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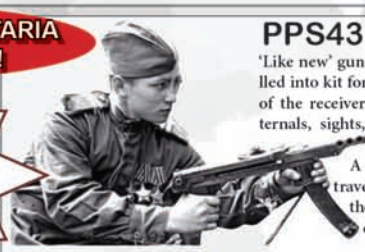

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#REP39

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Panzerfaust 30M Launcher & Rocket

(Non-Firing / Inert)

Panzerfaust 'Gretchen' 30 Meter Launcher & Rocket

Second model of the German WW2 Panzerfaust was referred to as the 'Gretchen' or 'Faustpatrone 1'. Essentially improving the earlier 'Klein' version by utilizing a larger tube and rocket with increased explosive penetration. All steel, this inert version is full size and comes with markings.

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(Inert)

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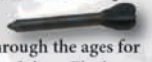

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The design concept was amazing and its impact could still be amazing in this day & age! Imagine a platoon of infantry Riflemen also each carrying 15 mortar shells and working as a fire and maneuver machine. Stalinist purges and a failure to develop better ammunition put this idea to sleep before its time!

37mm Spade Mortar Assembly.....$175.00 #MISC458
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Complete Set of each of the above.....$279.90 #MISC689

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(Non-Firing)

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(Non-Firing)

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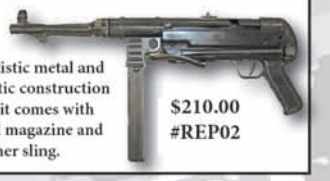

Realistic metal and plastic construction and it comes with steel magazine and leather sling.

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French Foreign Legion "Sahara" Kepi

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$34.95 #HLM058

WW2 JAPANESE ARMY HELMET W/ NET

Steel helmet complete with suspension, chin strap. New made.

$54.95 #HLM038

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Cover: Two American soldiers of the 96th Infantry Division engage stubborn Japanese defenders on the island of Okinawa. See story page 48. Photo: National Archives.

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WWII HISTORY

Volume 20 ■ Number 4

The Incongruity Between Conviction and Subsequent Celebration

IN JANUARY 1952, A 39-YEAR-OLD MAN WAS ARRESTED IN MANCHESTER, England on a charge of "gross indecency" as specified under Section 11 of Britain's Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885. The man's conduct, a homosexual affair with a 19-year-old, led to a trial, guilty plea, and the sentence of probation and injection of hormones that would curb his libido.

On June 8, 1954, the convicted offender was found dead of apparent suicide after consuming bites from an apple laced with cyanide. It was a tragic end to a story that no work of fiction could approach in its unlikely thread.

The deceased was none other than Alan Turing, whose scientific exploits were detailed in a feature film several years ago titled *The Imitation Game*. It was Turing's genius that led ultimately to the cracking of the German codes as encrypted via the Enigma machine. His work, and that of his associates, is believed literally to have shortened World War II by at least two years and saved thousands of lives in the process.

This commentary is neither intended to validate nor condemn Turing's sexual orientation or anything else relating to his personal conduct. I do not presume to possess any moral authority to cast or withhold a proverbial "stone." Questions surrounding what is good, what is just, what is right—in the eyes of the law, other people, or the Divine—loom larger than the content of this page.

The salient point here is that today, respect for the individual exists that in earlier times simply did not. In its place once stood instead edicts of institutional persecution.

In 2009, a campaign largely conducted via the internet influenced British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to issue a public apology for the "appalling way" Turing was treated. In 2013, Queen Elizabeth II granted Turing a posthumous pardon.

In the summer of 2019, the Bank of England announced that a celebration of science would be reflected in its new £50 banknote, featuring the portrait of Alan Turing, and that the crisp, new note, made of polymer rather than paper and including numerous advanced security features, would enter circulation in June 2021 in commemoration of Turing's June 23, 1912, birthdate. When the announcement of the note's design was made public, Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, commented, "Alan Turing was an outstanding mathematician whose work has had an enormous impact on how we live today. As the father of computer science and artificial intelligence, as well as a war hero, Alan Turing's contributions were far ranging and path breaking. Turing is a giant on whose shoulders so many now stand."

The note itself includes numerous references to Turing's achievements during his brief lifetime, such as a photo taken in 1951 from the National Portrait Gallery photographs collection and a table of mathematical formulae from Turing's 1936 paper titled "On Computable Numbers, with an application to the Entscheidungsproblem" from the Proceedings of the London Mathematical Society. The paper is acknowledged as a foundational work in the development of computer science and put forth the idea of a universal machine that might prove or disprove any theorem—a computer.

Other interesting elements on the note's face include technical drawings of the Bombe, the machine envisioned by Turing that was instrumental in breaking Enigma-coded messages during World War II; the ACE (Automatic Computing Engine) Pilot Machine, one of the world's first electronic stored-program digital computers; Turing's 1947 signature from the guest book at Bletchley Park, where he had worked during World War II; a quote from Turing to The Times newspaper from June 1949: "This is only a foretaste of what is to come, and only the shadow of what is going to be;" and a ticker-tape rendering of Turing's birthdate in binary code.

Much of Turing's pioneering work remained classified in the wake of World War II, and the passage of years has inevitably brought his monumental achievements to light. In 1999, Time magazine named him one of the 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century, commenting, "The fact remains that everyone who taps at a keyboard, opening a spreadsheet or a word-processing program, is working on an incarnation of a Turing machine."

Pause. Consider. Be kind to one another.

—Michael E. Haskew

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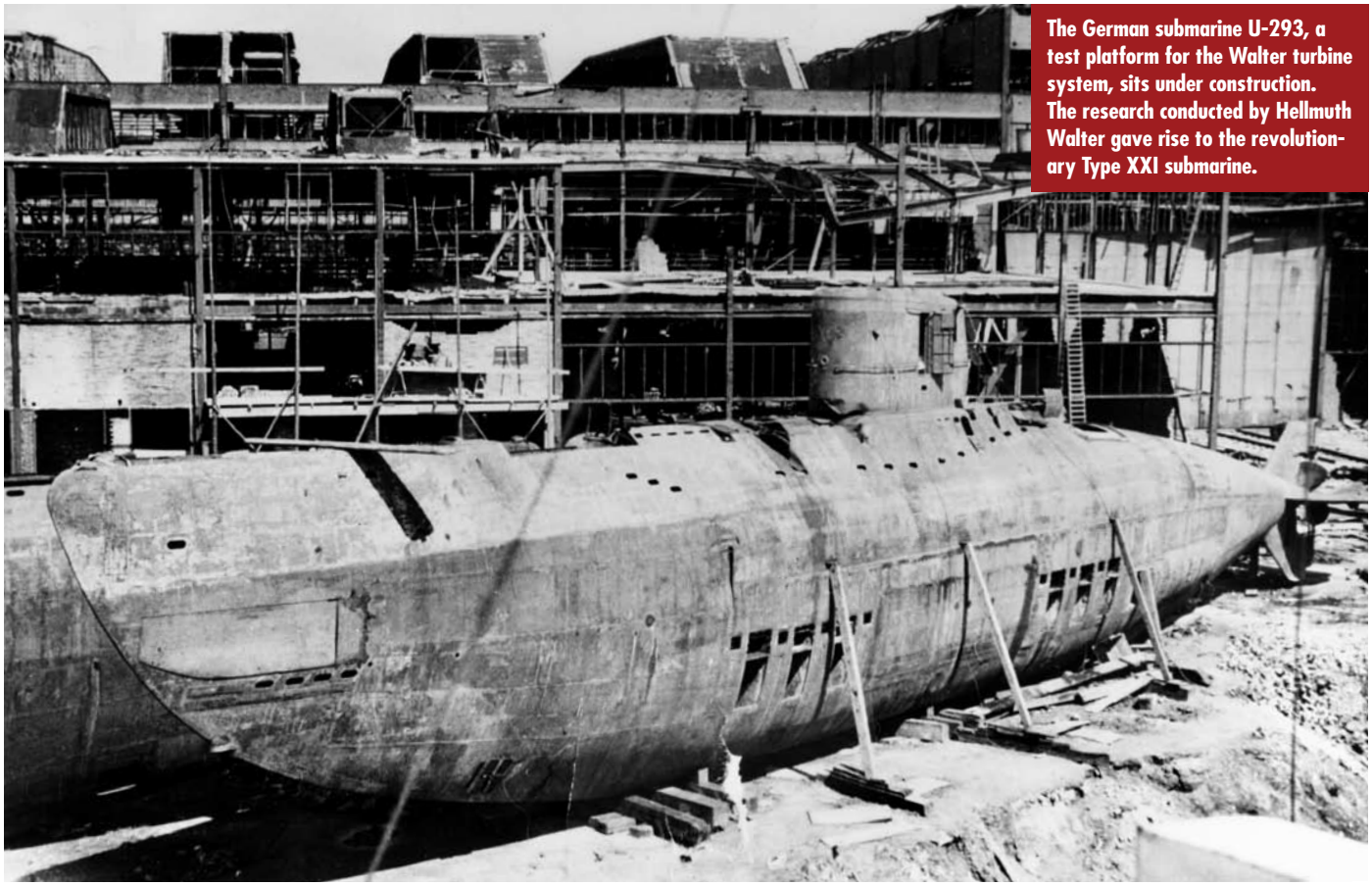

The German submarine U-293, a test platform for the Walter turbine system, sits under construction. The research conducted by Hellmuth Walter gave rise to the revolutionary Type XXI submarine.

The Wonder of the Walter Boat

Development of a revolutionary U-boat design led to the emergence of the Type XXI, but it came too late to change the course of World War II.

GERMAN ENGINEER HELLMUTH WALTER STRETCHED HIS SHOULDERS, RUBBED his face, and eased his hat back on his head as he walked down the wooden dock toward a covered deck. His right-hand man, test engineer Heinz Ullrich, was already there taking in the brisk, spring breeze that was sweeping into the Schlei Estuary from the nearby Baltic Sea. The sun was barely making its way above the horizon when a Swastika-marked Messerschmitt aircraft swept southward heading back from nearby Denmark, one more country that had just fallen to the Third Reich.

It was mid-April 1940, and the sun, indeed, was rising over a new world for the Nazis. Denmark, Norway, and half of Poland had fallen in recent months to the German onslaught. The Sudetenland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia had earlier succumbed to Hitler's demands. Within months France and the Low Countries would fall to the Nazis, and the British Expeditionary Force would narrowly manage to escape the continent. And the engineering project that Walter and Ullrich were working on held the potential of bringing the recalcitrant British, and perhaps others, to heel as well as the war unfolded.

This was to be a big day, as they looked upon the experimental V80 "Walter Boat" that gently bobbed under the covered deck. This was a U-boat like no other. It was short and somewhat stubby, just large enough for a four-man crew. It was fish-like in design, with few external protrusions to impede its projected swift movement through the water. Walter had close ties with the Luftwaffle, and the boat's vertical rudders and hydroplanes were controlled by a unit taken from a Junkers Ju-52 transport aircraft. He ingeniously used a depth-control apparatus from a torpedo for automatic depth-keeping.

The 80-ton experimental vessel was a high-speed underwater craft that would provide oxygen for propulsion when submerged through the use of a nearly pure form of hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2). Walter had found that hydrogen peroxide in the presence of a suitable catalyst would break down into oxygen and steam at high temperature and expand, spinning a turbine and providing propulsion. Walter had touted the process as one that could eventually result in a high-speed submarine capable of underwater

Now, THIS is a Knife!

*This 16" full tang stainless steel blade is not for the faint of heart —now **ONLY** $99!*

In the blockbuster film, when a strapping Australian crocodile hunter and a lovely American journalist were getting robbed at knife point by a couple of young thugs in New York, the tough Aussie pulls out his dagger and says "That's not a knife, THIS is a knife!" Of course, the thugs scattered and he continued on to win the reporter's heart.

Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

Secured in a tooled leather sheath, this is one impressive knife, with an equally impressive price.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of $2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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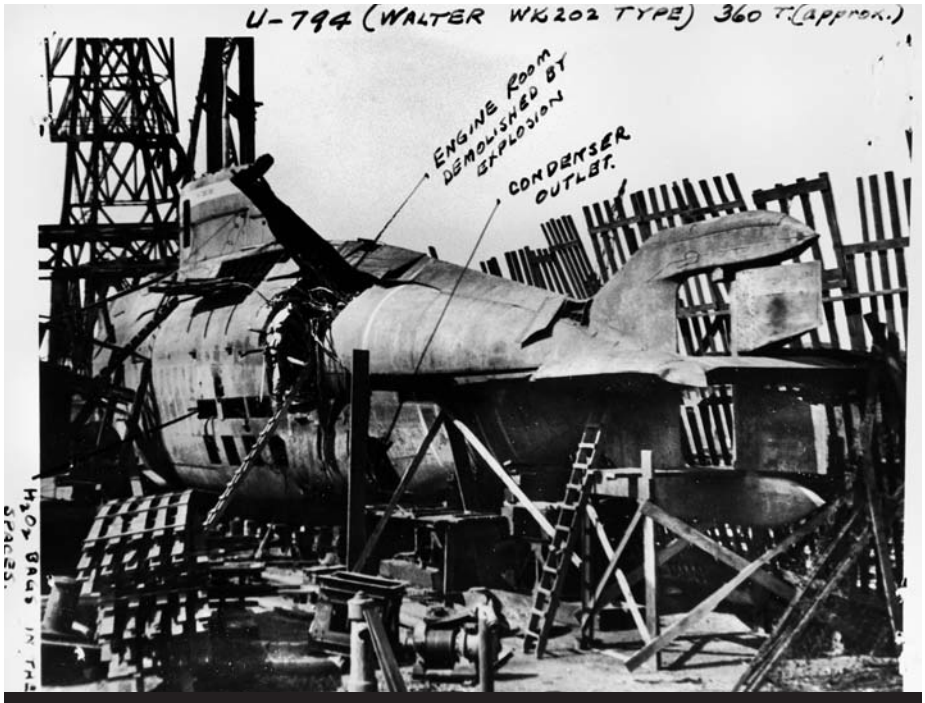

TOP: This image of the interior of a Walter type U-boat shows the machinery room with its specialized engine. This photo was one of a collection captured by Allied troops in the last days of World War II. ABOVE: The damaged Wk202, designated U-794, has been retrieved from the water to undergo repairs. An American engineer made the handwritten notes, pointing out the location of a catastrophic explosion in the engine room.

speeds of 25-30 knots, at a time when a leisurely Sunday bicyclist could easily keep pace with the speed of an average submerged vessel. The Walter Boat promised to revolutionize warfare at sea, enabling subs to work in conjunction with surface fleets. When the need arose, the fast subs could speed away and attack the enemy with repeated, guerrilla-like assaults from different angles.

The boat held out the promise of air-independent propulsion (AIP), which was the "Holy Grail" of submarine technology. Ideally, such a system would enable a submarine to operate without the need to surface or even use a snorkel to obtain atmospheric oxygen. AIP, or something close to it, would not be achieved until the launching of the nuclear-powered USS *Nautilus* in 1954.

Nevertheless, the Walther Boat's World War II stealth-like underwater speed and propulsion system were revolutionary. The U-boats the Germans were then using were little more than updated versions of World War I vessels. They were basically surface-moving boats that used oxygen-gulping diesel engines while above water and yet were capable of making short, rather slow runs underwater using battery-powered electric motors. In fact, it was said that German World War I mariners would have easily and readily adapted themselves to the U-boats sent out on patrol early in World War II.

Walter's heart was beating in his ears as V80 left its covered dock and eased into the estuary some 30 miles northwest of Kiel, where the experimental vessel had been constructed at the Germania shipyard in 1939-40. Walter was to rigorously push V80 that day in underwater trials in the shallow brackish estuary; before the trials were concluded, he had reached 14 knots in the restricted waterway.

That fall, the promising trials were moved to a former Polish naval base at Hel so the experimental craft could attempt higher speeds in the Gulf of Danzig on the Baltic. There V80 reached the amazing underwater velocity of 28.1 knots, more than 4.5 times the speed of any other undersea boat then in use.

The engineers in the "K" office of the Supreme Naval Command were excited about the prospect of a fast, AIP submarine and advocated the immediate start of construction of six small Walter-type U-boats. The engineers met resistance from the heads of the U-boat department, who wanted the system fully proved first in a laboratory installation. Only then would it be allowed to interrupt the currently planned schedule of conventional U-boat production. The latter view won out, and a slower-paced development ensued.

The boat went through two design changes, which led to greater size and sophistication with each projected operational vessel. The third design saw the vessel move from 300 tons to 600 tons. A conning tower, forward hydroplanes, and an enclosed bridge were added, which slowed the boat from the 25 knots planned for the first operational model to only 19 knots for the third design—still nearly three times the underwater speed of existing U-boats.

In mid-February 1942, Germania was given a contract for a test boat The result of their efforts was the Wa201, a boat similar to Walter's original V80 but with a sharper and more sloping bow to provide better surface speed. As with the V80, forward hydroplanes were dropped by Walter's firm based on his experi-

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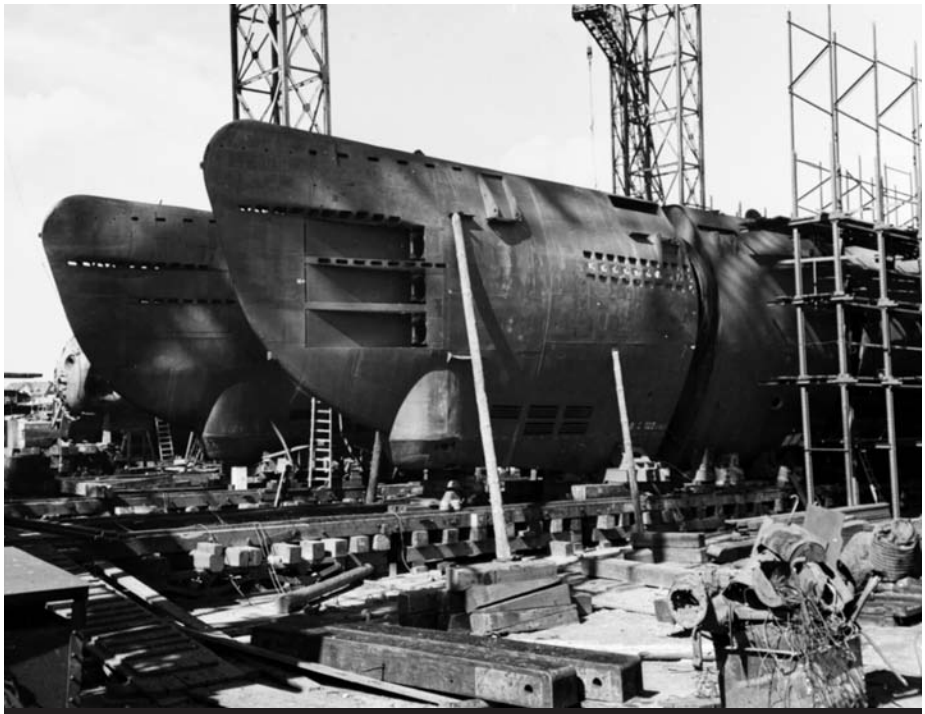

Two Type XXI U-boats lie under construction at the shipyards in Bremen, Germany in this photo taken after the submarines were captured by Allied troops in 1945.

ence in airplane design.

The design was thoroughly tested at the Hamburg Shipbuilding Testing Institute, and the steering and depth-keeping properties of the proposed rudders and hydroplanes were measured in a wind tunnel at the Hermann Goring Aviation Research Institute in Brunswick. These tests showed the performance of Wa201 was significantly better thanks largely to its enclosed bridge, balanced rudders, and Flettner ancillary rudders, which minimized the effort required to steer the vessel at high speeds. The Wa201 was to be some 37 meters long. It was to have two five-meter-long torpedo tubes and four torpedoes with a range of two and a third miles using Walter's hydrogen-peroxide propulsion system.

Internal squabbling continued over the quantity and type of boat to be selected, and this necessitated the direct intervention of Admiral Karl Donitz, chief of the U-boat fleet, in the autumn of 1942 to bring about the awarding of contracts for 24 small boats using the Walter drive (hydrogen peroxide) system. Twelve were to be of the Wa201, designated Type XVIIB, and 12 of the WK202, designated Type XVIIG.

The construction of four test boats began December 1, 1942. It was a new, innovative model, and no special priority had been provided. Allied air attacks also hampered construction, so it was not until October 1943 that the first two Walter Boats, *U-792* and *U-794*, were delivered. These boats were used for extensive training, and they reached submerged speeds of up to 25 knots.

Walter was not content with these smaller vessels, and he proposed a much larger 1,475-ton Type XVIII that would carry 23 torpedoes. Despite the superb performance of the Walter Boats, many in the German hierarchy continued to have severe reservations about the safety of using super hydrogen peroxide as well as the Reich's ability to produce the amounts of fuel that would be needed for an expanded fleet of such boats, which consumed high volumes of the liquid at very high rates. For the larger vessel (Type XVIII), Walter had designed a double hull, one section above another in a figure 8 configuration, with the fuel filling the entire lower hull. But Germany simply did not have the time to resolve such design and engineering problems in the near future.

It is interesting that after the war, both the British and the Soviets experimented with a modified Walter system for submarine propulsion, and both nations abandoned the idea because of the dangerous and volatile nature of hydrogen peroxide. But both countries retained its use for propelling torpedoes, with the British stopping after the HMS *Sidon* tragedy on June 16, 1955, when 13 men were killed and seven others seriously injured when a Walter-system propelled torpedo exploded while the vessel was moored in Britain's Portland Harbor. The Soviets attributed the August 12, 2000, sinking of their Oscar II-class *Kursk* that claimed the lives of all 118 men aboard to a similar mishap in the Barents Sea.

The Germans' World War II project using the Walter system was about to be totally scratched when two engineers devised a surprisingly simple and rather ingenious solution to the problems. Other engineers argued that faster underwater speeds and longer ranges could be achieved by adding another hull full of batteries under an ordinary submarine. The additional batteries would provide the speed using already-existing technology and avoid the safety and design concerns of the Walter Boats. The larger, streamlined hull of Walter's Type XVIII would serve as the design starter. The idea gave birth to the "electro-submarine," which used the added battery capacity to propel the vessel quickly underwater for extended periods, enabling it to be a nearly purely underwater craft, relying for the first time on diesels primarily to recharge its batteries via a snorkel system. That stood in sharp contrast to traditional systems, which used diesel engines as the main source of power for a largely surface-operated craft while electric motors provided only short-term power when the vessel was submerged.

This new Type XXI boat proved to be the first true submarine, and an intermediate stage between the then-traditional submersible U-boats and later submarines running with atomic reactors. The naval high command gave a quick go ahead, and detailed theoretical calculations were completed by January 1943. According to the calculations, the projected electro-submarine would be capable of maintaining high speeds of 18 knots per hour for 90 minutes, or by dialing back it could cruise at five knots for 60 hours. This was a significant development, because the conventional Type VIIC—which handled the majority of the battle in the Atlantic—could only cruise at a submerged speed of six knots for 45 minutes or reduce to two knots for some 20-30 hours.

In short, the Type XXI held out the promise of being a "war changer" and did so using a readily available technology packaged in a somewhat innovative manner. It stood in sharp contrast to the Walter Boat, which would have required years of additional refinement and development, years that the hard-pressed Third Reich simply did not have available.

The new boat could cross the dangerous Bay of Biscay while submerged and avoid prowling Allied planes and ships, and it could then travel quickly into the vital convoy routes of the North Atlantic. The snorkel would only need to be extended every other day to recharge the batteries via the diesel engines. Although the

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Type XXI could not reach the rather amazing speeds of the Walter type, it could be produced more quickly and more efficiently using existing technology.

Production would not be easy. Allied bombing, shortages of materials, and existing demands on limited waterside construction space hampered construction. Skilled shipyard workers had been called away to the front, and the Russian campaign was consuming vast industrial resources for the production of tanks, artillery pieces, and the like. Furthermore, the Germans also saw the need to have a vessel with more torpedoes at the ready to help offset the heavy defensive ring that the Allies had developed to protect convoys. The new design called for six bow tubes and an innovative semiautomatic hydraulic loading system capable of reloading the tubes in some 20 minutes. In addition, the Type XXI was to be fitted with water-pressure-controlled depth-keeping equipment and new food-freezing equipment for improved crew comfort. New innovations in sonar and radar equipment were to be included, along with improved underwater listening equipment.

These innovations, coupled with teething problems and the pesky Allied bombing raids, were to present substantial planning and delivery problems with the Type XXI for Donitz and Armaments Minister Albert Speer. The ministry came up with a mass production line, with eight sections of the boat produced at 13 different sites and then transported via rivers or canals to the assembly points. The scale of the undertaking attracted the attention of the Royal Air Force's photo reconnaissance units and resulted in an intensive bombing campaign that further disrupted the complex construction schedules.

It must be remembered that fierce internal power struggles were common throughout the Third Reich. As early as 1942, Franz Neumann, a former German labor lawyer who had escaped to West, described the Third Reich as a "non-state." Economic historian J. Adam Tooze added, "The criteria of power were brutally simple: access to the Fuhrer, control of one or other means of violence, command of the means of production. Useful experts could seek a place for themselves among power blocs."

Speer and his ministry provided one of the strongest power blocs late in the war. His efforts on behalf of submarine warfare did make some difference, with the first Type XXI launched on May 12, 1944, well ahead of the original schedule. That submarine, along with the next half dozen, had defects that prevented them from becoming fully operational. These

craft were pressed into service, nevertheless, for training and experimental purposes while the Navy awaited the delivery of the next batch of submarines.

That August, Speer had boasted that despite Allied bombing, the output of U-boats would be tripled by the end of the year. But, says Tooze, "There was no part of the German war effort in which the gulf between armaments propaganda and reality was more extreme" than the late-war projections for U-boat construction schedules. "Constructing U-boat sections elsewhere and shipping them piecemeal to assembly sites proved to be an expensive fiasco," argues Tooze.

In fact, he notes that the U-boat presented in early 1944 for Hitler's highly publicized birthday party in Danzig was little more than a "hastily thrown together mockup that leaked so badly it had to be towed back into dry dock" as soon as the crowds had dispersed.

Nearly a year later, the first operational Type XXI, *U-2501*, sailed from Kiel to Norway on March 18, 1945. It was sent back to the yard in Bergen to repair minor faults and damage incurred during deep diving tests. It was ready to sail by the end of April along with another handful of Type XXI boats. The *U-2501* was at sea when the war ended. Captain Adalbert Schnee nevertheless managed to conduct a mock attack against a heavily defended British cruiser. He successfully penetrated the escort screen before breaking off the attack at the end by ordering his boat to the depths.

"This successful mock attack proved that the Type XXI lived up to expectations. Had it appeared a few years earlier, the fierce battles in the Atlantic might have had a different outcome," commented one post-war observer. They never saw action, and fewer than a dozen Type XXI boats survived the war, most ending up in the hands of the British, Americans, and Soviets, with the rest either sunk or scuttled.

The Type XXI was to be the model for future developments in submarine technology. One observer noted, "The accomplishment of this breakthrough in submarine design in such a comparatively short period of time, under the constant pressure of war, represents one of the great technological achievements of our times." The Allies, indeed, can be grateful that the war ended before the Third Reich had time to release its combat-ready Type XXI submarine upon the world. □

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

By Anne Saunders

Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-784-0208-32A; Photo: Moosmüller

In this famous photo, General Erwin Rommel gestures during an inspection of Italian troops in North Africa.

From the Army to the Resistance

Colonel Giuseppe Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo fought the Allies and then joined the Resistance, ultimately losing his life.

SEPTEMBER 1943 WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY MONTH FOR THE ROYAL Italian Army. On the 8th, General Dwight Eisenhower and Marshal Pietro Badoglio announced Italy's surrender to the Allies. A few hours later, top-level Italian leaders deserted Rome for a secure location with Allied forces in southern Italy.

In the chaos that followed, the Italian Army collapsed, making it easier for German troops to occupy Italian towns and cities. In addition, the Germans arrested and deported about 600,000 Italian troops to forced-labor camps and killed the thousands who refused to surrender to the Germans.

Yet German forces could not crush the whole Italian Army, and thus thousands of Italian soldiers and officers were able to join the Resistance, which grew rapidly after September 8. Among those was Colonel Giuseppe Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, who founded and led the Clandestine Military Front at Rome after serving for many years in the army.

Montezemolo's goals included helping the Allies defeat the Germans and restoring Italy's governance, which had been sullied by the Fascist regime of dictator Benito Mussolini. Montezemolo's life, understood in context, was dedicated to serving his country.

Montezemolo was born in 1901 to an aristocratic family from the Piedmont region with a tradition of military service. His father, uncle, and maternal grandfather were officers in the Royal Italian Army. Montezemolo himself began moving up the military ladder in his late teens.

At age 17, he left school to join an infantry unit and serve in World War I. After the war he went back to his studies, graduating from a university program in civil engineering in 1923. In 1924, he returned to the army as a lieutenant.

Italian Colonel Guiseppe Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo served with Axis forces in North Africa and later became a prominent figure in the Resistance against Italy's Nazi occupiers.

In 1935, when war broke out in Ethiopia, Montezemolo was called to Rome to serve in the General Staff Corps. In 1937, he volunteered to serve in the Italian force sent to aid General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War. His excellent performance there earned him promotion to lieutenant colonel.

When Italy entered World War II in 1940, Montezemolo was assigned to General Headquarters of the Royal Italian Army in Rome. He first served as an administrator and then as head of the Office of Operations for the campaign in North Africa,

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ABOVE: A German PzKpfw. VI Tiger tank sits in Rome before the national monument to King Victor Emmanuel II. After the Italian government removed Benito Mussolini, Hitler dispatched German forces in large numbers to occupy the country. RIGHT: Colonel Guiseppe Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo was arrested and later executed by the Nazis for his participation in the Resistance.

where Italian forces initially had some success against Commonwealth troops but soon were suffering significant losses.

To regain the advantage, an Italian delegation including Montezemolo sought help from Hitler in a January 1941 meeting in Germany. The Italians persuaded Hitler to send to Libya one of his best generals, Erwin Rommel, along with German troops, tanks, and vehicles.

Rommel arrived in Libya in mid-February 1941 and set about organizing his men for battle. Through Operation Sonnenblume he succeeded in driving Commonwealth forces out of Libya and capturing all of its towns except for Tobruk.

At Tobruk, Montezemolo spent time on the front and for his service was awarded a bronze medal. Its inscription praises his "serene calm" at a moment when a sudden enemy attack prompted Italian units to retreat. It adds that Montezemolo halted the men, encouraged them, and then reorganized the units for an effective defense, thus stabilizing a "compromised situation."

Although Montezemolo said that he preferred being at the front, for the most part he served as an administrator during the war. His duties included compiling information and directives for commanders in North Africa and helping them communicate with staff back in Rome. Fluent in German, he handled interaction between Rommel and his Italian counterparts.

During his years in North Africa, Montezemolo's superiors often noted his outstanding ability to manage people and situations. For example, General Antonio Grandin praised his efforts whether the difficulties involved ongoing operations or "tense relations" between the Italian commanders and Rommel.

In 1942, Montezemolo was awarded another medal for military valor, this time silver. It honored his "risky" flights to Africa, through which he "delivered orders, collected data, and clarified issues," all of which proved his "deep sense of duty, extraordinary abilities, and disdain for danger." Those qualities would eventually serve him well in the Resistance.

The war in North Africa continued its seesaw motion in 1942 and early 1943. In October 1942, Commonwealth troops commanded by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery defeated Axis forces at El Alamein in Egypt. However, in February 1943, Axis troops commanded by Rommel overcame American forces at the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia.

Eisenhower replaced the American commander with General George S. Patton, Jr., who swiftly improved the morale, discipline, and battlefield performance of his troops. At the same time, Commonwealth forces continued to gain important victories. By May 1943, the Allies had forced Axis troops out of North Africa.

Defeat in North Africa, as well as the disastrous German campaign in Russia, undermined Mussolini's authority in the eyes of the Italian people and their rulers. The monarch and high-level officers, a group that included Montezemolo, decided that the moment had come to depose Mussolini. A cluster of events in July 1943 added urgency to that task.

On July 10, the British Eighth Army and the U.S. Seventh Army, collectively a force of over 100,000 men, landed along the southern and eastern coasts of Sicily and quickly overcame Italian troops defending the island. Operation Husky was at the time the largest amphibious operation of the war.

On July 19, Allied aircraft bombed the rail yards around Rome's main train station, accidentally blasting the surrounding neighborhood and killing hundreds of civilians. That same day, Mussolini, accompanied by Montezemolo and other top officers, met with Hitler at Feltre, a town in northeastern Italy. Mussolini was supposed to make the case for Italy's withdrawal from the war but was apparently too afraid of Hitler to carry out that task, and for the most part remained silent while the German dictator

lectured on what Axis forces must do.

This event and others strengthened the resolve of Italian leaders, including Montezemolo, to depose Mussolini, a move they had been considering for some time. On July 24, 1943, the Fascist Grand Council met with the dictator at Palazzo Venezia, a grand Renaissance palace that housed his offices. After hours of discussion, a majority of the council's members voted to remove Mussolini from government and command of the armed forces and replace him with Marshal Pietro Badoglio. In effect, they fired their dictator. Mussolini, who seems not to have understood the significance of the vote, returned to Villa Torlonia, his family's mansion near the center of Rome.

On July 25, Mussolini went to meet with King Victor Emmanuel III at Villa Savoia, the royal residence in Rome. The king informed

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Sexual Performance Breakthrough Almost Lost

While this discovery could help millions of men struggling with erection issues, Dr. Loscalzo is a cardiologist and does not focus on this area of medicine.

However, the scientists at the Applied Scientific Research Labs didn't want the discovery to go to waste. The Colorado-based company has been an industry leader in men's health and performance products for nearly a decade. They built upon Dr. Loscalzo's breakthrough to develop an amazing new erection-boosting formula called Viacor.

Of course, it contains proven nitric oxide boosters. But unlike ineffective products, Viacor also contains the key antioxidant needed to ensure free radicals don't keep the nitric oxide from working. The result is arteries open, blood-flow increases, and erections improve.

According to the company's president, Steve Young, Viacor is going to be a major game-changer for men. "We know guys are frustrated by the fact that so many products just don't work. Dr. Loscalzo's research showed us why. This is a major breakthrough that should help thousands of men improve their sex lives."

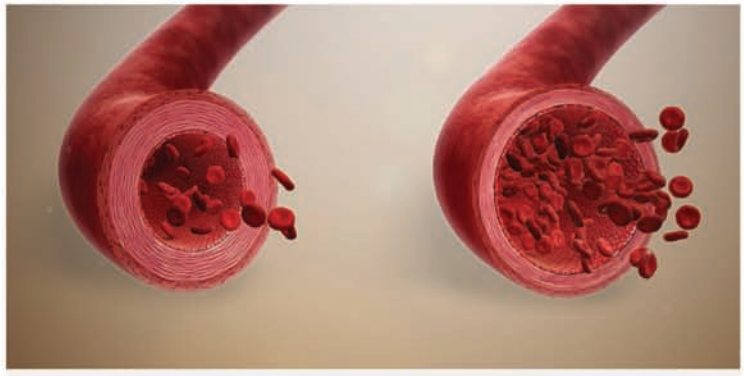
How It Works

Erection strength and staying power depend on healthy blood flow.

Nitric oxide is the molecule that triggers the blood vessels to open up and allow more blood to flow through them. It is produced in the endothelium, which is part of the inner wall of the blood vessel.

When men are young, their arteries are flexible and they have this molecule in abundance. As a result, sexual performance is not a problem.

However, blood vessels stiffen and get thicker as you age, and less nitric oxide is produced. As Dr. Loscalzo's research showed, this is made worse by the effect of oxidative stress and free radicals.



A discovery by a Harvard doctor opens arteries by 41% resulting in better blood flow and sexual performance.

Viacor is the world's first pill to address oxidative stress and nitric oxide deficiency.

Unlike the many ineffective products on the market, it delivers powerful nitric oxide boosting ingredients in clinically tested doses. Viacor also contains the exact antioxidant researchers used to open arteries 41%!

Impressive Clinical Results Show Harder Erections, More Sex, And "Very Satisfied"

Boosting nitric oxide and limiting oxidative stress offers massive sexual benefits to men.

Clinical testing on the ingredients found in Viacor confirms this.

One such placebo-controlled study was published in the prestigious journal Urology. In it, men who took an ingredient in Viacor were 6 times more likely to achieve a harder erection than those taking a placebo.

And with increased performance came more sex. On average, those men taking the ingredient in Viacor experienced 68% more sexual episodes per month. Furthermore, many of the men taking it reported being "very satisfied."

110% Money-Back Guarantee

Feedback from men across the country using Viacor has been so positive, the company is now offering an unprecedented guarantee.

Men who purchase in the next 48 hours are eligible for a 110% money-back guarantee. The company's president, Steve Young, says, "There are dozens and dozens of pills out there that don't work. We wouldn't offer a guarantee like this if we weren't certain our product was different."

Simply take the pill as directed. You must enjoy fast and impressive results. Otherwise, return the product as directed and you'll receive 100% of your money back plus an extra 10%.

How to Get Viacor

Viacor is not yet available in retail stores. But the company has set up a toll-free number so men can reclaim their virility right now. It's **1-888-597-0898**. Men should call now to get this hot new pill at a discount for the next 48 hours.

The hotline will be open for the next 48 hours. Only a limited discount supply of Viacor is available. When supplies run out, the phone number will be shut down to allow time to restock. Call **1-888-597-0898** to secure your supply. You don't need a prescription. Use Promo Code: **VC21** to receive the special discount. If lines are busy keep trying, all calls will be answered.

Photographed after the liberation of the city of Florence, these Italian partisans appear to be members of the National Liberation Committee, a group that included diverse political organizations.

Mussolini that he must step down and had him escorted to a waiting ambulance; some historians suggest that Montezemolo monitored that event. Guards took Mussolini to the island of Ponza, near Naples, and then to a cabin in the mountains east of Rome.

Back in Rome on July 25, the day Mussolini was deposed, Badoglio instructed Montezemolo to go to Mussolini's office and gather as many documents as possible; these included dossiers on individuals of interest to the dictator. That evening, the king stunned the Italian people with a radio address announcing that he had accepted the resignation of Mussolini and nominated Badoglio to take his place. That night, Badoglio announced that Italy would continue on in the war as an ally of Germany and proclaimed that "anyone who disturbs the public order will be relentlessly attacked."

When Hitler learned that Mussolini had been deposed, he was enraged. However, he decided to play along with the king and Badoglio, in part to preserve the country as a source of men and materiel. As a precaution, he ordered more German Army divisions sent to Italy in case it surrendered to the Allies. By the end of August, 16 German divisions were in Italy.

Most Italians rejoiced at the news of Mussolini's downfall. Many assumed that the war was over, despite Badoglio's assertion to the contrary. Throughout Italy, people gathered in the streets and piazzas to celebrate. In Rome and Turin, citizens broke open the doors of the main prisons to release political prisoners. Even in POW camps the mood was festive. One prisoner remembered that his guards tossed Mussolini's picture out the window, tore down Fascist posters, and shouted: "BENITO FINITO."

Soon after Mussolini was deposed, the leaders of the six major anti-Fascist parties met with Badoglio to make various demands, including an end to the war. Their followers began demonstrating in the streets in favor of freedom and democracy. Badoglio discouraged those assemblies, in part to give the impression that Italy intended to remain an ally of Germany. Although Badoglio and the king in reality wanted to withdraw from that alliance, they tried to conceal that wish from Hitler.

In August 1943, the king's representatives spent weeks negotiating in secret with their Allied counterparts for terms of a surrender. That process did not go smoothly, but on September 3, in an olive grove near the town of Cassibile in Sicily, General Ugo Castellano signed an unconditional armistice. On September 8, Eisenhower announced the armistice through a radio broadcast. That same evening, Badoglio also spoke on the radio, echoing Eisenhower's statement and ordering Italian forces to cease hostilities against the Allies.

A few hours later, the king, Badoglio, and other Italian leaders left Rome for a safe haven with Allied forces in Brindisi, a city in southeastern Italy that was to serve as the headquarters for the "Kingdom of the South" until the end of the war.

Why did the king and his leaders bolt? Their behavior was ignoble but not irrational in terms of self-preservation. They must have dreaded what vengeance Hitler might wreak on Italian leaders for quitting the alliance. They felt threatened by anti-Fascists who blamed the king for permitting Mussolini's rise to power and longed to dispense altogether with the monarchy. Victor Emmanuel and his colleagues preferred to wait for support from the Allies, who had landed at Salerno on September 9 and planned to force the Germans out of Italy.

Whatever their reasons, and to their discredit, Badoglio and other generals left no one in charge of the Italian military when they abandoned Rome. The abrupt exit caused the Italian army to disintegrate quickly. Its commanders did not know what other units were doing, had no practical way to find out, and thus could not develop a coordinated plan.

Many soldiers, left to their own devices, aided civilians in the battle against the Germans. For example, at Porta San Palo in a southern section of Rome, hundreds of Italian soldiers and civilians fought to prevent the Germans from entering the city. Combat then spread to other sections of the Eternal City. However, within two days German forces had suppressed most of the resistance.

On the evening of September 9, Montezemolo and two Italian generals, Giorgio Calvi di Bergolo and Enrico Caviglia, met with General Albert Kesselring in the nearby town of Frascati. Kesselring, head of German forces in Italy, demanded that the Italian military in Rome capitulate and surrender its weapons. In exchange he would declare Rome an "Open City," demilitarized and not subject to attack. German soldiers were to occupy a limited number of buildings during the day and sleep in the city's periphery at night.

Kesselring demanded the right to set up a German command in Rome, a requirement contrary to the spirit of an "Open City" arrangement. Since the Italians had no cards to play at this point, they signed the agreement.

In September, German troops settled in Rome's historic center, took control of local government, and placed tight restrictions on civilian activity. Elsewhere in Italy, they occupied many towns and cities. In addition, Mussolini resurfaced after being rescued and flown to Germany. He was soon broadcasting from his headquarters in northern Italy, where Hitler had made him head of a puppet regime.

Back in Rome, German officials recruited Italians to help them run local civic affairs and assigned them to offices in the center of Rome. Montezemolo sensed that the Germans were suspicious of his loyalty and would soon deport or shoot him. He prepared to go into hiding and join the Resistance.

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On September 23, Germans came to Montezemolo's office to arrest him and his colleagues. Montezemolo had civilian clothes on hand. Donning those, he slipped out of the building and made his escape into the streets of Rome.

To hide his true identity, Montezemolo carried the ID card he had used in Spain in 1937, which said: "Giacomo Cateratto, engineer."

In the following days, Montezemolo chose other men he knew well to form the initial nucleus of the FCMR (Clandestine Military Front at Rome). The group intended to unite former soldiers and officers now operating independently throughout the city, coordinate with other Resistance groups to force the Germans out of Italy, and put intra-Italian political differences aside until that objective was achieved. The FMCR also called for the construction of a strong intelligence service to aid the Allies, who were battling German forces in southern Italy in the fall of 1943. It encouraged the preservation of public order and respect for the legality of the king's government.

Although Montezemolo was only a colonel, he had a great deal of prestige and authority in the military and thus was able to bring officers with higher ranks into the FMCR. Among the first to contribute his services was General Raffaele Cadorna, who in October offered to select suitable candidates for the FMCR and also serve as a bridge to political parties. In a letter Cadorna observed, "…Around Montezemolo was united a group of capable officials devoted to him, the nucleus of a large organization that sought to provide the most urgent necessities, and above all information services, to which the Allies attached great importance."

By October, Montezemolo was known as the leader of the FMCR. The official investiture occurred on October 10th, when this brief query came from the government in Brindisi: "Let us know if Montezemolo is in a situation where he can take on the task of directing and organizing [the FMCR]." To this request, he answered, "Yes."

As the Allies made their way up the Italian peninsula, battling Germans much of the way, the FMCR helped to keep them informed about the movements of German forces and other pertinent data.

During autumn, Montezemolo and his colleagues also worked to expand the size, scope, and structure of the FMCR. In place of meetings on street corners and in piazzas, they set up three scheduled gatherings per week in apartments loaned by supporters of the Front. They distributed money and weapons to partisan bands. They kept in touch with the Allies and Italian leaders in Brindisi. They began working

with partisan groups elsewhere in central Italy, including Latium, Abruzzo, Umbria, and Tuscany. In November, their network extended to selected cities in northern Italy, including Venice, Bologna, Bolzano, and Milan. And among its more mundane tasks, the FMCR produced false identity cards.

That fall, Montezemolo was constantly on the move, meeting with colleagues around Rome. His lifelong talent for facilitating cooperation was useful in his work for the Resistance. For example, although Montezemolo supported the monarchy and was an anti-communist, he and the leader of Italy's Communist party ordered their groups to cooperate against the common foe. In one of their collective actions, they blew up trains carrying German soldiers, killing or wounding four hundred men.

Montezemolo's work brought him to the attention of German officials, and by the end of October he knew that the German police were hunting him. He left his cousin's apartment, moved frequently, and changed the name on his identity card to "Giuseppe Martini, university employee." But his time was running out: In November, the Germans put a bounty of two million lire on his head.

On January 17, 20, and 22, German officials arrested several members of the FMCR leadership in Rome. About the same time, the Allies landed at Anzio.

On January 25, Montezemolo attended meetings at various spots in the city and had lunch at Via Tacchini 7. As he left the building, he saw five men just outside its main door. They stopped Montezemolo and interrogated him briefly. Realizing they had their catch, the men handed him over to the SS, which took him to a prison on Via Tasso, a little over a mile from Rome's main train station. There he was interrogated and tortured for weeks on end, but he never broke.

Had he not been in prison on March 23, 1944, Montezemolo might have survived the horrors he suffered there. However, that day a Resistance group killed 33 Austrian soldiers with a bomb in the center of Rome.

As soon as Hitler heard about that bombing, he demanded that ten men be executed for every Austrian who had died. Herbert Kappler, the official in charge, was given a day to collect and kill 330 men. To reach that number on schedule, Kappler added everyone in the Via Tasso prison to his list of "men-to-be-shot." The list thus included Montezemolo.

The doomed men were taken to the Ardeatine Caves, a few miles south of the Via Tasso prison, and executed on March 24, 1944, a few months before the liberation of Rome.

Today, the public may visit the prison where Montezemolo was held, as well as the place where he was killed and buried. Both can be reached by public bus. At the Ardeatine Caves (renamed the Ardeatine Graves), a mausoleum shelters the tombs of Montezemolo and hundreds of other men who died nearby. Just outside the mausoleum, statues and other works of art commemorate what happened here.

The Via Tasso prison has been renamed the Museum of the Liberation and is a research center. It also preserves intact some of the cells where prisoners were held, including Montezemolo's small room. Posted there is a letter sent to his widow by Harold Alexander, commander-in-chief of Allied forces in Italy. Alexander expresses gratitude for Montezemolo's outstanding service to the Allies during the occupation of Rome and adds, "No one could have given more to his country. We regret that he did not live to see the results of his loyalty and self-sacrifice. In him Italy has lost a great patriot and the Allies a true friend." Those words provide a fitting close to this account of a hero's life.

Ann Saunders is a research associate with the College of Charleston. She resides in Columbia, South Carolina.

By Phil Scearce

National Archives

Sole Survivor

A bomber crewman lived through the ordeal of a mid-air collision and an epic island rescue.

ON DECEMBER 1, 1942, A 431ST BOMB SQUADRON BOEING B-17 FLYING FORTRESS named *Omar Khayyam - The Plastered Bastard* took off from a base codenamed Cactus on a photo-reconnaissance mission toward enemy-held Bougainville Island in the Pacific.

Pilot Captain Willis Jacobs was in command for the 5:30 AM flight with Lieutenant Stanley Sommers, co-pilot; Lieutenant William Jackimozyk, navigator; Lieutenant Clarence Johnson, bombardier; engineer Sergeant Dalos Tuffey; gunners Corporal Clair Grover, Corporal Ray Lindamood, and Corporal Joseph Hartman; radio operator Sergeant Kino Hamalainen and his assistant, Pfc. Arthur Lamar; and a Navy photographer. Two months later, only one of these 11 men made it back to his base.

In late 1942, the 431st Bombardment Squadron, 11th Bomb Group flew in support of the U.S. Marines fighting for control of Guadalcanal in the southern Solomon Islands following their landings in August. The stakes were high: a Japanese victory would threaten Australia and New Zealand and sever supply and communication routes between the United States and her allies, while American success would establish a base for future operations against enemy positions to the northwest and put the Japanese on the defensive for the first time in World War II.

B-17 Flying Fortresses of the Seventh Air Force, 11th Bomb Group based in Hawaii flew more than 3,000 miles, staging from Oahu to Palmyra or Christmas Island, then Canton, and from there to Nandi Field on Fiji and finally to Efate in the New Hebrides. From Efate, codenamed Roses, the big bombers could reach Guadalcanal's Henderson Field, codenamed Cactus, about 640 miles away, to gas up for strike missions and patrol flights. B-17s remained in the combat zone for days at a time before withdrawal to Roses or Espiritu Santo, which was known as Buttons.

At Espiritu Santo, the narrow American airstrip's B-17 revetments were so tight that ground crewmen walked in front of the wingtips as aircraft taxied out, ready to warn the pilots if they got too close to the coconut trees crowding each side. Bottles filled with oil burned paper wicks to mark the sides of the runway, and the headlights of a Jeep shone at the end of the runway during early-morning takeoff runs. And at Espiritu Santo air crews rested while ground crews repaired damaged planes for the next venture into hostile territory.

The Japanese had been taken completely by surprise by the American landings on Guadalcanal, and the captured runway there strained the capability of American forces to make effective use of it. The airfield and its facilities were so primitive that when the S.S. *Nira Luckenbach* arrived in August with 3,000 drums of aviation fuel, the steel drums were dumped over the side of the ship, floated ashore in nets, and laboriously rolled into dispersed fuel dumps of 20 to 30 drums apiece. An early August 1942 B-17 mission required the strength of every available hand, including 11th Group Commander Colonel Laverne "Blondie" Saunders and Brigadier General William C. Rose, to work a bucket brigade for 20 exhausting hours in a relentless storm as they filled the tanks of the big bombers.

American control of the airstrip at Guadalcanal pushed Japanese air operations back to Rabaul on the northern tip of New Britain. The distance, 560 nautical miles away from the fight for Guadalcanal, forced Japanese pilots to operate at the limit of their range for the first critical weeks of the battle. A new staging base at Buin on the southeastern edge of Bougainville was ready for Japanese Mitsubishi Zero fighters in October 1942, and another would be ready on New Georgia before the end of the year. The new base at Buin meant that Zeros could fly from Rabaul to Buin, refuel, and patrol for American intruders like *The Plastered Bastard*.

A Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber flies over a body of water. Corporal Joseph Hartman survived a terrible ordeal following a mid-air collision aboard a B-17, which was followed by an incredible odyssey.

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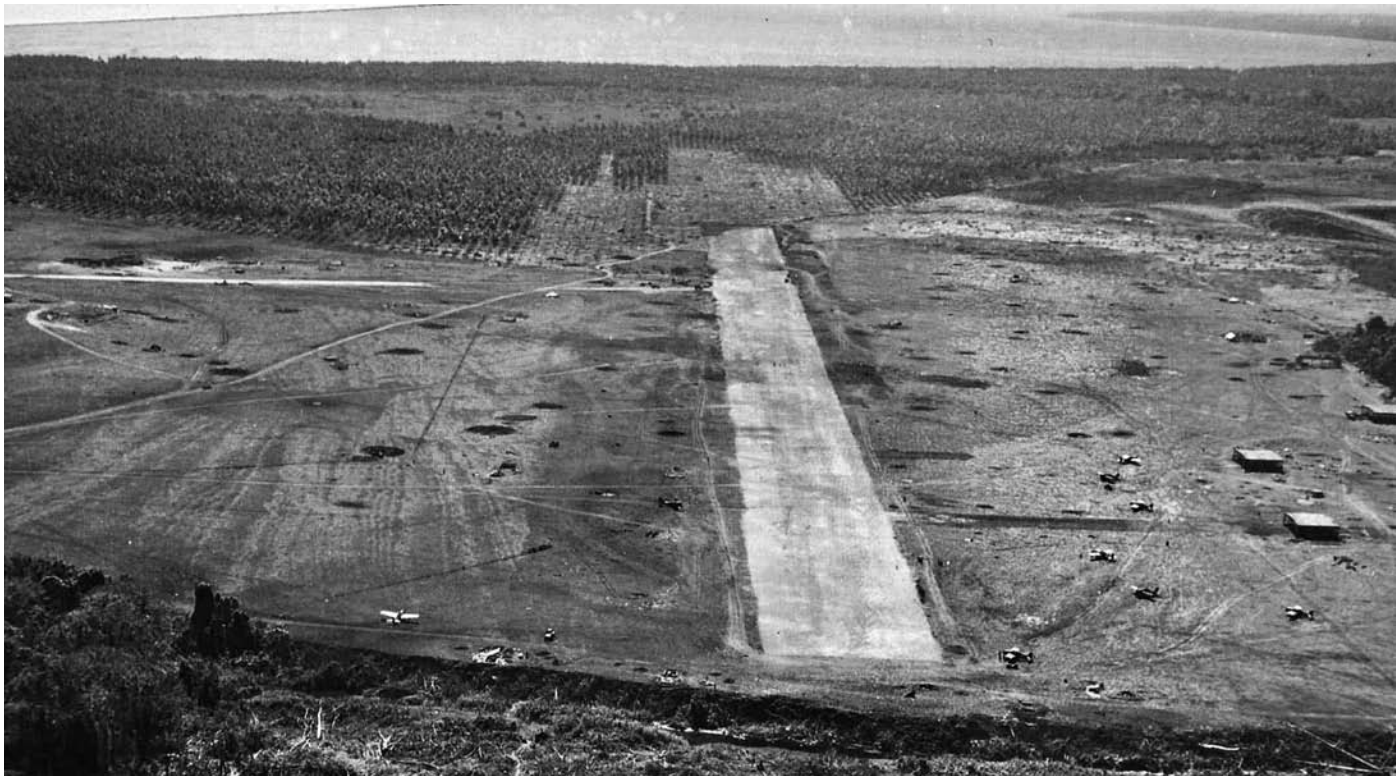

On December 1, 1942, Captain Jacobs and crew were on the return trip to Cactus, cruising at 17,000 feet off the southern tip of Bougainville. The mission proceeded without incident until a half-dozen Zero fighters suddenly attacked the B-17. Corporal Glover in the ball turret opened fire along with Lindamood in the waist and Hartman in the tail, and two Zeros burst into flames and fell to the water more than three miles below. The remaining four Zeros left for home, and Captain Jacobs, his bomber and crew unhurt, steered east toward Choiseul Island.

Near Choiseul, the Fortress was jumped by another group of Zero fighters. Once again the crew counted six, then another broke out of the clouds ahead, looming larger in the bomber's cockpit windows as it approached head-on. The seventh Zero pilot, more aggressive than his comrades, dropped four aerial bombs. The bombs fell harmlessly, but the Zero sped forward as the B-17 also continued on course, its closing speed too fast for the bomber to take evasive action.

The Japanese plane slammed into the top of the B-17 behind the radio operator's position, and the Flying Fortress immediately crumpled. The tail broke away from the main fuselage and fell gracefully while the forward section of the Boeing bomber and its Japanese adversary burst into flames and went down together. The American bomber's tail section, with Corporal Joseph Hartman still at his gun position, rolled gently to the right and arced toward the earth as if still in flight.

But Corporal Hartman was unconscious, even if just momentarily, when critical seconds mattered. He recovered his senses and realized that he was the only occupant of the back half of a B-17, severed by collision with a Zero. The comforting sound of the B-17's four engines singing in unison was replaced by the howl of wind rushing through the last piece of the plane still airborne, accelerating toward the sea.

Hartman grabbed the straps of his parachute and opened the rear hatch, struggling against the rush of wind. He pushed himself out of the hatch clear of the bomber's severed tail and fell free. Safely away, he pulled his parachute rip cord. When the chest straps jerked violently against his body because he had not had time to adjust them properly, he blacked out again. He had only 2,000 more feet to fall.

Corporal Hartman recovered consciousness again as he descended under the canopy of his parachute. As he approached the water, he slipped the harness straps up his arms and dropped into the sea off the coast of Choiseul. He began swimming to shore, almost two football fields away. When he finally reached the shallow water off the beach and staggered ashore, he realized he was naked, his clothing somehow lost during his struggle.

Two dark-skinned natives approached, having watched the airman descend with his parachute. They had seen the crash of the "koluka bauku," their native words for a boat that flies. They were friendly and spoke enough English to put Hartman at ease, and he went with them in an open boat, paddling to their village of Polo on the northwestern coast of the island.

At Polo, Corporal Hartman met the village leader and was treated well. He was given a simple garment to wrap around his waist and was treated for head wounds that the airman had hardly noticed. Hartman spent a week at Polo while a courier was dispatched to a mountain in the island's north. There, an Australian coastwatcher operated a clandestine radio station overlooking Bougainville Strait.

Coastwatchers operated behind enemy lines in the Solomons. These men, mostly Australians or New Zealanders, watched Japanese troop and ship movements and spotted Japanese aircraft on their way to attack American positions to the south and east. The intelligence they gathered and reported by radio allowed American forces to prepare a reception for the approaching enemy, getting ships under way and to battle stations, scrambling their fighters, and manning their antiaircraft guns. Radio reports from Choiseul provided critical advance warning to the Americans fighting for control of the Solomons.

When the native courier returned, Hartman was led along jungle paths into the island interior. He was anxious, uncertain whether the men who led him could be trusted absolutely. His feet were cut and painfully sore, unaccustomed to

Naval History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: The four engines of a B-17 Flying Fortress raise a cloud of dust as the bomber takes off from Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. Corporal Joseph Hartman was fortunate to live through a horrific mid-air crash and avoid capture by the Japanese. OPPOSITE: Henderson Field on the island of Guadalcanal was the home of the Cactus Air Force. Its possession was critical to the future of the U.S. offensive in the Solomon Islands.

the barefooted punishment of his uphill, muddy trek. His shoes had been lost in the fall from his plane or during his swim to shore.

After three days' travel, Hartman was brought to the coastwatcher. Hartman learned from him that Japanese troops were just a few miles away, and together they discussed the prospects and difficulties of Hartman's return to his base. After three weeks, the natives warned the two men that their position was no longer safe. Hartman and the coastwatcher removed themselves into the jungle until the danger of Japanese detection passed.

Corporal Joseph Hartman's stay on Choiseul extended into six weeks. While there, the American aviator was visited by curious natives. He hunted and fished with them and ate the island's fruits and vegetables, fish, birds, and "flying foxes"—the island's *papauku*, fruit bats. He lived as the natives lived, awaiting a plan and an opportunity to return to his squadron. He tolerated the high-pitched call of the bats, the exotic sounds of the island's birds, and during the night he suffered the strange music of Choiseul's noisy, diverse insect population. Hartman's island life was interrupted only once by the enemy, when a Japanese fighter pilot was led into the village. Hartman and the Japanese pilot, adversaries in the air, met in a strange encounter on the ground. Both men had survived the loss of their aircraft and both were led by the island's natives to that place, at that time.

The Japanese aviator had been fooled by the natives to waste the ammunition of his pistol shooting at birds, ostensibly for food, and was led unhappily to the coastwatcher. Later, 431st Bomb Squadron records would state that "an exceedingly informal and one-sided trial" resulted in the execution of the Japanese pilot.

The death of a Japanese soldier presented opportunity for Choiseul's natives, as they would set upon the dead man, removing his shoes and clothing, searching his pockets and belt for anything of value. When the Japanese later withdrew from Choiseul, villagers celebrated with a feast that included a mock hunt for Japanese soldiers. When the islanders "found" the natives dressed in Japanese uniforms, they opened fire with blank rounds, and the men playing Japanese soldiers dutifully fell, violently convulsing and twitching as they feigned death and the victors rushed at them to loot their bodies.

Corporal Hartman wanted desperately to return to his countrymen. Choiseul's natives agreed to deliver him down the southern coast of the island, along the hotly contested Solomon Islands waterway known as "the Slot." Hartman's native boatmen would leave under the light of the next waxing moon, moving stealthily low in the water with the black islands behind them. The moon's light would aid their navigation and warn them of enemy warships in deeper water beyond.

The Slot, a nickname for New Georgia Sound, was so-called because of its geographic shape through the middle of the Solomon Islands. The Slot was home to the "Cactus Express," the American term for nighttime submarine and destroyer efforts of the Japanese Navy to reinforce positions opposing American forces on Guadalcanal. Under cover of darkness, the Japanese attempted to put men and supplies ashore on the northwestern tip of Guadalcanal at Cape Esperance. American newspapers

Continued on page 82

By Patrick J. Chaisson

Prisoners on the Potomac

The clandestine activities at Fort Hunt, near Washington, D.C., helped the Allies gather intelligence and win World War II.

MAY 3, 1944: THE NONDESCRIPT ARMY BUS SLOWED TO MAKE A TURN OFF THE Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway just outside suburban Alexandria, Virginia. Following a gravel driveway through some woods, it first stopped at a hidden guard post where armed M.P.s carefully examined everyone's identification papers. The vehicle then continued on its way, parking at a wire-fenced enclosure far from public view.

A group of men, all clothed in a motley combination of G.I. fatigues and foreign uniform parts, was herded off the windowless bus. Disoriented after their long journey, many of them blinked in the hot sun. "Wo sind wir?" some were heard to remark. "Was ist hier?"

The crew of *U-515* had arrived at Fort Hunt. Here they would match wits with an American interrogation team, all of whom were specially trained in the art of extracting sensitive information from enemy prisoners of war (POWs). At stake was the U-boat's suite of underwater sensors and weaponry; whichever side possessed this technology could also control the Atlantic convoy routes between North America and Europe.

From 1942 to 1946, the U.S. armed forces conducted several intelligence-gathering operations at Fort Hunt, Virginia, a secluded point of land situated along the Potomac River about 11 miles south of Washington, D.C. Soldiers stationed at this ultra-secret facility interrogated top-ranking Axis captives, ran a covert information clearinghouse, and helped Allied prisoners escape capture.

After peace returned, almost the entire camp was torn down. Only recently has Fort Hunt's role in World War II come to light, while some of what took place there remains classified three-quarters of a century after the last enemy POW departed.

Originally part of George Washington's Mount Vernon estate, this 136-acre tract became in 1893 a U.S. Army coast artillery site named Fort Henry Hunt. For decades it slumbered in a caretaker status until the Department of Interior took ownership in 1933. Under National Park Service management, Fort Hunt served as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp during the Great Depression.

After Pearl Harbor, the U.S. War Department established two "detailed interrogation centers," one on each coast. Fort Hunt, the East Coast facility, was to focus on German captives, while Camp Tracy—a former resort hotel at Byron Hot Springs, California—would perform this function for Japanese prisoners out West. To preserve security, both installations were identified only by their local post-office addresses: P.O. Box 1142 for Fort Hunt and P.O. Box 651 for Byron Hot Springs.

The mission of these interrogation centers was to obtain national-level intelligence through the exploitation of selected enemy POWs. Prisoners who demonstrated in-depth knowledge of technical, industrial, political, or other strategic matters deemed important to the Allied war effort would be identified, transported to Fort Hunt or Camp Tracy, and thoroughly questioned before being sent to a more permanent detention camp elsewhere.

On May 15, 1942, the U.S. Army took control of Fort Hunt for "the duration of the war plus one year." Hundreds of civilian contractors worked around the clock that summer to install fencing, refurbish existing structures, and

TOP: In this painting by artist Mark Churms, high value Axis prisoners arrive at Fort Hunt near the city of Alexandria, Virginia. ABOVE: The remains of a building on the grounds of Fort Hunt. During World War II, American intelligence officers attempted to extract information from Axis prisoners.

National Archives

During a demonstration for Army personnel, a team of interrogators from Camp Ritchie demonstrates the proper method for searching prisoners of war. Three members of the interrogation team are wearing German uniforms.

erect temporary barracks, mess halls, and warehouses. By the end of July, 87 buildings had been rehabilitated or newly raised there at a cost of $217,000.

Significantly, the entire enclosure was bugged. Listening devices planted in every interrogation room, common area, and prison cell allowed American eavesdroppers to record their captives' most unguarded conversations. "Even the trees had ears," said one soldier of these sophisticated electronic surveillance systems.

The first prisoners, U-boat crewmen apprehended after their submarines were sunk in U.S. waters, arrived in August 1942. Under an interservice agreement, the Office of Naval Intelligence routinely interrogated German sailors sent to Fort Hunt. All other captives, however, fell under the control of a shadowy organization known as MIS-Y.

Earlier in 1942, the U.S. Army's General Staff formed an operational agency it called the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). As MIS's mandate included the collection of high-priority information from captured enemy personnel, it created a sub-section named MIS-Y to question those POWs.

MIS-Y's organizational structure closely followed that of MI19, the British Military Intelligence Directorate's prisoner-exploitation bureau. Several specialized departments—including the Air, Army, and Scientific Research subsections—focused on interrogation, while functional branches such as monitoring, evaluation, and document collection provided operational support.

Finding men qualified to carry out this unorthodox mission presented an enormous challenge. It quickly became evident that successful strategic interrogators required a combination of intelligence, education, language proficiency, and an instinct for the job. Fortunately, Army officials had established a sort of "breeding-ground" for MIS-Y at the Military Intelligence Training Center in Camp Ritchie, Maryland. There, German-speaking G.I.s were already learning the basics of POW interrogation.

Camp Ritchie's curriculum focused on tactical applications, though, and not the national-level information that MIS desired. Yet many "Ritchie Boys" who demonstrated an above-average knowledge of technical or scientific subjects were recruited for duty at Fort Hunt.

Several Jewish refugees, born in Germany or Austria and forced to leave their homeland after the Nazis rose to power, served with MIS-Y. Although U.S. soldiers, they were officially classified as "enemy aliens" and thus forbidden to question prisoners. The Army solved this problem by transporting these men to a nearby federal courthouse where a judge granted them U.S. citizenship.

Wilhelm Hess, a German-born Jew, had just completed the tactical interrogator's course at Camp Ritchie when he saw his name posted on a bulletin board. Hess read that he "had been promoted to corporal and was shipping out the next day." His destination was a mysterious duty station known only as P.O. Box 1142, Alexandria, Va.

Not everyone came from Camp Ritchie, however. John Gunther Dean was training to become a combat engineer at nearby Fort Belvoir when an officer there gave him a nickel and a telephone number to call. Dean was then dropped off in downtown Alexandria, where he found a pay phone.

"I called the number, and I said, 'Private Dean reporting, sir,'" he recollected. A voice instructed him to wait until someone picked him up. "So I took my duffel bag and I stood there at the corner, and sure enough, [a] staff car came—I felt very important—and I went to Fort Hunt."

All incoming personnel had to sign a document directing them never to discuss what went on at P.O. Box 1142. Next, each man received his duty assignment.

Some became interrogation officers (I/Os). Corporal Fred Michel said he received very little training in his new job, recalling, "We immediately started interrogations, first with the assistance or supervision of an officer who was already stationed there and who had gone through the experience."

Corporal Werner Moritz remembered it differently, though. He came to Fort Hunt in July 1942 with the initial cadre of soldiers and recalled six or eight British intelligence officers there who taught him how to question captives. Moritz later said this instruction "was of great value to me" as an I/O.

Other servicemen worked in a cramped concrete building located outside the main POW compound. This was the monitoring station, where German-speaking analysts recorded and transcribed interrogation sessions. They also listened in on the what the prisoners were saying to one another while confined to their cells or out in the exercise yard.

Private First Class George Weidinger, a Vienna-born Jewish immigrant, performed this duty. "I worked as a monitor," he recalled, "and I remember being in a very, very small room. The small room had a recording device, and I think I spent a good many hours per day there."

Enlisted men did most of the interrogating and all of the monitoring at Fort Hunt. Fred Michel believed this was because he and his fellow European-born soldiers exhibited superior language skills, adding that the officers assigned to MIS-Y were kept busy performing adminis-

trative or supervisory duties.

Most prisoners processed through the Joint Interrogation Center came from one of three sources: the combat theater of operations, POW camps in the U.S., or the port of debarkation. Tactical intelligence teams often identified captives who appeared to have significant strategic value right on the battlefield; other prisoners were earmarked for special interrogation as they stepped off the ship transporting them to the United States. In rare cases, certain POWs were flown directly from Europe to National Airport in Washington, D.C.

Prisoners arriving at Fort Hunt underwent a formal in-processing ritual known as "intake." One by one, the POWs were taken into a reception room, interviewed, and told to surrender all personal property. Captives then received a medical examination and a shower, as well as an issue of clothing, toiletries, and personal items. A typical stay there varied but usually did not exceed two weeks.

Inmates ate in their cells, which were typically left locked. They could, however, leave for bathroom breaks and daily recreation time—all under M.P. guard. Normally, within six hours of arrival POWs were escorted down the hall for their first meeting with an American interrogator.

Every I/O was allowed to develop "his own method of handling the various situations which may confront him," according to an MIS-Y report. This memo further noted, "Each prisoner, being a different individual, requires different treatment."

Interrogators typically used a mix of flattery and veiled threats to establish a relationship with their often-reluctant subjects. Cooperative inmates earned privileges such as better food and an occasional cigarette. Those who resisted or were caught telling lies, however, received a visit from "The Russian." This intimidating individual—dressed to look like a member of the Red Army—was in fact an American NCO, but there was no mistaking his message: answer our questions or be sent to the Soviet Union.

The I/Os employed other deceptions, as well. Fred Michel said that when talking with captives he "would wear officer's insignia. Usually [it was] the rank of the interrogee or maybe one step below that because the feeling was that Germans respected rank, and if somebody of a non-commissioned rank would interrogate them, they wouldn't expect any results."

Yet these young intelligence officers largely abided by the Geneva Convention's rules regarding treatment of POWs. "During the many interrogations," swore Pfc. George Frankel, "I never laid hands on anyone. We extracted information in a battle of the wits. I'm proud to say I never compromised my humanity."

National Archives

TOP: German General Ulrich Kessler, photographed aboard a U.S. Navy submarine shortly after his capture, was among the high value prisoners taken to Fort Hunt for interrogation and surveillance. ABOVE: German scientist Dr.Heinz Schlicke was a central figure in Nazi Germany's research and development establishment.

Some inmates remained at Fort Hunt long after they were "milked" of all valuable information. Several interrogators recall utilizing German "stool pigeons" to inform on other captives. Slovakian-born Franz Gajdosch, an SS tank commander, briefly performed this function before he got a job tending bar in the base officers' club.

Electronic surveillance occasionally proved worthwhile, but not always. Staff Sergeant Rudy Pins estimated that "probably only 20 percent of all of the conversation" he monitored was considered useful. Characterizing the prisoners' chatter, Pins said, "They talk[ed] about their girlfriends, and their sergeants, or whatever. Their families. Nothing of any particular intelligence interest."

The watermelon-sized listening devices used at Fort Hunt were frequently hidden in overhead light fixtures. Werner Moritz remembered one occasion when he heard a POW tell his cellmate, "I'm getting a funny echo here. I think we're being recorded." Moritz described what happened next. "So they took the lights apart. There was a microphone. It was a very, very embarrassing situation."

A total of 3,415 enemy captives passed through Fort Hunt's Joint Interrogation Center. Camp records indicate only one escape attempt, but it was a memorable one. As a way of getting him to talk, interrogators told Kapitänleutnant Werner Henke, *U-515*'s skipper, that he was being turned over to British authorities as a suspected war criminal. On June 15, 1944—his last night there—Henke was shot and killed while attempting to climb the prison enclosure's perimeter fence.

During the war, MIS-Y contributed to many Allied intelligence successes. Chief among these was the identification of Nazi Germany's military rocket research facility at Peenemünde months before deadly V2 ballistic missiles began raining down on London. Fort Hunt's I/Os also got their subjects to talk about such naval technology as acoustic homing torpedoes and the "Schnorchel" underwater ventilation apparatus.

In fact, a U-boat figured in MIS-Y's last major wartime operation. In May 1945, Germany's submarine fleet at sea received radio instructions to cease combat operations and surrender. *U-234*, a giant Type XB cargo sub en route to Japan, capitulated to U.S. destroyers on May 14. Five days later, *U-234* docked at Portsmouth Navy Yard in Maine, where it was closely searched by American intelligence officers.

Found on board were technical drawings for the V2 missile, Me-262 jet aircraft, and Hs-293 glide bomb, plus 1,200 pounds of radioactive uranium oxide. *U-234*'s passengers included a number of top military men and weapons engineers, all of whom would require intensive questioning.

Lieutenant William Hershberger, a document translator with MIS-Y, brought them back to Washington, D.C., on a military transport plane. Accompanying Hershberger on that air-

craft were *U-234*'s commander, Kapitänleutnant Johann-Heinrich Fehler, Luftwaffe General Ulrich Kessler, and an expert in the field of infrared radiation named Dr. Heinz Schlicke.

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted to gain control of people like Schlicke, who headed Nazi Germany's top military, scientific, and technological research programs. This resulted in Operation Paperclip, a top-secret postwar operation in which 1,600 scientists were brought over from Germany to help develop American weapons systems and to keep their knowledge out of Russian hands.

Fort Hunt served as a processing station for the first Paperclip participants, including noted rocketry expert Dr. Wernher von Braun. Bartender Franz Gajdosch remembered seeing him there in the summer of 1945, as did a 19-year-old morale officer named Pfc. Arno Mayer. Since Germany was no longer an enemy nation, men like von Braun—technically, contractors employed by the U.S. government—enjoyed certain privileges during their stay, such as the occasional shopping trip in town.

The Joint Interrogation Center was not the sole information-gathering activity based at Fort Hunt. Two highly classified organizations also had their headquarters there, kept separate from MIS-Y's POW enclosures only by a wire fence. These agencies, codenamed MIRS and MIS-X, played a vital role in America's shadow war against the Axis.

The Military Intelligence Research Section (MIRS) investigated and translated captured enemy documents, newspapers, scientific journals, and other publications. In a temporary building situated across the parade field, teams of German-speaking soldiers painstakingly waded through mountains of printed matter that had been captured by Allied forces.

"We used to get duffel bags full of materials," said Sergeant Paul Fairbrook, an order-of-battle specialist. "We collected information from various sources, and we put these [pieces of data] on cards. Then we catalogued them." Fairbrook further recalled how each MIRS analyst had his own particular assignment. "My job was to collect information about German units and what they were like," he recalled, "and what they had, and what they did, and what their armament was."

Officers at MIRS sent up the product obtained by Fairbrook and his co-workers for inclusion into an intelligence summary known as the *Red Book*, so-called for the color of its cover. Updated regularly as the war progressed, the *Red Book* served as a ready reference on Wehrmacht organization, capabilities, and leadership.

While those soldiers stationed at Fort Hunt knew better than to ask questions, many could not help but wonder what was going on inside the old post hospital. There, another covert operation nicknamed the Escape Factory gave thousands of American servicemen a reason to keep on fighting even though they had been made prisoners of war.

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Dr. Werner von Braun, standing at center with his arm in a cast following an automobile accident, is pictured with associates following their capture in Austria in 1945. Von Braun's group was brought to Fort Hunt under the auspices of Project Paperclip.

After war broke out in 1939, senior Allied commanders saw a need to exploit their own POWs' unique knowledge of enemy industrial capacity, morale, and transportation infrastructure. Accordingly, the British War Office formed a bureau within its Military Intelligence Directorate called MI9, not be confused with MI19, which focused on enemy captives. MI9's chief task was to help servicemen caught behind the lines evade capture and, for those held prisoner, aid their escape and return home.

When, in mid-1942, United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) bombers began flying missions over occupied Europe, some airmen inevitably were shot down. As no American equivalent to MI9 then existed, the Army's Military Intelligence Service set out to create one. In October 1942 it established at Fort Hunt an Escape and Evasion (E&E) section codenamed MIS-X.

Closely resembling MI9 in terms of organization, this agency contained five subdivisions: interrogation, correspondence, POW locations, training and briefing, and technical. The first three departments kept track of U.S. prisoners, communicated with them, and debriefed those men who managed to successfully escape or evade capture. Training officers provided instruction on E&E tools and techniques, while the Technical Branch developed, manufactured, and shipped a wide variety of cleverly concealed escape aids.

Most personnel worked out of Fort Hunt's old hospital, which they called "the Creamery." By December, though, a new structure across the street had been built to house workshops, storerooms, and even a printing press. Named "the Warehouse," it became Technical Branch's home.

Instructors began briefing USAAF combat crewmen on ways to avoid capture, as well as the proper conduct expected of them should they be made prisoner. Selected personnel, usually two per squadron, also received training as

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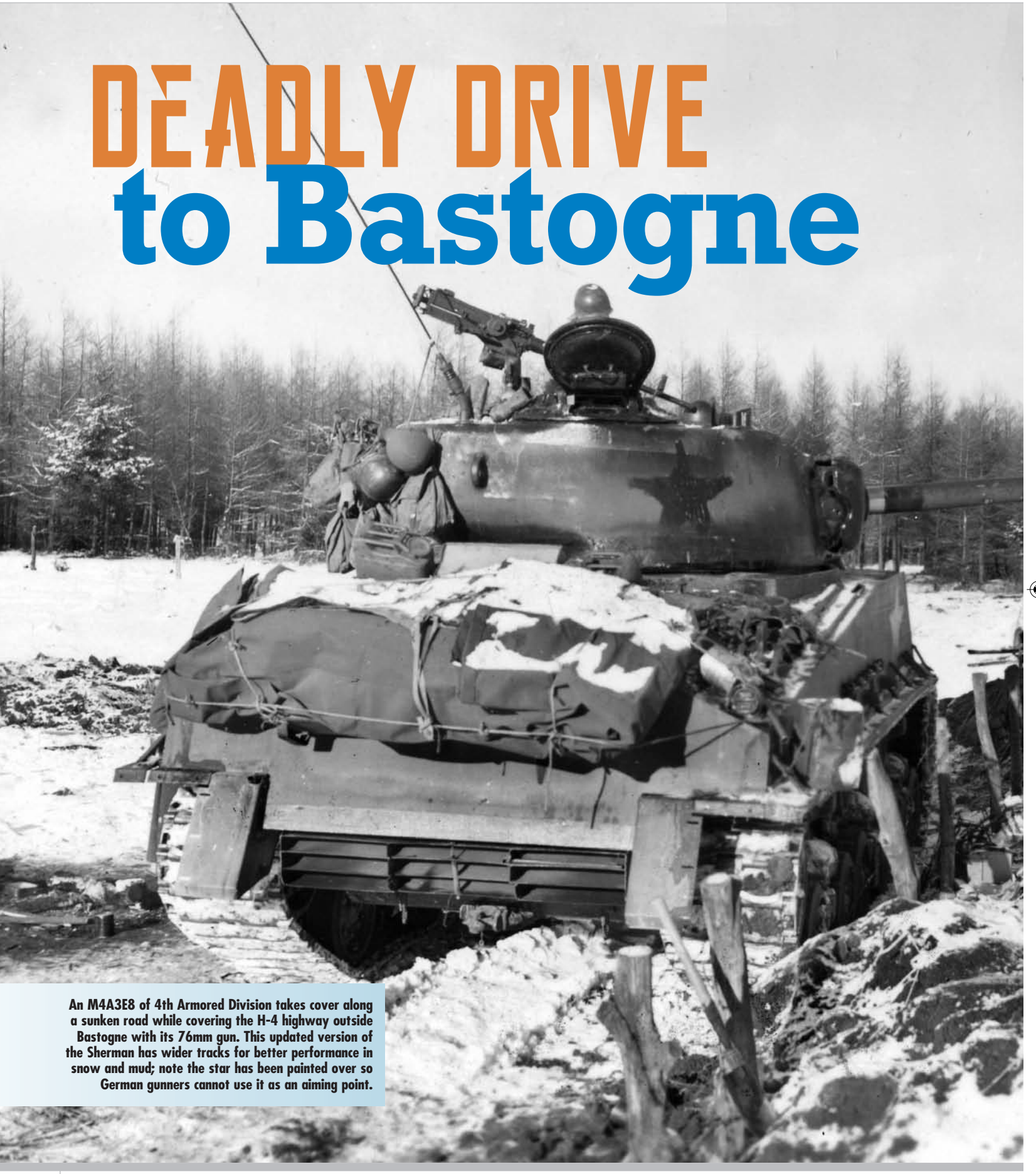
DEADLY DRIVE to Bastogne



An M4A3E8 of 4th Armored Division takes cover along a sunken road while covering the H-4 highway outside Bastogne with its 76mm gun. This updated version of the Sherman has wider tracks for better performance in snow and mud; note the star has been painted over so German gunners cannot use it as an aiming point.

National Archives

The U.S. 4th Armored Division's daring attack into the flank of the German Ardennes Offensive broke the siege of Bastogne in December 1944.

BY CHRISTOPHER MISKIMON

Private Bruce Fenchel was writing a letter home when his first sergeant burst into the barracks room.

"Pack your duffel bags and get ready to roll," the NCO said ominously. "One man go to the kitchen and take any food you can get." Their unit, D Company of the 8th Tank Battalion, part of the 4th Armored Division, was on their first break from the front lines after over 80 days of combat. Now that rest period seemed over just as it started. It was December 19, 1944.

The soldiers of D Company let out a collective groan of disappointment and frustration, but the First Sergeant kept issuing instructions. "The rest of you put the machine guns back on your tanks and gas them and be ready to roll in two hours." The company's senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) went on to explain the German army had broken through American lines in the Ardennes, north of their current location. The 4th Armored Division, as part of General George Patton's U.S. Third Army, would head north and tear into the enemy's flank.

The battalion commander, Major Albin Irzyk, wasted no time getting his unit moving. The 8th Tank Battalion formed part of the division's Combat Command B; each armored division divided its battalions into Combat Commands, designated A, B, and R (Reserve). Combat Command B (CCB) also contained an armored infantry battalion, a self-propelled artillery battalion, and supporting attachments of engineers, cavalry scouts, and tank destroyers. They left their temporary barracks in Lorraine, France, and set out for Belgium. The command's orders were to reach Bastogne, where a mixed U.S. force of paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division and elements of an armored combat command lay surrounded and besieged.

Three days later, Fenchel sat in the driver's seat of his M5 Stuart light tank, part of a column of vehicles pushing ahead toward Bastogne. They had driven all night on December 22, eager to reach the surrounded Americans in time. Patton, always aggressive, pushed his men to keep moving, aware that hitting the Germans hard and fast was the best way to beat them. Irzyk ordered a platoon each of jeep-mounted cavalry and light tanks to lead the way, depending on their better mobility to keep the advance in motion. Fenchel's tank platoon was chosen, and after refueling they kept going all night. Driving a tank at night was difficult; Fenchel once lost sight of the Stuart ahead of his until it suddenly appeared out of the darkness and he ran right into it. Luckily, there was no damage and the column got moving again.

The column had almost reached the village of Chaumont just as the sun appeared in the east, casting dim light across the frozen landscape. The Stuart crews pulled their tanks off the road for a brief maintenance check while the cavalrymen in the jeeps scouted ahead. Suddenly, gunfire erupted from both sides of the road. German paratroopers of the 5th Fallschirmjäger Division opened fire with machine guns and panzerfaust antitank weapons. From a distant ridge, Sturmgeschutz self-propelled assault guns sent high-velocity cannon shells screaming at the hapless cavalry platoon. Caught in a crossfire, two jeeps were soon aflame. Irzyk ordered the Stuarts to flush the German troops out of the tree line and keep the road clear. Most of the tanks were already fighting, their .30-caliber machine guns chattering as they moved across the fields toward the trees. The fight to reach Bastogne had begun.

The German Ardennes offensive caught the Allies by surprise, but they reacted swiftly. The sector was lightly defended by a combination of units either exhausted and understrength after fighting elsewhere or too green and inexperienced to be placed into heavy combat yet. The initial German attacks had mixed success; in some areas they punched through the thin American lines with relative ease. In other places, small ad hoc groups of GIs put up stiff resistance, causing delays the Germans could not afford. Hitler's goal was to reach the port city of Antwerp, Belgium, driving a wedge between the American and French forces to the south and their British Commonwealth comrades to the north. The plan was futile; even if the panzer columns reached Antwerp, the idea that this would destroy the Anglo-American

alliance was wishful thinking at best. As the German divisions pushed west, they formed a large salient in the American line; hence the operation's more famous name, the Battle of the Bulge.

The attack had to be dealt with, and General Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, saw this as an opportunity rather than a threat. Much of the Third Reich's remaining combat power was now rampaging through the Ardennes, exactly where the Allies could cut it off and destroy it. General Patton's Third Army was a key part of that response. Patton was an aggressive, offensive-minded leader with a reputation for bold action. His army was already preparing its own attack across the German border toward Frankfurt, scheduled for mid-December, when the Bulge fighting began on December 16, 1944.

With Patton's army already well-supplied and prepared, it made sense to pivot his forces to the north and smash them into the Germans' southern flank. It meant cancelling his own plans and moving over 100 miles, but Patton expressed confidence in his troops to Eisenhower and Bradley, commander of the US Twelfth Army Group; his GIs could get the job done. "But what the hell," he remarked, "We'll still be killing Krauts."

Patton chose three divisions organized into the U.S. III Corps to advance side-by-side for the pivot north. The 80th Infantry Division fell in on the right (east) flank, with the 26th Infantry Division in the center. The left flank belonged to Major General Hugh Gaffey's 4th Armored Division, and this included the route to Bastogne. The 4th Armored was one of Patton's favorites due to its good performance and aggressive leadership. It often served as the spearhead for Third Army's attacks, and now Patton expected it to lead the way to Bastogne. Though it was a daunting task, the 4th's leaders intended to do just that. Normally the division advanced with its two main Combat Commands, A and B, leading with the Reserve Command (R) held back to supply replacements for exhausted units or to exploit breakthroughs. By December 19, the division was moving.

The main German unit standing in 4th Armored's way was the 5th Fallschirmjäger Division, commanded by Oberst (Colonel) Ludwig Heilmann. His division had 16,000 troops organized into three infantry regiments (the 13th, 14th and 15th), supported by artillery, engineers, antitank and antiaircraft troops, and a mortar battalion. The German Command attached a brigade of Sturmgeschutz assault guns to increase the division's firepower. Like many German divisions at this stage of the war, it contained large numbers of former Luftwaffe personnel with little infantry training, including many of the leaders. There were also shortages of heavy weapons, including cannon, and even the Sturmgeschutz "brigade" had only 20 assault guns, probably StuG III models with 75mm guns. The division also lacked enough transport vehicles and was rated of "limited fighting quality" due to all these shortfalls. However, there were a few veterans spread through the ranks to stiffen the troops, and they were in dug-in defensive positions, the best place to put new troops. The frigid weather and harsh conditions also favored the defense.

The initial plan for 4th Armored Division assigned Brigadier General Herbert Earnest's Combat Command A (CCA) with the main effort, using the 35th Tank Battalion (Lt. Col. Delk Oden) and the 51st Armored Infantry Battalion (Major Dan Alanis) and supported by the 66th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. CCA would move to the town of Arlon and start its advance from there. There was a good road network leading north with only one town, Martelange, and several small villages along the route for the German to occupy for defense. There were also several forests noted on the maps. CCA was chosen for the main thrust largely because it had the most operational tanks in the division. The neighboring 26th Infantry Division guarded the flank to the east.

Brigadier General Holmes Dager's CCB secured CCA's western flank. The 8th Tank (Major Irzyk), 10th Armored Infantry (Major Harold Cohen) and 22nd Armored Field Artillery battalions fell under CCB. Their assigned road network was not as good, and several small towns and villages dotted the route. Combat Command Reserve (CCR), under Colonel Wendell Blanchard, contained the 37th Tank (Lt. Col. Creighton Abrams), 53rd Armored Infantry (Lt. Col. George Jacques), and 94th Armored Field Artillery battalions. Initially, CCR stayed in reserve as it normally would, but the difficult conditions as the attack went on forced the division to commit it fully to the battle. Though understrength and short over 20 M4 Shermans and four M5 Stuarts, CCR had the superb leadership of Lt. Col. Abrams, an aggressive and skilled officer.

Now, on December 22, the advance proceeded slowly. The weather worsened, with blizzards cutting visibility down to a few feet. Ironically, some of the division's worst impediments were caused by American combat engineers. As they retreated before the German advance, the engineers had blown up bridges and cratered roads to slow the enemy down. Now, American tanks needed those same roads and bridges, and both combat commands often had to wait for their own attached engineers to repair them.

While the engineers worked, General Earnest's CCA combined his two task forces so they could better advance along the available roads. Ahead of them, Able Troop of the 25th Cavalry Squadron scouted the route. Shortly before 11 AM, they found German troops dug in near the village of Flatzbourhof, Luxembourg. Soon the cavalrymen were engaged in a heavy firefight as CCA made its way north, driving through hilly country to Martelange, where they ran into more of the German line. The Sauer River wound along the northern edge of the town, with several bridges spanning the water. The Americans had to take those

BELOW: The low hills of the Ardennes region sprawl in the distance as tankers of the 8th Tank Battalion pause near the village of Hotte on December 22. OPPOSITE: A pair of M4 Shermans of the 35th Tank Battalion bivouac southwest of Bastogne near Vaux-les-Rosieres, just after Christmas, 1944. Even after reaching Bastogne, the German made efforts to cut the American corridor into the town.

National Archives

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bridges intact if they could. A and B companies, 51st Armored Infantry advanced into Martelange with two platoons of Shermans from Baker Company, 35th Tank Battalion. Other tanks occupied high ground southeast of the town to give fire support.

Some GIs rode in on tanks while others went in on foot. As the lead tanks reached the first intersection, it erupted into chaos. German machine gunners and riflemen opened fire, forcing the Americans from the backs of the tanks. Several panzerfaust antitank warheads flashed across the street as GIs scrambled for cover. Somehow, not a single American infantryman was even wounded, and every panzerfaust missed. Within moments the Americans recovered and returned fire. Rifle fire lashed at the Germans while tankers fired .30- and .50-caliber machine guns. The firing kept on, but neither side could gain the advantage; both armies fought stubbornly. The on-scene American commander, Major Alanis, realized they could not punch through, so one of his company commanders ordered a platoon of tanks to flank.

The 2nd Platoon of B Company, 35th Tank, moved out near dusk, with a platoon of infantry in tow. The German defenders missed them in the dark, and within minutes the Yanks arrived in the center of town at a large church. Several vehicles sat parked in the street; the tankers peppered them with machine-gun fire and pumped high-explosive 75mm rounds into the enemy defensive positions. The heavy firepower of the tanks quickly overwhelmed the Germans, placing most of Martelange in American hands. Unfortunately, another German line awaited them on the north side of the Sauer River, covering the bridges.

While CCA fought in Martelange, a few miles to the west CCB pushed toward Chaumont. Its scouts, the 3rd Platoon of B Troop, 25th Cavalry, pushed ahead through heavy snow, often barely able to see the road ahead, much less the enemy. Still, they kept searching. During the morning they found a small group of combat engineers from the 101st Airborne, cut off from their brothers in Bastogne. Private John DiBattista recalled, "Heavy beards. No helmets. They were so wet that the GI overcoats looked black." The scouts directed these stragglers south toward the main column and continued their mission.

Just after noon, the scouts drove over a small ridge and found the Sauer River. The road led straight to the river, but only rubble remained of the bridge. About 10 German soldiers guarded the remains. The troopers radioed their report to CCB but were spotted minutes later. Germans on a hill to the east pelted them with small-arms fire. DiBattista dove for cover as bullets struck the snow all around. Another soldier called for a medic; their lieutenant was hit. Someone radioed another contact report, giving the location of the groups firing at them. With the enemy located, 3rd Platoon fell back. DiBattista and a few others took refuge in a small house, where a woman started cooking for them. As she worked, German shells began soaring over the home, fired by a newly arrived German self-propelled gun. She kept cooking as if nothing were happening. Suddenly, a Sherman tank appeared and knocked out the German vehicle with cannon fire.

The tank belonged to Major Irzyk's 8th Tank Battalion. He realized the engineers needed time and cover to get a treadway bridge set up. The commander sent one platoon of tanks to the crossing site and another to a hill just southwest of it. Both platoons hammered at the Germans with their cannon, while Irzyk arranged a fire mission from his artillery. Three batteries responded, lashing the enemy's hill with 105mm high-explosive rounds. About 20 minutes later, a radio report came in. The surviving Germans were running away, the artillerymen were told, "mission complete."

German artillery fire crashed around the bridging site, but Irzyk sensed it was time to advance. He sent two platoons of infantry across the river to secure the far side. Observers spotted another platoon of Germans on another hill, and Irzyk called for more artillery. Three minutes later, 105 mm shells roared down onto the enemy. Immediately, the enemy artillery fire lessened; the Germans had lost their own spotters.

Technical Sergeant Roscoe V. Albertson added to the fire with his mortar when he spotted a nearby German machine-gun team. He carefully adjusted his weapon after each round even as enemy fire landed all around him. One of his rounds landed right on the machine-gun position, knocking it out. This proved too much for the rest of the German unit; 16 men stood up and surrendered to Albertson right away. He received a Silver Star for his coolness under fire.

As the engineers built their bridge and cleared a nearby minefield, Major Irzyk ordered fuel trucks up to top off every tank. Soon, they were ready to move out, with a new platoon of scouts to lead the way. The column advanced, and at first all was quiet. Nearing Chaumont, however, they ran into the German 14th Fallschirmjaeger Regiment's 8th Company. Other units of the regiment dotted the area, some able to join the fight.

This was where Bruce Fenchel, driving his light M5 tank, ran into trouble. The enemy opened fire during a halt, and Bruce was outside the tank doing maintenance. When bullets

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ALL OF A SUDDEN I WAS BEING COVERED WITH BLOOD," HE RECALLED. "I LOOKED UP AND SAW MY TANK COMMANDER ... HE WAS DEAD, BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN SHOT IN THE FACE. TWO OF OUR CREW NEVER EVEN GOT INSIDE THE TANK."

began bouncing off the armor of his tank, "I managed to crawl into my driver's seat with machine gun bullets ricocheting off my tank. All of a sudden I was being covered with blood," he recalled. "I looked up and saw my tank commander ... he was dead, because he had been shot in the face. Two of our crew never even got inside the tank."

Armor-piercing shells slammed into the other tanks, so Fenchel decided to get out of his own vehicle. He stumbled behind his M5 for cover from machine-gun fire, but then a shell struck, passing completely through his tank and past Fenchel's head. He moved away from the burning wreck just as an explosive round landed nearby, throwing him through the air and knocking him senseless. When he came to, Fenchel crawled into a ditch and waited until he saw a fuel truck retreating past him, the cab full of men. They let him jump onto the running boards and clung to him as they frantically drove away. After a time, his hands numb from the cold, he asked them to drop him at the next house they found. He knocked on the door, and the residents quickly pulled him inside, took him to the attic, and covered him in blankets. He hid there the rest of the day, hoping the Germans would not return.

American artillery started pelting the Germans, allowing the American survivors to pull back. Major Irzyk decided to use all CCB to get the enemy out of Chaumont. Tank and infantry platoons combined into small task forces to occupy high ground outside the town and provide firing positions. Other tank-infantry groups attacked Chaumont directly, preceded by a bombardment using three battalions of artillery. The weather cleared enough for squadrons of P-47 Thunderbolt fighter bombers to strafe and bomb the town and several wooded areas occupied by the Germans. In return, enemy counterbattery fire struck the American artillerymen, and one battery was even strafed by a pair of German Messerschmitt Me-109 fighters.

Brutal fighting occurred within Chaumont. Tanks columns fired constantly to keep the Germans suppressed. The lead tank fired forward, the next tank to the left, the third to the right, and so on. German assault guns fired back until they were driven back by the heavy fire. Meanwhile, GI infantry started rooting the Germans out of each building. A machine-gun team stopped Staff Sgt. Lumpkin Glenn's platoon, so he crawled up to the house and threw in several grenades; the enemy team fled. Outside Chaumont, screening U.S. cavalrymen saw a German force massing for a counterattack. The GIs opened fire, killing 40 enemy and destroying an anti-tank gun and a truck. By 4 PM, American tanks had reached the north end of town and hoped the battle was over.

Unfortunately, the fight was far from finished. Before the Americans could consolidate their gains, another German counterattack appeared, including several Tiger tanks and a few more assault guns. They took up unoccupied high ground north of town and pummeled the GIs of CCB with cannon fire. Several hundred German infantrymen attacked as well, pouring more fire on the shocked Americans. Irzyk and Major Cohen realized there was no time to form a coherent defense and ordered a retreat.

Even then, the soldiers of CCB fought bravely. Infantry NCO Charles Bennett ran through the enemy fire to rescue a wounded tank crew by jumping into their vehicle and driving it back to friendly lines. He earned a Silver Star for the act. Pfc James Carey made three trips in an abandoned German ambulance to get wounded men back to safety, receiving a Silver Star as well. A Distinguished Service Cross went to 1st Lt. Charles Gniot, who used a Browning Automatic Rifle to hold off the Germans while his platoon withdrew, but he did not survive to get his award.

Major Irzyk's own tank crew fought as well, firing at the enemy tanks while Irzyk sat in the open commander's hatch, instructing his driver to steer backwards because there was no room to turn around. Just as Irzyk thought they were safe, an 88mm round hit the tank. It ricocheted off the turret, knocked the crew around and left a hole in the armor the crew could see through. No one was seriously hurt, however, so they quickly got moving again.

The Americans pushed out of Chaumont and dug in on the south side of the town, but casualties were heavy. The battalion lost 11 tanks, including all of B Company's. A and C Companies had only a platoon of tanks each, and the infantry had suffered 70 casualties. As the Americans dug in, their artillery once again pelted the Germans, who had no plans to advance further, content to hold the Americans at Chaumont.

CCR spent the first part of the attack in its usual place—in reserve—but intelligence reports indicated a possible German counterattack forming on the division's right flank, where a gap appeared between them and the neighboring 26th Division. General Gaffey had little choice but to send in CCR to plug the hole in his line. A short radio call went out, and soon the 37th Tank Battalion's recon platoon was on the move, followed by a tank company and armored infantry from the 53rd. The icy roads made for slow going, but soon they ran into the Germans outside the village of Flatzbourhof just before noon on December 23. German troops from the 15th Fallschirmjaeger Regi-

ment dug in behind a railroad bed, and the surrounding woods put up heavy resistance.

Captain Jimmy Leach, leading B Company of the 37th, received a report of a German assault gun and a captured Sherman tank north of town. His artillery liaison, Captain Thomas J. Cooke, called in a Piper Cub spotter plane to watch for them. Leach put his three tank platoons to either side of the road leading into the village and advanced. First Platoon moved along the west side of the road. Staff Sgt. John Fitzpatrick led the platoon from the hatch of his Sherman, but a bullet struck him in the face, going through both cheeks and knocking out several teeth. He grimly stuck a bandage in his mouth to control the bleeding and kept going. Fitzpatrick realized most of the enemy fire came from a clump of trees to the northwest. He ordered Sergeant John Parks' tank to advance on the trees while the rest of the platoon provided covering fire.

Parks pushed ahead, driving over the railroad embankment. When his tank got near the trees, Parks suddenly fell into his hatch. His gunner, Herman Coffy, checked Parks and found a bullet hole just over his right eye. With his leader dead, Coffy climbed into the commander's hatch and took over. He ordered the driver, Russell Holland, to back the M4 over the embankment, but before they reached cover a German assault gun hit them and the tank burst into flame. Coffy and Holland got out, but Private Edward Clark did not. Captain Leach spotted the enemy vehicle from his own tank. He urged his driver forward, using the embankment as cover.

Once in position, Leach's tank was "hull-down," meaning only the turret lay exposed to enemy fire. His gunner, Corporal John Yaremchuk, first took aim at the captured Sherman. The first round went low. Loader Kenneth Jeffries pushed another round into the breech as Leach moved the tank a little further. That round also went low. They moved up again, and the third round crashed into the captured Sherman, which exploded in a ball of flame. Now having the range, Yaremchuk blasted two StuG assault guns behind the Sherman.

Next, the American artillery joined in, sending hundreds of 105mm high-explosive rounds into the woods. The barrage sent the enemy infantry running, some of them fleeing into Flatzbourhof and other going north. Infantry from the 53rd went into the woods to clean up while the tanks started to push into town. Second Lt. John Whitehill led A Company through Captain Leach's line and toward town. The attack stalled, however, when Whitehill's tank hit a mine, blowing off the left track. He got into another tank and continued, soon getting over the railroad. Whitehill saw some Germans moving into a house, but before he could act three rounds crashed into this tank. None of them penetrated, but two crewmen suffered injuries. Whitehill had to drive the tank back to the rear while 2nd Lt. Robert Gilson took command. Within minutes Gilson's tank was hit and Gilson wounded, so Whitehill returned, climbed onto the back of a Sherman, and led his company from there.

Company C took over the attack, but within minutes its own commander, Captain Charles Trover, died by a sniper's bullet. Lt. Col. Abrams called off the attack; the Americans would remain at Flatzbourhof for the night and advance on the next village, Bigonville, in the morning.

CCA found the Germans at Warnach in the late afternoon on December 23. The initial firefights led to general fighting when a group of American infantry in halftracks approached the town. Anti-tank guns destroyed two halftracks before falling to six American assault guns with 105mm howitzers. A patrol of M5 light tanks moved into town with artillery firing over their heads to cover them. They continued after dark, where two tank crews made a fateful mistake: They fired high-explosive and tracer rounds into some haystacks to provide light;

ABOVE: Armored infantry advance near Bastogne. Several GIs are carrying .30-caliber ammunition boxes. The large round object below the half track's machine gun is a spool for communications wire. BELOW: An M3A1 halftrack of the 4th Armored Division moves past a 25th Cavalry Group jeep knocked out during the fighting for Chaumont. OPPOSITE: The fighting at Chaumont took a heavy toll in American lives. Here, two slain GIs lie in a snowy field.

National Archives

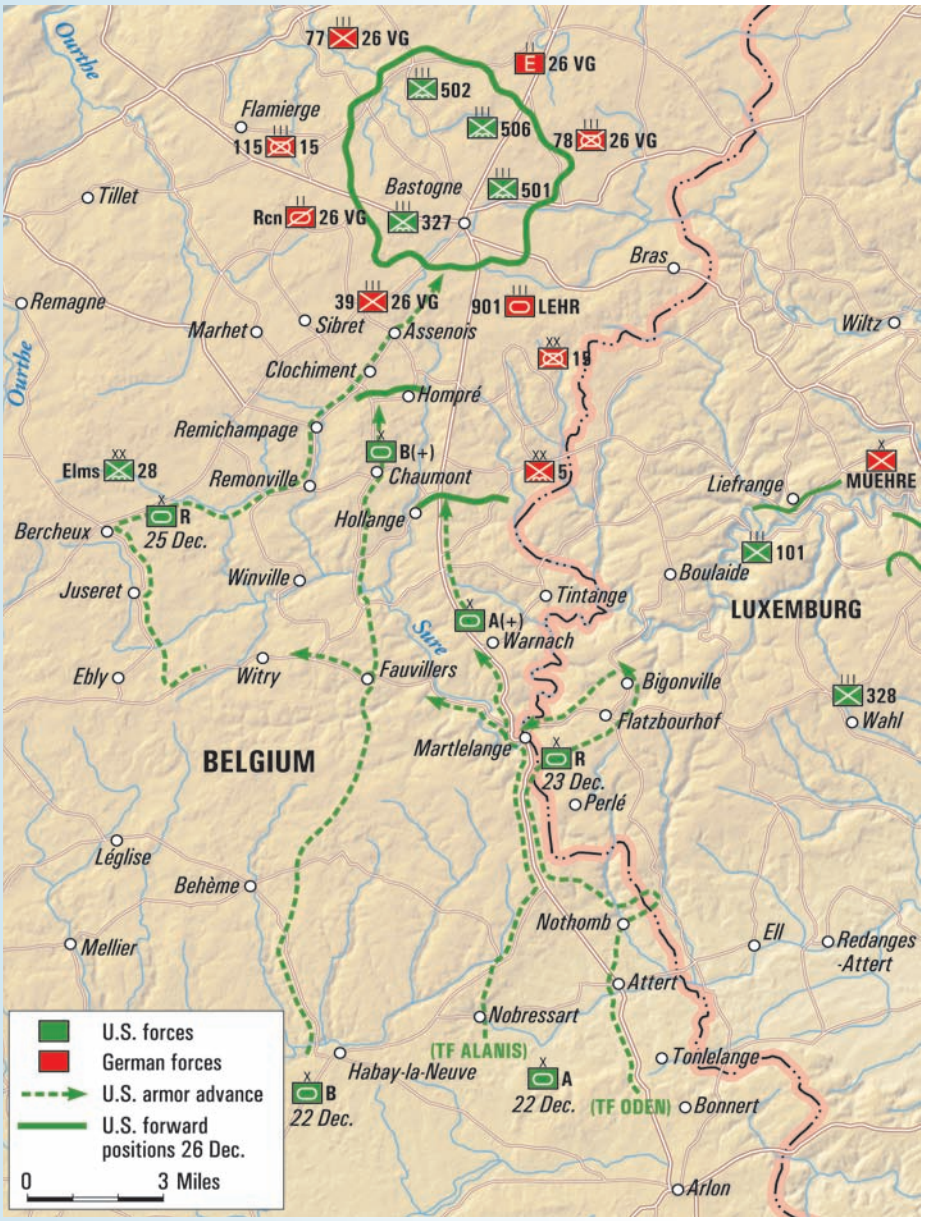
one haystack exploded as if ammunition were hidden inside it.

Unfortunately, the flames gave German gunners light as well, and within seconds both Stuarts were hit. Edward Rapp, a gunner in one of the tanks, bailed out and took cover. Suddenly, he realized the turret was blocking the hatches of the crewmen in the hull. He ran back to the tank and traversed his turret so they could escape. All of them took cover near some GIs setting up a machine gun. Despite the heavy fire, Rapp watched an infantryman climb aboard his tank and use its turret-mounted .30-caliber machine gun to fire on Germans fighting from nearby houses. Tracers flashed all around the man as he calmly returned fire, suppressing the enemy. Thanks to him, several Americans caught in the open got to safety.

Soon Sherman tanks arrived at Warnach and joined the fighting. Pfc Robert Riley served as a gunner in Baker Company, 35th Tank Battalion. Approaching in the dark, his tank commander, Sergeant John Foster, asked permission to fire a white phosphorus round for illumination. This time the risk paid off. Riley lit another haystack on fire, revealing two enemy assault guns. Riley's loader slammed a round into the breech just as the enemy vehicles moved to attack. He fired at the same moment as one of the StuGs; both rounds hit. The round hit the Sherman in the engine, starting a fire. The crew bailed out and ran for cover. Nearby, more StuGs dueled with Shermans. One well-hidden assault gun waited until a Sherman crew fired at an abandoned German vehicle and then hit the American tank before the crew could reload. The German crew did not see two other Shermans nearby; those tanks put several rounds into the assault gun, destroying it.

The destruction of the StuGs broke the morale of the German defenders in the area. They began running away, with American infantry shooting many down as they fled. Afterward, the GIs went from house to house, clearing them with grenades and submachine guns. Tankers supported them with cannon and machine guns. By late afternoon on December 24, Warnach belonged to CCA. A counterattack developed northeast of town, but concentrated American artillery stopped it cold.

Christmas Eve proved equally busy for CCR attacking Bigonville. Artillery pounded the defenses just before the American assault. Panzerfausts and mortars greeted A Company's tanks as they reached the village. Meanwhile, two platoons from Captain Leach's company forced their way into Bigonville, suppressing



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

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LEFT: The American 4th Armored's advance toward Bastogne followed a twisting network of roads with German paratroopers defending major villages and intersections. ABOVE: Sergeant John H Parks commanded a tank in the 37th Tank Battalion. He was killed in action standing in the hatch of his tank on December 23, fighting near Flatzbourhof. BELOW: A 4th Armored tank destroyed outside Bastogne. Both hits struck on the white identification star on the M4's hull, which German gunners used as an aiming point. Even the add-on armor plate did not save this tank from high-velocity German gunfire.

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An M5A1 light tank from D Company, 37th Tank Battalion leads a convoy of trucks into Bastogne on December 27. Infantrymen guard the flanks of the corridor from German attempts to reestablish the encirclement of the town.

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the enemy with machine-gun fire into every building they passed. As Leach's tanks pushed their way through the town, Lt. Col. Abrams urged Leach to push even harder. Leach in turn yelled at the infantry to keep clearing buildings. As he shouted encouragement from his tank's hatch, a bullet struck his helmet, slicing the sweatband inside and knocking him out. He awoke seconds later, got back up in his hatch, and kept giving orders.

Soon B Company pushed through to the north end of Bigonville to encircle the defenders. Small groups of German troops broke out; one group of 20 men simply ran between two Shermans and into a gulley before the tankers could bring their weapons to bear. The fighting remained difficult. Lieutenant Whitehill of A Company recalled the GI infantrymen, exhausted and understrength, becoming hard to move. Machine-gun nests in the houses held them up. At Abrams' suggestion, Whitehill's tanks switched to concrete-piercing fuses on their high-explosive shells. Designed to penetrate concrete bunker walls before exploding, they made short work of several machine-gun nests.

The Germans still resisted. Whitehill later wrote, "…a sniper was firing at me as I stood in the turret. His shells were flaking paint from the turret in my eyes as I peered out of the open hatch." Trying to save cannon ammunition, Whitehill returned fire with his submachine gun, but a round struck him in the hand. That convinced the lieutenant to use a round of 75mm high-explosive, which ended the sniper's career and cleared the street. The infantry started moving again, and soon the Americans made progress.

In the afternoon, a group of Germans tried to knock out the tanks supporting the American infantry as they methodically cleared houses. A panzerfaust struck one Sherman but caused no real damage. As the GIs tried to root the Germans out of each house, the tank crews tried a new tactic. They used a cannon round to blow a hole in each home's wall and then sprayed the interior with .50-caliber machine gun bullets, followed by another 75mm shell. Not long afterward, white flags appeared as the surviving Germans surrendered.

As CCR secured Bigonville, General Gaffey issued orders changing their mission. CCB experienced strong counterattacks from the west, so the division commander decided to send CCR to guard CCB's western (left) flank. The neighboring 26th Division would take over the Bigonville area. At the same time two battalions from the 80th Division's 318th Infantry Regiment were attached to 4th Armored to replace their heavy casualties in infantrymen. The move occurred overnight from Christmas Eve to Christmas Day.

While CCR moved west, CCA began its next move, an attack on the village of Tintange, a mile south of the Luxembourg border and 7.5 miles south of the Bastogne perimeter. General Earnest sent in the 1st Battalion, 318th Infantry and his own 51st Armored Infantry, reinforced with combat engineers and tank destroyers. The tanks of 35th Tank Battalion stayed in reserve to reinforce wherever a breakthrough occurred. Tintange sat atop a hill with a valley to the south. The Americans had to cross that valley under fire. The men of the 318th advanced before dawn, hoping for concealment from the Germans, but they were discovered and fired on with mortars and small arms.

In places, the valley was so steep the Germans simply rolled grenades down onto the GIs. Casualties mounted as heavy fire pinned them down. One squad leader, Staff Sgt. William Murphy, spotted one of the enemy machine-gun nests and took a grenade off his belt. Pulling the pin, he charged the German position. Just as he threw the grenade, a bullet killed him, and he dropped to the snow-covered ground. The grenade landed on target, however, and knocked out the nest. This selfless act of courage resulted in a posthumous Silver Star. Nearby, 2nd Lt. George Kane got up and advanced toward the enemy. Two platoons of GIs followed his brave example, and soon they reached their initial objective. He also earned a Silver Star, but luckily lived to receive it.

Company B, 318th, waited in reserve during the initial advance. Seeing the situation, the company commander, Captain Reid McAllister, asked permission to join the attack. This was granted, and his understrength company of 58 men moved out. They immediately took casualties as well and were soon pinned down. Luckily, help arrived from several sources. Some tanks moved up to lend fire support. Overhead, a flight of eight P-47s appeared and dropped bombs and rockets on Tintange before strafing with their .50-caliber machine guns. As the pilots withdrew, they saw the American infantry below, advancing to the outskirts of town. This was followed by a two-hour artillery barrage before the GIs moved in to clear out the survivors. Tintange now belonged to the U.S. Army, but patrols sent toward the

next objective, Hollange, met heavy resistance. With dusk approaching, that next village would have to wait until morning.

As CCR moved to their left flank, CCB still struggled to take Chaumont. Second Battalion, 318th Infantry joined in for the push to reclaim the town. Major Irzyk assigned them to clear the woods south of Chaumont so the rest of CCB could push forward into the settlement. After taking the town, they would advance to the high ground to the north to prevent the Germans from making another counterattack from there.

In Chaumont, Bruce Fenchel still hid inside the attic of a civilian home. German troops entered the house, and Bruce listened as they questioned the family and sang Christmas songs. Eventually they left, and the family brought Bruce downstairs and ate a Christmas Eve dinner with him. Afterward, they played cards until Christmas morning, when Fenchel returned to the attic.

On Christmas morning the German received unenviable gifts: American artillery and air strikes. First, the 318th's infantry advanced through the woods, clearing them in a few hours of intense fighting. Their battalion commander later said, "It was difficult to oust the paratroopers out of their foxholes and many were bayoneted while still in them." Irzyk sent two platoons of light tanks in support, and by 10:30 AM the woods were in American hands. As the rest of CCB started advancing, Irzyk called down the artillery. For 20 minutes, three dozen howitzers rained hundreds of shells on Chaumont, battering the Germans but not breaking them.

The 318th infantry tried crossing a field into the town but were stopped by heavy machine-gun fire. Again, individual soldiers made the difference. Sergeant John McNiff spotted a path leading to an enemy machine gun. He crawled along it until getting close enough to throw a grenade. Just after it exploded, he emptied his M1 rifle into the gun crew. Two died, and the other two surrendered. Nearby, Sergeant Celestino Lucero found another German machine gun. Telling his squad to stay still, he also crawled to the enemy nest and silenced it with grenades. Both men received the Silver Star. After recovering from an artillery burst that left him senseless, Pfc William South crawled 100 yards to flank a German position and spray it with fire from his BAR. He killed two Germans and captured four, earning a Bronze Star.

Pfc Roscoe Putnam found a German MG42 machine gun firing from a barn 150 yards away. As bullets tore into his comrades, he sprinted toward the structure. After 25 yards the Germans

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ABOVE: Soldiers of the 10th Armored Infantry cross a snowy field during the advance on Bastogne. A column of smoke reveals an air strike or artillery fire against the defending Germans. BELOW: As artillery pounds a German position in the distance, a gunner on a 4th Armored Division halftrack lifts the feed tray cover on his .50-caliber machine gun to reload it. German troops feared the powerful .50 as they had nothing like it. OPPOSITE: The first tank to reach Bastogne was Cobra King, commanded by Lt. Charles Boggess of C Company, 37th Tank Battalion. Cobra King was a "jumbo" Sherman, an assault tank with six inches of armor on the turret and added armor on the hull.

RETURNING TO BASTOGNE IN 1984, CHARLES BOGGESS TOLD A REPORTER, "I BELIEVE IT IS APPOINTED TO EACH MAN TO HAVE A FEW MINUTES OF GLORY IN HIS LIFE. MINE LASTED FOUR MILES AND 25 MINUTES."

turned their gun toward him, so he crumpled to the ground as though shot. The trick worked, and the Germans pivoted their weapon toward other GIs. Putnam got up and ran the rest of the way to the barn, tossed in two grenades, and burst in firing his rifle. None of the Germans inside were killed, but they all surrendered.

The 318th's bravery allowed the rest of CCB to get into Chaumont. GIs cleared the houses, supported by tanks. The 8th Tank battalion recovered seven Shermans lost during the earlier counterattack. From his attic perch, Bruce Fenchel saw the American tanks enter the town and ran down into the street. The first tank he saw was an M5 Stuart, driven by the gunner of his old tank. Fenchel told the man he wanted to go home. The gunner replied, "I'm going up in the turret of this tank and you're getting into the driver's seat." Chaumont was captured, and Fenchel was back in the war.

After moving to CCB's left flank, CCR pushed hard against the Germans. As the tanks pushed through each village, infantry was detached to clear it. Bastogne lay only a few miles away, and Abrams wanted his armor to reach it. Now the Americans were running into German units surrounding Bastogne, giving their enemy the difficult task of defending from two directions. Tank and infantry companies rotated through the lead position; one even used a bulldozer to push a stone fence into a crater in a small bridge, allowing them to maintain the advance. Dangerously close artillery fire landed just ahead of the lead tanks to keep the Germans suppressed.

At the village of Remoiville, some Germans chose to fight to the death, so the GIs obliged them with grenades and flamethrowers. Within a few hours the surviving Germans surrendered. The next morning, December 26, Abrams resumed the advance, hitting the town of Remichampagne. Captain Leach's B Company pelted the town with cannon fire until the German occupants fled into some nearby woods. A flight of P-47s appeared and doused the woods in bombs, rockets, and napalm. Some infantry cleared the town while the tanks pushed on.

More P-47s arrived to hit anti-tank guns spotted at the next village, Clochimont. Even Abrams joined the battle, ordering his tank, named "Thunderbolt VI," forward to engage a self-propelled gun. At 1,000 yards, his gunner destroyed it with a single shot. Captain Leach said, "I recommended him for the DSC right there. After all here's the Colonel—a lot of colonels stay back at the goddamn flagpole but not Abrams. So he knocked that gun out."

The final village on the way to Bastogne was Assenois. CCR was so close they watched a supply drop by C-47s over the besieged town. Company C, 37th Tank Battalion, took the lead with nine tanks, commanded by Lieutenant Charles Boggess. He took over the lead tank, an up-armored M4A3E2 "Jumbo" Sherman named "Cobra King." Everyone was to follow him and drive for Bastogne. Artillery would cover their flanks, and other tanks and half-tracks would follow.

The column sprayed gunfire ahead, left and right as it moved at full speed. Other tanks followed, firing into the woods to protect C Company. As Boggess reached Assenois, the artillery barrage started, hammering the German anti-tank and artillery crews and preventing them from firing at the Americans. Company C was almost through the town when a few Allied artillery rounds landed short, causing casualties and stopping part of the column. A few intrepid Germans ran onto the road and laid some mines in the gap. Boggess and three tanks kept going.

Soon they found a pillbox, and Boggess told his gunner to put some rounds into it. After destroying it, "I saw the enemy in confusion on both sides of the road. Obviously, they were surprised … some were standing in a chow line. They fell like dominoes," Boggess wrote. Next, they passed a small field littered with parachutes from the recent supply drop. Now near the American lines around Bastogne, they slowed down.

"We cautiously approached a line of foxholes … out of each hole, a machine gun was leveled at my tank." Boggess knew the Germans were using captured American vehicles and uniforms, so he shouted, "Come on out, this is the 4th Armored." The GIs stayed in their holes. Boggess kept calling out until an officer came out of his foxhole and approached. He reached up a hand, and with a smile said, "I'm Lt. Webster of the 326th Engineers, 101st Airborne Division. Glad to see you." Boggess took the offered hand, satisfied his company was the one that broke the siege of Bastogne.

Hours of fighting remained while CCR secured the route and cleared out the last German defenders. Several GIs ran onto the road under fire and cleared it of the German mines, allowing the column to continue. German counterattacks tried to close the narrow opening into Bastogne, but none succeeded. It took over a month of hard fighting, but the Battle of the Bulge ended in German defeat, inflicting losses the Reich couldn't afford. But for the moment, CCR and 4th Armored were happy; they had achieved their objective.

Returning to Bastogne in 1984, Charles Boggess told a reporter, "I believe it is appointed to each man to have a few minutes of glory in his life. Mine lasted four miles and 25 minutes." □

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.*

National Archives

The Battle of Savo Island, August 8-9, 1942, was the first major naval engagement of the Guadalcanal Campaign. In response to American amphibious landings commencing on August 7 on Guadalcanal and nearby Tulagi and Florida islands, the Japanese mobilized a task force of seven cruisers and one destroyer. The Japanese task force sailed down New Georgia Sound ("the Slot") intending to interrupt the landings by attacking the supporting amphibious fleet and its screening force. The American screening force consisted of eight cruisers and 15 destroyers, of which five cruisers and seven destroyers were involved in the Battle of Savo Island.

The Japanese task force thoroughly surprised and routed the screening force, sinking three American cruisers in a matter of minutes and damaging an Australian cruiser so badly it later had to be scuttled. Nearly 1,100 Allied personnel were killed in the attack. The Japanese task force suffered only light damage.

Despite its early success and fearing air attacks, the Japanese task force withdrew after the Battle of Savo Island rather than attempt to destroy the U.S. invasion transports. The American carrier fleet, fearing a Japanese attack, had already withdrawn.

The Japanese attack induced the remaining Allied ships to withdraw before all supplies had been unloaded; this premature withdrawal of the supporting fleet left the Marines on Guadalcanal in a precarious situa-

Eyewitness at the BATTLE OF SAVO

tion, with limited supplies, equipment, and food.

The destroyer USS *Ellet* arrived off Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942, and led the task force into Guadalcanal and Tulagi Harbor. According to the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, on August 9, the *Ellet* rescued 41 officers and 461 men from *Quincy* (CA-39) and one man from *Astoria* (CA-34), cruisers sunk in the Battle of Savo Island the night before. The *Ellet* then joined the destroyer USS *Selfridge* (DD-367) in sinking the hulk of HMAS *Canberra*, hopelessly battered in the same battle.

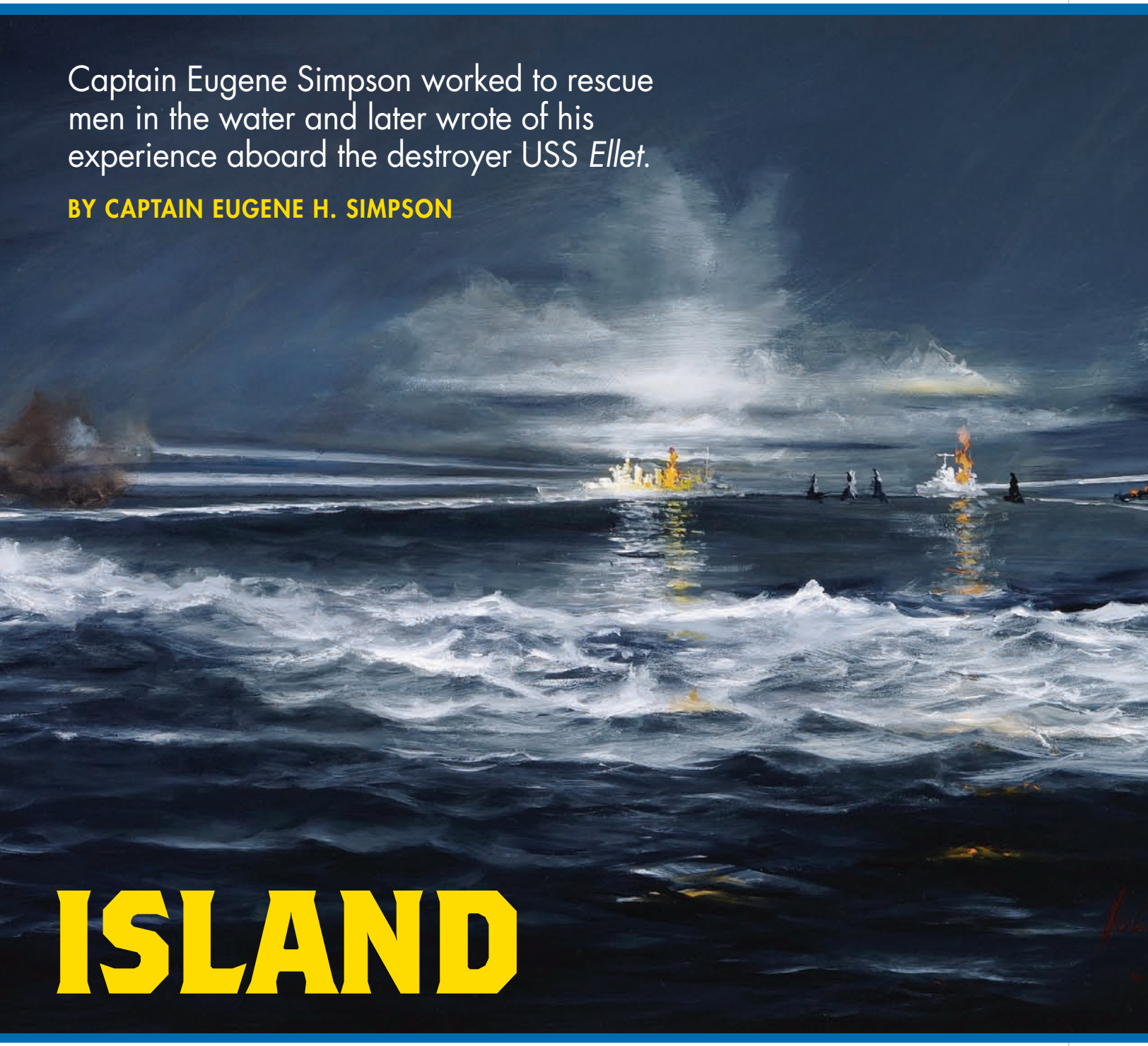
The following is the eyewitness account of Captain Eugene Simpson, who was serving as the engineering officer aboard the *Ellet* during the events of August 8-9, 1942. He provides an inspiring and unforgettable account of the heroism he witnessed:

On the night of August 8 and the morning of August 9, 1942, occurred the most dramatic and traumatic experience that happened to me in World War II.

In this painting by war artist John Hamilton, the Japanese light cruiser *Yubari* fires its main batteries and prepares to launch torpedoes as its searchlights illuminate distant targets, possibly including the destroyer USS *Ralph Talbot* and the cruiser USS *Vincennes*. During the Battle of Savo Island, *Yubari* is thought to have scored several hits on *Ralph Talbot* with its 5.5-inch guns and to have fired at least one of the torpedoes which sank *Vincennes*.

Captain Eugene Simpson worked to rescue men in the water and later wrote of his experience aboard the destroyer USS *Ellet*.

BY CAPTAIN EUGENE H. SIMPSON



ISLAND

Both: Naval History and Heritage Command

TOP: The destroyer USS *Ellet* is photographed at sea in February 1939. Eugene Simpson served as an officer aboard the destroyer during the disastrous Battle of Savo Island in the Solomons in August 1942. ABOVE: Sailors aboard the destroyer USS *Ellet* look at the wreckage of a Japanese Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" bomber shot down during a torpedo attack against American ships on August 8, 1942. A day earlier, U.S. Marines had stormed ashore on the island of Guadalcanal in the first offensive action of American forces on land in the Pacific theater. OPPOSITE: An unknown Japanese war artist produced this painting titled "Night Battle Off Savo Island," depicting the wake of a torpedo speeding toward and just impacting the hull of an American warship while another appears to have struck home seconds earlier. Although the silhouette of the American vessel appears to be that of an aircraft carrier, there were no aircraft carriers in the vicinity of the night action of August 8-9, 1942.

By way of background, during our approach to Guadalcanal our ship (the destroyer USS *Ellet* (DD 398)) had prepared to pick up survivors in the event that some of our ships were sunk. We had some serious discussions concerning how it was to be done. We actually held a couple of drills manning our survivor pickup stations.

We divided the ship into three main areas:

(1) Those survivors who appeared to have major injuries were to be sent to the wardroom, which was just forward of the break in the main deck. Our doctor, who was an obstetrician in civilian life, would man the wardroom operating table along with one corpsman.

(2) Those personnel who were wounded in some manner but could still manage for themselves would be routed to the forward living and berthing spaces. Our chief corpsman would be in charge there.

(3) Those that appeared to be uninjured or simply in shock would be routed to the after living spaces and sent below. One corpsman would be in charge there.

The after-boiler room, the entrance to which was just forward of amidships, would be manned to make hot coffee, which could be laced with torpedo alcohol if necessary. Torpedo alcohol was pure grain alcohol, and I was the custodian. I kept it in my room just forward of the wardroom under lock and key.

Our officers were stationed as follows: The first lieutenant manned the forecastle. Since I was the engineer officer and the engine room was approximately amidships, I had charge of the amidships port of the ship. The junior ensign had charge of the fantail, or after portion of the ship. All stations had cargo nets that could be put over the side for the survivors to climb up. There were three volunteer swimmers each rigged with a halter to which a line could be attached. They each carried a bucket with their lines neatly coiled so the lines would play out easily. The idea was that with the ship stopped, it could not be maneuvered. If a man was in the water some distance from the ship, a swimmer would go over the side and proceed to the man. Then the man and the swimmer could be pulled back to the ship by the line attached to the swimmer's harness.

My station amidships was the most logical place to bring people aboard. There were four quadruple torpedo tubes there with a small torpedo davit behind each one. As time went by, we equipped these torpedo davits with a rope-supporting strap so that a wounded man could be placed in this sling with the sling either under his arms or under seat and be hoisted aboard. Little did we know how useful these preparations would be.

At midnight on August 8, I took over the watch as officer-of-the-deck. We had been at general quarters all day. We had started out by supporting the Marines on the Tulagi side of the bay by gunfire. Then, we had steamed out in the bay to face the torpedo attack by the Japanese two-engine bombers. After this, we resumed our fire-support mission for the Marines on Tulagi.

We had gone to a watch status about 9:00 that night. Everyone was dead tired, with most of the men off watch sleeping somewhere near their general-quarters station. The captain had a lean-to constructed on the portside of the superstructure just behind the bridge. He was sleeping in this pipe-rail bunk under a canvas to ward off rain. The night orders had word that some Japanese warships had been sighted some hundreds of miles up the coast, but there was no thought of their arriving before morning.

Our afternoon bombardment had started a large fire on the Tulagi side, and we were steaming back and forth at slow speed using the fire as a reference point on when to turn and maintaining our distance from the beach by the use of the air-search radar, and by using eyesight. Our charts were prepared by a Russian survey in 1905 and were very unreliable, especially in regard to depth of water. They did give, however, the general outline of the island and prominent landmarks.

Three cruisers, USS *Quincy* (CA-39), USS *Vincennes* (CA-44), and USS *Astoria* (CA-34), were steaming in column with a destroyer screen well to the east of us. I had dimly sighted them once about 1:00 AM. The sky was overcast with moonlight shining through intermittently. There was occasional rain.

Suddenly, at almost exactly 2:00 AM the TBS (Talk Between Ships) loudspeaker located on the bridge erupted into sound, "Warning! Warning! Three ships sighted off Savo Island."

I turned around and automatically hit the general alarm that started squawking immediately, ordered the boatswain's mate to sound general quarters over the loudspeaker system, and rushed around the port corner of the bridge and hit the canvas of the captain's lean-to with my open hand. "Captain, someone just yelled 'three ships off Savo Island,'" I reported.

The captain raised up in his bunk, hitting his head with a violent thump on the pipe-rail extension over his head. I heard his feet hit the deck as I hustled back onto the bridge. Just about this time, a full salvo of heavy caliber guns went off in the vicinity of Savo Island. Several shells went roaring overhead and some ricocheted down the water some distance from us on our port side.

By this time the executive officer, LCDR J.D. Whitfield, was on the bridge and demanded to know where we were. I told him as best I could. He relieved me, and I hustled below to the engine room.

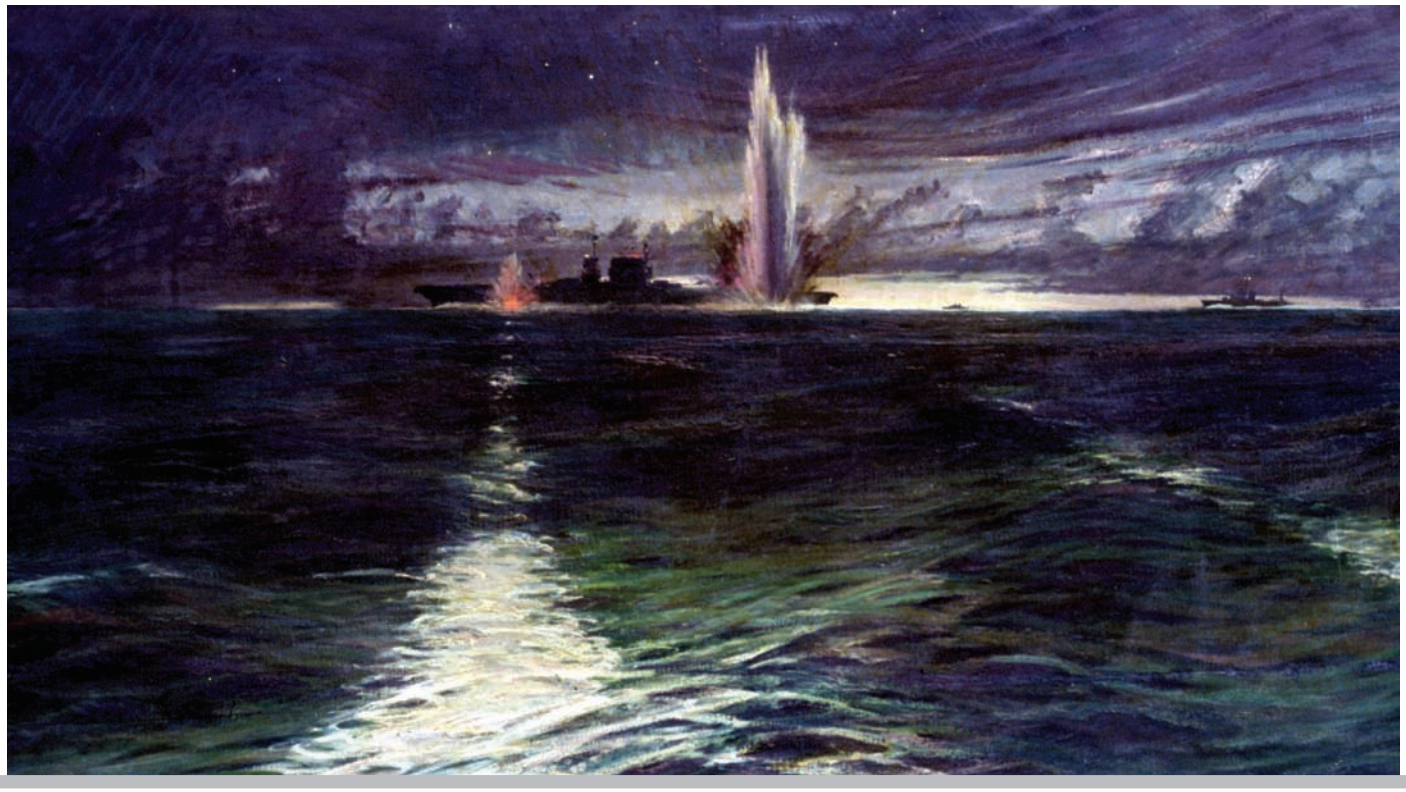
As I slid down the polished handrail on the ladder leading to the engine room, I shouted to Chief Vaughn, my trusted leading chief petty officer, "Have you got Big Ben open?" "Big Ben" was a large valve on the main steam line that admitted high-pressure steam directly into the intermediate-pressure turbine and was only opened when speeds of more than 30 knots were required.

"Of course," he replied. "We've got all boilers on the line, too," he said. There was nothing for me to do but stand there and watch. There was a battle going on—we could hear guns going off at a distance.

Suddenly the annunciator rang, and it registered "All Ahead Bendix." The annunciator was marked off in sections—Ahead 1/3, Ahead 2/3, Standard, Full, Flank, and then the last section was marked "Bendix Mfg. Co." When the annunciator rang up "Bendix," it meant "give her all you've got," and the throttle was gradually opened all the way without dropping the steam pressure too much, eventually resulting in full power being generated.

We immediately felt the acceleration in our feet as the throttles were opened. Suddenly the annunciator went from "All Ahead Bendix" to "Stop." As the big throttle was closed, I heard

I REMEMBER LOOKING AT MY SWIMMER WITH HIS LINE TENDER THINKING OF THE SHARKS AND SAYING, "ARE YOU READY?" HE SAID, "HELL YES, LET'S GO." I POINTED TO A LARGE NET FULL OF SWIMMERS AND SAID, "GET THEM."



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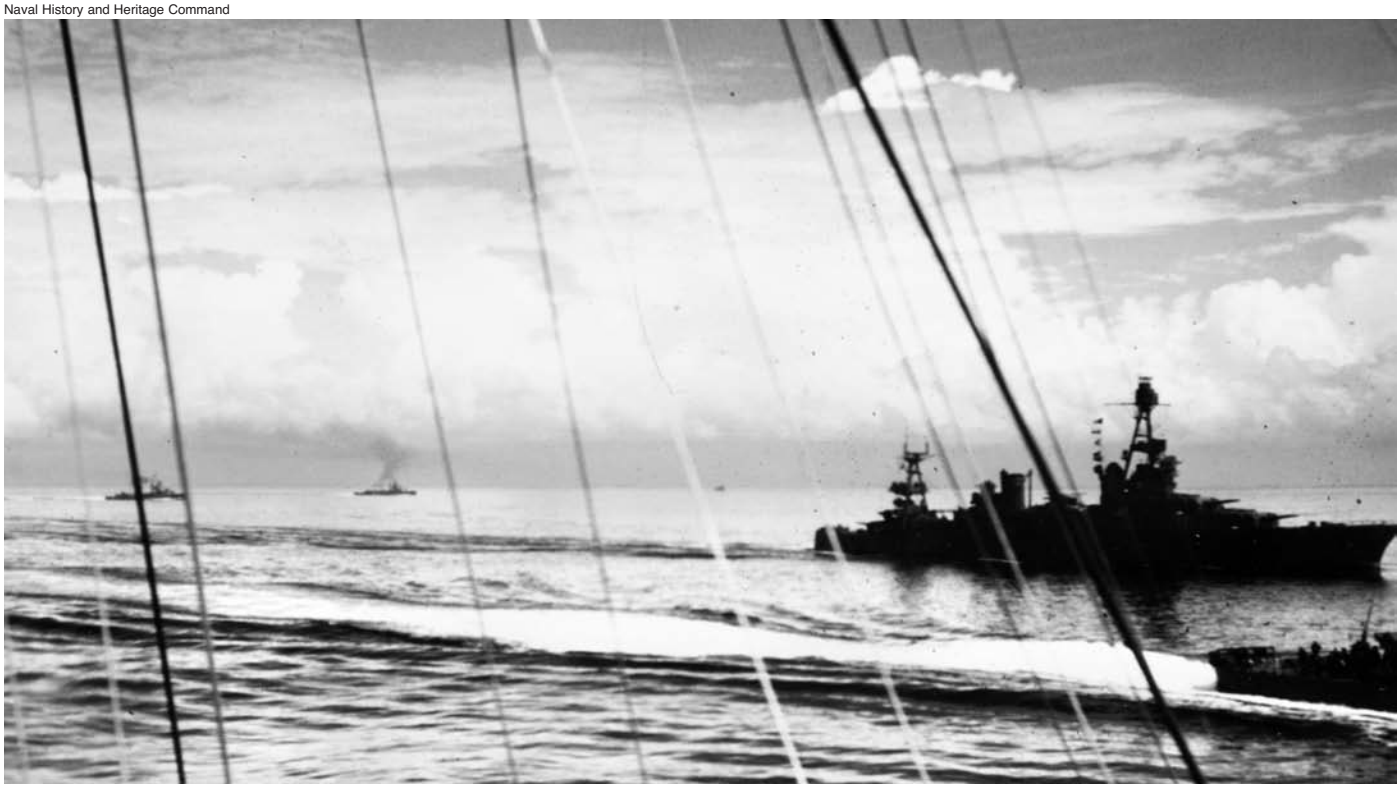


On August 9, following the Battle of Savo Island, a U.S. Navy photographer on USS *Ellet* captured this image of the cruiser USS *Chicago* at right, off Tulagi. The stern of an accompanying destroyer is also visible adjacent to *Chicago,* and other American ships are seen in the distance.

the safety valves lift on the boilers and I cursed, but then came the order to "Back Full," and that took all the steam. Then "Ahead Flank" followed by "Back Full" and then "Stop." Then over the loudspeaker came, "All hands man your rescue survivors stations."

I emerged from the engine room to the main deck to a scene of utter chaos. Everywhere I looked on the starboard side, there were men in the water, all yelling for help. Some were trying to swim to the ship, but most were in life rafts or life nets and they could not move. An occasional shark could be seen, too. They, of course, were busy.

Most of the men designated to man the amidships station had, by now, appeared. The first thing was to cut the lashings on the cargo nets and to rig them over the side. I remember looking at my swimmer with his line tender thinking of the sharks and saying, "Are you ready?" He said, "Hell yes, let's go." I pointed to a large net full of swimmers and said, "Get them." And he went over the side with a dive and swam strongly to the net. When he reached the net he waved his arm and we slowly pulled the whole mess alongside, maybe 30 or 40 men.

They were all in shock, with extremely white faces and a sort of vacant look. A lot of them could not climb the nets and had to be assisted. There were plenty of wounded ones, too, both from shell fire and shark bites. I saw one shark leap into a net and lay there thrashing about with jaws snapping until the shark was thrown out by the men in the net.

All of the swimmers congregated amidships as the life nets and rafts started arriving. To their credit, I did not see one hesitate to immediately turn around and head back for another net or raft after they were pulled alongside.

As one of the first groups was pulled aboard, a tall officer came up to me and said, "I'm a doctor and (pointing to another officer) so is he. Where do I go?" "You belong in the wardroom," I said, pointing the way, "but you better have a short of coffee and alcohol before you go." I pointed to the after-fireroom hatch, and he went below to emerge a short time later.

By this time, my people were carrying out the basic plan, laying the people who were badly wounded out like cordwood on the starboard side just aft of the wardroom. Those that were able to walk, but were bloody, were sent forward up the portside and down into the forward living spaces and mess hall, and the people who appeared to be unwounded were sent aft and down into the aft living spaces.

I had read of the great sea battles in the days of sail with John Paul Jones and Lord Nelson. I remembered that the white decks had run red with blood. That's exactly what happened to us that night as blood ran down the main deck from those people waiting to get into the wardroom to see the doctors. It wasn't too long before I sent a sailor into the superstructure aft to get a bucket of sand to put on the deck. It was getting too slippery to stand on. About 4:30 AM we started running out of survivors to pull aboard, and it began to be daylight.

The people in the after fireroom called up that they had run out of alcohol. I decided that things were calm enough that I could go forward and bring back another gallon. I picked my way up the starboard side, carefully avoiding the people laying there, and entered the wardroom.

There were people all over the wardroom, and blood was everywhere. The wardroom table had one of those big operating lights over it, and it gave out a bright, garish light illuminating the whisker stubble on the white faces of the doctors and their helpers. As I went through the entrance en route to my room on the starboard side just forward of the wardroom, I saw that the wardroom table was covered with a bloody sheet, and a man was stretched out on it. He was bandaged in various places. One of the doctors was leaning over him with a stethoscope listening to his heart. "He's dead," said the doctor.

Our doctor spoke up and said, "Well, he just died, then. He was alive a few seconds ago."

Another doctor said, "Let's start his pump up." With that, he jabbed a needle that looked

about four inches long into the man's chest. I could see his heart start pumping. Someone said, "No pulse." Another said, "Let's give him something to pump." He hung a bottle of plasma overhead and put the needle into the man's arm. That man was alive and conscious when we transferred him in the morning.

I picked my way through the wardroom and entered my room. It had two bunks and both contained men. I got my alcohol from the locked drawer. As I turned to back out, I noticed that the man in the top bunk was lying in the bunk with his arm extended out to one side. I said to myself, "I'll fold that arm back across his chest." I reached up to do that. He was dead and rigor mortis had set in. The arm was rigidly stiff. I carefully left him just the way he was and made my way back to the midship station.

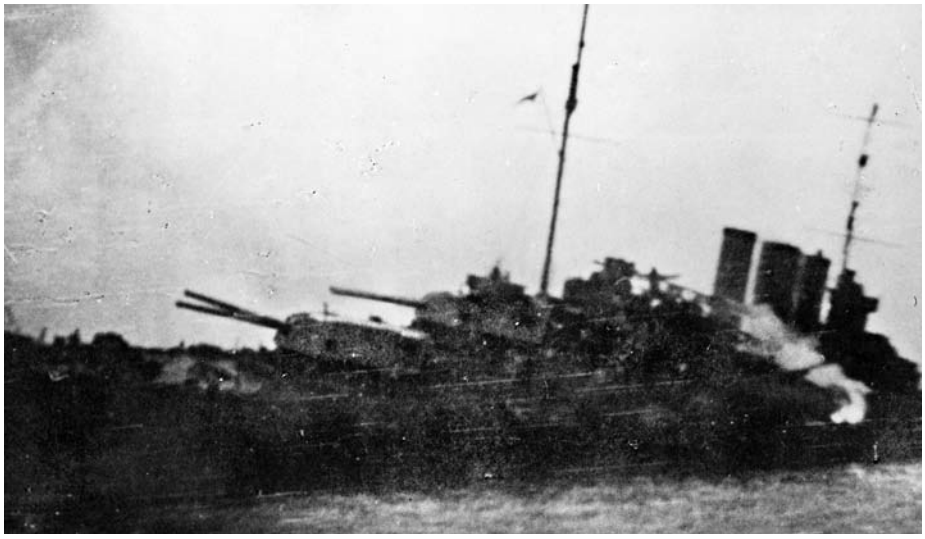
So passed the night of August 8 and the morning of August 9, 1942. The cruiser *Astoria* burned all night like a Ku Klux Klan fiery cross in the darkness. The *Quincy* and *Vincennes* had gone down, struck by torpedoes. We picked up 547 people, which was quite a load for a destroyer whose normal wartime complement was just over 300 personnel.

Just before 8:00 AM on August 9, we were ordered to proceed to the east of Savo Island and assist in sinking the *Canberra*, an Australian cruiser. We found out later that she had been out in the middle of the bay when the attack came, and she went to full speed to join the battle. As she headed for the action, she caught at least one torpedo in the bow section of the ship. The *Canberra* pursued the enemy eastward nevertheless and eventually was stopped by progressive flooding and was forced to abandon ship.

Several destroyers had come alongside the *Canberra* and taken off all personnel. As we headed for the scene, all of the survivors we had on board went out on the main deck and 01 levels. The ship quickly got top heavy. We managed to get the survivors back below and the ship became stable again.

When we arrived on the scene, we were ordered to torpedo the *Canberra*, which was down by the bow and listing slightly. Our torpedoes were equipped with the MK6 magnetic exploder. As we drew parallel to the *Canberra*, we fired one torpedo directly under the bridge. When the torpedo exploded, instead of a spectacular geyser of water appearing, there was only a large muddy looking bubble. The entire ship, however, staggered and shortly afterward sank by the bow, disappearing with the propellers being the last part to go under. Thus, we had the dubious distinction of sinking one of our allies' ships in the first battle of Savo Island.

Australian War Memorial



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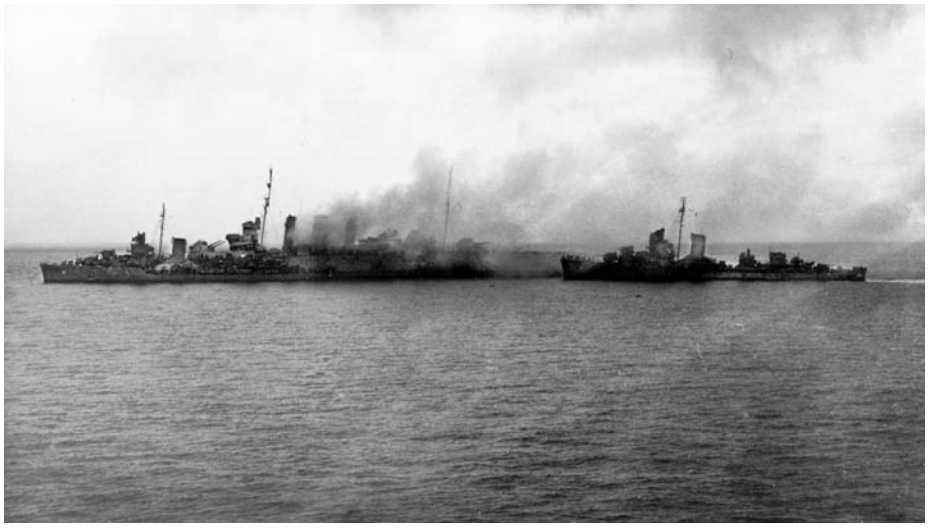


TOP: The cruiser HMAS *Canberra,* mortally wounded during the battle, remains stubbornly afloat although the ship has been ravaged by fire and internal explosions. ABOVE: On the morning of August 9, the destroyers USS *Blue* and USS *Patterson* maneuver close to the stricken cruiser HMAS *Canberra* to remove crewmen from the doomed vessel. Soon after, the destroyer USS *Ellet* was ordered to fire torpedoes into the hulk of the Australian cruiser to sink it.

We transferred the survivors about noon to a transport at Guadalcanal that was acting as a hospital ship. It took about two days to clean up the *Ellet*. I'll never forget that night and the sight of the sharks tearing at the rafts and trying to get at the wounded.

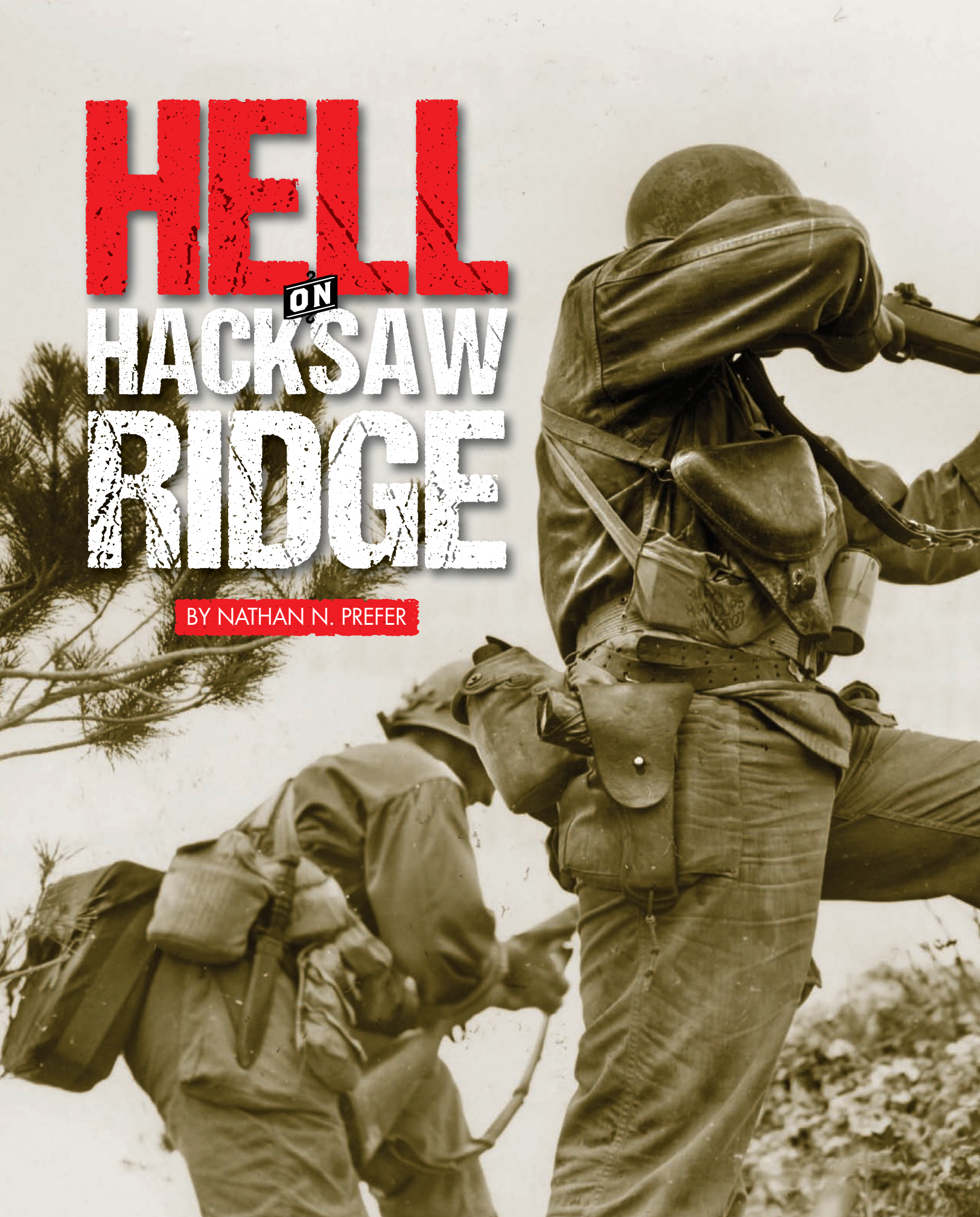
Captain Eugene H. Simpson (1916-1991) graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1939. He served on board destroyers in the Pacific from February 1940 through 1945. He served on the Benham-class destroyer *Ellet* and later served as executive officer on the Fletcher-class destroyer *Hailey*.

While serving on the *Ellet*, Simpson participated in escorting the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* carrying a Marine aviation unit to Wake Island in December 1941 (returning to Pearl Harbor the morning of December 8) and escorting the aircraft carrier *Hornet* when it launched General Jimmy Doolittle's raid on Tokyo in April 1942. Simpson participated in numerous battles and campaigns, including Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal, New Guinea, Eniwetok, Leyte Gulf, Saipan, Guam, and Okinawa. He was awarded the Bronze Star with V for his fighter-director work while the Hailey was operating on the picket line at Okinawa. □

The introduction to this story was prepared and the account edited by Mary Penn Mount, Captain Simpson's daughter, and Jay E. Grenig, Captain Simpson's nephew. Neither remembers the captain ever speaking of his wartime experiences. Fortunately, his son-in-law encouraged him to write down many of his most memorable experiences.

HELL ON HACKSAW RIDGE

BY NATHAN N. PREFER



Securing the Maeda Escarpment on the embattled island of Okinawa was a bloody affair for the U.S. Army troops of the 96th and 77th divisions.

It was called the Maeda Escarpment, after the nearest native village. An escarpment, according to the dictionary, is "a steep slope in front of a fortification" or "a long cliff." The Maeda Escarpment was both. The American GIs who faced it had their own names, including "Hacksaw Ridge," "Sawtooth," and "that big son of a bitch." If the Japanese had a name for it, it is lost to history.

Hacksaw Ridge, a 500-foot-high plateau, is in southern Okinawa. The plateau on top stretched about 4,200 yards from east to west. Its face was a crest consisting of a sheer rock wall that could only be scaled with ladders or special climbing gear. The entire mass was covered with narrow, jagged ribbons of rock and completely zeroed in by Japanese guns. To the east the ridge ended with a gigantic sentinel-like monolith known as "Needle Rock" to the GIs. Further east are Hill 150 and Hill 152, also called Conical Hill and Kochi Ridge. To the west was a Japanese defense consisting of a score of small individual positions hidden within a maze of low coral and limestone ridges known on U.S. maps as "Item Pocket." All these formed an anchor to a Japanese zone of defense, a part of their second line of defense protecting southern Okinawa.

Whatremained unknown until later in the battle was that Hacksaw was defended by thousands of heavily armed Japanese troops hidden deep within its recesses. In effect, Hacksaw was an enormous underground fortress called by some historians an "underground battleship." Within Hacksaw was a vast cave system, some of them large enough to hold hundreds of men at one time. Passageways connected the caves to each other and to the top of the ridge. Throughout were hidden gun ports and firing positions hollowed out by the Japanese. Even in the village behind the ridge, at Maeda, the Japanese had converted its concrete buildings into fortified bunkers. And behind that were Japanese artillery, mortars, and machine-gun emplacements, all of which had direct access to Hacksaw.

The GIs coming up to this ridge were from the 96th Infantry "Deadeyes" Division. Activated August 15, 1942, the division had trained at Fort Lewis, Washington, before sailing to Hawaii in July 1944. After more training, the division had assaulted Leyte, Philippines, and fought throughout that campaign. In late March 1945, the division sailed for Okinawa, where it stormed the island as a part of the Tenth U. S. Army on April 1, 1945. Under Major General James L. Bradley, it had fought its way down the west coast of Okinawa, clearing Cactus Ridge and Kakazu Ridge and fighting off a major Japanese counterattack. After being relieved by the 27th Infantry Division at Kakazu Ridge, the "Deadeyes" returned to battle at Nishibaru Ridge and Tombstone Ridge before coming up against Hacksaw.

The first steps were deceptively straightforward. Brigadier General Claudius M. Easley, the assistant division commander who had been with the division since activation, took one look at what the troops would soon be calling "Sawtooth" and ordered a heavy artillery barrage against it on April 25, followed by close-air-support bombardment. More than 1,600 rounds of artillery and thousands of tons of bombs fell on the ridge. Then self-propelled cannon of Colonel Michael E.

Two American soldiers of the 96th Infantry Division engage stubborn Japanese defenders on the island of Okinawa. One of them is seen firing his M-1 Garand rifle at a distant target, while the other is in the process of reloading his weapon. The bloody fight for Okinawa lasted 82 days. INSET: U.S. Army Corporal Desmond Doss receives the Medal of Honor from President Harry Truman. Doss served as a medic and saved many lives on Hacksaw Ridge.

A flamethrowing Sherman tank of the U.S. Army's 713th Tank Battalion provides cover for advancing infantrymen on Okinawa. The Japanese defenders had fortified the island with three concentric lines of defense and fought grimly to exact a heavy toll in American lives. OPPOSITE: An American radio operator relays the progress of an attack against well entrenched Japanese troops on Okinawa as infantrymen from the Army's 77th Division fire on a fortified position carved into an escarpment.

Halloran's 381st Infantry's Cannon Company pulled up and fired at every suspected enemy gun position hidden within the ridge.

On April 26, 1945, Company G, 381st Infantry, approached Hacksaw against no opposition until it climbed to the top and attacked a large concrete pillbox, where it suffered 18 casualties in as many minutes. The Japanese, using the reverse slope defense at which they were so adept, stopped the advance. To the east at Needle Rock, Company F tried to get men atop the escarpment, but the first three to reach the top were killed by machine-gun fire.

Company E attacked from Needle Rock and managed to get up the slope before coming under fire. A heavy machine gun, supported by mortars and small arms, covered the advance of three men who managed to get within hand grenade range of the enemy. Pfc William Reeder, a former professional baseball player, spotted Japanese mortars and proceeded to throw an entire box of grenades with World Series accuracy, knocking out most of the enemy guns. The Japanese immediately launched a counterattack, but Staff Sergeant Lee E. Moore, normally a flamethrower operator, grabbed a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) and stood up to meet the oncoming enemy. Firing from the hip, he halted the attack and then climbed to the top of Needle Rock and fired down on the remaining Japanese. Eventually, fire from a nearby cave position made him withdraw. However, Sergeant Moore soon returned with his flamethrower and a box of grenades and attacked the cave, eliminating the enemy position and earning a Distinguished Service Cross.

At Hills 150 and 152, men of Colonel Edwin T. May's 383rd Infantry Regiment reached the tops of the hills only to discover that the area "was alive" with Japanese beyond the high ground. Officers estimated that they could see upwards of 600 enemy troops out in the open, highly unusual for the Japanese on Okinawa. Immediately, the GIs opened fire with machine guns, BARs, and rifles. This allowed tanks and armored flamethrowers to approach Maeda Village and blast the entrenched Japanese. Scores of defenders were caught fleeing from their burning defenses.

This success disturbed Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima, commanding the Japanese 32nd Army. He ordered his 62nd Division to immediately dispatch all reserves to the Maeda area, repulse the American advance, and prevent a repetition of their success. The adjacent 24th Division was to cooperate and provide additional troops if necessary. Clearly, the Japanese intended to hold Maeda.

The "Deadeyes" renewed their attack on April 27 when the 1st Battalion, 381st Infantry, managed to get some men between Hills 150 and 152, supported by tanks of the 763rd Tank Battalion and flame-throwing tanks of the 713th Tank Battalion. For hours, the GIs and their supporting tanks blasted and burned the enemy defenses, forcing many Japanese into the open, where they were cut down by the infantry. But as they approached Maeda village again, the infantry was halted by heavy enemy fire.

Meanwhile, Companies F and G had tried but failed to reduce the large pillbox atop the escarpment. The day's advance was limited to a slight penetration between Hills 150 and 152. By this time the Americans were aware, after their previous experience at Kakuzu Ridge, that artillery fire against the dug-in Japanese was usually useless except for morale purposes.

Company E, 381st Infantry, also had moved forward as ordered by General Easley, to a position near the western edge of Maeda village. They reached the designated hill without trouble, but no sooner had they arrived than Hacksaw erupted with flame as a dozen enemy machine guns opened fire on the company. Captain George M. Wilcox, Jr., the company commander, found his men pinned down by machine guns, mortars and artillery as they tried to evade the enemy guns. Two men were killed and seven others wounded before a smoke screen covered the company's withdrawal.

Captain Willard G. Bollinger, commanding Company F, sent two men, Pfc. Alvin Brewer and Pfc. Gordon W. Lundman, to lie just at the crest to prevent enemy infiltrators during the night. The two men were soon fighting off 50 Japanese who were trying to get past Company F. For hours the two tossed or rolled grenades down on the enemy, killing at least 22 of them. Company F lost one killed and 15 wounded during the night. One observer noted that it was like the Western movies, as the protagonists ducked behind boulders and moved from rock to rock while firing at the enemy. So close did this battle become that before long grenades, knives, entrenching tools, and even sharp coral was being used in hand-to-hand combat.

April 27 also produced the first useful intelligence about Hacksaw. A company commander in the 381st Infantry Regiment, Captain Louis Reuter, Jr., and two enlisted men found an empty cave on the northern face of the escarpment and entered it gingerly. They moved deeper into the cave without finding anything. Soon a light from above brought them to a path that led to three other levels below where they stood. Japanese voices could be heard, but no enemy was seen. Backing out toward their original cave entrance, they found a tunnel leading off in another direction. Following this tunnel, they were soon in an observation post within the escarpment; it was equipped with binoculars and a telescope. Looking through the telescope, Captain Reuter was amazed to see everything his division had already cleared, completely back to the original landing beaches. It was now clear that the interior of the

escarpment was a rabbit's den of defensive fortifications and observation posts from which the Japanese could see everything the Americans did for miles around. It was also clear that no amount of artillery or bombing was going to destroy this fortress. As one wounded soldier put it, "We were squatting right on the lid of a vast fortress and didn't know it." Captain Reuter received a Silver Star.

American intelligence now understood that the Japanese defense was built around concentric circles of fortifications. Each was intended to halt the enemy advance for as long as possible, allowing the increasingly severe Kamikaze raids to cripple the supporting American fleet offshore. Hopefully, if the fleet could be forced to withdraw, then Okinawa might yet be saved, and the inevitable invasion of Japan postponed. Hacksaw was a key defensive position in the Shuri Line.

The following day, April 28, Company K, 381st Infantry, moved through the zone of the neighboring 27th Infantry Division to attack a large concrete school building known as the "Apartment House." This was located south of the escarpment and was a center of Japanese resistance. First Lieutenant Albert Strand, a former insurance salesman from South Dakota, led the company. Within moments, Company K was reduced to 24 survivors. So decimated were the companies of the 381st Infantry Regiment that Companies K and I were combined into one, numbering in total 70 officers and men, less than half a full-strength company.

April 29 saw the Japanese strike back with counterattacks all along the 96th Infantry Division's front line. Major George E. Bucklin's 2nd Battalion, 383rd Infantry, was hit by Japanese using grenades and spears. One platoon of 30 GIs had only nine still on their feet when the fight was over. More than 250 enemy dead were later counted in this area. Once again, tanks and flamethrowers came forward and repulsed further attacks.

Company L of the 383rd Infantry attacked Hill 138. Fighting was furious and often hand-to-hand. One Japanese machine gun dominated the crest of the hill and repulsed all attempts to knock it out. Finally, Pfc. Gabriel Chavez rushed it with a grenade and blew up the gun, the crew, and himself in one final effort. He was awarded a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross. Tanks managed to crawl to the top of the hill and began a duel with Japanese 47mm antitank guns to the south. For the first time in the month-old campaign, American guns fired directly on Shuri Castle, believed to be the enemy headquarters on Okinawa.

Captain Bollinger of Company F was frustrated. His men found it nearly impossible to dig foxholes in the hard coral. Yet, he knew the Japanese would counterattack that night. Deciding to be creative, he ordered his men to get on top of the boulders instead of digging in below them. Sure enough, the Japanese attack that night was cut to pieces when they charged

Almost immediately, Japanese troops hidden below ground and in pillboxes opened fire with grenades, machine guns and mortars. A group of small, cleverly camouflaged concrete and steel pillboxes dominated the plateau.

the empty foxholes while the Americans above cut them down. Captain Bollinger received a Silver Star.

By the end of April, the 381st Infantry Regiment was down to skeleton strength. The entire 96th Infantry Division was exhausted and forced to deploy fresh replacements directly into frontline foxholes. Then relief came in the form of the 77th "Statute of Liberty" Division.

The 77th Infantry Division was a New York-based Army Reserve unit filled out with draftees and volunteers. It had been activated at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, on March 25, 1942, and trained at the Desert Training Center in California before shipping overseas to Hawaii. It was assigned to the III Amphibious Corps and assaulted Guam in July 1944. After this battle, it was en route to Hawaii for rest and reorganization when an urgent call from General Douglas MacArthur reversed its course to Leyte, Philippine Islands. The division landed behind Japanese lines at Ormoc and speeded the end of that campaign. From Leyte, the division was assigned to the Okinawa operation and landed on Yakabi Shima and Zamami Shima before the main landings of April 1. Later it would land on Ie Shima before coming ashore on Okinawa and relieving the 96th Division at Hacksaw.

After three days "mopping-up" on Ie Shima, the 77th Infantry Division was ordered to land on Okinawa and support the advance south. Brigadier General Ray L. Burnell, the division's artillery commander, led an advance party to the XXIV Corps and the 96th Infantry Division's command posts to learn all that he could about their new mission. The division commander, Major General Andrew D. Bruce, brought the rest of the division ashore on April 27 and began moving to the front lines. The first to face "Hacksaw" was the 307th Infantry Regimental Combat Team.

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald D. Cooney's 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry, began its attack on April 29 when Companies A and B used scaling ladders to get atop the cliff. Once on top, they could see much of the plateau but at first no enemy soldiers. Almost immediately, Japanese troops hidden below ground and in pillboxes opened fire with grenades, machine guns and mortars. A group of small, cleverly camouflaged concrete and steel pillboxes dominated the plateau. These were protected by deadly fire from Japanese artillery, heavy mortars and antitank guns positioned behind the escarpment. When it got dark, Japanese soldiers came out of hiding and sniped at the Americans with rifles and grenades.

The 3rd Battalion, 307th Infantry, could not even get atop the cliff. When Companies K and L tried, they were forced back by heavy fire that came from enemy positions on the reverse slope of the hilltop and pillboxes on the plateau.

The next day, April 30, Company B managed to blow the roof off one of the three larger pillboxes on the plateau. Under cover of mortar fire, a demolitions man dragged a heavy satchel charge along the edge of the cliff until he came to the pillbox. Then he crawled up to the top of the plateau and tossed the charge into the pillbox, blowing off the concrete top. Grenades were used to complete the destruction.

For days the struggle continued. Getting food, water and ammunition to those atop the escarpment was difficult, requiring a climb from the base to the top, some 300 yards, at a 30-degree angle. The evacuation of casualties was equally difficult. On May 1, the division put up four 50-foot ladders and five cargo nets during the night to facilitate the necessary repeated climbs up and down the cliff face. Despite this, no progress was made, and Companies A and B remained stuck along the top of the cliff edge.

By May 7, a gasoline ditch had been constructed, allowing the GIs to burn out some of the enemy positions. But attempts to put this into action were repeatedly foiled by the Japanese. Finally, one squad managed to assemble among a group of scattered rocks and prepared to move against the pillboxes. The first man to stand was wounded in the leg. Mortar shells and machine-gun fire pinned down the squad while enemy riflemen sniped at them. Within seconds, two men had been killed and two others wounded. The squad evacuated its wounded and another squad soon took its place, with no better results. At the end of the day, the two companies atop the escarpment held a shallow

bridgehead under cover of coral rocks and boulders with a 40-foot cliff at their backs.

That night the Japanese counterattacked. They penetrated the Company B area, separating one platoon and establishing a flanking position from which they could fire at the company along the cliff edge. Mortars and grenades showered among the GIs, and it was soon apparent that they could not hold their position. American soldiers groped along the cliff edge seeking the ropes and slid down the 40-foot cliff. Others fell or jumped over the edge. A few Company B men managed to get to Company A, where they joined that defense. It was an ugly fight in the dark. GIs at the cliff base tossed grenades at the Japanese, but they had to be careful that those grenades didn't roll back on them. The Japanese dropped grenades down on the Americans and used their mortars, as well. It was only when the 60mm mortars of Company B found their targets that the Japanese withdrew.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion, 307th Infantry, had tried the same flanking maneuver as had the "Deadeyes." The battalion moved through the 27th Infantry Division on the right and got behind the escarpment, reaching the "Barracks." They found the building undefended but under such intense fire that it was safer to dig in just short of the building. The 2nd Battalion, 307th Infantry, followed and dug in alongside. Companies E and F managed to maneuver past the "Barracks," but heavy fire from the escarpment soon drove them back. At noon, a Japanese mortar shell detonated the 2nd Battalion's ammunition dump, killing five and disrupting the supply line for several hours. Colonel Stephen S. Hamilton, commanding the 307th Infantry, set up his observation post in the front lines and directed the operations of his battalions. But little could be done under such intense and accurate enemy fire.

On May 2, it was decided to withdraw Company B from the clifftop. The idea was to bombard it once again with heavy 4.2-inch chemical mortars and battalion mortars. More than 200 shells hit the clifftop, sealing six caves at the cliff face. Tanks blasted any enemy position they could identify along the bottom of the cliff, and self-propelled 75mm and 105mm cannon were brought up to do the same. One cave was blasted with six phosphorus shells. As the GIs watched, white smoke suddenly began drifting from 30 other concealed openings along the ridge.

Patrols were busy this day, as well. Some managed to gain the top of the escarpment and even reach the south side, where they discovered more caves and pillboxes. One even managed to sneak up on one of these emplacements and kill the half dozen occupants without loss. This patrol then organized a skirmish line formed with two BAR men on each flank, two riflemen in the center, and two others with demolition charges, and then slipped back to the lip of the cliff, throwing their grenades and satchel charges at any enemy position they encountered. Once out of ammunition, they "ran like hell" back to safety.

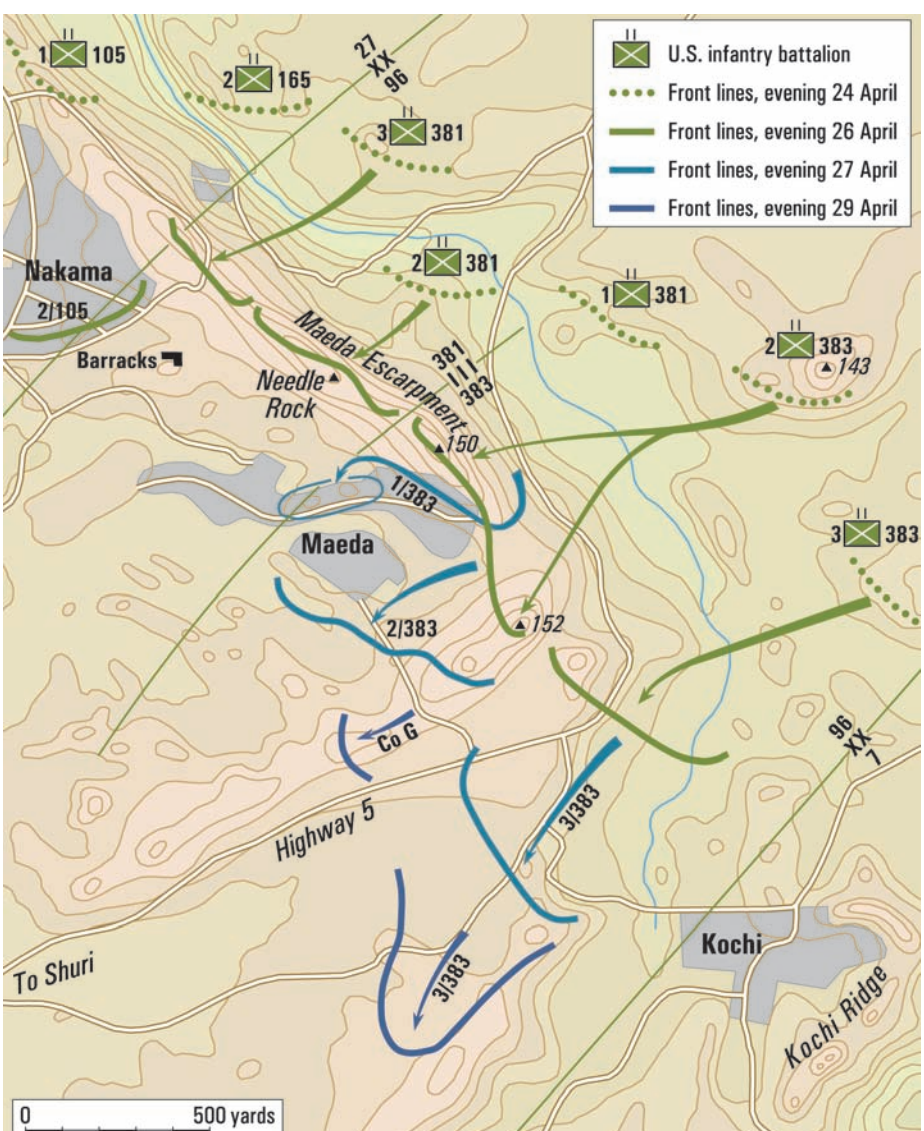
May 2 was also the day that Pfc. Desmond Doss, a 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry, medical aid man began a series of acts that would earn him a Medal of Honor. When the battalion withdrew from the clifftop, American wounded were still there. Refusing to withdraw with his company, and despite artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire, Pfc. Doss, the only surviving aid man in Company B, was alone atop the escarpment. He refused to take cover and remained in the target area for hours, treating the wounded and dragging them one-by-one to the edge of the cliff and then lowering them to GIs below, saving 75 wounded Americans. The following day he ran 200 yards into enemy-controlled territory to rescue another wounded man on top of the escarpment. A few days later he saw four men cut down while trying to knock out an enemy cave. Despite intense enemy fire, he treated their wounds and then made four separate trips to bring them to safety. The next day, he treated a wounded officer under enemy artillery fire and stayed with him until it was safe to evacuate. Later that same day, Doss saw a man fall in front of another cave. He raced to him, tended his wounds, and then carried him under enemy fire 100 yards to safety.

During a night attack on May 2, Doss was wounded while dangerously moving about to treat others. He bandaged his own injuries and waited five hours in the darkness until a litter team arrived. While being carried to the aid station, the group came upon another wounded man. Doss insisted on rolling off his stretcher and having the other man carried to safety. He was again wounded while awaiting the return of the litter party. He treated the compound fracture of his arm using a discarded rifle stock. Then he crawled more than 300 yards over rough terrain to the aid station. Doss, a conscientious objector from Lynchburg, Virginia, became a symbol for bravery throughout the 77th Division.

Hacksaw remained defiant. No amount of bravery, heavy artillery, or bombs seemed able to eliminate it. But the GIs kept coming. Company I managed to get to the left-rear of the escarpment and began the deadly process of cleaning out caves and pillboxes on the slopes.

BELOW: Taking cover behind a coral outcropping, soldiers of the U.S. 96th Division fire at the Japanese on Okinawa. OPPOSITE: An M4 Sherman medium tank mounting a flamethrower and attached to the 96th Infantry Division spews fire at a Japanese emplacement on Okinawa.

LEFT: Codenamed Operation Iceberg, the American landings of April 1, 1945, took place on the Hagushi beaches of southwestern Okinawa. The American Tenth Army, under the command of Army General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., included both Army and Marine Corps forces. BELOW: The horrific struggle to secure Okinawa was characterized by bitter fighting such as the contest for Hacksaw Ridge. American forces sustained heavy casualties in securing the high ground, but the Japanese were tenacious, often fighting to the death in defense of the island.



One of these caves was found to be three stories deep. A demolition charge thrown into the cave mouth blew out the floor, uncovering the second and then the third level. Two more charges and 25 gallons of gasoline finished this cave.

The GIs of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 307th Infantry, were able to move past the "Barracks" and partially cut off the end of Hacksaw from the rear. Atop the escarpment the 1st Battalion fought hand-to-hand with the Japanese. Company B became involved in a hand-grenade duel in which the GIs tossed grenades as fast as the human supply chain could bring them forward. After several bloody hours, the top of the escarpment was cleared, and the grenade duel moved to the reverse slope. It was a frustrating business. Constantly pounded by grenades and mortars, neither side really had an advantage.

One officer remembered, "The men would come back to the northern side of the ridge weeping and swearing they would not go back into the fight. Yet in five minutes time, those men would be back here tossing grenades as fast as they could pull the pins."

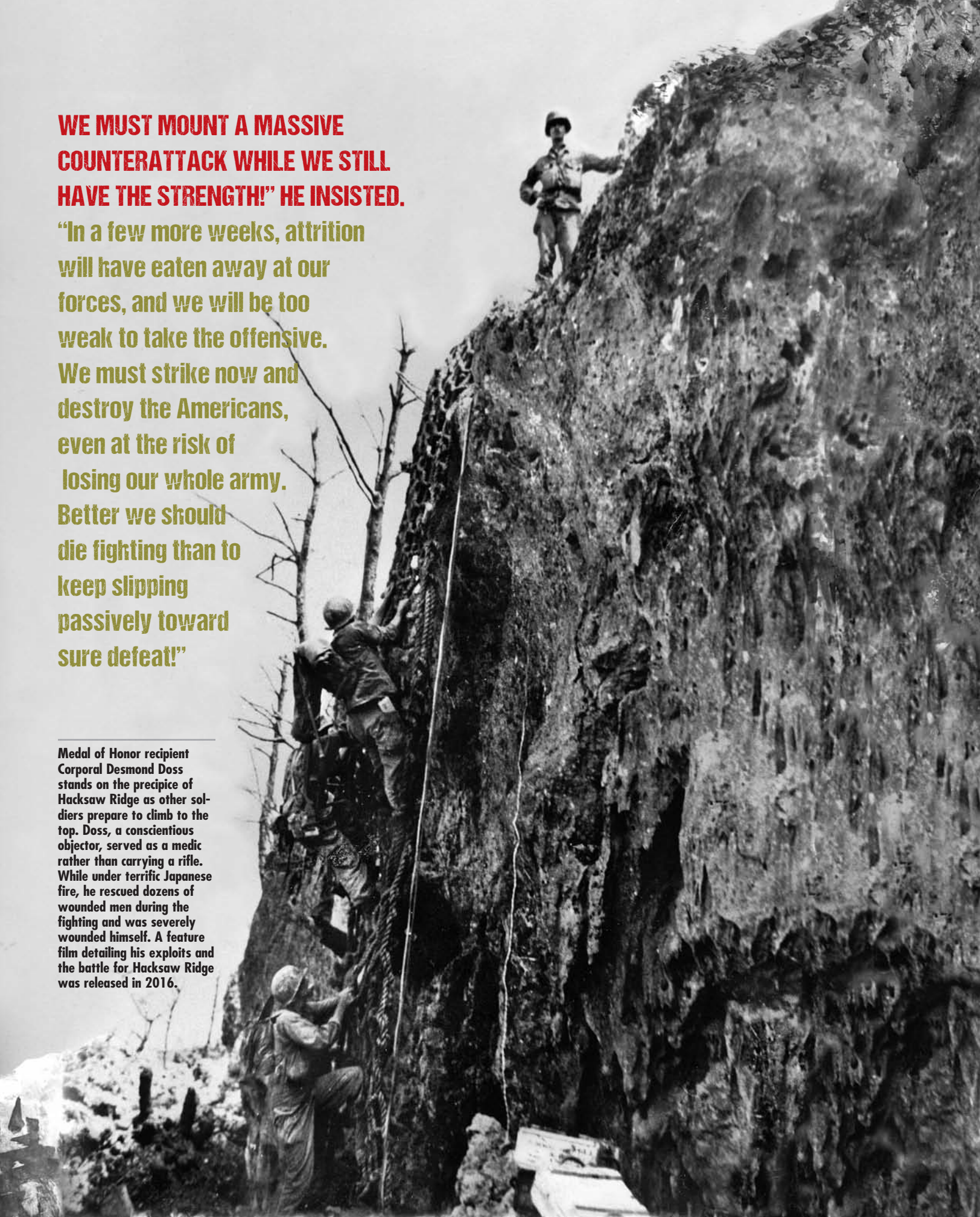
The center of resistance on the reverse slope was a huge cave that extended back into the ridge for some distance. From this ran numerous shafts and tunnels that opened at other locations along the ridge. One was at least 60 yards long. Despite explosive charge after charge being blown up inside, the shaft never collapsed. Another shaft even had a makeshift elevator. The Americans believed that this shaft held a hospital, a dormitory, and storage for food, water and ammunition. Rather than confirm their suspicions by investigation, the GIs blew the entrance closed.

By the end of May 3, the 307th Infantry Regiment had all but surrounded Hacksaw. The 1st Battalion was atop the ridge, the 2nd Battalion was at the eastern end, and the 3rd Battalion was on the southern slopes of the escarpment. The regiment spent the night of May 3-4 under bombardment from Japanese guns located on the Chinen Peninsula east of Hacksaw and from Shuri to the south. With daylight, the 1st Battalion began to clean up the top of Hacksaw. Armed with cases of grenades, satchel charges, and gasoline raised to the top in ship's cargo nets, Companies A and C lined up on the edge of Hacksaw and began throwing grenades as fast as possible. After 20 minutes, someone shouted, "Go!" and the two companies started forward, blowing up caves, pillboxes, and shaft openings as they went. Some of the stronger caves even resisted 25-pound satchel charges and had to be destroyed using double charges of explosives. An estimated 600 enemy troops had been killed.

By late afternoon, the top of the ridge was cleared, and the 1st and 2nd battalions had made contact on the far side of Hacksaw. The 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry Regiment, with Companies E and I and the 1st Platoons of Company C and H, had earned themselves a Presidential Unit Citation. It read in part, "For assaulting, capturing and securing The Escarpment, a heavily fortified coral rock fortress which was the key to the famed Japanese Shuri defensive position on

WE MUST MOUNT A MASSIVE COUNTERATTACK WHILE WE STILL HAVE THE STRENGTH!" HE INSISTED.

"In a few more weeks, attrition will have eaten away at our forces, and we will be too weak to take the offensive. We must strike now and destroy the Americans, even at the risk of losing our whole army. Better we should die fighting than to keep slipping passively toward sure defeat!"



Medal of Honor recipient Corporal Desmond Doss stands on the precipice of Hacksaw Ridge as other soldiers prepare to climb to the top. Doss, a conscientious objector, served as a medic rather than carrying a rifle. While under terrific Japanese fire, he rescued dozens of wounded men during the fighting and was severely wounded himself. A feature film detailing his exploits and the battle for Hacksaw Ridge was released in 2016.

Okinawa during the period 30 April to 5 May 1945, and making possible a general advance by all elements of the command."

The 2nd Battalion, meanwhile, had been clearing the eastern end of Hacksaw. As they did so, a previously unknown Japanese strongpoint opened fire. It took tanks firing into the hill, just underneath the 1st Battalion on top of the ridge, and an infantry attack using explosives to eliminate this new threat. One tank shell must have hit the Japanese ammunition dump: A tremendous explosion inside the cave took the fight out of the Japanese. Companies E and F then continued to work the southern slope and soon made contact with both sister battalions.

ABOVE: In this photo, soldiers of the 77th Infantry Division gather around a radio to listen to news of the surrender of Nazi Germany. The fight for Okinawa continued. BELOW: Partially sheltered by the ruins of a bombed out building, American soldiers of the 96th Infantry Division man a 37mm gun. OPPOSITE: Armed with explosives, two American soldiers approach the entrance to a cave believed to hold enemy troops. Okinawa's labyrinth of fortified caves, bunkers and machine-gun nests with interlocking fields of fire at times caused the Japanese defenders to be incinerated, blown up, or buried alive.

The 3rd Battalion had the best day. They were still around the "Barracks" awaiting the arrival of Company I coming alongside. As they waited, the Japanese launched a rare daylight counterattack, hitting Company L. Using a smoke screen as a cover, about a company of Japanese attacked just after daylight, losing 50 of their number to the guns of Company L. Shortly afterward, Company I appeared, having blown up at least 75 enemy caves in the past three days.

Behind the Japanese lines, another battle had been raging. The birthday of the Japanese Emperor had been celebrated on April 29, and this had touched off a fierce debate within the high command of the 32nd Army. General Ushijima's chief of staff, General Isamu Cho, argued strongly for a decisive action. "We must mount a massive counterattack while we still have the strength!" he insisted. "In a few more weeks, attrition will have eaten away at our forces, and we will be too weak to take the offensive. We must strike now and destroy the Americans, even at the risk of losing our whole army. Better we should die fighting than to keep slipping passively toward sure defeat!"

But the architect of the 32nd Army's strategy, Lieutenant Colonel Hiromichi Yahara, spoke in favor of a continued defense in depth. He pointed out that it had taken the enemy a month to gain only two kilometers of southern Okinawa and that the 32nd Army had already held out for more than a month, something no other invaded island had been able to accomplish. He reminded the staff of the great losses suffered by the Americans and that a counterattack would certainly fail to break through the American lines with the forces then available to the 32nd Army. Unfortunately, few sided with him, and General Ushijima decided in General Cho's favor.

General Cho had already spent considerable time on a detailed plan for his counterattack. The 24th Division was to seize the Maeda Escarpment and the town of Maeda, which controlled Highway 5. Then the 44th Brigade would drive west, cutting off the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions. Assisted by the 62nd Division, the 44th Brigade would annihilate the Marines while the 24th Division recaptured the Maeda Escarpment. Meanwhile, other Japanese units would strike at the 7th Infantry Division at Conical Hill and further east. Because he considered Maeda and the Maeda Escarpment the keys to defeating the Americans, General Cho assigned extra infantry and two companies of tanks to that part of the attack. Further, he arranged for a heavy artillery bombardment and even rare air sup-

port for the attack on Hacksaw, which was set for May 4. Even if the attack failed, General Cho believed that the Japanese Army would have preserved its honor.

While the Japanese prepared for their grand counterattack, Colonel Cooney's 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry, was counting its losses. In one 36-hour period, the four-company battalion had gone through eight company commanders, mostly wounded. Arriving at the escarpment with a strength of 800 men, it would leave on May 7 with 324 men. The division estimated that it had killed more than 7,000 enemy troops during the battle.

The Japanese counterattack began as scheduled with infiltration by small groups intended to target American command posts and communications centers. One Japanese infantryman's diary contained an entry that read, "The time of the attack has finally come. I have my doubts as to whether this all-out offensive will succeed, but I will fight fiercely with the thought in mind that this war for the empire will last 100 years."

The 32nd Infantry Regiment, supported by tanks and engineers and strong artillery, attacked the 77th Infantry Division at Maeda. Poor roads and American artillery interdiction reduced the armor support to two medium vehicles. One Japanese infantryman complained that the entire march forward was harassed by American artillery and that most of the men in his command were killed or wounded by this fire.

The 3rd Battalion, 32nd Infantry, supported by nine light tanks, struck the 306th Infantry Regiment, 77th Division before dawn on May 4. The Japanese found some weak points in the line, but heavy automatic weapons fire halted any significant penetration of the line. Nowhere did the Japanese break through. Except for driving one platoon off a small hill, success completely evaded the Japanese attackers.

Most of the Japanese light tanks were knocked out by American artillery, and the rest withdrew when their infantry stalled in front of the American defenses. By 7:30 that morning, the 306th Infantry had driven off the Japanese. American artillery and mortars took a heavy toll on the remaining Japanese. A second effort the following night managed to reach the 306th regimental command post, but in the end fared no better. General Cho's counterattack had failed. The Maeda Escarpment, Hacksaw Ridge, Sawtooth and "that big son-of-a-bitch" would no longer trouble the Tenth U. S. Army in its 82-day struggle to finally secure Okinawa. □

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Task Force Raff's RACE AGAINST TIME

The American paratroopers under Colonel Ed Raff met unexpected resistance on D-Day and watched a glider-borne reinforcement effort take heavy fire. | BY PATRICK J. CHAISSON

A trooper of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment prepares to exit the door of a transport aircraft during a training exercise. Prior to the Normandy invasion, the 505th was the only regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division that had experienced combat during World War II.

Colonel Ed Raff kept glancing at his wristwatch while trying to control the growing sense of dread inside him. At any moment, he knew, dozens of American cargo gliders were due to arrive overhead.

Yet well-armed enemy infantrymen and machine gunners dominated the gliders' designated landing fields. Unless those soldiers were defeated, chaos would prevail. Keeping one eye to the skies and another on his watch, Raff worked furiously to organize an all-out assault on the foe's stronghold.

At 2053 hours, the far-off throbbing sound of aircraft engines told him he had run out of time. Minutes later they appeared: 75 twin-motored Douglas C-47 Skytrain transport aircraft, each towing a giant Horsa or Waco glider. The C-47s' flame dampeners glowed white-hot against the gathering dusk as they approached their release point.

The low-flying air armada was too big a target to miss. As Colonel Raff looked on helplessly, a sheet of machine-gun fire erupted skyward from the enemy positions. Mortally wounded tug planes and gliders alike began spiraling down to crash land among the hedgerows. Those men able to crawl out of their wrecked aircraft stumbled dazedly around the battlefield, often falling prey to a sniper's bullet.

This incident, which took place near the road junction of Les Forges, France, was only one of many small-unit actions to occur on D-Day, June 6, 1944. It was a desperate attempt to link up the massive U.S. force landing across Utah Beach with some 6,000 paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division, who'd jumped into battle earlier that morning near the French village of Ste. Mère-Église.

Colonel Edson D. Raff receives the Legion of Honor from French General Edouard Welvert. Raff led the first U.S. airborne troops during operations in North Africa and handled the job well, although he gained a reputation as a somewhat difficult subordinate.

Located near the center of Normandy's Cotentin Peninsula, Ste. Mère-Église sat astride the main highway from Carentan to Cherbourg. The 82nd Airborne's D-Day objective was to take and hold this key crossroads, as well as a pair of bridges spanning the Merderet River west of town, in order to prevent German defenders from staging a counterattack against Utah Beach.

It was a mission that would sorely test the "All-American" Division and its aggressive commander, Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway. Only his 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) had combat experience; the attached 507th and 508th PIRs were well-trained but new to battle. Furthermore, Ridgway could not rely on personally greeting his veteran 325th Glider Infantry Regiment (GIR) until the morning of June 7 (D+1) owing to a shortage of transport planes.

Apart from two 75mm howitzers parachuted in before dawn on D-Day, most of the 82nd Airborne Division's heavy weapons would land by glider. The 319th (75mm) and 320th (105mm) Glider Field Artillery Battalions (GFABs) were to come in that evening, along with several 6-pounder (57mm) anti-tank guns belonging to the 80th Airborne Anti-Aircraft Battalion (AABN).

Ridgway demanded all these guns, especially the 80th AABN's 6-pounders, arrive safely and on target. Just before D-Day, however, Army intelligence identified a dangerous new threat moving into his area of operation: The German 91st Air Landing Division, equipped with tanks and specially trained to defeat paratroopers.

Initially, the "All-Americans" would have to fight these powerful adversaries with a minimum of organic artillery support. While U.S. troops moving inland from Utah were supposed to make contact with the 82nd Airborne by dusk on June 6, a host of factors—from bad weather to unexpectedly heavy resistance on the beachhead—could scuttle that plan. General Ridgway needed to find a way of evening the odds.

His solution was to form an armored "breakthrough force" that would land with the first waves on Utah and then advance on Ste. Mère-Église to help defend against enemy counterattacks. Ridgway further insisted that a paratrooper lead this mechanized team. Only a fellow airborne officer, he figured, would understand what was at stake and act with the requisite urgency.

In mid-May, a seemingly ideal candidate for the job reported to 82nd Airborne Division HQ. Colonel Edson D. Raff, a planner on the First U.S. Army staff, had for months been pestering his boss for a combat assignment. That officer, Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, finally granted Raff's requests by transferring him into Ridgway's command in May 1944.

Raff, 36, was already somewhat of a celebrity within the American airborne community. His outfit, the 2nd Battalion, 509th PIR, became the first U.S. Army paratroopers to see action in World War II when they parachuted into North Africa as part of Operation Torch in November 1942. He later wrote a book, *We Jumped to Fight*, detailing his experiences there.

Ed Raff made it very clear to all who would listen that he wanted to command a parachute infantry regiment in battle. Yet his ambitious nature, abrasive personality, and dim regard for most senior officers created friction nearly everywhere he served. As CO of the 2/509 PIR, Raff had earned the unflattering nickname "Little Caesar" due to his imperious leadership style and somewhat-stocky physique. While personally courageous, he showed no patience for weakness or mediocrity.

Neither Maj. Gen. Matt Ridgway nor his deputy commander, Brig. Gen. Jim Gavin, saw much room for Edson Raff in the "All-American" Division. Their first encounter with the newly assigned colonel did not go well. Curtly, Ridgway informed Raff that his infantry regiments already had competent commanders in place, and he was not about to change things this close to the invasion.

Instead, Raff was to come ashore on Utah Beach together with a company of medium tanks, some recon vehicles, and infantry. He was then to lead them eight miles through the

All photos: National Archives

lines to Ste. Mère-Église, overcoming all obstacles in his path. The 82nd Airborne Division counted on these reinforcements to arrive before German armor could move in and crush its lightly-armed paratroopers.

While Raff surely wished he had been allowed to make the jump into Normandy, he did perceive a certain opportunity in this alternative mission. A "spare colonel," Raff would be immediately available to replace any of Ridgway's airborne regimental commanders who were killed, wounded, or declared missing in action during the coming campaign. He simply had to accomplish his assignment and stay alive.

This paratrooper of the 82nd Airborne Division was one of many who lost their lives in the opening moments of the airborne invasion of Normandy. The Germans had flooded low-lying areas, and some men drowned upon landing as they were unable to negotiate high water while wearing heavy packs.

Raff also learned his command now belonged to "Howell Force," the 82nd Airborne's seaborne echelon. There weren't enough parachutes or gliders to transport the entire division by air; its quartermasters, MPs, and maintenance personnel would come ashore by landing craft and join up later. Brig. Gen. George P. Howell, another long-serving airborne officer, ran this operation from his temporary headquarters in the port city of Dartmouth.

There, Raff met the officers who were to work for him on D-Day. Captain James A. Crawford led Co. C, 746th Tank Battalion and its 18 M4 Sherman medium tanks. In addition, 2nd Lt. Gerald H. Penley had two M8 armored cars and four jeeps in his Third Platoon, B Troop, 4th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. Finally, there were 90 infantrymen on hand from Company F, 2nd Battalion, 401st GIR. This outfit, previously part of the 101st Airborne, had been separated upon its arrival in England to reinforce both the "Screaming Eagle" and "All-American" Divisions. For Normandy, 2/401 GIR joined the 82nd's 325th Glider Infantry Regiment as its unofficial third battalion.

While in Dartmouth, Raff also met an unusual man who had been named as his second-in-command. Major Ralph M. Ingersoll, a New York City magazine publisher in civilian life, served on General Bradley's special staff until he, too, obtained a transfer to combat duty. They made for an odd pair: the thickset, career paratrooper and his lanky citizen-soldier executive officer, yet both men were equally eager to get on with their mission.

On June 4, with all vehicles loaded aboard, the small flotilla carrying TF Raff left to war, departed for France. The tanks, along with Raff, Ingersoll, and their glidermen, sailed in British-crewed Landing Craft, Tanks (LCT) while Lieutenant Penley's recon troops came across in smaller Landing Craft, Mediums (LCM).

The invasion fleet maintained strict radio listening silence throughout its cross-Channel journey. As dawn broke on D-Day there was no news of the 82nd Airborne's night drop, nor whether its G.I.s had accomplished any of their assigned tasks. In truth, Ridgway's division was fighting for its life among the fields and marshes of Normandy.

Starting shortly after midnight on June 6, approximately 6,000 "All-American" paratroopers jumped into German-occupied France. A combination of low clouds, heavy antiaircraft fire, and inexperienced Troop Carrier pilots severely unhinged the drop. Only one regiment, the 505th PIR, landed anywhere near its objective; the rest of Ridgway's men and matériel were scattered all across the Cotentin Peninsula.

Another unpleasant surprise greeted those parachutists floating down over Normandy: Much of the region had been deliberately flooded by German forces. Many jumpers drowned before they could even see action, while dozens of essential equipment bundles simply disappeared underneath the murky swamp water. The glider carrying General Ridgway's powerful liaison radio plowed into the Merderet River, preventing him from communicating with anyone outside his division's perimeter.

Some "All-Americans," however, were able to carry out their orders. In particular, 1st Battalion, 505th PIR succeeded in capturing a key bridge at La Fiere, while another hundred or so 507th PIR paratroops grabbed the span at Chef-Du-Pont. After clearing Ste. Mère-Église, soldiers raised a small U.S. flag over the town, the first French village to be liberated on D-Day.

Ridgway and Gavin constantly roamed the battlefield, trying to create order from the tactical nightmare in which they found themselves. They eventually formed a triangle-shaped perimeter with one point at Ste. Mère-Église to the east, another at La Fiere two miles due west, and the third at Chef-Du-Pont in the south. Unit leaders next set up blocking positions to cover key avenues of approach, while a small reserve of mis-dropped 507th and 508th men assembled just outside of town.

The foe reacted swiftly to this airborne incursion. At 1300 hours, infantrymen from the 91st Air Landing Division's 1058th Regiment collided with a platoon posted at the hamlet of Neuville-au-Plain two miles north of Ste. Mère-Église. Three hours later, another probe by the 91st's 1057th Regiment headed toward the bridge at La Fiere. These German counterthrusts were well-supported by armored vehicles, mortars, and field artillery.

Thanks to the skill and bravery of his paratroopers, Ridgway managed to blunt both assaults. He experienced less success to the south, though. There, an understrength rifle company from 3rd Battalion, 505th PIR spent most of June 6 trying and failing to seize Hill 20, a long ridgeline located about halfway

between Ste. Mère-Église and the road junction at Les Forges.

Holding Hill 20 was a battalion of *Ostruppen*, Red Army prisoners of war who chose service with the Wehrmacht over slow death in a Nazi prison camp. Ostbataillon 795, commanded by a Captain Stiller (some sources cite his name as Ziller), numbered about 925 men: 90 or so German officers and NCOs, the rest ethnic Georgians from the Caucasus region of Soviet Russia. Although deemed "unreliable" by higher headquarters, the 795th was well-armed with .45-machine guns and a number of anti-tank cannon. Critically, Stiller's troops could cover with fire a U-shaped valley labeled Landing Zone "W" (LZ W)—site of a major glider-resupply mission set to commence at 2100 hours.

General Ridgway needed to clear Hill 20 but lacked the means to do so. Worse, because of his ruined radios, he could not warn the pilots approaching LZ W to land someplace safer. As evening drew on, he began to worry if the assault on Utah Beach had even taken place. Raff should have reached Ste. Mère-Église by now, yet there was still no sign of him or the main seaborne force, Maj. Gen. Raymond O. "Tubby" Barton's 4th "Ivy" Infantry Division. Had the 82nd Airborne Division been left to die in Normandy?

Unbeknownst to the paratroopers holding Ste. Mère-Église, a massive amphibious operation was even then putting thousands of American soldiers onto Utah Beach. It started off poorly; navigation errors and an unexpectedly strong tidal current caused the invasion's first waves to land 2,000 yards south of their objectives. Famously, the 4th Infantry Division's onshore commander, Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt Jr., remedied this crisis by declaring, "We'll start the war from right here." He directed his men to turn north and take their primary objectives—several important causeways leading inland–on the fly.

The first element of TF Raff to hit Utah Beach was Lieutenant Penley's cavalry platoon, which touched down at 0925 hours. Despite all efforts made to waterproof them, several vehicles "drowned out" while driving off their LCMs. It took 45 hectic minutes to get those machines restarted, during which time the unit came under heavy artillery fire. Penley lost two jeeps and four troopers wounded before he could move his men to a sheltered assembly area where they would wait for the main body to show up.

At 1400 hours, the landing craft transporting Raff's tanks and glidermen arrived. Major Ingersoll remembered how his LCT's skipper

TOP: Seeking cover from incoming German artillery shells on June 6, 1944, men of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division run for the chapel in the town of Ste-Mère-Église. ABOVE: Troopers of the 82nd Airborne Division enter Ste-Mere-Eglise on D-Day. The Germans counterattacked, attempting to retake the town.

"rammed the boat home" right up on shore so "our big tanks hardly splashed themselves from the ramp to the dry beach." Each M4 then "waddled across [the sand], up-ended over the dunes, and was out of sight." Tank crews next got to work stripping off their vehicles' waterproofing sealant, as well as unneeded deep-water wading trunks, in preparation for combat.

The last of Captain Crawford's Shermans to come ashore towing behind it a command jeep, specially fitted with an armored windshield and pedestal-mounted .50-caliber machine gun. Raff and Ingersoll, together with their driver and gunner, would make the journey to Ste. Mère-Église in this small, open-topped vehicle.

At 1730 hours, Colonel Raff told everyone to mount up. Company F's troops, including Pfc. Lucius P. Young, were ordered to "ride at the back of the tanks, four men on the back of each tank," as he later recalled. With Lieutenant Penley's armored cars leading, the column maneuvered its way through an incredibly congested beachhead and began heading inland along the two-mile-long causeway known as Exit 2.

In a matter of minutes, the mechanized breakthrough force reached a small village named Ste. Marie-du-Mont, just five road miles from its destination. Encountering "absolutely no opposition" thus far, Raff said the ride reminded him of a Sunday drive in the country. Now headed west toward Les Forges, he learned why things had been going so well.

Up ahead, American infantrymen could be seen cautiously making their way through pastureland on either side of the roadway. These soldiers belonged to Lt. Col. Erasmus H. Strick-

land's 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, one of the first "Ivy" Division outfits to storm across Utah that morning. Advancing steadily all day, Strickland's battalion had by 1900 hours cleared a swath of terrain all the way up from the beachhead to Les Forges—its D-Day objective.

The G.I.s digging in there warned Colonel Raff of an enemy strongpoint along a ridgeline about 1,000 yards to the north that had already fired on their lead platoons. A quick check of his map indicated this was Hill 20, the last danger area before Ste. Mère-Église. Between lay a swampy, tree-covered valley: LZ W.

Raff identified the problem immediately. "It was urgent that the valley be cleared for the glider elements from England," he recalled. "I ordered my tanks to attack."

Before his Shermans could advance, however, Raff needed to find out what was in front of them. Summoning Penley, he told the cavalryman to "take your scout car up the road and see what you can see." An M4 tank would follow closely behind to provide covering fire.

The small reconnaissance team cautiously edged forward perhaps 300 yards. Then from Hill 20 a high-velocity cannon barked, its shell ripping completely through the thin-skinned armored car. This lucky projectile kept going, somehow tearing a track off the accompanying Sherman. Its crewmen, along with Penley's scouts, all piled out of their stricken vehicles and headed for safety.

With his foe's position now pinpointed, Col. Raff quickly devised an attack plan. First, he instructed Major Ingersoll to locate the 8th Infantry Regiment's Cannon Company in position some distance behind them. That battery, equipped with six 105mm howitzers, would suppress the gunners occupying Hill 20 with high-explosive shellfire.

His next orders went to Captain Crawford, the tank company commander. "Deploy your infantry and armor on either side of the road," Raff said, "and take that hill." It was now 1930 hours.

Rifleman Lucius Young witnessed what happened next: "I, along with three other men, went out to the hedgerow nearest to the field on guard duty. One tank went up the road next to us and was hit by an 88 [sic]. Another tank tried to make it and it too was hit by an 88. The third tank went around through the field, but I understood an 88 hit it as well."

Young, like most G.I.s, believed the enemy weapons on Hill 20 were all 88mm dual-purpose artillery pieces. Penley later identified them as captured Soviet 76mm anti-tank guns.

In a matter of minutes, Company C lost yet two more M4s to the Georgians' deadly fire. Casualties were heavy; 2nd Lt. Joe M. Mercer was mortally wounded. Yet Raff's tanks had already advanced halfway across the valley; one more push, he figured, might just do it.

This noisy encounter attracted the attention of the 8th Infantry commander, Colonel James A. Van Fleet, who came forward to see what was going on. Raff met Van Fleet with an appeal for help: "I pleaded with him to make an attack to drive out the enemy forces across the way," the paratrooper said. "He demurred, saying he had reached his forward line for the day."

Captain Crawford radioed in some more bad news: his Shermans were bogging down in the marshy valley, while Cannon Company had to cease fire due to low ammunition supplies. Raff realized he did not possess the combat power necessary to capture Hill 20; that job required the entire 3,000-man 8th Infantry. Unfortunately, its commanding officer stood before him, not sharing his sense of urgency.

Meanwhile, at an altitude of between 750 to 1,500 feet, 75 U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) tug-glider combinations made landfall directly over Utah Beach. This was Echelon One of Mission Elmira, a massive D-Day glider assault carrying into France two entire field-artillery battalions, a battery of anti-tank guns, medical personnel, tactical vehicles, and trailers full of much-needed munitions. Unable to communicate with General Ridgway's command post, Elmira's transport pilots remained oblivious to conditions on the around Hill 20.

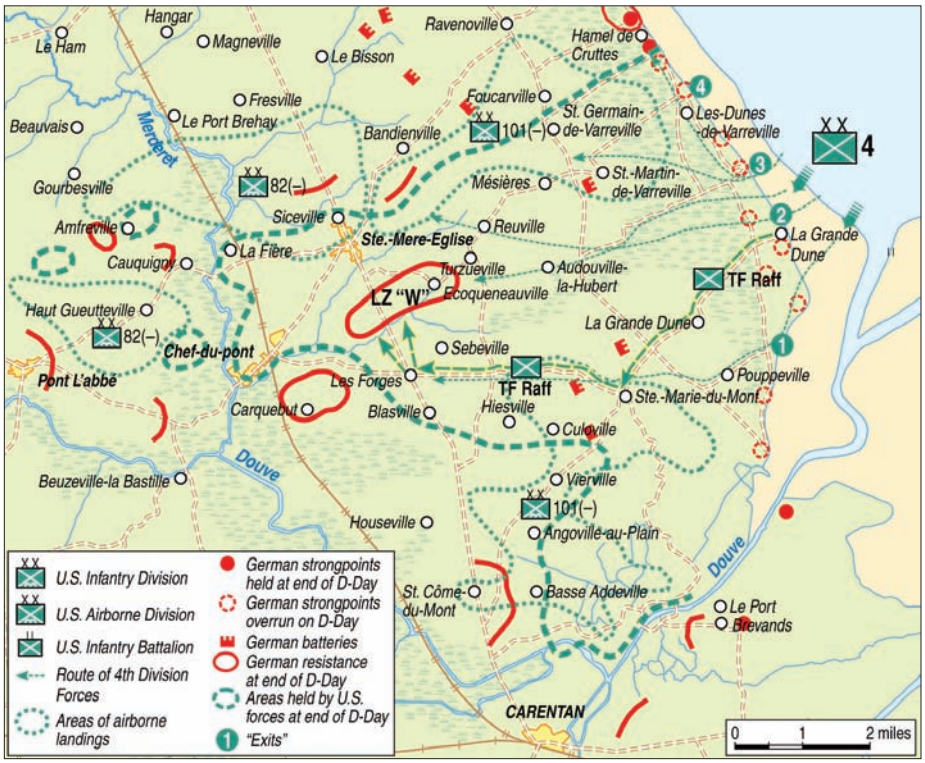
Raff described their arrival. "To my horror, at 2100 [hours] the glider lift came in low over the valley. Like watching a movie in which the full plot was known, I realized the smoking knocked out tanks were appearing as LZ markers in the evening light to the pilots in the troop carriers, so unerringly did they release their gliders over that valley."

Every member of Ostbataillon 795 then pointed his weapon skyward. "The whole hilltop began to crackle with small-arms fire going up towards the planes," recalled Major Ingersoll. "One of the [C-47] transports suddenly began smoking. It roared over our heads and thundered into a field just behind us."

The airmen piloting their unpowered Horsas and Wacos had no choice but to attempt a landing. "Gliders were crashing into hedgerows all around the valley," Colonel Raff recollected. "One or two … even landed on the hill occupied by the enemy." Ralph Ingersoll added, "It was too small a landing zone for so many gliders."

Indeed, Allied air planners had made a major miscalculation when they selected this valley as Mission Elmira's landing zone: The official Troop Carrier history contains a vivid description of LZ W: "Not only were there 'postage

American paratroopers were scattered across Normandy as their insertion on D-Day met heavy German resistance and high winds. The gliders that Raff was expecting were slated to come down at Landing Zone W, which was still under direct fire from the Germans as the aircraft came in to land.



"We banged down in the middle of the field and bounced into the hedgerow," he said. "I thought I had a broken leg, but after shoving aside a ton of debris ... I managed to crawl through what was left of the nose section and got to my feet."
Schroeder was fortunate in that he sustained "only bruises, contusions, and a slight concussion" during his harrowing entry into France.

TOP: The crew of an M8 armored car pauses to search the Norman countryside for signs of enemy activity. Colonel Raff's force included a pair of M8s and four jeeps of the 4th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. RIGHT: Exiting a landing craft directly onto the beach in Normandy, an American M4 Sherman medium tank prepares to advance toward the front lines. Eighteen Shermans of the 746th Tank Battalion supported Colonel Raff as he attempted to clear a landing zone for a glider-borne landing on D-Day.

stamp' fields 200 yards long, bordered by 50-foot trees, but also some of the designated fields turned out to be flooded and others were studded with poles more than 5 inches thick and 10 feet or more in height. Trip-wires for mines had been attached to many of the poles but fortunately, the mines themselves had not been installed."

Unable to reach a large field, one Horsa pilot "picked a small one, lowered his flaps, and landed at about 70 miles an hour," recounted USAAF historian John C. Warren. "The glider bounced twice and when about 10 feet off the ground on its second bounce crashed through a row of trees which stripped it of its wings and landing gear. The craft scraped to a stop 10 yards behind Raff's forward positions."

Flight Officer Ben O. Ward of the 81st Troop Carrier Squadron tried to bring his glider down safely, unaware that its brakes had been damaged by enemy fire. "Just ride it out," Ward told himself as the Horsa smashed sideways into a hedgerow. "The sound of shattered plywood and crunching plexiglass filled my ears … then silence. I was dazed by the impact … and staggered to my feet, wondering if I was still in one piece."

The Waco carrying Pfc. Menno N. Christner of Battery C, 80th AABN, hit a tree and disintegrated. Christner was thrown clear but discovered he had broken three ribs on impact. After helping to rescue his pilot and co-pilot from the wreckage, the young gliderman attempted to orient himself. "I heard a lot of gunfire all around and didn't know which way to go."

Forming "glider rescue teams," Raff's soldiers attempted to assist those who were either trapped inside wrecked aircraft or, like Christner, found wandering around no-man's land. The most grievously injured gliderman were evacuated back to 4th Division aid stations. Meanwhile, Major Ingersoll attempted to organize all able-bodied pilots and glidermen into *ad hoc* infantry. These reinforcements, Ingersoll hoped, could join TF Raff in a final, desperate attack on Hill 20.

Yet those who survived the landings were, by and large, so stunned by their cruel introduction to combat that Raff could expect nothing further from them that evening. Besides, he knew a second wave of cargo gliders was set to arrive right at sunset.

Again, Colonel Raff could only look on in frustration as another 100 glider combinations passed low overhead. The Georgians on Hill

20 unleashed a fresh torrent of fire against them, and once more young American aviators pushed their flimsy canvas and plywood aircraft down for a landing among the hedgerows in semidarkness.

The overloaded Horsa transporting Pfc. Wilmer Ranninger of Battery B, 319th GFAB, struck a tree on its descent. "There was a terrible and loud sound after we hit the tree," he recalled, "and the glider itself began to break up even before we touched the ground. I was thrown toward the floor of the glider, and my head and shoulder actually fell through an opening in the floor. As the glider skidded through the ground, my head and shoulder were repeatedly bounced on the hard, rocky ground."

First Lieutenant Edgar A. Schroeder, with the 320th GFAB's Battery B, also experienced a violent crash landing. "We banged down in the middle of the field and bounced into the hedgerow," he said. "I thought I had a broken leg, but after shoving aside a ton of debris … I managed to crawl through what was left of the nose section and got to my feet." Schroeder was fortunate in that he sustained "only bruises, contusions, and a slight concussion" during his harrowing entry into France.

Wacos and Horsas dove earthward in all directions. Paratrooper Sergeant Otis L. Sampson went to the aid of one aircraft that had crashed within the 82nd Airborne's perimeter. "As I came up, a hole started to appear on the right side of the glider. The men were kicking out an exit. Like bees out of a hive, they came out of that hole, jumped on the ground, ran for the trees, and disappeared. I tried to tell them they were in friendly country, but they passed me as if I wasn't even there."

And not every glider landed in U.S.-held territory. Wehrmacht Sergeant Rudi Escher of the 91st Air Landing Division's 1058th Regiment remembered encountering a shattered Horsa that night. "We opened a side door in the glider," he wrote, "and two Americans were sitting there, absolutely still, their weapons at the ready. They must have been absolutely petrified." Escher's group took the G.I.s prisoner before destroying their plane "with firebombs and grenades."

Casualties included 15 glider pilots killed, 17 wounded, and four missing. The 82nd Airborne's glidermen suffered 33 killed and 124 wounded, although many soldiers initially listed as missing eventually found their way into American lines. Yet Mission Elmira successfully delivered to Ridgway's division 15 of 24 howitzers, 42 of 59 jeeps, 28 of 39 trailers, and 33 tons of ammunition. All eight anti-tank guns from Battery C, 80th AABN, came in unharmed, one landing so close to the Chef-Du-Pont bridge that it was immediately offloaded and put into action against attacking German armor.

The "flying coffins" that brought these men and equipment into Normandy did not fare so well. Fewer than half of the 36 Wacos used in Mission Elmira landed intact, with eight listed as total losses. Of 139 Horsas employed that evening, 56 were entirely destroyed either on landing or by enemy fire. Only 23 survived in undamaged condition.

Raff himself attested to their fragile construction. "The British gliders made of wood completely disintegrated in the crashes," he

Sherman tanks negotiate a slope in the Norman countryside as American troops hitch a ride toward the front. Coming ashore with the Shermans of the 746th Tank Battalion, the men of the 401st Glider Infantry Regiment rode toward Ste-Mère-Église on the backs of the tanks.

remarked to an Army historian some weeks later. After Normandy, U.S. airborne forces would never again use the Horsa in battle.

As a brief June night finally fell, it seemed pointless to continue the advance on Ste. Mère-Église. While his troops rested, Raff went back to confer with the "Ivy" Division's commanding general. Finding Maj. Gen. Barton at his Utah Beach HQ, Raff convinced him to commit the 8th Infantry Regiment to an early morning assault on Hill 20. Captain Crawford's tankers would provide armored support.

While it took some time for Colonel Van Fleet's inexperienced riflemen to get organized, by noon on June 7 they had wrested that key hilltop from Ostbataillon 795. The 8th Infantry's hasty attack netted over 175 prisoners of war, but—more importantly—finally established a firm connection between the "All-American" Division and the Allied units advancing inland from Utah.

In the meantime, Lieutenant Penley's recon platoon headed west toward Chef-Du-Pont and Ste. Mère-Église. Following directly behind them in an unarmored jeep was Brig. Gen. Ted Roosevelt. The plucky little general met an anxious Matt Ridgway with his characteristic grin and a question: "Which way to the picnic?" This joke reassured everyone within earshot that all would soon be well.

Raff and his Sherman tanks rolled into town around 1200 hours. The infantrymen of Company F immediately rejoined their parent battalion, which had arrived by glider earlier that morning, while Crawford's tanks moved forward to help defeat a series of enemy counterattacks. The irrepressible Major Ingersoll kept busy all day escorting resupply convoys from Utah Beach to Ste. Mère-Église.

With his mission now complete, Colonel Raff no longer had a job. As the 82nd Airborne's chief of staff had been badly injured in a glider crash, Maj. Gen. Ridgway temporarily appointed his "extra colonel" to this post. One week later, Raff took over the 507th PIR after it was learned that outfit's CO, Colonel George V. Millett, had been captured.

Ed Raff served creditably with both the 82nd and 17th Airborne Divisions during World War II, making another combat jump as part of Operation Varsity in March of 1945. Staying with the postwar Army, he became an early proponent of unconventional warfare. Historians often credit him for introducing the green beret as a symbol of modern Special Forces soldiers.

A sadder fate awaited many of the G.I.s who fought under Raff's command on D-Day. On June 9, Pfc. Lucius Young suffered a serious bullet wound to his neck while advancing across the La Fiere causeway. That bloody attack also took the life of Company C's commander, Captain James Crawford. In September, cavalryman Lieutenant Gerald Penley was killed in action as his unit entered Belgium.

The region around Ste. Mère-Église bore battle scars long after the war had moved on. An American staff officer noted in mid-June that "all along the roads in this area were smashed gliders, some stripped of their clothing [fabric], others completely burned out, hung out and draped against trees and hedges. How the men came out alive to fight as they have fought is something of a miracle."

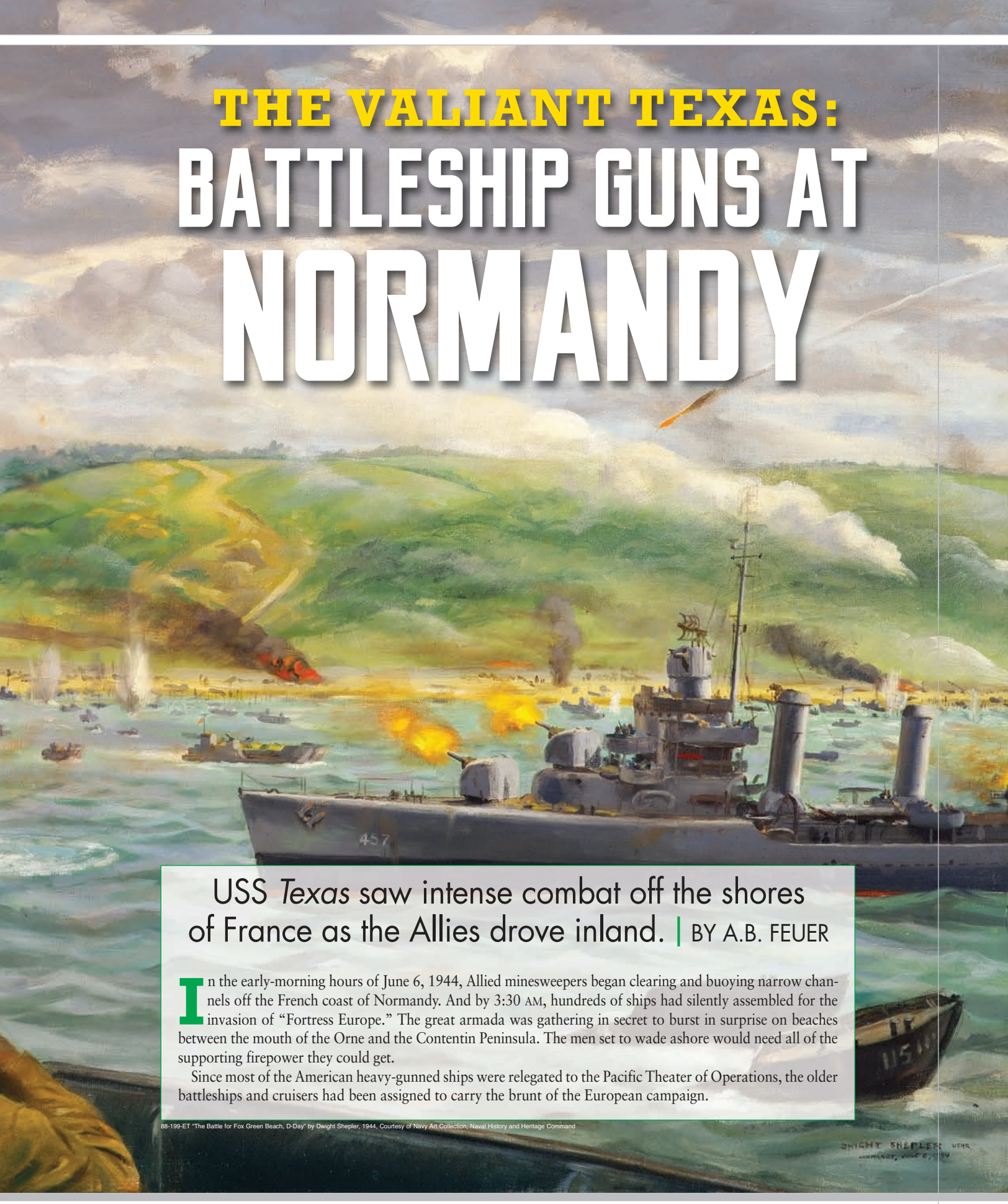
ABOVE: Allied gliders wing their way toward landing zones in Normandy, bringing troops, supplies, and equipment to reinforce the offensive in Normandy. BELOW: The body of a dead American soldier lies on the ground in Normandy. The soldier was apparently killed in the crash landing of the glider behind him when the aircraft careened into a stone wall.

At great cost, airborne forces in Normandy kept Utah Beach secure from enemy counterattack. These paratroops and glidermen next helped seal off the Cotentin Peninsula, enabling other First U.S. Army formations to seize the city of Cherbourg and its vital deepwater port. With Cherbourg secure, the Allies then prepared to enter a new and deadly phase of combat–breakout. □

Author Patrick Chaisson is a retired US Army officer and historian who writes frequently for WWII History *from his home in Scotia, New York.*

In this painting titled *Battle for Fox Green Beach,* artist Dwight Shepler captures the intensity of combat that includes the heavy shelling by U.S. Navy warships in support of the D-Day landings off Omaha Beach. Launched in 1912, the battleship Texas was 32 years old when its guns thundered against German fortifications in Normandy.

THE VALIANT TEXAS: BATTLESHIP GUNS AT NORMANDY



USS *Texas* saw intense combat off the shores of France as the Allies drove inland. | BY A.B. FEUER

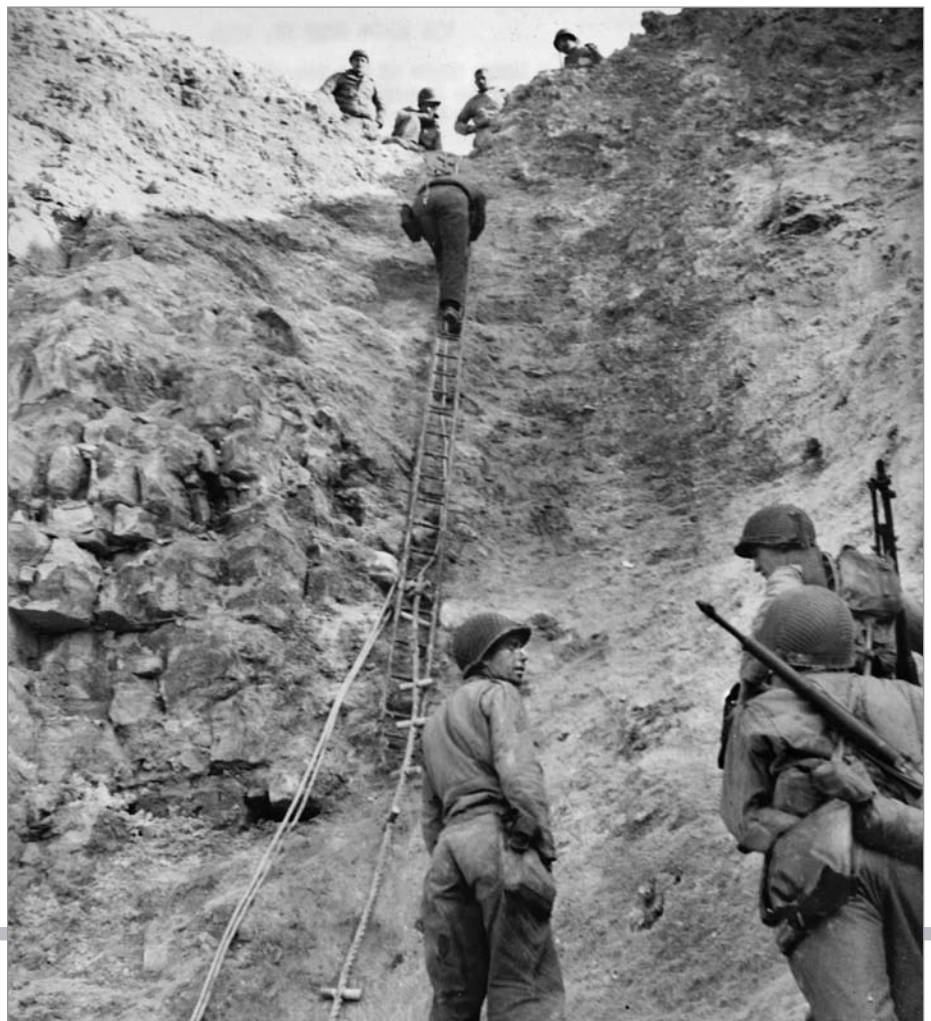
In the early-morning hours of June 6, 1944, Allied minesweepers began clearing and buoying narrow channels off the French coast of Normandy. And by 3:30 AM, hundreds of ships had silently assembled for the invasion of "Fortress Europe." The great armada was gathering in secret to burst in surprise on beaches between the mouth of the Orne and the Contentin Peninsula. The men set to wade ashore would need all of the supporting firepower they could get.

Since most of the American heavy-gunned ships were relegated to the Pacific Theater of Operations, the older battleships and cruisers had been assigned to carry the brunt of the European campaign.

88-199-ET "The Battle for Fox Green Beach, D-Day" by Dwight Shepler, 1944, Courtesy of Navy Art Collection, Naval History and Heritage Command

Both: Naval History and Heritage Command

ABOVE: The battleship USS *Texas* is shown underway in October 1944. BELOW: Within a day or two of the fighting that swirled around Pointe du Hoc on June 6, 1944, U.S. Army soldiers stand at the foot of one of the nearly sheer cliffs that Rangers scaled to engage the Germans on D-Day. The soldiers in the foreground are standing on a pile of rocks and dirt that fell from the cliff face during the engagement, possibly dislodged by a shell from the 14-inch main batteries of the battleship USS *Texas*. OPPOSITE: During the fight along the Normandy beaches on D-Day, U.S. Navy destroyers ventured dangerously close to shore to fire at German strongpoints. In this painting, the destroyer *Emmons* (DD-457) negotiates shallow water to direct 5-inch shell-fire against enemy positions.



A battleship bombardment group was formed comprising the USS *Texas* (BB-35) and the USS *Arkansas* (BB-33). The *Texas* was commanded by Capt. Charles A. Baker. Rear Admiral Carleton F. Bryant, the task group commander, carried his flag aboard the Big "T." To say the least, the *Texas* was by no means the freshest battle wagon afloat. She was launched on May 18, 1912 and, in fact, hers was the first launching ever recorded on motion picture film. She displaced 29,000 tons, could hit a top speed of 21 knots, and boasted 14-inch guns.

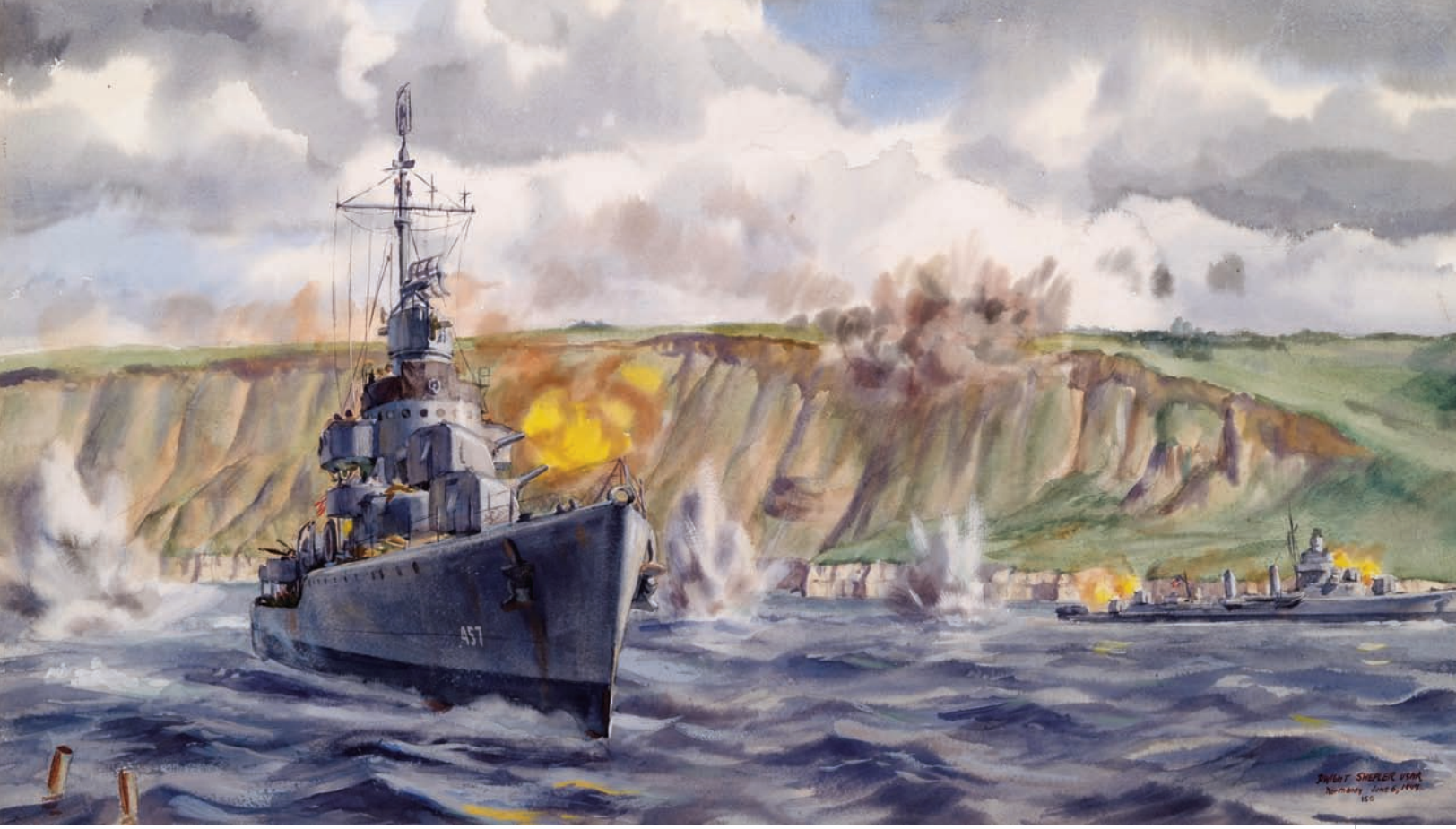
In 1914, she protected the landings at Vera Cruz, Mexico. Her only action in World War I was a lone encounter with a U-boat, and she narrowly avoided a torpedo. When the United States entered World War II, the *Texas* was immediately put to the vital work of escorting troop and supply convoys to England and Scotland. In the fall of 1942, she supported the invasion of North Africa. And now she was about to take part in the largest invasion force ever conceived.

By 4:00 AM, the Allied ships were within range of German coastal guns, and the bombardment ships moved into position to cover the American landings. Admiral Bryant's final orders to his battle wagons were: "Push straight in and slug it out!"

Lieutenant Commander Richard Derickson, gunnery officer of the *Texas*, lectured his men: "Learn to spot targets in the dark. If we don't knock the German big guns out, it means that our boys climbing those cliffs [Point du Hoc] will get lead in their teeth!"

Negotiating the Channel waters to France meant that the Allied armada would have to maneuver through the most effectively mined waters in the world. First Lieutenant Weldon James, U.S. Marine Corps, was a public relations officer aboard the *Texas*, and wrote: "The Marines played a unique role in the Channel crossing. Picked Leatherneck sharpshooters, armed with rifles, were stationed high on the masts of the larger ships. Their targets were floating mines. The marksmen manned their posts during the dark, pre-dawn hours of D-day, as we snaked through the cleared minefields toward the French coasts.

"There were no casualties from mines in our immediate vicinity. But, more amazing, was the fact that there were no collisions. With hundreds of vessels, both large and small, crowding the waters, our only brush with tragedy occurred when one nonchalant LCM [Landing Craft Mechanized] grazed our bow, bounced back, 'thumbed its nose,' then cheerfully put-putted on its way to join the seem-



"ALLIED PLANES ARE NOW PASSING OVERHEAD AGAIN, HUNDREDS OF THEM. WORD FROM THE RADIO SHACK STATES THAT THE FLIGHT IS 75 MILES LONG. WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT AN E-BOAT ATTACK, BUT, AT THIS MOMENT, THAT IS OCCURRING SEVERAL HUNDRED YARDS UP THE COAST FROM OUR POSITION."

ingly unending line of landing craft preparing to head for the beach."

About 5:50 AM, 40 minutes before H-hour, the *Texas* opened the action by unleashing fiery broadsides against the German positions near the bluffs at Point du Hoc. For more than half an hour, the battleship's 14-inch guns poured salvo after salvo into six-foot-thick casemented enemy positions near the beach while her five-inch guns blasted fortified pillboxes behind the cliffs.

The *Texas* lifted her barrage a few minutes before Companies D, E, and F of the Second Ranger Battalion made ready to assault the beach. The Rangers, under the command of Lt. Col. James E. Rudder, crouched low in their landing craft as the small boats scooted like water beetles along both sides of the battleship. The tiny vessels pitched and rolled as they plowed through heavy surf on their way to the French coasts.

Gunfire from the *Texas* and other naval vessels had knocked out the German six-inch guns on the cliffs. But, by the time the Rangers had landed, the enemy had hurriedly moved machine guns and mortars into the concrete and steel fortifications. Lieutenant Weldon James reported: "The Rangers caught hell. Six of their landing craft were swamped or sunk by mortar barrage. And, when they finally reached the beach, they were met with a devastating crossfire. The first grappling ropes that the Rangers fired over the bluffs were cut by the Germans, sending the climbing men tumbling down the sheer rocky cliffs. The Rangers, exposed on the beach, were showered with hand grenades from above.

"The enemy defense was stiff and ferocious. We could see three burning American tanks, and two half-sunken landing craft still smoking. Wounded Rangers were seen being collected and placed aboard small boats for evacuation. Meanwhile, German mortars, atop the bluffs, and in caverns along the cliff front, kept popping away."

Each ship of the bombardment squadron had its own Shore Fire Control Party and assigned spotter aircraft. In the case of the *Texas*, the spotter plane was an English Spitfire. Weldon James continued: "As the Rangers moved forward, our Spitfire relayed prompt reports. A German six-inch battery was targeted and destroyed as well as a pillbox observation post halfway up the 85-foot cliff."

The enemy defensive positions consisted of cleverly designed networks of interconnecting trenches. The Germans would fire a couple of times, duck and lie low for a few minutes, then reappear 300 yards away, or have fresh gun crews sneak into locations to the rear of American forces. Weldon James related: "Our Shore Fire Control Party, like the Rangers, was pinned down. And our spotter plane was temporarily called away on another mission."

In the midst of the terrific sea-land-air battle, Admiral Bryant called for close-in destroyer fire support. Without hesitation, the USS *Satterlee* (DD-626), skippered by Lt. Cmdr. Robert Leach, dashed to within 1,500

88-199-EX "Target of Opportunity, USS Emmons" by Dwight Shepler, Watercolor, 1944, Courtesy of Navy Art Collection, Naval History and Heritage Command

Both: Naval History and Heritage Command

TOP: This photo taken from aboard the battleship USS *Texas* on D-Day shows the impact of a shell fired from a U.S. Navy warship off the coast of Pointe du Hoc. ABOVE: U.S. Army Rangers rest in a shell crater atop their objective. The heavy guns of the USS *Texas* left craters that are still visible at Pointe du Hoc today.

yards of Point du Hoc and began pouring a hail of shells into the enemy fortifications.

Commander W.J. Marshall, commanding Destroyer Division 36, stated: "It was a sight 40mm gunners dream about. The *Satterlee* opened up with rapid fire, her shells landing squarely on the concrete blockhouses and pillboxes. We could see the Germans, falling like nine-pins, all along the clifftops. It was as satisfying a thrill as any tin can could wish for."

As darkness approached, Lieutenant James described the tense first night off the Normandy coast: "Tonight, understandably, air cover has not been perfect. There have been several sharp German raids on this hot corner. From our bridge, I saw three enemy planes burst into orange balls and fall flaming into the water. Other observers counted at least four more.

"Allied planes are now passing overhead, again hundreds of them. Word from the radio shack states that the flight is 75 miles long. We are worried about an E-boat attack, but, at this moment, that is occurring several hundred yards up the coast from our position."

The *Texas* survived the night of German air raids and E-boat attacks. The only damage, with no casualties, came from "friendly fire" when a 20mm shell exploded on one of the battleship's turrets.

Meanwhile, the determined Rangers gained the clifftops and battled their way inland. Heavy salvos from the *Texas* plowed up the terrain ahead of the advancing troops. Weldon James reported: "Without ever contacting expected reinforcements from their flanks, colonel Rudder's men gained their objectives within 34 hours after the landing. Although heavily outnumbered, the Rangers fought the enemy from shell hole to shell hole, from blasted pillbox to ruined casement through trenches, tunnels, and farmhouses."

Casualties among the Rangers were heavy. By five o'clock on the afternoon of D-plus-one, half their number had either been killed or wounded. Attached to the Ranger unit was a British naval officer, Lieutenant Ronald F. Eades. He had heard about Colonel Rudder's impending assignment and received permission to join the Ranger battalion. Eades climbed the steep cliffs of Point du Hoc with the Americans and became a one-man army, flushing out snipers. First Lieutenant James R. McCullers stated: "A lot of fun, that guy [Eades]. He kept running after snipers so much that we occasionally mistook him for a German and fired at him. Fortunately, we missed.

"But, right in the midst of all that blazing hell, he would sit down, light a cigarette and wisecrack, 'I say, fellows, I'm glad to see that you do miss a shot sometimes.' Then he'd be off again after more snipers.

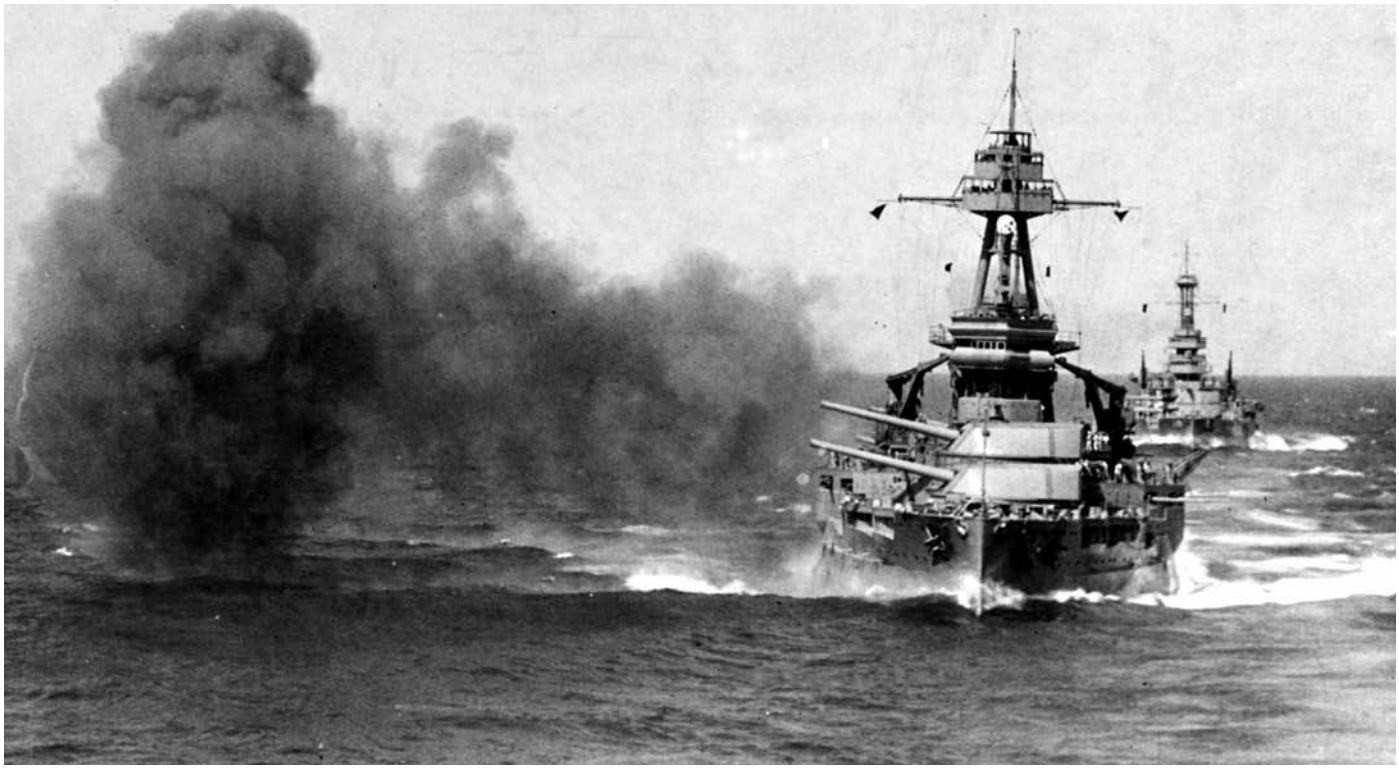
"Every time we hit a hole, he would be joking away funny as hell cool as a cucumber. He was good company, worth his weight, a fine man for helping morale. Eades kept us laughing. I reckon that he was the typical cool Englishman you read about."

Admiral Bryant was not the type of naval officer to just have his ship stand still and pump shells into enemy positions. Besides, he was still within range of German guns. Operating the *Texas* like a destroyer, Bryant steamed the battleship back and forth along its assigned eight-mile beachfront, continually sneaking in close for better observation and firing at called targets until they were reported destroyed.

Lieutenant James narrated: "Air cover was perfect, and air-spotting excellent. Our Spitfire spotter radioed back that 26 rounds of 14-inch shells completely demolished four German 155mm artillery pieces, several machinegun nests, and an ammunition dump.

"Admiral Bryant was jubilant. I don't blame

Naval History and Heritage Command



The battleship USS *Texas* participates in a training exercise as its main batteries bark in the direction of a distant target.

him. It practically gives you religion to stand on the bridge and see those heavies plow up what you believe to be the target and then to be told that your gunners were right on the money."

Stiff enemy resistance continued to plague the Rangers. A reported German observation post in a church steeple was accurately directing artillery fire against American positions. And a blockhouse, half concealed in a ravine, had bottled up a Ranger detachment on a flanking beach. The *Texas* dashed to within two thousand yards of the blockhouse. Her third 14-inch salvo obliterated the target. Lieutenant James stated: "A destroyer beat us by seconds to the church steeple, which rose peacefully above a little French village. We had deliberately spared the church until we received confirmation that it was being used as an observation post. The tin can's first shot snipped off the peak. Then our salvo, a second later, brought the rest of the spire tumbling down in a cloud of dust and smoke."

With the situation now well in hand on the beach, landing craft began the tedious job of transporting prisoners and wounded to ships standing offshore. An LCVP delivered 26 captives and 30 injured Rangers to the *Texas*. There was a lull in the firing while the LCVP unloaded its passengers. The battleship's curious crew lined the decks and turrets as the prisoners and wounded were brought aboard.

The dazed enemy soldiers were quickly lined up single-file on the main deck. Moments later, an announcement was made from the bridge that firing would start momentarily. A Marine sergeant immediately handed each prisoner cotton stuffing for the ears. James wrote: "The Germans were standing only a few feet back from one of the 14-inch turrets even then swinging ominously around to starboard. The captured men looked pop-eyed at our bristling armament, and at the naval power on all sides of us. Hundreds of Allied ships dotted the water as far as the eye could see.Two nearby cruisers were dueling mobile German batteries which were dropping shells into a convoy of LCT's heading for shore.

"Six husky Marine guards conducted the prisoners to the interrogation room. The Marines, armed with Tommy guns, made the 'Supermen,' in their tattered uniforms, look like a crummy mob. They were a mixed-up lot possibly typical of German forces in this area: four or five tough, grim-looking Nazis, about a dozen middle-aged Germans, and perhaps ten people recruited for a labor battalion. All of them looked decidedly relieved to be out of the action.

"Navy doctors gave prompt medical attention to the wounded Rangers, several of them in serious condition. There was one enemy soldier, all smiles and gratitude as he was treated for a bullet wound in the arm."

After interrogation, the prisoners were transferred to a smaller ship. A Marine guard remarked: "Not much to look at, this bunch. They might be tough soldiers, but they're damn poor sailors. Nearly all of them were seasick when the LCVP brought them in. However, not one Ranger was ill."

The *Texas* returned to England and made preparations for the next Allied naval operation. After a quick refurbishing, the battleship was assigned to Task Force 129 under the command of Rear Admiral Morton L. Deyo.

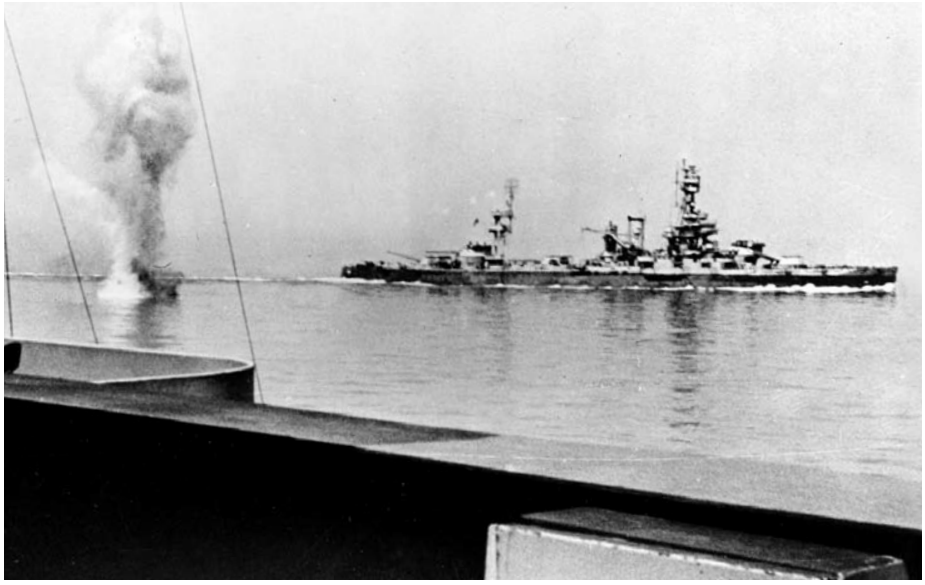
On June 24, 1944, General J. Lawton Collins' VII Corps had battled its way to the southern outskirts of the heavily fortified French port of Cherbourg. That same day, Admiral Deyo's task force received orders to bombard the port city from the seaward side.

Deyo split his fleet into two flotillas. Task Group 129.1 comprised the battleship USS *Nevada* (BB-36), the cruisers HMS *Glasgow* and HMS *Enterprise*, and six American destroyers. Admiral Deyo's flag was aboard the *Tuscaloosa*.

Task group 129.2 was commanded by Rear Admiral Bryant and included the *Texas*, *Arkansas*, and five destroyers.

At 3:30 AM on the morning of June 25, both task groups rendezvoused off the coast of the Cherbourg Peninsula. Deyo's instructions were to conduct a 90-minute bombardment of targets designated by General Collins. The VII

Both: Naval History and Heritage Command



TOP: A German shell fired from one of the gun emplacements defending the French port city of Cherbourg falls harmlessly distant from the battleship *Texas*. However, as the range narrowed, several enemy salvoes fell dangerously close, some shells straddling the battleship during the duel of the big guns. BELOW: A German shell falls between the battleships *Texas* and *Arkansas*.

Corps had advanced to within a mile of the beach, and pinpoint accuracy would be required of the naval gunners due to the proximity of American troops.

Admiral Deyo's task group was assigned to tackle German fortifications on the western shore of the peninsula, while Admiral Bryant would engage the enemy along the eastern shoreline.

The bombardment had been originally scheduled to take place before dawn; however, a German six-inch battery, west of Cherbourg at Barfleur, posed a problem if it had not been knocked out by previous sea or air attack. The task force was ordered to hold up its attack until notified as to whether the guns had been neutralized. About 11:00 AM, a Spitfire spotter was able to penetrate the enemy's antiaircraft defenses. The pilot dashed across the German coastal position at five hundred feet and reported: "There are many bodies around the guns, but no activity!"

Admiral Bryant immediately ordered his ships into position, and the flotilla followed a mine-swept passage until it was well within range of Cherbourg's harbor defenses.

For the first time in history, a naval task force was to make a daylight frontal assault on a concentration of heavy shore batteries that were among the most formidable in the world.

Lieutenant Weldon James stated: "We knew in advance that this would be an unequal engagement. The German fortresses, bristling with modern six, nine and 11-inch guns, could more than double the range of the guns of the *Texas* and other older ships of our fleet.

"The area was heavily mined, and there was no element of surprise. If we were forced to take evasive action, it would take us out of the mine-swept channels and into unswept waters. Then there was also the danger of E-boats and U-boats showing up.

"We were well within German range long before 12 o'clock. The enemy held their fire. With the *Texas* leading, we moved in closer to shore narrowing the distance to 14,000 yards. From the bridge, we could see that, while bright sunlight exposed our task group, dense haze and smoke obscured the enemy's casemented guns and pillboxes along the coast. Our Spitfire spotter-plane radioed that he could not locate targets and the Shore Fire Control Party, inland, was also hampered by fog and mist."

At 1237, enemy coastal batteries opened fire. The German gun emplacements were constructed of reinforced concrete and mounted on three adjacent levels. Weldon James continued: "Enemy shells began splashing 400 yards ahead, straddling the nearest destroyer. Huge geysers of water shot into the air higher than our own 152 feet. The sharp crack of German guns rang in our ears as the towers of foam fell back into the sea.

"Captain Baker shouted an order to take cover from shrapnel. We hurried from the open catwalk of the bridge and stood behind a dubious cover, a wall of thin armor plating, a scant three-eighths of an inch thick. There were about 18 people crowded into this triangular, gadget-filled space, each side scarcely 15 feet in length.

"Far below, on the main deck, exposed gun crews took shelter wherever they could. Above, in control stations and lookout posts, officers and men hit the deck when they literally saw the German shells whizzing toward them.

"We were in for it, and we knew it. Enemy salvos began straddling the *Texas*, two bursts close off the port beam and two off the starboard. Concentrating on the *Texas* as the most inviting target, the German gunners began to narrow the range."

But, the Big "T" was not standing still. Captain Baker began radical maneuvers in the narrow channel, speeding up, slowing down, and swerving. Enemy shells fell short and over, then straddled the battleship again. Lieutenant James reported: "We were under deadly, accurate fire for seven long minutes, but we couldn't see the enemy and we were not firing back. In the air above, our Spitfire spotters strained frantic eyes, searching for gun flashes to reveal enemy positions. On the navigation bridge,

Captain Baker dashed about on the open catwalk spotting the splashing geysers, trying to get a bearing.

"Suddenly, the Spitfires spotted gun flashes ashore. Moments later, the target was fixed, and our 14-inch rifles began their angry ship-shaking roar. The battle was joined."

A destroyer raced in and began laying a smokescreen between the *Texas* and the German forts, while the Spitfires reported back where the battleship's salvos were falling. Enemy reaction was swift. Hidden railway guns emerged from tunnels and began ripping the sky with their large-caliber, screaming shells. Sixty-five times, the Germans straddled or near-missed the *Texas*, as the Big "T" hurled back her defiance over the smokescreen. Weldon James narrated: "We drew out of range, then turned in again. A destroyer, the *O'Brien*, was hit; then the *Glasgow* and *Quincy*. Our turn was next: an enemy 9-inch shell cracked into the port bow, smashed through the steel side, and fell without exploding into the empty cabin of the ship's clerk. Lieutenant J.D. Ford, the shell disposal officer, smothered it with mattresses. He decided to nurse it back to England."

The 90-minute bombardment schedule had long since past, and the outcome of the battle was still in doubt. Lieutenant James vividly described the ensuing events that followed: "The Hellish straddling and near-missing continued. A splash off the port bow sent mountains of water cascading over the ship, half drowning the lookouts high aloft in sky control. But it was not only water that drenched the ship—deadly shrapnel fell like hail, sprinkling the ship with slivers of steel.

"Lieutenant Moody, our chaplain, was the ship's broadcaster, and he described, play-by-play, every bit of the action: 'Two, just across the starboard beam. One twenty yards off the port bow!'

"I had moved slightly toward the starboard door to see the next splash, when the shell hit. The noise and blast were indescribable. There was a warm, choking yellow-brown smoke everywhere. The back of my left knee felt as if it had been kicked by a mule. I thought, God, perhaps it's not there. A tide of blackness welled up from my feet, through my legs, and into my tightened chest. I thought to myself, 'So this is what it's like to pass out.' Then I began coming back slowly. I tried the leg again; it stood the weight.

"I stumbled, dazed and choking, out on to the open bridge. Three or four others were there. Smoke was still pouring out. Captain Baker was standing at the starboard rail. He called out: "Clear the bridge! All hands below!'

"Moments before the explosion, the captain had issued an order to the helmsman for hard right rudder. But now the helmsman was mortally wounded and the controls wrecked. Captain Baker dashed to the conning tower to transfer control of the ship—a collision with the *Arkansas* was imminent." The switch of control was made and collision avoided.

"But we weren't out of the woods yet," James continued. "Flames from the muzzles of our 14-inch rifles ignited gun covers and gun locker gear on the fantail. The blasts broke open ammo boxes and scattered 40mm shells across the hot deck. Marines, manning the stern antiaircraft batteries, threw the warm ammunition overboard, while a damage control party extinguished the flames."

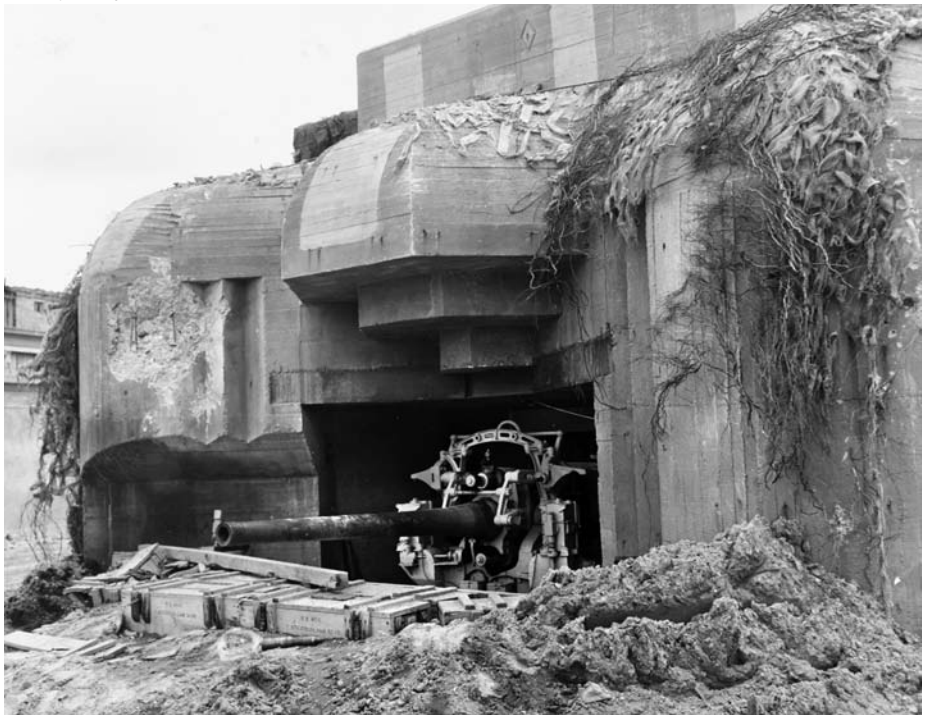
As the smoke cleared inside the bridge, medical corpsmen and stretcher bearers forced their way through the wreckage to care for the injured. Elsewhere on the ship there were other wounded, some suffering blast effects from their own guns. Weldon James remarked: "Despite the 'miracle-hit' at the base of the bridge, our damage, though extensive, was superficial, and the casualties incredibly few. The gaping hole in the deck of the bridge, ten feet wide and twelve feet long, was only 48 inches from where I was standing when the shell struck.

"But, Captain Baker's escape was even more miraculous. One foot from where he was standing, there was a jagged five-inch hole ripped through the deck by a flying piece of shrapnel.

"I watched the rest of the bombardment from the conning tower. We swung out of the German arc of fire after our second hit, but then headed back into harm's way. It was more of the same straddles and near misses and thundering replies from our 14-inch guns."

The savage battle lasted for three hours before the American task force was ordered to withdraw. Although Admiral Deyo's fleet inflicted heavy damage on the enemy shore batteries, many of the coastal guns were not silenced. However, General Collins stated that the naval bombardment had been a great help to the infantry, and the army considered the operation highly satisfactory.

Naval History and Heritage Command



Allied naval bombardment silenced or damaged many of the concrete-reinforced artillery emplacements that the Germans had constructed to defend Cherbourg. This image depicts a shore battery that absorbed substantial damage from the fire of Allied warships, including the battleship *Texas*.

The *Texas* steamed back to England with its flag at half-mast in honor of her dead. It was the first time in the battleship's 30 years of service that members of her crew had been killed in action.

The service of the *Texas* was not yet over. In August she supported the Allied landings in southern France. Then she steamed to the Pacific and participated in the landings at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. In all, the *Texas* was awarded five battle stars for her World War II actions. □

By Christopher Miskimon

The Luftwaffe Against England

The great air battle to gain control of the skies over Britain in 1940 failed, and Operation Sea Lion was postponed indefinitely.

IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR THE FINAL CONQUEST of England … I therefore order the Luftwaffe to overpower the English air force with all forces at its command, in the shortest possible time."

So came the order from Adolf Hitler in Fuhrer Directive Number 17, issued on August 1, 1940. England's aerial defenders had to be rendered ineffective before German ground forces could cross the English Channel and defeat what was left of the British Army, so recently evacuated from the beaches at Dunkirk and Calais. With England knocked out of the war, the Nazis' western flank would be secure, enabling the Third Reich to concentrate against the Soviet Union.

Before that could happen, the Royal Air Force had to be defeated, but that required more than just shooting down the Spitfire and Hurricane fighters that rose up against German bombers whenever they approached the British coastline. The British fighters were supported and directed by an extensive network of radar sites, early-warning outposts, and other stations designed to detect enemy attacks and send Britain's limited number of interceptors directly where they were needed. It was not enough simply to send fighter against fighter; the English defenses were well integrated, and taking out one element of them was not enough. On August 12, 1940, the Germans launched history's first attack against air defenses other than fighters and their bases. The Nazis were going after the radar stations.

Hauptmann (Captain) Walter Rubensdörffer led a force of 14 Me-110s and eight Me109s west toward England at 9:00 that morning. An earlier mission had struck an airfield nearby to prevent British fighters from intercepting. The group flew perpendicular to the south-facing radar site at Rye. The radar of the time lacked azimuth-tracking capability. By flying perpendicular to it, the return radar signal gave inaccurate range information, causing the British to misidentify the formation as possibly friendly. The Germans went on to bomb the Pevensey station, without interference from the nearby British No. 501 Squadron.

Passing Dover, Rubensdörffer detached his Me-109s to attack the Swingate radar site. Half the fighters carried 250kg bombs, but they failed to do any damage. The rest of the attack force hit Pevensey, dropping eight bombs. The radar survived, but the electricity supply was knocked out for most of the day, rendering it ineffective. The Germans returned to base, but three hours later Rubensdörffer returned with 21 aircraft to make a low-level attack on the Manston airfield, where the RAF's No. 65 Squadron was lining up to take off.

There was no warning at all for the British, and a German officer noted, "Our bombs fell right among them." Some Dornier bombers followed and dropped more bombs on the air base. As a result, nine British planes of various models were destroyed along with two hangars damaged and the destruction of the base's maintenance workshops. The runways were cratered, leaving the airfield unusable for 12 hours, so incoming planes had to land elsewhere. The German force escaped with no losses.

The attacks of August 12 were perhaps the world's first example of what is known today as SEAD, Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses. It was part of an evolving operational doctrine for the use of air forces and part of the German

A German Me 110 in the skies over Europe. The Luftwaffe attempted the first counter-air campaign before Hitler's planned invasion of England.

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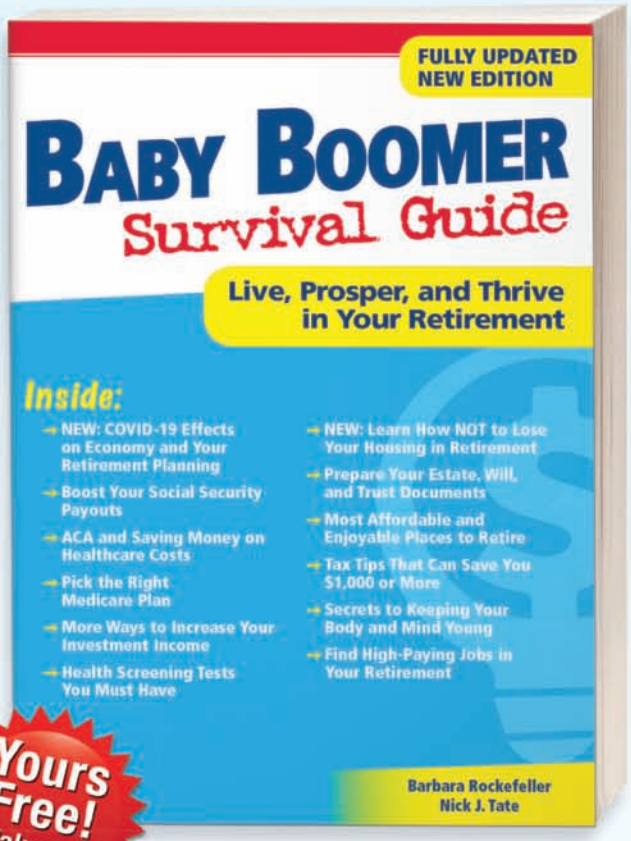

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plan to reduce British air power before the planned amphibious assault named Operation Sea Lion. This German attempt was the first counter-air campaign against what is now known as an integrated air-defense system. It failed, and England remained in the war. Nevertheless, the Battle of Britain was an epic engagement in the skies, one that is told from the German perspective in ***To Defeat the Few: The Luftwaffe's Campaign to Destroy RAF Fighter Command August-September 1940*** (Douglas C. Dildy and Paul F. Crickmore, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2021, 384pp., maps, photographs, appendices, glossary, notes, bibliography, index, $40.00, hardcover).

Most English-language accounts of the Battle of Britain center on the British perspective; this new work provides the opposing perspective. The book is detailed, with much information on squadrons, locations, and mission results. There are also numerous sidebars with data on major aircraft types and other facets of the fighting. This publisher is known for the quality of its illustration, and this volume lives up to that reputation with numerous color and black-and-white photographs. Useful appendices and clear diagrams are also used to convey information to supplement the text. While the German attempt to knock out the RAF thankfully failed, the story of their effort is interesting and worth retelling.

1,271 Days a Soldier: The Diaries and Letters of Col. H.E. Gardiner as an Armor Officer in World War II (Edited by Dominic J. Caraccilo, University of North Georgia University Press, Dahlonega, GA, 2021, 338 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, $24.99, softcover)

Henry Gardiner joined the U.S. Army in November 1935, with the rank of private in an Illinois National Guard cavalry unit. In June 1940, he received a commission as a lieutenant. By October 1945, he was a battle-hardened colonel with years of combat service in North Africa and Italy. He commanded a battalion and served as the executive officer of a regiment, among other myriad duties. During the North African campaign, he received the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry. Gardiner spent the entire war as part of the 1st Armored Division and its subordinate unit, the 13th Armored Regiment. His journey through the war took him from the saddle of a horse to the commander's hatch of a Sherman tank.

Gardiner wrote a series of letters and diaries chronicling his life as a soldier. In sum, they provide a fascinating look at the terror and boredom experienced by soldiers throughout history. The editor has done a superb job bringing together Gardiner's collection into a coherent, chronological narrative supported with maps and other useful information to provide context. The book is an official title of the Association of the United States Army's book program and is an excellent source for a young

New and Noteworthy

Fieldcraft, Sniping and Intelligence (Lt. Col. Nevill A.D. Armstrong, Naval and Military Press, 2021, $11.99, softcover). This is a classic World War II sniper's handbook. The author was a successful Word War I sniper and wrote his experiences down for snipers in the next war.

Royal Engineers Battlefield Tour: Normandy to the Seine (Naval and Military Press, 2021, $61.00, softcover). After World War II, the British Army's Royal Engineers compiled numerous battlefield reports to document the progress of the war. This initial volume covers the period from D-Day to the crossing of the Seine River.

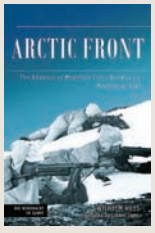
Royal Engineers Battlefield Tour: The Seine to the Rhine (Naval and Military Press, 2021, $61.00, softcover). This second volume of the classic British Army text covers the period through to the Rhine River Crossings. Each book has a selection of photographs and color maps.

Red Star at War: Victory at All Costs (Colin Turbett, Pen and Sword, 2020, $34.95, hardcover). The war on the Eastern Front was so vast that personal stories tend to become lost. This book collects accounts of Soviet soldiers and civilians.

The Second World War Illustrated: The Second Year (Jack Holroyd, Pen and Sword, 2020, $24.95, softcover). This new series collects photographs of the war, organized by year. It includes a color insert.

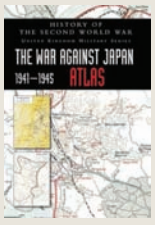
The Final Archives of the Fuhrerbunker (Paul Villatoux and Xavier Aiolfi, Casemate, 2021, $37.95, hardcover). In November 1945, two French officers found a cache of overlooked papers and other items in the now-abandoned Fuhrerbunker. This work uses those documents to expand the understanding of what happened in the Reich's final days.

German 88mm Gun Versus Allied Armour: North Africa 1941-43 (David Greentree and David Campbell, Osprey Publishing, 2021, $22.00, softcover). The fearsome and effective 88mm cannon wrought havoc among British and American tank units during the fighting in North Africa. The book is lavishly illustrated and includes substantial technical details.



Arctic Front: The Advance of Mountain Corps Norway on Murmansk, 1941 (Wilhelm Hess, Casemate Publishers, 2021, $45.00 hardcover). The author was a quartermaster in the German Mountain Corps, which attacked toward Murmansk. This is his account of the campaign.

First Burma Campaign: The Japanese Conquest of 1942 by Those Who Were There (Compiled by Col. E.C.V. Foucar, Frontline Books, 2021, $59.95, hardcover). The war in Burma is covered in detail by an officer whose duty was to document it just after the campaign ended.



The War Against Japan 1941-1945 Atlas (Naval and Military Press, 2021, $46.00, softcover). This volume collects all 223 maps and sketches from the official British campaign history. The book provides a good visual reference for all the major actions of the war.

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Simulation Gaming

BY JOSEPH LUSTER

WHY DESTROY WHEN YOU CAN REBUILD IN A GAME THAT TAKES ON ALL THE IMMENSE POST-WAR CLEANUP TASKS?

WW2 REBUILDER • PUBLISHER MADNETIC GAMES • **GENRE** STRATEGY • **SYSTEM** PC • **AVAILABLE** 2021

So many aspects of war-inspired entertainment are focused on destroying cities and bringing an end to the normalcy of a previously unmarred location. Even movies without any direct war-related themes—from Marvel films to any number of action flicks on the shelves and in theaters—show a high degree of collateral damage without having to worry about what happens next. Enter *WW2 Rebuilder*, a new type of simulation game that tasks players with the cleanup effort after the dust has finally settled on the battlefield.

Right from the start, the team at Madnetic Games want to emphasize the sheer scale of destruction that war brings upon each populace. Just because one side has been defeated or some level of truce was enacted doesn't mean everyone can simply return to life as it was before the first shots were fired. The Second World War left a particularly tragic mark on Europe, its cities, and the people who called them home, calling upon a different type of hero to strive toward some semblance of normalcy after the fact. From ordinary citizens to industry professionals, everyone had to do their part to pick up the pieces, and that's what *WW2 Rebuilder* is all about, quite literally.

Before you get started, it's important that you bear witness to the destruction itself. Seeing the impact of Blitz bombings as they happen drives the point of the game home, setting the stage for the enormous but essential task ahead. From there, players must first clear the city of debris so the rebuilding process can begin in earnest. Removing rubble, demolishing the remaining portions of destroyed buildings, and picking out items that can be reused in the days and weeks to come is an essential part of the job.

Eventually, the goal is to breathe life into the city once more. Make streets and pavements traversable, reassemble railroad tracks so production and deliveries can resume, and give city parks the vibrancy they need to deliver hope to everyone who made it through the war. Early pre-release previews mainly focused on London as a principal location, but Madnetic Games promises other locations like Warsaw, as well as some of the key towns in France.

At the time of this writing, there's no concrete release date for *WW2 Rebuilder*, but we'll definitely be keeping our eyes on it. While at a glance it looks like your typical city-builder game, its objective in the context of World War II makes it stand out in a crowded wargame market. If you're ready to build things up for a change instead of blowing them to smithereens, this is one to look out for in the near future.

HEX OF STEEL • PUBLISHER VALENTIN LIEVRE • **GENRE** ADVENTURE • **SYSTEM** PC, iOS, Android • **AVAILABLE** NOW

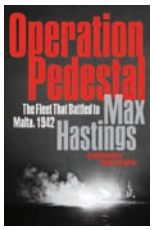
Formerly known as *Operation Citadel*, *Hex of Steel* is a particularly impressive effort when you take all of the behind-the-scenes facts into consideration. First of all, the indie strategy game comes from Valentin Lievre, a 21-year-old coder who says that this is their first game ever. Following up on a failed Kickstarter campaign, Valentin's brother joined the team to help get the game done against some seriously stacked odds. What came out of all of this hard work was Hex of Steel, a solo and online cross-platform strategy game for Mac, Windows, Linux, iOS, and Android.

Add in the sheer scale of what's on offer and you have a developer to watch. Valentin's two-person team has taken the time and effort to cover all fronts—from the Pacific to Europe, Italy, Germany, the Eastern Front, and more—and countries in World War II, featuring over 1,200 units, maps made up of over 72,000 tiles, and some interesting customization aspects.

Each map within *Hex of Steel* also plays into the game's many mechanics, including weather effects, changing seasons, encirclement, supply lines, bombing runs, submarine dives, the ability to capture enemy units, and more. Players have been contributing in their own ways throughout development, as well, providing feedback that is often incorporated into the still-in-progress game. At one point, updates were coming on a daily basis, and Valentin has promised to stay on top of bugs and communicate directly with players as much as possible.

Considering how available Valentin is, it's no surprise that they encourage challenging their own skills at *Hex of Steel*. Play enough and you'll probably get the opportunity to go head-to-head against the folks who made it in the first place, which is a rare treat that's only possible in the independent game dev sphere. How *Hex of Steel* grows from here remains to be seen, but whatever happens, we love to see this type of tenacity and determination from a WWII enthusiast. If you get a chance, it's absolutely worth checking out the demo at the very least.

officer or history student to learn about combat service through a veteran's eyes.



Operation Pedestal: The Fleet that Battled to Malta, 1942 (Max Hastings, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, NY, 2021, 448 pp., photographs, appendices, glossary, Notes, bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover)

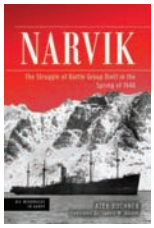
On August 10, 1942, the largest fleet the British Royal Navy had assembled since the Battle of Jutland in 1916 sailed past Gibraltar on its way to Malta, an isolated and battered island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Two battleships, four aircraft carriers, seven cruisers, and 32 destroyers supported by smaller craft and eight submarines escorted 14 merchant ships to bring relief to the island and its people. Against this force, the Axis nations of Germany and Italy hurled over 600 aircraft, 21 submarines, and 40 torpedo boats. The fight to get through to Malta was one of the bloodiest and most difficult naval and air battles of the war in the Eastern Hemisphere. If the fleet failed to get through, the island's loss to the Axis was assured, but Great Britain's leaders decided Malta must be relieved, even at heavy cost.

World War II was so vast in scale even many of its largest and most significant battles get scarce attention almost eight decades later. The relief of Malta is one of those dramatic actions that often receives no more than a few paragraphs in most histories. The author, a renowned military historian, corrects this injustice by presenting the story of Operation Pedestal. This book sheds a welcome light upon this mostly forgotten epic of courage and doggedness in the face of relentless attack.

Before Pearl Harbor: China, FDR and the Plot to Bomb Japan (Michael Lemish, Elm Grove Publishing, San Antonio, TX, 2021, 228 pp., photographs, notes, index, $28.99, hardcover)

For years before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States provided military aid to China, which had essentially been at war with Japan since the early 1930s. America and China also cooperated on military affairs, and one of these involved averting a possible war between the U.S. and Japan. Concerned by gradually increasing tensions, President Franklin D. Roosevelt entered secret negotiations with the Chinese government to send American bombers to China. From there, those bombers were within range of the Japanese capital city of Tokyo. The idea was to avert a war with Japan by placing their homeland at risk. It was a daring idea that was never put into action.

The conspiracy theory that Roosevelt knew about the Japanese plan to attack Pearl Harbor has long been in the public eye, but this actual secret plan is almost unknown. The author backs up his writing with extensive footnoting and documentation, providing a plethora of sources to back his assertions. The book is well-written, clearly laying out the intricate details of the planning that went into the concept. The story is also one of intrigue, in which numerous people plotted to get these planes and other weapons into China without rousing suspicion or violating export rules of the time.



Narvik: The Struggle of Battle Group Dietl in the Spring of 1940 (Alex Buchner, translated by Janice Ancker, Casemate Books, Havertown, PA, 2021, 218 pp., maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $45.00, hardcover)

The German invasion of Norway in the spring of 1940 was a hurriedly planned operation and by no means assured of success. It included the first large-scale amphibious landing of the war. Though miniscule compared to the enormous amphibious operations carried out in 1943-45, the effort at Narvik placed 2,000 German mountain troops and 2,600 sailors from sunken warships ashore, where they were outnumbered five to one by Norwegian troops and the Allied Expeditionary Forces of Poland, France, and Great Britain. The Germans had to fight without resupply due to the difficult conditions and hard-fought naval actions. After eight weeks, however, they managed to capture Narvik and to conquer the rest of Norway.

This book, originally published in the late 1950s, is authored by a former German mountain trooper who joined in 1939 and ended the war as a first lieutenant. When the German army reformed, he rejoined and served an entire career, retiring as a major. His retelling of the fighting at Narvik is a fascinating look at the battle from the German side. While the book does reflect the attitudes of the time it was written, it also reveals what the German troops faced and provides a good account of the various engagements in and around Narvik.

Panzer IV (Thomas Anderson, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2021, 304 pp., photographs, index, $40.00, hardcover)

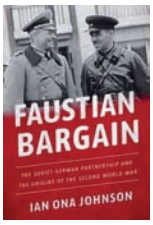
The Panzer IV formed the backbone of Germany's tank force for much of World War II. Originally designed as a support tank carrying a short-barreled, low-velocity 75mm gun, it underwent numerous evolutions to increase its capability. This occurred mainly due to the German experience during the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. While the panzer columns were remarkably effective, they struggled to deal with the small but growing numbers of T-34 and KV-1 tanks the Soviets could field. By mid-war, Panzer IVs carried long-barreled, high-velocity guns enabling them to engage heavier Allied tanks, making the vehicle a true battle tank. Over 13,000 Panzer IVs and variants were produced, more than the larger Tiger and Panther models combined. While the Panther was slated to replace the Panzer IV as the Wehrmacht's medium tank, there were never enough tanks to meet Germans' needs, and so the Panzer IV soldiered on until the end of the war in ever-decreasing numbers.

The author is an established expert on German armored vehicles of World War II and has spent decades gathering information and images from archives throughout Europe and the United States. This effort has paid off with this new book, part of a larger series the publisher created about the major German tank types. This volume focuses on the workhorse Panzer IV. It is beautifully and liberally illustrated and includes with numerous technical tables and charts describing the specifications and organization of the tank and its units.

The Story of 79th Armoured Division October 1942 – June 1945 (The Naval and Military press Ltd., East Sussex, UK, 2021, 314 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, index, $39.00, softcover)

The 79th Armoured Division proved one of Great Britain's most unusual but effective military units. Formed in 1942, the division was commanded by General Percy Hobart, an unconventional officer who proved perfect for his assignment. Hobart and his division's role was to provide specialist armoured vehicles for the invasion of Europe, which came at Normandy in June 1944. Innovations such as the floating Duplex Drive (DD) tank, engineer assault tanks, and tanks with mine-clearing devices were just a few of the vehicles designed for the 79th. Despite problems in their employment, these vehicles proved useful during both the Normandy landings and the subsequent Rhine River crossings in 1945.

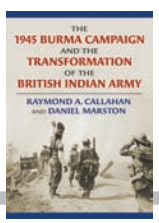
This is a reprint of a book written in the immediate postwar period; many Allied divisions published such books to document their exploits and provide a sort of "yearbook" for their members. These books are often valuable for their narratives, derived from first-person accounts and reports written during or soon after their respective actions. This work falls into that category and is of interest due to its coverage of specialist armored and engineering vehicles during the heavy fighting in Northwest Europe.



Faustian Bargain: The Soviet-German Partnership and the Origins of the Second World War (Ian Ona Johnson, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2021, 339 pp., notes, bibliography, index, $29.95, hardcover)

Unlikely and temporary allies, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union nevertheless cooperated long enough to carve up Poland and get World War II going in earnest. The Poles, already reeling from the German invasion of September 1, 1939, received another shock on September 16, when the Polish Ambassador to Moscow was given a startling message. The "Polish-German war has revealed the internal inadequacy of the Polish State … the Soviet Government intends to liberate the Polish people from the unfortunate war, where it was cast by its irrational leaders, and give them the opportunity to live a peaceful life." Within hours, 500,000 Soviet troops crossed Poland's eastern border. The campaign ended 11 days later. The German-Soviet détente could never have lasted, but in the short term it allowed each country freedom of action without the fear of war between them. Russo-German cooperation began soon after World War I ended, giving the Germans a way to re-arm without triggering the Versailles Treaty, while the Soviets received technical expertise they sorely lacked.

This story ends in fire, with the two nations locked in a death struggle. How they got there is the focus of this new work. The author delves into the details of German and Soviet interactions, revealing how they helped each other while simultaneously spying and stealing when they could. This book is essentially a "prequel" to the war on the Eastern Front.



The 1945 Burma Campaign and the Transformation of the British Indian Army (Raymond A. Callahan and Daniel Marston, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 2021, 288 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $34.95, hardcover)

The Imperial Japanese Army's worst defeat of World War II came at the hands of the Indian British 14th Army during 1945. Its commander, General William Slim, spent years rebuilding and modernizing this field army after it retreated from Burma in 1942. His efforts turned 14th Army into a premier fighting force that won a pair of defensive battles in 1944 and went over to the offensive in 1945. The Japanese suffered harsh defeats under Slim's attacks. Aside from the military aspect, the 14th Army also factored into the political fortunes of the British Empire and Southeast Asia. The exigencies of war forced the British to increase the number of Indians serving as officers, and many of these were nationalists, eager to see the end of British rule in postwar India.

The authors, both prominent scholars, have taken a study of one of the forgotten campaigns of the war and used it to vividly portray its wide-ranging effects on the future of India. Their account reveals how changing times and conditions blended to influence postwar events. Indian troops fought their way through Burma with diminished British leadership, giving Indian leaders both the experience and professionalism to help realize their nation's independence just a few years later.

Retreat (John Guzlowski, Kazva Press, St. Paul, MN, 2021, 300 pp., $14.95, softcover)

Magda Dressler is a war widow living in Berlin, her husband killed early during the war. Hans Metzger is a young soldier wandering the city during a furlough. The two meet and form a relationship before Hans returns to the Eastern Front. Nine months later, she is trying to survive as Berlin is bombed into ruin. Hans is trying to do the same in the hell of the Russian Front during brutal combat. Each is doing what they must to stay alive while maintaining a semblance of humanity during the dreadful end of World War II.

The author was born a displaced person in a camp after the war. His parents were Poles, forced to work as slave laborers for the Nazis. He came to America in 1951 and grew up in "Murdertown," a tough neighborhood in Chicago. He became a teacher and poet. This novel gives a voice to the millions of nameless people who lived through the war in various roles and guises, survived, and went on to build lives afterward. □

Weird Herb Shocks Doctors With Relief of Leg and Feet Pain, Burning, Tingling, Numbness

6 clinical studies show it is effective. Lost but now re-discovered. Thousands of new users report amazing relief from leg and feet problems in just 30 to 90 days – with no side effects. Available in all 50 states without a prescription.

A re-discovery from the 1600s is causing a frenzy within the medical system. A weird herb has been shown in six clinical studies (and by thousands of users) to be very effective for leg and feet pain, burning and numbness – with no side effects – at low cost – and with no doctor visit or prescription needed.

This weird herb comes from a 12-foot tall tree that grows in Greece and other countries in Europe. In the old days, people noticed that when their horses who had leg and feet problems ate this herb – it was almost like magic how quickly their problems got much better. They called it the "horse herb". Then somehow with Europe's ongoing wars, this herbal secret got lost in time.

"It works for people who've tried many other treatments before with little or no success. Other doctors and I are shocked at how effective it is. It has created a lot of excitement" says Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D.

Its active ingredient has been put into pill form and improved. It is being offered in the United States under the brand name Neuroflo.

WHY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT?

Researchers have found an herb originally from Greece that has been shown in six placebo-controlled medical studies (543 participants) to be effective and safe. This natural compound strengthens blood vessel walls and reduces swelling to stop the pain and suffering.

Poor blood flow in the legs and feet is one of the common problems that develops as we age. Millions of Americans suffer from neuropathy and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), edema, and other leg/feet problems – millions have these but are undiagnosed.

Today's treatments don't work for a high percentage of people – and they have side effects that make them hard to tolerate or that people do not want to risk. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter pain pills, surgery and compression.

Already popular in Europe, this natural herb is taking America by storm since it was announced last week.

HOW IT WORKS

Here's why you have pain now: Your arteries have weakened. Your arteries can't carry enough blood, nutrients and oxygen down to your legs and feet. This damages your nerves and causes your burning, tingling and numbness.

The herbs in the pill Neuroflo strengthen your arteries that carry blood, nutrients and oxygen to your feet and legs. It improves your circulation so oxygenated blood goes to the nerves and repairs them. This makes your nerves grow stronger so your pain fades away and your legs and feet feel much younger again.

Until now, scientists could not combine these herbs into one pill without losing their full potency, but finally, they have succeeded.

Katerina King from Murrieta, California says, "I had hands and feet tingling and snapping and burning feeling. It made my life very uncomfortable. I had a hard time walking, my legs felt like they each weighed 50 pounds. Once I got in my car and my feet felt so heavy I couldn't even drive the car. With Neuroflo I have no more tingling, cold or burning painful legs and feet. It went away."

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

"Now I finally have a natural solution I can recommend to my patients who suffer from leg and feet problems and pain. I'm delighted because previous treatments were not effective, but Neuroflo has worked for every one of my patients with no side effects" says Dr. Eric Wood, N.D.

Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D. says "This is new and different. It works for people who've tried many other things before. It is natural with no side effects. Don't give up hope for your leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbing. This pill is working for countless people after other treatments have failed them. I highly recommend it."

"Neuroflo is a terrific choice for people with leg and feet issues. The clinical trials in support of this herb show it is very effective for safe and fast relief," said Dr. Wood, a Harvard trained doctor who has appeared on award winning TV shows.

RE-DISCOVERED LEG AND FEET PROBLEM SOLUTION: *In Greece in the 1600s, this herb was originally called "horse herb" because it was fed to horses with ailing legs. It has now been re-discovered and is giving soothing comfort to Americans who have leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbness.*

Now you can get a good night's sleep - peaceful, restful sleep – with no pain, tingling, zinging, itching or zapping. Improve your balance and coordination. No side effects – safe to take with other medications. Enjoy your favorite activities and hobbies again. Be more active, have more fun, enjoy life more. Don't risk irreversible damage to your feet and hands. Don't get worse and wind up in the hospital or a nursing home.

Neuroflo is GUARANTEED to work for you – or you will get full refund with a 90-day unconditional money-back guarantee. It is NOT sold in stores or online. No prescription or doctor visit is required.

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This is the official release of Neuroflo for WWII History readers. Therefore, everyone who calls within the next 10 days will receive 50% OFF their first order. A toll-free hotline number has been set up for local readers to call for this 50% OFF savings. The number will be open starting at 7:00 am today and only for the next 10 days.

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Insight

Continued from page 27

referred to these clandestine movements as the "Tokyo Express," and American soldiers adopted the term out of concern that references to "Cactus," their codename for Guadalcanal, could put operations at security risk. Japanese vessels operating in the darkness of the Slot were a menacing threat for Corporal Hartman and the men attempting to deliver him.

On January 13, 1943, the group set out from Sasamungga along the New Georgia Sound with 21 men paddling a rough-hewn open boat, traveling only at night, passing countless dark and sinister, shot-up and abandoned enemy boats and barges. Off Santa Isabel Island, the spotlights of a Japanese warship danced across the waters of New Georgia Sound, and Corporal Hartman feared detection and the gunfire that would certainly follow. The natives and the American in their care had passed twelve anxious days and 225 miles on their journey, and now the sweep of a searchlight might bring Hartman's desperate passage to a violent end. But the enemy warship moved on, failing to detect the natives and their lone American passenger.

The group remained at Santa Isabel for a week and a day. The next leg of the trip required crossing the sound rather than skirting its edges, so the risk of detection was greater. They waited until they thought there was a reduced threat of enemy action before heading south to Florida Island, the final step toward Guadalcanal and American forces. While they waited, Hartman's escorts discovered an abandoned Japanese motor launch in good condition.

The natives readily took control of the abandoned boat, fired its engine, and drove Corporal Hartman to Tulagi. Hartman was impressed with the skill of the natives as they operated the motorized boat. Approaching Tulagi, the launch met an American PT boat, and Hartman was transferred to the U.S. Navy vessel. Hartman was relieved to be in American hands and grateful to his native guides, those who had so skillfully protected him and risked their lives to bring him home.

The PT boat delivered Corporal Hartman to Cactus, where he spent the night, his first in two months among his countrymen. The next morning he hopped a B-17 to Buttons, arriving on February 2, 1943. Hartman returned to his base and an uncertain future, 63 days after his ordeal had begun.

Author Phil Scearce has conducted extensive research on World War II in the Pacific. He resides in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Top Secret

Continued from page 31

code users. Those flyers taught to utilize this simple cipher system could secretly communicate by mail with MIS-X or other Allied intelligence agencies.

A cryptographer named Master Sergeant Silvio Bedini ran the correspondence division. He described how letters mailed home from imprisoned code users were intercepted at a New York City post office and forwarded to his desk in the Creamery. Bedini then steamed these envelopes open to read and decrypt their hidden messages before resealing everything and sending the letters on their way.

Posing as friends or family members, workers at Fort Hunt wrote enciphered notes back to the code users. As they were impersonating Americans of various ages and education levels, Bedini's staff deliberately made errors in grammar and punctuation when penning these communiqués. He said that his "writers had to know how to write badly," using "poor handwriting, poor language, [and an] inability to express [themselves] properly" so as not to tip off German mail censors.

MIS-X issued thousands of so-called "E&E kits" to U.S. flight crews. While their contents varied depending on the type of unit and operational location, typically these small, waterproof packets held cash or coins, a compass, water purification tablets, high-energy food, and a flexible saw that could cut through metal. Many downed aviators, including Flight Officer Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager, evaded capture thanks to the survival gear they carried.

Technical Branch also supplied a dizzying assortment of escape aids to the 95,000 American servicemen imprisoned by Nazi Germany during World War II. As these objects were sure to be confiscated if discovered, MIS-X staffers worked hard to conceal them from enemy postal inspectors.

Inside the Warehouse, skilled craftsmen modified ordinary comfort items like shaving brushes, ping pong paddles, and cribbage boards to hide a wide variety of smuggled paraphernalia. Their wares included tissue paper maps secreted underneath checkerboard tops and German currency rolled into hollowed-out shoe brushes.

American industry supported this effort, as well. The Scoville Manufacturing Co. of Waterbury, Connecticut, fitted tiny compasses inside some five million G.I. buttons, while Boston's Gillette Razor Co. made magnetized blades that pointed north when balanced on a string. The U.S. Playing Card Co. even placed map segments within special peel-away cards.

Perhaps MIS-X's most extraordinary product was its baseball-radio. The F.W. Sickle Electronics Co. of Chicopee, Massachusetts, produced dozens of miniature radio transmitters, which were sewn inside baseballs by Cincinnati's Goldsmith Baseball Co. Workers at the Warehouse surreptitiously marked these "hot" sporting goods so POWs would recognize them as escape aids.

Technical Branch covered its activities by creating two bogus humanitarian agencies, the War Prisoner's Benefit Foundation and the Serviceman's Relief. The staff there prepared plenty of "straight" packages, which contained only unaltered items, in order to minimize suspicion. Parcels containing contraband were considered "loaded."

Occasionally, MIS-X mailed out boxes stuffed with European-style clothing, photographic equipment, and even small-caliber pistols. No attempt was made to disguise their contents; instead, intelligence officers notified POWs beforehand so they could try and sneak these so-called "super-dupers" past distracted German inspectors.

At one point, workers at the Escape Factory were boxing up 120 packages per week for delivery to U.S. servicemen held in German POW camps. The equipment they sent out helped facilitate over 700 successful escapes. Another 10,000 Americans evaded capture due in part to the E&E kits that MIS-X supplied.

As World War II wound down, so did the top-secret activity at Fort Hunt. In June 1945, MIRS relocated to Camp Ritchie, while on August 20, MIS-X received an order to "burn all your records and artifacts on hand within the next 24 hours." MIS-Y's strategic interrogation center closed for good during the summer of 1946.

The National Park Service demolished most of Fort Hunt's abandoned military structures when it regained control of the property in 1948. Today, Fort Hunt Park has become a popular riverside recreation area along the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Little evidence of its clandestine past remains, except a commemorative marker recently placed near the park's flagpole.

Dedicated to the veterans of P.O. Box 1142, this plaque describes how their work "not only contributed to the Allied victory, but also resulted in strategic advancements in military intelligence and scientific technology." It is a fitting memorial to Fort Hunt's shadow-warriors.

Patrick J. Chaisson is a writer and historian based in Scotia, New York.

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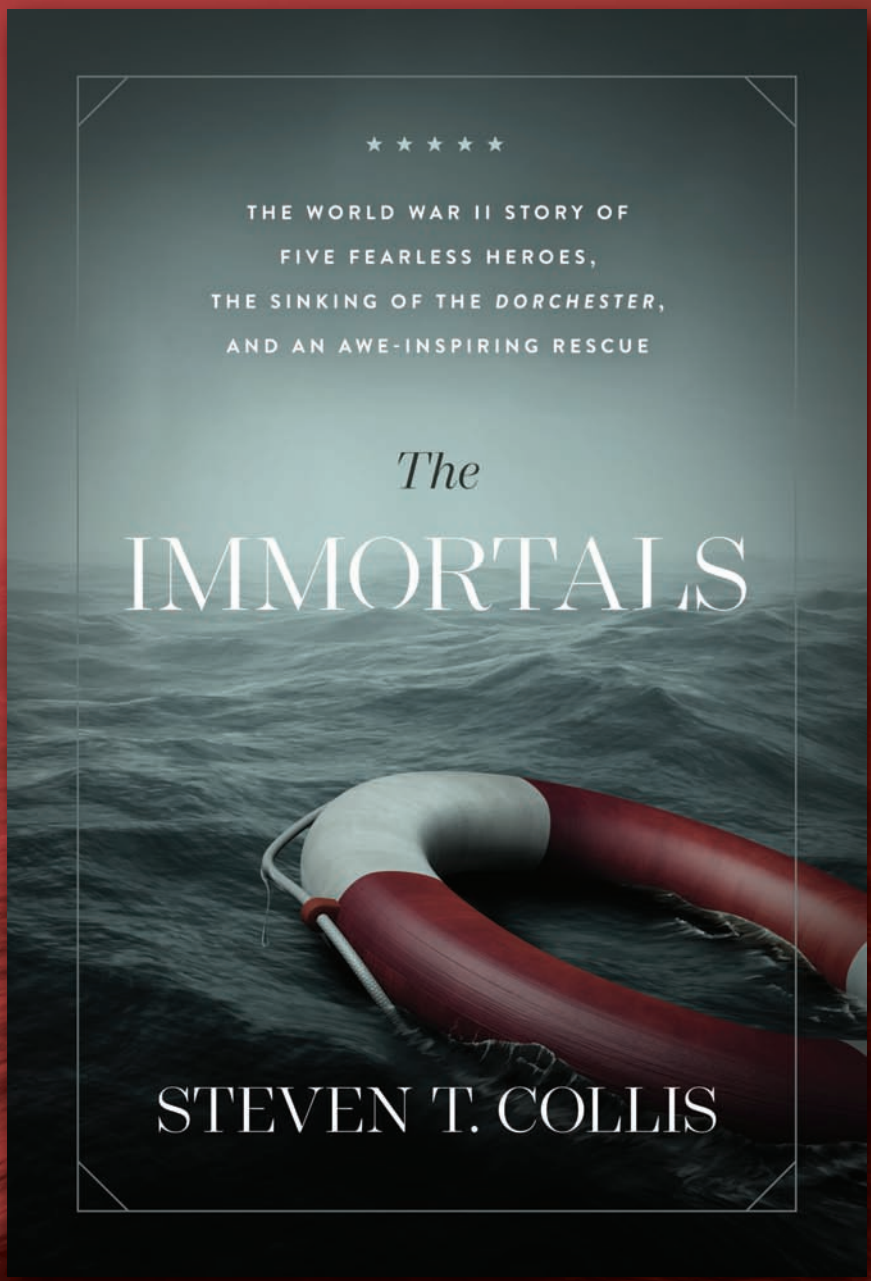
“METICULOUS. DEEP UNDERSTANDING. WRITING WITH PASSION AND INSIGHT. TRULY MOVING BOOK INFUSES THE TALE OF THE IMMORTALS WITH NEW AND ELEVATING IMPORTANCE.” *—Booklist*

In 1943, German U-boats lurked in the icy waters of the North Atlantic, anxious to bring down Allied ships.

By the time the four chaplains aboard the Dorchester descended into the lower holds, the troops knew something was going on; an announcement had blared over the loudspeakers. It was vague. The ship was entering into troubled waters. Submarines were estimated in the vicinity. They were told to put on their life jackets and clothes just to be safe. Tensions were rising.

For the first time in print, this gripping narrative features the largely untold story of a fifth hero, Charles Walter David Jr., a young Black petty officer aboard a Coast Guard cutter who risked his life over and over again, even with hypothermia setting in, to try and rescue the men from the torpedoed Dorchester.



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