Designed by Avro's Roy Chadwick, the 'Lanc' was a development of the company's ill-fated Manchester—a twin-engine bomber powered by two Rolls-Royce Vulture 1,760hp, 24-cylinder engines. The Manchester prototype first flew on July 25, 1939, and the bomber entered service with the RAF 16 months later. That long development period highlights the problems encountered with the Manchester—it was underpowered, and the engines were unreliable. Although a total of 202 were built, it proved to be nothing short of a disaster for its crews—losses were high, with around two-thirds of the RAF's Manchester fleet being written off in combat or in training accidents in just a couple of years. In fact, it lasted not much more than a year in frontline service.

There were plans to produce a Manchester II, powered by Napier Sabre or Bristol Centaurus engines, but the project was thought to be impracticable and was scrapped. Fortunately, Chadwick persevered and devised the idea of fitting the very dependable Rolls-Royce Merlin powerplant in place of the dreadful Vultures. He also saw an opportunity to redesign the bomber's wings to accommodate four Merlins, boosting performance in every respect. The project was given the green light, and the foundations for the Lancaster—originally designated the Manchester III—were laid.

The Lancaster prototype, serial number BT308, made its initial flight on January 9, 1941, in the hands of Avro test crew Sydney 'Bill' Thorn and Sam Brown. It featured the Manchester I's three-finned tail layout to aid directional stability, but the middle unit was found to be unnecessary and was removed from the second prototype, DG595.

The Lancaster became the most numerous four-engine "heavy" in Bomber Command's inventory, with most of the 7,377 built during the war years being produced by Avro at its Chadderton plant in Oldham, Lancashire, and test-flown from Woodford in Cheshire. Building the Lancaster fleet required a staggering amount of manpower and materials. More than 920 companies were involved in producing sub-components for the production lines, and, at its height, some 1.1 million men and women were employed making the parts or assembling the aircraft. More people were involved in building, maintaining, and flying Lancasters than any other RAF aircraft, before or since.

The initial version, the Mk.I, stayed in production until well after the war. Sub-variants included the Mk.I (Special), which could take the "Tallboy" and "Grand Slam" high-capacity bombs; the Mk.I (FE), modified for use against the Japanese in the Far East with the Commonwealth's "Tiger Force;" and the post-war PR.1 photo-survey conversion.

The B.II variant was powered by Bristol Hercules radial engines due to shortages of the Merlin, and it struggled to match the Mk.I's altitude; only 300 were made. The B.III featured U.S. Packard-built Merlins but was otherwise almost identical to the B.I. The aircraft modified to drop the Upkeep "bouncing bomb" for the May 1943 "Dambusters" raid were known as Mk.III (Provisioning). Coastal Command conversions were the ASR.III (ASR.3 from 1948) for air-sea rescue and the GR.III and MR.III for general and maritime reconnaissance, respectively. Only a handful of Mk.VIs were made; they were essentially Mk.IIIs with Merlin 85s and annular cowlings.

The Mk.VII was produced by Austin with a Martin-built top turret, and there was also the Mk.VII (FE), which included "tropicalized" modifications for use in the Far East with Tiger Force. Lancasters were also made under license by Victory Aircraft in Malton (Toronto), Canada. The company completed some 430 examples (Mk.Xs) between 1943 and 1945, with U.S.-built Packard Merlins being used in place of Rolls-Royce units and changes to the armament being the major differences from their UK counterparts.

The first production Lancasters were assigned to the RAF's 44 Squadron at Wadding-

ton air base, near Lincoln on England's eastern coast in early 1942. A second unit—97 Squadron—received its Lancs soon after. Little time was wasted in getting the bomber ready for combat. Its first operational sortie, a minelaying mission flown by No.44, took place on March 2 of 1942. Just over a week later, the Lancaster was flown in small numbers in a raid on Essen, Germany.

More Lancasters soon came online, allowing less-capable aircraft types to be withdrawn. Units flying the Manchester, Wellington, and Stirling converted to the Lanc, and even some Halifax squadrons later swapped their trusted steeds for the big Avro. In all, Lancasters would equip 66 RAF frontline units, plus more than 20 training and conversion squadrons, some of which also participated in combat missions.

The build-up of the Lanc force was rapid, indicative of how relatively simple the craft was to build. For example, less than three months after the Lancaster's combat debut, 73 Lancs of 5 Group took part in Operation Millennium, the RAF's first 1,000-bomber raid, which targeted Cologne. Another 74 flew on the second

such raid (on Essen in early June 1942), and 96 in the final RAF 1,000-bomber attack, which hit Bremen in late June 1942. A total of six Lancasters were lost on these three missions, including four on the Essen attack.

Perhaps the most celebrated Lancaster unit was 617 "Dambuster" Squadron, which was led by Wing Commander Guy Gibson. It famously used the Lancaster when it undertook Operation Chastise, the legendary attack on the Ruhr on the evening of May 16, 1943. Tasked with hitting a target many believed to be indestructible, far behind enemy lines, using an untried revolutionary bomb, under the glare of a full moon sounds like an impossible mission. But the men of the 617 Squadron did just that and struck a blow to the heart of the Nazi regime. While the damage caused on that fateful evening hurt Germany's ability to wage war, the negative effect on the nation's morale was even more considerable, and the raid's success greatly lifted the spirits of the pressured Allied forces around the world. It also meant the Germans had to commit more troops and antiaircraft guns to the area after the dams were repaired, thus removing them from other important targets. But the raid came at a heavy cost—19 Lancasters and 133 men took part in the mission, but eight aircraft didn't come back. A total of 53 men from 617 Squadron were killed.

After the Dams raid, 617 became something of a special-operations unit. Targets such as the San Polo D'enza Serivia and Aquata Scrivia power stations in Northern Italy, the Dortmund-Ems Canal, and the Antheor Viaduct on the French/Italian border were all attacked in 1943. The unit (along with Lancs from 9 Squadron) famously attacked the German battleship *Tirpitz* as part of Operation Paravane in September 1944. It was to be a complex mission that involved deploying to Yagodnik in Russia and attacking the ship in a northern Norwegian fjord with several Tallboy bombs. Some Lancasters from both units crashed in bad weather or ran out of fuel during the ferry flight east.

The remaining force of Lancasters that reached Yagodnik set off to bomb the *Tirpitz* on September 15, and although they didn't destroy the battleship, they did cripple it, and the damage necessitated much repair work. By the time the crews reached home, each Lanc had covered a total of almost 5,000 miles during the operation.

The patched-up *Tirpitz* was moved to Tromso, around 200 miles south of its previous location. Tromso's defences were bolstered, and a squadron of Focke-Wulf FW-190 fighters arrived at nearby Bardufoss to provide fighter cover. The good news for the RAF was that Tromso was potentially within range of aircraft flying from RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland.

Flying high above the Deutsche Vacuum AG oil refinery and storage depot in Bremen, Germany, an Avro Lancaster of Polish No. 300 Squadron delivers its payload on the smoke obscured target.

Calculations showed that the fuel required for the 2,250-mile flight would put the Lancs well over their maximum take-off weight. This could be overcome by reducing aircraft weight and by installing Merlin 24s, thus providing extra boost on take-off—though the only available Merlin 24s were already fitted to aircraft scattered around 5 Group. Simply borrowing aircraft was not an option, as it was necessary to combine the engines with aircraft capable of carrying Tallboys.

A search was made to track down the exact location of the Merlin 24s, and the modifications were carried out on the Lancasters. These included removing the mid-upper turret and the pilot's armour, as well as oxygen and nitrogen bottles. Guns and ammunition were also removed from the front turret, and the ammunition for the rear turret was reduced. Additional fuel tanks were added to provide the total of just over 2,400 gallons that would be necessary for the operation.

A total of 120 engines were changed over a three-day period, in addition to the modifications and the normal servicing and maintenance. From October 17-19, a series of "small flying programmes" were carried out. These were to test the newly fitted Merlin 24s for fuel economy and to evaluate the reliability of the modified aircraft. The force of 40 heavily laden Lancasters (19 from 617 Squadron, 20 from 9 Squadron, and one from 463 Squadron on special photographic duty) left for Scotland on October 28, and the following day set off for Tromso on Operation Obviate.

On approach to the target area, an unexpected weather front meant that conditions rapidly deteriorated, and bombing was made difficult as the target was obscured by cloud. Some aircraft dropped bombs by targeting the gun flashes they could glimpse through the cloud, but as the force returned, it knew that the *Tirpitz* was still afloat.

A third attempt by 617 and 9 Squadrons to bomb the ship was carried out in November, the aircraft being dispatched to their forward bases in Scotland on the 11th and the raid being carried out the following day. This time weather conditions were good all the way to the target, a clear sky offering excellent visibility. Everything was at last in favour of a successful attack, and the bombs rained down—several direct hits saw the battleship roll over to port and lie on its side. Another victory for the Lancaster.

The unit dropped the first of the new 22,000-pound Grand Slam bombs in March 1945, when two 617 Lancaster B.I (Specials) attacked the Bielefeld railway viaduct in Germany. A few days later, the Arnsberg viaduct received similar treatment. The unit's last high-profile operation of the war came on April 25, when Hitler's 'Berghof' home and the Eagle's Nest at Berchtesgaden in Bavaria were among the targets. Nine 12,000-pound Tallboys were aimed at the Berghof and three at the Eagle's Nest, though the crews were not able to assess the damage due to smoke obscuring the targets.

Although the missions listed above are some of the highest profile, other Lancaster units fought equally hard to bring down Hitler's regime. By the end of the war in Europe, crews had flown around 156,000 sorties and dropped

Continued on page 77

By Michael D. Hull

crdit???

The Blunder of Barbarossa

> Hitler's rationale for the invasion of the Soviet Union had been expressed years earlier, but the offensive was severely flawed.

By April 1941, just over a year and a half into World War II, Nazi Germany was master of Europe. All that stood in its way was Great Britain and her far-flung empire. The tiny island nation stood defiant but was perilously vulnerable after a series of defeats in northern France, Norway, the Far East, Greece, and Crete. With time and effort, Britain could summon imperial reserves, but she had no means of meeting the powerful German Army in battle.

Adolf Hitler had always admired the British Empire and still believed that he could bring it to the peace table. He dreamed of conquering Europe while the British Empire controlled the rest of the world.

Hitler suspected that Britain was fighting on because she looked to the Soviet Union for eventual support. So, the German leader calculated that he could isolate Britain with a rapid war of movement in the East, toppling Marshal Josef Stalin's regime and crushing Russian bolshevism, which he loathed. An invasion of western Russia would also provide Germany with needed *lebensraum*, or living space. This had been one of Hitler's aims from his earliest writings.

Less than a month after a humiliated France had surrendered to Germany in the early summer of 1940, and while he was considering an invasion of England, Hitler had ordered the drawing up of plans for an invasion of Russia in the spring of 1941.

This, he said, would be the blitzkrieg to end all blitzkriegs. With Russia struck down, Britain virtually impotent, and isolationist America unwilling to enter the war, he promised that a "Thousand-Year Reich" was assured. On December 18, 1940, Directive No. 21 was issued, authorizing Operation Barbarossa.

Hitler told General Franz Halder, chief of the General Staff, "When Barbarossa commences, the world will hold its breath and make no comment." And the Fuhrer made clear that it would be a brutal undertaking, with no quarter given. In March 1941, he told his generals, "The war against Russia will be such that it cannot be conducted in a knightly fashion. This struggle is one of ideologies and racial differences, and it will have to be conducted with unprecedented, unmerciful, and unrelenting harshness."

Three months later, on the eve of the invasion, Hitler told the German High Command, "Your armies will shatter the Russian colossus. It will be a hard fight; the Asiatics are cruel and cunning, but you will meet them with a determination as hard and cold as ice. Only one people will come out of this alive—our people. You must make your troops put aside all their notions of restraint and humanity…. This will be the last campaign of this war, and it will ensure the security of the Reich for many generations…. We cannot refuse to give battle, and one day the world will thank us for having responded to the call of destiny."

Operation Barbarossa was eventually launched early on Sunday, June 22, 1941. At 3:00 AM, more than 7,000 German field guns started bombarding pinpointed targets, while overhead droned 1,000 Luftwaffe bombers on their way to pound Soviet airfields, military installations, and communications centers. A key objective was the destruction of the Red Air Force. Then, German armor and infantry surged eastward across the frontier on a 500-mile front. The onslaught would eventually cover a 2,000-mile front from the North Cape to the Black Sea.

A PzKpfw. III command tank churns through the water of a river somewhere in Russia during Operation Barbarossa. The command tank, or panzerbefehlswagen, of this type was fielded by the 6th and 18th Panzer Regiments during Barbarossa.

The massive invasion comprised three powerful army groups with almost three and one-half million men, 153 divisions, 3,600 tanks, 7,000 artillery pieces, 600,000 motorized vehicles, and 625,000 transport horses. Flying in support were 2,700 bombers, fighters, and dive bombers. Tuned in closely to the

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Exquisite walking sticks not shown actual size.

German tanks advance steadily along a dirt road during the opening days of Operation Barbarossa. Early successes contributed to a German sense of overconfidence that was later dashed as the Red Army strengthened.

opening of the operation, Hitler was gleeful and supremely confident. "Before three months have passed," he promised on that fateful day, "we shall witness a collapse in Russia the like of which has never been seen in history."

Under the overall command of Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, the three German army corps aimed for precise objectives in Russia. General Ritter von Leeb's Army Group North was to advance from East Prussia through the Baltic States and on to Leningrad. General Fedor von Bock's Army Group Center was to besiege the border fortress at Brest-Litovsk, swing north of the Pripet Marshes, and head for Minsk, Smolensk, and ultimately Moscow. Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt's Army Group South would advance from a starting line that arced from southern Poland, along the Hungarian frontier, and across Romania. Ahead of it lay the vast plains of southern Russia and the Ukraine.

The Moscow high command was surprised by the scale of the Nazi assault, and, despite repeated warnings of Hitler's intentions by agents and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Soviet dictator Stalin was unable to grasp what was now happening. He had assumed that the rumors of war were just German saber-rattling.

The Soviet Union had been preparing for war, expanding the Red Army and producing such innovative weapons as the deadly *Katyusha* rocket launcher and the 26-ton T-34 medium tank, arguably the best tank of World War II.

But Stalin had been prepared to make big concessions to Germany in 1941, expecting a new reconciliation of interests with Hitler, and he was not yet ready for war. When the enemy juggernaut burst across his borders, the wily, brutal Marshal Stalin refused to sanction retaliation. He was in a state of shock—almost complete mental collapse—for several days before pulling himself together. "Everything which Lenin created we have lost forever!" he groaned to aides. After recovering, he operated cautiously in the first month of the war.

The specified aim of the German armies was to kill Russians rather than conquer cities. Hitler and his general had agreed that the Soviet forces had to be trapped and beaten in western Russia, within 250 miles of the border. Their concern was that the Red Army might fall back deep into the Russian interior, drawing the Germans into a battle of attrition on the edge of Asia.

Meanwhile, as the Luftwaffe achieved aerial supremacy within the first few days, great German formations of panzers, artillery, and infantry steamrolled relentlessly into western Russia in blitzkrieg fashion. The iron spearheads knifed through lightly defended frontier positions, and there seemed to be no stopping them. Bridges across the Bug and other rivers and streams were seized by surprise, and sleepy Russian guards were machine-gunned as they scrambled for their weapons. Where there were no bridges, German shock troops paddled silently in rubber dinghies or rode powered assault boats before the Russians could open fire.

But the Soviets fought back with a desperate valor, and they held a trump card on which the Germans had not reckoned: As the massed panzers rumbled toward distant Daugava, their left flank was suddenly menaced by monstrous 43-ton KV-1 and 52-ton KV-2 tanks of the crack 3rd Soviet Armored Corps. A furious two-day battle ensured, and the Germans were able to prevail only after calling on support from high-velocity 88 mm flak guns.

All went well, though the great distances involved and the minimal Russian infrastructure soon hampered the German timetable because the panzer divisions had to halt and wait for the slow-moving infantry and vital supplies. In many areas, the Germans faced no opposition; in others, Soviet units large and small fought desperately until overwhelmed. The city of Smolensk, on the left bank of the upper Dnieper River, held out for 63 days.

In August, Hitler and his stunted propaganda minister, Josef Goebbels, admitted that they had "obviously underestimated completely Soviet striking power and, above all, the equipment of the Soviet Union." They were forced to realize that Stalin's increasingly efficient regime had succeeded in creating an untouchable eastern industrial base, which enabled his armies to make good their heavy materiel losses in the battles of encirclement.

The German Army were also experiencing supply problems because it had failed to procure sufficient materiel and transport for lengthy operations. The Russians—soldiers and guerrillas alike—were upsetting the German timetable.

The Red Army had not cracked up after its initial setbacks and was contradicting Hitler's prediction about the "whole rotten structure" collapsing. He was unaware of the Russians' endurance and indifference to pain and death. When French writer Jean Bruller Vercours had suggested that Hitler's legions would go through the country "like a knife into butter," his Russian friend, Leon Motchane, retorted, "What an idea! You don't know the Russians. Never mind if they like or dislike Stalin and his regime; that doesn't count anymore. Holy Russia is attacked, and they'll defend it. To the last man. And they're invincible.... Hitler has repeated Napoleon's mistake. Even if he gets away with some early successes, he has flung himself into a bottomless pit. He's doomed. Let's drink to victory!"

Stalin, alarmed at the loss of several of his armies, appointed himself commissar of defense and taken direct control of operations. The generalissimo was as brutal with the army as he had been with his own people during the infamous purges of the 1930s.

Many of the generals who had faced the initial German blitzkrieg were relieved of duty and executed. Those who remained were hard and ruthless, obeying orders no matter what the cost in casualties.

When he became aware of the Soviet Army's growing strength, effectiveness, and will, the formerly confident General Halder was obliged to change his views. "Overall," he said on August 11, "it is clearer and clearer that we have underestimated the Russian colossus, which had prepared itself for war with an absolute lack of restraint which is characteristic of the totalitarian state. This is as true in the area of organization as it is of the economy, the area of transport and communications, but above all to pure military power. At the start of the war, we reckoned on some 200 enemy divisions. Now we have already counted 360. These divisions are definitely not armed and equipped in our sense, and tactically they are in many ways badly led. But they are there."

Hitler and his top advisors had naively expected their armies to be welcomed as liberators by the Russians, repressed as they were under Stalin's chilling regime. But the Germans came as conquerors and made little or no attempt to win the hearts and minds of the people. They regarded the Slavic population as *Untermenschen*, or subhuman, and were determined to enslave the Slavic population and exterminate all of its Jews.

But the German units were over-reaching their supply lines while a series of sharp Soviet counterattacks stalled their advance. It became obvious to Hitler's generals that the campaign could not be maintained on three fronts. So, resources were diverted from Army Group Center's drive toward Moscow in order to press attacks on Leningrad in the far north and Kiev and the Ukraine to the south, thus allowing Army Group South to approach the Soviet capital from behind.

Despite increasing Russian pressure, the Germans pushed on and managed to rush forward sufficient materiel to renew their drives. As a result, they were able to encircle Kiev in late September and Bryansk-Viazma in October.

A long stream of Russian prisoners stretches into the distance in this image of the heady days of the German advance during Operation Barbarossa. German encirclements netted hundreds of thousands of prisoners before the Nazi juggernaut was halted.

Almost eight Soviet armies totaling 1.2 million men were captured. The envelopment of Kiev was probably the greatest German feat of arms in any war.

Moscow seemed to lie open to a German advance, but the weather intervened to hobble further German progress. This was what the Russians called *rasputitsa*, or "the time when roads dissolve." Heavy rains in October turned dusty roads into impassable rivers of mud, bogging down tanks and supply columns. Already strained, the German logistical situation was now critical, while the weather favored the Soviets.

The Germans, though, had made great progress against the stubborn Soviet troops. Despite many unexpected setbacks and heavy losses in men and materiel, the Wehrmacht had encircled and captured an estimated total of two million Russian troops.

Nevertheless, none of the basic aims that Hitler had laid down for Barbarossa had been achieved. Although his armies had scored huge successes on the northern and southern fronts, they had not captured Moscow, Leningrad, the rich Caucasian oilfields, or the Archangel railway. Most importantly, the Russian armies as a whole had not been destroyed or prevented from withdrawing when necessary. The variety of these objectives and the sheer width of the front were proving beyond the capabilities of Operation Barbarossa.

The Red Army scored its first major successes in November. It secured the road over Lake Ladoga, the vital supply line to besieged Leningrad, and recaptured Rostov in the south. Meanwhile, the afflictions besetting the German armies became known to Stalin and his generals, who sensed that their foes were stretched to the breaking point with serious supply problems and a lack of winter equipment. The German offensive came to a standstill by the end of November, and General Eduard Wagner, the Wehrmacht quartermaster general, reported, "We are at the end of our personnel and materiel strength."

German commanders at the front demanded several times that their exhausted troops be withdrawn, but an angry Hitler refused. The fanatical Nazi leader ordered that soldiers should die where they stood and that not an inch of ground was to be surrendered. But, on December 8, he agreed reluctantly to issue Directive No. 39, suspending Operation Typhoon for the duration of the winter. Army Group Center began pulling back to less-exposed positions farther west, and Hitler's anger increased. Several commanders were replaced or dismissed, and on December 19, Hitler took over Field Marshal Brauchitsch's

function as army commander-in-chief. That day, the Fuhrer issued a general order: "Every man must fight where he stands. No falling back where there are no prepared positions in rear."

But the dispirited, frostbitten troops *were* falling back, and Hitler was forced to realize that his Russian adventure had failed. And he now had other, wider concerns. The disaster before the gates of Moscow had been preceded by the December 7 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and Hitler compounded his own troubles with a declaration of war against the United States on December 11.

When the Eastern Front stabilized at the end of the month, Germany faced three major enemies: Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. After many spectacular successes, Hitler was now involved in a total war he could not win.

The Battle of Moscow cost the Germans more than half a million men, 1,300 tanks, 2,500 artillery pieces, and more than 15,000 vehicles. By January 31, 1942, Operation Barbarossa had cost the German armies 918,000 men killed, wounded, captured, or missing.

After the Battle of Moscow, the German armies conducted a slow retreat in desperate conditions. Then, after new Russian offensives were mounted, fierce battles raged at Kalinin, Orel, the River Don, Krasnodar, Stalingrad, Kursk, Lvov, and elsewhere across the vast Eastern Front for almost three more years. Growing stronger and stronger, the Red Army relentlessly pushed the Germans back all the way to Warsaw, Budapest, East Prussia, Vienna, and finally Berlin.

Russian soldiers advance across a snow-covered and war-torn landscape as they support T-34 medium tanks during winter operations against the invading Germans. The T-34, perhaps the best all-around tank of World War II, helped turn the tide on the Eastern Front.

In the end, Hitler's misguided Operation Barbarossa had achieved nothing except to break the back of the German Army. □

The late Michael D. Hull wrote extensively for WWII History *on a variety of military topics. He resided in Enfield, Connecticut.*

By Gene Eric Salecker

National Archives

NOTICE TO ALL JAPANESE PERSONS AND PERSONS OF JAPANESE RACIAL ORIGIN

TAKE NOTICE that under Orders Nos. 21, 22, 23 and 24 of the British Columbia Security Commission, the following areas were made prohibited areas to all persons of the Japanese race:—

LULU ISLAND (including Steveston)
SEA ISLAND
EBURNE
MARPOLE
DISTRICT OF QUEENSBOROUGH
CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER
SAPPERTON
BURQUITLAM
PORT MOODY
IOCO
PORT COQUITLAM
MAILLARDVILLE
FRASER MILLS

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that any person of the Japanese race found within any of the said prohibited areas without a written permit from the British Columbia Security Commission or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police shall be liable to the penalties provided under Order in Council P.C. 1665.

AUSTIN C. TAYLOR,
Chairman,
British Columbia Security Commission

ABOVE: This public notice was issued by the Canadian government to identify areas around the country that were off limits to individuals of Japanese origin. TOP LEFT: A group of Japanese Americans who have renounced their U.S. citizenship and expressed a desire to return to Japan are in custody of law enforcement officers at the Tule Lake relocation camp. These men were en route to the Santa Fe internment camp, where nationals of Axis countries were held during the war.

Detention In Wartime

> Along with the United States, Canada and many Latin American countries dealt with detainees from Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II.

After the surprise bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, many Americans in authority began to fear the large number of people of Japanese ancestry living along the West Coast of the United States, thinking that some of them might have sympathies for Japan and might assist in a possible invasion or sabotage American efforts to resist such an invasion.

Although it took a few months, President Franklin D. Roosevelt eventually issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, granting military commanders the ability to designate certain areas of California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska as off-limits to any people of Japanese ancestry. While about 200 people of Japanese lineage were removed from Alaska, another 112,000 were removed from the western states. Approximately 80,000 were Nisei—American-born Japanese with United States citizenship—while the remainder were Issei, Japanese-born immigrants who were eligible for U.S. citizenship under U.S. law.

Removed from their homes and places of business, the Issei and Nisei were taken to relocation centers in several states, where they were forced to live in primitive housing units under harsh conditions. Surrounded by barbed wire, with guard towers pointing inward toward the compound, the new residents were forbidden to leave the premises under penalty of law. Told that they were being rounded up and removed from their homes for their own safety, the Issei and Nisei would not be allowed to go back to their homes until World War II was finally over.

Even before America began gathering up people of Japanese ancestry living along the West coast, authorities in Central and South America, and on the Caribbean island of Cuba, had been gathering up foreign nationals in their own countries. At the insistence of the United States government, 18 Latin American countries, including Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela not only swept up people of Japanese ancestry, but also those of German and Italian backgrounds. Taken from their homes, some of the detainees were sent to the United States and housed in detention camps in New Mexico and Texas operated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), part of the Department of Justice, until they could be repatriated to Japan, Germany, or Italy.

In June 1940, President Roosevelt sent 700 FBI agents into several Central and South American countries to monitor the situation. Often, these agents overstated the threat of German influence in Latin America, exaggerating the threat of a fifth column. One agent mistakenly reported that the 12,000 ethnic Germans living in Bolivia were an "imminent threat," ignoring the fact that 8,500 of them were Jews escaping persecution in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl

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Coin experts amazed by "Incredible Opportunity"

Actual size is 38.1 mm

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- ✓ Struck and bagged in 1882
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The Morgan Silver Dollar is the most popular and iconic vintage U.S. coin. They were the Silver Dollars of the Wild West, going on countless untold adventures in dusty saddlebags across the nation. Finding a secret hoard of Morgans doesn't happen often—and when it does, it's a *big deal.*

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-Jeff Garrett

But where did this unique hoard come from? Read on...

Morgans from the New Orleans Mint

In 1859, Nevada's Comstock Lode was discovered, and soon its rich silver ore made its way across the nation, including to the fabled New Orleans Mint, the only U.S. Mint branch to have served under the U.S. government, the State of Louisiana and the Confederacy. In 1882, some of that silver was struck into Morgan Silver Dollars, each featuring the iconic "O" mint mark of the New Orleans Mint. Employees then placed the freshly struck coins into canvas bags...

The U.S. Treasury Hoard

Fast-forward nearly 80 years. In the 1960s, the U.S. government opened its vaults and revealed a massive store of Morgan Silver Dollars—including *full, unopened bags* of "fresh" 1882-O Morgan Silver Dollars. A number of bags were secured by a child of the Great Depression—a southern gentleman whose upbringing showed him the value of hard assets like silver. He stashed the unopened bags of "fresh" Morgans away, and there they stayed...

The Great Southern Treasury Hoard

That is, until *another* 50 years later, when the man's family finally decided to sell the coins—still in their unopened bags—which we secured, bag and all! We submitted the coins to respected third-party grading service Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC), and they agreed to honor the southern gentleman by giving the coins the pedigree of the "Great Southern Treasury Hoard."

These gorgeous 1882-O Morgans are as bright and new as the day they were struck and bagged 138 years ago. Coins are graded on a 70-point scale, with those graded at least Mint State-60 (MS60) often referred to as "Brilliant Uncirculated" or BU. Of all 1882-O Morgans struck, *LESS THAN 1% have earned a Mint State grade.* This makes these unopened bags of 1882-O Morgans extremely rare, certified as being in BU condition—nearly unheard of for coins 138 years old.

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Given the limited quantity of coins available from this historic hoard, we must set a strict limit of five coins per household. Call quickly to secure yours today as supplies are sure to sell out quickly!

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Rounded up in the Panama Canal Zone, these Japanese Latin Americans carry a few belongings and board a train while under guard. They are bound for an internment camp in the United States.

Harbor, in a move to secure the vital Panama Canal, the United States pressed the Panamanian government into making mass arrests of Japanese, German, and Italian nationals. On January 20, 1942, even before President Roosevelt had issued Executive Order 9066, the U.S. State Department had instructed its embassies in Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua to contact the various governments and obtain agreements to lock up "all dangerous aliens" or send them to the United States for detention. At the Third Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in January 1942, the diplomats agreed to break off relations with the Axis powers and called for "the detention and expulsion of dangerous Axis aliens" from Latin America.

Large numbers of Japanese were living in Brazil (248,848), Peru (25,000), Mexico (5,100), and Argentina (5,398) in 1941, having emigrated in search of economic freedom and available land. After Pearl Harbor, Mexico, under pressure from the United States, relocated all of its Japanese citizens to Mexico City and Guadalajara. German and Italian residents deemed "dangerous" were interned at the city of Perote, about 150 miles east of Mexico City. Brazil and Venezuela, also under pressure from the United States, set up internment camps within their own countries, while Chile, in an attempt to stay neutral, used its own legal system to deal with foreigners considered a threat. In Paraguay, most of the Japanese nationals lived in one central area and were put under surveillance but generally left alone. Colombia rounded up about 100 German citizens and held them in the Hotel Sabeneta in the city of Fusagasuga. Only Argentina, which had pro-Fascist leanings, refused to go along with the United States and left its foreign nationals alone.

In Central America, Costa Rica arrested all the ethnic Japanese—mostly farmers—confiscated their property, and auctioned off their agricultural machinery. Originally held in the San Jose Penitentiary, they were later moved to an encampment that was quickly improved and cleaned up by the detainees themselves. In the Panama Canal Zone, German and Japanese detainees were housed at the U.S.-administered Camp Empire at Balboa City.

In Nicaragua, the 120 German and Japanese detainees, all males, were placed in a prison in Managua, where they suffered from a lack of washing facilities and inadequate food. In time, the older internees and those married to Nicaraguan women—about half the number interned—were moved to a confiscated German farm, where the living conditions and food resources were much better.

In the Caribbean, the entire Japanese population of Cuba, about 800, as well as several hundred German nationals, were rounded up and interned on the prison island of Isle de Pines (now Isla de la Juventud), under the southwest curve of the main island. Since Cuba was so close to the United States mainland, government officials in the Roosevelt administration took a special interest in the Cuban internment program, funding the entire operation.

Not surprisingly, at the other end of the North American continent, Canada—then a dominion of the British Empire—began rounding up German Canadians under the War Measures Act shortly after Canada declared war on Germany in September 1939. Interning both "enemy nationals and Canadian citizens," the Canadian government eventually established 40 internment camps that held an estimated 24,000 Canadian German internees. In June 1940, after Italy entered the war, about 600 Italian Canadians were also rounded up and placed into three internment camps.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and Hong Kong, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police quickly interned 38 Japanese Canadians, and on February 24, 1942, only five days after President Roosevelt had issued Executive Order 9066, Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King issued Order-in-Council P.C. 1486, ordering all Japanese Canadians to move 100 miles inland from the Pacific Coast to "remove the menace of Fifth Column activity from [the coast]." Some 22,000 Japanese, about 65 percent Canadian-born, were removed from their homes. Many of the Japanese Canadians moved into abandoned houses hastily refitted by the Canadian government at Slocan Valley, British Columbia. During the removal, an additional 720 Canadian Japanese who resisted the move were interned at a prisoner-of-war camp in Ontario. During the removal of the Japanese Canadians, the government confiscated and later sold their property to help pay for their relocation and detention.

Under United States Presidential Proclamation No. 2497, signed by President Roosevelt on July 14, 1941, Peru had placed hundreds of Japanese and Germans on a "blacklist." On January 24, 1942, Peru officially broke off relations with Japan, and on February 12 declared war on both Japan and Germany. The Peruvian government then moved quickly against its foreign nationals, shutting down foreign schools, community organizations, and newspapers.

Although Peru toyed with the idea of placing its people of Japanese, German, and Italian ancestry into internment camps within its own borders, they eventually decided to ship the detainees to the United States. On April 5, 1942, the first ship, *Etolin*, left Peru carrying 146 Japanese men, nearly all born in Japan and either all unmarried or with spouses already returned to Japan; 269 Germans; and 11 Italians. Steaming up the coast of South America, the ship stopped briefly at Ecuador to pick up 10 more

Japanese and 38 more German deportees, and then at Colombia to pick up an additional 149 Germans and three Italians. On April 20, the ship sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge and docked at San Francisco. Once on U.S. soil, the men were denied visas and passports, classified as "enemy aliens," and detained on the grounds that they had tried to enter the country illegally. Placed on a special 18-car train with blackened windows, the 626 South American detainees were sent on a three-day trip to a new detention camp at Kenedy, Texas.

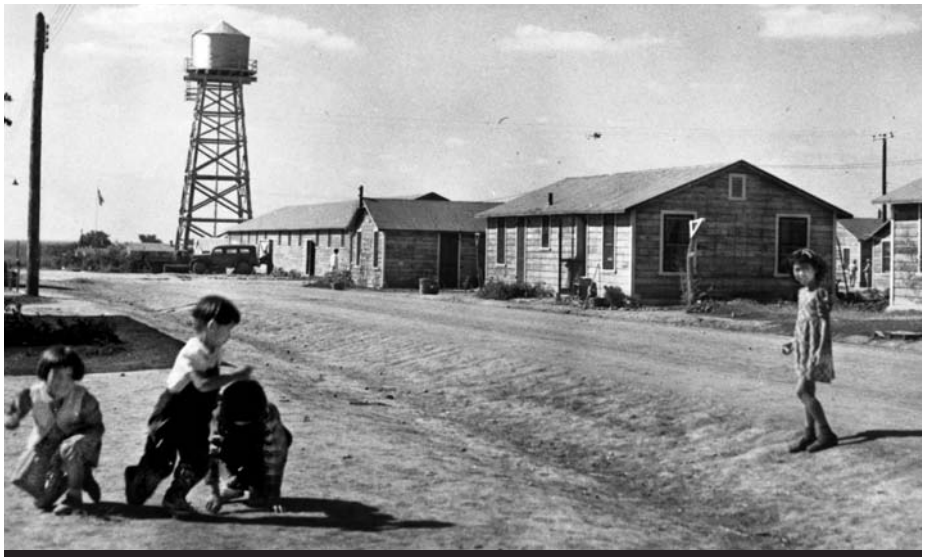
Located 55 miles southeast of San Antonio, the facility at Kenedy was an old Civilian Conservation Corps camp that had been converted into the Kenedy Alien Detention Camp. Administered separately from the War Relocation Authority, which oversaw the running of the different internment camps holding American Issei and Nisei, the detention camps were run by the INS and the Justice Department.

In the wake of the first group, more Peruvian deportees were loaded onto the Swedish ship M.S. *Gripsholm* and the U.S. military transport ships *Shawnee* and *Frederick C. Johnson*. Many of these subsequent deportees were women and children, termed "voluntary internees;" they'd volunteered to leave Peru in search of their husbands and fathers, who had been taken to the United States aboard earlier transports. Once on U.S. soil, families were sent to a detention facility at Crystal City, Texas, while lone females and married couples without children were sent to Seagoville, Texas. As before, single males were sent to the Kenedy camp or a new facility at Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The 500-acre Crystal City Alien Enemy Detention Facility was located about 110 miles southwest of San Antonio, near the Mexican border, and was opened on November 2, 1942. Established on the site of an old Farm Security Administration migrant-labor camp from the 1930s, the Crystal City camp was segregated, having German detainees on one side and Japanese on the other. While the German side contained a

Hans Joachim Schaer was five years old when he was brought to Crystal City from Costa Rica. "The prison camp was beautiful, at least for us kids," he wrote. "In the mornings we had a bottle of milk, we had a swimming pool, we had a dispensary, they treated us nice." As Blanca Katsura recalled, "Being a child at the time, I had no worries and made lots of friends. We were able to go to school and learn Japanese."

In February 1942, the INS acquired 80 acres of an old Civilian Conservation Corps camp from the New Mexico State Penitentiary near Santa Fe, New Mexico, and designated it Santa



Perhaps unaware that they are essentially imprisoned, children play outdoors at the Crystal City internment camp located south of San Antonio, Texas.

Fe Internment Camp. Opened in December 1943, the camp was originally intended to hold only Japanese families from Latin America but eventually held families of German detainees and "troublemakers" from the Japanese-American internment camps.

In all, 6,609 people of German, Italian, and Japanese ancestry were sent from Latin America to the detention camps in the United States, including 4,058 Germans from 18 countries, 287 Italians from 15 countries, and 2,264 Japanese from 13 countries. Of the 2,264 Japanese the Latin Americans sent to the States, 1,799—almost 80 percent—came from Peru.

In early 1942, through the assistance of Swedish, Swiss, and Spanish intermediaries, the United States and the Axis countries began talks to negotiate an exchange of both officials and private citizens. In May 1942, the Swedish ocean liner S.S. *Drottningholm* left for Lisbon, Portugal, carrying 652 German, Italian, Rumanian, and Bulgarian officials from the United States and 215 German and Italian officials from Latin America. *Drottningholm* returned to the U.S. with 908 American officials, newspaper correspondents, and civilians, including 241 from South America.

On June 3, *Drottningholm* set out on her second exchange trip, carrying 949 Germans and a handful of Italians, and returned with 949 North and South American passengers on June 30. On July 15, the *Drottningholm* returned to her home port in Gothenburg, Sweden, carrying 815 Germans and Italians from all over Central and South America, including 90 children and seven infants, who had been held at the Seagoville detention camp in Texas.

For the Japanese, exchanges began in mid-June 1942. It was estimated that as many as 3,300 U.S. citizens had been swept up by the Japanese in their attacks on China and through their early conquests in the Philippines and other Pacific islands. On June 18, 1942, the United States chartered the neutral Swedish motorship *MS Gripsholm* and put aboard 1,097 passengers. Many were Japanese-Americans from the United States, but over 200 were Latin American Japanese businessmen and officials and their families. Also aboard were Kichisaburo Nomura and Saburo Kurusu, the two Japanese emissaries that had been negotiating for peace with Secretary of State Cordell Hull when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

Starting from New Jersey, the ship stopped at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to pick up another 409 Japanese internees, including diplomats and officials from the Japanese embassies in Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay, and then steamed to the neutral Portuguese port of Lourenco Marques, Portuguese East Africa (now Maputo, Mozambique). The ship returned to Jersey City with 1,451 Allied civilians, mostly American officials and their families captured in Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Indochina. Many of the repatriated Americans had been beaten and starved by the Japanese.

It took more than a year to work out another exchange with Japan. Because of security problems, legal issues, logistics, and the growing hatred between the two governments, the second exchange of nationals did not take place until the late summer of 1943. On September 2, the *Gripsholm* left Jersey City with more than 1,300 Japanese aboard, including 314 Japanese American detainees from the U.S. internment camps. The rest were Latin American Japanese from the detention camps. The ship picked up another 89 Japanese Latin Americans at Rio de Janeiro, and another 84 detainees at Montevideo, Uruguay.

The *Gripsholm* reached Mormugao, Portuguese West India and exchanged her passengers for 1,236 Americans, 221 Canadians, and about 40 Chileans from Japan. Included among the Americans were 461 missionaries.

The second exchange trip of the *Gripsholm*, like that of the *Drottningholm*, was her last. By late 1943, the deportations from Latin America to the United States had dropped off dramatically as the perceived threat from Central and South America diminished and the Allies began squeezing the Japanese defensive ring around their home islands.

At the all-male Kenedy detention camp, many of the detainees remembered the "tropical hurricane" that roared in from the Gulf of Mexico in late August 1942, tearing apart many of the hastily constructed "victory huts." When the authorities ordered the Germans and Japanese to clean up the compound, many of them refused, arguing that such work did not constitute "regular camp maintenance" as stipulated in the Geneva Convention.

In September 1945, with the end of the war, President Harry Truman issued a proclamation authorizing the removal of all enemy aliens "who are within the territory of the United States without permission under the immigration laws." The few remaining detainees at Kenedy were transferred to the facility at Crystal City, and the camp was officially closed down. At Crystal City, 2,371 Japanese, 997 Germans, and six Italians from Latin America awaited return to their countries in Central and South America. Unfortunately, Peru, which had sent almost 80 percent of the Latin American Japanese that had come to the U.S., refused to take back most of the detainees, accepting only those that could prove Peruvian citizenship. In the end, only 80 Japanese Peruvians were returned to Peru. The rest, almost 900, along with another 100 from other Latin American countries, were deported to Japan, where many of the Central and South American-born children had trouble adjusting to the language and customs.

Thanks to legal action pursued by civil-rights attorneys Wayne M. Collins and A.L Wirin, several hundred Japanese Latin Americans were allowed to stay in the United States as "undocumented immigrants" after the war.

In Canada, just before the end of the war, many Japanese Canadians were preparing to return to their homes along the west coast when Prime Minister King issued a new order-in-council giving the detainees only two options.

With some help from the Canadian government, they could either resettle east of the Rocky Mountains, far from the Pacific Coast, or sign up for "voluntary repatriation" to Japan. The majority of Japanese Canadians agreed to move east of the Rockies, but almost 4,000 were shipped to Japan. Japanese Canadians were not permitted to return to the West Coast until April 1, 1949.

For those Japanese, German, and Italian Latin Americans who wanted to remain in the United States, Congress opened the door for them in June 1952, overriding a presidential veto and passing the Immigration Act of 1952.

On August 10, 1988, after years of lawsuits and negotiations, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, providing a formal apology on behalf of the United States government for the internment of the Japanese-Americans during World War II and granting each survivor $20,000. In September, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney signed an agreement to compensate Japanese Canadians who had lost their property and been detained in Canada. Similar to the United States agreement, the settlement included an official apology by the Canadian government and a payment of $21,000 to each survivor.

Unfortunately, the Latin American Japanese did not qualify under the United States Civil Liberties Act of 1988, since they had not been United States citizens or permanent United States residents at the time of their detention. A class-action lawsuit was filed against the United States by the surviving Japanese Latinos, and in 1991, the United States government agreed to pay each person $5,000. Although many of the survivors were glad to finally receive some form of compensation from a government that had held them in confinement without due process of law, many of the survivors felt that the $5,000 payment was a mere pittance when compared to that given to the Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians.

To this date, there has been no formal apology or compensation from any of the Central American, South American, or Caribbean countries; nor has the United States offered any apology to the German or Italian Latinos deported from Latin America during World War II. □

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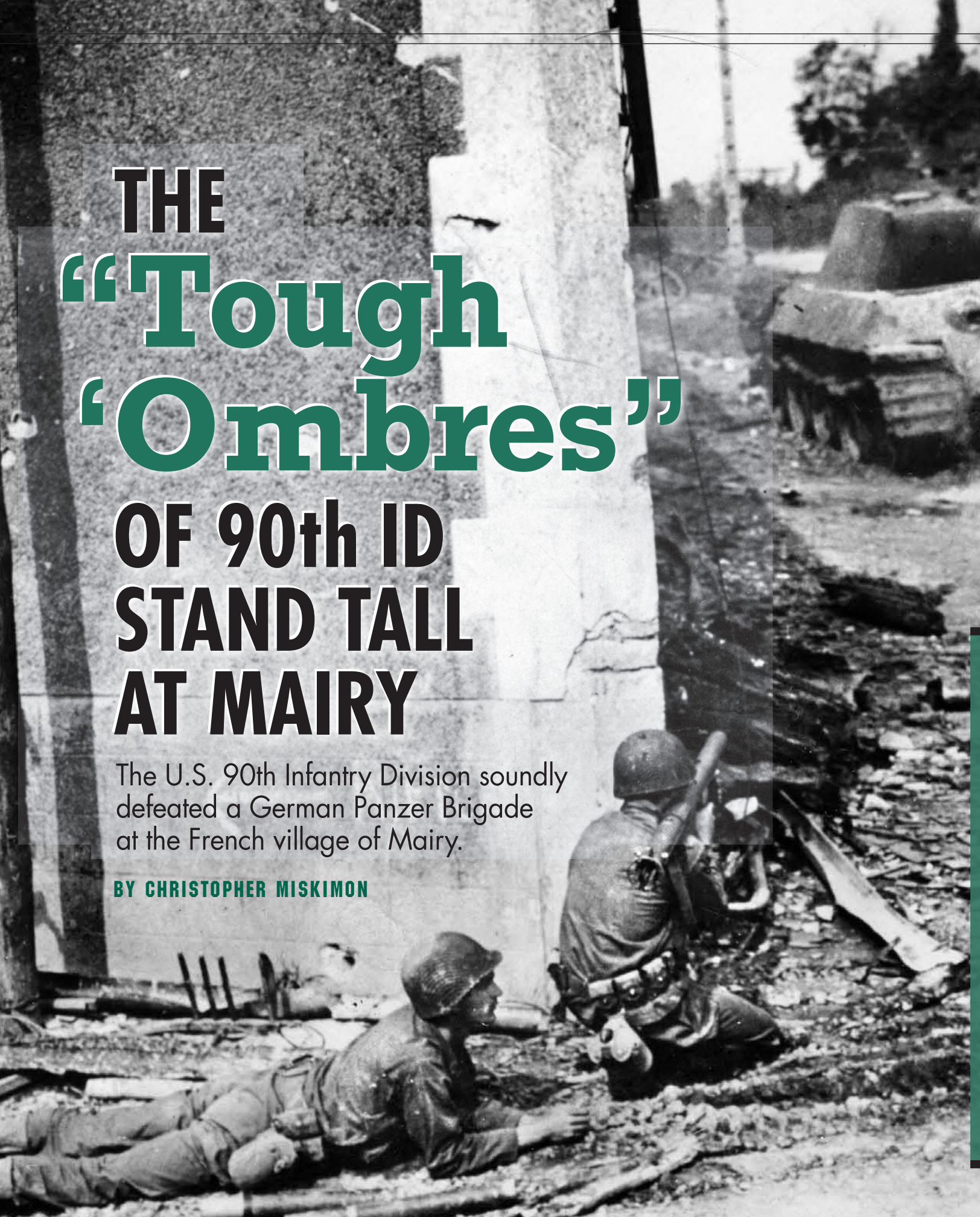

THE "Tough 'Ombres" OF 90th ID STAND TALL AT MAIRY

The U.S. 90th Infantry Division soundly defeated a German Panzer Brigade at the French village of Mairy.

BY CHRISTOPHER MISKIMON

As summer neared its end in early September 1944, the U.S. Army raced across northern France toward the German border. For over a month after the breakout from the Normandy beachhead, American armies chased their disorganized and exhausted German foes inexorably across territory held by the Third Reich since 1940.

General George Patton's Third Army acted as a spearpoint aimed at the Nazi heartland, smashing every hastily built defensive line the Germans had created as they retreated headlong toward the Rhine River. Hope of a quick victory began to build; many Joes and Tommys thought the war would be over in just a few months, spurring rumors the troops would be home by Christmas.

After the past four years of endless, numbing combat, it all seemed too good to be true; and it was. The Allied advance did proceed at a remarkable pace—until the leading divisions began to outpace their supplies.

By September, Patton and other senior commanders received warnings that their fuel rations were about to be cut dramatically. Third Army alone needed 400,000 gallons of gasoline a day to continue operating at full pace. There simply were not enough trucks and operable trains to provide the fuel, ammunition and supplies that the highly mechanized Allied armies' columns needed to maintain the advance. For an aggressive, offensive-minded leader like Patton, this was bitter news. He knew that if the Germans had even a brief period to reorganize, they could put a stop to further Allied gains. But he had little choice; he slowed his advance while the supply lines caught up to meet the needs of the frontline units.

Third Army slowed its pace in Lorraine, a province in northern France near the German border. Defending this area was the German *1. Armee* — so weak and disorganized a force that its defensive actions proved less a hindrance to the Americans than did the Yanks' own fuel shortages. The German high command believed U.S. Third Army would soon mount a major offensive toward the Rhine River in that area.

As Patton's army waited for its gasoline supplies to arrive during the first week of September, the delay only reinforced Pattens discomfort.

German intelligence, however, failed to realize the Allied fuel situation and believed that Patton's pause signified that he was preparing for an attack toward the Rhine. *1.Armee*'s commander, General Kurt von der Chevallerie, conceived a spoiling attack to frustrate Patton's nonexistent Rhine-crossing attack.

In simplest terms, a spoiling attack is one made to disrupt an impending enemy attack, preventing it from occurring. But Kurt's ineffectual efforts merely provided the Germans additional time to reorganize and reinforce.

The Germans had already gathered a force of their own for a counterattack against Patton, carefully husbanding it so it would be large enough to achieve a decisive result. *Panzer* and *panzergrenadier* (motorized infantry) divisions composed most of the attack force. All of them had seen recent heavy combat, and a few were still actively engaged on other parts of the front. These divisions lacked the tanks, half-tracks, and personnel to be at full strength, though they

A PzKpfw. V Panther medium tank smolders after being hit by the American infantryman at lower left firing his bazooka. Other GIs rush toward the tank to take out any crewmen who may have survived the blast. At Mairy, France, the soldiers of the 90th Infantry Division utterly defeated a spoiling attack by the German Panzer Brigade 106.

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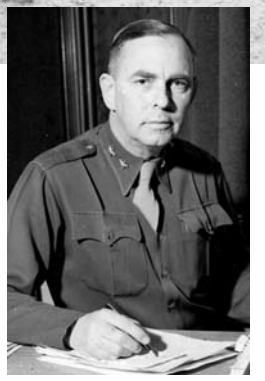

Both: National Archive

ABOVE: Soldiers of the U.S. 90th Infantry Division move inland in Normandy on June 6, 1944. The men of the "Tough 'Ombres" were believed to have performed poorly in their early combat encounters. However, new leadership hardened the division into a fine fighting formation, as proven at the Battle of Mairy. RIGHT: General Raymond McLain assumed command of the 90th Division and led its turnaround in combat effectiveness.

did have a core of experienced troops on-hand.

The remaining units in this force comprise six newly formed panzer brigades, a new sort of unit partly based on the *kampfgruppen* (ad-hoc, combined-arms formations) used on the Eastern Front to respond to enemy breakthroughs and stabilize areas of the front. Due to the desperate situation, General Chevallerie received permission to use Panzer Brigade 106 for his spoiling attack south of Metz. Any use of the brigade had to be personally approved by Hitler, however. The unit would return to its original mission afterward, later taking part in the counterattack called by the Germans the Vosges Panzer Offensive.

Panzer Brigade 106 was a compact yet powerful unit. Its main strength consisted of a panzer battalion with three companies of Panther tanks and one company of Panzer IV/70 tank destroyers, which mounted the same powerful 75 mm high-velocity cannon as the Panther in a turretless chassis. Alongside the tanks was a panzergrenadier battalion of five companies, though Panzer Brigade 106 eventually boasted eight companies. Each company had halftracks to carry the infantry; six halftracks in each company also sported triple 20 mm automatic cannon, useful against aircraft and ground targets. Some carried 75 mm howitzers for infantry fire support. At full strength, Panzer Brigade 106 numbered 2,100 troops and included support units such as engineer and reconnaissance companies. The brigade bore the moniker *Feldherrnhalle* ("Field Marshal's Hall"), since it was built around 347 survivors of a panzergrenadier division of the same name, destroyed on the Eastern Front in July 1944.

Colonel Franz Bäke commanded the brigade. An experienced tank officer, while serving on the Eastern Front he had led the Heavy Panzer Regiment Bäke, a "fire brigade" unit equipped with Tiger and Panther tanks. Panzer Brigade 106 was also partly based on this special unit. Bäke held the Knight's Cross, a high decoration for valor in the Wehrmacht.

Despite its heavy direct-action firepower, the brigade had several weaknesses. It had no integral artillery to support it, leaving it dependent on supporting division or corps assets to provide fire support. American armored units of similar size, called "Combat Commands" in U.S. armored divisions, generally had at least one battalion of self-propelled artillery assigned, giving them the ability to quickly place fire on enemy units. Panzer brigades lacked the ability to do so. These new German units were also composed mainly of new recruits with little time for complete training. The pressure to get them quickly committed to combat meant most of them did not get their into their tanks until a week or two before going into action. This left no time for proper training.

Likewise, the various components of each brigade were raised in different areas and did not meet until they arrived together for deployment. This left no time to develop the cohesion and combined-arms proficiency necessary for combat effectiveness. Despite these problems, Germany needed these brigades to enter the fighting; there was no one else available.

Berlin approved Chevallerie's plan on September 5, 1944, admonishing him that the brigade would return to centralized control in two days. Some elements of 19. Volksgrenadier-Division and 15. Panzergrenadier-Division reinforced the brigade. Their official orders were to attack from the area of Longwy-Aumetz in the Etain area southeast of Metz, clarify American dispositions, and destroy whatever enemy forces were found there. The attack would begin on September 7.

The American 90th Infantry Division of the XX Corps stood in the path of the German attack. The division carried the nickname "Tough 'Ombres" based on their shoulder patch, which bore the letters T and O, due to the unit's original recruitment areas in Texas and Oklahoma. As with most infantry divisions, the need to replace casualties meant the unit included soldiers from across the United States.

The 90th had landed on Utah Beach at Normandy after the first waves on D-day. Its initial combat service was poor, and the division was almost disbanded; but leadership changes resulted in General Raymond McLain assuming command by August 1944. His efforts improved

the division dramatically, so that by early September it was a veteran unit with replacements for the heavy casualties it had previously taken.

The 90th ID also had several important attachments to augment its combat power. The 712th Tank Battalion joined the division at the end of June; by September, it was fully incorporated into unit operations. Four tank companies made up the 712th: three employed the M4 Sherman medium tank, while the fourth used the light M5A1 Stuart. The Stuart was useless in a tank-to-tank confrontation but was highly effective in reconnaissance, screening, and support roles.

Tanks were usually allotted out to the division's infantry regiments at a ratio of one tank company per regiment. To assist against German armor, XX Corps also attached the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion to the 90th. Its three companies each fielded a dozen M5 76 mm towed anti-tank guns, also usually split among the division's regiments.

The German attack immediately got off to a sputtering start. Scheduled to begin at 11:00 PM on the night of 6-7 September, Panzer Brigade 106 arrived in their forward assembly area at 8:00 PM, only to discover that the infantry of Grenadier Regiment 59 / 19th Grenadier-Division had not deployed. When the brigade contacted the division, they discovered that higher command had never informed the Grenadier division of their orders. Almost six hours passed while the Grenadiers received their new orders and arrived in place at just before 2:00 AM on September 7. Colonel Bäke split his now reinforced kampfgruppe into two *stossgruppe* ("Shock Groups"), each a mix of tanks and infantry with engineers in support. A small number of infantry, tanks, tank destroyers and anti-aircraft vehicles formed a reserve, and a detachment was assigned to guard the brigade headquarters in the village of Audun-le-Roman.

The leading German troops reached the village of Briey an hour later but found no American troops. Several reconnaissance patrols swept the area to the southwest and west but found nothing. A planned rendezvous with 15. Panzergrenadier-Division in the nearby village of Landres did not materialize either, and further patrols failed to locate these missing friendly forces. The night's action accomplished nothing except the destruction of a bridge southeast of Briey. As a new day dawned over the French countryside, Bäke ordered his troops to return to their staging areas near Audun-le-Roman.

Unknown to the Germans, fuel shortages had also caused the failure of the Americans to find their own enemy. The 90th Division had to delay its planned attack until September 7th while sufficient gasoline arrived. The German plan simply miscalculated where the Americans would be by the time Bäke's advance began. When the American assault did begin, it quickly pushed back the two German units defending the area, *559. Volksgrenadier-Division* and 19. Grenadier-Division. The situation became so dire that 1. Armee issued Bäke new orders in the early evening of September 7 to make another attack toward Briey. Gen. Chevallerie hoped to restore the defense line with this move before the panzer brigade reverted to its original mission.

The renewed attack started as soon as the brigade could get ready. Around 8 to 10 of the unit's Panther tanks had already broken down, an all-to-common occurrence for the Panther, leaving 22 tanks for the attack. One stossgruppe (assault group), commanded by Senior Lieutenant Strauch, formed the eastern arm of the advance, assigned to relieve a battalion of 559. Volksgrenadier-Division. This unit became trapped in Briey by the day's fighting. Strauch led a company each of tanks and infantry with a platoon of engineers in support. With the relief completed, the stossgruppe would secure the town. Col. Bäke led the second group with most of the brigade's armor and men, two companies of tanks and three of infantry. As before, a company of infantry and the brigade's tank destroyers formed a reserve while the *flakpanzer* anti-aircraft guns protected the headquarters.

The US 90th Division occupied defensive positions about nightfall on September 7. Its three regiments deployed in a line with the 359th Infantry in the north around the village of Xivry-Circourt and the 358th Infantry around the village of Mairy. Two battalions of the 357th Infantry set up for the night at Avril, but that regiment trapped a battalion of the *559. Volksgrenadier-Division* in Briey and left one battalion, 2/357, to surround the German force and finish it the next day. The division commander, Gen. McLain, positioned his command post (CP) far forward so it could remain there the following day, as frequent movements hindered his ability to control his units. This placed the division's CP right among the forward infantry regiments in some woods, called the Bois le Rappe west of Mairy. The division's artillery headquarters set up in a farm field to the east, across a road which led toward Mairy. The two headquarters were perhaps a mile apart. Since the division command post was perilously close to the front lines, Company A of the 712th Tank Battalion posted Sherman tanks around both command posts to provide security. McLain and his troops were unaware that a reinforced German panzer brigade was readying itself to attack their positions.

Lacking intelligence, the Germans were likewise unaware of the locations of those American positions, knowing only the places that were their objectives. Col. Bäke's group set out along the road network leading from Audun-le-Roman toward Mairy with 4 or 5 Panthers under Senior Lt. Struck, followed by a platoon of half-tracks commanded by Senior Lt. Papke. The rest of the stossgruppe followed, with Bäke

With infantrymen hitching a ride, a German PzKpfw. V Panther Ausf A medium tank advances through a French village in September 1944. The Panther is considered to be one of the best tanks of World War II.

Ullstein Bild

and his headquarters company right behind the lead elements. They moved southwest and then south on the road, reaching the village of Mont, where they got on the road to Briey to rendezvous with the other stossgruppe.

The road to Briey was the same road which ran between the 90th Division's command post and the division artillery headquarters. Struck and Papke led their platoons right between the two American positions without spotting them

"RAY MCLAIN LOVED TO FIGHT, AND HE WAS GOING TO STAY AND SLUG IT OUT PERSONALLY. BUT HE WAS PERSUADED, AFTER MUCH ARGUMENT, WITH THE FACT HE HAD TO DIRECT THE AFFAIRS OF THE WHOLE DIVISION, AND NOT JUST THE HQ DEFENSE PLATOON."

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but Bäke and the headquarters company stopped in between them at about 2:30 AM. Their reason for stopping is unknown, but GIs involved in the battle surmised the Germans saw a sign posted for the artillery command post and stopped to investigate. Overhead, clouds floated in the cool night air, obscuring the moon and dimming its pale light.

A short distance from the road, the tank crews from Company A of the 712th silently perched on each side, looking at the column in between them. They soon realized it had to be German. Tank driver George Bussell remembered, "I could tell by the tracks it wasn't ours. The noise was altogether different. They had steel tracks and we had rubber." Bussell watched the German column stop and could make out the head of an enemy tank commander appear from the hatch of a Panther. "The 90th Division had a sign there…Red and White, it read 90th Division Artillery CP and that's what the tank stopped and was looking at."

2nd Lt. Harry Bell commanded three M4s guarding the division CP. As he looked out into the gloomy distance at the German column, he spoke into his radio microphone, reporting the enemy's location to 1st Lt. Lester O'Reilly, Company A's commander. O'Reilly asked Bell if he was positive the column was German. Bell said he was sure, and O-Reilly replied, "Give 'em hell."

Taking careful aim, the gunner on one of the M4s guarding the artillery CP pressed the foot pedal serving as the trigger for the Sherman tank's main gun. The cannon boomed, its muzzle flash lighting the night for a moment as its round smashed into a German half-track at the rear of the column. The vehicle burst into flames, illuminating the area and tragically revealing the location of the tank that just destroyed it. Several Panthers fired at it, and the Sherman exploded, spraying deadly metal fragments into the artillery CP—killing and wounding several additional men.

Nearby, another Sherman driver started the tank's engine. The noise drew the attention of another Panther crew, who hit the American tank in the suspension with its first round. On another Sherman, gunner Sgt. George Colton sent an armor-piercing round straight into one of the Panthers, setting it ablaze just seconds before German fire disabled his tank. Colton climbed out of his stricken vehicle, ran to a nearby Sherman and took over its cannon. He put a second Panther in his sights and slammed another armor-piercing round into it. Now there were two American and two German tanks burning, the light of their flames providing more illumination for the gunners on each side. The uneven staccato of muzzles flashes added to the general chaos and soon two more Shermans burst into flame.

GI Jim Gifford also joined the melee. "In the moonlight there was a column of tanks. There was a blacktop road there and we had tanks on both sides of it." He told his friend E.L. Scott to grab a bazooka and the pair moved to the road. "We were going to wait for that one tank and blast him…. Scott was pretty cool, he had it on his shoulder and we fired…he turned and started firing at us, and the next thing there were tanks firing all over the place in the moonlight."

While the Americans tried to organize a defense, the *panzergrenadiers* dismounted their halftracks and attacked toward both CPs. Several of the half-tracks carried triple 20 mm cannon; they moved to the artillery CP's flanks and opened fire, joined by the machine gun teams of the German infantry. The American headquarters personnel fought back but took heavy casualties. The GIs repelled the first assault, but another came at 3:45 AM, Panthers supporting the infantry with a barrage. Each side pelted the other with grenades. Private George Briggs climbed onto an abandoned tank and manned its machine gun, firing bursts at the Germans in the dark.

The hard-pressed divisional CP had to be partially evacuated, the principal staff sent to the 359th Regiment's headquarters. The assistant division commander, Maj. Gen. William

Weaver, had to convince Gen. McLain to leave. "Ray McLain loved to fight, and he was going to stay and slug it out personally. But he was persuaded, after much argument, with the fact he had to direct the affairs of the whole division, and not just the HQ defense platoon. He departed grudgingly." McLain did order reinforcements to join the fight; the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 359th moved in from the north, joined by C Company of the 712th Tank Battalion.

Bäke divided his stossgruppe into smaller elements in order to infiltrate through the American positions. However, this caused the smaller groups to run into other American units in the dark. One group ran into D Company of the 712th south of the command posts. This was the battalion's light company, equipped with the smaller M-5A1 Stuart tank. That unit later reported "…an enemy column, consisting of about 5 Panther tanks and 6 half-tracks, moved down a road between the [American tank] companies, circled the [712th] Battalion area and was believed totally destroyed. The presence of this company was known, but to fire on it in the darkness would endanger our own troops." Whether the German column was destroyed is unknown, but the statement only highlights the confusion of a night battle.

Whether the same German column or another, C Company of the 712th also encountered the enemy that night. The company bivouacked near the road with the battalion's Service Company on the other side. This outfit, containing the unit's mechanics, had a small hill between them and the road the Germans moved along. Several of the men stood guard on the hill, taking their bedrolls with them so they could take turns on watch.

Mechanic Eugene Sand was one of the sentries on the hill. When that column came through there," he recalled, "C Company started shooting at them and everything they missed in that column landed on the hill where we were." Sand and his buddies grabbed their bedrolls and ran down the opposite side of the hill to escape the firing. One soldier, Adam Kochan, had an alarm clock with him, used to tell time at night because it had a white face and black hands. As he ran the alarm clock went off, ringing all the way down the hill.

Ray Griffin of C Company was not involved in the exchange of fire on the road. His platoon was sent to reinforce the Artillery CP. After arriving the tank crews camouflaged their M4s with tree branches and waited for the dawn. He later wrote "When it did get light enough to see that the tanks at the bottom of the hill were indeed German…. I had my gunner, Bob Gladson, lay our gun on the closest German tank. Our 75-mm AP round bounced off…my loader Andy Rego, reloaded and we fired again with the same result. I believe we fired 3 or 4 rounds of armor piercing ammo … none of our rounds caused him any damage." The German tankers spotted Griffin's tank and returned fire. A round hit the M4, which began to burn. Luckily, the entire crew escaped without injury.

Other C Company tankers engaged the Ger-

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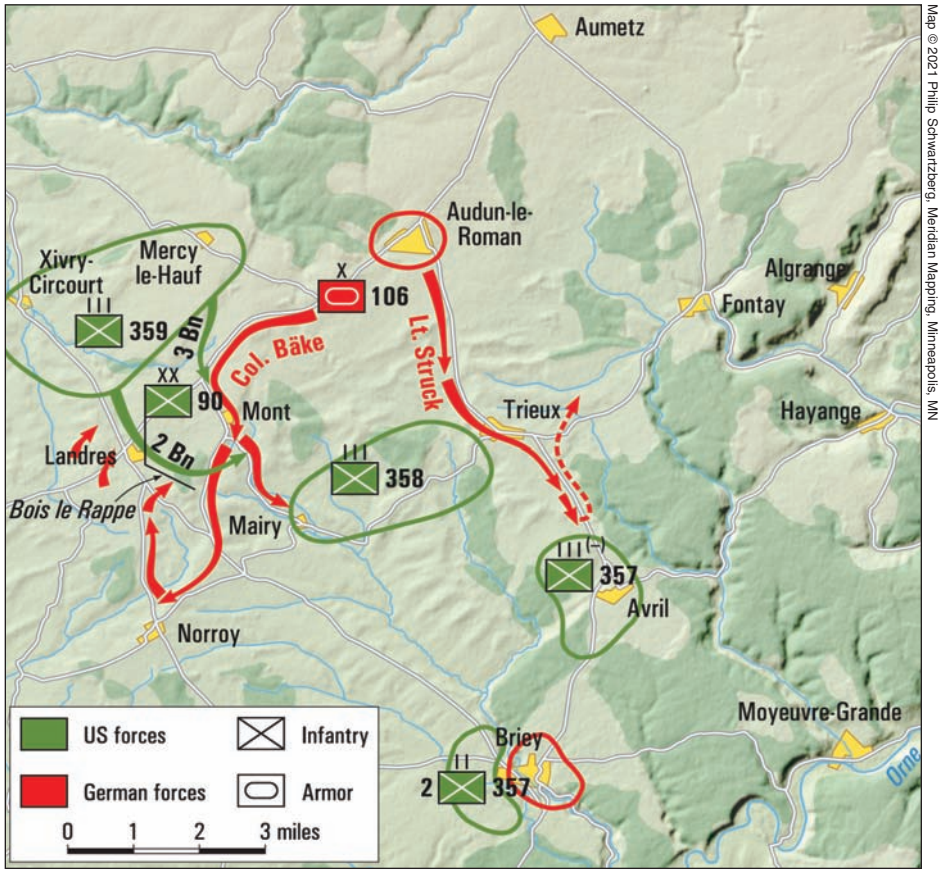


Map © 2021 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

TOP: Two soldiers of the 90th Division exchange fire with German troops from a second-story window. The 358th Infantry Regiment stopped the German Armored column in Mairy and captured more than 200 German prisoners. ABOVE: The 90th Infantry Division, nicknamed the "Tough 'Ombres," held key positions to defend against the spoiling attack of German Panzer Brigade 106 around the French town of Mairy. OPPOSITE: An M4 Sherman medium tank advances through a French village. The Shermans of the 712th Tank Battalion supported the 90th Infantry Division at Mairy.

Both: Author's Collection

TOP: GIs inspect this Panther tank of Panzer Brigade 106, disabled during the Battle of Mairy. A sign has been placed on the tank to familiarize passing troops. ABOVE: A German halftrack lies knocked out in the middle of a French village after falling victim to fire from American troops. The halftrack mounts a 75mm gun used for close infantry support and is deadly in street-to-street fighting.

mans with more success. Don Knapp commanded an M4. He saw a tank near his own hit by a Panther positioned some 2,000 yards away. The range was too far for the Sherman to effectively return fire, so they moved to cover. Minutes later Knapp's tank joined several others setting up "…in hull defilade," he remembered. "Okay, so here come some more tanks down the hill and they didn't even see us. And we nailed them. We were all firing…I think we caught a Panther, somebody did, and it was on fire. And there was an explosion. There was a smoke ring coming out of it and at the same time out of the turret was a German in that black outfit. It blew him right out of the tank and he almost went through that smoke ring."

Another German force approached Service Company after dawn. Forrest Dixon, a maintenance officer, climbed into a Sherman under repair and missing its engine. It did have battery power. He felt he had to act, since the battalion's ammunition and fuel was there, and they could not afford to lose it. Most of the mechanics ran when they saw the German tanks approaching, but one soldier stayed and helped Dixon get the 75 mm gun loaded, but there was only one round in the ready rack. Since the M4 had power, he could traverse the turret, but Dixon realized the sight was probably not aligned with the barrel, known as "boresighting." He decided to wait until the German tank got closer.

"I kept it pointed at the lead tank and when it got about 50 yards from me, that's when he saw me and began to turn to get his gun in my direction, and I let him have it," Dixon said. He knocked out the Panther but was now out of ammunition. He grabbed the radio and called Sam Adair, who commanded the 712th's assault guns, Shermans equipped with a 105 mm howitzer in place of the 75 mm gun. They quickly appeared and when the Germans saw them coming, they all surrendered.

Medical officer Capt. Jack Rediff watched Dixon knock out the Panther. "This German lieutenant gets out, one of his arms was badly injured." Rediff treated the man's wounds, speaking to him in broken German. He told the now-prisoner the war was over for him. The German did not like that but asked "Which bone is it, doctor, the radius or the ulna?"

The "Battle of the CPs" proved a chaotic fight, armor and infantry dueling in the dark. Despite this confusion, the Germans realized the situation was not unfolding as they expected. Bäke, while an experienced veteran, learned his trade on the Eastern Front. There, fighting the Soviets, time and again he saw his enemies break and run when a German panzer column penetrated their lines. Despite the breakthrough, here in the West the GIs refused to retreat. Instead, groups of American troops rallied and counterattacked. While these attacks often lacked coordination, the US infantry pressed the Germans hard, preventing them from regaining their momentum. The 90th Division did not panic.

Recognizing the difficulty of the situation, at 08:35 AM Bäke ordered his stossgruppe to turn east, back toward German lines. Briey was too far to expect they could reach it without taking excessive losses. Bäke also contacted the other stossgruppe under Lt. Strauch, located to the east. Strauch's column had not yet contacted any American forces as it moved south from Auden-le-Roman. He ordered them to turn west and rendezvous with him to support their retreat. This pointed Bäke's force directly at the village of Mairy, situated in a depression surrounded by hills, just a few miles away.

The Germans moved through a small valley between two hills just west of the village, straight towards the U.S. 358th Infantry's 1st Battalion, commanded by Major Cleveland Lytle. The 2nd Platoon of B Company, 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion supported the unit with four 76 mm towed antitank guns. The Americans received a report of 100 tanks moving toward them and prepared for the worst. Soon the Germans appeared, formed into an arrowhead formation to punch through the American lines. The GIs watching the German approach saw a T formation, though the road the Germans followed was sunken, constraining their ability to maneuver. Major Lytle wrote

"The tanks and the many armored transporters were camouflaged with brush, and it really looked for a while like that report of 100 tanks was no exaggeration."

While the true number was nowhere near 100 tanks, a number of Panthers led several dozen half-tracks straight toward 1/358's motor pool. Several of the half-tracks carried 75 mm infantry guns used for close fire support. Lytle ordered Lt. Major, his artillery liaison officer from the 344th Field Artillery Battalion, to be ready to fire danger-close fire missions, "to paste the enemy column with all the artillery he could get, regardless of how close he had to shoot to our own troops." As the liaison officer prepared a barrage, Lytle's infantry helped trap the Germans under it. Company A's commander, 1st Lt. Cud Baird, picked up a bazooka and went after the lead German tank. He succeeded in knocking it out at a narrow spot in the sunken road, forcing the German column to stop for a few minutes, long enough for the artillery to open fire.

As the tanks and half-tracks struggled to get around their disabled lead vehicle, the American artillery crashed down around them. Over 300 rounds of 105 mm and 155 mm high explosive hit the Germans, blast pummeling them and shrapnel piercing the thinner armor of the half-tracks and the flesh of the soldiers within. The regimental cannon company joined in, firing directly over open sights. A few antitank guns added their weight to the fray alongside the infantry's bazookas and mortars. Even the occasional rifle grenade arced into the German formation. The maelstrom of gunfire tore the German column apart; within minutes three tanks and thirty-one half-tracks lay destroyed or disabled.

Some of the American infantry had positions on a hill overlooking the action. Private Ramon Subejano recalled his company commander, Captain Harold Bergdale, appeared before the Germans arrived and told his men to get ready to move out. Minutes later, he returned and told them to dig in, as he had just learned of a German armored force getting ready to attack. Before Bergdale left, Subejano remembered the officer saying, "When the German go in counterattack, you all just lay down and turn around and shoot." He was essentially telling his men to let the attacking Germans pass by and shoot them from behind.

During the morning Subejano watched the German column's attack and subsequent destruction. He sent word to nearby tank destroyer gun crews about targets and to his fellow infantrymen about advancing enemy troops. Later in the morning he saw a staff car carrying two German officers racing toward him. He did what his captain told him; Subejano lay down, let the vehicle go by and then shot each German in the back. Both died and their vehicle crashed into a ditch.

With their vehicles lost, many of the panzergrenadiers dismounted and tried to assault into Mairy. Those at the back of the stricken column tried to retreat while a handful of Panther tanks moved to a hilltop providing a direct line of fire into Mairy. The American anti-tank guns returned fire, hitting two of the German tanks and driving the rest away. At 10 AM a group of panzergrenadiers in 17 half-tracks managed to get free of the main column, flanked to the south and got into the town. They had a single Panther tank positioned in the middle of their column.

Again, the Americans were ready. The column came close to the 105 mm howitzers of the cannon company, which blasted two half-tracks with high explosive shells. Several men from the tank destroyer platoon took up bazookas and destroyed two more half-tracks. The German column got moving again, trying to retreat out of town to the north, but soon lost four more vehicles to antitank guns. This included the lead and trail vehicles of the column, leaving the survivors trapped. A rifleman shot the Panther tank's commander as he raised his head out of his hatch. Further small arms and machine gun fire raked the burning column as mortars bombs dropped on it. Finally, the surviving German troops decided it was enough. A white flag appeared at the rear of the column; 209 soldiers surrendered, of which 65 were wounded. An unknown number died in the short battle.

While the main strength of the column suffered defeat at Mairy, the rest of Bäke's Stossgruppe ran into various elements of the 90th Division. GIs from the 359th Infantry arrived at the divisional CP and repelled several attacks by small groups of infantry and armored vehicles. A few miles south, the CP of the 712th Tank Battalion went through several more attacks over the course of the morning. A report from D Company described an attack at 10 AM: "…two enemy Panther tanks broke through our defenses and moved full speed toward the Company and Battalion Headquarters Company area. Guns from several directions opened up on them and destroyed both tanks before they had done any harm. Five P.W. [Prisoners of War] were taken, one of whom stated they were trying to get out instead of in." The panzer brigade was paying for the lack of training of its soldiers.

At the CP of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, a lone tank appeared, threatening the unit's rear echelon. A 76 mm gun fired on it, but the tank quickly changed direction and got out of the antitank gun's fi of fire. Lt. Elliot Schechter led a squad of men after it. They crawled to within a hundred yards and hit the lone armored vehicle with a rifle grenade or a bazooka rocket. A few soldiers fired their car-

Continued on page 78

A surrendering German slogs his way out of a creek. After the battle, German soldiers attempted to escape the area in small groups, which led to scattered firefights.

National Archives

Marines on Iwo Jima take cover from enemy fire near a captured Japanese pillbox. The island had been heavily fortified by the enemy and required 36 days of bitter combat before it was declared secured. INSET: By the time of the Iwo Jima landings, Marine Larry Kirby was a combat veteran.

Naval History and Heritage Command

Sergeant Larry Kirby experienced combat on Bougainville, Guam, and Iwo Jima and survived to tell his remarkable story.

A Marine Scout's WAR JOURNEY

Photo courtesy Larry Kirby

BY MATT BROGGIE

Sergeant Larry Kirby will always remember the fighting on the morning of March 12, 1945, as his unit, Easy Company, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, attempted to move against Hill 362C under the cover of darkness in northeastern Iwo Jima. Frustrated with the slow progress being made on the heavily fortified Japanese island, divisional command had issued orders the day before to Easy and three other companies with depleted numbers from 3rd Marine Division to quietly infiltrate the Japanese line and then knock out a high-ground position being used as an observation post. It was known on Marine Corps maps as Hill 362C.

Kirby remembered he and his fellow Easy Company Marines were ordered to shed all unnecessary gear and carry only "a weapon, ammunition, water and a couple of rations in our pockets." Kirby carried his preferred Thompson submachine gun and extra .30- and 20-round stick magazines loaded with .45-cal. ammunition. As a secondary weapon, he slung an M1 carbine around his back. To ensure complete silence, Kirby wedged a sock around the chain of his canteen to keep it from rattling.

"WE WERE ANNIHILATED; THERE WERE DEAD MARINES EVERYWHERE."

The four companies met up at 3:30 AM, and "then a silent command was given, just a nudge, and we started out." Moving single file in complete darkness, each Marine kept formation by reaching out and touching the man ahead of him. For the past several days Kirby's unit had advanced an average of 40 to 50 yards per day; on this morning, the column quickly covered 200 yards.

"This is a crazy idea," Kirby thought to himself, "But, wow, it's working." As the column approached the high ground, the four companies split. Easy and Fox companies moved east on the right side of the position while the two other companies advanced northeast to make an attack on the left side of the hill. A parachute flare suddenly launched in the air and illuminated the region, betraying their stealthy approach.

"Machine guns opened up, and they began to annihilate us," Kirby said. One hundred Marines from Easy and Fox ran for cover in a depression in the ground. Kirby saw piles of large rocks and steep stone walls around this low ground (likely a quarry the Japanese had been using to mine stones for constructing casemates) and took cover along the eastern wall. On top of the west wall overlooking the quarry, a machine gun fired into the Marines from the mouth of a cave.

"To the south there were machine guns that we had bypassed in the dark that were now turning on us," Kirby recalled. Looking north, Kirby saw nothing that would offer protection. "So, the only thing we could do was to try to form into fire teams, but it was so disorganized that didn't work. We simply had to go every man for himself and do our best."

Some Marines managed to set up firing positions, but Kirby feared the Japanese would use the advantage of the high ground and get an angle on the fixed positions. "I thought my best bet was to keep moving. So, I would fire and cover, fire and cover."

Trapped in what would be known as Cushman's Pocket (named after 9th Marine Regiment commander Colonel Robert Cushman) for the next 38 hours, Kirby scavenged .45-cal. ammo from fallen Marines when his Thompson ran low, took sips of water from his canteen when given a chance, maneuvered and fired at Japanese soldiers, and tried to stay alive.

Like many World War II servicemen, Kirby felt compelled to enlist after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The 17-year-old from Brookline, Massachusetts, chose the Marine Corps because he liked the look of the uniform over the other branches. At the local recruitment office, the underage kid was turned away until he could get a parent's signature. Kirby's parents convinced him to wait until he was 18.

After his birthday Kirby enlisted and soon arrived at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in Parris Island, South Carolina. Twelve weeks of Marine boot camp instilled in him a pride that Kirby carries today. After completing basic training, he went through advanced infantry training school at Camp LeJeune and received training as a reconnaissance scout. From Camp LeJeune, Kirby went to San Pedro, California, for amphibious assault training. In the summer of 1943, he shipped out to the Pacific and arrived at Guadalcanal, where he was assigned to Easy Company, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division.

Even though the name "Guadalcanal" was embedded in American culture from the fighting there the year earlier, to Kirby "it was just another camp." Training continued on the jungle island for the next few months. Practice maneuvers against simulated enemy fixed machine-gun positions were conducted at the fire team, squad, and platoon levels.

"This was a set procedure, and you practice it 25, 30 times," Kirby recalled, "and then you do it 50 times until you know it inside-out. And then you do it another 50 times until that particular procedure becomes auto-pilot, muscle memory."

As a recon scout, Kirby had the option of carrying a Thompson submachine gun or an M1 carbine. The carbine's length felt awkward, so he favored the more compact Thompson. Kirby kept an eye out for a carbine with a folding stock, commonly used by paratroopers, but the rarity of finding a folding stock carbine "was like finding vanilla ice cream on Guadalcanal," he lamented.

Equipped and fully trained, the 3rd Marine Division was assigned its first invasion against the Japanese-held island of Bougainville at the north end of the Solomon archipelago. As the island-hopping campaign progressed in the South Pacific, the airfield on Bougainville was a key objective. The night before the invasion, his nerves kept Kirby awake. The uncertainty of the day ahead weighed on his mind. He and some of his squad mates passed the time talking on the fantail of their ship.

At 4:30 AM, November 1, 1943, the Marines began climbing over the side of the ship and down the cargo nets into landing craft known as Higgins boats. When the landing craft approached the island, Japanese guns opened fire. Remembering the experience, Kirby said, "I was scared to death … we were all kids."

When the landing craft made it ashore, the Marines began pushing into the jungle and eliminating the Japanese defenders. In addition to fighting enemy soldiers, Marines battled the tropical island itself. "The jungle was so thick, if you couldn't find a trail you had to chop your way through it," recalled Kirby.

The weather also worsened the situation. Nearly every day, torrential rain soaked the Marines and turned roads into impassable mud swamps. Marines slowly expanded the beachhead and eventually secured the vital airfield. Army units relieved the Marines in mid-December, and the 3rd Division returned to Guadalcanal.

Recalling Bougainville and his first combat experience, Kirby said, "It was fierce. We lost men. I saw my first dead Marine…. It was a terrible place to be. I have no fond memories of Bougainville."

After recovering from combat on Guadalcanal, the 3rd Marine Division began training

for the next invasion scheduled in the island-hopping campaign. In June 1944, Kirby sailed for the Mariana Islands.

On June 15, 1944, the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions invaded Saipan. Kirby and the rest of the 3rd Division acted as a floating reserve aboard ships sailing offshore. As the Marine divisions and the Army's 27th Infantry Division swept through Saipan and wrested the island from the Japanese, the 3rd Marine Division remained in reserve for five weeks. Recalling life aboard ship, Kirby said, "It was a lovely voyage … for the most part it was lazy days, enjoying the sun. Of course, in the back of your mind you're always aware you're not going on vacation. When you got off the ship it was going to be difficult." The 3rd Division was never deployed to Saipan, and the Marine and Army units there secured the island on July 9. After resupplying on Eniwetok Atoll, the 3rd Division sailed to the southern Marianas to spearhead the assault against the island of Guam.

On July 21, Kirby and eight other scouts from his unit were tasked with a unique duty for the invasion. Three teams of three scouts, plus one officer, went ashore on Guam's Asan Beach as pathfinders before the main invasion force. From lessons learned during the invasion of Bougainville, this pathfinder boat group would set up canvas markers on the beach to expedite the offloading of Marines from their landing craft and guide them off the beach in a safe direction.

Thinking back on his assignment, Kirby laughed, "Basically our job was: land on the beach, move into the brush, and if you see a defensive position, someone trying to kill you, send the guys the other direction … a very simple assignment."

Kirby and the nine other Marines entered their landing vehicle, tracked (LVT), a landing craft fitted with tank treads to climb over the reef surrounding the invasion beach. Huge naval guns bombarded the island. Kirby watched with delight as massive shells passed overhead and exploded on the island. Grumman F6F Hellcat fighters and TBF Avenger bombers contributed by making repeated bombing and strafing runs against the beach. The single LVT approaching the shore did not

ABOVE: A Marine patrol slogs through knee-deep mud during the effort to wrest Bougainville from the Japanese. The island provided Marine scout Larry Kirby's first taste of combat, and the jungle proved a difficult adversary along with the Japanese. BELOW: A Marine fires his Thompson submachine gun at a distant enemy target. Kirby carried the Thompson as well, preferring it to the longer stock of the M-1 carbine.

Both: Naval History and Heritage Command

Marine fire teams kept shooting to keep the enemy from charging into their position. A mortar round landed near Kirby, and the concussion of the blast knocked him off his feet. A rock gouged a hole in his back.

attract fire from larger enemy guns, which feared revealing their positions and drawing American naval fire. Kirby recalled only sporadic small-arms fire as he hit the beach; one scout was shot and killed as he climbed over the side of the landing craft.

Kirby moved on, probed for enemy positions, and put up the canvas signs for the first wave of the invasion. "It cut down considerably on the casualties on the landing," he remembered.

The first wave of the 3rd Division landed on Asan Beach soon after, destroyed the Japanese shore defenses, and slowly expanded the beachhead inland. Five days into the invasion, the Marine perimeter extended one mile from the beach to the base of Fonte Ridge, a section of high ground held by the Japanese that provided a dominating view of the American beachhead.

Around 3:00 AM on July 21, the Japanese massed about 3,000 soldiers along the ridgeline and launched a suicidal banzai attack. Kirby was dug in on the Marine frontline when suddenly, "The Japanese came over the ridge in force," he recalled. "There were so many of them they couldn't be stopped; they ran through our line. It was crazy for a while. They actually penetrated our lines all the way back to the beach and got into the aid station and killed doctors and patients in their beds; they bayoneted them."

The Japanese counterattack lasted about an hour, but order was soon restored. The Marines reorganized the line and collected any wounded Americans they could find. Kirby was shocked by the reckless and suicidal Japanese tactic. "It almost seemed as though they were not intent on accomplishing anything other than to get killed," he said

Kirby's most memorable moment of the banzai charge occurred as the fighting died down. A straggling young Japanese soldier—Kirby guessed he was 16—ran down from the ridgeline carrying explosives. Kirby watched from 30 yards away as the soldier charged one of the American artillery pieces but was knocked down by Marine rifle fire. The enemy soldier got back on his feet and limped toward his target only to get shot a second time.

"He got hit, went down, got up, got going, got hit, went down. I'll bet he got hit six or seven times before he stayed down," Kirby said. Badly wounded on the ground, the young soldier attempted to crawl to the American gun but was finally shot dead. Kirby marveled at the display of determination from his enemy.

Throughout the campaign on Guam, Kirby carried out his duties as a recon scout. Several days a week right before sunrise, Kirby dressed in specially designed jungle camouflage dungarees, covered his face with grease paint, and moved out ahead of the American front line alone. Creeping through the jungle, he reconnoitered the perimeter of the Japanese and tried to determine the size of the enemy force.

"I could tell from the positioning of the sentries in the [defensive] arc how big it was, whether it was a platoon or a company or bigger," he remarked, "and usually, you could tell from where they placed them, which direction the unit would leave when they go out in the morning." Kirby brought this information back to his captain, who radioed it to regimental command. Reports from scouts in every company were compiled, and they provided an invaluable picture of the battlefield that determined future unit movement across the island.

One morning while on a scouting mission, Kirby slowly made his way through the entangling jungle maze and suddenly made eye contact with a Japanese soldier 20 feet away. The two men were frozen in place as they stared at one another. Kirby saw an Arisaka 6.5mm bolt-action rifle in the high port position—pointed skyward and held close to the enemy soldier's body. The moment seemed to drag on. Then the enemy soldier made the first move and quickly lowered the muzzle, shouldered the rifle, and pulled the trigger. The shot missed as Kirby instinctively dropped to the ground. Holding his Thompson at the ready, he heard the familiar "metallic click" of a Japanese grenade being armed against a steel helmet. The grenade landed behind Kirby, which caused him to jump out of his crouch, lunge forward and fire quick bursts at the soldier.

The grenade exploded and knocked Kirby down. When he looked up, the Japanese soldier was on the ground, leaning against a tree, shot in the chest, dead. The intimate encounter profoundly affected Kirby. He felt euphoric relief to still be alive, but taking the life of another in such a personal manner weighed on him heavily.

Before he left the scene, Kirby went through the dead soldier's gear and found a Japanese flag with his family's signatures on it. He placed the flag in the man's hand. Kirby also found a photo of the soldier, which he placed in the lining of his own helmet—not as a souvenir, but as a way to honor the memory of the man he'd killed. After the war Kirby put the photo in his wallet, where it remained for over 70 years.

One of Kirby's funniest memories of the war occurred sometime later, while he and other Easy Company Marines were on patrol in a coconut grove. As they pushed through the neatly planted rows of young palm trees, a Japanese gun opened fire, forcing the Marines to take cover. The ground had been trimmed of vegetation and offered no protection, so Kirby and his squad mates made themselves as thin as possible and hid behind the narrow tree trunks.

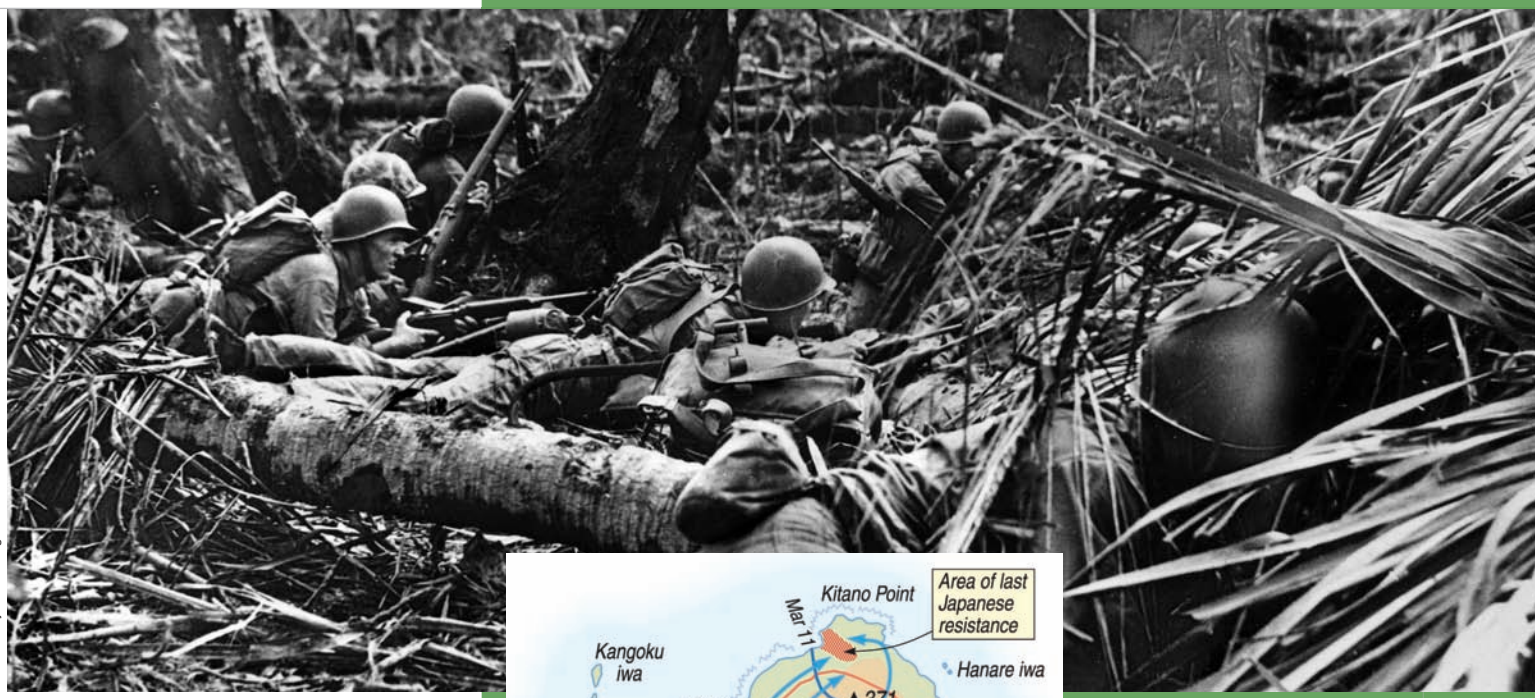
"We knew we'd have to make a run for it in one direction or another," he remembered. Kirby's friend George Christie, a corporal from New York, was standing sideways behind the next tree and yelled, "Hey Kirb, when we run, we should go in that direction." Christie pointed to the thick jungle treeline bordering the grove. As he pointed, as Japanese bullet ripped through his wrist.

"He was in agony; he put his weapon down between his knees and put his back to the tree, holding that arm. I could see that he was in terrible pain," Kirby said. Looking at Christie, Kirby wanted to give him a shot of morphine. "George, I'm coming over! Is there anything I can do?" he asked. Christie looked back at Kirby and replied, "I'm just glad I wasn't taking a leak!" Kirby still laughs at the line from his friend today. "Some people go to great pains to develop a wound [to get out of duty]; here he's got a very painful wound … it could be a permanent disability and he makes fun of it," Kirby admired.

Organized Japanese resistance on Guam ended August 10, 1944. To Kirby, the 21 days of fighting on the island was a "satisfying experience." He took pride in liberating a U.S. territory and restoring peace to the native Chamorro people. But as soon as the fighting had stopped on Guam, divisional command wasted no time training and preparing for the next invasion.

"Once in the Marine Corps they never let you stop moving [or] sit and think; we're always doing something," Kirby said. Field maneuvers took place for the next several months. Because the 3rd Division had so much combat experience, training focused on physical fitness over any specialized aspect of combat. Kirby and his friends wondered where the next invasion would take place, but it soon became obvious that they would land on an island called Iwo Jima.

Boeing B-29 Superfortress heavy bombers had been filling airfields throughout the Marianas in order to make bombing runs against the Japanese home islands. Looking at a map of the Pacific, Kirby saw that a round trip from the Marianas to Japan was about 3,000 miles, so it was clear that "we needed an airfield somewhere … and there's Iwo Jima right in the middle." Around this time Kirby was informed that he would no longer serve as scout and was



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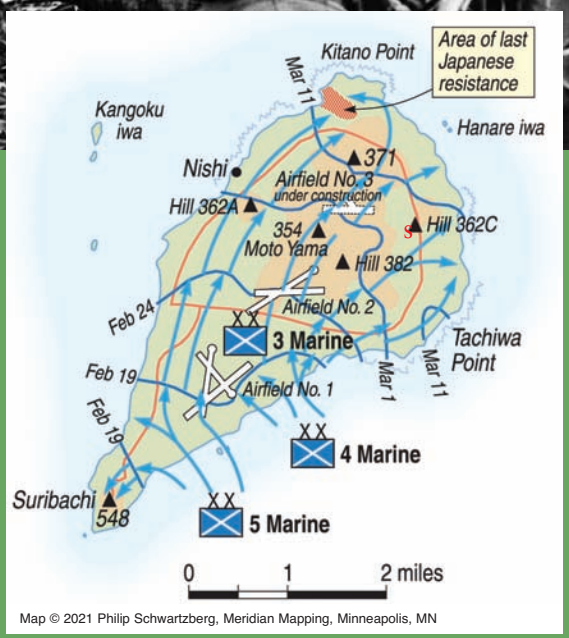
transferred to conventional infantry. "There was no need for scouts on Iwo Jima. We didn't have to locate the enemy—they were everywhere, like ants," Kirby said.

General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, the Japanese commander on Iwo Jima, knew the strategic importance of the small island and its two functioning airstrips. For months, he had been preparing for the inevitable American assault. Hundreds of pillboxes and camouflaged gun emplacements dotted the island. Artillery pieces, mortar tubes, machine guns and sniper rifles had been sighted within concealed bunker apertures and cave openings. Mines had been placed along the beach and other likely routes of advance across the island.

Many of these hazards had been identified by U.S. intelligence, but what the preinvasion investigations failed to learn was that the enemy bunker system on Iwo was interconnected by a complex tunnel system that stretched for miles underneath the island. Kuribayashi's headquarters sat five levels down, 70 feet beneath the surface. The defenders of Iwo Jima could easily move unnoticed from one position to another and also ensure that gun positions had a steady flow of ammunition. Mount Suribachi, an extinct volcano rising 550 feet on the southwest tip of the island, was honeycombed with internal stairwells and corridors, allowing the Japanese to move freely and take advantage of the elevation. Despite the months of pounding dealt by U.S. bombers, Iwo's defenders were generally unaffected, sheltered in the island fortress.

Three Marine divisions sailed for Iwo Jima in February 1945. The 4th and 5th Divisions invaded the small volcanic island on February



Map © 2021 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

ABOVE: Marines take cover amid debris from the pre-invasion naval bombardment as they move forward during the assault on Guam in the Marianas. Kirby was stunned by the ferocity of a Japanese banzai attack on the island and the resulting carnage. LEFT: The savage battle for Hill 362C on Iwo Jima decimated Larry Kirby's Marine unit, and he was fortunate to survive the terrible ordeal. BELOW: A U.S. Marine M4 Sherman tank equipped with a flamethrower attacks a Japanese bunker on Guam. The Japanese either sought to knock these tanks out swiftly or held their fire to avoid detection.

National Archives

19. The 3rd Division was again held in floating reserve offshore. Kirby thought, "It didn't make sense. It's an eight square mile island and [we put] two full divisions ashore; that's 40,000 men. And there's only 9,000 Japanese—that's what [naval intelligence] told us beforehand." Like many Marines tasked with invading Iwo, he believed the small island with the small force of Japanese defenders would be neutralized after a few days of fighting.

The intelligence report, however, had drastically underestimated the Japanese numbers. Instead of 9,000 defenders, the total was closer to 21,000; it would take the three Marine divisions 36 days to secure the island. Parts of the 3rd Division, including the 9th Marines, came ashore on the morning of February 23. The black sand beach was quiet by this point as Kirby marched past charred wrecks of tanks, trucks, landing craft, and other equipment—testimony to the vicious fighting that had taken place.

Iwo Jima's landscape was in stark contrast to the jungles of Bougainville and Guam. Months of bombardment by U.S. bombers and the volcanic nature of Iwo created a barren, moonscape environment. Except for Mount Suribachi, the island looked flat, "like a pool table," Kirby said. The 4th and 5th Divisions made little progress the first four days of the invasion. Advancing off the beach, Easy Company received small-arms fire from several directions, forcing the Marines to hug the ground or dash for cover.

"There was no safe place on Iwo Jima; every area was under fire at some time or another," Kirby remembered. Around 11:00 AM, as he looked out from the U.S. line, he heard a Marine say, "Hey, look at that." Kirby rolled over on his back, looked toward Mount Suribachi, and saw Marines moving around its summit. He watched as an American flag was raised in place and flapped in the wind. The event has become an iconic moment of the Pacific War and the history of the Marine Corps, but at the time, Kirby explained, "That didn't mean anything to me. All it meant was that now we won't take any fire from behind us."

Slow, excruciating progress took place day after day. Enemy soldiers made the Marines pay dearly for every yard gained. Easy Company came ashore with 225 men, but 12 days of combat reduced the company to 73. Fox Company, which fought alongside Easy, suffered similar losses. "So, we were really of no value," Kirby said. "You train as a company, you train as a platoon, you train as a squad," but after suffering such high casualties all unit cohesion was lost.

Easy company had become ineffectual. Divisional command formed the battered companies together and gave them the mission of infiltrating through the Japanese outer defenses under the cover of darkness and knocking out Hill 362C. The Japanese heard the column of Marines, sent up parachute flares, opened fire, and sent them running for cover in the nearby quarry. For the next 36 hours, Kirby and about 100 Marines fought for their lives trapped in Cushman's Pocket.

Kirby dreaded sunrise. To the Japanese positioned around the rim of the pocket, daylight was their ally. Conversely, darkness brought moments of reprieve to the Marines and concealed their movements. Some Marines attempted to escape by darting between rock piles and depressions in the ground leading away from the area, but vigilant Japanese gunners cut them down.

Marine fire teams kept shooting to keep the enemy from charging into their position. A mortar round landed near Kirby, and the concussion of the blast knocked him off his feet. A rock gouged a hole in his back. The injury wasn't serious; Kirby kept fighting. The Japanese were close enough that Kirby could hear them taunting the Marines during lulls in the shooting. He repeatedly fired, moved, and dug in. Hours into the fighting he forced himself to eat one of his D rations, even though he wasn't hungry.

Kirby watched a Marine from Fox Company try to sprint out of the area only to have his legs blown off in an explosion. This chaos continued hour after hour as the Marines fought off any encroaching Japanese soldiers. After a day and half of fighting in the pocket, Marine reinforcements finally reached the location. Two Sherman tanks entered the area, one with a "short, stubby barrel—probably a flamethrower," Kirby recalled. "Seeing that [short barrel] the enemy soldiers didn't fire at the tank because that flamethrower would have cremated them all."

One Sherman provided cover while the other drove down into the quarry near Kirby's location. The driver forced his tread onto a rock, elevating the bottom of the tank. The driver motioned Kirby and a few other Marines over as they crawled under the Sherman and up through a hatch near the bow gunner's seat. With the Marines aboard, the tank crawled out of the pocket and back behind American lines. "In all, they rescued seven men from Easy Company and four from Fox Company. [Of the 100 marines] Only 11 came out," Kirby said.

As one of the few survivors of Cushman's Pocket, Kirby credited the lessons learned from fighting on Bougainville and Guam for saving his life. Kirby and the remnants of Easy and Fox companies were pulled out of the pocket on March 12, taken to a sandbag bunker, and given some food.

"We just sat there staring at each other; no one said anything," he remembered. After the wound on his back was treated and bandaged, he was ordered to the beach to board a ship back to the Marianas. At the beach he stood in a line with other Marines, waiting for a landing craft to ferry them to a hospital ship. Exhausted and rattled from the ordeal of the past 36 hours, Kirby thought about his friends that were missing or killed, and he sobbed. The landing craft came ashore, and Kirby stepped off Iwo Jima.

Soon after Kirby was rescued from Cushman's Pocket, a fresh battalion of Marines marched into the area to neutralize Hill 362C. Fighting in the pocket continued four more days. On March 16, all Japanese resistance in the area was eliminated, and the hill was finally in Marine hands. The fall of Hill 362C allowed the final push across the northern section of Iwo Jima to begin. The last Japanese soldiers were wiped out on March 26. A devastating cost in lives was paid to secure the island: 5,931 Marines and 209 Navy Corpsmen were killed in the 36-day battle. Nearly the entire Japanese force of 21,000 soldiers were killed, and just 216 were captured alive.

After some recuperation on Guam, Kirby began training for the invasion of Japan. He was told to expect 100 Japanese divisions to defend against the U.S. landings in the home islands. He knew his luck would not hold out any longer and that he would surely be killed in the invasion. On August 13, his unit's message center received a coded transmission stating the Japanese Foreign Office had contacted Switzerland to coordinate a surrender.

The news spread rapidly throughout the 3rd Division. Kirby compared hearing the unofficial news of Japan's surrender to holding five winning lottery numbers and waiting for the sixth. On August 15, the formal surrender was announced; the war was over. "It was the happiest day of my life," Kirby recalled. No one knew the details of the atomic bombs dropped the week before.

"We had heard about [the bombs] but didn't understand the severity or size," Kirby remembered. "We just assumed they were some kind of giant blockbusters." He boarded an LST (Landing Ship Tank) and began his journey home to Brookline, Massachusetts. After being away for three and one-half years, he arrived outside his house by taxicab at 8:00 PM on Christmas eve, 1945.

"There was a light snow falling and Christmas carols playing like a Norman Rockwell scene," he remembered. "I rang the bell, my sister opened, and I said 'Hey, I'm home.'" The reunion with his family was the "ultimate joy."

Kirby watched a Marine from Fox Company try to sprint out of the area only to have his legs blown off in an explosion. This chaos continued hour after hour as the Marines fought off any encroaching Japanese soldiers.

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Kirby wasted no time getting on with civilian life. Two weeks after his homecoming he enrolled in classes at Emerson College in Boston, where he met "the beautiful Mary Crane." Eight weeks after their first date, they eloped to New York and got married on April 11, 1946.

Still happily married today, they will celebrate their 75th anniversary in 2021. Thinking back on his experience in the war, Kirby remarkably said, "Being on Iwo Jima was the best thing to ever happen to me.... I learned the value of love. These young Marines on Iwo Jima willingly gave their lives for their friends because they loved them. Thank you, Iwo Jima. I learned that lesson and I've followed it all my life."

ABOVE: Wary of enemy defensive positions that could erupt at any moment, U.S. Marines climb rocky terrain on Iwo Jima. Kirby's night patrol near Hill 362C bypassed several Japanese strongpoints that later opened in a torrent of fire amid the eerie light of a flare, and the battle for Hill 362C devolved into a fight for survival. BELOW: A Navy corpsman dresses the wound of a Marine who has been hit in the back while fighting on Iwo Jima. Kirby suffered a back wound during the fight for Hill 362C but kept fighting.

Naval History and Heritage Command

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A Supermarine Spitfire fighter of the British Royal Air Force chases a German Heinkel He-111 bomber during a swirl of aerial combat in the Battle of Britain. Canadian pilot Howard Peter "Cowboy" Blatchford served with the RAF during the crucial battle and was later killed in action.

Cowboy of the Royal Air Force

Wing Commander Howard Blatchford, a Canadian pilot with the RAF, gave his life in a brief but eventful career during World War II.

BY NEIL TAYLOR

In the six weeks since Britain's formal declaration of war against Germany on September 3, 1939, the Royal Air Force (RAF) pilots of No. 41 Squadron based at Catterick had flown numerous air patrols over the northeastern coast of England, all to no avail; they had sighted no enemy aircraft.

When B Flight's Green Section—flown by Flying Officer Howard Peter "Cowboy" Blatchford, Flight Sergeant Edward "Shippy" Shipman, and Sergeant Pilot Albert "Bill" Harris—scrambled to investigate an incoming raid on October 17, 1939, they were less than optimistic about encountering Luftwaffe aircraft. It was only after 40 minutes of fruitless searching that Shipman spotted a solitary German bomber flying north along the English coast.

He alerted the others, dipped his wing, and dove after his prey with Blatchford and Harris in close pursuit. The German bomber, a Heinkel He-111, caught sight of its attackers and dove for the safety of the North Sea's wave tops. Its dorsal turret gunner fired frantically at Shipman's rapidly closing Supermarine Spitfire, forcing Shipman to break off his attack. Circling tightly, Shipman came in from dead astern of the fleeing Heinkel and opened fire, striking home across the breadth of the bomber's fuselage. The dorsal gunner ceased firing, and both engines began to smoke.

Out of ammunition, Shipman broke away before noticing glycol drenching his left leg. Assuming his cooling system had been hit, he turned back for Catterick. Harris then moved in for an attack but was forced to abort when one of his guns jammed.

The last pilot with a chance to stop the Heinkel was Flying Officer Blatchford. Closing from astern, he triggered his first burst at 400 yards, scoring several hits before being forced to pull up suddenly to avoid a collision. Facing no return fire from either the ventral or dorsal gun positions, Blatchford lined up carefully for a final attack from astern. At a range of 400 yards, he poured his remaining ammunition into the bomber, then pulled away to allow Harris, whose guns were now operational, to make his second attack.

Harris continued to relentlessly pound the defenseless and rapidly descending Heinkel before it finally succumbed, ditching in the water about 20 miles from Whitby. As Blatchford and Harris circled above, two men later identified as pilot Oberfeldwebel Eugen Lange and radio operator Unteroffizier Bernhard Hochstuhl scrambled into a dinghy before the

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bomber disappeared below the waves. Blatchford and Harris radioed in the men's location so a rescue launch could find them, and then they headed back to Catterick. While the rescue launch never located the dinghy, the two men eventually drifted ashore after spending two days in bitterly cold weather and high seas. When apprehended by local police, Lange and Hochstuhl became the first prisoners of war captured on English soil during World War II.

The reception Blatchford, Harris, and Shipman received at Catterick was decidedly different. Upon their landing, a bottle of champagne was produced to celebrate No. 41 Squadron's first aerial victory of the war. For Howard Blatchford, the occasion was especially rewarding since it marked the first enemy aircraft downed by a Canadian in World War II. It was an auspicious beginning to what would be a remarkable, albeit short, aerial career.

Born on February 25, 1912, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the young Howard Blatchford had an intense interest in aviation. With his father's support, he began flying lessons at the Edmonton and Northern Aero Club under the tutelage of Captain Maurice Burbridge, an instructor and former bomber pilot with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) during World War I.

In 1930, Howard Blatchford obtained his private pilot's license and sought to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Unable to meet the enlistment requirement of a university degree, Howard left for Britain to pursue his aviation dreams.

After his arrival in December 1935, Howard obtained a short-service commission with the RAF in late January 1936. Blatchford's first posting was to No. 41 Squadron on January 10, 1937 at RAF Catterick.

When Blatchford arrived at No. 41 Squadron, the unit was still flying the Hawker Demon, a two-seater fighter variant of the Hart light bomber. Blatchford and his squadron mates were much more impressed when they started receiving the Supermarine Spitfire I in late December 1938, making No. 41 Squadron the third RAF squadron to receive the nimble fighter.

By 1939, war seemed inevitable, and training proceeded at a hectic pace as the pilots and ground crew learned the unique characteristics of the formidable Spitfire. For Howard Peter Blatchford, there was one particularly emphatic learning moment on June 8, when he forgot to pump down his undercarriage and performed a wheels-up landing in his Spitfire, skidding across the runway on his wings and fuselage. While the aircraft had to be written off, Blatchford luckily avoided any disciplinary action.

By now Howard had earned the nickname "Cowboy." Its origin is unsure—some claim it was an acknowledgment of Blatchford's western Canadian roots; others suggest it might have been derived from his love for hillbilly music. Regardless of its origin, the moniker fit Blatchford well.

When German panzers rolled into Poland on September 1, 1939, the pilots of No. 41 Squadron knew everything had changed. Cowboy Blatchford remembered how he felt when the United Kingdom declared war on Nazi Germany two days later. "I shall never forget the scene in the mess at Catterick as we sat and listened to [Prime Minister Neville] Chamberlain's announcement of war over the radio, and the strange silence that followed, as we tried to adjust our minds to the fact. We just looked at one another incredulously, and I remember thinking: 'This is goodbye to the old carefree life.' How true that was!"

For the first weeks of the war, Blatchford and his squadron mates practiced their interception techniques and flew defensive patrols across northeast England. No. 41 Squadron's patrols took on greater urgency as the weather deteriorated, plunging Britain into one of its worst

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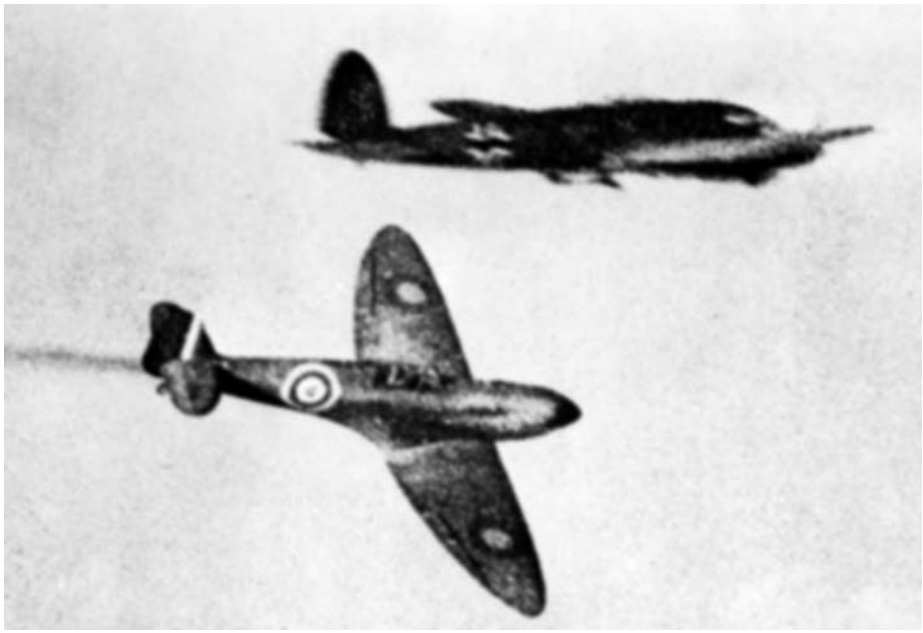

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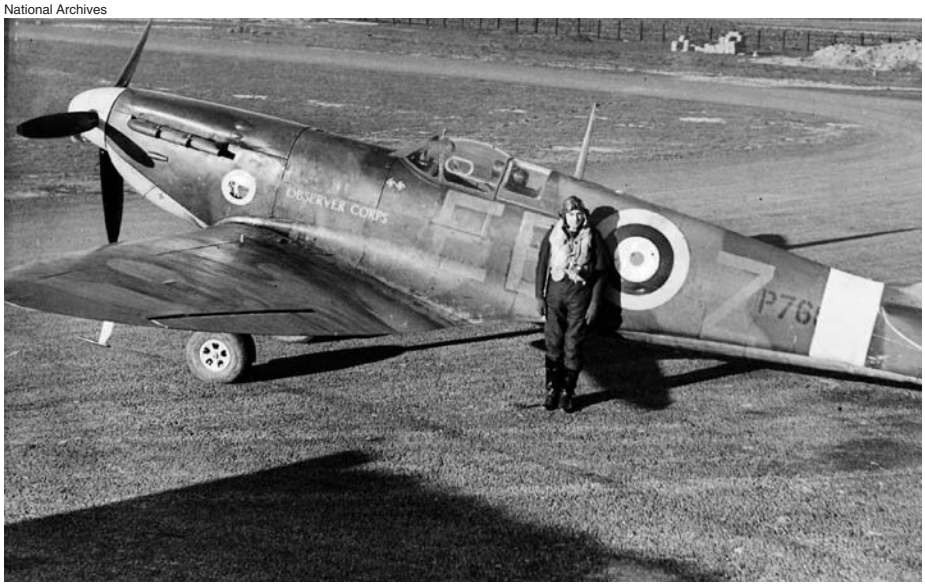

TOP: Trailing a wisp of smoke, an RAF Spitfire continues its pursuit of a Luftwaffe He-111 during the 1940 Battle of Britain. "Cowboy" Blatchford dogged a German bomber until it crashed into the sea during a mission in the autumn of 1939. ABOVE: This Spitfire has been specially equipped with camera equipment to serve with the photoreconnaissance unit of RAF No. 41 Squadron. The Spitfire was ideal for photoreconnaissance because of its great speed and agility.

Flight Lieutenant Howard "Cowboy" Blatchford climbs from the cockpit of his Hawker Hurricane assigned to No. 257 Squadron RAF, based at Martlesham Heath.

winters on record. Doggedly, the squadron soldiered on, providing convoy escort and standing air patrols, but neither Blatchford nor any of his squadron mates were successful in engaging the enemy. Anxious to experience more action, Blatchford was relieved when he was posted to No. 212 Squadron.

This new squadron was a unique group, a strategic photoreconnaissance unit that owed its existence to Wing Commander Sidney Cotton, an Australian with a keen sense for adventure and intrigue. When Cowboy Blatchford joined No. 212 Squadron on April 20, 1940, it was based at Seclin, functioning as a detachment of the Photographic Development Unit or PDU. While Heston, a civilian airport just outside London, served as the PDU's home base, Spitfires were posted not only to Seclin, but also to Nancy in northeastern France. When the Germans swept into the Low Countries on May 10, they bombed No. 212 Squadron's bases at Lille and Nancy, forcing the unit to move to Coulommiers and Meaux to continue operations.

The squadron's Spitfires and other aircraft flew operations non-stop, heading aloft as soon as they were serviceable from the previous mission. They sought out troop concentrations, transportation corridors, and undamaged bridges that could become the focus of Allied bomber attacks.

The Belgian Army capitulated on May 28, and by June 4, the British Expeditionary Force and elements of the French First Army had executed a desperate evacuation from Dunkirk. As the Germans advanced southward, No. 212 Squadron retreated to Orleans-Bricy.

By June 14, the German Army had marched into Paris, and Wing Commander Cotton decided No. 212 Squadron needed to move again. He sent his Spitfires back to Heston, and the rest of the squadron was ordered south to Poitiers. Caught in the confusion of the overall Allied retreat, Cowboy Blatchford soon found himself stranded in Orleans with spearheads of the German Army only 15 miles away and closing fast.

During his desperate search for a means of escape he recalled, "Luckily, I found a Tiger Moth that nobody seemed to own, so I packed in a ground crew chap who had also been left behind, and we flew to Poitiers, one hour away."

Blatchford remained in Poitiers for three days until another Tiger Moth landed at the airfield, piloted by a New Zealander, Flight Lt. Earnley Clark. Blatchford and Clark chose to fly their Tiger Moths back to England via the Channel Islands, securing 20-gallon barrels of fuel to each of their aircraft and took off. Landing at Nantes to refuel, they were surprised to find a field full of aircraft. When told they were to be destroyed, Blatchford pointed at his Tiger Moth and said, "Okay, then burn this thing. I'll have one of those," a Fairey Battle bomber. "And then I flew her home to Heston Aerodrome."

While everyone made it back safely, it had been a narrowly won race to flee the continent. Changes were immediately instituted: Wing Commander Cotton was relieved of command due to a longstanding dispute with the Air Ministry, and No. 212 Squadron and the Photographic Development Unit were combined to form the Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU).

On September 3, 1940, Cowboy Blatchford was promoted to flight lieutenant, but his days with the PRU at Heston and St. Eval were numbered. On September 30, he was transferred to No. 17 Squadron based at Debden, England, a sector station for Group 11 Fighter Command located south of Cambridge. This squadron was still flying Hurricanes, and although his stay was brief, it was memorable.

On the morning of October 2, 1940, Flight Lt. Blatchford led a group of four Hurricanes aloft in pursuit of a German bomber that had just bombed Colchester. They were flying an intercept course when Blatchford spotted the intruder, a Dornier Do-17, seeking cover in a cloud bank. Blatchford peeled off in pursuit, followed closely by the remainder of the flight. He closed to 250 yards and triggered a burst of gunfire that crippled the Dornier's left engine.

Cowboy broke away to commence another pass while a second Hurricane pressed home an attack from the rear. The Dornier was struggling to reach the safety of the clouds when Blatchford made his second pass, closing to only 20 yards while continuing to rake his opponent with gunfire. Fires took hold in the rear fuselage and near the left wing root before the other Hurricane renewed its attack, forcing the German pilot, Oberleutnant Hans Langer, to attempt a crash landing. Remarkably, Langer and the rest of his crew survived the crash

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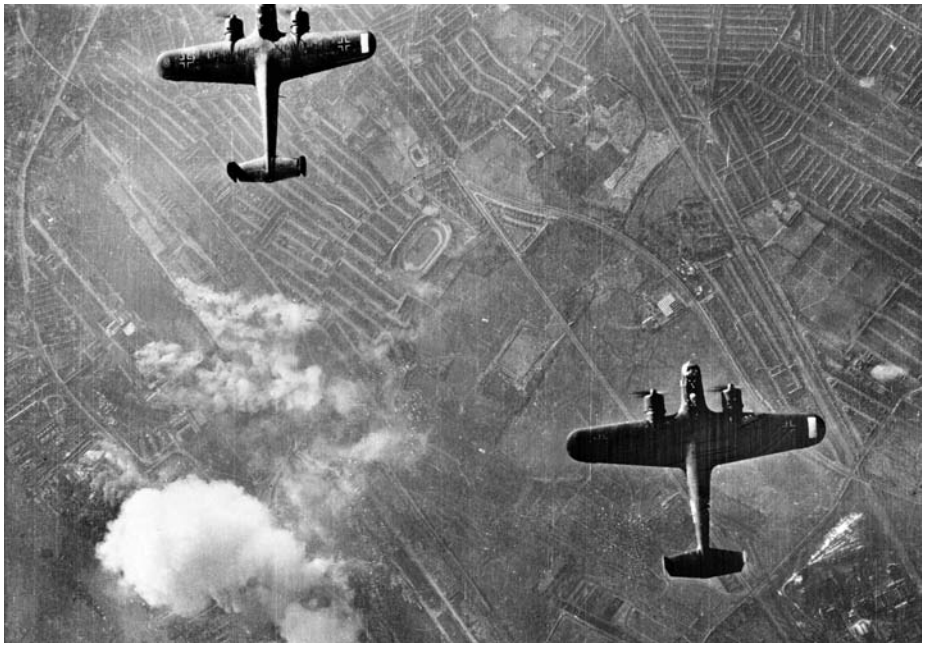


A pair of Luftwaffe Dornier Do-17 bombers flies above London during the Blitz of 1940. Cowboy Blatchford and the pilots of the RAF thwarted the German attempt to destroy British cities.

unhurt. Meanwhile, Blatchford had turned back for Debden nearly out of fuel. When his fuel-starved engine finally died, Blatchford made a successful forced landing near Pulham. He was awarded half a victory for the destruction of the Do-17.

Two days later, Flight Lt. Blatchford was posted to No. 257 Squadron, flying Hurricanes out of RAF Martlesham Heath east of Ipswich. He was specifically requested by the squadron commander, the famed Battle of Britain ace Robert Stanford Tuck, who was seeking an experienced flyer to become a flight commander. The two men became fast friends.

Squadron Leader Tuck saw great potential in Blatchford, mentoring him in the finer points of aerial combat, while Blatchford's easygoing manner seemed to "humanize" the consummate-professional Tuck. Together, they were a formidable duo in any dogfight.

October 1940 found No. 257 Squadron fully engaged, even though the Luftwaffe had primarily switched to night attacks. The squadron had moved to North Weald near Epping, Essex, and the airfield became the target of an October 29, 1940, raid by a swarm of Messerschmitt Me-109s under the command of Major Adolf Galland. As the German fighters roared over the airfield, a dozen Hurricanes were preparing to take off. Squadron Leader Tuck was leading Yellow Section aloft when a bomb exploded at the end of the runway, flipping Sergeant Alexander "Tubby" Girwood's Hurricane over Tuck's before crashing on its belly. While Tuck's aircraft was not touched, Girwood's erupted in flames, trapping him inside. Unable to escape the inferno, Sergeant Girwood was burned alive as the fuel tanks and onboard ammunition exploded.

As the carnage spread across the airfield, Hurricanes and Me-109s tangled overhead in a deadly dogfight. Three of No. 257 Squadron's Hurricanes were now airborne, flown by Flight Lt. Blatchford, Sergeant R.C. Nutter, and Pilot Officer Franciszek Surma, a Pole. Blatchford found himself a target in a head-on attack by Hauptmann Gerhard Schopfel, Gruppenkommandeur of Gruppe III, Jagdgeschwader 26. Blatchford's Hurricane was peppered with shells, piercing the oil tank and damaging the tail. One cannon shell ripped through the fuselage and passed between Blatchford's knees. Just when it appeared that Blatchford was doomed, Sergeant Nutter intervened and drove the German off. Blatchford crash-landed his damaged fighter back at North Weald.

Schopfel was not finished. While Surma had avoided a bomb blast on takeoff, he was soon in Schopfel's sights. A cannon shell exploded in his cockpit, and with the controls dead and the cockpit filling with smoke, Surma opened the canopy and bailed out. His parachute successfully deployed, but he drifted into an elm tree behind the White Hart pub in Moreton.

Two weeks later, Cowboy Blatchford got some revenge for the North Weald raid, but it was at the expense of Italians, not Germans. In the early afternoon of November 11, 1940, nine Hurricanes from No. 257 Squadron were scrambled along with others from No. 17 and No. 46 Squadrons to intercept an incoming flight of enemy bombers. With Squadron Leader Tuck grounded due to a painful eardrum, Cowboy Blatchford led No. 257 Squadron into battle.

Vectored out to sea at the mouth of the River Thames, Blatchford spotted what he called the "funniest-looking kits you ever saw" and took his squadron down to investigate. It was a flight of bombers belonging to the Corpo Aereo Italiano, making a rare appearance by the Italian Air Force during the Battle of Britain. Nine Fiat BR.20 Cicogna twin-engine bombers were being loosely escorted by two formations of Fiat CR.42 Falco biplane fighters, about 40 in total.

While No. 46 Squadron, led by another Canadian, Squadron Leader Lionel Gaunce, kept the fighters at bay, Blatchford's group tore into the bombers. According to Blatchford, "I selected the rear starboard bomber and opened fire with a beam attack, firing a four second burst" before plunging past the enemy. It was later confirmed that a Hurricane from No. 46 Squadron dealt the final blow to this bomber (earning Blatchford a shared kill). Meanwhile, Blatchford passed over to the port side of the formation and staged a quarter attack on the rearmost bomber. "Owing to my speed, I repeated this attack on both occasions with a two-second burst. The bomber then looped violently and went into a vertical dive towards the sea and disintegrated before hitting the water."

Another fighter swept in to engage Cowboy, and they entered into a series of tight turns, Blatchford firing short bursts at his Italian opponent when the opportunity presented itself. Finally, his ammunition expended, he pulled in close behind the CR.42 and attempted to ram it. The Hurricane's propeller chewed through the main top wing, and the Italian aircraft immediately began losing altitude. Blatchford was in trouble himself, out of ammunition and now flying a badly mangled airplane, so he turned for home. Blatchford repeated the trick on another group of CR.42s, and they, too, broke off their attack. Upon landing at North Weald, Blatchford discovered that "nine inches of one of the blades of my propeller was found to be splashed with blood."

The final count for the day's combat was 12 Italian aircraft shot down without a single British loss. Cowboy Blatchford's actions had accounted for the destruction of one BR.20, a shared kill of another, and the damaging of two CR.42s.

Six days later, Flight Lt. Blatchford scored again as his flight of Hurricanes happened upon a pack of Me-109s southeast of Harwich. According to Blatchford, "I led the squadron

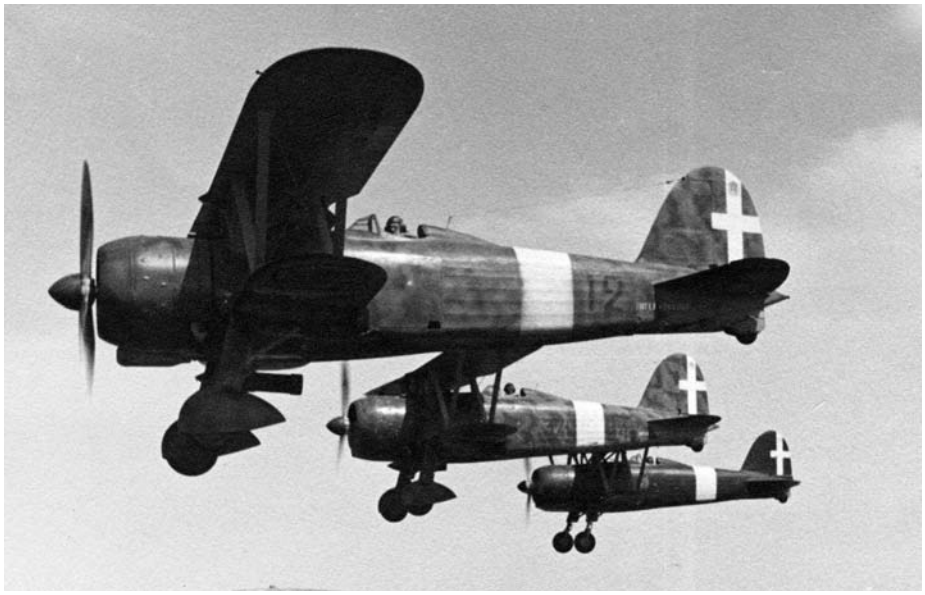
up towards the sun to cut off the 109s who were on my starboard side. While we were converging, the 109s realized we held an advantage, and they were forced to turn left-handed towards us, forcing us to attack head-on."

For Blatchford, it was a terrifying experience, but he recalled that as they drew closer, "I opened fire on the leader at about 300 yards with a four-second burst. As he went over the top, I gave a full deflection shot and I then did a right-hand turn and saw the 109 in front of me streaming profuse black smoke. I engaged the 109 again from astern. He continued to dive, and I followed behind and above. He appeared to flatten out, so I put the finishing touches on him. The enemy aircraft did a cartwheel and the pilot was jettisoned into the sea."

On January 26, 1941, Cowboy Blatchford and Stanford Tuck flew to Bircham Newton, where, in an investiture ceremony held by His Majesty King George VI, Blatchford received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroic actions against the Italians, while Tuck was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and a bar to his DFC. Blatchford's citation read, "In November 1940, this officer was the leader of a squadron which destroyed eight and damaged a further five enemy aircraft in one day. In the course of the combat, he rammed and damaged a hostile fighter when his ammunition was expended, and then made two determined head-on feint attacks on enemy fighters which drove them off. He has shown magnificent leadership and outstanding courage."

Toward the end of February 1941, No. 257 Squadron began converting to the Hurricane IIC, which was armed with four 20mm Hispano-Suiza cannon. Now Blatchford, Tuck, and the other pilots had a machine with the firepower to combat the 20mm cannon of the Me-109s. Tuck decided it was time to take the battle to the Germans, and he drafted Cowboy Blatchford to conduct lightning raids into France and the Low Countries. Air Marshal Sir William Sholto Douglas, commander-in-chief of Fighter Command authorized a trial attack to test their proposal.

On March 2, 1941, Stanford Tuck and Cowboy Blatchford took to the air, their objective a triangular patch of Holland containing several Luftwaffe airfields, railway yards, and other targets of opportunity. The flight across the English Channel was uneventful, and when they finally popped out of the clouds, they found several airfields packed with German fighters. At one airfield, the two men flew directly at the control tower, their Hurricanes barely five feet off the ground. At the last moment, they broke sharply away, but not before seeing the startled expressions on the faces of the German controllers. Satisfied that they had proved the feasibility of their plan, Tuck and Blatchford turned for home.



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TOP: Italian Fiat CR.42 Falco biplane fighters fly in formation. Blatchford engaged several of these Italian aircraft during one harrowing mission, ramming one of the enemy planes with his Hurricane fighter. ABOVE: Battle of Britain ace Robert Stanford Tuck specifically requested Blatchford to join No. 257 Squadron.

The operation was a complete success, and as Tuck reported later, they had proved that German radar had difficulty identifying their low-level approaches. Sholto Douglas sanctioned more fighter sweeps over the continent, ranging from large-formation intrusions—called "Rangers"—to sorties by one or two aircraft, called "Rhubarbs."

Meanwhile, the notoriously fickle English winter weather once again hampered patrols. Cowboy Blatchford did not record his first aerial success in 1941 until March 19, downing a a Junkers Ju-88. As winter faded into spring, Blatchford found himself involved in night patrols. Blatchford was one of the few daytime fighter pilots to succeed in downing an enemy aircraft at night. It was the night of May 11, 1941, when Cowboy Blatchford and Squadron Leader Tuck were patrolling separate portions of the English coast. Suddenly, Tuck excitedly exclaimed, "Listen to this!" as his cannon and machine guns erupted into action blasting the German bomber.

Blatchford chuckled, but scant minutes later, he spotted another He-111 directly above him. He yelled into his radio transmitter, "Now *you*

© Imperial War Museum

listen!" as he opened fire with his own cannon. As it began to lose altitude, Blatchford continued to pour shells into the German aircraft, and fire engulfed the starboard engine. Both men had scored in a matter of minutes, and their cockpit exchange was a source of continued amusement whenever the two men got together.

When Stanford Tuck was promoted to wing commander (flying) in July 1941 and given command of the Duxford Wing, Cowboy Blatchford was promoted to squadron leader and assumed command of No. 257 Squadron. On September 8, 1941, Blatchford was promoted again, this time to wing commander (flying) of the Digby Wing. At that time, the wing was stationed at RAF Digby in Lincolnshire and consisted of Royal Canadian Air Force No. 401, 411, and 412 Squadrons plus RAF No. 266 Squadron. An all-Spitfire wing, the Digby crew participated in countless sweeps and bomber-escort operations across France and the Low Countries.

Tuck and Cowboy Blatchford kept in close contact, often visiting one another. On January 28, 1942 Blatchford flew down to Biggin Hill to have lunch with his mentor and friend. Over beers in the mess, Tuck tried to talk Cowboy into taking part in a Rhubarb operation targeting the alcohol distillery at Hesdin, France. The weather was rapidly deteriorating, and Blatchford wanted to get back to Digby before he was socked in, so he declined. Little did he know that it was the last time he would see Tuck. Less than an hour later Tuck's Spitfire lay smoldering in a French field, brought down by antiaircraft fire. Luckily, Tuck survived the crash and became a prisoner of war. Blatchford was not to be so lucky.

Operations continued intermittently as the English winter, steeped in mist, rain, and dreary clouds, blanketed the countryside. Eventually, the weather improved, and by March, the squadrons under Blatchford's control were making frequent trips to the continent.

On April 25, Blatchford's squadrons were escorting a flight of Douglas Boston bombers when they flew over Abbeville, France. The response from the German fighters stationed in the area was swift. As the enemy moved in on the bombers, Blatchford and his fellow Spitfire pilots dove down to intercept. Blatchford picked one of the lead aircraft and fired two bursts into it at 250 yards, recording strikes on the fuselage. The Focke-Wulf FW-190 pilot attempted no evasive measures, so Blatchford continued to pump shells into the doomed airplane until it finally fell in flames.

As he watched the FW-190 spiral into the sea, Blatchford suddenly found himself under attack, cannon shells hitting his left aileron, right wing, and tire. His landing gear damaged, Blatchford fought to maintain lateral control. It was a near miracle that he coaxed his aircraft back to Digby, where he crash-landed and was slightly injured.

Shortly after his crash, Cowboy Blatchford was taken off operations for a period of 10 months, and during that time, he was assigned as a staff officer to one of Fighter Command's group headquarters.

On February 5, 1943, Blatchford began his second operational tour, this time as wing commander (flying) of the Coltishall Wing based in Norfolk. The wing consisted of the experienced No. 118 Squadron and the relatively new No. 167 Squadron, both flying Spitfire VBs.

At this stage of the war, the Coltishall Wing was used primarily for the escort of British and American light and medium bombers on daylight missions over occupied Europe. "Ramrod" operations aimed to destroy targets on the ground, while "Circus" missions were intended to draw enemy fighters into action. The Lockheed Venturas and Douglas Bostons that made up the bomber force were highly vulnerable to enemy attack due to their poor speed and limited armament. To give them a fighting chance to reach their targets, the Coltishall Wing flew as high cover, ready to dive on any Luftwaffe fighters that made an appearance.

The operation flown on March 18, 1943, was a typical Ramrod mission. Twelve Venturas of No. 464 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force were assigned to bomb the Witol oil refinery at Maassluis, Holland. Escort was provided by No. 118 and No. 167 Squadrons, led by Wing Commander Blatchford.

No interference was experienced on the run-in to the target, and after releasing their bombs, the Venturas made a wide starboard turn to return to England, while No. 118 Squadron positioned itself above and behind the bombers.

Soon, a gaggle of FW-190s appeared and streaked toward the Venturas. Blue Section of No. 118 Squadron dived on the attackers, only to be bounced by another group of Focke-Wulfs. Meanwhile, a third group of enemy aircraft closed on the bombers. Wing Commander Blatchford and Flying Officer Reyhill from No. 167 Squadron dove to intercept them.

Blatchford selected a target and closed to 200 yards before opening fire. Strikes were seen along the entire length of the FW-190's fuselage before it rolled over on its back and went into a flat inverted spin, during which Reyhill also fired on it. Blatchford, meanwhile, closed in on the leading FW-190 and blew its wing off, forcing the enemy pilot to bail out. By this time, Blatchford and his wingman had lost the bomber formation, so they set a return course to Coltishall. All the Venturas successfully returned to base.

On April 18 Wing Commander Blatchford led 22 Spitfires from No. 118 and No. 167 Squadrons, along with eight North American P-51 Mustangs from No. 613 Squadron, as escort for a strike wing of 21 Bristol Beaufighters on an anti-shipping operation off the Dutch coast.

Allied reconnaissance aircraft had spotted a German convoy off Ijmuiden with at least one 5,000-ton freighter and four flak ships (coastal anti-aircraft patrol boats). Twelve Beaufighters were assigned to flak suppression and sported cannons, machine guns, and 250-pound bombs. The remaining nine aircraft, commonly called Torbeaus because they carried cannons and torpedoes, were to attack the merchant ships. Wing Commander Blatchford's escorts took position slightly above and behind the attacking aircraft to prevent any enemy bounces from the rear.

When the strike force found the convoy off the island of Texel, the surprise was complete. The anti-flak Beaufighters damaged four escort ships, and the Torbeaus, singling out the largest ship in the convoy, put three torpedoes into the side of the 4,903-ton Danish Hoegh carrier, sending the ship and its load of coal to the bottom of the sea. The aerial victory had been complete and decisive: one enemy freighter sunk and four escort ships damaged without a single loss to the strike force.

On May 2, the Coltishall Wing escorted yet another flight of Venturas on an attack on the iron and steel works at Ijmuiden in Holland. The No. 118 and No. 167 Squadrons flew as close escort, while a Polish Spitfire wing provided top cover.

The outward leg of the flight was uneventful, but the formation had barely finished its bomb run and turned back toward England when a large number of FW-190s appeared. Soon, the sky was filled with twisting, diving, jinking Spitfires and Focke-Wulfs, all maneuvering to get the enemy in their sights. By the time the combatants separated, two German fighters had been knocked out of the skies and another damaged, but no Spitfires were lost. Wing Commander Blatchford was credited with one probable kill and his No. 3, Flight Lieutenant Hall, with one damaged.

The next day, May 3, 1943, the combined Coltishall Wing (Nos. 118, 167, and 504 Squadrons) was back flying close escort for the Venturas of No. 487 RNZAF Squadron and the Bostons of No. 107 Squadron. The New Zealanders were conducting a diversionary raid on a power station in Amsterdam, while the main force of Bostons was to bomb a power station and the iron and steel works in Ijmuiden. A further top cover was to be provided by additional Spitfire IX squadrons.

Unfortunately, the Spitfire IXs crossed the Dutch coast too early, alerting the German defenses, and then began running low on fuel and had to leave before the bomber force arrived. To make matters worse, the Nazi governor of Holland was on a tour of the area accompanied by a group of fighters, and other German fighter pilots were meeting in the area to discuss tactics. As a result, more than 70 FW-190s and Me-109s were mustered to greet the bombers.

Wing Commander Blatchford spotted the incoming Germans and attempted to recall the bombers, but the trap had been sprung. While FW-190s tackled the fighter escort, the Me-109s dove into the Venturas. Of the 12 bombers in the Ventura formation, two were shot down and two others severely damaged before they reached the coast. The fighters bore in relentlessly, and soon only four Venturas, including that of Squadron Leader Leonard

Continued on page 78

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ABOVE: "Cowboy" Blatchford initiated his second operational tour with the RAF flying the Spitfire Mk VB with No. 118 and No. 167 Squadrons. He was shot down and killed at age 31 on May 3, 1943, after scoring six confirmed aerial victories and three probables against the Luftwaffe. OPPOSITE: Flying the center aircraft in this trio of Hawker Hurricane fighters from No. 257 Squadron RAF, Squadron Leader Tuck guides the formation in for a landing at Martlesham Heath in November 1940.

WAR on the West Coast

The Japanese harassed the West Coast of the United States on a regular basis during the course of World War II.

GLENN BARNETT

Throughout World War II, the Imperial Japanese Navy dreamed of taking the war to the West Coast of the United States.

This was a difficult task because it is nearly 5,500 miles from Tokyo to Los Angeles. Only submarines had that kind of range and could stay hidden from detection during the day. However, unlike surface ships, the underwater boats had limited striking capability other than their torpedoes, and any damage to their hulls meant they could not dive and would be sitting ducks. Nevertheless, Japan would seek ways of taking the war to the enemy mainland until the end.

The first submarine to draw blood in the war between Japan and the United States was *I-26*. Stationed between the mainland and Hawaii on December 6, 1941, *I-26* was tasked with observing ships sailing to Hawaii from the West Coast. Aware that the attack on Pearl Harbor was coming the next day, the captain of *I-26* spotted the 2,140-ton Army-chartered schooner *Cynthia Olson* bound for Hawaii with its cargo of Army supplies just 300 miles off the California coast.

The sub maneuvered into a firing position that night so that she could begin firing at her victim at the expected time of the attack on Hawaii. At the appointed time, *I-26* surfaced and fired a warning shot. The crew of *Cynthia Olson* sent an SOS and boarded lifeboats. The sub hit the schooner with a torpedo 20 minutes before receiving the message, "Tora, Tora, Tora!"—the coded signal to start the attack on Pearl Harbor. *I-26* had jumped the gun.

Cynthia Olson was the first American merchant ship sunk by a Japanese submarine. Its crew perished in their lifeboats because the disaster in Hawaii consumed the attention of all at sea for the next several weeks.

A few days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, nine *I*-class Japanese submarines left Hawaiian waters for the West Coast. The submarines involved were *I-9*, *I-10*, *I-15*, *I-17*, *I-19*, *I- 21*, *I-23*, *I-25*, and *I-26*. All of these boats had a range of at least 15,000 miles on the surface; the newer ones could reach over 21,000 miles. They displaced between 2,500 and 3,000 tons (depending on their configuration) and were over 350 feet in length with a complement of 90 to 100 men. By comparison, the American *Gato*-class attack subs used throughout the war had a range of 11,000 miles, weighed in at 1,500 tons, were 311 feet in length, and carried some 60 men.

Most of these Japanese "cruiser" submarines were capable of launching and retrieving float planes in a bomber role. However, the rough winter seas along the North Pacific coast ruled out their use much of the time.

Both: National Archives


Los Angeles Times

ARMY SAYS ALARM REAL

U.S. Flyers Reap Indies Victories

Storm Grows Over Delay in Alien Ouster

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Five Deaths Laid to Raid Blackout

Roaring Guns Mark Blackout

Rangoon Aces Bag 30 Planes

Americans Sink Jap Ships

IN THE 'TIMES' TODAY

Knox Indicates Raid Just 'Jittery Nerves'

Rubber in Corsets Ordered Banned

Attention Subscribers!

ABOVE: Newspapers along the U.S. West Coast blared the latest information on Japanese attacks, real or imagined, and residents were eager to read the copy during a time of tremendous uncertainty and attempts to heighten national security against possible invasion or incursions. RIGHT: San Francisco residents snap up the latest editions of the city's newspapers and try to separate fact from rumor amid a swirl of information related to enemy activity in the early days of the war. The Japanese made numerous attempts to bring the war home to the U.S. West Coast, including submarines surfacing off the coast to shell targets or attempting to launch attack aircraft.


The San Francisco News
NAVY HUNTS JAPS
OFF PACIFIC COAST
WAR EXTRA
PEOPLES WORLD

Steaming independently, each submarine arrived off the coast of Canada and the U.S. by mid-December with each assigned to a different port or waterway. These included San Diego, Los Angeles/San Pedro, San Francisco, the mouth of the Columbia River, and the waters outside Seattle. Others were stationed along high-traffic areas including Monterey Bay, Morro Bay, and Cape Mendocino in Northern California and Cape Blanco, with its picturesque lighthouse, in southern Oregon.

Like all submariners, the Japanese hoped to sink "high value" targets like battleships or the finest prize of all, an aircraft carrier. They hoped to be as successful in the Pacific as the German U-boats were in the Atlantic. Once on station, they searched for targets of opportunity. It was expected that by Christmas Day their torpedoes would be expended, and they would then all surface near populated areas simultaneously and fire their deck guns toward shore until the ammunition was spent. Then they would return home having cast fear into the hearts of the enemy.

The first contact was made by *I-17* in the pre-dawn hours of December 18, off the coast of Mendocino. Lookouts made out the silhouette of a ship steaming nearby. It was the freighter SS *Samoa* bound for San Diego with a load of lumber from the vast forests of the northwest.

Captain Kozo Nishino ordered his gun crew to man the 5.5-inch (140mm) deck gun. The crew fired five shells, but in the darkness and ragged, pitching sea they all missed. Nishino then submerged and maneuvered his boat to face *Samoa* broadside and fired one of his precious torpedoes. However, *Samoa* rode high in the water, and the torpedo passed beneath her keel and kept going before exploding. In the pre-dawn gloom, *I-17* could no longer see the target and so reported it sunk. *Samoa* sped on with increased crew vigilance and some great yarns to tell when they reached San Diego.

Two days later, *I-17* found another target. The empty 6,912-ton oil tanker *Emidio* came into view. The seas were calmer, and the submarine's deck gun found its mark, hitting *Emidio* several times, killing three men. The radio operator sent out an SOS reading "under attack by enemy sub," and the order to abandon ship was given. The crew lowered lifeboats and rowed toward shore as they were fired on by the deck gun of *I-17*. Suddenly, *I-17* cleared the deck and dived. A moment later patrolling PBYs Catalina flying boats flew overhead, dropping depth charges.

The response from shore to the SOS call was immediate. Within 15 minutes the PBYs were on scene. It had not yet been two weeks since the attack on Pearl Harbor and two days since an enemy sub had fired at *Samoa*. Local air defense forces were on hyper-alert.

But Captain Nishino would not be denied. Despite the depth charge attack, he maneuvered for a torpedo solution and struck *Emidio* but did not sink her. *I-17* crash-dived and avoided the returning aircraft, which dropped another depth charge to no effect. Out of a crew of 36 aboard *Emidio*, there were 31 survivors. The abandoned and derelict tanker drifted away and later beached near Crescent City.

On the same day, *I-23* closed on the tanker *Agwiworld* (6,771 tons) off Santa Cruz. Just after 1400 hours, Captain Frederick Goncalves of *Agwiworld* heard what he thought was an explosion to his stern. He hurried to the bridge and, taking his binoculars, sighted *I-23* about 500 yards distant.

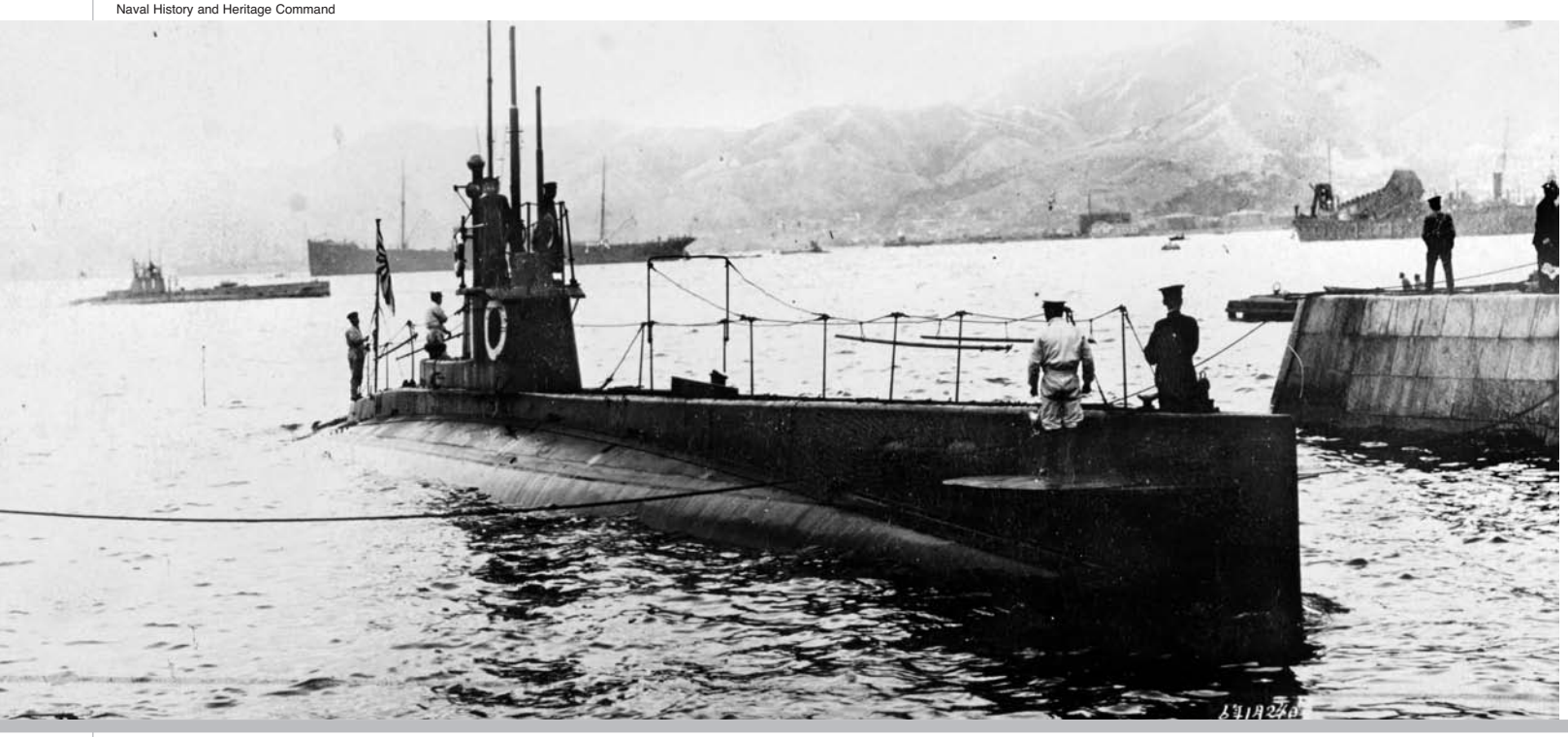
His immediate response was to turn toward the approaching sub and try to ram it. When that failed, he turned hard over so that only his fleeing stern faced the sub. Aboard *I-23*, Captain Genichi Shibata had a problem. The ocean was rough, and swells would wash over the bow if he used his superior speed. That would adversely affect his gunners' aim and might also sweep them off the deck.

I-23 moderated her speed so the gunners could fire while remaining upright as Shibata tried to maneuver for a broadside torpedo attack. But the captain of *Agwiworld* made smoke and zigzagged in random patterns, outmaneuvering the sub while keeping a small profile facing the enemy until he reached the safety of Monterey Bay. The gunners on the deck of *I-23* fired as many as14 shells at the tanker (reports vary) but scored no hits.

Captain Goncalves handled his slow tanker with skill and calm while under attack, and it is highly likely that he had gained experience aboard ship in World War I facing down U-boats.

On December 22, *I-19* sighted the tanker *H.M. Storey* (10,763 tons) off Point Arguello.

Naval History and Heritage Command



The hunter gave chase. *Storey* fled before the threat and made smoke, which threw off the aim of *I-19*'s deck gun. *I-19* submerged to fire torpedoes. Three were sent in *Storey*'s direction, but all missed, and she escaped. Though *I-19* missed the target that day, on September 15, 1942, in the waters surrounding the Solomon Islands, she fired a spread of six torpedoes that sank the aircraft carrier *Wasp* and the destroyer *O'Brien* while damaging the battleship *North Carolina* in one of the most successful submarine attacks in history.

On December 23, 1941, *I-21* sighted the tanker SS *Montebello* (8,270 tons) near the seaside town of Cambria, California. At 0530, she fired two torpedoes at a range of 2,190 yards; one of them struck home. The crew abandoned the sinking ship in four lifeboats and was fired upon by machine guns but suffered no casualties. Later in the day, *I-21* fired her gun at the tanker SS *Idaho* causing some damage, but the ship got away.

On Christmas Eve off Point Fermin, near San Pedro, *I-19* attacked the 5,698-ton lumber carrier *Absaroka*. One of two torpedoes hit *Absaroka*, and she settled until her deck was awash. But because she was loaded with lumber, she didn't sink and was towed to shore and beached near Point Fermin.

Tokyo called off the simultaneous Christmas shelling because of logistical problems, and then, on December 27, all Japanese submarines operating off the West Coast were recalled due to fuel-consumption concerns.

Once refueled and rearmed, *I-17* was ordered to return to the West Coast. She reached San Diego on January 7, 1942. From there she patrolled northward. Her captain, Nishino Kozo, was under orders to shell a target on the coast in order to create panic. A small oil-storage facility near Santa Barbara was chosen because of its ease of escape and distance from harbors where destroyers could race after the submarine. As a merchant captain before the war, Nishino had put in at this same facility and was familiar with it.

Just before sunset, *I-17* surfaced and at 1910 hours fired 17 5.5 -inch shells at the oil tanks. Due again to the interference of ocean swells, little damage was done, but it was enough. *I-17* slipped away, and the attack had its desired result. Panic set in as hundreds of people fled the coast, fearing the shelling was a prelude to invasion.

In Los Angeles, at about 0230 hours on February 25th, nervous antiaircraft gunners of the 37th Coast Artillery Brigade, perhaps sighting a wayward weather balloon, drew the wrong conclusion and opened fire. Other batteries followed suit, shooting at nothing. In neighboring Alhambra, awakened by the shooting and searchlights, 16-year old air raid warden Larry Stevens ran from house to house in his neighborhood to enforce the mandatory blackout. Within a year and a half, Stevens would be a B-17 tail gunner.

Over 1,400 shells were fired in the air over Los Angeles that night, causing damage to buildings and cars when the shells fell back to earth. Five people died in car crashes or of heart attacks. The whole bizarre incident would be called "The Battle of Los Angeles."

National Archives

Naval History and Heritage Command

TOP: After the Japanese submarine *I-25* fired rounds from its deck gun in the vicinity of Fort Stevens, Oregon, U.S. soldiers survey one of the impact craters. ABOVE: The tanker *Agwiworld* survived an encounter with the Japanese submarine *I-23* along the Pacific coast on December 21, 1941. The ship managed to escape the attack off the island of Santa Cruz and maneuvered violently, zigzagging to avoid more than a dozen shells fired from the submarine's deck gun. OPPOSITE: The Japanese submarine *I-10* was among those that attempted to attack the West Coast of the United States in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Several ships were attacked, and shells were lobbed at oil tanks and refining facilities, but the damage was negligible.

Meanwhile, *I-17* moved northward off the coast of San Francisco. On March 1, she attacked the 8,300-ton tanker *William H. Berg*. Several torpedoes were fired, but none found its mark. One exploded in the water, giving the impression that the ship had been hit. *I-17* surfaced to finish off the tanker with its deck gun. When the tanker unexpectedly began to fire back, *I-17* submerged and fled.

On June 3, 1942, far to the north, Japanese planes from the carriers *Ryj* and *Juny* bombed Dutch Harbor in Alaska. This was followed by the invasion of the islands of Attu and Kiska

on June 7. This faraway assault gave rise to fears that an invasion of the rest of Alaska was imminent.

On that same day, *I-26* was stationed 35 miles off the Strait of Juan de Fuca at the entrance to Puget Sound and Seattle. At 1410 hours a single torpedo was fired at the 3,286-ton armed cargo steamer SS *Coast Trader,* carrying 1,250 tons of newsprint. She was hit aft on her starboard side and sank by the stern. Among the crew of 56, there was only one fatality, but several were injured.

On June 20, off Canada's Vancouver Island at 2217 hours, *I-26* surfaced and fired 17 shells (two of which were sand-filled practice rounds) at the Estevan Point lighthouse and radio direction-finding station. There were no hits on target. Most of the shells fell short of the lighthouse or exploded nearby. One positive result for the Japanese was the American reaction: They turned off most West Coast lighthouses, causing navigation problems for coastal traders.

On the same day that *I-26* attacked the Canadian lighthouse, *I-25* fired on the 7,126-ton British steamer *Fort Camosun* off Cape Flattery, the northeastern tip of the Olympic peninsula. One torpedo exploded on her port bow, and she began to sink as the crew abandoned ship. However, her cargo of plywood and lumber, bound for England, prevented her from sinking, and she was towed to shore and placed in drydock.

The next day, *I-25* was off the mouth of the Columbia River. She surfaced and came within 11,000 yards of shore. After sundown, her 5.5-inch deck gun was fired at Fort Stevens, near Astoria, Oregon. The heaving ocean swells again threw off the aim of the gunners, and there was no significant damage.

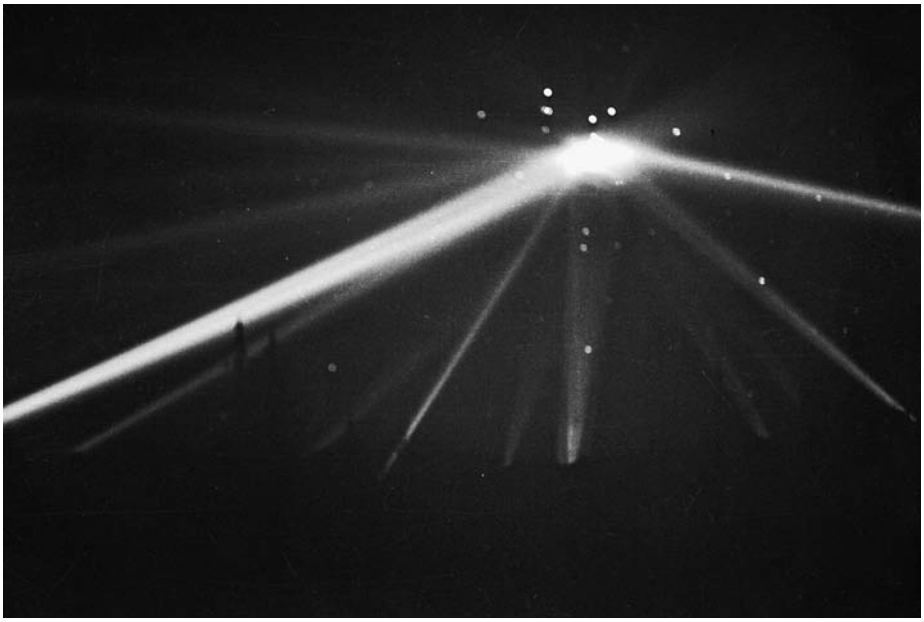
September 9, 1942 was the day of the first bombing of the continental United States. It was carried out by the aircraft-carrying submarine *I-25*, cruising 25 miles off the Oregon coast. The sea was calm; *I-25* surfaced just before dawn, and the E14Y1 Yokosuka floatplane, nicknamed "Glen" by the Allies, was pulled from its watertight cylindrical hanger on the bow. Its wings were unfolded, and two 170-pound thermite incendiary bombs were attached to wing-mounted hardpoints.

The pilot, Fujita Nobuo, catapulted off the deck at 0535 hours and flew in the direction of Mount Emily in southwestern Oregon. The plan was to drop the incendiaries into the forest, starting a conflagration that would rage out of control throughout the northwestern United States. Unfortunately for Fujita, rain had saturated the woods; though the bombs exploded and set small fires, they were soon extinguished by the soggy trees and flora, which refused to burn. Fujita, thinking himself successful, landed his float plane near *I-25* and was hoisted aboard. After the plane was stored, *I-25* submerged.

On September 29, another attempt was made to set the forest ablaze. This time, *I-25* surfaced after midnight about 50 miles west of Cape Blanco, Oregon. The float plane was laboriously prepared in the darkness and launched by catapult at 2107 hours. Most of the coast of Oregon was blacked out because of the attack on the Estevan Point lighthouse, but the Cape Blanco lighthouse was still operating. Fujita used it as a reference point to navigate as he flew inland and dropped his bombs. A fire ignited, but it sputtered out before U.S. Forest Service firefighters could reach the scene. Rough seas and heavy mist covered the region for the next few days, scrubbing any further bombing attempts.

After her failed attempts at arson in the national forests, *I-25* continued finding success against seagoing targets. In the predawn stillness of October 5, near Coos Bay, Oregon, while the submarine was recharging its batteries, her lookouts spotted a tanker dead in the water. It was the 6,653-ton armed tanker *Camden*, holding 76,000 barrels of gasoline and oil.

National Archives



Los Angeles Times

TOP: This photo is purported to be the only image taken during the famed Battle of Los Angeles and appeared in the February 26, 1942, edition of the Los Angeles Times. Theorists have asserted that it is proof of the existence of UFOs, but such notions have been dismissed. ABOVE: Following the nocturnal Battle of Los Angeles, police officers block a road in Santa Monica after locating an unexploded antiaircraft shell. Some structures sustained damage from shell fragments after the frightening night of false enemy sightings and gunfire.

She had been forced to stop to make emergency engine repairs.

I-25 cleared her deck and dived to make a torpedo run. Two torpedoes were fired, but only one hit its target. That was enough: The starboard bow was struck, causing the forepeak fuel tank to explode. *Camden* settled by the bow slowly enough to allow the crew to escape, but it did not sink. She was taken under tow by a tug, but on October 10 off Grays Harbor, Oregon, she suddenly burst into flames and foundered.

Also on October 5, *I-25* sank the armed tanker *Larry Doheny*, which was carrying 66,000 barrels of oil. The torpedo ran true, and the tanker exploded with so much force that the concussion rocked the submarine and showered the deck and conning tower with fragments.

On October 11, while returning to Japan, *I-25* sighted two ships thought to be American submarines. *I-25* fired its last torpedo, which hit and sank not an American sub, but the Soviet 1,039-ton minelaying submarine *L-16*, headed from Vladivostok to the Baltic Sea via the Panama Canal. This engagement was not made public until after the war.

I-25 would be the last Japanese submarine to cause significant damage on the West Coast. By this time, Tokyo had recalled its submarines to bolster the fight for Guadalcanal and offset the losses at sustained Midway. Other means of attacking the American mainland would have to be found.

As early as 1933, Japanese scientists had discovered that a jet stream flowed at high altitude from west to east across the northern Pacific at certain times during the winter months. Nothing was done to take advantage of the air current until the Doolittle raid on Tokyo on April 18, 1942. Humiliation fueled the desire for revenge, and the idea of using balloon bombs floated across the Pacific to wreak havoc on North America was pursued because it was easy and cheap, if perhaps a little desperate.

There was a precedent for the Japanese idea: The British were already sending thousands of balloon bombs on an air current against Germany in Operation Outward, and they were proving highly cost-effective.

The Japanese resolved to emulate the British example with a more sophisticated device. They would call their weapon *fusen bakudan*, or "balloon bomb," and nicknamed it "Fugu" after the poisonous puffer fish. Schoolgirls were recruited to glue newspaper-sized strips of tissue-thin paper into light but strong balloons. When inflated with hydrogen, the balloons were 33 feet in diameter and capable of lifting 3,000 pounds. About 1,000 pounds of instruments, a connecting framework, one high explosive bomb, and two or three small incendiary bombs with several sand bags for ballast were attached.

Naval History and Heritage Command

National Archives

ABOVE: The large Japanese submarine *I-400* was surrendered by the Imperial Japanese Navy when World War II ended. Shown here in Hawaiian waters, its substantial hangar is visible. Its original mission to transport bombers to attack the U.S. West Coast never materialized as the fortunes of war turned against Japan. LEFT: Workmen chop down a tree in a western forest in order to retrieve a Japanese balloon bomb. Most of the bombs failed to spark major forest fires or generate widespread panic among the West Coast population, although some civilians were tragically killed.

The balloon bombs were first released on November 3, 1944, to commemorate the birthday of the former Emperor Meiji. Some 9,000 fugu bombs were launched during the winter of 1944, but their effect remained unknown to the Japanese.

When the American military began to discover fugu bombs that had landed (some exploded, some not), they quickly assembled as many elements of the devices as they could. They realized that the incendiary bombs carried by the balloons were intended to ignite forest fires in the northwest, as *I-25* had tried to do. On May 5 a pregnant American civilian and her five children were killed near the town of Bly, Oregon, after they approached a landed balloon bomb that promptly exploded in their midst. A potentially even more perilous incident occurred near Hanford, Washington, the location of a top-secret facility for the production of nuclear material as part of the Manhattan Project. On March 10, 1945, a balloon landed on nearby power lines, causing an outage and blackout at the plant. This could have led to a serious nuclear incident; fortunately, a backup energy source kicked in almost immediately, and disaster was averted.

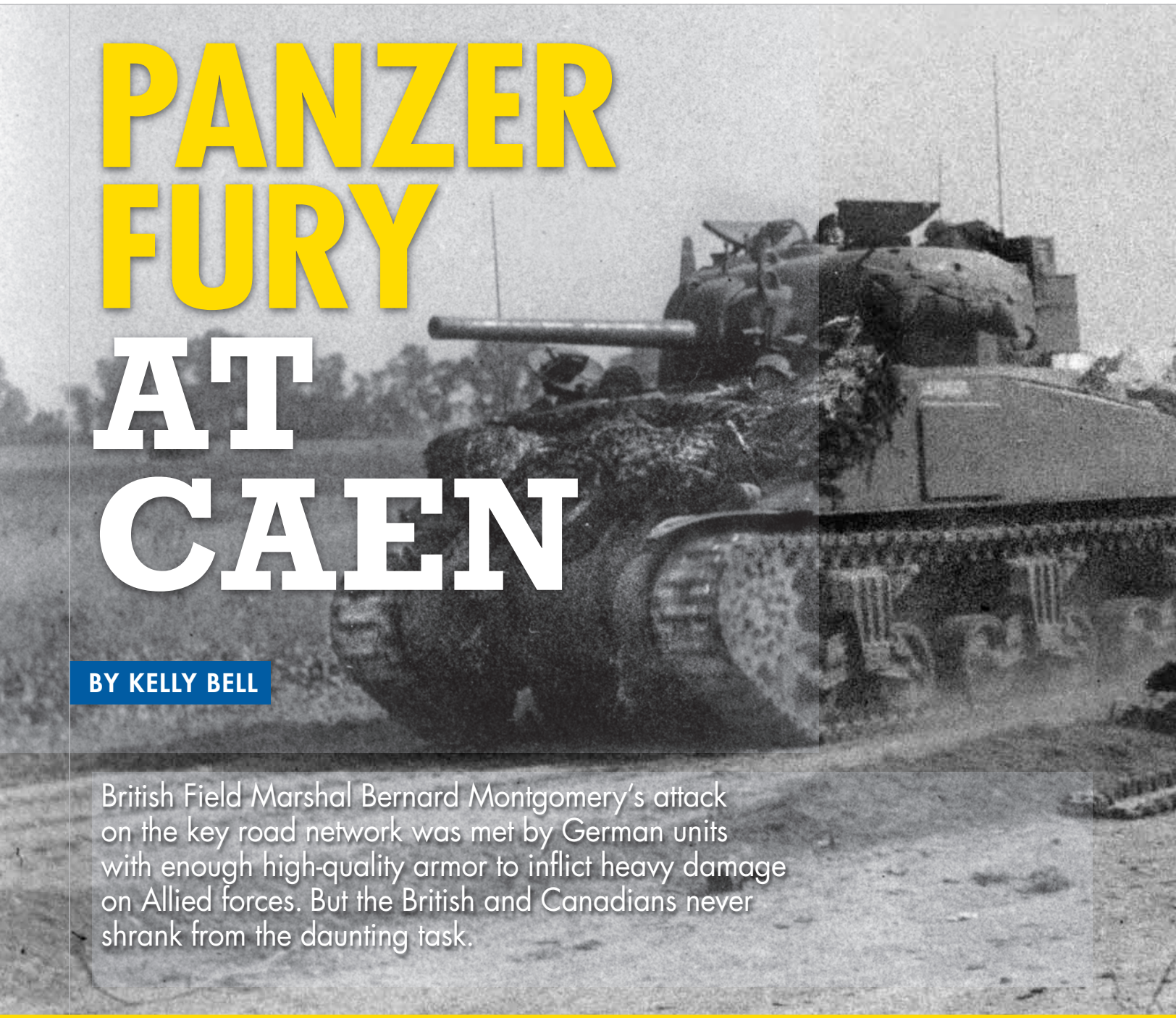
Senior military officers at the Pentagon also feared the balloons might be used to carry chemical or biological weapons. When authorities approached the bombs, they wore full protective gear. After the war, the Japanese claimed that Emperor Hirohito himself withheld permission for bombs laden with such weapons.

Many of the balloon bombs landed in the ocean, a few were shot down, and an unknown number landed in Alaska, Canada, and the

Continued on page 77

PANZER FURY AT CAEN

BY KELLY BELL



British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's attack on the key road network was met by German units with enough high-quality armor to inflict heavy damage on Allied forces. But the British and Canadians never shrank from the daunting task.

THE black uniformed German panzer crews climbed into their Panther tanks at 10 PM on June 8, 1944. Their objective was the village of Bretteville just west of the key crossroads of Caen opposite the beaches where the British had come ashore on D-Day two days before.

The engines roared to life, smoke poured from their exhausts, and the tracks clanked as they rolled into the black of night. Because of the threat of attacks on German armored columns by rocket-firing British Hawker Typhoons, it was essential that the attack go forward under cover of night.

The two companies of Panthers from Panzer Battalion I of the 12th SS Panzer Regiment were part of a kampfgruppe whose objective was to disrupt the advance of Canadian forces moving around the left flank of German forces organizing to make a stand at the city and possibly drive the British back to the beaches in the days to follow.

The kampfgruppe moved quickly toward its objective. Rather than having the panzergrenadiers participating in the attack ride atop the tanks, they rode the half dozen kilometers to their objective on motorcycles.

When the Germans arrived at their objective, the defenders were ready. Manning antitank guns, infantrymen of the Regina Rifles Regiment, 7th Brigade, 3rd Canadian Infantry Division scored a number of hits on Panthers at the front of the column. Hoping to take the defenders in the flank or rear, many of the tanks peeled off to the south, driving around the enemy's flank to enter the village from the other direction.

The Panthers rolled into the town and began firing into buildings and into rows of dense bushes where enemy infantry was hiding. Soon

A British M4 Sherman medium tank races past a knocked-out German PzKpfw. IV tank during the desperate fight for control of the crossroads and communications hub of Caen during the weeks after D-Day. Allied planners had projected that Caen would be in British hands on D-Day itself; however, a month of bitter fighting was required for Allied forces to capture the town.

a portion of the village was in flames. Thick smoke poured from burning buildings and destroyed tanks, making it doubly hard to see targets in the nocturnal fight. Some of the tank crews, lucky to escape their damaged tanks, ran for protection behind the panzergrenadiers or hitched a lift on friendly vehicles. The Canadians eventually made it too hot for the Germans to stay.

"Through my sight I saw a veritable wall of fire moving toward us about 900 meters away," wrote tank gunner Leopold Lengheim. "There was no time to think, load—fire, load—fire, as fast as possible until it was all over for us as well. Hits to the slanted front armor and the gun ruined its adjustment; our fire lay way short. The next hit went exactly below the commander's cupola. The cupola and the head of our commander were gone."

The desperate and gruesome night fight at Bretteville was characteristic of the fighting over a two-month period between the Commonwealth troops and German troops at Caen. In the early days, the Germans launched multiple counterattacks to buy time for German troops stationed at other possible invasion areas on the French coast to reach the Normandy sector.

The Germans managed in the weeks following D-Day to derail the schedule of British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, who expected Commonwealth troops to capture Caen on the day after the landings. German Army Group B Commander Erwin Rommel urged his subordinates to rush additional units to Caen to prevent a breakout by Montgomery's troops. Each commander committed the vast majority of his armor to the battle for Caen. It came as a cold shock to Montgomery and the Commonwealth

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-738-0267-18; Photo: Arthur Grimm

Wittmann had finished the day with 25 British tanks to add to his tally of 119 Soviet machines he had destroyed in almost three years on the Eastern Front.

troops that the steel-spined Germans would fight a two-month delaying action before being forced to relinquish the key objective to their equally determined foe.

Like other key cities in Normandy near the invasion area, Caen was an important road junction. The Germans sought to prevent the Allies from capturing it so as to deny them the ability to move east-west and break out from the bocage, which was the patchwork of fields divided by wooded embankments that offered every advantage to the defender and none to the attacker.

On the evening of June 6, Generalleutnant Edgar Feuchtinger's crack 21st Panzer Division assembled south of the city and sliced through the British-Canadian linkup between Juno and Gold Beaches. The 192nd Grenadier Regiment drove all the way to the English Channel coast. However, the former Afrika Korps division's armored elements lost contact with their accompanying infantry, and rather than following it and strengthening the potentially crucial wedge between the invasion beaches the panzers veered westward about five miles behind their advance units and blundered into Allied antitank positions outside Bieville and Periers and were quickly pinned down.

While the 192nd's infantry waited in vain for its tanks to arrive, the situation stagnated. This in itself was a positive development for the Germans. If they could hold the corridor long enough to pack it with armor, artillery, and men, the British beachheads would be isolated and in jeopardy. To the north at Calais there were about 200,000 German troops waiting for a second invasion the Wehrmacht suspected would come there. If German Führer Adolf Hitler were to decide to send these reserves to Normandy, they could have a very consequential influence on the still-vulnerable Allied foothold.

Realizing the peril, 21st Army Group Commander Montgomery rushed fleets of troop-laden gliders into the Nazi-held salient in advance of the beach landings. With virtually no air support, the Germans were unable to stem this mini-invasion from the sky, and when reinforcements and supplies failed to arrive they were forced to back out of their vital real estate and fell back to Caen. The invaders' beachfront holdings were now more secure, but they could be nothing but a stepping-off point for the inevitable liberation of western Europe, and in the corn-growing belt just in front of them their route was blocked by a ruthless and capable foe.

The vanguard of the 12th SS Panzer Regiment of the 12th SS Panzer "Hitlerjugend" Division had begun arriving southwest of Caen on June 6 to reinforce the 21st Panzer Division. The Hitlerjugend Division was led by Brigadeführer Fritz Witt. Panzer Battalion 2, which was equipped with Panzer IV tanks, arrived during the night. Panzer Battalion 1, which was equipped with Panther tanks, arrived the morning of July 7.

On the morning of June 7, the 21st Panzer and the lead elements of the 12th SS Panzer Hitlerjugend Division, which was led by Brigadeführer (brigadier general) Fritz Witt, were outside the city while preparing for a joint Army/SS attack on Sword Beach. Witt issued the following order for an attack: "Attack the enemy on the left of the railroad line Caen-Luc sur Mer and drive him into the sea." The attack was to begin at 4 PM, but the enemy's initiative would force the commitment of much of this force before that time.

While Panzer Regiment 12 was still arriving that morning, the commander of the 25th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment, Standartenführer (general) Kurt Meyer, was surveying his area of approach from the steeple of the 12th-century Abbaye d'Ardenne three miles northwest of Caen. Meyer was startled by the sight of an advancing armored column. It was the Canadians of the 27th Tank Regiment and 2nd Armored Brigade making a leisurely and (as it turned out) ambitious attempt to take coveted Carpiquet airfield.

Evidently unaware of the powerful, nearby hostile presence, the Canadians rumbled casually along a road lined with camouflaged German Panzer IV tanks and artillery. Meyer, who had at his disposal a battalion of panzergrenadiers and a tank battalion, personally directed the German attack. By then, the Germans at Caen had 50 tanks ready to take on the enemy. When the unsuspecting convoy reached the Caen-Bayeux Road, Meyer screamed "Attack!" into his field microphone.

A reconnaissance by four Panzer IVs of Company 5, Panzer Battalion 2, along the Franqueville-Authie Road ran headlong into Shermans of the Sherbrooke Fusiliers at 2 PM. The doughty Fusiliers managed to knock out three of the four German tanks in a brief but bloody action. When apprised of the bad news, Panzer Regiment 12 Commander Obersturmbann-

führer (lieutenant colonel) Max Wünsche ordered a general attack by all of the available panzers from II Panzer Abteilung. "Panzers, march!" he shouted into the radio. Hearing the order, all tanks of Companies 5 and 6 of Panzer Battalion 2 positioned to the left of Abbaye d'Ardenne started their engines and lurched forward to hunt for the enemy. The Mark IVs suddenly appeared as if out of nowhere on the enemy's left flank. The unplanned German ambush was a total rout. The Sherbrooke Fusiliers pulled back, leaving in their wake 21 knocked out Shermans. Meyer had pushed to within six miles of Sword Beach. Unfortunately, he had not yet been reinforced with additional armor from either the depleted 21st Panzer or the soon to arrive Panzer Lehr Divisions.

Trying to follow up his triumph with an assault on Sword Beach, Meyer deployed his forces northward. Additional Canadian armor promptly assailed his flanks. When Meyer came under fire from field artillery, naval artillery, and ground attack aircraft, he realized the odds were too great, broke off the advance, and returned to Caen.

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-738-0267-21A; Photo: Arthur Grimm

ABOVE: A column of British armored vehicles smolders in ruin after being blasted by Oberstürmführer Michael Wittmann's Tiger I tank. BELOW: British armored forces advance against Hill 112 near Caen. A vicious battle with the 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitlerjugend" followed, and eventually Allied forces defeated the fanatical Nazi resistance. OPPOSITE: A German Tiger I tank rumbles along a road near Villers-Bocage, a key objective west of Caen. Two companies of Heavy Tank Battalion 101, a Waffen SS unit, on June 13 ambushed tank columns of the British 7th Armored Division.

The lengthiest siege of the war in the West was unfolding, and Montgomery's frustration would mount steadily in the coming weeks. Stung by the German counterattacks, Montgomery on June 8 ordered British Second Army commander General Miles Dempsey "to develop operations with all possible speed for the capture of Caen."

On June 9, the 15,000 soldiers of the Panzer Lehr Division began arriving at the front and took up a position on the far left flank of the German line, blocking the Commonwealth advance toward Caen.

Over the next few days the situation on the northern outskirts of Caen stalemated with the 3rd Canadian and 3rd British Divisions keeping the pressure on and tying down the 12th SS and 21st Panzer Divisions while the British 7th Armored Division attempted to wheel around in a great arc, outflank the waiting Panzer Lehr Division, and assault Caen from the west. Things went terribly wrong.

The command of the 1st SS Panzer Corps had recognized the need to bolster the left flank of the Panzer Lehr Division west of Caen but could not draw off any of the scant tank assets of the three armored divisions already deployed at the front. The command, therefore, decided to order those elements of Heavy Tank Battalion 101, which had just arrived at the front and had not yet been committed, to protect Panzer Lehr's unanchored left flank. Company 1 of the heavy tank battalion took up a position 10 kilometers northeast of the outlying village of Villers-Bocage, and Company 2 established itself behind the other company two miles northeast of the village. Company 1 was led by Haupstürmführer (captain) Rolf Mobius, and Company 2 by Oberstürmführer (1st lieutenant) Michael Wittmann.

On the morning of June 13, the 22nd British Armored Brigade made it as far as the outlying village of Villers-Bocage. Wittman was watching. Angered at the nonchalance of the overconfident Englishmen, Wittmann (who had only five of his Tiger tanks on hand) attacked the column alone while his other four tanks laid down covering fire. Wittmann knocked out four Sherman tanks from 80 meters. He then roared up to the column, turned his Tiger parallel to it, and drove alongside the column in the direction of the march, blasting enemy tanks. The other tanks of his company fell in behind him and rounded up more than 200 prisoners.

Wittmann eventually was joined in the turkey shoot by Company 1, and together the two Tiger tank companies knocked out a large number of British tanks. Wittmann spent the

day destroying everything Allied he could get in his sights, and that evening, with infantry from the 2nd SS Panzer and Panzer Lehr Divisions strengthening the German line, the surviving "Desert Rats" of the 7th gave up and fell back to Livry five miles to the east.

Wittmann had finished the day with 25 British tanks to add to his tally of 119 Soviet machines he had destroyed in almost three years on the Eastern Front. His exploits this day earned him the rare swords addition to his Knight's Cross and a promotion to captain. More significantly, he and his fellow SS had pulverized the armored spearhead of Montgomery's main thrust. Another major drive on Caen was convincingly stopped. The Germans had shown they were eager to fight and would strive to inflict maximum damage on the British and Canadian forces advancing on Caen.

Montgomery was anxious about being overshadowed by the Americans. Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins's VII Corps was securing the Cherbourg peninsula on June 22. That same day the British and Canadians saturated the Nazi positions in front of Caen with a massive artillery bombardment before their next advance. It was the 16th day of the invasion. Montgomery had confidently scheduled Caen to be captured on D-Day plus one. It had been two weeks since June 7, and the chagrined field marshal planned to ford the Odon and Orne Rivers, take vitally strategic Hill 112, then send his forces around the city and secure it via a flanking maneuver. On paper it looked easy.

The onrushing British collided with the well-equipped, fanatical teenagers of the 12th SS Panzer Division but managed to force an expensive penetration through antitank positions. If the Allies could consolidate a breakthrough across the Odon Valley, Caen would be successfully outflanked and the German lines in northern France seriously breached.

Initially things looked promising for the British. Apart from the overworked 12th SS Panzer Division, the British were opposed only by decimated units and lone, panzerfaust-packing grenadiers lurking in hedgerows and orchards. These troops and a few Tiger and Panther tanks managed to slow the encroaching swarms of infantry-laden Shermans, but His Majesty's soldiers were many and determined.

By the end of June, Hill 112 was secure, enabling the Scottish 15th Division to cross the Odon and set up on its left bank. At daybreak on June 30, the 2nd SS Panzer Corps, with heavy mortar and artillery support, launched a sudden counterattack on the strategic heights. Although codebreakers had warned them of the assault and they had crowded tanks, antitank artillery, and part of a machine-gun battalion onto the hilltop, the speed and power of the dawn panzer charge knocked the British off balance, and Hill 112 again changed bloody hands. If only for the moment yet another Allied threat to Caen was averted.

Despite punishing attacks by Typhoons, the Germans had managed to amass 7½ panzer divisions around Caen by the end of June. Between them, the divisions had 150 heavy tanks, both the Tiger and newer King Tigers, as well as 250 medium tanks. Montgomery had been fought to a standstill, so it seemed. He issued a directive on June 30 indicating an intention to hold in front of Caen on the Allied left flank in anticipation of an American breakthrough on the Allied right flank. But his headquarters continued working on plans for an eventual breakout on the left.

On July 4, Canadian forces reached the heights overlooking Carpiquet airfield. One after another the outlying villages of Ste. Honorine-la-Chardonnerette, St. Manvieu, Blainville, Periers-sur-le-Dan, Anisy, Villons-les-Buissons, and Norrey-en-Bessin fell to the inexorably advancing Commonwealth forces, ringing the main objective in an almost complete encirclement. Eight centuries earlier William the Conqueror had set sail from Normandy to add England to his dominion. Now a far greater invasion in reverse had reached the outskirts of the ruins of his capital.

Montgomery called this offensive to finally drive the Germans from the ruins Operation Goodwood, and in preparation the Royal Air Force (RAF) sent the Avro Lancasters and Handley Page Halifaxes of 625 Squadron on a massive raid the evening of July 7. The heavy bombers unloaded 2,000 tons of high explosives onto the already devastated city. For an hour the bombs drummed to earth as Germans and imprudent townspeople who had not heeded the warning of the impending holocaust delivered via leaflets earlier in the day cowered in stunned terror as their world exploded around them. One young mother who watched two children blinded by flying glass shards covered her own little boy's face with a pillow as she felt the "whole world shudder. It went on and on for 50 minutes with a single break of five minutes."

Furthermore, Allied artillery fired more than 80,000 shells in support of the coming push but overshot the German defense perimeter and killed approximately 5,000 French civilians still in the city.

But German losses were insignificant. The bombing and shelling actually raised the morale of the waiting defenders as they listened in glee to the off-target pounding. Montgomery kicked

The goal of Operation Goodwood, which began July 18, was for the British to clear the Germans from the region southeast of Caen. After three days of hard fighting, the British failed to punch through the German defensive belt.

off his offensive, codenamed Operation Charnwood, at 4:20 AM on July 8 with the Canadians starting at 7:30 AM. The Allies were stunned at the ferocity of the resistance they encountered as Meyer's men fought with their typical abandon. Still, the decimated 16th Luftwaffe Field Division had essentially collapsed, dangerously exposing Meyer's right flank. Also, the British 9th Infantry Brigade and 33rd Tank Brigade had, by midmorning, penetrated into Caen's suburbs. Elsewhere on the sprawling battlefield the British were making progress.

The British pushed the 1st SS Battalion out of Milius, leaving adjacent Epron in danger of being liberated. What was left of the 2nd SS Battalion was encircled in Glamanche, and by 4 PM the British Royal Warwicks had reached St. Contest. In Buron the Canadians had trapped the 3rd SS Panzergrenadier Battalion. At 5:30 PM a counterattack by two platoons of the 3rd SS Panzer Company was hurled back, leaving Commonwealth forces at nightfall still in possession of the day's hard-earned gains. At great cost (262 men killed in the North Shore Regiment alone) the Canadians had taken the towns of Gruchy, Authie, Franqueville, Cussy, and Carpiquet airfield. In other areas the attack fell short of its objectives.

British attempts to reach and secure the Orne River bridges in Caen were blocked by minefields and intense artillery fire. Still, Meyer's command was being bled white, and on July 8, 1st Panzer Corps Chief of Staff Fritz Kramer gave him grudging permission to fall back to the Orne's southern bank. That evening Rommel removed all his heavy weapons from Caen's city proper and set up a new defense line with what was left of Meyer's troops on the southern bank. In the darkness the Allies did not seem to realize their foe was slipping away, and the Germans escaped to set up a powerful riverside position.

The British reached the center of the city on the afternoon of the 9th, but tons of bomb-blasted debris blocked further progress. Still, they had finally reached their D-Day plus one objective—slightly more than a month late. Even at that point the Germans held the southern part of the city. So far Montgomery's command had taken 3,817 casualties and lost 80 tanks. By ratio the Allies had lost six times as many men as the Germans during the Caen offensive. The tactical bombing was an even greater failure.

The sight of successive waves of medium and heavy bombers droning overhead was heartening to the British and American ground forces, boosting their morale. However, the tangible results were virtually nonexistent. Professor Solly Zucherman served as Royal Air Force Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder's scientific advisor. An authority on Allied bombing policy, he visited the bombed area as soon as it was secured and was appalled at what he found. Despite the ghastly devastation he could locate virtually no sign of German dead or of destroyed Wehrmacht equipment.

Apart from obliterating an area of profound historical and cultural significance the poundings were militarily ineffectual. A doctor who remained in Caen and survived later wrote, "The bombardment was absolutely futile. There were no military objectives. All the bombardment did was choke the streets and hinder the Allies in their advance through the city."

It also failed to achieve its aim of disrupting the transfer of German forces from the British to the American sectors. The 2nd SS Panzer and the Panzer Lehr Divisions moved westward to effectively block the advance of General Omar Bradley's First Army. By July 10, the First Army had suffered 40,000 casualties, forcing Bradley to halt his slow progress while his command rested, repaired, and absorbed replacements.

Rommel had managed to convey four sizable forces of fresh reinforcements from his 1st and 19th Armies to the Caen salient, enabling him to fight his old foe Montgomery to a standstill. The Germans' ability to move troop columns

Both: Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: A Sherman tank belonging to the Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment rolls through the abandoned streets of Caen on July 10, while the Germans still controlled the southern half of the city. BELOW: British infantry of the 1st Welsh Guards take cover behind a Norman hedgerow during Operation Goodwood. The bocage, a patchwork of field and woodlands, heavily favored the defending Germans.

across unbridged rivers despite heavy air interdiction took Montgomery by surprise and reminded him of a grim possibility that had troubled him for some time. What if Hitler decided to abandon the relatively unimportant Mediterranean coast and shift German forces there north? If he took that course of action, Hitler might be able to stagnate or even turn back the Allied advance. Thus, the British had to find a way to sustain their momentum and compel the enemy to commit all his reserves to engagements already or soon to be in progress and initiated by the Allies.

By keeping the Germans tied up in locations of his own choosing, Montgomery would make it impossible for them to counterattack through some weakly held part of his line. He was especially worried about where his lines intersected the American ones between Caumont and St. Lo. Hitler was indeed considering sending his forces against this vulnerable spot, and only constant pressure elsewhere was keeping the Wehrmacht off it. A strike sorely needed to be made soon to ensure against this dire possibility.

It had been two weeks since the expensive, futile attempt to secure the crucial high ground southwest of the city—specifically Hill 112 in the angle of confluence between the Orne and Odon Rivers. If a second, finally successful blow could be made here things would be looking up with the durable Nazi garrison at last outflanked and outmaneuvered. It was also an obvious place for Montgomery to strike. His beachhead was deepest and most secure to the south, around the city of Bayeaux, but it had moved inland as far as possible because the countryside in front of it consisted of a series of steep, forested ridges bisected by river bottoms and sunken lanes. All this led up to the cliffs, promontories, and deep gorges of the Norman interior. The Germans fully expected another attack on Hill 112 and beyond. The only thing they were unclear on was when.

It had to be soon. Reserves were shrinking. With his flow of replacements steadily ebbing, Montgomery contacted an increasingly impatient Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower on July 12: "Am going to launch a very big attack next week. VIII Corps with three armored divisions will be launched to the country east of the Orne." The attack he was referring to was Operation Goodwood.

With his predilection for deep thrusts through narrow breaches, Montgomery was habitually menaced on his flanks. To eliminate this danger he contacted RAF Bomber Command and the U.S. Army Air Forces to provide tactical support.

ABOVE: Soldiers of the 12th SS "Hitlerjugend" Armored Division ride an SdKfz 231 armored car through the devastated streets of Caen. In the background is the destroyed Church of St. Peter. OPPOSITE: British troops patrol Caen. Royal Air Force medium and heavy bombers pulverized the city during two separate bombing raids, killing many civilians but causing few German casualties.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris was unhappily aware of the dismal results of the recent bombing of Caen proper, but eventually agreed to provide 1,056 Lancasters and Halifaxes for yet another major raid. They were to line the entry point of the attack corridor with 5,000 tons of high explosives set with delayed fuses to crater the ground, making it difficult to transfer panzers. This also would smash defenses throughout the target area between the Colombelles Steelworks on the banks of the Orne to the west and the villages below the Bois de Bavent to the east. The U.S. Eighth and Ninth Air Forces would hammer the length of the corridor and its exit at Bourguebus with fragmentation bombs from 1,021 medium and heavy bombers in a synchronized Anglo-American attack that was the heaviest ever in support of ground forces.

Goodwood sent more than 10,000 vehicles of all classes (including 870 tanks and 680 tracked carriers) against the defenders. Late on the night of July 17, the 11th Armored clanked as quietly as possible across the Orne. Next came the 7th and Guards Divisions, passing through the gaps sappers had for days been clearing in the defensive minefields. It was 1 AM as the force began assembling at the jump-off point, and with H-hour set for 7:45 AM the tank crews, already exhausted by two days on the road, tried to snatch some sleep. At 5 AM, the first wave of bombers droned overhead, and within seconds the region in front of the armored force was a churning purgatory of titanic explosions.

Several miles out in the English Channel sat the battleship HMS *Roberts*. The last time she had seen action was the World War I Battle of Jutland, but now her elderly but enormous 15-inch rifles were doing such a masterful job of pounding the German antiaircraft positions that only six of the massive air armada's

planes were downed.

The unfortunate Nazis beneath these waves of multi-engine, explosive-laden planes were terrifyingly shocked to be deemed worthy of such devastating attention. The landscape-altering storm was indeed like nothing witnessed in the history of warfare. Panzer radio operator Werner Korstenhaus later described it as "a bomb carpet, regularly plowing up the ground. Among the thunder of the explosions we could hear the wounded screaming and the insane howling of men who had been driven mad."

An undetermined but horrific number of Germans lost their minds, committed suicide, were buried alive or blown to atoms by the unearthly bombardment that overturned 63-ton Tiger tanks. Tanks not wrecked by the explosions had their guns, exhausts, air filters, and engine grids choked by the tons of dirt thrown up by the bombing. Their gun sights were knocked off target, and if their motors cranked at all they ran roughly and grudgingly. The infantry fared even worse.

Surviving members of the Luftwaffe's 16th Field Division were so shaken by their ordeal that they lost their muscular control and could not be marched to POW compounds for several hours because they were unable to walk in a straight line.

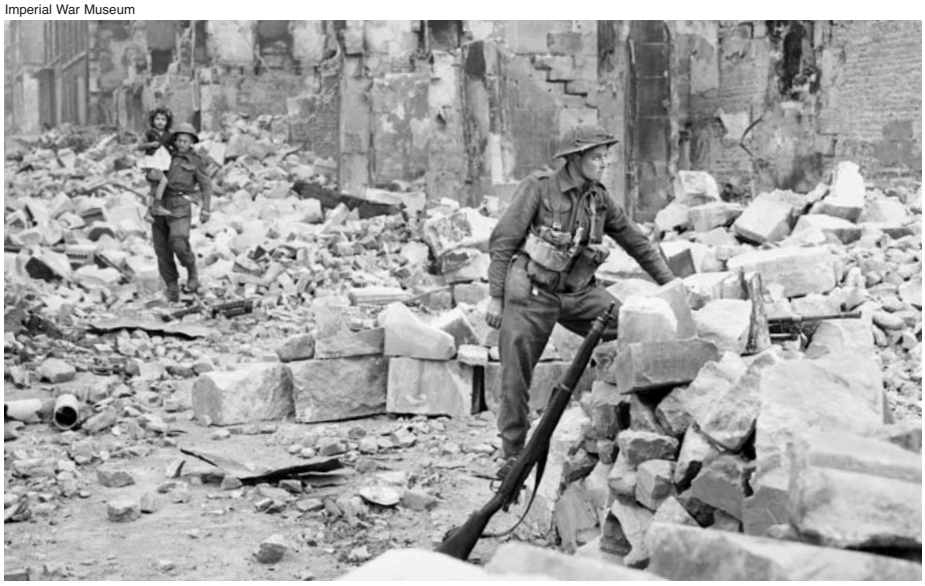
Montgomery and his planners had fingered elements of the 21st Panzer Division as the greatest threat to the coming Allied advance, but the Douglas Havocs and Martin Marauders of the U.S. Ninth Air Force had raked the 21st murderously. Also, the division had been in continuous combat since D-Day and was significantly depleted even before the air attack. Its surviving members, however shaken, were still proud professionals and had no intention of yielding anything easily.

Drowned out by the last bomb detonations were the crankings of hundreds of tank engines presaging the advance of the huge Commonwealth force down the pathway between Honorine-la-Chardonnerette and Escoville. To the left of the tank column was the accompanying infantry—the 23rd Hussars. Contrary to plans, the foot soldiers were forced to wait while the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment crowded through gaps in the minefield, and the infantry fell behind the armor. Rather than move ahead as a consolidated force, the massive attack group lost cohesion and formed a long, straggling line.

Before even encountering any defenders the divisional reconnaissance company, the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, lost four Cromwell tanks to mines missed by the sappers. Ahead of them the infantry had made it past the minefields and come under fire from German field pieces ensconced in the sprawling ruins. These foot sloggers sorely needed armored support.

The infantry elements of the 11th Armored, 3rd Monmouth, and 1st Hereford Brigades reached Cuverville about 8:30 AM and accepted the surrender of a number of shellshocked Germans numbed by the night's bombing, but preliminary bursts of automatic weapons fire from the debris made it clear to the riflemen that the airmen had not finished the job for them. The brigades commenced mustering for a frontal assault. This in itself was time consuming, and the tanks were already beyond the cluttered city streets, having bypassed them before dawn and resumed moving farther down the corridor and toward yet more Nazi strongholds. By the time the foot soldiers finished clearing the enemy from Cuverville, their motorized comrades were far ahead and, without the infantry, wide open for a flank attack.

Imperial War Museum



The Shermans were approaching the 10-foot-high railroad embankment of the Caen-Vimont line. Crossing was tricky. Each machine had to crawl diagonally to the top, ease itself over the tracks, then rush at top speed down the incline without exposing itself too long against the skyline. A few of the Germans' dread 88mm field pieces had indeed survived the night.

The column made it over the railway, but the cloud of dust it kicked up alerted Oberst (colonel) Hans von Luck of the 21st Panzer Division. Watching from an orchard in the lofty village of Cagny, he noted how the mechanized force would skirt that town, passing between it and neighboring Le Mesnil-Frementel. He also took into account the surprising absence of covering infantry.

Hastily assembling five 88mm guns in the orchard, von Luck ambushed the column and knocked out 12 tanks, but his attack came too late. By then more than 100 Shermans had already passed Cagny and were en route to their final destination—Bourguebus.

More time and lives were lost in another attack outside Cagny, this time by six Tigers from the 503rd Heavy Tank Division, which knocked out nine of the grenadiers' tanks. Running off high-octane gasoline rather than diesel, the Sherman was notoriously flammable and outclassed in other ways by the generally larger, better armored and gunned panzers they faced in France. This was more than offset by their greater speed, maneuverability, range, mechanical reliability, and marked numerical superiority. The 3rd Royal Tank Regiment had been shielded from von Luck's 88s by the mass of friendly armor between it and the ambush. Thus far during the advance they had lost just one machine, but as they crossed the Caen-Vimont railway they came under fire from mortars and three self-propelled 105mm guns.

The 3rd quickly lost three of its 19 tanks, and as its commander, Major Bill Close, recalled the squadron on the left "also had several tanks blazing furiously. My orders were to press on and bypass the village." Obeying instructions to advance rather than pause and fight, Close's command ducked into a railway tunnel and made it to the other side where a railroad embankment shielded it from enemy fire. It was soon joined by the rest of the regiment. Ahead, across 3,000 yards of open countryside, lay their temporary objective—the villages of Bras and Hubert-Folie.

In the rear of the main body of the 11th Armored, its commander, Maj. Gen. G.P.B. Roberts, was close to the action in his

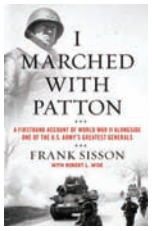
Continued on page 76

By Christopher Miskimon

With Third Army Across Europe

Corporal Frank Sisson fought with General George S. Patton's famed command during the battles in France and beyond.

Corporal Frank Sisson spent eight freezing hours in a truck, riding through France toward Belgium. A day earlier, Frank and his fellow GIs of the 667th Field Artillery Battalion, 10th Armored Division lay comfortably billeted in a French town, warm and relatively safe. Now, they bundled as best they could against the frigid December wind. Potholes punished the truck's suspensions and the soldiers' kidneys alike. The bouncing ride mattered little to Frank compared to his destination: the Belgian town of Bastogne, currently encircled by the German army as the Battle of the Bulge raged all around it.



As they got closer to the combat area, signs of recent action dotted the roadside. "Look at that!" a soldier called. He pointed to a wrecked German halftrack. It appeared as if a large-caliber shell had torn it apart. The corpse of a German soldier hung out of the halftrack's torn windshield and lay draped across the vehicle's hood. The body was stiff from the cold, with blood running down the side of the fender. None of the blood pooled on the ground, however; it froze before it could even reach the edge of the fender.

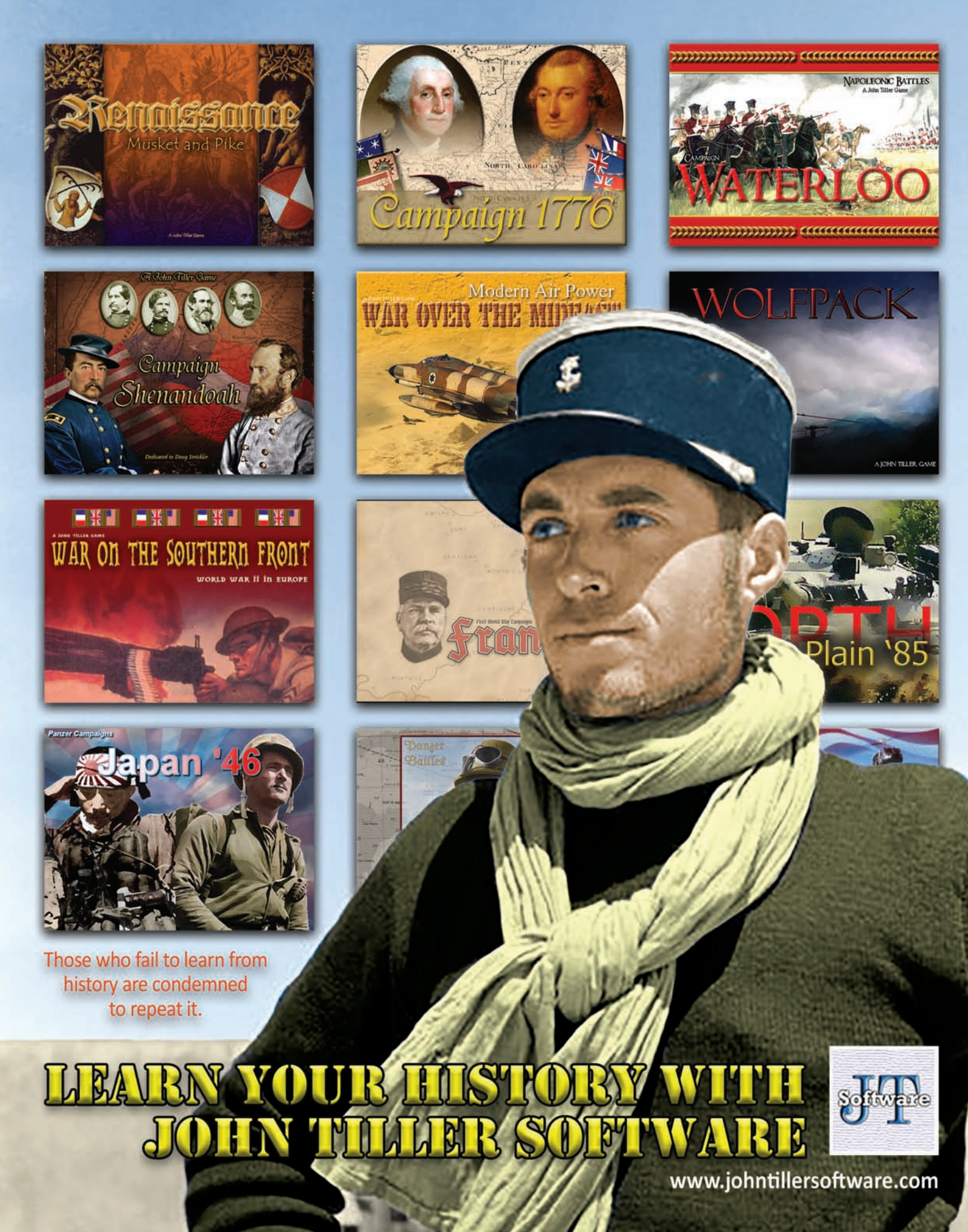
The scene soon grew worse. Body parts hung in trees, blown there by explosions. German tanks and other vehicles sat off the side of the road, twisted and burnt. Snow covered the ground and the vehicles, but frozen hands and arms poked through the veneer of white blanketing the area. A dead German soldier lay halfway out of a frozen lake. Frank thought some of the other men, less experienced, were going to vomit. He didn't like the scenes either, but as a child he'd done odd jobs at the local funeral parlor in his hometown of Weleetka, Oklahoma. Death didn't shock him as much as the others.

Eventually the trucks pulled into a clearing in a forest. The GIs got out of the trucks and lined up before their sergeant. He quickly issued orders, telling them the Germans were attacking Bastogne but that 10th Armored had snuck up behind them, still undetected. Gun crews stayed busy emplacing their cannon nearby; Corporal Sisson was part of a wire laying crew. The sergeant told them to dig foxholes and get some rest. There would be fighting tomorrow.

Frank spent a cold night shivering in his sleeping bag. The next morning, he got orders to lay communications wire for the artillery. He took a team out and got the job done. Soon after, a lieutenant ordered Frank to man an outpost and keep an eye out for enemy tanks. The weather kept Allied aircraft on the ground, so they weren't sure where the enemy forces were. Frank told the officer they would watch for any enemy tanks, but that if German armor did appear, his men would probably run like rabbits. Still, there was nothing to be done about it, so Sisson took up his spot in the outpost.

Frank knew he was caught up in one of the biggest battles of the war, part of the U.S. Third Army's campaign against Nazi Germany. He saw action across France, Belgium and Germany, including crossing the Rhine and fighting in Munich. The details of Frank Sisson's war experience are relayed in detail in *I Marched with Patton: A Firsthand Account of World War II Alongside One of the U.S. Army's Greatest Generals* (Frank Sisson with Robert L. Wise, William Morrow Publishers, New York, 2020, 304 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $28.99, hardcover).

GIs manhandle a 57mm anti-tank guns into position during the Battle of the Bulge. INSET: Corporal Frank Sisson.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The youngest veterans of World War II are now in their 90s; time and age have parted America from most of that generation. This book is a memoir from one of the last remaining participants in history's greatest conflict. Co-written by a best-selling military history author, it is a clear and lucid account of one man's service under General George Patton in his famed Third Army. Battle stories are mixed with the numerous small anecdotes common to the GI experience. Tales of men trying to stay warm, keep a full belly, and move inexorably forward add authenticity to the work. With the passing of the World War II veterans, fewer new accounts will appear, making this book a valuable addition to the war's documentation.

Panzers in Berlin 1945 (Lee Archer, Robert Kraska and Mario Lippert, Panzerwrecks Limited, Sussex, UK, 2019, 392 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, index, $104.99, hardcover)

By April 1945, the once-vaunted panzer force of the German army was but a shadow of its former self. Divisions were lucky to have a dozen tanks, and even many of those were static for lack of fuel. In Berlin, tanks served as pillboxes, immobile vehicles dug in to their turrets at intersections with good fields of fire and their crews ordered to fight until the bitter end. During and after the fighting, photographers covered the battlefield capturing images. The streets of Berlin held many sights for the camera lens: Blasted tanks, their armor twisted by fire, lay near halftracks with soldiers' corpses sprawled around them. Guns sat abandoned near their tractors, often pushed off to the side to make way for advancing Soviet tanks.

This photographic study of the last German tanks defending Berlin in April and May 1945 contains 360 images, most of them previously unpublished. The authors pieced together the stories around each picture through years of research, discovering locations, units and backgrounds. An enclosed map plots the sites shown in many of the images, allowing a tourist to visit them today. A number of the pages have QR codes, so the reader can use a mobile-phone camera to get an image from Google Street View.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf at 75: A Retrospective (Thomas J. Cutler, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 2019, 338 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, $29.95, hardcover)

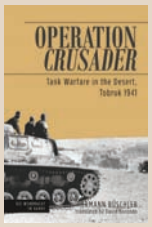
The Battle of Leyte Gulf ranks among the largest naval engagements of history. Almost 200,000 people on both sides fought this tremendous struggle around the Philippines in October 1944. One of them, Joshua Cooper, commanded the destroyer USS *Bennion* (DD-622) at Surigao Strait. His ship formed part of a squadron tasked with making torpedo attacks on the enemy's battleships and cruisers. By the time *Bennion* advanced for its run, the battle was well underway. At 2 or 3 AM, the destroyer rushed forward, launched its torpedoes at the already burning forms of the Japanese ships, and turned to circle for another run. Cooper thought the second attack more effective than the first. He discovered later his orders actually only specified one attack, to save some torpedoes for later actions; *Bennion*'s tubes now lay empty. It didn't matter; the only Japanese ships still afloat were either fleeing or adrift.

This book eschews the standard narrative format and instead highlights the battle through a series of vignettes, a combination of essays, and old articles on the action. The various contributors are either veterans of Leyte Gulf or experts on their subject. This makes the book an interesting read, providing a multitude of perspectives. One entry is by a Japanese officer, who gives an impression from the other side of the fighting.

New and Noteworthy

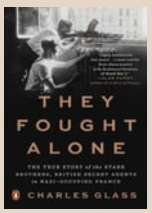
Hitler's First Hundred Days: When Germans Embraced the Third Reich (Peter Fritzsche, Basic Books, 2020, $32.00, hardcover) The Nazis took Germany from a fragmented society to a unified front in just a few months. This book reveals how it was done.

Battle of the Atlantic 1939-41: RAF Coastal Command's Hardest Fight Against the U-boats (Mark Lardas, Osprey Publishing, 2020, $24.00, softcover) The U-boat threat came as an unpleasant surprise to the RAF. England took heavy losses in ships but learned how to defeat the submarine threat.



Operation Crusader: Tank Warfare in the Desert, Tobruk 1941 (Hermann Buschleb, Casemate Books, 2020, $29.95, hardcover) This operation aimed to destroy German armored forces and relieve the siege at Tobruk. This account comes from a former German staff officer who wrote it to train military leaders.

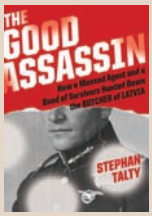
140 Days to Hiroshima: The Story of Japan's Last Chance to Avert Armageddon (David Dean Barrett, Diversion Books, 2020, $27.99, hardcover) This work covers the high-level machinations of both the American and Japanese governments in the months leading up to the atomic bombings.



They Fought Alone: The True Story of the Starr Brothers, British Secret Agents in Nazi-Occupied France (Charles Glass, Penguin Random House, 2020, $18.00, softcover) The Starr brothers were Anglo-American recruits in the British unconventional-warfare establishment. This work chronicles their ordeal in occupied France.

Peiper's War: The Wartime Years of SS Leader Jochen Peiper 1941-44 (Danny S. Parker, Frontline Books, 2020, $42.95, hardcover) Peiper was famed for his flamboyant and brutal style of warfare. The book covers his wartime experiences through to his postwar trial and imprisonment.

In the Cauldron: Terror, Tension and the American Ambassador's Struggle to Avoid Pearl Harbor (Lew Paper, Regnery History, 2020, $29.99, hardcover) This is an account of the efforts of Joseph Grew, the American Ambassador to Japan, who sought to avert war between the two nations. It uses his own diaries and papers to help construct the narrative.



The Good Assassin: How a Mossad Agent and a Band of Survivors Hunted Down the Butcher of Latvia (Stephan Talty, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020, $28.00, hardcover) Herbert Curkus murdered some 30,000 Latvian Jews. In 1965 an Israeli agent went to Brazil, befriended Curkus, gained his trust, and brought him to justice.

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Simulation Gaming

BY JOSEPH LUSTER

ENLISTED OPENS UP A NEW AVENUE FOR FIRST-PERSON WWII ACTION, WHILE *COMMANDOS 2* FINDS ANOTHER HOME FOR ITS REMASTER

ENLISTED

PUBLISHER GAIJIN ENTERTAINMENT • **GENRE** SHOOTER • **SYSTEM** XBOX SERIES X|S, PC • **AVAILABLE** NOW (EARLY ACCESS)

With the latest console generation upon us already, it was a race out of the gate to be among the first war games on the platforms. Gaijin Entertainment managed to get to the finish line—well, the "mostly finished" line, if we're being totally accurate—first with *Enlisted*, which made its debut day and date alongside Microsoft's powerful Xbox Series X and its slightly less loaded sister console, Xbox Series S.

Enlisted is going to be especially crucial for those who prefer the large-scale combat found in other massively-multiplayer first-person shooters. With campaigns set across various battles in World War II, players take on the role of infantry squad leader, tank crew member, or aircraft pilot, choosing whether they keep the battle grounded or take it to the skies. Soldiers within each squad can be trained and fully equipped before heading out into battle, with one player controlling the leader while the rest are handled via order-following artificial intelligence. Thankfully, *Enlisted* also allows you to switch between soldiers, ensuring that you remain at the most interesting and action-packed intersection of combat while keeping the fight alive even as your forces dwindle and your squad members fall around you.

Developer Darkflow Software started *Enlisted* out in Game Preview as a timed console exclusive, which means it isn't necessarily reflective of what the complete version of the game will be. As it stands, there are four key campaigns in sight, starting with the pivotal Battle for Moscow before moving on to the unforgettably iconic Invasion of Normandy. Other campaigns represented include the Battle of Tunis—serving as a vital strategic point for Germany unless the Allies do something about it—and the climactic Battle of Berlin. In an effort to stay as true to history as possible, the factions, squads, weapons, gear, ground vehicles, and aircraft all vary from campaign to campaign depending on what was actually present during that specific theater of operations.

At the time of this writing, *Enlisted* is trucking on through the roadmap of its closed beta test. While feedback rolls in, the developers are still working on weapon models, ground vehicle observation devices, building models, and other yet-to-be-finalized settings. Similarly, the AI of player squadmates is being tweaked and missions and maps are being rebalanced according to player experiences. It's always interesting to get in on the ground floor of an ever-evolving project like this, and that should extend to the launch of the open beta, which promises new locations, missions, and more.

War gamers who have played titles like *War Thunder* or online shooter *Cuisine Royale* might recognize the Dagor Engine that's being put to use in *Enlisted*. There's also plenty of tech that takes advantage of PC capabilities and the power under the hood of the new consoles, including the advanced in-game lighting made possible through its Proprietary Ray Traced Global Illumination System. *Enlisted* still has a battle ahead of it as it continues to be tweaked, but its early days on Xbox Series X and Xbox Series S show promise.

COMMANDOS 2 HD REMASTER

PUBLISHER KALYPSO MEDIA • **GENRE** STRATEGY • **SYSTEM** SWITCH • **AVAILABLE** NOW

Back at the start of 2020, *Commandos 2 HD Remaster* brought the classic real-time tactics of *Commandos 2: Men of Courage*—originally released back in 2001—to PC via Steam, GOG, and the Microsoft Store. PlayStation 4 and Xbox One versions followed in September of 2020, and December brought us, at long last, to the eagerly awaited Nintendo Switch version. Nintendo's plucky console/portable hybrid could always use more WWII-themed strategy on its online shop, so it was a welcome addition to a constantly growing lineup.

This marks the first time for the *Commandos* series to appear on Nintendo Switch, and it's doing so in exactly the right way. The controls and user interface have been reworked for the system, and *Commandos 2 HD Remaster* can either be played right on the portable touch screen or docked on your television. The portability makes a big difference; it's easy to control the minutiae of the battlefield when you're inches away from the screen and able to scrutinize each unit placement, movement, and attack appropriately.

As for the gameplay, developer Yippee Entertainment worked hard to stay as true as possible to the efforts of original *Commandos 2* developer Pyro Studios. All the authentic World War II vehicles, scenarios, and weaponry are in place across ten missions in day-and-night environments complete with weather effects that aim to be as realistic as possible. Character types like Sniper, Green Beret, and Whiskey the Dog are all present and accounted for, as are all the challenging tactical situations to which fans of the original are no doubt well attuned. Hopefully, this will be just the start of a welcome wave of strategy offerings that will draw more players into the convenient comforts the Switch has to offer. □

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P-51B Mustang: North American's Bastard Stepchild that Saved the Eighth Air Force (James W. Marshall and Lowell F. Ford, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2020, 352 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $50.00, hardcover)

The P-51 Mustang proved to be the fighter the U.S. Army Air Forces didn't want but desperately needed. The European bombing campaign had faltered in 1943 as increasing losses threatened the Eighth Air Force's ability to sustain the offensive. The P-51B solved the dilemma; it had the range to escort the bombers through enemy fighter defenses, something the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt lacked at the time. Commanders paid nearly as much attention to the acquisition of additional fuel tanks as to getting the fighters themselves. Those Mustang units not used for bomber escort stayed busy attacking German airfields and other significant ground targets. Some German pilots confirmed the P-51's effectiveness by claiming they were outnumbered 10 to one by American planes during air battles over Germany, when in fact there were not that many Mustangs operating on a single mission.

This new volume provides a definitive look at the P-51B and the missions it flew in 1943-44. The authors are proven aviation experts, and their work is as much a technical and engineering history as a recounting of the aircraft in combat service. The book is liberally illustrated with photographs, line drawings, and tables of relevant data. It is a thorough study with a wealth of information for students of World War II aviation.

COSSAC: Lt. Gen. Sir Frederick Morgan and the Genesis of Operation Overlord (Stephen C. Kepher, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 2020, 320 pp., maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $40.00, hardcover)

As a result of a decision made by the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, a relatively unknown British general received one of the most important jobs of the war. Lt. Gen. Frederick Morgan, a 49-year-old artillery officer with service in the Indian Army and France in 1940, was directed to study the myriad of ideas for the assault onto French shores, which would create a beachhead from which the Allies could liberate Western Europe. No one knew how or when this would occur; they only knew it had to happen. His superiors gave Morgan little direction or authority, but he dove into this task nonetheless. There was no previous concept for a multinational staff organization to direct a coalition army, so he created one—COSSAC, Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander. D-Day would never have happened without it.

The process by which the Allied invasion of Normandy was conceived and planned understandably receives much less attention than the actual operation, but there is still a story to be told. This new work explains how one man took the initiative in the absence of detailed orders to create a group to plan Germany's downfall in the West. The author does a good job explaining the complexities of his subject, making the numerous integrated military and political decisions clear and understandable.

Operation Chariot: The St. Nazaire Raid, 1942 (Jean-Charles Stasi, Casemate Publishing, Havertown, Pennsylvania, 2020, 128 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $24.95, softcover)

In 1942, one of Great Britain's greatest fears threatened to burst into the Atlantic and lay waste to the merchant shipping vital to the nation's survival. The German battleship *Tirpitz* awaited her opportunity while anchored in Norwegian waters. Repeated attempts to bomb it failed, but the British conceived a new option. The only drydock on the French Atlantic coast large enough to accept the *Tirpitz* lay in St. Nazaire; if a raid destroyed the dock, *Tirpitz* would have to remain in Norway, where it presented much less of a threat. On the night of March 27, British commandos did just that, taking an aging, explosive-packed destroyer into St. Nazaire to ram it into the dry-dock gates. Afterward, they planned to flee in motor launches that followed them into the port. The raid proved one of the most daring actions of the war.

Casemate Illustrated is a new series designed to provide compact yet thorough accounts of significant military events. This volume covers the St. Nazaire Raid in commendable detail. The book is well-illustrated with good maps and sidebars describing notable personalities and vessels used in the assault. These books are similar to Osprey's Campaign series and are of similar high quality. □

Panzer Fury at Caen

Continued from page 69

Cromwell headquarters tank. Assessing how the Guards Armored Division had shored up the eastern edge of the armored corridor, freeing him from fear of counterattack from that sector, and his western flank had left the suburbs and was moving into the city proper, and how the 7th Armored was approaching from the rear with 250 fresh Shermans and Cromwells, things were beginning to look hopeful for this necessarily tentative operation. Furthermore, the 3rd Royal Tanks and Fife and Forfars Divisions still had 40 battleworthy Shermans apiece and were resolutely advancing abreast with just the small towns of Four, Soliers, Hubert-Folie, and Bras between them and Caen.

Their enemy, however, since late 1941 had been learning in Russia how to mend gaping holes in his front lines with improvised units stitched together from rear-echelon personnel. Resourcefulness and flexibility were deeply ingrained in the German way of thinking, and the defenders had wisely spent the time bought by von Luck's attack.

General Edgar Feuchtinger of 21st Panzer had lined the summit of Bourguebus Ridge with his engineer battalion and divisional reconnaissance battalion. These scout car crews, motorcyclists, bulldozer drivers, and mechanics would keep the British busy while the 1st SS Panzer Division Liebstandarte Adolf Hitler prepared a counterattack.

On the morning of July 18, the crack Liebstandarte Adolf Hitler left the southern perimeter of Caen and, keeping a wary eye on the sky, moved to new positions between Bourgebus and Bras at an elevated spot overlooking the open plain that soon would be literally filled with British armor. Hiding in a labyrinth of sunken roads, the Mark IVs and Panthers had adequate cover versus an opposing force advancing naked over open ground. The tank carrying the RAF forward ground controller had been blown up, so the tankers were now unable to directly call for air support.

About 3 PM, the Fife and Forfars and 3rd Tanks approached the German-infested high ground. Captain Robin Lemon of the 3rd said, "It was just when the leading tanks were level with Hubert-Folie when the fun began. I saw Sherman after Sherman go up in flames, and it got to such a pitch that I thought that in another few minutes there would be nothing left of the regiment. I could see the German tanks milling about just behind Hubert-Folie and over to the left." It was the Panthers of the

1st SS, whose veteran crews were so accurately shelling the British with guns that outranged the Shermans and Cromwells.

To the rear the 23rd Hussars saw the smoke of battle and came rushing to help, but there was little to be done. The Fifes were wiped out, and survivors of the other units were withdrawing under fire. Montgomery's forces left 106 tanks burning in the barren cornfields south of the city. At about 5 PM, the Northamptonshire Yeomanry sent its Cromwells in a final attempt to continue the thrust's momentum beyond Caen, but again the Germans, with their panoramic view of the battlefield, were ready, and the Yeomen clanked back in crestfallen defeat minus 16 of their machines.

Although he had finally managed to take all of Caen, Montgomery had not accomplished the major aim of driving past it and depriving the Nazis of the ability to counterattack. The Wehrmacht would damagingly strike westward from the towns of Mortain and St. Barthelemy on August 7. Close inspection and hindsight would later reveal that the seemingly disastrous day of July 18 did have positive results. While the bulk of German strength was occupied south of Caen, Canadian forces secured all the eastern bank of the Orne, consolidating the Allied hold on the city.

Furthermore, it had also been a costly battle for the Germans. Between them the 21st Panzer and 1st SS Panzer Divisions lost 109 tanks and half their precious 88mm guns that day. The Allied bombing wiped out the 16th Luftwaffe Field Infantry Division, and two other panzer divisions that had been scheduled to oppose the Americans were now compelled to stand watch on the British front. The ferocity of the Allied air and ground assaults had shaken the German high command, whose ranks were further distracted on July 20 when news arrived about the faraway attempt on Hitler's life.

The 5,537 Commonwealth troops who perished during Goodwood had not died in vain. Although their advance had staggered to a bloody, premature halt they enabled the Americans to finally break out of their confinement in Normandy during Operation Cobra, clearing the way for Allied forces to complete their task of liberating Europe.

Montgomery's career and reputation would survive this wrenching campaign. There was no way it could have been won easily, and it is arguable whether any other commander would have done better.

William the Conqueror's city was now controlled by soldiers from the nation he had defeated so many centuries earlier. They would not be staying there long. □

War on the West Coast

Continued from page 61

western United States. Some traveled as far east as Michigan and south to Texas and even northern Mexico. As in the winter of 1941-42, the forests of the northwest were soaking wet from rain, which prevented the spread of wildfires.

The fugu bomb program petered out in Japan as winter ended and the supply of Kozo trees for balloon making was exhausted. Also, by that time, Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers had destroyed the Showa Denko chemical plant and most of Japan's hydrogen-production capability.

The last balloon bomb was released in April 1945. After that, the jet stream was less reliable, and Japanese officials had become frustrated at not knowing how much damage was being done as a result of their considerable efforts.

One last Japanese hope for attacking the West Coast of the United States remained. Early in the war, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the mastermind of the attack on Pearl Harbor, conceived of a new type of submarine, the *I-400*, that could carry two bombers, later increased to three, in a deck hangar. These purpose-built bombers would be capable of carrying bombs or torpedoes.

The airplane to be used was the Aichi M6A Seiran, with a poetic name meaning "mist on a clear day." It was a marked improvement over the Yokosuka E14Y. Each plane could be armed with one torpedo or an 1,800-pound bomb.

Construction of the submarines started on January 18, 1943 and three were built. *I-400*, *I-401*, and *I-402* were completed. *I-402* was used as a fuel tanker. Even as they were being built, their wartime mission changed from attacking the West Coast to a planned assault on the locks of the Panama Canal and, finally—after the fall of Okinawa—to protecting the home islands with Kamikaze attacks against Allied aircraft carriers that were staging at Ulithi Atoll for the final invasion of Japan. *I-400* and *I-401* were at sea headed to Ulithi when Japan surrendered. The two giant submarines were never used in combat.

Reminders of the wartime attacks on the West Coast are located from time to time. In 2014, for example, the remnants of a fugu bomb were discovered in a remote forest in British Columbia, Canada. □

Author Glenn Barnett is a retired college instructor and aerospace engineer. He worked on the Apache helicopter, B-1B bomber, and Space Shuttle. He is a frequent contributor to WWII History.

Ordnance

Continued from page 19

608,612 tons of bombs. Some 3,250 Lancs were lost in action. On average they completed just 21 sorties before being lost or written off, although around 35 made it past the 100-mission mark.

As the Nazi war machine buckled in the spring of 1945, Bomber Command aircraft—including many Lancasters—flew mercy missions over a region of the occupied Netherlands, dropping food to starving civilians as part of Operation Manna. Lancs were later used to bring Allied prisoners of war home.

After the war in Europe ended in May 1945, Bomber Command prepared to strike Japan with long-range heavy bombers, and Lancasters were earmarked to make up the bulk of what became known as the Tiger Force. But the conflict in the Far East ended before the aircraft were deployed from Europe, and the operations were cancelled.

Lancasters continued to serve long after the conflict, the RAF still operating the type as late as 1953. Some retired airframes were converted for civilian use as passenger aircraft or freighters. Ninety-one civilian Lancastrians, developed from the bomber, were either built from new or converted from existing machines, while Avro continued developing the four-engine bomber concept, which lead to the Lincoln, Shackleton, and later the jet-powered Vulcan. The distinction of being the last operational user of the Lancaster was given to the Royal Canadian Air Force, the service utilizing 14 in the photo-reconnaissance role up to the early 1960s. The French Navy also flew former RAF examples for a similar period.

Today, a pair of Lancasters remain airworthy, and they are flown regularly at events in Europe and North America. The RAF Battle of Britain Memorial flight includes Mk.I PA474 at RAF Coningsby—a base not far from the original Dambusters home airfield; and the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum operates Mk.X KB726 from Hamilton, Ontario. The latter Lancaster flew to the UK in 2014 and performed at shows around the country in one of the largest aviation events in many years. It was truly an amazing tribute to the many Lancaster veterans who were able to witness the pair flying in formation, in tribute to their fallen comrades. □

Author Nigel Price has served as the editor of Britain At War *magazine. He is a first-time contributor and resides in Cambridgeshire, United Kingdom.*

90th ID at Mairy

Continued from page 39

bines as well; it proved enough to shock the crew into abandoning their vehicle. The GIs gave chase and wounded one of the Germans. The rest surrendered.

Small groups of Germans tried to get through the American lines and back to Audun-le-Roman, leading to scattered fights throughout the area. In one case, even an artillery spotter plane got involved. An L-4 Piper Cub of the 915th Field Artillery Battalion overflew the area, piloted by Lt. George Kilmer and carrying Lt. George Pezat as an observer. As the pair looked for German targets to attack with artillery, they spotted a lone Panther tank moving north. Using their radio, they repeatedly tried to catch the tank in a barrage of high-explosives and steel.

Hitting a moving target is difficult, however, due to the delay between the time the artillery fire direction center received the call and when the shells roar downrange. Each time the tank avoided the incoming fire as it kept moving. The two lieutenants grew so frustrated by their inability to knock out the tank they began buzzing it with their light plane. Each time they fired their .45 caliber pistols at it, a hit sending the comparatively tiny bullet bouncing off the Panther's thick armor. After an hour, the two fliers broke off their impromptu strafing attack; the plane was low on fuel. The panzer escaped to Audun-le-Roman, one of only a few to get out that day.

A few days later, General Patton visited the area. He later remarked "one of the few tanks to escape was a Panther. I saw the tracks where it had gone straight into our line, oblivious of what we could do to stop it, and then turned sharply left on a road leading to Germany. It disappeared in a cloud of dust and sparks where our tracers were hitting it." Other German vehicles and infantrymen made their own escapes, not all of them successful. The other Stossgruppe under Lt. Strauch lost contact with Bäke's force at 1:30 PM. This German force soon ran into the 1st Battalion, 357th Infantry, supported by a few antitank guns. The Germans attacked but were quickly beaten back with the loss of two half-tracks and a pair of Panzer IV/70 tank destroyers. Strauch withdrew his command toward the town of Aumetz at 7 PM that evening. The German attack ended with the shattered and dispersed remains of Panzer Brigade.106, retreating to their lines in defeat.

Despite Bäke's experienced leadership, his brigade's attack failed due to poor execution. His untrained troops lacked the experience to carry out a successful spoiling attack against a veteran U.S. division. The brigade's lack of organic artillery support further reduced its capabilities. German leadership at the army level likewise overestimated the unit's potential and threw it into a poorly planned attack which would at best only temporarily delayed the American advance. The 90th Division's after-action report stated the German attack seemed to stumble into the command posts and appeared unaware they were fighting a rear-echelon unit. Several American artillery forward observers stated they saw panzer crewmen running back and forth between tanks carrying messages, even during artillery barrages. They surmised the enemy suffered from radio communications difficulties, another problem for inexperienced units.

For this, the panzer brigade suffered heavy casualties. The 90th Division reported taking 764 prisoners in the battle, including 125 wounded. There is no count of the dead but one estimate places total German casualties at fifty percent, including two battalion and three company commanders. The battalion surrounded in Briey surrendered in the afternoon; this put 442 more prisoners into American hands. Total casualties in the 90th Division totaled eleven dead and sixty wounded, most of them at the artillery CP. The 712th reported four Shermans lost with the rest repairable, but personnel losses are not known. The tank battalion's performance during the chaotic battle impressed Gen. McLain, and from then the 712th bore the nickname "Armored Fist of the 90th." Later during the war, when an armored division commander offered the use of one of his combat commands, McLain replied, "No, thank you. I have the 712th Armored Division."

The American units claimed about forty-nine tanks destroyed between them, along with fifty-four half-tracks and over a hundred trucks. These totals are certainly too high; units on both sides typically overestimated such numbers due to the confusion of battle. One German account reported only seven of twenty-two Panthers returned from the battle. A later German report stated their brigade destroyed 143 American tanks and armored vehicles from 6-11 September. This blatant exaggeration was likely to cover up the brigade's defeat and heavy losses. These high numbers do not appear in the brigade's diary, so it was probably added by a higher headquarters. Within days the battered German unit transferred to Luxembourg. The 90th Division resumed its advance the same day as the battle and by September 13 reached the banks of the Moselle River. □

Cowboy of the RAF

Continued from page 55

Trent, were left to conduct their bombing runs. As they approached the target, Trent's wingman was shot down, and then the other two Venturas were also destroyed.

Alone, Trent and his crew pressed home the attack, but they had no sooner released their bombs than they were hit by flak. Trent and his navigator managed to bail out, but two others perished in the crash. Trent served out the remainder of the war as a POW. Upon his liberation, he was awarded the Victoria Cross for valor during the attack.

The Spitfires and Bostons had also had a tough time of it. Blatchford's group had been cut off from the bombers by the attack of more than 20 FW-190s. A swirling dogfight ensued, with the Coltishall Wing intent on protecting the Bostons, while the Focke-Wulfs pounced on any fighter they could find. The wing was successful—to a degree. Only one Boston was lost, while three FW-190s were destroyed, and only one Spitfire failed to return.

Unfortunately, that Spitfire was flown by Wing Commander Cowboy Blatchford.

It is believed that Leutnant Hans Ehlers of 6th Gruppe, Jagdgeschwader 1, had badly damaged Blatchford's Spitfire, forcing it down into the English Channel 40 miles off Mundesley. It was Ehlers' 19th aerial victory, and he eventually went on to record 55 victories before being shot down and killed on December 27, 1944, while tangling with P-51 Mustangs of the 364th Fighter Group of the U.S. Army Air Forces.

A motor launch was dispatched to search for Blatchford, but there was no sign of him or his Spitfire. Cowboy was officially classified as missing after air operations over enemy territory, and back in Edmonton, his mother anxiously awaited news that he had been found or, at worst, was a prisoner. No such notification was forthcoming, and it became clear that Blatchford, one of the first Canadian wing commanders in World War II, a courageous pilot with six confirmed victories and three probables along with 4½ damaged enemy aircraft to his credit, was dead at age 31.

Today, Howard Peter Blatchford's supreme sacrifice is acknowledged on Panel 118 of the Runnymede Memorial in Surrey, England, a monument honoring more than 20,400 British and Commonwealth airmen and women from World War II who have no known grave. □

Author Neil Taylor has written for WWII History *on a variety of topics. He resides in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.*

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