Military Heritage Presents:

# WWII HISTORY

www.wwiihistorymagazine.com

Curtis 02313

RATTLESNAKES OF THE DEEP:
## Undeclared U-Boat War

## Nazi Retreat From Vienna

OPERATION WESERÜBUNG:
## Assault on Norway

## Naval Fight Off Guadalcanal

## JAPAN'S ENIGMATIC EMPEROR HIROHITO

+ African American Soldiers, OSS Jedburgh Foray, Cruiser HMAS Vendetta, Book Reviews and much more!

MAY 2009

$4.99US $6.99CAN

05

0 74808 02313 4

RETAILER: DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH 24

WWII HISTORY • MAY 2009 Volume 8, No.3

# Master *of* Arts *in* Military History Online

## Explore the framework through which important military events are understood.

Since 1819, Norwich University has played an important role in military history: as the birthplace of ROTC, as an institution whose graduates have fought in every war since its founding, and as the leader among military schools in racial integration and the integration of women into its corps of cadets. What better place to study military history?

### Unique online format

- a dynamic, interactive educational environment
- a manageable pace for busy adults
- coursework can be completed in 18 months
- dedicated 24/7 support




NORWICH UNIVERSITY™
School of Graduate Studies

**Please visit www.militaryhistorydegree.com/ww2 or call 1.800.460.5597 ext. 3372 for more information on this unique online degree.**

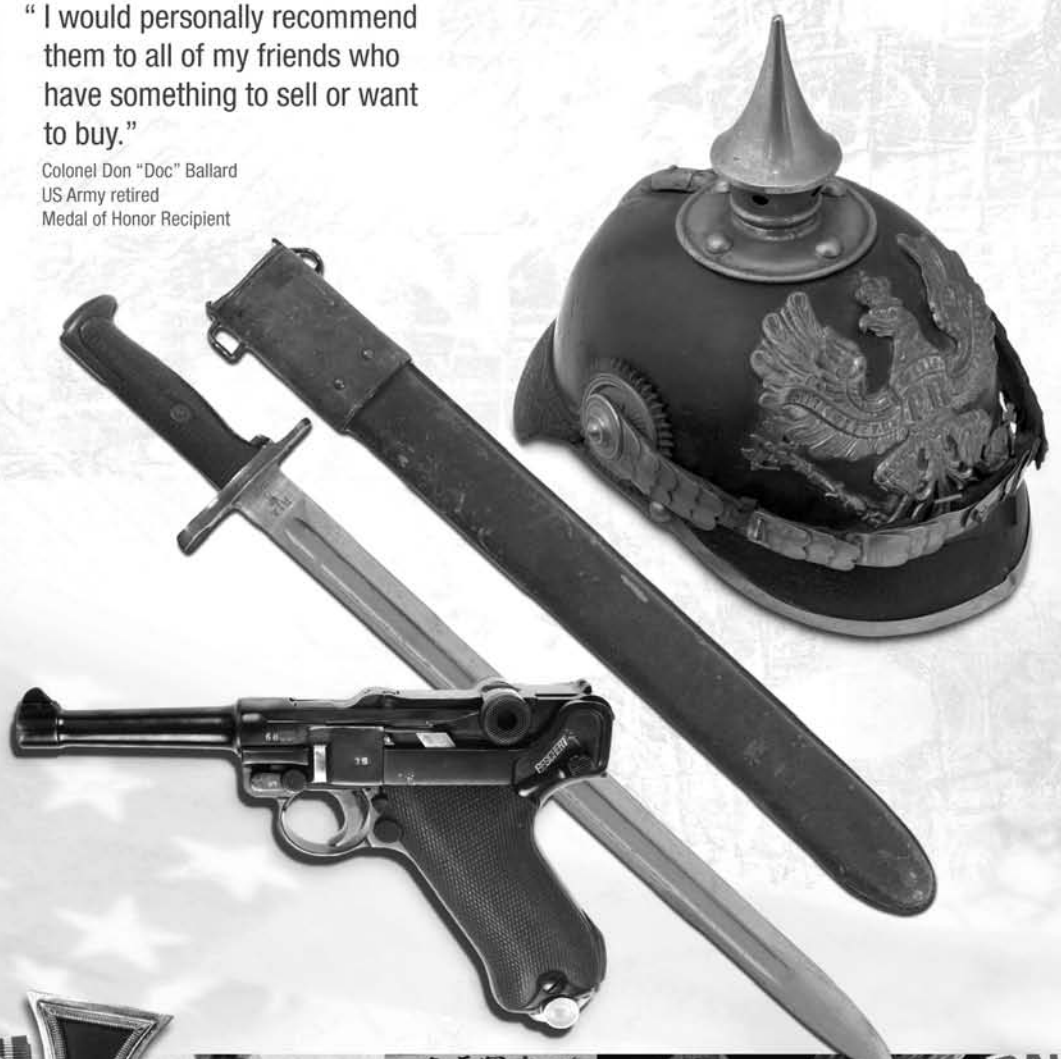
# Buy. Sell. Collect.

## MANION'S INTERNATIONAL AUCTION HOUSE

★ ★ ★

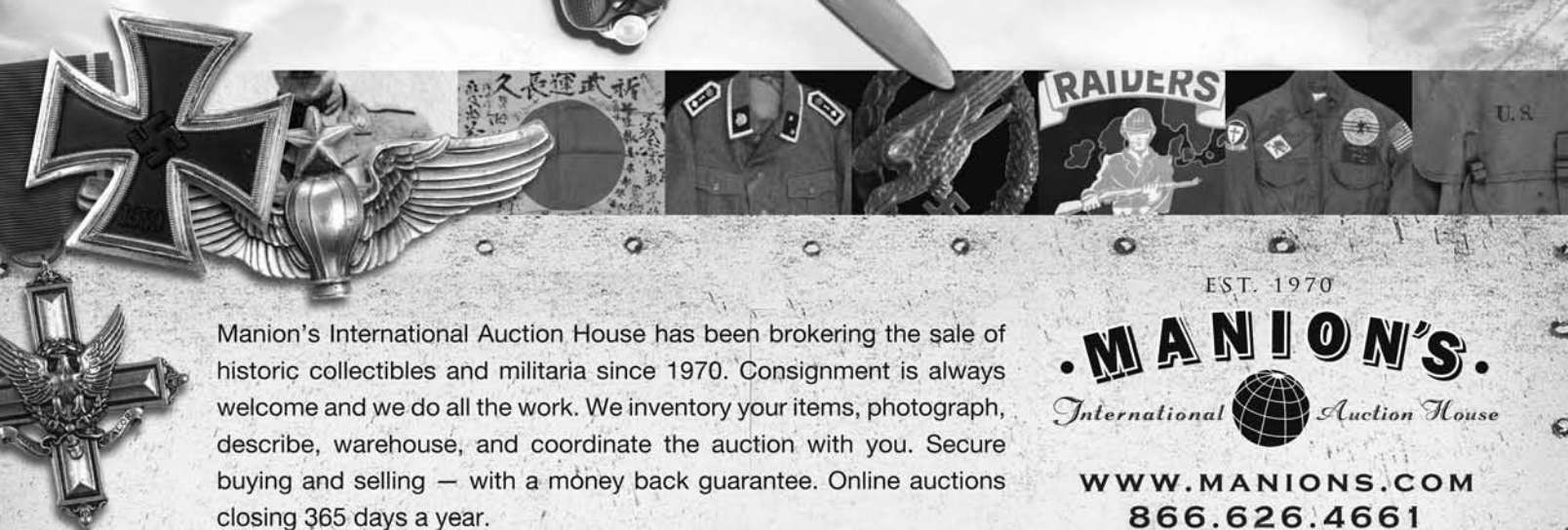
" I would personally recommend them to all of my friends who have something to sell or want to buy."

Colonel Don "Doc" Ballard
US Army retired
Medal of Honor Recipient



" We've been with Manion's as both bidder and consignor for over 20 years. Outstanding service and never a problem. We can always count on their support for the West Coast Militaria Collector's Show in Pomona as well."

Bob Chatt,
Vintage Productions




Manion's International Auction House has been brokering the sale of historic collectibles and militaria since 1970. Consignment is always welcome and we do all the work. We inventory your items, photograph, describe, warehouse, and coordinate the auction with you. Secure buying and selling — with a money back guarantee. Online auctions closing 365 days a year.

EST. 1970

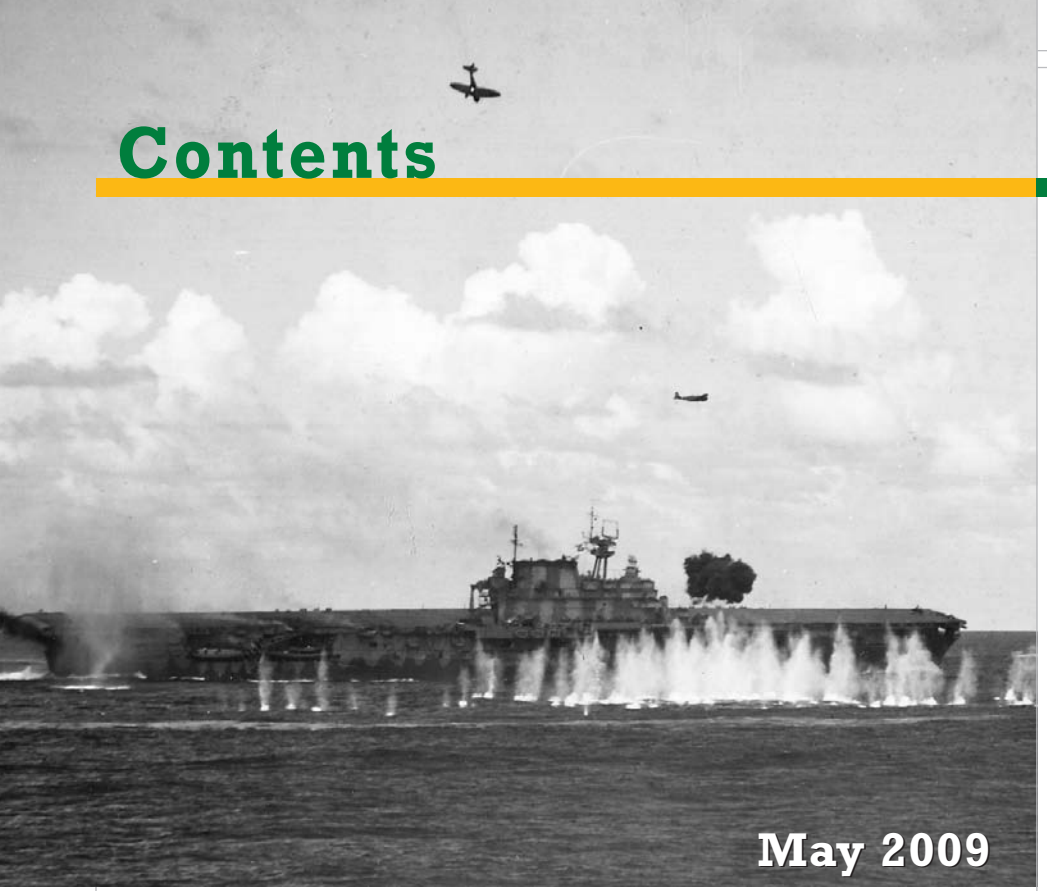
MANION'S

International Auction House

WWW.MANIONS.COM

866.626.4661

# Contents




WWII HISTORY

## Features



## Columns




Cover: A French soldier mans a machine gun on the Western Front, France, December 1939. © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS.

*WWII History* (ISSN 1539-5456) is published seven times yearly by Sovereign Media, 453 Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 20170. (703) 964-0361. Periodical postage paid at Herndon, VA, and additional mailing offices. *WWII History*, Volume 8, Number 3  ***Subscription services, back issues, and information:*** **(800) 219-1187** *or* write to *WWII History* **Circulation, WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.** Single copies: $4.99, plus $3 for postage. Yearly subscription in U.S.A.: $21.95; Canada and Overseas: $35.95 (U.S.). Editorial Office: Send editorial mail to *WWII History*, 453 Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 20170. *WWII History* welcomes editorial submissions but assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. Material to be returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We suggest that you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a copy of our author's guidelines. **POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WWII History, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.**

# A SOLDIER'S LEGACY

Legacy wears many faces, and reflects many moments in time. These faces we know. The craggy wrinkles and knowing eyes of a WWII Veteran, one of over a thousand we lose daily, taking with them the insight into the history they shaped. The steely stare and hardened jaw of a Vietnam War Veteran, who faced distrust and social abandonment upon return from the jungle. The furrowed, compassionate and youthful brow of an Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom Veteran, returning home a wounded warrior but with heart and soul intact thanks to the supportive embrace of a steadfast Nation.

These Soldiers – these Americans - live with an appreciation for the price of Freedom. No matter where, when or how they served, their time spent as Soldiers changed their lives forever; their personal experiences created the legacy that is the U.S. Army.

Story by story, the U.S. Army Freedom Team Salute program hopes to share this legacy.

Recognizing the bond between Soldiers, Veterans, Family and community, over the past three years this program has honored more than 1.7 million members of the Army Family with a free, personalized Commendation thanking them for their service in the United States Army.

Freedom Team Salute serves as the centerpiece of the essential and enduring bond between our U.S. Army and every American who lives with an appreciation for the price of Freedom.

More than 14 million Soldier Veterans remain as our living connection to generations of duty, honor and patriotism – and yet often have not been thanked for the significant role they played in American history. Freedom Team Salute honors this role and the sacrifices made by our Soldiers. One story at a time, one Commendation at a time, the Army Legacy is being honored.

## DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO SERVED IN THE U.S. ARMY?

**Visit www.FreedomTeamSalute.com** to join
our nationwide campaign to honor Army Veterans.

or contact us at Freedom Team Salute • 2461 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite 1406 • Alexandria, VA 22331

## TO ALL U.S. ARMY VETERANS

# THANK YOU

U.S. Army FreedomTeamSalute.com™

Freedom Team Salute is sponsored by the Secretary of the Army and Army Chief of Staff. There is no cost to participate. Anyone can honor a discharged U.S. Army Veteran and those who support Soldiers and the Army's mission. Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Soldiers can also honor their Parents, Spouse, and Employer.

# Editorial

## The *Königsberg* made history during the Nazi invasion of Norway.

**When the German invasion of Norway was set in motion on April 9, 1940, much of the planning** for the event had been done on a shoestring. Adolf Hitler, in fact, had given General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst only five hours to put together a coordinated scheme for victory.

Falkenhorst, nevertheless, accepted the assignment, admitted that he "had no idea what Norway was like," and purchased a Baedeker travel guide to assist in orienting his forces. The general envisioned a coordinated attack by land, sea, and air even though such a concerted military campaign was unprecedented. Despite the difficulties, however, the invasion was successful—but at serious cost to the German Navy.

Operation Weserübung (Weser Exercise), which had been named for a river which runs through Germany and empties into the North Sea, was initiated with confidence, but soon the issue was in doubt. The heavy cruiser *Blücher* was sunk in Oslofjord by Norwegian shore batteries, the light cruiser *Karlsruhe* was sent to the bottom near Kristiansand, and the light cruiser *Königsberg* was sunk during the capture of the port city of Bergen. In addition, the battlecruiser *Gneisenau* and the cruiser *Lützow* were heavily damaged, at least a dozen destroyers had been sunk or damaged, and as many as 14 supply vessels had been lost.

Aside from the fact that the losses were severe, the sinking of the *Königsberg* is worth more than passing mention. The light cruiser was the initial warship of three sisters including *Karlsruhe* and *Köln.* Displacing 6,000 tons, her keel was laid in 1926. Main armament consisted of nine 5.9-inch guns mounted in three turrets, while secondary armament consisted of a complement of six 88mm, eight 37mm, and four 20mm weapons primarily intended for antiaircraft defense.

In company with the *Köln,* the *Königsberg* supported the landing of German troops at Bergen on the morning of April 9. Accurate fire from the Kvarvan Battery at the mouth of the harbor scored at least three hits and damaged the *Königsberg*'s engines, damage control capability, and auxiliary power. Water mains that supplied firefighting equipment were crippled. Once Bergen was in German hands, the damaged cruiser was tied up alongside the Skoltegrund Mole inside the harbor.

British reconnaissance flights photographed two German cruisers at Bergen, and Royal Air Force Bomber Command launched unsuccessful attacks by 24 Vickers Wellington and Handley Page Hampden bombers late in the day. Dropping nearly three dozen 500-pound bombs, these aircraft failed to score a hit. When darkness fell, the *Köln* made good its escape. The battered *Königsberg* remained.

Lieutenant Commander Geoffrey Hare of the Royal Navy observed for himself the tempting targets at Bergen and persuaded the commander of HMS *Sparrowhawk,* as the Royal Navy's air station at Hatston was known, to authorize a strike by Blackburn Skua dive-bombers of the Fleet Air Arm. A total of 16 Skuas, 11 from No. 803 Squadron and five from No. 800 Squadron, took to the air to attack a target at the extreme limit of the aircraft's range.

At 5:15 AM on April 10, the mission commenced. Two hours later, the single German cruiser moored in the harbor was set upon by the Skuas, the first wave diving out of the sun at a 60-degree angle from 8,000 feet. At least three 500-pound bombs, released from altitudes of 1,500 to 3,000 feet, found their marks amidships and ignited raging fires. The attackers sustained minimal damage from light antiaircraft fire, and the ship began to settle by the bow. One Skua of No. 803 Squadron was reported to have spun in during the return flight, its pilot and wireless operator/gunner both killed.

Accounts vary as to the length of time the *Königsberg* remained afloat, some reporting that the ship sank within the hour and others that her crew waged a heroic three-hour fight to save her. Regardless, the ship was wrecked. Eighteen sailors were dead and 23 wounded during the attack. The Germans actually noted that as many as six British bombs had struck their target. Later raised from the mud of Bergen harbor, the *Königsberg* was never returned to service. Its hulk was broken up for scrap by the Norwegians in 1947.

A pair of noteworthy postscripts surround the sinking of the *Königsberg.* Although the Royal Navy had officially downplayed the role of dive-bombing as an effective offensive tactic, it was in fact the Skua that made the action memorable. Fleet Air Arm dive-bombers had accomplished their mission, and the *Königsberg* was the first naval vessel in history to be sunk by air attack during wartime.

**Michael E. Haskew**

# WWII HISTORY

**Volume 8 ■ Number 3**

CARL A. GNAM, JR.
**Editorial Director, Founder**

MICHAEL E. HASKEW
**Editor**

LAURA CLEVELAND
**Managing Editor**

SAMANTHA DETULLEO
**Art Director**

KEVIN HYMEL
**Research Director**

CONTRIBUTORS:
**Eric T. Baker, Glenn Barnett, Jon Diamond, Kevin M. Hymel, David Alan Johnson, Herb Kugel, Henrik O. Lunde, John Mancini, Michael Reynolds, Blaine Taylor, Mason B. Webb**

ADVERTISING OFFICE:

JEFF KIGHT
**Advertising Director**
**(570) 322-7848, ext. 117**

BEN BOYLES
**Account Executive**
**(570) 322-7848, ext. 130**
**benjaminb@sovhomestead.com**

MARK HINTZ
**Vice President & Publisher**

TINA POUST
**Comptroller**

KATHY PAULHAMUS
MARY NOLAN
SANDRA HILLYARD
**Subscription Customer Services**

KEN FORNWALT
**Data Processing Director**

CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY
WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

SOVEREIGN MEDIA COMPANY, INC.
**453 Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 20170**

SUBSCRIPTION CUSTOMER SERVICE
AND BUSINESS OFFICE:
**1000 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 300**
**Williamsport, PA 17701**
**(800) 219-1187**

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

# Dispatches

### The Battle of Surigao Strait

Dear Editor:

In the December 2008 issue, Mr. David Johnson does a very good job of retelling the story of the only time American battleships engaged and sank their opposite numbers from Japan. This comment might cause some controversy, as there are folks who believe the USS *Washington* sank the IJN *Kirishima* at the Third Battle of Savo off Guadalcanal in November of 1942. All the records show that *Kirishima* was scuttled by her own crew, after being severely damaged by *Washington*'s firing.

Mr. Johnson makes a comment that during the Surigao Strait battle the light cruiser *Phoenix* fired full 18-gun salvos at IJN *Yamashiro*(BB), contributing to that vessel's demise. *Phoenix* was armed with 15 6-inch guns, so I have to assume that there was a typo in the article. Otherwise, I would think he would be hard-pressed to show how a 15-gun vessel can fire 18-gun salvos.

You folks print an excellent magazine, full of a variety of genres to appeal to all history buffs. Keep up the good work.

John F. Klaine, Sr.
Independence, Kentucky

### Jackpot Issue!

Dear Editor:

You hit the jackpot with your October/November 2008 issue. It contained four articles of personal interest to me.

First, I've known Flint Whitlock since 1965 and his Buchenwald story brought back horrible visions of Dachau on May 2, 1945, when I visited the camp as a member of IPW Team 124. Our six-member interrogation team was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division.

Second, the Singlaub article ("The OSS and the Fourth Dimension of Warfare" by Bob Bergin) was of interest to me because I knew him, met the feisty general when he was a neighbor of a friend, on a hill above Tabernash, Colorado.

Third, the Dennis Whitehead article about the surrender negotiations that involved Franz Hofer, the former "Gauleiter" of the Austrian province of Tyrol, rang bells. After the war ended, I happened to assist Lieutenant Ernie Hochstadt in interrogating Hofer. Our IPW Team 124 had been transferred to the 7th Army Interrogation Center (SAIC) at Augsburg, Germany. Hochstadt was doing "in-depth" interrogation of Hofer, and I merely took notes and tossed in an occasional question. My main job was "prelim" interrogations of relatively unknown prisoners—who they were, where they had been, in what capacity, what war crimes they might have been associated with, etc.

Prime examples of such unknowns are General Gehlen, who was head of Fremde Heere Ost, the intelligence organization for the Eastern Front (and later became the intelligence chief of West Germany) and SS General Gille, CG of the Wiking Korps. We didn't know much about the generals and troops fleeing the Russians in order to surrender to American units. And, we knew even less about OSS operations. Hochstadt and I thought Hofer was trying to save his skin, was making up stories to look like an Austrian patriot—he even hinted that his namesake and Austrian folk hero Andreas Hofer was his ancestor. He claimed that he risked his life by violating Hitler's orders. I have no idea what happened to Hofer. He should have been tried. As Gauleiter of Tyrol he had to know about the concentration camps in Austria, had to approve those in the Tyrol, and surely benefited from their labor and production.

Fourth, there is the article about Julius Streicher, the notorious Jew baiter and Gauleiter of Franconia (Nuremberg). Streicher was also interned at Augsburg. I saw him daily when his group exercised—walked and did individual calisthenics. He was ostracized not only by the military officers, but also by the other Nazi big-wigs, like Ley, Frick, Schirach et al. All of them wanted to distance themselves from anti-Semitism and wanted to please their interrogators, most of whom were Jewish.

G.K. "Joe" Guennel
Littleton, Colorado

*Hofer was arrested on May 6, 1945, by the U.S. Army in Tyrol and held in an internment camp. In 1948, he managed to flee to Germany, where he continued his former trade as a salesman in Mülheim, in the end under his true name. In Austria, Hofer was sentenced in absentia in June 1949 to death. In July 1953, a Munich appeal court upheld a sentence of three years and five months in labor prison. When interviewed by the press during this time, Hofer made it known that his National Socialist convictions were unbroken.*

### What Lithuanian Troops?

Dear Editor,

I have read *WWII History* for several years now with keen interest, because I lived through the whole mess of that war during the

very critical years of my life, age 11 to 16. I come from the very center of the European continent—Lithuania. In those years I witnessed at least four armies of different countries marching back and forth, including the U.S. Army, in which I had the honor of serving (in Germany) during the Korean War.

As we all know, not everything is true that is written in back and white, even in *WWII History*. There is an error in Michael Hull's Profile of Sergeant Anton Schmid (January 2009 issue). Hull states, "The killings in Lithuania were carried out by so-called action groups of Einsatzkommando 3, led by SS Colonel Karl Jager and supported by Lithuanian troops, from July 2, 1941 onward."

There is a widely accepted truth that these Einsatzgruppen contained not only German, but also some individuals of other nationalities, including some inhabitants of Lithuania of questionable nationality or social status, some of them simply being habitual turncoats. But to call them "Lithuanian troops" is erroneous. After the occupation of Lithuania by the Soviets and also by the subsequent invasion of the Soviet Union by the Germans, Lithuania's independence was not restored. The Nazis treated my native country as a part of the occupied East or an integral part of their "drang nach Osten" policy. Hence, *there was no Lithuanian army or Lithuanian troops at that time* as such.

It is also true that, to my knowledge, the Germans managed to form only three or four separate volunteer battalions in Lithuania to aid them in guarding or transportation duties. They were dressed in Wehrmacht uniforms and commanded by the German officers. Later most of these men were sent to the Eastern Front, where the majority of them perished from malaria in the summer, unusually harsh winters, or from the bullets of the Red Army. Only a handful survived to tell the stories about that futile Hitler's war.

One of these survivors was Juozas (Joe), who lived just about a block away from me and passed away a couple of years ago. He participated in a lot of action at Volkov River, had contracted malaria, but was saved by a nurse in a hospital somewhere in Latvia, who, in his words, was sent from heaven just in time to pull him out from seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. He told me that he knew very little about the extermination of the Jews in Vilnius or elsewhere in Lithuania.

Incidentally, Joe showed me a clipping from a German military magazine, where he was asked to pose for a photographer as a Wehrmach lieutenant, ready to throw a grenade at the enemy. His "promotion" from private to lieutenant, of course, only lasted for an hour or two. He once jokingly lamented to me that he never was presented with a Volkswagen that the Nazis promised for participation in the "crusade" against communism.

Jonas Sarka
Omaha, Nebraska

---

*Note: Opinions expressed in "Dispatches" do not represent those of the writers, editors, or staff of* WWII History *or Sovereign Media.* WWII History *welcomes your letters which must be signed and include a telephone number for verification. Letters must be brief and of general interest to our readership. Write to: WWII History, 453 B Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 20170; fax to 703-964-0366, or e-mail: dispatch@wwiihistorymagazine.com.*

By Blaine Taylor

# Champion of Indian Nationalism

## Subhas Chandra Bose backed the Axis powers during World War II.

**WHEN BRITISH DIPLOMAT LORD HALIFAX ARRIVED AT THE BERGHOF IN THE** Bavarian Alps on November 19, 1937, he mistook German Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler for a footman and was about to hand him his coat and hat when Foreign Minister Baron Constantin von Neurath hissed, "The Führer! The Führer!"

Following a dismal luncheon, Hitler told his guest that his favorite film was *Lives of a Bengal Lancer,* and that the movie was compulsory viewing for his SS because "this was how a superior race must behave."

Then he launched into a tirade for the benefit of the former British Viceroy of India about what to do in response to Great Britain's current problems in that unhappy land: "Shoot Gandhi! If that does not suffice to reduce them to submission, shoot a dozen leading members of Congress, and if that does not suffice, shoot 200 and so on until order is established," said Hitler.

That night, Lord Halifax, called the "Holy Fox" by his peers, confided to his diary, "He struck me as very sincere, and as believing everything that he said.... We had a different set of values and were speaking a different language."

Earlier, in his infamous book *Mein Kampf,* Hitler turned his attention to the subject of British India. "I still remember the hopes, childish as they were incomprehensible ... to the effect that British power was on the verge of collapse in India.

"Some Asiatic jugglers ... real 'fighters for Indian freedom' ... had ... [been] expecting the end of the British Empire to follow from a collapse of British rule in India. If anyone imagines that England would let India go without staking her last drop of blood, it is only a sorry sign of absolute failure to learn from the World War ... and ignorance on the score of Anglo-Saxon determination....

"England will lose India either if her own administrative ... machinery falls a prey to racial decomposition ... or if she is bested by the sword of a powerful enemy. Indian agitators, however, will never achieve this ... I, as man of Germanic blood, would ... rather see India under English rule than under any other."

So Hitler concluded in 1925, but he was proven dead wrong on August 15, 1947, when, in fact, Great Britain did grant independence to such "Indian agitators" as Mohandas K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose, the last name being virtually unknown in the world outside India to this day.

Known to his many followers as the Netaji (Respected Leader) of the Azad Hind (Free India) movement, Bose was called "the darling of the Axis" by his biographer Marshall J. Getz in *Subhas Chandra Bose* (2004) and termed a "charlatan" by German postwar chronicler Max Domarus in *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations, 1932-45.*

Having met with Hitler, Italian Fascist Duce Benito

**LEFT: Indian nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose and Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Tojo review a parade during a rally for Indian independence from the British crown in Shonan, Japan, in 1944. RIGHT: Hitler greets Subhas Chandra Bose during a meeting at the Führer's Rastenburg headquarters in January 1942.**

(Both: ullstein bild))

Mussolini, and Japanese Premier General Hideki Tojo, Bose was, at one time or another, backed by all three of the major Axis powers. By 1943, he also held a trio of titles.

Bose was born in Calcutta on January 23, 1897, the son of a lawyer, and came from a family of 26 generations of soldiers, writers, and poets. Having studied both yoga and transcendental meditation, Bose entered college at age 16 in 1913. Thus, he was reared and educated in the traditions of the Raj that had grown out of the British Crown Colony claimed by the East India Company in 1757 during the first year of the Seven Years' War. Indeed, as a student, Bose even wrote an essay praising George V, the British king.

A liberal Hindu from a Muslim area, Bose fought the Raj as a socialist. He later tilted toward European fascism and established and then led military forces for the creation of Greater India in three theaters of war under the Springing Tiger flag made up of members of the Indian communities of Malaya, Burma, Singapore, and Thailand.

Deeply interested in the history of his country, Bose as a student was greatly influenced by the Swadeshi (Our Country) and Swaraj (self-government) movements. Indian nationalists had felt sympathy for the Kaiser's Germany during World War I; thus, Bose later saw Hitler as a fellow revolutionary against Great Britain.

By 1941, Bose had helped create the Indian Liberation Army (ILA) and joined the fascists in what he thought was the most direct path to Indian independence and home rule. He had headed the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1929, and the Raj later branded Bose a terrorist and had him jailed.

Elected mayor of Calcutta in 1930, Bose published his book, *The Indian Struggle,* six years later. During the years 1933-1936, he traveled to Warsaw, Prague, London, and Dublin. He was hailed in Dublin as a kindred rebel. Bose also appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine. While abroad, Bose studied the revolutions of Italy, Ireland, Turkey, and Russia. His turn toward fascism came as a result of Soviet attempts to dominate China and also the Soviet abandonment of the domestic Indian Communist Party.

A rising figure, Bose was considered "the black sheep of Indian politics" and wanted a national leftist government before his break with Nehru in April 1939. Bose founded the Forward Bloc that rivaled Gandhi's own Seva Sangha Party, and in April 1940 he called for riots and strikes against the British.

**ABOVE: Troops of the pro-Japanese Indian Liberation Army are reviewed by their leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, in 1944. Although his efforts to achieve independence for India were unsuccessful, the nation did gain its sovereignty after the end of World War II. RIGHT: Bose's ultra-nationalism led to his alignment with the Axis powers in a bid for Indian independence.** (Both: ullstein bild)

Despite his open support of a fascist victory in World War II, as early as March 1936 Bose was shocked to discover that Indians in Berlin were regarded as "colored" people and that when he was in Germany he himself was routinely followed by the Nazi Gestapo (Secret State Police.) His biggest supporter in the Third Reich was Nazi Propaganda Minister Dr. Josef Goebbels.

Bose gave an anti-British speech in Calcutta on June 31, 1940, and was arrested and sent to prison for the 11th time. There he came to a trio of conclusions: the Axis would defeat the Allies, the United Kingdom would retain India and, in return for Indian aid to the Axis, the Axis would set India free. Was he naïve? Possibly, as it is difficult to imagine Hitler, Mussolini, or Tojo freeing India once it had been conquered militarily.

Following a hunger strike and threats of suicide, Bose was released by the British and then disappeared from public view before turning up at the German Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, where his initial political advances were rebuffed. His later negotiations at the Italian embassy led to a tentative agreement by Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, and Afghanistan to back Bose, who wanted both Il Duce and the Führer to sponsor an expeditionary force to invade India as a catalyst to spark a full-scale revolt against the British.

In March 1941, Bose reached Berlin via Moscow and offered the Nazis an outright military alliance against the United Kingdom. Far from fearing a German military invasion of India that both Hitler and Field Marshal Erwin Rommel were planning, Bose wanted to include the Imperial Japanese Army as well.

For their part, the British were wary of a joint German-Soviet invasion of both Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent. Meanwhile, the Afrika Korps was capturing thousands of Indian prisoners of war who had been fighting for Britain during 1941-1942, from which Bose envisioned the future ILA that would free their country from the hated British yoke.

They would end World War II as members of Reichsfuhrer Heinrich Himmler's Waffen (Armed) SS, a supreme irony for the "turban-wearing, brown-skinned men" in the ultra-racist Nazi Germany, according to author Christopher Ailsby's book, *Hitler's Renegades: Foreign Nationals in the Service of the Third Reich.*

Bose set up the Free India Center in Berlin and began radio broadcasts from Nauen, Germany, to his far-off homeland on February 19, 1942.

Bose's British Broadcasting Corporation rival and counterpart, author Eric Blair (aka George Orwell of *Animal Farm* and *1984* fame), led the Allied propaganda team that fought Bose over the radio. On March 1, 1942, Free India declared war on the United Kingdom.

On May 4, Bose met with Italian Foreign Minister Count Galeazzo Ciano in Rome and Il Duce himself on May 5, but still Berlin vetoed overall Axis support for his movement even after Mussolini fully committed Fascist Italy.

On May 29, 1942, Bose met the Führer at the Reich Chancellery in Berlin. According to Getz, "The Führer … asked Bose what his plans would be if the Axis refused to help him. Misunderstanding slightly, Bose told his interpreter to 'please tell His Excellency that I have been in politics all my life and that I do not need advice from anyone.'"

A second and final meeting between Hitler and "the Indian charlatan" took place the following July 15 at Wolf's Lair, Hitler's headquarters at Rastenburg, East Prussia.

Meanwhile, the men of the newly formed ILA refused to serve under Italian officers because of their own colonial record in North Africa, and thus it was that the Nazis recruited and trained 27 officers and 10,000 enlisted men at Annaberg in Saxony; the troops comprised Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu components, each man wearing the symbol of a springing tiger on the tricolor shield of India on his uniform sleeve.

Ironically, these former British Imperial Army men took the oath of allegiance on August 26, 1942, to Hitler, Bose, and India—in that order—as Brandenburg Commandos. They were later incorporated into the German Army as the 950th Infantry Regiment with 2,593 men in three battalions. Most wore tropical-style uniforms with peaked forage cap with the standard Nazi eagle and swastika on their breasts. Their helmets featured both the Indian and German national colors.

The man who originally captured them, Rommel, refused their usage in combat on his side "for being cowardly, rebellious and barbaric." Indeed, the Germans never did commit this new Indian National Army (INA) to combat, and with good reason. There were instances of reported mutinies. At this point, it looked as if Bose's lifelong goal of Indian independence was as far off as ever.

It was the Japanese who came to his political rescue in February 1943. The armies of Imperial Japan, the so-called Floating Kingdom, had been welcomed with open arms by the scattered Indian population enclaves throughout Southeast Asia during their march of conquest early in 1942.

Just as in North Africa earlier, on February 19 fully 45,000 Indian soldiers of the British Army surrendered to the Japanese and were pressed into service with the Japanese version of the Indian National Army. Its initial commander,

Mohan Singh, was fired by the Japanese, however, and his force dissolved on December 29.

For his part, having had little luck with the German and Italian fascists, Subhas Chandra Bose was smuggled out of the Third Reich in a German U-boat bound for the Far East. In Tokyo, Bose shook hands with General Tojo and got yet another lease on political life.

Nominal leader of the new Japanese Indian National Army that had a Nipponese field marshal as chief of staff, Bose hailed Imperial Japan as the liberator of both Asia and India. In July 1943, he took over the Indian Independence League and the INA in Singapore, and at the subsequent military review compared his new force to the legions of George Washington and Giuseppe Garibaldi. Their goal was at once both simple and bold: to take the Red Fortress of Delhi, British military headquarters for the Indian Raj.

This time, however, Bose and his men swore allegiance to Free India, not the Axis, with the headquarters of the new provincial government of Free India based in Singapore. Bose also rejected both the exclusionary caste and religious aspects of the Royal Indian Army of the British Raj in favor of the triad themes of "Unity, Faith, and Sacrifice."

Bose was formally declared president of Azad Hind (Free India) on October 21, 1943. His core belief was that World War II gave India the chance to liberate itself. Like Il Duce and the Führer before him, Bose now claimed the multiple titles and offices of head of state, prime minister, minister of war, and head of the foreign office. On the 23rd, the new chief executive officer made a state visit to Japan's Emperor Hirohito during the Greater East Asia Conference in Tokyo, while Premier Tojo ceded the islands of Andaman and Nicobar to Bose's new regime. On November 18, 1943, Chief of State Bose traveled to Nanking, China, as well.

By then, the INA numbered 12,000 men charged with the battle cry of "On to Delhi!" In March 1944, the force invaded India and battled West African soldiers on the Burmese Arakan Front, with Azad Hind being a reality in the Indian border states of Mizoram and Manipur.

Asserts Getz, "Bose had grown into a serious threat: a Bose-Nehru-Gandhi-Japanese alliance that the British Raj feared above all. Although both Gandhi and Nehru were anti-fascist, they still advocated a tacit alliance with the Japanese nonetheless, but rejected joining either the INA or the IJA. Both the British and Bose now felt that the Raj would fall to the Japanese."

Bose advocated burning the Raj to the ground, while top American magazines gave him prominent coverage and Allied intelligence overestimated his forces.

The high-water mark of his epoch was the Battle of Imphal on July 20, 1944, but the Japanese Army retreated, abandoning the INA to a British counterattack, two million strong. By the fall of 1944, the INA was in complete rout.

Following the defeat of Nazi Germany on May 7, 1945, Bose considered tilting toward fellow "socialist" Generalissimo Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union, but nothing came of it in the end. For its part, the Communist Party of India (CPI) labeled Bose "the running dog of Japanese fascism." The Provisional Government of India (PGI) had been disbanded when the Allies retook Burma.

The future of this "would-be Führer" and "Indian Quisling," as he was called, now looked dark, indeed, even as he continued to chant "Jai Hind!" (Free India!). Before their surrender, Bose asked the Japanese to send him to either Shanghai or North China.

On August 17, 1945, Subhas Chandra Bose flew out of the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon aboard a Japanese bomber heading north for either Manchuria or the Soviet Union. Following takeoff from a refueling stop on Taiwan, an engine blew up and the plane crashed in flames.

About seven hours later, Bose died from burns in a Taipei hospital. Owing to his 1941 escape from the British in India, many people refused to believe that Bose was, in fact, dead, and it was not until 1956 that *The New York Times* finally published an obituary that was by then 11 years old.

Of Bose's troops, Hitler asserted near the end of the war, "If one were to use the Indians to turn prayer wheels, they would be the most indefatigable soldiers in the world ... The Indian Legion is a joke! There are Indians who can't kill a louse, and would prefer to allow themselves to be devoured. They certainly aren't going to kill any Englishmen ... It would be ridiculous to commit them to a real blood struggle."

While he may have been right about the INA, it is a military fact that Indian troops fought well against both the Germans in North Africa during 1941-1943, and then, later, against the Axis forces in Italy during 1943-1945. □

---

*Towson, Maryland, freelancer Blaine Taylor has published six books on World War II, the latest being* Hitler's Headquarters from Beer Hall to Bunker, 1920-45 *(2007) as well as studies on Pearl Harbor and Imperial Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto.*

By Glenn Barnett

# The Odyssey of HMAS *Vendetta*

## This Australian destroyer fought against Italy, Germany, and Japan during World War II.

**ON OCTOBER 20, 1941, THE AUSTRALIAN DESTROYER VENDETTA WEIGHED** anchor in the port of Alexandria, Egypt. After spending nearly two years supporting the Royal Navy in the fight for control of the Mediterranean Sea, the aging engines of the busy warship could no longer give her the speed needed to escort convoys, screen the fleet, or dodge dive- bombers. It was time for a major overhaul.

Launched in Govan, Scotland, on November 25, 1916, *Vendetta* was a Royal Navy V-class destroyer, 300 feet long with a beam of 26 feet, nine inches, and a top speed of 34 knots. Her original armament consisted of four-inch main batteries, 40mm antiaircraft guns, and four torpedo tubes. Later refits increased the vessel's antiaircraft capabilities and reduced the number of torpedo tubes.

*Vendetta* was no stranger to combat. She was originally commissioned in Great Britain's Royal Navy in October 1917, in time to take part in World War I. She saw action at the Battle of Heligoland Bight, performed fleet escort duties in the North Sea, and was on hand to witness the surrender of the German High Seas fleet. After the Great War, she was stationed in the Baltic where her crew rescued 430 survivors from the light cruiser *HMS Cassandra* when that ship sank after striking a mine left over from the war.

*Vendetta* then gave support to White Russian forces against the growing menace of the Communists. She engaged two Bolshevik destroyers in battle. One, the *Spartak*, was run aground, while the other, the *Lennuk*, was captured and later turned over to the new Estonian Navy.

From 1924 until 1933, HMS *Vendetta* cruised in the Mediterranean and Red Seas where she carried out patrol and escort duties, foreshadowing her future role.

In 1933, *Vendetta* and four other Great War era V- and W-class destroyers were turned over to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). As part of the RAN, the newly transferred HMAS *Vendetta* performed ceremonial and patrol duties until 1939.

On the eve of World War II, it looked as if Great Britain would need all the help it could get to stave off the growing Nazi menace. *Vendetta* and four of her sister destroyers, *Stuart, Vampire, Voyager,* and *Waterhen*, were sent to the aid of the mother country in her hour of need. *Vendetta* and the RAN destroyer squadron arrived in the Mediterranean late in 1939.

German propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels called the aging boats "scrap iron" and nothing more than a "consignment of junk," because they all dated from World War I. They were immediately and affectionately dubbed "the scrap iron flotilla."

It was not just their age but also their size that drew derision. Laid down at just over 1,300 tons, the V and W classes were dwarfed by newer British designs that ranged upward of 1,600 tons. American, German, Italian, and Japanese designs called for destroyers of up to 2,000 tons. Still, *Vendetta* and her sisters could pack a punch.

At first there was little to do in the Mediterranean as the combined British and French fleets were supreme. *Vendetta* conducted routine patrols and escort duty from one end of the sea to the other.

Everything changed when Germany invaded France. Excited by the prospect of a Nazi victory

**On May 2, 1944, soldiers of the 5th Australian Infantry Division disembark from the destroyer HMAS *Vendetta* at Madang, New Guinea.**
(All photos: Australian War Memorial)

and not wanting to be left out, Mussolini's Italy entered the war in June 1940. France surrendered in the same month.

The strategic situation changed overnight. The Royal Navy had once been welcome at any port in the Mediterranean. Within a month, it was barred everywhere save Egypt, Palestine, Cyprus, Malta, and Gibraltar.

The scrap iron flotilla was well used in the war's early days in every role that a destroyer was designed for and every task that the Admiralty could think of. It was a difficult time for the little Australian destroyer. She was undergoing a much needed retrofit at Malta when Italian and German bombers began their offensive against the helpless little island. She was

under repair from June 11 until July 8, 1940, and during that time her log recorded 80 bombing raids against the island. Fortunately, the Italians did not press their advantage.

*Vendetta* was not damaged, but her enforced stay at Malta caused her to miss the Battle of Calabria in which a combined British and Australian fleet engaged an Italian squadron with mixed results. Following her repairs, *Vendetta* continued her ceaseless round of escort duties.

Engine trouble in October caused her to miss another battle. Back in action in November, the renewed ship supported British actions in Greece and Libya. These were soon complicated by the introduction of Luftwaffe dive-bombers and torpedo planes to the Mediterranean conflict. Several ships of the Royal Navy were sunk or damaged.

By March 1941, German forces were pushing through the Balkans. Already stretched to the limit, Great Britain determined to bolster Greece's defenses. *Vendetta* began new duties escorting troops and supplies to mainland Greece.

**ABOVE: Black smoke belches from a stack aboard HMAS *Vendetta* as the destroyer makes a smokescreen during service in the Mediterranean. LEFT: The damaged HMAS *Vendetta* is under tow from the former Chinese river boat HMAS *Ping Wo*. *Vendetta* was towed by *Ping Wo* from Java to Fremantle, Australia.**

On March 28, *Vendetta* was steaming with a British battle fleet south of Crete when enemy ships were sighted. The Allied ships put on all speed to close with the Italian fleet in what became know as the Battle of Cape Matapan. Poor *Vendetta's* engines were overtaxed, and she could not keep pace with the fighting fleet. She was ordered to return to Alexandria, missing any participation in the resounding Allied victory to come.

Once again, *Vendetta* underwent repairs to her aging and cranky engines. By the time she was back on duty in April the situation in Greece had gone from bad to worse. The 56,000 Allied soldiers who had been landed there now had to be removed to prevent them from being overrun. *Vendetta* was called upon to aid in their evacuation.

On April 25, she took aboard 350 British troops and safely evacuated them to Suda Bay on Crete.

The next month found *Vendetta* ferrying reinforcements to Tobruk and bringing out wounded. She was then involved in the efforts to ferry soldiers to Crete and to resupply them. The fortunes of war were still against the Allies, and again *Vendetta* was required to help with the extraction of those same soldiers once the Germans threatened to overwhelm them.

The Germans soon took the offensive in Africa and increased the pressure on the British at the port of Tobruk. Axis troops surrounded the town and lay siege to it for 242 days. London was adamant about holding on to Tobruk, but the sandy enclave on the Libyan coast could only be supplied by sea. Merchant ships were too slow and vulnerable. Fast destroyers were needed.

*Vendetta* and other ships were pressed into service ferrying men and supplies to the besieged port city. The supply runs had to be made at night to avoid the deadly accuracy of German guns and the prowling Luftwaffe. These urgent trips were known to the men as "spud runs" because of the supplies they carried. *Vendetta* made 19 "spud runs" to Tobruk. In all, she ferried in 4,263 troops and 616 tons of supplies while carrying out 220 prisoners. The nocturnal runs required her to steam at high speed to accomplish her tasks and be away before dawn.

The resulting wear on her engines was acutely felt. *Vendetta* had been at war constantly for two years since leaving Australia and the wear on her ancient engines and primitive steam system could no longer be ignored. It was time for her to undergo serious repairs that could only be accomplished at a major naval yard. In this case, she would have to steam to Singapore.

Leaving Egypt forever, *Vendetta* steamed slowly through the Red Sea and on to Singapore, gingerly favoring her engines. She arrived on November 12, 1941. Most of her war-weary crew were sent home to Australia for a much deserved and long overdue rest. Just 21 volunteer crew members stayed behind to supervise the overhaul of the ship's engines and steam plant.

The boilers and propulsion system were completely dismantled, and the machinery was spread out on the adjoining dock. Her guns were also dismounted for rework. This was the state of things when the new battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* and the battlecruiser HMS *Repulse* steamed into the port on December 2, 1941. The two mighty warships had been sent from Europe to augment the forces that Great Britain could spare in the Far East to guard against Japanese expansion.

No sooner had the two capital ships arrived in Singapore than the Japanese began their assault in the Pacific Ocean from Pearl Harbor to Malaya. Within a week of their arrival at Singapore, both of the great ships were sunk.

When the war in the Pacific began, *Vendetta* was a dead ship. Immobile at her dockside and disassembled into a thousand pieces, she was helpless. Some of her engine parts were in a naval workshop 20 miles away. Her propeller shafts had been removed, leaving two gaping holes in her stern below the water line. These were temporarily plugged but vulnerable. Putting her pieces back together seemed hopeless as the Japanese moved ever closer to the city.

With no place to go, her commanding officer, Lieutenant W.G. Whitting, offered his services to the military authorities in Singapore. Despite her vulnerable position, the little destroyer would now take on her third enemy of the war.

*Vendetta* became the center of an antiaircraft hub at Keppel Harbor. Her already dismounted 12-pound guns were located dockside just astern of the lifeless hulk. They were positioned toward the flight path of incoming Japanese bombers. Machine-gun nests were established using the ship's .303 Lewis and Vickers guns. Soon the docks bristled with firepower. Lieutenant Whitting established two watches day and night so that the guns were always manned and ready for action. Whitting assumed command of the day watch of the guns while his gunner, J. Lace, officered the Lewis machine guns.

By New Year's Eve, the Japanese had advanced down the Malayan peninsula sufficiently that they were able to operate from abandoned Royal Air Force bases. On that day 54 bombers flew overhead. The bombing would continue until Singapore fell. *Vendetta*'s shore-side guns blazed away.

The Japanese kept coming. On January 21, the worst day of the bombing, 125 bombers participated in the carnage. Twenty-seven of those planes were assigned to bomb Keppel Harbor. They came in astern of *Vendetta* where one of her guns was waiting. A direct hit was scored on the bomb bay of an approaching bomber, rendering a terrific explosion, blowing the big plane out of the sky, and damaging her wing mates with fragments.

Through it all the skeleton crew tried to put its ship back together again, but it was slow going. It was monsoon season, and rain fell every afternoon. All repair work had to stop when the sirens sounded. The local laborers abandoned their work at the first alarm while the crew ran to battle stations.

After a month of working and fighting it became clear that the ship could not be put back into working order. Facilities needed for *Vendetta*'s repair were busy with other work or being bombed.

Two days after the downing of the Japanese bomber, Lieutenant Whitting was ordered to get his ship ready to be towed out of the harbor. He began the effort to prepare his ship for towing. With the Japanese advancing rapidly southward along the Malayan peninsula, the city-state of Singapore was doomed.

It took a week of struggle to remount the ship's guns and collect all of its equipment and stores. Machinery and parts of every description were unceremoniously stored on the mess deck to keep them sheltered from the elements. One enterprising crewman commandeered quantities of cigarettes and other stores "in the King's name" from an agreeable quartermaster.

On February 2, 1942, *Vendetta* was taken under tow by the tug *St. Just* and pulled out of the harbor. The tow lines of that day consisted of steel cables at each end and a length of four-and-one-half-inch thick manila or hemp rope in the middle. The total tow line was about 3,250 feet long. The steel cables and the rope spring had spliced eyes, which were connected with huge shackles. The purpose of the spring was to stretch and contract with the movement of the ships in medium to heavy seas.

When the tug had towed its charge seven miles into the open sea, *Vendetta* was transferred to the custody of HMS *Stronghold*, another aging destroyer just two years younger than she was. They were just underway when Japanese bombers flew overhead and bombed the wharf where *Vendetta* had been moored only two hours earlier. The resulting smoke from the bomb hits helped to hide her from above. Her luck was holding.

Although not attacked by the Japanese that day, the slow-moving ships leaving the harbor were noted, and the following day bombers found them and attacked repeatedly. In her perilous state the immobile destroyer fired her guns constantly. Each four-inch shell had to be hand carried up from the darkened magazine below the waterline with only dimming flashlights to illuminate the crew's steps.

One crewman estimated that 120 bombs were aimed at the destroyers and their little escort. No hits were scored, though near misses scattered shell splinters across the decks and the tow rope was straddled by one string of bombs.

Another destroyer, HMS *Electra,* was escorting the two slow-moving ships. Her gunnery officer T.J. Cain remembered one of the attackers: "He was a cautious type, or he believed in playing on our nerves for he followed us for at least an hour before attacking, and when he did decide to have a go, it was from a high level out of range of our gun."

The following day the ships reached the temporary safety of Sumatra. There at the little port of Palembang, *Vendetta* was left by her consorts until February 8, when the sloop HMAS *Yarra* resumed her tow, this time to Batavia, Java, the capital of the Dutch East Indies. The

crew of *Vendetta* knew the sailors on the *Yarra*. They had made the spud run to Tobruk together. Although rated as a sloop, the newer *Yarra,* at 1,060 standard tons, had nearly the same displacement as *Vendetta*.

The immobile ship stayed in Batavia until February 17. She was then towed out of port by a most unlikely savior.

HMAS *Ping Wo* was originally built in China as a river boat. She began life plying the waters around Shanghai. Fearing the growing power of the Japanese, her owners sailed her to Singapore. Once hostilities started there, the *Ping Wo* was pressed into service by the Royal Navy and then given to the Australians for this mission. Her crew was a mixture of Australians, English, and Chinese nationals.

The two ships left Java for the long trip to Australia at an average speed of three knots. It was a miserable time for those aboard *Vendetta*. Without her engines the ship could not produce electricity for refrigeration, lighting or air circulation. The destroyer glided slowly through the tropics in hot, humid weather. Hammocks were slung below decks where it was dark, warm, and clammy. On deck it was frying pan hot.

No hot or cold food was available, and mess consisted of what could be eaten out of tins. The crew passed the time playing cards, smoking the cigarettes liberated from stores in Singapore, sorting through and cleaning the hastily gathered ship's parts and equipment, and standing watch by the guns.

There was one small daily comfort. An old British tradition still applied in the Australian Navy. Each member of the crew was entitled to a tot of rum on any day or night that the ships were at anchor or not under way at sea. The shrewder crew members drank up the tots of their nondrinking mates as well.

HMAS *Yarra* continued as escort until February 24, when she was relieved by the light cruiser HMAS *Adelaide*. The *Adelaide,* like *Vendetta*, was another vessel that dated from the Great War. *Adelaide* was one of the very few warships left to Australia still in home waters. Most of Australia's ships were supporting the Royal Navy against the Nazis in Europe and North Africa.

The *Vendetta* was being towed through dangerous waters. Tragically, *Yarra, Stronghold,* and *Electra* would all be lost in action against the Japanese in early March. All but 13 of *Yarra's* 151-man crew would perish. If *Vendetta* had been discovered by wide-ranging Japanese cruiser squadrons, she, too, would have been a victim.

Despite the deteriorating situation around them, the little flotilla steamed on at an agonizingly slow pace until Australian territory was finally reached on March 3. The crew rejoiced on landing at Fremantle near Perth. They were given a well-deserved six-day shore leave.

However, the long trip was not yet over. The closest repair facilities for the dismantled destroyer were in Melbourne, half a continent away. *Vendetta* would have to continue her lifeless cruise around the south of Australia through the vast Australian Bight (or Bay). This was an area of desolate and stormy seas, extreme tidal variations, and a craggy coastline that could doom a towed ship if her tow line were broken. There was immediate physical danger as well. If a line snapped, the steel ends could whip around and cut a man in half. If the line were stretched taut and heard to "sing," sailors would run to get out of the way of an impending snap.

By now, the plucky little river boat *Ping Wo* had played out. She had engine problems of her own, and towing responsibilities were given over to the steamship SS *Islander* for the dangerous trip through the Bight. Lieutenant Whitting was relieved. He had no faith in the *Ping Wo's* ability to tow him across the stormtossed coast of southern Australia. Even without Japanese bombs to worry them, the Bight was perhaps the worst part of the journey. Seas were rough, and the *Vendetta* could not negotiate the heavy swells. In a following sea, *Vendetta* might come up abreast of *Islander* separated by the length of the connecting rope. The tow rope parted twice, and the helpless hulk threatened to wash up on the sheer cliffs of the shoreline.

Through heroic efforts from both crews, tow lines were restored, and on April 15, *Vendetta* and *Islander* triumphantly entered Melbourne harbor. The epic 5,000-mile odyssey from Singapore to Melbourne had lasted 72 days. Of these, 40 days were spent at sea under tow. The tow line had parted five times, but *Vendetta* had made it. It was the longest ship tow in history. For his part in saving his ship, Lieutenant Whitting received the Distinguished Service Cross.

*Vendetta* would undergo a complete refit and begin a new life serving the Royal Australian Navy in the battle for New Guinea. After her refit she steamed another 120,000 miles in support of Allied operations. She was an active warrior until the end of hostilities. Of the five World War I-vintage destroyers that Australia contributed to the scrap iron flotilla in the Mediterranean, *Vendetta* would be the only one to survive the war. She last steamed under her own power in October 1945.

In 1948, she was scuttled outside Sydney harbor to begin new service as an artificial reef. Her mast was saved and today stands proudly at the RAN Heritage Centre at Garden Island in Sydney. □

**ABOVE: A torpedo exits a portside tube of HMAS *Vendetta,* which is in action against Axis forces in the Mediterranean in 1940. OPPOSITE: This view of HMAS *Vendetta* was taken while the destroyer was on patrol in the Mediterranean Theater in 1940. The warship's camouflage scheme was intended to break up her silhouette on the high seas.**

*Glenn Barnett is a frequent contributor to* WWII History. *He is the author of the forthcoming book* The Persian War: The Roman Conflicts with Iraq and Iran.

By Jon Diamond


# The Generals' Battle

During the "Phony" War, British War Minister Leslie Hore-Belisha was unceremoniously sacked.

**LORD JOHN VEREKER, 6TH VISCOUNT GORT, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE** British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France in 1940, and his chief of staff, General Henry Pownall, have both been forever associated with the British Army's greatest continental defeat; namely, the retreat through Flanders and eventual evacuation from the harbor and beaches of Dunkirk in May and June, after being engaged with the invading German Wehrmacht for only three weeks.

Ironically, after Dunkirk, Gort became inspector general to the forces training in Great Britain prior to being sent to the island of Malta as governor general. Lt. Gen. Pownall subsequently became chief of ctaff to General Archibald Wavell at the American-British-Dutch-Australian (ABDA) command in early 1942 after just having taken command in Singapore a few days earlier.

Despite the debacle of Dunkirk and its mythic representation in the history of British arms, both Gort and Pownall had earlier in January 1940 won a decisive political victory over their civilian superior, the war minister, Leslie Hore-Belisha. At a time when Great Britain and her Western Allies and Dominions were engaged in an inactive, nonshooting conflict with Nazi Germany, the "Phony War," the British war minister was waging a constant personal struggle against his military subordinates, who for both professional and personal reasons regarded him as unable to serve in this lofty capacity.

In personal diaries of some of the British Expeditionary Force's (BEF) leaders, the odious tone of the establishment's anti-Semitism as well as personal incompatibility with the BEF leadership seem to have led to the war minister's resignation. Others have gone so far as to suggest an analogy between Hore-Belisha's sacking and France's Dreyfus affair after the debacle of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Nonetheless, the dismissal of the war minister of one of the chief Allied nations combating Nazi Germany barely four months after the outbreak of hostilities and prior to actual combat for the BEF in both Belgium and France has never been satisfactorily explained.

Isaac Leslie Hore-Belisha was born in London in 1893. His father's family members were Sephardic Jews driven from Spain during the Inquisition. In Manchester, Hore-Belisha's ancestors established a cotton import firm. Hore-Belisha entered public school at Clifton in 1907. There, he entered Polack's House, which was entirely made up of of Jewish students. His Clifton schoolmates observed that Hore-Belisha was quarrelsome and that good manners were not his strong suit. After Clifton, he was educated at Oxford, where he was president of the Oxford Union. He was a major in World War I, serving in the Royal Army Service Corps, and was invalided home after being in France, Flanders, and Salonika.

In 1923, he was both called to the Bar and became a member of Parliament (MP) from Devonport as a Liberal. From 1931-1932, he was parliamentary secretary for the Board of Trade, and from 1932-1934 he served as financial secretary to Neville Chamberlain at the Treasury. In 1934, Hore-Belisha became minister of transport and significantly reduced the number of road accidents with the introduction of a number of innovations including pedestrian crossings guarded by the now famous "Belisha beacons." Three years later, upon Stanley Baldwin's retirement, the new prime minister, Chamberlain, gave the War Office to Hore-Belisha.

Hore-Belisha's notable achievements at the War Office included improvements in other-rank terms and conditions of service as well as barracks and recruiting. This all went over well with the typical British Tommy. In the public's view, Hore-Belisha ranked only after Eden, always the favorite, and Winston Churchill in popu-

**A group of British soldiers poses from the railway car they have been packed into for deployment during the Phony War. These troops were assigned to an area near Arras, France, where heavy fighting later took place. INSET: British War Minister Leslie Hore-Belisha was roundly criticized by his own generals during the early days of World War II.**
(Both: Imperial War Museum)

larity. Newspaper photographs and newsreels frequently showed him chatting with the troops or drinking beer in sergeants' messes in an attempt to democratize the Army.

The war minister reformed the Army, and as war clouds were again gathering in Europe, Hore-Belisha doubled the size of the Territorial Army and introduced conscription. However, it was in the endeavor of Army reorganization and leadership that Hore-Belisha was sowing a bitter harvest. Specifically, by the late summer of 1937, in close collaboration with Basil Liddell Hart, the noted military correspondent, Hore-Belisha began a reduction in the number of strictly infantry units, particularly in the garrisons of India, to save funds for increased mechanization under the armor pioneer, Percy Hobart, among others. Specifically, when Hobart's name was proposed by Hore-Belisha to lead the first home-based armored division, Field Marshall Sir Cyril Deverell, chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), argued that cavalry officers could not be asked to serve under an officer from the comparatively new mechanized branch; besides, it would not be possible for the wives of cavalry officers to call on the one tank commander qualified, because Hobart had been divorced years before.

The hierarchy of the British military reflected the nobility caste in England with its rules and snobbishness. Since these initial proposals to reorganize the Army met with so much opposition, Hore-Belisha became convinced that a wholesale replacement of the senior generals in the War Office must precede more constructive reforms. Hore-Belisha decided that Deverell must leave the War Office. Thus, the war minister began to directly antagonize Britain's generals nearly two years before the onset of World War II. Furthermore, since Hore-Belisha orchestrated these changes with Basil Liddell Hart, a former Army captain, current military correspondent, and frequent critic of the Army who had numerous enemies in its hierarchy, a deepening of hostilities between the war minister and the Army's leadership developed.

First, Hore-Belisha replaced Deverell as CIGS with the recently appointed military secretary, Lord Gort, who was junior to many of the British generals. Deverell had refused to reduce the garrison in India and also typified the cavalry mind-set at the War Office. Lt. Gen. Sir Harry Knox, the adjutant general, and Lt. Gen. Sir Hugh Elles, the master general of the ordinance, were both replaced by younger and more flexible men. Thus, the upper echelon of the Army Council at the War Office was purged.

**ABOVE: Lord Gort stands at the center of a group of officers along with War Minister Leslie Hore-Belisha, who was fired soon after this photo was taken. General Bernard L. Montgomery, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, stands at right. RIGHT: Lord John Vereker, 6th Viscount Gort (left), commander of the BEF in France, confers with his chief of staff, General Henry Pownall at British Army headquarters in 1939.**

(Above: Author's Collection. Right: Imperial War Museum)

No one could dispute Lord Gort as a fighting general of boundless courage; however, Gort somewhat reluctantly became CIGS with General Sir Ronald Adam as his deputy. Pownall became Gort's new director of military operations and intelligence at the War Office. This triumvirate of general officers now leading the War Office was to become obstructionist toward Hore-Belisha's new proposals, suspecting, often correctly, that the plans originated with Liddell Hart. It is ironic that the close association between Hore-Belisha and Liddell Hart began to thaw in 1938 while the ire of the Army's leadership was brewing up. Hore-Belisha was increasingly disappointed at the lack of reforming zeal shown by his new team of Gort, Adam, and Pownall, but knew that another purge was impossible following the recent dismissal of Deverell.

As the Munich Crisis, involving Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland, unfolded in September 1938, Hore-Belisha began to defy and anger Chamberlain, his political leader and benefactor, by pressing for conscription and for a Ministry of Supply. He also abandoned the concept of "limited liability" to save funds for the other services and set plans in motion for a larger BEF should hostilities commence. These stances were at odds with Chamberlain's efforts to minimize actions that would signify an aggressive posture to the Nazi regime and, thereby, negate the appeasement strategy that he had implemented until the invasion of Poland in 1939.

So, Hore-Belisha, who previously had delighted Chamberlain by "stirring the old dry bones" at the War Office and received the prime minister's support, now clashed with him and his ardent pro-appeasement cabinet ministers. This cabinet struggle was to have grave consequences for Hore-Belisha.

The most damaging rift between Hore-Belisha and Britain's military leadership occurred with the outbreak of war in September 1939, and ultimately caused the war minister's downfall. This occurred despite Hore-Belisha's aggressive stance and vocal opposition to the Nazis. In October 1939, he enunciated British war aims on the BBC: "We are concerned with the frontiers of the human spirit … only the defeat of Nazi Germany can lighten the darkness which now shrouds our cities, and lighten the horizon for all Europe and the world." Unfortunately, it was still Chamberlain's policy, ably supported by his pro-appeasement sycophants in the cabinet, to avoid offending the Nazis although England and Germany were at war.

In September 1939, Hore-Belisha traveled to France to inspect the BEF's defensive works. He appointed a team of military and civil engineers to make further technical inquiry and recommendations to strengthen the British Army's dispositions. This seems to have incensed General Pownall, Gort's chief of staff, who regarded it as odd that the war minister went to France to deal with strategic and tactical matters.

Hore-Belisha thought it was his prerogative to visit the BEF's fortifications because he had to fight for the Army's plans and budget in Parliament. Also, if disaster occurred, it would be the war minister's head that would roll. After a second visit to France to meet with Gort and Pownall in November 1939, Hore-Belisha criticized the rate at which concrete pillboxes were being built. This so outraged the generals that they enlisted the support of the upper crust of power in England in an attempt to oust him. Pownall even traveled back to England after this second Hore-Belisha visit to express the "virtues and failings of Hore-Belisha" at the War Office.

Some historians assert that Pownall convinced King George VI and other powerful government leaders, including General William Edward Ironside, the CIGS, who replaced Gort when the latter assumed command of the BEF in France. Upon returning from a meeting with Gort and Pownall in France, Ironside was concerned about the rage he found in the BEF leadership and stated, "It is time we had a better chap in the War Office."

After receiving many reports from the BEF leadership that there was resentment toward Hore-Belisha, the king went to France in December 1939 to meet with Gort and Pownall among others. The king became convinced that Hore-Belisha would have to be replaced and had actually asked Pownall who should be the new war minister. Almost two weeks later, Chamberlain went to France to meet with the same BEF leadership. Gort told the prime minister that the BEF did not have confidence in the war minister.

Hore-Belisha's days were numbered as 1940 began. Next to Churchill, the war minister was the most vigorous in prosecuting the war, even though no actual fighting occurred. However, friction between Hore-Belisha and the War Office had grown to such an extent that, in Chamberlain's view, it was impeding the development of Britain's war effort, especially in France. Hore-Belisha had expressed lack of confidence in the commander in chief of the BEF, Lord Gort.

After Chamberlain visited Gort's headquarters on December 15, 1939, and listened to Gort's account of the deficiencies of equipment

in the BEF, he realized that no confidence existed between the senior British officers in France and their minister. Amid the rumors circulating during the debate to sack Hore-Belisha in January 1940, it was made clear that the choice before Chamberlain lay between the dismissal of Hore-Belisha and a request from Gort and the two corps commanders (Lt. Gen. Sir Alan Brooke being one of them) to be relieved of their appointments.

After conferences between Chamberlain and Hore-Belisha in the latter part of December, the prime minister decided to replace Hore-Belisha with Oliver Stanley, the son of the Earl of Derby. On January 4, 1940, Chamberlain summoned Hore-Belisha to the cabinet room, and informed him that he was to leave the War Office. Chamberlain wanted to offer him the Ministry of Information, but Lord Halifax, the foreign secretary, objected to the appointment because it would have a "bad effect among the neutrals … because HB is a Jew".

Ultimately, the now deposed war minister was offered the presidency of the Board of Trade, but Hore-Belisha rejected this position and withdrew to the back benches. Thus ended the sacking of the war minister just four months after the commencement of hostilities with Germany and prior to any land action on the Continent or in Scandinavia seemingly based on the number and speed of construction of pillboxes, the "Pillbox Affair," in northern France.

According to General Freddie DeGuignand, Hore-Belisha's military secretary (and later to be Montgomery's ubiquitous chief of staff), the war minister was trying to be helpful rather than critical of the BEF leadership. Gort, Pownall, and Maj. Gen. R.P. Pakenham-Walsh, a subordinate of Gort's, resented any criticism at all since they believed they were doing their best in adverse conditions, which the war minister had totally failed to grasp.

It seems Hore-Belisha's particular problem was that he inaccurately presented the facts of the pillbox construction to the Army Council, discussed the matter in cabinet after Ironside had left, sent a verbal reprimand to Gort through a subordinate office (Pakenham-Walsh), and dispatched the CIGS to inspect the defenses on the authority of the War Cabinet. Perhaps, the most galling to the GHQ in Northern France was Hore-Belisha's mistaken impression that the French were setting an example in the construction of pillboxes and could serve as a model for the British.

Did the handling of the dismissal of Lesley Hore-Belisha bear any analogy to France's Dreyfus affair after the calamitous Franco-Prussian War? There is evidence to suggest that some of the British generals, notably Gort's chief of staff, Pownall, had made up their minds on the outbreak of war that for the Army's sake Hore-Belisha would have to go from the War Office.

When Hore-Belisha resigned his office in January 1940, the reaction of the popular press reflected the frenetic suspicion of the time that somebody, somewhere, was conspiring against democracy. Among the wilder assertions were that Hore-Belisha had been fired at the instigation of British friends of the Nazis, because he was a Jew; that he was the victim of high society intrigue to replace him with Oliver Stanley, son of the Earl of Derby; and that the brass was determined to get rid of him so that they could set up a military dictatorship. It is not too difficult to imagine what the reaction would have been if the king's part in the affair had become known.

It cannot be ignored that the war minister's religion played some role in his dismissal. Some months after his requested resignation, Hore-Belisha was asked why he had been dismissed. "Jewboy!" he replied. There is also a clear trail of remarks that constitute ethnic slurs. Pownall commented about the relationship between

*Continued on page 68*

By John Mancini

Heavily armed members of the French Resistance to the Nazi occupiers, these Maquis are typical of the irregular soldiers who inflicted heavy losses on the Germans and kept thousands of them from the front lines. OSS often cooperated with the Maquis and provided leadership and organization to their ranks.

(The Art Archive/Kharbine-Tapabor/Collection NB)

# Fighting Alongside the Maquis

## The OSS Bugatti mission frustrated the Germans in southern France.

**THE TEMPO OF WAR PLANNING INTENSIFIED FOR THE INVASION OF EUROPE** during the early months of 1944. Finally, at daylight on June 6, 1944, Allied infantry stormed ashore along the German-held Normandy coast. American and British airborne units had jumped behind the landing beaches during the night to block enemy reinforcements from entering the battle.

Other Allied soldiers had also jumped into Nazi-occupied France during the night. They were special operations troops called Jedburghs. The Jedburghs were three-man teams that had been formed from OSS (U.S. Office of Strategic Services—forerunner of the modern CIA) agents and members of the British Special Operations Executive.

Three hundred soldiers from the United States, Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands volunteered for service with what was called Operation Jedburgh. Milton Hall, an Elizabethan stone mansion hidden in the lush English countryside 100 miles north of London, was selected for recruit evaluation and training. However, the Jedburghs acquired their name from a field training area in Scotland.

The mission of the Jedburgh teams was to recruit, arm, and organize French Maquis (partisans) to actively join in the fighting after the Allied landings. They parachuted into Nazi-occupied France and led the underground in support of the Allied invasion of Normandy and the amphibious landings from the Mediterranean on the southern French coast.

From June to September 1944, approximately 276 Jedburghs were inserted into France, Belgium, and the Netherlands from staging areas in England and North Africa. Throughout northern France Jedburgh-led partisans blocked German forces from joining the fight against the invading Allied armies. In southern France, Jedburgh teams and guerrillas helped the Seventh Army advance into the Rhone Valley. Jedburghs and partisans were responsible for destroying numerous bridges and railways leading to the landing beaches and inflicting heavy causalities in ambushes of German ground forces speeding to reinforce their comrades.

One of the Jedburgh operatives was OSS Marine Lt. Col. Horace W. Fuller. The adventurous Harvard graduate held a commercial pilot's license and had sailed around the world on a 23-month cruise as an engineer on a yacht. After the Germans attacked Poland in 1939, Fuller went to France and joined the French Army. He served from January to July 1940 and fought valiantly in the front lines until the French surrender.

He returned to the United States and received a commission in the prewar Marine Corps on May 13, 1941, and spent the next year training, instructing, and commanding Marines. Fuller was part of the initial force of the 1st Marine Division to land on Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942. In October, he received a severe leg wound from Japanese strafing and was evacuated to the United States. After months of teaching tactics at the Marine Corps base at Quantico, Virginia, he was personally recruited by General William "Wild Bill" Donovan, commander of the OSS, in September 1943 and assigned to duty in

England as a Jedburgh in early 1944.

By the summer, Fuller was selected to lead the Bugatti Mission into the Pyrenees Mountains. At 8:30 on the night of June 28, 1944, he and his two-man team of French Army officers flew out of Blida Airport near Algiers and parachuted into southern occupied France shortly after midnight. They were met on the ground by a Maquis reception team and swiftly taken to a nearby farmhouse.

The Gestapo was immediately aware of the Jedburghs. The following morning Fuller left the farmhouse in civilian clothes to make contact with other resistance leaders. He was advised to disguise himself as a civilian because the sector was swarming with German troops and he would immediately be spotted in uniform.

The isolated farmhouse was surrounded by the enemy soon after Fuller's departure. The French officers leaped from the second story of the house as the Germans were encircling it and were able to escape capture. The team was able to regroup and was taken to another hiding place by the resistance, but the Germans continued a relentless search for the Jedburgh team. The perilous situation was aggravated by difficulty in radio communication with Algiers. The French underground was in desperate need of arms and ammunition to fight the Germans, but resupply missions could not be scheduled.

It was now the middle of July, and the team had not been resupplied since its insertion in June. Finally, one of the French officers and four guerrillas made a daring raid into the town of Lannemezan, which was garrisoned by 1,200 German troops. The raiding team was able to steal a radio and withdraw to the their camp under fire. The radio permitted Fuller to transmit a desperate message to Algiers for an emergency air drop of weapons and ammunition. The only resupply drop that the Bugatti team received occurred at 2:30 AM on July 16. This was barely in time to prepare for a major attack by nearly 800 German soldiers on the 17th.

Describing the fight, Fuller wrote, "They arrived about 5:30 in the afternoon and set fire to all the buildings in the village and then advanced toward our positions, where they were met by fire from 10 Bren guns and about 80 rifles and Stens. Captain de la Roche (one of the French officers who parachuted with Fuller) personally maintained liaison between gun positions, constantly exposing himself to heavy machine-gun fire and mortar fire with no thought of his personal safety. He killed two of the enemy with his rifle and then manned a Bren gun permitting the successful withdrawal of our forces at a most critical time by acting alone as a rear guard. The enemy withdrew and did not seem interested in entering the woods after the Maquis. Although they had light 25mm cannon, they did not get them into the action. We learned that the enemy had 16 killed and 20 wounded while our force suffered no casualities."

**ABOVE: U.S. Marine Lieutenant Colonel Horace Fuller led Operation Bugatti. Here, he is flanked by his Maquis and Jedburgh officers near the Spanish border after pursuing the Germans across southern France. CENTER: Known as Paul, this physician from Corsica killed three Germans with a pistol during a Maquis patrol. TOP: Prior to takeoff at Harrington Airdrome in England, a group of OSS Jedburgh paratroopers prepares to board the B-24 that will carry them to their drop zone in occupied France.** (All: National Archives)

After the battle with the Germans, Fuller and his guerrillas withdrew into the Pyrenees near the village of Saint Bernard. The Jedburgh team and the resistance fighters received disturbing news. Civilian informers were reporting their moves to the Germans. A discouraged Fuller reflected, "At this time we had more to worry about from the French than we did from the Germans."

Justice was swift. An Italian civilian was identified as the informer of the Maquis encampment at Arbon. Fuller immediately gave the order to liquidate him. A Maquis patrol shot the traitor several days later. His wounds were not fatal, and he was taken to a hospital by several villagers. The job was finished that night when a "visitor" cut the man's throat. Despite the constant threat of betrayal by some civilians in the area and limited supplies of ammunition and explosives, Fuller's guerrillas maintained an aggressive ambush and sabotage campaign against the Germans.

By early August 1944, Allied forces held much of northern France, and a second major invasion force was poised to attack the Mediterranean coast. At 4 AM on August 15, Allied airborne troops dropped near Cannes, and by the end of the day 94,000 soldiers were ashore in southern France.

German troops in Fuller's area of operations were panicked, many of them racing back to Germany or over the Pyrenees to seek sanctuary in neutral Spain.

"On the night of the 14th of August we received the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) radio broadcast message for all Maquis to enter full scale open guerrilla warfare," wrote Fuller. "We moved our Headquarters the following day down into the village of Saint Bertrand-de-Comminges on the plain below. Patrols were sent out to cover the main bridges and narrow mountain passes where they succeeded in bagging a few stray enemy vehicles and motorcycles during the following days without suffering a single casualty … We received word that the *boche* garrison of 400 at Luchon were preparing to make a break to the north to join their troops who were packing up and hot-footing it for the 'Vaterland' by any means possible. At a later date, I watched long columns of krauts all heading eastward on foot, in peasants' oxcarts, on bicycles, pushing baby carriages filled with gear, and even riding on

**Liberated French citizens gather in the center of their town to heap praise and thanks on Lieutenant Colonel Horace Fuller and Captain de la Roche after the Nazis have been put to flight.** (National Archives)

donkeys. It was quite a contrast to the once proud German Army I had seen enter France in May and June of 1940.

"It was decided to attack the garrison at Luchon at once and I sent one group of 100 Maquis under the command of Lt. Marchal [French] south through the adjoining valley to begin the attack while I moved south down the parallel valley of Luchon with 60 men to occupy and hold the narrow gorge at Port Chaud through which the enemy had to pass to reach the main highways to the north. Large trees were felled across the narrow road which was bounded on one side by the Garonne River and on the other by steep rocky cliffs."

Fuller immediately positioned his forces to execute a deadly ambush on the retreating enemy.

"The Maquis were well installed and hidden among the rocks and cliffs which bristled with Sten guns, six Bren guns, rifles, potato masher grenades and shotguns loaded with buck shot," he recalled. "I installed my command post together with our first aid station behind the stone embankment of a bridge about 200 yards north of the roadblock. It was well protected by our heavy artillery which consisted of an enormous single shot Russian antitank rifle for which we had only nine cartridges. The following morning we received word that Lt. Marchal's group had made contact with the *boche* and had them running toward our reception committee … News of the fighting traveled like wild fire throughout the valley. We were soon joined by old men and young boys armed with everything from old hammer-type shotguns to home made grenades. All spoiling to kill a *boche*."

The guerrillas did not wait long for the fight.

Fuller continued, "About 1 o'clock we heard the sound of approaching motor vehicles which presently appeared around a bend in the road about 500 yards away and continued in our direction. I had given orders to hold all fire until they rounded the next curve and were stopped by the roadblock, then the anti-tank rifle would be fired as a signal to let them have everything we had. However, the temptation was too much and all hell broke loose from the cliffs while the enemy was still 200 yards away. Two trucks started burning, the convoy stopped and men tumbled out of the vehicles like rats leaving a sinking ship. They withdrew their remaining vehicles and the fire fight was on. Bullets whined overhead and ricocheted off the rocky cliffs as the *boche* got into position and returned fire. Our men were so well hidden among the rocks and in the cliffs that I felt quite confident that we had little to worry about unless the *boche* started to work us over with mortars.

"Intermittent small arms and machine gun fire continued during the afternoon and a few minor wounded were brought into our dressing station to be patched up once we had located our Corsican medic who had disappeared with his small *boche* grenade launcher and rifle to join in the fight. About 4 o'clock we discovered a group of the enemy were climbing up around our positions in the cliffs in an attempt to outflank us. Four Bren guns and the doctor with his grenade launcher went into action from the crest of a ridge which seemed to discourage any further efforts on their part to continue this plan of attack."

The battle continued into the night. At dusk

rifle and machine-gun fire broke out toward the rear of the enemy position and continued until after dark when a runner arrived with word that Lieutenant Marchal's men had liberated Luchon, had been reinforced by 100 men from the Spanish Maquis, and were now attacking the Germans from the rear. Plans were then made to surround their positions during the night for a surprise attack at daybreak.

"Shortly after midnight we heard sounds of vehicles being started and thought that the *boche* were preparing to make a break through our positions to get north," recalled Fuller. "The Bren guns were brought into position where they could sweep the road and men armed with fragmentation grenades were stationed at the road block. Instead of heading in our direction, the vehicles seemed to be heading east. Suddenly we realized what they were up to; they were taking the one and only means of escape left and before our men could get into position to stop them, they were on their way for the Spanish frontier about 15 miles away."

The following morning, a delegation from the town of Luchon arrived at Fuller's position and presented him with a captured German flag. The American thanked the villagers and the Maquis and sent patrols to find any remaining Germans. Adrenaline rushed as Fuller and his Jedburghs and guerrillas prepared for battle. Soon they came under German machine-gun fire and began to sustain casualties. Massing their firepower, the Maquis concentrated on German positions in a thickly wooded area. Word was quickly received that the Germans had abandoned their positions and most of them were headed for the Spanish frontier. Fuller and his men were honored as heroes during a ceremony in Luchon. One villager presented Fuller with 48 bottles of vintage champagne. The liberation of Luchon was complete.

Fuller's Bugatti Jedburgh team provided valuable tactical support for the Allied southern invasion of France and to the Seventh Army penetration of central France. Jedburgh teams executed over 100 missions into Europe and later conducted covert missions in Southeast Asia and China.

Horace Fuller was promoted to lieutenant colonel while on duty with the Jedburghs in the Pyrenees. He was awarded the Silver Star and the Croix de Guerre. After the war he returned to civilian life and worked in the airline industry. He continued to serve in the Marine Corps Reserve and retired in 1957 with the rank of brigadier general. □

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

# Red Army Victory at Vienna

In spite of a tenacious defense, the Soviets overwhelmed the Germans in the Austrian capital.

BY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL REYNOLDS

**ABOVE: Despite the more famous Tiger and Panther models, the armored workhorse of the German Army in World War II was the ubiquitous Panzer IV medium tank. Here, battle-weary Waffen SS soldiers ride atop a Panzer IV during the long retreat to the Fatherland in January 1945. TOP: Advancing steadily westward, Soviet soldiers ride atop T-34/85 medium tanks as their column rolls through an Austrian village in the waning days of the war in Europe. LEFT: Troops of the Red Army's Third Ukrainian Front move cautiously through the wartorn streets of Vienna.**
(Above: ullstein bild /Top: National Archives / Left: ullstein bild)

**IN MID-MARCH 1945,** the Red Army launched a major offensive with the aim of clearing Axis forces out of Hungary and forcing them back to the very borders of Hitler's Greater German Reich. It was successful, and at 1925 hours on the 29th a "Führer Decision" finally arrived at the headquarters of Army Group South authorizing a phased withdrawal to what was called the Reichsschutzstellung—the Reich Guard Position.

This position followed the approximate line of Austria's eastern border. Four days later, on April 2, Waffen SS General Sepp Dietrich, the commander of the Sixth Panzer Army, was presented to the people of Vienna as their "defender," and over the next two days a number of his battered formations, notably the 2nd SS Panzer Division Das Reich, pulled back in chaotic conditions toward what had inevitably been designated Fortress Vienna. The withdrawal was complicated by roads jammed with miscellaneous German and Hungarian troops and hordes of civilians—all desperately trying to reach what they thought might be a place of safety.

By April 4, Das Reich, with a Kampfgruppe (battlegroup) from the 3rd SS Totenkopf Division on its left flank in the area of the Vienna airport, had been forced back to a line running roughly between the villages of Mödling and Achau. There it was tasked with preventing a Soviet advance along the main roads leading into Vienna from Wiener Neustadt and Sopron. But it was now clear that the Soviets were also beginning to push northwest toward the Danube River valley in the area of Tulln with the intention of outflanking and isolating the Austrian capital. Das Reich's commander, SS Colonel Rudolf Lehmann, had little option other than to prepare to withdraw his Kampfgruppen into the city itself.

That same day, General Rudolf von Bünau was appointed commandant of the city of Vienna, and 24 hours later Lehmann received an order said to have come from the Führer himself, which ended: "From now on there is to be no more retreating." By this time, however, his men, despite intense fighting, had been forced back some two and a half miles across flat, open ground to a low ridge running from Vösendorf to Leopoldsdorf. There they occupied temporary positions on a reverse slope.

Some extraordinary events had occurred during the withdrawal toward and into Vienna. Some 2,800 men intended for the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend but unable to reach that division had been quickly absorbed into Das Reich, and a reinforcement unit made up of convalescents, leave personnel, and replacement troops was quite literally taken off trains passing through Vienna and found itself in action under Lehmann's command in the Piesting River sector.

In the same way, individual replacements arriving on April 3 had been quickly integrated, but according to SS Lt. Col. Otto Weidinger, the commander of the Division's 4th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment Der Führer, it was no longer possible even to take down the names of these men. Losses were being recorded in numbers rather than names. He also recorded that just before the final withdrawal into the city most of Das Reich's artillery was intact, but that the panzergrenadier regiments amounted to only "five average battalions" and the division had only 60 percent of its authorized motor transport.

At 2000 hours on April 5, Lehmann gave orders for a further withdrawal to the high ground behind the Liesing River, running from Mauer through Altmannsdorf to the area of Inzersdorf. This new position was within the city limits of Vienna itself, and soon after occupying it the men, and particularly the officers of the division, began to run into new problems.

SS Captain Franz-Josef Dreike, the commander of the 2nd SS Flak Battalion, said later that for the first time in the war he experienced a local Germanic population that was unfriendly and even treated his men with contempt and scorn. He found himself getting into arguments with the commanders of the local Viennese defense sectors over responsibilities and rank. He also described how the personnel of a fixed 88mm Luftwaffe flak battery joined him and stayed with his battalion right to the end, displaying great bravery and apparently proud of the fact that they were suddenly part of the Waffen SS. Dreike was to receive a Knight's Cross for his leadership at this time.

At 0730 hours on April 6, the Soviets launched a major assault on the German positions. It has been said that this attack was due to coincide with an attempt by the Austrian resistance movement to hand over the city to the Soviets. In any event, the attempt failed. The leaders of the movement had clearly not calculated on the presence of the men of the Waffen SS.

National Archives

**ABOVE: The might of the Red Army prevailed in the battle for Vienna in the spring of 1945. Soviet soldiers and their supporting self-propelled assault guns maneuver through the suburbs of the Austrian capital city in April. LEFT: Waffen SS General Sepp Dietrich was a favorite of Adolf Hitler. Dietrich commanded the German Sixth Army in Vienna.**

During the 6th, Das Reich's 2nd SS Reconnaissance Battalion, under the command of Major Ernst Krag, pulled back through the division's lines to the area around the Floridsdorf Bridge across the Danube. This vital bridge, which was to become the focus of the fighting in the last hours of the battle for Vienna, was already under observation from Soviet troops on the Kahlenberg feature in the northwestern part of the city.

By the evening of the 6th, Das Reich, which was no longer fighting as a division but in small-unit groups, had been forced back to a line just south of the Schönbrunn Palace and extending west to the Hietzing sector of the city. Some of its tanks and certainly the 10th SS Heavy Battery had taken up positions in the palace grounds. Another battery, the 12th, was in position on Prater Island between the Danube and the Danube canal. One of the 10th Battery officers later described how they were shooting directly over the gloriette toward the south and how one gun was positioned in the middle of the three main entrances to the palace grounds, firing toward the palace bridge to the north. He claimed the palace suffered only slight damage to the east side of the gloriette.

As darkness fell on the 6th and the Russians began to threaten Prater Island from the southeast, General von Bünau, who although still city commandant had been placed under the command of SS Lt. Gen. Willi Bittrich's II SS Panzer Corps that included Das Reich, the 3rd Totenkopf, and the 6th Panzer Divisions, gave orders for the bridges across the Danube in the eastern part of Vienna to be blown. The same night saw the enemy trying to infiltrate toward the West Station, but the deployment of a battalion of Hitlerjugend (youngsters, but not part of the Waffen SS or the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend) put a temporary end to this threat. Nevertheless, by midnight parts of Weidinger's Der Führer Regiment had been pushed back into the streets just to the north of the Schönbrunn Palace.

During the 6th, the commander of the Third Ukrainian Front, Russian Marshal Fyodor Tolbukhin, arranged for a message to be broadcast to the local population: "The retreating German troops want to turn Vienna into a bat-

tlefield just as they did Budapest. Vienna and its inhabitants are under the threat of similar destruction and terror as was handed out there. Citizens of Vienna—help the Red Army to liberate the capital of Austria; play your part in liberating your country from the Fascist German yoke!"

How much effect this broadcast had is unknown, but German morale was certainly not improved when it was learned from civilians and prisoners that in the sectors of the city already occupied by the Russians men and women with red and white armbands were helping Soviet soldiers by carrying ammunition and equipment.

By the morning of April 7, there was no longer a German front line in Vienna. Units defended positions considered by their officers to be tactically important, but they were often cut off from each other by Soviet troops. By the end of the day, Lehmann's men had lost the West Station and withdrawn into the areas known as Mariahilf and Neubau, and Krag's 2nd SS Reconnaissance Battalion had pulled back across the Danube to the Floridsdorf district.

In one of the more extraordinary stories of this day, SS Senior Sergeant Major Ernst Barkmann related later how former prisoners of war—French, Belgians, Dutch, and Slavs—were celebrating with accordions and guitars playing in some of the local cafés and wine bars and waiting for the war to end. There were even a few local people and German soldiers among them. He went on to point out that just a few hundred meters away, where the Soviets had broken through, men were dying.

The important and famous Grinzing region of Vienna, only two and a half miles from the Floridsdorf Bridge, also fell to the Soviets on the 7th, threatening all the Germans west of the Danube canal with encirclement. This led Lehmann to order the destruction of all the canal bridges except the Augarten and Aspern.

According to German Army Group South's morning report, Bittrich's II SS Panzer Corps destroyed 39 Soviet tanks in Vienna on April 8. There are no details of fighting on this day, other than the fact that Rudolf Lehmann, after being wounded in the hand while on reconnaissance, set up an advanced command post near the Augarten Bridge.

It appears that each day with the coming of darkness most of the fighting ceased and a deathly silence hung over the city. The center was apparently a sea of flames, and Lehmann reported seeing looters dragging "enormous sacks of plundered goods" along the streets.

By April 9, the German positions west of the Danube canal were no longer tenable. Das Reich was fighting in a rough semicircle extending from the vicinity of the North Bridge to just beyond the Aspern Bridge. Elements of three Soviet rifle divisions and the I Guards Mechanized Corps (equivalent to a German panzer division) were attacking from the southeast toward the Prater, two rifle divisions and a Guards mechanized corps from the south and west moved toward the Aspern and Augarten Bridges, and a Guards tank corps was closing in toward the Floridsdorf Bridge from the northwest.

National Archives

**Following the failure of Operation Spring Awakening in March 1945, Waffen SS troops resume their retreat. It had been hoped that the German spring offensive would push the Red Army out of Hungary.**

Furthermore, Marshal Rodion Malinovsky's 46th Soviet Army, having crossed to the east bank of the Danube with two rifle corps and a Guards mechanized corps, was attacking northwest and west with the aim of sealing the escape routes of the Germans defending the city. It has to be pointed out, however, that none of the formations mentioned was anywhere near peak strength, and by this stage of the war the Soviet supreme command was acutely aware of the Red Army's cumulative casualty figures. With Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Rumania already occupied by Soviet troops and the desired buffer zone between the western border of the Motherland and the fascist and capitalist enemies firmly established, there seemed little point in needlessly sacrificing more lives.

In view of the rapidly deteriorating situation, and in spite of the Führer Order forbidding further retreat, Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army headquarters gave permission for II SS Panzer Corps to pull back across the Danube canal during the night of the 9th and blow the remaining bridges. In true Waffen SS fashion and contrary to the normal tactics of the American and British Armies, tanks, armored assault guns, and artillery pieces rather than infantry covered the final withdrawal. The guns of the 2nd SS Artillery Regiment went into direct firing positions at various intersections to seal off the streets. Their commander, SS Colonel Karl Kreutz, received oak leaves to his Knight's Cross for the achievements of his artillerymen and for his own leadership of both his regiment and the Das Reich Division during the Battle of Vienna.

By first light on April 10, all the bridges over the Danube and its canal except the Reichs and Floridsdorf had been blown. General von Bünau had been the last man to cross the Aspern Bridge. Das Reich was now behind the canal in the area of the Floridsdorf Bridge with the 4th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment Der Führer on the right and the 3rd SS Panzergrenadier Regiment Deutschland on the left. Each regiment deployed two of its weak

*Continued on page 69*

**In *Air Defense, Battle of Santa Cruz* by U.S. Navy combat artist Dwight Shepler, the battleship USS *South Dakota* and other American warships throw up a withering curtain of antiaircraft fire as Japanese dive- and torpedo-bombers press home their attacks during the fight off Guadalcanal.**

U.S. Navy Historical Foundation

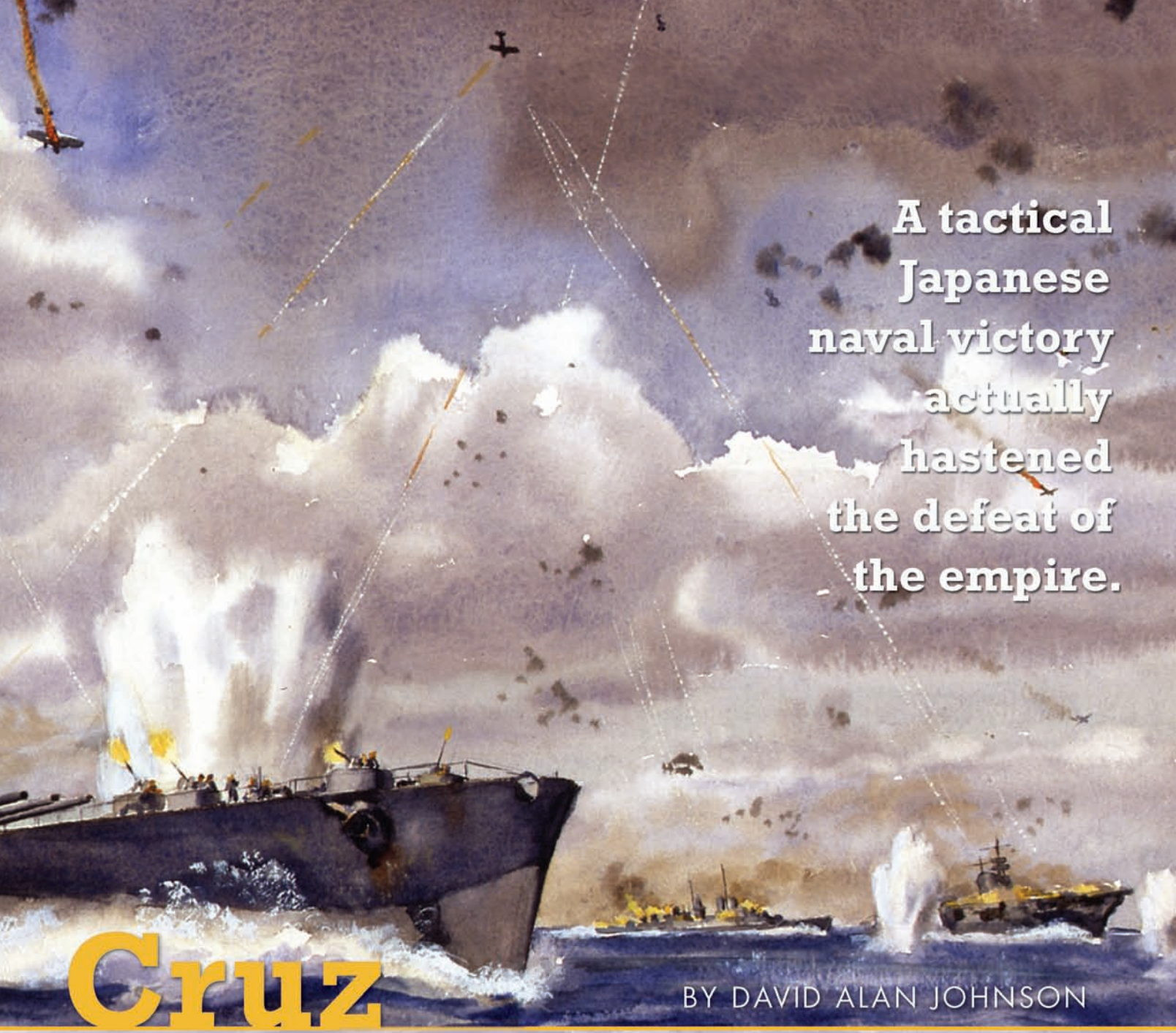
# Action Off Santa

**During the early morning** hours of October 26, 1942, several hours before the sun came up, Admiral William F. Halsey sent a dispatch consisting of three words: "Attack. Repeat, Attack." An enemy naval task force had been sighted moving south, toward Guadalcanal in support of a major ground offensive to retake the island of Guadalcanal in late October. Guadalcanal had been assaulted by U.S. Marines in August, and the fight for control of the island was raging.

To support the Army's offensive and to find and destroy American naval forces in the vicinity, the Japanese moved into position near the southern Solomon Islands. Admiral Halsey wanted his own aircraft carriers to attack the enemy before they could get within striking range of the island.

Halsey had landed at Noumea, New Caledonia, eight days earlier to replace his friend Admiral Robert Ghormley as commander of all U.S. forces in the South Pacific area (Comsopac). Admiral Ghormley was a meticulous man with a talent for organization. But he apparently lacked the aggressiveness and the personal qualities to inspire the men under him. The appointment of Halsey as Comsopac was hoped to remedy that situation. Halsey's first communiqué to his men was certainly grounds for encouragement.

Admiral Halsey felt the pressure and knew what was expected of him. He told Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, his superior and commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, "I had to begin throwing punches almost immediately." He also knew what forces he had at his disposal that would be throwing the punches: two aircraft carriers, two battleships, nine cruisers, and 24 destroyers. These were organized into three groups, two of which were led by the aircraft carriers *Enterprise* (Task Force 16) and *Hornet* (Task Force 17). The battleship-cruiser group was designated Task Force 64. Halsey gave the commanders of the three groups instructions to make a sweep north of the Santa Cruz Islands north of New Caledonia, then change course to the southwest to be in position to intercept



**A tactical Japanese naval victory actually hastened the defeat of the empire.**

# Cruz

BY DAVID ALAN JOHNSON

enemy forces approaching Guadalcanal.

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, aboard his flagship *Yamato* in Truk lagoon, was concerned about the aggressiveness of his subordinates as well. His Vanguard Group, made up of two battleships, four cruisers, and several destroyers, had been milling about Guadalcanal for nearly two weeks. The cruisers and battleships were supposed to support the attack on the island's vital airfield, Henderson Field, with massive gunfire, but the island and its airfield were still solidly in American hands. Yamamoto advised the Army that if Henderson Field was not taken soon, his ships would have to withdraw because of lack of fuel.

Yamamoto was also frustrated by the fact that he had no idea where the American carrier forces were. *Enterprise* had been spotted by a patrol plane a few days before, but no enemy carriers had been seen since then. Admiral Chuicho Nagumo, commander of the carrier strike force consisting of the fleet carriers *Shokaku, Zuikaku,* and the light carrier *Zuiho,* continued to stand by in the waters north of Guadalcanal and wait for news. About 100 miles to the west, Carrier Division 2, formed around the carrier *Junyo,* also waited for word.

American scouting planes were having much better luck than Yamamoto's. A relay of Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boats had been keeping track of the Japanese fleet since noon on the 25th. Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, in command of Task Force 16, complied with Halsey's directive by keeping to an aggressive northwesterly course at about 20 knots. One of the Catalinas reported the Japanese fleet to the northwest. About an hour later, another flying boat reported one large carrier and six other ships about 200 miles away on the same heading.

At 5 AM, Admiral Kinkaid ordered *Enterprise*'s captain, Osborne B. Hardison, to launch a 200-mile search for the Japanese carrier force. Sixteen Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bombers left *Enterprise* to look for the enemy. Each aircraft carried a 500-pound bomb "just in case."

On the way out, one of the bombers spotted a Japanese Nakajima "Kate" torpedo bomber heading in the opposite direction—looking for the American carriers.

The 16 SBDs split up in pairs, with each pair covering a wedge-shaped sector ranging from west-southwest to due north. At 10 minutes before 7 AM, Lt. Cmdr. James R. Lee, leading *Enterprise*'s Scouting 10, and his wingman, Ensign William E. Johnson, made contact. They had found *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku,* the heart of the Japanese force. As soon as Admiral Kinkaid received the message, he ordered an immediate increase in speed.

Australian War Memorial

**ABOVE: Veteran pilots of the Imperial Japanese Navy receive last minute instructions prior takeoff from the deck of their aircraft carrier. The loss of many experienced fliers crippled Japanese offensive operations for the remainder of the war. BELOW LEFT: Engines roaring, Japanese Aichi "Val" dive-bombers and Mitsubishi Zero fighters await the signal for takeoff from the deck of the aircraft carrier *Shokaku* during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands on October 26, 1942. BELOW RIGHT: Under attack by American dive-bombers, the Japanese cruiser *Chikuma* maneuvers violently on October 26, 1942. Damage and a plume of smoke from the impact of a 1,000-pound bomb are faintly visible amidships.**

National Archives

National Archives

Other SBD pilots intercepted the message as well. Lieutenant Stockton Strong and his wingman, Ensign Charles Irvine, on another leg of the search, turned toward the position indicated by Commander Lee and found the Japanese task force at 7:30. Strong spotted two narrow, light-brown flight decks far below—*Shokaku* and *Zuiho*. *Zuikaku* was only a few miles away and would have been within visual range, but she was hidden by cloud cover.

The two SBD pilots realized that they had just enough fuel to make one attack. *Zuiho* was the nearest carrier. Both pilots split their diving flaps and rolled their SBDs into steep dives toward the flight deck that expanded in their bomb sights. At about 1,500 feet, they released their bombs and pulled out of their dives. Both bombs hit their targets. A 50-foot crater was opened in the flight deck aft, knocking the carrier out of the battle just as it began. When Strong and Irvine landed aboard *Enterprise* two hours later, they had just enough fuel to make it back to the ship.

All of *Enterprise*'s search planes made it back safely. But Stone and Irvine had something else to report. *Zuiho*'s flight deck had been empty when they made their attack, meaning that her air group had already been launched. Japanese search planes, including the Kate spotted by *Enterprise*'s scouts, had discovered *Hornet* and her group at about 7:30. *Shokaku, Zuikaku,* and *Zuiho* had sent a 65-plane strike at about 8:15. These carriers were also preparing a second strike of 44 planes. Thanks to Strong and Irvine, *Zuiho* had already withdrawn, escorted by two destroyers.

**The American carriers did not launch their first** strike until about 8:30, when *Enterprise* and *Hornet* sent a total of 73 aircraft. Most of the planes were from *Hornet*; *Enterprise* contributed nine Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo planes, three SBDs armed with long 1,000-pound bombs, and an escort of eight Grumman F4F Wildcat fighters. The rest of *Enterprise*'s SBDs were either just returning from the morning's scouting duties or were on antisubmarine patrol.

The American air groups had flown about 60 miles and were still climbing when Nagumo's first strike passed overhead, flying in the opposite direction. At 8:40, nine "Zero" fighters from *Zuiho* dove at the strike force from *Enterprise*. Because fuel was being conserved for the estimated 200-mile flight to the enemy, the strike groups just flew straight toward the enemy and did not spend the time and gasoline to form up into a unit. Instead, the flights from *Enterprise* and *Hornet* proceeded individually and were strung out over a distance of several miles. This lack of formation made things much easier for the attacking Zeroes.

The Japanese fighters attacked the Avengers from *Enterprise* with 20mm cannon and 7.7mm machine guns. Diving out of the sun, the Zeroes immediately shot down two of the unsuspecting Avengers and damaged two others so badly that they had to turn back. After their first run, the Zeroes turned back and shot down two Wildcats and damaged another, forcing it to return to *Enterprise* with the two shot-up TBFs.

The air battle was not one-sided. Gunners aboard the TBFs shot down three of the attacking Zeroes. Lt. Cmdr. James Flatley, leader of *Enterprise*'s Fighting 10, shot another Zero into the sea, and the surviving Wildcats accounted for two more. The remaining Japanese fighters had run out of ammunition and turned back, leaving the first Japanese strike with an escort of only 12 Zeroes.

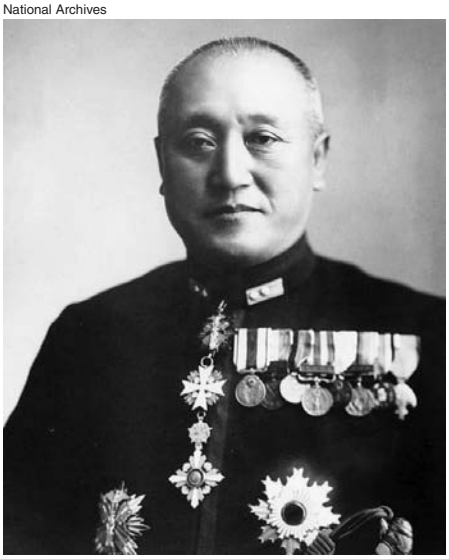
Each task group commander had surrounded his precious flight decks with supporting battleships and cruisers, each carrying a formidable number of antiaircraft guns, and covered them with combat air patrols (CAP) of circling fighters to take care of any attackers that broke through the withering antiaircraft barrage.

Nerves were tense, fingers rested lightly on triggers, and eyes scanned the sky for dark specks of approaching enemy aircraft.

The Japanese air strike was the first to arrive, since it was also the first launched. Radar operators aboard the American ships made contact with the approaching aircraft at 8:40, but had difficulties in separating friend from foe as the outgoing American groups and incoming Japanese strike were too close together and on a reciprocal course. First verification was not received until 8:57, when the enemy were only 45 miles out on a bearing of 280 degrees. Two minutes later, Wildcat pilots of the CAP spotted Aichi "Val" dive-bombers at 17,000 feet making directly for the American task force.

Japanese pilots spotted *Hornet* at about 8:55, but *Enterprise* was hidden by a rain squall 10 miles to the northeast. *Enterprise* had a repu-

National Archives

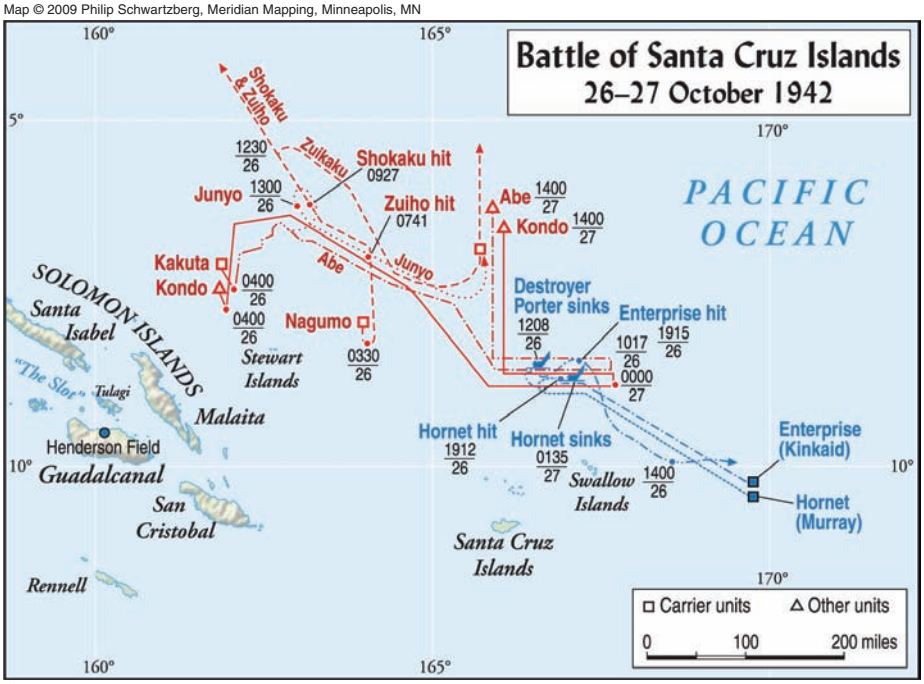


tation for being a lucky ship; her good luck would not desert her on this particular day. *Hornet*'s fighter director did his best to place the 37 Wildcats of the CAP directly in the path of the enemy, but they found themselves below the incoming strike. The fighters were too close to the task group—at 22,000 feet and only 10 miles out—and too far out of position to be of much use in defending *Hornet*.

*Hornet*'s captain, Charles P. Mason, ordered a change of course, attempting to get out of the way of the incoming attack, and increased speed to 31 knots. The cruisers *Pensacola* and *Northampton* steamed just ahead, while the light cruisers *San Juan* and *Juneau* followed along on the carrier's quarters. Six escorting destroyers tried to be everywhere at once. All of these ships kept pace with *Hornet* as her rudder was put over hard, spoiling the aim of the Val pilots.

Gunners aboard *Hornet* and her escorts put






**ABOVE: While the Japanese may have won a tactical victory during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands, they suffered serious losses in aircraft and pilots, while two aircraft carriers were seriously damaged. The U.S. Navy lost the aircraft carrier *Hornet,* while the *Enterprise* was also damaged. The Japanese effort to recapture Guadalcanal was simultaneously thwarted on land. LEFT: Vice Admiral Nobutake Kondo commanded the advanced force of the Imperial Japanese Navy during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands.**

up an antiaircraft barrage that was truly murderous. The sky above the carrier went black with the smoke from exploding shells. The first two Vals dropped their bombs at fairly low altitude, but both missed, exploding off the starboard side, adjacent the carrier's island. The two dive-bombers that dropped them followed their bombs into the sea, riddled by antiaircraft fire. But there were too many of them. Captain Mason estimated that 27 aircraft attacked his ship, and they were flown by determined, veteran pilots. The gunners had no chance of shooting down every dive-bomber.

At 9:12, *Hornet* was hit by a 550-pound bomb just abreast of the island, almost dead center of the flight deck. The bomb passed through the hangar deck and exploded in the space below. A few moments later, two more bombs hit between the aft elevator and amidships. One exploded on the third deck; the other blew a 7-by-11-foot hole in the flight deck and killed the crews of adjacent antiaircraft batteries. At 9:14, the Japanese squadron commander deliberately flew his crippled Val into *Hornet*'s island, which instantly covered the signal bridge with a blanket of burning gasoline. What remained of the Val and its crew, complete with 550-pound bomb, ended its journey in *Hornet*'s gallery deck, where it started a small but intense fire. All of this happened within the space of about five minutes.

To make matters even worse, torpedo-carrying Kates began their attacks. Actually, they were not supposed to begin their runs until after the Vals made their drops and left the area, but this lack of coordination came as cold comfort to *Hornet* and her crew. Two torpedoes hit the carrier on her starboard side at 9:15, about 20 seconds apart. The first hit the engine room, opening a four-foot hole below the water line; the second exploded against the starboard quarter, where the watertight compartments prevented any major damage.

Toward the end of the attack, *Hornet* became the victim of a second suicide pilot. Two accounts of this attack exist. The first claims that a Kate came in from astern, crashed just below the forward port gun gallery, and came to rest at the base of the forward elevator pit. The other states that the Kate made its suicide run from dead ahead, crashed into the port gun gallery, and blew up near the forward elevator shaft. Both accounts agree that *Hornet*'s forward elevator was put out of action by the explosion.

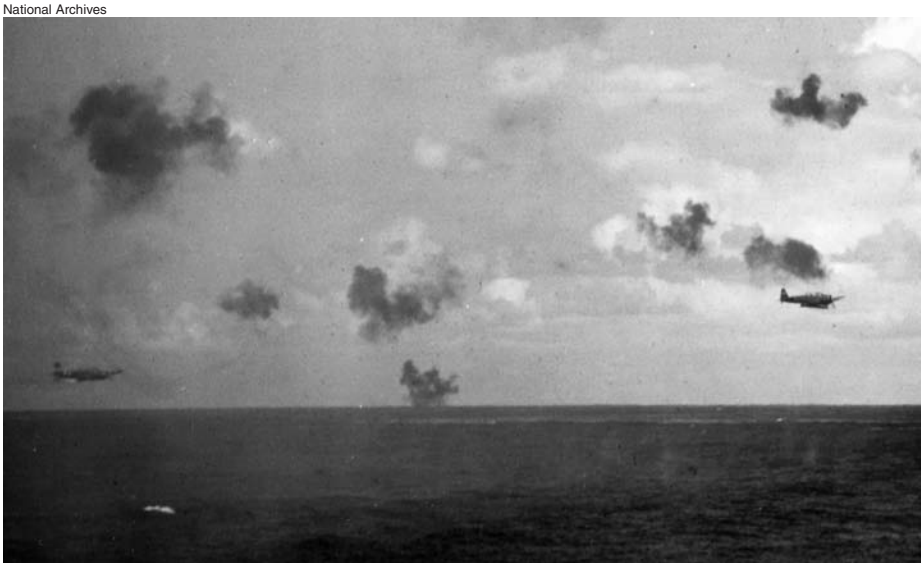
**At 9:25, the attack finally ended. Men blinked,** shook their heads, and took a deep breath. After all the noise, the sudden silence seemed unreal. The firing and explosions seemed to have gone on forever, but it had been only 15 minutes since the antiaircraft fire began.

*Hornet* was badly damaged during those 15 minutes. She was on fire and dead in the water, with an eight-degree list to starboard. All power

had also been knocked out, which meant that the fire pumps were not able to keep the fires from spreading, much less put them out. But damage control, under Commander Edward P. Creehan, went to work to bring the ship back on an even keel and used hand pumps and fire extinguishers to keep the fires at bay.

The Japanese air groups suffered heavily from both antiaircraft fire and fighters as 38 of the 53 attacking aircraft had been destroyed. Sixteen out of 20 Kates had been shot down, along with 17 of 21 Vals and five of the 12 Zeroes. If the CAP had been positioned properly, even more of the attackers would have been destroyed and *Hornet* probably would not have been as badly mauled. The fighters shot down most of the Vals after they dropped their bombs.

National Archives



**ABOVE: A U.S. Navy combat photographer aboard the cruiser *Pensacola* captured this image of Japanese torpedo bombers attacking the aircraft carrier *Hornet*. Although her escorts and combat air patrol resisted valiantly, *Hornet* was lost. OPPOSITE: A stricken Japanese aircraft crashes into the carrier *Hornet* during action off the Santa Cruz Islands. The Japanese plane demolished the carrier's signal bridge. This photo was also taken from the deck of the *Pensacola*.**

Just as *Hornet* was being savaged by Admiral Nagumo's aircraft, *Hornet*'s pilots were preparing to return the compliment. Her first strike group of 15 SBDs and four Wildcats, led by Lt. Cmdr. William "Gus" Widhelm, sighted the Japanese carriers at about 9:15. Fourteen Zeroes of the CAP intercepted the attackers, while Widhelm was busy broadcasting several sighting reports to *Hornet* and *Enterprise* and to the TBF torpedo planes approaching the target area.

The Wildcat pilots managed to keep the Zeroes from interfering with the dive-bombers, while the SBDs helped their own cause by defending themselves. When the Zero pilots attacked the SBDs, they had a very nasty surprise in store: the dive-bombers were armed with twin .30-caliber machine guns, and their rear gunners knew how to use them. Attacking Japanese fighters found themselves confronting a stream of .30-caliber machine-gun fire. One of the Zero pilots managed to hit Widhelm's engine, but Widhelm kept on course until his engine stopped running. He spiralled down to make a water landing, inflated his rubber raft, and, after the SBD sank, sat up and watched the battle with his rear gunner.

**They certainly had quite a performance to see.** The remaining SBDs, now under Lieutenant James Vose, pushed their way past the Zeroes until they were directly over *Shokaku,* the nearest carrier. From 12,000 feet the pilots could see smoke coming out of the two holes of nearby *Zuiho*'s flight deck. Eleven dive-bombers pushed over into steep dives and did not release their 1,000-pound bombs until they were only 600 to 900 feet above their target.

Widhelm claimed to have seen the carrier hit by six bombs. Lieutenant Vose claimed four hits. Japanese reports vary, mentioning between three and six hits. *Shokaku*'s flight deck now resembled the surface of the moon. From her midships elevator to the stern, the deck was a series of ragged, smoking craters. The hangar deck below was in ruins, and all antiaircraft batteries on the after part of the flight deck had been put out of action.

Damage control had about a dozen fire hoses ready around the periphery of the flight deck. As soon as the attack ended, the hoses were turned on the flames, which helped to keep damage to a minimum. There was no possibility of landing her air group, or what was left of it, but *Shokaku* lost little speed, even though near misses opened seams and caused some flooding.

*Shokaku*'s story might not have had such an encouraging conclusion if *Hornet*'s six torpedo planes had picked up any of Widhelm's sighting reports. (Widhelm and his gunner would be rescued by a Catalina flying boat two days after the battle.) The TBFs never even saw the carriers. Instead, they attacked the cruiser *Tone* unsuccessfully, with a loss of three of aircraft. *Shokaku* would be out of the war for nine months.

*Hornet*'s fire control crew had also more than done its job. With the help of the escorting destroyers *Morris* and *Russell,* which drew alongside and trained their hoses on the burning carrier, the fires were brought under control by 10 AM. Wounded crewmen had also been taken off, while the "black gang" did its best to relight three of the boilers and restore power. The *Northampton* left *Hornet*'s escort screen to take the carrier in tow and lead her out of the battle area. But while the towline was being rigged, the second wave of Japanese bombers arrived.

While *Hornet*'s crew was still fighting fires, *Enterprise*'s radar picked up a large formation of hostile aircraft at 23 miles and closing. Although the CAP covering Task Force 16 consisted of 21 Wildcats, they were out of position again—too far below the incoming attackers. Surviving Japanese pilots from the first wave had seen *Enterprise* emerge from the storm clouds as they turned for home. The pilots of the second wave saw *Hornet* dead in the water and decided to concentrate on *Enterprise.*

At about this time, *Enterprise* lost one of her screening destroyers because of a freak accident. One of the TBFs that had been damaged by Zeroes from *Zuiho* made a hard water landing. The impact of the crash jarred the torpedo loose and sent it toward the destroyer *Porter,* which did not have enough time to outturn the torpedo. The explosion killed 15 men and left the destroyer completely without power. The crew was taken off by the destroyer *Shaw,* which had her bow blown off at Pearl Harbor more than 10 months earlier. *Shaw* withdrew from *Enterprise*'s screen and sank the heavily damaged *Porter* with her five-inch guns.

Even without two of her destroyers, *Enterprise* was still heavily defended. Both the carrier and the battleship *South Dakota* had new 40mm antiaircraft guns. Mounted in batteries of four, these would prove lethal against attacking enemy aircraft. *Portland* and *San Juan* were also heavily armed—*San Juan* had 16 five-inch guns, as many as *South Dakota.*

Gunners aboard every ship in *Enterprise*'s

group, as well as aboard *Enterprise* herself, watched the Vals grow steadily larger in their sights. An *Enterprise* pilot saw *San Juan* open up with all her guns and thought that the cruiser had been hit and exploded. At 10:15 the Vals were directly overhead. Gunners aboard *Enterprise* had the easiest shooting because each enemy dive-bomber that dove at the carrier was coming directly down the barrels of her guns.

The Vals came straight at *Enterprise*. Captain Osborne B. Hardison ordered the rudder over full to spoil their aim, holding his helmet with his left hand as he stared straight up at the diving aircraft. *South Dakota* kept pace with the carrier, matching *Enterprise*'s every turn and putting up a roaring barrage at the enemy. One or two of the bombers were literally blown apart by the sheer volume of gunfire.

But, as had been the case with *Hornet* earlier, there were too many Japanese planes, and their pilots were too determined. The ship's executive officer, John Crommelin, standing on the bridge close to Captain Hardison, watched one particular Val push over into her dive. To no one in particular, he calmly announced, "I think that son of a bitch is going to get us."

**It was a prescient observation. The Val's 550-**pound bomb hit the forward flight deck at 10:17, punched through the forecastle deck overhanging the sea, and exited the ship's hull before exploding in the open air, just above the water and close to the port bow. Shrapnel sprayed the port side. The explosion blew a parked SBD over the side along with a sailor who was manning the twin .30-caliber guns in the rear seat. The deck crew pushed another SBD over the side. It had caught fire, and its 500-pound bomb was in danger of going off.

Less than a minute later, a second bomb hit. It landed just aft of the forward elevator and broke in two sections. The rear half penetrated the flight deck and exploded in the hangar below, destroying or badly damaging several planes. The heavier forward end went through two more decks before detonating, killing 40 men instantly. Several small fires were set in the officers' quarters, sending dense smoke into the hangar deck and out through the hole above it.

A third bomb exploded in the water about 10 feet from *Enterprise*'s starboard side at 10:19. The concussion shook the carrier the full length of her 800 feet, violently enough to spill mercury from the master gyroscope, crack open a fuel tank, jar machinery and equipment from their foundations, and rotate the entire foremast one-half inch, which threw every antenna mounted on it completely out of alignment. Just about every man standing was knocked off his feet, and another SBD was blown overboard.

In spite of everything, *Enterprise* still maintained 27 knots, although she was leaking a trail of fuel oil from her ruptured tank. Fire control worked hard to put out the fires around No. 1 elevator. The wounded were also tended in the battle dressing stations. Captain Hardison gave permission to counterflood, so that the list to starboard caused by the near miss could be corrected. Of the 19 Vals that had taken off, 10 had been shot down and two others ditched.

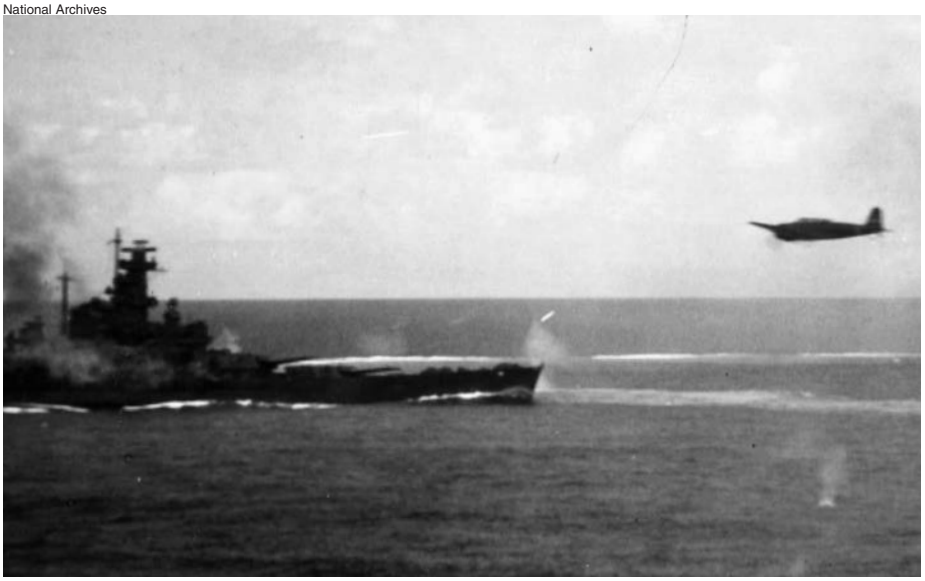
About 15 minutes after the last Val made its attack, *Enterprise*'s radar picked up another group of incoming enemy planes, 16 Kates from *Zuikaku*. These were supposed to have arrived at the same time as the Vals but had been delayed during the reloading of their torpedoes. Now they appeared off *Enterprise*'s bows in two groups.

Captain Hardison held his course, waiting to see which group would drop its torpedoes first and hoping that antiaircraft fire would take its toll on the enemy planes. The Kates came in low, and four of the 16 were disposed of before the pilots could get within range for an effective drop. The five remaining Kates made their drops on *Enterprise*'s starboard side and turned away. Captain Hardison ordered right full rudder. *Enterprise*'s bow swung to the right until it was running parallel with the bubbling wakes. The torpedoes passed along the carrier's port side, about 30 feet away, on a reciprocal course. Five more Kates tried to get into position on *Enterprise*'s port side, but Hardison kept turning until the carrier's narrow stern was the best target the torpedo planes could hope for. Two dropped their torpedoes in desperation; both missed. The other three were shot down by antiaircraft fire.

One of the Kates, on fire and smoking, deliberately crashed into the destroyer *Smith* at 10:48. The plane hit the forward five-inch mount, and flames from burning gasoline covered the bridge. Attempts to contain the fires were hindered by a large explosion, which was probably the Kate's torpedo warhead detonating. The destroyer's speed was unimpaired, and the captain decided to take up position directly astern of *South Dakota*. The battleship's wake

National Archives

National Archives



helped put out the fires. It was the third suicide attack of the morning.

Of the 16 Kates, nine had been shot down and another ditched. The attack might have been a lot more successful if it had not been for *Enterprise* fighter pilot Lieutenant Stanley W. "Swede" Vejtasa and his wingman, Lieutenant Dave Harris. Vejtasa had already accounted for a Val before it could dive on *Hornet* and was credited with destroying a second Val after its pilot had dropped its bomb. As the Kates were approaching *Enterprise,* Vejtasa immediately caught sight of them.

**Vejtasa and Harris made a side approach on** the nearest Kates. The torpedo bombers had already begun their runs at *Enterprise* when Vejtasa and Harris made their attack. Each pilot blew up a Kate with his six .50-caliber machine guns and used his speed to overtake a three-plane formation just as it flew into a cloud bank. The Americans became separated in the clouds, but Vejtasa managed to keep the enemy planes in sight. One at a time, he flew close behind his intended target, fired a short burst, and watched the Kate catch fire and fall away. All three planes were disposed of in a matter of a few minutes.

Vejtasa saw another Kate above and to his left. He pulled his nose up and fired a burst at his target, but he did not think he scored any hits. The Kate dove out of the clouds, but Vejtasa did not follow. It was too high to make an effective drop, so Vejtasa decided to leave it to the antiaircraft gunners. This was the plane that crashed into the destroyer *Smith*.

Almost out of ammunition by this time, Vejtasa fired his remaining rounds at a Kate that was withdrawing after dropping its torpedo. The Kate was low on the water, trying to avoid antiaircraft fire. Vejtasa dove on it and sent the plane spinning into the sea. This was his seventh enemy aircraft destroyed that morning—five Kates and two Vals.

*Enterprise* had been saved by the seamanship of Captain Hardison, whose skill in maneuvering frustrated the aim of every Japanese pilot. But Swede Vejtasa prevented five additional Kate pilots from dropping their torpedoes at *Enterprise,* and Harris shot down a sixth.

Following the departure of the Kates, *Enterprise*'s crew began cleaning up the damage from the bomb hits. At about 11:15, the carrier began taking her aircraft aboard. In spite of the damage to the flight deck that made landing hazardous, several planes made their approach from astern, dropped onto the deck, and taxied forward out of the way. *South Dakota*'s radar picked up yet another incoming Japanese air strike. The other pilots rolled up their wheels and banked away until the attack ended.

This was the first wave from *Junyo,* 17 Vals and 12 Zeroes. The leader of the Japanese fighter escort, Lieutenant Yoshio Shiga, spotted a large carrier and pushed his throttle forward. His orders were to stay with the bombers and leave the Wildcats alone until they attacked the Vals. He followed the lead bomber in its dive on *Enterprise,* but lost him. The Val had dive brakes to slow its rate of descent, but the Zero had no flaps, and Shiga had to go into a tight loop to keep from overshooting. Several of the Vals dropped their bombs, but Shiga saw all of them miss.

Antiaircraft fire destroyed eight Vals, while *Enterprise* turned sharply to starboard to evade the falling bombs. One bomb bounced off the carrier's hull as she heeled over in the turn and exploded about eight feet away. For the second time that morning, the entire ship whiplashed from the concussion of a near-miss. And once again, everyone was knocked to the deck. Two compartments below the waterline were opened to the sea. The main antenna was shaken, knocking out the carrier's search radar. The forward elevator, which had already been damaged, was now jammed in the up position.

Some of *Junyo*'s Vals decided to leave *Enterprise* alone and attack her escorts instead. *South Dakota* became the target for several dive-bombers. Most of the pilots missed, sending columns of water spouting higher than the battleship's masts, but one of the pilots hit his mark. A 550-pound bomb struck Number 1 turret and exploded. The turret was so heavily armoured that its crew, except for an officer at the periscope, were not even aware of the fact that they had been hit. Fragments killed two men and injured about 50, including Captain

## JAPANESE SUICIDE ATTACKS

The deliberate crashing into enemy targets by Japanese aviators did not begin at the Battle of Santa Cruz Islands. The first suicide attack against American shipping took place at Pearl Harbor, over eight months earlier, when a bomber crashed into the seaplane tender *Curtiss* and set her on fire. Attacks of this kind, including the crashes into *Hornet* and the destroyer *Smith,* were known as *kesshi,* "dare to die tactics."

Skip-bombing and ramming were also adopted. Skip-bombing involved fitting a Zero fighter with a 550-pound bomb, which was to be released 200 to 300 yards from an enemy ship. These were not exactly suicide tactics, although they were extremely hazardous. The bomb might bounce up and hit the Zero, or the explosion of the bomb could destroy the plane. A training program for skip-bombing was carried out in the Bohol Strait, near Cebu, but all training was stopped in September 1944, when American aircraft destroyed 50 percent of the air group.

Deliberately crashing into an enemy target was not limited to shipping; it was used successfully against enemy planes as well. A Japanese flight sergeant rammed his fighter into a B-17 Flying Fortress bomber on May 8, 1943. He was protecting a convoy off the coast of New Guinea and made the decision to kill himself and take the American bomber and its crew with him. Over a year later, the pilot of a two-man Nakajima Gekko

Thomas L. Gatch, the battleship's captain. While steering was shifted to Battle 2, the executive officer's station aft, the telephone went dead and *South Dakota*, temporarily out of control, headed straight for *Enterprise*. Captain Hardison saw what was happening and quickly maneuvered his ship safely out of the way.

***San Juan* was also hit, but did not get off quite** so easily. An armor-piercing bomb punched through her hull about three feet above the waterline and exited through the ship's bottom before exploding. The burst flooded three or four compartments and left the rudder jammed full right. Before steering was restored, which took about 13 minutes but seemed a lot longer, the cruiser steamed in a circle.

Eleven of the 17 Vals never returned to *Junyo*. All 12 Zeroes returned, however, with inflated claims of a dozen American planes destroyed. Inflated reports were not just limited to the Japanese, though. Gun crews aboard *South Dakota* claimed to have shot down 26 enemy aircraft—nine more than the actual number of Vals that had been launched.

As the Japanese left the area, *Enterprise* resumed taking her aircraft aboard. Fighters and dive-bombers were given precedence over the longer-range Avengers, which had a much greater fuel capacity, but several planes had to ditch. The jammed forward elevator slowed the landing process, since it made shifting planes down to the hangar deck impossible. The flight deck, packed with aircraft, quickly became overcrowded. To make matters even worse, Number 2 elevator was temporarily jammed in the down position, which left a gaping hole in the flight deck amidships. Incoming pilots were forced to taxi slowly around the hole on their way forward.

ullstein bild

**ABOVE: Heavily damaged, the destroyer USS *Smith* survived the crash of a Japanese torpedo bomber, which slammed into its forecastle. OPPOSITE: Repelled by heavy antiaircraft fire during an attack on the carrier USS *Enterprise,* a Japanese torpedo bomber instead moves into position to attack the battleship USS *South Dakota,* whose bow is seen creating a white wake as it slices through the water.**

By early afternoon, *Enterprise*'s deck was so jammed with aircraft, including orphans from *Hornet,* that 13 SBDs were sent off to a land base at Espiritu Santo. Also, several planes were lowered to the hangar deck via the after Number 3 elevator, which made just enough room to get the last Avenger aboard.

While escorting destroyers picked up the crewmen from ditched aircraft, *Enterprise*'s crew began to repair the damage that had been done that morning. The radar officer, Lieutenant Brad Williams, climbed the mast with his toolbox and actually began repairing the radar while antiaircraft gunners below him were still firing at the diving Vals. The bomb that bounced off *Enterprise*'s starboard side left him deafened for weeks. He could actually see it as it fell. It came so close that it looked spherical, like a ball, because he could see only its rounded forward end.

Williams tried to repair the antenna and its drive motor with one hand gripping the antenna, but he quickly found that he needed both hands for the job. So he tied himself to the aerial, which allowed him to use two hands. He worked as quickly as he could, but he was slowed considerably by the soot and salt that corroded the bolts and kept them from turning. It took quite a while, but Williams finally got everything to work. As soon as the radar screen lit up, an officer in the radar compartment switched on the antenna's motor, and the radar antenna resumed its 360-degree sweep.

Unfortunately, Brad Williams was still tied to it. He also began making 360-degree sweeps. His angry shouts of protest were drowned out by the guns and the noise of battle. After a few minutes of this, an officer on the bridge caught sight of Williams and quickly came to the conclusion that his majestic sweeps around the mainmast were purely unintentional. Except for his hearing, which eventually came back, Williams was no worse for his adventure, and

night fighter (codenamed "Irving" by the Allies) used the same tactics to bring down a B-24 Liberator bomber.

Most of these suicide attacks were spontaneous actions—a pilot making a heat-of-battle decision to end his own life by destroying an enemy ship or airplane. But as Japan's chances of winning the war became less and less likely, the strategy of suicide grew in direct proportion. Informal discussions of organized suicide attack began in 1943. In March of that year, the chief of the Army Aeronautical Department, Takeo Yasuda, secretly established a Special Attack Corps training program—a forerunner of the kamikaze corps.

The commander of the First Air Fleet, Kimpei Teraoka, made these telling observations: "Ordinary tactics are ineffective. We must be superhuman in order to win the war." On the subject of suicide units, he commented, "If all air units do it, surface units will also be inclined to take part."

Teraoka was right—the idea of the suicide attack unit spread. Admiral Soemu Toyoda, commander in chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy, was won over by what has been called the "vanity of heroism" and officially consented to the creation of the Special Attack Corps, or the kamikaze. The Special Attack Corp's slogan was "One plane, one warship."

Pilots did not have to be highly trained to undertake suicide missions. In fact, suicide pilots usually received only the minimum of flight training. Kamikaze pilots sank or damaged hundreds of ships during the latter part of the war. □

*Enterprise* could scan the horizon for enemy aircraft again.

While *Enterprise*'s prospects were looking brighter as the day went on, *Hornet*'s difficulties showed no signs of ending. She was listing, still on fire, and dead in the water, although the fires had been brought under control. At 11:45, her escorting destroyers *Russell* and *Hughes* removed all wounded and nonessential crewmen, about 875 men. Some of the remaining crewmen dragged a two-inch towing cable out of *Hornet*'s after elevator well and transferred it to *Northampton*. The line held, and the carrier was being pulled along at a speed of three knots. At the same time, engineers were on the verge of getting *Hornet*'s engines to begin supplying power. But at 2:55, another incoming air strike was detected.

The attack consisted of seven Kates and eight Zeroes from *Junyo*. By this time, after losing nearly 100 aircraft in the course of their morning offensives, the Japanese did not have many planes to send after *Hornet*—of the 15 launched from *Junyo,* five were her own and 10 belonged to *Shokaku*. But *Hornet* had no aircraft at all for a CAP since all had joined *Enterprise,* and the antiaircraft cruiser *Juneau* left for *Enterprise*'s group because of misunderstood orders. The carrier was an easy target for any planes the Japanese could scrape together.

Two of the Kates concentrated on *Northampton*. For the second time that day, the cruiser cut the tow line. The captain ordered a hard left turn, presenting the cruiser's stern to the incoming Japanese aircraft. Both Kates dropped their torpedoes, and both missed.

**The other five Kates went after *Hornet*. Two** of them went into the sea with huge splashes, while two Zeroes were also shot down and three others never made it back to their carrier. However, *Hornet* was too easy a target, and it seems odd that only one torpedo hit her. At 3:23, it struck the starboard side just aft of the first hit. The damage done by this torpedo made restoring power a lost cause and increased the list to starboard to 14 degrees. The captain ordered the crew to stand by to abandon ship.

At 3:40, two more Vals arrived. Their bombs missed. Fifteen minutes later, six Kates, flying in a perfect V formation, made a horizontal bombing attack on the listing carrier. One scored a hit on the starboard after corner of the flight deck, inflicting little additional damage.

By this time, the flight deck had an 18-degree list, and the crew was having a hard time standing upright. The men began abandoning ship in an orderly manner. Captain Mason was the last to leave at 4:27. Just over half an hour later, four more Vals appeared with an escort of six Zeroes. With no CAP and only moderate antiaircraft fire to disturb their aim, the Vals scored one hit. The bomb exploded on the hangar deck and started a small fire. Soon after this last attack of the day, rescue operations came to an end. The number of dead and fatally wounded came to 118 officers and men.

*Hornet* had not been home to her crew for years and years, the way some of the battleships sunk at Pearl Harbor had been. The aircraft carrier was barely a year old, commissioned on October 20, 1941. But most of the men had been through a lot of war with their ship, including launching the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo in April and playing a major role in the Battle of Midway less than two months later. They knew exactly what Japanese carrier-based aircraft could do, having seen their sister ship *Yorktown* sunk at Midway. Some of the men broke down and cried as they sailed off aboard escort destroyers and left *Hornet* behind, listing and abandoned.

Admiral Halsey had ordered a general withdrawal at 3:50. Japanese surface forces consisting of battleships and cruisers were advancing toward *Hornet*. There was now no alternative to destroying the carrier, which was in a hopeless predicament. Captain Murray assigned the destroyer *Mustin* the task of sinking *Hornet,* while the rest of the group left the area at high speed. *Mustin* fired eight torpedoes at the carrier, but American torpedoes were not

National Archives

**ABOVE: Geysers from antiaircraft shells churn the water surrounding the USS *Hornet* as Japanese torpedo- and dive-bombers attempt coordinated attacks on the American warship. OPPOSITE: Making an emergency landing while the *Enterprise* is under attack by planes from the Japanese carrier *Junyo,* this Grumman F4F Wildcat skids across the flight deck.**

of the highest quality at this stage of the war. Of the eight, one exploded prematurely, two ran erratically, and five hit but only three exploded. The destroyer *Anderson* was next, hitting her target with six of eight torpedoes. *Hornet* still remained afloat.

Both destroyers were now out of torpedoes and had to resort to using their five-inch guns. Between the two of them, *Mustin* and *Anderson* hit the carrier more than 300 times. During this gunnery exercise, the radar operators of both ships were becoming increasingly aware of the presence of Japanese scouting planes that had been launched from approaching cruisers. By 8:40 PM, *Hornet* was burning furiously. Satisfied that the carrier was finished, even though she had not sunk, the two destroyers left the area at top speed. Flares from Japanese float planes hurried them on their way.

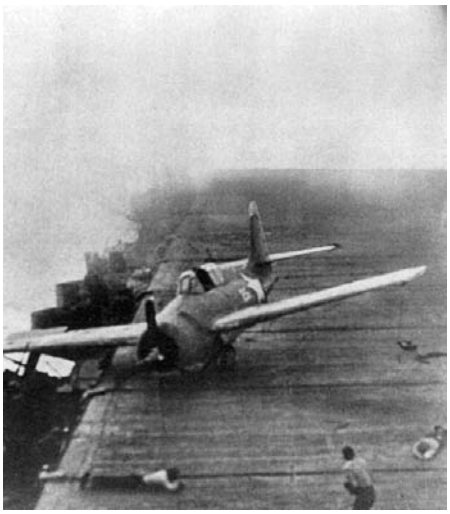
At 9:20, a Japanese signal was decoded which instructed the oncoming forces to capture and tow the derelict carrier, which was the last thing in the world the Americans wanted or expected. When the destroyers *Akigumo* and *Makikumo* arrived on the scene just 20 minutes after *Anderson* and *Mustin* had departed, they quickly discovered that the burning *Hornet* was in no condition to be towed. Instead, each destroyer fired two Long Lance torpedoes at the carrier. All four hit. At 1:35 AM, on October 27, 1942, *Hornet* finally rolled over and sank. The bottom was three miles down.

**Except for a brief postlude as torpedo-carrying** Catalinas from Espiritu Santo attacked and badly frightened *Zuikaku* and damaged the destroyer *Teruzuki,* the Battle of Santa Cruz was over. Admiral Yamamoto ordered Japanese naval forces north, to their anchorage at Truk, because of a fuel shortage that was becoming critical. American forces withdrew southward, toward Noumea. Throughout the trip, *Enterprise*'s construction and repair division worked to restore the carrier's lights and power.

For the Japanese, the initial reaction was relief and elation. They had sunk an American aircraft carrier and had not lost any ships of their own. Soon, however, this outlook began to change.

"The battle was a tactical win, but a shattering strategic loss for Japan," noted Admiral Nagumo, who was relieved of his command shortly after the battle and assigned to shore duty in Japan. "Considering the great superiority of our enemy's industrial capacity, we must win every battle overwhelmingly. This last one, unfortunately, was not an overwhelming victory."

The loss of *Hornet* did make Santa Cruz a



tactical victory for Japanese forces. The U.S. Navy now had only one carrier, *Enterprise,* in the entire Pacific Theater, and she was badly damaged. Even though Admiral Nagumo's fleet had not lost any ships, the victory was a costly one for Japan. Both *Shokaku* and *Zuiho* had also suffered severe damage and had to return to Japan for repairs. *Zuiho* returned to the fleet in January 1943. *Shokaku* was not fully repaired and restored until July 1943, when she was reunited with *Zuikaku* at Truk.

For the Japanese, the loss of two carriers for several months paled in comparison to the permanent loss of experienced pilots and aircrew. So many airmen were killed that the undamaged *Zuikaku* and *Junyo* also had to return to Japan. They did not have enough trained pilots, including senior squadron commanders, to carry on with operations. Of the 148 aircrew that were lost in the course of the battle, two were dive-bomber group leaders, three were torpedo squadron leaders, and 18 were section leaders. An overwhelming 40 percent of all torpedo bomber aircrew were lost, along with 39 percent of dive-bomber crews and 20 percent of fighter pilots. The skills of these men would never be matched by their replacements.

American fliers could not help but notice this decline in the quality of Japanese carrier aviators. An American destroyer commander noted that he could see "no diminution in the courage and daring of the individual pilot," but he did note "a most marked decrease in skill" compared with the fliers he had seen at Coral Sea and Midway.

At the same time, American pilots were becoming better at their trade because of advanced training methods and equipment. They were learning to shoot better, how to put their bombs and torpedoes on their targets with better accuracy, and generally how to outperform their Japanese counterparts. Throughout the rest of the war, the tactics of American pilots would continue to improve while the quality of Japanese pilots declined. Aerial combat would become increasingly one-sided.

Although *Hornet* would be missed, especially during the remainder of the Guadalcanal campaign, she was by no means irreplaceable. Soon after the battle, a story began making the rounds about two sailors talking to each other as they left the burning carrier. "Are you going to re-enlist?" one asked. The other replied, "Hell, yes—on the new *Hornet*."

It is a nice story, although probably apocryphal, but it certainly turned out to have more than a ring of truth. A new *Hornet* was commissioned just over a year later, on November 29, 1943. She was an Essex-class fleet carrier. Between December 1942 and the end of the war, 19 Essex-class carriers were commissioned. Japan could not hope to produce warships at such a rate. "The Japanese Navy is different from the American Navy," a Japanese admiral had pointed out earlier in the war. "If you lose one ship, it will take years to replace." In short, the American Navy could afford to lose *Hornet*; the Japanese Navy could not replace its losses.

At Santa Cruz, Japan lost its strategic opportunity to deal the American Navy a decisive defeat. The industrial output of the United States was already becoming a factor; by 1943, it would make a Japanese victory in the Pacific impossible. After Santa Cruz, Japanese carriers would no longer play an offensive role in the Solomon Islands campaign. On the other hand, *Enterprise* was back in the Solomons area in early November, supplying Henderson Field on Guadalcanal with fighters, bombers, and torpedo planes. For the next month, she would be the only American aircraft carrier in the Pacific. The next time the crew of *Enterprise* saw another friendly carrier was in December, when *Saratoga* arrived at Noumea. On the hangar deck, Enterprise crewmen had posted a sign: "ENTERPRISE AGAINST JAPAN."

The Guadalcanal campaign was a war of attrition that Japan had no chance of winning. After months of trying to retake the island and losing irreplaceable men and ships in the process, Admiral Yamamoto came to the same conclusion. All Japanese troops were withdrawn from Guadalcanal in February 1943.

An American writer summed up the impact of the Battle of Santa Cruz Islands: "Santa Cruz was a Japanese victory. That victory cost Japan the last best hope to win the war." □

---

*David A. Johnson has written extensively for* WWII History. *He resides in Union, New Jersey.*

# Hirohito's Triumph

## Japan's emperor survived atomic bombs, a palace revolt, and defeat to retain the dynasty's throne for his heirs.

BY BLAINE TAYLOR

It was fated to be the last wartime conference of the Big Three Allies of World War II, but it was the first not attended by the late American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died at age 63 on April 12, 1945. Taking his place was the new president, Harry S. Truman, also 63, whom neither British Prime Minister Winston Churchill nor Soviet Generalissimo Josef Stalin had ever met before.

How would these two seasoned world leaders size up Truman, and how would the former vice president, U.S. senator, and former Missouri judge do opposite them? People wondered.

All photos: National Archives

**Wearing the uniform of the Imperial Japanese Army, Emperor Hirohito, astride his stallion White Snow, reviews troops in this prewar photograph.**

In the event, Truman more than held his own, especially after Churchill was replaced as prime minister on July 26, 1945, by the British Labor Party's Clement Attlee when Churchill's Conservative Party lost the United Kingdom's parliamentary election. Of Attlee, Truman later told Churchill, "He's a modest little bird!" to which Winston replied, "Well, he's got a lot to be modest about!"

Nazi Germany had been soundly defeated two months before, and thus the main item on the agenda at the Potsdam Conference near Berlin was the defeat of Imperial Japan.

Called the Terminal Conference, it took place July 17 through August 2, 1945, and ended four days before the United States dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Japan. It was also the only time that Truman and Stalin, soon to be Cold War adversaries, would ever meet.

During this summit meeting, the fate of the former German Reich was sealed for the next 44 years, as it was divided by the victorious Allies into four zones of occupation, the Western part being French, British, and American, and the Eastern part being Soviet. Thus divided, Germany existed until the early 1950s, when the Western zones united to form the Federal Republic of Germany and the East became the Communist German Democratic Republic. These nations coexisted until German reunification in 1989-1990.

The Japanese delegation during the surrender proceedings aboard the battleship USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945, included Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu and Army Chief of Staff Yoshijiro Umezu (front, left to right). Behind them stand, left to right, Major General Yatsuji Nagai of the Imperial Japanese Army, Katsuo Okazaki of the foreign ministry, Rear Admiral Tadatoshi Tomioka of the Imperial Japanese Navy, Toshikazu Kase of the foreign ministry, and Lieutenant General Suichi Miyakazi of the Imperial Japanese Army.

On July 25, 1945, the Potsdam Declaration was issued, demanding the unconditional surrender of Japan and threatening complete destruction if this was not done. Unknown to the Japanese, but not to Stalin, 10 days earlier the United States had successfully exploded the first atomic device at Alamogordo, New Mexico. Informed of the details of the success of the test, Truman was, in the words of U.S. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, "tremendously pepped up."

In early August, the twin atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and both cities were obliterated in blinding, instant flashes. Moreover, since March, steady firebombing raids by U.S. Army Air Corps General Curtis LeMay's deadly Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber armadas had been destroying Japanese cities, and the Soviets had joined the war on the side of the Allies.

Reluctantly, privately, and in great anguish, Emperor Hirohito, 44, decided that the war must, indeed, be ended, and he therefore called an imperial conference of his top wartime advisers to be convened in his underground air raid shelter on the grounds of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo at 11 AM on August 14.

It was hot, sweaty, and stifling in the shelter as the emperor strode into the entranceway of the concrete structure, camouflaged from view under a hill in the palace's Fukiage Garden, the door covered by hanging tree branches.

The emperor proceeded down a small, darkened hallway, then stepped past a massive door swung open and into the conference hall itself, a small high-ceilinged room with dark, wood-paneled walls. The shelter had been built as an underground attachment of the Gobunko, the emperor's library, where the emperor lived. It

# THE REAL HIROHITO

Was the Japanese emperor a warmonger, pacifist, or both?

He was the longest-reigning monarch and head of state in the 20th century, and the third-longest in history behind King Louis XIV of France (72 years) and England's Queen Victoria (64 years). Indeed, the 62 years of Japan's late Emperor Hirohito on the throne of Japan spanned American presidencies from Calvin Coolidge to Ronald Reagan, from one conservative era to another.

**Japanese War Minister General Hideki Tojo presents a proclamation to Emperor Hirohito following a military review in Tokyo on October 21, 1941, in celebration of the 2,600th anniversary of the founding of the Japanese Empire.**

Those same six decades of his reign witnessed the rise, fall, and subsequent rise again of Japan itself, from one of the world's great military powers, to the depths of bitter defeat, followed by a rebirth from the ashes of two atomic bombs and an economic revival unprecedented in modern history.

Perhaps Hirohito's most notable achievement is that he managed to stay on the throne of his fathers at all. At one time, he was linked in public opinion around the world with his wartime allies, Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler and Italian Fascist ruler Benito Mussolini.

Both of these leaders met violent deaths at the end of their collective war in 1945, while the slight, diminutive emperor alone survived to live and preside at the side of his former enemies.

Moreover, today, while the former imperial and royal ruling houses of the Savoys, Bonapartes, Bourbons, Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, Romanovs, and many others have all passed into history, Hirohito was succeeded as emperor upon his death at age 87 by his son and heir, Crown Prince Akihito.

Indeed, even after a lost war followed by two devastating atomic bombs on the homeland—dropped in part because Hirohito refused to step down—he managed to escape overthrow and trial by his own people.

How was all this possible, and even achieved?

Clearly, Hirohito was something more than the postwar image promoted by the West. He was not a shy, young, inexperienced ruler out of touch with his people and dominated by his own diplomats, politicians, generals, and admirals during World War II.

In this scenario of fable and fancy, the emperor opposed the Japanese militarism of the 1930s that saw the rape of China and Manchuria, as well as the plot to attack the United States and the other Western nations in late 1941, beginning with the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor. Then, at the last minute, after the atomic bombs had been dropped, the reluctant commander in chief stepped forward, asserted his authority at last, and ended the war with secret speeches in private and a public radio broadcast to his people.

No, in truth, Emperor Hirohito likely ruled his nation from the very beginning of his long reign, made the major political, military, and naval decisions of the 1930s and 1940s in concert with his courtiers, and, when the game was up and in order to save both himself and his dynasty, delivered them up to their enemies for both trial and execution. So strong was Hirohito's hold upon them that they agreed willingly and went to their own ignominious deaths and disgrace without betraying his trust, just as had thousands of his soldiers, sailors, and airmen in scattered battles across Asia and the Pacific.

Indeed, an entire nation bent on mass suicide in 1945 and willing to fight on against the whole world and almost certain defeat obeyed his imperial will unflinchingly and accepted what to them was the unacceptable—surrender and humiliation— because he asked them to do so.

"We are keenly aware of the inmost feelings of all ye, Our faithful subjects," he intoned. "However, it is according to the dictate of time and fate that We have resolved to pave the way for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable, and suffering what is insufferable."

The emperor saved what was, for him, the most important news for last. "Having been able to safeguard and maintain the structure of the Imperial state, We are with ye, Our good and loyal subjects … Unite your total strength to be devoted to the construction for the future…and keep pace with the progress of the world…"

**Resplendent in his coronation robes, Emperor Hirohito became ruler of Japan on November 10, 1928.**

As millions of Japanese wept, the broadcast ended.

In the West, the day before had been one of delirious rejoicing as V-J Day had been celebrated, and the real significance of the defeated emperor had been overlooked — but not in Japan.

There, Hirohito's good and loyal subjects understood precisely what he meant. Japan's imperial conspiracy to conquer the Pacific had failed dismally. Hirohito, however, had not formally admitted that fact in his oblique surrender announcement. Nor did he when he met the very embodiment of his conqueror, General Douglas MacArthur, on Sept. 27, 1945,

had a conference room 30 feet long by six feet wide. His throne sat at the head of a long table ringed with chairs.

Attending the imperial conference were the members of the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War: director of the Overall Planning Bureau, Lt. Gen. Sumihisa Ikeda; director of the Bureau of Naval Affairs, Vice Admiral Zenshiro Hoshina; Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo; Navy Minister Admiral Mitsumasa Yonai; president of the Privy Council, Baron Kicharo Hiranuma; chief aide-de-camp to the emperor General Shigeru Hasunuma; Prime Minister Baron Kantaro Suzuki; War Minister General Korechika Anami; Army chief of staff General Yoshijiro Umezu; director of the Bureau of Military Affairs at the War Ministry, Lt. Gen. Masao Yoshizumi; and Chief Cabinet Minister Hisatsune Sakomizu.

On August 9 at 11:50 PM, the same group had met there before, on a hot night without air conditioning, making one delegate note, "Even the wooden panels on the thick stone walls were sweating."

General Umezu, who would later surrender aboard the battleship USS *Missouri*, made the case for a final, apocalyptic battle of Armageddon, in which every Japanese would fight to the death for the emperor. In this view, Umezu was supported by the Navy chief of staff, Admiral Soemu Toyoda.

The opposite case, arguing for surrender on the Allies' terms as enumerated in the Potsdam Declaration, was made by Japanese Foreign Minister Togo amid cries of "Defeatist!" from the men around him.

As at other meetings previously, there was an impasse in the imperial government, one that only the exalted emperor himself could break if

at the latter's headquarters. He even stated he felt his country had been justified in fighting the war. He was, no doubt, referring to the U.S. oil embargo that had precipitated his Navy's call for the Pearl Harbor strike on December 7, 1941.

In his memoirs, MacArthur called Hirohito the "First Gentleman" of Japan, because the emperor had offered himself up for trial, which many in the West at that time believed to be both fitting and proper. MacArthur was right, but for a different reason.

The emperor had ruled Japan in fact since at least 1921 when he had become regent for his ill father, or for 24 years by 1945, and he meant to continue doing just that until he died.

When he died on January 7, 1989, his family still retained the very same Chrysanthemum Throne he had occupied officially in 1928, in the identical Imperial Palace that the Allies failed to bomb during all of World War II. He commanded the same respect from his devoted people that he always had, renunciation of his "divinity" after the lost war notwithstanding.

Hirohito's people still understand this now, just as he knew that they would then. They understood, too, his words about working for the future. Today, the sign of the Imperial chrysanthemum, adopted formally in 1889, still adorns the dynastic cars.

The rising sun flag flutters over the reborn, if admittedly smaller, Japanese Navy, ironically recreated at the express wish of those same Americans who helped destroy its parent more than six decades ago. The Japanese Army, now called the Japan Self-Defense Force, marches again under the flag of a fiery sun ball. The nation's economy makes Japan, after the United States, the former Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China, one of the strongest powers on Earth today.

Far from being a quiet, cautious monarch led by the nose by his more aggressive advisers, Hirohito actually directed his country's massive arms buildup since at least 1929. The U.S. government knows this to be true but has continued to maintain the historic falsehood because succeeding U.S. administrations recognized what the emperor had long ago known—that they would need his help as a counterbalance to first Soviet and then Chinese communism in Asia.

Hirohito, who before and after Pearl Harbor reviewed his marching legions clad in Imperial Army uniform and mounted on White Snow, his gorgeous stallion, knew that he could never defeat the United States and its allies in a long war. It must be done quickly. Thus came the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor, which was hoped would destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Hirohito also hoped that the Nazis and Fascists would hold onto their conquests years longer than they did. He badly miscalculated and did not foresee that the Soviets would destroy the Germans and that Pearl Harbor would spur the Americans on to final victory. He also did not foresee the development of the atomic bombs that were ultimately used against his nation.

Yet, he managed to save his dynasty's right of succession over the generations and to keep himself on the same throne he had previously occupied. And so, the mythical concept of Hirohito, the British-style constitutional monarch of the postwar period, was born out of the ashes of defeat. He shed his uniform and dress samurai sword for the stiff, formal tuxedo attire that he wore to meet General MacArthur.

The busts of Napoleon and Darwin, symbolizing conquest and struggle, disappeared quietly from behind his desk. Another, of Abraham Lincoln, appeared, for the political emperor understood all too well the symbols and trappings of office and power.

His peace faction, created quietly in late 1941 and early 1942 even as the Japanese military reaped undreamed of victories in the Pacific, planned for what to do in case the great gamble fell flat. Thus it was that this strategy was in place and ready to be unveiled in summer 1945.

Hirohito "suffered the insufferable" as his top leaders, Konoye, Sugiyama, and Tanaka, committed suicide or were executed like Tojo, Homma, and Yamashita. These were the men who had acted at his orders and direction, but he allowed them to expire in his behalf so that the imperial house might survive. After the war, Japanese sources revealed that the nation was prepared to fight on even after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki if the Allies had not guaranteed Hirohito's survival as emperor.

Gradually, the respectability Hirohito lost through his reckless war policy returned to Japan and to his own person. In 1971, he toured Europe after an absence of 50 years. He received Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford in Japan, as well as Queen Elizabeth II. However, he did not meet Earl Mountbatten of Burma, who refused to allow any Japanese to be present at his state funeral because of the atrocities committed against British Empire forces during the war.

Incredibly, as late as 1975, three decades after the war, Japanese soldiers were still straggling out of Pacific jungles where they had chosen to stay and fight on alone because they had not known of his order to surrender.

Clearly, this Asian monarch was an extraordinary man, a capable ruler of great gifts and imagination and charisma, and not the passive wimp that creative postwar Allied propaganda would have us believe, a man kept on his throne by the Allies themselves because they understood his unique hold on the Japanese people, a ruler they needed as a future ally. Today, Japan remains a world-class industrial giant, a state with a powerful military presence in Asia once more, and a bulwark against Chinese and North Korean communism.

It has all worked out as the monarch's late adviser, the Marquis Kido, predicted in a top secret memo of December 3, 1940, a full year before Pearl Harbor: "After this world war, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. may ... emerge unhurt, when all other nations are devastated ... Our country may face great hardships.

"However, there is no need to despair. They will grow careless and corrupt. We will simply have to sleep in the woodshed and eat bitter fruits for a few decades. Then, when we have refurbished our manliness inside and out, we may still achieve a favorable result." □

he chose to do so. By 2 AM shirt collars had wilted and pools of moisture had formed on the table where the men's hands were resting.

These were the stunned men who now sat facing the emperor as the elderly prime minister put the decision to his majesty. Hirohito sat quietly, in a brown Army uniform, with his cap resting on the table in front of him, his throne on a small, raised platform in front of the folding screen at one end of the hall. To the emperor's left and right were long tables at which sat his imperial generals, admirals, and ministers—five men to his left and seven to his right. In front of all of them were their caps, folders, and sheaves of papers.

**The emperor spoke, as almost never happened** at these meetings, in what was euphemistically called the "Voice of the Crane." Hirohito rose nervously, with notes in hand that he could not read very well, and began in a halting manner as well but calmed down and got better as he went on.

"I was told by those advocating a continuation of the hostilities that by June new battalions would be ready for action in the impregnable positions at Kujukurihama when the enemy began to land. It is now August, and the fortifications have still not been completed. Not only that! The equipment for these battalions is insufficient and, I am told, will not be ready until at least the middle of September.

"As for the promised additions to our air strength, these are not forthcoming, and I understand, will not be.

"I am told that there are those who say that the answer to the survival of our nation lies in the outcome of one last battle, to be fought here, in our homeland. Do we have a plan for this? How is it to be carried out? The experiences of the past show that there has already been a grave difference between our plans and our performances! In the case of the impregnable positions at Kujukurihama, they are not impregnable.

"I do not believe that the difference between what is and what should be can be rectified, and this is the shape of things! How can we repel the invaders?

"I cannot help feeling sad when I consider the people who have served me so loyally, the soldiers and sailors who have been killed or wounded on the battlefields overseas, the families who have lost their homes and so often their lives as well in the air raids here. I need not tell you how unbearable it is to me that others who have given me devoted service should now be threatened with punishment as the instigators of the war.

"In spite of these feelings, so difficult to bear, I cannot endure the thought of letting my people suffer any longer! A continuation of the war would bring death to tens—perhaps even hundreds—of thousands of persons. The whole nation would be reduced to ashes! How could I then carry on the wishes of my imperial ancestors?

"The decision I have reached is akin to the one forced upon my grandfather, the Emperor

**Following a devastating raid by U.S. heavy bombers, Hirohito tours a shattered area of Tokyo. In the spring of 1945, Boeing B-29 Superfortresses rained incendiary bombs on major Japanese cities and caused widespread destruction.**

Meiji. I say it once more! As he endured the unbearable, so shall I! And so must you!

"Nevertheless, the time has come when we must bear the unbearable! When I recall the feelings of my imperial grandsire, the Emperor Meiji, at the time of the Triple Intervention (1895), I swallow my tears and give my sanction to the proposal to accept the Allied proclamation on the basis outlined by the foreign minister.

"I have given serious thought to the situation prevailing at home and abroad, and I have concluded that continuing the war can only mean destruction for the nation and a prolongation of bloodshed and cruelty in the world. I cannot bear to see my innocent people suffer any longer! Ending the war is the only way to restore world peace and relieve the nation from the dreadful distress with which it is burdened.

"Finally, I call upon each and every one of you to exert himself to the utmost so that we may work together in the trying days to come …"

Hirohito had spoken, the decision for surrender and peace had been made, and that was that. There would now be no more debate, no more discussion. All the men stood and bowed as the emperor rose and left the room—a room that would be sealed from public view until two decades later in 1965, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the momentous surrender decision.

Between August 9 and August 14, the Allies had responded to Japan's offer to surrender under the terms of the Potsdam Declaration in a way that left in doubt the future status of the emperor. The reply had stated, "From the moment of surrender, the authority of the emperor and the said Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, Gen. Douglas MacArthur—acting at President Truman's behest, ultimately—who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms …

"The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Proclamation, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people…." This statement related to a democratic system of balloted elections, as in the West.

Unknown to both the emperor and his warlords, however, in Washington the retention of Hirohito as at least the spiritual and symbolic ruler of Japan had already been agreed upon on August 10. Former U.S. ambassador to Tokyo Joseph C. Grew told President Truman at the White House "that even if the question had not been raised by the Japanese, we would have to continue to accept the emperor ourselves under our commander's supervision.

"In order to get him to surrender the many scattered armies of the Japanese who would own no other authority, and that something like this use of the emperor must be made in order to save us from a score of bloody Iwo Jimas and Okinawas all over China and the New Netherlands.

"He was the only source of authority in Japan under the Japanese theory of the state."

This was the view also expressed to Truman by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and other key advisers. In 1955, Truman himself posed the questions he had faced a decade earlier: "Could we continue the emperor, and yet expect to eliminate the warlike spirit in Japan? Could we even consider a message with so large a 'but' to the kind of unconditional surrender we had fought for?"

In 1973, Margaret Truman added, "My father agreed, but in a way that did not compromise his position, that the people of Japan

must remain free to choose their own form of government."

It was this vague and veiled assurance that Hirohito had thus ordered his government to accept. By then, it was August 14, the imperial conference had been reconvened, and the emperor rose to speak once more: "I realize that there are those of you who distrust the intentions of the Allies … I appreciate how difficult it will be for the officers and men of the Army and Navy to surrender their arms to the enemy and see their homeland occupied.

"Indeed, it is difficult for me to issue the order making this necessary, and to deliver so many of my trusted servants into the hands of the Allied authorities, by whom you will be accused of being war criminals.

"It is my desire that you—my ministers of state—accede to my wishes and forthwith accept the Allied reply. In order that the people may know my decision, I request you to prepare at once an imperial rescript, so that I may broadcast to the nation."

Although the emperor was not crying, he had wept before in private, all the other men in the room wept openly, some loudly, in his presence.

What his majesty's ministers feared even more than Allied occupation was a revolt from within and below from either inside the Japanese armed forces or from the masses of the oppressed people themselves. The dynasty must not be saved by the Allies only to be overthrown by a domestic insurrection. And that was what almost happened, at least from the military side. A small but volatile palace revolt took place, with young, rebel officers bent on a fight to the death rather than a shameful surrender urging War Minister Anami to stage a coup d'état, overthrow the government, and thus prevent the emperor's planned nationwide radio broadcast to the people.

**ABOVE: In discussions with the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, Emperor Hirohito conducts a meeting in an underground air raid shelter, safe from American bombers. TOP: Two months after the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, August 9, 1945, a crippled Japanese civilian surveys the postnuclear landscape of the once thriving city.**

They wished to "protect" the emperor from what they saw as the treasonous civilian influence of politicians. Thus, they urged the assassination of Premier Zenko Suzuki, Foreign Minister Togo, and Keeper of the Privy Seal Marquis Kido, Hirohito's top adviser.

Further, the Imperial Palace was to be surrounded by soldiers as martial law was proclaimed. The successful execution of the rest of the coup depended upon the cooperation of War Minister Anami, Army Chief of Staff Umezu, commander of the Eastern District Army General Shizuichi Tanaka, and the commander of the First Imperial Guards Army General Takeshi Mori.

Aside from the United States and democratization, these men and their junior officers feared the communization of Japan even more by the traditional northern enemy, the Russian bear. They also feared what they considered "the depraved and brutalized forces of occupation, pillaging the sacred soil of Japan and raping its womanhood," as the Japanese Army itself had done in China, Korea, and Manchuria for many years past.

Meanwhile, as these and other unknown plots swirled about him, the emperor, dressed in his wartime generalissimo's uniform that he would soon discard forever for the more Western-looking formal morning coat and tails and civilian business suits, prepared to record his imperial rescript at the facilities of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation in Tokyo.

At the radio station from which the imperial rescript was soon to be heard, an officer stated, "The emperor's broadcast will be on the air very soon." A Japanese Kempetai secret police lieutenant drew his sword and shouted, "There won't be any broadcast! I'm going to kill them all!" and rushed for the studio, but he was soon subdued and handed over to his very own Kempetai police for rebelling against the emperor's orders.

During his first-ever broadcast, the emperor noted, "The enemy has begun to employ a new

and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, not only would it result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization …"

Afterward, the studio engineers indicated that some of the words were unclear on the recording, so the emperor made a second recording and was willing to make a third if necessary. There were tears in his eyes now, as well as in those of the other men present.

Meanwhile, at Imperial Guards headquarters, the tension had expressed itself in the murder of both General Mori and his brother-in-law, Lt. Col. Michinori Shirashi. Two young officers looked into the murdered general's office as a third wiped Mori's blood from his sword. The hacked, bleeding bodies lay on the floor beneath him with blood still spurting from their wounds. The lieutenant colonel had his head sliced off, and the office walls were liberally splashed with red; the floor was both dark and slippery.

While General Anami planned his own suicide to escape either surrender or participation in the plot, Marquis Kido was hidden from the plotters. The rebels' reasoning was that in 1936, when the growing drift toward war had been opposed, the pro-war faction simply murdered the opposition leaders in a wave of bloody assassinations, and now they planned to abort the projected surrender in the same way. In all, 376 Army men from private to general, 113 Navy men from seaman to admiral, and 37 nurses and civilians also died by their own hands that week, a grand total of 526.

**At the Imperial Palace, the emperor was awake** and listening as his court chamberlains debated how best to safeguard his majesty's life if it came to that. It was decided to bar all the doors and fasten all the Gobunko's shutters, but the latter had become so rusted over many years of nonuse that the chamberlains were unable to shut them.

Finally, they ordered some tough young Imperial Guards to bar all the windows, and one chamberlain mused how ironic it was that this was being done against Japanese—and elite Imperial Guards at that—and not enemy soldiers.

Later, Premier Suzuki's residence was machine-gunned, and Kido's villa was also attacked, while Chamberlain Yoshihiro Tokugawa faced down his dispatched killers. According to one account, Tokugawa was assaulted. "A fist struck him full in the face, and he fell to the floor, his eyeglasses crushed beneath him…."

**ABOVE LEFT: Japanese War Minister Korechika Anami committed suicide rather than carry out an attempted coup d'état that would keep Japan fighting. ABOVE RIGHT: Discredited former Prime Minister Hideki Tojo botched his suicide attempt, was convicted of war crimes, and eventually hanged. TOP: During less stressful times, Imperial Japanese Army Chief of Staff Yoshijiro Umezu pauses for a photographer during a busy day at his office in Tokyo.**

And now, the imperial library itself was surrounded by rebellious troops: "I still can't believe it!" asserted Fujita, who opened one of the iron shutters to peep out, seeing knots of Imperial Guards occupying key posts between the Fukiage Gate and the Gobunko. "Machine guns were being placed with their muzzles pointing squarely at the house of the emperor!" noted another account.

Meanwhile, Anami committed hara-kiri, and, slowly, the plot began to lose steam. One of the chief plotters, Major Kenji Hatanaka, shot himself in front of the Imperial Palace, while another, Lt. Col. Jiro Shizaki, stabbed himself with a sword in his belly as he also shot himself in the head.

Prime Minister Hideki Tojo's son-in-law, Major Hidamasa Koga, sliced open his own stomach in the sign of a cross, it was recalled later. The captain of the Air Force Academy who had murdered Shirashi killed himself on the 16th, the day after his majesty's historic radio broadcast, while the entire Oyodomari family slaughtered itself en masse on September 2, the day of the signing of the surrender documents aboard the USS *Missouri.*

In 1960, a full 15 years after the events of August 1945, an Army sergeant sought out Chamberlain Tokugawa to offer an apology for having hit him, bringing as a peace offering an important family possession, a tea kettle made from a bronze mirror.

How many more lives were violently lost in the brief palace revolt against Hirohito's historic decision for peace? The actual number is not certain. More visible, however, was the public reaction to the imperial rescript broadcast, with squares full of weeping citizens and men falling to the ground and banging their heads on the pavement. Some others intermittently shot and stabbed themselves, with crowds bowing low to each such corpse as they uttered quiet prayers for the departing spirits.

The broadcast was indeed heard and acted upon, and the surrender became history. On August 24, 1945, General Tanaka shot himself through the heart after having first suppressed an attempt by military students to occupy the Kawaguchi broadcasting studio.

Now, an improbable event was about to happen. The first foreign occupation force ever was going to set foot on the soil of the Japanese Empire, and it was to be led by General Douglas MacArthur, who had three years earlier been driven from his Philippine Islands command by the forces of this now vanquished nation.

One who was aboard the general's aircraft that day was CBS Radio News correspondent William J. "Bill" Dunn, who recalled in 1988 what it was like: "The major who occupied the adjoining bucket seat nudged me in the ribs … 'Look, Bill, is that it?' That, indeed, was it: a perfect snow-capped cone rising dimly above the mists that covered most of the distant hills to the north … Fujiyama, Nippon's exquisite sacred mountain …"

Thus, a modern "invasion" of the fabled land of the Rising Sun was about to begin. A little after dawn on August 28, 1945, a total of 45 C-47 transport aircraft approached Mount Fuji with an American advance party.

No sooner was Atsugi Air Base outside Tokyo secured than MacArthur's own C-54 airplane, named *Bataan,* landed at 2:19 PM, with the general himself appearing first at the opened door. Wearing his famed Philippine Army cloth

field marshal's cap, his equally famous corncob pipe between his teeth, a jubilant MacArthur chortled, "This is the payoff!"

MacArthur's motorcade into Tokyo was guarded by no less than 30,000 Japanese troops, their backs facing their conquerors, their weapons held at port-arms. There are two versions of why this was done: first, to protect the general from any would-be Japanese assassins and, second, as a sign of contempt.

**That night, an ebullient MacArthur told his** personal staff after dinner, "Boys, this is the greatest adventure in military history! Here we sit in the enemy's country with only a handful of troops, looking down the throats of 19 fully

armed divisions and 70 million fanatics. One false move, and the Alamo would look like a Sunday school picnic!"

U.S. Navy Secretary James Forrestal selected the *Missouri* as the site of the surrender. The battleship was anchored 18 miles out in Tokyo Bay, and the date chosen was September 2, 1945, six years and a day after the invasion of German tanks that raced across Poland and began the largest war in recorded human history.

MacArthur came aboard ship at 8:40 AM, went to the bathroom in the captain's cabin, and threw up, according to his longtime personal pilot, "Dusty" Rhoads. "I asked him if he wanted me to get him a doctor, but he replied that he would be all right in a moment. Soon afterward, he emerged, went on deck, and staged the ceremony without a quiver in his voice. I believe that his momentary problem was merely an emotional reaction to his realization that this occasion could be his final significant action in a long and illustrious military career."

**ABOVE: Army Chief of Staff Yoshijiro Umezu signs the instrument of surrender on September 2, 1945, aboard the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. Prior to the war, many of the hawks among the Japanese leadership had been senior Army officers. LEFT: Following their first meeting, General Douglas MacArthur (left) and Emperor Hirohito pause for photographers on October 10, 1946.**

It was not, however, as ahead lay MacArthur's term as Allied ruler of postwar Japan, the tumultuous Korean War, and his firing by President Truman.

For his part, Japan's Emperor Hirohito did not appear in person, but instead sent a delegation consisting of Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu for the government, and the Chief of the Army's Imperial General Staff Yoshijiro Umezu, as well as Admiral Sadatoshi Tomioka to represent the Navy that had launched the war with the Pearl Harbor attack back in 1941.

**The weather was clear and bright, with Mount** Fuji visible 60 miles away. Tokyo Bay overflowed with Allied warships, and the bright sunshine sparkled on the white uniforms of the U.S. sailors. On one side lay the battleship USS *Iowa* and on the other, the *South Dakota*.

On a side of one of the *Missouri*'s massive gun turrets hung the American flag with 31 stars that Commodore Matthew C. Perry had brought with him to this same Tokyo Bay when he "opened" Japan to the West 92 years earlier. Also present was the American flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol on Sunday, December 7, 1941.

Assembled on the deck for the Japanese were all the top Allied officers of the Pacific War that Japan had just lost. The 11-member Japanese delegation came aboard. Shigemitsu had lost a leg in a prewar assassination attempt and had difficulty getting on deck. Not knowing this, however, none of the Allies would help him up. It was 8:55 AM, and the onlookers watched his plight "with savage satisfaction," in the words of one scribe. Finally, a hand was offered in help, but he refused it.

MacArthur strode on deck precisely at 9 AM and read a brief statement he'd been allowed by Washington to draft on his own, and then the signatures were affixed to the document by both sides. A drunken Allied delegate made faces at the Japanese. MacArthur intoned, "Let us pray that peace now be restored to the world, and that God will preserve it always. These proceedings are closed."

Thousands of Allied planes swept overhead, the Allied world rejoiced, and World War II was over at last.

Emperor Hirohito died of cancer at age 87 on January 7, 1989, and was succeeded by his son, Crown Prince Akihito, on the Chrysanthemum Throne. Alone among the former Axis powers, Imperial Japan today still flies the same flags it did during World War II—the rising sun and its rays and the single sun ball. Hirohito had won a victory after all. □

*Blaine Taylor is the author of several books on World War II. He resides in Towson, Maryland.*

# Assault on

Naval disaster in the Drøbak Strait slowed the German conquest of Norway. BY HENRICK O. LUNDE

# Oslo

Krister Brandser

In the spring of 1940, German infantrymen tend to their equipment at an airstrip in the Norwegian capital of Oslo. In the background, transport aircraft land with supplies for the ground troops. Once the airstrips were captured, the conquest of Norway by the Nazis was inevitable.
RIGHT: One of the heavy Norwegian cannons at Oscarborg Fortress is shown in the position it occupied in 1940. This weapon, nicknamed "Aron," was instrumental in the sinking of the German heavy cruiser *Blücher.*

ullstein bild

**The second week** in April 1940 was a stormy period in the North and Norwegian Seas. The weather deteriorated during April 7, with low cloud cover and fog. The wind increased to gale force on April 8 and reached hurricane strength in the Norwegian Sea, which had towering 50-foot waves. But another storm was about to break on the Norwegian coast. World War II was under way, and military forces, both Allied and Axis, were about to pounce on Norway.

Allied plans to send military forces to aid the Finns against the Soviet Union were widely reported in the press in late 1939 and early 1940. The only way such aid could reach the Finns was through Norway and Sweden, and this would accomplish the main Allied objective of cutting off Germany from its source of iron ore, Sweden. The Germans might then be drawn into a hasty and risky operation in Scandinavia.

The Germans were well aware of Allied plans to interfere with their importation of iron ore and their landings in Norway and the Allied plans had not ended with the March 1940 peace agreement between Finland and the Soviet Union. Therefore, to frustrate Allied plans, secure the source of iron ore, extend the operational range of the German Navy, complicate Allied blockade measures, and prevent the threat that Allied bases in Norway would pose for German naval operations in the Baltic and North Seas, Hitler decided to carry out a preemptive strike.

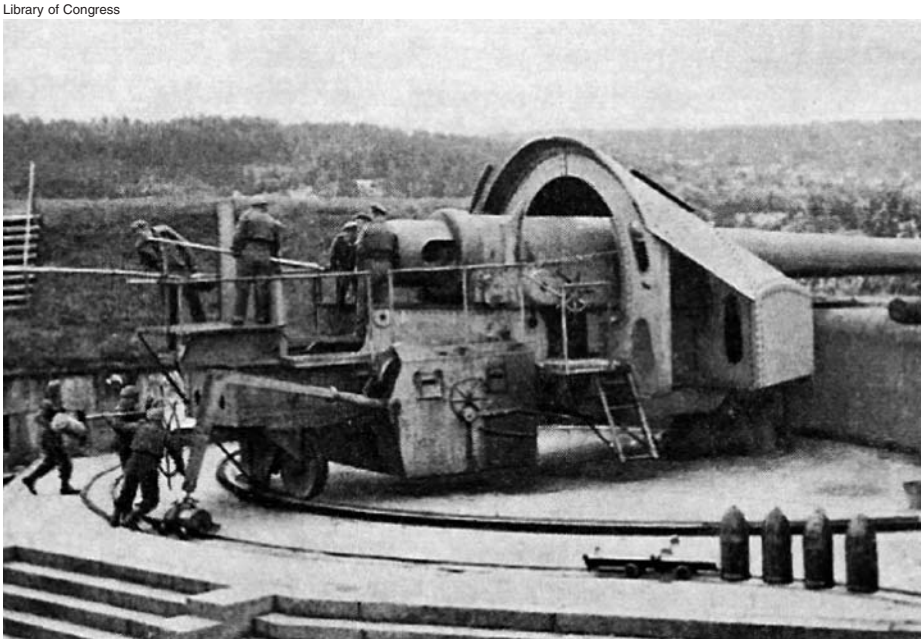
Allied action started on April 8 with the mining of Norwegian territorial waters. The plan was to deny the Germans the use of those waters for importing iron ore through the port of Narvik, to provoke German counteraction that could lead to quick Allied victories, and to open a new theater of operations away from the front line in France. British troops were loaded on warships and transports for the occupation of various coastal cities in western and northern Norway.

The second week of April witnessed the largest concentration of naval forces in the North and Norwegian Seas since the Battle of Jutland a generation earlier. The British Home Fleet and all available naval units in northern Europe were at sea. These were reinforced by units from the French fleet. Practically every ship in the German Navy was involved in the attack on Norway. The only German naval units not at sea on April 9, 1940, were those undergoing repairs—three cruisers, six destroyers, and four torpedo boats. Eight German tankers and 45 transports carrying 18,276 troops were at sea or leaving northern German ports. A further 40,000 troops were ready for transport to Norway as shipping became available. The Luftwaffe was prepared to support the operation with more than 1,000 aircraft and the largest airlift operation (approximately 500 transports) up to that time in military history.

Thus, as the Allies were carrying out mining operations and readying their forces for action in Norway, nearly every ship in the German Navy was on its way to Norway with assault elements to capture Norway's population centers. The success of the operation—which the German general staff considered "lunatic"—rested on three pillars: complete tactical surprise, the determination and professionalism of those involved, and mistakes by the enemy. Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, the commander in chief of the German Navy, told Hitler that the operation broke all rules of naval warfare but would succeed if the element of surprise were maintained. The Germans were prepared to lose at least half their navy in the enterprise.

The assault elements of the German invasion force were carried on warships divided into six task forces that were expected to land at the same time, 4:15 AM on April 9, along the 1,000

Library of Congress



**Although its crew was required to service this 280mm cannon in the open, the Norwegians used it and other heavy artillery pieces to devastating effect against the German invaders. This weapon is positioned at Oscarborg Fortress.**

miles of coastline from Oslo to Narvik. The German Task Force 5 (TF 5) had the mission of capturing the Norwegian capital, and it was hoped that the surprise operation would lead to the capture of the government, royal family, and the military commands. The Germans expected that this would lead to Norwegian capitulation and a peaceful occupation of the country.

**The naval contingent of TF 5 consisted of the** heavy cruisers *Blücher* and *Lützow*, the light cruiser *Emden,* three torpedo boats (small destroyers), eight R-boats (small minesweepers), and two auxiliaries (armed trawlers). *Blücher* was the newest of the major German surface units, launched on June 8, 1939, and commissioned on September 10, 1939. Its actual displacement was 18,200 tons although it was officially listed at 14,050 tons. Sea trials had just been completed prior to the Norwegian invasion. The *Lützow* was originally classified as a pocket battleship and named *Deutschland*. It was reclassified as a heavy cruiser on January 25, 1940, and given a new name. Hitler thought there would be undesirable psychological and propaganda consequences if a ship named *Deutschland* should be sunk.

The ships of TF 5 carried a combined crew of 3,800. Rear Admiral Oskar Kummetz commanded the naval component. The assault force of 2,000 men, commanded by Maj. Gen. Erwin Engelbrecht, consisted of two battalions of the 307th Infantry Regiment, one battalion of the 138th Mountain Regiment, plus artillery, engineer, and support units.

The capture of the Norwegian capital was a tall order for three infantry battalions. It was therefore planned that two airborne companies would seize Fornebu Airfield, a short distance southwest of the city. These companies would secure the airfield for the landing of two battalions and an engineer company from the 324th Infantry Regiment.

TF 5 left Swinemüde at 10 PM on April 7, and the major units (cruisers and torpedo boats) assembled in the Bay of Kiel at 2 AM on April 8. The smaller and slower units had already departed with orders to link up with the rest of the task force at the entrance to Oslofjord during the night of April 8-9. The German ships sailed through the Great Belt, the main strait between the Danish islands, in full daylight on April 8. The progress of the group was followed closely by Danish observation posts and reported to the Danish Naval Ministry. The reports were passed to the intelligence section of the Norwegian naval staff throughout the day.

The Norwegians did not take immediate action to meet the threat since the consensus in the navy was that the German activities had nothing to do with an attack on Norway. Such an eventuality was ruled unrealistic in view of their estimation of German capabilities and overwhelming British superiority at sea.

TF 5 rounded the northern point of Denmark at 7 PM on April 8. It steered a westerly course while within sight of land in order not to give away its destination. The Germans changed course to the north after they were out of sight of land and headed for Oslofjord at high speed. Two British submarines, *Triton* and *Sunfish,* spotted the task force north of Denmark during the night. *Triton* made an unsuccessful attack on the German ships. The faster ships in the task force were joined by the slower vessels as they approached the entrance to the fjord.

Two lines of forts at Oslofjord and Oscarborg protected the sea approach to Oslo. The Oslofjord forts had four battery positions, Bolærne, Rauøy, Måkerøy, and Håøy, on both sides of the fjord as well as a number of small ships. The Oscarborg fortress complex had batteries located on South and North Kaholm, two small islands in Drøbak Strait at the entrance to Oslo harbor. There was a main battery of three 280mm guns on South Kaholm and a torpedo battery of three 450mm torpedo tubes on North Kaholm. The three 280mm Krupp guns had been delivered in 1892. There had been an accident while they were under transport, and one barrel had fallen into the sea. It was immediately named Moses, and the other two were also given appropriate biblical names—Aaron and Joshua. A battery of 150mm guns and one of three 57mm guns were located on the mainland, on the east side of Drøbak Strait.

The antiaircraft protection for the forts consisted primarily of machine guns. The forts had only token infantry complements to protect against an overland attack. At full strength, the two fortress lines were to have 3,298 personnel, but only 957 were available at the time of the German attack. This left some batteries unmanned while others were critically undermanned.

**Admiral Kummetz interpreted the silence from the fort as an indication that the Norwegians would allow the Germans to pass. The delay, however, was a deliberate action by Colonel Eriksen.**

There were four small patrol vessels in the outer part of Oslofjord in the evening of April 8. One of the vessels, *Pol III,* was the first to make contact with the German invasion force. *Pol III* was a small ship of only 214 tons, had a crew of 13, carried a single 76mm gun, and

could manage a speed of only 11 knots. The Germans sighted *Pol III,* and the torpedo boat *Albatros* was ordered to take care of it. *Albatros* had a displacement of 924 tons, carried three 105mm guns, four 20mm guns, and six 210mm torpedo tubes. It had a crew of 122 and could reach a top speed of 33 knots.

The Norwegian patrol boat headed toward the German ships at full speed and fired a warning shot shortly before 11 PM. *Albatros* stopped, but the other ships proceeded toward Oslo. *Pol III* ended up ramming the German torpedo boat—apparently by accident—and tore a large hole in its side. The two vessels drifted apart, and at 11:15 the Norwegians fired three flares, the prearranged signal that foreign warships were entering the restricted area. After the Norwegians refused a demand to surrender, the Germans opened fire with machine guns and raked the Norwegian patrol boat. Although the German and Norwegian accounts differ, the Germans may have interpreted Norwegian activities to secure the deck gun as intention to open fire. The captain of the Norwegian vessel was mortally wounded and the first Norwegian to die in the conflict.

The German task force had meanwhile continued on a northerly course and was closing in on the outer line of forts. The invaders were hoping to pass the forts without having to fire. The forts were prepared and the gun crews in place, but several fog banks rolled in and obscured the attackers. The German ships were visible to the battery on Rauøy for a short period and it managed to get off two warning shots and five live rounds before the ships disappeared into the fog. The Germans later related that the Norwegian rounds fell so far short that they were believed to be warning shots.

The German naval force stopped after passing the first fortress line. The troops on *Emden* were transferred to eight minesweepers. Four were to land troops to capture two of the battery positions in the outer line of forts so that the route would be clear for the transports bringing in reinforcements. Two minesweepers, assisted by the torpedo boats *Albatros* and *Kondor,* set out to capture the Norwegian naval base at Horten. The remaining two minesweepers followed the main force to land troops to capture Oscarborg in case the German ships were unable to force their way past that fort. The passage through the Drøbak Strait and the attack on Horten were to take place at the same time, 4:15 AM. The day was beginning to dawn as the German ships approached Oscarborg.

Colonel Birger Eriksen, the commander of Oscarborg, had been kept informed about events in Oslofjord. Fate sometimes places the right person at the right location in war. Colonel Eriksen had a reputation among his colleagues for being a little trigger happy. He did not know whether the approaching warships were German or British, but he decided that such details were of little consequence. He ignored a subordinate's suggestion to seek advice from higher headquarters before opening fire. He also decided that there would be no warning shots. His decisions had a devastating effect on the approaching German task force and saved the Norwegian government and royal family from capture.


Maps © 2009 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN


**German naval forces were roughly handled during the opening phase of the invasion of Norway. Operations were extremely difficult in the confines of the Norwegian fjords.**

The German ships approached the Drøbak Strait in a column formation at 12 knots. The flagship, *Blücher,* led the column, followed by the *Lützow, Emden,* the torpedo boat *Möwe,* and the minesweepers *R18* and *R19,* in that order. The distances between ships were about 600 meters. The German ships were dark, and all lights at Oscarborg and along the fjord were extinguished.

**Admiral Kummetz interpreted the silence from** the fort as an indication that the Norwegians would allow the Germans to pass. The delay, however, was a deliberate action by Colonel Eriksen. He calculated that the old, slow-firing guns of the main battery, manned by partial crews with little training, would only have time to fire one shot each before the lead German ship passed the fort. Colonel Eriksen wanted to be sure that the ship was close enough to make it virtually certain that the shells would find their intended target.

Colonel Eriksen ordered the batteries to open fire when the range finder showed 1,800 meters. The time was 4:21. The two shells from the 280mm guns were direct hits. The batteries on the east side of the strait also opened fire on *Blücher.* Two 280mm, 13 150mm, and 30 57mm projectiles hit the heavy cruiser before it passed through the fields of fire. The results were devastating. The first 280mm shell hit the base of the bridge and blew part of that structure into the water. The second 280mm shell entered *Blücher*'s port side behind the funnel and exploded inside the ship, killing many soldiers on the middle deck.

The fire from the shore batteries also hit the airplane hangar on deck, loaded with three aircraft and barrels of fuel. A powerful explosion ignited the gasoline. The inferno spread rapidly and set off aerial bombs, ammunition, and hand grenades stowed in containers on deck. The second round from the main battery also destroyed *Blücher*'s rudder controls. The cruiser avoided striking the shore by reversing its engines.

While the German ships were at full battle stations, the operational directive required that they leave their main batteries in secured position—that is, the guns were pointing directly forward or aft. They hoped that the Norwegians would interpret this as a sign of peaceful intent. While the main gun orientations may have slowed the German response, they were quick to react with their secondary batteries. The German fire in the short but intense

All: Norwegian Home Guard Museum

**ABOVE LEFT: Moments before its final plunge, the battered hulk of the *Blücher* is photographed from a German destroyer waiting nearby to pick up survivors. ABOVE RIGHT: Stunned that their warship has been vanquished by Norwegian shore batteries, sailors from the German cruiser *Blücher* reach temporary safety on the rocky shoreline. TOP: A mass of smoke and flames, the German heavy cruiser *Blücher,* victim of Norwegian land-based artillery, rolls over and begins to sink during the invasion of Norway.**

exchange that followed was inaccurate since the shoreline was dark and the only way to pick targets was by observing the flashes from the Norwegian guns. The shore batteries sustained no serious damage.

It was too late for Kummetz to take his flagship out of the danger zone. The Germans tried to increase speed in order to get out of the reach of the Norwegian guns as quickly as possible, but this proved impossible since the ship's engines were partially out of action. The burning cruiser presented an eerie sight as it slowly passed the batteries on the eastern side of the strait. The gun crews on shore could hear the cries of the wounded and dying aboard the ship. However, they reportedly also heard something else.

Crew members of the crippled ship were singing the German national anthem. However, this is not mentioned by Korvettenkapitän (Lt. Cmdr.) Kurt Zoepffel, *Blücher*'s adjutant. He relates that the assembled survivors, before abandoning ship, "joined in three hurrahs for our ship, our Führer, our people, and our country." Whatever the case, the nationality of the attackers was now known.

As it moved slowly northward, *Blücher* came into the sector of the torpedo battery. The acting commander of the battery, Captain Andreas Anderssen, saw the burning ship approaching. He called Colonel Eriksen and asked if he should launch the torpedoes. Colonel Eriksen's answer was short and left no room for misunderstanding, "Torpedo the ship."

As he launched them against the German cruiser, Anderssen wondered if the 40-year-old torpedoes would function. The Germans did not see the wakes as the torpedoes hissed through the water. The first struck the *Blücher* forward, while the second struck amidships. Both torpedoes, but particularly the second, caused massive explosions inside the German warship. The engines were no longer functioning, and great amounts of water were streaming into the damaged ship. Captain Heinrich Woldag, *Blücher*'s skipper, ordered anchors dropped, and the great ship remained motionless with an 18-degree starboard list.

**The Germans still hoped to save the ship by use** of the auxiliary engines. The raging fire was their main problem. The ship's torpedoes were fired to prevent their detonation. They exploded against the shore on both sides of the fjord. The 105mm magazine was located amidships and could not be flooded. The ship's fate was sealed when this magazine exploded at 5:30 AM, and the captain ordered the ship abandoned. The Germans had not displayed a flag while trying to force passage, but now the German battle flag was hoisted. The starboard list was increasing, and the great ship finally overturned and sank by the bow in deep waters at 6:22 AM, with many personnel still on deck.

Oil spilled from *Blücher* covered the water and caught fire. The immediate area around the sunken vessel became an inferno. Scores of those who abandoned ship perished in the flames. Survivors came ashore on both sides of the strait, but mostly on the east side. Many were saved by Norwegian fishing vessels. Those who reached the shore were captured by Norwegian troops. Among them were Admiral Kummetz, General Engelbrecht, and Captain Woldag, who was seriously wounded and died within a few days at a Norwegian hospital. The loss of approximately 1,000 sailors and soldiers and one of the newest and most modern ships in the German Navy was a serious blow that disrupted the German timetable.

After *Blücher* slowly passed outside their fields of fire, the Norwegian batteries shifted their guns to the next ship in the German column, *Lützow.* The cruiser also opened fire on the forts with its 150mm guns. *Lützow* received three direct hits from the Norwegian guns on the eastern side of the strait. The ship's forward 280mm turret was put out of action. Captain August Thiele—*Lützow*'s captain—assumed that *Blücher* had struck mines in the narrows. This assumption and the fact that he was receiving heavy and accurate fire from the Norwegian guns caused him to conclude that the strait could not be forced successfully, and he decided to pull *Lützow* out of the danger zone before it was too late.

The other ships in the formation followed his example by reversing course and heading out of the fjord at high speed. The turning movement caused both *Lützow* and *Emden* to present their broadsides to the Norwegian batteries, which continued to fire. Several projectiles hit both ships. Thiele, while involved in this maneuver, received a signal from Admiral Kummetz directing him to assume command of TF 5. The German fire caused no casualties and very little physical damage to the Norwegian batteries.

Admiral Kummetz has been criticized for the tactics he employed in the attack. He undoubtedly felt pressured by his directive to land the troops in the capital around 5 AM, but this alone fails to explain some of his actions. His decision to lead the column with his flagship is difficult to understand. It would have been more prudent to let the torpedo boat or minesweepers take the lead to test the Norwegian defenses, particularly in view of intelligence that there was an electrically controlled minefield in the waters off

Drøbak. Admiral Kummetz's after-action report fails to explain the slow speed used in the attempt to pass Oscarborg. It would have been wiser to pass the fort at high speed to reduce Norwegian reaction time and limit the time his ships were exposed. The loss of *Blücher* did not end Kummetz's career. He was promoted to Generaladmiral (Admiral) and given command in the Baltic.

Library of Congress

**A German Junkers Ju-52 transport aircraft sits at Fornebu airfield in Norway on April 9, 1940. The smoke of an ongoing battle between German and Norwegian troops rises in the distance.**

**Captain Thiele started preparations for a new** attack on Oscarborg as soon as he had withdrawn what remained of TF 5 to safety. The Germans began landing troops on the east side of the fjord at 6 AM, and within two hours about 850 German troops were ashore. General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst, the planner and overall commander during the German invasions of Norway and Denmark, was concerned by the delay in capturing Oslo. He issued a directive making the capture of the shore batteries at Drøbak the main objective. The Germans began advancing north toward Drøbak after capturing the nearby towns of Son and Moss.

Colonel Eriksen knew that the German withdrawal after their first attempt to pierce the fortress line was only a temporary pause. The bombing of the fortress by German aircraft started at 8 AM and continued, except for a short period around midday, until 6 PM. The guns had no revetments, and the crews had to take cover in old tunnels that served as air raid shelters. The weak air defenses kept up a steady fire against the German aircraft, but the effects were minor. One Ju-52 transport plane was shot down and several sustained damage and had to make emergency landings. *Lützow* also participated in the bombardment.

The continuous air and naval bombardment caused few casualties at Oscarborg, but the material damage was substantial and the morale of the personnel deteriorated quickly since it was impossible to operate the exposed gun batteries while under constant aerial attack. The damage would have been more severe, but a large number of bombs failed to explode on impact.

The situation became untenable when German infantry captured the unprotected batteries on the eastern shore of the strait late in the afternoon. Colonel Eriksen could no longer prevent Germans ships from passing the fort. He decided that further resistance was hopeless and would only lead to unnecessary loss of lives. Negotiations leading to surrender began at 6:30 PM. The surrender took place at 9 PM on April 10, and TF 5 passed through the strait shortly thereafter. The surrender conditions were lenient. The enlisted personnel were to remain at the fort until conditions permitted demobilization. The officers were guaranteed their freedom and allowed to keep their personal weapons. The Norwegian flag flew over the fort alongside the German until April 21.

General von Falkenhorst had received several situation reports on April 9, and with respect to the operations against Oslo all conveyed bad news. He learned that TF 5 was driven back in its first attempt to reach the Norwegian capital, the cruiser *Blücher* was sunk with great loss of life, the cruiser *Lützow* had sustained serious damage, and both the army and naval commanders were either killed or captured. The Horten naval base had not been captured, and the same was true for the forts controlling the approaches to Oslo. Finally, the Norwegians had rejected the German ultimatum and stated that they considered themselves at war with Germany.

The only chance left for the Germans to capture Oslo on April 9 rested with the airborne and air assault components of the operation. The Germans planned to capture Fornebu Airport by parachuting two airborne companies directly on the airfield. The plan called for these troops to seize the airfield quickly, allowing German transport aircraft to land two infantry battalions and an engineer company. It was a risky operation and would be the first use (along with the attack on Sola Airfield near Stavanger) of airborne troops to seize an enemy airfield hundreds of miles from their base.

The Norwegian force at Fornebu consisted of only three machine-gun positions and seven Gloster Gladiator fighters. Fornebu was not alerted until 4:30 AM, more than five hours after the first contact with German warships in Oslofjord. The machine-gun positions were manned, and the fighter aircraft were prepared for takeoff.

There was a thick layer of fog over Oslo in the early hours of April 9. Breaks in the fog began to appear about 5 AM, and five Gladiators took off to investigate the sound of aircraft overhead. As they broke through the fog, the pilots saw a number of aircraft of unknown nationality. The foreign aircraft disappeared in a southerly direction after the Norwegians opened fire. The slow-moving Gladiators could not match the speed of the foreign aircraft, and they returned to Fornebu.

The German parachute operation was canceled when the aircraft carrying the paratroopers encountered heavy fog over the target area. The aircraft were directed to turn around and land at the airfield in Aalborg, Denmark, captured by the Germans earlier in the morning. The

*Continued on page 70*

## It appeared that the Germans had suffered another serious setback. Then, one of those bizarre events occurred that often decides the outcome of a battle.


The 93rd Infantry Division on Bougainville. LEFT (top to bottom): A GI ambulance driver shows a .50-caliber bullet attached to his dogtags. The bullet, shot from a strafing German fighter, imbedded itself in his windshield. A Coast Guard steward's mate takes up a battle station somewhere in the Pacific. U.S. Army nurses prepare to disembark from their transport in Greencock, Scotland. Navy men load an ammunitions bunker with 6-inch shells.

BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

WHEN IT CAME TO THE GLOBAL WAR AGAINST tyranny, America's blacks would not be denied a stake in the action. Despite prejudice and segregation at home, they joined the ranks and contributed to the ultimate victory. They fought to win peace but they also fought to prove they were as good as any fighter anywhere. Unfortunately, the United States was not prepared to give them an equal share of the war. Segregationist policies, so well established in civilian life, carried over to the war effort.

Most blacks were placed in service units, not front-line fighting groups. But through strenuous efforts, the ranks opened themselves up to infantry, armored, and even fighter squadron units composed of blacks, even though constraints continued.

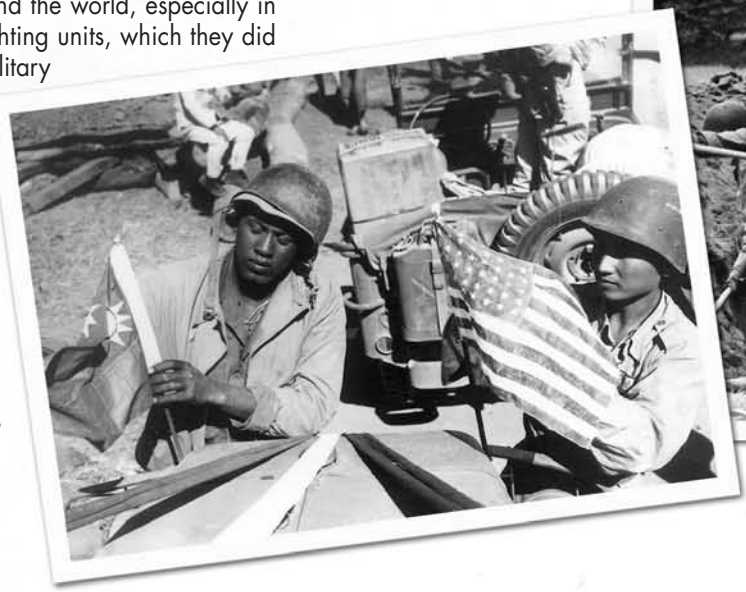
In the Army, blacks served in a variety of units. There were two black infantry divisions as well as black artillery batteries, armored battalions, chemical units, and even a parachute battalion, though that unit protected the home front. Behind the lines, they served in almost every capacity, particularly the crucial Red Ball Express, a truck line that kept forward units in France supplied and fed.

# THEY ALSO SERVED

## AFRICAN AMERICANS FOUGHT IN EVERY BRANCH OF THE MILITARY BATTLING OPPRESSION ON BOTH SIDES OF THE WAR LINES

In the Navy, blacks handled munitions and served aboard ships as mess stewards, but when the fighting started, they manned their battle stations with everyone else. The same was true in the Coast Guard. In the Marine Corps, blacks again served in a supply and service capacity, but they also formed small assault units.

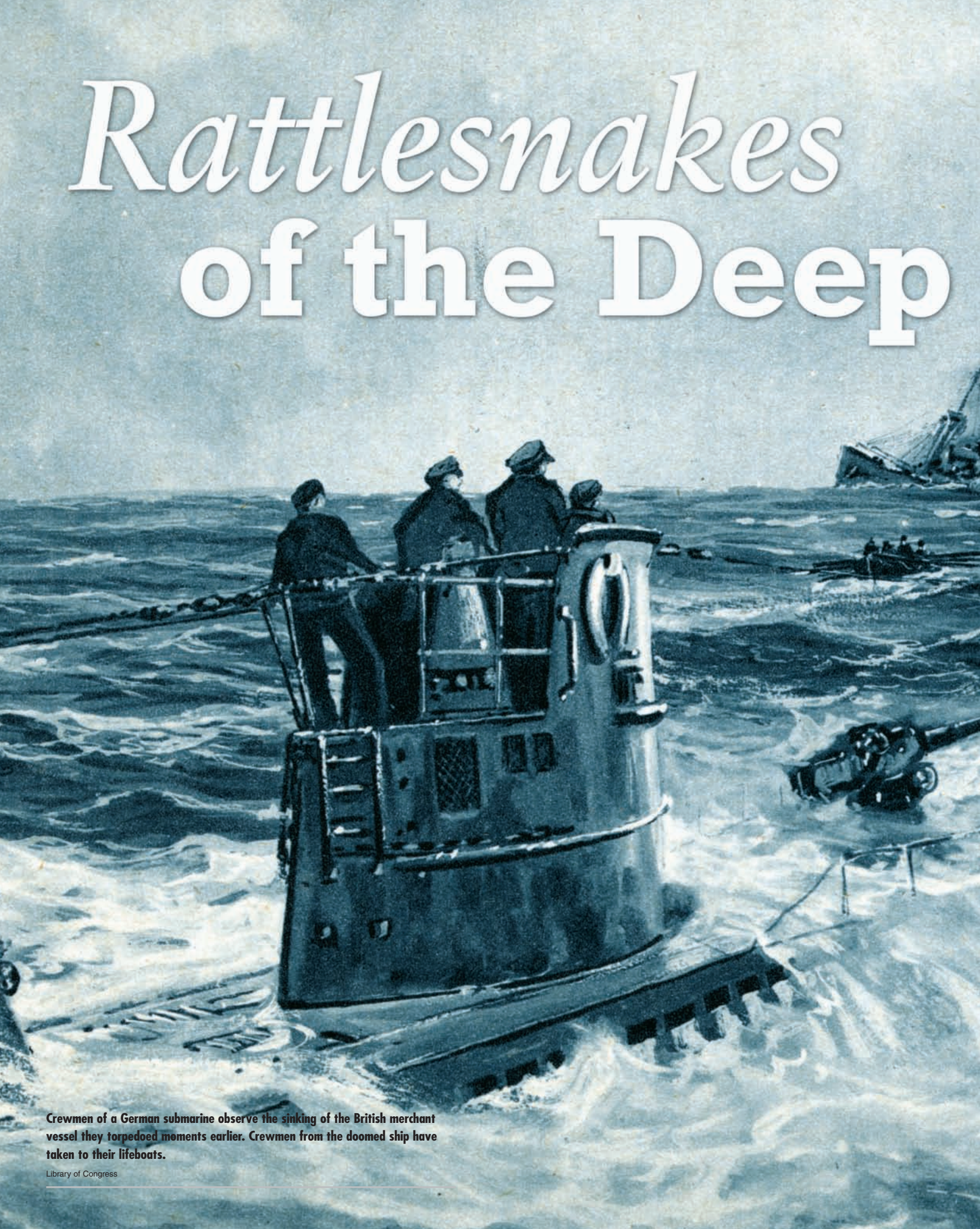
As the fighting intensified and casualties grew around the world, especially in Europe, more and more blacks were asked to join fighting units, which they did voluntarily. By the end of the war, the face of the military had changed. Segregation still existed, but blacks showed what they were capable of, which, in five years, would lead to the end of the wasteful policy. It would take decades to overcome segregation in the United States, but the gains made in World War II served as a bedrock to those citizens who believed that anyone born into a democracy should be allowed to participate in it equally. □



*Frequent contributor Kevin Hymel is the writer/editor for the U.S. Army's Freedom Team Salute, a program that thanks veterans as well as people who support soldiers and the Army's mission.*

**Marine Duck drivers take up arms on Iwo Jima after their vehicle was struck by enemy fire. ABOVE and LEFT (clockwise): A U.S. Army soldier and a Chinese soldier put flags on the first convoy from China to India on the Stilwell Road. An Army artillery crew keeps fire on German defenses in France during the Normandy campaign. A captain with the Tuskegee Airmen gives his ring to his mechanic for safekeeping before going into battle. An American soldier, killed in the "Malmedy Massacre" during the Battle of the Bulge, is carried off the field by medical troops. Paratroopers prepare to "stand up and hook up" before leaping out of their plane. Five Coast Guard Steward's Mates man a 20mm antiaircraft gun during a battle stations drill.**

# *Rattlesnakes* of the Deep



**Crewmen of a German submarine observe the sinking of the British merchant vessel they torpedoed moments earlier. Crewmen from the doomed ship have taken to their lifeboats.**

Library of Congress

BY HERB KUGEL

**America was not at war,** but American sailors were dying when American-owned ships were torpedoed by German submarines. In 1941, few Americans knew of the destroyers USS *Niblack,* USS *Greer,* USS *Kearny*, and USS *Reuben James,* but these and other American warships were fighting a grim naval war months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

American warships fought this undeclared war in the bitterly cold waters of the North Atlantic. They often struggled through brutal sub-zero temperatures and rapid, violent weather changes. Heavy storms were common; storms developed so quickly that it was often impossible to predict them. In the winter, ice sometimes almost a yard thick covered the convoy ships and threatened to capsize them. Ships sank and sailors died within minutes in the icy water.

On November 5, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected to an unprecedented third term as president of the United States. This victory gave him the political clout to openly support Great Britain in her struggle against Germany, but by the spring of 1941, the British were in desperate straits both economically and militarily. Under Roosevelt's order, the United States began using its warships to provide limited escort to merchant ships sailing for Britain, especially ships carrying weapons that America supplied through the Lend-Lease Act, which Roosevelt signed into law on March 11, 1941.

The first skirmish in what became the undeclared naval war between the United States and Germany took place on April 10, 1941, when the destroyer USS *Niblack,* on patrol in the North Atlantic, intercepted an SOS from the Dutch freighter SS *Saleier.* The SOS reported the *Saleier* was torpedoed and sinking rapidly. The freighter's latitude and longitude placed her 441 nautical miles from Reykjavik, Iceland. The *Niblack,* ordered to her assistance, sailed all night. The next morning her lookouts spotted three small lifeboats. Before attempting to pick up survivors, the *Niblack* circled the lifeboats while conducting a sound search for German submarines. The crew of the *Saleier,* nine

## For much of 1941, the U.S. Navy conducted an undeclared naval war with Nazi Germany.

officers and 51 men, survived, but at 8:40 AM, as the last of them were taken aboard the *Niblack,* sound contact was made with an "undersea object."

D.L. Ryan, commander of Destroyer Division 13, with which the *Niblack* served, described in his report what happened next: "This contact was about two points abaft the starboard beam and if it were a submarine, it was rapidly approaching a position for attack. With safety of ship, crew, and survivors in mind, decision was made to attack instantly … Accordingly … the ship went ahead … at full speed and turned to an intercepting course. When it was estimated the ship should be over the submarine (if one were present) time depth charges were dropped at ten second intervals, and then the ship proceeded to clear the area at 28 knots on course North without further investigation."

The *Niblack* arrived at Reykjavik on April 12. The *Saleier*'s crew was handed over to British authorities. It was later learned that the German submarine, *U-52,* was not hurt by the depth charges, if indeed the object was the *U-52*, which later proved extremely unlikely. The *Niblack* was the first U.S. Navy warship to use its weapons against Germany since World War I.

On May 21, 1941, the unarmed and clearly marked 5,000-ton American freighter *Robin Moor,* sailing from New York to various African ports, was stopped by the German submarine *U-69* about 700 miles off the west coast of Africa. The ship carried a 38-man crew and eight passengers, four men, three women, and one child, all of whom were ordered to abandon the freighter, which was then sunk by the *U-69*. The *Robin Moor* was the first American merchant ship sunk by German submarines prior to U.S. entry into World War II. The other American-owned merchant ships sunk had been under Panamanian registry and, thus, flew the Panamanian flag.

National Archives

**Survivors of the sunken American freighter *Robin Moor* pose aboard a small boat. Clearly marked as American, the *Robin Moor* was torpedoed by a German submarine in the Atlantic prior to U.S. entry into World War II. OPPOSITE: Crewmen of the Belgian freighter *Ville de Namur* rush to the lifeboats after their vessel has taken a torpedo hit from a prowling German submarine. Often attacking Allied convoys in groups, called wolfpacks, the Germans took a heavy toll in merchant shipping.**

**A full-scale war between the United States and** Germany loomed closer when, on June 14, Roosevelt froze Axis funds in the United States and, on June 16, he ordered German consulates closed and all German diplomats expelled. Branding Germany an "outlaw nation," he told the U.S. Congress on June 20: "I am … bringing to the attention of the Congress the ruthless sinking … of an American ship, the *Robin Moor,* in the … Atlantic Ocean…"

Roosevelt climaxed his report with: "We are not yielding and we do not propose to yield."

On the same day Roosevelt was reporting on the *Robin Moor,* the battleship USS *Texas,* the last coal-fired American battleship, which was launched May 18, 1912, and which served in World War I, was stalked by the German submarine *U-203,* a state-of-the art Type VIIc submarine almost 29 years younger than the battleship she was chasing. No exchange of hostile fire took place, but the submarine was apparently unable to catch the zigzagging battleship, which was southwest of Iceland.

In June 1941, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill asked Roosevelt to send American troops to Iceland to replace the British garrison there, thus freeing the British soldiers to fight elsewhere. Roosevelt agreed, and on July 1, 1941, the United States and Iceland reached an agreement allowing U.S. Marines to enter Iceland in order to prevent a German invasion. Four thousand Marines were ready for duty in Iceland, which was then a sovereign state under the government of Denmark. It was critical to beleaguered Britain that Iceland not be occupied by Germany. Because of this, Britain had occupied Iceland over a year earlier, on May 10, 1940. Roosevelt's decision to send Marines to Iceland heightened the risk of war with Germany. The convoy carrying the Marines anchored in Reykjavik harbor on July 7.

The support of the American people for Roosevelt's action remained steady throughout the year. Historian Richard R. Lingeman points out: "The country was overwhelmingly in favor of aiding England in late 1941. Asked [by a Gallup poll] which was more important: that the United States stay out of the war or that Germany be defeated, sixty-eight percent said it was more important … Germany be defeated."

While no one died when the *Robin Moor* sank, this was not true on August 18, when two torpedoes from the submarine *U-38* slammed into the Iceland-bound U.S.-Panamanian freighter SS *Longtaker.* The unescorted and unarmed ship sank within a minute of being torpedoed. Twenty-four of the freighter's 27-man crew perished.

On September 4, 1941, the destroyer USS *Greer* was about 175 miles southwest of Iceland when a British patrol plane reported a submarine, later identified as the *U-652*. The submarine was 10 miles dead ahead. The *Greer* made sound contact with the U-boat and followed it. The British plane dropped four depth charges, then, for whatever reason, turned away. For more than three hours, the *Greer* tracked the submarine, repeatedly radioing its position to the British, but there was no British attack. Suddenly, the *U-652* changed course and closed on the *Greer.* Every man on the destroyer was at his battle station when the lookouts sighted an impulse bubble—a big globule of air that was raised when a submarine fired a torpedo. The *U-652* had fired without raising her periscope, aiming with her sound equipment.

Within a minute, *Greer* lookouts sighted the bubbling wake of the first of two torpedoes; it was about 100 yards astern. By then, the destroyer had begun to wheel and was steaming toward the spot where the lookouts observed the impulse bubble. Once the *Greer* was over the position, the destroyer dropped eight depth charges, but its sound man heard the submarine apparently moving away. Two minutes after the *Greer* dropped her depth charges, the second torpedo was sighted 500 yards off her starboard bow. It did not strike the *Greer*. After this, the destroyer lost contact with the submarine but continued searching. She picked up the submarine again that afternoon, closed, then attacked with depth charges, dropping 11. Nevertheless, the *U-652* survived. By late afternoon, *Greer* lost contact with the submarine after a three-hour search, and then continued to Iceland. The USS *Greer* was the first American warship to be attacked in the undeclared naval war.

The next day, September 5, a German plane

bombed and sank the American merchant ship *Steel Seafarer* in the Red Sea during its voyage from New York through the Suez Canal. A U.S. flag had been prominently painted on the side of the ship.

During Roosevelt's September 11, 1941, radio speech to the American public, his 18th fireside chat with the nation, he called the attack on the *Greer* an act of piracy and then continued: "When you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has struck before you crush him. These Nazi submarines and raiders are the rattlesnakes of the Atlantic ..."

**Roosevelt's bottom line was blunt: "Our ...** vessels and planes will protect all merchant ships—not only American ships but ships of any flag—engaged in commerce in our defensive waters. They will protect them from submarines; they will protect them from surface raiders."

The German attacks continued. On September 11, the same day Roosevelt made his fireside chat, a speech that became known as his "Shoot on Sight Speech," the U.S-Panamanian freighter *Montana,* carrying lumber from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Reykjavik, was sunk by the German submarine *U-105*. Eighteen of her 25-man crew died. On September 17, five American destroyers began escorting convoy HX150 from Halifax. This was the first time the United States Navy escorted an eastbound British transatlantic convoy. On September 20, the U.S.-Panamanian freighter *Pink Star,* carrying general cargo from New York to Liverpool, was sunk by *U-552*. Thirteen out of the crew of 35 men died. On September 26, the U.S.-Panamanian oil tanker *I.C. White* was sunk by *U-66* while sailing from Curaçao, an island in the southern Caribbean, to Cape Town, South Africa. Three men died in this attack. The tanker was unescorted, unarmed, and fully lit. On October 9, Roosevelt began his efforts to have the U.S. Neutrality Acts changed to allow for the arming of merchant ships.

So far, all the ships that had been torpedoed were merchantmen, but that was about to change. On October 16, 1941, the destroyer USS *Kearny* was part of an emergency rescue mission. Convoy SC-48, a 52-ship slow convoy moving through bad weather, was under attack by a submarine wolfpack. The convoy defenses were reinforced by five U.S. destroyers, *Greer, Kearny, Plunkett, Livermore,* and *Decatur*, but the rescuers made the mistake of bringing their ships too close to those they were trying to protect.

National Archives

The wolfpack, taking advantage of this error, closed to torpedo range and fired salvo after salvo without interruption. Conditions were made worse for the destroyers when their captains ordered the firing of star shells and flares. The light that was generated dazzled the lookouts and greatly reduced their night vision, which, in turn, made it easier for the U-boats to strike again and again. In the resulting turmoil, the *Kearny* veered away to avoid colliding with a Canadian corvette and in doing so became a perfect target for the *U-568*. The submarine fired a spread of torpedoes, one of which struck the *Kearny*.

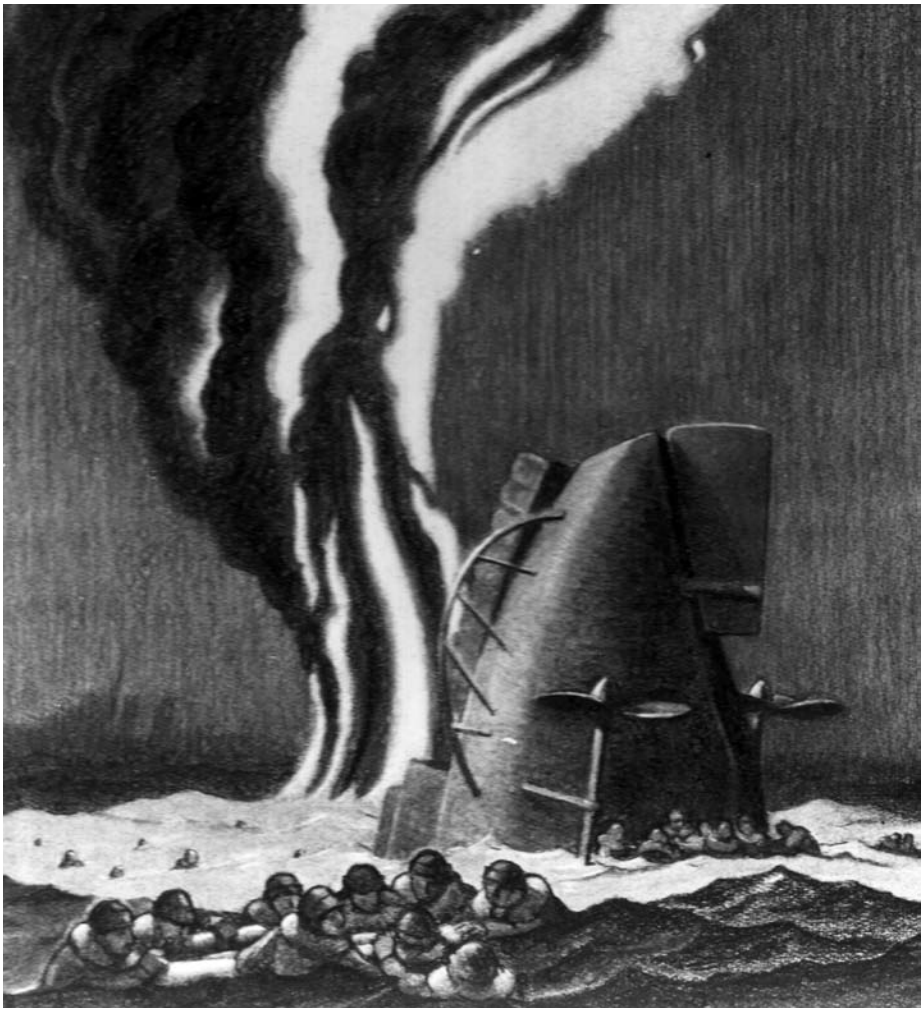
Ensign Harry Lyman, a *Kearny* survivor, later reported: "The U-boat fired three torpedoes at us. One went off the bow, one went off stern and the third hit us on the starboard side at the forward engine room."

**Lyman also reported hearing a terrible roar as** the warhead tore through the *Kearny*'s armor. The resulting explosion killed seven men stationed in the forward boiler room. The force also ripped through the deck, destroying the starboard wing of the bridge. It slammed the forward stack back and cut the siren cord so that the siren could not be shut off. Four other men disappeared, probably blown overboard. In total, 11 men died and 22 were injured. The ship managed to limp to Hvalfjordur, Iceland. She arrived on October 19, escorted by the *Greer.* A cavernous hole and twisted, misshapen plating disfigured her starboard side below and aft of the bridge. After the repair ship USS *Vulcan* patched the hole, the *Kearny* left Iceland on December 24, for Boston and permanent repairs. The *Kearny* was the first U.S. Navy casualty in the undeclared war in the Atlantic.

Two American ships were sunk during the attack on Convoy SC-48. On October 16, the Anglo-American Oil Co. tanker *W.C. Teagle* was sunk, and on October 17, the U.S.-Panama freighter *Bold Venture* was lost. The *Teagle,* carrying 15,000 tons of fuel oil and flying the British flag, was on a voyage from Aruba to Sydney, Nova Scotia, and then on to Swansea; she was torpedoed and sunk by submarine *U-558*. Though published figures vary slightly, it appears that 41 men on the ship died. Nine survivors were rescued by the British destroyer HMS *Broadwater.* However, all but one of these men died when the *Broadwater* was sunk the next day. The *Bold Venture,* which had left from Baltimore and was sailing for Liverpool with a cargo of cotton, iron, steel, copper, and wood, also suffered casualties.

On October 19, the U.S. freighter SS *Lehigh* was sunk. The *Lehigh,* sailing from Bilbao, Spain, to Africa was torpedoed by the *U-126*. The 4,983-ton freighter was unarmed, unescorted, and clearly marked as American. No one died in this attack. Sam Hakam, the radio operator on the SS *Lehigh* described what happened. "The torpedo struck without

National Archives



**ABOVE: Lieutenant Commander Griffith B. Coale, U.S. Naval Reserve, observed the sinking of the destroyer USS *Reuben James* at the hands of a German submarine on the night of October 30-31, 1941, from the accompanying destroyer USS *Niblack*. Coale later produced this vivid and haunting image of the event, which occurred six weeks before the United States was officially at war with Germany. RIGHT: Coale also drew this scene of the rescue of sailors from the *Reuben James* on the open sea.**

warning. There was a loud explosion followed by a towering plume of smoke and debris. My first reaction was, 'This is just like you see it in the movies.' ... Utter astonishment and disbelief followed. Jimmy, the fireman on the 4 to 8 watch, stood on deck shouting, 'They can't do this to us,' over and over ... He had reason to shout. It was October 19, 1941. We were not in the war yet."

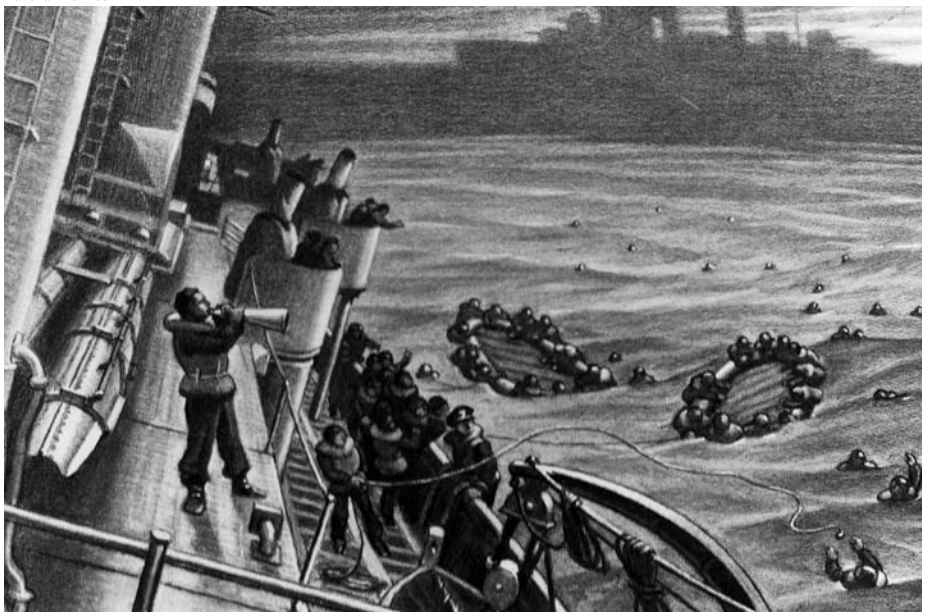
Although there had been no declaration of war, the United States was at war. The oiler SS *Salinas,* sailing about 700 miles east of Greenland, was torpedoed on October 30. There were no casualties, and the damaged ship managed to make it safely to port.

On October 23, 1941, the USS *Reuben James* sailed from Argentia, Newfoundland, with four other destroyers of the U.S. Escort Group 4.1.3. Its task was to escort convoy HX156. The *Reuben James* had been positioned directly between an ammunition ship in the convoy and the known position of a German U-boat wolfpack. At 8:34 AM, she was hit by a torpedo from submarine *U-552*.

The torpedo ignited the ammunition in the forward magazine. The resulting explosion tore the ship in two. The forward section sank immediately, taking all hands there into the icy water. As the stern sank, the ship's depth charges exploded and killed survivors in the water. At that moment, Chief Machinist's Mate William H. Bergstresser became the doomed ship's commander. He was the only survivor among the *Reuben James*'s 20 officers and chief petty officers. The destroyer carried a crew of 144, of which only 44 survived. Aside from the friends and relatives of the dead sailors, few Americans appeared to be deeply moved.

**Political activist and balladeer Woody Guthrie** composed "The Sinking of the *Reuben James,*" a stirring and patriotic song, commemorating the tragedy. The Nazis had invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, just over four months before the *Reuben James* went down. An ardent leftist, Guthrie had been composing and singing antiwar ballads for some time. Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union reversed all that. Great Britain and Soviet Russia were abruptly uncomfortable allies against Nazi Germany. Guthrie and other leftists made what conservatives and anticommunists ridiculed as "the great flip flop."

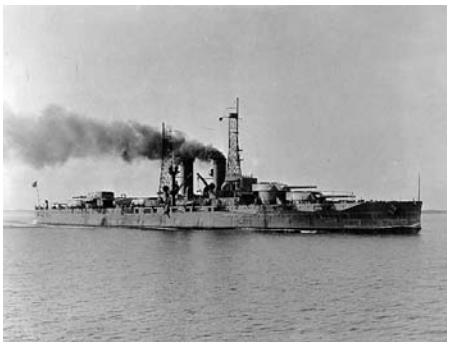
National Archives



The peace songs quickly vanished. Guthrie immediately composed a series of patriotic win-the-war ballads that were recorded and released soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Probably the most famous of these was "The

National Archives

National Archives

U.S. Navy

**ABOVET: The USS *Kearney,* a torpedoed destroyer, is undergoing repairs in Iceland. ABOVE LEFT: Escorted by warships of the U.S. Navy, a convoy bound for the hazardous Atlantic shipping lanes and Great Britain leaves the harbor at Brooklyn, New York, in 1941. LEFT: The battleship USS *Texas,* a veteran of World War I, was stalked by a German U-boat in the Atlantic south of Iceland but zigzagged out of harm's way.**

Sinking of the *Reuben James.*" Whatever the reason for its writing, the song was certainly a patriotic call to arms:

> "Have you heard of the ship called the good *Reuben James*?
>
> Manned by hard fighting men both of honor and fame
>
> She flew the Stars and Stripes of the land of the free
>
> But tonight she's in her grave at the bottom of the sea."
>
> *Chorus:*
>
> "Tell me what were their names,
> tell me what were their names?
>
> Did you have a friend on the good *Reuben James*?"

The United States continued moving closer to war with Germany. A November 5, 1941, Gallup poll indicated that 81 percent of the American public favored arming merchant ships and 61 percent favored allowing these ships to enter war zones. On November 6, the German blockade runner Odenwald, carrying a cargo of rubber from Japan, was captured in the Atlantic near the equator. She was taken by the cruiser USS *Omaha* and the destroyer USS *Somers*.

While Roosevelt was successful in pushing through changes to the Neutrality Acts, the U.S. Congress remained hesitant. The new rules specified that merchant ships could be armed and that U.S. ships could enter both combat zones and belligerent ports. The Senate approved the revision on November 7, and the House of Representatives reluctantly agreed on November 13. Senate approval was 50-37, and House approval was 212-194. Nevertheless, on November 11, 1941, the submarine *U-561* sank the 5,592-ton Panamanian freighter *Meridian,* and then the 2,939-ton Panamanian freighter *Crusader* on November 14. Both ships were part of convoy SC-53.

On December 2, 1941, the German submarine *U-43* fired a torpedo at the unarmed and unescorted oil tanker SS *Astral,* which was traveling from Aruba to Lisbon, Portugal. The tanker was clearly marked as American; flags were painted on its sides. The torpedo missed, and the tanker began zigzagging in a desperate effort to survive. It was to no avail. The *U-43* hunted her through the night and at 9:24 the next morning sent two torpedoes into her, one astern and one amidships. The tanker, carrying a crew of 37 men and 78,200 barrels of gasoline and kerosene, exploded and sank within minutes. There were no survivors. Gasoline and kerosene burned for an hour on the water after the ship went down. That same day the U.S. merchant ship SS *Dunboyne* received the first Naval Armed Guard crew.

The last American merchant ship sunk in the undeclared war was the unarmed SS *Sagadahoc,* which was stopped in the South Atlantic on December 3 by the submarine *U-124*. The German commander, deciding the ship carried contraband, ordered its 35-man crew into lifeboats. The *Sagadahoc* was then sunk. However, one sailor failed to leave the ship and went down with her. He was probably the last sailor to die in the unofficial war in the Atlantic.

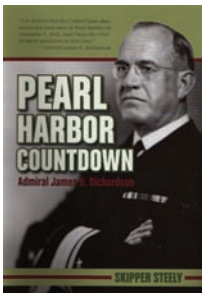
The undeclared naval war between the United States and Germany was coming to an end. Four days after the *Sagadahoc* was sunk, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. On December 11, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. □

*Herb Kugel previously wrote for* WWII History *on the topic of war bonds. He resides in Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia, Canada.*

By Mason B. Webb

# Countdown to Pearl Harbor

## New Richardson biography adds perspective to the Pearl Harbor attack.




**"I DO BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES FLEET WOULD NOT** have been in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, had I been the chief of naval operations at that time."

So stated Admiral James O. Richardson after the stunning Japanese attack that nearly destroyed America's Pacific Fleet on that fateful Sunday and propelled the United States into World War II.

In ***Pearl Harbor Countdown: Admiral James O. Richardson*** (Pelican, Gretna, LA, 2008, 543 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, softcover, $25.00), a big and compelling biography of a now almost forgotten historical figure, author Skipper Steely offers an illuminating portrait of a naval officer who could have changed history, if only America's leaders had listened to him.

Richardson, who commanded the Pacific Fleet until January 1941, had played a central role in developing and implementing War Plan Orange, the military strategies, plans, and exercises launched in 1924 to check Japan's expansionist moves in the Pacific. From his intense involvement in these exercises, it became clear to Richardson that the fleet should not remain at Pearl Harbor. In his estimation, the fleet was not prepared, the country was open to attack, and the facilities at Pearl Harbor were inadequate for training the sailors whose duty it was to defend the Pacific and America's West Coast.

Richardson's own training, expertise, and experience led him to the unshakable conclusion that a Japanese attack against Pearl Harbor was inevitable. The admiral risked—and ultimately sacrificed—his long and distinguished Navy career by locking horns with Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark, and even President Franklin D. Roosevelt, trying in vain to convince them of Japan's intentions and the Navy's vulnerability.

But Knox, Stark, and Roosevelt finally had heard enough and refused to listen. When Richardson continued to repeatedly criticize the executive decision to maintain the fleet in Hawaii, he was relieved of his command. After the attack, it became painfully obvious that Richardson had been right all along.

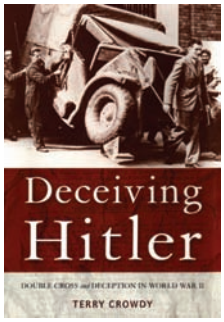
*Pearl Harbor Countdown* is a big, important book about one of America's greatest military disasters—a disaster that might have been averted had his superiors heeded Admiral Richardson's warnings. Highly recommended.

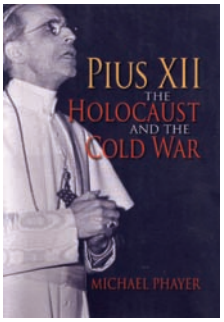
---

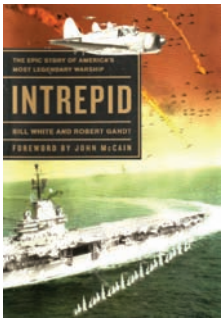
***Deceiving Hitler: Double Cross and Deception in World War II,*** by Terry Crowdy, Osprey, Oxford, UK, 2008, 352 pp., photographs, maps, bibliography, index, hardcover, $25.95.

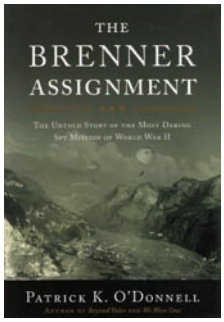
One of the most fascinating aspects of World War II is the cunning and trickery employed by the Allies to fool Hitler and his commanders into thinking they were about to do one thing when, in fact, they were about to do something altogether different.

**LEFT: The *West Virginia, Tennessee,* and *Arizona* in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack. RIGHT: Admiral J.O. Richardson takes the oath before the Congressional Pearl Harbor Investigation.** (Left: National Archives. Right: U.S. Navy)




Perhaps the best-known example of wartime deception was Operation Fortitude, the Allies' successful attempt at using a fake army, fake radio traffic, and fake landing craft in conjunction with a very real George S. Patton, to convince the Nazis that the main invasion of the Continent would take place at the Pas de Calais. So convinced were the Germans that, even days after the invasion of Normandy had been launched, Hitler was reluctant to move any units from Calais to Normandy.

But, as Crowdy points out, Operation Fortitude was only one in a long series of deceptions designed to arouse enemy suspicions and force them to act in a desired fashion. Whether it was dressing up a corpse in a British uniform and outfitting him with a briefcase that contained false plans for an invasion of Sardinia and Greece instead of the real target, Sicily, and setting him adrift off the coast of Spain; or using look-alike "doubles" of famous personalities such as Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery; or employing dummy tanks, aircraft, and landing barges that, from the air, looked like the real thing, the Allies' disinformation campaign worked beyond the planners' wildest dreams.

In *Deceiving Hitler,* Crowdy also details the careers of numerous spies, agents, and double agents whose work did much to confuse and confound the enemy, all the while risking exposure and their lives. We meet the operatives with such code names as Garbo, Dragonfly, Tate, Rainbow, Father, Careless, and Mutt and Jeff, and learn exactly how they contributed to German confusion and Allied victory.

Throughout Crowdy's constantly entertaining book the reader will encounter colorful characters, preposterous-yet-true schemes, and fabulous plans and plots that fooled the enemy and helped ensure an Allied victory. A must-read book of the can't-put-it-down variety.

---

***Pius XII, The Holocaust, and the Cold War,*** by Michael Phayer, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2008, 332 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $29.95.

For the past 60-plus years, much controversy has swirled around what Pope Pius XII and the Roman Catholic Church did or did not do regarding the mass murder of millions of Jews by the Nazis.

Delving into this complex issue is Michael Phayer, an emeritus professor of history at Marquette University and Holocaust scholar who has specialized in looking at the relationship between the Church and the Jewish Holocaust. In this new book, Phayer makes use of previously unavailable material to shed new light on the actions of the Vatican and of the man whom some have called "Hitler's Pope" while others continue to campaign for his sainthood.

After Hitler gained power in Germany and another world war loomed on the horizon, the Vatican believed that it had to make a choice between opposing either Communism or Hitler's Fascism. Convinced that Communist ideology would outlive Fascism, both Pius XI and his successor, Pius XII, reluctantly chose the Nazis as the lesser evil.

Although Pius XII denounced genocide in 1942, the crucial test for the pope came in October 1943, when the Jews of Rome were rounded up and hauled off to concentration camps. Pius XII was deeply troubled by the persecution of the Jews, but he feared that Catholics would be equally persecuted if he were to staunchly oppose Hitler. When 1,000 Roman Jews were shipped to their deaths at Auschwitz, the Vatican did not protest, a silence that has been interpreted as either complicity or cowardice ever since.

Phayer also delves into new documents that shed light on the Vatican allowing Holocaust perpetrators to escape justice by fleeing to South America after the war.

Phayer's work is a detailed look at a complex man caught on the horns of one of history's greatest dilemmas.

---

***Intrepid: The Epic Story of America's Most Legendary Warship,*** by Bill White and Robert Gandt, foreword by John McCain, Broadway Books, New York, 2008, 348 pp., photographs, index, hardcover, $32.00.

Sitting somewhat incongruously at Pier 86, located at West 46th Street and 12th Avenue on Manhattan's west side, not far from the site of where the twin towers of the World Trade Center once stood, is a floating museum, the aircraft carrier USS *Intrepid*.

Since her launching in 1943, the 27,000-ton, Essex-class carrier has compiled a record unmatched by any other Navy vessel. During World War II, she took part in some of the most savage battles in the Pacific: Kwajalein, Truk, Peleliu, Formosa, the Philippines, and Okinawa. Surviving kamikaze and torpedo attacks, *Intrepid* and her crew of sailors and aviators covered themselves with glory.

After the war, unlike so many other ships, *Intrepid* was not scrapped. She was modernized and refitted and continued to serve her country as a Cold War attack carrier, a symbol of America's steadfast resolve to defend freedom around the globe. During the Vietnam War, she was deployed to Southeast Asia, where she served as a platform for launching strikes against Communist targets.

She also served in peacetime, recovering returning astronauts who splashed down in the sea. *Intrepid* was also one of the main ships taking part in the nation's bicentennial celebration in 1976.

But, like too many other vessels that had served proudly, *Intrepid* was slated for an ignominious end. Pulled by a tugboat from Quonset Point Naval Air Station in Rhode Island to the Philadelphia Navy Shipyard in March 1974, she was scheduled to be decommissioned and then cut to pieces, welders' torches doing what Japan's bravest warriors could not.

But then someone got an idea: perhaps the old ship could be saved and turned into a floating museum. It seemed far-fetched at the time —how could the millions of dollars necessary to make the conversion be raised? Could enough civilian volunteers needed to perform all the work be found? And where could such a huge vessel be displayed?

The problems seemed enormous, the solutions impossible.

Enter Zachary Fisher, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants and a hugely successful New York developer and businessman. It was he who surmounted all of the hurdles and turned a dream into reality.

This outstanding book, by White, president of the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, and Gandt, a former U.S. Navy fighter/attack pilot,

tells how *Intrepid* was saved from destruction and resurrected as one of the nation's premier military museums. Both the book and the museum are tributes to America's heritage and the courage of her fighting men.

---

***The Brenner Assignment: The Untold Story of the Most Daring Spy Mission of World War II,*** by Patrick K. O'Donnell, DaCapo, Cambridge, MA, 2008, 286 pp., photographs, maps, index, hardcover, $25.00.

Since Roman times, the Brenner Pass has been an essential trade and military route through the Alps. During the war, it became a major supply artery for the Third Reich, as well as a symbol of the Hitler-Mussolini "Pact of Steel," enabling German troops to be shuttled to the southern battlefronts and food from Italy's rich agricultural regions to reach hard-pressed Germany.

This fragile link, tunnels beneath the mountain peaks, became the focus of an incredible plan: a secret American mission to infiltrate Nazi territory and cut the vital artery between Austria and Italy in order to hamper Germany's ability to halt the Allied drive up the Italian peninsula.

It sounds like the stuff of Hollywood, but it's all true, a behind-enemy-lines diary preserved in a buried glass bottle telling of the secret plans, along with a sensational cast of characters, the dashing team leader; the idealistic mastermind behind the operation; the beautiful and seductive Italian countess who is also a double agent; the cunning SS officer in determined, deadly pursuit of the spies and their partisan collaborators.

Drawing on a treasure trove of recently declassified files, private documents, and personal interviews, author O'Donnell reveals, for the first time, the facts behind the most daring covert operation of World War II.

Packed with action, suspense, intrigue, and even romance, this exciting tale of sabotage and survival behind enemy lines is one of the great untold adventure stories of the war. Highly recommended.

---

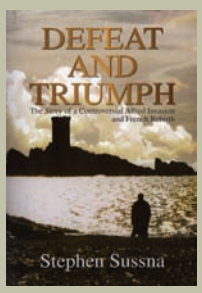
***More Than Courage: The Combat History of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment in World War II,*** by Phil Nordyke, Zenith Press, St. Paul, MN, 2008, 472 pp., photographs, maps, bibliography, index, hardcover, $28.00.

Few historians have captured the spirit and

## >> Short Bursts

***Defeat and Triumph: The Story of a Controversial Allied Invasion and French Rebirth,*** by Stephen Sussna, Xlibris, Philadelphia, 2008, 720 pp., photographs, maps, bibliography, index, softcover, $25.00.

This magazine does not often review self-published books. Too often they are poorly written and self-serving. But we have made an exception for this exceptional book. Stephen Sussna, an emeritus professor of law, was the helmsman on LST 1012 during Operation Dragoon, the invasion of the French Riviera, on August 15, 1944. In *Defeat and Triumph,* he goes into great detail about all aspects of this important, dramatic, and controversial invasion and his ship's role in the most dangerous and tragic event of the landings.



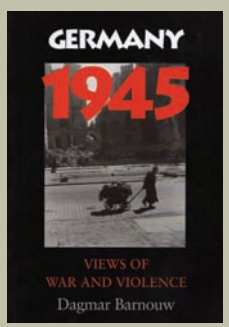

In his panoramic, well-researched history, Sussna thoroughly analyzes the pros and cons of Dragoon and provides a behind-the-scenes look at this large-scale but largely overlooked operation that ensured the liberation of France and the defeat of Nazi Germany.

***Germany 1945: Views of War and Violence,*** by Dagmar Barnouw, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2008, 255 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, softcover, $24.95.

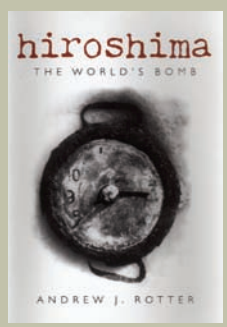
We are familiar with the images: destroyed German cities, long lines of pitiful refugees, demoralized German soldiers guarded by heavily armed GIs, stacks of dead concentration camp inmates. But what is the meaning behind the photographs? What do they tell us about war and the human condition, about the victors and the vanquished?

The brilliant, late University of Southern California professor Dagmar Barnouw, who wrote intellectually provocative works about the aftermath of World War II, is at her best in *Germany 1945* as she uses photographs in an attempt to answer these and other unsettling questions.

As one reviewer noted, "Barnouw's close readings try to suggest subtexts in the photographs that go beyond, and may even belie, the captions and texts that originally accompanied them. Barnouw aims at questioning a melodramatic victor's gaze in order to arrive at a more fully compassionate point of view and to force the reader to confront and meditate upon images of death and destruction, of corpses and ruins, of hunger, suffering, hopelessness, and the aftermath of genocide."








***At War with the Wind: The Epic Struggle with Japan's World War II Suicide Bombers,*** by David Sears, Citadel Press, Kensington Publishing, New York, 2008, 502 pp., photographs, maps, bibliography, index, hardcover, $24.95.

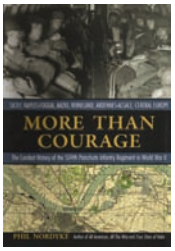
Anyone who ever thought that sea duty aboard a ship in wartime was safer than being in a foxhole or in an airplane needs to read Sears's book.

In the closing months of World War II, a new and baffling weapon terrorized the U.S. Navy in the Pacific, enemy pilots who were determined to die in their attempt to sink American ships and forestall an invasion of their homeland. Known as kamikaze, or "divine wind," these Japanese aviators were trained for one-way missions of mass destruction. Told from the perspective of the men who endured this horrifying tactic, *At War with the Wind* describes in nail-biting detail what it was like to be subjected to these devastating attacks from the sky.

***Hiroshima: The World's Bomb,*** by Andrew J. Rotter, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2008, 371 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $29.95.

Many books have been written about the development and deployment of the atomic bomb, but Andrew Rotter's book looks at the weapon in a new way—how it

élan of the airborne forces the way Phil Nordyke has. The author of *Four Stars of Valor, All American, All the Way,* and *The All Americans in World War II,* has done it again, this time focusing on the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment.



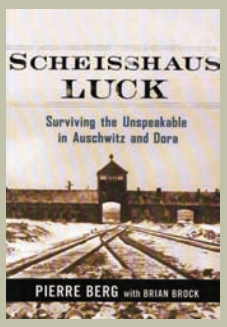

Although the 504th did not take part in Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy, the unit did practically everything else: executing combat jumps into Sicily, Salerno, and Holland; making an amphibious assault landing at Anzio; fighting in the rugged mountains of Italy; enduring brutal winter combat in the Belgian Ardennes; and making crossings under fire of the Waal and Rhine Rivers.

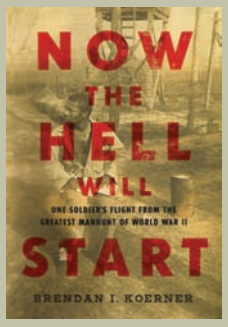
The 504th combat record is spectacular. No other American parachute regiment fought as many days (281) or under as many differing circumstances during World War II.

As the author notes in the introduction, "The paratroopers of the 504th were some of the toughest, best, most aggressive soldiers that America or any country has ever fielded. Despite fighting against some of the best troops of the German Army, the regiment never lost."

Drawing on personal interviews, oral histories, and unpublished written accounts from more than 300 veterans of the "black-hearted devils," Nordyke's *More Than Courage* brings the history of the 504th to life, conveying with power what it was like to be there.

A fine book for anyone who likes his or her military history raw, rough, and unadorned. □




***Scheisshaus Luck: Surviving the Unspeakable in Auschwitz and Dora,*** by Pierre Berg (with Brian Brock), Amacom Books, New York, 2008, 320 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $24.95.

Berg's book is a remarkable, unique personal account of the Holocaust from a non-Jewish French teenager's point of view. From his arrest in 1943 to his incarceration in the death camp at Auschwitz and his eventual escape from the underground V2 rocket assembly plant at Mittelbau-Dora, Berg keeps the reader on the edge of his or her seat with his unsparing descriptions—frank, irreverent, and ironic, and with a hint of dry, gallows humor.

***Now the Hell Will Start: One Soldier's Flight from the Greatest Manhunt of World War II,*** by Brendan I. Koerner, Penguin Press, New York, 2008, 386 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, hardcover, $26.95.

Part history, part thriller, *Now the Hell Will Start* is the astonishing, unknown tale of Herman Perry, an African-American soldier who sparked the greatest manhunt of World War II and became the war's unlikeliest folk hero.

Assigned to a segregated labor battalion, Perry was one of thousands of black soldiers ordered to perform the backbreaking chore of building the Ledo Road from the mountains of northeast India through the fetid, tiger-infested jungles of Burma and into China.

Unable to bear any longer the harsh conditions or his white superiors' racist treatment, Perry deserted into the inhospitable wilds of the Indo-Burmese jungle where he learned how to survive. Befriended by a tribe of headhunters, Perry hid out while squads of U.S. military police sought to bring him back under American control and to a court-martial. A gripping, overlooked chapter of American history. □



**Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation:** 1. Publication Title- WWII History Magazine 2. Publication Number- 1539-5456. 3. Filing Date- 11/17/08. 4. Issue Frequency- 7x 5. Number of Issues Published Annually 7. 6. Annual Subscription Price $21.95. 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known office of Publication- 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon VA 20170, Fairfax County. Contact Person: Mark Hintz. Telephone 703-964-0361.8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher- 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon VA 20170. 9 Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor- Publisher-Mark Hintz, 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon VA 20170, Editor Michael Haskew, 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon VA 20170, Managing Editor- Carl Gnam, 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon VA 20170. 10. Owner- Sovereign Media Inc, 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon Va 20170, Mark Hintz, 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon VA 20170, Carl Gnam-453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon VA 20170, 11. Known Bondholders, mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. None.12. Tax Status: Has not changed during preceding 12 months. 13. Publication Title- WWII History Magazine. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below- December 2008. 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months. a. Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run) 76,650. b. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 35,799. 2. Mailed In-County Subscriptions 0. 3.Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS 18,917. 4. Paid Distribution by other classes of Mail Through the USPS 0. c. Total Paid Distribution 54,716. d. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541 0. (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS form 3541 0. (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Mailed through the USPS 0. (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail 0 e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution 0. f. Total distribution 54,716. g. Copies not distributed 21,934. h. Total 76,650. j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation 100%. Actual No Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to filing Date. a. Total Number of Copies 74,126. b. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 36,077. 2. Mailed In-County Subscriptions 0. 3.Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS 36,077. 4. Paid Distribution by other classes of Mail Through the USPS 0. c. Total Paid Distribution 65,250. d. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541 0. (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS form 3541 0. (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Mailed through the USPS 0. (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail 0 e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution 0. f. Total distribution 65,250. g. Copies not distributed 8,876. h. Total 74,126. j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation 100%. Publication of Statement of Ownership Publication required will be printed in the March 2009 issue of this publication. 17. Signature and Title of editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner, Mark Hintz. Date 11/17/08.

## >>Simulation Gaming

| By Eric T. Baker |

### *Axis & Allies* celebrates Avalon Hill's 50th anniversary.

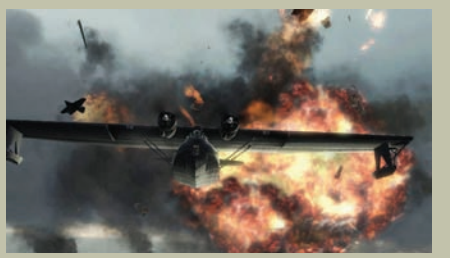
To celebrate its 50th anniversary [we now pause for a second while we all feel old], Avalon Hill has released an anniversary edition of its most successful game: **Axis and Allies**. This edition contains the largest map ever made for an *A&A* game,


24 x 46 inches. It also contains two new countries: China as an Allied power, and Italy is as a power the Axis can control or that a sixth player can run in the regular game. Both these new powers have new pieces designed just for them.

Players can now choose to start the game in the spring of either 1941 or 1942. A cruiser unit has been introduced and submarines are now both cheaper and cannot be attacked by airplanes unless they are supported by ships. There are other rule changes that further balance the game without adding to its complexity. *A&A* remains more of an abstract game with a WWII backdrop than an actual simulation of the conflict, but it also remains one of the most entertaining board games ever created.

Last year the *Call of Duty* series took a one-game detour from its familiar WWII setting to take on modeling *Modern Warfare*. This year the designers have used that same game engine to take the series back to the 1940s for modeling the **World at War**. The single-player story mode follows two parallel stories: a Russian infantryman fighting his way from Stalingrad to Berlin and an American infantryman fighting his way across the islands of the Pacific. Both of these fights have been explored in other games, but at least they aren't as worn out as D-Day and Pearl Harbor.


As with its predecessors, *Call of Duty World at War* is a first-person shooting game that models the war from the view down an iron sight. In both stories, the player's character actually starts without any weapons and on the brink of death, which lends an extra tension as he struggles to just survive, escape, and then to counterattack. Between each level are cutscenes employing archival footage and photographs to put into perspective just what the real battles were like.



Even with two stories, the single-player game is relatively short. It can be played by up to four players cooperatively, which is great fun but actually makes the campaign shorter since it takes out the sniping and gunnery levels. There is also a co-op mode that places up to four players in a bunker and pits them against Nazi zombies. The players get points for killing zombies and rebuilding their defense. Points unlock powerups and more rooms in the bunker, but each wave of zombies is larger and tougher than the one before. Death is inevitable, but the test is to see how many points can be racked up before it happens.

To balance the co-op modes, there are online versus modes. *CoD*'s experience system allows the players to unlock more weapons, better health, etc. It also grants them perks like the ability to leave a live grenade on their corpse when they die. There are also rewards for completing certain challenges. For example, if the player manages seven kills without dying himself, he gets a pack of war dogs. Yes, *CoD* not only lets players kill Nazi zombies, it also lets them unleash the dogs of war. □

## insight

*Continued from page 21*

Lord Gort and Hore-Belisha, "The ultimate fact is that they could never get on—you couldn't expect two such utterly different people to do so—a great gentleman and an obscure, shallow-brained charlatan, political Jewboy." Gort's nickname for the War Minister was "Horeb Elisha."

In May 1937, General Ironside noted in his diary, "We are at our lowest ebb in the Army and the Jew may resuscitate us." Some have speculated that Hore-Belisha's ostentatious pushiness provoked the comment, "of course he's Jewish." However, the provocative behavior, not the religion, was probably the real cause of the prejudice against Hore-Belisha.

There were other, more pragmatic and nonreligious reasons to explain Hore-Belisha's dismissal. He was prone to failing to consult the Army leadership about important reforms, such as doubling of the Territorial Army. His association with Liddell Hart was troublesome. Hore-Belisha stirred fear in the GHQ in France, thinking that he intended to replace some of its senior officers from Gort downward.

Gort and Pownall resented Hore-Belisha's style of making high-level appointments without consulting them. Perhaps, Pownall in his diary summed up the ill-will toward Hore-Belisha: "He has an amazing conceit, thinking himself in the direct line of descent with Cardwell and Haldane in matters of Army organization. He knows nothing about it … and he doesn't seem to listen and he will not read what is put before him. Impossible to educate, thinking he knows when he doesn't know, impatient, subject to a lot of outside influence, ambitious, an advertiser and self-seeker—what can we do with him?"

Ultimately, Chamberlain and his Cabinet bear a large responsibility for failing to support Hore-Belisha in his disagreements with the generals and arriving at a more appropriate conclusion, especially during wartime. Fortunately for the king's generals and the British throne, the man who was accused of being too publicity minded retired to the back benches and did not make a major press issue of his sacking. This was important because in five short months, Great Britain would be fighting for its life as the remnants of the BEF were evacuated from the harbor and beaches of Dunkirk. □

---

*Jon Diamond currently practices medicine and resides in Pennsylvania. He is a contributor to military history periodicals and is currently working on a book*, Britain's Military Pariahs.

*Continued from page 29*

battalions forward and kept one in reserve.

The remnants of the Totenkopf Division and the 6th Panzer Division were on the division's left flank, and Bitttrich's advance headquarters was now located on the east bank of the Danube near the Reichs Bridge. Casualties continued to mount during the withdrawal and included SS Captain Richard Engelmann, commander of the 1st/4th SS Panzergrenadier Battalion, who was killed with his whole crew when his command vehicle was shot up by a Russian tank on the south bank of the river. The armored strength of Das Reich on this day was 15 Panthers, 11 Mark IVs, four Jagdpanzer IVs, one Jagdpanzer V, and eight Flakpanzer IVs.

The German front on Prater Island held throughout the 11th, but on the 12th the Soviets made a major incursion in the area of the Augarten canal bridge forcing the Germans back into two small perimeters—Das Reich's encompassing the Northwest Station area and the Floridsdorf Bridge, and the Totenkopf's and the 6th Panzer Division's North Station and Reichs Bridge.

At 2315 hours on April 12, Bittrich, in what could be described as a convenient move, handed over command of all troops west of the Danube to General von Bünau. At the same time Das Reich's remaining armor was ordered back across the river and the remaining elements of the Totenkopf and 6th Panzer Divisions were withdrawn, or more probably forced back, to the east bank. This latter withdrawal resulted in the Reichs Bridge falling into Soviet hands intact. The cause of this error is unknown, but it has been alleged that it was due to a Führer Order expressly forbidding its demolition. In any event, the surviving structure was covered with some antitank guns and at least six 37mm flak guns.

Das Reich was thus left holding the Floridsdorf Bridge perimeter in isolation and with an open left flank. Not surprisingly, it soon found itself having to abandon the area of the Northwest Station and withdraw on von Bünau's orders into a close bridge garrison with a radius of only some 700 meters. Von Bünau saw the futility of holding on but knew that a further general withdrawal in daylight was out of the question since the bridge was under direct fire from Russian tanks and machine guns.

According to Otto Weidinger, commander of 4th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment, he was also influenced by an April 12 directive from the supreme headquarters of the German armed forces (OKW), signed by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, commander of OKW; SS chief Heinrich Himmler; and Martin Bormann, Hitler's personal secretary, which demanded that important communication centers be defended to the bitter end. The appointed commandant was to be personally responsible for carrying out this order, and if any of them failed in or acted in defiance of their duties they would be sentenced to death.

This last day in the battle for Vienna found Rudolf Lehmann, the commander of Das Reich, together with his chief operations officer, still in the tiny Floridsdorf bridgehead but with the main divisional headquarters back on the east side of the river. Von Bünau was also in the bridgehead, still refusing to give up and moving among the men in a simple forage cap with a stick grenade tucked in his belt. Lehmann called for all the available heavy weapons on the east side of the river, including an army 88mm flak battery, to keep up a wall of protective fire in front of his positions and for tanks to come forward again into the perimeter. An attempt by three Panther tanks of the 6th SS Panzer Company to do so was abandoned after the leading tank, commanded by SS Lieutenant Karl Heinz Boska, the company commander, was hit and set on fire.

Around midday von Bünau sent his operations officer to brief the Sixth Army commander, Sepp Dietrich, personally on the desperate situation in the bridgehead. Shortly after this, Lehmann was wounded in the knee by a shell splinter and evacuated to the east bank. Not for the first time, SS Colonel Kreutz took temporary command of Das Reich. Fifty-six men, too severely wounded to be evacuated without ambulances, were already sheltering under the arches of the bridge.

The operations officer returned from Sixth Panzer Army headquarters at around 1600 hours with the news that Dietrich had sanctioned a withdrawal. Von Bünau finally acquiesced and gave orders for it to begin as soon as possible after last light. Fortunately, as on the previous nights, the Soviet attacks ceased with the coming darkness, and in almost total silence all the wounded were evacuated. Von Bünau and the last grenadiers of the SS 3rd/4th Battalion pulled back across the bridge at about midnight. Shortly afterward, the order was given to blow it. The battle of Vienna was over. □

---

*Michael Reynolds is a retired major general in the British Army. He is a veteran of the Korean War and the former director of NATO's Military Plans and Policy Division. Since retiring from the Army, he has written several well-received books on World War II.*

*Continued from page 53*

landing of transport aircraft at Fornebu was predicated upon the airfield being secured by German airborne troops. Since this had not taken place, orders were issued canceling the air operation after consulting headquarters.

It appeared that the Germans had suffered another serious setback. Then, one of those bizarre events occurred that often decides the outcome of a battle. This time the fortune of war favored the Germans. There are two versions of what happened. The official Norwegian naval history, based on General von Falkenhorst's report, states that the cancelation order reached the first wave of aircraft but the following waves failed to receive it. Other sources relate a different story. Their version of what happened is that when the commander of one wave read the order to turn around he noted that it came from X Air Corps. He was subordinate to another command and therefore believed that the order was false or intended for someone else. He decided to ignore it and continue on to Fornebu.

The version given by Falkenhorst is more convincing. With all planes carrying the landing force airborne, it is obvious that the order to abort came via radio and its authenticity could easily be validated. All air elements in the invasion of Norway came under the operational control of X Air Corps, and each commander was no doubt fully aware of this fact. The operation was canceled because German paratroopers had not secured the airfield, and it would be strange for this not to be mentioned when the order to abort was given.

The Norwegian Gladiators returned to Fornebu to refuel, and all seven took off about 6:30 AM. The pilots were not sure if Norway was at war, but as they climbed in a southerly direction they saw a dark cloud of smoke rise from the spot near Oscarborg where *Blücher* had sunk. Any lingering doubts were dispelled almost immediately as they saw a wave of 80 German aircraft heading in their direction. The Norwegian aircraft were at a greater height than the Germans, and Lieutenant Torbjørn Tradin, the squadron commander, gave the order to attack.

The Norwegian formation broke up as the squadron dived in among the German aircraft. The airspace over Oslo was filled with planes, and dogfights took place both above and below the cloud cover. One Norwegian aircraft was damaged and crash-landed at Fornebu. The rest of the Gladiators exhausted their ammunition and returned individually to Fornebu. Two managed to land before a radio message told them not to set down since the airfield was under attack. The remaining four aircraft landed on frozen lakes in the interior of the country. The Norwegian Gladiators acquitted themselves well, shooting down three Heinkel He-111 bombers and two Messerschmitt Me-110 twin-engine fighters.

A squadron of Me-110s that were to have protected and supported the German paratroops had not received the news that the airdrop was canceled. These aircraft were circling the airfield, and they destroyed the three Norwegian Gladiators that returned to Fornebu.

In the meantime, the first wave of Ju-52 transport aircraft arrived over the airfield. German fighter aircraft were circling, and fires were seen on the ground. The German commander interpreted what he saw as proof that the paratroopers had jumped and were involved in fighting on the ground. Therefore, he ordered his wave to land. The lead aircraft met heavy fire from Norwegian machine guns. The pilot gave full throttle, but before he was airborne again, the commander and several others were killed.

The transport planes began to circle the airfield, uncertain about what they should do. It looked like another part of the German plan to capture the Norwegian capital had failed. However, the fortunes of war took a favorable turn for the Germans. Plans called for the Me-110s to land at Fornebu to refuel after they had protected the landing of the paratroopers because they did not have sufficient fuel to return to Germany or Denmark. This is another example of the risks the Germans were willing to take in their operational planning.

The Me-110s had used up all their fuel waiting for the paratroopers, and the squadron commander decided to land his aircraft at Fornebu. He did not have much choice. When the transport aircraft saw the Messerschmitts land, they decided to do the same, and one by one the German planes landed despite heavy Norwegian fire. Two German aircraft were destroyed and five severely damaged. The number of Germans killed is unknown, but they were held at bay until the Norwegians ran out of ammunition and were forced to withdraw at 8:30 AM. The Germans quickly took control of the airfield and signaled for subsequent waves to land. Six companies of Germans—about 900 men—were on the ground by noon.

The German air attaché arrived at the airport and briefed Colonel Helmuth Nickelmann, the landing force commander (commander of the 324th Infantry Regiment), on the situation in Oslo. As the companies were ready, they marched in close order formation toward Oslo.

There were about 1,000 uniformed Norwegian soldiers in Oslo that morning, but many were students at the various military schools. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment in the Tradum training area 50 kilometers north of Oslo was the nearest sizable Norwegian combat force. The only organized formations in the city were a squadron of cavalry at the cavalry school and three companies of Royal Guards. One of the three companies had just demobilized and turned in its weapons and equipment at the Akershus Citadel. Maj. Gen. Hvinden-Haug, the Norwegian commander in the Oslo area, had dispatched one company of the Guards and the cavalry school squadron to capture the *Blücher* survivors, and this force could not be recalled since it had no radios.

The only available Guard company was quickly dispatched to stop the Germans at Fornebu from reaching Oslo. The Norwegian commander decided to use back roads on the way to the airport, and the Germans and Norwegians managed to pass each other without making contact. The demobilized Guard company tried to retrieve its weapons and equipment at Akershus, but the Germans arrived before the Guards could rearm themselves.

Colonel Nickelmann met the acting commandant in Oslo, Colonel H.P. Schnitler, at Akershus and demanded the city's surrender. The two colonels had a conference with the city's chief of police, and Colonel Schnitler telephoned the prime minister, Johan Nygaardsvold, now located in Hamar, and explained the situation. The Germans stated that they did not wish to become involved in the civil administration, promised not to occupy the royal palace, and would allow the Guards to continue their routine. Nygaardsvold gave Colonel Schnitler permission to surrender Oslo. The document surrendering the capital was signed at 2 PM.

The determined and decisive action of one individual—Colonel Eriksen—had upset the ambitious German timetable, and this delay enabled the Norwegian government and royal family to escape the capital before the Germans arrived. The military commands and the gold reserves of the central bank were also evacuated. Instead of the hoped-for quick coup to assure a peaceful occupation like that of Denmark, the Germans were forced to undertake a grueling 62-day campaign to subdue Norway in the longest campaign of the war prior to the attack on the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941. □

---

*First-time contributor Henrik O. Lunde is a retired U.S. Army colonel and the author of a forthcoming book on World War II in Norway.*

# 8,200 AMERICANS ENTERED WORLD WAR II

## *... before the U.S. declared war*

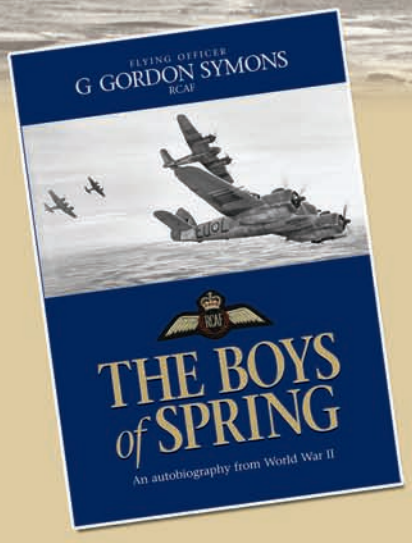
***Fighter Pilot's autobiography includes:***

Details of U.S. pre-war recruitment by the Clayton Knight Committee

Actual WWII flight mission records

A coming-of-age tale, from pilot training through the end of the war

## The Inspiration for a ***Feature Film*** in Development




In *The Boys of Spring*, G. Gordon Symons shows us an allied Air Force that amounted to a major Force of Arms with the addition of more than 8,000 American volunteers who joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in the early days of the war as instructors and active operational pilots in allied Bomber, Fighter, and Coastal Command Squadrons. This wonderfully written autobiography gives us a clear window into the relationships developed by the author with these men, and also chronicles the adventures of his life as a young man coming of age in wartime Britain.

G. Gordon Symons served on Royal Air Force 143 Coastal Command Anti-Shipping Squadron, flying Bristol Beaufighters and de Havilland Mosquitos against targets in and around the coastal waters of Norway, the North Sea, the Frisian Islands, and other German targets of opportunity.

**FOR NORTH AMERICAN ORDERS:**
*$49.95 CDN (S&H INCLUDED)*

**FOR INTERNATIONAL ORDERS:**
*$59.95 CDN (S&H INCLUDED)*

**FOR NORTH AMERICAN ORDERS, CALL 1-866-340-0685**
**FOR INTERNATIONAL ORDERS, CALL +1-613-482-4427**
***OR* VISIT WWW.THEBOYSOFSPRING.COM**
**EMAIL: ORDERS@THEBOYSOFSPRING.COM**

A GRAND STRATEGY GAME

TAKE A NATION. BUILD AN ARMY.

# CONQUER THE WORLD.

# SUPREME RULER 2020

GLOBAL CRISIS

## EXCLUSIVE BONUS

WWII History has teamed up with GamersGate to offer all readers a 30% discount on SupremeRuler2020 and the expansion Global Crisis.

Discount code: GLOB-ALCR-ISIS-2020
The code is valid until the end of March 2009.

EVERYONE 10+ ™
Mild Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

paradox INTERACTIVE

battlegoat studios

GAMERSGATE
DOWNLOAD GAMES ANYTIME ANYWHERE

WWW.PARADOXPLAZA.COM/SUPREMERULER2020