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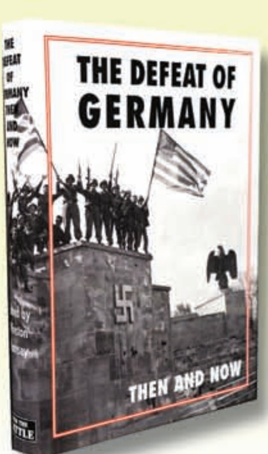

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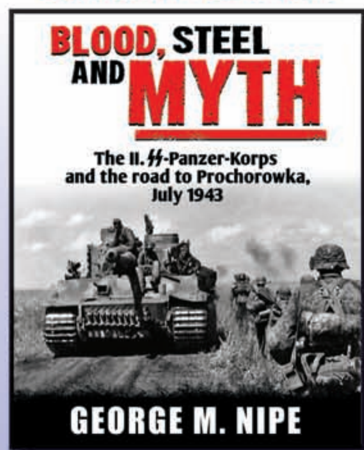

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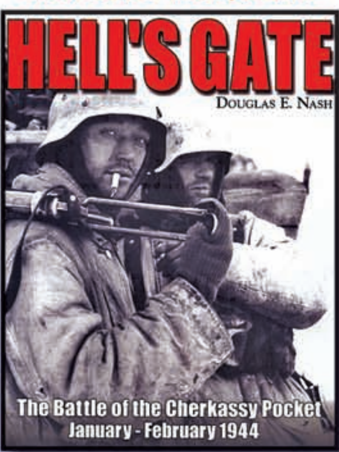

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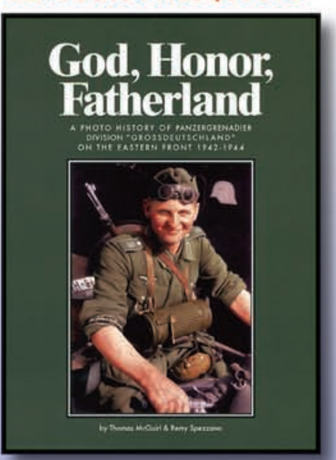

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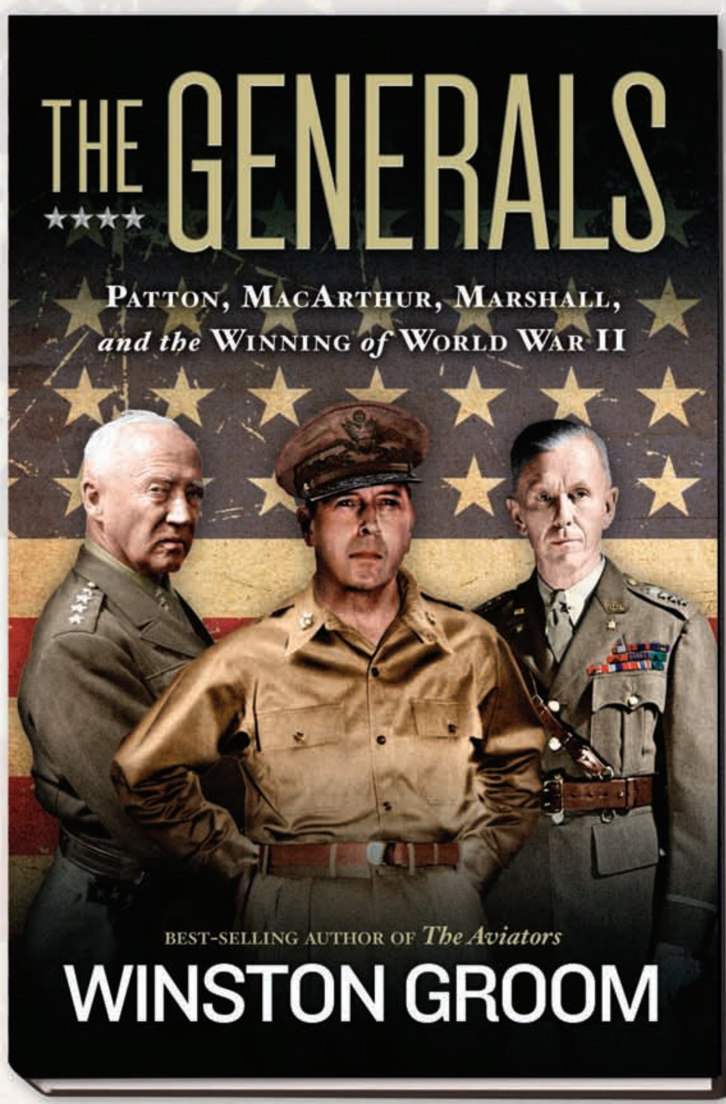

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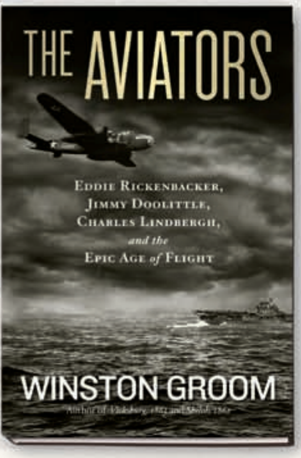

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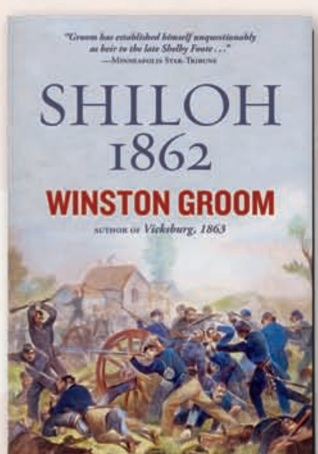

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Photograph: National Archives

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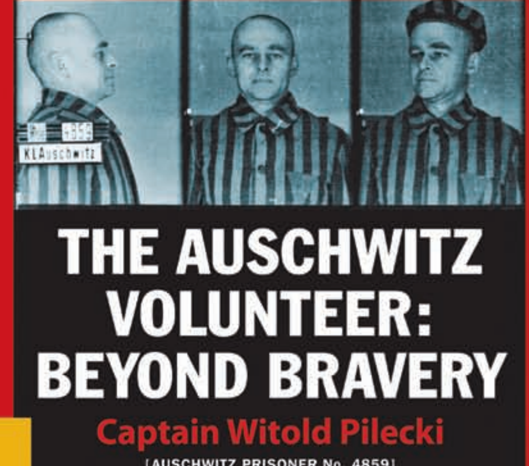

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Editorial

Operation Magic Carpet brought Allied fighting men and women home from the battlefields of Europe and Asia.

WHEN WORLD WAR II IN EUROPE CAME TO AN END, GENERAL DWIGHT D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force, published a victory message to the troops. With eloquent brevity, he noted the accomplishments of the troops under his command and offered advice for the future and the return for the majority of the men and women in uniform to civilian life.

Eisenhower wrote, "The route you have traveled through hundreds of miles is marked by the graves of former comrades. Each of the fallen died as a member of the team to which you belong, bound together by a common love of liberty and a refusal to submit to enslavement. Our common problems of the immediate and distant future can be best solved in the same conceptions of cooperation and devotion to the cause of human freedom as have made this Expeditionary Force such a mighty engine of righteous destruction.

"Let us have no part in the profitless quarrels in which other men will inevitably engage as to what country, what service, won the European war. Every man, every woman, of every nation here represented has served according to his or her ability, and the efforts of each have contributed to this outcome. This we shall remember—and in doing so we shall be revering each honored grave and be sending comfort to the loved ones of comrades who could not live to see this day."

While World War II had yet to end in the Pacific—Japan would fight on until the end of August—many American soldiers read the commander's stirring words on the decks of ships that were taking them home. More than 16 million Americans were in the military, and half that number had been deployed overseas. Within weeks of the surrender of Nazi Germany an impressive sealift was underway.

Operation Magic Carpet, the code name given to the massive effort to bring Allied fighting men and women home from battlefields around the world, began in June 1945. However, by V-E Day it had been in the making for some time. Under the auspices of the War Shipping Administration, the program had been in development since 1943 as planners grasped the enormity of the task that would confront them once victory was won.

From an American standpoint, Operation Magic Carpet eventually involved approximately 370 ships of all kinds, from aircraft carriers to battleships, destroyers, attack transports, and even passenger ships. The British liners *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Mary,* painted in wartime drab gray camouflage, were packed with returning service personnel on more than one trans-Atlantic voyage. Warships were converted to temporary troop transports with bunks stacked up to five tiers high on aircraft carrier hangar decks to accommodate the returning soldiers.

In September 1945, the Pacific phase of Operation Magic Carpet began with the U.S. Navy's Task Force 11 under the command of Admiral Forrest Sherman sailing from Tokyo Bay. The battleships *Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina,* and *Idaho,* along with two aircraft carriers and a destroyer squadron, made a stop at Okinawa and took on troops of the U.S. Tenth Army for the voyage across the Pacific.

At its peak in December 1945, almost 700,000 Allied military personnel were embarked for their return home. An average of 435,000 troops per month were transported during the 14-month duration of Operation Magic Carpet, and the aircraft carrier *Saratoga* set a record with 29,204 repatriated, more than any other single ship involved in the effort. The British aircraft carrier HMS *Glory* made three Magic Carpet voyages, the longest of these from the city of Manila in the Philippines to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

At the same time, former German and Italian prisoners of war were repatriated to war-ravaged Europe. Approximately half a million were returned home from POW camps in North America.

The Allied soldiers, sailors, and airmen who won the victory in World War II returned home to a different world. Winning the war was one thing. Winning the peace would prove an arduous task as well.

Michael E. Haskew

WWII HISTORY

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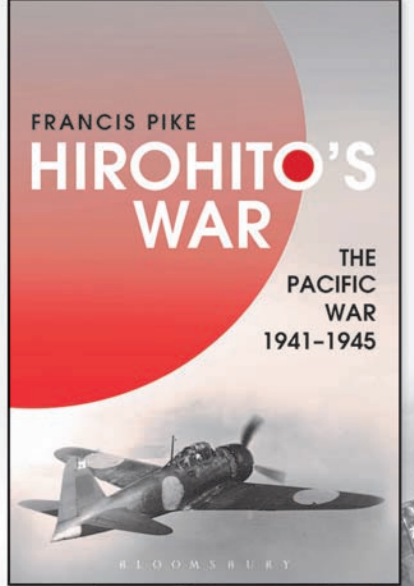

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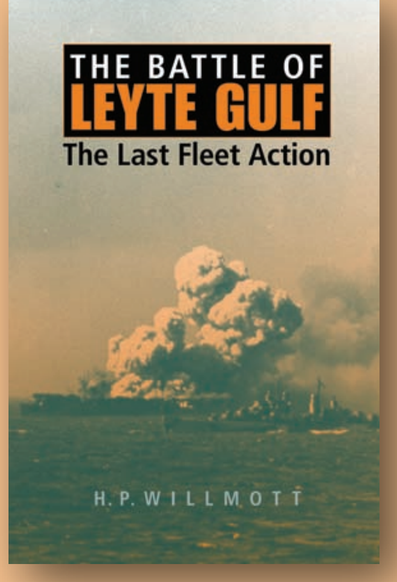

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PRESS

By Chuck Lyons

AKG Images

This post-World War II cinematic recreation of the Italian manned torpedoes in action was said to be referencing the attack on British shipping in the port of Gibraltar in 1943.

Italy's Daredevil Torpedo Riders

Numerous nations developed manned submersibles to attack enemy shipping during World War II and achieved some notable successes.

ON A DARK NIGHT IN SEPTEMBER 1941, MOVING AT PERISCOPE DEPTH, AN Italian submarine edged into Gibraltar Bay near the British harbor. Quietly, six men wearing rubber suits with breathing gear scrambled on to the submarine's deck and mounted three 22-foot long torpedo-like vessels, two men per vessel. The three craft slid from the submarine, floated to the surface, and began silently moving into the bay.

Fifty yards from their targets, they submerged.

"You see your target ship outlined against the sky," one of the six men later wrote. "You take a compass bearing, flood the diving tank, and the water closes over your head. It is cold and dark and silent."

Now submerged, the man to the front of each torpedo, the pilot, maneuvered his vessel through the harbor and beneath a British ship where he stopped the motor. While he held the submersible in place, the second man attached two clamps to the keel of the British ship above him and ran a line between them. He then clambered over the pilot to the warhead on the front of the torpedo, attached that to the line, and clambered back.

The pilots detached the warheads, the torpedoes bucking slightly, started their motors, and slipped out from under the British ships.

"Now," the Italian sailor wrote, "you can think of escape."

Two and a half hours later, the mines exploded, breaking the backs of the tanker *Denbydale,* the cargo ship *Durham,* and the storage tanker *Fiona Shell.*

The Gibraltar raid was one of the earliest uses in World War II of a weapon that would become known as a "manned torpedo." These were small craft, usually submersible, carrying one or two men who rode on the outside of the vehicle, either astride it like a horse or in small compartments. The vessels usually had a detachable warhead and were used for surveillance and surreptitious attacks on enemy shipping.

Invented and deployed by the Italians, who had used a similar weapon to sink two ships in World War I, these manned torpedoes were used in 1941 to attack shipping in Valletta, Malta, and Alexandria, Egypt, as well as at Gibraltar. Other combatants soon followed the Italian lead, developing their own versions of the manned submarine.

These were simple weapons, cheap and easy to mass produce, and during the war they were eventually used by a number of countries besides Italy, including Great Britain, Germany, and Japan among the major powers and such other participants as Yugoslavia and Egypt.

Submersible vehicles may have been used for military purposes as early as the 4th century BC, when, legend has it, Alexander the Great used one for reconnaissance. The Middle Ages gave birth to numerous designs for exploratory and military submersibles, most of which were never built.

The idea of using a small submarine to sneak up on a larger ship and plant explosives to sink it has been around since at least the Revolutionary War. In 1775, Connecticut-born David Bushnell developed the *Turtle,* a hand-powered submersible using a hand-powered drill and a ship's auger to attach explosives to a ship. The *Turtle* was used unsuccessfully to attack British ships in New York

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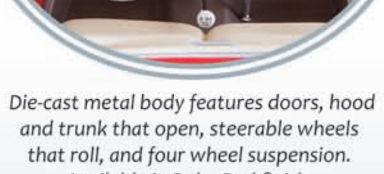

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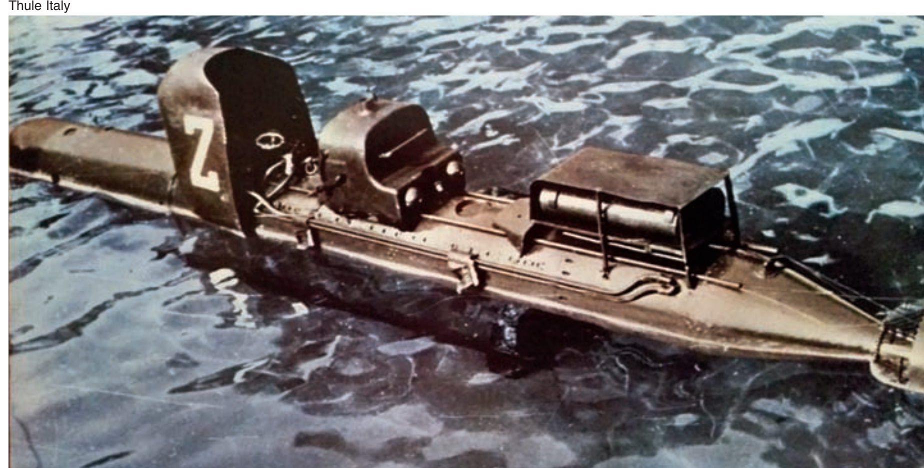

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LEFT: The Italian manned torpedoes used during World War II were nicknamed 'Maiala,' or 'Pig' because of the challenges they presented in handling and steering. RIGHT: The cramped cockpit of an Italian manned torpedo reveals a few dials and the tiny steering wheel that the driver literally wrestled in order to steer the vessel.

in 1776 and was finally sunk.

In 1909, British naval officer and designer Godfrey Herbert developed what was probably the first actual manned submarine, for which he received a patent. But the British War Office rejected use of the vessel in World War I.

It was then left to the Italian Navy to further develop the idea.

In November 1918, Italian naval officer Raffaele Rossetti and another man, wearing diving suits but without any breathing apparatus, rode a primitive manned torpedo Rossetti had helped develop into an Austro-Hungarian naval base at Pola on the Adriatic Sea. Using magnetic mines they were able to sink the Austrian battleship *Viribus Unitis* and a freighter. But since they had no underwater breathing gear, they had to keep their heads above water and were taken prisoner.

In 1938, the Italian First Fleet Assault Vehicles unit was formed as a result of the research and development efforts of Major Teseo Tesei, aided by Major Elios Toschi, who took Rossetti's 1918 idea and improved it with the addition of a breathing apparatus that allowed the torpedo and the men attached to it to submerge and remain underwater. Tesei's vehicle, officially named *Siluro a lenta corsa* (SLC), was later nicknamed the *Maiale* (pig) because of the steering difficulties it presented.

It was this vessel that was used in the Gibraltar raid, although Tesei had been killed on July 26, 1941, while attacking Malta on an SLC.

At about the same time, a similar idea was coming to the fore in Poland.

In early 1939, as Hitler threatened, a public appeal was made for Poles willing to sacrifice their lives for their country by becoming "living torpedoes." It is unclear, however, whether such a program had actually been developed or was simply being envisioned. It is also unclear how these volunteers were to be used, if at all. It is possible some sort of manned torpedo was being planned, but how it would be used was never made public.

The early Italian vessels were electrically propelled and had a maximum speed of three knots and a range of up to 10 miles. Most of these vessels and others developed during World War II had hydroplanes at the rear, side hydroplanes in front, and a control panel. There were typically four flotation tanks, two to the front and two aft, which were flooded or blown empty to adjust buoyancy and attitude as is done on a submarine. The early vessels were equipped with a compass. In some later versions, riders' seats were enclosed, and even domed cockpits were added. Most manned torpedo operations were conducted at night and during the new moon to reduce the risk of detection.

Shortly after the September 1941 Gibraltar raid, the Italian Navy began work on a scuttled tanker, the *Oterra,* in the harbor of Algeciras, Spain, within sight of Gibraltar. Telling the Spanish guards who were in place that they wished to clean the ship's trimming tanks and to ensure the *Oterra*'s neutrality, the Italians pumped out the ship's front, raising the bow, and then cut a hinged door and a watertight compartment there.

After the "cleaning" was complete, the bow was settled back into the water with the door and the watertight compartment below the waves. Telling the Spanish they were moving in boiler tubes to "overhaul the ship's engines to be ready for victory," the Italians then loaded several 22-foot manned torpedoes aboard the *Oterra.*

Beginning in early December 1942, the Italians launched several manned torpedo attacks on Allied shipping from the *Oterra*, usually in open anchorages. In the first of those attacks, Licio Visintini, who had organized the human torpedo crews, was killed by the British, who were in the habit of firing explosive charges into Gibraltar harbor each night. One of those charges caught Visintini and his partner. Their bodies were found in the harbor two weeks later.

Around the same time, the Italians used manned torpedoes to attack shipping in the eastern Mediterranean, particularly in the harbor of Alexandria, Egypt, where on December 19, 1941, manned torpedoes put the 31,000-ton British battleships *Valiant* and *Queen Elizabeth* out of action.

By late 1942, the British had developed their own manned torpedoes, which were called chariots. The two British versions were 20 feet and 30 feet long, capable of speeds of 2.5 and 4.5 knots, and each carried two men. They were capable of deployments of 5 and 5½ hours, respectively.

In October of that year, two of these new chariots were carried into Norwegian waters aboard a fishing boat to take part in the proposed Operation Title attack on the 42,000-ton German battleship *Tirpitz.* The two chariots were lost in a storm, however, and the operation was called off.

In January 1943, five chariots were launched near Palermo, Sicily. One was knocked out of action almost immediately when a big wave washed over it, causing it to lose its limpet mines and the gear used to attach the warhead to a ship; another of the manned torpedoes was also damaged. The remaining three chariots were able to continue into Palermo harbor, where they sank the Italian cruiser *Ulpio Traiano* and badly damaged the converted liner *Viminale*.

All the chariots were lost in the raid through equipment malfunction, human error, or intentional scuttling. One British submarine was also

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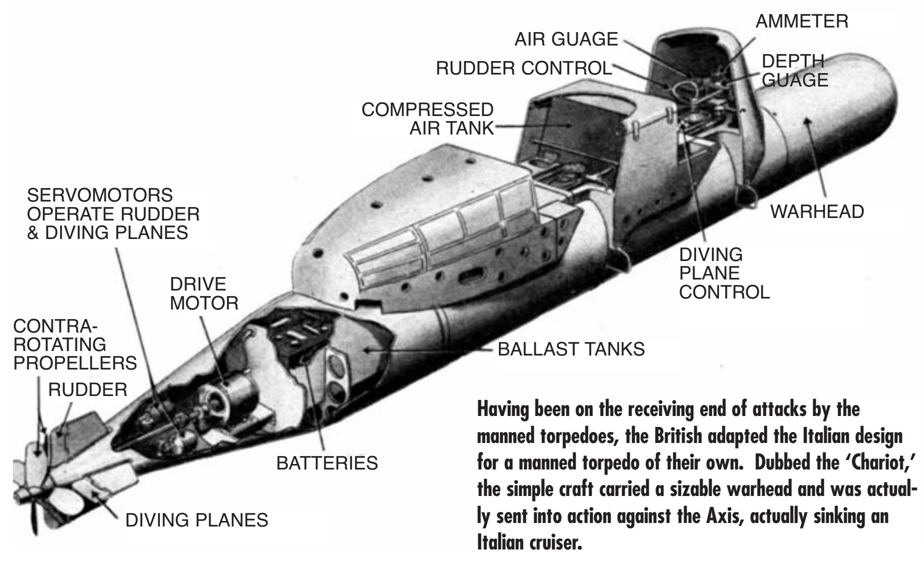


Having been on the receiving end of attacks by the manned torpedoes, the British adapted the Italian design for a manned torpedo of their own. Dubbed the 'Chariot,' the simple craft carried a sizable warhead and was actually sent into action against the Axis, actually sinking an Italian cruiser.

Imperial War Museum

Two Royal Navy sailors wearing full diving suits sit atop their Chariot manned torpedo during training exercises.

lost. One charioteer was killed in the attack, and seven others were captured. Two were rescued by the British submarine *Unruffled*. Two of the captured men later escaped from guards in Rome and hid in the Vatican until the Americans liberated the city in 1944. Two others later escaped from guards in Libya, found a British Army unit, and returned to England.

That same month, two British chariots were deployed to Tripoli in North Africa and used to help prevent blockading ships from being sunk at the harbor mouth.

The most successful British chariot operation, however, came in October 1943, when two Type 2 chariots were launched from a submarine in the Japanese-occupied harbor of Phuket, Siam, and were able to sink two Japanese ships. British chariots were also successfully used to survey the seabed along Normandy's coast in preparation for the D-Day landings.

By 1944, the German Navy had its own torpedo-like vehicles.

The first German version, the Neger, was a one-man vehicle that carried a torpedo below its hull. It had a range of 48 nautical miles at four knots. The pilot sat in a covered cockpit with air provided and navigated with a wrist compass. He aimed the torpedo by lining up an aiming spike on the vessel's nose with a graduated scale on the dome.

The Neger was not submersible, and water washing over the dome made visibility extremely poor and aiming difficult, however. The torpedo was released with a lever in the cockpit, and the Neger often and unintentionally became a suicide weapon when the torpedo failed to properly release.

A later German manned torpedo, the Marder, contained a nose tank, allowing it to submerge. Its maximum diving depth was 82 feet. It carried a crew of two men and had two torpedoes below its hull.

These German torpedoes were used mainly along the Normandy beaches at the time of Operation Overlord.

During the night of July 5, 1944, a force of 24 Neger boats attacked the Allied invasion fleet off the coast of Normandy, sinking the British minesweepers *Magic* and *Cato*. Fifteen of the Neger vessels were lost in the attack. Then on the night of July 7, another 21 Neger boats launched a second attack, heavily damaging the Polish light cruiser *Dragon,* which was later scuttled, and sinking another minesweeper, HMS *Pylades*.

A German midshipman named K.H. Potthast is credited with sinking the *Dragon*. Potthast later said that he saw several warships in quarter-line formation crossing his path and steered to attack the rear ship, which seemed larger than the others. At a distance of 300 yards, Potthast pulled the torpedo firing lever and turned to escape. His torpedo struck the *Dragon* with such force, however, that it almost almost hurled his Neger out of the water.

"A sheet of flame shot upward from the stricken ship," Potthast said. "Almost at once I was enveloped in thick smoke, and I lost all sense of direction. When the smoke cleared I saw that the warship's stern had been blown away."

Potthast managed to regain control of his Neger and left the area.

After more than six hours in the cramped cockpit, however, he dozed off. In the morning light, a British corvette attacked. Potthast, suffering from an arm wound, managed to get out of the Neger and was taken aboard the corvette. He was later flown to a British hospital, where he was interrogated but refused to give up any information.

In the end, the interrogators told Potthast that he was solely responsible for sinking the 5,000-ton *Dragon*.

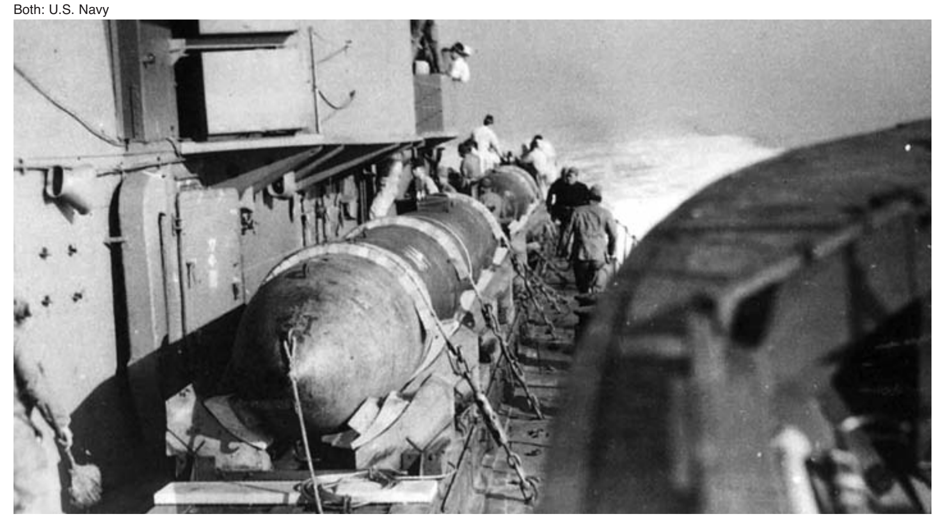
As one historian wrote, "All this cheered up [Potthast], who felt that his arduous training had not been wasted after all."

During the fighting in Western Europe and along the French coast, the Royal Navy destroyer *Isis* was also crippled while at anchor in the mouth of the Seine River. A German manned torpedo was believed responsible.

On August 2, 1944, another 58 Neger human torpedoes and 22 Linsen boats (similar to PT boats) were launched against Allied shipping off Normandy. One Royal Navy destroyer escort, HMS *Quorn,* was sunk by a manned torpedo. The survivors spent up to eight hours in the water before being rescued. Four officers and 126 ratings died. Forty-one of the Negers and all 22 Linsen boats were lost.

The Imperial Japanese Navy used similar manned submersible craft. The Kaiten (Turn to Heaven) was, unlike the Allied and German submersibles, a suicide vehicle. Although 10 types of Kaiten were developed, only two were produced. Type 1 was 48 feet long and armed

Both: U.S. Navy



LEFT: A Japanese suicide torpedo, or Kaiten, is launched from the deck of a cruiser into the rough waters of the Pacific Ocean. RIGHT: The fleet oiler USS Mississinewa burns furiously after a successful attack by Kaiten against the U.S. anchorage at Ulithi Atoll in November 1944.

with a 3,400-pound warhead. It was capable of a range of 85,300 yards and a speed of 30 knots. The Type 2 Kaiten was slightly longer and capable of 40 knots while carrying the same warhead. It had a hydrogen-peroxide powerplant.

The final designed version was 54 feet long and carried a warhead containing 3,000 pounds of high explosives. It was capable, its developers said, of sinking any warship afloat.

That at least was the "prophecy and hope," as one historian wrote, but the reality was quite different.

Only the Type 1 Kaiten, which was basically a modification of the oxygen-propelled Long Lance torpedo, was ever used in combat. These would separate from their host submarines and speed in the direction fed into their gyroscopes. Once within range, a Kaiten would surface as the pilot checked his range and bearing via periscope and made any necessary adjustments. He would then submerge, arm the warhead, and plow into the side of the targeted ship. In the beginning, the pilot could abandon the vehicle before collision and escape, but few did. In later versions, the pilot was locked into the Kaiten cockpit. In action, the Kaiten was operated by one man, but larger training models could carry two or even four men.

Continued on page 76

David P. Colley AUTHOR OF *Blood for Dignity*
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By Michael D. Hull

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The Man Who Led the Charge Against the U-boats

Admiral Sir Max Horton of the Royal Navy was himself a submarine veteran.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER WINSTON CHURCHILL, WHO RODE IN A CAVALRY charge in the Sudan in 1898, escaped from the Boers in 1899 and served for six months as a troop leader in the Western Front trenches in 1915-1916, remarked during World War II, "The only thing that ever really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril."

The former First Lord of the Admiralty had good reason to be alarmed. Shipping losses from German U-boats had brought his country to within three weeks of starvation in 1917, and two and a half decades later history was repeating itself with a vengeance. When German Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz intensified his offensive against Allied shipping in the North Atlantic late in the spring of 1942, losses rose alarmingly.

The Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy, aided staunchly by units of the Royal Canadian Navy and the U.S. Navy, were engaged in a desperate struggle in which no quarter was given. Dönitz, a former submariner himself, ordered his U-boat commanders, "No attempt of any kind must be made at rescuing crews of ships sunk…. Be harsh, bearing in mind that the enemy takes no regard of women and children in his bombing attacks on German cities."

The dour, poker-faced admiral, who had hated the British since his capture in the Mediterranean in the last year of World War I, concentrated his 1942 offensive in the "Black Pit" area south of Greenland, where the underwater predators were out of reach of Allied air attacks. Picket lines of U-boats were stationed on both sides, enabling them to attack convoys sailing between Newfoundland and Ireland. Sinkings by Dönitz's boats mounted, reaching a peak of 117 Allied ships totaling 700,000 tons in November 1942.

Yet all was not lost. When Churchill, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and their military staffs met at Casablanca in January 1943, it had been decided to make the defeat of the U-boats a priority objective. "U-boat warfare takes the first place in our thoughts," stressed Churchill.

The Casablanca talks led to a convoy conference that March at which it was agreed to pool all antisubmarine resources and also for newly formed U.S. escort carrier groups to be stationed in the mid-Atlantic. Allied scientists, meanwhile, had been busy developing improved antisubmarine weapons and detection equipment to better defend the convoys. This included a microwave radar system that the enemy could not penetrate and a "huff-duff" high-frequency radio direction finder to breach U-boat communications. Escort destroyers, frigates, corvettes, and armed trawlers were fitted with antisubmarine mortar bombs called hedgehogs, and the British introduced "squid" mortars, which fired depth charges that were thrown ahead of the ship. And more escort vessels became available.

Admiral Dönitz, meanwhile, was reaching the conclusion that there were to be no more "happy times" for his fearsome fleet. Sinkings of U-boats mounted, and 40 were destroyed in the first quarter of 1943. Dönitz now also had to contend with an equally ruthless foe, a fellow submarine veteran and underwater warfare pioneer who would emerge as one of the crucial figures in the Allied victory in the Atlantic. He was 59-year-old Admiral Sir Max Kennedy Horton.

On November 17, 1942, Horton had suc-

Imperial War Museum

TOP: A depth charge sends a plume of water skyward as it detonates off the fantail of a destroyer in the Atlantic Ocean. RIGHT: Royal Navy Admiral Sir Max Horton, a veteran of submarine action during World War I, led the fight against Nazi U-boats during the critical World War II Battle of the Atlantic.

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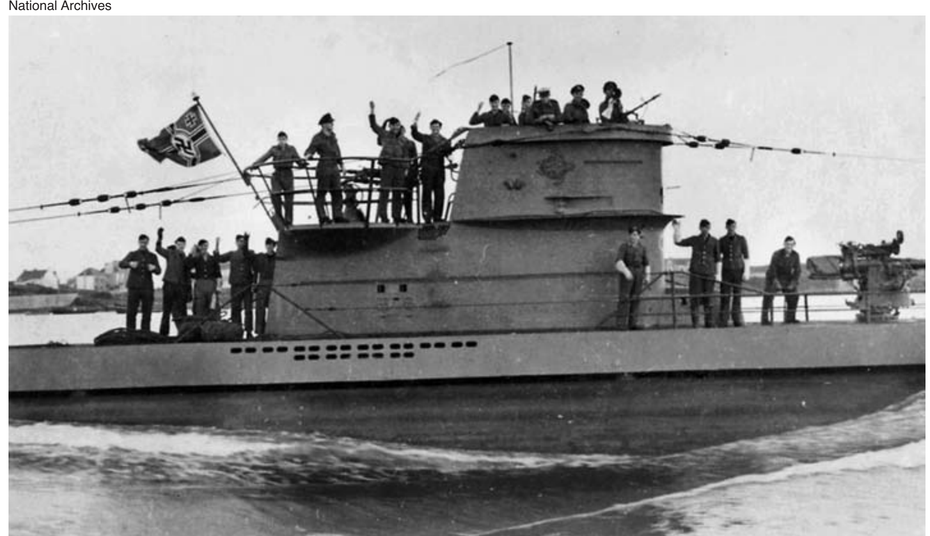

Imperial War Museum

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Max Horton (left), photographed during World War I. Admiral Karl Dönitz (right), also a veteran of World War I, commanded the U-boat force that posed a serious threat to Allied victory in the Battle of the Atlantic. LEFT: Crewmen aboard the German submarine *U-203* return to the safety of a French port following a successful wartime cruise. During its brief career, the crew of *U-203* sank 21 Allied merchant ships but was hunted down and sunk in 1943 by British Fairey Swordfish torpedo planes working in conjunction with the destroyer HMS *Pathfinder*.

ceeded Admiral Sir Percy Noble as commander in chief of the critical Western Approaches Command, responsible for the day-to-day conduct of the battle against U-boats in the Atlantic. During his 20 months at the helm of the Western Approaches before being appointed head of the British Naval Mission in Washington, Noble had done much to improve antisubmarine measures and kept up the morale of escort and aircraft crews with a close, personal touch. He was a charming and charismatic officer—but lacking in aggressive drive.

The complex Horton was a sharp contrast to his predecessor. While Noble was a quiet-spoken naval gentleman, the rough-hewn Horton regularly challenged authority and refused to suffer fools gladly. A stern taskmaster who had gained a reputation in the Navy as a bully and a "pirate," he was to prove well chosen for the post. He drove his new command hard from the start, fraying the nerves of subordinates and making his firm grip felt by every ship's company. Admiral Sir Peter Gretton, a distinguished escort group commander, observed that Horton was "ruthless in weeding out the weak and replacing them by high-caliber officers."

His chief of staff called Horton "a very great man possessing a dual personality, having on the one hand charm and kindness of heart not always realized, and on the other hand hardness which could at times be terrifying even to the toughest of men." Another officer reported that Horton "had more personal charm than any man I have ever met, but he could be unbelievably cruel to those who fell by the wayside."

Born in 1883 into a military family and the son of a wealthy stockbroker, Max Horton entered the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, Devon, as an officer cadet on September 15, 1898. At the HMS *Britannia* training school there, he became a cadet captain, outstanding sportsman, and middleweight boxing champion. But he had a wild streak, chafing at authority, being insubordinate, and causing trouble in the mess. His commanding officer's report in October 1907 cited Horton's intelligence and "excellent" leadership qualities but noted that he used bad language and was a "desperate" motorcycle rider.

Horton chose the newly formed submarine service as a career because it was the least stuffy and hidebound branch of the Navy. It offered command at a young age and some freedom from authority and ceremonial ritual. Working closely and relying on each other's technical and professional competence, officers and men enjoyed a special relationship. A submarine commander at sea or under it was independent, and the lone wolf aspect appealed to Horton.

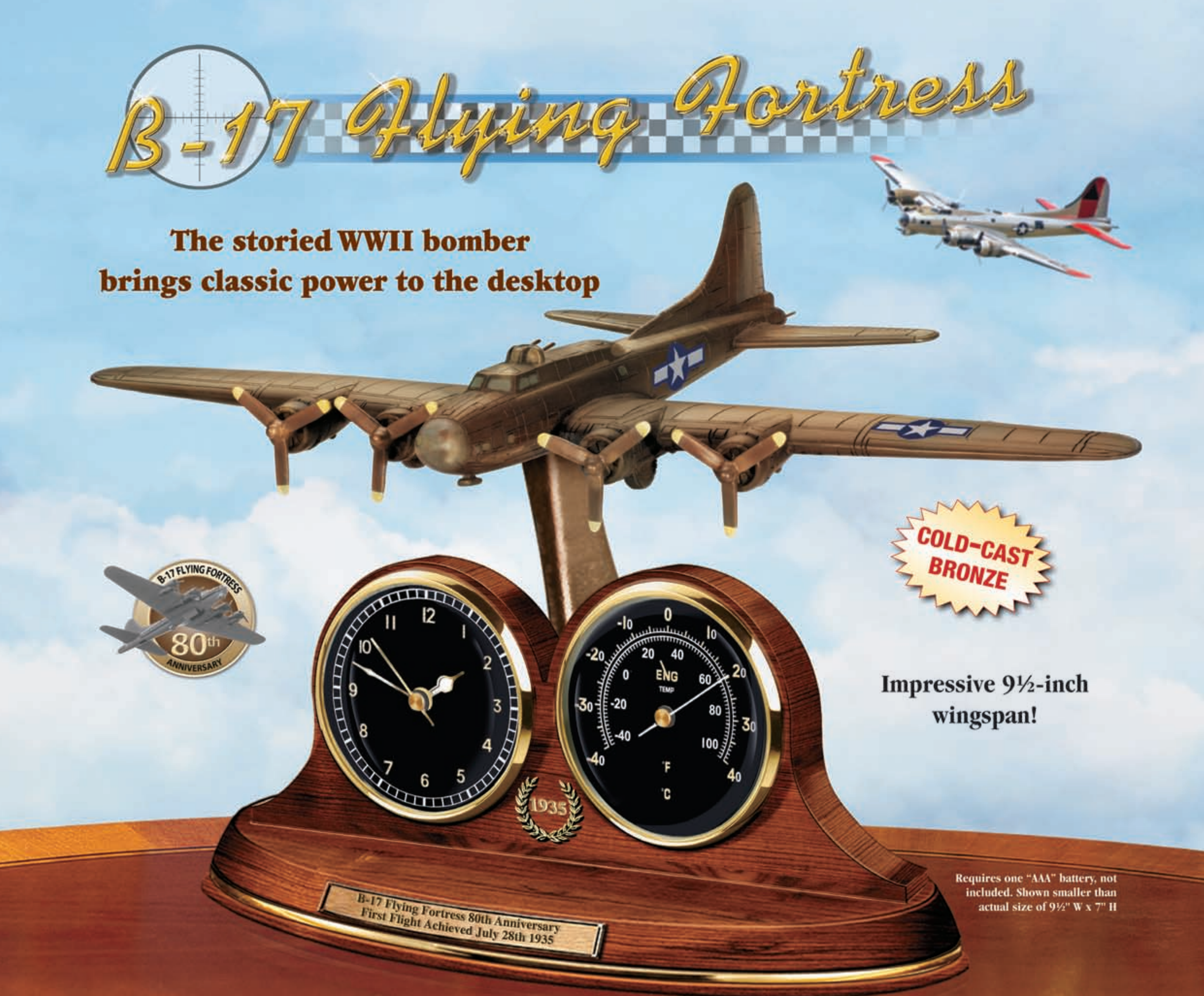
By the outbreak of World War I early in August 1914, Horton was already a lieutenant commander and in charge of one of the first few British ocean-going submarines, the 800-ton HMS *E-9*. He and a handful of other skippers soon distinguished themselves in action despite the fact that the diesel-powered British submarines, unlike U-boats, were plagued by constant mechanical troubles and a shortage of spare parts. On September 13, the *E-9* penetrated the Heligoland Bight and sank the aging German light cruiser *Hela* with two torpedoes from a range of about 600 yards. A few days later, the *E-9* sank the German destroyer *S-116* in enemy waters. On returning to his base at Harwich, Horton flew the skull-and-crossbones pirate flag, establishing a tradition in the Royal Navy's submarine service.

While patrolling off the Ems River in northwestern Germany on October 6, 1914, the *E-9* torpedoed and sank the enemy destroyer *S-126*. Horton was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and recommended for early promotion. In December 1914, the *E-9* and two other British submarines were deployed to the frigid Baltic Sea, where they wreaked havoc on German shipping. Horton sank a number of vessels there, including a destroyer, four merchantmen, and a collier, and seriously damaged the cruiser *Prinz Adalbert*. Because of his bold actions, the enemy called the area "Horton's Sea" and put a price on his head.

Horton operated in the North Sea from January 1916 onward and emerged from World War I as the British submarine commander most feared by the Germans. He was given command of the Baltic Submarine Flotilla early in 1919. A Russian request for him to be appointed the senior naval officer in the Baltic was opposed by the Second Sea Lord, who said, "I understand Commander Horton is something of a pirate and not at all fitted for the position of SNO in the Baltic." But the audacious submariner was awarded a bar to his DSO and promoted to captain in June 1920 at the age of 37.

After commanding the light cruiser HMS *Conquest* and the 29,150-ton battleship *Resolution* during the 1920s, Horton was promoted to rear admiral in October 1932. He flew his flag aboard the 30,600-ton Queen Elizabeth-class battleship *Malaya* for three years and then led the First Cruiser Squadron, flying his flag aboard the 9,830-ton HMS *London*. Given the rank of vice admiral in 1937, he then commanded the Reserve Fleet. He was credited with mobilizing the fleet by the time war came.

At the outbreak of World War II, Admiral Horton was placed in command of the Royal Navy's Northern Patrol, which enforced the distant maritime blockade of Germany in the waters between Orkney, Shetland, and the Faeroes. When the Admiralty decided to revitalize the submarine service, Horton was called to take charge in January 1940. Drawing on his World War I experiences, he displayed strategic intuition, achieved a



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close relationship with Coastal Command, and was a tireless leader. Horton reached four-star admiral status in January 1941.

Horton's appointment to lead Western Approaches was a well-timed and inspired stroke, and he brought new earnestness to the command. Admiral Noble had laid fine groundwork and made the command run smoothly, but his dynamic successor swiftly instituted improvements and was a more relentless match for Dönitz and his U-boat scourge.

Horton understood the workings of the minds of Dönitz and his commanders. Captain Stephen W. Roskill, the eminent gunnery expert and Royal Navy historian, said of Horton, "With his knowledge and insight, his ruthless determination and driving energy, he was without doubt the right man to pit against Dönitz." The German admiral eventually dubbed him "my own personal adversary-in-chief." Horton's grasp of the essentials was immediate, and on his first day in office he picked up where Noble had left off.

Able to reap much of what his predecessor had laboriously sown, Horton took over at a critical time when the insecurity of the North Atlantic threatened the Allied war effort, particularly the planned liberation of northwestern Europe, and demanded the undivided attention of senior naval officers and officials in London and Washington.

National Archives

Crewmen aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Spencer* watch the waters of the Atlantic Ocean brew up with the detonation of a depth charge. This photograph was taken while the *Spencer* was defending a trans-Atlantic convoy, visible in the background, against a German U-boat attack.

Swiftly and tirelessly, Horton strove to provide increased protection for the convoys carrying men, arms, and matériel from America and Canada to the British Isles. He demanded more long-range aircraft support, including B-24 Liberator bombers, Coastal Command Short Sunderland flying boats, and Royal Air Force Bomber Command Handley Page Halifax bombers. He rushed through advances in weaponry, such as rockets for carrier planes, and assigned special rescue trawlers to convoys, which eventually saved the lives of thousands of Allied seamen.

Most importantly, Horton ordered a series of changes in the operation of convoy escorts

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Set within the framework of World War II in Europe, Steve Snyder's book, SHOT DOWN, is about the dramatic experiences of each member of a B-17 crew after their plane, piloted by the author's father, was knocked out of the sky by German fighters over the French/Belgian border on February 8, 1944.

Some men died. Some were captured and became prisoners of war. Some evaded the Germans for awhile but were betrayed, captured, and shot.

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After their U-boat quarry has sustained damage from an effective depth charge attack and risen to the surface, crewmen of the *Spencer* pick up survivors before the stricken submarine plunges to the bottom of the Atlantic.

while sinkings by U-boats were still "the real danger." He boldly reduced all convoy escort groups by one vessel to allow the creation of five support groups able to hit back at the U-boats in the mid-Atlantic. Horton reasoned that the U-boats, accustomed to being attacked from the direction of a convoy, would be thrown off balance when the support groups came in attacking from all quarters.

The groups each comprised six to eight destroyers, frigates, or corvettes, occasionally a British or American escort carrier, and MAC-ships, converted tankers and grain ships each carrying three or four Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers. Based in Newfoundland and Iceland, the support group vessels had no escort duties but were used to hunt U-boats and rush to the aid of convoys under attack. The support groups, said Churchill, were "to act like cavalry divisions.... This I had longed to see."

Horton was a training fanatic, so he set about ensuring that sailors and seamen operating in the Western Approaches were fully able and motivated to cope with the rigors of antisubmarine warfare. An escort commander reported, "He drove and drove and drove at training, shore training at their bases, sea training, sea and air training all the time, even when with the convoys." Horton established the North Atlantic Tactical Training School in Liverpool, where, according to Sir Robert Atkinson, his brilliant leadership turned out "a highly trained force."

Horton also set up a "school of battle" at the Northern Ireland seaport of Larne in early February 1943. Centered around HMS *Philante,* a converted luxury yacht, and two submarines, the school's aim was to "exercise escort vessels in the art of sinking U-boats." The school, observed Admiral Gretton, was "a thoroughly practical affair and of great value." Horton took a keen interest in the school's progress and went to sea in the *Philante* for important tactical experiments.

Horton displayed remarkable strategic sense in the disposition of his forces, and his support groups made persistent and successful counterattacks against Dönitz's wolf packs. The tide began to turn in the bitter Atlantic struggle. In April 1943, Dönitz's crews sank 328,000 tons of shipping, half the preceding month's total, and 14 U-boats were destroyed, seven by escorts and seven by aircraft. For each three merchant ships lost, a German submarine was destroyed. Admiral Horton sent a message to Western Approaches naval and air units in which he observed, "The tide of the battle has been checked; the enemy is showing signs of strain."

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The showdown commenced on April 28, when a slow-moving, westbound convoy codenamed ONS-5 was ambushed in the North Atlantic by several wolf packs. Escorted by a destroyer, a frigate, and four corvettes, the 42 merchantmen were zigzagging through storms and fog when 51 U-boats closed in. Some of the escorts had to withdraw for refueling, but two escort-hunter groups sped to the aid of the convoy. At intervals when the foul weather permitted, Allied planes flew in to strafe the U-boats or force them down. When the battle ended on May 6, a dozen Allied ships had been sunk, but also seven enemy submarines. The attack on ONS-5 was the biggest of the Atlantic war, with the heaviest losses.

Four other convoys against which Dönitz dispatched wolf packs that climactic month completed their crossings unscathed, although six U-boats were sunk in vain attacks. During the next three weeks, 12 Allied convoys traversed the Black Pit with the loss of only five vessels, while the escort groups and patrol bombers sank 13 of Admiral Dönitz's U-boats. A number of others were severely damaged. Losses of 30 percent that May represented a rate that his U-boat command could no longer tolerate, and even the high morale of his well-trained, seasoned crews was seriously shaken.

The German losses were brought sharply home for Dönitz when he learned that his 20-year-old younger son, Sub-Lieutenant Peter Dönitz, and all his comrades had perished in the sinking of *U-954*. Adding to the admiral's woes, meanwhile, was the fact that more of his boats were being sunk by B-24s, Sunderlands, and Vickers Wellingtons of RAF Coastal Command along the western coast of France and in the Bay of Biscay. By that time, life at sea for the U-boat sailors was almost unbearably arduous and perilous.

Dönitz reported to Hitler, "We are facing the greatest crisis in submarine warfare, since the enemy, by means of new location devices, makes fighting impossible and is causing us heavy losses." Dönitz said later, "In the submarine war, there had been plenty of setbacks and crises ... but we had always overcome them because the fighting efficiency of the U-boat arm had remained steady. Now, however, the situation had changed. Radar, and particularly radar location by aircraft, had to all practical purposes robbed the U-boats of their power to fight on the surface. Wolf-pack operations against convoys in the North Atlantic ... were no longer possible."

Concluding reluctantly, "We had lost the Battle of the Atlantic," Dönitz ordered his submarines on May 24 to withdraw from the North Atlantic to an area southwest of the Azores. Admiral Horton was able to triumphantly signal

his escorts, "In the last two months, the Battle of the Atlantic has undergone a decisive change in our favor. All escort groups, support groups, escort carriers and their machines, as well as the aircraft from the various air commands, have contributed to this great success. The climax of the battle has been surmounted."

After June 1943, the U-boats never again posed a threat to Britain's lifeline, upon which depended the massive Allied invasion of Normandy a year later. New destroyers and other purpose-built escort vessels entered service in increasing numbers, and merchant shipping construction was finally outstripping losses. Although U-boats were still being built at a rate that kept pace with sinkings, the new crews lacked the training and experience of their predecessors.

Dönitz would not yield and renewed his offensive in September-October 1943. But he was fighting a losing battle. Out of 2,468 Allied merchant ships that sailed in 64 North Atlantic convoys during that period, only nine were lost. Twenty-five U-boats were destroyed. This caused Dönitz to stop deploying his boats in large groups.

When Britain made an agreement with Portugal and took over two air bases in the Azores early in October, Allied planes were able to cover the whole North Atlantic, and worse losses befell the U-boat fleet. In the first three months of 1944, only three merchantmen were sunk out of the 3,360 that crossed in 105 convoys, and 36 U-boats were sent to the bottom. Dönitz cancelled all further operations against convoys and told Hitler that there could be no renewal without new types of U-boats, better defensive equipment, and air reconnaissance.

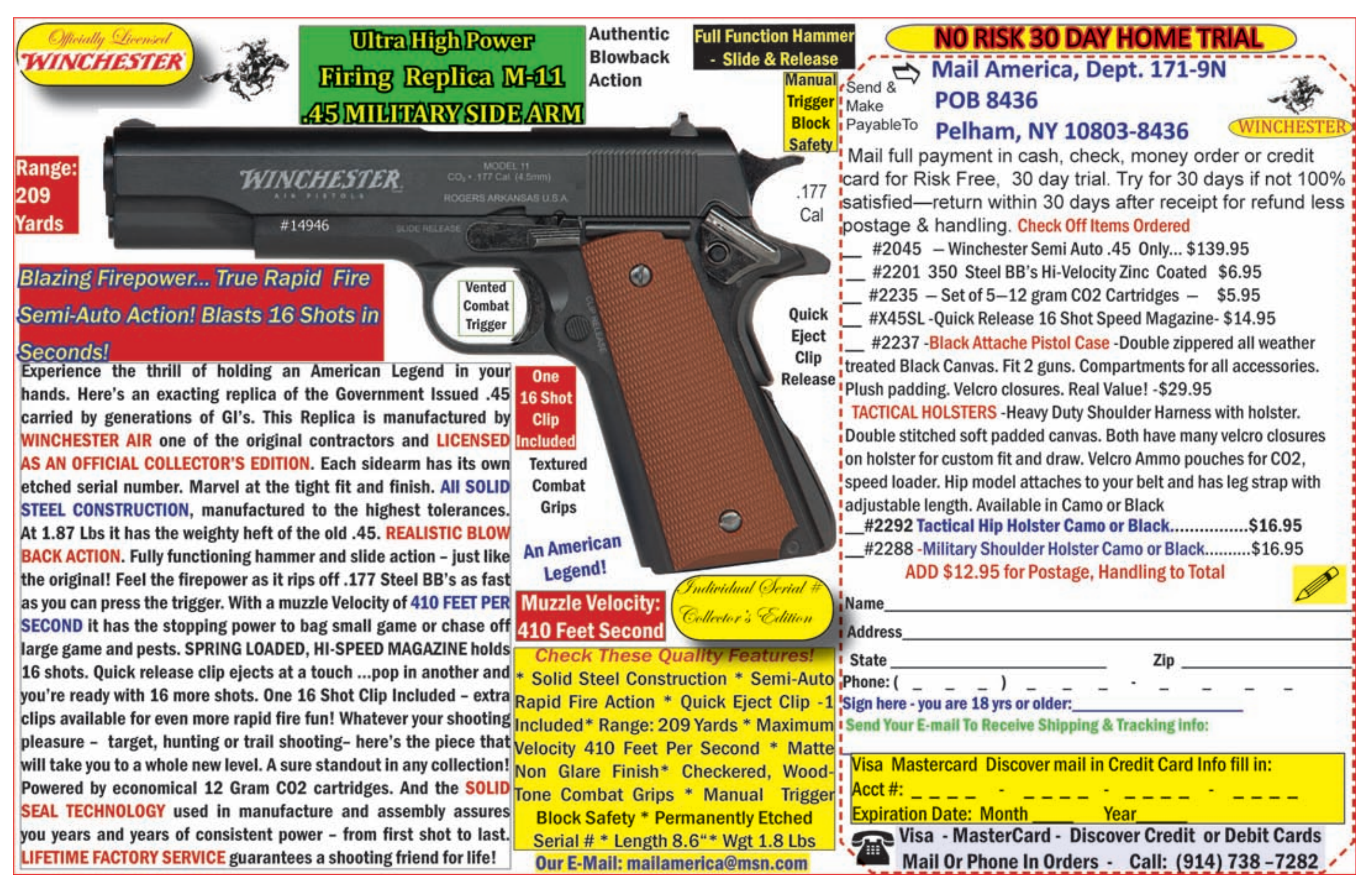
After almost five years of severe hardships and terrible losses in lives, ships, and matériel, the Allies won the crucial Battle of the Atlantic. Without that victory, Operation Overlord could not have been mounted on June 6, 1944. A few U-boats remained in action, nevertheless, until the end of the European war. On May 7, 1945, the day on which the unconditional German surrender was signed, two merchant ships were sunk off the Firth of Forth in Scotland by *U-2336*.

No man did as much to ensure Allied victory in the unforgiving Atlantic as Admiral Max Horton. Shrewd, intelligent, and energetic, he made sound decisions that swiftly bore fruit at the most critical time of the war. He refused to tolerate inefficiency and did not shrink from opposing Churchill or the RAF while fighting for scarce resources. His abrasive personality won him few friends in the press or among senior officers in the Royal Navy, but his zeal and dedication brought wide respect.

Fleet Admiral Sir Andrew B. "ABC" Cunningham, the famed commander of the Mediterranean Fleet, First Sea Lord, and naval adviser to Churchill, said of him, "Horton I have a great admiration for, although I do not think his judgment is always sound. His main fault, in my opinion, is that he sets everyone by their ears and is inclined to bully his immediate juniors. He is, however, full of energy.... He loved power, and used it mercilessly, taking upon himself the mantle of the strong man apart. He was not of the type who could reprimand an officer on the quarterdeck and afterwards enjoy a glass of gin with him in the wardroom.... He framed his policy on the survival of the fittest, and was sparing with his praise."

Besides the DSO and bar, Admiral Horton was awarded the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath for his outstanding service. At his own request, he was placed on the retired list in August 1945 so as to facilitate the promotion of younger officers. He traveled in France and other parts of Europe after the war and died at the age of 67 on July 30, 1951.

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



By Berry Craig

National Archives

The Wayward Helmet Liner

After seven decades, a helmet liner lost in World War II was returned to a soldier's family.

FIRST LIEUTENANT WILLIAM PARKS OF THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION LEFT A snow-camouflaged helmet liner behind when the storied Screaming Eagles moved out following the American victory in the Battle of the Bulge in January 1945.

Seventy years later, the rare World War II relic is stateside with the paratrooper's daughter, Patricia Parks Blaine, an education professor at West Kentucky Community and Technical College in Paducah. There is no doubt that the liner belonged to her dad, who died in 1993 at age 78. "PARKS WILLIAM" is scratched inside.

"When I saw the etched name, I said to myself, 'Oh, my gosh, it's his!'" Blaine remembered. "I recognized his writing."

Blaine and the liner have been united thanks to retired Dallas attorney Joe Czajkowski, who got it last November from Charles Sibille, a Belgian friend. Sibille asked Czajkowski to try to return the relic to Parks or to somebody in the soldier's family.

Czajkowski flew home to Texas determined to track down "PARKS WILLIAM" or a relative, a task that seemed daunting. He confessed he did not know where to start his search. "Do I contact the Department of Defense? Do I contact the Veterans' Administration?" he thought.

Then it dawned on him: surf the net.

He sat down at his computer and Googled "William Parks" and "Battle of the Bulge." Czajkowski immediately got the hit he was seeking, a link to a story in a Paducah publication about a college-sponsored World War II tour Blaine led in May 2014. "It took me maybe 15 seconds to find Pat," he said with a grin.

At Bastogne, Blaine had found where her dad and his fellow soldiers were dug in on a hillside. The tour bus driver made a special trip past the site. Blaine had no idea that a few months later she would have the liner Lieutenant Parks may have worn under his steel pot at Bastogne.

TOP: Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division patrol the perimeter of the besieged town of Bastogne, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge. ABOVE: Lieutenant William Parks of the 101st Airborne Division lost his helmet liner as his unit moved out.

Patrica Parks Blaine

Meanwhile, her new friend Czajkowski also discovered a photo of Parks on the 101st Airborne Division Association's website. He copied the image and e-mailed it to Blaine along with a note explaining that he had her father's helmet liner. Blaine and her husband, Linford, were skeptical at first, but subsequent emails from Czajkowski included photos of the liner with Parks' name clearly visible.

The lieutenant led the First Platoon in Easy Company of the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment. The regiment was part of the approximately 12,000-man 101st Airborne Division contingent at the Battle of the Bulge, the largest and bloodiest battle the U.S. Army ever fought.

On July 1, 1941, the 502nd, dubbed the "Five-oh-deuce," was activated as a parachute infantry battalion. In August 1942, the 502nd became the 101st Airborne's first organic parachute infantry regiment, according to Army records.

The Battle of the Bulge began early on December 16, 1944, when approximately 200,000 German troops supported by tanks and other armored vehicles sprang a surprise attack out of the snowy Ardennes, the rough, hilly, and thickly timbered region where Belgium, Luxembourg,

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and France converge. Before the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions arrived as reinforcements, only about 83,000 Americans stood between the Nazis and victory.

Supported by artillery and advancing on a 60-mile front, German infantry and armor shoved a deep salient in the American lines. Because General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, had thrown so many troops into November offensives north and south of the Ardennes, his reserves consisted only of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions.

The 101st was resting and refitting at Camp Mourmelon, France, near Reims, when the men received orders to head to the front. Poor weather prevented a parachute drop; the paratroopers would travel in trucks. The "Screaming Eagles" departed, undaunted by cold rain and sleet. Speed was of the essence. After dark the trucks proceeded with their headlights on, risky business in a combat zone.

The division was bound for Bastogne a little over 100 miles to the east. "For the paratroopers packed in the trucks, Bastogne was just a rear area town housing a corps headquarters where they would probably get their orders," wrote author Peter Elstob. "None could have guessed that it was a name that was about to become part of their division's and their country's history."

Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, the 101st commander, would miss out on that history. He was stateside at a Washington staff conference. Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe, the division's artillery commander, found himself acting commander of the 101st Airborne Division as the troops raced toward Bastogne. McAuliffe could never have conceived in his wildest imaginings that someday his children's children would visit this small town in southern Belgium to stand in the Grand Place, which would then be named "Place McAuliffe."

The entire division was in Bastogne by the morning of December 19. Parks and the 502nd were deployed north and northwest of Bastogne. Soon, the Germans encircled the ancient market town that was the road and railroad hub of the Ardennes.

"It was kind of like a doughnut," Parks remembered. "The Germans were the doughnut. We were the hole."

Parks also said his men showed considerable Yankee ingenuity while fighting the Nazis in winter weather. Many of the enemy soldiers wore white suits for camouflage in the deep snow. The Americans had only GI olive drab uniforms. Parks said they devised their own camouflage by taking off their white longjohns and wearing

Patrica Parks Blaine

"Parks William" is visibly etched inside the helmet liner that Parks lost during the Battle of the Bulge in 1944. Parks died in 1993, but the lost artifact was eventually presented to his family.

them on the outside of their clothing.

Besides the paratroopers, another 10,800 or so GIs also hung on in Bastogne, including Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division. They were an assortment of rear area soldiers plus artillery, combat engineer, and tank destroyer outfits.

The enemy expected to quickly wipe out Bastogne's beleaguered defenders or force them to give up. The Germans outnumbered the GIs about five to one, according to some sources. On the American side, heavy winter clothing, food, ammunition, medical supplies and just about everything else the GIs needed to hold the town were in short supply.

On December 22, the Germans demanded the Americans surrender or face "total annihilation." McAuliffe famously replied, "Nuts." Four days later, 4th Armored Division Sherman tanks from Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.'s storied Third Army broke through the German lines to relieve Bastogne.

The weather also helped the Americans turn the tide. The U.S. Army Air Forces and British Royal Air Force had almost total air superiority over the Western Front, but dense fog and thick clouds over the Ardennes had kept the Allied air forces grounded. No sooner did the fog dissipate and the skies clear than lumbering C-47 transport planes showered Bastogne's defenders with supplies while speedy P-47 Thunderbolt fighter bombers pounded the Germans with bombs, rockets, and .50-caliber machine-gun bullets.

Even so, bloody fighting continued in the Bulge into mid-January. But before the month was out, U.S. forces had erased German incursion and were preparing to strike at Germany itself.

On January 18, 1945, VIII Corps relieved the 101st in Bastogne. The division departed with a receipt from the corps command that acknowledged: "Received from the 101st Airborne Division, the town of Bastogne, Luxembourg Province, Belgium. Condition: Used but serviceable."

The 101st Airborne's courageous role in defending Bastogne earned the division a Distinguished Unit Citation (now a Presidential Unit Citation). It was said to be the first time in Army history that a whole division had received the award.

The successful defense of Bastogne was the key to German defeat in the Battle of the Bulge. The Screaming Eagles' do-or-die stand earned them the nickname "The Battered Bastards of Bastogne." Both sides were battered. About 75,000 Americans were killed, wounded, captured, or listed as missing. German casualties totaled as many as 100,000, according to official U.S. Army sources.

Parks' helmet liner started on its almost 7,000-mile journey to Kentucky last November when Joe and his wife, Mary Pat, visited Charles and his wife, Anne, in Saint-Prex, Switzerland. The Sibilles also maintain a home in Brussels, the Belgian capital. "I was a lawyer for Exxon, and Charles was at one time a lawyer for our affiliate in Belgium," Czajkowski explained.

"Regrettably I have very limited information to provide regarding the helmet's history," Sibille later explained in an email he asked Czajkowski to forward to Blaine. The olive-green liner, which fit inside a steel helmet, is in remarkably good condition. Most of the cloth webbing is intact, as is much of the white paint or whitewash that was daubed on it to provide better concealment in snow.

Sibille said that in the unusually cold and snowy winter of 1944-1945, his father was a young lawyer practicing in Ouffet, Belgium, about 50 miles northwest of Bastogne. "I remember my dad saying that American troops stayed in the village during and after the Battle of the Bulge. He also mentioned that he and my mother gave hospitality to American officers during that period."

Sibille suggested that Parks may have been quartered in his parents' home and perhaps forgot to take the liner when he and his men left. Sibille was glad the liner remained behind. He recalled that as children he, his brothers, and their friends enjoyed reenacting World War II battles using relics, including the helmet liner, and a steel German helmet.

"I remember vividly that we often quarreled and generally ended up tossing the dice to decide who was going to wear the American helmet because the game was always ending

Patrica Parks Blaine

Lieutenant William Parks' daughter, Patricia Parks Blaine, points to her father's name etched on the inside of a helmet liner lost during World War II. Dallas, Texas, attorney Joe Czajkowski (right) worked tirelessly to track down the family of the former 101st Airborne officer and bring the helmet liner home.

with the Americans crushing the Germans!" he said in the email.

Sibille remembered that after their parents died the children sold the family home. "While clearing up the attic I rediscovered the helmet and decided to take it to my house as a souvenir of our war games during my childhood."

Sibille said he did not notice Parks' name until shortly before he gave the liner to Czajkowski, whose 96-year-old father, retired Army Lt. Col. Anthony F. Czajkowski, is also a Battle of the Bulge veteran. Like Parks, who retired as a major, he earned a Bronze Star for bravery in battle during World War II.

In the email, Sibille said that when he spotted Parks' name, he felt his "mission was to return the helmet to its former owner or his heir(s)." Sabille added, "Your being the son of a WW2 veteran who took part in the effort of freeing Belgium from the Nazis, I believe you are the ideal person to present the helmet to Lt. Parks' daughter.

"Please tell Lt. Parks' daughter how grateful the Sibille family is for what the United States did during World War II. Without the courage and sacrifices of these young men, we would still be part of Germany! Tell her also how delighted I am of this happy ending."

The Czajkowskis presented the liner to Blaine and her husband, an Army veteran of the Vietnam War, in an impromptu January ceremony at the Paducah hotel where the Texans stayed during their trip from Dallas. The festivities included champagne, Belgian chocolates, and World War II big band music playing from Czajkowski's iPhone.

He had Blaine unveil the liner, which was inside a glass case he had built to protect the relic. The liner is at home with the Blaines, who live near Bandana, a small farming community near Paducah.

Lieutenant Parks, from Cristopher, Illinois, joined the Army around 1940 after serving in the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps. He also fought in the Korean War, his daughter said.

Parks came to Paducah in 1955 to help organize a local Army reserve unit. "It was his last assignment before he retired," Blaine said.

Parks made combat jumps into Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944, and in Holland on September 17, 1944, during Operation Market-Garden. The college-sponsored trip included stops in Normandy.

"He told me that when he jumped at Normandy it looked like the world was coming to an end," said Linford Parks, who is retired. "There were fires everywhere. The Germans were shooting at the planes. Antiaircraft shells were exploding everywhere.

"I asked him if he was reluctant to come out of the plane in Holland knowing what had happened in Normandy," Parks concluded. "He said, 'Hell no! The damn plane was on fire [from German antiaircraft guns].' He said the pilots jumped, too, and they made infantrymen out of them."

A first-time contributor to WWII History, *Berry Craig resides in Mayfield, Kentucky.*

By Blaine Taylor

All: National Archives

The Killing Squad

The Nazi Einsatzgruppen began the war's most closely guarded operation, the annihilation of the Jews.

THE WIDE-SCALE MURDER OF JEWS BY NAZI GERMANY BEGAN IN POLAND IN September 1939, protested only by German Army Generals Johannes Blaskowitz and Georg Kuchler.

Indeed, in some cases the Army even aided the Death's Head units of the SS in the Polish campaign by killing Jews under the thin guise that they were, in fact, enemy partisans operating behind the German lines. This stratagem would be vastly expanded when the Soviet Union was invaded on June 22, 1941, the rule being, "Where there is a Jew, there is a partisan; where there is a partisan, there is a Jew."

In the Soviet Union, the killing escalated as SS General Reinhard Heydrich, head of the RSHA (Reich Security Main Office), established, organized, and dispatched to the Baltic Republics and Western Russia six major units attached to the German Army for the specific purpose of killing what he termed "hostile elements," above all, the Jews.

These so-called Einsatzgruppen (Special Task Forces) were commanded in the field by young, motivated, highly educated soldiers who in civilian life were lawyers, and their ranks consisted of members of Heydrich's Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service, or SD), the overall General SS, the Nazi Party's Storm Troopers(SA), the German State Regular Police, and later combat troops from the Waffen SS Death's Head and Wiking Divisions.

Immediately after the war and for many decades thereafter, various German veterans' organizations falsely denied that the combat arm of the SS had anything at all to do with atrocities known to have been carried out by their organizational cousins in the dreaded Einsatzgruppen.

Mobilized initially during the 1939 Polish Campaign, the major heinous activities perpetrated by the Einsatzgruppen occurred during 1941-1942 with the outright murder of hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews in both Russia and Ukraine.

Working closely with the local police and the native non-Jewish populations, the German Order Police jointly served as the primary moving force of the Nazi Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Europe prior to the establishment of the more infamous death camp extermination combines.

And that was not all, either. Besides Jews, and often assisted directly by the local police of the invaded territories, the Nazi Einsatzgruppen murdered gypsies, homosexuals, and Communist Party officials.

Together, the locals and their invaders rounded up entire populations of occupied towns, executing them by shooting and then throwing their bodies into pits that served as mass graves.

Tiring of this time-consuming, costly, and emotionally draining effort, the killers soon deployed gas vans, sealed truck passenger compartments into which the vehicles' fumes were diverted, to kill their prisoners while in transit from one spot to another.

Originally, Heydrich organized his Einsatzgruppen into six units that would eventually encompass some 20,000 men and women. Each unit included Waffen SS, motorcycle riders, administrators, SD personnel, criminal police, state police, auxiliary police, regular police, female secretaries and clerks, interpreters, and teletype and radio operators. These units were, in effect, completely mobile, and self-contained.

In addition, at a time when the regular German Army was only partially mobilized in June 1941, with much of its field artillery still being horse drawn, Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS, ensured that his individual killing units were fully mobile with a complement of 180 trucks each. The troops themselves were well armed with either rifles or automatic weapons.

A mother clutches her child near Ivangorod, Ukraine as a German soldier takes aim at close range. The rifles of additional German soldiers, members of the Einsatzgruppen execution squads, are visible at left.

Himmler and Heydrich, acting on the direct orders of German Chancellor Adolf Hitler verbally and Reich Marshal Hermann Göring in writing in July 1941, fully intended to kill not only Jews, but also 25 to 30 million Slavs all the way to the far-off Ural Moun-

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- Ralph Burns

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In a chilling photo that provides documented evidence of Nazi atrocities on the Eastern Front during World War II, German soldiers fire into a pit as they execute Russian civilians.

tains in Soviet Asia. This would clear the vast grassland steppes for future German colonization.

At first, during June-July 1941, the SS members themselves were not fully and closely involved in the killings, instead encouraging the local populations of the invaded territories to kill their own Jews in alleged spontaneous uprisings that they both aided and abetted.

Indeed, to further enflame these locals the Germans opened up all the communist jails and displayed the dead left behind by the retreating Red Army political commissars, blaming these grisly killings on the Jews.

But even as they were actively encouraging these domestic killings and also participating in them, the SS nonetheless nervously approached their gory tasks. One SS man remembered, "We all said to one another, 'What on earth would happen if we lost the war and had to pay for all this?'"

This was precisely the problem that General Blaskowitz had identified in German-occupied Poland in the fall of 1939 and that Himmler encountered as well. As the direct result of the brutal mass killings, moral depravity was spreading through the SS like an epidemic.

It was, therefore, all well and good for Himmler to boast, "If Hitler were to say I should shoot my mother, I'd do it, and be proud of his confidence!"—as long as Himmler was not the man actually pulling the trigger, that is.

By all accounts, Himmler was, first, last, and always, a desk murderer who ordered other people to do the dirty work. The same was also true of both Heydrich and his own deputy, SS Lt. Col. Adolf Eichmann.

The anecdote is told that when Himmler first witnessed an actual Einsatzgruppen massacre in the East, he got sick and vomited on the spot. In similar fashion, his Einsatzgruppen commanders were losing their minds and being relieved of duty, while the men who actually performed the shootings were becoming alcoholics and experiencing emotional distress.

At one such action on September 15, 1941, fully 12,000 people were formed by the police into marching columns and sent down a street toward a local airport, with the small children and elderly being trucked. Upon reaching the airfield, all the prisoners were duly marched across

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an open meadow about 50 yards to an open pit. They were then murdered with automatic weapons. The killing lasted a full day, after which both water and quicklime were splashed over the bodies, causing the dead and the still living among them to boil.

On a single day, September 22, 1941, the Einsatzgruppen slaughtered 10,000 people in one such action. One of their commanders, Artur Nebe, later renowned as an executed plotter in the July 20, 1944, attempt to assassinate the Führer, wanted to herd Russian mental patients into a building and blow it up with dynamite.

Justifying this technique to relieve his hard-pressed men from having to shoot incurably insane patients, Nebe had a subordinate chemist set up a reinforced concrete machine-gun post rigged with dynamite. With the patients trapped therein, the dynamite would be detonated.

The result proved to be far more demoralizing than Nebe had envisioned, with both cement blocks and blasted body parts raining down on the Nazi killers, arms and legs landing in trees and then having to be retrieved to hide the evidence of this foul deed.

Nebe was also the first to experiment with the mobile gas vans. This was done not to kill more humanely, but rather as a means of making the killing more bearable for the executioners.

One of the most highly publicized Nazi atrocities on the Eastern Front during World War II was the mass murder of approximately 30,000 Jews in the ravine of Babi Yar in Russia.

Because pure carbon monoxide was found to be too expensive to use in this way, Nebe decided to experiment with the vehicles' own automobile exhaust fumes instead. These, in turn, led to the stationary and ever larger death camp chambers beginning in mid-1942, where the killing took place on an overwhelming scale until late 1944.

Even though the crematoria and gas chambers of the Nazi death camps have come to be grimly iconic of the Holocaust, they were, according to some sources, exceptional, and not the standard killing method.

If Slavs are counted among the victims of the Holocaust along with Jews and gypsies, then

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shooting accounted for far more deaths than gas. The van gassing began late in 1941, and the camps became operational afterward.

The men of the Einsatzgruppen obeyed their dire orders willingly, if uneasily, for no judges looked over their shoulders, at least not during the war. They were also told that they acted on the direct orders of their Führer, the Supreme Justice of the German State, making them "judge, jury, and executioner" all rolled into one.

The German Armed Forces, when not directly involved, simply looked away.

One infamous Special Task Force commander, Friedrich Jeckeln, invented the "packing" method of killing, wherein the intended victims were funneled in groups of 50 by troop gauntlets shouting at and beating them along the way to their deaths. For instance, at Babi Yar in Russia the pits were manned by such packers, who placed the people to be killed on top of those who already had been murdered. Once so positioned, they were shot in the back of the head, in what the Germans called the Genuckschuss. When one shooter fired a full clip, he was given a break by another, and so on.

On January 20, 1942, Heydrich and Eichmann convened their infamous top secret meeting at a villa at Wannsee outside Berlin to take the Final Solution of the Jewish Question to its next logical level, the railway deportation of all Jews by train "to the East" and their extermination in gas chambers. This process commenced in earnest in mid-1942, when Heydrich himself was assassinated in Prague by the Czechs.

The first such camp was at Auschwitz-Birkenau in Upper Silesia, followed by three more in eastern Poland, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Extermination at Belzec started on March 17, 1942. In time, the other SS death camps included Chelmno and Majdanek, for a total of six major facilities.

The notorious prussic acid insecticide Zyklon B crystallized gas was used only at Auschwitz, while reportedly Sobibor, Treblinka, and Belzec used engine-produced carbon monoxide exhaust fumes. Majdanek used both Zyklon B and pure bottled carbon monoxide.

Himmler toured Auschwitz on July 17-18, 1942, the month after Heydrich died, and watched a Zyklon B demonstration staged especially for him. The camp commandant, Rudolf Hoess, noted later of Himmler that "He just looked on in total silence."

The following February, Hoess' aides noted that the priggish Himmler seemed to enjoy seeing women tortured. At a special demonstration for him at Sobibor, 300 young Jewish women were sent on what was euphemisticall called "the road to heaven" from Camp 2 into the gas chamber. Reportedly, the dour Himmler enjoyed wine and cigarettes with his staff aides afterward.

The catastrophic defeat and surrender of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad in early 1943 put all Nazi plans for colonization of the East on hold, but the murder of the Jews continued unabated.

However, that same year it was felt prudent to disband the Einsatzgruppen and take steps to cover up what had been done. One who did not advocate this reversal of policy was Hitler, and in June 1943 the continued killing of the Jews became a more important political war than winning the military conflict it had engendered.

Hitler and Himmler committed suicide a few weeks apart, leaving behind their bloody minions to pay for the deeds of the Einsatzgruppen and others.

The military government of the United States in occupied West Germany brought to trial 24 former commanders and officers of the Einsatzgruppen in the ninth of 12 overall war crimes trials held at Nuremberg.

The case of Otto Ohlendorf et al. was heard by a panel of three judges from September 15, 1947, to April 10, 1948, with American Justice Michael A. Musmanno of Philadelphia presiding.

Amazingly, at first there was no such trial planned for the criminals of the notorious Ein-

stazgruppen, but this changed with the discovery of a single set of its reports that survived the war. It was found on the fourth floor among two tons of other documents at Gestapo headquarters in Berlin in September 1945.

It took prosecutors more than a year to sort through the literally thousands of such papers that had fallen into the hands of the Allies with the total collapse of Nazi Germany.

At the first of the trials, the International Military Tribunal of 1945-1946 in Nuremberg, Ohlendorf had let slip in open court testimony that his own Einsatzgruppen D had murdered 90,000 people. It was not until much later, though, that the fuller and much grimmer overall picture emerged via the newly found documents, the Nazis' records of their deeds.

The 24 accused included Ohelndorf, Heinz Jost, Erich Naumann, Otto Rasch, Edwin Schulz, Franz Six, Paul Blobel, Walter Blume, Martin Dandberger, Willy Seibert, Eugen Steimle, Ernst Bilberstein, Werner Braune, Walter Hansch, Gustav Nosske, Adolf Ott, Eduard Strauch, Emil Haussmann, Woldemar Klingelhofer, Lothar Fendler, Waldemar von Radetsky, Heinz Schubert, and Matthias Graf.

Only four of the accused were hanged in 1951, including Ohlendorf. Despite being the sole American prosecution witness in other trials, he was eventually executed after many appeals to superior courts in the United States had been denied.

One who was not hanged was the Austrian SS General Odilo Globocnik, an Eichmann crony and a former Nazi Gauleiter of Vienna, who founded four death camps in Poland: Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Majdanek. He died a mysterious death either by suicide, partisans, or an alleged Jewish death squad in May or June 1945.

SS General Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski was responsible for antipartisan warfare on the Eastern Front during the war and boasted in writing, "There isn't a Jew left in Estonia!" He also testified for the Allied prosecution at Nuremberg and died at Munich-Harlaching on March 8, 1972, long after most of his fellow co-conspirators. SS General Curt von Gottberg succeeded Bach-Zelewski and committed suicide.

SS General Friedrich Jeckeln was hanged at Riga. Eduard Strauch was named SD commander of central Russia in 1942 and diagnosed as insane in 1947.

SS Police General Otto Waldmann became SS Leader and Police Leader for Hungary and transferred to police duties in southern Europe, while Carl Zenner became SS and Police Leader for White Ruthenia in May 1942. They were given, respectively, a five-year sentence in 1945 and a 15-year prison term in 1961.

SS and Police Leader Heinz Reinefarth put down the Warthe, Poland, uprising, and in 1965 was elected mayor of Westerland-Sylt. That same year, Otto Winkelmann, former director of the Order Police Head Office and later SS and Police Leader in occupied Hungary, retired as a fully pensioned policeman.

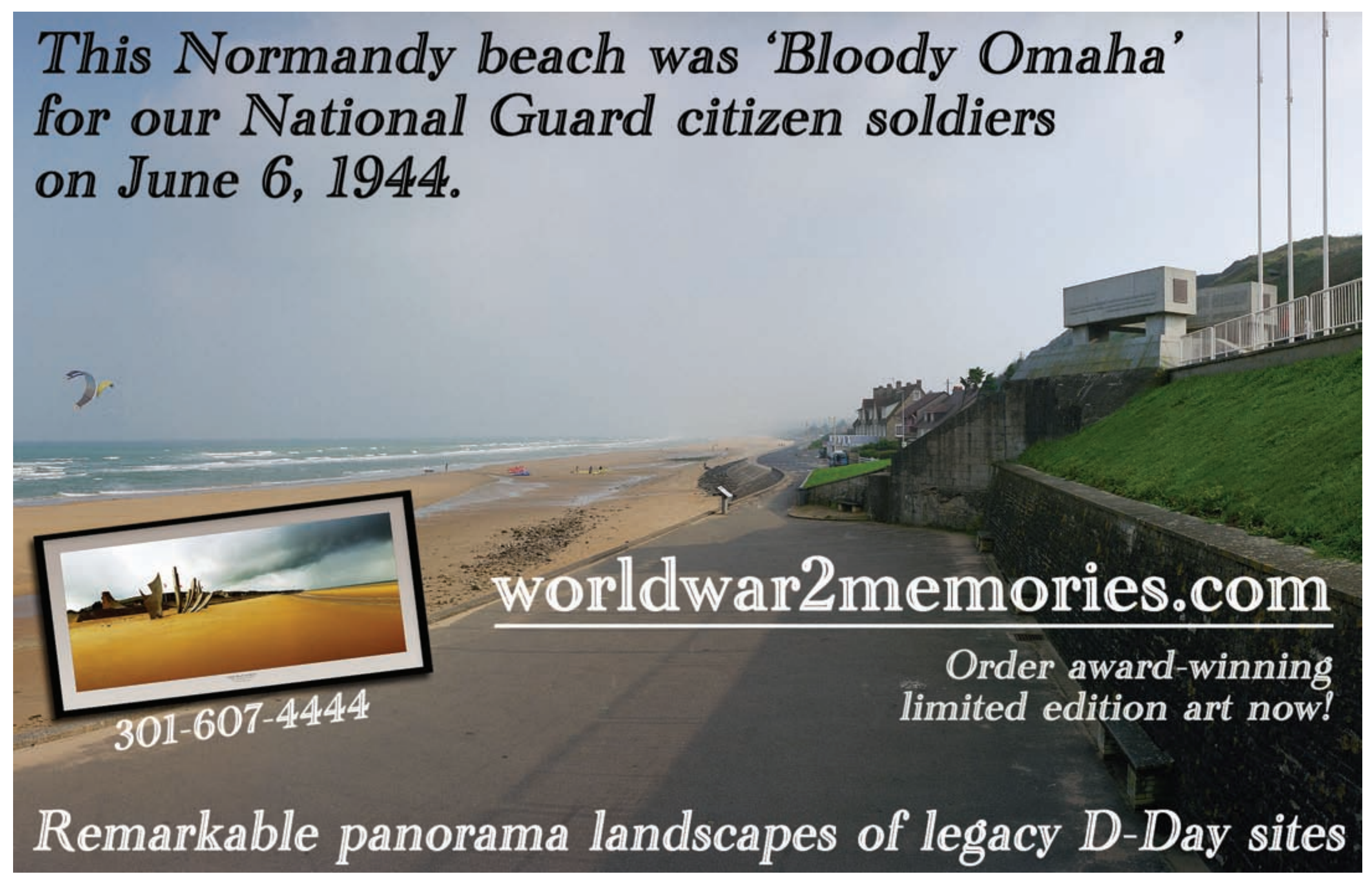
SS General Kurt Daluege was both head of the German Order Police and Acting Reich Protector succeeding Heydrich at Prague until illness forced his early retirement in 1943. After the war, Daluege was returned to Prague and hanged by the Czechs.

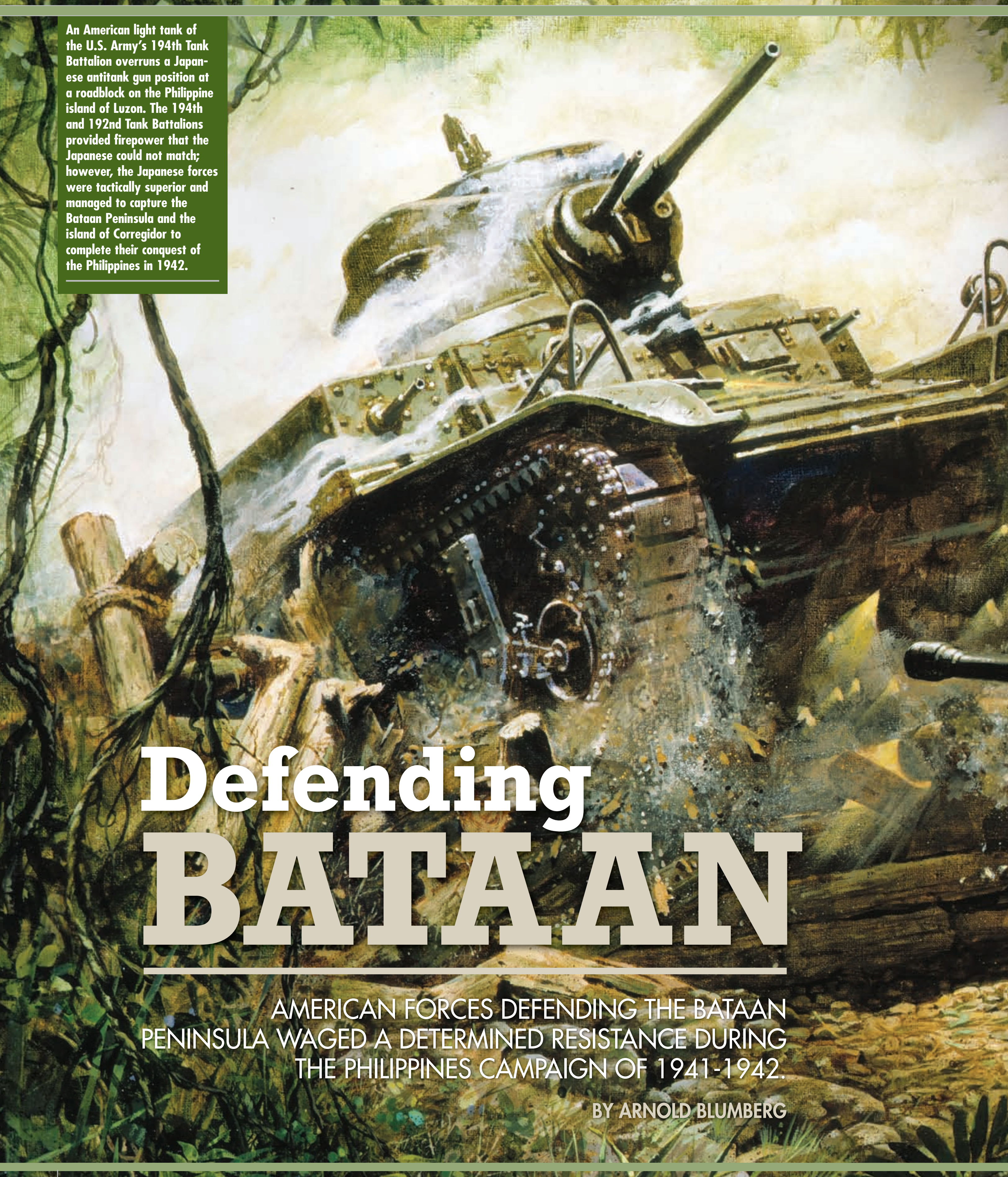
The notorious Dr. Oskar Dirlewanger was head of the infamous Special Battalion Dirlewanger during 1942-1944 and was killed while a captive in 1945.

Amazingly, few of the remaining guilty perpetrators were either indicted or convicted, much less confined or hanged for their nefarious crimes against humanity.

Conversely, Artur Nebe was reportedly a "broken" man by November 1941, writing, "I've looked after so many criminals, and now I've become one myself."

Towson, Maryland, freelancer Blaine Taylor is the author of several books on World War II.





An American light tank of the U.S. Army's 194th Tank Battalion overruns a Japanese antitank gun position at a roadblock on the Philippine island of Luzon. The 194th and 192nd Tank Battalions provided firepower that the Japanese could not match; however, the Japanese forces were tactically superior and managed to capture the Bataan Peninsula and the island of Corregidor to complete their conquest of the Philippines in 1942.

Defending BATAAN

AMERICAN FORCES DEFENDING THE BATAAN PENINSULA WAGED A DETERMINED RESISTANCE DURING THE PHILIPPINES CAMPAIGN OF 1941-1942.

BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG

In 1941, the Philippine Islands, 7,000 in number, an American-controlled mandate, formed a natural barrier between Japan and the rich resources of East and Southeast Asia. Capture of the islands was crucial to Japan's efforts to control the Southwest Pacific, seize the oilrich Dutch East Indies, and protect its Southeast Asia flank.

Japanese strategy called for roughly simultaneous attacks on Malaya, Thailand, American-held Guam and Wake Islands, Singapore, the Philippines, and Hawaii. Although the air strike on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, was designed to destroy the American Pacific Fleet stationed there, the other ambitious operations that commenced that day were meant to serve as preludes to full-scale invasion and permanent occupation.

The well-coordinated Japanese campaign, spread across great reaches of the Pacific Ocean, progressed with astonishing speed. The small U.S. garrisons on Guam and Wake surrendered on December 10 and 22, respectively. Four days after Wake Island was conquered, the British in Hong Kong capitulated to the Japanese attackers. Singapore, the supposedly impregnable British bastion on the Malay Peninsula, fell on February 15, 1942, to the Japanese 25th Army. Following lightning amphibious landings by the Imperial 15th Army in Thailand and Burma, Japanese troops pushed to the northwest, threatening India. The Dutch East Indies soon fell to the Japanese 16th Army.

Only in the Philippines, where the first elements of the Japanese 14th Army came ashore on December 10, did the combined U.S.-Filipino units mount a prolonged resistance, holding out for five months with grim determination and scoring some small but notable victories over their opponents.

The defense of the Philippines against Japanese aggression had become problematic by 1941. By January of that year, Japan controlled much of the surrounding territory. Formosa, just to the north, had been under Japanese control since 1895. The islands to the east formed part of the land mandated to Tokyo after World War I. To the west Japanese troops occupied eastern China, and in 1941 they occupied French

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Soldiers of an American artillery unit take up defensive positions on the Bataan Peninsula during the defense of the Philippines against Japanese invaders in the spring of 1942.

Both: National Archives

The opposing commanders, General Douglas MacArthur (left) and General Masaharu Homma of the Japanese 14th Army, waged a bitter campaign for control of the Philippines in 1942.

Indochina. Only the Dutch East Indies to the south remained in Western hands.

Although the United States had maintained military forces in the islands since 1898, the Philippines were unprepared for hostilities with Japan. There are several reasons for this situation. First, the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 traded a limitation upon Japanese warship construction for the abandonment of any new fortification of U.S. possessions in the Pacific. For the Philippines, this meant that only the islands near the entrance to Manila Bay were well protected. Second, with independence due to be granted to the islands in 1946, the defense of the Philippines fell almost solely on the Philippine government, whose resources were limited.

In April 1941, the United States military had recently updated War Plan Orange-3, a basis for response to Japanese aggression, which limited the defense of the Philippines to Manila Bay and important adjacent areas. War Plan Orange mandated that if attacked by Japan the U.S. Army garrison would withdraw to the Bataan Peninsula. Plan Orange did not envision a subsequent relief effort for the American forces holed up in Bataan. The administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt had decided that in the event of a new world war it would follow a "defeat Germany first" global strategy, and as a result the Philippines would have to be sacrificed.

The Philippine government passed a defense measure in 1935 intended to create a regular army numbering 10,000 men with a reserve force of 400,000 troops. After his stint as U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur came to Manila in 1937 to train and organize the Philippine defense establishment, christened the United States Forces, Far East (USAFFE). His attempt to do so was severely hampered by a miniscule defense budget and a chronic lack of weapons, especially artillery, transport, and communications equipment. Language differences between the various elements of Philippine society prevented the effective creation of cohesive military units of any size. Further, the lack of any military schools in the islands stymied the attempt to form a cadre of commissioned and noncommissioned officers able to lead the nascent Philippine Army.

Supporting the 120,000 Philippine Army personnel were 10,000 regular troops of the U.S. Army stationed in the islands. These consisted of several American infantry regiments, two tank battalions, and the Philippine Scouts. The latter were made up of 12,000 Filipino military professional enlisted men led by American officers.

The United States rushed the best aircraft it had to the islands. They included 107 Curtiss P-40 Tomahawk fighters and 35 Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers. These were designated the Far Eastern Air Force under Maj. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton. A woefully inadequate antiaircraft defense system left American airpower in the Philippines vulnerable to enemy air attack.

In early December 1941, MacArthur organized his forces into four separate commands. The Northern Luzon Force, under Maj. Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright, defended the likely amphibious invasion areas with four Philippine Army infantry divisions and some independent infantry battalions and artillery units. It was also responsible for the Bataan Peninsula. The South Luzon Force under Brig. Gen. George M. Parker, Jr., was assigned the zone east and south of Manila with two Philippine Infantry divisions and several artillery batteries. The Visayan-Mindanao Force under Brig. Gen. William F. Sharpe was composed of two Philippine Army infantry divisions. Acting as a general reserve was the regular U.S. Army's 10,200-man Philippine Division. The Far East Air Force was positioned just north of Manila under the direct command of MacArthur. Four artillery regiments, understrength with antiquated pieces, guarded Manila Bay. With this force, McArthur hoped to defend the main

Philippine islands by defeating any enemy attack at the landing beaches.

Lieutenant General Masaharu Homma commanded the Japanese 14th Army. In addition to his 30,000 combat veterans of the 16th and 48th Infantry Divisions, he had 60,000 ground and 13,000 air service support troops, along with two tank battalions, two regiments and one battalion of artillery, three engineer regiments, and five antiaircraft battalions. More than 500 planes from the 5th Air Force based on Formosa supported the Japanese ground forces, along with the Japanese Navy's 3rd Fleet and 11th Naval Air Fleet.

The Japanese invasion plan foresaw their air force eliminating its American counterpart on the first day of the operation. Elements of the Japanese Army would then land in the Lingayen Gulf north of Manila and to the south of the Philippine capital at Lamon Bay. Both forces would then converge on Manila, where the decisive battle for the islands would be fought. Homma was given 50 days to conquer Luzon; after that time half his command would be withdrawn to other combat areas in Southeast Asia.

From December 8-10, devastating air attacks on the Philippine islands of Luzon and Mindanao gave the Japanese air superiority over their opponents, allowing them to make diversionary amphibious landings in northern Luzon on December 10. The U.S. Asiatic Fleet withdrew from Philippine waters soon after the air strikes. With American air and naval power in the islands neutralized in the first hours of the war, the USAFFE scheme to defend the entire Philippines went off the rails. Now the area's sole defenders would be the ground forces, cut off from resupply, reinforcements, or escape.

On December 10, the Japanese made diversionary landings along the coast of northern Luzon. The next move came in the south when elements of the Japanese 16th Infantry Division landed in southern Luzon followed by an assault on Mindanao on the 19th. The main attack commenced on December 22 as infantry of the 16th and 48th Divisions waded ashore at Luzon's Lingayen Gulf supported by 100 tanks. Wainwright's poorly trained and equipped 11th and 71st Philippine Infantry Divisions could neither repel nor pin the enemy on the beaches. On the 24th, elements of the Japanese 16th Division landed at Lamon Bay against General Parker's dispersed corps and drove north to link up with their comrades from Lingayen Gulf heading south.

Realizing that the USAFFE defense plan had failed, on December 26 MacArthur notified his subordinate commanders that Plan Orange 3,

Map © 2015 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

The Japanese 14th Army pushed the American and Filipino defenders of the Philippine Islands into the confines of the Bataan Peninsula on Luzon and the small island of Corregidor in Manila Bay, forcing their surrender in May 1942.

the prewar plan to defend only the Bataan Peninsula and the island of Corregidor for six months until relief came, was being reactivated. To execute Plan Orange, Wainwright's North Luzon Force was charged with holding back the main enemy assault and keeping the road to Bataan open for use by Parker's South Luzon Force. To achieve this, Wainwright deployed his combat units in a series of defensive lines.

Under Wainwright's and Parker's guidance the American and Philippine withdrawal to Bataan proceeded quickly and in relatively good order considering the chaotic situation. A particularly precarious phase of the operation occurred when the commands connected near the town of San Fernando. Both forces had to move along a single narrow road to reach the Bataan Peninsula. Although the Japanese failed to take advantage of their complete air superiority by interdicting this chokepoint in the enemy's route of retreat, Wainwright, alarmed at the slow progress of South Luzon Force's withdrawal, ordered a stand to be made at San Fernando. The tenacity of elements of the Philippine 21st Infantry Division allowed the Americans and Filipinos to hold this defensive position until December 30.

MacArthur's rush to Bataan forced his retreating units to leave most of their supplies and equipment behind. At that point, the serious consequences of the shifts in USAFFE defense plans became clear. To ensure MacArthur's original design to defend the entire Philippine island chain, supplies from the main depots at Bataan and Corregidor had been dispersed to the North and South Luzon

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

ABOVE: In this photo taken in January 1942, a Japanese Type 97 Chi-Ha light tank fires at American and Filipino positions in a grove of palm trees. The Type 97 tank was inferior to contemporary American designs; however, these tanks were still effective against troop concentrations and contributed to the Japanese conquest of the Philippines. OPPOSITE: Soldiers of the Japanese 14th Army peer warily down a dirt road during their advance along the Bataan Peninsula.

command areas. Now with truck transport in short supply, congested roads, and limited time, the resupply of the magazines in Bataan and Corregidor proved impossible. The resulting serious lack of food, ammunition, weapons, and medical supplies would prove to be critical factors in the upcoming fight for Bataan.

Under the circumstances, the Americans and their Filipino allies did a remarkable job withdrawing to the Bataan Peninsula. However, the Japanese mandate to take Manila was more responsible for the defenders reaching Bataan than was their military prowess. Following Tokyo's order to make the Philippine capital his primary goal, General Homma on December 27 rejected the suggestion from his chief of staff that the enemy was fleeing to Bataan to make a last stand and that Japanese air assets should be switched to make a sustained effort to slow the Americans retreat to Bataan, allowing Japanese ground forces time to intercept them before they could enter the peninsula in strength.

Homma wanted to heed his subordinate's advice but could not due to his superior's orders to make the capture of Manila the top priority of the campaign. As a result, he directed no substantial ground and air forces then attacking Manila to attempt to slow the American withdrawal to Bataan.

On January 2, 1942, Manila fell to the 14th Army. Three days later Homma received a rebuke from Imperial Japanese Army Headquarters stating that the enemy army in Bataan could not be ignored and that Homma should have destroyed it while at the same time taking Manila. What the Japanese belatedly discovered was that the bottled-up enemy army on Bataan and Corregidor effectively blocked Japanese use of Manila Bay. As a result, the

AMERICAN TANKS SCORED SOME SMALL BUT NOTABLE VICTORIES DURING THE DEFENSE OF BATAAN.

The Provisional Tank Group, including the 192nd and 194th Tank Battalions with 108 M3 Stuart light tanks under Brig. Gen. James R. N. Weaver, was in the Philippines prior to the Japanese invasion. These armored formations had engaged the Japanese invaders since December, losing 36 tanks during the fighting. They continued to perform well in the fight for Bataan.

The American tankers first fight in the vicinity of Bataan occurred on January 22, 1942, when a force of three Stuarts accompanied by some Philippine Scouts set out on patrol on the West Road, south of the town of Mauban, which had been cut off by a Japanese roadblock. Soon one of the tanks destroyed an enemy antitank position with its 37mm gun and machine-gun fire. A quarter of a mile further on, two of the tanks were disabled by Japanese mines and had to be towed to safety by the remaining Stuart.

On the night of January 23, the tank group covered the withdrawal of the main American-Filipino army to a new defensive position between Bagac and Orion, with the 192nd Tank Battalion covering the movement on the east flank and the 194th Tank Battalion doing the same in the center and west. During the night of the 25th around Mount Natib, Company D, 192nd Tank Battalion blunted the Japanese pursuit and covered the retreat of friendly infantry from the area, firing blindly but effectively at the advancing enemy. By sunup on January 26, the Provisional Tank Group was safely behind the Bagac-Orion defensive line.

Responding to the enemy landing at Quinauan Point on February 2,three tanks of Companies A and C attacked the enemy position five times, losing one armored fighting vehicle but failing to evict the Japanese from their positions. Finally, on February 4, in conjunction with some Philippine Scout infantry, five tanks from the 192nd Tank Battalion helped crush Japanese resistance at Quinauan Point. On February 9, American armor helped break up the Japanese defenses at Anyasan Point.

During the collapse of the Bagac-Orion line on April 6, 1942, the

Imperial Japanese Army in the Philippines would have to continue the fight for the islands.

The American plan to defend the 30-mile deep, 15-mile wide, and heavily forested Bataan Peninsula called for the manning of an initial defensive line extending across the peninsula from Mauban in the west to Mabatang in the east. Wainwright's newly designated I Corps held the eastern sector with the 1st, 31st, and 91st Philippine Infantry Divisions, the 26th Philippine Scouts Cavalry Regiment, and a battery of 75mm guns. General Park's Southern Luzon Force, now called II Corps, held the western zone with the 11th, 21st, 41st, and 51st Philippine Infantry Divisions. The U.S.-Filipino reserve consisted of the Philippine Infantry Division. Each American corps fielded—on paper—30,000 men.

Mount Natib, a 4,222-foot-high promontory in the center of the American line, served as the boundary between 1st and II Corps. The U.S. commands anchored their flanks on the lower slopes of the mountain, but since they considered the rugged terrain around Mount Natib to be impassable, they did not extend their lines up the mountain slopes. As a result, a considerable gap existed in the center of the defensive line.

As the American-Filipino forces completed their withdrawal onto the Bataan Peninsula in the first week of January 1942, MacArthur feared that the placement of his troops would be disturbed by a rapid Japanese pursuit. He need not have been concerned; the enemy allowed the Americans time to organize their Bataan defenses while they shifted units around.

In early January 1942, Japanese Imperial Headquarters took Homma's experienced 48th Infantry Division from him, sending it to the Dutch East Indies. In its place the 14th Army received the 65th Brigade, 6,600 men strong, made up of recalled reservists, lightly armed, poorly trained, and suitable only for garrison work. This unit provided the mass of the Japanese attacking force in Bataan between January and March 1942, suffering terrible losses in the process. Although the brigade heroically did its duty, its limited training, aging members, and poor equipment prevented 14th Army from achieving victory in Bataan much earlier than possible if a more cohesive and experienced combat unit had carried the burden of the fight during the same period.

Finally, on the night of January 9, the Japanese initiated their first determined attacks against the American positions defending the Bataan Peninsula with an initial artillery barrage against the American II Corps, followed by assaults by two infantry regiments supported by tanks and artillery. After rapidly moving forward, the soldiers of Nippon were brought to a halt primarily by enemy artillery fire.

The storm of lead that stymied the Japanese advance came from American-Filipino 75mm guns placed on the main defensive line and backed up by powerful, well-concealed 155mm howitzers to the rear. The American pieces held the high ground and thus had ter-

National Archives

Getty

Provisional Tank Group fought in the I Corps sector. Acting as rear guard, seven M3s of Company C, 194th Tank Battalion, destroyed two Japanese tanks advancing toward their position and caused other enemy armored vehicles to scatter. For the next several days, the tankers did their best to escort to friendly infantry to safety. On April 8 and 9, all tank crews were ordered to destroy their vehicles in anticipation of a general surrender order. Despite the attempt to destroy the tanks, the Japanese were able to put 11 Stuarts, one of which was used in the attack on Corregidor, back into operating condition.

After the final American surrender took place on April 9, some tank soldiers tried to reach Corregidor and some faded in to the jungle to carry on guerrilla activities. The majority of the tankers voluntarily went in to Japanese custody. Two-thirds of the Provisional Tank Group's enlisted personnel died during at the hands of the Japanese during the next three years.

The commander of an American M3 Stuart light tank sits atop the turret near the breech of the tank's main 37mm cannon during training in the Philippines in November 1941.

SZ Photo / The Image Works

rific observation, while the Japanese, on lower terrain, had great difficulty spotting enemy gun positions even from the air due to the thick jungle vegetation.

The Japanese artillery effort was hobbled by the small number of pieces brought to the battle for Bataan, poor artillery doctrine, and a lack of accurate maps of the battle zone. During January 1942, the 14th Army drove the American-Filipino defenders from the Mauban-Mabatang Line with little help from the artillery. American-Philippine artillery fire completely dominated the battlefield right up to the withdrawal to the next American-Philippine defensive line.

Eight days of intense fighting raged along the American-Filipino front, especially near the Japanese salient in the line at Abucay Hacienda three miles east of Mount Natib. During this time the Japanese probed to the west, hitting the Philippine 41st Division, and then farther west, striking the 51st Division where they routed one of that formation's regiments and were poised to rupture the entire American position. At the very moment of their apparent breakthrough, however, they were rocked by a vicious counterattack from the best troops the defenders had, the 31st "All American" Infantry Regiment and the Philippine Scout 45th Infantry Regiment, all regulars. The combat at Abucay Hacienda was a rifleman's fight.

The Japanese finally won the battle when they concentrated their attacks against the I Corps on the western margin of the peninsula. On that front, only a single road near the sea served as a supply route for the defenders. Using their skill at small unit infiltration over difficult ground, the Japanese were able to sever the road, beating off repeated Filipino attempts to reopen the avenue.

With his reserves committed to shoring up II Corps' front, MacArthur had no choice but to order I Corps to retreat to the south. First Corps had to abandon much of its artillery due to lack of transportation during this retrograde movement. With its left now open to attack, II Corps soon followed suit. The general retreat of the Allied forces commenced on January 22. Starting off well, by the 24th it had fallen into total confusion caused by the poor training of the average Filipino soldier, the need to move on narrow jungle roads at night, and the constant fear of Japanese attack.

Fortunately, the Japanese failed to notice their enemy's maneuver south and did little to hinder it. When they finally set out to pursue their prey, they were held back by U.S. light tanks and artillery carried on half-tracks. By the 26th, a new American-Philippine defensive line stretching 4,500 yards ran from Bagac, resting on the shore of the South China Sea, east to Orion on the eastern margin of the peninsula.

Frustrated by the resistance his 14th Army was encountering taking the Bataan Peninsula, General Homma ordered Maj. Gen. Naoki Kimura, commander of the Japanese 16th Infantry Division, to mount an amphibious attack on the west coast to cut the West Road, the only American-Filipino north-south supply artery on the peninsula's west coast, 10 miles behind the enemy front line. Capturing this route would sever all American I Corps combat units from their supply sources to the south. Kimura selected the 2nd Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment under Lt. Col. Nariyoshi Tsunehiro to make the watery end run.

Defending the target area was the Bataan Service Command under the 71st Philippine Infantry Division's Brig. Gen. Clyde A. Selleck. Selleck had only a mixed bag of U.S. Marines, airmen, Philippine Constabulary (Filipino policemen turned into infantry), and four 6-inch naval guns to defend the lower third of the peninsula—40 miles of rugged terrain. In the weeks before the Japanese stepped ashore in his area, Selleck's men were able to string barbed wire, man observation posts, and cut crude trails toward probable landing sites.

The 900 men of Tsunehiro's 2nd Battalion set

out on their mission on the night of January 22, 1942. Throughout the night, initial attempts to land at their predetermined location, Caibobo Point, met with failure due to the machine-gun fire of American airmen of the 17th Pursuit Squadron fighting as infantry, as well as an Allied 75mm artillery battery. Forgoing a landing at Caibobo Point, the Japanese sailed on and landed 600 men at Quinauan Point, where they came ashore unopposed. A second group of 300 Japanese soldiers landed simultaneously 11 miles south of Caibobo Point at Longoskawayan Point near Mount Pucot, only 1,000 yards from the West Road.

During the night, American *PT-34* (patrol torpedo boat) sank two empty Japanese troop transport barges heading north from the Japanese landing sites.

During the next several days, American and Filipino beach defenders discovered the location of the two Japanese incursions. Although not trained well enough as foot soldiers to dislodge the invaders, the ad hoc American and Philippine defenders were able to contain the Japanese beachheads. The Japanese tried to reinforce the landing parties, but the attempts were made piecemeal and proved ineffectual. One company with artillery missed its intended landing zone, coming ashore at Silaiim Point, where it was quickly blockaded by the Americans.

On February 1, the balance of Kimura's battalion (500 men) in 12 barges made the run to Quinauan Point. Not far from their destination the Japanese flotilla was spotted and attacked by four American P-40 fighters, losing five barges to the planes. Soon the Japanese were targeted by 155mm and 75mm guns and Philippine Scout machine-gun positions farther down the coast that raked the barges' decks and killed scores of Japanese soldiers.

As the night progressed, *PT-32* engaged a Japanese minelayer with torpedoes, forcing it to withdraw. Shortly after midnight what was left of Kimura's force sailed to Silaiim Point.

It took the Americans two weeks using infantry, tanks, and artillery to dislodge the Japanese toeholds. The Imperial Army's attempt to cut off I Corps proved a costly failure with the loss of 1,400 men. American and Filipino casualties amounted to 750, with about a third of those killed.

In late January and early February, the Japanese launched new attacks on II Corps. These efforts were costly failures. The Japanese made several amphibious landings along the west coast behind I Corps' front, resulting in the complete destruction of the landing forces.

In mid-February, a lull settled over the peninsula. Since January the Japanese had lost more than 7,000 battle casualties and another 12,000 men to disease. Their attack formations had been reduced to the equivalent of three infantry battalions. In addition, Homma had severe supply problems. For its part, the American-Filipino army was increasingly affected by malnutrition and disease, both factors causing the soldiers to lose so much of their physical strength that their ability to fight was seriously impaired.

Through February and March, MacArthur's forces did what they could to prepare for a renewed enemy offensive by digging new defensive positions and reorganizing their units. On the Japanese side, reinforcements flowed onto Bataan. Among them were the 4th and 21st Infantry Divisions with 4,000 men each. Most important was the arrival of heavy artillery, including 96 150mm and 240mm cannons.

By late March, the Japanese had launched preliminary attacks to capture the enemy outpost line. On April 3, their main assault went in on a narrow front with six infantry regiments of the 4th Division and 65th Brigade supported by one tank regiment against II Corps' left flank. A heavy artillery barrage preceded the ground forces, pulverizing the defenders' forward and rear trench lines, wire obstacles, communications, command posts, and artillery positions. Filipino counterbattery fire was sporadic due to the intensity of the bombardment and the presence of Japanese airpower. Within 36 hours, II Corps was broken. Soon afterward, with its left flank in the air, I Corps also fled south.

Despite a counterattack by American forces on April 6, as well as stiff resistance by the U.S. 31st Regiment and Philippine Scouts, the Japanese juggernaut rolled south, pushing the routed American-Filipino forces before it. Seeing all was lost and wanting to save as many of his men from death and injury as he could, Maj. Gen. Edward P. King, Jr., commander of all U.S. and Filipino troops on Bataan, surrendered on April 9.

On May 5, after losing over half their 2,000-man assault force, the Japanese secured a landing on the fortress island of Corregidor. Reinforced by tanks and artillery, they beat off four American counterattacks, finally causing General Wainwright to surrender the post the next day. After 93 days of siege, the defense of Bataan ended. With its fall, 12,000 U.S. and 64,000 Filipino prisoners of war fell into Japanese hands. The infamous Bataan Death March and three years of cruel captivity awaited them. By June 9, 1942, all organized resistance to the Japanese in the Philippines ceased.

National Archives

ABOVE: Under a flag of truce, American officers are led by their Japanese captors to conclude surrender terms on the Bataan Peninsula. General Douglas MacArthur was evacuated from the Philippines, and General Jonathan M. Wainwright surrendered American and Filipino troops to the Japanese. OPPOSITE: Armed to the teeth and carrying extra ammunition, Japanese soldiers come ashore on the Bataan Peninsula. The Japanese attempted to quicken their pace of conquest via amphibious landings; however, these offensive moves met with fierce resistance.

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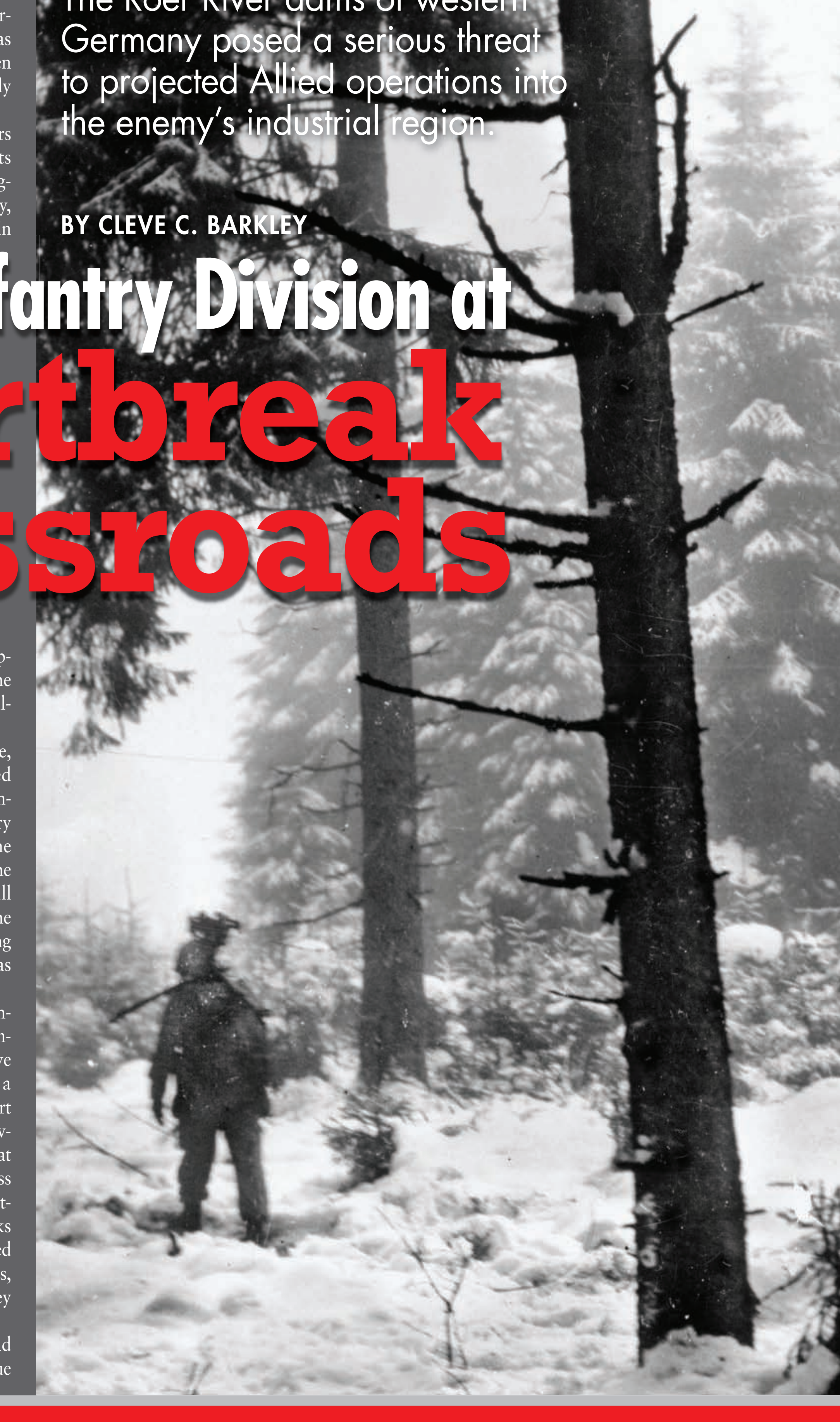
The 2nd Infantry Division at Heartbreak Crossroads

The Roer River dams of western Germany posed a serious threat to projected Allied operations into the enemy's industrial region.

BY CLEVE C. BARKLEY



Technical Sergeant Clyde Dugan flattened as another string of mortar shells ravaged the barren field. Pristine snow vomited fire and steel as chunks of frozen earth rocketed skyward then plunged to pelt his shoulders or clatter loudly on his helmet. Elsewhere someone screamed.

At the same time, a stream of neon tracers flashed overhead as machine-gun bullets sparked and rattled through the tangle of snagging wire in which he lay. Pausing briefly, Dugan summoned his courage then once again inched forward, wriggling beneath the sharp-tined obstacle as he led his squad toward the source of the terrifying tracers—a row of pillboxes that dominated the snowy plain.

After penetrating 40 yards of prickly wire, Dugan bellied into a narrow, mud-slicked trench. His squad, now reduced to eight, tumbled in behind him. Of the entire 9th Infantry Regiment, Dugan's small command was the only one that even came close to reaching the enemy's fortifications. The others, three full battalions, remained stalled 100 yards to the rear where they bled white amid the impeding wire. It was December 13, 1944. The place was Wahlerscheid Crossroads, Germany.

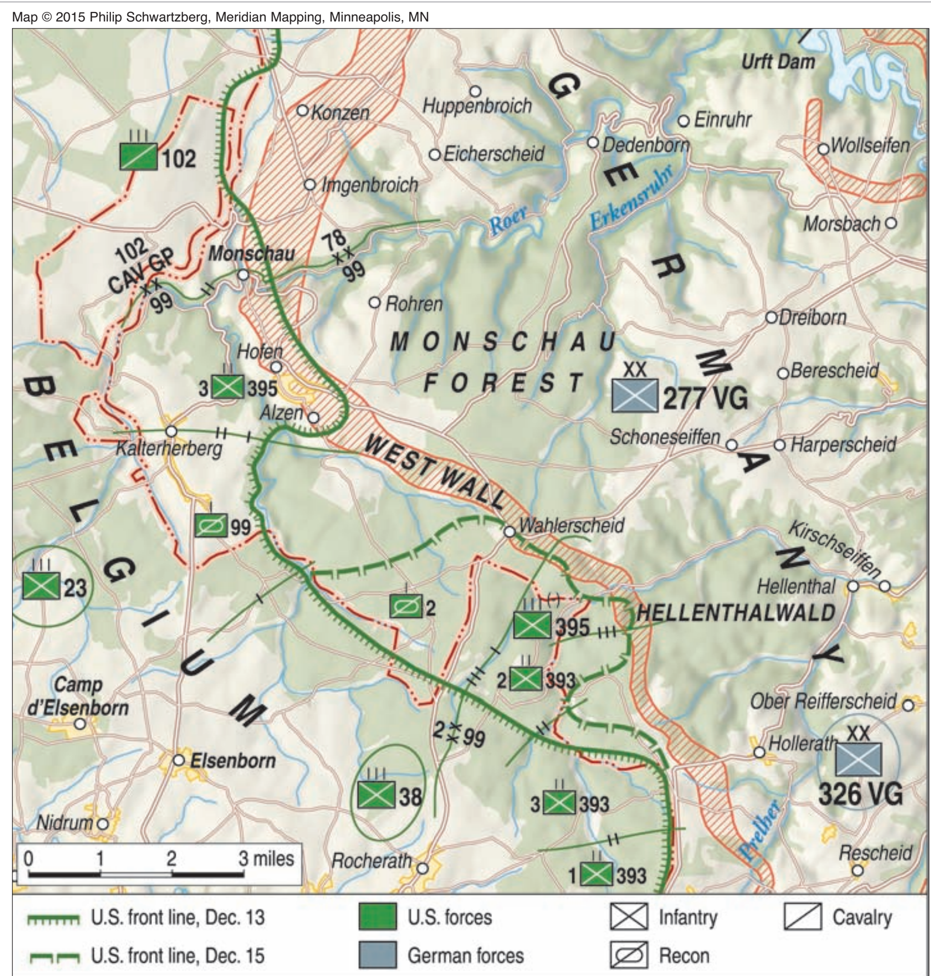
In September 1944, the Allies were approaching the very threshold of Germany. Allied planning prior to D-Day called for a swift drive through the northern Cologne plain to deliver a crippling blow to the Ruhr, the industrial heart of Germany, and then a thrust to Berlin. However, after breaking the Normandy stalemate that summer followed by the madcap dash across France, the spearheading armored divisions literally ran out of gas. While the Allied tanks awaited fuel, the Germans regrouped and closed ranks behind their vaunted West Wall defenses, also known as the Siegfried Line, where they braced for the final assault.

By October, enough fuel, provisions, and ammunition had been stockpiled to continue

Moving toward their objective of the Wahlerscheid Crossroads five miles to the north, soldiers of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division move cautiously through the Krinkelter Woods, a portion of the dense Monschau Forest. This photo was taken on December 13, 1944, the day their assault on the crossroads began.

All: National Archives

Map © 2015 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



the relentless drive into Germany. Although seven Allied armies were deployed from the North Sea to Switzerland, the shortest route to victory remained in the north where the Ninth U.S. Army had reached the western bank of the Roer River by December. While these forces marshaled for the inevitable river crossing, elements of First U.S. Army had become enmeshed in the hotly contested Hürtgen Forest, south of the city of Aachen. Hidden deep within the forest was a series of dams that controlled the current of the north-flowing Roer.

Initially, these dams received scant attention since it was believed that the enemy would not deny the Rhenish cities the power generated by their hydroelectric plants, but as strategists studied the terrain to the north they eventually concluded that if the dams remained under German control they would be capable of releasing devastating floodwaters, isolating any force crossing the Roer and subjecting it to piecemeal destruction. The largest were the Urft and Schwammenauel Dams, situated between Gemund and Schmidt in the heart of the Hürtgen. Combined, these two restrained 123,000 acre-feet of water, enough to inundate a 1,500-foot-wide swath of the northern lowlands with three feet of water. Before a river crossing could be attempted, the dams had to be neutralized.

With the hope of producing breaches in the dams, several airstrikes were authorized in early December, but they proved ineffectual. As a result it was determined that they should be captured by overland assault. To achieve this, Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, commander of the U.S. V Corps, directed the newly arrived 78th Infantry Division to strike seven miles due east from the vicinity of Lammersdorf, Germany, to reach the Schwammenauel Dam, while 11 miles to the southeast Maj. Gen. Walter M. Robertson's veteran 2nd Infantry Division would make a simultaneous attack northward from the Belgian border village of Rocherath to secure the Urft Dam.

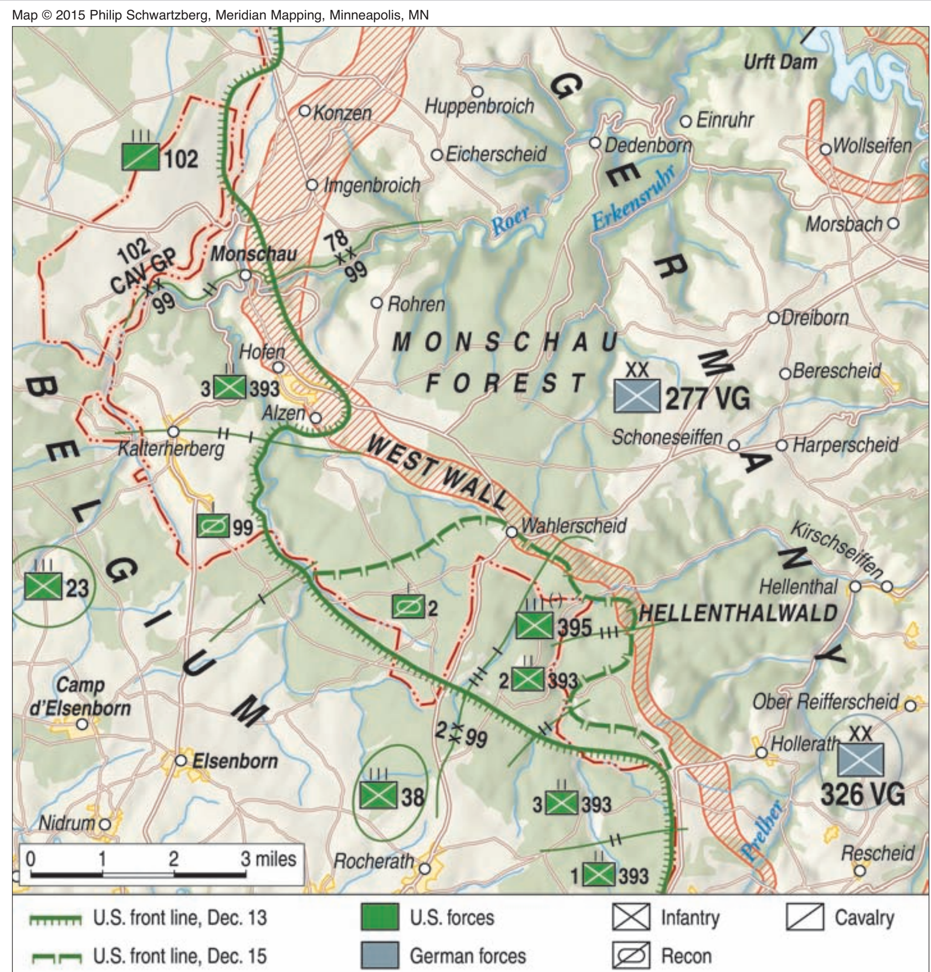
Both units would be forced to crack the Siegfried Line before gaining good roads to their objectives. Stressing the importance of Robertson's task, General Gerow had allocated seven battalions of corps artillery to supplement the division's four artillery battalions. In all, some 120 field pieces ranging from 105mm to 240mm would be on call. In addition, three battalions of the 99th Infantry Division would launch supporting attacks to protect the 2nd Division's right flank. The attack was scheduled for 8:30 AM, December 13, 1944.

Relinquishing its sector of the Ardennes "Ghost Front" near St. Vith, Belgium, to the green 106th Infantry Division on December 10, the 2nd Division motored 15 miles north to Camp Elsenborn, near Rocherath. Colonel Chester J. Hirschfelder's 9th Infantry Regiment had been selected to spearhead the division's attack. The 9th, dubbed the "Manchu" Regiment after its role in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion of 1900, was an old Army formation with an unblemished war record. The Manchus were tasked with driving north through the underbelly of the Monschau Forest to take and hold a vital German crossroads called Wahlerscheid, four miles beyond Rocherath. Defended by elements of the 991st Regiment of Colonel Wilhelm Viebig's 277th Volksgrenadier Division, Wahlerscheid was not a village but simply a forester's lodge and customs house situated at a triangular road junction near the German-Belgian frontier. Once Wahlerscheid was secured, the 38th Infantry would make the main effort, swinging east-northeast to gain the open country at Dreiborn and then on to the Urft Dam.

From the outset, General Robertson had serious misgivings about his mission. Not only was his division to attack through terrain chillingly similar to that of the doggedly defended Hürtgen Forest, but the troops would also have only one road for resupply and evacuation of the wounded. The first concern was allayed by ensuring that the men carried sufficient ammunition and rations to sustain them over a 24-hour period without replenishment. The road, however, was a bigger headache. Known to be rife with roadblocks and mines, this solitary route would remain a tenuous link to Robertson's forward units until the crossroads was secured and his forces had broken free of the restrictive forest. If severed by enemy counterattacks, the attacking battalions could easily be cut off and annihilated—a scenario that would nag him for the duration of the operation.

At daybreak on December 13, the 9th Infantry jumped off from its forward assembly area 2,000 yards north of Rocherath and entered the dismal forest. To preserve the element of surprise, there was no preliminary artillery barrage, and the attack proceeded in total silence. Avoiding the heavily mined road, Lt. Col. William D. McKinley's 1st Battalion trudged to the left through shin-deep snow, while Lt. Col. Walter M. Higgins, Jr.'s 2nd Battalion did the same on the right. The 3rd Battalion trailed as reserve. Dense fog and wind-driven snow restricted vision to 200 yards. Step by step, each soldier was forced to push aside

Map © 2015 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



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heavy branches of the close-knit fir trees, triggering icy avalanches that plopped ungraciously onto helmets and shoulders or slid down raw red necks. As the morning progressed, a slight thaw melted the snow of the upper branches, initiating a constant drizzle. Before long, all were thoroughly soaked.

Initially, opposition was nonexistent. At times the leading scouts encountered German patrols, but apparently the enemy regarded the incursion as routine patrol activity that merited little more than a few discouraging mortar rounds. At one point, elements of Company H surprised a pair of Wehrmacht soldiers who seemed bewildered by the sudden appearance of the Americans. Immediately, one threw up his arms, but the other pulled a grenade and held it to his neck until it detonated. The sole captive later confessed that they were deserters, and his comrade feared that the Americans were German soldiers dispatched to retrieve them. Not willing to face the consequences, the desperate soul chose suicide.

At 11:15 AM, the scouts signaled, "Halt!" and slipped to their knees. Before them a broad clearing, perhaps 200 yards deep, had been hacked from the forest and bristled with a sea of ice-encrusted barbed wire—double apron and concertina—six to 10 rows deep. Further scrutiny revealed that deep ditches had been excavated to prevent armored attacks while other natural ravines were piled high with coils of concertina wire. At the far end of this daunting obstacle wisps of smoke snaked above the treetops, indicating that the position was indeed occupied.

It was a frightening sight for the scouts, but had they known what else lay in store they may have blanched white. Hidden beneath the snow and interspersed amid the wire were hundreds of sinister land mines—the nasty Schu mines designed to cripple any who disturbed them and the dreaded S mines, dubbed Bouncing Betties by the GIs because when they were tripped they sprang to waist level before exploding, flinging hundreds of lethal ball bearings in every direction. Also lying beneath the snow was a web of tripwires capable of triggering several mines simultaneously.

Even worse, 24 mutually supporting pillboxes and bunkers glowered from the distant treeline, each constructed of steel-reinforced concrete six to eight feet thick. Some were no more than 20 to 30 yards apart and so well camouflaged that they were undetectable. Zigzagging communications trenches linked one to the next, while additional trenches provided shelter for supporting mortar and machine-gun crews. Four pillboxes and six bunkers were clustered around the crossroads itself, supplemented by the forester's lodge and customs house, both formidable fortresses. Adding depth to the defenses, the Germans possessed four batteries of artillery, all preregistered, to join the mortars and machine guns to create the perfect killing field. It was German defensive doctrine at its best.

Packs were dropped in anticipation of imminent action. The American officers still believed that the enemy remained ignorant of the division's presence and ordered an immediate attack. Higgins' 2nd Battalion, which was first to arrive, went straight in while McKinley's 1st Battalion, still struggling through dense forest, pressed forward on the left. Lt. Col. William F. Kernan's 3rd Battalion hunkered in the woods as regimental reserve.

By then visibility had increased to 500 yards, and with the fog's dissipation so vanished the chance of a veiled approach. No sooner had the leading squads emerged from the forest than the far treeline erupted with the chilling rip of MG-42 machine guns. Bullets lacerated the ranks at 1,200 rounds per minute. Within moments German mortar shells commenced their deadly promenade, erupting among the prostrate soldiers with uncanny accuracy. In one 12-man squad of Company G, eight were killed outright while four bullets shattered another's arm. The enemy had been waiting all along.

Throughout the night incoming artillery ravaged the forest canopy. Explosions cracked like thunderclaps as fireballs blossomed high overhead, flinging torrents of shrapnel on the hapless, cowering men.

ABOVE: A pair of American soldiers from the 38th Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division smile for the camera but work quickly to prepare a bazooka position as they lie in wait to defend ground around the embattled Wahlerscheid Crossroads. OPPOSITE: Elements of the 2nd Infantry Division waged a bitter fight for control of Heartbreak Crossroads but were eventually ordered to retire to defensive positions, giving up their hard-won gains.

The Americans realized that the element of surprise had been lost, and the supporting artillery went into action. Six thousand yards to the rear, the big American guns belched fire and steel, but lacking proper registration did little appreciable harm. Even so, shells fell in such quantity that the enemy fire tapered off momentarily, giving heart to the assault companies, which again surged forward.

In the 2nd Battalion sector, Captain Homer G. Ross's Company E attacked on the left while Captain James A. Force's Company G advanced on the right, but both were stopped cold by impenetrable masses of barbed wire. Desperate to break through, soldiers thrust Bangalore torpedoes beneath the obstructions, but the fuses were damp and would not ignite. By then the enemy had recovered from the shocking bombardment, and again bullets clattered amid the wire.

One platoon of Company E wormed through five aprons of barbed wire before becoming pinned down by concentrated mortar and machine-gun fire. Further movement set off antipersonnel mines or drew the wrath of additional weapons. Casualties soared. Unable to move forward or back, the survivors did not escape until dark.

Meanwhile, another E Company platoon bellied onto a slight elevation which offered good observation of the enemy line. Acknowledging its value, Captain Ross grabbed two radio men, scrambled to its crest, and began relaying coordinates of identified pillboxes to the supporting artillery until a deluge of high explosives rendered their position untenable.

While Company E was being slaughtered in the open, Captain Force's Company G tried to take advantage of scrubby, undulating terrain on the right, but tangles of barbed wire barred the way. In some ditches the concertina was piled six feet high. Again Bangalores were requested but failed to ignite. By then automatic weapons fire was sweeping the front with devastating effect, while mortar rounds crashed with regularity. Although the attack had hardly begun, it was evident that such head-on tactics were suicidal.

Noting that Higgins' men were helplessly impaled on the wire, Colonel Hirschfelder ordered his reserves into action. At 3 PM, Lt. Col. Kernan's 3rd Battalion swung through the woods to 2nd Battalion's right, intending to flank the troublesome pillboxes. Captain Jack A. Garvey's Company K probed forward on the battalion's left while Captain Bruce C. Cagle's Company L pushed through on the right with Captain William J. Ray's Company I trailing as reserve.

Using the forest as cover, the leading elements got to within 75 yards of the enemy's line before another series of undetected pillboxes took them under fire. Immediately, the two leading scouts were down. More gunfire raked the line. Within minutes mortar shells came plunging down, followed by heavier artillery that tore through the treetops at an alarming rate. By evening, Kernan's flanking maneuver had ground to a halt. Ordered to hold in place, his men pulled shovels from scabbards to hack at the frozen soil.

As daylight waned a mournful wail wafted from 50 yards in front of Company K. Heeding the plea, a medic worked his way forward only to be dropped by a sniper, even though his uniform was clearly marked with giant red crosses on his chest, back, and helmet. A second medic homed in on the wretched sobbing, but again a solitary shot rang out, killing him. Eventually the whimpering tapered and then ceased altogether, leaving his ashen-faced comrades to resume their solemn excavations.

An hour and a half after Higgins' battalion had commenced its noon assault, Lt. Col. McKinley's 1st Battalion had finally broken through the forest on the regiment's left, 600 yards southwest of the junction. An interdicting road separated them from a vast wasteland of snow-capped underbrush extending 500 yards, and beyond that lay multiple tiers of enemy defenses. Seeing no alternative to a frontal attack, McKinley ordered his battalion forward.

Captain Louis C. Ernst's Company C pushed across the road under galling fire. Immediately, one man set off a mine, followed by another. In short order 10 men were down, victims of crippling Schu mines or Bouncing Betties. Minesweepers from the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon were summoned. Covered by riflemen, the sweepers painstakingly cleared a lane 400 yards beyond the road. The infantry filtered forward in preparation for the main assault but were checked by intense mortar and machine-gun fire. Forward observers called for supporting artillery, but the shells fell far and wide.

By 3:30 PM lanes had been cleared well into no-man's land, but twilight was fast approaching and further operations were halted. Just before dark a fierce mortar barrage ravaged the battalion's right flank, followed by a half-hearted counterattack. For 45 minutes grenades thumped and rifles barked before the line was stabilized and order restored.

As darkness approached, Colonel Hirschfelder realized he was facing a catastrophe. As a precaution, he stripped Company I from Kernan's command and pulled it back behind 2nd Battalion to serve as regimental reserve while the other assault units dug in for the night. Some were barely 100 yards from the menacing pillboxes.

Unknown to the American command structure, there was one remarkable achievement that day. It was during the chaotic battles on the 2nd Battalion front that Technical Sergeant Dugan, leading nine men of 3rd Platoon, Company G, had managed to wriggle beneath 40 yards of barbed wire to gain the enemy's trench system, losing one man killed during their approach.

Once within enemy lines, Dugan monitored a pair of pillboxes that sat at either end of the zigzagging trench and continued to flay the plain with intermittent machine-gun fire. As he considered his options, the German rear guard suddenly noticed that several more GIs were slithering through the wire. When a string of tracers flitted over the infiltrators' heads, Dugan called for covering fire until all four tumbled, exhausted, into the trench. Led by Sergeants James Dunn and Adam Rivera of 1st

Platoon, these men had been dispatched to support Dugan's forlorn hope. Armed with wire cutters, they had managed to clear a four-foot-wide swath all the way to the enemy line, having lost two men wounded while doing so.

Now 13 GIs crowded the narrow trench. No sooner had Dugan commenced explaining the situation to Dunn and Rivera than a flurry of bullets cracked past their faces. Startled, GIs spun just in time to repel a group of Germans that had sallied from the pillbox to their right. In the confusion Dugan's men dragged a captive into their trench just as contact was broken. In faltering English, the stuttering German assured Dugan that if released he could convince the others to surrender. After weighing the odds, Dugan reluctantly set him free.

The squad formed an all-around defense and waited. Time dragged. Suddenly, movement in the connecting trench indicated that perhaps the gambit would produce dividends. Just as Dugan cautioned his men to prepare to accept prisoners, the muzzle of a machine gun poked around the trench corner, followed by a coal scuttle helmet. Dugan took aim and fired. The gunner dropped. Hollering a warning, Dugan clambered up the parapet and commenced triggering round after round into the body-choked trench, killing one more German. The enemy scrambled for cover.

Within moments a second German patrol joined the action from the nearby woods, followed by another and yet another. Assailed from three sides, Dugan's squad fought like demons. When the BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) gunner fell, Pfc. Bento Roposa retrieved the weapon and released one rattling burst after another until a bullet punctured his stomach. Enraged, Roposa regripped his weapon and continued his furious fusillade. Then a grenade plopped in and exploded. Fragments ripped through Roposa's arm, but the scrappy soldier continued to lay down accurate fire until loss of blood caused him to pass out, but not before he dropped one more German who was creeping toward his position.

After five hours of continuous action, Dugan's beleaguered command finally withdrew under cover of darkness, dragging two wounded comrades with them; two dead remained behind. Except for Dugan's patrol, no others had gotten even close to the enemy's works.

Meanwhile, back at Hirschfelder's command post staff officers studied maps and patrol reports to no avail. The tangles of barbed wire remained a vexing obstacle. Heavy concentrations of mortar and artillery fire combined with interlocking machine-gun fire thwarted every attempt to break through, and Kernan's flanking maneuver had stalled. Although American artillery had cleared some of the foliage that masked several pillboxes, many others remained undetectable. It was decided to resume the assault against the German positions in the morning at 8:30.

Throughout the night incoming artillery ravaged the forest canopy. Explosions cracked like thunderclaps as fireballs blossomed high overhead, flinging torrents of shrapnel on the hapless, cowering men. Splintered branches followed every burst, and sometimes entire trees snapped and crashed to the forest floor. Although cooks had prepared a hot meal, it could not be served due to the heavy shelling.

As the evening progressed, the temperature plunged. Curled in shallow foxholes, soldiers already drenched from the strenuous march through the dripping forest draped sodden blankets over shivering shoulders as they attempted fitful sleep. Those of the assault companies, having dropped packs prior to their attack, lacked blankets and suffered accordingly. By morning everyone's clothing had frozen stiff.

At first light on December 14, the American artillery resumed its fierce cannonade with some batteries focused on destroying known pillboxes while others concentrated on breaking up the wire entanglements to aid the infantry. After 15 minutes, the guns shifted to harass the enemy's lines of communication while the infantry prepared for action.

Upon receiving his attack orders, Lt. Col. McKinley decided elements of Captain John B. Cornwell's Company B and a detail from the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon would continue to cut wire and remove mines to create lanes of attack. Once this was accomplished, the balance of his battalion would push through in column to assault the pillboxes guarding the crossroads.

An experienced commander, McKinley regarded his assignment with reservations. He realized that even if successful his battalion would be subject to counterattacks from the east, north, and west. Nonetheless, he ordered his companies forward.

Cornwell's men pushed off on schedule. In rapid succession, eight men were killed or wounded while gapping the wire, but by noon sufficient penetration had been made to allow the final assault to proceed. Covering fire hammered pillboxes while a heavy smokescreen masked the approach of 1st Lt. Robert Kauth's Company A as it passed through Cornwell's line. Kauth's men advanced 150 yards through murderous mortar and machine-gun fire before stumbling on another belt of concertina. Again forward observers called for covering fire as wire-gapping teams wriggled beneath a blizzard of German steel. Realizing little headway was being made against such savage resistance,

ABOVE: Operating a British-made QF 25-pounder field gun, American artillerymen of the 2nd Infantry Division prepare to fire in support of attempts to secure the Wahlerscheid Crossroads from the Germans. The truck at the right appears to hold their gear. OPPOSITE: Keeping a sharp watch for enemy troop movement, two soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division man a forward position along a ridge in Belgium. The soldier in the foreground is wearing winter camouflage that he appears to have put together on his own with bedsheets or large pieces of canvas.

McKinley recalled his troops at midafternoon.

While McKinley's men wallowed in the frozen hell on the left, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions resumed their attacks on the right. Directing the battle from a ditch a mere 500 yards from the nearest pillbox, Lt. Col. Higgins already had problems. Earlier a number of short rounds of the preliminary barrage had smashed a platoon of Company E, so disrupting organization that Captain Ross's entire command was unable to participate in the forthcoming assault. As a stopgap measure Higgins wrenched a platoon from 1st Lt. Fred J. Arnold's Company F and shoved it between two platoons of Company G, which was slated to make the 2nd Battalion's main effort. The balance of Company F would follow as battalion reserve.

Company G, now under the command of 1st Lt. John M. Jacques, jumped off in the face of withering fire, pushed up a shallow, tree-studded draw in an effort to reach the nearest pillboxes, but soon encountered another rat's nest of prickly wire. Demolition men crept forward, this time dragging dry Bangalores, and blew a gap wide enough to accommodate the leading squad. Bodies stacked one upon the other as machine guns dropped the first four men to enter, while a fifth was killed after tripping a mine.

Disheartened, the others sought refuge in the shallow defile while frantic pleas went out for supporting artillery. Shortly after 1 PM, explosions rippled all across the front, but terrain variables hindered proper registration. After an hour of futile readjustments, the battalion was ordered to withdraw. By then the enemy's preregistered mortars and artillery were wreaking havoc in a draw now teeming with wicked tree bursts.

Simultaneous to Higgins' attack, Lt. Col. Kernan's 3rd Battalion resumed operations on the regiment's right but was also stopped by a combination of massed wire, mines, and intense gunfire emanating from several mutually supporting pillboxes. Still hoping to outflank the German defenses, Kernan decided to send one company looping through the zone of the neighboring 395th Infantry, which was making a supporting attack on the division's right.

Using Company K as a base of fire, Bruce Cagle's Company L set out on its circuitous route with three bazooka teams attached. While passing through a sparsely forested region they chanced upon a slight depression that ran almost under the nose of the easternmost pillbox. Believing that this indentation would provide a degree of security, Cagle launched his attack.

By ones and twos, soldiers sprinted toward the dubious shelter of the swale. The enemy opened fire. Shrapnel toppled six men while machine guns accounted for 14 others. Several intrepid GIs managed to press beyond the embankment but were soon driven back. As the volume of incoming fire intensified, the situation seemed doubtful. By 1 PM, Kernan, too, felt compelled to call off his attack.

Having been beaten at every turn, regimental command ordered a general withdrawal at 2 PM. At twilight the 2nd Battalion fell back a full 500 yards to take positions in the woods behind the battalion command post still hunkered in its muddy trough at the fringe of the clearing, while 50 unfortunates of Company E remained exposed in the glacial plain to man forward outposts. Kernan's 3rd Battalion deployed behind 2nd Battalion to resume its role as regimental reserve. Waiting until dark, McKinley's 1st Battalion broke contact with the Germans and withdrew under the protection of a covering barrage to reclaim its original position southwest of the road junction.

Again sequestered in the forest, soldiers sought refuge from the inevitable tree bursts, while others, the first of many to be afflicted with respiratory ailments or frozen feet, began the painful trek to the rear. By then, the divisional engineers had finally cleared the solitary supply route of obstacles and mines, permitting the arrival of ammunition, blankets, and a welcome hot meal. In the meantime, a pair of self-propelled 155mm guns from Battery C, 987th Field Artillery maneuvered to within 3,000 yards of the junction and began pasting pillboxes with armor-piercing shells. Although a total of 176 rounds were expended, it was later

On command, the Americans sprang into action. Sheer pandemonium supplanted false tranquility as suppressive fire raked pillbox embrasures or thudded savagely into the surrounding entrenchments. Beehive charges ripped open the fortifications' rear doors.

German prisoners of the 164th and 183rd Infantry Regiments are herded into the forester's lodge near the Wahlerscheid Crossroads on February 2, 1945. These U.S. troops from the 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division have taken charge of the German captives and will soon herd them to transport toward prison camps.

On the afternoon of December 14, 1944, soldiers of the 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division hug the snowy ground on the side of a ditch. The 9th Infantry was heavily engaged during the battle for the Wahlerscheid Crossroads, which the soldiers of the 2nd Division nicknamed Heartbreak Crossroads.

discovered that the massive structures suffered only superficial damage.

Meanwhile, battalion and regimental staffs struggled to find a solution to their dilemma. Earlier, General Robertson had admonished Colonel Hirschfelder for not conducting more thorough reconnaissance before resuming his attacks. In light of this, patrols were dispatched to probe for fissures in the seemingly impregnable defenses, while arrangements were made for a tactical airstrike in the morning. Noting that Hirschfelder's exhausted regiment was on the brink of collapse, Robertson ordered Colonel Francis H. Boos to ready his 38th Regiment to take up the attack. After two days of brutal assaults, the division had not gained a single foot.

By daybreak on December 15, the situation remained stagnant. The scheduled airstrike was cancelled due to heavy fog, resulting in a temporary suspension of offensive operations. In lieu of the aerial bombardment, 11 battalions of artillery unleashed hell on earth, ripping up wire and collapsing earthen trenches while other shells battered the massive bunkers and concrete pillboxes.

At about 10 AM, something totally unexpected occurred. Although German small arms fire continued to harry the front, all incoming artillery ceased. This was a most perplexing, albeit welcome, turn of events. What was not known was that the 277th Volksgrenadier Division was being relieved by the poorly trained 326th Volksgrenadier Division so that the former could participate in Hitler's upcoming winter offensive in the Ardennes Forest, which became known as the Battle of the Bulge. As the various Wehrmacht units exchanged positions, their heavy guns fell silent.

There was one more glimmer of hope that day. While inspecting Company G, Lt. Col. Higgins was finally informed of the singular penetration made by Sergeant Dugan's patrol. This noteworthy event had not been relayed up the chain of command due to the confusion experienced when the company commander, Captain Force, had been wounded and evacuated. Sensing an opportunity, Higgins decided to capitalize on this unexpected boon. If the German artillery and mortars remained silent, Higgins planned on dispatching a reinforced patrol through the gap under cover of darkness to report the enemy's disposition via sound-powered phone. If feasible, his battalion would then filter forward to surprise and eliminate the stubborn pillbox line while Kernan's 3rd Battalion pushed on to cut the Wahlerscheid-Dreiborn highway before assaulting the actual crossroads.

American artillery would continue to saturate the entire area to restrict enemy activity while these maneuvers proceeded. Believing his plan had a reasonable chance of success, Higgins presented it to Colonel Hirschfelder, who in turn took it to General Robertson, who gave his consent. It was a long shot but a gamble worth taking.

At 8 PM, Higgins summoned Sergeant Dunn to his command post, believing that since Dunn had been a member of the original foray he would be able to retrace his route to the enemy trenches. However, by then Dunn was in such poor physical condition that it was decided to send Sergeant Rivera, another original patrol member, in his stead.

Flickering explosions illuminated the front as Rivera's 11-man team slithered into no-man's-land. Colonel Higgins waited with bated breath as time ticked by ... 20 minutes ... then 30. Still no word. Finally, 45 minutes after Rivera's departure a soft whistle pulsed through the phone line. Anxious, Higgins monitored the report and it was not good. The patrol, confused by the maze of barbed wire, was inexorably lost in the darkness. The men could not find the route. Frustrated, Higgins ordered the entire patrol to return by following its phone line. Meanwhile, Sergeant Dunn was recalled and asked if he felt up to the challenge. Although exhausted, Dunn agreed. By then Rivera's patrol

was bellying into the American lines.

Guiding on Rivera's phone line, Dunn's party departed at 9 PM. Within 30 minutes Dunn was relaying good news. They were safely in the enemy's trench and were preparing to investigate the first pillbox. Not a shot had been fired. Higgins was practically giddy at the prospect of success. Fifteen minutes later Dunn was again blowing into the mouthpiece: "The Germans don't seem to be alert. We have surrounded one of the pillboxes. No opposition." Higgins was ecstatic.

Immediately, Higgins began feeding his battalion through the gap. Traveling single file, 1st Lt. Fred J. Arnold's Company F slipped forward following a strip of white engineering tape strung by a platoon of Company G, which was posted along the route to act as guides. Upon entering the trench system, Arnold's men deployed to the left of the breach. Captain Ross's depleted Company E came next, accompanied by Lt. Col. Higgins, and built up along a firebreak to the right. The balance of Company G assumed the role of battalion reserve. By midnight the 2nd Battalion had achieved a 300-yard bridgehead without the enemy's knowledge.

While Sergeant Dunn's men kept vigil on the first pillbox, Higgins joined Company F, now hunkered in the trench before the second pillbox to Dunn's left. Gambling on the enemy's apparent ignorance of the Americans' presence, Higgins stealthily clambered onto the roof of the second pillbox to direct Arnold's men in surrounding it. Two more platoons eased farther down the line to cover the next two pillboxes. With his battalion poised for action, Higgins' radio crackled: "Bring up the 3rd Battalion."

By 1 AM, Kernan's battalion was slipping forward. Upon reaching Higgins' position, the two commanders decided that 2nd Battalion would clear out the pillboxes in the immediate area while Kernan would pass through Company E to push 400 yards deeper, utilizing the firebreak that angled northwest behind the pillbox line to cut the Wahlerscheid-Dreiborn road. From there he would march west to reduce the fortifications guarding the actual junction.

No sooner had Kernan's battalion cleared Company E's perimeter than Higgins gave the command to attack. A fusillade of .30-caliber bullets powdered the concrete framing the narrow firing slits of the first pillbox in Company F's area. Other rounds hammered the iron aperture guarding the rear entrance as an assault team bolted forward to place a beehive charge against the steel door. Before the ringing blast faded, GIs rushed forward to fling grenades through the smoldering entrance or blast the interior with bazooka rockets.

"Kamerad! Wir nicht schiesen!" the Americans shouted, hoping to coax any survivors into capitulation, "Surrender! We won't shoot!" However, after three days of suffering in the freezing, bullet-swept plain, the men of the 9th Infantry were in no mood for clemency. Any Germans who did not emerge with their hands clasped over their heads were killed outright. In this manner the platoons of Company F leapfrogged from one pillbox to the next, eliminating each in turn.

By daylight two previously unidentified pillboxes loomed 500 yards to the battalion's right. Immediately, a platoon of Company F was dispatched to knock them out. While advancing through scrub and pines the platoon was counterattacked by 17 Germans. In the ensuing gunfight the Americans suffered one wounded, while four Germans were killed, four wounded, and four more taken prisoner. The remaining five escaped unharmed. By 9:30 AM, the 2nd Battalion had neutralized seven pillboxes. A half hour later its entire sector was in American hands.

While Higgins' men battled for control of the first tier of pillboxes, Kernan's battalion navigated the dimly lit firebreak, intent on gaining the east-west Dreiborn road. En route, the leading squad startled several sentries guarding a concealed bunker, initiating a brief but chaotic firefight before the outpost was overwhelmed and the infiltration resumed. Shortly afterward,

the point element stepped onto the highway. Wahlerscheid junction now lay but a short hike away.

In the darkness, Captain Garvey's Company K slipped past the first five pillboxes encountered as well as the fortified customs house to deploy before yet another pillbox situated at the triangular crossroads. At the same time, 1st Lt. Melvin S. Goldstein's Company L closed in on two of the five bypassed pillboxes while Captain Ray's Company I surrounded the remaining three to the east.

As the men readied for the assault, a deep-throated rumbling resonated from the eastern horizon, now shimmering with splashes of pink and red. It was precisely 5:30 AM, December 16, 1944. Although they did not know it, they were witnessing the opening blows of Hitler's desperate winter offensive—the Battle of the Bulge. The men of the 2nd Infantry Division hunkered in the frozen landscape before Wahlerscheid junction believed that the violent exhibition was merely a reaction to the Roer Dams attack and had no bearing on the dire task presently before them.

At Wahlerscheid the disorganized soldiers of the newly arrived 326th Volksgrenadier Division remained blissfully ignorant of the storm that was about to engulf them. Many were fast asleep in their bunkers believing that the Americans were still stalled before the barbed wire, hundreds of yards to their south.

On command, the Americans sprang into action. Sheer pandemonium supplanted false tranquility as suppressive fire raked pillbox embrasures or thudded savagely into the surrounding entrenchments. Beehive charges ripped open the fortifications' rear doors. Grenades were tossed in. Kernan's battle-weary soldiers possessed the same foul temperament as those of Higgins' 2nd Battalion, and any Germans who refused to surrender were quickly eliminated.

Captain Garvey's men jumped the pillbox before them, and by 6:45 AM had the situation under control. Meanwhile, Goldstein's Company L successfully assaulted its assigned pillboxes, then moved on to the nearby customs house where 2nd and 3rd Platoons formed a protective arc as 1st Platoon rushed the building at the break of dawn. The startled defenders, many still groggy with sleep, were taken completely by surprise, and within minutes 77 befuddled Wehrmacht soldiers filed from the building with fingers interlaced above field caps. Not one American was injured.

While Goldstein's men gathered their prisoners, Company K continued westward to a secondary road junction, which was secured by

ABOVE: Several days after the fighting at the Wahlerscheid Crossroads has ended, an engineer of the 2nd Infantry Division plants a mine. The GIs were preparing strong defenses as the Battle of the Bulge raged nearby. OPPOSITE: The shattered crossroads at Wahlerscheid, shown on February 13, 1945, after it was recaptured from the Germans, will forever be known as Heartbreak Crossroads to the soldiers of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division.

8 AM. Meanwhile, Company I had seized the three easternmost of the five bypassed pillboxes, then crossed the highway to assault two more, farther north. By 9:30 AM, the 3rd Battalion had secured the crossroads.

The enemy line was clearly crumbling. Upon receiving word of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions' breakthrough, Lt. Col. McKinley's 1st Battalion was ordered forward at first light. Company B, now led by 1st Lt. John L. Milesnick, moved out over ground that had previously been fiercely contested. Much to their delight, incoming fire was surprisingly light. Creeping forward, they managed to cut additional lanes through the wire at a cost of only four casualties, one from small arms fire and the others from mines. Once inside the entrenchments, they blew up one pillbox, which paved the way to the Wahlerscheid junction. The enemy's ability to resist had been greatly reduced by the confusion following the troop exchange of the previous day.

By 10:15 AM, McKinley's battalion had linked with the 3rd Battalion at Wahlerscheid, where the entire regiment dug in. By then, two battalions of the 38th Infantry were already trudging through the forests flanking the Dreiborn road to continue the drive toward the Roer River dams. After four days of suffering through shot, shell, and inclement weather, the Manchu Regiment had taken one of the most heavily defended sectors of the Siegfried Line, netting 24 pillboxes, bunkers, and fortified positions. But the cost had been high. All three battalions had been reduced to half strength, with battle- and weather-related casualties more or less equally divided.

At dusk the battalions surrounding Wahlerscheid received varied amounts of artillery and mortar fire while repelling several spirited counterattacks, but the Manchus refused to yield. However, their conquest was to be a pyrrhic victory.

Alarming reports flashed from the south. "Heavy enemy bombardment pounding the entire Ardennes sector; numerous penetrations by strong infantry and armored forces all across the front." Chaos and mayhem gripped the soldiers manning the thinly held "Ghost Front." The Battle of the Bulge was upon them.

General Gerow was gravely concerned over these unsettling developments. Elements of Robertson's 2nd Division were seven miles deep in enemy territory with only one poor road as their main supply route. If this road were cut, Robertson's nagging premonition at the outset of the operation could prove prophetic. Two entire regiments could be isolated and destroyed. Fearing the worst, Gerow requested an immediate withdrawal of his attacking forces. Initially, Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges, First Army commander, refused, believing the enemy was merely launching spoiling attacks in response to the Roer River dams offensive, but in time he too realized the gravity of the situation and grudgingly gave his consent.

In the dimming light of December 17, the 2nd Infantry Division disengaged and commenced a piecemeal withdrawal under fire across a crumbling front to assume defensive positions at its jump-off point of Rocherath, Belgium. In the following days, these men would fight one of the pivotal actions of World War II as they denied General Josef "Sepp" Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army access to three of its five assigned routes toward the port city of Antwerp, Belgium.

In the dreary twilight of December 17, 1944, the soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division were in a foul mood as they trudged past the battered fortifications of Wahlerscheid. Being forced to relinquish their hard-won gains without a fight was a bitter pill to swallow, and afterward the men who wore the Indian Head shoulder patch would refer to the battle-scarred junction as "Heartbreak Crossroads."

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THE WAR BETWEEN THE SMITHS

The ferocious battle for the island of Saipan in the Marianas was won by U.S. Marines and U.S. Army troops that defeated the Japanese during 39 days of heavy fighting from June 15 through July 9, 1944.

The death struggle for Saipan was followed by another ferocious battle between the Army and the Marine Corps when the top Marine general on the island, Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, relieved the top Army general, Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith, of his job as commanding officer of the 27th Infantry Division. Holland Smith fired Ralph Smith in the middle of the fighting. The abrupt dismissal set off fireworks at flag rank and in the media while generating a controversy that persists to this day.

At the center of the dispute was Ralph Smith, who led the 27th Infantry, a New York National Guard outfit, with many of its men drawn from the state's farming and mountain country along with others from New York City's tough neighborhoods. Ironically, Ralph Smith was not a New Yorker. He was born in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1893, and attended Colorado State College. He enlisted in the Colorado National Guard in 1916, was commissioned second lieutenant, and was promoted straightaway to first lieutenant. Taught to fly by Orville Wright, Ralph Smith gained the 13th pilot's license in the history of the United States, signed by Wright himself.

Ralph Smith graduated from Officers Training School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1917, and served on the Mexican border with the 35th Infantry Regiment. He was sent to France with the 16th Infantry Regiment, part of the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. He saw a lot of action, including the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, earning a Purple Heart and a Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster.

On returning home, Ralph Smith served in the usual peacetime Army roles including adjutant of the 2nd Infantry Brigade in Kentucky, French instructor at West Point, training and instructing at the Infantry School, and attending the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth in 1927-1928. Next up was a tour at the Presidio in San Francisco, then a return to the Command and General Staff School as an instructor. He graduated

ABOVE LEFT: General Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith (left) of the U.S. Marine Corps relieved General Ralph Smith of the U.S. Army on Saipan and created a firestorm of controversy. ABOVE RIGHT: After being relieved of command of the 27th Infantry Division, General Ralph Smith and other senior Army officers engaged in a bitter war of words with General Holland M. Smith and the U.S. Marine command establishment. RIGHT: The Marine in the foreground of this image is struck by shrapnel from an exploding mortar round during the savage contest for control of the island of Saipan in the Marianas. The photographer who captured this image flinched as he snapped the photo, blurring the image. Doctrinal differences between the Marine Corps and Army units operating on Saipan led General "Howlin' Mad" Smith to believe the Army troops were moving much slower than his Marines.

Two commanding generals, one with the U.S. Marine Corps and the other with the Army, were embroiled in a command controversy that began during the joint effort to capture Saipan.

BY DAVID H. LIPPMAN

All: National Archives

All: National Archives

from the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1935, and was then chosen to study at the prestigious École de Guerre in France.

In 1937, Ralph Smith returned to the United States. He was promoted to colonel in 1938, serving as Chief of the Operations Branch, Military Intelligence Division of the War Department General Staff. By 1940, he was Chief of the Plans and Training Branch of the G-2 Division. The following year, Ralph Smith received his brigadier general's star. All who knew him regarded Ralph Smith as gentle man and a gentleman.

In early 1942, the 27th Infantry Division was moved from New York to Hawaii to defend the islands against Japanese attack. The 27th had a proud tradition—one of its units was the 165th Infantry Regiment, which in its World War I incarnation had been the legendary "Fighting 69th" Infantry Regiment commanded by "Wild Bill" Donovan in the Argonne. Ralph Smith was given command of this division.

Ralph Smith's chief antagonist was a ferocious Alabaman, born in 1882. Holland McTyeire "Howlin' Mad" Smith was the son of a prominent Alabama politician. While attending the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, a military school in Auburn, Holland Smith read about Napoleon and decided to become a career officer. He graduated from the Alabama Polytechnic Institute and then went to law school at the University of Alabama, where he was a better sprinter than scholar but still gained a law degree and was admitted to the bar.

When Holland Smith sought an Army commission, he went to Washington to plead his case to his congressman, but the Army turned him down. Some historians suggest that may have given him a lifelong dislike of the Army. A congressman then suggested Holland Smith try his luck with the Marines.

Colonel Gardiner Conroy (left), commander of the 165th Infantry Regiment at Makin, was killed in action during the early fighting. General Sanford Jarman (right) was placed in command of the 27th Infantry Division after Ralph Smith was fired. Jarman found it difficult to work with senior Marine commanders, just as Ralph Smith had. TOP: Soldiers of the U.S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 165th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division wade ashore on Makin Atoll in the Gilbert Islands in November 1943.

"What are the Marines?" Holland Smith asked in all candor, and he found out on March 29, 1905, when he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Corps. He was soon nicknamed "Howlin' Mad," a play on his name and initials, and went to France with the 8th Marine Regiment in 1917. He earned a Croix de Guerre with Palm in combat. Between the wars, he became one of the Marines' pioneers of amphibious warfare.

In March 1937, Colonel Holland Smith became director of operations and training at Marine Headquarters in Washington, D.C. In September 1939, he gained general's stars and command of the 1st Marine Brigade. This was doubled in size under his leadership and became the 1st Marine Division. In June 1941, Holland Smith took command of the Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet.

A short, heavy-set man with a moustache, round, thin glasses, a hard face, and cigar, Holland Smith resembled an elderly business tycoon, not a poster general. Aged 60, his appearance and girth troubled a medical board, which found him physically unfit for combat service due to a diagnosis of severe diabetes. The diagnosis proved to be a mistake, and Holland Smith headed to the West Coast to lead amphibious training as the Marines prepared for Guadalcanal.

There, Holland Smith trained Leathernecks for their impending ordeal and Army troops for the Aleutian campaign. While his duties were vital, Smith, like most line officers, fretted about not getting into combat and beseeched Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, for a battle role. Nimitz gave Holland Smith the post of Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, and Holland Smith took up his duties on September 5, 1943.

Holland Smith headed the invasion of Tarawa in the Gilberts and its nearby islands of Makin and Abemama in November 1943, and under his command was Ralph Smith's 27th Infantry Division. The two Smiths first clashed during the assault on Makin.

On November 20, the 27th Division's 165th Infantry Regiment, under Colonel Gardiner Conroy, assaulted Makin and faced fierce defenders. On D+2, Holland Smith went ashore to check on the battle. He found the corpse of Colonel Conroy lying in an open area. Conroy, walking erect on the beach on D-day, had been shot between the eyes by a Japanese sniper, and the body had not been retrieved.

Holland Smith was angered that the colonel's body had lain for two days "in full sight of hundreds of men," a detriment to morale. Worse, when Conroy had been killed the Army troops had withdrawn tanks, mortars, and machine guns without firing a shot. The 27th Division's apparent lack of aggressiveness, poor training, and weak discipline irritated the fierce Holland Smith. He later wrote, "Had Ralph Smith been a Marine I would have relieved him on the spot." He also called the 27th's capture of the island "infuriatingly slow."

Meanwhile, the Marine landings on Tarawa were more successful despite suffering heavy casualties, burnishing the tactics and reputation of the Leathernecks and their tough-talking

commander.

The Smiths were united again for an amphibious assault on Eniwetok in February 1944, and once again Holland Smith was unhappy with Ralph Smith's performance.

On March 15, 1944, Holland Smith became the Marine Corps's second three-star general with command of the V Amphibious Corps. With great reluctance, he accepted the 27th Infantry into his command for the invasion of Saipan.

When the 27th Infantry came ashore on Saipan, the actual landing was close to farce. The GIs landed by night, their landing craft moving through waters jammed with Navy vessels. Holland Smith's corps staff did not tell the Navy that the Army was coming ashore.

Communications broke down, and Navy officers yelled through loud-hailers at the Army officers demanding to know who these people were and where they were going while point machine guns at them. The infantry officers had to wheedle and beg to get their men ashore. Once aground, the men of the 165th Infantry Regiment were exhausted and seasick before they even met the Japanese. The 105th Infantry Regiment lacked its vehicles, rations, and ammunition.

But Ralph Smith did his best, getting the 27th off the beach and into battle, headed for Mount Topotchau. A former Fort Benning infantry instructor, Ralph Smith used the tried-and-true Benning methods to approach the mountain: probe until enemy strongpoints were unmasked, hit them with accurate artillery fire, and use patrols to find ways to outflank the main positions. Frontal assaults up valleys were only acceptable in an emergency.

Ralph Smith's methodical probing irritated Holland Smith, who favored the aggressive violence and direct action that was the Marine hallmark. Personalities as well as tactical methods were now clashing on the rocky island. The Army made little progress.

On June 24, after consulting with his superiors, Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner and Vice Admiral Raymond Spruance, Holland Smith relieved Ralph Smith, sending a captain from the Adjutant General's Corps with the official order, typed up on V Amphibious Corps stationery, and the additional proviso that Ralph Smith and a single aide must leave Saipan by dawn on the 25th. Maj. Gen. Sanderford Jarman, who was to command the Army base on Saipan once the island was secure, would take over the 27th Infantry Division.

Ralph Smith offered to stay to help with the transition, but that offer was refused. At 5:17 AM on June 25, Ralph Smith and his aide boarded a Navy patrol plane and started winging back to Eniwetok, a 10-hour flight, ultimately headed for Hawaii.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: On June 15, 1944, landing craft filled with U.S. Marines churn toward the beaches of Saipan, a strategically vital island in the Marianas that would eventually serve as a forward base for long-range B-29 Superfortress bombers raiding the home islands of Japan.

BELOW: From the cover of a shell hole, U.S. Marines throw grenades across the shattered landscape of Saipan toward Japanese positions. The stubborn Japanese defense of Saipan resulted in a bloody 39-day campaign to capture the island, and the differing combat doctrines of Marine and Army troops compounded the discord among the highest echelons of the American command.

Holland Smith later wrote, "Relieving Ralph Smith was one of the most disagreeable tasks I have ever been forced to perform," adding that he personally liked the man and considered him "professionally knowledgeable."

But at the time, Holland Smith told *Time* magazine war correspondent and future Marine historian Robert Sherrod, "Ralph Smith's my friend, but good God, I've got a duty to my country. I've lost 7,000 Marines. Can I afford to lose back what they have gained? To let my Marines die in vain? I know I'm sticking my neck out—the National Guard will try to chop it off—but my conscience is clear. I did my duty. When Ralph Smith issued an order to hold after I told him to attack, I had no other choice than to relieve him."

Holland Smith was right about the oncoming storm. When Ralph Smith arrived in Hawaii,

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: **Three soldiers of the 27th Infantry Division take temporary cover from Japanese fire on Saipan. Their vantage point is a rock wall on high ground that overlooks cane fields. The terrain on Saipan contributed to the deliberate progress of the Army troops on the island.** **BELOW:** **His bayonet fixed to his M1 Garand rifle, a soldier of the 27th Infantry Division peers from cover on the island of Saipan.**

he reported to Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson, the senior Army commander in the Pacific, and Richardson was outraged. He told Ralph Smith to take as much time as necessary to prepare a report on everything that had happened on Saipan. On July 11, Ralph Smith produced a 34-page document with annexes and copies of his communications with Holland Smith. A copy went to Nimitz.

Ralph Smith urged Richardson, "No Army combat troops should ever again be permitted to serve under the command of Marine Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith."

While Ralph Smith and his officers typed up their report, the ranking Army officers on Saipan vented their considerable displeasure over the relief and Holland Smith's command to Richardson as well. Maj. Gen. George W. Griner, who took over the 27th Infantry Division from Jarman on June 26, told Richardson how he had quarreled so bitterly with Holland Smith that he came away from Saipan with the "firm conviction that [Holland Smith] is so prejudiced against the Army that no Army Division under his command alongside of Marine Divisions can expect that their deeds will receive fair and honest evaluation."

Meanwhile, Richardson ordered Lt. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, son of a Confederate Civil War hero and victor of the Aleutian Campaign, to head a five-general board to examine the circumstances of Ralph Smith's relief.

While the gravelly Buckner and his board studied the files, Richardson flew to Saipan in his capacity as commander of all U.S. Army forces in the Pacific Ocean Areas. First he bucked up the 27th Division's morale by staging a review and presenting decorations for valor—without the knowledge or consent of Holland Smith, who was angry at this breach of military etiquette and infringement on his authority as Corps commander.

Next, Richardson berated Holland Smith, barking, "I want you to know that you cannot push the Army around the way you have been doing; you and your Corps commanders aren't as well qualified to lead large bodies of troops as general officers in the Army, yet you dare to remove one of my generals. You Marines are nothing but a bunch of beach runners anyway. What do you know about land warfare?"

Faced with this verbal barrage, the normally volatile Holland Smith held his temper, but after the conversation he stormed off to Turner's flagship and vented his frustration.

Turner did the next round of exploding, questioning Richardson's right to exercise any command functions in the battle area and even to visit Saipan. Richardson coolly said that he had permission from Nimitz to visit Saipan, and Turner angrily demanded the proof. Richardson went over Turner's head to Spruance, who gave Richardson a "what do you expect from Turner" shrug.

Spruance and Turner complained to Nimitz about Richardson's visit and verbal attack on Holland Smith.

The Buckner Board reviewed the increasingly ugly mess, and arrived at four conclusions:

(1) Holland Smith had full authority to relieve Ralph Smith.

(2) The orders effecting the change of command were properly issued.

(3) Holland Smith "was not fully informed regarding conditions in the zone of the 27th Infantry Division" when he asked for Ralph Smith's relief.

(4) The relief of Ralph Smith "was not justified by the facts."

The board faulted the V Amphibious Corps command for not realizing that the 27th Division was facing much tougher opposition than the Corps anticipated, and the division's lack of aggressiveness was due to Japanese defenses, not sluggish Army leadership. The Buckner Board noted that the Marine Corps headquarters team and staff work were enormously sloppy and asserted that the senior Marine leadership had not been anywhere near the 27th Division's sector and simply did not know what the Army had been up against on Mount Tapotchau.

The Army had a point. Saipan was the first time in its 150-year history that the U.S. Marine Corps had fought a corps-level action, and while the Leathernecks were fierce fighters and professional warriors they simply lacked the experience needed at that level of combat operations.

The Navy and Marine Corps reacted with predictable irritation. Holland Smith wrote to Nimitz that the Buckner Board's conclusions were unwarranted, adding, "I was and am convinced that the 27th Division was not accomplishing even the combat results to be expected from an organization which had had adequate opportunity for training."

Turner chimed in, resenting the board's implied criticism in "pressing Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith ... to expedite the conquest of Saipan so as to free the fleet for another operation." He added that Holland Smith's relief order was not "based on either personal or service prejudice or jealousy."

Richardson added his own harsh words in his report to Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, writing, "I feel it is my duty to make of record my urgent and considered recommendation that no Army combat troops ever again be permitted to serve under the command of Marine Lieutenant General Holland Smith. So far as the employment of Army troops are concerned, he is prejudiced, petty, and unstable. He has demonstrated an apparent lack of understanding of the acceptance of Army doctrines for the tactical employment of larger units."

Jarman agreed, saying, "It is my earnest recommendation that in future operations of any kind where the Army and the Marine Corps are employed that under no circumstances should any Army divisions be incorporated into the Marine Corps. Their basic concepts of combat are far removed from that of the Army."

The Buckner Board findings went next to Washington for review by Marshall and his Assistant Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Thomas T. Handy. They believed that while Holland Smith had some cause to complain about the 27th Division's lack of aggressiveness, "Holland Smith's fitness for this command is open to question" because of his deep-seated prejudice against the Army and that "bad blood had developed between the Marines and the Army on Saipan" to such a degree that it endangered future operations in the theater.

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General Robert Richardson, senior commander of U.S. Army troops in the Pacific Theater, addresses staff officers of the 27th Infantry Division during his visit to Saipan after the relief of General Ralph Smith from command. Richardson did not consult Marine General Smith prior to visiting Saipan, and the Marine command establishment considered Richardson's tour of the island a serious breach of military protocol.

Handy advised that the two Smiths be ordered out of the Pacific but added, "While I do not believe we should make definite recommendation to the Navy for the relief of Holland Smith, I think that positive action should be taken to get Ralph Smith out of the area. His presence undoubtedly tends to aggravate a bad situation between the Services."

The Deputy Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, examined the Buckner Board report and concluded that Holland Smith's V Amphibious Corps staff work was below acceptable standards; there was reasonably good tactical direction on the part of Ralph Smith, but the division had poor leadership among its regimental and battalion commanders, a hesitance to bypass snipers "with a tendency to alibi because of lack of reserves to mop up," poor march discipline, and lack of reconnaissance.

On November 22, 1944, Marshall gave his views to the Navy's top seadog, Admiral Ernest J. King, expressing concern that "relationships between the Marines and the Army forces on Saipan had deteriorated beyond mere healthy rivalry."

Marshall urged that he and King send identical telegrams to Richardson and Nimitz to "take suitable steps to promptly eradicate any tendency toward ... disharmony among the components of our forces." He also suggested another investigation into the Saipan affair to prevent its recurrence.

King wrote back to say that the Buckner Board findings were unilateral and suspect, contained intemperate attacks on the personal character and professional competence of Holland Smith, and he could not concur in any further investigations in which Richardson was a party because that officer had done enough damage by his "investigational activities during his visit to Saipan" and by convening the Buckner Board. That ended any further official action on the controversy.

Unfortunately, now the controversy moved into the public arena. The Saipan battle was huge news in the United States, particularly the ghastly Japanese mass suicides on Marpi Point, which had been well-documented by film, photograph, and reporter accounts. The American public was shocked by how the island's Japanese civilians chose suicide over surrender and the heavy U.S. casualty toll. The command controversy was raw meat for American press barons.

William Randolph Hearst's empire opened the ink barrage. The aging reactionary titan was a major public supporter of the flamboyant and dramatic General Douglas MacArthur, who commanded the Southwest Pacific The-

ater. Hearst took advantage of Saipan's high casualty lists and Ralph Smith's firing to denounce the Navy, Marine Corps, and their leadership.

In his flagship newspaper, the *San Francisco Examiner,* Hearst editorialized that Army commanders used subtle, intelligent tactics while the Marines were one dimensional. "Allegedly excessive loss of life attributed to Marine Corps impetuosity of attack has brought a break between Marine and Army commanders in the Pacific," Hearst wrote.

In another one of his major papers, the *New York Journal-American,* Hearst wrote, "Americans are shocked at the casualties on Saipan following already heavy losses by Marine commanders on Tarawa and Kwajalein." Hearst accused Holland Smith of firing his Army subordinate when Ralph Smith protested "reckless and needless waste of American lives."

Hearst had a simple solution to the controversy. Put Douglas MacArthur in supreme command of the entire Pacific Theater from the Aleutians to New Guinea. Putting MacArthur in command of everything was Hearst's answer to most controversies—in 1948 and 1952 he would back the general for the presidency—but it fueled increasing debate.

The Navy had its partisans in the press war, however. Most notable of these was Charles Henry Luce, the publisher of *Time* and *Life* magazines. Luce's admiration dated back to his youth as the child of American missionaries in China at the beginning of the 20th century. There, the Navy and Marines had burnished their reputation by protecting American commercial interests and citizens from the ravages of Chinese bandits, civil war, and later the Sino-Japanese conflict.

Luce also had a reporter assigned to Holland Smith. Robert Sherrod was close to the fiery Marine general and went ashore with the Marines on the first day of the Saipan invasion, staying with them through the entire grim battle. Sherrod wrote highly accurate stories about Leatherneck courage and enthusiasm. Certainly the Marines had fought well and victoriously, and they made good copy.

But Sherrod never visited the Army units, and he overplayed the Marines' disgust at the 27th Division's perceived failures. He wrote that while the Marines made great gains against tough Japanese resistance, entire Army battalions were pinned down for hours by a single Japanese gun position or sniper.

On September 18, 1944, *Time* magazine published an article by Sherrod supporting Holland Smith, which described the 27th Division as being commanded by an incompetent. Sherrod wrote that the 27th's GIs "froze in their foxholes" and had to be rescued by the Leathernecks. Sherrod added, "When field commanders hesitate to remove subordinates for fear of interservice contention, battles and lives will be needlessly lost."

Historian Geoffrey Perret wrote decades later that the humiliating article devastated the men of the 27th, and the division never recovered its toughness from the journalistic blow.

The debate raged on in the media and in public conversation, which annoyed Marshall, King, and General Henry "Hap" Arnold, head of the U.S. Army Air Forces, who were now wishing the entire affair would simply go away. They were more concerned with the next campaigns, in the Palau Islands, New Guinea, and the Philippines, than in refereeing the "War Between the Smiths." It was time to end the whole affair.

Ralph Smith was given Maj. Gen. George Griner's old command in Hawaii, the 98th Infantry Division, when Griner took over the 27th. This switch of division commanders was only temporary, though, as Marshall wanted the two Smiths separated for life.

Ultimately, Ralph Smith's fluent knowledge of French saved his career. He was assigned as military attaché to General Charles de Gaulle's Free French government, which had installed itself in Paris. Ralph Smith arrived just in time for the closing guns of the Battle of the Bulge and the opening guns of Operation Nordwind, Hitler's offensive in Alsace against the U.S. Seventh and French First Armies. The two-pronged German drive was threatening to cut off Strasbourg, and the Americans wanted to withdraw from the city.

Unfortunately, Strasbourg's possession was a major issue for de Gaulle. He was determined not to yield once more a city that had been annexed to Germany in 1870 to the Huns. Gen-

BELOW: **Believing horrific tales of American atrocities fabricated by Japanese military propagandists, Japanese civilians commit suicide by flinging themselves and their children from the cliffs at Marpi Point on the island of Saipan. Unable to intervene, U.S. Marines watch helplessly as the civilians end their lives by drowning or falling on the rocks below. OPPOSITE: After he was relieved of command of the 27th Infantry Division on Saipan, General Ralph Smith was transferred to the European Theater, where he served with distinction as a liaison officer to Free French commander General Charles de Gaulle. In this photo, Smith attends a 1946 ceremony in the village of Ste. Mere-Eglise, France, honoring soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division, who parachuted into the area on D-Day.**

Getty Images

eral Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force, threatened to cut off supplies to de Gaulle's troops if they did not withdraw. De Gaulle was obstinate. With the two Allies shouting at each other, quiet diplomacy was needed to resolve the situation, and Ralph Smith provided it. He convinced the French that American and French troops would fight to hold the city. Both Strasbourg and French honor were saved, a good deal of it through Ralph Smith's efforts.

Holland Smith got a different reward. With six Marine divisions in the Pacific now, along with 28 artillery battalions, 12 Amtrac battalions, and four Marine air wings, the Marines now had an army rather than a corps in the field and needed a Marine headquarters to administer this force.

Holland Smith was named head of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, which was a mixed blessing for the fiery warrior. While he oversaw the entire Marine war effort in the Pacific, he did not actually command Leathernecks in battle. Nor did he command Army troops again.

The invasion of Iwo Jima was purely a Navy-Marine show, and both services suffered heavy casualties while gaining the island and glory, but when the Marines were assigned for the invasions of Okinawa and Kyushu they came under Army command.

At Okinawa, the higher formation was the U.S. Tenth Army under General Buckner. Ironically, Buckner was killed late in the battle, and Marine Lt. Gen. Roy Geiger, who commanded the III Amphibious Corps, took temporary charge of the Tenth Army from June 18 to June 23 while General Joseph Stilwell flew in from the United States to assume command. Geiger thus became the only Marine officer to command a U.S. Army in the field.

In the planning for Operation Olympic, the invasion of Kyushu, and Operation Coronet, the invasion of Honshu, the Marines were to come under the U.S. Sixth Army and General Walter Krueger in Olympic and General Robert Eichelberger's U.S. Eighth Army in Coronet. Both invasions were forestalled by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which hastened Japan's surrender.

But the controversy continued after the war, if not in the halls of high command, in the public eye. Holland Smith retired from the Marine Corps with his fourth star in May 1946, having served in the Corps for 41 years. He promptly wrote his memoirs, which were serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1948, and in book form in 1949 with the title *Coral and Brass*. In his memoirs, Holland Smith defended his decision to fire Ralph Smith and blasted the 27th Infantry Division for its perceived weaknesses.

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The 27th Infantry Division's official historian, Captain Edmund G. Love, wrote a rebuttal for the *Saturday Evening Post* as well, and another one for the division's history, published by the *Infantry Journal*. Love defended Ralph Smith and his GI buddies.

The official Army and Marine Corps historians also weighed in on the controversy. The 1960 Army history, *Campaign in the Marianas,* by Philip A. Crowl, straddled the fence. Crowl said that Holland Smith's orders were never clear, the division did fight hesitantly, and did not advance. Crowl concluded, "No matter what the extenuating circumstances were—and there are several—the conclusion seems inescapable that Holland Smith had reason to be disappointed with the performance of the 27th Infantry Division on the two days in question. Whether the action he took to remedy the situation was a wise one, however, was doubtful. Certainly the relief of Ralph Smith appears to have done nothing to speed the capture of Death Valley. Six more days of bitter fighting remained before that object was to be achieved."

The Marine history was written in 1966 by Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin T. Turndbladh and titled *Central Pacific Drive.*

The Leatherneck historians wrote: "The Smith against Smith controversy was caused by failure of the 27th Infantry Division to penetrate the defenses of Death Valley. Holland Smith had told the division commanding general that operations in the area had to be speeded up. Ralph Smith, who was thoroughly familiar with the tactical situation, informed Jarman of his own annoyance with the slow progress of his unit. He told the island commander that he intended to press the attack, but he postponed making the changes in command which, according to Jarman, he intimated might be necessary. The NTLF (Northern Troops and Landing Force) commander (Holland Smith), after stating that the objective had to be taken, saw that no significant progress had been made on 24 June and promptly replaced the officer responsible for the conduct of the Army division. The Army Smith offered his subordinates another chance, but the Marine Smith did immediately what he felt was necessary, without regard for the controversy he knew would follow."

Ultimately, Ralph Smith probably had the last word. After retiring from the Corps, Holland Smith lived in La Jolla, California, pursuing his hobby of gardening until his death at age 84 in 1967. He is buried in Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego.

Ralph Smith, however, became Chief of Mission for CARE (Cooperation for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) in France, retiring from the Army in 1948. After that, he was a fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, in California, and lived until 1998, dying at the age of 104. At his death, he was the oldest surviving general officer in the U.S. Army and had outlasted all of his critics.

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UPRIS

ABOVE: Bogdan Mieczkowski posed in his Polish Army uniform for a photographer in London in 1946. TOP: During the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising in the autumn of 1944, German soldiers, an officer among them, watch buildings burn to the ground. The Poles fought bravely, but the German assault was brutal. Some Poles, however, successfully escaped the killing zone.

"THIS MISSION IS SUICIDAL," thought Bogdan Mieczkowski. In the autumn of 1944, the 19-year-old Polish resistance fighter battled in the Warsaw Uprising. Poles, although outnumbered and outgunned, rebelled against Nazi Germans who overran western Poland and seized the capital city. Mieczkowski's unit now mounted an offensive to allow trapped comrades to escape from Warsaw's Old Town section, where a Nazi counteroffensive pinned them down. With just eight soldiers and armed only with hand grenades, Mieczkowski thought they risked slaughter.

Two Polish engineers placed dynamite next to a wall separating them from the Germans and then ran across the street. An explosion blasted a hole in the wall, emitting an enormous dust cloud, and Mieczkowski and the others scurried through the opening. As they ran, a German machine gun opened fire. Mieczkowski felt his right arm jerk violently, and brick shards struck his upper thigh as bullets ripped out pieces of the wall, turning them into projectiles. "I hit the ground and looked at my hand. Instead of my right thumb, a flap of skin was hanging in its place," Mieczkowski said. He had to continue fighting—only now he was bleeding profusely, his right thumb sliced off and leg pierced by shrapnel. World War II, which had devastated his family and the life he knew, was becoming deadlier every minute.

Before the war began, Mieczkowski was enjoying

ING!

A WARSAW FREEDOM FIGHTER BATTLES NAZI OCCUPIERS.

BY YANEK MIECZKOWSKI

his teenage years in Bydgoszcz, a city of 150,000 in northwestern Poland. He had older and younger brothers, Zbigniew and Janusz, and their mother Aniela was a devout Catholic who read voraciously and loved to play the family's grand piano. The family patriarch, Tadeusz, had gone to America to study engineering at Chicago's Armour Institute. After earning his degree in 1915, Tadeusz returned to Poland and parlayed his U.S. education into business success, co-owning a thriving construction company that had two brick-making plants in Bydgoszcz, plus other factories and storage depots nearby.

Tadeusz's success as an industrialist allowed the family to live in comfort. They owned a large, five-bedroom house, employed a cook and domestic servant, and had two cars, including an American-built Willys Overland. The family vacationed along the Baltic Sea during summers and took winter retreats in the Carpathian Mountains, where Tadeusz owned a small hotel.

On September 1, 1939, distant explosions signaled an end to this idyllic lifestyle. On that day, Bogdan was at his dentist's office. From far away came rumbling, like thunder. Although he didn't know it, those sounds marked the start of World War II. Also unaware of what the booms meant, the dentist arranged another appointment with Mieczkowski. Neither of them would keep it. (Mieczkowski later learned that the Gestapo arrested and tortured his dentist, releasing him to die within just two weeks.)

The significance of those sounds soon became clear. Just nine days earlier, on August 23, 1939, Germany and Russia had signed a nonaggression pact. The treaty removed German Chancellor Adolf Hitler's worry about a conflict with the Soviet Union and allowed the two nations to forge a secret agreement to divide Poland. On September 1, Germany

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smashed through the country, and two days later, Britain declared war on Germany. Because larger, hostile countries traditionally bordered Poland, invasions and annexations so bedeviled its past that one aphorism said that Poland "had no history, just neighbors." As if to prove that adage true, on September 17 the Soviet Union invaded and occupied the country's eastern half. This new aggression doomed Poland, which was attacked by Germany to the West and the USSR to the East; in effect, the country had been stabbed both front and back.

For millions of Poles, World War II meant injury, death, and destruction of the lives they once knew. So it was for the Mieczkowskis. The Nazis overran Bydgoszcz, killing especially upper-class citizens, and Tadeusz was a prominent target. For safety, the family fled the city in their Willys Overland, abandoning everything else they owned. The threat of German strafing was everywhere, and as they traveled they saw burning houses, dead livestock, and soon, bodies. The family reached Kobryn, where Tadeusz's sister lived, a city that seemed peaceful, giving the sense that there was no war. But the illusion soon ended. After two days, county officials decided to evacuate families on a bus. With gasoline now scarce, the Mieczkowskis left their car and joined the exodus.

At a roadblock, a civilian dressed in black and wearing a red armband boarded the bus. He told the driver to proceed to Brest, where the bus stopped at a jailhouse. Two Soviet tanks stood in front—a brutal reminder that they were now in the Soviet-occupied zone of Poland. Once inside the jail, Mieczkowski and his family saw more black-clad civilians, all wearing red armbands. They were processing a long line of Polish policemen, whom the Soviets singled out for harsh treatment—likely, forced labor in the Gulag—because they represented Polish authority, which they were abolishing. On the second floor, the Mieczkowskis joined other civilians and spent the night, sleeping on the bare floor. In the morning, Bogdan could hear the cries of men being tortured, and he saw a police officer's wife hastily shredding his uniform to protect his identity and prevent him from being beaten; her husband hid under a blanket, fearing discovery.

Author's Collection

Photographed during happier times, the Mieczkowski family is shown on vacation during the mid-1930s in Rabka, a resort town in southern Poland where they owned a villa. From left are Aniela, Janusz, Bogdan, Tadeusz, and Zbigniew.

The Mieczkowski family got lucky. Taduesz and Aniela were middle-aged parents with three teenage boys, and their captors released them. The next step was to keep moving. The family feared deportation to Siberia if they stayed in Brest and, moreover, conditions there were intolerable: food was in short supply, people were displaced (many sleeping in the railroad station), and more arrests were taking place. They decided to brave German and Soviet border guards and go to Warsaw, a metropolis where they could seek refuge with one of Aniela's relatives and blend with its more than million residents. Arriving in late November 1939, Bogdan and his family began a transient existence.

Amid tumultuous change, Mieczkowski had to refocus his priorities and adapt. Whereas most teenagers worry about school, he lost the 1939-1940 academic year and still had two years of junior high plus all of high school to complete. The Germans wanted to prevent Poles from studying beyond the elementary level, but Polish teachers convinced them that an educated Polish work force would redound to the Third Reich's glory. In this way, trade schools stayed open, and Mieczkowski completed junior high. High school was trickier. Warsaw Poles devised an underground educational system in which small groups of students and teachers—numbering just a half dozen so as not to arouse suspicion—met furtively, usually at the apartment of a teacher or student. This secret schooling allowed Mieczkowski to finish his secondary education, earning no diploma but gleaning enough knowledge that he hoped to enter a university when the war ended.

Earning money was even more important. Stripped of his construction empire, Tadeusz pawned family watches and jewelry and became a partner in a second-hand store. He used an alias to remain incognito, and to disguise his appearance, he grew a beard and used different glasses. Bogdan worked in a delivery business, shoe-making plant, toy manufacturing facility, and agricultural seed factory, and he rolled cigarettes for pay. The earnings brought only subsistence living, and the family ate meat just once or twice a year. Like his father, Bogdan learned to blend into the environment to avoid attracting attention. He recalled, "I did not wear any signs that might inspire curiosity—no rings, no military-style cavalry boots, no prewar high school uniform, nothing to indicate that I was anything but a poor, undernourished boy."

He also joined the resistance movement, helping to distribute an underground newspaper, wholesaled by a married couple who owned a small Warsaw grocery store. This was dangerous: had the Germans caught him carrying the newspaper, the result would have been torture and death. Two months after Mieczkowski began courier work, he was walking to the store to pick up his load of contraband papers when he noticed the place was shuttered, marked with a piece of paper carrying a German eagle and swastika. He briskly walked past the storefront, pretending to be oblivious but surmising that the couple had been caught and executed.

Although it offered hope and tested the Poles'

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ABOVE: Polish captives, their hands in the air, are obviously apprehensive as German soldiers search them for weapons and contraband. The Germans were constantly wary of attacks by Polish guerrillas. BELOW: The Poles were frequent targets of German brutality during World War II; however, the occupiers saved their most horrific actions for the Jews. In this poignant photo, furniture taken from a Jewish home is burned in the street in the town of Myslenice.

will to survive, resistance carried perils—as did everyday life. The brutality of the German occupation helped to explain why Poland had the highest casualty rate of any European country during World War II. The Germans viewed Poles as one of mankind's lowest groups, a subhuman race like Gypsies and Jews, and they held Polish life in dim regard. "To be a Pole was almost—but not quite—the most unfortunate thing a person could be in World War II," historian James Stokesbury has commented. In Warsaw, Nazi snipers picked off men, women, and children, and Germans also snatched Poles from the streets, torturing and killing them or sending them to concentration camps. Aniela hosted a couple from Bydgoszcz who also sought shelter in Warsaw, and one evening the husband decided to stroll outside just before the night curfew began. He never returned. In this way, the Nazis instilled fear among the Poles, patrolling the city and abducting residents. Once, a German patrol stopped Bogdan on a street. An officer frisked him and removed a wad of papers. Luckily, they were letters he was delivering to a German agricultural office, and the officer let him go.

Stout-hearted Poles kept up the resistance. The Polish AK (Armja Krajowa, or Home Army) began with a small nucleus but eventually totaled 40,000 soldiers, which included about 4,000 women. It took direction from the London-based Polish government-in-exile and throughout the war funneled information on German military activities to the Allies and engaged in anti-Nazi sabotage, including an estimated 27,000 attacks on railroads. Most AK fighters were amateurs with no military training or warfare experience and came from all walks of life. Like Mieczkowski, many were young students who had little to offer but courage, love of country, and a will to fight. They also took crash courses in warfare. After France fell to the Germans in the summer of 1940, Mieczkowski attended resistance meetings. Like any gathering under the occupation, these conclaves were small, and attendees studied military tactics and learned how to operate pistols, grenades, and flamethrowers, usually by reviewing diagrams since they lacked the real thing. Once the Uprising began, Poles relied on captured German arms, Allied supplies, and homemade guns and grenades. Initially, though, like many AK members, Mieczkowski had no weapons, not even a knife.

But the goal was ambitious—to rise up and repulse the Nazi occupiers. On August 1, 1944, word came that the resistance would begin, with action to start at 5 PM. The Soviet leadership encouraged the Poles to rebel, and Moscow radio broadcast the start date to coordinate the attack. In the strange alchemy of war, Soviets and Poles had become uneasy partners in fighting a common enemy after June 1941, when Germany invaded the USSR. For the Poles, the Soviets appeared the lesser of two evils, even though their invasion of Poland's eastern half had been savage. Poles still mistrusted the Soviets—and with good reason. In 1943, the Kremlin severed relations with London's Polish government-in-exile after it demanded an investigation of the 1940 Katyn Forest massacre, in which Russians executed 10,000 Polish Army officers, dumping their bodies in a mass grave in eastern Poland. Given their experiences with such treachery and violence, Poles were determined to avoid Soviet control of their country after the war. It was vital, then, for Poles to overthrow the Germans and establish a free government, instead of handing the USSR an opportunity to control the country after the war. At the very least, Poles expected their reward for the Uprising would be a strong bargaining position over their nation's future. But they expected Soviet help to repel the Germans and, indeed, needed it.

One of Mieczkowski's first assignments during the Uprising was to prevent attacks from

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Members of Anna Company of the Gustaw Battalion, Home Army soldiers Henryk Ozarek "Henio" (left), holding a Vis pistol, and Tadeusz Przybyszewski "Roma" (right), firing a Błyskawica submachine gun, battle the hated Germans on Kredytowa-Królewska Street in Warsaw. This photo was taken on October 3, 1944.

tanks, the Nazis' prime weapon, which they used to demolish buildings and ram through AK barricades. For weapons, he had two gasoline-filled bottles with wicks—the famous "Molotov cocktails." He commanded four fighters in a detachment charged with defending an entrance gate to a building. Mieczkowski tried unsuccessfully to start a nearby car, and he and his men began to push it inside the gate so that they could siphon its gasoline to use in Molotov cocktails. Just as they nudged the car into position, a German tank appeared down the street, swiveling its turret in their direction. Mieczkowski and the others ran into the building.

The car exploded. The tank's round hit it square-on, the impact sending metal fragments flying everywhere. Inside the building, one comrade gestured that Mieczkowski's jacket had blood stains. "I could not believe I was wounded because I had not felt anything," he said, "but the blood convinced me." He relinquished his command of the unit and sought help at his company's first aid post, where nurses cleaned and bandaged his wounds (a decade later, in 1955, a chiropractor found shrapnel still embedded in his cheek).

Mieczkowski had more close calls. At one point, he led a detachment that defended the second floor of a building, while the Germans occupied the ground level. After throwing grenades downstairs, he peeked down the stairwell. Seeing nothing but hearing noises, he retreated toward an apartment. Just then, the Germans unleashed a flamethrower attack, and a surge of fire enveloped the staircase. Mieczkowski's company withdrew to an adjacent building by using a hole in the wall connecting the two structures. Moments after his unit fled, the first building collapsed; the Germans had used a Goliath, a small tank packed with explosives and steered by a wire from a nearby tank. By seconds, Mieczkowski and his men had avoided annihilation.

The Uprising's first days went auspiciously for the Poles, who caught the Germans off guard and gained control of 60 percent of Warsaw. But the Nazis counterattacked, forcing them to relinquish their gains. In early September 1944, the Polish command decided to abandon the Old Town section of Warsaw, then receiving a vicious pounding from German infantry and Stuka dive bombers. At this time Mieczkowski, trying to help fellow resistance fighters flee from Old Town, embarked on the ill-fated mission where he lost his right thumb and absorbed shrapnel in his thigh.

After getting shot, Mieczkowski limped back through the dynamited wall, crossed the street, and went to a first aid station. There, a nurse bandaged his thumb and dressed his leg. In searing pain, he walked to a makeshift hospital, located in the basement of a nearby building, where a surgeon stitched his cuts and tried to even out his thumb bone. Doctors operated under horrendous conditions, with minimal medicine and often working with flashlights or candles. This hospital was dark and crowded, and anguished groans filled the air; Mieczkowski left almost immediately. Days later, in a jarring reminder of Nazi air power, a German bomb destroyed the hospital.

Just two weeks after losing his thumb, on the night of September 18, 1944, Mieczkowski fell asleep in the basement of his apartment building, an edifice darkened by the lack of electricity. A bomb blast jolted him awake, and minutes later his younger brother rushed into his cellar room. Their mother, he cried, had just been killed. "I got up as fast as I could, crossed the courtyard and went down to the basement on the other side," Mieczkowski remembered. "My mother lay on the floor in a pool of blood. She and another woman had been standing at the entrance to the basement, probably enjoying some clean night air, when the bomb struck. Shrapnel entered her back and pierced her heart." Both women died instantly. Friends carried Aniela's body to the building's first floor, where Mieczkowski tenderly cleaned her face of blood. Her front showed no wounds, but shrapnel had gouged a deep hole in her back. Although he and his brother sobbed for most of the night, near dawn they finally fell asleep.

The next day, Mieczkowski and his brothers made a simple casket out of untreated boards and lowered it into the earth. Aniela died at age 49—"in great physical shape, active and caring, the focus of our family," Mieczkowski recalled. For the next year he felt numb, "letting life pass by without much sense of personal involvement," he said. "The abortive Uprising added to my feeling of separation from reality."

The Uprising soldiered on valiantly but vainly, with the Nazis tightening their noose around Warsaw. Withering under bombs and ground artillery, Warsaw became a shell of the city it was just weeks earlier, as Germans pulverized a quarter of its buildings, adding to the destruction they had already wrought during the 1939 invasion and the 1943 Ghetto Uprising. For the third time during the war, the city found itself the nexus of conflict, and this combat was the deadliest, with fighting taking place from building to building at point-blank range.

On October 2, 1944, the Poles surrendered. The Uprising had lasted 63 days. The marvel was that it stretched that long, because it involved ragtag fighters, armed with only courage and crude weapons, confronting one of the world's strongest military machines. All told, 200,000 Polish civilians and 15,000 resistance fighters perished during the Uprising.

By willful neglect and obstruction, Soviet Premier Josef Stalin helped to doom the Uprising. Until almost the end, he refused permission for U.S. and British planes to use Soviet bases and appeared to wait deliberately on the sidelines as

the Uprising faltered. The Soviet air force held back, with the result that German bombers unleashed merciless attacks on Warsaw. While resistance fighters knew they faced long odds, they expected Soviet aid, especially since the USSR encouraged the Uprising. Mieczkowski recalled that the Uprising began when the AK heard Soviet guns across the Vistula River, the waterway bisecting Warsaw. But those sounds proved a false harbinger. "We counted on Soviet forces crossing the Vistula and expelling the Germans," Mieczkowski said, yet that help never came. As historian Thomas Fleming has written, "The Russian army suddenly developed a strange paralysis. It sat on the east bank of the Vistula for two months and allowed the non-communist Poles to be slaughtered by the infuriated Germans in horrific street fighting." Stalin's actions fueled speculation that the Soviets, while ostensibly supporting the Poles, wanted the Germans to crush them, allowing casualties to mount on both sides and clearing the way for Soviet domination of postwar Poland.

In an unusual show of leniency, the Germans sent resistance fighters to POW camps scattered throughout Germany rather than exiling or executing them. Mieczkowski waited in a makeshift hospital, housed in a former girls' school. Within two weeks, horse-drawn wagons took him and other patients to a railroad station, where they boarded freight cars bound for POW camps. Aboard Mieczkowski's dark car, the embers of resistance still glowed, as jaunty Polish prisoners plied their German guard with enough vodka to make him drunk. Then, as the nighttime train slipped through the Warsaw suburbs, some passengers bailed out. Mieczkowski's injuries prevented him from making the jump; he stayed aboard.

The train traveled two days and stopped at Zeithein, a POW camp where all the passengers disembarked. The Germans processed them, making Mieczkowski and others formal prisoners of war, many of them taking what became their only showers for the next several months. Now, the fight was for survival. Word spread among the prisoners that next to the camp were buried 50,000 Soviets, most of whom had starved to death, a grisly sign of their future. The prisoners received only a small daily food ration, which comprised two slices of something resembling bread, with the consistency of soft clay. Though it was barely edible, each prisoner had to guard his ration carefully because of potential theft. Meanwhile, Mieczkowski's thumb wound throbbed with pain, and he learned to adjust to eating, writing, and performing other tasks with a stump where his right thumb used to be.

POW life proved peripatetic. In December 1944, the Germans marched Mieczkowski and other prisoners to Stallag Müelberg. After just two nights, they sent him by railroad to Bergen-Belsen, a POW camp holding about 500 Polish officers, located next to the infamous concentration camp of the same name. After two weeks, they moved him again, this time to a new camp called Fallingbostel, and then days later to the Grossborn camp, located in northern Poland. The colder climate made daily prisoner counts torture, as everyone stood outside for long periods in sparse clothing, without jackets. This stay lasted only a few nights, after which the Germans marched the prisoners to a new camp. It was a bitter January, and during the two-month journey Mieczkowski fought numbness and frostbite while trudging in the snow or riding in cold freight cars. Eventually, he got to his final POW camp—his seventh—Sandbostel, located between Hamburg and Bremen, Germany. There, Swiss Red Cross representatives distributed care packages from the United States and Canada, which braced up wavering spirits; the American parcels were especially coveted because they contained cigarettes, which prisoners used for barter. Amazingly, Mieczkowski even got a parcel from a Polish acquaintance that contained onions he had requested, thinking the vitamin-rich vegetable would stave off beri-beri.

National Archives

Residents of Warsaw hurriedly fill sandbags to erect a barricade on Moniuszki Street in August 1944. The Warsaw Uprising was heroic but futile as the Germans crushed the resistance with overwhelming firepower.

Despite the new lease on life, the camp's conditions were crowded and harsh, and the food was just bread and what Mieczkowski described as "a stinking soup." Residents were emaciated and exhausted, and some staggered about disoriented. As days passed, any sense of time ebbed away, and Mieczkowski spent hours in the top bunk of a three-tiered bed, his feet painful from frostbite and his muscles wasting away.

By April 1945, Mieczkowski had been in Sandbostel for one month, and to the West he began to hear distant gunfire, especially at night, drawing closer as the weeks passed. Soon he detected the roar of tank engines. The British were coming—and with them, freedom. On May 2, Mieczkowski spotted soldiers clad in brown darting from tree to tree in the neighboring forest. It was a sweet sight: these were advancing British troops, preparing to liberate the prisoners. Realizing their impending fate, the Germans fled; at one point, a military vehicle carrying Nazi officers sped away from the camp, and soon word spread that all Germans had evacuated the premises.

When it came, freedom seemed almost anticlimactic, especially because the British had advanced at a glacial pace and worked slowly even after arriving. For what seemed an eternity, Scottish bagpipers walked around the camp, playing tunes but making prisoners—starving and aching to be released—impatient. The British detained all the prisoners, delousing them with DDT and attempting to establish an identification process. But the freedom was real: after a few days, Mieczkowski and another former prisoner took a long, limping walk, exploring the countryside, observing a British jeep damaged by a road mine and the body of a prisoner killed by an antipersonnel mine—caveats to be careful where to tread.

On May 8, 1945, the war in Europe ended, but for patriotic Poles, the struggle was unfinished. Hopes of a new Poland kindled their desire to return home and build an independent nation, free of Soviet rule. (Suffering a news blackout, most of them knew nothing of the February 1945 Yalta Conference, during which President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill swallowed Stalin's pledges to hold free elections in Poland—promises he never kept.) Thus Mieczkowski lunged at the chance to join the Polish II Corps to liberate Poland. After military training in Italy, he sailed to England, where the Polish II Corps had relocated. But by then, the war was truly finished, and Poland's fate was clear. Stalin clutched the country in his steely grip, and the

Continued on page 77

"Am over enemy submarine in position ..."

Cut off in mid-transmission, this contact report came from a U.S. Navy patrol bomber operating over the Atlantic Ocean some 95 miles north of Cape Peñas, Spain, at 0316 hours on November 12, 1943. Repeated attempts to restore radio communications with the Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberator, nicknamed *Calvert n' Coke,* all went unanswered. Controllers finally listed the aircraft as overdue—presumed missing.

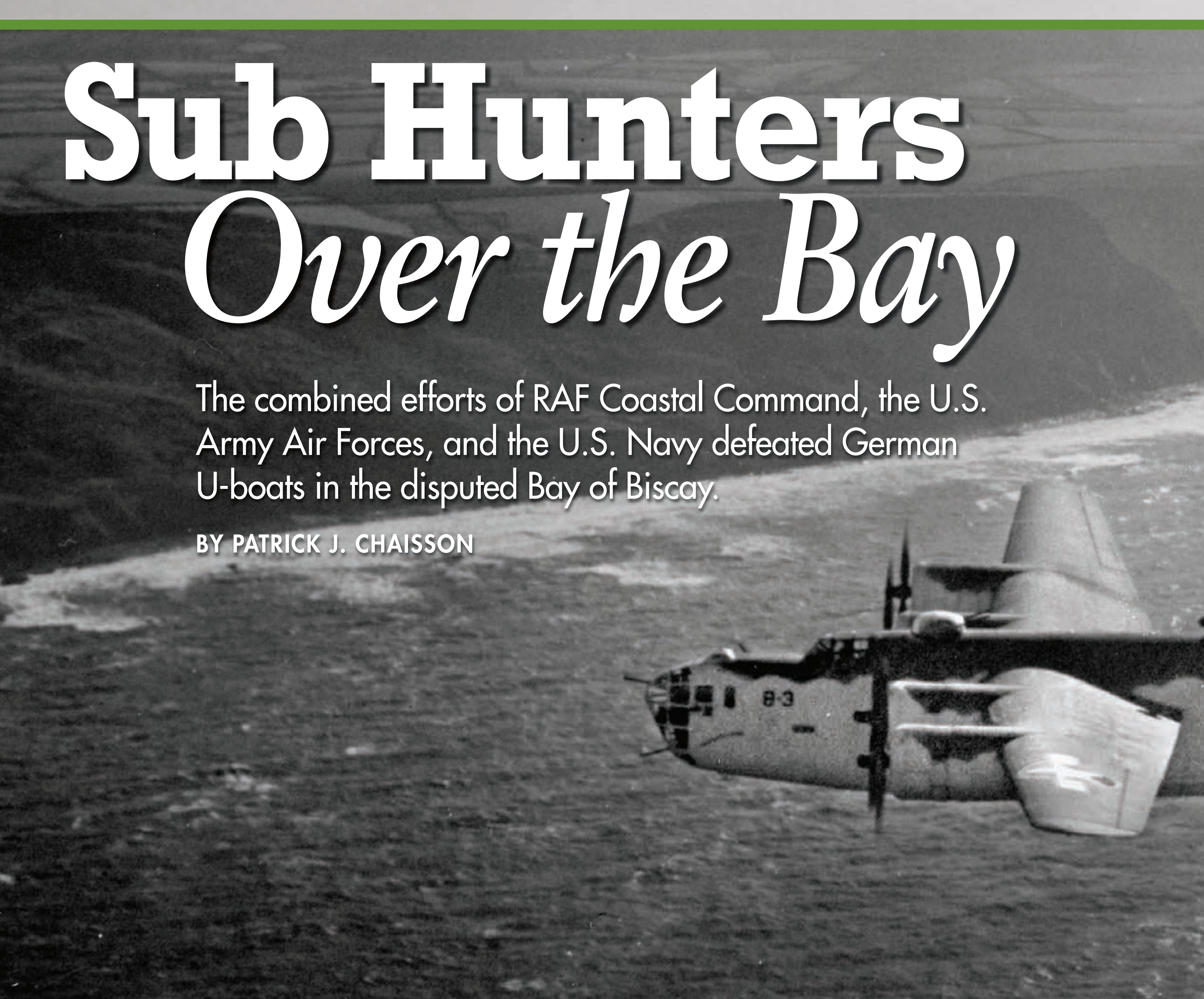
When Air Sea Rescue planes reached the Liberator's last reported position, no evidence of the bomber or its 10-man crew could be spotted. Searchers did discover two fresh oil slicks—one large and one small—five miles apart. A fight to the death had occurred there, but it would take years for investigators to learn the truth about this fateful nighttime encounter.

The mysterious disappearance of *Calvert n' Coke* marked just one incident in the three-year Bay Offensive, fought between Allied antisubmarine forces and the U-boats of Admiral Karl Dönitz' Kriegsmarine during World War II. From June 1941 until August 1944, thousands of airmen and sailors patrolled the Bay of Biscay, an Atlantic gulf along the coast of France and Spain. Most of these sub hunters wore British Commonwealth uniforms, but several groups of American aviators also played an important role in this campaign.

Ugly interservice rivalries, however, almost grounded the effort before it began. Senior officers in the U.S. Navy and Army Air Forces, deeply suspicious of each other and at odds over even the most minor matters of doctrine and tactics, seriously undermined the nation's antisubmarine effort. Hard-pressed British commanders stood by helplessly while their American counterparts quarreled and postured. In the meantime, long-range strike aircraft pledged by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to join the Bay Patrol instead sat parked on U.S. runways.

Following the fall of France in 1940, German

Sub Hunters *Over the Bay*



The combined efforts of RAF Coastal Command, the U.S. Army Air Forces, and the U.S. Navy defeated German U-boats in the disputed Bay of Biscay.

BY PATRICK J. CHAISSON

submarine forces started operating from bases along the Biscayan coast. As the war intensified, upward of 100 U-boats sailed to and from massive concrete-roofed pens at Brest, Lorient, St. Nazaire, La Pallice, and Bordeaux every month. These undersea predators proved extraordinarily difficult to defeat and by 1941 were sinking a large percentage of the war matériel, fuel, and food that Great Britain needed to stay in the war.

Something had to be done about Germany's U-boats, and soon. Air Chief Marshal Sir Philip Joubert, in charge of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Coastal Command, put his Operational Research Section (ORS) to work on the problem. The ORS consisted of British scientists and mathematicians charged with advising operational commanders on technological solutions. Already, ORS's out-of-the-box thinkers could claim credit for developing a reliable magnetic detonator fitted to aerial depth charges and a more effective camouflage pattern for low-flying patrol aircraft. Their work on increasing the lethality of air-delivered antisubmarine munitions through improved explosive filler and shallower detonation settings had, by the middle of 1941, begun to pay dividends in angry North Atlantic waters.

Noting that a large percentage of U-boats transited the 300- by 120-mile Bay of Biscay en

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: This photo was snapped by a crewman aboard the Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberator nicknamed *Tidewater Tillie* as the bomber pressed home its attack against a German U-boat in the Bay of Biscay. The crew dropped depth charges and forced the submarine to the surface before finishing it off. BELOW: Painted in a camouflage scheme to blend in with sky and sea, the Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberator *Calvert n' Coke* was photographed from an accompanying aircraft near the end of a 12-hour flight over the Bay of Biscay hunting for German U-boats. The Liberators had sufficient range to patrol the extensive area and return to their bases in England.

route to or returning from their patrol areas, Coastal Command analysts recommended launching an air campaign to catch them as they moved across this narrow sea corridor. Enemy submarines surfaced often to charge their batteries; it was while on top that these U-boats were most vulnerable to attack.

Air Marshal Joubert's staff further observed that air patrols need not destroy subs to successfully combat them. The mere presence of Allied planes overhead would cause a prudent U-boat commander to crash dive immediately. Constantly submerging to avoid patrol bombers slowed a boat's progress across the Bay (surfaced, a Mark VIIC U-boat could make 17 knots while its top speed submerged averaged only 7.3 knots), thus markedly reducing its overall operating range.

Both: Imperial War Museum

The Bay of Biscay, then, was where Allied airmen would most likely find a regular concentration of German submarines. Air Marshall Sir John Slessor, who replaced Joubert as air commander of Coastal Command in February 1943, described it as "the trunk of the Atlantic U-boat menace, the roots being in the Biscay ports and the branches spreading far and wide to the North Atlantic convoys, to the Caribbean, to the eastern seaboard of North America, and to the sea lanes where the faster merchant ships sail without escort."

Coastal Command's No. 19 Group, flying from bases along England's southwestern tip, took on the task of chipping away at that trunk. First, they needed proper tools for the job. Due to the distances involved (Cape Finisterre on the bay's southernmost point measured 800 air miles from British airfields in Cornwall), long-range aircraft were essential. Patrol planes also needed to carry an adequate payload of 250-pound depth charges and fly fast enough to catch a surfaced U-boat before it could dive.

Multi-engined bombers, therefore, answered No. 19 Group's requirements. Unfortunately, the Wellington, Whitley, and Halifax aircraft most suited for Coastal Command's Biscay Offensive were also greatly sought after by RAF Bomber Command and its influential commander, Air Marshal Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris. Joubert's Coastal Command fared poorly in obtaining the necessary number of heavy bombers for antisubmarine work.

Flying boats like the Short Sunderland and American-designed Consolidated PBY Catalina possessed the necessary range, but their bulk and poor maneuverability limited these patrol planes' utility against fast-diving U-boats. Coastal Command employed both types throughout the war with some success; however, another bomber then coming off U.S. assembly lines seemed a perfect fit for No. 19 Group's Bay Offensive.

This aircraft was the Consolidated B-24 Liberator. Designed as a high-altitude strategic bomber, the Liberator's impressive range, speed, and ordnance-carrying capacity also distinguished it as an ideal antisubmarine weapons system. In 1941 it represented the cutting edge of warplane technology; consequently, air chiefs everywhere wanted the Liberator for their own missions or theater of operations.

General Henry "Hap" Arnold, commanding the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF), was the man responsible for allocating land-based aircraft production. Arnold had an unenviable position—until American industry fully mobilized for the war there were never enough Liberators being built to satisfy global demand for these versatile bombers. And behind his amiable public façade, Hap Arnold kept a secret agenda regarding the Liberator.

For years, Arnold had been seeking to form an air force independent from the U.S. Army. The approaching conflict presented him with a unique opportunity to demonstrate how such a strategic bomber command could destroy the enemy's industrial means to fight, thus decisively affecting the war's outcome. To accomplish this mission Hap Arnold needed bombers, and plenty of them.

The first few Liberators sent to Great Britain through Lend-Lease went immediately to RAF Bomber Command. Only in late 1941 did Coastal Command receive a small allotment, which it immediately modified into very long-range (VLR) patrol aircraft. By this time U-boats were wreaking havoc on Allied merchant shipping, especially within a region called the Mid-Atlantic Air Gap, an area unreachable by land-based planes. One 12-plane squadron of VLR Liberators, each boasting a remarkable 1,150-mile patrol radius, soon began covering that gap.

But it soon became clear to the British that Hap Arnold was not about to offer up large numbers of Liberator aircraft despite an urgent need for them over the Eastern Atlantic. After the United States entered World War II, Arnold saw as his priority the need to build up the American strategic bomber force. Other users, such as the RAF and U.S. Navy, would have to wait until Liberator production capacity grew to meet their demands.

The trickle of Consolidated Liberators flowing into Great Britain was paralleled by an exchange of British technological innovation with their American allies. One such device that greatly affected future operations in the Bay of Biscay was Air-Surface-Vessel (ASV) radar. In 1940, scientists at Oxford's Clarendon Laboratories invented a microwave radio transmitter far superior to the long wave radar set then in use by British patrol planes and warships. Their "cavity magnetron" produced a 9.7 centimeter radio wave—a focused, high-resolution beam that, when mounted on an aircraft, proved highly effective at detecting surfaced submarines. As British manufacturers then

lacked the capacity to mass produce this microwave radar, Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed to share the technology with American engineers.

Called the Mark III by the British and the SCR-517 by American aviators, this new radar went into large-scale production by mid-1942. It came as a nasty surprise to the U-boat fleet as German warning receivers, calibrated for long-wave radar, could not detect its emissions. It took the Kriegsmarine two years and dozens of submarines lost before it fielded an effective countermeasure.

The Allies shared other sub-hunting innovations as well. The British Leigh Light, named for its inventor, a Coastal Command squadron leader, enabled Allied patrol planes to illuminate and attack U-boats at night. American-made radio altimeters proved crucial for maintaining a safe altitude over water during conditions of low visibility. Long-range navigation aids produced by both Allies assisted aircrews in accurately plotting their position over the vast Atlantic Ocean.

More top-secret antisubmarine devices in development included the Magnetic Anomaly Detector (MAD), which recorded variations in the Earth's gravitational field caused by a submerged U-boat. An air-dropped sonar sensor called the sonobuoy showed great promise, as did an acoustic homing torpedo nicknamed Zombie. But the sub hunters' most effective technological breakthrough was also the most highly classified: ULTRA, the decryption of German military signal ciphers.

Thanks to ULTRA, Allied codebreakers could read nearly every order that Admiral Dönitz gave to his U-boat commanders. Consequently, Coastal Command knew when enemy submarine traffic in the Bay of Biscay was likely to increase. Further, a chain of radio receivers called Huff-Duff (which stood for High Frequency Direction Finding, or HF/DF) helped triangulate a U-boat's location to within a few miles whenever it broke radio silence to report in or request orders.

Initially, production delays and reliability issues limited the effectiveness of these new weapons. By June 1942, only five Vickers Wellington bombers had been fitted with Leigh Lights, and British-built Mark III centimetric radar would not appear until March of the following year. Worse still, Air Chief Marshal Joubert's Bay Offensive was in danger of collapsing due to an inadequate number of long-range, radar-equipped patrol bombers. In 1941, RAF Coastal Command warplanes managed to sink just one U-boat in the Bay of Biscay. By the end of 1942, that number climbed to a mere seven submarines killed for thousands of flight hours spent patrolling the bay.

ABOVE: An excellent innovation deployed with sub-hunting aircraft that patrolled the Bay of Biscay, the Leigh Light was used to illuminate German U-boats on the surface and facilitate the speed of attacks. In this photo a Royal Air Force ground crewman cleans the plexiglass cover of a Leigh Light that has been installed under the wing of a Consolidated Liberator bomber. OPPOSITE: Royal Air Force armorers load 250-pound Mark VIII depth charges aboard a Consolidated Liberator Mark VA bomber of RAF Coastal Command. This aircraft is from No. 53 Squadron based at St. Eval.

If Coastal Command did not yet possess suitable sub-hunting aircraft, there was an organization that did. The USAAF Antisubmarine Command began to receive in the autumn of 1942 factory-new B-24D Liberator bombers specially equipped to combat U-boats. Fitted with SCR-517 ASV radar, radio altimeters, and long-range navigational equipment, these aircraft were badly needed to reenergize Air Marshal Joubert's Bay Patrol. It would, however, take British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's personal intervention to get them into the fight.

Writing to Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's personal emissary, Churchill asked for a force of USAAF Liberators equipped with microwave radar to work with Coastal Command against U-boats in the Bay of Biscay. Roosevelt deferred the question to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, then commanding Allied forces in North Africa. Ike agreed to Churchill's request with one caveat: that he reserved the authority to transfer USAAF antisubmarine aircraft from England to Mediterranean bases at any time. Starting on November 6, 1942, U.S.-marked sub-hunter B-24s started winging their way across the Atlantic Ocean toward Great Britain.

Just getting there proved no easy task. While the first three Liberators crossed without incident, ferocious winter storms battered another flight of six planes so badly that five of them had to turn back. One B-24 disappeared without a trace, while the remaining four regrouped to make an arduous but safer journey along the South America-Africa-England route. By November 27, the 1st Antisubmarine (A/S) Squadron occupied its new home, RAF Station St. Eval in Cornwall. Its sister unit, the 2nd A/S Squadron, would arrive in early January.

Conditions at St. Eval proved less than ideal. First, no one knew the Americans were coming. Living and working conditions were Spartan; wartime RAF rations of brussels sprouts and cabbage were described by one USAAF airman as "unbelievably bad," while gloomy English weather made staying warm a constant struggle. Compounding matters, St. Eval's ramps and parking areas were already clogged by three squadrons of Coastal Command bombers as well as other RAF aircraft. No hangars existed for maintenance, so mechanics had to work outside. Darkness came early, as did winter winds that numbed the ground crews struggling to keep their planes operational.

Equally challenging was St. Eval's distance from U.S. supply depots. Couriers drove all day to reach the nearest USAAF warehouse, which may or may not have had on hand the required replacement part. The newly arrived sub-hunter outfits also lacked trained radar repair specialists, postal clerks, and other administrative staff necessary to keep a flying squadron running smoothly. Eighth Air Force lent the A/S units some 66 support personnel until their own ground echelons landed in mid-January.

The 1st and 2nd Antisubmarine Squadrons quickly adapted to Coastal Command's tactics and procedures. The Americans learned they would operate under No. 19 Group, flying missions of 10 to 11 hours in duration out to the Bay of Biscay and back. Veteran British aircrews advised the novice sub hunters on how best to approach a wily U-boat, using low cloud cover or the sun to avoid observation. The RAF also warned their USAAF colleagues about a dangerous new threat, long-range Junkers Ju-88 fighters that had been spotted over the bay recently.

After a brief settling-in period, USAAF Liberators began flying operational patrols on November 16. The Americans' first attack on a U-boat took place on December 29, when Captain Douglas Northrop dropped 12 250-pound depth charges on a rapidly submerging sub. That vessel escaped unscathed from Northrop's strike, as did another U-boat attacked by Lieutenant Walter Thorne's B-24 two days later. In both cases, the U-boats were detected by ASV radar but managed to crash dive under a barrage of aerial explosives.

January was spent readying the 2nd A/S Squadron for combat. Also that month the 1st Antisubmarine Group (Provisional) was organized with Lt. Col. Jack Roberts (formerly of the 1st A/S Squadron) taking command. The group received administrative support from the USAAF's England-based VIII Bomber Command but took operational direction from RAF Coastal Command's No. 19 Group.

Coastal Command had big plans for the American sub hunters. From February 6-15, 1943, the Liberators participated with other No. 19 Group warplanes in Operation Gondola, a high-density patrol over the Biscayan approaches. Intelligence suggested that during this period the Bay of Biscay would be filled with as many as 40 U-boats, all unprepared for the long-legged B-24s and their powerful new radar. Ranging far out into the bay, these U.S. Liberators were likely to surprise the enemy in areas they previously believed were safe from air attack.

This new tactic paid off immediately. On February 6, 1st Lt. David Sands caught a U-boat on the surface but overshot the target in his excitement and missed. Sands then made a second pass but managed to drop only two depth charges due to jammed bomb racks. Three days later, another B-24 piloted by 1st Lt. Emmett Hunto dove on a submarine too late. Hunto's ordnance detonated behind the rapidly submerging boat, which survived unscathed.

Both: National Archives

American Lt. Col. Jack Roberts (left) commanded the 1st Antisubmarine Group, assigned to Royal Air Force Coastal Command No. 19 Group, while Colonel Howard Moore (right) commanded the 479th Group.

February 10 saw several attacks made by 2nd A/S bombers. First Lieutenant John Kraybill pressed in three times on a sub despite heavy antiaircraft fire, only to be frustrated by malfunctioning bomb racks. Lieutenant William Sanford's Liberator, nicknamed *Tidewater Tillie,* enjoyed better luck. Catching an unwary U-boat off the Spanish coast later that same morning, Sanford dropped nine 250-pound depth charges on it in three passes. The German submarine was last seen settling by its stern, followed shortly by a large dome-shaped bubble of air rising to the surface. Admiralty officials scored the boat as "probably sunk," later upgraded to a confirmed kill after ULTRA intercepted German reports indicating *U-519* had disappeared in that region without a trace. The USAAF received its first credited sinking of the campaign.

Recent research indicates that Lieutenant Sanford's crew actually struck *U-752* on its way home from operations in the North Atlantic, inflicting minor damage. The fate of *U-519* remains unexplained.

Operation Gondola showed what radar-equipped antisubmarine aircraft could do when employed in a maximum effort saturation campaign. During this 10-day surge Allied patrol planes logged 2,260 hours over the bay, resulting in 18 sightings and seven attacks. American B-24s accounted for 72 percent of all U-boat detections and 57 percent of attacks made, with Sanford's strike on February 10 marking Gondola's one credited kill.

Coastal Command's newly appointed commander, Air Marshal John Slessor, appreciated what these capable U.S.-crewed Liberators could do. Therefore, he was shocked when in March the 1st A/S Group unexpectedly pulled out of St. Eval. For their part, USAAF commanders understood that the sub hunters' time in England would be temporary—they determined the U-boat threat in North Africa took priority over Coastal Command's requirements and transferred their most combat-tested A/S outfit to Morocco in response.

This abrupt reassignment deprived Slessor of a powerful asset just as his spring offensives, codenamed Enclose and Derange, were gaining momentum. No. 19 Group would have to carry on solely with British and Commonwealth air units, now receiving new Leigh-Light Wellingtons and four-engined Handley Page Halifax bombers equipped with centimetric Mark III radar sets. In March a squadron of British-marked antisubmarine Liberators also began flying out of St. Eval.

The coming of spring brought both milder

National Archives

weather to the North Atlantic and a corresponding increase in Allied convoy activity. As Admiral Dönitz' submarines sortied out to strike those convoys, so did Air Marshal Slessor's maritime patrol aircraft scramble to meet them over the Bay of Biscay's constricted waters. British bombers sank one boat in March, two more during April, and an impressive seven subs caught transiting the bay during the height of operations in May.

John Slessor derived great pride from the results of his Biscay Offensive, yet the energetic air marshal could not help but wonder how many more U-boats might have been sunk if a few American patrol bomber squadrons had "joined the party." In June, Slessor traveled to Washington seeking a renewed U.S. commitment to his summer bay campaign, called Operation Musketry. He arrived to witness a long-simmering dispute over control of antisubmarine aircraft finally boil over between the chiefs of the U.S. Navy and Army Air Forces.

General Arnold and the Navy's commander in chief, Admiral Ernest King, distrusted one another intensely. These two officers created and maintained a poisonous jurisdictional dispute regarding the employment of antisubmarine aircraft, a quarrel that extended back to the dark days following Pearl Harbor. While the U.S. Navy was responsible for protecting American coastal waterways, the only long-range aircraft then available for patrol and convoy escort duties belonged to the USAAF. In March 1942, Arnold agreed to temporarily place Army antisubmarine planes under naval control, at least until the Navy could obtain its own sub hunters. Yet neither Arnold nor King was happy with this arrangement.

The brilliant, irascible King saw Arnold's increasing involvement in antisubmarine warfare as a grab for power, an attempt by the USAAF to intrude on what was traditionally a Navy mission. Hap Arnold feared the Navy's interest in obtaining long-range Liberators was merely a cover for involving itself in strategic bombing operations, which he viewed as the Army Air Forces' purview. For months the two chiefs danced like boxers around this issue, each spitefully rejecting any attempt at improving antisubmarine organization or cooperation.

Opposing tactical doctrines provoked more ill feelings between the two services. Naval policy dictated that patrol planes closely guard merchant convoys, while USAAF guidelines prescribed a more free-ranging, offensive-minded air operation. King scoffed at the Army's methodology, likening it to searching for a needle in a haystack. He further argued that by sticking to the convoys patrol planes would be more likely to find the U-boats stalking them.

National Archives

ABOVE: A German U-boat founders under the repeated hammering of depth charges and bombs dropped from a pair of Royal Air Force Short Sunderland flying boats in the Bay of Biscay. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** A Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boat practices low level bombing off the coast of England. Although the Catalina was a superb attack aircraft and doubled as a fine air-sea rescue plane, it lacked the range for long-distance patrols, and RAF Coastal Command retained these aircraft close to their bases.

On the other hand, naval district commanders kept USAAF sub-hunting aircraft out operating over their districts long after German U-boats had moved into more productive waters. Flexibility, the greatest advantage of aerial antisubmarine warfare, remained an unexploited asset so long as patrol bombers were prohibited from following their U-boat prey across sea district boundaries.

The two sides may never have reached agreement if it were not for a new factory being built in Renton, Washington. In 1942, Boeing Aircraft raised this structure to make the Navy's PBB-1 Sea Ranger patrol plane. General Arnold thought it would be better served manufacturing B-29 Superfortress bombers for the USAAF, and in exchange for the Renton facility offered the Navy a percentage of future Liberator deliveries. This deal meant the Navy would finally obtain a land-based patrol aircraft while the Army got its Superfortress plant.

The Navy took another step toward accepting full control of the American antisubmarine effort when, on May 10, 1943, Admiral King stood up the Tenth Fleet. It was a paper fleet, wholly without ships or airplanes, but one that represented King's determination to finally defeat the U-boat peril. Tenth Fleet had as its charter the mission of directing and coordinating all Navy sub-hunter activities worldwide. Curiously, in all of Tenth Fleet's organizational charts there was no mention of the U.S. Army Air Force's Antisubmarine Command or its 286 aircraft.

What happened next surprised no one. In a June conference held between Arnold and senior naval officials, an arrangement was made in which the Army would turn over its antisubmarine-equipped B-24s in exchange for an equal number of unmodified Liberators originally allocated to the Navy. Admiral King formalized the pact, writing to Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall on June 14, "The Navy will be prepared to take over all antisubmarine air operations by 1 September 1943."

This horse trade did not signal an immediate end to USAAF sub-hunter activities. While in Washington, Air Marshal Slessor had persuaded King to release the Army's 479th Antisubmarine Group for duty over the bay. Four full squadrons of B-24s (the 4th, 6th, 19th, and 22nd A/S) were set to arrive at St. Eval starting in mid-July, while Navy Liberators (PB4Y-1s in naval parlance) would follow along as soon as their crews could be trained.

The American planes deployed just as Operation Musketry reached its operational crescendo. Much had changed since the first USAAF antisubmarine squadrons in England pulled up stakes four months earlier. Admiral Dönitz' U-boats were now traveling surfaced in groups during daylight hours and slugging it out with Allied bombers thanks to new quad-barrel 20mm antiaircraft cannons hastily mounted to their conning towers. Even more

National Archives

Forced to the surface by depth charges, a German U-boat takes evasive action off the coast of Portugal in August 1943. The Consolidated B-24 Liberator that is mounting the attack is under the command of pilot William Pomeroy.

dangerous was the air threat—swarms of Ju-88 heavy fighters prowling the bay in search of unwary patrol planes. German gunfire compounded the normal hazards of weather, fatigue, and mechanical malfunction faced by all Allied sub hunters.

At least the situation at St. Eval had improved. Learning from past mistakes, Colonel Howard Moore's 479th Group deployed with adequate maintenance, administrative, and logistics support. In August, the Americans moved to RAF Station Dunkeswell, 100 miles down the road in Devonshire. This newly constructed base, dubbed Mudville Heights by the airmen living there, would remain the hub of U.S. antisubmarine activity for the rest of the war.

Operational patrols commenced on July 13, and soon thereafter the 479th scored its first U-boat kill. On July 20, 1st Lt. Charles Gallmeier's bomber surprised the surfaced *U-558,* delivering seven depth charges close aboard. The German vessel fought back, though, its well-aimed antiaircraft fire wounding one of Gallmeier's gunners as well as disabling an engine. A British Halifax then finished off the U-boat, which went down with all 43 hands.

Team tactics resulted in another kill on July 28, when B-24s piloted by Major Stephen McElroy (commanding officer of the 4th A/S Squadron) and 1st Lt. Arthur Hammer joined a British Liberator to fight *U-404* in an epic six-hour battle. The hard-fighting submarine damaged all three sub hunters before succumbing to a barrage of 27 depth charges.

The July Massacre ended for USAAF flight crews five days later when Captain Joseph Hamilton's B-24 helped Canadian pilots sink *U-706* about 400 miles west of the St. Nazaire sub pens. On August 2, Dönitz pulled the plug on his disastrous fight-back tactics. Hereafter, German submarines would hug the Spanish coast—where ASV radar proved less effective—surfacing only to recharge their batteries and then only at night. The Kriegsmarine also greatly restricted submarine operations, preserving its fleet while new wonder weapons were fielded—weapons that could change the course of the war.

Coastal Command's summer Bay Offensive resulted in 26 U-boats killed by air between April and August 1943. Seventeen more had been damaged, significantly degrading the German Navy's offensive capability. The U-boats were all but defeated, or so said Prime Minister Churchill when he boasted the Kriegsmarine had not sunk a single Allied merchant ship on North Atlantic convoy routes between May 1 and September 15, 1943. No. 19 Group contributed to this victory by whittling away at the Biscayan "trunk" with aggressive, coordinated attacks on enemy submarines.

Sub-hunter aircraft continued to prowl the bay throughout August and September, but by then Dönitz's remaining U-boats rarely ventured from their pens. Instead, patrol bomber crews faced increasing numbers of Luftwaffe heavy fighters—cannon-armed Ju-88s operating in packs. The USAAF's first clash with them occurred on July 26, when a Liberator commanded by Lieutenant S.M. Grider encountered nine fighters over the bay. Thinking quickly, Grider escaped undamaged by ducking into some low-hanging clouds.

The Americans' luck would not last. On August 8, marauding Ju-88s shot down Captain R.L. Thomas' bomber, killing all aboard. Ten days later they pounced on another B-24, this one with the luckless Grider aboard as check pilot. Grider and his aircraft commander, Lieutenant Charles Moore, managed to successfully ditch their stricken plane, no simple task given the Liberator's propensity for breaking apart upon hitting the water. Six survivors were rescued by a British warship after spending four days bobbing around the bay on life rafts.

Altogether, the 479th A/S Group lost four B-24s to enemy fighters during 16 recorded air-to-air encounters. American gunners claimed five German warplanes in return, demonstrating that these battles were not always one sided. Yet the USAAF's ungainly patrol bombers made excellent targets for prowling Ju-88s despite Coastal Command's efforts to provide escort coverage.

Into this hazardous operational environment entered a new group of aviators when on August 17 the first PB4Y-1 Liberators of U.S. Navy Bomber Squadron 103 (VB-103) touched down at St. Eval. After several weeks spent familiarizing themselves with Coastal Command procedures, the Navy crews moved to Dunkeswell where they relieved the soon-to-be disbanded USAAF sub-hunter squadrons. By September 5, the PB4Y-1s of VB-105 began arriving, with VB-110 closing on the United Kingdom starting on September 24.

They were commanded by Captain (later Commodore) William Hamilton of Fleet Air Wing Seven (FAW-7), who located his headquarters in nearby Plymouth. The Navy commenced operations on August 30, and by November 1 had taken over all patrol duties from the Army. Most USAAF antisubmarine crews received new combat assignments with the Eighth Air Force while their specialized B-24s were repossessed by Navy flying squadrons.

Although experienced at overwater navigation from previous assignments, these naval aviators soon discovered the Bay of Biscay held many unique perils. On September 2, skulking Ju-88s shot down a Liberator commanded by Lieutenant Kenneth Wickstrom; no aircrew survived. Two days later, a dozen German fighters mauled Lieutenant James Alexander's PB4Y-1 off the Iberian Peninsula. Alexander

ABOVE: A crowd of onlookers has gathered with its accompanying trucks and staff cars to watch the approach of an overdue Consolidated B-24 Liberator at an airbase in England. The B-24 proved an excellent aircraft in the anti-submarine role and was also one of the primary aircraft deployed during the Allied strategic bombing campaign against Nazi Germany. RIGHT: Three Allied crewmen, believed to be from a B-24 bomber piloted by Lieutenant Charles Moore, wave to rescue aircraft from their rafts in the open Atlantic. Their B-24 was shot down by a German Ju-88 over the Bay of Biscay.

somehow managed to ditch his bullet-ridden plane, enabling the 11 men aboard to escape into rubber dinghies. Rescued by Spanish fishermen some 36 hours later, they eventually returned to duty.

There were few U-boats left for FAW-7's flight crews to hunt. Husbanding most of its submarines for the coming cross-Channel invasion, the Kriegsmarine started to fit them with a revolutionary new defensive technology. The Schnorkel (German slang for "nose") allowed a U-boat to operate submerged while still taking in air from above, thus theoretically eliminating the need for it to surface altogether. Allied commanders worried how their hundreds of aircraft and thousands of aviators would find submarines no longer visible on ASV radar systems.

Navy sub hunters also introduced some new weaponry to the Bay Patrol. Their Liberators now carried sonobuoys, air-delivered sonar transmitters able to detect U-boats moving under water. Once the sub's location was marked, PB4Y-1 crews could then drop a Zombie, also known as the Mk 24 acoustic homing torpedo, on their unsuspecting prey.

Furthermore, the "MADCATS" of VP-63 operated their Magnetic Anomaly Detector-equipped PBY Catalinas over the Biscayan gulf for a time. Airmen used this apparatus to identify the gravitational disturbance caused by a submerged metal object like a U-boat and then dropped depth charges on the contact. Their PBYs proved easy pickings for Luftwaffe fighters, though, and the MADCATS soon moved to the Mediterranean's calmer waters where their specialized gear worked more effectively.

Liberators of FAW-7 joined Commonwealth aircraft in an all-day encounter with *U-996* on November 10. Caught on the surface by two Wellington bombers, this resilient U-boat then withstood attacks by three U.S. Navy PB4Y-1s before a Czech-manned Liberator disabled it with rocket fire. Unable to dive, *U-996*'s crew finally scuttled its sub two miles off the Spanish coast.

As mentioned previously, the last flight of *Calvert n' Coke* took place on November 12, 1943, when that VB-103 Liberator failed to return from a night patrol mission. Naval officials listed all 10 members of Lieutenant Ralph Brownell's crew as missing in action but did not solve the mystery of their unexplained disappearance until after the war ended. Investigators examining captured German war diaries discovered the airmen had, in fact, sunk *U-508* on that lonely patch of ocean before meeting their doom.

In December, all three patrol squadrons took part in an unusual battle against German surface ships, catching the blockade runners *Osorno* and *Alsterufer* as they traversed the bay bound for Asian waters. Heavily escorted by German destroyers, the two raiders traded blows with Coastal Command aircraft for three days starting on Christmas Eve 1943. Punished by relentless depth charge, bomb, machine-gun, and rocket attacks from dozens of Allied warplanes, neither vessel made it to port. One VB-110 PB4Y-1, commanded by Lieutenant W. Parish, was shot down while making a low-level strike against the *Alsterufer* on December 26.

These moments of excitement notwithstanding, most missions over the bay passed uneventfully. "The chief enemy of the patrol plane pilot is boredom," recalled VB-105's Owen Windall. "Boredom begets inattention, then indifference. Hundreds of hours are spent at sea with nothing to look at but an endless expanse of waves and sky." Other hazards included miserable winter weather, which contributed to the loss of several FAW-7 Liberators. Most of all, crewmen feared ice—if enough of it accumulated on

Both: National Archives

the wings of their heavily loaded PB4Y-1s they would fall out of the sky without warning.

The first American U-boat kill utilizing Zombie munitions occurred on January 28, 1944, when a VB-103 Liberator nicknamed *The Bloody Miracle* caught *U-271* on the surface west of Ireland. Lieutenant George Enloe and crew put six depth charges across the sub's beam and followed up with a lethal homing torpedo after they observed the vessel crash dive beneath them. Strike photos revealed first evidence of a Schnorkel, troubling news for the Allies then preparing to invade Normandy.

For D-Day, Coastal Command, now led by RAF Air Chief Marshal Sholto Douglas, planned to seal off all approaches to the English Channel with saturation air patrols. The aptly named Operation Cork would, if successful, prevent Dönitz' U-boats from getting anywhere near the Allied fleet by creating an "unclimbable fence" of air antisubmarine forces for them to face.

Reinforced for Normandy with 25 squadrons, No. 19 Group began flying Cork

Continued on page 77

Imperial War Museum

War Came Home to the Streets of Arnhem

British and Polish paratroopers fought a desperate battle for control of the road leading to Arnhem during Operation Market-Garden.

BRITISH AIRBORNE TROOPS WERE LANDING NEAR ARNHEM, HOLLAND, ON THE morning of September 17, 1944. Despite the fact that elements of two veteran SS panzer divisions were reconstituting in the area, the Germans were taken much by surprise.

Initial reports of the landings were confusing and often misleading; leaders needed to see the situation clearly in order to react. Local garrison commander Maj. Gen. Friedrich Kussin was one of those officers. He decided to see for himself, taking an aide, Max Kostler, and his driver, Josef Willeke. At about 5:15 PM, he arrived at a subordinate's command post along the Utrechtseweg, the main road leading from Arnhem through Oosterbeek to the British landing zones. That officer, a Sturmbahnführer Krafft, warned Kussin he should return along an alternate route; the road was not secure. Kussin chose to disregard that advice and raced off the way they had come.

Farther down the Utrechtseweg, British platoon commander Lieutenant James Cleminson led his men down a narrow portion of the road, sacrificing security for speed in the rush to get to the bridge across the Neder Rhine River. Suddenly, a German staff car drove right into their midst! The British paratroopers opened fire on it with Bren and Sten guns, hosing it with bullets until it looked like a sieve. Inside, General Kussin managed to draw his pistol before being hit in the chest, neck, and head. Kostler was covered in his leader's blood and brains as he too died. Willeke tried in vain to grab his rifle, but he was dead within seconds as well.

The British soldiers pulled the bodies out of the car and realized they had killed a high-ranking officer, but it was even better than they could realize. Kussin was in charge of the bridge defenses while the SS panzer units were tasked with areas to either side of the Arnhem Bridge. For now, there was no one to direct the troops around the bridge against the paratroopers moving to seize it.

The Battle of Arnhem was full of such small stories. Small groups of British paratroopers used daring and surprise to grab their objectives while German troops hastily deployed to meet them. Dutch civilians, trapped in the middle, watched with hope as German soldiers retreated in some areas along the Utrechtseweg to be replaced by British soldiers. Later these hopes would turn to despair as the Germans retook the area, killing or forcing out those the Dutch saw as their liberators. Focusing on just the Utrechtseweg road, author Robert Kershaw has shown the effect of war on a single street in a single critical battle in his new book ***A Street in Arnhem: The Agony of Occupation and Liberation*** (Casemate Publishing, Havertown, PA, 2015, 304pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $32.95, hardcover).

The struggle of the British paratroopers at Arnhem is well known and often documented in books and film. What sets this book apart is its focus. The author has narrowed the focus down to a single street, albeit a critical one connecting the Arnhem Bridge area to the British landing zones. Holding this road was absolutely essential for the British if their troops and supplies were to get through from those landing zones to the forces defending the bridge. By map it was a distance of nearly six miles, far from ideal for a lightly equipped airborne unit. Still they may have yet succeeded if not for the SS panzer divisions sent to the area to refit after the fighting in Normandy. These units were at relatively low strength but consisted of many veterans who knew their business and had fought paratroopers before. One German unit had enough MG-42 machine guns to equip every soldier since they had picked up so many during the retreat from Normandy.

The result was a catastrophe. The two sides battled back and forth across the Utrechtseweg, and the Germans succeeded in keeping the British from reinforcing the small group at the bridge until it was too late. The area along the road suffered heavily from the fighting, especially the artillery fire. This was an equal disaster for the Dutch civilians,

German General Friedrich Kussin's driver, Josef Willeke, lies dead beside Kussin's staff car after an ambush by British paratroopers at Arnhem who took this photograph. Kussin's body was also photographed by the British, lying on the opposite side of the car

You deserve a factual look at . . .

BDS, Academic Freedom and Anti-Semitism

Academic boycotts of Israel advocated by BDS supporters not only strangle free expression, they also deny Jewish self-determination.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions-sponsored boycotts of Israeli academic institutions tarnish the integrity of any school that stands for academic freedom—the open-minded, tolerant exchange of ideas. Worse, BDS couches its arguments against Israel in half-truths and lies meant to delegitimize the Jewish state.

What are the facts?

Academic freedom is a noble-spirited ideal at the heart of American higher education. Academic freedom thrives on the respectful exchange of ideas in search of truth—even among people who passionately disagree. As such, it depends on unfettered communications that span national, linguistic and ideological borders. Conversely, anyone who attempts to limit the access of the academic community to ideas, research or scholars, no matter their origin or beliefs, is guilty of trampling this precious privilege.

Indeed, the strategies and tactics of the BDS movement have just such a subversive effect on academic freedom. BDS supporters attempt to disrupt speakers with whom they disagree, support their arguments with outright falsehoods, and seek to blacklist innocent Israeli academics because of their nationality. Finally, most egregiously, BDS uses a double standard to single out Israel among all the nations for recrimination.

> "When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You're talking anti-Semitism."
>
> Martin Luther King, Jr.

Does academic freedom support censoring opinions we don't like? BDS advocates have shouted down speeches by the Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren, Harvard Professor Alan Dershowitz and others, and they routinely disrupt fellow students at Holocaust Memorial and pro-Israel events on campus. Yet preventing speakers from delivering their messages not only violates the tolerant, respectful spirit of academic freedom, it also violates our core First Amendment guarantees of free speech.

Does academic freedom support telling lies or half-truths to argue our point? Under the guise of human rights rhetoric calling for "liberation" of the Palestinian people and an end to Israeli "occupation," BDS proponents recite a litany of alleged Israeli crimes. Perhaps most outrageously, they accuse the Jewish state of apartheid—a bald lie that bears no relationship to the full democratic rights enjoyed by Israel's Arab citizens or even to Palestinians living in the West Bank or Gaza. Likewise, to accuse Israel of "occupation" without mentioning that Israel has been the Jewish homeland for some 3,000 years—or the Palestinian suicide bombers and nearly daily rocket attacks meant to destroy the Jewish state—is intellectually dishonest. While free speech allows anyone to lie, such outright mendacity discredits the worthy tradition of academic freedom.

Does academic freedom support severing our schools from international research and scholarly thought? BDS advocates an academic boycott of Israeli universities and, effectively, of scholars who teach and conduct groundbreaking work there, especially in medicine, the arts and information technology. By boycotting Israeli students and teachers, we deprive our own institutions of the kind of open collaboration that is key to academic freedom. What's more, to punish Israeli academics with pariah status simply because of their nationality, regardless of their political views, is unconscionable.

BDS's use of double-standards, demonization and delegitimization against Israel is anti-Semitic. BDS advocates are quick to assert that "I'm not anti-Semitic, I'm just anti-Zionist." While academic freedom allows everyone to criticize Israel, one also is free to criticize Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia or the United States. But BDS does not simply criticize Israel—it criticizes *only* Israel, and moreover it demonizes the Jewish state, calling it a Nazi regime and a slaughterer of children. It attempts to delegitimize Israel, claiming it is occupying Arab territory, thus denying the right of the Jewish people to self-determination. As Martin Luther King, Jr. has noted, "When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You're talking anti-Semitism." Indeed to single out Israel among all nations for a boycott is a double-standard . . . and that is, according to the U.S. State Department, anti-Semitism.

What do the BDS leaders really want? While the U.S., Western European nations, Israel and the U.N. Security Council have embraced a "two-state solution" as the basis for peace between Israel and the Palestinians, BDS leaders, like Ali Abuminah, argue for a one-state solution in which Arabs outnumber Jews. When BDS talks about occupation, it refers not to disputed West Bank territories, but to all of Israel. BDS has consistently opposed Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, calling them "collaborationist." No wonder BDS founder Omar Barghouti admits, "If the occupation ends . . . would that end support for BDS? No, it wouldn't—no."

If you support a robust atmosphere of academic freedom, in which all sides are heard and positions are vigorously debated, you must oppose BDS's call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel. In fact, BDS actions flatly contradict academic freedom, and its insistence on denying the self-determination of the Jewish people in Israel is overtly anti-Semitic.

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who had seen little of the war until then.

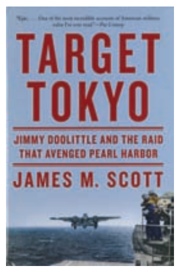
The author is a former member of the British Army's elite Parachute Regiment; his expertise on and understanding of airborne operations are evident in this book. While he mentions the actions of the various generals overseeing the battle, the focus is rightly given to the accounts of the fighting soldiers who struggled along the Utrechtseweg. The writing is clear and gives a good impression of the confusion and desperation of the fighting. The inclusion of the Dutch civilians' experiences further rounds out the book.

Hitler's Warrior: The Life and Wars of SS Colonel Jochen Peiper (Danny S. Parker, Da Capo Press, New York, 2015, 441pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $29.99, hardcover)

Jochen Peiper is infamous even for a Nazi. While not a member of the inner circle that surrounded Hitler, Peiper was an ardent national socialist who volunteered for service in the Waffen-SS at a young age. He became Heinrich Himmler's adjutant and served in this capacity until well after the war began. When he finally went into combat he served with the 1st SS Panzer Division. On the Eastern Front he quickly developed a reputation for brutality.

In time he gained the attention of Hitler and was given a major role in the Ardennes Offensive in December 1944, forever known as the Battle of the Bulge. There he became forever infamous for the Malmedy Massacre, a murderous execution of 84 American prisoners of war. Peiper was tried and convicted for his role in the incident but was released in 1956. Now free, Peiper moved to eastern France where he lived quietly until being discovered in 1976. Unknown assailants attacked his home and Peiper was killed and his house burned.

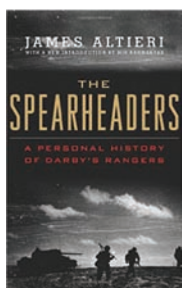
This new biography looks at Peiper's controversial life and his complicated personality. It is all too easy to simply write off any enthusiastic Nazi as a demented madman; it satisfies the ego and requires little thought for the author or reader. Instead, Mr. Parker has delved into Peiper's complexities in a way that encourages the reader to consider such evil and its perpetrators more carefully. Interviews with many of Peiper's contemporaries add a nice depth to the book.



Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor (James M. Scott, W.W. Norton, New York, 2015, 640pp., maps, illustrations, notes bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover)

The Doolittle Raid was America's first counterattack of World War II. Coming just four months after Pearl Harbor, this raid involved launching Army North American B-25 Mitchell bombers from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* in a surprise attack on mainland Japan. There were great challenges to completing this top secret attack, but in the end it was pulled off through the courage of Doolittle and his aircrews. The raid itself did little real damage but was a great morale booster for the American people. Conversely, it was a serious shock to the Japanese, who did not expect their country to be attacked directly. There was a price little known in the United States, however. Perhaps a quarter million Chinese were killed in retaliation.

This well researched book is a comprehensive account of the Doolittle Raid, which covers the entire mission from conception to the aftermath. The author's storytelling brings the reader back to the drama of this daring mission.



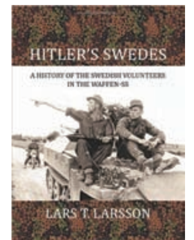
The Spearheaders: A Personal History of Darby's Rangers (James Altieri, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2014, 318pp., photographs, $24.95, softcover)

In early 1942 there were few ways for the United States to strike at Nazi Germany. There was no realistic chance of an invasion of Europe that year, and America was months away from invading North Africa. The British were having some luck with their commando units, conducting various raids whenever the opportunity arose. American General Lucian Truscott decided to raise a commando unit for the U.S. Army. That force became the 1st Ranger Battalion, and its commander, Major William O. Darby, was an excellent leader, so much so the unit soon became known as "Darby's Rangers."

The Rangers soon proved their worth as an elite light infantry force, taking on missions regular units would be hard pressed to accomplish. A small detachment went with the Canadians at Dieppe, and then the unit fought in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy including Anzio. In that final locale the Rangers were committed to an attack at Cisterna, which effectively destroyed the unit. Nevertheless, the Rangers'

accomplishments were such that their legend refused to die. The present-day U.S. Army Rangers can trace their lineage straight to Darby and his troops.

The author entered the Rangers as a private and ended the war as a company commander in the 4th Battalion. This account of his time in the Rangers was originally published in 1960 and has been reprinted due to its unvarnished look at an outfit that still captures the imagination in books, television, and film decades later. The writing is clear and simple, making the book a pleasure to read.



Hitler's Swedes: A History of the Swedish Volunteers in the Waffen-SS (Lars T. Larsson, Casemate Publishers, Havertown, PA, 2015, 336pp., maps, photographs, appendix, bibliography, index, $69.95, hardcover)

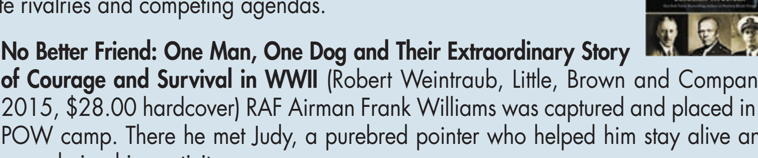
The Waffen-SS had entire units comprised of foreign volunteers during World War II. The nations these volunteers came from were mostly occupied territories the Nazis overran during the early years of the conflict. Often these volunteers were attracted to the Nazi ideology, their apparent strength, or a simple desire to fight communism, which was seen as a major threat to Europe in the period leading up to the war. Since the Nazis were the only

New and Noteworthy

Wall, Watchtower and Pencil Stub: Writing During World War II (John R. Carpenter, Yucca Publishing, 2014, $24.95, hardcover) This is a review of how writers did their work during the war. It examines how their work influenced American culture during and after the conflict.

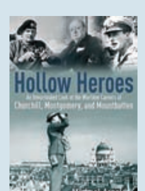
In Defense of Freedom: Stories of Courage and Sacrifice of World War II Army Air Forces Flyers (Wolfgang W.E. Samuel, University Press of Mississippi, 2015, $29.95, softcover) This book features 28 stories of different pilots and aircrews. Each is a unique tale of courage and endurance.

American Warlords: How Roosevelt's High Command Led America to Victory in World War II (Jonathan W. Jordan, NAL Caliber, 2015, $28.95, hardcover) President Roosevelt had to direct, influence, and at times manipulate his subordinates toward the goal of victory. This book reveals how he did so despite rivalries and competing agendas.



No Better Friend: One Man, One Dog and Their Extraordinary Story of Courage and Survival in WWII (Robert Weintraub, Little, Brown and Company, 2015, $28.00 hardcover) RAF Airman Frank Williams was captured and placed in a POW camp. There he met Judy, a purebred pointer who helped him stay alive and sane during his captivity.

The Third Reich in History and Memory (Richard J. Evans, Oxford University Press, 2015, $29.95, hardcover) The Nazis left a haunting legacy that humanity has struggled to deal with since 1945. Presented in this volume are a number of essays discussing the effect of Nazism and how our perception of it has changed over the decades.



Hollow Heroes: An Unvarnished Look at the Wartime Careers of Churchill, Montgomery and Mountbatten (Michael Arnold, Casemate Publishing, 2015, $34.95, hardcover) This book seeks to show these three British leaders as less than their popular reputations would indicate. The author argues they were all subject to fits of ego, jealousy, and self-preservation.

Airborne: The Combat Story of Ed Shames of Easy Company (Ian Gardner, Osprey Publishing, 2015, $25.95, hardcover) Ed Shames is the last surviving officer from Easy Company of *Band of Brothers* fame. This is his account of the war as he saw it.

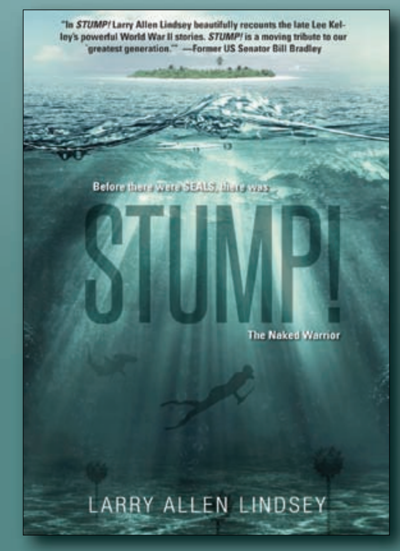
US Standard-Type Battleships 1941-45 (1): Nevada, Pennsylvania and New Mexico Classes (Mark Stille, Osprey Publishing, 2015, $17.95, softcover) These older battleships played an important role during the war despite their age. They provided gunfire support during amphibious operations and a few even saw ship versus ship action.

Stump!

by Larry Allen Lindsey

"In STUMP! Larry Allen Lindsey beautifully recounts the late Lee Kelley's powerful World War II stories. STUMP! is a moving tribute to our 'greatest generation.'"
—Former US Senator Bill Bradley

"STUMP! captures the real life experiences of a true American World War II hero-Lee Kelley, Navy frogman. If you like Navy Special Warfare action STUMP! will keep you on the edge of your seat."
—Jeffrey B. Crane, Commander, USN (Ret.)



Motivated by the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, champion swimmer Lee "Stump" Kelley is hell bent on becoming a Marine…He becomes a frogman instead. After blowing up under water obstructions all over the Pacific, at Tacloban he loses the first of his best friends in a gruesome explosion. A month later he loses the second in a freak encounter with a giant hammerhead shark at Manila Bay. Moving on to Okinawa with what's left of his frogman team, he suffers serious burns during the largest kamikaze attack of the war. At Guam a three star admiral asks his opinion on a prospective landing site for the invasion of Japan. As always, Stump tells it like it is. *"Admiral… trying to march into Tokyo will cost a million American lives. And one of those lives is gonna be mine."*

A retired naval officer and Vietnam veteran, Lindsey was stationed overseas in Spain, Guam, and Okinawa, and served tours of duty with both the Seabees and the Marines.

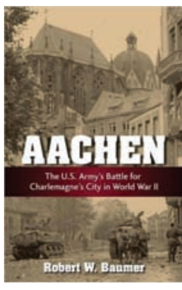
VISIT HIS WEBSITE AT

www.LarryAllenLindsey.com

force in Europe fighting the Soviets, it made sense to some to join their efforts.

Sweden was a neutral nation, so men wanting to join the Nazi cause usually had to make their way to an occupied country and then volunteer. Once there many were incorporated into frontline formations such as the Wiking, Nord, and Nordland Divisions. These volunteers served throughout the war and shared in the Nazi defeat in 1945.

The subject of foreign volunteers in the SS can be sensitive even today. It is no mark of pride for any nation to say some of its young men ran off to fight for such an evil cause. The author confronts this by telling the stories of individual Swedes, including why they chose to volunteer, what they experienced during their service to the Third Reich, and how the war ended for them.



Aachen: The U.S. Army's Battle for Charlemagne's City in World War II (Robert W. Baumer, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2015, 410pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $29.95, hardcover)

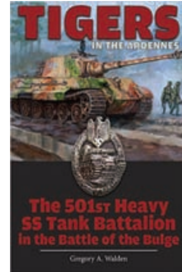
The Battle of Aachen was a critical moment in the European campaign during World War II. It was the first German city the Americans approached as well as an important cultural icon for the German people; Aachen had been the capital of Charlemagne's empire centuries before. The loss of the city would be a heavy blow to German morale, so Hitler ordered it defended to the last man and cartridge. For nearly two months combat raged around and finally in Aachen as the U.S. Army slowly ground the defenders into submission.

The battle for this ancient city is told through the words and accounts of various participants from both sides. Extensive use is made of contemporary battle reports, and the author effectively combines them into a narrative that is easy to follow and engaging.

The Battle of Britain: 75th Anniversary Edition (Kate Moore, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2015, 200pp., maps, photographs, appendices, bibliography, index, $14.95, softcover)

World War II is replete with turning points, critical battles, and pivotal moments when the course of the war changed, often due to the actions of a few people who succeeded by the thinnest of margins. The Battle of Britain qualifies as such an event. The war would have progressed differently had Nazi Germany been able to successfully invade England in 1940-41. That fact that they were unable to complete their plans was due to heroic efforts and great sacrifices by a mere handful of pilots, aircrew, and support personnel of the Royal Air Force. These men and women held off the Nazi onslaught long enough for the United Kingdom to prepare for the war's continuation and fought hard enough to convince the Nazis the island could not be invaded with a reasonable chance of success, enough so that German attention subsequently turned eastward.

This book is a well done photo essay of this critical time in British history. The publisher partnered with the Imperial War Museum, using its vast collections to produce an excellent popular history. The illustrations tell the story effectively, and the accompanying text rounds out the book with additional detail, giving the reader a look at one of England's darkest yet proudest moments.



Tigers in the Ardennes: The 501st Heavy SS Tank Battalion in the Battle of the Bulge (Gregory A. Walden, Schiffer Publishing Ltd. Atglen, PA, 2015, maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover)

Only a relative few Tiger tanks were built, but they spark intense interest even decades later. Grouped into a small number of heavy tank battalions in both the Army and SS, they were used wherever their firepower was needed. In the Ardennes Offensive, the 501st SS Heavy Tank Battalion was the heavy tank unit of the 1st SS Panzer Corps. It was expected to help punch through the thin American defenses and gain a victory, which would hopefully split the Western Allies. The tanks were among the toughest, most powerful of the war, but they suffered from reliability problems and poor mobility. The crews were brave, but at this late stage of the war many lacked experience.

Both German and American veterans were interviewed for this book. The author, a former tank officer, analyzes the terrain of the Ardennes and expertly describes the challenges the Ardennes presented to a Tiger battalion. Detailed maps accompany the text to show the exact route the 501st took during the battle. The book has many photographs, a number of them never before published. □

Ordnance

Continued from page 13

By late 1944, many of the Japanese submarines that were still operational were converted to carry Kaiten; some submarines could carry up to six. Kaiten pilots were all volunteers aged 18 to 20. Despite the hundreds of Kaiten launched and the many Japanese men who died in them, they are credited with causing little damage to Allied shipping. A pack of eight Kaiten did penetrate the Ulithi anchorage in the Caroline Islands on November 20, 1944, and sink the fleet oiler USS *Mississinewa,* spilling 400,000 gallons of aviation fuel and killing 63 men. All eight Kaiten pilots were lost in the attack, and the submarine *I-37,* which had launched the Kaiten, was sunk by the destroyers USS *Conklin* and USS *McCoy Reynolds* off the Philippine island of Leyte.

On January 9, 1945, four Kaiten again struck the Carolines, damaging the Liberty Ship SS *Pontus H. Ross*. Again, the submarine that launched them, *I-47,* was sunk by the destroyer *Conklin*. Kaiten were also credited with sinking an infantry landing craft, *LCI 600,* with the loss of three men, and the destroyer escort USS *Underhill* on July 24, 1945, with the loss of 112 men.

The *Underhill* was escorting a convoy of supply and troop ships 200 to 300 miles northeast of Cape Engaño in the Philippines when she came under attack. After lookouts spotted two Kaiten on the surface, the *Underhill* rammed the vessel to port and was herself rammed by the other Kaiten. Both Kaiten pilots detonated their charges, one of which exploded the destroyer escort's boilers, tearing her in half.

"I got topside and [was] standing on the quarterdeck," a 19-year-old survivor of the attack said. "I didn't know what had happened, but saw [our] bow floating by on the starboard side with probably 10 or 12 feet sticking out of the water. There were dead and seriously injured scattered over the ship."

The idea of manned torpedoes persisted after the war. British chariots were used to clear mines and wrecks in harbors, and Argentina developed manned torpedoes and special minisubmarines in the 1950s, the latter with torpedoes attached beneath them. During the 1960s, at least two manned torpedo-like vessels were manufactured in the United States and Britain for sport diving.

Today, similar vehicles are said to be in use by U.S. Navy SEALs.

Author Chuck Lyons has contributed to WWII History *on a variety of topics. He resides in Rochester, New York.*

Uprising!

Continued from page 63

Polish II Corps was demobilized.

Mieczkowski again had to readjust his priorities. In England, he passed competitive exams to enter the University of London, earning a bachelor's degree in 1950. He had little desire to repair to Poland under Communist rule, and his mother's death further soured him on returning. "Going back would have been dangerous folly," he said. "I concluded that I was a permanent émigré, a person without a country." His Polish friends felt similarly and emigrated to Australia, Canada, and the United States. (Bogdan's older brother, Zbigniew, went to Canada, but Tadeusz and Janusz stayed in Poland.) America became Mieczkowski's dream destination, and in December 1950, his entry visa approved, he boarded the RMS *Franconia* ocean liner headed for New York. He moved to Chicago, whose large Polish population made him feel at home, and soon enrolled in graduate school at the University of Illinois, where he earned a doctorate in economics in 1955. Eventually, he landed work at a Polish research institute in New York City.

In a sense, New York allowed the war to come full circle for Mieczkowski. There he met Seiko Kawakami, a native of Hokkaido, Japan, who came to the United States to study at Berea College and found a job at a Japanese bank branch in Manhattan. During the war, Kawakami worked at a factory near her hometown of Otaru, making chemical gas masks out of seaweed. (World War II had a profound impact on her family, too: her 17-year-old sister Yasuko died of tuberculosis during the war, and her older brother Suguru joined the Japanese navy and learned to fly Mitsubishi Zero fighters, training as a kamikaze pilot.) As World War II receded into memory, two people who experienced that epochal conflict while oceans apart met in New York City—the crossroads of the world—and later married. Both became college professors, but the war that shaped their youth carved indelible memories. For Mieczkowski, the fight for Poland's freedom carried a high cost, leaving him wounded and his family broken and destitute. Freedom came not just when he escaped a German POW camp. It came across the globe, in a new country and its promise of a new life.

Yanek Mieczkowski is the author of Eisenhower's Sputnik Moment: The Race for Space and World Prestige *and* Gerald Ford and the Challenges of the 1970s. *He is professor of history at Dowling College in New York.*

Sub Hunters

Continued from page 71

missions on June 5. Navy Liberators, temporarily augmented by detachments from Gibraltar-based VB-114, were assigned to patrol a region off the Cherbourg Peninsula. The pace was intense. Directed to cover individual sectors of ocean twice an hour, each squadron generated seven missions per day compared to two or three flown previously.

Forty-three of Admiral Dönitz' Biscay-based U-boats sortied against the invasion fleet in the weeks following D-Day. They failed miserably. By June 23, Coastal Command planes had killed nine U-boats and damaged 11 more. Unable to move without being detected, the surviving non-Schnorkel-equipped submarines could only cower helplessly on the ocean floor. Just five vessels fitted with this new breathing device managed to make it past the escort screen, torpedoing three warships and five freighters before being driven off by British destroyers.

Thanks to Coastal Command, Allied forces were largely free to cross the English Channel without fear of U-boat attacks. In August, what remained of Germany's submarine fleet in France transited the Bay of Biscay one final time as American ground troops approached their bases. The three-year Bay Offensive concluded victoriously for the Allies.

This triumph came with a heavy cost. During their time in England, USAAF antisubmarine squadrons lost 12 planes and 102 men due to enemy action, accidents, or causes unknown. Navy patrol bomber losses over the bay amounted to 16 aircraft and 157 crewmen. In return, American sub hunters received credit for sinking 13 U-boats from February 1943 to the end of Biscayan operations 18 months later.

United States antisubmarine aircraft played an unsung but vital role in this campaign. American technology and manufacturing capacity, including long-range Liberator bombers and the Zombie acoustic homing torpedo, contributed a significant amount of striking power to the Bay Patrol. Yet victory was ultimately measured by the determination, fighting spirit, and sacrifice demonstrated by thousands of Allied airmen. These aviators proved themselves to be the deciding factor in this deadly cat-and-mouse game fought between Coastal Command and German U-boats in the Bay of Biscay.

Patrick J. Chaisson is a retired U.S. Army officer and veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He writes from his home in Scotia, New York.

Simulation Gaming BY JOSEPH LUSTER

WORLD WAR II MEETS TRADING CARD GAMES, WHILE THE *COMPANY OF HEROES* SERIES TAKES THE BRITISH FORCES OUT FOR ONE MORE TOUR.

WORLD WAR II: TCG

PUBLISHER FROZENSHARD • **DEVELOPER** FROZEN SHARD
SYSTEM iOS, ANDROID, BROWSERS • **AVAILABLE** NOW

It might seem strange to imagine collectible cards based on the events of World War II. The funny thing is, I'm sure they exist, encased in plastic in a few collectors' binders across the world, each touting unique facts and feats performed by the historical figure on the front. *World War II: TCG* (Trading Card Game) doesn't feature those kinds of cards, but it does have a bunch of customizable decks full of infantries, vehicles, modifiers, and other ways of taking on opponents in both player-vs.-computer and player-vs.-player modes.

For the most part, its simplified take on card-battling games works, blending nicely with an easy-to-understand interface and straightforward rules. The opening tutorial guides you through a few short skirmishes, holding your hand gently as it teaches you the ropes of how to play cards in each turn, how to use other cards to power up and modify those in play, and how to use acquired points to promote cards, strengthening both their attack and defense and keeping them in the fight longer. The ultimate goal is to use your cards to whittle away at your opponent's hit points while protecting your own, with the first to reach zero getting the bitter taste of defeat.

For someone like myself who's not terribly good at, or even much interested in, trading card games, *World War II: TCG* ended up being surprisingly likable. The presentation is hit or miss—sound, for instance, plays a small part in the dynamics but can be turned off with no real loss to the experience—but mostly gets the job done smoothly enough. Cards can be examined to get a better idea of which one would be appropriate for a particular play, but the simpler battles can typically be won by being aggressive and coming out strong with cards that will, ideally, overpower the ones your enemy puts on the field.

World War II: TCG features five factions—Germans, Americans, Russians, Japanese, and British—with more to be added in the future. User-created decks aren't restricted by factions, though, so you can go wild and concentrate on putting the best cards in your deck regardless of their allegiance. While it's nice that there aren't too many restrictions on deck-building, there are special features that make cards of the same faction work well in tandem, so it's worth keeping that in mind when putting your cards together. On the other hand, if building a deck sounds like a total drag to you, you can always go in with a prebuilt deck, which should at least get you through the single-player stuff without too much trouble.

Player versus Player is another story entirely. *World War II: TCG* is relatively young, so you can find some competition that's still dabbling or just getting started, much like yourself. This will likely change as regular players get more time in with the game, so the versus play will definitely only get tougher from here on out. It does help that it's cross-platform, though, as you're more likely to find casual opponents giving it a go from a service like Facebook.

Like many free-to-play games, you'll only get as much out of *World War II: TCG* as you're willing to put in, be that time or money. I'm not really one for giving into the constantl -appearing advertisements that beg the player to plunk down a few real-world dollars for in-game rewards, but it makes enough sense for a game like this that it isn't too egregious. Unfortunately, this also means I didn't get to test out a few of the game's features, namely the micro-transaction system in question. You can still earn unlockable items through normal play, though, it's just going to take a lot longer than it would if you decided to pay upfront for the goods.

At the moment, *World War II: TCG* has more than 220 unique cards, with plans to release new booster packs with 5 to 10 new cards each month. If you enjoy trading card games but aren't too hardcore about them, you'll find *World War II: TCG* to be a nice little diversion for a while. It's a bit simple for anyone who dips into the deeper end of the genre, though. Ultimately, a game like this is going to live or die based on the ongoing support from developer FrozenShard. If they keep the updates coming and it maintains a strong enough player base to fuel solid PvP competition, it could blossom into something greater in the coming months.

UPCOMING BATTLES

COMPANY OF HEROES 2: THE BRITISH FORCES

PUBLISHER SEGA • **DEVELOPER** RELIC ENTERTAINMENT
SYSTEM PC • **AVAILABLE** SEPTEMBER 2015

Sega and Relic Entertainment are getting ready to expand the *Company of Heroes* series once more with *Company of Heroes 2: The British Forces.* Due out on PC worldwide this September, the third standalone expansion pack has Relic focusing once again on the multiplayer mode. The armies of Great Britain take center stage along with 15 different unit types, six commanders, and eight new maps recreating historically accurate locations from the European Theater of World War II.

Players will be able to choose between two separate branches in the tech tree: The Hammer and The Anvil. The former is all about aggression and extreme offensive maneuvering, while the latter puts emphasis on heavily fortified defenses. Other features include visual enhancements, unit adjustment, and faction rebalancing. Don't worry if you don't have a copy of the core title, because despite being a new add-on, *Company of Heroes 2: The British Forces* won't require an installed copy of the original. □

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October 20, New York

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PREVIEW
October 17-20

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