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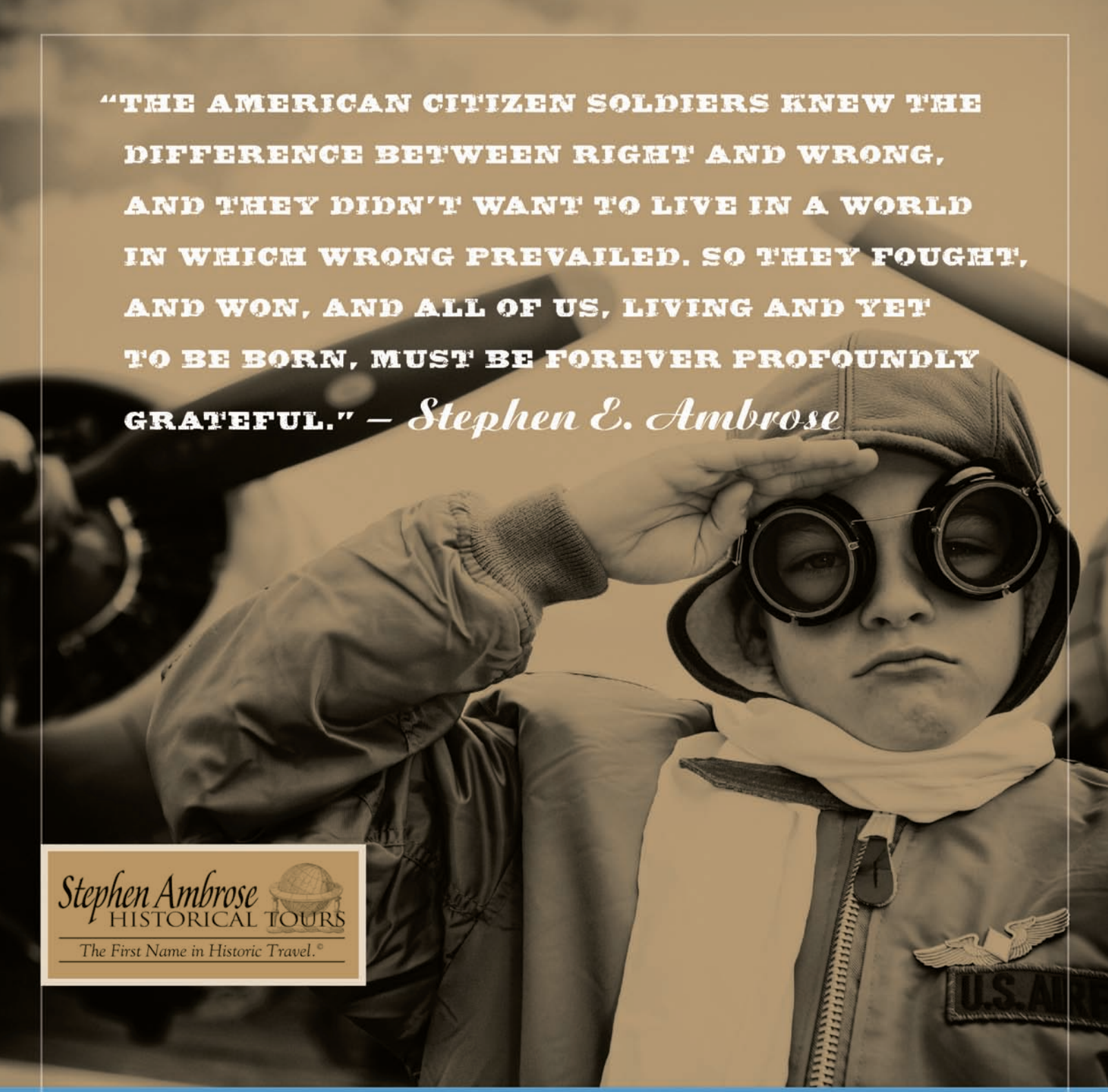

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Cover: An American soldier kneels in front of an armored vehicle during training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, in 1942. He is wearing a surplus WWI-era "Brodie" helmet, soon to be replaced by the standard issue M1 helmet. See story page 10.

Photo: National Archives.

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Editorial

The United Nations has shaped the postwar world.

SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, IN THE WAKE OF THE MOST CATASTROPHIC WAR THE world had yet seen, the United Nations officially came into being on October 24, 1945. Since that time, the organization has been hailed as an instrument of world peace, a forum for the oppressed, a champion of the Third World, and a police force for the planet. Conversely, it has been maligned as an ineffective body that is more theory than substance—powerless, for example, to prevent aggression, genocide, and the exploitation of the weak.

Regardless, the United Nations has shaped the postwar world for more than half a century and has often taken center stage during many of the greatest dramas of recent years. Among these have been the statement of the U.S. case for war against Iraq, the 1950 intervention on behalf of South Korea following the invasion by its communist neighbor to the north, and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis during which Ambassador Adlai Stevenson choreographed one of the most memorable moments in modern foreign relations history.

When Stevenson addressed the U.N. General Assembly and asked Soviet representative Valerian Zorin point blank whether the Soviet Union was deploying nuclear missiles to Cuba, Zorin hedged and implied that it was not so. Stevenson pressed, saying, "Don't wait for the translation, answer 'yes' or 'no!'" As Zorin hesitated, Stevenson then intoned, "I am prepared to wait for my answer until Hell freezes over." Stevenson then produced the hard evidence—photos of Soviet missiles on the island of Cuba.

Certainly, other moments have been memorable as well. The U.N. sanctioned military intervention in Korea during a period when the Soviet Union was boycotting the Security Council, rendering its veto power useless. More recently, the certainty that Iraq possessed "weapons of mass destruction" evaporated when U.S. forces were unable to locate appreciable stocks of these weapons.

Under the United Nations flag, numerous countries have dispatched forces to hot spots around the globe, including Korea, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Balkans. Whether these efforts have been successful or placed troops in harm's way unnecessarily is open to continuing debate. During the Cold War era, the United Nations also applied economic sanctions with varying degrees of success. Some of the organization's harshest criticism has stemmed from an apparent inability or unwillingness to enforce such measures. Further, various efforts to compel the United States to withdraw from the organization have met with some support through the years.

Beyond its "military" and dispute resolution aspects, the United Nations has become something of a collective conscience for nations, addressing issues such as human rights, poverty, disease, nuclear energy, and finance. No fewer than 17 various agencies operate under the auspices of the U.N., including the World Bank, World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Monetary Fund, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and possibly the best known, the United Nations Childrens Fund, or UNICEF.

From its initial membership of five permanent Security Council members, the United States, the Republic of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France, along with 46 other countries, the United Nations today consists of 192 member nations. Its influence, whether positive, negative, or neutral, is undeniable.

For all of the organization's effort, we may do well today to remember that the United Nations was primarily envisioned as a preserver of peace and recall the words engraved on a sculpture in the garden of the U.N. building in New York. Paraphrasing a passage from the Book of Isaiah, it reads, "Let us beat swords into plowshares" and was a gift from the Soviet Union in 1959.

Perhaps this most enduring purpose of the United Nations includes a reminder of the bitter global war from whose ashes it was raised.

Michael E. Haskew

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Remembering Our Veterans—Individually

Dear Editor:

As I sat down to write a newspaper article for Memorial Day, I wasn't sure where to start. With recent news of our history, and in turn on our veterans, under assault by a casino at Gettysburg and Wal-Mart at The Wilderness, I wasn't sure how to best honor our veterans for their sacrifices to this country.

Inspiration, in part, came from May 2010 edition of *WII History* and your article on Corporal Bill Bowser of the 502nd PIR, 101st Airborne Division. My next door neighbor of 25 years was a member of the 101st 506 PIR and I heard many stories of training on Curahee and battling Nazis at D-Day, Market Garden, and Bastogne—especially the cold and how poorly equipped the 101st was as it was rushed into combat to help blunt the German offensive.

So imagine my surprise when I turned to page 37 of Richard Beranty's article to find the picture of my neighbor dragging in supplies at Bastogne after the clouds had cleared to allow airdrops of food, ammo, and other necessary supplies to bolster our men.

My future neighbor was one of two nameless American GIs pictured. His name was missing, as is the case of far too many soldiers. Perhaps that is a way we can honor our vets by remembering them as individuals when the opportunity presents itself. In this case, the man on the left is Staff Sergeant Harold Anderson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 506 PIR.

Brian Questel
Wooster, Ohio

Rebuttal: Felix Sparks at Dachau

Gentlemen,

Below is my rebuttal for Mr. Edwin Sims's letter about my article on Felix Sparks. I don't write this to attack Mr. Sims; I actually appreciate that he read the article and is trying to add to the reader's knowledge. However, as he did claim I was mistaken on some points I wish to explain where he and I disagree. It is important to me you know I base my writings on research and investigate with a critical eye for accuracy.

Chris Miskimon

Below is Mr. Sims's letter in bold print, with my replies:

"I would like to bring to the reader's attention that there are some mistakes in the article "A Fighting Soldier of the 45th" (Profiles) in the June/July 2010 Issue. The photograph at the beginning of the article is incorrectly captioned. It was taken by T/4 Arland B. Musser of the 163rd Signal Photographic Company, U.S. 7th Army on April 29th, 1945. All the Americans in the photo are identified."

The photo he is referring to is the one of the coal yard just after the shooting, SC208765. I

Staff Sergeant Harold Anderson (left), Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 506 PIR.

did not write the caption for this photo, but whoever did took their information from the description printed on the reverse side. He is correct as to the photographer's name and unit; I can only guess that perhaps he disagrees as to what the original caption states happened.

"Colonel Howard A. Buechner, a medical officer in the 45th, wrote in his 1986 book *The Hour of the Avenger* that there was another machine gun located to the right but out of camera range. He was a witness to the execution of the German POWs in the photo…"

Colonel Buechner's account has been widely discredited, in large part by the surfacing of the IG report on Dachau. This report had been misfiled at the National Archives and presumed lost until it was discovered in the 1990s. His claim of 500 Germans killed at Dachau is not substantiated by evidence, or other accounts. Those accounts I have seen claiming this high number use Buechner's account as their "proof."

Before Howard Buechner wrote this account in the mid-1980s, he suffered a stroke which apparently affected his mental state. His claims about Dachau were made only after this. He also made a number of other (frankly preposterous) claims around the same time, including a book he wrote called *Adolph Hitler and the Secrets of the Holy Lance*, in which he asserts he was approached by a German U-Boat officer who said he had helped the Nazi regime transport "magical" artifacts to a secret base in Antarctica. Among these artifacts was the Holy Lance, the spear Christ was supposedly wounded with while on the Cross. The Nazis planned to use the Lance and other artifacts to help regain their former powers, etc, etc. So I don't believe his accounts of Dachau are legitimate.

Please understand I don't write this to ridicule or hurt Colonel Buechner. From what I know of him he was a good man who served his country and for that I thank him. Tragically, he was overtaken by a medical condition he couldn't control; the same thing could happen to anyone.

As to his witnessing the shooting, by Buechner's own statement he only heard the firing and later "poked his head over the wall." The second machine gun that was supposedly just off camera didn't exist. The IG Report confirms only one gun. The IG found 14 .30-caliber cartridge casings along with 15 .45 pistol casings and an uncounted number of .30 carbine casings on the ground where the shooting occurred. Plenty to kill 17 men, not enough for 500, though there were Germans killed in other parts of the camp that day, both by GIs and by freed inmates.

"…as was the author of *Surrender of the Dachau Concentration Camp 29 April 1945*, Colonel John H. Linden. There are approximately 60 Waffen SS soldiers in the photo taken in the Dachau coal yard. Seventeen had just been killed, numerous others were wounded, and some played dead when the shooting started."

Colonel John Linden was not at Dachau. He is the son of Brig. Gen. Henning Linden, who was there. Colonel Linden was still at West Point (Class of 1945) at the time of Dachau. I have not read his book about Dachau, so I can't comment as to what it says.

"The number of 17 dead came from Lt. Col. Sparks. Colonel Buechner wrote it was 12. There is a photo of the dead after the wounded and remaining survivors were removed but it's hard to count exactly. Just as the true number of German POWs killed in the Dachau coal yard incident will never be known, the total number of Germans killed by American soldiers at Dachau is unknown. The estimate is from 122 to over 520."

The number of 17 comes from the IG Report though Sparks did repeat this number to me. I have seen several photos of the dead German guards at Dachau, which some claim are part of the supposed 500 killed. However, my inspection of these photos revealed to me that these pictures are of the same group of dead Germans, in the coal yard, taken from different angles. One can see the same bodies in the same poses, just from different points of view.

According to historian Hugh Foster, whom I consider a reliable source on the subject of Dachau, "The number of German soldiers killed is certainly far, far less than 100. There are several photos surviving which show the pile of dead SS men—they were collected in a pile at the crematory site initially. Later they were dumped at some other location, where they were photographed again; the ultimate location of their bodies is unknown to me."

I do agree with Mr. Sims's statement that the

true number of Germans killed will never be known.

"The article mistakenly states that Lt. Col. Sparks was sent back Stateside because of his threat to kill Brig. Gen Henning Linden."

Actually, my article states he was sent to Le Havre to await transport, was stopped there and returned to Germany. Sparks told me he was away because the issue with Linden had "gotten too hot" and his higher command wanted to get him out of there until the issue went away. Since the expectation was that the 45th would go to the Pacific, the plan was for him to rejoin the division en route.

"Colonel Buechner writes in his book that Lt. Col Sparks, 1st Lt. Jack Bushyhead, and himself were investigated and brought up on court martial charges for the execution of German soldiers at Dachau. The article is correct that General George S. Patton, now the appointed military governor of Bavaria (which includes Dachau), destroyed the papers and evidence he had. He dismissed the court martial."

The IG report recommended courts-martial against six soldiers. Lt. Col. Sparks was not one of those named. Bushyhead was named, as was Buechner, who was the 3/157 Battalion Surgeon at the time. The IG stated Buechner should be charged since he had failed to render medical aid to wounded enemy troops. Sparks, however, stated Buechner had not even arrived until two hours later.

Initially this matter was under the jurisdiction of the 7th Army, whose commander did not want to proceed with the court martial because he felt the IG did not take into account the emotional state of the soldiers. Later, when jurisdiction transferred to 3rd Army, Patton destroyed his copy of the report and likewise did not proceed with a courts-martial.

So, while charges were recommended, no one was ever formally charged or tried for the shootings at Dachau.

"I, and I believe, many readers would like to read an article that details the true story of the execution of the German POWs at Dachau. Its a part of the war seldom discussed."

Flint Whitlock did an excellent accounting of Dachau and the chaos there in his book *The Rock of Anzio*. I feel his coverage of that day to be a thorough and impartial accounting of the events there.

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By Earl Rickard

All photos: National Archives

From Doughboy to GI Helmet

The steel head cover of the American soldier became an icon during World War II.

WHEN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MOBILIZED FOR DEFENSE IN THE FALL OF 1940, the peacetime draftees, National Guardsmen, reservists, and regulars carried Model 1903 Springfield rifles; the Guardsmen wore puttees; and all the soldiers covered their heads with the doughboy helmet—head-to-foot relics of World War I. Eventually modern equipment reached the field: leggings ousted the Guardsmen's puttees, the gas-operated M-1 replaced the bolt action Springfield, and on June 9, 1941, the War Department authorized a chunk of personal protective armament destined for use by all United States servicemen in World War II: "Helmet, Steel, M1"—the GI helmet.

Warfare's first helmets stretched back at least to the Greeks if not before. The Roman combat helmet served the legionnaires for centuries. Nevertheless, by the 18th century armor and helmets had all but vanished from the world's battlefields. Then, early in World War I, a French soldier placed a metal food bowl under his cloth cap. The bowl deflected a projectile and saved his life. Intendant-General August Louis Adrian noted the soldier's luck and ordered tests. The resulting "casque Adrian," a steel cap liner, first appeared in 1915. The following year the cap liner evolved into the classic French Army helmet.

In 1915 the British Army adopted the Brodie helmet (MkI), named for its designer John L. Brodie. When inverted, the Brodie helmet resembled a soup bowl. Although heavier and uglier than the French helmet, the MkI proved ballistically superior. It could take a hit better. In 1917, the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) landed in France without helmets. The AEF quickly chose the British design because of the better impact resistance and ordered 400,000 through the British Quartermaster Department. Back in Washington the Ordnance Department modified the British MkI helmet, increasing the overall ballistic strength 10 percent. The American version, standardized as Helmet, M1917, had ballistic specifications requiring the helmet to "resist penetration by a 230-grain caliber .45 bullet with a velocity of 600 f.p.s." American manufacturers produced approximately 2.7 million M1917 helmets by war's end.

With the Armistice in 1918 and the consequent evaporation of the AEF, the War Department entered peacetime with a large quantity of M1917 helmets. Nonetheless, the Ordnance Department and the Infantry Board wanted to find a better helmet, a helmet that not only satisfied the essential requirements of weight, ballistic resistance, and coverage but also the related problems of balance, method of suspension, and interference with other equipment. They chose a helmet designated the 5A and conducted tests at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1926. The 5A's pot-like shape covered more area on the sides of the head but proved heavier, more easily penetrated, and interfered with firing a rifle.

The Army conducted further tests at the Aberdeen Proving

TOP LEFT: During training at the U.S. Army Ranger School in 1943, two soldiers are wearing the newly issued M1 helmet and liner. They have applied grass and leaves as camouflage.
TOP RIGHT: A U.S. soldier wears a World War I-era Brodie helmet during exercises at Fort Knox, Kentucky, in June 1942.

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ABOVE: A soldier who has also been wounded in the arm and leg shows a medic the piece of shrapnel that penetrated his M1 helmet but failed to cause a potentially fatal injury. The new GI helmet and liner did in fact save thousands of lives during World War II. RIGHT: Necessity is the mother of invention for a soldier who uses his M1 helmet as a sink to wash his hair in August 1944 during a lull in the advance along the Western Front in France.

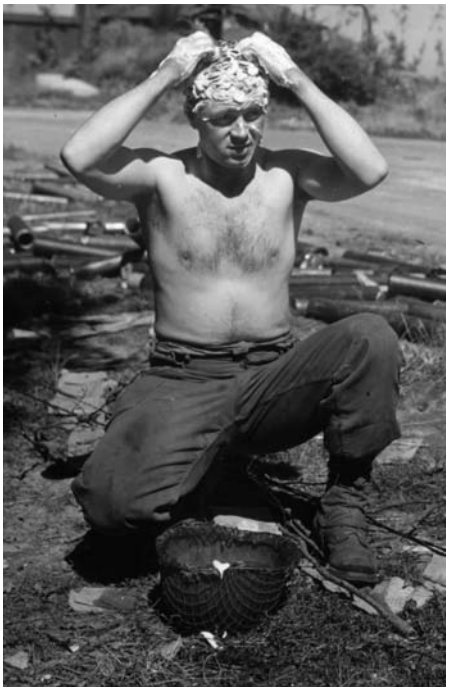
Ground to compare the old helmet's steel composition with the 5A.The M1917 proved superior. Consequently, the army rejected and abandoned the 5A in 1932. Even if the 5A had passed muster, the War Department's stock of more than two million M1917 helmets versus the new helmet's cost during the interwar years would have prohibited any spending by a parsimonious Congress that shrank military appropriations whenever possible. The anemic Depression-era Army had to soldier on with the doughboy helmet. One upgrade did slip through. In 1934, the M1917 received a modified lining of hair-filled pad. The steel helmet, two-piece canvas chin strap, and the new lining, with a combined weight of two pounds, six ounces, was then standardized as Helmet, M1917A1.

The 1940 defense mobilization brought new interest in helmet development. *Army Ordnance* magazine noted, "It was apparent that a washbasin-type helmet, originally designed to protect soldiers in trenches from fragments of shells bursting overhead would not be adequate in a war of movement where missiles could come from all directions—even from below, as in the case of parachute troops." The year 1940 also brought a new assistant secretary of war, Robert P. Patterson, who well recalled the doughboy helmet's faults. The former 77th Infantry Division Captain remembered the helmet as awkward, uncomfortable, and prone "to fall off in skirmish runs." Patterson closely followed the new helmet's progress, even to the extent of halting M1917A production until the replacement arrived.

Charged with developing a new helmet, the Infantry Board wisely tackled the problems of both helmet and suspension system concurrently. In a report on the helmet the board stated: "Research indicated that the ideal shaped helmet is one with a dome-shaped top following the full contour of the head and supplying uniform headroom for indentation, extending down the front to cover the forehead without impairing vision and down the sides as far as possible to be compatible with the rifle, etc., and down the back as far as possible without pushing the helmet forward when in a prone position, and with a frontal plate flanged forward as a cap-style visor and the sides and rear flanged outward to deflect rain from the collar opening. Following these requirements, the designers simply took the M1917A1, acceptable for protecting the top of the head, cut off the brim and added the sides and the front and back flanges.

The addition of a removable insert worn between head and helmet first appeared in 1932 during tests of the failed 5A. In 1940, the Army designers, at the suggestion of General George Patton, turned to the American playing field, borrowing the Riddell suspension system invented and patented by John T. Riddell, owner of a Chicago football supply manufacturing company. The Army Ordnance Department created a plastic impregnated fiber liner containing the Riddell suspension system. Covered with an olive drab cloth and fitted with an adjustable headband, the liner slipped snugly inside the helmet. In February 1941, the Infantry Board reported favorably on the first test helmet with liner designated the TS-3 (Test Section model 3).

The helmet's outer shell, made of the same Hadfield manganese steel used in the doughboy helmet, acquired new specifications. Tests



at the Aberdeen Proving Ground indicated the new helmet "would resist penetration by a 230-grain caliber .45 bullet with a velocity of 800 f.p.s," an improvement over the old helmet's resistance to a .45 bullet at 600 f.p.s. The steel outer shell weighed 2.3 pounds, and the liner seven-tenths of a pound for a total of 3 pounds. On April 30, the helmet was standardized, and on June 9, approved as "Helmet, Steel, M1." The Ordnance Department supervised the procurement and development of the outer shell, while the Quartermaster Department managed the development and production progress of the liner and suspension device. The first contract for the helmets went to the McCord Radiator Company of Detroit, Michigan

The GIs reacted positively to their new headgear. The M1 helmet not only reduced or eliminated the rocking tendency so well remembered by Secretary Patterson, but also "did not interfere with firing the rifle from any position,

did not obscure the field of vision too greatly, and was more comfortable to wear."

The new helmet's development corresponded with the Army's National Guard mobilization and the nation's first peacetime draft. The Army needed helmets quickly, but new helmet production could not begin until mid-1941. The War Department had no choice but to order the manufacture of 904,020 of the M1917A helmets during the first half of 1941. But the old "tin hat" soon made way for the new "steel pot." The helmet M1 went into full production in August 1941, and by V-J Day a total of 22,363,045 had rolled off the assembly lines. According to Army historian Harry G. Thomson, it was "a record for quantity production." The liner, however, traced a slightly rougher history.

In the summer of 1941, the original liner, developed as a plastic impregnated fiber hat worn under the helmet, proved inadequate. Consequently, the Standardization Branch of the Office of the Quartermaster General (OQMG) enlisted the aid of several private firms to experiment with various plastics. In 1942, a regular plastic liner was developed, although this too had problems. The Army's Research and Development Branch, the successor to the Standardization Branch, worked diligently to improve the liner by adding an adjustable headband, eliminating pressure points, and coating the liner with textured paint less reflective than the original. Their efforts finally produced a successful liner.

During the first stages of helmet and liner development, the OQMG sought to add a woolen head covering for warmth in winter. A knitted cap was adopted as a standard item in February 1942. But the Chief of Infantry disliked the cap, and in October 1942 the Army began the search for an all-purpose field cap. In the early months of 1943, using a ski cap as a starting point, the OQMG created "a windproof, water-repellent poplin cap with a stiffened sun visor, which gave protection to the eyes without protruding beyond the helmet liner." Field cap, M1943 along with a new "pile cap of improved military characteristics ... designed for wear in extreme cold," became standard and replaced several different field caps then in use.

A modification to the M1's chin strap hook fastener resulted after combat experience in the North African campaign. Too rigid, the fastener remained intact when subjected to the concussion of nearby explosions. With the helmet fastened to the chin, the explosion's impact jerked the head back resulting in fractures and dislocations of the cervical vertebra. Army Ordnance redesigned the strap with a ball and clevis release device that "would remain closed during normal combat activities but would allow for a quick voluntary release or automatic release at pressure considerably below the accepted level of danger." Subjected to the ordnance engineers' rigorous and extensive testing, the new ball and clevis device ultimately released at a pull of 15 pounds or more and was standardized in 1944.

During the war, soldiers forced to live off the land with what they had quickly found other uses for the new helmet: a wash basin, cooking pot, and a latrine. Climbing from a foxhole during a barrage was dangerous for any reason. But more important for the average GI, the new helmet proved a lifesaver. A postwar Army report found the M1 helmet cut battle casualties by 8 percent or 76,000 soldiers. More than half would have been killed in action. Sergeant Amelio Pucci of the 11th Airborne Division was one of them.

In February 1945, during the retaking of Corregidor Island in the Philippines, Sergeant Pucci charged a Japanese position; his men saw him go down and noted the round hole in the center of his helmet. When another sergeant asked for Pucci, one of the men said, "He's dead. Shot through the head." A few minutes later the "dead" Pucci rose up with a tremendous headache but otherwise unhurt. The bullet's force had spent itself penetrating the steel helmet and had rattled around between helmet and liner, falling out the back.

When the M1 helmets began rolling off the assembly lines in 1941, the old tin hat, like an old soldier, began to fade away, turning up on the heads of air raid wardens and civil defense workers. But fate dealt a bad hand to the old helmet during the war's early months. The doughboy helmet, worn victoriously by the AEF in World War I, became emblematic in World War II of surrender and defeat.The photographs of American soldiers on Bataan and Corregidor wearing the M1917A1 helmets, hands raised in surrender, will forever mark the tragic early days of World War II. The old helmet remains a historical marker of America's military unpreparedness. Similarly, when the United States launched the nation's first offensive ground action at Guadalcanal, the 1st Marine Division splashed ashore wearing the new M1 steel pot, forever marking the GI helmet as a symbol of victory in World War II. □

Freelance author Earl Rickard received both bachelor's and master's degrees in American history from the University of Nevada. He resides in Reno.

By Blaine Taylor

All Photos: Author's Collection

Nuremburg Prosecutor

Brigadier General Telford Taylor was also the author of a series of important books on the war and its aftermath.

ON MARCH 23, 1991, AT A REUNION OF THE POSTWAR NUREMBERG INTERNATIONAL Military Tribunal staffers in Washington, I had occasion to meet the former American prosecutor, Brigadier General Telford Taylor. On May 23, 1998, the general died in New York at age 90 after suffering a series of strokes.

In his *New York Times* obituary, Taylor's friend Jonathan Bush, a professor at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, recalled, "He'll be remembered as a chief Nuremberg prosecutor, but also more as a giant of American liberalism and a man of integrity."

At the close of World War II, Taylor was a U.S. Army officer promoted to brigadier general as a top assistant prosecutor at the International Military Tribunal, when the four member nations, the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, put 21 Nazi leaders on trial at Nuremberg's Palace of Justice. Starting on November 21, 1945, the tribunal included the missing Martin Bormann, Adolf Hitler's personal secretary, who was tried in absentia along with the others, all for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

After 10 months of courtroom activity, 19 were convicted, two were acquitted, and a dozen of those convicted were sentenced to death by hanging. Seven other defendants received varying prison terms as sentences. Reich Marshal Hermann Göring, the ranking officer of either side in the war, committed suicide in his maximum security cell just hours before his scheduled hanging.

After the initial trial, a dozen subsequent trials took place and at these General Taylor became chief prosecutor for the U.S. team against 200 more top Nazis, and he won 150 convictions on the charges against them.

In 1947, the general stated, "The crimes of these men were not committed in rage, nor under the stress of sudden temptation. One does not build a stupendous war machine in a fit of passion, nor an Auschwitz slave factory during a passing spasm of brutality."

The trials proceeded despite differing Allied opinions on procedures, the absence of legal precedents, and the question of whether it was right for the victors in the war to try the losers

—something that, indeed, the Nazis themselves never did of their defeated foes. It was the very same argument that had also been raised after the end of World War I, when the victorious Allies demanded the extradition of the former Kaiser Wilhelm II of Imperial Germany and the top defeated German generals, among them Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and Quartermaster General Erich Ludendorff. Both the governments of the Netherlands, where the former German emperor was living in political sanctuary, and the Weimar Republic of Germany refused these extradition demands.

In 1945, the situation was different as armies from both East and West had overrun the defeated Third Reich. Thus, the

TOP: U.S. Army Brigadier General Telford Taylor (left) and U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Robert Jackson sit in Jackson's office during a recess in the proceedings of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg in 1945-46. ABOVE: A gaunt Hermann Göring, former chief of the Nazi Luftwaffe, takes the witness stand during the Nuremberg trials.

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This scene of the secretarial pool of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg reflects the massive amount of paper generated by the proceedings during which numerous formerly high-ranking Nazis were convicted of war crimes. Several were sentenced to death and hanged in October 1946.

accused war criminals were already in Allied hands and ready to be tried for their prewar and wartime deeds.

After all four years of trials were concluded, Taylor asserted that they had been a success, but he suggested that any future war crimes trial must look at the actions of the winners as well as those of the losers. That has yet to happen in the intervening 60 plus years; nor is it likely to.

"The laws of war are not a one way street," Taylor asserted, a view he repeated as a law professor with his book *Nuremberg and Vietnam in 1970.* From this conflict emerged the trial of American Army Lieutenant William Calley and Captain Ernest Medina for crimes committed against South Vietnamese civilians at the village of My Lai in then South Vietnam.

Of his book in 1995, *The Nation,* a well-known weekly journal, stated, "The human rights movement owes much of its legal foundation to the work of Gen. Telford Taylor… Nuremberg gave legitimacy to the concept that the world had something to say about how governments treat their own citizens. In 1950, the United Nations codified Nuremberg's most important statements into the seven Nuremberg Principles, which have since been adopted by the legal systems of almost every other nation."

During the 1950s, General Taylor, back in civilian life, spoke out against U.S. Senator Joseph R. McCarthy's (R–Wisconsin) anti-communist activities and defended some of those targeted by McCarthy. He also worked to help Jews who were imprisoned in the Soviet Union. Dealing with the Soviets had been a thorny issue during the International Military Tribunal of 1945-1946, when the defense of Hitler's foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, accused the Soviets, as signatories to Josef Stalin's pact with the Nazis of 1939, of having thus participated in the rape of Poland, no less than the Nazis who were in the dock of the accused.

The former general was also a professor emeritus at New York's Columbia University School of Law and a visiting professor at both Harvard and Yale law schools and was associated with Cardozo Bet Tzedek Legal Services in New York.

Taylor's books included the following works: *Sword and Swastika: Generals and Nazis in the Third Reich* (1952), *The March of Conquest: The German Victories in Western Europe, 1940* (1958), *The Breaking Wave: The Second World War in the Summer of 1940* (1967), and *The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials* (1992). There was also *Grand Inquest: The Story of Congressional Investigations.*

Long after General Taylor's role at Nuremberg is forgotten, his work as a jurist may well be eclipsed by his efforts as a scribe on the war itself.

In *Sword and Swastika,* General Taylor wrote, "This is the story of the combination and clash of old and new forces in Germany at a recent and critical juncture. Old and honored were the German officer class and the hard military tradition that it embodied. New and irreverent was the revolutionary surge of lethal energy that swept Germany in the early thirties, carrying Hitler and the Nazis to power. The combination of these forces was the cornerstone of the Third Reich and its resurgent might. The clash between them was the struggle for supreme power in Germany, and for control of the glittering military machine.

"The interplay of these two drives—collaboration and conflict—was the warp and woof of the Third Reich's prewar years….

"The protagonists in this apocalyptic drama were strangely matched, the one archaic and the other atavistic. On one side, the stark, tight-lipped galaxy of professional warriors, most of whom would have been more at home in the entourage of the 19th Century German emperors: von Bock, von Rundstedt, von Kleist, von Reichenau—the names throb in our ears like the beats of a heavy war drum.

"On the other side, an incredible aggregation of demagogues, adventurers, misfits, and thugs; a veritable witches' brew of genius and villainy: Hitler, Göring, Himmler, and Goebbels—we have no trouble recalling their features years after their deaths. Whatever their faults, they were not lacking individuality."

General Taylor further noted, "Hitler and the officer corps each found in the other a dangerous, but necessary, vehicle for the attainment of goals which both shared; that mutual suspicions and irritations were submerged in a common design; that Hitler concealed but never neglected his purpose to bend the military to his will; that the power and traditional prestige of the generals survived Hitler's subjection of all other groups in Germany which might have opposed him; that the officer corps thus emerged, involuntarily, as the last hope of those who sought to restore liberty and preserve peace; and finally, that the hope was betrayed, and Germany's nightmare became Europe's fate."

In *The March of Conquest,* Taylor wrote, "At some time during the late spring of 1940, every American awoke not only to the fact of French defeat, but a chilling realization that Nazi Germany might well win the war! It was the end of an American era. In 1814, 4,000 British regulars had captured and burned the national capital, but in 1940 few Americans and fewer British knew that such a thing had ever happened. A century and a quarter had elapsed since the times when the United States was seriously endangered by foreign military power.

"National security was something that Americans took for granted, even after the brief involvement in World War I. Britain and France were friendly powers; one had the largest navy and the other 'the finest army' in the world. The United States 'had never lost a war,' and there seemed to be small chance that it would soon

—perhaps ever—have to fight another.

"Then these blue horizons were darkened by the ugly cloud of Nazism … Sober statesmen predicted a long and terrible war, but American faith in French military prowess was deep-rooted, and who wanted it shaken? The Maginot Line shielded the United States as well as France.

"The Wehrmacht/Armed Forces struck, and in four weeks' time, the French were crushed. Churchill was indomitable, but Britain was in dire straits. Suddenly the entire structure of American military security, which had endured since the turn of the century, had collapsed. The agent of its destruction was the Wehrmacht.

"A year and a half of uneasy peace remained, while the United States was riven by the isolationist-interventionist debate, but the die was already cast. America could no longer find security in the power of friendly European nations, and a large but antiquated Pacific fleet for insurance against the Japanese. To be sure, the German legions were on the other side of the Atlantic, but what would be America's fate in a world dominated by a Nazi empire?

"France had fallen, Britain must be shored up, but for the United States, security could be regained only by the development of her own vast resources and speedy conversion of the potential to the actual. America must become and remain a great military power. So it has been ever since that spring of 1940, and so it will be as long as can be foreseen today. Few indeed must be the Americans whose lives were not deeply affected by these events …."

In *The Breaking Wave*, written 15 years after the first volume of his trilogy was published, Taylor covered the Battle of Britain. "The Second World War—for most of its survivors—has remained the most intense experience of their lives, and the source of their most vivid recollections …The war was truly global, and far too extended for a single field of vision.

"There had been a time when things were simpler. After the fall of France, only three nations were at war, and of these Italy was not yet seriously committed in combat.

"The summer of 1940 was one of war between Germany and Britain, and at the time, there were many who would not have staked a thruppance on Britain's prospects for national survival, to say nothing of ultimate victory … The English Channel became the hinge of fate for Western democracy. Alone and against desperate odds, Britain fought through under a leader who spoke winged words, and it is both just and poetic that the summer of 1940 is remembered as her finest hour.…

"For the Germans, seemingly poised on the brink of triumph, the strategic problems were both crucial and complex. Choked with territorial conquest and militarily impregnable, it was even questionable whether the Reich should continue to seek a solution *vi et armis* [by arms] …

"Never again was the Third Reich as close to victory as it was in the summer of 1940. That is why the German effort and its failure were, in a strategic sense, the war's turning point, and must be accounted a crucial episode in the modern history of mankind."

In 1992, the general-attorney came full circle with the publication of his final book, *The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials.* He wrote, "In the spring of 1945, I was a reserve colonel in the intelligence branch of the United States Army. My duties had to do with information derived from the deciphering of enemy messages, the product of which in recent years has become known as 'Ultra' and 'Magic'…

"Robert H. Jackson, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, had been appointed by President Truman to represent the United States as chief prosecutor at a projected international trial of 'war criminals.'… I had graduated from Harvard Law School in 1932, and during the next 10 years, had held a succession of Federal government legal positions. In 1939-40, I had served briefly as a Special Assistant to the Attorney General (Jackson)."

Prior to Harvard Law School, Taylor had graduated from Williams College, and during the war he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. In 1979, his book *Munich: The Price of Peace* was awarded the National Book Critics Award for best nonfiction work.

His career as a writer closed as it began, on Nuremberg, however; and, surprisingly, he recanted his previous view that Nazi Jew-baiter Julius Streicher, Gauleiter (regional leader) of Nuremberg and Franconia and editor of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Sturmer* (The Stormer) should have been both convicted and hanged.

In the "politically correct" climate of the 1990s, the general concluded that Streicher and Nazi philosopher Alfred Rosenberg had both been unjustifiably convicted and hanged, largely because of the unpopularity of their political views, speeches, and writings.

It was a remarkable about-face for a truly remarkable author and preeminent jurist to make but wholly in character with General Telford Taylor. □

Towson, Maryland, author Blaine Taylor is a frequent contributor to WWII History. *He has written numerous books on World War II topics*

By John W. Osborn, Jr.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

Himmler's Recruits

The Nazi Foreign Legion included soldiers of numerous nationalities who fought for numerous different reasons.

IN AUGUST 1942, WITH OPERATION BARBAROSSA AT ITS HEIGHT, THE INVADER in coal shuttle helmet and field gray uniform crawled on his elbows through brush up the hillock, pistol in his right hand.

"I reached the crest of the hillock; one jump from me a Russian officer was crawling forward flat on his stomach, exactly as I was doing!" he remembered. "We fired simultaneously. His bullet whistled by my ear. Mine hit my luckless adversary right in the middle of the face."

In January 1945, in a wooded area inside Germany itself, another soldier in German uniform was in his own death duel with a Russian. "We took turns shooting at each other—head up, head down, up, down. Finally, the Russian made a mistake. Either because he was too lazy or in order to fire more quickly, he let his machine gun stay up, visible to me, while he ducked down to wait for the next shot. I squeezed the trigger then stayed up with my finger on the trigger. There! His head was up again behind his weapon, and before he could react, he had a hole between his eyes. The head was thrown back, then sank, disappeared and his limp hand dropped the weapon."

Shown in 1943 during close-order drill, Muslim soldiers of the Waffen SS mountain division "Handschar" have been recruited from Bosnia. Note the distinctive collar tabs on the uniforms.

Neither of these men fighting for Hitler was a German. The first was an extremist politician from Nazi-occupied Belgium. The other was a deserter from the army of neutral Sweden. They were among the hundreds of thousands who for reasons ranging from the polar opposites of conviction and coercion, with opportunism and sadism in between, fought in the foreign legion that Henrich Himmler authorized within his Waffen SS.

Himmler's military ambitions had been frustrated when Hitler sided with the German Army high command to decree that the Waffen (Armed) SS could not be more than a tenth the size of the Wehrmacht due to manpower requirements. The head of Himmler's recruitment office, Gottlob Berger, came up with the solution: racially suitable foreigners.

"No objections against a further expansion can be raised by the other armed forces if we succeed in recruiting part of the German and Germanic population not at the disposal of the Wehrmacht," Berger argued. In the course of the war, 125,000 men from occupied Western Europe and Scandinavia would enter the Waffen SS; volunteers even came from neutrals, up to 800 from Switzerland, 130 from Sweden. All of them were left in no doubt by Himmler: "You subordinate your national ideal to a greater racial and historical ideal, that of the German Reich."

German propagandists, and later apologists, would depict the SS volunteers as crusaders against communism, even an early NATO. The invasion of Russia undoubtedly inspired some. "Along the Eastern Front the fight against the world enemy is in full swing," the commander of Danish volunteers would declare.

Yet many of the first recruits came out of prewar pro-Nazi groups while the preparations for Operation Barbarossa were still secret. Some were ex-soldiers or police unemployed after the Nazi occupation of their homelands. A later psychological study of Dutch volunteers (the Netherlands provided 60,000, more than any other country) found the primary motivations were the same ones leading to becoming a French Foreign Legionnaire or a mercenary—adventure, boredom, the money, or trouble with family or the law. Gottlob Berger admitted, "We will never be able to prevent men from joining who are neither National Socialists nor idealists, and instead take this step for more materialistic reasons." Even the most notorious of the volun-

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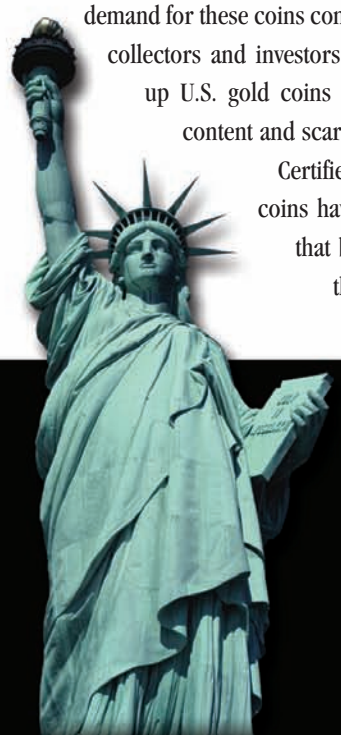

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Their nation having succumbed to the Soviet Union during the earlier Winter War, Finnish men line up during the summer of 1941 to join the German Army and continue the fight against the hated communist enemy.

teers, for all his loud admiration for Hitler and anti-communist fervor, still had his own deluded reason for fighting.

"If I had a son, I would want him to be like you," Leon Degrelle would claim Hitler told him. Degrelle was a Walloon (French-speaking) Belgian and the charismatic leader of a prewar Fascist movement, the Rexists. Because of Degrelle's French heritage, the Nazis initially rebuffed his efforts to work for them when they occupied Belgium, but when Hitler attacked Russia he organized a brigade of Walloon volunteers.

"We had given this gift of our youth in order to guarantee the future of our nation in the midst of a rescued Europe," Degrelle was to write. "Hitler, as victor would, I am certain, have recognized the right of our nation to live and be great, a right that it acquired for itself slowly, with difficulty, by the blood of thousands of Belgian volunteers."

Declining a commission since he had no military experience, Degrelle enlisted in his own brigade as a private. He would earn battlefield promotions to colonel, be wounded five times, and twice earn the Knight's Cross. By the war's end, of the 6,000 to serve in his brigade, 45 percent were killed, 87 percent wounded, and Degrelle was one of the only three survivors of the original 800.

Degrelle and his Walloons had to fight with the Wehrmacht until accepted by the Waffen SS in June 1943. The first foreign Waffen SS volunteers fought with the 5th SS Panzer Division "Wiking." Among foreign volunteers in the Waffen SS, 630 Dutch, 294 Norwegians, 216 Danes, a Swiss, and a Swede, 17–year old Hans Linden, were killed in action on December 27, 1941.

Others, including 2,559 Dutch, 1,164 Danes, 1,218 Norwegians, and 875 Flemish (German-speaking) Belgians, served in Freiwilligen Legionen (Volunteer Legions). Officially independent, they were secretly controlled, often ruthlessly, by the SS. Behind the propaganda façade of Germanic-Nordic unity against communism, the Catholic Flemish were abused and denied Mass, and Dutch and Danish officers showing too much independence were demoted or dismissed. "Every tie, every connection, between German and Norwegian was lacking," one legionnaire discovered, too late.

Not up to the standards of ethnic and racial perfection then demanded by Himmler, the legionnaires had less training and fewer arms than the Wiking recruits, and they were then sent into combat piecemeal. The results were devastating. The Norwegians had a 50 percent casualty rate, the Dutch 80 percent; the Flemish had only 60 left at the end. In a bitter historical irony, 121 Danes were killed at Demyansk in May 1942, while only 13 Danes had died resisting the German invasion of Denmark on April 9, 1940.

When the Danes paraded on furlough shortly afterward, the Copenhagen crowds jeered at them. They were not the only ones to be regarded with contempt. Himmler acknowledged that at least a third of his foreigners were ostracized by their wives or families. One Norwegian admitted, "My father has very little sympathy with my political beliefs. So little that when I tried to visit him on Christmas Eve while on leave (I hadn't seen him for seven or eight months) he threw me out."

In May 1943, the SS dispensed with the fiction of the legions' independence, disbanding them and incorporating those who were left and those to come into either the Wiking Division or new formations. Himmler by then had scoured Eastern Europe for more Volksdeutch (ethnic Germans outside the Reich). After rounding up—largely by conscription—45,000 in Romania, 42,000 in Hungary, and 17,000 in Serbia, he persuaded himself that Estonians were German enough to justify taking 6,500. Then 15,000 men from Latvia, 30,000 from the Ukraine, and 5,300 from Slovakia were impressed. As it turned out, Himmler could have saved himself the bother. Except for the Latvians, the Eastern units proved unenthusiastic and militarily useless.

Ranging furthest afield from his racial fantasies, Himmler actually recruited Muslims in the Balkans—26,000 from Bosnia, 6,000 from Albania—complete with fezzes, special rations, and imams. As he rationalized it, Islam "assumed the task of instructing men, promising them heaven if they fight with courage and get killed on the battlefield. In short it is a very practical and attractive religion for a soldier!" In fact, the Bosnians murdered their German instructors while half the Albanians deserted; the half staying proved effective only at slaughtering civilians. Himmler finally disbanded them.

For propaganda reasons, Himmler even accepted 2,000 Indians captured in North Africa. "A joke!" Hitler would call them. Fifty-eight specimens of human flotsam were dredged out of the POW camps, forming the British Free Corps. The Corps' leader, Sergeant Thomas Cooper, felt ostracized for having a German mother, and he joined the British Union of Fascists. In Germany when the war began, he was one of the first foreigners accepted into the Waffen SS, took part in massacring Poles and Jews, and was wounded and decorated before being assigned command of these British boozers and brawlers.

There were still a few deluded, true believers joining. One of them was an Army deserter from Sweden. Erik Wallin had belonged to the Nazi movement in his country but only as a follower. He fought Russia before Hitler or Leon

National Archives

Belgian Nazi Leon Degrelle, a highly decorated combat veteran, talks with factory workers in his native country. After the war, Degrelle remained a prominent pro-Nazi figure. His decorations include the Knight's Cross, the Iron Cross, and the Close Combat clasp.

Degrelle, as a volunteer for Finland in the Winter War. In 1943, he crossed the border into occupied Norway to join the mortar platoon of the Swedish company in the 11th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Nordland." Wallin would soon find the struggle on the Eastern Front was no longer about eradicating communism. Instead, it was an exercise in sheer survival.

Degrelle and his Walloons fought the rearguard in the breakout of the Cherkassy pocket in January 1944, with only 632 men of an original 2,000 remaining. "During the three weeks of encirclement I had personally engaged in 17 hand-to-hand combats," Degrelle later wrote. "Even now I am seized with a sort of dizziness when I think of those days of horror, the leaping bodies, and the rat-atat-tat of my hot submachine gun."

By 1945, the Waffen SS was half foreigners, increasingly collaborators on the run or forced labor conscripts. The desperate Western units fought perhaps even harder than the Germans themselves, while the Eastern formations came apart.

Erik Wallin was himself trapped on the Courland Peninsula in Latvia, firing his mortar for 10 days and nights, holding off Russian assaults. "With wet blankets we ran from mortar to mortar, to cool off the gleaming hot barrels," he would recall. Degrelle was evacuated across the Baltic and slowly driven back to Berlin with only 40 men of his company still left. "We fought, ran, drove, dug in, fought, ran and drove on again, all without pause.... The wave from the east rose and rose, and became implacably closer. It was thrown forward on tens of thousands of American trucks, and was fed by many millions of tons of American supplies. But still we believed!"

Wallin would vent, "Should our part of the world be ruined because a few, temporarily powerful, were blinded? In their hatred, and with all their power, they had helped break down the barrier beneath a torrent of barbarism and brutal rawness, that in a wild anger threw itself against our protective wall."

Degrelle fought a desperate last stand for two months along the Oder River. "A few hundred

Continued on page 72

By Allyn Vannoy

Following the capture of the Yugoslavian capital of Belgrade by a handful of SS troops, Nazi military police, or Feldgendarmen, were among the first to enter the city. This photo of two motorcycle officers was taken on April 12, 1941. Note the distinctive gorgets around their necks.

All photos: ullstein bild/The Granger Collection, New York

The Iron Fist

Nazi police and security forces maintained control in Germany and occupied territories.

HITLER'S GERMANY WAS KNOWN FOR ITS ORGANIZATION AND EFFICIENCY, AS well as its deprivations, terror, and cruelty. This was exemplified in its security forces.

Among the many Third Reich police and security organizations were several military police types, the Feldgendarmerie, Feldjägerkorps, Geheime Feldpolizei, Heeresstreifendienst, Marinekusten-Polizei, and numerous police-security regiments and divisions. In addition to the military police there were state security organs such as the SS, SD, and the Gestapo, which were also found to operate in combat zones as well as in Germany and the occupied territories.

The Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, imposed limits on the manpower of the German Army, and military police units were disbanded. With the Nazi rise to power and the start of World War II, the floodgates were opened for numerous police organizations to be formed and also the creation of a chaotic hierarchy of security forces.

The seed of the German military police began with state police organizations. The various state police battalions across Germany in the early 1930s were, in effect, paramilitary organizations, which allowed the Nazis to quickly expand both the Army and the military police by converting these units to national service once the party came to power.

In January 1934, the Nazi regime began unifying the various state police forces into the Landespolizei by transferring police powers to the national level. The post of chief of the German police in the Ministry of the Interior was created with Heinrich Himmler appointed to the position, thus blurring the lines between the police and the SS. As a result, the position of SS and police leader was created in 1938. The purpose of the SS and police leader was to be a direct command authority for every SS and police unit in a given geographical region, answering only to Himmler and Adolf Hitler.

The Feldgendarmerie was the regular military police arm of the Wehrmacht. Not only was it associated with standard military police duties, but some Feldgendarmerie units were assigned occupation duties in the territories controlled by the Wehrmacht. Their missions ranged from traffic control and civilian policing to suppression and execution of partisans.

Military police schools taught a wide range of subjects including criminal code, general and special police powers, forestry, fishery and waterway codes, traffic codes, industrial codes, passport and identification duties, folk culture, first aid, weapons drill and instruction, shooting, self-defense techniques, and criminal police methodology. There were also lessons in air defense, animal protection, and typing and stenography courses.

After examinations candidates spent time working at a police station. It was no easy feat passing the requirements and becoming a police officer. From one batch of 219 trainees, only

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In the courtyard of the Berlin Castle, 800 new police officers, or Landspolizei, are sworn in during ceremonies in 1934. These officers assumed their new duties at the height of Hitler's popularity and enforced Nazi laws on the streets of German cities.

89 made it as far as the final examination. Former civilian policemen drafted into the Feldgendarmerie acquired military ranks in keeping with their former police status.

Within the German Army, the Feldgendarmerie received full infantry training besides having extensive police powers. They were employed with Army divisions and higher formations.

Each field army of the Wehrmacht had under its command a Feldgendarmerie battalion and each division a Feldgendarmerietrupp. A typical Feldgendarmerie battalion included a command group with one officer, one warrant officer, two noncommissioned officers, three other ranks over three platoons each with an officer, three noncommissioned officer drivers, 17 more noncommissioned officers, and 10 other ranks. A Feldgendarmerietrupp, attached to an infantry or panzer division, would usually comprise three officers, 41 noncommissioned officers, and 20 men.

Military policemen were armed with Walther pistols that had been designed for use by civilian police, either the model PP (Police Pistole) or PPK; they were favored by officers over the Luger PO8 and Walther P38 used by other ranks. Machine pistols were carried by noncommissioned officers, while the Mauser 98K rifle was issued but not widely used. Heavier weapons included the MG34 and MG42 machine guns, often mounted on vehicles for use in defending roadblocks.

The Feldgendarmerie had the authority to pass through roadblocks, checkpoints, and secured areas and were allowed to conduct body and property searches and obtain the assistance of any other military or civilian personnel. They also had seniority over every other soldier, up to their own rank, whatever their branch of service. In the wake of combat operations they acted as temporary town police, rounded up enemy stragglers, dealt with guerrillas, collected refugees and prisoners, guarded captured booty, ensured that civilian weapons were surrendered, were responsible for the organization of civilian labor, and erected military and civil signs.

Members served on every front. Toward the war's end, they were more often employed as frontline troops and were involved in many desperate operations. Many were decorated for bravery. During the last days of the war, Feldgendarmerie caught by Soviet troops, who had been offered a bounty for their capture, could expect to be shot on the spot. Many were issued with a second Soldbuch (paybook) and matching identity tags that could be used to identify them as regular soldiers.

In the late stages of the war, the role of the Feldgendarmerie took on greater significance as they became responsible for the fate of tens of thousands of deserters, called Fahnenflüchtiger or, literally, "runners from the flag." Many deserters were summarily executed. As public support for the Wehrmacht was evaporating, the Feldengendarmerie also became known as the Heldenklau or "hero-snatchers" because they were assigned the unpopular task of searching streams of refugees for possible deserters and sending rear-echelon personnel to the front.

The Feldgendarmerie wore the standard German Army uniform but with several distinctive features that included orange-red piping on the crown and cap band of the Schirmmütze, or peaked cap. On the uniforms, the orange-red was used as piping to the center of the collar patch bars, to the shoulder straps for noncommissioned officers and other ranks, and as underlay to officers' shoulder straps. In addition, the Feldgendarmerie were identified by the Polizei-pattern, upper-left-sleeve eagle. This consisted of an embroidered eagle and swastika within a wreath of oak leaves. The swastika was in black and the rest of the insignia in orange-red for other ranks and in silver thread for officers.

On the cuff of the left sleeve of the uniform all ranks wore a 30mm-wide brown cuff with gray cotton edging and inscribed with the word "Feldgendarmerie" in silver-gray machine-woven gothic lettering.

The key identifying feature of the Feldgendarme was the duty gorget or Ringkragen—a half-moon shaped sheet metal plate. Because of their unpopularity among the German rank and file, the Feldgendarmerie were known as "kettenhunde," or chained dogs, referencing their duty Ringkragen. In the center of the plate was a large spread eagle and swastika over a scroll bearing the legend "Feldgendarmerie." The gorget was suspended by a neck chain.

As military policemen, their behavior and conduct was to be above reproach. If an officer of the Feldgendarmerie failed to abide by his code of honor, he would be relieved of his command, turned over to the Feldgendarmerie replacement battalion and returned to his home duty station in disgrace. Likewise, all Feldgendarmen who turned out to be unsuitable for further service could, depending upon the severity of their action, be transferred out of the Feldgendarmerie and reassigned to the Feldgendarmerie replacement battalion. What happened after that depended on the nature of the transgression.

The Geheime Feldpolizei (GFP), or Secret Field Police, operated as the executive organ of the Abwehr, the German military intelligence service. It collaborated with other security forces as well as local police and intelligence services.

Established in July 1939, the GFP was the special investigations branch of the Army. Just as experienced civil policemen were drafted into the Feldgendarmerie, so the GFP was staffed by

transferring experienced detectives from the Kriminalpolizei (Kripo) or criminal police. Although they were authorized to wear the uniform of an Army administration official, they generally wore civilian clothing. GFP personnel worked in close cooperation with the Sicherheitspolizei (Sipo) or security police. They undertook the investigation of espionage and treasonable activities, murder, theft, black marketeering, and other crimes within the military. In Belgium and France they were also deployed against the resistance.

Typically, the GFP were deployed in groups of up to 50 officers and men: one officer with the rank of major or higher; 32 with ranks of second lieutenant, first lieutenant, and captain; and 17 auxiliary personnel. The group could be divided so that one or two men were assigned to police a large area. In some cases, a single GFP officer could be attached to a Feldgendarmerie unit to assist in antipartisan operations.

By the second half of the war, the GFP were increasingly involved in dealing with subversion and sabotage within the Wehrmacht. After the middle of 1943, cases were identified in which German soldiers in France and Russia had deserted to the resistance or partisans. In the spring of 1944, cases of desertion started to rise rapidly. For example, in Army Group Center the GFP were on the lookout for over 3,000 deserters. At regular intervals, a gazette of wanted soldiers was published and circulated to all security and police agencies in the army group.

By 1943, as Germany's fortunes were turning and the morale of its soldiers began to wane, many able-bodied men made every effort to avoid service, especially on the Eastern Front. Strong measures were called for. In November, an entirely new force was created by the Army high command. The Feldjägerkorps was formed, answerable only to the high command; it thus had greater authority than other military police units.

The Feldjäger's function was to preserve order and discipline, prevent panicked retreats, collect stragglers, and round up escaped prisoners of war. At the same time, the corps was tasked to hunt down deserters; arrest insubordinate soldiers, looters, and malingerers; and search rear areas for any soldiers who were capable of frontline service. They were given the power to arrest anyone who could not provide a satisfactory explanation for their absence from active duty. They had the authority to hold a drumhead court martial and carry out executions on the spot.

The Feldjägerkorps consisted of three regiments or Feldjägerkommandos. Feldjägerkommando I and II served on the Eastern Front, while Feldjägerkommando III ended the war in the West.

The commanding officer of a Feldjägerkommando had equal status to that of an Army commander with the authority to punish Wehrmacht and Waffen SS personnel alike. In case of disputes, the Feldjäger were entitled to settle arguments at gunpoint.

Members of the Feldjäger had at least three years' of frontline combat service and had won at least the Iron Cross Second Class. Officers were also required to have considerable experience at senior command levels. These were men hardened by experience, who would tolerate no interference in their duties. Through the use of fear, backed up by the authority of the high command, it was hoped that the Feldjäger would provide the incentive for German soldiers to stand and fight to the death.

Nazi security police, known as Sipo, execute Czech civilians in the town of Klatovy in western Bohemia. This photo was taken on May 27, 1942, and the killings were likely in reprisal for the assassination of Reichsführer Reinhard Heydrich, the Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, by agents under the direction of the British government.

Other German police and security organizations included units such as the Army Patrol Service or Heeresstreifendienst, a branch of the military police tasked with maintaining order and discipline, and occasionally taking on traffic duties, as well as checking troop identification papers with the authority to report offenders to their commanding officers for punishment.

Another was the Wehrmachtstreifendienst that consisted of two elements, the Bahnhofswache and the Zugwache. Soldiers in the Bahnofswache were responsible for patrolling large rail centers. Their duties included checking the identification and leave passes of soldiers, checking for deserters, screening civilian passengers, and helping to run the center. The Zugwache were Army troops who were used to police military trains and rail centers where large groups of troops passed through. Their duties were similar to the Bahnhofswache, but they also guarded trains passing through enemy territory and dealt with partisan acts of sabotage.

In 1936, the German civilian police were divided into the Ordnungspolizei (Orpo) or Order Police and the Sicherheitspolizei (Sipo) or Security Police. The Orpo consisted of the Schutzpolizei (municipal police), the Gendarmerie (rural police), and the Gemeindepolizei (local police). Sipo was composed of the Kriminalpolizei (Kripo) and the Gestapo.

In 1939, the Sipo were centralized in the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) or Reich Security Main Office. The SD and the Sipo were the main sources of officers for the security forces in occupied territories. The SD-Sipo was also the primary agency, in conjunction with the Orpo, assigned to maintain order and security in the Jewish ghettos in Eastern Europe.

The Gestapo, a contraction of Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police), was the official secret police of Nazi Germany. It was administered by the RSHA, the head office of the Reich's security service, and was considered a dual organization of the SD and also an office under the Sipo.

The offices of the Gestapo were, for the most part, made up of bureaucrats and clerical workers who depended on denunciations by ordinary Germans for their information. Indeed, the

Continued on page 71

U.S. paratroopers plummet earthward during training exercises. In order to earn their paratrooper wings, soldiers had to complete five successful practice jumps. OPPOSITE TOP: Veteran 101st Airborne trooper Reginald Alexander visited Normandy during a reunion decades after he parachuted into hostile territory on D-Day, June 6, 1944. OPPOSTIE BOTTOM: Hundreds of parachutes billow as airborne troops descend on Normandy during the opening hours of D-Day. The transport aircraft droning along are emblazoned with invasion recognition stripes on wings and fuselage.

Baggy Pants *from* Hell

Courtesy Alexander Family

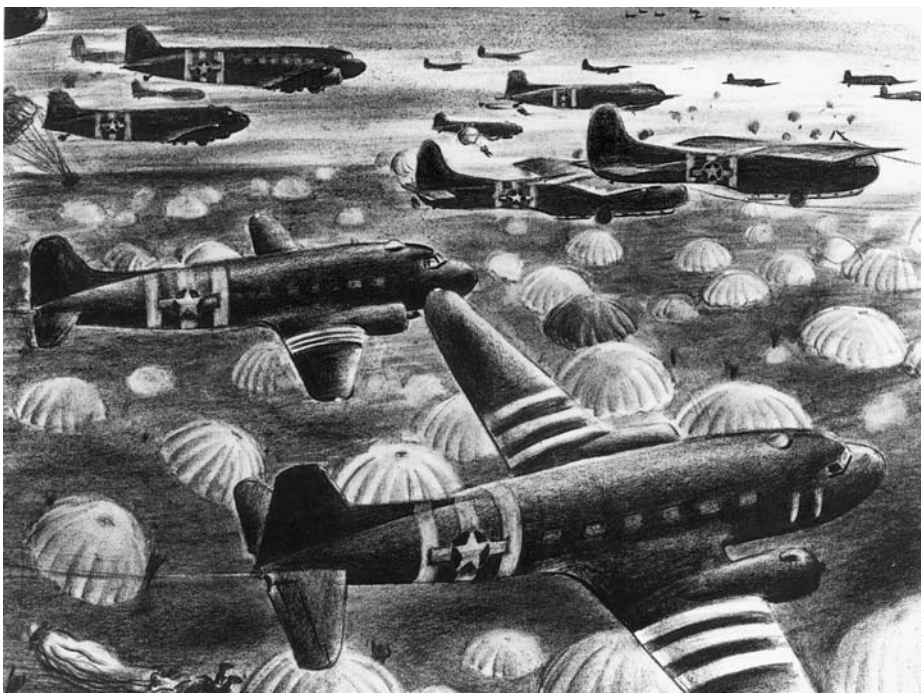
REGINALD ALEXANDER, AN ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE 501ST PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, RECOUNTS HIS EXPERIENCES WITH THE SCREAMING EAGLES FROM CURAHEE TO CARENTAN. BY BRANDT HEATHERINGTON

REGINALD ALEXANDER was born in Gardnerville, Nevada, in 1924 to Scottish émigré parents who were originally from Westcolvin, Scotland. His father was a soldier in the Black Watch Highlanders in World War I, a unit the Germans nicknamed "The Ladies from Hell" because of their kilts. Interestingly enough, the 101st Airborne Division soldiers were nicknamed "Baggy Pants from Hell" by the Germans in World War II. Alexander's family later moved to California, first to Monterey then to Carmel, then just outside San Francisco, and finally settled in Eureka. His father went into business for himself as a baker. When Reginald's mother died, the business took a turn for the worse and the family moved back to San Francisco where he finished high school. The outbreak of World War II set in motion a series of events for Reginald Alexander that resulted in life-changing events during his service in uniform.

Brandt Heatherington: What made you decide to enlist?

Reginald Alexander: As this was 1942, we knew about the fighting in the Pacific, but I really didn't know much about the war in Europe other than we had heard about the Battle of Britain, of course. Mainly, I was just a young guy—17 and a half—looking for adventure and some extra money.

BH: What kind of training did you receive?



National Archives

RA: When I enlisted they sent me to Monterey, and then we trained at the Presidio. I was put in charge of a squad and promoted to corporal. After a few months there, we were sent to an old cavalry station called Camp Toombs in Toccoa, Georgia. We thought that was a very unfortunate name, especially since we had to pass a casket factory on the way to the base. It was eventually changed to Camp Toccoa. At first, we would jump out of trucks and jump off of small towers to learn how to roll and tumble.

Then, as we progressed we moved on to Fort Benning, Georgia for jump school. This was where we had about a 250-foot tower and you

National Archives

All photos: National Archives

ABOVE: Damaged by German E-boats during Operation Tiger, a D-Day training exercise, LST-289 sits forlornly with its stern blown off. German torpedo attacks wreaked havoc during the exercise on April 28, 1944, and resulted in hundreds of casualties. BELOW: Allied troops disembark at Slapton Sands during training for D-Day. The location on the English coast was selected for its resemblance to Utah Beach in Normandy. The costly German E-boat attack that had disrupted Operation Tiger was shrouded in secrecy by Allied commanders.

would start by jumping off with a sort of bungee cord in a parachute harness, and you would pull the ripcord and then as you dropped you would transfer the bungee cord to your left hand. If you dropped it, you were taken up higher the next time, and no one wanted to do that.

Once we had learned how to do that, we learned to pack our parachutes, and after five live jumps from airplanes we got our paratroop wings. We modeled a lot of what we were doing on the Germans, as the U.S. Army had just started the paratrooper corps in 1940 and most regiments were just forming in 1942 when I joined.

BH: Your commanding officer was the famed Colonel Howard Johnson?

RA: Yes, "Jumpy" Johnson, as he was well known. Everything with him was "double time." He formed the 501st Brigade while stationed down in Panama, and that became the 501st Regiment. We were always competing against other units, the 506th, the 457th, but we also trained very much as individuals. Out of 1,500 men, they selected only 500. And if you dropped out, you were shipped out of camp immediately. We trained all through 1943 and then we were sent to Massachusetts and then on to England. We landed in Scotland on the Clyde River, where we boarded trains for southern England and ended up in Lambourne, which was a horse racing town not far from London. Randolph Scott, the famous movie actor, had a horse there.

BH: What were your accommodations like? What did you do when you were off duty?

RA: We were boarded in horse stables with four men to a stall. The Curahee Military Museum at Toccoa, which is the restored train depot, has one of those stalls on display. The stalls had bunks, and there was a bin for straw that we used as a pot stove and to make a fire, but it was still very cold. We made arrangements with a nearby pub for barrels of beer, which we covered up with a sheet and put books and flowers on top, and we had regular happy hours after training and bivouacs. One fellow built a still to make hooch, which blew up and destroyed the cook house. We also used to like going to Reading and London on the weekends.

BH: Did the 501st earn a colorful nickname?

RA: We were known as the "Bastard Regiment" because at first we weren't attached to a division. Colonel Johnson was also a colorful character; he had two pearl-handled pistols and was a West Point grad. Eventually, while training at Lambourne, we were assigned as part of the 101st Airborne Division. Parachute units were different in that we were "3-3-3." That is, three squads made up a platoon, three platoons made up a battalion, three battalions made up a regiment, and three regiments made up a division as opposed to four in the regular Army. We started together, trained together, and stayed together unless you were captured or killed. We had a tremendous amount of loyalty and cohesiveness—it really was a "Band of Brothers."

I liked jumping and made extra jumps whenever I could. Soon we started making night jumps, and then we started doing live rehearsals with landing craft (LCs) about four to six weeks before D-Day.

BH: Were you involved in a German attack during these rehearsals?

RA: Yes. We were working out of Slapton Sands rehearsing for the invasion. This was called Exercise Tiger. They came in and took over the whole town and moved all the civilians out. We did full dress rehearsals aboard the LCs out in the English Channel. We would go so far, and then do a U-turn. The columns were led by a British frigate with an American destroyer on the other end to protect the LCs. After mid-

Attempting to smile for the camera, American airborne troops are shown aboard their transport aircraft in preparation for takeoff during the predawn hours of D-Day. The paratroopers were scattered over a wide area but managed to spread confusion among the German defenders in Normandy.

night one night in late April [approximately 2 AM on April 28] a pack of German torpedo boats surprised the convoy and sank several LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank). We lost over 600 men. Decades later the nets of some English fishermen kept catching in this area and they dragged the bottom and hauled up one of the Sherman tanks that was on one of the LSTs.

BH: What kind of gear and weapons were you issued?

RA: I had an M1 Garand rifle, which I had qualified on as expert rifleman. Later I became a machine gunner and had the Browning .30-caliber light machine gun.

BH: Could you describe your D-Day air drop?

RA: We took off in the early evening the night before the naval force. German radar on the Cherbourg and Brittany peninsulas picked us up when we got close enough. I was with the 3rd Battalion, which was in reserve, and our job was to pick up Brigadier General [Douglas Forester] Pratt, the deputy commander of the 101st. He was killed on landing by a jeep that came unchained inside his aircraft and crushed him. My target was supposed to be Carentan but we were 25 miles off the drop zone when we came in.

BH: What kind of resistance did you meet with?

RA: You could hear shrapnel coming through the floor. Some guys got hit with that, some were killed. Outside it looked like the Fourth of July. They had extra medics on all the planes, which each held about 15 to 18 guys. My job on our plane was to watch the jump indicator light, which turned from red to amber to green when we were supposed to jump. The planes flew in echelons of three.

BH: And from then on the ride got rough?

RA: Our plane crashed, but I jumped before then. Unfortunately, I had a streamer, which is when your chute doesn't open all the way. I broke both legs when I landed. I tell people I came into the service at 6 feet tall and came out 5 foot 9! I gave myself a morphine shot and waited for help.

We used the "cricket" clickers to identify ourselves. You would click once and the other guy would click twice in response if he was a friendly, and then you would exchange sign and countersign, which for the 101st was "thunder" and "lightning." I called out and didn't use mine like I should have, and one of our guys said he almost shot me, but I said, "Cricket hell, I'm hurt!"

Don Metcalf and Bob Beachy gave me a rifle and put me in a hedgerow to wait for the medics. They were going to carry me off but they were worried that they would get me killed as they were attracting fire. A farmer brought me into the closest village in a wheelbarrow and left me in the care of a schoolmaster named Jacques Broquet. We couldn't use the doctor in town because he was a collaborator. They hid me there for about a week, but I didn't want to continue to endanger the schoolmaster and his family, and I wanted to get back to our lines. So, the French Underground put me in a wagon and covered me with straw and prepared to move me. I was armed with my M1, two bandoleers of ammo, six grenades, and a couple of Hawkins mines.

Eventually, we were stopped by a German patrol, which was kind of scary because I couldn't see what was going on. I was afraid they would stick bayonets into the hay like they do in the movies in that kind of scene. But I surrendered so there wouldn't be a firefight and the Resistance fighters who helped me would not get killed.

They took me to their headquarters at a chateau in Coigny—what looked like a large fortified baronial manor—where they searched me. I had given all my maps to some 82nd troopers after I got injured, just in case. The Germans found my food and went through all my other stuff while they were eating my food. What was like the movies was that the German soldiers treated me particularly rough. One soldier tried to stomp on me, but a doctor came in and stopped him and cleaned me up. He explained to me that he was a doctor and not a soldier.

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Diggers *in the* Southwest Pacific

AUSTRALIAN FORCES ENGAGED IN CONTROVERSIAL OPERATIONS AGAINST THE JAPANESE DURING THE FINAL MONTHS OF WORLD WAR II. BY JOHN BROWN

IN JUNE 1943, with the war on the island of New Guinea in its last stages, a proposal was under discussion in Washington that the huge Japanese base at Rabaul on New Britain be bypassed and "left to wither on the vine."

General Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief Southwest Pacific Area, opposed bypassing the Japanese stronghold, stating that he needed Rabaul as a forward naval and air base to protect his right flank as he advanced on the Philippines. The issue was resolved at the Quebec Conference in August 1943, when the combined chiefs of staff decided that Rabaul would not be captured but would be encircled, isolated, and left to wither. MacArthur agreed and set about transforming a bypassing maneuver into a brilliant strategic concept.

On December 1, the American 112th Cavalry Regiment landed at Arawa on the southern coast of New Britain. On December 26, the 1st Marine Division landed at Cape Gloucester, on the western coast of the island, and American and Australian troops landed at Saidor and Sio on the New Guinea coast of the Vitiaz Strait, across from Cape Gloucester.

At the same time, Admiral William F. Halsey's South Pacific Command landed a large force of Americans at Torokina on Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville, where an air base was quickly established from which to launch attacks on Rabaul. On February 15, 1944, the 3rd New Zealand Division seized Nissan in the Green Islands, 117 miles from Rabaul, and established air and torpedo boat bases. In February also, the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division landed on Los Negros Island in the Admiralties, overwhelmed strong Japanese resistance, and within weeks had built an immense maritime facility at Seeadler Harbor.

On March 8 and 20, the last acts in the campaign to isolate Rabaul were landings at Talasea, New Britain, and Emirau Island between New Ireland and the Admiralties. Rabaul was now, with its serviceable aircraft and naval units withdrawn north, militarily sterilized, and Japanese forces in northeastern Australian New Guinea and on Bougainville had been cut off.

MacArthur then made a tremendous jump forward. On April 22, with an armada of 158 ships, he made a 400-mile leap to land elements of the U.S. Sixth Army at Aitape, the last outpost in Australian New Guinea, and at Hollandia over the border in Dutch New Guinea (now the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya). Japanese reaction was comparatively weak.

In this painting by war artist Henry Hanke, the Australian crew of a Vickers machine gun engages Japanese troops near Madang, New Guinea, in April 1945.

Australian War Memorial

ABOVE: In November 1944, Australian soldiers view the bodies of Japanese troops killed on Bougainville. These enemy soldiers were killed in the fight for Little George Hill during Australian operations to mop up pockets of Japanese resistance. RIGHT: General Sir Thomas Blamey, commander of the Australian Army troops engaged in the Pacific, confers with American commander General Douglas MacArthur. Blamey believed Australia would enhance its position among the victors with greater troop participation against the Japanese.

American forces moved ahead on May 17 to Wadke, on May 27 to Biak Island, and on July 2 to Geelvink Bay. On July 30, Americans made their last landing on the huge island of New Guinea, at Sansapor.

On September 15, American forces landed on Morotai in the Moluccas, bypassing a strong Japanese garrison on nearby Halmahera Island, and began building a base for the invasion of the Philippines. A month later, on October 20, the Philippines were invaded at Leyte, fulfilling MacArthur's pledge to return.

Earlier in the year, MacArthur had said he intended to use three Australian Imperial Force (AIF) infantry divisions, the 6th, 7th, and 9th, veterans of the Middle East, North Africa, and New Guinea campaigns, in his assault on the Philippines, but it now seemed that he had no intention of using them; they were not included in his invasion plans.

In a press conference in July 1945, General Sir Thomas Blamey, commander in chief of the Australian Army, said, "General MacArthur said to both myself and Mr. John Curtin [the Australian Prime Minister] 'I will go to the Philippines and take the First Australian Corps with me.' That never eventuated. The Americans didn't want anyone else to take part."

Other comments at the time were: "It was to be an all-American show," and "It had more to do with American prestige and MacArthur's not inconsiderable vanity."

When MacArthur arrived in Australia from the Philippines in 1942, he told Prime Minister John Curtin, "You take care of the rear and I will handle the front." In agreeing with this, and as Australia was on a wartime footing, the Australian government in effect surrendered a large proportion of its national sovereignty to MacArthur.

In 1944-1945 Australia, total population about seven million, had proportionately more men and women in uniform than either the United States or the United Kingdom. It had the men, but it lacked the political, bureaucratic, and military framework to make and execute defense policies. The government lacked the expertise to make decisions on military strategy—these decisions had always been left to MacArthur; and MacArthur's interest was now, with the end of the war in New Guinea, caught up almost entirely with his return to the Philippines.

The American move north toward the Philippines had bypassed three large forces of Japanese—93,000 on New Britain mainly on the Gazelle Peninsula and around Rabaul, 37,000-40,000 on Bougainville, and 35,000 in the Aitape-Wewak area of northwest New Guinea. The Australian government was divided as to what should be done about them.

There were those who thought that continued active fighting by Australian troops would strengthen Australia's position in the coming peace treaty negotiations and foresaw a wider and more powerful Australian position in the Pacific in the future. There were those who were more concerned with the social and political challenges that Australia would face in the coming peace and the opportunity to introduce reforms in those spheres; they only wanted to see an end to the fighting. And there were those who simply thought the Japanese should be removed as soon as possible from all Australian mandated territories and the native peoples liberated.

In July 1944, Prime Minister Curtin in discussion with MacArthur said that Australia had a special interest in using Australian troops to clear the Japanese from the New Guinea territories. MacArthur agreed. Australian troops

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relieving American troops of their neutralization role would release thousands of them for his Philippines offensive. He informed General Thomas Blamey that Australian forces were to assume responsibility for the neutralization of the Japanese in Australian and British territories in the Southwest Pacific by November 1. Blamey responded that he would need only six Australian brigades for this, the equivalent of two divisions, one-third of the number of American troops presently carrying out the neutralization role. MacArthur insisted he use six divisions.

A number of discussions resulted in agreement. The minimum Australian forces to be used to neutralize the Japanese were Bougainville, four brigades; Emirau, Green, Treasury, and New Georgia islands, one brigade; New Britain, three brigades; the New Guinea mainland, four brigades. With MacArthur doubling the number of brigades Blamey had proposed, Blamey would have the numbers to undertake offensive actions that he would not have initiated with only six brigades.

Blamey placed Lt. Gen. Sir Vernon Sturdee's First Army headquarters at Lae on the New Guinea coast to control the forces engaged in the

neutralization campaign. On October 18, he issued an operation instruction defining the role of the First Army as "by offensive action to destroy enemy resistance as opportunity offers without committing major forces." When reporting to the Advisory War Council, he remarked: "Torokina [Bougainville] has been an inactive area but Australian forces would not perhaps be quite so passive."

Bougainville, about 125 miles long by 40 miles wide at its widest, is dominated by a long volcanic mountain chain. The coastal shelf, from narrow to about 10 miles wide, is covered with thick jungle dotted with minor areas of cultivation. It has an extremely heavy rainfall, and many rivers flow down from the mountains and across the coastal areas to the sea. The Japanese, whose strength was not known with any certainty but was actually close to 40,000, were in three main locations—to the north around Buka Passage, in the east near Numa Numa and Kieta, and in the south around Buin and Mosigetta.

Major General William Bridgeford's 3rd Division of Lt. Gen. Sir Stanley Savige's Second Corps began landing at Torokina on the northern edge of Empress Augusta Bay on October 6, coming in as shipping was made available since it was in short supply, with the majority marked for American operations in the Philippines. Green and Emirau Islands and Treasury Island off southern Bougainville were garrisoned by the 23rd Brigade.

The Australians were amazed at the luxury they inherited from the Americans at Torokina—folding cots to sleep on, wooden mess huts, shower units, recreation rooms, refrigeration, ice cream and soft drink factories, a cinema.... On their part, the Americans were amazed by the Australians who, immediately after arrival, began extensive patrolling inland checking the topography as available maps were woefully inaccurate, estimating the numbers of Japanese and where they were located, assessing their defensive positions, and observing the gardens they had established to feed themselves until, as they believed, they would be reinforced and begin another offensive.

The Japanese had made two attacks on the Americans in March and had been soundly defeated. Since then an unofficial truce had existed, a policy on both sides of live and let live. For the Americans it was "containment," and the Japanese seemed to be content to be contained, at least for the present.

The 9th Battalion took over from the Americans on the Numa Numa Trail, north of Torokina. Here it was typical of the unofficial truce with American and Japanese positions facing each other, with outposts sometimes as close as 50-60 yards apart. Two days after the 9th Battalion took over, patrols had reconnoitered a Japanese outpost on the nearest knoll, only about 60 yards away and consisting of six trenches. On the morning of the third day the battalion's mortars fired on the position, and Lieutenant John Deacon led a leap-frogging attack on the knoll. They reached the position as Japanese soldiers were jumping out of the trenches.

The action was over quickly, with 20 Japanese dead on the knoll, including an officer and a sergeant. Two Australians were killed and six wounded, including Deacon. The platoon was still occupying the position that evening when about 40 Japanese attacked. They were stopped and driven back. Throughout the night they made several attempts to infiltrate the position, but all failed.

The fight for the knoll was a very small action, a platoon attack on a platoon position. This and a few similar actions put the Japanese on notice that the "peace" on Bougainville was coming to an end.

Most Americans had left the island in December when the corps commander issued instructions for three simultaneous offensives. One was aimed at driving the Japanese in the north of the island into the Bonis Peninsula where they would be destroyed, another would clear the Japanese from the high ground on Pearl Ridge in the central sector, and a third would establish control of the area south from the Jaba River to the Puriata River and continue on to Buin with the aim of destroying the large force of Japanese located in that area. The offensives began on December 30.

The 25th Battalion moved up the Numa Numa Trail that runs across central Bougainville to Numa Numa on the east coast. Three days of hard fighting by the battalion ended with the seizure of Pearl Ridge, a fortress defended by a battalion of Japanese with six guns and 30 mortars. It was a high point in the Emperor Range from which the troops could see the sea on both sides of the island. A battalion of the 23rd Brigade brought in from the outer islands continued the advance from Pearl Ridge along the trail to Numa Numa where it could interdict Japanese communications along the east coast.

Meanwhile, the 31st/51st Battalion was advancing north toward Soraken Harbor. At Tsimba Ridge it encountered strong Japanese resistance, but the ridge was taken and then handed over to the 26th Battalion, which thrust northward toward Soraken. On the Soraken Peninsula the Japanese fought savagely during March, but by the end of the month all Japanese resistance had been overcome. From the hills of the peninsula, the Australians could see into Buka Passage, around which it was esti-

Australian War Memorial

Elements of the 1st Papuan Infantry Battalion, with an Australian sergeant along for the patrol, trudge through the high grass of the New Guinea jungle in July 1944. According to the period caption that accompanied this photo, the Papuan fighter in the lead had already killed 25 Japanese soldiers.

mated were some 1,300 Japanese with another thousand or more on the island of Buka.

While the other two offensives were taking place, the 29th Brigade drove south from Torokina and crossed the Jaba River. Resistance was minimal, and by the last week of January the 7th Brigade, which had relieved the 29th, occupied positions midway between Torokina and major Japanese forces around Buin.

The 25th Battalion of the 7th Brigade crossed the Puriata River on March 4, and Japanese resistance stiffened. On the 19th the battalion came up against some 2,500 Japanese in an extensive system of pillboxes and weapon pits. Over the next few days the Australians attacked them several times, sometimes with bayonets, but the Japanese held out until bombed by Vought F4U Corsair fighter-bombers of the New Zealand Air Force and an all-out attack by the battalion. This action cost the Japanese 620 dead and more than a thousand wounded, for 25 Australian dead and a few wounded.

All the offensives on Bougainville had moved painfully slowly, held up by thick jungle, deluging rain, swollen rivers and creeks, and the need to keep casualties to a minimum. Commanders, realizing the futility of their operations, were not enthusiastic about pushing ahead. They were aware, too, of the unpopularity of the campaign among the people and press and some politicians in Australia.

The soldiers, however, fought on. Brigadier "Tack" Hammer wrote that his brigade's morale "could not have been better if it had been fighting the Alamein battle or capturing Tokyo.... Every man knew, as well I knew, that the operations were mopping-up and that they were not vital to the winning of the war.... They ignored the Australian newspapers [and] relatives' letters advising caution and got on with the job in hand, fighting and dying as if it was the battle for final victory."

At Buin in the south of Bougainville, Japanese General Masatane Kanda estimated that the Australians would cross the Mivo River in early August and by the first week in September would be approaching or at the Silibai River, about 10 miles from Buin. He planned an offensive for September using 9,000 troops in the initial assaults with about 8,000 in reserve, but the offensive never took place.

On the morning of August 15, the popular English singer and actress Gracie Fields arrived at Torokina to give a concert for the troops. At midday an officer took her to a huge clearing in the jungle. It was filled with troops. The officer announced: "Men, at last I can tell you the only thing you want to know—the Japs have surrendered." In the stunned silence that followed his words, he said: "I have England's Gracie Fields here. I'm going to ask her to sing 'The Lord's Prayer.'"

The troops removed their bush hats, and under the blazing sun Gracie sang the prayer. "It was," she said later, "the most privileged and cherished moment of my life."

Near Buin, General Kanda made contact with the Australians and surrendered with 23,570 troops. Records showed that 18,300 Japanese died from all causes during operations on Bougainville while Australian losses were 516 killed and 1,572 wounded. The historian of the 42nd Battalion summed up the campaign as "futile and unnecessary."

WHEN THE WAR ENDED AND RABAUL SURRENDERED, THE DIVISION WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT IT HAD BEEN CONTAINING A FORCE EQUIVALENT TO FIVE DEPLETED BUT EXPERIENCED DIVISIONS, AMONG THEM 19 GENERALS AND 11 ADMIRALS.

During the campaigns on the New Guinea mainland and on Bougainville, voices were raised in Australia against Australian soldiers being assigned to the humble job of mopping up in bypassed areas while their American allies forged ahead in a blaze of public acclaim toward the Japanese home islands. As the Australian death toll steadily rose, criticism grew more vociferous and charges were laid that men were dying needlessly in wasteful offensives against "strategically impotent Japanese."

The controversy over the "backyard wars" was taken up by the press and parliament, and General Blamey was called upon to explain the conduct of his operations to the government. He stated that his objectives were to destroy the enemy where this could be done with relatively light casualties, thereby freeing territory and liberating the native population and, where conditions were not favorable for the destruction of the enemy, to contain him in a restricted area by the use of a much smaller force. This latter action was, as MacArthur had stated, to be applied to all bypassed Japanese. Blamey's explanation was accepted by the government.

Discontent with the backyard wars had begun to infect the Air Force. In April 1945, at Morotai, from which Australian air crews were flying what they called "drudgery flights against targets that had no military significance," eight decorated fighter aces including Group Captains Clive Caldwell (28 confirmed kills), John Waddy (15) and Wilfred Arthur (10) resigned their commissions in protest against operations that contributed nothing to ending the war.

Allied intelligence estimated there was a total Japanese Army-Navy strength of 38,000 on New Britain; it was in fact 93,000 concentrated mainly around Rabaul on the Gazelle Peninsula. Rabaul had been a small town and port before the Japanese built it into a fortress, their strongest bastion in the South Pacific, with a system of underground tunnels dug around it and filled with ammunition and supplies of all kinds.

The island is about 311 kilometers long by an average of about 50 wide. The Gazelle Peninsula was where some 40,000 of the island's people lived.

The Australian 5th Division, a militia division commanded by Maj. Gen. Alan Ramsay, a World War I veteran of France and the Middle East and New Guinea, began taking over from the Americans on New Britain in October 1944.

Ramsay decided to establish bases well to the east of the main American base at Cape Gloucester. The first to arrive was the 36th Battalion of the 6th Brigade; it took over from the Americans at Cape Hoskins and promptly began patrolling toward Ea Ea. Other patrols began ranging eastward, using a few American barges and two wrecked Japanese barges they managed to repair to carry supplies. The rest of the brigade arrived in dribs and drabs and by January 1945 had established a base at Ea Ea not far from the narrow neck into the Gazelle Peninsula. Patrols throughout the area found only abandoned Japanese positions.

The greater part of the 5th Division landed at Jacqinot Bay on the south coast in November, the nearest anchorage to Rabaul not then occupied by the Japanese. All units began moving closer to Rabaul.

While the Australians were caught up in several small battles with the Japanese, troops of the New Guinea Battalion (Papuans and New Guineans officered by Australians) distinguished themselves with deep patrolling, skillful ambushing, and taking out Japanese positions. Also, two groups of the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB)

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ABOVE: Moving into the jungle of New Guinea in search of Japanese resistance, this Australian patrol is heavily armed. Resupply was difficult, and the soldiers were often required to carry enough supplies and ammunition to sustain them for prolonged periods.

were operating against the Japanese in the interior. Each group consisted of a few Australian officers and noncommissioned officers and 140 native soldiers. They called air strikes on Japanese targets, harassed them in any way they could, and carried on a very successful guerrilla war.

Heavy fighting developed in the Waitavalo-Tol area in March 1945 when the 19th Battalion crossed the Walwut River under fire and fought its way forward for nine days against well-dug-in Japanese. Then the 13th/32nd Battalion took over and in some hard fighting drove surviving Japanese from the area.

By May, the 5th Division had established a firm line across the neck of the Gazelle Peninsula, achieving its main objective to contain the Japanese on the peninsula.

When the war ended and Rabaul surrendered, the division was surprised to learn that it had been containing a force equivalent to five depleted but experienced divisions, among them 19 generals and 11 admirals. Australian casualties were 53 killed, 21 who died of other causes, and 140 wounded.

Major General J.E.S. "Ocker" Stevens's battle-hardened 6th Division, veterans of Greece, Crete, Libya, Syria against the Vichy French, and Papua New Guinea, began arriving at Aitape on the northeast coast of Australian New Guinea in late 1944 to take over from the Americans. Because of the shortage of shipping, it would be almost four months before the last of the division arrived.

Stevens's orders were to defend airfield and radar installations in the Aitape-Tadji area, prevent movement westward of Japanese forces in the area, seize every opportunity for the destruction of these forces, and to give maximum help to the AIB and Australia and New Guinea Administrative Unit personnel in their tasks of gaining intelligence, establishing patrol bases, and protecting the native population. Stevens had little information on which to plan his campaign.

The 2/6th Cavalry (Commando) Regiment of the division was among the first to arrive at Aitape. The commandos quickly began patrolling along the coast toward Wewak, where the Japanese 18th Army was concentrated, and into the hills where the Japanese were raiding village gardens for food. The Japanese 18th Army, commanded by General Hatazo Adachi, consisted of about 35,000 troops in three divisions. As at Bougainville, they were cut off from supplies, reinforcements, or evacuation by sea. They were tending their gardens, racked by tropical diseases, and "sustained only by their faith in the Emperor and the Imperial Army."

One of the first commando patrols, about 40 miles east of Aitape, entered a deserted native village where, in one of the huts, they found a dozen dead Japanese soldiers. They had died of starvation. There was no food in the village, and the vegetation around it had been stripped bare. Other patrols found small groups of starving Japanese and took them prisoner. One patrol, in a brief clash with two Japanese soldiers, killed one and the other escaped. The condition of these two, in comparison with the

skeletal condition of other Japanese, surprised the commandos until they found evidence of cannibalism in the form of bodies with pieces cut from them and cooking utensils with pieces of human flesh in them.

General Stevens began his offensive by sending his 16th Brigade along the beach toward Wewak; a battalion of his 17th Brigade and two squadrons of commandos, all he could keep supplied by air drops, were sent into the Torricelli mountains toward Maprik. The weather was atrocious, the monsoon rains unending. Progress was slow, and, as the troops moved closer to Wewak and Maprik, Japanese resistance stiffened. Malaria was becoming a drain on the troops in both the swampy coastal areas and in the mountains despite daily doses of antimalarial drugs.

Australian War Memorial

Australian soldiers fire their mortar at Japanese positions near Balikpapan on the island of Borneo. The need for the bitter fighting during the last months of World War II was questioned by some in the Australian government and the public at large.

By mid-December, the 16th Brigade had cleared the area between the Danmap and Danmul Rivers, halfway between Aitape and Wewak. When the 19th Brigade relieved the 16th in January 1945, the 16th had killed 434 Japanese for the loss of 36 of its own and lost seven others crossing the raging Danmap River.

The tiny native coastal village of But now became important in the advance along the coast. It was on a small inlet that was protected from the seas and suitable for use by landing craft. The primitive coastal road was almost unusable, and lack of road-building equipment made repairs almost impossible, meaning that supplying the forward troops was always uncertain. There was an airstrip at But; however, its condition was uncertain. Landing supply transports into But inlet was the only means of keeping up the volume of supplies needed by the troops.

The 2/2nd Battalion was given the task of determining Japanese strength in the But area and whether Japanese artillery covered the inlet. Captured documents made it clear that the Japanese were aware of But's importance and that they were determined to hold it at all costs. The battalion made a fast but thorough reconnaissance of the defenses—bunkers of sand-filled 44-gallon drums reinforced with coconut logs and concealed weapon pits—and after a wet night and little sleep B Company led the attack on the bunkers and gun positions on sloping ground around the inlet. The Japanese fought desperately, but by the end of the day the inlet and airstrip were in Australian hands. Every Japanese soldier had died at his post.

There were still many Japanese in the area, and these withdrew to the south with the 16th Brigade in pursuit along the coast to Dagua and the 17th in pursuit in the mountains toward Maprik. Maprik, with its airfield, was captured after some hard fighting, and when Dagua was captured, the 16th Brigade was relieved by the 19th. By mid-May the country around Wewak had been secured, and by the end of the month the Japanese had been driven away from the coast and were bottled up in a small, mountainous area by the two brigades. By now many of the units of the Australian division were down to half strength or less.

"The final action of this campaign [was] typical in so many respects—short, sharp periods of fighting; dogged defense by the Japanese; bitter platoon and company actions over pieces of ground that lacked any kind of significance except for the troops actually on them," an officer reported. "When news of the Japanese surrender came through it was greeted very quietly by the veterans of the 6th Division, the only emotion unspeakable relief."

Notices in Japanese were placed around the perimeter of the Japanese positions telling them of the capitulation and inviting them to surrender. None did.

In 10 months the 6th Division had advanced some 62 miles along the coast, killing about 9,000 Japanese and taking 269 prisoners. The division lost 442 killed and 1,141 wounded. More than 16,000 were admitted to the hospital, mostly with malaria, skin diseases, dysentery, scrub typhus, and dengue fever.

General MacArthur had been planning a campaign on Borneo for some time. Control of the island, the third largest in the world, with its large deposits of oil and its harbors and airfields, would be useful as a springboard for a campaign to free the Dutch East Indies. The Joint Chiefs were lukewarm toward MacArthur's proposal for the Borneo operation but gave their approval when he told them that failure to carry it out would "produce grave repercussions with the Australian government and people."

Little was known about Borneo, 830 miles long by 600 at its widest, except that about 30 percent of it was, before the war, under British protection while the rest of it was included by the Dutch in their East Indies empire and that oil was produced at some places on the coast. A few rubber plantations were scattered throughout the island.

The Japanese brought hundreds of prisoners of war and civilian internees from Malaya, Singapore, and the Dutch East Indies to prison camps on Borneo. It was also known that in 1943 some 2,500 Australian and British prisoners were brought from Singapore to build an airfield at Sandakan on the northeast coast. When the airfield was completed, the surviving prisoners were marched into the interior. When the war ended only six of the prisoners, who had escaped into the jungle, were found alive.

The veteran First Australian Corps was to be used for the campaign. It consisted of the 7th Division, the 9th Division, and a reinforced 26th Brigade group. It was commanded by Lt. Gen. Sir Leslie Morshead, who had commanded the 9th Division during the siege of Tobruk and the Battle of El Alamein. The corps

would be commanded directly by MacArthur's headquarters, bypassing Blamey.

Using the corps on Borneo was MacArthur's way of excluding it from the Philippine operation. The 7th Division would capture Balikpapan, the 9th Division would attack at Brunei Bay, and the 26th Brigade Group would land at Tarakan. This brigade group included two battalions of pioneers, a commando squadron, a squadron of tanks, and an antiaircraft regiment, in total 12,000 troops.

In anticipation of an invasion of Borneo, in early 1945 agents of the AIB and Z Special Force were operating there, reporting shipping movements, establishing intelligence networks, and locating targets for bombing. Their activities were stepped up. Five AIB/Z Force teams were landed around the coast of North Borneo, and three teams dropped by parachute in Sarawak to gather information on Japanese forces and dispositions and arm and train guerrillas. Some of these were Special Operations Executive agents sent from Britain and given jungle training in Australia, and some of the teams were reinforced with Australian commandos who were parachuted in.

Both: Australian War Memorial

The Australian 9th Division was shipped from Morotai to Brunei Bay in LSTs and smaller LCIs, each craft carrying double the numbers of soldiers it normally carried. It was a horrendous journey with hardly any of the basic facilities required by the troops, and luckily their landing at Brunei Bay on June 10 met with only minor resistance.

The fighting began a week after the landing. The Japanese had withdrawn into a tangle of ridges covered with thick rain forest and fringed by swamps. Here they would stand and fight.

An attack by tanks was repulsed, and so for the next five days the feature was bombarded by 140 tons of artillery shells, by naval gunfire, and bombing and strafing. On the morning of June 21 the Australians attacked again. Two companies of the 2/28th Battalion supported by tanks and flamethrowers quickly overran the Japanese, whose numbers had been depleted by the constant bombardment.

The Australians quickly pushed inland and met little opposition. Hugely outnumbered, the Japanese disappeared into the hills, and the Australians called a cease-fire. Australian losses in north Borneo were 114 killed and 221 wounded. The Japanese lost about 1,500 dead.

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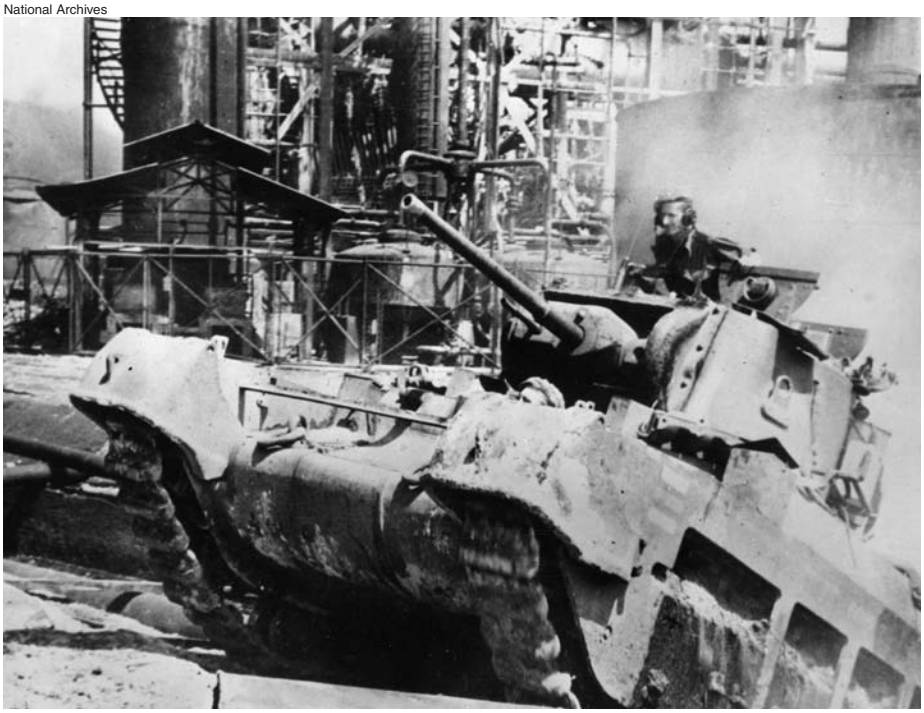

A tank of the Australian 7th Division traverses difficult terrain on the island of Borneo as a destroyed oil refinery looms in the background. The rich natural resources of the East Indies were a primary objective of the Japanese early in World War II. LEFT: Private Leslie Starcevich (left) and Lieutenant Thomas Derrick were two Australian soldiers who distinguished themselves in jungle combat against the Japanese. Derrick received a posthumous Victoria Cross for his gallantry.

Tarakan Island had two oil fields producing some 500,000 tons a day and was defended by over 2,000 Japanese soldiers. On April 30, the day before the main landing at Tarakan, the commando squadron and a battery of artillery of the 26th Brigade Group were landed on Sadua Island between Tarakan and Lingkas on the main island of Borneo, where the guns gave protection for a party of engineers as they made gaps in the beach obstacles. The next day, preceded by bombing and shelling, the two battalions of the group landed on the beach at Lingkas with the port of Tarakan town three miles inland.

They met with little opposition. Some fierce fighting developed over the next few days, but by the fifth day after the landing Tarakan airfield had been secured. The Japanese fell back to a series of strongpoints in the north and east from which they could launch raids on the airfield. They had to be eradicated.

Lieutenant Thomas Derrick's platoon was involved in an attack on two strongly defended knolls. A number of his soldiers were dead, others wounded, and he himself was wounded by five machine-gun bullets in his body. Still, he continued directing the attack until the knolls were knocked out. He died in the hospital. Derrick was already a legend, receiving an award for bravery in North Africa and the Victoria Cross for valor and promotion from the ranks to lieutenant for leadership at Sattelberg in New Guinea. His death was a blow felt throughout the group.

Another legendary soldier of the campaign was Private Leslie Starcevich, a Bren gunner, veteran of Syria, Tel el Aisa, El Alamein, and New Guinea. His platoon was charged with taking out three Japanese machine-gun posts, one behind the other on the slope of a hillock before the town of Beaufort.

As the platoon readied for the attack, Starcevich stood up and walked calmly toward the first machine-gun post through a hail of bullets. He silenced the post; then, in full view of the Japanese who continued to shoot at him, he reloaded his Bren and walked ahead to wipe out the remaining two machine-gun posts. Most of the platoon witnessed it but could not believe that, of the hundreds of bullets fired at Starcevich, none had hit him. Beaufort was taken with little opposition the next day.

While action was going on around Beaufort, one battalion marched 70 miles south along the coast to Seria. Seria was taken after a short fight, but the Japanese had set the town's 37 oil

Continued on page 74

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

Masterful Defense *at* Seelow Heights

A CAREFULLY CRAFTED GERMAN PLAN CAUGHT AN OVERCONFIDENT ADVERSARY OFF GUARD AT THE GATES OF BERLIN, BUT OVERWHELMING ODDS ENSURED A RUSSIAN VICTORY. BY WILLIAM E. WELSH

THE OFFICERS HUDDLED IN A CANDLELIT CELLAR IN AN ABANDONED farmhouse midway between the Oder River and Berlin. Outside the walls could be heard the steady pounding of artillery explosions and the whoosh of rockets to the east.

Sixty-year-old General Helmuth Weidling, a holder of the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords, listened to reports of the three-day-old battle from his subordinates. Weidling's LVI Corps had been tasked with the most difficult assignment given to any of the four corps in the German Ninth Army: defend the most direct approach to Berlin against Vasily Chuikov's reinforced Eighth Guards Army.

On April 15, 1945, one day before Marshal Georgi Zhukov launched his First Belorussian Front against the Ninth Army defending the middle Oder, Weidling had arrived to take command of 15,000 soldiers in three divisions tasked with holding the high ground behind the village of Seelow against vastly superior Soviet forces. It was a tall order but one befitting a veteran of campaigns in Poland, France, and Russia.

The reports were as dark as the unlit corners of the basement. The most ominous and disturbing was that delivered by Colonel Hans Wohlermann, Weidling's artillery commander. Having returned from the front, now no more than a few kilometers to the east, Wohlermann told how soldiers from the 9th Parachute Division "were running away like madmen" and that not even the threats of officers with drawn pistols could compel the frightened troops to stand their ground. The paratroopers were "a threat to the course of the whole battle," Wohlermann said. Even the arrival of the crack 11th SS "Nordland" Panzergrenadier Division from Third Panzer Army the night before could not stem the steady unraveling of the German front.

Earlier that day, Weidling had received several high-level visitors from Berlin, one of whom was Hitler Youth leader Artur Axeman, who was half Weidling's age. When the zealous, one-armed youth leader offered to commit the last of his teenage warriors to the final defense of the Third Reich, Weidling could not control his anger. "You cannot sacrifice these children for a cause that is already lost," he seethed.

To Weidling's disgust, his order prohibiting the boys from entering the battle was not heeded, and many of the underage soldiers perished that afternoon fighting in a belt of forest not far from Weidling's headquarters. The imminent destruction of the Ninth Army and the tragic death of the boy soldiers were part of Adolf's Hitler's quest to bring about, along with his own demise, the destruction of Germany and its people.

The situation facing the Germans on the Eastern Front at the outset of 1945 was grim. The Germans had bled heavily for their folly in invading Russia in the summer of 1941 and had suffered staggering losses in men and equipment after countless retreats and rearguard actions following the Battle of Stalingrad. In

En route to combat at the Seelow Heights, a JSU-152 self-propelled heavy assault gun of the 1st Polish Division, attached to the Red Army, crosses the Oder River during the Soviet drive toward the German capital at Berlin. Combat engineers had laid the pontoon bridge across the waterway.

contrast, the Russians boasted at the outset of 1945 that they had finally driven the Germans out of Mother Russia. As the Russians prepared to clear Poland of the enemy and invade the German heartland, the odds were overwhelmingly in their favor.

On January 12, Soviet leader Josef Stalin unleashed the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts with a combined strength of 2.2 million troops and more than 4,500 tanks against the battered and bruised German Army Group Center. Russian armored columns pierced the German lines and raced west, leaving follow-on forces to execute mop-up operations. Soviet armor averaged 25 miles a day, and Soviet infantry nearly 18 miles a day. Pockets of Germans fought desperately as they began a general retreat toward the Oder River.

In a fortnight, the Soviets had cleared Poland and reached the Oder. During the Vistula-Oder offensive, Hitler had turned a deaf ear on the warnings of General Heinz Guderian, chief of the Army general staff and commander of Eastern Front forces, dispatching against his advice two panzer corps away from the Oder line to protect Hungarian oilfields. In Guderian's mind, Hitler's strategy was both ignorant and foolhardy.

On January 25, as the remaining German forces in Poland and East Prussia were fighting for their survival, Hitler renamed three of his army groups on the Eastern Front caught up in the Vistula-Oder offensive. Henceforth, Army Group North trapped in Courland became Army Group Courland, Army Group Center in East Prussia became Army Group North, and Army Group A in Lower Silesia became Army Group Center. To cover Pomerania and the Baltic corridor, Hitler established Army Group Vistula, composed of untested reserves, and placed it under the command of SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, who lacked the skills necessary to direct troops in battle. Hitler also redrew the boundary between Army Group Center and Army Group Vistula, giving the lat-

ter the German Ninth Army commanded by General Theodor Busse.

On January 31, Zhukov's forces reached the Oder near Kustrin and rushed troops across the river to establish bridgeheads on the west bank. The bridgehead north of Kustrin was established by Col. Gen. Nikolai Berzarin's Fifth Shock Army, while the bridgehead south of Kustrin was carved out by forces belonging to Col. Gen. Vasily Chuikov's Eighth Guards Army. Complicating the situation for Zhukov were two German bridgeheads remaining on the east bank of the Oder at Kustrin and Frankfurt-an-der-Oder.

To solidify their bridgeheads, the Russians dragged artillery across the frozen Oder to positions in the soft ground of the Oderbruch. The wide floodplain stretched for 60 kilometers

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As the Red Army advanced westward in March 1945, Soviet troops were sometimes required to pause and deploy their weapons against pockets of German resistance. Here a Soviet crew fires a 45mm antitank gun. German resistance stiffened, and a major battle took place at Seelow Heights on the outskirts of Berlin.

along the west bank from Bad Freienwalde to Frankfurt-an-der-Oder. The Oderbruch was between 10 kilometers to 15 kilometers wide and was bordered on the west by the Seelow escarpment, which formed the eastern edge of a wide plateau and stood 40 to 60 meters above the floodplain. The following day Chuikov's men seized the only high ground in the Oderbruch when they occupied the Reitwein Spur. With the Russians on the west bank, Hitler ordered the organization of new infantry divisions for the Ninth Army formed from Luftwaffe ground units, guard and police battalions, and Volkssturm.

In mid-February, the Germans counterattacked from Stettin with three panzer corps, hoping to take advantage of the gap between Zhukov's and Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky's fronts. Operation Sonnenwende failed largely because a spell of warm weather turned to impassable mud the ground over which the German armor would attack. A bad situation turned worse for the Germans when Stalin, realizing that Zhukov's right flank was vulnerable, called off a full-scale attack across the Oder toward Berlin until Pomerania had been cleared.

Hitler, who mistakenly believed the Russians would launch their main offensive toward Prague, ordered the transfer of three panzer divisions from Army Group Vistula to Army Group Center. On February 18, Marshal Ivan Konev's First Ukrainian Front reached the Neisse River, thus securing Zhukov's left flank. The stage was now set for Zhukov and Rokossovsky to clear German forces east of the Oder from Pomerania.

Soviet operations to secure Pomerania would delay the drive on Berlin until early April. Zhukov temporarily diverted six of his nine armies north to clear West Pomerania, while Rokossovsky focused on East Pomerania. Working in tandem, the two fronts were able to isolate the German Second Army and Third Panzer Army from the Oder forces.

Guderian had repeatedly urged Hitler, to no avail, to evacuate Army Group Courland by sea and rescue the remnants of Army Group North trapped in the East Prussian fortress of Konigsberg. The ongoing feud between the Führer and his chief of staff got worse as the days dragged on and more German forces stationed along the Baltic were surrounded and annihilated.

As part of a reorganization of frontline forces, the 25th Panzergrenadier Division withdrew on March 22 from a key position it held maintaining the supply corridor to Kustrin before its replacement unit was in position. As a result, the Soviets completed their encirclement of the Kustrin garrison. Following an unsuccessful attempt to relieve the fortress on March 27, the garrison successfully managed to escape through enemy lines three days later. At odds with each other over the defense of the Oder line, Hitler and Guderian argued again the following day about the Kustrin debacle, and, as Guderian prepared to leave, Hitler instructed him to take a leave of absence for health reasons. Guderian was succeeded as chief of staff by Hitler loyalist, General Hans Krebs.

As one of his last actions before he was relieved, Guderian persuaded Himmler to resign as leader of Army Group Vistula so that a more competent commander might oversee the defense of the most direct route to Berlin. Himmler's successor was an unassuming, decorated practitioner of defensive warfare who had ensured the survival of the German Fourth Army against repeated Russian counterattacks following the bungled drive on Moscow in 1941. Called Unser Giftzwerg, meaning tough little bastard, by those who served under him during those grim days, General Gotthardt Heinrici was a recipient of the Knights Cross with Swords and Oak Leaves who preferred low-cut boots, leggings, and a sheepskin coats to the jackboots and overcoats sported by more preening German generals.

Bracing for the inevitable Soviet assault were the two armies that constituted Heinrici's Army Group Vistula. General Hasso von Manteuffel's Third Panzer Army held the lower Oder, while the four corps belonging to Busse's Ninth Army had the difficult assignment of blocking the direct route to Berlin along the middle Oder. The reconstituted and new divisions that made up each of the four corps had no previous experience fighting together, nor did the divisional commanders have experience working with the headquarters staffs that would direct them in the upcoming battle. The Ninth Army deployment from north to south was CI Army Corps, LVI Panzer Corps, XI SS Panzer Corps, and V SS Mountain Corps.

The two sides skirmished in the first week of April as the Soviets continued to construct railroads through Poland over which to move reinforcements and supplies necessary to sustain the planned attack across the Oder. On April 4, Heinrici drove into Berlin to confer with Hitler on the Oder defenses. Having lost several divisions that Hitler had transferred south to Army Group Center, Heinrici beseeched Hitler for additional forces.

In an effort to curry Hitler's favor, Himmler, Reichsmarshal Hermann Göring, and Admiral

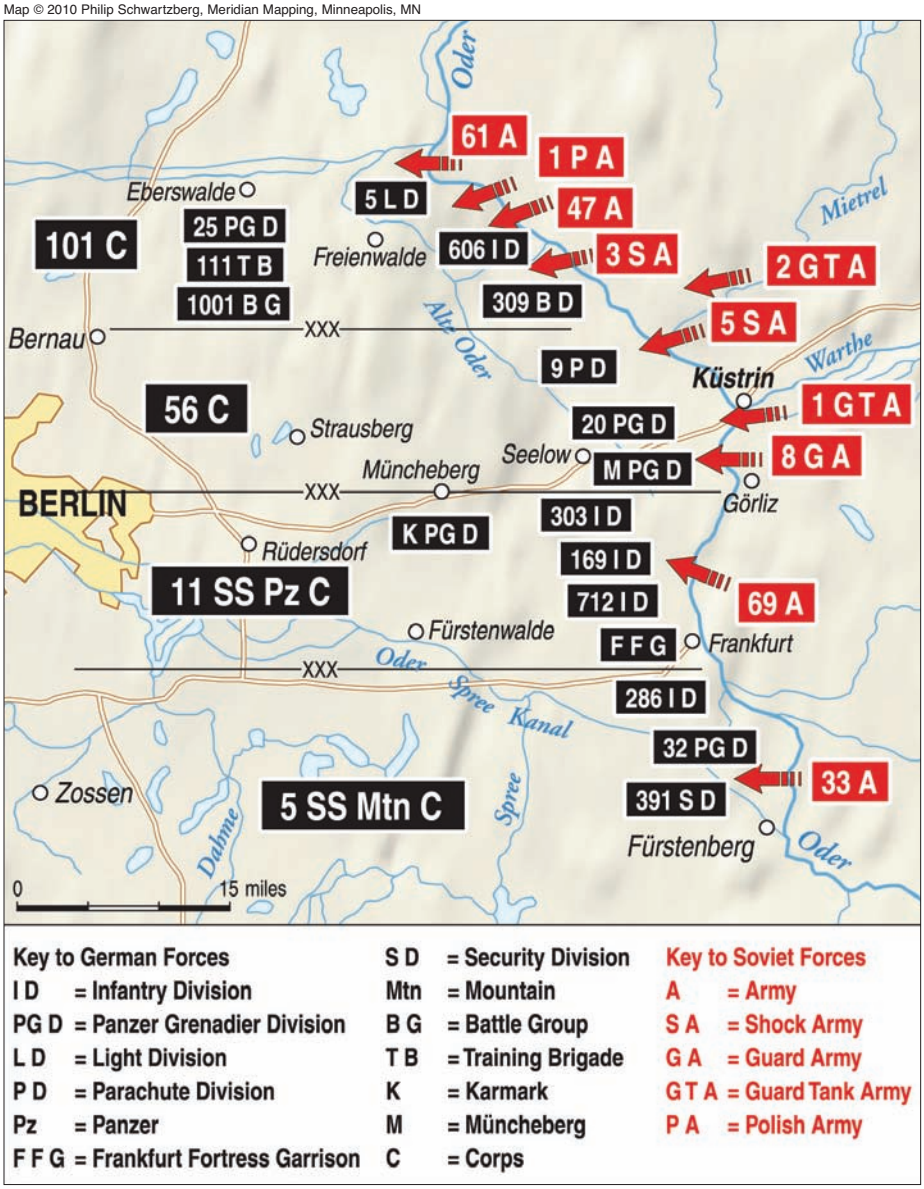
Karl Dönitz all stepped forward to pledge what amounted on paper to upward of 100,000 additional soldiers from their respective commands for Heinrici's army. But raw troops of the kind offered did not appease the seasoned commander. Hoping to get a few more experienced troops, Heinrici received permission to remove one-third of the 14,000 troops manning the Frankfurt Fortress and deploy them in critical sectors such as Seelow Heights. In the end, Heinrici received about 35,000 untrained Luftwaffe troops and sailors transferred to ground combat.

The Ninth Army's total strength at the outset of the battle was about 84,000 men organized into 14 divisions and the Frankfurt garrison. Another 60,000 Volkssturm troops were stationed in and around Berlin, and they would be fed piecemeal into the battle as it developed. Backing the troops were 512 tanks, 243 self-propelled guns, 340 pieces of regular artillery, and more than 300 antiaircraft guns that would serve in the role of tank killers. Distributed in an antitank belt that stretched from Mullrose in the south through Seelow and north to Neutrebbin were five regiments of the 23rd Flak Division.

To ensure that the Ninth Army would be able to prevent an armored breakthrough similar to what occurred during the disastrous retreat through Poland, Heinrici devised a complex defense-in-depth strategy for which he received Hitler's approval. The Germans constructed three defensive positions, each 10 kilometers wide, that served various purposes. Each of the defensive positions contained several lines that offered protection and a rallying point to retreating troops. The purpose of the layered defense was to slowly wear down enemy resources and establish rallying points for counterattacks.

The first position stretching back from the forward edge of the battlefield contained mines, trenches, and antitank ditches. The second position, which was the most heavily fortified of the three, contained more trenches, artillery emplacements on reverse slopes, and interlocking strongpoints. The third position contained more antitank ditches and tank obstacles to thwart enemy armor and prevent an armored breakout. The first and second lines of the second position were known as the Hardenberg-Stellung and Stein-Stellung, respectively. The entire third position was known as the Wotan-Stellung.

To ensure German frontline troops survived the artillery bombardment that typically preceded a major Soviet attack, Heinrici planned to withdraw the men from forward positions the night before the attack and have them wait out the bombardment nearly 10 kilometers behind the front line.



Against overwhelming odds, German forces concentrated at the Seelow Heights in a last-ditch effort to block the Red Army advance on Berlin. Despite fierce resistance, the Germans were eventually forced to retreat. Within two weeks of the breakthrough by the 1st Belorussian Front, Hitler was dead.

Stalin chose April 16 as the start date for Operation Berlin in which Zhukov's and Konev's fronts would attack west simultaneously. If everything went well, the Soviet leader hoped to capture Berlin by April 22, Lenin's birthday. Zhukov, who issued final orders to his front commanders four days before the operation was scheduled to begin, planned to start the battle in the darkness and use 143 searchlights transported from the antiaircraft defenses of Moscow to illuminate lines of advance for the attacking infantry.

The final plan of attack for the First Belorussian Front called for three thrusts toward Berlin. The Eighth Guards and Fifth Shock Armies would make a massive single thrust directly toward the German capital through Seelow Heights, while the Third Shock and Forty-seventh Armies would make two secondary thrusts through the German defenses that paralleled the Alte Oder. The First Belorussian Front's armored and artillery assets would be consolidated to support the three major attacks. The Soviets positioned nearly 600,000 troops in the Kustrin bridgehead alone. The First Belorussian Front had 3,100 tanks and self-propelled guns and 17,000 artillery pieces.

The Soviets launched limited attacks from the northern bridgehead opposite Wriezen and the Kustrin bridgehead on April 14. These reconnaissance-in-force attacks were intended to locate German strongpoints and artillery emplacements and also to further expand the

two large bridgeheads opposite Wriezen and Kustrin. Although a limited attack against Seelow was repulsed, the 20th Panzergrenadier Division suffered substantial casualties in the fight, and this forced the Germans to bring forward the Muncheberg Panzer Grenadier Division to reinforce that sector of the line. In anticipation of the pending Soviet assault, Hitler issued an order of the day on April 14 to the German soldiers on the Eastern Front exhorting them to stand fast to protect their homes and families from the Bolsheviks.

The Russian guns opened up at 3 AM on April 16. The eastern sky flashed orange as 9,000 artillery pieces blasted the German positions atop Seelow Heights and along the Alte Oder to the north. The force of the Russian guns shook the ground, "like a ship in a force 10 gale," wrote Friedhelm Schoneck, who was stationed with the 309th "Berlin" Infantry Division about 15 kilometers north of Seelow. A short time before the attack was scheduled to begin, Zhukov joined Chuikov in his bunker halfway up the Reitwein Spur. The two commanders watched the attack unfold from an observation post atop the ridge.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

ABOVE: The versatile 88mm cannon was originally intended as an antiaircraft weapon, but the Germans found other uses for it, particularly in an antitank role. Here an 88mm gun bombards the Soviet bridgehead across the Oder River east of Berlin. OPPOSITE: On April 18, 1944, a Soviet T-34 medium tank crosses marshy ground on top of tree trunks placed by engineers to facilitate the armored advance. The T-34 proved to be the finest tank of World War II.

Heinrici expected the attack to occur on April 16 based on interrogations of captured Russian soldiers and had taken the necessary steps to shield the Ninth Army from the full fury of the Russian artillery. For the most part, the German infantry stationed in forward positions had pulled back to the third line of the first position the night before and, therefore, survived the rain of Soviet shells. Afterward, Zhukov was roundly criticized by his fellow generals for sticking to the doctrine of using a lengthy preliminary artillery bombardment.

"As usual, we stuck to the book and by now the Germans know our methods," said Colonel General Vasili Kuznetsov, commander of the Third Shock Army. "They pulled back their troops a good eight kilometers. Our artillery hit everything but the enemy."

After 20 minutes, the Russians illuminated the battlefield with their gigantic searchlights. At that point, the Russian artillery switched to a rolling barrage as the infantry rose to their feet and advanced across the floodplain. Further west, throughout the Oderbruch, Soviet heavy bombers and ground attack aircraft pounded German towns and villages that might serve as strongpoints. The bombers managed to destroy an ammunition train with 17,000 artillery shells near Furstenwalde and three 280mm railroad guns stationed on a track behind Seelow. The Soviets flew more than 6,500 sorties against German positions on the first day alone.

Six armies were assigned to assault German positions north of Reichsstrasse 1, while the other four moved against German forces south of the autobahn. From the expansive Kustrin bridgehead, Col. Gen. Nikolai Berzarin's Fifth Shock Army advanced on the right, while Chuikov's Eighth Guards Army advanced on the left. Their opponents were the left and right wings, respectively, of SS General Mathias Kleinheisterkamp's XI SS Panzer Corps.

The Russian advance was no better than a crawl as the infantry had to negotiate soft ground, large shell craters, and countless dikes that laced the Oderbruch. While the infantry pushed forward with grim determination, Russian tanks advancing in support were bottled up on the few roads that traversed the floodplain. Moving the armor off the roads onto the soft ground was pointless, as the Soviets soon found out. Even the Soviet antitank crews had difficulty pushing their guns forward to support the infantry. As for the searchlights, they illuminated large Soviet infantry formations, providing German artillery crews with easy targets.

On the first day of the fight, the Sixty-first Army and the First Polish Army had to cross the icy waters of the Oder and attempt to establish bridgeheads from which to launch attacks on the German lines. Opposing them were three divisions of the CI Corps led by General Wilhelm Berlin. Two of the German infantry divisions, the 309th and 606th, were composed almost entirely of police, trainees, and officer candidates. However, the 5th Light Division under General Freidrich Sixt contained predominantly veterans. Sixt's troops held the front together by aggressively counterattacking and containing the Sixty-first Army's bridgehead.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Forty-seventh Army attacked from the advantage of an established bridgehead opposite Wriezen. Despite the presence of countless water obstacles in that area, the Forty-seventh had advanced nine kilometers from its bridgehead by day's end. As the fighting heated up on the southern edge of the CI Corps sector, Berlin sent reserve forces Kampfgruppe Nachte and a portion of the 560th SS Tank Hunting Battalion into the fray. When nearly two dozen Russian tanks attempted to breach CI Corps lines near Wriezen, they were turned back by low-silhouetted Hetzer self-propelled tank destroyers.

Just south of Wriezen, the Soviet Third Shock Army also made considerable progress on the first day against the weak 309th Infantry Division, comprising guard and trainee units who would thoroughly exhaust their ammunition in protracted fighting on the first day. As the 309th fell back before the Soviet onslaught of infantry and armor, Hitler gave permission for the crack 25th Panzergrenadier Division, which had been shifted by rail from Alsace in January, to go to its support. After suffering repeated attacks throughout the day on its position in the rear, the 25th pulled back south of Wriezen at dusk to regroup.

From the large bridgehead north of Kustrin, the Fifth Shock Army launched a massive assault on General Bruno Brauer's 9th Parachute Division, which was attached to Wei-

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

dling's LVI Panzer Corps. After a series of counterattacks that achieved little, at midday the parachute troops fell back to a railway embankment, where they were able to temporarily check the enemy advance. After a two-hour firefight in the early afternoon, the Soviets gained the embankment and the fighting spread to the Werbig railway station. Just west of the station, the Germans had parked a train with five flatcars loaded with Tiger tanks that had no fuel for independent action. The immobile tank crews and the flak gunners in the sector knocked out nearly 90 Russian tanks by the end of the day. The Werbig station changed hands several times before the Russians finally gained control of the rubble.

The initial objective of Chuikov's Eighth Guards Army was to clear the Oderbruch in front of Seelow Heights in preparation for an assault on the heights themselves. Backed by six tank and four self-propelled gun regiments, the Russians in that sector faced three German divisions guarding the approaches to the heights. In the center was the heavily armored Muncheberg Panzergrenadier Division commanded by Maj. Gen. Werner Mummert. On the left was the 20th Panzergrenadier Division led by Colonel Georg Scholze, and on the right was the 303rd Doberitz Infantry Division led by Colonel Hans Wolfgang Scheunemann.

To blunt the Soviet armor pointed at Seelow Heights, the Germans were relying on the 1st Battalion of the Muncheberg Panzergrenadier Division, which boasted 31 Panther and Tiger tanks. In addition, the 303rd was strengthened by four artillery batteries, three of which contained dreaded 88mm guns in the tank-killer mode. Although manned by boys younger than regular military age, the crews were supervised by veteran noncommissioned officers. Two self-propelled gun brigades also were ready to assist in blunting the Soviet advance.

From the Reitwein Spur, Zhukov observed the advance with clear disgust. The Russian marshal fumed and paced throughout the day, frequently berating Chuikov for his soldiers' slow advance. At 3 PM, nearly 12 hours after the Soviet attack, Zhukov phoned Stalin to apprise him of the situation. Stalin rebuked Zhukov for underestimating the strength of the German position at Seelow and chided him that Konev, commanding the First Ukrainian Front, had crossed the Neisse River at daybreak and already advanced 10 kilometers into the German lines.

"Things have started more successfully for Konev," said Stalin.

The news of his rival's success was a bitter pill for Zhukov to swallow. Eager to breach the German position, Zhukov altered his original plans following the phone call to allow armor from the First Guards Tank Army behind Chuikov's men and the Second Guards Tank Army behind Berzarin's men to try to punch a hole in the German lines. In response to the front commander's orders, the Guards tanks advanced with hatches closed, signaling they did not wish to cooperate with the infantry. Rather than improving the situation, the confusion on the battlefield became even greater as the Guards' armor forced the infantry's trucks and artillery off the roads and into the marshland. This not only interrupted communications between coordinated infantry operations but also deprived the infantry of the artillery support necessary to reduce enemy strongpoints.

By late afternoon, the Soviets had cleared the German forward positions and reached the outskirts of Seelow, but not without losing as many as 50 tanks to the fearsome Panthers and Tigers. Fighting was particularly heavy on the German right flank where the 303rd fell back in the face of tenacious Soviet attacks. Unsure that his troops could hold the line, Scheunemann requested assistance from the XI Corps reserve. In response, he received immediate support in the form of the 1st Company of the 502nd SS

Heavy Tank Battalion, whose Tiger IIs rumbled toward the Dolgelin railway station in the late morning. A fierce tank battle erupted, pitting a half dozen Tigers against three times as many Soviet tanks. The Tigers easily dominated the contest, transforming nearly a dozen T-34 medium tanks into smoldering wrecks.

At dusk the Germans at the base of the Seelow escarpment pulled back onto the heights that were part of the Hardenburg-Stellen. Although the Soviets captured the village from which the heights took its name, they failed to gain the escarpment, the approaches to which were guarded by camouflaged gun emplacements. Before these emplacements could be silenced, the Soviets would need to bring forward their heavy guns. Still, the Soviets estimated that in the Seelow Heights sector alone they had killed 1,800 Germans and captured another 600, which amounted to the loss of half of a division.

South of Dolgelin, the Soviet Sixty-ninth Army initially made considerable progress against the XI SS Panzer Corps' right flank. Although the 169th Division was made up of veteran troops who had served in Scandinavia, the 712th was much weaker as its ranks were filled with military cadets. When the Soviets punched a hole in the XI Corps right flank, Kleinheisterkamp sent the 2nd Company of the 502nd SS Heavy Tank Battalion and a battalion of panzergrenadiers from the Kurmark Panzergrenadier Division to stabilize the line. On the far end of the German Ninth Army's line, the fighting was much lighter than in the other sectors. The Russian Sixty-ninth and Thirty-third Armies in the southern sector deliberately bypassed the 14,000-strong Frankfurt Fortress, preferring instead to allow it to fall once it was completely surrounded.

In an effort to slow the flow of men and supplies across the Oder once the battle was under way, the Germans flew a small number of suicide attacks using Focke-Wulf Fw-190 fighter planes laden with heavy ordnance against a handful of the 32 makeshift and intact bridges used by the Soviets. In a lucky strike, one of the suicide pilots managed to sever the pontoon bridge at Zellin at dusk. The first day of the battle "was a great defensive success in view of the unequal strength of the two sides," Busse wrote afterward.

Zhukov's blunders on the first day were many. Among the most glaring were the useless pre-attack artillery bombardment, the searchlight scheme, and poor armored tactics. Stalin seethed with anger when Zhukov phoned at midnight to inform him that his troops had failed to capture Seelow Heights as planned on the first day. To punish Zhukov for his miscalculation and send a clear message to him to produce better results on the battlefield, Stalin told Zhukov that he was considering rerouting a portion of Konev's First Ukrainian Front toward Berlin. Zhukov learned shortly afterward that the Soviet leader had carried through on his threat and ordered two of Konev's tank armies to swing north toward Berlin.

The second day of the battle dawned with clear skies. Soviet Ilyushin Il-2 Shturmovik aircraft swept down on the German trenches and batteries atop Seelow Heights just after daylight. Following an artillery barrage, the Russians resumed their sluggish advance. Fearful that the Russians would break through the Ninth Army's line at either Wriezen or Seelow, Hitler ordered the veteran 25th Panzergrenadier and 18th Panzergrenadier Divisions to advance to Wriezen and Seelow, respectively, to buttress frontline forces.

As the day wore on, the 606th Infantry Division began to unravel, a development that threatened the entire northern sector. The 25th Panzergrenadier Division went into action at Wriezen to hold back lead elements of the Forty-seventh Army that sought to capture the key town. Just south of Wriezen, at Bliesdorf, the 560th SS Tank Hunting Company, which had three dozen Hetzers, helped blunt the Soviet advance by knocking out large num-

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Following their repulse of a German counterattack, Soviet infantrymen and tanks pursue the retreating enemy toward their capital in March 1945. Berlin fell to the Red Army weeks later.

bers of Russian tanks.

The advance of the Third Shock Army south of Wriezen was delayed considerably when Soviet engineers had to erect structures for tanks and vehicles to cross the Friedlander Strom Canal. Worse for the Soviets, two battalions of the 119th Panzergrenadier Regiment together with Luftwaffe trainees from the 309th Infantry Division backed by 10 Hetzers fought desperately to delay the Soviet advance from fortified positions in the village of Neutrebbin on the east bank of the Alte Oder to the southeast of Wriezen. Using *panzerfausts* and Hetzers, the Germans at Neutrebbin racked up a large number of tank kills throughout the day. The two sides fought face-to-face as opposing infantry fired on each other from parallel trenches at close range.

"We held on to Neutrebbin with our wild mob until the morning. Ivan was not able to advance a single step," wrote Schoneck of the 309th Division. The fighting continued throughout the night, and some German units fought to the last man. Those that survived withdrew before dawn to Kundersdorf west of the canal.

At the headwaters of the Alte Oder, the massive weight of the Fifth Shock Army backed by the Second Guards Tank Army forced the 9th Parachute Division to give considerable ground. The 25th and 26th Parachute Regiments clung to the villages of Neuhardenberg and Platkow but were outflanked by large formations of Soviet infantry advancing into the upland forest at Neuhardenberg. The parachute troops fell back to the fortifications of the Stein-Stellung. The fighting took its toll on the Luftwaffe support troops who had little or no formal combat training, and many formations lost the little cohesion they had in the face of the veteran Soviet forces. To the south of Neuhardenberg, two regiments from the 18th Panzergrenadiers advanced to plug the gap, taking up positions around Wulkow before the Russians could exploit their advantage.

In the Seelow sector, the Soviets launched concentrated artillery barrages on April 17 at dawn and again at 9 AM to soften enemy positions. Chuikov's 4th Guards Rifle Corps pushed with determination toward the village of Gusow on the left flank of Seelow Heights. Soviet riflemen, backed by armor, overwhelmed the inexperienced parachute regiments and worked their way behind the 90th Panzergrenadier Regiment of the crack 20th Panzergrenadier Division, forcing it to fall back. The panzergrenadiers found protection in a forest where 88mm guns held the Russian armor at bay into the afternoon.

To their immediate south, Chuikov's 29th Guards Rifle Corps, well supported by the 11th Tank Corps of Col. Gen. M.I. Katukov's First Guards Tank Army, gained the Seelow escarpment and drove the Germans out of the Hardenberg-Stellen. By nightfall the Russians had not only secured Seelow at the base of the escarpment but had also seized the village of Dierdorsdorf six kilometers west of it.

By noon on the second day, the battle directly south of Seelow had escalated considerably as the 258th Guards Rifle Corps tried to dislodge German units of the XI SS Panzer Corps from Dolgelin, which constituted the right flank of Seelow Heights. Although the remnants of the 303rd Infantry and Kurmark Panzergrenadier Divisions found themselves outflanked to the north, they stubbornly refused to withdraw, preferring instead to establish a front to the north and also to the east.

IF THE THIRD DAY OF BATTLE WAS THE CRITICAL DAY FOR THE NINTH ARMY, THEN THE FOURTH DAY WAS ONE OF RECKONING.

In an attempt to neutralize the Tiger tanks stationed around the village, the Soviets unleashed ferocious Katyusha rocket attacks on the steel monsters. Wave after wave of Russian infantry swept forward, but the Germans shifted four Panzer IV Wirbelwinds, each equipped with four 20mm antiaircraft guns, to mow down the advancing enemy riflemen. In response, the Soviets unleashed another 45-minute artillery barrage on Dolgelin at around 3 PM and ordered air strikes on the German positions. Still, the tenacious defenders at Dolgelin managed to hold out until nightfall, subsequently withdrawing to the west.

Farther south, the 69th Army made little headway against the right flank of the XI SS Panzer Corps largely because Zhukov had ordered its artillery shifted north to support the advance of Chuikov's troops. The 561st SS Tank Hunting Battalion, which had 16 Hetzers, launched determined counterattacks in an attempt to keep the Soviets from making substantial gains. The threat in the southern sector was so minimal as to allow half of SS Colonel Hans Kempin's 32nd SS January 30 Panzergrenadier Division to redeploy north to assist the hard-pressed XI SS Panzer Corps.

Heinrici had hoped to use the 18th and 25th Panzergrenadier Divisions as a concentrated counterattack force, but Hitler had undermined that effort by dispatching them to separate sectors. At the end of the day, Heinrici and his staff reviewed the situation, concluding that their chances for halting the Soviets were very thin. With the Ninth Army's forces on the left flank and center having fallen back to the Stein-Stellung and suffering substantial attrition by the end of the second day, Busse pleaded for additional reinforcements from Army Group Vistula's reserves.

In response, Hitler allowed some elements of General Fritz Steiner's III Panzer Corps stationed on the lower Oder to redeploy behind Ninth Army. The 11th SS "Nordland" and 23rd SS "Nederland" Panzergrenadier Divisions would reinforce the left flank and center of 9th Army. Those regiments of Nordland and Nederland that had sufficient fuel to make the trip started south after midnight.

The armored assets of the Nordland Division would make a substantial difference when they arrived on the battlefield the next day. Nordland's 11th SS Panzer Battalion consisted of a mix of Panzer IVs and Sturmgeschutz III self-propelled artillery, and the attached 503rd SS Heavy Tank Battalion boasted nearly a dozen Tigers and more than a half dozen Panzer IVs outfitted with flak guns. More aerial suicide attacks on the Oder crossings at the end of the second day resulted in heavy damage at Kustrin to two railway bridges that the Russians were repairing in the hope of eventually moving supplies and equipment across the river by rail.

As night descended on the battlefield on April 17, the Germans faced crises in the center and northern sectors. The collapse of the 606th Infantry near Wriezen prompted the Germans to reinforce that sector, but to the south an ominous situation developed as General Bruno Brauer's 9th Parachute Division on XI Corps' left flank was decimated by the Fifth Shock and Second Guards Tank Armies. The German death toll continued to climb precipitously on the second day with the Soviets claiming to have killed 3,200 Germans in the Seelow sector alone. The scene of heavy fighting the second day, Wriezen was engulfed in a firestorm on the night of April 17 as a result of shelling and airstrikes.

When the sun rose over the charred and cratered landscape on the third day, the Soviets still had not completely secured Seelow Heights, an objective they had hoped to secure the first day. Furious at the stout German resis-

tance, Zhukov ordered officers at all echelons of command to survey their positions from the front line and advance their artillery as far forward as possible before resuming the attack. Following a preparatory artillery bombardment and aerial ground strikes that caught some of the Nordland Division's troops moving up to the front, the Soviets resumed their attacks along the entire length of the battle line.

Throughout the third day Lt. Gen. Arnold Burmeister's 25th Panzergrenadier Division, reinforced by the 118th Panzergrenadier Regiment from the 18th Panzergrenadier Division, held the north-south axis between Wriezen and Kunersdorf against three rifle corps of Lt. Gen. F.I. Perkhorovich's Forty-seventh Army. Supporting the drive on Wriezen was Kuznetsov's Third Shock Army, which had altered its angle of advance to the northwest in an effort to capture Kunersdorf.

Lending weight to the German resistance were more than two dozen Panthers belonging to Burmeister's 5th Panzer Battalion and as many as three dozen Hetzers belonging to the 560th SS Tank Hunting Battalion. Burmeister's forces turned in a solid performance that day, but the troops were forced to withdraw several kilometers west at nightfall to a new position at Ludersdorf because of the success of the Fifth Shock Army in overrunning Brauer's parachute troops defending the left flank of Seelow Heights.

At noon on April 18, Heinrici received a phone call from Busse. "Today is the moment of crisis," Busse said. The Russians had breached the German line in several places, he explained, notably in the gap between LVI Corps and XI Corps south of Neuhardenberg and also on Seelow Heights. Lead elements of the Fifth Shock Army backed by units of the Second Guards Tank Army had advanced unopposed onto the ridgeline west of the Oderbruch after Brauer's parachute troops withdrew without orders from their positions that morning. Soviet tank columns were at that time advancing west toward Muncheberg.

Busse's call prompted Heinrici to phone Hitler and request additional reinforcements. The only remaining troops left in Berlin were several Volkssturm units. They would march the next day to the assistance of Weidling's LVI Corps.

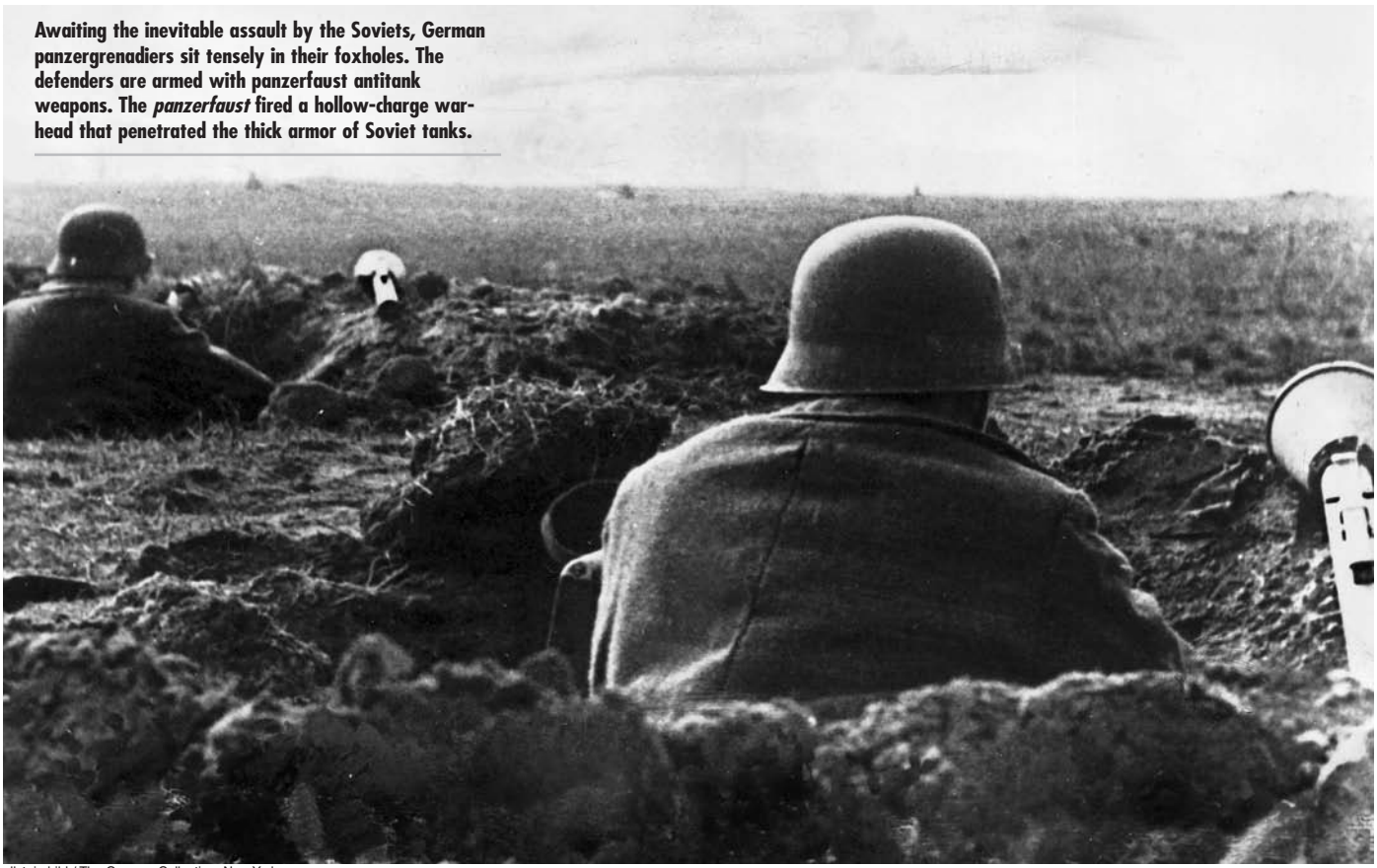
As Soviet units exploited the Seelow breach, German units still holding firm found the enemy had gotten behind them. As the parachute troops fled west through a forested belt, they eventually ran into the 11th SS Panzer Regiment of the Nordland Division, which had arrived at Reichenberg at midday.

After conferring with officers of the retreating 9th Parachute, Lt. Gen. Paul Kausch issued an order for teams of Tigers paired with tank-killing Sturmgeschutz IIIs to take up ambush positions and lie in wait for Russian armor to appear. The ensuing shootout between the 11th SS Panzer Battalion and the 503rd SS Heavy Tank Battalion against the Fifth Shock and Second Guards Tank Armies in the vicinity of Reichenberg resulted in the destruction of at least 50 Russian tanks that afternoon.

Also checking the Soviet advance in the Neuhardenberg gap was the 23rd SS "Norge" Panzergrenadier Regiment, another Nordland unit. While trying to deploy at Buckow, the Norge soldiers came under intense bombardment and were quickly outflanked by the advancing Soviets. Nearby, the 27th Parachute Regiment attempted to reform at Wulkow but Soviet artillery thwarted the effort. Survivors of the 27th Parachute and the 18th Panzergrenadier Division withdrew to Hermersdorf, a key crossroads situated in the Wotan-Stellung.

Upon the collapse of the 9th Parachute Division, Brauer had quite unrealistically asked permission to stand down the unit for 24 hours. When Göring learned of the request, he was furious. Göring phoned Heinrici shortly after 4 PM and ordered Brauer relieved of duty.

Fortunately for the Germans, the 1st Battalion of the Muncheberg Panzer Regiment had been rearming away from the front lines and returned to the outskirts of Trebnitz several



Awaiting the inevitable assault by the Soviets, German panzergrenadiers sit tensely in their foxholes. The defenders are armed with panzerfaust antitank weapons. The *panzerfaust* fired a hollow-charge warhead that penetrated the thick armor of Soviet tanks.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

miles south of Hermersdorf, where it took up a defensive position behind a railway. From there, the battalion's Panthers and Tigers knocked out several dozen Soviet tanks moving west from Seelow Heights. Southwest of Trebnitz, the 20th and Kurmark Panzergrenadier Divisions also were in retreat. Helping to stabilize the situation, Tigers from the 502nd SS Heavy Tank Battalion and Panthers from the Kurmark Division's Brandenburg Panzer Regiment destroyed large numbers of Soviet tanks advancing from Dierdorsdorf.

The sheer weight of the 8th Guards armor and infantry on the afternoon on April 18 steadily pushed back German forces in the Seelow sector. Before the end of the day, the Germans would lose a half dozen key villages north and east of Muncheberg. Despite being outflanked on both sides, the 2nd Battalion of the Kurmark Panzergrenadier Regiment continued to hold onto the village of Dolgelin against overwhelming odds throughout April 18. The regiment finally withdrew at midnight for fear of being encircled. To the south, Germans defending the line between Dolgelin and Frankfurt gave up little ground despite increased pressure.

If the third day of battle was the critical day for the Ninth Army, then the fourth day was one of reckoning. On April 19, the Soviet Third and Fifth Shock Armies supported by the Second Guards Tank Army exploited the northern breach south of Wriezen. The unraveling of the Ninth Army's line compelled Heinrici to shift his headquarters north where it would be better protected by the Third Panzer Army.

The 5th Light Division had fallen back to the Wotan-Stellung where it managed to hold out for most of the day. Unable to check the Soviet advance to its south, the 5th Light watched helplessly as large numbers of T-34s rumbled unopposed through the Wriezen breach and fanned out behind German lines. The 5th Light Division and CI Corps headquarters would withdraw during the course of the day toward Eberswalde on the Hohenzollern Canal, while the remainder of CI Corps fell back toward Bernau near the Berlin autobahn.

A chaotic situation developed as disrupted German units from the CI and LVI Corps retreated west. Having abandoned their radios, many units lost contact as each focused on its survival. West of Wriezen, the survivors of the 25th Panzergrenadier Division backed by Hetzers fought a rearguard action against the full weight of the Soviet Forty-seventh Army as they retreated into the forest west of Ludersdorf. Survivors of Weidling's LVI Corps fleeing from the Third Shock and Second Guards Tank Armies made a stand at Batzlow, and with the help of Volkssturm and Hitler Youth reinforcements they held on throughout the afternoon against determined enemy attacks. Most of the flak regiments in the Wriezen and Seelow sectors were overrun by the Soviets.

National Archives

Less than 100 miles east of Berlin, Soviet tanks race through a breach in the German lines. Infantrymen often rode atop the tanks to advance more rapidly and provide support for the armor during combat.

Without the presence of the 11th SS Nordland Panzergrenadier Division to fight a delaying action, the entire left flank of the Ninth Army would have completely disintegrated on April 19. With their morale intact, units of the Nordland Division engaged the Soviets and rallied retreating troops. However, their wide dispersal made it impossible for them to launch a concerted counterattack, much to Weidling's disappointment.

When units of Third Shock Army swept past Batzlow to the north, the Nordland's engineer and flak battalions, which were backed by Panzer IVs and Hetzers, engaged the advancing Russians near Herzhorn. As a result, a heated battle dragged on into the afternoon. Likewise, the Norge panzergrenadiers fought tenaciously against armor and infantry of the Fifth Shock Army at Pritzhagen.

Near the key crossroads of Buckow, the 24th SS "Danmark" Panzergrenadier Regiment, bolstered by a contingent of Hitler Youth committed to battle by Axeman without Weidling's approval, took refuge from Soviet air strikes in the Pritzhagen Forest while the 11th SS Armored Reconnaissance Battalion rounded up retreating survivors of the 9th Parachute and Volkssturm reinforcements in an effort to temporarily check the Soviet advance.

The Soviet T-34 tank crews remained at a safe distance and fired rounds into Pritzhagen Forest, which brought treetops and deadly splinters cascading down on entrenched Germans. A great fire broke out in the forest, and many German soldiers were burned alive. Those who survived escaped west along forest roads and paths where they regrouped after nightfall in Strausberg.

The Soviet Eighth Guards and First Guards Tank armies set out from Dierdersdorf to seize Muncheberg on the morning of the fourth day. Unbeknownst to Chuikov, the 48th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment of the 23rd SS Nederland Division, along with the divisional headquarters, had arrived during the night in the German center. By mid-morning, the Soviets had closed to within two kilometers of Muncheberg and severed communications between the German LVI and XI Corps.

Even so, the Guards Eighth rapid advance along Reichsstrasse 1 had left its left flank exposed as XI Corps forces still controlled a large swath of territory south of the highway. Taking advantage of the opportunity, the Nederland Panzergrenadiers counterattacked Russian forces near Marxdorf, seizing the high ground north of the town and recapturing flak guns lost to the Soviets the day before. However, the regiment soon found itself outflanked and withdrew west.

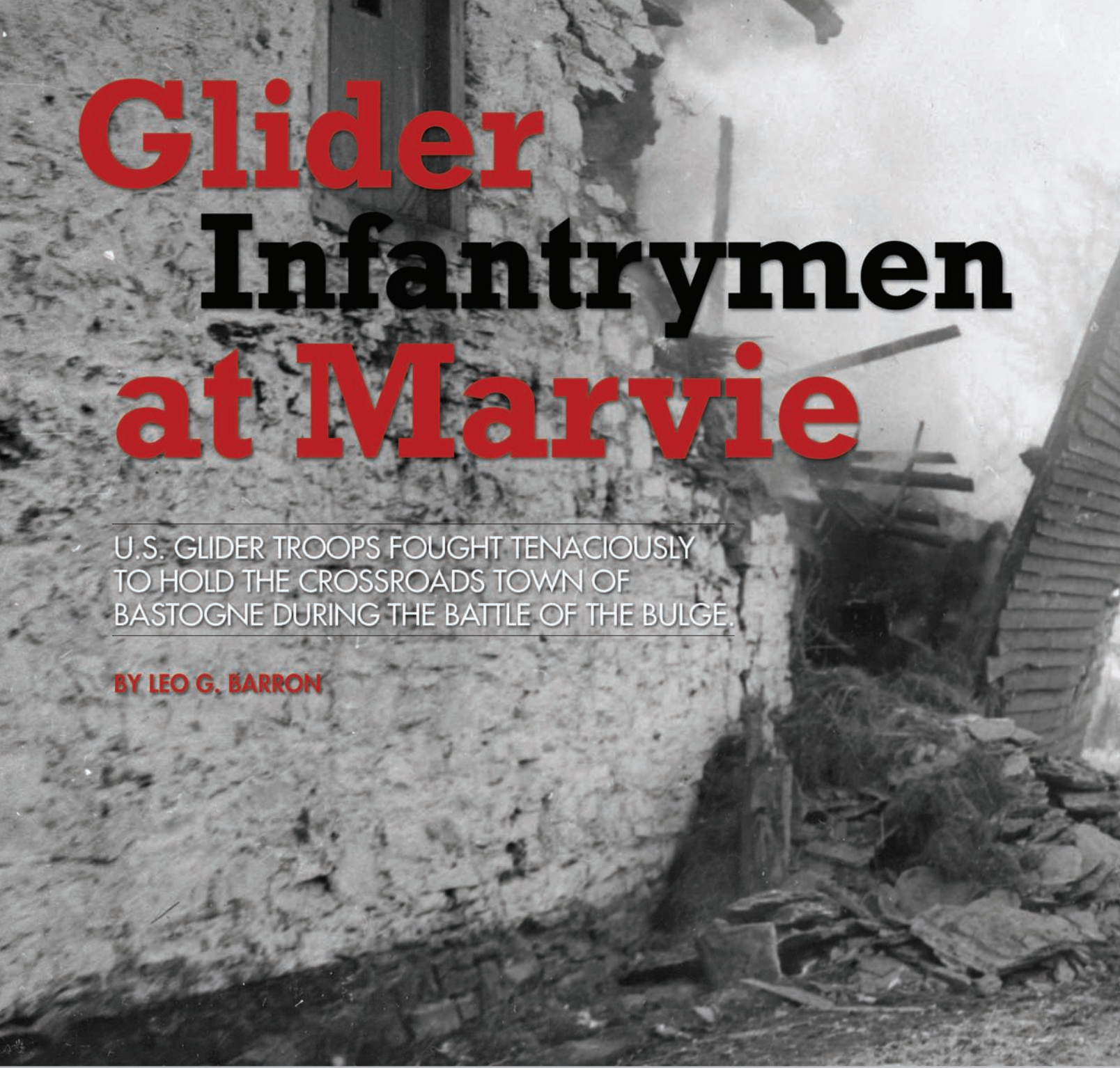
At 5 PM on April 19, the Russians attacked Muncheberg. Rather than launching a frontal assault through the antitank ditches of the Wotan-Stellung, the Russians sent small groups of infantry to outflank the Germans occupying

Continued on page 65

Glider Infantrymen at Marvie

U.S. GLIDER TROOPS FOUGHT TENACIOUSLY TO HOLD THE CROSSROADS TOWN OF BASTOGNE DURING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.

BY LEO G. BARRON



MARVIE IS A QUIET town nestled in the Ardennes region of southern Belgium. A farming village with a population of several hundred people, history has almost forgotten the town, but on one day in December 1944, Marvie lay astride a road that led to another town—Bastogne. If the German panzergrenadiers and tanks had overrun the glider infantrymen who defended Marvie, they might have taken Bastogne, and the history of the Battle of Bulge would have been radically different.

Unlike their airborne brethren, the glider infantry of the 101st Airborne Division has lived in the shadows of history. At Marvie, however, the 327th Glider Infantry showed its mettle and earned the moniker of the Bastogne Bulldogs.

On December 16, 1944, three German armies crashed through the thin American lines on the Western Front in the area known as the Ardennes Forest. The Germans' objective was the city of Antwerp, Belgium, a great seaport then in use by the Allies for the supply of their armies fighting toward the German homeland.

The Fifth Panzer Army, under the command of General Hasso von Manteuffel, had the task of securing the southern flank of the German drive to Antwerp and seizing the city of Brussels. To accomplish this mission, it would have to penetrate the American lines along the Our River and seize several crossings at the Meuse River. More important, it had to control two towns, St. Vith and Bastogne.

Running for cover as German shells explode around them, a pair of American infantrymen seek shelter in a town near Bastogne. The soldier in the foreground carries an M-1 carbine.

National Archives

Manteuffel had to make a difficult choice about Bastogne. The commander of the Fifth Panzer Army wanted Bastogne, but he was not willing to risk losing the Meuse River crossings to get it. During the preliminary operational planning, he ordered General Heinrich Luettwitz, commander of the XLVII Panzer Corps, to attempt to capture the vital town through a coup de main, using the Panzer Lehr Division, under the command of General Fritz Bayerlein. If that failed, the 26th Volksgrenadier Division would surround the town, allowing the other two panzer divisions in the corps (2nd Panzer and the Panzer Lehr) to continue their westward advance to the Meuse.

For Luettwitz the idea of leaving Bastogne in the rear, unconquered, meant greater problems later in the operation, and he strongly believed that he needed to concentrate his forces to capture the town before he could move the bulk of his corps to the west. As events unfolded, history would prove him right.

By December 21, 1944, the XLVII Panzer Corps had attempted several times to capture Bastogne, and each had failed. After a day of bitter fighting, the corps had surrounded Bastogne. Inside the town was the American 101st Airborne Division and Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division. It was clear that Luettwitz wanted to seize the town, knowing that the American paratroopers, so long as they had ammunition and food, would continue to resist his forces and disrupt his supply lines.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: An aerial view looking north shows the small village of Marvie during more peaceful times. U.S. glider troops held on at Marvie and blunted the German drive to the key crossroads town of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge. BELOW: Harsh winter weather added to the misery of the defenders of Marvie. The embattled glider troops helped the 101st Airborne Division to hold on at Bastogne, where this American soldier crouched in a foxhole, and disrupt the German timetable.

Bastogne was also an important crossroads town, and control of it could facilitate the westward movement of German forces.

Yet, Manteuffel wanted the XLVII Panzer Corps to continue its advance toward the Meuse, northwest of Bastogne. As a result, Luettwitz could commit only one reinforced Volksgrenadier division, the 26th under General Heinz Kokott, to the capture of the vital road hub.

Luettwitz decided to gamble. He sent the besieged garrison a surrender ultimatum on the 22nd. The Americans called his bluff as General Anthony McAuliffe, acting commander of the 101st Airborne, replied famously, "Nuts!"

Luettwitz faced a dilemma. He had to respond with force. Luckily, the 26th Volksgrenadier Division was not toothless. Luettwitz had authorized the transfer of one battle group from Panzer Lehr to remain with the 26th Volksgrenadier Division south of Bastogne. This was not likely a popular decision with Fritz Bayerlein, the commander of the Panzer Lehr Division. He was losing one of his maneuver regiments, the 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment, two panzer companies, and a battalion of artillery. With this force, coupled with the rest of the 26th Volksgrenadier Division, Luettwitz wanted Kokott to squeeze the noose around the neck of the American forces within the Bastogne perimeter and then penetrate it.

Kokott sensed that the best place to break though the American lines was near the southern side of the Bastogne perimeter. The 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment controlled the sector and reported that the American forces near Marvie were weak. In addition, both Kokott and Luettwitz sensed that the forces within Bastogne were not strong enough to continue their resistance if the Germans kept up the pressure. In preparation for a major attack on the night of the 23rd, Kokott and Luettwitz decided to increase the pressure around the entire Bastogne perimeter and close any potential gaps in their own encirclement of the American forces during the day.

Kokott's 26th Reconnaissance Battalion would attack Mande St. Etienne in the west, while the 77th Volksgrenadier Regiment would attack Champs and advance to the south. Meanwhile, a battle group from the 2nd Panzer Division would strike Flamierge. This would close any gaps, tie down U.S. forces in areas away from the main target, and perhaps even draw American forces away from the southeast sector.

For the main attack, Kokott chose the 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment and set the date for December 23. The 901st was relatively fresh and had not sustained serious losses in the prior few days. Next, Kokott decided to attack at dusk because the Americans controlled the skies during the day, and their fighter-bombers were very effective against tanks in the open. Moreover, by nightfall the other operations near Champs and Mande St. Etienne would be complete.

If the 901st penetrated the American defenses, Kokott could then order an all-out assault on Bastogne itself. To accomplish this, the 901st Panzergrenadier battle group had to breach the Bastogne defenses from the southeast and seize the town of Marvie in order to allow for a general attack on Bastogne. The time for its attack would be after 5 PM.

Opposing the 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment was the U.S. 2nd Battalion, 327th Glider Infantry Regiment. The acting commander was Major R.B. Galbreaith, who was the executive officer of the battalion. The original battalion

commander, Lt. Col. Roy L. Inman, had sustained injuries during an earlier attack on Marvie on December 20. The battalion held one of the most extensive sectors in the division. It extended from Marvie in the east to the Bastogne–Lutrebois Road in the west. On the eastern flank was the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, while on the western flank was the 326th Parachute Engineer Battalion.

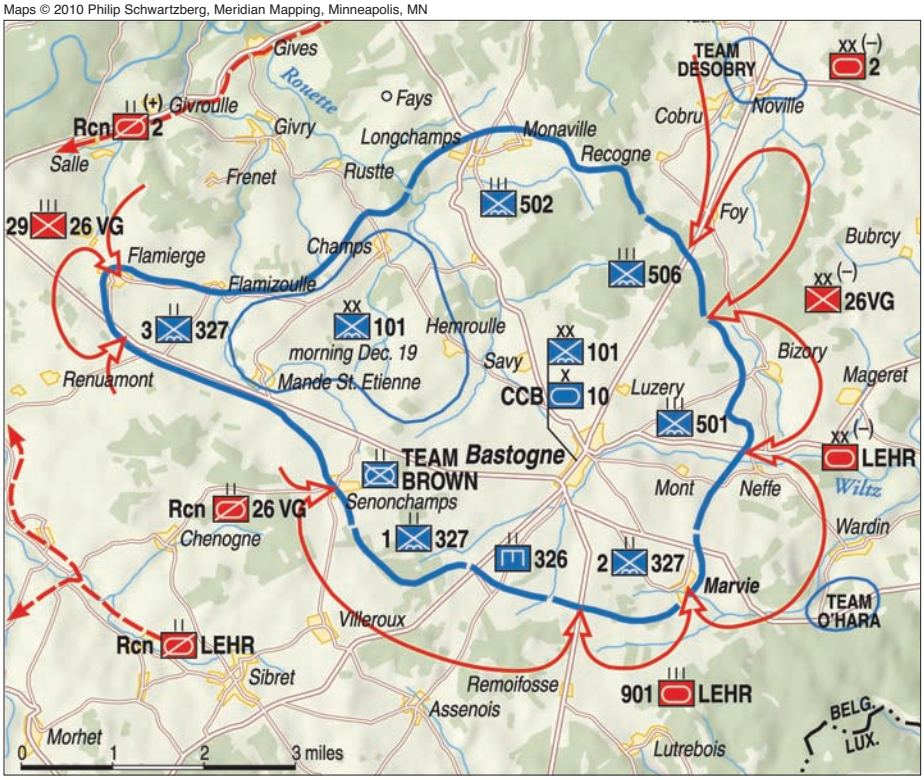
From west to east, Galbreaith arrayed his forces along the high ground that overlooked an east-west road that led to the town of Martelange to the west. His westernmost unit was a platoon from G Company. Farther to the east was F Company, which was situated between two G Company platoons. East of F Company was a G Company platoon that occupied the forward slope of Hill 500, the highest terrain in Galbreaith's sector. After Hill 500, a road bisected the battalion area of operations and ran directly north into Marvie. To the east of the road was a platoon of engineers. In addition, along the easternmost flank, was E Company.

The entire frontage for the battalion was nearly two miles, almost double the area a battalion could doctrinally defend. Colonel Joseph Harper, Galbreaith's boss and the commander of the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment, did not have much of an option. His regimental area of operations extended from Marvie in the east to Mande St. Etienne in the west, which was a distance of more than four miles. He had no choice but to stretch his forces thin to cover the entire southern approach to Bastogne.

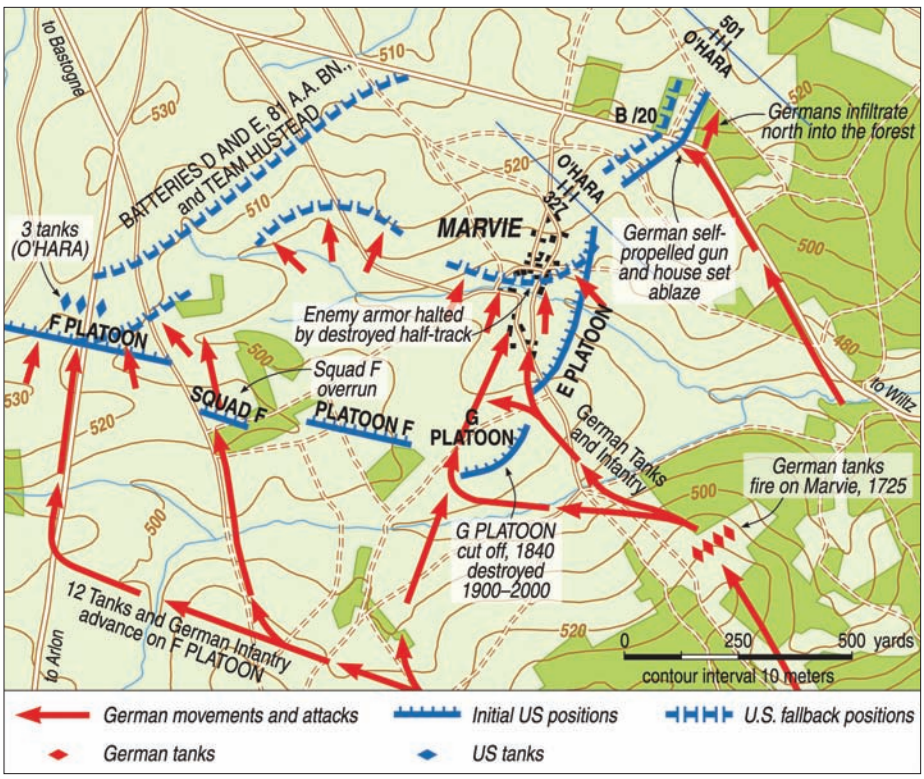
The glider men were not the only soldiers in and around Marvie. Team O'Hara, from Combat Command B, 10th Armored Division, was also in the southeastern sector of the Bastogne defenses. Lt. Col. James O'Hara commanded a combined-arms task force of medium and light tanks, mechanized infantry, and engineers. The force was mainly north of the Bastogne-Wiltz highway on a reverse slope, located to the northeast of Marvie.

O'Hara's total force comprised 19 officers and nearly 300 enlisted men, whom he divided among several armored infantry companies and attached tank platoons. More important, he owned six M4 Sherman medium tanks, a forward observer Sherman tank, one Sherman tank with a mounted 105mm howitzer, four M5A1 Stuart light tanks, and four 75mm howitzers mounted on M8 armored cars.

On the night of the 23rd, Team O'Hara had assembled a significant amount of firepower to block any German attempt to flank Marvie from the north. South of the road, O'Hara had positioned two light machine guns and one heavy machine gun. They covered a minefield



The location of Marvie in relation to the crossroads at Bastogne is clearly visible on the map above, while the night battle at Marvie on December 23-24, 1944, is detailed below.



and a roadblock. With them was one platoon of infantry from B Company, 54th Armored Infantry. To provide antitank defense, O'Hara buttressed the southern flank with three Shermans, including one with a 76mm gun that the forward observer used.

North of the road was another platoon from B Company. Like the southern platoon, O'Hara had supported it with two tanks; one had a 75mm gun, while the other was a 105mm howitzer mounted on a Sherman. Between the two platoons, O'Hara had placed a pair of outposts

to overlook the roadblock, while in the building just to the south of the road was the B Company command post. On the far northern flank were two heavy machine guns, and their principal direction of fire was to the north. Behind the primary fighting positions were O'Hara's headquarters and a heavy machine gun, which his engineers operated. Finally, far to the rear was his platoon of five light tanks, which were laagering at the main intersection where the east-west Wiltz Road crossed the north-south Marvie Road.

The terrain around Marvie favored the attackers. For observation and fields of fire, the Germans possessed the high ground to the south of Marvie, and with it they could observe most of the American perimeter in this sector. An extensive forest called the Te're dol'Hesse ran along the southern length of the Remoifosse Road, which would screen the German forces assembling for an attack on Marvie. The same woods that provided concealment would also, however, be an obstacle for the German forces and would severely restrict much of their mechanized units. Therefore, the German tanks would have to use the roads and trails until they reached the open fields.

From Hill 500 the Americans could observe German movement within the wood line. If the Germans seized it, however, they could lay enfilade fire on the American forces in Marvie to the northeast. The most likely avenue of approach for German mechanized forces would be along the north-south road that bisected the Remoifosse Road and led directly into Marvie and on to Bastogne.

Colonel Paul von Hauser, who commanded the 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment, planned his attack along several lines. The decisive operation would advance up the road that ran directly north into Marvie, while the main shaping operation would move up the highway that ran between Remoifosse and Bastogne. A second shaping operation would inch its way northward along the road that connected Wiltz and Bastogne to fix the American forces to the northeast of Marvie. If everything went according to plan, Kokott would then order his general assault once his forces had achieved a decisive penetration. The only variable was the glider men of the 327th. How would they react to Kokott's plan? He would have his answer soon.

ullstein bild/The Granger Collection, New York

ABOVE: A German Mark V Panther medium tank and a staff car pause on a wintry road during the Battle of the Bulge. German armor penetrated the thin American line in the Ardennes and nearly succeeded in reaching the port of Antwerp. OPPOSITE: An American bazooka team poses for the camera in the process of loading its weapon. In the distance, a disabled German tank, possibly a victim of the team, may be seen.

At approximately 5:15 PM, the German attack began. Tanks fired from a position in the forest hollow of Martaimont several hundred meters to the southeast of Marvie, while German machine guns opened up along the entire wood line. Their target was the men of 2nd Battalion. Their mission was to suppress the glider men in order to prevent them from responding with accurate fire against the German forces. Meanwhile, panzergrenadiers dressed in snowsuits edged their way forward from concealed positions in the wood line. Tracers crisscrossed the night sky.

Around 5:35, as the panzergrenadiers dashed and rolled from covered position to covered position, their first objective became clear to the glider men. It was the lone platoon from G Company at the base of Hill 500. The American platoon leader was Lieutenant Stanley Morrison. He had already been a POW briefly during the attack on Marvie on the 20th, but when that attack broke down the Germans left him behind in the town. For this attack, the Germans committed the 2nd and 6th Companies of the 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment to seize the vital hill and then the town. In addition to the panzergrenadiers, four tanks accompanied the infantry to provide suppression fire, while a platoon of 120mm mortars and a platoon of 75mm guns provided indirect artillery fire to secure the flanks of the attack.

The Americans immediately responded with two batteries of 75mm howitzers from the 463rd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, firing from the town of Hemroulle. Their target was the area just south of Hill 500, and by 6 PM, B and D Batteries had saturated the area with over 75 rounds of high explosives.

The other shaping operations now began in earnest. At 6 PM, 12 more tanks with accompanying infantry struck F Company near the Remoifosse-Bastogne Road. Some of the panzergrenadiers quickly overwhelmed and destroyed a squad from F Company defending a copse of trees north of the road to Remoifosse. While some of the Americans escaped, the Germans killed or captured most of the squad. In response, the B and D Batteries from the 463rd Parachute Field Artillery shifted their fire toward the intersection due south of Remoifosse. The 463rd called for additional assistance from the 377th Parachute Field Artillery, and this battalion began to fire on the same area.

Because of this massive artillery concentration and his dogged resistance, Lieutenant Leslie Smith's platoon, which overlooked the Remoifosse–Bastogne Road, temporarily blocked the German tanks. Smith's heaviest weapons were bazookas. The fighting was fierce. German tanks fired 15 rounds into Smith's command post, which subsequently caught fire. Smith refused to leave the burning building and decided to continue the fight from the basement. At one point, two German tanks closed within 50 yards of Smith's lines but were turned back. During the night, Smith's men repelled three separate attacks.

Elsewhere, however, the American main line of resistance was beginning to buckle. Despite the massive steel storm, the German panzergrenadiers inched forward, and by 6:40 they

had reached the base of Hill 500. Once there, they infiltrated the houses that surrounded the base of the hill and slowly began to envelop Morrison's platoon.

Sensing the threat, Morrison ordered some of his men on the flanks to fall back to prevent the enemy from turning him, but the Germans had fixed his platoon. Soon they would cut him off from the rest of the battalion. Believing they had neutralized the threat, some of German tanks then turned their attention toward the town of Marvie and began to hurl rounds into the village while two Mark IV tanks began to advance toward the town.

Morrison had very little to stop the clanking metal monsters. The only significant antitank weapon available was a 57mm gun mounted in a half-track. Colonel Harper had placed the gun at the base of Hill 500 to prevent German tanks from using the road that led into Marvie and then to Bastogne. Originally, a 37mm gun had been placed there, but Harper wanted something with more punch. He asked O'Hara for a tank, but O'Hara declined and offered the 57mm instead.

The gunners had just started to set up the 57mm weapon when the attack started. The driver, seeing two German tanks emerge from the wood line to the south, reversed the vehicle and started to head back toward Marvie. The men of E Company saw the approaching half-track with the two German panzers and panzergrenadiers behind it, and opened fire on the hapless half-track crew, slaughtering them. Their smoldering vehicle rolled to a stop at the southern end of Marvie near a church, blocking one of the main avenues of approach into the town.

The two German tank commanders, probably thankful that the Americans had shot up their own vehicle, quickly advanced into the southern half of Marvie after crossing the Rau de Wez Creek, but when they reached the wrecked half-track they realized they could not get around it. Therefore, they reversed their panzers and headed back to the south.

Despite the German tanks withdrawing temporarily, the end was near for Lieutenant Morrison. Panzergrenadiers were sweeping past his hill and advancing on Marvie, while some began their final assault on Hill 500 itself. Colonel Harper, worried about his platoon leader, called the lieutenant directly over the radio. "What is your situation?" the regimental commander asked.

Morrison replied that the panzergrenadiers' snowsuits provided them great concealment and made them difficult targets. Thus, the Germans were closing in on his positions almost unmolested.

National Archives

"How are you now?" Harper then inquired. "Now they are all around me. I see tanks just outside my window. We are continuing to fight them back, but it looks like they have us," Morrison reported. His voice never faltered, and instead of panic, Harper heard only courage.

"How are you now?" Harper then inquired. The answer was ominous. "Now they are all around me. I see tanks just outside my window. We are continuing to fight them back, but it looks like they have us," Morrison reported. His voice never faltered, and instead of panic, Harper heard only courage.

Harper waited three minutes and called Morrison back to get another update. Morrison answered, "We're still holding on." Then the line was cut.

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Rouzee, the regimental executive officer, then looked over at Harper and remarked, "I guess that's the end of Morrison." It was. Morrison and his platoon, together with some of the nearby engineers from C Company, 326th Engineers, were gone. Time was running out. Harper needed tanks to plug the hole left by the loss of Morrison's platoon, and he knew of one man who could provide those tanks.

Unfortunately for Harper, O'Hara had his own problems. He warned a frustrated Colonel Harper, "They are attacking me also and trying to come around my north flank."

For O'Hara, the fighting had started at 6:01 PM, when two enemy heavy machine guns opened up near his positions. They were laying suppressive fire on the town, and the 54th Armored Infantry units quickly neutralized the guns with flanking fire. Despite this small success, General Kokott and Colonel Hauser's plan was beginning to work. They initially had fixed the two flanking forces in the American lines, which meant they now could penetrate Marvie without worrying about their own flanks.

Their success did not last long. Matters started to unravel quickly on the eastern flank of the German attack along the Wiltz-Bastogne Road. A force of tanks and self-propelled guns slammed into Team O'Hara northeast of Marvie at 6:45. The lead German vehicle was a 75mm self-propelled assault gun. Behind it were Mark IV tanks with infantry trailing. The American soldiers manning the outpost on the road wisely allowed the armored vehicles to pass through the checkpoint without firing a shot. Then, as the German assault gun made the final turn around a bend in the road, a Sherman had a point-blank flank shot on the vehicle.

The Sherman rocked back as its 75mm gun bellowed. At the speed of sound, the armor-piercing shell hurtled through the air and pierced the thin armor on the side of the self-propelled gun. The wounded metal beast then exploded, showering the air with sparks. Simultaneously, the men in the outpost opened up with their machine guns, spraying the accompanying panzergrenadiers with hot lead. The night sky erupted as German tanks and machine guns replied, searching in vain for the killers.

The rounds inside the destroyed German vehicle began to cook off, causing it to burn furiously, and this light provided visibility for the German attackers. Thinking that the Americans had used a nearby farm as an ambush position, the panzergrenadiers concentrated their fire at the loft, which caused the hay inside the barn to catch fire. Soon, light from the engulfed barn and the burning gun bathed the roadblock in light, depriving the U.S. infantry and tanks of their prized concealment. The American vehicles withdrew to their alternative fighting positions a hundred yards to the west. Like the tankers, the soldiers in the outposts also fell back, but before they left they destroyed an approaching German half-track.

Meanwhile, the panzergrenadiers infiltrated the woods to flank the American lines to the north. Most of the American guns remained

silent, but one machine gunner did return fire on the northern flank, and the Germans thanked him with hand grenades. They killed the gunner and wounded his assistant gunner. Now exposed, most of the men in that trench line withdrew to the rear. With his northern flank falling back, O'Hara then called his commander, Colonel William L. Roberts, and told him that the Germans were trying to envelop his forces. Not wanting to alarm his boss too much, O'Hara next added that he thought he could still hold back the Germans. The time was 7:36 PM.

Not all of the Americans could escape by falling back. One man remained in his foxhole as the panzergrenadiers swarmed around him. As one group approached, the quick-thinking soldier slumped over, hoping that the Germans would think he was a corpse. When they reached the lip of the foxhole, the panzergrenadiers jumped in and kicked him, thinking he was dead. Then they pilfered his pockets for souvenirs while another panzergrenadier confiscated his Browning automatic rifle. After they left, the soldier could hear the Germans dragging a towed 50mm Pak 38 antitank gun into the wood line.

National Archives

From a position inside a barn near the town of Bastogne, two American soldiers are ready to confront the Germans with their .50-caliber machine gun.

Once set up, it started to fire down the road. Using it as bait, the Germans tried to draw the fire of American tanks while a German tank waited for the American tanks to reveal themselves. Unfortunately for the Germans, they did not take into account American infantrymen, who hurled several hand grenades at the gun and silenced it.

At 8 PM, the American infantrymen heard the clanking of metal treads as another German Mark IV rolled to a stop and began to fire from north of the Bastogne-Wiltz Road. Like a dazed boxer, the lead Mark IV then shot five rounds from its 75mm gun, hoping desperately to hit something as it tried to find the American tanks by observing the muzzle flashes of their guns. The chaos and din had overwhelmed the senses of the German crew. They hit only air.

Their adversaries had better luck, however. The Sherman with the 105mm howitzer and the Sherman with the 76mm gun then attempted to deliver a deathblow as they both slammed rounds into the doomed Mark IV in a deadly cross fire. The rounds from the 105mm howitzer bounced off the panzer like worthless water balloons since its gun was firing only high-explosive ammunition, but one armor-piercing round from the 76mm gun proved lethal.

Suddenly, without the support of their armored vehicles, it seemed the panzergrenadiers were facing defeat along the Bastogne–Wiltz Road. As the panzergrenadiers passed the burning buildings, they were silhouetted, and their snowsuits proved worthless in this illuminated position. As if on cue, the American machine gunners and riflemen unleashed a storm on the now-exposed Germans. Bodies crumpled as a tempest of lead peppered the hapless men and shattered their nerves. Their attack broken, the Germans began to fall back to their lines, but the Americans did not allow a respite. Forward observers began to call for fire, and artillery and mortars responded, plastering the retreating panzergrenadiers. What had begun as a promising advance had ended in a bloody repulse.

While the Americans handily had thrown back the Germans northeast of Marvie, the men in E Company and the remnants of G Company engaged in a bitter struggle inside the village. Sometime after the fall of Hill 500, the panzergrenadiers and tanks returned to Marvie. At 8 PM, Major Galbreaith rang up Colonel Harper and informed him of the deteriorating situation within Marvie. German tanks were approaching the town and panzergrenadiers had seized several homes on the south end of town.

More important, these panzergrenadiers were working their way northward toward Galbreaith and his command post. Galbreaith estimated that at least two squads, using the tanks to cover their movement, had penetrated the town. Without tanks of his own, Galbreaith knew he had no real way to overcome the firepower deficit, which meant those two squads would grow into platoons and then into companies. If the Germans occupied the town with a company, Marvie was lost. If the Germans captured Marvie, Bastogne would follow.

Galbreaith needed reinforcements now. "Can't I get tanks?" the acting commander of 2nd Battalion asked his regimental commander.

Harper replied, "I'll try." The colonel then tried to raise O'Hara over the landline. The connection was dead. Harper next attempted to use the radio, but O'Hara's connection was too weak.

The situation in Marvie could not wait for the signal officers to repair the communications network. Galbreaith warned Harper, "They are all around us now and I must have tanks."

Undeterred, Harper ordered the major, "You call O'Hara on your radio and say 'It is the Commanding General's orders that two Sherman tanks move into Marvie at once and take up a defensive position.'" For Harper, it was better to ask for forgiveness later than to ask for permission when time was critical. He did not want a repeat of Hill 500 in Marvie. To lose a platoon was a tragedy, but to lose a whole battalion would be a disaster.

By now, Harper had committed all his reserves, and he requested forces from the division headquarters. He also decided to thin some

ullstein bild/The Granger Collection, New York

On December 20, 1944, the date of an earlier German attack on Marvie, an advancing German SS armored column rolls past the blackened hulk of an American tank destroyer. German tanks harassed the glider troops defending the town of Marvie but eventually withdrew.

of his forces in other sectors so that he could shift reinforcements to plug the hole at Marvie. First Lieutenant Charles J. Roden, who commanded two platoons from B Company, 326th Engineers, received the order around 8 PM to pull them out of the line and lead them to Marvie. Roden then told his engineers to prepare to move out.

One of Roden's engineer platoon leaders, Lieutenant Robert Coughlin of 3rd Platoon, B Company, then pushed on ahead of his platoon to find a suitable place to set up his battle position, and he brought with him all the squad leaders. By now, several buildings in Marvie were on fire, providing some illumination as Coughlin mapped out his platoon's positions. While trudging through the snow in Marvie, Coughlin noticed that a small stream wound its way through the center of town along an east-west axis, and, more important, he determined that the banks were too steep for tanks to cross. Therefore, he decided to position his platoon behind the stream.

Luckily, the glider men had dug some foxholes earlier, which provided Coughlin's platoon excellent fighting positions. Using the roads and a fence that lined the north bank of the stream as fire control measures and boundaries, Coughlin arrayed his squads from west to east: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Squad. He reinforced the 1st and 2nd Squads with two machine guns each, and he placed his three bazooka crews in positions where they could cover the culverts that crossed the stream. Within a few minutes, his platoon was ready for the next German assault. By 8:30, Coughlin's commander, Lieutenant Roden, slipped the rest of B Company into Marvie after the second wave of German forces had stalled at the southern edge of the town.

Meanwhile, O'Hara responded to Galbreaith's pleas with a section of two Sherman tanks from C Company, 21st Tank Battalion. One of the tank commanders, Staff Sergeant Stan Davis, had just swept aside a German attack north of the town, and he believed his tank had destroyed a self-propelled assault gun during the chaotic melee. Despite this success, Davis did not relish the idea of driving tanks through a town at night, especially one that he hardly knew. What he did know was Marvie had two main north-south roads that lined the town, and inside the town Marvie had three east-west roads that connected the two parallel roads. These roads then merged on the south end of town. Now, his task force commander was ordering him to push into the unknown, but he sensed the situation in Marvie was dire. His men mounted their tanks.

Within a few minutes, the American tanks arrived at the north end of Marvie. The battalion intelligence officer, First Lieutenant Thomas J. Niland, linked up with the tanks where the road forked north of the town. Niland warned Davis and the other tank commander that he believed the Germans had moved three tanks with infantry into the south end of Marvie near the church. Niland also cautioned them that the glider men occupied the basements and the ground floors of several homes in Marvie.

Finally, he told them about the knocked-out American half-track blocking the eastern route in Marvie. Davis and the other tank commander then decided to cover both roads by splitting their section. Davis chose the eastern road and drove his tank down to a position where he could see the crossroads where he believed the glider men had established their battle positions. He could see the burned-out half-track to his front. Satisfied with his field of fire, he next backed his tank into a courtyard so the buildings would provide concealment for his rear and his western flank.

His guiding done, Niland then returned to his fighting position. His men normally did not man foxholes during combat actions, but the German attack had destroyed two platoons and had severely mauled another company. Gal-

Author's Photo

ABOVE: This recent photo of Marvie shows the view the German MkIV Panzer would have had the night of December 23, looking north into town. After the Panzer sustained a bazooka hit, it did not move past this point. OPPOSITE: An American soldier on the dead run passes a vehicle that has just taken a direct hit from German artillery. The tenacious defense at Marvie proved decisive in the ability of American troops to hold the key town of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge.

breaith needed everyone who could shoot a rifle in the foxholes fighting, and that included supply clerks, intelligence personnel, and headquarters staff. Therefore, Niland's intelligence section now was a provisional rifle section, defending the battalion command post. Niland was confident that his men were up to the task, and he knew they would fight like battle-tested infantrymen.

In addition to his internal reserves, Harper received 40 men from A Company, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, under the command of Captain Stanley Statch. At 9:45 that night, Harper placed these paratroopers north of Marvie, along the road that led into Bastogne. In addition to the paratroopers, Harper received D and E Batteries from the 81st Antiaircraft Battalion. These batteries provided him with 12 .50-caliber machine guns, and Harper arranged in them in an arc to the north of Marvie. The machine guns were in position by 10:30.

To bolster his western flank, Harper ordered his executive officer, Colonel Rouzee, to assume command. Rouzee then gathered 24 men from F Company and, together with the paratroopers from the 501st, he established a battle position near Smith's platoon. Rouzee wanted to recapture Hill 500, but when he saw the terrain, he realized he would have to remain on the defensive. In addition, Captain James Adams, the F Company commander, rounded up stragglers who had escaped the second German attack and re-established his positions.

While Harper shuffled his lines, the Germans prepared for one final lunge. The first two attacks bent the American lines, but they had not broken them. Moreover, although the Germans were inside Marvie, they did not control it. Their eastern flank attack had ended in failure. To the west, after they had advanced past Hill 500, they had not seized any other key terrain, and the paratroopers still held the high ground north of Remoifosse. Hauser decided to send in his reserves. The third attack likely would decide the fate of the small town of Marvie.

Around midnight, the third and final German push began in Marvie. The panzergrenadiers, using the concealment of night, crept along the roads northward to the American lines, while their tanks inched their way forward. Their commanders dampened the noisy diesel engines by not revving the throttles. Despite their strenuous efforts, the glider men and engineers could hear the low rumble, like the incessant thunder from a distant storm. They girded themselves since most of them could do little harm to a tank with only their rifles.

Davis, a Sherman tank commander, also heard the panzers approaching. He stared into the night but could see only the outline of the destroyed half-track. He then directed his gunner to aim the 75mm gun to the right of the half-track, since that was the only spot where a tank might try to drive around the twisted hulk. While the gunner was looking through the scope to adjust his aim, Davis told the loader to load an armor-piercing round into the breech and to ready the ammunition racks with an ample supply of armor-piercing and high-explosive rounds. While his men prepared the Sherman for battle, Davis detected the sound of engines revving. He surmised that one German tank was trying to push the half-track off the road.

For 15 minutes, the glider men, engineers, and tankers heard the shuffling of boots and the clanking of treads as the Germans readied themselves for their assault. Then a single flare shot up into the clear, night sky, illuminating the snow-covered earth below. Like a starting gun, the flare became the signal for hundreds of soldiers on both sides. The night erupted once again as the panzergrenadiers and glider men blazed away at each other.

Across from the engineers of B Company, three German tanks rumbled forward with panzergrenadiers following closely behind them. In response, 3rd Platoon's machine guns opened up on the panzergrenadiers, and within seconds bodies began to fall in the snow. The cries of the wounded panzergrenadiers quickly added to the cacophony of chaos.

Forward observers working for the glider men began to identify targets for the guns in the rear. Within minutes, the sounds of flying freight trains overhead greeted the ears of the harried glider men as round after round of high-explosive shells rained down on the advancing Germans to the south of Marvie. The 463rd Parachute Field Artillery's 75mm howitzers plastered German infantry southwest of Marvie, and within minutes the 377th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion added their barrels to the hurricane of steel that crashed upon the German forces.

While fighting broke out to the west, Davis decided to attack. His Sherman tank rocked backward as a 75mm armor-piercing round shot out of the muzzle of its gun. The unseen German tank retaliated, but its rounds were high as they careened into the buildings that surrounded the Sherman, setting them on fire. Within seconds, Davis's crew loaded and fired several more armor-piercing and high-explosive rounds at the Germans. Afterward, Davis only heard silence from the Germans. He peered into the night and watched men bailing out of the tank. Davis exhorted his tankers to unleash the tank's machine guns, while the gunner continued to fire high-explosive shells at the scurrying German crewmen.

For the engineers on the west side of Marvie, their six machine guns seemed to attract the attention of the other three tanks in the town. Two of the German tanks identified two of the machine-gun positions and retaliated. The shells shattered the trees above the machine-gun positions, showering the area with shards of wood and steel. Realizing that the Germans had a bead on their position, one machine-gun

crew ceased firing.

Another one, however, continued to engage the panzergrenadiers. Staff Sergeant Mariano Ferra, the platoon sergeant for 3rd Platoon, knew the gunners would not hear his pleas, so he sent a runner to tell the other gunner to cease firing. The runner, however, did not reach them in time as another round exploded nearby, killing him instantly while he tried to crawl to the position.

At this point, the indiscriminate tracers had ignited a fire in the command post of G Company. The glider men, realizing that the command post was lost to the flames, had to fight their way out. The battalion intelligence section, fighting furiously to protect the command post, then destroyed a German machine-gun team that had crept into the town.

The two regimental 37mm antitank gun teams under the command of Lieutenant Neal Fahey were not as lucky. Artillery and mortar fire killed or wounded most of them. As the panzergrenadiers moved closer into town, the 2nd Battalion heavy weapons platoon had to move its command post. To cover their withdrawal, Private First Class Harry Bliss remained behind at his machine gun, shooting all of the attacking Germans, save one, whom he killed with a hand grenade.

Meanwhile, another German tank attempted to push north into Marvie along the center road, which was near the 2nd Squad, 3rd Platoon, B Company Engineers. A bazooka team overlooked the center road from a nearby barn window, and when another flare shot off, it revealed the enemy tank approaching the culvert. One U.S. soldier shoved a rocket into the back of the tube and frantically attached the wires, while the other aimed the weapon through the window. The tank rolled onto the culvert, and the American soldier squeezed the trigger. With a great whooshing sound, the rocket shot out. It sailed through the air and struck the German tank in its front sprocket. The machine lurched as it halted.

"Minen, minen, minen!" the panzer commander yelled out, as he lifted up his hatch.

Though the guns remained in working order, the bazooka team had immobilized the German tank. Instead of escaping, the German crew decided to use its ammunition on the town. With reckless disregard for civilian property, the Germans unleashed their main gun and machine guns on the buildings in town, setting fires and smashing walls. When they had used up their ammunition, the crew dismounted and escaped to the south.

Farther east, Davis and his tank heard more clanking noises as another tank approached his position. Davis's roadblock now included a wrecked panzer and the burned-out half-track. As the German tank edged forward, Davis directed his gunner to aim above the hulk of the first enemy tank. When he felt it was close enough, Davis ordered his gunner to fire. The 75mm gun recoiled like a kicking mule. Not satisfied with the results, Davis ordered the gunner to fire another round. Following this volley, Davis could hear the German starting to reverse. After several minutes, the tank retreated, and Davis heard a third German tank follow it to the south.

Without armored support, the German attack stalled, and no fourth attack would follow. By 3:30 AM, the firing petered out as both sides paused to regroup. The glider men had fixed the 2nd Company of the 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment inside the town, and its commander, Lieutenant Furstenau, lay dead on the battlefield. Hearing the bad news, Kokott decided to call off the attack. He did not want to commit his division reserves into the Marvie maelstrom. He determined that the window of opportunity had closed at Marvie. He had to husband his forces for a much larger attack that was to take place in the western sector on December 25.

The men of the 327th Glider Infantry, together with the engineers of the 326th and the tankers of Team O'Hara, had stopped the 901st Panzergrenadier Regiment. Though the Germans would try to penetrate the American defenses of Bastogne on Christmas Day, they would not try to do it again at Marvie. □

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Fire

FOR THE GIs ON THE FRONT LINES OF EUROPE, A SIMPLE FIRE WAS A RARE LUXURY. BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

NEXT TO SLEEP, warmth was the most sought after commodity of the frontline soldiers who froze in their foxholes, stomping their feet or puffing on cigarettes to keep warm. Unfortunately, even small fires attracted a different kind of fire: German mortar, artillery, or sniper fire. Fires were found in safer locations—near artillery guns, regimental headquarters, or rest areas for recovering soldiers. Yet some soldiers risked death by starting small fires in their foxholes or in well-concealed places on the battlefield, just to fight off frostbite for an hour.

During the winter of 1944, men were desperate for warmth. On the night of Christmas Eve, inside the besieged town of Bastogne, a few men of the 101st Airborne Division chanced a fire. "Lo and behold," recalled Major Dick Winters, "the Germans picked it up and fired a mortar round in our direction." It exploded among the circle of men, injuring one lieutenant in the groin. After the fighting in Bastogne, some paratroopers washed their feet in the slush around a fire. One soldier, who had not removed his boots for a week, described his feet: "Large cracks in the skin laced deep around them, and my toes were swollen." The fire, and a new pair of socks, did his feet good. Soldiers rigged exhaust systems over fires to prevent the smoke from giving them away. Cooks hung tarps over their fires to disperse smoke. Some soldiers hosted cooking contests around the flame. One winning meal included cheese and Spam mashed together over the fire. "The inch-high mess was squashed with a trench knife onto K-ration hardtack, and topped with another biscuit," reported a soldier with 78th Infantry Division. "A memorable snack was born."

Whether for warmth, healing, or food, fire made the hard living in war-torn Europe bearable. No soldier who trekked from France or Italy into the heart of Germany could have survived the journey without fire's rejuvenating power.

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1. A private with the 42nd Infantry Division cooks a fish over his own personal fire in the Lembach Forest area in France.

2. During the closing of the Battle of the Bulge, the crew of a self-propelled 105 with the 2nd Armored Division enjoys a fire and a hot meal outside Les Tailles, Belgium.

3. British and American combat engineers swap stories, news, and cigarettes around a small fire as they wait for a call to build a Bailey Bridge near Someren, Holland. The British are with the 15th Scottish Division, while the Americans are with the 7th Armored Division.

4. Artillerymen of the 10th Mountain Division huddle around a fire as snow whips around them. Fires were often built on the opposite sides of slopes to hide them from the enemy.

5. These soldiers, nicknamed "Trouble Shooters," with the 100th Infantry Division, keep warm over a fire near Butten, France. Two of the soldiers sport M3 Grease Guns.

6. Two tankers with the 2nd Armored Division warm their feet by a fire in Beggendorf, Germany. They had just finished fighting for more than 24 hours without a rest.

7. On the outskirts of Bastogne, paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division and tankers of the 6th Armored Division gather around a fire five days after the surrounded city had been relieved. Some of the men are pulling their newly warmed overshoes over their boots.

7

Flying with the Jolly Rogers

HERBERT GOODRICH PILOTED A CONSOLIDATED B-24 LIBERATOR BOMBER WITH THE 90TH BOMB GROUP IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC.

BY GLENN BARNETT

The 90th Heavy Bombardment Group, known as the Jolly Rogers, was an element of the Fifth Air Force headquartered in Brisbane, Australia. During World War II it played a crucial role from the Battle of the Bismarck Sea to Leyte Gulf. The Jolly Rogers crippled enemy airpower on the ground and in the air. Their 100- and 2,000-pound bombs were used in support of Allied beach landings and against enemy shipping and airpower. A sign hanging beneath the squadron name proclaimed it to be "The best damn heavy bomb group in the world." Herbert Goodrich, a farm boy from Nebraska, enlisted as a cadet in the Air Corps in 1942. He became a B-24 pilot assigned to the 90th and flew 63 combat missions against Japanese targets in New Guinea.

Courtesy Herbert T. Goodrich

Glenn Barnett: Where and when were you born?

Herbert Goodrich: I was born in 1919 in Fairmont, Nebraska. My father was a farmer, and we lived on 240 acres where we raised wheat, oats, and alfalfa. We had hogs and cattle. All the chores were done with horses until Dad finally got an Allis Chalmers tractor in 1937 for $800. That was the best day of my life at that time.

GB: When did you see your first airplane?

HG: I was about 12 or 14 when an old barnstormer set down in our field. At that time you could take a ride for about $2.50. My father gave me the money for the ride. In high school we went into Lincoln, Nebraska, and paid $5.00 for a ride. Later a plane landed on our field, and the pilot negotiated with my father for some tractor gas. He gave us a ride in exchange.

GB: Where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

HG: We had just gotten home from church. We were getting ready for dinner. We didn't have the radio on so we didn't know. A neighbor family came over and told us. We listened to the news for the rest of the day.

GB: Were you drafted?

HG: The Army was going to draft me, but I didn't want to be in the trenches, so I applied to the Air Corps to be an aviation cadet. There were 150 questions on the test, and you had to answer 90 of them correctly. I got a 113. A friend of mine got an 89. He missed it by one and ended up handling cargo in the South Pacific. I was sworn in as a private in the Air Corps on March 23, 1942, down in Omaha.

Painting by Jack Fellows

GB: What was your basic training like?

HG: From Omaha I entrained for the air base at Santa Ana, California. It was our assignment center. We arrived there on April 14th. We lived in tents, and it rained like the devil in April. We did a lot of close-order drill. I took some tests and was classified as a pilot. On May 28th I was assigned to Rankin Aeronautical Academy in Tulare, California. I finally soloed on June 18th. We flew Boeing PT-17 Stearmans. It was a little biplane with a 220-horsepower Conti-

nental engine. After the war they were used as crop dusters.

I scraped a wing on my second solo flight. I figured I was washed out, but they let me pass. In total I had 50 hours flying time at Tulare. It was a tough school, and 44 percent of my class washed out. They were reassigned as navigators or bombardiers.

I was then sent to basic training in the hot months of July and August. We did some formation flying, night flying, and cross-country trips. Two of my friends were flying on instruments when their plane stalled on approach and they crashed and burned. It was a sad moment. At the end of the training I got my lieutenant's wings.

GB: Were you assigned to bombers?

HG: No they asked us if we wanted to fly pursuit planes or twin engines, and I chose the twin engines. In October I was assigned to Stockton [California] where we trained in AT6s and AT0-20s. I soon soloed in a Cessna AT-17. We had additional training in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Alamogordo, New Mexico. That is where we first flew the B-24 bomber. I had never seen one and didn't know anything about it. My first

Following the defeat of the Imperial Japanese Navy during the decisive Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944, U.S. Naval Intelligence was unable to locate the remnants of the Japanese fleet. However, a B-24 Liberator nicknamed "Sky Witch" of the 400th Bomb Squadron, 90th Bomb Group had been specially equipped for long-range flight and did locate many of the Japanese warships. This painting by Jack Fellows depicts "Sky Witch" above Brunei Bay and the Japanese vessels, while the Sultanate of Brunei is seen in the background at the far left. To the right is Labuan Island. OPPOSITE: Lieutenant Herbert T. Goodrich flew numerous combat missions aboard a Consolidated B-24 Liberator of the 90th Bomb Group in the Southwest Pacific.

Courtesy Herbert T. Goodrich

ABOVE: "Wolf Pack" was one of the B-24 Liberator bombers flown by Lieutenant Herbert Goodrich. Note the distinctive nose art and the twin .50-caliber machine guns in the nose that were used to defend against Japanese fighter planes. BELOW: Flak bursts darken the sky around a flight of B-24 Liberator bombers on a mission. The versatile B-24 proved effective on high-altitude and antishipping missions, while also functioning in an antisubmarine role.

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impression was that it was too damn big to fly.

GB: What were the B-24's strengths and weaknesses?

HG: It had the Pratt and Whitney engines. In my opinion it was a better engine than the Curtiss Wright that the B-17 had. However, it had no auto throttle control. I never flew the B-17, but one friend said it flew like a cub while the B-24 flew like a truck. You had to manhandle the controls. You wouldn't want to ditch in the ocean in a B-24 either. The nose tended to separate from the fuselage.

GB: When did you meet up with your crew?

HG: I arrived in Alamogordo in December and trained there. It was a pretty cold winter. Some of the crews were sent to Topeka, Kansas, to train. En route two of them had their wings ice up in flight and they had to bail out. One of my friends was killed when he didn't get out in time.

GB: When were you sent overseas?

HG: I got back from leave a day late so they sent our plane to North Africa. I heard that it later took part in the raids on the Ploesti oil fields in Romania. But we were sent to the Southwest Pacific. We had all of our fur-lined coats with us. There would be quite a pile of abandoned fur-lined coats in New Guinea. At about 9 PM on March 18, 1943, we took off from the west coast for Hawaii. Our plane was the "Double Trouble." There were 11 B-24s and a number of B-25s [medium bombers] with us. We watched as the lights of San Francisco disappeared behind us. We leveled off at about 8,500 feet and flew for 15 hours before reaching Hawaii. We had a little fuel scare for a time because of a misreading of the fuel gauge, but all the planes made it with fuel to spare.

From there we flew to Christmas Island. The poor soldiers there had a faraway stare in their eyes and begged us for any kind of liquor we might have. Some of them had been there for 14 months even though they were supposed to rotate out every six months. There was little to do there, and we felt sorry for them. From Christmas Island we flew to Canton Island. It was well fortified and subject to night bombings by the Japanese, but they did little damage. The night before we got there they bombed the island, and the only casualty was a dog. From there we flew to New Caledonia and then to Australia, arriving on March 24th. We soon discovered that Australian beer was not only good tasting but also very potent. We arrived in New Guinea in April.

GB: So you missed the Battle of the Bismarck Sea?

HG: Yes, but you know every time a new crew came in the old timers would say, "You should have been here when it was rough."

GB: You were assigned to the 90th Heavy Bomb Group?

HG: Right. We were called the Jolly Rogers after our commanding officer, Colonel Art Rogers. Our insignia was a skull with crossed bombs underneath it. I was in the 320th Squadron. Our squadron insignia was a shark with a twin tail like the B-24s. There were four squadrons in the group. Each squadron had about 12 airplanes. Our planes had an initial takeoff weight of 64,000 pounds, but later models could lift off with 72,000 pounds.

GB: Most of the planes sent to Australia were modified. Was yours?

HG: Yes. They took off the de-icing equipment and an alcohol tank. They had also found a way to put a tail gun turret on the nose of the plane. This gave us tremendous extra firepower forward. Colonel Rogers originally came up with the idea. With the help of a brilliant mechanic named Colonel Paul I. "Pappy" Gunn, the turret modification was made to work. Gunn had been an airline pilot in the Philippines before the war. He was able to successfully mount the turret in most of our B-24s.

Gunn was responsible for a lot of innovations that improved our fighting and flying capacity. It was at this time that they took Double Trouble away from us and gave it to another crew.

GB: How did the nose turret work out?

HG: Real well after they perfected it, but once we wanted to see what the red line was on the air speed when we dived. We just about got to that point in our dive when a helluva racket let loose and something flew by the cockpit. The pin that held the nose turret centered sheared off. The turret fell sideways, and the doors fell off of it and ripped the side of the fuselage.

GB: Is it true that General George C. Kenney [commander of the Fifth Air Force] was initially reluctant to accept the B-24s and liked the B-17s?

HG: Well, he might have been. I never flew the B-17, but it was supposedly easier to fly. The B-24 had no automated controls; we had to control it by hand, so we really gave our arms a workout adjusting it. It did have an autopilot, but if we were flying close formation we couldn't use it.

GB: When you were flying missions did you ever run into enemy fighters?

HG: Yes! Over Wewak they came in a time or two, but they peeled off. During our first daylight raid on Rabaul they came in. They got above our top turret gunner. His guns jammed. That was a long 30 seconds before he got it clear. We were following the commanding officer of the squadron. We were supposed to drop our bombs following the lead of his bombardier. But his bombs hung up, and so we were late and dropped them in the water.

GB: Did you come home with holes in your plane from flak?

HG: We got a little flak over Lae one time, and one of my waist gunners was wounded by some flak. I was really lucky. We never got too much flak and never got caught by the weather. I was on leave in Australia during Black Sunday. [Note: On Sunday, April 8, 1944, during a bombing raid over Hollandia, a weather pattern closed down all the Allied airfields in northern New Guinea. As a result, 31 planes were lost, only four to combat, the worst day of the war for the Fifth Air Force.]

GB: What was your first mission?

HG: It was to Salamaua near Lae [New Guinea]. It was a missionary village. We dropped some bombs in there. We flew a number of missions out of Port Moresby supporting the landings at Lae. Then we started hitting Wewak. We had some losses there. A friend of mine came home with a bullet-riddled plane, but his gunners shot down five Zeros [Japanese fighters] in the process.

One of our missions was reconnaissance, looking for shipping. But it was very long range from Port Moresby. They loaded the planes with 3,100 gallons of gas and a 20,900-pound bomb load. A 403rd Squadron plane loaded like this had just lifted off when it crashed into an Aussie camp, killing several Australians and the crew.

GB: Were there a lot of accidents?

HG: I'm afraid so. I remember a waist gunner shot up his own outboard engine. He was embarrassed. New Guinea had unpredictable weather. In the afternoon the clouds formed up over the mountains and reached as high as 40,000 feet. We had to fly through or fly around. We had one crew that flew around the clouds to bomb Rabaul, and they ran out of fuel before they got back. Weather probably accounted for more of our casualties than the enemy. Several planes crashed into mountains. Others hit trees on approach or takeoff.

GB: The B-24 carried a lot of firepower, didn't it?

HG: We had two .50-caliber guns in the tail, two more in the top turret, one on either side of the fuselage used by the waist gunners, and two in the nose. By mid-September 1943, our group [90th Bomb Group] claimed 39 kills. Our squadron claimed 22 Zeros shot down. The P-38 [fighter] pilots who flew cover for us took issue with this as they claimed some of the same kills that we did.

GB: Lae fell in mid-September. What did you do next?

HG: By mid-October we began the dreaded raids on Rabaul, which was well defended. At first we flew at night for reconnaissance and to harass them. We dropped our bombs to keep them awake. Sometimes we just tossed out empty Coke bottles, which made a terrifying whistle.

On the first daylight raid, I flew in a formation of six planes looking for shipping. Four of them had to turn back because of mechanical problems, but we kept going. Over the target our bombs hung up and wouldn't release. We tried to line up again but after eight passes from Zeros we dropped our bombs in the sea and headed home.

GB: What happened when you returned to base?

HG: They had an intelligence officer who would ask us what we saw, how much activity, how the flak was, the weather, any fighters. Then sometimes they gave us a shot of whiskey. Once we had a squadron photographer who wrote to his mother about the whiskey. She was from the Bible Belt in Texas and was upset. She didn't go through channels but wrote directly to President Roosevelt that her son was being ruined. Then it came down through channels, and he had to have a candy bar after his missions. He was a funny character.

GB: You got leave after the raid on Rabaul?

Continued on page 73

National Archives

A Japanese bomber is slowly consumed by flames following a raid by American aircraft. As the war in the Pacific progressed, American bombing raids grew in strength and number and often caught Japanese aircraft on the ground.

By Joseph Luster

WORLD WAR II THROUGH THE WINDOW OF E3 2010

For the time being, modern and future war games are taking over.

Though recent years have seen a bit of a back-and-forth with the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles—big changes transformed the convention into a smaller, more exclusive event, only to completely rebound—things are more or less back to normal. That means lots of hype across all platforms, from portables to consoles to PC, and of course lots of shooting. Seriously, if one thing has continued to grow over the years, it's the proliferation of shooters in the market. This is no surprise, since blasting away everyone from soldiers to chunky aliens to demonic babies (see: *Dead Space 2)* is as popular as ever; however, there's been a relative decline in supersize World War II-based games, for better or worse.

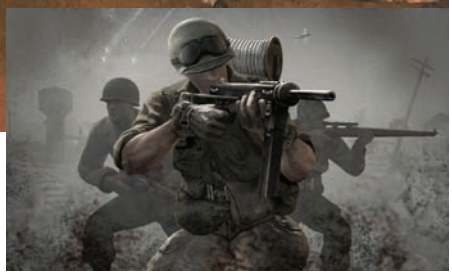
This might not be as significant were the market not saturated with them in years prior. Trends go up and down, however, and right now modern military action is the smokin' hot stuff, while WWII has been relegated more and more to PC-based strategy and similar genres. Still, despite the downturn, the show floor wasn't completely bereft of relevant titles. A combination of classic and unorthodox approaches to the genre show that somewhere, in some form, we'll always be able to get our fix. We've outlined a couple very different titles below, while also looking ahead at the ways in which the industry is diverging.

Company of Heroes Online

PUBLISHER THQ
DEVELOPER Relic Entertainment, Shanda
SYSTEM(S) PC
AVAILABLE September

Company of Heroes may already be an established real-time strategy hit on PC, but Relic Entertainment is trying something a little different as they take the title online. One of the most welcome changes overall is the pricing: *Company of Heroes Online* is a free-to-play game. Though that may already send people clamoring for the arrival of the beta, don't think there isn't some form of monetization.

CoH Online implements microtransactions, each meagerly priced item coming as some sort of weapon or upgrade. The initial reaction to something like this tends to be one of apprehension. After all, doesn't Johnny Deep-pockets benefit most from such a system? He or she with the most money should logically hold the battlefield advantage, buying up the strongest items and wreaking the most online havoc with their boosted wares. The folks at Relic have taken measures to alleviate concerns, as it looks like the same weapons and upgrades will also be unlockable through normal play.



Overseas gamers have already gotten a taste of the title and its system that puts the player in the role of a World War II commander—choosing from one of six divisions, from the Allied Airborne to the German Blitzkrieg. After the setup, it's all a matter of taking those strategic brainmeats of yours into head-to-head battle against up to eight players. China was the first country to receive access to an open beta, followed by Korea. Look for *Company of Heroes Online* to come our way this fall.

1942: First Strike

PUBLISHER Capcom
DEVELOPER Capcom
SYSTEM(S) iPhone
AVAILABLE Now

Not every announcement at E3 spells long waits throughout the summer months and beyond. Capcom may not be the immediate company that comes to mind when World War II pops up, but they've actually been flying the skies of war for over 25 years. *1942* first hit arcades in 1984; perhaps you've heard of it. Since then, it's been ported to countless platforms in one way or another, and was last seen in fresh form with the downloadable *1942: Joint Strike*, a fancy remake developed by Backbone Entertainment (*Wolf of the Battlefield: Commando 3*).

For those still unfamiliar with the series, it would be safe to say that it's a vertical shooter very loosely based on World War II. Sure, it features many era-specific elements, but I'm almost positive there weren't any screen-clearing bombs or tiny companion aircraft that boosted a plane's firepower in WWII. Correct me if I'm wrong.

1942: First Strike scales the top-down acts of derring-do down to a portable level, developed specifically for the iPhone. This brings touchscreen action into the mix, though it might not be implemented in the most traditional of ways. Rather than using your finger as an anchor for the plane—placed arbitrarily on screen and dragged accordingly—it acts instead as a destination point. Place your finger in one spot on the screen, and the plane begins to fly toward it. This may make certain areas difficult to fly to, especially if your hand ends up in the way of the action, but we'll have to see how suc-

cessfully it works in the final product.

Speaking of which, you should be able to give it a spin right now. All eight chapters, four bosses, and three selectable planes are available in *1942: First Strike* in the App Store as you read this.

Brief Departure

Don't think of this as a grim-faced elegy for a fading sub-genre, because things come and go in all aspects of the medium. Admit it, we're somewhat of a fickle bunch. Still, aside from PC strategy games, the upcoming World War II titles—at least those shown at this year's E3—remain fairly thin. Instead of M1 Garands and Thompsons on your gaming platter, look for a continued surge of tweaked-to-all-hell M2s and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Some of the chief examples of this departure were well received at the expo. Developers and publishers are clearly making modern, and even future, combat into flagship efforts. As you may be well aware (especially if you were with us last issue), the latest *Medal of Honor* game is the first to take the fight out of World War II and into Afghanistan, ending an 11-year streak of virtually reliving past conflicts.

Thing is, EA knows they need to compete with Activision, who will be rolling out *Call of Duty: Black Ops* this November. Developer Treyarch—well-versed in taking the bi-annual reins from chief *Call of Duty* developer Infinity Ward—last did so with *World at War,* making this their first attempt at exercising modern military might. They're certainly capable, even if the set-piece-laden template from which they're working is pretty sturdily in place.

THQ, publisher of the aforementioned *Company of Heroes Online,* is also pushing things a bit beyond modern military, into a slightly scary future war. Taking place in 2027, Kaos Studios' *Homefront* paints the dark portrait of a nuclear-armed Korean People's Army successfully invading the United States and defeating our armed forces. Fans of *Frontlines: Fuel of War* will find themselves in familiar, but revamped territory. The single- and multiplayer effort is centered on a story by *Red Dawn* writer and *Apocalypse Now* co-writer John Milius. Guerrilla warfare will be on the plate of many a gamer when *Homefront* hits PC, Xbox 360 and Playstation 3 in February of 2011.

No matter how many of these wars are waged, both far-flung and close to home, World War II remains one of the settings that established the standard of military combat in gaming. We'll no doubt all be ready for the next salvo; for now, it's probably best to fire up your computer and get mental with one of many commanding strategy gems out there. □

seelow heights

Continued from page 47

the town. When the Germans in Muncheberg discovered substantial enemy forces behind them, they withdrew west toward Rudersdorf at 6 PM to avoid being encircled.

As the 9th Army's left flank and center were swept away by the Soviet juggernaut, the right flank anchored by the stalwart Kurmark Panzergrenadier Regiment supported by 88mm guns continued to fight off Soviet attempts to dislodge it from the section of the Stein-Stellung between Marxsdorf and Dolgelin. Making a front to the north and also to the east, the panzergrenadiers covered the withdrawal of remnants of XI Corps units to the south. After nightfall, Kurmark's 2nd Battalion destroyed its vehicles and withdrew to the safety of the 169th Division lines a few kilometers south at Libbenichen. As for the V SS Mountain Corps, it held steady against the Soviet Thirty-third Army.

Soviet forces were poised to strike at Berlin from three sides on April 20, following the four-day battle along the Oder. The Russians had paid a heavy price in men and armor for underestimating the strength of the German position west of the Oder. Soviet losses in the battle were 33,000 men and 740 tanks. The Germans lost 12,000 men and most of their armor and artillery.

On April 20, the Second Guards Tank and Third Shock Armies captured Bernau just outside the Berlin autobahn and prepared to fight their way into Berlin from the north. The Fifth Shock Army prepared to advance into the city along Reichsstrasse 1, and the Eighth Guards and First Tank Armies were ordered to cross the Spree River to strike into the city from the southeast. As for the Sixty-ninth and Third Armies, they were instructed to pursue and destroy the largest remnant of the Ninth Army in the Spree Forest. By that time, Konev's Third and Fourth Guards Tank Armies had closed to within striking distance of the Wehrmacht high command's headquarters at Zossen. Also on April 20, Rokossovsky's Second Belorussian Front attacked General Hasso von Manteuffel's Third Panzer Army on the lower Oder.

On April 23, Hitler appointed Weidling to oversee the defense of Berlin. Most Ninth Army commanders were not interested in staying to defend Berlin, but rather focused on how to get their troops to the Elbe where they might surrender to the Americans and British. The armored brigade of the 20th Panzergrenadier Division had managed to fight its way alone to the Elbe immediately after the battle. The 5th Light Infantry and 25th Panzergrenadier Divisions, having previously joined forces with the Third Panzer Army, also were able to successfully withdraw to the Elbe where they surrendered to the Western Allies. The 11th SS Nordland and the bulk of the 20th Panzergrenadier Division tried to break out of the Berlin encirclement separately but were surrounded and compelled to surrender.

Busse stayed in the field with survivors of the XI SS Panzer Corps, V SS Mountains Corps, Nederland Division, and V Corps, which had been cut off from Army Group Center by Konev's advancing forces. Konev's and Zhukov's fronts had linked up behind Busse's army on April 24, trapping it in the Spree Forest southeast of the capital. The forces trapped in the Spree pocket began moving west on April 26 along forest roads in an attempt to link up with General Walther Wenck's Twelfth Army, which had marched from the Elbe to Potsdam in an unsuccessful attempt to relieve Berlin.

To facilitate the breakout, Wenck agreed to attack east in an attempt to open a corridor for the Ninth Army through Soviet lines. In heavy fighting on April 28, the Ninth Army rear guard was cut off from the main body and annihilated. About 40,000 survivors of the Spree pocket managed to join Twelfth Army and continue west, where both armies surrendered to the Americans on May 1, the day after Hitler committed suicide.

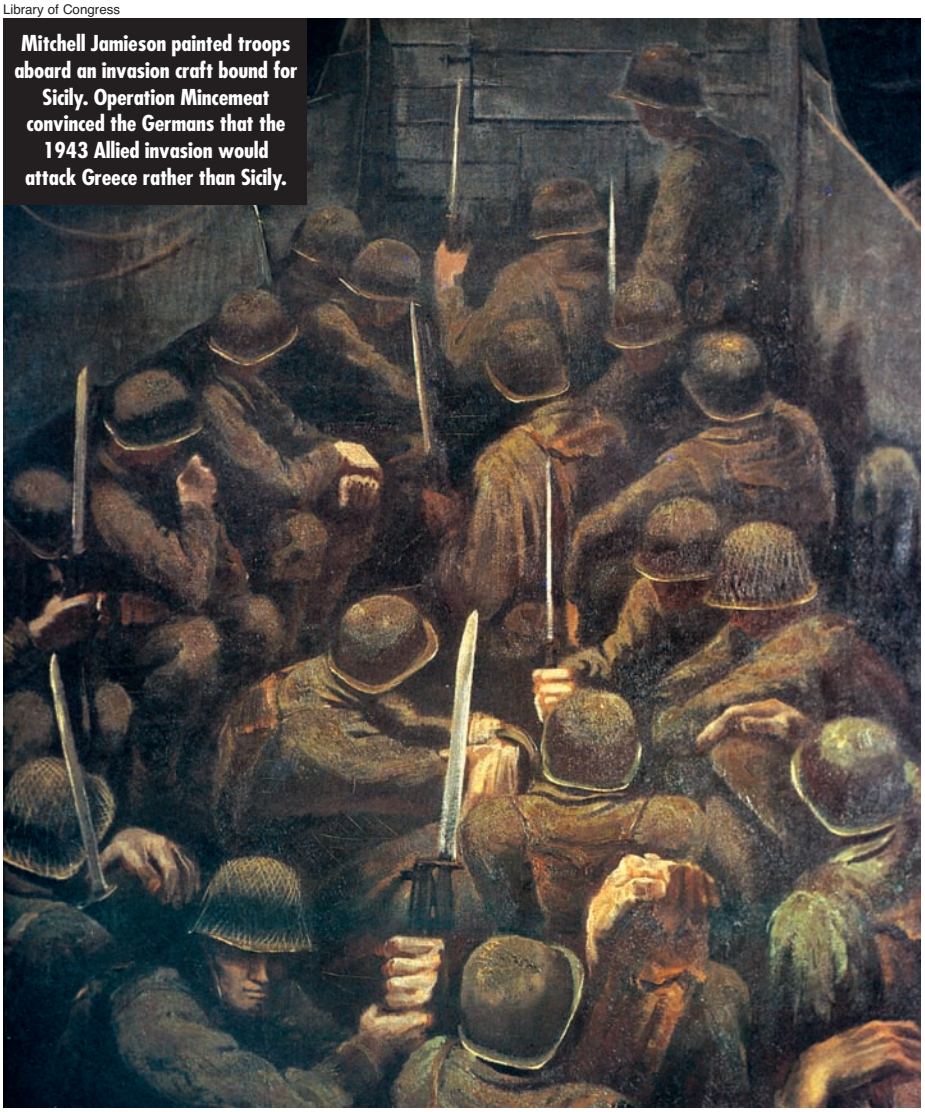
Although the defeat of the outnumbered Ninth Army along the Oder was inevitable, Busse's entrenched forces exacted heavy losses on the Soviets. Zhukov severely miscalculated the strength of the Seelow Heights position and paid a heavy price in men and equipment to open the most direct road to Berlin. The demanding timetable that Stalin set for the capture of Berlin, and the Soviet leader's decision to fuel the rivalry between Konev and Zhukov, led the latter to make rash tactical decisions in the opening hours of the battle.

In contrast, Heinrici's inspired defensive strategy exacted a substantial toll on the enemy and imbued the Ninth Army with a fighting spirit that allowed it to hold steady for a short time against overwhelming odds. Although a clear defeat for the Third Reich, the Battle of Seelow Heights showed that the fighting élan of the German soldier had not been completely extinguished as the fire of Nazism was died down in the belly of the Third Reich. □

William Welsh, of Vienna, Virginia, previously wrote for WWII History *on the Battle of the Reichswald. He also is a regular contributor to Sovereign Media's* Military Heritage.

By Al Hemingway

Library of Congress



Mitchell Jamieson painted troops aboard an invasion craft bound for Sicily. Operation Mincemeat convinced the Germans that the 1943 Allied invasion would attack Greece rather than Sicily.

Fooling the Germans

Operation Mincemeat was perhaps the most imaginative and strangest ruse in World War II.

AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL INVASION OF NORTH AFRICA IN NOVEMBER 1942, Allied planners immediately set to work developing a strategy to deliver a new offensive blow against Nazi Germany. There were only two ways that this could be done: through the Balkans, which would sandwich the enemy between the Allies and the Soviet Union, or by striking at Sicily and facilitating an invasion of the Italian mainland. Adolf Hitler and his staff realized an attack was imminent—but from where? Any large buildup of forces would tip the Allies' hand, and the Germans could reinforce the region, making the operation a risky one.

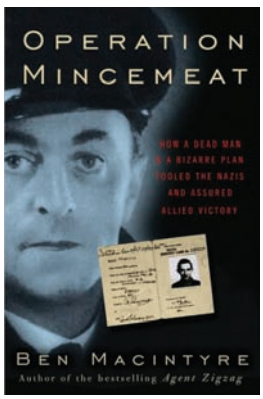
Since Sicily had already been chosen as the objective, something had to be done to convince the enemy that the invasion was to take place through Greece. What British Intelligence devised was arguably the most outlandish plan ever conceived to dupe the German Army into believing the main thrust would be through the Balkans.

Author Ben Macintyre has written a dazzling account of this scheme titled ***Operation Mincemeat: How a Dead Man and a Bizarre Plan Fooled the Nazis and Assured an Allied Victory*** (Harmony Books, New York, 2010, 416 pp., photographs, maps, notes, index, $25.99, hardcover). He delves into great detail on all the members of the team who created Mincemeat. Probably never in the annals of clandestine operations did such a quirky group exist.

It included Flight Lieutenant Charles Cholmondeley of the Twenty Committee, a small department within British Intelligence, who kept track of all the double agents. Although it was first dismissed, Lieutenant Commander Ewen Montagu of the Royal Navy was intrigued by the idea and decided to pursue it with Cholmondeley. The pair developed a plan to have the dead body of a courier, whose plane had crashed at sea, found floating off the Spanish coastline. This "corpse" would be carrying seemingly sensitive documents describing an assault on Greece. Montagu knew that the Spanish authorities, although neutral, cooperated with German intelligence, known as the Abwehr, and dutifully passed along any information that came into their hands.

Macintyre explains the intricate plot twists and methods the Twenty Committee utilized to make both the Spanish and the Germans believe that the Allies were coming ashore in Greece. The "dead body" would have the identity of a Royal Marine major named William Martin. Not only were there the "invasion letters" in his bag, but the team placed numerous "personal items" that "Martin" used while on leave in London.

William Martin was actually Glyndwr Michael, a 36-year old Welshman, who had eaten rat poison and died. Michael, an illiterate "ne'er do well," was estranged from his family and living in London. To enhance "Martin's" character even further, the group gave him a fiancée named "Pam," whose picture he had in his possession when his body was pulled from the water. In reality, "Pam" was Jean Leslie, an attractive clerk, who worked in British Intelligence.



When "Martin" was lost, his death notice was put in the *London Times* to add further authenticity to the story. It was soon learned that Major Karl-

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Israel: An Apartheid State?

Is there any truth at all in this oft-repeated calumny?

Only a short time ago, many universities, goaded by left-wing professors and students and their substantial Muslim student bodies, "celebrated" Israel Apartheid Week in which divestiture from, boycott of and sanctions against Israel were demanded. Is there any truth, any justification at all in this odious characterization?

What are the facts?

South African Apartheid. "Apartheid," the Dutch-Africaans term for separation, was the social order of the former South Africa. It meant exactly that. The Black majority of the nation and the so-called Colored were kept strictly apart in all aspects of life. White domination over the native population was mandatory. For instance: Non-Whites had to carry a "passbook." Passbook infringement could lead to deportation to one of the Bantu "homelands." Blacks and Coloreds were being kept from a wide array of jobs. Black-White sex was a serious jail-time criminal offense. Hospitals and ambulances were strictly separated. Whites enjoyed free education until graduation. Not so for Blacks, whose education was strictly limited by the oppressive "Bantu Education Act."

> "To call Israel an apartheid state is an expression of ignorance, anti-Semitism, and malice."

By law, no mixed sports were allowed. Park benches, swimming pools, libraries, and movies were strictly separated. Blacks were not allowed to purchase or imbibe alcoholic drinks – etc, etc, etc. And that is only a partial and small list of the many abusive impediments that non-Whites suffered under the South African apartheid regime.

Israeli Equality. To tar Israel with that kind of brush is utterly malicious. The exact opposite is the case. Not one single apartheid practice applies to Israel. Israel is by far the most racially mixed and tolerant nation in the entire Muslim Middle East. Arabs, who are about 20% of Israel's population, enjoy, without any exception, the same rights and opportunities in all fields as their Jewish fellow citizens. The total equality of all Israelis is assured in Israel's founding document. All non-Jews (which means primarily Muslim Arabs) have full voting rights. At present, eleven Arabs sit in Israel's Knesset (parliament): Three Arabs are deputy speakers. Arabs are represented in Israel's diplomatic service all over the world. Arab students may and do study in all Israeli universities. All children in Israel are entitled to subsidized education until graduation, without any restrictions based on color or religions. In short, Muslim Arabs and other non-Jews are allowed everything that Jews are allowed, everything that non-Whites were not allowed in apartheid South Africa.

But, yes, there is one difference: Jewish Israeli men are obligated to a three-year stint in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and serve in the reserve until they are 50 years old. For Arabs, this service is voluntary. Except for the Druze, hardly any Arabs volunteer to serve in the armed forces.

Israel has granted permanent residence and full citizen rights to a large number of legal and illegal foreign workers and their families – from the Philippines, Eritrea, Colombia, Nigeria, and from many other countries. Nobody, of course, is forced or requested to convert to Judaism as a condition of their being allowed to stay. Israel has accepted a shipload of Vietnamese refugees who had sought asylum. No Arab country has accepted a single one of those refugees. Israel has brought in about 70,000 black Ethiopian Jews, who despite their backwardness have become fully integrated citizens of Israel. Everything that Blacks were not allowed to do in South Africa is totally open to non-Jews in Israel.

The "Apartheid Wall." Another reason for which left-wing zealots and anti-Semites like to refer to Israel as the "apartheid state" is the fence between Israel proper and the territories. This fence (which is indeed a fence and not a wall over most of its length) was constructed at great cost in order to prevent the suicidal attacks that had killed hundreds of Israelis and grievously wounded thousands more. Thankfully, this "wall" is exceptionally successful and has totally prevented any such attacks since its completion. There is little question that this separation fence is the cause of inconvenience for some of the Arab population. But it is an annoyance that they have brought about themselves. And, of course, there are walls for protection all over the world. The Chinese invented it hundreds of years ago. Our own country has a long, high, very sophisticated wall across our border with Mexico. It is a wall, not to keep out criminals who want to kill Americans, but people who want to come here only in search of a better life. To call the Israeli fence an "apartheid wall" is an expression of ignorance and of malevolence.

Israel is a light unto the nations. It has, regrettably, many enemies – all or most of the world's Muslim nations and left-wing ideologues who mostly hate the United States and who consider Israel to be America's cat's-paw in the Middle East. The reality, of course, is that Israel is the exact opposite of an apartheid state. It is a country in which all residents, all citizens, enjoy the same full rights. All other countries in the Middle East are benighted theocracies, ruthless tyrannies, or mostly both. To call Israel an apartheid state is an expression of ignorance, anti-Semitism, and malice.

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East
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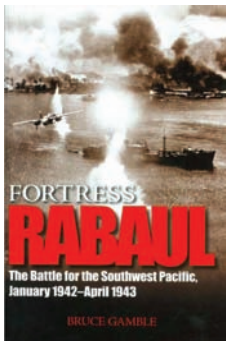
FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501 (c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world. Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

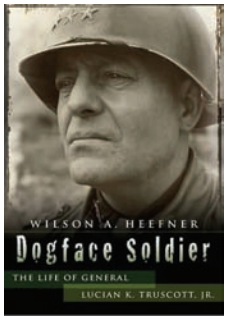
Erich Kuhlenthal, the top Abwehr agent in Spain, believed the contents of the briefcase were genuine. After copies were made of the briefcase's contents, it was returned to the British attaché in Madrid by Spanish authorities. British intelligence confirmed that the satchel had been opened and examined and reclosed. Allied leaders were sent a message: "Mincemeat swallowed whole," meaning that the Germans had taken the bait.

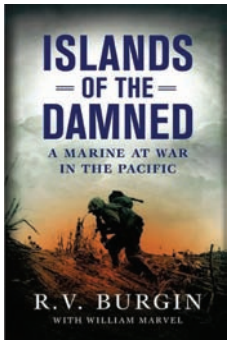
The operation was a resounding success, as the enemy diverted some of its forces from Italy to bolster the troops already stationed in Greece in anticipation of the impending invasion. Montagu wrote a book after the war titled *The Man Who Never Was.* It was so popular that it was made into a movie with Clifton Webb portraying Montagu.

The identity of "Major Martin" was kept a secret until 1996, when a historian unearthed evidence that Michael was indeed the dead man. In January 1998, the British government added a postscript to Michael's gravestone that read: "Glyndwr Michael served as Major William Martin."

The unemployed, alcoholic vagrant, who had come from a dysfunctional family, and had never amounted to anything, had become a war hero in death.







Fortress Rabaul: The Battle for the Southwest Pacific, January 1942-April 1943 by Bruce Gamble, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2010, 398 pp., photos, notes, index, $28.00, hardcover.

The Japanese fortress of Rabaul, situated on the northwest coast of New Britain island, was considered by many to be impregnable. In January 1942, a large Japanese force landed at Rabaul and quickly seized it. The defenders, Australian soldiers known as Lark Force, were no match for the enemy's overwhelming numbers and capitulated. Some of these men were later massacred by the Japanese.

Allied planners had contemplated invading the Japanese stronghold but realized that the cost in human life and material would be astronomical. Instead, an intense bombing campaign was undertaken. Throughout the conflict in the Pacific, Allied bombers and fighters struck Rabaul repeatedly.

From this massive air campaign, numerous pilots achieved fame with their aerial exploits. American Lt. Cmdr. Edward "Butch" O'Hare, downing five Japanese Betty Bombers, was the first naval aviator to become an ace and Medal of Honor recipient. Sadly, O'Hare's F4F-3 Wildcat was lost when he was commanding the first night fighter attack launched from an aircraft carrier. In September 1949, Orchard Depot Airport in Chicago was renamed O'Hare International Airport in his honor.

New Hampshire native Army Air Force Captain Harl Pease, Jr., was a B-17 bomber pilot when he earned his Medal of Honor. On a bombing mission over Rabaul, Pease and his crew were set upon by 30 enemy fighters. After downing several, his aircraft reached its destination and successfully dropped its bomb load. On the return flight, Pease's Flying Fortress lagged behind its formation and was shot down by another swarm of Japanese Zeros. Pease and his crew bailed out and were captured. It was later learned that they were beheaded after they had dug their own graves.

Gamble's book is a wonderful tribute to these and all the other pilots and crews, both land-based and carrier airmen, who kept the pressure on the Japanese at Rabaul. By August 1943, the Allies were rapidly advancing through the Pacific. The defenders of Rabaul watched helplessly as their empire slowly began to erode, until the island finally surrendered in September 1945, without firing a shot.

Dogface Soldier: The Life of Lucian K. Truscott, Jr. by Wilson A. Heefner, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 2010, 392 pp., photos, maps, notes, index, $34.95, hardcover.

Described as profane and hot-headed with a penchant for alcohol, Lucian Truscott was nevertheless a soldier's soldier. Although his training bordered on brutal, he shared in the discomforts of his troops because he firmly believed that an officer should lead his men at the front, not from miles to the rear.

Truscott's talents as a hard-charging officer with a keen eye for terrain did not go unnoticed by his superiors. By the outbreak of World War II, he already had achieved the rank of colonel. During the fighting in Sicily he took over the reins as commander of the 3rd Infantry Division and led it through much of the Italian Campaign. Here he developed the "Truscott Trot," in which infantrymen marched five miles per hour over the first mile and four miles per hour after that, far more than the standard 2.5 miles per hour required.

After the assault on Anzio, Truscott took charge of VI Corps when Maj. Gen. John P. Lucas was relieved of command. His usual fiery command style reaped benefits as his corps broke out of the beachhead and made its way up the Italian boot. Soon after, VI Corps served as the spearhead for Operation Dragoon, the invasion of Southern France, in August 1944. Once again, Truscott's leadership skills paid off as his troops performed admirably.

The author has done a remarkable job in researching this factual account of the life of one of America's best but little-known generals. He was able to gain the cooperation of the family and obtain access to Truscott's personal papers. All of this extensive research has produced a great book about a great man, Lucian Truscott.

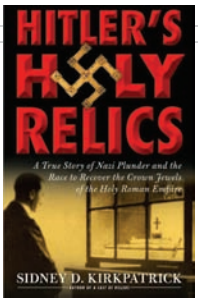
Islands of the Damned: A Marine at War in the Pacific by R.V. Burgin with Bill Marvel, Caliber, New York, 2010, 296 pp., photos, bibliography, index, $24.95, hardcover.

There have been many great autobiographies dealing with those who served in war. These individuals have described what it was like to participate in some of the biggest battles in history—and have lived to tell about it. Only they can vividly describe the horror of combat, the unforgiving terrain, and the death of a good friend. Most have waited years to collect their thoughts and put their words on paper after trying to forget what they had experienced.

Such a man was Romus Valton Burgin. As a young man growing up in rural Texas, Burgin was accustomed to a hard life and discipline, so he enlisted in the Marines. His decision would place him in some of the biggest campaigns the Marine Corps fought during the Pacific War: Cape Gloucester, Peleliu, and Okinawa. It was on Okinawa that Burgin was presented with a Bronze Star for eliminating a Japanese machine-gun nest.

Burgin served with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division, as a mortar man during the fighting to secure these islands. One of his comrades was Eugene "Sledgehammer" Sledge, who also wrote a magnificent account of his time in the Pacific titled *With the Old Breed: On Peleliu and Okinawa.* Many consider it one of the finest books ever written about World War II. *Islands of the*

Damned may well rank with Sledge's book. It is a gritty, no-holds-barred description of the bloody struggle to beat the Japanese from an infantryman's point of view. Kudos to Burgin for overcoming his anxiety and fears and writing it.

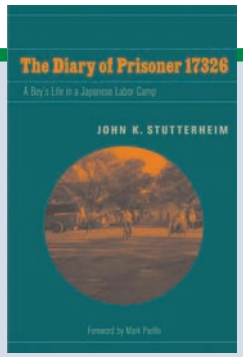


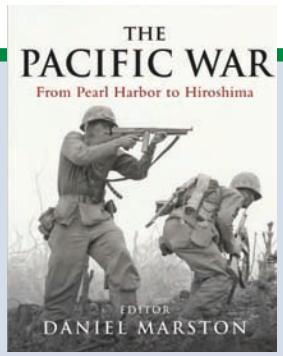
Hitler's Holy Relics: A True Story of Nazi Plunder and the Race to Recover the Crown Jewels of the Holy Roman Empire by Sidney D. Kirkpatrick, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2010, 352 pp., notes, index, photos, maps, $27.00, hardcover.

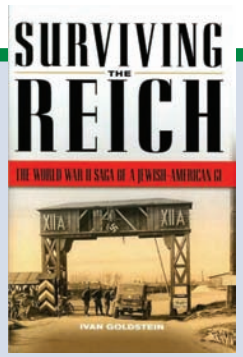
Lieutenant Walter Horn, a German-born intelligence officer who had fled Nazi Germany prior to the war, can easily be called a modern-day Sherlock Holmes. In civilian life, Horn was an art history professor at the University of California at Berkeley and had also studied the subject in Hamburg, Munich, and Berlin, and done postgraduate work in Florence, Italy.

While Horn was interrogating a German soldier, he discovered that Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, had been maintaining a top secret underground bunker some 200 feet beneath the Nuremberg castle. The bunker contained priceless works of art that the Nazis had stolen from occupied countries. The SS soldier's parents, who lived above the classified storage area, were charged with the upkeep of the ventila-

Short Bursts







The Diary of Prisoner 17326: A Boy's Life in a Japanese Labor Camp by John K. Stutterheim, Fordham University Press, New York, 2010, 235 pp., maps, photos, glossary, $35.00, hardcover.

When the horrendous ordeals of prisoners of war are discussed, it is rarely mentioned that thousands of Europeans, indigenous people, and those from other Asian nations underwent brutal hardships at the hands of the Japanese.

Finally a book has been written that chronicles the harsh life of a young Dutch boy who survived such a nightmare. Separated from his family, John Stutterheim describes in vivid detail the daily schedule of being a prisoner in a Japanese camp. It is truly an inspirational story of courage and determination to survive and to sit down decades afterward and write his account so others might know the truth of what had transpired.

This should be a must-read for today's youth who are transfixed in their self-centered world, surrounded by iPods, cell phones, and video games, to fully understand what can happen when outside forces shatter their seemingly safe world and transform it into a living nightmare.

The Pacific War: From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima edited by Daniel Marston, Osprey Publishing, Long Island City, NY, 2010, 272 pp., maps, photos, notes, bibliography, $19.95, softcover.

A dozen noted military historians, Japanese, American, British, and Australian, have collaborated to reevaluate the Pacific Theater campaigns of World War II. Beginning with the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and extending to the conflict's end when the atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the authors have written chapters that deal with their specific fields of expertise.

The book is full of photos and richly detailed maps, so the reader can follow along with the text. The final chapter is most intriguing. It details the invasion of Japan, Operations Coronet, the plan to seize Tokyo, and Olympic, the landings on the island of Kyushu. To augment their regular forces, the Japanese also trained their civilian population in suicide attacks. Thankfully, the two atomic bombs, although devastating, ended the war and prevented what was sure to be a major bloodbath.

This one-volume overview of the Pacific War is a must for any history buff's personal library. It further benefits students in gaining understanding of the war period.

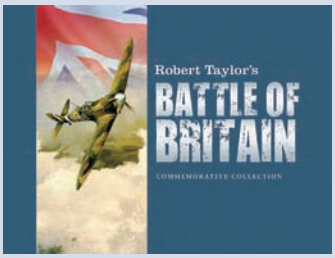
Surviving the Reich: The World War II Saga of a Jewish-American GI by Ivan Goldstein, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2010, 240 pp., photos, bibliography, $26.00, hardcover.

Here is a truly inspirational book that focuses on one American soldier of the Jewish faith who had to deal with anti-Semitism, not only from the enemy but from his own company commander. When the war broke out, Ivan Goldstein enlisted at 17 years of age. He was assigned to the 41st Tank Battalion, 11th Armored Division. He was shipped overseas, and soon his M4 Sherman tank named "The Barracuda" was involved in the Battle of the Bulge.

On the very first day of the German offensive in December 1944, Goldstein's tank took a direct hit and was set ablaze. The vehicle soon became stuck in a frozen pond. Goldstein managed to free himself from the inferno, only to be taken prisoner. He miraculously escaped death on numerous occasions, especially when the Nazis discovered he was Jewish, and ultimately survived the war.

Goldstein returned to Belgium when he discovered that his tank, The Barracuda, had been salvaged and was on display in the town of Bastogne as a memorial to the American troops who fought and died there. The book is a moving tribute to one man's extraordinary bravery to survive his harrowing ordeal.

Battle of Britain: Commemorative Collection by Robert Taylor, Casemate, Havertown, PA, 2010, 128 pp., illustrations, photos, index, $34.95, hardcover.



Wonderful pen and ink sketches, detailed paintings, and great photographs illustrate artist Robert Taylor's *Battle of Britain.* Taylor's works have been compiled into this edition to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the pivotal air battle of the war in Europe. It is indeed a fitting tribute to those outnumbered British fliers who met and defeated the German onslaught in the skies over England in 1940.

For the introduction, writer Michael Craig wrote: "Hopefully, this newly assembled but historically evocative collection of Robert's paintings will go a long way to ensure that the memories and importance of the Battle of Britain, and the young men who flew and fought it, will remain embedded within the soul of the British people for many generations to come."

tion system and checking to ensure that the objects did not have mold or insect damage.

From this, Horn began a chase to uncover the Nazi plunder, particularly the Crown Jewels of the Holy Roman Empire and the Spear of Destiny, reputed to have been the one that a Roman soldier used to pierce Christ's side as he hung dying on the cross. In his travels, the former art historian also unearthed the disturbing fact that his own family had helped to undermine scholarly research to support Adolf Hitler's claim of Aryan supremacy and the creation of a master race.

This is a remarkable story that has been buried for decades. However, with the assistance of Horn's widow and his children, Kirkpatrick was able to piece together the facts and finally reveal the truth.

American Guerilla: The Forgotten Heroics of Russell W. Volckman by Mike Guardia, Casemate Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 2010, 240 pp., maps, photos, notes, $32.95, hardcover.

Russell Volckman is truly a remarkable man. When the Japanese captured the Philippines, the intrepid U.S. Army officer steadfastly refused to surrender. Armed with just a six-shot revolver, he made his way into the unforgiving jungle and raised an army of more than 20,000 Filipinos who wreaked havoc upon the enemy's occupation forces. It is estimated that his guerrilla force killed 50,000 Japanese before the Allies returned to the Philippines in 1944.

Despite all of this, Volckman's name is virtually unknown among military historians. If it were not for the diligent research of the author, Volckman's valuable contributions to the war effort and his tireless work promoting special warfare and counterinsurgency operations would never have been revealed.

Volckman realized that future wars would not be conventional in nature, which prompted him to secretly author two books on the subject. These manuals would soon become the Bibles that would ultimately help in the creation of the first Green Beret unit, the 10th Special Forces Group.

Volckman died in 1982 at the age of 70 with the rank of brigadier general. Due to his secretive nature, few realized his accomplishments and contributions to counterinsurgency development in the U.S. Army. But, thanks to Guardia, Volckman now holds a coveted place in its history, as the true father of Special Forces. □

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Gestapo was overwhelmed with denunciations and spent most of its time sorting out the credible from the less credible of these. Far from being an all-powerful agency that knew everything about what was happening in German society, the local offices were understaffed and included overworked personnel who struggled with the paper load caused by so many denunciations.

The ratio of Gestapo officers to the population of the areas they were responsible for was extremely low. For example, for Lower Franconia, with a population of about one million in the 1930s, there was only one Gestapo office with a staff of just 28, half of whom were clerical workers. In Düsseldorf, the Gestapo office, which had responsibility for the entire Lower Rhine's four million people, had 281 personnel.

After 1939, when many Gestapo personnel were called up for military duty or moved to other security services, the overwork and understaffing at local offices greatly increased. For information about what was happening in German society, the Gestapo was for the most part dependent upon denunciations. Eighty percent of Gestapo investigations were in response to information provided by ordinary Germans about their neighbors, while 10 percent were based on information provided by other branches of the German government and another 10 percent in response to information that the Gestapo itself unearthed.

The Schutzstaffel or Protective Squadron, the infamous SS, was an organ of the Nazi Party. The SS grew from a small paramilitary unit to an elite force that served as the Führer's "Praetorian guard." It was built upon the extreme Nazi ideology and operated under Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler.

SS Einstazgruppen or operational task groups were involved in the suppression of partisan or guerrilla activity as well as the rounding up of Jews and undesirables in Russia and Eastern Europe.

The SS was responsible for the vast majority of war crimes perpetrated under the Nazi regime. As part of its race-centric functions, the SS oversaw the isolation and displacement of Jews from the German population and in the conquered territories, seizing their assets and imprisoning them in concentration camps and ghettos where they would be used as slave labor pending extermination.

The Sicherheitsdienst, abbreviated SD, or Security Service, acted as the intelligence service of the SS and the Nazi Party and was considered a sister organization to the Gestapo. The SD became more powerful after the Nazis came to power, and the SS began to infiltrate leading positions in the security apparatus of the government. In 1938 the SD was made the official intelligence organization for the state as well as for the party.

The SD was tasked with the detection and neutralization of enemies of the Nazi leadership. To fulfill this task it created a system of agents and informants throughout the Reich and later in the occupied territories. The organization consisted of a few hundred full-time agents and several thousand informants. The SD was mainly an information-gathering agency, while the Gestapo and to a degree the Kripo made up the executive department of the political police system. Both the SD and the Gestapo were effectively under the control of Heinrich Himmler as chief of the German police, while the Kripo kept a level of independence as it had been long established.

In addition to those troops who were dedicated to security and policing matters such as the Feldgendarmerie and the Feldjäger, the German Army fielded 15 security divisions (Sicherungs-Divisionen) during the war. These were usually formed of men who were in lower fitness categories, often older men with minor medical ailments that prevented them serving in frontline combat units. Some of these units began life as regular infantry divisions and were subsequently downgraded, having all their heavy weapons withdrawn. They were often called into action against partisan forces in Eastern Europe and Russia, but in the main they were inadequate to the tasks allotted them. This was especially true as the war dragged on and the few fit and able men serving in such units were drawn off to combat formations.

After Germany's surrender, while many of the German government organs were quickly dismantled, many Feldgendarmerie found themselves assigned to police roles by the Western Allies. British forces in Schleswig-Holstein formed a regiment of Feldgendarmerie to maintain discipline and order at the Meldorf Demobilization Center. All were armed and paid with rations.

German military police and security forces were the "chain dogs," the hero snatchers, given a mandate to enforce the law and uphold a code of honor under a tyrannical regime. Some were lawless, unholy organizations wielding absolute power of life and death, while others tried to provide order in chaos. □

Author Allyn Vannoy has written extensively on a variety of topics related to World War II. He resides in Hillsboro, Oregon.

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men, deprived of everything, exhausted, in the mud, had to face an avalanche of adversaries clambering on countless tanks, roaring, smashing, crushing everything in their way," he later wrote.

The Walloons fired *panzerfaust* antitank weapons point-blank at Soviet armor. Degrelle narrowly avoided a sixth wound, a bullet going through his collar and grazing his neck. Driving to headquarters for orders he ran into a column of Soviet tanks and had just enough time to jerk the wheel around and gun for safety.

In a single day one Walloon battalion suffered 94 percent casualties, 615 of 650. Degrelle finally fled with survivors into Denmark, then left them to find Himmler for new orders. Soon learning of Hilter's death and with his troops caught in the sudden surrender of northwestern Europe, he fled further north into Norway.

The foreign Waffen SS movement came to an apocalyptic end in the ruins of Berlin. Spanish diehards from Generalissimo Francisco Franco's Blue Division fell fighting around the Reichs Chancellery. A contingent of 330 Frenchmen defended Gestapo headquarters on the Albrechstrasse; one of them, a 20-year-old plumber, Eugene Vanlot, was awarded the last Knight's Cross in a street corner ceremony for destroying eight Soviet tanks in 24 hours. His luck ran out three days later.

An SS general had inspected the British and found them unfit for combat. Instead, they were put to work driving trucks, directing traffic, and evacuating civilians while taking the opportunity to evacuate themselves as well.

Erik Wallin was also caught up in the maelstrom of Berlin. His personal crusade came to a stunning conclusion: "We had just put our feet on the first step to the cellar, when suddenly the entire gable collapsed over us. A violent air pressure tore our helmets off and we were half buried in gravel and lumber ... I tried to crawl to my feet, but failed."

The explosion had torn a gaping wound in his left thigh. With a German woman supporting him, he hobbled in greatcoat, without trousers, unshaven, submachine gun hanging from his neck across his chest, to the still functioning Swedish legation on the Tiergartenstrasse. He was offered asylum but decided to go back, eventually finding a school being used as a hospital. He lay on a cot for three days listening to the Battle of Berlin being lost. Then Soviet troops swept in.

With war's end, retribution began. French SS, marching home, ran into Free French; words were exchanged and the Free French commander had the French SS shot on the spot. The Estonians and Latvians were immediately executed in Stalin's hands. The remnants of a 3,000-man Italian force of Fascist renegades recruited after Mussolini's fall, then half decimated at Anzio, surrendered to Partisans and were massacred to a man. A wounded officer was dragged from his hospital bed and killed.

For those reaching home, there was ostracism, lifelong loss of civil rights, and sometimes jail, or worse. The commander of the Danish Volunteer Legion was executed, and others received prison sentences of up to 10 years. In Britain, Thomas Cooper was sentenced to death, then had the sentence commuted to life and was released in 1953 while three other miscreants got 15 years. The rest were let off with fines or short terms.

Erik Wallin managed to escape from the Russians. The Swedish legation smuggled him civilian clothes and a Swedish passport, and he was able to talk his way out of captivity. Hiding in Berlin for two weeks, he encountered his company commander, and they walked west to the Elbe River where the Red Cross listed them as Italians to cross.

Back in Sweden, Wallin soon found himself in jail, convicted of stealing government property—the army uniform he had deserted in! He served a few tough months in prison, the other prisoners freely using him as a human punching bag while the guards looked the other way.

Although his experiences would have been enough for most men, they were not for Wallin, and he spent the rest of his life adventuring around the world. Although he survived the war, he did die among his Nordland comrades, dropping dead of a heart attack at a reunion in Germany.

Leon Degrelle also escaped. Reaching Oslo, he flew 1,500 miles across Europe on V-E Day, crash-landing on a beach in Spain, out of fuel.

Unlike Wallin, Degrelle could never return to Belgium, where he was under a sentence of death. "We had fought for Europe, its faith, its civilization. Sooner or later Europe and the world would have to recognize the justice of our cause and the purity of our gift," he defiantly wrote. Unrepentant to the end of his life, at age 87 in 1994, his response to whether he had regrets was, "Only that we lost." □

John W. Osborn, Jr., resides in Laguna Niguel, California. He recently wrote for WWII History *on the career of Polish General Wladislaw Anders.*

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They moved us around a lot, which was really scary because we were constantly being strafed by [British] Spitfires and American planes. They had an ambulance that was still done up in Africa camouflage. We tried to convince them to put a parachute over the top of the ambulance and paint a red cross on it so it could be seen from the air, but for some reason they didn't want to do that, which I didn't understand. Maybe they thought our planes would strafe them anyway.

The ambulances were so crowded that we could only sit upright in them. We couldn't lie down. It got to smelling so bad that one German soldier passed around some perfume to help with the stink. We passed the time by having spitting contests and punching each other. What was incredible to me was when we were getting strafed. The Germans stopped the ambulance, jumped out, and dove in the ditches on either side of the road, and they left us in the vehicles to get shot!

We traveled with them for weeks until we got to a captured British field hospital in Reims, which was formerly a girls' school or an orphanage, I can't remember which. There were also Polish, British, French, and Australian soldiers there. We didn't get fed very much, mostly mushy potato soup, so I lost a lot of weight. Some men died from malnutrition and some just plain gave up. The Germans tortured a lot of prisoners, and they were brought into the hospital after cold water baths or after being beaten.

We had heard that [General George] Patton was getting closer, and we could tell the Germans were getting ready to move. Patton had cut the rail line to Reims in preparation for his move into Germany. It was then that the Germans abandoned Reims along with us wounded prisoners, and the city was retaken by Patton. I was sent back to England, then to Charleston, South Carolina, on to Palm Springs, California, for rehab and finally to a general hospital in Modesto, South Dakota, for convalescence in 1945.

BH: I understand you served with the real "Private Ryan."

RA: Yes, that was Sergeant Frederick "Fritz" Niland, who had three brothers. Fritz and his brothers all joined the Army. While Fritz was with us in the 101st near Carentan on D-Day, his brother Robert, who was in the 82nd, was killed at Sainte-Mère-Église. His brother Preston, who was a lieutenant in the 4th Infantry Division, was killed on Utah Beach the next day. The "Paratrooper Padre," Father Francis

Sampson, who landed behind enemy lines on D-Day with the rest of the 501st, drove with Fritz about 20 miles back to Sainte-Mère-Église to try to find Robert, who was buried in a temporary grave. The story of *Saving Private Ryan* is based loosely on that incident.

When Father Sampson learned that Fritz's brothers had been killed and that the third brother, Edward, was reported missing in Burma, he initiated the paperwork to get Fritz out of the fighting and escorted him back to Utah Beach for evacuation. It probably would have been better for Fritz if he had been able to stay with his buddies, but they sent him home. This was, of course, after the Sullivan Brothers episode that happened in 1942 [the five Sullivan brothers were serving aboard the same U.S. Navy warship and all were killed in action during the same battle], so the military had the "Sole Survivor Policy" in effect, which meant surviving relatives would be removed from duty if they lost a family member in combat.

Fritz became an orthodontist after the war but didn't have much to do with the commemorations or associations after having lost two brothers. Some years later, he and his family actually lived with mine for a while in between moving from place to place. When the movie *Saving Private Ryan* came out, I called the historian Mark Bando who was involved with the movie and I found out Fritz had passed away.

The 101st cleared the causeways at Utah Beach and was successful in all of its missions. The flyboys were shut down for weeks at a time due to the stormy and windy weather, so in the absence of aerial bombardment we raised havoc wherever we could, cutting lines and blowing things up. All the pockets of activity confused the Germans.

Reginald Alexander returned to France for the 40th, 50th, and 60th anniversaries of D-Day, and each time the mayor of the city of Weisel was his host. French school children did paintings and drawings of the paratroopers in appreciation. There were reenactors who wanted their helmets autographed by veterans, and one individual asked the returning soldiers to sign his Jeep. A marble obelisk is dedicated to Alexander at the house where he was hidden in Housevielle, and he received the French Legion of Honor. He passed away on January 16, 2010. □

Brandt Heatherington is a freelance writer and collector of militaria living in Arlington, Virginia. He is a member of the Company of Military Historians and is an active member of several recreated military units.

jolly rogers

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HG: We flew down to Sydney for six days and then back to Brisbane. They gave us a new airplane there. Then we met some fighter pilots who wanted to get back to New Guinea, as well as some of our own ground crewmen. With our own crew of 10 we had 22 men aboard. In addition, someone loaded 75 cases of beer in the bomb bay. Because the ship was new to us, we had 2,800 gallons of gas, 400 gallons more than we thought there was. We were grossly overloaded.

Our takeoff roll was slow, and we really struggled to get airborne. But we clipped our right wing on a tree, which tore away the leading edge. So, we circled back and landed. The fighter pilots had seen enough of bombers and liked the quiet life in a P-40 [fighter]. Two days later, when we had a new B-24, they started betting among themselves that we wouldn't get off the ground.

While we waited for the fighter pilots to get back to Port Moresby, I hitched a ride up to Lae to see our new air base there. While I was there, I collected some souvenirs from wrecked enemy planes.

GB: When did you get back into action?

HG: On December 1 we were a part of a raid to Wewak. It was supposed to be a gravy run, but Japanese naval air pilots jumped us. We lost three B-24s that day. Only six men of the three crews survived. It was the 90th's worst day in combat.

GB: Port Moresby was far from the front by this time?

HG: That's right. We started moving forward to Dobodura on December 22. We used the bombers to transport our equipment. We flew three flights over on Christmas Day and missed the chicken and ice cream supper that evening. We did have a little liquor left from the club, and it was one very drunk night out. After Christmas we made three more runs of equipment to Dobodura and then went to Australia.

GB: What did you do in Australia?

HG: We flew to Melbourne to do some practice bombing with aerial burst bombs for Pappy Gunn. He had developed a bomb that would explode about 200 feet in the air. It was supposed to catch the Japanese soldiers in the trenches. The bombs were part of a project he was working on. I don't think they amounted to much. I didn't see them again. We were in Australia for a week and had a great time.

GB: American bombing raids caught a lot of Japanese planes on the ground. Why was that?

HG: Their communications weren't very good, and they were short of pilots. Then too, they might have had fuel shortage problems. The Germans did.

GB: You didn't always have visibility over the target?

HG: We flew usually around 10,000-20,000 feet. Once we were over Rabaul, we found that it was socked in with clouds. The navigator told me that it was down there. I said "Drop a flare!" He said, "What good will that do?" I said, "Drop it anyway." We dropped the flare, and the whole sky lit up. They started shooting, but they were shooting at the flare. A number of times we'd be over the target in the clouds. We killed a lot of fish.

GB: Did you arm the bombs in flight?

HG: The bombardier armed the bombs after we were airborne. He would set up his bomb sight for the expected height and airspeed. He could couple into the autopilot, but it was pretty erratic. So most of the time we flew the needle ourselves. One of the other pilots said of his bombardier that he couldn't hit the earth if it weren't for gravity.

GB: Did you ever bring your bomb load back to base?

HG: The bombardiers would say "drop the ... bombs." But I always thought they cost money. So, if we had a secure load we would bring them back if we couldn't reach the target.

GB: A lot of soldiers got sick in New Guinea. Did you?

HG: Toward the end of my combat flying, I came down with a bad fever and was hospitalized. I was afraid it was malaria, but it turned out to be dengue fever—not as bad but still no fun. I spent a month in hospital. Shortly after, I had my 397 hours of combat flying and could rotate home. I got home in February of 1945.

GB: What was the highest rank you attained?

HG: Captain. I started out as a second lieutenant. The Air Corps promoted guys because they claimed that the Germans recognized rank. If you got shot down, a tech sergeant was treated a lot better than a staff sergeant, so they made tech sergeants out of a lot of the crew members. Of course, it didn't make much difference to the Japanese.

In recognition of his service, Herbert Goodrich received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal. His combat flights totaled more than 400 hours. After the war, he worked as a pilot for United Airlines for 33 years. □

Glenn Barnett is a writer and historian living in Los Angeles. His forthcoming book is entitled The Persian War: The Roman Conflicts with Iraq and Iran.

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wells on fire. The whole area was hung over with thick smoke.

The battalion's engineers and pioneers, helped by local people, set about putting the fires out. None of the engineers had seen an oil well before, and their improvised methods for dousing the fires were described by experts who were later flown in as "primitive" and "highly dangerous." But most of the fires were put out or brought under control.

While some of the battalion fought the fires, others moved on south to take Lutong, with its oil refinery and nearby oil wells and the airfield at Miri. The refinery was in ruins and the wells on fire, and once again the soldiers were used as firefighters and for cleaning up. They found the bodies of dozens of slaughtered Indian prisoners of war and more of them barely alive. They told the Australians that the Japanese garrison of more than 500 was in the jungle outside town.

Patrols went looking for them but met up with only native Dyaks carrying severed Japanese heads. The Dyaks happily joined the patrols, and more Japanese were caught and killed. Then the patrols were recalled as the military had completed the job of securing the ports and coastal towns and clearing the oil and rubber-producing areas of Japanese. AIB and Z Force agents and their guerrillas replaced the military patrols, and these reportedly killed 1,800 Japanese.

Balikpapan, on the east coast of Dutch Borneo, was the last phase of the Borneo operation and the scene of the fiercest fighting. General Blamey regarded it as an unnecessary operation and opposed it, but the First Australian Corps had been removed from his control. The only reason for capturing Balikpapan was to use it as a base for the invasion of Java, but as American forces were now on Okinawa and knocking on Japan's door, an invasion of Java had little point at this stage of the war. Nevertheless, the Balikpapan operation went ahead.

Before the war, Balikpapan was a major port and oil refinery that processed oil piped from two fields to the north and shipped in from Tarakan, Ceram, and Java. Each year it shipped out two million tons of fuel oil and other petroleum products.

The Japanese had fortified Balikpapan with networks of bunkers, trench systems, and concrete strongpoints, and a continuous 14-foot-wide antitank ditch that could be flooded with burning oil ran for miles behind the beaches. Nevertheless, it was decided the Australian 7th Division would make a direct assault on the town rather than land along the coast and have to fight its way through jungle and swamp.

Before the attack, Balikpapan was heavily bombed by American and Australian planes. The area around the town was thoroughly scouted by patrols. Minesweepers removed mines from the sea before the port, and Navy underwater demolition teams cut channels through the obstacles on the landing beaches. On July 1, two brigades of the 7th Division landed on a 2,000-yard stretch of beach close to the port and moved quickly forward, smashing any resistance they came upon.

That night they rested among the ruins, the night alight with the flames from burning oil-storage tanks. The following morning, the two Australian brigades moved forward again, followed by the third brigade mopping up any pockets of resistance and groups of Japanese who had infiltrated the first advance.

By the third day, the brigades held a beachhead five miles wide and a mile deep, including an airfield; military barracks; the port with its homes, warehouses, and workshops; and seven wharves that would take oceangoing ships. However, all had been bombed and shelled into rubble.

The country around Balikpapan was reasonably open, but it soon became thick bush dominated by a multitude of fortified hills, knolls, and ridges riddled with tunnels occupied by the Japanese. Many were armed with naval and field guns. They were bombed and strafed and shelled with little effect, and it fell to companies, platoons, and single soldiers to clear them and fight off counterattacks and raids.

A few days after the landing it was found that because of the sea swell it was not possible to land enough stores and supplies over the beach. The port would have to be used, but the Navy was reluctant to do so until assured that the other side of the bay was clear of Japanese guns. A battalion of troops and some commandos landed across the bay, and a sweep of the area found half a dozen guns that had been destroyed. Evidence showed that more guns had been moved back into the hills. These were pursued and some destroyed, while the others were driven out of range of the port.

Fighting continued until the beginning of August, when all the objectives of the landing had been secured and a Dutch civil affairs unit installed. On August 16, Japanese forces were ordered to lay down their arms, and leaflets were dropped from planes advising them of Japan's surrender.

Major Tom Harrisson and Major Rex Blow were leading teams in the search of a large organized force of Japanese in the upper Trusan River area when they came upon an upland plain and found themselves in the middle of a battle between the Japanese force and hundreds of tribesmen. For two more days the fighting continued until the Japanese concentrated on a low hill for a last stand. It was here that Harrisson and his party managed to hold off the blood-lusting tribesmen and send in a Japanese interpreter under a white flag.

An hour later, the interpreter came back with Captain Fujino, the most senior officer left alive, who handed Harrisson his sword. Nearly 350 soldiers followed him and laid down their arms. It was October 29, 1945, and this was the last surrender on Borneo. It was the end of the war in the Southwest Pacific Area.

The war ended with the use of Australian soldiers in these campaigns and the campaigns themselves a matter of deep controversy. The controversy had begun with soldiers' letters home saying they were involved in mopping-up operations that were of no importance to the ending of the war with Japan. These soldiers' view of the war found its way into the hands of elected representatives and the newspapers, and questions were asked of the government in the national parliament.

What emerged from it was that the government had compelling reasons for continuing the fighting beyond the obvious aim of defeating the Japanese, reasons concerned with Australian self-interest after the war. The government affirmed that it was of vital importance to the future of Australia and its status at the peace table that its military effort should guarantee an effective voice. It was this that confirmed for the troops, and for many people in Australia, that the troops were fighting "a politicians' war."

In effect, they were not. They were fighting a generals' war, the war of Sir Thomas Blamey, whose decisions stepped up the fighting with the bypassed Japanese and launched the offensives on the islands of Bougainville and New Guinea, decisions he was neither competent nor authorized to make. The campaign on Borneo was at the direction of General Douglas MacArthur. The politicians simply went along with the generals, and the fighting and dying continued until after the war officially ended. □

John Brown has contributed to WWII History *with stories on the ordeal of the Mediterranean island of Malta, the Battle of Cassino, and the Battle of El Alamein. He hails from Minyama, Queensland, Australia.*

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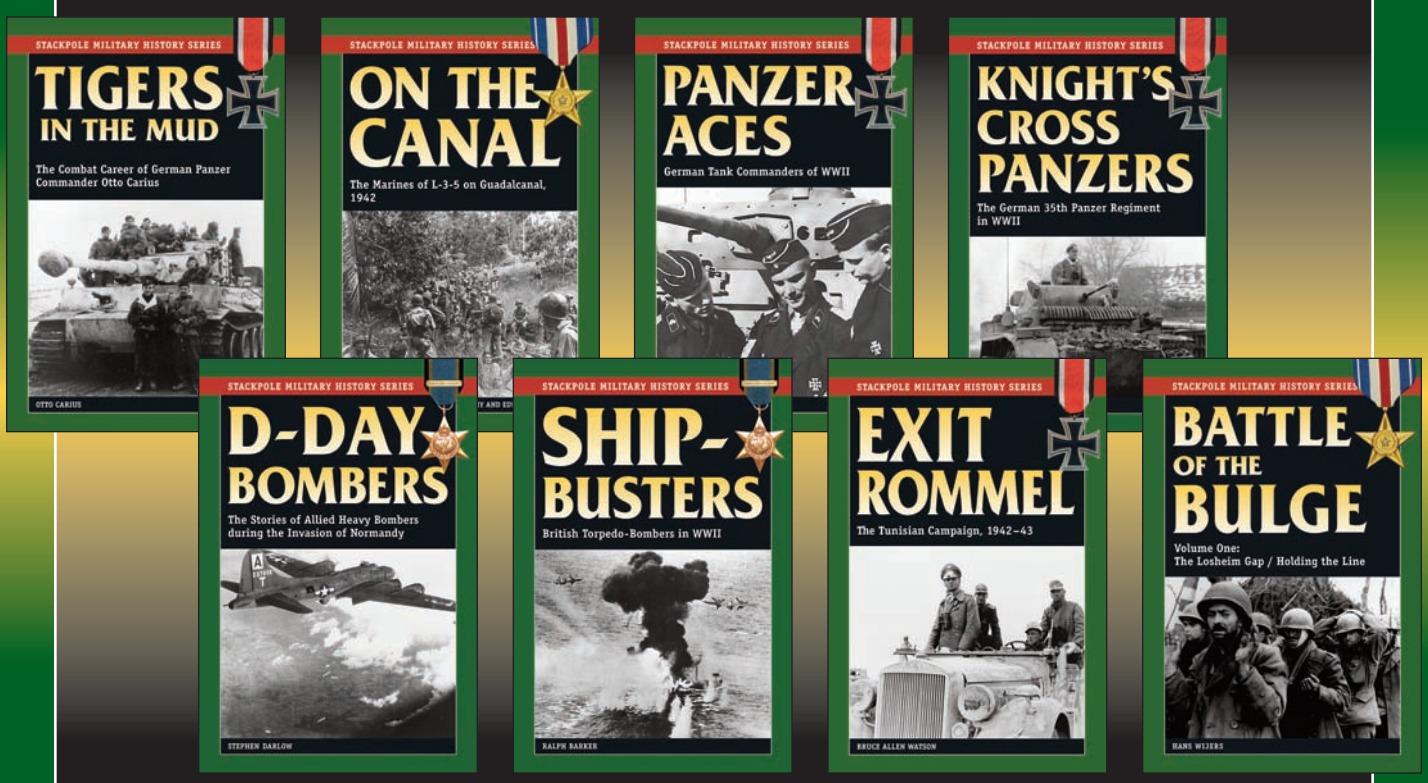

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