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Cover: A battle-hardened lieutenant in one of the American airborne divisions poses in a field near St. Saveur, France, in June 1944. Photo courtesy of Popperfoto/Getty Images.

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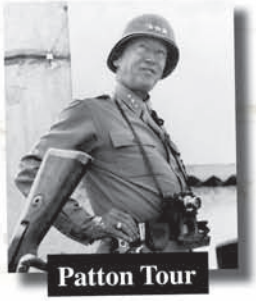

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Editorial

The mystery of HMAS *Sydney* has been uncovered.

THE WORST NAVAL DISASTER IN THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA HAD BEEN, FOR decades, shrouded in something of a mystery. The light cruiser HMAS *Sydney* had been a high profile warship, but not only because she was modern, sleek, and bore the name of a major city—the capital of New South Wales. The *Sydney* was British-built, and the opposition to the ruling party in Australia at once decried the purchase from Britain rather than constructing a naval vessel at home.

Nevertheless, the *Sydney* was commissioned on September 24, 1935, and her complement of 645 officers and sailors took great pride in their assignment. With the outbreak of World War II, the cruiser participated in minor engagements and convoy duty in the Mediterranean Sea prior to returning to Australia for refit and assignment to convoy duty in the Indian Ocean.

On November 19, 1941, off the coast of Western Australia, *Sydney* encountered what appeared to be a merchantman sailing alone. When the cruiser hailed the vessel requesting identification, the reply came that it was the Dutch freighter *Straat Malakka*. However, no ship by that name was thought to be in the vicinity. In actuality, the vessel was the disguised German surface raider *Kormoran*. A cat and mouse exchange ensued, and finally when the Germans realized that the game was over, they opened fire on the Australian warship with devastating results.

One report stated, "*Sydney* obviously thought the ship was friendly and was taken by surprise when, after she asked what she believed to be [a friendly ship] to give her secret call sign, the response was a number of salvos that destroyed *Sydney*'s bridge and amidships superstructure and a torpedo strike that crippled the ship and her forward guns."

Apparently, the Sydney had closed to within 1,000 yards of the raider, and the *Kormoran*'s 5.9-inch guns were fired accurately. Grievously wounded, *Sydney* nevertheless inflicted serious damage on the *Kormoran,* and both were in dire straits. Down by the bow and with several fires raging, the Australian cruiser distanced itself from its adversary, steering to the southeast. During the night, the stricken warship sank with all hands. The crew of *Kormoran* was unable to extinguish multiple fires below decks and eventually abandoned the ship, which was scuttled around midnight.

Sydney's commander, Captain Joseph Burnett, has been criticized for his handling of the ship during the encounter and for surrendering the tactical advantages of speed and firepower by approaching an unidentified vessel too closely. However, it is impossible to determine exactly what the circumstances were at the time.

The report noted, "It can never be known what matters were, in fact, operating in Capt. Burnett's mind when he decided to take the *Sydney* to the position described. Nor can it be known what advice, if any, he sought or was given by other officers on the bridge."

Considering that all 645 crewmen aboard the *Sydney* perished while 320 of the *Kormoran* complement of 400 sailors survived, the eyewitness accounts of the engagement provided by the Germans were met with skepticism. The Australian government conducted a search when the *Sydney* failed to return to Fremantle, and the news of the sinking was not made public for 11 days, giving rise to a number of vague theories as to the fate of the vessel. Some surmised that a Japanese submarine had torpedoed the ship and machine-gunned the crewmen in the water.

When the wreckage of both ships was discovered in March 2008, it was noted that *Sydney*'s bow had separated from the rest of the vessel, while the hull was resting upright on the ocean floor about 128 miles off the Australian coast. The controversy over what really happened was renewed, and an Australian government commission was formed weeks later to evaluate all evidence. Its conclusion supported the statements made by the Germans years earlier. The Australian cruiser had been observed as daylight faded, fires raging and barely under control. When the *Sydney* disappeared over the horizon, the Germans saw the glow of the fires as late as 10 PM. From that, they concluded that the ship had sunk sometime afterward.

Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, commander of the Australian Defence Force, stated, "For a long time our nation has struggled to understand how our greatest maritime disaster occurred. The unanswered questions have haunted the families of those brave sailors and airmen who never came home."

The case of the cruiser HMAS *Sydney* is closed. For some, the mystery of the fate of their loved ones has been put to rest. However, many more stories of the missing from World War II remain to be solved. Soldiers, sailors, and airmen from many nations lie in undiscovered graves around the globe.

Michael E. Haskew

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Never Forget

Dear Editor,

I have been picking up my son's copy of your magazine and admired the attention to detail and the amount of input from veterans.

I was wondering if there are any former Special Escort Guards from the trials that are still around. My father was one of the guards and had spoken to us about his memories of the event. He was able to return to the courtroom many years later and had found a few people in our area that had been there in other times and in other roles.

My father told us about the clean-up efforts and the house-to-house searches. He trained for the ski patrol and climbed a mountain near Garmisch. And then he would tell us of how he became a guard. He was on watch one night when the colonel came in and tried to enter without a pass. My father refused and after many attempts the colonel left. The next day my dad was made a Special Escort Guard.

Throughout the trials he stood watch. He saw the movie reels and could hear the American and English judges and lawyers. He escorted the elite of the German military to the gallows and had his gloves turn red with blood as he carried them down.

He was proud to be a member of the Army. He never wanted any of us to forget what happened in World War II and he also taught us the importance of those trials. Never forget.

Ann Hein
Markesan, Wisconsin

Carrier War in the Pacific

Dear Editor:

In Sam McGowan's interesting piece (Ordnance, Winter 2009 issue) on the F4U Corsair, a great aircraft, he states that, in 1942, "due to heavy carrier losses at the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, naval aviation was temporarily out of the war..."

While there were significant losses in both men and aircraft in these battles, along with the losses of the *Lexington* and the *Yorktown,* naval aviation was hardly "out of the war." The *Saratoga,* the *Enterprise,* and the *Wasp* were all in support of the initial landings at Guadalcanal, despite Admiral Fletcher's decision to withdraw them early. All three were involved in the late August Battle of the Eastern Solomons. The *Saratoga* was torpedoed at the end of August, returning for repairs to the West Coast.

The *Wasp* was sunk by torpedoes shortly afterward. Still, the *Enterprise* and *Hornet* participated in the late October Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands.

Only then, with the *Hornet* sunk and the *Enterprise* damaged, were carriers temporarily out of the war. Even then, aircraft from the damaged *Enterprise,* staged up through Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, contributed to the sinking of several Japanese ships during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal (including, I believe, the damaged battleship *Hiei,* the heavy cruiser *Kinugasa,* and several of Tanaka's transports). Pretty good record for being "out of the war." Despite this one point of correction, I found McGowan's article quite strong.

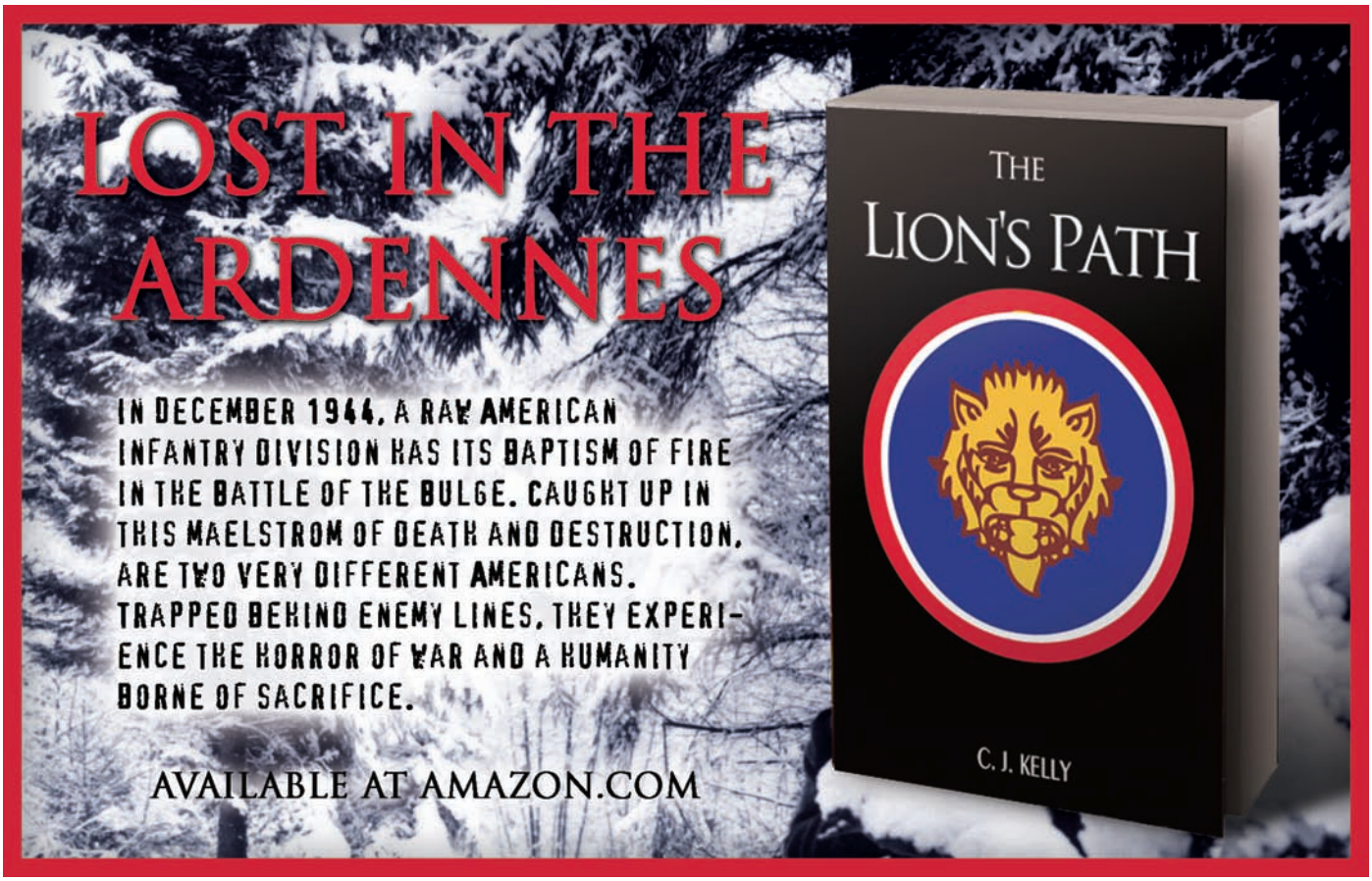
Vincent Casaregola
St. Louis, Missouri

British Losses in Ceylon

Dear Sirs:

I just finished reading Profiles in the January 2010 issue of *WWII History*, and I must say that I really enjoyed it. I guess I could be accused of being a nitpicker, but feel that a publication that is supposed to be history-oriented should be as true as possible in its facts.

The article about British Air Defense of Ceylon in April 1942 is excellent, however it is not totally correct. On page 14, Mr. Kugel states: "The Japanese attack on Ceylon failed to destroy the British Eastern Fleet. Unknown to the Japanese, the British ships had been alerted and had



moved to sea.The Japanese sank only an armed British merchant cruiser and an old destroyer."

The facts are that the British also on the day of April 5, 1942, suffered the loss of two cruisers, HMS *Cornwall* and HMS *Dorsetshire,* due to Japanese air attacks. Also, on April 9, 1942, the Japanese Striking Force launched attacks on Trincomalee, Ceylon, which resulted in the sinking of the aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes,* off Batticaloa, Ceylon. Lost with *Hermes* were the destroyer *Vampire* and the corvette *Holly Hock*. It was a calamity for British Naval Forces in the Indian Ocean.

Joseph Russell Jr.
King, North Carolina

Cuba's Batista

Dear Editor:

Recently I found your magazine with a nice, interesting article about a German spy in Havana (Top Secret, January 2010 issue).

I must take extreme umbrage at the portraying of President Fulgencio Batista, may he rest in peace, as a dictator.

To clarify your historical misunderstanding, let me inform you that President Batista was duly and democratically elected in 1940 and he left office in 1944 also as a result of a democratically conducted election. The description of the president as a thug left much to be desired in your article. While it is true that he had ample support from the United States during the Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower administrations, he did not do any dirty work for anyone.

While most of the people alive at that time are now dead, several of us who had the privilege of hearing some of this care for the purpose of history.

It is rather lamentable that the president is mentioned in such a bad light, while Mr. Fidel Castro is not mentioned as a true dictator who has just completed 51 years of revolutionary administration with thousands of dead and political prisoners who dared to oppose his government.

For your information, General Manuel Benitez and Colonel Mariano Faget—who I knew and are both dead—used the standard propaganda at that time. I would also like to remind your historian that Cuba, along with the other American countries with the exception of Argentina and I believe Paraguay, where Higinio Moringo and Alfred Stroessner were heads of the government, declared neutrality because of sociopolical reasons.

The loss of shipping off the Cuban coast was a result of Wilhem Canaris's deployment of German submarine operations in the Caribbean under Operation Neuland (New Land), with *U-67, U-502, U-161,* and *U-129* off the coast of British and Dutch Guiana for the purpose of squeezing the oil supplies from the Esso Refinery in Aruba, the Venezuelan oil shipments, and the bauxite supplies required for aluminum production.

As for Mr. Spruille Braden, U.S. ambassador to Cuba, I knew him in the early 1960s in New York. He was a very good friend of President Batista, and Batista was never a reluctant ally of the United States. As far as Lüning's trial is concerned, he was a spy and was duly tried, convicted, and executed as a spy. That also happened in the United States, if I recall correctly.

I know you probably don't care about this letter, but I did it to set the record straight.

Joseph Cubeiro
Avon Park, Florida

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By George Tipton Wilson

"The Submarine Appendectomy," by artist John Falter © 1945

Submarine Surgeon

A pharmacist's mate performed an emergency appendectomy in a combat zone.

IN CRAMPED QUARTERS ABOARD THE SUBMARINE USS *SEADRAGON*, BENEATH the Pacific Ocean, with enemy warships circling above, 22-year-old pharmacist's mate Wheeler Bryson (Johnny) Lipes was ordered to perform an emergency appendectomy on seaman Darrell Dean Rector.

It was the first such operation performed on a submarine, and it was all the more miraculous because Lipes was a high school dropout, he had never attempted such an emergency procedure, and the *Seadragon* lacked proper surgical equipment. But with the cooperation of other crew members, Lipes began the daunting assignment of saving the life of his fellow crewman.

On the morning of September 11, 1942, his 19th birthday, Darrell Rector awakened with stomach pain and asked for a laxative. When Lipes examined him, he determined that his patient's appendix was about to burst, but he was reluctant to work on him.

"He had the classic symptoms of appendicitis," Lipes remembered. "His temperature was rising. His abdominal muscles were getting that washboard rigidity. He began to flex his right leg up on his abdomen to gain some relief."

When Rector's condition worsened, Lipes went to the commanding officer to explain the seriousness of the situation. "The CO and I had a long talk," Lipes said. "He asked me what I planned to do, and I told him 'Nothing.' He lectured me that we were there to do the best we could. 'I fire torpedoes every day and some of them miss,' he reminded me. I told him that I could not fire this torpedo and miss. When he asked me if I could perform the surgery, I said yes. He then ordered me to do it.

"Abdominal surgery by pharmacist mates was frowned on, but because of my training, I had confidence in my ability," remembered Lipes. "Darrell had told the skipper, 'Whatever Lipes wants to do is OK with me.'"

Commander William B. Ferrall suggested that Lipes talk with the patient before the operation began. "Look, Darrell, I never did anything like this before," Lipes told him. "You don't have much chance of pulling through without our removing your appendix."

"I know just how it is, Doc," Rector answered.

It was the first time in his life anybody had called Lipes "Doc." But there was in him now, added to the steadiness that goes with a submariner's profession, a new calmness.

Commander Ferrall wrote the order on Rector's medical record, and Lipes began preparation for the surgery. While Japanese destroyers crisscrossed the Pacific overhead, the submarine lay quietly in deep water.

Lipes chose Lieutenant Norvell Ward as his chief assistant, and Lieutenant Charles S. Manning was chief nurse. Other officers, all his senior in age and rank, were recruited for various assignments. Even the skipper played a role in the operation. He was made "recorder." It was his job to keep count of the sponges that went into Rector. A double count of the tablespoons used as retractors was kept, one by Skipper Ferrall and one by the cook, who was passing them out from the galley.

Ward, of Indian Head, Maryland, became Lipes's assistant surgeon. His primary job was to place tablespoons in Rector's side as Lipes cut through successive layers of muscle. "I chose him for his coolness and dependability," Lipes said afterward of his superior officer. "He acted as my third and fourth hands."

Manning, from Cheraw, South Carolina, took the assignment that is known in a normal operating room as "circulating nurse." He drew the task of seeing that packets of sterile dressings kept coming and that torpedo alcohol and boiling water arrived regularly from the galley.

At the outset of the surgery, rubber gloves dipped in torpedo alcohol were drawn upon

RIGHT: Pharmacist's Mate Johnny Lipes and his wife display kitchen utensils similar to those he used to perform an emergency appendectomy at sea. TOP: In this painting by artist John Falter for the July 1943 issue of *Esquire*, Pharmacist's Mate Johnny Lipes performs an emergency appendectomy at sea during a combat patrol of the submarine USS *Seadragon*.

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the youthful medic's hands. The fingers were too long. The rubber ends dribbled limply over.

"You look like Mickey Mouse," one of the onlookers commented. Lipes grinned behind his gauze mask.

The "surgeon," wearing a blue blouse with white-taped collar and a white duck cap, had to fashion a handle for the scalpel he used. Bent spoons served as muscular retractors. The cook came up with a tea strainer for an ether mask. The instruments were sterilized in torpedo alcohol mixed with water and boiled. Surgical garb included pajama coats worn backwards and various pieces of cloth for masks and turbans.

The size of the officer's wardroom (commandeered for the surgical suite) was approximately that of a Pullman railroad car drawing room. It was flanked by bench seats attached to the wall, with a table occupying most of the room. The table was too short for Rector's six-foot length, so the team pulled out the drawer to hold his feet. The ceiling was so low it was necessary to enter the room with the knees crooked. Lipes stood that way during the two and one-half hour operation.

From the beginning, the crew was worried about having no equipment to determine Rector's blood pressure or blood count to determine the risk of infection. It crossed Lipes's mind that Rector could even be a hemophiliac. But an idea was hatched to solve the problem.

"We took a drop of blood from Rector's ear, put it on top of an inverted glass, raised it with a hypodermic needle and timed the clotting with a torpedo stopwatch," said Lipes.

The next problem was the effect of the barometric pressure on the ether administered to the patient. Rector needed to be in the third stage of anesthesia, totally unconscious. But this was worked out without incident.

Lipes admitted to a lot of stress and anxiety during the preparation. "We had the most meager environmental support in which to work. When I got behind the table, I knew the group was relying on me. This can give you an empty feeling in the pit of your stomach. When I made the first incision, I asked myself, 'What are you doing?' After that, when I couldn't very well turn back, confidence came."

But the three-inch incision in Rector's abdomen brought another problem.

"Normally when the incision is made, the appendix will pop up. But this one didn't. It was like a navigator missing his landfall. It occurred to me, 'Oh my God! Is this guy reversed?' There are people like that with organs opposite where they should be. I slipped my finger down under the cecum—the blind gut—and felt it there. Suddenly I understood why it hadn't popped up where I could see it. I turned the cecum over. The appendix was five inches long in comparison to the average length of a man's little finger. It was adhered, buried at the distal tip. It looked gangrenous two-thirds of the way. What luck, I thought. My first one couldn't be easy.

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: The submarine USS *Seadragon* rests off Hunters Point near San Francisco on May 24, 1945. The emergency operation Johnny Lipes performed aboard the submarine was recreated in movies and reported in print media. TOP: The Navy yard at Cavite, Philippines, burns furiously following a raid by Japanese aircraft on December 10, 1941, three days after the United States entered World War II with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

"I detached the appendix, tied it off in two places, and then removed it. I then cauterized the stump with phenol. I then neutralized the phenol with torpedo alcohol. There was no penicillin in those days. When you think of what we have in the armamentarium today, I marvel."

When a reporter asked about the availability of sulfa, Lipes answered, "We had some tablets that we ground into a powder and then put into an oven to kill any spores. This was all I had. I had given this kid a three-inch incision, yet he healed well and was back on duty in a few days. In fact, the ship's cook said, 'Doc, you must have sewed him with rubber bands, the way he eats.'"

Within a week Rector was performing minor duties, and soon he was fully recovered. "We were one of the earliest to use the new technique of having the patient up moving around the second day." Lipes explained. "We were under enemy attack, and depth charges were being dropped around us."

While Rector fully recovered from his operation, it was ironic that he died two years later aboard a different submarine, the USS *Tang*. When the *Tang* fired one of its own torpedoes, it circled back and struck the submarine.

After the operation, Lipes put the removed appendix in a bottle of alcohol. Later he took the bottled appendix to the Australian General Hospital to discount rumors that the operation should never have been performed. The hospital gave him a receipt for the appendix and then, through a pathology study, determined that two-thirds of it was gangrenous and should have been removed.

Lipes seemed so unimpressed with the feat that he had not even mentioned it in letters home to his wife. However, the submarine sent a report of the enemy losses for the day: "One merchant ship, one oil tanker and one removed appendix."

This intrigued war correspondent George Weller of the *Chicago Daily News*. He smelled a story in the cryptic report. His account of the operation won him a Pulitzer Prize. The incident became the grist for a popular World War II movie, *Destination Tokyo,* starring Cary Grant as the skipper and William Prince as "Pills," the surgeon.

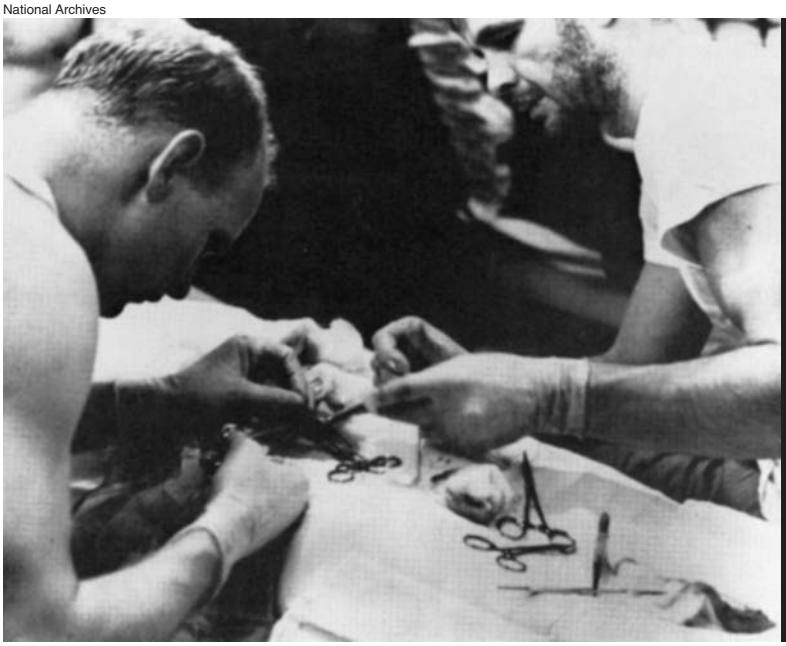
A trail of publicity followed, including a half-dozen other Hollywood productions that included the operation. In one of them, *Run Silent, Run Deep,* the crew, including Clark Gable, is shown watching *Destination Tokyo.*

Then came the radio talk shows. Then guest shots on the *Cavalcade of America, I've Got a Secret,* and others. The NBC television series *The Silent Service* included one episode called "Operation Seadragon," that portrayed the incident.

Although the daring operation inspired a nation during a period of desperately bad news from the Pacific, it did not set well in certain military quarters. Lipes was ostracized by Navy Medical Corps physicians. They were angered by his actions, even though he had been obeying his captain's orders. There was even talk of a court-martial by the outraged U.S. Surgeon General.

"After we submitted our report [of the surgery]," Lipes explained, "there was a great deal of consternation in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery [BUMED]. Everyone did then what they would probably do now. They reacted to a situation they knew nothing about. There was an old warrant officer at BUMED who was on duty the night the message came in. He told me that there were many doctors back there who were very upset about what I had done."

National Archives



Aboard the submarine USS *Silversides,* Pharmacist's Mate Thomas A. Moore performs an emergency appendectomy while at sea. During World War II, a total of 11 such operations were conducted, and each one was successful.

Lipes had been in the Philippines several months when World War II broke out. He was assigned to the U.S. naval hospital, near Cavite, but he asked to be transferred to the fleet as soon as it could be arranged. He had been assigned to the *Sealion* (the *Seadragon*'s sister submarine) when the Japanese bombed the Cavite Navy Yard near Manila two days after Pearl Harbor. The *Sealion* became the first U.S. submarine casualty of the war.

"When the Japanese bombed the Navy yard," Lipes said, "they destroyed everything in sight. Shrapnel from the *Sealion* killed crew members on the *Seadragon.* I got out through the forward torpedo hatch, went into the water and got on land at the pier. This was around noon, and I worked until dark treating the wounded."

That night he found a motor launch that was adrift and with "as many as we could pick up" went across Manila Bay where the submarine was tied up. Clad only in dungarees and Chinese sandals, Lipes was given a toothbrush, shirt, and folding cot by the crew.

He had just stretched out on the cot when the loudspeaker summoned him to sick bay. The division medical officers had assembled three or four members of the crew to select a replacement for the pharmacist's mate who had been wounded. Lipes was the only man present who was qualified for submarine service, so he was given immediate assignment as pharmacist's mate first class on the *Seadragon.*

Although Lipes was not seriously injured when the *Seadragon* was hit, he received a Purple Heart for his wounds. He bore scars from the attack for the remainder of his life. Navy recognition for his historic surgery did not come until 60 years after it occurred.

Asked once if he had ever received any official recognition for the surgery, Lipes answered, "The day I retired I got one of those canned retirement letters signed by the Surgeon General. He gave me credit for bravery in action during the sinking of the *Sealion.* Yet neither it nor any document I ever received mentioned the appendectomy."

Lipes was finally recognized by the Navy for the operation that had gained the service so much recognition. At a ceremony at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal. At age 84, he was reunited with an old friend, Arthur Killiam, also 84, who also served on the *Seadragon* at the time of the operation.

Killiam said the young pharmacist's mate never wavered during the emergency surgery. "He told the skipper he could do it. He went right after it, unusually calm and deliberate."

Lipes received the medal after Jan Herman, historian of the Navy Medical Department, began looking into the case. Past efforts to grant him the award failed because officials believed the statute of limitations had expired.

"I found Commander Lipes had never gotten any kind of recognition," Herman told the *Daily News* of Jacksonville, North Carolina. Herman interviewed and videotaped the submarine surgeon several times for the Navy.

"It was spectacular," Lipes told an Associated Press reporter. "The Navy certainly made up for the 63 years of delay in the medal."

Commenting on the recognition later, Lipes said, "Personally, I'm not overwhelmed with awards, but I think it was important they present the medal. It brings about some closure of things that fall through the cracks."

Lipes paused and then added that he always thought his patient was the courageous one. "I have asked myself, 'Would I have gotten on that table and let someone do the same thing to me?' Rector was one of the most courageous men I ever met."

After the publicity from the daring operation aboard the *Seadragon* caught the attention of the American public, Lipes returned to the States and reported to the naval hospital in Philadelphia, where he was promoted to warrant officer. "I then represented the Navy in war bond drives and visits to war plants," he said. "For about eight months, I would go from plant to plant making speeches, trying to increase production and sell bonds. This was in addition to my regular duties at the hospital."

Lipes retired from the Navy as a lieutenant commander. He had been commissioned an ensign in the Navy's Medical Service Corps. He later attended the Naval Justice School in Newport, Rhode Island, and participated in defense work in court-martial proceedings.

His final Navy active duty assignment was as finance officer at the Memphis Naval Air Station. When he retired from the Navy, he became director of the West Tennessee Chest Hospital before transferring to city of Memphis hospitals as executive officer. There, he supervised 2,606 employees, administered a $45 million budget, and coped with daily emergencies. He finally ended his medical career as president of Memorial Medical Center in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Wherever he went in his later career, a copy of a painting by John Falter hung behind his desk. It was a reminder of a time when equipment and modern facilities were out of the question, and makeshift surgery was the only answer. The painting shows an "amateur" surgical team crouched over a patient whose life or death hung on what a pharmacist's mate, with no experience in surgery, could perform.

Wherever Lipes traveled, memories of the emergency operation followed him. "I was on an airplane recently," he related once. "The man next to me was reading a magazine with one of *Ripley's Believe It or Not* features in it. It told about a submarine sailor who removed the appendix of a shipmate. My seatmate turned to me and said, 'Can you believe this?' I read it, shook my head and told him, 'Don't you believe a word of it.'" □

Memphis, Tennessee, author George T. Wilson has been a staff writer for such newspapers as the Nashville Tennessean *and the* Memphis Commercial Appeal.

By Glenn Barnett

Submarine Pioneer

Charles "Swede" Momsen was an innovator and advocate of the U.S. Navy's submarine fleet.

IN JULY 1943, THE AMERICAN SUBMARINE USS *TINOSA* WAS ON PATROL IN JAPANese waters when she came across an unescorted oil tanker. It was big at 20,000 tons. There were only a few that size in the Japanese fleet, and her sinking would be a huge blow to the enemy. The *Tinosa* maneuvered for position at right angles to the lumbering tanker and fired four torpedoes. At least two of them struck their target but none exploded.

Alarmed, the tanker raised speed and fled. The *Tinosa* fired again from an angle behind. This time two torpedoes hit their target and exploded, leaving the tanker dead in the water. The *Tinosa* moved in for the kill. At 900 yards the skipper of the *Tinosa* fired eight more fish at the sitting duck. All failed to explode.

It was the last straw. Since the beginning of the war, submarine skippers had complained that the Navy's new Mark 6 torpedoes failed to explode on target. Thousands of tons of Japanese shipping had escaped unharmed due to the faulty workings of the Mark 6. Yet, the Division of Naval Ordnance claimed that there was nothing wrong with the torpedoes. They claimed that the failure must be attributable to the crews of the submarines.

All photos: U.S. Naval Historical Center

When the *Tinosa* returned to Pearl Harbor, her skipper complained bitterly to the commander of submarines Pacific, Vice Admiral Charles Lockwood. Yet, when the *Tinosa*'s last torpedo was examined, no defect could be found. Lockwood had a big problem. He had frustrated and angry submariners on the one hand and an intransigent Ordnance Department in Washington on the other. He turned to his friend, Captain Charles "Swede" Momsen, for advice. Momsen was the commander of a submarine squadron but, more importantly, he was a hands-on problem solver who knew how to get things done.

Unwilling to wait for the ponderous Navy bureaucracy in Washington to solve the problem, Momsen suggested that a target range be set up on the nearby island of Kahoolawe. The island has sheer cliffs rising from shallow water. Momsen suggested that torpedoes be fired at the cliffs and

Crewmen aboard the stricken submarine USS *Tang* put on Momsen Lungs as they attempt to reach the surface, 180 feet above, in October 1944. Only eight members of the *Tang*'s crew survived. LEFT: Admiral Charles Momsen, seen here in 1953, was a pioneer submariner of the U.S. Navy. His inventions advanced rescue operations worldwide.

MEET THE PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE

He survived two ghettos, Dachau and Auschwitz before being liberated by the Americans.

She was engaged to an American paratrooper and joined the Women's Land Army in England.

During Nazi occupation in the Netherlands he carried messages on his bicycle for the Dutch resistance.

She lived a stone's throw from Utah Beach and was among the first French citizens to be liberated.

He slept in the cold attic during the Battle of the Bulge while Germans occupied his home.

A Frenchman in the US in 1940, he joined US Army Intelligence and went behind enemy lines in Normandy.

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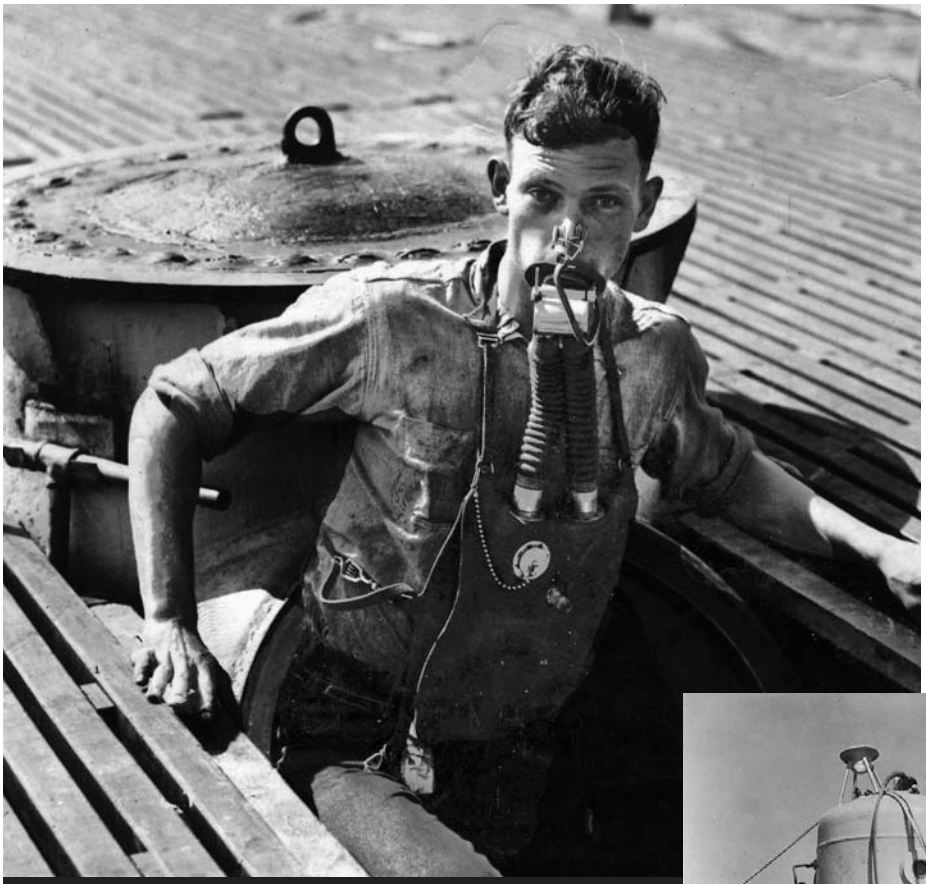

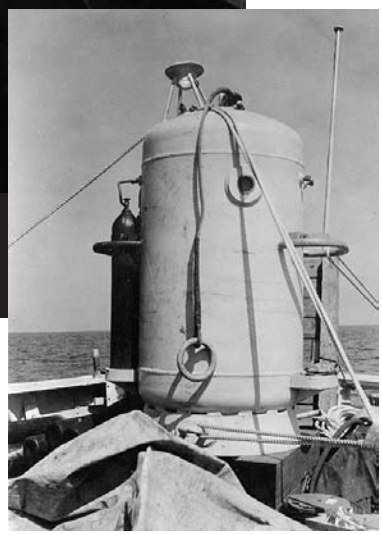

ABOVE: Seaman A.L. Rosenkotter aboard the submarine V-5, later named USS *Narwhal,* demonstrates the use of the Momsen Lung and the after escape hatch aboard the sub in July 1930. RIGHT: A diving bell rests on the deck of the USS *Falcon* as the effort to raise the USS *Squalus* gets underway.

any duds be examined.

The first fish ran true and exploded against the cliffs, but the second was a dud and sank to the bottom 50 feet down. Momsen jumped into the water with his snorkel gear, located the torpedo, and supervised the recovery of the live warhead. The torpedo was gingerly lifted onto the deck of the service ship *Widgeon* and examined. Even with 685 pounds of explosives in the warhead, Momsen did not hesitate to take the exploder apart. He found that the firing pin had not struck the primer cap hard enough to cause an explosion.

The workshops at Pearl Harbor modified the firing pins, and submariners found new lethality in their long, lonely vigils at sea. The Ordnance Department sheepishly admitted to the defect.

Momsen received the Legion of Merit for his successful efforts at discovering and fixing the torpedo problem that had plagued the submarine fleet for a year and a half. It was not the first or the last time that Swede Momsen would save the day.

Born in New York and raised in Minnesota, Momsen was appointed to Annapolis from his hometown of St. Paul. He was commissioned in 1919. After spending two years on the battleship *Oklahoma,* he requested a transfer to submarines. His commanding officer advised against it. Despite the path of destruction made by German U-boats in the Great War, the Navy was still the realm of the battleships and their advocates. "Pigboat" was the derisive name given to the submarine. Their officers and crews inhabited the lower rungs of the social ladder.

In the 1920s, submarines were cramped and uncomfortable. Duty aboard was primitive with no showers, no toilets, and no refrigeration. Meat spoiled rapidly. Fruit and vegetables lasted little longer. If a submarine should sink, her whole crew could be lost.

In 1925, that is just what happened. In September of that year, the *S-51* was inadvertently rammed and sunk by a passing ocean liner. Momsen, in command of her sister ship, the *S-1,* was the first on the scene of the disaster and the first to find the sunken sub. There was nothing he could do to help the men trapped below, many of whom were his friends. Still living when their sub reached the bottom, the men slowly died when their air ran out.

The feeling of helplessness at the loss sparked an idea. He began to think about how such a tragedy could be averted. He came up with the idea of a diving bell that could be guided down to the deck of a sunken sub. If flat plates could be welded as rings around the fore and aft hatches of all submarines in advance, the descending bell, or rescue chamber, could form a seal with the plate, the hatch could be opened, and survivors brought safely to the surface.

When he had fleshed out his ideas, he presented them to his base commander, Captain Ernest J. King, who later served as chief of naval operations during World War II. King endorsed the idea and sent it on to the Navy Bureau of Construction and Repair for evaluation. It was Momsen's first experience with a hidebound naval bureaucracy. He heard nothing for a year. He thought his idea had been rejected out of hand as unworkable.

Toward the end of 1926, Momsen was due for a transfer to shore duty. To his surprise he was assigned to the Bureau of Construction and Repair to the very desk where he had sent his rescue chamber idea. On his first day of duty he rummaged through the "in" basket on his desk. There at the bottom, untouched from the day it had been received a year earlier, was his submission. He was furious.

His rage gave way to renewed determination. He began to push for the evaluation of his idea and was met with disdain and derision. It was impudent of him to be so pushy about an idea, his own idea at that. His design was summarily rejected.

Then fate intervened. Shortly after his proposal was turned down, another submarine was inadvertently sunk. The *S-4* lay on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean near Cape Cod, 110 feet down. Her crew was still alive as their ship lay there. They were able to tap out messages to the surface as they slowly consumed all of the breathable air and one by one died in their watery tomb.

There was outrage from Congress and the public alike. Something had to be done to save the crews of submarines. In the meantime, Momsen had another idea, which he would pursue without going through official channels.

He wanted to avoid bureaucratic interference. It was a simple idea that did not require official evaluation or approval for construction of a prototype.

With a group of volunteers, he began work on a personal breathing bag that a man could strap to his chest and use to ascend from a sunken sub. The device would contain breathable air that on the surface could be used as a flotation device. The inflatable bladder soon earned the nickname, the Momsen Lung.

Enlisting a civilian engineer, Momsen began work on a prototype. The finished product, made of discarded inner tube, looked for all the world like a hot water bottle. Tests were begun in diving tanks with volunteer divers. Momsen always dove first at each new depth. By late 1928, he decided to demonstrate his lung. He chose a spot in Chesapeake Bay that was 110 feet deep, the same depth that the *S-4* had sunk, and was lowered to the bottom in a modified bell. He rose to the surface by breathing the air in his Momsen Lung and proved the validity of his design.

All of this work had been done on a shoestring and outside of official Navy channels. The brass learned of Momsen's success the same way that the rest of the world did, in the newspapers. Embarrassed by his success and yet anxious for it as well, the admirals now gave their blessing to his research on the lung and the rescue chamber.

Momsen next demonstrated that he could ascend from 200 feet down using the lung. The Momsen Lungs became standard equipment on submarines, and all personnel had to be qualified in their use before becoming submariners.

Momsen then turned his attention to the rescue bell. Five feet wide and seven feet tall, the bell was designed to winch its way down to a stricken sub along a line that a deep sea diver had attached to the hatch of the sub. The chamber formed a watertight seal against the flat plates that were welded around the hatches of all new and existing submarines.

Momsen was continually testing and improving the design of his inventions with a small crew of dedicated deep-sea divers. While in the midst of testing, with a diver in the tank on May 23, 1939, he got a phone call. The newest submarine in the fleet, the USS *Squalus,* was missing and presumed lost at sea. The Navy turned to Swede Momsen as the only man capable of rescuing survivors at the bottom of the ocean.

The *Squalus* had been in the midst of a shakedown cruise when her captain ordered a dive. When a ventilation valve failed to close, the *Squalus* rapidly filled with water and sank to a

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ABOVE: Following the tragic loss of the submarine USS *Squalus,* U.S. Navy deep sea divers don suits during rescue and salvage operations. Thirty-three seamen were rescued from the sunken submarine in one of history's great undersea rescue efforts. BELOW: The USS *Falcon* and the submarine USS *Sculpin* take up positions during the effort to raise the sunken *Squalus* from the ocean floor.

depth of 240 feet off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Thirty-three members of her crew of 59 were able to close themselves into the control room and forward torpedo room but could not raise their ship. The captain considered it too great a risk to allow his wet and shivering crew to use the Momsen Lung in the frigid waters.

Momsen and his deep-sea diving team were rushed to the scene. A buoy from the stricken sub bobbed on the surface marking its location, but an accident snapped the cable. Communication with the sub was lost. Worse, so was its location. One of Momsen's divers located the sub on the bottom and attached a cable to the forward hatch. The rescue chamber slowly winched down with two of his crewmen to effect the rescue.

Meanwhile, aboard the *Squalus* the surviving crewmen shivered against the wet and cold of their undersea prison. They had been down for over 24 hours by the time the bell came to rest on the forward hatch. The rescue chamber's crew brought sandwiches, coffee, and blankets for the crew who would not be able to make the first ascent. The most exhausted and weakest men went first. When they reached the surface they were taken aboard Momsen's rescue ship, the *Falcon*. The chamber descended again to fetch more crew members. The captain of the *Squalus* was the last to leave.

The rescue of the crew of the *Squalus* was a worldwide public relations windfall for the Navy, and Momsen was a hero. His success was punctuated by the fact that other nations were losing submarines around the same time and had no way to rescue their crews. For "the Swede" there was no time to celebrate. The next task for his intrepid crew of deep-sea divers was to raise the *Squalus* from its watery grave.

It was the deepest salvage job ever attempted at that time, and it too was successful. The *Squalus* was brought back to port, refurbished, and recommissioned as the USS *Sailfish*. She would fight and survive the upcoming war with 12 missions to her credit.

Swede Momsen continued his work on deep-sea diving and rescue techniques. He experimented with a breathable mixture of oxygen and helium to give divers a longer effective work time in the deep while continuing to perfect the rescue chamber and the lung.

He was stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, as an operations officer when he had an early morning call. A destroyer, the USS *Ward,* reported sinking an unidentified submarine. Without consulting his superiors as protocol demanded, Momsen dispatched another destroyer, the *Monahan,* to investigate. The *Monahan* reported excitedly that she had rammed another unidentified submarine. But by that time all hell had broken loose as Japanese planes launched their dastardly attack. The *Monahan* was the only American warship ordered into action before the air raid began. From his office, Momsen watched helplessly as the battleship USS *Arizona* blew up.

As the war progressed, Momsen was given command of a submarine squadron based in Hawaii. It was in this assignment that he risked his life while swimming over the live torpedo.

Following a stint at a desk job in Washington, D.C., Momsen returned to Hawaii and his beloved submarines. The Germans had successfully used wolfpack tactics in the Atlantic, but American submarines acted alone. As more subs came down the ways, it was feasible to start thinking about using them to hunt together.

Momsen gave himself the assignment of developing tactics unique to the Pacific War. In the Atlantic, the Allies were able to put together large convoys from a growing number of new ships. The Japanese suffered from a dwindling amount of shipping. Their convoys rarely amounted to more than a dozen or so freighters and tankers.

Momsen reasoned that for such a small target only three submarines would be necessary. Two would attack on either flank of a convoy, and one would trail behind, finishing off damaged ships. In October 1944, he got to put his theory to the test when he led the first American wolfpack against Japanese shipping. The three submarines under his command sank five ships and damaged eight others on their first patrol. The new strategy became commonplace for the rest of the war. This time Momsen was awarded the Navy Cross. With reliable torpedoes and improved tactics, the Silent Service soon swept Japanese shipping from the sea.

As a reward, Swede Momsen was given a plum assignment, command of his own battleship, the USS *South Dakota*. Under his command the mighty battleship supported operations on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. One day while the ship was taking on ammunition there was a series of explosions in the forward turrets as the forward magazines ignited, killing several sailors and threatening to destroy the ship. Timely flooding of the remaining magazines prevented the *South Dakota* from blowing up.

At the time, powder was stored in silk bags and housed in steel drums. Momsen concluded that friction between the steel casing and the silk bags caused a spark of static electricity, which ignited the disaster. His old nemesis, the Bureau of Ordnance, refused to believe it. He had burned them over the torpedo warhead incident, and he was not their favorite officer. But Momsen had enough clout to conduct his own tests on the matter. When simulated handling of powder proved that the rubbing of silk against steel could cause a spark, the Navy ceased using silk for the storage of powder.

After the war, Momsen was reassigned to his first love, submarines. He wanted to come up with a design for a submarine that would optimize speed. Yet he knew that if he went through official channels to design such a boat he would be constantly scrutinized, second guessed, and discouraged. So, he proposed to head a design team that would develop a submarine target, something for surface ships to shoot at. The ploy worked, and the Navy left him alone.

Meanwhile, he instructed his designers to sacrifice every consideration for the sake of underwater speed. "When in doubt, think speed," he told them. The result of his clandestine project was the bullet-shaped hull of his prototype, the USS *Albacore,* in 1953. She could reach underwater speeds of 30 knots in short bursts and turn on a dime. The hunter-killer surface ships that went after her were helpless against her speed and maneuverability. When Swede Momsen's design was married to nuclear power, the submarine achieved an exalted place in the Navy's offensive capability.

When Vice Admiral Momsen retired from the Navy, he was considered by many, not including those whose toes he had stepped on, to be the nation's foremost submariner. He died of cancer in 1967 at the age of 70, and an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, USS *Momsen,* is named in his honor. □

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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By Blaine Taylor

U.S. Army Combat Art Collection

German war artist Sauter painted this image titled *Soldiers on the Western Front.* Each of the soldiers, with the exception of the squad leader, carries a Mauser rifle, the staple shoulder arm of the German Army.

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The famed Mauser K98k was but one of a long line of acclaimed rifles that epitomized German arms.

ACCORDING TO THE HISTORY CHANNEL'S *TALES OF THE GUN,* THE MAUSER 98 was "the best bolt action rifle ever made." Author Robert W.D. Ball added that the Mauser was "a safe and robust rifle with a five-round clip, and the world's most popular rifle; 30 countries used it, and 100 million units were manufactured between 1898-1945, during which it was employed in both world wars by the German Army. At 49 inches long, the shorter carbine K98k World War II version witnessed 14 million produced."

Ball's epochal 2000 work *Mauser Military Rifles of the World* also calls the Model 1871 "the best rifle in history," somewhat akin to the famed French Dreyse needle gun. Indeed, proclaims one dealer, "No rifle has more history and quality than Paul Mauser's K98!"

The best Mauser was also the original, copied by every major rifle maker and never beaten. It was and remains first in strength, reliability, accuracy, and safety. Built for the rigors of combat, the K98k served its users well for a lifetime. The final long-slide, side-mount model of the renowned German Army sniper rifle of World War II used both scope and iron sights. The first of the long-eyed Relief Snipers—the original scout rifle—is copied even today. Mauser 98 Karbine Model M24/47 was first manufactured in 1924 with FN (Browning) technology, and was known as the M24. The World War II-era K98 Mauser variant was known as the M48, and was also celebrated as being "great for shooting or collecting."

Among the many nations that have employed the Mauser bolt-action weapons over the years for their armed forces are Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Greece, Guatamala, Haiti, Honduras, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Manchuria, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, the Orange Free State, Paraguay, Persia/Iran, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia/ Yugoslavia, the Slovak Republic, the South African Republic, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Thailand/Siam, Transvaal, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Yemen.

Many believe that the Germans marked every rifle with a secret factory code, a date code, and military inspection stamps with proof marks, depending on where the rifle was manufactured. Several Mauser rifles were built in captured factories in Belgium (Browning) and also in the former Czechoslovakia (CZ Brno), now the Czech Republic. More rifles were built that were intended for other countries as well. The "bnz" code with the single Gestapo rune and the "41" code signify that a particular rifle was manufactured that year for the German Secret State Police, many at the SS concentration camp in Styr, Austria.

The famous Nazi eagle—both with and without an associated inspector number—appeared on rifles produced during 1935-1945. These two markings were stamped on various individual parts depending on when and in which factory the rifle was manufactured. The notorious *Totenkopf* (death's head) was affixed for a small number of rifles that were intended for use by special SS troops, stamped on the barrel on the left side immediately ahead of the receiver. This same death's head was sometimes also

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ABOVE: During a counterattack near Orel on the Eastern Front, a German soldier is seen carrying his trusty Mauser rifle. The reliable Mauser was exported to numerous countries and is still in use today. RIGHT: A German Army cavalryman fires his Mauser 98 rifle standing atop a horse in a prewar demonstration.

stamped to the underside of the stock immediately behind the trigger guard in the underside of the pistol grip.

Of particular interest are some sniper rifles that make use of the original long-eye relief system. They are the famous ZF-41 models with the long-eye scope mount built into the rear sight base. Some sniper rifle models have high turret mounts, while others have the German long claw-type mounts.

Even today, Mauser rifles are highly regarded globally for their strength, reliability, and legendary accuracy. In 1866, the year of the Prusso-Austrian Six Weeks' War that saw Prussia reign supreme within the various German states, gun maker Peter Paul Mauser developed his self-cocking system for the Dreyse needle rifle.

Mauser was born on June 27, 1838, in Oberndorf am Neckar in Wurttemberg, Germany. Brother Wilhelm was four years older, and their father, Franz Andreas Mauser, was a gunsmith at the Wurttemberg Royal Armory, established by King Frederick I on July 31, 1811.

Mauser senior married in 1819, and the couple eventually had 13 children. Another Mauser, son Franz, immigrated to America in 1853 and worked at E. Remington & Sons. Peter Paul Mauser was drafted into the Prussian Army in 1859, becoming an artilleryman at the Ludwigsburg arsenal, where he began his own career as a gunsmith. Using the Dreyse needle gun as a model, Mauser developed his own rifle with a turn bolt mechanism that cocked the gun as it was manipulated by its firer. At first, this weapon also used a firing pin that fired a rear ignition cartridge.

Although the Mauser was shown to many governments, it was only after the Prussian victory over Hapsburg Austria in 1866 that the famed American gun maker Remington & Sons showed any real interest in Mauser's new invention. Remington's Samuel Norris felt that the design could be made to convert Chassepot needle guns to fire metallic cartridges, and soon thereafter a partnership between Norris and the Mauser brothers was formed in Oberndorf, Germany.

The company was moved to Leige, Belgium, the following year, but when the French showed no interest in a Chassepot model, the partnership was dissolved. By mid-1870, both Mauser brothers, Peter Paul and Wilhelm, returned to Oberndorf, where they continued developmental work on the new rifle.

The Royal Prussian state accepted the weapon for service on December 2, 1871, just after the Franco-Prussian War that defeated Imperial France and united Germany around Prussia's steel core had been concluded. Thus, the Mauser did not come on line until February 14, 1872, in the early years of the new German Empire. The delay had been occasioned by the military, which required a design change to the safety lock.

While official government arsenals and larger German industrial firms received contracts for actual production of the new weapon, the Mauser brothers were awarded an order for 3,000 sights, produced by the Xaver Jauch factory starting on May 1, 1872. After the brothers received a contract for 100,000 more sights, they bought the Royal Wurttemberg Armory in the Neckar River valley, and there they built an Upper Works in 1874. That same year, they received another contract to manufacture 100,000 Model 71 rifles. They also had a trio

Author's Collection

of factories in Oberndorf under a new partnership formed between the brothers and the Wurttemberg United Bank of Stuttgart in Saxony, one of the new federated German states within the empire.

Wilhelm died on January 13, 1882, and the following year the partnership became a stock company named Waffenfabrik (Arms Manufacturer) Mauser. Paul Mauser's shares were sold in 1887, but he stayed on as the firm's technical director. Mauser AG was formed a decade later; and after World War II, it was renamed the Industrial Works Karlsruhe AG.

A single shot, bolt-action rifle had been developed during 1867-1869 by Mauser and Norris, and an improved version utilized a coil spring wrapped around the firing pin, a safety, and a cocking piece attached to the rear of the firing pin. This was the weapon adopted officially by the Royal Prussian and Imperial German Armies (but not the Kingdom of Bavaria) as the Infantry Rifle Model 71 on February 14, 1872. According to noted authority W.H.B. Smith, in his work *Mauser Rifles and Pistols,* "The truly revolutionary features in the design are strictly those of Peter Paul Mauser."

Manufacture of the infantry version that fired a black powder 60mm round from a long 850mm barrel began at Oberndorf, and shorter versions were later made with the 700mm barrel hunter weapon and the 500mm cavalry carbine as well. Noted one source, "A number of slightly modified versions were widely sold to other countries … Serbia designed an improved version of the Model 71 in 10.15mm caliber, produced in Germany, and called the Mauser-Milanovic M1878/80. In 1884, an eight-shot tubular magazine was added by Mauser, who offered the Model 71/84. The Turkish Model 1887 rifle was the first of a series of rifles produced for the Turkish Army by Mauser. Its design echoed that of the German Gewehr 71/84 service rifle, being a bolt-action weapon with a tubular magazine beneath the barrel."

In 1888, the Year of the Three Kaisers in the Reich, the German Army introduced the Model 1888 Commission Rifle, along with a modified Mauser action and a Mannlicher-style box magazine, with an additional carbine version, the Karabiner 88. Both were updated in the early 1900s and saw service in the Great War of 1914-1918, but the Gewehr 88 was not a fully Mauser-designed and -engineered rifle.

A smokeless powder was introduced that provided its users safety from return enemy fire with its 7.92mm round, a rimless cartridge that allowed for smoother feeding for both rifles and machine guns. The initial bullet had a rounded head, while several redesigned versions, including the spitzer bullet and boat tail, brought the cartridge to its later potency. The Mauser 91 adopted a 7.65mm, round-nosed cartridge. Ironically, the 89 Mauser rejected by Germany in 1884 entered service in 1940, when it was issued to secondline German Army units in Norway, Denmark, Holland, and Belgium.

The Model 1893 Mauser became known as "the Spanish Mauser" and was used by the Spanish Army against the Americans in 1898 at the Battle of San Juan Hill. The use of smokeless powder gave a serious advantage to the Spanish soldiers in Cuba, when they faced the American with their U.S. Army Springfield rifles.

That same year, the Imperial German Army of Kaiser Wilhelm II purchased the Model 98 Mauser design rifle that officially entered service as the Gew. 98 on April 5. "This remains by far the most successful of the Mauser designs, helped of course by the onset of two world wars that demanded vast numbers of rifles," commented one arms expert.

Peter Paul Mauser died on May 29, 1914, just before the start of World War I that August. It was in large part the tragic events of World War I that helped immortalize both his name and the weapon that bore it. The Mauser Model 98 and its several variants included both a five-round and a 20-round box magazine.

Originally, the German Imperial cavalry used the shorter carbine versions, and by 1918, the new special storm troop trench units also employed Mausers. Both empire and republic came and went, and under the new Third Reich of Adolf Hitler in 1935, the Mauser Karabiner (Carbine) 98 Kurz (Short) was adopted as the standard German Army infantry rifle. It served in that capacity until the end of World War II a decade later.

In 1941, the Mauser Company took part in a competition to re-equip the German Army with a semi-automatic rifle as well, but the Mauser-designed version failed miserably on testing and was cancelled after a short production run. However, one estimate of the number of K98k rifles produced is an astounding 102 million.

Under the French Army, the entire factory at Oberndorf was dismantled, and all its records destroyed. In the initial postwar years, the Mauser Works made precision measurement instruments and tools, such as micrometers. Former company engineers saved what they could and founded the later famous firm of Hechler & Koch. Mauser continued to make hunting and sporting rifles, however, and in 1994 became part of Rheinmetal AG. In 1999, the civilian manufacture of hunting, defense, and sporting rifles was split off from Rheinmetall. Numerous Mauser surplus military rifles entered the peacetime civilian market, where they remain today.

Through the decades, the firm also made several military pistol models. These include the C1896 pistol; the Mauser 1910 and 1914 pocket pistols; and another such model 20 years later in 1934, under the Nazis; plus the 2008 Mauser M2 handgun.

In 1954, Mauser as a firm bearing that famous name was formally reestablished. In 2004 it became known as the SIG SAUER firm, one of the largest firearms manufacturing entities in the world.

In 1985, both Heckler & Koch and SIG SAUER lost out to Beretta USA of Accokeek, Maryland, and Italy for a contract to build the U.S. replacement for the venerable Colt Model 1911 .45-caliber sidearm pistol. The initial contract was for $57 million, one of the largest handgun contracts ever. □

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

By John Mancini

All photos: National Archives

Covert Marine in the Balkans and China

Captain Walter Mansfield conducted operations against the Nazis and the Japanese.

ON THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 19, 1943, A LONE BRITISH HANDLEY PAGE HALIFAX bomber flew over Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia. The aircraft carried OSS Marine Captain Walter Mansfield. The 32-year-old Harvard graduate had been personally recruited by General William "Wild Bill" Donovan, head of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) that was the forerunner of the modern Central Intelligence Agency, from his own law firm.

Mansfield's assignment was to parachute into enemy territory near Belgrade and make contact with General Draja Mihailovich and his Chetnik guerrillas. This would be the first American military mission into Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia. The objective was to get Yugoslav resistance units to provide support for the approaching Allied invasion of Italy by increasing pressure on the Germans and creating a strategic diversion for the enemy's divisions stationed in the Balkans.

Captain Mansfield's personal account reports, "After a five hour trip from Derna, North Africa, we spotted signal fires and made a pass over a field. I could see the fires beneath the jump hole. As soon as we checked our flash signal with the one seen on the ground, we did a circle of about 10 miles and came back. I shook hands with the RAF dispatcher, gave a thumbs up signal and when the light went green, shoved off. When the chute blossomed, I immediately saw the fires and realized that I was off to one side."

Captain Mansfield continued, "I landed in a pile of rocks and slightly hurt my hip. I found myself on a cool mountainside and in a few minutes was surrounded by a group of bearded Chetniks who tried to smother me with kisses, yelling, Zdravo, Purvi Amerikanee! Greetings, first American! I signaled the pilot with a light that all was okay. The plane circled and dropped 15 containers of supplies, dipped its wings and disappeared into the night."

A several-hour hike into the rugged, forested mountains brought Mansfield to General Mihailovich. The bearded, medium-built guerrilla leader and his Serbian Chetnik fighters were veterans of the Royal Yugoslav Army. They had refused surrender to the Nazi invaders after their defeat in April 1941, and they had remained loyal to the prewar government.

ABOVE: Several members of Tito's communist partisans are seen in this August 1944 photo. As many as 30 percent of Tito's fighters were women, who wore the same uniform and fired the same weapons as the men. LEFT: Under the watchful eye of Captain Walter Mansfield, a Chinese soldier masters the firing of a Thompson submachine gun on January 15, 1945.

The Chetniks ("armed company" in Serbian) had established a primitive but extensive base camp only three hours away from German forces. The camp held several hundred fighters and served as a command and control headquarters for guerrilla bands operating throughout southern Yugoslavia. Mansfield was impressed with the organization, discipline, and morale of the guerrillas despite the harsh living conditions. However, military justice was swift and brutal. He reported, "Two spies were captured, and I had the unpleasant experience of seeing them get their throats cut."

Several weeks after his arrival, Mansfield was awakened by machine-gun bursts and the crackle of rifle fire. Muzzle flashes pierced the darkness and ground fog. He grabbed his weapon and joined the fight. Ghostly figures emerged from the early morning mist. An estimated force of 200 German infantry had slipped past outposts, penetrated the Chetnik defenses, and was attacking the main camp. Mansfield picked targets and squeezed off rounds as Germans surged toward hastily formed Chetnik skirmish lines.

Sounds of gunfire, yells, and screams echoed through the thick forest as the two forces intermingled in fierce combat. After 15 minutes of savage fighting, the gunfire became sporadic and then stopped as the Germans broke off contact and silently withdrew. But they knew where the camp was, and the Chetniks knew they would be back.

General Mihailovich immediately ordered an evacuation. Within several hours, 500 Chetnik fighters were on the move. A heavy rain fell as the single-file column trudged into the steep, dreary Serbian mountains. The guerrillas maintained a grueling pace through extremely rugged terrain in freezing rain for the next 15 hours.

The general finally halted the column near a small village in the Zlatibor Mountain range after patrols reported no threat of German pursuit. The guerrillas prepared for a major strike on the enemy in this region. Their objective was to disrupt the traffic on the major railway between German headquarters in Belgrade and a supply point at Dubrovnik on the Adriatic Sea.

The route contained several tunnels and a bridge. Mansfield and a British SOE (Special Operations Executive) officer led a reconnaissance patrol to assess the line and determine train schedules. They observed that the rail line was unguarded, but an estimated force of 500 enemy troops was stationed three miles from the targeted tunnel.

ABOVE: Trained by British instructors on an island in the Adriatic Sea, Yugoslav partisans sing martial music as they march toward a German schooner that will transport them to participate in a raid on a German communications center. BELOW: Wounded Yugoslav partisans are transported by ox carts from a field hospital to a safe haven in the country's rugged mountains.

At about 4 PM, Mansfield and five men entered the tunnel, which was located one mile from the bridge. Chetniks were also positioned at each entrance. Mansfield and his team were busy placing half-pound blocks of TNT under the rails when they heard frantic yells from guerrillas stationed at the west entrance. A train was fast approaching the tunnel, one hour ahead of schedule. Mansfield and his force dashed from the tunnel, scrambled into the nearby forest, and waited for an explosion.

They fought disappointment as the train appeared at the tunnel entrance and stopped. Chetnik scouts raced from hilltop lookout posts and reported to the bridge detail that the train had made it through the tunnel and appeared undamaged. The British officer at the bridge immediately ignited well-placed explosives that severed the structure at both ends. A Chetnik patrol returned to the tunnel and discovered that Mansfield's demolitions had in fact destroyed some track. The sabotage did cause a major disruption of enemy rail traffic. The German maintenance yard was on the opposite side of the destroyed bridge, which delayed the repair effort.

Yugoslavia was a culturally, ethnically, and politically diverse country that consisted of six republics, four languages, and three religions. This environment resulted in the emergence of another guerrilla leader in northern Yugoslavia. He was a fierce threat to the Germans but had a very different political motivation and long-term agenda. Josip Broz, known as Tito, was a dedicated communist with allegiance to the Soviet Union. Intense competition erupted between Tito and General Mihailovich for Allied support.

The British were shifting their aid from the Chetniks to Tito's Partisans. Radio messages from the OSS Cairo Station to Captain Mansfield requested more intelligence analysis regarding which resistance group deserved American assistance. During the months of November and December 1943, Mansfield traveled the rugged north central region of Serbia assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the Chetnik units.

By the end of December, heavy winter snows had fallen and Mansfield faced the grim realization that German troops blocked his return to General Mihailovich's main force. He decided that it was time to leave Yugoslavia. For the next several weeks he evaded aggressive enemy patrols and hiked 200 miles to the Dalmatian Coast where he planned to sail across the Adriatic Sea to Italy.

Mansfield arrived at the coastal town of Dubrovnik in January 1944, with German troops in hot pursuit. Mansfield also received chilling news from the local resistance leaders who reported that the Gestapo already knew that an OSS agent was in the city. Resistance fighters took great risks to hide him. Every night he was moved from one safe house to another. He also faced the harsh reality that there was no easy way to get across the Adriatic to Italy. The Germans maintained tight control over all boats and operated aggressive air and sea patrols.

As Mansfield struggled to suppress frustration and avoid capture by the Gestapo, he was encouraged by meeting a British agent with a radio transmitter. The radio could be used to contact Cairo Station and request a sea extraction. The only immediate problem was a dead battery. However, the resourceful guerrillas took great risks and obtained a new radio battery.

Addressing a gathering of political and military leaders in his territory, Chetnik commander Draja Mihailovich is surrounded by men of his guerrilla fighting force.

The two covert operatives waited until a scheduled contact time and began a telegraph transmission. Since neither agent had communicated with Cairo headquarters for several weeks, they feared their message could be viewed as enemy controlled. Their apprehension quickly disappeared as the clicking telegraph key gave instructions for an extraction. They were directed to be at a designated rendezvous point in two nights and begin flashing a signal light at 10-minute intervals between 8 PM and 1 AM.

Unfortunately, the weather turned bad. Roaring winds turned the sea into foaming 30-foot waves crashing along the rocky coast at the rendezvous point. Mansfield waited on the shore of a small isolated cove, periodically flashing the signal into the pitch black darkness. At 2 AM he admitted that the gale force winds and thundering surf prevented a rescue that night.

The Allied agents would have to continue their deadly cat and mouse game with the Gestapo a while longer. The two men were hidden by the guerrillas in the attic of a house located in a small coastal town that was heavily occupied by German troops.

Several nights later, the two agents and several guerrillas slipped back to the pickup point. They again began flashing signals into the dark night. Within 20 minutes they heard the sound of an engine. Could it be a German patrol boat? Despite the risk, they continued to flash the signal. Minutes later a wooden dinghy appeared and transferred them to a British patrol boat for the trip across the Adriatic Sea to safety in Italy.

Mansfield's next OSS mission would take him to China where he would train and lead guerrillas behind Japanese lines. He arrived in China in December 1944. He was to lead guerrillas on raids and sabotage Japanese plans. These operations had the strategic objective of keeping large numbers of Japanese troops busy on the Asian mainland so they would not be deployed to the Pacific island fighting. OSS agents in China were also confronted with complex internal problems while trying to mount action against the Japanese.

Like Yugoslavia, China had two competing political forces, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists and Mao Tse-tung's Communists. The two groups fought each other for control of China, and occasionally with OSS leadership they also fought the Japanese. The conflicting political factions and warlords had their own agendas in which fighting the enemy occupiers was not always the first priority.

Captain Mansfield immediately began to organize, train, and lead a guerrilla force to harass and disrupt Japanese supply lines in Hunan Province. The goal was to hit part of the enemy strategic communication route that stretched from the seaport of Hong Kong to north China and the city of Pieping (Beijing).

Mansfield and his six-man team traveled 800 grueling miles in trucks and then on foot from OSS headquarters in Kunming to the headquarters of the 74th Chinese Army at the ancient walled city of Wukang. The OSS team spent the next three weeks training 300 Chinese soldiers in the use of basic infantry tactics and weapons.

Finally, Mansfield led the Chinese fighters into Japanese-controlled territory. The single-file column marched for 15 days over steep, winding mountain trails and through snow-covered rice paddies to the headquarters of the regional guerrilla chief.

The chief gave Mansfield's force a warm welcome. However, it became apparent that the guerrilla leader was interested in acquiring American equipment and wanted to fight the Japanese only to obtain weapons and supplies to strengthen his position as a local warlord. Mansfield provided several days of training in the use of the Thompson submachine gun, demolitions, bazookas, firing devices, and pocket incendiaries.

When the training was finished, Mansfield reported, "I pressed for action, suggesting several targets that I would like to see his men pull off warranting our request for more supplies. We finally worked out a plan for a major ambush on a Jap convoy on the Heng-yang-Siangtan Road, to be combined with blowing up a 30 meter bridge. Intelligence reports showed large convoys of 30 to 100 trucks passing down the road at night, protected by tanks and truck-borne soldiers, despite heavy snow. We started out in heavy snow—the first

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On January 25, 1945, Captain Walter Mansfield teaches a class on the Thompson submachine gun to a group of Nationalist Chinese soldiers.

in 20 years—a group of about 500 men. The Chinese colonel brought along a sedan chair and often hopped in for a spell while we walked. When we got about 40 miles east we ran into about 200 Japs. Both sides started firing. We withdrew leaving the second in command in charge. He joined us a while later and reported 27 Japs killed. A report came in that no convoys were running on the road because of the snow."

Mansfield continued, "We learned that the bridge was probably unguarded because of the snow. So, I proposed that we blow it. The bridge was wood, supported by eight pillars about one foot in diameter. I calculated charges and prepared them. The plan was for me to go with the Chinese to a point a couple of miles away. They would go on disguised as civilians. At 2100 hours they blew it. You could hear the boom for miles as we got away. Everyone reported there was nothing left.

"Two Chinese guerrillas reported that there was a Jap truck depot where 300 trucks were parked. The trucks were camouflaged in woods with a repair shop and warehouse nearby. It was supposed to be too heavily guarded for a guerrilla attack. I decided to get close with a radio and a small group to make a reconnaissance for the purpose of calling in and guiding Yank 14th Air Force bombers, if they would come. The first day of the recon we pooped up and down steep hills. I finally got to a hill where I had a perfect view of the woods. I could see Japs but no trucks. We ran into a small Jap patrol that started firing and chased us, but we got away."

The next day a Chinese officer dressed in peasant clothes was able to get near the staging area for a closer look and reported seeing approximately 100 trucks, but the Japanese had been alerted to guerrilla activity in the area and kept Mansfield and his men on the run. Despite the risk, he was able to send a radio message and arrange for a bombing strike.

Mansfield describes the scheduled air attack. "The day started out with good weather, but then closed in. When it cleared again I started out for a hill almost on top of the target." He and several Chinese guerrillas "lay between rocks with a perfect view of the target 1,200 yards below."

The bombers arrived 10 minutes after Mansfield was in position and conducted a 15-minute attack, which missed the target. Mansfield waited for another strike until 4 PM. His spirits rose the following day, and he reported "the bombers came over again and bombed the Hell out of our target for a long time."

On a cold, overcast day in March 1945, Captain Mansfield executed a major ambush on a large Japanese force. The trap was sprung in daylight near an enemy garrison. His guerrillas

fanned out across a hill and took up firing positions behind rocks and shrubs overlooking the main access road. The OSS force waited silently in biting cold for several hours. The absence of visible enemy activity fueled apprehension. Several of Mansfield's Chinese officers feared that the enemy had spotted them and were circling in behind.

Just as Mansfield was preparing to give the order to withdraw, he spotted movement down the road. Squinting through his binoculars, he saw a column of approximately 100 Japanese infantry marching toward his position, led by an officer with a gleaming sword. Tension grew as Mansfield and his guerrillas waited for the enemy to get into their kill zone. The distance closed to 80 yards, and his Chinese lieutenants whispered with urgency, "Chenzai! Now!"

Mansfield replied, "Meyo! No!"

The combat-seasoned OSS Marine held his command to fire for a few more agonizing minutes. When he could see the enemy's faces, he signaled his men for action. Shrill whistles blew. Mansfield sighted his Thompson submachine gun on the center of the column and squeezed off a lethal burst.

Ten Japanese soldiers were slammed to the ground by the deadly barrage of machine-gun and rifle fire. The Japanese were well trained and reflexively ran for cover in the roadside ditches. Mansfield sprinted among the guerrillas to direct more effective fire on the Japanese positions. He knew they would have to finish the fight quickly before reinforcements rushed from the nearby garrison.

After a violent 25-minute firefight, Mansfield's force came under heavy mortar attack from a Japanese relief unit closing fast on the guerrillas. He decided it was time to go and signaled for withdrawal. Despite poor Chinese fire discipline and marksmanship, 80 enemy soldiers were killed. The ambush force left the area with two prisoners, numerous captured weapons, and a Japanese officer's sword "appropriated" by Captain Mansfield.

The American operative's command maintained the pressure on the enemy with a night ambush. He reported, "At 2000 hours we placed 250 men alongside of a hill about 150 yards from the road and waited in the dark. One Jap convoy passed, and I counted 32 trucks. They were traveling very slow, about 10 miles an hour with headlights on, about 50 feet apart. I could clearly see the drivers and some soldiers in the backs of the trucks. The drivers were calling out to each other, apparently trying to keep together. We decided not to attack because there were too many Jap soldiers. We waited and about one half hour later another convoy of 30 trucks approached.

"We got ready, and when the first truck passed and was about 75 yards from the bazooka hideout, the bazooka fired, hitting the truck dead in the middle, throwing off a great flash of metal sparks in all directions. This was the signal, and all hell broke loose as the Chinese sprayed the convoy with our light machine guns, Tommy guns and rifle fire. All the other trucks instantaneously doused their headlights, and soon Jap firing started from the other side of the road, but the Japs were firing their little popguns, and I saw no Jap machine gun flashes. The bazooka continued to fire at other trucks, and a very heavy fight went on for about 45 minutes. I was told that Jap reinforcements were coming up the road, so we retired. Upon reaching our temporary headquarters about four miles back, our men began to appear. We then marched another 10 miles through paddies and hit the sack at 0300 hours."

The following morning, the Chinese reported to Mansfield that 120 Japanese had been killed in the ambush. Many rifles were captured, but no prisoners were taken.

Captain Mansfield led guerrilla operations in this sector behind enemy lines from February to May 1945. During this four-month period the daring OSS Marine chalked up an impressive record of successful missions that included training approximately 800 Chinese soldiers and guerrillas, inflicting hundreds of casualties, and destroying major bridges and thousands of feet of telephone line. After the Japanese surrender he participated with OSS mercy teams, whose mission was the rescue of Allied prisoners of war from Japanese camps in North China and Manchuria.

There was evidence that high-ranking Allied officers, such as General Arthur Percival, the former British commander of Singapore and American General Jonathan M. Wainwright, who had surrendered at Bataan in the Philippines in 1942, were being held in Japanese camps. There were also still over a million Japanese troops in North China and an entire Army group in Manchuria. Mansfield was assigned to one of nine teams organized for rescue and humanitarian operations. These six-man mercy missions were similar to the contact teams used in Europe to assist in the liberation of German POW camps.

After his extraordinary tour of duty with the OSS in Yugoslavia and China ended, Mansfield quietly returned to the United States and the practice of law. □

Author John Mancini is a retired U.S. Army colonel. He resides in Sierra Vista, Arizona.

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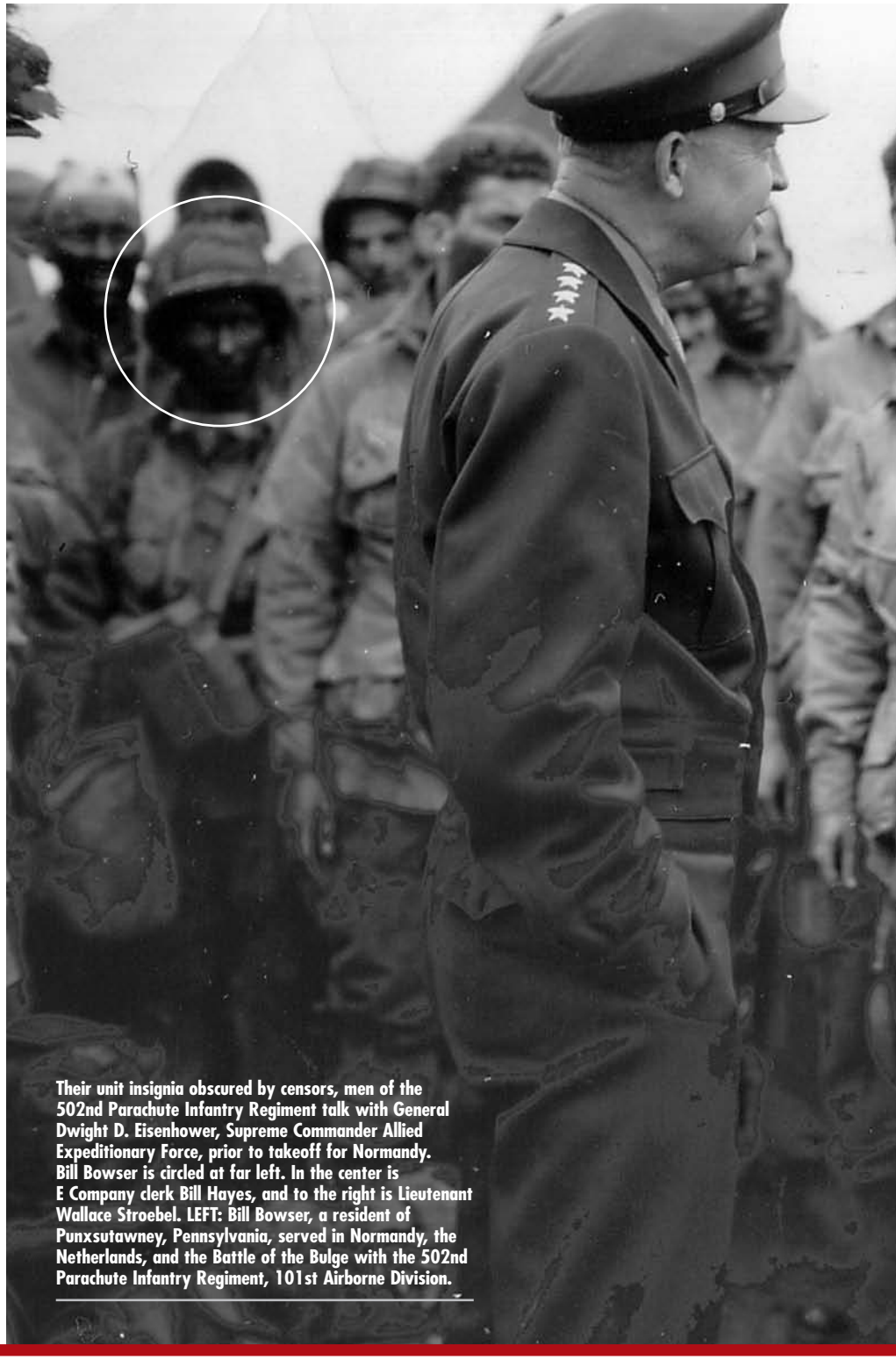
A Paratrooper's Combat

Joy Hockinson Collection

Corporal Bill Bowser of the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment fought throughout the European campaign with the 101st Airborne Division.

BY RICHARD A. BERANTY



Their unit insignia obscured by censors, men of the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment talk with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force, prior to takeoff for Normandy. Bill Bowser is circled at far left. In the center is E Company clerk Bill Hayes, and to the right is Lieutenant Wallace Stroebel. LEFT: Bill Bowser, a resident of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, served in Normandy, the Netherlands, and the Battle of the Bulge with the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division.

Journey

National Archives

IN ONE OF THE MOST recognized photographs taken by U.S. Army cameramen during World War II, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, is addressing men of E Company, 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 101st Airborne Division, in England on June 5, 1944, just hours before their jump into Nazi-occupied Europe. After the black and white film was developed and the photo passed censors, the image was flashed stateside to U.S. wire services for publication in newspapers and magazines. It has since been printed on calendars, coffee mugs, even a postage stamp.

As a morale booster on the homefront, the picture worked, visually depicting a determined Eisenhower and his prepared warriors on the eve of the greatest invasion ever. A common misconception took hold from the very start that the general, with his right fist clenched and thumb up, is extolling the Screaming Eagles to "Full victory—nothing else." The men who were there, however, and who heard the general speak, including Lieutenant Wallace Stroebel, jump master and the man wearing the cardboard No. 23 indicating his landing group or "stick" in the invasion, made it known after the war that the general was discussing fly fishing with the Michigan native.

Most of the men in the picture have since passed on, including Stroebel, who died in 1999. But William "Bill" Bowser, 89, who lives near the groundhog-friendly town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, remembers the general's pep talk to the troops. At five feet, four inches tall and one of the smallest men in Easy Company, Bowser's helmeted head and blackened face may be seen directly to the left of Eisenhower's shoulder. And viewed at a certain angle, since multiple shots were taken of the encounter, Bowser's nose is the "whitest" spot on his face.

"We put some kind of oil on our faces, and a buddy would take a handful of cocoa (chocolate powder) and blow it in your face," he says. "I must have reached up and touched my nose at some point."

Bowser says he did not hear Eisenhower's conversation with Stroebel, but he does remember the general's brief talk with Corporal Bill Hayes, E Company clerk, pictured directly in the center of the photograph.

"He asked Hayes where he was from, and Hayes told him either North Dakota or South Dakota. I'm not sure which," recalled Bowser. "He then

The Granger Collection, New York

ABOVE: Passing the bodies of Germans and men from their own unit killed in earlier fighting by German snipers, troopers of the 101st Airborne Division approach the village of Carentan on June 14, 1944.
BELOW: This modern view of Purple Heart Lane looking south from Dead Man's Corner at St. Comte du Mont belies the violent fighting that took place near the town of Carentan in June 1944.

Author's Collection

asked Hayes if he was scared, and Hayes looked over toward Stroebel and he said, 'Yes.' And Eisenhower said, 'That's okay. I'm scared.'"

The general's apprehension is understandable. Should the D-Day operation fail, he knew responsibility would fall on his shoulders alone. He also was aware of the dire predictions made by his advisers that up to 80 percent of the airborne troops, men whom Eisenhower took a special interest in visiting on the eve of the invasion, might be lost to enemy action over the coming days.

While the casualty rate among the airborne troops came nowhere close to that estimate, the idea of sending thousands of men to possible death might explain why Army officials treated them to a hearty meal on June 5, sort of a last supper.

"Roast beef, potatoes, the whole works," Bowser explains. "That's when it started to dawn on us, 'Hey, this is it.'"

In the early evening hours of June 5, paratroops and glidermen of the U.S. 101st and 82nd and British 1st Airborne Divisions began boarding planes that would take them into the darkening skies over England and into the inhospitable darkness over Normandy.

"Officers were supposed to be our jump masters," Bowser says. "Our plane didn't have an officer, so the company's first sergeant [Demitrius B. "Gus" Anagnostis, who later in the war would be awarded a battlefield commission to second lieutenant] acted as jump master. After we took off and flew a little ways, it came over the speaker for everybody to stand up and hook up because we were going to fly right between the Guernsey and Jersey Islands and were going to receive fire."

Antiaircraft fire from the German-occupied territory in the English Channel never materialized, and about 30 minutes later Bowser and the rest of the Screaming Eagles would hurl themselves into what the division's first commanding officer, General William C. Lee, called their "rendezvous with destiny."

"When we got the green light to jump, the first sergeant said, 'It's 11 minutes after 12. Let's get out of here,' I was the last one in line to get out of the plane," said Bowser. "In front of me was a kid from Philadelphia. He was our medic. And in front of him was [William F.] Podkulski. And Joe Guevera, a full-blooded Mexican, was the fourth guy. When Joe Guevera got up to the door, he sat right down in the door and Podkulski had to reach down and dump him out."

Private Podkulski would be killed on September 22 in the battle Easy Company fought along the Wilhelmina Canal at Best, Holland, while Private Guevera would, in Bowser's own words, "save his skin a number of times" in the war.

"When we hit the ground, there were four of us," Bowser continues. "Nobody got hurt, and we got ready to go. Then Joe Guevera said, 'Okay Bill, you're the leader. You're a corporal.' I don't know how in the world I ever knew which way to go. Something in me said go that way. So that's the way I went, and it led us right to a canal."

Allied bombers destroyed the German long-range guns the division was ordered to neutralize as one of its first objectives in Normandy. Over the next five days and nights, the Screaming Eagles fought countless skirmishes, consolidated forces, and pushed southward.

"What sticks in my mind was the 11th of June, and that was on a Sunday," Bowser explains. "That's when we moved toward Carentan."

Capturing the small Normandy town of Carentan with about 4,000 inhabitants was a high-priority assignment given to the Screaming Eagles. If left in German hands, it could be used as a corridor for a counterattack against American ground forces of the 4th and 90th Infantry

Divisions moving inland from Utah Beach. Also, its main highway and railroad connected the strategic seaport of Cherbourg to the northwest, St. Lo to the southeast, and Caen to the east. Whoever controlled Carentan could conceivably control the entire Cotentin Peninsula.

While the 101st was an untested fighting force, German troops in the Carentan area included battle-experienced men of the 6th Fallschirmjager Regiment (airborne) under the command of Major Friedrich von der Heydte. He was given orders to defend the area to the last man.

The main path of attack for the Screaming Eagles was a one-mile stretch of roadway that began at the south of St. Come du Mont and ended at the outskirts of Carentan. Today, this unassuming stretch of highway has been modernized, still straight and narrow, and rises only a few meters above the boggy marshes located on either side of it. But for two days in 1944, June 10 and 11, many Screaming Eagles died there and many more were wounded. So inspiring was the battle that two soldiers from Headquarters Company of the 502nd, Raymond D. Cready and Robert H. Bryant, wrote a dramatic poem of the attack that they titled "Purple Heart Lane" in memory of those who perished.

The following poem was co-written by R.D. Cready and R.H. Bryant, members of Headquarters Company, 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, in June 1944, after the capture of the Norman village of Carentan, France. It was dedicated in memory of the men who had died there.

Purple Heart Lane

We drink to the men so bronzed and tan,
Who marched down the road to Carentan.
We were the ones who so long had to train,
To fight this battle of Purple Heart Lane.
Yes, this is that road stretched cross the plain.
This piece of macadam called Purple Heart Lane.

Why was it called this you may want to know.
Well "Jerry" was there to give us his show.
He had mortars, machine guns and 88s too,
With plenty of armor to back up his crew.
Then there were the snipers we could not see.
They kept firing at us, my buddies and me.

We had laughed at crawling, keeping close to the ground.
But we did it and liked it right up to the town.
Then came the charge that led to their guns.
We beat back those "Jerries," those invincible Huns.
Invincible they say and they weren't far from wrong.
But we made them sing another sort of song.

The long battle over, we trudged up the hill,
There we paused to look back at our comrades so still.
We think of the boys who died not in vain.
Our pals, yes, the heroes of Purple Heart Lane.

The causeway featured four stone bridges crossing canals and the Douve and Madeleine Rivers before leading into Carentan. The terrain on either side of the road prevented troops from digging in, which exposed them to direct enemy fire. Part of the plan to seize the town called for the 3rd Battalion of the 502nd, led by Lt. Col. Robert G. Cole, to attack from the north straight down the causeway, in the open and without cover.

After crossing Bridge No. 1 on June 10, paratroopers found the second bridge destroyed by retreating Germans. Airborne engineers tried for hours to repair it but could not, stymied by enemy fire from mortars and 88mm cannons, one of the most feared weapons the Germans used during the war. Frustrated at their lack of progress, Cole and three others jury-rigged a footbridge with material left by the engineers. It enabled the men to cross the waterway in single file.

What followed was a slow and methodical progression down Purple Heart Lane. Screaming Eagles were extended in long columns hugging both sides of the road and were under sporadic fire from enemy artillery. That changed dramatically when the men reached Bridge No. 4, blocked by a massive iron and concrete Belgian gate that the troopers could open only about 18 inches, allowing just one man through at a time.

Here, German fire increased greatly. Snipers and machine guns opened up from the front and on both sides of the causeway. For several hours, 3rd Battalion men, clinging to both sides of the road, were mauled badly and picked off at an alarming rate. Only a handful managed to squeeze through the Belgian gate, cross the bridge, and flop in a ditch, pinned down with a 200-yard open field facing them.

This fourth bridge, built of stone, still stands today, located just off of the road that leads into Carentan.

The American attack petered out, and mercifully division artillery and the Normandy darkness halted the carnage, that is until around midnight when two enemy planes from seemingly out of nowhere bombed and strafed the battalion huddled along the causeway. The bleeding and dying troopers were left where they had fallen. The destroyed second bridge prevented wounded from being taken out and reinforcements from being brought in.

Joy Hockinson Collection

National Archives

ABOVE: Lieutenant Colonel Robert G. Cole was awarded the Medal of Honor for his action at a causeway in Normandy on June 11, 1944. However, he did not live to receive it. Cole was shot by a sniper during Operation Market-Garden weeks after D-Day. TOP: On June 30, 1942, Bill Bowser made his fifth practice jump and qualified as a U.S. Army parachutist.

Colonel John H. Michaelis, 502nd regimental commander, was quick to order Cole to renew the attack on Carentan. The antsy Cole, always eager for a fight, gladly obliged. At 4 AM on June 11, under cover of darkness and during a break in enemy fire, paratroopers began moving through the Belgian gate and across the fourth bridge. The men made it to an open expanse of farmland when German fire erupted again. It came from a farmhouse and

National Archives

outbuildings owned by the Ingouf family, which were being used by Major von der Heydte as his headquarters. The Americans who crossed the bridge were hung out to dry along the field and unable to advance. Cole called for division artillery to target known enemy positions. It had little effect, and the German guns continued to fire.

Faced with the destruction of his battalion, Cole made a desperate decision and ordered a bayonet charge on the farmhouse, a rarity in World War II. His order was relayed to Major John P. Stopka, 3rd Battalion's executive officer. Under cover of a smoke screen, Cole blew his whistle and rose to his feet. Some accounts report he held and fired his .45-caliber pistol as he charged. Others say he picked up a fallen man's M1 Garand rifle and affixed a bayonet during the assault. Of the approximate 250 paratroopers who should have followed him, only about 20 did so because of confusion and poor communication. Some 50 followed Major Stopka. The attack became known as Cole's Charge, and according to author and military historian John C. McManus, the bloodshed was horrendous.

"Cole and the others at the front of the charge had made it across the open area (roughly the length of two football fields), closed with the Germans in the Ingouf farm and either killed them or put them to flight. The Americans howled like demons as they charged. It was grisly—warfare at its most elemental. Dead and dismembered Germans lay everywhere—in foxholes, behind embankments, outside the farm buildings and behind hedgerows. Very few of them had been bayoneted, although some had. Most had been killed by rifle fire or grenades at close range. The rest were retreating west, in the direction of the Cherbourg-Paris railroad. First Sergeant Kenneth Sprecher [who would be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions] and Private George Roach shot the lock off the door of the main farmhouse and charged inside, only to find the place abandoned. Cole followed and used the place as his command post."

Warfare is fraught with the mixing of units, and Bowser, a member of 2nd Battalion, found himself with Major Stopka and 3rd Battalion during the charge. His crossing of Bridge No. 4 was not through the Belgian gate. He crossed the Madeleine River underneath the span.

"We had a column on each side of the road, and we went to the fourth bridge and that's where we stopped," he says. "The Germans were covering the bridge with small arms. We went down under the bridge, and there was a jump rope. Someone ahead of us put that jump rope there, and I was the first one to use it. I threw my rifle over my shoulder and jumped and went head over heels into the water. The river was deeper than we figured.

"We stayed under that bridge on the bank. What stands out is there was an 88 that came whistling over us. I was assistant squad leader, and I had positioned myself over this machine gun. Another 88 came and I said, 'That one's carrying the mail.' So we hit the ground, and I landed between the gunner, [Joseph] Malliawski, and the assistant gunner, who was a German-born barber from New York. Then Malliawski said, 'There's something in my shoulder.' I looked, and I said, 'Yea, there's a piece a steel.' He said to pull it out. So I pulled it out. It was about an inch long, but he wasn't bleeding much. I never reported it, so he never got a Purple Heart. Malliawski was the only man who saw every day of combat in our company. If I had known, I would've let the medic take care of it, and he would've gotten the Purple Heart."

Shortly afterward, Cole gave his order to charge.

"The units were badly mixed up, but it was mostly Cole's outfit. We started to advance, and the Germans had us pinned down in an open field and the only place I could get to was a dead furrow, a deep ditch," recalled Bowser. "They pinned us down there, and I was head to head to my squad leader, Sergeant [Robert E.] Pope, and I said, 'What do we do now?' He said, 'I don't know. Let's have a smoke.' So he

lit a cigarette and tore it in two. My half was all soaking wet. And the first thing I can recall is that an order came down the line, all the way from Cole: 'Fix bayonets.' So we fixed bayonets, and on Cole's command, 'Everybody up and at 'em.' And we went in. But the Germans didn't stay to fight. They left. Then we kept driving into Carentan. To this day I don't know whether we got credit for taking Carentan, or if the 506 (Parachute Infantry Regiment) did."

Recalling his participation in Cole's Charge reminds Bowser of an incident that had taken place two years earlier. "I remember in basic training, it was hot and everybody was tired. We were training for a bayonet charge. I made the mistake of saying that was from World War I, why do we have to take bayonet training? For that I went down and did push-ups."

Carentan was liberated by the 101st on June 12. For his heroic actions on June 11, Cole was recommended for the Medal of Honor, but he did not live to receive it. On September 18 in Holland, he was on the radio with an Allied pilot who requested that orange panels be placed in front of American lines near Best to indicate airborne positions. Cole did it himself and was shot dead by a German sniper. His family was presented his Medal of Honor posthumously. Cole's body is interred at the American Cemetery in Margraten, Netherlands.

Both: National Archives

Stopka was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions at Carentan. He replaced Cole as commanding officer of 3rd Battalion. Stopka was killed on January 14, 1945, near Michamps, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge, when American planes bombed his position by mistake. His body is buried at the Luxembourg American Cemetery near Hamm, Luxembourg.

Easy Company of the 502nd fared better than many other airborne units during the Normandy operation. From June 6 until its return to England in July, the company lost three men killed in action. Bowser says the next two months were a period of training and refitting for the Screaming Eagles in preparation for their second and last combat jump of the war, this one into Holland.

Code-named Operation Market Garden and developed by British General Bernard L. Montgomery, Allied paratroops were dropped along a corridor in Holland to seize roads, bridges, and the cities of Eindhoven, Nijmegen, and Arnhem, which would cut the country in half and clear a path for British armored and mechanized units to enter Germany from the north.

ABOVE: In a photo taken on September 17, 1956, Pfc. Garcia, a former member of the 101st Airborne Division, stands a few yards from where trooper Joe Mann was killed. Garcia is holding a charred German rifle butt and an ammunition clip from an American M-1 rifle. LEFT: Pfc. Joe Mann of the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment sacrificed himself by falling on a German hand grenade to save fellow soldiers. He received the Medal of Honor posthumously. OPPOSITE: With gliders still visible in the sky, paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division complete a picture perfect parachute drop into the Netherlands during the opening phase of Operation Market-Garden in September 1944.

If all went according to Montgomery's planning, it could bring the war to a swift end, possibly by Christmas. The goal of the 101st was to secure a 15-mile stretch of road from Eindhoven to Veghel, which became known to those who fought there as Hell's Highway.

On September 17, thousands of Allied paratroops and glidermen made a daylight landing in Holland and quickly began to consolidate. The 502nd landed at 1:30 PM. It took only one hour and 10 minutes for 97 percent of the regiment to assemble. In Normandy, it routinely took half a night to gather six men.

Still under the command of Colonel Michaelis, the 502nd received orders to seize the small road bridge over the Dommel River, capture the little town of St. Oedenrode, then secure the railroad and highway bridges that crossed the Wilhelmina Canal at Best. With its first two objectives reached, the men began their approach toward Best through the Zonsche Forest, an area thick with closely grown fir trees. Enemy troop strength in the area was thought to be light, and the Germans who defended it of poor quality— kids and old men. For that reason only a platoon was sent at first to capture the bridges. When German resistance intensified, a company was called in to help. Before too long, the effort included the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 502nd along with a column of British mechanized vehicles.

The paratroops had fought their way to within 100 yards of one of the bridges when German engineers blew it up. It was an ominous sign that the battle for Best would be the most violent of the war for men of the 502nd, especially for the regiment's officers. On September 18, Cole was cut down by a sniper's bullet. Michaelis and three of his staff were seriously wounded on September 22 by enemy artillery outside his command post. Lt. Col. Steve A. Chappius assumed command of the regiment. Captain Fred O. Drennan, commanding officer of Easy Company and recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross, was killed on September 22. Captain James J. Hatch

took charge of the company.

Another noteworthy death in the 502nd at Best was Pfc. Joe Mann, an Oregon native, of 3rd Battalion's H Company. Already wounded twice in the Zonshe Forest, on September 19 he threw himself on a German grenade to shield the other men inside of his foxhole from the explosion. Like Cole, Mann was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. They were the only two Screaming Eagles in World War II to receive the medal.

Easy Company lost 18 men killed in action at Best; 12 had been with the company during its jump into Normandy. The early fighting in Holland was bittersweet for the 502nd. While 1,100 prisoners were taken at Best and the fight was presumably won, the regiment was moved north toward St. Oedenrode to take up defensive positions to help keep the supply lines open along Hell's Highway. This movement allowed much of the ground that the regiment fought so hard to take to fall back into enemy hands.

Over the next two months, the Dutch countryside became a muddy and wreckage-strewn plain as German units tried again and again to disrupt the flow of men and machines toward Arnhem.

"One night along the Wilhelmina Canal," Bowser recalls, "our second in command at the time was Lieutenant [James W.] Tolar. And [Pfc.] Bill Boyle was wounded bad. Lieutenant Tolar said, 'There's a boat. Take Boyle and any other wounded and see what you can do for them.' Well, now as I tell that story, what in the world! I don't know where to go, what direction! But you don't think. You go! Bill Boyle was bad, and he took out his pocketbook and he had a .45-cal. [pistol]. He gave me his pistol and the pocketbook and said, 'See that my mother gets my pocketbook.'

"We got in the boat and went to the other bank. We were going down the canal, and I heard an engine running. So I stopped. The engine stopped right above us. We were all real quiet, and I heard English, British. We made ourselves known, and they took us, turned their vehicle around, and went back the way they had come. We turned in Bill Boyle with the other wounded. We rode quite a ways on that British vehicle, and I didn't get back to my company for what must have been two days. When I met up with them, I went over to F Company to see if a buddy from Punxsutawney was living, [Edward A.] Lefty Jacobson. He was.

"After supper that day, after five o'clock, the Germans started to surrender, 1,100 of them total. Old men and young kids. We had to search everyone and turn them over to some people to take them back."

Throughout October and into November, the Screaming Eagles, men who were trained to parachute behind enemy lines, disrupt and engage the enemy with speed and surprise—the cutting edge of attack warfare—now found themselves as "normal" soldiers holding defensive positions. Probes into the German-occupied Dutch countryside became the norm.

"One of our cooks wanted to go on a patrol with us," Bowser says. We had men on either side of the canal, and we were keeping track over the telephones so that one squad didn't get ahead of the other. This cook was never on a patrol, and he just begged, so they took him. And he wanted to carry Bill Boyle's pistol, so I let him. When we lost communication, Lieutenant Tolar said to me, 'Bill, you go up on the dike and keep us together.' I said okay, and the Germans must have seen me because an 88 went over me. The next one, I didn't have time to do anything, only to hit the ground, and I knew it was carrying the mail. It landed about 20 yards in front of me, and I never got a scratch.

"When we went into Bastogne our company made a circle around the town. I'm not sure who was on our left or right flanks. The snow was knee deep and the Germans had white camouflage uniforms. Once in our foxholes, you had to have one guy awake all the time."

"The squad on the right side went into an apple orchard, and the Germans had set booby traps all through that orchard. The cook stepped on one, and it blew him up. Parts of him were up in the trees. I never saw that pistol again. But I was able to give Bill Boyle back his pocketbook. I heard from him once [after the war], but he died quite a long time ago."

In late November, the Screaming Eagles were taken off the line and trucked to their base camp at Mourmelon, France. Their period of rest and refitting did not last long. On December 16, after secretly assembling a massive army of men, artillery, and armored units in the forested Ardennes region of Belgium, the Germans struck American lines with complete surprise. One of their first goals was to capture the Belgian town of Bastogne, an important road and rail center.

The Nazi offensive quickly overran American defenders, which included battle-tired and inexperienced troops positioned in the area because the terrain was considered unfit for a German offensive. Eisenhower was stumped on how to plug the tidal wave. At one point he considered breaching the Army's segregation policy and placing black soldiers on the front lines, but that never happened. To stem the onslaught, he sent the 82nd and 101st Divisions to the area by truck, hoping that these elite and veteran outfits, which were now at full strength and well acquainted with isolation as combat formations, could pull off a miracle.

With General Maxwell D. Taylor at a staff conference in the United States, command of the 101st fell to General Anthony C. McAuliffe, head of the division's artillery. During the evening of December 17, the 101st received orders to proceed to Bastogne. The lone standing order McAuliffe received from VIII Corps commander General Troy Middleton was direct: "Hold the Bastogne line at any cost." The 101st made the 107-mile journey in open 10-ton trucks.

"They told us to go and draw ammunition," Bowser says. "Nobody knew where we were going. I took my overcoat and six-buckle Arctics [boots]. When we went into Bastogne our company made a circle around the town. I'm not sure who was on our left or right flanks. Snow was knee deep and the Germans had white camouflage uniforms. Once in our foxholes, you had to have one guy awake all the time."

Following one heavy snowfall on December 22, Major John D. Hanlon, who commanded the 1st Battalion, 502nd, asked the villagers of Henroulle, Belgium, for white sheets to camouflage men and vehicles. In 1948, Hanlon returned to the village with a gift from the people of his hometown—replacement sheets.

Speed to the front lines was critical if Bastogne was to remain in American hands. Just two days after the Screaming Eagles departed Mourmelon, they were dug in and positioned in all directions around the town, with the 502nd in the area of Longchamps on the northwest side of the perimeter. On December 20, German troops isolated Bastogne and the 101st by seizing the last road leading out of town. The Americans were surrounded for the next seven days. Their position must have seemed hopeless to the Germans, as on December 22 they delivered an ultimatum under a white flag to the besieged troopers: surrender or be annihilated. To that, McAuliffe gave his famous "Nuts" reply.

The siege was lifted at 4:45 PM on December

26, when the lead tank of the 4th Armored Division met a 101st Division roadblock on the southern perimeter of Bastogne. The wary troopers manning the roadblock kept the tank crew at gunpoint until they were sure it was not a German trick. But by no means did it mean an end to the fighting. During the freezing weather over the next three weeks, the division would suffer through some of the toughest and bloodiest fighting of the Ardennes campaign. During a German push on 502nd lines by SS Panzer units on January 3, Bowser was wounded.

"We had been over a hill, and when they started to attack we ran to where our section was, our foxholes. When the German tanks started over the hill, we got orders not to fire until the last soldier is down off of that hill. Then mow them down. I was a sergeant at that time, and I was going from foxhole to foxhole to see how the guys were getting along. I went into one foxhole, it was a tee, and the gunner who I didn't know was dead. I could see blood gushing down from his chest. I went to another hole, and I looked down and saw blood on my left leg. There were two guys in there, replacements I didn't know. One was pretty bad from artillery. He had a phone, and I called back to Lieutenant [Bernard J.] McKearney and said, 'We're going to need more ammunition, we're getting low.' That's when I found out that I was wounded. My wound wasn't bad, and neither was one of the other guy's. So we helped this one guy over to the company's command post. When we got there, there were medics and wounded guys lying all around."

The "bulge" in the American lines was eventually reduced. On January 18, 1945, enemy resistance ended and the Screaming Eagles received a "receipt" from VIII Corps command and signed by General Middleton. It read: "Received from the 101st Airborne Division, the town of Bastogne, Luxembourg Province, Belgium. Condition: Used but serviceable." On the following day, the "Battered Bastards of Bastogne" were relieved.

Due to his wound, Bowser would not meet up with Easy Company again until April 1. During his absence, the Screaming Eagles returned to Mourmelon, where Eisenhower presented the division with the Presidential Unit Citation for their defense of Bastogne. It was the first time in the history of the U.S. Army that an entire division was given the citation. Previously, it had been awarded to units of regimental size or smaller.

The final combat mission of World War II for the 101st was to capture Hitler's mountaintop retreat at Berchtesgaden, known as the Eagle's Nest. Occupation duty in Germany followed, which left many troopers with plenty of time on their hands. Despite the Army's nonfraternization policy, many of the men found themselves with a lot of pent-up energy and had to let loose.

National Archives

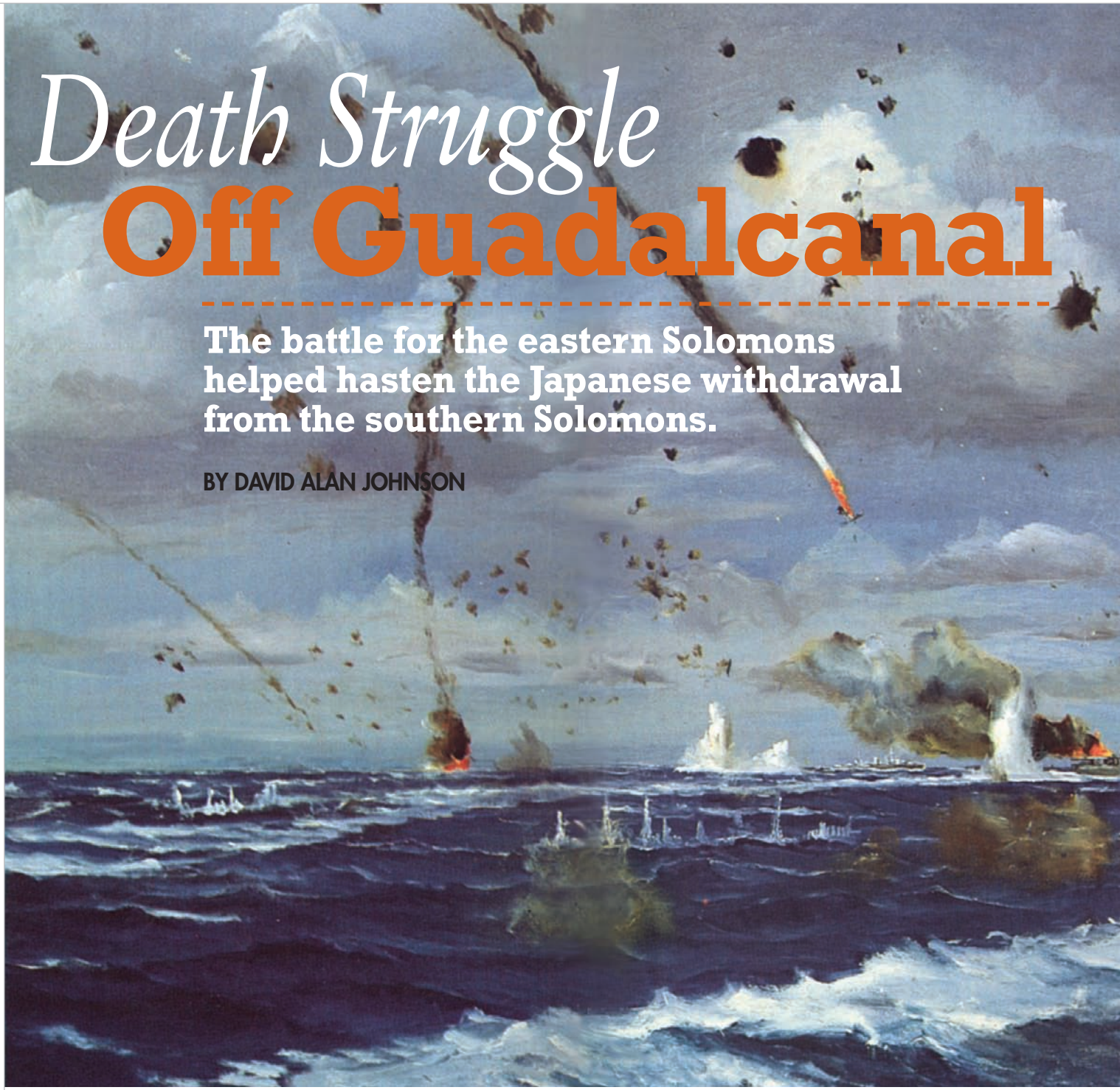
Defending Bastogne during bitter winter fighting, troopers of the 101st Airborne Division recover a canister of medical supplies which has been airdropped to the surrounded soldiers. The 101st held the crossroads town during the Battle of the Bulge until relieved by the 4th Armored Division.

"One guy in our platoon knew he could get booze from a house in this little village," Bowser says. "He got it there before. So he went back and the door was locked. I don't know how long he waited, but he figured he'd shoot the lock off the door. So he did, shot into the house, and he hit an old woman who lived there and killed her. I don't know how long afterward, but the family was trying to find him. They must have seen him around. So we had a company formation, the same as always, and our platoon sergeant saluted the company commander and said all present or accounted for. The family went up and down the lines, but this guy wasn't there. The platoon sergeant put him back in the kitchen so he couldn't be identified."

Those Screaming Eagles who had earned the required 85 points for discharge departed Europe from the southern French port of Marseilles on September 6, 1945, and arrived in Boston harbor eight days later. Bowser was discharged from the Army at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, and went home to Punxsutawney. The future gas field worker is quick to explain that the lure of an extra $50 in jump pay was his incentive to go airborne. Would he do it again?

"No. As far as money goes, it didn't do me any good." □

Richard A. Beranty is a veteran of the U.S. Navy. He is a teacher of English and journalism with the Kiski Area School District in Vandergrift, Pennsylvania.



Death Struggle Off Guadalcanal

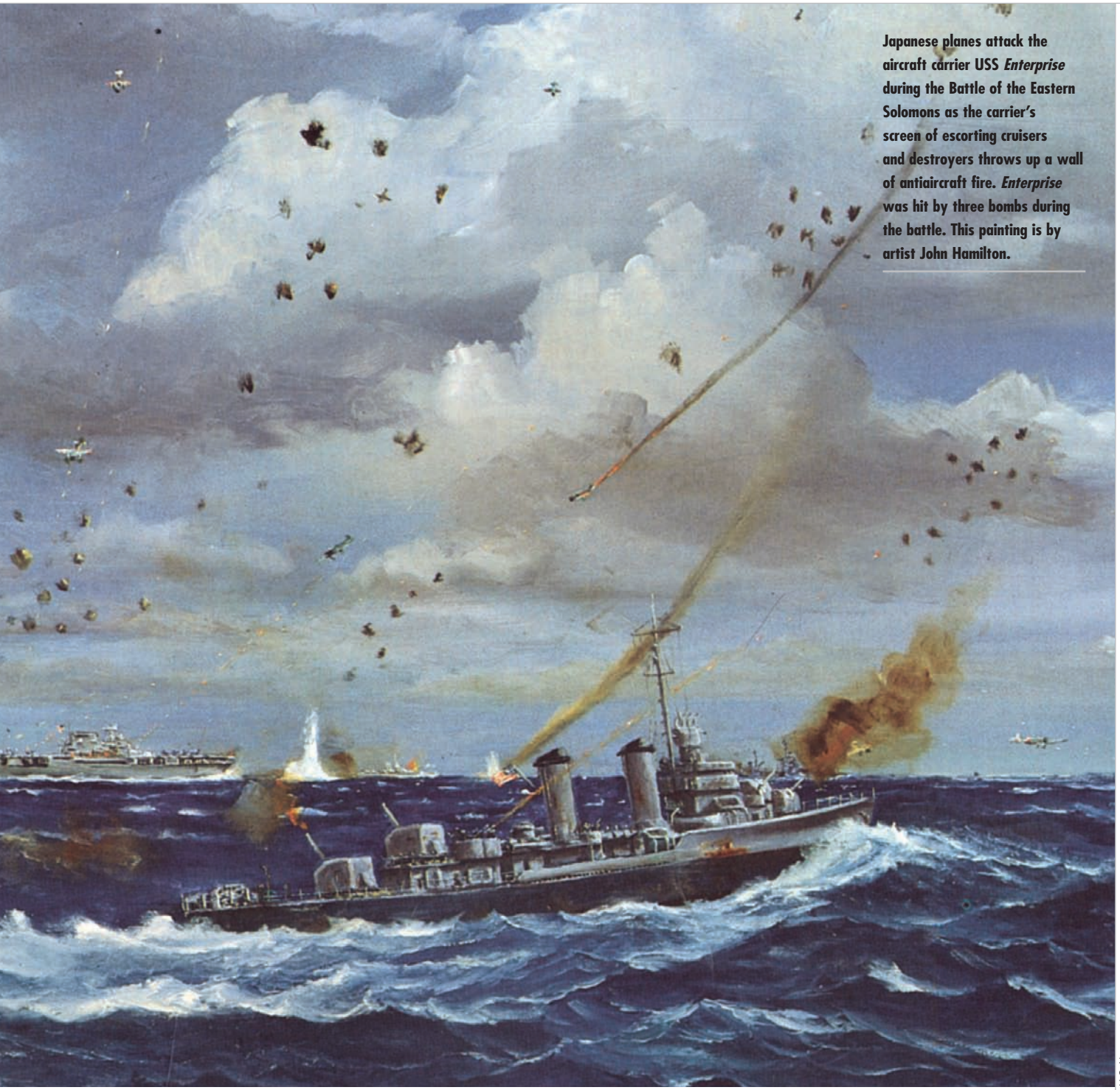
The battle for the eastern Solomons helped hasten the Japanese withdrawal from the southern Solomons.

BY DAVID ALAN JOHNSON

Lieutenant David C. Richardson spotted the four-engined flying boat silhouetted against the ocean by the late morning sun. The Japanese plane, code-named Emily by the Allies, was only about 20 miles from Richardson's carrier, USS *Saratoga,* right where the carrier's fighter director officer said it would be. As was the usual practice, Richardson split his section of four Grumman F4F Wildcat fighters into two groups—two fighters to attack the enemy reconnaissance aircraft from ahead, and two to come in from behind.

The Emily's pilot really did not have much of a chance to evade the four fighters. Richardson's Wildcats made their runs, put several bursts of .50-caliber machine-gun bullets into the big seaplane, and sent it flaming into the sea. When the kill was reported to *Saratoga,* the news produced a small celebration. It was the first time that a radio-vectored fighter attack from the ship had brought down an enemy aircraft.

Saratoga's captain, DeWitt C. Ramsey, did not join in the festivities. He was certain that the Emily's crew had radioed his position back to base and that a Japanese air strike would soon follow. The enemy had been searching for *Saratoga* and the other two carriers of Task Force 16, *Enterprise* and *Wasp,* for the past several days. Now, it looked as though Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, commander of the Japanese Combined Fleet, had found what he was looking for.



Japanese planes attack the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons as the carrier's screen of escorting cruisers and destroyers throws up a wall of antiaircraft fire. *Enterprise* was hit by three bombs during the battle. This painting is by artist John Hamilton.

U.S. Navy

Actually, Captain Ramsey was wrong; the Emily's crew did not have enough time to radio *Saratoga*'s position. But it would only be a matter of time before the enemy spotted Task Force 16. That day, August 24, 1942, had been designated by Admiral Yamamoto for the recapture of Guadalcanal. But before this could take place, the American force would have to be found and destroyed.

The American landings on August 7 "generated a typhoon of enemy reaction," according to U.S. naval historian Samuel Eliot Morrison. Japanese Army, Navy, and air forces were determined that the Marines occupying portions of the island would either be forced to evacuate or annihilated.

The Japanese Navy had already flexed its muscle in the waters around Guadalcanal. In the Battle of Savo Island on August 9, which was one of the most disastrous defeats ever suffered by the U.S. Navy, three American cruisers and one Australian cruiser were sunk, while the Japanese suffered minimal damage. Japanese supply and troop convoys soon began nightly runs down the channel between the islands of the Solomons, known as The Slot. These convoys were dubbed the Tokyo Express by the Americans.

Admiral Yamamoto was confident that the Marines would be forced to surrender by the end of August. An offensive code-named Operation Ka was undertaken on August 16 as a regiment of more than 1,400 army troops along

All photos: National Archives

ABOVE: Following a bombing exercise during Task Force 16 maneuvers, a flight of Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bombers returns to the *Enterprise.* Later replaced by the Curtiss Helldiver, the Dauntless was the frontline carrier-based dive bomber of the U.S. Navy during the opening months of World War II. RIGHT TOP: Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher commanded Task Force 16 during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons. RIGHT BOTTOM: Machinist Donald E. Runyon sits in the cockpit of his Grumman F4F Wildcat fighter on the flight deck of the carrier *Enterprise.* Runyon shot down four Japanese aircraft during the invasion of the island of Guadalcanal and tallied another four during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons.

with a contingent of Marines departed Truk in the Caroline Islands bound for Guadalcanal. The three slow transports carrying the troops were escorted by a screen of cruisers and destroyers. A naval task force also departed Truk for Guadalcanal five days after the troop transports. At the heart of the naval force were the carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku,* both veterans of both Pearl Harbor and Coral Sea, and the light carrier *Ryujo*.

According to the Japanese plan, bombers and torpedo planes from the carriers would sink any American aircraft carriers in the Guadalcanal area. Following this, cruisers and destroyers under the command of Rear Admiral Hiroaki Abe, would destroy all U.S. surface warships. After the American naval units had been disposed of, Henderson Field—Guadalcanal's unsinkable aircraft carrier—would be put out of action. With American naval and air support neutralized, the troops would be put ashore on August 24. Guadalcanal and its airfield would be back in Japanese hands by September.

Allied forces in the Solomons were on the alert for a major Japanese offensive. Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, commander of American forces in the South Pacific, ordered Task Force 16 to protect Guadalcanal and its sea approaches. The carrier USS *Hornet* and her escorts left Pearl Harbor for the Solomons on August 17, and the battleships *Washington* and *South Dakota* departed the East Coast of the United States for the Pacific. Admiral Ghormley wanted to be well prepared for the coming Japanese offensive. But first, he would have to rely on his reconnaissance to tell him about the enemy's approach—which ships were coming, and how many.

The two naval forces converged on Guadalcanal. Although both sides strongly suspected the presence of enemy warships in the area, neither had any solid intelligence. Neither Yamamoto nor Ghormley knew the location of his enemy or the makeup of its forces.

On the morning of August 23, a U.S. Navy Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boat finally made contact, spotting the Japanese troop transports heading southeast toward Guadalcanal. The Japanese carriers and the other warships still had not been located. An air strike was planned to attack the transports as soon as possible. *Saratoga* sent 37 bombers and torpedo planes to the northwest, and Henderson Field added 23 land-based aircraft an hour and a half later.

But the commander of the transports and their escorts, Rear Admiral Raizo Tanaka, was not about to keep a steady course while the enemy strike approached. He knew that his ships had been spotted and reversed course to the northwest, back toward Truk, at 1 PM, keeping his transports beyond American bomber range.

When *Saratoga*'s planes arrived where Tanaka was supposed to be, they found nothing but open sea. The planes from Henderson field had no better luck.

Vice Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, commander of Task Force 16, still had no idea where the enemy was or how many aircraft carriers he had. Admiral Fletcher had another problem as well. The carrier *Wasp*'s screening destroyers were running low on fuel. Because he had no information regarding the Japanese carriers, he reached the conclusion that it would be safe to detach *Wasp* and her group. Fletcher ordered the carrier south to Efate for a refueling stop, which was a two-day trip.

Fletcher has been severely criticized for this move. By sending *Wasp* out of the area, he reduced his own strength by 16 aircraft. One-third of the American force would not be positioned to take part in the upcoming battle.

Throughout the night of August 23, the two sides closed with one another. Tanaka's transport group had reversed course once again and was back on course for Guadalcanal, still undetected by American aircraft. At 9:35 AM on the 24th, a Catalina based at Ndeni in the Santa Cruz Islands caught sight of *Ryujo* and her escorts. The Japanese ships were about 250 miles north of Guadalcanal, steaming southward.

Although the battle had not yet begun, both sides had already made mistakes. Fletcher's order detaching *Wasp* turned out to be unnecessary. The logs of all seven U.S. destroyers accompanying the carrier indicated that they had sufficient fuel. Fletcher was by nature a cautious and conservative person and had spent much of his naval career serving aboard cruisers. When he detached *Wasp* from the task force, his unfamiliarity with carrier operations showed.

On the Japanese side, Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, commander of the Third Fleet, made a similar mistake. Nagumo ordered *Ryujo* to leave the main fleet and attack Henderson Field with her air group instead of keeping her bombers and torpedo planes for the strike against the American carriers. Nagumo's order may have been intended to divert the Americans from *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*.

The same plan had been used at the Battle of the Coral Sea in May, when the light carrier *Shoho* distracted aircraft from the American carriers *Lexington* and *Yorktown* away from the main Japanese carrier force—again, *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*. *Shoho* was sunk, while the big carriers went undetected, although *Shokaku* was later found and badly damaged.

Admiral Yamamoto has also been criticized for endangering his precious carriers in the defense of such a small landing operation. However, neither the Japanese high command nor Yamamoto considered the retaking of Guadalcanal a small operation. Yamamoto loved to gambling and card games, especially bridge and poker, and was willing to take any risk he saw as calculated.

Yamamoto and Nagumo may have been calculating, but Fletcher was cautious. Even though he knew *Ryujo*'s position, he hesitated to order an attack against the carrier. He suspected that other enemy carriers were somewhere near Guadalcanal, even though he did not have any definite information. Fletcher had been at Coral Sea and remembered that *Shoho* had been used as a decoy. Finally, at 1:40 PM, he ordered an air strike launched from *Saratoga* including 30 Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bombers and eight Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo bombers.

By that time, *Ryujo* had sent an air strike of her own, six Nakajima Kate bombers escorted by 15 Mitsubishi Zero fighters, to bomb and strafe Henderson Field. They were supposed to have rendezvoused with 24 twin-engined Mitsubishi Betty medium bombers and 14 Zeros from Rabaul, but bad weather intervened and forced the land-based planes to return to base.

Ryujo's aircraft arrived over Guadalcanal at 1:20 PM, and Marine Wildcats were waiting for them. In the scrambled fight that followed, the Marines lost three Wildcats and two pilots, while three Zeros and four Kates would never return to the fleet. The Zero pilots who survived claimed 15 Wildcats shot down. Actually, *Ryujo*'s strike had little to show for its effort. Only slight damage had been inflicted on Henderson Field, and this was quickly repaired.

About an hour after its aircraft arrived over Guadalcanal, *Ryujo* was under attack. *Saratoga*'s strike group was led by Commander Harry D. Felt, who decided to concentrate all of his dive-bombers on the Japanese carrier. One by one, the bombers opened up their dive flaps and pushed over. Each pilot adjusted his 3-power telescopic sight as his SBD plunged from 14,000 feet to about 1,800 feet, when he reached for the bomb-release lever.

***Ryujo* was rocked by explosions and near** misses. Commander Felt hit the carrier with his own bomb, but marksmanship from the rest of the group was not that impressive. Only three bombs hit their target. After pulling out of their dives, the SBDs found seven Zeros waiting for them. But all of the pilots managed to evade the fighters. None of the bombers was shot down in spite of Japanese claims that eight SBDs had been destroyed.

After the dive-bombers made their escape, the Avengers, under Lieutenant Bruce L. Harwood, began their attack. The torpedo pilots employed anvil tactics—splitting their forces and attacking their target from both bows at the same time so that the carrier would be showing her hull broadside to one of the groups whichever way she turned. Even though smoke from bomb damage made *Ryujo* difficult to see at times, the six TBFs managed to hit the carrier with one torpedo.

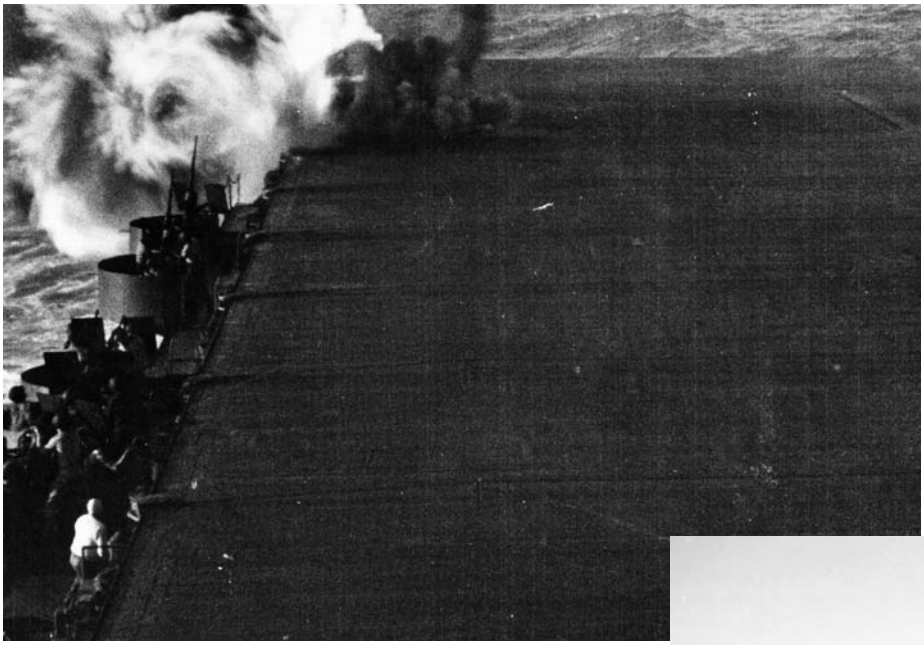
Commander Felt watched the attack from scattered cloud cover and noted that *Ryujo* turned in fast circles "like a waterbug" while trying to evade the American planes. After he left the area, the carrier slowed to a full stop, listing 20 degrees to starboard. At about 8 PM, she finally rolled over and sank. Most of her crew was rescued by the cruiser *Tone*. The survivors of the Guadalcanal air strike splashed down near the carrier; their crews were rescued by *Ryujo*'s destroyers.

Fletcher was glad to hear that one enemy carrier had been knocked out of the battle. He was not absolutely certain that *Ryujo* had been sunk since Commander Felt led his group back to *Saratoga* before the carrier capsized. Naval intelligence would not know for certain that *Ryujo* was lost until 1943.

Carrying a 1,000-pound fragmentation bomb, a Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bomber takes off from the deck of an American aircraft carrier to attack targets on the island of Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942.

Fletcher soon received reports from a PBY and from *Enterprise*'s search planes that two other Japanese carriers had been sighted northeast of *Ryujo*. One-third of his carrier strength had already been committed when he sent *Saratoga*'s air group to attack *Ryujo*. Another third disappeared when *Wasp* turned south with her destroyers. That left the *Enterprise* air group available, but at 12:40 PM 16 SBDs and seven TBFs had been sent on the search patrol, which found *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* at about 2:10. All that remained aboard Enterprise were seven Wildcats, 11 SBDs, and seven TBFs.

At about 4:30, *Enterprise*'s search radar had



ABOVE: Smoke pours from the impact site of the second of three bombs to strike the carrier *Enterprise* during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons. This one hit the starboard side of the flight deck aft. RIGHT: Blasted by U.S. Navy antiaircraft fire, a Japanese plane crashes into the sea off the port bow of the *Enterprise.* Although heavily damaged, *Enterprise* remained in action throughout the Battle of the Eastern Solomons.

detected enemy aircraft on an incoming course. The enemy aircraft appeared on their radar screen bearing 320 degrees, distance 88 miles and closing. Radar in 1942 was a good deal more primitive that it would be even a few years later. *Enterprise*'s radar was not able to give the altitude of the enemy aircraft, and the image remained on the screen for only a few seconds. But after a few quick calculations, they were estimated at about 12,000 feet.

About 10 miles apart, *Enterprise* and *Saratoga* put 53 Wildcats into the air. As the fighters strained for altitude, the flight decks were cleared of all dive-bombers and torpedo bombers. These had already been armed and fueled to capacity.

Aboard *Saratoga*, five Avenger and two Dauntless pilots were preparing to taxi their planes to the forward part of the flight deck, clearing the after deck for the returning air strike. As they sat in their cockpits, the pilots heard a very strange order over the loud speaker instructing them to take off immediately, join up with *Enterprise*'s group, and attack whatever enemy warships they could find. It was probably the vaguest order they would every receive. They did what they were told, joining *Enterprise*'s 11 SBDs and seven TBFs. No one had any flight or navigational gear with them, although one pilot did have a chart.

At 4:49, the enemy aircraft reappeared on *Enterprise*'s radar. They were only 44 miles out by this time. Four sections of Wildcats, which usually consisted of four fighters each, stopped orbiting the task force and flew off to intercept.

Lieutenant A.O. Vorse of *Enterprise* received the order, "VECTOR THREE TWO ZERO, ANGELS TWELVE, DISTANCE THREE FIVE," and began climbing. To his right, about 10,000 feet above him, Vorse was able to make out two separate formations of enemy planes. He counted 18 dive-bombers—the fixed-wheel Aichi Vals, with their distinctive spatted undercarriages, were easy to identify in each group, with fighters above and below. At 4:55, he shouted, "Tallyho!" into his radio. At 20,000 feet, with the Vals now 8,000 feet below them, Vorse and his section dove on the enemy bombers.

On the way down, the Wildcats were confronted by the Zero fighter cover. Vorse made a side attack on one of the Japanese fighters; a burst from his six .50-caliber machine guns set it on fire. Two other pilots in Vorse's group also claimed a Zero each. Ensign Francis R. Register also shot down what he claimed to be a Messerschmitt 109 of German manufacture.

The four pilots then headed for *Saratoga*, which was closer than *Enterprise*; all of the Wildcats were critically low on fuel. Three of the four made it. Vorse made a smooth landing in the carrier's wake, out of fuel and ammunition. He was picked up by an escorting destroyer.

Vorse and his group could rightly claim to have done a good day's work, although shooting down enemy fighters was not really what they were supposed to have done. Getting to the Vals proved to be more difficult than anyone expected. Machinist Donald E. Runyon, also from *Enterprise*, had no trouble at all. He used the blinding tropical sun to his advantage, making his first attack with the sun behind him. The pilot of the Val did not see Runyon as he

The Grumman F4F Wildcat Fighter held the line against Japan.

The Grumman F4F Wildcat is usually described as chunky, "square," squat, or stubby—not exactly adjectives that suggest grace or elegance. The Wildcat is also frequently criticized for being slow, heavy, and lacking in maneuverability, especially in comparison with its main adversary, the famous Japanese Zero fighter. Despite its shortcomings, the Grumman fighter more than held its own against the Zero at Coral Sea, Midway, and in the battles over Guadalcanal.

Designers at Grumman intended the Wildcat to be rugged and heavily armed, a fighter that could absorb punishment as well as attack with six .50-caliber machine guns. The Zero, on the other hand, was built to be light and maneuverable at the cost of strength and toughness. It was certainly graceful and nimble, but it did not have the armor or the self-sealing fuel tanks that would have made it better protected but less agile.

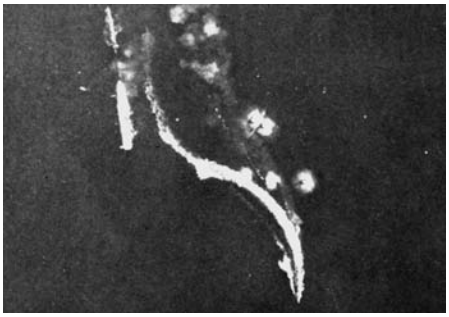
In performance, the Zero greatly outclassed the Wildcat, but because of their plane's rugged design and construction, Wildcat pilots were able to survive attacks by Zeros that would have killed their Japanese opponents.

Japanese ace Saburo Sakai was greatly impressed by the Wildcat's ability to withstand damage. "For some strange reason, even after I had poured about five or six hundred rounds of ammunition directly into the Grumman, the airplane did not fall but kept on flying," Sakai wrote after a fight with a Wildcat. "I thought

approached. A short burst of machine-gun fire shredded the Val's fuselage; the dive-bomber blew up and fell three miles into the sea.

Runyon used the momentum of his dive to pull back above the Vals, climbing into the sun for a second attack. The second Val did not see him coming either. Once again, the Wildcat's .50-caliber guns set the enemy aircraft on fire. It splashed into the Pacific about five miles from *Enterprise*.

Since the strategy of attacking from out of the sun had already worked twice, Runyon decided to try it a third time. As he made his approach toward the unsuspecting enemy dive-bombers, a stream of tracers darted past Runyon's cockpit—a Zero was firing at him from dead astern. Runyon sideslipped his Wildcat, and the Zero shot past. Now the situation was reversed. The Zero was in front of Runyon. The Zero was an excellent fighter, light and highly maneuverable, but it could not take much punishment. Another short burst from Runyon's machine guns made the fighter blow up.



ABOVE: On the afternoon of August 24, 1942, a third bomb penetrates the flight deck of the USS *Enterprise* and explodes. In this spectacular image, the moment of detonation is captured. Unfortunately, combat photographer Robert Frederick Read was killed during the battle. LEFT: As two Japanese destroyers maneuver violently to evade American bombs, the carrier *Ryujo* lies dead in the water. *Ryujo* later went to the bottom.

Runyon was now below the Vals. He pulled his nose up and brought his guns to bear on a third Val, which fell off in a smoking left turn. Another escorting Zero immediately dove after Runyon. He pulled up to meet the fighter and fired his machine guns for the fifth time in about five minutes. This Zero did not explode, but it did fly off trailing smoke.

While Runyon was shooting down three Vals and a Zero and damaging another Zero, the other Wildcats of *Enterprise* and *Saratoga* were also taking their toll on the approaching enemy. The SBD pilots who had taken part in the *Ryujo* air strike also found themselves fighting Japanese planes. Lt. Cmdr. L.J. Kirn and his force of 10 SBDs were returning to *Saratoga* when they came across a formation of four Vals, flying at about 500 feet.

The bomber crews must have been frustrated fighter pilots at heart. They came at the Vals in single file, firing their fixed .50-caliber nose guns, and then flying underneath the surprised enemy. As they passed below the exposed underbellies, the SBD rear gunners opened up with their twin .30-caliber machine guns. Three of the four Vals encountered were shot down, and one was badly damaged.

While the fighter screen did its best to fend off the oncoming Japanese planes, the U.S. ships prepared to defend themselves. *Enterprise* steamed southeast at 27 knots with her escorts, which included the fast battleship *North Carolina*, two cruisers, and six destroyers.

At 4:42, *Enterprise*'s tiny radar plot sent this message: "The enemy planes are directly overhead now." The fighter screen and Commander Kirn's 10 SBDs had destroyed as many Vals as they could reach, but about 25 of them managed to evade the defending aircraft. The original Japanese plan was to split and attack both *Enterprise* and *Saratoga*, but all of the surviving Vals concentrated on *Enterprise*.

On *Enterprise*'s bridge, Captain Arthur C. Davis made a mental note on the performance of the enemy pilots. He was greatly impressed by what he saw, observing, "The dives were steep, estimated at 70 degrees, well executed and absolutely determined." The gunnery officer on the cruiser *Portland* did not agree, however. He thought the Vals were pretty good but he had seen better.

this very odd—it had never happened before— and closed the distance between the two airplanes until I could almost reach out and touch the Grumman. To my surprise, the Grumman's rudder and tail were torn to shreds, looking like an old torn piece of rag."

Sakai concluded with a note of amazement, "A Zero which had taken that many bullets would have been a ball of fire by now."

Lieutenant Commander James Flatley, who commanded USS *Yorktown*'s fighter group at Midway, discovered that the best way to fight the Zero was to use the Wildcat's weight and speed to advantage—gain altitude and dive at full throttle no matter what the enemy did. This tactic allowed Wildcat pilots to zoom through any screening Zeros and attack enemy bombers.

"Sooner or later they had to take you on on your terms," Flatley explained. "If you should be jumped from behind, they had difficulty following, particularly when you rolled at high speed."

These tactics produced results. During the Guadalcanal campaign, Wildcat pilots decimated Sakai's fighter wing, which was stationed at Rabaul and made up entirely of Zeros. Although the Wildcat was not as graceful as its opponent, American pilots exploited the plane's weight to negate the Zero's agility. □

Antiaircraft gunners from the ring of ships around *Enterprise* did their best to knock down as many attackers as possible. One writer described the barrage as "a steel umbrella over the carrier." Another said it was "a cloud of fire." Eight of the Vals were distracted from *Enterprise* by *North Carolina*'s volume of fire and decided to go after the battleship instead. All of the attacking Vals missed their mark, although one bomb landed close to the port side. The combined antiaircraft fire accounted for nine dive-bombers, and most of the damage was done by *Enterprise*'s own gunners.

Aboard *Enterprise,* gunners watched the lead Japanese bomber grow larger in their sights until even the bomb under its fuselage became visible. Then the Val dropped its bomb and pulled sharply away. The pilot was not lucky—his bomb landed in the sea with a splash, a dud, failing to explode.

Captain Davis ordered *Enterprise*'s rudder hard over, turning the carrier in a series of violent maneuvers that spoiled the aim of several Japanese pilots, but the Vals continued diving at the carrier in seven-second intervals. At least three of the dive-bombers were blown apart by five-inch shellbursts. Several bombs fell into the sea close to the carrier, throwing fountains of water onto *Enterprise*'s deck.

The carrier's biographer wrote, "Neither the skill of her skipper, the aggressiveness of her fighters nor the accuracy of her gunners could save the Big E from such a sustained and well-executed attack." At 4:44, a bomb hit *Enterprise*'s flight deck and crashed through the corner of the after elevator. It penetrated three decks before a delayed action fuse set off its 1,000 pounds of high explosives.

"The long, narrow carrier whipped like a musical saw under the hammer blow at her stern," remembered Commander Edward P. Stafford. "It was like a 60-mile-an-hour truck ride over a rutted country road." The explosion knocked men off their feet. Gunners were jarred out of their battle stations, causing an unintended pause in the antiaircraft barrage.

The flight deck now had a two-foot bulge as well as a gaping hole. The after elevator would be out of commission until a Navy yard could put it right, and several fires were started. Thirty-five men were killed instantly by the explosion. The blast also ruptured a water main, and the gushing water put out one of the larger fires.

Thirty seconds later, before anyone even had the chance to recover their senses, a second bomb hit. It landed within 15 feet of the first bomb. For the second time in less than a minute, the carrier shook and vibrated. All of the five-inch guns on the starboard quarter were destroyed. Their crews were killed when 40 rounds of powder for the guns blew up.

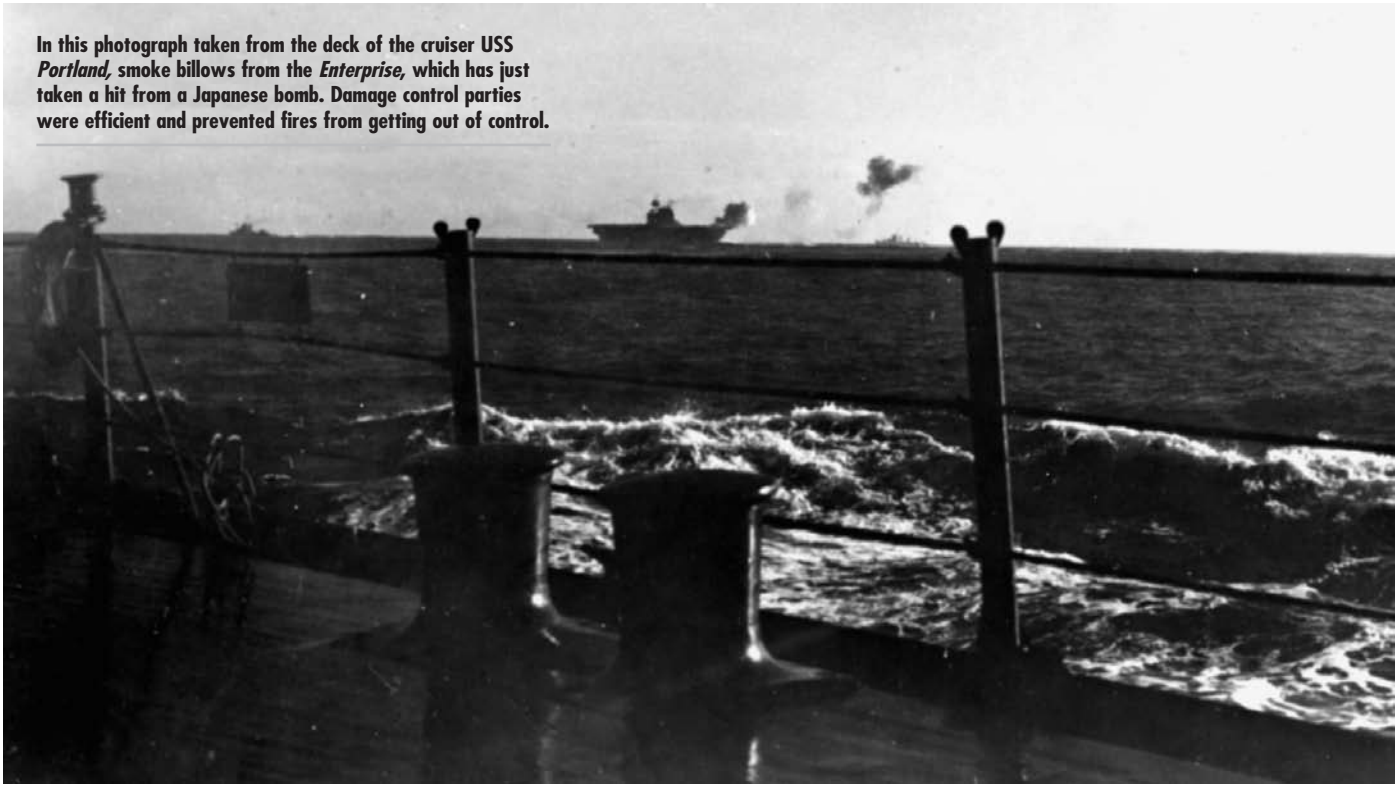
Enterprise listed slightly to starboard, and thick smoke poured out of the two holes in her flight deck. But she maintained a brisk 27 knots, and her damage control crews went to work putting out her fires, plugging leaks, and restoring power within minutes of the second bomb hit. Pharmacist mates tended the wounds of 95 men before having them moved to sick bay. Only one of these men would die as the result of his wounds.

Three minutes after the first bomb, *Enterprise* was hit a third time, adjacent Number Two elevator and just aft of the island. This 500-pound bomb was defective, and the explosion is usually described as being of "low order." It still had enough force to blow a 10-foot hole in the flight deck, damage a few more antiaircraft guns, and put the elevator out of order.

At 4:45, the last of the Vals flew off to the northeast, low over the water with several Wildcats giving chase. The dive-bombers left *Enterprise* badly holed and belching black smoke. In spite of her list, *Enterprise* continued at a speed of 24 knots and announced to the fleet that she required no assistance.

One hour after the third bomb hit, *Enterprise* recovered her aircraft. By 6:21, she had taken 25 of planes back on board. As the 26th made its approach, the carrier began to swing to port. The pilot was waved off and flew off with his wheels down and arrestor hook dangling.

The sharp turn to port was unintentional. One of the three bombs had caused *Enterprise*'s steering gear to fail. The compartment housing the electric motor that controlled the ship's rudder had flooded, shorting out the motor. As the



In this photograph taken from the deck of the cruiser USS *Portland,* smoke billows from the *Enterprise,* which has just taken a hit from a Japanese bomb. Damage control parties were efficient and prevented fires from getting out of control.

helmsman on the carrier's bridge watched helplessly, the rudder angle indicator swung from full left turn to full right, where it jammed.

Captain Davis tried to steer the ship by using just the engines, an act of desperation that did not work. The carrier kept turning to starboard and nearly collided with the destroyer *Balch*. Because the rudder was jammed in a full turn, *Enterprise* could not even be towed.

While her escorts stood anxiously by, Captain Davis slowed *Enterprise* to 10 knots as a repair crew tried to fix the rudder. Several men did their best to switch control to the standby motor but were overcome by the 170-degree heat inside the compartment. Eventually, Chief Machinist William A. Smith, who was the ship's expert on the steering motors, succeeded in shifting control to the secondary motor, but only after twice passing out from the heat. Steering was restored to the bridge at 6:39. *Enterprise* stopped circling and straightened out on a southerly course.

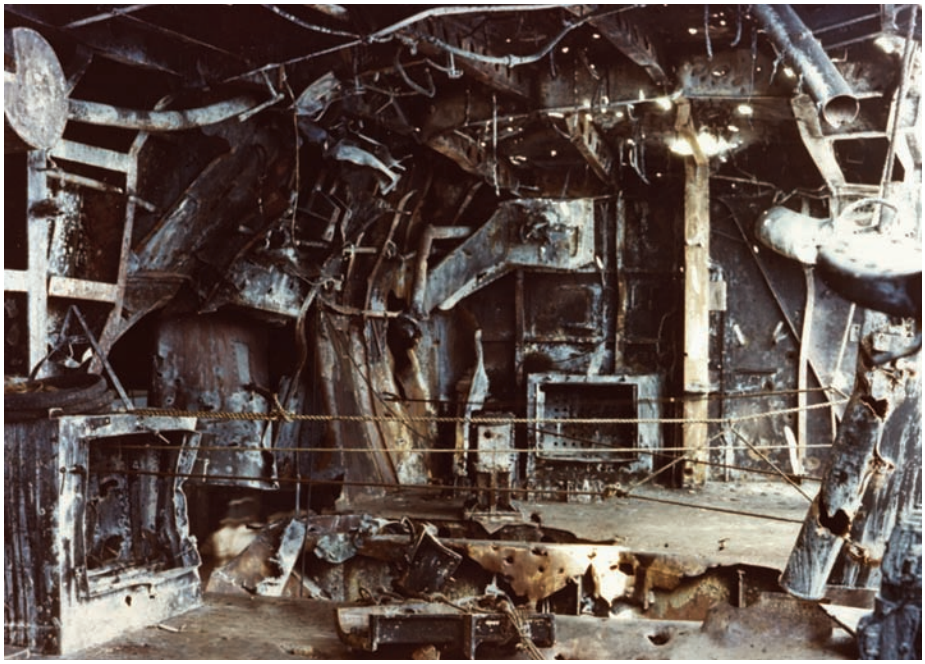
During the time that Smith was desperately trying to recover *Enterprise*'s steering, radar relayed this message: "LARGE BOGEY TWO SEVEN ZERO, FIFTY MILES." *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* had launched their second strike. Thirty more Vals were on their way.

The Japanese dive-bombers were on a course that would put them directly overhead in about 15 minutes. Radar watched the blip as it moved to within about 50 miles of the *Enterprise* task force, and then made a turning that put the enemy planes south. No Wildcats were available to intercept the incoming Vals; all the fighters were low on fuel and ammunition. All at once, the blip reversed course and disappeared. *Enterprise* had been given an unexpected reprieve.

The leader of the strike had been given *Enterprise*'s estimated position just before takeoff, and a more accurate position had been sent while the attack group was in the air, but the radio operator apparently did not copy it correctly. The fact that no American fighters were sent to intercept actually helped the American warships. Since fuel was low and there was no sign of the American task force, the Japanese headed for home.

***Enterprise* enjoyed a reputation as a good luck** ship and certainly lived up to its reputation on this day. However, her pilots who were supposed to have joined forces with *Saratoga*'s dive-bombers and torpedo planes were not as lucky. They could not find the enemy or even each other. *Saratoga*'s group did manage to locate the seaplane tender *Chitose* and damaged her with two near misses that caused major flooding.

ABOVE: Set ablaze by accurate antiaircraft fire, a Japanese Aichi D3A Val dive-bomber spins out of control. Pressing home their attacks with reckless abandon, Japanese pilots scored three hits on the *Enterprise,* from whose deck this photo was taken. BELOW: The gallery of one of the *Enterprise*'s starboard 5-inch guns was heavily damaged by a Japanese bomb during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons. The *Enterprise* survived the battle and the war only to be sold for scrap.



After a frustrating search for *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku,* the leader of the 11 SBDs from *Enterprise* elected to land at Henderson Field instead of trying to find their carrier in the dark. The Avenger pilots had more fuel to spare and did not turn back as soon. Shortly afterward, one of them caught a glimpse of what appeared to be the long, white wakes of high-speed warships. In the gathering twilight, the torpedo planes dove down to attack the enemy ships.

The wakes turned out to be the sea breaking over Roncador Reef, about 100 miles north of Santa Isabel Island. The pilots jettisoned their torpedoes and set out to find *Enterprise.* Only one made it safely aboard. The second TBF crashed into the carrier's island, blocking the flight deck and forcing the others to set down on *Saratoga.*

By about 10 PM, all of the aircraft that would ever return—American and Japanese—had either flown back to their carriers or landed safely on Guadalcanal. Fletcher wisely decided to retire to the south with *Enterprise* badly damaged and *Wasp* now heading north to rejoin the task force. He had no desire to get involved in a night battle. The Japanese advance force had already set a course to inter-

Continued on page 82

The Pacific Theater Lights Up Television

HBO brings us military memoirs with *The Pacific*.

BY JOSEPH LUSTER

THE BEGINNING OF THE DECADE will be remembered for a lot of things, but let us always keep in mind the transformation television made around that time. *The Sopranos* was in its early stages, Jack Bauer was just getting the hang of screaming at terrorists for bomb locations, and Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks were kicking off one of the most expensive and ambitious television projects ever. *Band of Brothers,* based on Stephen Ambrose's 1992 book of the same name, brought feature film production values to HBO, staging a historically rich take on Easy Company's contribution to World War II, from jump training to the end of Germany's resistance.

The 10-part miniseries, with an estimated budget of about $12 million per episode, accomplished a lot during its run, not the least of which was establishing that Ron Livingston (portraying Captain Lewis Nixon) was effective well beyond the smashing of corporate supplies and the kicking over of cubicles in *Office Space*. Above all else, *Band of Brothers* deftly balanced its character studies with hard-hitting combat that showcased the brutality of war, and its show runners are looking for a repeat performance in 2010.

Like its predecessor, *The Pacific*—coming courtesy executive producers Tom Hanks, Steven Spielberg, and Gary Goetzman—is spread across 10 episodes. Unlike *Band of Brothers,* this take on the Pacific Theater isn't based on a single book; instead it takes a good deal of its content from U.S. Marine memoirs. The pair of books in question are Robert Leckie's *Helmet for My Pillow* and Eugene Sledge's *With the Old Breed*. In addition to the personal tale of these Marines is that of John Basilone, a Marine who earned the Medal of Honor for his participation in the Battle of Guadalcanal, and also received the Navy Cross.

Other material used for the series includes *Red Blood, Black Sand,* by Chuck Tatum, and another work from Sledge, *China Marine,* with filmmaker-conducted interviews providing background for the rest of the show's narrative.

Filling the shoes of Eugene "Sledgehammer" Sledge is Joseph Mazzelo, an actor you many may recognize as Tim Murphy in *Jurassic Park*. Yes, he played the young boy in Spielberg's 1993 dino classic; try not to feel too old when you see him entrenched in battle. Rounding out the rest of the Big Three are Jon Seda (*Gladiator, King Rikki*) as John "Manila" Basilone, and James Badge Dale (he played Chase Edmunds in *24*, bringing us right back to the beginning) as Private First Class Robert Leckie.

The Pacific throws the audience into the dirt-kicking fury of things at ground level, with Marines taking on Japanese forces on Guadalcanal. Throughout the series, we wind through Cape Gloucester, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, bringing things to a close right up to the trip home. With a budget hovering around that of *Band of Brothers,* it's no

All photos: HBO

surprise that as much painstaking detail as possible was put into faithfully recreating these scenarios, with the majority of filming done across various Australian locations.

Explosive bursts of dirt and deafening water-submerged chaos bring to mind once more the opening to Spielberg's own *Saving Private Ryan,* which set the standard for budget-busting depictions of war. However, while surface comparisons to both the award-winning 1998 feature and *Band of Brothers* are (as evidenced by this very article) unavoidable, anyone familiar with this particular theater of war knows it to be another beast entirely. As executive producer Tom Hanks puts it, "The war in the Pacific was a very different perspective from the war in Europe."

As a result, series creators—including writer/producer Bruce McKenna, who also wrote episodes of *Band of Brothers*—have completely avoided the too-easy route of simply placing the essence of their former work in new locales; with a unique situation comes an appropriately fresh take. Soldiers fought against enemies that played with a rule book foreign to them, and braved harsh elements that made every little task all the more daunting. The result of this concoction is a documentary-style take on World War II's flipside.

The Pacific will no doubt have viewers glued to HBO in March, through the tumultuous ferocity of war, just as *Band of Brothers* did in 2001. It's not going to be entirely comfortable, and productions like this are memorable for things that go beyond pure entertainment value. They're not just about displaying fields of battle, or the execution of key campaigns as they occurred. Rather, *Band of Brothers,* and now *The Pacific,* place a more keen focus on the human element. There is perhaps no more honest or staggering a window through which we can observe our history.

The Pacific airs in March 2010. *Band of Brothers* is available in both DVD and Blu-ray collections.

Gottfried P. Dulias was a young Luftwaffe pilot who had seen plenty of action in the skies above the Eastern Front. Flying the Messerschmitt Me-109G-14/AS with Jagdgeschwader 53—known as the Pik A's, or Ace of Spades squadron, or simply as JG 53—he shot down five enemy aircraft and became an ace.

Subsequently, he was shot down by ground fire and captured, and he spent three years in a Soviet prison camp. Dulias emigrated to the United States in 1953 and worked in residential construction and as a locksmith until his retirement in 2009. He and his wife, Hedwig, were married for 46 years until her death in 1997.

The father of three daughters, who also has two grandchildren and one great grandchild, Mr. Dulias lives today in Patchogue, New York. He and coauthor Dianna M. Popp met on the Internet and later worked together to produce the book Another Bowl of Kapusta, *from which this story is excerpted.* Kapusta *is Russian for cabbage soup, which served as a staple food for prisoners of war held by the Soviet Union.*

Author's Collection

ullstein bild

Surviving the Soviet Gulag

A young Luftwaffe fighter pilot was shot down and captured by the Soviets, endured years in captivity, and lived to tell the tale.

BY GOTTFRIED P. DULIAS

As I was passing over the front line with tracers flying by right in front of me, I had no time for evasive action and I heard loud pings hitting my engine and saw the impacts and some debris hitting my windshield. The engine started to sputter as the cockpit immediately filled up with smoke, and I knew I was doomed. The first thing I did was to jettison my canopy in order to see and breathe. I quickly searched for a suitable spot to make a belly landing. Luckily, I found a clear opening in the forested area and set my mortally wounded machine down on the snow-covered ground.

Coming to a stop, I made a quick exit, ran away from my beloved "Gustav," and within a split second it blew up. Immediately, I headed toward the nearby woods to hide. Following my training on the procedures for bailing out, I used my survival knife and dug a small hole in the ground to hide my documents, including a photo of me in civilian clothes from my last furlough wearing the [Nazi] party pin. I intended to hide in the woods until nightfall and hoped to make it back through the nearby front line. I still heard the crackle of exploding ammunition from my burning Me-109; it was my beloved Gustav's goodbye call.

I started walking by feeling my way through the thick underbrush. I did have a survival compass which had glow-in-the-dark directional points and a glowing needlepoint top indicator. Besides that, I had my survival pocketknife and my Luger [pistol] with 30 bullets. I continued to grope my way through the for-

German soldiers march off toward captivity and an uncertain future in Russia. Thousands of Germans died in Soviet prisons or were held for several years following the end of World War II. INSET: A young Gottfried P. Dulias is pictured during his time as an aviation cadet in Berlin in 1944.

est, and it never seemed to end.

It was now beginning to dawn. I remained in hiding there in the forest and heard some voices. Russian was being spoken. I found a secure place and hid in the underbrush. I peeked through the branches and saw a group of six drunken Russians passing by. They passed perhaps 20 feet from me. I saw that they were soldiers, not civilians, and they walked along a narrow path. I carefully observed their movement and then managed to advance forward on my way back toward our side.

As I kept stalking in the direction of the front, following my compass, and snuck past them, another troop came along, and they spotted me. They yelled: "Stoi, Stoi!" meaning Halt, Stop! Unfortunately they spotted me before I did them. I guess I was better at navigating up in the air than on the ground! I had to hold my hands extended and outstretched above my head. They shouted commands in Russian to me that I much later got to know as derogative curses.

They were a mean bunch and I knew that they hated the Luftwaffe because of the great damage that was done to them by us. It was known that downed Luftwaffe pilots were executed on the spot. They all pointed their Tommy guns [machine pistols] directly at me. Then one started talking and sounded as he was giving me orders.

I knew he was extremely angry as he was shouting at me, obviously due to the fact that we had a language barrier. I couldn't understand a single word. He began hitting me in the chest with his gun butt. I almost fell backwards and his stroke took my breath away. He motioned for me to walk and pointed to the direction they came from. As I passed him, he kicked me hard in the back, and I almost fell forward. As I stumbled, the others cursed me too, and then hit me with their gun butts. Finally, I got knocked to the ground, yet they

Author's Collection

ABOVE: Dulias poses in front of a two-seater Olimpia Kranich soaring plane after a solo flight in the summer of 1944. The men flew bare-chested because of the hot weather and the even hotter enclosed cockpit. RIGHT: Dulias (left) and two of his fellow cadets are dressed in summer flight uniforms.

continued hitting, kicking, and trampling me so hard that I almost passed out.

They probably would have killed me if a Russian major had not come up and stopped them. He was a most impressive character. To my complete surprise, when he and I met face to face he addressed me in fluent German without the slightest accent. At the same time he spoke Russian to his soldiers. Thanks to God he appeared just in time to spare me from certain death.

The first thing he asked me was, "Are you the pilot of the plane that went down?"

I confirmed with a "Yes."

He stretched his arm forward with an open hand and he said, "Give me your gun!"

I handed him my belt and holster containing my Luger. He slid the holster off my belt and handed the belt back to me. I believe he was from the same troops that were doing the ground fire that shot me down and now had searched and finally spotted me. I acknowledged his questions and was really impressed with the major's command of the German language.

He asked me my name and rank and saw that I was a Leutnant [lieutenant]. He also asked what type of aircraft I flew, although it appeared that he was knowledgeable about that already. He ordered me to march ahead of him to their field command station, which was just beyond the forested area, to the north. I walked ahead while the soldiers still continued cursing at me, but the major gave them orders to stop that.

Later, at the farmhouse, which I correctly assumed to be their post, one of the Russian soldiers approached me, pointed toward his wrist and shouted, "Ura, Ura." He pointed to a chain hanging out from my pants pocket. I happened to have my grandfather Dulias's open pocket watch on me. It was of a copper-golden tone but without a cover. So I had to give him the watch. He held it to his ear, listened to it tick and shouted, "Ura, Ura." with a smiling face, obviously happy to get that trophy. In return he gave me a piece of bread. He was friendly, not too demanding, not stern, but just had to have my watch. Perhaps it was a novelty to him that he had only heard about.

At that station I saw several German infantrymen also held as prisoners of war. They were guarded by a few Russians and were not mistreated in any way. For the first time I saw a few female Russian soldiers holding their guns. When they saw me they shouted out, "Fritz, Fritz," which was their nickname for any captured German soldier, as I found out later. In turn, the German nickname for the Russians was "Ivan."

The major went into this command post. One by one all newly captured POWs were called into the post to be interrogated by the major. I was asked if I knew of any more German outfits (tanks, artillery, and so on) at or near the front. I couldn't answer, due to my real lack of knowledge. Basically all I revealed was the fact that from the air I saw some German tank columns approaching the front.

I was then asked if I was able to draw maps. I knew I was skilled in doing that because I had already been copying maps for our own pilots because of a shortage; supplies had dwindled fast and replacements never made it to our field base. So he led me to an empty desk in the room where Russian soldiers were busy working on copying maps and showed me what he wanted me to do. So now, I had to do for the enemy what I originally did for my fellow pilots; but now I had no choice in the matter.

Finally toward evening they gave me something to eat, as it was their suppertime.

A bowl of cabbage soup was my first meal as "guest" of the Russians. They called it *kapusta*. I welcomed that warm soup, especially after not having had any food at all since leaving my base the day before. In the rush of leaving my plane I had forgotten to take my emergency rations with me. The *kapusta* was rich with lots of green cabbage leaves and included some potatoes and a few other vegetables along with some morsels of meat. It tasted really good and reminded me of the good *Kohlsuppe* (cabbage soup) we had often at home as my mother had cooked it.

Author's Collection

Later that night I was led to the adjoining barn where I joined the other POWs. I was shown the floor as my place to sleep. It was rather barren except for some straw, and I fell asleep in my flight suit. I slept all through the night. In the morning my whole body was hurting me from the gun-butt blows and kicks I had suffered.

The next morning, the soldier who took my watch came back to me and said: "*Ura kaput, ura kaput!*" He showed me that he thought the watch was broken. He looked at me with a sad face as he handed it to me. I quickly realized that he didn't know that he had to wind it to make it go on ticking. So I wound it for him and handed it back. He held it to his ear and smiled and grinned and looked like he was dancing for joy as he shouted: "*Ura karascholl, ura karascholl,*" meaning, the watch worked again and that it was okay.

Then another guard came and motioned to me to come out and walk ahead of him while he remained behind me, pointing his gun at me and swinging it in the direction he wanted me to go, toward an open field. I wondered why he walked so far behind me and also noticed that he followed in my exact footprints along the open field, like Indians did on a warpath. At any moment I really expected to be shot from behind.

I kept walking but nothing happened until we reached the obviously intended destination. To my great relief we came to another farmhouse. Once there I noticed a group of about 80 German prisoners, all infantrymen. One of those Germans pointed to the field and asked me if I had come across it to get there. To my horror, he told me that I had crossed a minefield. I almost passed out from that shock.

More POWs were herded into our group. For a roll call we had to form three lines. We were then counted two and three times as a guard walked down the lines counting and writing in a notebook. Then we were ordered to march toward the south, away from the front. Following our column were four horse-drawn supply wagons loaded with *kapusta* and captured German *Komissbrot* [Army bread] and other supplies that were covered with canvas sheets. Following those wagons was another team of horses pulling a German *Goulaschkanone* [field kitchen, aka Goulash cannon].

Those infantry POWs each had their army-issued *Kochgeschirr* [aluminum cooking and eating dish] and their army spoon-fork combos, which were not confiscated from them as were most other things they carried. Also they could keep their army *Brotbeutel* [bread sacks with shoulder straps]. I did not have any of that equipment and was hoping I could borrow from one of those who were fed first whenever we stopped to eat, or I would go hungry. I did get to borrow these.

The next morning the guards shouted: "*Pajyom, Pajyom!*" Get up, let's go, let's go! Three or four of the wounded and sick POWs did not get up. They were dead. The guards just left them there in the field. After being counted again several times, we marched on the muddy road. The snow was melting and puddles were everywhere. Our march was leading us into the hinterland, far beyond the front. While under way, some of the sick and wounded were unable to continue or had passed out. They just dropped where they were in the marching column and were dragged to the side of the road by a guard and shot on the spot.

With a belt of ammunition around his neck, Dulias dons a Luftwaffe flak helmet and mans a double-barreled machine gun (MG 81) which has been mounted on a post for gunnery training. BELOW: This replica of the Me-109 Dulias was flying when he was shot down provides an appreciation of the sleek lines of the fighter and displays the extensive Luftwaffe camouflage scheme that was popular at the time.

From one of those poor dead fellows I took an army-issue bread bag. It had a looped strap to easily sling over my shoulder. Inside the bag I found a shawl, a pair of socks, and some army newspapers. The shawl and socks came in handy for the cold nights and windy days. We continued marching all day long without food. At nightfall there was another roll call, and our numbers got smaller. In the evenings we got our now familiar *kapusta* and bread. That soup was about the same quality as what I was served the first time at the command post, not bad! And the thick slice of German *Komissbrot* was welcomed as filler.

On the third or fourth night of our march, the guards happened to find an abandoned farmhouse with a barn and stable. That was the first night we found shelter with a place to sleep under a roof. It was a welcome relief after so much marching and sleeping out in the open. I was lucky to be assigned to stay in the main farmhouse and it was still fully furnished.

We slept on the floor and while I was lying there I looked around the room. My eyes gazed upon a collection of books on a bookshelf right by my head, and that sparked my curiosity. I was able to read the spine from one of them printed in gold letters. It looked quite familiar to me: *Altes und Neues Testament Die Heilige Bibel* (Old and New Testament the Holy Bible)

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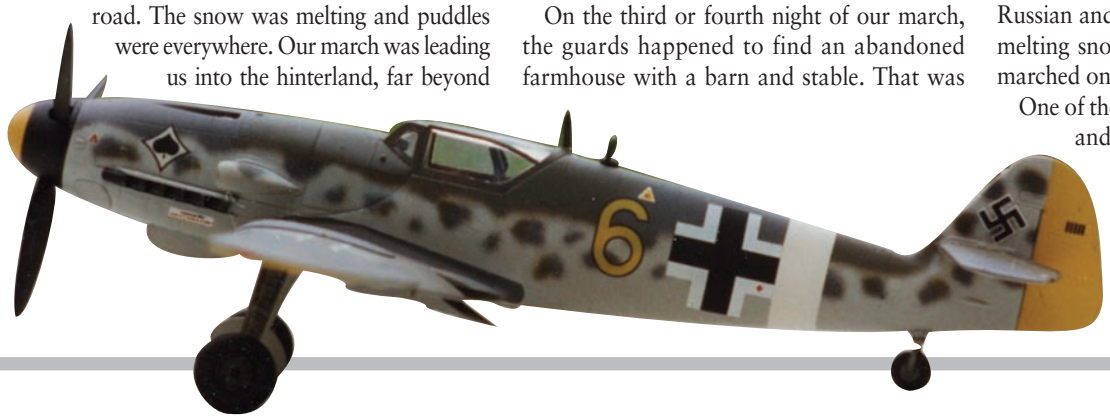
I slipped it off the shelf and opened it up. It was completely printed in the German language, and on the first blank page I saw a handwritten dedication by a father to his son. I don't remember their names, but as I recall, it was in a neat handwriting in the old German Sütterlin type, that I had learned at public school.

The pages of the Bible were rather thin and were edged in gold. I decided to keep my find. It fit nicely into my bread bag. The size of the Bible was about eight inches wide by 10 inches in length, and had a spine about two inches thick. Besides that, I found a small black and white photo, which showed a quaint town with its church tower with an arched gate, along with a few blank pages of paper from a notebook. I took those along too.

The next morning, after only one night of shelter, there was the usual roll call, and then we continued marching on. Every day more and more men died of their wounds; some of the weak guys who could not go on were shot where they dropped. Some were bleeding to death. Others who were never treated for their injuries had developed gangrene. It was a pitiful sight but there was no turning away from it, and I cooperated in every way, just to survive. The dead could not be buried. The ground was still frozen hard underneath the melting snow and thin layer of mud.

On our way we saw the bloated carcasses of horses lying frozen on the side of the road among burned-out Russian and German tanks, trucks, and other vehicles. Frozen soldiers, both Russian and German, were sticking out of the melting snow. It was a gruesome sight as we marched on.

One of the guards pulled me from our group and motioned me to sit down at the side of the road. I surely assumed again that I would be shot. He pointed to my fur-lined flight boots and said something in Russian, gesturing by pointing to himself. Much relieved, I realized he only



wanted my boots. He removed his well-worn ones and slipped into mine. Satisfied with the obvious fit, he handed me his pair to put on. Surprisingly, they fit me too and I was glad that this exchange was all he wanted.

He shouted, and I got up and rejoined our marching column. I did not mind the holes in my "new" boots because I was still alive. Later, he handed me a big piece of *Komissbrot* and a handful of tobacco (*machorka*). Pointing to my boots, he smilingly asked: "Karascholl?" (It's OK?) I nodded and smiled back at him, so relieved to still be alive.

The "death march" lasted about a week, maybe more, I cannot remember. Finally, we arrived at Jasbereni, a town south of Budapest, Hungary, where the Russians had changed the width of the European rails to their wider railroad system. At the railroad station was a long train of cattle cars waiting for us. We found many hundreds of other German soldiers already loaded into it. The empty train came from Russia, and when not in use to transport prisoners, it was used to reload and transport dismantled German and Hungarian factories that came to Jasbereni. The machinery, parts, and supplies were loaded onto their trains to be transported to Russia.

Starvation and illness took their toll on the majority of the prisoners in a very short time. Every day 40 or more of our comrades were found dead. The slightest onset of an illness overpowered the already weakened immune systems of the overworked POWs.

Each of our cattle cars had been loaded with 100 soldiers. We entered them from sliding doors that were in the center of both sides of the cars. As you looked in, to the right and to the left, there were something like wooden platforms, or berths built about four feet up from the wooden floor. All four berths had a thin layer of straw as mattresses. The upper berths were centered between the floor and the eight-foot ceiling. Twenty-five men were packed in each berth, 50 on each side of the car.

In the middle space, about eight feet between the two sides, stood a potbelly stove that had a chimney pipe going straight through the roof. A small metal bin filled with black coal was near the stove and a small pile of firewood next to it. Through an opening of about six inches was a sort of gutter mounted in a downward angle, sticking out a few inches from the side of the car. It protruded about two feet inside and a little over two feet above the floor. Believe it or not, that was our toilet!

Each cattle car had one guard riding along with us. He of course had his sleeping place next to the warm stove and also had blankets to keep him warm. Next to the passenger car there were three flatbed cars loaded with a German field kitchen and a shed for the cooks and supplies. Whenever our train stopped for the night we were fed our familiar *kapusta* and bread.

In the meantime, I had acquired one of the German *Kochgeschirr* containers and a set of the spoon-fork combos from one of the poor dead POWs. I could now stand in line and get my *kapusta* without having to ask someone to lend me his set.

And so the days and nights went by. We had lost track of time and now never knew what day of the week it was.

Along the rail route more and more transports of factory equipment were passing us on the way deep into Russia. We rolled mostly at night because during the day our train was held at the stations' sidetracks so that those priority transports could go ahead of us. Because of all the delays, I estimate that the trip took six to eight weeks.

We POWs counted ourselves lucky to get a steady diet of *Komissbrot* as well as *kapusta* while on that transport. It must have been the very beginning of May when we reached our destination. The train was unloaded at Grüntal (Greendale) near Penza-oblast (Pensa), a town and big railroad station located on the Volga River in the Kazan region. We were marched to the POW camp, or gulag, just outside town.

A high barbed-wire fence was the boundary line of the prison camp. Our living quarters consisted of a stable-like post and beam structure located halfway underground in dug-out trenches about 50 feet long. They were about six feet below ground level and about 15 feet wide.

A roof starting at ground level and angling up at about 30 degrees was built over them with tree trunks packed side by side, and the cracks between them were stuffed with moss. A layer of straw and branches had been placed on top. It was then finished off with a layer of topsoil about one foot thick. The disadvantage of this style of structure was that during a heavy rainstorm some water seeped through. In the winter, the roof became frozen and was watertight.

At both open ends of the trench there were steps leading down into our bunkhouse. Heavy canvas sheets hung as end walls and doors. Inside on both sides there were posts with girders supporting the roof logs. Large two-story bunks made of wooden planks and crosspieces had been built between and attached to those posts, accommodating about 10 POWs.

There was no provision to heat our bunkhouse, so we had to rely on our own body heat. At first not more than three army blankets were provided to cover 10 prisoners. About one hundred men filled that entire "barrack" or bunkhouse. Later, one blanket could to be shared between every two men—five Russian army blankets on each lower and upper bunk.

In the mornings our breakfast consisted of about a half tin of *kapusta* that was nothing more than greenish water and sometimes a portion of kasha made from barley and like a soupy puree. The heads of cabbage that were delivered to the camp for our consumption were stripped of their limp outer green leaves, and that was what they used for our soup. The clean heads of cabbage, less their withered outer green leaves, were regularly sold on the black market by the Russians.

Our workday began at 5 AM. Our first assignment was in the local textile factory. They manufactured brownish-gray woven fabric used for Russian uniforms. My first job was to pull apart the freshly sheared fleece of sheep and goats and sort them by color tones. Next we inserted them into a machine that converted the fleece into particles that would be spun into thread and then into cloth. The final products were bolts of woven woolen uniform cloth fabric. An advantage of working there was that we were served lunch because we were working with civilians. They were mostly women of German descent.

Some of the women had young children with them. I was able to speak with one little schoolboy who was maybe seven years old. I asked him if I could have something to write on. He gave me several small notebooks. Among them was one with graph paper which had squares less than one quarter of an inch in size. Another had a hardcover, and along with it a small colored red pencil. We were allowed to keep a swatch from the scraps of the newly produced fabric. I also was able to take a sewing needle and some thread that they used in a sewing machine.

We also went to the local forest and had to fell trees. We made beams which were then transported by horse-drawn wagon to the Volga River. At the riverbank we later had to build boxes like honeycombs with those log beams. These were later to be filled with rocks to prevent further erosion to the shoreline.

Back at the camp at night we were supposed to get the promised ration of 500 grams of bread. Instead, we were told we did not fulfill

our required tasks, so we only got 125 grams of that lousy so-called "bread." But we considered ourselves lucky if we got a nice crusty end piece. Each portion of bread was actually put on a scale for exact weight. Supplements were attached if the portion was under the required weight.

On May 10, 1945, when the war in Europe ended, the camp commander gave a speech to the daily count of 4,864 prisoners. "The war is over!" he called out and promised us that we would be returning home soon. This "good news" turned to bitter disappointment as days became weeks and weeks became months and months eventually turned into years without any action or intention of sending us home. By the spring of 1946, only 348 POWs were left in our camp.

Starvation and illness took their toll on the majority of the prisoners in a very short period of time. Every day 40 or more of our comrades were found dead. The slightest onset of an illness overpowered the already weakened immune systems of the overworked POWs.

I remember, as I was lying next to an older comrade on the crowded bunk and trying to get some sleep, that he just kept coughing. I had to turn my face away from his constant coughing, while I held my breath so that I would not inhale any of his germs. I was terribly afraid that I would also get sick. When the coughing finally stopped, I fell asleep. In the morning, there was his cold, stiff body at my side, a victim of pneumonia. It was a horrible sight seeing him there with a wide-open mouth and open glazed eyes. Just terrible! This was happening all too often throughout the camp.

I wore the piece of scrap material that I could keep from the textile factory wrapped around my chest, over my shirt. Every day it was of great comfort and kept me warm. I continued to trade my portions of *machorka*. I was reading my Bible every day, especially my favorite books from the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I kept the Bible and all my small possessions in my canvas bread bag.

By the late spring, we were assigned to work on the "Kolkhoz," a state-owned farm. The land had been confiscated from the former owners who were allowed to keep their farmhouses and a small parcel of land as a backyard. Then they were forced to labor at their own land for the state and for the "common good."

Our job was to plant seed potatoes. Our work group consisted of about 100 men, and we were ordered to form a wide line shoulder-to-shoulder. Each one of us had a shoulder bag of seed potatoes that had to be planted. We worked in unison, stepping forward foot by foot in a straight line and depositing a potato into the ground.

While we were working, the guards were facing us from about 15 feet in front, shouting commands and cursing at us. They were watching us closely to make sure that we did not dare eat any of the potatoes. When some guys indeed ate some, they were struck hard with a gun butt and knocked down, kicked, and cursed at.

Those guards were a bunch of Barbarians. Mostly they were young Russian soldiers, fanatic communists, thoroughly indoctrinated into their system. We were always glad when we had older Russian guards. They had more compassion for us and even gave orders in a friendlier, humane manner.

One very strange incident I recall while we planted those potatoes was a total eclipse of the sun that occurred on July 5, 1945, several weeks after the war had officially ended. It was an eerie, almost total darkness that lasted for quite a few minutes. We were all awed and wondered about that occurrence. One of our older guards was evidently scared, pointing up to the sky and shouting something in Russian. A fellow POW who was fluent in Russian started to laugh hysterically and told us what

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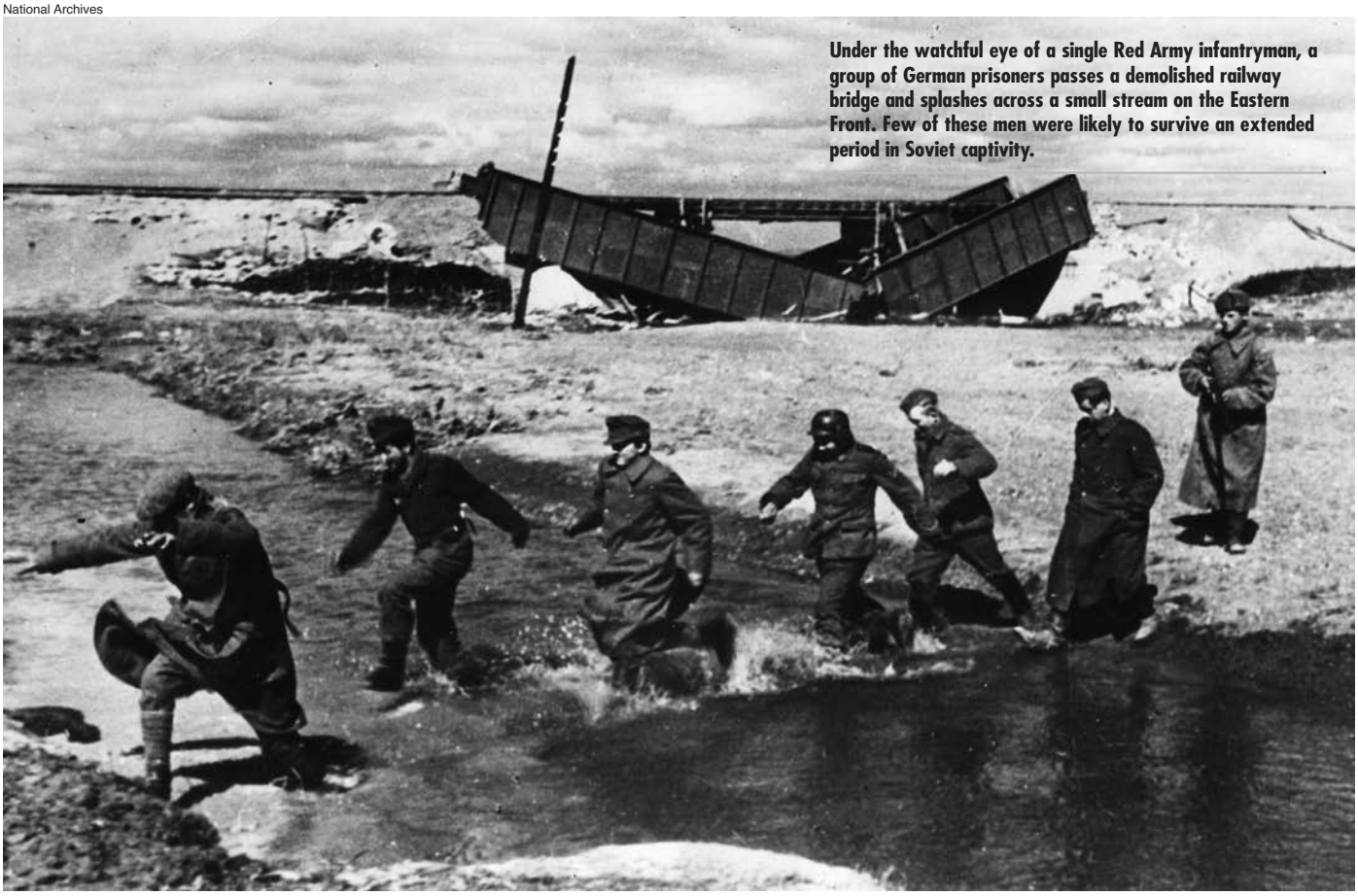

Under the watchful eye of a single Red Army infantryman, a group of German prisoners passes a demolished railway bridge and splashes across a small stream on the Eastern Front. Few of these men were likely to survive an extended period in Soviet captivity.

akg-images

German prisoners work outside the boundaries of their camp in the Soviet Union. Gottfried Dulias chopped wood and carried logs in similar fashion to these men. Long work hours and meager rations were the order of the day for the prisoners.

that guard was shouting: "Look, look, the Moon is eating the Sun!"

Once a month we were marched to a delousing facility. There we had to strip naked and put our uniforms and underwear in a bundle onto a metal hook. Footwear was lined up on the floor, but I no longer had the pair of boots that I had to exchange earlier during the death march. Now most of us had a pair of canvas shoes with wooden soles. The canvas top was nailed to the sole, and since the stiff wood could not bend, eventually the canvas separated at the heel and often fell totally apart from the stress of walking. So, for a while I had to walk barefoot until later when I received a replacement.

Our bundles of clothing were hung up in rows in a hot room where the temperature was raised to exterminate lice. While that was being done, we walked into the large shower room where pipes hung across the ceiling with numerous showerheads attached. We all showered simultaneously in a fairly warm water stream and occasionally got a small cube of gel type soap. When done, we drip dried. We received a clean set of underwear, but before putting them on we had to search all the seams for lice and eggs. If we found any, we squished them with our two thumbnails, and they popped.

The undergarments were not of a soft quality. They were made of a cotton bedsheet material. You pulled the long sleeved undershirt over your head, and it had an opening at the neck and one at the ends of the sleeves that you would tie closed. There weren't any buttons. The underpants were the length of longjohns and also had a slit at the calf with laces to tie.

I was fortunate enough that lice never took a liking to me, so I never needed an in-between delousing and never picked lice up from anyone else either. Also during this process our heads were shorn to the skin. Those who had a lot of body hair had to be clean-shaven over those areas. In addition, everyone's pubic hair had to be shaved off.

Once all of this was completed, you then put on a clean uniform. You never got the same one back that you came in with.

The next work assignment was going back to the same forest area that we had been working in before. Now we were paired in two-man teams. Using a pick and shovel, we had to dig straight down to a depth of about four feet where there was a horizontal layer of granite-like stone. It was about two to three feet thick and with the pick, fist-hammer, and flat stone chisel we had to break the layers apart, then excavate the loosened slabs to ground level.

We constantly strained to achieve our daily production quota or "norm" to earn 500 grams of bread but could never reach that goal. When a team came close to it, the daily norm was immediately raised to an unreachable level. Our long workdays were up to 19 hours.

We often talked among ourselves. Some men had heard rumors that there possibly had been some sort of agreement among nations establishing prisoner rights. If that was the case, we certainly had no such rights. The Quakers from America had been sending vast amounts of gift food to prisoners all around the world. I know this for a fact because I saw the empty cartons and read the printing in English. I could interpret it, having learned that language at school. We never got any of the food, yet those cartons were lying empty on the garbage piles. The Russians used those shipments for themselves or sold the food on the black market. I also saw

large empty wooden barrels of curded butterfat that were also labeled as given by the Quakers.

It was about that time that I was approached by some of the prisoners who were smokers. They had noticed me reading my Bible and wanted me to part with a few pages from it for rolling. At first, I was reluctant and did not think that would be a good thing to do. I gave it a lot of thought because I cherished my Bible and prayed about that as well. But driven by hunger, I finally gave in. Slowly, I sacrificed a page or two from the Old Testament part of my Bible. I prayed for forgiveness to God as I watched page after page from my Bible actually go up in holy smoke. I was so happy to get extra nourishment in return. Now I was running a trade business and playing a game to stay alive.

We estimated that in the Penza region of Russia alone there were at least 25 separately operated gulags. Each one originally held up to 5,000 prisoners. That gives one some idea as to how many men the Russians actually had to feed. We discussed the various facts we knew or heard from others regarding these numbers. When a prisoner was transferred from a hospital back to a camp it was not necessarily to the same one he came from. So we were able to find out more about what was really going on in the other camps and places.

A few prisoners who were transferred to our site came from the Moscow area. They were sharing information with us about where they had been and what went on there. Around Moscow the Russians had set up so-called "parade camps" for inspection purposes by dignitaries or foreign reporters so the rest of the world would know how well the prisoners in Russia were treated. In those camps the POWs were served better food and received better care and treatment.

Another "task" of ours was working in a stone quarry or processing plant. Earlier I mentioned that we had dug up layers of granite stone in the area where we felled the trees and also made the hand-hewn beams for the reinforcement along the Volga River bank. Following that, we had to load those harvested stone slabs onto trucks to be transported to that plant. The trucks were all American Studebakers, given to the Russians through the Lend Lease agreement with the Americans. The help they received with that agreement was a tremendous military advantage for the Russians. The equipment enabled the Russians to gain time to replace the losses the Germans had inflicted on them.

After they were transported to the processing plant, the slabs were unloaded to form huge piles. A stone-crushing machine that produced gravel to be used as roadbeds was located there. But the machine could accommodate stones no larger than the size of a man's fist. So, our job was to knock those slabs into smaller pieces and then load them onto rail carts that could be tipped and unloaded into a pit at a lower level.

Late in 1946 we were allowed to write our first postcards home. We were supposed to receive and send one per month, but often a month was skipped. We could only write 25 words or less, we were told, or else it would never make it home. Those postcards were preprinted double cards with the sending and return address. One side of it was blank to write to our family, and the other was identical as a return card for our loved ones to use in reply, also with only 25 words. We didn't have a pen or ink and only the rare pencil that one or the other had made the rounds among us.

Once again I had one of my brilliant ideas! Why not make my own ink and writing stick? From the workshop at our camp I obtained some iron file dust and mixed it in a spare tin cup with the juice from gall apples, which were ball-like growths that could be found under numerous oak leaves. The grown oak trees around our camp produced quite a good number of these, and I had no trouble finding green and juicy ones suitable for my new project. The acid juice mixed with the iron file dust resulted in genuine, nearly black ink. It did not even smudge after the writing dried if it had accidentally become wet from spilled water. I used a dried oak twig with a carved point as my writing stick for my first card home. I still have it today.

At a later time I traded a page or two from my Bible and some of my ink to a metal worker for a penholder and pen that he had made at the camp workshop. Since I was making a good amount of ink, I managed to trade some of my supply to fellow prisoners for some of the usual foods and so saved my Bible pages for later trades.

At the tool shop there was a foot-operated grindstone stand. The rotating stone wheel was half submerged in an attached trough, creating a whetstone effect for sharpening our tools. Some of them were spades, shovels, picks, and yes, even knives as well as cold chisels that we used to separate layers of granite stones in our quarry holes, as well as pick points that needed sharpening. Our hatchets and axes got sharpened as well.

On Mondays, the workday routine started all over again. The only reprieve we got was when there was an extremely heavy and steady downpour of rain, which we welcomed. Then we could stay in the camp, although we had to deal with the mud plopping down from the ceiling of our underground barracks. At each end of our bunkhouse where steps led down to the floor level of our living quarters, the rain collected when the gullies at the bottom were overflowing. We had to bail the water out.

We did get lunch on those rainy days and were not as exhausted as on those hot sunny days when sweat soaked our clothes during long hours of hard labor. During our march in the evening back to camp, the cooled air did dry our shirts and pants, so we did not take them off before going to sleep.

I remember one hot day, while laying asphalt on the new road that we were building, one of our fellow prisoners became seriously injured. For the two layers of asphalt of the road building we had a spreading machine. It distributed the asphalt evenly over the entire width of the road and rolled on rails, temporarily placed at both sides of the road. At the front of it was a long open trough in which a rotating worm-screw type of gear was located. It moved the hot asphalt from the center toward the sides of the trough, evenly distributing it. The worm gear was so constructed that one half of it spun to the left and the other half to the right, while the single jointed axle turned in just one direction.

Studebaker dump trucks brought the asphalt and dropped the mixture slowly into the center of the trough. Thus, the machine spread it evenly over the entire width of the road because at the bottom of the trough was an open slot that by hand control widened and closed depending on what thickness the layer had to be. The machine rolled slowly forward on its rails as the asphalt was laid down in a controlled thickness. Before each truck dumped a new load into the machine, two men had to shovel and scrape some misplaced asphalt back into the trough. I was one of the two men assigned to do that job this particular day.

My partner collapsed and fell rear end first into the rotating worm gear. The machine operator stopped the gear in an instant. But unfortunately not before he could prevent the sharp worm gear from cutting deep into the poor victim's left buttock. It was almost severed from his body. It also tore his hipbone bare. This was an extremely gruesome sight! Not much blood came out of the wound, but the terrible sight of the reddened flesh and the exposed bone was sickening. We lifted the unconscious victim onto an empty asphalt truck that brought him to the prison hospital in Grüntal (Greenvale).

As a result of all the hard, physical labor, I developed a hernia in my lower abdomen. It was the size of half an egg, and it had popped out from my lower right groin. Building a road

between Moscow and Stalingrad, lifting and placing heavy iron rails for the asphalt spreader, had taken its toll on me. We just had to accept and deal with those unpleasant realities in our own personal way. What a life we had.

Creating little notebooks gave me inspiration, and I started to record some information about myself in a series of mini-journals and in the form of letters to my family. It is important to remember that at the camp anything in writing with the exception of Bibles and prayer books if found would be confiscated. I managed to hide all well.

Some time in the hospital also gave me the opportunity to acquire little stacks of Russian cigarette paper for rolling *machorka*. Since I already had enough paper for my booklets I traded my portions for more food supplements. I was writing my journals in hopes of being able to eventually send my work back home with one of the prisoners who would be lucky enough to be released with the occasional transports.

I wrote to my family that I had a fever and compared myself to some starving soul from the poorer caste in India. My recovery in the hospital was not the greatest, but I could slowly gain some weight back. In addition to malnourishment and dystrophy, I got sick from some type of malaria, but it was not the familiar tropical kind. In fact, once you got over it you were not immune from getting it again. Unlike the tropical type that stayed with you, this non-tropical one occurred only by another bite from some kind of insect. This type of malaria caused a high fever that could be fatal. I contracted that three times and got over it, thankfully. But as was later discovered, my heart was affected and enlarged, and that caused it to develop an irregular heartbeat.

By February 1946, I had the opportunity to give my first journal to a fellow prisoner who was a Czech. He was supposed to be on the first transport home, and so I asked him to keep it, hide it, and when he reached the homeland to please send the little journal to my parents. I wrote their address on it for him. I sent two other journal booklets with released POWs returning home, but only this first one made it through, and my parents saved it for me. I still have it today.

The following, for the first time in more than 60 years, is what I am reading and translating today. It is very painful for me to reminisce over these sad but true facts, but at the same time I am finally able to share my story and release what I had hidden, even from myself, for too long. In the cigarette paper booklet, I withheld from my parents the more unpleasant happenings.

"My Dear Ones,

"Paper is scarce, as is the case with everything else here. Up to now writing to you was impossible. I want to give you a small review about my past here. In March of 1945 I became a POW at Naggi Sallo in Hungary at the River Gran, not far from Budapest. We marched many kilometers until we were loaded into railroad cattle cars. At Jasbereni (Hungary) there were wider railroad tracks for our transport to Russia. Once in Russia we had to pass through numerous temporary campsites and were interrogated and everything we had was confiscated. The train made many stops and we were de-loused and so on. By May 9th we arrived in Grüntal, near Kasan (Kazan) at the Volga River, west of Moscow. There we worked on the "Kolkhoz." It was hard work for sometimes 16 to 19 hours with very little food. Many of us became sick, many died. In October 1945 there was a rumor that the zone behind the Volga had to be cleared of all POWs and the sick were put into the *Lazarett* (camp hospital) and the others were dispatched to a camp in the vicinity of Pensa. I counted myself as one of the lucky ones and was admitted to the Hospital…."

I continued writing and telling my parents that I had a job at the hospital doing errands,

During transit to an internment camp, German prisoners line up to receive a meal from a Red Army field kitchen near Moscow in July 1944. The sheer number of German prisoners needing food and shelter stretched Soviet resources. Note that two of the cooks are women.

National Archives

such as picking up potatoes and helping the medics to take care of the other sick and wounded comrades. I guess I was something like an orderly. I was also told that I had to stay until the last prisoners would be transported home and that it would not be in that same year. I continued writing in that first journal:

"You will be astounded about what I will personally reveal to you later when we are together again. My future is all set. I am very anxious to see how my sisters look [my two younger sisters would be 19 and 17]. I don't have my photos anymore because they took everything away from us. Only in my dreams can I see all of you. Soon I'll be making it to my 21st year of life and I'll be of legal adult age. Can you imagine that? How fast time goes by? Hopefully things are not too rough by you? For all the time that I have been away from you, it can be made up, well, mostly in reference to the food. I am also curious about what happened to my dear friend Irmi. I'm sure that she stopped at the house to inquire about me. Please convey my 'heartfelt greetings' to her and tell her that soon I will be home. Here in the hospital and so far throughout my stay, I was together with a comrade who is also from Fürstenfeldbruck. His name is Hans Weber. Please contact and let his wife know that he is still alive and surely will come home soon. If he comes home first, he will visit you and tell you about me. Once we are both home then, that day will be celebrated every year as a 'New Birthday' and that will be the right thing to do. So now I close for today, and, God willing, we will see each other soon, healthier and happier. My 'heartfelt greetings and kisses' to all of you, and my friends, relatives and acquaintances, Gottfried."

In March, Hans was fully recuperated and was sent back to the camp.

On July 2, 1946, I continued writing.

"My Dear Ones,

"It turned out differently than we had expected. Until now, no more transports left here. But now in July there are supposed to be some more returning home. Sorry to say that I got notified that I was to be dispatched back to the camp. It seems they need more men to finish the new road between Stalingrad and Moscow. They wanted to have it completed by October. Everyone who was capable of working was required to go on this project. Therefore, that's how we became involved. All the patients from here are supposed to be sent home within a short time, but those of us left behind have to get stuck with it once again. So we are being promised that by the winter we will be sent home. Let's hope so! It looks like tomorrow we will be sent to the camp. Therefore, I am writing these few lines quickly and will leave this letter behind as well as two more. Whoever is able to get on the transport back will dispatch these letters to you in hopes that you will receive at least one."

There were rumors and more rumors and one disappointment after the other.

Actually, the German chaplain at the hospital had been a wonderful man and most inspiring. We were able to spend quality time together in discussions as well as with prayers. My friendship with him strengthened my spirituality. Actually he helped me in finding the fellow patients and prisoners who would be going home so that they could carry my messages with them.

I lived with the positive hope and outlook that not only my parents would know that I was indeed still alive, but also the fact that one day soon I would rejoin them.

About that same time in camp we were issued our first postcard, which was given to us by the Red Cross. Finally, we were given permission to write one card home. The card had a return portion on it with our address. I decided that I would hold on to the postcard until a later date because I had no idea what my new location would be and if I was moved from one place to another, they would not forward it. Instead, I stuck to my original plan of sending my own messages home along with men who would be released soon.

My journal continues:

"I heard that the new camp where I am supposed to go is much better managed than the one I was in earlier. Some of our patients came from there and told me that they got more to eat than at the hospital.

"All I can say is, who knows why it's good that I am being sent back to the prison camp? The good Lord will lead me the right way and not forsake me. Someday He will lead me on the road home. So let us not lose our faith and courage and let's keep hope for finding freedom.

"Greetings and Kisses, Your Gottfried."

Additional thought: "By the way, I am here with the former top Pastry Chef/Baker Herr Maschinski, now called 'Maschner.' He is from Osterode and had his business across the street from the Catholic Church. He was there to the last days and reported that Osterode was surrendered to the Russians without a battle and that it seemed that most of the city appeared undamaged."

On July 8, I continued writing:

"My Dear Ones, until now we did not yet leave the hospital. It looks like it will not happen because the doctor said that now in July the transports leaving here are leaving directly for the homeland. If there are not enough passengers then maybe we would have the possibility of being one of the 'lucky ones' to be part of it. Here anything can happen! The Russians are in every way 'unpredictable.' Therefore, let's hope for the best. If I should not be one of those lucky ones, we have to console ourselves with God's word. The good Lord has so intended and He knows when it is time for me to be sent home. I remain in God's hands; He will lead me and guide me when it will be best. The Bible verse at my Confirmation is again and again my consolation. 'Do not be afraid, because I freed you, fear not, because I redeemed you. I called you by your name, you are mine. I belong to Him and He is in me and beside me, what should I be afraid of? The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want.' Better to go through God's school than be forsaken by Him...."

"All I can say is, who knows why it's good that I am being sent back to the prison camp? The good Lord will lead me the right way and not forsake me. Someday He will lead me on the road home.... Let's keep hope for finding freedom."

I continued writing by telling my parents that these nice scriptures I remembered were embroidered and hung framed on the wall over the sewing machine in our home. "I am clinging to these scriptures and again and again they comfort me. Therefore, the good Lord already knows when it's my time to be sent home and He will lead me to you, now we just have to patiently wait."

So, I continued writing in my journal, sharing whatever I could day by day, week by week.

Finally, on January 4, 1948, Gottfried Dulias was released from Soviet prison. He was repatriated to West Germany through the American occupation zone. Although he endured great hardship, Dulias was indeed among the fortunate. Thousands of German prisoners of war were marched into Soviet captivity and never returned. Today, Dulias is a frequent guest and exhibitor at historical enactments and other events. □

Another Bowl of Kapusta *by Gottfried P. Dulias and Dianna M. Popp was revised and expanded in 2009 and is available online and through major bookstores.*

Lessons at St. Nazaire

U.S. Army

An early U.S. bombing raid proved to be disastrous for the pilots and crews hitting the German U-boat pens.

BY ROBERT F. DORR

Even today, they don't like to talk about the St. Nazaire raid.

Compared to the thousand-plane raids that went deep into Germany later in World War II, the January 3, 1943, bomber mission from England to the coast of German-occupied France was small and spanned only a modest distance. It introduced new tactics from a leader who later made his mark by innovating aerial warfare. Yet Colonel Curtis E. LeMay's attack on St. Nazaire ended up being mostly a debacle that appears to have had a high cost for achieving little.

The purpose was to bomb the German submarine pens at St. Nazaire, which were dispatching the U-boats that were wreaking havoc in the Atlantic. The Germans had U-boat pens at Lorient, La Rochelle, and Toulon in France and at Trondheim in Norway, and they were all difficult, heavily shielded targets for the new technique of massed daylight bombing, but none was more a challenge than the mammoth bunker base at St. Nazaire.

Britain's Royal Air Force attacked St. Nazaire in February and March 1942 with Handley Page Halifax and Armstrong Whitworth Whitley bombers. Construction was only being finished then, and the pens might have been more vulnerable than they were later. Still, the Royal Air Force achieved mixed results, lost several aircraft to mishaps rather than German fire, and apparently did little to interrupt the savagery being inflicted on Allied shipping in the Atlantic by Admiral Karl Dönitz's U-boat *Rudeltaktik,* or wolf pack strategy. Squadron Leader Michael Curphey, an RAF intelligence analyst, said in an interview for this article that his bosses concluded the U-boat pens were too heavily reinforced by concrete to be neutralized by bombing. Allied leaders believed, however, that they could hamper the U-boat campaign by bombing torpedo and optics facilities that were above ground.

"There was some disagreement between the British and the Americans on this," said Curphey. "Frankly, the Americans went into the war overconfident in their daylight-bombing capabilities. We had plenty of experience with bombing by then and had chosen to do most of ours by night. The Americans eventually made daylight bombing work, but it's debatable whether it ever worked against U-boat bunkers."

The optimism felt by those early American bomber crews and their leaders may have been

National Archives

Smoke billows from bomb strikes against the submarine pens at St. Nazaire. This photo was taken from a U.S. bomber that participated in a costly raid against the heavily defended pens on the French coast. OPPOSITE: Looking over the barrels of his twin .50-caliber machine guns, Sergeant Arnold Burton sits in the top turret of his B-17. Burton was a participant in several of the early U.S. daylight raids over Nazi-occupied Europe and considered the submarine pens at St. Nazaire his toughest target.

misplaced. After all, they lacked experience and were yet to learn the value, indeed the necessity, of fighter escort. Still, when LeMay, commander of the 305th Bombardment Group, who hung his hat at Chelveston in Northhamptonshire, led the attack on St. Nazaire, the mission was a landmark in the fledgling American daylight-bombing offensive.

"We learned a lot that day," said former Sergeant Arnold Burton. A newly minted aerial gunner, he was manning a .50-caliber air-cooled machine gun in the waist position of a B-17F Flying Fortress (41-24482), called the *Heavyweight Annihilators,* of the 322nd Bombardment Squadron, 91st Bombardment Group. Burton was in a formation of 85 bombers that included 72 B-17s from the 91st, 303rd, 305th, and 306th Groups and 13 Consolidated B-24 Liberators from the 44th Group.

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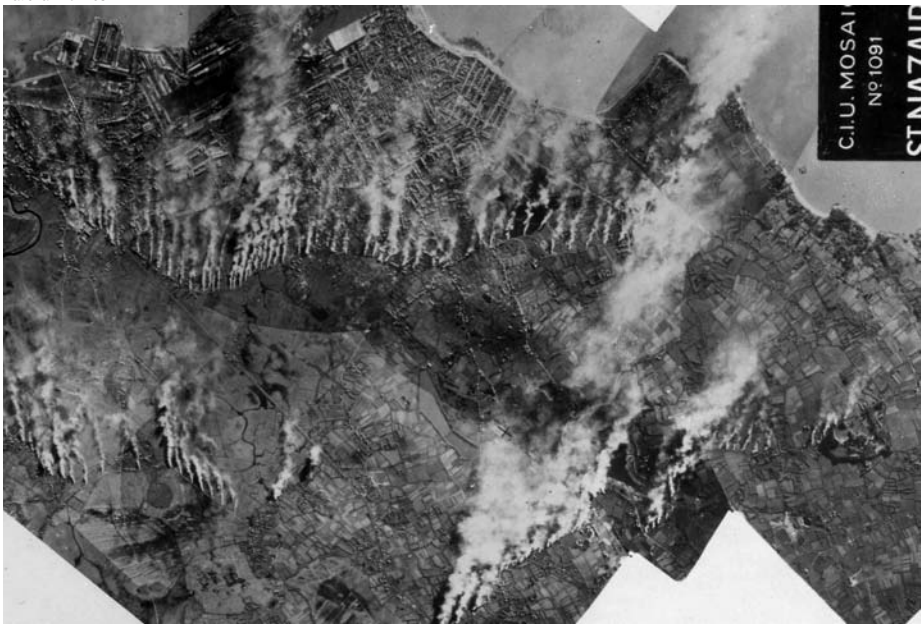

Although the effort was largely a failure, the Germans attempted to conceal the submarine pens at St. Nazaire from Allied bombardiers with smoke.

"Our aim point was a torpedo shed near the U-boat pens," Burton wrote in a diary at the time. "Our bombload was five 1,000-lb. general purpose bombs. We took off at 9:12 AM and were scheduled to return at 2:10 PM." Burton's 91st Group, nicknamed "The Ragged Irregulars," was based at Royal Air Force Bassingbourn, located in Cambridgeshire about a dozen miles from Cambridge.

LeMay had experimented with various ways to stagger three- and four-plane elements so their defensive gunfire would have the most effect against fighters. He believed that the survival of a bomber crew battling winds, weather, and Germans depended in large measure on the performance of aerial gunners like Burton.

Burton was struggling with the faulty equipment and bad ideas that became part and parcel of the early days of the American daylight-bombing offensive over Europe. The problems resulted from flying higher and being colder than ever before in a combat aircraft. "The early, bladder-style oxygen mask didn't work," said Burton. "Your saliva would freeze up, and if you didn't do something, you would pass out. So you had to jerk off the whole bladder and mask, pull the hose out of the mask, and stick the oxygen hose directly into your mouth and suck on it." Later in the war, bomber crews would receive demand-type oxygen masks that worked.

Burton was irritated, even more, at the electrical suit designed to protect him from the terrible cold at high altitude. "Remember, the waist-gun position on the B-17F was just an open rectangle in the side of the fuselage," said Burton. "Only much later, with the B-17G, did we have a window to keep the air from rushing in."

"Heated boots and suits were constantly burning your ankles," said Burton. "It was a terrible design. The suit was blue with wires all through it. The shoes that went into the boots were blue with an electric plug-in; the gloves that went inside your gloves were blue. You got cold, so you turned the rheostat up, and when you did that you'd start to burn at the wrists and the ankles. The suit literally burned you and sometimes it caught fire."

Burton and the 91st Bombardment Group had a lot of aborts from guns freezing up. "You would chamber one round in your gun and be ready. When you were airborne, you were supposed to test-fire a couple of rounds. You'd shoot off one round and the gun would freeze." Later in the war, there was a type of gun oil that didn't freeze no matter how low the temperature.

What went into being a gunner in the early days of the bombing offensive? Burton was a product of the Midwest. Born in 1921 in Pella, Iowa, he took business classes in high school. He was doing office work, "not anything great, just menial office work," when he learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Like many Americans, Burton did not at first recognize the term "Pearl Harbor" or know what place it referred to.

Burton enlisted and went through gunnery training at Lowry Field, Colorado, in 1942. "They had a P-37 fighter mounted on a rack with guns that fired two .30-calibers through the propeller," Burton said. "We had to learn how to maintain and synchronize those guns. We had class where we assembled and disassembled various kinds of machine guns, rifles and pistols." Initially a member of the 91st Group's ground cadre (and only later a member of a flight crew), he went to war aboard the ocean liner *Queen Mary* and set up shop with the rest of his group at Bassingbourn. He was shifted to flight status. St. Nazaire was his third combat mission.

LeMay was nothing if not an innovator. He wanted his bombers to maintain a steady course during their bomb run, which began at an imaginary spot in the sky called the initial point and continued to the aiming point, a torpedo storage shed astride the St. Nazaire submarine pens.

In his book *Flying Fortress,* Edward Jablonski, without naming LeMay, described what LeMay wanted: "A new bombing technique was introduced on this mission which was to have an important effect upon future operations," Jablonski wrote. "Instead of each plane dropping bombs individually, all bombardiers released when they saw the bombs leave the bomb bay of the lead plane. This technique resulted in greater accuracy (for the most skilled bombardier and pilot were in the lead aircraft) and a massive concentration of strikes in the target area."

Still, even though studies showed that the odds of getting hit by flak went down if the bomber remained straight and level, crews didn't like the new tactic. Burton's pilot, 2nd Lieutenant Don C. Bader, did not like it. Burton's bombardier, 2nd Lieutenant James W. Hensley, did not like it. Burton did not like it.

"The weatherman said we would have 90-mile-per-hour tailwinds," said Burton. "He got it exactly wrong. We had 90-mile-per-hour head-

winds." An official record indicates that the bomber force was flying into an unprecedented, 115-mile-per-hour gale. Whatever the exact speed of the headwinds, they had the effect of slowing the bombers to a near-standstill in midair, meaning that the bomb run—the period when the crews went straight and level into German flak—lasted for what seemed an eternity.

Moreover, wrote Jablonski, "Instead of attempting to follow the formations as was the usual practice, the flak gunners introduced their own innovation. They predicted the area through which the B-17s would have to pass on the bomb run and filled that area with flak bursts. Three Fortresses were shot down over St. Nazaire [by flak] on that mission and dozens returned in various stages of damage."

Burton said he did not feel the impact but "saw it happen" when a flak shell exploded near his B-17 and battered its No. 1, or right outboard, engine. "I saw the propeller get feathered and the smoke trailing back," Burton said.

With LeMay in the lead, just 76 of the intended 101 Flying Fortresses actually found and hit the target. LeMay's tactic called for a straight and level bomb run, flak or no flak, and the result was that seven bombers were shot down and 47 damaged.

German fighters made a belated attack on the B-17F of Staff Sergeant Alan Magee and shot off a section of the right wing, causing the aircraft to enter a deadly spin. Wounded ball turret gunner Magee leaped from the plane without a parachute. He rapidly lost consciousness due to the altitude.

Magee fell four miles. He crashed through the glass roof of the St. Nazaire railway station, which softened the impact of his plummeting body. German troops discovered Magee alive inside the station, took him prisoner, and administered medical treatment. He had 28 shrapnel wounds, several broken bones, severe damage to his nose and eye, and lung and kidney damage; and his right arm was nearly severed. Magee was liberated in May 1945 and received the Air Medal and Purple Heart.

The bombers completed their runs, but German flak and fighters shot down three B-17s (of the seven lost altogether) as they emerged from the target. Burton said his bomber was swarmed over by Messerschmitt Bf-109 and Focke-Wulf Fw-190 fighters. He fired at them when he could, but by the time they crossed his gunsight, their work was done.

Imperial War Museum

U.S. Army

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ABOVE: The massive concrete submarine pens were constructed at St. Nazaire, Brest, Lorient, La Pallice, and Bordeaux in France, and the ports of Bergen and Trondheim in Norway. Built by the German Todt Organization, the pens included repair facilities. LEFT: General Curtis LeMay commanded the 305th Bombardment Group when the hazardous mission against the submarine pens at St. Nazaire was undertaken. FAR LEFT: Sergeant Arnold Burton poses in a uniform without any markings. Then-Private Burton was undergoing gunnery training at Lowry Field, Colorado, when the photo was taken.

The Germans were using a new tactic of intercepting the bombers from above and head-on, striking from the position crews called "twelve o'clock, high."

Coming off target the aircraft was hit by flak. One engine and wing caught fire. It lost speed and fell behind the group. Pilot Bader called the group leader over the command set but got no response. According to the after-action report, Captain Campbell, the leader of B Flight, whose first name is not recorded, heard "*Heavyweight Annihilators* in trouble" and made a 360-degree turn to pick them up. According to the report, Campbell's gunners shot down two German fighters, and the remainder ceased swarming over Bader's bomber.

Crewmen remember the situation differently. They got away from the target, all right. But as Bader struggled to nurse the damaged bomber over the English Channel, German fighter pilots saw the B-17 lagging and attacked it again. Gunfire wounded Bader and Hensley. In the air-to-air battle that ensued, two of the gunners aboard *Heavyweight Annihilators*—though not Burton—were credited with shooting down German fighters. In an after-action report, one wrote of "a Focke-Wulf hit by our slugs, pin-

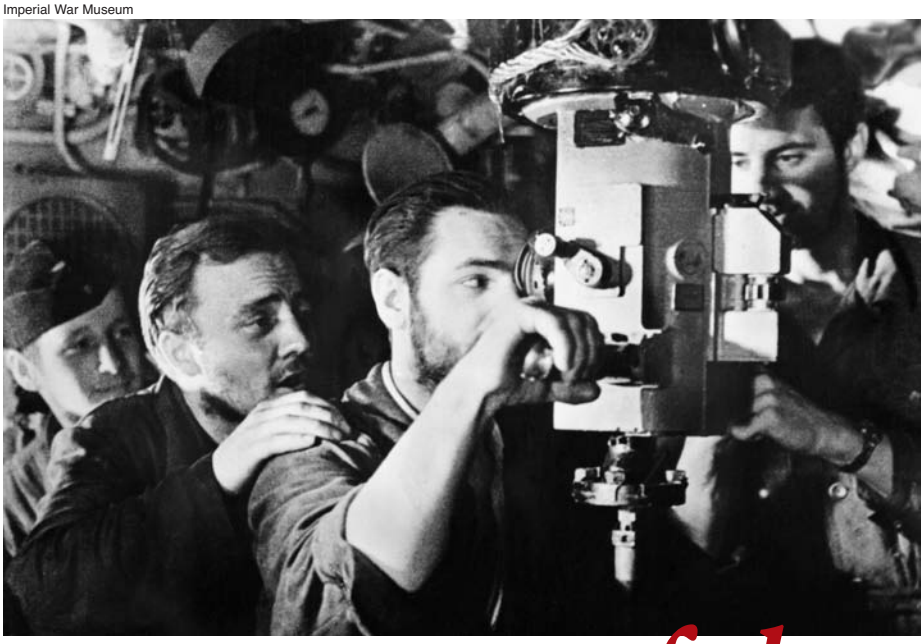
Continued on page 82

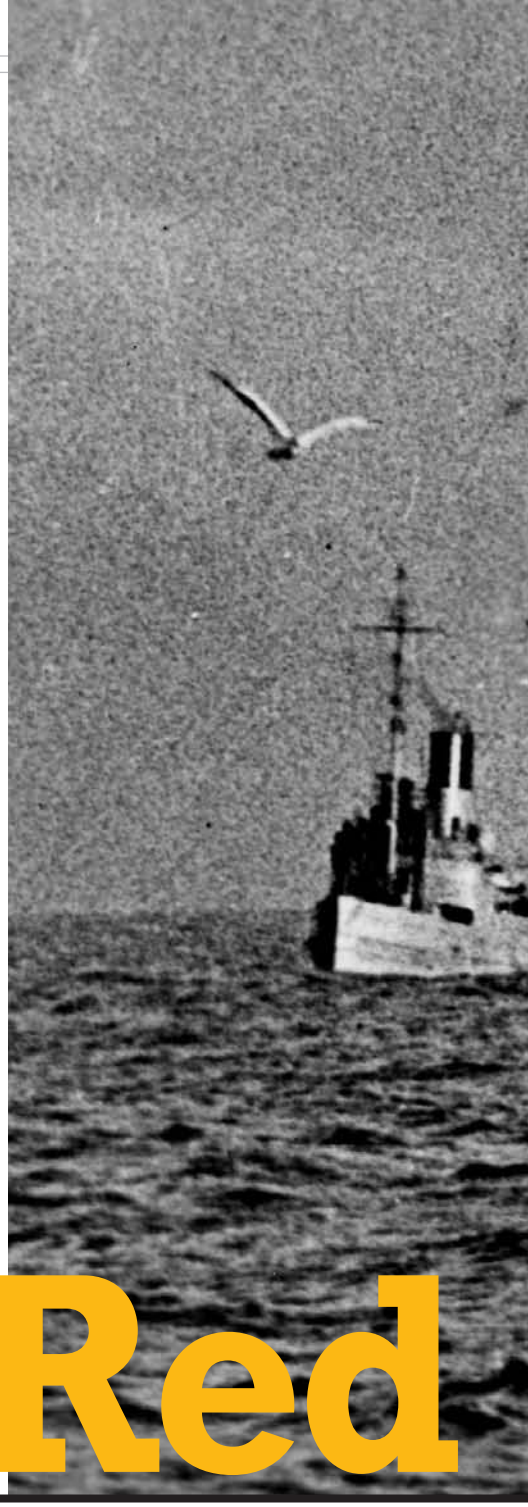
NONE OF THE ALLIED SERVICES ENGAGED IN WORLD WAR II WAS IN action longer or suffered a higher percentage of casualties than the British Merchant Navy.

The unsung heroes who plied the world's sea-lanes under the Red Ensign, nicknamed the "Red Duster," were on the front lines from beginning to end. Their war began less than nine hours after Great Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany on September 3, 1939, following the invasion of Poland.

At 7:45 that fateful Sunday evening, the 13,000-ton liner *Athenia* of the Donaldson Atlantic Line was on course from Belfast, Ireland, to Montreal, Canada, with 1,418 passengers—men, women, and children. They included 316 American citizens. Zigzagging at 10 knots, the *Athenia* was steaming 250 miles west of Inishtrahull, Donegal, when she was torpedoed without warning by the German submarine *U-30,*

Imperial War Museum





Heroes of the Red

commanded by Lieutenant Fritz Lemp.

The liner stayed afloat until early the next morning, by which time two Royal Navy destroyers, a Norwegian freighter, an American steamer, and a motor yacht had arrived to rescue the survivors. Eighty-three civilian passengers, including 22 Americans, perished in the sinking. The 18 crew members who died were the first Merchant Navy casualties of the war.

The first two weeks of the war saw 27 British merchant ships go down, and between September 3 and the end of the year, 215 merchantmen totaling 748,000 tons were lost. Yet, by the end of 1939, more than 5,500 convoyed Allied vessels had reached their destinations. In the first year of the war, 438 merchant ships were lost.

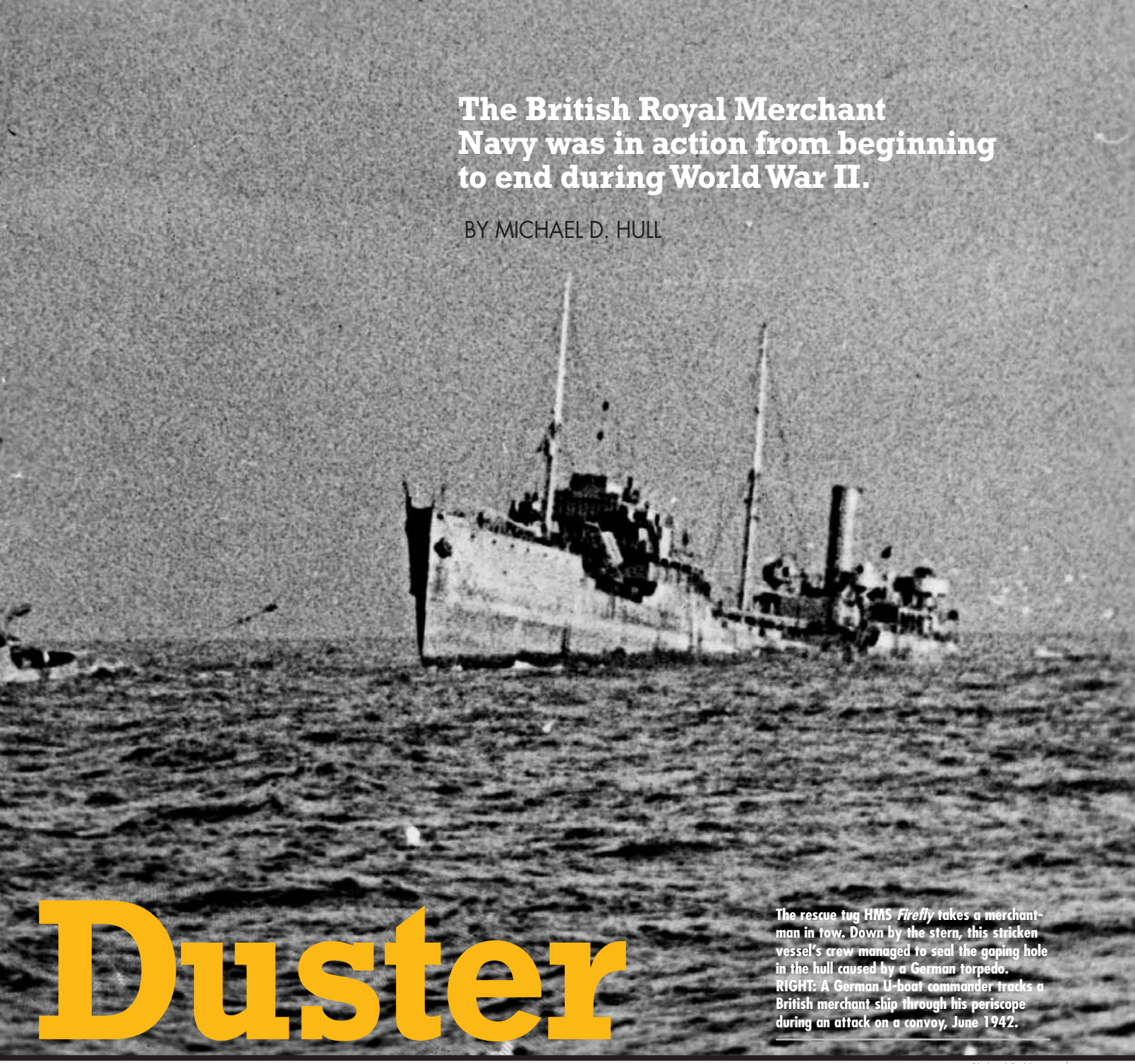
During the six years of hostilities between the Allies and the Axis powers, the war at sea never ceased. Late in the evening of May 7, 1945, the day of Germany's unconditional surrender and the day before VE-Day, Kapitanleutnant Emil Klusmeier, commanding a new Type XXIII U-boat, sighted one last Allied convoy sailing out of Edinburgh, Scotland, into the Pentland Firth. All aboard the merchantmen were rejoicing over the end of the European war as the submarine skipper—in disobedience of German Navy orders—fired his torpedoes into the Canadian steamer *Avondale Park* and the old Norwegian tramp steamer *Sneland I*. Twenty-three seamen were killed.

Klusmeier was out of order; Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz had ordered all of his U-boats to cease fire and surrender. Thus, the German submarine service ended the war the way it

Duster

The British Royal Merchant Navy was in action from beginning to end during World War II.

BY MICHAEL D. HULL



The rescue tug HMS *Firefly* takes a merchantman in tow. Down by the stern, this stricken vessel's crew managed to seal the gaping hole in the hull caused by a German torpedo. RIGHT: A German U-boat commander tracks a British merchant ship through his periscope during an attack on a convoy, June 1942.

National Archives

had begun it, with the destruction of defenseless ships.

The stormy years from 1939 to 1945 saw the loss of almost 2,500 British merchantmen and 116 fishing vessels, amounting to about 12 million tons. A further 900 craft were damaged by enemy action. Great Britain began the war with almost 9,000 merchantmen of all classes, amounting to 21 million tons. These were vessels sailing under the British flag and those on British, Commonwealth, Indian, Panamanian, or colonial registers, together with chartered or requisitioned foreign ships.

From the start of the war, the German Navy sought with every means at its disposal to destroy enough merchant shipping to starve the British and force them out of the conflict, as it had come close to doing in World War I. German surface warships, supported by a network of supply craft and often disguised as merchantmen, were deployed as long-range commerce raiders, while most of Admiral Dönitz's 46 operational U-boats roamed the ocean approaches to the British Isles.

Almost 32,000 of the 185,000 British merchant seamen who served during the war either went down with their ships, died subsequently as a result of the sinkings, were otherwise killed in action, or succumbed while prisoners of the enemy. The Merchant Navy lost proportionately more men than did any of the three British armed services (Army, Navy, and Air Force). Moreover, more than a few of the seamen lost were barely 16 years old, and some even younger.

From the beginning of March to the end of May 1941, U-boats sank 142 merchant ships,

99 of them British. Another 179 merchantmen were sunk by enemy aircraft, 44 by surface raiders, and 33 by mines. The tonnage lost in those three months exceeded the existing rate of British ship production three to one, and the combined Anglo-American production two to one. It was not until August 1942 that the Allies' combined ship production at first balanced the losses and then commenced to exceed them as month followed month.

The worst month for the merchant service was December 1941, when 120 vessels were lost, 98 of them seized or sunk in the South China Sea when Japan entered the war. The worst year was from June 1940 to May 1941, when 806 merchantmen were lost at the rate of more than two a day. The majority of them fell victim to U-boats in the North Atlantic.

As in the latter half of World War I, U-boats created havoc for the British and other Allied merchant fleets. The fall of Norway and France in 1940 transformed the strategic situation in the Atlantic. From newly acquired bases, starting with Lorient on the Bay of Biscay, U-boats could threaten all shipping passing south of Ireland, while their range and endurance were greatly extended. No longer confined to operations within range of bases on the North Sea and Baltic coasts, Dönitz's lethal boats could now patrol for days far out in the mid-Atlantic.

In August 1940, Adolf Hitler ordered that the submarines set up a total blockade of the British Isles, freeing them to attack any merchant vessel approaching or entering British waters. The following month, Dönitz's undersea fleet started using "wolf pack" tactics, with about 20 U-boats making mass attacks on single convoys.

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: Several British merchant ships, most of them colliers, steam in line as part of an East Coast convoy in the North Sea sometime in 1940. The casualty rate among merchant seamen was high. BELOW LEFT: U-boat Captain Otto Kretschmer, seen here in 1942, was one of the highest scoring aces of the war in the Atlantic. Kretschmer was later captured when his U-boat was sunk. After the war he became a NATO naval officer. BELOW RIGHT: Young Merchant Mariner William Oxford hailed from Camden Town near London. Only 20 years old, Oxford was typical of the young British men who went to sea during World War II.

The Granger Collection, New York

National Archives

The same tactical flexibility was accorded the Kriegsmarine's surface fleet, which was augmented by disguised auxiliary cruisers. At the same time, long-range Focke-Wulf 200 Condor reconnaissance bombers were used for missions over even the far northwestern approaches to the British Isles. The perils faced by Allied merchantmen and their escorts mounted.

But the most dire threat came always from the U-boats, as exemplified by Otto Kretschmer, one of Germany's ace submarine captains. Prowling in *U-23* and later *U-99* during 16 patrols in the first year and a half of the war, he sank 44 ships totaling 266,029 tons. For every day he spent at sea in that period, Kretschmer dispatched 1,000 tons of Allied shipping to the bottom, a record not equaled. Instead of firing salvos of four or six torpedoes from about 3,000 yards, Kretschmer preferred to act like a sniper, picking off individual ships at close range.

Yet, Kretschmer was chivalrous to his victims, sometimes providing the occupants of lifeboats with food, water, and course directions. Fortunately for the Allied seamen, however, *U-99* was sunk by the destroyer HMS *Walker* in March 1941. Kretschmer and all but three of his crew were picked up and then interned in Canada.

Allied losses soared as the war progressed, and almost three million tons of shipping were destroyed between June and December 1940. During their "happy time" between July and October that year, U-boat crews in the Atlantic sank 217 ships for the loss of only two boats. Although surface warships, disguised raiders, aircraft, and mines all accounted for significant tonnage, German submarines claimed the lion's share of losses to Allied shipping. Dönitz achieved this with only about 16 U-boats on station in the Atlantic at any given time. He pressed Hitler for more boats and for cooperation from a reluctant Luftwaffe. Dönitz dreamed of a fleet of 300 long-range submarines—with a third of them on station, a third going out or returning, and a third being re-equipped at base. But, fortunately for Britain, his demands were never fully met.

As the prospect of a German invasion of England receded after the Battle of Britain in 1940, more Royal Navy escort ships—destroyers, frigates, corvettes, sloops, and armed trawlers—became available and the British responses were better coordinated. Western Approaches Com-

mand was established at Liverpool and the Newfoundland Escort Force at St. John's. The German Condor menace was reduced by the development of catapult-aircraft-equipped merchant ships and escort carriers.

But before adequate air cover and better defensive and detection measures could come into play, the Allied convoys remained intensely vulnerable. The first to have an escort through its entire voyage was Convoy HX-129, which crossed the Atlantic late in May 1941. During that year, the U-boats sank a total of 875 Allied ships (3,295,000 tons) in the Atlantic. By the first few months of that year, German submarine production steadily increased, with U-boats emerging from the shipyards at the rate of 10 a month. Their operational strength increased fourfold.

Dönitz's fleet had grown to 331 boats in January 1942. By November, there were 42 U-boats deployed between Greenland and the Portuguese Azores, and 39 were active elsewhere in the Atlantic. After September 1941, when U.S. Navy ships started escorting convoys from a point 400 miles west of Iceland, Admiral Dönitz became increasingly frustrated and transferred his attention to the western coast of Africa. When America entered the war, he concentrated his efforts in the Western Atlantic, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico, and the result was a second "happy time" for the U-boat crews.

Dönitz's undersea hunters sank 65 vessels in February 1942, 86 that March, 69 in April, and 111 in May. Total Allied losses for the year reached 1,664 ships, of which 1,160 were destroyed by U-boats. Many of the merchantmen were sunk in the first half of 1942 by U-boats roaming within sight of the American East Coast. Silhouetted against city lights along the New York and New Jersey shore, the merchantmen were sitting ducks for the German submariners.

U-boat offensive power reached its peak from January 1942 to March 1943. The United States finally adopted the convoy system and initiated blackouts along the Eastern Seaboard. In July 1942, all German submarines operating off the East Coast were redeployed to concentrate on traffic in the North Atlantic.

The year 1943 opened disastrously for the Allies, with Dönitz's wolf packs sinking 203,000 tons of shipping in January, 359,000 tons in February, and 627,000 tons in March. This was twice the rate of Allied merchant ship construction, and for every U-boat sunk two were launched. Admiral Dönitz became commander in chief of the Kriegsmarine early in 1943 while retaining direct control of the U-boat force. The surface fleet had by now lost favor with Hitler, and submarine construction was given full priority.

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A sorely needed shipment of food reaches the docks of a British port city in December 1941.

The Battle of the North Atlantic reached its climax in May 1943 when Dönitz lost 41 submarines, making a total of 114 for the first five months of the year. By that July, the number of U-boats had begun to fall, and the tonnage of Allied merchantmen launched exceeded that lost for the first time in the war. Dönitz conceded that he was losing the struggle but refused to give up.

U-boats were equipped with *schnorkel* systems, which enabled them to run submerged while recharging their batteries, and their antiaircraft armament was augmented. And more sophisticated, powerful submarines were being developed. But the losses of operational U-boats at the hands of British, Canadian, and American naval and air units continued to mount, while the monthly sinkings of Allied ships diminished, only once exceeding 100,000 tons for the rest of the war. Meanwhile, Allied countermeasures—more convoy escorts; improved radar and sound detection equipment; new depth charges, rockets, and forward-throwing mortars; and extended air cover—had been deployed just in time to stave off defeat.

American-built, long-range Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers closed the air-cover gap in the mid-Atlantic, and big Short Sunderland flying boats of Royal Air Force Coastal Command ranged far out to shepherd the merchant convoys coming and going. There was now tighter protection for the convoys, and losses dropped dramatically. The merchant seamen could now breathe more easily.

The long, bitter Battle of the Atlantic proved costly for both the Royal Merchant Navy and Dönitz's submarine force—785 U-boats sunk and 11,899,732 tons of shipping (2,232 vessels) lost. Eighty percent of all operational U-boats were sunk, with their crews suffering the highest percentage of fatalities among the German armed services.

Britain entered the war as the premier maritime country, with about 50 percent of the world's shipping tonnage under her flag. But, as with the other British armed services, the outbreak of war caught the Merchant Navy largely unprepared. It had suffered grievously from years of depression since World War I. Rivers and lochs were choked with laid-up, rusting ships, and many seamen had left the service. In some years, the loss in manpower exceeded 15,000.

In 1938, when a handful of unblinkered men in Whitehall saw the ominous portents of war in Europe, a register was compiled of volunteers ready to return to sea should the need arise. It was just as well that the precaution was taken. When war came in September 1939, about 12,000 serving merchant officers and men went at once into the Royal Navy. They were either in the Royal Navy Reserve; were serving in ships that became armed merchant cruisers, such as the *Jervis Bay*; or, in the case of the fishing fleet, were manning trawlers that were requisitioned as minesweepers.

The Navy, Britain's long-established first line of defense, was stretched thin across the oceans and had to have manpower priority. But the Admiralty's demand for officers in particular was such that it caused the Board of Trade—then responsible for the Merchant Navy—to urge a slowdown in the transfer of seamen into the Navy until the already depleted ranks could be made up.

On every ocean and every sea, from the Mediterranean to the Arctic, and from the North Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, British merchant ships formed the principal lifeline of the empire and its allies.

Taken over by the Admiralty in August 1939, the Merchant Navy faced an immense and vital task in the war years. Yet, in the critical months of 1942 it numbered only about 120,000 officers and men. This number was small in comparison with the Royal Navy, for a merchant ship requires only a fraction of the complement necessary to man a warship. However, the total number of merchantmen vastly exceeded the number of fighting ships.

To meet the U-boat threat, the Admiralty introduced a convoy system in the Western Approaches soon after the outbreak of war, and this was gradually extended to cover most major Atlantic shipping routes. By 1943, Atlantic convoy lanes formed a huge interlocking pattern. Linked to it was the convoy route through the Indian Ocean, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, though in general most vessels traversing the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean were expected to sail singly.

On every ocean and every sea, from the Mediterranean to the Arctic, and from the North Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, British merchant ships formed the principal lifeline of the empire and its allies. The vessels were often required to carry cargoes for which they had not been built across oceans they had never been meant to sail. They traveled to and from Halifax and Liverpool, Cape Breton Island and Glasgow, Freetown and Valletta, Suez and Tobruk, Algiers and Casablanca, Reykjavik and Murmansk, and Rangoon and Singapore.

In any given period of the war, up to a dozen convoys were traversing the Atlantic, each numbering between 10 and 100 ships. Some were bound for Britain with vital war supplies, and others were heading outbound in ballast to collect the next consignment. The commercial fleets comprised many types of craft—fast and slow, large and small, old and new, coal-fired and oil-fired—manned by men of widely different nationalities, backgrounds, and faiths.

The bulk of the Merchant Navy's sailors hailed from Merseyside, Clydeside, Newcastle, Hull, London, South Wales, and the English West Country, which had bred hardy mariners since the time of Drake and Raleigh. Many others were Lascars from India, West Indians, Chinese from Hong Kong, Somalis

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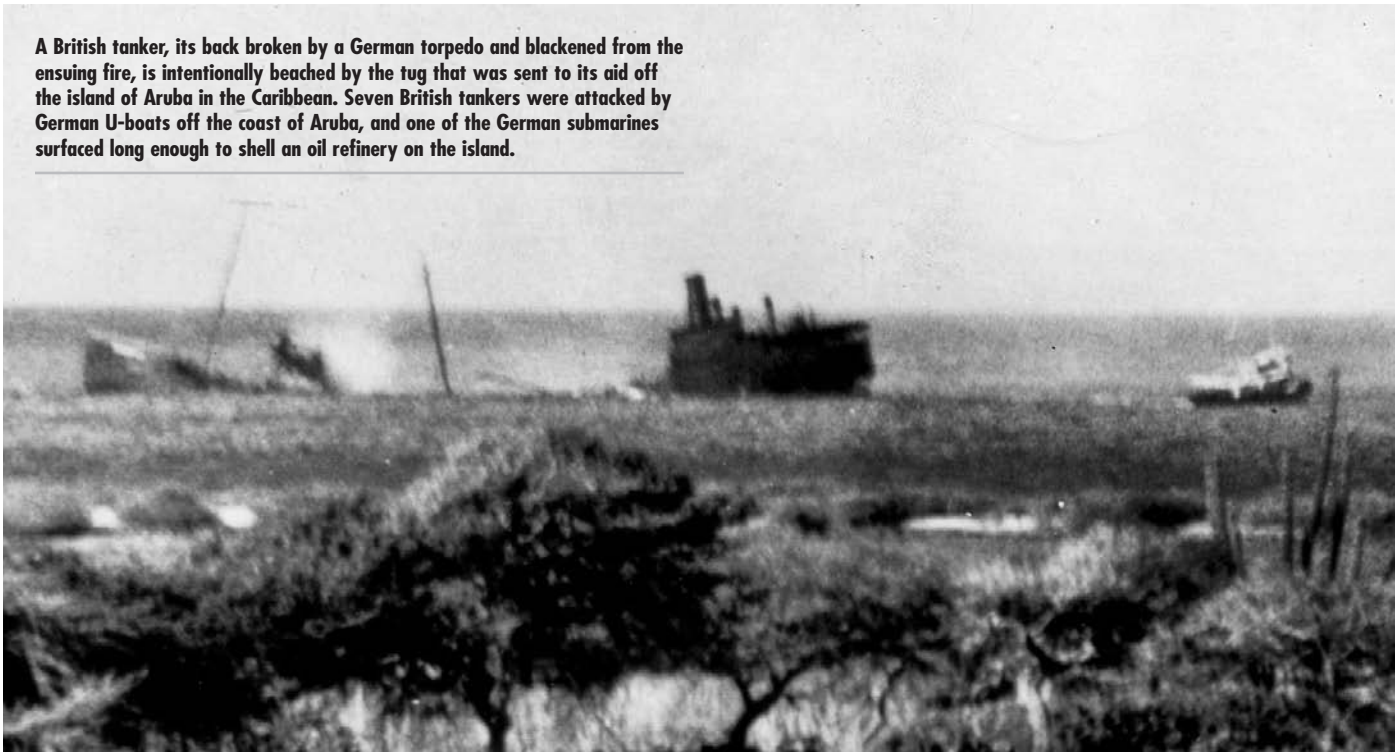


A British tanker, its back broken by a German torpedo and blackened from the ensuing fire, is intentionally beached by the tug that was sent to its aid off the island of Aruba in the Caribbean. Seven British tankers were attacked by German U-boats off the coast of Aruba, and one of the German submarines surfaced long enough to shell an oil refinery on the island.

from Africa, Irishmen from Eire, Arabs from various parts of the British Empire, men from the Dominions, Jews from Britain and other lands, and citizens of enemy-occupied countries who had found themselves cut off in Britain or had escaped there.

Some Americans also served in the Merchant Navy. The best known was Richard Maury, a descendant of Matthew Fontaine Maury, the famed U.S. naval hydrographer and oceanographer, who joined the British service in 1940. He served until the Pearl Harbor attack, when he transferred to the U.S. Merchant Marine and helped to train crews in Canada.

Throughout the war, even after America's entry, the British Merchant Navy served as the main conduit for Allied troops, tanks, aircraft, weapons, spare parts, oil, food supplies, and essential related matériel in every theater of operations except the Pacific, where the U.S. Merchant Marine played the predominant role. From September 1939 to June 1940, ships flying the Red Duster transported the British Expeditionary Force—with all of its tanks, guns, trucks, and other equipment—to northern France. Merchantmen kept the BEF supplied, often under fire, yet only one ship was lost during those nine months. The so-called Phony War was real for Britain's seamen.

Along with Royal Navy units, merchant ships took part in several troop evacuations during the grim early years of the war when Britain suffered a string of defeats, from Norway to the Aegean. During Admiral Bertram Ramsay's brilliant Operation Dynamo in May-June 1940, the Merchant Navy played a crucial role, with 36 prewar ferries, seven hospital carriers, three store ships, tugs, trawlers, and even cockle boats picking up British and French troops from the burning beaches of Dunkirk.

Merchantmen also took part in the costly evacuations from Greece and Crete in April-May 1941; the Anglo-American amphibious landings in North Africa in November 1942, Sicily in July 1943, and Salerno, Italy, in September 1943; and the greatest invasion of all, Operation Overlord. Two thousand merchant ships—most of them British—supported the Allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, with losses of barely 1 percent.

Most troop movements during the war were made by British merchantmen and converted liners, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said that the transatlantic crossings of the big, high-speed Cunard liners *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*—ferrying Canadian and American troops to Europe—shortened the war by two years. Each ship sailed independently and carried 12,000 men at a time. Between January and June 1944, a million U.S. Army personnel were ferried to Britain.

The survival of the strategic Mediterranean island bastion of Malta, bombed and besieged in 1940-1942, was credited to Royal Navy and Merchant Navy convoys that ran a relentless gauntlet of Axis air raiders and submarines. "The work which this magnificent service [the Merchant Navy] did, in conjunction with the Royal Navy, in bringing supplies to Malta cannot be overstated," declared Sir William Dobbie, wartime governor of the island. "Without that help, Malta could not have held out…. The debt the empire owes to the Merchant Navy is immense."

Month after month through the war, in both fair and foul weather, the merchant ships and their crews plied back and forth, singly or in convoy. Day and night, lookouts and gun crews stood watch, eyes strained for black specks in the skies that could be enemy planes, and tirelessly scanned the waves for the telltale wake of a submarine periscope. It was harrowing, nerve-wracking duty as the seamen sailed on, living day by day and praying for a safe landfall.

At night, they lay in their bunks and hammocks trying to sleep but dreading the sudden thunder of explosions and clangor of bells that signaled a U-boat or air attack, injuries, breathless dashes to the lifeboats, or, at worst, a struggle to survive in frigid waters. Survivors of sinkings told of the fearful minutes between an explosion deep in the bowels of the ship and its final plunge to the bottom, the heartbreak of losing shipmates, and the frenzy of having to fight their way clear through twisted steel, scalding steam, and flames in a desperate effort to reach a lifeboat, sometimes only to find that it had been destroyed. When tankers were torpedoed, survivors who made it overboard found themselves struggling amid burning oil.

Even when in a lifeboat, the horrors were not yet over for seamen after their ships had gone down. Unless they were lucky enough to be picked up quickly by a shepherding destroyer or corvette, they watched helplessly as comrades died from injuries, exposure, or thirst. Many survivors crammed into lifeboats or clinging to rafts drifted in the ocean currents for days, weeks, and even months while their sparse rations and water dwindled. Then they tried to assuage gnawing hunger with raw fish or unsuspecting seagulls. Then there was the additional peril of being attacked by enemy vessels or planes. After sinking Allied merchantmen in the Pacific and other Far East waters, Japanese submarines regularly machine-gunned lifeboats and sometimes rammed them.

In the winter months, the merchant sailors endured snow, sleet, and raging mid-ocean storms as their heavily laden ships butted through towering waves and troughs. They shivered while scraping ice from decks, gun mounts, and superstructures, and then struggled to thaw out in cramped, fetid quarters

This photograph. taken from the deck of the British cruiser *Bellona,* depicts a number of merchant vessels laden with supplies en route to the Soviet Union. During this particular voyage, a German U-boat was sunk by escort vessels and several German aircraft were shot down while attacking the convoy.

below decks while off watch. Living conditions on the freighters, tramp steamers, tankers, and coasters were severely restricted and austere. Aboard a tramp steamer, only the master and chief engineer had cabins, with a toilet and bath; the deck officers shared cabins amidships below the bridge while the engineer officers' quarters were above the engine room. The rest of the crew slept in two-tier iron-framed bunks below the forecastle head, not the most stable section of the ship. Firemen and greasers slept on the port side, and the seamen, boatswain, and carpenter on the starboard side. All had to queue up to use the head.

"It was the long Atlantic trips that were worst for cabin conditions," reported one seaman, "especially on the lower decks, where the portholes couldn't be opened. As many as eight men ate, slept, smoked, and broke wind, and generally lived in those 'glory holes' with their damp clothes. The air was thick and foul, like in a submarine. It was heaven to stand up on deck and breathe in the fresh air. There was no real recreation, only an occasional four hours on watch, eight hours off, with extra work like chipping, cleaning, and painting in off-duty hours. Any spare time was spent on private chores and sleep."

The seamen sailing under the Red Duster during World War II earned every penny of their modest wages during long and perilous voyages. The pay for British merchant sailors was minimal, less than half that of their American counterparts. An able seaman earned 12 pounds a month, slightly more than half of that paid to a sergeant pilot in the RAF, and he had to provide himself with insurance.

Merchant ship duty was rigorous at all times during the war, but the most hazardous conditions of all were endured by the sailors manning the Arctic convoys. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Britain decided to help the hard-pressed Russians by dispatching war supplies—aircraft, Matilda infantry tanks, and trucks—that Britain could ill afford to spare. The first convoy, code-named Dervish, sailed for Archangel with seven freighters in August 1941, followed by a second convoy in September. By year's end, eight British convoys had arrived in Russia without loss.

From August 1941 to the end of the war, 40 outward convoys were routed to the Arctic. The merchant sailors and their Royal Navy escorts faced pack ice, fog, and ferocious storms; perpetual night in winter and perpetual daylight in summer; and high latitudes that made even gyrocompasses unreliable, causing navigational errors—not to mention the menace of U-boats, land-based Luftwaffe raiders, and German capital ships sneaking out from Norwegian fjords. Ship superstructures, decks, and guns were constantly caked in ice, making the merchantmen and their escorts particularly vulnerable to mishap and attack.

National Archives

British sailors aboard the escort carrier HMS *Trouncer* use a carley float to assist the survivors of the sunken merchant vessel SS *Empire Patrol,* many of whom are women. The *Empire Patrol* had caught fire during an effort to repatriate Greek refugees from Abyssinia. Of the 510 survivors of the sinking, HMS *Trouncer* rescued 420.

Out of a total of 811 merchant ships that sailed from Britain to Russia, 33 returned to port with damage from weather or ice, 58 were sunk by the enemy, another five were lost in the Kola Inlet after arrival, and 720 reached port safely. The convoys carried four million tons of supplies, including 5,000 British and American tanks and more than 7,000 airplanes. Remarkably, only about 300,000 tons of supplies (7.5 percent) went down with sunken ships. Of 13 vessels that sailed independently from Iceland to Russia, five were sunk and three had to turn back. While the merchant losses on the Arctic convoys were comparatively light, the cost to the Royal Navy was high: two cruisers, six destroyers, two sloops, a frigate, two corvettes, four minesweepers, an armed whaler, and a Polish submarine.

During the war, the Merchant Navy recorded many incredible sagas of survival by sailors after sinkings. One able seaman found himself drifting alone in the Atlantic, clinging to a substantial piece of wreckage, after his ship was sunk in the spring of 1943. All that he had was a raw cabbage and a snapshot of his wife. Occasionally munching a leaf of the cabbage, drinking rainwater and melted hail or snow, and talking to the photograph, he managed to survive for 18 days until a ship picked him up.

Even more remarkable was the story of Poon Lim, a young Chinese steward who took to a life raft when his ship, the *Benlomond,* was torpedoed on November 23, 1942, while sailing westward unescorted from Cape Town to Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana. He was the only survivor of a crew of 47. Subsisting on the small provisions he found on the raft, augmented by whatever fish and seagulls he could catch, Poon drifted for week after week. The combined effect of the equatorial sun, winds, and salt rotted his clothing to shreds and turned his skin into a mass of blisters, but he kept fighting to stay alive. He became so weak that he could not sit up, let alone catch fish with his makeshift line.

On the 133rd day, reduced to a scarcely breathing bundle of bones and in the last stages of starvation, Poon was spotted by Brazilian fishermen. They landed him at the port of Belem, where he was cared for at the Beneficiencia Portuguese Hospital. The Chinese sailor amazed his doctors and nurses by making a full recovery in just over two weeks. He was later decorated as a Member of the British Empire.

Ten months later, Poon Lim's survival record was exceeded by two days. After discharging a cargo of ammunition in the Middle East early in September 1943 and bunkering at Aden, the freighter *Fort Longueuil* sailed for Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia. On September 19, she was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine south of the Chagos Archipelago. The ship sank in minutes, and only seven survivors managed to scramble aboard a life raft. The submarine surfaced alongside, but its captain said he could do nothing for the seamen. The raft carried only two days' rations, and the men aboard died one by one.

By the 25th day, two Indian seamen named Mohamed Aftab and Thakur Miah remained alive. They rode the ocean currents for 3,400 miles, subsisting on raw fish and rainwater. On February 1, 1944, after 135 days aboard the raft, Aftab and Miah drifted ashore on the island of Sumatra. Natives found them and handed them over to the Japanese occupation forces, and the two seamen faced death. But the Japanese had second thoughts. They reasoned that the pair might be anti-British Indian spies and simply did not believe that they could have

survived on a raft for so long.

So the two Indians were spared execution and held in a prison camp. Eighteen months later, at the end of the war, they were freed by troops of the British 14th Army, flown to Rangoon, and thence repatriated.

For their staunch service as the very sinew of Britain's survival and the Allied victory, officers and men of the Royal Merchant Navy were awarded five George Crosses, 213 Distinguished Service Crosses, 18 Distinguished Service Orders, 1,077 Orders of the British Empire, 1,717 British Empire Medals, 50 Commanders of the British Empire, and 10 knighthoods. They paid a high price—30,248 crewmen drowned or were killed in action. At the Merchant Navy War Memorial, a sunken garden walled with Portland stone close to the Tower of London, the names of 23,837 seamen who have no grave but the sea are emblazoned in bronze. The graves of another 8,000 of their shipmates lie in cemeteries scattered around the world.

In a strange turn of events, veterans of the Merchant Navy have never been invited to take part in the Remembrance Day (November 11) march-past at the Cenotaph in London's Whitehall, during which the Queen and members of Parliament lay wreaths to honor Britain's war dead. White-bereted veterans of Royal Navy escort ships in the Arctic convoys are present, but there is no one representing the ships they shepherded. At the poignant ceremony, which dates back to the end of World War I, the only recognition of the role played by the Merchant Navy in World War II is a wreath laid by a single representative who stands alongside the leaders of the armed forces.

Yet the Merchant Navy, along with British, Canadian, and American warships and aircraft, won the Battle of the Atlantic, possibly the most crucial campaign of the war. It was a battle that Britain could not afford to lose. Had it been lost, Britain's capacity to wage war when it stood alone would have been irreparably damaged, the Allied buildup and invasion of continental Europe would not have been possible, and Hitler would have been free to concentrate all his resources against the Soviet Union.

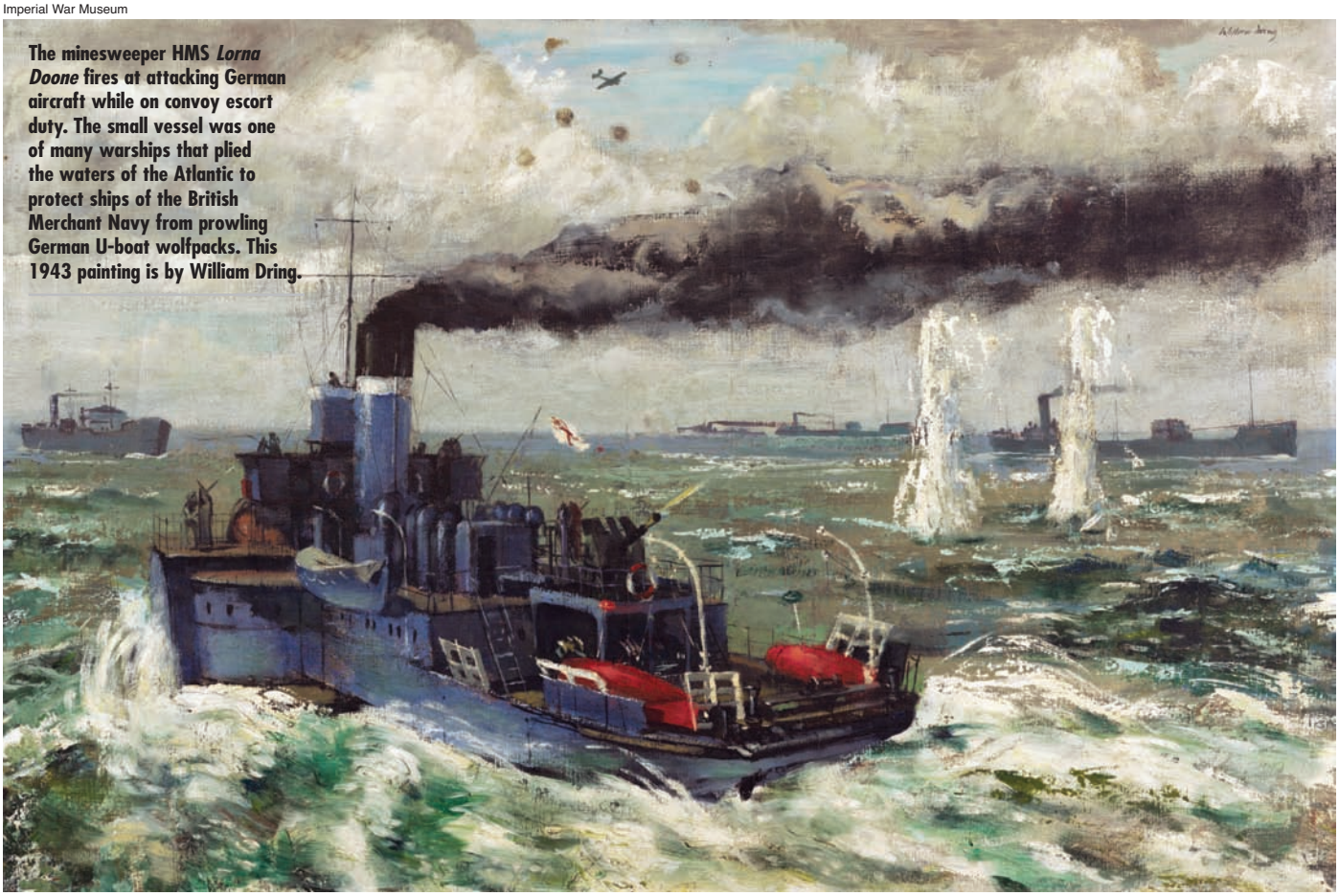
Overlooked by the majority of historians, the sacrifice of Britain's civilian fourth service in 1939-1945 has faded, sadly, from the national consciousness, although high tribute was paid to it when memories were clearer. During a speech in London in 1950, Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, hero of the climactic Battle of El Alamein in October 1942, said, "Victory was won in Hitler's war not only by the courage and skill of the fighting services, but also by the quality of the ships and men of the Merchant Navy who transported us to our overseas bases and battlefronts, and maintained us there till the job was done."

Prime Minister Churchill wrote, "We never call on the officers and men of the Merchant Navy in vain," and during his victory broadcast in May 1945 he declared, "My friends, when our minds turn to the Northwestern Approaches, we will not forget the devotion of our merchant seamen … so rarely mentioned in the headlines."

On October 30, 1945, Parliament carried a resolution: "That the thanks of this house be accorded to the officers and men of the Merchant Navy for the steadfastness with which they have maintained our stocks of food and materials; for their services in transporting men and munitions to all the battles over all the seas, and for the gallantry with which, though a civilian service, they met and fought the constant attacks of the enemy." □

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

Imperial War Museum



The minesweeper HMS *Lorna Doone* fires at attacking German aircraft while on convoy escort duty. The small vessel was one of many warships that plied the waters of the Atlantic to protect ships of the British Merchant Navy from prowling German U-boat wolfpacks. This 1943 painting is by William Dring.

Operation Dovetail: Guadalcanal Rehearsal

Regarded as essential for the success of the first U.S. offensive as well as its first amphibious operation of World War II, the rehearsal for the assault on Guadalcanal proved to be an alarming mix of inadequate planning and poor execution.

BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG

BY JUNE 1942, the military might of Imperial Japan threatened Australia. The string of spectacular Japanese conquests in the South Pacific menaced lines of supply and communication between the United States and its allies and bases in the region.

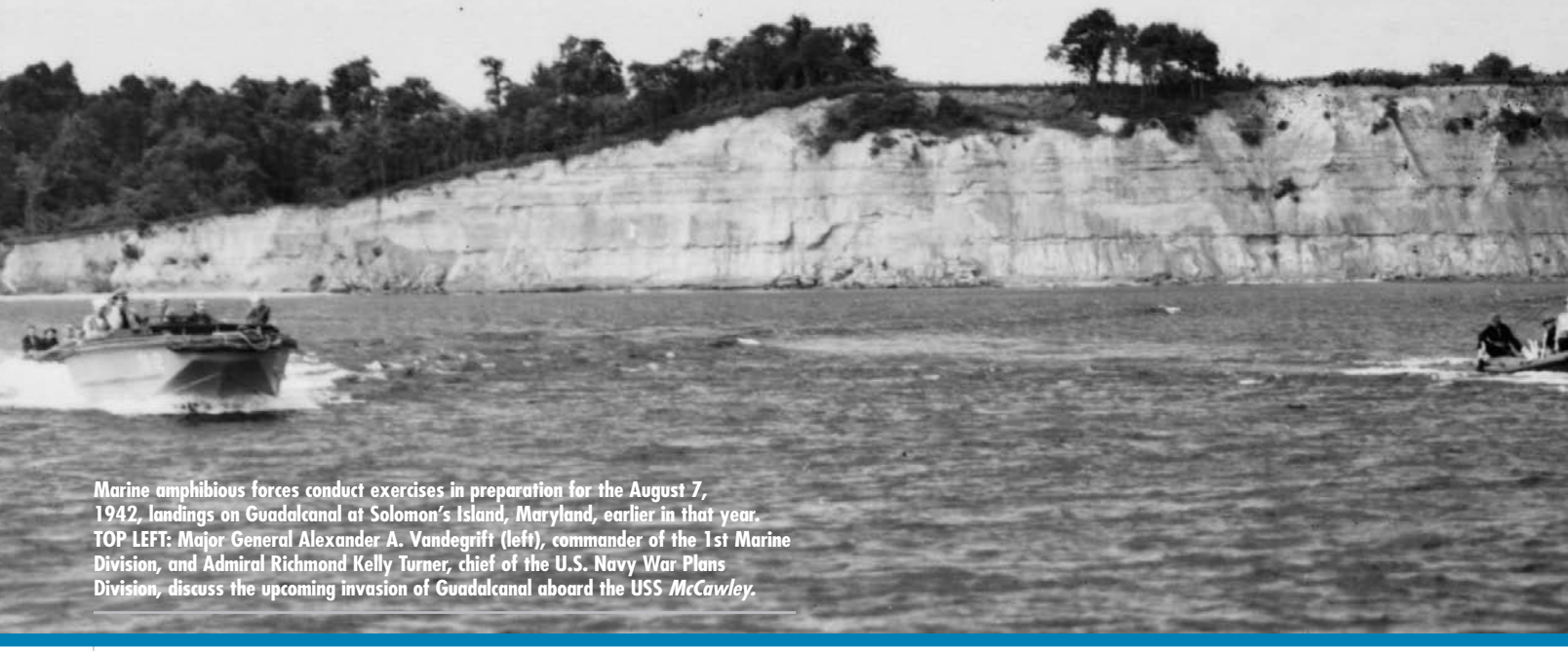
The initial threat would come from airfields established on the islands of Guadalcanal, Tulagi, Florida, and Savo, all in the Solomons archipelago. Allied bases in the New Hebrides, Fiji, and New Caledonia could be interdicted by Japanese airpower, seriously hindering, if not forestalling, any Pacific counteroffensive against Japan.

Eager to take the fight to the Japanese, Allied planners searched for an opportunity to hit back. Situated closest to concentrations of Allied forces in the Pacific, Guadalcanal became a likely target, and a plan for an amphibious assault to capture the enemy airfield being constructed there was devised by the U.S. military. The island was located halfway between Allied bases in the New Hebrides and the major Japanese naval base at Rabaul on the island of New Britain. The capture of Guadalcanal would allow the Americans to base airpower on the island. This, in turn, would not only make for an easier defense of the lines of communication with Australia, but also provide a jumping off point for offensive action against enemy positions in the Bismarck Sea and on New Guinea.

Although at the time a rehearsal was considered vital before the U.S. Navy launched its initial seaborne attack of World War II, information about the four-day operation off the coast of Koro in the Fijis at the end of July 1942, just 10 days before the actual invasion of Guadalcanal, is strangely absent from the literature of the Pacific War. Neither the official Navy and Marine Corps histories nor other authoritative accounts more than briefly acknowledge its existence. Even high-profile participants in the Guadalcanal operation barely mention it in their postwar accounts.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Alexander A. Vandegrift, who led the 1st Marine Division in the landing on Guadalcanal, simply gave a brief assessment in his autobiography, while his assistant operations officer, Merrill Twining, in his published memoir, mentions the planning of the exercise and the problem of naval gunfire support, but no information about the rehearsal itself other than the coral conditions found around the island.

The dearth of official and other accounts of what occurred during the execution of the practice would indicate that it was of only marginal significance to the operation at Guadalcanal. But the facts show otherwise. More likely, scant mention of the rehearsal was due to the glaring lack of preparedness in amphibious warfare on the part of the commanders and the troops who took part, as well as serious weaknesses in the ability of the Navy to support such a mission. As a result, it is not surprising that neither the



Marine amphibious forces conduct exercises in preparation for the August 7, 1942, landings on Guadalcanal at Solomon's Island, Maryland, earlier in that year. TOP LEFT: Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift (left), commander of the 1st Marine Division, and Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, chief of the U.S. Navy War Plans Division, discuss the upcoming invasion of Guadalcanal aboard the USS *McCawley*.

Navy nor the Marine Corps at the time, or after the war, wanted to cast light upon an operation that was so flawed.

To implement its new offensive strategy in the Pacific, the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff issued in early July 1942 its "Joint Directive for Offensive Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area Agreed by the United States Chiefs of Staff." This blueprint provided for the seizure of the islands of New Britain, New Ireland and New Guinea to be carried out in stages. The conquest of Guadalcanal in the lower Solomons would be set in motion first, followed by the taking of portions of the upper Solomons and parts of New Guinea, and concluding with the occupation of Rabaul and other bases in New Britain and New Ireland. The Navy was given responsibility for the first phase under the joint directive for operations and would naturally depend on the Marine Corps to provide the required landing force.

That force would be the 1st Marine Division, under Maj. Gen. Vandegrift, which had been formed in February 1941. Moved to New Zealand during May and June 1942 in anticipation of engaging in active operations, the 1st Marine Division was not fully trained in the ways of modern amphibious warfare. This new strike force's prime mission prior to the war had been seen as one of mounting sea assaults against Japanese-held islands in the Central Pacific in support of the Navy in case of war with Japan.

The tactics and doctrine to carry out this mission had been set down in 1934 in the Marine Corps' Tentative Manual of Landing Operations, the first detailed treatise ever developed on the subject. In 1938, it became official Navy doctrine and was slightly revised in 1941 to become the theoretical foundation for U.S. amphibious operations in World War II. It stressed six primary components: command functions, naval gunfire support, air support, ship-to-shore movement, securing the beachhead, and logistics.

An Amtrak of the U.S. Marine Corps churns toward the shoreline during amphibious exercises at New River, North Carolina, in 1941.

If the theory relating to amphibious assaults by the Marine Corps was in place for a number of years before the war, proper equipment and training required to test the theory was lacking in 1942. Between 1935 and 1941 the Corps attempted to refine its new doctrine and tactics during the annual fleet landing exercises. The practical experience gained from these showed that the Marines' mission would be hampered by shortages of transports and poor communication among ships, the transports, and troops ashore. Also, it became evident that not nearly enough landing craft, especially the new Higgins boats, were available for ship-to-shore movement of troops.

Amphibious training just before the war garnered mixed results. Between June and August 1941 at New River, North Carolina, training exercises brought to light deficiencies regarding combat loading of transports and the offloading of supplies onto the beach. The suitability of troop transports was also called into question, as was the effectiveness of naval gunfire support.

Further complicating the first U.S. sea assault

All photos: National Archives

of the war was the fact that only some elements of the 1st Marine Division had ever practiced the techniques of such an operation. The 5th Marine Regiment, along with the 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, were the only units slated for the Guadalcanal invasion that had participated in the training exercises at New River, and the next year at Solomon's Island, Maryland.

The rest of the assault force from the 1st Marine Division, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 1st Marine Regiment, the 11th Marine Artillery Regiment, and all the division's logistical and support units would be engaged in a landing, possibly opposed, without any prior training. The division's 7th Marine Regiment had been detached to Samoa prior to the move to New Zealand and would miss the initial landings on Guadalcanal. All in all, the 1st Marine Division, stripped of one of its combat regiments, broken apart and then reconstituted three separate times since early 1941, lacked the training and cohesion to assure success in the Guadalcanal operation in the summer of 1942.

A new Eureka (B-5) landing boat gathers speed during joint amphibious exercises conducted by the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps.

In early July, with only three days' notice, Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, director of the Navy's War Plans Division, rushed to finalize the plan for the first U.S. Navy offensive thrust since the Spanish-American War of 1898. Approved by Admiral Ernest J. King, chief of naval operations, and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander in chief Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Area, Turner's plan called for the U.S. occupation of the Santa Cruz Islands, the island of Tulagi, and the "occupation of an airfield or airfield site" on the north coast of Guadalcanal, which Turner had learned was being built by the Japanese.

Raising the concern with Nimitz that the forces scheduled to conduct the operation where inadequately trained to do so, Turner stressed the need to carry out a preinvasion practice by all the land, sea, and air units that were to take part in the invasion. This would not only allow for practical experience in amphibious warfare but also provide for the inclusion of actual naval and aerial bombardment in support of the land forces. Nimitz approved, and Turner then looked for a site at which to conduct the exercise.

The place Turner came up with was the Fiji Islands, a British colony 1,100 miles east of Guadalcanal. It was considered secure from the prying eyes of the enemy, and Nimitz gave his approval, stressing that a rehearsal "was considered essential" and should be held in the six-day period beginning July 23, which would allow for two full practices.

The next step was to identify a suitable landing area for the exercise. To that end, Maj. Gen. Vandegrift dispatched his aide, Major Donald Fuller, and Captains Louis Ennis and C. Ray Scwenke to confer with the British authorities in the Fijis and to conduct air and ground reconnaissance of possible areas to be used for the rehearsals. Although Koro Island was not originally on the list of sites, it was suggested to the American team by their U.S. and English contacts in the Fijis that the island, a wedge-shaped mountainous island 100 miles northeast of Suva, might do. The survey of the site was conducted during what the officers believed to be low tide. Although their observations revealed that a large coral reef surrounded the island and it gave them cause for concern, they recommended Koro on account of the prompting of their British hosts and the lack of time they had to explore other options.

On July 15, Fuller and his fellow explorers reported to Vandegrift and Vandegrift's new superior, Admiral Turner, to offer their recommendation. Turner, who had just arrived in the theater, had been recently selected to command the amphibious forces in the South Pacific and execute the very mission he had planned. Fuller and his assistants informed their superiors that Koro was "a most unpromising and unsuitable area." Unfortunately, they did not have a better suggestion. Turner commented, "It doesn't make any difference. We don't have any time. We're going to rehearse at Koro."

Turner's decision seems faulty in hindsight, but at the time he made it he had learned of facts that were throwing his schedule off track, thus limiting the time for the projected rehearsal. The July 23 rehearsal date had been based on the premise that the real invasion of Guadalcanal would take place on August 1. However, severe rains and ship-loading problems in New Zealand had prevented the 1st Marine Division from sailing from Auckland as originally envisioned. The delay threatened to jeopardize the invasion date.

To compensate, and still be able to attack Guadalcanal in the first week of August, the practice, which Turner always considered vital to the success of the real thing, was pushed back to July 28, with the invasion of Guadalcanal to take place on August 7. Further, the arrangements with the British colonial government in the Fijis had been completed, including the removal in late July of half of the population of Koro, 966 natives, from the affected zone on the island's north shore.

The four-day preinvasion exercise, extending from July 28 to July 31, was to be carried out by Turner's Task Force 62, which included 19,000 ground troops of the 1st Marine Division in 22 transports, two fire support groups comprising cruisers and destroyers, and three fleet aircraft carriers with their complement of fighter, dive, and torpedo bomber aircraft. The naval component of the exercise totaled 72 ships. The landing zones were designated Red Beach (1,600 yards wide), Blue Beach (500 yards), and Green Beach (150 yards), with the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 5th Marine Regiment, and the 1st Marine Regiment hitting Red Beach; 1st Raider Battalion and 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, and the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment landing on Blue Beach; and the 1st Parachute Battalion disembarking on Green Beach.

On Tuesday, July 28, Vice Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, who had led the American naval forces at the Battle of the Coral Sea and who was in overall command of the assembled forces for the invasion of Guadalcanal, gave the signal for the rehearsal to begin at 9 AM. The exercise was to be carried out in two phases, with the troops landing on the 28th and being recovered the following day and with the process repeated on the 30th and 31st.

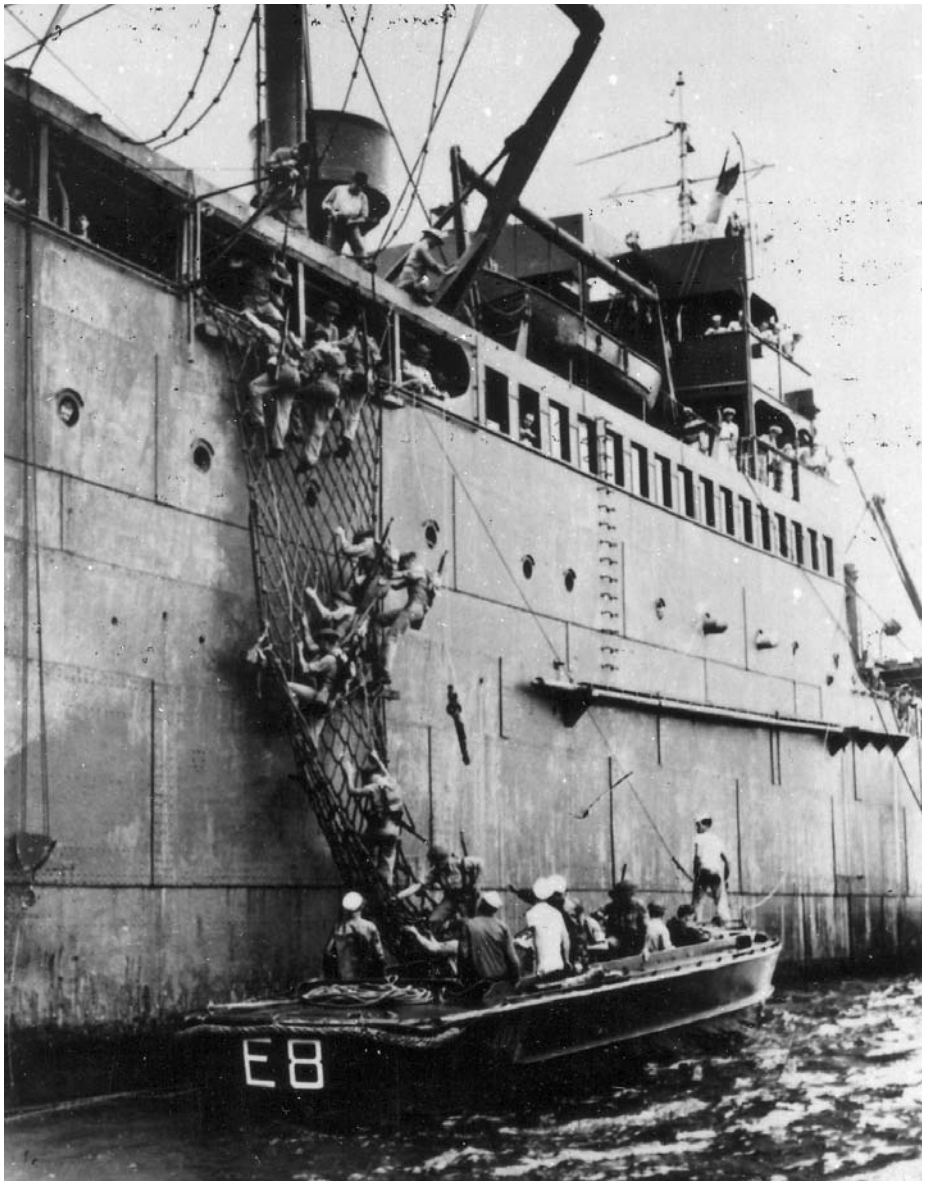
At the appointed time the rehearsal commenced with 36 wooden Higgins boats along with 30-foot X-boats and ramp boats being hoisted over the sides of the transports and lowered into the sea 8,000 yards off the north coast

of Koro. Each carried a crew of three plus 36 Marine passengers, the latter weighted down with 70 pounds of equipment and arms. After moving 500 yards from the transports, the landing craft began to circle until the entire landing force was assembled for the run to shore. Soon the five waves of landing boats, with five-minute intervals between each wave, headed for the line of departure some 3,500 yards further south and about halfway between the transports and the beaches. Operation Dovetail, the first mass amphibious exercise in Navy and Marine Corps history, was on.

As the small boats reached the line of departure, the officers in charge checked their watches. The time was 2 PM. To their chagrin, they saw that the operation was already an hour and a half behind schedule. Further, it would take the Higgins boats, which traveled only 10 miles per hour, another 20 minutes to reach the shore. The top brass was displeased with the slow progress of the movement, but a far worse problem would soon reveal itself and derail the entire operation.

Unknown to the American planners, the start of the rehearsal coincided with low tide in the waters off Koro. As the landing craft carrying elements of the 5th Marines neared Red Beach, they encountered large coral formations, many two to three feet in diameter and clearly visible below the surface of the water. Loaded with men and their equipment, the draft of the Higgins boats was two feet. As they neared the shore, many of their propellers struck the coral outcroppings.

Unable or unwilling to continue, the crews stopped their forward movement about 100 yards from the shoreline and ordered their passengers to go over the side. Many Marines did and found themselves plunging into water well over their heads. Soon, hundreds were struggling to climb back on board in an attempt to avoid drowning. A few of the Higgins boats were able to elude the coral obstructions and place their charges in shallow water or on the beach itself. The scene on and near the shore was one of damaged ships and waterlogged, bewildered men.



Clambering down the side of their transport vessel, units of the 1st Marine Division and the 1st Infantry Division are preparing to board their landing craft during the 1941 joint amphibious exercises conducted at New River, North Carolina.

Marines of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment were landed no more than 50 yards from the shore. Their relief at not having to wade to the beach from a longer distance was dampened by the realization that they were not where they were supposed to be. They found themselves some 1,800 yards from their proper landing site on Red Beach. As the 3rd Battalion trudged off to where it should have landed, the follow-up troops scheduled for Red Beach (the three battalions of the 1st Marine Regiment) arrived just off shore. As they prepared to go over the side, the wave leaders received a visual message to abort the landings and return to the transports.

The boats dutifully turned around and headed back to sea. Not long after reversing course, they passed the boats carrying parts of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, and a battery of artillery from the 11th Marine Regiment going toward Red Beach. Not seeing the signal to turn back, this group landed on the beach and spent an uncomfortable night on Koro with little food, no shelter, and no communication with the outside world.

The seascape stretching between the troop transports and Koro from 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM was one of complete chaos. The last Higgins boat did not return to the transports until after 6:30 PM. Confusion did not reign just within the waves of assault craft trying to reach the beach. Many support troops, such as those of the 11th Marine Regiment, never got to board the landing boats and leave the transports. Inadequate loading procedures and poorly planned disembarkation schedules held up the transfer of some forces from their transports to the landing craft. Before it was all sorted out, the operation had been closed down for the day.

Impetus for canceling the July 28 maneuvers at Koro was initiated by Navy Lieutenant Jack Clark of the troop transport *Fuller,* one of the beachmasters assigned to Red Beach and the repair officer of Transport Group 62.1. As he

was approaching Red Beach with the third wave carrying the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, Clark saw the damage to the landing craft caused by the coral knobs. He saw disabled Higgins and ramp boats with hull damage below the waterline. Greatly concerned about the growing number of damaged ships, the possible depletion of his limited number of spare propellers, and their impact on the real landing at Guadalcanal, he contacted Captain P.S. Theiss on the *Fuller* to report the situation.

Not long after radioing Theiss, Clark noticed a launch from the task force flagship *McCawley* approaching the island. It quickly turned to the *McCawley,* and soon the signal to stop the rehearsal was received. Clark's gloomy report from the shore to Theiss had been intercepted by the radio operator on the flagship and given to General Vandegrift and Admiral Turner. They had dispatched staff officers to assess the situation.

The launch Clark had seen moving toward the beach and then turn around had carried some of these officers. After seeing for themselves the damaged boats and disorganization of the troops on shore, they convinced Turner and Vandegrift to call a halt to day one of Operation Dovetail. Also, Turner had learned about the same time he received this recommendation that in addition to the boats that were damaged by the coral off Koro others were inoperative due to mechanical failure. On one transport alone, 12 boats could not be used.

The following day, Clark was summoned by Captain Theiss and informed that as a result of his invaluable intervention on the 28th he had been named by Turner as beachmaster for the entire Guadalcanal invasion.

While the mission on Red Beach was nearing failure, the landings on Blue Beach seemed to be going satisfactorily. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, and the 1st Raider Battalion had reached their destinations only about 20 minutes behind schedule. Unfortunately, many of the men disembarked 200 yards offshore and had to wade the remaining distance to land. Two hours later, the rest of the Blue Beach landing forces reached Koro, but they too were forced by the coral to go over the side and wade hundreds of yards in knee-deep water to reach shore.

At Green Beach, the 1st Parachute Battalion closed in on its objective according to plan and on time. However, as with the other beaches, especially at Nola Point, the main Green Beach landing area, the coral heads damaged propellers and boat hulls.

As evening settled on Koro, the Marines who had been scheduled to remain on the island found themselves without adequate food or shelter. With little control exerted by their officers and NCOs, the men, against standing orders, scooped up any pigs and chickens left behind by the island's inhabitants and ransacked deserted native dwellings. Unauthorized fires to cook the captured animals blazed along Red and Blue beaches, and camp security was generally nonexistent. Even the commanding officer of the 5th Marine Regiment, Colonel Leroy Hunt, was unable to curtail the lax discipline and rowdy behavior that night on Red Beach.

The Marines who had landed on Koro on the night of July 28 were scheduled to be returned to their transports the following day. In addition, the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, was to land on Green Beach and simulate an attack on a specific objective before being carried back to its transport that afternoon. However, the cancellation of the landing exercises in mid-execution on the 28th prompted Admiral Turner to revise the activities for the 29th.

Turner ordered that the morning be spent reembarking the units of the 2nd and 5th Marines and the Raiders who had stayed on Koro the night before. After theses troops were back on their transports, elements of the 11th Marine Regiment were to take to their landing craft, move to within 2,000 yards of Red Beach, and be returned to the transports. The landing of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines on Green Beach was cancelled. Turner's limited maneuver of the 29th was rooted in his desire to avoid any more damage to his precious few Higgins boats.

By mid-morning, all the troops from Koro had been brought back to the waiting transports. The 11th Marines had made an uneventful trip to within 2,000 yards of the island and returned by 3:30 PM. About this time, Lieutenant Clark was making an inspection of the condition of the landing boats carried by the *Fuller*. Many needed new propellers, and while seeing to their replacement he was called to a meeting with Admiral Turner.

The new beachmaster of Transport Group 62.1 recalled that the conference with the Admiral on the *McCawley* was one of the less pleasant planning discussions he ever participated in during the war. Not surprisingly, due to the dismal performance of the day before, Turner displayed some of the personality traits that had given rise to his nickname of "Terrible Turner." He was particularly furious about the conditions of the boats on the transports, taking the ship captains to task for the mechanical breakdown of so many of the boats during the rehearsal on the 28th. He demanded that they be repaired immediately.

Turner also sounded off about the slowness of the ship-to-shore operations. He complained that hoisting the boats for embarkation was taking far too long and that even a 50 percent reduction of the time was not good enough. He went on to demand that each transport captain significantly speed up the transfer of the Marines from ship to landing craft and report to his staff the time those vessels were lowered into the water, when each boat arrived at the line of departure, and when each wave reached the shore.

The exercise for July 30th was originally envisioned as a repeat of the landings of the 28th, with the addition of coordinated naval and aerial bombardment using live ammunition. Turner modified this scheme for the 30th, and instead of actual landings by his men, waves of landing craft carrying Marines would move to within 2,000 yards of the shore and then return to the transports. Green Beach was stricken from the list of missions for the 30th.

Shore bombardment was to be carried out off Red Beach by four destroyers and three cruisers. Off Blue Beach two destroyers and one cruiser were to conduct live fire, while at Green Beach five minesweepers were ordered to shoot at Nola Point. Nearly simultaneously, 32 fighters and 51dive bombers from the three aircraft carriers would conduct strafing and dive bombing runs against Nola Point and the north shore. Flight operations commenced at 10 AM on the 30th and were deemed a great success by the carrier commanders as their planes, according to a war correspondent on the carrier *Enterprise,* hit their targets "blasting coral on the beaches and ploughing up the sand." The performance of the naval gunfire, however, proved to be more problematic.

At 8:55 AM, Turner changed H-hour for the start of the naval fire component of the exercise. All went well, even with the change of H-hour to 10:30 AM, with the coordinated shore bombardment and landing approach at Blue Beach. While the landing boats went to within 2,000 yards of Koro and then returned to their transports, the Navy fired 123 rounds at the island.

Things did not go as well on Red Beach.

Captain Theiss of the *Fuller* did not receive the change of the start time for the exercise and did not realize that troops were not to land on Red Beach. As a result, by 10 AM the first wave of Marines was clambering ashore on Red Beach. As the second wave approached Koro, the destroyer USS *Ellet,* serving as the control ship for the amphibious practice on Red Beach, steamed in from the ocean and ran dangerously close to the shore. She had been given the unenviable mission of warning the errant Marines to get off the island as soon as possible because

Shown at the conclusion of the New River amphibious training exercises, these troops are boarding small craft that will return them to their transport ships.

the Red Beach shore bombardment was about to commence. The second-wave commander got the message from the Ellet and ordered his force to turn back. Sailing parallel to the shore and using hand signals and voice, he got the first-wave boats to take men off the beach and back out to sea. But many men could not be brought off and were left stranded on Koro.

With only minutes to go before the naval bombardment was to begin, the ships slated to fire on Red Beach received notice to postpone the operation until mid-afternoon when it was assumed the Marines still on Koro could be evacuated. Further complicating the situation was that some first wave Red Beach landing craft had not reached the 2,000-yard line of departure until 12:30 PM, with the second through fifth waves not gaining that position until 1 PM. This tardiness not only allowed for the possibility that some troops might go all the way to Koro, but that those wandering boats might get in the path of the bombardment groups. By late afternoon the mission to conduct naval fire on Red Beach was suspended when it was acknowledged that the Marines could not be extricated from there until the next day.

By 5 PM on July 31, all the Marines who had been sent over the side the morning before and marooned on Koro were back on their transports. Some had more trouble doing so than others. A number of boats holding units of the 11th and 5th Marines had to catch up with their parent transports, which were already leaving the area. One Marine in a Higgins boat trying to overtake its transport as the latter stood out to sea later remarked, "Christ, we felt that the Navy was in such a hurry to get out of there they would have left their grandmothers behind if it would have allowed them to go faster."

Operation Dovetail was a disappointment to the commanders involved. Lt. Col. Sam Griffith, 1st Raider Battalion executive officer, recalled that after its conclusion it was the only time he ever saw Vandegrift despondent. In his autobiography, the general wrote, "I shuddered to think what would happen if those beaches turned out to have been defended in strength." In 1948, he termed the Koro rehearsal "a complete bust." At a lower level, Captain William Hawkins, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, summed up the feelings of many fellow Marines who took part in the practice at Koro and later in the initial landing at Guadalcanal when he recorded, "We would have been slaughtered" if Koro had been in Japanese hands.

The rehearsal for the Guadalcanal landing was hampered first and foremost by the poor choice of coral-ringed Koro. For this, the blame falls squarely on Admiral Turner; he made the final choice. The second major cause for the less-than-stellar performance at Koro was the poor mechanical condition of many of the landing craft engines. Further, it was fortunate that only a few Higgins and ramp boats were completely destroyed at Koro and that the damaged craft were put back in working order prior to the real landing on Guadalcanal.

Ship-to-shore operations proved to be too slow, including the transfer of troops from transports to landing craft, and the inexperience of the landing craft crews slowed the drive to the line of departure. These factors combined to cause a delay of at least three hours.

Operation Dovetail raised the issue that U.S. Navy attempts to effectively coordinate naval gunfire and air support with amphibious operations were in an elementary state in 1942. Poor reconnaissance failed to pinpoint targets, adversely affecting American air strikes and naval bombardment at Guadalcanal, and this was apparent during the rehearsal at Koro.

On the positive side, some lessons were learned from the otherwise faulty Koro rehearsal. Flawed as it was, the exercise provided invaluable experience in ship-to-shore embarkation for many Marine company and battalion officers who had never participated in such a mission before. It also helped to eliminate some of the problems resulting from the need for better communication to achieve a successful coordinated land-sea-air operation.

Further, the loading and offloading of supplies onto ships and then onto the invasion beach was improved between the conclusion of Operation Dovetail and the start of the landings at Guadalcanal. Last, and of great importance, a system was created (first developed on July 30 at Koro) that pooled all the landing craft to prevent the delayed arrival of the assault waves due to the breakdown or absence of these essential vessels. □

Arnold Blumberg is an attorney with the Maryland state government and resides with his wife in Baltimore County, Maryland.

By Joseph Luster

THE COLORS OF REVENGE FLY IN NAZI-OCCUPIED FRANCE

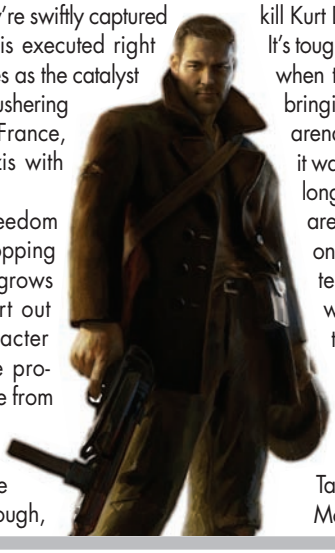
The Saboteur's Sean Devlin is based on a real SOE spy.

I love shooters as much as the next adrenaline-pumping gamer; it's practically a requirement if you want some kind of interactive war experience outside of strategy titles. However, sometimes it takes more to really breathe life into a historically bloated sub-genre, and Pandemic Studios' *The Saboteur* provides just that: a lively take on Nazi-occupied France that goes for much more than the headshot.

That's not to say that *The Saboteur* doesn't have shooting in it. Oh no, there's plenty of running and gunning and blowing things up. It's the setting and the characters that make it special, and this goes hand in hand with the freedom given to tackle a red-hot case of revenge in any way one pleases.

Irishman Sean Devlin has his own personal grudge against the Nazis, not for a lack of reasons to despise them in the first place. He's tough-as-nails, but he's not your average battle-hardened protagonist. His fighting experience mostly comes from bar fights, and his true skill lies in his work as a mechanic and, as we experience for ourselves in the game's Prologue, a racer. If this background sounds familiar at all, it's because Devlin is based on William Grover-Williams, Grand Prix driver and special agent for the Special Operations Executive in France.

Sean's real trouble with the Nazis comes about pre-invasion, during a heated race in the Saarbrücken that ends with the villainous Kurt Dierker shooting out Sean's tires and claiming a nasty and dishonest victory. When Sean and his friend Jules tail Dierker after the race, they're swiftly captured and, long story short, Jules is executed right before Sean's eyes. This serves as the catalyst for all that follows, eventually ushering Sean into the resistance in France, where he takes on the Nazis with explosive results.



This is also where the freedom begins, and missions start popping up as Sean's circle of allies grows and grows. Objectives start out simple enough; one character agrees to help after you've procured a vintage bottle of wine from the claws of the Nazis, where it would no doubt go grossly unappreciated. The scale gradually ramps up, though, and for the most part the pacing stays as tight as the player prefers it.

Those first few hours may honestly be the best, but that says more about what they accomplish narratively. The way the developers deftly switch from an introduction to the resistance to a harrowing prologue is about as impressed as I've been with a game of its kind. The events that trigger it all could have easily been presented in a cutscene, or as drawn-out dialogue, but Pandemic puts you inside the race that got the gears turning, making the pivotal impetus for revenge incredibly effective. It ensures the player will want to see the game through to the end and kill Kurt Dierker with his or her bare hands.

It's tough not to mention *Grand Theft Auto IV* when talking about *The Saboteur*, though bringing up a *GTA* game in the sandbox arena isn't nearly as necessary today as it was a few years ago, as the genre has long since come into its own. Still, there are a number of specific comparisons one could draw, and it's really a matter of taste as to which game does what better, be it driving, shooting, or the shaking of female rumps.

Speaking of which, the game comes packed with a download code that removes the pasties from the red-light district's finest strippers. Tasteless? You be the judge!

Most stark in contrast to *GTA* is the relative lack of minutiae to mull over and consider tackling between story missions. There aren't girlfriends to juggle, and there aren't really a ton of tiny errands to distract from the main story. To some this could be a con, but I'm one of those weirdos that enjoys open-world games but doesn't enjoy infinite options, side-quests and irrelevant detours. Some will argue that *The Saboteur* just doesn't pack as much content as Pandemic's other open adventure, *Mercenaries 2*, but the story is strong enough to keep you moving from mission to mission without too much for yearning.

PUBLISHER
EA

SYSTEM(S)
Xbox 360, PS3, PC

AVAILABLE
Now

With that in mind, there's still a lot one can do in occupied territory, some of which serves to make things easier on Sean and other members of the resistance. This largely consists of sabotaging Nazi installations, ranging from guard towers to alarms. There's a staggering amount of these things scattered around the map, though, so it's going to take either the truly dedicated or the criminally bored to dispose of them all.

This sounds about as glowing as could be, but a few aspects of *The Saboteur* bog down what would otherwise be a completely excellent title. The entirety of the map isn't overwhelmingly huge by any means, but it can take some time to traverse it, even by auto. This can become a hassle when the person you need to meet up with is in the French countryside and you're smack dab in the

middle of the city, even more so when they just tell you a few things before sending you off to meet ... back in the city. Some kind of fast-travel mechanic would likely kill the atmosphere, but I'd be lying if I didn't chant for its inclusion a few times.

It also takes absurd finesse to be subtle, which is odd for a game that employs so many stealth elements. The developers would love for players to sneak Sean in and out of buildings like a cat, but the otherwise brain-dead guards are outfitted with some kind of superhuman senses that will almost certainly raise alarms and give way to reckless shooting. It sometimes seemed like the "coolness" of my character was undercut whenever I was forced to come blazing out of a restricted area in a ragtag vehicle while Nazis chased me to what should have been "Yakety Sax." Victorious? Yes. Stealthy and slick? Not by a longshot.

Anything that detracts from the game is quickly forgotten thanks to all the good it brings to the table, and this is something that came in at the tail end of a year with plenty of solid entries in the genre. The visual style is instantly memorable, with heavily occupied areas depicted in black and white, save for the burning red of Nazi flags and insignias. Once crucial missions are cleared in these parts of town, they flood with color like *Okami* or, more recently, Ubisoft's *Prince of Persia*. The way these two styles blend is seamless, and adds a ton of character to what could have been a fun but drably decorated outing.

It's kind of refreshing to play a game that isn't padded with content just for the sake of length. Sean's story is solid, and the setting is something we don't normally see in World War II games; especially not with this delivery. It also makes for a chunky cross-media double feature with *Inglorious Basterds* if you're really feelin' in the business of killin' Nazis. Need I divulge that business is, indeed, good?

NEW FRONTS: UPCOMING BATTLES

R.U.S.E.: THE ART OF DECEPTION

Speaking of strategy titles (no really, I did right up there), Ubisoft is publishing this real-time entry that employs what's known as the IRISZOOM Engine for a properly massive sense of scale. This allows players to take their command from the scope of the full theater of war down to the battlefield, where all the action is happening.

Campaigns in *R.U.S.E.* include the Battle of the Kasserine Pass, the Battle of Monte Cassino, the Invasion of Normandy, and the Battle of the Bulge, among others. The game focuses on bluffing and tricking the enemy, which should hopefully make for some unique encounters.

PUBLISHER Ubisoft
SYSTEM(S) Xbox 360, PS3, PC
AVAILABLE March 2010

ACHTUNG PANZER: KHARKOV 1943

By now you may have fought every WWII battle documented from the comfort of your computer chair, but Paradox Interactive is going the extra mile to make sure all ground has been covered with *Achtung Panzer: Kharkov 1943*. Players can choose between German or Red Army forces—battling in March and February of 1943, respectively—and will roll out across faithfully recreated maps.

While it's a strategy game at heart, once troops and artillery have been set up across the field of battle (hence the strategy), players can then engage in real-time 3-D encounters against AI-controlled opponents that analyze your actions and change up their strategies accordingly. If this holds true in the final product, strategy fans may be in for a highly replayable war.

PUBLISHER Paradox Interactive
SYSTEM(S) PC
AVAILABLE Q1 2010

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By Mason B. Webb

National Archives

Allied Air Retribution

Questions persist as to the morality of the Allied bombing campaign against Germany.

WHEN DOES WAR END AND SLAUGHTER BEGIN?

That is the question that drives this compelling reexamination of the Allied aerial bombing campaign against Germany during World War II.

From 1942 to 1945, American and British bomber forces dropped nearly two million tons of bombs on Germany, destroying some 60 cities, killing more than 600,000 citizens, and leaving 80,000 Allied air crewmen dead.

During the past 60 years, books written by American authors have tended to focus on the bravery of the American bomber crews, facing flak and fighters to burn out the heart of the Third Reich, while minimizing the suffering of German civilians, Recently, however, historians have taken another view. Several books about the devastating raids on Dresden have cast a new light on the bombing campaign, arguing that perhaps these raids should be seen as war crimes perpetrated by the Allies against innocent men, women, and children. Randall Hansen's book ***Fire and Fury: The Allied Bombing of Germany, 1942-1945*** (NAL Caliber, New York, 2009, 352 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $25.95) raises this disturbing question anew.

While not completely absolving the Americans of responsibility, he reserves most of his criticism for Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris, the British head of Bomber Command and the architect of massive retaliatory raids against Germany.

The terrible truth in this scathing indictment of Harris and Bomber Command is that most of the British "area" bombing was carried out against the expressed demands of the Allied military leadership, leading to the needless deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians, the wanton destruction of scores of beautiful medieval and Baroque cities, and the prolonging of the war.

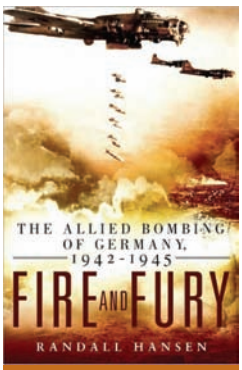
By contrast, American precision bombing almost brought Nazi Germany to its knees. Throughout the war, writes Hansen, a University of Toronto political science professor, the United States did its utmost to minimize civilian casualties, trying its best to target primarily industrial sites, transportation networks, and troop concentrations in order to seriously restrict Hitler's ability to wage war.

America's fusion of determination, optimism, and morality, says Hansen, played an integral and largely unrecognized role in securing Allied victory in the skies over Europe.

This book is a thoughtful, well-written, and brilliant, if disturbing, analysis of the British and American air campaign that ultimately reminds us of the basic idealism and principles that underpin the history of American military power. Highly recommended.

The Battle of the Bulge: The Photographic History of an American Triumph, by John R. Bruning, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, 2009, 288 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $50.00.

Fought six and a half decades ago, the Battle of the Bulge, Hitler's last-gasp major offensive to stave off defeat in the West, still ranks as the largest single battle ever fought by the United States Army. More men, vehicles, aircraft, equipment, and effort took part in this 36-day battle than any other in American history.



B-17 Flying Fortresses of the 390th Bomb Group drop their loads over Bremen, Germany, on November 8, 1943, as flak bursts around them.

Thirty-one American infantry and armor divisions—fully one third of all the U.S. Army divisions formed during World War II—saw action during this titanic struggle in the hilly, heavily wooded, and snow-clogged Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxembourg. Not only were

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Myths About Israel and the Middle East (1)

Do the media feed us fiction instead of fact?

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

What are the facts?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reality: This is simply not correct, although it has been repeated so often that many have come to believe it. The greatest obstacle to peace is the intransigence and the irreconcilable hostility of the Arabs. Not more than 200,000 Jews are settled in these territories, living among about 1.4 million Arabs. How can Jews living there be an obstacle to peace? Why shouldn't they live there? About 1.2 million Arabs live in Israel proper. They are not an obstacle to peace. Neither the Israelis nor they themselves consider them as such.

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

Reality: The concept that to the loser, rather than to the victor, belong the spoils is a radically new one, never before thought of in world history. Israel has emerged victorious in the five wars imposed on it by the Arabs. In order to make peace, it has returned over 90% of the territory occupied by it, specifically the vast Sinai Peninsula, to Egypt. That territory contained some of the most advanced military installations in the world, prosperous cities and settlements, and oil fields developed entirely by Israel that made it independent of petroleum imports. In the Camp David Accords, Israel agreed to autonomy for Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") with the permanent status to be determined after three years. But no responsible Palestinian representation has been available to negotiate with Israel about this.

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

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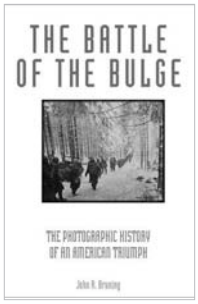
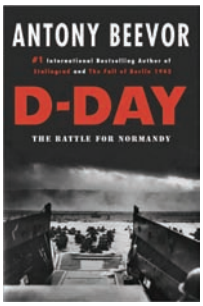
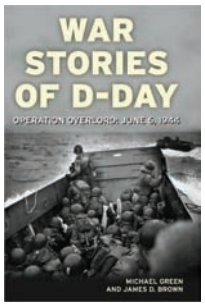
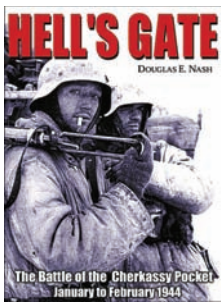
American soldiers, green troops, and veterans alike thrust into an unexpected battle in unimaginably harsh weather conditions, but they also faced some of the best and most battle-hardened troops Nazi Germany had left.









The story of the Bulge, as author Bruning tells it in this stunning, lavishly illustrated new work, is the story of panic, fear, and physical misery, as well as sheer courage and determination in the face of overwhelming odds.

Bruning's book is arguably the most complete and awe-inspiring history yet published about this epic battle. The text and 500 photos (many of which were previously unpublished) place the reader in the frozen, snow-filled foxholes, the dark, haunting forests, and the devastated towns and villages of the Ardennes during the brutal winter of 1944-1945 like no previous book on the subject has.

The author's well-written text includes much insightful detail, replaying the thrusts and volleys of both the Allied and German forces during the tumultuous, ever-changing battle.

It is a fitting tribute to the men who braved the weather and the relentless enemy to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. Highly recommended.

D-Day: The Battle for Normandy, by Antony Beevor, Viking Press, New York, 2009, 592 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $31.95.

From the acclaimed author of *Stalingrad* and *The Fall of Berlin 1945* comes the first major book since Stephen E. Ambrose's *D-Day: 6 June 1944* to cover all the aspects of the monumental Operation Overlord, from the landings in early June to the liberation of Paris more than two months later.

Basing his work on research done in more than 30 archives in six countries, Beevor uncovered new material not published in previous books. The result is a work of extreme depth and complexity.

In discussing the Allies' pre-invasion jitters and second-guessing, Beevor notes, "Eisenhower was far from being the only one awed by the enormity of what they were launching. Churchill, who had always been dubious about the whole plan of a cross-Channel invasion, was now working himself up into a nervous state of irrational optimism, while Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke [the pessimistic Chief of Britain's Imperial General Staff and never an Eisenhower fan] confided to his diary that there was 'an empty feeling at the pit of one's stomach. It is very hard to believe that in a few hours the cross-Channel invasion starts! I am very uneasy about the whole operation. At best it will fall so very far short of the expectation of the bulk of the people, namely all those who know nothing of its difficulties. At worst it may well be the most ghastly disaster of the whole war.'"

While Beevor covers much familiar ground, he also details a largely unknown part of the operation that most other historians have overlooked: the heavy casualties suffered by the French population. In fact, as he points out, more French civilians were killed by Allied bombing and shelling than British civilians died as a result of Luftwaffe attacks during all the months of the Blitz.

For anyone who wants to understand the entire operation, complete with its myriad successes and failures, it will be hard to find a book that beats this one.

War Stories of D-Day: Operation Overlord — June 6, 1944, by Michael Green and James D. Brown, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, 2009, 312 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $28.00.

As a companion piece to Beevor's broad-ranging work is this compilation of first-person stories of D-Day as told by some of the participants, the "common" American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who took part in history's largest combined air and sea military operation.

Authors Michael Green and James Brown have gathered a representative selection of accounts by men with their own individual views of the action. For example, Leonard Lebenson, one of the American soldiers who would be towed into France in a flimsy Waco glider, recalled the tension in the hours before the invasion was launched: "I was extremely nervous. I had to stop three or four times to urinate while we were on the airfield before loading onto the glider. I wasn't the only one, of course, but we were all jumpy and nervous. We smoked a lot. We didn't say too much. Finally, we got loaded. I didn't know the people I was going with. As it turned out, it was very fortunate because there were many, many accidents in gliders, mainly from crashing into hedgerows, trees, or buildings."

Another soldier, Sergeant Alan Anderson, a member of an antiaircraft unit that landed several hours after the initial waves hit Omaha Beach, discovered that the supposedly secured beach was still "hot" and deadly: "I heard a shell burst not more than five or six feet from me. It hit the bank where we had dug into the sand. I heard some fellow ask about his buddy, and one of our fellows, Luther Winkler, said, 'He's dead. His whole head is blown away.' I went over to see how Winkler was, and his face looked like raw hamburger. He had been cut and the skin of his face was shredded. I don't know how he ever survived that shell burst. We then had to get him out of there. I found a medic to help me…."

It is searing stories like these that stick in the mind and remind readers of the human cost of taking back a continent from a brutal enemy. A "must-read."

Hell's Gate: The Battle of the Cherkassy Pocket, January-February 1944, by Douglas E. Nash, HarperCollins, New York, 2009, 390 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $69.95.

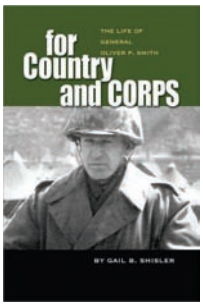
Largely unknown in the West, 1944's Battle of Cherkassy (also known as the Korsun Pocket) still stirs controversy in both the former Soviet Union and in Germany.

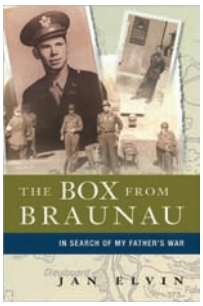
It was at Cherkassy where the last ounce of German offensive strength in the Ukraine was drained away, creating the conditions for the Soviet Army's victorious advance into Poland, Romania, and the Balkans during the summer and autumn of 1944.

Eclipsed by a war of such gigantic proportions that saw battles of over a million or more men as commonplace, the events that occurred along the frozen banks of the Gniloy Tickich River should have faded into obscurity. However, to the 60,000 German soldiers who were encircled there at the end of January 1944, this was one of the most brutal, physically exhausting, and morally demanding battles they had ever experienced. Fully one third of them would not escape.

The culmination of years of research and survivor interviews, *Hell's Gate* is a detailed, riveting, hour by hour, day by day account of the Wehrmacht's desperate struggle analyzed on a

tactical level through maps and military transcripts, as well as on a personal level, through the words of the enlisted men and officers who risked the roaring, ice-choked waters of the Gniloy Tickich to break out of the encirclement and avoid certain death at the hands of their Soviet foe.





For Country and Corps: The Life of General Oliver P. Smith, by Gail P. Shisler, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 2009, 324 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $39.95.

Oliver P. Smith was a Marine officer who fought in the meatgrinder battles of Peleliu and Okinawa, then went on to command the 1st Marine Division in Korea during the amphibious invasion at Inchon, the recapture of Seoul, and the breakout from the "Frozen Chosin" Reservoir.

One of the 20th century's great Marine combat leaders, O.P. Smith was widely regarded as an outstanding commander and a man of great intellect and moral (as well as physical) courage.

This biography, written by the granddaughter he helped raise (her father was killed during the war), illuminates the general's remarkable life. Drawing on interviews, oral histories, official records, and private letters held by the family and not previously available to researchers, Gail Shisler paints a complete portrait of this larger-than-life but very human individual.

Her investigation of Smith's relationship with his Army superiors in Korea, and with his Marine Corps peers and superiors takes exception to previously published descriptions and adds new insights into the Corps' postwar battle for survival among the U.S. armed services. A terrific read about a towering, legendary warrior.

Special Ops, 1939-1945: A Manual of Covert Warfare and Training, edited by Stephen Bull, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, 2009, 160 pp., photographs, illustrations, index, hardcover, $17.00.

How does one construct an exploding rat? Hide a secret message inside an innocent-looking tube of toothpaste? Create an incendiary suitcase? Sabotage a major military operation with the simplest of household products?

All these questions and many more are answered in this small, fascinating volume of secret tricks and techniques once employed by Allied partisans, spies, and saboteurs for whom all of German-occupied Europe was a battleground and where the normal rules of warfare were forgotten. For these undercover warriors, concealment of oneself, one's weapons, and one's equipment was vital, and so were the new methods and hardware that were constantly evolving in a life-or-death bid to stay ahead of the Gestapo and the enemy's security services.

Silent killing, disguise, covert communications, and the arts of guerrilla warfare were all advanced as the war progressed. Clandestine war in the shadows, a deadly cat-and-mouse game, became a permanent part of the modern military and political scene.

Gleaned from dozens of manuals, and using the same photos and illustrations that once guided American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and British Special Operations Executive (SOE) agents, *Special Ops, 1939-1945* is chock full of surprisingly simple yet effective tools for waging a new kind of warfare that had no defined front line.

Stephen Bull's compilation of scores of these once secret techniques creates a complete and authentic picture of the Allied spy. This is an essential pocket manual for anyone interested in unconventional warfare.

Hitler's Chariots: Volume I—Mercedes-Benz G-4 Cross-Country Touring Car, by Blaine Taylor, Schiffer Military History, Atglen, PA, 2009, 176 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $49.99.

Anyone fascinated by the big, beautiful automobiles of the 1930s is sure to become entranced by this incredible volume of photographs, many previously unpublished, of the rugged, legendary Mercedes-Benz G-4 cross-country touring car.

Taylor, the author of the 1999 book, *Mercedes-Benz: Parade and Staff Cars of the Third Reich,* has outdone himself with this volume. Not only does he detail the history of the G-4, but also provides an interesting history of the prewar and wartime German automobile and panzer industries.

The huge, six-wheel Mercedes-Benz G-4, designed by Dr. Ferdinand Porsche and manufactured from 1934 to 1939, was a magnificent, iconic vehicle often seen in the books, films, and documentaries about the Third Reich. Only 57 of these beasts were manufactured, and only handful of them still survive today in museums and private collections, and Taylor recounts the history of many of them. Hitler owned several, as did Luftwaffe head Hermann Göring, in addition to other Nazi bigwigs.

Taylor's lavishly illustrated book, with numerous shots showing Hitler and his G-4s in parades and at the front, will intrigue the history and automobile buff alike.

The Box from Braunau: In Search of My Father's War, by Jan Elvin, Amacom, New York, 2009, 273 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $24.99.

As a child in the years following World War II, Jan Elvin could not understand her father's mood swings, his anxiety, his overly controlling behavior, his silence whenever the conversation turned to the war, or why she was advised by her mother never to stand close to him when waking her father from a nap.

It was only years later, shortly before his death, that she discovered that the keys to his emotional distance or unexplained explosive anger lay in a small tin box found in the attic, a box marked "Braunau 1944."

She learned that her father, Bill, had been a war hero in General George S. Patton, Jr.'s Third Army and the 80th Infantry Division, that he had been awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, and had witnessed firsthand the bloodiness of the battlefield and horrors of the Nazi concentration camps when his outfit liberated the slave-labor camp at Ebensee, Austria. All these experiences, she then understood, had taken a terrible emotional toll on him, one that now has a name: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD.

The Box from Braunau is both an emotional memoir of the unraveling and healing of a father-daughter relationship damaged by the ghosts of war and a sensitive chronicle of a veteran whose return to civilian life was marred by nightmares of combat and concentration camps.

Anyone who has had a relative come back from war with a changed personality and a refusal to talk about his or her experiences will find this book of immense help and insight. □

death struggle

Continued from page 45

cept the Americans and initiate just such an action. At midnight, with no sign of any American warships, the Japanese reversed course.

Admiral Tanaka's transport group was still on course for Guadalcanal and remained undamaged. But a PBY Catalina found the convoy at 2:33 AM on August 25 and stayed with it, giving its position at regular intervals. At about 6 AM, eight SBDs escorted by eight Wildcats took off from Henderson Field to look for the two Japanese carriers but had no success. When the Wildcats began to run low on fuel, they turned back toward Guadalcanal. The SBDs went on without any fighter cover and accidentally came across Tanaka's transports.

For some reason, Japanese lookouts thought the approaching dive-bombers were friendly. Tanaka's flagship, the light cruiser *Jintsu,* was the first ship to come under attack. After four near misses, the cruiser was hit squarely between her two forward turrets. The bomb flooded the forward magazine, damaged the hull, and knocked Tanaka unconscious.

The SBDs also hit the transport *Kinryu Maru,* setting her on fire. Another transport, *Boston Maru,* was damaged by a near miss. After pulling out of their dives, the SBD rear gunners claimed to have shot down two floatplane Zero fighters.

At about 10:15, a flight of eight Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bombers from Espiritu Santo appeared above the Japanese ships. The destroyer *Mutsuki* was rescuing men from the stricken *Kinryu Maru* and dead in the water. When the B-17s unloaded their bombs, at least one scored a direct hit on *Mutsuki,* blowing her engine room apart. As he was lifted out of the water after his ship sank from under him, *Mutsuki*'s captain was heard to mutter, "Even the B-17s could make a hit once in a while."

The same pattern of bombs sprayed another destroyer, *Uzuki,* with shrapnel from a near miss.

While *Mutsuki* was sinking, her sister destroyer, *Mochizuki,* scuttled the burning *Kinryu Maru* with a single torpedo. By this time, Combined Fleet headquarters had canceled Operation Ka. The losses suffered the day before, followed by the air attacks of that morning, convinced the high command at Rabaul to call off the landings. Admiral Tanaka, who had shifted his flag to the destroyer *Kagero,* was ordered to retire to Faisi Harbor in the Shortland Islands.

"The Battle of the Eastern Solomons was undoubtedly an American victory," wrote historian Richard B. Frank. The Americans lost far fewer men and aircraft than the Japanese. American aircraft losses totaled 25, along with eight pilots and air crewmen. *Enterprise* was badly damaged and would be out of the war for at least two months while she returned to Pearl Harbor for extensive repairs. The Japanese, on the other hand, lost three ships—*Ryujo, Mutsuki,* and *Kinryu Maru*—and 75 aircraft along with their highly trained crews. Japan could not easily replace these losses.

Tanaka's troop convoy had been turned back. Because the air groups of *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* had been so badly shot up during their attacks on *Enterprise,* the troops "no longer dared to try a daylight landing" without air cover, observed Morison. The men were taken off the two remaining transports and loaded aboard destroyers for a Tokyo Express night landing three nights later. These troops landed without their heavy equipment, which made them much less effective against the defending Marines.

Japanese senior commanders, including Yamamoto, were well aware that the operation had failed. They had moved south to sink American carriers and put a well-equipped landing force on Guadalcanal but, in spite of their efforts, had conspicuously failed to accomplish either goal.

Even though the Americans won the battle, the commander of Task Force 16 did not come out of it as very heroic, or even as very competent. When *Saratoga* was torpedoed by the Japanese submarine *I-26* on August 31, Fletcher was one of 12 men on board who sustained injuries.

Saratoga would return to the fighting at Guadalcanal, but Fletcher would not. His decision to send *Wasp* out of the Guadalcanal area just before the battle began ended his career as a combat commander.

"As long as the issue was in doubt, every available carrier aircraft should have been used to protect our tenuous lease on Guadalcanal," stated Morison. "This is what they were there for."

The U.S. victory in the Battle of the Eastern Solomons prevented Japanese troops from being put ashore on Guadalcanal in ideal circumstances and softened Japanese resolve to commit further resources to the fight. A Japanese officer on the island noted, "Our plan to capture Guadalcanal came unavoidably to a standstill, owing to the appearance of the enemy striking force." □

Author David A. Johnson has written extensively for WWII History. *He resides in Union, New Jersey.*

st. nazaire

Continued from page 61

wheeling and tearing itself apart with just a little fire and smoke."

"With our wounded pilot struggling to keep us out of the water, we eluded the fighters and made a very rough landing at a British base in the south of England," said Burton. "Our B-17 never flew again."

Counting other bombers that made it home but were too damaged to fly again, total losses on the St. Nazaire raid were seven, according to official records. German records indicate that the Luftwaffe claimed 15 bombers destroyed by fighters although fighters were actually responsible for four of the seven.

Historians disagree whether this attack on concrete-reinforced submarine pens, or any other, had much impact on the Battle of the Atlantic, where German U-boats wreaked havoc on Allied convoys. Early in the aerial campaign against Germany's submarine bases, Allied air commanders decided they would not be able to penetrate the concrete bunkers that protected the U-boats but believed they could achieve the same purpose by targeting the adjacent torpedo depots that were above ground.

What the January 3, 1943, raid on St. Nazaire proved indisputably was the flaw in the idea that the "bomber will always get through"—at the core of Army Air Forces doctrine. At great cost, and all too slowly, it was being learned that bombers needed fighter escort to get through. Two years later, as the end of fighting in Europe approached, the long-range North American P-51 Mustang escort fighters commanded the sky all the way from bomber takeoff to target. By then, Luftwaffe fighters were no longer a serious threat to B-17s or B-24s. The cohort of aerial gunners that followed Burton by a year or two often flew 30 missions without ever firing their machine guns at a German aircraft.

LeMay (1906-1990) became the leading bomber general of his era, introduced new tactics repeatedly up through the firebombing of Tokyo in March 1945, reached four-star rank, and was Air Force chief of staff from 1961 to 1965. Hensley (1920-2000) became a beer distributor and was the father of Cindy McCain, wife of Senator John McCain, R-Arizona. Burton, 86, flew 46 combat missions and lives today in St. Charles, Illinois. □

Robert F. Dorr is a U.S. Air Force veteran, a retired diplomat, and author of the book Air Force One, *a look at presidential aircraft and air travel.*

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