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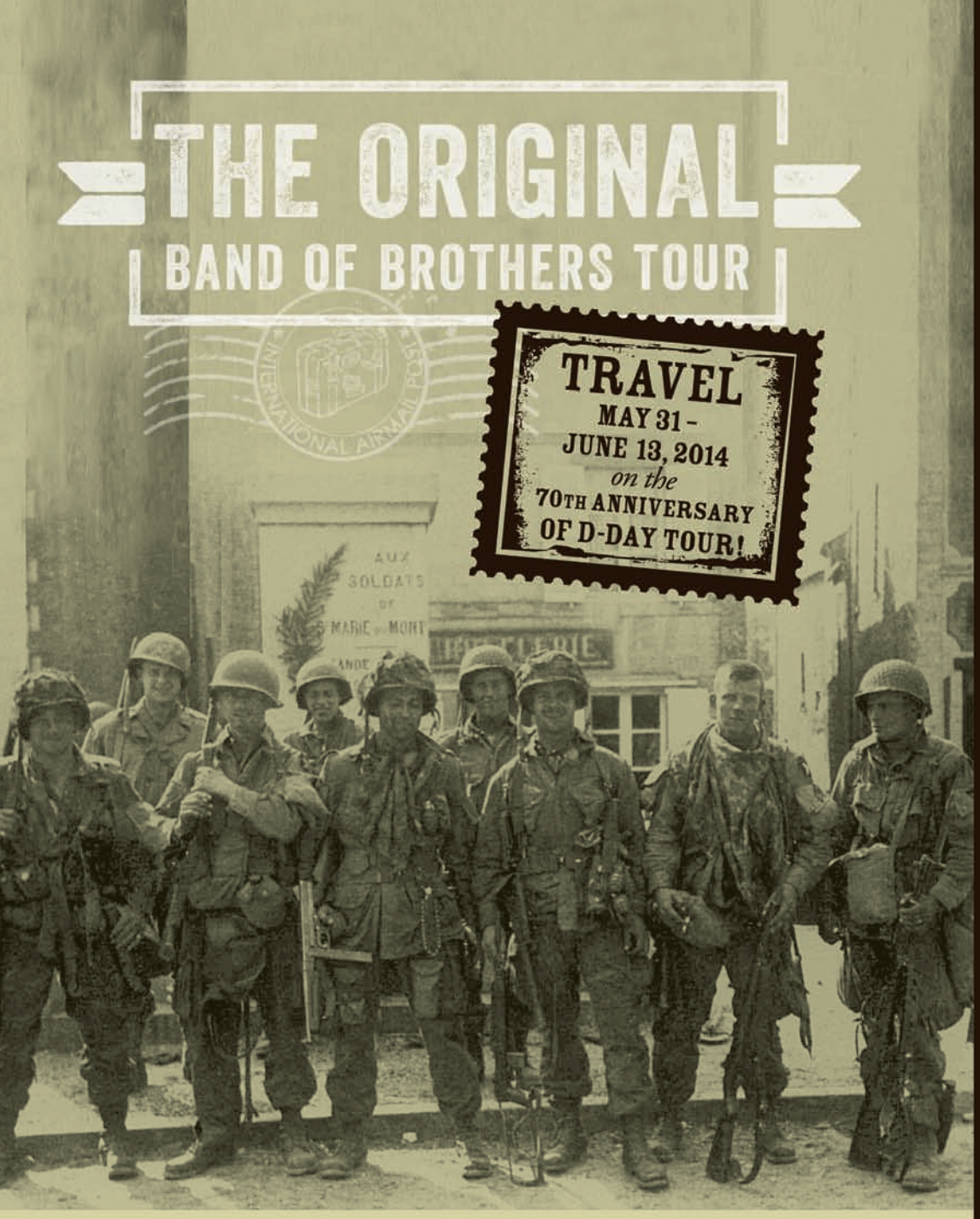

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Cover: B-29 Superfortress bombers from the 20th Bomber Command drop their ordnance over Japanese occupied territory in Burma. See story page 28. Photo: Library of Congress.

WWII History (ISSN 1539-5456) is published seven times yearly by Sovereign Media, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite A-100, McLean, VA 22101. (703) 964-0361. Periodical postage paid at McLean, VA, and additional mailing offices. *WWII History*, Volume 12, Number 7 © 2013 by Sovereign Media Company, Inc., all rights reserved. Copyrights to stories and illustrations are the property of their creators. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without consent of the copyright owner. ***Subscription services, back issues, and information:*** (800) 219-1187 *or* write to ***WWII History*** Circulation, WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703. Single copies: $5.99, plus $3 for postage. Yearly subscription in U.S.A.: $24.99; Canada and Overseas: $40.99 (U.S.). Editorial Office: Send editorial mail to *WWII History*, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite A-100, McLean, VA 22101. *WWII History* welcomes editorial submissions but assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. Material to be returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We suggest that you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a copy of our author's guidelines. **POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.**

Editorial

The Tarawa landings made the Alligator an indispensable tool of war in the Pacific.

ON NOVEMBER 20, 1943, FULLY 70 YEARS AGO, AMERICAN MARINES HIT THE beaches on the islet of Betio, the principal spit of land that makes up Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert Islands. For the Americans to advance across the Central Pacific toward the home islands of Japan, the capture of Tarawa was essential.

The Americans learned bitter lessons from this first experience in storming a heavily defended beach. Among them were the hard facts that heavy preparatory naval and air bombardment were likely to be only partially successful in destroying enemy bunkers, pillboxes, and dug-in defensive positions unless direct hits with plunging fire or armor-piercing bombs were achieved. Flamethrowers were to become essential tools to root out a stubborn enemy that refused to surrender, and an abundance of automatic weapons would increase the Marines' firepower in the face of enemy machine-gun and small-arms concentrations. Numerical superiority was a must. Overwhelming numbers of troops would have to be landed in future operations simply to maintain combat effectiveness.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson of all was the realization that a tracked landing vehicle, capable of traversing coral reefs, negotiating sandy beaches, and climbing seawalls, was needed to tip the balance in favor of the landing troops. At Tarawa, the planners of Operation Galvanic were aware of a coral reef that encircled Betio, creating a broad lagoon. Relying on outdated maps, the planners hoped that the tides around the islet would be sufficient to allow flat-bottomed Higgins boats, the most plentiful landing craft available, to reach the shoreline without becoming hung up on the reef.

Only 75 of the new LVTs (Landing Vehicle, Tracked), also known as amtracs, were available initially for the Tarawa operation. At the last minute and following a heated argument at the highest echelon of the Marine and Navy command structures, 50 more LVTs were allocated to the Marines, but the majority of the assault waves would still ride to the hostile shore in the Higgins boats. Another 50 LVTs were allocated to the U.S. Army landings on Makin Atoll, which were being executed concurrently.

Just as the Marines had feared, the draft of the Higgins boats proved too deep to negotiate the barrier reef at Tarawa, and many Marines were forced to exit their craft at the reef and wade hundreds of yards through chest-high water under murderous Japanese fire to reach the beaches. Those who were fortunate enough to head to shore in LVTs realized the value of the craft as soon as they encountered the reef. Engaging their tracks, the Marine LVTs climbed over the coral and moved on toward their assigned beaches, affording their human cargoes a measure of protection from enemy small-arms and artillery fire.

Although Donald Roebling had originally intended his Alligator to be utilized for civilian purposes, the earliest military LVT and its subsequent variations saved countless lives and enabled the forces of the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army to hop thousands of miles across the Pacific and defeat the Japanese at every fortified island or coral ledge where they landed—in only a year and a half. Riding the LVTs, U.S. forces reached the shores of Okinawa on April 1, 1945, and culminated an unbroken string of Pacific victories. The LVT became an indispensable instrument of amphibious victory.

The Japanese commander at Tarawa had boasted, "A million men cannot take Tarawa in a hundred years!" He had not reckoned with the stalwart Marines who took his island fortress in a remarkable 76 hours. Nor had he reckoned that the ingenuity of Donald Roebling would hasten the fall of Tarawa, and indeed of the Empire of Japan.

Michael E. Haskew

WWII HISTORY

Volume 12 ■ Number 7

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CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY
WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

SOVEREIGN MEDIA COMPANY, INC.
6731 Whittier Avenue, Suite A-100
McLean, VA 22101-4554

SUBSCRIPTION CUSTOMER SERVICE
AND BUSINESS OFFICE:
1000 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 300
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PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

By Michael D. Hull

U.S. Army

Architect of Victory

General George C. Marshall shaped the wartime U.S. Army and advised President Franklin D. Roosevelt throughout World War II.

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT WAS DISTURBED IN THE AUTUMN OF 1938 by the Munich agreement, at which the rights of Czechoslovakia were signed away, and by reports of mounting air strength in Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany.

Shortly after the infamous accord on September 29, the president instituted a series of White House meetings at which he and his military advisers discussed the ominous situation in Europe. One of the early formal sessions was attended by the Assistant Secretary of War, the Solicitor General, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Army and Air Corps Chiefs of Staff, and a tall, blue-eyed, and courtly brigadier general named George C. Marshall, who had recently been appointed the Army Deputy Chief of Staff and head of the War Plans Division.

FDR unveiled an ambitious program for building 10,000 military aircraft a year with no increase in supporting forces. As the proceedings drew to a close, the president summed up his plan and turned to Marshall, whom he scarcely knew. "Don't you think so, George?" he asked. Marshall replied, "I am sorry, Mr. President, but I don't agree with that at all." The general was painfully aware of the state of America's defenses and knew that it would require much more than airplanes to rectify the situation. The U.S. Army, numbering only 174,000 men, was ranked 19th in the world, just behind that of tiny Portugal.

Roosevelt gave a startled look, and the outspoken Marshall received expressions of sympathy from the other conferees, who feared that his promising tour of duty in Washington was about to come to a swift end. But they underestimated both the president and the general, and stiff formalities were observed. FDR never again called Marshall "George" in public, and the general always called FDR "Mr. President." He refused to succumb to the well-known Roosevelt charm and determined never to laugh at his jokes.

On April 23 (St. George's Day), 1939, FDR made one of the most significant choices of his presidency. Vaulting over 34 names on the senior generals' rank list, he asked Marshall to succeed retiring General Malin Craig as Army Chief of Staff. In a hasty ceremony at the old Munitions Building in the nation's capital, Marshall took the oath of office on Friday, September 1, 1939, the day that Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. He was promoted automatically to four-star rank.

With Great Britain and France allied against Germany and the expansionist Japanese rampaging in China and threatening stability throughout the Far East, Marshall faced the possibility of both a global conflict and a mammoth task at home. The U.S. Army was a threat to no one. Its divisions were half under strength and scattered, it had no combat-ready units, and joint two-week maneuvers were conducted only every fourth year. "During the lean years," he observed, "the Army's fight for personnel was a fight for its very life."

Enthusiasm and resources for a large army were lacking. Instead of 800 men, many infantry battalions could muster only 200, including clerks and cooks, and equipment was hopelessly obsolete and inadequate. Marshall was no interventionist, but it was his responsibility to prepare the Army for a modern war. Despite opposition from the Navy, the Air Corps, isolationists, Congress, and even the president, Marshall went to work with decisiveness and often drastic moves. He gave his best effort.

Wearing the five stars of General of the Army rank, U.S. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall sat for this portrait following the end of World War II. Marshall went on to serve as U.S. Secretary of State and formulate the Marshall Plan to rehabilitate war-ravaged Europe.

Israeli Submarine Commander Brings Military Strength Memory Pill to the USA

A NEW HOPE FOR MEMORY-LOSS

Helps restore recall, focus, concentration and clears up to 4-years of memory fog.

By Steven Wuzubia, Health Correspondent

Clearwater, Florida: Nothing's more frustrating than when you forget names... misplace your keys... or just feel "a little confused". And even though your foggy memory gets laughed off as just another "senior moment", it's not very funny when it keeps happening to you.

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Ex-submarine commander, David Rutenberg unveils his discovery at news conference

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ABOVE: Unlike many of those high-ranking military officers who reported to him, Marshall attended the Virginia Military Institute, not West Point. In this photo, Marshall is shown front row center with other VMI cadets in 1901. BELOW: As a young officer with the temporary rank of colonel, Marshall served as an aide to General John J. Pershing in France during World War I.

National Archives

Marshall set out early to reorganize the War Department, where the thinking and bureaucracy had advanced little since 1919. He sought to create "some kind of organization that would give the chief of staff time to devote to strategic policy and the strategic aspects and direction of the war." There were too many people reporting to him, and too many forced to approve too many documents before the War Department shambled into action.

The major change was the elimination of the fiefdoms of the major generals commanding the infantry, cavalry, field artillery, and coast artillery, each of whom jealously guarded his service branch and personal prerogatives. Marshall was intent on creating a unified, efficient army rather than a loose collection of separate services. The reorganization was undertaken by a committee headed by blunt, ruthless Maj. Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, a former Air Corps pilot.

Efficiency was stressed, and the men immediately below Marshall were given increased authority. Instead of 60 officers having access to the chief of staff, the plan reduced the number to six. Nevertheless, Marshall often plumbed the lower ranks to hear from younger men with worthwhile ideas. The new Army was made up of three commands—the Ground Forces, led by the bantam, energetic Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, Marshall's longtime friend from World War I; the Services of Supply, under Lt. Gen. Brehon B. Somervell, a hard taskmaster; and the Army Air Forces, commanded by genial Lt. Gen. Henry H. Arnold. For his command post, Marshall reorganized the War Plans Division and renamed it the Operations Division.

Arnold had the authority to mold the Army Air Forces into an effective bombardment and pursuit force capable of challenging the powerful Luftwaffe, while Somervell was responsible for procurement, supply, support services, morale, and military justice. McNair had the job of turning loosely disciplined, unmotivated ground troops into a fighting army. Regarded by Marshall as "the brains of the Army," McNair recognized the primacy of the foot soldier. "Our Army is no better than its infantry," he pointed out, "and victory will come only when and as our infantry gains it. The price will be predominantly what the infantry pays."

While undertaking the massive reorganization, Marshall also found time to institute another reform in America's military command structure. His plan to reorganize the Joint Chiefs of Staff proved to be one of his most enduring achievements.

Marshall worked closely with his immediate civilian superior, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, and managed to cultivate a good relationship with Admiral Ernest J. King, the irascible Chief of Naval Operations, despite fierce Army-Navy rivalries. Marshall gained the cooperation of Congress and worked harmoniously with President Roosevelt, though in temperaments and habits they were oddly matched. After harboring doubts about him until the Pearl Harbor attack, the austere general came to trust and respect FDR for his intelligent, decisive leadership. "It took me a long time to get to him," Marshall noted.

George Catlett Marshall was born in Uniontown, southeast of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Friday, December 31, 1880, the youngest son of a stern, prosperous coalfield owner, Democrat, and Episcopal vestryman. Nicknamed "Flicker," the gangling, red-haired boy became fascinated with local history, but his progress in school was indifferent. Sensitive and shy, he floundered in grammar, spelling, and mathematics and was an average student in everything but history. Benjamin Franklin and General Robert E. Lee were his early heroes.

Young George decided on a military career, and the Virginia Military Institute was the first choice because several Marshalls had attended the school. His grades remained unimpressive, but the young man mastered drill regulations and enjoyed exercising command. He grew into a model cadet and advanced from first sergeant to first captain. Meanwhile, he courted a 26-year-old woman who would become his wife—auburn-haired, shapely Elizabeth "Lily" Carter Coles of Lexington, Virginia. Graduating from VMI in late 1901, Marshall received his commission as a second lieutenant in January 1902 and was assigned to the 30th Infantry Regiment stationed in the Philippines. After a hasty marriage and brief honeymoon with Lily that February, George kissed her goodbye and headed for a remote, dismal Army post on Mindoro Island.

At the end of 1902, Lieutenant Marshall and his company were transferred to bustling Manila, where he borrowed cavalry mounts and took up riding, which would become his lifelong recreation.

Marshall was posted back to the United States in November 1903, and served at Fort Reno in the Oklahoma Territory. He was promoted to first lieutenant in 1907 and graduated that year from the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He graduated from the staff college there in 1908, and remained as an instructor until 1910.

Flicker Marshall's career got into gear when America entered World War I in April 1917. That July, he went to France as a staff and operations officer with Maj. Gen. William L. Sibert's 1st Infantry Division. Marshall quickly showed a flair for staff work and leadership, and the experience prepared him for his considerable role in the later world war.

Promoted to temporary colonel in August 1918, Marshall moved up to the staff of the U.S. First Army. The following month, he accomplished a brilliant feat of staff work by

overseeing the rapid night movement of 500,000 troops, 2,700 guns, and 40,000 tons of ammunition from St.-Mihiel to the Argonne Forest for the big Meuse-Argonne offensive. Marshall continued to move upward in the Army hierarchy, gaining recognition as a first-rate staff officer and trainer. He was appointed operations chief of the First Army in October 1918, chief of staff in the Eighth Corps the following month, and served as an aide to Pershing in 1919-1924. Pershing championed Marshall's career and later directly petitioned President Roosevelt to consider him for Army Chief of Staff.

After having reverted to the rank of captain, Marshall was promoted to major in 1920 and lieutenant colonel in 1923. He served with the 15th Infantry Regiment in China in 1924-1927, and then was named assistant commandant of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he left a strong imprint on the tactics the Army would use in World War II. Promoted to colonel in 1933, Marshall commanded the 8th Infantry Regiment at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, served as senior instructor of the Illinois National Guard, and was promoted to brigadier general in 1936. Two years later, he was attached to the Army General Staff.

Although he had never commanded a division or been in action, Marshall proved to be the ideal man—intelligent, resolute, and widely respected—to build and lead the Army when his unready nation was thrust into global war. He assumed Pershing's mantle as America's premier soldier.

Marshall inspired and guided almost every aspect of the Army's growth and effectiveness —recruitment, mobilization, training, logistics, commissions, racial problems, utilization of women, and morale, one of his primary concerns. He traveled widely, usually by air, from camp to camp to check on conditions and needs. He moved without parades or other ceremonies and made morale a "command responsibility." He also went in civilian clothes to visit the towns near large bases.

Marshall was seeking to build a citizen army based on "respect rather than fear; on the effect of good example given by officers; on the intelligent comprehension by all ranks of why an order has to be." He said, "We must treat them [draftees] as soldiers; we cannot have a political club and call it an army."

Marshall respected officers with initiative who did not wait to be told what to do and encouraged them to disagree with him when necessary. He insisted on concise briefings, sought to "expunge ponderosities," used telephones sparingly, and instituted 9 AM show and tell sessions that kept him on top of military and political situations around the world.

USAMHI

At Allied headquarters in North Africa in June 1943, Marshall (right) confers with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Allied commander in the Mediterranean Theater.

Marshall remained a firm believer in staff initiative. One day early in 1941, he was conferring with some generals when then Major Walter Bedell Smith came in to report the plight of a salesman who was being given the runaround in Washington. His company had designed a small, lightweight, low-silhouette vehicle that could carry four or five soldiers and be lifted out of mudholes by its passengers. The blueprint had been rejected by the Ordnance Department, but, from his days as an instructor under Marshall at the Infantry School, Smith believed that such a vehicle could be useful to the Army.

"Well," asked the chief of staff, "what do you think of it?" Smith replied, "I think it is good." Marshall responded crisply, "Well, do it." And that was how the durable quarter-ton jeep entered Army service, used for myriad functions in all theaters of operations during the war. By the end of 1945, a total of 653,568 jeeps were in service—634,000 delivered to the Army and almost 20,000 to the Allies and the other services.

Marshall found it necessary to be ruthless when it came to upgrading the Army for combat and weeding out officers he considered unsuited for it. "The present general officers of the line are for the most part too old to command troops in battle under the terrific pressures of modern war," he had told a columnist. "Many of them have their minds set in outmoded patterns and can't change to meet the new conditions they may face if we become involved in the war that's started in Europe. I do not propose to send our young citizen soldiers into action, if they must go into action, under commanders whose minds are no longer adaptable to the making of split-second decisions in the fast-moving war of today, nor whose bodies are no longer capable of standing up under the demands of field service."

So Marshall screened the roster of senior generals to see who could lead an army or corps in combat and eliminated all except the gallant German-born Walter Krueger, who would lead the Sixth Army with distinction in the Pacific War. Meanwhile, the chief of staff compiled a list of officers—some known to him and some recommended—in whose judgment he had confidence. The names in his "little black book" included Dwight D. Eisenhower, Omar N. Bradley, Mark W. Clark, Courtney H. Hodges, Jacob L. Devers, George S. Patton, Jr., J. Lawton Collins, Alexander M. Patch, William H. Simpson, Lucian K. Truscott, and Robert L. Eichelberger.

These men achieved distinction, but Marshall was not infallible in his choices of fighting generals. He overlooked the able James Van Fleet, and three of his chosen corps commanders had to be relieved—Lloyd R. Fredendall after the Kasserine Pass rout, Ernest J. Dawley after the near disastrous Salerno invasion, and John Millikin after the Rhine River crossing at Remagen.

Under Marshall's wise leadership, the U.S. Army was shaped into an effective fighting force. By the time it began lining up beside the British to fight the Germans in 1942, its combat strength had increased more than tenfold. The Army grew from 1.8 million men in December 1941 to 8.25 million by the war's end.

Marshall's buildup of the Army from a loose peacetime conglomeration into a mobilized, hard-hitting force capable of challenging the seasoned Germans and Japanese was a remarkable achievement. After some humiliating reverses in North Africa, the Pacific, and Italy, it matured into the most powerful army America had yet put into the field. Although he had seen no combat, Marshall understood the realities of 20th-century war, particularly the key role of infantry in any land campaign. "Modern battles are fought by platoon leaders," he said. "The carefully prepared plans of higher commanders can do no more than project you to the line of departure at the proper time and place, in proper formation, and start you off in the right direction."

Marshall enjoyed a cherished relationship with Field Marshal Sir John "Jack" Dill, head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington, and when the latter died in November 1944, Marshall skirted regulations to enable him to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Dill and Maj. Gen. Orde C. Wingate are the only British officers to be laid there.

But Marshall and the British clashed over strategy a number of times during the war. He had proved himself a brilliant organizer but was less sure footed in his approach to the most important strategic choice facing America in World War II: when and where to deploy U.S. forces on a large scale. He correctly supported the Germany first strategic priority, but the timing he proposed was premature and caused serious misunderstandings with the British. He advocated a cross-English Channel invasion in 1942, when manpower and resources, particularly landing craft, were limited, and which, as British Prime Minister Winston Churchill rightly warned, would have been catastrophic.

Marshall fiercely opposed the North African campaign and pressed again for an invasion of France in 1943. But manpower and resources were still inadequate, the U.S. Army had still not gained enough experience against the hard-fighting Germans, and the Allies had yet to achieve mastery in the Atlantic and in the skies over Europe. A cross-Channel invasion in 1943 would have carried great military risk.

From his Washington desk, Marshall coordinated the operations of American armies around the world, and coordinated these operations with the Navy and the Allied forces. But he was far more than a chair-borne manager of U.S. military resources. He became a leading figure in the U.S. and Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff and attended all the wartime summit conferences. He also visited the armies in the field—from Algeria to New Guinea, from Anzio to Normandy, and from Belgium to Holland—and maintained intellectual and emotional contact with the fighting fronts. Marshall made a special point of talking to subalterns and enlisted men without the presence of their superiors and used liaison officers to prowl the combat zones and report on conditions, needs, and GI morale.

The chief of staff viewed war in the same basic terms as General Ulysses S. Grant: go after the enemy and smash him. Marshall's simple strategy was to mass the maximum possible weight of men, materiel, and firepower against the enemy where he considered success would bring the swiftest and most decisive results. To him, the armed forces' singular responsibility was total victory.

Roosevelt insisted that Marshall should command Operation Overlord but wavered when the moment of decision came. FDR left it to Marshall, who refused to request the post. The president then appointed General Eisenhower, telling Marshall, "Well, I didn't feel I could sleep at ease if you were out of Washington." The chief of staff was crestfallen but characteristically never uttered a word of complaint.

Marshall saw the great army he had forged mature in combat from North Africa to the Pacific, from the Aleutian Islands to Sicily and Italy, and take its place alongside the British, Canadians, Free French, and Poles in the great crusade across the English Channel on June 6, 1944. After bitter struggles in Normandy and a critical setback in the Ardennes, Marshall's force vaulted across the Rhine and into the Third Reich as Nazi resistance faltered and then crumbled.

The chief of staff was promoted to five-star general in December 1944, and on November 26, 1945, he received his only American military decoration of the war—a second oak leaf cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal he had been awarded in 1919. He had refused U.S. decorations during World War II, saying that it was not proper for him to accept such honors as chief of staff and while men were dying. President Harry S. Truman had reluctantly accepted Marshall's resignation on November 20, and General Eisenhower became the new Army chief of staff.

Churchill hailed Marshall in 1945 as "the true organizer of victory" and called him "the noblest Roman of them all." *Time* magazine

honored him twice as its "man of the year," and President Truman said, "In a war unparalleled in magnitude and horror, millions of Americans gave their country outstanding service. General of the Army George C. Marshall gave it victory." Truman termed him "the greatest military man that this country has ever produced."

Marshall was gone from the War Department, returning to his home in Leesburg, Virginia. But his respite was short lived. Late in 1945, Truman sent him to China in a bid to avert a civil war between the Nationalist Kuomintang government and Mao Tse-tung's Communists. Marshall's force of character was unsuccessful in bringing about a durable compromise, but the experience proved beneficial when Truman appointed him Secretary of State in January 1947. Marshall resigned his Army commission the following month.

On June 5, 1947, Secretary Marshall went to Harvard University to receive an honorary degree. In his speech, he outlined a program of foreign assistance—the largest ever undertaken by the U.S. government—to help war-torn European countries, including Germany, restore their economies. He invited the Soviet Union to participate, but it refused and responded by tightening its control over Eastern Europe. The momentous Marshall Plan,

National Archives

Marshall (right) greets General Omar Bradley, commander of the U.S. First Army in Normandy in June 1944. Bradley was later elevated to command of the Allied 12th Army Group.

which laid the foundations for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the Atlantic alliance, was hailed by Churchill as "the most unsordid act in history."

Marshall left the cabinet in January 1949, but returned in September 1950 as Secretary of Defense. He held the post for a year during the early phase of the Korean War and retired permanently from public affairs in September 1951. In war and peace, he had given his country sterling service for more than half a century. Marshall acted briefly as President of the American Red Cross and was awarded the Nobel Prize, primarily for his plan for European recovery, on December 10, 1953.

The warrior's health failed, and he was taken to Walter Reed Hospital in the spring of 1959. He suffered a stroke, grew frail, and died quietly on the evening of Friday, October 16. Marshall had left instructions ruling out a state funeral, saying that he wanted no eulogy or long list of honorary pallbearers, and a private interment. On October 20, after a brief, simple service in the Fort Myer (Virginia) Chapel, attended by President Eisenhower and former President Truman, Marshall's body was taken by caisson to Arlington National Cemetery. He was buried down the hill from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as an honor guard fired rifle volleys and taps was sounded. □

Author Michael D. Hull writes frequently for WWII History. *He is a resident of Enfield, Connecticut.*

By R.J. Seese

Frederick Lewis/Hulton Archive/Getty

Roebling and the Aligator

The invention of an American businessman found an unintended purpose and changed the conduct of amphibious warfare during World War II.

WHILE MAKING BUSINESS CALLS IN TAMPA, FLORIDA, DURING THE SUMMER of 1980, I spotted a strange looking tracked contraption atop an overgrown pedestal in front of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Center. Business was temporarily forgotten as I inspected and photographed the deteriorating remains of what was clearly a machine originally built with precision and purpose.

I learned it was the third prototype of a hurricane rescue vehicle designed and built by Clearwater, Florida, resident Donald Roebling and that it had been on display in that location since being donated by the builder's widow in 1965. Further, after being modified to military specifications as an amphibious ship-to-shore tracked vehicle the Marines called an amtrak, it spearheaded the amphibious landings on numerous Japanese-held islands in the Pacific during World War II.

The amtrac became such an important component of American amphibious tactics in the Pacific that Vice Admiral E.L. Cochrane, chief of the U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships during World War II, noted, "There is not the slightest shadow of a doubt that the overwhelming victories of our forces at Tarawa, Kwajalein, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Palau, and Iwo Jima would not have been possible without the amtraks."

Millionaire philanthropist Donald Roebling made these victories possible. He was the great grandson of John Augustus Roebling, who invented "iron rope" and incorporated it into his design of the Brooklyn Bridge, and grandson of Washington Augustus Roebling, who supervised construction of the bridge. As millions of Americans struggled through the dark Depression years Donald, heir to the Roebling fortune, led a life of luxury on his seven-acre estate in Clearwater, Florida.

Born in New York City on November 15, 1909, Donald Roebling's stature was as excessive as his life. He fueled his well over six feet and 350-pound frame with rich foods and chocolates. His girth tended to overpower his handsome features, and he suffered from diabetes and related health issues. Seeing therapeutic qualities in the warm Florida climate, he chose the little community of Clearwater as the place to build a palatial home for himself and his new bride.

Donald was educated as an electrical engineer but instinctively understood and loved mechanical engineering principals. Much of his time was spent tinkering in his machine shop, but he was also extremely interested in radio technology and the study and collection of postage stamps.

The story of the amtrac begins with the catastrophic South Florida hurricane that smashed ashore at Miami on September 18, 1926, with winds in excess of 150 miles per hour. As the storm left Miami and tore across huge Lake Okeechobee, it created a storm surge that breached the lake's dikes, flooding several hundred square miles of land. The death toll from the storm was estimated at 2,000. Many in the flooded areas of perished because they could not be rescued from higher ground or buildings and trees.

For Donald's father, financier John Augustus Roebling II, the hurricane was a personal tragedy. He had a winter home near Lake Okeechobee and was well acquainted with South Florida. As John Roebling reflected on the fact so many deaths had been caused by the inability to rescue people from areas made inaccessible by floodwaters, he concluded there was a humanitarian need, and perhaps even financial potential, for a rescue vehicle that could traverse both land and water.

When a less devastating but still destructive and life taking hurricane struck South Florida in 1933, he decided it was time to act. John Roebling chose a Machiavellian approach; he would harness the mechanical

During the invasion of Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert islands on November 20, 1943, U.S. Marines rush forward from the Amtrak landing craft. The Amtraks were in short supply at Tarawa.

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Author's Collection

Donald Roebling, the wealthy inventor of the amphibious vehicle that became the primary landing craft of American forces during the war in the Pacific, stands with Admiral Ralph E. Davidson following the ceremony during which Roebling received the Medal of Merit in 1946.

creativity of his nonconformist and to that point relatively unproductive son to build a rescue machine.

Donald seized the challenge with gusto and with the dedicated assistance of associates Earl Debolt, Warren Cottrell, and S.A. "Al" Williams, set about designing and building the first version of an amphibious rescue tractor.

Donald Roebling concluded there were two primary challenges to overcome. The first was to create a vehicle light enough to maintain buoyancy without sacrificing the strength needed for overland travel through difficult terrain. The second was to design a single propulsion system for both land and water. Roebling's answer to the first was to use a relatively new lightweight material called Duralumin. His answer to the second was an ingenious system of bogie and idler wheel-driven tracks for land with T-shaped cleats attached for movement in water.

While the forming of the large Duralumin structural parts was sublet to the Bushnell-Lyons Iron Works in Tampa, the machining of most other parts and all final assembly was accomplished in Roebling's machine shop and garage. Testing of the machine at various points throughout the development involved clinking around the mansion's brick driveways and plunging into its huge swimming pool. Following two years of design and construction work, a first model of what Roebling had decided to call "The Alligator" was deemed ready for field testing.

This first machine looked like a huge shoebox. It was 24 feet long, nine feet, 10 inches wide, and weighed 14,350 pounds. Power was provided by a 92-horsepower, six-cylinder "flat head" Chrysler marine engine. Crawling over the mangrove swamps and open plains that surrounded Clearwater in the 1930s, the land speed of 25 miles per hour was deemed satisfactory.

Donald and his team knew they could do better and set about more versions of the machine. Completed in early 1937, their third design was four feet shorter and almost 8,000 pounds lighter. The width remained nine feet, 10 inches. Roebling would later explain that while the length was based on reasonably solid engineering principles the width was based on the fact that the doors to his garage were only 10 feet wide.

In mid-1937, *Life* sent a team to Clearwater. The resulting pictorial article in the October 4 issue was titled "Roebling's Alligator for Florida Rescue." It is fortuitous for America that the article was read by Fleet Battleship Force Commander Rear Admiral Edward C. Kalbfus. With the thought that Roebling's invention might hold military promise, Kalbfus brought it to the attention of Fleet Marine Commander Major General Louis McCarty Little, who sent a copy to Commandant of the Marine Corps Major General Thomas Holcomb.

Japanese imperial expansion had made possible war in the Pacific a primary focus of Navy planning. Amphibious assaults were a key element of such planning, and there was at that time no adequate transport for the mission of landing troops on Japanese-held islands. General Holcomb recognized the potential of Roebling's amphibious machine and directed Brig. Gen. Frederick Bradman, president of the Marine Equipment Board at Quantico, to evaluate the Roebling vehicle and make recommendations. Bradman assigned Major John A. Kaluf to investigate the military potential of the Alligator.

Kaluf observed and took 16mm movies of the Alligator performing on land and water and even personally operated the Alligator in both environments. His enthusiastic recommendation to the Marine Equipment Board was that Roebling's machine was precisely what was needed to transition fighting troops from sea to land.

Major Kaluf was able to convince Roebling to construct a completely new Alligator that satisfied initial military specifications. A fourth-generation Alligator was delivered in May 1940 and the redesigned militarized (fifth-generation) Alligator was delivered to the Marine Corps five months later. It had a far sleeker and decid-

Author's Collection

Photographed in the driveway of Donald Roebling's Florida estate, Roebling and his co-workers pose with the fourth generation amphibious vehicle that became the famed Amtrak during World War II.

edly more military appearance. It was powered by a Lincoln-Zephyr engine rated at 120 horsepower. Combined with other design improvements, this new Alligator produced a speed of 29 miles per hour on land and just short of 10 miles per hour in water. Following extensive testing at Quantico and participation in a fleet exercise in the Caribbean, the Navy Department asked Donald Roebling if he could make this model of what they now termed an "Amtrak" (Amphibious Vehicle-Tracked) stronger by constructing it from steel.

Lacking the capability to produce Alligators in volume, Roebling, due to some combination of friendship and confidence in their ability, employed the Food Machinery Corporation (FMC) plant in Dunedin, Florida. FMC made agricultural and food-processing equipment, but with war clearly on the horizon agreed to work with Roebling and the government to develop and build a steel-hulled Alligator.

Within just a few months, two steel Alligators were delivered for military evaluation. When a $3.3 million government contract for 200 more amtraks followed, FMC began immediate conversion of its new citrus sprayer and turbine pump manufacturing plant in Lakeland, Florida, to the exclusive construction of the LVT (Landing Vehicle Tracked).

This first military Alligator was identified as LVT-1. It had no armor plate and only light armament consisting of two .30-caliber air-cooled machine guns. An enclosed two-man crew cab was forward on the hull. Instrumentation and controls were rudimentary. Movement was accomplished very much as in automobiles of the era. The right foot operated the accelerator and the left foot operated the clutch as the transmission was hand-shifted through a series of three gears. Push the reverse levers forward, and the LTV backed through the same three-speed transmission. Two steering levers controlled the power output drive-track

The U.S. military modified the basic Roebling invention to its own specifications. One of the later incarnations of the Alligator was the LVT-4 Water Buffalo with an enclosed driver's compartment and a pair of Browning machine guns to add fire support for assault troops.

clutches and brakes on land and water. Full forward on both levers engaged the tracks at full power. The lever on the side to which a turn was to be made was pulled part of the way to slow or full back to stop that track. The opposite track maintained power to drive the LVT through the turn on land or water.

The first overseas deployment of a LVT detachment was in May 1942, when Company A, 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 5th Marines left Norfolk for New Zealand. It arrived just in time to be included in the plan for landings on Guadalcanal and the adjacent islands of Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo. The Alligator LVT-1 saw use in that operation, which commenced on August 7, 1942, but only as a logistical support vehicle carrying cargo and ammunition to the beach and evacuating wounded.

The first actual combat use of the LVT-1 was at Tarawa November 20, 1943. Of 125 amtraks deployed only 35 were still operational at the end of the first day. This made it obvious the LTV-1 was not quite ready to assume an offensive role. Yet, its ability to deliver troops directly to the shore was of such critical importance that it gained the support needed to fund a succession of improved models.

The larger and more powerful LVT-2 Water Buffalo entered the war as a lightly armored 32,500-pound assault amphibian at Bougainville on November 1, 1943, followed by Kwajalein Atoll in February 1944. It carried a crew of six and was armed with machine guns and a 37mm howitzer mounted in a tank-type turret. It still had no ramp, making it necessary for the 24 troops it could carry to continue going over the side and recover from an eight-foot drop to the ground to meet the enemy.

The LVT-3, which was to have a much improved drivetrain, remained in development while the LVT-4, a larger and more powerful version of the Water Buffalo, finally equipped with a stern ramp to deploy troops, landed at Saipan June 15, 1944. Providing clearing firepower was the new, 20-ton LVT-A4 armored amtrak carrying a 75mm howitzer. These two vehicles performed admirably at Saipan and in the invasions of Guam and Tinian in July, Moratai and the Paulaus in September, and Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945.

On Easter Sunday of 1945, the Japanese at Okinawa were introduced to the 38,600-pound stern ramp LVT-3 Bushmaster. Its two Cadillac V-8 engines produced a combined 220 horsepower. They were coupled to the tracks with a Borg-Warner automatic-shift fluid-drive transmission designed to maintain peak power under all conditions.

Like the LTVs themselves, the tactics for deploying them were continually refined. LVTs that had required an hour or more to unload from a ship were now launched in just minutes from the bow doors of the Navy's versatile LST (Landing Ship, Tank). Communicating by radio, the launched LVTs maneuvered into a standard assault formation line of departure.

At the signal, all LTVs headed for the beach with the invading troops crouched below the protective sides of the open cargo compartment. The cacophony of roaring engines, bursting shells, and bullets pinging off the armor combined with the pitching and rolling that quickly produced seasickness, caused most of the troops to welcome the crunch of contact with the beach, despite the fact it signaled they were about to enter the fury of battle.

LVTs would see service in all branches of the services and in all theaters in World War II, but their greatest contribution to victory was the

Author's Collection

The military upgunned the LVT-4 to produce the LVT-4(A) mounting a 75mm howitzer. The howitzer was capable of taking on Japanese bunkers and pillboxes during island fighting.

role they played in securing the Pacific islands so strategically critical to any invasion of the Japanese mainland. These islands could be shelled from the sea and bombed from the air for days, but in the end they had to be secured by ground forces landed from the sea. Landing boats could not circumvent the reefs and sandbars that fringed most Pacific islands. This forced the landing troops to disembark and wade long distances to the beach, often under heavy enemy fire. Without the ability of the tracked LVTs to land troops directly on the shore, causalities in the Pacific would have been much greater.

Nearly 20,000 LVTs were produced during World War II. When the atomic bomb ended the war, negating the need to invade the Japanese mainland and what would have without question been the war's most horrendous and costly campaign, surplus LVTs were eagerly accepted into the armies of other countries. Hulking descendants of the original Alligator with far advanced engine, drive, navigation, and weapons systems continue to serve the Marines to this day.

Donald Roebling died August 29, 1959, from complications following gall bladder surgery. His multifaceted legacy is one of extreme generosity with his time and wealth to positively influence the interests of mankind—but never without emphasis on his invention of a machine meant for humanitarian purposes that saved military lives and helped shorten a war.

In 1984 the prototype Alligator was moved from the Marine Reserve Center in Tampa to the United States Marine Corps Museum at Quantico, Virginia, where it was placed on display following an extensive restoration. □

This is author R.J. Seese's first contribution to WWII History. *He resides in Gainesville, Florida, and researches and writes on a variety of historical topics.*

By Brent Douglas Dyck

Hitler's Stolen Children

The Nazi regime kidnapped hundreds of Polish children to raise them as sons and daughters of the Third Reich.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1943, MALGORZATA TWARDECKI, A SINGLE MOTHER living in Nazi-occupied Poland, received an ominous order to bring her five-year-old son to the local town council office by 6 the following morning. He was to be sent on a holiday to improve his "health."

Malgorzata's son, Alojzy, had blond hair and blue eyes. When Twardecki refused to obey the order, the military police arrived and took the young boy to the district office where he, along with other village children with similar characteristics, were led by SS officers to the local train station. Without being told where her son was being sent, Malgorzata watched the train leave with her only son on it.

"You can't imagine what it is like to have a child stolen. We didn't give them our children. They stole them," Malgorzata said years later. "Nobody had ever done anything as terrible as this."

Alojzy was just one of approximately 200,000 Polish children who were stolen by the Nazis between 1939 and 1944 and sent back to Germany to be "Germanized." When the German Army invaded Poland in September 1939, the invaders were struck by the abundance of blond-haired and blue-eyed children. Heinrich Himmler, the Reichsführer (national leader) of the SS, said in a speech to officers in Posen in October 1943, "It is our duty to take their children with us, to remove them from their environment, if necessary by robbing or stealing them" and send them to Germany.

Since the Nazis believed that Poles were inferior to themselves, the notion of Aryan-looking Poles conflicted with their ideology. How can Poles be an inferior race if some of them look just like the ideal German? To reconcile this dilemma, the Nazis propagated the idea that these children were actually descended from German blood. Therefore, the Nazis convinced themselves that they were not stealing children but were merely reclaiming lost blood that belonged to the Fatherland. Poland was not alone in suffering this tragedy; Aryan-looking children from Czechoslovakia, Slovenia, Belorussia, and the Ukraine were also stolen and sent to Germany.

In October 1939, Hitler created the office of the Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom with Himmler at its head. Its aim was to help resettle the occupied territories with a German population. In February 1942, SS Gruppenführer (major general) Ulrich Greifelt from Himmler's office issued directive 67/1. Polish children with suitable Aryan characteristics would be identified and taken away from their parents under the pretext that their health was at risk. The children would be sent to either Lodz or Kalisz where they would be photographed and analyzed according to 62 physical characteristics, including the color of hair and eyes, the length of the nose, the thickness of the lips, and posture. Even the size of a girl's pelvis was measured for reproductive reasons.

If the children were found to be suitably Aryan, then those between the ages of two and six were to be sent to maternity, or Lebensborn, homes in Germany where they would await adoption by a proper SS family. False birth certificates with new German names and birthplaces would be issued to hide the children's true identities. In many instances the Nazis would give the child a similar sounding last name so it would be easier for the child to remember.

SS doctors examine a large group of Polish children who seem to exhibit Aryan features. The Nazis forcibly took hundreds of Polish children away from their families with the intent to raise them as Germans.

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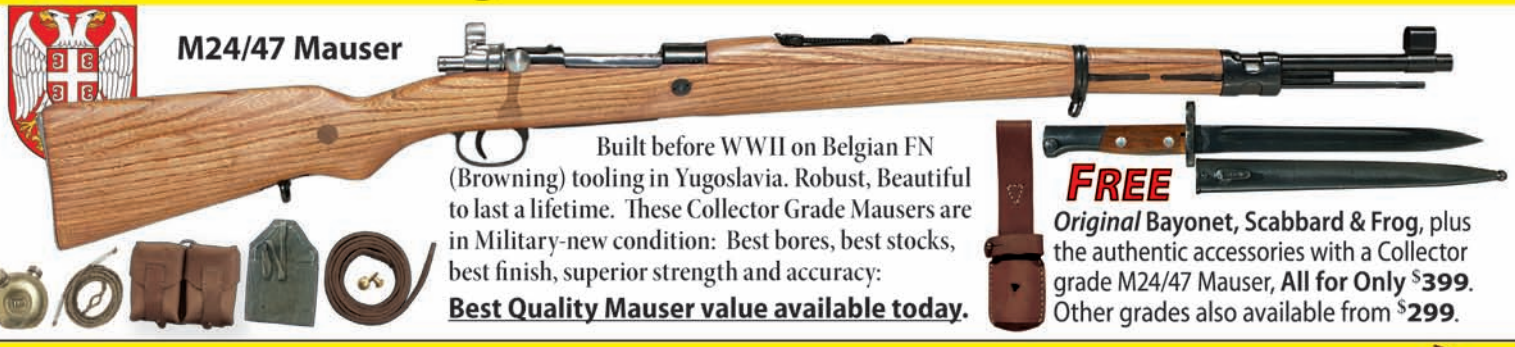

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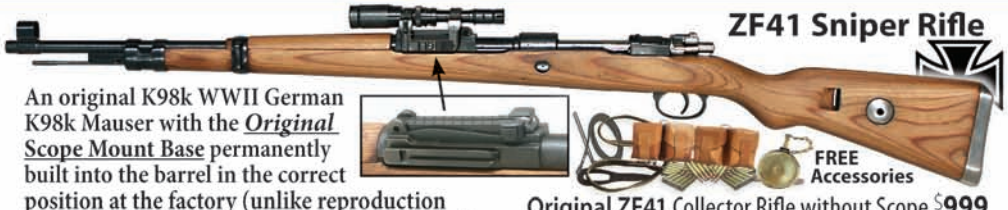

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Barbara Mikolajczyk became Baber Mickler, Helena Fornalczyk's new name was Helena Former, Alodia Witaszek was now Alice Wittke, and Helena Fice was changed to Helene Fischer. Children who failed the medical test and were deemed not to be Aryan enough were sent to the Auschwitz and Treblinka concentration camps, where many were murdered.

Children between the ages of six and 12 who passed the tests were to be sent to German Motherland, or Heimschulen, schools where they would be taught to become good Aryans. The goal was to erase any trace of their native heritage and reshape them as loyal Nazis. They were taught to speak German; if any children spoke their mother tongue they were either deprived of food or whipped with a strap. The children were forced to wear uniforms with swastikas, sing military songs, and were taught Nazi beliefs. They were also forced to endure countless hours of drills and marches to destroy any sense of individuality.

Once the children were suitably "Germanized," they were available for adoption by German families. Historian Richard Lukas writes that some Polish girls with Aryan characteristics were even sent to SS maternity homes in Germany where they became "breeding material" for SS officers.

The Nazis used several methods to capture the children. At first the Nazis targeted blond-haired and blue-eyed children at Polish orphanages and foster homes. One boy recalled his experience: "In 1940 four boys, all of us fair haired, were taken from the Sienkiewiczowka orphanage to the Health Department for examination…. Our blood was tested, all parts of the body, the head, etc., measured, our hair, skin, etc. examined. Eventually I was taken to Bruczkow…. We were taught German and forbidden to speak Polish…. I spent a year and a half at an SS school… Going to church and speaking Polish were punished by flogging and deprivation of food…. We were told that we would be Germans from then on, and we were given new names…. Later we were assigned to farmers…. I was told to address the farmer and his wife as 'father' and 'mother' in order to forget more quickly that I came from another country. My name was to be Johann Suhling instead of Jan Sulisz."

The Nazis also confiscated the children of Poles who had been sent to concentration camps. One camp survivor, Josef Olszacki, said: "In 1944, following my arrest and deportation to a concentration camp, my daughters Regina, aged 14, and Anna Maria, aged 10, were summoned to the Arbeitsamt (employment office) and later to the Race Office. I did not see my daughters after I had returned from the camp; they were no longer there. What I know about them comes only from my foster daughter who had brought them up. During an examination at the Race Office, both daughters were pronounced 'racially valuable'…. I know from a nun who was present during the evacuation of children from Kalisz on January 18, 1945, that the children boarded a train and headed toward Poznan. But their destination is unknown."

In some cases the Nazis took children straight from school without any warning. Janek Hammerling was only six years old when the Nazis entered his school in Radom and measured his height, weight, and even his teeth. Shortly afterward, he was sent on a train to a camp in Germany, where he was taught German songs.

Kacper Poldek was seven years old when the Nazis took him, his sister, and two other schoolboys from their school in Nowy Sacz. They were sent directly to a camp in Germany, where they were taught the German language.

Mieczyslaw Domanski was six years old when he was rounded up by the Nazis along with 80 other pupils from his school in Adamow. He was sent to a camp in southern Poland, where he had to wear a German uniform and was beaten if he spoke Polish.

Finally, the Nazis took Aryan-looking children directly away from their Polish parents. Maria Komsyk later testified: "I had two children: a boy aged six … and a girl…. In 1940 I was arrested by the German gendarmerie because a German neighbour had informed against me. With two small children, I could not agree to do the washing for her.… One of the gendarmes took the children away from me, while the other one led me to the Arbeitsamt.… I was deported to Lubeck for forced labour.… I stayed there until 1942…. Till this day I do not know what happened to my children."

In other cases parents received a notice from the SS telling them to bring their children to the local train station at a certain time to go on a holiday. This is what happened to young Alojzy. He was sent to Germany, where he was adopted by a member of the Nazi Party. He was taught to speak German, and his name was even changed to the more German sounding Alfred Binderberger. Young and impressionable, Alojzy soon became such a follower of Adolf Hitler that when his adoptive father took down the picture of Hitler over his bed when the war was over Alojzy called him a "traitor."

Sometimes the Nazis employed the notorious Brown Sisters to find suitable children for them. The Brown Sisters were female nurses who were dedicated to the Nazi cause. They worked for the Nazi Welfare Organization and searched through villages and towns for Aryan-looking children. According to Lukas, they used "candy and even slices of bread as lures to attract boys and girls."

Striking up conversations with children, the Brown Sisters inquired where they lived and if there were any similar looking brothers or sisters at home. The Sisters would then relate their information to the local SS authorities. The children would then disappear from their homes usually at night and never to be heard from again.

Sometimes children were assigned for Germanization even before they were born. During the war, thousands of women from occupied countries, especially Poland, were rounded up by the Nazis and sent to Germany to support the war effort. These women labored on farms, were employed as servants, or worked in factories.

Signal

National Archives

ABOVE: Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler looks closely at a young Polish boy who has been judged as a potential candidate for a Nazi program to raise children from other countries as German, kidnapping them from their parents and placing them in the homes of loyal Nazis. LEFT: This photograph of a Polish girl was taken at a euphemistically titled "youth holding camp" in 1943.

In July 1943, Himmler issued a decree concerning pregnant foreign workers and their potential offspring. The decree stated that if the parents were "racially valuable" the child should be taken away from the mother and either placed with proper SS foster families or raised in Lebensborn homes. Children of foreign workers that were not "racially valuable" were to be eliminated.

A Nazi document from the German city of Wurzburg referred to this process: "Polish woman NN (no name), born on … is expecting a baby (… month of pregnancy), whose father is Pole NN…. The mother's request for an abortion was rejected, since there is a likelihood of racially good offspring. The NSV is kindly asked to take charge of the baby following its birth."

It is estimated that Lebensborn homes took care of over 90,000 children of whom the majority were "racially valuable" and had been born to foreign workers in Germany.

Malgorzata Twardecki was one of the lucky parents. She was reunited with her stolen child —albeit 10 years after he was taken. Many Polish parents never saw their children again.

After the war, the Polish government created the Operation for the Revindication of Children headed by Dr. Roman Hrabar. Its mission was to reunite stolen children with their rightful parents, a formidable task. Researchers had to first determine what the children's names had been changed to and then where they were living in the West. Once found, many German parents refused to believe that their "children" were Polish and refused to give them up to the authorities. The task was made doubly hard when children did not speak Polish anymore and had no memory of their original life or family.

Lastly, the Polish Mission could expect little help from British and American authorities to send children behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. By the end of 1950, the Polish government had only been able to repatriate 3,404 children back to Poland. It is estimated that only 40,000, or 20 percent, of the estimated 200,000 children who were stolen from Poland by the Nazis were ever reunited with their families. Thousands of others and their descendants still live in Germany today unaware of their true identity and heritage.

As Dr. Hrabar wrote, Adolf Hitler's theft of Polish children is one of the "blackest page[s] in the annals of humanity." □

Brent Douglas Dyck is a Canadian historian and teacher. His articles have appeared in the British journal, The Historian.

By Jon Diamond

Blunder or Deception?

General Joseph Stilwell's suppression of intelligence reports on Japanese troop strength at Myitkyina led to controversial tactical decisions and strategic outcomes.

GENERAL JOSEPH W. "VINEGAR JOE" STILWELL AND HIS SINO-AMERICAN Myitkyina Task Force (MTF), in a coup de main attack, seized the vital Japanese-controlled airfield just west of the town of Myitkyina on the great Irrawaddy River in northern Burma on May 17, 1944.

The MTF was made up of Stilwell's American 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), codenamed Galahad but also known by its newspaper sobriquet, Merrill's Marauders; elements of two of his Chinese regiments that he had trained at Ramgarh, India; and Office of Strategic Services (OSS)-led Kachin scouts. The dazzling military feat, first through Burma's Hukawng and Mogaung Valleys and then over the Kumon Range, was incomplete, though, since it was not until August 3, after a protracted and bloody 78-day siege, that the well-fortified town of Myitkyina itself was captured.

Some of Stilwell's key American subordinates in the MTF asserted that faulty, repetitive underestimates of the Japanese garrison's strength led to poor tactical and strategic decision making that necessitated the lengthy siege.

According to contemporary historian Geoffrey Perret, "What Stilwell wanted was the airfield. His plan was to take it, fly in Chinese reinforcements, then capture the town, a mile away. This plan was entirely his own.... His chief of staff, Brigadier General Haydon Boatner, wasn't asked his views on it.... The only people he ... discussed it with were Merrill and his own son, whom he'd installed as his G-2. Colonel Joseph Stilwell, Jr., assured his father that there were only a few hundred Japanese left at Myitkyina: too few to hold the town, too few to defend the airfield."

Kachin scouts defend their dug-in positions in Burma with an assortment of Allied weapons. The scout standing at center carries the British Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE) rifle. The scout at lower right holds an American M3 submachine gun, commonly known as the grease gun.

Both: Author's Collection, USAMHI

General Joseph Stilwell, commander of American troops in the China-Burma-India Theater, confers with Brigadier General Frank Merrill of Merrill's Marauders fame and Colonel Charles Hunter at an airfield near Myitkyina.

It is true that the airfield's capture on May 17 removed the threat of Japanese fighters stationed there, which had been interdicting the Air Transport Command (ATC) pilots' more southerly and less onerous Hump Route from India to China to avoid the geographically hazardous northerly flight path over the Himalayan peaks. However, the taking of Myitkyina town was a prerequisite for completing the Ledo Road's juncture with the Burma Road, thereby establishing a point where land communication could be reopened with China via an all-weather road with a gasoline pipeline.

In a scathing military commentary long after the war, U.S. Army Colonel Scott McMichael wrote, "Inexplicably, in a display of gross military incompetence, Stilwell completely failed to take advantage of this coup-de-main. Instead of flying in strong infantry reinforcements, food, ammunition ... Stilwell's staff deployed antiair-

We found our most important watch in a soldier's pocket

It's the summer of 1944 and a weathered U.S. sergeant is walking in Rome only days after the Allied Liberation. There is a joyous mood in the streets and this tough soldier wants to remember this day. He's only weeks away from returning home. He finds an interesting timepiece in a store just off the Via Veneto and he decides to splurge a little on this memento. He loved the way it felt in his hand, and the complex movement inside the case intrigued him. He really liked the hunter's back that opened to a secret compartment. He thought that he could squeeze a picture of his wife and new daughter in the case back. He wrote home that now he could count the hours until he returned to the States. This watch went on to survive some harrowing flights in a B-24 bomber and somehow made it back to the U.S. Besides the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star, my father cherished this watch because it was a reminder of the best part of the war for any soldier—the homecoming.

He nicknamed the watch *Ritorno* for homecoming, and the rare heirloom is now valued at $42,000 according to *The Complete Guide to Watches*. But to our family, it is just a reminder that nothing is more beautiful than the smile of a healthy returning GI.

The hunter's back

The Ritorno watch back opens to reveal a special compartment for a keepsake picture or can be engraved.

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Author's Collection, USAMHI

On the march toward the siege lines around the town of Myitkyina, Chinese soldiers pass the bodies of dead Japanese troops killed in earlier action against Allied troops.

craft units and airfield construction troops! As a result, a magnificent opportunity was lost. Stilwell's mental lapse, which no one has ever satisfactorily explained, allowed the Japanese to build up the Myitkyina garrison to the point where it could only be taken after a three-month siege instead of by storm."

Stilwell's failure to take the town of Myitkyina after his initial sensational success at capturing the western airfield was to be one of his greatest humiliations.

Ironically, Stilwell was an intelligence officer on the Western Front during World War I. He trained at the Army General Staff College at Langres, France, and served as an intelligence liaison with the French Army at Verdun and as chief intelligence officer with the IV Army Corps, American Expeditionary Force. During his service between the wars, he was appointed the initial U.S. Army Intelligence Division's language officer for China, and after promotion to major he left for Peking in August 1919.

In 1926, when civil strife between Chinese communists, rival warlords, and Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces was reaching a crescendo, Major Stilwell, who spoke Chinese, was sent into the countryside to gather first-hand information about the extent of the unrest. The intelligence trip was dangerous, with frequent threats to Stilwell's life since he was a foreigner, but he was commended for the thoroughness of his report and he was on his way to becoming America's foremost military expert on China.

In Burma in 1943-1944, while leading the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC), Stilwell possessed a strong streak of the unorthodox while in the field, which was unusual for a West Point graduate. Due to his strong sense of family bonding, he included his son and sons-in-law on his staff. According to historian Shelford Bidwell, he "liked to keep a surrogate family of a few trusted friends near him."

Stilwell biographer Barbara Tuchman noted, "Stilwell had sent for his son, Joe Jr., then a lieutenant colonel, who arrived in November [1942] to serve as G-2, as well as his sons-in-law Colonel Ernest Easterbrook and Major Ellis Cox who came to join the Ramgarh staff … serving as liaison officers with the Chinese divisions … [since] the family [was] always Stilwell's main anchor in life."

According to Boatner, "When I returned to NCAC headquarters about 25 April [1944] … both Easterbrook and Cox were then on duty in that headquarters then at Shaduzup with JWS [General Stilwell]. The former, a very fine man and officer, served as headquarters aide to JWS and Cox was in the G-2 section under Little Joe. Neither ever took advantage of family relationships nor did anything other than their prescribed duties. Although occasionally U.S. Army generals have had their sons and relatives serve directly under them, it is universally recognized as being bad practice…. Little Joe was volatile and impetuous like his father and both consciously and unconsciously would involve himself in other than intelligence matters."

Colonel Charles Hunter, initially Galahad's deputy commander, then the H Force leader that captured the Myitkyina airfield, and finally the overall commander of American ground forces under Stilwell engaged at Myitkyina, derisively noted that many did not appreciate the "erratic and nepotistical direction" of operations in the NCAC. Stilwell's previous "end-runs" with Galahad at Walawbum, Shaduzup, and Inkangahtawng were initially successful in their immediate objectives, but "thanks in part to deficiencies in theater intelligence, were disappointing in the follow-up."

Hunter contended that this was to be especially true for the assault on Myitkyina, which was "seized with sensationally neat precision, but what should have been the following quick occupation of the town was turned by lack of planning, international and interservice involvements, and the manipulation of intelligence into a grueling ten-week siege."

Were intelligence figures of Japanese strength at Myitkyina town intentionally underestimated, and, if so, for what reason? Did the unreliable intelligence estimates of Japanese troop strength adversely prolong the capture of the town? Finally, did the low numbers of Japanese troops believed to be in Myitkyina by Colonel Stilwell and his G-2 staff cloud General Stilwell's judgment into not utilizing veteran British troops allocated to assist in his attack on Myitkyina?

According to Hunter's postwar memoirs and other writings, Merrill, on his arrival at the Myitkyina airfield on May 19, was informed that local intelligence from Galahad troops and Kachin scouts had put between 400 and 500 Japanese in Myitkyina on the day of the airfield's capture (May 17); however, due to rapid reinforcement, the town's garrison quickly swelled to over 2,000 troops or two and a half battalions.

Additional reinforcements from other Japanese divisions were also anticipated to arrive in Myitkyina from the south. Merrill took Hunter's estimates of a rapidly increasing Japanese garrison size at Myitkyina to General Stilwell's headquarters at Shaduzup on the Kamaing Road between Walawbum and Inkangahtawng, which were all sites of previous Galahad operations preceding the Myitkyina assault.

These figures were downgraded back to 400-500 by Colonel Stilwell, the G-2 officer, as well as by the intelligence staff at the MTF Headquarters that Hunter noted was "at this time inexplicably back at Naubum."

The village of Naubum, situated on the Tanai River just west of the Kumon Range, was the base from which Galahad's 1st and 3rd Battal-

Author's Collection, USAMHI

After the capture of Myitkyina by American troops in August 1944, a soldier takes a long drink from his government issue canteen. Controversy surrounds General Joseph Stilwell's use of intelligence concerning Japanese troop strength at Myitkyina.

ions started their trek to Myitkyina on May 1. At Naubum, General Merrill had with him the equivalent of a divisional headquarters, which was not to march with the assaulting Galahad and Chinese troops to Myitkyina but would be held back until the airfield was reached. The estimate of 400-500 Japanese in Myitkyina would not be modified despite the fact that during the ensuing days of grueling combat more than that number of Japanese were killed in action at the airstrip and in the town's environs.

The discrepancy between the intelligence estimates harbored by the senior MTF headquarters at Naubum and the true figures ascertained on the battlefield rankled Hunter to such a degree that he stated after the war that the low enemy estimates were "to deceive the Chinese troops into a sense of shame in view of their demonstrated lack of aggressiveness. Neither the Chinese nor Galahad fell for this intelligence. The concept of deliberate deception is my personal opinion. Colonel Stilwell, the Intelligence officer [Stilwell's son] could not have been as ignorant of the situation as the intelligence estimates furnished Galahad indicated in June and July … if he was he should have been relieved … this deliberate manipulation of intelligence created a complete lack of confidence in the higher headquarters' estimates of enemy strength such that upon its receipt, it was usually discarded."

Galahad's combat troops had found Japanese unit identifications marked on the dead soldiers' trousers. The estimate of 400 to 500 Japanese troops in Myitkyina had become so rigidly adhered to by Stilwell's and the MTF headquarters at Shaduzup and eventually at the airfield that attempts to revise this estimate based on the number of Japanese soldiers known to have been killed in and around Myitkyina were ignored.

Hunter bitterly commented, "Our positive unit identifications and casualty counts were brushed aside." Furthermore, Galahad, within a couple of weeks of seizing the airfield, began to capture and interrogate some 50 Japanese soldiers from Myitkyina's defenses. After obtaining information from the Japanese prisoners, it became evident to Hunter and others that there were more than 2,000 Japanese combatants in the town of Myitkyina.

Subsequent accounts from the Japanese have placed that number at 4,500 Japanese troops in Myitkyina at one time during the siege. As Hunter explained after the war, even Galahad's estimate of more than 2,000 enemy soldiers in Myitkyina was still "way short of the correct figure, as we learned after the war from Japanese officers, for a very simple reason. Every Japanese soldier we had hitherto killed or captured had been found to have his name and unit marked in India ink on the fly of his breeches. In June we began to find bodies without this marking, and so could not tell whether they belonged to units already identified or to new ones. Our estimate, therefore, based on the known organizational strength of positively identified units, was incomplete, and we did not suspect that at one point in the battle there were some 4,500 enemy troops opposing us."

According to Boatner's memoirs, "That

Continued on page 67

Heavy Losses Anticipated

A GUNNER ABOARD A U.S. B-29 BOMBER LIVED THROUGH HARROWING TIMES DURING MISSIONS AGAINST THE JAPANESE.

BY ROBERT F. DORR & DOUGLAS L. CARTER

WHEN the Boeing B-29 Superfortress crews poured out of the briefing at North Field, Tinian, on the afternoon of March 9, 1945, they were disgruntled. Some were angry.

Sergeant William J. "Reb" Carter, the left blister gunner on a B-29, remembered four words: "Heavy losses are anticipated...." The men had just been told they were going to Tokyo with firebombs—which they had expected. They had also been told what they were not expecting. The B-29 crews would attack at low altitude, at night, without guns or ammunition.

They would be unarmed and exposed over Japan, the destination they called "The Empire."

Carter's airplane commander, Captain Dean Fling, was normally a mix of congeniality and stern, businesslike bearing. Today, Fling was abrupt.

"No guns," said Fling.

"No guns?" someone said. "This cannot be right."

"It is."

"There is trouble ahead," thought Red Carter, who was a gunner but would be carrying no ammunition today.

"LeMay is going to get us killed," somebody said.

The reference was to Maj. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, commander of the B-29 force arrayed against Japan at airfields on three islands in the Marianas chain in the northwest Pacific, Guam,

Photo: Doug Carter

Escorted by North American P-51 Mustang fighters during part of their long flight home from a raid on Tokyo, B-29 Superfortresses head for their base on Saipan in the Marianas in this dramatic painting by artist Robert Taylor titled *Valor in the Pacific.* INSET: Sergeant William J. "Reb" Carter was the left blister gunner aboard the B-29 bomber nicknamed *God's Will.* Carter's bomber was among those that executed the devastating firebomb raid on Tokyo on March 9-10, 1945.

Saipan, and Tinian. LeMay commanded Twenty-First Bomber Command, which included Carter's outfit, the 9th Bombardment Group. LeMay's unprecedented battle order for the day dictated that the bombers would carry no ammunition for their defensive guns. Many B-29 crews in LeMay's command were going to ignore the order, but the Fling crew in *God's Will* was going to follow it to the letter.

Said Carter, "I hope the big brass know something we don't."

Until now, bombing mostly by daylight and from high altitude, B-29s had not been having much impact on the Japanese war machine. Swatted around by the jet stream—those furious winds at high altitude that had been undiscovered until the B-29 came along—they had been getting poor bombing results. LeMay had taken over from his predecessor, Maj. Gen. Haywood Hansell, precisely because the B-29 campaign against Japan was not working. Without asking permission, LeMay decided to bring his crews down to low level.

On this day, 334 Superfortresses would take off from Guam, Saipan, and Tinian in early evening. They would arrive over The Empire shortly after midnight.

On tonight's mission, the primary weapons, 500-pound E-46 chemical incendiary bombs, would rain down on Tokyo like giant firecrackers. Each bomb contained 47 small bomblets, called M69s, strapped together inside a metal cylinder fused to break open at 2,000 or 2,500 feet and to scatter the individual bomblets. Three to five seconds after the big firecrackers hit, they would go off. An explosive charge would violently eject a sack full of gel that would burn intensely. The sack held the gel in one spot, thereby igniting a hotter fire. Other weapons being employed were the E-28 incendiary cluster bomb and the M47, a petroleum-based bomb that would be carried by the lead B-29s.

Typical of 4,000 B-29 crewmen heading for Japan on the night of March 9, 1945, William Jesse "Reb" Carter was born in the small town of Omaha, Georgia, delivered by a doctor who arrived at his house in a horse and buggy. Carter's family moved to Atlanta when he was a child. They were very much people of the Deep South.

National Archives

ABOVE: Taxiing into position for takeoff from West Field on the island of Tinian in the Marianas, Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers of the 462nd Bomb Group set out on a mission against a major Japanese city. BELOW: Shown in flight, this B-29 Superfortress of the 40th Bombardment Squadron, 6th Bombardment Group stays in formation during a mission to bomb a target in the home islands of Japan. Late in the war, major military and industrial targets became scarce after bombers laid waste to much of Japan's infrastructure.

Percy Usher Tucker from Robert F. Dorr Collection

As a teenager, the tall, toothy Carter was the local whiz in yo-yo competitions. He was in the 11th grade and was 18, a little old for his level in high school and 10 months older than a distant relative—Jimmy, to the southwest in Plains, who would one day become president—on December 7, 1941.

That Sunday afternoon, Carter was listening to the family's favorite afternoon radio show *Top Tunes* on Atlanta station WATL with his parents, William and Anne, and his 14-year-old brother Pete. Carter was consuming the last of the cake from his birthday party four days previously. The cake's vanilla icing was a special treat for him.

A few minutes after 2:30 PM Eastern Standard Time, a Mutual Broadcasting System bulletin reported events at a place called Pearl Harbor. "Turn the sound up," Carter's mother said.

"This is an outrage."

Carter looked at his dad, who was an accountant, and saw a furrow in his brow. There was no accounting for what they were hearing now. "The Japanese have attacked us and we are going to be in some kind of war," the older man said.

He gave his sons a special look. They were a loving family. "I hope this thing won't last long enough for either of you to be in it."

At North Field, Tinian, following the briefing and a quick, mild, late afternoon thunderstorm so typical of these islands, gunner Reb Carter dismounted from a boxy, 4x4 weapons carrier at the hardstand and started toward a B-29 with his crewmates, including airplane commander Dean Fling.

Carter's B-29 today was slotted at the cutting edge of the nighttime, low-level air assault being mounted on the Japanese capital. It was scheduled to be the seventh aircraft from their group over target; the first six would carry M47 incendiaries and use their fiery bombloads to mark the "urban area of Meetinghouse," a code term for Tokyo, for Superfortresses to follow. The rest of the group would follow with larger E-46 bombs.

Carter had no guns to fire if Japanese night fighters found them later tonight, but his role as a scanner, tipping off the flight deck crew about engine operations and events around the aircraft, would never be more important.

Seeing Carter, a member of the line crew who may have been new asked him which plane he was heading for.

"It's *God's Will,*" said Carter.

That was the name of the aircraft. In the night, no one could see the emblem painted on the nose of the bomber, a giant bluish purple shield enclosing a Christian cross bisected by a wide-bladed sword. The name was a nod to the divine intervention that had apparently saved the Fling crew during its first combat mission, but pilot 1st Lt. Harold L. "Pete" Peterson—he sat in the right front seat and would have been called the co-pilot on any other aircraft—had been planning on the name ever since the crew came together in the United States. Instead of pilot and co-pilot, the B-29 had airplane commander and pilot. Peterson was an avid churchgoer.

Takeoff was frightening for B-29 crewmen, especially those in the rear of the aircraft. Every man on Guam, Saipan, and Tinian had seen a B-29 fail to get skyward, falter, and fall into an unforgiving sea dotted with rock formations. The B-29 remained an imperfect aircraft. Four hundred and two B-29s were lost bombing Japan—147 of them to Japanese flak and fighters and 255 to engine fires, mechanical failures, and takeoff crashes.

God's Will lifted into the air from Tinian at 6:21 PM that busy Friday evening. Fling, Peterson, Carter, and other crewmembers did not

know that theirs would inadvertently become the first B-29 from their group to reach the Japanese coast, yet, because of ensuing confusion, one of the last to drop bombs.

If war is moments of terror interrupted by hours of boredom, the long journey across the ocean to Japan was mostly in the latter category. Tonight, there was no aerial formation. Every one of LeMay's Superfortresses was on its own, cruising at low level across an open sea. The Dean Fling crew was out there in the night, hugging the dark Pacific, the Japanese home islands approaching. In the left front seat Fling was listening to his navigator and engineer on the interphone and glancing back and forth at Peterson in the right seat. Occasionally, when a minor problem arose, he cussed. Fling was from Windsor, Illinois, and was not as devout as Peterson.

The bombardier aboard *God's Will* was 1st Lt. Don "Red" Dwyer. He was using his bombsight to give the navigator drift readings. He took off his headset and chatted with pilots

National Archives

Fling and Peterson.

Reb Carter acted as a scanner, keeping his eyes on the No. 1 and No. 2 engines, ready to utter a warning if a mechanical problem revealed itself.

As *God's Will* neared the halfway point, Carter's best friend, Sergeant Richard "Bake" Baker, the radar operator, was unable to find the embattled island of Iwo Jima, soon to become an emergency site for B-29s with battle damage, on his six-inch scope.

Navigator 1st Lt. Phillip Pettit had a radar screen identical to Baker's that was not working, either. The crystal in the radar transmitter that powered both screens was malfunctioning. The radar screens were blank. The only thing Baker or Pettit could see was the illuminated lubber line as it swept around the scope like a second hand of a clock. Nothing else was visible.

Pettit was very junior but was universally

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ABOVE: Arming a B-29 of the 500th Bomb Group at Isley Field on the island of Saipan, ground crewmen scrawl messages across some of the ordnance before it is loaded through the gaping bomb bay of one of the aircraft. LEFT: Civilians flee the flames following a bombing raid on the Ginza District in Tokyo. Many structures in the largest Japanese cities were primarily constructed of wood and provided tinder for the firebombs dropped by American planes.

respected among the crew. Said Baker, "We had an excellent navigator in Pettit. In addition to our navigator, both pilots and the bombardier had some navigation training. But I was not in any position to help. I didn't have an air speed indicator. I didn't have anything on my scope. I was completely blind."

"Fling taught college physical education before he came into the Army Air Corps so he had a good way with people," said Baker. Even if a heavy bomber carrying 11 men was going to get lost on its way to The Empire, "Fling would never demonstrate that he was dissatisfied with any one of us in front of anyone else. If we did anything wrong, that was considered a private matter and when no one else was around he would handle it."

"We were the first ship to reach the coast of Japan," wrote Carter in his forbidden diary, "but we were lost because the radar went out and we were flying in electrical storms."

A dark mass of land to their left gave way to a yellowish glow of the kind that could come only from electric lights.

"That's a city," Carter said over the interphone. "All lit up."

"I think that's Tokyo," said Dwyer from his ringside seat in the nose. "I wonder why they have lights on in the city with us coming to visit them."

"No," said Pettit. "It's Yokohama."

As if considering, Pettit added, "Surely, Tokyo, the seat of government and the number one military target in all of The Empire isn't going to be all lit up like a Christmas tree."

He was wrong.

Incredibly, even as the first pathfinder B-29s were on their final approach, and as a new day began—before the bombs, before the conflagration—street lights in Tokyo were lit. Instead of turning west toward Tokyo, *God's Will* mistakenly continued flying north.

They were in the sky, in the night, off the coast of Japan, on a flight where fuel was critical, with no idea where to turn next.

Carter followed a circuitous path to the March 9-10, 1945, great Tokyo firebomb raid. He took basic training in Greensboro, North Carolina. He went to the college training detachment at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, preparing to go into flight training and to become an officer and a pilot.

On February 14, 1944, at Duquesne, Carter used his fountain pen and cursive handwriting to draft a letter to his girlfriend, Phyllis Ewing—daughter of a prominent jewelry distributor—whom he had met at a swimming pool one Sunday afternoon in Atlanta. Carter was smitten.

He called her his devil, and he began his letter, "My dearest, dearest darling Devil...

"Darling, I don't see how I could ever get such a beautiful, adorable, darling, sweet girl as you." Later in the letter, perhaps feeling anxiety—they were not yet engaged—he wrote: "Don't worry about me quitting loving you because I never will." Carter wrote that they would see each other when he began pilot training at Maxwell Field, Alabama.

Weeks later, he and his buddies were told that the Army had too many pilots and not enough gunners. Instead of Maxwell, Carter was sent to Tyndall Field, Florida, for "flexible gunnery training." His train would pass through his hometown. Carter made a long distance telephone call, not an easy thing to do, and told his Dad the time his train would be in Atlanta on the morning of April 16, 1944.

On arrival, Carter's family and his girlfriend, Phyllis, and her family, were at the station. It is unclear how he pulled it off, but Carter was the only person allowed off the train during the brief stop. He began kissing Phyllis while soldiers leaned out the passenger car windows and began whistling.

After months of intensive gunnery school at Tyndall, Carter earned his gunner's wings and was transferred to Lincoln Field, Nebraska, for additional training. Meanwhile, across the Pacific the seizure of the Marianas island chain opened the way for B-29s to be based in Guam, Saipan, and Tinian. Three days after Tinian was secured, Carter wrote to Phyllis from Lincoln: "The way I feel, knowing you want to marry me now and love me so much, I could lick the whole Jap Army so don't worry about me."

From Lincoln, Carter traveled to McCook Field, Nebraska, where he saw a B-29 for the first time. At McCook, officers and enlisted men from training bases around the United States came together, formed crews, and pressed ahead with preparations, planning, and training. On August 21, 1944, airplane commander Dean Fling remarked that he liked the looks of the men assigned to him.

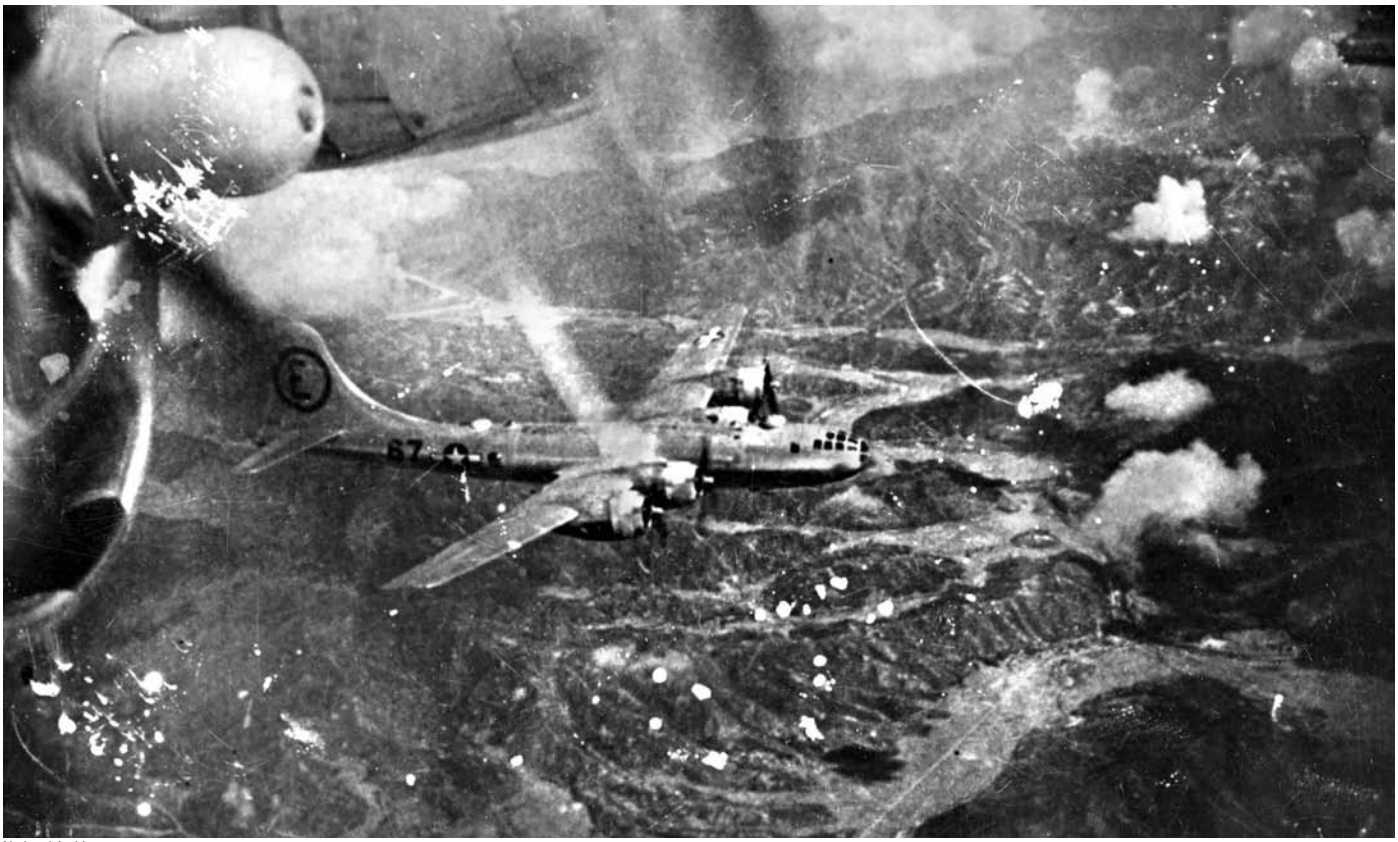
Peterson, the right-seat pilot and the most devout among the crew, had been a varsity athlete in college. In flight training, Peterson's flight instructor was a Hollywood actor—Robert Cummings had been taught to fly by his godfather, Orville Wright.

In addition to Peterson, Fling acquired bombardier Dwyer, navigator Pettit, flight engineer Lawrence Eginton, radio operator Thomas Sulentic, radar operator Baker, central fire control gunner Noah A. "Pappy" Wyatt, left blister gunner Carter, right blister gunner John Emershaw, and tail gunner Norman "Shorty" Fortin.

The Fling crew was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 9th Bombardment Group. Baker wrote that Carter, the only Southerner in the crew, was "friendly as a cocker spaniel" and "did not have an enemy in the world."

Baker noticed that Carter was confident and thorough, whether handling his machine guns or cleaning their barracks living area or pulling the much disliked kitchen police, or KP, duty that helped keep the troops fed. The Fling crew completed a grueling training flight to Cuba. Now, their awareness grew that they would be

When *God's Will* entered the final swarm of B-29s approaching Tokyo, Carter heard the sounds of other aircraft and of gunfire. He saw the searchlights, the flak bursts, the burning urban sprawl rushing toward him.



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taking their B-29 to the western Pacific. They were heading for the real thing.

On January 21, 1945, the Fling crew landed at North Field, Tinian, completing the marathon journey from the United States. The men left McCook in their B-29 and paused at Herrington, Kansas. Their subsequent stops in New Mexico and at Mather Field, California, were typical of the long, winding path from the training grounds of the American Plains to the war zone of the Pacific. The Fling crew proceeded to Hawaii and onward to Kwajalein, and finally Tinian, 38 square miles of coral rock, dust, jungle, and cane fields, crowded with B-29 hardstands, tents, Quonset huts, and docks. It lay 125 miles northeast of Guam and just three miles southwest of Saipan.

The men slept in large tents, each housing the enlisted members of two B-29 crews. They slept on cots on a crushed coral floor.

While LeMay's plan for the great Tokyo firebomb mission was taking shape, the Fling crew flew its fourth mission, traveling to Tokyo on March 4, 1945, the old-fashioned way, taking off before dawn for a daylight, high-altitude strike. In the dark early morning hours flying toward The Empire, Carter snuggled up in the padded tunnel over the bomb bay and caught four hours of sleep.

Over the target, serious trouble befell *Dinah Might,* a B-29 commanded by 1st Lt. Raymond F. "Fred" Malo, not because of Japanese gunfire but because of mechanical problems common with the Superfortress.

Fling announced on the interphone that *God's Will* would escort *Dinah Might* as it attempted to get home. Wrote Carter: "We led Malo's ship to Iwo Jima. Malo's bomb bay doors were stuck in the 'open' position, the fuel transfer was out and the radar was out."

Iwo Jima was within reach, but bitter fighting was taking place there. No B-29 had yet saved itself by landing on the sulfur island being slowly wrested from the Japanese at a cost of 6,800 Marine lives. But with Fling riding herd and Carter watching, Malo did land on Iwo, the very first of 2,251 landings by B-29s that saved crewmembers' lives and redeemed the awful cost of the battle for Iwo Jima.

While the Fling crew got lost at the start of the great Tokyo firebomb mission, Carter mulled over four words that had been uttered at the briefing: "Heavy losses are anticipated."

At the start of the attack, around midnight, pathfinder B-29s dropped heavy incendiaries to mark the target area of the city with a burning X.

When this narrative was written 67 years after the war, fully five members of the *God's Will* crew were alive and articulate. All agreed that they saw the streetlights of the Japanese capital before the pathfinders set the city afire, misunderstood what they were seeing, and continued north. They flew over open water paralleling the coast away from their intended run-in location at Choshi Point.

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ABOVE: During a daylight raid on the Japanese city of Osaka, American B-29 bombers drop their payloads on the target far below. This raid took place in June 1945, and within weeks the war in the Pacific was over. OPPOSITE: Flying over the rugged, mountainous terrain of Japan, B-29 Superfortress bombers wing their way toward targets in the home islands.

They "expended extra fuel in searching for the target," an official report would later say. Their B-29 strayed from clear, windy Tokyo to shrouded, snow-spattered skies above open water just off the coast north of the capital. Had they been a few miles inland, they might have been in the same location where three other B-29s, caught in a more intense part of the same snowstorm, flew into the same mountain at the same time—32 crewmembers killed in a matter of seconds.

God's Will was burning precious gas and was lost. Carter had long since become accustomed to the drone of the R-3350 engines in his ears. He peered from his blister trying to discern some distinctive feature, any distinctive feature, in the early morning darkness.

Over Tokyo, silvery B-29s continued to pass through searchlight beams, incendiary bombs continued to tumble from their bays, and the city burned with such intensity that flyers could smell roasting flesh. Aboard *God's Will,* navigator Pettit and radar operator Baker struggled to get their radar screens to work. Pettit made no attempt at celestial navigation because of poor visibility in a sky now filled with snow. The radar flickered on intermittently. Pettit told Fling that he was seeing Choshi Point on his scope.

He was wrong.

Fling made a 90-degree left turn to head to the west toward Tokyo. *God's Will* made landfall over the Japanese home islands for the first time. About 15 minutes later, Dwyer, looking down from his perch in the nose, saw a mountain covered with snow. Right-seat pilot Peterson saw it too.

"There's a snow-capped peak right below us," Dwyer said over the interphone.

"There's not supposed to be a mountain there," Fling said. There was no mountain near Choshi Point.

Dwyer would later say that *God's Will* came close to slamming into the mountainside. Fling threw the aircraft into an abrupt, climbing 180-degree turn. He pointed the bomber's nose back toward the ocean from which they had just come.

They retraced their route. The radar went on the blink again.

Weary from struggling to get into the right place, the Fling crew was skirting the Japanese

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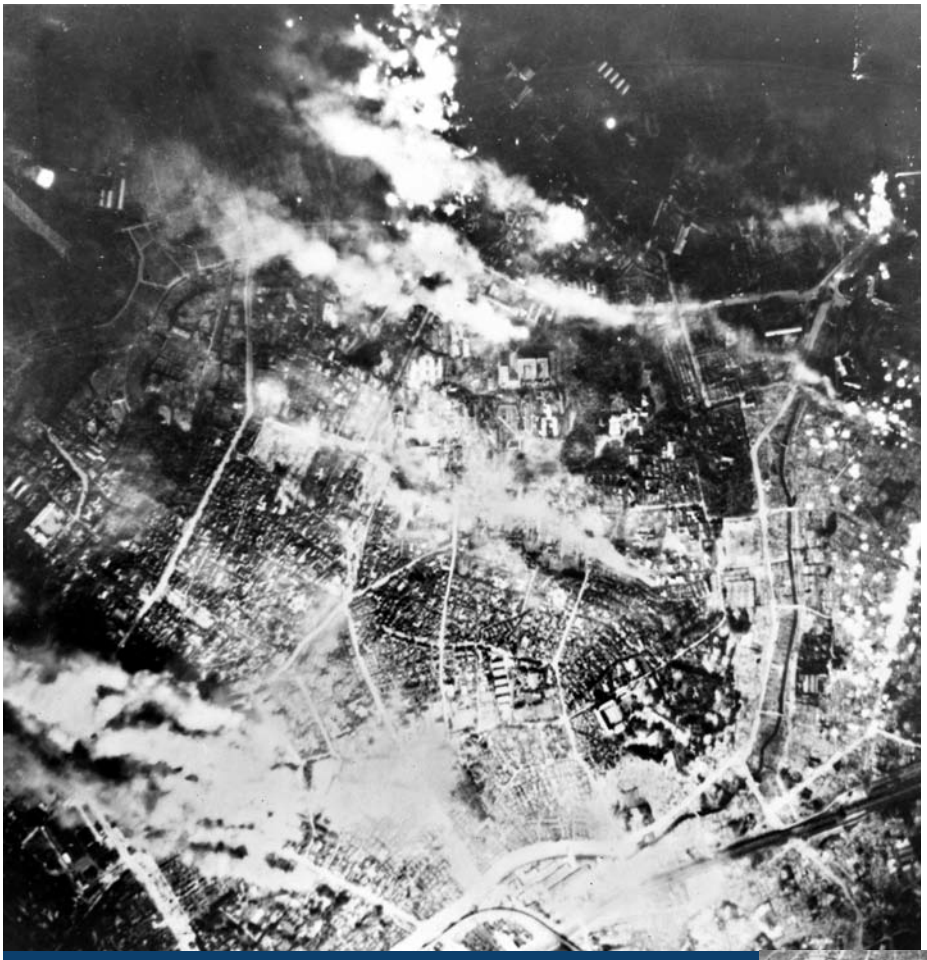

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ABOVE: Tokyo burns fiercely following one of numerous American firebomb raids. This attack was conducted in May 1945, two months after the devastating raid of March 9-10. RIGHT: Several square miles of Tokyo were burned to the ground in the U.S. firebomb raid of March 9-10, 1945, and this photograph gives some indication of the extent of the damage to the city.

coast north and east of Tokyo.

By now, more than 200 B-29s had passed over Tokyo. One was blown out of the sky right over the Imperial Palace, but the heavy losses that had been predicted were not taking place.

The crew of *God's Will* had been lost for an extraordinary, fuel-guzzling 2¼ hours, had nearly slammed into a mountain, and were seething with frustration and anxiety. It was less than a week after Malo's first ever B-29 landing on Iwo Jima, and crews had been briefed that if they couldn't get home, they should try for Iwo.

Fling's men were determined to carry out the mission even though, as Carter noted in his journal, "We knew we wouldn't make it back to base because we were low on gas."

When *God's Will* belatedly stumbled upon Tokyo, as many other B-29s were doing in the confusion of the night, Carter thought of it as deliverance. "We were 80 miles away when we saw the fire," he wrote. The bombing had been going on for two hours.

When *God's Will* entered the final swarm of B-29s approaching Tokyo, Carter heard the sounds of other aircraft and of gunfire. He saw the searchlights, the flak bursts, the burning urban sprawl rushing toward him. Carter wrote in his journal that the flak was "intense and rather accurate" and that "about 100 searchlights" were stalking the B-29s.

God's Will, far later than anyone ever intended, began its bomb run. Fling turned the aircraft over to bombardier Dwyer.

God's Will was now flying parallel to B-29s from a different group, braving the heat thermals with Dwyer hunched over his Norden bombsight, trying to ignore the spectacular view of a world afire.

In the final moment of the bomb run, Carter peered out and saw a falling bomb. It had come from a B-29 above them. He estimated that it missed the left wingtip of *God's Will* by just 10 feet. Dwyer said, "Bombs away." It was 3:01 AM and *God's Will* was almost three hours behind schedule.

Every member of the Fling crew knew that *God's Will* did not have enough fuel to return to Tinian. They hoped they could make embattled Iwo Jima. When *God's Will* approached Iwo, the sun had become bright, flying conditions were as good as they would ever get in this weather-racked corner of the world, and Iwo's Motoyama No. 1 airfield looked almost red in its brightness. *God's Will* touched down on Iwo at 10:30 AM.

Dwyer recalled, "Bullets were flying around us" as Fling taxied *God's Will* to a halt in front of a cluster of Marines.

God's Will—although it sustained two shrapnel holes in a wing—was capable, once it could be refueled, of flying its crew home. Carter noted when they took off that the Japanese were firing small arms at them as they accelerated down the runway.

The great Tokyo firebomb mission ignited the hottest fires that ever burned on the earth and killed more people—possibly 100,000; the exact number will never be known—than both subsequent atomic bombs. It was the most destructive bombing attack in history.

Losses on the great Tokyo firebomb mission of March 9-10, 1945, were 14 B-29s, including the three that flew into a mountain together, three that ditched, and one that simply vanished.

The Tokyo fire raid marked the beginning of what became known as the fire blitz. The Fling crew did not participate in the first blitz after Tokyo to Nagoya on March 11-12, but it did fly the remaining three blitz missions against Osaka, Kobe, and Nagoya.

Of the Kobe mission, Carter noted: "The fire looked even bigger than the Tokyo fire to me. An area with a diameter of about 30 miles over the target was as bright as day but it had a reddish color. The sky was full of B-29s, Jap fighters, phosphorus flak, shrapnel flak, rockets, tracers and the blackest smoke I have ever seen. It was enough to scare the devil."

The fifth and final mission in the great fire blitz took B-29s to Nagoya again on March 19. Now, stocks of firebombs were so low that many Superfortresses carried explosive bombs. *God's Will,* which carried incendiaries, was caught in 15 searchlights for six minutes. Fortunately for the Fling crew, another B-29 going over at the same time was caught in 25 to 30 searchlights and received most of the flak. Carter wrote that the other B-29 "flew right thru it but I don't see how."

The blitz involved 1,595 sorties and used 9,373 tons of bombs to burn about 32 square miles in four cities. Air Forces commander General Henry "Hap" Arnold sent a message to Twenty-First Bomber Command, saying that the blitz was "a significant example of what the Jap can expect in the future. Good luck and good bombing."

Japan's Lt. Gen. Noboru Tazoe, a key air defense leader, said that as a result of the fire blitz he knew, finally, that Japan could not win the war. Thanks to LeMay's risky decision to fly low and light, B-29 Superfortress crews were finally accomplishing something.

Major George Bertagnoli took over *God's Will* when Fling was made group assistant operations officer. The crew became the first from the 9th Bombardment Group selected for "rest camp" in Hawaii because the men had flown more combat missions than any other crew. When they returned to Tinian, they learned that the Malo crew from their squadron, which had made the first B-29 landing on Iwo Jima, was lost in combat over Kawasaki on April 16, 1945. One month later, Captain Samuel N. Slater became the crew's navigator when Pettit was moved up to group headquarters.

Carter completed 27 combat missions, including another mission to Kobe on June 6, 1945, during which a swarm of attacking fighters wounded Bertagnoli, Peterson, and Dwyer and shot out two engines and damaged a third, prompting another emergency landing on Iwo Jima. The Bertagnoli crew was credited with three Japanese aircraft shot down plus two probables.

When General Douglas MacArthur oversaw the formal Japanese surrender aboard the battleship USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on Sunday, September 2, 1945, a 2,400-aircraft flyover was supposed to be part of the event. The weather near Tokyo was poor, so the start of the flyover was delayed.

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Japanese authorities examine the bodies of civilian casualties killed in the heavy firebomb raid on Tokyo on March 9-10, 1945. The raid was the single deadliest of the war, killing more people than either of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki two months later.

The Japanese signed first. Observers looked around for the planned flyover and saw no sign of it. The delay was causing some irritation on the part of those orchestrating the ceremony. After the Japanese finished, MacArthur began signing.

Columbia correspondent Webley Edwards was providing a real-time radio narrative. "General MacArthur is using a fifth pen," Edwards spoke into his microphone. "And here comes one of the big B-29s which I suppose is the leader of the flight which was to put on a demonstration of air power here over the bay this morning."

But it was not. Although his plane was not part of the planned flyover, B-29 commander Bertagnoli was going to fly over the ceremony whether LeMay, MacArthur, or anyone else liked it or not. Bertagnoli was a "really good man," Carter said, but he had a rebellious streak, too. Before the planned aerial formation could arrive, Bertagnoli detoured from an assigned supply flight to a different location and, without permission, set his B-29 up for a straight, flat run over the moored *Missouri*.

Bertagnoli, Carter, and the *God's Will* crew—in a different aircraft that day—looked down from their B-29 and saw MacArthur sitting at the signing table on the ship's deck. The Edwards broadcast was playing on the plane's interphone. They heard Edwards say, "Here comes one of the big B-29s" and then they heard the sound of their own engines in their earphones, conveyed by the broadcast.

As the Bertagnoli crew flew overhead, Edwards continued. "The weather is miserable for a demonstration of air power. The maximum ceiling is not more than fifteen hundred feet, but everything is going to plan. General MacArthur has finished signing. Lieutenant General Jonathan Wainright and General Percival have saluted him and MacArthur is back to the microphone...."

The scheduled flyover began soon afterward. The war had ended.

William J. "Reb" Carter (December 3, 1923-November 3, 2011), known as Bill to everyone except his military buddies, received the Distinguished Flying Cross and other awards. He was discharged as a staff sergeant on November 28, 1945. He returned to Atlanta and became a successful certified public accountant. On December 19, 1946, he wed Phyllis Ewing in a simple ceremony at her pastor's home. They raised two sons, Doug and Gary, and many dogs. □

Robert F. Dorr is an Air Force veteran, a retired U.S. diplomat, and author of the book Air Force One, *a look at presidential aircraft and air travel. Douglas L. Carter is the son of the subject of this story.*

Daredevil Tankers TURN THE TIDE

BY PATRICK J. CHAISSON

"PEIPER MUST BE STOPPED!"

Lieutenant General Courtney M. Hodges, commanding the U.S. First Army, looked up from his maps and saw chaos everywhere. All across the Ardennes Forest, American forces were reeling from a surprise German counterattack that struck on the morning of December 16, 1944. While some frontline units stubbornly held their ground, others simply disappeared—annihilated by the Nazi juggernaut.

One marauding enemy column particularly worried General Hodges. This was Kampfgruppe Peiper, the spearhead of the German 1st SS Panzer Division. Named for its commander, SS Lt. Col. Jochen Peiper, this powerful force was headed for the crossroads city of Liege, first stop toward its ultimate objective of Antwerp and the Belgian coast.

Amid reports of mass surrenders on the front lines and English-speaking German commandos terrorizing the First Army rear area, Hodges's staff began hearing rumors of a massacre involving Kampfgruppe Peiper at Baugnez, near Malmedy. There, on December 17, some 80 American soldiers were ruthlessly gunned down after surrendering to Peiper's troops.

Even as Kampfgruppe Peiper rampaged westward toward Liege, Hodges looked for help to defeat it. He first contacted the Ninth Army, which promised the 30th Division then refitting near Aachen. Hodges then appealed to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, for release of the Theater Reserve. Ike agreed, and within hours the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were on their way from camps in France to the Ardennes.

But getting these reinforcements into position would take time, a precious commodity. Small groups of combat engineers, antitank gunners, and infantry bought vital hours when they blew bridges and set roadblocks across Peiper's path, hindering his advance. Even antiaircraft crews got into the fight, firing their 90mm guns over direct sights.

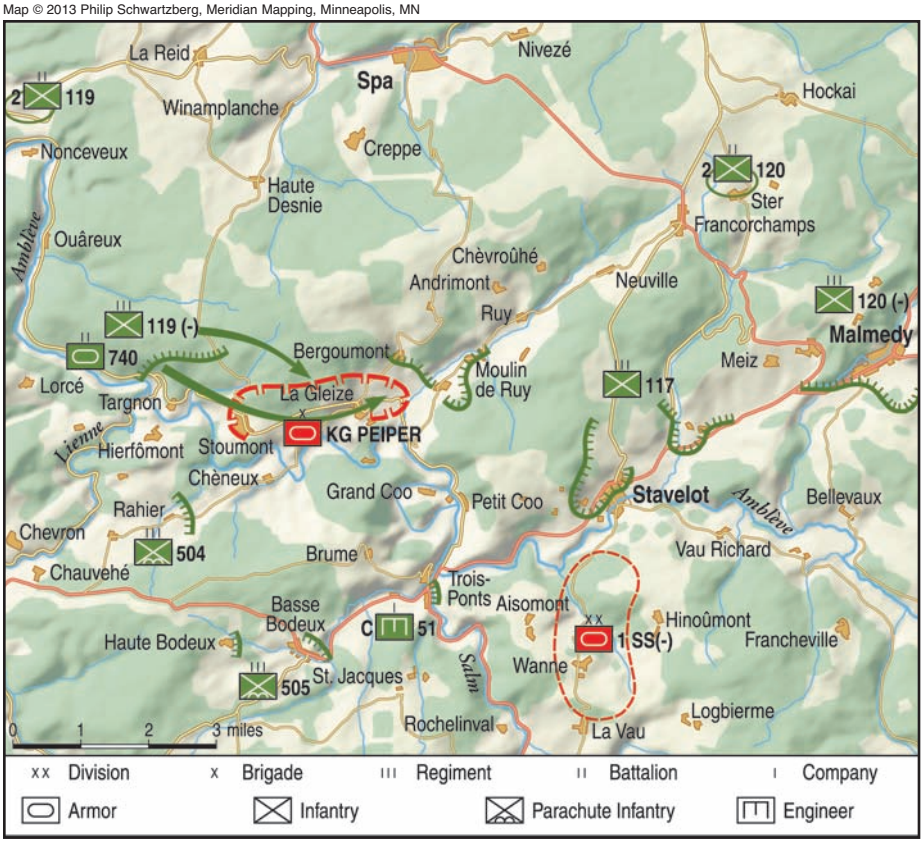
First Army needed accurate information to find and then halt the German advance. Hodges's staff sent out tiny, unarmed Piper Cub spotter planes to track the progress of Kampfgruppe Peiper as it headed west along the Ambleve River Valley. Crashing through

Both: National Archives

AGAINST LONG ODDS, THE AMERICAN 740TH TANK BATTALION STYMIED KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER, THE GERMAN SPEARHEAD AT STOUMONT DURING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.

Tanks of the U.S. 740th Tank Battalion negotiate a snowy roadway during the Battle of the Bulge. These tanks are accompanied by paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division. The 740th led a valiant defense of the town of Stoumont and slowed the advance of German Kampfgruppe Peiper during a critical phase of the Ardennes offensive.

LEFT: German soldiers of SS Kampfgruppe Peiper pause beside a road sign pointing toward the village of Malmedy during the opening hours of Hitler's desperate Ardennes offensive. Peiper's spearhead was stopped in its drive for the River Meuse by determined resistance from the 740th Tank Battalion at Stoumont, Belgium.



Pockets of American resistance, particularly at Stoumont, Belgium, where the American 740th Tank Battalion stood its ground, and at the crossroads town of Bastogne, slowed the German timetable and ultimately led to the defeat of Hitler's last gamble in the West.

Ligneuville, Stavelot, and La Gleize, the enemy column was, by midday on December 18, only 12 road miles from First Army headquarters, located in the resort town of Spa, Belgium.

Hodges pushed his reinforcements, the 30th Infantry and 82nd Airborne Divisions, into blocking positions along the Ambleve Valley. However, to stop Peiper's tanks Hodges needed armor of his own. His staff could find only one available unit, the 740th Tank Battalion, codenamed "Daredevil."

There was a catch: the Daredevils had no tanks.

The 740th Tank Battalion, so desperately thrust into action against Kampfgruppe Peiper, was formed in March 1943 at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Within a few weeks the 740th moved to a heavily guarded enclosure far from the main post. All passes were canceled, and each soldier was sworn to secrecy. Only then did the troops learn their new mission—the 740th was to become a "special" outfit, equipped with searchlight tanks designed to illuminate the battlefield at night.

Everything about the Canal Defense Light (CDL) tank was classified. Built on an M3A1 medium tank chassis, the CDL, or "gizmo" as 740th crews called it, used a high-intensity carbon arc lamp inside the turret to light up the night sky while blinding enemy defenders. Orders soon arrived transferring the 740th to Camp Bouse, Arizona, for intense training.

The battalion arrived at Camp Bouse, part of the Desert Training Area, in October 1943. The men encountered scorching heat, constantly blowing wind, and dust that seeped into everything—engines, clothing, even food. Very few gizmos were available for training, so the men spent their days performing menial work details. Morale plummeted, and the battalion commander was relieved after his unit failed a major inspection.

On November 12, Lt. Col. George K. Rubel took command of the 740th Tank Battalion. A wiry, 40-ish professional soldier from Phoenix, Arizona, Rubel was a battle-hardened veteran of the North Africa campaign. He immediately set out to turn his battalion into the best tankers in the U.S. Army.

While Camp Bouse had few CDLs, there were plenty M4 Sherman tanks to go around, as well as piles of 75mm main gun ammunition. Rubel started his training program with the basics of driving and firing, day and night, over the roughest terrain.

Everyone learned to drive a tank. The entire battalion qualified with pistols, carbines, rifles, and Thompson submachine guns. Tankers lived on their iron chariots, learning to maintain the machines as if their lives depended on them.

All winter long the battalion trained. When time came to take the Individual Tank Crew Test, the 740th passed with an average score of 83.73 percent, the highest record in the armored force at the time. Top-shooting gunners even competed for an $80 prize offered for the best crew qualification score.

The unit was determined to do everything first and to do it better than anyone else. Out in the sprawling Arizona maneuver area the men built a dummy minefield, infiltration course, and even a mock city. First to run the infiltration course was Lt. Col. Rubel, shouldering a 31-pound machine gun while bullets snapped inches from his head.

The outfit learned to work as a combined arms team. Mortarmen quickly learned their trade, while service company drivers practiced delivering rations at night using map and compass.

Drawing on his own combat experience, Lt. Col. Rubel insisted that all tanks fight with the hatches open instead of buttoned up as armored force doctrine prescribed. "Everyone looked for targets," Rubel later wrote, "and if they didn't see the enemy first they didn't live." This practice paid many dividends later.

When the 740th Tank Battalion left Camp Bouse in April 1944, it was proficient both in standard tank missions and top-secret CDL tasks. Departing for England in July, the outfit came across Utah Beach three months later. The Daredevils then drove across France to join the First Army in November 1944.

While the 740th was marching toward the front, it received news that its special mission was cancelled and the unit would reconfigure as a standard medium tank battalion. This meant it was to reequip with M4 Sherman medium tanks and M5A1 Stuart light tanks. Unfortunately, First Army could lend the 740th only nine Shermans and a few M5A1s for familiarization purposes. Headquarters promised a full set of tanks to arrive perhaps by January. In the meantime, Rubel was directed to train and organize his battalion.

When German forces commanded by Field Marshal Gerd Von Rundstedt launched their Ardennes counteroffensive—which became popularly known as the Battle of the Bulge—on December 16, the 740th Tank Battalion was garrisoned in Neufchateau, a muddy Belgian village 50 miles behind the front lines. Within hours it was ordered to deliver its nine borrowed M4s to another unit. This left the Daredevils with three Stuarts and two scrounged assault guns.

On the 17th, Rubel paid a visit to First Army headquarters in Spa. There he learned the true extent of the German breakthrough and was told the 740th might have to fight as infantry, a task it was neither trained nor equipped to perform. Alarmed, Rubel returned to his command post and ordered the battalion to prepare for immediate action wherever it was needed. The situation looked grim.

It was then that fate intervened in the person of Colonel Nelson M. Lynde, who was organizing the defense of Sprimont, an enormous vehicle repair depot sitting a dozen miles west of Peiper's advance positions. Lynde informed First Army Headquarters that his depot had several tanks on hand ready to fight but no crews to man them. Someone remembered Rubel's dismounted Daredevils, and at 12:45 PM on December 18, orders went out: move to Sprimont, draw all available armor, and prepare to defend the depot.

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ABOVE: At the height of the Battle of the Bulge, American infantrymen advance through the muddy streets of a French village. Although taken by surprise, the Americans rallied to resist the German offensive. LEFT: Ruthless SS Lieutenant Colonel Joachim Peiper commanded German troops who massacred American prisoners in a field near Malmedy.

Two hours later, Captain James D. Berry (nicknamed "Red" for his shock of flame-colored hair) had Company C on the road to Sprimont. Rubel followed along with his command section and as many mechanics as he could muster. Time remained their chief adversary. Could the tankers get into action before Peiper attacked?

What the Daredevils found at Sprimont shocked them. The depot had but three tanks on the ready for issue line, and these were all missing essential pieces of equipment. Of the 25 armored vehicles present, most had been damaged in battle and then cannibalized for parts. They lacked working radios, weapons, and even tool sets. Not one tank carried a full load of ammunition.

Company C's tankers swarmed on the equipment, laboring through the night to ready any vehicle they could get out the gate. There were old Wright-engined M4s next to newer tanks that for some reason all had British equipment. Staff Sergeant Charlie Loopey's crew ended up with an M36 tank destroyer, while Sergeant John A. Thompson drew a duplex-drive amphibious Sherman that was missing the breech block for its 75mm main gun, not to mention all three machine guns. Captain Berry ordered Thompson and his "damned duck" to the rear of the column—they would fight.

Some tankers had to ride M7 self-propelled howitzers or M8 assault guns, neither of which they had ever trained on. The Daredevils also found at Sprimont two M24 Chaffee light tanks, part of a demonstration unit traveling around to acquaint U.S. troops with these new vehicles. The M24s would go into battle too, their crews learning by doing or dying.

While the Daredevil tankers hurried to prepare their mounts for combat, the situation along the Ambleve River was deteriorating badly. On December 18, Maj. Gen. Leland S. Hobbs's 30th "Old Hickory" Division began moving into position along the northern shoulder of Peiper's penetration. His 119th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel Edward M. Sutherland, had advanced a reinforced battalion to occupy the village of Stoumont, blocking Kampfgruppe Peiper's westward progress. Overnight the riflemen of 3rd Battalion, along with eight towed 3-inch guns of the 876th Tank Destroyer Battalion, dug in frantically to prepare for an SS attack.

It was not long in coming. At 7 AM on the 19th, German paratroopers and SS panzergrenadiers accompanied by several Mark VI tanks emerged from the dense fog in front of Stoumont, firing on all suspected targets. Blasting the weary GIs from their fortifications, Peiper's forces gradually gained a toehold in the village and began pushing the Americans out. A company of M4s from the 743rd Tank Battalion then arrived to help slow 3rd Battalion's

retreat, but by noon the Germans held all of Stoumont.

Hobbs absorbed this news with great concern. His 119th Infantry had been knocked out of the last defensible position in the Ambleve Valley. Only the 119th's understrength 1st Battalion remained as a reserve. If it failed to halt Peiper, the way to Liege and beyond would be wide open.

Hobbs ordered Sutherland to hold at all costs. He then begged First Army for additional armored support; the brave tankers of the 743rd were completely out of ammunition and had to resupply. Staff officers from the 30th Division spread out in all directions to find anyone who could help hold the line west of Stoumont.

One such officer discovered Captain Red Berry and Company C of the 740th posted near Sprimont. Pleading with Berry to join the 119th's desperate defense, Hobbs's messenger had to leave disappointed when the tank captain replied he could not leave his position without orders from higher authority.

Those orders were not long in coming. Hobbs contacted First Army, requesting the 740th Tank Battalion be attached to his 30th Infantry Division. This was quickly done, and by 2 PM the Daredevils were on the move.

Company C led off. Passing the 119th Regiment command post with his 14 badly needed Shermans, Captain Berry shouted encouragingly to a nearby officer: "They're bastard tanks, but we're shooting fools!" The ragtag column was just minutes away from a showdown with some of Nazi Germany's deadliest tanks.

The Ambleve River Valley was just wide enough on its north bank for a winding macadam road, paralleled partially by a rail line. Steep, wooded valley walls and the deep-running Ambleve further restricted mobility. The day was cold, and icy fog kept visibility down to 100 yards or less. There was only one way to go, down the road, and all afternoon the 1st Battalion of the 119th Infantry waited for Peiper's tanks.

By 3:30 PM, in a cold drizzle and with dusk already starting to settle, the Germans had yet to appear. Lt. Col. Robert H. Herlong, commanding the 1st Battalion, conferred with Captain Berry. They decided to organize their own spoiling attack with Berry's tanks covering the road while Herlong's infantrymen protected their flanks. Their objective was Stoumont Station, a small granite block structure 800 yards away.

Third Platoon, led by Lieutenant Charles D. Powers, went first. Powers moved out cautiously, hugging the cliff side of the road while his machine guns riddled every possible target. The young lieutenant stood up in his turret, scanning for enemy tanks. He knew his Sherman was no match for a German medium Panther or heavy Tiger tank, so his crew's lives depended on firing first and accurately.

The American column had advanced several hundred yards when Powers's tank rounded a curve near Stoumont Station. Powers spotted a Panther, camouflaged with brush, 100 yards away. The gunner, Corporal Jack D. Ashby, fired once, his shot striking the gun mantle before deflecting down into the driver's compartment and setting the enemy tank ablaze.

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This aerial view depicts St. Edouard's Sanatorium at left center and the Belgian village of Stoumont at far right. Both locations were the scenes of heavy fighting during the desperate battle between the 740th Tank Battalion and elements of German SS Kampfgruppe Peiper.

Moving forward, Powers's crew identified another Panther. Again Ashby's aim was true, his shell ricocheting off the Panther's lower front slope plate. At this critical moment, Technician 5th Grade Howard Henry, the lieutenant's loader, reported that the gun was jammed. Powers's Sherman was helpless, and he waved the next tank up to finish off the wounded SS Panther.

The next vehicle in line was not even a tank. Staff Sergeant Charlie W. Loopey and his crew happened to draw an M36 tank destroyer at the Sprimont repair depot. Neither Loopey nor his gunner, Corporal William H. Beckman, had ever seen an M36 before but thought they could get this lightly armored tank killer running.

While Loopey's M36 had only thin armor plate, it did carry a powerful 90mm cannon. Corporal Beckman used it to blast the second Panther, firing three rounds into the German behemoth until it caught fire.

By this time, Powers's loader had cleared the jammed gun and the platoon leader resumed his place at the front. Advancing another 150 yards, Powers sighted a third Panther in the growing darkness. Ashby fired again, blowing the muzzle brake off the tank's main gun. Two more shots put the Panther out of action permanently.

Lieutenant Colonel Herlong then halted the attack for the night. In 30 minutes of combat, Berry's "bastard tanks" had recaptured Stoumont Station and blunted Peiper's advance down the Ambleve Valley. Those months of hard, realistic training at Camp Bouse had paid off enormously, but the 740th's war was just beginning.

Protected by the three burning Panthers, Herlong's riflemen dug in while their Daredevil brethren paused to resupply and rest. One tanker described his first night on the line at Stoumont Station: "It was too cold to sleep. All we could do was curl up in the tank like dogs."

During the night, more tanks fresh from the Sprimont depot moved up to join Berry's command. Fuel, ammunition, and radios also made their way forward. With artillery finally in position, American infantry and tankers prepared to resume their attack at dawn.

Weather conditions on the 20th remained poor, with cold, rain, and fog hampering visibility. This time, 2nd Platoon, led by 1st Lt. John E. Callaway, spearheaded the attack. Riflemen from the 1st Battalion, 119th Infantry provided flank protection while artillery and mortars stood by ready to fire. The day's objective was Stoumont, two miles up the road, where Peiper's main force was waiting.

Within minutes Callaway encountered a Pan-

ther, which his gunner dispatched with an armor-piercing shell that "opened its muzzle up like a rose." Second Platoon then destroyed two SS half-tracks before running into a minefield that blew both tracks off Staff Sergeant Homer B. Tompkins's M4. Though shaken up, Tompkins and his crew scurried to safety despite the mines and heavy German machine-gun fire.

The Americans captured the hamlet of Targnon that day, moving to the outskirts of Stoumont before nightfall and violent SS counterattacks halted their progress.

Late in the afternoon, some American infantrymen occupied St. Edouard's Sanatorium, a large brick building on the eastern edge of Stoumont. Situated on a steep hill, the sanatorium was a natural fortress. Whoever controlled it dominated the battlefield.

The enemy knew this and around 11 PM launched a fanatical counterattack. Between 50 and 100 SS panzergrenadiers, many screaming "Heil Hitler," stormed St. Edouard's and pushed the GIs out. Held up by a sharp cliff, the Daredevil tankers could do nothing to help. They had to wait for daylight to resume their attack.

At 4 AM on December 21, 1st Lt. David Oglensky's M4 crawled cautiously forward into the murk. Suddenly, according to driver Technician 4th Grade Robert Russo, "All hell broke loose." Shells from a hidden antitank gun pierced Oglensky's tank, forcing his crew to bail out. As the lieutenant boarded the next Sherman in line a panzerfaust rocket hit that tank, causing it to burst into flames. German panzerfausts then blasted two more M4s. In an instant, four tanks were destroyed, three of them burning fiercely. With the road blocked and St. Edouard's Sanatorium in Peiper's hands, the American attack bogged down almost before it started.

Had American commanders known of Kampfgruppe Peiper's critical fuel shortage, they would have felt better about their situation. Already forced by the fuel shortage to cancel his drive on Liege, Peiper was even now radioing for permission to withdraw eastward. Peiper's failure to capture vital bridges or American fuel depots meant his still powerful force was stuck in Stoumont, a difficult place to defend. Many of his heavy tanks, their gas tanks almost empty, started moving back toward La Gleize, where it was hoped that supply trucks would meet them.

Interestingly, almost a million gallons of gasoline were stacked in 5-gallon jerry cans along a road two miles north of Peiper's route through the Ambleve Valley. Had the Germans known of it, they could have brushed aside the company of Belgian soldiers guarding this depot and solved their fuel problem.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: American infantrymen of the 30th Division march down a country lane somewhere in Belgium. Nearby lies the body of a dead German soldier, while several destroyed German tanks bear mute testimony to the ferocity of a recent engagement. BELOW: American soldiers gaze at the hulk of a German Tiger tank knocked out near La Gleize during the final stage of the Battle of the Bulge. The fate of the German Ardennes offensive was sealed when the U.S. 740th Tank Battalion stopped Kampfgruppe Peiper at Stoumont.

Back in Stoumont, the 119th Infantry Regiment and 740th Tank Battalion became part of Task Force Harrison, named for Brig. Gen. William K. Harrison, Jr., the 30th Infantry Division's assistant division commander. Additional forces from the 3rd Armored Division had joined the battle north and east of Stoumont, pushing Peiper's forces closer to their base in La Gleize. The noose was tightening, but first Stoumont had to be retaken.

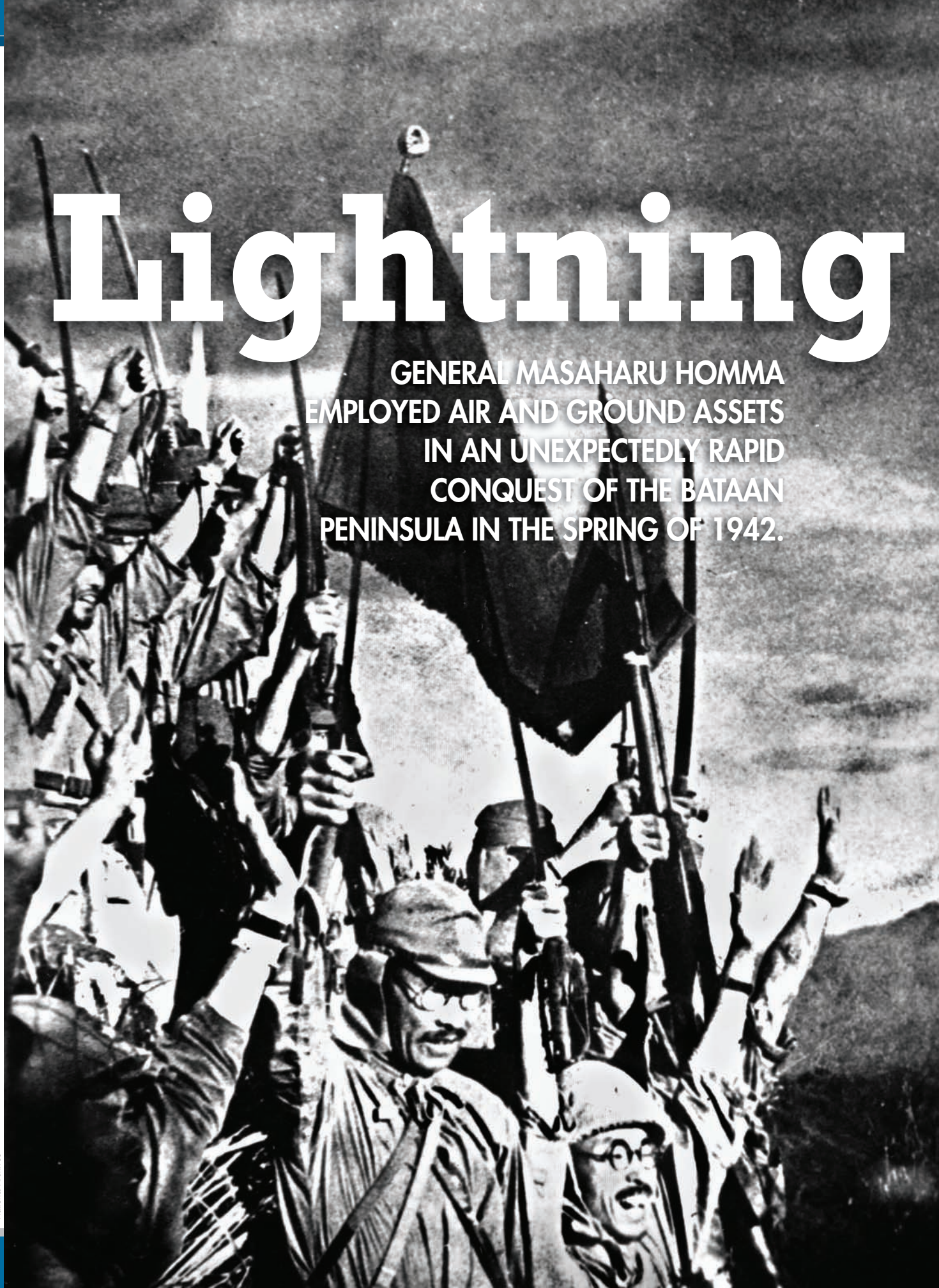
From a hill near Targnon, Lt. Col. Rubel somehow acquired a self-propelled 155mm howitzer and began shelling the enemy-held sanatorium. Firing over open sights, Rubel's personal artillery piece hurled about 50 high explosive rounds into the sturdy structure before darkness fell. The Germans inside were stunned by the massive bombardment but refused to yield.

Captain Berry thought of a way to throw the Germans out. That night he crawled completely around the sanatorium and found a place where a road might be built that could support

Continued on page 73

Lightning

GENERAL MASAHARU HOMMA EMPLOYED AIR AND GROUND ASSETS IN AN UNEXPECTEDLY RAPID CONQUEST OF THE BATAAN PENINSULA IN THE SPRING OF 1942.



National Archives

Strike IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Donald J. Young

Following their impressive string of victories in Malaya, Hong Kong, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines, it appeared that the Japanese were invincible in the early days of World War II.

By the spring of 1942, the Japanese had driven the American and Filipino defenders of the Philippines to the Bataan Peninsula and the brink of total defeat. Still, they believed that it would take a major offensive to overwhelm the defenders. This belief actually forced them to design and successfully launch what could be called a near textbook version of the German blitzkrieg, surprising, cutting off, isolating, and bypassing enemy strongpoints. So effective was the campaign that twice during what turned out to be a six-day battle, offensive operations actually had to be halted to allow tanks and vital supplies to catch up.

The fact that the starving, emaciated, poorly equipped U.S. troops on Bataan were in such dire straits that they would never been able to stop the Japanese, blitzkrieg or not, is not pertinent to the story. Nor is the fact that Japanese General Masaharu Homma anticipated it would take a month to capture Bataan and that his decision to attack Mount Samat, the strongest position on the U.S. line, was a bold one. The plan of attack was central to the rapid success. It was one that would have made German General Heinz Guderian, known to history as the "Father of the Blitzkrieg," proud.

Following their victory on the Bataan Peninsula in the spring of 1942, Japanese soldiers raise their arms in a thunderous 'Banzai!' cheer. During the first six months of the war in the Pacific, the Japanese compiled an impressive string of victories.

The U.S. defensive dispositions on Bataan left little doubt as to the focal point of the Japanese attack. Nearly the entire western half of the line, manned by troops of the U.S. I Corps, encompassed jungle so dense that it would not only neutralize the effects of Japanese air superiority but also swallow up an invading army within its roadless confines.

In contrast, with the exception of its most dominating feature, 300-foot Mount Samat, the eastern half, defended by II Corps, offered an open, jungle-free approach to its gently rising northern slopes. The area was accessible to the trails that flanked both the eastern and western sides of the mountain.

General Homma chose to launch his attack against Mount Samat, which he wrongly anticipated would take one week to capture, for two reasons. First, the Americans would least expect a frontal assault against the high ground that dominated the surrounding countryside. Second, with Mount Samat in Japanese hands artillery observers would be in position to direct fire for the primary assault down Bataan's east coast. Prior to launching their assault on the mountain itself, the Japanese needed to gain control of three key trails, numbered 4, 6, and 429. Combined, these three trails encircled the footprint of Mount Samat.

Complete Japanese air superiority allowed the attackers to bomb and strafe virtually at will. Increasing air operations were the only indication that the renewal of Japanese offensive operations were imminent. Otherwise, there was little indication of exactly where or when the Japanese would strike the American line. To beef up the squadrons of light bombers and fighters already operating in the area, the Japanese brought in two heavy 60-plane bombardment units from Malaya and Indochina, plus two squadrons of Mitsubishi G4M Betty bombers and a squadron each of carrier-based bombers and Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighters.

On March 25, the opening day of the preattack phase of the battle, Japanese bombers and fighters attacked targets without pause. The Japanese usually paused for three hours at midday; however, on this date they were literally in the air from dawn to sunset bombing and strafing U.S. frontline and suspected artillery positions.

For the next eight days, the cycle was repeated. On April 2, 1942, the day before the scheduled opening of the ground attack, 82 Japanese bombers pounded the forward slopes of Mount Samat, while fighters and dive bombers, directed by ever present spotter planes, made life miserable for the Americans and Filipinos squeezed into the defensive pocket on Bataan.

As with the German blitzkrieg, one of the major contributors to the success of the air phase was the use of spotter planes, whose accurate observation of American positions almost totally neutralized the effectiveness of U.S. artillery. Every time a 155mm or 75mm gun fired, coordinates from their smoke trails were radioed to either a patrolling fighter or bomber, which usually executed a quick and deadly response to the message.

The presence of the Japanese planes not only played havoc with artillery positions but also with infantry concentrations and machine-gun emplacements. One American officer wrote, "Every few minutes a plane would drop down, lift up a tree branch and

lay one or two eggs. Every vehicle that tried to move, every wire-laying detail, infantry patrol, even individuals moving in the open were subject to these spot bombings."

Captain Alvin Poweleit, a medical officer with the 194th Tank Battalion, wrote of his experience with marauding Japanese fighters. "We hit an open stretch of road just as Japanese strafers came over. Fortunately, we jumped out of the jeep in time to get out of the rain of machine-gun fire, but several soldiers were killed and many wounded. While dressing the wounded, the planes returned and laid another round of fire on us killing more. We tried to move the wounded to the side of the road, but again the bastards came back and bombed and strafed us. They continued strafing back and forth for about an hour."

For the artillery phase of the attack, the Japanese had close to 200 weapons, of which nearly half were heavy 150mm to 240mm guns. Most of these heavy guns were positioned within a rectangular, 4 1/2-square mile area west of Balanga, a mere three miles from U.S. lines and the forward slopes of Mount Samat.

With U.S. artillery nearly neutralized by the efforts of the ever present Japanese aircraft, the anticipated duels between the American 155mm guns and Japanese 240mm weapons never occurred. The Japanese also launched an observation balloon some three miles north of Balanga, well out of range of any operational American 155mm guns. Interestingly, the influence of the balloon was best noted in the diary of Major Achille Tisdale, an officer on Bataan commander General Edward P. King's staff. In his entry for March 16, Tisdale routinely noted, "The Japanese now have an observation balloon." Fifteen days later, however, he frustratingly wrote, "Nip artillery raising hell. If we could only get that damned balloon."

To help conceal the scope and direction of their planned assault on Mount Samat, the Japanese limited their pre-attack artillery concentrations to eliminating U.S. artillery positions, the general disruption of troop movements, and destroying enemy command posts, communications, and defensive positions.

The third and perhaps most important pre-attack effort was to secure both flanks of the operation from possible counterattacks against the center or main focal point of the assault. Threats to both the east and west sides of the mountain would also force the defenders to direct their attention away from the main objective, thereby weakening the center.

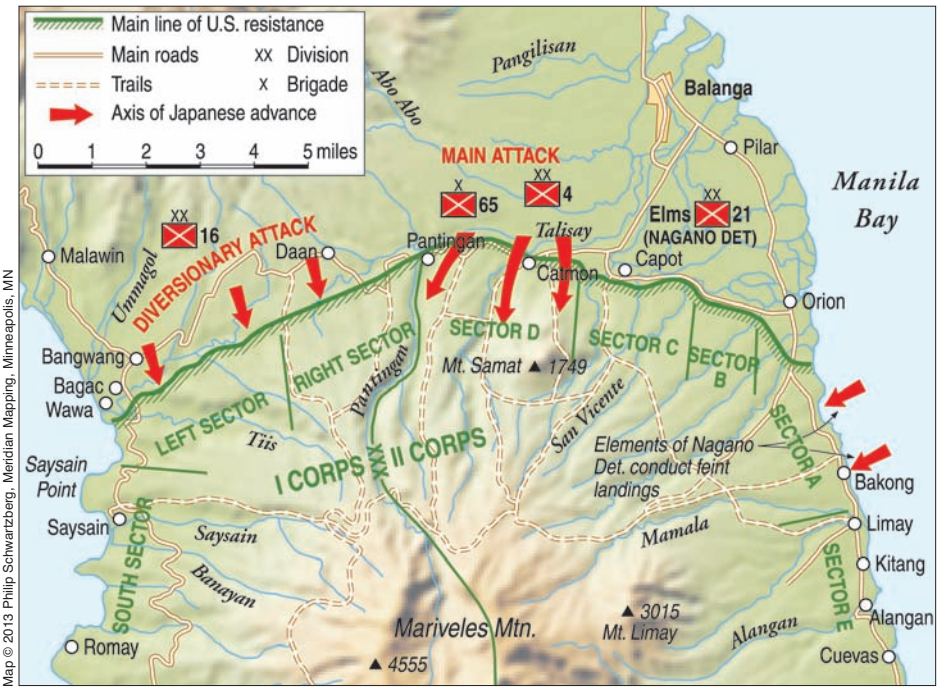
The Japanese preparations began in earnest on March 31, three days before the main effort, when the Japanese 16th Division to the west and the Nagano Detachment to the east began their operations. The 16th Division's job was to engage the I Corps from its eastern boundary with the II Corps across its entire front to the west coast. At the same time, to further tie down and decoy the defenders, Japanese warships began shelling U.S positions from the South China Sea. While the 16th was keeping the I Corps occupied, the Nagano Detachment, made up of some 4,000 men from the 21st Division, began pushing down the East Road, while also creating a diversion with the feint of an invasion from Manila Bay south of the U.S. line.

three-mile-wide U.S. front defended by the Philippine Army's 21st and 41st Divisions.

Captain Paul Ashton, a doctor with the 51st Division hospital high on the east slope of Mount Samat, had climbed to the brow of the mountain that morning to view the "sweeping panorama of flat farmlands ... and the towns of Pilar and Balanga [from which] it [had been] possible to discern a great increase in the number of gun emplacements ... around those two towns."

Ashton continued, "On this day, a large number of guns were zeroing in on us and the muzzle flashes were plain to see. Then at 10:00 AM,

"THE TREES WERE A JUMBLED MASS OF FOLIAGE; FIRE WAS BURNING THE DRY BRUSH AT THE BASE AND CREEPING UP THE FRONT OF THE HILL."



Map © 2013 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

With the primary assault scheduled for Friday, April 3, it was decided that the planned five-hour artillery bombardment in support of the direct assault would open at 10 AM and continue nonstop until three in the afternoon, on the heels of which the tank and infantry would begin to roll forward. An hour before the ground action got under way, at 9 AM, an estimated 196 Japanese artillery weapons, including 29 mortar and heavy batteries plus every close-support field piece available, would begin firing their guns, already registered on preselected targets. At the same time, Japanese aircraft, which by the end of the day would fly 150 sorties and drop an estimated 60 tons of bombs, would begin their assault on the chosen

a greatly increased bombardment [came] in waves, steadily creeping up the brow and along the top of Mt. Samat. It continued for five hours and surpassed anything of the like we had ever seen. At the same time the Nips sent over fleets of bombers ... the explosions [of bombs along] with the whine of smaller strafing planes ... was [sic] almost deafening. Communication lines and artillery positions were destroyed. Several acres of brush caught fire and burned fiercely.

"It became worse with each hour.... I climbed the hill to the top of Samat for the last time to see what happened. I was amazed to see that the topography had changed. The trees were a jumbled mass of foliage; fire was burn-

ing the dry brush at the base and creeping up the front of the hill. A few bodies could be seen scattered along Trail 4, the main [withdrawal] route from the front, and groups of Japanese were fanned out everywhere.

"The extensive denuding of the area must have meant that most had withdrawn in units as the barrage crept upward and across the mountain. I found the answer later [when] I drove our only ambulance over trails leading southward from the 51st and 21st Division areas. I was greatly hampered by roads full of aimless stragglers pouring toward the south."

Recorded effects of the bombardment were consistent throughout the command. Captain Carlos Quirino of the Philippine Constabulary's 2nd Division remembered it as "the most devastating concentration of [enemy] fire seen during the Philippine campaign." Had he known, he could have added, "and the entire Pacific War to come."

Although it may have seemed to those men along the II Corps front as though the entire line was being blasted simultaneously, the Japanese were actually directing the bulk of their air and artillery bombardment toward one specific point.

Sector D, the westernmost portion of the II Corps' area of responsibility and widest of the four sectors, stretched some three miles across the lower slopes of Mount Samat. Divided roughly in half, the defense of the sector was shared by two Philippine Army divisions, General Mateo Capinpin's 21st Division on the east and General Vicente Lim's 41st Division on the west. Both generals had assigned all three of their regiments to the line. General Lim had his in numerical order from left to right. The Japanese directed their assault at the 1,000-yard-wide defensive perimeter manned by the 42nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Division.

Despite the initial pounding of the 42nd frontline positions by the Japanese artillery and aircraft, the Filipino soldiers of perhaps the toughest of the Philippine Army divisions on Bataan did not budge. After riding out over two hours of steady bombardment, the Americans and Filipinos paid little attention to the next squadron of enemy bombers that came over until the usual "freight train" roar of falling high explosives strangely did not occur.

As the Filipino soldiers cautiously looked up from their holes to see what was happening, they saw what looked like hundreds of stick-like objects falling from the sky. When these sticks hit the ground, they burst into flame. They were firebombs, incendiaries.

It was the end of the Philippine dry season. The flat lower slopes of Mount Samat were

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ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, NY

TOP: A flight of Mitsubishi Ki-30 light bombers, codenamed Ann by the Allies, execute bombing runs against American and Filipino positions on the Bataan Peninsula. ABOVE: A Japanese crew services its field artillery piece in the jungle of the Bataan Peninsula in March 1942. BELOW: Wearing the World War I-style doughboy helmet, an American soldier crouches in his foxhole on Bataan in April 1942. Making use of every available weapon, this soldier has an improvised Molotov cocktail at the ready to hurl against the advancing Japanese. OPPOSITE: Utilizing a coordinated plan of attack, Japanese ground forces executed assaults against American and Filipino defenses on the Bataan Peninsula from three directions. Japanese artillery and aircraft joined in the offensive action, nearly achieving the shock effect of a German blitzkrieg as demonstrated in Europe.

National Archives

devoid of lush tropical jungle but overgrown by brush and dry clumps of bamboo and uncut sugar cane. It was not long before hundreds of small fires started by the incendiaries, fanned now by an afternoon breeze, merged into one.

As the heat grew in intensity, men were flushed from their frontline positions back across a cratered, lunar-like landscape toward their regimental reserve line. Although it was possible to outrun the fire, continued heavy Japanese artillery fire forced the Filipino soldiers to seek refuge in shell holes or abandoned foxholes along the way.

Soon, there appeared to be no escape. Panic stricken, those who tried to outrun the fire were killed by the enemy artillery. Just as many of those who stayed to avoid the artillery burned to death.

Sergeant Silvestro Tagarao of the 42nd Infantry, whose Company K occupied the outpost line on the leading edge of the regiment's defensive positions, recalled the deadly effect of the attack and firebombing. "The enemy [opened] up with a mortar barrage. We knew that the much-awaited assault was on. We dashed into our foxholes and waited eagerly," he recalled. "Violent explosions came rapidly, blowing up the trees around us. The merciless barrage went on but there was no reply from our guns."

"At the height of the intense fire, incendiary bombs [were dropped]," he continued. "They came unannounced, going up with a silent blast that became hot, blinding fire that burned the woods and rendered our position insecure. [Soon] the fire was all around us and we couldn't hold there anymore. We waited for an order from our C.P., but none came.

"Soon flames were very close to us. We came out of our foxholes and withdrew. One of the men told me that our left flank had been consumed by flames several minutes before. Again we had to move back because of the flames, moving further until we reached our command post. It was also burning, and nobody was there except a corpse lying on a stretcher."

At 3 PM, the line, masked in dense smoke and racked by steel and fire, was hit again. This time, General Akira Nara's 65th Brigade supported by the 7th Tank Regiment attacked. The objective of Nara's thrust was Trail 29—the feeder trail to 429, which, along with Trail 6 on the west and Trail 4 on the east side of Mount Samat, encircled the high ground.

Like a rampaging river, the rout of the 42nd Infantry flowed into the 43rd Infantry on its right, carrying most of the 43rd with it. General Nara, who at best had expected to get only as far as the U.S. main line that day, surpris-

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Scherl / SZ Photo / The Image Works

ABOVE: Japanese infantry and light tanks advance along a jungle trail on the Bataan Peninsula. BELOW: Rapidly displacing from one position to another, American soldiers rush along a jungle trail on the Bataan Peninsula. By the time the Philippines were completely under Japanese control, the victors had taken the largest number of prisoners surrendered to an enemy force in the history of the U.S. military. OPPOSITE: Filipino soldiers train with a heavy .30-caliber, water-cooled machine gun. The Filipinos often fought courageously in defense of their homes; however, neither they nor their American allies were prepared for the vicious Japanese onslaught that swept to victory in the spring of 1942.

ingly found a 1,600-yard-wide corridor completely abandoned to him when he arrived later that afternoon.

At the same time, one mile to the east, the 4th Division's 61st Infantry supported by a dozen tanks launched its attack against empty foxholes previously occupied by the men of the 43rd Infantry. When the battle subsided around 6 PM, nearly two-thirds of the enemy's initial objective, the capture of the junction of Trail 6 and 429, had been accomplished. At the point where Trails 6 and 429 reached the backside of Samat, 429 turned eastward to connect with Trail 4. The Japanese were nearing their objective of cutting off Mount Samat from the rest of the Allied defensive positions.

Buoyed by their unexpected success on the first day of the ground attack, the Japanese resumed the offensive at 6:30 the next morning with the same intensity as the day before. The Japanese kept the pressure on Mount Samat's west slope and hit General Mateo Capinpin's 21st Division on the Allied left wing. After a two-hour air and artillery bombardment, the 21st Infantry, westernmost of Capinpin's three regiments, was hit by infantry and tanks of the 7th Tank Battalion. The Japanese ran rampant through the helpless Filipinos.

By 9 AM, less than three hours after the first bomb dropped, the Filipino 21st and 23rd Regiments were driven off the main line. The 22nd Infantry, positioned astride the access to Trail 4, was forced back an hour later. In less than a day and a half, the Filipinos had abandoned a three-mile-wide sector in front of Mount Samat.

April 5 was the third day of General Homma's anticipated 30-day offensive to capture Bataan. However, thanks to the effective blitzkrieg against Mount Samat, the Japanese were halfway home. The battle for Bataan would be over in six days.

The objective of the Japanese this Easter Sunday was the capture of Trail 4, thus completing the encirclement and isolation of Mount Samat, securing its heights, and allowing the capture of the entire Bataan Peninsula to proceed.

After consolidating their seizure of Trails 6 and 429, the Japanese forces on the right began their assault on the western slope of the mountain. They found the going relatively easy. In fact, by 1 PM, less than three hours later, they had reached the heights. Before the Japanese gains could be consolidated, however, the stoutest defense so far was put up by U.S. artillery as accurate fire erupted from the guns of the 41st Field Artillery located on the south or reverse slope of the mountain. Until their forward observers were forced from their positions on the heights, the American artillerymen were able to direct fire from their Model 1917 British wooden-wheeled 75mm guns and old Vickers 2.95-inch pack howitzers. The defensive artillery fire held up the Japanese assault on Trail 4 until reinforcements arrived later that afternoon.

By about 4:30 PM on April 5, with the capture of Mount Samat and control of Trails 429, 6, and 4, the Japanese had successfully executed their own version of the blitzkrieg. During the remainder of the Pacific War, they were never again presented with the opportunity to mount such an offensive against the Allies. When the Bataan Peninsula fell on April 9, 1942, the remnants of the American and Filipino defenders were forced to take refuge on the island of Corregidor in Manila Bay. Their days were numbered.

General Homma was never credited with developing the tactics of the successful attack. His conquest of the Philippines had fallen behind the time table established by the high command in Tokyo. A more rapid operation had been anticipated following the three-month victory in Malaya and Singapore. The capture of the Philippines required six months of fighting, a sharp contrast to the lightning movement against Bataan.

Homma was relieved of command in June 1942 and brought home in disgrace. He retired from the military in 1943. Convicted of war crimes related to the brutality of the Bataan Death March and the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, Homma was executed by firing squad in 1946. □

BY ABOUT 4:30 PM ON APRIL 5 ... THE JAPANESE HAD SUCCESSFULLY EXECUTED THEIR OWN VERSION OF THE BLITZKRIEG.... THEY WERE NEVER AGAIN PRESENTED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO MOUNT SUCH AN OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE ALLIES.

Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images

Donald Young writes from his home in Vista, California. He has done extensive research on the Pacific War with particular interest in the fighting in the Philippines.

Sport DURING WAR

WORLD WAR II disrupted the lives of millions of people around the globe: fuel rationing, food rationing, shortages of all kinds, and, of course, the death and destruction that was visited on cities, nations, and whole populations.

In two areas—sports and entertainment—all the combatant countries tried to maintain at least a semblance of normality in order to keep up civilian morale. It was anything but easy.

In the United States during the 1930s and 40s, the major spectator sports were boxing, horse racing, major league baseball, and college football; although the National Football League started (as the American Professional Football Association) in 1920, it had not yet become America's favorite athletic entertainment, and professional basketball was still decades away from achieving the popularity it enjoys today.

Boxing was hugely popular, especially after Joe Louis won a rematch and regained the world heavyweight championship against German Max Schmeling in 1938. (As an aside, Louis was later drafted and spent the war with the USO giving boxing exhibitions at bases around the country, while Schmeling joined the German paratroops and participated as a member of a mortar company in the 1941 invasion of Crete.)

The outbreak of war had a profound effect

on the American sports scene. On July 8, 1942, eight months after Pearl Harbor, automobile and motorcycle racing were suspended entirely for the duration of the war due to gas and rubber rationing.

Deferments from the military draft that began in early 1942 were few and far between. As a result, many of the nation's top athletes between the ages of 18 and 35—both college and pro—found themselves wearing uniforms

TIME

Even during the darkest days of the war, the morale-lifting business of sport went on in the United States, Britian, Germany, and elsewhere.

BY FLINT WHITLOCK

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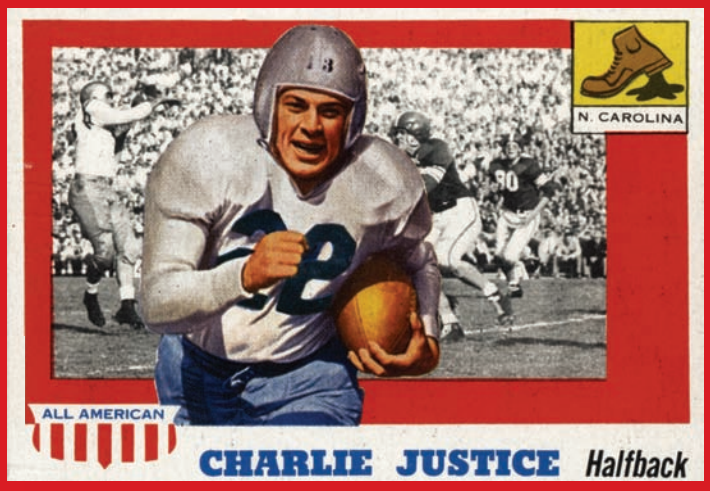

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TOP: Professional football player Charlie Justice played with other players who had experience as pros while serving in the U.S. Navy at Port Deposit, Maryland.

LEFT: Joe Louis won the World Heavyweight Boxing Championship with a defeat of German boxer Max Schmeling. While Louis served in the U.S. Army, Schmeling went on to serve as a paratrooper in the German Luftwaffe.

FAR LEFT: Former professional baseball player "Catcher" Batcha takes a swing at a pitch while playing in a game at Riza Stadium near Manila, Philippines. This photo was taken shortly after the liberation of the city from Japanese occupation, and several other former major league players participated in the game.

of a different kind.

Five weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, baseball commissioner Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis asked President Franklin D. Roosevelt for guidance on whether or not the upcoming major league baseball season should be canceled. For the good of public morale, Roosevelt advised that baseball should go on—if the talent were there.

Thousands of major and minor league players, including many of the game's best-known stars, such as Joe DiMaggio, Bob Feller, Ted Williams, Joe Garagiola, Yogi Berra, Red Schoendienst, Enos "Country" Slaughter, Bill Dickey, "Daffy" Dean, Ralph Kiner, Jackie Robinson, and Hank Greenberg, were trading in their flannels for khaki.

A number of ballplayers would also lose their lives in combat. Two major leaguers, Captain Elmer J. Gedeon, a U.S. Army Air Forces pilot and former player for the Washington Senators, died over France on April 20, 1944, while Marine 1st Lt. Harry M. O'Neill, (Philadelphia Athletics) was killed in action on Iwo Jima, March 6, 1945. Hundreds of minor league, semi-pro, and amateur players also died during the war.

As might be imagined, the loss of baseball's top talent meant that less skilled players wore major league uniforms, and over-the-hill players came out of retirement to lend their services to the cause, even if just for a couple of years.

Because so many men had volunteered or were drafted into military service, a women's professional league was formed in 1943 by William K. Wrigley, owner of the Chicago Cubs. The league, made up of 15 Midwestern teams such as the Rockford Peaches, Kalamazoo Lassies, and Grand Rapids Chicks, was known as the All-American Girls Baseball League and was a combination of baseball and softball (the pitchers threw the ball underhand). The ball was the size of a regulation softball (12 inches), the pitcher's mound was only 40 feet from home plate (rather than the standard 60 feet, six inches in the majors), and the bases were only 65 feet apart instead of 90 feet. More of a curiosity than anything, the women's game inspired the 1992 film *A League of Their Own*, starring Tom Hanks, Madonna, and Geena Davis, but faded a few years after the war.

The Japanese had been introduced to baseball in the 1870s and, although it was the national pastime of their American foe, they

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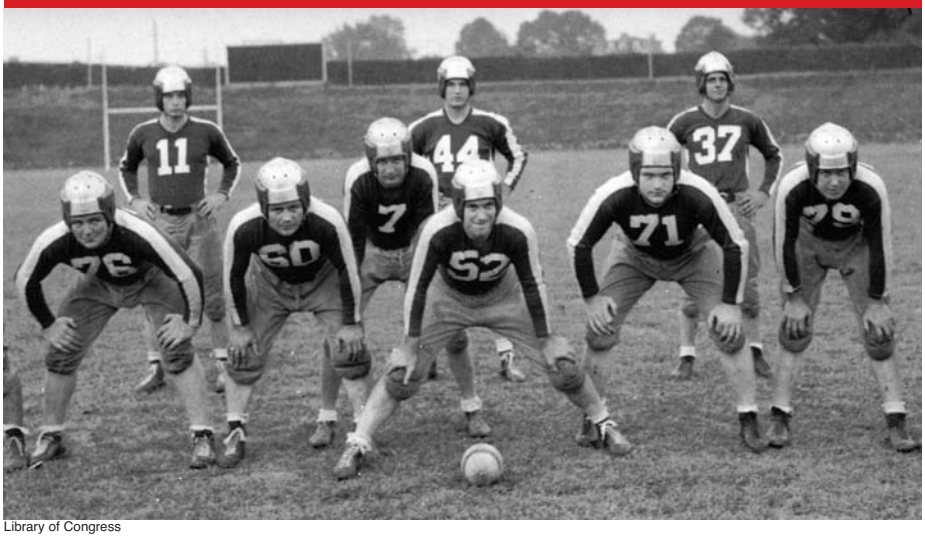
ABOVE: While many professional baseball players enlisted or were drafted into military service, Chicago Cubs owner William K. Wrigley formed the All-American Girls Baseball League. BELOW: In the midst of a shortage of professional football players, the National Football League's Pittsburgh Steelers and Philadelphia Eagles merged temporarily in 1943 to form the Steagles.



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embraced it through the war and afterward. At least 72 Japanese professional baseball players, called up to serve their country, gave their lives during the war.

The Japanese also had a professional soccer league and, after they invaded and occupied Korea and areas of the Far East, they incorporated Korean and other foreign teams into leagues in occupied areas.

American football, too, felt the effects of the war and the draft. At the time, the college game was considerably more popular than the professional game, and thousands of college players soon found themselves serving Uncle Sam instead of their alma maters. Some 350 schools suspended football entirely for the duration of the war. These included Harvard, Princeton, Oregon, Stanford, Florida, and Mississippi State.

Because of fears of a West Coast invasion by Japan (and a U.S. government ban on large public gatherings on the West Coast for the duration), the 1942 Rose Bowl, scheduled to be held in Pasadena, California, three weeks after Pearl Harbor, was moved to the Duke University stadium in Durham, North Carolina (Oregon State beat Duke, 26-16.)

The National Football League's ranks, too, were depleted as more than 1,000 players, coaches, and referees marched off to serve their country. Because of the shortage of players in 1943, the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Philadelphia Eagles merged to form the Steagles—a team that went 5-4-1 in its single season of existence. The merger ended prior to the start of the 1944 season, when the Steelers joined forces with the Chicago Cardinals, another struggling team. During that season the team was known as the Card-Pitt Combine and lost all 10 of its games; so inept was the team that some sportswriters began calling it the Carpets. The next year both Pittsburgh and Chicago operated separately.

College and professional football's loss was the military's gain. Virtually every Army, Navy, Air Corps, and Marine base had a star-studded team that played regularly before large, football starved crowds. Their opponents were other bases and even college and NFL teams.

Of the base football teams, probably none was better than the Bainbridge Naval Training Station Commodores, located at Port Deposit, Maryland, on Chesapeake Bay. During their first season in 1943, and fielding a team with the likes of college and pro standouts Charlie "Choo Choo" Justice, Norm Standlee, Cecil Hare, Phil Ragazzo, Bill Dutton, Tom Noble, Gerry Ramsey, Red Hickey, and others, the Commodores defeated their opponents by a combined point total of 313 to 7. They beat one team, the Philadelphia Yellowjackets, 72-0.

Six hundred and thirty-eight soon to be famous NFL players, coaches, and owners joined the military during World War II, including George Halas, Otto Graham, Fred Levy Jr., Wellington Mara, Weeb Eubank, Sid Luckman, Andy Robustelli, Ernie Nevers, Chuck Bednarik, Tex Schramm, Bud Grant, Norm Van Brocklin, Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsch, Pete Rozelle, and more.

Tom Landry, the famous head coach of the Dallas Cowboys from 1960-1988, dropped out of college to enlist. He served as the co-pilot of an Eighth Air Force Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber stationed in England and flew 30 missions, surviving a crash in Belgium.

Twenty-three NFL players would lose their lives during the war. Two professional football players—Maurice Britt and Jack Lummus—both earned the Medal of Honor.

Britt played end at the University of Arkansas and then for the Detroit Lions in 1941 before joining the Army. As an officer with the 3rd Infantry Division, Britt took part in three invasions: Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio. On November 10, 1943, while his division was battling furiously at Mignano, Italy, Captain Britt's company was pinned down. He jumped up and started performing calisthenics in order to draw enemy fire toward him and away from his men.

His Medal of Honor citation reads, "During the intense fire fight, Lt. [sic] Britt's canteen and field glasses were shattered; a bullet pierced his side; his chest, face, and hands were covered with grenade wounds. Despite his wounds, for which he refused to accept medical attention

until ordered to do so by his battalion commander following the battle, he personally killed five and wounded an unknown number of Germans, wiped out one enemy machine gun crew, fired five clips of carbine and an undetermined amount of M1 rifle ammunition, and threw 32 fragmentation grenades.

"His bold, aggressive actions, utterly disregarding superior enemy numbers, resulted in the capture of four Germans, two of them wounded, and enabled several captured Americans to escape. Lt. Britt's undaunted courage and prowess in arms were largely responsible for repulsing a German counterattack which, if successful, would have isolated his battalion and destroyed his company."

Britt's wounds resulted in the loss of his right arm, but his life was saved. After the war he ran a manufacturing company and then entered politics, serving as lieutenant governor of Arkansas.

Jack Lummus, a Marine Corps company commander, had played college baseball and football at Baylor University, then joined the New York Giants as both an offensive and defensive end; he played in the 1941 NFL championship games against the Chicago Bears. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, he joined the Marines and became an officer.

During the battle for Iwo Jima in February 1945, he was twice wounded by grenades but refused to be evacuated for treatment. Leading his men forward, 1st Lt. Lummus was confronted by an enemy machine-gun nest and knocked it out. While charging another, he stepped on a land mine that blew off both his legs. Mortally wounded, he still encouraged his men to advance before loss of blood claimed his life aboard a hospital ship.

At least two other former college football players lost their lives on Iwo Jima. Jack Chevigny played for Notre Dame in the 1920s and then coached the University of Texas team in the next decade. When war broke out, he joined the Marines and ended up at Iwo Jima, where he was killed.

Another player, Howard "Smiley" Johnson, played at the University of Georgia, then went on to the Green Bay Packers; he joined the Marines shortly after Pearl Harbor. He had earned a citation for conspicuous gallantry on Saipan in 1944 but lost his life on Iwo Jima.

Other NFL players, coaches, and front-office personnel who died during the war include Mike Basca, Charlie Behan, Keith Birlem, Al Blozis, Chuck Braidwood, Young Bussey, Ed Doyle, Grassy Hinton, Eddie Kahn, Alex Ketzko, Lee Kizzire, Bob Mackert, Frank Maher, Jim Mooney, John O'Keefe, Gus Sonnenberg, Len Supulski, Don Wemple, Chet Wetterlund, and Waddy Young.

Every one of them deserves special mention, of course, but 2nd Lt. Alfred C. Blozis, all six feet, six inches of him, is perhaps emblematic of them all. Serving with the 110th Infantry Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division near Colmar, Alsace, France, Blozis sent a nine-man patrol into the snowy woods of the Vosges Mountains on January 31, 1945. Seven men returned, but two did not. So, Blozis went out alone to search for them. A short while later, the sound of a German machine gun was heard—a gun that killed the lieutenant who, just six weeks earlier, had played offensive tackle for the New York Giants in the NFL championship game.

Canada's national sport is ice hockey, and the war impacted that sport the way it affected all the others. Many brave Canadian athletes perished serving their country and the British Empire.

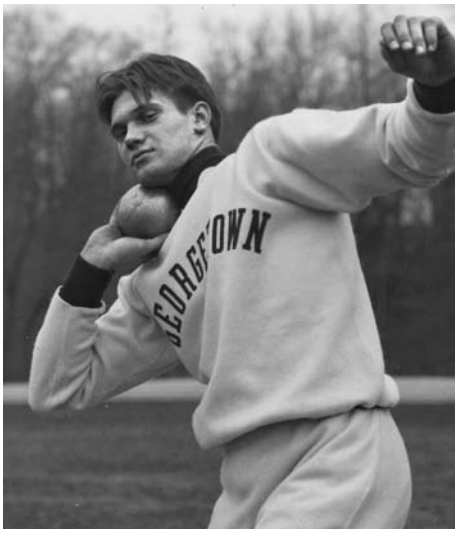
After war was declared, the six-team National Hockey League considered suspending operations, but the U.S. and Canadian governments urged it to keep going. Eighty NHL players served in the war, and two lost their lives in battle—Dudley "Red" Garrett and Joe Turner.

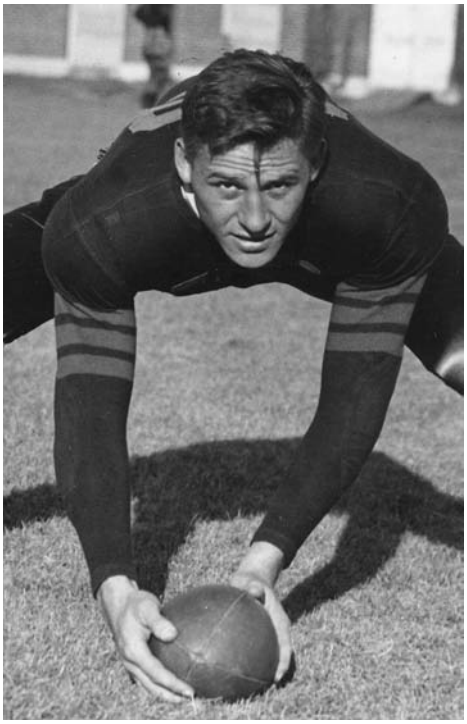
Garrett, a Toronto native who played for the New York Rangers, was called up and served in the Royal Canadian Navy. He died on November 25, 1944, when his supply ship was torpedoed by a U-boat off the coast of Newfoundland.

Born in Windsor, Ontario, Joe Turner played goalkeeper for the Detroit Red Wings in only one NHL game in 1942, but was killed in January 1945 while serving in the U.S. Army in Europe.

In Canada, both rugby and a version of American football have been played for over a century, and the sports, both at the collegiate and professional level, suffered many of the same problems as those in the United States.

National Archives





LEFT: A company commander in the U.S. Marine Corps, Jack Lummus was killed on Iwo Jima. Lummus had played baseball and football at Baylor University and with the New York Giants of the NFL. CENTER: Army 2nd Lieutenant Alfred Blozis played in the NFL championship game with the New York Giants in 1944 and was killed in action in Colmar, France, six weeks later. RIGHT: U.S. Marine 1st Lieutenant Harry M. O'Neill played college football and professional baseball with the Philadelphia Athletics. He was killed in action on Iwo Jima on March 6, 1945.

Because of the loss of so many players to the military, both the Western Interprovincial Football Union and the Interprovincial Rugby Football Union went so far as to completely suspend play during the war.

Sacrifice of the highest order was exhibited by Canadians. For example, one of Canada's foremost gridiron players, Jevon "Jeff" Nicklin, who starred for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers from 1934-1940, joined the paratroopers, took part in airborne operations in the Normandy invasion, and was killed near Wesel, Germany, in March 1945 during Operation Varsity. In addition, seven members of the 1942 Grey Cup-winning Royal Canadian Air Force Hurricanes football club died in combat against the Germans.

Imperial War Museum

During a time when the U.S. military was segregated, American service personnel stationed in Great Britain formed a football team that included both black and white players. The U.S. military was desegregated in the late 1940s.

As Laurie Prince, the daughter of RCAF Hurricanes punter Charlie Prince, put it, "One thing that my father very strongly believed was that you supported the group. Being a team member and in the war, that was the epitome of what they were doing, wasn't it? To risk yourself for the bigger group."

Professional basketball was a relatively minor sport in the United States before World War II. One pro league, the National Basketball League, or NBL, was organized in 1937. A second league, the American Basketball League, or ABL, started in 1946. The two leagues would merge in 1949 to form the National Basketball Association. Like the rest of the sports scene, basketball contributed thousands of players to the war; some never came home.

One such player was Bob "Ace" Calkins, who captained the UCLA team in 1938-1939. When war broke out, he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps and was serving as a navigator aboard a B-17 when it was shot down. He died from his injuries in an Italian prison camp.

Another basketball player who made the ultimate sacrifice was Edward C. Christi, the center and team captain of the U.S. Military Academy's team from 1941-1944. He died in combat in Austria shortly before the war ended. West Point's basketball arena is named in his honor.

In one sense, America was lucky. Its cities did not come under enemy attack. The same could not be said for the other major combatant nations—Britain, Germany, Japan, Russia, Italy, and others. In the large cities of these and other countries, football (i.e., soccer) stadia were often located in urban centers or close to industrial areas and thus became inadvertent targets.

In England, after Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, and the British and French declared war on Germany, the English Football Association (or FA, the governing body of English soccer), canceled the rest of the season after only three games because of a ban on the assembly of large crowds. With immediate conscription, young Englishmen, including professional soccer players, were drafted into military service. And, with the season canceled indefinitely, the clubs ceased operations, bringing howls of protests from the fans.

To appease the fans, the FA relented and created seven regional leagues that provided some competition without placing undue strain on the nation's railroad service that was needed to move troops and military goods (the government had imposed a 50-mile traveling limit).

But, because of fears of German bombing, the number of fans allowed to attend each game was limited to just 8,000. The government soon realized, as one historian wrote, that football "was good for morale and served the purpose of trying to keep life as normal as possible under the difficult circumstances. Gradually these attendance limitations were lifted, especially after the daytime bombings had stopped."

Tom Finney, who played for Preston North End, was one of England's best known footballers. He noted, "Wartime football was no substitute for the real thing but it did serve a purpose. There were restrictions galore and most clubs found their squads decimated through call-ups into the armed services, but the public passion for football won through.

"Sometimes matches were in doubt right up to kick-off as clubs tried desperately to recruit some guest players but, when the action rolled, it was good. Football provided the country with some much-needed escapism and, speaking as a player, it was thoroughly enjoyable—despite the bombs. After we had lost 2-0 at Anfield, our coach-ride home was caught up in an air-raid on Merseyside and that was a frightening experience by any standards."

After the Luftwaffe's first bombing raid on London, July 10, 1940, many historic English stadia were damaged or destroyed by German aerial bombing. After one 1940 raid, an unexploded bomb was found lodged in the stands at Stamford Bridge, home to the London club Chelsea. The bomb disposal unit was called, but they told the club there were hundreds of other unexploded bombs to deal with across London that had greater priority, so the team's manager (head coach) Billy Birrell defused it himself.

Old Trafford, the famous Manchester United stadium, had its main grandstand destroyed in a 1941 Luftwaffe raid; the team played the rest of its home games until 1949 at the stadium of its arch rival, Manchester City.

Arsenal's Highbury stadium, too, was badly damaged, forcing the Gunners to play their home matches at White Hart Lane—the home of their London rival, Tottenham Hotspur. The east grandstand at White Hart Lane was used as a temporary morgue for victims of the London Blitz. Aston Villa in Birmingham had its stadium commandeered by the Army, and thus the team was unable to play until 1942. London's huge Wembley Stadium, too, was hit and damaged in 1944.

Many other stadia throughout England suffered extensive damage during air raids, including Sunderland, Hartlepool, Sheffield United, Southampton, Bristol City, Leicester City, and Plymouth Argyle, to name but a few. One Plymouth Argyle fan said, "There were some pretty angry football supporters ready to lynch Adolf Hitler for ordering the bombing of our football stadia if they could have caught him."

In addition, with so many of their players in the service, some clubs had problems even fielding a full 11-man squad—some resorted to asking prior to kickoff if anyone in the stands would like to play! In anticipation of this, some young men brought their soccer boots with them to the games.

It was also sometimes difficult getting referees to the games. At least one game had to be called off before its conclusion because the referee had to report back to his Army barracks.

Another time, a game was suspended when a German bomber appeared overhead and everyone dashed for the air-raid shelter except for the referee, who was an antiaircraft gunner. He rushed to his gun position located nearby, strapped on his helmet, and began firing at the plane!

As might be expected, a number of British professional footballers became physical training instructors and did not see combat, while many others distinguished themselves on the battlefield.

Harry Goslin, captain of the Bolton Wanderers team, and 14 of his teammates enlisted in the Territorial Army and were assigned to the 53rd (Bolton) Field Regiment. While serving with the British Expeditionary Force in France following the 1940 German invasion, Goslin destroyed four enemy tanks; he was given a field promotion to the rank of lieutenant.

Later, the footballers' unit, the 53rd, was made part of General Bernard Montgomery's Eighth Army for the invasion of Italy. On September 24, 1943, Lieutenant Goslin and his men landed at Taranto and began fighting their way northward along Italy's east coast. On December 14, 1943, Goslin was hit by shrapnel and died of his wounds. His hometown newspaper mourned, "Harry Goslin was one of the finest types [of] professional football breeds. Not only in the personal sense, but for the club's sake, and the game's sake. I regret his life has had to be sacrificed in the cause of war."

Other English footballers who lost their lives included Walter Sidebottom (Bolton), who drowned in November 1943 when his ship was torpedoed in the English Channel. Joe Rooney, who played for Wolverhampton, was killed in an air raid in Belfast in June 1941. Fred Fisher (Barnsley and Millwall) died in September 1944. Popular, red-haired William Imrie (Blackburn Rovers and Newcastle United) was in the Royal Air Force and lost his life during a raid in 1945.

Eight members of the Arsenal team died during the war, including Bobby Daniel, Sidney Pugh, Harry Cook, and Leslie Lack. Goalkeeper Bill Dean was killed in action with the Royal Navy in March 1942. Three other Arsenal players, Hugh Glass, Herbie Roberts, and Cyril Tooze, who all joined the Royal Fusiliers, also lost their lives.

And so it went for almost every British team. The names of the fallen are still memorialized on bronze plaques at most of the stadia.

Considered one of the greatest English soccer players of all time was the ageless Stanley Matthews, who played in the top level of the game for Stoke City and Blackpool until he was 50 and played for England's national team 54 times. He was the only player ever knighted while still active. When war was declared, Matthews joined the RAF, but Sir Stanley's reputation took a hit when it was learned that he and another well-known player, Stan Mortensen, sold items on the black market during the war.

In 1945, after Belgium was liberated, the two men were in Brussels with an FA Services team to play against local teams when they sold some

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: The players of the British Bolton Wanderers football club enlisted in the 53rd Field Regiment of the British Army. In this publicity photo, team members pull an artillery piece into position on a firing range. BELOW: Taking time to play a game of soccer, or football as it's referred to in Europe, these men of the British 80th Scottish Horse Medium Regiment are just behind the front lines of the hotly contested Anzio beachhead in Italy during the spring of 1944.

Imperial War Museum

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: British prisoners of war engage in a game of rugby at Stalag XXID. Prisoners on both sides were often allowed to organize sports teams during the war, and the competition was spirited. RIGHT: British soccer star Stanley Matthews volunteered for service with the Royal Air Force shortly after war was declared. Matthews played for Stoke City and Blackpool and for England's national team. He was considered one of the greatest soccer players of all time.

rationed coffee and soap to a jewelry shop owner. Charged with "conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline," the pair admitted the allegations but received only a reprimand from their commanding officers. In spite of the incident, Matthews was also one of the first players to be inducted into the English Football Hall of Fame in 2002, two years after his death.

Sport in Europe continued its popularity in the 1930s despite the gathering war clouds. Mussolini's Italy hosted soccer's 1934 World Cup, with the home team defeating Czechoslovakia, 2–1, in Rome. And, as is well known, in 1936 Hitler used the awarding of both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games to Germany more for political than athletic purposes.

In 1938, the last soccer World Cup before the war, controversy came to the forefront. Prior to playing host country France in the quarterfinals, Italy was asked to field its team in white jerseys, as both teams' colors were blue. Defiantly, however, the Italians, on Mussolini's orders, dressed instead in black—a symbol of the Italian paramilitary fascists. Also on Mussolini's orders, the Italian team members were instructed to hold their arms in the fascist salute throughout the playing of both nations' national anthems and beyond. This they did until the frenzied anti-fascist French fans, outraged by the display, had screamed themselves hoarse.

To rub salt in the wound, the Italians won the match, 3-1, and then went on to beat Hungary, 4-2, to again become world champions. The Azzurri perhaps had an extra incentive when, before the championship game, Mussolini sent the Italian team a telegram stating, "Win or die." The Hungarians were apparently aware of the threat facing the Italians because after the game the Hungarian goalkeeper, Antal Szabó, quipped that he had just saved 11 lives.

The Germans, too, like most of the rest of the world, had embraced soccer as their national sport and had had a thriving professional league since the early 20th century. The pummeling of German cities by the British and later by the Americans, however, brought great devastation to the country's infrastructure. And, as with the other combatants, the athletes were pressed into military service. But the Nazi government decided that football was essential for the morale of the civilian populace, and thus, after banning teams with a communist or socialist connection, allowed the various teams and leagues to continue competition.

Jewish soccer teams and players also faced special scrutiny. As the Nazis imposed restrictions on the rights of Jews in Germany, clubs were compelled to expel their Jewish members. One club, known as Alemannia Aachen, however, defied the authorities by demanding that one of its Jewish players be released from prison; the Nazis, who were worried about a backlash that might harm their chances of hosting the 1936 Olympic Games, caved in. The retreat was only temporary, though, and after the Olympics German sporting clubs were purged of their Jewish members.

Across Germany, regional soccer leagues, known as Gau Ligen, were formed, and civilian clubs competed against military teams sponsored by the Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, and SS. By 1943, with fuel shortages growing worse and Allied air raids becoming heavier by the week, travel restrictions were imposed on teams and fans. With increasing manpower shortages, competition became ever more lopsided; scores of 10-0 or 15-1 were not uncommon. The greatest margin of victory came when Germania Mudersbach defeated FV Engen, 32-0.

Despite the round-the-clock Allied bombing, the diversion offered by soccer became more important than ever to the harried civilians. The 1943-1944 league championship game was initially called off by the authorities but then reinstated when fans protested. In that game, Dresdner SC beat SV Hamburg (made up mostly of Luftwaffe personnel), 4-0, in Berlin's Olympia Stadium.

The end for Germany was drawing near, however. The Third Reich's last recorded professional match took place between two Munich teams, FC Bayern and TSV Munich 1860, on April 23, 1945. Bayern won, 3-2, just three weeks before Germany's unconditional surrender.

One of Germany's most famous soccer players was goalkeeper Bernhard "Bert" Trautmann. Like Max Schmeling, Trautmann had joined the Luftwaffe and volunteered for para-

trooper duty. He fought on the Eastern Front for three years, where he earned five medals, including the Iron Cross. Later transferred to the Western Front, he was captured by the British and incarcerated in a prison camp in England.

After the war, Trautmann declined to be repatriated to his home country and stayed in England, where he played for local amateur teams until he was signed in 1949 by Manchester City in the league's highest professional division. Not all of City's fans were pleased by the signing of a former enemy paratrooper, however, and 20,000 once turned out in protest. But his solid play in goal eventually earned acceptance and respect; he played in all but five of the club's next 250 matches.

Prisoners of war, no matter what their nationality, were usually able to obtain sports equipment and organize contests behind barbed wire. One British soldier, Len Murphy, a prisoner of the Germans, recalled, "One day quite a number of us were back in camp early and decided to have a game of football. I was in goal when the German Sergeant Major who had been watching decided to take part, pushing me out of the goal and taking my place. Well, the lads all thought this was funny and after a while decided to kick the ball at him. After several [shots], 'Peg Leg' as he was known, pulled out his revolver, pointed it at the lads and said 'The next one who tries to score will be shot!' We all thought it rather funny, but thought better of it. We did not know that he was joking!"

Perhaps the most famous wartime game that involved the Germans was called the "Match of Death." In August 1942, during the Nazi occupation of the Ukrainian city of Kiev, a team composed of Luftwaffe antiaircraft gunners calling themselves Flak Elf (Antiaircraft Eleven), many of whom were ex-professional players, faced off at Zenit Stadium against a team called FC Start, made up of malnourished Dynamo Kiev players.

The two teams had earlier played each other, with the Kiev team winning by a huge 5-1 margin. This time there would be no embarrassing defeat for the visitors. Before the match, an SS officer told the Kiev team that they would lose or face the consequences. To ensure a German victory, a German referee presided over the match and implied to the Kiev players at the pregame coin toss that they must give the Nazi salute and also that it would be wise for them to lose.

The German players gave the customary stiff-armed salute and shouted, "Heil, Hitler!" while the FC Start players put their hands to their chests proclaiming the Soviet slogan, "Physical culture, hooray!" The local fans cheered wildly.

ABOVE: German goalkeeper Bernhard Trautmann served with the Luftwaffe and was captured and sent to a prison camp in England. After the war, he remained in England and was signed to play professional soccer with the Manchester City team. The signing of Trautmann was controversial. BELOW: German authorities printed and distributed this poster to publicize the "Match of Death" between a soccer team of Ukrainian prisoners of war and an elite team of German players known as Flak Elf.

Wikipedia

Once the game began, the Flak Elf team began fouling its opponents with vicious tackles, trips, shoves, elbows to the face and ribs, and every other tactic prohibited by the laws of soccer; the referee ignored the fouls. After the FC Start goalkeeper had been brutally fouled, the Germans scored. Not long thereafter, FC Start scored the equalizer, then another and another to go into the locker room at halftime up 3-1. The local spectators were delirious with joy while the Germans were fuming.

During the interval, a Soviet collaborator with the Nazis entered the Kiev locker room and addressed the team, telling them that they had better lose if they knew what was good for them. Another visitor, an SS officer, made threats against their lives and their families if they should win.

Undaunted, the Ukranians came out for the second half and scored two more goals. The Germans scored, too, and the game ended 5-2.

What happened afterward has been shrouded in legend and mystery. Some sources say that the entire FC Start team was taken to Kiev's Babi Yar ravine, where over 100,000 civilians, mostly Jews, had been murdered by the Nazis and their bodies dumped, and shot while still in their soccer uniforms.

Another more accurate story has it that the Gestapo showed up at the Kiev bakery where the team members worked, arrested them, and took them off to headquarters where they were tortured in hopes of getting them to confess that they were Soviet spies and saboteurs. No one cracked under the pressure, but the sister of one player, Nikolai Korotkykh, exposed him as a former NKVD officer. He died during torture, becoming the first victim of the "Match of Death."

The remaining 10 players were sent to a slave labor camp. When partisans attacked the Germans in 1943, the camp commander gave the order to kill three of the players; their bodies were thrown into the Babi Yar ravine. Hearing about this atrocity, three other players escaped from the camp and hid in the city until it was liberated by the Red Army in late 1943.

After the war, one of the surviving Kiev players said, "A desperate fight for survival started which ended badly for four players. Unfortunately they did not die because they were great footballers, or great Dynamo players.... They died like many other Soviet people because the two totalitarian systems were fighting each other, and they were destined to become victims of that grand scale massacre. The death of the Dynamo players is not so very different from many other deaths."

In 1981, Hollywood made an entertaining but wildly fictitious movie about the incident, titled *Victory!*, directed by John Huston, starring Sylvester Stallone, Michael Caine, and Max von Sydow, and featuring cameo

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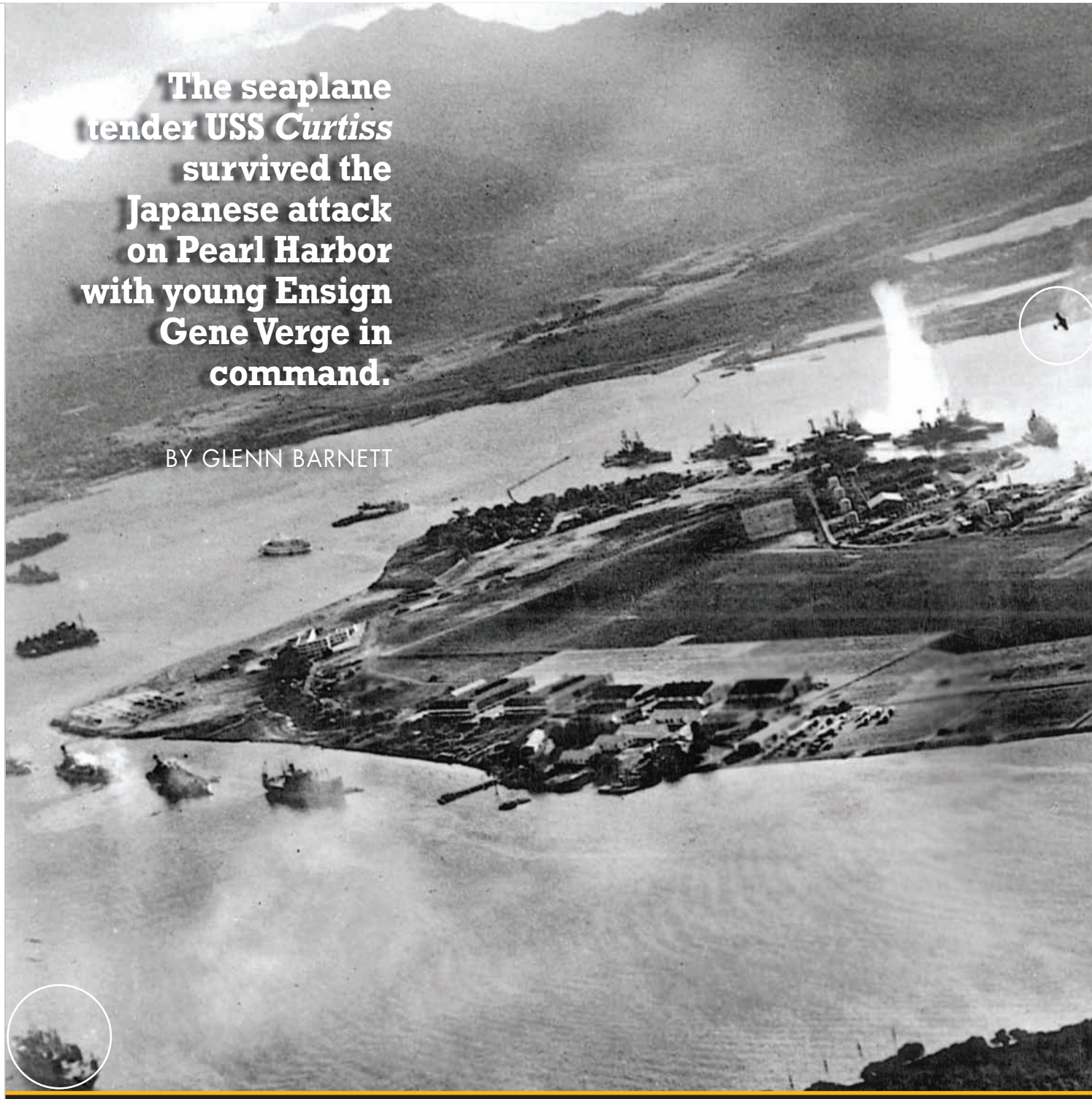


The seaplane tender USS *Curtiss* survived the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor with young Ensign Gene Verge in command.

BY GLENN BARNETT

From Pearl Harbor TO BIKINI

Author's Collection

In this well-known photo of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the seaplane tender USS *Curtiss* is shown circled at lower left. Japanese planes are also circled. The dramatic image, snapped from the cockpit of one of the attacking aircraft, also reveals waterspouts from torpedo strikes along Battleship Row. INSET: Young Ensign Gene Verge, right, confers with a fellow officer. During the harrowing attack on Pearl Harbor, Verge took command of the seaplane tender USS *Curtiss*.

National Archives

Gene Verge was born in Pasadena, California, in 1918. As a young man in 1941 he faced the probability of being drafted. He had already completed two years as a student at nearby Glendale Junior College and could be drafted at any time. He decided that he preferred the Navy to the Army and learned of a 90-day "wonder" program in Chicago that would graduate him as an officer.

Before he left for Chicago, a neighbor who had spent his career in the Merchant Marine taught the young man how to navigate by sextant, read nautical maps and charts, and use a compass. This knowledge impressed his teachers in Chicago, and upon completion of the 90-day course he was commissioned an ensign in the United States Navy. He was asked if he preferred to serve in the Atlantic or Pacific. He chose the Pacific, as it was closer to his Southern California home.

From Chicago, Verge went by train to Long Beach, California, where he was lodged in the officer's quarters until he could ship out to Hawaii. As a newly minted officer, Verge arrived at Pearl Harbor in August as a passenger aboard a hospital ship and was immediately assigned to the seaplane tender USS *Curtiss* as an assistant navigation officer. With this assignment he would be stationed on the bridge.

The *Curtiss* was part of a task force commanded by Vice Admiral William Halsey, whose flagship was the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*. The task force sailed for Wake Island to deliver food and supplies to the Marine outpost. Besides the *Enterprise* and *Curtiss,* remembers Verge, the convoy included four destroyers and four cruisers. Halsey ordered the ships to be on full wartime alert because of the very real threat that the Japanese might attack at any time. All the shipboard guns were manned, and lookouts kept sharp eyes out for unknown vessels and aircraft.

Having completed this mission, the *Curtiss* arrived safely back at Pearl Harbor just after noon on Saturday, December 6, 1941. The live ammunition at the ready during the cruise was safely locked in magazines. Around 5 PM, the captain and two thirds of the crew went ashore for the remainder of the weekend. Only a skeleton crew remained aboard on Sunday morning when the Japanese did attack.

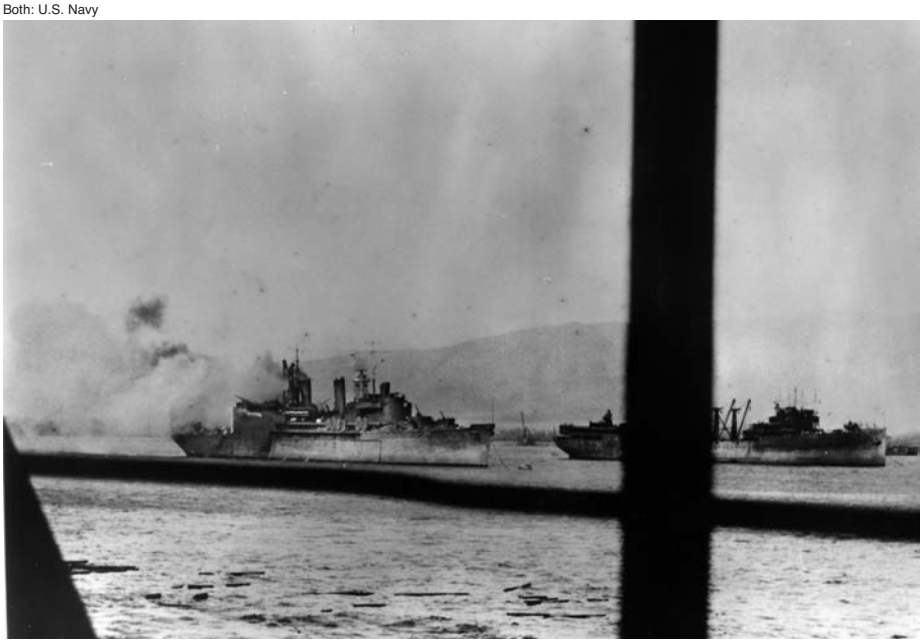
Verge, having little seniority, was left on board. At 4 AM, the young ensign arrived on the bridge to stand watch as officer of the deck for the next four hours. All was quiet. He was relieved just before 8 AM and, eager for sleep, decided to sack out and skip the breakfast of coffee, toast, eggs, and bacon being served in the mess that morning. He told his replacement, "I'm going to sleep. It's Sunday morning."

Verge walked back to his berth, unbuttoning his uniform on the way. Just before reaching his cabin, he heard three explosions on nearby Ford Island. His immediate thoughts were the same as every serviceman in the Honolulu area: "Bombing practice on a Sunday morning? Someone is going to be in trouble."

He went out on the galley deck to see what was going on. As he looked over at Ford Island, he saw fires burning in two hangars. He also saw the offending planes make a slow banking turn. He could see the red circles on the wings and knew at once what they meant. He ran to his room and called the bridge. "Did you see that?" he asked the officer of the watch. "Yes, what should we do?" he was asked. "I think you better sound the general alarm," Verge replied.

Verge put down the phone and raced to the bridge while rebuttoning his uniform. Meanwhile, the ship's alarm wailed its call to action and the announcement was made, "Battle stations, this is no drill!" The sound was repeated throughout the harbor. The other officers still aboard had duties in other parts of the ship, so the 22-year-old ensign found himself the ranking officer on the bridge of an undermanned ship under attack. The sky seemed to be full of enemy planes.

Both: U.S. Navy



ABOVE: Smoke boils up from the USS *Curtiss* after the ship was struck by a crippled Japanese dive bomber during the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. BELOW: The *Curtiss* sustained extensive damage to its hangar when a Japanese bomb penetrated the boat deck and three lower decks and exploded in the magazine of the No. 4 gun. Eighteen men were killed, and the 5-inch weapon was put out of action.

The *Curtiss* was a prime target that morning. Maps later found in the wreckage of Japanese planes showed where each ship was in the harbor. The battleships were marked with Xs meaning they were priority targets. The *Curtiss* too had an X to indicate its importance. Although the aircraft carriers were not in port that day, a seaplane tender was the next best thing. In 1941, seaplanes performed vital functions for the world's navies, including reconnaissance, rescue, and sometimes combat operations.

The flying boat had dominated international airline service in the 1920s and 1930s. The Pan Am Clippers were the only planes that could fly from the West Coast of the United States all the way to Hong Kong and, by implication, Japan. They could land in any sheltered harbor at primitive islands where no airports existed.

The Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boat was purpose built for the Navy as a patrol bomber. On its maiden flight in 1936, it completed a nonstop flight of 3,443 miles. Future flights improved the Catalina's range.

The *Curtiss* was a new ship, launched in 1940 and named after Glenn Curtiss, inventor of the seaplane and father of naval aviation. When the ship was launched it was christened by his widow. The *Curtiss* was a big ship for the time, displacing 8,671 tons, reaching 527 feet in length, and housing a crew of nearly 1,200 officers and men. Amenities included a soda fountain, movie theater, and library. The *Curtiss* was armed with four single-mount five-inch guns and four quad 40mm gun mounts for defense against enemy aircraft.

The *Curtiss* was designed to care for the Catalinas. She carried them in her hangar, fueled and armed them, launched and retrieved them, repaired and supplied them, housed and fed their pilots and crew, and served all the functions that an aircraft carrier would for Navy seaplanes.

With their ship under attack, the diminished crew of the *Curtiss* rushed to her guns, but the ammunition was stored in the magazines, and these were locked with no keys to be had because the men entrusted with opening the locks were ashore. The magazines had to be broken open. Once the ammunition was brought up, the guns of the *Curtiss* swung into action, firing their initial shot within 15 minutes of the first bomb blast. The guns remained in

action throughout the battle despite the absence of most of the crew. The few men who remained aboard accounted for at least one and perhaps two enemy planes. One gunner later noted that there were only three men available from his gun crew of seven sailors.

Meanwhile, the engineers in the boiler room below were ordered to work up steam for an emergency move if necessary. Number 3 boiler was already in use as it was needed to power the ship's electrical system in port, and two more boilers were soon kindled and made ready for emergency action.

The first wave of the attack concentrated on the battleships and airfields. The second wave looked for other targets, especially the *Curtiss*. A Japanese torpedo plane in the first wave, flying just above the water, released its weapon toward another ship but was shot at by any number of guns then firing. Smoke poured from its engines, and it stayed level long enough to smash into a crane on the stern of the *Curtiss,* starting fires in the hangar. The pilot, who could not escape, may have decided to deliberately crash into the American ship. In 1945, the *Curtiss* would be hit by a Japanese Kamikaze at Okinawa.

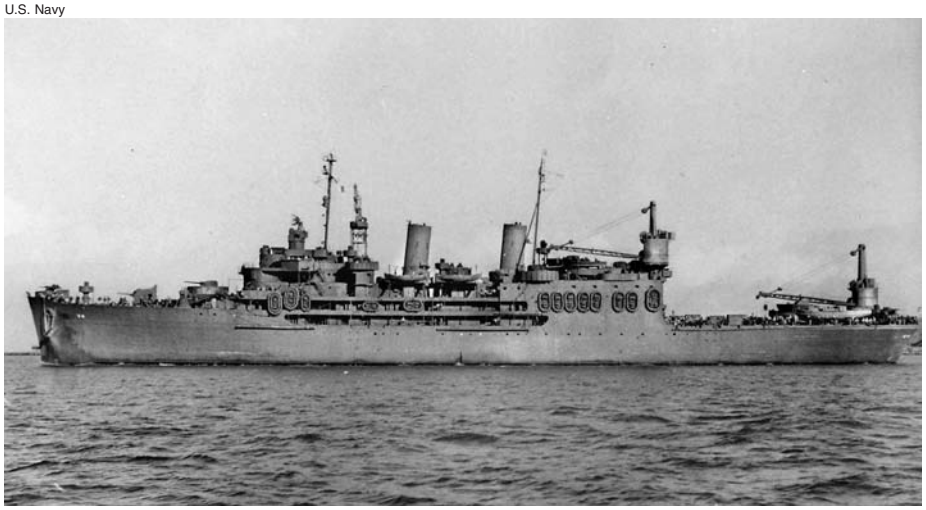
Verge rushed from the bridge to help shorthanded fire control parties and assist the wounded. He attended one man with severe burns but could not save him. As the crewmen extinguished the flames of the crashed Japanese plane, they pulled the dead pilot from the wreck and pushed the plane over the side. Verge looked at the dead Japanese pilot and noticed that he was wearing what looked like American-style swim trunks, but not just any trunks. They were the kind sold in a popular local Honolulu department store called McInerny's. Verge remembers thinking, "He's been here before."

More Japanese planes turned their attention to the *Curtiss.* There were several near misses from dive bombers and a hit that did minor damage to the superstructure. One dive bomber made a successful drop on the ship with a 500-pound bomb that pierced the boat deck and three lower decks, bouncing off a roll of cable before exploding in the magazine of the No. 4 five-inch gun.

Eighteen men were killed instantly, and some were incinerated beyond recognition. The explosion caused fires in the hangar and on the main deck aft. The No. 4 gun was put out of action. Fortunately, the 300,000-gallon capacity fuel tanks, now empty after the cruise to Wake Island, were not punctured.

However, the resulting blast in the magazine punched a hole in the side of the ship at the water line on the port side. Seawater began to pour in. This news was rushed to the bridge, where Ensign Verge ordered counterflooding. The resulting list to starboard had the effect of raising the port side hole above the waterline, which prevented further flooding.

U.S. Navy



ABOVE: The USS *Curtiss,* a veteran of World War II in the Pacific, sails off Mare Island, California, site of an extensive naval facility. The ship earned seven battle stars during World War II and went on to serve in the Korean War. BELOW: Gene Verge photographed with South Pacific islanders employed by the Navy, loading and unloading ships.

Author's Collection

At least three other near misses were observed by the ship's gunners as they kept firing at incoming Japanese planes. Crewmen then noticed a periscope and conning tower in the water a short distance away. An alert sailor on the bridge knew that the large American submarines of that day could not sail submerged in the shallow waters of Pearl Harbor. The submarine must be Japanese. In fact, it was one of several two-man midget subs that had attempted to enter Pearl Harbor that morning. Either the sub was having technical difficulties or had to surface to visually acquire a target. The surface of the water by that time was covered with oil and other debris that may have obscured the view from its periscope.

Verge ordered his gunners to fire on the sub. Five-inch shells made their way in the sub's direction, but by now it was so close (perhaps 50 yards) to the *Curtiss* that the gunners could not depress their guns enough to hit it. The submarine reportedly fired a torpedo at the *Curtiss.*

Continued on page 74

First Hell IN THE Pacific

The strategic defeats suffered in the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway checked Japan's advance in the Pacific. The engagements, which cost the Japanese over 400 carrier and landbased aircraft and five aircraft carriers, forced Tokyo to assume a defensive posture.

As part of its new military reality in the Pacific, Japan still relied on its plan to secure its strongest naval bastion in that area, Truk in the Caroline Islands some 1,600 miles northeast of New Guinea, by strengthening its recent acquisition of Rabaul on New Britain in the Solomon Islands, and building a major base there. To safeguard Rabaul, forces were landed in eastern New Guinea, Guadalcanal, and Tulagi in the southern Solomons chain.

By holding fortified air bases at these locations, the Japanese could meet Allied air and amphibious attacks by shuttling their own air assets from base to base. This strategy was employed in anticipation that the United States might push its inevitable counterattack through Port Morseby, Rabaul, and Tulagi as an alternative or complement to its obvious strategy of attacking across the Central Pacific toward the home islands of Japan.

By mid-June, the Japanese program designed to establish airfields in the Solomons, including Guadalcanal (construction commencing there on July 6), Florida, and Savo Islands, was authorized. Its primary purpose was to use airpower to cut communications between the United States and Australia and forestall American offensive operations. The threat to vital American supply bases in New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, and Fiji was also an important reason for the expansion of the Japanese defensive perimeter.

The Americans planned to parry the enemy's plan by capturing Tulagi and the Santa Cruz Islands and setting up their own airfield somewhere in that zone to support an advance toward New Britain and New Guinea. On June 24, 1942, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Com-

mander in Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet, was ordered to prepare to capture "Tulagi and adjacent positions." It was not until July 5, when definitive intelligence revealed that the Japanese were preparing to build an air base on the island of Guadalcanal, that the Americans dropped the Santa Cruz Islands from their forthcoming amphibious assault, instead preparing to move against Guadalcanal. Tulagi remained a target, albeit now a secondary one, to be occupied simultaneously with Guadalcanal.

The island of Tulagi is two miles long and a half mile wide; it lies just south of Florida Island and 22 miles directly north across Sealark Channel from Guadalcanal. A ridge rising over 300 feet above the sea marks the northwest-southeast axis of the island. About two-thirds of the way down from its northwest tip, the ridge is broken by a ravine and then rises again in a triangle of hills, the farthest southeast designated Hill 208 and the farthest northeast Hill 281 after their elevation in feet.

Tulagi had been the seat of the British Solomons Island Protectorate with the governor's residence and other governmental structures located on its northeast side. About 3,000 yards east of Tulagi are the small islets of Gavutu and Tanambogo joined by a 500-yard long causeway. Gavutu Harbor on the northeast end of the island and Purvis Bay to the southeast of Gavutu and Tanambogo formed the finest deep-water anchorage in the Solomons.

To protect Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanamabogo the Australians stationed only two dozen soldiers and 130 native policemen along with crew and maintenance personnel who operated the four Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boats assigned for patrol duty there. After the Japanese began regular bombing of the islands in January 1942, the Australian government evacuated the civilian population. The tiny defense force was taken off on May 2, one day before the Japanese Army occupied Tulagi while also installing small garrisons on Gavutu and Tanamobogo. Concerned about the ability of

UNLIKE THEIR COMRADES WHO INVADED GUADALCANAL ON AUGUST 7, 1942, UNITED STATES MARINES LANDING ON TULAGI MET FIERCE RESISTANCE. IT WAS A HARBINGER OF THE BLOODY ISLAND FIGHTING THAT MARKED COMBAT IN THE PACIFIC DURING WORLD WAR II.

BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG

U.S. Marines execute an uncontested landing at Blue Beach on the island of Tulagi near Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942. As the day wore on, Japanese resistance on this small spit of land in the Solomons stiffened considerably.

National Archives

National Archives

ABOVE: Photographed on August 8, 1942, the day after the U.S. landings in the Solomons commenced, Japanese installations on the island of Tanambogo lie in ruins. BELOW: Following a U.S. air raid on Japanese positions on Tulagi, August 7, 1942, smoke billows from the island's cricket grounds.

U.S. Navy

the enemy to conduct long-range air rreconnaissance from Tulagi, in late May Admiral Nimitz urged that the island be reoccupied using the 1st U.S. Marine Raider Battalion. However, his idea was rejected by General Douglas McArthur, commander of U.S. ground forces in the Pacific, citing the shortage of combat troops available to hold the place once it was retaken.

On May 3, 1942, the Japanese invaded Tulagi. The ground troops were from the 3rd Kure Special Naval Landing Force (SNLF). Sometimes erroneously referred to as Japanese Marines, these were a peculiar hybrid of sailors used as landing parties, specially trained in amphibious warfare. After taking Tulagi, the Japanese constructed a seaplane, ship refueling, and communications base on the island with supporting facilities on Gavutu, Tanambogo, and Florida Island.

The amphibious assault on Guadalcanal and Tulagi was the first U.S. ground offensive of World War II. Designated Operation Watchtower, the hastily thrown together plan called for the 1st Marine Division, about 19,000 men, supported by American and Australian warships and transport vessels, 82 ships of all types, to make the seaborne assault. The Allied armada assembled near Fiji on July 26. A poorly planned and executed rehearsal, Operation Dovetail, was held on Koro Island in the Fijis, after which the fleet sailed for its objectives on the 31st.

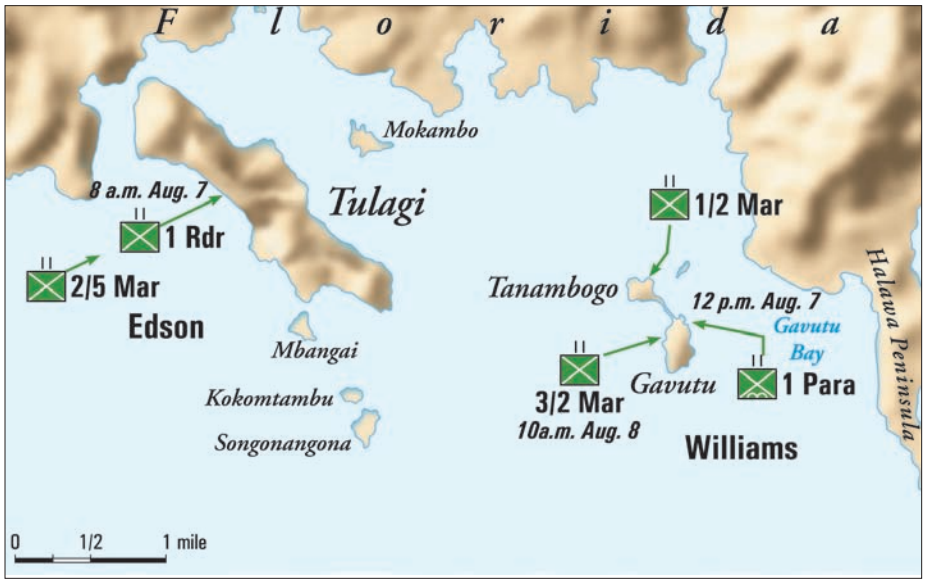
As the Allied fleet neared Guadalcanal, it split: the Guadalcanal Group, made up of Combat Group A composed of the 1st and 5th Marine Regiments, the divisional artillery, and support units (11,300 men), under 1st Marine Division commander Maj. Gen. Alexander A. Vandegrift, headed for Lunga Point on Guadalcanal. The Northern Group, built around four Marine infantry rifle battalions (2,400 troops), led by assistant division commander Brig. Gen. William H. Rupertus, steered for Tulagi, Florida, Gavutu, and Tanambogo.

At 9:10 AM, August 7, 1942, the first wave of Marines of Combat Group A scrambled ashore on Guadalcanal between Koli Point and Lunga Point, quickly establishing a 2,000-yard-long, 600-yard-deep beachhead. Their surprise arrival met no organized Japanese ground resistance. Approximately 2,500 laborers, mostly Korean, of the 11th and 13th Construction Unit along with the few dozen regular Japanese soldiers melted into the island's hinterland as the Americans came ashore. The only threats to the leathernecks that day came from a number of mostly ineffective Japanese air raids launched from Rabaul. By nightfall the Americans had carved out a mile-deep toehold on Guadalcanal. They halted for the night about 1,000 yards from the unfinished Japanese airfield near Lunga Point. The next day, August 8, the Marines, meeting only sporadic enemy resistance, advanced to the Lunga River and at 4 PM captured the airdrome.

The main Marine force that came ashore on Guadalcanal encountered more difficulty with the island's foreboding jungle terrain, oppressively hot weather, and the confusion the inexperienced Americans had with offloading men and supplies than it did with the Japanese. It was a different and deadly story for General Rupertus's command, which hit the beaches at Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo that same day.

At 6:52 AM on the morning of August 7, 1942, Japanese troops on Tulagi began to send a flood of radio transmissions in the clear reporting 20 enemy ships shelling the island accompanied by air attacks and seaborne forces. At 8:05 AM, Tulagi signaled that the island's defenders were destroying their papers and equipment and signed off with the message, "Enemy troop strength is overwhelming. We pray for enduring fortunes of war," and pledged to fight "to the last man."

The Japanese garrison on Tulagi consisted of a 350-man detachment of the 3rd Kure SNLF under Commander Masaaki Suzuki, 536 naval members of the Yokohama Air Group, and some Japanese and Korean civilians from the



The islands of Tulagi, Tanambogo, and Gavutu are located in the southern Solomons. Control of these small islands was deemed critical to the success of U.S. landings on Guadalcanal and subsequent ability to resupply the Marines ashore.

14th Construction Unit. About 900 soldiers under the supervision of Captain Shigetoshi Miyazaki, commander of the seaplane-equipped Yokohama Air Group, were in residence on Gavutu and Tanambogo. Making good on their promise, the Japanese on Tulagi did fight almost to the last man while exacting a heavy price on their American opponents.

The Marines assaulting Tulagi were carried to their objective by Transport Group Yoke, consisting of three troop transports, four Navy transport-destroyers, and one cargo ship. The landing force was made up of the 1st Raider Battalion; 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment; 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment; and 1st Parachute Battalion. These were the best trained units in the division and expected a tough fight. That assumption, which proved to be spot on, was based on prebattle intelligence assessments that Tulagi and the other islands were held by several hundred elite Japanese SNLF personnel of proven fighting ability who were well dug in.

Preinvasion aerial reconnaissance revealed that the strongest defenses on Tulagi fronted the northeast and southeast shorelines. Therefore, the Marines selected a 500-yard stretch of beach (named Beach Blue) midway on the southwest side of the island for the landing. The invasion plan called for elements of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines to secure flanking positions on Florida Island followed by the 1st Raiders and then the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines going ashore on Tulagi. The idea was to make the first American amphibious assault of the war against natural obstacles instead of enemy firepower.

Four hours after American troops hit the beach on Tulagi, the parachutists were to have gained control of Gavutu and Tanambogo. Lt. Col. Merritt A. "Red Mike" Edson, chief of the Raider Battalion, offered to make a reconnaissance of the objectives on Tulagi prior to the operation, but the idea was rejected since it might alert the Japanese to the impending landing. As a result, the Marines would be landing with little concrete information on Japanese dispositions and strength.

At 7:40 AM, Company B, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, under Captain Edward J. Crane, made an unopposed landing near Haleta on Florida Island guided by three Australians, all former colonial officials who were familiar with the area. The rest of Company B's parent unit, led by Lt. Col. Robert E. Hill, waded ashore on Florida's Halavo peninsula east of Gavutu and Tanambogo. Both parties secured the high ground overlooking Blue Beach on Tulagi, and neither encountered any opposing forces.

At 8 AM, Edson's 1st Raider Battalion grounded on an undetected coral reef 100 yards from Tulagi's shoreline, forcing them to wade that distance to reach the beach. No enemy resistance was met at first since the Japanese garrison on the island believed that the naval bombardment and air attacks only signaled a hit-and-run raid and took shelter in caves. A solid defense was not mounted until later on the afternoon of the 7th.

In the meantime, the battalion's leading companies pushed across the island and crested its spine. Company B then wheeled to the right while Company D moved right of Company B. Company A soon tied in with Company B, while Company C extended the entire Marine line to the island's southwest shore. At around noon the Raiders swept down the island to their preinvasion designated Phase Line A, where Company C met the first enemy resistance from the Japanese outpost line.

Brief firefights eliminated these pockets of resistance, but not before the death of a Marine doctor and the wounding of Company C's commander, Major Kenneth D. Bailey. Meanwhile, at 9:16 AM, Lt. Col. Harold E. Rosecrans's 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines landed at Blue Beach, relieving Edson's Company E, which was guarding the landing zone. The newly arrived 5th Marines then combed the northwest end of the island but found no Japanese.

Close to dusk, as the Raiders attempted to move beyond Phase Line A, Company C ran into heavy Japanese machine-gun fire near Hill 208. Commander Suzuki had formed his forward tripwire line on the hill's steep slopes, which ran down to a ravine on its western edge. Farther to the east, he had set up his main line of resistance running from Hill 281 on the northeast coast of Tulagi through flat land that had been used as a cricket field in peaceful times to the southeast tip of the island.

Cunningly constructed dugouts and tunnels carved into the hill's limestone cliffs and covered by machine-gun pits protected by sandbags made up this strong and well-concealed Japanese defensive position. The Japanese subsequently employed tactics that became hallmarks of their savage defense of Pacific island strongholds, including ambushes, the plentiful use of snipers, savage nocturnal counterattacks, and stealthy infiltration of American lines by small groups of Japanese soldiers.

During the afternoon and evening, Marines rooted out stubborn Japanese defenders with small arms and hand grenades. The Americans at this point in the war did not possess flamethrowers or purpose-built explosive devices, so they had to improvise, and that took time and cost lives. After disposing of the enemy's forward defense line, Companies C and A moved a little farther to the east. The

gathering darkness precluded a Marine attempt to clear the apparently strong and unidentified enemy positions of the main defensive line, so the Raiders dug in for the night.

About 10 PM , the Japanese mounted a fierce counterattack, driving a wedge between Company C and Company A, almost isolating the former from the rest of the battalion. Savage assaults against Company A's exposed flank were were fended off. A second banzai attack, which might have successfully exploited the initial thrust, fell on the front of Company A and was bloodily repulsed.

U.S. Navy

Officers of the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy who held command responsibilities at Tulagi posed for this photograph after the island was secured. On the front row left to right are Lt. Col. O.K. Pressley, Colonel Merritt A. Edson, Lt. Col. H.E. Rosecrans, and Lt. Col. R.E. Hill. The middle row left to right includes Navy Lieutenant E.B. McLarney, Brig Gen. W.H. Rupertus, Colonel R.C. Kilmartin, and Major William Enright. On the back row left to right are Captain Ralph Powell, Captain Daryle Seeley, and Captain Thomas Philpott.

The Japanese reverted to using infiltration tactics. Throughout the remainder of the night they slipped individuals and small groups into the rear of the American lines. They attacked the aid station and the command post of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines on Blue Beach. In addition, during the early hours of the 8th, Japanese infiltrators made five separate attacks on and near Raider battalion headquarters at the governor's residence. The attackers were wiped out in hand to hand fighting. During the desperate fighting near the battalion command post, Colonel Edson tried to summon reinforcements, but his radio communications were out.

Later that morning, reinforced by Company's E and F, 5th Marines, which landed on the north shore above Hill 281, and by 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, which reinforced the main U.S. line moving east along Tulagi, the leathernecks surrounded Hill 281 and the ravine sheltering their foe. After delivering lengthy barrages of 60mm and 81mm mortar fire, they used improvised TNT explosive devices to eliminate the numerous Japanese positions.

By 3 PM, the tenacious and often suicidal Japanese resistance on Tulagi was broken. The battle had cost the Marines 45 dead and 76 wounded. The Japanese suffered 347 killed and just three captured. Japanese prisoners reported that about 40 to 70 Japanese soldiers had escaped Tulagi by swimming to Florida Island. Over the next two months, they were hunted down by Marines and native patrols.

The 1st Raider Battalion performed well during its baptism of fire on Tulagi. Both officers and enlisted men exhibited daring, bravery, and individual initiative. Major Kenneth D. Baily demonstrated the type of leadership commonly found in the unit. When an enemy machine gun held up his company, he personally circled around the offending weapon, well placed in a coconut log bunker, crawled on top, and shoved a hand grenade into the firing aperture. He was wounded in the thigh.

Colonel Edson established his reputation for courage by spending most of his time on the front lines, where he contemptuously exposed himself to the enemy's heaviest fire. More importantly, he aggressively employed his command in battle, taking the fight to his adversary and steadfastly defending his positions when attacked.

While the fighting raged on Tulagi, the 1st Parachute Battalion, under Major Robert H. Williams, was tasked with capturing Gavutu and Tanambogo. The attack was to commence four hours after the landing at Tulagi. Insufficient numbers of landing craft to conduct both the Tulagi and Gavutu oeprations dictated that the landings could not occur simultaneously. As a result, the defenders of Gavutu and Tanambogo were prepared for their enemy's assault.

Each of those islets was dominated by a single elevation, Hill 148 on Gavutu and Hill 121 on Tanambogo. The islands were surrounded by coral reefs that allowed an approach only from the east. The terrain channeled any attacker into a narrow funnel dominated by high ground on two sides.

Defending Gavutu were about 240 men, mostly laborers from the 14th Construction Unit, buttressed by a 50-man platoon of the 3rd Kure SNLF. On Tanambogo were the 303 crew and maintenance personnel of the Yokohama Flying Boat Air Group under Captain Miyazaki. Only the SNLF members were equipped and trained to fight as ground troops. However, the constricted terrain and well-placed defensive positions greatly aided the other defenders, allowing them to give a good account of themselves. The Japanese on both islands were entrenched in bunkers and caves, and each spit of land was within mutual machine-gun fire support of the other.

As the parachutists approached Gavutu Harbor at noon, the island was rocked by a five-minute naval bombardment carried out by the light antiaircraft cruiser USS *San Juan* and the destroyers *Monssen* and *Buchanan,* followed by a 10-minute air assault by dive bombers from the aircraft carrier *Wasp*. The efforts did little damage to the Japanese defenses except for eliminating an 75mm gun on Hill 148. The seaplane landing ramp on Gavutu was damaged to such an extent that the Marines could not disembark on it. The Marines were forced

to land on a more exposed part of the dock.

After getting ashore, the attackers of the first wave, Company A, pushed 75 yards inland but were met by withering fire from the Japanese on Hills 148 and 121. The second and third waves, made up of Companies B and C, landed on the dock and immediately came under Japanese rifle and machine-gun fire, so heavy that in a few minutes 10 percent of both units were cut down, including the battalion commander.

By 2 PM, elements of Companies A and B had taken Hill 148 after extensive use of grenades and improvised explosive charges, as well as close-quarter fighting to clear the many fortified positions on the heights. Unfortunately, this hard-fought Marine triumph was marred by the arrival of American Douglas SDB Dauntless dive bombers responding to an earlier call for air support. The Marines had no sooner taken control of Hill 148 than the planes attacked the summit, killing several Marines and wounding others. This tragic accident would not be the only such friendly fire incident during the struggle for Gavutu and Tanambogo. When night fell on the 7th, Gavutu was still not secured and Tanambogo had yet to be taken. The acting battalion commander, Major Charles A. Miller, who had replaced the injured Major Williams, requested reinforcements.

General Rupertus responded to Miller's appeal by sending Captain Crane's Company B, 2nd Marines, then on Florida Island, to subdue Tanambogo. After landing under heavy fire and suffering severe losses, Crane evacuated his wounded on boats and had them sail back to Gavutu while he and a dozen men sprinted along the causeway back to Gavutu. The Japanese lost only 10 men in the aborted assault on Tanambogo that day.

Throughout the night, the Japanese staged persistent attacks against the Marines on Gavutu under the cover of heavy rain and thunderstorms. Hoping to get his attack on Gavutu moving, General Vandegrift ordered his last reserves, Lieutenant R.G. Hunt's 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines, to land there. Hunt's men assisted the paratroopers in exterminating the last Japanese defenders on Gavutu, enduring machine-gun fire from the Japanese on Tanambogo. During these mopping-up operations, a second American naval air attack killed four Marines and injured eight.

With Gavutu pacified by noon, Hunt ordered an attack on Tanambogo at 3:30 PM after a 30-minute naval bombardment by *San Juan* and *Buchanan,* the latter firing at close range. At 4:15 PM, Company I, in conjunction with two M5 Stuart Light tanks under Lieutenant R.J. Sweeny (who was killed in action later that day), reached the island by water. One tank assailed Hill 121 from the south, while the other did the same from the east. Both metal monsters were closely supported by Marines. However, one of the tanks moved too rapidly ahead of its accompanying infantry. As the tank approached its target, Captain Miyazaki and other Japanese officers swarmed over the vehicle, setting it ablaze with gasoline-soaked rags, killing three of its crewmen and savagely beating a fourth. An immediate hail of American small-arms fire soon killed the captain and 41 of his comrades, who fell around the burned-out American tank.

National Archives

While clearing the small island of Tulagi of its Japanese defenders, U.S. Marines discovered dugouts and tunnels carved into the island's hillsides. These types of defenses were encountered many times during the American march across the Pacific toward the Japanese home islands.

Meanwhile, the second armored fighting vehicle was able to knock out enough enemy bunkers using its 37mm main gun to allow a platoon from Company K of Hunt's battalion to charge across the causeway onto Tanambogo at 4:40 PM. This provided the needed muscle to finally break the Japanese hold on the islet. Although the island was declared secure by 9 PM on August 8, isolated night attacks by the Japanese continued. It was not until the next day, after savage fighting with bayonet, rifle butt, and hand grenades, that the remaining defenders on Tanambogo were completely eliminated.

Of the 1,300 men committed, 70 Marines were killed and 87 wounded during the fight for Gavutu and Tanambogo. The Japanese lost 516 killed and 20 prisoners, 15 of whom were Korean laborers who had fought alongside their Japanese masters.

American deaths sustained in the capture of Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo totaled 122, while 863 Japanese perished in the three engagements. The 1st Marine Division's after action report noted: "The combat assumed the nature of a storming operation from the outset, a soldier's battle, unremitting, and relentless, to be decided only by the extermination of one or the other of the adversaries engaged. Soldierly behavior was manifest wherever the enemy was encountered."

Shortly after Tulagi was taken by the Marines, Gavutu anchorage began serving as a giant naval base and refueling station. Purvis Bay assumed a significant role as a center for light naval forces operating in the middle and upper Solomons. Tulagi's harbor also functioned as a temporary repair center for vessels damaged in the many naval battles that occurred in the Guadalcanal vicinity between August and December 1942. Later in the campaign for Guadalcanal, Tulagi became a U.S. PT Boat base.

After Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo were firmly in American hands, the majority of the Marines who wrested these islands away from the Japanese were transferred to Guadalcanal to help defend Henderson Field, the key to the victory in the Solomons, from repeated attempts by the Japanese Army to recapture it. □

Military historian Arnold Blumberg lives and writes from his home in Baltimore, Maryland.

By Joseph Luster

Gaijin's *War Thunder* is poised to challenge *World of Warplanes* in online air combat.

PUBLISHER
Gaijin Entertainment

DEVELOPER
Gaijin Entertainment

SYSTEM(S)
PC, Mac, PlayStation 4

AVAILABLE
Now (open beta)

WAR THUNDER

World of Warplanes may currently have everyone feeling pretty satisfied with online air combat, but a challenger recently entered the fray with the kick-off of the *War Thunder* open beta. Though Gaijin Entertainment's combat flight simulator previously caused a bit of confusion—it was originally titled *World of Planes* when development began in 2009—*War Thunder* isn't just about dogfighting with a variety of aircraft, and its massively multiplayer action is currently being tested in open beta.

In addition to aircraft from pre-World War II times through the early Korean War era, *War Thunder* also lets players take control of armored vehicles and ships. With hundreds of plane models and dozens of upgradeable weapons, *War Thunder* offers up both player-versus-player action in full-scale combat missions and player-versus-enemy sorties. The latter also includes options for cooperative play, as well as a mission editor to customize the battle landscape.

With plenty of tutorials and options like a less harsh, team-based arcade mode, early impressions reveal a dogfighting game that's actually not too difficult to dive right into. Historical battles will always be there for the more advanced players—which could be you (or maybe even me, though it's a long shot at the moment) after a bit of practice—but it's nice to jump into battle without having to worry about the more realistic effects of physics. Cut your teeth on those before taking a crack at recreating history without the hope of respawning after death.

The smooth handling of *War Thunder* should come as no surprise to anyone who's taken on some of Gaijin Entertainment's previous efforts. Games like *Birds of Steel* and *IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey* showcase how the developers honed their skills in the genre, building up to a larger scale effort like this one. One thing's for certain, there's already no shortage of capable competition in the online arena.

War Thunder is currently in open beta on PC and Mac, and will also be available on PlayStation 4 when the system launches in November. It will be playable across platforms, but unfortunately it doesn't look like Xbox One will be among those due to uncertainty regarding some of Microsoft's policies. According to *War Thunder* developers Anton Yudintsev and Kiril Yudintsev, Microsoft hasn't quite made it clear how they're handling online free-to-play and self-published games, making it difficult to release a product like theirs. Microsoft also doesn't currently plan on allowing cross-platform multiplayer on Xbox One, and that's another important function of *War Thunder*.

If air and land combat at home doesn't sound like enough for you, there's also a mobile version on the horizon, appropriately titled *War Thunder Mobile*. Look out for what promises to be a standalone game set in the *War Thunder* world, yet built from the ground up for mobile devices, at some point down the line.

PUBLISHER
City Interactive

DEVELOPER
City Interactive

SYSTEM(S)
PC, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3

AVAILABLE
Spring 2014

ENEMY FRONT

We still have a while to wait for City Interactive's release of *Enemy Front*, but the sandbox-style World War II shooter continues to impress. At the time of this writing, its most recent showing took place at this year's PAX Prime, but anticipation has been building since well before the last time it graced these pages.

Back then *Enemy Front* was under the direction of Stuart Black, who had previously helmed Codemasters' *Bodycount* and Criterion's *Black*. Unfortunately, Black's vision for the WWII game proved "different" from that of City Interactive, and he left the studio in August 2012. This paved the way for *Enemy Front*'s new creative director, Raphael van Lierop, who worked as *Far Cry 3* narrative designer and *Warhammer 40K: Space Marine* director prior to joining the team. Lierop explained in interviews at the time why he thinks it's time to return to World War II as a setting.

Despite the fact that the market got oversaturated with WWII shooters for a while—the majority of which were inspired by the desire to recreate the impact of films like *Saving Private Ryan*—Lierop believes there's plenty of room to revisit it all with a fresh approach. One of those approaches, as Lierop told GamesIndustry International, involves taking out the linearity and injecting the genre with a good ol' shot of sandbox design.

"The levels are quite open," said Lierop, "encounters are designed specifically so that players can approach them from various directions and use what we call 'the resistance fighter's toolbox' to get through them." Even the core of the narrative strays from tradition, opting to follow a "Hemingway-esque" war correspondent who gets involved with the Polish resistance, as opposed to the soldier protagonist of your average game.

The full *Enemy Front* package sounds promisingly diverse, with missions—ranging from sabotage, espionage, assassination, assault, and beyond—that can be taken on with force or stealth. Throw in class-driven, cover-based enemy behavior; destructible environments; authentic weaponry paired with over-the-top effects; and faithfully recreated theaters of conflict such as France, Norway, Greece, and Poland; well, hopefully now we're cooking with something that could lead the charge for future World War II shooters. □

Continued from page 27

which strikes me most was that I never seemed to have doubted the estimate that there was not much more than the 600-700 Japanese that JWS [General Stilwell] told me were in the town and that we had enough attacking strength to take the town…. However, there are very significant statements in the interrogatories of the Japanese officers."

These postwar admissions by the Japanese not only definitely refuted Colonel Stilwell's estimates of 400 to 500 enemy troops in Myitkyina but rather placed the Japanese troop strength at 3,500 to 4,600 men. Also, in May the Japanese had decided to let the 18th Division with only two regiments hold Kamaing. The 114th Regiment of that division was in Myitkyina, and the Japanese had decided to reinforce Mogaung and Myitkyina with elements of the 53rd Division. Finally, there were at least 1,000 Japanese casualties in Myitkyina in June alone. Boatner surmised in his archives, "The 4,400 Japs in Myitkyina … explains the delay and extra casualties."

During the last 10 days of May, despite Galahad's best efforts to cover the main approaches to Myitkyina, the Japanese had been able to reinforce the garrison with an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 troops coming from the Nsopzup, Mogaung, and even the Bhamo areas. The Japanese had built up more strength at Myitkyina than the Allies and within a week of the airfield's capture had actually been able to pass over to the offensive and attack the MTF on the airfield.

Boatner wrote, "At the conclusion of his inspection of the 18th Division on 27 May, General Honda felt that the Division was stronger and had better morale than he had expected. As a consequence he determined to utilize the 53rd Division to relieve Myitkyina rather than to cover the 18th Division [at Kamaing]…. General Honda never wavered in his belief that Myitkyina should be held to the last. Accordingly, it was definitely decided to commit the 53rd Division to relieve and defend Myitkyina."

A G-2 MTF Memorandum from August 9th, almost a week after the town of Myitkyina was captured, estimated that "4,075 Japanese were killed in Myitkyina. These, plus the several hundred who escaped, came close to Tanaka's figure of 4,600. The garrison commander, Maruyama, set his strength at 3,500, which can be reconciled with the above if Tanaka's figure is taken as the grand total."

Stilwell cabled his superior, General Marshall, "I will probably have to use some of our engineer units to keep an American flavor in the fight."

Thus, controversy exists as to why the British 36th Division was not used to take Myitkyina after seizure of the airfield in mid-May but instead was sent south by Stilwell in July 1944 to the "Railway Corridor," extending from Myitkyina in the north to Katha, on the Irrawaddy in the south, approximately 145 miles away. According to that division's historian, Geoffrey Foster, "The 36th Division was the first all-British unit to come under the command of General Joseph Stilwell…. Stilwell briefly considered asking that the British 36th Division be rushed in to take Myitkyina. The 36th Division had been withdrawn from Arakan to refit before being allocated to Stilwell's NCAC. These British veterans were fit and ready for battle and were the obvious force with which to replace Hunter's exhausted men."

The 36th Division had an American-led Chinese artillery group consisting of three batteries attached to it as well as a separate air contingent provided by the Tenth U.S. Army Air Force. In addition, an American engineer company joined the 36th Division to build air landing strips for resupply and evacuation of wounded. This force with its attendant firepower and support elements would have provided a much needed punch for the MTF during the early days of its siege of Myitkyina town.

Instead, Hunter had to quickly train the engineers for introduction into combat with the entrenched Japanese veterans. Perhaps the Anglophobic Stilwell did not want to be beholden to British troops to restore some élan to his waning attack on Myitkyina town with his Sino-American forces. If the true strength of the Japanese garrison at Myitkyina were known and well disseminated among the various Allied headquarters, perhaps Stilwell would have had to swallow his pride and utilize this force to expedite the capture of the prize of Myitkyina.

Since Myitkyina was the key to vital road, river, and rail links with the rest of Burma and the southwestern Chinese provinces, its earliest capture would have offered strategic advantages as a potential supply center to which the American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) had attached such great importance for future operations. □

Jon Diamond has written numerous articles for WWII History. *His Osprey Command Series volumes on Orde Wingate (#20) and Archibald Wavell (#28) were released in 2012. He practices medicine and resides in Hershey, Pennsylvania.*

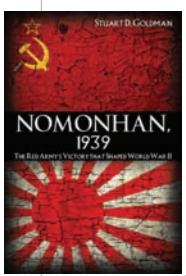
By Christopher Miskimon

Soviet machine guns fire on Japanese troops at the Battle of Nomonhan. The Japanese underestimated the capability of the Russian military.

Soviets Stop the Threat of War with Japan

The Battle of Nomonhon may have influenced the invasion of Poland.

WHILE MOST OF THE FOCUS ON WORLD WAR II'S BEGINNING CENTERS ON Europe and Nazi Germany's rise, there is also a distinct body of writers and researchers who have turned their gaze eastward toward Asia in the 1930s. Much of this work looks at the rise of the Japanese Empire, its war with China, and how various incidents in East Asia influenced the Pacific War of the 1940s. There has been little real effort to show how events in Asia may have influenced what was happening elsewhere. Stuart Goldman's *Nomonhan, 1939: The Red Army's Victory that Shaped World War II* (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2012, 226 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $32.00, hardcover) aims to do just that, making a coherent argument that a battle still little known in the West had a dramatic and possible history-altering effect on the invasion of Poland in September 1939.



In 1939, the small village of Nomonhan sat in the border zone between Japanese-controlled Manchuria (Manchukuo) and Soviet-dominated Mongolia. The actual border was in dispute; for the Soviets, it ran near the village itself while Japan placed it several miles to the west along the Halha River. The actual area had little in it to justify fighting, and during the early 1930s the Soviets stayed mainly on the defensive and tried not to provoke the Japanese because the Red Army was still relatively weak and unprepared.

The Soviet opponent in Manchukuo, Japan's Kwantung Army, was considered an elite formation in the emperor's military. It also operated virtually independently of higher authority, even using political and cultural maneuvering to disregard orders from Tokyo when it suited the Kwantung commanders. Many on the Kwantung Army staff assumed there would eventually be war between Japan and the Soviet Union and took a hard stance toward border incidents.

By the late 1930s, however, the Red Army had made great improvements in its equipment and organization, despite the crippling effects of Premier Josef Stalin's purges of its officer corps. The Soviets were ready to assert their rights in the Far East using a force that was larger and better equipped with armor and artillery than the force the Kwantung Army could field. As would become painfully evident later against the Allies, Japan could not produce modern weaponry in sufficient quantity and instead tried to imbue its soldiers with an aggressive, superior "spirit" which would allow them to overcome any impediment. This belief in their moral supremacy paired with the Kwantung Army's arrogance caused a fatal underestimation of Soviet capabilities.

The stage was set when a skirmish between Mongolian and Manchukuoan cavalry occurred near tiny Nomonhan in May 1939. Both sides decided it was time to teach a lesson. The actual fighting spanned the next several months until the end of August. While the Japanese enjoyed some initial success, they were unaware of a methodical, deliberate Soviet buildup under the leadership of General Georgi Zhukov. In August, the Red Army struck with a massive combined arms offensive, which gradually crumbled the Japanese defenses and threw them out of the disputed area. Once the Soviet troops had succeeded in expelling the Japanese from what they considered Mongolian territory, they stopped, and a startled Japanese government quickly signed a cease-fire.

Aside from a detailed telling of the actual battle, the book explains the political machinations and their wide-ranging effects on various nations. Stalin, fearing a two-front war, had his diplomats negotiating with Germany, Great Britain, and other European nations in an effort to play each off the other by alternately hinting

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Myths About Israel and the Middle East (1)

Do the media feed us fiction instead of fact?

We all know that, by dint of constant repetition, white can be made to appear black, good can get transformed into evil, and myth may take the place of reality. Israel, with roughly one-thousandth of the world's population and with a similar fraction of the territory of this planet, seems to engage a totally disproportionate attention of the print and broadcast media of the world. Unfortunately, much of what the media tell us — in reporting, editorializing in columns, and in analysis — are endlessly repeated myths.

What are the facts?

■ **Myth:** The "Palestinians" are a nation and therefore deserving of a homeland.

Reality: The concept of Palestinian nationhood is a new one and had not been heard of until after the Six-Day War (1967), when Israel, by its victory, came into the administration of the territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip. The so-called "Palestinians" are no more different from the Arabs living in the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, than Wisconsinites are from Iowans.

> "Peace will only come when the Arabs finally accept the reality of Israel. And that is not a myth — that is a fact!"

■ **Myth:** Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip are/were "occupied Arab territory."

Reality: All of "Palestine" — east and west of the Jordan River — was part of the League of Nations mandate. Under the Balfour Declaration, all of it was to be the "national home for the Jewish people." In violation of this mandate, Great Britain severed the entire area east of the Jordan River — about 75% of Palestine — and gave it to the Arabs, who created on it the kingdom of Transjordan. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, five Arab armies invaded the new country in order to destroy it at its very birth. They were defeated by the Israelis. The Transjordanians, however, remained in occupation of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and East Jerusalem. They proceeded to drive all Jews from those territories and to systematically destroy all Jewish houses of worship and other institutions. The Transjordanians (now renamed "Jordanians") were the occupiers for nineteen years. Israel regained these territories following its victory in the Six-Day War. Israel has returned the entire Gaza Strip to the Palestinians. The final status of the "West Bank" will be decided if and when the Palestinians will finally be able to sit down and seriously talk peace with Israel.

■ **Myth:** Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") are the "greatest obstacle to peace."

Reality: This is simply not correct, although it has been repeated so often that many have come to believe it. The greatest obstacle to peace is the intransigence and the irreconcilable hostility of the Arabs. Not more than 500,000 Jews are settled in these territories, living among about 1.4 million Arabs. How can Jews living there be an obstacle to peace? Why shouldn't they live there? Over 1 million Arabs live in Israel proper. They are not an obstacle to peace. Neither the Israelis nor they themselves consider them as such.

■ **Myth:** Israel is unwilling to yield "land for peace."

Reality: The concept that to the loser, rather than to the victor, belong the spoils is a radically new one. Israel, victorious in the wars imposed on it by the Arabs, has returned over 90% of the territory occupied by it: the vast Sinai Peninsula, which contained some of the most advanced military installations, prosperous cities and oil fields developed entirely by Israel that made it independent of petroleum imports. For the return of Gaza Israel was "rewarded" with constant rocket attacks. In the Camp David Accords, Israel agreed to autonomy for Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") with the permanent status to be determined after three years. But, so far, no responsible Palestinian representation has been available to seriously negotiate with Israel about this.

All these myths (and others we shall talk about in a future issue) have poisoned the atmosphere for decades. The root cause of the never-ending conflict is the unwillingness of the Arabs (and not just the Palestinians) to accept the reality of Israel. What a pity that those of the Palestinians who are not Israeli citizens have lived and continue to live in poverty, misery and ignorance. They could have chosen to accept the proposed partition of the country in 1947, would now have had their state alongside Israel for over sixty years and could have lived in peace and prosperity. They could have kept hundreds of thousands of refugees in their homes and could have saved tens of thousands of lives. Peace will only come when the Arabs finally accept the reality of Israel. And that is not a myth — that is a fact!

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FLAME

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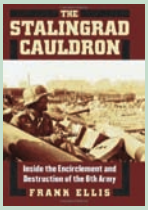
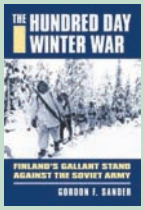
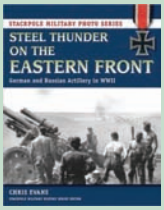
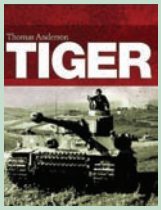
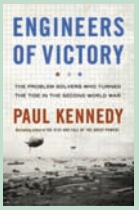










NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

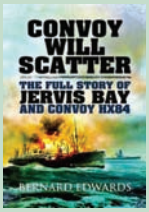
The Stalingrad Cauldron: Inside the Encirclement and Destruction of the 6th Army (Frank Ellis, University of Kansas Press, 2013, 512 pp., $39.95, hardcover). This book looks at the encirclement of Stalingrad from the perspective of the German soldiers trapped inside the city. It includes previously unpublished accounts, newly translated.

The Hundred Day Winter War: Finland's Gallant Stand Against the Soviet Army (Gordon F. Sander, University of Kansas Press, 2013, $39.95, hardcover). A translation of a Finnish best-seller on the bitter defense and eventual defeat of Finland by the Soviet Union.

Steel Thunder on the Eastern Front: German and Russian Artillery in WWII (Chris Evans, Stackpole Books, 2013, 208 pp., $24.95, hardcover) This book is a photo essay of the various artillery pieces used by both combatants on the Eastern Front. The bulk of the images are from private collections worldwide.

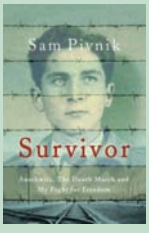
Tiger (Thomas Anderson, Osprey, Oxford, UK, 2013, 256 pp., $29.95, hardcover) This is an overview of the quintessential German tank. Included are development history, variants, service, and where to find remaining examples.

Engineers of Victory: The Problem Solvers Who Turned the Tide in the Second World War (Paul Kennedy, Random House, 2013, 464 pp., $30.00, hardcover) The author asserts that the war was won not only by generals and politicians, but also, engineers, logisticians, and analysts. The organizational and business culture of the Allies allowed middle management to prosecute the war.



Unsung Eagles (Jay Stout, Casemate, 2013, 320 pp., $32.95, hardcover) This is an oral history relating the stories of 22 different pilots and how they experienced—and won—the war. It includes both the Pacific and European Theaters.

Finding the Few (Andy Saunders, Grub Street Publishing, 2013, 192 pp., $24.95, softcover) Many of the pilots who fought the Battle of Britain were lost without a trace. The author and others found a dozen of them through long research and helped bring closure to the families of these fallen airmen.



Disarming Hitler's V Weapons (Chris Ransted, Pen and Sword, 2013 256 pp., $39.95, hardcover) Of the V1 and V2 rockets launched at England, almost half failed to function, and their wreckage lay strewn across Europe and England. This is the story of the teams dispatched to recover the weapons and discover their secrets.

Convoy Will Scatter: The Full Story of Jervis Bay and Convoy HX84 (Bernard Edwards, Pen and Sword, 2013, 224 pp., $39.95, hardcover) Convoy HX84 was eastbound when attacked by the German pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer* in November 1940. Though outgunned, the armed merchant cruiser *Jervis Bay* engaged but was defeated.

Survivor: Auschwitz, the Death March and My Fight for Freedom (Sam Pivnik, St. Martin's Press, 2012, $30.00, softcover) This book tells the story of Sam Pivnik, a Holocaust survivor who endured a Polish ghetto, six months in Auschwitz, a mining camp, and then a death march to the east. Put aboard the prison ship *Cap Arcona,* he was one of only a few to survive its sinking.

at alliances or treaties. While none of them favored the Soviet Union, the communist nation was too large to be ignored, and this had to be dealt with at some level.

Right up to the weeks before World War II began, Stalin feared a Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union in the Far East. With the crushing victory at Nomonhan, this threat was effectively erased, allowing Stalin to return his focus to Europe, where Hitler's Wehrmacht stood just days from crossing the Polish border and the Soviets prepared to take their share. This was possible because Soviet espionage efforts confirmed the Japanese were no longer considering war against them.

Instead, the Japanese leadership decided to turn toward the Pacific to seize the resources the nation needed to sustain itself. This led to eventual war with the United States and allowed the Soviet Union to transfer much of its eastern military might to Moscow in time to defeat the German invasion that came in 1941. While there may be argument about how influential Nomonhan was to the larger war, this book makes a cogent argument of its profound effect on the course of history.

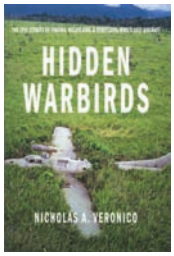
World War II required the production of matériel on a scale surpassing anything yet seen in human history. For the Allies, the United States provided the bulk of not only weapons, but also trucks, ships of all types, and items down to radios and raw materials. ***A Call to Arms*** (Maury Klein, Bloomsbury Press, New York, 2013, 866 pp., notes, bibliography, $40.00, hardcover) gives the detailed story of how America became the "Arsenal of Democracy."

That fact that the nation could do so was not seen by everyone. After a decade of depression and isolationism, America was woefully unprepared to equip its own forces, much less those of its allies. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt told Congress he wanted to set aircraft production goals at 50,000 planes a year, he was ridiculed. Nevertheless, within a few years American factories were turning out an amazing and diverse quantity of products for the war effort. By 1945, the 50,000-plane goal had been handily exceeded; 325,000 aircraft had rolled off the production lines. Agricultural output and raw material extraction likewise skyrocketed.

Along the way, the author, an economic historian, attempts to revise the wide belief that on December 8, 1941, America smoothly and easily slipped onto a war footing. The path to

increased production and military expansion was a difficult one, which caused considerable social upheaval as women found new roles in society and minority populations, such as African Americans in the American South, moved to other regions to find work. Professor Klein also challenges the myth of the "Greatest Generation," claiming those who fought in World War II acted because they were forced to do so by circumstances rather than any innate superiority to Americans of other eras.

Once production got under way, it had to keep up with change. For example, when the riveted armor on tanks was proved defective on the battlefield in North Africa, manufacturers realized the need to switch to welded armor. This change went more smoothly than the old annual changes for new car models before the war. Companies constantly devised new and more efficient ways to produce, setting themselves up for the postwar economic boom.



The highlights of many air shows are flight demonstrations by World War II fighters and bombers. Few of them fly today, and the chance to see and hear a North American P-51 Mustang or Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress actually in the air is exciting indeed. ***Hidden Warbirds: The Epic Stories of Finding, Recovering and Rebuilding WWII's Lost Aircraft*** (Nicholas A. Veronico, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2013, 256 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index, $30.00, hardcover) reveals how private collectors and restoration companies search the globe for the remains of World War II's aviation heritage.

Thousands of planes were built during the war, 325,000 in the United States alone. During the war some crashed; after the war others were abandoned or mothballed until they were sold for scrap. A few went to museums or were sold to private pilots as racing planes, tankers, and fire bombers. Many went to foreign militaries in South America and elsewhere. Over time, they started to disappear altogether.

At that point a small number of private citizens, a few specialist businesses, and museums began trying to gather what was left for preservation. A lucky few aircraft sat in the weeds around various airfields in the United States. Others sat in swamps, or were buried in glaciers or submerged in lakes and seas worldwide. It is an ongoing effort to collect what remains, particularly rare aircraft. This book chronicles those efforts and is geared toward aviation enthusiasts in particular, who will appreciate the stories of individual aircraft and the history behind them.

Take, for example, the B-17E named *Swamp Ghost*. This plane arrived at Hickam Field, Hawaii, 10 days after Pearl Harbor and later flew to Australia. On February 22, 1942, the bomber was sent on a mission against the Japanese base at Rabaul. Attacked and damaged by defending Japanese Zero fighters, fuel leaks caused the crew to belly land the B-17 in a swamp on New Guinea. The crew survived and spent four days walking the eight miles to Gumbire Village. Malaria stricken, the crew embarked on a perilous journey back to Australia, arriving on March 30.

Three decades later, an Australian Air Force helicopter crew on a training mission saw the bomber's tailfin poking up through the tall Kunai grass. Landing to investigate, the crew found the abandoned bomber with coffee still in the crew's flasks and the machine guns still loaded. Over the next few years the plane was revisited, disarmed, and partially stripped of equipment. Eventually, an enthusiast recovered the plane, and it now sits in Hawaii, awaiting display in a museum.

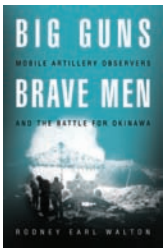
The end of the war in Europe is often neatly summarized into a few key events: the liberations of the concentrations camps, Hitler's suicide, and the Nazi collapse. In reality, it was an extremely complex and chaotic period full of tiny details. The advancing Americans might seize a dozen villages without a shot fired only to enter a vicious firefight against diehard fanatics at the next. Would a given German unit fight or was it ready to surrender and end the bloodshed?

Thus the scene is set for ***The Last Battle*** (Stephen Harding, Da Capo Press, Boston, MA, 2013, 233 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $25.99, hardcover), a rescue mission to save imprisoned French politicians. It was an unlikely enterprise involving GIs, slave laborers, SS troops, and finally German Army soldiers ... on both sides.

After the conquest of France, the Third Reich imprisoned a number of important French leaders, among them former premier Edouard Daladier and General Maurice Gamelin, who had been sacked in May 1940 after his response to the Nazi invasion failed. Among others, they were in time sent to the Schloss Itter, a castle in northern Austria run by the SS as a prison for VIPs the Nazi regime might later need. While prisoners, their time was relatively safe and comfortable.

By the first days of May 1945, their situation became much less certain. The Reich was crumbling and the prisoners wondered whether they awaited liberation by the Allies or execution by SS thugs intent on hiding their crimes. A few went to find the approaching Allies along with a German officer who had decided his war was over. He ran into Captain John Lee of the 12th Armored Division, who set out to rescue the imperiled Frenchmen.

Along the way, Lee and his small task force would find strange partners, among them the almost unknown Austrian resistance and a group of German soldiers who threw their lot in to protect the French prisoners. Arriving at the castle, the rescuers found themselves surrounded by SS troops intent on taking it, ending in a finale worthy of Hollywood.



The front lines are the province of the infantry, and others tread in this realm at their peril. Even the infantry, however, fears artillery, over which it has little control. During World War II, the U.S. Army pioneered the development of effective forward observer parties to precisely control the fire of its supporting guns. ***Big Guns, Brave Men: Mobile Artillery Observers and the Battle for Okinawa*** (Rodney Earl Walton, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2013, 229 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $36.95, hardcover) tells the story of one battalion's forward observers during the desperate and bloody battle for Okinawa.

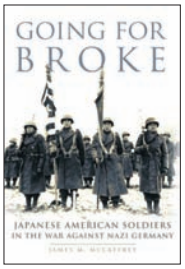
The author, whose father was one of those observers, conducted and gathered numerous interviews with members of the 361st Field Artillery Battalion and the units it supported as part of the 96th Infantry Division. This organization was blooded on Leyte in the Philippines but met its true test on Okinawa in mid-1945.

The use of forward observers is well documented, but this work focuses on these teams specifically. The observer, normally a lieutenant, was supported by a small team of enlisted soldiers. Artillery techniques, heavy on mathematics, are usually only touched upon, but here the author attempts to explain the details of adjusted fire, preplanned concentrations, and the protective fire used at night when American troops went on the defensive and the Japanese attempted counterattacks.

On Okinawa these soldiers were sorely tested as each advance was bitterly challenged. The Japanese occupied a series of defensive lines and were themselves amply supplied with artillery.

The U.S. commander, General Simon Bolivar Butler, Jr., who would die during the campaign, knew artillery was an American strength and planned for its heavy use. With such a free hand, the observer teams were kept busy. By the end of the fighting, many gun tubes were worn out, no longer capable of accurate fire.

The dangers of short rounds or friendly fire are also frankly discussed. An observer could become unpopular with the infantry he supported if rounds landed short and caused U.S. casualties. This was true even if the incident was not the observer's fault. Fatigue, stress, and inexperience all contributed to the problem, which was never fully solved.

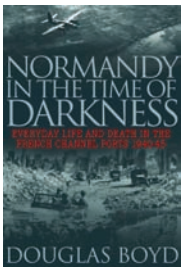


Japanese American soldiers struggled on two fronts in World War II. They faced combat against the Germans in Italy and Western Europe during 1944-1945. For the entire war they fought prejudice, segregation, and hostility from their fellow Americans. By war's end their primary unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, was one of the most decorated units in the U.S. Army. ***Going for Broke: Japanese American Soldiers in the War Against Nazi Germany*** (James M. McCaffery, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2013, 408 pp., photographs, notes, index, $34.95, hardcover) uses the 442nd motto "Go for Broke" to encapsulate the unit's effort to prove itself to the country it faithfully served.

Formed at the beginning of 1943, the regiment's origins really go back to Pearl Harbor and its aftermath. The fear that swept America concerning citizens of Japanese descent resulted in their essential imprisonment and loss of rights as well as denial of the ability to serve in the military, except for a number of men already in the Hawaiian National Guard. Argument over the morality of these actions raged until the government relented and allowed military enlistment. Once the unit was created, many men flocked to it, eager to demonstrate that not only themselves but also their people were Americans.

Initially the unit went to Italy, where it entered combat near Belvedere. From then on, the 442nd garnered a reputation for bravery and determination. By late September 1944, the regiment was withdrawn from the line and sent to France to reinforce the U.S. Seventh Army as it fought its way into Germany. In late October, a battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment found itself surrounded by German troops, and the 442nd was sent to break through the encirclement. The 442nd succeeded in relieving this "Lost Battalion."

By the end of the war, this unit's achievements could be measured by the high casualties it suffered in the accomplishment of its missions and by the decorations its soldiers earned, including Distinguished Service Crosses, Silver and Bronze Stars, and Purple Hearts. Sadly it took until after the war for 21 of those awards to be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.



Normandy is famous as the landing point for the Western Allies in June 1944. Today it is known for its brandy and cheese. However, there are still remnants of bunkers and cemeteries bearing the graves of those who died during the German occupation. Their story is documented in ***Normandy in the Time of Darkness: Everyday Life and Death in the French Channel Ports 1940-45*** (Douglas Boyd, Ian Allen, Surrey, UK, 2013, 256 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $39.95, hardcover).

French citizens had to face two enemies during the war. Every day they had to fear the occupying Germans. Property might be taken by the Wehrmacht with no recourse. Short of labor, the Germans might forcibly take men for construction duty. The SS and Gestapo were ever present threats and could take whomever they wanted at any time. French police had no choice but to assist their overlords in enforcement of German regulations. After the Allied invasion, retribution was often meted out by the retreating Nazis, especially against those thought to be resistance fighters or their supporters.

Their second foe was the Allies themselves. In their prosecution of the war, the Allies had to bomb France in order to harm the common enemy and pave the way for eventual liberation. In doing so, thousands of French were killed in air raids, shore bombardments, and other unfortunate actions during the total war inflicted on the nation by its friends. There was debate over whether the widespread bombing campaign was justifiable considering the number of French expected to be killed. The British were the most reluctant to bomb France in this way, and Prime Minister Winston Churchill thought 20,000 or more might be killed by the bombing campaign, though some British officers though it had to be done to win the war. The American leadership largely thought it was part of the high price of victory and urged going ahead with the dread task. It was done, and a postwar French assessment placed the number of French killed by bombing at 60,000.

The Japanese conquest of Malaya and Singapore was a heavy blow to Great Britain. Unprepared for the onslaught and engaged in a bitter fight against Germany and Italy, Britain could do little but watch as its Far Eastern bastion fell. The situation was bad for Churchill and the government, but infinitely worse for the soldiers taken prisoner by victorious Japan. One such group was the Lanarkshire Yeomanry of the Royal Artillery. Their experience fighting and as prisoners is retold in ***Death Was Our Bedmate: 155th (Lanarkshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment and the Japanese 1941-45*** (Agnes McEwan and Campbell Thomson, Pen and Sword, South Yorkshire, UK, 2013, 212 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, index, $39.95, hardcover).

The regiment was a Territorial, or reserve unit, called to duty in September 1939. Initially cavalry, in 1940 they were converted to artillery. By December 1940, they had received orders for "a tropical climate," and after a stop in India arrived in Malaya in September 1941. With the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan's coordinated strike into Southeast Asia went into full swing, and a day later Japanese troops were landing on Malaya's shores. Establishing a beachhead, the Japanese Army carried out its own blitzkrieg and within months took Malaya and Singapore. During this time, the regiment acquitted itself well and supported British, Indian, and Gurkha troops. Its fighting retreat ultimately failed, and the 155th was among the units forced to surrender.

Life as prisoners started badly and only got worse. During the beginning, the men were guarded by Indian troops who had switched sides to the Japanese. They treated their former allies harshly, some taking delight in avenging themselves against their supposed former masters. As their captivity stretched on through the war years, the unit was split up as men were parceled out to various work projects. Some were kept in Southeast Asia and forced to work on the infamous Burma Railway. Others were taken to a copper mine on Formosa. Still more were transported to Borneo and even Japan. In all these places, they toiled, suffered, and died, waiting for their eventual liberation in September 1945. □

stoumont

Continued from page 41

tank traffic. Using volunteers from Company C and the infantry, Berry had a corduroy track built of shot-up trees and shell casings. Under cover of a thick smokescreen, service company recovery teams then towed off the four wrecked tanks from that morning's fight.

By daybreak on the 22nd, Berry had maneuvered a platoon of M4s right up to St. Edouard's. Firing through the windows, they kept the SS inside pinned down while soldiers of the 119th entered to recapture the main building, this time for good. Almost 250 civilians, many of them children, were later found dazed but unhurt in the sanatorium's cellar.

Meanwhile, Powers and Loopey dispatched two more lurking tanks, one a Panther, the other a captured Sherman. This broke the back of Peiper's defense, and the SS remaining in Stoumont quickly fled toward La Gleize. Coordinated attacks by the 2nd Battalion, 119th Infantry and Combat Command B of the 3rd Armored Division moving in from the north hurried them on their way. By nightfall, the U.S. advance had gone 2,000 yards past Stoumont while enduring ferocious German resistance.

Retaking Stoumont was a costly fight; in its first battle the 740th Tank Battalion lost five tanks and six men wounded. Miraculously, no Daredevils were killed. Infantry losses ran higher: the 1st Battalion, 119th Infantry suffered 106 casualties, including 18 killed, 60 wounded, and 28 missing.

On December 23, Task Force Harrison resumed its attack but ground to a halt short of La Gleize. Peiper's men fought desperately, hemmed in by the 119th Infantry to their west, 3rd Armored Division columns attacking from the north, and paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne pushing steadily from across the Ambleve at Cheneux. Deadly German fire kept the Americans out of La Gleize that day, but everyone knew the end was near.

Peiper huddled in his basement headquarters while 95-pound shells from Rubel's private cannon exploded overhead. It was after dark on December 23, and his nine-day race to the Meuse River had ended in total failure. Out of fuel, ammunition, and supplies, Peiper passed the word to his exhausted troops: "Destroy your equipment and escape on foot."

What was left of Kampfgruppe Peiper abandoned La Gleize before dawn on Christmas Eve. The Germans left behind at least 28 heavy tanks, 70 half-tracks, eight armored cars, and numerous artillery pieces. Counting dead, wounded, and captured, Peiper lost over 85 percent of his original 5,800-man force. Escaping with him to the German lines were a mere 800 frozen, dejected soldiers.

There was no rest for the Daredevil tankers after taking Stoumont and La Gleize. On December 29, they joined the 82nd Airborne Division, working with that veteran unit in extreme cold and discomfort. Rubel's tankers got along well with the aggressive 82nd, one paratrooper even noting, "The 740th was the only tank outfit that could ever keep up with us."

Once the Battle of the Bulge officially ended in January 1945, Allied forces began the final offensive in Western Europe. The Daredevils moved from unit to unit, supporting at times the 8th, 63rd, and 86th Infantry Divisions, as well as the 82nd Airborne, as they marched across Germany. While their infantry comrades occasionally went into reserve, the Daredevils stopped only for maintenance or resupply. They were always on the go, but that was how they preferred it. The men of the 740th realized that only hard, relentless fighting would bring an end to the war.

V-E Day found the Daredevils occupying Ulzen, Germany. They had been at the tip of the spearhead for 138 days of nearly constant combat, and it was now time to take stock. The death toll for the Daredevil tankers included 43 officers and enlisted men killed in action. They had also suffered an astonishing 57 tanks lost during their six months on the line.

On the positive side, Lt. Col. Rubel's 740th Tank Battalion accounted for 69 enemy tanks destroyed, including 17 Tiger and Tiger IIs. The Daredevils also smashed or captured hundreds of cannon and combat vehicles. They even shot up 200 airplanes, most of them caught on the ground when the battalion overran an airfield at Hagenow.

Captain Berry, Lieutenant Powers, and Staff Sergeant Loopey each received a Silver Star for their actions at Stoumont. Every 740th tanker who fought there was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. For many Daredevils, however, the best tribute to their heroism came from a tank commander named Cecil Taylor, who summed things up in 2008.

"We were a good outfit," Taylor remarked. "I don't know if it's because we were scared or just didn't have any better sense, but we got the job done."

Brave Americans like Cecil Taylor turned the tide of battle, stopping Hitler's elite SS at Stoumont. □

Patrick J. Chaisson is a retired U.S. Army officer who writes from his home in Scotia, New York.

sport

Continued from page 55

appearances by the great Brazilian star Pelé and Bobby Moore, the captain of England's 1966 World Cup winning team.

Decades after the end of the war, reminders keep popping up at local venues in Europe. In 1998, an unexploded 1,000-pound bomb was discovered a few feet below the center of Borussia Dortmund's playing field during reconstruction work there. In 2002, while remodeling Berlin's Olympic Stadium, workers found a 500-pound bomb beneath a section of the stands; it was safely defused. In Munich two years later, two bombs were found at the construction site for a new soccer stadium, the Allianz Arena, and detonated by munitions experts in a controlled explosion.

While the VfB Stuttgart stadium was being remodeled in 2009, 18 unexploded bombs were found at the construction site, and in 2012, workers came across an American 500-pound bomb beneath one end of Munich's 101-year-old Grünwalder Stadium.

Perhaps the most lasting and frightening connection between war and sport is what happened in deepest secrecy beneath the now demolished stands of the University of Chicago football stadium, where college football hall of famers such as Jay Berwanger, the first Heisman Trophy recipient, Paul Des Jardin, and Walter Steffan once played for legendary coach Amos Alonzo Stagg. It was there on December 2, 1942, that the world's first controlled, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction took place under the watchful eyes of physicist Enrico Fermi and other scientists. As a result, the atom was unleashed, and civilization has never been quite the same.

It has been said that enjoying sport in the midst of war verges on the sacrilegious, akin to laughing during a serious sermon in church. Sport, these critics say, has no business intruding on the life-and-death issues that war brings —that intensely focusing on victory on the battlefield and nothing less should be the ultimate and undiluted effort of every man and woman in a nation at war.

Yet, such a singular focus obscures the true value of sport and other diversions during a time of great stress—to take one's mind off the grimness, even for just a few hours, and remind everyone of the pleasures of peace and the joys of living. □

Flint Whitlock is the author of several books on World War II and is the editor Sovereign's WWII Quarterly.

uss curtiss

Continued from page 59

The torpedo supposedly missed, running aground in a channel at Pearl City.

As the submarine turned parallel with the *Curtiss* and moved farther away, a gunner managed to put a five-inch shell through the conning tower. At the same time, Ensign Verge ordered his signalmen to alert a passing destroyer, the *Monaghan,* to the danger. The destroyer rammed the two-man submarine from behind, shearing off its propellers and crushing the aft section of the hull. Then she dropped two depth charges on the sub, which exploded 50 to 100 years behind the destroyer. The sub lurched forward about 50 feet and then sank.

As the second wave of Japanese planes departed, more ammunition was made ready, damage assessed, and the dead and wounded attended to. Twenty-one men of the *Curtiss* died that morning, and some 60 others were wounded. The exhausted men remained at their battle stations until 6 PM, when the captain and the rest of the crew finally trickled back aboard when they were able to hitch rides on small boats. The long day was over.

The next morning, the captain asked Ensign Verge to lead a party to recover the sunken submarine. Verge picked a small party and used a ship's boat to drag the bottom with grappling hooks. When the sunken vessel was found, divers attached chains to it and a nearby tractor was enlisted to pull the sub to the beach at Pearl City. There was a hole in the conning tower where a shell had passed through. The hull was crunched where the *Monaghan* had rammed it and from the detonations of the depth charges. Both crewmen were dead.

Reports had spread that this submarine had launched a torpedo at the *Curtiss* and that it missed, but Verge disagrees. As the officer in charge of bringing the sub ashore, he observed that both of the sub's torpedoes were still aboard and neither had been fired. It is true that different people remember the battle in different ways, but Verge's physical observation indicated that the midget sub had not launched any torpedoes that day.

The *Curtiss* continued to lie at anchor for some weeks before space could be made in a dry dock to repair the damage to her hull. Other ships had priority for repair, but eventually her damage was patched up and she again stood out to sea.

Ensign Verge stayed with the *Curtiss* for a short time as part of the crew that secretly delivered supplies to Midway Atoll in advance of the battle there. Then the two parted company. The *Curtiss* went on to earn seven battle stars during the Pacific War. She would later serve in the Korean War. Her career ended during the testing of nuclear bombs at Bikini Atoll.

Gene Verge transferred to Seattle, Washington, where he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant (j.g.) and assigned as executive officer of the Patapsco-class gasoline tanker USS *Wabash*. He sailed aboard *Wabash* five times to deliver gasoline to Alaskan ports. In October 1943, the *Wabash* was sent to Hawaii to support operations in the western Pacific. Verge eventually rose to command the ship.

About that time a convoy of tankers was being assembled at Pearl Harbor to carry aviation fuel and lubricants to outposts in the western Pacific. Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, personally picked Verge to command the convoy and ordered the young officer to meet with him in his office to discuss it.

Nimitz had no idea how young Verge was and asked bluntly, "How old are you, son?" "Twenty-three, sir," he replied while standing stiffly at attention. It was a white lie. He would not be 23 for another month.

Nimitz was shocked. "I've got five ships sitting outside the harbor, and the skippers of all those ships have been to sea for 20 years or more." Nimitz mused. Then he ordered, "You're going to take that fleet to Saipan tomorrow but don't ever let them see you."

Verge commanded the *Wabash* for the next three years. Late in the war, he was ordered to take a load of aviation fuel to Tinian, an island in the Marianas chain. Fuel was pumped from the ship to tanks ashore to support the bombing campaign against the Japanese homeland. At war's end, Verge visited Japan as part of the occupation force and saw the horrific results of that bombing.

After the war, Verge was sent back home and assigned to a training facility on the East Coast. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander and placed in command of the facility. He was then asked to remain in the Navy for four or five years to get the facility up and running.

Verge was used to duty aboard ship and did not take well to the land assignment. He decided to return to California to continue his studies at the University of Southern California. Today, more than 90 years of age, he still vividly remembers the Sunday morning aboard the *Curtiss* that will never be forgotten. □

Glenn Barnett is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles. Recently he served as an historical consultant for the film Spiritual Warriors.

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